

FOAFTale News

Newsletter of the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Perspectives on Contemporary Legend: International Society for Contemporary Legend Research 32nd International Conference Prague, Czech Republic Tuesday 3-Sunday 8 June, 2014

The International Society for Contemporary Legend Research is pleased to announce that the 2014 conference will be held in Prague on the dates mentioned above under the auspices of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. The conference will take place in the Main Building of the Faculty of Arts, Namesti Jana Palacha 2, 116 38, Prague, Czech Republic.

As usual, the meeting will be organized as a series of seminars at which the majority of attendants will present papers. Concurrent sessions will be avoided so that all attendants can hear all papers. Proposals for special panels, discussion sessions and other related events are encouraged.

Presentations will be given in two lengths, either 15 minutes with an additional 5 minutes for discussion or 30 minutes with an additional 10 minutes for discussion. Please state on your abstract whether your paper will be the short form or the long one.

Proposals for papers on all aspects of "contemporary," "urban," or "modern" legend research are sought as are those on any legend or legend-like tradition that circulate actively at present or have circulated at an earlier historical period. To submit a

proposal, please forward a title and abstract (250-300 words) by February 1st 2014 to:

Dr Petr Janecek
 Institute of Ethnology
 Faculty of Arts
 Charles University in Prague
 Namesti Jana Palacha 2
 116 38 Prague 1 Czech Republic
 e-mail: petr.janecek@ff.cuni.cz

Prague, historical capital of the Czech Republic (former Kingdom of Bohemia, later Czechoslovakia) is located in the heart of Central Europe bordering Germany, Poland, Austria and Slovakia.

The conference will take place in the premises of the Charles University, founded in 1348 by Bohemian and Roman King Charles the Fourth as the oldest university north of the Alps and east of Paris.

The Faculty of Arts where we shall be meeting is famous for the "Prague School" or "Prague Linguistic Circle" connected with linguist Roman Jakobson, folklorist Petr Bogatyrev, and also folklorist Jiri Polivka of the Bolte-Polivka "Notes to Children's and Household Tales of Brothers Grimm" fame:

<http://www.cuni.cz/UKENG-1.html>

The conference place will be located in the center of the historical Old Town, a 10-minute walk from the most important historical sites such as Charles Bridge, Old Town Square and Prague Castle. The Jewish Town where Franz Kafka lived and wrote, with glimpses of the mysterious Odradek creature and the unfortunate victim of Metamorphosis, along with some beautifully preserved synagogues, is a 5-minute walk from the conference site.

Thursday 5th of June will be set aside for an excursion. It will take us to the immaculately preserved late medieval town of Cesky Krumlov with a unique Baroque theatre located in the monumental castle:

<http://www.zamek-ceskykrumlov.eu/en/>

The cultural programme on other evenings will include visits to dark winding alleys of old Prague,

where we will get acquainted with old ghost stories and bizarre contemporary legends from the Communist times.

There will also be an evening with screening of subtitled Czech movies inspired by contemporary legends, and evening with Czech folk music and dance on the beautiful premises of the Ethnographical Museum:

<http://www.nm.cz/Hlavni-strana/Visit-Us/Ethnographical-Museum-Musaion.html>

The following practical information can be given at this time:

The conference fee (including transportation, lunch and admission tickets on the excursion day, but not the optional conference dinner on Tuesday the 3rd of June or other meals) is currently estimated at:

- for ISCLR members 75€ (\$105 USD)
- for non-ISCLR members 107€ (\$145 USD)
- for student non-ISCLR members 95€ (\$130 USD)
- for accompanying persons 50€ (\$70 USD)

It will be payable in euros via bank transfer to Prague by May 31st 2014. Payment may also be made by check or credit card (through PayPal) directly to ISCLR by the earlier date of May 1st. More definite prices, bank details, and information on sending money to ISCLR will be given in a second circular to be issued before New Year's Day, 2014. Cash payment on arrival can only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. Payment by check or credit card will not be possible at that time.

