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Marcia Haag

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NATIVE LITERATURES OF THE AMERICAS SERIES

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A LISTENING WIND

NATIVE LITERATURE FROM THE SOUTHEAST

Edited and with an introduction by Marcia Haag

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS *Lincoln and London*

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INTRODUCTION

Marcia Haag

This volume is one in the series of books devoted to Native literatures, inaugurated and edited by Brian Swann. The material here is from the Native peoples of the southeastern portion of the United States. The Southeast groups consist of both related peoples (for example, the large group of Muskogeans) and those whose closest relatives either disappeared or were absorbed by other groups. Hence we find disparate language groups, but at the same time peoples who often share many elements of a common culture, through the spreading of practices such as the cultivation of corn and the ease of trade via the large riverine highways of the Southeast. I cannot define "Southeast" in a way that definitively includes some groups and excludes others. Instead I use my best evaluation of that term, based largely on the cultural groups who were present in the area known as the "Old South" from about 1600 forward and who had not been absorbed or scattered by the time text collection began.

In apprehending the literary traditions of the Southeast peoples, we need to take account of the long shared history of these peoples with European and later American whites, beginning before whites represented as profound a threat as they would prove to be. Europeans introduced cows, chickens, horses, guns, fabrics—things that would become readily incorporated into southeastern native lifestyles, even while the tension over land and European proxy wars made the Natives' control over their own peoples and destinies ever more tenuous.

Some of the tribes were driven to annihilation or absorption within

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other groups, and their languages were made extinct or virtually so. But others made affiliations with whites, trading with them, joining their military exploits, and adopting much of their material culture. The tribes that survived found themselves living among ever larger populations of white colonists, who intermarried with the Native populations and introduced them to plantation farming and slaveholding.[1]

Mixed-race men were very often leaders in their tribes. Southeastern Native people fought in wars side by side with American or British soldiers. In the Civil War they chose sides; those who sided with Confederates were punished as if they were Americans.

The point is that the societies of Southeast Native peoples have been evolving alongside the eventually dominant white newcomers for hundreds of years. This can be seen in the literature, which makes common reference to that fact; moreover, the influences on their literatures, those of general Southeast, of Europe, and of Africa cannot be completely disentangled, as will be seen.

HOW "LITERATURE"?

Soon after I began this project, it was thrust upon me that my ideas about interesting and valuable pieces written by Native authors might have their cultural and linguistic attractions, but they could not be counted as "literature."[2] Even if we allow that Western concepts of literature can hardly be appropriate here, there remains the problem of how to describe the many artifacts of written Native language; hence we may speak of "texts," "ethnopoetics," "verbal arts," "discourse," "the ethnography of speaking," "rhetorics," "folklore," and probably others. Even the act of writing rather than speaking may be suspect. Compelling arguments have been made to us that the oral tradition in the original language, situated in the true cultural context, is the authentic one, and that written facsimiles of these performances are weak at best and distortions at worst. In H. C. Wolfarts's vivid words, "What is authentic, in any ordinary sense of the term, about reducing a *viva voce* delivery with all its voice qualities, dramatic effects, and gestures, with its knowing and expectant audience, to cold print?"[3] The most successful efforts incorporate as much of the oral performance as

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possible using techniques especially developed to do so. The work of Dell Hymes is groundbreaking in this regard, as he establishes means of putting the qualities of the performance into written form, what we term *ethnopoetics.*[4] The interpreter-recorder endeavors to capture as much about the sound of the performance as possible, using devices such as capitalization and line breaks that signal voice amplitude and pauses. In some cases a running set of notes in the margin helps the reader to track the narrative, since often the real-life audience knows perfectly well what the story is and does not need much in the way of refreshed references and links to events in the stories.

