

ON THE COMPARISON OF VERSIONS OF TEXTS

Anthony Mattina
University of Montana

Almost without exception North American Indian literary texts have been studied through their English translations, which, at least until recently, have been prepared mainly by individuals without fluency in the language of the original. Much of this literature is considered hard reading, obscure, even incoherent.

There are scholars who attribute the opacity and difficulty of the English translations of Indian texts to poor editorial practices of various types.¹ These critics seem to imply that with proper editorial practices much, if not all, of the difficulty of the texts would disappear and their beauty would be revealed. By contrast I feel that, by and large, editorial practices, however inappropriate, have not significantly contributed to the lack of appeal of the texts. I believe, rather, that the records of Amerindian texts we possess are, for circumstantial reasons, run of the mill, or perhaps even inferior artistic specimens--that is, most of these records have NOT been obtained under the circumstances that favor the production of outstanding specimens, and, equally importantly, there is no reason to believe that they have derived from superior or outstanding artists. I imagine, in other words, that many of the "informants" who volunteered texts to ethnographers and linguistic collectors were not exceptionally gifted as story tellers, and moreover, did not tell their best story.²

The ideas I have sketched stem from my work with texts obtained from Peter J. Seymour, a Colville Salish author. All such texts were obtained under unfavorable conditions, yet most of them seem to me beautifully told: compared with extant versions of cognate narratives, they show unmatched richness.³ In the remainder of this essay I will compare (fragments of) seven versions of a Colville myth authored as follows: one was told by Seymour, four by others, and two of these four reworked by editors. First I will describe the circumstances of the texts to be compared; then I will discuss what constitutes (the telling of) a Colville myth; and finally I will present and compare the versions.

In the first third of the present century, a bilingual and bicultural woman named Mourning Dove, recorded in writing (in English) many of the myths and legends of her people. Mourning Dove, who is known for having written the first Indian novel (Cogowea), and full-length memoirs, was encouraged in her work of writing by Lucullus McWhorter, a sympathetic student of Indian things. McWhorter arranged for the publication of Mourning Dove's collection of stories, which, edited by him, appeared in 1933. In the discussion to follow I will refer to McWhorter's edition of Mourning Dove's stories as Version 1 (V1).

In the mid 1970's Donald Hines found in the archives of Washington State University the original manuscript of Mourning Dove's Okanogan (Colville) stories, and in 1977 arranged for the publication of the manuscript minus the editorial tamperings of McWhorter. I will refer to these unadulterated texts of Mourning Dove's as Version 2 (V2).⁴

In July and August 1930 a group of graduate students participating in a field training course of the Laboratory of Anthropology (Santa Fe, NM) directed by Leslie Spier, headed for the territories of the Southern Okanagon peoples in eastern Washington, Idaho, and Western Montana. Spier edited for publication all the ethnographic materials collected, crediting each student with the authorship of the various essays and reports. For his part, Spier "added, deleted, and otherwise changed these manuscripts [submitted to him by the students] to a considerable extent, for the most part without consulting the authors or initialling [his--Spier's] contributions" (p. 4). So we do not know the extent to which the mythological texts included in the volume were edited. We do not even know if the texts were collected through an interpreter or directly in English. What we know is that the collectors of the three texts were Miss L. V. W. Walters who, "financed by the University of Washington," joined the party, Mr. Walter Cline of Harvard University, and Miss Rachel S. Commons, a student at the University of Chicago. I will refer to the versions of the texts collected by Walters as Version 3 (V3), to the versions collected by Cline as Version 4, and to the texts collected by Commons as Version 5 (V5). The text of V3 with which we are concerned, was obtained from Suszen Timentwa, a man so identified in the introduction: "48 years old, present chief of the Kartar band, was born at Okanogan town.

Ancestry is a mixture of Moses-Columbia and Kartar on his mother's side for several generations; father was Chelan. Intelligent person with mystical tendencies; prone to formalize everything into a cosmic scheme centering around his religious ideas" (p. 4). The text in V4 of interest to us was obtained from Andrew Tillson, a man described as follows: "aged 78, affiliated with the Northern bands and with the Northern Okanagon. Difficult to work with because of Johnnie's⁵ resentment of his deafness and his character. Material seems to have been trustworthy whenever certainly checked as his own." V5 was obtained from a woman described as follows: "Cecile Brooks, about 58 years old, was born at the time of the great earthquake (1872?)... Kalispel by birth, but married into the Kartar branch of the Okanagon at a rather early age (about fourteen). There got rather full technological training as well as some insight into the functioning of the social and religious order, and traditions about the tabus of menstruation and so forth, which were for the most part no longer practiced. Very able and intelligent. Distinguished very carefully between customs of the Okanagon and those she knew of the Kalispel" (p. 4).

In 1971 a book was published by St Mary's Mission (now Paschal Sherman school) on the Colville Reservation in East Omak, Wa., under the discreet editorship of Eileen Yanan.⁶ In this book, titled Coyote and the Colvilles, the English text of several Colville (Okanogan) stories occupies about 37 pages. Authorship or source of the stories is not given, but the FORWARD [sic] acknowledges that "among the people who provided information and help were Mrs. Adolph, Jeannette Aleck, Francis Assissi, Louise Charley, John Cleveland, Cecelia Condon, Madeline Desautel, Eileen and Larry Emerson, Alice Irely, Smoker Marchand, Sara McCraigie, Ellen Moses, Mourning Dove, Mary Pierre, Harriet Rupp, Fr. Wilfred Schoenberg, Lena St. Peter, C. B. Suszen Timentwa, Julian Timentwa, Mrs. Cull White and Mickey Derrickson." The Timentwa of these acknowledgments is certain to be the same author of V3. The 1971 text, to which I will refer as Version 6 (V6), is a variant of V3 told by the same author. We do not know if the text was collected through an interpreter, or if it was told in English. Nor do we know the details of Yanan's editorship: did she know and/or rely on any of

the extant versions of the texts? We cannot know without inquiring of her.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's I recorded, in the original Colville, many stories narrated by Peter J. Seymour. Mostly in the 1970's I transcribed and translated these stories with the help of Madeline DeSautel. I refer to the translations of Seymour's stories as Version 7 (V7).

