

## **THE GIRL AND THE BEAR FACTS: A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON**

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### **ABSTRACT/RESUME**

Stories concerning bears are common among Native peoples of North America. Here the author discusses and compares a series of similar myths about bear - human relations found among widely scattered groups, including the Tlingit, Bella Bella, Blackfoot and Cherokee.

Des récits à propos des ours sont communs aux autochtones de l'Amérique du Nord. Dans cet article l'auteur examine et compare un nombre de mythes semblables concernant les rapports homme-ours qu'on trouve chez des groupes largement dispersés, y inclus le Tlingit, le Bella Bella, le Blackfoot et le Cherokee.

One very interesting story that appears in many parts of the North American continent is a bear story that reveals what Joseph Campbell refers to as "vestiges of a circumpolar paleolithic cult of the bear." This story, he notes, can be found in all of the north from "Finland and Northern Russia . . . [through to] Hudson Bay . . . [and down the west coast to include the] . . . Tlingit [and] Kwakiutl [tribes of B.C.] (Campbell, 1959:339). The general story is about a girl who married a bear, and utilizes at least three categories of oral narrative: that of myth, *märchen* and the etiological tale. Elements of the *märchen* include a culture hero, a youngest son, a faithful animal helper and a promise that is elicited. Most of the stories list the culture hero(ine) as a young girl, although at least one version has a hunter in this role, and in another she is a full-grown woman. As a myth, it includes the element of mythical or cosmic time, either by the beginning words, or by a comment half-way through indicating that the culture hero is not clear as to how much time has passed. Claude Levi-Strauss explains myth in this manner:

Myth always refers to events alleged to have taken place long ago. [The] . . . specific pattern described is timeless; it explains the present and the past as well as the future . . . . The mythical value of the myth is preserved even through the worst translations . . . . Its substance lie[s] . . . in the story which it tells (Levi-Strauss, 1963:209).

This particular myth appears to explain certain rituals that different tribes observe in connection with hunting bears. The many motifs in the story that are similar in some versions, and different in others, can be understood in terms of their relationships to specific cultural observances.

As an etiological tale, this tale varies greatly as each storyteller seeks to explain certain phenomenon particular to his area. In his book, *Ojibway Heritage*, Basil Johnston includes an etiological tale that seeks to explain the relationship of the bear with humans and dogs, a common element in all of these particular bear myths. In the story, he relates how all the animals got angry at man for the way they were being treated. At that time all the animals spoke the same language as man, but did not like the idea that they could understand the commands that were given them to serve man. They decided to speak different languages. In their discussion, most failed to notice the dog sneaking off to warn man of what was to come. However the wolf caught him and brought him before the council. The animal's decision was given by the bear, who said:

"Brothers . . . .to kill the dogs would be without purpose and substance. Rather let him endure his servitude. Let him serve man. Let him hunger. Let him hunt for man. Let him guard man. Let him know man's fickleness."...

Turning to the dog, the bear . . . said, "For your betrayal you shall no longer be regarded as a brother among us. Instead of man,

we shall attack you . . . (and) you shall eat only what man has left . . . and receive kicks as a reward for your fidelity" (Johnston, 1976:50-52).

The above explanation certainly corresponds with the relationship of the bear to both dog and man in the following bear myths.

The following stories are a cross-section of tribal narratives covering the Yukon, British Columbia, Alberta, and the United States. The Cherokee narrative is included because it has many similar elements to the Canadian ones, and also includes some aspects which help understand the other myths.

In comparing and contrasting the various versions of the bear myth, the ways in which it reveals the peoples' culture and their particular beliefs regarding bears, including some of the elements that appear to be referring to ritualistic practices, will be outlined. The various stories will be compared to the Tlingit version which appears to be the most complete one.

Having a choice of eleven versions in one book, it seemed to be more faithful in comparing the versions to chose not only the longest and most complete, but also to avoid the neatly combined version offered by Catherine McClellan in her book, *The Girl Who Married the Bear* (1970). The old Inland Tlingit, Jake Jackson, whose story is the most complete version included here was "probably well in his seventies when he told this story" (McClellan, 1970: 15). The date given for the story was July 11, 1949. McClellan says that "he openly stated that he was a shaman" (Ibid.), which accounts for the experiences with changing forms and visits to another world.

In the narrative an area at the mouth of a river on the coast is described. Later in the story Jackson refers to the place where the bear and the girl wintered, as being "on a high mountain . . . near a big river on the Alaska side of Chilkat" (see Appendix I). This description lends credence to the story, as the places he names do exist. The food mentioned as being gathered and prepared would describe what the people ate in that area, berries and salmon.

The first element that one suspects in describing a taboo, is the motif of the girl insulting the bear excrement. McClellan says of this matter

Ethnographic data make it plain that body wastes are . . . of considerable concern to (these people) . . . Many of their beliefs and stories, including this one, make it clear that excrement and urine may contain rather strong spiritual powers (Ibid. :8).

Thus, when the girl insults the bear after dropping her berries due to slipping on the bear excrement, she is breaking a taboo. One of the reasons for this taboo was that the bear could hear when anyone insulted it or its excrement. Jake Jackson includes this in his story, saying "And maybe the bear heard it". Later, McClellan noted that the people believed

persons must always speak carefully of bear people, since bears have the power to hear human speech no matter where the humans

may be . . . the bear will certainly take revenge . . . (McClellan, 1975:127).

The Eastern Cree have a similar belief as Alanson Skinner noted. The bear was considered "the most powerful and important" (Skinner, 1911) of all of the animals. Therefore to prevent the bear taking revenge on them, the hunters endeavoured to practice rituals that would in some manner placate the animal. Not only did they worry about acting correctly, they also were concerned to address the bear in the proper manner. It was bad enough that the girl touched the excrement, but to say anything insulting was worse. Some of this belief may have been included in what Jackson was implying.

Further to this problem, was the belief that the bear had shamanistic powers. Certainly Jackson appeared to believe this fact. He states that the woman, who had a husband at home, thought that he was coming to meet her. The bear appeared to the girl in the form of her husband who "used to wear a bearskin on his back when it was raining." Campbell notes that

where shamanism is involved, the mythological age and realm are here and now: the man or woman, animal, tree, or rock possessing shamanistic magic has immediate access to that background of dreamlike reality which for most others is crusted over (Campbell, 1959:290).

