

TRICKSTERS TROT TO AMERICA¹

AREAL DISTRIBUTION OF FOLKLORE MOTIFS

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Abstract: The folklore Trickster is usually considered a universally known combination of features intrinsic to human nature. However, there are strong anomalies in the areal distribution of such a figure. Sub-Saharan Africa, North America (except for the Arctic), Northeast Asia and South American Chaco not only are the preferred zones of tricksters' activity but also share some peculiar trickster motifs unknown in most of the other regions. The range of animals which play the role of tricksters is also restricted and not always easily explained, E.g. the Hare and Spider, known in both Africa and North America, are neither "mediators" between life and death (suggested by C. Lévi-Strauss for Coyote) nor "really tricky" ("materialistic" hypothesis of M. Harris). The set of trickster motifs and the zoo- or anthropomorphic impersonations of the Trickster are independent variables. The same episodes are easily linked to different tricksters while every trickster usually attracts episodes characteristic of a particular region. Though the original emergence of Trickster as a mental construct can indeed be rooted in human psychology (and where else?), the distribution of tricksters in folklore is discretionary and depends of many uncertain, i.e. chance, factors. The wide spread or lack of tricksters in certain cultural areas hardly reflect any fundamental differences in the psychology of inhabitants of these regions. The study of trickster motifs, just as of any other folklore motifs, helps us reconstruct possible historic links between populations. The African – North American links remain enigmatic (independent emergence is possible but slight historical links cannot be completely excluded) but the parallels between (Western and Northeast) Siberian – North American tricksters are almost certainly due to former cultural ties across Northern Asia. Another interesting case is the proliferation of tricksters with different zoomorphic and other identities (Mink, Blue Jay, Raccoon, Ice, South Wind, etc.) inside a small area of North America (Plateau and the adjacent part of the Northwest Coast) between two large zones of the Raven and of Coyote. Study of such cases helps us reconstruct cultural processes that little is known about, and some of them are very ancient.

Key words: comparative folklore and mythology, peopling of America, prehistoric migrations, trickster

The folklore trickster is usually understood as a combination of features intrinsic to the human mind. However, there are strong anomalies in the area distribution of such a figure. Sub-Saharan Africa, North America (besides Arc-

tic), the Northeast Asia and South American Chaco not only are the privileged zones of tricksters' activity but share some trickster motifs unknown in most of the other areas.

I define trickster not as any personage who deceives others, acts in a strange way or gets into comical situations but as one who combines two pairs of opposite characteristics which in the norm are related to different types of actors: the hero (strong and ours, representing the ego group), the adversary (strong and not ours, related to enemies and non-human world) and the failure (weak but ours). The fourth potential combination (weak and alien) is of minor importance for the plot. The trickster constantly oscillates between these extremes, being good and bad, smart and stupid, making problems for himself and for others and resolving them. Native people are aware of this contradiction. "Coyote – he is bad, mean; but he is good, smart, too; I don't know how that is." (Voegelin 1938: 60)

In particular traditions the trickster can be placed at about the centre of this system, such as the Raven in the North Pacific region or the Spider in Tropical Africa, or be displaced towards one or another pole as a "hero-trickster" (e.g. Coyote among the Salish Indians) or "enemy-trickster" (Wolverine among northern Algonkians).

Tricksters are engaged in activities that are strange, immoral, sly, etc. Other types of actors can be engaged in similar activities. Some tricks related to the Fox in Eastern Siberia and to the *Kantjil* (dwarf deer) in Indonesia are the same, though the Fox is an example trickster while the *Kantjil* is a hero who is smart and never loses. Of the same type of a personage is the small Tortoise in Amazonia.

Tricksters are anthropomorphic or zoomorphic. The choice of animals, playing the role of tricksters is difficult to explain. For example, Hares and Spiders, known in both Africa and North America, are neither "mediators" between life and death (that was suggested by Claude Lévi-Strauss for Coyote) nor "really tricky" ("materialistic" hypothesis of Marwin Harris 1979: 200–201). Besides, the set of trickster motifs and the zoo- or anthropomorphic impersonations of the trickster are independent variables. The same episodes recorded inside a particular area are easily linked to different tricksters while every trickster usually attracts many episodes peculiar for the area. Still, sometimes it is possible to select different sets of trickster motifs that are linked systematically to different personages represented in folklore of the same area. A plausible explanation is that the tales in which motifs in question are used have different prehistory and coexist in one and the same tradition as different folklore genres.