The specific myth of which I want to compare seven versions, is one in which a superior being assigns names (and associated ranks and functions) to the animals, birds, and fishes of the world. Coyote, wanting to be first at the ceremony, manages to oversleep and misses the ceremony altogether. Out of pity (not all the texts identify pity as the motivation) the dispenser of names gives Coyote special powers and the charge that he patrol the earth, and in some versions, specifically rid the earth of man-eaters. Essentially this is a story that explains the order of things in the Colville world, including Coyote's position in it.

The seven texts I want to compare all contain the elements of the plot I have just outlined. V1, V2, and V5 contain only these elements, but the remaining versions add materials beyond this core. I do not intend to discuss any such extensions of the myth of name giving, but I will indicate the range of each version.

The abstract of V3 found in the Spier volume shows how its text (and its close relative V6) go:

God creates the world and the animals. He is to return in a year, when he will name the animals and create humans. Coyote desires to be the first named, hence leader, but falls asleep and is named last. God puts an object in the water, which becomes Beaver. In the future, humans will arise from twelve pieces of Beaver. Coyote is left in charge of the earth. When God returns, Coyote asserts he has the most power. Coyote is challenged to move mountains by pointing: he succeeds once but then fails. Coyote, having lost the opportunity to make humans, is placed by God in a house in the sea. God is to rejoin Coyote in the future.

Four wolf brothers prepare spears to kill Beaver. The youngest wolf uses his three brothers' spears, but they break. He pierces it with his own spear but is dragged down the Columbia, despite his clutching at plants on the way. Beaver is killed. The beaver is cut into eleven parts, instead of twelve. The animals take these portions and the blood, which serves as the twelfth part, to various localities. They breathe life into them so that each part becomes an Indian tribe. The humans are

shown what is food and told to pattern their utensils after certain pictographs.

The portion of V4 that follows the episode where Coyote is given his name, is abstracted as follows in the Spier volume:

Fox, as chief, commits wrongs. God sends Coyote to right them. God, naming the sweathouse, tells it to be wherever there are people. Coyote and Fox travel over the world. God places Fox on a log in the northern ocean, Coyote on one in the southern ocean. God turns the world over and the creatures become animals. Coyote is still in the ocean and will return to destroy the whites.

V7 continues with Coyote's challenge of God and a subsequent showdown in which Coyote is reprimanded and sent on to his cannibal hunts. So we can see that each author may append to the naming myth any number of myths that bear on Colville cosmology.

I think that it is neither possible nor desirable to state with authority where or with what episode this myth--or perhaps any Colville myth--begins and ends. Colville-Okanagan cosmology includes, besides the various accounts of the organization and prehistory of the world and its denizens, a cosmogonic component that gives accounts, in ways understood by the Colville-Okanagans, of how the animal world (precursor of the human world) came to be. The Cv-Ok cosmogony includes, in turn, an account of how animals (the precursors of humans) came to have their names and the functions and ranks associated with these names. The heart of the account is the actual conferment of the names. A number of episodes add details to the core of the myth. Some episodes explain things such as the time frame of the naming, the instructions given by the name-giver, the behavior of individual animals, including the jockeying for position in the hope of receiving a name of prestige, their attempts to trade their names for more prestigious ones, etc. Any given account of the myth will include the central account of the conferment of the names, and any number of related episodes, chosen by the narrator. The seven versions I am comparing overlap and differ in ways that I hope to make clear with a chart of the elements of the plot and pertinent discussion.

In remote times myth-telling sessions were occasions where

individuals speakers would contribute, at the appropriate times, particular episodes that they knew or liked best, in a sort of collective effort where episodes could be repeated, and corrections and additions could be made.⁷ Recordings of texts narrated by single individuals often seem fragmentary and incoherent, because they are obtained away from their natural environment. Unfortunately none of the records that we have of Cv-Ok myths seems to have been obtained in its traditional setting. But by comparing the fragments of seven variants of a Cv-Ok myth I propose to show that one of these stands above the others as an example of a good text in spite of the adverse circumstances in which it, like the other texts, was told.⁸

While Seymour said to me something like "this is the story of how Coyote got his powers," and I somewhere in my notes wrote "How Coyote Got His Powers," I do not know how the other titles were arrived at. They are:

- V1. The Spirit Chief Names the Animal People
- V2. The Great Spirit Names the Animal People: How Coyote Came by His Power
- V3. The Origin of the People
- V4. The Naming of the Animals (First Version)
- V5. The Naming of the Animals (Second Version)
- V6. Naming of the Animals
- V7. How Coyote Got His Powers

We note that V3 and V7 are the only titles that do not refer to a "naming."

The story begins with the summoning of the animals and the announcement of names to be given at an appointed time. Coyote schemes to get the most prestigious name, and determines to stay up all night. In spite of having propped his eyes with sticks, Coyote oversleeps and misses the assembly.

It is not possible to reproduce all texts in their entirety, but it is possible to show the remaining contents of each text by listing cumulatively all the motifs found in all the versions, and to indicate the presence of a particular motif in each text by a mark in the appropriate column. A patient scanning of the chart gives a clear idea of the contents of each text through the conferment of Coyote's name and powers. The sections that are boxed in and enclose all seven columns, show the parts common

to all the texts. Other blocked in sections highlight (sequences of) motifs unique to a text or pair of texts. I have numbered

the rows arbitrarily, subsuming under a single row number those items that I felt were allomotifs of one another.⁹

MYTH CONTENTS (1-27)							
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7
1.0 Intro: opening formula							V7
1.1 God created the world			V3	V4			
1.2 God made laws for animals			V3				
2.0a. God summons animals	V1	V2				V6	V7
b. God summons people					V5		
c. God summons all things				V4			
2.1a. God announces change	V1	V2				V6	V7
b. God announces new people will populate the earth	V1		V3				
c. God announces animal world to rule		V2					
d. God announces animals separate from humans							V7
2.2a. God announces names will be given	V1	V2			V5	V6	
b. God announces laws will be given			V3			V6	
c. God announces arrows will be given							V7
d. God announces first one will be chief				V4			
2.3a. God orders to return in 1 yr			V3			V6	
b. God orders to return in 1 day	V1	V2			V5		V7
2.4a. Interdiction against individual thinking			V3			V6	
b. First come first served	V1	V2					
2.5. God announces work to be assigned	V1	V2					
3.0 Creatures scatter			V3			V6	V7
3.1 learned from God			V3				
3.2 know one another's thought			V3			V6	
4.1 Time to meet God again			V3			V6	
4.2 receive a human leader			V3			V6	
4.3a Animals excited	V1						
b People excited		V2					
c want proud name	V1	V2					
d want to rule part of the world	V1	V2					
e determine to get up early	V1	V2					
5.0 Coyote starts doing his own thinking			V3			V6	
5.1a Coyote wants to be first	V1	V2			V5		
b wants to be chief				V4			
c doesn't like his name - Imitator	V1	V2					

