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The Book of the Omaha: Literature of the Omaha People

Paul Olson

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, polson2@unl.edu

Wallace Wade Miller (Thio-um-Baska)

Macy Public Schools

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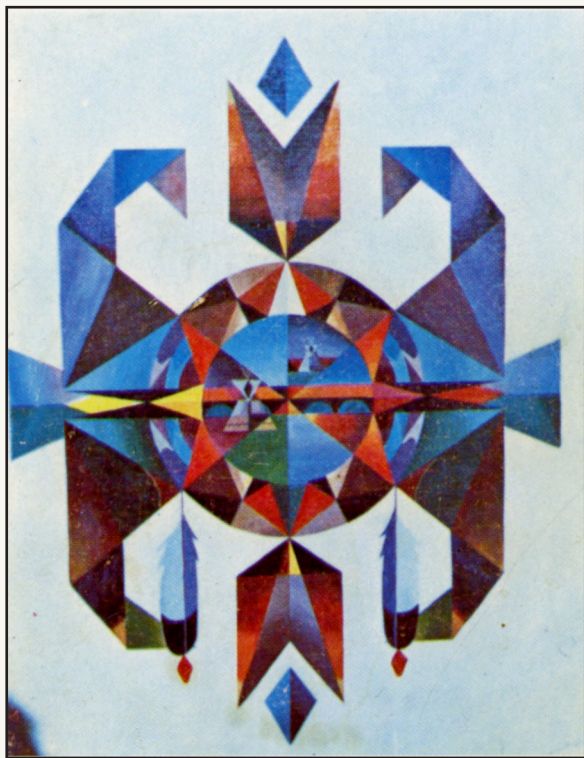
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THE BOOK OF THE OMAHA



Edited By Paul A. Olson

Illustrated By W. W. Miller

**THE BOOK OF THE OMAHA:
LITERATURE OF THE OMAHA PEOPLE**

**Stories Organized and Edited with Commentary by
Paul A. Olson, Professor of English
University of Nebraska-Lincoln**

**Illustrations and Cover Painting by
Wallace Wade Miller (Thio-um-Baska)
Member of the Omaha Tribe
Artist and Teacher in the Macy Public Schools**

**NEBRASKA CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT CENTER
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32 Andrews Hall
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To the Memory of Leonard Springer
Visionary and Wise Man
Vice-Chairman of the Omaha Tribal Council
Leader in the Native American Church

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I. The Creation

Let us look at the creation stories of the Omaha people's Pebble Society. The first is a prose account; the second is a poetic account.

1. *At the beginning all things were in the mind of Wakonda . . . the First Spirit. All creatures including man were spirits. They moved about in space between the earth and the stars. They were seeking a place where they could come into a bodily existence. They went up to the sun, but the sun was not a good place to live. They moved on to the moon and found that it was not good as a home. Then they descended to the earth; it was covered with water. They floated through the air—to the North, to the East, to the South, and to the West and found no dry land. They were full of sorrow. Suddenly, from the middle of the waters, up rose a great rock. It burst into flames and the waters floated into the air in clouds. Dry land appeared: the grasses and the trees grew. The hosts of spirits descended and became flesh and blood; they fed on the seeds of the grasses and the fruits of the trees. The land vibrated with their expressions of joy and gratitude to Wakonda, the maker of all things.*

2. The poem about creation is a poem in which all things are looking for their existence; the people mentioned in stanza one are all of the creatures of the earth. The person who speaks in the remainder of the poem is Wakonda, who speaks of his creation as part of his person and yet speaking of him. The "place of the sun" is the place in the sky where men had no bodies and where all other things were without a body. As the rock of the first creation appears, each of the animals that can live on the newly formed earth makes its trial of the earth.

The Creation Poem: Wakonda, the Rock and the Creatures

i.

*Toward the coming of the sun—
There the people of every kind gathered;
And great animals of every kind.*



The Creation

*All gathered together,
And people and insects of every description—
All gathered together there.
By what means or manner we know not. And the First Spirit spoke:*

ii.

*“One of these creatures is the greatest, inspiring to all minds,
The Great White Rock.
Yes, indeed—as high as the heavens:
As he speaks my little ones shall speak of me, Wakonda.
As long as they shall travel in life’s path;
thus, shall they speak of me.”
Such were his words, it has been said.*

iii.

*“Then next in rank you came—male of the Cranes—
You stood with your long beak and your neck lovely in its length.
With your beak out to strike the earth.
Your people shall be among the legions of the people, among the Red people.
Thus, my little ones shall speak of me.”*

iv.

*“Next in rank you came, male gray wolf, whose cry,
Though it was uttered without effort,
Made the earth to tremble
Even the stable earth
To tremble.
Such shall be the legion of my people.”*

v.

*“Then next in ranks came Hega,
The buzzard, with his red neck.
Calmly he stood, his great wings spread—letting
The heat of the sun straighten his feathers.
Slowly he flapped his wings, then floated away as without effort.
Thus, displaying the gift of Wakonda often
To be spoken of by the old men in their teachings.”*

II. When Man Came to the Earth

The next story is the story of the creation of man upon the earth:

- The Awakening: *In the beginning, the people were in water. They opened their eyes, but they could see nothing. As the people came out of the water, they beheld the day; so we have the child-name, "To-Behold-The-Clear-Sky." As they came forth from the water, they were naked and without shame. And after many days passed, they desired covering.*
- The Covering: *They took the fibers of weeds and grass and wove it about their loins for a covering. The people dwelt near a large body of water in a wooded country where there was game; and the men hunted deer with clubs. They did not know how to use the bow.*
- The Tools: *They wandered about the shores of the great water, and they were poor and cold. And the people thought "What shall we do to help ourselves?" They began chipping stones; they found a bluish stone which was easily chipped; and they made knives, and arrowheads out of that stone.*
- The Fire: *They now had knives and arrowheads, but they suffered from the cold. And the people thought, "What shall we do?" And a man found an elm root which was very dry and dug a hole in it, and put a stick in, and rubbed it and smoke came. And he smelled it and the people smelled it and came near. And others helped to rub and at last a spark came, and they blew this into a flame and so fire came to warm people and to cook their food.*
- The House: *After this the people built grass houses; they cut the grass with a shoulder blade of a deer.*
- The Pottery: *Now that the people had fire, they ate their meat roasted. After a while they tired of roast meat. And the people thought "How shall we have our meat cooked differently?" A man found a bunch of clay that stuck together well; then he brought sand to mix with it, and he molded it as a vessel. He gathered grass and made a heap, and put the clay into the center glow of the fire which made the clay vessel hard. After a time he put water into the vessel and held it with his hands, and it held water. That was good. So he put water into the vessel, put meat into the vessel, put the vessel over the fire, and the people had wonderful boiled meat to eat.*

III. The Bringing to the Creation of a New Life

When a child was born into the Omaha tribe, he was placed in the middle of the life of all things very early in his life through the ceremony of "The Turning of the Child." He was placed on the symbol of the first great white rock, the "Aged One" which was the first lord which appeared at creation time. He was placed in the middle of the sun, the winds, the earth; to each of these, the priest announces that a new thing has been born.

*O you—sun, moon, and stars,
All of you that move in the heavens,
I bid you hear me,
Into your midst has come a new life.
Consent, I implore, make its path smooth
That it may reach the brow of the first hill.*

*O ye winds, clouds, rains, mist,
All of you that move in the air,
I bid you hear me,
Into your midst has come a new life.
Consent, I implore, make its path smooth
That it may reach the brow of the second hill.*

*O ye winds, valleys, rivers, lakes, trees, grasses,
All of you that belong to the earth,
I bid you hear me,
Into your midst has come a new life.
Consent, I implore, make its path smooth
That it may reach the brow of the third hill.*

*Birds, great and small, that fly in the air;
Animals, great and small, that dwell in the forest;
Insects that creep among the grasses and
Burrow in the ground:
I bid you hear me.
Into your midst has come a new life.
Consent, I implore, make its path smooth
That it may reach the brow of the fourth hill.*

*All of you in the heavens, all of you in the waters,
All of you in the earth,
I bid you—all of you—to hear me.
Into your midst has come a new life.
Consent, consent,
All of you consent, I implore.
Make its path smooth
That it may travel beyond the fourth hill.*

The four hills are the four ages of life: childhood, youth, adulthood, and old age. The child in the beginning is sustained by the sun and the moon; in youth, he is sustained by the winds, the clouds, the forces of the air; in his adulthood, he is sustained by his own region—the hills, valleys, rivers, lakes, trees; and, in his old age, he is sustained by all of these and, most of all, by their vital inhabitants—the birds, the animals, and the insects. The creatures that collaborate with him in sentient life support him in old age. The final stanza of the poem is a prayer that all things will work together to bring the child beyond the fourth hill of old age to a union with Wakonda, the First Spirit.

IV. The Osage Creation Story

A story of the creation of the earth like that told by the Omaha tribe in the Pebble Society is told among the Osage. The Osage story also helps to explain some of the other ideas that come into Omaha story and ritual. The Osage story goes like this:

Once upon a time a part of the Osage tribe lived in the sky. They desired to know the source from which they came into existence. They went to the sun; he told them they were his children. They wandered farther and came to the moon; she told them that she gave birth to them, and that the sun was their father. She also told them that they must leave their present abode and go down to the earth and dwell there.

And mankind came to the earth, but found it covered with water. The people could not return to the place they had left and so they wept for an answer. But no answer came to them from anywhere. They floated about in the air seeking in every direction for some help from some god; but they found none. The animals were with them; and, of all these, the elk was the finest, the most stately, the most inspired of all creatures. Therefore, the creatures appealed to the elk for help. And he dropped into the water and began to sink. Then he called to the winds, and the winds came from all quarters and blew until the waters went upwards as a mist. Before that time the winds traveled in only two directions, from North to South, and then back from South to North. When the elk called, they came from the East, the South, the West, and the North. When they met at a central point, they carried the water upward.

At first, the rocks were the only exposed things and the people traveled on rocky places that produced no plants. They had nothing to eat. Then the waters began to go down until the soft earth was exposed. When this happened, the elk, in his joy, rolled over and over in the soft earth and all of his loose hairs clung to the soil. The hairs grew, and from them sprang beans, corn, potatoes, and wild turnips, and, finally, all of the grasses and trees.

The Sky People went over the land and in their wanderings came across human-like footprints and followed them. They came upon people who called themselves the Earth People. Elk joined with them, and together they traveled in search of food. During these wanderings, they came across the Solitary Earth People and the Water People. The Water People were

accepted by the Sky and Earth People. The Water People had a pipe; this they filled for the Solitary Earth People, who accepted it. Thus the Solitary Earth People were brought into the group.

The Earth People who joined the Sky People had come down from above and found the earth covered with water. And they flew in every direction seeking for gods to call upon who could render them help, and drive away the water, but they found none. Then the Elk came and with his loud voice shouted to the four quarters. And again the four winds came in response to his call. And they blew upon the waters; the waters ascended, leaving the rocks visible, but the rocks gave but a limited space for the people to stand on. To obtain some earth, the muskrat was sent down into the water, and he was drowned; the loon was sent, and he also was drowned; next the beaver was sent down and was drowned; finally, the crawfish dived into the water, and when he came up there was some mud clinging to his claws, a job which made him so exhausted that he died. But from his mud, the land was formed.

The stars are believed to be the children of the sun and the moon. The people of the Satiski who are among the Osage are said to have been the stars or the Sky and Earth People who came down to earth like meteors and became people. The Water People came from under the water and lived in the water weeds that hang down green in color and beautiful of stem. The people who lived in the water dwelt in shells which protected them from the water, keeping it out and serving as houses. The Solitary Earth creatures in that time lived under the earth and were the cougar, the bear, the buffalo, and the elk. These creatures came up out of the ground. The land creatures and those that lived in shells came up to the earth, and the star people came down to it. All four groups came together and intermarried, and from their union sprang the "people" as we know them today.

V. The Child is Placed in the Cosmos, in the Tribe, and in the Tribe's Fight

The sacred winds which blew the land dry for the first elk and eventually for mankind were also the sacred winds which were called when a child was brought to a priest to be placed in the midst of time, at the ceremony of the "Turning of the Child." One author describes the ceremony as follows:

The ceremony of the Turning of the Child took place in the springtime, after the first thunders had been heard when the grass was well up and the birds were singing, usually the meadowlark. At the time the tribal herald proclaimed that the time for the ceremony had come. A tent was set up for the purpose, a tent which was made sacred. And the priest made himself ready and entered the tent. Meanwhile, the parents, whose children had arrived at the proper age, would walk with their little ones to the sacred tent. The only thing necessary for the child to bring was a pair of new moccasins. Much of the ceremony was lost before recordings of Omaha ceremony were made, but some things are recorded.

The tent in which the ceremony was conducted was always the large one set facing the east and opened at the entrance so that the people of the Omaha tribe could see something of what was going on inside the tent. In the center of the tent was a fire. On the east of the fire was placed a stone, which probably symbolized the rock of the universe. There was also a ball of grass placed at the west of the fireplace, near its edge which symbolized the lightning in the sky. The mother, who led the child to the tent, paused at the door of the tent, and addressed the priest, saying "Venerable man, I desire my child to wear moccasins." She then dropped the hand of the child; the little one, carrying his new moccasins, entered the tent, alone. He was met by the priest who went to the door to receive the gifts brought by the mother. Here, she again addressed the priest, saying "I desire my child to walk long upon the earth; desire him to be content with the light of many days; we seek your protection. We hold to you for strength."

The priest would reply to the mother, addressing the child, "You shall reach the fourth hill sighing:

You shall be bowed over;

You shall have wrinkles;

Your staff shall bend under your weight.

I speak to you that you may be strong.

Laying his hand on the shoulder of the child, he would add:

*"What you have brought me shall not be lost to you.
You will live long and enjoy many possessions.
Your eyes will be satisfied with many good things."*

Then the priest would move with the child toward the fireplace in the center of the lodge. He would speak as if he were the thunder:

*"I the thunder, am a powerful being.
I breathe from my lips over you."*

Then the priest would begin to sing a prayer addressed to the winds which asked that the winds do for the child what the wind did for the first elk and the first man: place him firmly upon the rock in the center of the universe and give him a long and well nourished life. The four who are addressed in the prayer are the four winds.

*Ye four, come hither and stand
Near shall ye stand,
In four groups shall ye stand,
Here shall ye stand
In this place stand.*

There follows a roll of thunder (drum) and then the thunder goes on to speak as the child is being turned from the East to the South to the West to the North:

*Turned by the winds goes the one I send yonder.
Yonder he goes, who is whirled by the winds,
Goes where the four hills of life and the four winds are standing.
There in the midst of the winds do I send him,
Into the midst of the winds.
Stand there.*

The thunder rolls one more time.

The priest now places the moccasins on the feet of the child. The child is then lifted and put on his feet and made to take four steps, which symbolize

his entrance into a long life. As the new moccasins are put on, and the four steps are taken, the priest says or sings:

Here the truth has been spoken to you.

Because of this truth you shall stand.

Here the truth is declared.

Here—in this place—the truth has been shown you.

Therefore, arise, go forth in the strength of the truth.

The thunder rolls one more time and the name of the child is announced. Then the priest in the voice of the thunder cries:

Ye hills, grass, trees, creeping things,

Both great and small—I bid you hear.

This child has thrown away his baby name.

The thunder which speaks in the poem is the power of war and a main messenger between the First Spirit and man. He is particularly the messenger of that power which is placed in man for the purposes of protecting his society. Each of the four directions has its thunderbird, and the thunderbirds are the bringers of the thunder and of power.

When a boy was two years old, old enough to be consecrated as a warrior, he was brought to the sacred tent for the ceremony of the consecration to the thunder. In the ceremony, the priest cut the young man's hair as a symbol of the thunder's capacity to cut down the child's life. The priest gathered a tuft from the crown of the boy's head, tied it, cut it off, and then laid it away in a case which was kept as a sacred case. As the priest cut the hair, he sang a ritual song to explain what he had done.

In the ceremony, a rock was placed to the west of the fire, a bundle of grass was placed near the fire to represent the force of lightning and thunder. In the first part of the ceremony, the priest took the young man to the west of the fire and faced him toward the east, he cut a piece of hair from the crown of his head, and as he cut the piece of hair, he sang the following song:

Grandfather, Grandfather Thunder, far above on high:

The hair like a shadow passes before you.

Grandfather Thunder, far above on high;

*Dark like a shadow the hair sweeps before you,
into the midst of your realm.*

*Grandfather Thunder, far above on high,
Dark like a shadow the hair passes before you.
Grandfather, dwelling afar on high,
Dark like a shadow,
The hair sweeps before you,
 into the midst of your realm.
Grandfather, far above on high;
The hair like a shadow passes before you.*

In the second song, the thunder power himself speaks and declares his capacity to give and to take away life. The thunder is speaking in the poem:

*Whatever time I will
Then and only then a man lies dead.
What a gruesome thing.*

*At whatever time I will
Then and only then,
Suddenly a man lies dead,
A gruesome thing.*

*At whatever time I will
Then and only then,
Like a shadow dark,
A man shall lie.
At whatever time I will
Then . . . then suddenly a man lies dead.
A gruesome thing.*

*At whatever time I will
Then and only then
Reddened and stark
A man lies dead.*

*What time I will
Then and only then—suddenly—a man lies dead.
A gruesome thing.*

The last song sung in the ceremony unites the young man with the thunder and the lightning, with the powers of the cosmos as these may sit in defense of his tribe. The song asks the lightning to come and give power to the boy.



Bringing to Creation a New Life (page 5)

Come hither; hasten; help.
Flames, flames come.
Red hot fire, hasten, hasten.
Flames come.
Come speedily to help me.
Flames come.
Red hot fire, hasten,
Hasten, flames come.
Come hither, hasten,
Help me.

During this ceremony, the ball of grass which symbolizes the lightning and thunder is held in the air. It bursts into flames as the fire on the ground gives light to the dry tinder. Then it is thrown flaming to the ground as the symbol of lightning shooting across the sky from the zenith to earth.

VI. The Sacred Pole

One of the most important symbols in the Omaha tribe was the sacred pole. The sacred pole was somewhat in the shape of man. The first half of the ceremony which was done before the sacred pole made the sacred pole stand for the power of the tribe as represented by the chiefs' council, the seven elders of the tribe, in governing and organizing the tribe. During the second half of the ceremony, the pole represented the power of the individual family's father in organizing the family. The sacred pole was always addressed as if it were a man. He was the man of all men, the man who represented the collective spirit of the tribe. The sacred pole was thought to have come into existence through a special blessing of the cosmos, the four sacred directions, and the four sacred thunderbirds. All brought their special power to it. This is the story of the discovery of the sacred pole:

A great council was being held to devise some means by which the bands of the tribe might be kept together and the tribe itself saved from extinction. The council lasted many days. Meanwhile the son of one of the ruling men was off on a hunt. On his way home he came to a great forest in the night. He lost his way. He walked and walked until he was exhausted pushing his way through the underbrush. He stopped to rest and to find a motionless star for his guide. He was suddenly attracted by a light; believing it came from a tent, the young hunter went toward it. But on coming to the place where the welcome light came, he was surprised to find it was a tree that sent forth the light. He went up to it and found that the whole tree, its trunks, branches, and leaves were alight; yet, it remained unconsumed. He touched the tree, but no heat came from it. This mystified him, and he stood watching the strange tree—for how long he did not know. At last, day approached, the brightness of the tree began to fade until, with the rising of the sun, the tree with its foliage assumed its natural appearance.

The man remained there in order to watch the tree another night. And as the twilight came on, the tree again began to be luminous and continued to be until the sun again rose. When the man returned home, he told his father. Together they went to see the tree. They saw it alight, as it was before, but the father noticed something that had escaped the notice of the young man. This was that four animal paths led to it. These paths were well beaten, and as the two men examined the paths and the tree, it was clear to them

that the animals had come to the tree and rubbed against it and so polished its bark. The polished tree was full of significance to the older man. And on his return, he told the leading men of his tribe of the mysterious tree. It was agreed by all that the tree was a gift from Wakonda and that it would be the thing that would help them and help to keep people together. With great ceremony, they cut the tree down and hewed it to a portable size.

Another version of the sacred legend of the Omaha tribe gives the following account of the finding of the sacred pole:

During this time a young man who had been wandering came back to his village, and when he reached his home, he said, "Father, I have seen a wonderful tree." And he described it. The old man listened, but he kept silent, for the chiefs were still conferring. At last, when everything was agreed upon by the tribe, the old man sent for the chiefs, and said, "My son has seen a wonderful tree. The thunderbirds come and go upon this tree, making a trail of fire that makes four paths on the burnt grass that stretch toward the four winds. When the thunderbirds alight upon the tree, it bursts into flames, and the fire mounts to the top. The tree stands burning, but no one can see the fire except at night.

When the chiefs heard this tale, they sent runners to see what this tree might be. The runners came back and told the same story, how in the night they saw the tree standing and burning as it stood.

Then all the people held a council as to what the tree might mean, and the chief said, "We shall run for it; put on your ornaments, and prepare for battle." So the men stripped and painted themselves, and put on their ornaments and set out for the tree which stood near a lake. They ran as if in a race to attack the tree as if it were a warrior enemy. All the men ran.

Aponco was the first to reach the tree, and he struck it as he would an enemy. Then they cut the tree down and four men walking in line carried it on their shoulders to the village. The chiefs sang for four nights the song that had been composed for the tree. While they held a counsel and deliberated concerning the tree, a tent was made for the tree. It was trimmed and people called it a human being. They made a case for it of twigs and feathers and tied it about the middle. And then they said, "It has no hair," and they sent out to get a large scalp lock and put it on the top of the pole for hair. And, afterwards, the chiefs told the herald to tell the people that, when all was completed, they should come to see the pole. Then they raised the pole and set it up before the tent, leaning it on a crotch stick which they called a staff so

that the tree became like a man walking with a staff. They summoned the people, and all of the people came—men, women and children. When they gathered, the chief stood up and said, "You now see before you a mystery; whenever we meet with trouble, we shall bring all our trouble to the pole. We shall make offerings and requests. All of our prayers must be accompanied by gifts. This pole belongs to all of the people though it shall be in the keeping of one family and the leadership shall be with them. And if anyone desires to lead and to take responsibility in governing the people, he shall make presents to the keeper of the pole, and they shall give him authority."

And when all was finished, the people said, "Let us appoint a time when we can again paint the pole and act before him the battles we have fought." This was the beginning of the ceremony of the pole, and it was agreed upon that this ceremony should be kept alive.

There was another ceremony of the pole among the Omaha tribe: the ceremony of the Hidiwatchi. The Hidiwatchi ceremony took place in the summer when the plum and cherry trees were almost full of fruit and all creatures were awakened. A cottonwood or a willow tree was cut, and it was decorated to symbolize the placing of the life of the tribe in time (even as the ceremony of the turning of the child places the child in time). After the tree was cut, the leader approached the fallen tree and said,

"I have come for you, that you may see the people who are beautiful to behold." The young men cut the branches from the tree, leaving a tuft of twigs and leaves at the top and stripping off the bark. Then they tied the tuft at the top together with a black covering. In later days, a black handkerchief sufficed, but in the olden days, a piece of soft-dressed skin, dyed black, was used. All the branches, the bark, and the chips were made into a pile and deposited at the stump of the tree. After the tree had been cut, it was carried back to the town and taken to the tent of the leader and thrust into the door until it reached the fireplace. Two men from the single clan, who were supposed to do the decorating of the pole, performed the duty of mixing the red and black paint which was used to decorate the pole.

The painting was done in bands of red and black. One man painted the black bands, the other the red. The black bands signified the night, the thunder, death, and the earth. The red band symbolized the day, the sun, life, and the sky. The young men dug a hole for the pole which made the center of a level place. And after the pole had been set up, the keepers sat in a circle about the pole and smoked the pipe, passing it four times. The down

of a swan, a waterbird, and tobacco (an offering to Wakonda), were sprinkled in the hole which was made ready to receive the decorated pole. After the pole had been decorated, the leader said, "It is finished. Raise him that your grandfather (that is, Wakonda) may see him." The pole was set in the hole and was made ready by trampings on the earth around it.

The pole symbolized a man, the black covering on the top, his head. The decorations which were placed on "the branches" which were left at the top of the tree referred to the forces in the world which give and maintain life: the winds, the thunderbirds, and so forth. As the tree or pole symbolized the tribe, the twigs at the top of the tree were the tribe's members.

Around the pole was sung a series of songs which asked the people to come and rejoice in unity to the tribe, in the power of the thunder, and in the capacity of the people who used the power of the thunder to defend themselves together. If the pole of the Hidiwatchi symbolized the placing of the life of the tribe in time, the sacred pole symbolized the placing of it in space. There was yet one other symbol of day-night, earth-sky, and the unity of the tribe. That was the manner of camping of the tribe.

VII. The Divisions of the Tribe and Colors

The Omaha tribe arranged its village in two half circles around the sacred pole and other sacred objects. The tribe camped in two half circles—five clans of earth people on the south and the five of the sky on the north. The ten clans generally had two names, one set of names suggesting that each clan was a part of the corn plant, another suggesting that each clan was a part of the buffalo. Some of the sky clans were named for constellations or other sky phenomena, but some buffalo parts were also the names of constellations. Thus, the uniting of the whole tribe was like the uniting of earth and sky or like the unity of the buffalo's body or like a whole corn plant.

We do not have a story of how the divisions of the Omaha tribe and their way of camping came to be; we do have the story concerning this subject told by the Osage relatives of the Omaha. Among the Osage, as a story which we have told earlier suggests, there were three kinds of people at the beginning: the Sky People from above, the Earth People from above, and the Water People from the water. The Solitary Earth People were a minor group which came from "under the earth." In the Omaha tribe, the divisions are only two: the Sky People and the Earth People. In the Osage tribe, there are the two large divisions of Sky People, and the Earth People are divided into the Water and the Land People. The story of how the three groups came to be and to cooperate goes something like this:

In the beginning the people of the water, the earth, and the sky came from the sky to the earth. And after these three groups of people had descended, they started forth to wander over the earth, observing as they marched the sequences in which they had reached the earth. First came the Water People, then the Earth People, and last the Sky People. One day, after they had wandered a great length of time, the Water People suddenly halted. The leader looked back over his shoulder to his followers who had also halted, and, in an undertone, he said, "We have come to the village of a strange people." The leader of the Earth People looked back over his shoulder and, in the same manner, passed the word on to the Sky People.