Even writing itself may lead to the detriment of spoken languages, as Jane Hill instructs us in a sobering indictment, because writing discards the phonetic and prosodic nuances of speech, and privileges the lexical items of one dialect over another, as well as standardizing grammar along the theoretical lines of whichever linguist holds most sway.[5] Worse, it teaches communities of speakers that language preservation is achieved by helping the young to read, learn, and value a standard dialect, the correctness of which can be verified, again because it is written, rather than to speak in natural situations, with the variation attendant upon speech.

Without diminishing in any way the primacy and the glories of performed literature (to coin yet another inadequate term), the simple truth is that Native people have been writing for a long time. Those of us who concentrate on North America often forget that writing was invented in ancient Mesoamerica without reference to European alphabetic systems. (Barbara Tedlock's discussion of the history of texts from this era through Spanish colonialization is highly informative.)[6]

As a consequence of the close proximity, and even the occasional interrelatedness of the Southeast tribes with white Americans, these tribes became aware of writing and its advantages very early on. Indeed, the Choctaws in particular asked to be missionized—this request was eagerly fulfilled—not because they particularly wanted to convert to Christianity but because they wanted to learn to read and write.[7] When the Presbyterian missionary Cyrus Byington came to the Choctaws in 1820 (he would devote the rest of his life to them and their language), he soon developed a roman-based orthography. What is remarkable is that

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the Choctaws lost no time in learning to write with it. The Cherokees, showing even more alacrity with Sequoyah's marvelous invention of the syllabary, finished in 1821, taught it to each other, even if they did not attend school. The syllabary had and still has enormous symbolic connection to the people. Mooney suggests that the literacy rate among Cherokees was high even a few months after the syllabary's introduction. Certainly by 1828 literacy was high enough to support the first Cherokee newspaper, the *Cherokee Phoenix*, published in New Echota (in present-day Georgia).[8] The Creeks and Seminoles too acquired writing in the early 1830s after having moved to Indian Territory (present day Oklahoma). Again they had invited missionaries to instruct them in literacy, but this story has a less happy ending. Those missionaries were expelled a few years later for preaching, which the Creeks had expressly forbidden. The Creeks eventually settled on a National Alphabet, modified by Loughridge, Robertson, and Robertson from an earlier one. Many Creeks were literate by the end of the nineteenth century.[9]

The fifth of the "Five Civilized Tribes," a term used without irony by many of its members today, the Chickasaws, have an interesting story with respect to writing. Chickasaw is closely related to Choctaw, and many Chickasaws spoke both. The Chickasaws, too, invited missionaries to create schools for them in the early nineteenth century. However, these schools concentrated on agricultural and mechanical skills for boys and the domestic arts for girls, far more than literacy. Most important, the educators did not see their way to learning the Chickasaw language, instead compelling the Chickasaw children to learn to speak and read in English.[10] Hence the Chickasaws did not create their own orthography or even borrow that of the Choctaws. Rather, early Chickasaw texts are written in Choctaw, including even their constitution. That this is so is readily apparent: even though many Chickasaw words are strongly cognate and even identical to Choctaw, the grammatical particles are rather different, such that one who is familiar with both languages knows in a paragraph or so which language is being written.

The Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program (see Hinson, this volume) has tasked itself with the fascinating problem of going back to Chickasaw speaker Zeno McCurtain's early stories, written in Choctaw at

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the end of the nineteenth century, and translating them into Chickasaw and then again into English.

The Rev. James Humes and his wife Vinnie May created a Chickasaw orthography, published in their dictionary of 1973. Professor Pamela Munro and speaker Catherine Willmond formulated a linguistically based orthography that appears in their 1994 dictionary. The Chickasaw Nation uses both these orthographies in their various undertakings, including language teaching and preservation. Until this point the Chickasaw people had been spelling as they were moved to do and were not especially perturbed by the lack of an official orthography.

