

Thirteenth Annual International Conference
on Comparative Mythology

**MYTHOLOGY OF METAMORPHOSES:
COMPARATIVE & THEORETICAL
PERSPECTIVES**

PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY **IACM**



**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY
&
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN ESTONIAN STUDIES**

**THIRTEENTH
ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY**



**MYTHOLOGY OF METAMORPHOSES:
COMPARATIVE & THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS

June 10-14, 2019

**Estonian Literary Museum
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Mythology of Metamorphoses: Comparative & Theoretical Perspectives

**The 13th Annual International Conference on Comparative Mythology
of the International Association for Comparative Mythology
&
The 8th Annual Conference of the Center of Excellence in Estonian Studies**

June 10-14, 2019, Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia

Creative development of mythologies has been part of the human culture since time immemorial. Myths explain the origin of humans and other beings, the Earth and the Sky, and the world as a whole. Mythological reality is fluid and is subject to metamorphosis. Mythological characters shift their shape; human and supernatural beings undergo all kinds of transitions; the world and myth are constantly changing. Through studying myth, we can trace metamorphoses in the oldest forms of religious thought and narrative.

The unprecedented accumulation of digital corpora allows us to follow the development of mythology on the basis of a much larger amount of material than ever before. New findings from different time periods change our perception of relationships and distribution of myths and motifs. New data calls for novel methods and comprehensive approaches in the study of mythology. The conference will answer the call by digging deeply into new and established methodologies, by giving fresh interpretations and perspectives of well-known and classical facts and theories, by bringing to light most recent studies about underresearched and underrepresented traditions, peoples, and cultures.

The conference focuses on:

1. *Metamorphoses and transitions in myth, including:*
 - Metamorphosis, shapeshifting, and transformation in myth;
 - Transition and passage in myth and ritual;
 - Thresholds, borders, and boundaries: related myths, characters, and worldviews.
2. *Theoretical Approaches to Comparative Mythology, i.e.:*
 - New theoretical and methodological approaches in the research of mythology;
 - History of comparative mythology: old and novel approaches, changes in methodology;
 - Mediascapes and digital mythology;
 - New mythologies.

PROGRAM

MONDAY, JUNE 10

09:00 – 09:30 **PARTICIPANTS REGISTRATION**

09:30 – 10:00 **OPENING ADDRESSES**

MICHAEL WITZEL
Harvard University, USA; IACM

URMAS SUTROP
Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia

MARE KÕIVA
Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia

MONDAY MORNING SESSION: COMPARATIVE AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES I

CHAIR: MICHAEL WITZEL

10:00 – 10:30 YURI BEREZKIN
*Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography,
St. Petersburg, Russia*
THE FOLKTALE. CATEGORIES OF MOTIFS, PATTERNS OF MOTIFS'
SPREAD AND HISTORY OF EURASIA

10:30 – 11:00 PAOLO BARBARO
Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, France
THE BRAIN, THE SOCIAL GROUP AND HISTORY: PRELIMINARY RESULTS
OF TESTS AND STATISTICS DEVISED TO DISCUSS CHANCES OF
PAREIDOLIA, CONVERGING EVOLUTION AND RANDOMNESS IN
ASTERISMS AND (MYTHOLOGICAL) NARRATIVE

11:00 – 11:30 *Coffee Break*

11:30 – 12:00 MARCIN LISIECKI
Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń, Poland
DOES MYTH HAVE TO BE OLD? PHILOSOPHICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE
THEORY OF MYTH

12:00 – 12:40 **SPECIAL LECTURE:**

ANTTI TAMM
*The Centre of Excellence “Dark Side of the Universe”, Tartu
Observatory, Estonia*
COSMIC MYTHOLOGY

12:40 – 14:00 **Lunch Break**

MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: MYTHOLOGY OF METAMORPHOSES I

CHAIR: MARE KÕIVA

14:00 – 14:30 KEIKO TAZAWA
The Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo, Japan
TRANSFORMING GODDESSES IN ANCIENT EGYPT

14:30 – 15:00 LUCIE VINŠOVÁ
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
SEEING THROUGH THE EYES OF OTHERS:
PERCEPTUAL AND LANGUAGE ASPECTS OF SHAPESHIFTING IN
SHAMANIC RITUAL PRACTICES OF THE SELECTED SOUTH AMERICAN
TRIBES

15:00 – 15:30 ATILA MÁTÉFFY
University of Bonn, Germany
TRANSFORMATION AND PASSAGE IN A NORTH EURASIAN
MYTHOLOGICAL AND RITUAL TRADITION:
ANIMISM, SHAMANISM, EMBODIMENT, AND INDIGENOUS ONTOLOGY

15:30 – 16:00 **Coffee Break**

- 16:00 – 16:30** ONDŘEJ PIVODA
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
THE CALL OF THE SHAMAN'S DRUM
[PRESENTED *IN ABSENTIA* BY VÁCLAV BLAŽEK]
- 16:30 – 17:00** HITOSHI YAMADA
Tohoku University, Sendai, Japan
HUMAN-CANINE INTERACTION AND TRANSFORMATION DESCRIBED IN
DOG ANCESTOR MYTHS
- 17:00 – 17:30** MARIA V. STANYUKOVICH
*Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography,
St. Petersburg, Russia*
SHAPESHIFTERS IN PHILIPPINE MYTHOLOGY
- 17:30 – 18:00** ŠTĚPÁN KUCHLEI
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
THE DOLPHIN AND THE DRAGON: COMPARING HINDU AND BUDDHIST
ASPECTS OF A HUMAN/ANIMAL TRANSFORMATION –
AN EXAMPLE OF METAMORPHOSIS IN TWO CAMBODIAN MYTHS

19:00 – Reception

University of Tartu History Museum
(Tartu Cathedral)
White Hall
Lossi 25, Tartu

TUESDAY, JUNE 11

TUESDAY MORNING SESSION: MYTHOLOGY OF METAMORPHOSES II

CHAIR: HITOSHI YAMADA

09:00 – 09:30 LYUBOV LISKI
University of Helsinki, Finland
KOMI BELIEFS AND PRACTICES CONCERNING THE REGULAR MONTHLY
PURIFICATION OF THE FEMALE BODY

09:30 – 10:00 MARINA VALENTOVA
Institute of Slavic Studies, Moscow, Russia
METAMORPHOSES AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN SLAVIC DEMONOLOGY

10:00 – 10:30 LOUISE MILNE
University of Edinburgh, UK
METAMORPHOSIS, MYTH, DREAMS & DESIRE: THE CASE OF THE
WATERWOMAN

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00 – 11:30 SEÁN MARTIN
Edinburgh Napier University, UK
GHOSTLY TRANSFORMATIONS: SUPERNATURAL SHAPESHIFTING IN
MEDIAEVAL ENGLISH HISTORIES

MYTHOLOGY OF METAMORPHOSES IN THE MODERN ART

11:30 – 12:00 JOEL DIETZ
Palo Alto, California, USA
BURNING MAN AND META-MYTHOLOGICAL LANGUAGE

12:00 – 12:30 SACHIE KIYOKAWA
Kobe University, Japan
TO CALL UPON THE ANCESTORS:
THE MEANING OF BECOMING PART OF MYTH IN *BLACK PANTHER*

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch Break

TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: COMPARATIVE AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES II

CHAIR: YURI BEREZKIN

14:00 – 14:30 DMITRI PANCHENKO
St. Petersburg State University, Russia
THE RELEVANCE OF CELESTIAL PHENOMENA TO CLASSICAL
MYTHOLOGY

14:30 – 15:00 MICHAEL WITZEL
Harvard University, USA
IS IT RACIST TO COMPARE DATA?

15:00 – 15:30 NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA
Princeton University, USA
PROBING THE BOUNDARIES OF COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY:
ON METHOD AND MATTER

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 – 16:30 KAZUO MATSUMURA
Wako University, Tokyo, Japan
THREE TYPES OF STRUCTURE: PROPP, CHIASMUS, AND LÉVI-STRAUSS

16:30 – 17:00 ARJAN STERKEN
Groningen, The Netherlands
IN-BETWEEN DÉMÉTÈR AND PERSEPHONÉ:
COGNITIVE THEORY AND THE BINARY PRINCIPLE

17:00 – 17:45 METHODOLOGY IN COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY: GENERAL DISCUSSION

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION: METAMORPHOSES AND TRANSITIONS IN THE INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGY

CHAIR: KAZUO MATSUMURA

- 09:00 – 09:30** JAN A. KOZÁK
*Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic &
University of Bergen, Norway*
BODY AND COSMOS: THE LOGIC OF MYTHICAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN
OLD NORSE RELIGION
- 09:30 – 10:00** SIGNE COHEN
University of Missouri, USA
FLESH TO STONE, STONE TO FLESH: LITHIC TRANSFORMATIONS IN
INDO-EUROPEAN MYTH
- 10:00 – 10:30** JOSEPH HARRIS
*Harvard University, USA &
NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA
Princeton University, USA*
SEXUAL METAMORPHOSIS AND ‘THE BINARY’
- 10:30 – 11:00** *Coffee Break*
- 11:00 – 11:30** YAROSLAV VASSILKOV
*Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography,
St. Petersburg, Russia*
INDIAN MYTHOLOGY OF THE CAVE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE
- 11:30 – 12:00** KRZYSZTOF GUTOWSKI
University of Warsaw, Poland
AGNIHOTRA AS A RITUAL *MODEL OF* AND *MODEL FOR* THE
TRANSFORMATIONS OF REALITY

12:00 – 12:30 BORIS OGUIBÉNINE
University of Strasbourg, France
BUDDHIST HELL AS SACRIFICE METAMORPHOSED

12:30 – 14:30 **Lunch Break**

**Business Lunch for IACM Board of Directors
and Conference Organizers**

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: MYTHOLOGY OF THE AMERICAS AND EAST ASIA

CHAIR: LOUISE MILNE

14:30 – 15:00 PETRA VOGLER
Ludwigsburg University of Education, Germany
PWATAKIS AND DIVINATION SYSTEMS PREDOMINANTLY PRACTICED IN
THE TWO MAJOR CUBAN CULTS SANTERÍA (REGLA DE OCHÁ)
AND PALO MONTE (LAS REGLAS DE CONGO)

15:00 – 15:30 MARTÍN CUITZEO DOMÍNGUEZ NUÑEZ
*Center for Research and Advanced Studies in Social
Anthropology (CIESAS), Mexico City, Mexico*
FLOUR IN THE SKY: A NORTHWEST MEXICO PA IPAI MYTH ABOUT THE
ORIGIN OF MILKY WAY

15:30 – 16:00 MICHAL SCHWARZ
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS AND THEIR EMOTIONAL POLARITY IN EAST
ASIAN FOLK TALES

16:00 – 16:30 **Coffee Break**

16:30 – 17:00 YOKO NAONO
International Christian University, Tokyo, Japan
DISTRIBUTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOTIF OF “THE ORIGIN
OF PEOPLE’S DEATH” IN JAPAN

17:00 – 17:30 KOKO NANGO
Kobe University, Japan
SAN-JIN, HUNTER, AND CHRISTIANITY: THE OVERLAPPING IMAGE OF
THE MISSIONARIES AND IMAGINARY PEOPLE LIVING IN THE MOUNTAIN

17:30 – 18:00 JINGHUA HUANG
Yunnan University, China
STORY AND RITUAL: HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE LAHU'S CREATION
MYTH IN FOUR VILLAGES?

