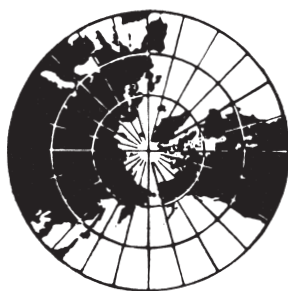


# PROVERBIUM

Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship



# 38:2021

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The University of Vermont

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*Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* is published annually by The University of Vermont. The Yearbook succeeds *Proverbium: Bulletin d'Information sur les Recherches Parémiologiques*, published occasionally from 1965 to 1975 by the Society for Finnish Literature, Helsinki.

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ISSN: 0743-782X

Printed in the United States of America  
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Burlington, Vermont

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

## PREFACE

The old proverb “All things must come to an end” will serve me very well for the last preface that I shall write for yet another volume of *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*. Of course, I ought to add the classical proverb “Tempus fugit” to it, since almost four decades have passed by since I became the founding editor of this annual publication. This year it is volume thirty-eight, and it might have been nice to finish with the round number of forty or even fifty volumes. However, advancing age cannot be stopped, and the moment for the orderly transfer of the editorship of *Proverbium* has surely arrived.

Several matters have led me to the difficult conclusion of handing over the reins to someone else. There is my age of seventy-seven and my decision to retire at the end of May 2021 after having served as Professor of German and Folklore at my beloved University of Vermont for fifty years! Together with my wife Barbara I gave this much thought, and I admit that it is painful to leave the teaching of my dear students behind. They have given me so much joy for half a century, and I shall miss them terribly. However, the university administration is letting me keep my International Proverb Archive in the Waterman Building on our campus. My large library of over nine thousand proverb collections and books on international proverb scholarship that I donated to the University of Vermont is housed in the beautiful Billings Library that I hope might become a Mecca for visiting proverb scholars. Obviously, I shall continue my scholarly work and plan to be at the university at least two or probably three days of the week.

My retirement alone is not the most important reason for giving up the editorship of *Proverbium*. This decision is primarily based on very pragmatic reasons. The expense of editing, publishing, and mailing the yearbooks literally throughout the world is not sustainable any longer. While the unchanged subscription

rates of \$45 for libraries and \$40 for individuals have not changed, and while I have always received \$2000 from the College of Arts and Sciences and \$1000 from the University Bookstore, these sums do not even come close to covering the actual costs that I have been glad and honored to personally subsidize all these years. More and more journals and yearbooks are now published online, and there is simply no choice but for *Proverbium* to follow suit.

It is my great pleasure and honor to announce that two much younger and well-established paremiologists will be the new editors as of volume 39 (2022). Dr. Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt (Bottmingen, Switzerland) and Dr. Melita Aleksa Varga (Osijek, Croatia) are well-known among proverb scholars with their jointly edited book *Introduction to Paremiology. A Comprehensive Guide to Proverb Studies* having become a classic in but a few years. The headquarters of *Proverbium* will be at the University of Osijek in Croatia. Both new editors will have all addresses to continue to distribute the electronic version of the yearbook. Please feel free to contact them at:

Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt xpucuhu@gmail.com

Melita Aleksa Varga melita.aleksa@gmail.com

Both of them are eager to continue the publication of *Proverbium* for years to come. I am especially pleased that they will continue with the volume numbers. They might make some changes in manuscript preparation and external reviews, but basically they are committed to continue the long-standing service to the international paremiological community. I certainly want to thank my two friends for their willingness to continue my work with dedication and diligence. As I have promised them, I shall be glad to assist them in any way possible. It is also my hope that I can travel to the University of Osijek and thank the leadership there for hosting the new editorial office of *Proverbium*.

After thirty-eight years of my scholarly service, there are literally hundreds of colleagues and friends whom I wish to thank for their support and help. My most sincere appreciation goes to all the paremiologists from around the world who entrusted me with their significant scholarship. I thank them for considering *Proverbium* worthy of publishing their important work. It has been such an incredible honor for me to edit *Proverbium* for so

many years. I shall miss it, but I hope that some of my own future papers will be accepted in the “new” *Proverbium*. Since I have kept all the correspondence that I have had with all the contributors, I am thinking about putting a volume of letters together that will be a written testimony to the splendid history of the yearbook.

I thank all of you, individuals and libraries, for the many years of supporting *Proverbium* by sending me your valuable manuscripts, paying for subscriptions, and making financial donations to our yearbook. Special thanks are due my associate editor Galit Hasan-Rokem, my managing editor Brian Minier, and my production editor Hope Greenberg who, as well as their unnamed predecessors, helped to make these volumes possible. I also wish to thank my friends at Queen City Printers of Burlington, Vermont, for producing the handsome volumes. Special thanks also to several deans of the College of Arts and Sciences, a few bookstore managers at the University of Vermont and several former students for their generous support. All of these good friends have played a big role in keeping our *Proverbium* afloat.

So let me end my last preface with yet another proverb: “All’s well that ends well!” I shall keep my *Proverbium* in my mind and heart for my remaining years, knowing that it brought much happiness and satisfaction to me during many productive years in the dedicated service of international paremiology. Fare well, my beloved *Proverbium*, in the capable hands of my dear friends Hrisztalina and Melita who will continue the good work. I thank them both from the bottom of my heart and look forward to assisting them in any way I can. I know that the future of *Proverbium* looks very bright as it moves towards fifty, seventy-five, and a hundred volumes!

Wolfgang Mieder





DEMING AN

## TOWARD A NEW ORIENTATION OF CHINESE PROVERB STUDIES

**Abstract:** Proverbs have been widely used as a formalized genre in the literature since the eighth century BCE in China, and there has appeared a great number of proverb collections in the past centuries. However, the proverb studies in China have not been given relevant attention, and the deficiency of focusing only on the proverb texts out of context in those existing studies is obvious. Proverbs are a form of literature as well as a comprehensive practice of life and culture, whose integrity of meaning and function can only be presented and realized in context. Therefore, a better collection or investigation of proverbs must be combined with the perspective of context. The ongoing national project the “Treasury of Chinese Folk Literature: Proverbs” is expected to not only make up for the deficiency of previous investigations of proverbs in China, providing a more comprehensive and integrated collection of Chinese proverbs, but also further advance proverb studies in China.

**Keywords:** proverbs, context, Treasury of Chinese Folk Literature: Proverbs

As a folklore genre with extensive impact in social life, proverbs have been constantly concerned by scholars and intellectuals since very early time in China. The proverb texts have not only been widely quoted by various books and documents since at least the 8<sup>th</sup> BCE, but also been collected and compiled more and more into different collections since the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, which show the multiple nature and value of this genre from different perspectives. Nevertheless, Chinese folklorists have paid less attention to the study of proverbs, compared with that of other genres such as myths, folktales, and ballads. Even the small amount of existing proverb studies has shown obvious deficiencies, particularly in the inquiry of the nature, function, and definition, as well as research method. With this awareness, this paper discusses the characteristics of Chinese proverbs and key issues in the related research, as well as introducing a brief history of proverbs collecting and study

in China, with particular attention to the ongoing national project of “Chinese Proverb Collection” and the “Treasury of Chinese Folk Literature: Proverbs.”

***The definition, classification and characteristics of Chinese proverbs***

There are more than ten different words referring to proverbs in classic literature and oral speech in Chinese, such as “*li yan*” (country saying), “*bi yan*” (small town saying), “*su yan*” (popular saying), “*ye yu*” (wild words), “*chang yan*” (common saying), and “*lao hua*” (old saying). And the concept of “*yan*” (saying/proverb) was popularly used to specifically indicate the genre of proverb as early as in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, which is the form most equivalent to “proverb” in Chinese.

It should be noted that the word “*yan*” is polysemous in classic Chinese literature, with multiple meanings in different context. On the one hand, it is used as an adjective to describe someone who is impolite or rude. On the other hand, as a noun, it signifies three verbal genres. The first and the most common one equals to proverb; the second refers to idiom; and the third means ballad. Those multiple meanings of “*yan*,” according to different understandings of people in different contexts, embody the high similarity between proverbs and other genres alike, as well as the easy confusion among them. This makes it particularly vital to well define the genre of proverb.

The definitions of a proverb are various and numerous, and they have “caused scholars from many disciplines much chagrin over the centuries” (Mieder 2007: 394). In Chinese academic circles, there are two influential views as the following:

Proverbs are the summary of people's practical experience, and they are expressed with artistic words and may be publicly used in daily conversation. They are speeches to regulate people's behavior (Guo 1924: 6).

Proverbs are concise and relatively formalized artistic speeches that are collectively created by the folk and widely orally spread among people. They are the regular summary of people's rich wisdom and common experience. (National Editorial Board of Chinese Folk Literature Collections 1990: 20)

Definitions of proverbs in the Western countries are also more diverse. Despite concerning expressions such as “Proverbs are the

children of experience,” “Proverbs are the wisdom of the streets,” and “Proverbs are true words,” which are quite popular, proverb scholars have “not been satisfied with the vagaries of this type of definitions” (Mieder 2007: 395).

Referring to those existing views, I attempt to define “proverb” as such:

A proverb is a genre of verbal art with short and easy-to-remember words and relatively formalized structure that is passed down from generation to generation to summarize collective experience, to transmit general knowledge, to demonstrate basic principles, and to guide or regularize people's social practice. It is characterized by outstanding orality, conciseness and clear rhythm. Being in the form of a complete sentence other than sentence element, it often states a definite conclusion, and has the nature and function of "axiom" in daily application.

Generally speaking, Chinese proverbs not only have obvious regional or ethnic characteristics in presenting unique experience and knowledge, but also embody the consistency in line with the traditional world outlook and values of Chinese culture in general, which makes them mostly understandable and acceptable to most people. Such understandability and acceptability enable us to classify proverbs according to the texts, with the perspective of intertextuality. Chinese proverbs may generally be classified into two types: proverbs of natural environment and modes of production, and proverbs of social life. More specifically, they can be divided into the following eight categories: natural proverbs, agricultural proverbs, professional proverbs, proverbs of social manner, cultivation proverbs, social contact proverbs, everyday life proverbs, and political proverbs. This classification as a basic framework and reference to the current project of the “Treasury of Chinese Folk Literature: Proverbs” in China, is just a static division of proverbs from the synchronic point of view. However, from the diachronic and dynamic perspectives, the main contents, types and applications of proverbs in each period are varying due to the differences of social life norms in different historical stages and the different motivation and interests of each document or collection in which proverbs are recorded. The proverbs in each historical stage, therefore, do not necessarily appear in the above classi-

fication completely. It should be noted that the emergence and application of agricultural proverbs usually corresponds to special regional adaptability (see Juanjuan Chen's article in this volume). At the same time, a considerable part of social proverbs superficially express a specific historical person or event, but these people or events have become symbols after a certain period of time, which might be generally used in other contexts without the specific person or event involved.

***The development, collection, and investigation of Chinese proverbs***

As mentioned above, proverbs were popularly spread as a formalized artistic genre of speech as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> BCE in China. The rhetorical devices of antithesis, metaphor or direct statement, which are commonly used in modern proverbs, have been widely used in this period. At the same time, many proverb texts well known in later times have also appeared, which were widely involved in ethics, self-cultivation, social norm of conduct and general principles, such as "A good neighbor is better than a brother far off," "Better be a chicken's head than a cow's tail," "Gems unwrought can do nothing useful," "A thousand-mile journey begins with the first step," "Good fortune lies within the bad; bad fortune lurks within the good." The principles and rules emphasized in those texts not only established the basic norms for the social life at that time, but also constituted the core content of the spiritual and cultural tradition of the Chinese culture

Thus it can be seen that proverbs shaped a special expression of national spirit and "keywords" in Chinese traditional expressive culture in early times when the language originated and formed. They are not only the summary and embodiment of the national spirit, but also play a strengthening role in this spirit. As a mature genre, such proverbs in the development in later times, although they might change constantly in content based on the increasingly rich social life, have gained little increase in artistic means and structural forms

Many proverbs about natural knowledge and agricultural production experience also appeared in the early times. With the continuous progress of agricultural technology and the increasing diversity of production activities, the content of these proverbs are

constantly accumulated and increased, which forms a large part of the treasury of Chinese proverbs.

The earliest collection of proverbs in China appeared in the Song Dynasty, which is *Proverbs from the Past through Present* compiled by Zhou Shouzhong in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Although its original version is no longer handed down, this book started a trend for the later scholars to compile proverbs. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties (14<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> century), there appeared a number of collections on old and contemporary proverbs, such as *Old and Contemporary Proverbs* by Yang Shen (1488-1559), *Six Speeches* by Guo Zizhang (1543-1618), *On Old Sayings* by Zeng Tingmei (1734-1816), *The Old Sayings* by Du Wenlan (1815-1881), and *Yue Proverbs* by Fan Yin (1827-1897). They all collected and preserved a great deal of old proverbs in China. Among them, *The Old Sayings* compiled by Du Wenlan is a great success. (For the history of Chinese proverbs development and collection, see Juwen Zhang's article in this volume.

Since the late 1910s, with the rise and continuous advancement of folklore studies in China, the collection and compilation of proverbs have been booming, and a large number of proverb collections reflecting the life experience of different regions and fields have emerged. Some of those books are compiled on the basis of old literature, which continue the traditional way of proverb collection. There are also many new collections through field-work, which reflecting new perspectives and methods developed in the discipline of folklore studies. Those new perspectives and methods have been widely used in the proverb collections after 1949, and especially applied and greatly developed in the national project "Chinese Proverb Collections" (1984-2009) started in the early 1980s, which not only collected and recorded the vast amount of proverbs widely spread throughout China, but also vividly showed the vitality of proverbs

Academic studies of proverbs in China started in the late 1910s. Since then, Chinese proverb scholars have made progress in the following aspects: First, they have formed a rigorous and clear definition of proverb, and thus distinguished proverbs from several other genres that are easily confused with each other, such as idioms, ballads, two-part allegorical sayings, and adages. Second, they have discussed and summarized the artistic features and syntactic structure of proverbs, laying a solid foundation for

further understanding of the formal characteristics of proverbs. Thirdly, and most importantly, they have studied the Chinese people's thoughts, conceptions and nationality embodied in proverbs, for instance, by analyzing the educational significance and cognitive value contained in proverbs of a certain ethnic group, or the values and living and cultural conditions reflected in a certain type of proverbs. These studies account for the largest proportion in Chinese proverb studies, and the achievements concerned are encouraging. In addition, there are also some studies on proverbs in literatures from different historical periods, which provide important clues to understanding the records and use of proverbs in specific times.

#### ***The importance of context in the proverb studies***

However, compared with the studies of other folklore genres such as myths, legends and tales, proverb studies in China is quite underdeveloped, which is also inconsistent with the fact that there are a large amount of proverbs both in literature and real life. Moreover, with increasing acceptance of the concept to understand and interpret folklore from the perspective of "performance," the deficiency of focusing only on the proverb text out of context in those existing studies has become increasingly striking. This is especially reflected in research on the cognitive value and educational function of proverbs, as well as on people's worldview, ideological history, and national character involved in proverbs, which occupy the main proportion of proverb studies.

A typical example of the new and progressive approach is *A New Study of Chinese: People's Mind Seen through Proverbs* (Li 1996). In this book, the author classifies proverbs from the perspective of the study of national character, and focuses on different aspects of national mentality with the supports from different types of proverbs. As a study on national spirit based on folklore materials, this book brings fresh air into the concerning field, and also has a positive significance for understanding the value of proverbs. Nevertheless, since the proverbs cited in the book are all mere text out of context, its viewpoints, based on the choice of materials, are obviously preconceived. For instance, when discussing the process of socialization of Chinese people, the author concludes that this process is "growing up from integrity to tact," by analyzing proverbs related to personal cultivation and social

experience. That is, people are often determined to be upright in their early stage of socialization, but they tend to be tactful in real social life (Li 1996: 121-133). Such kind of analysis is reasonable to some extent. However, due to the lack of information about the transmission and impact of different proverb texts, especially the lack of discussion on proverbs expressing completely opposite ideas from those selected in the book, its conclusion is far less persuasive

One of the main reasons for this problem is that researchers regard proverb text as self-sufficient and independent super organism, and ignore the importance of context. Proverbs, of course, have strong textual self-sufficiency. However, if we want to understand people's thoughts and ideas through proverbs, and to ensure that this understanding is as close as possible to the facts, that is, to understand people's thoughts more comprehensively rather than partially, we must pay attention to the issues related to context. These issues include but are not limited to: How popular are the proverbs collected or grasped by the researchers? Who are using those proverbs? For whom are those proverbs used? When do people use proverbs? What are the effects of using those proverbs on the social relations, psychology, behavior, production, and life practice of the proverb users and listeners? For a same issue or phenomenon, there are often two proverbs with different or opposite ideas and interests. Such kind of "contradictory proverbs" (Litovkina and Mieder 2006: 1-2) widely spread in many places has already drawn the attention of paremiologists, which is conceptualized as "counter-proverbs" by Wolfgang Mieder (2014: 40). In that case, whose concept or value and in what situation do such kind of opposite proverbs respectively represent? It would be impossible to answer the above questions and make right conclusion if we analyze people's thoughts embodied in proverbs without context. For example, some opposite expression conveyed in proverbs might be representation of the different ideas of people from different social classes, or just a temporary expression of the experience or interest from the same group of people in different situations. If we see only texts of the following two proverbs that are expressions of marriage attitude: "Change your friends as you are elevated and change your wife as you become wealthy," and "Never forget your poor and humble friends, nor abandon your wife who shared your hard lot," it would be very difficult to

conclude which one is more popular or serious, representing the attitude more concerned among Chinese people.

In combining with the context of proverbs to explore the history of thought, Wang Kaixuan and Li Yang (2012) have made better achievements in the book of *A History of Chinese Ballads and Proverbs*. It is an in-depth analysis of the social, cultural and historical connotations of proverbs. Despite its juxtaposition of the ballad and proverb without distinction, and the view that ballads and proverbs are counterparts of folklore rather than being self-sufficiency as agency of proverbs on its own, which is far from the common understanding of current folklore scholarship, this book investigates proverbs in old and present times by focusing on the situational, social, and historical contexts in which specific proverbs are used. This study not only helps with a deep understanding of the meaning of different proverbs and the function of this genre, but also provides an example for studying historical and contemporary proverbs in consultation with the perspective of “performance.”

As Bartlett Whiting points out, “The fact that proverbs are of value only to those who understand them, is hinted in the Ashanti proverb ‘When the fool is told a proverb, the meaning of it has to be explained to him’” (Whiting 1994: 35). Furthermore, to understand the meaning of a proverb, as Wolfgang Mieder emphasizes, it should “be analyzed in its unique context, be it social, literary, rhetorical, journalistic, or whatever” (Mieder 2007: 395). In his book on fieldwork, Bruce Jackson also argues:

It might be interesting to compile lists of proverbs known by members of one ethnic group or another, but meanings of those lists are very different if the proverbs of one group are only bits of words remembered from youth and the proverbs of some other groups are rhetorical devices still used regularly. If the latter, the folklorist wants to know how and when they are used, who uses them, and why. How are they embedded in conversation.....The real folklore fact, to quote Bronislaw Malinowski on linguistic facts, “is the full utterance within its context of situation” (Jackson 1987, 29-30).

It must be pointed out that in addition to situational context in which a conversation takes place, the context should also contain



the background knowledge closely related to social and cultural factors embodied in and conveyed by the specific concepts in the text of proverbs, that is, intertextuality or discursive context (Bauman 2004: 4-8). It enables people in the same social and cultural tradition to understand some individual proverb texts without extra situational context. For example, some figurative proverbs, like "The sun declines at the highest position; the moon starts to wane as being full," use metonymy without the essence of the figurative words and metaphors (Wu 2000: 60-61). But it is understandable through a certain perception and understanding of its rhetorical devices. In detail, this proverb literally expresses an understanding of specific natural phenomena, and has the attribute of natural proverb. The metaphorical meaning contained in it can also be accurately and properly understood on the premise that we have a better understanding of the relevant rhetorical devices, especially other applications of proverbs composed of relevant rhetorical devices in specific contexts.

In a word, proverbs are not only a form of literature, but also a comprehensive practice of life and culture. Their integrity of meaning and function can only be presented and realized in context. Therefore, a better collection or investigation of proverbs must be combined with the perspective of context.

***The compilation of the "Treasury of Treasury of Chinese Folk Literature: Proverbs" and its significance***

In China, especially since the 1980s, with the accelerating process of modernization and globalization, the traditional style of production and life has changed dramatically. This has also brought great impact to folklore/folk literature that is based on the traditional agricultural civilization. Many folklore items were facing the danger of declining or even dying out. Proverbs are no exception. Compared with the past, the number of people who bear rich knowledge of proverbs or quote proverbs frequently either in verbal communication or writing has decreased significantly. This situation has prompted many intellectuals, especially folklorists, to initiate and join in several large projects to salvage traditional culture, including proverbs and other folklore genres. The project of "Three Collections of Chinese Folk Literature" (including that of Folktales, Ballads, and Proverbs, hereinafter referred to as "Three Collections") (1984-2009) carried out by folklorists

nationwide since the 1980s is a prominent example of such large-scale investigation and compilation. This project has not only recorded and preserved in time a large number of folklore items, but also accumulated new experience for the further development of Chinese folklore studies.

However, in the past 40 years, with the continuous advancement of theories and perspectives in folklore scholar, the deficiencies embodied in the project of “Three Collections” has been more and more revealed (see the articles by Chen and Zhang in this volume). It is right on the basis of the reflection of those deficiencies that the new project of the “Treasury of Chinese Folk Literature,” in which the proverbs is one of the important categories, was launched by the Chinese Folk Literature and Arts Association in 2017.

The Treasury of Chinese Folk Literature project aims to compile new collections of folklore according to more detailed genres, which include myths, legends, folktales, ballads, proverbs, epics, long poems, folk dramas, riddles, idioms, and professional storytelling and singing. In accordance with the work concerning the other genres in the same project, the category of proverbs will compile new collections of proverbs from each province, with reference to the latest theories and perspectives in folklore studies, and to the basic data accumulated during the investigation of the Collection of Chinese Proverbs. With the effort to rectify the lack of context perspective in the previous project of the Chinese Proverb Collections, this new project emphasizes the nature of proverbs as an “equipment for living” (Burke 1941) and promotes field investigation in the places involved. At the same time, it also requires the investigators and compilers to collect and record the contextual information related to the application of specific proverbs, and make comment and annotation on the natural and cultural background, using situation, the way of using, the users and the expression effects of each text in order to draw the broad picture of proverbs as much as possible. The development of this ongoing national project will hopefully not only make up for the deficiency of the previous project, and provide a more comprehensive and integrated collection of Chinese proverbs, but also further advance proverb studies in China.

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## USE OF PROVERBS AND SIMILAR SAYINGS IN RECENT PROTESTS AND POLITICAL DEBATES IN POLAND, BELARUS, AND RUSSIA

**Abstract:** In the article, the attention is focused on recent political events in three Eastern European countries, namely Poland, Belarus, and Russia. In the case of Poland, the emphasis lies on demonstrations against the new anti-abortion law, commonly known as the Women's Strike (*Strajk Kobiet*). The focus then moves to the protests which followed the presidential elections held in Belarus on 9 August 2020. Finally, the paper addresses the public debate around the Russian opposition politician and anti-corruption activist Alexei Navalny. In all three cases, the use of paroemias on different levels and its role are examined. The sayings discussed here appear in interviews, official statements, on social media, and on demonstration posters.

**Keywords:** Eastern Europe, protests, politics, public debate, social media, proverbs, quotes, rhetoric, anti-proverb, allusion

### 1. Introduction

Proverbs constitute an important element of human interaction and have penetrated various spheres of lives including literature, mass media, politics, social sciences, and education. They serve as a mirror of social norms and may also justify or even reinforce existing stereotypes in different socio-political contexts. Much research covering decades and centuries in several national and international settings has been done in this respect.<sup>1</sup> The investigation of current developments around the globe indicates that the use of proverbs is still a wide-spread and popular rhetorical tool applied equally by those in power, ordinary citizens, and observers in order to defend their respective viewpoints, to intensify their message, or to describe a certain situation without addressing it directly. Such statements often start with "You know, there is a saying..." or "In our country, there is a proverb...". In fact, the idea for this article was born after hearing a commentary given by a member of the Polish parliament for the Finnish tele-

vision, in which she cites a proverb in defense of her anti-abortion attitude (see the paragraph on Poland below). Being a native of Belarus and inspired by the peaceful and creative demonstrations regularly organized there after the controversial elections in August 2020, I decided to go further east from Poland to scrutinize recent developments from the paremiological point of view.

