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INTRODUCTION: THE HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIP IN BELIEF NARRATIVES

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Since time immemorial, humans have lived in a mutual relationship with animals, and have, indeed, been dependent on them, that is, their help with domestic work, protection, the food and clothing they provide. The close link between animals and humans throughout history has been reflected in various forms of expressive culture such as ritual, dance, religious practices, art, and so forth, as well as in material culture and other everyday practices. Folklore around the world also reflects the close interrelation between humans and animals in various ways. In cosmogonic myths, animals are sometimes ascribed the role of the creators of the universe; in tales of magic they often figure as supernatural helpers to heroes and heroines on their journey towards a happy ending; they can mimic and mock human characters in animal tales; animals are sometimes addressed with requests in incantations, etc.

Legends in particular often address the close animal-human relationship: humans and animals can have sexual intercourse, which can result in offspring; humans can be temporarily, or even permanently, transformed into animals; a person's soul, when they are asleep or in a trance, can, according to belief narratives, temporarily detach from the human body, in a shape of a small animal, such as a fly, a butterfly, a mouse, etc.; strangers and foreigners, who come from beyond the boundaries of the community, can be perceived in terms of animals and ascribed animalistic attributes, and so on and so forth. Moreover, animals leave their traces not only in narratives that stem from the rural way of life which would foster human-animal contacts, but also in legends that spread in urban environments. One only needs to recall the "urban" or "contemporary" legends about albino alligators thriving in the New York City's sewer system, spiders that nest in people's dreadlocks, mice that people find in Coca-Cola, Kentucky fried rats, and so on.

The continuous significance of animals, and their relationships with humans in folklore, and more specifically in belief narratives, led the Belief Narrative Network (BNN) Committee to select it as the general topic of the BNN conference that was held as part of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) interim conference in Ragusa in 2018. While we initially expected the BNN members to focus especially on human-animal transformations, the proposals we received were much more varied than we had anticipated. In eight sessions, the participants discussed not only werewolves and other were-animals, but also narrative expressions of sameness and otherness through the images and notions of animals, respectful inter-species cooperation, and many other roles that animals fulfil in belief narratives and folklore in general (see Koski 2018: 316–319). The papers presented at the conference covered a huge geographical scope and time-span. From those discussing ancient mythical texts to those that focused on contemporary narratives, the authors unravelled the underlying symbolism and connotations of the animals in the narratives, discussed the messages these narratives convey and their meanings within a wider social context, but also problematized Western attitudes towards animals in the past and present, and offered new ways of looking at and treating animal cultures in the future. The enthusiastic responses of the BNN members, and the ample number of submissions to the conference titled "Human-Animal Relationship in Belief Narratives" have proved that the Committee obviously made the right decision in dedicating the BNN conference to this particular theme.

This issue of *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* therefore features seven papers that were presented at the BNN conference in Ragusa. They approach the topic of human-animal relationships from very different perspectives and angles, and within various genres of folklore.

Argentinian folklorist **María Inés Palleiro** focuses on Argentinian animal tales and argues that animal tales, in their local transformations, are often intertwined with belief narratives as well as with ritual discourse. Based on an analysis of several animal tales she demonstrates that it is precisely through this intertwinement that the narrators are able to express their local identity. Moreover, in order to make the role of local beliefs in the transformation of narrative patterns and their expression of vernacular identities visible, Palleiro even suggests that the classification of Argentinean folktales in a catalogue of tale types should not (only) follow ATU tale types, but should be carried out within narrative matrices, i.e., "sets of thematic, structural, and stylistic features which serve as a pre-text to be transformed in different contexts".

Japanese folklorist **Fumihiko Kobayashi** discusses the ambivalent views of mice and rats in Japanese history. While on the one hand they were detested and killed in daily life, they have had a favourable reputation in the folk tradi-

tion, as revealed at least since the eighth century's mythological chronicle *Kojiki*. Kobayashi argues that the positive view of vermin stems from the notion of a hidden fantasy world where they were believed to keep treasures, including a limitless supply of foodstuffs that they had hoarded. While covering various oral and written genres as well as visual forms throughout a long span of Japanese history in which the favourable attitude towards mice and rats has been expressed, he particularly focuses on toys, which he considers a "three-dimensional form of narrative". Based on the examination of toys in the form of rats and mice within their socio-historical context, he argues that they have provided people with a means to play out their elaborate fantasies of the kind of utopia of abundance and wealth that usually contrast with their real lives.

An even larger time-span, from pre-history up until the present day, is covered in the paper on the symbolism of the frog/toad by Croatian ethnologist **Jelka Vince Pallua**. Based on a comparative perspective of not only folklore, but also archaeological, ethnological, and linguistic data stemming from various parts of Europe, and occasionally even from other parts of the world, yet with a primary focus on Croatia, the author argues for their "female" connotations, i.e., fertility, fecundity, regeneration, renewal of life and resurrection, pregnancy, etc. The longevity of the connotations associated with these animals in traditional cultures is further attested in Christianity, within the framework of which their image has been replaced by the Virgin Mary, the author argues.

In contrast to the previous two authors, the scope of **Mirjam Mencej**'s paper is quite narrow. It focuses on one particular legend about a wrestling match between a human and a werewolf that the author recently recorded while doing fieldwork in rural Herzegovina. Based on an analysis of the belief narrative, narrated by her Croat interlocutor as the "pure truth", she aims to demonstrate the latent inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions between Catholics (Croats) and Muslims (Bosniaks) in Bosnia and Herzegovina as revealed in the story.

The next paper, by Estonian folklorist **Reet Hiiemäe**, discusses the notion of the spirit-animal, which is rather popular in contemporary Estonian culture. The lack of points of commonality between contemporary notions of spirit-animal and the notion of a soul in the shape of an animal (although often known under the same name) in Estonian (and other European) pre-twentieth-century folklore suggests that contemporary Estonian narratives and beliefs related to spirit-animals are not a continued tradition, but rather an innovation, an influence of modern Western spirituality. The notion of spirit-animal as supernatural protector and guide has come to Estonia mainly from neo-shamanism, based on Native American shamanism, the author argues. As spiritual protectors and means of self-empowerment, spirit-animals are important in contemporary Estonian culture insofar as they have a therapeutic value, especially for individuals who are overcoming psychological traumas.

Finally, the last two papers follow a radical new development in animal studies and posthumanist scholarly perception of animals, which, in contrast to traditional Western discourse and practices, treats animals as equal to human beings. Folklorist and well-known Croatian animal rights activist **Suzana Marjanić** combines a zoofolkloristic and ethnozoological approach with the perspective of contemporary critical animal studies. By showing that cockroaches can have different value and connotations in the folklore of different cultures, she demonstrates how the negative attitude towards them in Croatian folklore found its continued expression in contemporary aggressive use of insecticides and their advertising strategies based on militant language. Moreover, by demonstrating scientific educational projects and contemporary art performances in which cockroaches are subjected to torture and killing, she is able to shrewdly point out and condemn speciesist attitudes and practices towards insects in contemporary Western society.

In the final article, U.S. folklorist **Tok Thompson** argues that we can expand our understanding of animals by referencing the ways in which mythology has shaped our views, with a comparative case study contrasting Abrahamic and Native American mythologies and worldviews. After offering a brief overview of current movements and the contributions of posthumanism, he seeks, by exploring cosmogonic myths, to further connect the posthumanist and postcolonial perspectives with those in mythological theoretical studies that are re-appraising the role of non-human agency. Mythology – as ideology – has had a continuing and profound impact on Western society and culture, and has to a large extent affected our thinking about animals, Thompson argues. While Western anthropocentric ontology is largely influenced by Abrahamic mythic traditions, in which the universe is created by a male human god, non-Western cultures have often been informed by cosmogonic myths and other mythic traditions in which it was non-human actors, i.e., animals that played the main role in the creation, as is the case with Native American mythical traditions. Like the previous author, Thompson too points to the groundlessness and inadmissibility of the anthropocentric Western perspective and its superior attitude towards animals, or rather “other-than-human-cultures” in general. Moreover, he believes that postcolonial philosophy and posthumanism will help the West learn from previously overlooked systems of knowledge and thus better understand the close interconnections between humans and animals.

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ANIMALS, TALE TYPES, AND BELIEF NARRATIVES IN ARGENTINEAN FOLKLORE

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Abstract: Tales regarding transformations of animals, expressing social beliefs related to the relationship between humans, animals, and supernatural beings, are spread all over the world. This paper deals with the intertwining of ritual discourse, animal tales, and other folk narrative genres, all of which express the differential identities of local groups. The aim is to discuss the relevance of belief narratives in an Argentinean catalogue of tale types, whose first volume includes animal tales. Following the models of Monika Kropej Telban (2015) and Camiño Noia Campos (2010), who include in their indexes of Slovenian and Galician folktales textual examples of each tale type, my purpose is to show the local transformation of universal tale types in the catalogue of Argentinean folktales. I analyze textual examples of this blend between tale types and belief narratives with the aim of proposing a classification of Argentinean folktales not only into tale types but also into narrative matrices, which share thematic, structural, and stylistic features. The goal of this folk narrative catalogue is to show how local beliefs transform universal narrative patterns into expressions of vernacular identities.

To contextualize this approach concentrating on the interweaving of animal tales and belief narratives, I also present a diachronic overview of Argentinean folk narrative collections focused on animal tales, from 1921 up to the present day.

Keywords: animal tales, Argentina, belief narratives, folklore genres, tale types

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL STARTING POINTS

When considering the social restraint in the definition of folklore, Abrahams (1971: 16) characterizes, as a point of departure, folklore as a sum of all traditional expressions and implementations of knowledge operating within a community, comprising an embodiment of social beliefs. In this sense, he stresses that knowledge, to be transmitted, must be embodied; whereas institutions or value structures are abstracts of culture, folklore is an aggregate of concretions.

When dealing specifically with folklore genres, he takes into consideration the content and structure of performances, in a complex interweaving of simple forms. Folk narratives, as verbal expressions of social identities, may be either highly codified items, such as folktales and fairy tales, or simply codified ones, such as legends and anecdotes. Many animal tales show a mixture of these genres in a polyphonic message, in which fictional creatures cross the boundaries of belief discourse. In fact, in Argentinean folktales, in which fairies do not exist, there is an interweaving between animal tales, marvelous tales, and belief narrative genres such as legends. Linda Dégh (2001) stresses that all legends are based on beliefs, to the extent that she considers the term "belief legend" as a pleonasm. All these narrative genres are closely related to daily experiences and beliefs in the societies in which they circulate (Blécourt 2012), and serve as reaffirmations of commonly held values of the group to whose tradition they belong (Tangherlini 1990).

All these considerations reveal the ways folk narrative patterns change constantly while responding to the exigencies of different societies. From this standpoint, I focus attention on those narratives that explore the boundaries of historic experience with the cognitive modality of belief, considered as a modal expression in which the true value of discourse depends on social consensus (Greimas & Courtès 1982; Palleiro 2008a). According to my classificatory goal, such interweaving between different narrative genres that can be observed in concrete performances should be included in a catalogue of folktales.

RHETORIC OF BELIEVING AND THE QUEST OF TRUTH

As it is well known, Aristotle characterizes rhetoric as the art of persuasion, whose counterpart is dialectics, based on logic syllogism, also pointing out that the aim of rhetoric is not to reason but to convince and appeal to beliefs (Butcher 1902). Rhetoric deals also with anomalies (Ducrot & Todorov 1983) that refer to the rupture of an epistemic paradigm. From this starting point, I focus the attention of this paper on the narrative construction of beliefs whose true value depends not on reasoning but on a collective agreement.

When speaking about beliefs, it is worth considering the argumentative use of metaphors, both as figures of language and as cognitive issues. From this perspective, metaphors constitute anomalous expressions which serve as resources of persuasion not only in literary speech but also in daily life (Lakoff & Johnson 1987). Belief narratives can be considered as discursive manifestations of such anomalies which go beyond the borders of epistemic knowledge, towards the ontological arenas of belief. Narrative, as a cognitive principle, which organizes

experience in a sequential order (Bruner 2003), provides structural patterns to articulate social beliefs in discursive formats.

The dimension of truth leads to the problem of believability (Palleiro 2008a; Astapova 2015). Since the true statement of belief depends on a social or interpersonal agreement, in belief narratives there is always a quest for such believability, supported by argumentative strategies to make the discourse accepted. In this way, belief narratives are based on modal affirmations oriented to convince the addressee about the credibility of the message. Another important aspect which factors into believability is the relationship between fiction and reality. It is worth considering Todorov's distinction between the categories of "marvelous", "uncanny", and "fantastic" tales (Todorov 1981 [1980]).[1] While marvelous tales belong to the dominion of fiction, and uncanny ones remain within the limits of real experience, fantastic ones, instead, belong to a vanishing zone in which there is a gap between reality and fiction. When dealing with supernatural beliefs, Hufford (1995) considers such vanishing narratives as rooted in real experiences, representing discursive attempts to explain out of ordinary facts. Likewise, other belief genres such as myths are experienced as real (Siikala 2002). White (1973) focuses attention on the poetics of history, dealing with fictional elaboration of reality, in a dynamic tension with the illusion of reality of fiction (Barthes et al. 1970; Barthes 1971). Such dynamics can be identified in Argentinean living folktales which show the interweaving between fiction and reality in folk narrative, opening the boundaries of folklore genres such as *Märchen* towards fantastic tales and legendary discourse. A catalogue of Argentinean folktales, then, should include such living examples of folk narratives, in which fiction and reality are mixed up in the flexible arenas of belief.

DETAILS, MATRICES, AND HYPERTEXTUAL ITINERARIES IN FOLK NARRATIVE

From a formalist perspective, Jan Mukařovský (1977) describes the structure of folk art as a "mosaic-like" heterogeneous addition of semantic units, also underlining the semantic relevance of apparently irrelevant changing details as the basic semantic issue in folk art. In the constructive process of folktales, such details act as mnemonic tracks, which activate totally or fragmentarily thematic, compositional, and stylistic features, whose combination constitutes a folk narrative matrix. This concept of "narrative matrix" adds to the thematic regularities classified into tale types, structural and rhetoric issues identified by intertextual comparison of different narrative versions (Palleiro 2004, 2018).[2] Thus characterized, each matrix constitutes a pre-textual pattern stored in

the memory of folk narrators. Such pre-textual patterns, comprising thematic, compositional and stylistic features stabilized along the diachronic process of oral (and written) tradition, are transformed with the addition, suppression, substitution, or displacement of these changing details, generating alternative itineraries in different communicative situations. In this way, each narrative matrix acts as a germinal nucleus of versions and variants displayed in different contexts (Palleiro 2004, 2018). The folktale's genesis is thus based on the transformation of narrative matrices in new cultural environments, expressing the differential identity of each social group (Palleiro 2018). However, the concept of narrative matrix is a classifying issue, deployed with the aim of cataloging folktales in an archive. Following Derrida (1997), I deem the archive in its etymological sense of *arkhé* – or cognitive organization principle – as well as in the sense of a material and symbolic space for storing memory.

Thus characterized, the matrix turns out to be similar to the disseminative structure of a virtual hypertext, whose flexible links favor the generation of alternative routes.[3] From this starting point, the structure of animal tales and other subgenres of *Märchen* can be compared to that of hypertext, characterized by Nelson (1992) as a flexible combination of textual blocks, freely set by the user of a virtual system. The dispersive itineraries of the folktale, in their different versions and variants, reflect the flexile linkages of memory (Assman 1997 [1992]; Palleiro 2004, 2018). My proposal of classifying folk narratives into matrices emphasizes the transformation of thematic topics, structural patterns, and rhetoric strategies as a result of the influence of social beliefs bound to vernacular contexts (Palleiro 2004, 2008a, 2018).

ANIMAL TALES IN ARGENTINEAN FOLK NARRATIVE COLLECTIONS: CHANGING DETAILS AND CONTEXTUAL VARIANTS THROUGH A DIACHRONIC OVERVIEW

Animal tales are distinctive expressions of the most diverse cultures.[4] They can be found both in early Eastern cultures and in Greco-Roman antiquity, as well as from the Christian Middle Ages up to the present times in itineraries which show intercultural crossroads between Eastern and Western traditions (Palleiro 1998). Such crossroads can also be found in Argentinean animal tales, which reflect the intertwining between European and vernacular indigenous cultures, in an original blend which is the distinctive feature of national identity.

The main protagonist of Argentinean animal tales is neither the wolf nor the bear or jackal, as in European and Asian ones, but the fox, who is the protagonist of two different cycles. In one of them, the fox assumes the role of a large

and foolish animal (such as attributed to the wolf in the ATU Index), and in the other one, he plays the part of a smaller, cunning animal threatened by a bigger and mightier tiger. In the cycle of "The Fox and the Tiger" the cunning fox defeats the tiger, representing the victory of the intelligence over the force. In another cycle, the fox is mocked by smaller animals, representing also the victory of cleverness over the force. Other characters of Argentinean animal tales belong to the vernacular fauna. Many of them have local or indigenous names, such as the armadillo (*quirquincho* or *peludo*) or the ostrich (s*uri*, in indigenous *Quechua* language). The role of the fox's nemesis is played not only by the tiger, but also by the armadillo, the lion, or even by different local birds.

In animal tales across cultures, the dominant rhetorical strategy is personification, whereby animals can think and speak in human language. In indigenous cultures, such human embodiment of animals is connected with a worldview in which animals are considered as representations of supernatural forces. In Hispanic tradition folk narrators give human names to the animals; the fox is called John, his wife is Jane, and their children are the Johnnies. This name is also well spread in Latin America and particularly in Argentina, where the fox also receives the vernacular affective diminutive of *Juancho*.

In the preface to the main folk narrative collection, *Cuentos y leyendas populares de la Argentina* (Argentinean popular folktales and legends), Berta Elena Vidal de Battini (1980) points out that animal folktales such as the ones of the fox cycle arrived in Argentina with Spanish conquerors in the early sixteenth century, and such cultural heritage is reflected in the way that narrators name the fox *Juancho*, and other vernacular animals, like the tiger (*Simon*), and a local bird (*Alonsito*).[5]

In short, animal tales can be characterized as a folk narrative genre – whose protagonists are animals – that reflects the atmosphere of rural life through the humanization of the vernacular fauna (Kovacci 2000). Such personified animals carry out a series of actions articulated in sequences, which take place in a fictional world. Each version is organized according to narrative patterns or "matrices" stabilized in the diachronic transmission process, which includes scriptural registers and recreations. In this paper, I deal with animal tales collected in Argentinian alternative versions and variants of such narrative patterns whose transformation, connected with local beliefs, expresses the differential identity of vernacular cultures.

To contextualize this approach to the intertwining between animal tales and belief narratives, I will provide a quick diachronic overview of Argentinean folk narrative collections, from 1921 up to the present day. Such collections can be divided into two groups: those including folk narratives of the whole Argentinean territory or "general collections", and those including only regional narrative material.

ANIMAL TALES IN GENERAL FOLK NARRATIVE COLLECTIONS

In 1921, the National Council of Education sent a questionnaire to the teachers of all public primary schools of Argentina, resulting in the *1921 Folkloric Survey,* which became the first systematic collection of Argentinean Folklore. Schoolteachers had been convoked to work as intermediaries between their pupils and the institutional authorities of the National Council of Education. They were supposed to collect and register folkloric material from young students and their families in written manuscripts, following a series of institutional instructions. Such instructions responded to the nineteenth-century collectionist paradigm of folklore centered on compilation rather than on textual interpretation (Palleiro 2008b). The instructions sent to the teachers by the National Council of Education asked them to compile all the cultural products considered at that time as the most important folk narrative genres: crafts, games, beliefs, customs, rites, and handicrafts, as well as literary forms in verse and prose such as tales or fictions. Folktales were then classified according to thematic parameters, similar to the ones of AaTh Tale Type Index (1928). Both the instructions and the thematic contents of this survey have been listed in a catalogue, published in 1925 under the title of *Catálogo de la Colección De Folklore donada por el Consejo Nacional De Educación*, by the Institute of Argentinean Literature at the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature at Buenos Aires University.

According to the aforementioned instructions sent to the teachers, animal tales were supposed to be classified as *Märchen*, along with "marvelous, religious, moral, scary tales, human tales and jokes".[6] Although these are not appropriate terms of subgenres, this is the way in which they were named in the instructions sent by the National Council of Education. Such instructions asked the teachers, who acted as collectors, to identify versions and variants of an *urform*; that is to say, to collect different local expressions of a hypothetical original, and the earliest universal folktale pattern then spread in different areas, according to the historic-geographic method of the Finnish school.

The whole survey, kept in a vast manuscript archive now located at the National Institute of Anthropology and Latin American Thought of Buenos Aires, gave place to different textual re-writings.

The *1921 Folkloric Survey* acted as a pre-text for textual rewritings, such as the two series of *Cuentos folklóricos de la Argentina* (Argentinean folktales) by Susana Chertudi (1960, 1964), comprising two volumes, whose first part includes animal tales. The author of this collection is a researcher in the field of folk narrative, with university studies in literature and folklore. The content itself is mainly a textual re-writing of selected narrative material

from the *1921 Folkloric Survey*, with precise classificatory criteria and the addition of versions collected during fieldwork. According to the paradigm of the nineteenth-century Finnish school, this collection contains two "series" or volumes of 100 versions each, classified according to the AaTh Thematic Indexes of Tale Types (1961 [1928]). As previously mentioned, animal tales merely is the first thematic category in this collection, the other categories being marvelous, religious, human, and formula tales. The tales have been classified according to the parameters devised by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson (AaTh 1961 [1928]), Stith Thompson (1955–1958), and Ralph Boggs (1930), and the collection has been organized with an anthological criterion that privileges the selection of tales over the analytical interpretation.[7] The first series includes 34 animal tales all featuring the fox as the main character, while the second series includes 30 animal tales, in which the main character is also the fox. Both series include a list of lexical regionalisms, also providing, in footnotes, short explanations regarding phonic, syntactic, and morphological forms of local speech.[8] In both series of tales, the fox is the focal point of two different cycles within those series. In one cycle he acts as the bigger animal defeated by the little and clever armadillo (*quirquincho*), while in the other he acts as the smaller and cleverer animal who manages to defeat the bigger and more foolish tiger.

The method of filing up narrative versions of this collection, which contains folk narratives of the whole Argentinean territory, focuses on the geographical diffusion of tale types. Animal tales is the largest category of both series, but it is shorter in length than marvelous tales. Some remarks included in the introduction focus on the structure of the folktale as well as the style and performance of folk narrators, revealing the emergence of new paradigms oriented towards a more communicative dimension of folklore.

Animal tales can also be found in the largest Argentinean folk narrative collection, *Cuentos y leyendas populares de la Argentina* (Folktales and popular legends of Argentina) by Berta Elena Vidal de Battini. This nine-volume collection, edited in Buenos Aires by *Ediciones Culturales Argentinas* (1980–1984), with a tenth volume published posthumously in 1995, includes two folk narrative genres: folktales and legends. They are ordered, as the previous volumes, with an anthological criterion that privileges the register over the interpretation and analysis. Battini, who served as both the inspector of primary schools of the National Council of Education and as a research professor of the Hispanic philology and regional dialectology at Buenos Aires University, collected folk narratives of all Argentinean regions and provinces. The method for obtaining and registering folk narrative material was a written questionnaire sent to teachers of primary public schools of all Argentinean provinces, which followed

the model of the *1921 Folkloric Survey* (Consejo Nacional de Educación 1921) with the addition of linguistic and dialectological issues.[9] The way of classifying folktales was bound to the historic-geographic method of the Finnish school, and to AaTh thematic parameters. According to these parameters, folktales have been divided into: 1) animal tales; 2) magical or marvelous tales; 3) human[10], moral, and other tales; 4) tales of popular characters like *Pedro de Urdemales*; 5) accumulative tales; 6) jokes; 7) riddles; 8) *novellae*[11]; and 9) indigenous narratives. When classifying legends, Vidal de Battini adopted her own criteria. These, as well, are based on thematic parameters, according to which legends have been thematically divided into those referring to 1) places; 2) stones and hills; 3) lakes and rivers; 4) the lost city; 5) hidden treasures; 6) plants; 7) animals; and 8) heaven. Animal tales have been included in the first three volumes of this collection, which contain 841 versions and variants of animal tales, classified according to AaTh parameters. Each group of versions includes a "note" which summarizes the main thematic topics, along with a reference to Aarne-Thompson's tale type number and AaTh thematic description translated into Spanish, as well as a map showing the geographic area across which the tale type spreads.

As is true of many previous collections, the main character of animal tales in this collection is also the fox. In this collection, he is the protagonist of two different cycles: the one of the fox and the armadillo (*quirquincho*), in which the armadillo outwits the fox, and the one of the fox and the tiger, in which the fox defeats the tiger. Legends deal with mythical characters of vernacular cultures such as the *lobizón* (werewolf), the *uturunco* (a sort of tiger with devilish powers), and the *mulánima* (the "soul-mule", considered as a zoomorphic metamorphosis of the Devil).

The technique of collecting material by means of a "questionnaire" addressed to the "informers", which privileges the semantic content both over the style and over the narrative *performance*, reveals the impact of the same epistemic paradigm. Vidal de Battini included interesting remarks dealing with the artistic talent of vernacular narrators and references to the cultural environment in her footnotes, showing an opening to a contextualist paradigm.[12]

ANIMAL TALES IN REGIONAL CONTEXTS

Once the monumental folk narrative corpus of all Argentina was created/collected/codified in the *1921 Folkloric Survey*, contemporary Argentinean collections restricted the area of gathering folk material to regional contexts. Subsequent efforts followed the guidelines of previous collectors such as José Carrizo and

Guillermo Perkins Hidalgo (1948), whose research has been developed in Corrientes and Catamarca provinces (northeast and northwest Argentina), and Juan Agüero Vera (1965), whose activity as a collector of folk narrative has been focused in the Argentinean province of La Rioja (northwestern Argentina). These new collections reveal the impact of communicative paradigms of folklore focused in contextual variations.

One of the contemporary collections that best exemplifies the tensions between different paradigms of organizing folk narrative material is *Cuentos y leyendas de La Pampa* (Tales and legends from La Pampa) by Nélida Giovannoni and Maria Inés Poduje (1988). As announced in the title, this text is a regional folk narrative collection which includes tales and legends of La Pampa province. The classification parameters it utilizes for the folktales are similar to the ones adopted by Vidal de Battini, based on Aarne and Thompson's Tale Type Index. Like Vidal de Battini, Giovannoni and Poduje include in their collection folktales and legends, privileging anthological criteria rather than an analytical approach in the same ways.

"Animal tales" is the first taxonomic category of this local anthology, whose texts include vernacular denomination of animals such as peludo (armadillo). The collection includes 59 versions of animal tales, as well as many legends whose protagonists are drawn from local fauna: snakes, birds, mosquitoes, goats, oxen, and owls. Other folktales in this collection are human tales, jokes, tales of the Hispanic trickster Pedro de Urdemales, fool's tales, tall tales, fictional tales or novellae[13], marvelous, religious, and moral tales. The focus in contextual variations is a distinctive feature of this volume, whose texts include registers of regional speech and references to vernacular fauna, which contextualize universal tale types in the local environment. Local contextualization of universal tale types is one of the main goals of this work. As in Susana Chertudi's (1960, 1964) and Berta Elena Vidal de Battini's (1980–1984) collections, the main character of animal tales is the fox, who acts as a protagonist in two cycles: the first is that of the fox and the armadillo, in which the fox is the antagonist, tricked by the smaller and cleverer armadillo. The second is that of the fox and the tiger, in which the fox acts as the protagonist, who manages to cheat the tiger who is bigger and more foolish than him. Similar to the format of Chertudi's collection, the narratives are based on re-writings of manuscript texts in the 1921 Folkloric Survey responses from the La Pampa region, with the addition of new versions and variants registered in fieldwork by the collectors.

Giovannoni and Poduje (1988) classified animal tales into the following groups: "The fox and the peludo" (16 versions), "The fox and the tiger" (12 versions), "The fox and the partridge" (10 versions), "Other tales of the fox" (20 versions), and "Tales of different animals" (11 versions). In certain animal tales,

folk types are mixed up with legendary discourse, in an intertwinement of folktales and belief narratives. One notable example of this intertwining can be found in the tale "The fox learns to whistle like the partridge" (AaTh type 58**: "Fox asks thrush to teach him to sing"), narrated by Marcial Fleytoux, and collected by Giovannoni and Poduje in 1986.[14] This is an etiological narrative which explains that the shape of the fox's mouth seems to be a broken peak because the fox had it sewn shut when trying to whistle like the partridge (Giovannoni & Poduje 1988: 64). On the other hand, motifs appearing in animal tales can also be found in the legends, as it happens with the legend of the goat.[15] The goat is said to be a demonic being created by the Devil himself as part of a contest with God, according to the version narrated by Tomás Domínguez in 1986 and collected in Santa Rosa, La Pampa, by Giovannoni and Poduje (Giovannoni & Poduje 1988: 280–282). It is worth noticing that the versions that show the interweaving with belief narratives are those registered by the collectors during fieldwork, and not those transcribed from the *1921 Folkloric Survey*, which have been corrected by the collectors in order to fit with "pure" taxonomic categories, such as animal tales or legends.[16]

TEXTUALIZATION PROCESSES IN MY OWN ARCHIVES OF ARGENTINEAN FOLKTALES

My own edited archives consist of three anthologies of animal and marvelous tales (Palleiro 1990, 1992, 1998) and three critical editions: one of marvelous tales (Palleiro 2011), one of supernatural tales and belief narratives (Palleiro 2004), and one of animal, marvelous, and human tales, with the addition of an analytical study (Palleiro 2016). All of these collections contain the results of more than twenty years of fieldwork in both rural and urban Argentinean contexts. The anthologies, oriented to a wide range of readers, include more than 50 folktales classified according to the AaTh parameters and Thompson's Indexes of Tale Types and Motifs, updated in the last version according to Hans-Jörg Uther's 2004 revision of Aarne-Thompson's Tale Type Index (ATU 2004). The first two collections of folktales are *El escondite mágico y otros cuentos folklóricos riojanos* (The magic hiding-place and other Argentinean folktales), edited in 1990, and *Los tres pelos del diablo: Cuentos maravillosos de la cultura popular Argentina* (The three hairs from the Devil's beard: Marvelous tales from Argentinean popular culture), edited in 1992, mainly comprised of marvelous tales, while the third edition, *La fiesta en el cielo: Cuentos populares de animales* (The heavenly banquet: Animal folktales), edited in 1998, consists of 20 animal tales, one of which is analyzed in the following section. These animal

tales have been organized into thematic groups: "The fox and the *quirquincho*" (armadillo), "The fox and the tiger", "The tiger and the *quirquincho*", "The fox and other animals", and "Tales of other animals". The main critical edition, whose title is *Fue una historia real: Itinerarios de un archivo* (It has been a real case: An archive with different itineraries), edited in 2004, contains the results of a post-doctoral research, based on the analytical study of 20 oral versions of a same narrative matrix, "Meeting Death", which shares some thematic features with Thompson E 332.3.3.1., "The vanishing hitchhiker". Although that text does not contain animal tales, I mention it because I deal here with the same concepts I work with when classifying animal tales. The "narrative matrix" is characterized as a set of thematic, structural, and stylistic features which serve as a pre-text to be transformed in different contexts (Palleiro 2004, 2018). An updated rewriting of this work, comprising new versions dealing with belief narratives collected in Argentinean and European contexts was published in 2018, under the title of *La dama fantasma: Los laberintos de la memoria en el relato folklórico* (The lady ghost: Folktale and the labyrinths of memory).

My largest collection, *El cuento folklórico riojano: Una aproximación a la narrativa oral* (Folktales from La Rioja, Argentina: An introductory approach to oral narrative), published in 2016, contains an updated rewriting of my doctoral thesis, focused on the study of contextual variations in a collection of Argentinean folk narratives, including animal tales, collected during fieldwork in the Argentinean province of La Rioja. The analysis of animal tales is based on an intertextual comparison with belief narratives regarding the Salamanca local rite, in which men and women suffer a metamorphosis into different animals, as I have explained (Palleiro 2016: 217–264). The climax of this ritual ceremony is the participants making deals with the Devil, who appears in the form of different animals, reflecting a local cosmology in which animals and human beings are closely bound to supernatural forces.

ANIMAL TALES IN INDIGENOUS FOLK NARRATIVE COLLECTIONS

Argentinean folk narrative collections also comprise oral tales belonging to indigenous cultures, transcribed into both Spanish and vernacular written versions by different scholars.[17] Else Maria Waag is a pioneering scholar who privileges the analytical dimension and whose work, *Tres entidades "weküfu" en la cultura mapuche* (Three weküfu entities in Mapuche culture), focuses on the study of the cultural representations of Mapuche evil entities in vernacular narratives (Waag 1982).[18]

Martha Blache (1991 [1982]) developed this analytic trend of folklore studies in *Estructura del miedo: Narrativas folklóricas guaraníticas* (Structure of fear: Guaranytical folk narratives). Such systematic work, based on her doctoral thesis defended at Indiana University in 1977, shifted the perspective of Argentinean folk narrative studies from the one based on anthological criterion and associated with a collectionist paradigm of folklore, towards the one based on analytical interpretations of vernacular folk narrative material. Her analysis is centered on a semiotic approach to a corpus of legends recorded in Spanish from Paraguayan migrants belonging to the Guaranytical culture in Buenos Aires. In such legends, animals are represented as anthropomorphized mythical beings, such as the *Yasí-yateré*, a sort of South American crocodile considered as a mythical creature.[19]

A relevant register of indigenous Mapuche folktales can be found in *Testimonios de los últimos ranqueles* (Testimonies of the last Ranqueles), compiled by Ana Fernández Garay (2002). Garay privileges the linguistic dimension of analysis, focusing her interest on the Ranquel variant of the Mapuche language. This work presents a bilingual edition, including a written transcription and translation of oral vernacular registers into Spanish, in varying levels of complexity. The compilation provides not only verbal transcriptions but also audio recordings in an enclosed CD, which were originally collected on the indigenous reservation of Colonia Emilio Mitre in 1983. The reservation is located in the Argentinean province of La Pampa. Folktales, comprised of mostly animal tales, whose main character is usually the fox, are presented as examples of the Ranquel variant of the Mapuche language.

The same trend of research in Mapuche oral expressions has been followed by Marisa Malvestitti, whose doctoral thesis, supervised by Dr. Fernández Garay in Buenos Aires University,[20] deals with written transcriptions of oral narratives, including animal tales. The thesis was published under the title *Kiñe Rakizuam: Textos Mapuche de la Línea Sur* (The Mapuche southern variant) in 2005. In another study conducted in collaboration with Antonio Díaz-Fernández (2009), Malvestitti deals with the narrative analysis of Mapuche animal tales such as "Cuento del zorro y la martineta" (Tale of the fox and the *martineta*).[21] This vernacular version, which shares some thematic distinctive features with AaTh 58**, "The partridge teaches the fox to whistle", presents a flexible sequential order and rhetoric strategies connected with the *epew*. The *epew* is a Mapuche folklore genre which can be characterized as a sort of vernacular saga whose protagonists are animals of the local fauna. In the narrative plot, these personified animals deal with conflicts which reflect the struggles of indigenous people in everyday life (Malvestitti & Diaz Fernandez as cited in Palleiro & Fischman 2009: 144). This and other texts, accurately registered by Malvestitti and Diaz

Fernández both in Spanish and in the Mapuche language show an interweaving with aboriginal myths regarding personification of animals (Malvestitti & Diaz Fernandez as cited in Palleiro & Fischman 2009: 197–200).

All these collections of animal tales in vernacular languages, whose main goal is to register linguistic variants of indigenous languages facing extinction, reveal the impact of a communicative approach to folklore, based on the ethnography of speaking developed by Dell Hymes (1972).

TRENDS AND TOPICS IN ARGENTINEAN ANIMAL TALES AND FOLK NARRATIVE COLLECTIONS

This brief diachronic survey across Argentinean collections of animal tales shows some trends in the classification of folk narrative material. The first collections include narratives of the whole country, classified into thematic tale types and organized according to anthological criteria. In these anthological collections, which reflect a strong influence of the nineteenth-century Finnish school, animal tales along with marvelous ones – whose register is based on the re-writing of orality – are the most relevant narrative genres. These texts include footnotes explaining the meaning of vernacular lexical forms, mainly referred to in the local fauna. Philological and historic-geographic approaches dominate in such collections, published in a period during which the main goal of folklorists was registering the texts rather than analyzing contextual performances.[22]

Contemporary collections, instead, reveal the impact of contextualist paradigms, centered in the discursive construction of the narrative message. Such collections also include belief narratives whose protagonists are animals, and some of them even provide different stages of textualizing oral registers. Others include registers of indigenous languages and vernacular narrative genres facing extinction. Nowadays, folk researchers tend to restrict the scope of collecting folk narrative material to specific contexts, with an accurate methodology of registering and analyzing a shorter range of texts both from a linguistic and ethnographic perspective. The previous collectors, instead, used questionnaires to collect and document a wider range of narratives in extended areas of the whole country, with the help of cartographic techniques.

Another trend deals with the broadening of the paradigm of folklore, associated with the oral and anonymous production located in a rural environment, towards the production located also in urban contexts, considered with an analytical approach which highlights the stylistic hallmarks of individual folk narrators.

This overview of vernacular collections reveals the richness and variety of Argentinean folk narrative collections, whose dynamism can survive political, social, and economic crises, re-signifying the past from the present. Folk narrative is an efficient instrument to achieve this goal, since the semantic content of the message is linked with the expression of social identities.

The concept of narrative matrix (Palleiro 2004, 2018) as a classification instrument adds to the thematic typology of international indexes, structural and stylistic issues which highlight the narrators' capacity to recreate in aesthetic messages the distinctive features of each cultural context, such as that of Argentina. One of these distinctive features of the Argentinean culture is its multiethnic profile, reflected in folk narrative collections. Such multiethnic profiles are connected with the plural convergence of European, Créole, and indigenous groups, along with the diasporic migration of other communities, creating cultural diversity. Animal tales, connected both with the local fauna and with the contextual landscape, act in these collections as metaphoric expressions of vernacular and migration cultures.

FICTION AND BELIEF IN ARGENTINEAN ANIMAL TALES: TEXTS AND INTERTEXTS

In this section, I deal with an oral version of the narrative matrix "The fox and the raven", whose intertextual connections with ritual discourse show the influence of belief narratives.

The narrator of this version of the narrative, collected in fieldwork done in Villa Mazán (La Rioja, Argentina) in 1987, was Luis Ariel Molina, aged 12. This animal tale, titled "The fox, the female armadillo (*quirquincha*), the baby armadillos (*quirquinchitos*) and the raven", was transmitted orally by Molina's mother to her offspring, and shares some thematic features with the type 73, "Blinding the guard", whose thematic description in AaTh is as follows:

> *The rabbit, imprisoned in a hollow tree, induces his guard to look up at him. He spits tobacco juice into the guard's eyes and blinds the guard, and thus effects his escape.*

In ATU, instead, the thematic description of this type is:

> *A rabbit (fox) who is imprisoned, throws dirt (salt, pepper, tobacco juice) into the eyes of his guard. While the guard is blinded, the rabbit escapes.*[23]

The ATU description offers a generalization which fits better to different variants of this tale than the one of AaTh. This means that, when elaborating an Argentinean folk narrative catalogue, it is worth choosing the thematic universal description which is more likely to fit better with the contextual variants. However, it is worth pointing out that the choice should be done for each tale type separately, and not as a general rule, since there are Argentinean folktales which fit better with the ATU description, and others that fit better with AaTh.

All the animals alluded to in this version belong to the Argentinean fauna and are mentioned with their local names, as it happens both with the personified female armadillo (*quirquincha*) and with the raven or *jote*, who replace the rabbit and the tiger as the guardians in the universal tale type. Such changing details show the connection with the Argentinean local context of a rural community, in which the topic of the triumph of the small animal over the big one acquires special relevance. In fact, in the community where the struggle for survival in a difficult environment as well as the struggle of the humble people against the oppressors is a daily concern, the tales of the fox and the armadillo were the most frequent ones in the repertoire of rural folk narrators.[24]

In Molina's version, the axis of the narrative conflict is that of deceit, thanks to which the female armadillo (*quirquincha*) manages to cheat both the fox and the raven, who want to eat her and her sons, as it can be seen in the following text.

> *Once, there was a female armadillo (*quirquincha*). And she was there, sitting with her three little sons near the cave, facing the sun.*
>
> *And then the fox came, and he said: 'Armadillo (*quirquincha*), I want to eat you!'*
>
> *'Well, well! But let me first sing three little songs!'*
>
> *'Alas, my fortune! Armadillo (*quirquincho*) in cave!' she sang for the first time. And while she was singing, she was also pushing the first baby armadillo (*quirquinchito*) into the cave.*
>
> *And the fox began laughing, as he saw the armadillo singing and pushing.*
>
> *In the meantime, the armadillo was hiding the baby armadillos inside a narrow, deep and winding cave. She was at the same time singing and pushing the babies into the cave. And she did this for three times, and then, she herself entered the cave, she went running deep inside.*
>
> *And then, a raven came over; a raven who was overflying just there.*
>
> *That the raven is always flying around, in a search of a prey to eat. It is said that the raven had been a human being, and that the devil*

transformed him into a carrion bird, who eats the flesh of dead animals.[25] *And it is said that this happened because he refused to worship the Devil in the Salamanca rite. That the raven has been a good dancer who used to dance at the Salamanca, and when he was supposed to offer his soul to the Devil, he didn´t do so, he refused. And this is why the raven is always looking for the flesh of dead animals.*

And that the fox knew all this, so he said: 'Come on, come on, brother! Come on, here! I have a job to offer you: you must just stay here, at the entrance of this cave, keeping your eyes widely open!' he said. You must pay attention, because you can´t let the baby armadillos escape from this cave! 'I'll bring a shovel to push them out when I return, so we can catch them and eat them,' the fox said. 'So, with the shovel I will bring, I am going to push them out, and then both of us are going to eat them! But they must remain in the cave until my arrival.'

And that the fox went to fetch a shovel, and the raven remained there, at the entrance of the cave, with his eyes widely open, watching and watching.

And then, well, he, the raven, remained there, with his eyes widely open, like this. [The narrator makes the gesture of opening his eyes, and then he suddenly closes them while he makes the movement of throwing something into his eyes with the right hand.]

*And then, suddenly, the armadillo (*quirquincha*) grabbed a handful of dust and threw it into the raven's eyes. And thus, the raven closed his eyes. And he began to wallow, and he fell down, he rolled down. And then, since he had been blinded, he couldn't see where he was going, so he entered another large cave.*

And then, the fox came back with a shovel, and: 'What is this? What's going on here?' he asked, when he saw the raven inside the other cave.

*'The armadillo (*quirquincha*) hurt my eyes, she threw me a handful of dust into my eyes!' said the raven.*

And then the raven began mourning, he began crying.

'And now I am going to eat you!' the fox threatened the raven.

And he ate him. Just like that, the fox ate the raven.

*And, in the meantime, the armadillo (*quirquincha*) managed to escape with her babies.*

*And so, the poor raven was fucked over, and the fox ate him, instead of eating the armadillo (*quirquincha*) and her babies. It was just like that.*

*That was what happened to the armadillo (*quirquincha*) and her babies: they managed to escape from the fox.* (Palleiro 2016 (CD))

In this narrative, the conflict, dealing with the deceit of the big animal, takes place in a macro-sequence whose climax is the threat of the fox to the female armadillo. At first, the armadillo manages to outwit the fox by hiding her children in a cave in the episode which precedes the one of "The blinded guard". Such deceit is the main thematic topic of the matrix "The fox, the raven, and the armadillo", whose rhetorical axis is the personification of animals along with the antithesis between strength and cunningness. The structural axis of this narrative is based on the flexible combination of different episodic units, and such flexibility results in the addition of a preceding sequence before the climax of the deception of the fox. The armadillo makes the fox laugh while she delivers her sons inside the cave and in this way she outwits the fox, hiding her children. By doing this, she manages to escape with her offspring, blinding the guardian, represented by the raven. The narrative matrix includes the combination of these structural, rhetoric, and thematic features, which include the universal topic of the blinded guard, recreated in the local Argentinean context.

THE INTERTEXTUAL CONNECTIONS: COSMOGONIC TALES AND RITUAL SPEECH

The connection of this folktale with ritual speech becomes clear in an explanatory clause, included in the sequence in which the fox threatens the female armadillo. Such a connection can be seen in the intertextual comparison with other belief narratives collected from other narrators of the same community, in a similar period. One of these is the narrative produced by Marino Cordoba, "The Salamanca and other social beliefs", which I recorded in an oral interview held in La Rioja in 1987 (Palleiro 2016). In this interview, Cordoba, a local ceramist and creator of a series of pottery statuettes related to the Salamanca, explained the sequential development of this rite.[26]

According to Cordoba, the Salamanca is a ritual ceremony in which "a man or a woman sell their soul to the Devil", whose climax is the moment in which this "deal with the Devil" is achieved (Cordoba as cited in Palleiro 2016: 54–58). In such a ceremony, those that refuse to make such a deal are punished and transformed into ugly animals. After having narrated this ritual climax, Cordoba alluded to the raven as one of the "punished" participants, whose ugly embodiment is a consequence of a penalty due to this refusal:

***Figure 1**. The Salamanca by Marino Cordoba in La Rioja Museo Folklorico. Photograph by Analia Canale 2013.*

> *And there are also the "punished" ones: the* caranchi*, the vulture, the raven, the* jote*, who has also been a handsome dancer. And he became an ugly dirty animal, a carrion eater, who eats the flesh of dead animals, because he refused to sign a contract with the devil.*
> [Cordoba shows the pottery statuette of a stylized raven, whose form resembles the one of a dancer in a human form, with wings instead of arms, and an ugly beak.] (Cordoba as cited in Palleiro 2016: 58)

There is an intertextual connection between the episode of Molina's tale dealing with the ugliness of the raven as the guardian of a cave, and the sequence of the Salamanca rite dealing with the *jote*. In fact, the Salamanca rite is often performed in a cave, similar to the one where the female armadillo (*quirquincha*) hides her babies in Molina's narrative. In a metaphorical procedure, Cordoba identifies the raven with a "punished" dancer, whose penalty has been caused by his denial to accomplish the Salamanca, which is the name of both the cave

and the ceremony. In a similar way, the young narrator Molina connects this narrative sequence with the Salamanca rite as an explanatory clause in which he alludes to the zoomorphic transformation of the raven. In Cordoba's discourse such a transformation is associated with the devilish ritual whose distinctive feature is the contrast between a beautiful appearance and a monstrous essence.

