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A Comparative Analysis of Appalachian and Chukchi Folktales

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Departmental Honors Thesis
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Department of Anthropology

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“Far from being minor amusements, folk tales put us in touch with the values of people. They affirm the creativity of people and show the power of stories in transmitting cultural principles.”

– Judy Brown and Rex Stephenson

“There are things in folk (materials) that evoke immediate, universal, and sometimes irrational responses; things which seem to touch human beings not in the head or heart but near the solar plexus.” – Gerald Tyler

Abstract

Comparative folktale studies have revealed high quality emic data in past Anthropological study, but not nearly enough studies have been done. This thesis proposes an ideal avenue of study for delineation of patterns to reveal historically particular emic data as well as universal ideals. The avenue of study is that of comparative analysis of six folktales from two vastly different cultures. The people of the icy Chukotka peninsula in Northern Russia and the people of the temperate Appalachian Mountains share rich folktale traditions that provide a look into the cultural valuables and undesirables within both of these cultures. Through a comparison of both cultures' folktales framed within their sociohistorical backgrounds, this thesis seeks to add to a gap in Anthropologic research.

Introduction

Books, television shows, movies, and social media are all forms of modern entertainment that transmit cultural values, fears, and information. Before any of these modern modes of storytelling existed, there were folktales. Folktales are stories passed down from generation to generation that serve both the purpose of entertaining listeners and communicating valuable cultural information. Storytellers would pass on folktales to educate their communities by instilling cultural wisdom and practical information through playing on emotions, forming interesting plotlines, and using larger-than-life details to illustrate key themes and principles of cultural significance.

Folklore scholarship and collection began in-depth in the 20th century, although the focus was primarily on finding origins rather than analyzing content. Because of this focus on origin rather than content analysis, not many comparative studies of folktales have been done. The comparative study of folktales is a subject of anthropological study that provides a rich area of understanding. While folktales provide emic data for the anthropologist, they also communicate valuable cultural information within their respective cultures. This communication of valuable cultural information happens through symbolic identity within the folktales. As Franz Boas, a man considered to be the father of modern anthropology, once wrote, “symbolic identity plays an important role in the form of thought” (Boas 1932, 179). Symbolic identity is the cornerstone reason why folktales are so important to so many cultures. Folktales provide a widespread, oral tradition that communicate symbolic identity to cultural members.

While folktales provide particular and environmentally specific cultural information for future generations, they also reveal cultural universals. Boas, perhaps the first anthropologist to employ comparative analyses on folktales, speaks on this in an article on the beliefs of the

Kwakiutl people: “Still a more detailed consideration of these subjects shows that only the general attitudes are common to all humanity, while the forms they assume can be understood only on the basis of each specific cultural background” (Boas 1932, 177). However, not many research projects after Boas’s have employed this comparative method for comprehensive analysis of this specific form of orally communicated culture. This lack of comparative analysis may be due to basic oversight, or that a large sample size is necessary to support the validity of the findings. This is of course more difficult during modernity wherein mass media has spread global ideas of culture to far reaches of human civilization, thus creating an atmosphere of storytelling that is more inclined towards cultural universals and technological advancements rather than cultural particulars. This thesis seeks to add to that gap in anthropological research by employing a comparative analysis of Appalachian and Chukchi folktales.

The study of folklore in general includes folk music, folktales, folk medicine, proverbs, and other forms of emic knowledge that can mix language and physical practice. While these forms of cultural transmission are essential in transmitting cultural knowledge from generation to generation, they are vastly different when one looks through the lens of anthropological study. Each form of transmission holds its own important place within the culture. Folktales tend to be more similar cross-culturally in format which allows for a higher quality comparative analysis. The objectives of this thesis are as follows:

1. This thesis will employ a comparative analysis of six folktales, three from each culture, to reveal cultural universals and cultural particulars found in folktales.
2. The comparative analysis will focus on the hero characters in each folktale because the hero character reveals culturally valuable traits within that culture.

Folktales provide a doorway into the belief systems of a collective group, but they also have their own effect on preserving and defining cultural realities for generations. This role of significance is no longer what it used to be for both Appalachian and Chukchi people as the industrialization of modernity has irrevocably changed the way in which culture is communicated. Because of this undeniable fact, this thesis uses folktales recorded and transcribed in the early 1900s by researchers keen on preserving these folk cultures. In comparing and contrasting these six folktales, this thesis will present and analyze the hopes, fears, beliefs, and values of Appalachian and Chukchi cultures prior to the introduction and subsequent effects of modernity (technological, agricultural advances as well as globalization) on this creative and vital form of cultural transmission.

Background

Though they have become defunct in the modern age of mass media, folktales once served the essential purpose of communicating cultural values within a vast variety of environments. From the icy peninsulas of northern Russia to the temperate woodlands of the rolling southern Appalachian Mountains, humans of all cultures have used symbolic stories to transmit important information from one generation to the next. Thus, over centuries of storytelling, the folktales that became the most popular prior to the dissemination of mass media became a synthesized time capsule with centuries of emic cultural and environmental learning. When analyzed in contrast with another culture's folktales, this information can be used to discover patterns and details that reveal significant data ripe for anthropological analysis.

“Cultural zero” is a phrase that will be used throughout this thesis. This phrase describes culturally important information that is observed by an Anthropologist. The significant difference between a cultural zero and any other type of culturally significant information is that the cultural zero data is not directly told to the Anthropologist. The cultural zero is observed and that is how the information is gleaned because the information may otherwise be too sensitive or controversial for a member of the culture to discuss directly with the Anthropologist. I use this term to describe cultural information provided within folktales that are not seen in the ethnographic research done within the two cultures discussed in this thesis. Folktales are a useful vehicle for communicating sensitive or uncomfortable information in a distant yet familiar way. In my analyses of these folktales, I have discovered certain cultural zeroes by placing these folktales within a sociohistorical context.

However, within each culture, folktales will vary according to different cultural values and different climates. There have seldom been comparative analyses of folktales from two

vastly different regions. A recent and rare example of published studies utilizing this style of analysis include an article analyzing the similarities between folktales of Jaka Tarub of Indonesia and Tanabata of Japan (Wardarita & Negoro, 2017). The authors' purpose, however, was to discover whether or not these two distinctive cultures could share any common cultural ancestry. In their conclusion, the authors state that the evidence overwhelmingly says no. While comparative folktale analysis is a useful tool in discovering similar origins, this thesis has no intentions of pursuing this angle. In fact, it is obvious that the Chukchi culture and the Appalachian culture share no origin-based similarities. Their sharp contrasts will only further illuminate the fascinating phenomena that is cultural universals.

Alan Dundes, a celebrated folklore theorist, discusses the importance of using the comparative approach in analyzing folklore (Dundes, 1986). Dundes rightfully discredits the racist and ethnocentric theoretical understanding of this method that "nineteenth century armchair anthropologists" used to explain the illogicality of "primitive peoples" (Dundes 127). This faulty use of the comparative method came from anthropologists who advocated unilinear evolution, which is inherently ethnocentric of the Western European cultures in which these men were raised, has now been thoroughly debunked, and is no longer widely used in anthropology today. However, it is still important to note the beginnings of this approach within the study of folklore.

In response to the fallacies of unilinear evolution, Franz Boas developed his own comparative methodology. Boas was more concerned with data collection than with synthesis of data. In his 1935 work on *Kwakiutl Culture as Reflected in Mythology*, Boas briefly analyzes his extensive folktale data using a comparative analysis with the Tsimshian mythologies in "one of the first studies comparing the images of two peoples on the basis of their respective

mythologies” (Dundes 1986, 128). Boas’s comparative analysis was one that acknowledged cultural universals while respecting and focusing on historical particulars based on each culture’s particular sociohistorical background. This framing of comparative analysis is now used widely in modern anthropology, whether one is comparing folktales or economic exchange practices. The basic approach to analysis in this thesis will thus be Boasian in nature.

Another key shift in the study of folktales includes the shift from diachronic to synchronic study. While diachronic study has its place, synchronic is the most valuable form of structural study. There is little point in going on a treasure hunt to discover the exact origin of place of a folktale if one cannot understand the symbolic significance of said folktale for its respective culture. In a broad sense, folktales are not orally passed around in order to glorify the teller but to transmit important cultural information. Dundes explains in an article on the matter that “Folklorists of the late nineteenth century were much more concerned with how folklore came into being than with what folklore was” because they believed that “... folklore evolved from historical facts and primordial customs” (Dundes 1962, 95). This is not to say that one should approach comparative folktale studies as if there is no conceivable definition or mode of particular analysis, for any attempt to analyze culture through the lens of “the superorganic abstraction” is doomed from the start (Dundes 1962, 97). A more reasonable approach is Stith Thompson’s use of motifs as data elements. Thompson includes three types of motifs: actors, background items, and incidents (Thompson 1946). These provided a closer movement towards reasonable analysis, but still are too general for the purposes of this thesis. Though I will discuss motifs within the six folktales, I will specifically be focusing on the hero and his or her journey as explained through the motifs. Thus, the motifs I use will be built around this concept of the hero.

There has been no notable comparative analysis of folktales centered around the hero figure. However, there has been research into the hero trope itself. A popular work that details the heroic figure in folktales is Joseph Campbell's book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell focuses specifically on the universal undercurrents throughout all myth and folktale, and his analysis provides key information of interest for the purposes of this thesis. Campbell discusses in his book the universal formula for the typical journey of a hero. While Campbell uses cross-cultural examples, he only presents them so to demonstrate the undeniable universality. Campbell's universal applications are towards the end of extremism, but he does have a point in there being certain aspects or motifs within the heroic figures' journeys. He refers to this is the "Cosmogonic Cycle" (Campbell 2008) which involves a set of steps and thresholds the hero must move through in order to reach his or her conclusion. While acknowledging that the hero's journey in all six folktales presented in this thesis has certain universal similarities as Campbell suggests in his book, this thesis also acknowledges that the heroes exhibit historical particularism relevant to their cultural origins. This thesis applies Campbell's heroic lens of analysis, specifically his concept of the hero's journey and what the means in a universal sense, while maintaining an even-keeled application of historical particularism matched with cultural universality.

Methodology

The methodology of this thesis centers around the heroic figures and their antagonists by proxy. This thesis will begin each section by providing a comprehensive sociohistorical context. Then, folktale one will be presented. Each folktale is a scan or screenshot from the original published source. After each folktale, a brief analysis will be conducted. This will go on for three folktales for both cultures. After the three folktales and their subsequent brief analyses have been conducted, there will be a comprehensive analysis of all three folktales placed within the sociohistorical context. After this method has been carried out for both cultures, there will be a comparative analysis section that delineates the patterns of heroic and antagonistic traits as well as motifs to discover universal themes and historically particularistic themes. The goal in all analyses is to delineate patterns and show that the heroic characters in each folktale reveal emic data that may have not been communicated in past ethnographic studies.

Appalachia

Sociohistorical Context

Appalachia is most poetically described by the rolling hills of forest climbing up to beautiful mountains known for their biological diversity and outdoor recreation opportunities, all within a 205,000 square-mile area that ranges from New York to Northern Mississippi (The Appalachian Regional Commission). A map of the region can be seen in Appendix A. In antiquity, the Appalachian region was populated by Native American tribes such as the Cherokee, Creek, and others. During the colonization of eastern North America by European countries, immigrants mostly from the British Isles found that the Appalachian region reminded them of their homeland, and they settled there. The farmland was rich and tenable, which motivated even more people to find their way to the Appalachian Region. These settlers became subsistence farmers who lived in cabins and grew small, intimately connected communities over time based off of these activities (Yarnell, 8). Though settlement was predominantly Europeans from the British Isles or one generation removed from British Isle origin, there were also settlers from Germany and France, notably in Pennsylvania and Kentucky, respectively (Yarnell, 8-9). This colonization created a population influenced by the culture of their home, but over time, this cultural habitat fragmentation resulted in the ethnogenesis that was distinctly Appalachian. According to folklorists Jody Brown and Rex Stephenson, “Although many of the folk tales derived from Old World stories, the free adaptations in the new environment and culture that settlers discovered in the South produced a plethora of variants” (Brown and Stephenson, 167). This is the cultural landscape within which Appalachian folktales began to be told.

Population densities were low and remained so until the early 20th century. People in the highlands kept livestock, and people in the lowlands had farms. Communities were never very

large and were widely dispersed through the region, and trade was done with nearby neighbors up until the mid-19th century. Appalachian culture had grown and morphed into its own unique way of life at this point in time. An economy had been established that was distinctly Southern. Cotton plantations, textile production, and agricultural production in the Appalachian valleys allowed for trade with foreign nations while hardwood timber cutting, and milling did the same in the mountains. A growth of a wealthy class spurred the desire for a large majority of this region to want to split from the northern industrialists and form their own sovereign nation. This, of course, led to the Civil War. This incredibly divisive conflict split the Southern Appalachians from the rest of the region. The conflict “split mountain society into factions and broke mountain communities into opposing bands of armed guerrillas” (Yarnell, 14). The Civil War ripped through the Southern Appalachians and “the pattern of decline begun during the war would never be completely reversed” (Yarnell, 17). At this point, industrialization began to enter the Appalachian region and the lumber, coal, and iron industries took off with the direction of Northern investors and land speculators. In this time period, the first real folklore collection in this region began.

The first real collection of Appalachian folklore ever published was an article entitled “Folk Custom and Folk Belief in North Carolina,” written by N.C. Hoke who wrote down all sorts of cultural traditions and lore from the people of Lincolnton, North Carolina. Early collectors like Hoke were “primarily interested in finding survivals of past lore” (McNeil 55). This style of collection focused primarily on form rather than analysis continued into the 20th century scholarship. True folklore scholarship evolved during the early to mid-20th century. In the 1930’s, Richard Chase collected folktales from citizens around Beech Creek, North Carolina. Though these tales are not generally considered to be a collected work on caliber with

professional folklorists of the late 19th century, they certainly captured the essence and era of the strong folktale traditions of the Appalachians. Other similar collectors of folklore, from scholars to schoolteachers, such as Leonard Roberts and Marie Campbell, have been criticized for collecting “‘memory traditions’ rather than living folklore” (McNeil 57). It is unfair to discredit these collections of tales. Many areas of the world during the early to mid-20th century were within the throes of modernization, having one foot in tradition and another in the new age. Appalachia was no exception, and these collectors of tales may have been collecting tales that no longer served the purpose of cultural transmission as they once did, but that certainly should not discredit their validity or their importance.

By the late 20th century, practically all Appalachian folklore traditions had become culturally dead. Craftsman traditions such as basket-making which flourished in the 1930’s, had “‘virtually disappeared” by the 1970s (McNeil, 61). Overall, the majority of the folktale collecting in Appalachia has been done by amateurs: people who were simply collecting old tales because they saw them as interesting and important. Perhaps these are the best sources, for they offer information that, when placed within a sociohistorical context, allows one to gain a greater understanding of Appalachian culture prior to the invasion of modernity.

Concerning Appalachian Sources

The three folktales that follow were all found and retrieved from either an online source or from a physical book. “How Bobtail Beat the Devil” comes from Richard Chases’ book *Grandfather Tales*, first published in 1948. Chase collected this tale from residents of Beech Creek, North Carolina who had been telling these stories for generations prior to Chase hearing and recording them.

The second folktale, “Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby”, comes from an online source written down recently, in the year 2017. However, I can attest to this tale’s validity and age, as my grandmother who was born, raised, and died in the Appalachian foothills told it to me many times in my childhood. It is a common story in the Georgia and Tennessee area of the Appalachians. Many comments on this webpage are written in Appalachian style language affirming this tale’s validity within the culture. One commenter says “My daddy would really get in character as he told me this story when I was a child. I wanted to review it before I tell the story to my grandchild. Hope he’ll love it as much as I did and remember me when he is 60!” (Schlosser, 2017). Another affirms, “First time I’ve seen this story in about 65 years. Glad it’s here” (Schlosser, 2017). To further prove this tale’s impact and age, Disney created an animated version of this story in 1946 (*Song of the South – Br’er Rabbit Escapes the Tar Trap*).

The third folktale comes from Donald Davis’s book *Southern Jack Tales*, published in 1992. Although this tale comes from another source published long after modernization of Appalachia, its validity is still intact. Davis explains that these stories “in my own memory go so far back as to be indistinguishable from the very Appalachian context of my early life” (Davis, Acknowledgements). Davis grew up in Haywood County in the mountains of North Carolina, an area that is firmly planted within Appalachia. For Davis, folk tales were simply “part of the

fabric of daily living,” (Davis 26). Davis, providing a fully emic perspective with a tint of anthropological knowledge in his introductory sections explains that his “impression of the prior collections made by folklorists and outside collectors is that the imposition of time restraints ... has greatly altered the stories themselves” (Davis 28). Davis’s motivation for writing down and publishing these tales himself is similar to the motivation behind choosing mainly emic renditions of these tales for this thesis. The best way to engage in comparative analysis of folktales is to have genuine emic data with which to do so.

“How Bobtail Beat the Devil” (AT1)

How Bobtail Beat the Devil

One time the Devil he decided he'd like to try a little farmin'. The climate wasn't much good for it down there where he lived at, so he come up here and went to lookin' around. First man he run across was Bobtail. Now if the old Devil had-a knowed how hard Bobtail was to beat in a trade he might-a waited till the next feller come along. Anyhow, there was Bobtail walkin' in home. So the Devil he stepped up beside him and commenced talkin' while they ambled on down the road.