Hotel accommodation must be booked and paid for individually. Hotel rooms will be reserved at University hotel and other neighboring hotels; the details and price will be announced soon. The University hotel is located about 10 minutes walking distance from the conference site.

For other hotels, information and booking, and other useful information as well, please look to the website of the municipal Prague Information Service at <http://www.praguewelcomes.cz/en/>

The most convenient international access to Prague is via the local Vaclav Havel Airport Prague which serves most of the international and local flights to the region: <http://www.prg.aero/en/>

Prague has a reliable, safe and cheap Public Transport System including Metro (underground), tramways and buses; details can be found at the web page <http://www.dpp.cz/en/>

Registration forms and other conference information will be soon available at www.contemporarylegend.org

MICHIGAN'S MONSTROUS TRIO

If legends are to be believed, then the residents of the Great-Lakes state of Michigan are being terrorized by a number of hybridized, humanoid creatures, particularly those related to Bigfoot. In the lower southeast corner of the State, Monroe County is home to a number of hybrid pair of such creature legends, including the legend of Dog Lady Island, and the Monroe Monster (also referred to as the Mentel Road Monster). Further northwest, in Traverse City, the Michigan Dog man has entered into state lore, despite being popularized by an April Fools' Day prank by a local radio station host in 1987.

Ignoring the pattern of hybridized creatures occupying Michigan is difficult, particularly in Monroe County. Ironically, Monroe is notable for an entity powerfully linked to mutations: the Enrico Fermi II Nuclear Power Plant; its predecessor, the Fermi I Power plant suffered a partial meltdown in 1966. This meltdown was contained, and the reactor was sealed in concrete. While it may be a mere coincidence that these hybrid legends began circulating in the 1960s and 70s, it is quite possible that Michigan's mutation legends may have been born, at least partially, from the outgrowth of anxiety due to the presence of the nuclear power plant. No long term problems have been reported in the area, but that has not stopped people from spreading rumors. Growing up in Monroe, I heard many stories of two headed frogs and turtles, but never managed to find one, despite living across the street from the Raisin River for more than 20 years. The 1975 book by John G. Fuller, with the over-sensationalized, and largely inaccurate title *We Almost Lost Detroit*, probably did not do much to allay residents' fears. The idea of nuclear anxiety, however, is not limited to Monroe County.

The Legends: Dog Lady Island

Sandwiched between two large, industrial cities, Detroit, Michigan and Toledo, Ohio, Monroe is the home to a very unique creature: the Dog Lady. This dog-like woman is said to inhabit a small island just off Lake Erie. This island is affectionately referred to by locals as "Dog Lady Island," and legends of her attack on young teenagers date back to the 1960s. In every variation, Dog Lady inhabited a small island off of Dunbar Road near Laplance Road on Monroe's east side. The island is very small and nondescript; the entire area can be walked in approximately 15 minutes. The once isolated general location was commercially developed in the late 1980s, and the island has been sold a couple times, with each new owner hoping to profit from the popularity of

the Dog Lady legend, but attempts to commercialize the island have failed.

Many variations of the legend exist, but the basic story focuses on a woman who, following the death of her husband, surrounded herself with several Dobermans. The dogs were there to protect her, but one day they attacked, leaving her partially blind and incapable of speech. She became quite reclusive and jumped onto the cars of anyone who dared park near the island. At the time I was first told this story in the late 1970s, Dog Lady had supposedly been murdered by members of a local motorcycle gang, and they were the new occupants of the island. As a symbol of their presence, they allegedly kept Dog Lady's body in a coffin on the island itself. In some variations of the legend, Dog Lady remains alive, but supposedly sleeps in the coffin. Almost every variation of the story includes the coffin, undoubtedly because, when I visited the island in 1988, there was an object on the island that did resemble a coffin lid. Following an interview that I gave to the *Monroe Evening News* in 2006, I was contacted by someone who claimed to have worked at worked one of the local cemeteries who said the object was in fact a mausoleum lid, one of several which were brought to the island to help make a bridge for easier access.