Additionally, Molina's clause links the origin of the raven as a carrion eater with a ritual punishment, in an etiological discourse ("The raven had been a human being, and the devil transformed him into a carrion eater bird… because he had refused to worship the Devil in the Salamanca rite" (Palleiro 2016: 254)). According to the narrative plot referred to by Molina, the raven, presented in the aforementioned clause as a zoomorphic metamorphosis of a human being, is the blinded guardian who acts as a helper of the fox, outwitted by the female armadillo (*quirquincha*). In this way, the defeat of the raven acquires the meaning of a ritual punishment, connected with social beliefs of the local context.

These contextual transformations of folk narrative matrices can be identified not only in the thematic plot, but also in the sequential organization, as well as in the rhetorical construction of the narrative discourse. As it is, in the local context, the personification of animals acquires not only the value of a rhetoric strategy but also the meaning of a social belief, dealing with zoomorphic metamorphosis of human beings into animals. Such zoomorphic transformations, caused by devilish forces, are connected with the antithesis between reality and appearance. In this way, this antithesis becomes both the axis of the Salamanca rite and the dominant rhetoric strategy of this series of animal tales, in which the apparently weaker animal manages to defeat the stronger one.

In Molina's narrative, the addition of an explanatory clause highlights the relevance of social beliefs in transforming folk matrices. In fact, the reference to the ritual punishment of the *jote* – a vernacular name of the raven – resemantizes the message, showing an intertextual connection of the folktale with belief narratives. In this way, both Cordoba's and Molina's discourses deal with "rhetoric of believing" (Palleiro 2008a) oriented to convince the audience of the credibility of the narrative discourse.

As affirmed in the introductory part of this article, belief narratives deal both with the ontological dimension of truth and with a social consensus. Such a connection is mentioned by Cordoba himself in a metanarrative clause, when referring to the Salamanca rite. In this clause, he stresses the relationship between folktales and belief discourse, considering the Salamanca as a "true rite" which serves as inspiration for fictional tales: "All that happens in the Salamanca is true, since it is a rite which must be accomplished. But from this rite people find inspiration to tell histories and fictional tales" (Cordoba as cited in Palleiro 2016: 58).

As I pointed out in my previous work, in which I dealt with this interview (Palleiro 2016: 217–264, especially 251–253), such affirmation shows that fictional tales and histories can be considered as alternative itineraries of the same narrative matrix, the tale being closer to the fictional domain, and the rite closer to social beliefs. Nevertheless, all these parameters prove to be flexible categories, which reveal a mixture of different narrative genres. This mixture should be shown both in the textualization of folk narrative texts and in their classification in folk narrative catalogues.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The diachronic overview of Argentinean folk narrative collections reveals that belief narratives, reduced in the first collections to minor categories such as superstitions, gain space in contemporary ones, illustrating how an *a priori* taxonomic criterion such as the collectionist paradigm of the nineteenth-century Finnish school has been gradually replaced by a contextualist and performance-centered one. In fact, belief narratives are closely bound to local contexts, whose cultural distinctive features are recreated in each textual message.

Besides, both the textual analysis and the intertextual comparison of Argentinean animal tales show the interweaving between folktales and belief narratives, in a mixture of legendary, ritual, mythical, and fictional discourse. In the texture of animal tales analyzed in this article, there is in fact a vanishing gap between fiction and reality, rooted in social beliefs, and such a vanishing gap should be reflected in the classification of Argentinean animal tales, along with the blend of different folklore genres. The inclusion of textual examples of this blend would be the best way of underlining such generic mixture in a catalogue of Argentinean folk narrative. In such a vernacular catalogue, the order of the folktales could remain the same as in the ATU international index, whose numbers correspond to ATU 1-299, replacing types with matrices. The concept of folk matrix proves to be, in this sense, a flexible taxonomic issue, which allows for the connection of alternative itineraries of the same narrative patterns, such as the ones analyzed in this article. The alternative itineraries of each narrative matrix, textualized into numerous versions, are similar to those of a virtual hypertext, characterized as a flexible combination of semantic units whose changing details can also be considered as variants.

An updated catalogue of Argentinean tales should reflect these distinctive features of vernacular folk narrative in a flexible dialogue with international classification criteria, enriching both the world map with local variations and the

local map with a taxonomic reference to global cultures. Animal tales included in such a catalogue, as metaphoric symbols of local worldviews, can reflect the differential way of narrating social identities, in an intertwining between fictional and belief narratives.

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NOTES

[1] It is worth noticing that Becker (2010: 542), in his updated overview of animal tales and collections, mentions literary recreations of animal tales, such as Joanne K. Rowling's saga of Harry Potter, which can be considered as an example of fantastic literature.

[2] Such parameters regarding theme, structure, and style are inspired by the ones used by Bajtín (1982) when defining discursive genres.

[3] For a specific study of a hypertextual approach to folk narrative discourse, see Palleiro (2004, 2018).

[4] For an accurate definition of animal tales, see Bies (2010). For an approach to animal tales as a folklore genre see Uther (2010). For an updated diachronic overview of types, topics, collections, and literary recreations of animal tales, see Becker (2010). Perhaps due to the lack of catalogues, none of these authors include in their bibliography references to Argentinean collections whose distinctive features deserve to be taken into account in an overview of animal tales. This is the reason that encouraged me to face the task of providing a catalogue of Argentinean animal tales classified according to international standards.

[5] *Alonsito* is the given name of a local bird, the *hornero* or oven bird, so called because his nest has the size of an oven.

[6] The instructions mentioned also other folklore subgenres, such as legends, memories, traditions, myths, anecdotes, and "uncanny cases". The way the different subgenres are named corresponds to the denomination used *ad passim* in the catalog of the *1921 Folkloric Survey*, whose title is *Catálogo de la Colección De Folklore donada por el Consejo Nacional De Educación* (1925).

[7] In this collection, narrators are considered as informers and identified with name, surname, age, place of birth, and place of residence. Besides, in the same way as in the *1921 Folkloric Survey*, "realistic tales" are also named as "human tales".

[8] When analyzing textualization methods of oral versions, it is worth noticing the absence of tape recorders and other sound-reproducing devices at the time in which these folktales were collected and transcribed.

[9] The model of such a linguistic questionnaire has been recently published by the research team of the Institute of Philology and Linguistic Research of San Juan University, Argentina, led by Aida González (2010). This Institute owns the Vidal de Battini Archive (FONVIBA) containing the written manuscripts with the results of the survey in which, curiously, all the manuscripts regarding folktales have been carefully torn off, as I could see in my last visit to this archive in November 2018.

[10] "Human tales" is the parameter used by Vidal de Battini in this collection, instead of "realistic tales".

[11] "Novella" is the parameter used by Vidal de Battini to classify realistic tales.

[12] For a complete synopsis of Vidal de Battini's profile as a folk narrative researcher, see Palleiro (2014).

[13] In the same way as Vidal de Battini, the authors use the term novella to refer to "realistic tales".

[14] The thematic description of this tale type, according to AaTh, is: "Thrush consents if fox will bring needle and thread. Thrush sews up snout of fox and he sings. While hunting quail he shouts too loud and breaks thread". Although the AaTh index was updated by Hans-Jörg Uther in 2004, and the reference used in folk narrative studies corresponds to ATU, in this paper I follow the reference used by the authors in 1988. Besides, the thematic content of Argentinean versions belonging to edited collections is closer to the AaTh description, perhaps because many collectors chose to include in their anthologies the versions that were similar to the universal types as descripted in the index.

[15] In this version, the goat, belonging to the local fauna, is called with the vernacular name *chiva*, instead of *cabra*, as the goat is named in standard Spanish.

[16] For the sake of shortness, I omit here the comment of other regional collections, such as *Cuentos de las tres abuelas* (Stories of three grandmothers) by Silvia García and Diana Rolandi (2000), in which the narrators are three grandmothers from Antofagasta de la Sierra of the Argentinean Catamarca province. This collection consists of different oral narratives including animal tales whose scriptural transcription shows three different phases of textualizing folk narrative texts, as analyzed in Palleiro 2011.

The first part focuses on different oral narratives of the grandmothers, in a written textualization which includes animal tales of the vernacular fauna, ordered according to the cycles of the seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter). The first part is then rewritten as a second part in the frame of folktales, presented as stories for children. Such stories have been illustrated by children themselves, and classified by García and Rolandi into thematic categories, similar to those of the Aarne-Thompson's Tale Type Index, as marvellous tales, animal tales – in which the fox is the main protagonist, along with other animals of the local fauna – and human tales, with the addition of some contextual categories like narratives regarding the *Pacha* – a female goddess representing Mother Earth – in Q*uechua* culture.

[17] For the sake of shortness, I also omit in this overview the narratives collected by "travelers" and early miscellaneous collectors such as Lehmann Nitzche, and also others, as the collection by Berta Koessler Ilg (2006 [1962]), analyzed in Palleiro (2011).

[18] From the pioneers of collecting indigenous versions in vernacular languages, it is worth mentioning the linguistic research of Eusebia Martín (1969: 75), who collected a version of ATU 33 in the Aymara language, "The fox plays dead and is thrown out of the pit and escapes", published in a linguistic study of phonology and morphology of the Aymara vernacular language, with a systematic criterion of transcription (Martín 1969: 75). In this version, the protagonists are not the fox and the tiger but the fox and the donkey, who plays dead and, in this way, manages to trick the fox.

[19] For the sake of shortness, I also omit the comment of other collections of indigenous narratives, such as César Fernández's anthology *Cuentan los mapuches* (The Mapuches tell) published in 1995. In this collection, for which vernacular folktales have been translated into Spanish, the author has included a preliminary study of Mapuche poetics, organized in different folklore genres. Such an anthology offers a miscellaneous mixture of folk narratives, classified into mythical tales, conversations between paysans, legends – including mainly animal legends – prayers, and folktales. The relevance of animal tales led the author to include them into three different categories: one regarding animals, the second regarding only the fox, and the last one in which the fox is identified with a human name such as John.

[20] It is worth remembering that Dr. Fernández Garay is the author of one of the most relevant contemporary collections of folktales in the Mapuche language, as explained in the first part of this article.

[21] In this version collected by Malvestitti (2005), the partridge of the universal type is replaced by the *martineta,* a local bird. The title of this version by Maria Cona, narrated in the Mapuche language, is *"Epew ng[ur[u kay war"*.

[22] It is worth noticing that the same trend has been documented in this period in other parts of the world, such as Estonia, as Ülo Valk points out when affirming that "philological approaches have dominated in Estonian folkloristics; it has become a scholarly tradition to work with the texts in archives. Estonian folkloristics has been influenced by the historic-geographic method, known also as the Finnish school" (Valk 2001: 207).

[23] Although there is a Spanish translation of the ATU index, made by F. Peñalosa, it has not been used by Argentinean collectors, so I decided to use the English version to discuss the classification system of Argentinean folktales. See also note 18.

[24] For further considerations regarding the main topics chosen in the repertoire of animal tales of Argentinean folk narrators of La Rioja, see Palleiro 1998.

[25] The anaphoric use of “well”, “that”, “and that”, “and then”, as well as pleonastic repetitions of the narrative discourse, are distinctive features of vernacular oral speech. In fact, this textualization tries to reflect such distinctive features of Argentinean Spanish of La Rioja province in an English translation.

[26] The rite consists of a sequential repetition of actions, with a performative intention of achieving effects on the context (Rappaport 1992; Palleiro 2008). One of the performative effects of the Salamanca rite is a punitive action, oriented towards the dancer who has not fulfilled the act of offering his soul to the devil, which is the axis of this ritual ceremony (Palleiro 2011).

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PLAYING WITH *NEZUMI* TOYS, DREAMING OF UNATTAINABLE UTOPIA: UNIQUE PORTRAYALS OF *NEZUMI* IN JAPANESE FOLK TRADITION

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Abstract: The Japanese have long regarded the *nezumi* – rats and mice – as vermin that plague agrarian and urban communities. In folk tradition, however, the characterization of the *nezumi* as amiable, efficacious, and auspicious has formed a powerful motif. As rodenticides and rat traps advertised widely and sold well, *nezumi*-motif toys such as Daikokuten *nezumi* (a protector deity of wealth riding on a white *nezumi*), *neko to nezumi* (a cat and a *nezumi*), and *komekui nezumi* (a rice-eating *nezumi*) enjoyed great popularity, particularly in eighteenth-century Japan. These toys substantiate the way people favored *nezumi*-motif items even as actual *nezumi* caused tremendous damage to Japanese cities and towns through their behavior. This article analyzes the motivation behind playing with *nezumi*-motif toys by examining the reasons why people accepted the more fanciful idea of *nezumi* expressed by toys in the face of a very different reality on the ground. The results of this investigation will provide an opportunity to understand the folk narrative embodied within the toy in order to reconsider the purpose such animal-motif toys and mascots have served in Japanese culture. Indeed, the *nezumi* have provided people with a vehicle they could use to play out elaborate fantasies of the kind of utopia of abundance and wealth that usually contrasted with their real lives. This unique portrayal of human-animal relationship can still be observed today, not only in toys but also in the animal characters found in media today.

Keywords: Daikokuten lore, *Edo nishiki*, Edo period (1603–1868), famine, Japan, *kakurezato* (hidden utopia) lore, *nezumi* (rats/mice), *nezumi*-motif toys, *otogi-zōshi* (medieval storybooks), woodblock prints

INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, the people of Japan do not necessarily refer to the *nezumi* – a collective term for rats and mice in Japan – as endearing or auspicious animals.[1] In folklore, however, the Japanese have long portrayed the *nezumi* in

a favorable light, often for the very behaviors they scorn in daily life – such as collecting and hoarding (Minakata 1997 [1994]: 349–350, 388–392). For example, Mujū Dōkyō (1227–1312), a Japanese Buddhist monk, wrote 153 stories that explain Buddhism to laypersons and compiled them in a book that he called *Shasekishū* (Sand and pebbles, ca. 1283). In one of these stories, entitled "Nezumi no mukotori" (A *nezumi* seeks a good son-in-law for his daughter), a *nezumi* – a rat/mouse – the story's protagonist, secures a superior groom for his daughter, a young *nezumi* stronger and wiser than any other. This story appears to indicate the emergence of a favorable opinion of the *nezumi* among the Japanese, juxtaposed against a historically negative view. Indeed, this kind of plotline developed in several narrative cultures; for example, the plot nearly matches that of "The Mouse Who Was to Marry the Sun", which is recorded in the Aarne-Thompson-Uther Classification of Folk Tales (ATU) 2031C under the Cumulative Tales rubric, and also in India, as evidenced in the second-century BCE Sanskrit text *Panchatantra* (Inada 1988: 478). While "Nezumi no mukotori" invites many interpretations of its theme – for example, that the best or most suitable thing in our lives always lies near to us, and not beyond our grasp – it is also notable for its contrary depiction of long-detested rodent behaviors, such as hoarding and gnawing, in a positive light, as natural gifts that rodents could use to great advantage, and even good. Thanks to this development in folklore, the Japanese could project qualities of virtue on the *nezumi* rather than see them simply as vermin to be exterminated. This theme finds expression across the Japanese cultural landscape, which scholars have explored through folklore, literature, and art.

One interesting and popular expression of the *nezumi* motif, the toy, remains overlooked, despite its function as a plaything in the everyday life of historical Japan, and despite the fact that it never stood apart from portrayals of the *nezumi* in other, more closely studied, genres. Surely, *nezumi*-motif toys communicated the auspicious character of the creatures they portrayed to any child who played with them, an idea that persisted despite the animal's verminous behavior in reality. Thus, the toy constituted a powerful, unique narrative form that influenced the fashioning and communicating of meaning behind the *nezumi* motif in Japan.[2]

This study discusses the nature of the *nezumi* motif and its expression through toys thanks to an examination of the socio-historical context and human-animal relationship that shaped these toys and affected their popularity in Japan since the eighteenth century. The colorful illustrations of toys contained in a 1773 picture book published by Rō Raishi in Edo (modern-day Tokyo), entitled *Edo nishiki* (Edo in two colors), include two illustrations of *nezumi*-motif toys.[3] This provides an opportunity to consider premodern (more narrowly, early

modern) modes of expressing their needs and expectations – even unattainable dreams – in the form of fantastic figures that help to quiet people's uneasiness so that we may go on with our everyday lives.

POPULAR TEXTUAL NARRATIVE TRADITION ASSOCIATED WITH THE *NEZUMI* MOTIF IN JAPAN

Nezumi in the Ōkuninushi story of Kojiki and Daikokuten lore

One of the oldest stories in which a *nezumi* is portrayed as a beneficial, amicable little creature, called Ōkuninushi, can be found in the ancient Japanese mythological chronicle *Kojiki* (Record of ancient matters, completed ca. 712 CE). The story in question narrates the epic of Ōkuninushi or Great Land Master, one of the key deities in Japanese Shintoism, and the predicaments imposed on him by Susano-o, another key Japanese deity, after he declared his desire to wed Princess Suseri, Susano-o's daughter. In response, Susano-o imposed many difficult riddles and dangerous trials on the Land Master in order to determine whether Ōkuninushi would make a suitable son-in-law. One of these stories describes the *nezumi*'s significant role:

> *He* [Susano-o] *shoots an arrow into a plain and orders Ōkuninushi to retrieve it. When the latter* [Ōkuninushi] *reaches the middle of the plain, Susano-o encircles him with fire. There seems to be no escape, but a mouse* [a nezumi] *appears before Ōkuninushi and delivers the cryptic message: "The inside is hollow-hollow; the outside is narrow-narrow." Ōkuninushi, solving this riddle at once, responds by stamping his feet until he opens a hole in the ground into which he disappears while the flames pass overhead. Later, the mouse* [the nezumi] *brings him Susano-o's arrow as a souvenir.* (Keene 1999a [1993]: 44)

In the above story about Ōkuninushi, a *nezumi* was depicted as a kind of *deus ex machina* that rescued him from a deadly predicament thanks to its wits (Minakata 1997 [1994]: 391).

Interestingly, over time the Shinto deity Ōkuninushi in the above story transformed into the folk deity Daikokuten, the protector deity of wealth accompanied, according to vernacular belief, by *nezumi* as his loyal messenger. While it is quite difficult to point out exactly when this confusion began and spread across Japan, it is clear that the two characters became confused before early modern times (Minakata 1997 [1994]: 363; Suzuki 1996: 205). The abovementioned Ōkuninushi lore mixed with stories about Daikokuten and

thereafter gradually popularized throughout the Japanese society (Nakajima 2013; Sakurai 2017; Yasuda 2010, 2014); it also led to the basic concept of the Daikokuten *nezumi* toy that won favor among the Edo-period people. Thanks to this development in Ōkuninushi lore, Japanese myths and folktales have tended to portray the *nezumi* as a symbol of both fortune and wealth rather than as vermin (Nakajima 2013). Any negative image of the *nezumi* simply vanishes whenever they are depicted with Daikokuten, because they consider the *nezumi* as the deity's important messenger. People continued to try to exterminate the *nezumi* in real life, while they simultaneously revered *nezumi*-motif portrayals in verbal and visual ways – one of which took the form of the Daikokuten *nezumi* toy (see Fig. 1). The archetype for Daikokuten stems from Kubera, the lord of wealth in Hindu mythology, which accompanied Buddhist lore when the religion reached Japan in the mid-sixth century (Azuma 1971; Minakata 1997 [1994]; Suzuki 1996: 205). Kubera almost always appeared as a loyal messenger mongoose, even though mongooses did not inhabit Japan, so eventually people replaced the mongoose with a *nezumi*. Since then, the iconography of Daikokuten and his loyal messenger *nezumi* has earned public favor. From there, the *nezumi* motif lent itself to toys and other three-dimensional narrative forms, like the Daikokuten *nezumi* that *Edo nishiki* included in its profile of fifty-six popular toys in late-eighteenth-century Japan.

When *Edo nishiki* was published in 1773, the Daikokuten *nezumi* toy was popular among the common folk. This indicates that both adults and children enjoyed the symbolic meaning of the toy, namely that Daikokuten and his subordinate *nezumi* endeavored to protect people's wealth and happiness. Moreover, they saw a clear association between Daikokuten and the *nezumi* that stemmed from the animal signs of the Chinese zodiac (Nakajima 2013: 26–27; Yasuda 2010: 2–3). It should not be forgotten that, in the real world, the people of early modern Japan used rodenticides and rat traps, an evidence of that, in their everyday lives, they regarded the *nezumi* as hateful vermin (Sakurai 2017; Yasuda 2010, 2014). Despite

Figure 1. *Daikokuten* nezumi *toy in* Edo nishiki *(1773). Courtesy of the National Diet Library Digital Collections, Tokyo, Japan.*

this, they revered the *nezumi* as a messenger of Daikokuten, who bears bags of treasure to people's homes, which gave them an esteemed place in the circle of the Daikokuten cult (Minakata 1997 [1994]: 364; Nakajima 2013: 38–40; Sakurai 2017: 51). In this way, the Daikokuten *nezumi* toy suggests that the *nezumi* were also icons symbolizing wealth and happiness.[4] Thus, views of the *nezumi* in ancient texts (which later turned into folk narratives) were generally rather favorable, and this view was handed down to generations that followed.

Nezumi in other ancient texts

The *nezumi* were also portrayed in many ancient texts both in a positive and negative light, such as in official chronicles of the mid-ninth and tenth centuries, as well as essays and memorandums of the early eleventh century. For example, Sei Shōnagon's *Makura no Sōshi* (The pillow book of Sei Shōnagon, ca. 1002) and Izumi Shikibu's *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* (Izumi Shikibu's diary, early eleventh century) both depict the *nezumi* as small, adorable animals. Indeed, some descriptions in official chronicles, such as *Shoku Nihongi* (Second chronicle of Japan, ca. 797), accused the *nezumi* of gnawing at priceless materials that were stored in private storage spaces and official warehouses (Nakajima 2013: 38–39). However, in general, the descriptions of the ancient texts verify the gentle attitudes contemporaries held toward the *nezumi*. Unfortunately, there remains no record describing commoners' views of the *nezumi* in their actual daily lives during ancient times.

Storybooks related to the *nezumi* during the medieval and early modern periods

Generally speaking, the *nezumi* – rats and mice – have not always received public favor in agrarian and urban societies (Sakurai 2017). Throughout the Edo period, poisons and traps advertised widely and sold well (Yasuda 2010, 2014). For example, extant *otogi-zōshi* – short storybooks published from 1573 at the end of the Muromachi era to the early 1600s during the early Edo period – include such titles as *Tōshōji nezumi monogatari* (Story of the *nezumi* living in Tōshō temple, ca. 1570s); *Neko no sōshi* (Cat storybook, ca. 1602); and *Yakushi tsuya monogatari* (Story of a funeral wake for Yakushi, ca. 1643). In these stories, the *nezumi* persistently ransack kitchens and warehouses to steal crops and hoard them in their nests. Another short storybook, *Nezumi no sōshi emaki* (Storybook picture scroll of the *nezumi*, ca. sixteenth century), describes

the *nezumi* as vermin gnawing at kitchen utensils and damaging clothes while also displaying pictures of rat traps (Yasuda 2014).

The plotlines of storybooks such as *Keiso monogatari* (Story of hens and *nezumi*, late seventeenth century) and the abovementioned *Yakushi tsuya monogatari* revolve around the social turmoil caused by the Kan'ei famine (1640–43), the deadly, widespread famine that forced the Tokugawa government to reshape its policy on agricultural production and distribution (Ageta 1947; Yasuda 2014: 234).In this kind of historical context, Yōko Yasuda explains, these storybooks emphasized the ceaseless ransack of kitchens and warehouses to steal rice crops and other agricultural products, and then keep them inside their nests unseen. In the horrific food shortage among them, people dreamed of a utopia where the *nezumi* hoarded limitless treasure and plentiful foodstuffs – namely, a place they wished to live.

Despite their unattainable dreams of treasure and foodstuffs associated with the *nezumi*'s hoarding habit, it cannot be denied that the contemporaries regarded the *nezumi* as the prime object of public hatred at that time because they regularly stole crops and damaged materials. The Japanese have struggled with vermin such as the *nezumi*, sharing a disdain for the creatures with subsequent generations.[5] This relationship is skillfully discussed in the storybook *Neko no sōshi*, which was one of the popular storybooks published in Japan between the fourteenth and late-eighteenth centuries. In this anonymously written work, a Buddhist monk accuses the *nezumi* of exhibiting harmful habits that threaten him and others, saying:

> *When I stand my umbrella after I repaired it, you,* nezumi*, bite the grip of this umbrella. When I prepare for baked beans and black beans in order to host my laypersons, you,* nezumi*, devour these beans in one night. You,* nezumi*, always eat Buddhist gowns and clothes, fans, books, folding screes, rice cakes, tofu, and more. Therefore, even Buddhist monks with peaceful minds cannot stop thinking of killing the* nezumi*. Needleless to say, laypersons are eager to exterminate all of you* nezumi*!* (Kuwabara 1982: 265)

This exactly reflects the kind of blame that people levied on the *nezumi*. Clearly, they potentially affected human life in profound, intimate ways and in all kinds of everyday life situations. There is no doubt that people did not always favor them because they devoured almost everything people possessed.

Yanagita Kunio begins his article "Nezumi no jōdo" (*Nezumi* utopia) by explaining how Japanese people had long suffered from the small creatures. The *nezumi*, he points out, perennially devoured most of the crops that farmers diligently cultivated, so much so that people were sometimes forced to abandon

their farm fields and even villages whenever faced with the irrevocable damage they created (Yanagita 1987 [1960]: 157–209). Naturally, this shaped people's actual views of the *nezumi*. At the same time, despite this view, Japanese people conjured a hidden fantasy world where the *nezumi* hoarded boundless treasures, including a limitless supply of foodstuffs. Thus, traditional representations of the *nezumi* remained rather ambiguous; the portentous existed side-by-side with the auspicious.

Storybooks about the *Kakurezato* utopia: From *neko to nezumi* toy

The concept of *kakurezato*, a *nezumi* utopia where all animals dwell safely beyond the reach of humans and enjoy the secret stores of smuggled food they hoard, constitutes another important theme in *nezumi* lore. This concept informs the *neko to nezumi* toy (see Fig. 2), because a poem that accompanies the toy states that a *nezumi* hides in its peaceful *kakurezato* whenever a *neko* or cat detects it. This form of a *nezumi* toy is quite unique. When the board on which a *neko* figure sits is pushed forward, the *nezumi* figure shifts downward to hide inside the underlying box, as if secreting itself to its *kakurezato*.

The question of the *kakurezato*'s origins has elicited much discussion among scholars in many disciplines. Notable among them, Wan Jan Kang (1993) analyzed Japanese storybooks from the medieval and early modern eras and concluded that the concept of *kakurezato* traces back to Chinese Daoism. According to him, *kakurezato* refers to "[an] ideal place where one is not easily noticed, i.e., the home of the recluse" (Wan 1993: 51), and originated in the "Chinese Daoist tradition of cave dwelling as an ideal [way to lead life]". Eventually, stories developed to become "early modern tales of the strange and marvelous" that thrived into the Edo period (ibid.: 52). To demonstrate, Wan examines an early modern collection of sixty-eight stories, *Otogi bōko* (Strange and marvelous stories, 1666) by Asai Ryōi (?–1691). One story, titled "Kakurezato", focuses on *nezumi* messengers of Daikokuten as its main protagonists. Wan (1993: 57)

Figure 2. Neko to nezumi *toy in* Edo nishiki *(1773). Courtesy of the National Diet Library Digital Collections, Tokyo, Japan.*

argues that the author probably reformulated well-circulated *nezumi* folktales to create his story, though he does not provide evidence. However, story elements such as the *nezumi* as a messenger of Daikokuten in the abovementioned Ōkuninushi story influenced Asai Ryōi's story "Kakurezato" and also another *nezumi*-themed storybook entitled *Kakurezato* (Hidden village), which was written by an unknown author in the early seventeenth century.[6]

Another *nezumi*-related storybook published in the late-sixteenth century is *Nezumi no sōshi* (*Nezumi* storybook), which circulated widely during the Edo period. The plot revolves around an underground *nezumi* utopia where an old male *nezumi* attempts in vain to wed his male heir to a human princess so that his descendants could get rid of their animal status and live forever in the human world as human beings. As part of the genre of *emakimono* (picture scroll), the storybook's illustrations depict a gorgeous wedding banquet, for which the *nezumi* prepared an abundance of luxurious dishes using the most sophisticated kitchen utensils of their time.[7] Thus, it appears that this book represents the food fantasies that the author's contemporaries had; for, however rich noble classes were, it was not so easy to purchase food and other culinary items at times and so, most of the Japanese faced the specter of hunger in times of regional or nationwide famines (Farris 1985: 178–187).

The ambiguous identity of the *nezumi* pervades early modern Japanese literature. Examining the anonymously written *Nezumi no sōshi* as a part of their research on Japanese foodways during the Muromachi period (1338–1573), Miwa Kobayashi and Ikuko Tomiyasu remark:

> *Generally, Muromachi people eagerly sought success, prosperity, and pleasure in their daily lives. It is quite suggestive that such Muromachi people easily connected their strong secularism with the* nezumi *and their fertility and productivity. This can also be detected in the plotline of the story* Nezumi jōdo [Nezumi utopia] *that is still narrated as a popular story in Japanese folklore.* (Kobayashi & Tomiyasu 2007: 14)

Interestingly enough, from an actual daily-life perspective, the *nezumi* occasionally appear in stories as vermin (Yanagita 1987 [1960]: 157–209). Nevertheless, from a folk-cultural perspective, they have appeared as beneficial animals and thus projected their dreams of treasure and foodstuffs upon them. Setsuko Suzuki observes:

> *The* nezumi *has always been viewed ambiguously by the Japanese. Detested as a pest, it has also been held in high esteem as the messenger of Daikokuten, one of the Seven Lucky Gods who bestow and protect wealth. Perhaps this is because the presence of the* nezumi *in houses and granaries is a sign of abundance and providence. Even now, the* nezumi *is depicted*

> *together with gold and silver coins and bags of rice on New Year's cards for the Year of the Rat* [or nezumi]. (Suzuki 1996: 281)

As the above remarks, the aforementioned *nezumi* motif stories provide us with good examples showing the way in which Japanese people traditionally have favorably observed the *nezumi*'s hoarding habit and then spun fantastic tales about their underground utopia, a persistent dream of wealth and happiness that in early modern times took the form of toys.

Guidebooks for feeding the *nezumi* as animal companions in the Edo period

Despite the popularity of advertisements for rodenticides and rat traps in mid-eighteenth century Japan, the number of people who kept the *nezumi* as pets – white *nezumi* in particular – grew. Consequently, guidebooks to help these pet fanciers care for their rodent companions proliferated in cities like Osaka and Edo (modern-day Tokyo) where the practice was popular (Sakurai 2017; Yasuda 2010, 2014). This popularity reached a peak in the mid-eighteenth century, curiously in the wake of the Kyōhō Great Famine (1732–33), whose memory long haunted the Japanese. Popularity grew among the wealthy and commoners alike. *Nezumi* fanciers could find a variety of guidebooks to the ins-and-outs of *nezumi* care; books like *Yōso tama no kakehashi* (A guidebook of how to foster the *nezumi* as pets, 1775) and *Chingan sodategusa* (A guidebook to caring for *nezumi* as pets, 1787) were among the best-selling books of the day (Yasuda 2010, 2014). These pet guides reflect the adulatory perspective of the *nezumi*'s ambiguous characterization that attributed their hoarding habit to service as loyal messengers of Daikokuten distributing treasure and food to the people (Yasuda 2014: 241–244) and to the clear association made between Daikokuten, *nezumi*, and the animal signs of the Chinese zodiac (Yasuda 2010: 2–3).

Needless to say, although the *nezumi* pet boom was widespread, people of the Edo period did not always focus on the fanciful perspective on the *nezumi* that this implies. A book written in the early nineteenth century, *Nezumi domo kōjōsho* (Discourse on mice), for example, describes with some detail the kinds and levels of damage that the *nezumi* caused to everyday human life. Judging from the abovementioned *nezumi* pet guides, it appears that *nezumi* fanciers thrived in Japan starting from the eighteenth century; indeed, their numbers had grown so much that by the nineteenth century, two contrary characterizations – "harmful *nezumi*" versus "harmless pet *nezumi*" – coexisted (Yasuda 2014: 240–241). Fanciers were by no means naïve; indeed, they were drawn principally by the idea that the *nezumi* had the power to transmit wealth and happiness (ibid.: 241).

FOLKTALES ON *NEZUMI*

Though it is difficult to find evidence of the time and place when people began to create tales about the *nezumi* and share them among others, stories that appear in the aforementioned storybooks did partly influence *nezumi*-related folktales that still circulate to this day. Among these folktales, the *nezumi jodō* (*nezumi* utopia) story remains well known and widely distributed throughout Japan today. While Japanese folklorists generally categorize this tale as an oral story transmitted among people from generation to generation, its underlying plotline can be traced back to the abovementioned texts such as medieval storybooks that associated *nezumi* utopia with *kakurezato*. This association can be also detected in the underlying theme of woodblock prints in the Edo period.

Many variations on the *nezumi jōdo* story have been widely distributed throughout Japan. Though we cannot pinpoint their birthplaces, we can learn more about origins by studying related stories in local gazetteers. One of them, *Sanshū meiseki shi* (Famous places in Sanshū, 1711) written by Sakauchi Naoya (1644–1711), contains a *nezumi jōdo* story retold by the author's contemporaries. Among these folktales, the *nezumi jōdo* story effectively demonstrates how people traditionally treated the *nezumi* as denizens of their fantasy world.

While there are many variations of the *nezumi jōdo* story, they all share the following basic plotline:

> *In a field, an old man dropped his rice ball, which rolled into a small cave. Following the rice ball, the man stumbled into an underground* nezumi jōdo *or* nezumi *utopia full of rice, rice cakes, gold, and other treasures. The old man gave the* nezumi *his rice ball, as they had never eaten one before. They were very happy to eat it. In return for the rice ball, they presented him with plenty of rice cakes, gold, and other treasures. The old man returned happily to his home, bearing plenty of rice cakes, gold, and other treasures. He and his wife lived happily ever after. A crooked old man living just next to the old man, upon hearing the above story, attempted to locate the underground* nezumi *utopia. Once he had located it, the crooked old man tried to steal their treasures, but the* nezumi *discovered his malicious plan in time and devoured him.*[8]

The above plotline is not completely identical to the abovementioned storybooks about *nezumi* utopia and *kakurezato*.

Indeed, many attempts have been made to identify the theme that underlies the above *nezumi jōdo* story and describe what it implies. For example, some scholars have attempted to argue that evidence exists that Buddhist teachings form the fundamental ideas underlying these stories – such as when the *nezumi*

offer gifts of food and treasure to the kind old man in gratitude for his benevolent treatment, while, in contrast, they rebuff and even punish the crooked old man for his malevolence against them (Yanagita 1987 [1960]; Yoneya 1998: 28). Though this interpretation invites much discussion, it does reflect the Japanese way of viewing the *nezumi* as a harbinger of efficacy and abundance.

When Yanagita Kunio published his folktale index *Nihon mukashibanashi mei'i* (Guidebook to the plotlines of Japanese folktales) in 1947, he recorded the typical plotlines of widely-known *nezumi jōdo* stories along with their local variants (1971 [1947]: 140–143). Seki Keigo also listed the *nezumi jōdo* story in his *Nihon mukashibanashi taisei* (Unified index of Japanese folktale motifs, 1978–1980) under tale-type index JT 185. Likewise, Inada Kōji recorded the *nezumi jōdo* story and its variations in his motif index, *Nihon mukashi banashi tsūkan* (General survey of Japanese folktales, 1988; see under Inada tale-type index IT 82). This index book also suggests that many kinds of medieval short stories probably influenced the development of *nezumi jōdo* tales, because their plotlines nearly match that of the folktales still circulating among the Japanese at the time Inada was collecting in the 1980s. According to Inada's index, short stories whose plotlines resemble that of *nezumi jōdo* folktales include: *Hamamatsu chūnagon monogatari* (Tales of Hamamatsu chūnagon, the mid-eleventh century); *Konjaku monogatarishū* (Collected tales from times past, ca. 1120); and the medieval storybook *Kakuresato* (Hidden utopia village, mid-sixteenth century).

Another such storybook, entitled *Nezumi kusa kami emaki* (*Nezumi* picture scroll book, ca. early-eighteenth century), contains a plotline nearly identical to that of the *nezumi jezu* story. It unfolds as follows:

> *When an elderly man accidentally drops the rice ball into the hole, the* nezumi *are delighted with it and then guide him to their underground utopia. They entertain him and give him a treasure souvenir when he returns home. A bad old man who lives next to the good elderly man attempts to enter the underground utopia in vain and the* nezumi *kill him.* (Sakurai 2017: 51)

Variations of such stories recorded in medieval compilations on Daikokuten lore were still circulating among people when *Edo nishiki* first appeared in Edo in 1773. Santō Kyōden (1761–1816) and Kyokutei Bakin (1767–1848), both of whom were popular novel writers, did not list the *nezumi jōdo* story in their essays about folk narrative culture in the early nineteenth century.[9] The *neko to nezumi* story appears in *Umezono nikki* (Dairy in a plum garden) by Kita Seiro (1765–1848) and another about the *nezumi* biting bowstrings in *Matsunoya hikki* (Matsunoya's memorandum) by Oyamada Tomokiyo (1783–1847)

(Takagi 1995 [1974]: 25). Thus, folktales related to the *nezumi* and their utopia were popular in the Edo period.

NARRATIVES IN VISUAL FORM: *NEZUMI*-MOTIF IN WOODBLOCK PRINTS

The aforementioned storybooks include many woodblock-printed illustrations that feature the *nezumi* as leading characters in *nezumi*-motif stories related to the *kakurezato* utopia. Instead of *nezumi*-focused illustrations, several woodblock-print, illustration-only books published in the Edo period include images of *kakurezato* in which the *nezumi* play both leading and supporting roles. The *nezumi* were also drawn as supporting characters in *nishiki-e*, multi-colored woodblock prints created for Edo-era art connoisseurs.

Woodblock-printings for illustration books

Early modern Japanese woodblock-print artists employed the *nezumi* motif as both central and peripheral images in their works. In 1781, Toriyama Sekien (1712–1789) published his illustration book *Konjaku hyakki shūi* (Supplement to the hundred demons from the present and the past), which includes a woodblock-print illustration of *kakurezato* (Hidden utopia village) that features Daikokuten and also the *nezumi* (Toriyama Sekien, 1781; see Fig. 3). Interestingly, this illustration displays Daikokuten, the central character, in the seat of honor in a huge room while people busily provide him with luxury foods. Outside the room, many *nezumi*, as supporting characters, oversee countless sacks of oval gold coins. According to the illustration, Daikokuten and his *nezumi* dwell in *kakurezato*, a distant, dreamy utopia overladen with treasures and victuals. Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) created a woodblock-print illustration of a *kakurezato* for the tenth volume of his fifteen-volume *Hokusai manga* (Hokusai's sketches, 1814; see Fig. 4). Entitled "Kakurezato" (Hidden utopia village), the print features the *nezumi* as leading characters industriously managing many sacks of oval gold coins, conveying

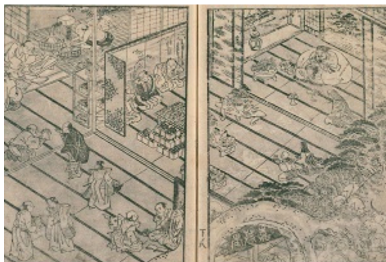

Figure 3. *Toriyama Sekien's* Kakurezato *in* Konjaku hyakki shūi *(1781). Courtesy of the National Diet Library Digital Collections, Tokyo, Japan.*

Figure 4. *Katsushika Hokusai's* Kakurezato *in* Hokusai manga *(1814). Courtesy of the National Diet Library Digital Collections, Tokyo, Japan.*

the mythical idea of a multitude of *nezumi* dwelling in *kakurezato* amidst boundless treasure.

Multicolored woodblock printings: *Nishiki-e* for art connoisseurs

Besides the above illustration books, the *nezumi* also appear as supporting characters in *nishiki-e*, multi-colored woodblock prints made for Edo-period art connoisseurs. Nishimura Shigenaga (1697–1756) printed a *nishiki-e,* entitled *Futamata daikon to nezumi* (Two-forked daikon radish and *nezumi*), that features a two-forked daikon radish and the *nezumi* together to symbolize prosperity of offspring (Sakurai 2017: 54). The *nezumi* biting fruits form the central image in *Kajitsu to nezumi* (Fruits and *nezumi*) by Ishida Yūtei (1721–86), another symbol of abundant progeny (ibid.: 55). Shirai Naotaka (1804–?) crafted his *Hanebōki to nezumi* (A feathered broom and *nezumi*) to feature three *nezumi* biting a feathered broom. According to Shintoism, a feathered broom symbolizes one of the auspicious items used to welcome Shinto deities at homes and prepare shrines at the beginning of the year for the *nezumi* (ibid.). Edo-period art connoisseurs thus regarded something propitious about *nishiki-e* featuring feathered brooms and the *nezumi*, reflecting the idea of the *nezumi* as a harbinger of good fortune, rather than as vermin (Sakurai 2017).

NEZUMI-MOTIF TOYS AS A THREE-DIMENSIONAL FORM OF *NEZUMI*-MOTIF NARRATIVES

The above discussions focus on the way in which the *nezumi* motif found expression in narratives and visual forms, particularly in early modern Japan. These forms never functioned alone but interacted with each other. A mythical story about Ōkuninushi and his savior *nezumi* turned into Daikokuten lore, in which the Shinto deity assumed a new role as the folk deity Daikokuten with *nezumi* as his loyal messenger. Probably, the special relation between Daikokuten and *nezumi* can answer one of the reasons why the *nezumi* pet boom occurred even at a time when the harsh memory of famine lingered among Japanese people,

because the loyal *nezumi* could bring treasure and food from their utopia to the people that need them (Yasuda 2010, 2014).[10] In this way, variant narrative forms worked together to produce a new form, toys, as a three-dimensional form of the *nezumi* motif.[11]

Toys as a three-dimensional form of associated narratives

In the year 1773, as mentioned above, a unique book entitled *Edo nishiki* (Edo in two colors) was published in the city of Edo (modern-day Tokyo), which features fifty-six kinds of old and new toys both of which were very popular at that time. Kryburz explains why this book stood out at that time:

> Edo nishiki [*Edo in two colors*] (Ro and Kitao 1773) *is the earliest work entirely dedicated to toys. With some eighty-eight* [sic.] *playthings drawn by Kitao Shigemasa (1739–1820) ... with a forward by the noted humorist Ōta Nanpo (1749–1823), this* ehon *(picture book) is a telling product of the milieu known as the "floating world", of its chroniclers, and of the urban population of Edo* [which had about one million inhabitants] *and Osaka* [which had about more than four-hundred thousand inhabitants] *by the early eighteenth century in general. It had a very limited circulation, but its very creation proves that there was an interest in toys as a category of daily-life object. It remained, however, the only monograph produced until the middle of the Meiji era* [1868–1912].[12] (Kyburz 1994: 16)

Edo nishiki introduces two kinds of *nezumi*-motif toys: Daikoten *nezumi* (see Fig. 1) and *neko to nezumi* (see Fig. 2). The poems accompanying these two toys indicate that the narrative and visual forms discussed above underlie the concept of these toys as representations of *nezumi* as amicable, auspicious animals. Thus, given the wide circulation of *nezumi*-motif narratives among early modern Japanese, what kinds of social and economic situations led people to play with *nezumi* toys?

Toys that pacified people in predicaments

Since the Tokugawa shogunate began in 1603, Japan's social and economic systems had improved, as government policies helped to raise the living standards of the urban Japanese and increased the agricultural output (Jansen 2000: 127–158). By around 1773, the Japanese had begun to enjoy a kind of "Pax Tokugawa", as social and economic progress sparked a cultural change (Jannetta 1987: 7; Jansen 2000: 159–186; Keene 1999b [1978]: 1–7). This situation did not

preclude worries about the very real prospect of epidemic disease and famine that plagued both ruler and commoner, rural and urban dweller, alike (Jannetta 1992).[13] Under such circumstances, a book like *Edo nishiki* appeared in 1773, illustrating Daikoten *nezumi* and *neko to nezumi* toys with other popular toys of that time. Nowhere does the book depict *nezumi* – rats/mice – as vermin to be exterminated, preferring to focus on the image of the auspicious animal icon in the Chinese zodiac (Yasuda 2010: 2–3) over the destroyer of crops and food stores. Kyburz observes that, when *Edo nishiki* was published, *nezumi* toys served a purpose and function not unlike other kinds of toys:

> *As practical function gives way to symbolic meaning, a plaything turns into a symbol, moving out of the child's hand into the conceptual universe of the adult. It is with respect to this class of "toys," which lacks all ludic purpose in form as well as intent.* (Kyburz 1994: 11)

As mentioned above, *Edo nishiki* contains an illustration of a Daikokuten-*nezumi* toy (see Fig. 1), in which Daikokuten straddles a white *nezumi* and its accompanying poem explains that the mythic figure rides a squeaking *nezumi* with a big bag on his back to symbolize limitless treasure. Essentially, this toy functions as a three-dimensional expression of Daikokuten lore. When Edo-period people played with this toy or watched it, they probably recalled words in the accompanying poem that praises the auspicious animal servants of Daikokuten and their ability to provide food and treasure.

Another *nezumi*-motif toy, the *neko to nezumi* toy, is also remarkably unique (see Fig. 2). As described above, a *neko* (cat) and *nezumi* sit on top of a rectangular box. When the toy player pushes the board atop the box forward, the *nezumi* moves downward into a box; as the board is pulled back, the *nezumi* reappears. This simple mechanism creates the impression that the *nezumi* can hide in its utopian *kakurezato*, as the accompanying poem claims. The narrative of this toy resembles that common to *karurezato* lore – *nezumi* dwell in abundance in *kakurezato* under the auspices of Daikokuten as a ruler or an honored guest. Thus, the *neko to nezumi* toy represents another three-dimensional expression of *kakurezato* and Daikokuten lore.

