

Author's Introduction to This Edition of *Fur Magic*

As most readers are aware, the Amerindians had a rich mythology of their own. They, too, spoke of a Golden Age in the past. But in their tales of that they varied sharply from the ideas of the invading Europeans. For their "Golden Age" was one of animals, animals who were larger, wiser, stronger, and more just than Man.

Over this world presided the Great Spirit with his messenger, the Thunder Bird. Until the Shaper meddled.

The character of the Shaper is an ambivalent one (his other name is Trickster). He is presented as both helpful or harmful as his wayward fancy desires. Among the Amerindians of the west he is usually represented by the coyote—an animal noted for its sly intelligence to this very day.

One of the major myths concerning the Shaper is that he, not the Great Spirit, made Man—as an experiment intended to create a slave servant for the Animal Nations. And the sad result of this was that the Golden Age of the Animal People came to an end. The Shaper himself was exiled to an island in the far northwest. This island is continually hidden in thick fog, and there the Shaper must remain "until the world turns over," a world-wide catastrophe scheduled to strike at a time now calculated by anthropologists who have studied these tales about the year 2000 A.D. (Oddly enough the recently translated Mayan calendar sets the end of the world for 2010 A.D.)

When the world "turns over" Man and all his works will disappear and the Shaper will be released to once more raise up the Animal People.

It was coming upon this legend which led me to write *Fur Magic*—though in it I dealt with the first age, not the second.

—ANDRE NORTON