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One Man's Fakelore is Another Man's Treasure: A Case Study of Paul Bunyan and the Legend of the Sleeping Bear, and the Value of Fakelore in an Interconnected World.

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Prologue

Ms. Kuhtic waited patiently in her rocking chair as her second graders situated themselves with their pillows on the story-time mat in front of her. Her fingers itched to open the newly bound book that every colleague in the teacher lounge had continuously suggested to her for the past month. She planned to begin her unit on Michigan legends with a reading. Reviews raved about the “picturesque” and “powerful” illustrations that surrounded Kathy-jo Wargin’s “harrowing” prose in her first ever children’s book. Small oval faces fixated upon the pages as Ms. Kuhtic began her story, and they remained absorbed as she neared the climax.

*“Mother Bear pleaded,
‘My children, do you promise
that you’ll swim with all your might?
If we are go reach the other side,
we must swim throughout the night!’*

...

And as they swam, Mother Bear kept turning her large, black face to make sure her cubs were not far behind. She watched as their paws struggled against the water. And as their soft round faces became smaller and smaller between the waves of the mighty lake, Mother Bear grew worried.”

“But, Ms. Kuhtic!” a little boy named Jonathon cried out as he raised his hand. “Where are the cubs? I don’t see them in the water!”

Suddenly, the second grade mob buzzed with the makings of a tempestuous riot. Jonathon was, after all, correct. The two lovable baby bears were not in view of the audience any longer. Ms. Kuhtic turned a nervous, sad smile on her little group – her fellow teachers had warned her of this, but had encouraged her to push through to the end. “I’m sure we will find out why that is, Jonathon,” she replied gently, and turned her attention back to the pastel pages.

“Mother bear climbed to the top of the highest hill. She looked out over the dark, deep water, but saw no sign of her cubs.

*Mother Bear called throughout the day,
‘My children, can you hear me?
I know you must be near!
My children, I am waiting,
waiting high up here.’*

Mother Bear waited until the sun set and another night fell upon her. She waited while sun came up again in the morning...She waited. And waited. Mother Bear waited, but her cubs never reached the shore. And high upon the hill, Mother Bear fell fast asleep in her sorrow. Years

passed, and the winds of Lake Michigan blew blankets of sand upon her, keeping her warm and safe in her slumber.”¹

Soft weeping noises began to grow in the story-time circle. Tear stained pillows called to Ms. Kuhtic for sanitation before the following day. She dabbed carefully at her own misty eyes as she closed the back cover of *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* and waited for her children to compose themselves. If her colleagues had defined power as heart-wrenching and driving second graders to tears, then they had been right indeed – the children’s book was very powerful.²

¹ Reading excerpts: Wargin, Kathy-jo. *The Legend of Sleeping Bear*. (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 1998).
Review of book based on: Andrew L. McFarlane, “The Legend of the Sleeping Bear,” *Northern Michigan Journal* (Leelanau, MI), n. d. url: <http://www.leelanau.com/nmj/summer/sleepingbear.html>

² This story is a fictional adaptation of my own memories as a child hearing my teacher read the story to us, now told from the teacher’s perspective.

Introduction

In 1998, Kathy-jo Wargin's first published children's book took the industry by storm. All around the country, especially in Michigan, teachers read the story of a self-sacrificial mother bear to weeping children of all ages. The Michigan House of Representatives then named it the official children's book of Michigan in the same year.³ Individuals who disliked Wargin's adaptation of the Ojibwe legend expressed their views in journals or articles so far off the beaten path, that they rarely made headlines, and Wargin followed her first children's book with an entire series of adapted legends of the origins of Michigan landmarks.⁴

Almost fifty years earlier, a compilation of seemingly cherished Paul Bunyan stories received a much different sort of welcome. Harold W. Felton compiled and edited his book, *Legends of Paul Bunyan* in the hopes of gathering numerous Paul Bunyan stories into one location. The attack on Felton did not originate in his incorrect translations of stories, or even his portrayal of the popular folk-hero, but from the topic he chose to cover in the first place. In 1951, the "father of American folklore,"⁵ Richard Dorson, gave a scathing and eviscerating review of Felton's book. The book, Dorson argued:

³ For *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* as state children's book: Michigan House of Representatives, "A resolution commemorating *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* as the state of Michigan's official children's book" (House Resolution No. 286, Michigan, 1998).

"Michigan frequently asked questions," *Michigan Department of Natural Resources*, last modified July 7 2010, https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-54463_54466_20829-54118--,00.html#book.

⁴ For series published by Wargin:

Kathy-jo Wargin, *The Legend of Sleeping Bear*. (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 1998).

Kathy-jo Wargin. *The Legend of Mackinac Island*. (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 1999).

Kathy-jo Wargin. *The Legend of the Loon*. (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2000).

Kathy-jo Wargin. *The Legend of Lady's Slipper*. (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2001).

Kathy-jo Wargin. *The Legend of Leelanau*. (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2003).

⁵ Tanja Bueltmann, introduction to *Locating the English diaspora, 1500-2010*, eds. Tanja Bueltmann, David T. Gleeson, & Donald M. Macrauld (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 6.

http://books.google.com/books?id=YFF8ynVL4wIC&pg=PA6&lpg=PA6&dq=richard+dorson+%22father+of+american+folklore%22&source=bl&ots=qAU8cZJo-T&sig=3YLHcynw-T-TB5cPOfO7V3Jd_c0&hl=en&sa=X&ei=CyJPU_uGOsSQyAS42ICoBg&ved=0CEgQ6AEwAw#v=onepone&q=richard%20dorson%20%22father%20of%20american%20folklore%22&f=false

[Testified] to the gullibility of the public, the irresponsibility of publishers and editors, the timidity of folklore scholars, and the dismal insipidity of some American writers. Here is no excusable Ossianic lie, with a witty fraud and a poetic talent to palliate the act. Here is chiefly ignorance, commercialism, and the shoddiest of creative power. The surest proof that most of these “legends” are not folklore lies in their puerility; no self-respecting folk would pass them on... A legendary hero, as distinct from a folk hero, gets widely known through printed as well as oral means. But I would deny Paul Bunyan either title. The genuine American legendary heroes, Davy Crocket, Mike Fink... achieved a popular renown in a purely spontaneous fashion, when the term folklore had not even been coined... But the Bunyan writers who loudly trumpet their epical creations are shamelessly self-conscious, and far away from the myth making process.⁶

Dorson continued in this vein for some time in the review. He also declared that the legend of Paul Bunyan in all forms was not folklore, but actually extreme ‘fakelore’. Dorson believed that authentic folklore descended from an oral tradition that the actual storytellers considered a ‘folk’ helped to create. Thus, characters such as Mike Fink or Davy Crocket – those characters who only achieved popularity *after* having a long, traceable history of oral tradition – were authentic characters of folklore. Fakelore, by contrast, included any stories that industry had created. If industry attempted to gain profit from changing, altering, or selecting concepts or characters previously reflected in traditional folklore, the resulting folk hero story was *fakelore*.⁷ Dorson coined this new term in 1950, but the implications of such a definition resonated far beyond his book. Since fakelore directly resulted from a meddling industry, Dorson argued that fakelore was an inauthentic form. He urged all scholars of folklore to purge fakelore from any academic study. Thus, no one involved in sustaining the Paul Bunyan fakelore was safe from his wrath.

