

must follow in the leader's footsteps in order to keep their footing on the slippery beach at the bottom of the sea (MAM 4:97).

In conclusion a stylistic parallel to the fishing of one's wishes out of the water may be pointed out in *Ten'a* mythology:

All of a family of sisters except the second oldest who was a bad girl, draw in husbands in bags on their fish hooks; they dive into the water to settle in their husbands' village (PAES 6:94).

23. Skunk and Fisher

Skunk and Fisher live together; Skunk keeps house and gets only scraps to eat
 Chipmunk and Squirrel are sent to Fisher
 Chipmunk laughs at Skunk's noise
 Skunk hides girls
 Girls scorn Skunk's food
 Fisher keeps up fire and prevents Skunk from visiting girls at night
 Fisher and girls desert Skunk
 Skunk pursues them, sees their reflection in water and threatens to kill them
 Skunk loses his fluid in water
 Skunk sends his fluid into Fisher's eye; girls come down to Skunk
 Girls run away from Skunk and leave rotten wood in their place
 Skunk pursues them; tricks his hosts, leaving his dung to look like camas
 Skunk steals baby
 Skunk tells people hardluck story
 Skunk kills people with his fluid; spots Antelope and Wild Canaries
 Skunk cures blindness
 Skunk honored as chief
 People transformed into stars

Skunk and Fisher lived together. They had lots of deer. They would go hunting in the morning. They would kill two deer. Fisher would clean them and prepare the meat. Skunk would say, "Don't give me any meat, just the entrails, the fat and the meat near the back of the tail. That's all I ever want. You just give me those scraps from now on." Customarily they did that. Fisher hunted and secured plenty of meat but Skunk took only the scraps.

Not far from where they lived there was a village. Eagle was the chief who had two daughters. The younger was Chipmunk, the elder was Squirrel. One day he said to them, "Go to Fisher so he will give you meat." Before they left their mother said, "When you go in look carefully at the meat. What Skunk gets is no good. It's only scraps. Fisher's is the only good meat."

The girls went. They came into the house and sat down. They looked at what Skunk had at the head of his bed, then at what Fisher had.

Just as it became dark they heard Skunk's noise *p'ap'aq'*. He made this noise (of breaking wind) every time he took a step. Chipmunk had to laugh at this. Squirrel, her sister, said, "Keep quiet and come under the mat so he cannot see you." Meanwhile Skunk came nearer and Chipmunk was convulsed with giggles. He heard her and saw them. Then he asked, "Did your parents tell you to come to Fisher's bed? There's my bed." He grabbed one of them by the arm and made her go in behind his pillow. Then the other hid there too. Skunk set about making a fire. Soon a noise was heard, *tcisasa'at'at'*. It was Fisher. Then Squirrel said to her sister, "Didn't I tell you! What a nice noise his is!" Fisher laid down two deer and said to Skunk, "Come, drag them in!" Skunk said, "You make me ashamed. What if someone heard you say that?" Fisher thought, "That's funny! He never said that before." Skunk dragged in the deer and as Fisher cut them up he said, "Give me some of the ribs to cook." Fisher thought, "I won't be stingy. I'll give him some."

He prepared the meat, gave some to Skunk and they both cooked. When the food was done and they were ready to eat Skunk said, "Let's share with our pillows." "What do we want to feed our pillows for?" asked Fisher. "It's all right," said Skunk. He took a dish, put meat in it and set it just behind his pillow. Then he watched it while he and Fisher ate. When they had finished Skunk said, "Let us look." His plate was the same. He told Fisher to look at his. "What do I want to do that for?" "Oh, go ahead."

Fisher looked. The plate was empty. Only bones were left. "My, there must be someone here," said Skunk. Fisher thought, "I wonder why he says that. He never says it other times."

At night they went to bed. Fisher laid a stick on the fire. Skunk said, "You are making it too hot for me." "No, I feel sore, my back hurts." They both lay down near the fire. As the fire died down so that the house was dark Skunk got up. Just as he got near his pillow Fisher kicked the wood and it lighted up the house. So Skunk came back and lay down. Thus Fisher kept it light all night.

In the morning they got up and cooked. Again as they were dishing up the food Skunk said, "Let us share with our pillows." Fisher protested but again they put food near the pillows. When they had finished eating they looked at the dishes they had put near their pillows. Skunk's was the same as before, but on Fisher's plate there were only bones.

Fisher then went out and rolled a disk which made a noise like a bull-roarer. Skunk thought, "He's gone now." Fisher had gone out only to hide near the house in the brush. Then Skunk said to the girls, "Come with me. Fisher is already gone." So Squirrel and Chipmunk went with

him. He ran around making his noise. Chipmunk always laughed when he did that but Squirrel was quiet. Soon Skunk said, "Go back into the house. I am going away too." Fisher saw him go. When Skunk got out of sight Fisher went in to Skunk's bed where the two girls were hiding. "What are you doing here? Did your people tell you, 'Go to Skunk's'?" What were you going to get from him? Look at what he has handed out to him, nothing but disgusting odds and ends." Squirrel said, "Chipmunk laughs too much." Fisher said, "Go over there. We'll leave Skunk. We'll take the meat supply along."