"You live around here?"

"Um-humh."

"You a farmer?"

"Um-humh."

"I been thinkin' about goin' into farmin' myself."

"Say ye have?"

"I'm a-lookin' for me a partner."

"Ye are?"

"How would you like to do a little share-croppin' with me?"

"I might," says Bobtail.—The Devil had his hat pulled 'way down over his forehead but Bobtail had done noticed two little sharp-like bumps a-pushin' out the felt; seen one of his feet was too big, didn't have nothin' in the shoe-toe, looked like it was all in the ankle.—So Bobtail asked him, says, "What share of the crop do you want, mister?"

"Why, I don't hardly know now," says the Devil. "Jest what do ye mean?"

"Do you gener'ly take what grows above ground or what grows below?"

The Devil told him, says, "Oh, I always take what grows above ground."

So Bobtail and him put in a crop. And when it got ripe and they went to gather

there next to this 'un, and that rail fence runnin' down the middle of it from yonder side the pig-lot—makes two fields over there? Now, you can throw a pig in one field, and then I'll throw one in the other field; then you throw another'n and I'll throw me one—and that way we'll not have much bother gettin' the pigs divided up."

Well, the Devil he went to that side of the pig-lot, looked down the fence a ways; come back, says, "Why, yes, I reckon that'll be all right."

"You can have the first throw," Bobtail told him. Says, "Wait just a minute." And he went and got him a couple of bushels of corn, dumped it in the middle of his field. Come on back, says, "Go ahead; you throw first now."

So the Devil he picked out the biggest, fattest sow in the lot, pitched her over, turned back around quick and looked and looked to see which was the next biggest 'un. Then Bobtail tackled him one, only a fairly big 'un, dragged her to the fence by her ears, got under her and heaved, and fin'ly over she went. The Devil had done grabbed him another great big hog by the hind leg, so he flipped it over; and Bobtail he wrestled with his next 'un till he got hit over. And they kept on pitchin' out pigs till there wasn't but one left—and it was the Devil's turn to throw. He thought he had Bobtail sure on this trade 'cause that made the extra pig his'n. So he got it cornered and picked it up, dropped it over; and then he looked over in the field—and there wasn't a pig in sight but that last 'un, and he seen it run down to where there was a couple of rails rotted out, scrouge under the fence and run a-squealin' to Bobtail's pile of corn.

it, the Devil he cut off the tops and stacked 'em up real careful; and then Bobtail he got his bull-tongue plow and his grabbler and pretty soon there was his potatoes. So he put 'em in the cellar. And the Devil he took a load of his part of the crop to town and asked around about potato tops, and it didn't take him long to find out he'd been cheated. Got back in, says, "Bobtail, next time I'm to have what grows below the ground."

So the next season the Devil come back, and Bobtail put him to work: plowin', harrerin', plantin', choppin'—made the old Devil sweat. And when that crop got ripe Bobtail says to him, says, "Well, I'll clean off the top of the ground for you this time." So he cut the corn and shocked it in the orchard; handed the Devil a mattick, says, "Here."—And they tell me the old Devil grubbed up every corn-root in the field; washed a few of 'em, put 'em in a bushel basket and carried 'em on to town. Come back after a while, says, "Bobtail, let's us try some other kind of farmin'."

Bobtail asked him how about pigs, and the Devil said all right; so they got some brood-sows and the sows they found little pigs directly, and it wasn't long till the shoats was runnin' all over the place. They kept feedin' 'em corn—the Devil had to buy his corn—and then pigs grewed till pretty soon they got to weighin' around eighteen-nineteen hundred pounds—like the pigs we raised when I was a boy. And one day the Devil come, says, "Bobtail, ain't it about time we divided up them pigs?"

"Yes, I reckon they're about big enough by now," says Bobtail.

"How'll we get 'em divided out?" the Devil asked him.

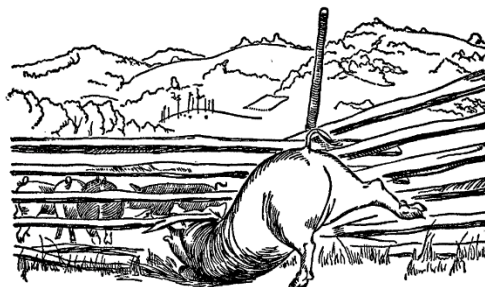
"Why, I don't know," says Bobtail. "Can you count?"

"Why, no, I can't count. Can't you count?"

"No," says Bobtail, "I never was much of a hand with figgers."

"Well, how'n the nation can we divide them pigs?" the Devil asked him.

"Tell ye what," Bobtail says to him, "if it's all right with you: see that field



"Look a-yonder, Bobtail! All my pigs have done gone and got mixed up with your'n!"

"That don't differ none," Bobtail told him. Says, "I'll know *my* pigs."

"How?" the Devil wanted to know.

"Why," says Bobtail, "ever' pig I throwed out I reached down just 'fore I let go of it and twisted its tail right hard—left it in a curl."

And they say the old Devil spent the rest of the day over there amongst all them pigs, tryin' to find the ones that had straight tails.

But the Devil he studied up a way he thought he could surely outdo Bobtail. Come to him directly, says, "Bobtail, let's you and me play pitchhammer a couple of rounds. I got a real good hammer for pitchin'. I'll go down yonder and get it."

Well, he got the hammer and they went out in the bottom fields to play. The Devil he whirled it around and around, let go of it—and straight up it went. Shot

through a couple of clouds, went past two or three more—went on up out of sight. Bobtail kept lookin' up for it to fall; and the Devil let him look a while. Then he says to him, says, "I'll jest tell ye, Bobtail: there ain't no use waitin' for it. Hit'll not fall till tomorrer sometime."

So they went on to the house and fooled around; and jest 'fore dinner the next day they heard it hit—WHAM! "Come on," says the Devil. So they went back down to the bottom pasture; and sure enough, there was that hammer mired in the ground about halfway up the handle. The Devil he pulled it out and laid it down. Stepped back, says, "All right, Bobtail."

So Bobtail went to look the hammer over. Walked up the handle, walked around the head, and here he come walkin' back down the other side the handle. The Devil had one hand in his pocket and was r'ared back jest a-grinnin'. Well, Bobtail he took his stand at the end of the handle; then he looked away up in the sky, put his hands up to his mouth, hollered, "Hey, Saint Peter! Open the gate and move back out the way!—Gabriel! You better move over to one side!—You little angels now, you run back and stand right close to the throne. Some of ye might get hurt." And Bobtail he bent down like he was goin' to grab holt on the Devil's hammer.

The old Devil come over there quick. "Un-unh, Bobtail! I didn't know you was aimin' to pitch my hammer *that* high! Why, if you was to throw my hammer up in that place, I never would get it back. Jest let it alone now and let me have it."

So the Devil took his hammer and went on back where he come from, and he ain't been seen in that part of the country since.

AT1 Analysis

One must utilize context clues to figure out the geography in which this story takes place. There are multiple mentions of a field and the plot line of the story having to do with sharecropping insinuates a land with rich soil and vast farmlands. Chase wrote this story down from locals around Beech Creek and the tales were passed down from generations prior to those who he transcribed them from, so one can assume that these fields back up to mountains similar to that of the North Carolina rolling hills that create the fertile valleys which nestle up against the mountains.

The key actors in this story are the Devil and Bobtail. Presumably, Bobtail is an Appalachian farmer. The focus on Bobtail's actions rather than his appearance reveals that his activities within the plot will showcase the important cultural information. Other mentioned characters who are not truly actors in the sense that they do significant things that move the plot along are the people in the town that the Devil visits, and the pigs that the two actors rear. If anything, these extra details serve to set the scene for the story. They also provide small yet significant details about the Appalachian culture.

From the beginning, Bobtail is set up as the heroic figure. He is a man of Appalachia: a clever farmer. This is not to say all Appalachian people are farmers, but at the time of these folktales' inception, it was certainly a very popular if not completely necessary way of life. Bobtail immediately notices that the man who approaches him is the devil, because "The Devil had his hat pulled 'way down over his forehead, but Bobtail had done noticed two little sharp-like bumps a-pushin' out the felt; seen one of his feet was too big, didn't have nothin' in the shoe-toe, looked like it was all in the ankle" (Chase 1). This story is told in third-person omniscient view. The narrator, who is not truly a character of any kind, as it would just be the

person telling the folktale, asserts that "... if the old Devil had-a knowed how hard Bobtail was to beat in a trade he might-a waited till the next feller came along" (Chase, 1). Herein it is established by the storyteller that Bobtail is a man who knows what he is doing. It is proven throughout the story that the Devil has no idea what he is doing, but he certainly acts like he does. The Devil's actions showcase the values that Appalachians view as negative cultural values: selfishness, hastiness, pride, and the desire to trick someone for selfish purposes. Bobtail may trick the Devil, but he only does so because he could tell that the Devil was trying to trick him by disguising his true form and futilely trying to get the best of each crop.

The Devil is a prominent figure in Abrahamic religions, especially Christianity. Christianity has long been a significant part of Appalachian culture. Most of the time, the Devil is depicted as a harrowing individual not to be messed with. It's a little different in this story. Bobtail entertains the Devil simply because Bobtail knows he can outsmart him and wants to mess with him. Bobtail is the hero, and it is the hero's function to promote these culture values.

At its core, this is a story that pits good against evil. Good wins using wit, forethought, attention to detail, and an unusual sense of humor that can only be described as distinctly Appalachian. Through Bobtail's success at outsmarting the Devil, this folktale communicates that intelligence, wisdom, discernment, knowledge of the land, and attention to detail are all important cultural values to have for one to succeed. In a universal sense, the theme of this story is that when good and evil are pitted against each other, if good has the correct cultural qualities and morals, then good will win. After the fourth and final battle of wits that Bobtail wins by threatening to throw the Devil's hammer right up into heaven, the Devil disappears and "ain't been seen in that part of the country since" (Chase, 5).

“Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby” AT2

Brer Rabbit

Like 1.6K

Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby

A Georgia Folktale

retold by

S.E. Schlosser

Well now, that rascal Brer Fox hated Brer Rabbit on account of he was always cutting capers and bossing everyone around. So Brer Fox decided to capture and kill Brer Rabbit if it was the last thing he ever did! He thought and he thought until he came up with a plan. He would make a tar baby! Brer Fox went and got some tar and he mixed it with some turpentine and he sculpted it into the figure of a cute little baby. Then he stuck a hat on the Tar Baby and sat her in the middle of the road.

Brer Fox hid himself in the bushes near the road and he waited and waited for Brer Rabbit to come along. At long last, he heard someone whistling and chuckling to himself, and he knew that Brer Rabbit was coming up over the hill. As he reached the top, Brer Rabbit spotted the cute little Tar Baby. Brer Rabbit was surprised. He stopped and stared at this strange creature. He had never seen anything like it before!

"Good Morning," said Brer Rabbit, doffing his hat. "Nice weather we're having."

The Tar Baby said nothing. Brer Fox laid low and grinned an evil grin.

Brer Rabbit tried again. "And how are you feeling this fine day?"

The Tar Baby, she said nothing. Brer Fox grinned an evil grin and lay low in the bushes.

Brer Rabbit frowned. This strange creature was not very polite. It was beginning to make him mad.

"Ahem!" said Brer Rabbit loudly, wondering if the Tar Baby were deaf. "I said 'HOW ARE YOU THIS MORNING?'"

The Tar Baby said nothing. Brer Fox curled up into a ball to hide his laughter. His plan was working perfectly!

"Are you deaf or just rude?" demanded Brer Rabbit, losing his temper. "I can't stand folks that are stuck up! You take off that hat and say 'Howdy-do' or I'm going to give you such a lickin'!"

The Tar Baby just sat in the middle of the road looking as cute as a button and saying nothing at all. Brer Fox rolled over and over under the bushes, fit to bust because he didn't dare laugh out loud.

"I'll learn ya!" Brer Rabbit yelled. He took a swing at the cute little Tar Baby and his paw got stuck in the tar.

"Lemme go or I'll hit you again," shouted Brer Rabbit. The Tar Baby, she said nothing.

"Fine! Be that way," said Brer Rabbit, swinging at the Tar Baby with his free paw. Now both his paws were stuck in the tar, and Brer Fox danced with glee behind the bushes.

"I'm gonna kick the stuffin' out of you," Brer Rabbit said and pounced on the Tar Baby with both feet. They sank deep into the Tar Baby. Brer Rabbit was so furious he head-butted the cute little creature until he was completely covered with tar and unable to move.

Brer Fox leapt out of the bushes and strolled over to Brer Rabbit. "Well, well, what have we here?" he asked, grinning an evil grin.

Brer Rabbit gulped. He was stuck fast. He did some fast thinking while Brer Fox rolled about on the road, laughing himself sick over Brer Rabbit's dilemma.

"I've got you this time, Brer Rabbit," said Brer Fox, jumping up and shaking off the dust. "You've sassed me for the very last time. Now I wonder what I should do with you?"

Brer Rabbit's eyes got very large. "Oh please Brer Fox, whatever you do, please don't throw me into the briar patch."

"Maybe I should roast you over a fire and eat you," mused Brer Fox. "No, that's too much trouble. Maybe I'll hang you instead."

"Roast me! Hang me! Do whatever you please," said Brer Rabbit. "Only please, Brer Fox, please don't throw me into the briar patch."

"If I'm going to hang you, I'll need some string," said Brer Fox. "And I don't have any string handy. But the stream's not far away, so maybe I'll drown you instead."

"Drown me! Roast me! Hang me! Do whatever you please," said Brer Rabbit. "Only please, Brer Fox, please don't throw me into the briar patch."

"The briar patch, eh?" said Brer Fox. "What a wonderful idea! You'll be torn into little pieces!"

Grabbing up the tar-covered rabbit, Brer Fox swung him around and around and then flung him head over heels into the briar patch. Brer Rabbit let out such a scream as he fell that all of Brer Fox's fur stood straight up. Brer Rabbit fell into the briar bushes with a crash and a mighty thump. Then there was silence.

Brer Fox cocked one ear toward the briar patch, listening for whimpers of pain. But he heard nothing. Brer Fox cocked the other ear toward the briar patch, listening for Brer Rabbit's death rattle. He heard nothing.

Then Brer Fox heard someone calling his name. He turned around and looked up the hill. Brer Rabbit was sitting on a log combing the tar out of his fur with a wood chip and looking smug.

"I was bred and born in the briar patch, Brer Fox," he called. "Born and bred in the briar patch."

And Brer Rabbit skipped away as merry as a cricket while Brer Fox ground his teeth in rage and went home.

AT2 Analysis

In this “Georgia Folktale,” the environment plays a key role as it does in every folktale cross-culturally. Briars were, and still are, a common plant to come across in the Appalachians. They range in size and color across the region, but in Georgia, the most difficult kinds are the ones that grow in patches such as the briar patch that plays a pivotal role in this tale. “Brer” is simply an Appalachian pronunciation of Briar. The plot takes place near a roadside, presumably a mildly populated route as there is an “everyone” that Brer Rabbit apparently “bosses around” (Schlosser, 1).

In this folktale, the two actors, who also happen to be the only characters, are both anthropomorphic animals. Their names are Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox, and their relationship is a contentious one. Brer Fox is the antagonist. He is described as a “rascal” with “an evil grin” who hates Brer Rabbit “on account of he was always cutting capers and bossing everyone around” (Schlosser, 1). Brer Rabbit then is obviously a leader figure who Brer Fox dislikes and sees as bossy. Brer Fox creates a “tar baby” which is tar mixed with turpentine, a resin made from pine tree sap that is typically used as solvent. Brer Fox forms this into a mixture and molds it to look like a person. He then sets it in the middle of the road and waits for Brer Rabbit to come down the road, for he knows how Brer Rabbit will react.

Brer Rabbit, on the other hand, is an honest, straightforward character. He is the hero within this tale. Upon approaching the inanimate object, made to look as if it is a living being, Brer Rabbit becomes frustrated when it doesn’t respond to his attempt at conversation. Brer Rabbit chastises it by asking “Are you deaf or just rude?” and proceeds to angrily say “I can’t stand folks that are stuck up! You take off that hat and say “Howdy-do” or I’m going to give you such a lickin!” (Schlosser, 1). Brer Rabbit’s monologue demonstrates some key cultural values.

Politeness and willingness to make conversation are very important to people within Appalachian culture. The bare minimum expectations are for a person, no matter what they think of the other person, to politely say hello. The hero demonstrates this with his passionately angry response when the tar baby does not do this.

Being the passionate epitome of a Southern man that this heroic character is, Brer Rabbit proceeds to fight with the tar baby until “he was completely covered with tar and unable to move” (Schlosser, 1). The entire time this interaction, or lack thereof, is happening, Brer Fox is hidden in the bushes by the road trying not to make a noise even though he is finding all of this hilarious. Once Brer Rabbit is trapped, however, Brer Fox thinks out loud and tries to decide how he is going to kill Brer Rabbit. Brer Rabbit is obviously the physically weaker character. He let his passionate response get him into this situation, although it was a justifiable response within the frame of Appalachian culture where politeness is highly valued. However, Brer Rabbit sees his position, and figures out a way to escape by using Brer Fox’s lack of intelligence against him. He begs Brer Fox to not throw him in the briar patch, and Brer Fox does just that. Of course, Brer Rabbit wanted this for he was “Born and bred in the briar patch” (Schlosser, 1).