As it was told above, mapping of motifs related to deeds of the tricksters demonstrates the existence of well defined tendencies in the territorial distribution of motifs. Because these tendencies reveal no correlation with ecology, economy and social organization, functional and psychological explanations of regional distribution of tricksters do not work. Though the original emergence of the trickster as a mental construction can be really rooted in the human mind (and where else?), the distribution of tricksters in folklore is optional and depends on many uncertain, chance factors. The wide spread or the lack of tricksters in particular cultures hardly reflect fundamental differences in peoples' psychology. The study of trickster motifs, just as of any other folklore motifs, helps first of all to reconstruct cultural networks and prehistoric migrations.

However, just such a reconstruction and hardly anything else opens a possibility to get to know what motifs were used in stories told in the past, not in the uncertain "archaic" past but in the particular one that can be dated in thousands of years before the present and localized in particular regions of the globe.

Below I try to suggest what trickster motifs could be possibly related to particular episodes of the peopling of the New World and what could be the possible origins of some of them.

For the study of tricksters in prehistoric folklore as well as for any reconstruction of prehistoric Eurasian cultures American data are indispensable. As the time of the peopling of the New World is approximately known (15,000–5,000 BP from the initial entries to the arrival of the probable language ancestors of the Eskimo and Aleuts), the areas where trickster motifs are recorded can be correlated with particular migration episodes and streams. The latter are reconstructed on the base of archaeological and other data, including the combined data on area distribution of many hundreds of folklore motifs.

The peopling of the New World was a complex and rather long process and many important episodes are still little known about but the general pattern of this process is, however, simple. There were two main routes from Beringia (part of the north Pacific and Arctic continental shelf that was dry during the glaciations) to the more southern regions of the New World. One route was along the coast and islands of southern Alaska and another along the Yukon and Mackenzie valleys between the Laurentide and the Cordilleran ice sheets, this route being called the Mackenzie corridor and this coastal route was probably opened about 15,000 BP (Hill 2006: Fig. 3). The time when the Mackenzie corridor became passable is unknown and this remains one of the weakest points in the reconstruction of the early prehistory of the New World but it is

usually thought that people could move along the Mackenzie corridor at least after 12,000 BP.

As soon as the routes became passable people began to migrate to the territories where natural resources were still non-exploited. Such a movement was probably a more or less continuous process until the very time when the American vessel was brim-full, i.e. when new people could obtain new territories only at the expense of displaced or assimilated former inhabitants. To simplify the picture, we can select up to six major episodes or phases of the peopling of America (Fig. 1).

1. The earliest entry along the coast down to Central and South America. Its age is defined by the pre-Clovis dates on Monte Verde in Chile and Cactus Hill in Virginia (Dillehay 2008; Dixon 1999: 45–89). Moving from southern Alaska these people rapidly reached South America *ca.* 15,000 BP. The North-Eastern part of North America was still covered with ice at this time and could not be inhabited but, however, southern areas of the North American continent were open for initial colonization. In and across the Southwest, southern Plains and the Southeast, the so called emergence myth (many people of both sexes and different age ascend from under the earth) is recorded. Besides southern North America this myth is known across all Central and South America, Australia,

Indo-Pacific borderlands of Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (Berezkin 2007). The earliest South American crania are not Mongoloid but protomorphic (Neves & Hubbe 2005; Neves & Pucciarelli 1998) and this correlates well with the Amazonian-Melanesian parallels in mythology and ritual (Berezkin 2002). Melanesia was not the natural homeland of American Indians, their movement to the New World began somewhere in Pacific Asia. It is worth noting that the only male rituals of the Amazonian-Melanesian type, ever found in the Northern Hemisphere, were described by