The obvious question that arises from the juxtaposition of these two scenes is: how would Dorson have reacted to Wargin’s children’s book? If he stayed in his holding pattern, he would

⁶ Richard Dorson, “Review of *Legends of Paul Bunyan*,” *American Folklore*, 64, no. 252 (1951): 233-235, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/536649> .

⁷ Richard Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 3-5.

have attacked her metaphoric writing jugular and argued that scholars should give her stories no credence in the academic arena. Indeed, many folklore scholars seemed to heed his advice, as a quick search of any database of any type of paper written about Wargin's book will now turn up only crumbs of information. This paper will focus on a comparative case study of Kathy-jo Wargin's *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* and the legends of Paul Bunyan. I will prove both stories to indeed be consistent fakelore by evaluating the role of industry in the development of each legend. According to Dorson, this definition should immediately exclude either legend from any form of academic study. However, a reader should automatically ask *why* fakelore should be cast aside as an important societal artifact. If one agrees with Dorson's conclusion, should no one study the role of Santa Clause on retail Christmas, or Sherlock Holmes on the crime novel industry? Iconic characters influence the culture in which they arise. Whether they arise from oral tradition and well defined 'folk', or from a capitalistic industry is important to note. It is even helpful to separate these categories into fakelore and folklore. To claim one development as authentic and one as *inauthentic*, however, is an argument that accepts the definition of the countryside as a rural, picturesque, romantic place that is untainted by the city. William Cronon spent hundreds of pages arguing that the city and the country are not mortal enemies, but are mutually dependent upon one another for their existence.⁸ Thus, to argue that fakelore is inauthentic because it arose in an industry is to claim that industry and the city have no place in determining a shared culture of the Great Lakes Region. A close study of the history of the legends of Sleeping Bear and Paul Bunyan before mass popularity will reveal an extremely authentic development borne of industry and a sense of place. In addition, a close case study of the pushback and outrage against these legends will illustrate that storytelling, even in a fakelore

⁸ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991).

format, is still an interactive entity with society. This paper will argue that while *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* and the stories of Paul Bunyan are indeed fakelore, their definition as such makes them items that are necessary for all scholars to understand societal influences in an increasingly interconnected world. Defining a piece as fakelore becomes a reason to study them, not one to shun them.

Section 1: Fakelore vs. Folklore

In order to prove that Paul Bunyan and *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* are fakelore and not folklore, one must thoroughly understand the meaning of both words. Richard Dorson coined the term *fakelore* in 1950 to describe “pop kutch” that was influenced by industrial man and is vastly different from the “folklore of the folk.”⁹ Understandably, this definition leaves a reader with little clarity. In his subsequent book, *American Folklore*, published in 1959, Dorson attempted to codify his new addition to the English language. Folklore could include quilting patterns, festivals, songs, stories, and even recipes, even though the term folklore usually suggested a tale steeped in oral tradition.¹⁰ The one thing that all of these occurrences had in common, though, was a tradition of passing them from one generation to the next. Each civilization could then have their own folklore, and these civilizations often bound folklore with nationalistic tendencies or propaganda.¹¹ Much folklore was coarse, obscene, or too obtuse for an audience outside the folk that created the lore. Dorson failed to describe exactly what a *folk* was. However, Daniel Hoffman compiled Martha Bethwick’s research with his own to help readers understand what

⁹ Richard Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 3.

¹⁰ *ibid*, 2.

¹¹ *ibid*, 3. Dorson points out that small countries exploding onto the national scene such as Ireland and Finland took the lead in folklore studies, “as part of their endeavor to demonstrate their cultural independence.” However, colossal countries such as Russia and Germany used folklore as an effective propaganda tool in order to advance ideals such as “the uniqueness of the master race.”

constitutes a group of *folk*.¹² A group of folk “[was] one that...preserved a common culture in isolation long enough to allow emotion to color its forms of social expression”.¹³ In order for isolation to occur, linguistic, geographical, occupational or other social barriers had to separate the group from surrounding groups. By definition, then, folklore is communal in nature.¹⁴

Hoffman and Dorson agreed that folklore was nearly extinct in their days and Dorson argued that it was quickly being replaced by fakelore. Dorson claimed that after numerous countries in Europe had successfully used folklore as the battering ram for nationalism, the American people desired folklore that was not only original to their country, but also exuded American ideals.¹⁵ This demand resulted in a flurry of writers, journalists, and artists spontaneously meeting the public demand, creating folk heroes that exuded *Americanism* and dripped with romantic nationalism. Fakelore, then, was a story, song, or artifact that was the result of “invention, selection, fabrication, and similar refining processes” undertaken for capitalistic gain, rather than traditional idealistic control. Dorson attacked the disorganization of the folklorist world, and claimed that current scholars undermined that division of academics. He argued that comparative folklorists focused too much on Europe; cultural anthropologists gave too much attention to non-literate peoples; regional collectors came close to parochialism; literary scholars were untrained in folklore and thus unworthy; and popularizers and entertainers worked directly against the attempt to uncover the truth of folklore.¹⁶ Though Dorson attacked most of the people working within his academic area and the study of folklore, scholars today should consider fakelore an

¹² Daniel Hoffman, *Paul Bunyan: Last of the Frontier Demigods* (New York: Temple University, 1952), 12.

¹³ *ibid* ,12.

¹⁴ *ibid* ,13.

¹⁵ Richard Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 3.

¹⁶ Richard Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 5. Admittedly, my background in academics is that of a literary theorist. I am sure Dorson would be consternated to find that another literary theorist was polluting the folklorist arena.

extremely useful term, as it aids folklorists in categorizing and codifying existing legends and myths in American society.

Subsection 1a: The Mammoth of a Man...was a Capitalistic Creature?

Schoolteachers, librarians, and the public widely accepted and continue to accept Paul Bunyan as a legendary folk hero – a belief, Dorson argued, that publishers assiduously promoted.¹⁷ In order to prove Paul Bunyan as fakelore, one must prove that the legend had only a diminutive base of oral tradition; that the folk that created him were not isolated from other groups in any significant way that affected the mood of the tales; and, finally, that a capitalistic industry bore the stories into the world they inhabited. When studying the history of Paul Bunyan before mass popularity, one can find only a slight trickle of oral tradition that preceded his explosion onto the national scene. James McGillivray wrote select newspaper stories that featured Paul Bunyan as a supporting character in 1910.¹⁸ He claimed he heard the stories first-hand from lumberjacks when he was thirteen years old. Other than McGillivray's journalistic writings, few other written sources existed before Bunyan achieved mass popularity. Dorson claimed that scholars could not trust any stories recorded after 1914 as authentic, because they were likely already subject to "literary contamination."¹⁹ While there was a noticeable absence of a strong oral tradition, though, it cannot be the nail in his metaphoric coffin of a fakelore puppet; his first major appearance is truly the backbone of defining his categorization as fakelore and not folklore.