Brer Rabbit, the heroic actor, showcases Appalachian values and Appalachian fears. Values include politeness, being conversational, and wit. A fear that he displays is the double-edged sword of a person with strong cultural conviction allowing their passion to get them into a difficult situation. This folktale’s actors communicate a cultural theme that values wit and personality over strength and trickery.

“The Time Jack Told a Big Tale” AT3

The Time Jack Told a Big Tale

Since this is a collection of stories told about Jack, it seemed good to include the one tale I remember hearing in which Jack himself is the storyteller. This was certainly one of my earliest favorites.

There was one time when Jack and his mama were living in a little old shack of a house on a creekbank way down at the bottom of the same town where the king lived. Jack's daddy was already dead at this time, but Jack's brothers Tom and Will were still living there. Jack and the rest of them had got down to being so poor that about all they lived on was what they could grow themselves, and that was mostly cabbage and potatoes.

The king lived in a great big three-story house on the top of the biggest hill above this very same town. He owned the whole town and most of the countryside all around there. He was rich and had so much money that he would have needed some help if he wanted to spend it all.

Now, this old king was getting to be a right old man. He was fairly infirm and had to spend most of his days just wrapped

up in the bed. He wasn't scared of dying because he had lived a good long life already, but he did get awful bored just wrapped up there in the bed day after day.

Besides being bored, there was one real thing in the world that was worrying the old king. That one thing was his daughter. The king had one daughter. She was about sixteen years old and was at least two-and-a-half times as pretty as anybody else in the whole country around there, and she was going to be the new queen someday because she was the only heir the king had.

The thing that was worrying the king was that he was afraid he might die before his daughter got married, and if that happened he would never have a chance to know who the next king would be. He wanted awful bad to know who was going to come after him before he died.

Now, back in those old days most of the poor people got married just because they loved one another, but the rich people didn't do it like that. No, the rich people always married whoever their daddies picked out for them. It worked out better than you would think, because doing it this way, the people getting married didn't know enough about one another to be disappointed once it was too late to get out of it.

So the old king decided that the thing for him to do was just to pick out somebody for his daughter to marry, and then he could rest easy because he would know for sure who the next king was going to be.

So he gathered up some of his chief wisemen and advisors, and all of them started talking about it.

"Who do you'all think my daughter ought to marry?" the king asked. Every one of those wisemen had a different answer.

One of them said, "She ought to marry the *handsomest* man in all the country, and that is that."

"What if he is the handsomest but turns out to be *stupid*?" the next one asked. "I think she ought to marry the *smartest* man—that's the one."

The third one of these advisors was ready. "Smart is all right, but what if he is *puny*? She really ought to marry the *strongest* man if he is going to be the new king."

The last of the wisemen was not to be outdone. "Strong bedads, I say! Why, the *strongest* man could *smell* like a hog pen. We can do better than that!"

The old king was fairly laughing by now, and it was the first time he had laughed in a good long while. "This is good," he said. "This is the most fun I've had in I don't know when. All four of you sure are some storytellers, and I do like that. Why, all this fun gives me an idea."

All the wisemen wanted to know what the king had thought of, and they waited for him to tell them.

"All of you know," he started, "that I spend most of the days wrapped up in bed, and that is awful boring. But we've had such a good time just now that I've figured out what to do.

"Let's just have every man in the kingdom who wants to marry my daughter come here and tell me a story. That way I will be entertained for days and days, and then I will pick one out to marry her."

So the word went out. The king was looking for somebody to marry his daughter and be the next king when he died. All you had to do to try out was go up there to the castle and *tell the king a story*. There wasn't anything to lose.

By now every man in the kingdom knew how pretty that girl was, *and* they knew how rich that old king was and what all he owned in land. So they started lining up at the castle door, all working on stories in their heads while they waited.

The old king had never had such a good time in all his life. He just laid there in bed and listened, day after day. He heard great adventure stories; he heard fortune-seeking stories; he heard about dreams; and he heard about demons. This was the best idea he had come up with in a long time. He forgot all about picking out somebody to marry his daughter.

After a few weeks some of the men had been there to tell stories a half-dozen times. They were wondering what you had to do to *win* this business. So they sent word in to the king to try to find out.

Well, the old king was having such a big time that he hadn't even thought about that. But he figured it was fair to let them know something or they wouldn't keep coming. So he got carried outside on his bed to where he could talk to them himself.

"Fellers," he said, "I sure do appreciate your trying to win my daughter, and those stories have been awful good. But to really win, somebody is going to have to tell me a story that is so fantastic that I just cannot possibly believe that it could ever be true. Yes, fellers, tell me a story that is beyond my imagination. If you can be the one to make me say, 'That's not true!', then you will be the winner right on the spot."

Now the stories really got wild. That old king heard things he had never imagined before. He liked what he was hearing so much that he would just lean back and close his eyes and say, "Oh, yes! That's good! I can just *see it now!*" And the stories went on and on.

After several months, the stories had just about run out. Even Jack's brothers Tom and Will had been up there two or three times each. Every man, old and young, had tried to win the contest with the king. Every one, that is, except old Jack.

Jack didn't think he knew any stories, and besides, he didn't have any clothes to wear up to the king's big house. So he had never really thought about trying.

One day Tom and Will started poking at him. "Jack," they said, "why don't you go on up there and tell the king a story? Everybody else in the whole countryside has tried and just about give out of ideas. You might be just the very one to hit on the right thing. We would like it awful well to be the new king's brothers."

"No," Jack said, "I better not. I don't know anything to tell, and besides, I don't have any good clothes to wear. I wouldn't know what to say if I did go up there."

"Aw, Jack," Tom said, "what you'd say will just come to you as you say it. And Will and I will fix you up to where you'll look real good. You're getting about big enough that I bet you could wear some of Daddy's old left-behind clothes. How about it?"

Jack thought it over and finally decided to give it a try.

Tom and Will spent all morning getting Jack all dressed up to go. He had to wear his own britches and shirt because even if he was pretty tall for his age, he still wasn't big enough around the middle to fill in his daddy's britches.

After that Tom picked out a long overcoat that their daddy used to wear and put that on Jack. It came just about clean to the ground. They put an old hat on Jack which did cover up all of his hair but also came down over his ears.

Finally Will said, "Now, Jack, a feller ought to have him a sword to wear to the king's house. We don't have a sword, but here is the blade off of a mowing scythe. Let's stick it through your belt and let it hang down, and it will maybe look a little bit like a sword where it pokes out of your coat at the bottom."

Jack was a sight to look at! There he went, dressed in that big, oversized coat and hat, on his way to the king's house, with his mowing-scythe sword sticking out at the bottom.

All the way through town Jack had people laughing and poking at the way he looked. But he didn't pay any attention to them. He was on his way to the king's house to tell a story—if he could come up with one.

At last Jack got up to that big old three-story house where the king lived. He walked right up onto the porch and knocked on the front door.

When the king's men opened the door, they fell right down on the floor laughing at Jack. He was about the funniest thing they had ever seen.

"Whoa, Jack!" one of them said, "you shore are a sight! What are you doing up here at the king's house, anyway?"

"I've come about the contest to be the new king," Jack told them, straightening up right tall. "I am planning to tell the king a story he will never believe. When he hears me he will say, '*Jack, that's not true!*' and I will get to marry his daughter."

Those men really rolled around and laughed when they heard this. It was about the most unbelievable thing *they* had heard for sure.

"So," said Jack, who was getting annoyed about all of this laughing by now, "take me in to see the king."

They took old Jack right up to the top floor of that three-story house and right on in to the king's bedroom. The old king was propped up in bed just waiting for whoever was coming to entertain him next. He wasn't expecting Jack, and when he saw him he laughed so hard that he about fell out of the bed!

"Jack!" he finally said, "it's you! I just about couldn't see you under that big coat and hat! What are you doing here?"

Jack was getting puckered up to pout by now. It seemed like everybody was laughing at him. He was wishing that he had not ever come, but he wasn't going to back out now.

"I have come to tell you a story that you will never believe," he said.

"That's a pretty good one, Jack," the king said. "You thought you were going to trick me right there from the start. You thought that I was going to say, '*That's not true*' as soon as you said that, didn't you? It's not going to work, Jack. So far, I believe everything you say."

Jack didn't even catch on to what the trick was supposed to be. The king was already way ahead of him.

The king smiled and went on, "Now, Jack. Tell me your story. Remember, now, that I know everything about you. Your daddy used to work for me when he was living. He was a good man, Jack. He used to raise forty acres of corn for me every year. He was a good, hard worker."

Jack was thinking hard and fast now. "He sure was," Jack replied to the king, "but he was not *half* the worker that I am. Did you know, King, that I raise *eighty* acres of corn all by myself every year, and I don't even have a mule to work it with? Do you believe that?"

"Of course I believe it, Jack," the king said. "I can just close my eyes right now and see you pulling that plow yourself. But tell me, Jack, do you cut all that corn and put it all up by yourself when it's ripe in the fall?"

"I do," said Jack. "How did you guess? I cut the entire eighty acres in one hour without the help of one single, living human being! Do you believe that?"

The king chuckled and answered, "I know that I do, Jack. I just can't quite get the picture of it in my head. How about telling me just a little bit more about how you do that, Jack, so I can get the picture."

"Sure," said Jack. "It started out like this. One day in the fall of the year I went out there to my big eighty-acre cornfield to cut a few stalks of corn for my cow. I had a little kitchen knife with me to do the cutting. About the time I got to the edge of the field, I saw a rabbit sitting there in the high grass, and I thought that I sure would like to have that rabbit to cook and eat for my supper.

"So," Jack went on, "I drew back that kitchen knife and threw it at that rabbit."

"I can see *that*, Jack," the king said. "Did you kill it?"

"Well, no. Just before the knife hit the rabbit, he turned around and *caught it in his mouth by the knife handle*. Then he took off running away with my kitchen knife.

"As that rabbit ran, he was hopping right along beside a row of corn, and, with that knife-blade sticking out of the side of his mouth, he was *cutting that whole row of corn right down!*"

"When that rabbit got to the end of the row, I just clapped my hands to scare him, and he jumped around and started running down the next row. All I had to do was to clap once at

the end of each row, and, in less than an hour, that rabbit cut all eighty acres of corn. Now, what do you think of that?"

"Oh, Jack. I can see it now!" the king said, with his eyes closed. "Look at that rabbit *go!* Did you eat him after that, Jack?"

"No," said Jack, "there wasn't enough to eat after that. He just wore himself out!"

The old king laughed and laughed. Jack thought to himself, "This king will believe *anything!* I'll never get him to say, 'That's not true,' no matter what I tell him. No wonder his daughter's not married yet. I might as well give up now and go on back home."

The king had a different idea, though. "Tell me another one, Jack. That rabbit business was good! Tell me another one."

"You want to hear another story, do you?" Jack asked the king. "This time I *will* tell you one you will never believe."

Jack thought to himself for a few minutes, and then he started.

"Do you remember, King, a few years ago when we had that bad drought? When it didn't rain for about four months and all of the corn just about dried up? Do you remember that?"

"Of course I do," the king said. "Why, if we hadn't had some corn brought in from over in England, a lot of people would have starved to death!"

"That's right," Jack went on. "I was just a little old boy back then, but I am the very one who went over to England and brought back that very load of corn that saved everybody! Do you believe that?"

"If you say it's true, Jack, I know I believe you," the king answered. "But you're going to have to go on and tell me a little more about how you actually did it."

Jack wound up and started. "It was like this," he said. "I came from my house all the way up through town until I was almost right up here to where you live. I wanted to get a good running start downhill, you see.

"Well, sir, I ran downhill from here about halfway through town; and when I was going as fast as I could, I jumped. I mean, I *jumped* so high and so far that I sailed all the way over the ocean and landed right there in England. Do you believe that?"

"*I can see it now, Jack!* What a jump. I can just see you flying through the clouds across the big water. Go on, Jack!"

Jack thought, "He *will* believe anything!" but he kept on talking just the same.

"When I landed in England, it made such a big noise that the king's men over there came out to see what it was. When they saw who it was, they said, 'Law, Jack! What do you want?'"

"I told them that we was having a drought and that I needed to take five hundred bushels of corn back to save our people. They took me in to see their king, and he told them to set me up with the five hundred bushels right on the spot."

"How did you get back with it?" the king asked Jack.

"I'm coming to that part if you'll just wait." Jack was thinking about as hard and fast as he could.

"They asked me if I had anything to carry the corn in. At first I started to say 'no,' but just about then I felt something biting me on the back of the neck. I slapped at it and found out it was a flea. So I picked up that flea and said to the king's men, 'Just you let me borrow a knife to skin this flea with, and I will make a flea-skin sack out of its hide that I can carry my corn in.'"

Jack didn't dare stop talking. He was really on a roll now. "I skinned that flea and turned its hide inside out, and it made a mighty fine sack for carrying corn. Of course, the hard part was getting the first little bit of corn into it. But after I got that flea-skin started to stretching, why, it just got bigger and I could load it a bushel at a time.

"Well, King, would you believe I finally loaded five hundred bushels of corn into that sack I made from the skin of just one flea?"

"I can see it now," the king said. "What a sack. I truly can see it getting bigger and bigger in my mind's eye. What a load of corn! How did you get back home with it, Jack? Did that corn-cutting rabbit help you out this time?" The king was grinning when he said it, but Jack didn't pay any attention to him.

"I'm coming to that part, too." Jack's mind really was moving fast now.

"At first I thought about jumping back just like I had jumped over there to start with," he kept going on, "but then I realized that with the big load of corn I might not make it all the way across. So I sat down to figure out another way to do it.

"While I was sitting there, a whole huge flock of wild geese came over and then landed right in the edge of the cornfield. That gave me an idea. I asked the king's men if they could get me two good, long pieces of stout cord. Then I took those cords and tied one to the left foot and the other one to the right foot of every single one of those geese. There must have been a thousand of them. When I got finished, I had me a string of geese half a mile long, each one about a foot behind the next one.

"All I had to do then," Jack said, "was to tie the ends of those cords to myself and my flea-skin bag. Then when those geese decided to take off to flying, they carried us right up into the air. Those two cords were just like reins on those geese. I could guide them by pulling either on their left feet or their right ones. I guided them right over the ocean until we were right here and back at home!"

"I can see it now," the king said. "That was a beautiful sight in my head to see that great string of geese hauling you and your corn-sack back over the ocean. That was a good story, Jack, but I am afraid that I *do* believe every word of it. Why don't you come back and try to tell me another one again another day?"

"Not so fast," Jack said. "This story's not over yet. The geese haven't landed yet. In fact, that part turned out to be the biggest problem of the whole trip.

"When we got back close to here, I discovered that even if I could make those geese turn left and right, I couldn't figure out how to make them land. We circled right around here above your very house five or six times, and those geese just got higher and higher."

"What did you do, Jack?" the king asked.

"Well," Jack went on, "I finally decided that I was just going to have to let loose and fall on down to the ground. I tried to guide those geese around over the edge of town, and when we got over there I cut the corn loose. Then I circled them around those big, soft pine trees above town, and that's where I let loose.

"I was coming down just fine," Jack said, "until a big puff of wind caught me. That wind blew me off track, and instead of landing in those soft pine trees, I landed feet first on that great big flat granite rock that is right up there above town."

The king wasn't saying a word now, but he sure was listening hard.

"When I hit that rock"—Jack was not even slowing down now—"I was falling so fast that I sank into the rock itself right up to my neck, just like sinking in mud! I couldn't move anything but my head, and I didn't know how I would ever get out. I kept thinking that I had to get word to Mama so she could come up there and pull me out of that rock.

"Then," Jack went on, "I got an idea. My sword here (Jack patted the mowing-scythe blade as he talked) had landed on the rock right beside my head, and when I saw it, I knew what to do.

"I reached out with my chin, got my sword under the edge, and pulled it right up against my neck. Then I started rubbing my neck back and forth on the blade so I could cut my head off."

The king's eyes were getting bigger and bigger as he listened.

"Yes, sir," Jack smiled, "I kept sawing away until I cut my own head off. My head rolled right down off of that rock and landed in the road. I hollered, 'Head for home!' and my head started rolling down the road to get Mama.

"Everything was going just fine until, about halfway home, my head rolled past a den where an old fox lived. It was a fox that was already mad at me because I had chased him out of the henhouse a few times before now. And when my head rolled by, that fox started chasing it!

"Boy, was that some race! My head was just rolling and bouncing along as hard and fast as it could with my hair and ears and tongue all a-flopping, but that fox was coming faster and faster and gaining with every step. It looked for sure like that fox was going to have my head! But then, I got an idea.

"All of a sudden I stopped my head, right there in the road, and just stared at that fox. This surprised him so much that he stopped for a minute right there. And when he did, I said to him, 'You come one step closer and I will stomp you to death!' And do you know what? That old fox got so scared that he tucked his tail between his legs and ran back toward where he had come from!"

"What a stupid fox!" the king laughed out loud.

"Not half as stupid as you are!" Jack said, looking straight at the king.

"THAT'S NOT TRUE!" The king fairly shouted...and...then he realized what he had said. Jack *had* told the king a story that he couldn't believe!