11.2 birds " "
11.3 trees " "
11.4 plants " "
12a One arrow is undelivered
b name is undelivered
13 Coyote is fetched
14.0 Coyote wakes up blind
14.1a washes his eyes and sees
b Christ washes Coyote's eyes
15.0 Coyote rushes to meeting
15.1a requests name Grizzly
b requests name Wolf
c requests name Cougar
d requests name Eagle
e requests name Salmon
f requests to be chief
g receives choice of Coyote and Sweat House
16 receives name Coyote
16.1 Coyote is dejected
16.2a God announces a law has been missed
b Blue Jay and Meadowlark have done own thinking
17.0 God puts Beaver in the water
17.1 lays third law
17.2 announces there will be 12 tribes
18.0a Coyote wants to trade name with Grizzly
b Cougar
c Wolf
18.1 Grizzly wants to kill Coyote
18.2 God intervenes
18.3 overturns law of worthless last name
19.0 Chief feels pity
19.1 assigns work to Coyote
20.0a makes Coyote chief of all tribes
b makes Coyote father of all tribes
c makes Coyote head of all creatures
21.1a asks Coyote to rid earth of man-eaters
b asks Coyote to work until unspecified day
21.2a gives Coyote special powers
b gives Coyote a book

V5 V6
V5 V6
V5 V6
V7
V3 V7
V3 V6 V7
V3 V6
V7
V1 V2 V4 V5 V6
V1 V2 V5 V6
V5
V5
V1 V2
V1 V2
V4
V4
V1 V2 V3 V4 V5 V6 V7
V1 V2
V3
V6
V3 V6
V3
V6
V3 V6 V7
V3
V3 V6
V3 V6 V7
V3
V1 V2
V1 V2 V7
V1
V2
V3 V6
V1 V2 V7
V3
V1 V2 V4
V3 V6

c	gives Coyote power in the stomach
d	gives Coyote power in the faeces
21.3	Coyote tries out the faeces-powers
21.4	Coyote moves mountain with his power
21.5	Coyote thinks he is greater than God
22	Chief gives Coyote resuscitability through Fox
23.0	Coyote's eyes has grown slanted from the sticks
23.1	Indians' eyes are slanted
24.0	Sweal House receives name Sweat House
24.1	Chief's wife takes name of Sweat House
24.2	Sweat House's ribs represent the Chief's wife
24.3	Sweat House hears people's songs to her
25.1	Coyote is interim world-watcher
25.2	meets God again
26	Myth of creation of humans continues
27	Ending formula

				V5		
			V4			V7
			V4			V7
			V4			V7
			V4			V7
V1	V2	V3			V6	
V1	V2					
V1	V2					
			V4			
V1	V2					
V1	V2					
V1	V2					
		V3			V6	
		V3			V6	V7
		V3	V4		V6	V7
				V5		V7

The chart shows certain facts about the contents of the myth, a few of which I want to note:

(1) the parts of the myth common to all versions, boxed in in the chart, are:

- 2.2 Superior being announces that names will be given
- 5.1a-d Coyote wants to be first
- 5.5 Coyote determines not to sleep
- 6. props his eyes open with sticks
- 7. falls asleep
- 16. receives name Coyote
- 21.2 Superior being gives Coyote special powers

Without these parts there would be no myth. Note that once Coyote is given his special powers, the myth teller has wide narrative options--he can stop or continue with any number of Coyote stories, Fox stories, Blue Jay stories, etc. As we have seen, V3 and V6 in fact branch out with the Beaver myth that follows from 17; V3, V6 and V7 contain the borrowed element of judgement day, when God and Coyote meet again; and V4 ends with a "world turned over" section.

(2) Each version selects for inclusion details that other versions may omit. The chart I have compiled shows the following count of motifs in each text:

V1 and V2	42
V6	34
V3	31
V7	23
V5	22
V4	19

V1 and V2 are the texts richest in detail, yet they needn't be more artistic than any of the other texts. Some of the motifs unique to V1-V2 are an attempt to add western-like descriptions, e. g. the excitement of the animals (4.3); one motif adds the explanation of the slanted eyes (23); two other sections, one an exchange between Coyote and Fox (5.3), the other an exchange between Coyote and Mole (5.7-5.12) are meant to represent Coyote's personality.

(3) Each text or pair of texts may contain some motifs not found in other texts, for example, uniquely of V1-V2 are:

- the excitement of the animals (4.3)
- the exchange between Coyote and Mole (5.6-5.13)
- the slanted eyes (23)

Uniquely of V3-V6 (which, incidentally, confirms the single author of these two versions) are:

- the knowledge of one another's thoughts (3.2)
- time to meet God and receive a human leader (4.1-1.2)
- Coyote's own thinking (5.0)
- Blue Jay wants Eagle's name (9.0)
- Meadowlark wants Grouse's name (9.1)
- Coyote wakes up blind, washes his eyes, sees (14)
- God puts Beaver in water (17)
- Grizzly wants to kill Coyote (18.1)

Unique to V7 are

- the left over arrow (12)
- the fetching of Coyote (13)
- Christ's washing of Coyote's eyes (14.1a)

and even V4 and V5, the least rich of the texts, have each some unique motifs: V4 has Coyote's multiple falling asleep and awakening (5.14a), and the assignment of the first name to Fox (10.0c); and V5 has the individual animals' dispersals to hills and mountains (10.c-j), and Coyote's requests of the names Wolf (15.1b) and Cougar (15.1c).

