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DEVIL IN WOLF'S CLOTHING: VARIATIONS ON THE
THEME OF "SPEAK OF THE WOLF / DEVIL AND HE AP-
PEARS"

Abstract: The proverb *Speak of the wolf* (or: *of the devil*) and *he will appear* leads back to early folk belief that uttering the name of a demon could serve to summon it. Correspondences of the proverb exist in a large variety of languages in an abundant morpho-syntactic and lexical variability. Especially the parallelism of WOLF and DEVIL raises questions that can be answered only within a wide range of cultural contexts such as folklore, mythology, symbolism, tabooing of names, Christian exegesis, fairy tales and literature, among other things.

Keywords: concepts of WOLF and DEVIL, etymology, folk belief, symbolism, taboos, widespread proverb type

1. Introduction to the problem and objective

Although the attitude towards demons and devil (including the wolf as a demonic figure) has changed during the last centuries, languages have conserved numerous idioms and proverbs containing the concept and the manifestation of the devil. In most cases, the real background (danger for animals and humans) is already forgotten, yet it survives verbally in everyday speech.

The subject of this paper is a proverb type which is characterized by several peculiarities: its wide distribution in European languages and far beyond, its rich variability in these languages, dialects and earlier stages of languages and especially by the parallelism of the concepts WOLF and DEVIL, interchangeable in several cases, as in English: *Speak of the wolf and he will appear* with the analogous version, currently more common in English, *Speak of the devil and he will appear*.

A broad set of linguistic and cultural issues arises from the number of variants in many languages, ranging from "When one speaks of the wolf, one sees the tail/the horns" (French) or

“Mention the devil, and if his head does not appear, his tail does” (Spanish) to “Where a wolf is mentioned he walks at the back of the garden” (Hungarian), “If you talk about a tiger, it will appear” (Korean), or even “Talk about the angel, and here comes the priest” (Yiddish). Despite the significant morpho-syntactic and lexical differences the figurative meaning of all of the countless variants can roughly be formulated as ‘said aloud when a person just mentioned enters the area of those conversing unexpectedly’. There may be subtle pragmatic differences among the many versions (e.g. a rather ironic or jocular usage in current languages, connotative differences between expressions using DEVIL or ANGEL), but they can for now be set aside.

Several earlier studies have been devoted to this proverb type. All of them connected it with the well-known Latin proverb *Lupus in fabula* and emphasized its wide dissemination (see section 2 below). Despite these studies we feel disposed to turn to this subject again and discuss some of the peculiarities in more detail, now with the help of a much larger data set. The objectives of this study are, firstly, the presentation of the expressions we collected from many languages and, subsequently, the discussion of our data from various linguistic and cultural perspectives. We will present ours in a way that the parallelism of the concepts WOLF and DEVIL becomes apparent. This will be followed by an analysis of certain morpho-syntactic features (patterns) and lexical peculiarities. The examination of the lexical structure, i.e. the literal meaning of the expressions will go into the variation of the underlying images and ideas that manifest themselves in our proverb type.

The parallelism of WOLF and DEVIL is another unresolved point of discussion. The question of why both concepts can be equated in one proverb type cannot be answered on the basis of the linguistic data alone, but would require far-reaching studies on the concepts WOLF and DEVIL, relating to culture and the history of ideas. The wide range of cultural codes connected with both concepts (folklore, mythology, symbolism, tabooing of names, Christianity, literature, etc.) can be touched on here only briefly.

2. *State of the art*

The proverb type considered here has drawn the attention of several scholars. Three studies come mainly from the Romance languages. Cornette (1931/32) quotes a variety of instances from dialects spoken in Italy, France, Switzerland (Swiss French), Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands. Starting from the conception of DEVIL as a bad spirit in folk belief, the author shows how the blending of the sayings using WOLF (preferred in French dialects) with those using DEVIL (preferred in Dutch dialects) came about due to areal contacts in certain regions.

The following Spanish study by Lozano Baudón (Buenos Aires, 1967) connects our proverb type with an entirely different, though comparable set of proverbial sayings, such as Spanish *En mentando al ruin de Roma/al rey de Roma/al Papa luego asoma* ‘Mentioning the ruin of Rome/the king of Rome/the Pope then it/he is nearby’. Our proverb is related to the figurative meaning (‘said when a person spoken about appears unexpectedly’) and the concepts of the EVIL which can be verbalized (like by WOLF and DEVIL) by ‘the ruins of Rome’, ‘the king of Rome’ or even ‘the Pope’, based on special historical events and trends of the time.¹

The third article, written in Catalan, follows here directly. According to Forcadas (1977), the proverb *Lupus in fabula* and its variants can be found in a large number of European languages and also outside of Europe. The author cites a wealth of further evidences containing RUIN and/or ROME, in the first place from the languages spoken on the Iberian Peninsula (e.g. Spanish *Al ruin, cuando lo mientan, luego lo encuntran*, Galician *Ende falando do ruín en Roma, axiña asoma*) as well as other languages, and points to the commonalities between the RUIN- and the WOLF- and DEVIL-expressions. (For the sake of space we cannot dwell on the RUIN-expressions in more detail.)