And that is how Jack came to marry the king's daughter. Some people say that he became the next king, too. But other people say that Jack decided to give that job to someone else, because he didn't want to have to waste all of his time having to tell other people what to do.

AT3 Analysis

The setting of this folktale is in the hilly farmland of North Carolina, presumably because Donald Davis grew up in such a place and writes this story from memory with this environment described. He explains that one of the actors and his family are living “on a creekbank way down at the bottom of the same town where the king lived” (Davis, 41). Hilly farmlands rolling into mountains are typical of the North Carolina area of the Appalachian region. The main actor and his family grow cabbage and potatoes to feed themselves, and the land that the actor known as the king owns is referred to as the “countryside.”

The main actors in this story are Jack and the King. Other characters include the King’s advisors, the King’s daughter, (who exists and who the plot centers around but is never a part of the action), Jack’s family, and the other male suitors. The premise of the plot centers around the king, a very sick man, having only his beautiful, sixteen-year-old daughter as his successor to all of his land and fortune. So, the king decides that he needs to marry off his daughter. In order to do this, the king puts out word around town that any man, no matter how poor or ugly, can win his daughter’s hand in marriage and the king’s land and riches so long as he tells the king a story. The king decides he will enjoy being entertained by the townsfolk for days and days and eventually, he will just pick one of the suitors. The king, although not an evil character, can be typified as the antagonist. He is overtly rich, has a lot of land and money, and has a beautiful daughter. These are all valuable things to have as an Appalachian man. His counterpart actor, Jack, who is the hero of this story, is a poor young man with no real job and a widowed mother. However, Jack is quite clever and brave. These two attributes are valuable in Appalachian culture, and this is communicated when Jack is able to use a folktale of his own to cleverly trick the king into winning his daughter’s hand in marriage.

Throughout the story, the king enjoys every story he is told and truly enjoys Jack's lengthy tale, with "The king's eyes getting bigger and bigger as he listened" (Davis, 51). Jack the hero wins the folktale contest by tricking the king into saying that his tale wasn't true. Both of these plot points, the king enjoying tales and Jack winning using wit alone, reveal some valuable, cultural attributes that resonate throughout all three tales: intelligence as key to being triumphant in any situation. The presence of humor in this tale as well as the value of the oral tradition of folktale telling represents some more significant aspects of Appalachian culture.

Analysis of all Appalachian Folktales

Patterns of heroic and antagonist characteristics shown through the major actors in each tale reveal cultural valuables and cultural fears or undesirables. When framed within a sociohistorical context, these patterns reveal important emic information about Appalachian culture. Patterns of data concerning animals, gender, and other motifs reveal even more cultural zeroes. A cultural zero describes important cultural information that is not typically communicated through ethnographic interviews but can be found in other cultural materials such as folktales.

Each heroic actor, Bobtail, Brer Rabbit, and Jack share common characteristics. The most prominent characteristic that prevails throughout each tale is wit. While intelligence seems to also play a role, wit is the better name for this cultural valuable. Wit is a practical, resourceful, and sometimes humorous intelligence that is innate rather than learned. Each heroic character showcases wit in order to defeat their antagonist. Bobtail showcases his practical knowledge of the land and farming practices, as well as his humorous trickery that defeats the Devil. Brer Rabbit uses his quick wit to convince Brer Fox that doing something that will help Brer Rabbit become free again is the very thing that Brer Fox shouldn't do, which leads Brer Fox to do just that. And Jack uses his wit to convince the king to pick Jack as his successor if Jack can tell the king a story that the king cannot believe, knowing that the king is prideful and will not like being insulted.

It is also important to note that in each tale, the antagonists attempt to display wit but fail to do so against their heroic counterparts. This communicates a cultural undesirable, which is pride. Pride is the downfall of each of the antagonists, the Devil, Brer Fox, and the king. The Devil thinks that he is smarter than he is, but he has little knowledge of the land or the crops. Brer Fox is just smart enough to capture Brer Rabbit, but proves that he is more prideful than intelligent,

and lets Brer Rabbit trick him into letting him get away. The king thinks he is being clever by tricking all of the townsfolk into entertaining him for days and days, but Jack cleverly comes up with a way to trap the king into making Jack his daughter's husband and his own successor using words alone, essentially beating him at his own game. All of these antagonists think that they have wit, but in comparison with the hero, they have only pride.

Motivations within the culture that promote this specific type of intelligence may very well have to do with the practical and resourceful intelligence one must have in order to be a successful farmer and mountain dweller. This specific environment can be difficult to live in if one is not prepared to deal with consistent rain and flooding during certain seasons, as well as all different types of wildlife. Wit very specifically is usually a type of intelligence tied into humor, and that is something that is pervasive among the people of Appalachia. The environment does lend itself nicely to agriculture, as seasonal floods naturally replenished farmlands with nutrients up until the TVA dammed a large portion of those farmlands during the New Deal in the early to mid-20th century. There was also no industrialism or advanced technology in this region prior to the massive spread of modernity, so small communities kept themselves entertained and morally on track with their cultural values by coming up with folktales. An agricultural lifestyle lends itself to hard work in certain seasons, and plenty of down time and rest during other seasons, which provides more time for craft specialization and family time. This in turn created an environment within which good-natured humor was incorporated into folktales that also taught the next generation what was important in order to survive and even thrive.

Another characteristic demonstrated by all three heroes is politeness. Even through their disdain of the antagonists, the heroes still maintain congeniality. One potential reasoning for this patterned heroic characteristic is that Appalachian communities were typically small and tight

knit. People lived relatively close together along dirt roads or they lived in small clumps and tended the same farmland as an extended family. Many multigenerational families would live in the same house and either work within a local community gathering center as a craft specialist or tend to the farmlands and grow food for the family or to trade with neighbors. Small and physically and emotionally close communities thus had little desire to upset the status quo. Even if someone was a sworn mortal enemy, there was likely to be a cordial exchange upon running into one another. This maintained civility within these agricultural and craftsman-based communities. Maintaining civility was important to people whose livelihoods may have been tied into trading with neighbors. It became a cultural value to maintain civility. That way, small or large disputes would not lead to larger-community issues that might disrupt flow of goods within a larger trade network or break up the harmony within a group of people who really can't escape from one another.

While the two most common characteristics shown by the hero in Appalachian folktales were wit and politeness, other patterns reveal more information about this culture during the time which these tales were being told in an emic setting. An interesting concept is the anthropomorphizing of animals. This occurred in two of the three tales. In "Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby," the two main actors were both anthropomorphic animals. They spoke and acted like Appalachian people, but they were very clearly animals. This may speak to the characteristics of rabbits and foxes within Appalachian culture. Rabbits were quickly moving animals that were very concerned with taking care of their young. They also are not predators, as their diet consists only of grasses and vegetables. On the other hand, foxes are characterized as sly predators who eat animals like rabbits, opossums, squirrels, and other small mammals. Thus, this interaction wherein the fox wants to trap, kill, and eat the rabbit is based in ecological reality. The other tale

where this human characterization occurs is in Jack's tale within the folktale "The Time Jack Told a Big Tale". In this tale, the animals are not quite anthropomorphized, at least not to the extent that the animals are in the tale of Brer Rabbit. They do still have their own motivations beyond those typically ascribed to animals. In Jack's tale within a tale, a fox appears to have a vendetta against Jack and chases his head down a hill. Jack stops his rolling head and scares the fox off by saying "You come one step closer and I will stomp you to death" (Davis 52). This insinuates that another aspect of Appalachian culture is the acknowledgement that animals have the power of choice and are liable to be ruled by more than just knee-jerk survival responses. Animals play a significant role in the folktales in many different cultures. This comes from the significant and complex roles that animals play in the everyday lives of people. This is especially relevant to those who lived in a time prior to the construction of large cities where animals no longer play as large of a role, such as those living in the Appalachian region during the times the folktales in this thesis were being told. The concept of talking animals in these Appalachian folktales may have something to do with the importance of animals within their environment. This concept of the anthropomorphic animal will be discussed at greater length in the comparative analysis of this thesis.

Another interesting pattern is the near absence of females from these tales. Every character is male or insinuated as male, see the Devil and Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox, and the females who do appear or are discussed, have very little time in the tale except to serve as unimportant plot devices. This is interesting, as women were a key part of Appalachian life. Houses and communities were typically, although not always, centered around patriarchal lines. Traditional marriage was between a man and a woman, as is shown in the folktale "The Time Jack Told a Big Tale." In fact, this is the only folktale where women are even mentioned. And in

their mention, they are tied directly to males. Jack's mother is important because she is his mother. Jack's family is also poor, probably because their mother was widowed at a young age, leaving she and her sons with no male to provide economically for them through agriculture or a trade. The only other female mentioned, but never appears, is the king's daughter. She is briefly described at the beginning of the tale: as being "about sixteen years old and was at least two-and-a-half times as pretty as anybody else in the whole country around there" (Davis 42). Thus, the women in these tales are defined only as how they are seen through the eyes of or their relationship with a male character. This could be because of the Christian influences on Appalachian culture. During their immigration to America after European countries had established colonies, many sects of Christianity fled to North America to escape religious prosecution. Christianity is still a widely accepted belief system in the Appalachians to this day. In this belief system, males hold a more prominent leader role which could be why there are no female heroes in these folktales. The Christian influence may explain the lack of female representation, especially in the role of the hero character.

Another repeated motif is the hero's relationship with his environment. In two out of three stories, the hero is able to defeat their nemesis by having knowledge of and a relationship with their environment. Bobtail does this by tricking the Devil into always taking the unusable part of the crop, and Brer Rabbit does this by knowing he thrives in the briar patches. Thus, the young or old Appalachian listeners to these folktales come to see that it is important for them to be knowledgeable in concern to their environment. The patterns delineated from these three Appalachian folktales reveal some significant emic data. These tales all came from the best reliable sources and provided a lens through which this thesis analyzed the emic data and extracted sources of that data.

Chukchi

Sociohistorical Context

The Chukchi people are an ethnic group tied together by a similar genetic lineage. They live around the Chukotka peninsula in northern Siberia. A map of this region can be found in Appendix B. This peninsula was, thousands of years ago, connected to North America by the Bering Strait. Thus, the Chukchi people have genetic similarities to Alaskan Inuit. The landscape in which they live is an Arctic climate and “Apart from the basin of the Anadyr River, most of the [autonomous district] is mountainous or hilly” (*Chukotka*). The peninsula borders the Bering Sea and the Chukchi Sea, both of which have massive icebergs that only melt for a few months a year, making travel to this region incredibly difficult. There is not much infrastructure in this part of northeastern Siberia. Although it is an autonomous district not required to tax, the Chukotka area is still technically a part of Russia and was so when the folktales included in this thesis were recorded and transcribed.

The Chukchi group was comprised of around 14,000 people in the late 1900’s and have two distinct subgroups: the reindeer Chukchi and the maritime Chukchi. They speak a Luorawetlan language deriving from the Paelosiberian language group. Whereas the reindeer Chukchi lived off of domesticated reindeer herds, the maritime Chukchi lived off of marine life, such as whales and fish. Whereas reindeer Chukchi were nomadic and lived in tents that they could transport according to seasonality of pastures for their herd, the maritime Chukchi lived in permanent small villages along the coast (*Chukchi*).

According to ethnographic studies done in this region, all Chukchi were “a very fierce and warlike people who, when captured, took their own lives” (Borgoras, 80). There has been a

history of hostility between the Chukchi people and the Russians ever since their first contact in the mid-17th century. In this struggle, a mythos emerged surrounding this contentious conflict. A Cossack leader of the Russian forces supposedly did not show up to support his people in battle and because of this, “his last descendant, Mitrophan Krivogornitzyn, a blind beggar ... his sad fate was in punishment for the treachery of his forefather” (Borgoras 81). His forefather is said to have been brutally tortured by the Chukchi prior to his death. This sort of familial descendancy punishment is telling of the Chukchi culture. This changed in the late 16th century. In 1775, the Chukchi sent delegations to meet with the Russians and the two groups established peace with trade benefits. The Russians realized that letting the Chukchi be autonomous was cheaper than military campaigns against them, and since there were no real natural resources in the area, the Russians did not have a problem with a lack of access (Znamenski, 26). The Chukchi began to trade and barter with the Russians and other countries, typically with animal pelts, tobacco, and alcohol moving between foreign nations and the Chukchi people. It was during this time when the folktales presented in this thesis were being told.

The Chukchi people can best be described spiritually as animists. They believe that everything has a spirit, and this is the core belief which their spiritual practices center around. Spiritual leaders are essentially shamans: there is ritual dancing, divination, and connection with the spiritual world done by these leaders. These practices were still in place in the early to mid-20th century but have been in decline as modern technology and practices have started to arrive in the Chukotka Peninsula. Alexander Dolitsky, a preeminent folklore scholar of the Chukchi people, explains how “A number of legends and tales were derived from ancient myths of an egalitarian hunter-gatherer society and continued to take shape during the breakup of that

egalitarian society, later entering the context of new social institutions that emerged around activities such as reindeer herding and sea-mammal hunting (Dolitsky 2012, 20-21).

The Chukchi's oral narratives began to attract the attention of Anthropologists such as Waldemar Bogoras and Waldemar Jochelson who collected and published a large number of Chukchi folktales in the late 19th and early 20th century. The two men also attempted to analyze these folklores to some degree in their publications. While Bogoras focused primarily on collected a wide variety of tales, Jochelson was focused on the tales of the Koryak, a different ethnic group, and their 'Raven Cycle' of folktales. A common theme in Northeastern Siberian folktales is the presence of cyclical tales throughout different groups. Although the Chukchi have some cyclical tales, the ones included in this thesis are not from that cycle.

The Chukchi people have an intimate relationship with their natural environment. They assign spirits and powers to animals, geographical formations, and celestial bodies. Dolitsky asserts that this spiritism orientation mixed with their ethnohistorical background created "a distinctive chain of major tale cycles... such as legends about the raven, orphan, woman-creator of people and animals, conjugal unions of people and animals, and myths about other worlds" (Dolitsky 2012, 21). Assigning anthropomorphic traits to natural processes or animals expresses their "dependence on manifestations and objects of nature that surround them and that spiritualize and endow human life with the traits" (Dolitsky 27). They acknowledge that a positive relationship with their harsh ecosystem is what keeps them alive. The most common manifestations of fears and values within Chukchi culture are communicated through these anthropomorphized animals, natural processes, and their dealings with the Chukchis.

The Chukchi's temperament is as brutal as their environment, and quite possibly because of it. The temperatures in this region of the world tend to range from -73 degrees Celsius to +14

degrees Celsius, yet the Chukchi continue to thrive. In photographs, they are often seen wearing reindeer pelts from head to toe to stay warm. They are a people with some but not a lot of available ethnographic information, probably because of the difficulties in reaching and living in their corner of the world which is something that they, and they alone, can brag about.

Concerning Chukchi Sources

All three folktales from the Chukchi region came from one book, *Fairy Tales and Myths of the Bering Strait Chukchi* by Alexander Dolitsky. Dolitsky recorded, translated into Russian, and transcribed traditional oral narratives from multiple different Chukchi people. A colleague of his, Henry Michael, then translated these transcriptions from Russian to English. The authors assert in the introduction that they did their best to maintain the uniquely Chukchi grammar and spirit of the folktale telling throughout the translating.

Dolitsky has done folklore research in the Chukchi region, Siberia, and Alaska for the majority of his career. He has also been President of the Alaska-Siberia Research Center which is based out of Juneau, Alaska. He has published multiple books on folktales from the Chukotka and Kamchatka peninsulas in Siberia, and he has also published articles in other scholarly journals depicting sociohistorical contexts for his folktale collections. In order to collect these folktales, he interviewed and recorded local folktale tellers, as well as short descriptions of the person who told him the tale. This sort of in-depth and honest emic data is rare from this region. Dolitsky's book of folktales is perhaps the highest quality and largest publication in recent years of Chukchi folklore.

“The Toy People” CT1

1. The Toy People

Recorded in 1948 by an inhabitant of Uelen village in Chukotskiy *rayon*, Uvataryn, age 62. Recorded and translated into Russian by P. Skorik. This is a mythical rendition about a coast-dwelling woman – a creator of people, reindeer herds, sea mammals, and dwellings. This rendition is widespread among the coastal Chukchi and Asian Eskimos.

A young girl from the village of Memerene³ refused to marry an old, rich reindeer herder. Her father said to her:

— I’m getting old. I want you to get married.

His daughter replied:

— No, I will not marry!

— Why?

— If I marry, my life will be a misery. For no reason at all!

The father said:

— In that case you will not stay in my house. Go wherever you will!

The daughter answered:

— Just the same I will not marry!

The father said:

— Hey, don’t you see, I’m already old! And what will you do?

The daughter answered:

— Somehow I will live.

The father became angry and said:

— I am finished quarreling with you. I don’t need you anymore. Go wherever you want. You know you were my only one and I always meant well for you. Stay here in the house overnight. But tomorrow leave since you can’t do what I want you to do. And that’s all I am going to say.

— Well, let it be that you don’t need me! Yet, I am not going to marry!

The father said:

— Very well, you go to sleep! And tomorrow before dawn I don’t want to see you here.

The daughter cried. And her mother also quietly cried. Then the daughter stopped crying and said:

— Oh well, let me be just a girl, let me be!

