

UDC 82-343(292.77+477.85/.87)
doi: 10.15330/jpnu.1.2,3.45-49

THE TRICKSTER IN APPALACHIAN AND HUTSULIAN TALES

OLGA DERKACHOVA, SOLOMIA USHNEVYCH

Abstract. The fairytales of Hutsuls and Appalachians are analyzed in the article. Mountainous dwellers have an indissoluble connection with the nature and metaphysics of mountains that is why there are so many sacred objects and special places there. Megaliths and sanctuaries, life-giving places, miraculous springs, natural metaphysics of the mountains and tales which are grasped like true stories about creation and objective reality of the world, - all these attract not only tourists but also scientists and researchers to the mountainous region. The tale is one of the permanent attributes of people's life. It gives the opportunity to make the process of emotional and moral development more controlled and determined. The common feature of the tale is identified: it is the presence of a hero-trickster - Jack (the Appalachians) and Ivan (the Carpathians). In tales, most of the fictional characters can be described by the term "duality". It is a certain state of consciousness when the hero-character reproduces his double that lives an imaginary life and performs an intended role. It is a hero who is often hidden behind the mask of a jester and a foolish man. He does not live according to the rules. He breaks both laws and rules, but achieves positive results. The common and different features of the Trickster in the fairytales of Indians and Hutsuls are defined.

Keywords: hero-trickster, tales, Hutsul, North American Indian, archetype.

Mountains are an important factor that always influences people's way of life, their cultural and personal development. These peculiarities are brightly revealed in traditions and customs of mountain dwellers. Folklore is a mirror that reflects man's fixed ideas of the world and the place in it. The essence of everyday life is the source for objective cognition. It comprises a totality of evidence and confidence, beliefs and outlook, each being important and essential. Objective meanings of the world appear depending on individual, psychical and social descriptions as well⁹. That is, not only individual peculiarities but also man's environments influence the essence of everyday life. In our case, it is the mountainous environment.

Mountainous dwellers have an indissoluble connection with the nature and metaphysics of mountains that is why there are so many sacred objects and special places there². Megaliths and sanctuaries, life-giving places, miraculous springs, natural metaphysics of the mountains and tales which are grasped like true stories about creation and objective reality of the world, - all these attract not only tourists but also scientists and researchers to the mountainous region.

The tale is one of the permanent attributes of people's life. Being a necessary means of children's comprehension of both external world and inner life, it gives the opportunity to make the process of emotional and moral development more controlled and determined. It should be noted that despite the

great number of studies devoted to the problem of a fairy tale, the issues related to the mechanisms of its influence on personality, as well as a number of theoretical statements have not been sufficiently investigated so far. All the facts mentioned above prove the fact that studying tales, especially the tales of the mountainous region, is of current interest.

One of the open issues in the problem under study is the Trickster figure which is often mistakenly and unreasonably identified with the Foolish hero.

A detailed research work of the fairy tale, its structure and characters was carried out by V. Propp⁴. The works of P. Radin⁵ and D. Gavrilov¹ are also devoted to the trickster's figure in mythology and culture. S. Russova studied the type of the author-trickster in lyric poetry⁷. But the solution to the problem of the hero-trickster in the tales of different nations (he is often treated as if he were a naive pigeon who is lucky only due to his blessed innocence) has not been found yet. It all makes our investigation very burning.

The aim of the article is to track the peculiarities of trickster's figure in Hutsulian tales and in the tales of the Indians of the Appalachian mountains as there are some typological traits in the tales of the given regions.

The trickster is a deity, spirit, man and anthropomorphous being. His behavior is out of the generally accepted system of norms and rules of conduct. The trickster is associated with slyness and trickery; he is often laughed at. He can change his gender, be homosexual and be able to experience transformations. He can be a comical dubbing actor and he often causes different conflicts¹.

We can single out the following trickster's functions: a peace breaker; a provocateur and initiator; a mediator between worlds and social groups; the seeker of knowledge and wealth; a personification of primitive wildlife; a werewolf, trickster, player; a man of wisdom⁵.

The myths about trickster appear in the mythology of different nations, both in simple and large communities, but later, they transform into legends and tales.