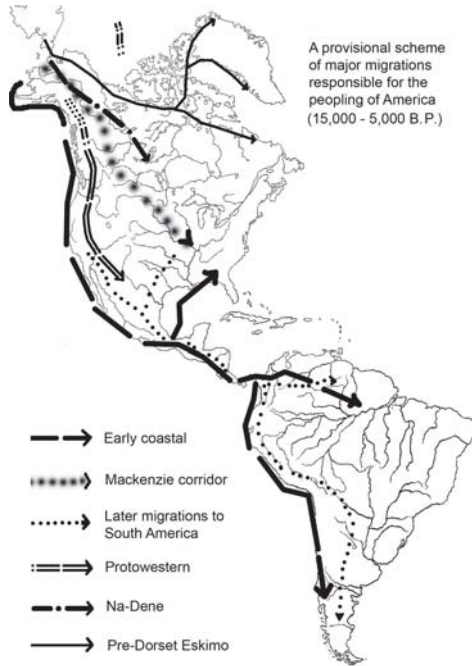


Figure 1. A provisional scheme of major migrations responsible for the peopling of America (15,000–5000 BP).

early Russian sources among the inhabitants of the Unalaska and Kodiak islands to the south of Alaskan coast (Davydov 1812: 205–208; Veniaminov 1840: 309–315).

2. The early entry along the Mackenzie corridor, directed to areas to the east of the Rockies, could be synchronic with the early coastal stream, or more probably took place later. With the pre-Clovis sites being so rare and not totally reliable, it is still quite impossible to differentiate archaeologically the eastern early North American sites related to the first and second episodes. However, there are few doubts that only the second stream people brought to America the Siberian earth-diver myth and probably other Southern and Eastern Siberian motifs. The earth-diver and the emergence myth are two major cosmogonic concepts that almost never overlap territorially, the earth-diver being of continental Eurasian and the emergence out of the earth of Indo-Pacific origin (Berezkin 2007).

3. Later movement or movements from North America to South America, mostly to its western regions. Archaeological evidence suggests that in western, southern and eastern South America there is a succession of Terminal Pleistocene–Early Holocene stone industries that could hardly have evolved from each other. Their North American origins are obscure but the existence of more or less constant diffusion of ever new groups of people from north to south is plausible. The starting point of such migrations had to be localized rather in the western than in the eastern part of North America, and different groups that earlier came to the New World, both along the Mackenzie corridor and along the coast, could be involved.

4. The next provisionally selected episode of the peopling of the New World is the movement of people from north to south in western United States and Canada. The probable archaeological correlate is Protowestern Tradition dated to the Early Holocene period (Geib & Jolie 2008). This tradition is different from Clovis-related Paleoindian cultures to the east of the Rockies, and stemmed, not fluted projectile points are characteristic of this. This reconstruction is supported by the data on the regional distribution of folklore motifs that are typical only for western North America but find parallels in Pacific Asia (e.g. the invisible fish-hook, Berezkin 2009b: Fig. 6). When during the Terminal Pleistocene–Early Holocene groups of Asian origin continued to move along the Pacific coast from Alaska down to California and the Great Basin, one of them split from the others (possibly already in Alaska or even Chukotka) and then migrated from the Fraser River basin (Plateau cultural area) to the Great Lakes. Its linguistic descendents are the Algonkians who assimilated

with the earlier inhabitants of eastern Subarctic and the Northeast. Algonkian (especially the Central Algonkians without Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and the Atlantic groups) mythology is a mixture of motifs brought from the western Algonkian-Ritwan (or Algie) homeland and those that were borrowed from the local Great Lakes and the eastern Subarctic substratum.

5. The fifth episode in the peopling of the New World by American Indians is, perhaps, the most controversial. We have to postulate it on the logical grounds (if people continued to move from Asia or Beringia along the coast, why not along the Yukon and Mackenzie valleys) and, which is more important, under the evidence of linguistics. The Na-Dene languages are different from all other North American families but distantly related to the Yenisei family whose only modern survivor is the Ket. It is most plausible that proto Na-Dene was the language of the Denali people, tracing its roots in central Alaska and dated to the Terminal Pleistocene. Denali is considered to be an offshoot of the Dyuktai culture of Eastern Siberia. Both the Paleoarctic tradition, with the Denali in their roots, and Na-Dene languages are localized in the western Subarctic, mostly in Alaska. The hypothesis of the former spread of Na-Dene farther to the east, perhaps even as far as American Northeast, is difficult to test but folklore evidence rather supports this.