Except for Mori’s (2010) study on the development of the English *talk of the devil*, most other studies dealing with our proverb type concentrate on the Latin *Lupus in fabula*, especially its etymology (Quitard 1842; Grimm 1865; Otto 1890: 199–201; Abbott 1956). Let us summarize their results. The etymology of the Latin *Lupus in fabula* is closely connected with the question of how to interpret the term *fabula* (~ *fabulor* ‘to talk, speak’). The Latin word has several meanings, such as ‘1. a talk, conversation,² 2. a thing said, account, 3. a fiction, tale, fable, 4. a leg-

end, myth, 5. a play, drama'. The different sources – strengthened by the variant *Lupus in sermone* (~ *sermo* 'anything that one says, speech, talk') – support the first meaning, thus the idiom can be translated as 'the wolf in the talk, the wolf mentioned', and not 'the wolf in the fable'.

This etymology was already discussed by Quitard (1842), and has often been repeated ever since. Otto (1890) lists a dozen of idioms containing *lupus* with the relevant Latin and Greek texts, and Abbott (1956) gives a new summary of the whole literature again. Some authors simply repeat these sources, others stick to the erroneous etymology.³ In our case, *Lupus in fabula* can be a false friend as well: according to an old belief, to mention the wolf was prohibited due to taboo (cf. German *I keep silence, the wolf is not far away from me*). Thus the proverb was used to prevent the speaker from inconveniences (Otto 1890).⁴

3. The data: an overview

As already mentioned, evidences of our proverb type are abundant – not only in terms of their spatial extent, i.e. their spread into many languages, but also from a historical and diachronic perspective. The proverb has been recorded since ancient times. The Greek sophist Zenobios (ca. 4th–3rd c. BC) included it in his "Collection of Proverbs in three Books". The entry in Erasmus of Rotterdam's famous "Adagia" (ii viii 4), *Etiam si lupi meminisses*, provides information on its use by classical writers: "*Εἰ καὶ λύκον ἐμνήσθης*, If you had even mentioned a wolf (we must supply, he would have appeared). For use when the man of whom we were speaking unexpectedly appears." (Erasmus Coll.W. 34, 51)

Correspondences of the proverb have abounded in the European vernacular languages since the Middle Ages. Two evidences in the popular Medieval Latin proverb collection "Fecunda Ratis", finished ca. 1023, show its circulation in early medieval times: *It lupus inter oues, cum sermo ceditur inde* "The wolf goes among the sheep when the conversation targets to him" (1, 10) and: *Aure lupi uisa non longe est credere caudam* "When the wolf's ear has shown, one must not think that the tail is far away" (1, 193). The "Thesaurus Proverbiorum Medii Aevi" (TPMA 13, 172–174) lists a number of examples for Germanic and Romance languages, in two main versions: "Speak of the wolf, then he comes" and "He

who speaks of the wolf sees already its tail". The earliest Hungarian proverb collection from 1598 also has an evidence: *farkast emlegetnek, kert meget kullog* "the wolf is mentioned, he lags behind the garden" (Decsi 4.5.2.3).

All these early collections merely report versions with WOLF. Parallels with DEVIL appear only much later in proverb collections and dictionaries. A wealth of examples can be found in Karl Friedrich Wander's "Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon" from 1867; these are distributed equally to those with WOLF (Vol. 5: 365–371) and those with DEVIL (Vol. 4: 1091, 1099, 1129). The literature referred to in section 2 as well as idiom and proverb dictionaries of current languages show a rich variety; here WOLF and DEVIL occur in about the same frequency, along with some other concepts.⁵ For all these examples, however, it remains unclear whether they are currently known by the speakers or whether they are obsolete.

In the following, we present the data which we collected through surveys with competent speakers of many European languages. The starting point is the project "Widespread Idioms in Europe and Beyond" which has access to figurative multiword expressions (mainly idioms) from 78 European and 20 non-European languages.⁶ We present the data as reported by our respondents. Most expressions are currently still in circulation in the language communities. In order to show the doublets of WOLF and DEVIL, however, we present some outdated versions as well (cf. French, Spanish, Latvian, Czech). Most languages use only the elliptic form, i.e. the first element of the compound sentence (*Speak of the devil*), while the second part (often given in brackets in our documentation below) remains unspoken. The majority of the data we will analyze in section 4 comes from this collection. For some other examples, reference is made to the cited literature.

We group the collected proverbs according to the underlying concepts: (1) WOLF and DEVIL, (2) other ANIMALS, (3) MYTHICAL BEINGS and (4) SUN.

