

THE MOTIVES OF INDIAN SPEECHES AND SONGS

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IN preceding articles attention has been called to the subject about which the Indian voiced his thoughts. First inspection of these rituals, songs, and speeches does not, however, always reveal the underlying motives or reasons back of them. It seems essential, therefore, to make a particular analysis to discover motives rather than reflections of environment. In a sense the range of Indian ideas and technique in self expression was rather limited. That is, nearly everything he said, sang, or chanted can be classified into a few general topics, and we find the same things referred to again and again. Yet within these topics the variations showing special animating motives on different occasions are almost numberless. An analysis of our materials (or similar ones) from this latter point of view (*i.e.* of motive) is both interesting and essential.

All selections previously quoted fall into two general classes: those of the group, expressing the emotions and ideas of the group, and those of the individual. Within the class of group expression, whether the group was large or small, the most important were undoubtedly those addresses or rituals for the purpose of supplication or propitiation of supernatural powers. The motives back of these were in every case economic. Red-skin mysticism, so often eulogized as the spontaneous overflowing of a pure and unspoiled heart, was inspired by a materialism which in turn arose from the stern necessities and hardships of existence. This is not to say that the Indian was not a mystic. In previous selections,¹ we have seen that he was; but his mysticism was not actuated by love, but by fear—the strongest and most

¹ See especially, selections quoted in "Mysticism and Associative Symbols of Thought Revealed in Indian Composition."

elementary of human emotions. We do not find Indian communities assembling to offer up disinterested chants of praise even to Earth-mother (perhaps their nearest approach to our concept of a primal, all-powerful, creating deity). Whenever they praise their gods, or the mysterious supernatural forces, it was with the idea of getting something, as food or weather which would insure good crops, success in hunting or war, prosperity and peace within the tribe, or else a continuation of these favorable conditions.

The rituals embodying most of these supplications are, as previously stated, long and involved, often highly obscure. Therefore, no lengthy analysis of them will follow here. A few passages only have been selected to illustrate primal motives.

In speaking of the Tusayan ritual for securing rain, J. Walter Fewkes has adequately stated a typical case. The Tusayan Indians live in an extremely arid zone of the Rocky mountains. Because of the scarcity of animals they are forced to depend on agriculture. "Accepting the inevitable, a man's ritual became a mirror of that part of his environment which most intimately affected his necessities. The irregularity of the rains and the possibility that the corn may not grow, developed the ritual in the direction indicated. As long as the processes of nature go on without change, no special rain or growth ceremonials would develop. . . . But let natural processes be capricious, awake in the primitive mind the fear that these processes may not recur, let him become conscious that the rain may not come, and he evolves a ritual to prevent its failure. He is absolutely driven to devise ceremonials by which to affect those supernatural beings who he believes cause the rain and the growth of his crops. *The cults of a primitive people are products of their necessities, and they become complicated as the probability of their needs not being met are uncertain. . . .*"²

"The genus *Homo*, emerging from genera of animals most of which were timorous and bodily weak, inherited from them wonder and fear at anything unusual or uncanny. . . . Man understood the causes of few of the mysteries about him, and felt himself at the caprice of chance. In this early condition . . . the use of charms, spells, amulets, mascots of various kinds to control chance, arose." Later, when animals had become tutelary gods,

² The italics are mine.

and the forces, of nature had been deified and endowed with human or animal forms, the rituals were addressed to them.³

The ritual by which the Tusayans hope to secure rain and bountiful crops consists of many symbolic acts by the priests, accompanied by prescribed songs and prayers. Some of these ceremonies last as many as sixteen days, the most important of them being the celebrated Snake Dance. The following quotation is given by Fewkes as the key to the whole explanation of the ritual:

“All people awake, open your eyes, arise,
 Become *Talahoya* [child of light], vigorous, active, sprightly.
 Hasten clouds from the four world quarters;
 Come snow in plenty, that water may be abundant when summer comes.
 Come ice and cover the fields, that after planting they may yield abundantly;
 Let all hearts be glad;
 The knowing ones will assemble in four days;
 They will encircle the village dancing and singing their lays
 That moisture may come in abundance.”⁴

The Navahoes, another agricultural people living in the arid environment of the southwest are also given to many ceremonies for “the planting and harvesting of crops, . . . war, nubility, marriage, travel, the bringing of rain.”⁵ The following extracts, though taken from the Night Chant, a ceremony for healing the sick, is an interesting example of a prayer for subsistence.