From this point on in the narrative, the "dreamlike" quality takes over. The bear leads the girl to another world through "windfalls." The "bear knows it's a mountain, and he goes under," as Jackson relates. There are two windfalls which are encountered, suggesting that there are two levels of the world which are entered.

The mythical elements that can be noted in the main part of this narrative, after the girl and the bear enter the other world, include the fact that the girl seems to take some time before she is aware that it is not her husband with whom she is travelling. Either she is under a magic spell, or the shamanistic bear is appearing to her in human form. Another possibility is that both features are involved. Another element is the employment of the number four. The girl and her bear husband "camp in four camps in four days," and the girl has four brothers. In Indian narratives the number four often has cosmic significance. The orientation is usually made to the four cardinal directions. The aspect of the dissolving of historical time is present in the comment that they camped three nights, but "it seems as though it is three nights, but really it is three months," adds Jackson. The girl's impregnation by the bear is another mythical element, with the additional mystery that the pregnancy lasts only three and a half months. The excuse Jackson gives for this change is "because the bear has babies quicker than people."

When the babies have been born and it is spring, the brothers attempt to kill the bear who is holding their sister hostage. McClellan explains the fact that it is only the younger brother who is able to complete the task and speak to the

sister by saying that

the interplay between the girl and her brothers is complex and subtle. (In another version by Maria Johns) . . . it is specifically stated that because of the rules of sibling avoidance she can communicate directly only with her younger brother (McClellan, 1970:7).

Thus an element of social taboo related to the cultural area of the myth is noted. In other versions different relationships may be included in this particular social taboo.

The ritual or ceremonial elements of the narrative are most often changed to coincide with the particular area to which they arise. In the Tlingit version the bear gives the girl specific instructions as to how his body is to be treated. His head is to be put in the fire and burned. McClellan notes that "Tagish and Inland Tlingit hunters sometimes burn the bear's head and then sing to it . . . It is sung explicitly so that the spirit will go back into the bear" (1975:128). Jackson included another ritualistic element peculiar to this area in an addition to his story. He said that the bear instructed the girl in this manner,

When your brothers kill me, you call for my knee bones. And when my kids are hungry for something to eat, you put my knee bones into the fire. And my knee bones are going to show you where the bears are (McClellan, 1970:21).

These instructions draw attention to another aspect of the function of the bear, that of animal helper. Weston La Barre suggests that

preoccupied with hunting and stories of hunter's luck the first men were needful only of a supernatural "that would help them hung . . . Ivar Paulson . . . emphasizes the double function of the master of animals as protector of the game and helper of the hunter - both functions that shamans themselves exercise for men as protectors and supernatural helpers (1978:162, 163).

The bear was not a god, but only a "supernatural." Thus the function of the myth was to explain the ways in which the animal helper could be expected to be of assistance to the hunters, and what the hunters would have to do to encourage the animal helper to assist them. Many of the versions stress that there was very little food and the people were hungry.

McClellan finds many more cultural elements in this particular version, but for the purposes of this paper the foregoing will suffice.

The second version (Appendix II), which was recorded at Bella Bella in 1923 by George Hunt, then travelling with Franz Boas, includes the same number of children but personalizes the story by giving each one of them a name. This naming process would tend to give the story authenticity. Other

similar elements include the number four in reference to the brothers; the taboos regarding the older brother's actions which supposedly explain why the other brothers were not able to rescue the sister; and the snowball with her bear scent that the sister rolls down to the lower slopes to be found by their dogs. Again it is the youngest brother who rescues his sister.

In this version the bear is speared, differing from the Tlingit version in this respect. This would refer to a cultural difference: if one reads the other versions of the Tlingit story, one would find that only arrows and bows were used.

The greatest differences in this version appear to be in the area of ritualistic observances. The bear appears in what one might visualize to be a form of ceremonial garb that a shaman might wear in acting out this particular myth. He is referred to as "the cannibal dancer", which again suggests a ritual. Judging from the number of "as told to" stories in Boas' *Bella Bella Tales* (1932) that concern cannibalism, there must have been a cult of cannibalists in the mid-West Coast of British Columbia at some early time. The instructions the woman gives to her brothers regarding the cannibal dancer's "whistles and ornaments," and the elaborate description of the bear's house again suggests ritual. It is interesting to note "they do not build the sacred room," and one might conjecture that a later shaman might be allowed to build it having such a clear description.

The motif of fire could be understood in this particular narrative as indicating that the bear has power over the woman's fire. Fire was sometimes used by women when berry picking to keep away bears. Thus the people to whom this narrative was related would understand the particular significance of the bear's power over fire. In the area of power, one notes that the bear equates power with excrement, and wonders what power the woman has. Her power is explained to be "abalone shells and copper." She further demonstrates her power by "slipping off one of her copper bracelets." Again the significance of this act would have more meaning to the people in this particular culture. Boas does not go into detail regarding the cultural significance of the stories he has collected, which McClellan suggests takes away from its value to others. She states that "the importance of (the)... source of the variation is frequently underplayed because folklore collectors so often know very little about those who tell the stories" (1970:2). He never seems to indicate clearly the specific tribal background of the story teller, other than the general description of "Bella Bella" or "Rivers Inlet," that is the area in which the person lived when they told the story. With intermarriage between tribes, the story could have been passed down from a completely different tribal culture.

The next two versions of the story from the same general area were written as addenda to the second version of the bear myth. Version #3 (Appendix III) shows a taboo addition in the actions of the two eldest brothers. This time the sister was wearing the blanket described in the previous story as being worn by her "cannibal dancer" husband. The name of the blanket suggests that it enabled the bear to communicate to humans.

The description of the method the people used to transport the girl and her cubs home suggests that they were people who travelled in wider waters and needed the added support of canoes tied together and covered with planks.

Certainly the canoes would not upset as easily. Thus it becomes a culture trait.

In this version the fire motif is different. "... The people made a fire to deprive (the bears) . . . of their supernatural powers and they all die(d)." In the previous version the fire could be controlled by the bear, and in this version fire is used to control them, showing a different belief in the power of fire. However in Version #4 the fire is again under the control of the bear.

