

alert and curious that they could devote full time to reflection and systematization. According to figures supplied by Whiting (1950: 28) for Northern Paiute and by Reichel-Dolmatoff (1971) for the Desana of South America, only about 20% of a Native American population are empowered with such knowledge and less than 5% of these have any wise and systematic overview of the conceptual universe. These adepts earn their position by a long and arduous period of training in self-discipline, empathy, and the use of liturgical techniques and languages. This process involves the perfection of skills dealing with mind and body control, hypnosis, meditation, and, most especially, breathing exercises.

The aim for all of this training is the ability to gain and control supernatural power-and-energy (*puha*) after it is conferred by a spirit through a recurrent dream because it is already familiar with the family of the trainee or it has taken a liking to him or her. This person can then use the power for the benefit of others, which is the socially-sanctioned practice, or for more personal reasons, which is regarded as selfish and equated with sorcery. Power in and of itself is merely a significant gift to a human by one of the Immortals, often the 'boss' of a particular species, who has existed since the dawn of this world and this time frame.

The primary characteristic of this Myth or Timeless Age "when animals were people" was its sameness. According to Powell (1971: 73), this primal world consisted of the "original facts or primary concepts that there is a land and a sea, an abyss below, and a night above." Southern Paiute mythology is even more explicit in tracing the origin of the world to a primal ocean occupied by an Old Woman who sprinkles some particles of her skin upon the water and, assuming a birthing posture, stretches it out to make the land. Laird (1976) provides the most complete account of this creation in a Chemehuevi version in which Ocean Woman is aided by Wolf, Coyote, and Cougar. Wolf symbolizes the magical, vastly wise—but pompous and humorless—shaman possessing the crooked rod (*poro*) that is the shamanic insignia. Coyote is the innovative, sensuous, selfish, and foolish character who set the pattern that humans now follow. Cougar is not well delineated in the myth, probably because he represents the dangerous, malevolent, and crazy actions of a sorcerer since "the mountain lion and the rattlesnake . . . conferred upon their possessors the power to do great harm" (Laird 1974: 22).

Humans were created on the island formed by Ocean Woman as the result of the union of Coyote as father and of Louse as mother, were carried to land by Coyote in the guise of a water spider, and carelessly scattered over the earth when the curiosity of Coyote led him to open the basket containing them before he reached the center of the world. As Laird (1976: 214) remarked, Louse is an appropriate mother because "her offspring have assuredly crept like lice over the beautiful body of the earth."

From this evidence, it seems likely that the center of the primal world, if not also the island where humans were born, is Charleston Peak (Snow