The Dog Lady stories, even though there are many variations, do maintain several consistent elements: a bizarre, speechless widow, Dobermans, a coffin lid, attacks on young lovers in a car, the isolated island locale, and the motorcycle gang. They are a real motorcycle club and are quite visible in Monroe County. Many believe the island was their meeting place during the 1980s, but there is no definitive evidence to support this notion. When I visited the island, the litter that was left indicates that someone had been using the island for parties, but for nearly twenty years, they have occupied a building on a main highway with their logo on it. Despite the terrifying acts this gang allegedly perpetrated, the only story I have ever seen in the local newspaper was a feature detailing their fund-raising efforts to help buy a disabled child a computer.

The Legends: The Monroe Monster

Dog Lady briefly shared company with the Monroe Monster, a Bigfoot-type creature spotted during the summer of 1965 on Mentel Road, near the Detroit Beach area. According to the legend, a local woman and her mother spotted a creature on this road. When the car stalled, the monster reached through the driver's side window and grabbed the victim while her mother ran for help. Over the next two months there were

many sightings of the beast, and an investigation followed. According to locals, the story was so famous that it made the national news, but the Monroe Monster was proven to be a hoax when, supposedly, hair samples found at the scene of an attack were discovered to have come from a paintbrush. Apparently, people thought that the creature could be a radiation-spawned mutant caused by the nearby Enrico Fermi atomic plant. This legend, however, was born more than a year before the partial meltdown at the power plant, but it does reflect a general paranoia of the nearby reactor.

The Legends: The Michigan Dog Man

Southeastern Michigan is not the only home to a hybridized creature. In the north east corner of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, the Michigan Dog Man is rumored to roam the woods in various locales, including Traverse City, Reed City, and Manistee. In 1987, disc jockey Steve Cook at WTCM-FM in Traverse City, Michigan recorded "The Legend," a song supposedly based on actual reported sightings of the creature, which was played as an April Fool's Day joke.

Despite the Dog-Man's dubious path to notoriety and Cook's admission of the song's intent, Dog-Man sightings in this region have been reported dating back more than a century. More recently, the Michigan Dog Man made news when, in 2007, a three and a half minute "vintage" film found its way to the Internet. This dubious piece of evidence was named "The Gable Film" because of small tag attached to a box of junk purchased at an estate sale by an unsuspecting buyer, who sent the reel to Steve Cook in 2006. The film was finally revealed as a hoax in the finale episode of *MonsterQuest* on March 24, 2010. Obviously, the Michigan Dog Man legends predate the proliferation of nuclear power plants, but it is important to note that many of the sightings occurred within 60 miles of the Big Rock Point Nuclear Power Plant in Charlevoix. This facility operated from 1962-1997. Still, to my knowledge, the Michigan Dog Man sightings have never been tied directly to the nearby nuclear power plant.

Conclusion

Michigan residents apparently have a great deal of affection for hybridized, humanoid creatures, and Bigfoot's brethren have found a home in the Great Lakes State. A number of these legends surfaced during the 1960s and 70s, when nuclear power plants began to surface. However, concluding that the hybridized legends are a result of cultural anxiety and fear of radiation would be based on insufficient evidence. Hybridized creature legends have existed practically

forever, evidenced by creatures such as centaurs, griffins, and mermaids, just to name a few. A correlation between nuclear power plants and hybridized creatures could possibly be argued in Monroe County specifically, and possibly the state in a much more general fashion, but making the case for causation would take a great deal more investigation.

Daniel P. Compura (Daniel.Compura@utoledo.edu)

HELP: "SON'S MURDERER GIVEN REFUGE"

Greetings, *FOAFTale News* readers. I'm seeking information about a literary narrative that I suspect may have been based on a contemporary legend that might have been circulating in the early decades of the 20th century (and perhaps earlier or later, as well). To date, I have been unable to find any evidence of the legend's existence or circulation at that time, however. So, I'd like to enlist your expert help.