They took the food and burned the house. It made a lot of smoke. They went past the smoke.

Meanwhile Skunk had been eating grass. When he had eaten enough he lay down on his back. He saw the smoke and thought, "The Cayuse must be burning the Coeur d'Alene." Then he noticed that the smoke was near and he got up and ran. As he came closer he saw it was near his own house. As he went over the hill he was sure of it. "Oh the chief's daughters, they may have died," he cried. He ran as fast as he could, but when he got there the house was burned. "The Squirrels died," he cried. He took a stick and stirred the fire thinking, "I might find some bones," but he did not find any. Then he wondered, "What could have become of them?"

He sat down. He thought, "I'll leave. Maybe Fisher will come back at night and then we'll find out." However Fisher did not come back at night. Then Skunk thought, "All over the earth I will go. There is no corner where I will not go."

So he started off. When he had gone far he found tracks of three people, Fisher's between the tracks of the Squirrel girls. Farther on he followed. Then he became thirsty. He saw a cliff and underneath it a spring. He went to drink. "What's the matter?" He saw the Fisher party deep in the water. "You are going to die," said Skunk. "Leave Squirrel and Chipmunk." But Fisher only laughed at him and did not go away.

"All right! You'll all die." So saying he exuded his fluid there in the water. They laughed and he did it again. Then he had no more. His strength had all gone into the water. He ate again and when he had enough he went back to the water. He lay down. Soon he thought, "I'll do that lying down this time." He lay on his back and looked up at the top of the cliff where he saw the three were sitting.

He got up. He said to the girls, "Leave him! I am going to squirt my fluid into his eyes." They said nothing. They only laughed. Then Fisher said to them, "Go far away. He can't reach me anyway."

They went far away. Then Skunk sent his fluid into Fisher's eye.

Skunk said to the Squirrel girls, "Jump down!" The girls paid no attention. "Hurry! If you don't come down I'll do the same thing to you."

They came down. They were sorry. Skunk said to them, "What business had you to go with Fisher?" They went away. They camped. At night Skunk ordered "Go fix my bed." The poor girls were obliged to fix Skunk's bed. They chose a smooth spot, they piled grass high for a mattress. Skunk lay down. He said, "You, Squirrel, will be my pillow." The poor thing lay down. "You, Chipmunk get under the calf of my leg for a support." She had to get under his leg. In the morning Skunk was asleep. Chipmunk woke up. She looked at Skunk. His legs were spread out. She said to her sister, "Wake up!" She answered, "I am already awake." "Go get a piece of wood. Put it down here where I am." As her sister put it down she crawled out from under Skunk's head. They put a piece of wood under his legs. Then they ran off.

Skunk kept on sleeping. He finally woke up and said, "Chipmunk, wake up! You have no flesh. You are hard." She paid no attention. Then he threw back his head and called Squirrel. But no, she was not there! There was nothing but a stick of wood. "Now you *are* going to get it!" he threatened when he found that neither of the girls was there. He ran off, found their tracks and followed them. He came to a place where camas was being baked in a pit. Someone said to him, "Maybe you are Skunk." "So you're here," he said. "I'm hungry for cooked camas." "Yes. You may eat."

The pit was just being uncovered and the food was taken out. He sat at some distance. "Come, sit nearer," he was told. "No just pass a dish over to me here," he said. He took a sack. He dumped the camas on it. He ate. He got up to go. He had some camas tied up for his lunch. Where he had been sitting the people saw some camas which had been spilled. "Look, you spilled some," they told him. "No, I tied it up and fastened it to my belt (like a purse)," he said. Then they asked, "Are you leaving it?" "No, I've already eaten the camas," he said. Then he went away and they found he had left his dung looking like camas.

Again he came to a settlement. Again he did not sit with the people but a little apart. At night something cried. The chief said, "Go see the baby." Someone went. It was dark. Skunk went. He saw there were many houses. He peeped in. He saw all the people passing a baby around from one to the other. He was not seen but he had his two hands cupped and moved in among the people. Then he took the baby. The people said, "Where is it? It is gone!" They scattered. In the morning they saw Skunk. He said to them, "I have something to tell you."

The chief called the people together. "Come we have something to announce." Skunk said, "Sit down. I want to tell you. I just came from

the Cayuse country. As I passed by the enemy ran after me. There must have been a hundred of them. I did my best but my firstborn was captured. I came on but a hundred and fifty of the enemy attacked me. My secondborn was captured. I kept on running. I crossed the river in the Cayuse country. Then my third child was captured. I'll stop right here. I want to go out."