## 2. Poland: Protests for women's rights

Poland has experienced some essential changes in social policies ever since the traditionalist and conservative party Law and Justice (*PiS*) formed the majority government in 2015. Many of these changes concern women's and various minorities' rights. In 2020, Poland announced its withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Criticizing these plans in her article, a reporter finds fault with the fact that many Polish men still seem to have the same attitude to family as is reflected in the proverb *Jak się baby nie bije, to jej wątroba gnije* 'If one does not beat the woman, her liver is rotting'.<sup>2</sup> In a poster campaign called *Tradycyjne Podhale* ('Traditional Podhale', referring to Poland's southernmost



Figure 1. Traditional Podhale: If one does not beat the woman, her liver is rotting. And what is your favorite proverb?

region), activists tried to make the general public aware that besides beautiful landscapes and rich traditional culture, there is also a considerable tolerance towards violence in the region. On one poster, the abovementioned saying is cited with the sarcastic addition: ‘And what is your favorite proverb?’<sup>3</sup>, as if to initiate a discussion about this severe grievance.

The situation is similar with the tightening of the Polish abortion law. In 2015–2016, the abortion ban was discussed in the Sejm, the lower house of the Polish parliament, and sparked the so-called Black Protest directed against this proposal. On 22 October 2020, a declaration<sup>4</sup> by the Constitutional Tribunal made nearly all types of abortion illegal which only fueled more demonstrations. Soon afterwards, Stanisław Michalkiewicz, a Polish right-wing political commentator and former politician labeled them as *rewolucja macic* ‘the revolution of uteri’.<sup>5</sup> As a reaction to the European Parliament resolution of 26 November 2020 on the de facto ban on the right to abortion in Poland, Michalkiewicz cites the proverb *Nie dał Pan Bóg świni rogów, bo by ludzi bodła* ‘God gave no horns to the pig so that it would not butt people with them’.<sup>6</sup> Its general meaning is that someone cannot realize their plans, usually so as to harm others – or, in this case, to alter the decision of the Constitutional Tribunal of Poland, due to the lack of the necessary tools, cf. *A curst cow has short horns*.<sup>7</sup>

Sometimes, non-Polish sayings are resorted to in such discussions. Thus, in an article on the website of *Jagiellonian Club*, a Polish non-partisan association, the authors hold the opinion that abortion should not only be regarded from the position of the mother-child relation, but rather seen in a larger context of the whole political community. In this context, they see the “African” proverb *It takes a village to raise a child* as an apt expression, stating that not abortion should be the answer to women’s isolation and calamity, but rather legal changes forcing the whole society to take part in the upbringing of new citizens.<sup>8</sup>

The protests in Poland have been also rich in anti-proverbs, ‘parodied, twisted, or fractured proverbs that reveal humorous or satirical speech play with traditional proverbial wisdom’.<sup>9</sup> Some of them are mentioned in a 2018 Master’s thesis on the Black Protest, and are popular up to the present.<sup>10</sup> One such coinage is *Nie ucz matki dzieci rodzić* ‘Don’t teach your mother how to give birth to children’, formed from the original *Nie ucz ojca dzieci robić*

‘Don’t teach your father how to make children’, cf. in English *Don’t teach your grandmother to suck eggs*. Another one is *Kto mieczem wojuje, ten od pochwy ginie* ‘He who fights with the sword shall die by the vagina’ originating in the Biblical *Kto mieczem wojuje, ten od miecza ginie* which corresponds to *He who lives by the sword shall die by the sword* (cf. Matthew 26, 26:52).

Proverbs were used in Poland in the public debate on (de)legalization of abortion as part of the argumentation throughout decades. In the early 1990s, shortly after the end of Communist rule, the access to abortion was made more difficult and was further tightened in the following years. In 1994, gynecologist Radziśław Sikorski presented in his article the opinion that abortions are harmful for the further development of Poland’s demography. “The fertility rate per woman must rise in the following years in order for a generation change to take place,” he stated referring to the so-called replacement-level fertility which, according to him, was under the necessary minimum rate in Poland. As if purely medical argumentation were not enough, the professor makes use of an “Old Chinese proverb”: *Lepiej uratować jedno życie ludzkie, aniżeli wybudować 100 pagód* ‘It is better to save one human life than to build one hundred pagodas’.<sup>11</sup> Now, nearly three decades later, in a commentary for a reporter from Finland, Member of the Sejm Maria Kurowska summarizes the position of those who advocate abortion in Poland by saying:

“We have a reasonable Polish proverb which goes ‘Better ten children on the shoulder than one on the consciousness’. And I think it very well reflects our philosophy and that of those who protect life.”<sup>12</sup>

Proverbs and related sayings are used on both sides of the debate as a means of reinforcement of the respective moral stance of the actors involved. Especially among traditionalists, the recourse to folk wisdom aims at sending the signal that their position is deeply rooted in the Polish culture and thus cannot be wrong. This is sometimes amplified by referring to other cultures, as in the case of “Old Chinese” or “African” proverbs above, the use of which implies a notion of the universality of such standpoints.



### ***3. Belarus: Presidential elections and the ongoing anti-regime protests***

Probably *the* most known expression produced during 2020 events in Belarus, especially in the post-electoral phase, is *Belorus belorusu belorus* 'A Belarusian, to another Belarusian, is a Belarusian'. The phrase is built by analogy with the Latin *Homo homini lupus est* 'Man is a wolf to man,' and reaches further back in time than to the 2020 protests. While it has had a rather negative connotation for years, roughly meaning 'everyone for himself', its meaning changed to the opposite starting with arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in Belarus. While Belarusian authorities downplayed the dangerous nature of the situation with the then President Aliaksandr Lukashenka suggesting that drinking vodka, going to the sauna, and driving tractor would help people fight the virus<sup>13</sup>, ordinary citizens had to organize themselves at the grass-roots level. With the outbreak of post-electoral violence and arbitrariness against peaceful demonstrators, ordinary people continued supporting each other providing marchers with water and snacks, helping people escape from their persecutors, and starting local support initiatives.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the proverbial coinage *Belorus belorusu belorus* now emphasizes mutual support and helpfulness of protesters.

Ahead of the presidential elections, Belarusian citizens attempted to make the formation of local election commissions more transparent by nominating impartial election observers rather than letting the authorities appoint predetermined monitors.<sup>15</sup> The longtime head of the Central Election Commission, Lidia Yermoshina, responded to these requirements by citing the popular proverb *V čužoy monastyr' so svoim ustavom ne chodyat*, literally 'You do not go to another monastery with your own rules', cf. *When in Rome, do as the Romans do*.<sup>16</sup> A few months before the elections, the Belarusian economic policy model was criticized on the non-governmental news portal *Naviny.by* using an allegedly Native American proverb *Lošad' sdochla – slez'* 'If the horse is dead, get off it' referring to Lukashenka's attempts to make his economic model work although it repeatedly proved ineffective over the decades.<sup>17</sup>

Throughout the election campaign, Lukashenka repeatedly distanced himself from his nearest political ally Russia sparking critical reaction from Moscow. In her statement, Director of the

Information and Press Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Maria Zakharova said:

“My grandmother had a good saying which later my mother kept telling me: ‘The maid beats herself, if she does not reap cleanly’. [...] I would not like to give any assessments. [...] But, in my opinion, this proverb suits the situation very well.”<sup>18</sup>

The basic meaning of the saying quoted here is that whenever someone neglects something they do so at their own expense. Thus, although avoiding a direct reproach, Zakharova sent a clear signal that such behavior can have unpleasant consequences for the Belarusian leader.

When peaceful mass protests erupted after the elections, and the official Moscow attested its support for Lukashenka, he commented on it using the proverb *Drug poznačetsya v bede* ‘A friend in need is a friend indeed’.<sup>19</sup> After Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelensky stated that Lukashenka should not be called president in light of the rigged elections, Lukashenka responded using a slightly modified version of the saying which in English corresponds to *Pot calling the kettle black*. Referring to recent polls according to which Zelensky’s popularity had dramatically declined, he added that the Ukrainian politician “should be now worried about being called simply Zelensky instead of ‘President [Zelensky]’”.<sup>20</sup>

Accusing Poland of alleged attempts to foment a revolution in Belarus, Lukashenka said in an official statement: “I told them (the Poles – F.B.): Don’t climb into someone else’s garden, sort out your own problems first. But no, they started climbing over”.<sup>21</sup> The basic meaning of the saying with the garden is *Mind your own business*. When Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Lavrov, in his turn, accused Ukraine of being the inciter of the protests in Belarus and of intervening in the internal affairs of the country, his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba replied with the saying *Vor kričīt “deržite vora!”* ‘It is the thief [himself] who shouts, “Stop the thief!”’ meaning that Russia itself intervenes into Belarus’ domestic matters and at the same time accuses others of doing so.<sup>22</sup>

When Roman Bezsmertnyi, former Ambassador of Ukraine to Belarus, was asked in an interview how independent Lukashenka is as a political actor in his opinion, he answered that such politici-

ans can be characterized by the proverb *Laskovyy telėnok dvuch matok sosėt* ‘A friendly calf sucks two mothers’. In other words, he who is friendly with everyone, gets benefits from everyone, cf. *The stillest hog gets the most swill*, implying that the Belarusian leader has never been politically independent, but is rather a political opportunist.<sup>23</sup>

In January 2021, Lukashenka gave an exclusive interview for Nailya Asker-zade from the state-owned Russian television channel Rossiya-1. It became one of his rare interviews since the beginning of the protests in Belarus which were cracked down on systematically by the regime’s police and special forces. In the interview, Lukashenka was given an opportunity to present himself in a favorable light. The newspaper *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* described the goal of Asker-zade’s Minsk visit as “washing a black dog until it is white, which is virtually impossible according to the corresponding proverb [...]”.<sup>24</sup> The proverb in question goes *Čėrnogo kobelya ne otmoyeš’ dobela* ‘You cannot wash a black dog to make it white,’ cf. *A leopard cannot change its spots*.

However, the use of proverbs during the protests in Belarus does not restrict itself to politicians and political commentators. Protesters themselves often resort to proverbs – and anti-proverbs – in their posters. Most of them refer to the systematic violence against peaceful demonstrators. *Nasil’no mil ne budeš* is written on the poster held by three young women dressed in white with flowers in their hands.<sup>25</sup> The saying can be translated as ‘Love cannot be compelled,’ and means in this context that Lukashenka cannot regain trust and respect of the Belarusian people which was lost over the preceding months. A young man sits cross-legged on the ground smiling and holding a poster with the inscription in Russian ‘Let’s melt rubber truncheons into condoms.’<sup>26</sup> The catchphrase is known from late Soviet-time demonstrations<sup>27</sup> and is a revised version of the Biblical “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks” (Isaiah 2:3–4). It is also tightly linked to the slogan *Make love, not war*.

The infamous saying *Byėt značit lyubit* which roughly means ‘A loving man is a beating man’ (lit. ‘If he beats [his wife], it means that he loves [her]’) is the source of not one, but two anti-proverbs used on posters. The one is *Byėt ne značit lyubit* ‘If he beats, it does not mean that he loves’, the other one *Byėt značit syadet* ‘If he beats, it means he will go to jail’ implying possible

consequences for the regime leader after the envisioned transition of power.<sup>28</sup>

In continuation of the topic of love and violence, another apt saying was employed, *Ot lyubvi do nenavisti odin šag* ‘There is one step between love and hate’, similar to the English *The thinnest line is between love and hate*. Referring to riot police methods of detaining protestors and the often inhumane treatment of the arrested, a new coinage emerged: *Ot lyubvi do nenavisti odin avto-zak* ‘There is one paddy wagon between love and hate’.<sup>29</sup>

Another popular expression widely used in daily life was given a new form, namely *Baba s vozu – kobyle legče*, literally ‘It is easier for the mare when the woman is off the cart’, indicating that one welcomes the departure of someone else, cf. in English *Good riddance to bad rubbish*. In the light of the discontent with the long-time president, it was reworded into *Lukašenko s vozu – Belarusi legče* ‘It is easier for Belarus when Lukashenka is off the cart’.<sup>30</sup>

This is only snapshot in time, a fraction of the overall picture of how paroemias are applied in Belarus protests on the part of both the demonstrators and the authorities. However, it is enough to show how much such sayings are appreciated as instruments of conveying certain ideas and of reinforcing the respective political messages of their users.

#### **4. Russia: The case of Alexei Navalny**

The latest political events in Russia are no exception in this respect. President Vladimir Putin has been demonstrably fond of using proverbs and sayings during interviews, press conferences, and similar events. Back in 2019, the BBC Russian Service presented a video compilation with nearly thirty sayings from his speeches from different years in different contexts.<sup>31</sup> The case of Alexei Navalny is full of paraphrasing and metaphors, particularly as Putin and other officials persistently avoid using his very name in public.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, as is shown below, Navalny’s supporters are just as active in using paroemias.



*Figure 2. “It is easier for Belarus when Lukashenka is off the cart” by protesters from the Bilevo neighborhood in Vitebsk.*



*Figure 3. “There is one paddy wagon between love and hate”:  
Women’s March in Minsk in September 2020*

The Russian animation director Garri Bardin said in support of the public initiative *My za Navalnogo* (We are for Navalny): “There is a folk proverb which goes ‘constant dripping wears the stone’. Today, the power is lying around like a stone on the road of our progress. And Alexei Navalny turned out to be the drip [needed to wear that stone].”<sup>33</sup> In response to a critical complaint message on Instagram by a private entrepreneur asking how he was supposed to feed his family if his employer is unable to pay for his services, Igor Artamonov, a politician from the pro-Putin party United Russia and head of administration of the Lipetsk region, cynically remarked: “Every man is the architect of his own fortune. There is such a proverb. You are rebuking the wrong person here”. A pro-Navalny activist team from Lipetsk picked up this public conversation, reposted it on Twitter, and commented referring to Artamonov: “There is a[nother] proverb: A United Russia governor is either an asshole or a thief, or both”.<sup>34</sup>

Speaking about the denial by Kremlin of any involvement in the poisoning of Navalny, Professor at the Moscow Institute of Economics Igor Chubais said in his interview for the broadcaster Voice of America: “[...] it is appropriate to cite the old folk proverb ‘The thief has a burning hat’ (*Na vore i šapka gorit*). [...] Kremlin’s position keeps changing and boils down to a ‘we are not us’.”<sup>35</sup> The proverb used here is equivalent to *A guilty mind betrays itself*, cf. also *Liar, liar, pants on fire*. When Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany Heiko Maas accused the Russian side of taking no action to investigate the poisoning, the above-mentioned Russian foreign ministry’s spokesperson Maria Zakharova reacted by saying: “Let me remind Berlin of the Russian proverb ‘The father does not beat his son for gambling, but rather for trying to win the money back’.”<sup>36</sup> The general meaning of this saying is that there is a limit to everything, one should know where the line goes. In this case, this is an indirect request not to intervene in the issue.

Another person mentioned earlier in this paper is the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. After the detention of Navalny upon his return to Russia, Kuleba publicly called for the release of the activist and for an end to the use of violence against peaceful protesters across Russia. When asked about his official position on Navalny, the minister said: “There is a saying: The

enemy of my enemy is my friend. Therefore, if Navalny is Putin's enemy, then Ukraine will support Navalny."<sup>37</sup>

Occasionally, expressions which are thought to be proverbs are in fact quotations by famous people, as the following examples illustrate. In 2017, a series of protests broke out in the country caused, among other things, by the refusal of Russian authorities to register Alexey Navalny's 2018 presidential candidacy. Speculating about the possible rapidity of social changes brought about by these protests, the Russian human rights activist Lyudmila Alekseeva opined: "We have a proverb: 'Russians harness [the horses] slowly, but they drive fast'."<sup>38</sup> This "proverb" is often treated as a quote usually attributed to Otto von Bismarck and, more rarely, to Winston Churchill. It is nowadays gladly cited by Russians as a "Russian proverb" and was attested as such as early as in 1880.<sup>39</sup> It implies that Russian people often need much time to collect their thoughts, courage, or strength, and like to postpone things, but are highly productive and reach their goals once they get down to action.

In September 2020, an anonymous commentator on social media, reflecting on a possible annexation of Belarus by Russia, wrote:

"There is a famous proverb: A state always calls itself 'fatherland' when it is about to commit murder. One could go on by saying: When a state calls the neighboring state 'fraternal', it means trouble: an occupation, annexation, or a punitive operation. Let us hence stop talking about a 'once-united country' and 'fraternal people'."<sup>40</sup>

As a matter of fact, the proverb cited here is a quotation by the Swiss author and dramatist Friedrich Dürrenmatt used in act three of his play *Romulus the Great*.<sup>41</sup> Not only is the quotation handled as a proverb in this post, but it is also rephrased by the post author into some sort of an anti-proverb, however, not in a satirical way, which would be more typical of an anti-proverb, but rather in order to simply make his political point.

### 5. Conclusion

Three different cases were presented in this paper from the paremiological point of view: the protests for women's rights in Poland, the civic movement against the political regime in Belarus

with the accompanying demonstrations and protests, and the situation around the Russian opposition activist Alexei Navalny. The findings presented here show that in all three cases, several types of proverbial speech are used both by the protesters and by those against whom the protests are aimed. Proverbs from the respective native culture as well as from other cultures, but also anti- and pseudo-proverbs, proverbial expressions, allusions, and proverbial coinages are applied. Depending on the context, they pursue various objectives. One of them is persuasion: by citing “old” sayings, the actors seek to prove their point. The notion that these traditional expressions constitute obvious truths aims at disarming those who bring forward dissenting opinions. This strategy is repeatedly employed on high political level as a defense against critics from foreign governments. Another goal is defamation: In this case proverbs might be used for criticizing individual politicians or describing their unpopular policies. Yet another reason is emotional emphasis or appeal to certain emotions: The role of proverbs used in this context is to highlight existing grievances and to ultimately call for a change. An overarching reason for using proverbs is their shortness, explanatory power, and the economy of expression which they provide. On several occasions, they are applied to avoid taking a clear standpoint, and are thus used as an instrument for verbal evasion.

In conclusion, the data presented here demonstrates that proverbs and related expressions are considered by different actors a powerful rhetorical tool which can be applied in different contexts. They might serve as a means of either capturing the essence of an issue or making subtle insinuations instead. They are intended and perceived as generally comprehensible and effective. Most interestingly, proverbs have once again proved to be an inexhaustible source for new, creative expressions tailored to current political developments and reflecting new political and social realities.

#### *Notes*

<sup>1</sup> Mieder, Wolfgang (1997): *The Politics of Proverbs. From Traditional Wisdom to Proverbial Stereotypes*. Madison, Wis., London: University of Wisconsin Press; id. (2004): *Proverbs. A Handbook*. Westport, Conn., London: Greenwood; id. (2008):



“Proverbs speak louder than words”. Folk Wisdom in Art, Culture, Folklore, History, Literature and Mass Media. New York, Oxford: Peter Lang.

<sup>2</sup> <https://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/7,114884,26190050,brudy-pierzcie-w-domu-co-prawicy-przeszkadza-w-konwencji.html>. The proverb also has another version starting *Jak chłop baby nie bije...* ‘If the man doesn’t beat the woman,...’, cf. [https://wsjp.pl/do\\_druku.php?id\\_hasla=3732&id\\_znaczenia=746509](https://wsjp.pl/do_druku.php?id_hasla=3732&id_znaczenia=746509).

<sup>3</sup> <https://goral.info.pl/billboardowy-protest-przeciwko-decyzji-zakopiaskich-radnych-odrzucajacej-ustawe-antyprzemocowa-zdjecia/>; cf. <https://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/7,44425,26631040,mikolaju-chcialbym-zeby-tata-nie-bil-mamy-wielki-baner.html>.

<sup>4</sup> English version of the judgement at <https://trybunal.gov.pl/en/hearings/judgments/art/11300-planowanie-rodziny-ochrona-plodu-ludzkiego-i-warunki-dopuszczalnosci-przerywania-ciazy>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.michalkiewicz.pl/tekst.php?tekst=4822>. The author draws parallels to women’s protests in the neighboring Belarus. In their turn, Belarusian populist commentators defame the Belarusian protest in their own way, cf. Ganzer, Christian (2020): Alles „Prostituierte“ und „Faschisten“. Diffamierung der Proteste in Belarus auf Telegram. Osteuropa: 10-11, pp. 205–214.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.michalkiewicz.pl/tekst.php?tekst=4849>.

<sup>7</sup> Apperson, George Latimer (2006): Dictionary of Proverbs. Ware: Wordsworth Reference, pp. 116–117.

<sup>8</sup> <https://klubjagiellonski.pl/2020/11/05/aborcja-odpowiedzialnosc-heroizm-i-spor-o-poczek-ludzkiego-zycia-wyrok-tk/>. On the “African” roots of the saying see Mieder, Wolfgang (2011): “It Takes a Village to Change the World”: Proverbial Politics and the Ethics of Place: [University of Illinois Press, American Folklore Society]. The Journal of American Folklore: 124 (492), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> For the definition see Mieder 2004: 24.

<sup>10</sup> Domańska, Monika (2018): Medialny obraz Czarnego protestu w kontekście dyskursu o aborcji [Media image of the Black Protest in the context of the abortion discourse], University of Warsaw, p. 67. The latter of the two anti-proverbs stated is used again in 2019 on the Facebook page of *Bunt kobiet* ‘Women’s rebellion’, an internet public archive of protests for women’s rights: <https://www.facebook.com/BuntKobiet/photos/kto-mieczem-wojuje-ten-od-pochwy-ginie-bunkobiet-has%C5%82ademonstracji/1409347402565511/>. The former anti-proverb was used again as a poster in October 2020 in southwestern Poland: <https://myglogow.pl/spontaniczny-strajk-kobiet-w-glogowie-nie-ucz-matek-dzieci-rodzic/>.

<sup>11</sup> Sikorski, Radziśław (1994): Bioetyczna świadomość społeczeństwa a aborcja. Ethos: 7 (1/2=25/26), pp. 232, 236.

<sup>12</sup> *Lepiej mieć dziesięć dzieci na ramieniu niż jedno na sumieniu*, in the newscast by Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE from 29 January 2021: <https://arena.yle.fi/1-50622039>, minutes 10:00–10:14. The proverb is occasionally cited with a different number such as six or eight instead of ten.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-belarus/nobody-will-die-from-coronavirus-in-belarus-says-president-idUKKCN21V1PK?edition=redirect=uk>.

- <sup>14</sup> <https://news.tut.by/society/713365.html?c>.
- <sup>15</sup> Cf. <https://www.euronews.com/2020/07/23/who-is-making-sure-belarus-presidential-election-is-free-and-fair>, see also the OSCE report on violations during the elections in question: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/2/b/469539.pdf>.
- <sup>16</sup> <https://news.tut.by/elections/690381.html>.
- <sup>17</sup> <https://naviny.media/article/20200707/1594139319-stegat-dohluyu-loshad-lukashenko-pytaetsya-uyti-ot-imidzha-konservatora>.
- <sup>18</sup> *Sama sebya raba b''ët, što nečisto žnët*, <https://tass.ru/politika/9168347>. On Belarus-Russia relations ahead and after the elections see <https://www.euronews.com/2020/08/07/ties-between-russia-and-belarus-cool-ahead-of-presidential-elections>.
- <sup>19</sup> <https://ria.ru/20200914/putin-lukashenko-1577228937.html>.
- <sup>20</sup> *Čya by korova myčala, a Zelenskogo molčala*, [www.kp.by/online/news/4081703/](http://www.kp.by/online/news/4081703/).
- <sup>21</sup> *Ne lež'te v čužoy ogorod*, <https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-o-situatsii-v-polshe-oni-hoteli-u-nas-mjatezh-ustroit-a-poluchili-sami-413180-2020/>.
- <sup>22</sup> <https://nv.ua/ukraine/politics/protesty-v-belarusi-kuleba-oproverg-zayavlenie-lavrova-o-vmeshatelstve-ukrainy-poslednie-novosti-50109715.html>. More on Russia's information intervention in Belarus: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-belarus-election-russia-journalists-idUSKBN25T1GH>, <https://www.rferl.org/a/after-belarusian-journalists-quit-state-tv-russians-fill-the-void/30800576.html>.
- <sup>23</sup> <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/roman-bessmertny-o-lukashenko-protestah-i-zapade/30964600.html>.
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- <sup>25</sup> <https://www.dw.com/ru/zhenskoe-lico-protestov-v-belarusi/a-54557727>.
- <sup>26</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/godofbelarus/>.
- <sup>27</sup> Cf. <https://discours.io/expo/image/photography/mirnye-protesty-1989-lyudina-protiv-steny#24>.
- <sup>28</sup> Maxim Mirovich, <https://mirovich.media/613010.html>.
- <sup>29</sup> <https://t.me/plakatypratestu/309?single>, <https://euroradio.fm/ru/ot-lyubvi-donenavisti-odin-avtozak-v-minske-prohodit-zhenskiy-marsh>.
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<sup>40</sup> <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/479557>.