Despite its popularity after the publication of *Edo nishiki*, the *komekui nezumi* or rice-eating *nezumi* toy uniquely represents the *nezumi* eating rice (Saitō 1968: 79; see Fig. 5). According to Ryōsuke Saitō, this toy was first developed and popularized in the Kaga Domain, and then gradually diffused across all of Japan after the Tenpō Famine (1833–37), one of the three great famines of the Edo period. The Kaga Domain was one of the worst-affected areas and, because of this, Saitō argues, people played with the *komekui nezumi* toy in the midst of difficult times in order to conjure fantasies of satiating themselves

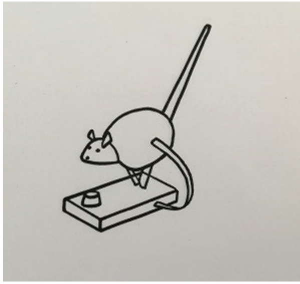

Figure 5. Komekui nezumi *toy. Drawing by Hyunhee Park 2019.*

with food (Saitō 1968: 82). He notes that people there played with this toy as a way to pray for rice enough to eat, just like the *nezumi*, who they imagined enjoyed an endless supply of food produced from limitless stores of their hidden utopia (ibid.). Thus, such a toy can also represent people's shattered dreams. The *komekui nezumi* toy never stood apart from the Daikokuten *nezumi* or the *neko to nezumi* toys, and remained firmly connected to the context of the textual, verbal, and visual narrative forms of the *nezumi* motif.

CONCLUSION

Considering the above three toys as three-dimensional forms of *nezumi*-motif narratives, it is hard to deny that a *nezumi* icon serves as a narrative topos (so it does not matter which form it assumes) representing the possessors of treasure and food.[14] This is exactly what Kagawa means when he refers to "representation", namely, the tendency to substitute something real for something unreal (2013 [2005]: 43–44). Representation functions as a kind of virtual reality, given its roots in reality and its allure as people's dreamed reality, in other words, the *nezumi* are real, but the tales they inspire are quite unreal. Thus, in folklore, the *nezumi* motif represents a utopia filled with the objects of people's longings.

As emphasized in the discussion of advertisements for rodenticide and rat traps in the Edo-era Japan, people loathed the *nezumi*'s hoarding habit more than any other, and they still do because of their carrying plague virus and gnawing important and expensive materials at homes and infrastructure systems (Sakurai 2017: 48). This was balanced by the auspicious view of the hoarder, which inspired stories about the *nezumi* as a loyal messenger of Daikokuten, the deity of wealth. Through examinations of the *nezumi*-motif narratives that circulated throughout early modern Japan, it became evident that *nezumi* fanciers and non-fanciers alike favored the iconic *nezumi* despite simultaneously

acknowledging that in real life they were vermin, too, as Sakurai (2017: 58) and Yasuda (2014: 244) explain. Ceaseless anxiety about famine perennially cast a blight on everyday life in the Edo-era Japan. It is not difficult to see why people would have the urge to dream of leading a happy life in their little utopia, as portrayed in the woodblock prints by Toriyama Sekien (see Fig. 3) and Katsushika Hokusai (see Fig. 4).

The *nezumi*-motif toy – a three-dimensional form of narrative about the *nezumi* – did not always work as mere playthings for children, nor were they ludic at all. In his insightful discussion of traditional Japanese toys, referring to Starr's observation, Kyburz mentions that traditional Japanese "toys" were not toys in the western sense; they instead functioned to produce "magical, curative, protective, or luck-bringing powers" (Kyburz 1994: 9). He also refers to Saitō's comment that traditional Japanese toys "are intimately related with folk beliefs concerning the protection from and riddance of disease and misfortune, and embody wishes for happiness and long life, vows for abundant crops, and prayers for easy delivery" (ibid.: 8). Saitō remarks that some toys "given or sold by shrines are in many respects the same as amulets or talismans" (1968: 20); if so, then "[s]ome are decidedly unlike playthings" (Kyburz 1994: 8). Espousing the observations of Starr and Saitō on traditional Japanese toys, Kyburz stresses that "most traditional toys originally were, and to some degree continue to be, talismans and amulets for the blessing and protection of the holder, tokens of and material links with certain holy places and their tutelary deities" (1994: 1, 9–16, 23). In short, Kyburz concludes, traditional Japanese toys usually served as "amulets and talismans" (1994: 11).

Saitō notes that the concept of what we today call "toys" gradually transformed from "tool of faith" to "tool of play" sometime around the mid-sixteenth century (1968: 20–21). Indeed, there had been many toys designed for children's play since the late sixteenth century (ibid.: 21), but the legacy of "tool of faith" has prevailed until today. In this regard, examining the way in which Japanese people treated (and still do) "*kumade* (rake-of-fortune)", one of traditional Japanese toys, Kyburz underscores that this *kumade* "could hardly be considered a plaything in any Western sense, intended as it is for no other purposes than to act as a talisman for prosperity in business" (1994: 4).[15] It seems that Japanese people did not treat the Daikokuten *nezumi* and the *neko to nezumi* toys as merely ludic playthings but instead as three-dimensional charms for conjuring wealth and happiness or, in short, a happy life in utopia. Traditional Japanese toys do not represent merely playthings that only have a ludic function, and it appears that this trend still works as the concept of today's mascot markets in Japan.[16]

As Kyburz notes, "[t]heir [toys'] essential formal characteristic is the miniaturized representation, in figurative terms, of certain human beings, animals, or material objects, expressive of symbolical values that do not intrinsically relate to play, games, sport, amusement, or entertainment" (Kyburz 1994: 10). Therefore, in light of what Kyburz argues, the *neko to nezumi* toy is on "a metaphorical level, as material objects representing or even embodying symbolical images and values" (ibid.: 11). In other words, this toy embodies a dream of people's longing to live in a utopia narrated in a three-dimensional form. Those who played with this toy, even if only for a short time, could now make an imaginary trip to their utopia and escape so-called real life and forget all the concerns that tortured them. From this point of view, the Daikokuten *nezumi* toy illustrated in *Edo nishiki* represents a wish to be rich and to be free of suffering from starvation. Similar to "pigeon-whistle (*hato-bue*)" as Kyburz describes (1994: 11),[17] the *nezumi* figure of the Daikokuten *nezumi* toy is an emblematic animal that serves as Daikokuten's messenger, assisting with the distribution of wealth and happiness to the world's people. So, traditionally Japanese people did not always treat toys as mere playthings designed to pacify or entertain children but rather as items that have a "[m]agical function" which "is also the essential role of another family of 'toys' closely resembling 'mascots' . . . that are outright amulets (*omamori*) [in Japanese] or talismans" (ibid.: 12). And thus, he remarks, "[a]lthough they [toys that were "produced by adults and existing for adults"] may not be without a ludic dimension, their enjoyment is conditioned by so profound and complex a symbolism as to place them essentially outside the child's mental range" (ibid.: 16). So, the *nezumi* motif toys illustrated in *Edo nishiki* serve as a three-dimensional form of people's dreams of the happy life in utopia, free of predicaments.

When *Edo nishiki* was published in 1773, the people of the Edo Japan enjoyed Pax Tokugawana, in which connoisseurs living in urban and also agrarian communities had time to enjoy the arts, such as woodblock prints and theater plays (Keene 1999b [1978]: 1–7; Jansen 2000: 159–186). However jolly they found the amusements, epidemic diseases and famines that frequently and periodically attacked them always cast a blight on their actual daily lives (Jannetta 1992: 427–443; Tatsukawa 1979: 84–122, 1984: 31–69). Perhaps they accepted living amid the shifting sands of human life. This feeling led people to accept transient happiness and dreams that they could hardly fulfill in this real world. Anxieties about periodical calamities, such as epidemic diseases and famine that regularly and sometimes easily ruined everyday life, drove them to dream of a transient peace and appreciate fleeting beauty, a primary concept behind *ukiyo*, the "floating world", popularized across Japan, at least in urban communities (Jansen 2000: 177–178; Keene 1999b [1978]: 156, 579;

Sansom 1978 [1931]: 477). They considered that their life simply drifted on the waves at the intersection of the periodical calamities – they had to enjoy their lives as the current calamity faded away until the next wave of calamity returned. Examining this phenomenon helps us to understand the advent of *nezumi*-motif toys – three-dimensional form of narratives – amid the streams of epidemic diseases and famines. Contemporaneous records reveal how people suffered from epidemic diseases and famines – no one could avoid them. As Saitō and Kryburz point out, Japanese people regarded traditional toys as good preparation and protection from the unmanageable, unescapable, and imminent threats to their everyday lives (Kryburz 1994: 11; Saitō 1968: 20). As already noted, people mainly focused on the *nezumi*'s hoarding habit and then crafted their fantasy around that. Thus, playing with toys to dream of utopia was a function of the *nezumi*-motif toys that circulated among Japan's Edo-era people.

We tend to consider animal-shaped mascots and ornaments as objects of superstition or, today, even laughter, and this three-dimensional form of narrative can provide clues to the dreams of our ancestors. Even today, this trend can be detected in the variety of mascots on display at gift shops in downtown Tokyo. Those who purchase or wear animal-shaped mascots and ornaments, such as the *nezumi*, snakes, lions, and other fierce beasts, still dream of living in an unattainable utopia where they imagine they are immune to the sufferings of their daily lives. As Elliot Oring notes, "[t]he new and the old are mutually constitutive [for creating what we call tradition]" (2019: 142), so the way Japanese people rely on talismans and mascots today can be identified with the same kind of behavior vis-a-vis the *nezumi*-motif toys that Edo-era people once had. This trend of relying on *nezumi*-motif toys sounds ludic, but it still lives deeply in the traditional Japanese way of viewing *nezumi* creatures, and also makes us understand their unique way of portraying human-animal relationship for imagining their longed-for, yet unattainable, utopia.

NOTES

[1] Zoologically speaking, Sakurai Fujiro identifies the *nezumi* to include the house mouse, brown rat (or common house rat), and Norway rat. However, it remains difficult to determine which of these animals is depicted in individual verbal descriptions and visual images. Thus, for the sake of discussion, this article employs the term "rat/mouse" (or "rats/mice") when an English translation of *nezumi* is necessary (following Sakurai 2017).

[2] The concept of "narrative form" comes from Josef A. Kyburz (1994).

[3] Its illustrations were drawn by Kitao Shigemasa (1739–1820), the preface written by Ōta Nanpo (1749–1823), and poems composed by Kimuro Bōun (1714–83). Henry D. Smith mentions that *Edo nishiki* offers "a remarkable example in a color-printed book of 1773" of "forty-odd [*sic*] pairs of old versus new toys" (2012: 24). See also Kyburz 1994: 16.

[4] Examining stories about the mythical Daikouten lore, Sakurai Fujirō identifies the *nezumi* depicted in this lore as *dobu nezumi*, a brown or common rat, which is often called *daikoku nezumi*, the small common rat on which Daikokuten rides (Sakurai 2017: 51).

[5] Interestingly, the Black Death did not break out in medieval and early modern Japan as it did in Europe, so Japanese people did not identify the *nezumi* as a vehicle of fatal epidemic diseases (Tatsukawa 1984: 9–16).

[6] Although evidence of the *kakurezato*'s origins remains lacking, utopia-motif folktales can be traced to the seventh-century Chinese novelette *You xian ku* (A journey to the Fairy Utopia) by Zhang Zhuo (Li 2010: 41–58), which was imported to Japan in the early ninth century.

[7] Various scroll pictures of *Nezumi no sōshi emaki* survive to this day. One of them can be seen at the webpage of the Spencer Collection at the New York Public Library (see https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/nezumi-no-soshi-emaki-the-tale-of-mice#/?tab=about&scroll=6, last accessed on 10 October 2019).

[8] This recapitulated plotline of the *nezumi jōdo* story is based on the one that appears in Seki's Unified Index of Japanese Folktale Motifs (1978–1980): Japanese tale-type index JT 185, and also Inada & Ozawa's References for Folklore Research (1988): Inada tale-type index IT 82.

The same story plotline appears under the Aarne-Thompson-Uther Classification of Folktales; see ATU 613 ("The Two Travelers", under "Tales of Magic") in Uther's folktale (2004); however, no *nezumi* (rats/mice) motifs appear in the ATU 613 stories.

[9] Kyokutei Bakin, *Enseki zasshi* (Enseki memorandum, 1811), and Santō Kyōden, *Kottōshū* (Collecting curios, 1813).

[10] As Toriyama Sekien illustrates in his woodblock print *Kakurezato*, Edo-era Japanese people simply thought that Daikokuten has the highest ranking status in *nezumi* utopia to command his loyal messenger(s) because he takes his seat of honor in the mansion of the *nezumi* utopia (see Figure 3).

[11] I credit Kyburz with the term "three-dimension" to describe people shaping a conception into an actual iconic image: "[q]auntitatively the most important types are anthropomorphic figurines of popular, historical, legendary, mythical, sacred, or divine (also profane) personages, followed by animal figures and, finally, by three-dimensional likeness of material objects and symbols" (1994: 10). Following this line of reasoning, he examines the significant position of the papier-mâché tumbling *daruma* toy (a titling doll or a roly-poly toy with the legendary Zen monk Daruma figure) relative to other traditional Japanese toys and dolls, depicting it as "three-dimensional charm in papier-mâché" (ibid.: 15). Regarding the *daruma* toy, "the purpose [of the *daruma* toy] is magical rather than ludic" (ibid.: 15–16). Regarding the mysteries of *daruma* cult, see Faure 2011: 45–71.

[12] The populations of Edo (modern-day Tokyo) and Osaka are based on data from Jannetta (1987, 1992) and Jansen (2000).

[13] Even though the government of the Tokugawa shogunate firmly controlled Japan's society and economy during its long rule between 1603 and 1868, it periodically faced unavoidable predicaments. Regional and nationwide outbreaks of epidemic diseases and famine, for example, threatened not only the people living under Tokugawa rule but also the regime itself. Despite its successes in handling an array of crises, the shoguns had no power to control natural phenomena, of course, so that the specters of disease and famine, to which no one was immune, always hung over them.

[14] In this paper, a *topos* (pl. *topoi*) means a well-known, traditional, and popular icon that verbally and visually represents or is associated with a certain theme. It can thus take the form of certain actual or imaginary places, figures (human or animal), or codes. A topos is generally understood as a certain kind of signifier.

[15] Regarding the purpose of the *kumade* toys, Daniels describes that they "are fork-like objects … which are used for the raking in of good fortune" (Daniels 2003: 625–626).

[16] Regarding the contemporary trend of Japanese culture, Atkins' view of Japanese culture helps to understand a Japanese trait that has motivated Japanese people to engage with high and popular culture since early modern Japan to the present (Atkins 2017: 33–37).

[17] According to Kyburz, a pigeon-whistle or *hato-bue* "is a well-functioning wind instrument" used to call the attention of deities to the individual who blows it (Kyburz 1994: 11).

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WHAT CAN THE MYTHICAL FROG TELL US? THE SYMBOLISM AND ROLE OF THE FROG IN HISTORY AND MODERNITY

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Abstract: Frogs have always been related to the mythical origin of life. In mythologies throughout the world, frogs were associated with the primeval waters out of which life arose. The author looks at the rich symbolic language of this amphibian, with a special focus on its clear female symbolism – fertility, fecundity, female genitals, abundance, regeneration, renewal of life, pregnancy, eroticism, wetness/life, etc., as well as divine symbolism as revealed in the Polish and Croatian words for frog – *boginka* and *bogińa* (goddess). The author identifies and discusses past and contemporary imagery, legends, narratives, and fairy-tales, and the folkloristic, mythical, ethnological, archaeological, and linguistic aspects of frogs and their symbolism. The folkloristic triplet *toads – babas – mushrooms* identified during the research is presented as additional proof of the analogous linguistic triplet with *bau* or *bo* roots in some European languages. All three of the items, with the aspect of wetness as a precondition for fertility, as shown in the paper, are symbols of female sexual organs, fertility, and renewal. In the end, the author points to the longevity of the image of the frog presented next to the Virgin Mary in an interesting syncretism of the pre-Christian and Christian worlds.

Keywords: female genitals, fertility, frog, frog-goddess, frog-woman, frog-womb votives, regeneration, toad, Virgin Mary

Frogs have always been related to the mythical origin of life. In mythologies throughout the world they were associated with the primeval waters out of which life arose. In this paper, I will try to enter into the rich symbolic language of this amphibian, with a special focus on its evident female symbolism – lunar attributes, fertility, fecundity, abundance, regeneration, renewal of life and resurrection, pregnancy, the womb, eroticism, wetness/life, bringer of rain, protector of mothers and newborns, protector of water springs, etc. It is clear that the regenerative symbolism not only of fish, but of frogs as well, comes from their aquatic environment. Frogs, associated with the primeval waters,

were the symbol of the life-giving uterus with its water-like amniotic fluid. Therefore, one of the many terrestrial guises of the Great Goddess/Mother Goddess, the great regeneratrix, was the image of a frog (Gimbutas 1999; Kuğutjak 2018: 156). In her latest book, *Ten Gods*, Emily Lyle specifically states that "[a] point of special interest, since it contradicts some current understandings of the Indo-Europeans, is that the approach taken here seems to show that in prehistory goddesses played central, though not dominant, roles within the pantheon" (Lyle 2012: 115). By providing several examples of historical and more contemporary imagery, some of which are perceived as such for the first time, it will be shown that frogs themselves were considered procreative organs.

The aim of this paper is not to discuss or back up the "Goddess theory" and its scientific or historical accuracy, but to use historical and contemporary imagery and narratives and the folkloristic, ethnological, archaeological and linguistic aspects of the frog and its symbolism as new evidence and support for Marija Gimbutas' position that "more recent beliefs concerning frogs and toads illuminate those of prehistory" (Gimbutas 2001 [1989]: 251) and that "many images and beliefs about frogs and toads endured through the Bronze and Iron Ages and in European folklore and folk art" (Gimbutas 1999: 30).[1] It should be noted that although there are several illustrative examples from other regions given as references, the principal region under study is Croatia.

VOTIVES

Let me first focus on votives/ex-votos and amulets in the shape of a woman-frog or a womb. These objects have been known from prehistoric times until the present. It is the most striking example of the continuity of pre-Christian traditions connected with the motif of the frog, which, as already mentioned, is considered a symbol of fecundity and fertility – a renewal of life. In contemporary Europe, including in Croatia, peasants believe that a frog or a toad[2] is a portent of pregnancy. "Both Hippocrates and Plato described the uterus as an animal capable of moving in all directions in the abdomen" (Gimbutas 2001 [1989]: 251). In the Tyrol region of Austria, as testified in folk beliefs recorded at the beginning of the twentieth century, people believed that women had something similar to frogs in their wombs (Kus-Nikolajev 1928: 39). There is also a close symbolic relationship between the toad and the female body.

> *In a vast area of western Europe from Alsace to the Tyrolean Alps, phenomena of spirit possession resulted from a toad's bite or its penetration into the body of the possessed (Charuty 1997: 82–94). … The identification of the 'bite' with the uterus was based on an age-old representation of*

> *the female sex organ, which, according to a tradition running through Greco-Roman, Renaissance, and Baroque medicine, was endowed with a mobility that made it similar to an animal, and in this form it 'possessed' the female body.* (Pizza 2006: 1124)

A visible association of the toad with the vagina can clearly be seen in a wax toad ex-voto from Germany (Fig. 1).

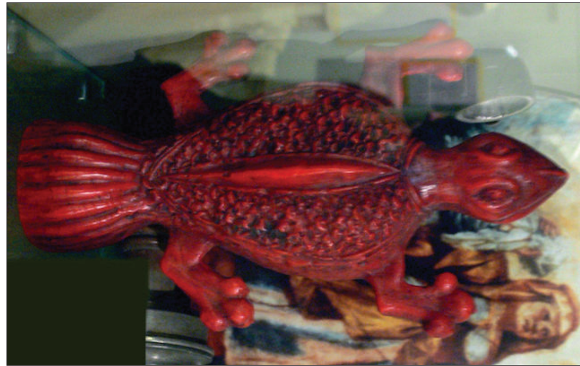


Figure 1. *German wax toad votive with a vulva on its back (see https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/toad-votives-religion-medieval-saints, last accessed on 4 November 2019).*

Furthermore, small toad sculptures and votives were placed as offerings at Christian holy sites or were brought to the shrines of certain saints as a petition for pregnancy. A certain logic is evident in this offering, since toads were sometimes considered vaginal symbols in the medieval mind. In addition to their association with childbirth, toads (like vaginas) were also linked to sin, magic and evil[3] (Laskow 2017).

In Croatia, people also used to buy votives in the shape of a woman-frog or a womb, as a votive for the protection of female genitals as a prayer for conception and pregnancy. They were bought from *licitar* makers (*licitar* is a traditional, colourfully decorated biscuit) and were brought to church as votive gifts and left there with the faith that their prayers would be answered. Frog-shaped *licitars* are still sold today by *licitar* makers in Marija Bistrica, one of the most famous Croatian pilgrimage sites, situated close to Zagreb. Its symbolic meaning has changed and today it is used to bring health to the whole family. It should be added that silver or golden ex-votos made in Dalmatian goldsmiths' workshops were owned by the wealthy upper classes, while wax votives were more common among the poorer classes in Croatia (cf. Grdinić & Dugac & Biškupić Bašić 2007: 37).[4]

Figure 2. *Infertile woman's wax* žena-žaba *(woman-frog), i.e. womb votive. Marija Bistrica, Croatia (Čulinović-Konstantinović 1989: 222).*

Figure 3. *Infertile woman's wax* žena-žaba *(woman-frog) votive. Ethnographic Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, early 20th century (Čulinović-Konstantinović 1989: 222).*

Figure 4. *Wax votive in the shape of a womb (frog), votive gift for the protection of female genitals (Catalogue 2013: 92).*

Figure 5. *Mould for a votive – frog with a cross on its back. Križevci City Museum, northern Croatia, mid-19th century, wood (Grdinić & Dugac & Biškupić Bašić 2007: 8).*

RITUAL FROG DANCES – *ŽAPCI* (CROATIA) AND *ŽABSKÁ* (MORAVIA, CZECH REPUBLIC)

Let us move on to a quite amusing illustration of the frog as a symbol of fertility: the magical ritual dance called *Žapci* (Frogs), in which the movement of frogs is imitated, as the name itself suggests. It was performed until the 1970s in the northern part of Croatia, in several villages close to Čazma, but also in southern Moravia in the Czech Republic, in Haná and in the Horňácko region.

The dance from northern Croatia was described in 1967 as follows:[5]

> *The ritual dance Žapci is still performed in only two or three villages around Čazma. ... At the end of winter, a few married couples meet in the evening in a large, well-closed room. After a short conversation and singing over drinks, the dance begins. At first everyone stands in a circle, couple next to couple, so that they face each other back to back. Then each dancer leans forward with arms extended nearly to the ground. When given the signal, everyone thrusts their head forward, swaying slightly left and right while beating their feet rhythmically and deeply mumbling mm mm mm, mm mm. When man and woman meet, the woman usually grabs the man's shoulder with her arms and jumps over him. She then comes upon the next player and jumps over him or her as well, or they jump over her. While jumping, they usually touch each other's genitals with their arms or heads. Nobody can say anything about the origin of this dance, and it is not openly talked about. It is mentioned only in secret circles, and they even secretly invite the dancers to the event.* (Lovrenčević 1967: 155)

We can see that this ritual dance, performed by married couples in secrecy, where the genitals of the opposite sex are touched while imitating frog movements, is an obvious imitation of a sexual act, symbolising and evoking the fecundity of the annual agricultural cycle. But this does not only include the fertility of the fields: "The aim of this frog-dance is the evocation and intensifying of the overall fertility of the fields, the cattle and also the people of the village" (Lovrenčević 1967: 155).

The other ritual dance with a similar name derived from the word for frog is the *Žabská* or *Žabský*,[6] which is performed in Moravia, the south-eastern part of the Czech Republic. The dance is accompanied by lascivious songs called *falický* (phallic songs). This ritual dance, which also has visible elements of fertility magic, is performed by making various leaps in the squatting position. In this way, frogs' leaping, jumping and hopping is imitated in a humorous way. In the Horňácko region this dance was most often performed on certain saints' name days or during traditional carnival festivities accompanied by a specific

song, which was not the same everywhere – *Hrály dudy* (The Bagpipes Played) or *Žába leze, žáb za ní* (A Frog is Crawling, and Another is Crawling After It) (Tyllner et al. 2007). Since the lascivious scenarios of both dances are similar, there is no doubt that the Czech name *falický* is derived from the Latin word *phallus*. Clearly, both the Croatian and Czech ritual dances imitate the sexual act, serving as a magical ritual for fertility and fecundity for which the frog is a symbol. Additionally, it should be noted that the Croatian dance *Žapci* is performed at the end of winter when the agrarian cycle is the weakest; therefore, it was necessary to supplicate for its fertility through ritual. If we now recall the frog-womb votives (Fig. 2, 3, 4) offered as gifts by infertile women and compare them with the Croatian and Czech ritual dances *Žapci* and *Žabská*, it is clear that both Slavic "frog dances" have the same purpose – encouraging procreation and fertility.

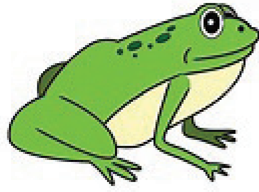
As we have seen, both dances are performed in a squatting position. This typical frog position can well be compared with the folkloristic material from the Yaroslavl province in Russia, where in order to get married, spinsters had to find a frog and after squatting and jumping like a frog had to sit on it with their naked bottom (Gura 2005: 283). The examples presented here, as can be noticed, all come from Slavic ethnology.

FROG NAMES FOR FEMALE GENITALS

Žabicu driti (to break a small frog)

In the same context, it is highly interesting to examine several frog names that illustrate their evident linguistic and symbolic connection with the frog's main connotation – fertility. In some villages in Germany, women call the womb a *toad* (Devereux 1990: 72), so it can be seen that frog symbolism is also present outside the Slavic world. Moreover, in Yucatan, the same word (*much*) is used for both female genitals and frogs (Seler 1910: 81). I have found a similar linguistic phenomenon in Croatian, in the Istrian dialect (Fig. 6).

The Croatian word for frog is *žaba*, and the diminutive form is *žabica*. In a dictionary of local idioms from the village of Vodice in Istria, Croatia, I found quite an interesting syntagm, *žabicu driti* (to break a small frog) or, as this Croatian phrase was explained in German, *Blut brechen*[7] (to break blood) (Ribarić 2002: 225). The German phrase *Blut brechen* consists of two common German words – blood and break. But what about the phrase in Croatian – *žabicu driti* (to break a small frog)? What does it indicate? There is no doubt the syntagm *žabicu driti* denotes an act of defloration, where *žabica* (a small frog) is again a term for women's genitals that bleed when they are "broken" during the first



Žaba – *a frog*

Žabica – *a small frog*

Žabicu driti / *to break a small frog*
Blut brechen / *to break blood*

Figure 6. *The syntagm* žabicu driti *(to break a small frog).*

sexual act. The explanation in German that Ribarić adds after the Croatian syntagm *žabicu driti* proves that a small frog, *žabica*, again represents the female sexual organ.[8]

Žabica – a word for the triangular part of the Croatian national costume

In the same territory of Istria in western Croatia, I found another indicative piece of evidence also connected with the diminutive form *žabica*, this time as the name for the part of the traditional female Istrian costume described in a text written by Jelka Radauš Ribarić, expertly analysing the phenomenon of the so-called *klinasto ruho* (wedge-shaped costume). A *žabica* in the form of a triangle/wedge is inserted at the back of the long dress, thus broadening its skirt (Radauš Ribarić 1997: 121).[9] Not only do we once again find the same diminutive word *žabica*, indicating female genitals, but this piece of cloth called *žabica* is placed exactly on the part of the dress where the female genitals are located. This *žabica* is also tailored in the shape of a triangle/wedge that is inserted into the bottom part of the dress called *rubina* in the shape of a double triangle, which even more clearly corresponds to the anatomy of the female sexual organ.

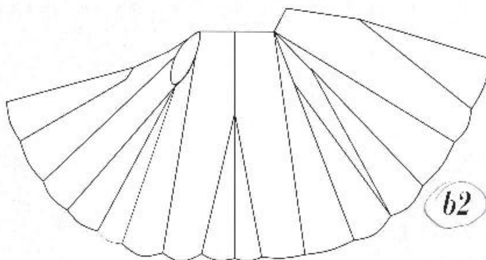


Figure 7. Žabica, *a triangle / wedge inserted into a wedge-shaped* rubina *(dress). Istria, Croatia (Radauš Ribarić 1997: 134 b2).*

Figure 8. *Female genitals in triangular form. Lepenski vir, Serbia, 6000 – 5000 BC (front cover of Devereux's book* Bauba – Mitska vulva*, Zagreb, 1990).*

Another part of the Croatian traditional costume with the name *žabica,* also in the shape of a triangle, can be found in the village of Habjanovci in Slavonia, in the eastern part of Croatia. The description of the upper *oplećak* (shirt) informs us that there is a small triangular piece of canvas under the armpit called a *žabica*, which was supposed to prevent the stiches from breaking (Španiček 2010: 27).[10] It should be emphasised that in both the Istrian and Slavonian cases, the part of the traditional national costume called *žabica*, inserted either into the long dress or under the armpit, is in the shape of a triangle. I believe that this ethnological element – a *žabica* as a triangular piece of cloth – can be associated with the triangles engraved on numerous prehistoric female statues where they also represent female genitals. Let me illustrate this claim with the image on the front cover of the Croatian translation of Georges Devereux's book *Baubo, la vulve mythique*, about the goddess Bauba.

As we have seen, the term *žabica*, in both folkloristic as well as in the original linguistic examples presented and discussed above, has been identified in this paper as a synonym for female genitalia, as is the frog itself.

LOVE MAGIC

On the basis of the frog names given to female genitals discussed above, the female sexual symbolism of the frog can be clearly detected. Now let us turn to the use of the frog in love magic.

> *In Ukrainian Galicia a young man in the marsh catches a frog that is the first to make a croaking sound during sunset. He then inserts a needle and thread into the frog and uses the same needle to discreetly stick into the lower part of the skirt of the girl he is in love with.* (Gura 2005: 283)

A very similar theme of a young man's attempts to use a frog in love magic to win the heart of the girl he loves can be found in the legend "Tri dlake i zelena žaba" (The Three Hairs and the Green Frog) from Ćićarija in Istria, Croatia. In this story, a young man is hunting for a green frog in order to find a remedy for unrequited love:

> *When the young man finally found the green frog, he put it in a little box and poked a hole in it with a sharp piece of wood and placed the box on a large anthill. The ants immediately began to ravenously devour the green frog. After two whole days, the lovesick young man returned to the anthill and peeked into the box; inside he found a clean frog skeleton … He went to mass on Sunday. As he was leaving the church, he met his love's gaze in the crowd. He managed to touch her with the box with the frog skeleton inside, as they were crowding around the holy water font, and he was certain that the power of the frog skeleton would work its magic.* (Vrkić 1991: 188–189)

Let us recall the similar love magic mentioned above, i.e. the love-marriage magic testified to in the folkloristic material from Yaroslavl province in Russia, where, in order to get married, spinsters had to find a frog and after squatting and jumping like a frog had to sit on it with their naked bottom (Gura 2005: 283). From other magic uses it can be added that "a frog as a fairylike being plays an important role in folk medicine, and its demonic characteristics are most evident during childbirth. … In order to protect women from these fairy beings, amulets containing their image (a frog) are used" (Kus-Nikolajev 1928: 41).

A LINGUISTIC AND FOLKLORISTIC TRIPLET: TOADS – WITCHES *(BABAS)* – MUSHROOMS

We now come to the interesting linguistic triplet *toads*[11] – *witches* – *mushrooms*, which I have realized is a folkloristic triplet as well. Marija Gimbutas writes that "some European languages use the root *bau* or *bo* in association with names for toads, witches or mushrooms. … I believe these words reflect the names of the goddess of death and regeneration before she was rendered a demon" (Gimbutas 1999: 29).

The etymological connection between the three terms is quite thought-provoking. I realized that my own ethnological research of the same three items, years before I read the paragraph above, had led me in the same not etymological but "mythological" direction.[12]

As stated above by Gimbutas (1999: 29), in some European languages the root *bau* or *bo* is associated with the words for witches, mushrooms, and toads.

Baba also means "witch" in Bulgarian and Polish dialects (Alinei 1988: 43). On the other hand, in France, the words *bo*, *bot*, *botet* (in the Haut Saone and Loire provinces) mean "toad" (Gimbutas 1999: 29). "In Lithuania, *bauba* denotes a frightening witch or monster … These could be related to the Lithuanian *baba*, an old woman or wife, and *bobausis*, an edible fungus" (Gimbutas 1999: 29, 218 (footnote 18)). It is similarly interesting that the German word *Hexe* signifies both "toad" and "witch". Likewise, in Italian dialects a frog is defined as *strega* (witch) or *fata* (fairy) (Pizza 2006: 1123), so they intertwine linguistically.

However, this interlacing is not merely linguistic. Narratives about the intertwining of frogs/toads and witches in folklore, i.e., about the transformation of a witch into a frog, are actually quite common. As one of many examples, let me quote one from eastern Slovenia, on the border with Croatia: "…the widespread conviction that it is the neighbours who bewitch [*sic*] obviously influenced the 'victim' to immediately connect the toad, in our region typically understood as an incarnation of a witch who comes to do harm, with her neighbour" (Mencej 2015: 115).

> *When neighbours saw a toad on the piece of land that was an object of dispute regarding the ownership, they obviously recognised the narrator with whom they were in conflict about this particular piece of land as the toad, i.e. the witch.* (Mencej 2015: 123)

The transformation can also occur in the other direction (from toad to witch):

> *Sometimes a frog is nothing but a female person who turned into one. … In our country, people also believe that a witch turns into a frog. … and a girl turned into a frog. In Lukovdol near Severin, a frog is perceived as a witch (*coprnica*). In Stupnik near Zagreb, people say that a toad is a* coprnjica*, a witch. In Čučerje near Zagreb, people believe that a frog (*coprnica*) can turn into a* coprnica *(witch).* (Đorđević 1958: 197)

Apart from turning a toad into a witch, the negative and dark aspect of the toad is also evident, and toads are often considered to be opposites of frogs. There is also "an old story of a witch with a frog as her demonic companion evolved in the oral tradition to become 'The Frog King' (or 'The Frog Prince'), the first tale in the famous collection of German fairy tales by the Grimm brothers" (Sax 2001: 127).

Let us also illustrate this transformation with part of a fairy-tale from the Podravina region in Hungary, titled (in Croatian) "Krastača i ružica" (The Toad and the Rose).

> *There was an old woman, she had a beautiful granddaughter. The young girl was fifteen years old, and she knew that her grandmother was a witch*

> *... The grandmother told the granddaughter, 'Go to the well and look!' A crusty toad as big as a bread paddle was swimming inside. The young girl was very frightened. 'Don't worry,' said the grandmother, 'I used to be that crusty toad, and you used to be that beautiful rose on the water.' – 'Grandmother, I love being the rose and not the witch'.* (Vrkić 1991: 133)

What else makes this triplet so relevant? Besides the etymological connection of the three items presented above, there is another obvious bond connecting them. They all are connected with water and wetness, and they represent the same thing – the female genitalia and thus fertility and renewal. Therefore, let us now focus on the first two items – the *baba* and the mushroom.

Monolithic *babas*

The abovementioned root word *ba(u)* can be found in the word for the monoliths (called *babas*) that I found during my fieldwork in the Adriatic part of north-western Croatia in 1995.[13] It should be remembered that in Croatian *baba* means "old woman" or "old hag", and as a mythological character a *baba* is similar to a witch, one of the three items mentioned by Gimbutas. *Babas*, the rocks I discovered during my fieldwork on the island of Krk and in Istria, have to be offered fruit and wheat and have to be kissed when approached for the first time, often expressed in the form of a threat to children that they would have to kiss an old woman's behind.

When I began my research some twenty years ago, the *baba* was not understood as an aquatic goddess with water being one of her main connotations. It took me some time and effort to discover that these *baba*-monoliths were always associated with water in some form. Little by little I noticed that all *babas* were situated near water (by wells and streams) and that they were all accompanied by the legend about kissing the hag / ugly old woman and by the need to give her gifts of fruit, wheat, etc. Furthermore, the attributes wet, slimy, snotty, damp, and mucous undoubtedly also indicated the presence of water and humidity – the preconditions for fertility. The aquatic nature of all these *babas* is additionally confirmed by the hydronyms of the water bodies they are situated on (*Potočina* named after the Croatian word for stream (*potok*) and *Pucunel* after the Italian word for well (*pozzo*)).

I had to ask myself what these *baba*-stones personify, why they are kissed and given offerings, and what the meaning of the legends and practices was. After a while I found the most illustrative answer during my fieldwork, when I discovered the only figurative representation of the *baba* at that time[14] – the unique Grobnik Baba near Rijeka, which is not a rock shaped by nature but

a grotesque female figure carved out of a solid rock, with a large head and emphasized feminine attributes – large hips and breasts (unfortunately diminished by the children's game of flinging pebbles) no doubt symbolizing fertility and abundance (Fig. 9, 10).

Figure 9. *The Grobnik Baba. Photograph by the author 1996.*

Figure 10. *The Grobnik Baba. Photograph by Z. Novačić 1996.*

Like all the other amorphous *babas*, she is "snotty and muddy", as her wetness was described by the informants from the region, and is visible from the dark trail of water along the entire stone figure. The Grobnik Baba also had to be kissed and offered gifts when a stranger came to town for the first time. Hrobat (now Hrobat Virloget) continued to explore the "wet" aspect of the *babas*, paying particular attention to the connection of the element of water in the form of atmospheric elements with the *baba's* bodily fluids in the context of fertility (Hrobat 2010: 207–209).

At the end of this section, I should mention George Devereux's book *Baubo, la vulve mythique* (1983), in which the author presents the goddess Baubo/ Bauba who displays her vulva. Similarly, Hrobat (2010: 212) observes that both goddesses, Baubo and Baba, raise their skirts. This act is also present in the title of Hrobat's book from 2010.[15] Now that we have addressed the monolithic *babas*, let us turn our attention to mushrooms picked by another *baba*.

Mushrooms – "Baba Went Mushroom Picking"

Like *babas*, mushrooms are closely connected with water, and in fact, mushrooms are largely composed of water.[16] In this case, a *baba* is picking mushrooms in the woods – a wet, humid area. In the northern Međimurje region of Croatia, Baba exists as a character in the traditional wedding ritual comedy skit "Baba Went Mushroom Picking", where the motifs of *baba* and mushrooms are intertwined. The main character Baba is dressed as an old woman with grotesquely large hips and breasts (like the Grobnik Baba) filled with straw. She is holding a wooden bread paddle containing a chalk drawing of *baba*'s *wound*, which is actually a depiction of female genitals, locally called *cuca* (Fig. 11, 12).

Figure 11. *Traditional wedding ritual comedy skit "Baba Went Mushroom Picking". Goričan, northern Croatia, 1975 (Hranjec 2011: 244).*

Figure 12. Traditional wedding ritual comedy skit "Baba Went Mushroom Picking". Goričan, northern Croatia, 1975 (Hranjec 2011: 243).

The entire skit clearly emphasizes the symbolism of fertility and fecundity, as is otherwise common in wedding customs. In addition to the claimed aphrodisiac property of mushrooms, it is obvious that their shape resembles the congress of the male and female genitalia, and that it symbolizes not only fertility but also the bond of marriage, happiness, and life force. In the wedding comedy "Baba Went Mushroom Picking", the obscenity of the gestures of Baba's escort, Djeda, and the free and lascivious dialogue between the wedding celebrants and Baba should be considered within the same context of the desire for fertility in marriage. The erotic symbolism of the wooden bread paddle with a drawing of Baba's "wound" (mentioned in the song called "Baba Went Mushroom Picking"), is also in the service of fecundity.

Moreover, mushroom-shaped pastries are served which also symbolize fertility, an important motif that we have already encountered a number of times (Fig. 13).[17]

Figure 13. Traditional mushroom wedding pastry (anonymous, taken in Dragoslavec-Breg, Croatia, 2012).

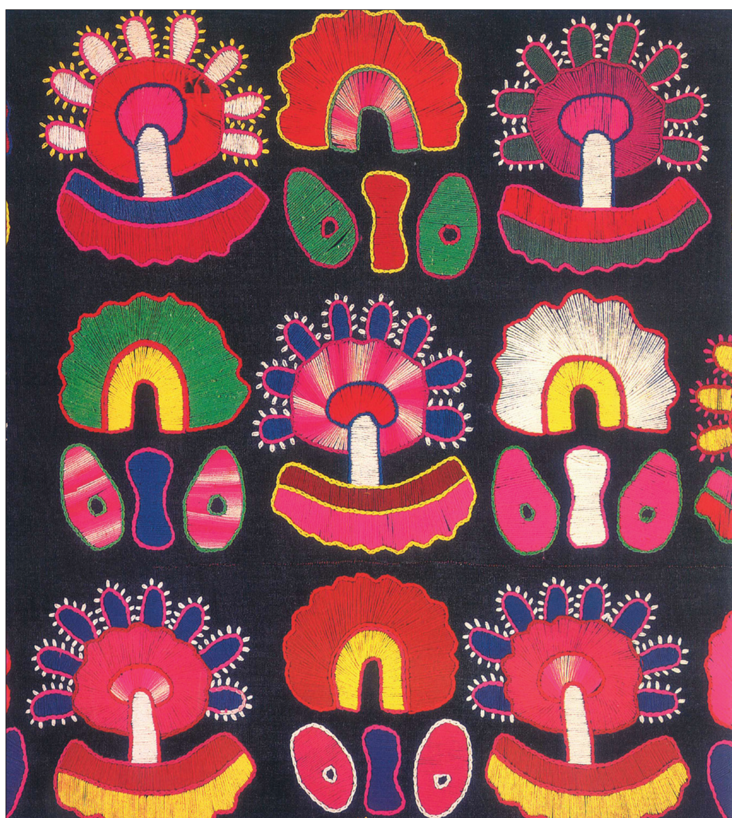


Figure 14. *Mushrooms on a wedding bed cover. Slavonia, Croatia (Toldi 1999: 59).*

In another wedding context, a mushroom appears on a wedding bed cover called a *ponjavac* from Slavonia, the eastern region of Croatia. We can see that mushrooms represent the sexual act, with mushroom stalks and caps symbolizing male and female genitals in the act of intercourse (Fig. 14). The mushroom cap clearly symbolizes the female genitalia.

Another clear example of a mushroom representing a vagina can be found in verses recorded in a village near Slavonski Brod in eastern Croatia (Toldi 1999: 45):

Da znaš mili šta imam pod krili!? *Milo janje, lipo eklovanje.* *Turi ruku, pa ćeš nać **pečurku**.*	*If you only knew, my dear, what I have under my lap!?* *Gentle lamb, pretty little lacework,* *Push your hand in, and you'll find a **mushroom**.*

The *baba* and the mushroom in the wedding skit "Baba Went Mushroom Picking", like the triangles on traditional costumes called *žabica* (little frog) that were introduced above, embody the same thing, female genitalia, and therefore fertility, a highly desirable attribute for newlyweds, particularly emphasized in various ways during this wedding ritual scenario (cf. Vince Pallua 2013). If we now connect the symbolism of the frog, the *baba* and the mushroom with the ritual wedding skit "Baba Went Mushroom Picking", we can compare it to the already mentioned customary practice in the Yaroslavl province in Russia where, in order to get married, spinsters had to find a frog and after squatting and jumping like a frog had to sit on it with their naked bottom (Gura 2005: 283). In fact, a similar tradition exists among the southern Slavs – women have to sit on a wet rock called *baba*[18] when they want to get pregnant.

The folkloristic material I have analysed shows the intertwining of the three elements also indicated in the etymological triplet. The examples described above demonstrate the similar symbolism of the *baba* and the mushroom and are closely connected with the frog. Therefore, not only the linguistic/etymological but also the folkloristic data point to the unity of the items in the triplet: *toads – witches / babas – mushrooms.* As shown in the paper, these three "wet" items symbolize female sexual organs, fertility, and renewal.

THE NAMES FOR FROGS

It is very common among Southern Slavs that children are not allowed to call a frog by its usual term *žaba*. Instead, they have to call it *baba*: "*Baba* is a euphemism for a frog. Children who have a mother should never say *žaba*, but *baba*, otherwise their mother would soon die" (Đorđević 1958: 195).[19] The vagina is considered a symbol of the frog and an entrance to the other world as well. Therefore the word *žaba* is taboo since its utterance would cause the mother's death.[20] On the other hand, this might be correlated with the importance of avoiding the direct utterance of the names of gods (or goddesses) in many traditional cultures, which indicates the possibility of the former high divine status attributed to the frog.[21] Could this admonition also be connected with the frog and its former image as the primeval mother / frog-goddess?[22]

Some of the words I found for frogs are quite interesting: "Female ghosts called *boginke* (goddesses) and *čudožene* (miracle-women), who like to exchange small children, can also look like frogs" (Gura 2005: 285–286); the European tree frog (*hyla arborea*), also known as "God's frog", is the most well-known type of frog in our country, which is why it has so many names. It is called *bogińa* (goddess), *kraljica* (queen), *kraljevčica* (princess), *kraljeva žabica* (king's frog),

kraljeva žabička (king's frog), *zelenjara* (green frog), *kišnjara* (rain frog), *kišovica* (rain frog), *gatalinka* (fortune teller), *gatalinčica* (fortune teller), *katoličanka* (Catholic frog), *reglica* (queen), *krekavica* (croaker), *zelena žabica* (small green frog), and even *vračara* (spell caster), because frogs were used for casting spells (Hirtz 1896: 23–24).

There are quite a few examples that illustrate the echoing of a remote depth connected with frogs up until the present day. As late as the twentieth century, people in Lithuania would erect wooden sepulchral monuments in the shape of a toad, whose heads were sometimes a sprouting lily, a symbol of regeneration (Bračko 2012: 117; Gimbutas 2001: 254), like the frog itself. "The toads were sometimes good protectors of homes, they lived in huts and were fed with milk. They were shy, quiet and good. People believed that such toads were the incarnation of the soul of those deceased from that home or ghosts" (Bračko 2012: 123). "A home frog is respected, especially if it resides under the doorstep, with its manistic meaning drawn on the basis of the frog representing an ancestor" (Kulišić & Petrović & Pantelić 1970: 120); "Frogs are often thought to be Titans or that Titans reside in them, or that they are a certain female saint" (Đorđević 1958: 200–201).

THE FROG AND THE VIRGIN MARY

We have seen that the sexual connotations and love magic so often associated with the frog are connected with its wetness attributes, and hence with the symbolism of fertility, life giving, renewal of life, regeneration, etc., that we have been following so far. However, the frog plays another quite important role, as the protector of water springs. This can be well illustrated by a legend from Čakovec in Međimurje, the northernmost county of Croatia. In the seventeenth century, the highest Croatian noblemen Šubić and Zrinjski bravely protected their feudal holdings, and at the same time all of Europe, from the Ottoman invasions. The following legend[23] tells us about the lands granted to these noble families by the king in gratitude for their achievements and military accomplishments, all thanks to a poor young girl who managed to kill a giant frog with a ruby in its forehead. The giant frog was the protector of drinking water sources, surrounded by wetlands. At the spot where the frog was killed, water suddenly jetted out, and a well was built allowing for the construction of the castle and the life around it.