THURSDAY, JUNE 13

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION: MYTHOLOGY AROUND THE WORLD I

CHAIR: NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA

INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGIES

09:00 – 09:30 NATĀLIJA ABROLA
University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia
OLD INDIAN AŚVINĪ, UṢAS, AND LATVIAN DIEVA DĒLI: POTENTIAL
PARALLELS

09:30 – 10:00 YURI KLEINER
St. Petersburg State University, Russia
FROM THE RAGE OF GODS TO SWEARING
(SEMANTICS OF THE OLD GERMANIC 'INNER WORLD')

10:00 – 10:30 VÁCLAV BLAŽEK
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
WOLF OR SHE-WOLF AS A FOSTER IN INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGICAL
TRADITIONS AND BEYOND

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00 – 11:30 ALDIS PŪTELIS
Rīga, Latvia
WHAT IF GRUNAU WAS RIGHT? AN OLD-PRUSSIAN CHRONICLE AS A
SOURCE FOR MYTHOLOGY RESEARCH

MYTHOLOGY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

11:30 – 12:00 LEILA ABDI
Shiraz University, Iran
THE INFLUENCE OF VEGETAL AND MARTYR GODS ON THE
CONSTRUCTION OF “HUSSEIN”: A COMPARISON OF TAMMUZ AND
SYAVASH

12:00 – 12:30 VLADIMIR SAZONOV
University of Tartu, Estonia
THE ROLE OF BEER IN SUMERO-AKKADIAN AND HITTITE
MYTHOLOGIES: SOME COMPARATIVE NOTES

12:30 – 14:00 **Lunch Break**

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: MYTHOLOGY AROUND THE WORLD II

CHAIR: BORIS OGUIBÉNINE

SLAVIC AND FINNO-UGRIC MYTHOLOGY

14:00 – 14:30 YULIA A. KRASHENINNIKOVA
*Institute of Language, Literature, and History of Komi Science
Center, Syktyvkar, Russia*
MYTHOLOGICAL CONTEXTS IN THE RITUAL DIALOGUES OF THE RUSSIAN
WEDDING CEREMONY

14:30 – 15:00 ELENA BOGANEVA
*Center for the Belarusian Culture, Language, and Literature
Researches, Minsk, Belarus* &
MARE KÕIVA & ANDRES KUPERJANOV
Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia
MYTHS RELATED TO TREES

15:00 – 15:30 REET HIEMÄE
Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia
MAPPING THE TRAJECTORIES OF THE PLAGUE SPIRIT: A CASE STUDY OF
HANDLING COLLECTIVE FEAR

15:30 – 16:00 *Coffee Break*

MYTHOLOGY OF MONGOLIA AND AFRICA

16:00 – 16:30 MARIA MAGDOLNA TATÁR
Oslo, Norway
A HOLY MOUNTAIN IN THE DESERT GOBI, MONGOLIA, HUNTING
GROUND AND HOLY PLACE

16:30 – 17:00 JOHN M. SAUL
Paris, France
ELAND AND STORK, AND THE ORIGIN OF HUMANITY'S OLDEST BELIEFS

17:00 – 17:45 MUSICAL SURPRISE

FRIDAY, JUNE 14

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION: TRANSFORMATION, MYTHOLOGY, AND MODERNITY

CHAIR: MARCIN LISIECKI

09:00 – 09:30 SIARHEI ANOSHKHA
Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw, Poland
METAMORPHOSIS OF THE FOUNDING MYTH OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS
CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS (MORMONS): THE PROPHET JOSEPH
SMITH AND REVELATION

09:30 – 10:00 ANNELI MIHKELEV
Tallinn University, Estonia
THE BIBLICAL MYTHS IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

10:00 – 10:30 KATHERINE ANNA NEW
New College, University of Oxford, UK
THE METAMORPHOSES OF MYTH IN RUSSIAN NEO-CLASSICAL DRAMA:
TRANSFORMING THE PRELUDE TO THE TROJAN CYCLE

10:30 – 11:00 **Coffee Break**

11:00 – 11:30 INDREK OJAM
University of Tartu, Estonia
USING MYTH FOR THE SAKE OF LITERARY REALISM:
THE CASE OF MATI UNT

11:30 – 12:00 ALEXANDRA YATSYK
Polish Centre of Advanced Studies, Warsaw, Poland
NECROPOLITICAL MYTHMAKING AND NATIONALISM: THE CASE OF
POLAND

12:00 – 12:20 POSTERS DISCUSSION:

HASMIK H MAYAKYAN
Institute of Oriental Studies, Yerevan, Armenia
AROUND SOME COMMONALITIES IN RITES RELATED TO HATTI-HITTITE
GODS HAŠAMILI AND TELEPINU

URMAS SUTROP
Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia
METAMORPHOSIS IN SNOW WHITE FAIRY TALES

12:20 – 13:00 GENERAL DISCUSSION & CONCLUDING REMARKS

19:00 – Conference Closing Dinner

Vilde and Vine Restaurant
Vallikraavi 4, Tartu

ABSTRACTS

THE INFLUENCE OF VEGETAL AND MARTYR GODS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF “HUSSEIN”: A COMPARISON OF TAMMUZ AND SYAVASH

LEILA ABDI
Shiraz University, Iran

“The Vegetal Gods” are very common in the myths of agricultural regions such as Mesopotamia (contemporary Iraq), Iran, Egypt and Greece. These mythical narratives play an important role in the construction of beliefs of people, and are more noticeable during the plantation, growing and harvesting process. The vegetal gods have been recognized by specific names in different regions; such as, Tammuz in Mesopotamia and Syavash in Iran. As Babylonia is located in the west of Iran, these two regions have had many influences on each other. This is why that even after the transformation of the religious system in Iran, which happened when Islam entered Iran in AD 651, some characteristics of these vegetal gods remained alive in the Islamic figures. It is particularly very visible in some rituals which have been held for the martyrdom of “Imam Hussein”, the third Imam of Shiite who is a prominent Islamic figure.

This research explores the ways in which the characteristics of Sivash and Tammuz have influenced the construction of the figure of “Hussein”. It analyses some dominant elements, such as plant, water, woman, mourning, marriage and sacrifice which construct the narratives of the martyrdom of “Hussein”. This research focuses on the mourning rituals which are practiced during the first ten days of Muharram in Iran. It also looks at the main narratives of the martyrdom of Hussein in Islamic religious books such as Rowzat –al-Shohada (Martyrs’ paradise). The research has compared these rituals which are held in different regions of Iran. The comparison of different regions in Iran indicates that these rituals are more held in north and east of Iran because they have been geographically far from Iraq Caliph at that time.

OLD INDIAN *AŠVINĪ*, *UŠĀS*, AND LATVIAN *DIEVA DĒLI*: POTENTIAL PARALLELS

NATĀLIJA ABROLA
University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

The author of this paper is going to trace potential propinquity of Old Indian mythological deities *Ašvinī* and *Ušās* with their Latvian counterparts – *Dieva dēli* (Sons of God) – *Auseklis*, *Ūsiņš* and *Jānis*. Although, most often these are two Sons of God mentioned in Latvian folklore texts called *Dainas*, however, not infrequently there are four of them, i.e., *Mārtiņš* comes as the fourth one¹. The selected celestial deities will be reflected in their respective pantheon of deities as well as the comparison of their functional, semantic and semiotic area will be conducted. In addition, a more in-depth study on the controversial deity *Ūsiņš* will be performed to explore its ancient origins with relation to aerial deities. Likewise, to illustrate the sustainability of Latvian tradition to modern times, georeferencing on the map of corresponding Latvian toponyms and index of anthroponyms will be created. In order to investigate similarities and distinctions, the combined methodology will be applied: structural semiotics, archive investigation, analysis and synthesis.

¹ “Dainu kods”. Janīna Kursīte-Pakule. Rīga: Rundas, 2018. Pp. 103-106.

**METAMORPHOSIS OF THE FOUNDING MYTH OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS (MORMONS):
THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH AND REVELATION**

SIARHEI ANOSHKVA

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw, Poland

The rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) is a phenomenon of psychological, sociological and, above all, religious nature. The confession that was born on the American continent in the first half of the 19th century among immigrants who came to the New World from Europe is a phenomenon not only in the dimension of America. Mormonism in its course as a religion of short history has evolved from a sect despised and persecuted by its surroundings to a respected and vital denomination.

The founder of this new religion was, according to Mormon doctrine, Christ himself who entrusted the mission of renewing His Church on Earth to a poor American boy, Joseph Smith. In 1820, Smith experienced the first vision, when the Father and Son, when answering a question about belonging to a Church, ordered him not to enter into any denomination, because all are mistaken and constitute a disgrace to the Lord's eyes. In 1823, during the next Smith's vision, he was visited by the angel Moroni, who revealed the fact of hiding the holy book written on golden plates.

In the story of this young American religion, the most interesting seems to be the metamorphosis of the Church's founding myth. This is derived from the fact that the Mormon doctrine has been changed many times because it has aroused controversy not only for the 19th-century American society but even for adherents among the followers of the Prophet Smith.

In my paper, I would like to focus on the issue of changes that were taking place in the God's Revelation understanding in Smith's narrative, and how it influenced the history of the first community of Church's followers.

**THE BRAIN, THE SOCIAL GROUP AND HISTORY:
PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF TESTS AND STATISTICS DEVISED TO DISCUSS
CHANCES OF *PAREIDOLIA*, CONVERGING EVOLUTION AND RANDOMNESS IN
ASTERISMS AND (MYTHOLOGICAL) NARRATIVE**

PAOLO BARBARO

Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, France

In the last years, when presenting my researches based on comparative mythology and comparative ethnoastronomy outside of the circles of comparati(vi)sts, I've often encountered four strong counter-arguments to my findings – or I shall say strong in the perspective of the persons that I was arguing with: converging evolution, archetypes, *pareidolia* and randomness. Using those criticisms – especially those of scholars whose academic work and method I keep in high esteem – means applying the scientific method, i.e. measuring my hypothesis on the scale of counter-hypothesis, testing them through experiments and measurement-based analysis, and refining and eventually abandoning parts of the hypothesis basing my work on the experimental findings. Not satisfied with the quantity and results of studies published so far on the matter, some of which are indisputably of high quality, I've devised a number of tests and of statistical/probability analysis, in order to better understanding assumptions that are at the heart of my researches: the meaning of similarities in distant asterisms and (mythological/folk) narratives. The first tests aimed at discussing *pareidolia* in asterisms. They have been designed together with scholars coming from other trainings (computing, statistics, psychology and neurosciences). The focus soon enlarged to discuss also methodologies and to involve narratives that are distant in time and space but not in content, plot or topics. The tests and calculations performed so far include a small portion of the visible (night) sky, a selection of asterisms, and a very low number of myths (e.g. the Orpheus type). I will present the tests performed, the methodological choices, and the preliminary results, and I will invite others to join in the discussion and help performing more tests.

THE FOLKTALE. CATEGORIES OF MOTIFS, PATTERNS OF MOTIFS' SPREAD AND HISTORY OF EURASIA

YURI BEREZKIN

*Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography,
St. Petersburg, Russia*

The efficiency of the quantitative approach to folklore data depends on the choice of particular statistical program. Such a program should fit the mode of replication peculiar to computed units, i.e. narrative episodes and ideas concerning the worldview (both are called *motifs*). Unlike genes between species, motifs can be brought across linguistic and cultural borders. The cross-cultural transfer of the motifs creates an extremely complex picture of the distribution of thousands of motifs in hundreds of traditions. Factor analysis is a way to reduce this picture to a few understandable tendencies. The latter are represented by the principal components (PC). Each PC selects a particular group of traditions that contains the most similar set of motifs and another group that contains a set of motifs that is most different from the first one. Tendencies in the distribution of particular motifs revealed by different PCs are independent from each other. The 1st PC usually selects all traditions that are well described from the poorly known ones and is not of much interest for us. Tendencies revealed by the 2nd and the 3rd PC are the most meaningful. Different thematic categories of motifs also demonstrate different distribution (their spread was influenced by different historical processes). Applying factor analysis to particular thematic groups of motifs, one reveals tendencies that contain information on different epochs. The dating is possible thanks to presence or absence of Eurasian motifs in the New World (the time and the course of the peopling of America is basically known). As a result, we select interaction spheres (patterns of information exchange) in their historical dynamics from Terminal Pleistocene to the Early Modern Period. The report is illustrated by 15 maps that reflect major tendencies of the areal distribution of folklore motifs.

WOLF OR SHE-WOLF AS A FOSTER IN INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGICAL TRADITIONS AND BEYOND

VÁCLAV BLAŽEK
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

The present contribution analyzes the motif of a she-wolf or wolf as a foster of a hero in several Indo-European traditions, namely Italic (Roman: Romulus et Remus according to *Ab urbe condita* by Titus Livius), Celtic (Irish Cormac Mac Airt), Germanic (Langobardic *Lopichis* according to *Historia Langobardorum* 4.37 by Paulus Diaconus), Greek (Miletus according to *Metamorphoses* 30), and hypothetically Iranian (borrowed into Turkic traditions and documented in Chinese annals *Zhoushu*, *Suishu*). Finally, the external parallels are discussed.