6. The latest episode is the peopling of the formerly uninhabited American Arctic by the pre-Dorset Eskimo *ca.* 4500 BP. Much later, less than 1000 BP, the Thule Eskimo moved along the same route annihilating and assimilating the earlier dwellers of the Canadian Arctic and Greenland.

Now let us look at the areal distribution of some selected folklore motifs that could spread to particular regions of the New World due to particular migrations.

1. Fig. 2. *Smart Sun-man involves stupid Moon-man into different tricks which the Moon cannot invent himself. He imitates the Sun and suffers a reversal.* The Moon is not a trickster in the corresponding stories as he is a failure while the Sun is a hero. The burlesque situations described are, however, of the same kind that in North American or Sub-Saharan African stories related to genuine tricksters like the Coyote or Spider. The motif is registered only in eastern South America and in New Britain but we should consider that only a minor part of pre-contact Melanesian mythology has been recorded. This Melanesian–South American link is among others that connects these regions and in both cases we can deal here with the cultural heritage of early (before 15,000 BP) East-Asian populations that survived in the most remote areas where later cultural influence from continental Eurasia was minimal.



Figure 2. *Smart Sun, stupid Moon.*

2. Fig. 3. *While man is at a distance from women, his penis crawls like a snake to copulate with them.* In North America a “long penis” is a typical feature of a trickster (usually he sends it across the river into bathing girls). In South America, Australia, Melanesia and South Asia it is a property of gods, demons or first people before they acquired totally human characteristics. Like most of the motifs related to “strange biology”, “strange marriages” and the like, this motif is absent in Africa.



Figure 3. *Long penis.*

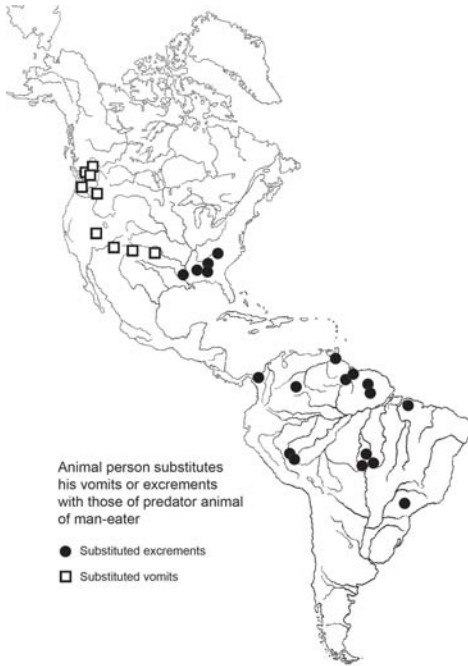


Figure 4. Substituted excrements.

3. Fig. 4. Two (animal) persons compare their faeces or vomit to know about the diet and habits of each other. The weaker one gets to exchange the faeces (vomit). This motif is practically unknown in the Old World, as there is only one Yakut parallel that is not quite identical with American cases. For motifs with regional distribution of such a type the Beringian origin is highly probable as it is still unknown if people settled in Beringia as soon as the sea level began to fall at the time of the Last Glacial Maximum or later, but it could not be later than the earliest traces of people in

the New World *ca.* 15,000 BP. Just as with *smart Sun, stupid Moon*, the participants of the story are a hero and a failure. It is important that the variant with substituted excrements is recorded not only in South America but also in the North American Southeast where groups of the very first migrants probably settled.