> *Before the construction of the palace could begin, a water well had to be dug. They dug and dug, but all they could find around them was dirty, muddy, filthy water! In the place of the future well, below a rock, they saw*

> *a huge green frog with bulging eyes and a big precious stone, a ruby, that shone on its forehead. It was a magical frog that guarded the water! It could be killed only by a virgin. They brought a girl from the surrounding area, dressed in a white gown, with a garland of flowers on her head. There was a whole ritual for the performance of this act. With a dagger in her hand, the girl slowly approached the frog, and when she was close enough, she stopped and readily swung with a steady arm and stabbed the frog in its heart. At that moment, pure and crystal-clear water erupted from the ground, and its invigorating taste delighted all those present. The girl was richly rewarded.* (Kalšan 2011: 33–34)

This folk tale reminds us of numerous Christian narratives about the ritual murder of a mythical animal (a snake or a dragon) as the precondition for the liberating of waters. The seventeenth-century legend from northern Croatia cited above is interesting in another context as well, as it reminds us of Christian legends about healing water sources around which altars were built, with churches dedicated to the Virgin Mary erected above them. By killing a giant frog,[24] the poor girl enabled the release of clean drinking water, bringing life to the palace. In the same way, the Christian Virgin Mary appears as her substitute, enabling the opening of healing wells. In the reinterpretation of old religious images after Christianization, the mythical frog, as the protector of mothers and newborns, was often closely associated with the Virgin Mary, who was also the protector of barren women.

We can all recall the well-known fairy tale "Sleeping Beauty", in which the frog announces to the queen, while she is bathing, that her desperate wish to have a child would be granted and that she would become a mother within a year. "In Germany up to the 20th century, women suffering from uterine problems presented images of toads to the Virgin Mary" (Gimbutas 2001 [1989]: 255). As already mentioned, wax frog votives are still being sold and brought to St. Mary's Church in Marija Bistrica, a well-known Marian sanctuary, but today as a votive for the overall health of the whole family.[25]

Frogs were not considered poisonous only during the period between the Assumption and the Birth of St. Mary (from 15 August to 8 September) and were then burnt and used as a powder against various diseases (Hiller 1989). This folk belief shows that during this particular interval of time the frog is not considered ugly and poisonous. This period coincides with the most important Marian feast days.

The connection between the frog and the Virgin Mary illustrates the longevity of the symbolism of the frog. More importantly, this connection points to the blending of two images – pre-Christian and Christian – that we can see in a Bavarian votive (Fig. 15) dating from the nineteenth century. Therefore,

we should not be surprised to see the frog (with a human vulva on its back symbolising a regenerative force) and the Virgin Mary placed right next to each other in a painting on a votive tablet from 1811 in Bavaria, southern Germany.

Figure 15. *Ex voto / Votive tablet – frog with vulva on its back next to the Virgin Mary. Bavaria, Germany, 1811 (Gimbutas 2001 [1989]: 254).*

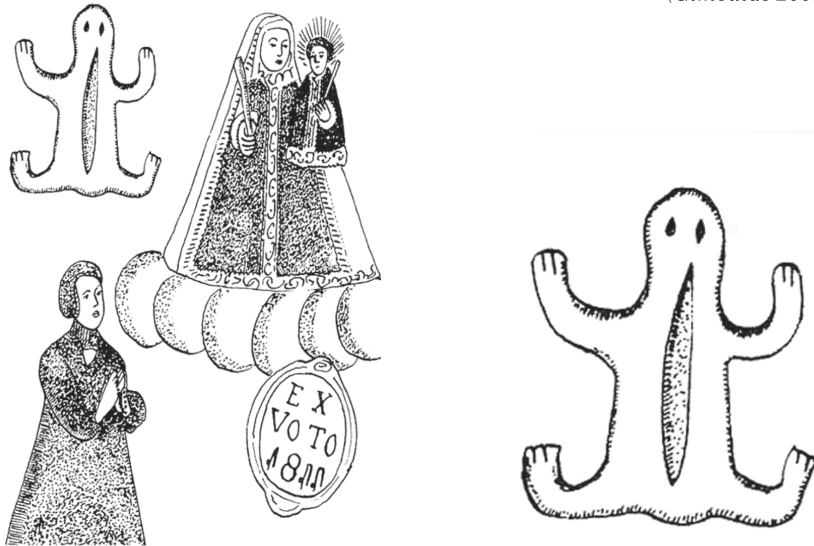


Figure 16. *Silver ex-voto, frog with a human face, late nineteenth century. Andechs Monastery, Upper Bavaria, Germany (Gimbutas 2001 [1989]: 254).*

The curious examples above show two votives in the shape of a frog: one with a vulva on its back[26] (Fig. 15) and one with a cross in the same place (Fig. 16).[27] The silver nineteenth-century votive frog with a human face and a cross (instead of a vulva) on its back, also from Bavaria (Fig. 16), reflects the frog-woman with a goddess-vulva association – the great regeneratrix.

CONCLUSION

After discussing the rich symbolism of the frog, I have come back to the very beginning of the paper where I emphasized the "wet" attributes connected with frogs, with wetness meaning fertility, fecundity, renewal of life, regeneration, the frog as a symbol of the womb, protector of mothers and newborns, and protector of water springs. Throughout the paper, past but also contemporary imagery, legends, narratives, fairy-tales, and the folkloristic, mythical, ethnological, archaeological and linguistic aspects of the frog and its symbolism have been identified and discussed.

Numerous testimonies, some of which are perceived in this light for the first time, have shown that the frog itself was considered as a procreative organ. The Croatian and Czech ritual "frog dances", performed by married couples in secrecy, present an obvious imitation of the sexual act, symbolizing and evoking the fecundity of the annual agricultural cycle as well as the overall fertility of the fields, the cattle, and also the people of the village. Compared with these Slavic ritual frog dances, the frog-womb votives offered as gifts by infertile women have the same purpose – encouraging procreation and fertility.

The piece of cloth inserted into the national costume in two regions of Croatia, Istria and Slavonia – either into the long dress or under the armpit of the shirt – lead in the same direction. That is, they both are triangular and are called a *žabica* (small frog). It has been shown that the same diminutive word *žabica* indicates female genitals in the local Istrian phrase *žabicu driti*, to break a small frog, as well as the triangular piece of cloth inserted into the bottom part of the dress called *rubina*, in the shape of a double triangle. The *žabica* as an ethnological element has been associated with triangles engraved on numerous prehistoric female statues where they also represent female genitals. In short, *žabica* in the folkloristic examples has been identified as a synonym for the female genitals, as is the frog itself.

We have seen that the sexual connotations so often assigned to the frog, as well as love magic, are connected with its wetness attributes and therefore with the symbolism of fertility, life giving, renewal of life, regeneration, etc., that I have been following throughout the paper. That is, "wet" attributes are

connected not only with frogs, but with two other folkloristic items as well – the *baba* and the mushroom. The folkloristic triplet *toads – babas – mushrooms* discussed here is an additional proof of the original analogous etymological triplet *toads – witches – mushrooms*, with *bau* or *bo* roots in some European languages, as presented by Gimbutas. The three folkloristic elements, with wetness as a precondition for fertility, symbolise female genitals, therefore fertility, fecundity, and renewal.

The different words for frogs granted the frog a very high status. The majestic position of the frog is recognizable by the enigmatic words used for frogs, fraught with spirituality and divinity – *ghosts*, *titans*, *ancestors*, *čudožene* (miracle-women), *female saints*, *reglice/kraljice* (queens), and *boginke / bogińe* (goddesses). It is also reflected in the fairy-tale about *žabica kraljica* (a small frog queen), in which a frog, who is also a beautiful girl, becomes a queen and acquires high status in this legend, just as the words for frogs also reveal: *kraljica*, *reglica* (queen), but even more *bogińa* and *boginka* (goddess).

In Christianity, the image of the frog was replaced by the image of the Virgin Mary. Again, we should not be surprised by the proximity of the frog (with a human vulva on its back as a symbol of the regenerative force) and the Virgin Mary presented right next to each other on the Bavarian votive tablet from 1811 or by the wax frog-shaped votives brought to one of the most famous Croatian Marian pilgrimage sites, Marija Bistrica. The votives provide us with material proof that vividly points to the intertwining of the frog and the Virgin Mary, and even more so, as shown in this paper, to the longevity of the frog as a symbol of fertility, fecundity, female genitals, procreation, and regeneration up until the present day. The two parallel worlds are shown standing together in an interesting syncretism of the pre-Christian and Christian worlds.

NOTES

[1] Although one of the leading American mythologists, Joseph Campbell, compared the importance of the scientific achievements of this Lithuanian-American archaeologist and anthropologist to that of Champollion's decipherment of the Rosetta Stone (Campbell 2001 [1989]: xiii), some of her statements have been greatly challenged.

[2] Although members of the same order, *Anura*, frogs and toads are different groups of amphibians. Nevertheless, they are used almost interchangeably in myth and legend. As Sax points out, *frog* and *toad*, as the terms are often used, seem almost like words for different aspects of a single creature (Sax 2001: 123).

[3] In her PhD dissertation about votives, Mirela Hrovatin stresses the demonic aspect of the frog, considered to be influenced by Christianity (2015: 136).

[4] When I visited *licitar* shops in Marija Bistrica on 31 December 2018, I saw wax votives of houses, legs, eyes, pigs, hens, etc., but I could not find an ex-voto of a frog, though some people claim they are still being sold.

[5] Due to its particularity and special value, the description of this ritual dance is given here *in extenso*. It can be seen in the Croatian TV show *Pučka intima* (The Common People's Intimacy).

[6] I would like to thank my colleague Jiři Woitsch for informing me about the Czech dances in the entry in the Czech ethnological encyclopaedia (Tyllner et al. 2007).

[7] Since Ribarić's PhD thesis was written in Vienna in German, the explanation of the Croatian phrase is also given in German.

[8] I should also mention that in colloquial Slovene, as I was informed by Mirjam Mencej, *žabica* means a lock with a "phallus-like" key.

[9] Writing about *modrne* (blue dresses) in the Barban region in Istria, Barbara Ban quoted the work of Radauš Ribarić (1997: 121) and stressed that a *modrna klinarica* (wedge-shaped blue dress) also has an insertion called *žabica* (Ban 2019).

[10] A *žabica* under the armpit is also mentioned in Varoš near Slavonski Brod, and also in Slavonia (Lukić 1919: 83).

[11] Cf. endnote 2.

[12] Not knowing about this etymological connection, I published three articles about the *baba*, a mythological character similar to a witch (Vince Pallua 1996; 2013; 2018). I also published an article about the mythological symbolism of mushrooms (Vince Pallua 2013). Finally, the frog, which is in the focus of my present research, is the third item in this etymological and mythological triplet.

[13] Katja Hrobat Virloget dedicated a great deal of her research to the phenomenon of *babas*, especially in the Karst region in Slovenia. Furthermore, with the help of D. E., a student from Venice, in 2013, she was able to identify the presence of *babas* outside of the Slavic world, i.e., in Italian and French folklore.

[14] For the second figurative discovery of the *baba* cf. Vince Pallua 2018.

[15] The Neolithic Sumerian goddess *Bau*, also called *Baba* (Gimbutas 1999: 28), raises her skirt in an ancient ritual while displaying her vulva.

[16] Mushrooms, which are 95 percent water, draw moisture from the soil and grow quickly, from a few hours to 14 days, hence the expression "you are growing like a mushroom after the rain".

[17] It should be added that a festive ritual bread called *baba* is baked for baptismal celebrations and, like the aforementioned *babas*, it also has to be kissed.

[18] There is a testimony from the valley of the Soča River in Slovenia about the healing power of the rock *Babja rit* (Baba's arse) – people would sit on the rock due to its healing qualities. Near this rock were two other round rocks associated with fecundity (Hrobat 2010: 213).

[19] In a future article, I will address the very intriguing correlation between *žaba* and *baba* (not only phonetically), including a mushroom that also shares similar connotations with these two terms.

[20] I would like to thank Mirjam Mencej for this observation.

[21] As a water goddess, the Egyptian goddess of childbirth, creation, and grain germination was depicted as a frog or a woman with the head of a frog betraying her connection with water (Seawright 2001). The goddess Sheela na gig is "none other than the descendant of the ancient frog or toad goddess, the birth giver and re-generatrix inherited from the Neolithic (Gimbutas 1999: 29, text accompanying figure 20).

[22] While studying the formal and symbolic structure of female headgear in the broader Dubrovnik region in Croatia (Konavle, Mljet Island, etc.), Ivica Kipre noticed motifs of frogs on them. He also gave some parallels to the Russian headgear (from Arhangelsk province) called *soroka-kerčef* with the motif of a little frog, or archetipal mother (Kipre 2012: 207, 224).

[23] I would like to thank my colleague Lidija Bajuk for informing me about this legend.

[24] In another Slavic part of the world (Częstochowa, Poland) the bond between the female character, water, and a giant frog is shown in the quote as well: "The wife of a water-ghost can appear as a giant frog" (Gura 2005: 286).

[25] Cf. Fig. 2.

[26] Cf. also German wax toad votive with a vulva on its back (Fig. 1).

[27] There is also a cross on the back of the frog on a wooden mould for a votive of a frog from Križevci, northern Croatia, mid-nineteenth century (Fig. 5).

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THE WEREWOLF AS A RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC OTHER IN A HERZEGOVINIAN LEGEND

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Abstract: The paper focuses on a particular legend about a wrestling match between a human and a dead werewolf, which I recorded during my fieldwork in the Croat (i.e. Catholic) community in Herzegovina in 2017. Based on the analysis of a legend about a wrestling match between a human of Catholic faith and a Muslim werewolf, I aim to show how latent inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions in multi-ethnic and multi-religious Bosnia and Herzegovina are reflected in this legend about the restless dead. I pay particular attention to how the ethnic and religious Other is constructed in the legend, and demonstrate the prejudices against the religious and ethnic Others that are reflected in it. I argue that its main function was, and still is, first and foremost to emphasise the superiority of the narrator's religion, i.e. Catholicism, over Islam, and to serve as a warning to Catholics against abandoning their faith and converting to another religion.

Keywords: Bosnia and Herzegovina, ethnic identity, Islam, religion, the dead, vampire, werewolf

It has often been demonstrated that folklore, and legends in particular, reflects the cultural and social context within which it is transmitted (cf. Abrahams 1971; Dégh 2001: 127–128; Ellis 2003: 11–12; Fine 1985; Tangherlini 1994: 18–19, 2013: 51; Valk 2008: 169; Ward 1976). By means of folklore, community members are also able to emphasise distinctive characteristics by which their own group differs from others, and thus define, maintain, and reinforce their own distinct cultural identity (cf. Bendix & Klein 1993; Dundes 1971; Jordan 1975; Mathisen 1993). Legends about encounters with the supernatural, and the dead in particular, are no exception in this respect. They likewise express cultural values and expectations, point out cultural stresses and conflicts, reaffirm social norms of behaviour, and react to cultural, economic, political and

legal changes within societies (cf. Cowdell 2011: 7; Honko 1962: 118; Hornaday 2002: 71–72; Nyce & Talja & Dekker 2015: 86–87; Stewart 1991: 105–107; Valk 2006: 32, 35, 47). Moreover, they can also indicate social boundaries between different ethnic and religious groups, reflect the cultural views of strangers, and reveal ethnic stereotypes and hostility towards people of other ethnic and religious identities.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, where I conducted fieldwork from 2016 to 2019, is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country which became independent in 1992, after the collapse of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There are three main ethnic groups living in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs, related to the cultures of Sunni Islam, Catholicism, and Orthodox Christianity, respectively. Indeed, religion is one of the most important and persistent factors in the formation of ethnic consciousness and collective identity in the Balkans (Bringa 1995: 7; Čolović 1994: 155; Velikonja 1998: 18–22, 308) and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, religious affiliation is usually used synonymously with ethnic identity. Although nationalistic processes began taking place on the territory of the former Yugoslavia as early as the nineteenth century, they were suppressed under the socialist regime. Moreover, my interlocutors from rural areas, who lived side by side with the members of other ethnic and religious groups, more or less without exception stated that there had been no tension between them until the war broke out. Nevertheless, nationalistic tendencies again escalated in the 1980s–1990s, just before the collapse of former Yugoslavia, and reached their peak in the war that took place in 1992–1995 (cf. Velikonja 1998: 152). It should therefore not be surprising that folklore, including legends about the supernatural, inevitably expresses the changes in society and the revived and re-emphasised cultural prejudices and stereotypes of the members of other ethnic and religious communities living in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In this paper, I will focus on one particular narration about a supernatural encounter. Specifically, I will discuss a legend about the apparition of the dead, called werewolf in the legend, which I recorded during my fieldwork in the Croat community in Herzegovina in 2017. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the term "werewolf" (*vukodlak*, lit. wolf-hair) only rarely applies to a shapeshifter; instead, it much more usually applies to the restless dead. As has already been noted by a number of authors who have studied werewolves in this part of the world, the term "werewolf" among South Slavs more or less entirely correlates with the term "vampire" (*vampir*) (Đorđević 1953: 150; Levkievskaja 2001: 105; Pasarić 2015: 239 ff.), and as has been claimed by researchers since the beginning of the twentieth century, people in Bosnia and Herzegovina similarly

make no distinction between the two terms (Bratić 1902; Lilek 1902: 271; cf. also Filipović 1963: 346). One and the same narrator could thus easily switch from one term to the other, even within the same narrative, or answer my question about "werewolves" with a story about "vampires", and vice versa. Likewise, the term "apparition" (*prikaza*, *utvara*, *privid*) is used with the same meaning, and during my fieldwork proved to be an even more frequent synonym for werewolf than the term vampire (Mencej forthcoming). At any rate, the terms werewolf, vampire, and apparition were regularly used interchangeably in my interlocutors' narratives, and people were generally not aware of any conceptual difference between them.[1] They all refer to the dead who, due to their own sins and unresolved matters, or due to the community's violation of the norms, are unable to properly proceed to the other world. In this paper, however, I will not discuss the violated social norms that may have contributed to the dead's "return" among the living. Instead, I will pay particular attention to how the ethnic and religious Other is constructed in the legend, and illustrate the prejudices against the religious and ethnic Other that are reflected in it.

ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS OTHERS IN FOLKLORE

Ethnic and religious Others, closely linked with the notion of exteriority, the space beyond the community's boundaries, are often marked by an *otherworldly*, *supernatural quality* in folklore. Indeed, the attribution of supernatural powers to foreigners, coming from outside the boundaries of "our" community, used to be so obvious that it was impossible to draw a firm line between the supernatural and (merely) ethnically different enemies (cf. Belova 2007: 339; Lindow 1995: 16, 19–21; Stewart 1991: 170). For ancient Scandinavians, for instance, Finns, Greenlanders, Saami, Ethiopians, Moors, and other foreign ethnic groups were endowed with the aura of the supernatural and were believed to have power over magic, and in more recent Nordic folklore, in addition to Saami and Finns, Gypsies and travellers (tinkers), conceived of as Others, are also ascribed supernatural powers (Lindow 1995: 11–15, 19 ff.).

The blurred boundary between the supernatural and other ethnic and/or religious groups is sometimes evident from the overlapping of their names and images. Supernatural entities are thus sometimes named after other ethnic groups, or their image informed by theirs, and vice versa. In Bulgarian folklore, for instance, *armenka*, literary "an Armenian woman/girl", is a name of a particular supernatural agency; another supernatural agency bears the name *evreiche*, i.e. "Jewish child" (Troeva 2009: 399). In Eastern and Western Slavic

folklore, various demonic entities take on the appearance of Jews (Belova 2007: 341). In Greek folklore, a supernatural entity called *arápis*, pictured as a black man smoking a long pipe, obviously derives its name from the ethnic denomination of an Arab, as do *arménides* whose name derives from the ethnic name for Armenians. Jews in Greece, on the other hand, for instance, were closely related to the Devil and *kallikantzaroi*, demons that are believed to appear on earth during the dangerous period of the twelve days of Christmas (Stewart 1991: 170–171). In Scandinavian legends, plague, traditionally conceived of as an anthropomorphised supernatural entity, was occasionally personified as a Finn, and more generally pictured as a stranger, i.e. a "strange gentleman" (Lindow 1995: 19). In Kološević in Bosnia and Herzegovina, legends describe plague in a human form, with goat's legs, coming from China (Kajmaković 1987: 215), whereas in Bulgarian folklore it is the image of a Gypsy that is linked to plague (Troeva 2009: 399). In the Posavina region in north-eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Gipsy's or heretic eyes" were, on the other hand, attributed to werewolves (Lilek 1902: 269).

Representatives of oppressive political forces were particularly prone to the attribution of negative, supernatural characteristics (cf. Stewart 1991: 188). In Slovenian folklore, Ottoman Turks and Huns, who had attacked the territory of present-day Slovenia in the past, are typically demonised, and Turks are also associated with, or even equated to, the Devil (Mlakar 2019: 55–58, 64, 120). In Estonian serfdom songs, German noble landlords were typically demonised and equated with the Devil, spirits and ghosts, their helpers with demonic cannibals and their manors with hell. The terms *saks*, meaning German nobleman, and *junkar* (from "Junker", a German nobleman or aristocrat), were likewise euphemisms for the Devil. Moreover, since the German landlords had a status of nearly supernatural beings, the peasants took the same magic precautions in communication with them as they did in communication with the supernatural; for instance, warding off the anger of Germans with spells and salt (Valk 2001: 80–92). As Valk points out, "the images of demonic evil acquired a concrete embodiment in the figure of the German landlord. It is possible to speak of both the demonization of the Germans and the 'Germanisation' of the Devil" (Valk 2001: 86).

While physical distance and arrival from outside the community may play an important role for the members of another ethnic group who are attributed an aura of the supernatural, the members of a different ethnic community and/or different religious affiliation, even when living in the same community, may be informed by the same "otherness" that applies to people coming from beyond the community's boundaries. Living in our midst, people of different

ethnic background and different religion represent the Other within, and are as such a constant source of threat to the members of different ethnic and/or religious groups. Like foreigners, they too can be ascribed supernatural abilities and powers, such as knowledge of magic, the ability to metamorphosise, etc. Throughout the history of European culture, it was very often Jews who – due to their different religion and ethnic background – were typically scapegoats, were attributed supernatural powers, and accused of carrying out magic procedures (Belova 2007: 339 ff.; Bronner 2007: 383; Bystroń 1980: 330–331; Matteoni 2008; Mlakar 2019: 108–109). The Roma were similarly considered magicians, for instance in Poland (Bystroń 1980: 330–331). In Slovenian folklore they were associated with magic and additionally linked to hidden treasures and the otherworld (Mlakar 2019: 158–161). My Bosniak interlocutor (37) similarly told me that "there are Serbian, Gypsy, and Muslim *sihrs*,[2] but Gypsy *sihrs* are the most dangerous!" When her husband added that Catholic *sihrs* count more or less for nought, she protested: "They do not count for nought, all *sihrs* are dangerous, but Gypsy *sihrs* are the worst as they are the filthiest!" (Mencej 2018: 264)

In multi-ethnic and multi-religious Bosnia and Herzegovina, the tensions and prejudices against the members of another religious and ethnic identity, living in the same country, and often in the same village, also occasionally found their expression in notions of ethnic and religious Others as supernatural Others, particularly in their post-mortem existence. In this paper, I will focus on how Muslims are constructed as ethnic and religious Others through their after-life agency as werewolves. A legend about a wrestling match between a human of Catholic faith and a werewolf of Muslim religious affiliation, told by a Catholic (Croat) narrator, seems an excellent example of how latent inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions can be reflected in legends about the apparition of restless dead. Based on the analysis of this particular legend, I aim to demonstrate that its main function was and still is, first and foremost, to emphasise the superiority of the narrator's religion, that is, Catholicism, over Islam, and to serve as a warning to Catholics against abandoning their faith and converting to another religion.

WRESTLING WITH A WEREWOLF

The story, the events of which allegedly occurred in the nineteenth century and which my Croat narrator assured me were all true, is actually based on a rather widespread motif, featuring in legends throughout the Balkans (cf. Banović 1928: 354–355; Đorđević 1953: 29; Lilek 1902: 269; Vuletić Vukasović 1901: 5) about a fight between a human and a (dead) werewolf (vampire). Fabulates featuring this motif are also known in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A legend from Vlasenički Kotar, for instance, tells about a peasant who "one night, upon his returning home from the town, heard a voice by the spring that sounded like an ox's. Suddenly, a vampire jumps in front of him and starts wrestling with him. The peasant defends himself, but all in vain. Finally, the vampire leaves him. Coming back home, the peasant becomes ill and after three days he is dead" (Đorđević 1953: 175). Another legend about a fight between a human and a werewolf was recorded in Herzegovina, where "the werewolf 'doesn't do any evil to anyone, he only wrestles with anyone who he meets on his way. If he beats a man, he kills him, and if a man beats him, he disappears'" (ibid.). Let me now, then, first present the legend that I recorded in a Herzegovinian village in 2017.[3]

> I[4]: *Let me tell you, now I'm gonna* [tell] *you! Grgić, the old one, we call him Old Grgić. We, the Grgićes, are his descendants. He was, I would say, among the strongest and most prominent men. That was a time when humanity in people was important, when every word mattered. And then there was that one, Babić, I believe, a Turk, who was also… They were proud of him too. This was not long ago and nationality was not that important, they* [Grgić and Babić] *were something like buddies. And then on his fortieth birthday that Babić got sick and died. He died suddenly and people started to say that he turned into a werewolf. No one saw him until one night... As Grgić was often going to …, that is, he was taking care of his oxen and horses, he was going to throw* [hay] *to the oxen. There was a basket in which there was hay and he* [Babić] *was in the basket. When he* [Grgić] *was just about to throw hay in it, that Babić appeared to him from the basket, as a werewolf. And then, he* [Grgić] *didn't.... want to throw* [hay on him]*, so he asked him to move. He* [Babić] *said: "No, I won't* [move]. *Let's wrestle!" The werewolf, that is, the one who had turned into a werewolf, challenged Grgić to a fight. Grgić said: "Come on, why, I don't want that, don't be foolish!" He* [Babić] *didn't give up but called to him: "Let's wrestle!" ... And, they started* [to wrestle]*, here, you saw there in the*

fields [pointing to the place where the wrestling contest took place], *it happened there, and they were to wrestle. And he* [Babić] *was challenging Grgić to a fight, to wrestle. And they were wrestling, sometimes one was stronger, sometimes it was the other. They were* [competing in] *throwing stones... They took that thing that oxen used to drag – before there used to be oxen that dragged a cart – they took an oxcart, and competed in lifting the oxcart, over and over again… Sometimes Grgić was stronger than Babić, sometimes the other way around, and so on … When they were wrestling on the ploughed land, so it goes, Grgić was stronger. That's because it had been blessed with holy water when it was being ploughed. Grgić was stronger* [on the ploughed land], *because he* [Babić] *was faithless, had no faith, he was nothing, they say. Whereas where it was not ploughed, the werewolf was stronger, they say.*

And [finally] *Grgić got fed up with him, as he* [Babić] *was challenging him* [every night]. *I mean, Grgić was annoyed,* [the werewolf] *wouldn't let him sleep*, [they were] *wrestling all the time. And Grgić was fed up, and he told, he told a friar about the case, how it all happened. What's to be done? During confession the friar told him: "Let's see, maybe he'll go away",* [and suggested]*"You should cross yourself!" But, the first time – nothing. Then, the second time, so it goes, the friar said: "Take the hawthorn, with thorns," he said, "sharpen it and stab* [him]*". "Stab him,"* [the friar] *said, "while he is in the basket, but don't do it twice, only once, because God* [created] *us only once," he said. "God is one. Don't do it several times." And so it goes, he came with the hawthorn, while he* [Babić] *was in the basket. And now,* [when] *he* [Babić] *called on him to wrestle, they say, Grgić stabbed him. He* [Babić] *begged him: "Do it again!" He* [Grgić] *said: "No, God created us once, God is one!" And he didn't want to do it again. And after that nothing appeared to him anymore. They said that there were some goatskin's remains stabbed, but nobody has ever seen the werewolf again, and so Grgić defeated the werewolf, and the story has continued to live on among folk. …*

F: *And why hawthorn, in particular?*

I: *Well, that's because, you know how Jesus' crown was of thorns... Well, everything is for a reason. … That, hawthorn ... is the same as the crown of Jesus ... that crown of thorns ... it was of the hardest thorns. Jesus' crown is thorny and hawthorn is the hardest wood we have here. … Yes, and he* [Grgić] *never had any problem* [with the werewolf] *anymore, nor has anybody else had. And nobody ever heard of him again or anything...*

> *Whereas before, down where his grave is, people, folks came to his grave and saw him... That is, when he came out, that is, when he was running around, that is, he was restless ... But he has never appeared to anybody in public, only to Grgić. …*
> F: *And how come Babić turned into a werewolf?*
> I: *Well... the Turk wasn't baptized, he was nothing, I mean… first he was a Croat, then he converted to Islam. … As that friar didn't conduct …, that is, didn't organize a funeral or anything, they just buried him like an animal, they threw him into* [a pit]...
> F: *Oh, wasn't he buried with a Muslim funeral?*
> I: *No! Nothing, he wasn't buried with the ritual, they just threw him into... There, you saw the grave and everything. You know, before, many of them, these Muslims, they were all Turkicized.*[5] *I mean, Turkicized, they gave them a piece of land, they got all the best pieces of land when they converted to Islam. Their families. I mean, if you converted to the Turkish religion* [Islam], *they gave you the best* [land]... ...
> F: *And what is the reason for someone to turn into a werewolf?*
> I: *Well, restlessness ... In the man, yes, in his soul, in everything. … It happened to him* [Babić] *because... he abandoned his faith, he was Turkicized, he betrayed Christianity. That's why that happened to him! ...*
> F: *Thank you, this was a great story!*
> I: *This is no story! This is the truth, a real experience! Whereas stories are... (....) This is a true experience! Not like when people talk about fairies – who's gonna believe that! (53)*[6]

In spite of the widespread distribution of this motif in the legends throughout the Balkans, as noted above, the subjects in the legend as narrated by my interlocutor are not some undetermined people from the past. They are actual individuals who lived in the village and whose surnames are still known to the narrator. Grgić is the esteemed ancestor of my narrator's family, whose name is eternalised in the genealogical family tree (see Fig. 1), which I was proudly shown. In addition, the narrator and his relatives, who were present during his narration, were also able to show me the ruins of the house in which Babić lived and the grave (marked by stones) where he was buried (see Fig. 2), which they still keep intact – my interlocutor and his relatives swore that they would neither plough over it, nor ever build a house upon it.[7] In accordance with the generic characteristic, the events in the legend about the wrestling match I was told about are also precisely localised. The contest is placed in a specific location at the boundary of the village where the narrator himself lived. I was even shown the meadow where the wrestling match between his ancestor and the

Figure 1. *Grgić' genealogical family tree. Photograph by Mirjam Mencej 2017.*

Figure 2. *Stones marking Babić' grave. Photograph by Mirjam Mencej 2017.*

werewolf took place. In the analysis of the legend that follows, I will not focus on the elements that the legend may share with other legends about a contest between a human and a werewolf, but especially on those motifs that the narrator himself introduced to the legend – the motifs by which he ultimately transformed the legend about a contest between a human and a dead werewolf into a legend about a fight between a Croat and a Bosniak, between a Catholic and a Muslim and, ultimately, between Christianity and Islam.

CULTIVATED LAND VS. UNCULTIVATED LAND

A motif of the legend that may seem insignificant at first glance refers to the precise definition of the place where the wrestling contest allegedly occurred: partly on land that was ploughed (*oranica*) and partly on land that was not. According to the narrative, the Catholic protagonist was winning only "as long as they were fighting on ploughed land". However, when they were fighting on uncultivated land, it was the Muslim werewolf who was winning. The narrator's explanation of why the Catholic hero was winning only while they were fighting on the ploughed land was that this was due to the power of the blessing over the ploughed field.[8] Among the Catholics in Herzegovina, the blessing of the fields is considered to be an apotropaic means against all sorts of misfortunes, and it is not an uncommon practice for the Catholics in the region under research to bless their fields with holy water, and sometimes with holy salt. Moreover, the annual blessing of the fields, conducted by clerics, usually on the family's graves, aimed at ensuring the fertility of the fields and their protection from misfortune, is also a fairly commonly practiced ritual among the Catholics in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Martić 2019).[9] People in this region often emphasised its power to protect them against the supernatural, fairies in particular (Mencej 2019: 170–171). Irrespective of the apotropaic power of the blessings conducted by householders themselves, as well as of the annual blessing of the fields conducted by the Catholic priests or friars, ploughed land is also considered a safe place, protected from the destructive agency of the supernatural, in the folklore of other ethnic and religious groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Muslim female narrator (34) from Central Bosnia, for instance, told me a story about a revenant who rose from the grave in order to drag his lover into it too. He was able to appear to her allegedly only because she was not standing on ploughed land – "apparitions cannot appear on ploughed land", my interlocutor stressed (34).

The opposition between ploughed and unploughed land clearly mirrors the opposition between the inner and the outer, "our" and foreign space, the human and the supernatural. Indeed, if one refers to the (somewhat problematic) dichotomy between Nature and Culture, in European traditional concepts of space the ploughed, cultivated land typically represents Culture – as opposed to unploughed, uncultivated land representing Nature (Stewart 1991: 169; Pócs 2011: 100). The motif of a human hero winning while fighting with a werewolf on ploughed land and the dead werewolf winning while fighting on unploughed land therefore implies the relation between the hero, as the representative of the world of humans, to cultivated land and Culture, whereas his werewolf opponent is related to the world of the dead, to uncultivated land, and to Nature. However, as the hero is not just *any* human, but a Catholic, and the dead not just any dead, but a Muslim, Culture is thus associated not just with human beings, but specifically with Catholics. Nature and wilderness, related to the dead, are, on the other hand, associated with Muslims. Ultimately, therefore, the Catholic Church is revealed to be intrinsically linked with the world of humans, cultivated space, and Culture, whereas the Islamic faith is associated with the demonic dead, uncultivated space, and wild Nature.

THE MAGICAL POWER OF THE HAWTHORN

The notion of the supremacy of Christianity over Islam is revealed in yet another motif that appears in the legend: the means of overcoming the werewolf, or, more precisely, its interpretation, suggested by the narrator. In the legend, as told by my Croat interlocutor (53), the hero Grgić appeals to a Catholic friar for help against the werewolf. On his advice, he first tries to counteract the werewolf with the power of a holy cross, the most powerful Christian symbol (Martić 2019: 95), which people also used to protect themselves against the agency of fairies (Mencej 2019: 167). When this does not help, he is advised to stab the werewolf with a hawthorn stake with thorns, but "only once", as "there is only one God" and because "God only created people once" – an instruction that obviously refers to Christian dogma. Taking this advice, the hero finally manages to overcome his werewolf adversary.

Now, stabbing the dead body with a hawthorn stake (*glogov kolec*) is the most common traditional means used for the annihilation of werewolves (vampires) in the Balkans (cf. Čajkanović 1994: 212–213; Đorđević 1953: 188–189, 194–195, 211–212; Dragičević 1908: 460; Kajmaković 1974: 101; Lilek 1896: 418; Schneeweiss 2005: 40). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is known and used

with the same aim by the members of the Catholic, Orthodox, and Muslim communities alike. Moreover, not only is the body of the dead that is thought to have transformed into a werewolf stabbed by a hawthorn stake; the coffin and the house of the deceased are also sometimes bound by the hawthorn's thorny branches in order to prevent the dead from turning into a werewolf. Serbs from the western Bosnian region where I was doing fieldwork in 2016 would also carefully observe the grave after a funeral: if a hole appeared on its surface, they thought that the dead had transformed to a werewolf and started to wander around the village. To prevent him or her from coming out of the grave, they would take a small hawthorn branch and stab it into the hole.

In spite of the hawthorn therefore being generally considered the most powerful magical means of protection against werewolves all over the Balkans, and used by the believers of all three faiths in Bosnia and Herzegovina, my Catholic narrator explained the efficacy of the hawthorn stake over werewolves through the power of Christianity: he likened the hawthorn to Christ's crown, that is, associated its thorns with the thorns of Christ's crown. Ultimately, therefore, the narrator did not rely on "tradition" that confers the magical power upon hawthorn, but on its association with powerful symbols in Christianity. In this way he appropriated the (power of) traditional means, proper to all three ethnic and religious groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to testify to the power of his own group.

THE FAITHLESSNESS OF OTHERS

When the narrator talked about Babić, the Muslim, i.e. the Catholic Grgić's opponent in the fight, he referred to him as being "faithless", "without religion" – as being "nothing". Such a perception of other religious groups as not only having "bad" faith, but as being *faithless*, or sometimes even the opposite – worshipping diabolic spirits and performing diabolic rituals – is one of the most typical themes pertaining to the folkloric image of the Other (Belova 2007: 336, 340). In Poland, clerics of faiths other than the dominant Catholicism – like Polish Orthodox priests and Islamic imams – were sometimes believed to communicate with the Devil (Stomma 1986: 37–38). In Slovenian folklore, as Mlakar (2019: 64) argues, the notion of faithlessness and the relation with the demonic and the Devil is pushed to the extremes when associated with Ottoman Turks. From the perspective of ethnocentrism, it is thus exclusively our own ethnic group that possesses true religion – or rather, possesses religion at all.

OTHERS AS ANIMALS

Moreover, in our legend, upon his death, Babić as a Muslim, and thus a non-believer from the Catholic perspective, was – as my narrator stated – simply thrown into a ditch and "buried like an animal". The association of ethnic and religious Others with animals often informs the death of believers of other religions and of other ethnic backgrounds. Greeks in Rhodes, for instance, sometimes referred to the death of a Turk with the expression "animal-died", which they explained on the grounds that "the Turks do not profess the true religion: they are 'godless' people" (Stewart 1991: 188).

Furthermore, in the legend in question, the werewolf, while looking as he did when he was alive, also exhibited animalistic features. When asked about his image, my interlocutor explained that his belly was bloated and hairy – which might point to the wolf's image, but the narrator also directly associated the werewolf's belly to a "goatskin" (*mješina*).[10] Later on in the course of the narration, he also mentioned that when the werewolf was stabbed, all that was left of him was some goat's skin found lying on the floor. The shape of a werewolf as a bloated goatskin, full of blood, is also a rather well-known motif in traditional Bosnian and Herzegovinian folklore on werewolves (cf. Bratić 1902: 292; Filipović 1949: 211; Kajmaković 1974: 101; Lilek 1902: 269). The narrator was thus likely relying on the werewolf tradition when describing his image, but the assigning of "animal" essences, or imagining members of other ethnic and religious groups in a combined animal and human form (Belova 2007: 337, 340–341) is fairly common in folklore in general. The Catholic Poles, for instance, referred to Islam as "mare's religion", to Lutheranism as "dog's religion" and to the religion of Baptists and Jehovah's witnesses as "cat's religion" (Stomma 1986: 37). In nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Poland, the taboo against eating pork observed by Jews was explained by their origin: Jewish women supposedly originate from pigs. In the Eastern and Western Slavic traditions, Jews were generally assigned zoomorphic features. Lithuanian Poles compared their "different" smell[11] to the smell of animals; they were also believed to have a tail and horns and were associated with unclean animals, and Jewish women were said to originate from swine (Belova 2007: 341, cf. 337–341; Stomma 1986: 31). Serbian politicians from the turn of the twentieth century similarly claimed that while human tails had died out long ago, Albanians retained them until the nineteenth century (Jezernik 2011: 87–88), and in South Slavic and Slovenian folklore, Ottoman (Muslim) Turks were equated with cynocephali and believed to originate from the union between a dog and a woman (Mlakar 2019: 57). In an Estonian folk song, German noblemen are pictured as "tail-less dogs" (Valk 2001: 82). In the past, Scandinavians ascribed animalistic

characteristics to people of colour: their eyes were compared to cats' eyes, their stout frame to that of a bull, and they were said to have claws like a griffin – in short, they were seen as a mixture of human and animal. Later on, Saami and Finns were ascribed the ability to change into animals, and were presented as human-animal mixtures, werewolves and man-bears, or as riding animals such as rats and snakes (Lindow 1995: 17–19).

THE AFTER-DEATH SOJOURN OF OTHERS

The proneness of people of other religious affiliation to turn into werewolves after death can be seen in the legend discussed here as well. Not only are they considered faithless *per se*, but their funeral is also not conducted "properly", that is, according to the correct religious rites – which, of course, are only considered as such when they belong to the religion of the narrator – and is thus considered invalid. An invalid funeral, moreover, can be the reason for the dead to be unable to progress to the other world; he or she is thus bound to become a restless dead, to turn into a werewolf/vampire and haunt the living (cf. Lawson 1964 [1910]: 375). The likeliness of people to turn into a werewolf seems even greater for people who betrayed their religion and converted to another – a deed that is considered to be one of the most severe violations of social norms. When asked about the reason for Babić to turn into a werewolf, the narrator explained without a second thought: "Well, restlessness ... In the man, yes, in his soul, in everything. … It happened to him because... he abandoned his faith, he was Turkicized, he betrayed Christianity. That's why that happened to him!" Muslims, considered faithless from the perspective of the Christian believers, have, indeed, typically qualified as werewolves/vampires in the eyes of the Christians in the Balkans.

When writing about the Albanians (who are mostly of Islamic faith), Tomo Bratić, a Catholic ethnographer from Bosnia and Herzegovina at the beginning of the twentieth century, explained the continuing existence of werewolves among the Albanians by their "faithlessness": "It is difficult to find a werewolf in Bosnia and Herzegovina today, but they still exist in Albania nowadays, because the people there are faithless and lawless" (Bratić 1902: 293). Orthodox Christians in Bosnia and Herzegovina similarly believed that people who are baptised will not become vampires – and even if they did, they would do no harm to their family (Lilek 1899: 703). In Greece, anyone who did not belong to Orthodox Christianity, Turks in particular (who had been the oppressors in the Balkan territory for about four hundred years), was believed to turn into a vampire after death much more easily than Greeks (Đorđević 1953: 171).

When Crete was occupied by the Turks, it was thought that every Thursday evening[12], Turkish vampires transformed into "howling black and white dogs". In Greek-speaking Asia Minor, legends circulated about Turks who returned from the world of the dead in the shape of "dogs and cats" (Stewart 1991: 187–188). Similar stories about Turkish soldiers who, after having fallen in a fight with Albanians and Greek rebels, turned into vampires, circulated among Albanians in Greece. In some parts of Albania, there are stories about (only) Turks and Roma becoming vampires after death (Kreuter 2003 [2002]: 2). In Serbian folklore too, it was most often Turks that were believed to turn into vampires (Đorđević 1953: 171), yet in the Balkans, the label "Turk" usually applied to Muslims in general (Hangi 1907 [1906]: 9). According to a legend from Potomlje, Dalmatia, people suspected that a certain person had turned into a werewolf; when his grave was dug up, they saw a man sitting in his grave crossed-legged, that is, with his legs crossed "in the Turkish way" (Banović 1918: 187; Šešo 2016: 199) – clearly revealing the werewolf as a Muslim.

Werewolf narratives thus often reflect prejudices against the Muslim religion and culture among Christian believers. Moreover, Muslims are additionally degraded in legends in which they are pictured as turning into pigs or wild boars after death (*posvinjiti se*; lit. "to turn into a swine"). This notion obviously relates to the taboo against eating pork in Islam and a generally shared notion of swine as particularly dirty animals (due to their fondness for mud and dirty places and their rooting for food below the earth's surface) and demonic creatures (cf. Radenković 1996: 124–128). Bulgarian legends similarly relate that Turks turn into vampires in pigs' bodies after death (Troeva 2009: 399); the after-death transformation into wild boars sometimes applies only to Turks who never ate pork (Abbott 1903: 216). In the village of Slepče, in Macedonia, they say that wild boars originate from Turks who turn into vampires, which explains why the Turks do not eat pork (Momirović 1939: 97). In the Djevdjelia region in Macedonia they say that Muslims who ate pork turned into pigs, not vampires. In the region around Leskovac in Serbia, they said that every true Turk transformed into a pig after death, and every "*poturčenjak*" (lit. "one who turned into a Turk", i.e., the term specifically refers to people who converted to Islam) into a vampire (Đorđević 1953: 171; Schneeweiss 2005: 39).

A type of legend about a Turk who turned into a pig after death and was only recognised by the ring on its toe circulates in a rather wide region, historically invaded by the Turks. In Melnik, Bulgaria, it was recorded that "Turks who have led a particularly wicked life, when at the point of death, turn into wild boars, and the ring worn by the man on his finger is retained on one of the boar's forefeet" (Abbott 1903: 215–216). A similar narrative was published by the famous Serbian folklorist Vuk S. Karađić in the nineteenth century:

Just as the Serbs say that people can turn into vampires, the Turks say that they turn into pigs. They tell of a certain boy who had turned into a swine; they were searching for him among the pigs, but couldn't find him until they noticed a ring on one of its forefeet. (Karađić 1966 [1818]: 608; cf. Đorđević 1953: 171–172)

According to folk legends, Đorđević writes, even the Prophet himself turned into a wild boar after death, because "something jumped over him" while his body was lying at home:[13]

When after some time people killed the wild boar, they found a ring on its cloven hoof which had grown into the flesh so that one could hardly notice it. This was Muhammad's ring. When Turks saw that, they took a vow never to eat pork. Even nowadays they believe that the feet of wild boars have a circle which they say ensued from that ring. (Đorđević 1953: 172)

CONCLUSION

Folklore about the werewolves as restless dead seems to be particularly appropriate to incorporate negative evaluations and prejudices of religious and ethnic Others. As demonstrated above, through subtle details introduced to the well-known fabulate about a wrestling match between a human and a werewolf, the Bosnian narrator of Croat ethnic identity, which in Bosnia and Herzegovina is intrinsically linked with Catholic religious affiliation, established the superiority of his own ethnic and religious identity over the Others with which Croats, i.e. Catholics, share the country – specifically Bosniaks (Muslims), with whom they do not even share the Christian faith, as they do with Orthodox Serbs living in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Furthermore, narratives about ethnic and religious Others turning into werewolves after death are by no means a matter of the past among Croats. Croatian folklorist Luka Šešo, who conducted fieldwork in rural Croatia, more precisely in the Dalmatian hinterland, between 2003 and 2009, writes that most narratives about werewolves with clear distinct ethnic denominations are told by Catholics and usually directed against Muslims. A Croat (Catholic) narrator from the Biokovo region in Croatia, for instance, told him about "a certain evil man who turned into a werewolf after death and then moved to Bosnia". When asked why to Bosnia, the narrator answered: "Because such things are devilish, of Turkish origin."[14] A Franciscan priest from Herzegovina similarly associated werewolves with Muslims, and also with the Orthodox, but excluded

the Catholics: "Werewolves can only be seen by the Turkish graves, by the Orthodox graves", he affirmed (Šešo 2016: 198).[15]

As the Muslim werewolf in the legend discussed above was originally a Croat who later converted to Islam, the story can therefore be understood not only as reflecting latent inter-ethnic and inter-religious prejudices but also as a warning legend, demonstrating what happens to Catholics who betray their religion. While in the past they may have taken advantage of converting to Islam during their lifetime by getting better land from the Ottoman oppressors, as my Croat interlocutors often explained, punishment awaits them in the afterlife. Indeed, the fact that the legend about the wrestling match between Babić and Grgić continues to be transmitted in contemporaneity, together with all the anti-Muslim motifs that it includes, reveals that the same inter-religious antagonisms and tensions latent in nineteenth-century Bosnia and Herzegovina when this particular legend allegedly started to circulate still resonate nowadays, and that it continues to serve as a vehicle for their expression. Nevertheless, it is important to know that the accounts of the tensions and of the recent war that focus on ancient inter-ethnic hatreds are misleading. The important issue is not ethnicity as such, but, as Hammel argues, "ethnicity with a specific political history and subject to political manipulation in a context of the collapse of civil order" (2000: 29–30).