Specifically, I'm working on a project about the Harlem Renaissance novelist Nella Larsen, whose career was brought to a screeching halt in 1930 by allegations that she had plagiarized a short story by the British local-color writer Sheila Kaye-Smith. My contention is that both Larsen's story ("Sanctuary") and Kaye-Smith's ("Mrs. Adis") are based on what appears to be a contemporary legend, but I have as yet been unable to find any other analogues to the narrative both stories tell.

Here's a brief synopsis of the plot shared by both stories:

A man peers in the window of an isolated rural cottage, where he sees a lone woman working in the kitchen. He considers tapping on the window, but decides to go in instead. When he does, the woman recognizes him as a friend of her adult son...but he's a friend she doesn't like. The man announces that he's shot someone down the road, but that it was dark, so he's not sure who it was. In each story, the victim is described as an enemy of some kind—the local estate's groundskeeper in Kaye-Smith's story, and a white man in Larsen's.

In both stories, the man asks the mother to hide him, appealing to her love of her son and arguing that the son would want her to help him out. The mother agrees, and finds a hiding place for the man. When the authorities arrive, they tell the mother about the shooting, and announce that they're looking for the friend. When the mother asks who's been shot, the authorities reluctantly tell her that it's her own son who's the victim, and they proceed to bring his dead body into the kitchen. The authorities then ask the

mother explicitly if she's seen the friend, and she says no, she hasn't.

When the authorities leave, the mother allows the friend to escape: in Kaye-Smith's story, she simply unbolts the door of the lean-to where he's hiding so that he can get out; in Larsen's story, the mother confronts the man directly, then tells him the only reason she's allowing him to go is because of his "black face."

I don't think it takes much to convince folklorists of the legendary qualities of this narrative: the woman home alone at night who unknowingly allows her betrayer into the house; the dramatic revelation that the man she's hiding has killed her own son; the even more dramatic and surprising twist that she allows the killer to go free. Further, while both stories imply that it's the mother's loyalty to her son that demands that she both hide and free the friend who killed him, they also both underscore that primary explanation with a second and more convincing one based on class allegiance (in Kaye-Smith's story) or race loyalty (in Larsen's story).

Kaye-Smith's story appeared in print first, in the January 1922 issue of *Century* magazine. Larsen's appeared in the January 1930 issue of *Forum*, though in a letter to the editor defending her story against the plagiarism charge, she claimed to have heard it in 1912, a full decade before the publication of Kaye-Smith's story.

I am interested in knowing if this story, or a similar one, is familiar to legend scholars, and if so, where and when you encountered it. Please feel free to contact me directly at rosemary.hathaway@mail.wvu.edu with any information or comments, or to respond to the editors of the *FOAFTale News*. And thank you very much for your thoughts!

Rosemary Hathaway
(rosemary.hathaway@mail.wvu.edu)

Works Cited

- Kaye-Smith, Sheila. "Mrs. Adis." *The Century Magazine* 103.3 (January 1922): 321-326.
Larsen, Nella. Letter to the Editor. *Forum* 83.4 (April 1930): 41.
———. "Sanctuary." *Forum* 83.1 (January 1930): 15-18.

Editor's Note: This narrative resonates with Motifs P322 "Guest Given Refuge" and W15 "Woman shelter's son's murderer out of charity," associated most commonly with ATU 756D.

LEGEND IN THE NEWS DIGEST

Compiled by David J. Puglia

As ISCLR's Facebook feed has been quite active, we are starting a new feature to be found regularly in *FOAFtale News*, a digest of the contemporary legend happenings in the news found and posted by our members. As the Internet is an ephemeral place, we will post titles and brief summaries of legend in the news from each quarter. We hope this will help you keep up with exciting popular developments, while also encouraging you to continue to submit the stories you find. (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/ISCLR>)

"Heroin Sold with McDonald's Happy Meals in Pittsburgh"

Although merely a report of an unusual and humorous narcotics crime, simply glancing at the headline without reading the entire story could spawn a full-blown legend cycle.