MYTHS RELATED TO TREES

ELENA BOGANEVA

*Center for the Belarusian Culture, Language, and Literature Researches,
Minsk, Belarus*

MARE KÕIVA & ANDRES KUPERJANOV

Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia

This paper examines Slavic (from Russian to South Slavic area), Baltic-Finnic (from Finnish to Livonian area) retellings of universal mythological motifs about trees. Also, the variability of vernacular etiologies about trees. The current analysis is based on data collected in the 19th to 21st century in the territories of Estonia and Belarus in the context of Slavonic, Baltic, Finno-Ugric, and Scandinavian belief systems. The digital folklore materials are currently kept in the collection of Scriptorium (Tartu) and Belorussian Ethnolinguistic Atlas (BELA, Minsk). Since the end of the 1980s, both archives have been constantly systemized and integrated into scientific circulation.

1) First of all, the motifs related to the large tree, world tree and the tree shadowing the world are considered;

2) Secondly, the main semantic field connected with people turning into trees is examined;

3) Thirdly, the semantic field of oral narratives about the trees is connected with the layer of vernacular etiologies and biblical texts, also found in charms. Etiology provides information on the aspen, birch, spruce, juniper, willow, etc. Some trees are given certain characteristics of aid (according to that, blessed trees could comprise juniper and rowanberry, also willow and spruce) or punishment and curse (aspen, other deciduous trees).

Sub-motifs and storytellers are:

a) lack of respect or indicating,

b) refusal to offer shelter to the Holy Family (Jesus, Mary) or to other persons (Judas, Devil, as well as the man-killer from epics).

Diverse qualities of trees (bitter, white, or red bark or juice, etc.) are discussed. The core of myth serves as a template for establishing etiological concepts.

FLESH TO STONE, STONE TO FLESH: LITHIC TRANSFORMATIONS IN INDO-EUROPEAN MYTH

SIGNE COHEN
University of Missouri, USA

This paper explores Indo-European myths, legends, and folktales involving living beings turning to stone, and conversely, beings of stone coming alive. I will examine Old Norse myths involving giants and dwarves (such as *Alvíss*) turning to stone in the sun and trace this theme through later folk tales as well. This paper also analyzes Balor of the Evil Eye in Irish mythology, Celtic legends about stone circles (giants or humans turned to stone), Medusa's petrifying gaze in Greek myth, the basilisk's equally harmful gaze in Greek and later medieval legends, and Ahalyā's transformation in Hindu texts such as the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, *Skandapurāṇa*, *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*, *Raghuvamśa*, and *Rāmcaritmānas*. I then turn to tales of beings of stone coming alive, or petrified humans coming back to life. Examples include Galatea in Greek myth, various Hindu legends of stone images of deities coming alive, and the un-petrification of Ahalyā through the grace of Rāma. I argue that while living beings may turn to stone for many different reasons in these narratives (dwarves, giants, or trolls stepping beyond the boundaries of the world where they belong, petrification as a metaphor for the scorching and destructive heat of the sun, or petrification as punishment for social and religious transgressions), the un-petrification of those who are made of stone frequently represents divine grace.

BURNING MAN AND META-MYTHOLOGICAL LANGUAGE

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Burning Man has several interesting characteristics for the student of mythological morphology. First, it is a highly influential cultural phenomenon with a mythological kernel that has gained more complexity as it has evolved. Second, this evolution, including various contentious aspects (such as keeping “the man” at the center) is extremely well documented. Third, the theme of this year's burning man is “Metamorphosis.”

This paper will first present the history of burning man and various embedded mythological claims from the earliest source documents. Second, it will examine the morphology of this mythology from the agendas of groups which attempted to shape it in various ways. Third, a meta- mythological language will be suggested which integrates the morphology of modern mythmaking (especially Burning Man) with classical literature on semiotics (Saussure, Barthes) and Laurasian mythology (Witzel) and explain why “Metamorphosis” is an appropriate unifying theme between ancient and modern myths.

**FLOUR IN THE SKY:
A NORTHWEST MEXICO PA IPAI MYTH ABOUT
THE ORIGIN OF MILKY WAY**

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In this paper I will try to develop a methodology, at the same time contrastive and comparative, in order to understand a Pa Ipai Myth from Baja California, Mexico. This myth is about the origin of the Milky Way. In order to achieve this goal, I will contrast and compare this story with a Kumeyaay myth, from Southern California, and also with a popular Mexican tale from Bolson de Mapimí in Durango, Mexico.

I will try to identify differences and similarities in the superficial elements of the story and its relation with the structure and internal narrative functions of the myth. Then I will analyze the results departing from the social, cultural and historical context of each myth in a contrastive and comparative way. Finally, in order to make the interpretations I will use the analogical hermeneutic perspective developed by Mexican philosopher Mauricio Beuchot.

***AGNIHOTRA AS A RITUAL MODEL OF AND MODEL FOR
THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF REALITY***

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The main purpose of this paper is to describe Vedic *agnihotra* ritual (daily morning and evening offering) as a *model of* and a *model for* transformations of Reality. The textual sources analyzed in the paper are the Brāhmaṇas: the *Jaiminīyabrāhmaṇa* and the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*.

The *Agnihotra* is strictly related to the process of the positive change. The two aspects of the *agnihotra*'s interpretations in the Brāhmaṇas will be presented:

- cosmology – *agnihotra* as a *model of* and *for* the transformations of Reality and ritual model corresponding to these transformations
- soteriology – transformation of the ontological status of the Sacrificer achieved through the offering of the *agnihotra*.

Apart from the philological methodology, cognitive linguistics' methodology will be applied in order to reconstruct these aspects of the Vedic perception of the *agnihotra* ritual.

SEXUAL METAMORPHOSIS AND 'THE BINARY'

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&

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From antiquity and myths in general, we know a few famous figures such as the Greek Tiresias, the Old Norse Loki, and the Welsh Gwydion and Gilfaethwy who have been women or otherwise have changed sex. Our brief and necessarily incomplete survey will concentrate primarily on the Indo-European materials and include Germanic and Scandinavian, Greek, Indic, and Slavic instances. In the first part of the paper, we will try to determine the significance of sex change in mythology: what characters undergo such a change? how does the mythological narrative deal with it? what are the consequences of this change?

But, using the fraught sex-gender contrast, we distinguish actual sex change in myth and folklore cross-culturally from instances of *gender manipulation*, which are much more common, including in real life. We pause on one such story, the chilling "The Wife who 'went out' like a man," that conveys primal fear of gender manipulation and transformation. However brief, the story is of particular interest because it was recorded decades before the issue of transgenderism became a hot political topic.

What gives urgency to these myths in our world is that such metamorphoses are being performed in reality on a daily basis. The next generation is preparing a normalization of transformations that could only rarely be imagined in even myths. A philosophical background is developing that of course does not involve the punitive magic or pure mischief of the myths but rather concepts of identity and "the binary." The talk will attempt to assess the relationship of ancient mythological ways of thinking to modern political and philosophical identity constructions.

MAPPING THE TRAJECTORIES OF THE PLAGUE SPIRIT: A CASE STUDY OF HANDLING COLLECTIVE FEAR

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There were many people ill with plague in Avanduse. Even now there is the Katku [Plague] village where the plague ended. During war the cart of the plague spirit crashed. The plague spirit stopped, got very angry and said: "Even my children and grandchildren should not come here any more!"

In plague legends the main emphasis is on survival. Mental danger maps, place names and etymologies as meaningful knots on these maps, and the plague spirit and human actors exemplifying certain behaviors on this mythologized landscape are mediated in respective narratives, pointing to order and logic in the irrational outbursts of the illness. Based on a corpus of approximately 1500 Estonian plague legends and other topical accounts (printed in Hiimäe 1997), the author demonstrates in her paper the importance of such recurrent motifs in selective and often anachronistic information collecting and remembering (e.g., pre-13th century place names are related to the last plague outburst in 1710, referring to the causes that started or ended the epidemic; some narrators claim to have seen the plague spirit even 150 years after the last plague epidemic in Estonia), concluding that many plague legends function as narrative guidelines of collective and subjective coping (cf., Hiimäe 2016). Drawing parallels with contemporary legends, the author points out that several mechanisms of creating mental danger maps and narrative coping logics associated with these have a rather universal character that becomes visible also in less mythological contexts.

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STORY AND RITUAL: HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE LAHU'S CREATION MYTH IN FOUR VILLAGES?

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The Lahu, inhabit mountainous area of Yunnan province of China. My places of field investigation consisted of 4 villages located in the south-west of Yunnan. In four villages, regarding the creation story, there is a common name — “Mud Phaf Mil Phaf” and a similar storyline. However, there are some differences. The emphasis is that they are different from each other not only in the completeness and systematic of the story, but also on how to tell, how to think about, and how to explain these stories.

What is “Mud Phaf Mil Phaf”? “Mud Phaf Mil Phaf” is different from *Mud Phaf Mil Phaf*. As a written text collected by a folklorist, *Mud Phaf Mil Phaf* is related to the knowledge of the subject. Indeed, it's an outsider's view. As a book, it is regarded as the classic example, or as the representative of The Lahu's myth. In my fieldwork, “Mud Phaf Mil Phaf” in the folklife is not only a story in narrative form, but also a kind of operational knowledge, when it appears in the form of words in a worship ceremony to solve specific problems, and it answers the question of “how to do”.

On the issue of “what is the Lahu's creation myth?” For me, it's analyzable. But for the locals, it is unanalyzable. Unanalyzable creation myth, in the visible and invisible form, exists in their daily lives. The Lahu's creation myths in four village's folklife represent a non-reflective habit and daily behavior. It's hard for the locals to pull it away from their lives. They have such a strong feeling that they should do it, so that they have an unshakeable conviction about how to practice: this makes them choose and rebuild their stories through diversified beliefs, thoughts and feelings. We could see the existing state of the creation myth in the behavior practices of different villages. In these stories, or in their practice of stories, they meet with different gods (Buddhism, Christianity and folk religion) through different celebrations and then get access to purification. Of course, they also ask the gods for help to maintain a smooth life whenever they need. Indeed, it's a communication.

In sum, as to the question of “what is creation myth?” or “what is the Lahu's creation myth”, How to think about it, and how to answer it---the process reflects the focus of the interaction between two sides: it has been transferred from the locals to me (as otherness/the other). It also provides us a good opportunity to rethink about ourselves and then to get a better understanding of myth.

AROUND SOME COMMONALITIES IN RITES RELATED TO HATTI-HITTITE GODS HAŠAMILI AND TELEPINU

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We intend discussing some common features in rites and myths relating to the Hatti-Hittite blacksmith god Hašamili and the disappearing-returning, patron of nature god Telepinu. Particularly, we examined the spring rite *antaḥšum* during a wine was poured in front of hearth, fleece, window, ^{GIŠ}Hašamili (Hašamili's stick or tree). In other cases, sacrifices were devoted to hearth, throne, window, wooden bar and Hašamili.

It is interesting that the abovementioned rite attributes relating to god Hašamili, i.e., hearth, throne, window, door lock, ^{GIŠ}Hašamili have their clear parallels in rites and myths dedicated to disappearing- returning god Telepinu. According to myth Telepinu disappears and takes away with him the country's prosperity and by returning with the support of goddess Kamrusepa, brings back and reintroduces the prosperity. The final part of this myth describes a rite whereby by returning Telepinu begins taking care of the country: clouds leave the window ... the woods calm down in the hearth... the evergreen tree Eya with hanging fleece full of amenities is erected before Telepinu, who handles the fleece to the underworld lord:

Hašamili	Telepinu
Window	Window
Hearth	Hearth
Golden Fleece	Golden Fleece
^{GIŠ} Hašamili	Evergreen tree Eya
Throne	Underworld Lord

It is obvious that the rite attributes are same in both cases, with the following exceptions: Hašamili's tree is replaced by Eya, and the throne by the underworld lord in Telepinu rite.

We will touch upon other similarities in regard to these two gods in details during presenting the paper.

Summarizing, we should emphasize that the blacksmith gods (in this case Hašamili) stand as culture heroes in various mythologies, supporters of humans and therefore are comparable to definite functions of dying-and-rising and nature patron deities that are evident in the above Hittite myths.