¹⁷ *ibid*, 215.

¹⁸ *ibid*, 216.

¹⁹ *ibid*, 217.

Paul Bunyan first appeared in 1914 in a pamphlet published by the Red River Lumber Company titled *Introducing Mr. Paul Bunyan of Westwood, Cal.*²⁰ W. B. Laughead was an ex-lumberjack turned advertising agent for the Red River Lumber Company, and he attempted to “sandwich hunks of advertising copy between stories about Paul Bunyan.”²¹ Mr. Laughead gave Bunyan’s ox the name Babe and wrote stories extremely similar to the earlier tales McGillivray had written. Laughead later admitted to Daniel Hoffman that his audience had been whole sellers, dealers, and sawmill men. The first draft of the pamphlet contained extremely technical terms that meant nothing to the average reader, such as “skidding,” “swamping,” and “quarter section” – sales were pitifully small.²² Two years later, Laughead wrote another copy of the pamphlet titled, *Tales about Paul Bunyan Vol II*. Laughead slowly added terminology such as “high efficiency” and “low operating costs” in an attempt to attract businessmen and workers to the character, but the pamphlet still refused to take off.²³ Finally, in 1922, Laughead published *The Marvelous Exploits of Paul Bunyan*, in which he claimed that Babe “constituted Paul Bunyan’s assets and liabilities...Upkeep and overhead were expensive, but the charges for operation and depreciation were low and efficiency was very high.”²⁴ This version exploded, demanding a new edition every year until the Red River Lumber Company closed in 1944, selling over 100,000 copies in all.²⁵ Widespread children’s books, festivals, and tourist attractions followed Laughead’s pamphlet immediately – the first widespread children’s book appearing in 1924.²⁶ The transformation that Laughead wrote into the Paul Bunyan stories placed the legend firmly into the fakelore category. The Red River Company adopted Paul Bunyan as

²⁰ Daniel Hoffman, *Paul Bunyan: Last of the Frontier Demigods* (New York: Temple University, 1952), 5.

²¹ *ibid.*, 5.

²² *ibid.*, 6.

²³ *ibid.*, 6.

²⁴ *ibid.*, 7.

²⁵ *ibid.*, 7.

²⁶ Richard Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 218.



Figure 1.1. (Left) Red River Lumber Company Lumber logo. Courtesy of: W. B. Laughead, *The Marvelous Exploits of Paul Bunyan* (Minneapolis: The Red River Lumber Company, 1922) the Project Gutenberg url: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/32994/32994-h/32994-h.htm> .

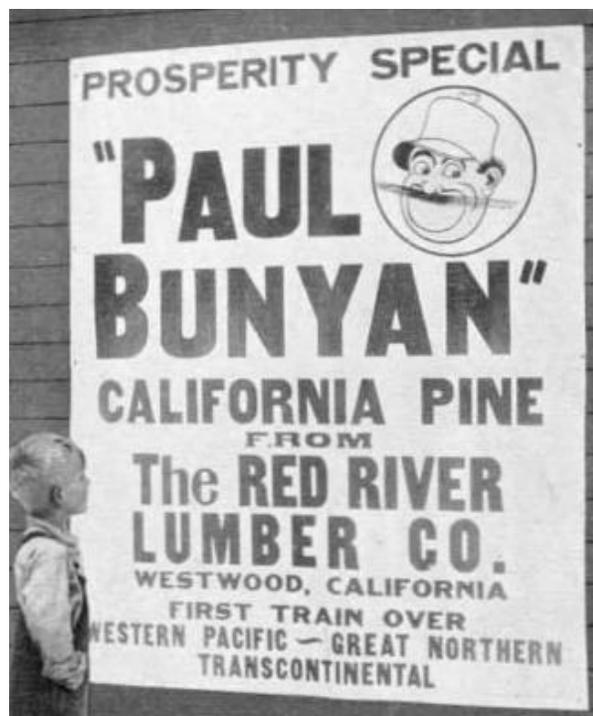


Figure 1.2. (Right) Advertisement for Paul Bunyan Pamphlet. Courtesy of: Amanda T. Ross, "Paul Bunyan Defeats Depression?," *Peeling Back the Bark* (blog), June 5, 2009, <http://fhsarchives.wordpress.com/2009/06/05/paul-bunyan-defeats-depression/> .

their extremely profitable mascot (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2), and Laughead admitted that he had used Paul Bunyan as a vehicle for advertising and not as literature.²⁷ Paul Bunyan existed as a folk hero because a logging industry placed him front and center, and gave him qualities that would appeal to workers and investors alike – near the end of the logging boom in the Great Lakes Region, in fact. Bunyan was strong and powerful, yet cunning and possessed business sense.

Finally, once the Red River Lumber Company altered Paul Bunyan, he ceased to belong to an isolated group of folk or illustrate their specific emotions and worldviews. Dorson argued that Bunyan reflected no mood or outlook of lumberjacks, and indeed, as he changed from 1914-1922, he resembled the city-folk in mentality more than the lumberjacks – who were frequently

²⁷ Daniel Hoffman, *Paul Bunyan: Last of the Frontier Demigods* (New York: Temple University, 1952), 74.

agrarian men in the off-seasons. At first, Paul Bunyan was one of the men, and his problems consisted of struggling with nature to break jams, fell trees, or get rid of forest pests. By 1922, though, he had attained status as a manager, and his problem consisted of incompetent foremen who were a financial and not a physical threat to him and his business.²⁸ Even if Dorson exaggerated the lack of oral tradition in Paul Bunyan's development, in order for scholars to deem the tales folklore, Bunyan would have had to reflect the mentalities of a folk that was isolated from others in some fashion. Perhaps this folk began with a separation of occupation – that of lumberjacks – but Laughead quickly eradicated any language or mentality that would isolate his character from being enjoyed exclusively by members of the lumberjack community. Advertising is only successful if an ad draws people from all walks of life. According to the definition of folklore, the moment a lore became the focus of national interest and obsession, it ceased to be a pure form of folklore because an isolated folk lost its influence over the story. By altering the language and emotion in the Paul Bunyan tales, Laughead offered widespread acceptance to Bunyan with one hand, and stole any claim to folklore with the other.

Subsection 1b: The Sleeping Bear Lay Atop a Mound of Children Book Gold

While numerous scholars have produced a wealth of academic writing on Paul Bunyan, very few have attempted to tackle Kathy-jo Wargin's *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* in any format whatsoever. The lack of academic writing proved to be a formidable barrier to researching the origins of the legend before widespread popularization. Nonetheless, in order to prove Wargin's book as fakelore, one must again establish an unstable base in oral tradition, a lack of folk isolation, and the role of a capitalist industry in the story's popularization.