“Oh male divinity!
 With your moccasins of dark cloud, come to us. . . .
 With your head-dress of dark cloud, come to us.
 With the dark thunder above you, come to us soaring.
 With the shapen cloud at your feet, come to us soaring. . . .
 With the zig-zag lightning flung out on high on the ends of your wings, come to us soaring.
 With the rainbow hanging high on the ends of your wings, come to us soaring.
 With the near darkness made of the dark cloud, of the rain, of the dark mist and of the she-rain, come to us.
 With these I wish the foam floating on the flowing water over the roots of the great corn.

³ *The Tusayan Ritual*, pp. 686, 687, 688.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 693 and 699.

⁵ Washington Mathews, *The Night Chant, a Navaho Ceremony*, *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. VI, May, 1902, p. 3.

I have made you a sacrifice. . . .
 My body restore for me.
 My mind restore for me. . . .
 Today, take away your spell for me.
 Away from me you have taken it. . . .
 Happily I recover
 Happily my interior becomes cool.
 Happily my eyes regain their power. . . .
 Impervious to pain I walk.
 Feeling light within, I walk. . . .
 Happily abundant passing showers I desire
 Happily an abundance of vegetation I desire. . . .
 Happily may fair white corn to the ends of the earth come
 with you. . . .
 Happily may fair plants of all kinds, to the ends of the earth
 come with you. . . ."⁶

Rituals innumerable to secure success in the quest of food might be quoted. Every tribe had several—usually a great many. Equally numerous are the formulae for healing the sick, of which, also, the above is a fair specimen.

A unique ceremony or securing a tribal need is the "Hako", a collection of Pawnee rituals in behalf of children, "in order that the tribe may increase and be strong; and also that the people may have long life, enjoy plenty, be happy and at peace."⁷ Like the others mentioned this consists of numerous chants, symbolic acts, dances, and songs in which the whole tribe participated, led by a group of medicine men known as the "Fathers":

"Mother Corn, Oh hear! Open our way!
 Lo! As we draw near, let our souls touch thine
 While we pray thee:
 Children give to us! Mother Corn, hear!

 Mother Corn, Oh hear! Open our way!
 Lo! Now over hills, over streams, we go
 Taking our way.
 Toward the Children's land. Mother Corn, hear!"⁸

Still other verses repeat the inevitable cry for food, in this case buffalo:

"Clouds of dust arise, rolling up from the earth.
 Spreading onward; herds are there.
 Speeding on before,
 Going straight where we must journey.

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 143-4.

⁷ Alice C. Fletcher, "The Hako, a Pawnee Ceremony," *22nd Ann. Rep. B. A. E.*, p. 26.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 293.

What are those we see moving in the dust?
 This way coming from the herd;
 Buffalo and calf!
 Food they promise for the Children."⁹

There are also general invocations for the favorable regard of all the gods of the four directions: the West Gods of thunder, lightning, life, and death; the South Gods of daylight and plenty; the North Gods of darkness and moonlight:

“
 Look down, South gods, look upon us! We gaze afar on your dwelling.
 Look down while here we are standing, look down upon us, ye mighty!
 Ye daylight gods, now behold us!
 Ye sunshine gods, now behold us!
 Ye increase gods, now behold us!
 Ye plenty gods, now behold us!
”¹⁰

Among the other impulses which moved the redskins to invoke supernatural aid, the desire for success in war, and vengeance on enemies was perhaps strongest. War songs without reference to the supernatural, such as battle-songs expressing hatred and defiance for the enemy, songs of the women longing for absent warriors, songs of grief for the slain, will be cited later among the secular compositions.¹¹

These, then, were the chief types of rituals, common to all tribes, because they represent common needs; rituals for food, for health, for success in war, for happiness, peace, and prosperity within the tribe. One other type of ritual appeal to the supernatural is important—that embodying the history of the group.

Reference has been made to the chant of the Puma, from the *Osage Rite of the Chiefs: Sayings of the Ancient Men*.¹² This rite is the initiation ceremony into a select and esoteric group of warriors in the tribe. It consists for the most part of lengthy chants which accompany various parts of the initiation ceremonies, such as painting the candidate, and making symbolic moccasins of buffalo hide. Some of these rituals are recited simultaneously by whole gentes. Interspersed are songs by the medicine men.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

¹¹ War-songs already given represent the individual, rather than the group point of view.