TO CALL UPON THE ANCESTORS: THE MEANING OF BECOMING PART OF MYTH IN *BLACK PANTHER*

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Black Panther is more than a most successful popular entertainment film among recent Marvel productions. It is an outstanding example of Afrofuturism also. In this paper, I shall try to illuminate what kind of vision this film presents to our society, as a utopian story dealing with an animal myth: More concretely, how metamorphosis into the Panther empowers black people, who have been suffering from exploitation and diaspora. There are clearly several differences between the Panther myth and Western traditional myths, even though Marvel comic itself is a mostly “Western” production, and this is the very point to be discussed when we consider about how much significant myths and its adaptations are.

Other modern superheroes are a vessel for superpower acquired by a single person either a posteriori or a priori, but *Black Panther* is in this point quite otherwise: Panther’s powers can deliberately be both acquired and lost by ingesting the heart-shaped herb, which leads the person who decides to become the Panther to have a dialogue with the ancestors. So, in the film, there appears two Panthers, one is a Wakandian, the rightful king and who can talk to his father on equal footing and blame him for a past mistake, and the other is American, an abandoned descendant because of his father’s betrayal to Wakanda, whose only motivation is revenge for abandonment. It makes a contrast between the two Panthers, and in the end, we come to find that overcoming ancestor’s mistake is the fundamental theme.

Moreover, a precious metal, vibranium, plays an important role in the *Black Panther* to vanquish the evil. It triggers us to consider how we should use technology not harming to nature. Wakanda as a sci-fi utopia could be our ideal society, where tradition, technology and nature perfectly harmonize with each other.

FROM THE RAGE OF GODS TO SWEARING (SEMANTICS OF THE OLD GERMANIC 'INNER WORLD')

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According to George Borrow, the author of *The Romany Rye* (1857), the word *mother* in “vulgar sayings”, being of Scandinavian origin, meant “not the female who bore us, but rage and choler”. The idea is based on the putative affinity of OI *móðir* ‘mother’ and *móðr* ‘anger’. In the mythological *Vǫluspá* of the *Elder Edda*, *móðr* is used to describe the fury of Thor, cf. *Þórr þrunginn móði* ‘Thor, swollen with rage’ (*Vsp* 26: 2) and *Óðins sonr ... drepr af móði* ‘Othin’s son ... in anger smites’ (*Vsp* 56: 3, 5). In the *Prose Edda*, Thor’s fury is juxtaposed with his pacification: *þá gekk af honum móðrinn, ok sefaðist hann* ‘the fury departed from him, and he became appeased’ (*SE* 45). It is denoted by the verb *sefa* (refl. *sefask*) ‘to soothe, soften, “eig. ’zur besinnung bringen”’ (De Vries, 467), possibly akin to OI *sefi* ‘Sinn, Gemüt’ (ibid.) and *svefn* ‘sleep’ (Cleasby – Vigfusson, 518). The noun and the verb signify two directly opposed notions, ‘anger, (combative) spirit’ (cf. German *Mut*) and ‘peace’, covering the entire Germanic heroic/mythological psyche sphere. At a later stage, the two ceased to be disjunct; the ‘epic repetitions’ in the episode of the funeral of Scyld Scefing, describing his associates’ state of mind, (*him wæs*) *geōmor sefa*, // *murnende mōd* ‘their hearts were grieving // their minds mourning’ (*Beowulf* 49b – 50a), suggest that *sefa* and *mōd* are (near) synonymous. Likewise, OE *mōdsefa* ‘character’, cf. *wæs his mōdsefa / manegum gecyðed* ‘his character was known to many a one’ (*Beowulf* 349), must represent one semantic whole belonging to spiritual sphere as distinguished from that of the body (a physical entity), cf. *ban-loca* ‘body’, lit. ‘bone enclosure’. In this context, the evolution suggested by Borrow must have involved paronymic attraction of the words for ‘mother’ and ‘anger’, not necessarily limited to the Germanic realm; cf. Russian *materit’sja* ‘to curse (= express anger)’ and (denominative) *mat* ‘obscenities collectively’; cf. also Russian *kljast’* ‘to curse’ and *kljast’sja* ‘to give an oath’ vis-à-vis Mod. English *to swear* (**swer-*, Gmc. **andswaru* ‘a swearing against, rebuttal’, hence, a possibility of ritualistic word-flyting) and *to swear an oath*.

BODY AND COSMOS: THE LOGIC OF MYTHICAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN OLD NORSE RELIGION

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The Old Norse mythology contains a certain number of motifs of body transformation that serve as crucial points of the cosmogonic process. Gods or other anthropomorphic beings are sacrificed or wounded in various ways and these acts translate directly to the establishment of the Cosmos and its various features.

As a part of my presentation, I will review a number of myths concerning the most prominent gods – Óðinn, Týr, Heimdallr, Loki and others – and provide an analysis of the symbolic logic that governs the seemingly surreal narratives. I will show that the types of transformations in the myths correspond to the basic types of tropes: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony. This perspicuous alignment of tropes and myths illustrates that they are related phenomena and that we need cognitive linguistics and the study of conceptual metaphors if we want to understand “the language of myth”.

As a theoretical epilegomenon I would like to formulate several notes on the problem of “the language of myth”, revising well known psychoanalytical, structuralist or socio-anthropological conceptions of how we should read myths.

**MYTHOLOGICAL CONTEXTS IN THE RITUAL DIALOGUES
OF THE RUSSIAN WEDDING CEREMONY
(BASED ON THE MATERIAL OF THE 19TH – 21ST CENTURIES)**

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Ritual question-answering dialogues are conducted by representatives of the bride and groom clans during the most important and tense moments of the ceremony: at the closed doors of the bride's house (with the goal to open the door for the bridegroom) and when “buying a place” next to the bride (i.e. getting the bride, bride purchasing). The analysis of archival and published materials of the 19th – first third of the 20th century, as well as modern records of the end 20th – beg. 21st. century and their comparison showed the following. In dialogues the representative of the bride's family is assigned the role of “verifier”, and the groomsman is assigned the role of “verifiable”, while the process of guessing is “closer to academic testing than to creative search” [Kengas-Marand 1978, 256], because groomsman is implied to know the only correct answer. That is emphasized by collectors and correspondents. Ritual dialogues which are pronounced at closed doors consist of questions and riddles, the functions of which is to identify those who came for the bride; to form a “common space” for both clans [Bayburin 1988, 135; Toporov 1999, 54]; to clarify the value reference points of the arrivals; to test the ability of the representative of the groom (read: as the groom) to overcome symbolic obstacles to the bride. Thus, the guessing at closed doors is a symbolic test of the groom with the aim of confirming his readiness (mental and physical) to transition to a different social and age status. In dialogues of the 19 – beg. 20 century plots and various genres, which are referring to various areas of traditional culture and everyday life, are included (references to apocryphae in particular the “The Verse about the Book of the Dove” (Golubinaya Kniga), fairy tales, charms and incantations, mythological perceptions and folkways, local historical, cultural and biographical facts, allowing to check the “inclusiveness” of those who arrived in the daily life of the collective, etc.). In the modern wedding the semantic and psychological scope of this ritual act becomes simpler, however the improvisational element strengthens. Improvisation is more concerned with the practical skills of the groom and his best man (sing, dance, draw, play, etc.). The tasks for ingenuity are also included, but they are simple and straightforward. Also riddles on ingenuity or just riddles are usually used.

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**THE DOLPHIN AND THE DRAGON:
COMPARING HINDU AND BUDDHIST ASPECTS OF A HUMAN/ANIMAL
TRANSFORMATION – AN EXAMPLE OF METAMORPHOSIS
IN TWO CAMBODIAN MYTHS**

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Until these days, many Cambodians would, without hesitation, admit that they believe the dolphins have a human origin, as it is said in the time-honored folklore tales. Several children in the central and southern part of Cambodia, south of the town of Kratie, don't even know what a dolphin is... (Irrawaddy dolphin, *Orcaella brevirostris*, in Khmer *ph'sout* to be precise) or believe them to be mythical creatures, similar to dragons. Dragons themselves play a crucial role in legends all over the world, and in Cambodia, which is predominantly a Buddhist country with Hindu ancestry and long observed traditions, is no different. In fact, in the Khmer mythology, dragons represent a crucial archetypal character since the very "beginning", for it is the *dragon princess* who can be considered the principal hero of the Cambodian creation myth. The dragon has also its place in many other traditional tales and legends dated back to different periods of Cambodian history, and even until modern times the Khmer people remind themselves the importance of the dragon symbol in the religious ordaining ceremony. This is because the word that Khmer language uses for "a dragon" also refers to a future monk before the initiation – *neak*, *bombonous neak*, "the ordained dragon" (which comes from a traditional folk story). In my paper, I would like to analyze the "dragon" features in the Cambodian Buddhist ordaining ceremony and explain how this type of a metamorphosis serves as a model of spiritual growth. This will be illustrated on the example of the legendary narrative about a dragon who wanted to become a Buddhist monk and compared with two other versions of Khmer human/animal transformation legends dealing with the origin of the Irrawaddy dolphin.

DOES MYTH HAVE TO BE OLD? PHILOSOPHICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORY OF MYTH

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(...) we cannot go beyond myth, because the human spirit is tireless in explaining life with the help of myths, in 'making sense' of reality
Bruno Schulz, *The Mythologization of Reality*

The main purpose of this paper is to describe theory and methodology of mythological research. There are reasons behind the choice of the topic of this essay. First of all, the significance of this topic comes from the fact that we still lack not only the definition of the concept of "myth", but also the explanation of how to study them. Secondly, often the myth is identified with an "old story", thus depreciating the threads appearing in contemporary culture. Lastly, we also need to reflect on the meaning of myth, and not just on the analysis of individual cases of stories, which we call mythological. For clarity of analysis the essay is divided into three parts:

- methodology and attempt to approximate a definition of myth (is it possible to define myth?);
- an attempt to outline a new approach to the study of myth;
- can myth be important in the contemporary culture?

KOMI BELIEFS AND PRACTICES CONCERNING THE REGULAR MONTHLY PURIFICATION OF THE FEMALE BODY

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In my presentation, I will discuss Komi-Syrjan's beliefs and practices concerning the menstruation. According to Komi myths, woman bleeds monthly, because negative creator Omöl' has given her the impurity or she took upon herself voluntarily all filth of the world. The concepts of woman's impurity are reflected in some terms of period: *сьöd д öрэм* "dirty shirt", *лэк выытыр* "bad body", *мысльасьом* "cleaning" and others.

In traditional culture, the regular monthly purification of female body has a semiotic status, allowing us to talk of "the mythology" of periods (G. Kabakova).

At the cultural level, menstruation is linked to a change of status – a girl's transition from one socio-age group to another. The girl's transition from childhood into girlhood is accompanied by a transformation in diverse aspects of a girl's life (T. Agapkina). For example, she gets the right to participate in the youth activities.

In my view, this transition contains the elements of initiation. This is manifested in taboo on a topic related to period in company of girls and in using of metaphor *пуч нур өм* "bite of a fox" in the messages about future monthly. Also, first menstruation was assessed by unprepared girls as their approximating death, that is an important stage in the rituals of passage.

The presence of period was regarded as a marker of girl's physiological maturity. The absence of menstruation was perceived as a deviation and could be the result of a magic spoiling. For example, the Komi has a practice to steal a period. Therefore, women were advised to follow certain rules in these days. Also, the woman was considered impure and danger to others during menstruation. In this regard, she must comply with prohibitions.

In my presentation, I will show how women's physiology defines the features of her behavior and the relation to her in traditional community.

**GHOSTLY TRANSFORMATIONS:
SUPERNATURAL SHAPESHIFTING IN MEDIAEVAL
ENGLISH HISTORIES**

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An examination of supernatural manifestations recorded in texts such as William of Malmesbury's *De Gestis Regum Anglorum* (c.1125), William of Newburgh's *Historia rerum Anglicarum* (c.1198), Walter Map's *De Nugis Curialium* (c.1182) and the works of the anonymous Monk of Byland (c.1400). These writers recorded encounters with ghosts, revenants, vampires and other enigmatic figures. To the mediaeval chronicler, a ghost was not necessarily the traditional spectral figure clad in shroud and chains: they ranged in form from shape-changing, violent entities, to the sense of an unseen presence, an ill-regarded location, or were embodied in the strange behaviour of animals. I consider various texts, comparing and contrasting the mediaeval accounts, from the earlier material, betraying possible Scandinavian influences, to the later stories which suggest that the church was playing a greater role in combatting supernatural influences by the close of the Middle Ages. I suggest methods of classification, and conclude by noting similarities between some of the mediaeval material and later literature works by the Brontës, and folkloric sources.