They lay down to sleep. The father and the mother fell asleep. The daughter did not sleep. She got up quietly and said to herself:

— What am I to do? Father said that I can’t survive by myself. Never mind, I will survive, I will not die!

She took a sack from behind the canopied *polog*⁴ [sleeping platform]. She examined it, tied it, and put it back. She took a second sack in which the women kept roots of herbs and other plants for cooking. She tied the sack and put it back. Finally she took a third sack, removed from it a small pouch, untied it, and spilled out its contents and said:

— And what is this?

It happened to be that there were toys in the pouch: various seal and walrus teeth and small bones. She looked at them and said:

— Aha, and what is this?

She took another pouch from the sack. It contained deer teeth. She took out a third pouch. It contained mouse hides. She put the pouches back in the sack, tied it, and said:

— This will do.

She took yet another large sack and removed from it a piece of *baleen* and a small whale bone. She put all in one sack.

³Memerene is the Chukchi adaptation of the Eskimo toponym Mamrokhpak. The Eskimo community of Mamrokhpagmit was located between Uelen and Naukan. Judging by the rendition of toponyms, this presentation apparently originated among the Asian Eskimos and then spread over the entire Chukchi-Eskimo region.

⁴*Polog* is the inner part of a Chukchi dwelling used as living and sleeping space. [Editor].

The girl returned to the *polog*, took a *kerker* [woman's outer garment], *torbaza* [reindeer boots], white gloves, and a seal fur blanket. She again climbed up to the *polog* and got hold of another sack. From it she took a *dozhdevik* [rainproof cloak] made of seal intestines and a *kukashka* [outer fur garment]. She put the *kukashka* on. She opened the door, looked out, and said:

— What wonderful weather!

Indeed it was very nice. The moon rose. It became as light as day.

The girl left. She found her father's boat. She took the mooring strap, a harpoon, spear, and oar, and she said:

— I will take all of this.

Then she looked around and said:

— Well, my father and mother will stay here. I feel sorry only for my mother.

She cried a bit, then got to her feet, saying:

— But it is so. I shall go wherever my nose leads me. They don't need me. My father threw me out. It's going to be a good trip. The night is wonderful.

She started to walk. She had loaded herself with the spear, harpoon, and all the other things. She came to the village of Kenypek and said to herself:

— This is not much of a place; it's better that I go on!

She arrived at Uelen. There was only one house there, a dugout. It was night. The girl knocked on the door. An old woman looked out and asked:

— Who is there?

— I!

— Who are you?

— I am from Memerenen.

— So, it's you, the one that doesn't obey. You are not a nice girl! You don't listen to your father. The woman passed out of sight. She shook her husband awake. Sleepily he asked:

— What's the matter?

— A girl from Memerenen came.

— What does she want?

The wife told him:

— Maybe you don't know? She's the one that disobeyed her father.

The husband said:

— She must go!

Then his wife asked him:

— You should at least give her some meat!

The husband decided:

— Let her eat!

The girl ate a bit. The old man said:

— All right! You don't want to marry — go where you will.

The girl answered:

— Very well. I will leave!

She left. She walked farther. As she walked she said to herself:

— What shall I do? Where is a village? Where is a place where good people live? I can't find one anywhere. Most likely I am the bad one. I did not listen to my father. Yet this needs to be thought over. Oh, it could be that I'll die on the road! I have to travel far.

She came to the land of the Utens. She looked around and said:

— Yes, this is nice land. True, it is a narrow strip of land, but really it's all right.

She climbed up a hillock and dropped her burden. She took out a pouch. In it were seal and walrus teeth. She thought a bit and said to herself:

— What should I do with these?

She walked to the seashore. She took all of the seal teeth, closed her eyes, and threw the teeth into the sea, saying:

— Tomorrow let there be many seals on the seashore.

Then she took the walrus teeth and spilled some onto the sand, saying:

— These are walrus on the sand, a walrus rookery.

She threw the rest of the walrus teeth in the sea, saying:

— There, I have thrown walrus!

Finally she took the *baleen* and the small whalebone and threw them far into the sea, saying:

— Now I have done it. I have created seals, I have created walrus, I have created whales.

She went back toward the shore and with stones and turf she built a large dugout. She then returned to the seashore again, grasped two stones in her fists and said:

— This will be a good man, this a woman.

Again she said:

— Since there is no village here, there are no men. So the man and his wife should have a boy and a girl.

She also created other people. She took a large stone, put it down, then another one, put it down, saying:

— This will be a strong man!

She made clothing for all from the mouse hides, *kukhlyanki* [deer-skin cloaks], breeches, *kerkers* [a woman's fur gument], and *torbaza* [reindeer-hide boots]. And she said:

— There are enough boys and men already. Soon, many, many people will be born here. I have finished my work here.

Then the Memerenen girl went to the tundra, to the Eet river. From it she gathered many stones: white, black, and many-colored. With these she made many reindeer. And she said to the reindeer:

— I will leave you now. Soon your keeper will be here.

She made a hut from bushes and covered it with grass. When she finished she took more of the stones and said to herself:

— Now I shall make reindeer herders, the men.

She put down two stones and said:

— One will be a woman, the other a man.

She took other stones, small stones, and said to them:

— You be a little boy, you, a little girl! Now I have finished all my work. Grow up and multiply now! I, a wretched girl, have created you.

She clothed them, put them in a *yaranga*⁵ [dwelling], and said to them:

— Tomorrow, when you wake up, you will hear something that will frighten you, but it will only be the reindeer snorting and bellowing, many reindeer. But now you go to sleep.

She went to the seashore. She made a shelter of branches in the grass and fell asleep. At dawn a man and his wife arrived asking:

— Where is our old one, where is our grandmother? Let's look for her!

The Memerenen girl awakened and came out of the shelter. The woman saw her and cried out:

— There is our grandmother!

Her husband also looked at her and said:

— True, it's her.

And really, the girl had aged. Certainly, she had worked hard; she had spent so much of her strength!

The man said to the old woman:

— Grandmother, come home!

She answered:

— All right, let us go!

— Well, get up!

The old woman rose. The man cradled her in his arms and carefully carried her toward the house.

And he said to her:

— What beautiful weather! Look at the sea. What is that on the shore?

The old woman looked and said:

— Nothing unusual. Those are seals for you so that there will be plenty to eat.

The man said:

— Listen. What is that calling out so loudly: Gy-gy-gy, gy-gy-gy?

The old woman said:

⁵*Yaranga* is a semisubterranean dwelling of the Chukchi.

— Those are walrus that are calling; they are your future meals. You will not be hungry. You will eat seal, walrus, and whale meat. Let us now eat!

The man wondered:

— And what are we going to eat?

The old woman said:

— Here is my father's harpoon. Take it and go to the sea. Kill a seal with the harpoon!

There were many seals on the shore near the water. The man threw the harpoon at one. It hit the seal's head and killed it. He hauled it out, put it over his shoulders and walked to the house. The old woman told him:

— Now, cut up the seal!

— All right, I will cut it!

Then the old woman said:

— Now we will cook it! But wait, first I have to make a kettle.

From a stone she made a kettle. The woman started to cook the meat. The broth boiled. They ate. The old woman got up, took the oars and said:

— These are my father's oars. Come with me.

From wood she made a single-seat boat and said:

— Try to make one like it! When you finish the boat take it to the shore!

The man made a wooden boat. The old woman told him:

— Now make a spear!

The man did. The old woman said:

— Now go to the sea shore!

The man went to the sea shore. There, on the pebbles, many walrus rested. The man thought: "I am afraid. Shall I kill one? Hear how strongly they cry." But finally he speared one. He cut open the carcass, cut it into pieces, removed the hide and carried it home. He told the old woman:

— Here's a *repalgyn* [walrus hide] I have brought.

The old woman told him:

— That will be the way to hunt animals! Take that hide and stretch it over a boat[-frame]. When you finish the boat, the children will grow older and all of you will go hunting. From the boat you will hunt walrus and whales, you will harpoon seals. This will be your food. And the children will multiply. Take care that you feed them well! And now I have done my work among you. Live like I have told you and your life will be prosperous.

Thus, the old woman taught the coastal people how to live.

After some time herders with their wives appeared. A man inquired:

— And where is grandmother?

A shore dweller answered:

— She is here. And what a wise grandmother is ours! It is good that she also created you. The herder said:

— Please, grandmother, get up! Now you will visit with us! He took the old woman in his arms and carried her to his home. As he carried her he said:

— Look, there are many reindeer around our *yaranga*!

The old woman said to him:

— Well, that's the way you are going to make a living!

When they came to the house, the herder told his wife:

— Spread out a large hide! Let grandmother eat of deer meat, fat, and marrow!

The old woman said:

— I thank you very much! I have created this for you. And if you wait a while, you will live even better. Your children will multiply. I am from Memerenen, the one that did not listen to her father. But you have treated me well. May you be so nice in the future!

The old woman was good. She taught the herders how to live, how to pasture the reindeer, how to use them for food, how to make clothes, how to collect herbs. The old woman taught them everything. And there were many reindeer among the herdsman, and among the shore dwellers there were many seals, *lakhtaks* [bearded seals], walrus, and whales. The old woman taught the shore dwellers and the tundra herders to visit each other and to exchange things, the *pyghpygh* [a bag or a

floater made of seal skin], and other things for deer meat and hides. So the herders and the shore dwellers came to help each other, and both lived well.

At this time the father in Memereren began to think about the whereabouts of his daughter. One day he said to his wife:

— Well, I shall go and see where she died.

It was summertime.

— Tomorrow we shall go by boat, – said the father of the Memereren girl.

Overnight the weather became very mild. The father and mother got in the boat. They arrived at Uelen. One dweller of Uelen saw them and said to his wife:

— Someone arrived in the boat.

The Uelen man and his wife went down to the shore. The Memereren man asked:

— Have you seen my daughter?

The Uelen man answered:

— Yes, I have seen her! But she only ate at our place. I had told her, “You are bad, you don’t listen when father speaks,” and she went on farther.

The Memereren man came to Uten. He asked a woman:

— Have you seen my daughter?

The Uten man said to his wife:

— Probably that is her father?!

And the Uten man answered the old man:

— She is our grandmother. She lives here.

The Memereren man asked:

— Where is my daughter? I would like to see her!

The Uten dweller said:

— All right, let’s go to the *yaranga*!

They climbed to the shore. The Memereren man saw his daughter and said:

— Well, have you found a home here?

— Yes, I have. As one who according to you was not in the right mind, I have created this entire village. You see, I was right in not wanting to marry a rich old man. Of course, you think that I did not do the right thing? Well then, let’s go to my *yaranga*!

The father asked:

— Where is your *yaranga*?

The daughter answered:

— In the tundra. Let’s go there.

They arrived. The daughter said to her people:

— My bad father has arrived. I thought that he had forsaken me. Let him now eat! Slaughter a fat reindeer. Serve everything: the brains, the meat. And fish.

After they had eaten, the daughter asked her father:

— Have you eaten well?

The father answered:

— Let me and mother move here.

The daughter said:

— Certainly, move here. But, oh, you have aged very much! Well, you can age some more!

Then she said to the herder:

— Let my father grow old!

The father protested:

— No, I don’t want to grow old!

Nevertheless, the daughter continued:

— Grow old! Why, being my father, did you send me into misery? And you did not want to hear me out. So now, I tell you: “Grow old.” I tell you: “Die.”

The father said:

— Very well, I will die!

The daughter said:

— If I would die, you as a father would age with sorrow. Now you will die comfortably. You will have deer meat, walrus meat, seal meat. When you die, my people will carry you high into the

mountains, the tundra. Don't fear, you will die quietly. Remember, you threw me out of the house to die on the road. And now I tell you: "Die"!

She told the herders and shore dwellers:

— Fetch the thong!⁶

They placed it above his head. They made a noose. The daughter said:

— Put the noose around his neck!

They did. Then, the daughter told the people:

— Now, pull!

They pulled, and they strangled him. The old man died. The daughter told the people:

— Let us set out! You shore dwellers and also you herders, let us all go. My father was a bad, bad man! Tie him to a reindeer sled and take him to the mountains!

They left. They came to the tundra. There they put him on the ground. They killed the reindeer that pulled the sled. They tore asunder two reindeer hides. The daughter said:

— Now let us go home. Leave him here!

They left him. They went home. And on the way home the daughter said:

— So, my father has died.

The next day the daughter said:

— Oh, I have aged! Both of you — shore dwellers and herders — I have created well. Now I am altogether very old. Well, let us together, my creations, eat plenty of deer, walrus, and seal meat. All — men, women — all should eat, let all eat together. And now, fetch the thong.

Both the shore dwellers and the male herders exclaimed:

— Why should you, grandmother, die when you have not tasted the good life yet?

The daughter [grandmother] said:

— That's enough. Give me the thong right away!

She put the thong around her neck and said:

— When I die, take me to my father in the mountains! I am not a woman of the herders. Although my father was not a herder, he was taken to the tundra with reindeer. Let the shore dwelling men and the herders carry me to the tundra too!

And the men took her, not on a sled pulled by dogs or reindeer, but on their own arms. They carried her to the tundra and returned home. On leaving the tundra, two men talked among themselves:

— Yes, the village of Uten did not exist before! Thanks to the Memereren old woman, our creator! Now life will be much better. Uten has now grown very much. There are many more men. Things are now better. And all was done by grandmother: reindeer, seals, walrus, whales. All this was created by grandmother.

And even today the village of Uten exists. It is farther north from Mitkulin. The Uten people made from toys have become a large tribe. Some of the Utens have spread over the countryside. Some have gone to the herders, others to the shore people. In Uten, even today, there are descendants of the toy people. There is Nenek, a descendant of the toy people. In the village of Mitkulin there is the family of Ettugi. Their mother is an Uten, a descendant of the toy people. And, yes, there are many more. And that is all.

⁶"Fetch the thong" is the accepted, usual formula in Chukchi-Eskimo folklore. It signifies the decision of an overly aged or very sick person to be put to death by strangling. Voluntary death was regarded as honorable. Before leaving for "the world of his/her ancestors," the one who decided to die arranged with his/her nearest kin to offer lavish entertainment during which those present took turns in telling the good things associated with the person who decided to die. The act of strangling was carried out by relatives in the sleeping quarters. They believed that the deceased would enter into a world of abundant hunting and return from there as a newborn. The relatives slaughtered reindeer or dogs, which would be necessary to transport the deceased to the other world. Also they placed with the deceased implements for hunting and articles that belonged to the person during his or her life, as well as a supply of food "for the road" (cf. Bogoraz, 1900, p. 50). Myths about the creation of people are found in Bogoraz, 1900, nos. 53, 57-59.

CT1 Analysis

Dolitsky writes that this tale was recorded in 1948 by a woman named Uvataryn who was 62 years old. She lived in the Uelen village in the Chukotsky region of Siberia which is another name for the autonomous district that encompasses the lands of the Chukchi people, both marine dwellers and reindeer herders. This myth of the female-creator is widespread among the Chukchi and the Asian Eskimo people. In this myth, a rebellious young woman, an only daughter, refuses her father's charge that she must get married. He sends her out of his house to fend for herself in anger. Her mother does not want her to go, but in the daughter's pride, she decides that no matter what happens she will create a life for herself. And this she certainly does. Before leaving her home, she finds a sack near her family's sleeping platform filled with "various seal and walrus teeth and small bones" (Dolitsky 1997, 1). She randomly decides to take these with her on her journey. When she reaches the coast, after staying with a few families who all tell her that she should just go back home and let herself be married off by her father, she uses these objects to create a new people and the animals that they need to survive. These people become the reindeer herding and the marine dwelling Chukchi.

The main actors in this tale are the female creator (who has no name), and her father. Other notable side characters are the villagers along the way to the coast, and the villagers that the creator woman creates. The woman creator is the main character and the hero of the story. Her father is the antagonist, and certain villagers along the way to Uten are also antagonistic towards her although they are not technically the main antagonists. This tale begins in the setting of inland Chukchi at the village of Mermerenen and ends in the setting of Uten on the coast. The heroic characteristics displayed in this story by the heroic character as rebellion, self-sufficiency, and respect of elders. The antagonist displays undesirable traits such as the desire for normalcy

in wanting his daughter to be married off and live a life like his, being an advocate for the status quo, and being unwilling to adapt. All three of the antagonist's undesirable qualities fit well to be the fears of a people living in a tundra environment and relying primarily off of the animals that they herd and hunt. Not being able to adapt even if it goes against the status quo is a negative trait to have in a place with such harsh and unforgiving weather that could change a person's fate in seconds. The heroic traits displayed also reflect the tension between the people and their environment. Being self-sufficient is a positive attribute when one has to live off of what they can catch, hunt, or herd for themselves. The rebellion of the daughter might represent a tension between domestic life and the relationship with the environment. In this setting, it is difficult to maintain balance between both for one must spend so much time trying to survive.