¹² *36th Annual Report, Bur. Amer. Ethnol.*

Parts of the ritual such as that previously quoted invoke animal deities and various forces of nature. Other parts, still more important, contain symbolic references to the early history and experiences of the tribe.¹³ The following lines clearly refer to the superstitious wonder and fear with which early man regarded fire; and indicate why *red paint*, because of its resemblance to the color of the protecting camp fires, was regarded as a safeguard to be worn by warriors. The reference to fire as "the red shield" is particularly interesting.

"Verily, at that time and place, . . .
 They spake to one another, saying: What shall the little ones
 [members of the Osage tribe] use to paint their bodies?
 Verily, at that time and place,
 They gathered together four stones,
 Which they arranged in a pile, leaning one against the
 other. . . .
 They gathered together the small dead branches of surrounding
 trees. . . .
 They thrust the pieces of dead branches underneath the
 stones. . . .
 They set fire to the pile of the dead branches and the stones,
 And made the air to tremble and vibrate with the flames and
 heat.
 The darkened sides of the heavens
 They made to vibrate with the flames and heat. . . .
 They spake to one another, saying: Let the little ones use
 the fiery glow upon yonder heavens as paint for their
 bodies. . . .
 They said: The red shield,
 Let the sacred fire draw toward us.
 When the sacred fire draws toward us the red shield,
 Then when our enemies who dwell toward the setting sun,
 Come against us with weapons in countless numbers,

¹³ ". . . in this rite is perpetuated the story of the vital changes that took place in the ceremonial life of the Osage people during the protracted transitional period through which the tribe passed. Although the Nonhonzhiga (the Seers) handed down the story of the tribe's experiences in cryptic form, the story revealed clearly to the studious members of the tribe that these men of the ancient days were well aware of the historic fact that the tribal life of the people, as well as their tribal institutions, were developed gradually; that this gradual development was a process continually stimulated not only by the desire for the preservation of the tribal existence, but by actual hard experiences that taxed the physical and mental powers of the people and their leaders. This rite also points back to the time when the life of the people was in a chaotic state; to their emergence therefrom; and to their achievement of a tribal government well suited to safeguard the people, . . . , from internal as well as from external perils."—La Flesche, *Rite of the Chiefs*, p. 47.

Their weapons shall fail to strike the little ones, they said to one another. . . .
 The God of Day that sitteth in the heavens
 The sacred fire shall draw toward us.
 When the God of Day that sitteth in the heavens
 The sacred fire draws toward us
 Then all the gods shall always fear us, they said to one another. . . .
 Even the gods themselves
 Shall always fear to stare us in the face, they said to one another."¹⁴

Other passages in this ritual commemorate in similar fashions experiments in making tools of bone and flint, the discovery of animals useful for food and clothing, of medicinal herbs, and many other items of tribal experience.

Selections quoted in preceding chapters afford sufficient evidence, however, that not all group expressions were directed to the supernatural powers. The Indians had ceremonial rites and songs for the numerous purely secular occasions which recurred in the life of the tribe. Councils for discussing peace and war and internal government, weddings, house-building, festivals,¹⁵ social dances frequently were held without appeal to the gods.

Samples of Indian oratory have already been seen in the Iroquois council. Incidentally, these council rites also embody the names of the great leaders of the Iroquois Confederacy, the names of the original towns, and other important items of League history. There is in this case, however, no reference or appeal to the supernatural. These selections easily substantiate the opinion, frequently expressed by observing critics, that the redskins were notable orators.

In the case of the Iroquois Mourning Council, the underlying motives are plain enough; the whole ritual was evolved for the same purpose as are similar inaugural ceremonies among white people. It might be compared, for instance, to the solemn rites performed when a Vice-President of the United States is installed to take the place of a President who has died in office. Inasmuch as the Iroquois rites were traditional they do not represent the motives which inspired Indian speeches for special occasions; nor do they necessarily indicate that these latter had any

¹⁴ La Flesche, "Rite of the Chiefs," from *The Painting Ceremony*, pp. 242-244.