TRANSFORMATION AND PASSAGE IN A NORTH EURASIAN MYTHOLOGICAL AND RITUAL TRADITION: ANIMISM, SHAMANISM, EMBODIMENT, AND INDIGENOUS ONTOLOGY

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This paper follows two main approaches. On the one hand, it focuses on the ontological link between a North Eurasian ritual (e.g. Vasilevič 1957, Hamayon 1993, Vitebsky 1995) and heroic epic tradition (ATU 401; “Prinzessin als Hirschkuh”: *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* 10, 2002), and some related Upper Paleolithic and Neolithic rock carving sites in Southern Siberia (e.g. Martynov 1991, Okladnikov 1972, Jacobson-Tepfer 1993, 2010, 2015). On the other hand, it discusses critically the previous scholarly interpretations of the mythological tradition in question, principally the works of Dumézil (1958, 1971), Eliade (1970), Hummel (1973), Thompson (1955-58), Rühle (2002) and Uther (2004). The presenter deals with this subject matter interdisciplinarily, using the theories and methods of comparative mythology, ritual analysis, embodied cognition, prototype theory and ontology.

According to the original sujet of this archaic oral narrative type and ritual, the doe leads the male hero (hunter/shaman) to the otherworld, where it transforms into a human shape, they get married and return home. The semantic structure of this cohesive narrative and ritual tradition came to existence from the embodied human experience. One can find this common logic among almost every indigenous North and Central Eurasian population of the last four thousand years, mostly among the Tungusic, Turkic and Mongolic peoples. This complex and time enduring cognitive and perceptual symbol system was based on environmental perception (Gibson 1966, 1979), image schemas (Arnheim 1970; Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987; Mandler and Cánovas 2014) and their embodiment in the cognition of early hunter-gatherer communities. Among the population of the Taiga region during the thousands of years of the Paleolithic and Neolithic Age, the primary source of nutrition was the hunting of wild reindeer and moose, and this circumstance has been reflected by the riverside petroglyphs of Southern Siberia and by the oral narratives and rituals (rites of passage).

THREE TYPES OF STRUCTURE: PROPP, CHIASMUS, AND LÉVI-STRAUSS

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Many species of fauna and flora are in symmetrical in form. This does not only occur with living beings; we also see symmetry in the arrangement of atoms in a crystal. Symmetry enhances balance, and therefore stability. Nature shows abundant variations in forms, but at the deepest level it has a symmetrical structure. In nature, there exists an unnoticed innate structure. Man makes things while not always being conscious of symmetry, but when we look at our bodies, designs, buildings, and family crests, the results are most often symmetrical. We probably choose symmetry unconsciously or instinctively because, as mentioned earlier, it makes us feel comfortable and secure. It is then assumed that such symmetry exists in writings at all levels of a sentence, paragraph, and text. There is a problem. When symmetry is employed in writing, the beauty of balance will be apparent, while the need for new expressions remains unsolved. We need variations for new expressions. This conflict of stability and innovation can be reconciled by introducing partial innovations that do not damage the entire symmetry. Since the totality is the sum of the parts, by introducing a similar or inverted element in a symmetrical position to the opposite side of a corresponding constituting part, the total symmetry remains stable, while new elements are introduced in the parts to produce new expressions. This type of a technique of maintaining symmetry while at a same time producing new expressions is known by various names, such as chiasmus, chiasmic structure, inverted structure, ring composition, hysteron proteron, and V-structure. This technique has been in practice since antiquity and modern researchers find it in the Old Testament, the New Testament, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and so on.

In this paper, I plan to discuss several aspects of this technique. One is a review of the research history. In the process, I will inevitably touch upon two other modern, so-called structural analyses of myth: One by a group of formalists such as Vladimir Propp, Otto Rank, Lord Raglan, and Joseph Campbell; the other by a group of French structuralists such as Georges Dumézil and Claude Lévi-Strauss. I will review the research history of these three groups and argue that two are useful, but one is not worthy of the name structure. I also argue that we could have made faster progress in the humanities if the technique of the inverted structure was widely shared by modern mythology researchers. Lastly, I will give a bibliography of various studies about the technique of inverted structure. The bibliography shows this technique is still quite active not only in literature but in art and architecture.

THE BIBLICAL MYTHS IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

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The Bible is a text which has influenced literature and culture for a long time: there are numerous quotations, allusions to, and also transformations and metamorphoses in the literary texts. The motifs and myths of the Bible have entangled in the literary or cultural texts and they have different meanings in the new contexts. Most of all these texts are also neomythological: the Bible functions as a metatext in culture describing, via auto-communication, the culture itself.

The paper analyzes and compares different literary and cultural texts (manily) from Estonian literature and culture.

Anton Hansen-Tammsaare (1878–1940) uses many Biblical myths in his literary works. It is possible to compare also visual and verbal art, how different media uses and changes old myths. Tammsaare's play "Judith" (1921) interprets the apocryphal story of Judith from the Old Testament in a new way *etc.*

The main themes of the Estonian contemporary writer Ene Mihkelson's (b. 1944) neo-mythological literary works (both poetry and prose) are the severance of the identity of Estonians after the war and attempts to rediscover the deeper continuity of identity Mihkelson refers to several biblical legends in her poetry and novels, *e.g.* to the legends of John the Baptist, and Cain and Abel. She interweaves these different legends to describe national Estonian history and culture.

Ervin Õunapuu uses strong grotesque images in his short stories, and his stories contrast with traditional realism. He describes ugly events in life, but these stories are actually very poetic, full of contrasts and impressive images. He uses intertextual relations, and combines verbal and pictorial images in his stories and books, as well as historical motifs from Estonian and European history.

METAMORPHOSIS, MYTH, DREAMS & DESIRE: THE CASE OF THE WATERWOMAN

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Changes in how the waking world theorizes the otherworld instigate, and are accompanied by, changes in the general codification of metamorphic imagery and agencies in dream experience. Central to the mythos of the water-woman is the transformative power of desire (love, lust, fear, grief, hatred, vengeance). Her impossible or hybrid form is a focus of desire, so she is a dense figure in dream-culture (itself, in practice, always comprising several interwoven, even contradictory traditions).

The basic image of a female spirit attached to a place of water has endured for millennia in Western literature, legend and the visual arts, but this image can and has taken an enormous variety of forms, from ideal female nudes to monstrous hybrids. Supernatural water-women in myth and folkculture – the mermaids, nymphs and nereids of river, spring and cave – are marked as daimonic by their double nature: they shift from one form to another. Mortal women in extremity may also undergo transformation into watery forms, as punishment or reward; when their situation matches certain conditions, metamorphosis is the mythic substitute for death. Whether and in what circumstances women are credited with shape-shifting potential depends also on how far humans can be seen as daimonic (inherently, or through association).

Traditions concerning metamorphic water-women are mobilized historically to express changing cultural protocols about how desire works and how it should be harnessed. As the latter are redrawn and over time – notably under pressure from Christian authorities – the ways in which people adapt and alter water nymph visualizations offers evidence for the reorganization of desire-driven metamorphosis, and how it is conceived of in dreams, texts and art. The inexhaustible potential of the water-woman for every kind of metamorphosis propels the evolving repertoire of forms in art and literature. Arguably, moments of concentrated collective attention to this figure in the permanent artistic media signals that changes in the protocols of desire are underway.

DISTRIBUTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOTIF OF “THE ORIGIN OF PEOPLE’S DEATH” IN JAPAN

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According to Yuri Berezkin, we can presume, that among the myth that human beings already knew, when they departed from Africa about 60 thousand years ago, the motif "Why did people become mortal?" was the most important one. In Japan the variants of this motif are most frequently distributed in Okinawa, Japan's southernmost islands, and all of them are examples of the "shed skin" motif; that is, a snake bathed in water instead of humans and got the ability to shed skin and regenerate. This "Shed skin" motif is mainly popular in Africa, Pacific coast of Asia and South America, whereas it is rarely found in Northern Eurasia and North America. On the other hand, in one of the oldest history books, *Kojiki*, and in the early collections of Ainu (native people of northern Japan) tales, a characteristic motif of Southeast Asia, "strong and weak" is seen (people are mortal because they have been likened to something subject to decay and easy destruction). In general, however, most of the stories in Japan are composed on the basis of "the muddled message" motif (a person is sent by god to bring instructions or certain objects, but he distorts, forgets or replaces them), which is common in northern Eurasia, unlike other "death origin" motifs. Crows, the typical animal that causes death, well known in northern Eurasia and North America, also appear in several cases in Japan.

Thus, in the Japanese Archipelago a unique narrative world was created by the peculiar combination of motifs not seen elsewhere, and they suggest how people with different set of motifs came from Eurasia to Japan in the deep past.

SAN-JIN, HUNTER, AND CHRISTIANITY: THE OVERLAPPING IMAGE OF THE MISSIONARIES AND IMAGINARY PEOPLE LIVING IN THE MOUNTAIN

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The myth and tales about strangers have great meaning for a community. I would point out the image of stranger often connect with Europeans or their Christianity in non-European world. For example, in the notion of the highland Chiapas in Mexico, their soul, inherently means “the other”, conclude European [P. Pitarch:2010].

In this presentation I will focus on the Japanese legends and oral tales about SAN-JIN. SAN-JIN are half imaginary existences who live in mountain and they are not “normal human”—they have big body, they run so fast, they cannot speak like us.... And SAN-JIN were overlapped the hunters who were, so to speak “stranger”, in Japanese ordinary community where people were living by agriculture. Especially I’d like to talk about some tales of hunters and imaginal SAN-JIN, which connect with Christian missionaries [*Bateren*] and their believers [*Kirishitan*].

In Japan, after the banning of Christianity and closing the door to the other nations except the Netherlands and China in 1639, people almost never had met anyone who came from Europe. Thus in many cases the Europeans’ images were represented through the images of Christian missionaries who had come in 16th century and had left great impact—as magical, mythical, marvelous existence. After Christian missionaries and their believers disappeared from their community, they changed almost imaginary existence. Their images embodied the stranger. And in some tales, the images of SAN-JIN and Hunters connected with Missionaries and Christianity.

In the age of “discovery” Europeans met strangers in Latin America, Japan, and many areas in the world. But at the same time Europeans were also “discovered” as strangers. On my presentation I aim to reconsider the tales of SAN-JIN and hunters with the “discovered” strangers-- European and Christianity.

THE METAMORPHOSES OF MYTH IN RUSSIAN NEO-CLASSICAL DRAMA: TRANSFORMING THE PRELUDE TO THE TROJAN CYCLE

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The paper offers new ways of conceptualising and investigating Classical mythology, as perceived by the Russian Neo-classical mythological drama. The main argument is directed against the common assumption of scholars that the Russian Neo-Classical dramatists worked with fixed canonical Classical myths, that myth is inherently unstable, originating in narrative nodes, which are reshaped, branched, stretched, reversed, inverted, over long periods of time, in the plastic visual arts as well as in literature. Through typological analysis of the varied embodiments of the prelude to the Trojan Cycle extant from Ancient Greece and Rome, it is shown how these processes were already underway within two centuries of the first known record of the myth in the *Iliad*, how by Euripides' time a brief reference to a warrior's heroic death and his wife's grief had become the centre of dramatic action, and how in the era of the great Latin poets both main characters had been greatly developed in emotional and psychological complexity and in interaction with each other. Detailed analysis of key scenes in the Russian neo-classical drama, shows how the dramatists (each in his individual ways) were able to borrow, modify, invert, or add to the myth details from crucial stages in its history, and how they saw themselves as contributing to it, and so becoming themselves, through their own writing, members of the creative company of mythologists.

BUDDHIST HELL AS SACRIFICE METAMORPHOSED

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I examine and compare two mythographic accounts (*avadānas*) from a collection of Buddhist Sanskrit texts “Mahāvastu-Avadāna” (Mv.) with the aim to reevaluate their content from the perspective of the narrative developments illustrating such doctrinal points as the fruits of actions or, broadly speaking, of evil and retribution within the karmic birth view.

