

N. Scott Momaday divides his book *The Way to Rainy Mountain* in an interesting manner. The book is divided into three chapters, each of which contains a dozen or so numbered sections, each of which is divided into three parts. The first part of each numbered section tends to be a legend or a story of the Kiowa culture. However, this characteristic changes a bit as the book evolves, as does the style and feel of the stories.

The first passage in the first numbered section describes the Kiowa creation myth. It tells that they came into the world through a hollow log. The next ones tell of a dog saving the life of a man, the story of how Tai-me became part of their culture, and other stories. These, especially in the first beginning of the first part, are stories which relate timeless tales. The events described took place long ago, though nobody knows how long. In addition, the endings of the tales would probably be described as having a good outcome. The people were created and they found friends in the physical and spiritual world. The first part of the book describes the beginning of the Kiowa culture and their development.

Towards the end of the first part, the tone of the stories changes. Instead of describing different stories each time, they begin to tell a story which continues through six numbered sections. The story relates the life of a baby who grows into the sun's wife who then has a child who becomes two children, who become honored people in the eyes of the Kiowa. These stories do not explain things like the creation of the people, or the reason dogs and men are friends, or the origin of Tai-me. They tell what happened to some people.

The last part of the book, the last third, is mostly narrative. Instead of telling myths to explain things, Momaday tells stories which relate events without any significant outcome. Also, in contrast to the first part of the book, the outcomes seem to be bad ones, or at least not fulfilling. They describe, for a large part, people whom he knows existed and were related to or were friends of his family. One story tells about Mammedaty, who heard someone whistling to him, but could not find the person. Another tells about how Mammedaty was having trouble with a horse, so he shot an arrow at it, but missed and killed another horse. These endings do not leave the reader or listener with a good feeling about the story.

These changes in the stories show an important development in the character of the Kiowa and of Momaday himself. As time progresses, Momaday learns more about his culture. The Kiowa begin as distant detached people with outlandish myths and extraordinary happenings. However, as time passes and his journey to Rainy Mountain progresses, the Kiowa become more close to home. The legends he starts with become stories of his family and their friends at the end. He tells of Mammedaty and Aho, a relative and friend. There are many stories he can relate about each of them. This shows that Momaday has found the true meaning of the Kiowa legends. While the myths remain supernatural and explain key points of their being, the stories are about people. While some stories may not be completely true, they are based on the past of the tribe.

The stories of the last part do not describe dogs or spiders talking to people, or the sun wedding a woman. They describe things which are easily conceivable, even to people who do not understand the Kiowa's beliefs. The first passage of the last numbered section even describes the location of something by saying that it is "East of my grandmother's house." Momaday has become part of the Kiowa, telling stories which have been told only a few times before, or possible never at all, where they can join the others.