¹⁵ See especially the marriage song of the Taensa tribe already quoted in "The Indian Reveals His Character."

particular literary quality. The following Iroquois messages, spoken to Sir William Johnson¹⁶ and other Indian commissioners in 1754, reveal the political integrity of the Iroquois, and their skill in claiming alliances. In this case, too, their pronouncement displays poetic imagination and skilfully inserted pathos:

“Fathers:

We are greatly rejoiced to see you all here. It is by the Will of Heaven that we are met here, and we thank you for this Opportunity of seeing you altogether as it is a long while since we have had such a one.

Fathers. Who sit present here We will just give you a short relation of the long Friendships which hath Subsisted between the white people of this Country and us. Our forefathers had a castle [fortification, or stockade] on this River, as one of them walked out he saw something on the River, but was at a loss to know what it was, he took it at first, for a great Fish, he ran into the Castle and gave Notice to the other Indians. Two of our forefathers went out to see what it was, and found it a Vessel with Men in it. They immediately joined hands the People in the Vessel and became Friends. The White people told them they should not come any further up the River at that time and said to them they would return back from whence they came and come again in a years time. According to their promises they returned back in a years time and came as far up the river as where the Old Fort stood, Our forefathers invited them ashore and said to them, here we will give you a place, to make you a Town, it shall be from this place up to such a Stream . . . and from the River back up to the Hill. Our Forefathers told them tho’ they were now a small People they would in time Multiply and fill up the Land, they had given them. After they were a Shoar sometime, Some other Indians who had not seen them before, look fiercely at them and Our Fore fathers observing it and seeing the white people so few in Number lest they should be destroyed took and Sheltered them under their Arms; . . . At this time which we have now spoken of, the white People were small, but we were very Numerous and strong. We defended them in that low state, but now the Case is altered. You are Numerous and strong, we are few and Weak. Therefore

¹⁶ Major General of the English forces in North America during the period 1753 and years following.

we expect that you will Act by us in these Circumstances as we did by you in those we have just now related.

We view you now as a very large Tree which has taken deep Root in the Ground, whose Branches are spread very wide, we stand by the Body of this Tree and we look round to see if there be any who endeavor to hurt it, and if it should so happen that any are powerful enough to destroy it we are ready to fall with it."¹⁷ There are many of these speeches, chance survivals of the long intercourse between the British and the Iroquois. In them one may trace many of the events leading to the decline of the once-powerful Six-Nations. They remained loyal to the English to the end, as they had promised. When the king's power fell, they fell with it; and their nation was broken forever.

Next to the tribal or confederacy council, the most important Indian meetings were those of secret societies which existed in all tribes. These fraternities were of various types, some religious, others purely social; and among them were included organizations for women as well as for men. In some cases the possession of a common "dress totem"¹⁸ was the basis for membership; in others it was military distinction of some specified kind. Tribesmen of the same age usually belonged to the same societies.¹⁹

Each of these societies possessed its own set of rituals and songs for ceremonial and social occasions; and these compositions were constantly being added to as need arose. Among the purely secular songs and speeches are those celebrating distinguished service by members in war or hunting, happy events as well as occasions of misfortune in the history of the tribe, feasts or other social events, and miscellaneous songs expressing the spirit of brotherhood, of defiance to the enemies of the tribe, and other emotions. Since the members of these societies represented practically every class of adult tribesmen, their songs will in large measure serve to represent the feelings and impulses of the tribe.

Songs commemorating brave actions by individual chiefs in battle.

¹⁷ Manuscripts of Sir William Johnson, *Documentary History of the State of New York*, Vol. II, pp. 598-9.

¹⁸ Densmore, "Teton Sioux Music," p. 284.

¹⁹ See Clark Wissler, "Smoking Star, a Blackfoot Shaman," *American Indian Life*, p. 445 ff.; and Robert H. Lowie, "Takes-The-Pipe, a Crow Warrior," *Ibid*, p. 17 ff.

"*Yae hi tha e hi the* (meaningless vocables, repeated four times)
A friend, *Wahatonga* (man's name—also meaning "shield"),
they say.

Yae hi tha e hi the (repeated four times)

"The meaning of the song was said to be that Wahatonga was a friend and a shield to the people."²⁰

"When I come to the battle I shout,
I shout as I stand in my place,
I shout my command as I stand."