The key motif of the two accounts is ‘living-together’: on the one hand, it appears in the denomination and the description of one of the Buddhist hells (Sanskrit *saṃjīva* from Sanskrit verb *saṃjīv-* ‘to live with or together’, Mv. 1.10.9 sqq., called also ‘an abode of evil deeds’) and, on the other hand, the same motif is found in the account of a suspended sacrifice (Mv.2.94-115). The suspension is activated since the sacrificial process requires the totality of beings to sacrifice while the king Sucandrima observes a lacuna: the absence of Kinnarī (a female Kinnara, literally ‘a what-do-you-call-it’, *kiṃ-nara* ‘half-man, half-beast’). To fill the lacuna, the prince Sudhanu is sent to chase a Kinnarī and to capture her. The episode displays the effect of the ‘living-together’ motif: once the Kinnarī is captured by the prince, they both fall in love with each other, their love being justified in the karmic perspective by the fact that they lived together in former lives (Mv.2.98.14-15 ‘By living together in the past and by kindness in the present, so this love is born, as a lotus is born in water’).

It is possible that the use of the ‘living-together’ motif in the description of the hell *saṃjīva* is connected with the initially lacunary state of the sacrifice. This state is improved by supplementing it by the Kinnarī (involving the ‘living-together’ motif). Indeed, the description of the hell includes the reciprocity of negative actions of its inhabitants denoted by such expressions as Mv.1.10.12 *anyamanyam vivādentī* ‘they quarrel among themselves’ and Mv.1.10.14 *chindanti anyonyam* ‘they rend one another’, and is significantly concluded with the statement: “Thus has the Master, the Tathāgata (the Buddha), understanding its true nature called this hell *saṃjīva*’. The hell is depicted as transformed sacrificial process: in the description of the latter the ‘living-together’ implicates the filling up a deficiency as its precondition and resulting positive reciprocity of the agents, while in the former the ‘living-together’ is a feature determining its denomination (revealing, as the same motif in the presentation of the sacrifice, a doctrinal point of the karmic outcome, Mv.1.10.16 *pūrvakarmavipākataḥ* ‘as a result of reaping [the fruit] of their past deeds’) and unavoidable harmful reciprocity.

USING MYTH FOR THE SAKE OF LITERARY REALISM: THE CASE OF MATI UNT

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Mati Unt is considered of the foremost innovative Estonian authors of the second half of the 20th century Estonian prose. However, in his critical reception there has always existed some basic uncertainty concerning the interpretation of some his works. Should these texts be read as playful postmodern *écriture* or as seriously representing new social life-worlds of late socialism? Mati Unt has also been known to bring his knowledge of deep psychology and mythology, especially the works of Carl G. Jung, to his texts. But I claim that the key author for understanding Unt's writing is Roland Barthes and his critical theory of Myth, elaborated in his 1953 book „Mythologies“. In this work, Barthes analyzes the various myths underlying his contemporary society.

In turn, Unt creates his reality-effects by depicting different “primal scenes” and affects of urban life from the outside and with a fast pace; thus without revealing the personal backstory of characters and refusing long and epic plots. To use Barthes' terminology, Unt thus creates a depthless literary world whose meaning becomes self-evident solely through the typicality of its material details and its character gestures. There is, however, another component to Unt's literary strategy. The narrator or sometimes even characters themselves seem to be aware of the sheer “typicality” of their predicament and comment on it. This creates critical distance in the otherwise flat and transparent fictional world. In my presentation I focus on two of Unt's stories, both of which he later rewrote: “Kui me veel surnud ei ole, siis elame praegugi” and “Räägivad” (1984). My thesis is that despite his tendency to constantly mythologize the surrounding social world, this very act in fact contributes to the realistic verisimilitude of his works and creates the space for critical ambivalence towards their content.

THE RELEVANCE OF CELESTIAL PHENOMENA TO CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY

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There was a time when many scholars were prepared to treat almost every myth as a nature-myth and in particular a solar one. This school of mythology was severely criticized and even ridiculed at the end of the nineteenth century, and its contribution to our understanding of classical mythology may nowadays seem negligible. It is true that too many studies of the exponents of the solar mythology are disappointing. One may however regret that the area of their interests was almost completely abandoned by classical scholars. It becomes increasingly clear that, on the one hand, the population of the Aegean that emerged as the Greeks after a time of social dissolution and cultural decline, the Greek Dark Ages, was originally quite heterogeneous and that, on the other hand, the monuments of the Bronze Age Europe (in Scandinavia in particular) testify to remarkable interest in celestial phenomena, while the cultural connections between distant parts of Europe during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age were significant. One may therefore approach a number of Greek myths as echoes of notions and stories that go back to a social milieu with a greater interest in celestial phenomena and a better knowledge of them. Cultural change, cultural amalgamation and cultural decline were here at work; the so-called disease of language (frequently invoked by Max Müller) could also possibly play a role. Much debated myths of Cronus swallowing and disgorging his children, of Odysseus blinding Polyphemus, and of Daphne pursued by Apollo and changed into a laurel can be selected as examples.

WHAT IF GRUNAU WAS RIGHT? AN OLD-PRUSSIAN CHRONICLE AS A SOURCE FOR MYTHOLOGY RESEARCH

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The Baltic mythology has been struggling with scarcity of sources for the whole of its existence. The ancient documents practically provide no data on “the Hyperboreans” living on the coast of the sea here, mentions of amber as valuable goods only prove the fact that the shore here were inhabited.

The chronicles gradually turned from descriptions of the crusades from the perspective of the crusaders to more general aspects of the land conquered, though with contemporary political undertones, nevertheless.

Simon Grunau (1470?-1537?) was the first to create a comprehensive chronicle of Prussia. As the discipline of history requires, he tried to describe the land from its very beginning as known to him.

One of the most widely used parts of his document is the description of the Prussian cult and deities. This description complies with the mythology principles introduced by the French scholar Georges Dumézil (1898-1986) centuries later. Grunau’s system mentions a clearly three-tiered system of functions, the lower (food producer) level being larger and including brother (though not twin) deities. The cult described by Grunau would clearly support Dumézil’s stance.

Grunau has also provided valuable linguistic information in the form of a glossary of Prussian words and a Lord’s prayer – one of the oldest attestations of the text in a Baltic language.

Grunau’s work has been widely quoted and used (the American archaeologist and anthropologist Marija Gimbutas (1921-1994) relies on Grunau as a source).

Still the work is rather problematic. Grunau himself could have no reliable sources, the events he describes are distant past from his perspective, while even much more contemporary events are described differently in comparison with other documents of the period. Also the glossary and Prayer provide fought for thought.

THE CALL OF THE SHAMAN'S DRUM

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This paper follows up on the paper from the 9th Annual Conference in Torun, Poland (2015). The paper will be devoted to Siberian shamanism in mythological and linguistic contexts. First, I will focus on naming the shaman and shamaness in the languages of the Altai family (including Korean and Japanese). Then I will deal with the evidence of shaman's initiation, supernatural abilities (especially shapeshifting and animal transformations), crossing of gender, and passages to the other worlds in myths and rituals. I chose many examples from Tungusic, Mongolic, and Turkic traditions (especially Evenki, Nanai, Yakut, Altai, Tuvan, Buryat, Mongolian). I compare them to each other and then with some myths, rituals and language records of the neighboring groups (Korean, Japanese, Uralic, Ket, Nivkh, Yukaghir and Chukotko-Kamchatkan). Finally, I will compare these mythological topics in traditions of various cultures of the Northern Asia and try to attest some aspects of the reconstructed Proto-Altaic mythology and shamanistic tradition.

ELAND AND STORK, AND THE ORIGIN OF HUMANITY'S OLDEST BELIEFS

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The eland was the focus of the Bushman's deepest aesthetic feelings and his highest moral and intellectual speculations. The Mountain Bushmen were the People of the Eland.

Patricia Vinnicombe, author of *People of the Eland* (1978)

All the hunting stories are about eland.

Shani Mangola, a member of the Hadza community

Evidence from the now extinct /Xam Bushman of southern Africa and the Hadza of northern Tanzania provide elements of a theological scheme whereby the dead or their souls might attain the top of the sky where they would be reborn or dwell forever. They would achieve this by traveling to the eastern horizon at dawn on the first day of Spring – the time of year when all is renewed and reborn – and from there follow the star tracks of the celestial Eland upward along the Milky Way. (Elands are the greatest of the African antelopes.) With correct ritual, living and dead were to become one with Eland.

Such notions, mostly modified past the point of easy recognition, are present in later beliefs worldwide. (The male Eland of the /Xam was *Gemini*, not *Taurus*, as might have been guessed.)

Although it appears that /Xam-Hadza beliefs and practices might represent humanity's most ancient religion, /Xam myths also incorporate isolated elements from still older beliefs. These focused on stars in the region of *Scorpio*, situated at the opposite "end" of the Milky Way from the stars of Eland. From there souls might be carried up the Milky Way by cranes, herons or storks and then returned as newborns.

Astronomical dating and fragments of tradition from as far away as Australia suggest that such ideas predate humanity's move out of Africa. They further suggest that we are all heirs to one single cultural heritage, a worldwide tradition whose history began when one of our two most distant cultural forebears understood that the other was asking, "What shall we do about death?" The goal was immortality. Civilization was the unintended result.

THE ROLE OF BEER IN SUMERO-AKKADIAN AND HITTITE MYTHOLOGIES: SOME COMPARATIVE NOTES

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In current paper I will focus on the role of beer in Sumero-Akkadian and Hittite myths and other religious texts, trying to figure out comparatively some characteristic strokes for Hittite and Sumero-Akkadian cultural space.

Beer played significant role in culture in Ancient Near East, where beer was invented. People of ANE drank beer as everyday drink, mainly because water was muddy and often undrinkable. The cuneiform mark for “beer” was invented in very early, it is known already in pictographic Sumerian language at the beginning of III mil. BC. The terminology, that was related to beer was developed during III mil. BC. Moreover, these words, which were connected to beer drinking, brewing of beer, beer drinking ceremonies were used actively, e.g. Sumerian term *kaš-dé-a*, “the flowing of beer”, which has important ritualistic context. Beer was poured on the altars for different deities. Beer became an influential factor in forming ANE mythological cycles – e.g. beer played role not only in important royal rituals, offerings, in anthropogenic myths – e.g. “Enki and Ninmah”, where god Enki and mother goddess Ninmah created different people. During this creation process Enki and Ninmah were drinking a lot of beer and became drunk. Importance of beer in ANE religion was also accentuated in several Sumero-Akkadian myths and hymns (“A song of Inanna and Dumuzi”, “Iddin-Dagan’s Sacred Marriage Hymn”). Beer played an important role in civilizing process of “wild person” (case of Enkidu in “Epic of Gilgamesh”). In Hittite world beer and alcohol were important element in new year *purulli*-festival, which had a crucial importance for existing of Hittite land and continuation of kingship (“Illuyana and Tešub”, famous Hittite dragon slaying motif).

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REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS AND THEIR EMOTIONAL POLARITY IN EAST ASIAN FOLK TALES

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There are four basic types of mythological reptiles or amphibians in East Asia: snake, turtle, dragon and frog. From large part every animal is connected with one prevalent emotional value. While frogs seem to be generally “good”/“positive” and snakes surprisingly often also “bad”/“negative”, both turtles and dragons moreover appear as imperial symbols, where both are necessarily “positive” and turtle related to longevity. But there are more types of quadrupedal or snake-like dragons, their shape may be influenced by real crocodiles etc. Thus dragons are related not only with happiness and success, but also with danger and violence. In this context, the dragon can be both: wild beast or lucky being and there are also stories with two fighting dragons (sometimes also snakes) – one positive and one negative.

Together with introductory overview, the paper will focus on examples of motifs from Mongolian, Jeju Korean and Vietnamese folk tales. The spectrum of motifs in Korean and Vietnamese stories is rich; on the contrary reduced contexts of Mongolian or Central Asian dragons or dragon-like beings offer more transparent data for analyzes of metamorphoses, since dry steppe and specific nomadic lifestyle represent less suitable cultural habitat for this mythological animal even if also Mongolian names have Sino-Tibetan origin.

SHAPESHIFTERS IN PHILIPPINE MYTHOLOGY

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The present paper concentrates on ancient Austronesian roots and modern implications of several forms of shiftshaping in lower mythology of the Philippines.

The diversity of local mythologies of the pre-contact era has not formed a more or less unified system like that of the Ancient Greece or Scandinavia. The situation rather reminds us of the one faced by a student of Slavonic lower mythology, suppressed and marginalized in the course of Christianization. In the Philippines, the interest towards lower mythology is primarily connected to the studies of the indigenous peoples of the archipelago; on the other hand, it was rather recently boosted by modern urban legends' studies, comics and horror movies.