The fourth version (Appendix IV) appears to be the earliest version (1886), and yet it is added to the second version, which suggests that both are from the same cultural area. The time differentiation is included in this earlier version, but is not included in #2 to which it is appended, which could suggest that it became forgotten in the telling.

A greater difference is noted in the ending in which the bear sends the girl home, and there is no mention of the brothers killing the bear. This may suggest that in the Rivers Inlet area people did not eat bear. Instead the salmon is the food mentioned. A second important difference is the addition of the bear's house appearing next door to her parents, who are elderly and in need of care. The magic element of her being able to make them young again reminds one that this is a mythological narrative. It appears that once again the girl, who has gone to another world, returns with shamanistic powers. In this particular story the emphasis is on the animal being a supernatural helper, rather than cannibalistic. One might suspect that this story either was toned down to fit the listener, or is a conglomerate of stories, as the two elements of cannibalism and helping seem incompatible.

One final element worth noting is that the girl took the bearskin off the children. In the first version, when the girl came back she asked for snowshoes. However, subsequent versions differed as to this particular request depending upon the sex of the storyteller. The usual understanding is that the girl requested clothing. The reason for this was that the clothing had magical significance. When someone put on bear skin they could turn into a bear, and when they put back on human clothing they became human. Thus, in the fourth version, the woman's actions toward her children was a manner of bringing them back into the community.

The fifth version (Appendix V) of the bear myth from the Blackfoot tribe is a much more vicious version. The sister appears more as a shamanistic trickster, and there are elements of ritual in the description of the face being painted "like that of a bear, with black marks across the eyes and at the corners of the mouth." The additional comment that the young girl is protected by this magic adds to the mythical element in the story. It is stated that the older sister "was a powerful medicine-woman." The fact that the brothers kill her may also suggest a power struggle between male shamans and female shamans which this story was used to resolve. One notes that the brothers only talk to the little sister, a reversal of the previous tales in which the older sister could only talk to the younger brother, suggesting an added sibling avoidance motif that McClellan noted in the bear myths of the Tlingit. The mention of the taboo of touching the kidneys of the older sister suggests another ritualistic observance, which may refer either to women or animals.

There are added magical elements in this story that do not appear in the other versions. The bird which speaks to the children directing them as to where they should shoot their arrows is one, and the ability of the little brother to bring his brothers to life by the manner in which he shot his arrows is another magical element.

Other differences, such as the larger number of brothers and a sister, plus the addition of a father at home with no mother, suggest cultural traits, as does the father's disapproval of the daughter's relationship with the bear which suggests this culture has monogamous marriages and a patriarchal culture. The ending differs in the fact that it becomes an etiological tale which explains to that particular culture "how the seven stars (Ursa major) came to be."

Upon further reflection it could be noted that this myth is in some respects a reversal of the previous myths, if one views the older sister as the bear-shaman. Possibly then it would refer to the temperament of the female grizzly bear, not known for its good nature at the best of times. In this manner the younger sister being with her would be a similar element, and the brothers being aligned against the older sister would be similar to the brothers endeavoring to kill the bear and rescue the little sister in the previous version. In this particular version, one notes that there is no mention of dogs. These differences could possibly be explained by the particular culture area of the Blackfoot tribe who subscribe to this particular narrative.

One final narrative is the Cherokee myth about the Bear Man (Appendix VI). This particular narrative is of interest first by its similarity to the Canadian practiced certain rituals of abstinence to ensure a good hunt before the hunt and to cleanse themselves when it was over. He says,

A Carrier Indian of B.C. used to separate from his wife for a full month before he set traps for bears . . . neglect of . . . [this] precaution could cause game to escape (Frazer, 1963:197).

In another place he describes the ritual observed by Laplanders after the hunt, living by themselves for three days while they cut up and cook the bear's carcass. Thus it appears a general practice in those areas that look to the animal helper for assistance in their flight for survival to take care that their own actions are ritually controlled to ensure the fulfillment of their endeavor.

There are various cultural differences in this story that can be explained by the area in which the story was told. The inclusion of a Bear Council in the first world that the hunter and bear entered was an interesting addition. All the other versions that included at least two (holes, windfalls) worlds entered, left the first one empty and passed on to the second where it seems generally agreed that the bear resided. In most of the versions it is a mountain, in which his home is located. This is not only a culture trait, but also a general belief that the gods, or supernatural helpers lived in high places. The coastal-tribe bear myths appear confused as to whether it was a windfall or a mountain through which one entered the other world. This could be explained by a cross-cultural sharing of the stories, through intermarriages or trading practices.

The mention of the difference in smell between the bear and the human in some cultures is indicative of their concern for body odors, as noted by McClellan:

A good many other Yukon stories about humans who have stayed long enough with animals to begin to acquire animal-like characteristics stress the repugnant smell that humans have and the need for the returning person to conquer this 'wild' trait by slow degrees (1970:8).

McClellan explains how in several northern Athabascan groups one could find "various remedies for body odours." Evidently they associated bad smells with evil super-humans (Ibid.). This motif, then is also a particular culture trait of certain areas.

One cannot end without making some mention of the reference to the woman as the one who makes mistakes and is, therefore, not to be part of the ritual observers. Joseph Campbell attempts to arrive at some reason for this exclusion of women from the sacred aspects of the community, and also of the political or leadership arena:

We have already noted the role of chicanery in shamanism. It may well be that a good deal of what has been advertised as representing the will of "Old Man" actually is but the heritage of a lot of old men, and that the main idea has been not so much to honor God as to simplify life by keeping women in the kitchen (1959:339).

The words "Old Man" are naturally meant to refer to whomever will be angry if the proper rituals are not observed in the correct male-oriented manner. In the last version of the Bear Myth, not only does one note that the main character is male, but also that the hunter is not allowed to be fully integrated into the community because of the actions of his wife. One can well imagine the male attitude toward this story: "The poor woman loved him so much she couldn't wait till his separation time was up. But then women are so much morally weaker and prone to be emotional. They wouldn't understand the importance of ritual. So what can you expect?" In previous versions of this narrative it is the woman, turning into a bear, who kills her brothers: it is the girl who breaks the taboo by insulting the bear excrement. Thus, by keeping these elements in the story, they would explain to the community to whom they were related, why it is that women held the positions they did and why it was that women were not to participate in the sacred rituals of the hunters.