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NOTES

[1] When discussing the topic in general, I use the term "werewolf" in this paper, but when referring to or citing what particular authors and narrators have said, I use the term used by them.

[2] The Arabic word *sihr* means "magic" (Davies 2012: 9).

[3] Throughout his narration, which lasted for about an hour, the narrator returned to the same episodes several times, offered new, more elaborate explanations to my additional questions, occasionally expanded parts of the narrative with new details that he had skipped before, etc. The text below is therefore – for the purposes of the analysis – composed of the first version of the story and its later additions. I have omitted repetitions, incomprehensible parts, explanations of various dialect words that I didn't understand, side discussions that were not related to the story, and precise descriptions of the location where the events in the narrative took place.

[4] I in the transcripts refers to the interlocutor and F to the folklorist (the author).

[5] The word connotes a conversion to Islam.

[6] Due to the delicacy of the topic the names of interlocutors are not given, and all personal names mentioned are pseudonyms. The number in the brackets (see the list of interlocutors) indicates the number of the interlocutor in the archives. The recordings and transcripts of the interviews are being stored in the archive of Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest.

[7] In Bosnia and Herzegovina, graves are generally not to be disturbed. Many legends and first-person narratives warn against their disturbance or removal by demonstrating the consequences of such acts.

[8] Stewart writes that in Greece, ploughed land is considered safe because it is 'crossed' by successive ploughings (1991: 169).

[9] Ritual blessing of the fields is also practiced by the Orthodox community, whereas the Muslim equivalent of this ritual can be recognised in the "dova" ritual (Martić 2019: 87 ff.), likewise taking place by gravesides, usually of important Muslims such as *shehids* (martyrs who died for their faith) and *evlijas* (saints).

[10] Used as a water-carrying vessel.

[11] Olfactory markers can be used as a means of expressing cultural identity; foul odours are typically ascribed to Others. In many cultures they are understood as originating from death and associated with the Devil (Classen 1992: 140, 150–153, 159 ff.; cf. also Belova 2007: 341; Bystroń 1980: 325–326).

[12] That is, the night before Friday, the most important day of the week for Muslims, when congregational prayers are held in the mosque (according to traditional beliefs, the day starts at dusk on the previous day).

[13] The most frequently stated reason for a person to turn into a werewolf/vampire in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere in the Balkans is that something (usually an animal, such as a cat or a hen) crossed over the dead body while it was lying at home, or in a grave (cf. Đorđević 1953: 167; Dragičević 1908: 458; Filipović 1949: 211; Kajmaković 1974: 101; Lilek 1896: 418; 1902: 269–270; Schneeweiss 2005: 40).

[14] The majority of Muslims from the former Yugoslavia live in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

[15] Šešo also noticed that Catholics in his research area have recently found the following categories of people to be prone to turning into werewolves: those who have no faith, atheists, communists, and – in one case – also Orthodox, who, after the war in the 1990s (in which Croats fought against Serbs), also became Others (2016: 200, 202).

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INTERLOCUTORS

34: female, Bosniak, b. 1938, a housewife, soothsayer and healer; Central Bosnia
37: female, Bosniak, b. 1972, a housewife; Central Bosnia
53: male, Croat, b. 1963, a technician; Herzegovina

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BELIEF NARRATIVES OF SPIRIT-ANIMALS: A CASE STUDY ON ESTONIAN CONTEMPORARY FOLKLORE

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the images, communication modes, and belief narratives connected with spirit-animals in Estonian folklore. Firstly, the older (pre-twentieth-century) concept of the spirit-animal is described. Secondly, contemporary beliefs and experiences related to spirit-animals are highlighted. The paper desribes to what extent the old local soul concepts have intermingled with the imported ideas of the spirit-animal and how narratives describing the verbal or non-verbal communication with a spirit-animal sometimes become part of life history narrating, supporting psychological coping with life stress. The author describes repeated elements in the manifestation forms (e.g. bears, wolves) and the behaviour of spirit-animals, contexts where they occur (in the course of rural sweat-lodge rituals as well as in urban settings, experienced and narrated by esoteric practicioners as well as schoolchildren), and tries to find out about their sources.

Keywords: belief narratives, contemporary folklore, new spirituality, spirit-animals

Often it is easier for people to connect with an animal, to have a pet for example – and they connect very well with their pet. It may be that they can connect with a spirit helper or 'power animal'. Everybody has a power animal, but not everybody is conscious of it.

Shamanistic practitioner and teacher Jonathan Horwitz (2017: 16)

INTRODUCTION

Imagination has become an important research concept in the social and human sciences, and several authors represent the understanding that our societies, with their taken-for-granted presumptions, are socially imagined; also the boundaries between human and non-human realities are culturally established (cf. Traut & Wilke 2015 [2014]; Kouri 2018). In the 1960s the New Age movement 'discovered' shamanism and made it a major reference tool for its worldview – the shaman became an indication of a new understanding of humanity's relation to nature, of the human ability to access spiritual levels of reality, and of leading a respectful life towards the 'sacred web of creation' (Stuckrad 2002: 774). Since then, elements of appropriated shamanism have been a steady part of the Western spirituality (cf. Welch 2002; Jenkins 2004). Similarly, a renewed interest in certain traditional or pagan European folk beliefs has emerged, stressing their close relationship with all beings of nature, including animals. According to a poll about religious views of Estonians, conducted in 2014, 61 percent of the respondents considered the local pagan earth religion (*maausk*) to be the proper religion for Estonian people (RSE 2014[1]). Besides receptivity towards religious ideas related to nature, there is a wider openness towards various views, object-use, and behaviour related to protective magic (Hiiemäe 2016; about views of angels as protectors see Uibu 2012) and esoteric teachings related to one's inner balance and wellbeing; for example, 46 percent of respondents to a poll about religious views in Estonia expressed their belief in spiritual self-development (Saar Poll 2015).

In the twenty-first century, the concept of power-animals or spirit-animals, which has been shaped by the modern shamanistic imaginations of the previous decades, has started finding resonance in circles much wider than the New Age subculture, offering to the experiencers of this novel animal-human relationship an empowering pillar of identity and life-history narrating. This article provides a discussion on the formation of the concept of spirit-animal in Estonian culture – its perceived parallels with older (pre-twentieth-century) folklore, relationships with the wave of modern shamanism, and the functions of contemporary memorates describing the communication between the narrator and the spirit-animal. The article shows that, among other things, respective narratives are influenced by the simultaneously occurring shift of the status of pet animals in the Western societies – at times pet animals take over the role of spiritual protectors, thus obtaining a new cultural meaning through this imagined, lived, and narrated social interaction.

The theoretical backdrop for the analysis is set by folkloristic theories of narrative and belief, supported by the theories of the therapy value of personal

beliefs from the field of psychology and medicine. The data analysed here consist of topical interviews, questionnaire answers (e.g. from the collecting campaign School Lore 2018, from Estonian university students and their interviews with other respondents), forum posts (mainstream forums as well as more specific esoteric forums), and articles in the mass media collected mainly in 2018 (but to a lesser extent also during the preceding decade), containing approximately 100 personal accounts of spirit-animals. Narrators cover a wide age range (12–60 years old) and spiritual background (from people indifferent towards any religious or spiritual views to the ones frequently attending spiritual courses and having strong personal supernatural beliefs). There were both men and women among narrators, but for various reasons it was easier to find female narrators. As supporting material, some interviews with people who have attended courses of modern shamanism describe their worldview and its connection with the notion of spirit-animals. As for the concept of spirit-animal in older folklore, texts from the Estonian Folklore Archives serve as a basis. The analysis focuses on Northern European context and on the resonance of the spirit-animal concept in Estonia, as so far not much attention has been paid to the analysis of the structure and motives of respective memorates in folkloristics. Although research is available about beliefs related to spirit-animals in historical and current Amerindian communities in North and South America (e.g. Gossen 1996), only some general comparisons are made with this material in the present article.

CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES ABOUT SPIRIT-ANIMALS: TERMINOLOGY AND PARALLELS TO OLDER FOLKLORE

In contemporary Estonian language use the main term used for a supernatural animal-shaped protector is *hingeloom* (spirit-animal or soul-animal) or *väeloom* (power-animal), in some rare cases also *tootemloom* (totem animal). In the majority of cases it is defined as an animal (or bird, insect) who, beginning from the first contact, will remain the spiritual guide and helper of a person, often for the person's whole lifetime. According to the narratives, the spirit-animal can occur in physical form as well as in an imagination, feeling or dream. In a few cases, however, a differentiation is made between more categories: the spirit-animal as the expression of the current emotional state of a person, which is constantly changing; the power-animal as the embodiment of the nature of a person; and the spirit-animal as a supernatural animal-shaped guide and helper who guides the person continuously. For example, one esoteric forum user writes in his post:

> *As I have had longer contact with this topic and dealt with it a bit, I first give here a clarification – spirit-animal and power-animal are not one and the same thing. The spirit-animal is inborn and it will remain the same for your whole life. Yet there can be several power-animals who may stay with us long but who may also change.* (User 1; http://pesa.valguseleht.ee, 2016)

Yet another user in a women's forum stresses that such a disctinction cannot be made:

> *Power-animal, protective angel, spirit-animal – these are actually all one and the same. We are talking about different functions of the same whole that still make up a whole.* (User 2; http://naistekas.delfi.ee/foorum/read.php?79,9496831, 2009)

Only a couple of specific explanations make a clear distinction of three or four types of topical animal characters, for example, the following Estonian blog post:

> *The spirit-animal lives on the same physical level as the person – in the shape of a real mortal animal. The protective animal is an animal whose life has already ended and whose task is to guide and protect the person; such an animal may go to the next level in the astral realm and be born again into the physical world. Yet the power-animal is a personified and intelligent energy of the spiritual world and its favorite projection is a certain animal species.* (User 3; http://web.zone.ee/ilvi/nuudveidiloomatarkust.htm)

However, as in most cases such a differentiation is not made in the vernacular reasoning and narrating, I will focus on the meaning of the supernatural animal-protector and use the terms spirit-animal and power-animal interchangeably.

According to the views of the narrators, the contemporary Estonian concept of spirit-animal or power-animal is mostly connected with the Native American (Amerindian) cultures. Although similar concepts of power animals and animal transformations exist in other cultures (e.g. several European countries; for India, see Lyngdoh 2016, for southeast Russia, see Bulgakova 2018), the majority of the narrators (around 70 percent) expressed the opinion that the concept is related to the Native American culture. Fewer narrators claimed that communicating with a spirit-animal is an ancient Estonian tradition. Only a few narrators added that, to their opinion, the concept is related to shamanism in a broader sense, including also Siberian shamanism.

As for the actual parallels with older folklore, in pre-twentieth-century Estonian folklore texts, flies, butterflies, bees, sometimes also mice or certain birds were called with the same name – spirit-animals (*hingeloom*), and they were

perceived as the embodiments or manifestations of a person's soul. According to respective legends and folk belief accounts, these spirit-animals usually do not communicate actively with humans and have no protective function – as is also the case in several other European cultures. Below are some typical Estonian archival texts:

> *The souls of old maidens go into certain birds. Their souls can't find peace after their death, they have to fly in the shape of birds and scream.*
> (E 8* 9, 9 (23) < Saaremaa, 1909)

> *Sometimes the soul comes out of the mouth of a sleeping person in the shape of a mouse. Sometimes you can observe it also in the person's body – the mouse is moving. It is called the "life mouse".*
> (E 8* 2, 91 (298) < Rakvere, 1909)

There are also wide-spread traditional legend plots about people whose soul goes out of their body during sleep with the aim to bring to the owner certain goods (rye, milk) or to cause harm (e.g. destroy cornfields in the form of a heavy whirlwind) as in the following sample text (belonging by its migratory main plot to the Guntram legend type).

> *There was a rich farm-owner but nobody knew how he had got his goods and treasures. Someone saw him sleeping and turned his head into another direction. Soon a bee came and started flying around. Some men turned the body into the initial position. Immediately the bee flew into his mouth. The farm-owner woke up. Now they understood that his soul went around in the form of a bee and gathered goods and treasures.*
> (ERA II 58, 12/3 (2) < Vändra, 1933)

According to some texts, the soul-butterfly flies away before a person dies and comes back after the death of the person to visit relatives and his or her previous home. It is forbidden to kill this insect because otherwise the soul of the person would get lost. Yet, according to some folklore records, the eating of respective insects is advisable in the case of illness or other problems because it is a means for obtaining spiritual power. According to some folklore texts, cranes or certain water birds are depicted as the souls of ancestors but usually no dialogue takes place between them and the living. There are only a few charm texts that aim to send these birds further away, so that they would not spread the harmful energy of the otherworld (Kilp 2000; more about the Estonian traditional soul-concept see Loorits 1949: 289–365).

Since the 1990s, when esoteric teachings and rituals connected with Native American culture reached Estonia, the concept of spirit-animal as a protector, helper, and spiritual guide of a person has spread in Estonia not only in esoteric

groups but (since approx. the 2010s) also in the mainstream internet forums, in quizzes circling in social media, and in children/youth folklore. Although the linguistic term *hingeloom* (spirit-animal) remained the same and a number of narrators referred to the perceived continuity of the tradition of the spirit-animal concept, claiming that it was well known already in pre-twentieth-century folklore or even in the mythical pre-thirteenth-century pagan times, a comparative analysis shows that there are only a few consistent connecting points between the pre-twentieth-century folklore texts and contemporary spirit-animal narratives. Thus, contemporary narratives and beliefs related to spirit-animals can rather be analysed as a phenomenon of modern Western spirituality.

THE SECOND COMING OF SPIRIT-ANIMALS: MODERN WESTERN SHAMANISM AND CONTEMPORARY APPROPRIATED SPIRITUALITY

In the 1960s, when the New Age movement became fascinated with shamanism, the phenomenon soon became known in academic parlance as 'neo-shamanism', or 'modern Western shamanism', although most shamanic practitioners today do not see themselves as followers of 'core shamanism' or neo-shamanism (the latter being used as a scholarly umbrella term for a multitude of contemporary shamanist philosophies and activities) but of shamanism that they perceive as genuine (cf. Stuckrad 2002: 774). 'Core shamanism' that formed the foundations for most contemporary Western shamanism was founded by American anthropologist and shamanic practitioner Michael Harner (1929–2018) who, according to his own explanation, elaborated – based on participant observation and literature – what he felt to be the cross-cultural common denominators of shamanism. Thus, core shamanism comprises an eclectic range of beliefs and practices that involve methods for attaining altered states of consciousness and communication with the spirit world, stressing that every human has helping spirits, the most important of them being the power-animal (see DuBois 2009). Among other things, Harner (1982 [1980]: 42–43, 68) describes ways of detecting one's power-animal (e.g. a shaman takes a journey to the Lowerworld, brings back the power-animal the patient has lost, informs the patient about his or her power-animal and blows it into the chest and to the fontanelle in the top rear of the head of the patient; a couple of such rituals were also mentioned by Estonian informants). According to modern shamanistic teachings, when a power-animal is restored to a person, they feel better immediately, and then gradually experience power flowing into their body over the next few days. The main techniques for creating contact with one's power-animals are part of the

basic course of core shamanism that is regularly taught also in Estonia. For example, two influential shamanic teachers in Northern Europe, Jonathan Horwitz and Annette Host, have contacts with Estonian as well as other Nordic shamanistic circles, and attending Horwitz's courses was also mentioned in a couple of personal experience stories that came up during my interviews. Additionally, various Amerindian ritual masters who have visited Estonia and conducted rituals here have influenced the general understanding of shamanistic and Native Indian traditions in Estonia.

Further, it became clear from the narratives that after attending core shamanism courses or camps of Native Indian teachings (e.g. sweat-lodge rituals)[2], individual elaborations of the cooperation with the power-animal may follow – the initial contact with the power-animal may be a starting point for a long spiritual connection between the experiencer and the spirit-animal. Yet in other cases the connection can take place spontaneously, without the mediation of a shaman but triggered by an impulse derived from a reading or attending some other type of esoteric course or camp, which can lead to an unexpected and powerful first contact that in several cases has been called 'life-changing'. Some researchers point out that the results of the mythic imagination, such as mythic images, are 'true experientially' (Doty 1986: 15) or 'considered and experienced as real' (Siikala 2002: 52). Central to such a view is an understanding of knowledge, sociality, and culture as a form of imagination, acting and communication that includes human as well as non-human and supernatural actors (cf. Latour 2005: 64–65).

EXPERIENCES WITH AND NARRATIVES OF SPIRIT-ANIMALS IN A WIDER PUBLIC

In the Estonian national census of 2011, only 62 people defined themselves as shamanists. Yet the knowledge of the concept of spirit-animals has reached far beyond these circles of practitioners. There are increasingly many people who have attended a basic shamanistic course or a sweat-lodge ritual once or twice or just happened to read information about spirit-animals, thus obtaining at least a passive comprehension set of the phenomenon. At times advertisements circulate (e.g. in Facebook, mailing lists) that invite interested individuals to participate in lectures and workshops dedicated to learning how to communicate with spirit-animals. Additionally, topical books, magazine articles, and other sources of information bring the understanding of spirit-animals to even wider groups of recipients.

Parallelly, mostly on specific esoteric forums, more detailed debates about the true understanding of spirit-animals take place (i.e., about how to get such an animal intentionally and what is the right way of establishing such a contact). In these discussions certain repeated models of competing for the authority of having information can be observed. For example, the author of one post on a dedicated esoteric forum claims that actually no contact-making with spirit-animals is needed at all:

> *THERE IS NO NEED TO GO AND GET YOU POWER-ANIMALS ON A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY!!!!!!!! Every person has already 96 of them. But the connection with them has been destroyed – because of the shitheads of this planet. We need to recreate the connection with the side of antireality, and all these 96 will be available. Of course, it is easier to make a stupid ritual and bring you ONE power-animal. But why???????* (User 4; vaimumaailm.ee, 2008)

Another esoteric forum that mainly focuses on keeping contact with angels offers precise instructions for initiating communication with spirit-animals:

> *When you wish to get more closely acquainted with your power-animal, you need to invite it to you. You need to meditate and see what is shown to you. Often the animals that we like are not necessarily our power-animals. Imagine yourself in your heart to be in a beautiful place that is dear to you and ask the animal to come to you.* (User 5; http://pesa.valguseleht.ee, 2010)

In longer narratives circulating in a wider public the first contact with the spirit-animal typically happens unintentionally, although the experiencers have previously had at least basic information about the concept. Thus the contrast between the – usually unhappy and hopeless – previous life of the experiencer and the life-changing contact with the spirit-animal builds the most powerful narrative axis (more about narrating of supernatural experiences see Valk 2015). Spiritual meaning-making of the contact with spirit-animals (or birds, insects) goes far beyond their physical appearance and the behaviour of respective animals that is observable in real nature. On spiritual contact level they often obtain human-like or even god-like characteristics, partly influenced by stereotypical features traditionally ascribed to animals, for example, in local paroemiological usage (strong as a horse, clever as a wolf, etc.; cf. similar thoughts regarding other animal lore in Voolaid 2008). Preferred are physically powerful animals that are related to heroic images of strength, smartness, wisdom (e.g., no rats as they do not carry positive associations) and animals that can actually occur in Estonian nature. In the available material just a

couple of foreign species were mentioned; for example, one coyote and one lion, and almost no mythical species, although there are some courses available in Estonia that teach also communication with mythical creatures, for example, unicorns (cf. Mahlamäki 2018). However, meeting unicorns was mentioned in a couple of Estonian blog posts and forum discussions, and an esoteric website mediates a prayer that contains power-animals and unicorns:

> *Dear spiritual guides, teachers, protective angels, Mother Earth, the Primal Source, archangels, karma angels, and my power-animals and unicorns, and all beings of light who support me – I ask you for support, help, and guidance.* (http://valguseleht.ee/valguselaegas)

There were also combinations of spirit-animals and pet animals. As in welfare society the status and importance of pet animals more and more resembles to that of humans, a new mythological dimension can be observed – supernaturally protective pets (dead or alive) as in the following text:

> *Sometimes when I feel that something is going wrong, I talk with my dead cat in my bed in the evening, asking the cat to protect me and keep me safe.* (KP, ID2006, girl, 14, Tartu, 2018)

In a couple of texts pet animals as protectors were mentioned side by side with deceased relatives, for example:

> *I know that in heaven my deceased relatives and my pet animals keep a protective eye on me.* (KP, ID717, girl, b. 2005, Saue, 2018)

In the next text two pets – a cat and a fish – are attributed supernatural powers and protective abilities and they are interpreted as life-savers of certain family members.

> *I have a protector – a real animal, a cat. Just a year ago we still had this cat but nobody could believe that it was just a cat. It acted as if it was more than superhuman – it was very majestic, it cared for us a lot, hugged us, was the first to run to pick up the phone. When someone was ill, it jumped onto the ill spot on the body. It never carried its kittens with its teeth – it would have been too undignified… It looked like the mythical Egyptian cat Mau – in black and golden colour. My daughter was having complicated times in her life and then something strange took place in our garden; it seems that the cat energetically turned this stroke of destiny on itself. Around a week earlier we had found a dead rat in front of our gate – for me mice symbolize someone's death. I looked at this rat and mentioned the name of our cat. Later it turned out that it was a sign of*

its departure – the cat lost its life in a fight close to our house – we don't know exactly with whom.

One more protector – a live fish. When my grandchild was ill and dying when she was two months old, I kept her in my arms and prayed and finally I felt that there was a turning moment; her breathing became better and she started to recover. Then I put the baby into bed. But in the morning I discovered that the goldfish was dead in the aquarium. There is a saying that when death comes to get someone, it would not go away with empty hands and our animals quite often sacrifice themselves. (Woman, 58, 2017)

Narratives describing contacts with spirit-animals may contain an active mutual dialogue, but they can also be limited to simply describing the appearance of the spirit-animal. The experiencer interprets the contact as the spirit-animal's willingness and ability to protect or support, based on non-verbal signs decoded, at least partly, on the backdrop of prior folkloric background-knowledge (cf. Hiiemäe 2016: 51–52). In the following sample text, the experiencer ponders about the species of her soul-animal and the impressive appearance of a male swan is interpreted as an answer to this non-verbalized question:

I have an experience related to this topic that really warms my soul.

I read a thread about soul-animals last week and started pondering about the topic. I didn't have a very urgent desire to find out which animal is my spirit-animal... I rather wished to read and explore more. Next day we and the children were by a lake close to home, where we went on a longer hike, and then we got some rest on a more remote part of the sandy lakeshore. And there it came – directly across the lake – a majestic male swan, so unbelievably beautiful. Directly towards us. Then it stopped a metre away from us and for a long while it looked me in the eye with its one eye, then it turned its head and looked with the other eye. I have never before had the honour of watching this bird so closely; it was a soul-warming feeling. Well, is it really so simple that you just ask and get the information immediately!? (User 6, woman; http://pesa.valguseleht.ee/mittematериaalsed-olendid, 2013)

In the next account the lynx is described as a spiritual protector and the experience of sighting lynxes in nature and seeing a lynx who looks the narrator in the eye in a dream is interpreted as an evidence of their support:

M. – a female friend of mine – has always had a very strong connection with animals and she believes that the lynx is her protective animal. Several times has she met lynxes in nature, which is quite rare, and she

> *has also seen them in her dreams. For M., the lynx symbolizes keeping the mental borders stable, as well as self-confidence and being and remaining herself. In difficult times the lynx has often looked M. deep in the eye in her dreams, supporting her.* (Woman, student, 20, 2018)

Thus, the experience is mediated in a narrative form but for the experiencer the core of the symbolic contact lies in direct experiencing of the imaginative, affective, sensory, and kinesthetic aspect of it (cf. a similar thought by Lusebrink (1990) regarding the therapeutic approaches using animal symbols).

SOCIETAL VISIBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF THE CONCEPT OF SPIRIT-ANIMALS

As already mentioned, the narrators often describe their contact with a spirit-animal as unexpected but they are usually not totally unaware of the concept as in the recent decade it has become well visible in the Estonian media, having become part of the contemporary 'spiritual milieu' (about the term see Campbell 2002). Comparisons of Estonians and Native Indians as shamanic nations, spirited nature-lovers, and otherwise similar groups have repeatedly occurred in media interviews. Musicians Tarmo and Toomas Urb, who have been called the 'importers' of Native American culture to Estonia (e.g. Saagim 2008), because they were the ones who started organizing shamanistic camps and sweat lodges in Estonia in the 1990s, conclude in an interview: 'Estonians are genetically very closely related to Native Americans. In fact, we, Estonians, indeed are like European Native Americans.' Thus, according to them, the reason why Estonians should be interested in Native American customs lies in the need 'to revive our genetic memory' (Saagim 2008).

In a parallel manner, a (partly) idealized view of the Estonian traditional (pagan) folk belief stresses its close relationship with all beings of nature, including animals, giving a reason to call Estonia a post-shamanistic country and to still depict modern urbanized Estonians as 'forest people' who have lived in harmony with their animistic worldview since ancient times. These imaginations are probably one of the factors that have motivated the interest in spirit-animals in the form of appropriated sacred traditions derived and mixed from various cultures. As a matter of fact, there exist many pre-twentieth-century folk narratives that describe dialogues between humans and animals but they are quite far from the motives characteristic of contemporary narratives about the encounters of spirit-animals as protectors.

Anyhow, there are plentiful contemporary sources and models for the spirit-animal concept. First of all, esoteric literature often makes references to spirit-animals. Already in 2007 the book titled *Personal Power Animals: For Guidance, Protection and Healing* by Madonna Gauding was published in Estonian. The following interview text shows how the spread of respective information triggers individuals to experiment with finding one's own spirit-animal:

> Woman: *I have tried to get in contact with my spirit-animal but I haven't succeeded.*
> Interviewer: *But how do you know that such a contact is possible at all?*
> Woman: *I read a book about voodoo magic and there was a description of making this contact but for some reason I haven't got in contact with my spirit-animal. However, I managed to get in contact with my protective angel.* (Woman, 29, 2018)

In a forum thread about spirit-animals one user comments on the experiences that another user has narrated about his spirit-animal, and mentions that he notices certain influences from Harry Potter books (see http://www.para-web.org/showthread.php?tid=1043, 2006). It is very likely that these popular books have indeed had an impact on the imagery of spirit-animals also in Estonian contemporary folklore.

Besides books there are numerous other media representations that have influenced these images. In media interviews it is not only healers or alternative therapists that talk about spirit-animals but also singers and artists; for example, at the opening of an art exhibition an interview was made with the artist Relska (Reelika Laks), who has depicted wolves in her pictures and commented that the wolf is her power-animal that she has been seeing in her dreams since her childhood (Keskpalu 2017). Online quizzes titled "Who is your astrological spirit-animal?" or similar (in English or in Estonian), which promise to reveal one's spirit-animal after having answered a few (rather random) questions, occur frequently in the social media and respondents comment on the results that they get from such quizzes, commenting in addition, for example, whether they agree with the result or imagine that they have some other spirit-animal. The combination with astrology is yet another evidence of the free-floatingness of elements from various spiritualities in contemporary globalized spiritual offer. Esoteric shops sell a plentitude of various goods related to the concept of spirit-animal, such as talismans and incenses; for example, an incense called "Protector" with the description of its effect: 'Through the smoke of chamomile the ancient power-animal of women – the wolf – comes to protect you'. Workshops for making spirit-animal talismans take place in some esoteric shops (for example, in January 2018, an esoteric teacher in Pärnu taught the participants

how to make a power object from bones, skins or feathers of animals/birds in order to obtain energy from spirit-animals). In addition to the esoteric workshops that offer to establish contact with spirit-animals,[3] there is, for example, the company Hingeloom OÜ (Spirit-animal LLC) that advertises itself as an Estonian company offering funeral services, overarching the old soul concept and new spirit-animal traditions. In addition, due to modern mobility trends people bring souvenirs with spirit-animal symbolism from their travels; for example, one respondent describes:

> *This armlet that is adorned with figures of animals and the text saying that their spirits protect me is a gift from my husband bought from a workshop of Native Americans that is located in the mountains on the Canadian-American border. Already twenty years I have strongly felt the support of these animals on my armlet.* (Woman, 61, 2017)

There are channels that also speak to the very young generation; for example, Great Eagle in the popular children's TV animated series *Yakari* is the totem bird and protector of the Native American boy Yakari, whom it aids with wisdom and advice. The Estonian version of this French series has been broadcasted on the Estonian state channel approximately a decade.

A significant marker in the visibility of the concept of spirit-animal was the Eurovision Song Contest's song "Spirit-animal" (2016), authored and sung by the Estonian singer Kerli, who repeatedly emphasized in media interviews that the song was inspired by her own spirit-animal who is the white tiger. In a newspaper interview Kerli compares Native Americans with Estonians, concluding that they are very similar in believing in the energy of animals and in the possibility of inviting animal souls in order to get access to their energies (Metsküla 2017). Further, she describes her own powerful contact with her spirit-animal in a dream:

> *It came to me in a dream where I stood on a balcony and invited it by singing. Then the white tiger came to me from the snow and jumped on me and embraced me. It was quite frightening but at the same time I knew that it was not dangerous*. (Metsküla 2017)

Such a constant flow of background information suggests a potential possibility for supernatural experience and thus prepares ground for encounters with spirit-animals also for persons who otherwise describe themselves as sceptics. Narrative texts form an effective axis along which the polarised movement from total scepticism to the experiencing of the supernatural encounter takes place – comparable with similar introductions in many other legends – whereby the truth value of the experience is increased by the contrast between the previous

scepticism and the new physical reality (i.e., the person physically feeling, seeing, hearing the spirit-animal). Such sceptic introductions occur rather typically in legends depicting various supernatural phenomena. For example, in a blog an experiencer describes herself at the beginning of the narrative as follows: 'I'm very sceptical of the stories of magic and the zumba-mumba of healers-clairvoyants and prophets'. The narrative goes on, describing a short stretching massage sample that the experiencer received from a Thai massage specialist, which brought along an unexpected turn on experiential level:

> *And then… an interesting part started. As if bees were crawling out from below tree bark, something crawled in my back and on my hand and foot …how to describe something that is indescribable – I got a vision (feeling at the same time how it was fondling my left leg) of a red-orange-coloured hairy cat. At the same moment I knew, just knew: see, it's my spirit-animal. Such a story. Weird but somehow very deliberating was this experience (?). I actually don't know what to do next with this information :) But at least I know – I saw my spirit-animal. Whatever it would mean :)* (Blogger 1; https://veraprima.wordpress.com/?s=hingeloom, 2011)

Another experiencer similarly describes the strong physical sensuality of the experience, narrating how she went to a well-known Estonian shaman in order to get clarity in her life and during the opening of chakras and meditation suddenly her power-animals – the deer and the lynx – appeared:

> *First it was the deer and it left the feeling in my palms as if it had touched them with its nose. This feeling remained in my palms for long. The second meeting was with a lynx; I remember that I caressed it, it was nice. It was many years ago.* (User 7; http://naistekas.delfi.ee/foorum, 2009)

Thus, a bright personal experience can turn general cultural information into personal knowledge and further into an experience-based memorate that can have a longer- or shorter-lasting influence on the experiencer.

BELIEF NARRATIVES OF SPIRIT-ANIMALS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

In the collected material there are two main types of belief narratives regarding spirit-animals – narratives that mention the spirit-animal as having a general preventive and protective function, and narratives as part of life-history narrating and meaning-making of traumas, providing a more elaborated 'frame of reference for interpreting reality' (Luckmann 1967). It deserves attention

that memorate-type longer narratives of spirit-animals dealing with meaning-making of traumas and life stress are mostly narrated by not very young people. Similarly, they often originate from people who have a deeper interest in esoteric traditions and who have tried to practice at least some of them.

In the 2018 school-lore collecting campaign around 30 young people out of 3,717 described their personal spirit-animals. However, among these texts there were no stories connected with overcoming of particular traumas; the narratives were rather short accounts of getting the spirit-animal or becoming aware of it (in dreams, or just getting the right feeling after reading something about the topic, not specific rituals). The 'finding' of their soul-animal gave them the feeling of being protected and potentially helped in the case of difficult situations. Here are some examples:

> *I believe that every person has a soul-animal who gives them best orders what to do.* (KP, ID1268, boy, 15, Võru, 2018)

> *Because my soul-animal is the wolf who is the symbol of courage and independence, I believe that through garnering support from the wolf I can cope better in life than with no support at all.* (KP, ID1335, girl, 14, Võru, 2018)

Similar narratives were collected from a dozen students of the University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy.

The experience of getting or finding one's spirit-animal is one-time, yet the narrative describing this event can be repeated endless times, stressing elements that are necessary or important namely in the given context or moment (e.g. identity, consolation). Thus I agree with the conclusion of Arnold Arluke and Clinton Sanders, who point out regarding the functions of mythic narratives: 'Shoring up the normative order in any culture are attitudes and institutions that provide ways out of the culture's contradictions by supplying myths to bridge them and techniques to assuage troubled feelings' (Arluke & Sanders 1996: 82).

Some experiencers said that after the initial unplanned contact they developed methods for more controlled and directed communication or described spontaneous as well as directed contacts occurring parallelly. For example, one woman mentioned visualizations and shamanic journeys for intentionally contacting her spirit animals but added that the animals can appear also spontaneously during her meditations (woman, 58, 2017). In a few cases the narrators mentioned that they have a tattoo depicting their spirit-animal on their skin, reminding them constantly of its positive presence.

Below are some longer sample narratives (used with the permission of experiencers), followed by their short analysis. The first two examples show

how meeting with a spirit-animal is integrated into narratives describing the overcoming of a serious life crisis. In sample texts 1 and 2, characteristic elements contributing to narrative tension occur – an extremely critical personal situation as a starting point in case 1, and a relatively critical personal situation in case 2. The narrators have had previous contact with spiritual teachings: in case 1, the first contact with the spirit-animal was initiated by a shamanic teacher, in case 2 the contact occurred at the time of attending an esoteric school. Certain liquidity of tradition elements can be observed: in case 1 the shamanistic traditions of Native Navajos are combined with chakras (in yet another narrative a yoga breathing course was described as a starting point for the communication with the spirit-animal). Both narratives describe a movement from the situation of lack and unbalance to balance. First, there is clear manifestation of qualities that are missing (in the first case – love, change, movement towards personal security; in the second case – joy). The contact with the spirit-animal becomes a turning point towards a better life. By the end of the narrative the initial problem has been solved and the experiencers have a clearer life vision. In case 2, more meaning-making and identity-strengthening elements followed later in the course of the interview – after depicting the direct encounter with the spirit-animal memories of having been a Native American woman in a previous life came up, a close connection with Native American culture was described, leading to further participation in respective courses (e.g. camps dedicated to Native American culture).

Case 1: Stork as spirit-animal

> *As a rule, one shouldn't talk about one's soul-animal because with talking you dissolve your experience and its power will vanish. But I can still tell it to you because I know that you are a good person. In 1992, I was totally broken, I had had sexual violence experience in my childhood, I had had physical violence experience because I had landed in a violent partner relationship. I had two children. An Estonian artist invited me to a shamanistic course led by Jonathan Horwitz. My husband didn't allow me to go, thus the fact that I still went was my first act of confrontation. The shaman chose one person to whom to bring his / her soul-animal and also mediate to this person the spirit-animal's messages. At this time, I had many hypogastric problems, I had also had surgical operations – obviously these were related to my traumas. I had very weak self-confidence. And then all this group went to the underworld in a canoe in a vision and the shaman blew my spirit-animal into me through my heart chakra.*

> *Then he told me about its meaning and about the meaning of nature, insects, living beings in general. This was according to the tradition of Native Navajos but it is surely also not unknown to Estonians. Thus, this journey went along a river and I saw a stork on the riverbank; it greeted me by the name and said: 'I have been waiting for you so long and I love you.' After hearing that I burst into tears, even in the night I woke up weeping, weeping my pain out of me. Until then I had been so broken both spiritually and physically – and then suddenly such an experience! This was a real experience of love. Thenceforth my life started to change. I didn't continue with this shamanic training but until today I have had this special relationship with birds, I admire them. In 1994, I put an end to my partner relationship, but this experience was the first turning point. Later I have brought spirit-animals also to other people myself*. (Woman, 50, Estonia, 2018)

Case 2: Horse as spirit-animal

> *I have had a very close connection with the topic of the Native American culture – I realized later that I had been a Native American woman in my previous life! This summer I will also go to the camp in Estonia that is organized by real Native Americans. I have been in these camps several times and they are life-changing.*
>
> *But already years ago, at the time when I attended a school of hypnotherapy, I got my soul-animal; it appeared to me in the form of a white horse whose name was Maximus. It was the time when I had a very difficult period; somehow I had lost all my cheerfulness. And then this horse helped me to find it again. It was so joyful itself, jumping around all the time, and think what a name it has!*
>
> Interviewer: *Who is this animal then more particularly, a protector or rather a part of yourself or…?*
>
> Narrator: *It is like a protector but it is also like a part of me*. (Woman, 49, Estonia, 2018)

Case 3: Wolf, deer, and salmon as spirit-animals

Most narrators described just one spirit-animal, in fewer cases two or three were mentioned. The third sample text touches upon four spirit-animals, although one of them is mentioned very briefly. The experiencer is a frequent

participant in various esoteric courses – tantra camps, shamanistic courses and rituals, courses of massage techniques, workshops of ancient Estonian wisdom. He uses a respective vocabulary (e.g. 'showing the path', 'consciousness of an eagle') and symbols (e.g. interpretation of the wolf's behaviour), knows ways for intentionally establishing contact with some of his spirit-animals. Thus, here the narrative is not built around a sudden and surprising first occurrence of the spirit animal (as in cases 1 and 2). Although in case 3 the contact with spirit animals is also related to coping with crises, here the presence and help of spirit animals is rather expected.

> *I have more than one spirit-animal... according to my understanding they are the ones who show me my Path. They have come to me through some journey (a shamanistic journey) or they have shown themselves in real physical shape, giving me a very strong spiritual-emotional contact. The wolf is the one who sits in my blood... I have met it in real life, on a forest path, and it always 'shows' itself when there is a conflict ahead – as if it is trying to say 'fight as a wolf and I will protect you'.*
>
> *The animal that gives me wisdom is a mixture of a deer and a maral. It appears when there are some unsolved problems or problems that I'm trying to solve at the moment. Yes, I think that it is actually subconciousness that shows itself in a pictorial form. The one who shows itself quite seldom is the salmon. It shows that I have to swim with the current or swim against the current – depending on the situation. On a peyote-ritual there was – or I was – also the consciousness of an eagle but this bird has not shown itself any more. But yes, I can call them myself – on a longer journey in case I need longer guidance, or quickly when I need protection, a secure feeling, wisdom. My inner crises that are usually related to the splitting of my partner relationships somehow seem to hurt the wolf... it hesitantly stands on one spot and looks wounded. But yes, in these moments I'm more in contact with the wolf.* (Man, 50, Estonia, 2018)

The third narrative does not have the same structure as in the previous two cases (i.e., moving from the 'occurrence of a specific problem' to 'problem solved') but is a continuum, equipping the experiencer with spiritual tools for the current and future life crises. Similarly, a young respondent describes her various protective animals having various functions. Unlike many other narratives that depict the strong physicalness of the appearance of their spirit-animal, the experiencer of the following case points to the role of conscious imagination:

> *I imagine two animals as my protectors: the butterfly and the tortoise. They are so-called 'passive' protective animals, it means that it is generally not*

possible to communicate with them and they watch over you during the whole life. I also have an 'imaginary friend', a protective animal who is active – it is possible to communicate with it and it appears in situations when you need it (or you just want to communicate). (KP, ID1369, girl, 18, Tallinn, 2018)

CONCLUSIONS: MAINSTREAMING OF THE CONCEPT OF SPIRIT-ANIMAL

Belief in and narratives about spirit-animals are an example of contemporary vernacular lived religion. The aim of this article was to analyse the ways of talking about spirit-animal experiences. It became clear during the analysis that beginning in the 2010s, when the concept of spirit-animal as a protector, helper, and spiritual guide started reaching a broader audience in Estonia, certain characteristics of respective beliefs and images can be observed that are typical for many modern so-called 'liquid' belief phenomena (see more about the concept of liquidity of traditions in Bauman 2000, about appropriation of native/aboriginal beliefs in Welch 2002); for example, limited knowledge of the historical or cultural background of spirit-animal beliefs, stereotypization of characters, mixing of elements from different cultures.

It became clear that regarding biological (i.e. behaviour and habitat of respective animal species) or cultural details, the Estonian spirit-animals are relatively context-free – narrators often perceived their connection with Native Indian culture in general, without taking into consideration that there is no single homogenous Native American culture (in a few cases, though, the soul-animal tradition was brought into connection with a certain tribe, e.g. the Hopi Indians) or that there have been changes in these beliefs in various historical periods. There were only a few debates about the sources and cultural authenticity as in most cases the personal experience itself was already perceived as validating the narrative built around it (cf. a similar conclusion by Belenky et al. (1997 [1986]: 113) about the importance of special subjective experiences in the argumentations related to sources of knowledge).

The variety of animals occurring in the narratives was rather limited. The most popular was the wolf (around 75 percent), who was followed by the bear, deer, horse, and eagle. Still in a few cases butterflies were mentioned – maybe derivatives of the soul concept of the traditional Estonian folk belief. The natural characteristics and lifestyle of respective animals were not described (often probably even not much known) as these were not perceived as important in

this experiential and narrative context. The selection of narrative motifs was also limited. The main focus was on the interaction between the experiencer and the spirit-animal and on the positive outcome that followed. Shorter narratives only mentioned the species of the animal and the fact that it had the function of a protector. Longer memorates usually focused on describing the first contact with the soul-animal, the crisis situation that preceded the contact, and the powerful spiritual/psychological transformation that came along with this contact. Most experiences were situated in Estonian contexts.

As it followed from the interviews, the social or belief background of the experiencers and narrators can be quite different; however, more elaborated stories usually came from people with a history of at least some forms of spiritual seeking or practicing. Several authors have stressed that the majority of vernacular belief forms attract particularly women (Utriainen & Salmesvuori 2014), but there were also a number of male narrators who shared their stories about beliefs related to spirit-animals.

In accordance with the tendencies of hybridity and liquidity of traditions, summed up in the term 'pick-and-mix religion' (Hamilton 2000), it leaps to the eye that spirit-animals are often freely combined with other protective magic that derives from various cultural and religious traditions, as in the following text: "I wear a chain with a cross around my neck and I'm also baptized, and I have a protective angel who protects me but my soul-animals are surely the horse and the dog" (KP, ID1621, girl, 16, Võru, 2018).

An interesting feature was the functioning of the spirit-animal narratives as a tool of vernacular psychological and spiritual self-therapy (cf., e.g., with the studies of Al-Krenawi 1999; Eason & Colmant & Winterowd 2009). It became clear from the narratives that colorful descriptions depicting the powerful experience enabled the narrators to identify with their ideals and to feel themselves as a more spiritually empowered person. Thus, respective experiences and narratives helped the experiencer tell themselves and significant others the story of overcoming a trauma that could sometimes become the axis of life-history narrating or a tool for future reference in problematic situations, working as a reminder and anchor of personal identity. However, testing inhowfar the mechanisms of respective beliefs could provide added value in official psychotherapy (e.g. through testing inhowfar self-reported improvements in the physical, spiritual, emotional, and cognitive dimensions have a lasting effect) remains the topic for another study.

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NOTES

[1] See https://www.ut.ee/et/uudised/uuring-eestlased-usuvad-vaimsesse-enesearengusse-maavalisesse-ellu, last accessed on 4 October 2019.

[2] A group ceremony conducted in a small heated tent for healing and prayers, usually guided by a spiritual leader (e.g. a shaman).

[3] To mention just a few examples: in February 2018, a workshop took place, which taught the participants how to get in contact with their power-animals in dreams and during spiritual journeys; in December 2018, a finalist of the popular TV-show "The Ordeal of Clairvoyants" gave a public lecture on how to get acquainted with one's spirit-animal, teaching the participants how to communicate with the spirit-animal as one aspect of their subconsciousness.

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E = Matthias Johann Eisen's manuscript collection at the Estonian Folklore Archives
ERA = Estonian Folklore Archives
KP = collection of school folklore of the archives EFITA (archives of the Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Museum)

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COCKROACHES: FROM BELIEF NARRATIVES TO THE CONTEMPORARY VISUAL PRACTICE OF CATHERINE CHALMERS, OR HOW COCKROACHES HAVE SURVIVED ON EARTH FOR MORE THAN 320 MILLION YEARS

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Abstract: This article,[1] developed on the meeting point of ethnozoology and critical animal studies, is an overview of the role of cockroaches (of which there are around 3500 species) in customs and beliefs of certain ethno-traditions, with a special emphasis on Russian and Croatian, i.e. South Slavic, ethno-traditions in terms of context. In the first part of the paper, I have chosen to present the two aforementioned Slavic examples, considering that they are contradictory in the ethics of their relationship towards cockroaches: while cockroaches, particularly the black ones, were respected in Russian ethno-tradition, almost as *pets* that bring happiness and prosperity to a household (we could call them *pet amulets* of sorts) (cf. Gura 2005), they were treated merely as *pests* in Croatian ethno-tradition, as is the case today.