(Referring to the bravery of another chief who is not named in the song.)²¹

In connection with these songs it is interesting to note that they were only composed after due deliberation of the society. Without this dictum no man would dare permit a song to be made in his honor. When a favorable decision was reached the task of composition was turned over to a man with recognized musical talent. Sometimes the original name was stricken from a very old song, and the name of the latest hero inserted. A few songs carry two names, the old and the new. No man's name was ever dropped during the life of any of his near kindred. There was no official keeper of songs, but these were transmitted from one generation to another over very long periods of time.²²

Song referring to an event in tribal history (Literal translation)

"Yonder far away (the voices I hear),
They are saying something to me.
They send (their words) where I lay.
The owl speaks; *thohe the* (vocables)
Morning comes.
A shout (is) directed toward one."

This song would be unintelligible (as would be many Indian songs) without the story which goes with it, and which it brings to the mind of the Indian singer. "The song may refer to a time when the Omaha were a forest people; it preserves the memory of a timely discovery by which a disaster was averted and a victory won." According to the story, one warrior of a band of Omahas camped in a forest was awakened by the hooting of an owl. Becoming suspicious of the genuineness of the call, he crept away among the trees, and discovered an enemy band preparing

²⁰ Fletcher-La Flesche, "The Omaha Tribe," p. 483.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 484.

²² Fletcher, "Omaha Music," p. 255 ff.

to attack. He then roused his own party, who completely defeated their assailants.²³

Song at a feast given by a member to the society.

“The feast awaits you—come, eat,
The feast is awaiting you,
Members, comrades, come and eat.
The feast awaiting stands before you, come,
Members, comrades, come and eat! *He tho.*”

The further procedure at the feast is also interesting enough to be recorded here.

“. . . the choicest pieces were given the bravest man present. After all had been served except the host, or feast-giver (for he observed the tribal custom of not partaking of the food he had provided for his guests), the leader arose and made an address, in which he thanked the feast-giver and discoursed on the need of food for the preservation of life. He told of the trials, dangers, and hardships encountered in securing food, so that the feast represented both a man's valor and his industry; and, since no one could live without it, food was a gift of the greatest value. Therefore no one should partake of it without thanking the giver and he should not forget to include the giver's wife and children who relinquished to outsiders their share in this great necessity of the family. When the repast was over, the member who had received the choicest part of the meat held up the picked bone and acted out in a dramatic dance the story of his exploit. Sometimes this exhibition was of a remarkable histrionic character.”²⁴

The following group of songs express the war-like spirit of the Hethushka braves, their defiance for the enemy, and their sense of brotherhood and loyalty to each other.

Songs of Eagerness for Battle, in time of Peace.

“Before me stands, awaiting my touch, coal black paint,
Heavy black clouds filling the sky o'er our head.
Upon our faces now we put the black, coal-black cloud,
Honoring war, wearying for the fight, warriors' fight,
Waiting to go where the Thunder leads warriors on.”²⁵

²³ Fletcher-La Flesche, “The Omaha Tribe,” p. 478.

See also the mourning son of the Hethuska society which commemorates a time of defeat when many of the warriors were dead.

²⁴ Fletcher-La Flesche, “The Omaha Tribe,” pp. 467-8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 463.

See also remarks on the Indians' inherent delight in war, comparable in many ways to the iron spirit of the ancient Anglo-Saxon warriors.

"Yonder the enemy are coming;
 Seeking for me, they come.
 'The Omaha, where is he?' they say.
 Yonder they come.
 'Here I stand! Come hither!' answer the Hethushka."²⁶

Song of Brotherhood and Loyalty.

"Elder brothers!
 I longingly wait [to share in the duties of the society]
 Captains! The old men have spoken [of these duties]
 Their words now refer to me.
 Elder brothers! Captains! I longingly wait to take part in
 them [the duties]."