1. WOLF AND DEVIL

Indo-European Languages in Europe

Germanic Languages

- Swe. *när man talar om fan, dansar han i farstun* “when one talks of DEVIL, he dances in the vestibule”
- Dan. *når man taler om Fanden, kommer han* “when one talks of the DEVIL, he will come”
- Eng. *speak/talk of the devil (and he will appear) / speak/talk of the wolf (and it will appear / talk of the wolf and his tail appears, etc.*
- NFris. *wan ham faan a düüwel snaaket, do komt'r* “when one talks of a DEVIL, so he comes”
- WFris. *as men fan de duvel praat, is er tichteby* “when one speaks of the DEVIL, he is nearby” / *as men fan de duvel praat, trapet men him op de sturt* “when one speaks of the DEVIL, one steps on his tail”
- Du. *als je van de duivel spreekt, trap je hem op zijn start* “if you speak of the DEVIL, you will step on his tail” / (Belgium) *als je van de duivel spreekt, zie je zijn staart* “if you speak of the DEVIL, you will see his tail”
- Ger. *wenn man vom Teufel spricht, kommt er* “when one talks of the DEVIL, he comes”
- Lux. *wann een vum Däiwele schwetzt, dann kënnt en* “when one talks of the DEVIL, then he comes”
- LGer. *wann'm van de Düüwel küürt, dann is he de all of schickt 'n old Wief* “when one speaks of the DEVIL, then he is there already or he sends an old wife” / *wenn's van de Düüwele küürs, dann sitt he all up't Heck* “when you speak of the DEVIL, then he sits already on the entrance gate”

Celtic Languages

- Bre. *pa vez komzet eus ar bleiz e vez gwelet e lost a-bell pe a-dost* “when talking about the WOLF, one sees the tail from near or far”

Romance Languages

- Fr. *quand on parle du loup, (on voit sa/la queue)* “when one speaks of the WOLF (one sees its/the tail)” / *quand on parle du diable, (on voit sa queue)* “when one speaks of the DEVIL (one sees his tail)”
- Rm. *sch'ins discurra dal diavel (muss'el las cornas)* “when one speaks of the DEVIL (he shows the horns)”

- Fri. *si fevele dal diaul (e a rivin i cuars)* “when one speaks of the DEVIL (and he shows the horns)”
- It. *si parla del diavolo e ne vedi spuntare la coda/le corna* “speak of the DEVIL and not to see the tail/the horns sprouting”
- Sp. *hablate del lobo, (y veréis su pelleja)* “you talk of the WOLF (and you’ll see its fur)” / *mienta al diablo, y si no asoma la cabeza, asomará el rabo* (dated) “mention the DEVIL, and if the head does not appear, the tail will”
- Cat. *qui del llop parla, prop li surt* “who speaks of the WOLF, it comes out near to him”
- Mir. *fala-se no diabr (o i el aparece)* “speak of the DEVIL (and he will appear)”
- Port. *falar no diabo e ele a aparecer* “speak of the DEVIL and he will appear” / *falando do Diabo (apareceu o rabo)* “speaking of the DEVIL (his tail appears)” / *falai no lobo, ver-lhe-eis a pele* “speak of the WOLF, see its fur”
- Rom. *vorbești de lup și lupul la ușă* “speak of the WOLF and the WOLF is at the door”
- Aro. *noi ti luplu, nās laldupā ushe* “speak of the WOLF and it is behind the door”

Baltic Languages

- Ltv. *kā velnu piesauc, tā viņš ir klāt* “when you mention the DEVIL, he arrives” / *kā vilku piemin, tā vilks klāt* “when you speak of the WOLF, he arrives”
- Lith. *vilką minime – vilkas keliu bėga* “we mention the WOLF – the WOLF runs the way”

Slavonic Languages

- Russ. *помяни чѣрта (, он и появится)* “mention the DEVIL (and he appears)”
- Ukr. *про вовка помовка, а вовк у хату* “speak of the WOLF, and the WOLF is at the house”
- Cz. *my o čertu a čert za dveřmi* “we speak about the DEVIL and the DEVIL is behind the door” / *my o vlku a vlk za humny* “we speak about the WOLF and the WOLF is at the backyard/the sheepfold”
- Slk. *my o čertu a čert za dvermi* “we speak about the DEVIL and the DEVIL is behind the door”
- Pol. *o wilku mowa (, a wilk tuż tuż)* “speak of the WOLF (and the WOLF is nearby)”
- Kash. *ò wilkù mòwa, a wilk za dwiérzama* “speak of the WOLF and the WOLF is behind the doors”

- LSorb. *gaž wó wjelku powědaš, njejo daloko* “when you speak of the WOLF it is not far”
- Slo. *mi o volku* (, *volk iz gozda*) “we speak about the WOLF (the WOLF comes from the forest)”
- Cr. *mi o vuku, a vuk na vrata* “we speak about the WOLF and the WOLF is at the door”
- Bos. *mi o vuku a vuk na vrata* “we speak about the WOLF and the WOLF is at the door”
- Mont. *mi o vuku, vuk na vrata* “we speak of the WOLF, the WOLF is at the door”
- Sr. *mi o vuku* (, *vuk na vrata*) “we speak about the WOLF (the WOLF is at the door)”
- Mac. *nue za volkom* (*volkom na vrata*) “we speak about the WOLF (the WOLF is at the door)”
- Bulg. *говорим за вълка, а той – в кошарата* “speak of the WOLF, and he is at the cattle-pen”
- Albanian *fol për ujkun, ujku pas/në derë* “speak of the WOLF, the WOLF is behind/at the door”