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## CONSTRUCTING CHINESE PAREMIOLOGY: A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST SEVENTY YEARS

**Abstract:** The studies of Chinese proverbs entered a new stage since 1949 when the People's Republic of China was founded, following the inceptive stage in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when Chinese folklore studies began to take shape by introducing the Western theories and concepts. From 1949-2019, Chinese proverb studies have systemically developed into a research area through collection, categorization and analysis. In particular, the *Grand Collection of Chinese Proverbs* project in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century set an epochal mark in collecting proverbs in use, and in building academic discourses both at domestic and international levels. This essay surveys this history of seventy years in terms of collection and theoretical studies within the context of Chinese folk literature and folklore studies.

**Keywords:** Chinese proverb studies, history, verbal art, agriculture and weather proverbs

Chinese proverbs, with a history of several thousand years, have been freshly and frequently used in everyday communication with their strong vitality and practicality. While there are different views regarding the definition and usage of proverbs, this essay begins with the idea that "Proverbs are a form of verbal art of speaking with its distinctive rhyme and stable syntax as a complete sentence, containing experience and knowledge from the past, telling the reasons and ethics identified by a common nation or folk group, and functioning as the truth in everyday life" (An 2008: 584). In terms of content, proverbs are here divided into two main categories: proverbs about social interaction; proverbs about the natural and material production.

Two notes about this essay should be made here: First, while proverbs are also the target of some other disciplinary studies, this essay focuses on the development of proverb studies within the framework of folk literature studies in China, and includes the aspects of collecting, recording, categorizing, and analyzing.

Second, proverbs have a strong adaptability as a literary form and are often used in everyday life, but this essay will not include many examples due to the limit of length; it is meant to draw a general picture of how proverb studies have been developed in the past seven decades in China, though with an obvious lack of theoretical discussion in this regard.

The early records of Chinese proverbs can be traced to such classics as the *Book of Changes* (*Yi Jing* 易经) and *Book of Songs* (*Shi Jing* 诗经) before the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. However, Chinese proverb studies in modern academic sense began only in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, influenced by the New Cultural Movement (1915-1923) (Li 2001: 29). During this period, both Chinese scholars in China and European missionaries conducted extensive collecting work. Two representative publications by Chinese scholars are the *Studies of Proverbs* (1925) by Guo Shaoyu (1893-1984), and the *Proverb Studies* (1936) by Xue Chengzhi (1907-1988). In general, there was not a systemic theoretical framework of proverb studies during this initial stage.

The establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 marked a new stage of proverb studies in China. On March 29, 1950, the China Association for Folk Literature and Arts was founded. This is a national organization specializing in collecting and studying folk literature. The goal was clearly stated by the Chairman of the Association: "From now on, through collecting, categorizing, analyzing, criticizing, and studying folk literature and arts, we will contribute to the new culture in new China with more excellent and richer works of folk literature and arts" (Zhou 1985: 10). Against this background, proverbs were taken as one form of folk literature. As a result, there appeared a high wave of collecting various proverbs about social life, agriculture, and weather. However, theoretical proverb studies were very limited, with only a few publications in Mainland China and in Taiwan (Wang 1982; Zhu 1964, 1970).

It was after the Open-up and Reform in China in 1978 that proverb collecting and studies entered an unprecedented stage, with the historical national project of *Grand Collection of Chinese Proverbs* (Ma 1990-2009). Meanwhile, Chinese scholars began to study proverbs in Macau and Hong Kong (Tan 2003), showing diverse interests in collecting and studying proverbs in the Chinese language.

### ***I. Collecting, categorizing, and publishing proverbs of social life as the blossom of wisdom***

“Social proverbs,” or proverbs about social life or interaction, are the human wisdom in blossom. This wisdom is “the result of social interactions related to inter-personal relations, ethical conducts and social norms, and are inseparable from all aspects of social life” (An 2008: 588-589). The collection of social proverbs became quite popular in China after 1949, not only in the Han-Chinese communities, but also in all minority groups. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s, there were many collections published such as on the Mongolian proverbs (Na 1954, 1956; Eerduntaoketao 1959, 1965) and Uyghur proverbs (Zhai 1957; Jin 1958; Liu 1962). Since 1978, there have been more comprehensive collections published, including collections of proverbs from multiple ethnic groups (Enenjiyatai and Chen 1981; Li 1985; Ma 1991, 1993; Xu and Li 2016: 65).

Regional proverb collections and publications were also “like the new bamboo shoots after the rain” --- growing massively and rapidly. In particular, the publications and studies in Taiwan reached a climax, represented by the works of the paremiologist Zhu Jiefan (1912-2011) (Zhu 1950, 1957, 1959, 1961, 1962, 1964, 1970, 1987). His masterpiece is *The Ethnography of Chinese Proverbs* (Zhu 1989), which “highlighted his dedication of 60 years in paremiology” (Wang and Guo 2005: 242).

The categorization of proverbs by theme was a new achievement, which resulted in many publications of those categories at both national and regional levels, for example, on regional weather, selecting seeds, and legends in proverbs (Wang and Pan 1981, 1983; Qiu 1983; Xia 1985; Liu 1986; Liu 1986; Ren 1987; Zhang 1987; Peng 1988; Su 1988; Wang 1989; Wen 1989; Yang and Dong 1991; Zhang 1996).

### ***II. Collecting and popularizing agricultural and weather proverbs as a body of knowledge and verbal art***

The proverbs of agricultural production and weather “are the knowledge that are cumulated and distilled from experiences of material production and the related activities that are closely connected to the nature” (An 2008: 588). Proverbs of this category are directly on agricultural production and weather. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, intellectuals began campaigns of “going to the peo-

ple” and “joining the rural construction.” Subsequently, they collected many proverbs of this kind. The representative work is the *Chinese Agricultural Proverbs* (Fei 1937), which contained a total of 5,953 proverbs and they are categorized into five types: seasons, weather, crops, breeding, and adages. In addition, proverbs about other modes of production such as, forestry, husbandry, and fishery were also given relevant attention after 1949 due to the fact that the government called on developing those economic sectors (Mu 1986).

Agricultural proverbs are the most significant component of Chinese proverb repertoire because agriculture has been essential to Chinese society and culture. Thus, proverbs of this category have the most practical meaning to the common people. Such proverbs are about “every stage of agricultural production from ploughing to harvesting” (Wu 2014: 196-198). Many of them are proven to be “correlative to modern science” (Fei 1937: 6-7) because “they are from production practice and are proven repeatedly” (Wang 1982: 341). “While old agricultural proverbs are already rich, new agricultural proverbs are continuously being created. This requires us to regularly collect, examine, categorize, and analyze them. Such work is significant because it will not only help provide meaningful material to the understanding of the history of agricultural production in China, but also improve current agricultural production. It can be said for sure that agricultural proverbs are still one of the most effective ways to spread knowledge and experience” (Wang 1982: 341). Clearly, this is due to the fact that proverbs are easy to be memorized by the rural population that is still mostly illiterate or semi-literate.

As a result, many provinces have published collections of agricultural proverbs guided by the central government since 1949. For example, in 1958, the Ministry of Agriculture organized a project to collect agricultural proverbs, which resulted in more than 100,000 proverbs, out of which 31,400 proverbs were selected for publication (Li 2016: 61), which can be seen as a compressive collection (Lv 1980). In addition, there were also smaller collections that were published (Wang and Jia 1951, 1959; Cui 1978).

Agricultural proverbs are inseparable from observing the weather change. Those proverbs about weather are also a form of artistic verbal expression of the experience and wisdom from agricultural production. They are “the artistic generalization of the



experiences of farmers, woodcutter, fishermen, and herdsmen” (Duan 2018: 180), “containing simple philosophical thoughts and scientific knowledge” (Deng 1994: 53). As the folklorist Dong Zuobin said, “The common people can quite accurately predict weather changes based on proverbs without using any modern technology for weather-forecasting” (Dong 1927: 1).

A number of collections of weather proverbs have been published since the 1950s (Yu and Hu 1960, 1960, 1974, 1977). In 1977, *The Application of Weather Proverbs in Long-Term Weather Forecast* was published, and “All the proverbs in this book are scientifically proved by identifying their specific locations, seasons, and conditions in using them, and combined scientific proof and popular experience” (Xu and Li 2016: 65).

In 1990, *Chinese Weather Proverbs* (Xiong 1990) was published as the result of eight scholars’ hard work for ten years. It contains nearly 20,000 weather proverbs from every part of China, “with extensive contextual information and explanation, and is seen as the most comprehensive collection of its kind” (Feng 1990: 30).

### ***III. Proverbs as important resources of national identity reconstruction***

Studies of the relationship between proverbs and national spirit or identity are very limited, with only brief touches here and there. Folklorist An Deming points out, “In China, proverbs were developed to a mature literary style, in terms of syntactic structure and artistic expression, as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. Many proverbs that have been popularly used were created during that period. The content ranged from ethics and social norms to routine affairs, which also became the core of the Chinese national spiritual traditions. Therefore, at least by that time, proverbs had already become the special expression of the national spirit and national cultural system, which in turn strengthened the national identity” (An 2017: 20-21). While there are also studies of the Han-Chinese cultural values (Lin 1995), Han-Chinese mentality (Huang 2015), and Confucian thoughts (Li 2005), they are not the same as the national spirit in Chinese culture.

Today, the Chinese national spirit is reflected in such proverbs as in the political ambition: “Worry about the worries of the country at first, enjoy the joys of the country later”; the patriotic

passion: “Not to forget the duty to the country even at a humble status” and “To rather die for the life of the country, but not to prioritize the need for personal wealth”; the dignity with justice: “Not to be abusive with wealth; not to lose dignity in poverty; not to subordinate to violence”; and the devotion and dedication: “Everyone dies, but leave a mark in history with a loyal heart” and “Strive to the utmost and spare no effort to die for the country.”

Proverbs of national spirits are about cultivating individual ethical life and maintaining the ethics and values of contributing to the reconstruction of the country. These proverbs are commonly used by political leaders to emphasize national spirit to reconstruct national identity. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s, Chairman Mao Zedong frequently and creatively used proverbs to call upon the nation to build the new country. He once said, “China is a big country, if the east is not bright, the west is bright; if the south is dark, the north is not dark” (Mao 1952: 182). He also used “Modesty makes people progress, pride makes people fall behind” to encourage people in the reconstruction of a new nation (Mao 1959: 35). In the early 1980s, Deng Xiaoping also used the proverb, “People can be short of money, but can’t be short of ambition,” to promote economic development as well as maintaining communist ambitions (Deng 1983: 290).

At a national conference with the youth representatives from all walks of life in China in 2013, Xi Jinping used the proverb, “Doing good deeds is as hard as climbing a mountain, doing bad things is as easy as falling with an avalanche,” to remind the young generation of keeping positive life-views, be virtuous, and living a healthy life (Li 2015: 64). Such uses not only reinforce the Chinese tradition and national spirit, but also help promote using proverbs in various situations.

#### ***IV. Achievement, experience, and reflection of the Grand Collection of Chinese Proverbs***

The national project of collecting and compiling the *Grand Collection of Chinese Proverbs* was launched on May 28, 1984, as one of the *Three Grand Collections* (the other two being on Folktales and Ballads). The Editor-in-Chief was Ma Xueliang, a highly respected scholar of Chinese folk literature and art. He believes that “proverbs are one of the precious cultural treasures that have been verbally passed down by the people of all ethnic groups

in our country for thousands of years. The *Grand Collection of Chinese Proverbs* will surely record and preserve proverbs in China, which will provide real historical information for various scientific research” (Ma 1988: 512). According to the report from the editorial board, there were about 2 million individuals/times involving in surveying and collecting proverbs from 1984-1990, resulting in a total of 7,180,000 proverbs (Liu 2006: 709-711).

The *Three Grand Collections* are edited and published with the principle of “being scientific, comprehensive, and representative” on the basis of nation-wide survey and collection, and thus have high literary and historical values as the collectanea of folktales, ballads, and proverbs from all regions and ethnic groups in China (Liu 2014: 72). They have provided rich sources for holistic studies with native thoughts and theories (Xiang 2014). At a recent conference, Li Yaozong, Associate Editor-in-Chief of the *Grand Collection of Chinese Proverbs*, summarized that this collection awakens all Chinese people with their self-awareness of the treasure of proverbs in our culture, so that they can be even more actively engaged in safeguarding this treasure at a larger scale and with more experiences (Xiang 2014).

The *Grand Collection of Chinese Proverbs* also represents the achievements of the construction of folklore theories and methods in the second half of the twentieth century in China. For example, during the survey, experiences were accumulated through faithful recording, providing references from ancient literature, and comparing variants. In recording and selecting, the principle of “being scientific, comprehensive, and representative” was reaffirmed. In categorizing, a framework of three-level system was established for collecting proverbs: commonly used at national level; commonly used at provincial level; and commonly used at smaller regional level. In indexing, there were methods developed by the first word, by theme, by similarity, and by category of syntax and content. In annotating, this principle was applied: what can be omitted should not be included; what can be fewer should be repeated; what should be included should not be omitted; what should be comprehensive should not be concise. In designing the general format of the publication, there was the general and consistent structure: Format Example; Introduction; Table of Contents; Illustrations; Appendices; and Postscript. All of these details

contributed to the improvement in methodology and theory for the construction of paremiology in China (Li 2001: 29).

Certainly, there are shortcomings in this *Grand Collection of Chinese Proverbs*. For example, there were not enough trained staff in collecting proverbs from certain regions and ethnic groups (Zhang 2009: 27). Also, in collecting, more attention was paid to the popularity and circulation of the proverbs, while the peculiarity, relationality, and uniqueness were largely ignored. In editing, due to certain ethical restraints and publishing restrictions, certain sensitive proverbs were excluded, including those being seen “vulgar.” As a result, “the collection contains very limited number of those regionally characteristic proverbs at county and village levels, even though they have long history and great popularity” (Xu 1988: 16).

Another shortcoming is that too great attention was paid to the text itself, while the contextual information about the circulation and practitioners was little included. This practice was not in accordance with the guidance from the Editorial Board, which emphasized, “to record the tellers and collectors’ personal background information, so as to provide accuracy and reliability for academic research; related materials and images should also be included in the appendices” (*Handbook* 1987: 2-6).

With these lessons from the past, in 2003, the China Folk Literature and Art Association launched the Project of Rescuing Chinese Folk Culture to further surveying, collecting, categorizing, and editing folk culture items from all over the country. This project was also part of the greater project of Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage project at national level, and gained enormous progress (An and Yang 2012: 21).

As a form of cultural expression, proverbs are listed as a category within Folk Literature (*minjian wenxue*) during the Campaign of Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage after 2004 in China. As a result, “Shanghai Proverbs” and “Northern Shaanxi Proverbs” have been listed as “National Intangible Cultural Heritage Items” respectively in 2011 and 2014. For this Project, the principle of “being comprehensive, representative, and truthful” was applied, with emphasis on the contextual information about the local cultural and natural environment, and about the tellers’ life experience. Audio-visual recording technology has also been

used to strengthen the recording of the teller, location, time, recorder and other related factors.

In January 2018, the China Folk Literature and Art Association launched another national project, Treasury of Chinese Folk Literature (*Zhongguo minjian wenxue daxi*). “Proverbs” is considered as one of the divisions of this project. One of the guiding principles for this division, according to the *Publication Bulletin of Treasury of Chinese Folk Literature*, is “to improve text, annotate context” (2018: 85). It is highly expected that this new project will make a breakthrough from the previous projects, and yield new fruits, demonstrating the new stage of proverb collection and studies.

#### ***V. From text to context: diverse perspectives***

There is a view about the continuity and popularity of proverbs in China that proverbs “put collectivism above individualism, pay more attention to the old routines than to the new things, underline more external rules than self-development, stress non-individual opinions, and emphasize survival rather than happiness” (Roh-senow 2003: 69). While this is obviously a biased view, it also points out some important aspects about proverbs in terms of their role in preserving and spreading knowledge and experience. In this regard, there is also a view that proverbs are “the encyclopedia for people to know life” (Jiang 1992: 12).

Meanwhile, among Chinese scholars, emphases have been on the uniqueness, content, and artistic feature of proverbs. These studies focus on definition, scope, function, content, rhetoric, and form, which can be called “morphology of proverbs” following the studies in the 1930s (Yue 2019: 54). Studies after 1949 were also heavily influenced by the Soviet Russian theories on folk literature, while Chinese scholars continued the tradition from the New Culture Movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A turn in academia in China took place in 1978 when interdisciplinary perspectives began to be used in studying proverbs (Zhong 1982: 441). For example, there have been studies on the customs of housing, dressing, dieting and other aspects of folk life through proverbs, while some others are on religion (Liu 2004), medicine (Luo and Lin 2008), and martial arts (Zhang and Han 2008). There are also more and more scholars who have extended their interests in studying proverbs through a broad cultural lens

by, as mentioned above, comparing proverbs from different cultures and languages within China.

Since the late 20th century, more and more attention began to be paid to the context of proverbs in order to understand proverbs or verbal lore in everyday life (Zhong 2002; Liu 2012). In this approach, individual proverbs are no longer a linguistic item, but a “folklore event” (Huang 2002: 288-290). Thus, the studies of proverbs moved from a text-centered to a context-centered stage. In this regard, “proverbs are not only a literary form, but also a comprehensive and living cultural phenomenon, and it must be put in the concrete context to fully understand its complete meaning and function” (An 2008: 585). An Deming further points out that since the Song Dynasty (970-1279) there have been two distinctive tracks: one only focusing on text; the other emphasizing both text and context (An 2008: 585). Of course, “context” in historical studies was mostly about “inter-textuality” (Yue 2019: 71), but not the “contextualization” as we use today by emphasizing “situational” context involving “physical environment, identity of the participants as a performance, cultural background, procedural structure, and principles of interpretation, which determine what is performed, what strategies are used, what new text is added, and what the specific situation is, among other factors” (Liu 2009: 8).

Overall, the focal transition from text to context shows that multiple perspectives are being adopted in studying proverbs. This transition helps us understand our own surrounding and the changes in broad societies, and further shows the richness of proverbs through multiple disciplinary approaches.

#### ***VI. The writing of the history of Chinese Proverbs***

Chinese proverbs are the cumulated wisdom and life experience over the past millennia. They have been continuing with great vitality. Although recording such proverbs had been carried out in the past centuries, more conscious collection began only after 1949. From then on, collection was changed from individual action to collective action, and from regional collection to national collection. Publications of various collections have reached to an unprecedented number. Proverb studies have gradually become a systematic and disciplinary research area. What is lacking, however, is the writing of the history of Chinese proverbs and the history of Chinese proverb studies.

Regarding the developmental history of proverbs in China, one of the systematic studies is the work “On Proverbs” by An Deming (An 2008: 581-608). In that study, he categorizes proverbs in terms of syntax and context into three historical stages: 1) early formation of proverbs (pre-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE); 2) expansion and enrichment of content and application (3<sup>rd</sup> c. BEC – 10<sup>th</sup> c. CE); 3) further expansion of content, structure and application (11<sup>th</sup> c. – 20<sup>th</sup> c.) (An 2008: 585). There are also approaches from other disciplinary perspectives. For example, specialized studies of the proverbs in the classics of *Zuozhuan* (左传, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE) (Li and Tu 2016), the *Qimin Yaoshu* (齐民要术, from the 6<sup>th</sup> century) (Tian 2009), and Mongolian influence after the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Peng 2008; Wang 2016).

Theoretical issues related to the history of proverbs in China have become a heated topic in recent years. For example, Li Yaozong argues that, “for various historical reasons, proverb studies began rather late in China, but a distinctive ‘Chinese Proverb Studies/Paremiology’ (*Zhongguo yanxue*) is taking shape with some basic theoretical framework” (Li 2001: 30). Fu Jianrong considers that the studies of the history of proverbs in China is still in its initial stage, and such a history should be constructed under the framework of “one nation with multiple ethnic groups” and this history must include proverbs from all ethnic groups in China with a holistic and historical view, by emphasizing that “the history of proverbs in China should be first established by dividing stages, and then, with synchronic and diachronic views, studied through the repertoire as one entirety” (Fu 2018: 117). This view represents the pioneering thinking in the construction of Chinese paremiology.

#### ***VII. The paradigm shift in Chinese folk literature studies as seen through proverb studies***

Among all the forms of folk literature, proverbs is a form or genre that has two distinctive characteristics: as a type of language; as a type of speech/parole. Proverbs are certainly part of a language, and is not only a research target for linguistics, but also for folkloristics. Proverbs are also verbal speech/parole because of their nature in oral communication. This second character is particularly standing out when the research focus is transited from a text-centered to a context-centered approach. This paradigm shift

in studying proverbs also calls for a paradigm shift in the studies of folk literature in general.

Since the 1980s, new thoughts, new theories, and new methods have been introduced to China, and Chinese academy has developed into a reality of “hundred flower in blossom” (Yang 1994: 298). Among those new ideas, performance theory that treats a proverb use as a folklore event has exerted a big impact to the paradigm shift in folk literature studies, as well as in folkloristics in China.

Through the emphasis of context of performance, proverbs are seen as ways of passing down knowledge, maintaining social norms, and ways of facilitating oral communication as part of “speech.” Clearly, Chinese paremiology has emerged with its initial protocol, and will surely be a contributing part to the development of Chinese folkloristics.

(Translated by Juwen Zhang)

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“A NIGHTINGALE CANNOT SING IN A CAGE” – OR CAN IT? A PROVERB AND ITS RELATED BELIEFS

**Abstract:** The international proverb “A nightingale (or other bird) cannot (does not, will not) sing in a cage” is several centuries old—prevalent in English since the eighteenth century—though rebuttals or exceptions to the proverb, both popular and “scientific,” have also been common. In modern times a special application of the proverb occurs in the poetry of Paul Lawrence Dunbar and in the prose and verse of Maya Angelou.

**Keywords:** international proverbs, proverbs in English, popular beliefs, songbirds, Aesop, William Caxton, African American literature, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Maya Angelou.

In my five decades of teaching Shakespeare to English majors, I have almost always included the tragedy *King Lear* on the syllabus. Near the end of that play, the insane (but finally serene) king welcomes his beloved daughter Cordelia to accompany him as his traitorous enemies lead him into captivity: “Come, let’s away to prison: / We two alone will sing like birds i’ th’ cage” (Shakespeare 1974, 1291). In class, typically, I would ask the question, “Where else might we encounter an expression about captive birds and singing?” No student has ever proffered a proverb in response, but in recent years, many of them have mentioned the title of Maya Angelou’s 1969 autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, which is commonly assigned or recommended in the public schools of Georgia, where I live and work.

From late classical times to the present, little consensus appears as to whether various kinds of birds *do*, in fact, sing in captivity—or, if they do, what their warblings might import. A Greco-Roman zoologist in the second century of the Common Era wrote, “It seems that the Nightingale passionately loves its freedom, and for that reason when a mature bird is caught and confined in a

cage, it refrains from song and takes vengeance on the birdcatcher ...by silence" (Aelian 1959, 3: 200-201). That motif or concept would survive the Middle Ages in an Aesopic connection, traceable to the early-twelfth-century Latin fables of Petrus Alfonsus. In 1484 William Caxton's *Historyes and Fables of Esope*, one of the first books printed in England, gave an English translation of a French translation of a German translation of the Latin narrative, "The Labourer and the Nyghtyngale." A rustic has captured a nightingale in order to enjoy hearing its song. But the bird tells the rustic, "Certaynly in vayne thou has payned and labored / For / for no good I wylle synge whyle that I am in pryson" (Caxton 1967, 202). That is the earliest expression of the motif in English.

In proverbial form, the idea may have appeared as early as the third century, when the Greek historian Philostratus told of a certain sophist who declined an invitation to reside and lecture in a particular city that he regarded as oppressive. The sophist quipped, "The nightingale does not sing in a cage" (Philostratus 1952, 74-75). That terse and metaphoric expression has all the marks of a proverb.