In summation, one must note that the common elements of the story suggest that the basic narrative was used possibly because of its popularity. The elements of ritual that cause it to become a myth or sacred story, and the etiological motifs are the main additions that would vary from culture to culture, and signify the story as belonging to a particular people.

As stated earlier, the oldest version of those narratives included in this

paper is the story from Rivers Inlet recorded in 1896. It is unfortunate that it was not included as a complete story, rather than being appended to a story related in 1923. One notes the different name for the major character, and one is led to wonder what other elements might have differed from the one to which it was appended.

Initially it was stated that some people, such as Campbell, view these myths as part of a circumpolar bear cult, which they well may have originally been. However, due to the popularity of the basic story, it has spread south as far as Cherokee country in U.S. and east to Cree country in Canada, areas that cannot be considered circumpolar. Thus one learns that many cultures may share one particular narrative, using it as a teaching tool, a vehicle for passing down ritual and ceremonial practices, or a story to be told on a winter's evening that could guide succeeding generations in the ways of their particular people.

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## APPENDIX I

### The Girl Who Married the Bear

Some people had been staying one day at the mouth of the river, and they were putting up dry fish - salmon. Well, they finished. They dried the salmon and stored it, and they were ready to go off to get berries. The women, just about ten of them together, went out to get berries. One young girl goes with them. There are ten women, and she is young.

She fills up a basket that big [gesture]. She fills up two baskets. Fifty pounds she has. And she puts the baskets together, one on top of the other.

When they were coming down to the camp, it was all dark. The young woman was tired of packing so much, and after a while she slipped on something. She slipped down, and she spilled all the berries from the top basket. Then she wanted to know what it was she slipped on. That's where the bear goes out [i.e., defecates]. And the girl wants to know what was on her foot. It was where the bear goes out. You know, like down on the salt water where they [bears] eat berries and go [defecate]. It's big, that big [gesture]. That's what she slipped on.

She got mad at the bear. "Where this dirty bear went out, I fell on it myself!" And she called that bear bad names because of it. And maybe the bear heard it.

So she takes the berries again that she had spilled from her basket, and some of the other ladie helped her put them back in the basket. When they had finished, she packed [carried] the baskets again.

She goes along packing the baskets one on top of the other, and after a while the pack-strap across her shoulders broke, and both baskets fell onto the ground, and the berries spilled out.

That was because the bear wished it.

But the ladies came in to help her put the berries back again. One was just about half empty, and the other is full again. And she was about half-crying. She put the berries back again, and all the ladies went again. It's dark. It's in the fall time. Everybody goes again.

They had gone only a little ways, and then the strap broke again on both sides. And then all the other older ladies were kind of cold. And it's raining - raining hard. And the old ladies are getting cold. So one old woman said,

"I'm going to go home now." And pretty soon all the other ladies want to go, and they left her alone to stay and pick up those berries all by herself. She had a husband at home, and when the last woman left her, she told her to tell her husband to come and meet her.

When the young woman started for home, she had just gone a short little way when she saw somebody coming. He had a little bearskin on his back. It was a man. She thought it was her husband. He used to wear a bearskin on his back when it was raining. And she kept crying. And when he was coming, he said,

"What's this crying for? I'm here." He wiped her eyes. "Quit crying. Let's go now!"

The husband was packing the berries. And they kept on going and going. That is a bear taking her away now.

They go and they go, and after a while he tells that young woman to walk quick. "It's getting dark on us!"

And after a while she sees a big windfall about five feet high. You know, down on the coast there are big trees. He goes under it. That's really a mountain. The lady thinks it's a windfall, but that bear knows it's a mountain, and he goes under. And then they go and go, and after a while they go under again. She thought it was another windfall. And they go under again.

And after a while they go on the side of a mountain, and they camp there. "We're lost," he says. "We go the wrong way," he tells the lady,

Next morning she wakes up. She sleeps all right, but in the morning early, just before the man wakes up, she wakes up, and she knows it [i.e., what has happened]. She is sleeping on the ground, but in the evening she had thought she was in a house, her own house. But in the morning when she wakes up and opens her eyes, she knows it's a camp around her. And that morning she sees bear claws on her neck.

Then after a while the bear wakes up, and that lady shuts her eyes. She doesn't want to move. When the bear gets up, she looks at him, and it looks like her husband walking around. And he makes a fire and cooks. And when he finishes cooking, she gets up and eats. She doesn't see it [i.e., the cooking?]. Lunch too. But all the same, the man cooks. She doesn't see where he does it.

In the morning after they have their breakfast, the man says, "I am going to hunt for groundhog. You stay home and make fire," he tells her. He goes.

In the evening time he comes back home. He packs a big sack full of groundhogs and gophers. He cooks it, and when they are going to leave, he packs it.

When he comes back in the evening, they go to bed again. And in the night the lady wakes up again and wants to know for good what's wrong here. Then

she knows it's a grizzly bear that sleeps with her. And then she is quiet again and goes to sleep.

Next morning she wakes up again. In the evening time he had packed home what he had gotten - groundhogs - but there is nothing left. They are all gone. And she doesn't say anything. She doesn't see anything around, but all the same the man is cooking something. And when he puts it down, it is groundhog that is cooked already. And she takes it and eats it again. [There was an interruption in the story here. Jake stopped to discuss a point in native trading.]

When they are through eating in the morning, he told her to stay home again and get lots of wood. "I'm going to kill groundhogs." And when he came back in the evening he had a big pack again full of groundhog and gophers and things like that. And he did the cooking in the same way.

And they stayed there about a month and did things that way. And they didn't save anything at all. In the fall, late in the fall, the man says,

"We are going to be late in having a winter camp, a winter home. Let's go look now for where we are going to stay in the winter time to make a home."

And then they go, and they have a big pack with dry groundhogs. She never sees it when they stop, and she never sees him drying them at all, but when they walk off from the camp, her husband has a big pack of dried groundhog just the same.

They camp in four camps in four days. They were on a high mountain. It's near a big river on the Alaska side at Chilkat. It's called tsu.m. It's the highest one.

You see where the mud comes down from the mountain, that's the place the bear found on the mountain, where all the rocks wash down and spread out in the valley below. That's where the bear dug a hole. As soon as he finished digging the hole, he told his wife to get boughs.