But let us return to the problem of literature. It is one thing for people everywhere to apprehend the value of being able to fix speech in time and place, as well as to unburden themselves of the need to recall speech, with its attendant risks. It is another thing to claim that what is written represents literature, rather than other kinds of useful texts, from sets of laws to bookkeeping ledgers. As Arnold Krupat explains, "In the second half of the nineteenth century, the meaning of *literature* shifted away from an emphasis on the form of presentation (writing) toward an emphasis on the content of the presentation (imaginative and affective material)."[11]

Craig Womack, in discussing Native people's "meaningful literary efforts" comments that "it is still a struggle simply to legitimate Native approaches to Native texts, to say that it is OK for Indians to do it their own way."[12]

WHY AND HOW THIS BOOK FOUND ITS SHAPE

This volume is a collection of "Indians doing it their own way." Readers will not fail to notice that each collection is introduced with essays that differ in style and point of view—radically so. For anyone wondering what the editor's instructions to contributors were, those instructions were to think deeply about what this "literature" is for their people, pick out examples, and explain them to people outside their groups.

They were not asked to form essays around some organizing theme (based on some Western lit-crit category): to do that would have been to stanch the flow by creating the distance of criticism, of being watched

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and judged, of conforming to some template. I fully accept that many readers may be quite comfortable with a template and may prefer that to continually having to recalibrate their brains to new ways of presentation.

My experience in gathering the Koasati (Coushatta) collection perhaps best illustrates the spirit that underlies this book. The Coushattas, who speak the Koasati language, had preserved their culture and language for decades by lying low in rural Louisiana and Texas, reasoning that the less meddling they attracted from the larger culture, the better they could deflect whatever mischief might result from that attention. (See Linda Langley's heartfelt description of this history in her "Koasati (Coushatta) Literature," this volume.) But very recently a new zeitgeist appeared among the people. They told me that they were finished being silent and invisible and felt ready to emerge into the greater world—but only on their own terms. They graciously allowed me to visit them in one of their meetings and present my proposal that they should write a chapter for this book. The meeting was conducted in the Koasati language. I stood quietly to the side. When the participants had discussed the proposal to their satisfaction, they informed me that they would like to write certain stories and memoirs for inclusion. They also required that a photograph of the authors be published, "so that people can see what we look like." (This is the reason that the volume contains a single photograph.)

A Koasati description of a morning walk may not be "artful" in a way that would pass muster as poetry in the Western tradition, but it is highly valued by the community because of the status of the person who wrote it, because it is the first example of this kind of first-person meditation, and because the community is enthusiastically encouraging its youngsters to bring forth this kind of expression. The Coushattas offer us this example not because we might value it but because they do.

What if Native peoples were to make us a gift of their thinking? We would accept it and enjoy it, and expect to understand it eventually, and on its own terms.

WHICH TEXTS?

In preparing this collection of texts, I must refer to Herbert Luthin's wonderful introduction to an earlier volume, *Surviving through the Days,*

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in which he laments that no collection can get it altogether right, in part because no collection can get it all.[13] In calculating what to keep in and what to leave out, he emphasized one criterion that is equally valid here: the texts must be translations of real stories and other types of oral expression, from the Native language, and verifiably so. In this volume, additionally, actual written texts by Native people are included, when they are available to us; some of these appeared originally in English.

When I began to collect contributions for this book, I believed that *I* would choose the texts, an act that I found quite audacious, no matter how respectfully I might approach the task. But as shown in the case of the Coushattas, I need not have fretted quite so much. Several of the contributors, representing notably the Cherokee and Chickasaw as well as the Coushatta communities, were alive to the idea that they were obligated to offer works that had been ratified by their communities. Contributor Kimberly G. Wieser expresses this quite directly in her essay: "I hope here that I speak in a good way that does not offend people who are fully grounded in their Cherokee identity in all respects." I had long discussions with the other Cherokee contributor, Christopher Teuton, who rejected a number of my offerings, some of them new and unpublished, saying that the author did not have enough status in the community to represent its literature. He was scrupulously attuned to works that had passed muster not with us but with the Cherokees. To have passed muster most often meant that a work had appeared elsewhere.