The proverb has survived—or been reinvented—in English and other languages. In the form "The nightingale cannot sing in a cage" it entered English proverb dictionaries in 1732 with Thomas Fuller's *Gnomologia* (13), and collections from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries sometimes give the variant "A nightingale won't sing in a cage." The *won't* versions possibly suggest the bird's willful refusal rather than its inability to sing, as the *cannot* versions would imply

Prior to its first being recorded as such in English proverb dictionaries—and frequently since then—the concept has been applied or explained or elaborated or simply alluded to—sometimes with *nightingales* replaced by other species of birds, sometimes by *birds* generically. From 1995: a character in a novel bluntly advises, "A nightingale cannot sing in a cage, or tethered by a foot to a perch. You would do well to remember that" (Lackey 1995, 27). From 1935, in an anonymous column in the magazine of the Massachusetts SPCA: "It is authentically reported that a nightingale will not sing in a cage" ("Apples of Gold" 1938, 135). From 1908, in a speech by a Christian divine: "It is said that the nightingale will not sing in a cage—she must have her God-given liberty ere her sweetest and highest note can be sounded" (Barrett



1908, 164). From 1820, the poet John Keats writing to his beloved Fanny Brawne: “I will be as obstinate as a Robin, I will not sing in a cage” (Keats 1958, 2:270)

The caged bird’s inability or unwillingness to sing often becomes a metaphor for the suppression of poetic or other creative talents. In 1991 an essay on modernism and poetry mused, “Poetry itself should be free enterprise, unpaid, circulated by hand, never official. The nightingale will not sing in a cage” (Ipsissimus 1991, 2:187). From 1986, in a country-and-western song by Michael Johnson: “Give me wings / Don’t be afraid to fly / A bird in a cage will forget how to sing” (Folsom 1993, 78). From 1952, quoting Ezra Pound “when he was confined to St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, and he refused to record his poetry for Caedmon,.... He always said, ‘Caged birds won’t sing’” (Parry 2002, 5). From 1913: a character in a novel says, “Larks can’t sing in a cage:...why should an artist be able to work under all conditions?” (Benson 1913, 1:307). From 1906, in reference to Oscar Wilde’s emergence from jail: “He suffered from a complete mental atrophy. A nightingale cannot sing in a cage. A genius cannot flourish in prison” (Grolleau 1906, 109). From a novel of about 1867: “A nightingale cannot sing in a cage—Judith Mazingfor cannot write in prison” (Riddell c1867, 265). From a 1686 poem by Edmund Waller: “Though slaves, like birds that sing not in a cage / They lost their genius and poetic rage” (Waller 1686, 265)

A particularly brutal variant has occurred, although rarely. From 1886, in notes for use in a sermon: “Even the nightingale will not sing in its cage unless you first *put out its eyes*. And man’s eyes must be put out before he can sing in a cage” (Pierson 1886, 12:217; italics as shown). The same author elaborated six years later: “Human slavery has been the fatal foe of the best good of the race; equally bad for master and slave. The nightingale will not sing in a cage until its eyes are put out. The light of man’s intelligence must be quenched, the eyes of his intellect be blinded, before he will submissively wear his bonds” (Pierson 1894, 164)

Occasionally an anti-proverb will comically respond to the proverb, playing on the slang term *jailbird* for “prisoner.” In 1883 a Texas newspaper quipped, “Our jail birds still sing in their cage” (*Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, 15 Dec 1883). In such jesting conceits, the verb *sing* often plays on the sense, in criminal argot, of “confess” or “reveal to the authorities incriminating information about

the jailbird's collaborators"—that is, *rat on* them. A Florida newspaper in 1993 lengthily titled an article, "The Caged Bird Doesn't Sing for 20 Years: Sheldon Yavitz Was Lawyer to South Florida's Drug Smugglers, Thieves, and Murderers. And Now That He's behind Bars, He Still Won't Rat on His Former Clients" (*Sun Sentinel* [Ft. Lauderdale], 24 Jan.). Later that same year, reporting that the felonious financier Charles Keating had cancelled his scheduled testimony regarding the savings-and-loan scandal, an article was titled "The Caged Bird Doesn't Sing" ("Washington Watch" 1993, 11). In 1999 a Scottish newspaper titled its review of the television series *Jailbirds*, "Why the Caged Birds Don't Sing" (*Herald* [Glasgow], 22 Mar). In 2010 a published collection of unattributed witticisms included this: "You've heard the old saying, 'A caged bird never sings?' If you believe that, you've never spent time with a police interrogation team" (Lisby 2010, 306)

Sometimes, perhaps in a rebuttal (implicit or explicit) of the proverb or of the popular belief that the proverb expresses, it is noted that caged nightingales *will* sing. In Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, one of the Lords exclaims, "Hark. Apollo plays, / And twenty caged nightingales do sing" (Shakespeare 1974, 112). An anonymous essayist in 1854 remarked, "There is an idea generally entertained in England and partly here [in Italy] that nightingales will not sing in cages. Never, while memory lasts, shall I forget the first proof I received of the erroneousness of this idea" ("My Aviary" 1854, 35: 638). By that date, ornithologists had prominently recorded the fact that nightingales and many other kinds of birds can and will sing in cages. For instance, in 1839 a three-volume *History of British Birds* mentioned an occasion on which a caged nightingale had sung "upon one hundred and fourteen successive days" (Yarrell 1842, 1:276). As far back as 1787 it had been noted, specifically of Virginia nightingales, "They will sing in a cage, and are frequently brought to England in a state of confinement..." (*Natural History of Birds* 1787, 3:75)

Even if caged birds do in fact sing, the singing may be less satisfactory than that of their free-ranging counterparts. From 1658, in a scriptural commentary by Thomas Hall: "A wicked man at best is but sad, or if he sing, 'tis like a bird in a cage." From a Scottish children's poem of the early nineteenth century: "For birdies are like bairnies, / That dance upon the lea, / And they

winna sing in cages / So sweet's in bush or tree" (Smart 1844, 22). In a novel of 1896, the issue is likewise the *quality* of the singing: "The nightingale will not sing its best in a cage, and without its song the nightingale is a poor thing" (Moore 1896, 333). The diminution of the song's quality—rather than its absence—seems to have been the emphasis in a German version of the proverb from as far back as the sixteenth century: "Die Nachtigall singt im Käfig nie so schön als im Freien" (Wander 1873, 3:851).

Somewhat rarely, the singing of a caged bird is actually deemed superior to that of a bird at large. A three-volume zoology compendium of 1803 reports, "... [A] caged nightingale sings infinitely more sweetly than those we hear abroad in the spring" (Bingley 1803, 2:268). An anonymous naturalist in 1844 noted, "Nightingales may either be allowed to fly about the room, or confined to cages; the latter plan most promotes their singing" (*Natural History of Cage Birds* 1844, 150). It is unclear whether the verb *promotes* refers to the quality or to the abundance of the singing.

Most often, though, the issue is not the mere occurrence of the bird's singing or the degree of skill in its performance but rather the *tone* of the song—the singer's intent (so to speak). As the poet William Blake wondered in the 1790s, "How can a bird that is born for joy / Sit in a cage and sing [?]" (Blake 2008, 31).

Sometimes the bird cage represents submission, as in the case of a person bound (for better or for worse) in matrimony. In a tragedy by one of Shakespeare's contemporaries, William Alexander, a disconsolate queen uses the image to compare even a royal marriage with slavery: "As birds, whose cage of golde the sight deceiues, / Do seeme to sing whilst they but waile their state: / So with the mighty matcht, made glorious slaues, / We happy seeme whilst we but curse our fate" (Alexander 1607, sig. K4<sup>v</sup>). In a satiric pamphlet of about 1735 a wife addresses "the right worshipful the Batchelors of Great Britain" in an ironic vein: "... I am content with my Station, and can bill, and sing in my Cage, (as you call it) both with more Pleasure, and Security, than among the wild Beasts of the Forest" (Nab c1735, 66). In an opera of 1794 a woman sings, "But when my dear freedom's resign'd, / Good-nature my heart must engage; / The linnet, though closely confin'd, / If cherished, will sing in the cage" (Arne 1764, 42). From 1924, a character in a novel remarks, "That's what most marriages

consist of, trying to influence the other person to do something he or she doesn't want to do. That's why a good many birds won't sing in a cage" (Taylor 1924, 146).

The conceit of the caged bird singing—or not singing—can have other applications. For example, an anonymous song from 1767 employs the conceit for a bit of jingoism and political polemic: "Let the French hop and sing, and a cage relish best, / Like Birds who their freedom have lost from their nest; / But Britons, deserving a much better fate, / Should they chance to be caught in the lime-twigs of state, / Are birds that have fled and sweet liberty known, / Whose songs are no more when their freedom is gone" (*London Songster* 1767, 361-52). An "emblem" poem from 1766 construes the bird as the human soul incarcerated in an earthly cage: "Imprison'd in this Cage of Flesh, / We earnestly Enlargement wish; / In Hopes that God Relief will bring, / The caged Bird its Song will sing." (Quarles 1766, 146).

It is a measure of King Lear's lingering madness that he can anticipate melodious happiness while imprisoned with his daughter: In ancient Britain, rival claimants to a would-be tyrant's throne did not sing—they died! From an anthropocentric perspective, a caged bird's song, however pleasant to hear, must be expressing or disguising sadness or yearning—or agony or rage. In the tragedy *The White Devil*, by Shakespeare's contemporary John Webster, a speaker opines, "Wee thinke cag'd birds sing, when indeed they crie" (Webster 1995, 1:241). In an early nineteenth-century edition of *The White Devil*, the annotator quotes a couplet that he attributes (erroneously, it would seem) to Sir Walter Scott: "Who shall say the bird in cage / Sings for joy and not for rage[?]" (Dodsley 1825, 313). In a short story from 1899, the narrator observes, "So the wise bird sings in its cage; and if it be a home-sick song, a heart-sick song, a soul-sick song, it is all the sweeter" (Gilmore 1899, 330). In a 1911 novel, a character muses, "The captive bird sings in its cage, but I often wonder if it is not the way it has of expressing its longing for its mate and native air" (Brown 1911, 142).

So: Why *does* a caged bird sing? Maya Angelou's title, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, seems to promise an answer to the question that has so many generations of proverbs and beliefs underlying it. The autobiography does not actually furnish an answer, though—not explicitly, at least.

Less widely known than Angelou's autobiography itself is the fact that the title quotes, without attribution, from the pioneering African American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, from his poem "Sympathy," published in 1899. Here is the final stanza:

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,  
When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore, —  
When he beats his bars and he would be free;  
It is not a carol of joy or glee,  
But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,  
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings —  
I know why the caged bird sings! (Dunbar 1899, 40-41)

Nowhere in the autobiography does Angelou explicitly refer to the poem, even though she does recall that during her Arkansas childhood, Dunbar was one of the writers for whom she had a strong passion: "Although I enjoyed and respected Kipling, Poe, Butler, Thackeray and Henley, I saved my young and loyal passion for Paul Lawrence [sic] Dunbar, Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson and W. E. B Du Bois' 'Litany at Atlanta'" (Angelou 1969, 14).

An explicit answer from Angelou herself had to wait a few years. In 1983 she published a poem titled "Caged Bird":

A free bird leaps  
on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
and dips his wing  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks  
down his narrow cage  
can seldom see through  
his bars of rage  
his wings are clipped and  
his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill

of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze  
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees  
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn  
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams  
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream  
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on a distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom. (Angelou 1989, 16-17)

In Angelou's poem, it is the free bird that does not sing at all, even though he grandiosely "dares to claim the sky" and "names the sky his own," while comically (and less grandiosely) he looks down on "the fat worms waiting" for his breakfast. Indeed, even uncaged, he is not altogether free; he can float downstream on the wind only "till the current ends." The caged bird sings of imagined freedom, of course, just as Angelou, protagonist of the autobiography, chronicles the several stages of her anticipated liberation from childhood disappointments and delusions. Her voice, recounting some of the episodes, laments the destructive "bars of rage" that impeded the clarity of her vision. The image of the caged bird standing "on the grave of dreams" seems to acknowledge unfulfilled hopes in the struggle toward true emancipation of the generations of Angelou's forebears. More personally, she experiences the "fearful thrill / of things unknown / but

longed for still” as she grows toward adulthood, a development that culminates in the birth of her child, when the narrative ends. The memoir itself, like Dunbar’s poem to which its title alludes, is a song of freedom—freedom dreamed of, hoped for, but not yet fully realized.

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## “WHAT MAKES WHAT BEDFELLOWS?”: PROVERBS VS. PHRASEOSCHEMATA

**Abstract:** The paper deals with explores properties of two Anglo-American proverbs, “Handsome is as handsome does” and “Adversity/politics makes strange bedfellows”, as well as their modifications and derivatives (such as anti-proverbs). The question is raised whether these proverbs may be considered phraseoschemata (the term originally coined by Dmitrij N. Šmelëv for set phrases such as *X kak X* ‘X is a typical specimen of its kind’, lit. ‘X like X’). A phraseoscheme has formalized structural patterns both in its syntax and its figurative meaning with variables that are to be filled in context. Analysing data retrieved from synchronic and diachronic corpora, the paper argues that the aforementioned proverbs and their derivatives retain stable structural patterns (namely, *X is as X does* and *X makes Y bedfellows*) and, therefore, should be regarded as phraseoschemata.

**Keywords:** Anglo-American proverbs, idioms, phraseoschemata, transformations, corpus linguistics

### **Introduction**

As is known, there happens to be some variation in proverbs that owes to the existence of fundamental proverb structures such as “Where there’s X, there’s Y,” “No X without Y,” etc. (Mieder 1993: 9). Certain proverbial formulae exist such as the German “man soll P”, which was covered by Archer Taylor in the 1930s (Taylor 1975). Not only are they common for proverbs but for idioms, as well; in the domain of idioms, they are known as *phraseoschemata* (*phrazeoschemy*), a term coined by Dmitrij N. Šmelëv for set phrases such as Russian “X kak X” ‘X is a typical specimen of its kind’ (lit. “X like X”) (Šmelëv 1977). German scholars use a different term, *phraseo-patterns* (*Phraseoschablone*) (Palm 1977). An example of such a *Phraseoschablone* is “einmal X, immer X” ‘once an X, always an X’, e.g., *einmal Lehrer, immer Lehrer* ‘once a teacher, always a teacher.’

This raises a question of whether proverbs that follow similar structural patterns should be considered phraseoschemata. The aim of its paper is to answer it by analysing the variability of two proverbs, namely “Handsome is as handsome does” and “Adversity makes strange bedfellows.”

### ***The Theory Behind the Phraseoschemata***

A phraseoscheme seemingly belongs to the domain of syntax rather than that of phraseology and paremiology. It has been noted that phraseoschemata are close to the constructions in construction grammar (CxG); see (Baranov, Dobrbovol'skij 2008). Besides, the constructions such as *let alone* are as idiomatic as figurative units, e.g. idioms or proverbs; see, for instance, (Fillmore, Kay & O'Connor 1988). They may also be close to reduplication used for intensifying and disambiguating, cf. the “X-X” pattern in the English *It's a tuna salad, not salad salad* or the Russian *èto byla derevnâ-derevnâ* ‘it was a real village through and through’ (literally, ‘it was a village-village’), *takaâ devočka-devočka* ‘such a girly’ (‘such a girl-girl’) (Gilyarova 2010) and the “X X<sub>instr</sub>” pattern in Russian (*pen' pnëm* ‘a real dimwit’, lit. ‘a stump by a stump’, *durak durakom* ‘a complete and utter fool’, lit. ‘a fool by a fool’). As one can see, this type of morphologically and syntactically bound reduplication is also phraseoschematic. What differentiates it from the “X-X” pattern is a somewhat greater degree of idiomaticity<sup>1</sup> (i.e. the sum of reinterpretation, differing degrees of opacity of . Somewhat similar to reduplication are the “X kak X” and “X on in v Afrike X” patterns found in Russia (literally, ‘X like X’ and ‘X is still X even in Africa’). Their figurative meaning is ‘a certain X has typical features of the set of X-like objects’, cf. the line in Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin*: *Yes, I see, vizhu, vizhu, kampus kak kampus: The usual kind of thing*.

From the standpoint of reproducibility, fixedness, and idiomaticity, phraseoschemata are quite regular. Consider, for instance, the Russian “hot’ V<sub>2SgImp</sub>.” (*hot' zalejsâ, hot'v bočke soli, hot' plač'* – literally, ‘you might as well get flooded / have it salted in a barrel / weep’). All of them are used for intensifying the meaning of the word or clause to which they are attached (in the framework of Igor Mel'čuk's Meaning–Text Theory they would be defined as *Magn*). The whole phraseoscheme should be put down as follows: (P) — *hot' VP/V<sub>2SgImp</sub> F (P)*, where *F* stands for a lexical

function (a term widely used in MTT) indicating the most relevant and/or plausible action in the situation P that affects all its participants, cf. *bezvyhodnoe polozenie* ‘desperate situation’ vs. *[polozenie takoe, čto] hot’ plač’* ‘[the situation is so desperate that] one might as well weep’, *očen’ mnogo X* ‘there is a lot of X [commodity]’ vs. *X stol’ko, čto hot’ v bočke soli* ‘there is so much X that one might as well have it salted in a barrel’.

The following sections of this paper are aimed at establishing whether the idiomaticity of two English proverbs is more or less regular.

### ***The Case of “Handsome Is as Handsome Does”***

The peculiarities of this proverb and its structure have been covered in *The Proverb Process* by Stephen David Winick’s (Winick 1998) – to be precise, in the chapter aptly named *Proverb is as Proverb Does*. In it, Winick analysed the relatively recent structural pattern that appeared because of *Forrest Gump* by Winston Groom and its film adaptation by Robert Zemeckis. These works of art have popularised the saying, “Stupid is as Stupid Does.” The “Gumpisms” of this kind have become so widespread that, as Winick demonstrates, they virtually become eponymous with conventional wisdom; for instance, they are ridiculed by Bruce Springsteen along with more “traditional” proverbs (Winick 1998: 97).

However, this variability of the adjective (“X is as X does”) is not as recent as it seems. The Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) reveals a degree of variability of its constituents as early as 1848, e.g. “Pretty is as pretty does” and variants with alternate spellings like *purty*, *han’sum*, and *handsum*.

*“Handsum is as handsum does,” is a old and true sayin’*  
(1848; FIC; Major Jones’s Sketches) (COHA).

The situation with “Stupid is as stupid does” is somewhat paradoxical: the synchronic Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) reveals that it is used more frequently than “Handsome is as handsome does.” The former accounts for 62 citations out of 193, whereas the latter is found only in nine entries, being mostly replaced by “Pretty is as pretty does.” Interestingly enough, most contexts containing “Stupid is as stupid does” date

back to 2012 and involve Barack Obama's reforms and electoral campaigns in one way or another, cf.:

Considering that our taxes already go to pay for medical care (including various forms of BC) for those unable to pay, this whole issue is a really trivial and stupid reason to be against Obamacare (but, *stupid is as stupid does, I guess...*). (2012; WEB; watchdog.com) (COCA).

More often than not, these quotations have direct references to *Forrest Gump*, e.g.: *What was it Forrest's Mom said? Something like "Stupid is as stupid does." or something like that* (2012; WEB; theburningplatform.com) (COCA). However, the variability of the proverb goes beyond "Gumpisms" of this kind. COCA reveals that the adjectival constituent tends to be replaced with an adjective or a noun relevant in the particular context, e.g. *happy is as happy does, scary is as scary does, liberal is as liberal does*, etc. Cf.:

**a.** From an evolutionary viewpoint, it is very much true that "*intelligence is as intelligence does*". Plants have survived for epochs with little genetic change and less intelligence. Until supra-intelligent humans have matched that lifespan the jury is still out as to whether picking up sapience was really all that "good" for us. (2012; BLOG; patterico.com) (COCA). **b.** As to Obama's socialism, In your self-proclaimed research, surely you must have uncovered by now enough evidence that he has a clear-cut socialist AGENDA for the country. Even a dummy like me has figured that out by now. Does that make him a card-carrying socialist? Frankly, I don't give a hoot. *Socialism is as socialism does* to my half-witted way of thinking (with apologies to Tom Hanks). (2012; WEB; dailyrepublic.com) (COCA).

Both the structure and the figurative meanings are formed on a regular basis, with "X is as X does" meaning something like 'the background, affiliation or identity of X has to be determined by judged upon by its actual function or performance.' Thus, one may safely assume that the phraseoscheme "X is as X does" has formed. This phraseoscheme may itself be subjected to structural

changes that are able to deprive it of its idiomaticity altogether, cf.:

The previous examples may suggest that humor is always manufactured for consumption; that *humor is as humorists do*. Not so. We may find experiences humorous as well. (2012; WEB; hughlafollette.com) (COCA).

Here, the only difference between this phrase and a regular free word group is the syntax and combinability: *as humorists do* instead of *what humorists do*. The structural pattern is altered, “X is as X does” turning into “X is as Y do”, where Y is a derivative of X.

***The Case of “Adversity Makes Strange Bedfellows”***

In *The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs*, Jennifer Speake comments on the proverb in the following way,

While the underlying idea remains the same, there has always been some variation in the first word of the proverb: see also POLITICS makes strange bedfellows. (Speake 2009: 21).

Consequently, the proverb shall hereinafter be referred to as “Adversity/politics makes strange bedfellows.” The figurative meaning can be defined as ‘there is certain unlikely affiliation between participants of a certain situation; the affiliation owes its existence to adversity or politics’. This section of the paper aims at defining the variation of constituents in this proverb more precisely, as well as at finding out whether the proverb in question can be considered a phraseoscheme. There are 28 entries citing the proverb in the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), and 61 entries in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). In both, the most frequent first constituent of the proverb is *politics* (10 occurrences in COHA, 16 in COCA). The first source found in the corpora dates back to 1870 and is quoted below.

But one can never say what these politicians mean; and I shall let this variety grow until after the next election, at least; although I hear that the fruit is small, and rather sour. If there is any variety of strawberries that really declines to run, and devotes itself to a private life of fruit-

bearing, I should like to get it. I may mention here, since we are on politics, that the Doolittle raspberries had sprawled all over the strawberry-bed's: *so true is it that politics makes strange bedfellows*. (1870; FIC; Warner, Charles Dudley, 1829-1900; *My Summer in a Garden*) (COHA).

In this example, the proverb occurs in a relative clause. This occurrence is found in both synchrony and microdiachrony (within the span of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries). A schematic outline for a typical clause would be *P because/for/since politics makes strange bedfellows*, where the proverb would explain and explicate the proposition in the main clause.

Variation of first constituent includes substituting it with another one such as *misfortune* (a) or expanding it such as *politics and religion* (b), or by adnominal modification (c) akin to those found in idioms (Dobrovol'skij 2008; Omazić 2008). Example (c) is also peculiar in the way the proverb is transformed as the metaphor evolves: *it [American politics] is making for active, absent ones [bedfellows]*.

**a.** "You knew him! A waiter, you!" "Yes. *Misfortune makes strange bedfellows*. It was either that or starvation. I preferred to wait." (1921; FIC; George Gibbs. *The Vagrant Duke*) (COHA). **b.** Karl rolled up his sleeves, and went to work. In the end, even Billy Graham sold his soul to Rove and scrubbed his website of the Mormon cultist references. We'll see if this spiritual conversion holds, or if the website reverts back to its narrowness. *Politics and religion make strange bedfellows, don't they?* (2012; BLOG; Daily Kos: let's all take a moment to remember Karl Rove) (COCA). **c.** *WHETHER or not American politics makes strange bedfellows, it assuredly is making for active, absent ones* in election year 1972. (1972; Time Magazine: 1972/10/09; *Bittersweet Homecoming of Three Pilots*) (COHA).

The proverb may be played on, as in the following context.

Giulia felt like the man who survives pneumonia only to discover that his heart has been weakened forever. Worst of all she found that *misery doesn't necessarily make*

*strange bedfellows – or any bedfellows at all.* (1947; FIC; John Horne Burns. *The Gallery*) (COHA).

The reason why this proverb allows for such variation is simple. The idea behind it can be phrased in the following way: ‘for certain serious reasons (connected to politics, adversity, etc.), even the most unlikely persons or entities may become partners.’ Thus, the variation serves one purpose, that of stating the reason behind the unlikely partnership. In other words, the proverb can be presented schematically as *X makes strange bedfellows*.

But what kind of *X* might it be? Clearly, most of the substitute constituents are abstract nouns; it is safe to assume that if the first constituent is substituted with a non-abstract noun, the modification is less standard. Cf.:

This week the undisputed winner is AvX: Consequences #4 taking the number one spot in Great Britain, U.S.A., France, Italy, Brazil, Ireland, Sweden and Norway, proving that just because the fighting has stopped doesn't mean we can't stop making people feel bad about it. Cyclops. Ah-hem. (Cyclops was right). Meanwhile *miniature Batman make strange bedfellows as Australia, Japan & Israel go batty (oof.) for Lil' Batman* (2012; BLOG; ComiXology Takes Over the World) (COCA).

Quite obviously, the *X* tends to be context-based. However, the proverb is prone to creative modifications and double-take effect, sometimes both with context-based substitution, cf.:

*Coal, like politics, makes strange bedfellows.* But these days in Washington, *coal is political.* (2012; BLOG; Questions surround coal terminal's impact on Spokane – Spokesman) (COCA).

Similar creative modifications based on double-take effect are listed in Anna T. Litovkina and Wolfgang Mieder's dictionary *Old Proverbs Never Die, They Just Diversify* (Litovkina, Mieder 2006) along with other anti-proverbs. These anti-proverbs may involve syntactical transformations (e.g. cleft constructions like *The bedfellows politics makes are never strange. It only seems that way to those that have not watched the courtship*) and modifications (e.g.

the expansion of the idiom in *Politics makes strange bedfellows – rich* (Ibid.: 260–261).