In myths, in particular in those of the North American Indians, he is a creator and a destroyer; he is the one who gives and takes away; he is a liar and a victim of lies. His passion and desire push him forward and, in consequence of his actions, all the values get their real importance^{6,3}.

The trickster is the most ancient figure in the mythology of the Indians and Hutsuls. He can appear either in fairy and social tales or in tales about animals. Let's consider the tales where a trickster transforms into a man. These are characters of Jack (the Appalachians) and Ivan (the Carpathians). Among Appalachians' tales there are: «*Jack and His Lump of Silver*», «*Jack and the Giants*», «*Jack and the King's Girl*», «*Jack Goes to Seek his Fortune*», «*Jack and the Robbers*», «*How Jack Got a New Shirt*», «*Jack Plays The Banjo For Tom*», «*How Jack Got Tom To Do Will's Hard Work*», «*Jack and Mossyfoot*», «*The Tale Without an End*», «*Fool Jack and the Talking Crow*», «*The Thieving Boy*».

There is a term «Jack tales» which indicates different stories about Jack. In these tales Jack is represented as a weak and indecisive leader, but at the same time as a kind person. Richard Chase, the American specialist in folklore, had collected the most part of the Appalachian tales which were published in the book «The Jack Tales». Herbert Halpert, the folklorist, stated that Jack was a verbal tradition which was opposed to the written one. The verbal tradition dates from the time of the English folklore tradition and has undergone a great transformation (the appearance of two brothers, Bill and Tom who act as sheriffs). Some tales about Jack's adventures originated in German folklore¹⁰.

There are tales about Ivan's adventures in the Hutsulian folklore like those: «*Ivan Ivanush*», «*Ivan and a magic pipe*», «*Ivan Doluban*», «*Ivan Naida*», «*Ivan Sukhobrazenko*», «*Tsarevych Ivan and Princess*», «*Ivan and his brothers*». Some folktales such as «*How Sister Foxy was useful to Ivan*» and «*Ivanko and the Bad King*» have a common hero, implying the idea that there might be a cycle of tales. As we can see, the titles of the tales include the names of Ivan and Jack, proving their leading roles. The Trickster's characteristic peculiarity is the fact that after his appearing in the tale, everything starts spinning round him. This is just what happens to Jack and Ivan.

In tales, most of the fictional characters can be described by the term "duality". It is a certain state of consciousness when the hero-character reproduces his double that lives an imaginary life and performs an intended role. On the other hand, such fabrication of the game can be explained by the attempt to

deceive for the sake of achieving his purpose. In both cases, a fool (Ivan or Jack) is only a mask that hides a clever and witty hero. The mask becomes a tool for concealing the real face and nature of the hero. The motif of the mask transforms into a motif, or rather a complex of motifs: covering the face; searching and regaining the true Self; wishing to get rid of a stuck mask and attempting to find out its essence etc. In particular, the main character of the tale «*Tsarevych Ivan and a kind wolf*» is trying on several masks of the trickster: provocateur (he breaks the peace of four states in order to find a so-called diamond dove), a werewolf (dead or alive) and a man of wisdom (he gets a dove and princess, gets married to her and lives happily). Ivan is called "Duranko" (a foolish man) but, in fact, it is only a good mask that helps to put the plans into action.

The topos of disguise is intertwined with the topos of play, which is of great importance in the folklore of different nations. Acting as an immanent art method is performed at different levels. In the tale «*How Sister Foxy was useful to Ivan*» Sister Foxy plays atypical for herself role, namely a mouthpiece of justice, she begins her own game with the mother and the son, with the Bad King and other characters. Through various manipulations Sister Foxy turns Ivan into a seeker of knowledge and wealth, subsequently into Ivan the Wealthy: "... so Ivan the Wealthy had a grand wedding, and he became stronger and better than the king".

Now, the main character plays according to his own rules: he is waiting for the right time while Foxy is doing dirty work for him: "... and so he nicely started talking, and the language he spoke was not known to the king". The subject-matter of Hutsul fairy tales is considered to be complicated by Ukrainians' mental outlook. In particular, the very nature of Trickster expresses the main idea of the tale «*Ivanko and the Bad King*»: Ivan the Silly demonstrates to his family that eagerness and persistence will be necessarily rewarded.