"Don't get them where the wind blows the boughs and the brush," he told her, "Get them down low."

So the girl goes out to get the brush, and she breaks the trees up high. She breaks the boughs off way up high . . . She brings the brush back and throws it down by her husband. The bear comes out and smells that brush and tells his wife,

"Why did you break the brush up high? Somebody is going to find us!" he said. She breaks off the brush too high, so they are going to see it. Bears break their brush over and under their arms. People break brush by turning it down.

Then he is mad. The man gets mad and slaps his wife. And he goes himself to get the brush . . . And he gets the brush and something just like roots for putting on the ground. He brings the brush and everything together for the ground. The ground is icy, and he throws roots and brush into the hole and breaks it up. That way he finishes the hole.

When he comes in the evening time, he wants to eat. He cooks something. It's groundhog meat and gopher, but the woman never sees the groundhog. All the same, the man cooks some.

Then they camp three nights. It seems as though it is three nights, but

really it is three months... The man told her, "Feel outside how soft the snow is!"

The woman is going to put up on the door place [? sic], because she is getting used to staying with the bear. The woman has begun to carry a baby. It seemed like it was only three months [since she had been with the bear?], but the baby seemed like six months. She feels the baby already. That's because the bear has babies quicker than people. She has a big body showing she is having a baby.

After a while, when she is going to feel the snow outside, first she feels her husband all around his body like she is loving him. She hugged her husband and stroked his hair all over.

Then she moved outdoors and felt the snow. Then it's soft. She makes a big snowball with her hands, and she knows the snowball will slide down. She knows that the den is high above a snowslide. She throws the ball down to the bottom of the hill to the creek.

The girl has four brothers staying at the mouth of the river.

After a while, in April when the fourth month comes, the girl feels sick because she is going to have a baby. In the middle of the night which was really half a month, two little baby boys are born to her. In three and a half months she has babies. When they are born, the palms of their hands are like a person's [indicates smooth], but the backs are all hairy. It is all hairy on their backs too, but their stomachs are like humans'. Their feet were the same way.

In April when there first began to be a crust on the snow is the time that the brothers would want to go hunting bear with their dogs. The oldest brother has two dogs, bear dogs - big dogs - good hunting dogs.

For a long time her brothers and all the townspeople had known that the girl was really taken by the bear when she was out berrying. The four brothers went out together. The youngest one was only a kid. The other three have wives.

The oldest brother tries first, but he never gets any bear. Next time the second oldest one tries to get the bear. He comes back home in the evening, and he has got nothing. The next day, the third one tries it. He doesn't get anything.

The youngest kid is always sleeping. When the oldest brother comes back and his kid brother is sleeping yet, he says,

"You're no good! Do you think you are going to get your sister?"

Well, he just wished to himself that he would try it; he knows he is going to get his sister.

So the third one tries. And the next day that youngest boy never sleeps. After a while he puts his moccasins on. And he goes, and keeps on straight to the high mountain. He keeps on to where they used to go in the summer, and he has those two dogs with him.

After a while, he sees that snowball. And the dogs get into the place and smell the bear. And he follows them to where the snowball came down. And the two dogs run up the mountain. And after a while he hears the dogs barking up there. And he walks up and up. And after a while he sees there is a bear. He sees the hole, and the dogs are in it. He sees the two dog tails in it. They are

barking and barking.

He has no way to hit the bear. He has a bow and arrow, but he has no way to shoot it, because the dogs are in the way. He tries to pull them out. And after a while he hears somebody talking inside that hole. The voice was talking to the dogs. One dog's name was calsq wa [?, Tlingit]. The other's name was kusadago ic [kucdak<sup>ku</sup>ic, little otter, father, Tlingit?]. The person said,

"You ought to keep quiet now! You can never quit barking!"

She knew her brother's dogs. She is inside. And then the dogs go out.

And the man told his wife, "Those are your brothers. They are going to kill me, but when they do kill me, see that you get my skull! Get my whole head. You go get it. When they stretch my skin, make a fire right along where they are stretching it, and put my head in the fire and burn it up."

That day when the brother came to kill him, he did not fight back. He never threw him down the creek. He never rolled down. He just lay there quietly. The three brothers below came to meet the fourth one, because they heard the dogs barking up on the mountain. They went to meet the youngest brother.

When they were skinning the bear, the oldest brother told the youngest one to go into the cave and get the arrow he had shot in there. When he went into the bear hole the girl was way in the back holding her two babies - one on each side. She tells her brother,

"You skin the bear good. That's your brother-in-law, i kani! [your brother-in-law, Tlingit] Treat him good. It's good to use to eat," she said.

When they skinned him, they cut one side of the ribs out to roast it. When they finish, the sister is sitting on the bear nest.

[At this point Jake declared that the story was too long to tell in full, "so we can change it. Wrong here," - i.e., he was going to condense it.]

When the youngest brother saw his sister inside the den, he came out. He tells his oldest brother,

"I see my sister in the bear hole."

And they don't believe him. "You're no good! You're no good to your sister [sic]."

"I know I see her good! She has two babies. On both sides she has a baby. I see it!"

So the oldest brother says, "Let's go look at them! All right, go ahead."

Then they go fast. The first thing, the oldest [sic] brother looks in the back of the bear hole. And then he starts to cry when he sees his sister. He cries and cries, and his sister keeps still. Then she says,

"Keep quiet, brother! I'm not going to be lost much longer!"

Then the man stops crying, and the girl says to him, "When you go back home, brother, ik [younger brother, Tlingit], tell my mother to come meet me and bring snowshoes for me."

So just as though it's nothing, they go back home without packing anything. They want to get home quick.

Just as soon as they see the camp, they holler out, "We got our dIuk [sister, Tlingit]!"

Nobody believes them. They tell their mother, " 'ax dUk [my sister], she calls for you to come with snowshoes." Their mother doesn't believe them either. When they say that, she too doesn't believe them. All the same, she puts on her moccasins and goes, and she packs an extra pair of snowshoes. And she walks and goes to where her daughter is.

When the girl starts to walk out from the hole, she starts to cry and cry to be back at home. She tells them,

"Someone can fix a camp for me, out of the way, way out from where the townspeople stay."