Apart from the variation of the first constituent, there is some variation of the adjective. The only constituent that is frozen and unchangeable is *bedfellows*, cf.:

**a.** This 'new' General Medical Services contract was one in a series of Government initiatives to make primary care more businesslike, even though anyone who has worked in healthcare in the UK will be aware that *the principles of business and the NHS do not always make comfortable bedfellows*. (2012; ACAD; Ed Warren. *A survival guide to Directed Enhanced Services: The new DES Implications for primary care*; Practice Nurse, 7/19/2013, Vol. 43 Issue 7, p28-32. 4p.) (COCA). **b.** I contend that *art and historic buildings make great bedfellows*. (1998; NEWS; Catherine Fox. *Nexue owes everything to her; After 15 years, Louise Shaw leaves stamp on venue for contemporary art*; Atlanta Journal Constitution) (COCA).

It is evident that, despite all the variability, the proverb has the same structural pattern, as well as the pattern of a figurative meaning. The meaning of “X [and Y] make Z bedfellows” can be defined as ‘there is a certain Z affiliation between X and Y caused by their properties.’ This meaning is more generalized than that of “X makes strange bedfellows” that was provided at the beginning of this section.

### **Conclusion**

The concept of the phraseoscheme overlaps with those of constructions in CxG (which include both fixed expressions and morphemes), idioms, and proverbs. The phraseoscheme is a fixed expression (clause or sentence) that is based on a regular model, both structurally and semantically, and has obligatory variables to be filled in in a particular context. The structure of their figurative meaning allows for greater generalisation than that of separate proverbs (or anti-proverbs). As one can see, the two proverbs cited in this paper can be referred to as phraseoschemata.



**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Idiomaticity of a figurative unit is the combination of reinterpretation of its figurative meaning, opacity, and increased complexity of referring to its denotation. Cf. *a person's thoughts and conscious reactions to events, perceived in a continuous manner* vs. *stream of consciousness*. See also (Baranov, Dobrovol'skij 2008).

**Acknowledgments**

The reported study was funded by Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR), project number 20-012-00239

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## SEMIOTIC AND SEMANTIC ASPECTS OF THE PROVERB

With the untimely death of the great paremiologist Peter Grzybek (1957-2019), the international community of proverb scholars has lost one of its most remarkable members (see Wolfgang Eismann's obituary and Wolfgang Mieder's list of his publications in the 2020 volume of *Proverbium*). While Peter Grzybek's seminal article on "Semiotic and Semantic Aspects of the Proverb" appeared five years ago in Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt and Melita Aleksa Varga (eds.), *Introduction to Paremiology. A Comprehensive Guide to Proverb Studies* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), pp. 68-111 that is readily and without cost available online, it was decided to republish this significant theoretical survey in *Proverbium* as a lasting recognition of Peter Grzybek as a world-class scholar and special friend. (W.M.)

### ***1. Semiotics and the Proverb***

The semiotic study of proverbs has long been a claim in the field of folkloristics. The earliest explicit claim in this direction goes back to Russian folklorist and semiotician Pëtr G. Bogatyrev, a co-author of Roman Jakobson, who, as early as in the 1930s, explicitly stated: "The investigation of proverbs in their semiotic aspect is one of the most grateful tasks for a folklorist" (Bogatyrev, 1971: 366). In contextually appreciating this statement, one should not forget that this was the time when, despite many valuable studies from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier, proverb research became an increasingly important topic. Let it suffice to mention Friedrich Seiler's fundamental *Deutsche Sprichwörterkunde* (1922), or André Jolles' influential *Einfache Formen* (1930). Nevertheless, despite all achievements made at that time, the outstanding folklorist and paremiologist Archer Taylor, started his seminal book on *The Proverb* with the sharp and critical remark: "The proverb and related forms have long been objects of general interest and the occasion for many books,

but they have attracted little serious and thorough study” (Taylor, 1931: vii).

Bogatyrev’s postulation remained unheard until the 1960s and 1970s, when along with the rise of structuralist approaches – first in the field of linguistics, then in anthropology – semiotics, with its genuinely interdisciplinary orientation, became increasingly important. In fact, various facets and aspects concerning the semiotics of proverbs began to be studied at that time, which had – more often implicitly, rather than explicitly –, been the object of paremiological study before, but now received attention from a different methodological point of view. Nevertheless, comprehensive and systematic semiotic analyses of the proverb still today represent some kind of research desideratum.

One of the major reasons for this state of the art is the fact that both the proverb, as the research object at stake, and semiotics, as the discipline in focus, are no traditionally established phenomena in the international scholarly world. Although the proverb belongs, in principle, to the discipline of paremiology, the latter has never been institutionally established in the academic world; rather, the proverb has traditionally been served as a research object for disciplines such as folkloristics, sociology, pedagogy, linguistics, and many others, all of them looking at the proverb from different methodological perspectives, asking different questions and, as a result, obtaining different answers. Likewise, semiotics, that branch of science which studies signs, or systems, and the processes of sign generation (semiosis) and usage, has rather been a methodological tool used by individual sciences, interested in a methodological generalization of their results.

In semiotic studies, it is commonplace, in line with Morris’ *Foundations of the Theory of Signs* (1938), to subdivide semiotics into three semiotic dimensions (see below), the distinction of which has subsequently become most widespread in the field of linguistics; yet, due attention must be paid to the fact that they refer to any kind of sign processes, not only, and not specifically, to linguistics which has, as a discipline, been of particular relevance for proverbs, too, being part of verbal folklore. Notwithstanding the fact all these aspects have become most relevant in the field of linguistics, the semiotic approach and the semiotic understanding of the three dimensions outlined is much for en-

compassing and comprehensive, and it covers linguistics as the science of linguistic signs, too, but is of larger concern and relevance.

Keeping this in mind, it is also of utmost importance to note that, despite the three-dimensional and triadic study of semiotics, a number of dyadic relations may be abstracted for study (Morris, 1938: 6):

- a) the *pragmatical dimension*,
- b) the *syntactical dimension*,
- c) the *semantical dimension*.

The three disciplines studying these dimensions are accordingly termed *pragmatics*, *syntactics*, and *semantics*: whereas, according to Morris' (1938) concept, pragmatics is concerned with the relation between sign and sign users, syntactics is directed towards the formal relations of signs to one another, and semantics concentrates on the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable. In this respect, it should be pointed out right away that already Morris emphasized the close interrelation between these three dimensions suggesting that they can only, for heuristic purposes, be distinguished and studied with a separate focus, but not really isolated, neither with the regard to sign usage, nor with the study thereof. Also, it should be noted, that more often than not, in the history of studies applying these concepts, implicitly or explicitly, semantics has some kind of dominated over pragmatics and syntactics, since it has always been common to ask for the function of pragmatical or syntactical factors and, by way of that, for the influence these dimensions have on the overall meaning (or even change of meaning). It seems, in this respect students of semiotics generally, and paremiologists specifically, do not differ from ordinary sign users, whose cognitive activity is principally characterized by what psychologists have termed the "effort after meaning" (Bartlett, 1932: 44) and identified as an anthropological constant (Hörmann, 1986).

Morris' rather rough approach, which owes much to the semiotic of Charles S. Peirce, has not remained unchallenged in the course of time: both the concrete definitions and the methodological approaches to each of these dimensions and their interrelations have fundamentally changed in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, they have served as some kind of orientation

point till today. It seems therefore reasonable to take them as a starting point for an analysis of the semiotics of the proverb, on the one hand, and of proverb studies, on the other. With this perspective, it will easily be seen that the three semiotic dimensions cover traditional folkloristic and paremiological issues, which can thus be united under a common theoretical roof.

## ***2. Semiotics and Its Dimensions***

### ***2.1 Pragmatics***

Generally speaking, *pragmatics* focuses on “the relation of signs to interpreters” (Morris, 1938: 6); more specifically, it is “that portion of semiotic which deals with the origin, uses, and effects of signs within the behavior in which they occur” (Morris, 1946: 219). It is thus concerned with the use of a sign system in contexts. Having initially been a predominantly philosophical issue, including speech act theory, pragmatics has become increasingly important since the 1970s in the field of linguistics, last but not least as a reaction to rather *context-free* structural or generativist approaches. In fact, it was *context* which received more and more attention; it became particularly relevant to study the ways in which context contributes to meaning, i.e., how meaning depends not only on structural and linguistic knowledge of a message’s producer and recipient, but (also) on the context of an utterance, pre-existing knowledge about those involved, the inferred intent(ion) of the message’s producer, etc. In this respect, a number of different notions of context were distinguished, such as: (a) the physical context, referring to the *real-life* situational setting of a communication act, i.e. that situation in which the communication takes place; (b) the epistemic context referring to the background knowledge (or world knowledge) of a communication, which may be necessary for understanding, but logically speaking can of course be shared on partly by producer and recipient; (c) the linguistic context, often distinguishingly termed *co-text* instead, referring to that information into which a message is imbedded, i.e. which either preceded or succeeded the message in question, or which accompanied it simultaneously (e.g., specific prosodic elements, nonverbal communicative elements, etc.), (d) the social context, specifically referring to the relationship between producer and recipient, involving, among others, hierarchies or different degrees of inti-

macy between them, and thus having an impact on the success communication act. The recipient's ability to understand another's intended meaning has been called *pragmatic competence*; but of course, producing and conveying a message includes, to a certain degree, the anticipation of the communicative imbalance between producer and recipient, and any producer's strategy to avoid resulting problems is part of pragmatic competence, too.

With regard to *pragmatical* issues, paremiology has been concerned with the study of negotiating proverbs in natural communication (oral or written), and social life, i.e., with the analysis of speech act performances, focusing on the *why* and *how* of verbal exchanges. This line of research, despite all differences in detail, has thus basically concentrated on the proverb in its *context*, less on the proverb as a text: in fact, proverbs are studied with regard to contextual and situational implications in the process of social exchange, on the one hand, including all pragmatic restrictions which may be effective, and with regard to functional factors, on the other. Paremiological research along this line has of course been much more concrete, than simply stating that proverbs are indirect speech acts;<sup>1</sup> rather, quite concrete social and cultural interactions have been analyzed in detail. Studies in this direction have a long tradition. Raymond W. Firth, for example, who was later to become an important ethnologist and a leading representative of functional cultural anthropology, referred to the importance of proverb context as early as in 1926, when he wrote: "The essential thing about a proverb is its meaning, – and by this is to be understood not merely a bald and literal translation into the accustomed tongue, nor even a free version of what the words are intended. To convey the meaning of a proverb is made clear only when side by side with the translation is given a full account of the accompanying social situation—the reason for its use, its effect, and its significance in speech" (Firth, 1926: 134). And on the threshold to modern, structural anthropology, Ojo Arewa and Alan Dundes, in their 1966 essay *Proverbs and the Ethnography of Speaking Folklore*,<sup>2</sup> explicitly postulated to complement the description of a proverb's textual characteristics by a detailed description of the context in which it is used. Their main interest was not as much the question of the function of the proverb in general, as the description of a concrete proverb's function in a specific context:

“Notice that such as study of context is not the same as the more general study of functions of folklore. One can say that proverbs sum up a situation, pass judgment, recommend a course of action, or serve as secular past precedents for present action; but to say this does not tell us what the particular function of a particular proverb used by a particular individual in a particular setting is” (Arewa & Dundes, 1966: 71). Emphasis is laid here on the contextual boundary conditions of individual (proverbial) speech acts and proverb usage. Nevertheless, the ultimate object of this approach was twofold, of course: with regard to individual proverbs, the interest was to gain better insight into a proverb’s functioning and, by way of that, into the complex matter of its semantic functioning; and with regard to the proverbial genre, the interest was to obtain a clearer picture of the proverb’s social and cultural functions in general. This dual interest has since characterized pragmatic approaches to the proverb in the field of paremiology (see among others Briggs, 1985, Charteris-Black, 1995, Hasan-Rokem, 1982).

Summarizing the gist of this whole line of research, one can generally say that, on the whole, the predominant interest has been, to study the ways in which context contributes to, or changes, proverbial meaning, i.e., to analyze the overwhelmingly complex question how a proverb either obtains its meaning, or how it changes its meaning, or its function, depending on (a change of) the situational, contextual, or pragmatic boundary conditions of proverb usage.

## 2.2 *Syntactics*

As to the syntactical dimension, it cannot be overemphasized that syntactics must not be identified with, or reduced to, the (study of) grammatical concept of syntax in linguistics, i.e., the rules and principles of sentence structures and processes by which sentences are constructed. The linguistic study of syntax may, of course, be sub-summarized under the broader concept of syntactics, but the latter, in its semiotic understanding of the term, refers to (the study of) signs in their relations to one another generally.

Before pointing out the relevance of syntactics for paremiology, it seems necessary to emphasize that in this context, a number of further distinctions should be made, which have not al-



ways been kept apart as clearly as would have been desirable. Partly, this is due to Morris' own ambiguous statements, partly to later interpretations of his statements by other scholars. A major problem consists in the wrong identification of syntactics not only syntax, but also with syntagmatics, thus excluding paradigmatic sign relations from the field of syntactics. In his *Foundations of the Theory of Signs*, Morris (1938: 14) defined syntactics rather specifically as being concerned with "the consideration of signs and sign combinations in so far as they are subject to syntactical rules" (the latter being meant as formation and transformation rules in terms of formal logics); but he also, in a more general way, spoke of "the formal relation of signs to one another" (Morris, 1938: 6). Later refining these definitions in his book *Signs, Language, and Behavior*, Morris (1946: 219) saw syntactics not only generally dealing "with combinations of signs", but also as that "branch of semiotic that studies the way in which signs of various classes are combined to form compound signs" (Morris, 1946: 355). Whereas the first statement thus still refers to combinatorics and seems to imply a syntagmatic perspective, the second refers to any kind of relation between signs, possibly including paradigmatics, too, and the third specifically aims at the combination of signs from different classes being interrelated in one way or another. In order to cover all aspects of syntactics, it seems therefore reasonable to pay attention to the methodologically important juxtapositions of *paradigmatics* vs. *syntagmatics* and *simultaneity* vs. *succession*, which stand in specific relations to each other.

When, per definition, syntactics includes (the study of) syntagmatic relations of a given sign concerning its relation(s) to other signs with which it is combined, this necessarily implies a specific succession or sequentiality, i.e., an extension in the temporal and/or spatial dimension. Following the above definitions, a syntactical approach needs not be syntagmatic, however; rather, it may include paradigmatic relations between signs as well (Posner, 1985), which concern a sign's relation(s) to signs within one and the same sign system and, consequently, no temporal or spatial extension. As a consequence, a paradigmatic focus implies simultaneity, in contrast to a syntagmatic focus, implying succession. In sum, a syntactical approach would thus not be restricted to syntagmatics, but include paradigmatics, as well

and, as a consequence, not necessarily imply sequentiality. Moreover, syntactics would also include the (study of a) simultaneous combination of heterogeneous signs, i.e., signs from different sign systems being merged into a complex sign, or a sign complex.<sup>3</sup>

These distinctions, as theoretical as they may appear to be at first sight, are highly relevant for paremiological analyses, too. In fact, paremiological studies have always included syntactical studies, without necessarily having been understood or termed as syntactical in the sense outlined above. It goes without saying that no exhaustive or systematic account can be given here, but it may be helpful to give at least some examples:

a. Approaches to proverbs concerning the linguistic embedding of a verbal utterance into the linguistic context, for example, would be a typical case of a syntactical-syntagmatic approach: concentrating on the linguistic environment of a proverbial utterance would focus, among others, on the study of the verbal text preceding or succeeding a given proverb utterance, often referred to as *co-text* instead (Catford, 1965: 30), in order to distinguish such verbal embeddings from situational contexts. Such analyses would also attempt to identify introductory (*pre-proverb*) formulae, i.e., some kind of preceding verbal prompts, verbally introducing proverbs into a running conversation and separating them from the ongoing text, as well as extensions and elaborations, including stylistic extensions, strategies of commenting, proverb dialogues competitions, etc. Studies of proverb usage in a given situational context with particular regard to non-verbal communicative elements accompanying it, would be an instance of simultaneity-oriented syntactics, studying the combination of heterogeneous signs into a compound sign complex. What is relevant here is of course not the nonverbal channel as such, but the simultaneous combination of (different) signs; this instance is therefore different, of course, from studies of proverb usage in particular societies, when proverbs are not orally expressed, by on drums, through gestures, in dancing, etc., without verbal accompaniment

b. A syntactical-paradigmatic approach, as compared to this, asks for a definition of which paradigm is under study, since paradigms are not a priori given truths, but the *a posteriori* result of

definition. Such a paradigm may be represented by all proverb variants and variations belonging to one and the same proverb (with a given language or even cross-linguistically), it may comprise all proverbs belonging to a specific structural type, e.g. all those including formulae like *Where ... there*, *Like ... like*, etc., or it may even concentrate on all proverbs of a given language, studying their interrelations, and it may as well study all proverbs, within a given culture or not, in their mutual interrelations, including what has been termed paremiological homonyms, synonyms, antonyms, etc.

As has been pointed out above, syntactical approaches would of course comprise linguistic syntax analyses, studying grammatical specifics of proverbs, as well. It should be noted, however, that in this case the concept of proverb as the object of research is, from a semiotic point of view, essentially different from its understanding in the examples above. In all previous examples, a proverb has been understood as a proverbial entity, i.e., as one sign studied in its relation to other signs. It has been thus ignored, at least temporarily, that a proverb itself is composed of more than one constituting sign, since a proverb, by definition, is composed of minimally two words, and each individual word is a sign in its own right<sup>4</sup>, the proverb thus turning out to be what has been termed a super-sign, i.e. a complex sign, or a sign complex.

Accepting the assumption that a word obtains its meaning only in co(n)text, it turns out that any change in this respect, as well as any pragmatic difference, will have impact on proverb meaning, showing once more how closely interrelated pragmatical, syntactical and semantical aspects are, and how fluently these aspects merge into each other, despite any heuristic focus.

### 2.3 *Semantics*

As compared to Morris (1938: 6) definition of semantics as “the relation of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable”, he later regarded it as dealing “with the signification of signs in all modes of signifying” (Morris, 1946: 219): whereas in the first case, we would thus be concerned with some kind of reference semantics, the later modification is more general in scope, rather focusing on the conditions which must be fulfilled

for something to be denoted by a sign, or for a sign to serve as denoting, or signifying, something, respectively.

In the course of time, and mostly related to the fields of philosophy of language, on the one hand, and linguistics, on the other, the discipline of semantics has undergone important developments and sustainable changes. In the field of linguistics it has become common, irrespective of methodological differences, to distinguish different branches, or foci, of semantics, depending again on the specific focus of research: whereas *lexical semantics* is concerned with the meanings of words and morphemes, as well as the structure of a (mental) lexicon as a whole, *sentence semantics* studies how (i.e., by what kind of rules) the meaning of larger syntactic units, such as phrases, clauses, or sentences, can be described and eventually derived from individual words; *text semantics* concentrates on the combination of sentences, i.e., the representations of real or hypothetical (presumed, fictive, etc.) facts into coherent narrative, descriptive or argumentative structures; and *discourse semantics* concentrates on the level of texts in interaction (discussions, conversations, etc.) Quite obviously, these different aspects interact in specific ways.

What is important here is that all these aspects are essentially relevant for semantic studies in the field of paremiology, too. The proverb being defined as a folklore unit on the sentence level, sentence semantics is of course specifically concerned. Quite obviously, the study if or how from the meanings of individual words, as the constituents of a sentence, along with combinatorial semantic, morphosyntactic and syntactic rules relate to the meaning of syntactic entities (phrases, clauses, sentences), cannot be solved without information from lexical semantics: independent of the fact if different kinds of tropes and figures are included, or not, sentence meaning might well not emerge from the meanings of its components (see below). But it would be a too narrowing view to restrict paremiological semantics to these two aspects – ultimately, the meaning of a proverb is likely to transcend sentence boundaries. Depending on the definition of *text*, a proverbial sentence can be seen to be a full text in its own right, eventually embedded into a situational context and additional co-text. Likewise, the integration of a proverb into discursive structures parallels the importance of co(n)textual structures

already pointed out above with reference to pragmatics and syntactics.

It is obvious that neither a historically nor a conceptually oriented survey of semantic approaches can be given here, be that with regard to semantics in general or to the narrower field of proverb semantics, only. In any case, it seems worthwhile emphasizing again, with regard to the three-partite division of semiosis outlined above, Morris' emphasis of the unity of the three dimensions involved, and referring to the fact that ultimately, that any semiotic process can only be adequately studied paying due attention to the indispensable interrelationship of all three dimensions. Not any one of them must be isolated from any one of the others except, temporarily, for heuristic purposes. Based on these general assumptions, it has become a commonplace in semiotics, specifically in process-oriented semiotics, that signs do neither occur isolated from other signs, nor outside of a specific situational context; consequently, meaning is generally considered to emerge as a result of operations which sign users fulfill by way of texts (in a broad semiotic understanding of this term) in particular communicative situations.

Generally speaking, it should be pointed out that the notion of *semantics* has been ambiguously used in the past, and that we have been concerned with different readings of the term *semantics*. Most importantly, and irrespective of different methodological approaches complicating the situation, two different levels of abstraction should clearly be kept apart. When *semantics* was introduced as a scholarly term in the linguistic discourse by Bréal in 1883, its task was supposed to be the description of the meaning of words and of meaning change; this led to a rather colloquial usage of the term, semantics often being understood as a synonym for *meaning*. Proverb semantics, thus understood, would then be but the meaning of a proverb – indeed such readings can be found, e.g., in Lundberg' 1958 study on *The Semantics of Proverbs*, concentrating on contradictory interpretations (i.e., meanings) of proverbs within a given language.<sup>5</sup>

More adequately, however, and following the tradition outlined above, semantics should not be understood in terms of *meaning*, but of *the study of meaning*, or *science of meaning*. Semantics, in this understanding, thus would not be the object of study, but the discipline of studying the object; and since the ob-

ject, in this case (i.e., the proverb), is a linguistic expression, this would ask for a description and study of (the process of generating) meaning. From this perspective, any attempt to *explain* or to *interpret* a proverb, i.e., to describe its meaning, could thus be classified as being semantic, and any description of proverb meaning would fall into the field of proverb semantics. It would be too easy, however, to leave this statement as it is: on the one hand, it is quite evident that no (proverb) meaning can ever be described without at least a minimum of meta-linguistic competence, be that implicit or explicit; on the other hand, ambition and scope of different meta-languages, or their degrees of abstraction, may be quite different, up to the level of specific theories of proverb meaning and meaning generation. Meta-language thus turns out to be a crucial factor in context of proverb semantics, and it seems reasonable to recall some elementary cornerstones about the status and function of meta-language.

### 3. *Meta-language*

Generally speaking, meta-language is language about language. As compared to this, the language which is spoken about is called an *object language*; in case some meta-language itself is made the object of study, i.e. functionally turning out to be the object, we speak about meta-meta-language. Any meta-language includes two main components (Baranov, 2007: 78): (i) the *initial alphabet of elements* or *units* (vocabulary of metalanguage) and (ii) the *allowed rules for the generation of well-formed meta-language formulae* (expressions) from initial elements.

It goes without saying that not only is meta-language itself concerned by all three dimensions of semiosis (i.e., by pragmatic, syntactic and semantic aspects) but also may it concern all aspects of a given object language, not only the semantic dimension focused here, in terms of a *semantic meta-language*. As Baranov (2007: 78) correctly points out, with regard to phraseology, expressions of a semantic meta-language must convey the essential features of the meanings of the object language expressions.

In this respect, two positions may be distinguished, with regard to the completeness of description (Baranov, 2007: 81): for the first, the goal is a (maximally) complete analysis and exhaustive description of meaning, including all necessary and suffi-

cient conditions for its correct use; according to the second, a semantic meta-language can describe only a part of the content of a language expression.

From a model theory perspective, a meta-linguistic expression can be regarded to be a model of an object expression; quite obviously, a meta-linguistics model can in practice cover but selected properties considered to be relevant in a given research context. As a consequence, the view on the object, as well as its description, will change depending on the meta-language chosen. Different meta-linguistic approaches and any theory of proverb meaning will therefore arrive at different semantic descriptions, and with each difference in describing a proverb's meaning the latter will seemingly change, to a certain degree.

There are, at least, two more factors to which due attention must be paid with regard to the influence of meta-language. First, one should not forget that the more general (broader, abstract) a given meta-language is, the more phenomena it will be able to cover, but on costs of the degree of specificity of description. And second one should be well aware of the fact that meaning is, after all, the outcome of a dynamic process – but any description of meaning is bound to arrive at a static result. Alone from this fact it follows that any attempt at describing a concrete meaning will always face serious difficulties, if it will not even be principally doomed to failure.

Estonian folklorist Arvo Krikmann has adequately drawn the necessary conclusions from these general and theoretical problems. On their background the proverb as a genre seems to be specifically characterized by a number of factors responsible for what he has termed its semantic indefiniteness: in addition to modal, functional, pragmatic, situational, and other factors, Krikmann (1971) particularly emphasized the importance of the chosen meta-language. According to him, it is simply impossible to define a proverb's meaning exactly, and he concludes: "[...] the meaning of a proverb [...] is, for a researcher or a user, a mere semantic potential. The final and maximally definite meanings of a certain text manifest themselves only in concrete actualizations of this text" (Krikmann, 1974: 5).

