

## Résumé

L'un des contes les plus populaires chez les Indiens du sud du Yukon, (Tlingits de l'intérieur, Tagish, Tutchones du sud) est celui de *l'enlèvement d'une jeune fille par un ours qu'elle a injurié*. L'ours ayant pris la forme d'un être humain, la jeune fille l'épouse et a des enfants de lui. Par la suite, ses frères tuent l'ours, qui est leur beau-frère, et la femme rentre dans sa famille. Mais quand ses frères veulent lui faire endosser une peau d'ours malgré elle, elle se transforme définitivement en ourse et tue ses frères. Les deux thèmes principaux de cette fable sont, d'une part, le conflit entre la fidélité aux liens du sang et la force de l'affinité et, d'autre part, l'instabilité de l'harmonie entre les animaux et les hommes. Les Indiens du Yukon rattachent aussi ce conte aux rites qu'ils observent à l'égard des cadavres d'ours, car l'ours de l'histoire a appris à sa femme ce qu'il fallait faire et elle, à son tour, en a instruit ses frères.

L'appendice donne onze versions de l'histoire, accompagnées chacune d'une brève introduction décrivant le narrateur et les circonstances dans lesquelles il a raconté son histoire. Dans certains cas, on peut expliquer les variantes par des faits particuliers de la vie des divers conteurs.

## Summary

One of the most popular stories of the southern Yukon Indians—the Inland Tlingit, Tagish, and Southern Tutchone—is about a girl who was taken away by a bear after she had insulted it. He first appears in human form, and she marries him and has children by him. Later her brothers kill the bear, who is their brother-in-law, and the girl returns home. However, when her brothers urge her to don a bearskin against her wishes, she turns into a bear forever and kills her brothers. The two chief themes that the story develops are conflict between consanguine and affinal loyalties and the uneasy balance of harmony between animals and humans. The Yukon Indians also link this tale to their ritual observances for the corpses of bears, since the bear taught his wife what should be done and she instructed her brothers.

The appendix includes eleven versions of the story, each with a brief introductory description of the narrator and the circumstances under which the story was told. Some of the variations in the versions may be traced to the particular life circumstances of the individual story-tellers.

### Biographical Note

A native of Pennsylvania, Catharine McClellan received her A.B. from Bryn Mawr College in Classical Archaeology. After serving four years in the United States Navy, she took her Ph.D. in Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. She has taught in a number of universities, most recently at the University of Wisconsin where she is professor of Anthropology. Her special interest has been in the culture history of northwestern North America. She has done archaeological and ethnographic field-work with Tlingit and Athabascan Indians of Alaska and Canada, and with Alaskan Eskimos. Professor McClellan has been president of the American Ethnological Society. She is an associate editor of *Arctic Anthropology*, a contributing editor of *The Indian Historian*, and a member of the executive committee of the American Society for Ethnohistory.