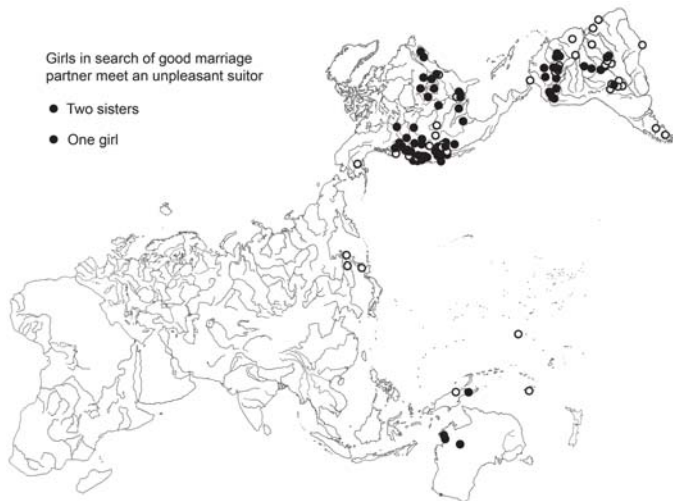


Figure 5. Girls in search of marriage partner.

4. Fig. 5. *A girl, or more often, two sisters travel, usually in search of the marriage partner who lives far away or who has departed. On the way, or after reaching the place of destination, the girls get to an unpleasant suitor. This suitor is a buffoon, deceiver, smelly, dirty, poor hunter, etc.* This motif is also known predominantly in the New World but Australian – Melanesian – Pacific Asian parallels exist in addition to more distant parallels in Eastern Siberia. The motif is completely absent among the Eskimo and rare among the Na-Dene (Tlingit, Eyak, Athabaskans). It is equally widespread in North (besides Arctic and Subarctic) and South America and could be known to both of the major groups of first migrants, those who were moving along the Pacific coast and who followed the Mackenzie corridor. In the North American West, from British Columbia till the Southwest, and in South American Chaco, the typical local trickster, i.e. the Coyote or Fox, can fulfil the imposter role. To the east of the Rockies, however, the imposter is usually the Owl, Loon, Helldiver or other zoomorphic personage which is not related to most of the other trickster motifs.

5. Fig. 6. *Stupid imitating. A person sees others act using magic or according to their animal nature so back at home, he imitates their actions and gets into trouble. Actions are not heroic deeds, competitions or tests and mostly refer to providing and cooking food.* In North America, and in Sub-Saharan Africa, the motif is known in its typical *Bungling host* version (Thompson's J2425). In some South American and Eurasian tales the *exchange of visits* is absent but otherwise these tales are similar to the North American and African versions.

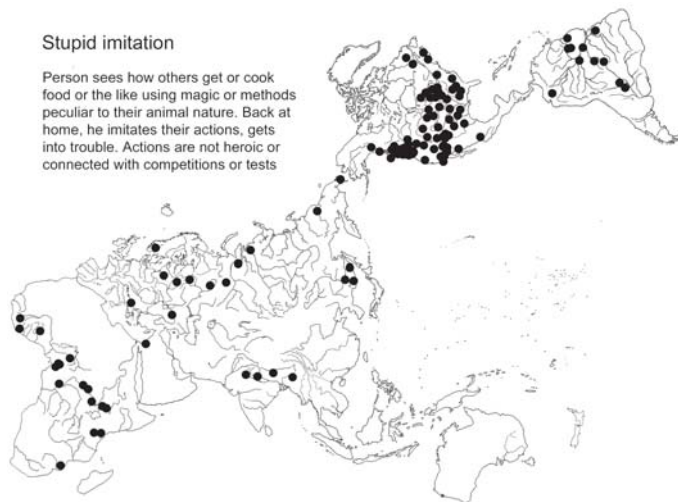


Figure 6. *Stupid imitation (bungling host).*

In Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania the motif is certainly absent. Similarly to *girls in search of marriage partner*, the *stupid imitation* could be known to early migrants moving both along the coast and along the Mackenzie corridor and not known to people who later followed them, at least certainly not to the Na-Dene and the Eskimo. The regional pattern of the motif in the Old World finds two explanations as it could emerge in continental Eurasia and then spread to Africa and to America, or it could be related to initial Out-of-Africa migration but further preserved not in the Indo-Pacific Asia like most of other motifs of African origin (Berezkin 2009a; 2009b), but in continental Eurasia.



Figure 7. *Lecherous parent* (cf. Fig. 8).