This careful curating of texts also meant that the Cherokee medicine man Swimmer's famous collection of treatments and encantations was left out, even though readers might well have expected to see it.[14] Precisely because Swimmer's work was part of the traditional medicine, its intention was entirely different from that of texts that entertain, instruct, or remember history, a significant distinction to the Cherokee contributors.

I occasionally experienced disappointment in collecting texts when I had to accept that we could include only the works of those storytellers and authors who chose to share them. I talked to several "owners" of stories who deliberated about contributing them, but who then chose to keep them private, a decision that we must respect.

This book is different from some of the early and famous

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anthropological collections, particularly those of Swanton (early twentieth century) and Mooney (Cherokee, late nineteenth and early twentieth century). In these cases particularly, there was an urgency to collect as much Indian memorabilia as possible before the Native people were subsumed into the larger white society, as was fully expected and even encouraged. In the reprint of his introduction, Swanton cheerfully admits to a casual collection style: items were "taken down at various places and from various persons, and for the most part in English . . . part of them recorded directly, while part were written down in the original by an Indian."[15] He continues, "No attempt has been made to separate these stories into classes, but the following general order has been observed." He then creates categories of "myths," "encounters between men and animals," "animals," with a special section on the "Southeastern trickster Rabbit," and finishing with miscellany. A hallmark of the Swanton collection is lack of signs of oral performance; rather, the stories follow a straightforward narrative in a fairly high English register. Still, the stories display no psychological interiority or cultural grounding. This structure characterizes direct translation from the oral tradition—the listeners do not have to be prepped, as it were, as would a larger audience outside the tribal circle.

As editor I made a considered effort to balance traditional with new work, which turned out to be something the contributors were eager to do. All of us have striven to counter the ingrained if unconscious notion that Native cultures are best represented in museums; that real Indians live quaintly on reservations and wear deerskin; that real stories are those created by people long dead. As Craig Womack puts it, less gently, in his complaint that the early twentieth-century story collector John Swanton included "talking animal stories as Creek 'culture'" but . . . "[those] unmarked by sufficient beads and feathers, usually are simply overlooked by Indians and non-Indians alike as authentic Native literature." Swanton himself on at least two occasions deliberately omits stories from his Hitchiti and Natchez collections with the remarks, "the others [stories] are modern tales of trifling value" and "a very modern story told to my informant. It is of little value except for the linguistic material obtained with it."[16] Native people have been creating stories, poems,

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songs, memoirs, and the like this whole time and are actively creating Native literature as we speak. A good portion of the works in this volume were produced by people who are alive now or are only recently departed. As we might expect, they have been observing the scene right along with everyone else and have incorporated their observations and perspectives into their writings and oral performances. We must not miss an opportunity to shine light on modern work, both for our own pleasure and edification and for the encouragement of the next generation of authors.

THE COLLECTIONS

This book is grouped into seven language-based collections. Five of them include a text that appears in both English and the Native language. Each collection features at least one essayist who is close to the work, either a scholar deeply conversant with a particular literature or a community member; some have both qualifications. Each essayist begins from a unique starting point, without reference to how the other contributors shape their thoughts, creating a montage of approaches.

And yet. Readers will enjoy noting how often the essayists make similar points, coming as they are from completely different perspectives. All the essayists group the texts into various "genres." I left these genres as the essayists named them, even though they sometimes seem to refer to similar categories. We have the Choctaw *Shukha Anumpa* (Animal Stories), the Chickasaw *Shikonnoʼpaʼ* (Possum Stories), and the Yuchi Animal Tales. Other collections clearly have traditional stories about animals, but these are placed in other genres. Another theme includes Choctaw Supernatural Legends and Encounters (which are distinct from Prophecies); Yuchi Stories of the Supernatural (which are distinct from Mythical Time Stories); and Cherokee *Ulvsgedi*: Stories of the Wondrous.