Thanks to his capability of being a werewolf, trickster and gamester, the main character finds a gold ship and marries the princess: "... now he's got a uniform, a horse and armor, and that's really something worth seeing. The Halfwit's outfit proves to be even better than the King's".

A Hutsul-Verhovynets is known to live in a make-believe world. He takes demotic fantasy for reality. Therefore, investigation into the Hutsuls' folklore might tell us more about Hutsul's psychology than special scientific research.

In the fairy tale «*Ivan and the Magic Horse*», the subject-matter is enhanced by introducing the demonological characters, Sharkan and the representatives of the religious sphere (twelve priests). The story depicts the struggle between Good and Evil, along with mythological beliefs of the Carpathian inhabitants. The main character becomes Prophet Ivan, actually the epitome of savage nature. Another transformation of the trickster in the story urges us to delve into the Hutsuls' mentality of predictions, divination and prophecy: "Ivan already knew that he was betrayed by his brothers who had concluded an agreement with Sharkan about his death"^{1,p.34}.

Thus, appearing of the Horse -prophet who helps Ivan overcome difficulties is not accidental in the story. In confrontation with Evil it is a must for the main character to purify through the bathing-in-the-milk rite ("...he plunged, bathed and became a nice young fellow, much nicer than he had been"). The final chord of the tale is Liturgy said for his beloved maiden Ardil'anka as a testimony of victory of Light over Darkness wherein the trickster becomes the young man of wisdom.

According to D. Gavrilov, the trickster appears to destroy the conventional system, established order, and contributes to transforming an ideal world into a real one¹. In fact, the same occurrence might be observed in all the stories with Jack.

By way of example, consider introductions of several stories:

– «Once upon a time, there were three boys, Will and Tom and Jack. Everybody called Jack, "Fool Jack," 'cause he was considered sorty dull».

– «Once upon a time, there was a woman who was a widow and she had one boy named Jack. Jack disobeyed his mother one day and she whipped him. He decided he was going to run away».

– «Once upon a time, there was a great king and he norated throughout his kingdom that the man who could tell him an endless tale could have his daughter for a wife and be the king when he was dead. Several young men came and tried to tell a tale without an end, but they all run out of something to tell. At last a boy named Jack came in and told the king a tale»⁸.

In the introduction, the emphasis is made on the fact that the conventional order will be destroyed by Jack's behavior or actions, which actually takes place later: Jack acquires treasure, entraps the cruel and dishonest, marries the royal daughter, and so on.

At the beginning of the story, Jack is often described as a foolish or half-witted man.

However, hiding behind the disguise of a fool he achieves success by doing anything he desires. When the mask is off his real self-reveals, and the play gets different: he punishes his offenders and attains his aims.

For example, the fairy tale «*Jack and a Talkative Silly Crow*» describes nearly all the functions of the trickster: Jack kills his cow, removes its skin, then goes to sell it, thus breaking not only his own established life style, but also that of his brothers' (the function of a peace-breaker); with the help of the crow Jack gets delicious dinner and money (the function of a provocateur and initiator); he tells his brothers how he got money (the function of a mediator); he obtains everything his brothers owned, and even more than that (the function of a seeker of knowledge and wealth); he demonstrates careless attitude to life and death (as a personification of savage life); he claims to be the master of the extraordinary crow and pretends to be the one who is back from heaven (as a werewolf, trickster and gamester); owing to his quick wits and intellect, Jack achieves his aims (as a man of wisdom).

While wearing a mask of a fool, Jack let be cheated (he exchanges the skin of his cow for a crow that is supposed to be able to talk), as though he knew it might be in handy in the near future. Later on, with the help of his tricks he gets some food and money from a wood chopper. Then he makes fun of his brothers explaining to them how he cut the cow's skin into dollar bills. The brothers are taken in and try to do the same. In fact, Jack demonstrates to them how it feels to be a fool. After being nearly killed by his brothers, the hero-trickster, resorts to the further trick which appeared to be fatal for his brothers. Prior to this, he deceives a shepherd who presents the main character with a half of his flock.