In the second part of the paper, I supplement the aforementioned folklorist and ethnologic perspective (zoofolkloristics and ethnozoology) with animal studies. This includes the question of animal rights from a contemporary perspective, whereby I concentrate on aggressive insecticides and exterminators of cockroaches today, as well as on the research of the advertising strategies that contain militant killing performatives (e.g. *Raid* commercials). I conclude with the discussion on the ethic and aesthetic in the visual art of Catherine Chalmers, who kills cockroaches in the name of art, for the purposes of some of her works, albeit simultaneously demonstrating that even the “lowly” cockroach can be a subject of so-called high art.

Keywords: cockroaches, commercials, (critical) animal studies, folkloristic research, speciesism, visual arts

Is there really nothing nice to be said about cockroaches? … In the world of insects, their parental love for their offspring is one of the greatest, it is unsurpassable.
Exhibition *Žohari – svijet koji ostaje* (Cockroaches – A World That Remains), Croatian Natural History Museum, Zagreb, 2018

This article on cockroaches, insects of the order *Blattodea* and loved by few, which have lived on Earth for more than 300 million years (cf. Grush 2016) and will survive the climate change apocalypse (which is becoming increasingly probable), was written within the scope of two fields of research – one based on folklore and the other on animal rights (animal studies and particularly critical animal studies). Specifically, the first segment of the paper, based on the research performed by Aleksandar Gura (2005), lists examples from Russian ethno-tradition, comparing them with respective examples from Croatian ethno-tradition. I have limited my comparisons to these two Slavic examples for two reasons: the first is that Aleksandar Gura is the author of the first systematic research of the symbolism of animals in Slavic folk tradition (as the title of his book suggests) and hence, regarding Slavic ethno-traditions, I have opted for the Russian (which is Gura's field of research as a folklorist) and the Croatian one (as my own field of folkloristic research). The second reason is that the aforementioned ethno-traditions possess divergent relationship ethics towards cockroaches. While cockroaches, primarily the black ones, were valued in Russian ethno-tradition and treated almost as pets that bring good fortune and prosperity to a household (we could call them pet-amulets of sorts), in Croatian ethno-tradition they were regarded only as pests, that is, the same way they are perceived today.

In the second segment of the article, I supplement the aforementioned folkloristic and ethnological perspective (zoofolkloristic and ethnozoological) with research implemented in the field of animal studies and critical animal studies, which (especially critical animal rights) also includes issues of animal rights and contemporary perspectives. Briefly put, in order to obtain a perspective of the past and present relationship of humans with cockroaches, I supplement the folkloristic and ethnologic perspective (zoofolkloristics and ethnozoology) with animal studies, which also includes the question of animal rights from a contemporary perspective. Here, I place a special emphasis on Branislava Vičar's (forthcoming) critical animal research of advertising strategies for aggressive insecticides and exterminators that contain militant performative acts of killing (e.g. the *Raid* commercial).[2]

I conclude the aforementioned animal studies and critical animal studies perspective with another example of visual animal studies, i.e., a segment of animal studies, which addresses the question of ethics and aesthetics – the work of the artist Catherine Chalmers who, for the purposes of some of her works, kills cockroaches in the name of art, albeit simultaneously demonstrating that even the "lowly" cockroach can be a subject of so-called high art.

Therefore, I have written this paper as an intersection of folklore studies (zoofolkloristic and ethnozoological) on the one hand, and animal studies and critical animal studies on the other hand, in order to comprehensively document the relationship between humans and animals (cockroaches), from folklore beliefs to the contemporary relationship in which they are treated (only) as pests. According to numerous animal studies theoreticians, such cross-disciplinary research needs to include the totality of relationships between humans and animals, and therefore needs to go far beyond the limits of the zoofolkloristic and ethnozoological perspective (cf. Visković 1996: 11) in order to document the human-animal relationship, both of today and of the past. More specifically, animal studies is an interdisciplinary subject field in which animals are studied in a variety of cross-disciplinary manners; it is a study of the interactions and relationships between human and nonhuman animals. In other words, to cite Margo DeMello, programme director for Human Animal Studies at the Animals and Society Institute:

> *Human-animal studies (HAS) – sometimes known as anthrozoology or animal studies – is an interdisciplinary field that explores the spaces that animals occupy in human social and cultural worlds and the interactions humans have with them. Central to this field is an exploration of the ways in which animal lives intersect with human societies.* (DeMello 2012: 4)

However, theoreticians in critical animal studies are of the opinion that the mainstream of animal studies has no connection at all with animal rights. Or, as a philosopher and seasoned activist Steven Best goes on to say: "*Animal studies is everything to everyone* – including welfarists, carnivores, speciesists, pro-vivisectionists, and sundry human supremacists and animal exploiters" (Best 2009: 13). Hence, Steven Best demands that mainstream animal studies be replaced by *critical animal studies*, an academic field of study dedicated to the abolition of animal exploitation, oppression, and domination (Best 2009: 13; cf. Marjanić 2017a: 128).[3]

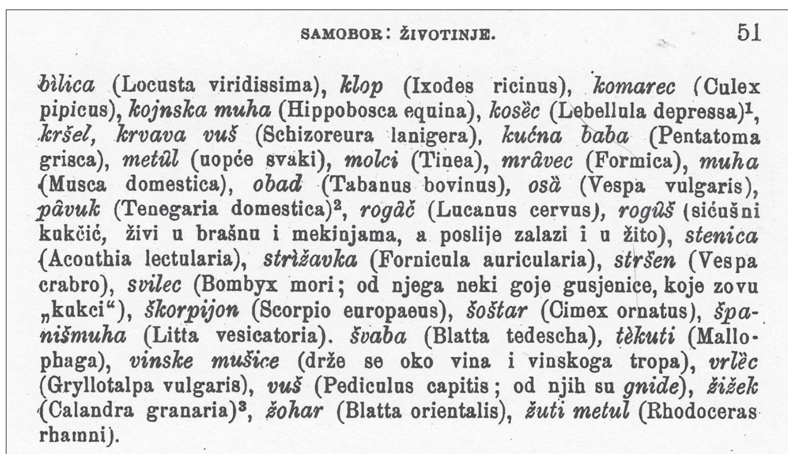
COCKROACHES WITHIN THE FOLKLORISTIC RESEARCH: TWO EXAMPLES FROM BYGONE DAYS – RUSSIAN AND CROATIAN

The first research I seek to present – the folkloristic one – stems from the study of Russian philologist Aleksandar Gura, whose book *Simbolika životinja u slovenskoj narodnoj tradiciji* (Symbolism of Animals in Slavic Folk Tradition, 2005) contains chapters in which he thematically observes domestic insects – so-called parasites (fleas, lice, mites, cockroaches). As regards cockroaches, Gura focuses on their symbolism in Russian ethno-tradition, wherein they are considered harbingers of wealth and material wellbeing. Such folk beliefs usually apply only to black and not brown cockroaches. According to this belief, black cockroaches are not to be exterminated because they are thought to bring wealth. Furthermore, the reproduction or the emergence of *prusaks* – big black cockroaches – was considered especially good fortune in the home: "Many black cockroaches living in someone's home is a sure sign that fortune is coming that person's way" (cf. Gura 2005: 314–315). Gura points out that the function of the protector of the home in Russian ethno-tradition, characteristic of cockroaches and many other chthonic animals – reptiles and some insects (snakes, weasels, frogs, turtles, moles, worms, spiders, crickets, ants, etc.) – can be recognised from these beliefs, as is the case in Croatian ethno-tradition, wherein the role of the protector of the home is assigned to the snake. The most common reason for a ban on exterminating black cockroaches is that it may have an adverse effect on livestock (cf. Gura 2005: 314–315). When moving into a new house, they too were moved and fed, especially for big holidays, believing that the greater the number of black cockroaches, the better one's livestock would breed. In Vologda province, there was a belief that in every home there is a *cockroach queen* – a cockroach as big as a lamb. If sorcery is used to get her out of the house, all the landlord's livestock will die. And should the cockroaches leave the house on their own, this would be a sign of misfortune, most often signifying fire or death in the household (ibid.: 315–316).

Outside the borders of Russia, the ban on exterminating cockroaches, as well as mites and fleas, is completely different in nature and is usually related to the danger of these or other insects taking revenge on humans (the same reasoning applies to the ban on killing lizards, snakes, and some other reptiles and insects). The Hutsuls (Ukraine) believe that cockroaches must not be killed because their brothers (cockroaches) will take revenge on the person who insulted them (the Hutsuls), and fall into their meal (cf. Gura 2005: 315).[4]

With regard to Croatian folkloric material, ethnographer Milan Lang (1863–1953), in his monograph *Samobor: Narodni život i običaji* (Samobor – Folk Life and Customs) on the town of Samobor near Zagreb,[5] wrote that the residents of Samobor are not very good at naming bugs, and cites the following types of

cockroaches: švaba (*Blatta tedesc(h)a*)[6] and žohar (*Blatta orientalis*) (Lang 1992 [1915]: 50–51) (see Fig. 1). This very short record shows that Lang distinguishes the švaba and the cockroach, names which in Croatian and Serbian languages actually denote the same insect (Serbian *bubašvaba*, Croatian *žohar*). Furthermore, in the chapter titled "Nature" of the same monograph, Milan Lang writes about *animals* and *insects* separately. He introduces a separate subchapter with a speciesist relationship (speciesism – discrimination based on species membership) with insects, titled "Extermination of Animals and Vermin", detailing the ways cockroaches are killed (exterminated). He instructs the reader to pour some old beer into a high bowl and then place sticks or kindling around the edge of the bowl. The cockroaches will smell the beer, enter the bowl, get drunk and will not be able to climb back out. "Some put this mixture inside holes: one-third white flour, one-third powdered sugar, and one-third sodium borate, all well mixed. Of this – they say – all the cockroaches will die" (Lang 1992 [1915]: 178). Thus, when mentioning cockroaches, Lang is referring to the *Oriental* or black cockroach, which is usually said to leave an unpleasant odour on the surfaces on which he or she (I will not use "it", to avoid speciesist language!) moves. Furthermore, in contrast to these two traditional ways of cockroach destruction or *extermination*, today it is generally recommended to spray surfaces with insecticides based on deltamethrin, pyrethrin or fipronil, apply an insecticide gel or place traps with an attractant (cf. Blatta orientalis). However, there are *eco-friendly* alternatives to these dangerous and aggressive insecticides; these practices recommend using peppermint essential oil and vinegar for the removal of spiders and cockroaches, as they cannot stand the smell (Kos 2016).



SAMOBOR: ŽIVOTINJE. 51

bìlica (Locusta viridissima), *klop* (Ixodes ricinus), *komarec* (Culex pipicus), *kojnska muha* (Hippobosca equina), *kosȅc* (Lebellula depressa)[1], *kršel*, *krvava vuš* (Schizoreura lanigera), *kućna baba* (Pentatoma grisca), *metȗl* (uopće svaki), *molci* (Tinea), *mrâvec* (Formica), *muha* (Musca domestica), *obad* (Tabanus bovinus), *osȁ* (Vespa vulgaris), *pâvuk* (Tenegaria domestica)[2], *rogȃč* (Lucanus cervus), *rogȗš* (sićušni kukčić, živi u brašnu i mekinjama, a poslije zalazi i u žito), *stenica* (Acontbia lectularia), *strìžavka* (Fornicula auricularia), *stršen* (Vespa crabro), *svilec* (Bombyx mori; od njega neki goje gusjenice, koje zovu „kukci“), *škorpijon* (Scorpio europaeus), *šoštar* (Cimex ornatus), *španišmuha* (Litta vesicatoria). *švaba* (Blatta tedescha), *tèkuti* (Mallophaga), *vinske mušice* (drže se oko vina i vinskoga tropa), *vrlȅc* (Gryllotalpa vulgaris), *vuš* (Pediculus capitis; od njih su *gnide*), *žižek* (Calandra granaria)[3], *žohar* (Blatta orientalis), *žuti metul* (Rhodoceras rhamni).

Figure 1. *Excerpt from the monograph* Samobor: Narodni život i običaji *(1992 [1915]), written by ethnographer Milan Lang (1863–1953).*

In contrast to folkloric field records, which distinguish between the *švaba* and *žohar* types of cockroaches, some twenty years before Lang's monograph, in his zoological book *Kukci* (Bugs) (1887), biologist Mišo Kišpatić writes about the cockroach or *švaba* (*Blatta*, *Periplaneta orientalis*, *Küchenschabe*, *Schwabe*), offering a speciesist, "scientific" description: "A very disgusting and annoying occupant of our homes" (Kišpatić 1887: 188). He also mentions how to get rid of them, in a similar fashion to Lang, but points out that everything can be resolved in a natural way – it is only necessary to acquire a hedgehog: "The hedgehog is very eager to eat cockroaches so they can help us get rid of the cockroaches in the home" (ibid.: 190). However, unlike Lang, he mentions the difference between the cockroach and the *rus* (lit. "the Russian" (*Blatta germanica*, *Deutsche Schabe*, *Russe*, *Blatta tedesc(h)a*), which he states is the closest relative to the *švaba* (cockroach). He mentions that they are called the *prus (Prussian)* in Russia, as there it is believed that soldiers brought them to Russia from Germany after the Seven Years' War, since they did not exist in Saint Petersburg before that. He continues:

> *In Austria, it is thought that workers from the Russian border carried them into Czech glass plants, from where they expanded into Austria. One way or the other, only the* rus *(Russian) is now widespread throughout the world.* (Kišpatić 1887: 190)

Furthermore, he states in the description that the *rus* is smaller than the cockroach, has a brownish-yellow colour and is exterminated in the same way as the cockroach. In addition, he also mentions a more "humane" way of destroying the *rus*:

> *The* rus *is very sensitive to sudden temperature changes; it is advised to open doors and windows wide during the winter, for it is the way that Czech farmers clean their houses from the* rus*.* (Kišpatić 1887: 191)

In this part of the article, I concentrate on two Slavic (Russian and Croatian) examples, since they are contradictory in their ethics of relationship with cockroaches; while cockroaches, primarily the black ones, were admired in Russian ethno-tradition, considered almost *pets* that bring happiness and prosperity to the household (we could consider them as *pet amulets* of sorts) (cf. Gura 2005), they were treated in Croatian ethno-tradition merely as *pests*, as is also the case today. It is exactly my own enthusiasm about this *animal-friendly* relationship with cockroaches in Russian ethno-tradition that served as one of the incentives for writing this article, as it is evident that the aforementioned relationship also testifies to the yearning of humans to unify with nature, which is even older than the human tradition of animal rights and the foundations of environmentalism (Sax 2007: 46).

CONTEMPORARY ANIMAL RIGHTS RESEARCH: COCKROACHES FROM PESTS TO PETS

As I have stressed in the introduction, in the second part of the article I supplement the aforementioned folkloristic and ethnological perspective (zoofolkloristics and ethnozoology) with contemporary animal studies and critical animal studies perspective. Here, I address the aggressive use of insecticides and exterminators of cockroaches of today, as well as the advertising strategies that contain militant performatives of killing (e.g. the *Raid* commercial), by referring to Slovenian critical animal theoretician Branislava Vičar (forthcoming) who discusses the speciesist representation of cockroaches and other insects in commercials. She provides an example of an advertisement for the *Raid* insect repellent used to kill insects that are commonly considered parasites and pests in speciesist culture. Speciesist verbs used for cockroaches – *get rid of*, *exterminate*, *kill*, *destroy* – can also be found in the folkloristic scope, as we have also seen, for example, in Lang's notes on the safest ways *to get rid of* cockroaches. The author also observes that, in their earliest days, insecticide ads were twice as long as modern advertisements. As an example, Vičar says that the original ad for *Raid* was one minute long, while a current *Raid Television Commercial* is only 29 seconds long. She also points out that modern advertisements consist of several structural units because they are characterised by short, rapidly changing shots. She interprets such a commercial according to the animal rights research: the first scene depicts various species of insects in fear of *Raid*. The author transcribes all five shots from the first scene and I describe three of them here:

> First shot. *Long shot of a net on a window. Gradual close-up of a fly that enters through a hole in the net. The fly yells.*
> Fly: "RAAAIIID is here!!!"
> Scene 2. *Close-up of an overflowing sugar bowl, followed by a medium shot of ants jumping out of the sugar, shouting and placing their drawn-on "human" hands on their heads. The background is empty. The horizontal lines indicate that it is a wall.*
> Ant: "RAAAIIID!!!"
> Fifth shot. *Close-up of a bug, yelling and running away in fear.*
> Cockroach: "RAAAIIID!!!"
> …
> *A huge cloud of insecticide appears, taking up the entire space, with the following writing on it: "ALL TYPES OF INSECTS FROM THE INSIDE".*
> [Sound of spray.]

> Narrator's voice: Yes, *Raid* beats flies, mosquitoes, cockroaches, ants – all types of insects from the inside. (Vičar forthcoming)[7]

It is equally noticeable that older advertisements use the speciesist verb *to kill*, while more recent advertisements tone down the speciesist, "terminator-like" attitude towards cockroaches by using a lighter version – the verb *to beat*. Nevertheless, it demonstrates our speciesist attitude towards insects equally well or, as theoretician of animal rights Joan Dunayer states, it demonstrates a discriminatory practice, "a failure, in attitude or practice, to accord any non-human being equal consideration and respect" (Dunayer 2004: 1–5).

Looking at the ways in which insecticides are used against cockroaches (and other insects that modern civilisation regards as pests), we can conclude that in the past, at least some cultures – as demonstrated by the Russian ethno-tradition – were far more considerate towards cockroaches. On the other hand, cockroaches in Croatian folk tradition were considered to be pests in the same way they are today, but they were still not killed with as violent methods as they are today, when only aggressive insecticides are applied. In Czech folk tradition, for example, it was advised to open the windows to get rid of cockroaches during winter months (Kišpatić 1887: 190). In Croatian folk tradition one could use a hedgehog or a cat to remove the cockroaches from the food chain. Using a hedgehog *to get rid* of cockroaches implies considering the latter in the context of the circle of life: hedgehog (predator) – cockroach (victim), whereas the cockroach will perform the role of the predator in relation to some other living beings, which is, in fact, in line with the discursive nature of the circle of life. However, it can be noticed that some exterminators do not use militant means for destroying cockroaches. For instance, Chicago exterminator Hugo Hartnack, "author of a leading pest-control guide, recommended simple homemade and commercial cockroach traps that required no poison. Popular trap designs involved ramps leading into a jar or coffee can baited with such favorite roach foods as stale beer. More important, Hartnack advised caulking cracks and crevices to eliminate household harborages, and sanitation to deprive roaches of food. The parts of his guidebook dedicated to roaches suggest chemical remedies only as 'very successful emergency measures,' in contrast with his strenuous promotion of hydrocyanic acid gas (HCN) for bedbugs" (Biehler 2013: 88).

Furthermore, the starting point for contemporary cockroach extermination is mostly the *hygienic niche*, or what anthropologist Mary Douglas (1984 [1966]) in her structuralist interpretations terms the *purity-danger* dichotomy; however, it is interesting to note that there is no mention of cockroaches in this dichotomy. That is, black cockroaches are known to roam around the sewage system and transport microbes to surfaces for food or to food on their feet. They

are known to carry more than thirty sorts of bacteria and numerous causes of disease (cf. Crni žohar).

The aforementioned militant cockroach extermination demonstrates that, as far as Western culture is concerned, cockroaches are today mostly detested.[8] This derogative attitude is clearly a result of urbanization of the post-industrial revolution and a detachment from the context of agriculture – the introduction of new cultural norms of hygiene/purity by which, to use Mary Douglas' *purity–danger* dichotomy, anything that is connected to creeping is placed in the context of a possible danger to the human species. In European history, the changes in hygienic habits and grooming were not prompted by a desire for cleanliness but by their attractiveness and trendiness. The nineteenth century is cited as the century of great changes in the matters of hygiene. At the time, very few people had a bathroom in today's sense of the word; the toilet was usually located separately, while up until the mid-twentieth century bathing was performed in a heated room (the kitchen or, more commonly, the bedroom, using a trough and a wash basin), often in the presence of other people (the servant or relatives) (cf. Sladetić 2016: 131; Leismann & Padberg 2010: 25).

Boria Sax stated that "[o]ur understanding of animals is so intimately bound up with our own self-concepts as human beings, we can hardly hope to separate the two completely. Representations of animals have always contained projections of our deepest hopes, fears and aspirations" (Sax 1990: 146). Within human *civilisation*, cockroaches have therefore found themselves on the receiving end of our hatred.

The cockroaches' positive aspects – presented, for example, at the 2018 exhibition under the heading *Žohari – svijet koji ostaje* (Cockroaches – A World That Remains), the first exhibition on cockroaches in Croatia held at the Croatian Natural History Museum (see Fig. 2) – are rarely introduced. The exhibition opened with a zoo-ethical question: Is it really true that we cannot find anything nice to say about cockroaches, even though not a single attack of a cockroach on a human has ever been recorded? In fact, out of over 4,000 species that enter our households, only 1 percent of cockroach species cause fear and loathing in humans. The exhibition documented actual contemporary tendencies to turn cockroaches from pests into pets, as is particularly illustrated by the giant Madagascar hissing cockroaches (*Gromphardorhina portentosa*) which, as proven by their name, produce peculiar hissing sounds, due to which they are interesting to children. Due to their ability to hiss, their size and lack of odour, they began to be kept as pets. This testifies to the rise of the culture of *petishism* (culture of pet-keeping), even of the insects, as in the case of Madagascar cockroaches, which do not live in houses, flats and other housing units, but rather in the forests, usually hiding underneath fallen leaves, rotten branches and logs.[9]

The speciesist attitude towards cockroaches can also be seen in children's illustrated books, in which they are presented mostly as pests.[10] It is true that cockroaches are usually described in illustrated books as one of the oldest and most successful living creatures on Earth; however, the rest of their description is given along the lines of speciesist definitions of so-called pests. In short, when educating children about insects, almost nothing has changed in the modern world. In 1897, the Croatian magazine *Smilje* offered an educational article for children on how to kill bugs considerately because they are considered pests:

> *In many countries, people are rewarded for exterminating them. Therefore, children, you too should crush the pestilent insects, but in doing so you must not torture them, but rather give them to a pig to eat or drown them in hot water.* (Smilje 1897 as cited in Batinić 2013: 209)

While in the nineteenth century the children were taught to kill beetles, today, in this particular case, the children are taught how to use *Raid* against insects, that is, the so-called pests.

Figure 2. *Poster for the exhibition* Žohari – svijet koji ostaje *(Cockroaches – A World That Remains), Croatian Natural History Museum, 2018.*

A recent case of our speciesist attitude towards cockroaches is demonstrated in the science education kit produced by Backyard Brains (Fig. 3), which lets children implant electrodes into a cockroach's brain and then control the beetle with a smartphone app. The organisation People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) protested against these mind-controlled Robocop Roach insects, but Greg Gage, co-founder of Backyard Brains, responded to the accusations with a speciesist attitude: "These are cockroaches that people would easily kill in their apartments" (The RoboRoach Bundle; Bittel 2013).

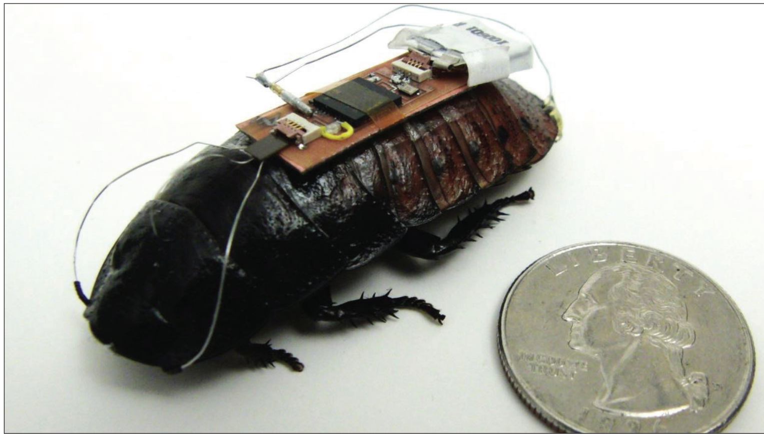


***Figure 3**. Robocop Roach: cyborg cockroach with a remote control "backpack" (Sandle 2013).*[11]

COCKROACHES IN VISUAL ART PRACTICE: FROM SYMBOLISATION TO EXPLOITATION

I would like to conclude with another example from visual animal studies – which is a segment of animal studies – presenting conflicting notions between ethics and aesthetics. I present the use of cockroaches in contemporary art practice by citing the example of Catherine Chalmers, a photographer who uses cockroaches in her photographs and videos. The artist kills cockroaches in the name of art for the purposes of some of her works (video work *Execution*, part of the *American Cockroach* video series),[12] albeit simultaneously demonstrating that even the "lowly" cockroach can be the subject of so-called high art. In her works *Crawl Space*[13] and *American Cockroach*[14], she demonstrates how cockroaches find their natural habitat in domestic spaces – under the sink, in ventilation ducts, in door and window frames, between the walls of bathrooms,

which provide them with shelter when searching for food. The American cockroach is very similar to its human hosts because, just like humans, he or she is an omnivore and lives with us in our habitats today just as we used to live in caves with so-called wild animals. In short, the artist demonstrates how the humble cockroach can be the subject of art. Catherine Chalmers' work also includes a critique of American racist history, since the American cockroach came to North America as an immigrant, on ships from Western Africa during the early days of the slave trade.

In her videos *Crawl Space* and *American Cockroach* (Fig. 4), Chalmers shows cockroaches in their domesticated environment, i.e., human habitats; however, in her video *Safari*[15] she releases cockroaches into the wild, where they encounter animals they would normally never encounter in their own habitat, i.e., human homes (cf. Baker 2013: 68). The artist's work also raises the question of artistic freedom since she also kills them for the sake of her art. Thus, we arrive at a parallel between Kafka's huge insect Gregor Samsa and Chalmers' cockroaches, in which the cockroach is transformed from symbolic matter into an object of exploitation (cf. Copeland 2003: 164), or in this case artistic exploitation since, as Chalmers demonstrates, he or she can be killed in the name of art.[16] Firstly, let us note her symbolic interpretation of cockroaches:

> *Insects are a window into the unimaginable. Their biology and behaviours are routinely bizarre and enigmatic to us – they are refreshingly outside the human perspective. I think that our experience can be enhanced by an attempt to understand and give meaning to other life forms. Yet, is it possible that a human-centric viewpoint is setting the stage for an impoverished environment?* (Chalmers 2004)

On the other hand, however, we also see her exploitative use of cockroaches; it is truly horrifying to watch the ways in which the artist is prepared to murder cockroaches for her photographs and videos.

> *While making this video, Ms. Chalmers said, she got very upset, not because of the Holocaust parallel, but because she thought she had actually put the roaches through an agonising death. Previously she had always knocked her roaches out by chilling them. But Betty Faber, an entomologist, told her to try carbon dioxide. So she put the roaches in the chamber and with a pipe pumped in the gas from dry ice, which is frozen carbon dioxide. The roaches went into 'dramatic convulsions', she said. 'They tossed themselves all over the place, threw themselves against the walls. Then they all fell on their backs. She thought: 'I can't show this. It's visually too disturbing.' But then, as the videotape kept rolling and the dry ice cleared, the cockroaches rose from the dead. Their legs started kicking. 'The most beautiful part is their getting up,' Ms. Chalmers said.*

> *She decided to show the uncut video from this point on. It shows the cockroaches as survivors. 'I wanted to show their character,' Ms. Chalmers says. 'They keep coming back.'* (Boxer 2003)

In this sense, Chalmers' thoughts on cockroaches are contradictory – they are ethically dichotomous, ranging from symbolisation to exploitation.

In the book *Artist/Animal* (2013), his third work in the field that could be termed visual animal studies (visual artist – animal studies), Steve Baker introduces and zoo-ethically *defends* the artists who kill animals in the name of art. It can be assumed that Steve Baker, as an art historian, does not condemn such artwork and believes that he can *learn* something from it regarding the exploitative and symbolic relationship between humans and nonhumans. To quote Baker himself, in the context of his interpretation of *Rat Piece* (1976), a performance by Kim Jones in which the artist set on fire several rats, and *Helena* (2000), an installation by Marco Evaristti:

> *But simply to condemn such works is to learn nothing from them. It is to undermine the very notion of art, to prefer compliance to creativity, for fear that animal abusers might get away with mischievously 'excusing their misdeeds as instances of performance art'.* (Baker 2013: 17)

In the aforementioned book, Baker thus includes three artists who killed animals, caused the animals' deaths during the project itself, or used previously killed animals. They are Catherine Chalmers, who killed cockroaches, Eduardo Kac and his genetically modified rabbit Alba (the project ended with her death in a French laboratory), and artist Catherine Bell who, in her performance *Felt is the Past Tense of Feel* (2006), ate raw squids (pre-bought), with which – or, more specifically, with whose black ink – she purged the trauma caused by losing her father to cancer.

As an art historian, Steve Baker does not separate ethics from aesthetics. He does not want to be "an idiot, a voyeur, or a moralist", to paraphrase the first page of the introduction to his book *Artist/Animal* (2013) which is, in turn, a paraphrase of Marco Evaristti's statement (Baker 2013: 1), wherein he sought to ethically and aesthetically defend his installation *Helena*, during which one goldfish had been killed (cf. Baker 2013: 1; Marjanić 2017b). Baker's most pertinent zoo-ethical questions are the following: 'Can a contemporary artist be trusted with animals, living, or dead? Can they be trusted to act responsibly, ethically, when their work engages with questions of animal life?' (Baker 2013: 1)

Specifically, while the previous example of visual animal studies, the *Raid* commercial, demonstrated our commonplace, everyday relationship towards cockroaches as pests, the artwork of Catherine Chalmers – which I list as an example of artistic visual animal studies – addresses the question of ethics and aesthetics towards the aforementioned insects since the artist treats them as

aesthetic objects (when she kills them for some of her works) on the one hand, and as aesthetic symbols (when she uses them to critically consider America's racist past). It is exactly the dimension of treating them as aesthetic objects that the artist uses to also address the ethical question of using animals in the name of art or, in this case, killing them in the name of art, which is not an unfamiliar practice in postmodern art, as Steve Baker systematically documented in his books (2000, 2013).

Figure 4. *Catherine Chalmers: Drinking, C-print, 60" x 40", from the series* American Cockroach *(2005). Source: https://www.catherinechalmers.com/residents-1, last accessed on 7 October 2019.*

TOWARDS... NOTHING

Catherine Chalmers' killing of cockroaches in the name of art can be compared to the aforementioned cyborg-cockroaches and the justification given by the company that designed the idea. Such scientific or pragmatic reasoning, as well

as artistic or aesthetic reasoning for using animals in the name of science/art is reminiscent of the zoo-metaphors incorporated in racism; briefly put, they testify of the parallelism between racism and speciesism, in a racist manner in which we used to treat slaves, and in a speciesist manner (speciesism – discrimination based on species membership) in which we treat animals even today. Hence, Charles Patterson (2002) noted that, during World War II, the Japanese were vilified as "animals, reptiles, or insects (monkeys, baboons, gorillas, dogs, mice and rats, vipers and rattlesnakes, cockroaches, vermin – or, more indirectly, 'the Japanese herd' and the like)", as John Dower wrote (as cited in Patterson 2002: 39). This vilification campaign paved the way for a "war without mercy" in the Pacific, which culminated in the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (ibid.). Stories of hate and racist animal metaphors go even further:

> *During the Gulf War in 1991, American pilots described killing retreating Iraqi soldiers as a 'turkey shoot' and called civilians who ran for cover 'cockroaches'. As always in wartime, animal images dehumanise the enemy and facilitate his destruction.* (Patterson 2002: 43)

Prompted by these examples of killing animals in the name of art, and with respect to the often emphasised and ubiquitously pronounced aesthetic motto of the freedom of artistic creativity, the following question imposes itself: is it, after all, senseless to pursue ethical accountability of the artists of such works of art? Especially, as animal rights activist Alf Waibel reminds us with regard to animal victims still being exploited by Hermann Nitsch in his theatre company, the Orgies Mysteries Theatre (Das Orgien Mysterien Theater): '… the freedom of artistic expression is in our constitution, while the rights of animals and the laws protecting them from suffering and death, are not' (Waibel 1998).

And finally, is it, after all, not hypocritical to single out such artistic acts created on the basis of slaughtered animals, while simultaneously being surrounded by animal Holocaust on a daily basis? In order to avoid being criticised for equalising the Holocaust committed against the Jewish people and the Holocaust against animals, it should be stressed that the creators of this analogy – including, for example, Theodor W. Adorno (cf. Adorno et al. 1950), Isaac B. Singer (cf. Singer & Burgin 1985), John Maxwell Coetzee (1999), Peter Singer (1990 [1975]) and Charles Patterson (2002), as well as a host of other thinkers and animal rights activists – did not equalise the victims but rather signalled the same type of crime. Marjorie Garber reflects on the aforementioned parallelism as a challenge to humanism, noting that the Holocaust is to many an event beyond analogy, and also addresses the question whether zoo-metaphors (for example, the widely-used *scapegoat*, or *donkey's years*, *close to the bone*, *stew in one's own juice*, *prick up one's ears*, *easy to digest*, *baby potatoes*) and

zoo-parables are also unfair: “Viewed in literary terms, this is the challenge to humanism” (cf. Coetzee 2004: 90).

It would seem that those facts – freedom of artistic creativity and the daily Holocaust to which we subject animals – do not make any demand for respecting animal rights in performance arts and art in general, but rather are merely an expression of utopian *ludism*. It is quite obvious that the ethics of our relationship with animals is marked by dystopia and ethical schizophrenia (see, e.g., Christa Blanke as cited in Patterson 2002: 222–229) and Gary L. Francione (2002)). Unfortunately, we are losing the web of life,[17] a part of which is also the cockroaches. I conclude by readdressing the motto-question of this article – *Is there really nothing nice to be said about cockroaches?* – which was also posed by the aforementioned exhibition that documented their path from pests to pets, with both terms being differently anthropocentric, in short – speciesist.

Translated by Andrea Rožić, Ivana Bodul, Maja Boban, Mirta Jurilj

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NOTES

[1] Throughout the article I use the he/she pronoun for the animals as I seek to avoid using speciesist language, in the sense of the critique of this language according to feminist and animal rights theoretician Joan Dunayer or, to quote Dunayer herself: ‘According to current scientific knowledge, every animal is male, female, or hermaphrodite, so I use *he, she*, or *she/he* (alternatively *he/she*) for any specific nonhuman individual’ (Dunayer 2004: XII).

[2] Mark L. Winston remarks that insecticides today still bear military names, such as Ambush or Sidekick (Winston 1997: 47).

[3] The Institute for Critical Animal Studies is the first interdisciplinary scholarly centre of higher education dedicated to establishing and expanding the field of critical animal studies.

[4] As far as the systematic research of the role of cockroaches in Slavic traditions is concerned, only Aleksandar Gura conducted systematic research of folklore records. For example, the role of cockroaches cannot be found in Tihomir Đorđević’s work titled *Priroda u verovanju i predanju našega naroda* (Nature in the Faith and Legends of our People), which is the first systematic two-volume book on the role of animals in South-Slavic ethno-traditions.

[5] The monograph was first published as part of the edition *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena* (Collected Papers on the Folk Life and Customs of the Southern Slavs), in 1911–1914, and reprinted in 1992 and 2009.

[6] *Blattella germanica* or *bubašvaba*, a species of non-flying cockroach. The word *bubašvaba* probably comes from the "formal" name of this insect: *Blattella germanica* – German cockroach. It is known that if just one female German cockroach finds her way into a home, she can easily produce an army of hundreds of thousands within a year (Grush 2016).

[7] To sum up, Branislava Vičar's article "The Discursive Construction of Insects in TV Advertisements: Multimodal Analysis" reveals that 'the insecticide adverts construct two dominant representations of insects: insects as a nuisance and insects as a threat or danger. The comparison of speciesist rhetoric in the last fifty years has shown that, with the development of corporate capitalism, depictions of insects have become increasingly aggressive and frightening, while the inscribing of negative anthropomorphic constructs has increased; indeed, the aim of constructing this fear of insects and persuading the audience of their potential danger is to increase the sales of insecticides and consequently to increase corporate production' (Vičar 2018). Cf. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUgUz3sVLGE (Raid Roach Foam: hiding roaches, 1986); https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZPuxcLpxyU (Raid MAX Plus Egg Stoppers Roach Bait, 2016), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRl85gdLGy8 (United States – Raid® How To Beat Roaches, 2017), all last accessed on 7 October 2019.

[8] In the European Union, insects fall into the category of novel food, which stands for food that had not been consumed to a significant degree by humans in the EU before 15 May 1997 (see Regulation (EC) No. 258/97 on novel foods and novel food ingredients, available at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31997R0258&from=EN, last accessed on 7 October 2019) (cf. Rimac Brnčić & Badanjak Sabolović).

[9] Cf. https://www.zastitabilja.eu/madagaskarski-siktajuci-zohar-gromphardorhina-portentosa/, last accessed on 7 October 2019.

[10] The French animated comedy series *Oggy and the Cockroaches* (*Oggy et les Cafards*), aired from 1998, centres on a blue cat Oggy who would prefer to spend his days contentedly watching television and eating – if not for the three roaches in the household: Joey, Dee Dee, and Marky, all named after members of the punk band Ramones (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oggy_and_the_Cockroaches, last accessed on 7 October 2019). I think that this animated comedy series at a certain level produces some more humane attitudes towards cockroaches. Namely, even if the cockroaches are presented as mean and intrusive, they nevertheless prevent Oggy from surrendering himself to the life of a lazy household cat.

[11] Cf. Sandle 2013. Furthermore, there are prognoses that, in the future, humans will use cockroach milk, which is four times more nutritious than cow's milk and could become crucial in feeding our ever-expanding population. It is well-known that the team from the Institute of Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine in India "has sequenced a protein crystal from the gut of *Diploptera punctata* (Pacific Beetle Cockroach), the only known cockroach to give birth to live young". On the other hand, one could sarcastically add that cockroach milk will be the superfood of the future because cockroaches will remain in this world even after the human race dies out following the potential – and entirely realistic, according to certain political circles – scenario of nuclear war (cf. Ratner 2016).

[12] In her video work *Gas Chamber*, the artist stated that no roaches had been harmed in the making of said work (cf. https://vimeo.com/25535616, last accessed on 7 October 2019).

[13] See https://www.catherinechalmers.com/crawl-space-video, last accessed on 7 October 2019.

[14] See https://www.catherinechalmers.com/american-cockroach-interview, last accessed on 16 October 2019.

[15] See https://vimeo.com/25525065, last accessed on 16 October 2019.

[16] Cf. https://www.catherinechalmers.com/american-cockroach-interview, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgiHXTrqRT8 (Catherine Chalmers, *Collaborating with insects,* last accessed on 16 October 2019).

[17] Cf. https://unearthed.greenpeace.org/2019/05/06/nature-crisis-biodiversity-dangerous-climate-change-extinction/, last accessed on 7 October 2019.

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LISTENING TO THE ELDER BROTHERS: ANIMALS, AGENTS, AND POSTHUMANISM IN NATIVE VERSUS NON-NATIVE AMERICAN MYTHS AND WORLDVIEWS

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Abstract: Contrasting with much of Western discourse, Native American myths frequently ascribe world-creating deeds to non-human animals. Further, Native American stories display a remarkable slippage between the worlds of the human and non-human animals, a slippage that continues into worldview, rituals, and everyday life. Using these stories as a starting point, this article seeks to connect the current theoretical movements in posthumanism with those in mythology, in line with Graham Harvey's call for "academic animism", a re-appraisal of the role of non-human agency and culture.

New developments in animal studies have revolutionized the way scholars perceive of non-hominid mental lives and abilities, which has led to challenges to traditional Western beliefs and practices. Many of these new concepts would be old news to Native Americans, whose traditions fundamentally and categorically posit radically different relationships than the non-native. In short, this paper will present a mytho-evolutionary blueprint for broadening our understanding of culture and narrative far beyond the human, yet including the human as well, as part and parcel of cultural life on earth.

Keywords: decolonial, mythology, Native American, posthumanism

The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness

On this day of July 7, 2012, a prominent international group of cognitive neuroscientists, neuropharmacologists, neurophysiologists, neuroanatomists and computational neuroscientists gathered at The University of Cambridge to reassess the neurobiological substrates of conscious experience and related behaviors in human and non-human animals. While comparative research on this topic is naturally hampered by the inability of non-human animals, and often humans, to clearly and

readily communicate about their internal states, the following observations can be stated unequivocally:

… the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates. (Declaration 2012)

THE CONSCIOUS WORLD

The beginning of the new millennium witnessed a dramatic growth in scientific knowledge of non-human mental worlds and abilities. Dolphins have individual names for themselves, expressed in whistles (King & Janik 2013). Hyraxes speak different socially-learned languages (Kershenbaum et al. 2012) Octopi are playful, intelligent creatures who learn quickly from one another (Kuba et al. 2006). Fish use tools (Brown 2012; Bernardi 2012). Such scientific discoveries not only overturn years of scientific thought, but also are in direct contradiction to much of the religious and lay discourse in the Western world regarding "humans versus other life" as well.

Not only must we recognize that animals are "a lot like us", sharing fundamental characteristics heretofore unrecognized, but we must also begin to question the very nature of "us". Such powerful questions tug at accepted definitions of essential words – person, human, animal – while troubling widely accepted ideologies, traditions, language, and beliefs. In animal studies, specialists are now having to confront the study of animal culture, animal communications, and animal mentalities, all of which lead towards the discussion of personhood beyond the human.

In her comprehensive overview of the "animal turn" in recent scholarly discourse, Pauliina Rautio (2013) praises the utility of concept of interspecies articulation, where the focus becomes the connections between the human and non-human, rather than focusing on merely our own species, or on a divide.

From the human-oriented disciplines, the animal turn has been a tectonic shift: "humanities" takes the human as a starting and ending point – if there is anything other, our "animal nature", it is merely cast as a shadow, perhaps as a fault to be overcome. As Tonutti wrote, "we can say that humanism turned its back no nature; it assumed *humanitas* as a subject of speculation and totally dismissed humanity's natural dimension" (Tonutti 2011: 187). The binary divide between the humanities and natural sciences helps reinforce the seemingly

intrinsic boundaries between human and animal, yet as these boundaries have proven more fictions than real, the implications have destabilized the underlying organizing principals of "nature versus nurture", or "wild versus cultured". "Cultural studies" is in a similar bind. Culture has long been presumed to be an entirely human affair. Anthropologist Ruth Benedict wrote that "culture is the sociological term for learned behavior …. The degree to which human achievements are dependent on this kind of learned behavior is man's great claim to superiority over all the rest of creation; he has been properly called 'the culture-bearing animal'" (1942: 138). Yet now we know most certainly that culture is not the sole province of humans.

Rethinking these basic definitions and their implications forms the backbone of posthumanism. Posthumanism is the general intellectual movement to re-examine what it is to be "human", acknowledging the cultural bases of such ontology. Donna Haraway's canonical works *A Manifesto for Cyborgs* (2001) and *When Species Meet* (2007) illustrate the outlines of posthumanist inquiry: work on cyborg identity, artificial intelligence, and, increasingly, animal studies. Within posthuman animal studies, common themes include the human versus the animal; animal minds and awarenesses; domestic versus wild; and the use of animals for human cultural meanings (in such themes as sexuality, race, social inequality, gender, etc.).

Although anthropology is the "study of humankind" by definition, anthropology has increasingly become involved with posthuman questions, particularly in a considered reaction to indigenous accounts and worldviews. An entire 2006 issue of *Ethnos* focuses anthropological attention into this area. For more on the idea of "multispecies ethnography" and the implications of posthumanism and the animal turn in anthropology, one could see particularly Eben Kirksey and Steffan Helmreich's *The Emergence of Multispecies Ethnography* (2010), discussing the *Cultural Anthropology* special issue dedicated to this topic, as well as Alan Smart's *Critical Perspectives on Multi Species Ethnography* (2014), similarly. An important contribution to this discourse is also Tim Ingold's *Anthropology Beyond Humanity* (2013).

It is interesting (and slightly ironic) that most of these works deal with animism as human constructions – that is, taking humans as the appropriate site of attention when discussing animism. This may be beginning to change: for example, Colin Scott's *Spirit and Practical Knowledge in the Person of the Bear among Wemindji Cree Hunters* (2006), takes animism as centered on an essential ontology which allows for non-human agency and personhood – an epistemic de-centering of the agency away from the human, and towards non-human personhood: in a word, animism. Here, taking his cue from his Cree

informants, he notes that such a proposition of animal souls allows for non-human agency, even within animism itself. Or, one might say, non-hominids contribute to animism, too. Thus, in his view, animism can be seen as more than a spiritual or religious outlook: instead it is an ontological (and, following this, epistemological) system of understanding the world.

A concurring recent anthropological study is Eduardo Kohn's *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human* (2013). Here, too, the author becomes interested in ontologies, and here too he is interested in Native (South) American ideas of the thinking forests, plants, and animals. According to him, for the Runa, with whom he studies, animism is "grounded in an ontological fact: there exist other kinds of thinking selves beyond the human" (Kohn 2013: 94).

Ontology has deep links with mythology, which is a branch of folklore, yet the discipline of folklore has remained exclusively focused on the human, even while it is increasingly obvious that many of its core subjects (tradition, games, music) are widely shared throughout the animal kingdom. Jay Mechling (1989) first demonstrated the category of inter-special traditions, showing that a "folk group" is not limited to humans. Combining these insights with those afforded by animal studies, and by Scott's view of animism as ontology, we are now in a better position to examine core difference in Native American mythology (enmeshed in animist ontologies), with those of non-Native, Western mythologies, based instead on an anthropocentric ontology. This article seeks to extend posthumanist and postcolonial perspectives utilizing comparative mythologies in investigating our relationship with the non-human world, our own categorical ontology.

There are some inherent difficulties in large-scale comparative mythological studies and associated worldviews. Perhaps the most pronounced is the reluctance of many scholars to admit that there *are* widespread mythologies and associated worldviews: universalists such as Carl G. Jung and Joseph Campbell (now largely discredited from scholarship; see, e.g., Dundes 2005), argued for universal mythologies, held together by the "collective unconscious". On the other side of the spectrum, anthropologists and ethnologists tended towards site-specific researches and conclusions, and specialists of all sorts focused on cultural minutiae and dense layers of meaning and contestations at the local – even extremely local – levels. Still, mythologists have long been aware that related mythologies do span immense territories, revealing large-scale similarities as well as profound differences in different groups (see, e.g., Dundes 1984, p. 270, where he says: "There is no myth that is universal, no myth which is found among all the peoples of the earth… By the same token, there is no myth that is limited to a single culture"). In this article I compare

the widespread myth associated with Abrahamic traditions, that of the Garden of Eden with its inherently anthropocentric cosmos, with the variety of myths found in Native North America, which tend to feature non-human actors in creating the world. This key conceptual difference in the creation of the world, and of humankind, I argue, grounds resulting key philosophical differences in the role of human versus non-human animals in Native American societies and traditions, contrasted with Abrahamic-inspired ones.