(4) V1 is a reworking of V2 which leaves the content of V2 intact, except for the following:

V2	V1
-4.3 people excited	-animals excited
-5.6 Coyote's 5 sons	-Coyote's 3 sons ¹⁰
-20.0 Coyote father of tribes	-Coyote chief of tribes

McWhorter also included some useful cultural notes, and gave the transliteration of several Indian words, some of which were not in the Mourning Dove text.

(5) Even though not immediately obvious from the chart, the sequence of motifs is not uniform, and some texts show transposition of some materials. For example, in V7 it is Christ who washes Coyote's eyes to vision after the meeting has been held and the names assigned, but in V3-V6 it is Coyote who washes his own eyes and then goes to the meeting. In V5 the episode of the giving of the names is told before Coyote awakens, but in V1-V2 Coyote is reported going to the meeting before any account of the name giving. While other such transpositions can be discovered, I have found none that disturbs the integrity of the myth.

(6) Authors use different narrative tactics to repeat: while Seymour employs what I call the multi-angled tour (see below), Tillson and Brooks use enumeration, e. g. in V4 Fox gets name,

then Grizzly gets name, etc. (10c-d); and in V5 Grizzly receives his name, Brown Bear receives his name, Cougar receives his name, etc. (10e-j). We should also note that, discounting the repetitions omitted by the recorder/editor of V4, no text shows a constant number of repetitions. V1 TO BE CONTINUED

Having noted the foregoing characteristics of plot and organization, I now examine the texts of the myth focusing first on narrative tactics and then on narrative strategies. By narrative tactics I mean the specific rhetorical and stylistic devices used in the various parts of the text--how an author speaks, his diction; by narrative strategies I mean the techniques used to achieve dramatic coherence--how an author makes the facts of a story fit together.

I begin by reporting the texts that cover sections 1.0 through 2.5 of the myth:

V1 (McWhorter's edition of V2)

HAH-AH' EEL-ME'-WHEM, the great Spirit Chief, called the Aminimal People together. They came from all parts of the world. Then the Spirit Chief told them there was to be a change, that a new kind of people was coming to live on earth.

"All of you *Chip-chap-tiquik*--Aminal People--must have names," the Spirit Chief said. "Some of you have names now, some of you haven't. But tomorrow all will have names that shall be kept by you and your descendants forever. In the morning, as the first light of day shows in the sky, come to my lodge and choose your names. The first to come may choose any name that he or she wants. The next person may take any other name. That is the way it will go until all the names are taken. And to each person I will give work to do."

--*-*-*

V2 (Mourning Dove)

The Great Spirit called all his people together from all over the earth. There was to be a change. He would give names to the people, and the Animal World was to rule. The naming was to begin at the break of day, each one having the right to choose his or her name according to who came first to the Spirit Chief's lodge. The Spirit Chief would also give each one their duty to perform in changed conditions.

* * * * *

V3 (Timentwa)

In the beginning, as in the Bible, God created the world, and created animals. He made laws for the animals. He said, "I'm going to leave. In one year, I will come back. I will give you

a law if you will all not think in your own thinking. I've given you laws for one year; I'm going to make a human next time I come. If all you creatures think in your own thinking, you are going to be lost."

--*-*-*

V4 (Tillson)

When God (qolenco'tn) first finished the world and had made everything in it, nothing yet had a name. After he had fixed everything he waited for a while and then thought, "I haven't given names to anything that I have put on this earth. Then he came back. He gathered everything that he had already put on this earth, gathered all things into a bunch, to give them all names. He told them, "The first one that comes here tomorrow morning will be the chief."

[illegible]

V5 (Brooks)

There was once a chief. He called all his people together because he wanted to give them each a name. They all gathered. By the time the day was over, the people were all there. The chief told the people, "Early in the morning you all come in my house, so I can give each one of you a name."

--*-*-*

V6 (Yanan edition)

The Chief called his animal people. From all parts of the world they came. By the time the day was over, the animal people were all with Him. The Chief told them there was to be a change. A new kind of people was coming to live. "All of you must have names. To be kept by you and your children forever. In one year I will come back. I will name you then, and I will make a person to take care of you and be your leader. Until then, there is only one law. But it is two laws. Do not think in your own thoughts until I have named you. If one of you thinks for himself, you will lose the person. Now I'm gone. Good day."

--*-*-*-*

V7 (Seymour)

I'm going to tell a fairy tale. When Christ was first born he got here on earth and he called all the birds and the ones that walk on the ground, Coyotes, Lynxes, Wolves, all the animals that walk on the ground. He asked all of them to come. Not the human beings, just what they call in white man's language 'animals,' and these here fowl, the 'birds'. He told them: "Now we are all going to gather up. Just now this world is going to come to life and I'm going to change you. You chickens that flies in the air, you are going to be birds, you are going to be those that fly in the air up high. And the ones that stand on fours, the ones that's got no wings, these here Coyotes, and these here

Grizzlies and Black Bears, and the Deer. Everything that's on the ground, and everything that's up in the air, too. You're not going to be mixed up with the people." They all agreed. And he went on: "Tomorrow just when the sun is turning, we'll all get together here. That's when I'll give you what's going to be your arrows, and that's when you'll scatter all over the mountains. You won't be mixed up with the people. For now you can scatter, go to bed. When daylight comes on you, just when the turning of the sun fits again, then you'll all be here. Then I'll give you the arrows." They said "all right," and they scattered and went where they are going to camp. I guess their camping place is all together.

[illegible]

Note, first of all, that the amount of information given in five of the seven fragments is roughly comparable. V5 is the simplest and shortest text--it has no opening formula, it does not say that it is animals that are being summoned, there is no announcement of either a general change or the arrival of humans, and there is no announcement of laws to be given. V4 is similarly jejune. Note also that three of the remaining versions contain a number of obscure references, as follows:

V2: A change. What change, and who is to rule?

The Animal World was to rule.

There was to be a change ... duty to perform in changed state

V3: Animals will be lost if they do their own thinking--what thinking and how lost?

I will give you a law if you will all not think in your own thinking
If you think in your own thinking ... you are going to be lost

V6: What law, and how many? A person will be lost. Who?

... there is only one law. But it is two laws

a person will take care of you ... if one of you thinks for himself,
you will lose the person.