Finno-Ugric Languages in Europe

- Hung. *farkast emlegetnek, s a kert alatt jár/kullog* “the WOLF is mentioned, and it walks/lags at the back of the garden”
- Fi. *kun susi mainitaan, se liikkuu puutarhan ympärillä* (dated) “when one mentions the WOLF, it moves around the garden”
- Est. *kus hundist räägid, seal ta on* “speak of the WOLF, there he is”

Turkic languages in Europe

- Kar. *bioriu üčiuñ siožliav, ja bioriu bunda* “to speak about the WOLF and the WOLF is here”
- Basque *otsoa aipatu, otsoa agertu* “the WOLF mentioned, the WOLF appeared” / *otsoa aipatu eta otsoa atean* “mention the WOLF and it appears at the door”

Esperanto *se vi parolas pri la Diablo (li certe aperos/venos)* “when you speak of the DEVIL (he certainly appears/comes)”

2. ANIMALS

- Lux. *wann ee vum Fuuss schwätzt, ass de Schwanz net wäit dervun* “when one talks of the FOX, the tail is not far away”
- Ger. *wenn man den Esel nennt, so kommt er gerennt* “when one names the DONKEY he comes running”

- Gk. *κατά φωνή κι ο γάιδαρος* “by voice/speak also the DONKEY”
 Hung. *emlegetett szamár (megjelenik)* “mentioned DONKEY (appears)”

3. MYTHICAL BEINGS

- Swe. *när man talar om trollen (så står de i farstun)* “when one speaks of the TROLL (so he stands in the vestibule)”
 Yid. *az men redt fun der malekh, kumt der galekh* “when one talks about the ANGEL, here comes the priest”
 Ice. *oft kemur illur Þá/Begar um er rætt* “often comes EVIL when referred to”
 Fi. *sünä paha missä mainitaan* “there is the EVIL where s/he is mentioned”

4. SUN

- Nor. (Bokmål) *når man snakker om sola, så skiner den* / (Nynorsk) *når ein snakkar om sola, så skin ho* “when one talks about SUN so it shines”
 Swe. *när man talar om solen, så skiner den* “when one talks about the SUN so it shines”
 Da. *når man taler om solen, så skinner den* “when one talks about the SUN so it shines”

4. Linguistic interpretation

4.1 Analysis of the most significant morpho-syntactic features

The proverb consists of a main clause and a clause: if the wolf is mentioned, then it appears (logically symbolized as $p \supset q$). All the possible morpho-syntactic versions of the proverbs containing WOLF or DEVIL are shown on the chart below:

WOLF	DEVIL
<i>When one speaks of the wolf...</i> Fr.	<i>When one speaks of the devil...</i>
<i>When you speak of the wolf...</i> Ltv., Slo.	WFrisk., LGer., Rm., NFrisk., Sp.
<i>When one mentions the wolf...</i> Fi.	<i>When one talks of the devil...</i>
<i>he arrives</i> Ltv.	Ger., Lux.
<i>it isn't far</i> LSorb.	<i>When you mention the devil...</i>
<i>one sees its/the tail</i> Fr.	Ltv.
<i>it moves around the garden</i> Fi.	<i>so he comes</i> Ger.
	<i>then he comes</i> Lux.
	<i>then he is there already or he</i>

	<p><i>sends an old wife</i> LGer. <i>he arrives</i> Ltv. <i>(he certainly comes/appears)</i> Esp. <i>he is nearby</i> WFris. <i>then he sits already on the</i> entrance gate LGer. <i>(one sees its/the tail)</i> Fr. <i>one steps on his tail</i> WFris. <i>(and he shows the horns)</i> Fri.</p>
<p><i>When talking about the wolf... one sees the tail from near or far</i> Bret.</p>	<p><i>When talking of the devil... he will come</i> Da. <i>he dances in the vestibule</i> Swe. Speaking of the devil... <i>(his tail appears)</i> Port.</p>
	<p><i>If you speak of the devil... you will see his tail</i> Du.</p>
<p>Speak of the wolf... Eng., Port., Rom., Arom., Ukr., Pol., Kash., Bulg., Alb., Est. We speak about/of the wolf... Cz., Cr., Slo. Talk of the wolf... Eng. You talk of the wolf... Sp. We mention the wolf... Lith. <i>The wolf is mentioned...</i> Hung. <i>Mention the wolf...</i> Bas. <i>Wolf mentioned...</i> Bas. <i>wolf appeared</i> Bas. <i>and it will appear</i> Eng. <i>the wolf runs the way</i> Lith. there he is Est. <i>(and the wolf is nearby)</i> Pol. <i>(the wolf comes from the forest)</i> Slo. <i>it walks/lags at the back of the</i> garden Hung. <i>and the wolf is at the sheepfold</i> Cz.</p>	<p>Speak of the devil... Eng., It., Mir., Port. We speak about the devil... Cz., Slk. Talk of the devil... Eng. Mention the devil... Sp., Russ. <i>(and he appears) / will ap- pear</i> Russ., Eng., Port., Mir. <i>and the devil is behind the</i> door Cz., Slk. <i>and not to see the horns/the</i> tail sprouting It. <i>and if the head does not ap- pear, the tail will</i> Sp.</p>