The notion of shapeshifters in Philippine mythology is generally reduced to the complex figure of *aswang* vampire. However, the range of personages of lower mythology that imply transformations is much bigger. The dangerous spirit can change its shape from young to old, beautiful to disgusting, human to animal and vice versa. Shapeshifters most often take the animal shape of a pig, a dog, or a bird. Connection with a crocodile is more complicated: in Philippine oral tradition and mythology *buaya* (*buwaya*), a hairy crocodile, combines human and non-human, malevolent and benevolent features.

The paper aims to compare popular Philippine and Indonesian shapeshifting figures like Philippine urban *babaeng nakaputi* (white lady) and *tianak*, Indonesian *pontianak* and *kuntilanak* in search of their possible proto-Austronesian mythological basis. It is proposed that they have a certain amount of common features with the little-known heroes of traditional epics and ritual myths of the Ifugao, Northern Philippine highlanders, like "spring-poled personages/lonely epic heroes" and *numputol* ("the self-beheaded") monster.

IN-BETWEEN DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE: COGNITIVE THEORY AND THE BINARY PRINCIPLE

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With the dawn of the cognitive era in the Humanities, some scholars have hoped for a revival of structuralism. More specifically, scholars wished for empirical verification for some of the more speculative claims made by Claude Lévi-Strauss. One such a promising claim pertains to the binary principle. According to Lévi-Strauss, the classification system of a society organizes itself by means of binary pairs of opposition. One of the most substantial binary oppositions is that between nature and culture. This opposition is relevant for scholars of mythology, for Lévi-Strauss claims that societies try to consolidate this opposition by means of myth.

Implicitly, the binary principle is implemented in cognitive theory by means of body schemata. Body schemata are basic cognitive models based on the embodied experience of humans in their environment. People unconsciously use these schemata to guide their reasoning in the world, often in a metaphorical fashion. For example, the verticality body schema is based upon our embodied experience of walking upright, and employs the binary opposition between up and down. This body schema, and the binary opposition it utilizes, can be metaphorically implanted upon the cosmological differentiation between heaven and earth.

In this paper, I will examine the binary principle as it functions in structuralism and cognitive theory. I am going to show its usefulness and limitations in actual research by analyzing the *Homeric Hymn to Dēmētēr*. This famous myth, which recounts the separation of Dēmētēr and Persephonē, utilizes a basic binary scheme but elaborates upon it. This case study will both demonstrate the use of the binary principle as a model and its more nuanced implementation in actual texts.

METAMORPHOSIS IN SNOW WHITE FAIRY TALES

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The paper is based on fairy tales about Snow White from the anthology “The most beautiful woman in the world: Snow White tales” (ELM Scholarly Press, 2018, 992pp). In a wider sense, the metamorphosis in the fairy tales about Snow White could be a change in the heroine’s state, crossing the borders between life and death, lying in repose and awakening from the death-like sleep. For example, variants of the “Snow White” by the Brothers Grimm or “Jesus restores to life Jairus’ daughter” (Mk 5:21-43). In a narrower sense, I consider as metamorphoses variants of fairy tales, in which the heroine transforms into a bird, a plant, ashes, or a trickle of water, and then, either directly or in stages, back to a human being. Transformations in this fairy tale type (ATU 709 and related types) can also occur with objects, the anti-heroine, or persons close to the heroine. Transformations can be imaginary, complete, reversible, irreversible, or partial.

Here are some examples. In the “Metamorphoses” by Ovid, Phoebus turns himself into a crone (reversible temporary or imaginary change, disguise) to rape Chione ‘Snow’ for his pleasure, but when later on Diana shoots Chione with an arrow out of jealousy, Apollo turns her grieving and suicidal father Daedalion into a bird, giving him wings at the moment when he tries to jump from Mount Parnassus (irreversible change of shape or transformation).

In the Icelandic fairy tale fragment of the beautiful queen Vala and the marvellous Vidfinna (before 1650) the jealous queen is turned into a ribbonfish (*Trachipterus arcticus*). The queen’s golden bowl (similar to the mirror in typical Snow White fairy tales), in which clairvoyant spirits lives, is turned into a sea urchin. In “The juniper tree”, a fairy tale by Philipp Otto Runge, the son is killed and boiled into soup. The father eats the soup and the sister buries the bones from the soup (brother’s bones) at a juniper tree. Finally, the brother turns up alive. A partial metamorphosis takes place with an armless girl, to whom finally arms grow back. A partial metamorphosis also occurs in the Norwegian fairy tale “Twelve wild ducks”, in which the brothers who had been turned into wild ducks finally become young men again, yet the youngest of them has a duck wing instead of his left arm, as the sister, who was taken to execution, was not able to finish the sleeve of the last shirt. In the southern Nigerian fairy tale “About a fat woman who melted”, the fat woman melts, with only a toe left. The little sister hides it in a pot, and when the pot is finally opened, the fat woman comes out of it, as fat and as beautiful as before.

Transformation can happen in several stages. In the Sudan fairy tale “Beautiful Faritma” the murdered girl first turns into a verdant cotton tree, and when the tree is burnt, a handful of ashes remains. When the ashes are thrown into a spring, the water turns as sweet as milk. When the stepmother has the spring filled up, a forest grows on the place, and a young and beautiful gazelle inhabits it, and finally the gazelle becomes a girl again.

Beauties can transform from oranges (Mexican fairy tale “The dark queen”) or from pomegranates (Indian fairy tale “The pomegranate king”). In the Indian (Marathi) fairy tale “The little sunshine girl” a golden flower grows instead of a drowned girl; the flower is burnt to ashes, and a mango tree sprouts from the ashes. From the most beautiful fruit of the tree the sunshine girl is reborn. In the Turkish fairy tale “Magic hairpin” a hairpin is stuck into a girl’s head and she turns into a bird. Eventually she becomes a beauty again.

The Blackfoot Indians’ fairy tale “Cruel stepmother” presents several types of metamorphoses. Sticks thrown over the shoulder become a forest, white stones thrown behind the back become cliffs, and a tuft of moss thrown behind the back turns into a marsh behind the escaping children. Eventually, the father turns himself into the sun with the help of his dead wife’s apparition and goes to live with her in the heaven. But the old witch, with the help of the remaining magic, turns herself into the moon and follows him to the land of stars.

To conclude, I sum up all the metamorphoses treated on the basis of Snow White stories, their functions and types. I also develop the concept of the Snow White fairy tale – in addition to jealousy, banishment, and bewitched sleep a significant feature is metamorphoses that make the heroine reappear.

COSMIC MYTHOLOGY

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Heavenly phenomena have been an inexhaustible resource of myths, legends and misbeliefs throughout the history of mankind. While often appearing naïve and ridiculous in retrospective, they once represented the understanding of the reality. A brief overview of some of the heavenly misconceptions and their origin will be given.

A HOLY MOUNTAIN IN THE DESERT GOBI, MONGOLIA, HUNTING GROUND AND HOLY PLACE

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In March 1971 and in August 1983 I had the good fortune to visit the Gobi desert in Mongolia. During my rather short stay in Ömnö Gov` Aymag I collected two legends from the herders in the vicinity about a high and dangerous mountain pike some 25-30 km from the centre of the administrative unite. One of the legends had a Buddhist or rather syncretistic connotation, the other one was connected to a kin, well-known in the history of Mongolia. On the way up to the mountain pike I observed a complicated and extensive network of low fences, which were built in stones. The legends gave a mythical explanation of the purpose of the fences. In lack of any archaeological excavations, there are three possible explanations about the purpose of this huge work in an otherwise completely empty landscape:

1. An economical goal,
2. The mythical explanation, given by the local people;
3. A sacral purpose, connected to the obo, the usual place of sacrifices in the syncretistic religion of the Mongols.

I intend to compare these fences with similar structures in both in Mongolia and in Siberia to find a solution. On the other hand, I will analyze the legend as well to elaborate a chronology as far as possible.

TRANSFORMING GODDESSES IN ANCIENT EGYPT

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The aim of this paper is to explore the interrelation between metamorphoses of some Egyptian goddesses and “motherhood” in the Egyptian myths.

In the mythological story “The Destruction of Mankind”, originally the first part of a longer text known as “The Book of the Cow of Heaven”, which is inscribed in five royal tombs of the New Kingdom, the goddess Hathor transforms into the goddess Sekhmet when Hathor is required to destroy the human race by her father, the sun-god Re, because mankind becomes rebellious and plots against him. Hathor and Sekhmet are not members of a particular mythical group such as Osirian Myth, Heliopolitan Creation Myth and so on, nevertheless they are known as great goddesses in ancient Egypt. Hathor is a divine mother of the incumbent king as a mythical mother of Horus who is strongly connected with earthly king, and also a divine daughter or wife of Re as an Eye of Re, and furthermore the goddess of female sexuality, music and entertainment, and foreign matters as well as funerary goddess. Sekhmet on the other hand is described as a warlike and bloodthirsty goddess. She is therefore a protector goddess of kings in the battle scenes, and also she is oppositely a healing goddess who prevents or cures sufferers from illness and injures. It is apparent here that Hathor and Sekhmet seemingly don’t share the same character or personality which probably makes it possible for them to be shape-shifter each other at will as a single deity like a werewolf.

In the present paper, it is expected to discuss this transformation from Hathor into Sekhmet along with other examples from the viewpoint that one “hypostasis” or “substance”, namely “motherhood” here, manifests in various divine physical forms each of which is separately equipped with every character of “mother”.

METAMORPHOSES AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN SLAVIC DEMONOLOGY

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In Slavic demonology (although surely not only in Slavic) we can distinguish fundamentally different types of metamorphosis, that is a change in the shape of people, mainly magicians, people enchanted by them or mythological characters.

1. A real person with supernatural abilities (“those who know” — a sorcerer, a witch) turns — that is, changes his physical appearance — from human to bestial. Such magicians can also enchant other people and make them turnskins as well. The brightest example of such transformation is werewolf (Slav. *volko(d)lak*), more examples can be found in Slavic folklore.

2. The soul of a living person (as a rule, the soul of a sorcerer, witch) or the soul of deceased (mainly of those, who died violent death and the witches also), being a vapour, a shadow or something invisible, transforms into visible objects, very often a toad, a mouse, a snake, a moth, a magpie or other birds — that is, mainly chthonic or aerial animals. Yet the connection with the first group can be seen in the beliefs about disfigurement of this animals and finding its results on the body of the sorcerer/witch.

3. A demon takes on the appearance of a familiar person or a beautiful object — to entice, to seduce a person and to take his life: the serpent transforms into the husband of a woman, into the lover of a girl; the water-spirit - into a fish, the forest spirit — into a tree, etc.).

The report will try to show, that the first type of metamorphose — the physical shape changing, can be considered the most ancient. Slavic material used to confirm this idea is added with the examples of neighbouring traditions.

INDIAN MYTHOLOGY OF THE CAVE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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In this paper I propose to present a brief review of mythological motifs and images connected with the cave in the Vedas, Epics and Purāṇas. Having started with such motifs as spinning/weaving Goddesses of Fate in the cave and the Wheel of Time/Fate revolving underground, which have parallels in other Indo-European traditions, we shall turn then to a related motif of a hero, king or a chthonic character/demon imprisoned in a cave. The study of these motifs as a complex not only confirms the presence of universally spread mythological link between the cave and ideas of birth and death. It leads also to the conclusion that there is some connection between the image of the cave and the notion of periodicity (sequence of cycles) in the existence of the macro- and microcosm, with possibility of its cessation. In some cases, we can trace how the archaic myths connected with the cave, in the development of Vedic-Hindu tradition, are transformed into doctrinal and philosophical concepts.