Overhearing the words cautiously spoken by the leader of the Water People, the people of the village sent a messenger to inquire who these strangers were and what their mission was. On the invitation of the messenger, the Water People entered the village. They entered alone since the Earth People

and the Sky People had refused to follow because they had noticed that the bones of animals and of men lay scattered and bleaching about the village. It was the Village of Death to which they had come, but they had been seeking for life.

The leader of the Water People was conducted to the house of the leader of the Village of Death. There were two men who exchanged words and friendly terms. The Water People presented a ceremonial pipe to the leader of this strange Village of Death, who in turn gave a pipe to the Water People. Then the two leaders conversed freely about the life and customs of their people. In the course of their conversation, the Water People said they belonged to the people who called themselves "the earth dwelling people." Thereupon the stranger said, "I also am an earth person." He then told the Water People the manner in which his people destroyed life whenever it appeared on the earth using, for their weapons, the four winds. And whichever way the Death People turned the winds, the animals and men stricken by them fell and died. At this point, the leader of the Water People made known to his host in the Village of Death that his people and the Earth People and Sky People desired to dwell with him and his people, but did not like his habit of destroying life.

The leader of the Water People then suggested that his host and his people move to a new country where the land was pure and free from the signs of death. The Death People, the Solitary Earth People, willingly accepted the invitation and moved with the Water People, the Earth People, and the Sky People. All the four groups—the Water People, the Earth People, the Sky People, and the Solitary Earth People—moved until they came to a new country where the land was clean of decaying carcasses and where there were no visible signs of death. There they united themselves in friendship, each pledging to the other its strength and support in resisting the dangers that might beset them in the course of their new united tribal life. However, death was in the world at this point.

At this time, an incident took place between the Water and Earth People. The Water People offered a symbolic pipe to the Earth People, but before accepting it, the Earth People asked, "Who are you?" The Water People replied, "I am a person made of a pipe; I'm his body. When you also make your body of the pipe, you will be free of the causes of death, Earth People."

The Earth People took the pipe and said, responding, "I am a person made of the red boulder's body; when you also make your body of it, the evil gods and their destructive course will pass by and leave you unharmed, O Water People."

The expression of the Water People, "I am a person who is made of a pipe, his body," means that the pipe is the life symbol of the Water People. The pipe is the way through which they approach Wakonda with their supplications.

The words used by the Earth People in their response, "I am a person made of the red boulder's body," are also figurative and mean that the red boulder is the life symbol of the Honga or leader group among the Earth People. The red boulder has a double meaning: it is a symbol of endurance, and also a symbol of the sun, never ending life. It was thus that the two groups, the Water People and the Earth People, pledged support to one another in times of danger so long as the life of the tribes should last. The words of the Water People and those of the Earth People are embodied in the rituals of unity of the Osage people. In the Omaha tribe, we would guess that there was once a similar story as to how the Sky People and the Earth People, the two half tribes which made up their complete social world, came to help each other.

The Omaha people had four sacred colors: blue (or green), red, black, and yellow. We are not entirely sure what each of these colors meant, or how they related to one another. Blue and green were sometimes taken as the same color. Blue-green generally represented the sky. The elements of earth were represented by the black. These two colors were also connected to the two great divisions represented in the tribal structure and the myths and ceremonies of the Omaha people. The other two main colors of the Omaha people were red and yellow: red representing the sun and procreative forces, hope, and the continuation of life, and yellow representing a less intense version of the same force. The dawning of the day in the east is almost, without exception, represented by red—the forceful, aggressive, life-giving and hope-inspiring color. Red and yellow bore to each other a relation somewhat resembling that of blue and black. The red loses its intensity and becomes yellow; the blue loses its intensity and becomes black. The aggressive force, symbolized by the red, is lost in the yellow. If the Omaha world was painted with this symbolic color, we would see a brilliant band of red start from the east and fade to yellow in the west while the green-blue line from the north would deepen to the black of earth, of the south. In the first, the intense color red rushes from 'war' into the mild yellow light of 'peace'; the brightness of blue springs from peace to be lost in the black darkness of war. Thus, the two sets of color hold the tribe within the opposing and complimentary forces which speak of the mystery of the relationship between life and death.

VIII. Corn

The great thunder is located in the center of the sky. The four sacred directions, signs of the sky, come home to the Omaha people to endow them with authority in the form of thunderbirds flying to the sacred pole from the sky's several directions. But there are also the four sacred directions for the earth. And their meaning on the earth may be represented by a sacred story which the Omaha Indians attributed to the Arikara. The myth goes as follows:

The Arikara were the first to find corn.

A young man went out hunting; he came to a high hill, looked down upon a valley, and saw a buffalo bull standing in the middle of bottomland lying between two hills where they joined. As the young man surveyed the country to find a safe way to approach the buffalo, he was impressed with the beauty of the landscape. The banks of the two rivers were low and well timbered. He observed that the buffalo stood, facing the north. He saw that he could not approach the animal from any side within bow shot. He thought that the only way to get a chance to shoot the buffalo would be to wait until the animal moved close to the banks of one of the rivers or to the hills where there were ravines and shrubs. So the young man waited, and the sun went down before the buffalo moved. The young man went home disappointed.

All night long, the hunter lay awake—brooding over his disappointment. Food had become scarce, and the buffalo would have given a good supply. Before dawn, the young man arose and hurried to the scene of the buffalo to see if he could find the animal somewhere near the place where he had seen it. He wondered if it had moved. Just as he reached the summit of the hill where he was the day before, the sun arose, and he saw that the buffalo was still in the same spot; but he noticed that now it was facing the east. Again, the young man waited for the animal to move, but again the sun went down. The buffalo remained standing in the same spot.

The hunter went home and passed another night of restlessness. He started out again before dawn and came to the top of the hill as the sun arose; he saw the buffalo still standing in the same place, but he had turned around to face the south. The young man waited until dark for the buffalo to move and had to go again to his house disappointed. Another sleepless night.

The hunter's desire to secure the game was not unmixed with some curiosity to know why the buffalo should so consistently remain in the one spot

without eating or drinking, or lying down to rest. And with this curiosity working in his mind, he arose for the fourth time before dawn and hastened to the hills to see if the buffalo was still standing in the same place.

It was again daylight.

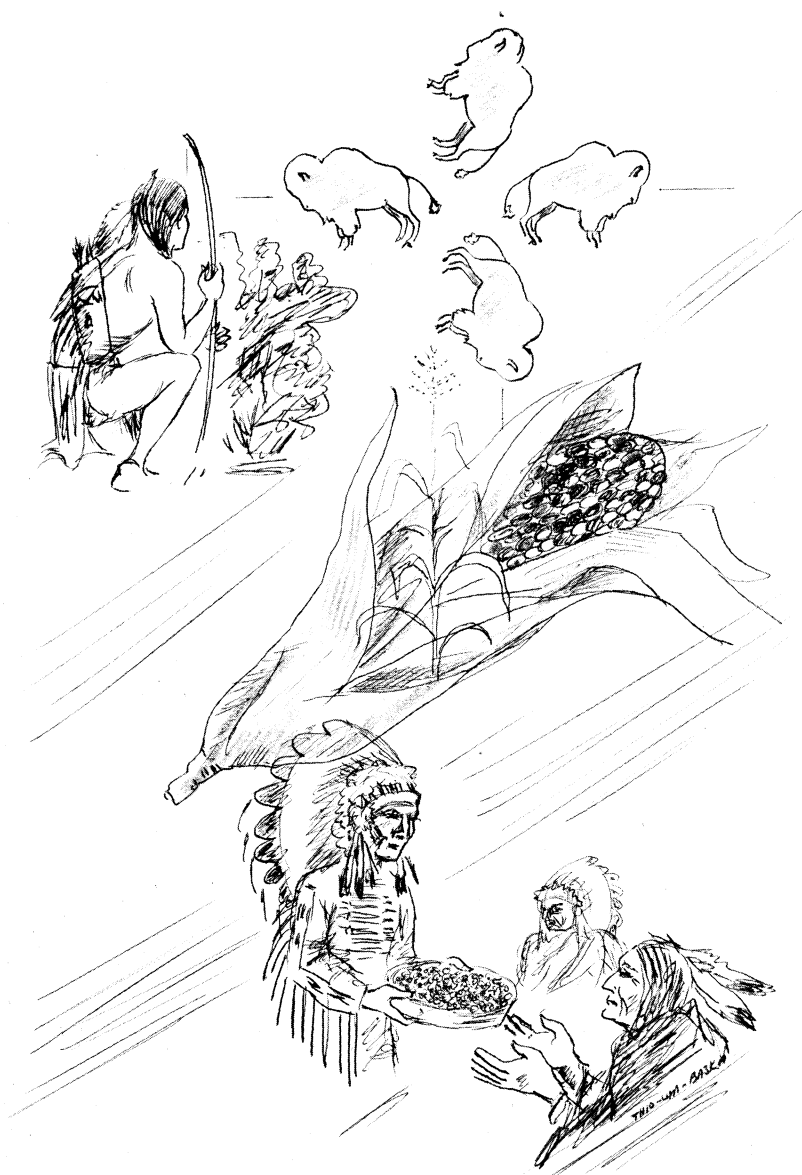
When he came to the hill, there stood the buffalo in exactly the same place. But it had turned around to face the west. Being now determined to know what the animal would do, the young man settled down to watch to see—as he had done for three days before. He thought that the animal was acting in this manner under the influence of an unseen power for some mysterious purpose, and that he and the buffalo were controlled by the same influence. Darkness came upon him again with the animal still standing in the same position.

The hunter returned to his home and lay awake all night, wondering what would come of this strange experience. He arose before dawn, and again he hurried to the mysterious scene. As he reached the summit of the hill, the light of day spread over the land. The buffalo had gone, but in the spot where it had been standing, there stood something like a small bush.

The young man approached the place with a feeling of curiosity and disappointment. He came to the object and saw that it was a strange plant. Upon the ground he saw the tracks of the buffalo and followed them as they had turned to the north, the east, the south, and the west. In the center there was but one buffalo track. And out of that track had sprung this strange plant.

The hunter examined the ground near this plant to find where the animal had left the place, but there were no other footprints besides those near the plant. The hunter hurried home and told of his strange experience to the chiefs and to the prominent men among his people. The men, led by the hunter, proceeded to the place and examined the ground and found that what he had told them was true. They saw the tracks of the buffalo where he had turned and stood, but could find no tracks of his coming to the place or his leaving it. All these people believed that this plant was given to the people in this mysterious manner by Wakonda, but they were not sure how it should be used.

The people knew of other plants that were used for food and the season for their ripening; believing that the fruit of this strange plant would ripen at its own proper time, they arranged a guard to protect it carefully until the time that it would ripen. The plant blossomed. The people's knowledge of other plants gave them to know that the blossom of a plant was but a flower and not a fruit. While they were watching the blossom develop into fruit, as they expected it would, a new growth appeared from the joint of the plant.



The Gift of Corn

Their attention was now diverted from the blossom to this growth; it grew larger and larger until there appeared at the top something that looked like hair. This, in the course of time, turned from pale green to a dark brown. After much discussion, the people decided that this growth was the fruit of the plant, and that it had ripened.

Up to this time no one had dared to approach within a step of the plant. Although the people were anxious to know the use to which this plant could be put or for which it was intended, no one dared to touch it. And as the people were assembled around the plant, undetermined as to the manner of examining it, a young boy stepped forward and spoke, "Everyone knows how my life from my childhood has been worse than worthless; my life among you has been more for evil than for good. Since no one would regret should any evil befall me, let me be the first to touch this plant and taste of its fruit so that you may know of its qualities, whether they are good or bad."

The people said that this was fine; the youth stepped forward and placed his right hand on the blossoms of the plant, and brought his hand in a downward motion to the root of the plant as though blessing it. He then grasped the fruit and turning to the people said, "The plant is solid; it is ripe." He then parted the husks, the top very gently and again turning to the people, he said, "The fruit is red." He took a few of the grains, showing them to the people, and then ate of them and replaced the husks. When the youth suffered no ill effects, the people became convinced that the plant was given them for food. In the fall, when the plants turned brown, the stalk and the leaves of this plant had turned brown also. The fruit was plucked and put carefully away, and in the following spring the kernels were divided among the people, four to each family.

The people removed the stalk where a strange apparition had taken place, and there they built their bark huts—along the banks of the two rivers. As the hills began to take on a green tinge from the new prairie grass, the people planted the kernels of this strange plant, having first built little mounds like the one out of which the first stalk grew. And to the great joy of the people, the kernels sprouted and grew into strong and healthy plants. Through the summer they grew and developed, and the fruit ripened as did that on the first stalk. The fruit was gathered and eaten and was found to be good. In gathering the fruit, the people discovered that it was various colors. Some ears were red, others white; still others were blue, and others were yellow. The next season, the people reaped a rich harvest from this new plant. In the fall of the year, the people sent invitations to a number of different tribes to come and spend the winter with them. Six tribes came. Among them was the

Omaha tribe. The people who had found the corn were very generous in distributing the fruit of the new plant among the guests, and in this manner the knowledge of the corn spread among the Omaha.

The Omaha's two main staple sources of food supply were corn and buffalo. The sacred story that we have just given is an instance of the extent to which the buffalo and the corn were seen as related, as essentially the same object coming from the center of the universe and granted by Wakonda.

IX. The Buffalo Hunt

The hunt for the buffalo was a very carefully controlled sacred ritual. One Omaha described it as follows:

When the crops were well advanced and the corn, beans, and melons had been cultivated for the second time, the season was at hand for the tribe to start on its annual buffalo hunt. Preparations for this great event occupied several weeks as everyone (men, women, and children) moved out on what was often a journey of about seven hundred miles. Only the very old, the sick, and a few who stayed to care for and protect them remained in the deserted village. All articles not needed were placed in storage, and the entrances to these storage places concealed for fear of looting by enemies. The earth lodges were left empty; tent covers and poles were taken along as during the hunt the portable dwellings were used exclusively. The tent poles were fastened to each side of the pony by one end, the other trailed on the ground. The family brought along all its family supplies; men and women walked or rode according to the family supply of horses. Between the trailing tent poles which were fastened to a steady old horse, here and there rode a boy mounted on his own unbroken pony, for the first time given a chance to win his place as an independent rider in the great cavalcade. Many funny experiences were recounted by older men to their children of the adventures they had when breaking in their pony colts as the tribe moved over the prairies on the hunt.

Much bustling activity occupied the household in anticipation of the start of the hunt. When the hunt was about to get started, there was a ritual, or a kind of ritual directed by the man who was to be director of the hunt.

The director of the hunt had to gather together the materials to make a staff for the hunt. The materials for this staff consisted of an ash sapling, two eagles (one black and one golden), a crow, a swan's skin, a dressed buffalo skin, two pieces of hide, a shell disk, a copper kettle, and a pipestone. These articles were all difficult to obtain, and they represented hard work on the part of the man who was to lead the hunt.

The office of the director of the hunt was one of the most difficult offices in the Omaha tribe. The men who aspired to fill it needed to possess courage and the ability to lead men so as to command their respect and obedience. During the term of his office, the entire tribe was placed under his direct

control during the hunt. The council of the seven chiefs acted only as his counselors and together with the people obeyed his instructions. He directed the march of his tribes, chose camping places, dispatched runners in search of buffalo, and directed the hunt when the game had been found. He became responsible for all occurrences from the pursuit of the buffalo and the health and welfare of the people down to the care of children and dogs. When the time came for the tribe to go forth on the hunt, the man who was the director of the hunt took, or sent, the materials he needed for making the ceremonial staff to one of the clans to which belonged the hereditary right to make the staff. That clan then made the staff, and the man who was to be the director of the hunt was appointed as the director.

The council had to determine the direction which the people were to go when they went on the hunt, and the day on which they were to start. This decision was one of the most important decisions with respect to the welfare of the people. At this council, two sacred pipes were smoked and the ritual of the sacred pipes was chanted. While the sacred pipes were being smoked, the sun arose and everybody wore to the ceremony a buffalo robe with its hair on the outside. After the pipe had been smoked, the chief spoke to the people of the great importance of the decision as to when the hunt was to begin; the people needed to think carefully about what they were to do.

When a decision was made, an official herald was sent out to proclaim to the people that the day had been fixed for the departure for the hunt. Meanwhile, the council sat in bowed attitude at the sacred feast which was served in seven wooden bowls. These seven wooden bowls were passed four times around the council, each person taking a mouthful from the seven bowls with a black horn spoon. The food could not be touched with the fingers or with any other utensil.

The sun would have set before the chiefs could lift their heads and the council could break up, and the members return to their homes.. The day for the start, once fixed, could not be changed as that would be breaking faith with Wakonda, in whose presence the decision had been reached. No prescribed order was made for the start of the hunt. Those who were ready moved first, but all kept fairly well together. For four days prior to the start, the man who was to act as the director of the hunt fasted, and when all were departing, he remained behind. After everyone had gone, he took off his moccasins and, carrying no weapons, followed slowly with bare feet. He reached the camp after the people had eaten their supper and went to his own tent. As he entered, everyone was through and left him alone. The fast, the bare foot march, and the lonely vigil were explained to be a prayer to

Wakonda to give courage to the man to direct wisely and lead the people successfully as they went forth to seek for food and clothing. The old men went on to state that during all the time that a man is director of the hunt, he must not eat too much, he must not drink alcoholic beverages, he must live apart from his family, he must continually pray. For on him all the people were depending. This manner of life for the director of the hunt was called by the same word which was applied to the fast which was observed by the young man in the Omaha tribe when he went forth alone to pray to Wakonda and to receive his vision. The idea expressed in this word was this: A man who undertakes this manner of life has to forget about the natural world. He has to be in communication only with the unseen and supernatural powers which surround him and from which he receives power and direction from Wakonda.

Every effort was made by the chiefs and the leading man to control arguments within the tribe. If, however, disturbances occurred, or if the winds blew toward the game, thus revealing the approach of the people and frightening away the buffalo, the director of the hunt might have to resign. To preclude the coming of this 'necessity' to the director, a man was appointed by the chiefs who took the name of director of the hunt. He was a kind of clown who assumed all the blame for the quarrels and other mishaps. This official clown took his office good-naturedly and in his humorous way served the tribal hunt director.

Three sacred tents which were in the charge of their keepers were carried on the march. In later years, a white buffalo hide for the sacred white buffalo tent was packed on a pony. In earlier years, it was carried on the back of its keeper. The sacred staff was carried by a pure young lady—and as it belonged to the white buffalo hide, she carried it near that sacred article. When in camp, this staff of office was kept in the sacred tent which contained the hide. The sacred pole was also carried by its keeper. When a camping place was reached, each woman knew exactly where to place her tent in the tribal circle. The Sky People camped on the north; the Earth People camped on the south. The sacred tents were set up in their respective places, and the sacred articles put at once under cover. After the camp was made, the daily life went on as usual. The ponies were tethered or hobbled and put where they could feed. Wood and water were secured, and soon the smoke betrayed that preparations for the evening meal were going forward.

The beauty of an Indian camp at night was wonderful to behold. As one old observer put it, it cannot be forgotten by one who has seen it, and it can

hardly be pictured by one who has not. The top of each conical tent stained in smoke was lost in shadow, the lower part was aglow from the central fire; and on it, the moving life inside was pictured in silhouette. The sound of rippling water beside which the camp normally stood accentuated the sense of brightness of the overhanging stars.

The signal to move in the morning was the dropping of the cover from the tent of the director. When the poles of the tent were visible, every woman began to unfasten her tent cover. And in a short time, the camp was a memory, and the people were once more on the march—stretching out as among colored mass over the green of the prairies.

When the buffalo country was reached, that is, when signs of game were seen, then the director of the hunt and the chiefs met in council and appointed a number of men who were to act as soldiers or marshalls. These men were chosen from among the bravest and most trusted warriors of the tribe: those who had won the right to wear the crow. They were summoned to the sacred tent of the white buffalo hide where they were informed of their duty. It is said that these officers were told, "You are to recognize no relations in performing your duty. Neither fathers, nor brothers, nor sons." Their services began when the camp was within hearing distance of the herd. The marshalls were to prevent noises such as loud calls or the barkings of dogs and to see that no one slipped away privately. Few, however, attempted to act independently, as it meant death to a man to stampede a herd by going out privately to secure game. During the surrounding of the herd, the marshalls held the hunters back until a signal was given for the attack on the herd. It was in the exercise of this duty that the marshalls were sometimes put to the test of keeping true to their obligations of their offices.

The director of the hunt would choose some twenty young men to act as runners to search for a herd suitable for the tribe to surround. If the region was one in which there was danger of encountering enemies, the runners would go out in groups; otherwise, they might scatter and go singly in search of game. When the runners had been selected, the tribal herald stood in front of the sacred tent containing the white buffalo hide, and intoned the following summons. First, he called the name of a young man, and then he added, "Come, do you go and secure knowledge of the land for me." When the runners had found a suitable herd, they made a speedy run back to where the tribe was camped. When they were near, they paused on some prominent point where they could be seen and signalled their report by running from side to side. If there were two young men, both ran, one from the right to the

left, and the other from the left to the right, thus crossing each other as they ran. As soon as they were seen, word was taken back to the sacred tent and to the director of the hunt.

The sacred pole and the pack containing the white buffalo hide were carried to the edge of the camp in the direction of the returning runners. It was followed by the seven chiefs; then a halt was made while the runners approached to deliver their message, the white buffalo hide was taken down and arranged over a frame so that it resembled, somewhat, a buffalo lying down. The sacred pole was set up, leaning on a "staff," the crotch stick. The chiefs, the keepers, and the heralds were grouped in the rear of these sacred objects. The first runner approached and, in a low tone, delivered his message telling the herd's whereabouts and its size, being careful not to exaggerate its numbers. He was followed by the second runner who repeated the same message. The herald was then dispatched by the chiefs to notify the people. He returned to the camp and shouted, "It is reported that smoke is rising from the earth as far as the eye can see."

Meanwhile, as soon as the signs of the returning runners were seen, the director went to his own tent and remained alone until he heard the voice of the herald shouting to the people. Then he went at once to the tent of the white buffalo where the seven chiefs and the people of the Honga clan who had charge of the sacred tent and its belongings were. The director of the hunt now became the leader of the council and gave command to the heralds and to the other people. Two men were selected by him to lead in the surrounding of the herd: one to carry the staff, and one to carry the pipe stem. Two boys were also selected to carry the twenty tongues and the one heart for the sacred feast which would be held at the end of the hunt. Then the herald went out, and, turning to the left, he passed around the tribal circle, calling as he went, the command in the name of the director. "You are to go upon the chase. Bring in your horses. Braves of the Sky and Earth People, braves of the Omaha tribe, pity me who belong to you. Soldiers of the Sky and Earth People, soldiers of the Omaha tribe, pity me who belong to you. Women of the Sky and Earth People, women of the Omaha tribe, pity me who belong to you."

The tribe is always addressed by the name of its two divisions: the Sky People and the Earth People. And the words "pity me who belong to you" constituted an appeal by the director of the hunt, through his herald, that he might obtain both the honor and the compassion of the people and that the people might avoid all quarrels and problems which might bring about

problems or misfortune while the tension of the hunt was on. Misdeeds or mishaps would fall heavily upon the director of the hunt at this time. He was responsible for every action, fortunate or unfortunate, and he would have to suffer for the acts of the tribe as though what they did was something done by him. His office, in a sense, was part of them in the same way, an old Omaha man explained, that a hand is part of the body.

If the herald was at such a distance that the tribe had to move on and camp again before the chase took place, then the pole and the hide remained where the message of the runners had been received until the people were ready to go to the new camping ground. On that journey, the two sacred objects, followed by the seven chiefs, led the parade—while the marshalls rode on the sides of the great cavalcade of the Omaha people and kept the people in order. Once the people arrived in the camping place, the camp was made silent, in fear of any sound frightening the herd. Strict silence was maintained until the hunters were ready to start. If the herd was discovered near the camp, then after the message of the runners, the two sacred objects, the sacred pole, and the white buffalo hide, were returned to their tents. The marshalls at once enforced silence, killing any barking dogs if that was necessary.

All preparations were made as quickly as possible. Each hunter was attended by one or two trained dogs who led the fast running horses to be used in the chase. Once again, the herald circled the camp. His return to the white buffalo hide was a signal for the hunters to move. The two young men bearing this sacred staff of the director of the hunt and the pipe stem were the first to start. These two men led the procession of the hunters headed by the director of the hunts and the seven chiefs.

The advance on the herd was marked by four stages. At the close of each stage, the chiefs and the directors sat and smoked. The slow approach to the herds was for definite purposes: first, to allow the people to make offerings of smoke to Wakonda to secure success; second, to keep people from being too hasty; and, third, to keep people in an orderly pattern as they moved toward the buffalo. As the four stages had a religious character, they could not be disregarded. When the designated place for the attack was reached, the two youths would stop while the hunters divided into two parties. One was to follow the youth with the sacred staff—the other, the youth with the pipe stem. At the command of the director of the hunt, the two young men started and ran at full speed to circle the entire herd, followed by the horsemen. The marshalls, with their whips, held the riders back, and in order. For

no one was allowed to break into the herd, or to advance beyond the director of the hunt or the pipe stem; whoever attempted to do so or failed to control his horse or keep in line, was flogged, the rawhide thong of the marshall falling on the bare body of the hunter with all the force of the strong arm of the officer.

When the two youths bearing the sacred staff and the pipe stem met, the sacred staff was thrust into the ground, and the pipe stem was tied to it. This was a signal at which the marshall gave the word of command to charge on the herd. The hunters responded with shouts and yells, driving the bewildered buffalo into confused circles toward the camp.

When the two youths started to circle the herd with the emblems of authority, their places were immediately taken by the two boys who had been selected to secure the tongues and the hearts for the sacred feast. As soon as the hunters rushed into the herds, and the buffalo were seen to fall, these boys rushed in, dodging in and out among the animals and hunters. For they had to take a tongue from a buffalo before it had been touched with a knife. They carried their bows unstrung and thrust the tongues on them. They had been instructed in the manner that the tongue must be taken. An opening was made in the throat of the buffalo, and the tongue pulled through and taken out. And the end of the tongue was bent over, and a full slit made from end to end. It was thought that if the knife was thrust through the tongue to make a hole, it would bring bad luck. Through the slit thus made, the unstrung bow was thrust. Ten tongues were carried on one bow, and when the twenty tongues and the heart were secured, the boys returned with these articles to the sacred tent of the white buffalo hide.