An aspect of grouping stories is that some stories "belong" to families or clans. Hence the Chickasaw collection contains *Iksaʼ Nannano̠liʼ* (Clan Stories). While humor is a prominent feature in all the collections, and is well discussed in the essays, the Chickasaw collection has an overt genre of *Chokoshpaʼ Nannano̠liʼ* (Humor Stories).

Yet another set of genres is that which includes texts based on memoir. We have the Creek Stories of Real People, the Cherokee *Kanoheda*:

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Philosophy, History, and Memoir, and the Koasati Modern Stories and Memoirs. One of the most salient developments in Native literature is the departure from folktales toward the artful shaping of memory. Several of the essayists (Hinson, Wieser, Teuton, Linn, and Mould) find the topics of their people's relationships with the past and with the supernatural to warrant special attention. This theme is well worth tracking through the book.

THE ESSAYISTS

In the first collection, folklorist Tom Mould, who has collected Mississippi Choctaw folktales for decades, explains in detail the goals and tools he uses "as a remedy to the inattention often paid to the skill and artistry of storytellers, not just their stories." Some of his collected stories are rendered to reflect their oral performance, so that "we begin to understand how they are heard within a community." Several of the stories are excellent examples of how storytelling is evolving in modern Mississippi. Besides the very intimate views that Mould is able to give us of the stories and their tellers, because he is a professor of folklore he also helps us gain the larger view of how to think about the importance of storytelling in Choctaw or any culture.

Phillip Carroll Morgan brings something unique to this volume. A Choctaw-Chickasaw scholar and specialist in nineteenth-century Native authors, he found and transcribed the handwritten 1830 letter from Choctaw intellectual James L. McDonald to statesman Peter Perkins Pitchlynn. This letter contained his version of a Choctaw tale, "The Spectre and the Hunter: A Legend of the Choctaws," but McDonald also "describes the story styling methods and techniques of a typical Choctaw storyteller of the period." Morgan had been planning to write an article discussing the importance of this document: I acknowledge that I pled with him to let me include it in this volume. The McDonald work is transcendent. Readers will not fail to notice McDonald's high literary register as he situates himself among nineteenth-century white intellectuals. I believe this text may well represent the first known written Choctaw literature and hence provides a perfect reference for the work that follows in the rest of this volume.

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The Choctaw collection concludes with my essay on modern Oklahoma Choctaw stories, with four stories that represent a break from the *shukha anumpa* of yesteryear.

Jack B. Martin, a specialist in Muskogean linguistics, has worked for many years collecting and translating a large number of Muskogee texts of all types, in close collaboration with speakers Margaret Mauldin (now deceased) and her daughter Gloria McCarty. In his essay he concentrates on providing details about the authors and the provenances of the stories. He also gives us insights about how the Muskogee language creates stylistic effects using its distinct grammatical structure.

Lokosh (Joshua D. Hinson), director of the Chickasaw Language Revitalization Program, has contributed two essays. In the first he focuses on the history of the Chickasaws, using the seasons as a metaphor for the renaissance of the people from near-extinction to vibrancy. He explains speech and story genres, their uses, and their place in the culture. The second essay, "Interpretation is a Tricky Business," is something remarkable. Hinson describes the process of bringing back Chickasaw stories that had only existed in written form in English, what he calls *re-translation.* Using as an example Glenda Galvan's version of the *shikonnoˈpaˈ* "How Poison Came to the Chickasaw and Choctaw," he explains in fascinating detail the problem of shedding English literary tropes and replacing them with the kinds of language structures that are employed in Chickasaw storytelling.

Linguist Mary Linn, a specialist in the Yuchi language, a story collector, and an archivist, gives us an informative history of Yuchi story collection. In her close collaboration with the few remaining speakers of the language, she has had the opportunity to record expert versions of stories from several genres. More important, she is able to share with us the cultural significance of these stories, including the reactions of various audiences to their telling.