<p><i>and he's at the cattle-pen</i> Bulg. <i>and the wolf is at the house</i> Ukr. <i>and the wolf is at the door</i> Rom., Cr., Bos., Mont. <i>and it is behind the door</i> Arom. <i>and it appears at the door</i> Bas. <i>and the wolf is behind the doors</i> Kash. <i>the wolf is at/behind the door</i> Alb. <i>(the wolf is at the door)</i> Sr., Mac. <i>and his tail appears</i> Eng. <i>(you'll see its fur)</i> Sp. <i>see it fur</i> Port.</p>	
<p>To speak of the wolf... <i>and the wolf is there</i> Kar.</p>	
<p>Who speaks of the wolf... <i>it comes out near to him</i> Cat.</p>	

As we see, there is a great variety of syntactic possibilities: indicative, conditional and imperative moods can be equally used as synonyms (*we speak about the devil and the devil is behind the door; if you speak of the devil, you'll step on his tail; speak of the devil and he will appear*). Instead of the if-clauses preference is usually given to the when-clauses (*when one speaks of the devil, he is nearby*). Some minor patterns also include sentences with subordinating conjunctions (*there is evil where s/he is mentioned*), with relative pronouns (*who speaks of the wolf, it comes out near to him*) and the comparative structure (*the devil is never nearer than when we are talking of him*). Since proverbs often come down to the present through several centuries, their structure may keep the archaic features of the given languages. The lack of conjunctions, which is highly characteristic of the Slavonic languages, creates an informal, unconnected type of discourse (*we speak of the wolf, [therefore] the wolf is at the door*).

Rarer used versions of the proverb follow the same patterns as mentioned before. The chart below shows those containing words different than WOLF or DEVIL:

Animals	Mythical beings	Sun
<p><i>When one talks of the fox...</i> Lux.</p> <p><i>When one names the donkey... he comes running</i> Ger.</p>	<p><i>When one speaks of the troll...</i> (so he stands in the vestibule) Swe.</p> <p><i>When one talks about the angel... here comes the priest</i> Yid.</p> <p><i>Often comes evil... when referred to</i> Icel.</p> <p><i>There is the evil... where s/he is mentioned</i> Fin.</p>	<p><i>When one talks about the sun... so it shines</i> Nor., Swe., Dan.</p>
<p><i>Mentioned donkey (appears)</i> Hung.</p> <p><i>by voice/speech also the donkey</i> Gk.</p>		

4.2. Examination of the lexical structures

On the whole, in many cases WOLF and DEVIL can be exchanged with each other, the meaning will not suffer. Instead of WOLF and DEVIL, some idioms contain other animals (DONKEY,⁷ FOX, TIGER, LION)⁸ and mythical beings (ANGEL, TROLL, EVIL). Cao Cao, a Chinese warlord and chancellor of the Eastern Han Dynasty (155–220) is also immortalized in a proverb: *shuō cáo cāo, cáo cāo dào* “Speak of Cao Cao and Cao Cao arrives”. Vietnamese has borrowed it as *Vừa nhắc Tào Tháo, Tào Tháo tới* “Speak of Tào Tháo and he appears immediately”.

The WOLF⁹ is primary, the DEVIL is its secondary adaptation. Parallels of the proverb in the European languages have manifested themselves most clearly since the Middle Ages. (In some languages the wolf has turned into the devil, cf. the semantic

change in Czech *vlk* 'wolf' → 'devil'.) Quickly and easily does 'wolf' become 'evil' through metaphoric extension as well.

The WOLF and the DEVIL share many common features, such as turning up uninvited, often at the door, as large as life or just showing the tail (*pars pro toto* principle). Apart from this, they have their specialities: WOLF can also be known by his fur; as a predator he comes out of the forest, walks by the stack into the garden, or hangs around the sheepfold or the cattle-pen, until he arrives at man's house. All these elements are peculiar to the particular languages, yet if we put them together one by one, they build up the above-mentioned route of the wolf from his natural habitat to man's house:¹⁰

forest (the wolf's dwelling place) → stack (in the fields unbound by hedges) → sheepfold, cattle-pen (domestic animals) → pit (for vegetables, meat, etc.) → house (man's dwelling place).

The wolf can often become a taboo word; in Russian it is also called *чёрный* 'the black one', *шут* 'clown', *окаяшка* 'the damned one' (Vlasova 1995: 340–358); the Ukrainians of the Carpathians call the wolf *котюха* 'large cat/dog', *неситий* 'insatiable', *сироманец* 'the grey one', *звірь* 'beast' or *песик* 'doggy' (cf. Smal-Stocki 1950). The Hungarian language has not preserved the original name for wolf; today only *farkas* (< *farok* 'tail') is used, which itself is a taboo word meaning 'the taily one'.