²⁸ *ibid*, 77.

The Legend of Sleeping Bear's lack of oral tradition is tightly bound up with its supposed 'folk' lacking isolation. Kathy-jo Wargin claimed that "it [was] believed that the Ojibwe of Michigan were the first to tell the story of Sleeping Bear," but she gave little clue as to where she obtained this information.²⁹ She failed to explain who told her the story or where she first heard it.³⁰ Today, any search for an original Ojibwe legend of the area simply turns up links to tourist sites that spit out Wargin's story verbatim. The lack of any deviation or development in the story forces one to realize that it is unlikely that an original Native American tale could maneuver society for so long without changing at all. The first official mention of the legend, in fact, appeared in a volume written by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft; he traversed the Great Lakes Region and recorded numerous translated Native American legends and tales, publishing them in 1856.³¹

The presence of the Sleeping Bear legend in Schoolcraft's tome could naturally incline individuals to think that it proves that there truly was an initial oral tradition that surrounded the story. Indeed, it is unlikely that Schoolcraft could have recorded it if someone had not told it to him. However, Native American groups have notoriously accused Schoolcraft's translations of being inaccurate, reflective of European and not Native American ideals, and a shoddy form of cultural appropriation.³² He inserted fairies, Elizabethan ideals, and "Once Upon a Time" motifs

²⁹ Wargin, Kathy-jo. *The Legend of Sleeping Bear*. (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 1998), dust jacket.

³⁰ The absence of this information flies directly against the meticulous methodology that Richard Dorson laid out for the documentation and recording of folklore. His methods included securing texts literally from informants, providing full background information on the human sources of folklore, and verifying folklore through indexes and reference works. Richard Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 5-6.

³¹ Henry R. Schoolcraft *The Myth of Hiawatha, and Other Oral Legends, Mythologic and Allegoric of the North American Indians*. (AuTrain: Avery Color Studios, 1984).

Numerous historians have researched and documented Schoolcraft's many writings and travels around the Great Lakes region, including Jerry Dennis: Jerry Dennis, *The Living Great Lakes*, (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2003), 57.

Doris Seale and Beverly Slapin. *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children*. (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2005), 417.

³² Doris Seale and Beverly Slapin. *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children*. (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2005), 415-419.

into nearly every story.³³ Schoolcraft may have based his translations off oral tradition, but he based them so loosely that much of the original mentality and mood of the original stories evaporated. It was these translations that Kathy-jo Wargin based her book on. Perhaps she was unaware of the poor quality of Schoolcraft's translations – perhaps not – this argument is not to condemn her or Schoolcraft on the moral rightness or wrongness of cultural appropriation; instead it is to situate her book in a larger discussion to obtain academic merit as fakelore and not folklore.³⁴ In translating so many legends poorly, Schoolcraft robbed those legends of folklore status by stripping them of moods or themes associated with a particular 'folk'. He barred the folk that created the tales from imposing their isolated emotions or moods onto the stories. He cut the chain of oral tradition by disallowing any of the Native American folk to change the stories from that point forward.

Schoolcraft robbed the Sleeping Bear legend of the first two facets of folklore, but Kathy-jo Wargin put the nail into its folklore status coffin. Wargin, after all, published her children's book in 1998 for many reasons – one of which was to make money. The children's book industry boomed in the early 1990's. After a slight slump, the industry experienced a large 6% gain in revenue, selling more than 364 million books in 1998.³⁵ Wargin claimed that she loved the

³³ Doris Seale and Beverly Slapin. *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children*. (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2005), 418.

³⁴ Vincent B. Leitch, ed., *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2010), 1332-1378, 2110-2126.

For a complete discussion on cultural appropriation that occurs in literatures across the world, I suggest a close reading of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Paul De Man, and Louis Althusser. These authors discuss cultural appropriation through literary works, as well as cultural movements and all three will be more than willing to give you their opinion on the rightness or wrongness of such acts. For an argument on how Paul Bunyan exhibits cultural appropriation, see Richard M. Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 214-226. For an argument on how Wargin's book appropriates culture, see Doris Seale and Beverly Slapin, *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2005), 415-419.

This paper will not discuss the morals of cultural appropriation, but instead the value of fakelore vs. folklore.

³⁵ Doreen Carvajal, "Media; Book Industry Study Shows Sales Increased 4% Last Year," *New York Times* (New York, New York), August 16, 1999, url: <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/08/16/business/media-book-industry-study-shows-sales-increased-4-last-year.html>.

legend and wanted to retell it in a cherishing fashion – which may well be the truth.³⁶ However, the children’s book industry affected her writing style, the illustrations, and the story plot. If she had not conformed to a capitalist consumer demand, publishers would not have accepted her and she would not have sold over 200,000 copies of her book.³⁷ The same was true of W. B. Laughead when he had to write three drafts of a Paul Bunyan pamphlet before it gained popularity. The logging industry bore Paul Bunyan, and the children’s book industry resulted in *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* as many know it today. Both legends lacked firm oral tradition, failed to reflect the moods of the original isolated folk in which they arose, and a capitalist industry tampered with each in some way to create a popularized story, thus situating them firmly as fakelore in academics.

Section 2: The Value of Fakelore

Fakelore and folklore are extremely charged words in the academic study of American folklore. Richard Dorson coined the term fakelore not only in an effort to categorize different types of folklore, but also in an attempt to argue that academics should cease all study of those legends deemed fakelore. He argued that folklorists must “separate the wheat of tradition from the chaff of journalism,” and that Paul Bunyan merely represented “the most obvious facts of American life – the worship of bigness and power, and the ballyhoo of salesmanship and promotion.”³⁸ However, readers should not view the categorization of Paul Bunyan and *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* as a black mark or condemnation of these stories. Instead, readers should realize that the stories are fakelore but one must acknowledge the effects that each story

³⁶ Kathy-jo Wargin, *The Legend of Sleeping Bear*. (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 1998), cover page.

³⁷ “Awards and Bestsellers” *Sleeping Bear Press*. Last modified 2014.

http://sleepingbearpress.com/awards_and_bestellers

³⁸ Richard Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 220, 226.

has had on the surrounding society. By conducting a case study of the importance of place and industry in the rise of these two stories, as well as the interactive qualities of each story with the societies that surrounded them, one must admit the authenticity of such fakelores, and the necessity for studying them.