Meanwhile, the slaughter of the game went on. The Omaha were expert hunters and many a man could boast of sending his arrow clear through a buffalo and into a second one beyond with the same arrow. At the conclusion of the hunt, the sacred staff and sacred pipe stem were brought back and delivered to the director of the hunt.

The meat was packed on the horses and taken to camp where it was jerked by the women so as to make meat jerky. On the night of the surrounding of the buffalo, the feast of the tongues and hearts was held in the tent of the white buffalo hide. The seven chiefs, the director of the hunt, the keepers of the white buffalo hide, and sometimes a few of the leading men were present. All wore the buffalo robe in ceremonial fashion. On this occasion, the feast was a sacred one, the consecrated food was prized. It was believed to bring health and long life. A share was sometimes begged, and the portion received was divided among a number of the people who ate of it in the hope

that they might thereby secure for themselves the benefits of a long life. The tongues and hearts were boiled, but only the chiefs and the director of the hunt were present during the cooking of the tongue and the heart. After the feast of the twenty tongues and the sacred heart of the buffalo, the Omaha people sang the ritual of the white buffalo hide. The ritual was sung by one of the old men of the tribe and by his companions while the chiefs smoked the sacred pipe and the people feasted on the products of the chase, enjoying peace and plenty.

The ritual of the white buffalo hide tells over and makes sacred the hunt of the buffalo. It is perfectly clear from the ritual that the holy pipe symbolizes man's capacity to put himself in touch with the holy powers. It is a messenger from man to the powers; the holy staff of the hunt that was carried by the director of the hunt (or the emissary of the director of the hunt) carried on it the feathers of the four sacred birds who 'assisted' in the surroundings. The staff was a symbol of man's capacity to put himself in touch with the forces of the sky: the forces of the four sacred directions who assist in the hunt and help in bringing heaven and earth together. The sky had to help to make a harmonious thing of the capture of the buffalo, the great earth figure.

The ceremony begins with a poem to the sacred pipe. The keeper of the pipe, a priest, announces the pipe, saying this before the council:

*The holy pipe, the holy pipe, I say,
Now the holy pipe appears before you.
Behold.*

The pipe is held as if to be smoked with prayers to Wakonda.

The second poem in the white buffalo ritual is a little like the first. In it, the keeper of the pipe presents the pipe to the masters of the hunt.

*The Holy Pipe appears.
It appears.
I bid you, I bid you
Take this holy pipe;
Take this holy thing to your lips.
The pipe appears,
It appears to you.*

*I urge you.
Take it, take it,
To your lips, the holy pipe.
It does appear, it appears to you.*

The third poem is a poem which celebrates when the Omaha tribe, particularly the council and the leaders of the hunt, see the buffalo for the first time:

*See the buffalo coming to birth
As it were being born out of the cosmos
In the way that the first buffalo was born.
This buffalo moves itself, it is conscious.*

*This buffalo moves,
Behold the nose, the breath of life.*

*This buffalo moves,
Behold its face, the breath of life.*

*This buffalo moves,
Behold its eyes, the breath of life.*

*This buffalo moves,
Behold its standing horn, the breath of life.*

*This buffalo moves,
Behold its back, the breath of life.*

*This buffalo moves,
Behold its arms, its breast, its ribs, its body, the breath of life.*

*This buffalo moves,
Behold its stomach, the breath of life.*

*This buffalo moves,
Behold its tail, its hind quarters, behold its calf, the breath of life.*

*This buffalo moves,
Behold its feet, the breath of life.*

*The buffalo moves,
Behold its footprints, our breath of life.*

The fourth poem is a poem-prayer to the buffalo as representative of the power to the earth. It is a prayer to that which feeds the Omaha tribe so that

it will come closer to the people.

*Young male, buffalo calf, come closer to us,
Young male, buffalo calf, come closer to us,
Young male, buffalo calf, come closer to us.*

*Majestic bull buffalo, come closer to us that we may live.
Majestic bull buffalo, come closer to us that we may live.
Majestic bull buffalo, come closer to us that we may live.*

*Mother buffalo, do not flee from us; we need food.
Mother buffalo, do not flee from us; we need food.
Mother buffalo, do not flee from us; we need food.*

*Little buffalo ones, stay near to us, succor us.
Little buffalo ones, stay near to us, succor us.
Little buffalo ones, stay near to us, succor us.*

*Great power of Wakonda,
Manifest in the multiplication of the buffalo pairs,
Come closer to us.*

In this case, the young male buffalo calf may stand for the west, the majestic bull for the north, the mother buffalo for the east, and the little buffalo for the south.

The fifth poem is a vision of tremendous buffalo herds coming, in every direction, to the Omaha people after the above prayer has been prayed. It reminds the buffalo that they were born to succor the Omaha tribe and to sustain them.

*Now they are coming.
They are coming,
They are coming on many paths toward us,
Come to succor us.
For this you were born.
This way—come, come.*

The sixth poem is a poem speaking of the coming of the buffalo from the many sacred directions as they swarm down upon the tribe.



The Turning of the Child (page 9)

The buffalo, they are coming.
From one direction.
They are coming;
From the east, they are coming.
The buffalo are coming, from two directions—
They come from the south.
The buffalo, they are coming.
From three directions, they are coming;
From the west, they are coming.
The buffalo, they are coming.
From four directions, they are coming;
From the north, they are coming.
They come, they come, they come.
From the seven directions of the great council, they come.
From the ten directions,
From the eight points,
From the above and the below, they come.
They come. They come from everywhere: Buffalo!

The last priest who repeated this poem repeated it after the white man had massacred the buffalo; he said, at the end of his recitation of the poem, weeping as he said it, "Not now. Not now. They no longer come."

The next poem was a blessing of Wakonda on the prayer of the people that they might have the assistance of a young male calf, of the great bull buffalo, of the mother buffalo, and the little buffalo. Wakonda, as it were speaking from the center of the sacred hoop, says that each of the four will nourish the tribe as a consequence of its efforts in the hunt. Wakonda speaks in the poem.

It is done.
You will have the young male calf.
It is done, yours is the young male calf.
I have spoken.
It is done. You will have the great bull buffalo.
It is done. Yours is the great bull buffalo.
I have spoken.

*It is done.
You will have the mother buffalo.
It is done, yours is the mother buffalo.
I have spoken.
You will have this great herd,
Thundering manifestation of the power of Wakonda.*

The next poem is a questioning poem; it asks how the orders will be given as to how the hunt is to be carried on. The question is "Who will give the orders?" and the answer is "The orders will be given by the seven chiefs of the council whose authority is represented by the single 'person' who is the tribe and who is represented by the sacred pole:"

*Who will speak first of the hunt?
Who will speak first of the hunt?
Who will speak of the path of the hunt?
Who will speak first of the path of the hunt?
I, the seven chiefs of the sacred pole,
I will speak first.
I, the seven chiefs of the sacred pole,
I will speak first.*

The next poem is a poem about moving toward the herd after the command of the council has been given. The "I" is a hunter.

*I go toward the noise of the herd,
To bring back the red meat of the hunt.
Say it seven times over.
I go toward the noise of the herd, go to bring back
The red meat of the hunt.

The bellowing of the bulls, I face it to bring back
The hunt's red meat.
The bellowing of the bulls, I face it to bring back
The hunt's red meat.

The bellowing of the bulls, I face it to bring back
The hunt's red meat.
Say it seven times over . . .*

*I face the bellowing of the bulls to bring back
The hunt's red meat.*

The next poem is a poem about when the herd is first aware of the hunter coming; the herd begins to run away from the hunter.

*They smell us.
They are like smoke blowing away.
See their dust.
I go toward them,
Toward the dust, like smoke blowing away.
They smell us,
They are like smoke blowing away.
See their dust.*

The next poem is about the beginning of the actual surrounding of the herd. It is particularly interesting in that it first appeals to the seven chiefs of the council in the sacred tent who say that the herd should be surrounded; second, it appeals to a sacred article, the sacred staff, which instructs the tribe in surrounding the buffalo. The sacred staff is referred to as the four 'birds' whose feathers it contains: the black crow, the brown eagle, the golden eagle, and the white shell (a white sea artifact is here substituted for a white bird artifact for unknown reasons). The four colors of the animals which are mentioned are the colors of the directions: black of the south, brown of the west (for yellow), gold of the east (for red), and white of the north (for blue). As you read the poem you can imagine the four sacred birds wheeling, surrounding the herd and telling the tribe, through their sacred circling, where the herd is.

*The seven of the sacred pole—
It is their will that the herd be surrounded.
Those who are sitting in the sacred tent,
They say, "You must go there to surround the herd."
The sacred things,
All of them say to surround the animals.
The sacred articles,
They will surround the animals themselves.
The articles from the sacred staff will surround the herd.
The sacred articles,
They will surround the animals.*

*The black crow of the staff—
See! it is in the sky, surrounding the walking herd
The brown eagle of the staff—
See! it is in the sky, surrounding the herd.*

*The white shell disk,
See! it helps us.
The power of Wakonda—
The power of the sacred bird, difficult to assemble,
The power of all they stand for is surrounding the herd.*

At the time when the director of the hunt had instructed the people that the sacred objects, that is the staff and the pipe, should be carried out so that the actual surround should begin, a herald went throughout the camp: the herald in the poem which follows is compared to one of the sacred birds circling the camp from east to south, to west, to north, as if he were the crow or the golden eagle. He is really portrayed as going through the camp, crying to the people to come and begin the hunt. The speaker in the poem is the herald.

*I go,
Circling the camp as the sacred bird circles,
Telling the people, "Come."*

*I go,
Circling the camp as the sacred bird circles.
Questioning the people, I go.*

*The hunter, over there,
What does he say?
I go, circling the camp as the bird circles,
Telling the people, "Come."*

The next poem is about the wounding of the buffalo. You will notice that, in the whole sequence of poems, the wounding of the buffalo is not concentrated on so much as are the ceremonies leading up to the hunt and those leading away from it. The poem is particularly moving in its tracing out of the death of the buffalo—its coming to a standstill, bleeding from the nose, staggering, and its final lying down:

*The moving one I wounded there,
It slows now,
The moving one I wounded there,
Has come to a standstill.*

*The moving one I wounded there,
Its mouth bleeds,
The moving one I wounded there,
Has come to a standstill.*

*The moving one I wounded there,
It slows now.
The moving one I wounded there,
It slows now.
The moving one I wounded there,
It has come to a standstill.*

*The one I wounded there,
It has staggered.
The moving one I wounded there,
It has come to a standstill.
The moving one I wounded,
It slows now.*

*The moving one I wounded there,
It slows now,
The moving one I wounded there
Has come to a standstill.
The one I wounded there,
It has fallen
It lies still. . . .*

*The moving one I wounded
Comes to a standstill.
The moving one I wounded,
It slows now.*

The next poem is the poem of the butchering of the killed buffalo. The master butcher speaks, addressing the young men who are assisting him in the butchering.

*Young men,
Place the creature on its back
Young men,
Hold the head right, the body right,
Young men,
Hold the tail so the butchering may be done right.
AHOIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEA!*

After the meat was butchered, the people who had done the butchering loaded the meat on themselves and carried it back to camp. It was particularly important that nothing be wasted. One of the things that caused more heartbreak to the Omaha Indians than anything else was the manner of the white man's wasting. The killing of the great buffalo herds by Buffalo Bill and his accomplices represented the kind of savagery that astonished the Indians. The poem which follows is a poem for the gathering of the foreleg (which was particularly bony and lacking in tasty meat). Usually the leg joints were loaded onto the side of a man, and he carried it as far as he could. If the meat that was on his back was too heavy or if the foreleg impeded his walking too much, he would let it go, but only after he was exhausted:

*All things are good;
Therefore, let all things be gathered.
Let everything be kept,
The skin, the hind legs, the guts,
The forelegs, the breast, the ribs.
Let everything be kept,
The side meat, even the foreleg.
Let it be kept.*

*Place the foreleg on the hip,
And walk on.
Let everything be kept.*

The next poem is the poem of the return of the hunters, their backs weighted down with meat. They stop, as they go home, at various stations, even as they stopped at stations on the way out. No account says whether they stopped at four stations, but, given the love of the Omaha Indian for four, it seems very possible that four stops were made. The song is a joyous one.

*Moving to a station,
Returning to camp.
Moving to a station,
Returning to camp.
Hurrying,
Going back home,
Returning to camp.
The sacred tongues,
The holy heart,
Hear the sacred feast.
Moving, hurrying,
Going home,
Returning to camp.*

The last poem in the sequence is a song sung at the sacred feast, but sung as if by some hunters who are out in the field and have too much meat to bring back in time for the sacred feast. They stop in the field to build a fire and roast some of the meat for themselves. The hunters prepare a fire to have their first feast after the kill—to refresh themselves, happy at the end of a day's work. The poem is addressed to the fire which is called "Difficult-to-Accomplish." When the Omaha people wished to call attention to the presence of the divine, they spoke of "Things-Difficult-to-Accomplish." Hence, the fire is addressed as if it were a divine fire, brother to Wakonda. The person speaking in the poem is endeavoring to start the fire by whirling a stick in a notch in another stick, a work which is very tedious. The menial character of the work involved in starting the fire is contrasted with the sacred symbology of the fire.

*I say, Difficult to Accomplish,
Brother to Wakonda,
This is sweaty work.
I say,
Rolling my stick in another stick,
The yellow amber appearing,
This is sweaty work.
I say,
Difficult to Accomplish,
Brother to Wakonda,
This is sweaty work.*

*I say,
Rolling my stick in another stick,
The smoke coming,
This is sooty work.*

*I say,
Difficult to Accomplish,
Brother to Wakonda,
This is beautiful work.*

*The yellow glow of the flames—
Beautiful! Beautiful!*

X. Ponca Buffalo Ritual (related)

There was among the Ponca a ritual which celebrated a really good kill and which was related to the ritual of the white buffalo hide. It may be useful to end this section on the buffalo hunt with a description of that ritual. The Omaha may have had one very like the Ponca one, but it is lost. An old man tells about the ritual: "When I was a young man, I used to see very old men perform this ceremony and recite the ritual of the feast of the soldiers. The feast took place when many buffalo had been killed, when food was plentiful, and everyone was happy." The ritual went as follows:

When the feast was ready, a bowl containing soup and bits of meat was placed near the door of the lodge. The leader said as the bowl was set down, "It is done." When the leader said this, the old man went to the bowl, took it up, and held it as he sat. Then he began to recite the ritual. The ritual is in four parts. There are two names mentioned in the ritual. The name mentioned after the first part is the name whose meaning we do not know; the name belongs to one of the clans. The name mentioned after the second part is forgotten. When the first name was mentioned, the old man made an impression in the ground near the edge of the fire with the knuckle of his first finger. And into this depression he dropped four drops from the tip of the little spoon which was in the bowl. The offering was to the spirit of the first man. At the end of the second part, when he mentions the name of the second man, he again drops four drops from the end of the spoon. At the end of the third part, which refers to the wolf, he drops four more drops. Finally, at the close of the fourth part, in which the crow is mentioned, he drops four drops. Four times four, sixteen drops in all, are dropped from the spoon into the bowl.

After the ceremony was complete, the servant approached the one who presided and fed him from the bowl. He took the food deliberately and solemnly and fed the leader all that was in the bowl. When he finished, those present could begin to eat. Each person had to pass his bowl to his neighbor who took four spoonfuls and passed the bowl on. In this manner, the bowl was kept moving until the feast was consumed.

The ritual mentions several chiefs. These chiefs were not the living chiefs of the Omaha or Ponca tribe from any period we know. They appear to be

the chiefs who are dead, who have come to sit. They have come across the great water of the sky, across the clouds, to sit upon the banks of the clouds and watch the hunt. They have, as it were, assisted the sky birds, the four clouds which are black and represent the chief officers of the hunt, and the clouds which reddened represent the seven who sit in the sacred council. The chiefs who have come back from the dead, blacken and make effective the officers of the hunt; they redden the seven of the council and make them more effective.

In the ritual, the people are blessed by the wolf which represents the destructive tendencies in earth and all mankind. They are blessed by the male crow, who represents the destructive aspects of the sky. Thus, all the people and nature together have been blessed—even by their own destructive tendencies; the poem which is the center of the ritual goes:

*Chiefs, I pray,
Thus you have spoken, it is said,
Dead chiefs, I pray,
The great water that lay, impossible-to-cross,
You, nevertheless, have crossed,
You have sat upon the banks,
Oh chiefs, pray;
Thus have you ever spoken.*

*Chiefs, the four clubs of the hunting master
You have blackened,
The four clubs of the council of seven
You have reddened.
Those that are black, my people, are without fear.*

*"I shall care," you have said.
"Not even my own child shall stain my hand,"
You have said.
It is said.*

*Without over-confidence, my people,
Word has been brought back
That great animals have been found,
The people approached near to them and stood,
My people.
A great herd of animals.
The people shall cause none of them to remain.
The people shall go toward home.
Rejoicing, along the trail strewn with fat.*



Rabbit and He-For-Whom-They-Shoot-The-Deer (page 65)

*The male gray wolf,
Shall move with tail blown to one side,
Shall gallop along the trail.*

*The male crow,
Without over-confidence,
Shall join the male gray wolf
In giving help. . . .
As an instructor.*

*The people astonished at the buffalo coming,
Cry, "Oh-ho."
Beyond the ridge, you disappear, oh buffalo
As though piercing the hill.
After that you return,
Sweeping close to the hill.
The people, astonished at your coming,
Cry, "Oh-ho!"
As you appear on the ridge.*

*I have killed one herd of animals. . . .
I have killed a herd of animals for you
My people.*

XI. The Corn Song

In the place where the buffalo stood in the story of the first corn, the corn grew up. The Omaha tribe's ritual for the corn tells how the maize is placed among the four winds or roots, between the seven cardinal points or leaves—in exactly the way the buffalo is placed in the center of things in the ritual of the white buffalo. Though the ritual of the corn is much simpler than the buffalo rituals, it is still interesting. The tassels of the corn have four colors; also, the corn, with its hair like a man, is like the sacred pole:

*Oh hasten, behold,
With four roots I stand,
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With one leaf I stand,
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With two leaves I stand,
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With three leaves I stand.
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With four leaves I stand.
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With five leaves I stand,
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With six leaves I stand,
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With seven leaves, I stand.
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With one joint I stand.
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With two joints I stand,
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With three joints I stand.
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With four joints I stand,
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With five joints I stand.
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With six joints I stand,
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold,
With seven joints I stand,
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With clothing I stand,
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With live glossy hair I stand,
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With yellow hair I stand.
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With dark hair I stand.
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With light glossy tassel I stand,
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With pale tassel I stand.
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold.
With yellow tassel I stand.
Behold me.*

*Oh hasten, behold
With fruit possessed, I stand.*

*Behold me, oh hasten,
Grasp the fruit of my hand,
Pluck me.*

*Oh hasten,
Roast me by the fire,
The fruit of my hand,
As I stand, even roast me.*

*Oh hasten,
Rip from its cob,
The fruit of my hand and eat me.*

It is no wonder then, that the sacred pole stood in the midst of the Omaha tribe.

XII. Another Osage Creation Story

We do not have all of the creation story of the Omaha people; we have had to put it together a little at a time, from the story of the creation to the story of the appearance of the buffalo who created the corn. The Osage tribe, which was, according to legend, once part of the Omaha tribe, tells a more complete story of the creation from the time of the first men who were living without bodies until the buffalo and the corn appear. This is the way the story goes. This story helps us understand other Omaha stories:

At the top of the universe in the heavens above the heavens, there is a tree near a river. The tree is a cedar. It is called the tree of life. It has six roots, three on each side.

Near the cedar tree there is a river with many branches. Just under the cedar tree there is a large star, the red, or the morning star, which is in our sky. Next to it are six stars which the Osage tribe call the large foot of the goose. To the left of the large foot of the goose is the evening star, and finally there is one small star called Mecokesinca. Beneath these four sets of stars (that is the morning star, the evening star, the large foot of the goose, and the small star), there are the seven stars, the Pleiades, which are placed between the moon on the left and sun on the right. Beneath the sun on the right is placed "the hatchet" set of stars.

The great or central thunderbird is seen beneath the rim of the stars and placed above the upper worlds. It is seen floating above the four upper worlds. Each of these four upper worlds are supported by two pillars, except for the lowest one. The lowest one rests on a red oak tree.

The journey of the first people began at a point below the lowest upper world. People then had neither human bodies or souls, and existed in some unknown manner (perhaps, as the Omaha said, in the mind of Wakonda). They descended from the left of the lowest upper world to the highest world. There they obtained human souls in the bodies of birds. And there they met a male red bird to whom they appealed for aid (this male red bird was not the female red bird which later gave them human bodies). The male red bird helped them shape souls for themselves. They descended to the first world, the second world, the third world, and from that they traveled until they came down into the branches of the red oak tree. They climbed down the red oak tree and found the ground covered with grass and other kinds of vegetation.

Then their paths separated. Some marched to the left; they were the people of peace, those that could not kill anyone or anything. They lived on roots. Those on the right, the sky people, the people under the sun, killed animals.

The people who went toward the moon were assisted by a black bear. Those who went toward the sun assisted themselves. Then the female red bird gave bodies to the peace or moon people, the black bear found seven skins which he gave them to use for tents. Subsequently, the people discovered four kinds of rocks: the black rock of the south, the blue-green rock of the north, the red rock of the west, and the white rock of the east. (Now, when a child is named, four stones are heated for the sweat bath.)

After the people had found the rocks, four buffalo bulls approached them. When the first bull arose after rolling on the ground, an ear of red corn for the east and a red pumpkin fell from his left hind leg; the leader of the people of peace noticed them and asked the younger brother to pick them up and taste them. The leader of the bald eagle clan did so. Then the elder brother said, "These will be good for the children to eat. Their limbs will stretch and increase in strength."

When the second bull arose after rolling, an ear of spotted corn and a spotted pumpkin dropped from his left leg; these too were tasted and declared good for the children.

When the third bull arose after rolling, an ear of black corn and a black pumpkin dropped from his left hind leg for the south.

And when the fourth buffalo dropped the ear, he dropped an ear of white corn, and a white pumpkin for the west. Therefore, when a child is named in the peace clan, the head man of that clan takes a grain of each kind of corn and a slice of each variety of pumpkin which he puts into the mouth of a child.

After a council between the three main sections of the Osage had been conducted (the sky clans, the water clans, and the earth clans), two old men were sent off to seek a country in which all might dwell. One of these was a sky man, the other man was an earth man. Each man received a pipe from the council and was told to go for seven days without food or drink. He carried a staff to aid him in walking. Three times a day he wept, in the morning, at noon, and near sunset. The two men returned to the people at the end of seven days, being very thin. The report of the sky man was accepted so the sky clan was superior to the earth or to the water clan. The water man acted as crier and told the people all about all the new homes of the nation. And when the people heard about the new homes, all the men decorated their

faces with clay. When the next morning came, the two old men who had gone in search of the new homes led the respective sides of the nation; the sky people and the earth people, they marched on parallel roads. When they reached the land, the leaders of the peoples ran around in circles just as they do previous to starting a war. The water and earth men ran around from right to left and the sky men ran around from left to right. At different sessions, the two old leaders addressed the people.

Finally all the men of both groups took sharp pointed sticks, which they stuck into the ground. Each one sang, "I wish my life to be here and settled there." The next day the messenger of the sky's old man went to summon the elk crier. The latter was ordered to make a proclamation to all the sky people as follows: "They say you will settle down today. Wakonda has made good weather. They say that you must move today to a good land." In those days, the Osage used dogs, instead of horses. When the old sky man made his speech, he went into details about every part of the lodge that was to be built in the settling palce: the fireplace, the building material, the implements, and so forth. Four stakes were placed in the fireplace, the first one to the west. When this was laid down, the sky leader spoke about the west wind, and also about the young buffalo bull, repeating his name. When the stick of the north was laid down, he spoke of the gray buffalo horns, or the bull buffalo. When the stick of the east was laid down, he spoke of the large buffalo bull. And the fourth stick was laid down in a southerly direction; the leader spoke of the buffalo cow.

At the same time, a similar ceremony was performed by an old earth man on the other side of the grove. While placing the stick to the east, he mentioned the east wind and the dark horned deer; placing it to the north, he mentioned the north wind and the deer with gray horns; placing it to the west, he mentioned a mythical animal. And placing it to the south, he mentioned the south wind and a female doe. So the first settlement of man in earth and sky (earth clan and sky clan) began.

This is another version of the creation story of the Osage people:

At that time and place, the Honga people were gathered together and they existed only in the mind of god. The messengers of the gods said to one another, "Should not the little ones, the human beings, go below to the earth to become a people?" The messenger elders turned to the four great gods appealing to them for aid. They spoke first to the god of day, who sits in the heavens saying, "Oh great grandfather, god of day, should not the little ones,

human beings, go below to become a people?" The god of day replied, saying, "You have said the little ones should become persons; you have also said the little ones should go below to become people. The little ones shall make of me, the god of day, their bodies. When the little ones go below to become a people, they will find in me the god of day, the means of reaching old age.

"If you will look at my toes gathered together in a cluster, if you will look at my ankles and my knees wrinkled with age, the inner muscles of my thighs and the muscles of my breasts gathered in folds, the muscles of my arms and of my throat grown flabby, if you look at my hair, grown slight and yellowish, you see age. Through the power of each of these, the little ones of the human race will find a means of growing old.

"If they trust in me, the god of the sun, they will grow old. They will always live to see their hair grow scant and yellowish with age. For I, the god of day, dwell in the four great divisions of the day and of life. When the little ones from the human race make their bodies of me, they will find that they will be able to travel to old age."

Afterwards, the same people spoke to the messengers of the gods and asked if the human race should not go below to form a race of people. And the messengers of the gods referred them to the god of night sitting in the heavens, the moon. And the messengers said, "Grandmother Moon, should not the little ones go below to become a people?" And the goddess of night replied, saying, "The little ones should go below and become a people. They will also find in me the means of reaching old age: my toes, my ankles, my knees, my thighs, my breasts, my arms, my hair, are the sources of a ripe old age."

The people again turned to the elder messengers, and the messengers turned to the male star. And the male star said that he would help the people to reach old age. And when the people went to the evening star, they received the same answer they received through the sun, the moon, the morning star.