There has been a marked tendency to avoid naming evil demons since ancient times.¹¹ "One thing especially is to be noted at this point: the name and the thing are intimately connected. The true name is a part of the thing, and uttering it brings the evil thing to the spot. This belief was formerly general European [...]. The Finns and Lapps do not name the bear, the wolf, the fox, and the lynx, by their real names lest they come and ravage their herds" (Flom 1925: 407, 409). The avoidance of uttering the name of the wolf may depend on the time of the day (among the Belorussians and Macedonians).

5. Cultural interpretation

5.1. Wolf

The wolf is one of the primary dangerous wild carnivores with whom the Eurasian Indo-European-speaking people had to

deal, and it is important also as an image or symbol. Indo-European divinities with lupine associations are quite frequent: the wolfish aspect of Apollo connects him both to death and to fertilizing and life-giving powers; mythic representations of the wolf make the animal both a monstrous enemy of humankind and a nurturing mother-beast such as *Lupa* who suckled Romulus and Remus (Plutarch, “Romulus” 4).

Werewolf or man-wolf activity may not be simply solitary (cf. the widely-recurring belief in nightroaming bands or confraternities of lycanthropes who abjure the laws of society): these bands have also been connected to the German *Wilde Jagd* (Wild Hunt) or *Wutende Heer* (Wuodan’s Army), legendary affiliates of Death and the Devil. Instances of bloodthirsty and destructive werewolf bands are also known in the Iranian sources and in Baltic and Slavic folklore.

In a “historical” saga such as that of Egil Skallagrimson, the wolf not only seems to be a family totem (the family’s patriarch named Kveld-Olfr or Evening Wolf; Egil himself as *ulfgrar* ‘wolf-gray’), it is also associated with the god Óðinn. In literary works of antiquity WOLF is seen more as a robber than as a thief. Being the enemy of almost all other animals, it has a panic effect.¹² The wolf is also cunning and superior, cf. the Old Greek compound *λύκοφύλια* ‘false friendship’.

In folk beliefs the wolf is closely connected with witches (cf. Latin *lupula* ‘witch’ < *lupus* ‘wolf’); they often appear in the shape of a wolf or ride on a wolf. The story of the wolf’s birth is to be found in Bulgarian, Macedonian, Polish and Serbian etiological legends. According to them, the wolf was created out of clay or wood by the devil (or, rarely, by the shepherds themselves). But the devil was unable to resurrect him, so he had to ask for God’s help. The wolf attacked the devil, who could hardly take refuge on a tree. Since then he has been lame. Often is this story directly related to the creation of snakes.¹³ Due to this chthonic symbolism, the wolf is intimately connected with the netherworld, and thus with the devil himself. In some places *wolf* is the name of the vampire (Gura 1996: 121–159).

The wolf was also thought a ghost animal whose very gaze could strike people speechless. This has led to further figurative expressions (see Pappas 2008; Grimm 1865: 215). The Greek idiom *λύκον ιδεῖν* “to see a wolf” means ‘to be struck dumb’ as

was believed of any one of whom a wolf got the first look (Platon “Republic”, 336). The expression *κάλος λύκος* ‘nice wolf’ can often be found on drinking cups as well. In ancient Greece wolves were important emblems (cf. Autolykos, grandfather of Homer; the cult of Zeus Lykaios who becomes a wolf and a human being; transition/dialectical binaries between human and animal, alive and dead, civilized and barbarian, male – female, etc.).

The equation of *wolf* and *prostitute* persisted into the 12th century, but by Elizabethan times wolves had become primarily symbolic of male lust. The specific use of *wolf* for “sexually aggressive male” first was recorded in 1847. In Slavonic wedding songs the wolf often has erotic connotations as well (Smal-Stocki 1950).

The Chinese also had a celestial wolf (the star Sirius) which carried out the duty of the watchman outside the Heavenly Palace (the Great Bear). Its polar character made them attribute the wolf to the north. As the watchman’s role has replaced the animal’s ferocious aspect, in some areas of Japan, wolves are invoked to protect the people against other wild animals.

The wolf

FOLKLORE, MYTHOLOGY totem ancestor, fierce, cunning, thief, glutton, sees in the dark, netherworld, bad omen		
SYMBOLISM fertility, day and night, destruction, sexual lust, in sheep’s skin		TABOO taily (animal), dog, cat, gray one, beast, master
METAWOLFOSIS man, shepherd, werewolf, witch, devil	CHRISTIANITY wolf ↔ sheep, dog (Domini canis)	ORIGIN created by demon, devil or speech act
ART Romulus and Remus	LITERATURE Little Red Riding-Hood, The Jungle Book	

5.2. *Devil*

“In folklore the devil is one of the most important and most popular figures. He appears in all the various kinds of folk tradition, in legends, folk beliefs, tales, Christian legends, jokes, anecdotes, folk plays, proverbs and sayings, and in folk customs” (Röhrich 1970: 23).¹⁴ Fairy tales also abound in devils (Bettelheim 1977). In Christianity Satan is seen as an adversary of God, but only in the monotheistic religions of the West with an analogy in Buddhism as the eastern religion of salvation.