This, then, is a paper juxtaposing Old World and New World systems of thought, as they relate to non-human animals. In doing so, I do not mean to stress a uniformity in either Abrahamic or New World mythologies or philosophies, but rather try to display what I see as a fundamental (as in the structure of the world) disjuncture between the two, a post-colonial and post-humanist look at mythologies and worldviews. Such an investigation is not merely an academic exercise, but, hopefully, one that could lead to a better understanding of current scientific and lay discourse, and to a better understanding of the contours of the wider topic at hand: how to envision our relationship with other species.

This comparative view of the Native American mythology and worldviews with that of Euro-American may provide valuable insights into the benefits of postcolonial theory, being able to learn anew from previously-discounted cultural discourses of knowledge. By nature, such a large comparison will paint the picture in broad strokes, at times doing a disservice to the variety of different traditions in both worlds. Yet I hope that it may still also be able to illuminate critical differences that bear directly and indirectly on the subject of human relations with the natural world.

SACRED NARRATIVES FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

The categorical differences in human/animal ontology in the categorization of the numinous can be traced to the cosmogonic myths, the sacred stories of how the world (and other things) came to be. Myths explain not only the cosmos, but they also explain one's relation *to* the cosmos. Myths answer the big questions: What is life? What is thought? What is my place here in the universe? Myths are a sacred charter for our most everyday and mundane actions, as well as for our ritualized ones.[1]

In studying both Native American mythology and traditional culture, one is inevitably struck by the strong sense of connections to other living things – animals, plants, even stones and forces of nature. This has spectacular local

variations, yet the central theme can be found throughout a wide geographic area, part of the larger animism-shamanism area of the Americas and the circumpolar world (see, e.g., Hultkrantz 1991; Hoppál 1987; Brightman & Grotti & Ulturgasheva 2012). Animals play active roles in nearly all genres of Native American folklore, from myths and legends to dances and names (see, e.g., Harrod 2000). If I were asked to propose the single most striking difference between Native American cultures and those of Western societies, my answer would have to be in this regard. Although people might feel uncomfortable with widespread comparisons, there is no escaping the wide gulf between how Western and Native American societies portray their kinship with animals. While this emphasis on humans' relatedness (in terms of kinship, but also in terms of ethics, spirituality, and, ultimately, ontology) with other material (especially living) forms can be seen throughout Native American culture (from costumes to art, to song, to dance, and so on), we can find a particular saliency and focus on the core of such ontologies in Native American myths. In nearly all of these, the world, and/or humans, are created by divinities that are explicitly non-hominid.

As Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz (1984: 3) put it, the stories of "human creation and the bringing of culture reflect in myriad ways a common belief that people are living part of a natural world, brother and sister to the grain and the trees, the buffalo and the bear". While a few major macrotypes have been suggested by Rooth (1984 [1957]), including several found elsewhere in the world, a closer inspection reveals a parade of characters that differ from place to place, yet all inhabiting a similar milieu, a world just prior to ours in which animals regularly talked and acted like people. Animals often turn into people, and vice versa, so it is often vague if it is people or animals being discussed. The transformations are not an aberration, but rather precisely the point. "Blood Clot Man" is sometimes taken as the story of the first man, yet among some he is created by Rabbit (White River Sioux, Erdoes & Ortiz 1984: 5), and among other by Buffalo (Southern Ute, ibid.: 8). Other Sioux stories claim that the Sioux are descended from Eagle (ibid.: 94), while the Modoc claim Bear as humankind's progenitor (ibid.: 85). White Buffalo Woman (ibid.: 47) is a "messiah" figure who brings culture and civilization to many of the tribes of the great plains: she regularly transforms between Buffalo and woman. "Salmon Boy" among the Haida and many others of the Pacific Coast brings the knowledge of how to treat salmon with respect due to time spent as a salmon (e.g. Gunther 1926), this story setting the stage for many of the most important ceremonies, the World Renewal Ceremony. Among many groups, Grandmother Spider wove together our world (e.g. Erdoes & Ortiz 1984: 154). Not only animals, but also plants and other natural forces were often included: for example, "Corn Mother"

is the main creative deity for many groups (e.g. the Penobscot; ibid.: 11) and others, or "Stone Boy" (ibid.: 15) who was created from stones.

The macrotype myth, the "earth-diver", is one of the more widespread creation myths in North America, and frequently features aquatic animals such as ducks (Erdoes & Ortiz 1984: 89) or muskrats. The world was all water, until the animal dives down to bring up earth. In the crow story "Old Man Coyote Makes the World" (ibid.: 88) the earth is created by earth-diving ducks, yet it is Coyote who stars in the story, creating much of the stuff of the earth, including people. Coyote in this story also created music, and song. Coyote, and his allomotif in the Northwest Raven, is frequently the major creator figure, creating light, as in the widespread story of Coyote/Raven Stealing the Sun and the Moon, which often also figures Eagle as Coyote/Raven's adversary in world change and creation (see, e.g., ibid.: 140, 169, 170). Coyote/Raven figure in many of the most essential creation stories, such as the Caddo's version of the origin of death (ibid.: 470)

But Coyote/Raven is no Jehovah – instead of a perfect, omniscient creator, Coyote is a trickster, falling prey to his own base instincts of greed, or lust, often in humorous encounters in the mythic narrative (e.g. Erdoes & Ortiz 1984: 335–336). One is left with the distinct impression that this world, rather than being some clock-like heavenly plan, might instead be a bit of a mistake, a bit of a joke.

In many Native American myths, there is a great deal of slippage between the worlds of men and animals. Animals often act and hold councils, even using canoes or tipis, and frequently turn into people. People, likewise, are often revealed to be animals. Interspecial marriages are common, as are their offspring. In the Dena'ina folklore, the animals are people, too: they call humans the "Campfire People", (e.g. Kalifornsky 1991: 41, 71) like the beavers might be called the "Chewing People", and so on. Thus even the word for "person" reflects this distinction: does personhood only refer to homo sapiens? Western discourse tends to say yes. Linguistically, the Dena'ina myths claim the opposite categorical definition – animals are people, too.

Stemming from such widespread and important myths, non-hominid animals are often acknowledged as "Elder Brothers" or some similar title acknowledging their mythic importance, and their existence prior to humans.[2] Such an outlook reflects an interesting and intriguing spiritual tradition, with ramifications for prevailing notions about the role of animals and other living forms, and our relations to them.

GOD THE FATHER AND THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

These tendencies can be easily contrasted with Abrahamic myth. This is salient especially because the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity are the dominant faiths in over half the human population, and they are the dominant faiths in most of the nations of the world (including the Americas), barring only parts of Asia.

In the myths of the Abrahamic and related faiths, the most common and well-known mythic story is the creation of the cosmos, and the earth, and Man and Woman, as Adam and Eve. It is noticeable that the divine entity appears to resemble a human being, as the bible states that God "created Man in His image" – the implication, and the later iconography, being a male human-looking divinity, who creates the cosmos, the earth, and mankind, as well as rules the cosmos, and the spiritual realm.

One of the most widely known creation stories in the world is the one found in Genesis:

> *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."* (Genesis 1:26, KJV 2004)

In this anthropo- (and andro-)centric tale, a man god rules the universe, and creates mortal man in his image. The only active role of animals in the tale is that of the snake (commonly identified with the Devil/Satan, although the Old Testament does not state this). The snake tricks the pair into eating fruit from the forbidden tree of knowledge, causing their expulsion from Eden by Jehovah. The animal here is clearly the bad guy.[3]

Further, when God banishes Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, he states that the land, the plants, and the non-hominid animals are under their control, saying, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28, KJV 2004).

The overall narratives of Genesis seem to reflect a patrilineal and patriarchal cultural outlook (everything stems from the man, the patriarch). This outlook accorded well to much of the culture in the Near East, North Africa, and Europe – minority religious traditions notwithstanding. It also helped propagate an explanation of the cosmos in very anthropocentric terms: the spiritual real, heaven, is all about *homo sapiens*. The rest of this life stuff is ours to do with as we please, without any spiritual significance in the grander scheme of things.

People are numinous, other life is mundane. In the Abrahamic mythic traditions, the universe is created and controlled by a human-looking male figure ("God made man in his image" (Genesis 1:27, KJV 2004)), for the purpose of mankind. The categorical split is obvious: humankind versus everything else. This is not to say that individuals, and folk traditions, may not disagree with this view, but however compelling their personal appeal might be, the official view from the Abrahamic faiths is that only humans are spiritual beings. As Thomas Aquinas expressed in his *Summa Theologica*, "He that kills another's ox, sins, not through killing the ox, but through injuring another man in his property" (II-II, q. 64, a.1), while the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that "Endowed with 'a spiritual and immortal' soul, the human person is 'the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake'. From his conception, he is destined for eternal beatitude" (Article 1. Man: The Image of God).

The story of the Garden of Eden translated well into Christian Europe, where the common iconography of the fig-leafed couple biting into the fruit of knowledge transformed into a delicious red apple, and the snake representing the *Summum Malum*, the sum of all evil. This scene is one of the most widespread of the Abrahamic faiths, and it encapsulates the powerful messages transmitted through such mythic tales. As scholars of myth (e.g. Barthes 1995 [1972], Dundes 1984, Lévi-Strauss 1969, Lincoln 1999, Schrempp 2002) have shown, myths do more than offer fantastic stories; myths organize our basic principles about how we organize our cultural lives. The story of Genesis has been taken as a template for many a marriage, and many personal names in the world are derived from the story of Genesis as well. For many people, the story of Genesis further explains the nature of our relation to other life forms: the relationship has been decreed to be one of dominion.[4]

Since the use of agriculture became widespread, agriculture has remained the dominant way of life for most people on the planet, until very recently. The Garden of Eden seems to reflect this agricultural lifestyle, as God decrees that after banishment, humans are to "till the ground" (Genesis 3:23, KJV 2004), which may have been one reason for its easy widespread acceptance. Unlike in the New World, the Old World civilizations domesticated many species. People increasingly saw themselves as lords and masters of nature; herding cattle, irrigating fields, changing the very landscape itself. Domestic animals were good, and under the command of humans; wild animals tended to be bad, threatening human society. If it was all very hard work, one could take comfort in the thought that this was in line with the cosmos: the sacred myth decreed that toiling the fields was God's command.

Throughout the Middle Ages, this myth provided all the answers needed regarding the beginning of the world: enshrined as one of the most important stories of Christianity, the textual version was held to be literally and factually true, a merging of history and the divine. Stemming from this category of "humans as divine", the relationship between Jesus Christ and humans reflected this model: Christ was seen as a "shepherd" of people. Animals were to people what people were to God. A feudal hierarchy of being was observed, of men as lords and masters of their fields and flocks, while "good servants" of the Lord.[5]

THE "ENLIGHTENED" VIEW OF ANIMALS

Following the Reformation and the decline of feudal Europe came the Enlightenment, and the rise of science-based learning. In challenging faith-based knowledge, the new philosophies sought to extol the role of the individual and rationality. Although this presented a challenge to the church on many fronts, one aspect that proved harmonious was a continuing anthropocentrism.

The single most influential scholar regarding this issue was doubtless Rene Descartes, whose ideas shaped the modern view of man, now with a critical distinction between the mind and the body. Only humans had a mind, in Descartes' view (see Harrison 1992), and this proved humanity's essentialism. Other living things, therefore, had only a body, and no real sense of thought, or even feelings of pain. For Descartes, and for most of science for the next 400 years, animals in this view were seen as completely separated from hominids, not even sharing basic fundamental qualities like thought processes, emotions, memories, etc. They were instead viewed more or less as "fleshy robots", simply displaying responses to stimuli. This widespread notion continues to influence much of Western culture, as is evidenced from the categorical use of "animals" as meaning "non-hominid animals". Much of Western culture still displays widespread rejection of animal thought, language, and culture, although the scientific evidence establishing each of this has been recently increasingly made apparent.[6]

TALKING ANIMALS ARE FOR BABIES

In other European genres, we can notice talking animals especially in the *märchen*, or fairy tales – those traditional narratives told not to discuss true things, but rather for fun and entertainment, and perhaps a bit of pedagogy, and often directed at children. In European traditions, this genre is thickly populated

with talking animals, from the Three Little Pigs (ATU 124) to Chicken Little (ATU 20c). In the celebrated Aarne-Thompson-Uther *Tale Type Index* (Uther 2004) the macro-category of Animal Tales takes up the first 299 numbers, while animals also regularly appear in the other categories, particularly in the Tales of Magic macro-category, numbers 300–749. In this category, predicated on non-belief, domestic animals are often portrayed as good, while wild animals, those outside of human dominion and control, are portrayed as bad, as in the Big Bad Wolf. There is a split between "good" domestic animals, and the "bad" wild animals, especially those that may threaten the agricultural livestock, like the "big, bad wolf".

Western society holds anthropomorphized, talking animals as appropriate for children, as any quick review of children's toys, literature, and fashion apparel makes abundantly clear (see, e.g., Dunn 2011). We may see how the idea of talking animals is held to be fantastic, categorically untrue, and appropriate only for the "innocent" age of childhood. Pioneering child psychologist Piaget (1929) described one of the earliest stages of childhood development as the "animistic stage" of psychological development, a terminology still regularly employed.

By extension, we can note how Westerners have historically associated animism with a "childhood stage" of religious development. Talking animals, Western society says, are for children, and societies who have traditions of them, then, such as the Native Americans, are likewise viewed as children. This move employs a long-held metaphor for Native Americans to be "like children", or in a child-like state of cultural evolution. It was yet one more way for the conquering people to denigrate the culture of the conquered, one more example of colonialism. In a clash between two mythic traditions, the militarily successful society trivializes the others' mythic, sacred traditions.

From the Garden of Eden, through Descartes, and into the trivialization of Native American spiritual traditions, the question of the relation between *homo sapiens* and the other animals has been consistently dismissive, and defensively so, of close links. Indeed, we may note that the science of evolution was noticeably slow to develop in face of an abundance of evidence. It was not until Darwin's *Origin of the Species* (1859) that a compelling argument was made to establish a model of the past not dependent on the Garden of Eden myth. In the United States, most citizens continue to disbelieve science on this topic, in spite of an overall acceptance of science, generally.[7] This rate, unparalleled in the developed world, reflects the high rate of religious belief and practice in the United States. I believe that this extreme obduracy to this one issue can be explained at least in part in terms of the power of sacred stories. Many people do not feel comfortable with the idea that we could be "related" to "animals"; hence, for them, evolution must be false. Even our words themselves contain

this idea: although we know that we are animals, we *never* use the term in this regard (except as an insult).

We are animals, but we will not say it. We were created out of animals, but we do not feel comfortable believing it. This is the continuing power of myth.

THE VIEW FROM TURTLE ISLAND

By contrast, as we have seen, throughout Native American mythology, animals play resplendent roles. Indeed, Native American traditions are wholly consonant with the idea of evolution in the general idea that animals were here before us, and that they created us, or our world, long before we arrived on the scene. Further we may remember that this was true long before Western science believed this to be true. Early on, Western science felt secure proclaiming its superiority over Native viewpoints, all the while being wrong on this important point, until the *Origin of the Species* and the resulting scientific discussion. All the while, there remained, and still remain, many traditions of people learning from animals in Native American discourse, and indeed of animals learning from other animals. There is an intense engagement in the natural world, especially the living world. Animals play central roles in many genres in Native American culture – in stories, dances, clothing, songs, names, and of course the religious observances regarding maintaining the proper relations with the spirit realm, with its many animal denizens. It is difficult to overemphasize the role that animals, in particular, play in Native American cultural traditions (see, e.g., Booth & Jacobs 1990).

At the heart of it all is animism: the generalized outlook that spiritual forces flow through the material world: all life, certainly, but also things not to be classified as living by Western thought, such as glaciers, wind, and stone. Rather than have a centralized church hierarchy to reflect a canonical text, spiritual authority in animism is more commonly located in the natural world, and the individual's abilities to interact with it, including but not limited to the role of the specialists, the shamans.[8]

In animism, animal spirits are often the creators and teachers of mankind. Such animal spirits are rooted in the role of real animals (the eagle, the mouse, the coyote) but also in the heightened spiritual role of teachers and guides to mankind. Nor should contemporary scholars dismiss such beliefs as all extinct or archaic – many Native Americans continue animist spiritual beliefs and practices (see, e.g., Cassady 2008).

In animism, human society is seen as dependent on this spiritual relationship with the natural world. Hence, inter-special communication is not only viewed as a distinct possibility, and reality, but even as a necessity. This is why the animals figure so highly in so many genres, including dances and costumes. From rituals to tales, to even personal and clan names, the importance of inter-special communication resounds loudly throughout Native American culture.

For example, hunting in animism is viewed as an inherently spiritual activity, an interaction between two spiritual, soulful beings, and an exchange of flesh, skin, and sustenance. Following this, when spiritual relations with the animals, and the rest of the natural world are good, then so are the material rewards, in the form of animals giving themselves up to humans. Vice versa, when hunting is bad, this means that spiritual relations are bad as well, and very often the animal spirits may be angry at being disrespected, for example when hunters do not offer them appropriate prayers, thanks, and funerary rites. The imposition of the "disrespectful behavior" of non-native culture is held to have significant environmental consequences. John Iniuq, a Caribou Inuit, stated,

> *Now-days, look around. Animals are insulted. They might go away forever. This can happen. It is not like when I was a child. People don't understand animals any more. People who have to go among animals, out on the land, they still understand*. (quoted in Norman 1990: 144–145)

At times these traditions could be mundane, such as accounts of old people near my home area in rural Alaska (Kenai Peninsula) who learned to communicate with ravens. The ravens would help them hunt (the ravens, after all, being cunning scavengers known to guide hunters to their prey). Other times, the accounts of inter-special communications are more spiritual, and visionary, although there may be no clear line between the two. Samaon Autao, a Cree, put it: "In the old times, people and animals talked with each other, just like I talk with my family every day" (Norman 1990: 143).

Anthropologist Rodney Frey writes how the Coeur d'Alene would describe their relations with the non-human world: "Within this web of kinship relationship, the members share in an *equality* with one another, in what the Coeur d'Alene term *unshat-qn*" (1995: 41). Such equality is expressed especially by respectful speech and behaviors, for example in asking "permission" to harvest plant life, and in using all parts of the animals hunted.

As Howard Harrod (2000: xii) put it: "Oral memories were rich with examples of how animals gave their bodies to the people, often agreeing to become food because they had established kinship relations with humans". In this way, Harrod states, this reciprocal arrangement contrasts with the non-Native, Euro-American utilitarian views of animals.

Folklorist Allice Legat (2012) explains how among the Tlicho Dene, the concept of dè signifies not only the environment itself, but also of being aware of one's place in that environment, an elemental form of knowledge for them. Such a knowledge is both physical and spiritual, and therefore necessitates respect, a recognition of the spirit power of the non-human, the souls of animals.

A general notion of reciprocity is shared by many ecocritics and posthumanists, and echoes Tonutti's (2011) call for "articulation". If we know we share an ontology, in what manner do we re-think our relationship to that ontology? In other words, now that we know animals are much more like us than we ever thought, how do we change other related beliefs, outlooks, and even terminology, regarding other living things? In what ways might we re-imagine or re-categorize our ontological relationship with the non-human world?

CONCLUSIONS

There is an explanatory value to myth: in this sense it is not unlike a folk science. At times myths can be productively consonant to scientific explanations, and at times they may seem in direct contradiction. In the Native American traditions, their mythic stories of animals creating the world of the humans is now scientifically known to be largely correct, and in direct contrast to the competing anthropocentric myths of the Abrahamic faiths. We have also seen that Western science was wrong on this for a long time while the Native Americans were right, yet all the Western science and society denigrated their traditional explanations. This is not to state that Native Americans were Darwinists, or employed his notions of biological evolution, but rather that their ontologies tended to concur with Darwin that we are all, indeed, kin.

We may now speak (as good scientists) of animal cultures – that is, socially learned, not innate, patterns of behavior. Animals have words, in languages. Animals have been demonstrated displaying episodic memories, the distinct memory of time and events, and even planning ahead for future events (see Thompson 2018). Not only are we closely related to animals through our bodies, sharing many of the same genes with wolves and even fish, but even our very humanity – ideas of family, of jealousy, of politics, and fairness – is shared with our Elder Brothers. This is a concept that, although well documented, still sits uncomfortably for many people in Western culture.[9]

We have moved the goalposts many times for "what makes humans special", from Man the Tool User, to Man the Language User or Man the Artist. Certainly, there are many things that stand out about humans: we are indeed

a most remarkable species. Yet, at the same time, we may also notice how much of who we are we find in other species, and how remarkably intelligent (and otherwise gifted!) many other species are as well.

Alongside these scientific advances in our understanding of the remarkable mental worlds of animals has been a general reassessment of the proper moral relations between humanity and other animals. It is unclear what form this will take. There is certainly a radical fringe, some of whom have engaged in violent or other highly controversial actions in the name of animal rights. Yet there is a growing middle ground, as can be witnessed in the increase of animal rights' legislation worldwide. Animal protections of some variety are now standard in the legal systems.

As Donna Haraway (2001: 2271) wrote, "Movements for animal rights are not irrational denials of human uniqueness; they are clear-sighted recognition of connection across the discredited breach of nature and culture". Such "clear-sighted recognition" often finds itself in direct contradiction to prevalent current discourses. In 2013 the "Nonhuman Rights Project" filed writs of habeas corpus on behalf of four captive chimpanzees. Merely a few years ago, such an attempt would be laughable, but now it has garnered serious attention from legal scholars as well as ethicists.

Several concepts now current in popular understandings of the natural world also reflect this new discourse. Global warming has cast into stark light the limits, and dangers, of enforcing man's will on the natural world. The increasing environmental stress on the world system is looking particularly ominous, and we may yet have to pay a horrific price for our anthropocentric ways.

That, in itself, should lead us to enquire into other cultural systems and worldviews, particularly of those sensitively attuned to the natural environment now so severely threatened. Even following the concept of anthropocentric utilitarianism, one could argue that it is in our (human) best interest now to pay attention to the planet (an attitude reflected in the growing "Green Theology" of Abrahamic-based environmental approaches). Yet it may also be worth remembering that it is precisely such a philosophical approach that got us into this environmental mess in the first place.

We now talk in terms of ecosystems, and ecological balances, yet these are terms relatively new to our scientific discourse. These concepts largely do agree with Native American mythic traditions, and we can note once more that Native American traditions were very consonant with these terms, including, of course, earlier times when such ideas were *not* yet formulated in scientific discourse.

This explicit comparison between these two worldviews is not meant to equate folk knowledge with scientific discourse, or to say that folk discourse is "just as good" as scientific discourses. They are, of course, different discourses.

However, mythic themes can influence a society, including that society's scientific discourses. In the past, Abrahamic myths of an anthropocentric universe created hurdles in understanding the natural world, particularly in terms of its overlap with our own. Myths work at creating ontologies, ontologies which are then carried forth in other discourses, including that of science.

I believe science may learn a great deal from examining traditional Native American mythic traditions, not only about the rest of Native American culture, but also of larger questions of our relation to the rest of the natural world. Investigations into mythology allow us not only to see how categorical ontologies influenced Western discourse, but also, more tantalizingly, how they allow us to witness other ontologies – in this case the animist ontologies revealed in Native American mythology and worldview. It is in this context that we may appreciate Graham Harvey's 2006 article "Animals, Animists, and Academics", where he argues for a re-evaluation of the utility of the concept of animism within academic discourse, as well as Scott's (2006) assertion that the animist outlooks of his Cree informants helped provide them with objectively better wildlife data than was available via Western science.

And, if we admit that the Native American traditions were right about such major issues regarding our relations with other animals, vis-à-vis Western science, about evolution, animal consciousness, animal languages, and other issues, for hundreds of years, then it is at least worth asking, rhetorically, what other issues might they also be correct about. And what of similar views of other minority groups in various locations around the world? Postcolonial science opens itself up to the inclusion of considerations of other schools of thought, other epistemologies, and offers possible avenues of thought out of the dead-end of anthropocentrism.

Postcolonial outlooks also lead us back to the potential of posthumanism: by looking at the overlooked, the under-heard, those with agency and personhood denied, we gain by not only acknowledging and listening to other species, but also by improving our understanding of our own interconnection and relations, and, ultimately, by learning how to use such knowledge to help build a stronger, more sustainable world.

A great deal of scholarly work has been done under the *aegis* that the concept discussed applies to humans only; new research on a great many topics (ethics, communication, memory, aesthetics, tool use, culture, etc.) has recently shown that this *aegis* is no longer valid. In seeking to understand the roots of such a worldview, I have contrasted it with Native American traditions, which continue to challenge Western linguistic and cultural assumptions. I have attempted to demonstrate some of the ways in which mythology – those strange

stories of the formation of the world – profoundly (yet for the most part unconsciously) influences a culture's discourse, even its scientific discourse. I have attempted to do so in order to elucidate a less culture-specific lens through which to view the relations between humans and other living things, and to allow for dialogue, for articulation, between different cultures and different ways of viewing the world: both the Native American, and that of the non-hominid world as well. Postcolonial philosophy, and posthumanism, may in the end be the best of allies, as Western discourse continues to learn from other, previously overlooked, systems of knowledge. The questions that await posthumanist philosophy are daunting yet exciting, stretching into an uncharted territory. What destination they will lead us to is as yet uncertain, but it is clear that our ideas and understandings are headed in vastly new directions, in keeping with the simple goal to better understand ourselves: who we are, and our relations to other living things.

NOTES

[1] For an excellent overview of the topic of myth, see Honko's *The Problem of Defining Myth* (1984), which lists as "modern theories of myth" several interpretations, including "myth as source of cognitive categories", "myth as form of symbolic expression", "myth as charter of behavior", "myth as legitimation of social institutions", and "myth as religious genre", and the Lévi-Straussian "myth as medium for structure". Schrempp (2002: 2) notes that "myths are recurrently characterized as foundational, primordial, sacred, and theomorphic", while Bruce Lincoln (1999) goes so far as to label myths as "ideology in narrative form", reinforcing the link between worldview (including ontology) and mythology.

[2] See, e.g., Beck & Walters & Francisco 1977, Brown 1992, Laguna 1995, Brown & Cousins 2001, Rockwell 2003, McNally 2009.

[3] It is interesting to note that the snake was a widespread symbol for a variety of religious traditions, and particularly a symbol for the idea of reincarnation, perhaps due to the fact that snakes shed their skins (see, e.g., Vaz da Silva 2008).

[4] This line of argument has a long and rich history, perhaps in the contemporary era most easily dated to the teachings of historian Lynn White, who put the blame of the ecological crises squarely on the anthropocentric teachings of the Abrahamic mythologies in his classic 1967 *Science* essay, "The historical roots of our ecological crisis". This essay saw the ecological crises as descended technologically from the industrial age, but philosophically from the medieval Christian worldview.

[5] For an investigation of the views of animals propagated by Islam, see Foltz 2006.

[6] The emerging "embodied consciousness" follows epistemological and phenomenological moves in philosophy, which acknowledge biologically mediated experience (e.g.,

Husserl 1989, Merleau-Ponty 2012 [1945]), and comports with many recent studies of the "embodied mind" (e.g., Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch's *The Embodied Mind* (1991), Shaun Gallagher's *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (2005), Antonio Damasio's *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (1994), and his *Self Comes to Mind*: *Constructing the Conscious Brain* (2010), as well as Evan Thompson's *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (2007)). Unlike the "soul-like" image of consciousness (as in Descartes' "homunculus" view, predicating the "mind-body" split), the "embodied mind", with its view of the necessary links between thought and the physical world, needs neither homunculi nor souls.

[7] A 2019 Pew Research poll found that only 33 percent of Americans believed that humans evolved in a biological process, when asked directly with one question (this number became 40 percent when asked as a follow-up question) (see Funk 2019).

[8] This somewhat glosses over the varieties of spiritual traditions in North America, not all of which had shamans; yet it does convey, I believe, the overall picture of Native American spirituality's intense engagement with the natural world.

[9] See, for example, the discussions in Benvenuti 2014, and de Waal 2016.

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FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

THE WOLF: HUMAN/NON-HUMAN RELATIONS ON THE BASIS OF ETIOLOGIES AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract: The article examines the attitudes towards wolves reflected in Estonian folklore and their etiological and religious motifs: the emergence of wolves, wolf incantations, wolves' food from heaven / from the ruler, pieces of clouds, and taboo names of wolves as expressions of mythological and religious relations. The number of grey wolves (*Canis lupus*), whose habitat once covered the entire Northern Eurasia including India, Japan, and Arabian Peninsula, has declined in most of central and southern North America, as well as almost all of Western Europe, and they are no longer known in Scandinavia, India, the United Kingdom, and Japan. The article demonstrates the parallels between Slavic and Finno-Ugric traditions.

Keywords: etiology, incantations, pieces of clouds, ruler of wolves, St. George, wolf

The article was inspired by Mirjam Mencej's monograph titled *The Ruler of Wolves* (2001), which thoroughly covers Slavic and partly also non-Slavic culture, and the monograph of Alexandr Gura (1997). In Mencej's monograph Estonia is represented with only one story, and there are only a few reports from Finnish folklore in the book. However, the wolf is a remarkable predator in Estonia and the specific motif of the wolf leader or ruler is widely known. Due to the language barrier, Estonian folklore has remained difficult to find and compare for the international readership, and this article is an attempt to add some facts about the wolf that was chosen as the national animal on 23 April 2018 (St. George' Day) in Estonia.

The article focuses on the grey wolf, whose former habitat covered all of Northern Eurasia, including India, Japan, and the Arabian Peninsula. Today, the habitat of the grey wolf populations has shrunk. In most of the central and southern parts of North America, as well as in almost all of Western Europe, in Scandinavia, India, in the United Kingdom, and Japan the grey wolf is no longer known.

There are many tales about wolves, also beliefs and belief narratives, and storytelling related to wolves is rich. Some motifs were still known in the 1970s and beyond. We can find a larger corpus of incantations connected with wolves, master or herder of wolves, feeding of wolves from the sky, communication with wolves, etc. Folkloristics and folk religion are mostly subject to genre-centred research (see Baumann 2000; Briggs & Baumann 1992; Ben Amos 1976; Honko 1968, 1989). Yet religious tales and messages are the most universal sets. Species, in this case the conventional categories, divide the same subject into different subcategories for the wolf ruler – legends and memorates. In the stories depicting personal experiences, there are often references to classes that are more distant in the hierarchy of texts (e.g. religious messages), or which reflect the same subject matter, which in some cases (but not always) is verbalized. On the other hand, for a fair evaluation of the material, it is necessary to look, for example, at the corpus of taboo names and expressions, and to observe the verbal and non-verbal expressions that belong to the set of customs. For example, incantations as texts behave differently from narratives as a class and, while incorporating motifs, names, and expressions from other classes and older sacred literature, however, in their peculiar laconic form, they convey individual features of beliefs.

The wolf-related tradition is a variegated and controversial corpus of stories where texts containing folk beliefs and experience about wolves attacking (and overpowering) people in the forest interweave with stories of the wolf's tricks to catch prey (tail-stabbing the sheep running out of a barn), of a kid growing in a wolf's den, or a grateful wolf, whose cubs are rescued, or humorous stories of how a thorn is pulled out of its paw, or a bone is removed from its throat, etc. Also, there are historical reports of wolf raids, accompanied by generalizations, certain hunting restrictions, and the expected limitations to wolves harming domestic livestock.

One of the peculiar moral complexes associated with wolf problematics is its etiology: the wolf was created by the devil as a creature destined to devour God, but during the failed revival process it became a creature destined to chase and kill devils, revenants (walkers), and other demonic beings. Due to this, it has been attributed an important mission in the legends – to protect human beings from the attack of demonic beings in a very physical way. For example, legends of clouds, of feeding wolves from the sky, and similar stories point to lofty aims.

But how does this abundance of different facets, symbols, and beliefs translate into everyday practice? The wolf is a carnivorous wild animal, a competitor and a threat to the farmer. Understanding and managing wildlife is also about understanding and managing societies, full of conflicting situations and values. The situation where a competitor is a threat, has been studied more closely by Herrmann et al. (2013). They used a combined approach of in-depth interviews and storytelling as a means for conveying value orientations towards wildlife. In

their research of big wildlife they reveal what causes the conflicts and impedes relations:

> *The four main barriers to conservation identified for our studied felid species are most probably also valid for other conflictive carnivore species: (1)* fear towards the animal *which can lead to less acceptance of its presence or even reduce the willingness to protect it, (2)* inconspicuousness of and missing contact possibility with the animal *which favours the willingness to protect aposematic animals over cryptic animals, (3) a* diminished or missing cultural dimension of the animal *which might provoke less identification with the animal, and (4) a* contradictory relationship towards the animal *meaning that people have mixed sentiments (positive and negative at once) towards the animal, where it is not clear which values finally govern.*

To sum up, we may say that the same positive and negative features also characterize the wolf-connected folklore – it is a vast and controversial phenomenon. At the same time, it contains surprisingly plenty examples of mutual dialogue or human/non-human agreements, concessions, and room for each.

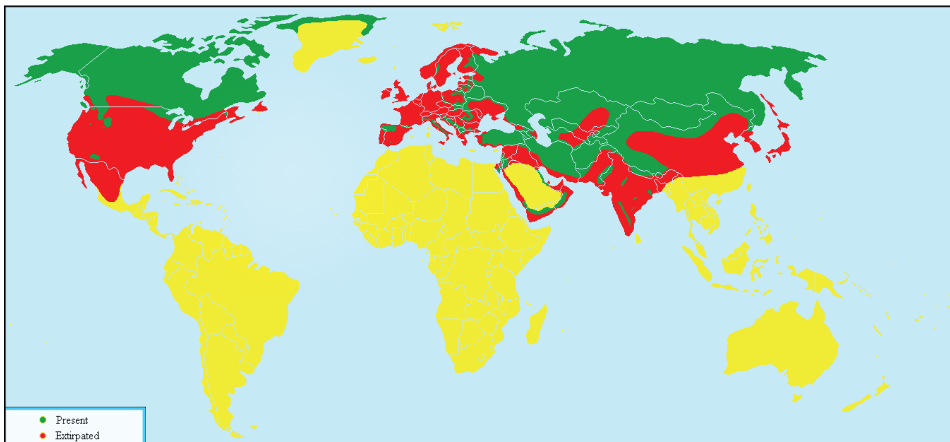

Figure 1*. Distribution of the grey wolf (Canis lupus) in the world. Green – present, red – extirpated. Source: https://et.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunt, last accessed on 9 December 2019.*

ETIOLOGIES: CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NARRATIVES AND NORMS

In folklore studies etiology (derived from the Greek αἰτία, which means cause) attempts to explain the origins of the world, creatures, natural monuments, and customs. The story of the creation of wolves and their etiological descent is

a multi-layered narrative, of which there are about four hundred records in Estonia. Wolf stories are known to have direct parallels, for instance, in the Livonian tradition (Loorits 1926), in Estonia (Loorits 1949), in Vepsian folklore (Vinokurova 2006, 2015), in Finland (Kaski 2019; Rokala 1973), Latvia (Šmits 1940–1941; Neuland 1981), Lithuania (Vėlius 1998), Russia (Gura 1997; Levkievskaya 2010; Kuznetsova 1997); Belorussia (Salavei 2011; Federowski 1897; Romanov 1891; Boganeva 2004, 2006), among the Bulgarian inhabitants in Ukraine and Moldavia (Badalanova Geller 2017), and in the East Slavic tradition (Belova 2004; Belova & Kabakova 2014; Belova et al. 2019), to name but a few. The focus of attention in Russian folklore is on bear-related etiologies (Belova 2004; Belova & Kabakova 2014). The etiologies are discussed also on the example of traditions in Sweden (Balzamo 2006), Hungary (Nagy 1990, 1998), Serbia (Katinski 2015), Mali (Johnson 1976), and Slovenia (Kropej 2012). Although narrative material does not differ much, it contains unexpected turns and forms peculiar nodes that give reason to debate categorization. These are episodes of the creation of the world when God makes animals, either alone or together with the devil. The activity is accompanied by humour, outdoing one another or pulling the wool over the nose. The devil mainly supplements God's creation with his own compliments (the cattle get devil's horns on their heads), he creates annoying and nasty creatures (mosquitoes and clegs), and he is the creator of the bat, toad, and wolf (it varies in different cultures). Then God intervenes and changes what was originally intended. In the following example, the devil is in a position of the ineffectual creator:

> ***Creation of the frog***
> *The old pagan was jealous of the skylark created by God, which sings so beautifully.*
> *Then he wanted to create a bird that would be more beautiful than the lark and would sing more beautifully. He took clay and made a bird as he had planned, and breathed a soul into it.*
> *The bird made by the devil, however, did not take off, but began to croak and jump. It became a toad. Some people still call the frog the "Lark of the Old Pagan.* (ERA II 115, 455 (1) < Mustjala, 1935)

The wolf etiology also represents a change in the original intention, though it answers the questions of who created the wolf, what it was made of, its function and its tasks in a different way.

Let us list the reasons for the creation:

(1) The devil wants the same revered servant as God has in the person of man (H I 5, 145/6 < West Nigula, 1894) and he turns to God: "You are now done with your work, but let me make one of the lower animals, who would listen to my commandment and agree with me." God allowed him to do as

he pleased. (H II 21, 271/3 (4) < Tori, 1889). In some texts the devil wants to create a dog for himself.
(2) In variations, the devil asks for his own human and goes to create the wolf.
(3) The devil sees the animals created by God and also wants to create something (H II 21, 807/8 (6) <Tori, 1889).
(4) The devil wants to limit the number of people and animals created by God; there is also a motif in which God may go to talk to the devil while resting from the creation of the world and promises that the devil may create the destroyer:

> *God asked the devil: "Is everything good now, has everything been created well?"*
>
> *The devil replied: "Everything is good, but there is one animal still missing. There is no such animal that would eat all the filth and scum on the earth."*
>
> *God said: "If you know that there is no such animal existing and you believe there is a need for one, then go ahead and create it."*
>
> *And so, the devil went about in the village and collected old broom-ends, broomsticks and other garbage and crafted the body of a wolf.* --- [dominant ending – the wolf eats the devil]
> (S 65492/6 < Setumaa, 1933)

In some texts God himself wants to create a predator, but the devil offers that he, for his part, will put on this animal a chain armour and a bell on its neck, then the people and the animals will see and hear that it is a predator. God resists, but decides to create the wolf with a strong stiff back, and call it *susi*. For unknown reasons, its cub started to be called hunt (wolf) in the Tallinn region (H II 32, 634 (2) < Räpina, 1889).
(Wolf in South-Estonian dialect is called 'susi', in North-Estonian – 'hunt'. Language and vocabulary differences have prompted a range of neighbourly jokes.)
(5) The devil often decides to create an animal that would destroy all the living things, including man.
(6) The devil wants to create an animal that would destroy God.

The basic type of narrative is variant 6, in which the devil creates a clay wolf that would eat/destroy God. The devil tries his best to resurrect the wolf by saying: "Get up and eat God!", But the animal does not come round. Finally, the devil turns to God and asks him to breathe life into the new animal. God agrees to resurrect the creature when the devil says: "Get up and eat the devil!" So, the animal restored to life rushes to chase the devil, and its main task remains to chase and destroy demons, including the devil and the revenant (walker). Thus, this is the animal created by the devil, who becomes his and other evil forces' enemy. It is namely this motif that offers a series of variations of the fascinating storyline

in which the encounter with a devil or a revenant ends with the destruction of evil creatures by the wolf.

> ***Making of wolves and the death of the devil***
> *In the olden days, the devil wanted to create the kind of wolf that would eat all people and animals. Having this in mind, the devil went to a clay pit and started to create a wolf. He gave it a fence pole for the spine and wood beam legs, a heart made of a sauna stone and hot coals for eyes and torch rods for ribs, and finally gave it flesh made of clay, but the wolf would not come to life.*
>
> *The devil then went up to heaven to plead God to give life to the wolf, but God asked: "Why have you created this wolf?"*
>
> *The devil replied: "To eat people and animals."*
>
> *To this, God said: "Go down and tell your wolf to eat the devil – this will make it come to life."*
>
> *The devil then came down to the earth and told the wolf to eat God, but this would not bring the wolf to life. Then the devil repeated its words but to no avail. After that the devil gave it some thought and then said with some discourage: "Wolf, eat the devil!"*
>
> *As soon as he had uttered those words, the wolf sprang to life, snatched the devil and ate him. This is how the wolf came to be and for this reason devils are said to be mighty afraid of wolves.*
>
> *Wolves' eyes are also said to glow at night because they are made of hot coals and wolves are said to turn with difficulty because their legs are made of stiff wood beams and their spine is made of a fence pole. It is also said that you shouldn't throw stones at a wolf - it is a useless act because the wolf has a heart of stone.* (E 4210/1 < Põlva 1893)

Another etiological legend is connected with God's delegated mission to serve as a shepherd in the form of a counterpart, in the role of a shepherd, or a shepherd's assistant, and to be entitled to free food for his services. This norm results in the following etiology, which explains why the wolf's mouth is black:

1. The wolf receives food from the host/hostess for keeping the herd, but one day the hostess tells it to go and search for food itself and throws a hot stone from the stove into the wolf's mouth. The angry and wounded wolf goes to her lambs. The wolf eats the smaller lambs with his torn mouth and remains the cattle killer.
2. The wolf gets the right to feed his family for grazing animals, but one day the host/hostess throws into the wolf's mouth a hot stone instead of bread. The wolf with a black and scorched mouth starts to kill.

A blind storyteller Kaarel Jürjenson presents the story in the following way.

> ***Why do wolves have a black mouth?***
> *In the olden days, the wolf was as meek as a lamb that never did any harm. It even minded cattle like dogs do now and every time bread was baked in the families whose cattle it had minded, the wolf was given a long herdsman's loaf by each family.*
>
> *But one stingy old hostess didn't make a loaf for the wolf and instead threw a hot sauna stone into the wolf's mouth, which made the wolf's jaws burn black. This hurt the wolf and made it angry and it went prowling into the woods, running across bogs to go see God and tell him of its distress. The wolf asked to be promised to eat as pay fifty pigs, sixty horses, a hundred horned animals, and a thousand sheep each year.*
>
> *God made no such promise and released the wolf from its herdsman's duties, ordering it to feed only on such animals that lose their herd and wonder off. The wolf has eaten nothing but that type of animals ever since then. After receiving this permission from God, the wolf went back and killed the fattest sheep belonging to that stingy hostess. Its mouth remained black as a result of the hot sauna stone and this characteristic has been passed on to its kind until this day. The burn also made the wolf smell of burning. Dogs sense this smell from far away and know when to expect wolves.* (ERA II 54, 439/40 (495) < Tartu-Maarja, 1932)

In some versions the text ends with the wolf's report to God about how many animals it had killed during a year. This part has also spread as a short independent fairy tale (AT 77 * – more than 40 versions, consists only of the wolf's monologue). The same monologue also forms riddles (Kippar 2000).

Although the wolf gets the right to slaughter domestic animals, there is also a limitation:

> *… The wolf came to God again, and complained of its affliction, and showed its burnt mouth. But now God said to the wolf: 'As men are so greedy and do not want to give you crumbs and thus play the rogue, I now give you permission to take a pig from where you can. But I forbid you to eat a shaft horse or a yoked ox.' And this right has remained to this day. And never will a wolf eat a shaft horse or a yoked ox.* (EKS 8° 2, 482/5 (3) < Paistu, 1877)

The most common Estonian astromyth about the Great Wagon is based on the violation of a clearly formulated ban. The wolf is lifted to heaven for killing an ox, with a chariot, host, and bull (cf. Kuperjanov 2003: 180–182; 2010: 353 ff.). Folklore researcher Rudolf Põldmäe has recorded the following version:

> ***Stars in the sky***
> *The wagon has four wheels and a wolf and an ox are pulling it. The wolf killed the second ox and took its place in pulling the wagon. The wagon is*

on the same line as the North Star and does not change its position. (ERA II 19, 300 (1) < Kose, 1929)

ANIMATED ANIMAL THAT IS CREATED FROM INANIMATE MATTER

In etiological legends the wolf is made of soil or clay like people and other animals, which is also a common material in Slavic (cf. Gura 1995: 411; Romanov 1891: 169; Federowski 1897: 191) and other peoples' tradition (cf. Badalanova Geller 2017: 337; Vinokurova 2015: 104 ff.). In Estonia and Belorussia, the wolf is made also from spruce or aspen trees as an alternative (for more Slavic parallels see Federowski 1897: 191).

According to frequent Estonian motifs, the wolf is created from different inanimate materials: from a stone or an oak stub and cabers for fence, with a wooden backbone, due to which it is called 'animal made of one bone' – *üksluine*. The wolf has a strong back and does not bend to look behind its back. This feature manifests in hunters' beliefs – you have to attack the wolf from behind, which makes it easier to kill it.

All other materials are very variable and a creature under creation is similar to the *kratt* 'treasure bringer', the boggard created by people, or the bogie, one of the more widely known mythical beings, who was also created using rural materials at hand.

Popular variants list that the wolf's eyes are from glowing coal, rakes for teeth, legs from oak-tree, tail from a sauna whisk, clenched around with blue clay, skinned with fir tree bark.

The wolf may also be made of rags, or its head is made of old socks and mittens, but the permanent element is the heart of stone. The tail may be a stove broom or whisk, the backbone and bones from the oak-tree, ears from oak and the rake teeth for teeth, the eyes should be pieces of coal, the skin – from the fir bark, the nails – from the fir needles.

In the etiology of trees four texts are related to the previous main legend in which the wolf is eager to destroy the devil: the devil escapes from the wolf up a tree. But the wolf reaches for his leg, his blood stains the bark of the tree / makes alder juice red; the wolf brakes off, but the blood runs down the tree, stays on the tree forever and therefore the juice of the alder is red (motifs are connected with alder or aspen; for Slavic parallels cf. Agapkina & Usacheva 2004: 1706; Agapkina 2019).