Then the people turned to the golden eagle, and their messengers said to him, "Younger Brother, let the little ones of the human race go below to become a people." And the golden eagle replied saying, "You say the little ones, the human race, should go below to become a people. I'll make a search for them and lead them down there," he said. And he led the people downward, passing through four heavens as he descended quickly . . . in wide circles. Four times he soared without a pause speeding downward. Finally, he came within sight of the tops of the seven trees. Close to these tree tops he swooped, and then suddenly he lighted as did the people.

The people had alighted on the tops of the seven trees and set their feet firmly upon them. They spoke to one another and said, "Can we not become a people here below?" Then they turned to the Star Radiant, one of the great spiritual powers. They said, "Can we brothers? Is it not possible for the little ones to become a people here below?" Star Radiant ran as these words were spoken to Water Spider and spoke to him saying, "Grandfather, is it not possible for the little ones to dwell upon the surface of the water?" And Water Spider replied, "It does not appear possible for the human race to dwell upon the surface of the water. I will make a search for a way to help them." At that time, the spider ran upon the surface of the water. And as he ran, he said, "Even Wakonda himself is not able to see my footprints. If the little human race make their bodies like mine, Wakonda himself will not be able to see their footprints. Look at the parting of waters; I push onward in forked lines. As the waters go apart, the gods of the waters go apart to make way for me as I push onward." From what the spider did, the people knew that the human race could not live on the surface of the water. The whirligig then did as the water spider had done—as did the white leach. So each of these creatures went and searched for a place for mankind to live. Each of them parted the water before him as he went.

Star Radiant finally came to the Great Elk. And when Star Radiant came to the elk, he turned and spoke to his elder brothers, the messengers, and said: "Behold, elder brothers, a creature stands yonder." Then the elder messenger said, "Who are you?" and the Great Elk replied saying, "I am a sacred person, I am the sacred elk, oh elder brothers." The elder messenger of the gods then spoke to the Great Elk saying, "Younger brother, Sacred Elk, is it not possible for the little ones of the human race to dwell upon the surface of the water?" Sacred Elk replied, "It is not possible. I am a person who is not absent from any important place or movement." Then the great sacred elk suddenly threw himself upon the waters which covered the earth and riled up the water in all its vastness. Again, a second time he threw himself down upon the water; now the water began to grow lower. The third time he threw himself upon the water; the water went yet lower. When he threw himself upon the water the fourth time, the land began to appear, dry and livable land.

The elder brothers spoke to one another, saying, "Look, it is certain from the sign that our younger brother, the elk, was about to perform another great deed." At that time, the great elk stood and faced the winds of the four corners of the earth. He faced each in turn in sacred sequence. First, he faced the winds that come from the rising sun. He approached these in a hollow

and stood there calling loudly over the lands. Secondly, he faced the winds that come from the lands of the cedar—he approached the winds of the north. Third, he faced the winds that come from where the sun drops down. Finally he faced the south wind and called loudly. As he called for the winds to come, he said, “In this manner the little ones of the human race shall call to the winds when they are in distress. If they call in the way I am calling now, their voices shall always be heard by Wakonda, the Creator. I call with my very life’s breath. When the little human race which has just come down out of the stars seeks protection, my breath of life, the breath of life of the great sacred elk, will enable them to live to see old age as they travel the path of life.”

Then the older messenger of the gods noticed that the Great Elk was about to perform another great deed. They saw him throw himself violently against the ground and scatter the hairs of his body in profusion. The Great Elk spoke: “Behold these hairs of my body—scattered upon the ground without a design. The grasses of the earth are what they are now.”

The human race then approached the grasses of the earth and found the animals in abundance. Great Elk spoke: “Behold, the muscles of my back. I’ve made them to be the rounded hills of the earth. Behold, the upper part of my body; these are the wide plains of the earth. See the middle of my back; it is the ridges of the earth; the inward curve of my neck is the gaps in the earth; the tip of my nose is the sharp ridges of the earth; the top-most branches of my horn are the creeks of the earth; the larger branches of my horn are the larger branches of the streams of the earth; the largest of the horns, the great rivers. At the base of my horn are the loose rocks of the earth, and the center of my forehead is a snare for all creatures. My brow antlers are standards for my own use.”

So it was that the earth was created. . . .

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At that time, the Water People made a reed or a pipe of their bodies. They spoke to the Earth People who had been following Star Radiant and said, “Star Radiant People, we have made a pipe of our bodies; when you make a pipe of your bodies your body will be free from all causes of death. Behold the joint of its neck: we have made joints of our own neck. When you make a joint of our own neck the joint of your neck will be free of the causes of diseases.” And so the water people explained how each part of their bodies were like a part of a pipe. They concluded their speech by saying,

"When you go toward the setting of the sun against your enemies, and carry the pipe as an offering, when you make yourself prayers for aid, your prayers will be readily granted even before the sun rises to the height of your house."

Thus it was that the use of the sacred pipe began with the Water People and spread to the Earth People.

The Earth People, in turn, explained to the Water People how they had made their bodies of the god of the day and added to them in the red bird's house and in other parts of the universe. Then the Sacred Elk showed the Water People and the Earth People how to use a snare.

The Earth People decided to build a House of Mystery; they brought to the House of Mystery seven small stones for fireplaces. They brought four of these small stones to the House of Mystery and said, "Let each of these stones be to the Water People and to the Sky People a place of refuge in their life's journey." Then the Earth People made offerings in the House of Mystery: dark soil, blue soil, red soil, and yellow soil for each of the directions. They brought to the House of Mystery the plants that they had been taught to use, the fire, and the vessels for containing the plants which they knew how to handle. Then the people invented knives for themselves, the sacred flint: the black flint, the red flint, the white flint, and the yellow flint. And so they had an earth to live in, a pipe to pray with, houses of mystery where each group of people could meet, and a way of life.

XIII. The Omaha Creation Hymn

No Omaha creation story which parallels the full Osage story exists any longer. However, one short fragment which parallels what we have just told exists. One of the great poems which the Omaha Indians used to review the creation story and to pull things together was the poem to the six high powers spoken each morning. The high powers were the sun, the moon, the sky, the earth, the winds of the four corners, and the rock on which creation was centered. The poem is as follows:

Sun upon high—power over all—show yourself on your seat.

I pray that you will understand that whatever I do,

I desire only good.

Moon, there on high, have pity on me;

give me the good road.

Pity and help me; whatever I do,

I desire only the good.

Sky-father above: you, seated there.

I pray you to understand that whatever I do,

I desire only good.

Earth, there, I pray you, Mother.

Pity me. Good is what I desire.

Winds of the four quarters: give me the good road

Whatever I do, I desire good.

Rock, old grandfather seated there, remaining firmly seated,

Keep me firm and straight.

The powers evoked are similar to those which the first people visit in the Osage creation story.

The Bedtime Stories

People frequently told stories to children at bedtime. One Omaha elder said recently that when he was bad as a child his grandparent told him stories which told him what to be until he went to sleep. The stories concern chiefly Rabbit, Orphan, the Thunder, and Monkey. Some of the stories just explain nature—e.g., the story which follows:



Rabbit and the Winter

The Sun and the Moon

The moon said to the sun, "I'm out of patience with you; despite the fact that I bring the people together in the evening, you scatter them every morning. You cause many to be lost to my purposes." The sun said, "I want the people to grow and so I scatter them. You—you—all the time you put them in darkness; thus, you kill many of them with hunger." Then the sun said, "People down there: many of you are mature; I'm looking down on you from above. I'll direct you in whatever jobs you are undertaking."

The moon said, "And I will remain as I am: I will collect you people together, and when it is dark, you will get back together in full numbers to sleep. And I will rule all your occupations, and we, the sun and the moon, will walk in the right road of life, one after the other. I will walk behind the sun." As the moon finished speaking, the people noticed that the moon was just like a woman walking with a paddle on her arm.

The Rabbit Stories

One of the most interesting characters in Omaha story telling is Rabbit. Some people see him as a relative of the sun and a picture of light and of the sun's heat and life-giving power. He may also stand for the sun's destructive powers. Rabbit is frequently in fights with characters which represent aggression and hatred or characters which represent cold malice.

Rabbit and the Winter

Rabbit was going somewhere. It happened that he reached the place where Winter had his palace. The Winter said to the rabbit, "Well, you've made it a rule not to come here in the past. Sit over there by those things. On what business have you come here today?" Rabbit said to Winter, "Well, my grandmother has altogether beaten the life out of me so I've come over here in a bad mood." As Rabbit 'sat' crying, he continued jumping around (a rabbit does not sit still at all). Eventually he annoyed the Winter, and the Winter said to the Rabbit, "Hey, sit still." And the Rabbit replied, "I can't; this is just the way I am."

Eventually the Winter spoke about going hunting. "Oh, I will go with you," said the Rabbit. "Why, you'd be apt to die," said the Winter. "No!

How is it possible for me to die? I'll go along with you in any case." "OK. Come along with me," said the Winter.

The Winter, having gone outside, said, "Whew, whew, whew" and made a big puff with his cheeks. He made a fine driving snowstorm with the wind he created. The wind was very cold. When Winter left his palace, Rabbit went with him. Rabbit was jumping around; he continued going away from the Winter and far ahead of him. He came back and forth repeatedly. He ran around the Winter again and again. "That person, over there, that Rabbit is surely active," thought the Winter.

By and by, the Rabbit scared up a deer. "Oh, Brother Winter, a deer has come your direction. Shoot it," said the Rabbit. The Winter said, "No! I don't care for a deer." Rabbit thought, "What's he looking for?" After a time, the Rabbit was moving around again and discovered some men moving around. "Winter," he shouted, "Some men are coming to you!" Winter whispered to himself, "Yeah, that's what I want," and he killed the men and carried the dead men home on his back. When he reached home with them on his back, he had his wife boil them all: "Hurry up, hurry up and get those men boiled for the Rabbit, I think he's very hungry," said the Winter. The wife cooked the men until they were well done. She filled the Rabbit's dish with fresh human meat. "Hm! I'm not accustomed to eating such food," said the Rabbit, and he gave it back to the Winter.

When the provisions from the first hunt had been devoured, the Winter spoke a second time of going hunting. "Let's go, Rabbit," said the Winter. "No, mother's brother, you go alone," said the Rabbit. And the Winter, having made cold weather, again went out. and when he had gone, the Rabbit questioned the Winter's wife, "Oh, Winter's wife, what does Brother Winter fear?" The Winter's wife said, "My husband has nothing to fear." "No," said the Rabbit. "Even I have something to fear. How is it possible for our brother, Winter, to have nothing to fear?" "He has nothing to fear," said the Winter's wife. "No?" asked Rabbit, "Even I am used to being scared; how is it possible for this Winter fellow to have nothing to fear?" "Well, I guess that's true," said the Winter's wife, "Your Winter friend fears the head of a rocky mountain sheep." "Hm, just as I thought," said the Rabbit. And having found one, he killed it. He cut off its head with a knife and carried it homeward on his back. When the Winter reached his home, he asked, "In what direction has the Rabbit gone?" "He's just gone out of the lodge," said the Winter's wife.

After awhile, when it was dusk, the Rabbit reached home. "Oh, Winter, friend, that round object by you is a head of a rocky mountain sheep," said

the Rabbit. When he had thrown it suddenly toward the Winter, Winter became altogether dead with fear. And only the Winter's wife remained. Since that time, it has not been very cold in Nebraska.

Rabbit and the Sun

Once upon a time Rabbit dwelt in a lodge with no one but his grandmother. It was his custom to go hunting very early in the morning. No matter how early in the morning he went, a person with a very long foot seemed to have gone ahead of him leaving a trail. The Rabbit wished to know why. Now he thought, "I will go ahead of the person." Having risen very early in the morning, he left his grandmother's house. Again it happened that the person with the long foot had left a trail.

Then the Rabbit went home. He said, "Grandmother, I want to make a snare and I want to catch him."

"Why do you want to do that?" she asked.

"I hate the person," he said, and then he left home. As he went along the trail, he again saw the footprints, and he laid waiting for the night to come. He made a noose of bowstrings putting it in the place where the footprints had formerly been seen. And it happened that when, very early in the morning, he reached the place where he had put the noose, he looked at his trap and he saw that he had caught the sun. He ran as fast as he could homeward to tell his grandmother. He said, "Grandmother, I've caught something that rather scares me. Grandmother, I wished to take my bowstring, but I was scared every time." After his grandmother comforted him, he went out with a knife and got very near to his sun-trap.

"You've done wrong. Why have you done this? Come here and untie me," said the Sun. The Rabbit, although he was afraid, kept passing quietly by the sun a little on one side. Then he made a rush with his head bent down and his arms stretched out and cut the bowstring with his knife. The snare sprang up and the Sun flew from the snare and went up, up in the sky. The Rabbit had the hair between his shoulders scorched yellow, the Sun having been hot upon him as he stooped to cut the bowstring. Rabbit arrived at home crying and shouting: "I am burned, Grandmother; the heat has left nothing at all of me." The grandmother answered, "Oh, my grandchild, I think that the heat has left to me nothing of him. Oh, my grandchild, oh my grandchild."

Eventually the Rabbit got better, but from that time he has had a singed spot on his back between his shoulders.

In another story Rabbit is placed in the sky because of what a giant does to him. The giant is called He-For-Whom-They-Shoot-The-Deer. No matter what animals were killed by men or other creatures, they always gave them to the giant because they were afraid of him.

Rabbit and He-For-Whom-They-Shoot-The-Deer *

In one of his wanderings over the earth Rabbit came to a village that for a time mystified him, for on his entrance the people who met him spoke to him by gesture, in whispers, and in low tones. At first Rabbit laughed and spoke out loud but when he did so the people to whom he spoke fled and hid themselves. Seeing that if he continued to speak out loud he would soon have no one to talk to he also took to speaking by gestures and in whispers.

As he was walking around in this village of whispers Rabbit saw a young man standing at the door of a large tipi. The young man motioned Rabbit to go in. Rabbit entered the tent and he saw a lot of men sitting in a ring gambling. He was welcomed and given a seat in the ring and being familiar with the game he soon became very much interested and excited. An extraordinary throw was made by one of the gamblers, every man put his hands to his mouth to stop the laughter that arose, and each man's head bobbed up and down. Rabbit, forgetting the custom of silence, laughed outright, and the gamblers scrambled to the back of the tent and covered their heads in fear.

After a moment one of the men slowly raised his head, then coming up to Rabbit whispered, "He will hear you!" pointing backward with his thumb. "Who will hear me?" asked Rabbit in a whisper. The man made no reply but stepped softly to the door and looked out. He returned and whispered, "No danger." Then the gambling went on again in that silent mystery manner. A few days after this the crier went through the village telling the people in a loud voice that they were ordered to prepare for the deer chase the next day in the black forest. Rabbit, thinking that a day of fine sport was coming which everybody would enjoy, busied himself at once sharpening the points and retrimming the feathers of his arrows. His host, a man who looked big and powerful, sat opposite and did not move but gazed into the fire without expression.

Rabbit was among the earliest to start to the hunt. The hunters surrounded

*Modified from the story as contained in the LaFlesche collection, National Anthropological Archives, Washington, D.C.

the black forest in a wide circle and worked toward the center. Rabbit was very active and saw a number of deer but he could not get near enough to any to shoot. Suddenly he came upon two men, one of whom had just killed a large deer. "Good," said Rabbit, "you have made a happy day, my friends, but why don't you skin the deer and divide the meat? Why do you stand looking at it as though afraid to touch it?"

"We are afraid to touch it," replied the man who had shot the deer. "All this forest and the deer in it belong to He-For-Whom-They-Shoot-The-Deer and no one dares to touch the deer he has shot until given permission by this man."

"And you're all afraid of this giant—whoever he is—are you?" asked the Rabbit in a tone of indignation. The two men moved further away from the deer and looked around as though in fear. "Well, if you are afraid, I'm not," said Rabbit, "and I'm going to cut up the deer and take my portion and that is one hind leg and the backbone. That is the way we do at home. You may stand and watch me." Rabbit had almost finished when he heard heavy footsteps approaching and he looked up and there stood the giant, He-For-Whom-They-Kill-The-Deer. He was so tall that his head was above the treetops and the hind feet of the five deer that dangled at his belt hardly touched his knees. His bow was as tall as a good-sized tree and his arrows long as spears. He looked ferocious enough when he was not angry, but when his forehead gathered into a frown he became a terrifying object. "Who are you?" the giant roared in a voice like thunder, looking down at Rabbit, "and who told you you could cut up that deer?"

Trembling with fear, the two men dodged behind a tree and they made motions to warn Rabbit not to answer—but taking no notice of them he straightened up and tried to roar like the giant. "I am Rabbit and you will know me presently; after that you will know nothing. I cut the deer up to get my share of the meat as second comer the way my people do. If that isn't the way here it ought to be, and it's going to be that way if I stay here much longer!"

"Leave here this instant," thundered the giant, "or I'll blow you up in the air."

Puffed up with defiance and rage, Rabbit moved toward the giant shrieking out, "Blow me up into the air! Blow me up into the air! It will be your last blow!"

Quick as a wink the giant thrust his hand out and caught Rabbit by the left ear, then lifting him up at arm's length blew his breath with all his might upon him. Away went Rabbit into the air now right side up, now his feet

forward and sometimes turning a series of somersaults, but always turning vigorously—and all the while shrieking insults and threats of vengeance against his enemy. At last the giant became exhausted and could blow no more. Rabbit came to the ground with a thud; he landed on his feet, seizing his bow and, fitting an arrow into the string, he pulled it, bending the bow almost to the breaking point. He let go and quick as a flash the arrow pierced the giant's eye passing on into his brain. With a loud groan the giant fell in a heap to the ground, gave a few jerky kicks and died.

The two hunters who had seen the fall of the tyrant ran through the woods shouting, "He-For-Whom-They-Kill-The-Deer is killed!" Soon the people came running and gathered about the body of the giant. They gathered dry wood and bushes and piling them high over the body of the tyrant they set the bushes on fire and burnt the body to ashes. Then altogether the people shouted, "We will build a new village and have Rabbit as our chief!"

"No!" said Rabbit, "You build your village and chose a chief from your own people. I am content to be the grandson of my grandmother, and I shall go home to her."

Thunder Stories

In Omaha stories, the thunder is the power which controls the giving and the taking away of life. Each of the four cardinal directions has its thunderbird, the lightning which comes from that direction; the center of the sky also has a thunderbird in some stories. The thunderbird of the south is normally green or black. The thunderbird of the north is white or green. The thunderbird of the east is red, and the thunderbird of the west, yellow. The thunderbirds of the four directions are in some senses messengers of Wakon-da, the Creator, and of the four winds. In the story which follows, the chief's son visits four of the thunders in the worlds beyond our world. Each of the four villages is one of the four heavens or four worlds posited in Omaha-Osage stories. The place of the cedar trees in the story which follows is like the place of the tree of life in the Osage story of the creation. Notice that the young man learns to go forth on a journey after he has had a fast, probably after he has seen the young man's vision which tells him what kind of person he must be when he grows up.

The Story of The Chief's Son and the Thunders

There was a tribe whose chief had a son who was a young man; he was very lazy. He did not desire anything at all. In fact, he laid down all of the time until his father finally said, "My child, if one is a man, he usually travels. Why don't you travel? Go out with the young men and travel. Pay attention to the women, and take one of them for a wife." The son never said anything; he continued to be sad. All the time, even though his father spoke to him, he said nothing. Finally he said, "Father, let my mother make a tent for me," and his mother made a tent for him. He said, "Mother, make a couch for me in the tent." The boy entered the tent and fasted. He fasted for four seasons. For four seasons, he did not eat any food and he did not drink any water: winter, spring, summer, autumn. A few times he took a little food and drank a little water which his mother brought to him.

And it happened that while he fasted he thought in his heart, "Let me see? I will wear a robe made of scalps." Then Wakonda spoke to him in a vision saying, "Whatever you desire, that you shall do. You will surely wear a robe made of scalps." And then the boy made an end to the fast. At length, he said, "Father, let my mother cook a meal for me. Send the people after an old man for me, for I wish to go traveling."

"Yes, my child," said the chief, "If one is a man, he is accustomed to travel. I have always wished that you would travel. I do not wish for you to die in the lodge. I wish for you to die someplace that is away from home. I've always been sad because you did not wish to travel." After awhile the people arrived with the old man, and the young man said to the old man, "Old man, go after some of the young men for me."

The old man departed. As he reached each of the people's lodges, he said to the young men in the lodges, "The chief's son has invited you." And a great many young men went to the place where the chief's son was sitting. The chief's son exclaimed: "Hey, young men! I've invited you to go traveling, to go on the warpath." The young men were happy. The chief's son also said, "For four days you must make moccasins." And the young men obeyed. After four days they went on the warpath with the chief's son.

And as they went down the path, they came to the lodge of an aged thunder man who appeared to be very poor from the looks of his lodge. None but the chief's son knew that he was a thunder man but all the young men pitied him and said to each other, "Give him of our robes and of our other goods." So they gave him a portion of their robes and their food. Then the old thunder man said, "You people have been very kind to me. Now let me

be kind to you. Let me tell you about what matters." As he said this, the coyote who was a servant of the old man standing at the door gave a wink to the chief's son indicating that he should follow him and go outside. Once outside, the coyote said, "When he tells you to choose one of the four sacred bags—as he will do—don't take the three that seem to be the most attractive; take the old otter skin. All of the bags are good gifts, but only the old otter skin is terribly good." The chief's son and the coyote reentered the lodge, and the old man showed them some sacred bags that he had: a "hawkskin" bag, a "mountainskin" bag, a bag made of the skin of a bird whose name has been forgotten, and an "otterskin" bag. [We do not know what these bags are.] The old thunder man said, "Now since you've been kind to me, I'm going to be kind to you. Which of these four sacred bags do you want? If you wish to return the scalps and booty in half the day, take the mountainskin. Should you take the hawkskin, you'll return the next day. And if you wish to be absent for, say three days, take the bag made of a skin of a bird whose name has been forgotten."

He paused for a moment. Then he looked at the otter skin and cast it aside as if it were of no account, saying, "This otter skin one is good, but it is old and worn." Then the chief's son looked them over carefully and grasped the otter skin and said to the thunder man, "Grandfather, I will take this one despite its age." The old man, who was in a bad humor at that moment, scolded the coyote: "It seems to me that you are the one who told him that he should take the otterskin." But the chief's son said, "No, Grandfather, he did not really tell me. I really decided for myself." The old thunder man then gave the chief's son the otterskin bag and a wooden club and told him, "The owner of this otterskin bag really does whatever he desires, no matter how difficult it is. This club, it kills a great many people. Should you wish to kill all of the people in any village or place, flourish this club around your head four times and on the fourth round say 'Faah' in a loud voice, and the club will make thunder."

The old man knew what the chief's son thought in his heart, and he said, "After awhile you will say to yourself, 'I will wear a robe of scalps,' and you will find it to be true." Then he dismissed the chief's son. He left and went on his own way. In about four days, four of his men went scouting. As they scouted ahead, they came to a populous village, and they returned to the camp and said, "Chief's son, we've seen a village with a great many lodges." The chief's son replied, "Warriors, that village will do." So they went down the road until they came to the village. When they reached it, the chief's son surprised everyone by saying, "I'm not seeking this village, but a differ-

ent one." In the next few days they saw three more villages which were equally unsatisfactory to the chief's son.

As they were scouting, the leader said to the men, "Warriors, should one of our grandfathers be on your scout trail, beware lest you kill him." It happened that the scouts found a buffalo bull, and they spoke of killing the standing buffalo bull, but one of them said, "Why my friends, the chief's son said we were not to kill it." And the other one said, "No, the leader did not mean that standing buffalo, I think." The others said, "Yes, he did mean it." And all the men felt in their hearts that they wished to kill the buffalo except for the one who protested. Then the buffalo came alive with great life and charged the men and killed one of them. The three who remained went back to the camp, and when they got there, they said, "Chief's son, there was a bull buffalo there and he killed one of us." The chief's son replied, "Didn't I say 'Do not kill your grandfather?'" The scout wondered what he meant.

Later the chief's son went with his men back to where they had seen the bull buffalo, and when they arrived, they found the scout who had been charged by the buffalo and killed. The chief's son then said to them, "Warriors, let this be a lesson. Make the road straight. Since that one of your friends wished to lie here, let him lie here—by all means. As for you, avoid further killing of the grandfathers." Again they wondered what was meant. When they went on, four of the crowd went scouting. But before they went out, their leader said, "Should you see one of your grandfathers, beware of killing him." It came to pass that they saw a big wolf. They spoke of killing him, but one said, "The leader said we were not to kill the grandfathers." Others said, "The leader didn't mean this great wolf." One of them went wild and shot at the wolf. Lo and behold, the wolf ran for the men and killed the one who had shot at him. When the scouts got back to the main group, the chief's son reminded them that he had told them not to kill one of their grandfathers and further observed that the one who had been killed ought to be allowed to lie there since he wished to lie there.

On the next scouting trip, when the chief's son told them not to kill a grandfather, they should have been prepared. But this time they saw a grizzly bear. Another argument followed. One scout finally went ahead and tried to kill the bear and was in turn killed by him. The three went back to the camp. Again the chief's son reminded them not to kill a grandfather: "Warriors, make the road straight; as that warrior wished to lie there, by all means let him lie there." Thus the grizzly bear, the buffalo, and the wolf killed each a warrior despite the warnings and riddles of the chief's son.

The friends journeyed for miles and miles and finally came to the end of the sky. When they came to the place where the end of the sky was going down into the ground, the leader said, "Beware, warriors, beware of the end of the sky. Jump—jump to the other side! Leap! Beware lest in leaping you feel fear for the blinking of an eye." The leader jumped. He flew up and reached the other side. All of the rest leaped and barely made it, but one scout failed to jump across. One scout wished to jump across but was afraid as he jumped, and he failed to make it as he was wishing and fearing. The end of the sky carried him away—under the ground.