She wants to camp alone.

And they fixed the camp there already, She came home and stayed in there.

That same spring she tells her youngest brother who got her that she wants to have a good time bear hunting. She tells her brother,

"I see smoke, ik [younger brother, Tlingit], bear smoke." [Jake explained as an aside: "The bear has a camp in winter time. But the bear lives just like a person. He has a fire, and it smokes right in his den."]

"Where?" her brother asks.

"Out there. You see that tree standing up? Right there. You go there and look for it." He goes and he sees a bear right there every time she says that. Anytime when he is lonesome he asks his sister,

"Can you see any bear smoke?"

"Wait," she says. "I'll see some!" Then she looks across at the hill, and after a while she sees some. And she tells her brother, "There's a bear there!" She can tell how many bears there are too. Just the woman can see the smoke. Nobody else can see it. She tells them to look by the tree.

After a while it is summer again, and they fish again. And after a while in the fall, they go to get berries again. And they hunt bear again in the fall time. They see three grizzly bears coming out of the side of the mountain. A family. There is a female with two cubs about a year and a half old. She sees them first, and she tells her brother,

"There are more bears up there," she says. "There are three of them. First thing when you clean them up [kill them], don't fool with them," she tells him. If you fool with them when you kill them, they are going to take me away," she said.

And then they go up there, and they kill the bears - all three of them. And they skin them, and they bring the feet and the skin. And they eat some in the evening. Before the sun goes down they finish their eating somewhere. Then they tell their mama,

"Mama, can you tell our sister? Let's play with her. We want her to put on the big bear skin, and the cub skins are for our sister's sons!"

And the mother starts crying and crying. And they keep on telling her they want to play with their sister. After a while the mother goes to the daughter and tells her,

"Your brothers tell me they want to play with you. You put on that bear-skin and walk just like a bear coming out on the side of the mountain."

And the girl starts to cry. And she gets mad and sore, and she says, "How

can they talk that way? I am going to be a bear forever now!," she says.

And the girl is crying and crying. And after a while the men folk come themselves. They tell her.

"dUk [sister, Tlingit], we want to play with you. We want you to put this bearskin on. And these here are for our nephews."

"What for do you say that? I used to tell you not to fool with those bears! Now I am going to put the skin on. You come quick and see us in the mountain!"

She takes the bear skins with her. And she takes the little one, and she shakes it on the child. She turns the little kid around this way and puts the bear skin on the baby's back. She puts it on four times that way, and then it fits right on. She grabs the other kid and does the same way again. And a real bear comes out again. Then she picks up the big skin and puts it on herself that way and walks out. She's a bear.

The oldest brother told his sister, "dUk [sister, Tlingit], we are going to shoot our bow and arrows, but we are going to use spruce bark for the arrow heads instead of iron points."

When the brothers were sneaking up to where their sister was eating berries like a bear, the youngest brother looked at her, and it didn't look like a person, but just like a bear. When he saw that his sister looked just like a bear, he took off the spruce and put a bone [sic] point on. A strong one too. When he saw her, the oldest brother hit her first. She goes right behind a tree. The other two watch. The youngest brother has a good arrow. When they shot their bows and arrows, the bear turned around and just grabbed the three brothers. And those young bears come behind and just tear them up, the three brothers.

The younger brother that is behind, he hits the bear sister good - right in the throat. He does it because his sister has turned into a bear. The arrow goes through and stays in the bear's collar bone -- just as big as a finger. That is where the younger brother shot the bear.

Then the bears went away from their home forever. They never came back to the camp any more. They had killed the three brothers. Only the youngest brother was left. He was all right. This is the end of the story.

## APPENDIX II

### The Bear Who Carried Away A Woman

There were four brothers and one sister, the children of *G'î'tagawê<sup>e</sup>* (the very first). The name of the eldest son was *G'â'lasta<sup>e</sup>wak<sup>u</sup>* (Leader), that of the second *L!â'lba* (Spouting ahead). Next came a daughter *L!â'qwaats!êgas* (Copper Receptacle Woman). The next son was named *Aik'!â'lalis* (High-on-Beach) and the youngest one *L!â'!ElsEla* (Spouting-out-of-House). [The girl] . . . while picking berries steps on the dung of bear and insults it. The bear appears elaborately dressed in black bear skin with thick cedar-bark head and neck rings and also arm and leg rings, and a man's face carved on the shoulders of his

blanket. The name of the blanket is *bê'bak!wâ'lasgEm* (man's voice blanket). He is the cannibal dancer of the bear. He asks her what sort of excrement she has that would give her the right to scold him, and she says her excrements are abalone shells and copper. He tells her to sit down and show him, which she does, slipping off one of her copper bracelets. He says, "You are the first woman I ever knew to do this, and now I will make you my wife." They go to the foot of a steep hill and the man opens the door of a great house. Outside the house there is a stream and the man tells her that he will get salmon every morning and she must make a fire of waterlogged burls for drying his blanket. The next morning she finds a dead tree and breaks it up. It is burning up well but when her husband comes in he shakes his blanket so that the water running down from it puts the fire out. But he does not get angry. Every night the woman gives birth to a bear. She announces that she has four brothers who may come to get her. The bear announces that the three oldest will not succeed, for the first one uses the knee of his wife for a pillow, the second fails to turn his face away when a menstruating girl walks past, and the third breaks his toilet sticks. The youngest is clean, however, for his bed is off the ground. The next morning the youngest brother goes hunting with his dogs. The dogs take the scent of the bear and his sister indicates her whereabouts by a snowball on which she makes two fingerprints. He follows the trail of the snowball and enters her house. His sisters run in ahead of him and she calls her children to sit close to her. The cannibal dancer bear sits in the rear of the house and the four dogs attack him. The man spears him and the two cubs. The other two escape. The bear's house is called *k'!â'wats!<sup>e</sup> gôx<sup>u</sup>* (carved box house). Each rear post is a *hō'x<sup>u</sup>hōx<sup>u</sup>* sitting on a bear's head; each front post, a thunderbird sitting on the head of a *k'!â'waq!a*. The beams are flat. On the front of the sacred room is painted a toad sitting on the room. Then the woman tells her brother to take the cannibal dancer's whistles and ornaments and to put them into the carved box which contains other kinds of cedar bark ornaments. He does so and both return home. The woman advises the brothers to move to another place because all the bears will come to revenge the death of their head chief. The move to *<sup>e</sup>nō'lo* and build a house like that of the bear, but they do not build the sacred room. Then *L!âlElsEla* tells his eldest brother and his sister to disappear and they come back as cannibal dancer and *Q!âminâgas*. The name of the cannibal dancer is now *K!wâ<sup>e</sup>g'îls* (sitting behind on the ground).