South America it is the Fox, in most of North America it is the Coyote and in Africa, Near East and India, it is the Jackal. There is no doubt that the Fox/Coyote came to America from continental Siberia and not from Pacific Asia where original homeland of another famous American trickster, the Raven, is localized. European tales with participation of the Fox are under-represented in my database, in many European traditions the Fox certainly is as important as the Coyote in North America. Distribution of *trickster-Fox/Coyote* in North America mostly overlaps the distribution of *lecherous parent* and its arrival

6. Fig. 7. *Lecherous parent*. Person changes his or her guise to marry his or her close relative in descending (rare: ascending) line. According to the most common American variant, man pretends to die, is abandoned at the burial place and comes to his family unrecognized to marry his daughter. In South America the motif is found, though rarely, mostly in the east and extreme south while parallels in the Old World are known in Eurasia and Africa with one case on the Torres Strait Islands (Fig. 8).

7. Fig. 9. *Trickster is Fox, Coyote or Jackal*. These three animals, biologically related, occupy similar positions in folklore and the choice of one of them seems to depend on what species inhabits the corresponding region. In most of Eurasia and western

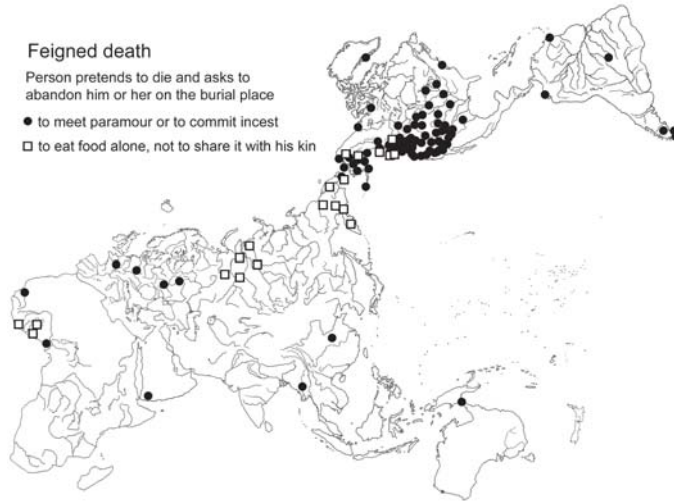


Figure 8. Feigned death (cf. Fig. 7).



Figure 9. Trickster Fox, Coyote, Jackal.

into the New World has to be early enough to make it possible to reach (together with a series of specific trickster motifs) South America. There *trickster-Fox* is known, however, only in the western areas (Andes, Chaco, Patagonia) and is extremely rare or absent in the east and in Tierra-del-Fuego where motifs of Amazonian-Melanesian heritage are abundant. In North America, the Fox/Coyote demonstrates a moderately negative correlation with the earth-diver cosmogonic myth and probably was not brought by the very first groups who moved along the Mackenzie corridor.



Figure 10. Trickster marries man.



Figure 11. Eye-juggler.

8. Fig. 10. *Male person poses as woman and marries a man. He is either unmasked or abandons his “husband” by his own will.* In European versions (Thompson K1321.19; ATU 1538) the Trickster is disguised as a woman, in non-European he (partly) acquires female physical features. Distribution of this motif by regions is much the same as the distribution of *trickster-Fox/Coyote* (main parts of North America besides the North and Southeast; Chaco in South America).

9. Fig. 11. *Person plays throwing his eyes (rare: his tooth) up or away* (Thompson’s “Eye-juggler”, J2423). *Eyes or tooth first come back to eye sockets or mouth but eventually are lost.* The major area of this motif’s use is in western North America, Asiatic parallels are in Western Siberia and Taimyr (Berezkin 2006: 312–314), and isolated South American parallels are localized to the east of the Andes. The spread of this motif just as of motifs 7 and 8 and possibly 5 and 6 is probably related to migrations from North to South America that took place after initial peopling of the New World.

10. Fig. 12. *In a difficult situation a person (usually the Coyote) consults his tail or some beings that are inside him (excrements, parasites, etc.).* The spread of this motif correlates with the spread of the Protowestern tradition of the Early Holocene. The *Coyote’s advisers* are unknown in the Old World but the motif could appear either in Beringia or later in North America.