"Everyone Must Share This"

A Facebook post warning against the dangers of licking envelopes. A woman cut her tongue while licking envelopes. After it began to swell, the doctor found cockroach eggs from the envelope seal had nested in the woman's warm, moist tongue. Supposedly, envelope factories, their gum applicator trays, and their storage facilities are overrun with cockroaches.

"Satanist Blamed for Theft of Pope's Blood"

Thieves stole a rare vial of John Paul II's holy blood from a small church east of Rome. The blood is a remnant of the 1981 assassination attempt on the pope's life. An anti-occult advocate interviewed for the piece suspects it was the work of European Satanists.

"Vietnam Finally Nets Legendary Turtle for Treatment"

A Vietnamese legend tells of a giant turtle in the Hoan Kiem Lake who reclaimed king Le Loi's magic sword—the sword used to win independence from China's Ming Dynasty in the 15th century. The Vietnamese capital of Hanoi has since been built around the lake. In August, specialists and soldiers caught a sickly 440 lbs. turtle in hopes of nursing it back to health. Some believe this is the turtle that assisted Le Loi.

"This Incredible Picture that Proves Adolf Hitler Lived to 95 with his Brazilian Lover"

A blurry photograph taken in 1984 and purported to be of Adolf Hitler and his Brazilian lover. The legend states that Adolf Hitler fled from Germany to Paraguay, eventually making his way to Brazil.

Mystery of the Lyubov Orlova: Ghost Ship Full of "Cannibal Rats 'Could be Heading for British Coast'"

An abandoned Russian ship crewed only by diseased rats continues to sail the high seas. Although no one knows where the ship is, experts know it is still afloat because its lifeboats contain water-activated beacons. These beacons remain silent. Officials fear the consequences of a ship filled with starving, diseased, cannibalistic rats coming ashore on their coast.

"Monster Porn Is the Latest Wrinkle in Self-Published Smut"

A subgenre of erotica known as "monster porn" or "cryptozoological erotica" has followed the international success of *Fifty Shades of Grey*. Given special attention in the article is Virginia Wade's Cum for Bigfoot series, which has become a bestseller through Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing.

"Philip Morris Introduces Marlboro Marijuana Cigarettes"

A satire article about Philip Morris starting a new line of marijuana cigarettes. Based on its circulation and its comment section, the article seems to have been read as fact by many. Highlights include Phillip Morris working with drug lords in Mexico and Paraguay, setting aside \$15 billion to market the product to consumers, and planning a series of Super Bowl commercials.

"Is the Ku Klux Klan Distributing Lollipops with its Recruiting Literature?"

A report from Emily V. Gordon that the Ku Klux Klan is including lollipops in its recruitment literature in Winston-Salem. Includes a picture of the plastic baggie with flyer and Dum Dum lollipop.

"Everybody Panic!"

A *Washington Post* article listing six new ways children might be experimenting with mind-altering substances. In addition to "nose maggots" from grinding up Smarties and pretending to smoke them, the mini-panics list includes vodka-soaked tampons, jenkem (huffing human feces), I-dosing (getting high off of audio files), nutmeg highs (smoking, snorting, or eating), eyeball vodka (imbibing alcohol through one's eye), and butt-chugging (imbibing alcohol through one's anus).

"Get Out of the Car!"

A contemporary legend making the rounds on Facebook. An armed, elderly woman scares her hijackers in a grocery parking lot, only to realize it is not her car and she is in fact the hijacker.

"Tick Warning"

A hybrid contemporary legend-joke making the rounds on Facebook. The image warns against door-to-

door tick inspectors who will ask unsuspecting victims to take off their clothing and dance around. The creator of the warning was supposedly duped the day before.