"This song enforced the bond of brotherhood which bound together the members of the Hethushka. There were two ways in which the relation of brother could be expressed in the Omaha language: 'elder brother' and 'younger brother'. In the song the newly admitted member speaks, addressing the members of the society as 'elder brothers'. As war-honors were requisite to membership, those whom he addressed were all men of more or less distinction. In this form of address he not only recognizes this but also his own inclusion in the brotherhood and proclaims his eagerness to do his part in maintaining the honor of the society and to share in its duties."²⁷

In other cases the situation in the songs was reversed; and the society expressed their principles very plainly for the benefit of new, or prospective members:

"Friends,
 Whoever runs away
 Shall not be admitted."²⁸

One of the most interesting of the society songs represents the stern philosophy, the essentially stoic attitude, the grim resolution in the face of the hard circumstances of their life and death.

"The land, the scene one beholds,
 Shall long endure
 When I am gone."

The idea of the song is that "man's life is transitory, and being

²⁶ Free rendering of literal translation given by Fletcher-La Flesche, *op. cit.*, p. 473. This was not a battle song; apparently it was sung in "lodge meetings" of the society merely to give vent to the Jingo spirit of the warrior group. "While the song is defiant, there is also in it the note of tribal unity as against enemies."—*loc. cit.*

²⁷ Fletcher-La Flesche, *op. cit.*, p. 471.

²⁸ Densmore, "Teton Sioux Music," p. 322.

so it is useless to harbor the fear of death, for death must come sooner or later to everybody; man and all living creatures come into existence, pass on, and are gone, while the mountains and rivers remain ever the same."²⁹

The miscellaneous songs of the tribe (as a body) are even more numerous than the society songs. The following selections, though not markedly different in style from the preceding group, reveal various other community interests and thoughts.

Song of the women to send strength to the braves absent on the war-path.

"His call they obey!

Wa backa (name of a chief) raised his voice, nor ceased to cry aloud.

Come to me!

They all obeyed."

This song was originally composed to recall an occasion of great tribal excitement during an attack upon the neighboring Pawnee. The Omaha delegated complete authority to one man (Wabacka) who led the entire tribe, including the women, against the enemy. "This song has lived, and as it has been used by the women since that time as *wetonwaan*—a song to send strength to the absent warrior on the battle field—it is probable that it originally belonged to that class of songs."³⁰

Quite different are another class of songs *about* women, but sung exclusively by men. "These songs refer to the flirtations and amorous adventures. They were not sung in the presence of women, but by men when by themselves. The existence of this class of songs was withheld from the knowledge of women of the better class. These songs were called *wauwaan*, 'woman songs'. They were composed by men, yet they always represent the woman as speaking, betraying her fondness for some one and thus violating social etiquette by speaking of her personal liking for a young man. They sometimes refer to uncongeniality in the marriage relation; the unhappy wife begs her lover to fly with her to another tribe."

"Daduma—I have made myself known, *the!*

²⁹ Fletcher-La Flesche, "The Omaha Tribe," p. 475.

³⁰ Fletcher-La Flesche, "The Omaha Tribe," p. 407.

Note. The style and import of this song is, of course, quite similar to that of other songs given previously, commemorating various individuals; but the primary motive is different. For other songs of war, see selections quoted in "The Indian Reveals His Character."

Daduma—I have made myself known, *the!*
 Last night when you sang I uttered your name, *the!*
 Daduma—I have made myself known, *the!*
 'Who is it that sings?' *the!* they said, and I was sitting there,
the!
 'Wagunttia is passing', I said, *the!*
 It was your name I uttered, *the! hi.*"³¹

Not at all times were the Indians so restrained in referring to sex relations, nor did the ladies and gentlemen always separate when they sang of such matters. The so-called "Crazy Dance" of the Creek is described:

"One of the favorite Creek dances is the Crazy Dance, so named because the participants behave like wild people, men and women taking freedom with each other's persons and acting in general in such a way as to provoke mirth. The word *hadjo* [name of the dance] . . . is in no way opprobrious. The songs for the Crazy Dance usually are funny or obscene stories, which in connection with other traits, suggests that in some way there is a connection between the dance and the idea of procreation. In other respects the movements, motions, and accompaniments are similar to other dances. Licentiousness usually follows after it."³² One set of words for the Crazy Dance (sung by a leader, with chorus response by the dancers) is as follows:

"My mule, saddle him for me,
 On the prairie big, when we get there,
 Buffalo young bull, when I kill him,
 My wife's mother, when we eat together,
 When she scolds me. Osage chief,
 When I become his son-in-law, many little Osages,
 When I made them.
 Morning star big, when it is rising,
 Old turkey gobbler. When I hear him gobbling
 My old gun, I start with it on my shoulder.
 I'll go along, when I get there,
 On tree limb big, I'll see him.
 On a tree standing, I'll see him.
 I'll aim at him; I'll shoot him
 When I shoot him, I'll kill him, turning. My wife's mother,
 I'll take it on my back. When I get there
 My sisters-in-law, turkey breast meat,
 When we eat it together, when they begin quarreling,

³¹ *Ibid*, pp. 321-323.