He got up and just as he got to the door they could see his fists were far apart and he was holding something in them. He squirted his fluid on the door poles. The people all fell back. Skunk was gone. Fox ran out. On the way Skunk had thrown his fluid on Antelope right near the tail. He threw some on the little animals which became wild canaries. That is why their feathers are yellow. He saw Coyote. All the people died. A poor old blind woman like me (the narrator) was standing at the door. "How are you?" said Skunk.

The old woman pointed to her left eye. "Just a little I can see." Skunk sent some fluid in the eye and she could see. Then he threw some into the eye of another old blind woman. "Fine! I can see everything now," she said. "I got my eyes back again." Then Skunk asked the old woman, "Are there many people over here?" "Yes," they said. "Carry me back to pay me for curing you," he said. They said, "We'll take you in a canoe." Skunk said to them, "You must respect me as if I were a chief."

He sat in the canoe in state. One of the old women sat in front of him, the other behind. They moved on. The old woman said, "There is a nice village; it is white with houses." Skunk said, "Call out! Say, 'Here comes a chief with yellow moccasins. He has stripes at the back of his head and on his back. His eyes and his tail are striped.'"

The people crowded out to the shore. Skunk sat very dignified with his arms folded as if he were a chief. The chief and his people lifted him by the arms¹ and carried him up to the village. So they went. They made the noise of transformation and became stars.²

The end of the road.

The Skunk and Fisher myth has numerous analogues, all of which follow the same general outline. Such myths are found among the *Kutenai*, *Shuswap*, *Northwest Sahaptin*, *Coast Salish*, *Nez Percé*, *Kathlamet*, *Quinault*, *Chilcotin*, *Achomawi* and *Coos*. The main elements of the individual myths are outlined below:

The grandmother of Chipmunk and Big Chipmunk sends her granddaughters to Fisher; Skunk takes the girls in; Fisher escapes with the girls; Skunk shoots his

¹ The way of showing the highest respect to a hero was to lift him under the arms, raise him high and carry him thus to the house.

² They became something other than they were, perhaps stars.

fluid at them and kills all three; Skunk revives the two girls and takes them for wives; the girls hem Skunk in with rocks, escape and revive Fisher; Skunk escapes from the rock barrier by pushing out his body parts one by one, Raven flying away with his musk bag; Skunk comes to people playing with his musk bag and recovers it (*Kutenai* BBAE 59:231).

Two women are sent by their parents to marry Fisher; the women laugh at Skunk's noise and become his wives; Fisher and the women escape to a cliff, leaving wood in their place; Skunk shoots his fluid into the water at the foot of the cliff; the three up above mock him and he leaves, ashamed (*Shuswap* MAM 4:752).

Skunk hides a woman; his housemate, Eagle, takes the woman to a bluff; Skunk ejects his musk into the water at the base of the bluff; Eagle cuts the rope on which he is hoisting Skunk, Skunk drops into the water and sets out in search of his musk sac which has floated away; he recovers it from people who are playing with it; he ejects his musk at all the people who had spoken harshly to him; Cougar escapes Skunk; Prairie dog overcomes Skunk by whistling (*Northwest Sahaptin* UWPA 2:207).

A chief's elder daughter follows the wrong trail and is taken in by Skunk; Skunk's master, Cougar, runs away with the girl beyond the sky; Skunk pursues and shoots his musk into the water; the two up above knock out his anus with hot rocks when he attempts to ascend to them backside up; Skunk follows it down the river and recovers it from people rolling it as a hoop; Skunk shoots his musk at those people who were unkind to him; he is frightened by Skwkwi'kw's whistling, dies and loses his dangerous powers [Skunk kills Cougar; Fox escapes Skunk by whistling; five Wolves render Skunk harmless and revive Cougar] (*Upper Chehalis*, *Cowlitz* MAFLS 27:46, 198).

Skunk hides the five Killdeer girls who have come to marry Eagle and sends the five Frog sisters to him instead; Eagle sends the Frog sisters home; Eagle flees to a cliff with the Killdeer girls; Skunk shoots his musk into the water at the foot of the cliff; Eagle knocks out Skunk's musk sac with a hot stone; Skunk recovers his musk sac, is alarmed by his captive's whistling and is killed by the wolves (*Nez Percé* CUCA 25:251).

Owl hides the girl sent to his chief, Panther, by Bluejay; after five nights Panther finds the girl and takes her; Owl and Panther fight in the air; the girl puts Panther's bones together and replaces his missing intestines with those of Lynx (*Kathlamet* BBAE 26:129). [The air-fight or tree-fight, though it has no counterpart in Coeur d'Alene mythology, is a common myth episode, called into service most often in connection with the overpowering of dangerous beings.]

