

## **Eastern Cherokee Creation and Subsistence Narratives: A Cherokee and Religious Interpretation [ABSTRACT]**

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Eastern Cherokees' mythic and legendary worldview, as refracted through sacred myth narratives, forms a living tradition which grounds their identity. In particular, the central sacred stories of their world—the Creation Myth, Kanati the Hunter, Selu the Corn Goddess, and Stone Coat—embody spiritual meanings, purposes, and values which actually orient the Eastern Cherokee lifeway. These spiritual peoples' traditional religious experience and expressions cannot be reduced to economic, social, psychological, or political structures. This essay explores this Eastern Cherokee mythic epistemology. One author is a historian of religions and attorney for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians; the other author is a linguist and an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians who reads, writes, and speaks the Cherokee language.

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