Whether or not a Colville audience knows how to interpret each of the unclear references, their fuzziness is a fact. I suggest that on quantitative criteria alone, V4 and V5 fail to give enough information pertinent to the myth. This is not to say that the amount of information is expected to correlate with artistic worth, but it points to the fact that some tellings of myths fail to meet minimum expository adequacy: they do not tell enough of the story. It is possible that V4 and V5 will provide missing data as the story unfolds, but they haven't yet, and I see nothing in them that compensates for the scantiness of the material. I also suggest that V2, V3, and V6, beside their obscure references, are not particularly well told.

As I have already said, V1, V2, V3, and V6 are related to each

other as follows:

- V1 is a reworking of V2
- V6 is a reworking and/or retelling of V3

These two pairs of versions should prove useful in determining the extent to which editorial tamperings damage the quality of text; and I will use V7 as a standard against which to compare all other versions to determine if the qualitative difference between the texts in each pair is appreciable.

The editor of V1 has added the following material not found in V2:

- the transliteration of the name of the "Spirit Chief;"
- a footnote that explains the Colvilles' beliefs with respect to the Spirit Chief;
- the misapplied transliteration that is meant to stand for "Animal People," but doesn't (cəp-caʔptikʷəɬ means 'legends');
- the direct discourse of the Spirit Chief that translates the fourth and fifth sentences of V2: "All of you ... must have names... Some of you have names, some ... haven't."

McWhorter made another change as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| V2 | V1 |
| -the animal world was to rule | -a new kind of people was coming to live on earth |

McWhorter also tried to improve Mourning Dove's diction by a certain amount of deletions, additions, and rearrangements of phrases and sentences, but his rearrangements do not strike me as stylistically different from V2. Compare these excerpts:

- | | |
|--|---|
| V2 | V1 |
| -Coyote was of a degraded nature, a vulgar type of life | -Ø (but see: "Coyote ... is a degraded name") |
| -He was hated by all the people for his ways. No one liked him | -Such smart talk did not make friends for Coyote |
| -Fox laughed | -Fox, who at the next sun took the name Why-ay'-looh... Soft Fur, laughed |
| -He was awakened by his wife, Mole when she returned from the Spirit Chief's lodge, when the sun was high in the morning sky (Mole loved her husband and did not want to lose him. She wished him to remain Coyote, did not want him to become a great chief | -The sun was high in the sky when Coyote awoke. But for Mole he would not have wakened then. Mole called him. She called him after she returned with her name from the Spirit Chief's lodge. Mole loved her husband. She did not want him to have a |

only to leave her for younger and more handsome women. This is why she did not call him at early morn).

big name and be a powerful chief. For then, she feared, he would leave her. That was why she did not arouse him at daybreak. Of this she said nothing.

The direct discourse of V1 and V2 is equally stilted and out of character:

V2
"Eh-ha!" grunted Coyote sarcastically. He answered his wife, "I am no common person to be spoken to in that fashion by a mere woman. Do you know that I am going to be a great Chief at daybreak tomorrow? I shall be Grizzly Bear. I will devour my enemies with ease. I will take other men's wives. I will need you no longer. You are growing too old, too ugly to be the wife of a great warrior, of a big Chief as I will be."

V1
"Eh-ha!" Coyote grunted. "I am no common person to be addressed in that manner. I am going to be a great chief tomorrow. Did you know that? I will have a new name. I will be Grizzly Bear. Then I can devour my enemies with ease. And I shall need you no longer. You are growing too old and homely to be the wife of a great warrior and chief."

All of McWhorter additions, including the misapplied transliteration, aim to clarify V2, but may not always be successful. Thus "a new kind of people was coming to live on earth" is an interpretation of "the animal world was to rule" which may or may not be appropriate; and the addition that "some of you haven't" is an attempt, perhaps unwarranted and unsuccessful, to cope with the awkwardness of having to refer to "nameless" animals by some name.¹¹

The editor and the reteller (or some combinations thereof) of V6 have varied from V3 as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| V3 | V6 |
| -God | -Chief |
| -reference to the Bible | -Ø |
| -reference to creation of world | -Ø |
| -reference to creation of animals | -Ø |
| -Ø | -Chief calls animal animal people |
| -Ø | -animal people arrive |
| -Ø | -Chief announces change |
| -a new kind of people is coming to live | -a human is coming |
| -Ø | -permanent names given to animals |

- one law

-you are going to be lost
- one law / two laws

-you will lose the person

While the diction of the two texts is comparably awkward, the chart shows that they differ from each other in a number of ways--so many that were it not for other evidence (some given in the chart, more to be given presently), one might question the wisdom of considering them variants of the same text. One might even suspect that V6 is closer to V1 than to V3: note that V6 "from all parts of the world they came" paraphrases V1 "they came from all parts of the world," and that all the following fragments from V6 are identifiable as paraphrases of V1: "the Chief told them there was to be a change," "a new kind of people was coming to live," "all of you must have names." But consider the next few sentences of each:

V3	V6
The creatures scattered and learned from God. The scattered creatures knew what each other thought. Finally the creatures knew that it is time to meet God again. The creatures said, "We know enough from God, but tomorrow there will be a person-to-be in charge of us."	The animal people scattered. They learned from their Chief and always knew what each other was thinking. In one whole year around, all the animal people remembered all at once to meet with their Chief again. "We know enough from Him, but tomorrow there will be a person-to-be in charge of us."

Notwithstanding the different beginnings, and whatever liberties the editor or editors have taken, the texts show similar styles. This and the isomorphism of the plots of V3 and V6 (see chart) confirm a single author.