Section 2a: The Ingredients of a Sense of Place and Industry in an Authentic Meal

Understanding the role that place and industry played in the development of Paul Bunyan and *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* is essential to realizing the authentic nature of such fakelore. As has been covered in detail previously, academics can classify Paul Bunyan as fakelore because the lumber industry bore him into the popular world. However, before Paul Bunyan was a Mammoth of a Man, he was, in his earliest oral forms, a lumberjack. Lumberjacks historically served as case studies for the mood and sense of place that infiltrated those that lived in the Great Lakes Region. The majority of lumberjacks at the start of the lumber boom lived double lives as farm owners who viewed the trees as impediments in their ability to attain the ground beneath.³⁹ Two main groups influenced the boom of the lumber industry in the Great Lakes Region: those individuals heading for the prairie states that hoped to maintain a connection to what seemed like a vast source of wood, and those pioneer farmers who only desired to clear land they could then turn to farming. The tales of Paul Bunyan told by Laughead embodied fakelore, but they also called back to a time that was an inseparable period for the residents of the region. In 1836 America, a pioneer farmer worked just as hard as a lumberjack; working from sunup to sundown was hardly a novelty.⁴⁰ The people that lived in the region hardly revered lumberjacks, but the work they did was irrefutably bound up with the land, and the ‘folk’s’ relation to it. The term

³⁹ Susan Flader, ed. *The Great Lakes Forest: An Environmental and Social History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press in Association with Forest History Society, 1983), 124, 204.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 133.

‘folk’ can be applied to these pioneer settlers because they existed in relative isolation and many of them had the same goal: to clear the land in order to farm it. The way that pioneers viewed the forest ranged from evil to inconvenient, but most shared the belief that it stood in the way of progress of civilization.⁴¹ Thus, the origin of the lumberjack starts with the earliest farmers who simply wished to clear some space.

However, in order to truly understand the importance of place in the development of a tale such as Paul Bunyan’s, one must return to the basics of the uniqueness and commodification of the lumber of the Great Lakes. A unique combination of temperature placated by the surrounding lakes, and the precipitation that decreased the farther one traveled west combined to form our forests.⁴² Of course other factors such as fires, insects, diseases and storms affected them, but the temperature and precipitation made a unique climate in which fewer than forty kinds of trees existed.⁴³ These trees, though, would form the commodity on which settlers based western expansion.⁴⁴

The first settlers viewed the trees as impeding and sometimes evil.⁴⁵ More importantly, though, those that saw the economic potential beneath the grey bark viewed the forests as unending. The pioneers of the Great Lakes Region always knew the value of the lumber that surrounded them. The British realized in the late 17th century that the “king” white pine was perfect for ship masts. They proceeded to claim every single tree greater than two feet in diameter for the British crown.⁴⁶ They failed to enforce their claim after the American Revolution, but the theme remained: a white pine forest equaled capital. Logging booms had

⁴¹ *ibid.*, 123.

⁴² *ibid.*, 6.

⁴³ *ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, xx.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 124.

⁴⁶ John R. Knott. *Imagining the Forest: Narratives of Michigan and the Upper Midwest* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1937), 64

already occurred in Maine and Canada's provinces in the 1830s and 1840s. These areas had already configured the best format for logging and high efficiency.⁴⁷ The agrarian settlers, combined with the pioneers settling farther west in prairie states low on wood, resulted in a logging industry that would take our ancestors only fifty years to realize that the forests of pine "sufficient to supply all the wants of the citizens...for all time to come" could do no such thing.

The winter season called all lumberjacks north to cut and saw and hack away at the white pine forests. The rivers surrounding Lake Michigan swelled in the spring, allowing for the men to float the light wood down to sawmills as far as Chicago.⁴⁸ While people of the time did not necessarily revere lumberjacks, that does not mean that those people did not realize the true danger those men faced. For instance, a logjam struck fear into the lumberjacks of stories and reality alike. When logs piled up for miles behind a logjam, the river overflowed; it wreaked havoc on structures on shore and slowed the process of productivity. Folklorists and historians alike have spent countless books describing them – and more importantly, the process of breaking them up:

The critical moment of a jam came when a lone daredevil, stripped to his shorts with a rope around his waist, worked his way into the growling mass to release the last few logs. As the jam lurched forward and gave way, his comrades on shore pulled on the rope with all their might to haul him ashore. With luck, he usually survived.⁴⁹

The "logger" arose as a distinct type in American folklore, featuring stories of remarkable exploits and characters who participated in "hard drinking, hard fighting, and wild carousing [in logging towns]...that followed the logging seasons."⁵⁰ These men and these stories shared an irrevocable connection to the land they tirelessly worked. The stories of Paul Bunyan breaking

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 65.

⁴⁸ Susan Flader, ed. *The Great Lakes Forest: An Environmental and Social History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press in Association with Forest History Society, 1983), 131.

⁴⁹ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991), 157-158.

⁵⁰ John R. Knott. *Imagining the Forest: Narratives of Michigan and the Upper Midwest* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1937), 65.

log jams (see Figure 2.1), struggling with nature, fighting mosquitoes as large as horses, and other notorious feats took root in the geographic location that Paul Bunyan inhabited: the Great Lakes Region. Paul Bunyan created the Great Lakes as a watering hole for Babe, and their footprints left other lakes in their wake.⁵¹ Both stories illustrated a direct and concrete link to place. The problems he came across or solved reflected environment, and were “the necessary fantasies men [created] in order to fortify themselves against the dangers...they [could not] overcome except by force of mind.”⁵²

Figure 2.1. *Chippewa River Logjam.* Logjams were one of the most terrifying and nerve-racking occurrences in a lumberjack’s life – especially those who were sent out to break it up when Paul Bunyan was not around to save the



day. Courtesy of: William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991).

The arrival of rail lines in the Great Lakes Region enhanced lumber productivity and the ability to provide prairie dwellers with lumber so that Michigan produced the highest amount of

⁵¹ Richard Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 78.

⁵² *ibid*, 30.

lumber in the country from 1870-1890s.⁵³ The big-cut stripped the state of nearly all white and red pines, and its old growth hard-woods.⁵⁴ However, if the lumber industry peaked and began to decline in the early 20th century, why would an advertising pamphlet about the exploits of a lumberjack take off so enormously in 1922? The answer lies in the item that Dorson took out of his equation: a sense of place. The logging industry indeed robbed the Great Lakes of most of its forests, and yet, people remembered. Those individuals who drove so much effort into clearing the land “soon looked over the nearly treeless landscape, coveted the woodlots, and occasionally missed what once had covered everything.”⁵⁵ Paul Bunyan, specifically, may not be able to draw his roots from strong oral tradition, but the lumberjack and his intense relationship to the place in which he arose certainly can.

Industry continuously affected Paul Bunyan long after his first publication, though. Red River Lumber Company adopted Bunyan as their mascot, and the stories that followed Laughead’s original pamphlets transformed the “mere superlumberjack...to a modern industrialist with his own name emblazoned upon his company’s letterhead and products.”⁵⁶ The advertisements attempted to gain business for Red River Lumber Company’s mill located in California, as many people questioned the quality of wood from the west. In order to instill trust in the company’s western lumber quality, Laughead wrote exploits of Paul Bunyan that largely took place in the Great Lakes Region, where the lumber industry flourished. Paul’s stories also morphed as the Red River Company moved west to California, and his exploits reflected the geographical change. For instance, the company argued that Paul would not

⁵³ John R. Knott. *Imagining the Forest: Narratives of Michigan and the Upper Midwest* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1937), 60.