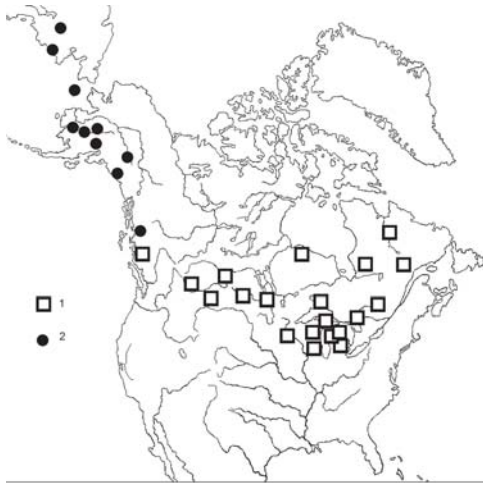


Figure 12. Coyote's advisers inside him.

11. Fig. 13. To kill birds or animals (usually geese and ducks), a person invites them to dance or to stand around him and concentrate their attention on some activity, usually to dance with their eyes shut (Thompson's "Hoodwinked dancers", K826). As a rare variant the Trickster dances himself with his eyes shut and then kills the waterfowl who gather around him. The motif is known only in North America. Its absence in the Arctic and in the Southeast evidences against being either very late (the Eskimo migration) or very early (coastal migrations) age but it could be known both to early Na-Dene and to the bearers of Protowestern tradition. On the map (Fig. 11) the central area with anthropomorphic tricksters is clearly differentiated from the periphery where the protagonists are zoomorphic. The anthropomorphic Trickster among many Algonkian and Siouan groups is paradoxically identified with Creator god, and this is also



Figure 13. Hoodwinked dancers.



Body part as a guard
 Before falling asleep, person tells his eyes (which he extracts and puts aside) or his anus to awake him in case of danger. Eyes of anus do not make an alarm or person does not react to it. As a result he suffers a damage
 1. Anus on guard 2. Eyes on guard

Figure 14. Body part as a guard.

typical for traditions of the Northwest Coast, Chukotka, Kamchatka and to some Eskimo and Athabaskan groups of Alaska. Such a merging of the Trickster and the Creator always seemed enigmatic for European authors who were the first to become acquainted with corresponding traditions. Because such a combination of features is unique for these regions it can be best understood as a rare deviation that emerged in Beringian mythologies and was then brought to the North American mainland.

12. Fig. 14. Before falling asleep, the person tells his eyes which he extracts and puts aside, or his anus, to awake him up in case of danger. Eyes or anus do not sound an alarm or the person does not react to it and suffers damage as a result. This motif looks like a trace of the proto-Algonkians (more precisely, the Algiic) people on their move from Chukotka – Alaska to the Plateau and then to the Great Lakes region. There are few doubts that it is of Holocene age.



Trickster's head stuck in animal's skull

13. Fig. 15. The Trickster gets to see how small animals or insects dance or feast inside a big animal skull, or he tries to pick up food from inside the skull. When he inserts his head he cannot take it out from the skull for a long time. In most cases this motif is directly linked to the previous one and is one in a series of adventures of anthropomorphic Trickster-Crea-

Figure 15. Head stuck in skull.

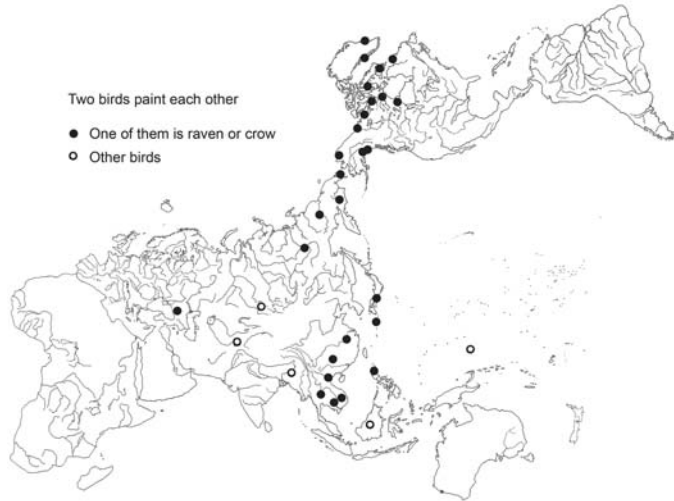


Figure 16. *Two birds paint each other.*

tor. The only cases where the trickster is zoomorphic are among the north-westernmost (Frazer river Salish – trickster being Wolverine), the north-easternmost (Naskapi – also Wolverine) and the southernmost (Athabaskans Lipan – Coyote) traditions.