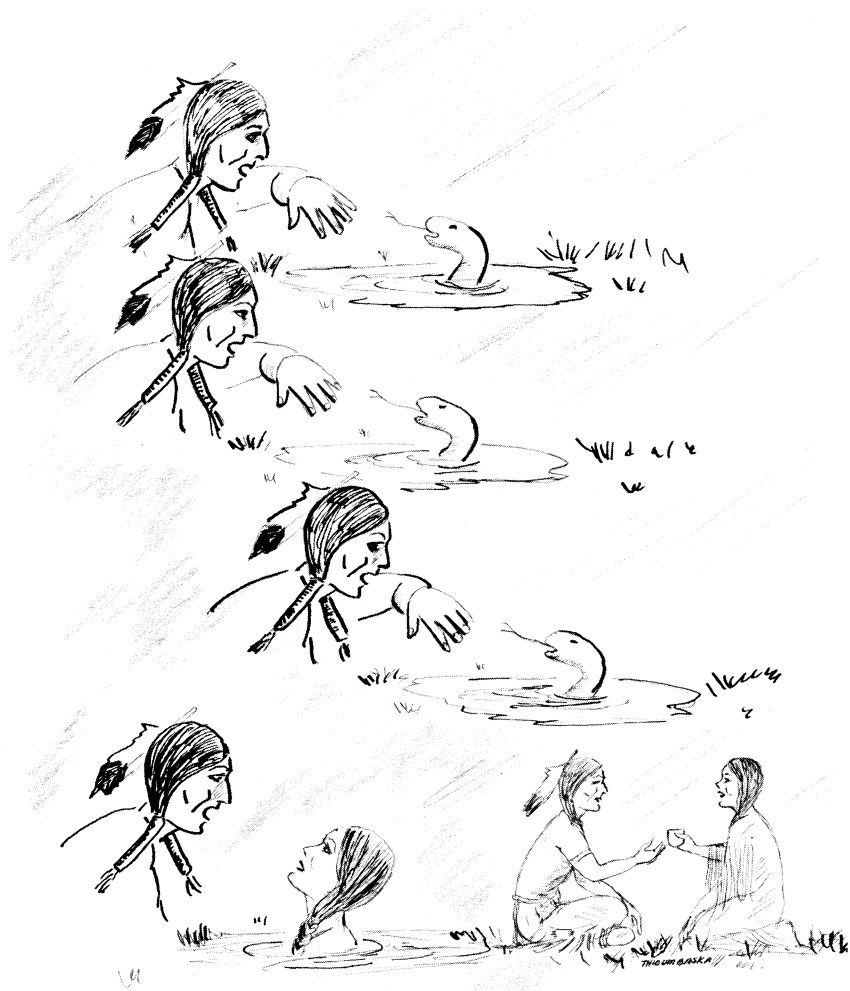
There was no sorrowing. The chief's son said, "Come warriors, let's go. If we wish to be warriors, we must expect such things. Let him lie there."

After they left the chasm behind, the scouts and the chief's son were going for some time. At last they saw a very high hill and a very dense forest of cedars. "Ho, warriors, we are going there," the chief's son said. "Come on, warriors; now we really must scout." The four went ahead as scouts and when they reached the cedar forest, they saw only a little smoke as a sign of life. However, eventually, they reached the town which was in the middle of the cedar forest, but even then they saw only the smoke. They did not see the lodge. In returning they said to the leader, "Leader, we reached the place where there must have been a lodge. We saw the smoke but we could not see the lodge."

The chief's son said, "Warriors, that lodge is what I am seeking." The four returned to scouting, and when they reached the place of the smoke, they again saw the smoke but not the lodge. They did return four times; on the fourth return, they saw not only the smoke but also the great lodge. Then the chief's son said, "Warriors, let us enter the lodge," and they entered the lodge and found in it an old man dwelling. His head was large, and his hair was white and when the chief's son entered the lodge he did not recognize him, but after sitting a great while he knew who he was seeing. He was the oldest of the thunder beings.

The old man greeted the chief's son. After having greeted him, he reflected to himself, "My brother thunders suffer very much. They go a great distance in search of game. Now some human beings have brought themselves into my lodge without any difficulty. Their life is easy, and they are going to make my life easy. I'm going to kill them." The chief's son was also thinking to himself. He thought, "I said to myself that I would wear a robe of scalps. That will be a good robe, and I will have it."

As the old thunder and the chief's son were looking at each other and thinking, one of the younger brothers of the old thunder came home bring-



The Snake Woman (page 76)

ing a black bear with him. His head was enormous, and his hair was very red. When he reached home the old thunder told the news to his brother. "You have had a hard time traveling to catch that black bear, but I have an easy time of it. Human beings have brought themselves right to my lodge while I rest, and I'm going to kill them without any effort." Another younger brother thunder came carrying a buffalo bull with hair very yellow. The old thunder repeated himself: "You've had to travel a long trip to capture that buffalo bull; yet, I have some human beings right here to kill." Finally, the third thunder brother, large of head and with hair very green, came home; he carried a dead man. No one brought the wolf. The thunder who first came and brought the bear cried out, "Old thunder-brother, have the men eaten who came to this lodge?" The old thunder replied, "No, they have not eaten. Go ahead and cook for them. Cook some nice slices of squash for them." And the thunder brothers went ahead and cooked the ears of the dead man for the visitors and served them as sliced squash. But the chief's son and his friends asserted, "We do not eat such things. We are not cannibals." The old thunder answered in a soft voice, "If you don't eat such things, what do you eat?" as though he did not understand them. And the chief's son and his friends said, "Cook us some fine, sweet corn."

The old man said to his younger brother, "Cook some fine, sweet corn for them;" he meant lice by 'sweet corn.' When the brothers saw the cooked lice, they said, politely and firmly, "We do not eat such things either; we are not bug eaters." Then one of the thunder brothers said, "Why not let them cook the black bear and the buffalo too for themselves?" The scouts and the chief's son rejoiced when they heard the good news, and they cooked the black bear and the buffalo for themselves and had a feast eating.

Finally it was night. When night came, the old thunder said, "You have traveled so far; you must have a lot to tell us about yourselves. Go ahead and talk. Tell us your life stories."

The chief's son, who had grown very polite as he journeyed, said to the old thunder: "Grandfather, we do have a great deal to tell but you have gotten old. Being an old man, you must know many things. Why don't you tell about yourself first?" The old man answered, "Grandchild, I am an old man but I have nothing to tell about my life. I will tell a myth—a story." And the old man told the following myth:

"Grandchild, there once upon a time was an old man and he dwelt in the lodge with his three younger brothers. When his younger brothers went to great distances hunting, they invariably reached home at night. It happened that when the old man was alone watching the lodge, a great many people

entered his lodge. And the old man who had the people entering his lodge sat thinking, 'My brothers have suffered a great deal going to very great distances to kill such things as a black bear, the buffalo, and other creatures; however, I will kill a great many men right here in the lodge.' And then he said, "Chief's son, grandchild, now you tell me a myth."

The chief's son said, "Yes, grandfather, I will tell you a myth. It goes like this. Once upon a time a chief had some villages. He also had a child. And the child was very lazy. His father commanded him to travel, but he did not. He did not wish to do anything whatsoever. At length the boy spoke a bit of fasting so his mother made a separate lodge for him. While he fasted, the boy thought of his father. He also thought, 'Let me see. I want to wear a robe of scalps.' And the boy went on the warpath with a great many men. And finally they came to a place where four men lived together. As the war party sat in the lodge of the four men, the boy sat thinking, 'I did say to myself that I would wear a robe of scalps. It will be indeed a very good robe and I will possess it.' Then as he looked at the lodge which he reached, he noticed that one of the brothers had very white hair, one had very red hair, one had very yellow hair, and one had very green hair. That was the end of the myth." The old man laughed with him, "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. My grandchild has seen the very same thing," he said.

When it was night, the chief's son lay with his eyes fixed on a hole in his robe as he wished to watch the old thunder. He spoke quietly to his followers saying, "My followers, don't go to sleep; lie without sleeping. Shush." And it happened as he was lying down at night, the old thunder lifted his head very gently and looked down at the people who were supposedly sleeping. And at length the old power seized his stone hammer, and when he seized it, the chief's son arose suddenly and brandished his club with a terrible roar and said, "Faah," and he killed all four thunders. Then he shouted unto his warriors, "Warriors, stand! Take the hair of all of these, Beware, lest you cut one of them in pieces." The scouts arose and cut off each of the scalps; the white one, the green one, the yellow one, and the red. And having captured the scalps of the great thunders, they went home. They came back to the end of the sky. The chief's son now said, "Warriors, go back to the other side. Stand in a row and jump." They did so. He sent all of them home before him. He went after. He ran very fast as he went and leaped very far, and as he leaped, the boy who had gone under the ground joined him and went homeward with him, being alive again just as the chief's son was.

They continued their homeward journey and they came to the place where the grizzly bear had been killed. And the grizzly bear came alive and

the chief's son sent the bear home before him. The chief's son went home after them, running and leaping fast. He took home alive the boy who had been killed by the grizzly bear, who had been dead. They came to the place where the wolf was, and the wolf came alive again. And the boy whom the wolf had killed leaped up and ran home before him. And they came to the place where the buffalo was and the buffalo came alive and the boy who had been killed by the buffalo came alive and ran home before them. The chief's son reached home with all alive; he did not lose even one scout. As the party went homeward, they passed by a great many villages and shouted as they passed, "Warriors, friends, followers of the chief's son, we will surely wear a robe made of scalps." When they reached the four villages, they killed all of the people in the villages and took their scalps, and then they came home to their own tribes. And when the chief's son came home to his own tribe with the four scalps, he governed all the people.

Explanation: Some people who have studied these stories believe that the four thunders of the directions are here equated with the four ages: the red thunder with youth, the yellow thunder with older age, the green thunder with yet older age, and the white thunder with old age and death. The grizzly bear is associated with the red of the east, the buffalo with the yellow of the south or west, the great chasm with the green of the west or south, and the wolf with the white of the north, with death. The young man who has gone to the country of the cedar lodge, where the cedar tree of life lives, comes back with the secret of long life and the secret of respect for the grandfathers. He is appropriately made a chief because he knows the four ages and knows the grandfathers who protect the four ages.

How the Thunders Were Placed in the Sky

In many Omaha stories, crossing a great water is equivalent to moving from the world of the everyday things to the world of holy things, or moving from earth to the sky. This story of "How the Thunders Were Placed in the Sky" suggests that the water, which is the sky world or which separates earth and sky, was originally on the earth and that the gap which moved the Thunders to the sky was a human creation. The two Thunders that the young man meets first are probably the Thunders of Winter and Fall, or middle and old age. The two other Thunders who come home are probably the Thunders of Summer, or youth, and Spring, or childhood. Notice that the Thunders

have sacred meanings which are associated with cannibalism: the human creatures are responsible for teaching the Thunders a discrimination between the world which is edible and natural, and the world of culture where cannibalism is not permitted. The sins of the Thunders in destroying 'man' in the human world are paralleled by the sins of man in destroying powers in the sacred world (when the hero comes to the sacred snake village and kills off the village of the Snake Woman). The story is a story of how the holy and the everyday relate to each other:

A father who was a chief spoke as follows: "My child, travel. Either hunt or work. I am a chief. When I sat doing nothing I was not a chief, but I worked; I was the best of the group in walking, so I hunted for my work. I am not a great man without cause. You must find your work. If you sit doing nothing, you will not be a chief."

The boy said, "OK, father! I'll go hunting. Saddle the horse." And so the inexperienced child went hunting. At length he found some elk who looked like a good quarry. He stationed the horse with its feet tied, and went on foot—creeping up on the elk, crawling on his hands and knees. When he reached them, he shot at them from point-blank range. Since he was green, he wounded one only slightly and then chased it. The elk took him a great distance from home. Eventually the horse tired, and he tired too. He was impatient from thirst. He came along running after the elk with his horse, but as he ran he thought and thought, "If I do not drink water, I shall surely die." When he became desperate for water, behold, a spring appeared. And he prayed to the power in all things: "Thanks be to Wakonda; I will live; Wakonda! I thought up to now that I would die. You have made life for and in me so I will live! Wakonda!"

When the young man went on thinking of drinking the water, a snake came out of the water. It scared him, and he fled. He cried out: "Alas, Wakonda! I thought up to now that I would live; but I stand about to die." He went again to the water to drink, and the snake came in sight again. While he cried and fled, he looked toward the snake and spring again. There was nothing dangerous to be seen, and he went to drink the water. Just then, the snake came in sight again. Again he fled. Fleeing and looking happened four times. As the snake appeared the fourth time, the chief's son looked and he saw it become a very beautiful woman. The chief's son stopped fleeing.

Then the woman filled a small drinking vessel and gave it to the chief's son. "I am incredibly thirsty," said the youth. "I'll not get enough," he thought. "Too little water here." But the woman made him have all the

water he could use, and the youth drank as much as he could drink. When he looked at the woman, he loved her: "A very beautiful woman," he thought. When the youth went homeward, the woman gave him a ring. "Wear that ring as you go homeward. And when you wish to eat, put this ring on a seat, and say to the ring, 'Come, let us eat.'" And the youth went homeward with his horse. When he reached home, his father said to the family, "Cook for him. He has come back hungry." And the family cooked for him. "Bring me food," the son said to the family. And they brought food to him.

But the son also wished to try the power of the ring. He pulled it off and placed it on a seat and said, "Come, let us eat." When he did that with the ring, the lovely Snake Woman sat right with him and ate with him, feasting to his and her delight. When the Snake Woman had finished her food, however, she disappeared suddenly. And the chief's son was lonely.

The youth put on the ring again and said to his father, "Father, I wish to see the women dance." And the women danced. And when the chief's son saw the women dancing, he did not find the beautiful Snake Woman among them, so he made his father stop the dance.

When the chief's son reached home at the lodge that night, he said, "Father, let my mother cook. I am hungry." He had just feasted, but he wished to feast again. And she cooked another great feast. When the feast was taken to the chief's son, he pulled off his ring, and again placed it near him, and said, "Come, let us eat." Again the Snake Woman sat right with him; she ate with him, and danced. Then she disappeared again. Indeed, the chief's son feasted, asked the women to dance, and danced with the Snake Woman four times. And the last time that the Snake Woman appeared and feasted and danced, she did not disappear but became the wife of the chief's son.

The chief's son and the Snake Woman lived together happily for a while. But one day the chief's son found another beautiful woman and said to her, "I will marry you. Tell your father and mother." The Snake Woman knew of her husband's bad faith and disappeared in a bad humor. When she disappeared, the chief's son said, "I wish to eat," and pulled off his ring. But the Snake Woman did not come back. And the chief's son could not eat because he was crying inside.

He decided to follow Snake Woman, his wife, so he put on very good clothing and told people he was going hunting. As he trotted along, he found the trail of the Snake Woman, who had gone back to the spring from which she came, and lo and behold, the trail went through the spring and beyond. The chief's son went down through the spring, following the trail of his wife,

following, following, following, till at length he arrived at a very unsightly lodge. He thought, "She may have arrived at this place," and he went there. When he arrived there, a very aged man was there, his clothing much torn in shreds. The chief's son gave the old man some of his clothing and the old man said: "Grandchild, you think that you are really nice to me in giving me clothing; you are kind; yet, I pity you. The woman whom you have been following went that way, across the great water. Take my very bad clothing and go down into the water." The old man gave the 'bad clothing' to the chief's son plus a knife and a headdress, and he gave him an old lame horse, too. Then the old man—he was a sacred man—said, "Come, go now. The woman reached that village there across the great water. When you get across," said the old man, "talk to the persons who are there. If they do not obey your words, send them away. Do not be afraid."

When the chief's son reached the big water, he saw that it was wide. The old man performed a sacred rite as the chief's son sat with closed eyes, and this sent the young man over the water at a stride. When he opened his eyes, he was on the other side. A lodge was there; the smoke arose in a straight column. "This is the place which the old man on the other side of the water told me of. This is it," he thought. The young man entered the lodge, and old men sat there. They were fearful in appearance. They were the aged Thundermen who watch over Fall and Winter, middle and old age. The other Thunders had gone hunting.

However, instead of being scared, the chief's son decided to play tricks. He pushed the headdress, which the old man on the other side had given him, down on one Thunder's head, and made a joke at his expense. But the old Thunder could not see him. The chief's son realized that he must be invisible. Then the chief's son noticed something terrible. The Thunders were eating men like us. Then the chief's son made himself visible by holding his headdress in a certain way. He was so arrogant that, even visible, he did not fear the Thunders. He snatched their pipes from them. One Thunder's pipe he held against the other aged Thunder man. "I am burnt!" shouted the old man. Just then, the young man pushed on his headdress, and he was 'missing.' One old Thunder shouted, "Why! A man brought himself here just now. Why was he not destroyed?" The other Thunder said, "Why was he not destroyed, indeed! Those who are coming home will blame us. They will scold us interminably because a man who came here got away slick as a whistle."

At length one other Thunder (the Thunder of Summer and youth) came home carrying a man whom he had killed. "Take that object," he said, and threw the man whom he had killed into the lodge. The old Thunders laid it

by the side of the lodge with their other food and started to pout. "Don't scold us—don't scold us—don't don't, don't," they whined. "A man came here and tricked us and got away slick as a whistle." Then they whined some more, but the younger Thunder said, "What were you about that you let him go home and did not kill him? I have gone a very great distance to get my man-meat, and yours came here at no trouble to you, and you let him off, you dummies. I hate you. Come, fill my pipe, you simpletons!" he shouted. The old Thunders filled the pipe, and gave it to the younger Thunder who had brought back the dead man. But the chief's son played the same trick on the younger Thunder—appearing, burning the Thunder, disappearing. Now the younger Thunder started to shout with his burn, and all three quarreled about who had let the chief's son get away.

A little later in the day, the youngest of all, the Thunder of Spring and childhood, came home. He carried a woman and a girl back from his hunt and threw them on the food pile. Then he started to relax, but the older Thunders said, "Youngest brother, you will hate us for what we have done." And so they told how they were duped. And, again, the youngest Thunder filled his pipe and was burned. And again our hero appeared and disappeared and made a mockery of the Thunders. But this last time, the chief's son made himself visible and talked to the Thunders. "I will talk to you," he said. "If you do not obey my words, you will surely die, but if you obey, you will be in good shape. You make these men whom you eat suffer. Why? Why do you kill them?" They all justified their actions by saying that a Thunder has to eat just like a man does.

The chief's son stepped back and looked very philosophic. "Have you seen the creatures that have horns?" he asked, meaning the buffalo. "Yes! There are a great many! Millions!" they said. "Eat them! Wakonda made them for all people. When you eat these pitiful human beings, you do wrong. Stop it," said the youth. "Don't strike and burn them. Have you seen those too?" he asked, pointing across the water at the elk. "Yes," they said. "Eat them," said the youth. And then he pointed to the deer and to other wild edible creatures and told the Thunders to eat such beings. "Leave these human beings alone. You make them suffer without cause. Will you stop this cannibalism? Will you eat the animals which I have commanded you to eat?" he asked them. And they solemnly promised to avoid consuming mankind. And so he said farewell: "I'm going now. But I will pass here on my return home. If you do not tell the truth, you will surely 'depart' from the scene; I will dispatch you. If you tell the truth, you remain continually. Those of you who eat the right animals will surely be here when I return. Not so the man killers," said the youth. And he departed.

The chief's son then went on in the world beyond the waters—following the woman's trail as it went along. He eventually came to a place where there was a big village. The Snake Woman had arrived there earlier and had taken up residence in the grandest of the village's lodges. The chief's son stopped and talked to his people and learned before he got to the village where the Snake Woman was living. When he approached near her lodge, he decorated himself. He performed a sacred rite which made beautiful the clothing which the old man had given him, which made his horse black, and made his knife gleam in his belt, and made his headdress perfect in its appearance. The horse came trotting and leaping—the proudest horse in the world. When the people saw the chief's son, they became suddenly amazed. They shouted, "A man has come, and his clothing is very good. He also sits on a very good horse." But the Snake Woman, when she saw her husband coming, ran out of her lodge and hid here and there in the village—as if playing hide and seek. At length the chief's son found her. He also found that she had taken another man for her husband in retaliation for his interest in the other woman on the other side of the water. He, who had come seeking her, now hated her. He was jealous of her. He was so jealous that he took the knife the old man had given him, and waved it around like a crazy man. When he waved it a fourth time, he killed all of the people in the village. He killed the Snake Woman too.

The chief's son went homeward, confused and sad of heart. As he went homeward, he came again to the Thunders with whom he had talked. He found human bones there. They had not told the truth when they promised to stop it. "You are indeed disobedient! Though I said that you were to stop it, you have not obeyed . . . you shall surely depart. I will dispatch you. If you remain here, you will treat the human race carelessly and gobble it up. I am going to send you upstairs for your crime. You who kill men, go up on high; whenever the day is very warm, you will make men cool again. Whenever the day is dark, you will light your pipes and fill it with fire and light." Thus, the chief's son prophesied the coming of rain and of lightning from the Thunders. Then he said, "Come on." And he threw them up above to the place where they could make men cool.

The chief's son went homeward. He reached the big water and called to the old sacred man who sent him across the water in one stride. When he came to the old man, he said, "Old man—I have come back. I talked to the persons to whom you said that I was to talk. I commanded them. They did not obey. I sent them straight up—up in the sky."

"That will do all right," said the old man. "In fact, it was good of you to send them away. They'll be better up there." Then the youth added, "And

this one whom I went following after—I reached her only after she had taken another husband, so I killed all of the people in the village, including her. I was angry, and I did the deed just as you commanded me to do it,” said he. “That will do. I desired you to do the deed, so I gave the great knife to you,” said the old man.

“Come, old man, I wish to go homeward. I wish to see my father,” said the youth. He went homeward, looking like a bum. His horse was very lame, his clothing was very bad, his headdress was very bad; everything was torn.

By this time, his father regarded him as dead. “He died,” he thought whenever he thought of his son and his last days in the village with the Snake Woman and the feasting and dancing. When the chief’s son reached his home village, the people did not know him. “A poor person has come to town. A bum,” they said. But the chief’s son went to the lodge of the head-chief. Having returned to his father’s lodge, he entered, but even his father did not recognize him.

“Father, it is me. I have come home,” he said. The father sat in dignified sorrow as if he did not recognize him. Finally his eyes began to gleam with recognition. “You have come home; I thought that you were dead, and have been sitting here full of sorrow. I didn’t know you. It is good that you have come home to the village and our people. Now you must stay. When I was young, my child, I traveled regularly over large tracts of land. I always came home very poor, having given away all that I had. Now I am a great man. Now that you are back, you should take a wife whom you can keep and stay here and feast with us.”

A Thunder-Related Story:

The Twin Brothers: Five Faces and the Forces of Earth, Sky, and Water

This story is a story of the forces of the earth, the sky, and the water. The heroes are two twin sons, one of whom has been raised by the human race and the other by natural creatures. The older son tames the natural forces, the water under the earth, the earth, by taming the creatures who dwell in each of these realms. The forces which are contained in the snakes may be the forces which chain down the corners of the earth from floating away in the water; the “grandmother” in the story is probably the Mother Earth. The four Thunderbirds are probably four representatives of the four corners

of the sky as well as of the ages and seasons. Finally, the reptiles appear to be the four corners of the water world. Each of these is brought home by the hero. In each case man shows that he has some degree of control over natural forces. And in each case, man restores them to their original place. The story may be a representation of the relationship between man's capacity to control the order of nature and nature's desire not to be manipulated by mankind or to be exclusively mankind's servant.

Once upon a time there was a man who dwelt in a lodge with his wife who was about to have a baby. As he killed many deer and was a good provider, they dwelt together very happily. However, the husband feared some unseen danger. "Beware, when I leave you, lest you look at anyone who comes in. Sit with your back to him," he said to his wife one day as he went away. As he left, the husband thought to himself, "Really! she is waiting for me; I am always fortunate in searching for things, and I am fortunate in finding this woman."

An old man came to the door and saw the woman laying by the side of the door. She did not look at him or speak to him. The man waited and waited to talk, but the woman said nothing, so the old man went home.

When the husband came home from the hunt, he said, "How was it while I was gone?" The wife sat up and turned to her husband and said gently, "It was as you said. An old man came and sat and talked. But I did not look at him or talk to him." The husband said, "Wife, he will come regularly; never never look at him."

The husband went hunting again, four times, and the old man came three times. And each time, the wife did not look at him or communicate with him. But the fourth time, when the old man left, as he went homeward, the woman peeped. When she looked at him, behold, it was the evil monster, Two-Face, that was moving along. And as the woman peeped, Two-Face flew back to her lodge—his two faces purple with anger. And he attacked the woman and killed her and slit her stomach with a knife and out came twin boys. For some reason, Two-Face did not choose to kill the boys but wrapped one in a skin with the hair on and laid it by the side of the lodge. The other twin, he mysteriously took homeward to his 'old man's' lodge and thrust it headlong into a crack in a log.

When the wife's husband reached home, he saw his wife dead from Two-Face's knife, and he mourned. Gently, he wrapped her in a robe, and buried her. The twin who was crying by the side of the lodge when the father reached home grew mysteriously and quickly; he was soon taught to run and

to pull the bow. He was almost a man before he had been a child. "Father, make me a small bow," he said. The man made blunt arrows for him to shoot at birds. Daily the father taught him such things as 'When the fresh meat is cooked on the fire, and is done, you may eat it, and then you may sleep.' 'Never go far away to play.'

One day the twin's father went to hunt. While he was gone, a boy approached, making a song as he walked. The boy said to the twin, "Brother, you have a father. You stand at home eating soup and goodies. I have no father. I have to eat weeds as I walk." The twin asked, "Has your father left you?" And the boy replied, "Yes, my father has gone." The twin then said, "Come. Eat these roasts with me."

"That sitting one, the pot, is your father. He is here!" the visitor said to the twin. "Shame on you. My father has gone hunting," the twin asserted. And so the two boys went into the lodge and ate and talked and had fun.

Now the boy who was really the twin whom Two-Face had taken away had been raised by field mice, and so he ate up everything and left. When the father came home, he complained that the roasts were gone, but the twin did not tell him why they were gone. And so the father had no meat. Three times the father hunted, and three times he returned to find his roast stolen by the Field-Mouse Twin and no explanation from the other twin.

The fourth time the father pretended to go hunting, but rather really changed himself into a buffalo neck that was dried very hard and lay inside the lodge door. The Field-Mouse Twin approached. "Has your father gone?" he asked.

"Yes, brother, my father has gone. Come, let us hunt lice for each other." The Field-Mouse Twin said, "Yes." When the twin hunted lice, he wrapped his Field-Mouse brother's scalplock round and round his hand and would not let him go. Suddenly the father arose from the buffalo neck and grabbed the Field-Mouse Twin and cried out, "My child, it is I. You and your playmate here are brothers. When your mother was pregnant with you, Two-Face killed her." And that evening the two brothers and the father told their life stories to each other.

The Field-Mouse brother stayed at his father's and brother's lodge. One day he also said, "Father and brother, make a small bow for me. I need to shoot at birds regularly. I need to learn to shoot."