³² Frank G. Speck, "Ceremonial Songs of the Creek and Yachi Indians," *University of Pennsylvania, The Museum Anthropological Publications*, Vol. 1, No. 2. Philadelphia, 1911, p. 190.

Fighting with each other, I'll knock them about.
I'll eat it all up myself. WHOOP!"³³

One set of words to the Drunken Dance, an orgy of similar nature, is even more frank and startling. "As in the Crazy Dance, . . . the leader may compose words for the song, improvise on the spot, or merely keep up a meaningless burden with a few expressions here and there. The songs are usually ludicrous, sometimes telling a story or some clownish anecdote."

"I don't know anything. I am drunk.
Something strong we drink together,
Something wonderful, is it not?" (whoop at end)

(Repeat with the following in which one of the women is supposed to be speaking):

"Let us go, she says to me,
I have no husband."

(Man supposed to be speaking)

"Your bed, tell me where it is.
Your home, tell me where it is." (whoop at end)

(Woman supposed to be speaking)

"My husband lies down. I will run away and wander.
My husband stays home. I will run away and wander."

(Man supposed to be speaking, whoops at end)

"When the moon rises I'll cohabit with you. . . .

I'll sleep with you, night just one.

Road close to.

Night just four.

In that house old.

Night just ten, I'll sleep with you."

(An outsider is here supposed to be speaking)

Husband will whip her they say of you, they say of you.

Husband will strike you, they say of you, they say of you,

When you are called, they say of you, they say of you."

(whoop at end)³⁴

³³ Speck, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 197-200. I have taken the liberty of altering punctuation in a few places.

"An interesting feature of this song is the role played by the leader in which he impersonates a man, then a woman, and finally an outsider or public opinion. The chorus of dancers follow along as best they can with the song, or else sing *he ya* or some common burden syllables, at the end of each phrase, if they do not know the words."—*op. cit.*, p. 200.

It seems to me that this song goes far to discredit the "communal composition" theory. Such an occasion would surely be the time for the dancers to add verses. Yet from all accounts, the song is always sung by one person, chosen as leader. The others merely come in on the chorus. The song is not given as an *individual* composition, because the group took part in it, and apparently had different leaders at different times. D.

The Creeks and Yachis had a number of these social dances, with appropriate songs, some with words, some without. Many of the dances, such as the Rabbit Dance, the Mule Dance, the Alligator Dance, required the imitation by the dancers of various animals, or even of other objects in nature, as in the Leaf Dance. There seems to have been little if any idea of worship in these affairs.

Another very popular social pastime of the tribesmen was and is gambling in various games. Frequently these take the form of contests in which one side hides small objects as bullets, and the other players guess where they are. The "moccasin game" of the Chippewa, for example, resembles somewhat the "shell game", or "three card monte", of the country-fair sharper. The object is to manipulate a number of bullets, one of which is marked, hiding the marked bullet under a moccasin, or between the fingers of the hand. The opponent guesses where the bullet is hidden. This game and others are also the occasions for special "game songs" which are sung by spectators and participants as a sort of joyous social accompaniment.³⁵ These songs are not particularly interesting to the white man because they hardly suggest anything of the subject. To the Indians, of course, the reference is obvious. Frederick Burton gives as an example the song whose only words were "I use bad shoes". Not knowing the occasion for the song, he puzzled over these cryptic words for some time, finally deciding that they referred to worn out moccasins, and that the song was one of poverty. Later he discovered that the words meant that the singer was an expert in manipulating the moccasins used in the moccasin game, and expressed the idea "I am using bewitched shoes; they will fool you; you're not smart enough to get around these wicked shoes of mine."³⁶

(To be continued)

³⁵ Francis Densmore, "Chippewa Music," II, pp. 209 ff.

³⁶ Burton, *American Primitive Music*, pp. 154-159.