Many beliefs are related to some of the aforementioned etiologies, and their core knowledge explains the origins of the former norms:

> *You mustn't hit wolves with an alder – it is said alder is the blood of the wolf; you mustn't hit wolves with a stone – it is said it has a heart of stone, or you shouldn't throw a stone at a wolf or it will take it to heart and kill you.* (ERA II 198, 465 (17) < Helme, 1940)

RULER OF WOLVES

The central support of the former folk-religious way of imagination, related to animals, is the master or protector of the animal species. For example, the protector of fish – alfa-fish, fairy – protects and watches over fish. The subject of the wolf ruler or wolf master is related to the human/non-human (animal) relations, which Tim Ingold (1994 [1988]: 2 ff.) has described as follows: *animals and animality are deeply embedded in our own ways of thought*. This notion draws attention to the fact that humans and animals might actually engage in social relations with one another.

In broader terms, the protector may be a fairy related to an element of nature, such as a forest fairy, who can stand for a variety of animals and birds. For almost every major wild animal, we can see conflicting content in the texts: different experience stories, symbolic and intertwining legends, fear as well as real economic losses.

Mirjam Mencej (2001) lists different names of the wolf protector: a ruler, commander, leader, master of the wolves, sometimes also called the wolf herdsman. The herder, leader, and ruler are known also in Estonian tradition. Next, she focuses on the saints in their role, the wolf-related tradition and religious imagery, including magic spells. In Estonia and Livonia God, fairy, St. George, dwarf-size human or bigger wolf is in the role of the ruler of wolves. In incantations this role has been transferred mostly to St. George (Est. püha Jüri). In Slovenia the ruler can be a mythical being in the form of a man, an old man, horseman, or human turned into a wolf, or a half-human / half-wolf, etc. (Kropej 2012: 54).

Mencej (2001) attributes the following features to the wolf ruler: 1) commanding the wolves – driving the wolves, giving them assignments and orders, telling where they shall live, sending wolves away from livestock, etc.; 2) allotting food to or feeding the wolves; 3) protecting livestock and/or people from wolves, i.e., locking the mouths of wolves and other animals.

In Baltic-Finnic tradition we can find all these, but also an additional motif of how wolves protect livestock or herd cattle. It is shown in legends, but also in incantations.

In the Slavic tradition we can see a saint in the role of the ruler of wolves (more than 20 different saints have been named as rulers of wolves, incl. St. Mina in Bulgaria) (Gura 1995: 413, Vinokurova 2015).

The ruler is responsible for feeding wolves, keeping their mouths locked from St. George's Day to Michaelmas (the period when cattle were herded in the forest, outside the farm). There are a number of magical rituals performed in the spring, especially on St. George's Day: the symbolic acts of closing the lock, stitching the mouth shut, burning the eyes of a wolf (at the campfire).

In Livonian traditions the host ties red and blue ribbons around twigs, prompting the other person to ask: 'What is it you're doing there?', to which the former replies: 'I'm tying the wolf.' Once this is repeated nine times, he places the twigs in a pile made of other bits of wood (Loorits 1926).

St. George gathers up his wolves on St. George's Day and allocates a specific number of animals for each wolf that the latter can kill. There is a ban on killing animals in the Baltic-Finnic region from St. George's Day in spring until Michaelmas in autumn (from 23 April until 23 September). For the Slavs, the ban varies from St George's Day in spring to St. George's Day in autumn. A widespread fairy tale tells how a man behind a bush sees a pack of wolves being fed from the sky. Each of them gets a piece, but one wolf is left without it. The wolf ruler from the sky says: 'Your portion is behind the bush.' (SUS 934B *; Salavei 2011). Gura (1995: 413) concludes that this is the common Slavic motive.

There are also other rituals associated with the beginning of spring, including St. George's Day; for instance, symbolic rituals whereby children or young animals are offered to wolves in the spring, saying: "This is your share." The idea of the ritual is that after that the wild animals have no right to take more without permission as they have already been given their share. (In the same way, in spring, goslings and chickens were placed onto a sieve and offered to a hawk – it was believed that this way the buzzard will save most of the poultry.)

FEEDING WOLVES FROM THE SKY

In addition to the agreement present in etiological stories, stating that humans must feed the wolf for keeping the herd, wolves also receive food from a wolf shepherd, God or other creatures: they are thrown pieces of clouds from the sky. Pieces of clouds, or cloud chunks is a worldwide phenomenon known in the Baltic-Finnic (Estonian, Latvian, Livonian, Votic, Finnish), Slavic (Belorussia; Gura 1995: 413) and other (e.g. Swedish) beliefs (Scriptorium; Jürgenson 1997; Loorits 1926, 1949).

This cycle of beliefs and experiences represents images of the structure of the sky and the nature of the clouds. Etiology explains that clouds are solid by nature; some call it liquid, sour milk, saliva, or frogspawn. In heavy wind, storm or rain cloud pieces fall to the ground. Dozens of people have found them on the ground and studied them closely.

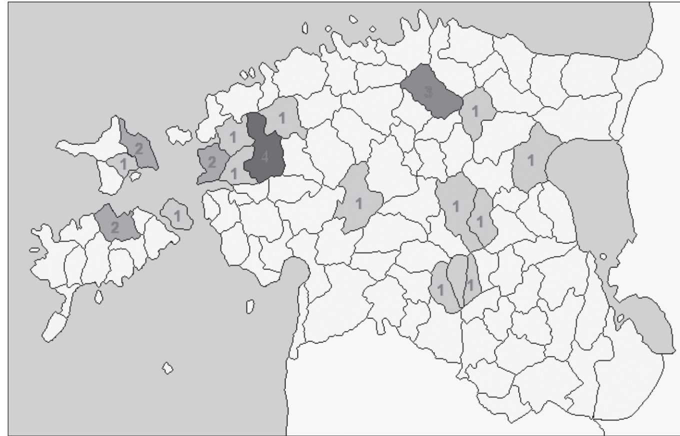

Figure 2. *The figures marked on the map of Estonian parishes indicate the number of texts recorded in the 19th–20th centuries about feeding wolves from the sky. Data M. Kõiva, map A. Kuperjanov.*

> *A piece of cloud is like sour milk, sometimes during a storm a piece of it came down as rain.* (H II 25, 257 (208) < Helme, 1888)
>
> *A cloud of thunderstorm is thick as meat jelly, sometimes it rains down.* (ERA II 19, 301 (4) < Kose, 1920)
>
> *Clouds are like coagulated gravy, and many times cloud pieces have been found which were dropped in a heavy storm.* (H IV 3, 786 (12) < Puhja, 1890)

According to Livonian tradition, Loorits defines another possibility of appearing clouds: "But these are also called sea clouds, or water clouds; they also come from the sea as frogspawn, especially in the spring when the sea blooms" (Loorits 1926: 59–60).

In search of rational explanations, folklorists have associated pieces of clouds with mushrooms. M. J. Eisen argues: "Indeed, cloud pieces belong to mushrooms *(Tremella Nostoc L.)*, which are invisible in dry weather, but swell after rain and have the meat-jelly-like appearance" (Eisen 1926: 59). One of the mushrooms even bears the name of wolf's milk, but in this respect no folklore has been collected. Jürgenson (1997: 58) draws attention to a mushroom called *pilvik, pilveseen* (derived from the Estonian word 'pilv' which means a cloud).

Mycologist Erast Parmasto (1988) associated a mucous fungus (*Fuligo septica*) with a mythic motif prevalent on the islands – a witch (*ragan*) or mythical milk bringer (*vedaja*, *puuk* or *päär*) shit on walls, wells, etc. (see ERA II 188, 323(74) < Käina, 1938). A supernatural creature stealing milk is believed to leave behind yellowish poops; that is why it is known to have stolen milk or secretly suckled cows. Such a damaging object could also be sent or carried by a concrete witch, and this motif, in turn, is associated with witch-sent witchcraft and the idea of *lendva* (witch-arrow), or sent sickness (Kõiva 2007). A witch has also been associated with a *ragan* (witch on the islands; for more on the Latvian witch tradition

see Laime 2013). According to folk beliefs, cloud pieces can be eaten by wolves, but not by dogs or domestic animals; the latter get rabies after eating them.

> *[W]hen you happened to come across such a piece of cloud, it had to be placed between bowl pieces and buried under a big fir tree. If you failed to do this, dogs went mad.* (E 79236 (4) < Varbla, 1932)

> *When cattle eat a piece of cloud that has fallen down and been found on the ground (a meat-jelly-like hardened grey substance), they go mad.* (EKmS 48 III, 4 (30) < Palamuse)

Aivar Jürgenson (1997) regards the celestial origin of clouds as the basis for their healing power and even hypothesises about the possible hallucinogen content of cloud pieces/fungi. Convictions recommend that the pieces of clouds be buried or burned; at the same time, pieces of clouds were used in folk medicine to cure various diseases. Oskar Loorits (1949: 437) lists diseases such as grey disease (malaria, fever), stings, typhoid fever, epilepsy, toothache, warts, agria, and constipation; pieces of clouds were also used at childbirth, and against the evil eye. In Finland, pieces of clouds were used as a remedy for burns, stings, eye diseases, rashes, and internal diseases (Jürgenson 1997 with reference to Manninen). The list includes serious diseases that used to be treated with more radical remedies, including poisonous plants.

INCANTATIONS AND WORD TABOO

There are about 400 wolf incantations in Estonian for the protection of cattle, lambs, and humans. Below is a brief description of the texts. The texts contain appeals to the wolf as a person with a higher position in social hierarchy: *metsasaks* (lit. lord of the woods)*, metsaisand* (lit. master of the woods)*, vana kuldjalg* (lit. old gold-foot).

Metsa ukku, metsa akku / ukku –	Old forest man, *ukku*, old forest lady, *akku* –
metsa kuldane kuningas	golden king of the woods,
kuldatrooni neitsikene	maiden on a golden throne.
Mõtsa esä, mõtsa emä	father of the woods, mother of the woods!
Mõtsa kulla kuningas!	Golden king of the woods!
(kullane, kuldne)	(*kullane* and *kuldne* = versions of 'golden')

(E, StK 1, 143 (26) < Nõo khk, 1921)

One might meet a wolf and say: 'Uncle, show me the way / let's split the way' (H I 1, 394 (1) < Risti khk, 1889).

The mouths of wolves are shut as of St. George's Day.

When cattle were taken to the woods before St. George's Day, people would say:

Pühä Jüri, pühä Jüri,	St. George, St. George,
pea omad koerad kinni,	keep your dogs down,
pane neile rauad suhu!	shove a bit in their jaws!

(RKM II 208, 137 (16) < Põlva, 1966)

When the cattle of a farm were taken to the woods for the first time on a Saturday in the spring, it was believed that a wolf attack would take place. As protection against this, some medicine was tied to the horns of each cow with a piece of cloth while uttering the words:

Püha Jüri Jorkuvits,	St George,
lase minu karjal kaugel käia.	let my cattle wonder far.

(ERA II 57, 373 (3) < Otepää, 1932)

Wolves were called to help lift loads or to pick up a stone from the ground to make them release their prey.

Püha Jüri kutsikad,	St. George's pups,
ajage kari koju	drive the cattle home
Vea mulle villu / lambaid	Bring me wools/sheep
Su koerad soos magagu	May your dogs sleep in the bog

(H III 21, 289 (4) < Kursi, 1894)

You lose your voice when a wolf secretly gazes at you – if you get a sore throat or other throat disease, the voice is requested back from the wolf.

A great number of incantations refer to their practical value. They can be classified into the following groups:

(1) Give me half a road;
(2) Let my herd go far;
(3) Stray in wetland / forest / go to the neighbours;
(4) Do not sting/bite secretly!
(5) Put your prey down! Keep your sons away;
(6) Ritual magic: burning the wolf's eyes, stitching its mouth, etc., accompanied by incantations;
(7) Keep my herd!

Püha kallis Jürike,	Dear St. George,
mõtsa kuldse kuninga,	Golden king of the forest,
mõtsa helde emanda,	Mother of the forest,
hoidke meie utukeisi,	Keep our sheep,
kaitske ma karjakeisi,	Guard my herds,
sigitage mu tsiapõrsakeisi. Aamen.	Conceive my piglets. Amen.

(H III 22, 175 (3) < Sangaste, 1890)

(8) Wolf/puppy of St. George, drive my cattle home!

We can see a respectful attitude towards wolves in the proverbs and nicknames used in verbal communication. As for the wolf, besides the characterizing linguistics, respectful address in speech is important and the taboo name system is eloquent. A number of cryptonyms for referring to wolves based on their appearance, habitat, and behaviour are used in daily conversations. Indirect equation of wolves with wickedness and the devil/woods is frequent: *kriimsilm* (scratch-eye), *va villasaba* (the woolly tail), *sorksaba* (droopy-tail), *kriimsilma isand* (lord scratch-eye), *hallivatimiis* (man with grey coat), *mõtsakutsu* (dog of the woods), *metsaillu* (little beast of the woods), *metsa koer* (lit. dog of the woods), *va hall* (the [colour] grey), *süsisilm / söesilm* (coal-eyed), *lambavaras* (sheep thief), *hobõsõsüüjä* (horse eater).

Another possibility for cryptonyms was connected to place and reduction: *võsavillem* (*Villem* [male name of 'wolf'] of the underwood), *pajuvasikas* (calf of willows), *võsavasikas* (calf of the underwood), *soovasikas* (calf of the bog), *kõrbekutsikas* (puppy of the woods), *metsakutsikas* (puppy of the woods); or place: *aiatagune* (the one beyond the fence), v*a sootagune* (the one beyond the bog).

Names equating wolves with the devil are the following: *vana halv* (old bad one), *mõtsakoll* (bogey [ghost] of the woods), *mets* (lit. woods), *painajavanamees* (the oled nightmare man), *vanapoiss* (lit. old bachelor/boy = devil), *metsaline* (the wild beast).

Kinship terms were also used; wolves were called *onu* (uncle), *metsaonu* (uncle of the woods) or wild uncle of the woods. A wider range of kinship terms can also be found in Russian folklore.

CONCLUSION

In mythology the wolf is an animated animal that is created from inanimate matter (usually clay or soil, wood) or from everyday rural trash. It is similar to a mythical creature called *kratt or pisuhänd* – 'treasure bringer', which is a human-created anthropomorphic or zoomorphic being that is magically created entirely from inanimate matter, mostly from objects at hand.

This attitude ignores eloquent traditions and themes: texts about wolf–human relationships, where a wolf gets help from a man for its cub or itself and pays off in its own way – a child who got / was taken into a wolf's lair is in good health, and so on.

The proximity of narrativity, etiologies, and beliefs is obvious; they influence each other and norms. Beliefs live longer than formulated legends. They come in a variety of layouts and styles, including humour (e.g., the devil makes a wolf and a cat from the rest of the clay), the fictional intertwines with real practices.

This article has presented only some pieces of tradition; however, it is obvious that wolf-human relationships were multifaceted. Complete material would provide an opportunity to determine exactly how Herrmann et al. (2013) defined relations between humans and predators. It is still evident that while it was important to keep wild animals away from home and herds, the relationships were diverse, and wild animals were even verbally approached for help.

However, even this limited material also reveals the need for a re-examination of human/non-human relationships, as well as for a broader analysis of printed and biblical literature, etiologies of beliefs and practices. On St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day in November, when *sandid* (masked people) sang outside how wolves were looking at the house and pigs were looking at the woods, the people in the house outside of which they were singing would throw ashes at the masked people and cuss at them.

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ARCHIVAL SOURCES

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EKS – Folklore collection of the Estonian Literary Society
EKmS – Folklore collection of the Society of Estonian Literati
ERA – Folklore collection of the Estonian Folklore Archives
H – Folklore collection of Jakob Hurt
S – Collection of Samuel Sommer
Scriptorium – digital tool for the preservation and editing of folklore texts, Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Museum
SUS – Eastern Slavic catalogue of tale types

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TO REACH HISTORY, WE NEED IMAGINATION

Interview with Mieke Bal

Interviewer Henri Zeigo

At the beginning of September, the Estonian Literary Museum held the 9th annual conference of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies (CEES) under the heading "Perception and Performativity in Arts and Culture in the Age of Technological Change". During the conference we had a great chance to listen to a presentation by a famous cultural analyst Mieke Bal, who is also well-known for her visual artistic approaches. Mieke Bal works at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) and gives lectures all around the world. Her interventions in visual art have been influential.

Mieke Bal, recently I visited your website and I found that your interests are very widespread, starting with movies, arts, exhibitions, and literature and ending with cultural theories. Why haven't you specialised in a narrower field?

Actually, I am highly specialised, but not in a single field, but in a kind of approach or idea, which is narrative. I have specialised in narratives all my life. That is what I have been doing, looking at narratives in different art forms, languages, and cultural modes.

This also includes disciplines. But you know, disciplines have been created almost arbitrarily as separate departments and approaches, but narrative is everywhere. I am a specialist in narrative. I have to study all these fields, otherwise you might get such a silly idea that only literature has narrative. And that is clearly not true.

We can meet narratives in journalism and television and in everyday uses. For example, when a child comes home from school and tells his or her mother a story about what happened during the school-day. So, narrative is a very important tool for communication.

In fact, I come from literature, but then I discovered that this is not the only place where narrative functions. I have always liked to look around the corner and see what the neighbours do. Should I call myself with one name, I'd call myself a cultural analyst. And artistic work is a part of that.

From an artistic point of view, I can see that visual art is something that is more often represented in your works. Are videos on screens your preferred medium for communicating narratives?

No, not anymore. Originally, I started making videos and documentaries as a way of getting closer to people from other cultures. For instance, I started to make movies of internal migrants inside their own culture, and that helped me to better understand migratory culture. The world changes so quickly whereas publications come out years after writing them. For me making a movie *with* people, instead of *about* people, helps to achieve an interaction that is more intimate than making a survey, observation, or other kinds of academic approaches.

I have visited a lot of museums in Amsterdam. I noticed that many of them use plenty of high-tech solutions and screens to retell a story from the narrator's perspective. Is this a kind of trend that all museums should follow to present their history, the artworks they host, and thereby reach the audience?

I think the problem between art and audience is deeper than what screens can do. Screens can give information, but they cannot make people interact with art more comfortably. And this is why in my presentation I was advocating for changing the museum displays in the sense of theatre, by hanging paintings low and putting seating in front of them – such as benches, so that people can sit and take the time to enjoy art, which is never encouraged in museums. I have had an experience where I could do this in the Munch Museum in Oslo, and it made all the difference. People spent some 20 minutes with a painting. This is a way that looks very different from walking around and taking a snapshot and moving on. It is very important to encourage audiences to take the time to look at paintings they are interested in and do

Photograph by Alar Madisson 2019.

it as long as they feel comfortable. But to do that you must make them feel comfortable enough to make those choices. So this is my intervention, and it is an artistic and social practice in museums at the same time.

I remember that in your presentation you said that, to reach history, we need imagination. Does video art help us go back to history, let's say to the 19th century, and make it more understandable to the audience?

Generally, I think museums and the documentary videos shown are informational. That does not really help us get back to the past. Rather it gives you an idea of what it was like, but it does not make you a part of that. What I try to do with my videos is to make the audience a part of interaction, of staging the past. So, in my work I was not trying to get back there, but rather

to make it come to us. To make the past come to the present and to show the presence of the past.

At this conference you made Don Quixote's story come from the past to the present. Why did you choose this famous piece of literature over many others?

Because of the madness. I think it is a book on and of madness. And "Don Quixote" is about war, violence, and slavery more than about anything else. This is completely the same today. There are over 50 million slaves in the world today; 70 percent of them are women. We do not realize that in Libya there are slave auctions, public sales of slaves today. So "Don Quixote" is about today. In this book there is a story of a man who was on a ship that was going back to Spain after having won a battle, and the ship was taken by corsairs. And this one guy was taken, the rest went on to Spain. So, he became a slave. Now this happened to the author, Cervantes: he was on his way back from the battle and he and his brother were taken in slavery. And this happened in the late 16th century.

This is also happening today, to people who are captured in these boats of immigrants who are crossing the Mediterranean Sea. Either they drown or they are captured, taken back to Libya where they find their way to the slave auctions. I do not know what is worse. So, it is very actual.

In your videos we saw that Sancho was presented as a woman. I assume this choice in the cast was made deliberately, was it not?

Yes, of course. In the novel Sancho Panza is the helper. Someone who is always there when he is needed. Usually Don Quixote is described as a nobleman and Sancho belongs to the working class. So, there is a distinction between classes where Don Quixote criticizes Sancho because of his way of speaking, claiming that he is not sophisticated enough. But in their discussions, Sancho appears to be very smart. So, to use a woman as a Sancho is to do justice to the women who have devoted their lives to supporting their husbands. So many women are being underestimated, because they have sophisticated education. And this character shows that it is not an issue. A woman can also choose to get away from such an old male setting. This woman in the video is from Latin America, which is different from Central Europe, and she has an accent. No matter she is smart and helpful. In this

scene she offers solidarity when Don Quixote needs it, but the main point is that when he collapses, she holds him and shows empathy instead of only helping him technically. On the other hand, it is an allusion to the role of women and also shows that women can do everything. It is very important socially to help in difficult situations.

What do you want to achieve, who do you want to reach with this project?

This project has actually 16 screens [at the conference we saw 4 screens and stories]. This is a massive exhibition. It takes plenty of technology and benches to sit on. It is going to be displayed in its entirety in Sweden and in Spain from the end of October until the holidays in December, and in the UK (Leeds) in January and February. I do not know how far it will take me, but I am going to technically finish it. I will go around and give lectures. My project never really finishes.

I know that you have also studied French. And many actors in these videos where also originally from France. This makes me wonder about your relation to French culture.

It comes from way back when I was a child. My mother could not cope with the family situation, but she had very cultural interests. French chansons was one of the aspects she was interested in. She played these records at home and so I got acquainted with French culture at an early age. When I went to study French, there was no particular reason for that. I just had to get out of home and find an excuse to go to France for holidays. So I said I would study French if I were let go. I was really taken by the idea, because I love this language and I like the sound of it. Therefore, I got hooked on the cultural background. And the literature is beautiful, but this is not what I am particularly interested in. I am also interested in Spanish and English literature. I do not believe in cultural segregation. What I like about being in Europe is our diversity of languages and cultures. It enriches your thoughts, like walking around in Tartu where I have never been. It is a different experience. It adds to my knowledge and insight into a smaller city that has history. I find it more interesting than French.

You have also said you like visiting Nordic countries. Why is that so?

Recently I have been invited to give lectures there. When I gained an international reputation I received invitations from Russia to Scandinavian countries, and I have been to Tallinn earlier. I have worked a lot with Norwegian institutions, such as the Munch Museum, but I also received a very warm welcome in Sweden where they were incredibly receptive to my ideas. I was also in Denmark, so Iceland is the only Nordic country I have not been to. But there are also other places in Europe with which I am happy to collaborate. I enjoy collaboration.

For my work, see my website at **www.miekebal.org**.

NEWS IN BRIEF

9TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN ESTONIAN STUDIES

The 9th annual conference of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies under the heading "Perception and Performativity in Arts and Culture in the Age of Technological Change" took place at the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu, Estonia, from the 5th to the 7th of September 2019.

Contemporary society is affected by technology on all levels of our lives and it is an important topic for a number of research fields. In culture, digitalisation is visible not only through the different uses of technology by artists and the audience, but also by the new ways of communicating and creating socio-cultural contexts. The conference focused on these changes in our culture, more precisely in theatre, literature, film, music, and folklore.

The keynote speakers of this interdisciplinary conference were Professor Mieke Bal, cultural theorist ancacd critic from the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, Professor of literary theory Marina Grišakova from the University of Tartu, Estonia, and Professor Władysław Chłopicki from Jagiellonian University, Poland.

The exact schedule of the conference as well as the theses of the presenters can be found at https://www.folklore.ee/CEES/2019/performance.

There were presenters from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, India, Russia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Poland, Germany, Austria, Romania, and Ireland.

Conference participants after the first plenary session. Photograph by Alar Madisson 2019.

The conference was organised by the working group of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies on narrative studies and PUT1481 ("The Role of Imaginary Narrative Scenarios in Cultural Dynamics").

The conference was supported by the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies – CEES, TK 145), PUT1481 and IUT 22-5.

Piret Voolaid

SYMPOSIUM DEDICATED TO THE 80TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF ACADEMICIAN ARVO KRIKMANN AT THE ESTONIAN LITERARY MUSEUM

In July 2019, the renowned folklorist, academician Arvo Krikmann (1939–2017), would have turned 80. To celebrate this as well as to honour him and acknowledge the donation of Krikmann's library to the Estonian Literary Museum, a symposium was organized at the Estonian Literary Museum on Saturday, September 7, under the auspices of the annual conference of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies.[1]

The programme of the symposium consisted of opening words by Liisi Laineste, a plenary session, presentations as well as a books display, and photographs depicting Krikmann's academic life. There were many Krikmann's colleagues and former students among the participants of the symposium. The papers were based on Krikmann's main fields of research as a folklorist: jokes, proverbs, phraseology, and riddles, to name just the main subjects. He also had many other interests. On the methodological side, the Finnish method (the historical-geographic method) is worth mentioning, which he adapted and applied to the Estonian material. Later on, when computers became available, his method to supplement the results with cartographic tables and statistical summaries added new dimensions to the study of the material. An overview of Arvo Krikmann's publications and academic activities is available at https://www.etis.ee/CV/Arvo_Krikmann/est.

In her opening words Liisi Laineste emphasized that Arvo Krikmann's research was internationally widely known and highly appreciated. His extensive research was mainly dedicated to the short forms of folklore and their sources, folk humour, semantics of phraseology, and the theory of figurative speech.

As the plenary speaker, Władysław Chłopicki from Jagiellonian University, Poland, concentrated on various aspects of the creative mind that link folklore studies and humour studies. He pointed out how humour in general and stand-up comedy in particular share the basic speaker-stimulus-audience contextual triad with language in general, focusing on a specific case of an improvised outdoor performance by a Polish comedy group, which was organised on the birth anniversary of Jan Kochanowski, a Polish Renaissance poet who contributed to the growth of modern Polish with the power of his talent and creative imagination.

Liisa Granbom-Herranen from the University of Turku, Finland, took a glance at paremiology and the unique position Estonia has gained as one of the leading countries in paremiological theories and methodologies largely thanks to academician Arvo Krikmann.

Władysław Chłopicki. Photograph by Alar Madisson 2019.

At the heart of Krikmann's studies lay the methodological and theoretical trends he familiarised himself with in the 1960s, primarily the Finnish method (also called the historical-geographic method) which he adapted and applied to the Estonian material. At about the same time the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School was established, which paved the way for Krikmann's semanticological classification of proverbs. Moreover, Krikmann used the premises of structural linguistics and applied linguistic statistics to the study of short forms of folklore. All this took place before the time that international academic connections were established.

Jonathan Roper from the University of Tartu, Estonia, spoke about dictionaries as a possible source for folklore material. He emphasised Krikmann's ability to see the potentiality dictionaries had as a reservoir of paremiological data, as, for example, in his work *Fraseoloogiline aines eesti vanimais grammatikates ja sõnastikes* (Phraseological material in older Estonian grammar books and dictionaries) (1986).

The last speaker was Sergey Troitskiy from the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The focal point of his presentation was parody. As the starting point, he presented a Russian humour scandal where a parodic amateur video by Ulyanovsk cadets (2018) was disputed by the wider public. He raised the question of if and why parody is dangerous for the official discourse.

Krikmann's varied interests are reflected in the composition of his library. It contains over 1500 items of academic literature, including books, manuscripts, and lecture notes. The library also holds a number of unique books that Professor Krikmann had obtained through his established network of academic connections. Krikmann's library is kept at the Estonian Literary Museum.

Academician Arvo Krikmann's library. Photograph by Alar Madisson 2019.

In summary, Arvo Krikmann was content neither with the existing ways of collecting material nor with the expected methods, but elaborated them. Thanks to his interest in open-access publication, many of his texts and articles are available on the Internet. At his time, the computer-based databases of Estonian short folklore genres were something unheard of. His academic insight and ability to see old phenomena from a novel point of view inspired him to apply computerised methods to support his research. He created digital databases, computed maps, and provided statistics. He used old and new materials, archives, and books as well as the Internet. At the same time, he appreciated and commended the former researchers and their studies, and encouraged us all to find something new.

Liisa Granbom-Herranen

Note

[1] The symposium was organised by the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum and was supported by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (IUT 22-5), and by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies).

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ON TRANSNATIONAL FAMILY LIFE ACROSS THE GULF OF FINLAND

Keiu Telve. *Family Life across the Gulf: Cross-Border Commuters' Transnational Families between Estonia and Finland*. Dissertationes Ethnologiae Universitatis Tartuensis 10. University of Tartu Press, 2019. 169 pp.

Keiu Telve defended her PhD dissertation at the Institute of Cultural Research, University of Tartu, on the 26th of August 2019. The supervisors of the thesis were Aimar Ventsel and Tiit Tammaru (University of Tartu, Estonia) and opponents Mari Korpela (University of Tampere, Finland) and Maarja Kaaristo (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK).

The thesis is structured as follows: section I consists of an introductory and theoretical cover article, summaries of the five published papers, concluding discussion, references, summary in Estonian, and a list of interviews with the research participants. Section II of the thesis comprises reprints of the five published articles that form the main body of the thesis. All of these publications (published between 2016 and 2019) are single-authored, and three are journal articles published in international, indexed, and peer-reviewed academic journals (*Ethnologia Fennica*; *Gender, Place and Culture*; *Mobilities*), whilst two are chapters in books published by Routledge.

The research questions are formulated as follows: "1) How do male cross-border commuters between Estonia and Finland extend their family life into the transnational sphere? 2) What kind of everyday practices and strategies are used to maintain family connections in Estonia-Finland cross-border families? 3) How does the mobility of one family member (the husband and the father) affect other family members? Does it also facilitate the international mobility of the wife and children?" (p. 9) The cover article summarises Keiu Telve's research journey on the subject, which started with her MA studies, while the PhD research was also conducted in parallel with her work on two migration-themed research projects at the University of Eastern Finland, which demonstrates the author's well-established academic citizenship within migration studies.

The introductory chapter gives an overview of migration between Estonia and Finland, the main patterns of family life in the two countries, and a review of the academic literature on transnationalism and cross-border commuting in Estonia, as well as an overview of the empirical material that forms the basis of the analysis. The second part of the cover article presents the theoretical framework of the thesis, discussing the key theoretical literature on transnationalism, family life, and masculinity that informs the thesis. The concluding section presents the main results and findings, discusses the implications of the research, and suggests further avenues for future research.

The format of the thesis, which is PhD by publications (as opposed to a monograph) is structured in such a way that it always presents the PhD researcher with a particular challenge: publishing the results of your ongoing work piece by piece without an opportunity to go back and revise as the research progresses. Consequently, this increases the importance of the cover chapter, which has to weave the published papers seamlessly together and provide a clear justification of the selected theories, as well as analytical foci. Keiu Telve has managed this particularly well: the thesis reads almost as a monograph, where the published papers, together with the introduction and conclusion, form a clear research narrative.

The resulting PhD thesis is therefore both an engaging and convincing analysis of Estonian male blue-collar skilled and unskilled workers in Finland, who live their lives in permanent transnational mobility, commuting between the two countries, and of the impact this lifestyle has on their various practices, norms, ideas and values, concerning both their family and work life. The thesis is mostly framed within the theories of the 'transnational turn' in mobilities and migration studies. More specifically, it deals with the notion of the 'transnational family' and with the subject of gender and notions of masculinity in terms of transnational commuting. The five articles of the thesis examine the studied workers' international commuting practices, focusing on the understandings, meanings, and motivations for the cross-border commute and the ways the host society's values have changed the studied men's understandings of family life and social security. They also analyse the various strategies of maintaining the family connections, including creating a virtual transnational mobile field for both themselves and their family members.

The three main keywords that arise from the thesis are therefore mobility, care, and communication. Transnational families live their lives in constant mobility: the main breadwinner's commute back and forth between two countries is demanding not only physically but also emotionally, further reinforced by the fact that Estonian blue-collar work migrants have received a lot of – often negative – attention in both the Estonian and Finnish media. Furthermore, the constant travel means the formation of a certain everyday life, which is determined by a particular geographical location: Finland is where the studied men focus exclusively on work, which means that Estonia becomes a place for family, friends, leisure, and hobbies. In this sense, the Estonian workers do seem to inhabit a diaspora 'bubble', mingling mostly with other Estonians living in Finland, and virtually and digitally socialising with friends and family in Estonia. In this sense,

the commuting labour migrants seem to be living in a permanent liminality, with their bodies inhabiting Finland and minds Estonia. However, it is not that straightforward: as Telve shows, a closer engagement with Finnish society does exist; however, it takes place mostly in terms of the workplace (for example, training), but also in terms of social security issues. Thus certain norms and understandings become mobile as well: Finnish values about social security and family life travel back to Estonia with the studied men and "cultural contacts and mobility may bring along changes in the ways in which men think about family and fatherhood" (p. 44).

This brings us to the second important theme, namely care: the studied men live and work abroad, in Finland, because they want to afford and provide their families with a better life, and the children with a better childhood than they had themselves, which, by their own definition, mostly means having to be able to travel, eat out in restaurants, and visiting amusement parks. Therefore, the studied men's view of care is very activity-centred. However, these activities clearly demonstrate the previously discussed changes in the values: the men appreciate time spent with their families more and tend to take caretaker roles while in Estonia, which they did not do to the same extent before. As Telve states (p. 49), the men are taking on the values of the Finnish workplace, which includes some practices that might be seen as clashing with so-called 'traditional' or 'masculine' practices or behaviours. It seems that there is a kind of tension caused by the men's moving towards the 'softer', family-orientated values on the one hand, while on the other hand reinforcing the 'traditional' ones (with men as the main breadwinners and a big wage gap vis a vis women). Nevertheless, it is important to note that care for these men does not only mean sending home remittances, but also being in constant contact with their families.

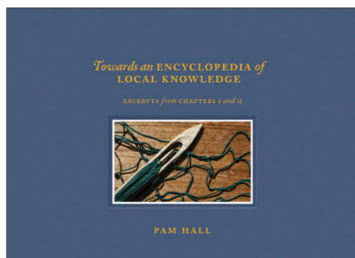
Therefore, the third main keyword of the dissertation is communication. The men working abroad are regularly in touch with their families thanks to modern information and communication technologies. Living family life via social media, text-messaging and Skyping become an important part of their day. One of the most important theoretical results of the thesis is that the family members therefore become important parts of the transnational communication field. "Active communication practices create a virtual or imaginative social sphere between the destination and home countries, making all family members part of collective transnational sphere through what they have good understanding and first-hand experiences of mobility" (p. 46). This means that ICT enables those dwelling in Estonia to be an active part of their family member's mobility, even if they themselves travel to Finland very rarely or, indeed, not at all.

To conclude, the overall enquiry into Estonian migration research has gained a new important addition. With its individual-centred, anthropological approach, the study presents the "flesh and blood" behind the statistics about labour migration in Estonia, by considering what these men who endure the constant weekly travel between Estonia and Finland think, feel, and do. The results of this thesis are important not only for academic researchers on migration and transnationality, but also for different policy makers both on a national and transnational/EU level. The study also gives some suggestions where further research is needed: focusing on age, education or other demographic characteristics, and on female labour migrants, further studies on different generations of transnational migrants, or a comparative study also researching similar work migration patterns in other countries.

Maarja Kaaristo

BOOK REVIEWS

AN INTRIGUING FIELDWORK DOCUMENT



Pam Hall. *Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge: Excerpts from Chapters I and II*. St John's, NL: Breakwater Books, 2017. 208 pp.

How best to present the culture we encounter during our work as folklorists, especially when that culture is disappearing and may be hard for distant people to grasp? Many researchers write monographs, others make films, yet others organize exhibitions. It seems to me that informants *get* ethnographic film (or, less commonly, ethnographic audio) and exhibitions in a way that they do not get ethnographic books. They may well get the *fact* of ethnographic books – and I have certainly seen instances of how the relatives value the sheer palpable fact of an academic book that they can hold in their homes and hands, which drew upon their now-deceased relative's knowledge. But it is unlikely they often take it down to consult it.

Pam Hall has come up with her own solution to this conundrum by presenting her research on Newfoundland in the form of a visual encyclopedia, a project which combines the visual and the verbal. In fact, Hall's is a long-term project very much still in the making, hence the title *Towards an Encyclopedia*... The elegant 208-page work contains "excerpts" from the first two "chapters", which deal with parts of the north-east and north-west of the island. Hall, an Ontarian by birth, has been involved with Newfoundland culture since at least 1977, when she provided the illustrations for Al Pitman's children's book *Down by Jim Long's Stage*. In 2013, she earned a PhD from Memorial University for a thesis entitled *Recruiting the Visual – Knowing our CommonPlace: Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge*, a forerunner or outrider of the current book. The introduction to the Encyclopedia still has a little whiff of academe (and indeed of "art-speak") about it, but the heart of the book itself has no such distancing.

The work proper represents 129 display boards, here reproduced in a reduced format (originally approximately 41 by 27 cm, now approximately 30 by 20 cm). Each board/page has a title, such as 'On Trawling for Shrimp in Notre Dame Bay' or 'What Change Island Women Know about Knitting Socks', and is dominated by imagery in the form of photographs, paintings, diagrams, maps, etc., some with added arrows, circling, and labelling. This imagery is accompanied by text – the trawling card (p. 136) discusses how fishermen sought new species, including shrimp, after the 1992 moratorium on cod fishing, data on the typical length of the shrimp-trawling season, and the size of the allowable catches. And the knitting card (p. 129) has a substantial paragraph that mention the 'more than a dozen women on Change Islands who do custom knitting', with a focus on the different varieties of socks they knit and their features, how fast they could knit (a sock a day), and how much money might be raised by knitting in a year (though in the words of an informant 'no-one is knitting just for money').

Such informative and visually-bold "pages" have a broad appeal. As well as appearing in exhibitions, "images of *Encyclopedia* pages have been screened in university classes and seminars and public conferences on democracy and knowledge" (p. 141). Hall is also very open to their re-use:

> *In a culture of mash-ups and remixes, the pages are versatile and lend themselves to multiple purposes in diverse contexts … I imagine that someday the pages on food might be extracted and used to inspire local recipe book projects or cooking classes, or the pages on textiles used to inform conversations about local craft practices, the pages on berries to prompt a project to map local edibles*. (p. 141)

An emphasis on the collaborative nature of the project is found in the ascription of the book to 'Pam Hall and Collaborators'. Intriguingly, at several places in the book Hall also provides visual networks representing the snowball method by which she came by the people she terms as "knowledge holders" – somehow a more revealing form of presentation than a simple list would be. Of course, the fact it is dealing with non-controversial topics means everyone's names can be acknowledged in the work. Dealing with darker or more controversial topics would have made this trickier. The foregrounding of named individuals is evident in such typical panel titles as 'What Lambert Kennedy Knows About How to Build a Longliner' (here p. 65) or 'What Joe Reid Knows About Local Jams and Jellies' (here p. 65 and p. 69). Somewhat unexpectedly, while all of her "collaborators" are named (more than one hundred of them), there are no photographs or drawings of them in the work.

While the topics such as traditional boat-building and jam-making are familiar ethnographic topics in Newfoundland (and elsewhere), some of the most intriguing ones cover less expected themes. For example, on page 93 we find a panel on 'Where Things Come from in Conche', which literally maps out where local people get hold of their supplies of items such as fuses (Roddickton), beer (St. Anthony), paint (Corner Brook), and bingo cards (St. John's). Further panels dealing with innovation in the outports can be found on page 166 ('Growing New Food in Old Places') and page 169 ('Innovation in Traditional Fisheries').

For me, the most fascinating panels were those addressing local language, often from unusual angles. These included 'On Pond-naming in Tilting' (p. 159), 'On Local Signage, Pamphlets and Museums' (p. 95), the coverage of projects to record local fishing marks (p. 153), and names for rocks and fishing grounds (p. 163). Indeed, one of the best features of the cards is that alongside traditional ethnographic objects, such as boats and needlework, they also have photographs of local "documents", such as business cards, handwritten notes, informants' sketches, pages from phone books, articles in local newspapers, maps, road signs, jar labels, etc., and even photographs of entries from the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*. The presence of these documents supplies another atmospheric layer to the world of objects. Elsewhere she herself mentions information 'nestling in the front and back pages of Bibles, in fishing logs and tally boards, in ledgers and in letters' (p. 106). Perhaps these sources could feature in pages created in the future.

Another panel that particularly stood out was the one entitled 'Woodfinding: On Seeing Boats in Trees', which focuses on how local boat-builders 'find and harvest trees

that have the right shape from which to make stems and keels and timbers' (p. 133). This is an example of a page where the verbal and the visual complement one another especially well. At times one wishes for more information. For example, on page 137, we read the assertion that knot knowledge is being passed on, but we do not learn how this takes place. And all those interested in Newfoundland English would be interested to have been provided with extended examples of connected speech. But then again perhaps that would best be done by online audio files rather than in a book.

All in all, this is a book which does what it says on the cover – it presents local knowledge. This is what so many so-called ethnographic and anthropological studies fail to do, preferring to remain involved in meta-level discussions instead. While this book is unavoidably costly, given its heft (it weighs a kilo) and the number of full-colour reproductions it contains, in terms of accessibility it is worth noting that this wonderful Encyclopedia-project also has other forms – as unbound panels in boxes in community locations, and now also as a website: http://encyclopediaoflocalknowledge.com/.

Indeed, the current website indicates that a third chapter has been begun, dealing with the Conne River area in the south of the island. Long may this project continue to grow!

Jonathan Roper

KYRGYZTAN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LEGAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Judith Beyer. *The Force of Custom: Law and the Ordering of Everyday Life in Kyrgyzstan*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016. 272 pp.

Judith Beyer is a professor of anthropology at the University of Konstanz, Germany, and has been engaged with legal anthropology for many years. The book under review is based on her doctoral dissertation and some of the readers might know her work through publications in journals like *Ethnos* or *POLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*.

The central topic of the book is legal and moral ordering of the everyday in the villages of Aral and Engels, former centres of collective farms in Talas province, Kyrgyzstan, the negotiations of proper behaviour, resolution of disputes, and expression of loyalty and solidarity. For the Kyrgyz (and to be exact, also for the neighbouring Kazakhs) this complex set of unwritten norms is known as *salt*. Everyone who has conducted some sort of fieldwork in the region knows that it is difficult if not impossible to separate the ethnic and the Muslimness when it comes to identity. Therefore, when talking about the moral order, one cannot ignore the impact of Islam but also the rhetoric leaning on Islam. It is puzzling that in many cases it is hard to understand

whether Islamic customs and norms shape the everyday or the language of Islam there justifies the existing norms and customs. The picture is complicated even more by the fact that even in the existing norms and perceptions of the local moral order there is no clear consensus on right and wrong.

Central Asian social life is very ritualised and, as the book helps us to understand, most of these aspects – the sitting order at table, who offers a hand for handshake, how people organise their festive events, how to behave in these events, and so forth – are part of the *salt*. Beyer has conducted an impressive amount of fieldwork stretching over ten years, from 2005 to 2015, in two villages – Aral and Engels – of one of the most remote and isolated regions of north-western Kyrgyzstan. To some extent the story she tells is typical for many regions of the former Soviet Union – after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had subsidised and centrally governed agriculture with its collective and state farms, people were left on their own. The land and the cattle were distributed in the villages and lack of knowledge, opportunities, and finances let people survive merely on a more or less subsistence level. More than often the state also withdrew other institutions – remote villages became isolated due the decrease of the public transport, local administrations barely coped with their primary obligations (support of schools and children's day care, maintaining public roads in a state of certain usability) and had very little resources for anything else. Often, the Soviet moral order with its policing and courts faded away or was relocated to the cities, i.e., became unreachable. This vacuum was filled with the *salt*, the local moral order to maintain the integrity of the community.

One of the main lines throughout the book is the state's relationship with a community that leans heavily on *salt* in its internal business. Here we can observe different transformations of how state institutions and officials establish their link with the people in the village but also what is the perception of the state (state as an idea, p. 60) among the local people and what they expect from the state. Typical for the post-Soviet Central Asian periphery, the state is often presented as a 'Potemkin state' (p. 81), where the presence of the state structures is rather visual (piling up insignia, p. 81) than fulfilling its functions.

Beyer has, over a long period, studied the aksakal courts or the state-sponsored and institutionalised courts of the Muslim elders. The tensions between the aksakals, between the court and the state, and between the community and the court, is another central topic of the book. As usual, it comes down to local clan politics. The author shows how the clan solidarity and cooperation transform over time and are related to local demographics and economy. Here, community rituals are taken as an example. When years ago some lineages used to feast together then now, when the population has grown, they celebrate certain holidays separately.

A very important contribution to our understanding of the Central Asian societies is the interplay with Islam. The author says correctly that "religious practices are part of getting old" (p. 103). In Central Asian states Muslim practices are indeed related to age and status. This so-called civic Islam is an integral part of the everyday life and serves as justification for the existing power hierarchies and gender order. In some cases, it can also have a conservative edge creating certain inertia. A big problem in the region is more or less compulsory gifts one should make in order to show respect. This is widely known that the price as well as the number of gifts has been growing

constantly so that the state (this is the case in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) has been interfering by limiting the number of guests in weddings or final sums of money spent for the celebration. This is indeed a big economic problem as people are burdened with debts to buy gifts or organise a festive event, the so-called *toi*. In the last three chapters before the conclusion, Beyer tackles this issue, demonstrating how people maintain the customs they would actually like to abandon, what are the economic causes of such indebtedness, and why they do not overcome the reluctance to spend increasingly bigger parts of their incomes on such rituals.

This book is theoretically well founded but not overkill. It means that the style is not typically dry with lots of references but easily readable where the story to be told has the priority. The author has conducted meticulous research and demonstrates that she indeed knows much about details. This book should be of interest not only to the scholars of the region but to a wide range of people interested in the anthropology of the state, legal anthropology or post-Socialist societies. In some sense this is a "thick description" combined with understandable language we so often miss in the academic writing.

Aimar Ventsel

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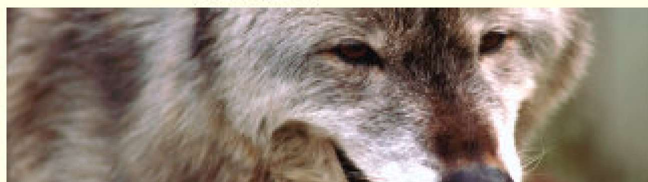
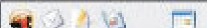


On the cover: Sheela na Gig on the Church of St. Mary and St. David in Kilpeck, Herefordshire, England, 12th century. By the picture from https://the-halfbreed-hobbit.tumblr.com



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