“Exposing Online Fakes and Frauds of the Cryptozoological Kind – A Shukernature Top Ten Listing”

A list of ten instances of cryptozoological hoaxes. The article includes background information, images, and external links for each cryptid.

“This Is What Happens In Your Stomach When You Consume Packaged Ramen Noodles With a Deadly Preservative”

An image, article, and video making the rounds on Facebook. According to the image, Ramen contains tertiary-butyl hydroquinone, a deadly preservative found in inexpensive processed foods. The article claims this additive has a deleterious long-term effect on organs and can lead to the onset of cancer and tumors. The video shows the comparative reaction of a stomach while digesting processed ramen versus fresh, homemade ramen.

“Portsmouth Middle School Warns Parents about Smartie-snorting Epidemic and the Risk of Nasal Maggots”

Portsmouth Middle School in Portsmouth, Rhode Island sent a letter to parents warning that students may be snorting and smoking crushed Smarties candies. The letter warned of cuts, infections, nasal cavity scarring, lung irritation, allegoric reactions, nasal maggots, and future drug use.

“Ghost Hunters at ‘Haunted Hospital’”

After news that it was haunted circulated on social media, 200 students showed up at the Clayton Hospital, a 19th century hospital that closed in 2012. The police eventually dispersed the students.

“Australian Doctors Pull Inch-Long Cockroach from Man’s Ear”

In Darwin, Australia, an inch-long cockroach burrowed in Hendrik Helmer’s ear while he was sleeping. He woke in pain. After the self-administered vacuum cleaner and water flush both failed, Helmer rushed to the hospital, still not sure what was in his ear and if it was poisonous. Doctors were eventually able to remove the cockroach with forceps. They told Helmer they had never removed such a big insect from someone’s ear.

“Two of the Last Victims of the Satanic Ritual Abuse Panic Are Finally Free”

Dan and Fran Keller, convicted of horrible crimes against children, have been released from prison after a

judge decided they had not received a fair trial. The Kellers had been jailed for 22 years. They are two of the last victims of the satanic ritual abuse panics that ravaged the United States in the 1980s and 1990s.

“Pathetic Story of a Nigerian Man Whose Kidney Was Stolen”

A Nigerian variant of the organ theft legend. In this version, the twist is that the victim does not even realize what has occurred until weeks later when he becomes severely ill. The thieves (Indians, in this case) are such experts that they left no trace of their burglary.

“Colorado Toddler Hospitalized After Ingesting Marijuana”

After nibbling on a cookie that she reportedly found outdoors soon after the legalization of marijuana in Colorado, 2-year-old Evelyn Hernandez was taken to the hospital. She tested positive for THC. A search of her mother’s apartment found no marijuana, but it turned up no half-eaten cookie either.

“Santa Monica ‘Knockout Game’ Rumor is False, Cops Say”

A man was attacked without apparent motive while walking through Santa Monica. Some believe he was a victim of the “Knockout Game,” a competition where assailants attempt to knock out an unsuspecting victim,” but police are resisting this explanation.

“Big Foot has been Killed and is Going on Tour”

Rick Dyer claims to have killed Bigfoot in San Antonio in 2013. He now plans to go on tour with the purported remains. The article includes a photograph Dyer took of his Bigfoot’s face.

“Blizzard of Babies Nine Months After Storm? More Likely an Urban Legend”

Since the New York blackout of 1965, a legend has circulated in maternity wards that a rash of pregnancies will follow nine months after a blackout, blizzard, or ice storm. Nurses will count back nine months when encountered with a large number of deliveries, attempting to decipher the reason for all of the pregnancies. Although they do not cite a study or a scholar, the article goes on to claim that the alleged New York blackout boom proved to be statistically insignificant.