In this creation myth, this female creator comes from the village of Memerenen. She ends up in the "land of Utens," a narrow strip of land on the coast. She takes her animal remnant toys out of her pouch and throws them out, always saying "Tomorrow let there be..." whatever object she throws, seals, walruses, whales, et cetera. She also creates an entire village of people to whom she says "Grow and multiple, now! I, a wretched girl, have created you" (Dolitsky 1997, 3). Even though she views and refers to herself as wretched and disobedient, the people she created still worship her. Both sects of the Chukchi, herders and marine people, call her "grandmother" and treat her with the utmost respect. She teaches them how to live off of the land by hunting, herding, and house building. By the time her creations have matured and begun to fend for themselves, they refer to her as "old woman" (Dolitsky 1997, 4). The view of time in this tale is different from the linear Western view. Even though she is an old woman who has spent her life creating these people and their animals and teaching them how to live in their environment, her parents decide to come find her and do so by coming across all of the people

the young creator stayed with on her way to the coast. It is unspecified whether or not her parents and these other dwellers in different villages are incredibly old, or whether the creator woman aged quickly due to the all of the creating she was doing. This lack of attention to the time span of this story may speak to the Chukchi culture and their being less obsessed with time keeping than Western cultures are.

When her parents show up, the creator woman immediately orders her creations to “Slaughter a fat reindeer. Serve everything; the brains, the meat. And fish” (Dolitsky 1997, 5). In Chukchi culture, this is a big honor. Slaughtering a fat reindeer for one specific person or feast is a big show of respect. In their environment and with their lack of resources such as those so readily available in Appalachia, this is taking a big resource out of commission. After the feast, her father expresses his desire to die rather than growing old and becoming a burden. This is a large theme in Chukchi culture, and this folktale serves to explain and promote this idea. It is common for an elderly person to kill themselves rather than to become a burden on their children. In fact, it is deemed heroic. Through his suicide, the father who once kicked his daughter out is restored to a place of respect. Not long after, the grandmother creator gets her creations to carry her out to the mountains where her father died so that she can kill herself alongside him. She is revered for this action as well as for her creation of the Chukchi.

“The Man in White Clothing” CT2

16. The Man in White Clothing

Recorded and translated into Russian in 1954 in the village of Khatyrka in Anadyr *rayon* by P. Inenlikey. The fairy tale is about man-eating *kele* who with fishing rods catch young men through holes in the ice. The motif of fishing through ice-holes by spirits-*tungaki* (Eskimo “werewolves”) is characteristic of Eskimo folklore. It is quite likely that similar topics penetrated into Chukchi folklore from the neighboring Eskimo culture (cf. Bogoraz, 1900, no. 119).

There lived a man in white clothing with two wives. One day he said to his wives:

— Sew me new clothing, but everything must be white!

The women obliged. They made white boots, a parka, breeches, a fur cap, and gloves. Evening came. The man put on the new clothing. He said to the women:

— I am now going outside. After some time you go out and try to find me.

The man in white clothing went outside. He lay on the snow in the lee of the *yaranga*. He then shouted:

— Come on out!

The women came out. Although they searched for a very long time, they could not find him. At last they called out:

— Where are you?

— Well, here I am, — said the man in the white. — You actually walked over me as if I were snow. Anyway, now I can start my trip!

The women asked him:

— Where are you going?

— I am going to *Peegti* [festival dedicated to the winter slaughter of reindeer]; I want to take his wife away, — said the man in white. — Nobody was able to take his wife away.

The women said to him:

— Even you will not take her away. You are going to certain death.

— So what! I will simply call on him.

The man left. A full moon arose. He walked in the darkness of the night. Suddenly, he saw at a cleft in the earth that *kele* were fishing. An old *kele* fished out a small child. The child cried pitifully. The man in white said:

— Well, it seems that you are killing children. That’s why our small children are disappearing!

The old *kele* was startled. He said:

— Oh! It’s nothing! It’s nothing! Now, we better go home. If my companions will hear you they will kill you. You go first!

The man in the white said to him:

— Better you go first. I don’t know the way.

So the old *kele* went ahead. They came near the house. It was already dawn, but for the *kele*, to the contrary, darkness was just beginning. The old *kele* said to the man in white:

— Stay here for a little while! I will go and tell my wife that a guest has arrived and that, to be sure, she has to clean the *polog*.

He entered. The man in white listened. The old *kele* was saying: “An animal-seal arrived here. Prepare all my tools!” The man heard this and ran. He lay down in the snow at the ramp [surrounding the house]. The old *kele* came out. He started looking for the man in white. He could not find him. He walked on him, stamped his feet, but could not find him. Finally it got completely dark. The old *kele*’s companions arrived from fishing. They asked:

— What are you looking for in the dark?

The old *kele* told them:

— A seal came by himself and then he suddenly disappeared!

His companions said to him:

— Why did you not tell us before?

And they began hitting him in the face one after the other. The face of the old *kele* became swollen. Then all of the *kele* entered the house.

As soon as all of the *kele* left, the man in white went on farther. He walked. He came to a small dwelling. He approached the house. He stuck his staff in the snow. Suddenly a little dog howled. An old man shouted from the house:

— Oho! Why is the dog howling? We have to go and look, — he told the children.

The oldest son went out. As he left the house he said:

— Look, there is a full moon!

And the man in white answered:

— Yes, there is a full moon!

The youth was startled. He did not see who was talking.

— Oho! Who's there? — he inquired.

— It is I, the man in white clothing!

— Well, all right, come on in.

They entered. The youth said to the old man:

— Look, the man in white has come to us!

The old man said:

— So, that's how it is. And it's not a *kele*?

The man in the white answered:

— No. I'm not a *kele*!

— In that case, climb to the *polog*, — said the old man — and have a bite!

Afterwards he asked:

— Where's the journey taking you?

— I am going to take *Peegti's* wife away, — answered the man in white.

— There will be no taking by you! — said the old man. — You are going to sure death!

— Well, I may just call on him. And how far is it to his place?

— When you leave here, you'll get there, — answered the old man.

In the morning he awakened and started out again. He walked. Toward evening he arrived. He saw guards walking around. One was called *Kuurky*. And *Peegti* was sitting on a stone at the wall of the house. *Kuurky* said:

— Welcome! What have you come for?

— It's like this: I want to take *Peegti's* wife away.

Suddenly, *Peegti* arose and said:

— Perhaps! But first we have to play games a little!

And he said to his children:

— Go to one of the herds. Kill four fawns and one old bull!

They went and killed the reindeer. They brought in the carcasses, made a big fire, and cooked all the reindeer meat. They took the meat out of the kettles. *Peegti* said to the man in white:

— Well, now we shall look at the first game!

He opened a large door in the ground. He told him to look in. The man in white looked in the pit. Then *Peegti* shoved him in! There was a large fire burning in the pit. The man fell through the fire into the earth. He also saw that *Peegti* was eating. *Peegti* finished eating and suddenly he saw before him the man in white. *Peegti* said to him:

— Well, it seems that you have come here not without purpose! You have come to take my wife away!

The man in white said:

— I have only come to call on you!

Again *Peegti* sent his children to the herd, saying:

— Kill three fawns and two old bulls!

They did and cooked the meat.

— Now, have a bite before tea, — said *Peegti* when the meat was cooked — but first let's look at the second game.

He opened a second door in the floor and said to the man:

— Look in there!

The man did and again *Peegti* shoved him in. Two huge brown bears were sitting in the pit. *Peegti* locked the man in white in. The man in white made a wish and turned into a voracious mosquito. He began to fly around in the pit. He flew and in turn sat on the ears of the bears. *Peegti*

finished eating. He lifted the door a little. And from the pit a voracious mosquito flew out. He hit the ground—and again became the man in white. Peegti merely remarked:

— Not for nothing did you come to take my wife away!

The man in white said:

— But I have only come to call on you.

Then Peegti said to him:

— Now, let's look at my last game!

Peegti ordered that a singing old woman be invited. Again he opened a door in the ground. The man looked in and discerned something like a large saw in the pit. They put the man in white in a sack made of *rovduga*,²¹ tied it with a rope, and placed it under the saw. The old woman prepared to sing. Suddenly a spider lowered itself from above, tied a rope around the man in white, and hoisted him out. Then the spider said:

— Listen and see what the large saw is going to do!

And under the saw only the *rovduga* sack remained. The old woman started singing: "Oy, how good it will be to cut a *rovduga* sack in which there is a man." The old woman stopped singing. They pulled out the sack and there the man in white stood safe and sound. Peegti said to him:

— It seems that not for nothing did you come to take my wife!

The man in white replied:

— I only wanted to call on you. But now let us compete with drums.

They started to compete. Peegti put one of his wives in front of him, the other in back of him. He tied the legs of the one sitting behind him, in front of him, and the legs of the one sitting in front, behind his back. The man in white played the drum and Peegti said to him:

— Look after the women with consideration! I am going home!

He played the drum a little more and then the drum continued drumming by itself. Peegti never knew how he fell asleep.

The man in white was nearing his house. With him were the wives of Peegti. Suddenly the spider [appeared and] said:

— That Peegti is chasing us on reindeer!

The man in white replied:

— Well, let it be!

They arrived. The man in white rubbed soot on Peegti's wives. Soon Peegti arrived. The man in white asked him:

— Why have you come?

— For this: I want to call on my wives!

The man said:

— I left them at your house. Look, are those really your wives? Haven't I told you: "Keep an eye on the women, I am going home." True, I have a sister but she is very ugly.

Peegti said:

— Show her; maybe she is nice!

The man in white said:

— Wait here, I will go after her!

Unseen he dropped a knife and a candle. He went behind the *polog*. He fashioned a woman out of snow and said to her:

— Let us go quickly to the house!

He took her to the house. He said to Peegti:

— Here is my sister, I have brought her.

Peegti exclaimed:

— Oho, what a nice woman!

At once they quickly started for home. On the way the woman said to him: Go faster, I am just about ready to give birth! They arrived home. They began to eat. Soon the nose of the woman began to thaw because of the heat. She slid from the *polog* and fixed her nose of snow. And the whole time she was saying to Peegti:

²¹ *Rovduga* – a soft, pliant leather, prepared by kneading and other means, from the skin of reindeer, sheep, goats, and other animals. Chamois.

— Eat faster, I am already beginning to deliver!

Pieces of food stuck in Peegti's throat – so fast was he eating. As soon as he finished eating, the snow woman began to thaw. The *polog*, the whole house became filled with thawing snow and was flooded. Peegti drowned. At that time his companions were with the herd. Suddenly a big snowstorm blew up and scattered the reindeer over the land. The companions tried to gather the reindeer but all had frozen to death.

All of the descendants of the man in white lived a good life. That is all.

CT2 Analysis

This folktale was recorded in 1954 in the Khatyrka village in Anadyr. There is no description of the person who told this folktale other than where they were from. There are some similar motifs in this story that appear in the neighboring Eskimo culture. In this tale, the main actors are the man in white clothing and Peegti, a man who lives in a nearby village. The plot of this story is that the man in white clothing wants to steal one of Peegti's wives, even though the man in white clothing already has two wives. Other characters that the man in white clothing encounters on his journey to steal Peegti's wives are a kele, which is a common monstrous creature within Chukchi folklore that eats children, the man in white's two wives, the men he stays with along the way, Peegti's guards, and a spider. In this tale, the man in white is the heroic figure. He displays valuable characteristics of cunning and boldness. The antagonist is Peegti, who displays undesirable characteristics such as hoarding resources, (wives and animals), and being easily tricked.

The man in white displays his heroism by boldly deciding to go do something that everyone tells him he should not: steal Peegti's wives. He also displays cunning by having his original two wives sew him an entire outfit made of white so that he can lay in the snow and become totally camouflaged if he needs to be. The man in white also uses his cunning to trick Peegti by creating a fake woman out of snow who the man in white says is his sister. The fake snow sister can talk and convinces Peegti that she is "about ready to give birth" (Dolitsky 1997, 45). She is so insistent that Peegti begins to choke on his food and the snow woman thaws and destroys his entire house. Directly after this, "a big snowstorm blew up and scattered the reindeer over the land ... all had frozen to death" (Dolitsky 1997, 46). Peegti's unfortunate demise shows that his characteristics are undesirable for a Chukchi person to have.

The man in white, on the other hand, is rewarded greatly for having the traits of boldness and cunningness. He makes away with Peetgi's wives and "All of the descendants of the man in white lived a good life" (Dolitsky 1997, 45). This is a huge honor in Chukchi culture. If one is truly heroic and the best version of what a person in their culture should be, then it is said that their descendants live good lives. Very briefly in this tale, a spider comes across the man in white twice. The first time, the spider gives the man in white advice on how to beat Peetgi in a game, and the second time, the spider warns the man in white that "That Peetgi is chasing us on a reindeer" (Dolitsky 1997, 45). In Chukchi culture, it is "the spider that brings miraculous help to the human hero when he is in trouble (Dolitsky 2012, 28). Thus, the man in white is proven to be an epitome of a Chukchi man.

“Akannykay” CT3

52. Akannykay

Narrated in 1948 by Ragtyn, age 36, an inhabitant of Lorino village in Chukotskiy *rayon*. Recorded and translated into Russian by P. Skorik.

They say that once there was a wild doe. She lived quite by herself. All winter she roamed the mountains. In the spring, time for calving arrived. As yet, the snow had not melted. There was a howling snowstorm. Yet, during the snowstorm she calved in the mountains.

The mother was licking the calf when a wolf sneaked up to her and threw himself at her. The doe fought back with all her might but could not free herself. The wolf killed her. And the calf, not quite licked clean, began to freeze in the snowstorm. The wolf had already eaten of the doe. At that point the calf begged him:

- Will you leave the udder? If I am to grow up I will have to drink milk!
- Well, all right. All the same you'll have to become food for me! — said the wolf.
- Be it so, — agreed the calf.
- All right. If you wish I will leave the udder. But come the next year I will be after you. Don't

go anywhere, and wait for me here! — said the wolf.

- I will not go away. I will stay here while you are gone! — promised the calf.

The wolf went far into the tundra. Then, the calf, during the very snowstorm, not yet licked clean by his mother, tried to get up but could not. The next day it cleared. Somewhat encouraged, the calf crept up to his mother. He sucked a little — he was very careful with the milk. Every time when he felt hungry he sucked a little. And the calf became stronger. He ran around his mother and learned how to run fairly fast. He also stayed by himself. All the time he ran around his mother and learned to become very fast at running. Spring came and he continued to run all the time. Summer arrived and he began to run farther away, always at a trot. But he always returned to his mother. In this way the young deer prepared himself for the arrival of the wolf. At the same time he thought: “Why should I let him eat me — I'll run away!”

Fall arrived. Suddenly the wolf appeared and asked of the young deer:

- Well, can I kill you now?
- It would be a pity; I am still small and skinny, you would not get much to eat! — replied the young deer.

— It seems you are right. I will not eat you now but I'll return again next year. Don't go anywhere from here, wait for me! — said the wolf.

- All right, go! — said the young deer.

Again he exercised by running. He went all over the mountains. Winter came. The young deer learned to run ever faster. Another year went by. The young deer grew some more. Again the wolf appeared. He asked:

- Well, what's with you now?
- I'm trying to fatten myself, — the young deer said.
- That's good of you, — said the wolf. — But when will I eat you?
- It's a pity that I'm not big and fat yet!
- That's for certain. Then I will come in a year, — said the wolf.
- Very well go!

Again the wolf went into the tundra. And the young deer never thought of getting fat, he only wanted to be strong and fast. For that he practiced running through the year. And so another year went by, the wolf appeared and asked:

- Well, no doubt you've become good and fat?
- I don't know, but as for me I'm still skinny. In no way it seems can I grow and get fat.
- Really. Be it so. I'll come back in a year!

Again the wolf went into the tundra. The young deer again exercised all year — he ran over the mountains and jumped from cliffs. Another year went by and, again, the wolf appeared. He said to the young deer:

- Now, to be sure, you must be a fully proper meal?
- Well, I've grown, but I'm still skinny. It was a bad year, I did not get fat! — the deer answered.
- That seems to be the case; you are painfully skinny, — said the wolf.

— Well, I'll leave.

— All right, go!

Actually, the deer tricked the wolf – he did not want to get fat.

Winter came. The deer ran all the time. He jumped from cliffs and practiced every day. Again summer arrived. He walked only in the mountains. He became like a mountain goat – strong and deft. He jumped from low cliffs and butted boulders. He gained great strength. And so they called him Akannykay.⁴⁷

Wherever Akannykay was running, he always came back to the place where the wolf killed his mother; he always returned to the bones of his mother. Then again the wolf met him. At that time he was very hungry. Akannykay said to him:

— Ah, welcome! You've arrived?

— Yes, I've arrived, – the wolf answered. — But now I'm ready to eat you!

The deer agreed:

— So what? If you wish, it is now possible!

But really he did not think that way. You see, he had become very big, strong, and deft. The wolf said:

— Well, let me then kill you and eat you!

The wolf wanted to eat very much. Akannykay answered:

— Just let me run away from you! I will run a little! Why hand myself over right away?

The wolf agreed:

— Very well, run! – He believed that he would catch up to him at once.

And so Akannykay ran. He ran very fast. The wolf darted after him but in no way could he catch up with him. The deer let the wolf come nearer. The other was already running quite slowly. It turned out that Akannykay was leading the wolf to a high cliff. At last the wolf cried out:

— You wait. Didn't you say that you were not going to run far??

— You catch up with me! – Akannykay cried out in answer.

They ran to the cliff. The deer jumped down. And the wolf after him, thinking of catching him. The cliff was right next to the river! Akannykay swam across the river. And the wolf, like a boulder, fell onto the bank. He hurt his legs badly. You know, it was a high cliff! Then the wolf yelped:

— O-o-y! Let them gnaw you to the bone. Oy, it is so painful.