⁵⁴ Susan Flader, ed. *The Great Lakes Forest: An Environmental and Social History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press in Association with Forest History Society, 1983), 3.

⁵⁵ *ibid*, 129.

⁵⁶ Daniel Hoffman, *Paul Bunyan: Last of the Frontier Demigods* (New York: Temple University, 1952), 74.

need Babe in California because the company had machines that would make Babe hang his head with shame.⁵⁷ Here, industry played an essential role in Paul Bunyan's development as a character – the economics behind his birth showed themselves more and more as time went on. Such connections to place and industry are what make Paul Bunyan not just fakelore, but also authentic fakelore. Such an essential link and interaction with place and industry will be used shortly as a proof for authenticity.

A sense of place and industry played an equally important role in *The Legend of Sleeping Bear*. The legend is, after all, an origin story that explains how a geographic formation came to be – that of the Sleeping Bear Dunes in Northern Michigan. However, telling an origin story is not enough to give a story a sense of place. Any evaluation of Schoolcraft's stories, or even early Disney Movies serve as ample proof of this fact. Instead, what gives this legend a sense of place is the fact that it includes three very specific facets of the Great Lakes Region: fire, lumber and dunes.

It is true that the logging industry severely depleted lumber surrounding the Great Lakes – specifically the white pine. This industry did not seal the fate of the white pine directly, though – fire did. Originally, red and white pine forests of the lake states were a direct result of fire. The forests from Michigan westward depended on “repeated light-to-moderate surface fires 20-40 years apart...[that] consumed litter and killed back shrubs.”⁵⁸ These fires also eliminated shade and made space for younger white pines to grow. Additionally, pines tolerated higher intensity fires every 100-200 years that killed patches of mature pines, leaving space for new age classes.⁵⁹ Dependence on healthy fires in white and red pine forests resulted in Native American

⁵⁷ *ibid*, 6.

⁵⁸ Susan Flader, ed. *The Great Lakes Forest: An Environmental and Social History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press in Association with Forest History Society, 1983), 396.

⁵⁹ *ibid*, 397.

and early colonial traditions which respected these fires despite a lack of understanding. After the logging industry arose in the 1830s, though, fires grew increasingly violent. If loggers clear-cut large areas of land, the pines of the forest ceased to exist and could not introduce new seeds to replace them. If there *were* trees left, though, they nearly always sat atop debris left from logging called *slash*. Slash, including wood chips and saw dust, highly increased fire incidence.⁶⁰ Millions of acres burned over repeatedly, and a shorter interval between fires eliminated most young pines, and sterilized the area of white pine reproduction.

The mother bear and her cubs traverse Lake Michigan in *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* because a forest fire on the western shore of the lake drives them out. It is hard to tell if the fire in the story Schoolcraft wrote down was a natural one or a logging incident, as the logging industry and pioneer movement had encroached significantly on the Great Lake region by the time of his book's publication. Nevertheless, the fire took on the role of antagonist in Wargin's book. The flames that had so often served as rejuvenating moments in a forest's succession, turned into an uncontrollable beast.

The final role of lumber in the legend is illustrated by its absence. The Sleeping Bear Dunes were nearly devoid of trees at the time Schoolcraft transcribed the origin legend. By 1856, no white pines could be found in the region. This situation resulted from the clear-cutting and the fires, but finally succumbed to something none of the settlers could predict: blister rust. The earlier lumber booms discussed earlier resulted in eastern state nurseries ordering white pine saplings from European nurseries.⁶¹ Unknowingly, an Asian strand of blister rust already infected these European white pines. European and Asian pines proved resistant to the disease, but the American white pines did not. In 1952 alone, the Control of Forest Diseases spent \$3.6

⁶⁰ *ibid*, 55.

⁶¹ "White Pine Blister Rust." ASP. January 1, 2003. Accessed November 23, 2014. <http://www.apsnet.org/edcenter/intropp/lessons/fungi/Basidiomycetes/Pages/WhitePine.aspx>.

million to eradicate the blister rust.⁶² However, the disease eliminated the reproduction capabilities of white pines, and as of 1973, most reforestation programs had been discontinued due to this fact. This disease finalized the absence of white pine near the Sleeping Bear Dunes. While the plot of the legend functions without direct allusion to lack of lumber, its absence at the time of the legend's codification is fact. Schoolcraft likely never knew that his original legend tied so directly into the literal roots of the land it originated in. Wargin likely never knew either when she wrote the children's book in 1998, as only direct research about the ecological succession of Great Lakes forests would have steered her to this knowledge.

The final characteristic that gives the legend a distinct sense of place, therefore lending it authenticity, is the presence of the dunes themselves. Dunes possess much more than a potential for tourist activities around the coast of Lake Michigan. The modern study of ecology traces its origins to early studies of succession in Lake Michigan dunes. Henry Cowles pioneered the field of ecology with his doctoral thesis in 1900: "The Ecological Relations of the Vegetation of the Sand Dunes of Lake Michigan."⁶³ The dunes surrounding Lake Michigan provided evidence of a 5,000 year old glacier system, 1,600 years in the making, as well as invaluable examples of the impacts of stable and unstable environments on plant life.⁶⁴ Even today, 'ghost forests' exist in the Sleeping Bear Dunes – these forests of trees and shrubs that took root when the sand was more stable, died and became partially covered by sand once again.

The *Master Plan* to develop the Sleeping Bear Dunes in particular into a National Park directly cited Cowles' research. The plan outlined the reasons for declaring Sleeping Bear Dunes a national park and the methods through which it would be obtained. Of these reasons, Cowles'

⁶² *ibid.*,

⁶³ *ibid.*,

⁶⁴ Henry Chandler Cowles, *The Ecological Relations of the Vegetation on the Sand Dunes of Lake Michigan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1899), 15.

research proved that vegetation at the dunes clearly displayed plant succession progression from barren sandy beaches, to beachgrass dunes, then to shrub and forest covered dunes, and finally to the climax maple and beech forest of the moraines of the region.⁶⁵ The committee in charge of creating the *Master Plan* argued that the dunes contained an unusual combination of natural features that possessed outstanding scientific *and* scenic recreational values. But, what did all of the science have to do with a legend about a mother bear and her cubs? How did the unique ecology of the dunes add anything to a sense of place for the legend other than a quality of mild interest? The *Master Plan* laid out the argument quite well:

The purpose of creating Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is to preserve this portion of Lake Michigan shoreline for the inspiration, education and recreational use and enjoyment of the American people, while at the same time stabilizing private development within the area.⁶⁶