Ultimately, attempting to solve the problem, we are therefore faced with a methodological dilemma, since analyzing a proverb text we are concerned with two antagonistic tendencies. On the

one hand, we are faced with the *absolute sum* of all *possible* meanings which represent a proverb's semantic potential. On the other hand, we have to do with the sum of all *real (actual)* meanings, as manifested in all its previous realizations, and since we do not know all these actual realizations, we usually have no chance to explicate the proverb's semantic potential in such a way that it corresponds to its actual meanings. This deficit is responsible for a number of possible error sources in any attempt to describe a proverb's meaning (Krikmann, 1974: 5):

- i. a semantic description is attributed to the text, which is too broad (or too general) – as a result, the description includes a number of unreal meanings, in addition to all real meanings;
- ii. the description is too narrow – consequently, part of all real meanings remain out of the consideration;
- iii. errors (1) and (2) occur simultaneously – in this case, the description introduces some unreal meanings and excludes, or neglects, a part of real ones;
- iv. the interpretation fails entirely and the formulation of the semantic potential does not include any real meaning.

Despite this seemingly hopeless situation there have always been (and will always be) attempts to describe proverb meanings, notwithstanding all theoretical problems pointed out – after all, there are simply concrete practical needs to do so, maybe even less for paremiology than for paremiography, striving for some kind of semantic arrangement of proverbs. In this respect, paremiologists and paremiographers, have always had to deal not only with the interaction of semantics with pragmatics and syntactics – it is yet another problem, which is essentially responsible for the proverb's semantic indefiniteness, namely, factors concerning its indirectness, figurativeness, non-literalness, etc.

The assumption of indirectness has always, in one way or another, played an important role in the history of proverb scholarship, primarily with regard to semantic issues, including however pragmatic, linguistic, poetic and other approaches.

#### **4. “Indirectness” and “Non-literalness”**

From a pragmatic point of view, it might eventually be appropriate to classify a proverb as an indirect speech act. This concept goes back to ideas from the philosophy of language,



mainly Searle's (1975) discussion of *Indirect Speech Acts*, based on his earlier *Speech Act Theory* (Searle, 1969), and referring back to Austin's (1962) well-known treatment *How to do things with words*. In this framework, we are concerned with a direct speech act, when a speaker utters a sentence and means exactly and literally what s/he says (Searle, 1975: 59). But a speaker may also utter a sentence, mean what s/he says, but additionally mean something more, or something different instead. In these cases, we are concerned with indirect speech acts, when "the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer" (Searle, 1975: 60).

On this basis, there have been a number of studies on the speech act character of the proverb. And there have not only been attempts to characterize the proverb, due to its citational character, as a doubly indirect speech act (Norrick 1982), there have been efforts to define specific paremic speech acts – Nahberger (2000: 121), Nahberger (2004). Such attempts may be reasonable from a philosophical or maybe even pragmatic point of view. If, however, such classifications are helpful for semantic purposes (be that in a paremiological context or not), is an entirely different matter. Ultimately, the status of indirect speech acts has increasingly been principally called into question in the last years, not only due to the fact that the majority of speech acts in every day conversation have turned out to be indirect (Crystal, 1987: 121); profound skepticism has also come up for theoretical reasons, stating, e.g., that "there are no indirect speech acts" (Bertolet, 1994: 335), claiming "that indirect speech acts, if they do occur, can be explained within the framework of conversational implicature" (Green, 2009), or declaring "that the notion can be discarded with no significant methodological loss" (Chankova, 2009).

The question of figurativeness in proverbs has preoccupied generations of paremiologists, and monographic surveys of the proverb use to devote separate chapters to this question – Seiler, (1922: 149), Röhrich & Mieder, 1977: 90), and many others. More often than not, juxtapositions of the following kind have traditionally been put forward:

<i>metaphorical proverb</i>	vs.	<i>proverbial apothegm</i>	(Taylor 1931)
<i>proverbe</i>	vs.	<i>dicton</i>	(Greimas (1970)
<i>proverb proper</i>	vs.	<i>maxim</i>	(Barley 1972)
<i>proverb proper</i>	vs.	<i>folk aphorism</i>	(Permjakov (1979)

Although at first sight such distinctions, irrespective of differences in terminology, seem to refer to similar concepts, they may have been based on different assumptions: On the one hand, the difference may either have been assumed to be (a) *categorical* or (b) *gradual* (allowing for possible degrees and transitions between both); on the other hand, the juxtaposition may have been motivated either on the basis of specific (c) *textual* characteristics, or the difference have been seen in (d) *pragmatic* respects (i.e., in the act of proverb usage, strictly asking for a distinction of literal or non-literal usage of a proverb, rather than of literal and non-literal proverbs).

One might argue, of course, in favor of the notion that these different assumptions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and that we are rather concerned with different perspectives: from a text-oriented approach (c) one might, for example, treat a proverb, be it categorically (a) or (b) gradually (more or less) literal or non-literal, as a homonymic and polyfunctional text (c). One might also classify a proverb as literal or non-literal, from an a posteriori perspective, without claiming that such a categorization is possible a priori, too, on the basis of information given in the text itself – after all, any word can be used metaphorically, and even the classical sentence *Colorless green ideas sleep furiously*, seemingly semantically anomalous at first sight, has repeatedly shown to be fully reasonable, if interpreted metaphorically.

Be that as it may, the problem of literal and non-literal meanings is too complex to be answered straight-forward. In any case, it seems reasonable see a parallel here to what (Burger, 2007: 91) has suggested for phrasemes, namely, to speak of *literal reading*, rather than of *literal meaning*. While this wording emphasizes the recipient's active role and makes it clear that the distinction outlined may be a cognitive, rather than an exclusive-

ly text-based phenomenon. Moreover, it has generally been assumed that distinctions which can be made from text-oriented studies are relevant for, or paralleled by cognitive processes, as well, among others, Norrick (1985: 27) claims that a speaker “means what he says on the literal level, but he means something more in context”, particularly if one takes into account that the “literal meaning (or rather one literal meaning of several potential ones, as the components can be polysemic at the literal level) can be activated [...], but does not have to be of any importance in the actual use of language” (Norrick, 1985: 91).

Related issues have been the study of specific psycholinguistic studies of proverb comprehension, where a crucial question has been if understanding a proverb’s literal meaning is an obligatory pre-condition for the decoding of its figurative meaning. Since Grzybek’s (1984c) early summarizing discussion of results available at that time, much progress has been made in this field (e.g., Gibbs et al., 1996, Honeck, 1997). Various models have been propagated, starting from two-step *literal first* models, over *multiple meanings* models, up to *conventional meaning models*, to name but a few, all of them concentrating on the question, how paremic meaning is achieved, if and how (elements of) literal meaning may come into play or not. Unfortunately, in many relevant studies, many possibly interfering factors have never been systematically controlled, starting from a clear phrase- paremiological distinction between idioms, proverbial sayings and proverbs, including the differentiation of different kinds of proverbs as well as of different kinds of tropic process involved – be that on the lexical or the sentence level (see below) – up to differences depending on (individual) familiarity with the given proverb.

The above-mentioned point of different kinds of figurativeness concerns two aspects: on the one hand, this concerns individual tropes (such as metaphors, metonymies, synecdoches, etc.) as lexical components possibly present in proverbs,<sup>6</sup> on the other hand, this relates to the proverb text as a whole, i.e., its overall paremic (transferred, indirect, non-literal, non-figurative, etc.) meaning. Although Seiler (1922: 152), in his *Deutsche Sprich-wörterkunde*, drew on this difference as early as in 1922, both aspects which must be clearly distinguished have often have

not been kept apart – both problems are principally different, yet closely related, depending again on the approach chosen.

### 5. *Holistic vs. Componential Analysis, Analytical vs. Synthetic Clichés*

In a more modern approach, Krikmann suggested to distinguish two different methodological approaches to explain proverb meaning:

- (1) The first approach, which might be termed *componential*, regards the proverb text as ***internally heterogeneous***. It tries to tell apart *content elements* (*c*-elements) from *formal elements* (*f*-elements). Formal elements are, among others, any kind of relational words or quantifiers, syntactic formulae, such as *every*, *all*, *if ... then*, *better ... than*, etc. All other words belong to the *c*-elements; these can be further subdivided into semantically (*c*<sub>1</sub>) *literal* and (*c*<sub>2</sub>) *transferred* (non-literal, figurative, tropical, etc.) elements, based on the assumption that there is, in principle, a literal reading of words, and a non-literal (figurative) one. The exact distinction between *c*-elements and *f*-elements may vary, of course, as well as the classification of specific kind of trope involved, depending on various factors; but all approaches along these lines share the assumption that figurativeness (non-directness, figurativeness, poeticalness, etc.) is not assigned to the proverb text as a whole, but is restricted to its individual elements (or even to the *c*<sub>2</sub>-elements, alone).
- (2) The second approach, which might be termed *holistic*, considers the proverb text as an *internally homogeneous* entity. All its elements are considered to belong to a specific *secondary* language, a proverb representing a *secondary modeling system*, i.e., a semiotic superstructure built upon (the basis, or principle of) natural language as a *primary modeling system*. From this perspective, approaches along the componential approach appear to be restricted to the analysis of the proverb as a linguistic entity, studying it in the framework of sentence semantics (see above). In contrast, according to the holistic ap-

proach, a proverb is seen not only as a linguistic super-sign but as an even more complex superstructure, a paremic super-sign, in analogy to any poetic work of art. In this framework, the eventual occurrence of tropes on the lexical level may result in different subcategories of proverbs, but the overall classification of a proverb as being *completely poetical* would not be touched by this detail, the semantic description of a proverb thus asking for a specific meta-language beyond sentence semantics.

From a different perspective, we are thus faced again with the proverb's semiotic status as a sign complex, or a complex super-sign. Comparing these two approaches just outlined, there are some similarities between the two, since in both cases, lexical tropes may but need not be contained; furthermore, both do not exclude, or even claim that there is some information beyond the information given on a merely linguistic level. Yet, both approaches differ in important respects:

- a) the status and role of lexical tropes, particularly concerning their relation to the syntactic and proverbial whole, is treated differently;
- b) the need to develop a specific meta-language for the description of what is assumed to be some kind of additional information, is seen differently, and clearly relevant in the second approach only.

Whereas the first approach thus focuses on a componential analysis, eventually being negligent of the need to develop of a specific meta-language for the semantic description of the proverbial whole, in addition to its the second approach, with its particular emphasis on the additional (*secondary*) meaning, is faced with the need to offer a solution as to the interplay between lexical and proverbial levels, particularly with regard to figurative processes involved. Again, we have a parallel to the narrower field of phraseology, and one cannot but agree with H. Burger (2007: 92), for whom "one of the main semantic problems in phraseology is describing and explaining if and how the two meanings or levels of meaning are connected."

According to the componential approach, a proverb text thus is regarded to be not principally different from any other verbal

text, except for the indirectness of the speech act of its utterance (see above), and for the eventual inclusion of lexical tropes. Under this condition, a proverb is submitted to semantic analyses in a linguistic framework. For approaches along these lines, *literal* meanings (or readings) of the proverb and/or its components are a pre-condition of analysis.

In this respect, the concept of *semantic autonomy* has been used in the field of phraseology, in order to study “how much and in what way the components of the phraseme contribute semantically to its overall meaning” (Burger, 2007: 96). Along these lines, idioms without semantically autonomous components have been termed non-compositional, those with semantically autonomous components have been termed compositional; as a consequence, such idioms have been termed non-motivated or opaque, on the one hand, and motivated or transparent, on the other, both types also allowing for combinations leading to partly idiomatic (motivated, transparent) idioms (Burger, 2007:96).<sup>7</sup> The classification of a phraseme to be (more or less) motivated thus depends on a decision how the individual components contribute to the overall phraseological meaning. It seems that with regard to this point, things are considerably different in paremiology: although here, too, we may ask how the individual components contribute to the whole, and if, or how, these components can be motivated, these questions are not relevant for a classification of the proverb meaning as a whole, which is always motivated, even if possibly in different manners (see below).

Componential analyses in paremiology, however, tend to see the overall proverb meaning, which may frankly be admitted to exist, either as an emerging result of the (the analysis of) individual components, or it tends to be completely ignored and regarded as being out of scope. Quite typically, Norrick (1985: 9), for example, suggests that a semantic analysis of a proverb must begin with a literal reading<sup>8</sup>, before its *customary meaning* or *standard proverb interpretation* (in his terms) can be achieved. The *literal* meaning a literal paraphrase of its *surface form*.<sup>9</sup> In Norrick’s understanding, this intermediate step may be necessary for proverbs which contain, for example, archaic or peculiarly proverbial syntactic constructions or lexical items; according to Norrick (1985: 81) such proverbs (i.e., only such proverbs) are

“not amenable to regular compositional semantic interpretation” – from what we learn that all other proverbs obvious are considered to be amenable. Whereas compositional analysis thus is regarded to be not only possible, but also necessary, in order to arrive at a proverb’s *literal* meaning, there is, according to Norrick (1985: 82), no need to semantically analyze proverbs in order to provide them with what he terms *standard proverb interpretations*: since proverbs are not freely generated, “no analysis of their internal semantic structure is necessary to provide readings for them” (Norrick, 1985: 82). Both statements taken together, it becomes obvious that the semantic (compositional) analysis is confined to *literal* readings, and that the semantic analysis of proverb meaning as such ultimately is not even touched upon in his approach, except for everyday re-phrasings of proverbs’ customary meanings.<sup>10</sup> Based on the *literal* reading, Norrick (1985: 81), assumes proverbs to be either literal or figurative, depending on the relation between the literal meanings determined for them and their *standard proverb interpretations*,<sup>11</sup> more specifically, he claims that if the literal reading *coincides* with the customary meaning, a proverb is literal, else figurative (Norrick, 1985: 1). Irrespective of the fact that the whole approach is highly problematic, from a theoretical point of view<sup>12</sup>, it turns out that proverbs which contain some kind of trope on the lexical level are classified as *figurative*, all others as *literal*.

At closer sight, the crucial question raised above, as to possible interrelations between lexical tropes and the paremic meaning of the proverb as a whole, thus turns out to remain unanswered, in this approach. And although it is conceded that “information beyond that present in a simple semantic decomposition of lexical items may play a crucial role in interpretation” (Norrick, 1985: 114), the same holds to as to the question how to semantically describe a proverb’s customary meaning, as an inventorized unit, admittedly being considered as “belonging to a particular language” (Norrick, 1985: 1).

Whereas thus, in the framework of componential approaches, there even may be no need to develop a specific meta-language for paremic meaning, it is just this specific paremic content which renders the proverb a secondary modeling system, for the second approach. Here, a proverb is treated not only as a

linguistic, but also, additionally and indispensably, as a paremic entity. In other words: from this perspective, a proverb is analyzed both as a text in ordinary language, as the primary modeling system, and as a specific paremic entity, belonging to a specific paremic plane of language, assumed to represent a second level of meaning.

This approach theoretically owes very much to literary and cultural semiotics. In this theoretical framework, linguistic analyses are of course not excluded – but (additionally) considering the proverb to be a specific paremic text, all text elements are considered to fulfill semantic functions, and they must be strictly distinguished both from all elements of the primary language and from those of a given meta-language used for their semantic description (in both cases we would otherwise be concerned with homonymous elements). We will come back to details of the concept of secondary modelling systems, further below, and we will discuss what this concept has in common with approaches distinguishing between two kinds (or levels) of signification, a primary (denotative) and a secondary (connotative) one. There is more than one scholar who has advanced this view, but with regard to the question raised above, Permjakov's approach deserves some in-depth treatment here.

Permjakov's approach<sup>13</sup> is based on the fundamental distinction between analytical vs. synthetic clichés, relating not only to proverbs, but to all categories of linguistic stereotypes. The main difference between these two types of clichés is seen to consist in the way how the constituent signs are fused to a complex supersign (a term not used by Permjakov himself):

- *analytical clichés* can have only a *direct overall meaning*: even if an individual constituting element is used in a non-direct (i.e., transferred, or figurative) understanding, these stereotypes tend to remain mono-semantic, i.e. they have one concrete meaning and do not ask for some extended interpretation;
- *synthetic clichés*, as compared to this, are assumed to have an extended (transferred, figurative) overall meaning, in addition to the direct, which cannot (or not completely) be derived from the meanings of the individual components; synthetic clichés are considered to refer not only, as a linguistic



supersign, to a specifically denoted segment of reality, but, as a paremic cliché, to all similar situations of which they are a model.

The crucial difference between analytical and synthetic clichés thus is the kind of overall motivation, which goes along with their mono- vs. polythematicity, on the one hand, and their quality of being a secondary modelling system or not. To give but one example as to the concept of polythematicity: prognostic sayings<sup>14</sup> such as *When swallows fly high, the weather will be dry* or *Low flies the swallow, rain to follow* would have to be considered as analytical clichés, being restricted to the observation of swallows' behavior and predictions derived from it, and allowing for no (or at least not asking for any) semantically extended interpretation; in contrast, the thematically similar proverb *One swallow does not make a summer*, as a synthetic cliché, also (or even only) works when referring to situations which have nothing to do with swallows (or other kinds of birds), seasons of the year, etc.<sup>15</sup>, but rather, in a more general sense, to situations in which the (first) appearance of a specific phenomenon should not be (mis)interpreted as an obligatory index of the appearance of circumstances usually accompanying it.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, attributing the proverbial genre to the category of synthetic clichés, it is important to emphasize that this concerns *literal* (*L*-proverbs) and *figurative* (*F*-proverbs) proverbs alike. In this respect, it is of utmost importance to emphasize that a proverbial text as a whole is always motivated, i.e., neither in *L*-proverbs nor in *F*-proverbs motivation can be absent; this is a clear difference in comparison to the situation in phraseology, where a phraseme may be fully motivated, partly motivated, or non-motivated, depending on the component's status, their function for the phraseological whole and the possibility to derive the latter from the individual components (Burger, 2007: 96).

Yet, both types of proverbs differ according to their motivational character: *F*-proverbs are (or can be) motivated figuratively, *F*-proverbs directly. The fact that not only *F*-proverbs, but *L*-proverbs as well are synthetic, so that the overall meaning of both can be understood to be extended (or transferred), may at first glance be as surprising, as well as the fact that not only *F*-proverbs, but also *L*-proverbs can contain individual (lexical)

tropes – yet, these assumptions are fully in line with what has been termed a *holistic* approach above.

Under these conditions, the figurative character of proverbs appears in a different light, as compared to many traditional conceptions: now the question is foreground, which options and which restrictions there are as to the occurrence of tropes in *L*-proverbs and in *F*-proverbs. In the framework outlined, this question may be asked separately (a) on the basis of text properties, and (b) with regard to properties of the lexical components. Both perspectives are not completely independent of other because, according to Permjakov (1979: 113-115), for each of the two paremic types there are clear interdependencies between the properties of the components and global text properties.

In addition to further distinctive properties enumerated by Permjakov (1979: 10-112), the one which is most relevant for the treatment of figurativeness in proverbs and the distinction between *L*-proverbs and *F*-proverbs is the dichotomy between directly motivated and figuratively motivated components, the latter further being sub-divided into metaphorically motivated, on the one hand, and otherwise motivated components (i.e. metonymies, synecdoches, hyperboles, etc.), on the other. From this results an essential difference between the overall meaning of *L*-proverbs and *F*-proverbs:

1. the overall meaning of *F*-proverbs is always metaphorical, and no direct interpretation is possible here;
2. for *L*-proverbs, a direct interpretation is possible, notwithstanding the possible presence of figurative components.

This general distinction goes along with a number of differences as to constituting components:

1. both *L*-proverbs and *F*-proverbs may contain direct components:
  - a) in *L*-proverbs all components can be direct
  - b) in *F*-proverbs it is excluded that all components are direct
2. both in *L*-proverbs and in *F*-proverbs all components can be figurative (that means, neither *L*-proverbs nor *F*-proverbs must obligatorily contain a direct component)

3. both *L*-proverbs and *F*-proverbs may contain a metaphorical component:
  - a) if an *L*-proverb contains a metaphorical component, then it must also contain either another direct or a figurative (but in this non-metaphorical) component
  - b) in *F*-proverbs at least one of the components must be metaphorical
  - c) *F*-proverbs may contain, in addition to a metaphorical component, direct components; if, however, an *F*-proverb contains, in addition to a metaphorical component, further figurative components, these can only be metaphorical ones.

Against this background, proverbs such as *The apple does not fall far from the tree* or *Too many cooks spoil the broth* may of course quite easily be attributed to *F*-proverbs; with regard to *L*-proverbs, however, the matter is slightly more complicated, because not only *non-pictorial* proverbs such as *Nothing ventured, nothing gained* or *Exceptions prove the rule* would belong to *this category*, but also sayings containing lexical tropes, such as *Speech is silver, silence is golden* or *A lie has no legs*.

In practice, the classification of tropical and proverbial types may turn out to be more complicated, due fact that the exact definition of a component may be no straight-forward procedure, but the result of a set of complex interrelations. As has been mentioned before, according to Permjakov's text-based approach, analytical and synthetic clichés may be distinguished "depending on the character of links between the component words" (Permjakov, 1979: 106). This formulation is likely to be interpreted in favor of a *component-first approach*, implying that an analysis of the components' status allows for conclusions as to the status of the proverbial whole – in fact, the components' status is, however, but a result of using a proverb as a whole.

Table 4.1 summarizes the most important properties of *L*-proverbs and *F*-proverbs<sup>17</sup> (Permjakov, 1979: 122).

	Text properties			Component properties				
	1	2	3	1	2a	2b	3	4
	Possibility of transferred interpretation with direct components present	Possibility of direct interpretation with transferred components present	Overall meaning always metaphoric	All components can be direct	All components can be metaphoric	Metaphoric transfer	Metaphoric + non-metaphoric transfer	Obligatory presence of direct component
<i>L-proverb</i>	+	+	–	+	–	+	–	–
<i>F-proverb</i>	+	–	+	–	+	–	–	+

Table 4.1. Text and component properties of proverbs

The word *apple*, however (by default denoting a round fruit with red, yellow, or green skin, firm yellow-white flesh and little pips

inside), remains to denote this fruit and not, for example, a pear, independent of the fact if an apple denoted by this word falls far from a tree or not, unless this word occurs, for example, in a proverbial sentence like *The apple does not fall far from a tree*, i.e., when used as a proverb, to refer to a situation which has nothing to do with apples. It is thus the use of the proverb as a whole, which turns the overall meaning out to be proverbial, and only *a posteriori*, i.e., as a consequence of proverb usage, its individual components may turn out to be figurative, and then we can say something about the figurative status of their components in their intra-textual interrelations.

Starting the analysis from individual words may be an interesting occupation for linguists and folklorists, who are interested in theoretical possibilities. It may also be a necessary procedure in case of unknown proverbs (in this case representing a task to be solved, in this respect similar to riddling processes), or when either a proverb user or a scholar is concerned with proverbs from a culture other than the one s/he is enculturated in. Yet, there is no reason to assume this to be the standard direction of the genesis of proverbs' figurative meanings; rather, knowledge about proverb usage (including internalized about previous usages) in terms of cultural (paremiological) competence seems to play the crucial role. Researchers, oscillating between participation and observation, may eventually forget about this, in this case running into to a methodological trap known by the name of *metagenetic fallacy*.

The lessons to be learnt from these observations are manifold. First, it is obvious that *component-whole* strategies may exist, but that they may differ for ordinary users and analytical researchers. Moreover, and maybe more importantly, they may differ across users, depending on familiarity with a given proverb. In this context, the status of individual tropes is not independent of the status of the proverbial whole; but it would be wrong to assume that the components' status determines the status of the whole – rather, the status of the whole determines the components' status, which then can be understood to stand in specific intra-proverbial interrelations.

This concerns not only, of course, the fact that we are generally concerned with a trope, and not only can eventually determine a specific kind of trope, but also its further semantic inter-

pretation: when used as a proverb as, e.g., in the proverbial sentence *A rolling stone gathers no moss*, individual component like *rolling*, *stone*, or *moss* may turn out to be used figuratively, but how rolling is interpreted (desirable flexibility and diligence, or hyperactivity?), if semantic features of *stone* are activated or not, or if *moss* is understood to be something like *material wealth* or a i.e., desirable to be obtained, or rather avoided,<sup>18</sup> depends, first of all, not on lexical semantic processes, but on the overall paremic meaning, concerning the proverb's overall relation to the denoted (extra-linguistic) segment of reality, which plays the crucial role in this respect.