What V7 has that none of the other versions has is artistry. Seymour does several things that the authors of the other versions do not do. First, with a simple formula he casts a spell that carries the reader into the world of the myth: "I'm going to tell a fairy tale." Then he invites his audience to have confidence in him as a guide, because he knows the world of the myth as he knows this world--his and the audience's: "When Christ was first born he got here on earth..." A familiar "Christ" was born and he came here. Then he takes the audience/reader on a many-angled tour of this familiar world about to be recast in the terms of the myth. This is a world

tull of familiar animals, with familiar names, but one needs to work along with the myth--that's the invitation of the detail and repetition--and imagine a world without human beings. In this familiar world there are only what white people call "animals" and "birds." What I call a multi-angled tour is one of the forms that repetition may take. D. Hymes has noted the prominence of one such repetitive device, that of onset, ongoing, outcome, in other narratives. Seymour shoots a scene (to use a film metaphor) from many angles, and links the shootings in his narrative: Christ summons the four footed animals and the birds, not the humans, but Coyotes, Lynxes ..., animals, and fowl. And those that fly, those that have wings, will be birds, will fly in the air up high. His wonderful detail goes on, and each scene to be visualized is shot from several angles and savored in multiple paraphrases. The voice of the "Christ" is heard call the meeting, promise the symbolic arrows, and stress the segregation of animals and (present-day) humans. The artistry is in the choice of each of Seymour's words, in the turn of each of his phrases, spoken or written. If it's good in the translation, imagine the original.¹²

Following the passages just quoted and discussed, the myth goes on, with Coyote scheming to get the longest arrow, and the most prestigious name. Whether or not there is a one year waiting period, the night before the assembly Coyote determines to be up all night and be the first at the meeting. In spite of having propped his eyes open with sticks, Coyote oversleeps and misses the assembly.

Comparing more fragments of text shows that an author may develop a particular motif in unique ways. Mourning Dove, aware of literary standards and styles, and interested in writing literature, uses explanatory comments and characterizations that are atypical of Colville texts. She explains, for example, Mole's failure to wake Coyote up as well-meaning selfishness. She describes Coyote's character--a motif restricted to V1-V2--as follows:

Coyote was of a degraded nature, a vulgar type of life. He was an imitator of everything he saw or heard... He was hated by all the people for his ways. No one liked him. He boasted too much about his wisdom, about everything.

Note that in V3-V6 and in V7, Coyote falls asleep and remains asleep, but the authors of the remaining texts add information. V1-V2 add a self-serving rationalization:

Mole ... did not want to lose him. She wished him to remain Coyote... This is why she did not call him at early morn.

V4 adds a culture validating rationale:

[Coyote] went to sleep with his eyes open... Fox came along ... and thought he would wake him up, but decided not to do this, for it is dangerous to awaken people.

And V5 adds an etiological explanation:

the Chief knew all the time what Coyote was thinking about, and just by his power he made Coyote sleep.

Thus while in V7 and V3-V6 oversleeping is just the sort of thing that would happen to Coyote, in V1-V2 Mole, Coyote's wife, absent from all the other versions, lets him sleep out of some well-meaning but pitiful selfishness. In V4 it is Fox who, obedient to cultural rules, lets him sleep, and in V5 it is the Chief who, in his unquestioned wisdom, causes him to sleep.

Another example of how an author may choose to develop a particular motif is afforded by the gathering of the animals to receive their names and ranks. In V1 and V2 we learn indirectly that there has been a name giving ceremony. Coyote arrives at the meeting and requests certain names. He is told that those names have been taken. The Spirit chief says:

all the names expect your own have been taken. No one wished to steal your name. (V1)

All the names have been used except your own: Coyote. No one wished to steal your name from you. (V2)

Timentwa, the author of V3, tells that

About nine in the morning, the creatures had met. God named them all. Then, God said, "That is all of you creatures?" "No," they said, "one is not here." "There is one name left. When he comes that is his name." ...

The story continues with the episodes of Blue Jay and Meadowlark's dissatisfaction, Coyote's awakening and rushing to the meeting. The text (still V3) reads:

When he [Coyote] got there, he saw all the creatures sitting in a circle and he saw God too. He said, "Have you named all these creatures?" God said, "Yes, I named them all. There is one name left. That is yours now." Coyote said, "What is the name?" God said, "It is

Coyote (sinkEli'p)." Coyote said, "I don't like that name Coyote myself."

In V4 we learn that

As soon as it was getting daylight, Fox ... went to God, and God told him, "You can go through the world and fix anything you want." He was the first thing that got a name: xwae'lox, the fox. The second one that got there and got a name was the grizzly, kelauna. All the other animals then came and got names... When Coyote got there, there were only two names left.

In V5 the episode is told as follows:

The people got up early and they went in there to get their names. When they came out, they saw Coyote lying there with his eyes propped open although he was sleeping. And as soon as each animal was given a name, the chief told it where to live. For instance, the chief told the grizzly, "You go way up in the mountains: that will be your country, and your name will be kola'ona." ... As soon as he gave them a name they all came out of the house. The birds and animals were all given names when Coyote woke up.

In V6 we learn that

All the animal people had come early in the morning. The Chief named each and told the people where to live. All the fish and all the birds each was named. He named all the trees and all the plants... Coyote got to the meeting place that evening.

Seymour's description (V7) goes as follows:

The others gathered up in another place where they were supposed to gather and Jesus Christ was there to give them their arrows. They all got there, and they were all gathered. When they were all there then the boss got there, and when it was time he asked them, "Are you all here?" And they told him, "Yeah, we're all here."

Jesus Christ was holding the arrows. First the longest one, and he gave the longest one to Grizzly Bear. He told him, "You'll be the head boss on earth for all the animals that walk, you'll be the boss." He gave it to him, and he took it. Then he gave the next one to Eagle. He told him, "You'll be the boss of the birds that fly in the sky. You'll be their boss and your home will be up high. Take it and go away. You won't be mixed up with the people." He gave everybody one arrow and they're all gone, except one arrow. There is one left, the shortest one. And Jesus Christ asked them: "Is this all of you?" "Yes, it's everyone of us."

And then he said: "What's the matter, you are all here and there's one arrow left? One person must not be here."

Just then they thought about Coyote. They said, "Coyote is left out." He's not with them, and why? They said, "Maybe he overslept. He was still walking up and down when we went to sleep..."

Note how this text goes beyond the reports of the other

authors, into a narrative of the event elaborated in detail. We know that this is an important meeting, one at which the boss arrives appropriately after the throng has gathered, and opens the ceremony by a general roll call. Then he distributes the arrow, with a measure of formal ritual. Surprise, one arrow is left. The mismatch of expectation and reality (the extra item) is typical of Seymour's narrative, but is probably a staple of ancient Interior Salish narratives. It is found, for example, in Shuswap and Spokane stories, and Timentwa does it in V3. Those who have read Seymour's The Golden Woman and have become fans of the little boy will not be surprised that the story continues as follows:

Jesus Christ said: "Go and bring him over. Even if he gets lazy, pack him. There's no no about it, he has to be here and mix with the rest." And so they run, the young people. They went and they got there. Coyote was rolling around trying his best to see because his eyes are dry. They packed him on their back. They went and they got his there. They sat him down, him right in front of God.