Christopher B. Teuton, author and critic, gives us the history of Cherokee literature from the times of Boudinot (in the *Cherokee Phoenix*, 1828–34) as an adaptation to Euro-American institutions, including literacy. He explains that "literary writing began among the Cherokee as a way to explain and defend the people; oral tradition sustained

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them." Teuton carefully explains the Cherokee genres, not so much in terms of their narrative content but in terms of their relationships to the way the listener is expected to interpret them.

The other Cherokee essayist, Kimberly G. Wieser, takes up the highly relevant and provocative situation of the mixed-blood Indian, the "victims of paper genocide" who cannot "prove" they are tribal members but who are among the most numerous sustainers of Native culture—and who represent the future.

Since the Cherokees are a large tribe with a long history of written as well as oral literature, the Cherokee collection is the largest.

Linguistic anthropologist Linda Langley has lived with the Coushattas for many years (she is married to Coushatta Heritage Department Director Bertney Langley). She grounds her essay in the history of the Coushattas, emphasizing their fierce independence and resilience. Langley's main perspective is the remarkable way in which the tribal members collectively decided to revive the Koasati language. This revitalization effort represents the deepest community involvement, and one of the most successful, of any I have witnessed. Langley describes how this collection was created and edited collectively, with the traditional stories forming the initial work, but how the writers became increasingly interested in the activities of their own lives and the lives of relatives, their own thinking, and their own new writing styles. We are lucky to have this collection, which is the first new material to have been produced by the Coushattas. We are cheering for the birth of a strong new literary movement among a group that was too long silent.

Linguistic anthropologist William Sconzert-Hall lives and works in southern Louisiana, focusing on the smaller tribes in the Gulf region, whether or not they have federal recognition. In his essay he introduces three tribes, the Atakapa-Ishak, the Catawba, and the Houma, by bringing to light their geographical placement, relevant historical details, and discussions of their languages, which are all in different families. This collection is distinct in that each language group also has a spokesperson, a tribal member, who explains the featured stories. Shaman Shawn Papillion of the Atakapa-Ishaks has written up the traditional creation myth, but he also introduces it with his interpretation of it. He compares

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their myth with those of cultures worldwide and shows how symbols in this myth parallel those of other peoples. Beckee Garris explains the storytelling style of modern Catawbas, along with the impact of those stories on the expected behavior of the youth. MorningDove Verret Hopkins describes the importance and moral force of the animals that appear in the two Houma traditional tales. It is fascinating to compare the Houma story "How Turtle Broke His Shell" with the Chickasaw "Why Turtle Has a Cracked Shell": the style, the details of the narrative, and the emphasis are completely different.

ON TRANSLATION

Every project of this type—presentation of literature from other languages—must grapple with the bugbear of adequate, no, *artful* translation. One volume in this series, *Born in the Blood,* is devoted to precisely that question—it endeavors to help readers gain new respect for the problems of adequately representing the meaning, narrative, characters, cultural underpinnings, sound of the language, sublimities of the grammatical structure, and all the rest.[17] Of course, these problems can only rarely be solved to great satisfaction, but we are not thereby absolved of trying.

A salient point often overlooked when dealing with literature in translation is that the translators themselves are also authors. We find that the storytelling or literary gifts of the translator are those that matter to our audience. Reader of this volume will notice immediately that the styles of the translated stories are quite different, even when the content is somewhat comparable, simply as a consequence of who did the translating. We may forget that the number of speakers of many Native languages has dwindled to very few. When story collectors come around, those speakers are often thrust into the role of performer and storyteller, without regard to their storytelling gifts. We often notice the brevity, flat style, and sometimes loss of narrative integrity of some Native stories (something we have tried to avoid here!) simply because the narrator was perhaps the only one left who knew the outline of a tale and was pressed to relate it.