The belief in the devil was widespread in earlier times; it can be found until today in various cultural domains, in literature, art, music (rock music is full of demonic, satanic allusions), also in cinema movies (cf. the scene with the wolves in *Dr. Zhivago* [Chapter 14], and many more). The 15–18th centuries produced a plethora of novels and stage plays concerning the devil (cf. Röhrich 1970: 22f).

There are three reasons for the existence of the devil: 1. the evil in the world should be explained (Judaism, Christianity and Islam); 2. Satan is the unsaved man (cf. the 7th Prayer request); 3. the necessity of the existence of Satan. It is the deceptive mirror image of the one God (cf. the temptation of Jesus in which Satan wants to be worshiped instead of God). In the New Testament his existence is taken for granted. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). For educated people, the devil is now an inner imagination which should be driven out of their heads.

Throughout the centuries people (heretics, witches) have been demonized. In the course of 500 years, the Satan increased in power, rose to the opponent of God. In the Old Testament he was only of marginal significance; later in many places, he became also identified with the serpent of paradise (Theißen 2011). WOLF in the New Testament (and Christian exegeses) belongs in the context of the largely elaborated SHEPHERD metaphor: Jesus as the shepherd, pastor, who cares of the flock of sheep – the wolf being their worst enemy; it is primarily the diabolical enemy that threatens the flock of the faithful. The connecting link between wolf and devil can be found here (see “Wolf” in HWA 9, 720: wolf is the creation of an evil demon).

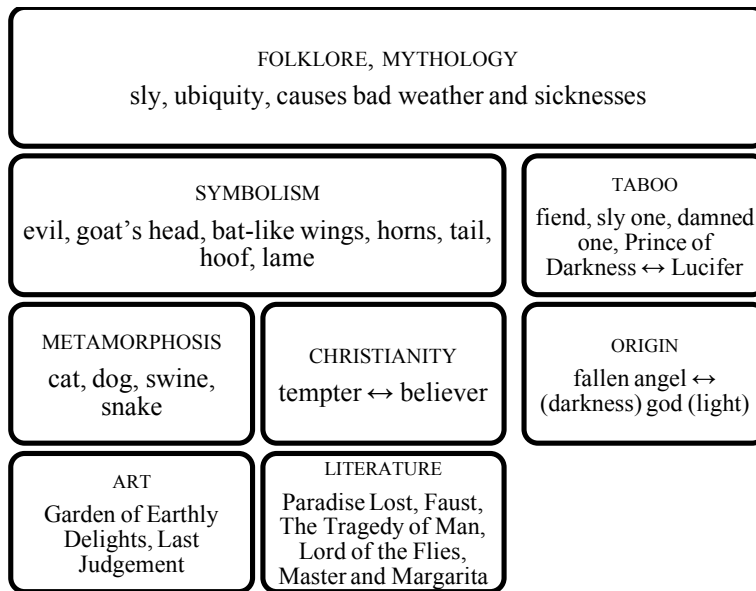
“Pope Gregory the Great [ca. 540–604] made the parable [of the good shepherd] the subject of a sermon delivered to the peo-

ple in the Basilica of St. Peter the second Sunday after Easter. He gave an extended exposition of the mercenary who usurped the place of the pastor and sought only material rewards, and of the various devices by which the wolf, the devil, destroyed the minds and souls of the flock" (Coffman 1936: 102).

The devil's attributes come primarily from those of Charu, the Etruscan demon of the underworld. To these were added physical features of the goat, horns, legs, tail, making resemble the Greek god of nature Pan – portrayed with horse's hooves or with one hoof and one human foot (symbolizing his divided nature); wings of a bat, a second face (Biedermann 1994: 387–389). Horse hoof has been popular since the 15th century (Röhrich 1970: 23).

The German folk literature is extremely rich in stories about the devil, and Goethe had a vast material to draw from, making use of the speak-of-the-devil belief (Woods 1959).

The devil



6. Outlook

Only some issues connected to the widespread proverb type “speak of the wolf/devil”, so rich in variants, have been touched upon here briefly. A far more extensive study should be devoted to this topic. We tried to show how – in the course of history – the “modern” devil-type of the proverb evolved from the older wolf-type which leads us to an archaic world of imagination. The wolf was the worst enemy of pastoral peoples; it has been demonized since the earliest times of human history. The wolf was thought to be a ghost animal which caused panic and whose very gaze could leave people speechless. He who spoke about the wolf would conjure disaster. It is these demonic abilities which allowed the devil to be equated with the wolf, a fact which manifests itself in similarities between both beings in various codes of culture, throughout the cultural history of Europe – non-European parallels have also been identified. Thus, alluding to the widespread idiom a wolf in sheep’s clothing, we may speak of a “devil in wolf’s clothing”, as the title of this article suggests.

Notes

¹Cf. also Turkish *iyi adam lafinin üstüne gelirmiş* “speak of a good person and s/he will appear”.