As a result, it turns out that problems of proverb semantics obviously cannot be solved without reference to some kind of extensional semantics (i.e., taking into account, in one way or another, extra-proverbial reality), and that some concept is needed for what has repeatedly been termed the *proverbial whole*, the *abstract proverb idea*, or the *paremic information beyond the proverb text as such*. In other words: as it is admitted that a proverb contains paremic information beyond the linguistic information given in the text (and that this additional information is not only provided ad hoc by verbal co-texts or situational contexts, but is part of cultural memory at large, based on previous textual and pragmatic experience), no componential semantic description will arrive at an adequate description of proverb meaning; as a consequence, paremiology is in need of having (a) to define referential aspects of proverb usage, and (b) to discuss how this additional information can be semantically described and if a special meta-language is needed for this description. For this purpose, a short theoretical discussion of semiotic foundations seems to be necessary.

#### **6. Sign Concepts: System-based vs. Process-oriented Semiotics**

In most sign concepts, particularly those used in the field of linguistics, and here first of all those which feel obliged, in one way or another, to the Saussurean tradition, a sign is understood as a binary relation between a signifying expression and a signified content<sup>19</sup>, as illustrated in Figure 4.1:

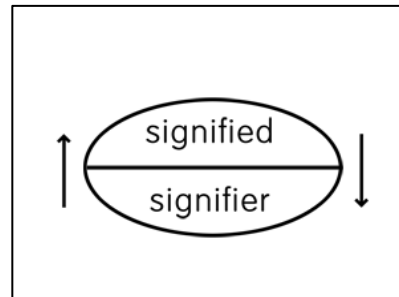


Figure 4.1. Bilateral sign concept

In this framework, a sign is considered to be an element of (or belong to) a given sign system, its meaning depending on its relation to (or rather difference from) the other signs of that system. On the basis of the sign's differential relations, the denotative level of signification is determined as the basis of any sign process, from which more complex relations are possible in two directions: either towards a meta-linguistic or towards a connotative sign. In the first case, the combined expression and content planes of a given (denotative) sign serve as the content of a meta-linguistic sign; in the second case, expression and content of the denotative sign function as the expression of a connotative sign. This approach goes back to Danish linguist Hjelmslev's ideas in his *Outline of Glossematics* (1957). It was later popularized by scholars such as Roland Barthes, who applied this concept not only to individual signs, but transferred it to texts (e.g., myths), using *text* in the broad semiotic meaning of this term, not restricting it to verbal texts, treating them as super-signs as outlined above. Usually, both processes are depicted separately; as compared to this, Figure 4.2 is an attempt to represent both levels simultaneously.

As can easily be seen, in this concept the question of an adequate meta-language is complicated by the fact that the meaning of a connotative sign, like that of a denotative, can only be described by meta-linguistic procedures. A crucial question thus is if that meta-language which covers the first (denotative) level of meaning, can (or should) also cover the second (connotative) level of meaning, or if special meta-language is needed for each of them.

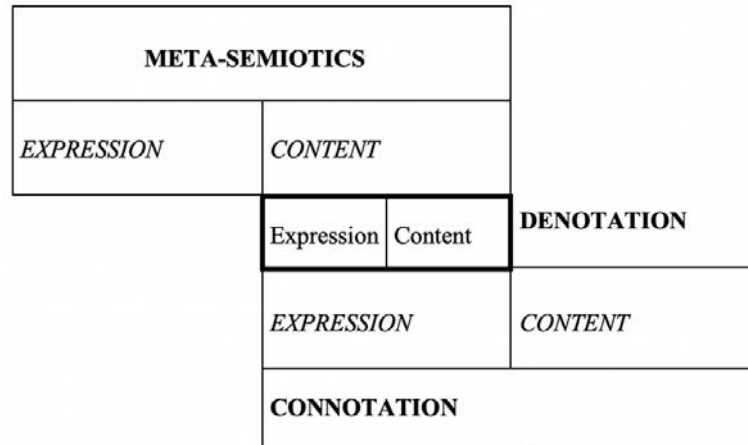


Figure 4.2. Simultaneous representation of both levels of sign

Moreover, such a scheme is almost perfectly suited to evoke objections from a theoretical point of view for other reasons:

- a) it includes only two levels of signification, not taking into consideration the possibility that there might be multiple levels in the process of meaning generation;
- b) it appears to operate on both levels of signification with fixed assignments between expression and content, which may not be less relevant in semiotic reality;
- c) it seems to suggest the possibility of a strict distinction between denotation and connotation, neglecting fluent transitions between both;
- d) it gives rise to the impression that we might be concerned with an allegedly successive generation of connotative meaning, implying the need of a literal reading of the denotative meaning first, ignoring the option that the connotative meaning might be accessed directly, leapfrogging the denotative one.

Further objections might come not only from post-structuralist and deconstructivist positions, but from a process-oriented semiotic perspective as well. As compared to system-based approaches, rooting in the Saussurean tradition, process-oriented approaches, particularly in the tradition of Charles S. Peirce<sup>20</sup>,



are principally dynamic: semiosis here is characterized by signs principally referring to other signs, the process of meaning generation thus turning out to be, theoretically, an infinite regress. In this respect, Peirce's 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas meet current post-structuralist and deconstructivist ideas: not only is the assumption of a fixed relation between signifying and signified repealed, also becomes the strict separation of denotative and connotative structures of signification void. Whereas such views thus rub theoretical salt into the wounds of methodological shortcomings of structuralist approaches, they are not compatible with practical needs to describe meanings, e.g., for a lexicographic or, in our case, paremiographic purposes. In a way, they even seem to be inconsistent with the long and productive traditions in these fields, as insufficient, unsatisfactory or *authoritative* as the attribution of allegedly fixed meanings may seem to (post)modern theorists.

Such theoretical discussions must be as strange to paremiographer and paremiologists, striving for semantics descriptions of proverbs, as is the assumption of "invariant meanings" for contemporary post-structuralist and deconstructivist semiotic approaches. In this respect, it is important to note an essential difference between the original Peircean concept and these *modern* ideas: in contrast to current approaches, which see the principally infinite regress as an absolute and indispensable principle, the possibility to communicate is ensured in Peirce's pragmatic approach by the circumstance that at the end of the theoretically infinite regress in semiosis, there stands what he termed a final *logical interpretant*, which does not finish, but interrupt the potentially infinite semiosis.<sup>21</sup>

As compared to the system-bound bilateral sign concept above, process-oriented semiotics thus might eventually provide an alternative theoretical, but obviously impractical basis; this approach might also, under certain conditions, seem to be not fully in contrast to meaning descriptions in terms of a culturally accepted consensus. In this respect, one should not forget that although each process of meaning generation is in principle an individual act of meaning generation and interpretation, in case of proverbs we are specifically concerned with collectively or culturally conventionalized and agreed-upon meanings. This view would not claim such culturally accepted meanings, or their

descriptions, to be fixed, obligatory once and for all; rather, taking into account individual proverb use, all factors of semantic indefiniteness pointed out above would persist, the meaning description thus turning out to be exactly that semantic potential it has been postulated to be above. Seen from this perspective, connotative meanings and their semantic descriptions thus

- would not be confined to two meanings, or levels of meaning, but include possibly multiple planes, of which the denotative and the connotative ones are those which most likely to incorporate inter-subjective consensus;
- would not imply any assumption as to successive stages in comprehension processes, i.e. they would not make, for example, any predictions as to some stepwise succession as, e.g., in terms of a denotation-before-connotation approach;
- would not go along with the authoritative claim to represent the only, true or ultimate meaning; rather it would be understood to be as one of many possible meanings in the course of an eventually longer (and theoretically infinite) chain of meanings;
- would represent some kind of temporary snapshot, subject to diachronic changes, rather than eternal truth;
- would remain to have the status of a semantic potential, along with other elements of semantic indefiniteness as acknowledged in the field of paremiology.

Under these conditions, semantic concepts distinguishing between a denotative and a connotative plane of signification might be unfettered from structuralist restrictions without at the same time forfeiting the chance to describe meanings which lend themselves to inter-subjective consensus within a given culture, despite all potentiality and tentativeness. The remaining methodologically crucial question how paremiologists can provide reliable semantic descriptions is a process which includes two different aspects: (a) insight into proverbs meanings, and (b) their meta-linguistic description. Both issues have been dealt with before: on the one hand, the inevitable oscillation between (intrinsic) participation and (extrinsic) observation, on the other hand, the choice of concrete meta-language in the process of finding a balance between specificity and generality.

Attempts to avoid getting lost in a circle of arguments and counter-arguments have referred to the above-mentioned concept of connotative semiotics, defining the proverb as a connotative semiotic super-sign. One of the first to apply this concept to proverbs was Canadian anthropologist Crépeau, referring to a rather peripheral remark by Greimas (1970: 310), seeing proverbs as *connotative elements* [*éléments connotés*]: “On the first level, signification is determined by denotation, i.e., by an immediate (albeit arbitrary) relation between designating and designated. On the second level, signification is determined by connotation, i.e., by a mediated relation between connotating and connotated” (Crépeau, 1975: 288). Crépeau was not the first to propagate this concept: with explicit regard to proverbs Russian scholar Čerkasskij (1978) had already promoted this idea some years before him, assuming that the aggregate of expression and content is but the verbal realization on the linguistic level, at the same time representing the substance of expression for the supra-linguistic semiotic level of an *inhomogeneous* text, in which more than one sign system is simultaneously operative. In this context, Čerkasskij made an important distinction: according to him, a sentence such as *The apple does not fall far from the tree* is the complex sign to denote a particular, individual situation, of one may say that the text represents a verbal model of that situation; as a proverb, however, it serves as a sign not of an individual situation, but of a *class of situations*, and thus serves not (only) as a primary, but as a secondary modeling system.

Illustrating the application of these ideas to the concept of connotative semiotics outlined above results the graphical representation depicted in Figure 4.3.

Both Čerkasskij and Crépeau thus, independent of each other, developed similar ideas, although with slightly different (not necessarily contradictory) foci as to the conclusions drawn: whereas Čerkasskij paved the way for model-oriented interpretations, Crépeau emphasized the importance of analogy – two interpretations which do not necessarily contradict each.

### 7. *Logics and Analogies*

Crépeau (1975) illustrated the distinction between two levels of signification, and the importance of analogy, referring to the following proverb: *Dog of the king – king of the dogs*. If the im-

plicit analogy, so his argument, were to be determined on the basis of the first level of signification only, one would arrive at an absurd formulation like *Dog : King :: King : Dog*. In fact, however, we are rather concerned with a different analogy, which may be expressed in terms of *King's Dog : Other Dogs :: King : Dog*. Crépeau's considerations are relevant in several respects, not only with regard to the important distinction of two levels of signification. They also deserve special mention here because they introduce the important concept of analogy,<sup>22</sup> which opens the doors in two directions: first, they allow for the conceptual integration with attempts to logically formalize proverbial structures; and second, they can perfectly be combined with theoretical concepts distinguishing different types of situation, relevant in context of the proverb and its usage. Both lines shall briefly be outlined here, starting with those attempts concerned with logical modelings of proverbial structures.

	<b>1. Expression</b>	<b>2. Content</b>	
<b>Linguistic</b>	<b>3. Denotation</b> <i>Linguistic (Super-)Sign</i>		<b>Paremic</b>
	<b>I. EXPRESSION</b>	<b>II. CONTENT</b>	
	<b>III. CONNOTATION</b> <i>Proverb (Paremia)</i>		

Figure 4.3. Application of Čerkasskij's and Crépeau's ideas to the concept of connotative semiotics

Earlier works in this direction, including those from Klaus (1964) or Kanyó (1981), focused on the level of denotation only; moreover, they tended to neglect important differences between phrasemes, idioms, and proverbs. As compared to this, Krikmann (1984) took into account the distinction of both levels of signification, and presented a coherent concept with a theoreti-

cally substantiated distinction between phraseological and paremiological entities. This distinction is based on the fundamental juxtapositions of phraseological information ( $P_x$ ) and paremic information ( $P_x \supset Q_x$ ), on the one hand, and existential ( $\exists_x$ ) and universal ( $\forall_x$ ) quantification (*there exists* and *for all*), on the other.<sup>23</sup>

In detail, it is a matter of scholarly tradition, of course, how the resulting categories may terminologically be distinguished from each other, and how they are logically symbolized. In any case, three kinds of basic categories<sup>24</sup> result from the above distinctions:

Category	Logical formulation	Type
I	$\exists_x (x = a)(P_x)$ or $\exists_{x_i} (P_x)$	Phraseme
II	$\exists_x (x = a)(P_x \supset Q_x)$ or $\exists_{x_i} (P_x \supset Q_x)$	Proverbial phrase / saying
III	$\forall_x (P_x \supset Q_x)$	Proverb

Items to be classified as phrasemes thus are characterized by existential quantification and ask for the choice of an individual argument (denoted as  $x = a$ , or  $x_i$ ) complementing the phraseological information  $P_x$  as, e.g., in expressions such as *to spill the beans*, or *to bury the hatchet*, linguistically resulting in an expression such as *\*Peter spilled the beans*. As compared to this, proverbial phrases such as *to put the cart before the horse* or *to set a fox to keep the geese* would also be related to existential quantification with an individual argument, but – in contrast to phrasemes – contain paremic information ( $P_x \supset Q_x$ ), that is, concern the relation between two concepts and/or the attribution of a property to (at least) one of them. Finally, proverbs are by definition complete propositions, prototypically represented by items such as *The apple does not fall far from the tree* or *Water always flows downhill*, as heterogeneous as these may two examples may seem to appear at first sight; in this respect, it is important to note that proverbs are logically, but not necessarily grammatically complete statements, universal quantification being obligatory and characteristic for them from a logical perspective.<sup>25</sup>

Items of all three classes have partly been dealt with by different disciplines: phrasemes and proverbial sayings have been in the focus of phraseology, or idiomatics, the lacking distinction between these two classes being favored by the fact that, in lan-

guages like English, they have been sub-summarized under the common term *idiom* without further distinction. Proverbial sayings and proverbs, as compared to this, have been studied by paremiology, the group of proverbial sayings thus having received scholarly attention from both fields.

One of the reasons for these disciplinary overlappings is of course the existence of fluent transitions between phrasemes and proverbial sayings as well as between the latter and proverbs. But such zones of possible interferences, which eventually make the attribution to one of the categories difficult, may also be related to differences in meta-language. Expressions such as *a wolf in sheep's clothing* or *to make a mountain out of a molehill* may, on the one hand, be paraphrased mono-lexically (e.g. in terms of *pretender*, *hypocrite*, *pharisee*, or *exaggerate*, *overemphasize*, respectively), resulting in the perception of one concept only; on the other hand, they may also be interpreted to explicitly relate two concepts with each other (e.g., something *small* and *unimportant* vs. something *big* and *important*, or *peaceful looks* vs. *dangerous character*, etc.), thus the relation between two different concepts tending to being focused. By way of a pragmatic solution, it may seem reasonable, from a semiotic point of view, to consider such items to represent some kind of phraseo- paremiological homonyms (Grzybek & Eismann, 1994).

Quite obviously, the distinctions discussed here concern both proverbs' textual surface (i.e. the denotative level of signification) and the meta-linguistic modeling of their connotative meaning structures; in this case, the concrete attribution to one of the categories again depends on specifics of usage, rather than on textual characteristics only. Usage, however, now concerns not so much situational circumstances, but first and foremost cognitive processes, the relevant question concentrating on the point if a user tends to see the items verbalized in the given phraseo- paremiological expression to represent an individual concept or a specific relation between concepts – a task not only for the disciplines of phraseology and paremiology, but first and foremost for psycholinguistics, which might find a promising field of research here, using more refined theoretical distinctions than has hitherto been the standard.

Despite a number of open questions and unsolved problems outlined above, we can thus return to Crépeau's conclusion that a

proverb's paremic meaning results from the structural integration of two levels of signification, which in general way can be represented in terms of the logical formula  $A : B :: C : D$ .<sup>26</sup>

### 8. Analogy, Double Analogy, and the Concept of Situativity

This analogy should not be confounded, however, with the analogical processes involved in proverb usage, as pointed out by folklorist Peter Seitel in a number of papers, in which he suggested a useful heuristic model (Seitel, 1969; 1972). Seitel's schema is based on the central assumption that the situation in which a proverb is used (the *interaction situation*) is of course not identical with the situation verbally represented in and by the proverb text (the *proverb situation*), and that both of them are not identical with the situation the proverb refers to<sup>27</sup>, i.e., the situation to which it is intended to be applied (the *reference situation*).<sup>28</sup> According to Seitel, proverb usage is thus related to two distinct, though closely related processes: (i) the process of relating proverb situation to reference situation, and (ii) the speech act of applying the proverb in an interaction situation. This resulting differentiation is illustrated in Figure 4.4.

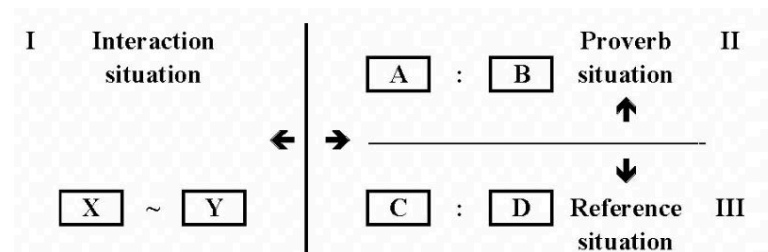


Figure 4.4. Basic distinction of three types of situation involved in proverb usage

As can be seen, proverb usage thus is related to two distinct though closely related processes: (a) the speech act of applying a proverb in a given interaction situation<sup>29</sup>, and (b) the process of relating proverb situation to reference situation. Concentrating on the second process, Seitel sees it as an analogy between the relationship of entities of the proverb situation and entities of the reference situation, which he expresses in terms of  $A : B :: C : D$  (Figure 4.4).

Quite obviously, the situational schema refers to the first, denotative level of the *proverb situation* (i.e. the proverb text), ignoring the existence of two levels of signification outlined above and the structural analogy resulting from it. In fact, we thus seem to be concerned with two different analogies which; unfortunately, both of them have been symbolized in an identical manner (i.e., by way of  $A : B :: C : D$ ), what may give rise to difficulties when attempting to integrate both views. In fact, such attempts, as e.g. suggested by Grzybek (1984a: 235), have not always been correctly understood (Honeck, 1997), last not least due to the fact that identical symbols have been used to refer to different things; as a consequence, it seems reasonable to explicate the argumentation stepwise again.

For the purpose of the necessary integration of both approaches, it seems first reasonable to maintain the symbolization  $A : B$  for the denotative signification of the proverb situation, and to replace Crépeau's symbols for the second level of signification (i.e.,  $C : D$ ) by the symbolic notation of  $p : q$ ; the structural analogy outlined by Crépeau would thus be symbolized as  $A : B :: p : q$ . Under this condition, the extra-linguistic reference situation can be symbolized as  $C : D$ , as in Seitel's schema; and since it is rather the paremic meaning of the second (connotative) level of signification, which is related to the reference situation, the analogy outlined by Seitel might be then symbolized as  $p : q :: C : D$ . All in all, this would result in the double analogy  $A : B :: p : q :: C : D$ , as suggested by Grzybek (1984a), and as illustrated in Figure 4.5.

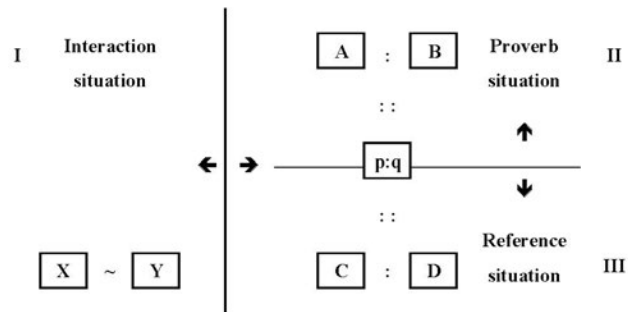


Figure 4.5. Double analogy in proverb usage



Although this schema, attempting to integrate two different concepts, pays due attention to the processes involved, it has later turned out that it needs some additional specification and modification (Grzybek, 1998; 2000;2007; Chłosta & Grzybek, 2005), a major problem to be seen in the (at least implicit) identification of two abstraction results, which de facto are not identical. This becomes evident from a closer look at model-theoretical concepts, in line with modern paremiological ideas, which have emphasized the important role of models and modeling inherent in proverbs and proverb usage. Given a principally infinite set  $S = \{P_{1,2,3,\dots}\}$  of individual proverbs (i.e., of proverb texts), and given a principally infinite set  $R = \{RS_{1,2,3,\dots}\}$  of (possible) reference situations to which any one  $P$  of the proverbs may refer, all those proverbs from  $S$ , which express one and the same meaning, can be considered to be variants, or variations<sup>30</sup>, of one and the same proverb invariant, or *model situation*; and all those individual reference situations  $RS$  from  $R$ , to which a given proverb (or one of its variants, or variations) may refer to can be considered to be some situational class, or type, which is represented in terms of a *situation model*. These assumptions can be illustrated as follows:<sup>31</sup>

$P_{1,2,3,\dots,n}$ ↘ ↓ ↙	≡	[Proverb variations, variants]
$P$ invariant	≡	[Model]
		⇕
$RS$ invariant	≡	[Model]
↖ ↑ ↗		
$RS_{1,2,3,\dots,n}$	≡	[Situational variants]

At closer sight, we rather seem to be concerned with two different abstraction processes: first, it has been argued, a general (paremic) meaning is abstracted from the denotative text of the *proverb situation*, and the term *model situation* has been suggested to denote it; and second, the individual and unique *reference situation* as a situational *token* a proverb refers to must be sub-categorized under, or attributed to a general *type* (or class) of situations, which might be termed *situation model*. The resulting schema might thus be illustrated as in Figure 4.6:

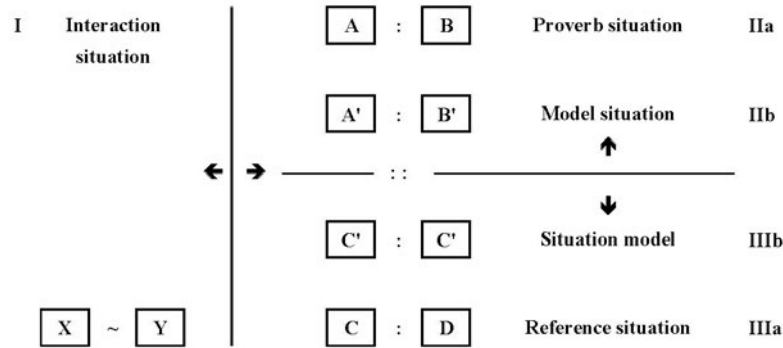


Figure 4.6. Additional distinctions of proverbial situation types

The schema represented in Figure 4.6 does not contain (any more) the previous (at least implicitly contained) assumption of a single abstraction process, represented above by the relation  $p : q$  (Figure 4.5). Rather, Figure 4.6 expresses the idea that we are concerned with two (different) abstraction processes.<sup>32</sup>

Comparing the basic implications of the conceptions illustrated in Figs. 5 and 6, one may say that the relation  $p : q$  is related to the proportional analogy of  $A' : B' :: C' : D'$ , which might as well be expressed in terms of the relation of two distinct sets of related objects, i.e.:  $\{R_1(A', B')\} R \{R_2(C', D')\}$ . Seen from this perspective,  $p : q$  would but express the ground of the similarity between two relations of the sets  $(A', B')$  and  $(C', D')$ , along with the assumption of at least one common feature between these sets, determining in what respect(s)  $A'$  is to  $B'$  (as  $C'$  is to  $D'$ ), the feature(s) resulting from an interpretative process. In other words, if (and only if), within a process of proverb usage, such a proportional analogy is drawn, on the basis of and resulting from some interpretative process, one can speak of successful proverb usage.

However, although this schema is much more elaborated and differentiated, it still contains a major problem, primarily to be seen in the alleged symmetry it expresses: this symmetry is, however, but a final state of successful proverb usage, and it might give rise to the (wrong) assumption that one might reliably

arrive at the abstract meaning (i.e., the model situation) starting from a proverb's verbal surface, or without taking account of the reference situation (or rather the situation model related to it). Abstracting proverb meaning from the verbal surface of a proverb's text seems to be possible, particularly to persons enculturated in a given culture; after all, semantic potential and indefiniteness are increasingly reduced by any further (successful) proverb usage. Actually, however, such interpretations are based on previous encounters and experiences with usages of the given proverb – de facto, they are (more or less) reliable only a posteriori, knowing all (pragmatic and semantic) conditions and restrictions of usage and reference, that is, only if both some situation model and some model situation have repeatedly been related to each other. As a matter of fact, even paremiologists may fall (and have repeatedly fallen) into this meta-genetic trap, interpreting proverb texts by way of a (conscious or subconscious, correct or incorrect) transfer and extrapolation of proverb knowledge from their own culture(s).

Figure 4.7 is an attempt to schematically represent not only the synchronous final state, but the process of model generation in its genesis.