Years passed, and the boys learned to shoot. One day the father said, "Beware going near to the spring in that unseen place." A few days passed, and the father went hunting again, and the boys—as is the wont of boys and young men—disobeyed their father. The Field-Mouse Twin said, "Brother,

let's go to the spring—the mysterious one we were told to look out for.” “Shame on you, brother; father commanded us not to go,” said his brother. But he was persuaded after a while and both went to the spring. As they approached the waters, shining rattlesnakes were lying there, shaking their rattles just in the prettiest manner, and the boys were hypnotized. “Brother, we have found some pretty pets. Let’s take them home,” said the Field-Mouse Twin. The boys caught the snakes, cut off the rattles and poison-tails of the snakes and took them home. When they reached home, they tied the rattlers’ tails around the door.

Now, when the father reached home (he had shot a deer), he saw the rattlers’ tails and was very angry. “You go right now and take those tails back to the spring and the snakes,” he shouted. The boys were crestfallen, but they obeyed. On their arrival back at the spring, they thrust each tail on its own snake, and the snakes wriggled away about the water.

When the father went hunting again, he said this time, “Don’t go to the deep ravine.” But the boys went, and a very old woman was sitting there, making pottery and sticking down in the mud with which she was working. The Field-Mouse Twin said, “Brother, this one sitting there is your grandmother.” [She looked very like Grandmother Earth.] “Grandmother, we have come for you,” he continued.

The old grandmother replied, “Though I have been sitting thus for many years, grandchild, no one can pull me out of this stuff to which I am sticking. I can’t walk where you want me to go. If you carry me, I’ll stick to you, and then I will always stick to you.”

But the Field-Mouse Twin said, “Well, let’s get the old lady anyway! Break some of her pottery. Get her out of the mud. We need her to help take care of the house at home.” So the brothers broke pots and put walking places in the mud and pulled the grandmother out and took her home, carrying her to the lodge. But when they got her home, she wouldn’t get off the Field-Mouse Twin’s back. “Come, grandmother, get off,” he said. “No, grandchild, I always stick in the way that I am sticking now. I warned you!” she said. “Tickle your grandmother in the ribs,” the Field-Mouse brother said to his twin. He tickled her in the ribs, but she continued sticking. “Hit her on the hip bone with the stone-hammer,” he commanded. His brother hit her on the lower part of the back and she suddenly fell off the Field-Mouse Twin’s back.

Later in the day, the father got home from hunting and the twin shouted, “Father, we carried my grandmother, and brought her home.” “Really! That’s evil. That’s forbidden. Go, and put your grandmother back.” And so



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the boys went to the gorge whence they had brought her. Again she stuck, and again a hit with a stone-hammer to the grandmother's lower back made her come unstuck. And she went back to her valley and her pots.

One day some months later, the father said to his twins, "Sons, a tree stands on the headland of the high bluffs. Do not go there. You must not." Then he went hunting. Again the brothers disobeyed and found the tree which the father had forbidden, and lo and behold, four young Thunderbirds sat hatching in the nest in the tree. And the boys decided to make them pets. The Field-Mouse Twin climbed the tree.

And so the Field-Mouse Twin threw down the Thunderbirds, and the brother knocked them senseless when they hit the ground. But when the fourth bird came down, suddenly the tree shot up very high, very far away from the ground and the Field-Mouse Twin was lost in the sky. "Rescue me! Rescue me! Help! Help! Help!" he cried. "I'll die up here where the world is just a dot, and the air is thin." But his twin on the ground was stunned by the miracle. At length he came to himself and thought, "Perhaps if I strike the tree it will grow shorter." As he struck the tree with the stone-hammer, he said, "This tree shortens of its own accord." And the tree became shorter. He struck at the tree with the stone-hammer again and again, and it continued to get shorter. When he hit it a fourth time, the tree was as before; it stood as tall as it had been before the accident. "Brother, that will do," said the Field-Mouse Twin. The boys carried their prizes, the Thunderbirds, home. They placed them inside their father's lodge and went out to play. But out of the lodge door came great flashes of lightning and thunder. Both boys sat laughing. "Brother, when father comes home, he will really love these Thunderbirds—about as much as he liked our other pets," the twin said to his Field-Mouse brother. The boys laughed again, and played with their bows and arrows.

When the father reached home, he pulled up the door-flap and saw the mighty flashes like a July thunder storm and he was very angry. "This time you have gone too far. Carry them back right now," he said. And he stormed until the boys returned the birds to their nest.

Days and weeks passed, and the boys took no more pets. Then one day the father said to the Field-Mouse Twin, "You and your brother should not go to the big lake whose shore is filled with canes." Then the father went hunting, and the boys, as before, went where they were not to go. When they arrived at the lake, the sandy beach lay very level by the water, and on it four-footed reptiles were moving about while standing very thick. "Brother, we have found very pretty pet animals," said the Field-Mouse twin. And the brothers

tied the reptiles' tails together and made them into packs, and carried them homeward. And the great lizards walked about by the door and sides of the lodge. When the boys ran and played, their feet trod on the tails of the lizards and made them cry out.

The father heard the great hub-bub as he came back with his deer. When he threw his deer down by the door, the lizards were crying out in a great cry, and the father, in sorrow and anger, said, "It is very bad. From whatever place you have brought them, take them back." And the children went with the lizards. Having gone with them in spite of their desire to keep them, they threw them suddenly into the lake where they belonged.

This ends the story of the twins and their pets. Having captured the rattlesnakes and the great sticky grandmother and the thunderbirds and the great lizards as their pets, having been forbidden to keep each, they felt no more desire to disobey their father or to make strange pets from the world beyond the camp circle.

Cardinal Stories

The next story is not a story of the Thunders themselves; it is a story which in symbolism is related to the stories of the Thunders which we have looked at. You may recall that in the descent of the first man from the world of the heavens, in the same realm as the Thunders exist, exists the great red bird, the male red bird, which gives to mankind their souls or their inner power. The story which follows tells of the issue of the existence of inner power or inner worlds and of the relation of these to the seen world. The four brothers who are described in the story are probably the brothers of childhood, youth, middle-age, and old age—equivalent in the human world to the Thunder powers who live in the sky. The child, splinter wrapped in the buffalo hide, seems to be wrapped with the earth version of sunpower or the life force. It is no surprise that the splinter comes alive as a child. The taking of the child may stand for death, but the flashing of the red bird through the tent is a common figure used for the taking of the soul or the return of sacred power. You will notice that the red bird can only be shot with sacred arrows.

The youngest of the sons in the story sets out after the young female red bird. He passes through four villages which may be the east, south, west, and the north—or spring, summer, autumn, and winter—or the four ages. He then comes to the water which is like the water of the first of the Thunder stories, the water between the present world and the world of the sacred. You will

notice that the woman is married to the sacred being, the red bird, to the source of power or of the sacred sense. This marriage to the sacred, in turn, apparently produces abundance in the present world.

The Four Villages and the Cardinal

There were four brothers who dwelt by themselves. They had neither mother nor sister. One day three of them went hunting, and the youngest one remained at the lodge. He chanced to hurt his foot with a splinter. Having pulled out the splinter, he wrapped it up in some fine buffalo hair, and placed it at the side of the lodge. He wished his elder brothers to see the splinter that had caused him pain. By and by the boy went for water, as he was thirsty. And when he had come very near to the lodge again, a child was crying inside the lodge. When he got inside, he found that the cry came from the splinter which had hurt him; it had become a child. And having wrapped it up again, he laid it at the side of the lodge.

When his elder brothers reached home, he told them, "Brothers, my foot was hurt, and I took out the splinter which hurt me, but now it is a baby." They got big-eyed and responded, "Stop! Younger brother, get out the sliver and show it to us. We must see it." And when he got it, behold, it was a girl. The brothers were astonished. They made small talk for a while. Finally one said, "Younger brother, up to this time we have had no children in this lodge. Let us bring this one up very well." The younger brother said, "Elder brothers, what relation shall we consider her?" And one said, "Let her be our child." And they said, "No. We have no sister. Let us have her for a sister." Having said yes, all had her for a sister.

And as she was an infant, and they wished to bring her up well, they took very good care of her. They did this for years and years until she became a grown woman.

One day all four brothers went hunting. The woman alone did not go, and when the brothers got home she was not there.

When the brothers searched for their lost sister, they did not find her. One day the three older brothers were hunting for the sister but the younger brother stayed in the lodge. As he was wandering around outside, he saw something very red shining through the lodge from the inside. When he peeped in, he thought, "What can it be?" It was a bird. And seizing a bow, he shot at it but missed it every time. He shot away all the arrows but one, which had been made sacred, and finally he shot with it. He wounded the

red bird with the sacred arrow, but the bird went homeward with the arrow sticking to him.

The youth went following the bird because he was discouraged. "My elder brothers prize the arrow very highly, and I shall lose it for them," he thought. As the youth flew on his feet following the wisp of red in the sky, he arrived at a large village. When he reached there, the people recognized him. "The youngest of the four young men who are said to be brothers has come! One of the famous marksmen has come!" they said. And they shouted and cheered in the square. They went to tell it to the chief. "The youngest of the four young men who are said to be brothers has come. One of those who are indeed famous marksmen has come," they said. And the head-chief solemnly replied, "Bring my daughter's husband to me. Bring him and no one else."

The people went out and got the youngest brother and returned with him to the chief. And the chief said, "My daughter's husband, you will marry this girl. And I will also give you a lodge." And the chief gave the youngest son his daughter in marriage. And after the marriage, the youngest son asked his wife, "Have you seen some kind of great red bird passing here on its way home?" "Yes," she said, "very early yesterday morning a red bird passed by on its return, and it went with an arrow sticking to it." And he said, "Then you can tell your father that though I have taken you as my wife, I go a-traveling. I will come back."

And the youth went on. He came to a very large village. And when he arrived there, the same things happened. This chief, too, gave him a daughter for a wife, and so did the chiefs of two other villages. So he had passed four villages and had four wives (perhaps east, south, west, and north—or spring, summer, autumn, and winter—or the four ages—or the four worlds). But he left his wives, and continued the search for his sister and the red bird.

After leaving the fourth village, he came to a great lake. The red bird had gone into the water of a very large lake. The boy went thither. And behold, his sister came in sight—came up out of the water. "O brother, come this way," said she, and disappeared. But the youth continued to fear the water. As he went there, the water separated, leaving a passage between. And that served as an entrance.

When he arrived inside and beyond the lake, he saw his sister again. She was married, and she and her husband were far from being poor. They had a great abundance of possessions. The youth was very glad to see his sister. And his sister too was very glad, as was her husband. The youngest brother's sister had hung up the arrow with which he had wounded the red bird in the lodge. It had been well placed in a horizontal position, in which it still

remained. And as he looked at the arrow and his sister's husband, he recognized that the red bird and her husband were the same person, that she had married what he had followed. And so he pondered and thought about this mystery and that of his sacred arrow for days. After a time, however, he remembered his elder brothers and asked to return home.

The woman told her husband, "My brother, your wife's brother, speaks of going home now." So the youngest brother's sister's husband made him four small boats, each one very small, about six inches in length, and said, "Wife's brother, take those home with you. When you desire anything, say, 'Such and such goods I wish!' and put a boat into the water." The young man went homeward with the small boats and the arrow with which he had wounded the red bird. When he went homeward, he reached at length his lodge in the fourth village (perhaps the village of old age). And he put one boat in the water of a creek that was there. When he put the boat in the water, the boat came to be full of different kinds of goods. And when he finished, he went homeward to his lodge. He got home to his woman in that village. And he said as follows: "I have brought back from my sister's husband a boat which is in that place. Let some one go after it for your father." And they went after it, and reached home with it. Then his wife's father had a boat; it was full of goods.

When it was night, the husband and his wife in the fourth village talked. The man said, "I will go homeward tomorrow, as I wish to see my brothers." And the woman went to her father and said, "O father, he speaks of going homeward. He speaks of seeing his elder brothers; hence he speaks of going homeward." And the chief said, "They who take men for husbands always follow them. Follow him." And the woman went homeward with the man. So he did with the daughters of the chiefs of the third and second villages. He gave them goods, and left with them. But when he reached the first village (perhaps the village of youth), he kept the daughter of the chief as his first wife, as she was not jealous. And he loved her. When he arrived at home, he gave the women of the second, third, and fourth villages to his brothers and so all found wives and the families were complete.

XIV. Orphan Stories

The next group of stories concerns the Orphan or “Orphanage Sacred Boy” as some people call him. The Orphan has some attributes of a sacred power and some very human attributes. He seems in some cases to be a kind of figure for the fatherless and the afflicted, for the weakling or the sellout, but he also has frequent encounters with the lower forces or with Monkey, the Omaha Trickster, and other very human creatures. Sometimes he suddenly turns powerful like Captain Marvel or Superman or one of the divine figures in Greek or Asian Indian religion.

The three stories chosen for this book are stories about Orphan and the soul-red bird, Orphan and coming of the white man’s culture, and Orphan and the buffalo. The first story, about Orphan and the red bird, resembles the Omaha Monkey stories (see Monkey section in this book) in that Monkey pretends to do something that he didn’t do—in this case, shoot the red bird—Orphan actually shoots him. The light of the red bird is very like the red light of the bird which shines from the red bird in the lodge in the story which just precedes this one, “The Four Villages and the Cardinal.” However, in this story the red bird is hung on a sacred hoop and has a very real power to create abundance in that the hoop, when rolled from the house where the red bird is kept, becomes a source of the buffalo—the source of sustenance for the people. The buffalo which emerges from the hoop is then carried to the chief’s lodge and becomes a source of plenty for the whole tribe.

After the Orphan has captured the red bird and brought sustenance to the tribe, he is rejected as unworthy by Monkey and Monkey’s wife. He leaves the village to come to the shore of a lake which, like the great bodies of water in earlier works, connects this world and the spirit or “power” world. The Orphan goes beneath the waters, is restored, and makes himself a sacred person by changing his costume, placing owls on his moccasins and robe, and placing the green algae on his wife.

After Orphan goes into the water to acquire his new beauty, he ascends through the four worlds above our world; he acquires the sky powers of the eagle, the buzzard, the crow, and magpie, and returns for a second time with the power of the upper world or the power of the four sacred birds. Having related to the spirit of “power” world through conquering the cardinal and providing abundance to his tribe, having come into harmonious relationships with the powers of this world through relating to the four birds in the sacred

sky tree, he is able to go back to his tribe and kill the creatures which he must sacrifice to nature in order to maintain harmony. The final assertion of his power is the village dance which he sponsors, and through which dance he destroys the Monkey forces.

Orphan and the Monkey

Once upon a time there was a village of Omahas. An old woman and her grandson, Orphan, dwelt in a lodge at a short distance from the village. The two were very poor and lived in a low lodge made of grass. But the grandson used to play games. So one day he said, "Grandmother, make a small bow for me." And she made him a bow and some arrows. The boy practiced and practiced and eventually learned to shoot birds. And after that, he used to bring back many birds for his grandmother, putting them all around his belt. He became an excellent marksman, killing whatever game came in sight as he walked.

One summer, Orphan and his grandmother noticed a special noise arise from the village each day when the sun was halfway up the sky. Each morning, all the people in the village used to make a great noise. It sounded like people cheering and booing and crying all at the same time. At last, the Orphan turned to his grandmother and said, "Grandmother, why do they make such a noise?" The grandmother went into the village and inquired, and when she returned she said, "A very red bird goes there regularly. When he alights on a very tall cottonwood tree at the center of the village, he makes a red glare that covers the whole village. So the chiefs have ordered the people to shoot at the bird, and whoever kills the bird can marry the daughter of one of the chiefs."

"Grandmother," said the Orphan, "I want to go there." But the Orphan's grandmother replied, "Of all places in the world, that is the worst place for you to visit. They call strangers bad names. They will tease you and beat upon you! There is no sense in your going!"

The boy paid no attention to her, but took his bow and arrows and went out of the lodge: "Don't go! You hear me!" said Grandmother. "I'm only going to play games," said the Orphan. But he went straight to the village. When he approached the village, he noticed a red light all around, and saw a great crowd of people, moving to and fro and shooting at the bird. When Orphan reached them, one man said, "Dirty little Orphan—why don't you try a shot?" Then he laughed.

The Orphan heard the man's words but he continued to hesitate, as he feared that he would get more teasing. But some people encouraged him, saying to the rest, "Get out of here! Give everybody a chance. Let the Orphan boy have a chance at a shot!"

So the Orphan shot at the bird. And he barely missed it. Just then Monkey shot, and sent a reed arrow beside that of the Orphan. The people said, "Oh! The Orphan came very near killing the red bird!" But Monkey said, "I am the one who almost killed it!" And he stuck out his chest and grinned and walked in a circle as if he were the greatest man in the world. When the bird flew away, the people scattered, returning to their lodges.

The Orphan went home. He said to his grandmother, "I very nearly killed the bird," but the grandmother only warned the Orphan against the teasing and abuse, and so the Orphan went back to try his luck on the next day and the next day. For three days in a row the Orphan barely missed, but on the fourth day, he hit the bird, wounding it through and through. "Oho! The Orphan has killed it," said the people, and a great cry went up. But Monkey said, "Nonsense! I killed it! I killed it!" and puffed out his chest and walked in a circle and pretended to hold up a bird that he had killed—a red piece of something.

Monkey would not let Orphan be the hero, and the people came in crowds to view the spectacle, the body of the famous bird. But when the Orphan approached the spot, he pulled out a feather from the bird in token of his near hitting it, so the people thought, but he really took the entire bird in token of his having killed it, and carried it home. He had left behind something that looked like the famous bird but was not. Then the celebration went on, feasting and dancing and joy. The chief said, "Bring my son-in-law hither!" So the people took the 'famous bird (actually the semblance that Orphan had left) which they imagined had been killed by Monkey and brought it and Monkey to the chief who had promised his daughter. And Monkey married the elder daughter of the chief, living his life in the chief's lodge.

In the meantime, the Orphan reached home. "Grandmother," he said, "I have killed the famous red bird that lit the village." "Oh! my grandchild! Oh! my grandchild!" she said.

"Grandmother, make me a hooprack between the fireplace and the seat at the back of the lodge," said the Orphan. And after she made it, the Orphan hung the red bird upon it. And the Orphan and his grandmother had their lodge filled with a very red light. By and by the young man said, "Grandmother, make me a hide hoop." And his grandmother made the hoop for



Orphan and the Monkey

him, placing it aside to dry. But the Orphan could hardly wait for it to dry.. But at last it was dry. "Ho, grandmother, sit in the middle between the fireplace and the seat at the back of the lodge," he said. Then the Orphan went out of the lodge and stood at the right side of the entrance. The Orphan said, "Grandmother, you must say, 'O grandchild, one of the buffalo people goes to you.'" And the woman obeyed. She rolled the hoop from the lodge to the Orphan. When the hoop rolled out of the lodge, it changed suddenly into a buffalo, and the Orphan wounded it through and through, killing it near the entrance. He and his grandmother cut up the body, and his grandmother cut the entire carcass into slices for drying.

At this time the people in the village had nothing to eat. The grandmother prepared a quantity of dried buffalo meat mixed with fat, and the Orphan told her to take it to the lodge of the chief, and to say to the chief's unmarried daughter, "O, daughter-in-law! Your father may eat that." The old woman threw the bundle of meat into the lodge, turned around suddenly, and went home.

When the bundle was thrown into the lodge, the chief said, "Look! A miracle! We have food enough and to spare to keep ourselves alive."

And when one of the daughters went to look to see who had brought the meat, she could not see anyone. The Orphan, by his magic power, had rendered his grandmother invisible.

On the fourth day, Orphan said, "Grandmother, you shall be visible when you return this time. Strange new things will happen!"

When the fourth time came, the old woman carried a sack of buffalo meat on her back, and on top of the sack she carried the bird. The Orphan repeated his message, "Grandmother, now you will be visible when you return." The old woman left for the chief's tent and as she walked, her bird shone with a red light. As she passed along by the lodges the people said, "Oho! We thought all along that the Orphan had killed the bird, but Monkey said that he had killed it. We were taken in by Monkey. Now the Orphan's grandmother is bringing the real bird in. To whom will she take it?" The people stood looking. "Oho! She has carried it to the chief's lodge! I wonder what her plan is—what the Orphan's plan is."

When the Orphan's grandmother reached the entrance, she threw down the sack, letting it fall with a sudden thud. "Oh, daughter-in-law, your father and brothers may eat that," she said. "Look! Look! Look!" said the chief. "She has done that before!" And Monkey said, "It's only that funny old woman out there. Could she have been the one who brought the meat before? She is just the dirty little Orphan's grandmother!"

The people in the lodges went out to see the grandmother of the Orphan, the bundle of meat, and the red bird. "Ho! Bring my son-in-law to me," said the chief. And they took the pack which the old woman had brought and they hung it up with the bird which Orphan had placed in the pack. They placed it beside the bird which Monkey had seemingly killed, which had been hung up. And Monkey's bird gave no light, but Orphan's bird gleamed. As they sat in the lodge it filled the lodge with a very bright red glare. The chief's representatives brought Orphan to the chief's lodge, and he married the younger daughter of the chief, making his abode with Monkey and the chief and their households.

Remember that Orphan had been very poor for a long time. His hair had not been combed for a long time; it was tangled and matted. Monkey's wife was disgusted to have poor people in the house of such a respectable person as she thought herself to be. She shunned Orphan and his wife. One day she said, "Sister, if your husband sits on the buffalo hide rug, he will make his lice drop on it! Make him sit away from it! Is it possible that you do not loathe the sight of your dirty little man?" The Orphan and his wife were hurt by this, but the Orphan was also proud. When the wife wished to comb his hair, he was unwilling to do it, just because of Monkey and his wife.

Orphan grew more and more tired of the snobbishness of Monkey and his wife. One day, when the sun was approaching noon, he and his wife left the village and went to the shore of a great lake. As they sat there the Orphan said, "I am going beneath this water, but do not return to your father's lodge! Be sure to remain here, even though I am absent for some time. I will return. Examine my forehead." Now in the middle of his forehead was a depression. He had been a poor Orphan, and was brought up accordingly, so he had been hurt in some manner, causing a scar on his forehead. The wife memorized the scar and implored her husband not to go—cradling his face in her hands. But the husband said goodbye and started to wade into the lake. He waded until only his head was above the surface; then he turned and called to his wife, "Remember what I told you. That is all!" And he plunged under the surface.

The wife sat weeping. She could not sleep. She walked along the lake shore, weeping and weeping because her husband did not return. At last her eyelids became weary, and she went to sleep at the very place where they had first reached the lake. She slept for many hours. As she was sleeping soundly, her husband returned. He took hold of her and roused her, and said, "I have returned. Wake up. Get ready to go with me."

On arising suddenly and looking, the Orphan's wife saw only a very handsome man; his hair was combed very nicely. He was not anyone she knew.

She hesitated to follow him, thinking him a stranger. Then she began to cry, "Do not mock me. You make sport of people! I married a very poor man, who plunged beneath this water, and I have been sitting here weeping while awaiting his return. Perhaps he will come back. Perhaps not," she said, and she burst out crying again. "Why! I am he," said her husband. Still the woman paid no attention to his words. "Now see the mark on my forehead. Examine it!" And he moved her finger across the mark on his forehead as she moved her eyes over the same spot. When the woman saw it was her husband, she no longer hesitated, but embraced him suddenly and kissed him.

Then the Orphan went to the shore, drew together a quantity of the green algae that collects on the surface of water, and made of it a robe and skirt for his wife. He had birds resembling short-eared owls over his moccasins and robe, and he had tied some to his club. Whenever he laid down the club, the birds would cry out. Late in the afternoon he and his wife departed for the village. When they arrived, the people exclaimed, "Why! The wife of the Orphan has returned with a very different man. I think that the Orphan has been killed. He went off in the morning. Why, this is a very handsome man!"

As the Orphan approached the chief's lodge, all the birds on his costume made a great noise, and the people welcomed him as a great figure. Orphan and his wife sat down quietly in the lodge. Then the wife of Monkey said to the Orphan's wife sheepishly, "Sister, let your husband sit on part of the rug." But Orphan's wife replied, "Why, elder sister! My husband might drop lice on your rug." And she threw one end of the rug toward her elder sister. Monkey's wife began to cry; she cried incessantly. At last her father said to Monkey, "This world is very large, but you are known everywhere as one who possesses various kinds of knowledge. Use one of these kinds of knowledge and make my daughter stop crying." So Monkey puffed out his chest and looked proud and tried to think of something clever to placate his wife.

By and by, Monkey said to the Orphan, "Younger brother, let's go cut arrow shafts together. Let's make arrows for your wife's brother." But the Orphan was thinking of other things and did not answer. So Monkey addressed him again a little louder. "Brother, let's make some arrows for your wife's brother. Let's go cut arrow shafts." Orphan agreed, and Monkey was delighted. When the Orphan spoke of laying aside his magic garments if they were just going arrow shaft cutting, Monkey objected. "Wear them! Why should you put them away? They're great."

So the two went out together to the Missouri bottoms. When they reached the edge of a very dense forest, some wild turkeys flew off and up in a tree.

"Wow! Younger brother, shoot at them. I would like to eat roasted turkey before I take my noon nap. A little turkey dinner would really do me good," said Monkey. "No, elder brother," said the Orphan, "We're in a hurry." But Monkey insisted, "Come on! Please! Kill one for me." Tired of Monkey's chatter, the Orphan said, "When my elder brother talks, he has so much to say he does not stop talking!" He then went towards the tree, took his bow, and shot at the turkeys. Just as he stood pulling the bow, Monkey said a charm in a whisper, "Let it lodge on a limb." And when the Orphan shot, he sent the arrow through the bird. "Let it lodge on a limb. Let it lodge on a limb," said Monkey quietly. And it fell and lodged on a limb.

"Oops! What a pity! Maybe you can climb up there and get the arrow and throw it down," said Monkey. "No, forget it. Let's go on," said the Orphan. "Why? You ought not to leave your arrow as well as the bird up there," said Monkey. "Go up for it and throw it down." And Orphan said, "Why, when my elder brother speaks about anything, he has so much to say he does not stop talking!" Grudgingly, he decided to go and climb the tree.