14. Fig. 16. *Two birds agree to paint each other. One of them (usually because of its inadequate behaviour) becomes uglier or at least not better than it initially was (in most cases the Raven becomes black).* It is the only the trickster motif which spread is related to the movement of the Eskimo, possibly even to Thule and not pre-Dorset Eskimo. The motif probably differentiated in Southeast Asia from two related motifs which are *two animals paint each other* and *many birds get their colours*. Both these latter motifs are probably of greater age, the *painting of many birds* being known in eastern South America and in Tierra del Fuego and *two animals* known in Africa and Australia. *Two birds* are recorded not only in Southeast Asia but also in eastern continental Eurasia, including the Lena and Kolyma basins where the supposed homeland of the Eskoaleut proto-language was localized.

CONCLUSIONS

In America tricksters and trickster motifs are more typical for those native groups whose ancestors were probably not among the earliest nor the latest migrants to the New World. I can easily adduce other motifs the areal distribu-

tion of which is more or less similar to those of motifs 5–13 but not of motifs 1–4 and 14. Rather many American trickster motifs have no parallels in the Old World. Beringia at the late period of its existence could be a territory where such motifs first became popular. The nearest parallels for the North American (and Chacoan: Takwak of Mataco) tricksters are in Western Siberia. However, the North American – Paleoasiatic complex figure of the Trickster-Creator is unique for corresponding traditions and demonstrates no analogies in Africa, Western Siberia, Chaco or anywhere else.

The Trickster, as a particular folklore type, could independently have emerged in Siberia and in Sub-Saharan Africa, or it could have spread from Africa to America across continental Eurasia or emerged in Eurasia and spread to both Africa and America. The second possibility seems to be the most plausible though more arguments in its support should be researched. Multiple independent inventions are never excluded. However, in the case of African – North American parallels we have a combination of the real Trickster as a folklore type with particular motifs (*bungling host, simulated death*) and to some extent with trickster animal identifications. The Spider and Hare are widespread in Africa and not so widespread but still present in North America (Spider among some Plains Sioux and Hare across the Southeast and episodically in other places). There exist other, non-trickster, motifs which are also present mostly in Africa and in North America.

Though Tricksters and trickster motifs are much more popular in North than South America, some South American parallels can be found for most of the North American motifs and for some motifs we have also Siberian parallels meaning that all this trickster folklore complex most probably existed already 12–10,000 BP when the process of peopling of the New World was still intensive, though one cannot be sure about the earlier time when the peopling of America was at its very initial stage. The Trickster as a particular figure with peculiar characteristics is not typical for Australia. Patricia P. Waterman's index contains abstracts of slightly more than a dozen trickster stories, most of which can be equally classified as some other kinds of adventure tales. The only Australian figure that really looks like a trickster is the Crow (approx. twenty stories) but it was known almost exclusively in the Southeastern Australia (Waterman 1987: 104–110). As tricks in which this Australian Crow is engaged find no parallels in Africa (though there are relevant occurrences in Northwest North America), we have no arguments in favour of the Trickster being known to the first humans who came to Australia from Africa ca. 45,000 BP. That Trickster is not the earliest, the most archaic type of folklore personage as Paul Radin (1956) suggested, following also from the lack of typical Tricksters in the African Koisian folklore. As it was mentioned above, the emer-

gence of trickster complex in Eurasia with its later dissemination into Tropical Africa, but not to the isolated Australia looks plausible. To find the early Eurasian sources of the Trickster is difficult because during the last two thousand years or so Eurasian folklore traditions in general, and the Trickster complex in particular, were severely transformed and reworked, especially in Europe, Southwestern and Central Asia.

NOTE

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