

interwoven with mythical tales never have had any symbolic significance among the people whose property they are now. They are not nature myths, in the generally adopted sense of the term. While dealing with phenomena of nature and with the peculiarities of animals, they are not the result of tribal thought; they are at best adaptations of foreign thought, but much more frequently importations that have undergone little if any change. The present character of Indian mythologies can be understood only by historical studies regarding their origin. How much is due to independent thought or to gradual adaptation, under the influences of environment and of new social conditions, remains to be determined by detailed comparative studies.

We may trace the influence of environment in the modifications that the tales undergo, owing to differences in the mode of life of various tribes. Thus the tales of the fishermen of the seacoast who spend most of their time in their canoes, and whose villages are located near the shore, differ in many respects from the tales of the Thompson River Indians, who hunt part of the year in the mountains. The animals who are the heroes of the tales, also change from one locality to the other. In northern British Columbia the Raven takes the place of the Coyote; on Vancouver Island the Mink takes his place, while still farther south, among the Chinook, the Blue Jay assumes many of his functions.

But much more striking than the influence of geographical environment is that of the social status of the tribe. The clan organization of the coast tribes pervades their whole mythology and all their traditions, while the loose social organizations of the tribes of the interior gives their tales a peculiar character. This difference is brought out very strongly in the myths of the transformer as found among a number of coast tribes and those of the interior. Every clan has a legend expounding the events that took place at the time of meeting between the transformer and the ancestor of the clan, while there is no such personal relation between the Indians and the transformer in the interior. The rivalry between clans is one of the mainsprings of action in these tales. It is evident that in many cases tales which originally had no totemic bearing were appropriated by a clan and changed so as to become clan traditions. I have described a number of such changes in a fuller discussion of the social system of the Kwakiutl.<sup>30</sup> Other tales developed numerous variants among various clans, the more elaborate social organization acting as a stimulus for the development of traditions. The same is true in the case of ritualistic myths. The complicated rituals of the coast tribes are all part and parcel of traditions, and some of the latter are made to explain the ritual. Conclusions founded on