Another crucial factor, one that is rarely discussed when considering

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Native American work, is the influence on all writers of the literary styles of their era. The several stories from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that were translated by educated Native persons—those who had received extensive schooling and were literate in both English and their native language—have an initial eeriness that comes from being rendered in a high literary register. (Take particular note of J. L. McDonald's story of the specter and the hunter from 1830.) My first instinct on reading these stories was to be suspicious of them—on the mistaken grounds that Native languages could not, and certainly *would* not, have words and clause structures that might count as an elevated register. Native people were not allowed to be hifalutin' in their speech!

For readers who will bear with the linguist in me for a paragraph, I want to point out that words in Native American languages simply have no cognates in English. Many of the languages, taking Choctaw as a typical example, have verbs encompassing several parts that together make very sophisticated meanings, which in turn can be rendered in English in different ways. Equally important, words, especially those that are most basic to the vocabulary, have wide synonymy and extended meanings. To *run after* to *chase*, and to *pursue* differ little in their basic semantics, but they have different senses in usage and in register. Choctaw people may *pursue* as well as *run after* and be perfectly faithful to the language and to the story, especially if the translator wishes to uphold the rhetorical standards of a particular era.

Joshua D. Hinson's essay on translation treating multiple levels of word choice, sentence structure, and story meaning is one of the highlights of this book.

ABOUT UNCLE REMUS

Another direct consequence of the interpenetration of Southeast cultures with that of the white colonists is the exposure of all to African folktales and motifs. This exposure has generated a good deal of scholarship, opinion, and ire and given rise to academic tiffs in an attempt to tease apart what influence the European and African folk traditions might have had on southeastern tales, and the reverse. The issue arises due to the extensive sharing of certain reappearing talking animals, especially

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the Rabbit, and of story lines that are quite similar, a good example being the sticky doll, the Tar Baby.

Dundes presents the analysis as a stark choice: "The question raised was whether the Negroes borrowed the tales from the Indians or whether the Indians borrowed the tales from the Negroes."[18] Apparently a number of scholars felt the need to come down on one side or the other. The question was attenuated in the Joel Chandler Harris's Uncle Remus tales as primary evidence for an African origin for an appreciable portion of southeastern tales—the large number of animal-based humorous stories. Dundes is one who believed that scrutiny of certain motifs led to the inevitable conclusion that even the rabbit trickster was African. A number of other scholars (Mooney foremost), arguing for the Indians, pointed to the ubiquity of the rabbit trickster motif in a number of languages and in various modifications. Vest is most forceful in his discovery of references to Rabbit, terrapin, the Tar Baby, the briar patch, deer, and the thunder-spirit in a 1728 collection of stories.[19] Those stories are told in Saponi, an extinct Siouan language from Virginia.[20] A version of the Tar Baby was printed in the *Cherokee Phoenix* syllabary in the 1840s, three decades before Harris introduced Uncle Remus in 1876. The Cherokees consider it their story, have a number of versions of it, and count back by generations to its first rendering. In this volume the Cherokee story "The Rabbit and the Image" (Dalala, from Kilpatrick) is fundamentally Cherokee in its characters, language, and emphases.[21]

Overlooked in this debate is the certainty that all peoples know a good story when they hear one and will lose no time in making relevant parts of it their own. I have never heard anyone claim that *West Side Story* is not an American musical because its story line bears a strong resemblance to that of *Romeo and Juliet*. For that matter, Shakespeare's free borrowing of an Italian historical tale does not prevent some of the best-known *English* poetry from emerging from the throats of Italian-named characters.

It remains that the sheer number and variety of Rabbit-based tales in the Southeast through (at least) four language families makes this animal supremely important to Native peoples irrespective of what African slaves made of it or, for that matter, what the people of East

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Africa might have thought and told about a Hare. In this volume Tom Mould gives an excellent discussion not only of thematic borrowing but of the documented appropriation and restructuring of specific stories. It is important not to get lost chasing the chimera "authenticity," seeking only strangeness as a definer of what might be uniquely Native American. Rather, it is the changed perception of themes, the emphasis of some kinds of relationships and the diminishment of others, the place of humor, and so many other sublime differences that make these tales Native American.