Wargin's children's book retained its prevalence for a reason, just like it became the official state's children's book for a reason. It reflected an ability of Great Lakes residents to take lists of ecological value that included "kettle holes, drainage channels, deltas, interlobate morains, and iceblock lakes," and add them together to culminate in the moment a visitor or native looks out see a solitary dune made of quartz, multicolored sand rising 464 feet above Lake Michigan.⁶⁷ Wargin captured the feeling of seeing something not of our world – indeed, the terrain was molded by glaciers and we have only protected it for a little less than 45 years. While her book is fakelore, she also anchored it in a sincere sense of place. The legend that Schoolcraft originally translated was an authentic explanation for how these dunes came to be. While industry and incorrect translations altered the mood and tone of the story, the explanation of the dunes and the Manitou islands were true. Wargin, or even Schoolcraft, could not have

⁶⁵ *Master Plan: Sleeping Bear Dunes, National Lakeshore, Michigan*, (Washington: National Park Service, 1973).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*,

⁶⁷ "Geology Auto Tour", *Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore*, Date Accessed: 23 November 2014. url: <http://www.nps.gov/slbe/planyourvisit/geologytour.htm>

placed the story outside the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3). Without this lakeshore, the story made no sense, and possessed no foundation in a specific place. Wargin's passion for the place she writes about not only reflects the importance of the national park to the author, but also to a vast majority of Great Lakes Region residents. It is true that the story is fakelore, but residents of the Great Lakes Region know the story and cherish it despite its lack of firm Native American roots or explanation of the story's origin. The fact that residents cherish this story speaks to their love of the place in which the story originates.



Figure 2.3. Close-up view of the National Park with the North and South Manitou Islands. Courtesy of: "Sleeping Bear Dunes" *Destination 360*, accessed April 17, 2014, url: <http://www.destination360.com/north-america/us/michigan/map-of-sleeping-bear-dunes>

The children's book industry played a large role in Wargin's writing as discussed earlier, but another industry continuously affected *The Legend of Sleeping Bear*: the tourist industry. Pamphlets, figurines, maps, and many other items reflected the story that Wargin and Schoolcraft told.⁶⁸ The tourist industry of the Sleeping Bear Dunes did not create Wargin's book, but it firmly depended on the continuation of Wargin's fakelore, and the children's book depended upon acceptance by that same tourist industry. By the 1990's, over a million people visited the national lakeshore area annually (not anywhere near the 3 million predicted by the

⁶⁸ George Weeks, *Sleeping Bear: Its Lore, Legends and First People* (Glen Arbor: The Print Shop, 1998), 7. Doris Seale and Beverly Slapin, *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2005), 417.

Master Plan), and the budget of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore had increased from \$364,700 in 1976 to \$2,784,000 in 1999.⁶⁹



Figure 2.2. The location of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Park in Michigan. Courtesy of: Howard Meyerson, “Lawmakers push for part of Sleeping Bear Dunes to be designated wilderness,” *Grand Rapids Press* (Grand Rapids, Michigan), February 8, 2010.

⁶⁹ Theodore J. Karamanski, *A Nationalized Lakeshore: The Creation and Administration of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore* (Omaha: Midwest Regional Office, 2000), 121, 167, url: http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/slbe/adhi_1c.htm.

Section 3: Authenticity

Dorson argued that the role of place, and especially industry, not only proved stories such as Paul Bunyan and *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* to be fakelore, but also proved that folklorists should never study such items. He claimed that such fakelores did not represent the true mood of any folk or society, and distracted folklorists from authentic folklore worth their time. However, to argue that fakelore is not authentic due to the role of industry in their development is akin to claiming that the country and the city are at constant odds, and human society would be better off choosing the country over the city. By condemning the role of industry in creating fakelore, one also condemns the role of the city, capitalism, and industry in human society – especially of Great Lakes regional culture. The adjective *authentic* possesses numerous meanings, but the Oxford English Dictionary defines it as:

1. Of undisputed origin; genuine
2. Made or done in the traditional or original way, or in a way that faithfully resembles an original.⁷⁰

One can easily break down these definitions and apply them to such stories as Paul Bunyan and *The Legend of Sleeping Bear*. According to the definition, we cannot consider either story authentic folklore, as I have already shown that they neither conform to a definition of folklore, nor are they of “undisputed origin” or “made or done in the traditional way.” However, the matter of discussion here focuses on the authenticity of *fakelore*, not folklore. Dorson argued that the very nature of fakelore is to be *inauthentic*, but each story satisfies the definition of authenticity within its category. Both stories are “traditional” and “original” fakelore – industry, place and a lack of an oral traditional base directly influence them. The origin of each story lies within industry and the Great Lakes Region and they need not be original to any other story, as

⁷⁰ “Authentic.” *Oxford Dictionaries Language Matters*, accessed April 1, 2014, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/authentic?q=authentic .

they are *original* fakelores themselves. They constitute “genuine” examples of fakelore, and thus academics should consider them authentic.

William Cronon spent an entire book evaluating the common practice of humans to see the country and the city at odds with each other. Instead, Cronon argued that they depended upon one another, and everything that one saw in the country or city was a direct result of its relationship with its counterpart. He argued for a “genuine” relationship between city and country.⁷¹ Dorson viewed the effects of industry and capitalism as inexcusable, claiming that most legends of Paul Bunyan could not be trusted to “be free of literary contamination,” as if industry was an infectious creature to be avoided.⁷² To argue that anything that industry produced is inauthentic is to argue that the city had no place in creating and determining facets of a Great Lakes Regional culture. The effects of industry and capitalism on these stories is blatantly obvious today, but that creates an *authentic fakelore* that industry spawned, and therefore something that scholars should study.

The stories of Paul Bunyan and *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* also obtained authenticity through an interaction with the society that surrounded them. In order to understand how an interaction with society creates authenticity, though, we must evaluate the specific interactions of Paul Bunyan and *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* with their surroundings. The pushback against these stories was violent and impassioned. As presented in the introduction, Richard Dorson’s dislike of the Paul Bunyan legends germinated in his claim that they were not truly folklore. Dorson travelled throughout the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to prove a large argument of his academic career: that Paul Bunyan was fakelore. He illustrated vehement distaste for scholars who gave the stories credence, as well as the publishers who perpetuated the horrible practice.

⁷¹ William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991), 5-19.

⁷² Richard Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 217.

He described his new term fakelore as resulting in stories that were “quaint, eccentric, whimsical, droll [and] primeval.”⁷³ Yet, Dorson admitted that Paul Bunyan nonetheless obtained significant influence on the society in which he existed.⁷⁴ Sculptures, ballets, lyric operas, songs, folk dramas, radio plays, oil paintings, woodcarvings, and even glass mosaics memorialized the giant lumberjack and Babe the blue ox. A celebration known as Paul Bunyan’s Days migrated across the countryside in both directions in which men participated in “logging contests and woodsmen sports, such as birling, canoe-tilting, log-bucking, log-rolling and log-chopping.”⁷⁵ Dorson’s plea for folklorists to abandon Paul Bunyan as folklore went directly against the fact that even as fakelore, the society around Paul Bunyan influenced him, and he in turn had influenced the society he occupied.