“Marijuana Overdoses Kill 37 in Colorado on First Day of Legalization”

The now infamous satire article that was widely circulated and reported as true following Colorado’s legalization of marijuana. The article claims a large number of persons died in Colorado on the first day of

legalization. The satirist relies on the reader to know that it is, in fact, impossible to overdose on marijuana.

“Is That Calamari You’re Eating — or Sliced Pig Rectum?”

Seafood fraud is rampant. Much calamari may, in fact, be “imitation calamari” or pig rectum. While the investigative reporters found no instances themselves, and the FDA says it would be illegal to serve hog rectum without labeling it as such, seafood fraud levels are high enough to make the legend easily believable.

REVIEWS

Eda Kalmre. *The Human Sausage Factory. A Study of Post-War Rumour in Tartu*. On the boundary of two worlds. Identity, freedom and moral imagination in the Baltics 34. Amsterdam New-York: Rodopi. x+180 p., € 40 / US\$ 56

While filing texts for the Estonian Folklore Archive, Eda Kalmre [hereafter EK] noticed in 2001 that several “recount the story of a post-war human sausage factory in Tartu.” When, in an interview published 21.12.2001 in the media, EK “referred to these texts as clear horror stories” (3), several people claimed that this was not folklore as they, or their parents have seen the factory and many people witnessed it at the time. The book describes and contextualizes the numerous interviews that followed and the quotations of these informants are smoothly spread all through the chapters. Of course the description of the details is linked to the belief in the story “they saw human hair or simply pig’s bristle, children’s clothes or simply rags” (5). Half of the informants believe in the story’s literal truth.

EK reflects on how much meaning and information the Human Sausage Factory story carried “Along with this old story the people told me their life stories – the full scale of human feelings and reminiscence came forward. For me the incident that had fallen into oblivion transformed through the stories of the many informants into a guide to the post-war period and the worlds of the people who lived at that time” (5).

Drawing on former studies of folklorists (Kõiva 1998) and mentions of close rumours (Brednich 1991: 100-104), EK explains her book’s purpose “it aims to observe the tradition as a process that may have highly varied meanings and different levels”. Her hypothesis is that these rumours are stories “characterized by a remarkable synthesis of reality and mythological imagination” (24).

In the evocation of the troubled times Tartu lived through when the human sausage factory rumour appeared, illustrations are smartly used in the book. Thus each chapter is followed by a set of three photographs illustrating important landmarks of the city before (in their glory), then (in ruins), and after (reconstructed or transformed).

Chapter 1 (31-37) discusses cannibalism rumors and earlier sources. Chapter 2 (41-62) sets the human sausage factory rumour in post-war images of violence and evil. Chapter 3 (65-84) analyzes the antagonistic relations opposing Estonians to the numerous “others” (Russians, Jews, Estonians returned from Russia, etc.). Chapter 4 (87-102) extends to food contamination rumours and discusses the human sausage factory rumour as a criticism of the Soviet economic system. Chapter 5 (105-128) presents the meanings of the human sausage factory rumour in the 21st Century. Chapter 6 (131-134) concludes by a discussion of rumour as metaphor for social truth.

EK explains how “the violence and evil that had seeped into Tartu [...] came to be regarded as synonymous with the human sausage factory” (62). Through this story reality was reconstructed, horror was named and this application of the Rumpelstilskin principle (Ellis 2003: xiv) gave the narrators a feeling of control over the situation which was thus explained “times were so bad that anything was possible, even selling sausages made from human meat” (62). She concludes on the stories’ persistence: “The world described in these stories was so powerful and influential that it created an environment that continues to function and to influence people’s memories, emotions and values even today” (134).

This important book, always moderate, does a great job of evocation of Estonia in the difficult late 1940s and in the present times. Its thorough analysis will help the reader to understand the persistence of close rumours in many societies today, rumours that go generally unnoticed but are briefly alluded to by the media when a lynching including “non-native” victims occur (Nosy-Be, Madagascar, October 2013).