A girl, sent to Owl's house, arrives at Screech Owl's by mistake; the girl flees and hides in a tree; Screech Owl jumps at her reflection in the water and is almost frozen; the girl marries Owl; Screech Owl claims her for his wife; the fifth time Owl and the girl tear Screech Owl to pieces (*Quinault* MAM 4:122).

Some girls hide in a house; they laugh at Skunk smelling about for them; Skunk finds and marries them; some men steal them and carry them to a mountain top; Skunk tracks them, ejects his secretion and the mountain falls, killing the men; the girls tire of Skunk and run away to sky country, to return eventually to their mother's house (*Chilcotin* MAM 4:28).

Two sisters are sent to chief Pine Marten; the younger girl saves her sister from being deceived by Coyote's disguise; Hawk Man takes the two girls in; Hawk Man, given nothing but bones to eat by the people, tries to feed the girls his own flesh; the younger sister discovers his identity; the two girls go to Pine Marten; Hawk Man causes a great rain; Pine Marten has Hawk Man's head cut off (*Achomawi* JAF 21:163).

Two girls, sent to Sea Otter, a great hunter, marry his servant, Old Beaver, by mistake; the girls leave Beaver and marry Sea Otter; when Beaver pursues them, the people kill him (*Coos* JAF 22:35).

Despite the variations to be noted in even the main features of these abstractions, notably in the myth dénouement as compared with that of the Coeur d'Alene story which is not found duplicated, a general framework outlines them all: girls are sent to a person of rank and standing; his servant or inferior takes them in by deceit; they manage to get to the one whom they sought originally; the servant may avenge himself temporarily, but is ultimately overcome. In those myths most similar to the Coeur d'Alene story in which Skunk has the role of the evil-doer, he consistently has certain distinguishing characteristics and features which identify him—his degrading servility, disagreeable noise, dangerous fluid (its loss and recovery), delusion by reflections in the water, treachery to his hosts and talkative, story-telling habit. There is often also his cringing defeat brought about by his victim's whistling, though this is not included in the Coeur d'Alene model. Skunk as a kidnapper and a chief is a distinctly Coeur d'Alene addition. When other characters such as Screech Owl, replace Skunk, they may possess several, generally only the first, of these distinctive Skunk features.

A *Kutenai* and a *Southern Puget Sound* story have singled out one major element of the Coeur d'Alene myth for the motivation of a short story.

Skunk pursues Panther (Fox) to a lake; he breaks wind at Panther's reflection in the water; he lies down and discovers Panther up above; before he can act, Panther shoots him [Skunk succeeds in killing Panther in the tree] (*Kutenai* BBAE 59:24, 41, 49).

A girl is warned by Raccoon Woman, slave of Thunderbird and his housemate, Skunk, not to laugh at Skunk's jesting and singing or she will be obliged to become

Skunk's wife; the girl heeds the warning; Master Hunter marries her (*Southern Puget Sound* UWPA 3:106).

24. *The Girls Who Stole Dentalia (Kidnapping)*

Chief orders daughters to throw all bones into water and not look at them
 Daughters disobey and discover bones have turned into dentalia
 Girls build house in woods
 They get threat for stringing dentalia by lying
 Chief discovers deceit and deserts daughters
 Girls cross river
 Younger girl breaks eating taboo and is deserted by older sister
 Older girl gives Mudhen dentalium
 Mudhen secures girl as wife for her grandson, Redheaded Woodpecker
 Baby is born to girl and kidnapped by four man-eating sisters
 Mother pursues Man-eaters
 Meadowlark directs her
 Mother catches full-grown son in sweat-house
 Proves motherhood by jumping in her son's tracks and throwing a pailful of water
 without spilling any
 Son leaves dummy behind and flees with mother
 Man-eaters pursue
 Son and mother cross water on her belt; Man-eaters fall off and are drowned
 Man-eaters become terns
 Son turns into helldiver
 Mother turns into robin

There was a settlement. Many people lived there. The chief had two daughters.¹ The chief said to the people, "When you eat meat bring the bones over to me."

The people ate. At night they brought him a lot of bones in a bucket. In the morning he said to his daughters, "Go make a hole in the ice, throw the bones into the water, but don't look at them. Just put them in, then go away."

For a while they did just as he said, but one day one of them thought, "I wonder what that noise is, *mu mu mu*." She thought she would look. As soon as she poured the bones in she looked. The bones had become dentalia. Soon the ice would be full of them. She told her sister about it. They talked it over. "Let's go into the timber and make a house." They did so. They took two sacks full of dentalia to their house. One said to her sister, "Ask all the people for grass thread. You must say, 'My father is asking for it.'"

The girl went about and asked for thread from house to house. The people gave her a lot because they thought the chief wanted it. She took it to their house in the timber and strung the dentalia. At night they

¹ In this case the chief and his daughters were said to be Eagles.