While the author's diction contributes to the flow of the episodes of the story, his narrative strategy confers dramatic coherence to the story. With reference to this particular name giving myth, let us remember that this text explains how Coyote, in spite of his inappropriate behavior, and at least in one author's description, in spite of his unfit character, receives special powers. His attempts to stay awake have failed (and in some accounts Mole, Fox, and the Chief himself have played a part in this failure). This failure is met with the award of special powers. There is in the myth an incongruity of behavior and reward that the author is forced to reconcile. We follow the development of each of the narratives (or pairs of narratives) to see how this undesirable character manages to win his special powers. The story told in V2, as we know from the chart, continues with Coyote making a nuisance of himself at home, not providing food for his children, inveighing against his wife, coming to the meeting late, and demanding prestigious names, already assigned. After Coyote's "knees grew weak" and he "sank down by the fire,"

... the heart of the Spirit Chief was touched when he saw the lowered head of Coyote... After a silence the Chief spoke, "You are Coyote! You are hated among all the tribes, among all the people. I have chosen you from among all others to make you sleep, to go to the land

of the dream visions. I make a purpose for you, a big work for you to do before another change comes to the people. You are to be father for all the tribes...

In this text (V1-V2) there is a sudden transition from bad boy to father of all tribes.

In V3-V6, after he is scolded for having done his "own thinking" like Blue Jay and Meadowlark, Coyote starts harassing Grizzly to the point that "Grizzly became so angry with Coyote that he almost killed him." At this point the Chief "suddenly" appears, dismisses Grizzly and says to Coyote: "I want to talk to you." Coyote, "afraid of the Chief's words ... stood there shaking." And immediately after this the Chief says: "I see now that you are smarter and wiser than the others, Coyote." In this text the transition, also sudden, is from naughty boy to wise man.

In V4 God tells Coyote that there are two names left, and when Coyote wants neither, the "Great Man" says:

"Coyote would be a good name for you. If you take the name Coyote, I'll give you power to be a powerful man, to be smart in every way. I'll give you power in your faeces. Now I'll show you how and you can try it for yourself."

In this text the Chief seems to be trying to appease a bully by sweetening the pot--it's not such a bad name after all.

In V5 the Chief talks much like the Great Man in V4:

[Coyote] is the only name there is left and you have got to take it. You'd better take that name, because then I will help you get power, and nothing will be hard for you." So Coyote said, "Oh, all right then, I'll take that name."

A little less timid than the Chief of the previous text, this Great Man also gives in to the bully. Let's see what happens in V7.

In this text, after all the arrows but one have been given out, Christ has Coyote fetched and deposited in front of him. He sends away the other animals, and speaks to him:

"Yes, Coyote, it's a pity that you got behind. That's the only one arrow left. Take it, it's going to be your arrow. And that'll be your name, 'Coyote.' Now you can go."

Dismissed, he

went a little ways, and Coyote got Big Coyotish. He thought "Heck, no. What's that, I'm way up in class, and this here arrow is the shortest one. And then I took it. He gave it to me." He got mad.

Then Coyote chases down Grizzly and tries to trade arrows with him. Christ intervenes, tells Grizzly not to pay "any attention to Coyote," and speaks to the latter:

"Sit down right here. I'm going to talk to you. Yes, Coyote, you are sure pityful. You haven't been having your training. You are always putting yourself higher than others. If you had gone to sleep when you's supposed to it wouldn't have been like the way it went. And then you thought of all kinds of things. I am the God. You can't win me over. You did all kinds of figuring to get the best of what I thought, you wanted to come first. That's how you come to prop your eyes with sticks, that's how you got your eyes dried up. Now, take those sticks out of your eyes." [Christ restores Coyote's eyesight] ... I pity you. Because I pity you, I am going to help you. But I didn't pity you for nothing. I am going to hire you."

This Coyote is now ready to undertake a thousand adventures, in all of which first he will get in trouble and then he will have to rely on his turd-powers, his little helping partners. Coyote is pitiful in his weaknesses, just a Coyote, laughable, but sometimes powerful through a gift.

While it may be possible to argue that the incongruity of behavior and reward seems strident to this reader because it is filtered through his ethnic tunnel, it is also true that Seymour responded either to circumstantial pressure (a White audience of one and a tape recorder), or to the higher demands of the myth. All other authors, like Seymour, found themselves confronted by an audience and a request for a myth. All of them had to decide how to render the piece. And while Mourning Dove, it is obvious to me, wrote for a White audience a piece in which she included western rhetorical devices, and Timentwa turned his story into an account of his interpretation of Colville cosmology, each of these and each of the other authors made analogous choices. Seymour's story coheres better, tells better, and reads better. There may be fewer motifs in his text, but their quality is choice. It is both Seymour's narrative tactics (his many-angled tours and turns of phrase), and his narrative strategies that make his story good. Seymour tells Coyote stories like few others ever have.

NOTES

¹I review the practices of two such critics in Mattina 1987.

²Similar opinions have been expressed. In 1925 Boas had stated: "Even when the material is available in the original text we may assume that, at least in the majority of cases, it does not reach the standard of excellence of the native narrative" (p. 492). Boas was referring specifically to texts recorded without the aid of mechanical recording devices, but I find his observation has contemporary relevance. There are those who hold what seems an opposite view. In a letter to the editor of SSILA, March 1987, Kroeber writes "... more often than has been recognized in the past Native American texts possess significant artistic dimensions." My part of the dialog that I would open with Professor Kroeber is as follows: most of the extant records of Colville Indian narrative do not come close in artistic worth to what must have been outstanding specimens performed in their proper setting by the best Colville story tellers. I say that on two grounds, one intuitive, the other deductive. My intuitive feeling is that there is no reason to believe that a collector, arriving at a research site, would be able to obtain outstanding texts on a regular basis either from a single informant or from a variety of sources. I also consider important some evidence that recurringly appears in reports about Colville and related narrative: in the "old times" a story would take "all night" to be told--but nowadays a version of the same story takes less than nine minutes. Not only is this fact reported by researchers, but, for example, the prefatory remarks of the Flathead woman --- Woodcock at an organized story telling symposium (Helena, Montana, Spring 1981), amounted to such a characterization of story telling now and then. What exactly were the 14 hrs and 51 minutes (long winter nights) worth of missing materials? Any report of Colville "terseness" in story telling can only refer to a telling of the outline of a story, and not to the story itself.