### APPENDIX III

#### Version #3

A young girl named *L!â'qwats!Eqs* went up the mountains to pick salmon berries. While she was walking along she stepped on bear's dung. Then the story continues like the preceding version. The bear husband says, "I believe your brothers are coming to find me." She says, "My eldest brother will find you." But the bear replies, "He will not be able to do so, for he does not purify

himself and when he sees a woman he turns back to look at her." Then she says, "My second brother will find you." The bear replies, "He does not clean the fern roots which he is eating, he cannot see far." Nothing is said about the two other brothers. The youngest brother finds her as described before. His sister was wearing a blanket, "Speaking-with-a-Man's voice"... She went down with her brother and the young bears to A'ku. They were met by the people who tied canoes together and covered them with planks. After some time the young bears were crying and when asked why they cried, they said they wish to play on the sand beach. They called an enormous rock-slide a sand beach. After sometime the people made a fire to deprive them of their supernatural powers and they all die.

#### APPENDIX IV

##### Version

A woman named La'ixemil steps on bear dung and scolds the bear. A man appears and the same conversation follows as in the previous version[s]. She is taken into the house of the bear who marries her. When she makes a fire with dry wood it is extinguished when her husband shakes his blanket over it. When she finally takes wet wood the fire is not extinguished. She has two sons and two daughters. She thinks she has been there four days, but these were actually four years. She wishes to go home and the bear sends her home with her children. The young bears are catching salmon; in a river where they are found by the brothers of La'ixemil. She explains to them what has happened to her. She takes off the bearskin of three of her children but her youngest daughter runs back into the woods as a bear. The bear's house appears next to the house of her parents who have become very old. She washes them and they became young again. (Sagen 226)

#### APPENDIX V

##### The Bear-Woman (Blackfoot)

Once there was a young woman with many suitors; but she refused to marry. She had seven brothers and one little sister. Their mother had been dead many years and they had no relatives, but lived alone with their father. Every day the six brothers went hunting with their father. It seems that the young woman had a bear for her lover, and, as she did not want any one to know this, she would meet him when she went out after wood. She always went after wood as soon as her father and brothers went out to hunt, leaving her little sister alone in the lodge. As soon as she was out of sight in the brush, she would run to the place where the bear lived.

As the little sister grew older, she began to be curious as to why her older sister spent so much time getting wood. So one day she followed her. She saw the young woman meet the bear and saw that they were lovers. When she found

this out, she ran home as quickly as she could, and when her father returned she told him what she had seen. When he heard the story he said, "So, my elder daughter has a bear for a husband. Now I know why she does not want to marry." Then he went about the camp, telling all his people that they had a bear for a brother-in-law, and that he wished all the men to go out with him to kill this bear. So they went, found the bear, and killed him.

When the young woman found out what had been done, and that her little sister had told on her, she was very angry. She scolded her little sister vigorously, then ordered her to go out to the dead bear, and bring some flesh from his paws. The little sister began to cry, and said she was afraid to go out of the lodge, because a dog with young pups had tried to bite her. "Oh, do not be afraid!" said the young woman. "I will paint your face like that of a bear, with black marks across the eyes and at the corners of the mouth; then no one will touch you." So she went for the meat. Now the older sister was a powerful medicine-woman. She could tan hides in a new way. She could take up a hide, strike it four times with her skin-scraper and it would be tanned.

The little sister had a younger brother that she carried on her back. As their mother was dead, she took care of him. One day the little sister said to the older sister, "Now you be a bear and we will go out into the brush to play." The older sister agreed to this, but said, "Little sister, you must not touch me over my kidneys." So the big sister acted as a bear, and they played in the brush. While they were playing, the little sister forgot what she had been told, and touched her older sister in the wrong place. At once she turned into a real bear, ran into the camp, and killed many of the people. After she had killed a large number, she turned back into her former self. Now, when the little sister saw the older run away as a real bear, she became frightened, took up her little brother, and ran into their lodge. Here they waited, badly frightened, but were very glad to see their older sister return after a time as her true self.

Now the older brothers were out hunting, as usual. As the little sister was going down for water with her little brother on her back, she met her six brothers returning. The brothers noted how quiet and deserted the camp seemed to be. So they said to their little sister, "Where are all our people?" Then the little sister explained how she and her sister were playing, when the elder turned into a bear, ran through the camp, and killed many people. She told her brothers that they were in great danger, as their sister would surely kill them when they came home. So the six brothers decided to go into the brush. One of them had killed a jack-rabbit. He said to the little sister, "You take this rabbit home with you. When it is dark, we will scatter prickly-pears all around the lodge, except in one place. When you come out, you must look for that place, and pass through."

When the little sister came back to the lodge, the elder sister said, "Where have you been all this time? .... Oh, my little brother mused himself and I had to clean him," replied the little sister. "Where did you get that rabbit?" she asked. "I killed it with a sharp stick," said the little sister. "That is a lie. Let me see you do it," said the older sister. Then the little sister took up a stick lying near her, threw it at the rabbit, and it stuck in the wound in his body. "Well,

all right," said the elder sister. Then the little sister dressed the rabbit and cooked it. She offered some of it to her older sister, but it was refused: so the little sister and her brother ate all of it. When the elder sister saw that the rabbit had all been eaten, she became very angry, and said, "Now I have a mind to kill you." So the little sister arose quickly, took her little brother on her back, and said, "I am going out to look for wood." As she went out, she followed the narrow trail through the prickly-pears and met her six brothers in the brush. Then they decided to leave the country, and started off as fast as they could go.