²Cf. *fabula est* ‘they say’, *sine fabula esse* ‘to have good reputation [not to be talked about]’.

³In his novel “The Monastery” (1820) Walter Scott uses the expression in a different way, either deliberately or mistakenly referring to the Aesopian fable “The Wolf and the Lamb”: “Lupus in fabula,” answered the Abbot, scornfully. “The wolf accused the sheep of muddying the stream when he drank in it above her – but it served as a pretext for devouring her” (Scott 2010: 541).

⁴Hungarian also has a synonymous proverb *Ne fessd az ördögöt a falra, mert megjelenik* “Don’t paint the devil on the wall because he appears”.

⁵For English alone we found variants such as *who speaks of the wolf sees his tail; when one speaks of the wolf, one sees its tail; talk of the wolf, and his tail appears; to mention the wolf’s name is to see the same* and: *talk of the devil and his imp appears; think of the devil and he’s looking over your shoulder; the devil is never nearer than when we are talking of him; speak of the devil and you are sure to see his horns*; cf. also *speak of an angel and you hear the rustle of his wings* or *speak of angels and you will hear their wings*. Most of them seem to be outdated.

⁶See Piirainen (2012; forthcoming) for more detail.

⁷Also Heb. *m’dabrim ‘al ha-khamor, ve-hinei* “talking about the donkey, and here it comes”.

⁸In some Asian languages there are variants with TIGER and LION as well, cf. Kor. *ho-rang-i-do je mal-ha-myeon on-da* “if you talk about the tiger, it will appear”, AlgAr. *oudhkour esbe' yahdef* “mention the lion and he will appear”. Both animals are associated with physical strength, power and military prowess. The tiger is popular in the myth and fable of India and China, and was adopted by Buddhism as a symbol of the power of the Buddhist faith. For the role of the tiger in Korean folk beliefs see Balázs (2012).

⁹Very often languages do not make any distinction between the different species of the Canidae. Dogs, wolves, jackals, coyotes or foxes may be called equally in the self-same language, or the original Indo-European root may develop entirely diverse meanings in different languages, cf. IE. **ul(o)p-* > Skt. *lopāśa* ‘1. fox, 2. jackal, 3. a similar animal’ ~ Av. *urupis* ‘dog’ ~ Hit. *ulip(pa)na* ‘wolf’ ~ Khot. *rrūvāsa* ‘jackal’ ~ Lat. *volpes* ‘fox’. Dogs and wolves may play the same mythological role.

¹⁰Medieval English villages consisted of a toft, a small yard or garden immediately surrounding the house, and of a croft, a larger area used by the tenant for growing crops or keeping a few animals. German woodland villages were often but one street wide, with fields stretching out towards the forest on either side.

¹¹Cf. article “Wolf” in: HWA 9: 716–794, esp. 782f, as well as the articles by Flom 1925, H. E. Allen 1935, 1936, Smal-Stocki 1950, and Ward 1987. For the interweaving of cultural semiotics and figurative language see also Dobrovolskij/Pirainen 1999, 2005: 335–343 and Idström/Pirainen 2012.

¹²Cf. Ovid “Ars amatoria” 1, 118: “As doves flee the eagle, in a frightened crowd, / as the new-born lamb runs from the hostile wolf: / so they fled in panic from the lawless men, / and not one showed the color she had before” (translated by A. S. Kline).

¹³Cf. Bulgarian *zad*, Serbian *zadina* ‘snake’ → ‘wolf’.

¹⁴About illegal, pagan devil-worship in Chaucer’s time, fairy tales, pranks with the devil see Raben (1950). For devil in Old English literature see R. E. Woolf (1953).

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Abbreviations

Alb. = Albanian, AlgAr. = Algerian Arabic, Arom. = Aromanian, Bas. = Basque, Bos. = Bosnian, Bret. = Breton, Bulg. = Bulgarian, Cat. = Catalan, Cr. = Croatian, Cz. = Czech, Da. = Danish, Du. = Dutch, Eng. = English, Esp. = Esperanto, Est. = Estonian, Fi. = Finnish, Fr. = French, Fri. = Friulian, Ger. = German, Gk. = Greek, Heb. = Hebrew, Hung. = Hungarian, Icel. = Icelandic,

IE. = Indo-European, It. = Italian, Kar. = Karaim, Kash. = Kashubian, Khot. = Khotanese, Kor. = Korean, Lat. = Latin, LGer. = Low German, LSorb. = Lower Sorbian, Lith. = Lithuanian, Ltv. = Latvian, Lux. = Luxembourgish, Mac. = Macedonian, Mir. = Mirandese, Mont. = Montenegrin, NFris. = North Frisian, Nor. = Norwegian, Pol. = Polish, Port. = Portuguese, Rm. = Romansh, Rom. = Romanian, Russ. = Russian, Skt. = Sanskrit, Slk. = Slovak, Slo. = Slovene, Sp. = Spanish, Sr. = Serbian, Swe. = Swedish, Ukr. = Ukrainian, WFrís. = West Frisian, Yid. = Yiddish

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