THOSE WHOSE VOICES ARE FAINTER

In this volume we have the gift of many tales, histories, memoirs, and even songs. All the texts have a Native American author and someone who can discuss and represent them reliably.

We regret that we were simply not able to arrange inclusion of texts and stories that still exist among a number of Southeast tribes and peoples. Too, some peoples lost their tribal identities, their languages, and even their lives before the notion of collecting their ideas and stories was even considered. In those cases we have only the testaments of persons who claim provenance of pieces of the oral tradition.

There are some good general collections of stories including selections from these groups, which although not vetted and attributed to authors in the same way will at least give readers a sense of the oral traditions that remain. Among those easily accessed are Swanton's *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians* and Howard Martin's *Myths and Folktales of the Alabama-Coushatta Indians of Texas.*[22]

NOTES

1. One excellent source that explains the complexity of the Native-European relationship historically is Greg O'Brien's "The Conqueror Meets the Unconquered: Negotiating Cultural Boundaries on the Post-Revolutionary Southern Frontier," in O'Brien, *Pre-Removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008).
2. I generally refer to the indigenous peoples of the Americas as "Indians," because this is what my close colleagues call themselves and what they

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prefer I use. But this is a term that may give offense, or at least give pause, and I would rather not have my writings interrupted by readers' having to process this term. I occasionally use "Indian" in some contexts, but in general I use "Native" and hope that this is acceptable to most readers.

3. Quoted in "Authenticity and *Aggiornamento* in Spoken Texts and Their Critical Edition," in Lisa Philips Valentine and Regna Darnell, *Theorizing the Americanist Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 122.
4. Dell Hymes, *"In Vain I Tried to Tell You": Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983).
5. Jane Hill, "The Meaning of Writing and Text in a Changing Americanist Tradition," in Valentine and Darnell, *Theorizing the Americanist Tradition.*
6. "Continuities and Renewals in Mayan Literacy and Calendrics," in Valentine and Darnell, *Theorizing the Americanist Tradition.*
7. Clara Sue Kidwell, *Choctaws and Missionaries in Mississippi, 1818–1918* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995).
8. James Mooney, *Historical Sketch of the Cherokee* (1900; repr. Chicago: Aldine, 1975); James Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, Nineteenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology 1897–98, pt. I (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1900).
9. Jack B. Martin, *A Grammar of Creek (Muskogee)* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 13.
10. Arrell Gibson, *The Chickasaws* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971).
11. Arnold Krupat, *Ethnocriticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 174.
12. Craig Womack, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1999), 13.
13. Herbert Luthin, *Surviving through the Days: Translations of Native California Stories and Songs, a California Indian Reader* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
14. *The Swimmer Manuscript: Cherokee Sacred Formulas*, Collected by James Mooney. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 99 (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1932).
15. John R. Swanton, *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians* (1929; repr. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 1.
16. Craig Womack, quoted in *Totkv Mocvse/New Fire: Creek Folktales by Earnest Gouge*, ed. and trans. Jack B. Martin, Margaret McKane Mauldin, and Juanita McGirt (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), x; Swanton, *Myths and Tales*, 117, 266.

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17. Brian Swann, *Born in the Blood: On Native American Translation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).
18. Alan Dundes, *African Tales among the North American Indians: Mother Wit from the Laughing Barrel* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 114–25.
19. Jay Hansford Vest, "From Bobtail to Brer Rabbit: Native American Influences on Uncle Remus," *American Indian Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (2000): 19–43.
20. William Byrd, *William Byrd's Histories of the Dividing Line betwixt Virginia and North Carolina* (1728; repr. New York: Dover Publications, 1967).
21. Dalala, in Jack F. Kilpatrick and Anna G. Kilpatrick, *Friends of Thunder* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995).
22. Swanton, *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians*; Howard Martin, *Myths and Folktales of the Alabama-Coushatta Indians of Texas* (Austin: Encino Press, 1977).

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