**SEEING THROUGH THE EYES OF OTHERS:
PERCEPTUAL AND LANGUAGE ASPECTS OF SHAPESHIFTING IN
SHAMANIC RITUAL PRACTICES OF THE SELECTED
SOUTH AMERICAN TRIBES**

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For my comparative research, I selected a few South American communities inhabiting the mountainous and west Amazonian regions in Colombia and Peru, in particular Paez, Kogi, Yaminahua and Shipibo-Konibo. Despite the diverse character of their natural habitats and the considerable distances between their territories, these tribes share cosmological viewpoints and perform rituals that reveal striking similarities. The focus of my attention will be the collective belief that a shaman (or a *médico*) has ability to change into non-human entities and the various features and purposes of the accompanying rituals. As we learn from mythological stories, but also from contemporary testimonies, during his metamorphosis, a shaman undergoes a sudden shift in the perception of the self and others- a fascinating motif to which a considerable part of the presentation will be devoted. Since metamorphoses associated with felines play an essential role in the traditional myths of all the aforementioned tribes, closer attention will be given to this concept. The ritual singing used during the ceremonies associated with shapeshifting is characterized by an obscure “twisted” metaphoric language. These metaphors, which are considered a shaman`s most valued possessions, are usually based on perceptual and cultural associations and succinctly illustrate the nature of the shapeshifting phenomenon by simultaneously revealing the multiple viewpoints of all parties involved. For comparative purposes, where appropriate, parallels appearing in traditions of more distant cultures (geographically and historically) will be mentioned to highlight similarities in the manner societies living in a close relation with their natural environment perceive the coexistence of the human and non-human realities.

**PWATAKIS AND DIVINATION SYSTEMS PREDOMINANTLY PRACTICED
IN THE TWO MAJOR CUBAN CULTS
SANTERÍA (REGLA DE OCHÁ)
AND PALO MONTE (LAS REGLAS DE CONGO)**

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Cuban culture, its people and their customs and belief systems are based on European, African and indigenous American influences. Despite the fact that Cuba is primarily considered a Catholic country - around sixty percent of the population are followers of the Catholic Church -, it is still home to other large religions and/or mythologies that developed or continued to exist in different forms on the island. According to the two major Cuban ethnical groups, namely la lucumí (Western African origin) y la conga (Central African origin) - yoruba y bantu -, the following "religious" groups can be differentiated: Santería or Regla de Ochá, La Regla de Ifá or Lucumí (Yoruba) and Palo Monte or Las Reglas de Congo, La Regla de Mayombe, in short regla lucumí and regla conga (see Cabrera 1993: 70). The word regla can be translated with cult or religion; it refers to rites and religious and magical practices that during the colonial times were imported from African countries and over time also might have been altered or changed or became syncretized with Catholicism.

Due to Eurocentric tendencies during the colonial era as well as during the time of the early Republic, Afro-Cuban religions and mythologies were often negatively associated with black magic and witchcraft. "West African-derived Santería is generally a highly regarded Cuban cultural treasure, whereas, Palo Monte is typically regarded with suspicion. Although Santería shares the same persecutory history as all African-identified subjects its contemporary representation is more favourable than its Central African counterpart (Scott 1999: 13)."

Palo Monte primarily beliefs in the veneration of the spirits and in natural/earth powers. Earth/world, nature/wilderness and el monte are the same: "Tierra y monte son lo mismo (Cabrera 1993: 17)." For them, monte means earth (mother earth) within the concept of universal mother, source and origin of all life. Especially in this tradition it is believed that all natural objects (particularly sticks) are infused with powers, whereas the orishas of Santería and other Yoruba religions for example, are associated with archetypal human beings. "'El monte es sagrado' porque en el residen, 'viven', las divinidades. 'Los santos estan mas en el monte que en cielo (Cabrera 1993: 17)." The belief that in el monte human beings can directly be in contact with supernatural forces, is still prevalent in Cuban culture.

The cults are based on traditional and largely secret still orally transmitted myths. Any attempt to canonize these cults in writing has failed so far, because there is no institution that decides on right or wrong practice of religion. Nowadays all over Cuba specific cults are being practiced; this is especially true for the Abakuá-society as well as for the Arará and Yorubá, whose mythic forms are popularly known as *Pwataki*. These mostly still orally transmitted myths in form of simple stories could be spread across the island and therefore come to vernacular esteem with also practical and secular use for daily life (see Barnet 2000: 9 f.).

Another herewith related prevalent mythological Cuban tradition are the divination systems used in Afro Cuban religious practices that are, as Barnet emphasizes, based upon a polymorphic mythological foundation. Every sign or formula belonging to one of the divination systems such as the system of throwing cocos (*tirada del coco*), throwing cowrie shells (*tirada de los caracoles*, *Diloggun*) or to the system of Ifá panels (*tablero de Ifá*) presumes one or more stories or *Pwataki*s offering advice to those seeking advice. In most cases the protagonists are the gods themselves giving advice or providing help, but also natural forces and animals can play an important role. So many *Pwataki*s organize human interaction and living together (see Barnet 2000: 11 ff.). Both, *pwataki*s and divination systems are based upon a mythological foundation.

IS IT RACIST TO COMPARE DATA?

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My book “The Origins...” (Oxford U.P., 2012) has been received favorably, or with some constructive criticism such as by N. Allen, or more recently with the less enthusiastic comments by Marc Thuillard *et al.*

This cannot be said of the reviews by a prominent ex-Indo-European mythologist, Bruce Lincoln (2018), and an aspiring folklorist, Tok Thompson (2013). Both have tried to show racism in the book, though any application of “race” was criticized in the book itself, and though neutral geological terms (Laurasia, Gondwana) were employed to distinguish the two main varieties of archaic mythology – as to avoid any connection with current “races.” Instead, it has clearly been indicated that both versions go back to an older one in Africa. One of the founders of modern human genetics, L. Cavalli-Sforza (1994), had to deal with the same accusations merely because he showed that various genetic variations (haplogroups) do exist in modern humans.

In consequence to their fixation on “race” they denounce and dismiss data that have been provided by authors that they regard as politically undesirable or toxic.

Further, both Lincoln and Thompson have not carefully read the description of the migration of certain north and eastern) African myths (and people) along two routes to West and South(west) Africa, which are now substantiated by the discovery of ancient DNA. To bolster his claim, Thompson has even *invented* quotations that are not found in the book. Both also disregard the important data from Australia and New Guinea.

Importantly, both also did not, or do not want to understand the method of historical comparison applied to mythology, which ironically is very similar to that used in comparative (Indo-European) linguistics, -- all of which has been extensively explained in the introductory chapters. Thompson, following his teacher A. Dundes, even denies the existence of any “universals” (such as the widespread Flood Myth).

HUMAN-CANINE INTERACTION AND TRANSFORMATION DESCRIBED IN DOG ANCESTOR MYTHS

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As dog is the oldest domesticated animal, its relationship with human beings is profoundly reflected in folk narratives all over the world, and the so-called dog ancestor myths are no exception. These peculiar tales attribute the descent of a group of people to an intercourse or intermarriage between a canine forerunner and his/her human mate. Thanks to generations of scholars who addressed these myths (esp. Koppers 1930, Kretschmar 1938, Mishina 1971, Obayashi 1993), we now have a fairly clear picture as to the distribution and the local characteristics of them.

My paper focuses on different worldviews found in the relevant narratives among foragers, pastoralists, and horticulturalists. Foraging — partly cultivating — peoples of the Americas tell how a dog acquired a human partner by shedding its faunal skin, thus assuming a human figure (metamorphosis). Central Asian herders have widespread myths about their ancestor wolf, the revered heroic animal among these peoples. Not only a dog but also a pig or a boar appear in some legends from Southeast Asian horticultural societies, a feature intelligible when we consider their traditional meat resources. These instances illustrate how different notions about human-canine interaction and transformation are described in the dog ancestor myths with different economical backgrounds.

NECROPOLITICAL MYTHMAKING AND NATIONALISM: THE CASE OF POLAND

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In this paper I address Polish identity-making as it has been developing by the hegemonic discourse after the Smolensk tragedy, that took place in April 2010 in Russia. I consider the latter as a starting point for constructing a new national myth grounded in the martyrologic narrative on the Polish suffering and messianism, referred to the Polish experience of the WWII, with the “fascinating with death” in its core (Bielik-Robson, qtd. in (Szeligowska 2014, 498)). I focus on a *necropolitical* dimension of the latter, which is stemmed from a wider biopolitical paradigm brought to a scholarship by Michele Foucault and Giorgio Agamben. In contrast to Foucauldian understanding *biopolitics*, that mostly deals with fostering population to keep their body alive and healthy for a sake of development of the whole nation and the state system (Foucault 2003), necropolitics refers to governing space of death and mourning (Mbembé and Meintjes 2003). Unlike thanatopolitics, which addresses the death with focusing on practices of justification and glorification of sacrificing life for the sake of communal survival, necropolitics concerns a “paradigmatical principle of rule that differentiates among, and capitalizes on, the imposition various form of death” (Gržinić and Tatlić 2014, 2). Seen from this perspective, death and dead are inscribed into the order of power (Mbembé and Meintjes 2003, 12), so the memory becomes such a field for a necropolitical nation-building struggle.

I particular focus on two cases of current Poland’s memory and myth-making policy. First one addresses the discourse of the Warsaw 1944 Uprising, which is one of the pillars of the nation identity narrative, mostly produced and promoted by the Institute of National Remembrance and the Museum of the Warsaw Uprising. Second case concerns the so called “Holocaust law”, which was adopted by the Polish parliament (Sejm) in the beginning of 2018. I examine both cases as parts of the same (hegemonic) story for creating the “very Polish history”, which is aimed at promoting the sole image of Poles as a nation suffered from the permanent victimhood. Within this paradigm of martyrdom, each episode of mass violence in the past is considered the significant political arena where the narrative about the dead Poles plays a constitutive role for the current nation-building.

My empirical data includes cultural dimension of the hegemonic discourses of the issues, as exemplified by Polish art works, exhibitions, feature films and documentaries, released after 2010.

PROBING THE BOUNDARIES OF COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY: ON METHOD AND MATTER

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Is Comparative Mythology a subfield of Religious Studies? If so, it is subject to the same critiques that have been leveled against the so-called Comparative Method in the recent decades. If it is not, what are the peculiar differences that make it, in essence, distinct as a research discipline? And what place does the Comparative Method hold in Comparative Mythology? What sort of a comparative method?

This paper is a response to the most recent book “Apples and Oranges” by Bruce Lincoln that seems to dismiss the whole discipline altogether by suggesting the impossibility of “grand comparisons”. I survey various critiques of the Comparative Method, including Bruce Lincoln's; explore when they apply to Comparative Mythology and when not; discuss new approaches to and theoretical background of Comparative Mythology.

MUSICAL SURPRISE

Must bass läks üle tee* is a community band from the Mudaaugu farm. The band assembled at the beginning of 2018 to participate in the Mooste Elohelü folk music festival and has been around since then.

The composition of the band has changed over time, today the members are:

- Heikki – drums
- Andrus – electric guitar
- Kätlin – bass guitar
- Maali – guitars, talharpa, hybrid banjo, other instruments
- Helle – voice, acoustic guitar, small zither, melodica, whistles
- Minna – voice, ukulele
- Maarja – voice
- Reet – mandolin
- Madis – saxophone, flutes, melodica

* The name of the band (in transl. ‘*The black bass crossed the road*’) refers to the similar pronunciation of the words ‘bass’ and ‘kass’ (cat) in the Estonian language.

<http://mustbass.mudaaugu.ee/>



THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN ESTONIAN STUDIES (CEES)

PROJECT HOLDER: THE ESTONIAN LITERARY MUSEUM

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The CEES assembles more than 60 researchers with a doctoral degree and more than 50 post-graduate students from the Estonian Literary Museum, the University of Tartu, the Institute of the Estonian Language, Tallinn University, the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, and the Tallinn University of Technology.

The CEES is concerned with interdisciplinary studies of the linguistic and cultural phenomena of the ethnic groups in Estonia, analyzing and proposing models for

- the dynamics and cultural diversity of transnational phenomena and processes;
- local cultural patterns and philosophies created by different groups and communities as well as their dynamics;
- historical and modern trajectories of cultural diversity, categories of historical variation (ethnic, conceptual, confessional, linguistic, communicative, etc.), and the evolution of innovations on the basis of former patterns;
- forms of linguistic behavior and practice.

The activity plan of the CEES stipulates the work of twelve interdisciplinary working groups:

- corpus-based linguistic, literary, and folklore studies;
- digital humanities and linguistic technologies;
- ethics and philosophy of mind and language;
- gender studies;
- historical expression and cultural practices;
- life writing studies;
- literary studies and textual culture;
- migration and diaspora studies;
- narrative studies;
- religiosity and myth studies;
- speech and music studies;
- studies of contemporary culture (incl. the media).

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