As he went to the base of the tree, he heard Monkey calling in the distance, "Ho! Lay your garments there! If you get caught in the branches, your pretty things will be torn." So the Orphan stripped off his magic garb and placed it at the foot of the tree and began to climb. As he climbed, Monkey again whispered a charm: "Let this tree shoot up high suddenly!" But Orphan had great hearing, and he heard him whisper. He turned his head and queried him, "Elder brother, what did you say?" Monkey answered, "I said nothing of any consequence, younger brother. I was merely saying, 'When he brings that bird back, I will eat it!'"

The Orphan continued climbing. When Monkey whispered again, Orphan repeated his question. "I said nothing of importance," said Monkey. "I was merely saying, 'He has nearly reached it for me.'" Then the Orphan climbed higher. Monkey whispered again, and made a similar reply to the query of the Orphan, who began to apprehend mischief. When Monkey whispered the fourth time, the Orphan said, "Elder brother, you have been saying something!"

"I said nothing of importance," said Monkey. "I said, 'Let this tree extend to the upper world.'" And as Monkey went around the tree he hit it at short intervals saying, "I say, 'Let this tree shoot up high very suddenly.'" And the tree extended to the upper world. And the Orphan stood in a very narrow place between the limb of the tree and the upper world. "Alas!" he said, and he wept incessantly, and his hair became exceedingly tangled.

At length a young eagle went to the weeping man. "O man, what are you

saying?" he asked. "O grandfather! O grandfather! O grandfather!" said the Orphan to the young eagle. "Come! say it! Tell your story," said the eagle. "Yes, grandfather, I am one of those who once left some parts of a young male elk at the timber at the foot of the bluff for you all to fly over and eat." The eagle replied, "That is right, I recall it. Now one of your grandfathers shall come to rescue you." And the eagle departed.

And the Orphan stood weeping, being very sorrowful. Presently the buzzard went to him. And when the Orphan told him of another animal, which he had left for the buzzards, he was told, "That is right. One of your grandfathers shall come to rescue you." Then the buzzard departed, leaving the Orphan weeping. By and by the crow approached. And when the Orphan told him of an animal which he had left for the crows to eat, he was told that another grandfather, a crow, would come to aid him. After the departure of the crow, the magpie came. He made a like promise and departed.

Then came the promised eagle. "O grandfather! O grandfather! O grandfather!" said the Orphan, praying to him for help. "Ho! Catch hold of my wings at the shoulders," said the eagle, "and lie on my back with your legs stretched out. Beware lest you open your eyes! Lie with closed eyes." So he moved his wings slowly—gliding in great circles, flying with the Orphan on his back, round and round the tree until he became very tired. He alighted from time to time to rest himself, and after he rested he resumed his flight. Finally he left the Orphan standing on a low limb so far as his world was concerned.

Then came the buzzard. He also took the Orphan on his back, after giving him directions similar to those given by the eagle. He also flew around and around the tree, going lower and lower, alighting from time to time to rest himself, and resuming his downward flight when rested. Finally, he left the Orphan standing on a low limb according to his world.

Then came the crow, who took the Orphan still lower. But while he was on the crow's back, Orphan opened his eyes lightly and he saw the ground emitting the yellow light of the second world. So he lay down again on the crow's back and begged him to continue to help him until the crow put him on what was to him a low tree branch.

But about this time the magpie came very suddenly. And the magpie carried the Orphan lower and lower until they reached the ground. When they were on the ground, the magpie lay insensible, as he was exhausted. When the Orphan went to get his garments, he found that Monkey had departed with them, leaving his own garments at the foot of the tree.

When Monkey returned home wearing the magic garments, the birds on them did not cry out at all, so Monkey pretended that they wanted to cry

out, saying, "Keep quiet! You will make too much noise in people's ears!" The people thought that Monkey was now the magic one and that the wonderful garments were being quiet out of deference to Monkey. But when the Orphan returned on the magpie's back to the foot of the tree, the birds on his garments knew about it, and they cried out with a great noise for some time, though Monkey had the garments on. Then Monkey reprimanded his clothes, saying, "Do keep quiet! You make a great noise in people's ears!"

When the Orphan reached the ground and hunted for his quiver, he found that Monkey had taken it, leaving instead his quiver with the reed arrows. When he looked at the arrows he found among them some wooden arrows having the points cut sharp with a knife. He also found that Monkey had left there his robe of raccoon skins. Orphan was highly displeased, but he seized the arrows, straightened the wooden ones, and with them he killed all the animals about which he had told his deliverers; he did this so that he would be their benefactor and friend as he had been before—and as they had been to him.

Then Orphan started back to the village wearing Monkey's robe of raccoon skins and carrying his quiver. When he drew near the village, his birds knew it, and they cried out. This made Monkey feel very proud, and he commanded the birds to keep silent. When the Orphan entered the lodge, he sat and watched Monkey wearing his magic garments. He didn't say anything at first. Finally he threw the raccoon clothes at Monkey and said quietly, "You used to wear that thing; wear it again!" Then the Orphan took back his own garments.

After Orphan's return, nothing of any note happened for some time. But one day the Orphan caused a drum to be made. He said to his wife, "I have returned after being in a very lonely situation. Tell your father that I wish all of the people to dance." And his wife told her father. Her father commanded an old man to go around among the people and proclaim the words that the Orphan had told. The old man went through the village as a herald, crying out, "Orphan says that you are to dance today. He says that all of you in the village, even the small children, are to dance!"

The Orphan, his wife, and his grandmother, who had the drum, went to the inside of the circle. The Orphan fastened his belt very tightly around his waist and then said to his wife, "Grasp my belt very hard. Beware lest you let it go!" Then he told his grandmother to grasp the other side of the belt, saying, "Do not let go!"

When all of the people assembled inside the circle of lodges, the Orphan sat in the very middle surrounded by the people. When he beat the drum, he

made the people rise about a foot above the ground and then come to the ground again. The people were enjoying themselves when he beat the drum. But he beat it a second time and made them jump a little higher. When he gave the third beat he made the people jump still higher, and as they came down he beat the drum before they could touch the ground, making them leap up again. He beat the drum rapidly, sending all the people so high into the air that one could not get even a glimpse of them. And as they came down after a long time, he caused them to die one after another as they landed on the ground. He thus killed all the people by the concussion which resulted from his beating the drum.

Though the Orphan's wife and grandmother were taken up into the air at each beat of the drum, only their feet went up into the air and their heads and bodies were turned downward. The women held him by the waist, as he had ordered them. Of the other people, only three others survived: Monkey, the chief, and the chief's wife. Now as the chief was coming down, he implored the Orphan to spare him. But the latter was inexorable, sending him up repeatedly until he grew tired of hearing the chief's entreaties. Then he let him fall to the earth and die. In like manner, he caused the death of the chief's wife. Only Monkey remained. "O younger brother! I implore you and my wife's sister! Pity me!" said Monkey. But the Orphan beat the drum again and when Monkey fell to the ground, the concussion killed him. Only Orphan and his wife and his grandmother remained.

Orphan and the White Men

The second story is the story of the Orphan and the white man. It may be Pawnee rather than Omaha in origin. Here the Orphan does not so much operate as a divine or power being (although he may symbolize to some extent the transfer of power from the native peoples to the white man and back). More specifically, the story is a satirical one which suggests the extent to which white men chose as their 'Tontos' the weakest, or most disreputable, people of the time, flattered them with gifts, and then used them as their agents to buy off specific families and divide the tribe against itself. People from the tribes who thus became agents of white society then were completely useless in the preservation of the traditional culture. The Orphan's disappearance with his wife into another world and the fact that the white man knows about it suggests some kind of power transfer and a possible reversal of that power transfer, but the meaning of the end of the story is not at all clear.

Orphan lived in a lodge with his grandmother, who was very old. The grandmother used to carry her tent-skin, that was worn by use, and the Orphan had only a bow. His skin robe was unsightly, and his hair was always uncombed. He lived by visiting the lodges and begging. He went throughout the camp, from one end to the other, visiting the lodges or tipis and begging for food. They called him 'the beggar.' One day the camp moved on while the Orphan slept. Though they nicknamed him 'the beggar,' they were always apprehensive on account of him, lest he get lost or starve or lose his life. But Orphan was sleepy. He continued to sleep by the old camping grounds, among the litter and remains of the old camp. He slept long after the tribe had departed, leaving the place to solitude and him.

As he was snoozing, he heard some pink-faced, rough-bearded men come up and look him over. He peeked through his eyelids and saw white men and heard them say, "This is the one whom we seek." When Orphan stretched out and got up, lo and behold, four white men were surrounding him. They looked him over, didn't say much, and went back to their people.

When he was fully awake, Orphan got dressed and got on the trail for his people's camp. He went following the road made by the migrating party. When he arrived, the young men said, "You said that the Orphan would not come; he's lazy, but he gets by!" Later in the day, Orphan went to bed at the lodge of the head chief, whose daughter had not yet taken a husband. And she gave food to the Orphan. And the chief said to Orphan, "The common people out there have no food to spare. The tribe is poor this year. Only I have any extra food. Whenever you wish to come, come here for a free lunch." But soon after, Orphan began to beg among the ordinary people. The chief lectured him, "When people have but little food, they eat only once a day. You have just gone home with food which my daughter gave you. You shouldn't be such a pig." But the chief's daughter gave the Orphan food again because she knew him.

When the camp was moved again, this daughter of the chief said, "Mother, when we move this time, please pitch our tent at the very front of the path. I want to see Orphan catch up with us." All the young men used to court the chief's daughter, yet she acted as if she did not wish to marry anyone.

On the next move, the mother pitched the tent where the daughter wanted and she then stood in the path waiting for the Orphan to come. When the chief arrived from gathering wood, he said, "You should have pitched our tent among the rest." But his wife said, "I pitched the tent as the girl, your daughter, commanded me to pitch it here." When the chief's daughter came back carrying wood, she did not put it at the lodge; she put it beside it. At

length the Orphan's grandmother came directly to that place, carrying her worn tent-skin. "Venerable woman, come this way," said the chief's daughter. "Pitch your tent here by my father's." Though the venerable old woman was ashamed of her tent and clothes, she did not speak or defy the chief's daughter. She placed the tent-skin by the wood which she knew the chief's daughter had put there for her use.

The chief's daughter helped the old woman make up her tent, and then the old woman sat there, saying nothing but "Oh!"

The young men were astonished. "Why! The chief's daughter has made the tent for the Orphan's grandmother. My friends, I think that she will marry him." They laughed and made jokes and made fun of Orphan and the chief's daughter. When she finished the tent, the chief's daughter carried her robes and beds to the Orphan's tent. "Why, it is just as I thought," said one of the young men.

The Orphan arrived at his tent, but he did not enter it. In spite of what was done, he stood diffident about entering his tent, because the woman was within. "Fie! Come on in," she said. He entered his tent. She made a very good bed for him, and she was sitting with him. Later she married him, and she had food with him. And the young men said as follows: "Why, friends, the chief's daughter has married the Orphan. That's a turnabout."

The Orphan and his wife traveled with the hunt party for some days. One day the Orphan said to his wife, "Please tell your father to let them stop and rest tomorrow." The chief sent the criers around. And the people thought, "Why should we stop to rest?" And the criers replied, "He says that you are to stop and rest tomorrow, halloo!" And the people said, "Why should one stop to rest when he is without food?" But they stopped.

At length, four white men arrived there. "Four white men have come," said the boys. "The Orphan says that you will assemble yourselves. Get to it!" said the criers. The chief commanded everyone to adorn themselves. The criers shouted, "The white man promises to give you all kinds of things. He says, indeed, that you will decorate yourselves, halloo!" And so the people came looking for beautiful things. The white men promised to give a silver medal to the chief and the people.

At length, on the morrow, the white men came in sight. The wagons came and stood outside of the camp. The principal white man sat before them. And all the people went outside of the camp. As the four white men were approaching, the principal white man said in a loud voice, "Go and seek him whom we promised to make a great man." They were looking for Orphan. The white men were seeking Orphan among those who were in the line of the

middle-aged and aged men. They returned to their leader. "Why! Leader, we did not find him," they said. "Come on, as you saw him at the very first, back where he was sleeping, you know him. Go again and seek him," said the white man who was the leader of the group. But the Orphan was nowhere to be found among the leaders of the people.

The Orphan put on his robe. He had his bow. He stood among the young men. And when the white men finished looking at the line of the elder men, they departed towards the young men, to look among them. At length they found Orphan—looking as he had looked when they first saw him. They said, "This one is Orphan," and they went back to tell it to their comrades.

"He is over there," they said on their arrival back at the white man's camp. All the white men went where Orphan was; they rode on seats in their wagons. They had a medal, and the robe too—which they showed to everybody as if it were a great prize. Eventually they approached Orphan. The principal white man said as follows: "We are employed by a great power, and so we have come here to talk to you, Brother Orphan. The President likes you. He has promised to make one man head chief over all of the tribes. Therefore, we have brought all these things to the greatest man in the tribe—you—Orphan!! You alone are a great man in the tribe. You other tribes-people—do not be jealous of him. Though, indeed, we have brought the things to him, that is just as if it was done for you. Come, go after him. Let us put him in a robe, and bring him back with us." The four white men went for the Orphan. They went to the rear of the line of young men to find him, and they put him in a grand robe and departed with him. Every one of the chiefs was displeased.

The white men made the Orphan sit in the middle of their wagon. The principal white man said, "This is the one. Let us make him the principal great Indian man. We have brought this for him to wear on his neck." Having gone to the Orphan, he made the latter wear the medal on his neck. "Come, bring the goods to him," said the white man.

Then they brought the wagons to him full of different kinds of goods: kettles, guns, tobacco, blankets—all kinds of goods were placed in piles just before the Orphan. He pulled the tobacco out of one box. He put his arms around some very large pieces of flat tobacco and spoke: "Notwithstanding people sometimes ridicule me, they will stop talking when I pass out goodies. You have been ridiculing me; it is time for you to stop!" He then threw the tobacco to make the people scramble for it. Somehow it appeared that he gave most of the goods to his wife's father. But his wife's father was displeased, because the white men did not also give him a medal. The Orphan

sent his relatives to his lodge with a great many goods piled up very high. The rest of the people got little. The white men said, "We have been sent here to make this great, wonderful, ambitious, bright Orphan your head chief. When you are destitute of implements or goods, ask favors of him. We will come here from time to time to perform for him what he may desire, and he will get goods from us and give them to you."

Orphan's wife's father collected the relatives. The relatives gathered what good clothing they had. After all, if they were to have a chief in the family, he had to be dressed well. The chief gave a good horse to the Orphan. When they ceased giving, they moved the camp. And Orphan ruled the whole village when they next moved to hunt the buffalo. He rode proud on his horse with his woman by his side.

Yet the people knew Orphan very well. Behind his back, they invariably talked against him. When they surrounded a herd, Orphan did not help. When they returned from seeing the buffaloes, the Orphan promised to take part in surrounding the herd, but he did no good. His wife's relatives surrounded their own part of the herd, but not he. The people grumbled against their leader. After the surround failed, the women spoke of going for chokecherries.

Since food was short, the Orphan's wife also spoke of going for chokecherries. "Go ahead," said the Orphan, and she went, riding a very swift horse. The Orphan did not go with her. He was sleeping. At length there was an uproar out beyond the camp. The people in the camp said, "They are exterminating those who went for chokecherries." It was true. The Dakota were exterminating the chokecherry pickers. So the people armed and went out after the foe. The Orphan said to his friend as he aroused from his sleep, "Get ready for me my very swift horse with very white hair."

The Orphan had only a dart, but he went in pursuit of the foe. And the Omaha warriors were coming back regularly and telling him, "They nearly got your wife!" When the Orphan arrived there, the Dakotas had nearly caught her, and he shouted, "I have come," to her. And she pleaded back, "You are just in time. This one behind me has got me cornered." "Oho!" said Orphan, and he roused himself. He attacked the Dakota fiercely. He pushed one and made him fall off his horse. He pierced another with the dart. Many from the foe were driving them back.

Then the Dakota advanced and nearly captured her again. She said, "This one has very nearly got me." Orphan said "Oho!" Acting very impatient, he attacked them. He pushed another Dakota, making him fall off his horse, pierced another with a dart, and fought like a hero. Again the Dakota were

driving them back. This happened four times. When the Dakota perceived that Orphan beat them back regularly, they closed upon him, standing very close together. Then suddenly he disappeared in the midst of them.

When the fight ceased, the Dakota had killed the Orphan. At least some people thought so. The people came out to look for Orphan but did not find the slightest trace of him. They did not find his horse. He had disappeared altogether. When the Orphan's wife reached home, she put good clothing on herself and prepared to mourn, but when it was night, she disappeared. However, the first white men who came to the camp later knew about Orphan's disappearance. Therefore, some people thought that the Orphan might have gone up on high where white people know what happens. They thought that the woman might also have gone on high, but they have never heard anything about them down on this earth.

The Orphan and the Buffalo Woman

In the next story about Orphan, the white buffalo (who is possibly the source of the white buffalo hide) is born; the bull buffalo calf, who is the child of the Orphan, goes in search of its mother, who is the buffalo wife. He goes through three experiences seen from the perspective of childhood: the terrors of old age, the occasional dense rains of middle age, and the mists and fogs of youth. Through that, he is reconciled with his mother and to the reconstituted family on which the story ends.

A second version of the story, not offered in this book, is a more complex one. It reverses the order of experiences seen from the child's perspective so that the Orphan, in pursuing his buffalo wife, experiences the four ages of man—the water of childhood, the canyon of youth, the thorns of middle age, and finally, the transfer to the upper world. Having experienced those, he comes home to restore fertility and happiness to the tribe. The meaning of the water, the canyon, the thorns, and the transfer to the upper world is not entirely clear, but a structure of successive symbols a little like this is to be found in the Winnebago Medicine Lodge ceremony.

When the Orphan's mother and father died, he dwelt with his sister. And his sister married a man who was an excellent marksman. When he went hunting, he brought back a deer on his back. And the Orphan said, "Surprise, Sister! My sister's husband is coming home bringing meat on his back. I will eat fat meat soon." And when the husband reached home, Orphan's sister



Orphan and the Buffalo Woman

took the fat wrapped around the kidneys, having pulled it out of the animal, and gave it to the Orphan with the liver. "Eat that. You truly desire fat! When you finish eating," she said, "go and watch the field."

Orphan ate and departed to the field. He was sad to be sent out by himself. And when he reached the field, he stood near a tree, and said, "Birds, come down and devour the corn in the field." And when it was night, he went homeward. This same episode happened four days in a row. But on the fourth day the Orphan's sister said, "Sit here and take care of things. We will go to see the field."

When Orphan was alone in the lodge, he lay sound asleep. A very beautiful woman arrived there very suddenly, and roused him by pulling at him. "Arise. Why do you sleep?" she asked. And when he arose, she said, "You ought to eat those fat parts of meat. Why do you not eat?" Orphan replied, "Though you say I should eat, it is my sister's meat. I am afraid to eat it, lest she scold me," he said. And she said, "Cut off part with a knife, and eat it." But the boy said, "Though you say so, I am unwilling." And the woman stood and cut off part of the best piece, just the size for one person to eat. She roasted it. Having given it to the boy, she said, "Eat it."

And the woman made the piece that she had cut just as it had been before, restoring what she took from the piece of meat. And it was thus again four times, for four days.

When the woman went homeward, she made her trail very plain. And the Orphanage boy went following her trail. He walked throughout the day, and at length, when he arrived at her lodge very late in the evening, behold, there was a very good lodge, a whitened lodge. And when he entered, behold, the woman was sitting there. She was sitting on a very good couch. And she gave the Orphan a small wooden bowl, filled very full with pounded and dried buffalo meat. As she gave it to him, he sat thinking, "I have been very hungry. How shall it be possible for me to get my fill?" And the woman said, "No. Eat your fill. We have enough and to spare." And as the Orphanage boy ate the food, he was filled until he was stuffed, but he still left some in the small bowl. He gave back the small bowl to the woman. At night, he lay down where she told him to, she having made an excellent couch and a pillow too. And it came to pass as he lay in a sound sleep that when he awoke in the morning, there was not even a lodge there anymore. Nothing. He was lying on the soft grass.

And this occurred four times, on four days.

Now the woman was a Buffalo Woman. That was why she could feed the Orphan and nothing be lost. That was why she could make the lodge vanish.

One day the woman was pregnant. She went about her business until the time approached when she was to be delivered.

One day Monkey was traveling and he arrived at the Buffalo Woman's home and saw her writhing in pain. "O first-born daughter of the household, why do you writhe so?" he asked. "Grandfather, my stomach pains me," she said. "Alas! My dear little grandchild! Your stomach pains you." he said. Then, suddenly, the Buffalo Calf was born. He stood very white. And Monkey thrust him suddenly under his robe. The mother called for her child, but Monkey said none was born. He had seen none. The Buffalo Woman wept and said, "Grandfather, you do not tell the truth."

Monkey departed and went out of sight, a very great distance, and then he took the Buffalo Calf out from under his robe and sat wiping the calf with grass. He was white, and beautiful of form. "Ha ha! How easily I have done as I wished! They are saying, 'We have been deprived of a very fine calf,'" said Monkey. And the Buffalo Calf ran around Monkey. "Why! Son of the Buffalo Woman—come back here," he said. And the Buffalo Calf returned to Monkey. This happened three times—the calf running away and the Monkey calling. The fourth time it occurred, the calf continued running homeward to his mother. And when Monkey cried, "Come back. Beware lest you run too far," the calf departed without stopping at all. And Monkey went on to another place, very sorrowful.

At length, as the Buffalo Calf went along, an aged buffalo bull was sitting there. And the aged buffalo bull said as follows: "O white buffalo calf, they took away your mother in that direction. They have already taken her down yonder long bluff extending beyond the other bluff. And, my grandchild, you shall go through occasional drops of rain to get to her." He said the words to the calf because he wished to make him strong. And when the Buffalo Calf departed, there were occasional drops of rain.

When the calf reached the foot of the bluff, there was a younger buffalo bull sitting there. He said, "O white buffalo calf, they have just gone this way with your mother. They have gone to the foot of yonder long bluff extending beyond the other one in sight. You shall go walking through dense, misting rain as you approach her." The bull buffalo loved the calf, therefore, he said these words to him.

When the Buffalo Calf departed, he went walking through the dense, misting rain. When the calf reached the foot of the bluff, a young buffalo bull—very new, small, of the sort that have very sharp horns—was sitting there. And the young buffalo bull said to the calf, "O Buffalo Calf, they have just taken your mother this way. They have gone to the foot of that bluff in sight,

the one beyond that one nearby. You shall go walking through a dense fog to get to her." And when the Buffalo Calf departed, he went through a very dense fog. And when he reached the bottom of the bluff, behold, there were a very great many buffaloes.

Now he began the fourth part of his journey. The herd sat there in the valley. They sat in a circle. The Buffalo Calf's mother was in the center. And the herd said to the mother, "Ho! Ho! The child has come in sight. It knew its loss; therefore, it is coming back to you."

Behold, a very aged female buffalo, very scabby, very poor, was sitting with her own calf near the center as the approaching calf came. When the white buffalo calf reached this aged buffalo, he sucked at her breast, as he was very hungry. He did not go on to his mother. And one of the buffaloes said, "Let four buffaloes start for this one sitting a little way off. He sucks the breast there." They went forward unhesitatingly and said to him, "We have come for you. This one at a short distance is your mother." But the Buffalo Calf was unwilling to go with them. When they wished to take him home, they failed. The four went back. When they got back, they said, "Leaders, we have failed." So the leaders said to a very tough buffalo, "Unsplintered-horns, go quickly, and kill the old buffalo."

And the buffalo with unsplintered-horns went thither and killed her. When he wished to take the Buffalo Calf homeward, he was unable. "This one at a short distance is your mother. Let us go home," he said. But the Buffalo Calf was unwilling. And the very tough buffalo reported that he had failed, "Leaders, we have failed again," he said. This happened four times. Finally, they took the white buffalo calf home to his mother. When they reached home with him, they made him sit with his mother. And there were sitting around her a great many buffaloes.

At length Orphan came in sight of the bluff, having been hunting for his wife, the white buffalo calf's mother, Buffalo Woman, up to that time. And the buffalo leader said to the Buffalo Woman, "Though your husband has come in sight, you shall sit with the female buffalo. If he recognizes you, you shall go home with him; if he does not recognize you, we will kill him."

But as Orphan went among the buffaloes, his wife told him by stealth, "A female buffalo just like me they will make sit with me. And when they say, 'Where is your wife?' you say, 'That one is she.' I will move my right ear to signal you. They will do the same with my white buffalo child. He, too, will move his right ear, and you shall pick him." And they made the Buffalo Woman sit with a female buffalo just like her. "Come," said the leader to the Orphan, "Pick whichever one is your wife." As Orphan stood looking at

them, behold, the woman moved her ear. Orphan said, "That one!" and was right. He took hold of her. He guessed right with the Buffalo Calf, too. "This is my child," he said. And he took him. And the leaders said, "Come, that will do. Go with him." And so Orphan and Buffalo Woman and Buffalo Calf were at one again.

Orphan and the Blackbird Horse

In some of the stories, Orphan is like Androcles in "Androcles and the Lion." He helps nature so that nature can heal him and his hungry people.

Orphan was living with his grandparents as he had no mother or father. One day the enemy came along and took his horse. He felt bad and didn't know what he should do, so he just went wandering off. He went so far and laid down in the wilderness and slept. After he had slept for a long time, he heard a noise. Another horse was standing by him and talking to him. He woke up and looked at him and talked to the horse, saying, "Where are you going to take me?" The horse replied, "I'm going to take you home. You get on me. I'll take you home." So the boy got up on him and went back to the village, and when he got off the horse he said to him, "I'm going to be your friend from now on."

When Orphan came into the tipi, his grandfather said, "Where have you been?" Orphan answered, "I've been down the line—way down—over the hill. I found a horse and that horse talked to me, too. He's going to be my friend from now on." So his grandfather went out and looked at the horse and said, "That's a good horse, too, all black like a blackbird. No spot on him. That horse's name is Blackbird."

One night Orphan was camping alone, no family, just a blanket. The people had left him and his horse behind because of spite and hatred. They were hungry and short of patience. Orphan said to himself, "I don't know what is wrong with me. I don't see why my people don't want me. You—Wakonda—put me here." He sat up and didn't know what to do. "I need you to help me, Wakonda," he thought. So he went out and found his horse—the same Blackbird horse. He was lost and crippled from having run from the camp. Orphan came to him. He hugged the horse and said, "My friend, I need you pretty bad. I am an orphan—no one left." The horse responded, "The people left me too. We're both lost orphans. We are going to be friends, travel the same paths, and support each other."