The Legend of Sleeping Bear likewise influenced its surrounding society. As previously discussed, industry bore the story and it in turn affected the tourist industry. In addition to an interaction and relationship with industry, though, *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* also attracted its own unique Richard Dorson. Oyate is a “community-based Native organization working to see that [their] lives, traditional arts and literatures, and histories are portrayed honestly.”⁷⁶ Oyate and AltaMira Press co-published the book, *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children* in 2005. Multiple authors in this book assessed children’s books that dealt with Native American themes. Contributors gave not only Wargin’s *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* a scathing review, but also her entire Michigan based children’s series. The authors attacked Henry Rowe Schoolcraft’s additions of European ideals into his translations, and claimed that Wargin’s series

⁷³ *ibid*, 4.

⁷⁴ *ibid*, 224.

⁷⁵ *ibid*, 224.

⁷⁶ Doris Seale and Beverly Slapin, *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2005), copyright page.

took root in Schoolcraft's translations – not Native American legends or culture.⁷⁷ In particular, authors claimed that Wargin had tapped into a capitalistic market that established profits at the expense of Native culture:

There was a whole niche to be filled, a niche for mushy, live-up-to-white-sterotypes-about-the-docile-Indians-who-willingly-give-everything-to-superior-white-author/interpreters, stories for white schoolteachers to fool themselves into thinking they're really doing justice by minority books. Yeah, like we need more of those.⁷⁸

The lines today between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation are extremely thin, and arguments for the moral rightness or wrongness of either appear in numerous other locations outside this essay.⁷⁹ However, the caustic Native American response toward this legend illustrated a firm interaction between the book and society.

The interactions between these two focal legends and their societies illustrates the authenticity of such fakelores. Paul Bunyan and *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* directly affected the societal industries and cultures that surrounded them, much to the chagrin of Dorson and Native American groups. As an existentialist philosophy, the Oxford English dictionary defines authentic as:

1. Relating to or denoting an emotionally appropriate, significant, purposive, and responsible mode of human life.⁸⁰

The city's industry and the countryside's supposed lack of equally affect human life. While both stories fail to represent the mood of an *isolated* folk, they still reveal a mode of human life – that is, industry and capitalism. Dorson and the authors of *A Broken Flute* did not like or support what the stories revealed about society, but just because we do not like what something reveals,

⁷⁷ *ibid*, 417. One author claimed that the legend of Sleeping Bear “was one of those Indian stories that [had been] so used and abused by non-Indians for so long that we [Native Americans] kind of don't want it anymore.”

⁷⁸ *ibid*, 417.

⁷⁹ See footnote 28.

⁸⁰ “Authentic.” *Oxford Dictionaries Language Matters*, accessed April 1, 2014, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/authentic?q=authentic .

does not mean we can ignore it. Authentic fakelore reveals a facet of society. It may reveal a facet that citizens would like to overlook, but we must force ourselves to accept William Cronon's argument that the city and the country are not at odds, but are instead two sides of a single coin. By realizing this truth, academic folklorists must then accept a need to study and not shun authentic fakelore.

Conclusion

Admitting the authenticity of fakelore must result in expanding fakelore studies. Adaptation to attain national acceptance and interest naturally harms the purity of traditional folklore because it instantly robs stories of moods and tones special to isolated folk. Richard Dorson and Daniel Hoffman agreed that pure and authentic folklore was reaching extinction when they wrote their books. Now, almost fifty years later, that trend continues and nationally accepted fakelore increasingly replaces folklore. We live in a world of globalization and increasingly interdisciplinary studies that will continue to create more fakelore than folklore, if only because less and less isolated folk can exist in an interconnected and globalized world.

Richard Dorson's attempt to classify differences between folklore and fakelore was not only admirable, but also extremely healthy for the development of folklore studies. Unfortunately, though, too many folklorists heeded his words to shun fakelore from all academic study due to its lack of authenticity. On the contrary, fakelore, this essay has proven, can have an extremely authentic development and interaction with society and industry. Fakelore can reveal facets of culture and societal values. A study of Paul Bunyan and *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* revealed facets of a Great Lakes Regional culture: the importance of the logging industry to the development of the region, a firm connection to location and place, and an interactive

relationship between the countryside and the city's industries. Authentic folklore may be endangered in today's society, but if that is the case, should folklorists simply stop studying the world in which we live and hyper-focus on civilizations and cultures that no longer affect today's world? On the contrary, folklorists have a duty to preserve, study, and find ways in which cultures reveal themselves. Paul Bunyan was fakelore, but the tradition has spread and infiltrated societies and cultures across the continental United States. *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* did not have true folklore roots, but it has become the praised official children's book of Michigan. Realizing that an assumed folklore story is fakelore is an understandably disillusioning process – as I can attest – but our academic folklorists must resist the urge to respond by attacking fakelore instead of accepting it for what it is. Whether the spread of these fakelores is right or wrong, or whether they should or should not be praised is an argument for a much different essay. Instead, this essay argues that for better or worse, these fakelores directly and authentically came to be and affected the societies, places, and industries in which they arose. Thus, students of folklore should study them as fakelore, because they have become part of the Great Lakes Region cultural tradition.

Acknowledgements

The research for this essay was understandably difficult, as no academic writings existed on *The Legend of Sleeping Bear* prior to writing. While researching a subject that is untouched by the academic world is exciting, it is also extremely challenging, and I hit quite a number of dead ends before navigating my way through the fakelore versus folklore argument.⁸¹ Like many Michigan children, I cherished Kathy-jo Wargin's children's book; and, what started out as an attempt to research the Native American origins of the story turned into a deconstruction and disproof of the beloved story as authentic folklore. My aims are not to attack Wargin or her children's series, but instead to illustrate an ongoing debate that many individuals outside the relevant Native American or folklorist communities are unaware even exists. I am indebted to Dr. Lynn Heasley for pushing me to tackle such a complex and grey topic, as I was prepared to traverse a much safer route as soon as I saw the path that was ahead of me. In addition, I am indebted to Richard Dorson's thorough research and creation of the term *fakelore*. While I may disagree with his conclusions about what to do with fakelore, without his research, I would never have had the vocabulary or resources needed to write this paper. The resources of Western Michigan University, including the library, archives, and online databases also were invaluable to my research. I could not have undertaken such a project without the resources and individuals at the university

⁸¹ Certain tomes were invaluable to attain background knowledge that were not cited directly including: Mood, Terry Ann. *American Regional Folklore: A sourcebook and Research Guide*. (Santa Barbara: ABC, 2004). Dorson, Richard M. *American Folklore and the Historian*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

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