Veronique Champion-Vincent (campionv@msh-paris.fr)

Quoted references

- Brednich, Rolf Wilhelm. 1991. *Die Maus im Jumbo-Jet. Neue sagenhafte Geschichten von heute*. Munchen: Beck.
- Ellis, Bill. 2003. *Aliens, Ghosts and Cults: Legends We Live*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Kõiva, Mare. 1998. “Bloodsuckers and Human Sausage Factories.” *FOAFTale News* 43.

Jaap Van Ginneken. *Stranger Danger and the Epidemic of Fear: On the Psychology of Recent Western Reactions to Others*. The Hague: Eleven International Publishing, 2013. 123 p., €23.50 / \$35.50 / £22.00

In this small book Jaap Van Ginneken, specialist of political and mass psychology (crowds, collective behavior, mood contagion) as well as of the images of other cultures and author of several books in Dutch and English, explores the psychological dimension of the fear of strangers and its links with the political and social developments since the pivotal event of 9/11. Several topics are treated – in an easy style but with many references to recent social sciences studies. The contemporary legend scholar will be especially concerned by the first essay “The Current Western Culture of Fear. The Increasing Obsession with Minor Risks” (1-43) which rounds up the rise of the culture of fear in Western societies. JVG shows how media hypes and scares are not just “silly season” phenomena but signal the fearful prism towards the outside world that we increasingly tend to adopt. In fields such as growing fear of nuclear plants and the radiation and contamination they might cause, or of “chemicals” (i.e. pesticides) as cause for cancer, one can sense the generalized growth of fear, in Western societies, in spite of the by-and-large safe environment they live in. The decline in trust parallels this growth of fear. An overview of recent scares, of contagion, of accident and disease, of child abuse and abduction, of violence and murder, of minorities document these remarks. The role of the media in the elaboration of these scares is analyzed. This analysis is very relevant for those studying contemporary legend, as the development of this culture of fear strongly influences contemporary legends’ developments and themes.

The following chapters successively discuss The Dutch position on immigration (53-86) and reactions to 9/11 both in American society (87-99) and World public opinion (101-121). JVG convincingly – and sadly – demonstrates how assertions of the clash of civilizations develop into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Veronique Champion-Vincent (championv@msh-paris.fr)

Editor’s Note: This review was originally meant for inclusion in *FTN* 81. I apologise for the error.

PLUGS, SHAMELESS AND OTHERWISE

Trevor J. Blank. *The Last Laugh: Folk Humor, Celebrity Culture, and Mass-Mediated Disasters in the Digital Age*. Folklore Studies in a Multicultural World Series. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013

“Blank argues that computer-mediated communication has helped to compensate for users’ sense of physical detachment in the “real” world, while generating newly meaningful and dynamic opportunities for the creation and dissemination of folklore. Drawing together recent developments in new media studies with the analytical tools of folklore studies, he makes a strong case for the significance to contemporary folklore of technologically driven trends in folk and mass culture.”

Lynne S. McNeill. *Folklore Rules: A Fun, Quick, and Useful Introduction to the Field of Academic Folklore Studies*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2013.

“Through these chapters students are guided toward a working understanding of the field, learn basic terms and techniques, and learn to perceive the knowledge base and discourse frame for materials used in folklore courses. *Folklore Rules* will appeal to instructors and students for a variety of courses, including introductory folklore and comparative studies as well as literature, anthropology, and composition classes that include a folklore component

BACK MATTER

FOAFTale News accepts short articles, reports, queries, reviews, and collectanea pertaining to contemporary legend. To submit, contact the Editor, Ian Brodie (ian_brodie@cbu.ca) or the Assistant Editor, David J. Puglia (djp5303@psu.edu).

All back issues of *FTN* can be found at <http://www.folklore.ee/FOAFTale>. Thanks as ever to Eda Kalmre and the *Haldjas* server at the Estonian Literary Museum for hosting.

Ian Brodie would like to thank David Puglia for his help in this issue and welcome him to his new position as Assistant Editor.