The horse was holding his foot up because it hurt, and Orphan went and got his knife and examined the hoof and found a stick in it. He took it out and with it came blood and water. The boy felt bad, very bad; he felt the horse's sorrow and soreness as if in his own body. He told the horse, "Since you're my friend, I'm going to doctor you, so that we both can go on." He went and got some sage root, cut it, and found a small bowl and cooked the sage in the bowl and then lifted the horse's hoof and doctored it with the sage mixture. As the horse felt it, he jerked.

Orphan also chewed some of the herb to make it soft and then plugged it into the horse's wound. He stayed with the horse until it was well. He didn't have any rope for the horse so he looked around until he found a small grape vine and cut that for a halter for the horse. He then rode it fast to the village which was abandoned when he also had been left. There he found a bow which someone had left behind, but he could find no arrows.

The horse understood everything that Orphan needed, so he went to find an arrow. Now Orphan had everything—a good horse which was healed, a rope, a bow and an arrow. Down in the valley a herd of buffaloes came marching by. The boy said to the horse, "I want you to help me to get one of them." He talked to the horse just as if it were another human being. He started out, got two buffalo, skinned them, and prepared the meat—one buffalo for himself and one for his people, should he find them. He took one hide to make a robe. He dried the meat. After that he loaded his hides on his horse and caught up with his people. The horse came in and everybody looked at him and said, "There's that Orphan Boy. There's that horse that we left behind."

Orphan then shared his buffalo meat with the hungry people. Later on, Orphan made good—he killed many buffalo for the people when they were desperately hungry and got hides for robes and a tipi for himself and for other members of the tribe. He made a home with his good black horse.

Orphan and the Flute

Orphan also invented the love flute and love flute tunes of the Omaha people. This is the story of how that happened.

Orphan got next to a girl in a village, but eventually this girl got mad at him and left him. He felt bad and hurt; he went back to his grandmother and said, "Grandmother, that girl quit me. I love her but she doesn't love me, I

guess." The grandmother said, "Well, all of the women are like that. If they love you, they are going to continue to love you. If they don't love you, they pretend and then leave you. Maybe she didn't love you; maybe you brought this on yourself." "No," Orphan said. "I didn't do that." Grandmother said, "Well, I guess she didn't want you anymore. Don't bother her anymore. Keep away from her."

Orphan was desperate and didn't know what to do. He went out away from the village and on a hillside. He was sitting out there, and finally he went to sleep. In a dream or a vision he heard a tune—a very pretty tune. When he woke up, he knew the tune. Afterward, he invented the flute to recreate the tune. He worked it as it should be—he used a buffalo windpipe to hold it together, because he had no glue. He tuned it so that it would sound as perfect as the tune in his vision. One evening just about sunset, as it grew dark, he played the tune from the hillside, the tune which he had heard in his dream.

The people in the town said, "Where did that come from?" They had never heard anything like that. They pointed to the hill and said, "There is a tune out there." And the chief said, "There is a tune out there; you go out and find out if you can discover what it is."

One man went out searching around, until he came to Orphan. He said, "Is that you playing?" Orphan said it was. "What is that?" the man asked Orphan. "This is my instrument—my flute." Then Orphan told the story of what had happened. The man came back to the village and told the people about Orphan and his music.

The next night Orphan played his flute tune again, and the girl who had abandoned him found him. She found him playing the song, a love song, which he'd heard in the vision. She said, "Is that you?" He replied, "Yes, it's me! Get away from here! Don't hurt me anymore!" The girl said, "I heard your tune. That's why I came. I want to marry you."

Now the tune said 'I'm going to see you again' and that was what had happened—Orphan had seen his girl again. The tune was a love song. That's why the love flute always brought girls to the boys in the olden days. And so the Orphan and the girl who rejected him were married and set up a lodge together.

XV. Monkey and His Tricks

The hero of the Omaha who remains most alive at present in Omaha storytelling is Ictinike or Monkey. Ictinike was not given a physical form until the Omaha people first saw the monkey, perhaps in a frontier circus. They said that the monkey they saw looked like their picture of Ictinike they had in their minds. Ictinike may or may not represent one of the physical forces in nature. An early Otoe account says that Ictinike (or Ictinke) is a figure for the wind. His frequent association with Rabbit or Rabbit's son, who relates to the sun, may give this idea some truth. His stories are the best and funniest, whatever he stands for.

Monkey and the Turkeys

Once there were a great many turkeys. They were feeding on the very high edge of the ground among the arrow-weeds. Monkey went there. Having discovered them, he bent his head at once, and was coming back again to the place whence he had started. "What shall I do in order to eat them?" he wondered. And he made a decision. Immediately he rolled up a raccoon-skin robe several times, making it a pack for carrying something. He carried it on his back, and ran at once very close to the turkeys who were feeding.

"Wow! Something is the matter with the old man. See him?" exclaimed the turkeys. "Why, old man, what is the matter?" they asked. "Well," said Monkey, "some villagers said that I was to sing dance-songs for them. I have been carrying my songs on my back for a long time now" The turkeys said, "We too would like to dance a little." But Monkey said, "No, I am going on in a very great hurry." "We would like to dance a little, and then you can go," said the turkeys. "Oh, what a bother! I am in an awful hurry; but if you wish to dance, you can have your way," said Monkey.

"Well! Come, let us see! Come on over in a group," said Monkey. And they came in a group. And Monkey pulled open his bag of songs and sang, and as he sang, he shouted, "Turn in your course and go around me. You—very large ones—you who are moving along, pass very close to me as you go dancing around me. Shut your eyes. Beware of opening your eyes. If you do, your eyes will become red," said Monkey. And the music played on. "Lift

your tails erect! Spread them out! Do-de-do. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. Come on and dance!" he said.

Then Monkey sang: "Alas for the gazer. His eyes shall be red. His eyes shall be red. Flip up your tails. Flip up your tails." Monkey caught hold of the very large ones and twisted off their heads in succession. He sat filling his bag very full. A small half-grown turkey saw the situation as he moved along. He walked with his eyes open a little now and then, "He is destroying the largest ones among us. He is killing us. It is Monkey, and we did not know who he was," the turkey said.

"Now! Now to fill myself until I am stuffed," said Monkey.

Monkey and the Elk

Monkey came to a place where a male elk was sitting. He talked to him for a bit. Then he said, "My friend, I have come to question you a little." The male elk said, "What do you want to ask me? My friend, I sit here tired in my legs; I don't go anywhere at all. The woman whom I married has been taken from me. My heart feels no joy. I just sit here," said the elk.

"My friend, let's go visiting," said Monkey. But the old elk told him to go alone. So Monkey went to visit the rest of the elks himself. There were a great many elk in the elk tribe when he found them. "Man, what is your business here?" asked the elk. "Well," said Monkey, "I have been wanting to eat the food which you eat for at least one day in my life. Therefore, my grandchildren, I have come."

"O grandfather Monkey, our food is difficult," said the elk. "We eat all bitter things as we go. Besides, when it is cold we sit facing the wind," they said.

"Grandchildren, you have said enough. I wish to live as you live," said the Monkey.

The elk group thought for a while. One finally said, "He may be telling the truth." They made horns for Monkey out of a small oak. They made him a tail like an elk's out of the oak root. They made hair for him out of cat-tails. Then the elks said, "Come on. Come on and eat these resin weeds." Monkey ate them, but they were bitter in the mouth, and he spit them out. "Psha! I have joined the eaters of rotten, bitter things," he said. "Well, old man Monkey, what did you say?" they asked. "I said, 'I have joined the eaters of very good food,' my grandchildren," said Monkey.

"Old man, we want to tell you one of our customs," said the elk on

another day. "You shall cause the children to use their ears (aright), therefore we will tell you one custom. When we discover men who are our enemies, we cry out."

"Well, I can do that," said Monkey.

It became cold. The wind blew, and it was very cold. All the elk walked facing the wind. Monkey walked apart from them, facing the wind, but he soon turned himself so that he walked with his back to it; and still he was cold. "This is terrible!" he said.

After going for a distance with his back to the wind, Monkey suddenly saw men. "Look out! Look out!" he shouted. All the elk raised their heads suddenly. "What's wrong?" they asked. "Look! Men!" exclaimed Monkey. But when the elk looked, it had suddenly become nothing but grass. "You mean that?" they inquired. "Yes," said Monkey. "Ho, old man Monkey! Don't you dare cry 'wolf' anymore. That scares us."

The elk grazed on, but Monkey saw men again. "Look! Men!" he cried out. When the elk looked this time, they saw men and they were peeping through the grass. "Well," said the elk, "Let's get out of here. Make a trail for the baby elk."

"I'll do it," said Monkey, and he went down a trail of his own making but right to where the men were. He passed right alongside of the men. And when he discovered the men, he talked with them. "Don't shoot! It is just me—Monkey! Shoot at my kids!" When the men saw the herd of young elk, they shot and killed them. Only one small male elk and one small female elk were alive. Monkey fled with them and reached a place at a very great distance from the place of slaughter. When he arrived at the place where he could relax, he took the horns and threw them away. He told the young elk to get out of there. "Don't follow me," he said. "I only joined your band to get myself a piece of fresh meat. Get out of here, elk. You're no good to me now with men after you." And so the elk and Monkey went separate ways.

Monkey and the Coyote

One day a two-year-old colt lay sleeping in a pasture. The Coyote was standing looking at him when Monkey came up to him. "Well, friend, this is a dead horse. We wanted to drag him away and eat him, but we have not been able to move him. Help us," said Coyote. "I will tie your hands to his tail, and when you pull, we will catch hold of his legs and we will go along dragging him."



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"Ok," said Monkey. "Come on. Tie my hands for me." Coyote tied Monkey by the hands to the colt's tail. When he finished, he said, "Come, my friend, pull on that tail." And Monkey pulled on it. Suddenly the colt awoke. He arose like a shot, and went off dragging Monkey along. He kept kicking at Monkey; he kept him crying as he kicked. While Monkey cried, the Coyote laughed till he panted for breath. Finally the colt kicked Monkey so hard that he sent him flying through the air with deep wounds in his flesh.

On the following day Monkey was eating a fish thinking of how to get even with Coyote. Then Coyote came by. "My friend, it is truly a pleasure," said Coyote. "Yes, a pleasure indeed," said Monkey as he shook Coyote's paw. "My friend, what were you doing when you caught the fish?" asked the Coyote. "My friend, I knocked a hole in the ice, and I sat with my tail put through the hole into the water. A fish bit me suddenly on the tail, and I caught it."

"Where was that?" inquired the Coyote. "Over there, old friend; these fish only bite in the evening when it is cold." That evening it was very cold.

"Old friend, let's go fishing," said Coyote. Monkey said he would be happy to go, and when they reached the ice, he knocked a hole in it and told Coyote to put his tail in the hole and sit. Coyote sat ever so quietly with his tail through the hole and in the water. After some time he said, "My friend, whatever is in there bites me now, but I don't catch anything." Monkey answered, "With this method, small ones bite in early evening; when the large ones bite, you'll catch them for sure. Sit still." After some time the ice commenced freezing over.

"My friend, again one of those small ones bites me," said Coyote. "Sit still, my friend," said Monkey. "After a while the large ones will come."

At length the ice froze over. "Now, my friend, one of the very large ones bites me. I'm sure," said Coyote. "Now, then. Pull! Pull! Pull!" said Monkey. The Coyote pulled and pulled, but though he tried ever so hard, he only slipped on the ice. "Put some muscle into it; that must be a whale," said Monkey. "Help!" said Coyote. "Take hold of my hands," said Monkey. "Pull, pull, pull!" Coyote's tail was suddenly pulled off altogether.

And that is how Monkey got back at Coyote—wrong for wrong—but the Coyote made a tail for himself out of twisted grass.

XVI. Ictinike and Human Cultures: His Effect on Those Cultures

Monkey seems always to help people tear down their way of life and build up a new one. One of the stories which illustrates this quality is the story of the child tribe, which is one of the most remarkable of the Omaha stories. In this story, the grizzly bear encourages a group of parents to leave behind their children. The children who are abandoned are at first lost, but later they perform a complete job of reconstituting their culture. In a more benign version of "Lord of the Flies," they recreate marriage, war, the hunt, and even the ritual system. Monkey then becomes the patron of this child or young person culture and teaches them how to express rage through the blackening of the body and eventually how to destroy the parent culture. Notice that the emphasis of the story is not on the parent-child relationship, but rather the parent tribe/child tribe one.

Ictinike and the Deserted Children

A grizzly bear was the ruler of a tribe that was very populous. He pitched his tent in the very center of the tribal circle. The grizzly bear took an old man from the tribe home one day and told him, "Tell your people to send all the children out to play." The old man then sent the children out to play, and there were over two thousand children. The crier went about the village chanting, "Children—go out to play! Children—go out to play!"

When the children had gone out to play, the grizzly bear called to the old man and took him to his home and told him in a low voice, "The children are a trouble to us. We sent them away to play, but also so we could abandon them. Tell the people to remove the camp." So the crier took his cue from the old man and commanded the people to move their tents; they struck all their tents in a flash, and had their horses carry them. And because the grass was green and fresh, they made no trail. Because they were fearful that the children would follow in case any sign of a trail was made, they scattered and agreed to meet when they reached a place far away.

When it was very late in the afternoon, the children got tired of playing and decided to go back to camp. But when they got there, no one was there.

The children looked and looked but found nothing, and some started to cry. They knew that they did not know how to live. But some of the children were older, and began to think about survival. The girls who were somewhat grown went about finding awls that had been dropped, and deer sinew also. The boys that were related to each went together in their respective companies. They found materials and began forming a lodge. They made the large lodges in seven places.

After the children had learned how to make clothes and lodges for themselves, the weather began to cool; suddenly it was winter.

The children knew times would be hard, but two of the boys who were almost grown said to each other, "Friend, let us two be together, let us make arrows for ourselves." They made bows first, then arrowheads, a hundred in a lot, and arrow shafts. They glued feathers on the shafts, and put the sharp pieces, the arrowheads, in the ends of the arrow shafts. When they finished, they slit a skin from one end to the other for quivers; and when each had finished making a quiver for himself, he filled it with arrows.

Then they said to one another, "Friend, let us go traveling." And they went. Finally they came to a place where there were a great many lodges. They arrived there when it was dark. They stole the horses. The members of this tribe hated each other, so they made shields to protect themselves from each other. Those, too, the two boys stole and with them they took the quivers and quiver straps. They also stole the horses and took them home. When they reached home, they discovered that they had just a sufficient number of ponies for the 'grown boys'—that is, those who were about four feet tall or taller. They gave the mares to the girls. To the boys who were about three feet tall, they gave colts.

While it was winter, the buffaloes came, and, since the two boys who had reached manhood had bows and quivers, they attacked the buffaloes. And each one killed four of the animals. The hunters used the ponies to carry the meat. As the children sat in equal numbers in the seven lodges which they had made, the hunters followed the camp circle, distributing the fresh meat evenly all the way back to the other end of the circle. They hunted again and killed more animals. As they had killed a great many buffaloes, they gave a great quantity of fresh meat to every lodge. And they gave the skins to the lodges for beds; they gave to the lodges equal shares of deer sinew. And they went again to surround the buffaloes. Now each chief of a lodge killed six buffaloes. Hence the children were in good spirits. They were very rich in fresh meat. And they gave fresh hides to any who lacked.

When it was summer, behold, ten of the boys were grown by that time,

and an equal number of the women were grown. And the two boys talked to each other. "Friend, let us marry." Since the two leading boys had two sisters, each boy gave his sister to the other boy in marriage. And they caused the rest of the ten grown boys and girls to marry one another. And that summer, all who were somewhat grown took wives, about twenty. And they alone made separate lodges—skin-lodges of buffalo hides. The rest who were not grown dwelt in the old earth lodges.

Again the group went on the war path and captured horses; again they hunted and killed buffalo. Again they married and were given in marriage. And so it was for four years.

Then one year, the child-tribe saw that it was about to be attacked. The two leaders prepared the groups for battle. Lodges had been made for them in the very center; and the young men had earlier said to the people, "When you make a circle, make the lodges for us in the center." From these central lodges, the two young leaders directed the battle. They prepared the horses and directed the warriors in arming. They attacked the foe. The one took hold of one leader of the foe, and the other took hold of another main leader of the foe. They captured them alive after a great battle. They scared the foe, driving them away. They chased them even into the night, and then went back home. When they reached home, they shaved off the hair of those whom they killed and were in good spirits.

The girls—now become women—danced around in a circle. They danced continually for ten days.

One evening a visitor came to the child-tribe. It happened to be Monkey. "Where is a lodge of a leader of this tribe?" he asked. "This is it," they said. Monkey looked puffed-up. "I have come, my friends," he said, "I have come to honor you as you are coming to be very famous. You are men and women now. Be strong, my friends."

One child-tribe member said, "O elder brother, I want to give you a horse to honor you."

"No, younger brother," said Monkey, looking disdainful, "I love only the quiver and arrows. It is difficult to get my food with what you have given me."

"I suppose so," they said, "but the horse with weapons will help."

Then Monkey said, "I will make my own arrows." So he made two hundred arrows—working until he finished them.

One day Monkey said, "My younger brothers, I want to go now. I don't want to be a visitor any more." And they said, "Where will you go?" But Monkey didn't answer. They assembled the people to say farewell to Monkey.

At the doings, Monkey said, "Come, tell me who are the fathers of the boys who are grown?" And each of the two grown ones said, "My father is such a one," describing his features, dress, height, and telling his name. Most of the rest of them were too young when their parents left to remember them.

Then Monkey departed. He slept each night in a wilderness. When it was day, he walked throughout the day for four days. On the fifth day he arrived at the circle of tents of the parent-tribe. Monkey asked, "Where is the lodge of the head man?" "Over there," they said. He went there. "A visitor has come," said a man. And others said, "Come, do tell the news." Monkey said, "Well, the news is that I think that you abandoned your children."

At first the people denied it. Then they blamed the grizzly bear. Then they asked Monkey if he knew of their whereabouts and what they looked like. Monkey identified what parents he could and went home to the child-tribe.

When he arrived, he said to the children, "Your parents have invited you to move your camp, and come to them. They hope that you will come in seven days and be reunited with them."

The children decided to go over to the parent camp and have a look. In seven days they had arrived very near to where the parents were. As the children neared the parents' camp, Monkey said, "Younger brothers, I feel sorry for you. When your father was head man, he listened to the words of a total stranger and abandoned you. What a pity." He filled the hearts of both of the child-tribe leaders with pain from his words, and they sat with bowed heads. Both sat thinking, "He tells the truth!"

Later the child-tribe came and pitched their tents not too far from where the parent-tribe lived and on both sides of a creek; the tribal circle of the child-tribe extended over a large tract of land. The parents came searching for their own children and pitched their tents nearby so that they could visit the child-camp.

As the parents continued to seek for their own children, they were constantly moving back and forth among the tents in the distance. Finally the parents of the two young leaders found their sons and came to invite them to a feast. They said, "The grizzly bear invites you." But the boys did not go. Finally the parent tribe invited the child-tribe to its camp, promising the unmarried women of the parent-camp to the child-tribe for wives, but Monkey rushed after the parent-tribe and its leaders. He crushed one leader's head in suddenly with a blow from the hoe. He rejoiced and laughed. And then the children exterminated the remainder of the parent-tribe. It would never again abandon the children.

XVII. Deer Woman Stories

Deer Woman appears to have come into Omaha literature rather recently. She is always the siren, seductress, and fatal woman. Her lovers are destroyed and she constantly reappears at Macy or the surrounding countryside.

Deer Woman and the Handsome Man

One time at a pow wow a beautiful woman appeared, a very beautiful woman no one had ever seen before. She appeared out of nowhere and began to dance perfectly, better than anyone else. Everyone there stopped what they were doing and watched her. Then a man, an Indian, also appeared. He was very handsome. He watched the girl dance and didn't say anything, but the dancing girl read his eyes. His eyes told her to follow him and she did. They walked up a nearby hill while a few of the Indians at the pow wow watched them. When they came into a spot of bright moonlight, they suddenly turned into deer. Then they walked down the other side of the hill toward the woods by the river. Some of the other Indians ran up the hill, but the deer had disappeared. But the Indians had proof of what they had seen, because there were deer tracks on the ground where the two had been. The Deer Woman still lives.

Deer Woman and the Stone Man

The Deer Woman can turn herself into a woman when she wants to, but she still has hoofs like a deer instead of feet like a woman. Sometimes she dresses in all white and sometimes she dresses in brown, which is like her skin when she is still a deer.

Two Omahas were walking along a road. They had been warned by a grandmother that if they saw a woman dressed in white not to look at her face or to look back. They were to keep on going without saying anything. At one time the two Omahas and a strange man they didn't know were walking along and went by a big church. A woman was standing on top of it, clothed in white clothes. The woman tried to call the three, but one of the Omaha

told the others not to look back. One of the men, the stranger, looked back and looked into her face and into her eyes. As he did this, he turned into a stone.

When the others got farther away from the church, they started running. They ran until they got home. They had a hard time catching their breaths, but they did. The next morning the two went back to the church to see if the stone was there. It was not. The woman was no longer there, either, and no one knows who the man was who was turned to stone.

XVIII. Miscellaneous Stories

The following stories do not fall into any series or sequence. They are reproduced here as reflections of the quality of Omaha storytelling, even when that storytelling is organized around no one great event (such as the Creation), or hero (such as Orphan).

The Grizzly and the Quail

During one of his wanderings, the grizzly bear met the quail and said to him, "Little quail, weren't you scared when you saw me?"

"No," replied the quail, "why should I be scared of you?"

"All animals, including the two-legged animal that everybody is afraid of, are scared when they see me," said the grizzly. "I am scared of nothing."

"Oh, I can scare you," said the quail. "I have often scared the two-legged animal you say everybody is afraid of."

"Phooey," laughed the grizzly. "The idea of your putting fear into anyone is pretty funny." The two parted and soon the grizzly forgot all about his talk with the quail.

One day, the grizzly was digging roots on the prairie. As he dug, he came to a small bunch of grass. He stuck his nose into it, when with a sudden whirrr and a thunder-like noise the quail flew up. The bear, shocked out of his wits, turned a complete back somersault. When he arose to a sitting position, he saw the quail speeding away over the low hills. "Well!" he said. "The little fool did scare me, but he won't do it again!"

The Coyote and the Buffaloes

For a long time a coyote followed a herd of buffaloes waiting for some of the calves to sicken and die so that he could for once have a great feast. He was lean and hungry-looking, even actually starving. Seeing the buffaloes devouring the grass with relish, he bit at a bunch and began to chew, but a blade sticking to the roof of his mouth made him gag and choke so that he could hardly get it out.

One day the coyote went up to a young bull and said to him, "Pity me, grandfather; pity my condition! Help me. I am starving. The food that I can eat is hard to get and I want to eat grass as you do."

"Then why don't you eat grass?" asked the bull. "What is to prevent you? How do you want me to help you?"

"I want you to turn me into a buffalo like yourself," said the coyote, "so that I, too, can eat grass and grow fat."

The coyote begged with such a sorrowful voice that the bull consented.

"Now," said the bull, "go stand over there, and I will run against you and turn you into a buffalo. Don't be afraid." The coyote stood where he was told to stand, but he kept looking back through the corner of his eye. The young bull, exercising all of the magic he possessed, pawed the earth, tore the ground with his horns and made the air vibrate with his bellows. The coyote trembled with fear thinking he would be torn to pieces. The bull was ready; he rushed at the coyote with horns lowered as though to gore him. When the bull was right upon him, the coyote leaped to one side with a yelp of terror and the bull did not touch him. The bull turned away in disgust, but the coyote begged again so hard that the bull tried once more and again without success. But in the fourth attack he brushed against the coyote and turned him instantly into a buffalo.

The coyote was no longer a starving coyote but a fat, sleek, young buffalo bull. He enjoyed this new sensation. He ate grass and weeds too, and enjoyed buffalo life for a few days. But he would straggle behind until scolded by the other buffaloes, accused of wanting to desert.

One day, as the herd was going up a hill, the coyote lagged behind pretending to be very busy picking grass. When his companions had gone out of sight over the hill, coyote dashed into a ravine and ran away just as fast as he could go. Coyote-buffalo had a friend, another hungry coyote, that he now wished so much to see. He galloped here and there and everywhere until at last he found his friend hunting for grasshoppers to eat.

"Go stand over yonder," said the coyote-buffalo to his friend, "and don't be afraid. I will run against you and turn you into a buffalo and you will eat grass and grow fat and sleek as I am."

The coyote, curious to know what would happen, did what he was told to do. The coyote-buffalo pawed the earth, threw clouds of dust into the air and tore the sod with his sharp horns, all the while making the hills re-sound with his terrible bellowing. He was now full of magic; he was ready. He rushed forward with all the fury of a buffalo and brushed against his friend. Lo and behold! Instead of transforming him into a fine sleek grass-



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eating buffalo, he turned himself instantly into the lean and hungry coyote that he was before.

The Father and His Son

Once a man had a son whom he loved very much. He taught him to hunt and to dance and to honor the sacred things and to pray to Wakonda. One day the son died, and the father in grief went to the holy man to ask him to pray for his son's return.

The holy man prayed and prayed until the father fell into a trance and went on a spirit journey. He flew heavenward and, at first, came to a great earth lodge surrounded with beautiful waving, deep grasses. A woman, benign and friendly in appearance, was preparing jerky outside the lodge. The father went up to her, spoke to her gently about this and that, and then asked to be shown his son's life and spirit. But the woman—who was our Mother Earth—said, "I am not the keeper of spirits," and pointed to the sky world.

And so the father journeyed in his spirit dream from the emerald world of our mother to the turquoise world of the sky. There he saw four turquoise hills, and on the fourth of these, the hill of old age, he asked a man with a crooked cane where his son was and whether he could have him back. The old man looked at him with a frown and spoke to him very severely. "You are a person alive with a human body. This is not your proper place. Your son is on the second hill, and you can take him back, but you—you, personally—will pay a price for this. Never, never appear in this world in that form again."

The father found his son among a multitude of youth on the second hill racing their horses and playing lacrosse and other games in the sun. The father embraced his son and took him back along the sky path and the earth path of vision to his body. When they came back, both awoke. The son was alive again, but the holy man told them, "You will pay a price for this. You never get something for nothing."

When the next change of the old moon to the new occurred, the father fell sick and died quickly.