The older sister, being a powerful medicine-woman, knew at once what they were doing. She became very angry and turned herself into a bear to pursue them. Soon she was about to overtake them, when one of the boys tried his power. He took a little water in the hollow of his hand and sprinkled it around. At once it became a great lake between them, and the bear. Then the children hurried on while the bear went around. After a while the bear caught up with them again, when another brother threw a porcupine-tail (a hairbrush) on the ground. This became a great thicket; but the bear forced its way through, and again overtook the children. This time they all climbed a high tree. The bear came to the foot of the tree, and looked up at them, said, "Now I shall kill you all." She took a stick from the ground, threw it into the tree and knocked down all four of the brothers. While she was doing this, a little bird flew around the tree, calling out to the children, "Shoot her in the head! Shoot her in the head!" Then one of the boys shot an arrow into the head of the bear, and at once she fell dead. Then they came down from the tree.

Now the four brothers were dead. The little brother took an arrow, shot it straight up into the air, and when it fell one of the dead brothers came to life. This he repeated until all were alive again. Then they held a council, and said to each other, "Where shall we go? Our people have all been killed, and we are a long way from home. We have no relatives living in the world." Finally they decided that they preferred to live in the sky. Then the little brother said, "Shut your eyes." As they did so, they all went up. Now you can see them every night. The little brother is the North Star (?). The six brothers and the little sister are seen in the Great Dipper. The little sister and the eldest brother are in a line with the North Star, and the little sister being nearest it because she used to carry her little brother on her back. The other brothers are arranged in order of their age, beginning with the eldest. This is how the seven stars [Ursa major] came to be.

## APPENDIX VI

### The Bear Man [Cherokee]

A man went hunting in the mountains and came across a black bear, which he wounded with an arrow. The bear turned and started to run the other way, and the hunter followed, shooting one arrow after another into it without bringing it down. Now, this was a medicine bear, and could talk or read the thoughts

of people without their saying a word. At last he stopped and pulled the arrows out of his side and gave them to the man, saying, "It is of no use for you to shoot at me, for you cannot kill me. Come to my house and let us live together." The hunter thought to himself, "He may kill me," but the bear read his thoughts and said, "No, I won't hurt you." The man thought again, "How can I get anything to eat?" But the bear knew his thoughts, and said, "There shall be plenty." So the hunter went with the bear.

They went on together until they came to a hole in the side of the mountain, and the bear said, "This is not where I live, but there is going to be a council here and we will see what they do." They went in, and the hole widened as they went, until they came to a large cave like a townhouse. It was full of bears - old bears, young bears, and cubs, white bears, black bears, and brown bears - and a large white bear was the chief. They sat down in a corner, but soon the bears scented the hunter and began to ask, "What is it that smells bad?" The chief said, "Don't talk so; it is only a stranger come to see us. Let him alone." Food was getting scarce in the mountains, and the council was to decide what to do about it. They had sent out messengers all over, and while they were talking two bears came in and reported that they had found a country in the low grounds where there were so many chestnuts and acorns that mast was knee deep. Then they were all pleased, and got ready for a dance, and the dance leader was the one the Indians call . . . "Long Hams," a great black bear that is always lean. After the dance the bears noticed the hunter's bow and arrows, and one said, "This is what men use to kill us. Let us see if we can manage them, and maybe we can fight men with his own weapons." So they took the bow and arrows from the hunter to try them. They fitted the arrow and drew back the string, but when they let go it caught in their long claws and the arrows dropped to the ground. They saw that they could not use the bow and arrows and gave them back to the man. When the dance and the council were over, they began to go home, excepting the White Bear chief, who lived there, and at last the hunter and the bear went out together.

They went on until they came to another hole in the side of the mountain, when the bear said, "This is where I live," and they went in. By this time the hunter was very hungry and was wondering how he could get something to eat. The other knew his thoughts, and sitting up on his hind legs he rubbed his stomach with his forepaws so - and at once he had both paws full of chestnuts and gave them to the man. He rubbed his stomach again - so - and gave the man both paws full of blackberries. He rubbed again - so - and had his paws full of acorns, but the man said that he could not eat them, and that he had enough already.

The hunter lived in the cave with the bear all winter, until long hair like that of a bear began to grow all over his body and he began to act like a bear; but he still walked like a man. One day in early spring the bear said to him, "Your people down in the settlement are getting ready for a grand hunt in these mountains, and they will come to this cave and kill me and take these clothes from me" - he meant his skin - "but they will not hurt you and will take you home with them." The bear knew what the people were doing down

in the settlement just as he always knew what the man was thinking about. Some days passed and the bear said again, "This is the day when the Topknots will come to kill me, but the Split-noses will come first and find us. When they have killed me they will drag me outside the cave and take off my clothes and cut me in pieces. You must cover the blood with leaves, and when they are taking you away look back after you have gone a piece and you will see something."

Soon they heard the hunters coming up the mountain, and then the dogs found the cave and began to bark. The hunters came and looked inside and saw the bear and killed him with their arrows. Then they dragged him outside the cave and skinned the body and cut it in quarters to carry home. The dogs kept on barking until the hunters thought there must be another bear in the cave. They looked in again and saw the man away at the farther end. At first they thought it was another bear on account of his long hair, but they soon saw it was the hunter who had been lost the year before, so they went in and brought him out. Then each hunter took a load of the bear meat and they started home again, bringing the man and the skin with them. Before they left the man piled leaves over the spot where they had cut up the bear, and when they had gone a little way he looked behind and saw the bear rise up out of the leaves, shake himself, and go back into the woods.

When they came near the settlement the man told the hunters that he must be shut up where no one could see him, without anything to eat or drink for seven days and nights, until the bear nature had left him and he became like a man again. So they shut him up alone in a house and tried to keep very still about it, but the news got out and his wife heard of it. She came for her husband, but the people would not let her near him; but she came every day and begged so hard that at last after four or five days they let her have him. She took him home with her, but in a short time he died, because he still had a bear's nature and could not live like a man. If they had kept him shut up and fasting until the end of the seven days he would have become a man again and would have lived.

## HIGH STEEL

In 1907 on August 29th  
There were 36 Indians killed.  
Some people were trapped under the steel.  
The workers lived in Chagnawaga.  
It happened at Quebec Bridge.

Billy Monias

## THE BEAVER

The beaver are gone.  
And those who saw the beaver are gone.  
Those who saw the beaver by hundreds  
and how they live with the water  
their great head down  
Those who saw the beaver are gone  
And the beaver are gone.

Zack Flett