³Seymour was not renowned in the Colville community for his narrative skills, but popular opinion and community sanction need not correlate with artistic ability.

⁴During the course of the essay I will explain why V1 and V2 are not appreciably different texts. I will say here that I consider Mourning Dove's writing typical of acculturated Indians who imitate the style of Western fairy tales. These writings contain Western motifs, lots of exclamation marks, and no contractions. McWhorter's editing of her texts is hardly noticeable. Mourning Dove has written Colville stories for Western audiences, much as I believe Archie Phinney edited and translated his presumably monolingual mother's Nez Perce tales, which, incidentally, have been re-de-edited by Hines. Part of Phinney's text in an Orpheus story reads: "But suddenly a joyous impulse seized him [Coyote]; the joy of having his wife again overwhelmed him. He jumped to his feet, and rushed over to embrace her." This doesn't sound like a Coyote story to me, but replace "Coyote" with "the king," and you have a nice Western fairy tale. Note how, in a less obvious way, Edward S. Curtis turned a Wishram text into the beginning of a Western fairy tale. A cognate text, collected by Edward Sapir begins: "Coyote's wife died and also his two sons died. Now then Coyote said..." Curtis' version reads: "Coyote had a wife and two children, and so had Eagle. Both families lived together. Eagle's wife and children died, and a few days later Coyote experienced the same misfortune."

⁵The editors do not say who this Johnnie is. Possibly the person who is described as follows:

Johnnie Louie, aged 49, served both as interpreter and informant. His affiliations seem to be mostly among the central and northern bands, but one or more of his grandparents were Colville, and there is a question how far he identified himself with the Colville. Much of our Colville information was supplied by him. He is shrewd, intelligent, well-informed, and was active in furthering our enterprise.

It is possible that V4 was recited by Tillson in Colville, then translated by Johnnie Louie, and written down by Cline.

⁶Page 2 of the book, immediately preceding the table of contents acknowledges "Materials collected and prepared by Eileen Yanan. Editorial supervision, John E. Andrist."

⁷If my assumptions about the myth-telling sessions are correct, then by definition the majority of the texts obtained as solo performances cannot ordinarily reach great artistic heights.

⁸If it is true that only exceptionally can a Cv-0k story teller produce, out of context, a fine text specimen, it is also true that each entire recorded text needn't show uniform superior quality. In fact, it may be a feature of oral narrative that the parts of a performance vary in quality. If my aesthetic judgements about the fragments of text about to be compared are not off the mark, then further comparisons could be undertaken with some confidence, aimed to fulfill two goals: (a) the formulation of a typology of Cv-0k (mythological) narrative; (b) a classification of stylistic devices that makes possible the evaluation of textual specimens.

⁹This is no attempt to study motifemes and their sequences à la Dundes. Dundes establishes a small number of motifemes corresponding to a few of Propp's 31 functions. Allomotifs are manifestations of each motifeme. In phonology phones in contrast constitute different phonemes, and phones in complementarity (or free variation) are variants of a single phoneme provided the phones share a sufficient degree of phonetic similarity. There is no analogous requirement of factual similarity for motifs in Dundes' scheme--functional equivalence is the only requirement, so that darkness and celibacy both belong to the motifeme LACK (of light in the first case, of a mate in the second), and the obtainment of light and a mate belong to the motifeme LACK LIQUIDATED.

¹⁰This could be a simple typographical error or misreading.

¹¹It may be of interest to note that Hines, in his zeal to preserve intact Mourning Dove's work, miscopied several of her transcriptions. Thus, for example, he wrote Le-a'-whn where the Colville has l?iw, and McWhorter le-ee'-oo. Where Hines reports squ-stenk', which may be accurately copied, McWhorter has squas-tenk', which is closer to the Colville sq'wa?stínk. His la-ah'chin is as far from the actual l?kcin as McWhorter's klek'-chin.

¹²The search for authors who have great artistry and can tell a better story than others is a different enterprise than the search for the rhetorical structure of a story, or the

insistence on faithful recordings. Practices resulting from the latter two activities needn't reveal anything of the artistic worth of the piece. The search for the rhetorical structure of a piece, whatever the posited structural unit (motifeme, verse, pair of oppositions), provides the blue prints of its architecture. The practice of faithful recording of a text is judicious procedure and common sense when applied to the original. But the insistence that prosodic features of the original be reflected in the transcript of a translation is whim. Judgements about the aesthetic worth of an artifact, whether it is a vase, a myth, or a song, are no more than informed (comparative) opinions expressed by critics who should know about structure and historical and cultural contexts.

REFERENCES

- Boas, Franz 1925. "Stylistic Aspects of Primitive Literature."
Journal of American Folk-Lore, Vol 38, pp. 329-339.
- Dundes, Alan 1964. *The Morphology of North American Indian Folktales*.
Helsinki.
- Mattina, Anthony 1987. "North American Indian Mythography:
Editing Texts for the Printed Page." In *Recovering the Word*.
University of California Press.
- Mourning Dove 1933. *Coyote Stories*. edited by L. McWhorter.
Kaxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho.
- 1976. *Tales of the Okanogans*. edited by Donald Hines. Ye
Galleon Press, Fairfield, Washington.
- No Author 1971. *Coyote and the Colvilles*. St. Mary's Mission,
Omak, Washington.
- Phinney, Archie, ed. 1934. *Nez Perce Texts*. *Columbia University
Contributions to Anthropology*, Vol. 25. Columbia University Press.
- Sapir, Edward, ed. 1909. *Wishram Texts*. PAES.
- Spier, Leslie ed. 1938. *The Sinkaetk or Southern Okanagon of
Washington*. General Series in Anthropology No. 6, Menasha,
Wisconsin.