In other tales with similar motif of travelling and exchanging valuable items for less valuable one, as described above, there are episodes of trickster's playing with passers-by without pursuing any profit. For the trickster, play for its own sake means more than the outcome. In other words, he plays because it is the essence of his nature, and not because of the profit. Later, the character like this will be wildly used in postmodern literature.

In the fairy tale «*Jack is looking for Happiness*», the motif of which is similar to that of «*The Bremen Musicians*», Jack sets off on his journey changing the established way of his life. One by one, animals join him in his journey (a vivid example of his relation to nature). Together, they find a shelter and settle in the house driving robbers out of it. Jack finds gold in the house and keeps it to himself. However, gold itself is not his goal, it's a sort of an add-on.

In the fairy tale «*Jack and Silver Bullion*», the main character loses everything he had. But treasure means nothing to the trickster. He enjoys the play as it is: he exchanges expensive items for the cheaper ones and allows to be taken in.

He likes the way people take his mask for sincerity. By letting others befool him, he entraps them himself.

Both people of the Carpathian and Appalachian mountains have a great number of fairy tales with a trickster as the main character. In both folklores, he wears a mask of a fool (like in case with Jack and Ivan). Common peculiarity rests on the fact that their behavior is inconsistent with the generally accepted rules, which allows them to violate laws and restrictions, and attain what they desire. Both Indian and Hutsul tales have the main character who performs functions typical for a trickster: he disturbs peace (so the fairy plot arises); he acts as a mediator between different worlds and social groups; he is capable of gaining knowledge and wealth; he proves to be a man of wisdom, a good player, and an epitome of savage nature. The main peculiarity of the Hutsul tales under study is the fact that the hero is greatly related to the myth: purification ritual and initiation rite serve as an example. At the same time, the synthesis of paganism and religion can be observed in the Hutsul tales, (priests, Liturgy etc), which doesn't often find place in the Appalachian folklore.

Common feature for Jack and Ivan is the topos of disguise intertwined with the topos of play, which is of great importance in the folklore of different nations.

The analysis of the tales makes it obvious that the trickster's mask is the core element that proves the mythical origin of the two nations' folklore. Thus, it is a common trickster archetype that determines similarity of the two mythical characters, Jack and Ivan, common model of behavior and the story architectonics.

REFERENCES

- [1] Gavrilov D. *Trikster. Licedej v jevroaziatskom folklore*. Socyavno-politicheskaja mysl, Moskva, 2006.
- [2] *Metaphysica Karpat*. BGKF "Cynamo novy Hrushch, Ivano-Frankivsk, 2010.
- [3] Nicholson S. *Appalachian Folk Beliefs*. Available at: <http://www.hauntedcomputer.com/scottst41.htm>.
- [4] Propp V. *Morphology "volshebnoj" skazki*. Labirynt, Moskva, 2006.
- [5] Radin P. *Trikster. Issledovanie mifov severoamerikanskih indeicev s kommentarijami K.G. Jungai, K.K. Kerenji*. Evrazija, Moskva, 1998.
- [6] Roberta T. Herrin. *Journey Through Fantasy Literature: A Resource Guide for Teachers*. Available at: <http://www2.ferrum.edu/applit/articles/wondertales.htm>.
- [7] Russova S.N. *Avtor ili richeski text*. Znak, Moskva, 2005.
- [8] Tina L. Hanlon *Resources for Readers and Teachers of Appalachian Literature for Children and Young Adult*. Available at: <http://www2.ferrum.edu/AppLit/>.
- [9] Tytarenko T.M. *Jyttie vysvit osobystosty*. Lybid, Kyiv, 2003.
- [10] *Ukrainski narodni kazky. Knyga 7*. Prosvita, Kyiv, 2009.

Address: Olga Derkachova, Solomia Ushnevyh, Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, 57, Shevchenko Str., Ivano- Frankivsk, 76025, Ukraine.

E-mail: olga_derkachova@ukr.net.

Received: 02.10.2014; **revised:** 18.12.2014.