— Serves you right! Why did you kill my mother? I will yet settle accounts with you for her! – cried Akannykay.

— All right, settle accounts for your mother! But I will call on my companions, – the wolf called out as he lay at the foot of the cliff where he had fallen.

— All right then, invite your friends! – answered Akannykay. — I also have friends!

Akannykay asked a hare and a ermine to help him. A large pack of wolves came to help the wolf. As he lay below the cliff he said to his companions:

— Let's kill that deer Akannykay! To begin with, catch up to him in running and fighting, and as you gain on him kill him at once. Think of the most painful way of killing him. Do you understand?

— Yes, we do, – answered the friends of the wolf.

Besides the wolf pack there came to help the wolverine, a brown bear, foxes, mice, marmots, "pirate-gulls," vixens, and an old wild deer, a very big one. He was called Matachgyrkynaynyn.⁴⁸ His trunk was like that of a deer but his feet were like dog feet. Also he had antlers, but such big ones that they covered the sun. But Akannykay was not afraid of the deer with dog's feet. Akannykay had only two friends – the hare and the ermine. The wolf told his helpers:

— Well now, go and catch up with him!

They started. The mice followed directly in the footsteps of the deer, but the other helpers picked their way through the grass. All went to challenge the deer. Matachgyrkynaynyn at once started to run fast. He ran and behind him the air swirled, like in a snowstorm. Actually he couldn't be seen.

⁴⁷ Akannykay, lit. "Bad Antlers."

⁴⁸ Matachgyrkynaynyn – lit. "Male-dog matchmaker" or "Lewd matchmaker." The mention of a deer-like animal with dog-like paws occurs for the first time in Chukchi fairy tales about animals.

They ran for a long time. On the way they were drifting apart. Some were running fast, some slow. With all they had, the gulls tried to keep up with Matachgyrkynaynyn. Just the same he outran them. The helpers of the wolf started to turn back. Then Akannykay said to his friends:

— Now, let's try to catch up to Matachgyrkynaynyn! We can't let him outrun us!

— By all means, let's do that! — said his friends.

The hare and the ermine attached themselves to the legs of Akannykay. And so Akannykay ran with them. Oh, and how fast he ran! Much faster than Matachgyrkynaynyn! If you looked at him from the side it seemed that Akannykay was flying through the air!

And so they caught up to Matachgyrkynaynyn. It was as if they were caught in a snowstorm. And, yet, the weather was fine. While running, Matachgyrkynaynyn created such a swirling wind. Then Akannykay said to his friends:

— All right, now let's catch up to Matachgyrkynaynyn!

Akannykay burst into that wind and he killed Matachgyrkynaynyn. At this point there was only a bear left. The ermine offered:

— Now, let me try to best the bear.

— Try, — Akannykay agreed.

The ermine threw himself at the bear. They began to fight. The ermine jumped far and wide. Suddenly, the bear lost sight of the ermine. He didn't notice that the ermine had jumped into his mouth. The bear said to himself:

— Where did he go?

Then, suddenly, he started spinning from pain:

— Oy! Oy-oy!

He rolled on the ground. In the end he died. The ermine climbed out of the bear's mouth and told Akannykay:

— I jumped into his mouth; then I let myself farther into his stomach. Then I began to gnaw. Because I did so, I killed the bear fast.

Akannykay told him:

— Thanks to you for destroying such a big enemy!

He would have liked to praise himself, but then he remembered:

— The gulls are still left!

He jumped in the air and twisted their wings off. And he killed all of them. He stamped to death all of the mice. He easily got rid of the foxes and all the others. There remained only one wolf alive.

Akannykay approached him:

— Now, you're the only one left to talk with. Why did you kill my dear mother in such a snowstorm? You know, it was so hard for me, I had just been born. I didn't forget how you were humiliating me. You are a glutton, wolf!

Akannykay became very angry.

— Didn't you think that every year I would get fat for you? But it wasn't so. All I wanted was to get strong, deft, and fast so that I could take revenge on you!

And there and then Akannykay killed the wolf. After that he said to his friends:

— Thank you for helping me! Now we will all live together in peace and quiet.

The end.

CT3 Analysis

This tale was narrated by an inhabitant of the Lorino village in the Chukotsky region named Ragtyn who was 36 at the time of recording in 1948. This tale is comprised completely of anthropomorphized animals. The heroic actor is Akannykay, a wild deer calf whose mother is killed by the antagonistic actor, the wolf. The premise of the story is that Akannykay wants to survive, but the wolf wants to eat him. But Akannykay convinces the wolf to keep putting off her death for another year so that Akannykay can grow out of being “small and skinny” (Dolitsky 1997, 108). This goes on for years until finally, Akannykay has trained himself to be quick enough to run away from the wolf when the time comes that the wolf decides to eat him. This tale is set in the mountains.

The heroic characteristics that the young deer exhibits are self-sufficiency, a desire to live, respect for his elder, cunning, and physical strength. The antagonistic attributes that the wolf exhibits are brutality and gluttony. This wolf brutally kills Akannykay’s mother, and Akannykay the hero seeks retribution for this untimely murder by training up to outrun the wolf and establish his physical dominance. While cunning is important in this tale, the role of physical strength is more important. Akannykay does not beat his antagonist until he is strong enough to do so. The Chukchi view physical strength as important, probably because they must hunt, catch, or slaughter most if not all of their food. Thus, taking care of oneself and one’s family requires a certain amount of physical strength. After defeating the wolf and his friends, Akannykay says “You are a glutton, wolf!” (Dolitsky 1997, 110). Gluttony is thus deemed an undesirable trait in attachment to the wolf. Being a glutton in the Siberian environment could be bad for a number of reasons, and this is communicated through the wolf’s desire to return, year after year, to eat a fattened Akannykay despite the existence of other deer in his hunting range.

Akannykay's respect for his mother is what drives his desire to get retribution.

Akannykay is certainly driven by his self-sufficiency and a desire to live, but he “always returned to the bones of his mother” (Dolitsky 1997, 109). This is borne out of a love and respect for the mother deer who gave birth to him despite Akannykay never having had a chance to get to know his mother. This theme of elder respect reverberates throughout Chukchi culture and is seen thematically in two of the three folktales. For one to learn how to survive in this climate, one must be willing to be self-sufficient in their work, but they must first know how to go about that work. The best way to do this is to listen to and respect one's elders, for they know from listening to their elders the best ways to survive in the tundra.

Analysis of All Chukchi Folktales

In all three Chukchi folktales, patterns present themselves through the heroic and antagonistic characters that reveal cultural valuables and cultural undesirables. Patterns of other motifs reveal even more in-depth emic knowledge about this group of tundra-dwelling people. The motifs included within these tales are animals, gender, and more that reveal cultural zeroes typically uncommunicated in ethnographic interviews. All of the details within these three folktales provide a vat of emic data to be analyzed within the sociohistorical context provided.

All three heroic actors have some characteristics in common. The most prominent characteristic that the female creator, the man in white, and Akannykay share are self-sufficiency. Other shared characteristics of at least two tales include respect for elders and cunning. Other heroic traits that develop most prominently in only one tale but can be seen at least minimally in all three are bravery, boldness, physical strength, and rebellion. All of these qualities that are communicated as culturally valuable through the hero figures in each folktale have groundings in the Chukchi's culture and relationship with their environment.

The female creator showcases her self-sufficiency and cunningness through her ability and willingness to strike out on her own and subsequently create an entire group of people. She showcases her respect for elders by ordering her villagers to slaughter a fat reindeer when her father, the man who threw her out at her boldness in her refusal to be married off, arrives to her land by the sea and the mountains. Her bravery is shown through her solo journey to becoming a creator, as is her physical strength. Although these are not directly discussed or alluded to, it must be insinuated that a woman who takes such a long journey on foot with all that she owns on her back is equal bits brave and strong. The man in white shows his self-sufficiency, cunningness, and boldness when he comes up with the idea to trick the antagonist out of his

wives. He also shows his physical strength and ability to transform into another being during the games he partakes in with his antagonist. Akannykay shows his self-sufficiency prominently through his ability to survive after his mother is slaughtered in front of him by his antagonist. He shows his physical strength, cunning, rebellion, and bravery in his journey to keep himself alive, grow his speed, and seek revenge on his mother against the wolf who slaughtered her.

These heroic strengths in large part seem like a response to the Chukchi's tundra environment. Self-sufficiency mixed with reverence of ancestors is key to having the will and knowing logistically how best to eat, build a home, and survive in the difficult environment. Living in this environment requires a certain amount of knowledge that is best learned not necessarily through trial and error, for trial and error in this environment is brutally unforgiving. Thus, it becomes increasingly important with each generation to listen to and respect the instructions and cultural knowledge of one's elders. However, it is also important to have a sense of self-motivation and ability to work alone and figure things out.

Physical strength is common among these heroes. In an environment that does not take well to agricultural practices, one must hunt, forage, and catch one's food. Even to be a reindeer herder requires significant physical strength. This trait is very valuable for Chukchi people. Bravery and boldness are also valued. These certainly have a tie to surviving in this environment, but there is a tinge of specifically social intrigue here. The man in white clothing seeks to find himself more wives when he already has two. His motives are never discussed, but one can assume that more wives might equal more frequency of sexual encounters which is somewhat driven biologically by a genetic survival impetus but could also be a potential status symbol. A man who is not only able to use cunning and boldness to steal extra wives also must have some other motive than survival because it seems wholly unnecessary to have more than two wives,

especially since the man in white is never mentioned as having children. However, seeing as the Chukchi tend to live isolated or in small villages, having multiple women to do housework and other menial yet important tasks would be increasingly helpful and allow for the growth of the man in white's reindeer herd or other physical assets.

The antagonists' characteristics are also important to make note of. Attributes shown through the heroes' adversaries reveal undesirable traits within Chukchi culture. These include glutton, ability to be tricked, desire to stick with the status quo or more succinctly said, cowardice. Gluttony is seen specifically through Peegti and the wolf. Peegti has numerous mammals which he seems to have no problem slaughtering and presenting for his guest, the man in white. He also has a lot of wives. Because no distinction is made between the wives of Peegti and the wives of the man in white, one must assume that Peegti's wives have a high value or that stealing from Peegti is a badge of honor. Nonetheless, Peegti's hoarding of resources is seen as gluttony, from his wives to an unnecessary number of belongings. This is perhaps seen as a negative cultural trait because many Chukchis do not have the ability to hoard resources, so they resent those who do. However, it may also be that the Chukchi are a communal people and see those who have too much as not being fair members of their community. This seems to be a realistic assumption considering that in both tales having to do with humans and according to ethnographic research, the Chukchi will gladly welcome their neighbors and present the nicest food they have to offer. The wolf presents gluttony through his desire to eat Akannykay even after killing and eating most of Akannykay's mother. There are other deer that exist, which makes the wolf's desire to come back in hopes of a guaranteed fat deer just ready to be eaten all the more pathetic and idiotic. This also shows the wolf's lack of cunning and ease to be tricked. Peegti shows his lack of cunning also through the man in white's trickery working on him. Peegti believes that the man

in white's handmade snow person is a real human. This leads to the snow person melting on Peegti's home and drowning him.

Other interesting aspects within these folktales that reveal some key emic data of the Chukchi culture includes the role of fate, the role of magic/ritual, the role of gender, and the role anthropomorphizing of animals. Fate plays a key role in the man in white's story, but it also seems to be a significant driver of all three plotlines. The heroes do have control over their actions, but it always seems as though fate plays an eerie role in their journeys. The creator woman leaves her house, not knowing where she will end up, but somehow ending her journey on the coast in Uten and randomly deciding to throw her animal bone toys into the air and speak new beings into existence. She did not have an intention of creating a new people or animals when she discovered these animal bone toys, she simply thought she should take them with her. The man in white sees fate delivering him through his journey to defeat his nemesis and bring his new wives to his home to meet his old wives. Along his journey, the man in white is confronted with positive circumstances and help completely outside of his own control. The spider helps guide him to win, and after Peegti is killed by drowning, a random snowstorm crashes down on Peegti's reindeer herd and freezes them to death. Thus, fate affirms that the man in white is the hero and that Peegti is the model example of who a Chukchi person should not strive to be like. Akannykay is placed in his position with the wolf solely by fate. He also comes across a cliff which injures the wolf while Akannykay is running away. These circumstances were fully outside of the young deer's control but led to him being triumphant, nonetheless.

Magic or ritual divination is shown in two of the three folktales. The creator woman uses her words to communicate her intentions onto an object which then creates humans and animals. This is a prime example of magic. In his folktale, the man in white experiences shape shifting.

He makes a wish and turns into a mosquito which allows him to escape the pit of bears. In this tale, we also see the monstrous, child-eating keles. The kele has magical powers, but they are unsuccessful in this tale as the man in white deceives the kele using his white garbs to hide in the snow. In ethnographic research, the Chukchi are seen as valuing the people in their villages who have contact with the spirits. This is communicated through these two tales. They see magic as being a valuable resource because they are so tied into their environment that they attribute human characteristics to nearly everything. This explains their world and environment to them. Also, believing in a direct link to the spirits of everything around you allows for a sense of comfort in trusting that the forces that be have their own human-like motivations. This means that they could possibly be convinced or appeased to treat the Chukchi with benevolence. In such a harsh environment, this belief system is surely a comfort.

In the Chukchi tales, there are multiple women involved. In fact, there is even one female main character. In her tale, she is a creator of people, which earns her honor and respect. She even becomes a creator by showing her rebellion against the status quo of marriage and is still respected as a hero figure. In the man in white, the women play the role of wife. Though the wives are useful, they are not shown in the spotlight as a female was in the first tale. In the third tale, there are no real depictions of women, especially because all of the characters are animals whose gender is not too important to the plot. However, it is interesting to note that the mother is killed and the son desires to revenge this murder. This may show a significance in familial ties within Chukchi culture. It is common in Chukchi folktales for animals to seamlessly and humanly interact with the Chukchi people. This happens in two out of three folktales. The man in white is lead on his journey by a spider. Akannkykay and all of the characters in this folktale speak and act out of places of emotion and logic. It seems as though the Chukchi culture either

reveres or fears animals. They also have preconceived notions of what certain animals mean, such as the spider being innately a bearer of good news or helpful information. The last folktale also, as anthropomorphized as it is, sees a typical sight in the natural world being played out which is the wolf hunting and eating deer.

All of these characteristics and motifs play significant parts in delivering the hero to his or her journey's end and in revealing certain beliefs, practices, and valuable traits within Chukchi culture. These folktales truly provide an intimate window into the Chukchi peoples' lives.

Comparative Analysis

The Appalachian region with its temperate weather and forested mountains and valleys lends itself to a place where life can flourish. Appalachians have historically been agriculturalists who live in small communities and are historically Christian. They were immigrants from Western Europe who carried a lot of that society with them to North America. The Chukchi region, on the other hand, is an ice and snow filled tundra on a peninsula in Siberia where life struggles to survive. The Chukchis are herders and hunters who live nomadic lives if they are not settled into small villages and are animists who use magic and ritual as their spiritual practices. They speak a uniquely Paleo Asiatic language, are considered an ethnic group, and are not too far removed from their ancestors who were egalitarian hunter-gatherers. These vast environmental and cultural differences lend themselves to a comparative analysis, for in discernment of great differences, any similarities can be seen as a model of the universal experience of culture through the journey of a hero within a folktale, which is, at its core, a tool of enculturation.

The best way to discern similarities and differences among these two distinct cultures is to compare the hero figures from their folktales. The hero actor displays the most desirable traits through their journey within their folktale that a person within the respective culture should desire to have. The hero's journey may also communicate certain practices, hopes, or fears of that culture. The patterns revealed through the culturally specific analyses showed that there were some key differences in how the heroes acted and why they won their battles against their antagonists.

In the Appalachian folktales, the most pervasive characteristics were wit and politeness. These are relevant specifically to the makeup of Appalachian culture. However, the Chukchi folktales did not seem to value politeness unless it was towards one's ancestors. There is far

more importance focused on traits such as physical strength and self-sufficiency. While there are more differences than similarities, the two cultures do seem to both value wit and/or cunning. Basically, the ability to outsmart one's adversary and think quickly in response to a negative situation is a valuable asset for both cultures. Another common cultural valuable is a knowledge of their environment. Though Appalachia is arguably easier to live in than the Chukotka peninsula is, the goal of any human in any environment is first and foremost to survive. This, no matter where one lives, (at least prior to the conveniences of modernity), requires an intimate knowledge of one's environment. Whereas in Appalachian folktales this knowledge is gained from practice, in Chukchi, this knowledge is gained from one's ancestors. Thus, the Chukchi in their folktales put more of an emphasis on demanding respect for elderly people. However, the Chukchi do revert back to a survivalist mentality in that it is commonplace and even respected for an elderly person to kill themselves before they become a survival-interceding burden on their family. In an environment that lends itself more easily to agriculture such as Appalachia, there is a better chance of food surpluses and food storage. This then contributes to a better family environment for elderly people to eat even though they cannot themselves contribute to the planting or harvesting. Overall, similarities between these different cultures reveal two potentially universally valuable characteristics: wit/cunningness and knowledge of one's environment. Through these similarities we see a universal pattern, but through the many differences, we also see a Boasian-lite version of historical particularism. This pattern is perpetuated through the antagonists in the folktales. Understanding why these cultures view certain traits as undesirable, which is communicated through the folktale antagonists, helps one to better understand the universalities and the particularities of these two cultures. In Appalachian folktales, the antagonists all shared the undesirable trait of pride. This was the most

prevailing characteristic in all folktales. Although the specific circumstances and general descriptors of attributes were different, each antagonist had some action that boiled down to pride. This would logically make sense as a universally undesirable trait. To specify, pride in this thesis does not mean a person having a reasonable and healthy amount of self-respect and measure of abilities. Pride means that the antagonist has too high an opinion of their skills or puts their desires for whatever above other things at any cost.

Though the differences in patterns of motifs vary a great deal more than the similarities, there are still some universals. Some different motifs include the presence of magic/ritual within Chukchi folktales and the complete lack of this in Appalachian folktales. This can be drawn back to the origins of both cultures and their general spiritual affiliations. In Chukchi culture, people practice a sort of spirituality based on the idea that everything, even natural bodies and events such as the sun, the moon, and thunder have spirits and anthropomorphic personalities. Chukchi people, especially those with spiritual gifts, perform rituals in order to connect with these spirits. In Appalachian culture, the predominant spiritual affiliation is Christianity, where magic is critically rejected. Appalachians come from Western Europe where all nations are predominantly Christian and have been for hundreds of years. Meanwhile, the Chukchi are descended from egalitarian hunter-gatherers who have been animists for as long as their cultural memories go back. In the Appalachian folktales, the only mention of religious affiliation is in one folktale where the Devil is the hero's adversary. In this folktale, the Devil, an evil entity in Christianity, is a prideful and pathetic figure defeated by the Appalachian hero's wit.

Another difference in motifs is the treatment of gender. In the three Appalachian folktales, the hero is always male, and females are only mentioned in relation to their male family. In one Chukchi folktale, a female is the hero and creator figure. In another, females are depicted only as

wives to the main character. Thus, in Chukchi culture, the female seems to hold value as both a wife and an individual whereas in Appalachian culture, the female is not a part of the hero's journey: her importance lies in her home life and her relationship with her family.

Where the Chukchi folktales subtly reveal their view of fate as critically important, perhaps even more so than individual free will, Appalachian culture seems to view free will as being dominate over fate. However, both do share a semblance of fate, by whatever force is culturally relevant, controlling the hero's journey. In Chukchi folktales, it is by their own volition that they embark upon their journey, but it is fate that decides how and when they defeat their antagonist. Often, fate turns up in the form of a helper, such as a spider. In the Appalachian folktales, the hero's decisions and skills that lead him to his journey and deliver him to his victory, but it is fate that plays a subtle role in keeping the hero in the right place and the right time without directly communicating with the hero. This difference could be derivative of the regions' difference in spirituality. The spirits within their environment help guide the Chukchi heroes' journeys, whereas the monotheistic creator God of the Christian religion subtly aids the heroes' journeys. In the religious beliefs of the monotheistic God of Christianity, God has predetermined everything that has happened or will happen and the choices of the characters in these folktales are all merely a part of God's plan. The folktales' sub textual depictions of fate in both regions reveals just how deeply the different regions' cosmological views are rooted.

The last motif is the only truly universal motif. In both regions, two folktales each depict anthropomorphic animals. Briefly put, an anthropomorphic animal is an animal given humanistic traits. In two out of the four, specifically one each, there is some presence of anthropomorphic animals, but they are not the main actors. However, in both cultures, there is one folktale each wherein the main actors and any other characters are all human-like animals. This sort of

depiction can be seen as a way for each culture to demonstrate a natural prey/predator relationship while also involving culturally important information. Thus, the anthropomorphic tales stand as a tribute to the heroically associated cultural valuable of knowing one's land intimately. Anthropomorphism has long been a presence in cultures throughout the world, so Appalachia and Chukchi's use of this motif is no different. Even today, there are movies, books, and television shows that involve talking animals, such as the Disney film *The Princess and the Frog*, the FX television show *Wilfred*, and the children's book *The Tale of Despereaux*. This impulse towards anthropomorphic activities extends well beyond the scope of animals in folktales. We assign human names and qualities to stars and star configurations, planets, hurricanes, and Gods. Humans have always been trying to understand this complicated world we live in and typically use our own human identities to do so. Anthropologist Stewart Guthrie asserts that the process of anthropomorphizing happens "because guessing that the world is humanlike is a good bet" (Guthrie, 1993). He further explains that this bet on a humanlike world is because "the world is uncertain, ambiguous, and in need of interpretation" (Guthrie, 1993). This need to define or flesh out ambiguity is often what births a folktale. Using animals with humanlike characteristics in a tale allows the culture to hear and understand cultural valuables and undesirables through a motif that is both familiar and distant. This mixture of familiarity and distance provides a useful vehicle for communicating culture through folktales, and anthropomorphic animals give that vehicle just the right amount of power.

People will always maintain some measure of a relationship with their environment, no matter where in the world they live. This relationship differs between a temperate, wooded climate and a snowy, tundra environment where hunting and herding are the only real options.

But the fact is always the same that the nuances of that relationship is important to communicate, for it is what helps the next generation to know how best to survive in that climate.

Each folktale in this thesis has a heroic actor, and that heroic actor's plotline can be roughly applied to the Campbell model of the heroic journey seen throughout the world's myths and tales. This journey, simply put, goes as follows: Departure, Initiation, and Return (Campbell, 2008). Departure is essentially the hero's call to his or her journey. This can be prompted by an accident, or by a circumstance that acts upon the hero, but typically this prompt comes from outside the hero's influence. Thus, the hero is defined by his or her decision to respond yes to the call. Initiation describes all of the struggles or conflict that the hero must push through. This portion can involve allies as well as enemies who want to help or hurt the hero. The Return of the hero shows the internal transformation that the hero has gone through during his journey. He is not the same, having had to endure the trials in his initiation. But he brings some kind of hope with his new knowledge as he must integrate this learning into the life which he returns to. A classic example of this journey can be seen in the Greek myth *The Odyssey* written by Homer. The hero in this tale is Ulysses, who is trying to return home after the end of the Trojan War (the departure). Ulysses undergoes many trials and tribulations as he and his men sail homewards (the initiation). Ultimately, Ulysses reaches his home to find that his wife thought he was dead and does not recognize him. This forces Ulysses to figure out how to converge the person he was upon leaving for the Trojan War with the man he has become upon returning home (the return). This formula can be applied to each folktale in this thesis.

In the tale "How Bobtail Beat the Devil," the hero, a farmer named Bobtail, has a journey where he goes task to task with the Devil. Bobtail departs on his journey when the Devil approaches him and asks him for help. Bobtail is initiated during his farming competitions with

the Devil. Bobtail's return happens when he finally outwits the devil for the last time, sending the Devil running home. In the tale "Brer Rabbit," Brer Rabbit is the hero. Brer Rabbit's departure occurs when he comes across the tar baby. Brer Rabbit's initiation is his time being captured and threatened with torture by Brer Fox. Brer Rabbit's return happens when he escapes Brer Fox and lands in the briar patch. In the tale "The Time Jack Told a Big Tale," the hero is Jack. Jack's departure is prompted by him hearing that the King is having a story telling competition. Jack's initiation happens through his mishaps in getting prepared for the competition as well as him participating in it. Jack's return happens afterwards when he successfully wins the King's competition and literally returns home. In the tale "The Toy People," the hero is the female protagonist, the creator. The creator's departure is prompted by her father kicking her out. Her initiation occurs during her travel to the coast and in her creation of a new people. Her return happens when her father and mother come to visit her and they all kill themselves, returning to a state of non-existence. In the tale "The Man in White Clothing," the hero is the Man in White Clothing. His departure is prompted when he hears about how great Peegti's wives are and decides to go and steal them. The Man in White Clothing's initiation occurs during his trials that he faces as he attempts to outwit Peegti and steal his wives. The Man in White Clothing's return happens when he successfully steals Peegti's wives and returns home. In the tale "Akannykay," the hero is a young deer named Akannykay. Akannykay's departure occurs when his mother is killed right after he is born. His initiation happens as he trains to beat the wolf who wants to eat him, and his return happens when he beats that wolf and is able to live in peace.

Overall, each of these tales and how they follow Campbell's model reveals the findings formerly stated in this comparative analysis. The similarities between the two cultures include

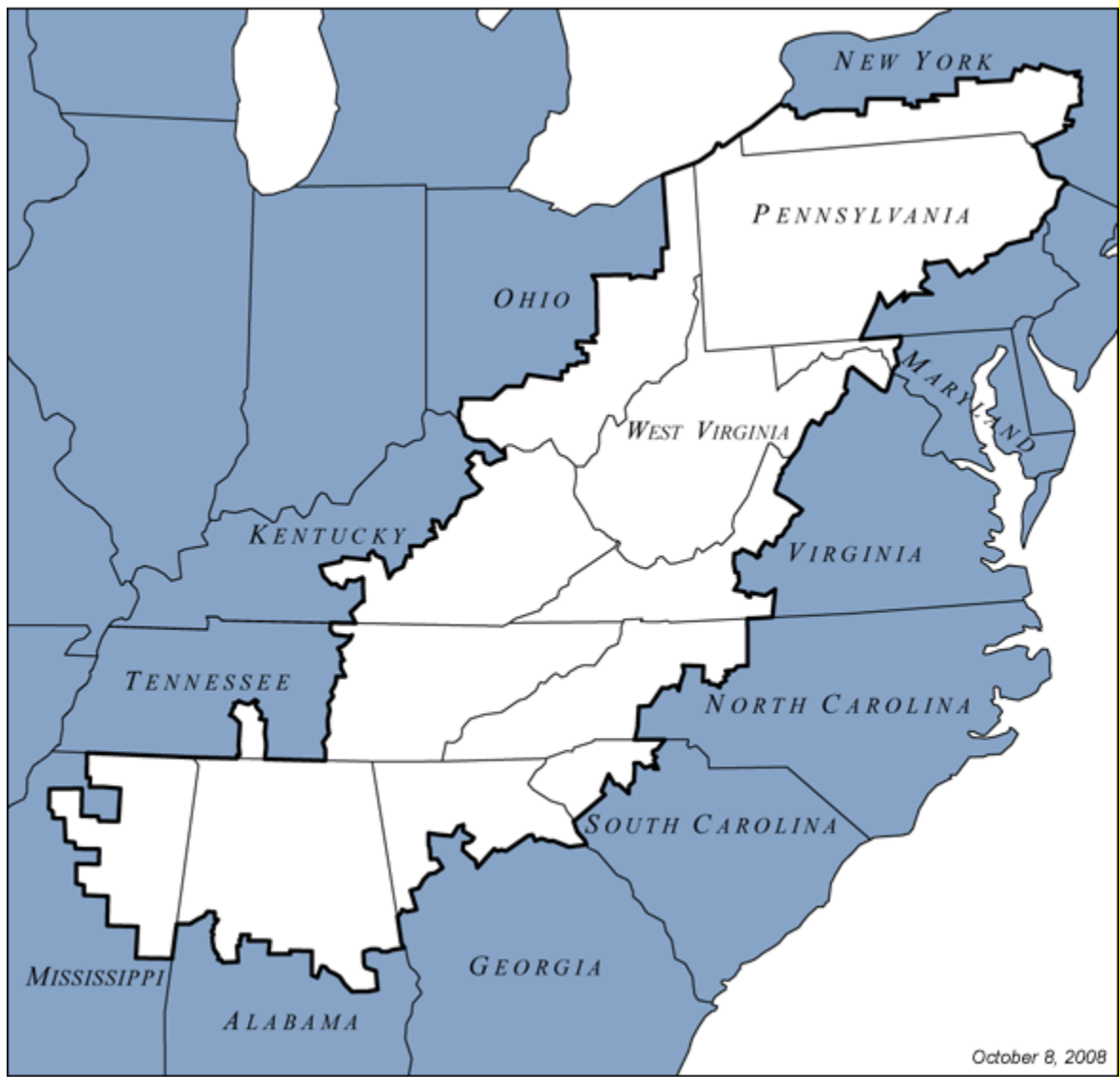
valuing wit and a strong relationship with the environment, and these qualities tend to move the hero through his or her initiation stage and to his or her return.

The ease with which most myths and folktales follow the Campbell model of the Hero's Journey speaks to a culturally universal concept. Campbell refers to this universally applicable journey as the "monomyth" wherein the hero will ultimately "bring a message for the world." People within all different cultures seek to understand their environments and the natural forces they cannot explain. There is a universal desire to answer the universal question that all folktales seem to grasp at in one way or another: is there more to life than just existence?

Conclusions

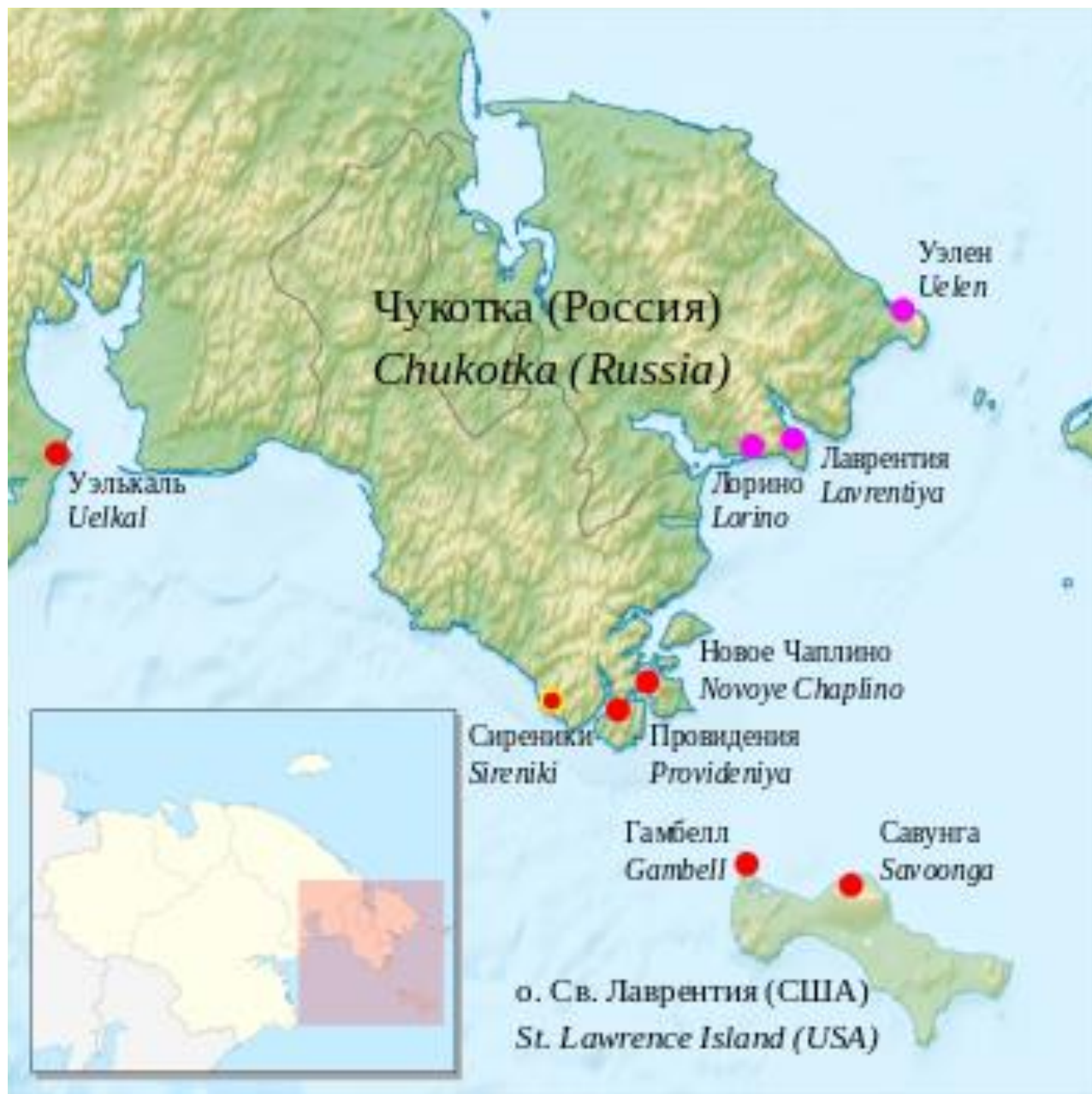
This thesis sought to fill a research gap in the academic landscape. However, this gap is large and widening as we move further and further away from a time where folktales were commonplace. Some conclusions reached include the acknowledgement of folktales as significant modes of cultural communication, the heroic figure within folktales as the communicator of valuable cultural characteristics, and the duality of folktales revealing both universal and historically particular cultural desirables. One key area where new research is needed includes some critical ethnographic research into the replacement of folklore with multimedia (i.e. television shows, movies, music, and more of the like). Another key area is the presence of more comparative analyses of folktales and other forms of cultural transmission, such as folk songs, folk dances, and more. Furthermore, there is a current need for the collection of remaining folktales from all areas of the world that still maintain this fascinating tradition in the face of modernity. While the replacement of folklore with mass media as a tool of enculturation seems like a loss of historical particularities and a spread of universalism, it at least opens the door for some interesting anthropological studies yet to be done.

Appendix A



Source: Appalachian Regional Commission

Appendix B



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