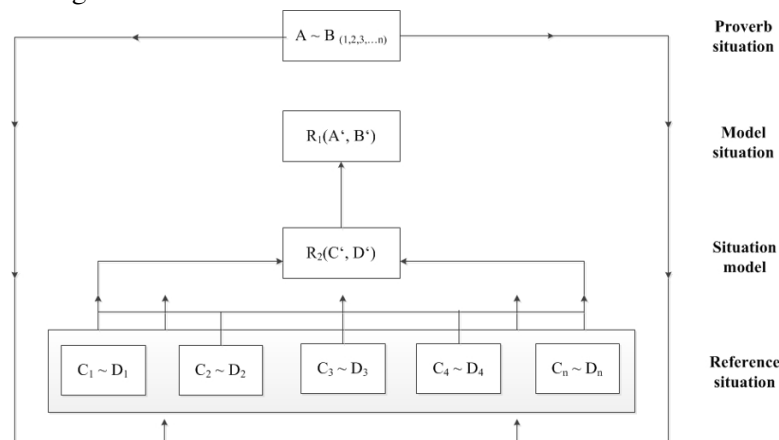


Figure 4.7. Genesis of proverb meaning – integration of heterogeneity, polyfunctionality, and polysemanticity

This schema illustrates, among others, that a semantic interpretation (and classification) of proverbial utterances is not reliably possible without knowledge of the culturally accepted contexts and admitted reference situations (i.e., the situation models). It also illustrates the close interrelation between pragmatics and semantics, emphasizing that the reliable generation of a model situation is impossible without the (repeated) exposure to adequate reference situation, i.e., the without repeated processes of referentialization (or the semiotically mediated knowledge about them).

Referring to the model-theoretic assumptions dealt with above, it is thus possible to derive an important aspect of a proverb definition in general, which might be phrased as follows:

*A proverb is a model of some situation denoted by it, if – eventually within a given INTERACTION SITUATION (I) – such a MODEL SITUATION (IIb) can be derived from a given PROVERB SITUATION (IIa), that stands in isological relation to some SITUATION MODEL (IIIb), derived from a concrete REFERENCE SITUATION (IIIa) and eventually previous ones.*

Given these assumptions, it is obvious that for participants of a given culture, scholars of paremiology among them, the description of model situation and situation model seemingly coincide or are identical – in principle they are, however, heuristically speaking, two faces of a double-faced coin called *successful proverb usage*. The illustration in Figure 4.7 does not only make it clear that it is not, or not necessarily, possible to derive the abstract proverb meaning from its verbal surface form; it also makes clear that a semantic description cannot be based on verbal information alone.

As a consequence, it seems plausible to claim that a semantic description – and, as a consequence, of semantic classification – of proverbs ultimately asks for the description of situations, or of model situations, to be more exact. The concentration on modeled situation for the semantic classification has extensively been discussed by Permjakov whose conception still today provides one of the most elaborate systems for the semantic classification of proverbs.

### **9. From Proverb Semantics to Semantic Proverb Classification**

In his *Grammar of Proverbial Wisdom*, Permjakov (1979: 317) claims proverbs to be “signs and at the same time models of various typical situations”. Consequently, he postulates that “a classification of the situations themselves” has to be worked out, if one wants to categorize proverbs on the basis of their meanings (Permjakov 1979: 306). Since the distinctions suggested above were not made at the time when Permjakov developed his ideas, his notion of *situation* was not as specified as in the differentiations above. On the one hand, this has led to a variety of misunderstandings and misinterpretations of his ideas (Schveiger, Kanyó, Švydkaja and others), which can and need not be discussed here in detail (see Grzybek 1984a); on the other hand, this led to inconsistencies in Permjakov’s own classifications, some of which were rather based on the denotative, rather than the connotative level of signification (i.e. on the proverb situation, not the model situation).

Nevertheless, given the descriptions above, Permjakov’s claim out to be completely reasonable and still today of high relevance, as long (or as soon) as we take into consideration neither the proverb situations nor the extra-linguistic reference situations as the basis for the semantic description and classification of proverbs, but the model situations of the second level of signification. With this in mind, it is a tempting question to ask, which situations, or what kind of situations, are modelled in proverbs, and how these situational models can be described.

Permjakov’s approach can be seen as a specification of what has been symbolized as the relation  $R(A', B')$  above. From his early writings on, Permjakov distinguished four different *Higher logico-semiotic invariants*, as he termed them. Two of them model the relationships between objects or between objects and their properties, the other two are more complex, modeling the dependence between the relationships of things and the relationships of their properties. In detail, we obtain the following four invariants:

Type	Description	Example
I A	Every object has a particular quality or property.	<i>Water always flows downhill.</i> <i>Each flower has its own flavor.</i>
I B	If there is one object, there is (will be) another object.	<i>No smoke without fire.</i> <i>Rain is followed by sunshine.</i>
II A	The relationships between the properties of objects depend on the relationships between the objects themselves.	<i>Like father, like son.</i> <i>The cat's death is holiday for the mice.</i>
II B	The interrelationships of objects depend on (the existence of) particular properties of these objects.	<i>If two quarrel, the third will laugh.</i> <i>A sparrow in the hand is worth two in the bush.</i>

The logico-semiotic classification is more complex than the examples above can show, and the system has been elaborated over the years by Permjakov himself; in its latest version in the *Grammar of Proverbial Wisdom*, each of the four types above is sub-divided into seven further categories (and allowing for further specifications and sub-classifications).

This logico-semiotic categorization is then necessarily complemented by a thematic classification: analyzing three proverbs such as (i) *No smoke without fire*, (ii) *No rose without thorns*, and (iii) *No river without bank*, all three would belong to invariant IA, each of them containing the statement that one of the two objects mentioned cannot exist without the second one. Still, the meanings of these three proverbs differ completely – the first (i) maintains that there can be no indication of an object unless the object itself exists; the second claims that there can be no good things without faults; and the third says that no whole can exist without any one of its obligatory parts. Consequently, a proverb's meaning is principally described by the two-fold reference: (a) to one of the logical categories, and (b) to a thematic pair (or a combination of pairs) such as *good – bad*, *cause – reason*, *hot – cold*, *male – female*, etc.), on the other.

The resulting proverbial model<sup>33</sup> may additionally be submitted to what Permjakov termed *paremio(logical) transformations*;

according to this view, the basic paremiological model like *Own is good* may be logically transformed in various ways, the results belonging to one and the same proverbial type; this concerns first-order transformations (*Own is bad*) as well as second-order transformations (*Foreign is bad*), from which a number of further subtypes may be derived. Within this framework, not only explicit negations (*The face is no index to the heart* vs. *The face is the index of the heart*; (Norrick, 1985: 162)) can be theoretically covered, but also proverbial synonyms (*Strike while the iron is hot* vs. *Make hay while the sun shines*) and antonyms (*Out of sight, out of mind* vs. *Absence makes the heart grow fond(er)*).

Permjakov's approach owes, of course, very much to structuralist approaches of the 1970s. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that, according to Permjakov, not more than 64 of such semantic oppositions – which are very similar to those found to be relevant in the semiotic analysis of culture in general –, are sufficient to describe ca. 97% of a culture's proverbial stock. Permjakov's system has suitably been called a *Mendeleevian Proverb Table*, and the question has been raised if his conception is kind of a *hocus pocus system* (Krikmann, 1971, Kuusi, (1972), comparing it to Kuusi's classificational schema as a *God's truth system*. Such a view might seem to be justified referring to Permjakov's claim to describe not only all actually existing, but also all possible (conceivable) proverbs with his model. The juxtaposition of these two kinds of system originates in linguistics, where it was brought into discussion by Householder (1952: 260): "On the metaphysics of linguistics there are two extreme positions, which may be termed (and have been) the 'God's truth' position and the 'hocus pocus' position. The theory of the God's truth linguists [...] is that language has a structure and the job of the linguist is (a) to find out what the structure is, and (b) to describe it [...]. The focus pocus linguist believes that a language (better, a corpus, since we describe only the corpus we know) is a mass of incoherent formless data, and the job of the linguist is somehow to arrange and organize this mass, imposing on it some structure [...]." It was Jakobson (1962: 276) who repeatedly pointed out the futility of such a controversy; Householder (1952: 260), too, admitted that ultimately it seems to be rather a question of ideological-philosophical differences in approaching

one and the same question, partially arriving at identical results, and confessed, “it may be that these two metaphysical viewpoints are in some sense equivalent.” The direct relevance of these observations for Permjakov’s and Kuusi’s models has been pointed out by Voigt (1977: 167): “Kuusi directly departs from the given material, and he tries to arrive at the same results as Permjakov has, with the help of the deductive method.”

As has been pointed out above, Permjakov’s notion of *situation* was not as specified as this has later been suggested. As a consequence, his own semantic classifications are not void of interpretations which to the first, denotative level of signification, rather than the second, connotative level, i.e., the proverb’s abstract meaning. In fact, his system might theoretically be used to describe both levels, although he ultimately had in mind the abstract *proverb idea* as a basis of his semantic classification. In illustrating the problem at stake with reference to but one example, it may be helpful, by way of a comparison, to refer to the Kuusi system (Lauhakangas, 2001). In the Lauhakangas-Kuusi system, the internationally broadly distributed proverb *One hand washes the other* would fall into the general category H *Social Interaction*, more specifically, category H3 (*Group Solidarity*), or H3A, respectively (*Solidarity to one’s own people*). Permjakov attributed it to the invariant IB (see above), and within it into a sub-category entitled *Tendency of things to be close to each other; Friendship – Hostility* (9LA), in combination with the semantic opposition of *Left – Right*; quite obviously, it is rather the concrete spatial relation of two hands, which is in the focus of this classification, both with regard to the logical and thematic classification. As compared to this, Grzybek and Chlosta (Grzybek & Chlosta, 2000), in their attempt to consequently apply Permjakov’s system to the second level of signification, suggest to attribute it to the sub-category *Existential dependence of a thing or an action on another one* (8KA) of invariant IB, combining it with the semantic pair *Action – Reaction*, *If there is an action, there is / will be a reaction*. As can be seen, no statement as to the quality of action or reaction is included into the model, what makes clear, how difficult it is to take account of possible culture-specific pragmatic restrictions: for cultures which would use this proverb to refer to good favors as a reaction to good favors only, the addition of the thematic pair *good – bad* might be



necessary. Quite evidently, this is related to the fact that semantic descriptions of proverbs – and neither Permjakov's nor Kuusi's systems are exceptions to this rule – principally cannot but provide metalinguistic descriptions of the given proverb's semantic potential in Krikmann's terms; further semantically relevant information – be that of functional, pragmatic, situational, deontic, modal, or other kind – at least to data cannot adequately be mapped onto the paremiological model.

It turns out that attention has to be paid to the important interdependence of three basic categories, which have been termed *polyfunctionality*, *polysemanticity*, and *heterosituativity* (Grzybek, 1984a). Whereas the concepts of *polyfunctionality* and *polysemanticity* refer to the fact that one and the same text may serve different functions and may represent different meanings, the concept of *heterosituativity* covers the fact that a proverb can convey different meanings, depending on the situation in which it is used. None of these three categories, which condition each other in one way or another, can be interpreted in isolation. And it seems to be for this specific interrelation that no ultimate meaning can ever be described to a particular proverb text.

On the one hand, this may sound like paremiological surrender; on the other hand, this corresponds to those degrees of semiotic freedom, necessary for successful proverb usages.

Systems like Permjakov's thus provide a way to theoretically describe and map the paradigmatic inventory of a culture's proverbial stock. In fact, this system is only partly deductively derived, consisting of a systematic extrapolation of initially inductive classifications; in semiotics, it has again been Charles S. Peirce who coined the term *abductive reasoning* to describe this scientific process, oscillating between induction and deduction. In our case, a paremiological system has resulted, in which the individual *slots* represent possibilities, which may be realized or not, within a given culture, thus also possibly containing so-called *empty cells* (as known in the field of phonology, as well), i.e. theoretical models for proverbial utterances, which are not even realized by concrete proverbs within a given culture.

### ***10. Theoretical and Empirical Paremiology and the Semiotics of Culture***

From the perspective of cultural semiotics, this opens new perspectives to study the (social and cultural) function of proverbs as a genre, allowing to ask the question, which proverbs are realized within a given culture, and which are not. In this respect, paremiology can immensely contribute to the more general study of culture from a semiotic point of view, or in a semiotic perspective.

But culture is a process, a synchronous snapshot, at best, being subject to constant changes. Searching an answer to the profile and size of a culture's proverbial stock, thus is dependent on the previous documentation of proverbs, which necessarily must represent some past, recent or not. Of course, proverbial stocks do not change within a day's time – trying to find an answer to the question outlined, and necessarily relying on (more or less) obsolete documentation, cannot be but paradigmatic by nature: the fact that a given proverb has been realized and documented within a given culture and thus has been part of it, does not mean that it is still used, and thus in function: after all, proverb collections consist of items which either may be current still today, or which were current in some past, but are not any longer, or even never have been used within the given culture, but translated from some other(s).

It is at this point, where empirical work comes into play – empirical paremiography as well as paremiology. Whereas empirical paremiography, in this context, contributes by way of collecting and documenting proverb usage, and the frequency of proverbs' occurrences (including the analysis of current corpora), empirical paremiology studies, by way of empirical methods, familiarity with proverbs, as an obligatory first step for further proverb-oriented studies. This is not the place to discuss relevant methods at some length here (see Chłosta & Grzybek 2004; Grzybek & Chłosta; 2009; Grzybek 2009; 2012a). Yet, Permjakov's attempts to empirically establish what he termed a *proverb minimum* deserves mention here, trying to find out, which proverbs are known by *all* members of a given culture or society. After Western readers were had been made acquainted with this approach (Grzybek, 1984b), which was first tested in 1991 with some language other than Russian (Grzybek, 1991), these ideas

were broadly propagated in paremiology (Mieder, 1992); since then, relevant methods have been tested and developed over the last decades, resulting in the modified basic question. As a result, the crucial guiding question of empirical paremiology, from a contemporary point of view, may be phrased as follows: “Which proverbs are known in what (verbal) form by which members of the given culture, and which collective overlaps and intersections exist with regard to proverb knowledge and familiarity?” (Grzybek, 2012a)

Given the assumption that proverbs represent no isolation genre in the semiotics of culture, but are closely interrelated with all other genres, deep insight can be gained into cultural mechanisms from a semiotic point of view. It should have become clear that theoretical as well as empirical works are necessary to provide a sufficiently broad picture, and that semiotic approaches are able to provide an adequate framework for any study in this direction.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Indirect speech acts, in the tradition of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), refer to the situation when someone, in a given communication, says one thing (the locutionary act), and means something different (or additional), thus performing an illocutionary act, which has some (perlocutionary) effect on someone else.

<sup>2</sup> This refers back, of course, to D. Hymes (1962) postulation of an *Ethnography of Speaking*, paradigmatically shifting the focus from *anthropological linguistics* to *linguistic anthropology*.

<sup>3</sup> Heterogeneous signs may of course not only simultaneously accompany, but also precede or succeed a given sign, thus implying syntactical sequentiality as outlined above.

<sup>4</sup> There is no need to enter a more detailed discussion here as to the semiotic status of phonemes, as the smallest linguistic units bringing about a change of meaning, or of morphemes, as the smallest grammatical units, or the smallest linguistic units bearing meaning.

<sup>5</sup> Later, Milner (1969) would elaborate on this observation, interpreting them as an intralingual, though intercultural phenomenon.

<sup>6</sup> In this respect, Norrick's (1985: 101) appeal to pay attention to these different kinds of tropes is important, although his assumption that no one has ever attempted to define or catalogue the types of figures proverbs contain commonly, is far from being correct, if one does not ignore older sources as, e.g., Klimenko (1946) detailed study of tropes in Russian proverbs.

<sup>7</sup> In linguistics and semiotics, different kinds of *motivation* have been distinguished, originally referring to Saussure's distinction of arbitrary and motivated

signs. In a more general sense, we are concerned with the derivation of form, meaning, function, usage, or historical development of simple or complex signs, on the basis of formal (morphological, syntactic, phonological, graphical), semantic, or sign-external aspects.

<sup>8</sup> Norrick uses both terms, obviously interchangeably, i.e., *literal reading* as well as *literal meaning*.

<sup>9</sup> The *literal* reading of the proverb *Like father, like son*, for example, would be *Father and son are alike*.

<sup>10</sup> At closer sight, even these demands are not met in Norrick's approach; after all, a standard proverb interpretation *Fear gives the ability to fly* of the proverb *Fear gives wings* (Norrick, 1985: 194) is more than far away from any kind of customary meaning, to give but one example.

<sup>11</sup> More specifically, depending on this relation, synecdochic, metonymic, metaphoric (and eventually further) types of proverbs may be distinguished – see e.g., Norrick (1985: 108).

<sup>12</sup> Although the *customary meaning* may eventually be described with terms from everyday language, this may not blind us to the fact that we are concerned with a different, meta-lingual function of language. The (meta-linguistic) description of a proverb's customary meaning and its literal reading may of course *coincide* formally, but not functionally, in this case both being but homonymous expressions. It is therefore profoundly misleading to speak of a coincidence between literal and customary meaning – a meta-language must principally not only have a logical lexicon not smaller than that of the object language, but it must also necessarily have variables belonging to a higher logical type than the variables of the object language. Thus, for both 'literal' and *figurative* proverbs the literal reading must differ from its meta-lingual description, and every change in the type of meta-linguistic description would let this conception collapse like a house of cards.

<sup>13</sup> A synoptic survey of Permjakov's conception can be found in his 1970 book *От поговорки до сказки*, which was translated into English in 1979 under the title of *From Proverb to Folktale*. However, his theory of proverbs was significantly elaborated upon in the 1970s and therefore is not contained in the English translation, which is obsolete, in this respect.

<sup>14</sup> Sometimes, such prognostic sayings have been termed *weather proverbs*, although the term *proverb* is reasonably better reserved for synthetic clichés.

<sup>15</sup> In one way or another, this concept thus is based on conventionalized meanings of lexical signs. This does bit exclude, of course, that one might artificially construe a (situative) context, in which a figurative interpretation of a prognostic saying might be possible; however, in this case we would not be concerned with an analytic cliché anymore, but with an instance of paremic homonymy.

<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, it is this GENERIC-SPECIFIC relation, which has been emphasized by cognitive linguists from the 1980s on (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson (1980), in context of a theory of metaphor, to be relevant for proverbs, too (e.g., Lakoff & Turner (1989 : 162). Notwithstanding the lack of empirical evidence, including the danger of overemphasizing subjective introspection (Gibbs et al. 1996), cognitivist linguistics has attracted much attention by phraseologists and paremiologists, ignoring the close resemblance of these ideas to Permjakov's linguistic and folkloristic ideas, as

pointed out by Krikmann (1984) in his critical review of the cognitivist approach. In this context, Krikmann suggests that the GENERIC-SPECIFIC metaphor might be better understood as a metonymy; this classification might be seen as a parallel to Norrick's (1985) classification of proverbs as *scenic species-genus synecdoches* – but in this case, the proverb as a genre would generally be concerned and not – as Norrick (2007: 389), basing his distinctions on the relation between 'literal' and customary meaning, sees it –, only a specific subtype of proverbs.

<sup>17</sup> 'Proverbial aphorisms' and 'proverbs proper' in Permjakov's terminology

<sup>18</sup> Lundberg (1958), Milner (1969).

<sup>19</sup> The fact of Saussure's psychological (or cognitive) definition of the sign and its components is not of primary concern here.

<sup>20</sup> Broadly speaking, in a Peircean framework, a sign process is a dynamic interaction of three components: the *representamen*, a functionally defined sign carrier, an *object*, and the *interpretant*, an interpreting consciousness. The *object* additionally is specified as an *immediate object* (as represented in the sign itself), and the *dynamic object* (only indicated by the sign, to be cognized by collateral experience only); similarly, different kinds of interpretants are distinguished, which need not be discussed here in detail. In any case, an interpretant must not be confused with the interpreter as the sign user.

<sup>21</sup> According to Peirce (Hartshorne & Weiss, 1931-1958), this logical interpretant is "what *would* finally be decided to be the true interpretation if consideration of the matter *were* carried so far as that an ultimate opinion *were* reached". The final interpretant thus ultimately is based upon some customary interpretive consensus, which in principle is only an ideal and can be achieved only by way of some (quasi-asymptotical) approximation.

<sup>22</sup> In this respect, one should well be aware of the fact that, logically speaking, analogy principally includes the relation between two ordered pairs (of terms or concepts); quite characteristically, the ancient Greek term *ἀναλογία* (*analogia*) originally meant proportionality, in the mathematical sense, and eventually was translated into Latin as *proportio* as a set of equations in which two relations are equated. There is no need to go into details here as to a discussion of analogy – after all, one may still today side with John Stuart Mill's (1843) wise words saying that "There is no word, which is used more loosely, or in a greater variety of senses, as Analogy" – Nevertheless, Crépeau may be seen fully right in arguing that proverbs need not necessarily be characterized by fully explicit four-term analogies.

<sup>23</sup> The background of these distinctions must be seen in philosophical and linguistic theory, where a proposition includes nomination, predication, junction, and quantification. In this context, nomination is a necessary condition for predication, the latter implying the attribution of a property to a subject (or object). Whereas phraseological information ( $P_x$ ) thus concerns nomination (which, grammatically speaking, is not restricted to nouns, but may comprise verbs, too), paremic information ( $P_x \supset Q_x$ ) contains, by definition, a predication, a proverb thus corresponding to a proposition, which may either refer to the relation between two (or more) objects, or to an object and (one of) its properties.

<sup>24</sup> It goes without saying that within each of these basic categories, a number of further subdivisions are possible and necessary.

<sup>25</sup> The fluent transitions from proverbial phrases to proverbs become most evident in verbal constructions like “One/You should (not) ...”.

<sup>26</sup> There is no need to deal here in detail with the circumstance that not in all proverbs, all terms of these relations must be explicitly expressed.

<sup>27</sup> A proverb may, of course, but need not refer to the situation in which it is used; but heuristically, both must be principally distinguished.

<sup>28</sup> Seitel’s original term *context situation* is avoided here and replaced by the term *reference situation*, since *context* might erroneously be applied the interaction situation. Quite evidently, a proverb may refer to that situation, in which it is used, but this is not necessarily the case; as a consequence, it is better to clearly (heuristically, conceptually, and terminologically) distinguish them.

<sup>29</sup> Here and throughout this text, particular forms of proverb usage as, e.g., in literary texts, will not specifically be dealt with.

<sup>30</sup> As to a more detailed distinction between the notions of *variant* and *variation* (see Grzybek et al., 1994; Grzybek, 2012b; Chłosta & Grzybek, 2005)

<sup>31</sup> Although sets *S* and *R* both are, in principle, infinite, a given individual’s proverb knowledge is, of course, characterized on the basis of a limited number of experiences with individual proverbs and situations, what is correspondingly symbolized.

<sup>32</sup> It may be appropriate to bring up some restrictions and caveats here. First, the assumption of two processes of abstraction does not necessarily imply that these take place simultaneously during any cognitive processing of a proverb; also, there is no need to discuss here in detail the complex (and controversially seen) interrelations between abstraction and analogy, i.e. to analyze the role of analogical reasoning in abstraction, or abstraction processes in analogy processing.

<sup>33</sup> Only in Permjakov’s later writings, like his *Grammar of Proverbial Wisdom* (1979) the model is a two-fold complementation of separate logical and thematic components, whereas in his earlier writing (as his *From Proverb to Folk-Tale*, translated into English in 1979), both components were fused into logico-thematic classes.

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PILAR DE JAIME RUIZ AND JOSÉ MARÍA DE  
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## LA SALUD MENTAL EN LOS REFRANES JUDEO-SEFARDÍES

**Resumen:** Presentamos un estudio de carácter bibliográfico realizado sobre las principales colecciones de refranes recogidas desde finales del siglo XIX hasta hoy entre los descendientes de los judíos españoles que fueron expulsados en el año 1492. Tras emigrar y establecerse en diversos lugares del norte de África, Palestina, Turquía, orillas del mar Adriático, centro de Europa e incluso en América, esta población de desterrados supieron y tuvieron el gusto de conservar a lo largo de los siglos, junto a la lengua española que no han dejado de usar en el ámbito familiar, una notable selección de proverbios y refranes sobre los más diversos temas. Estrechamente relacionados con los refranes españoles del Renacimiento, nos hemos ocupado solamente sobre los que tratan de salud mental. Los mismos abordan la locura en general, forma de reconocerla, su carácter irreversible, actitud que debe adoptarse frente a la misma, inutilidad en general de los tratamientos, así como de algunas dolencias psíquicas concretas que logran identificarse. En cuanto a la terapia recomendada, como reflejo del pensamiento médico de la época, se basa en el aislamiento en los manicomios y castigos corporales para los casos más violentos.

**Palabras clave:** Etnopsiquiatría, Historia de la Psiquiatría, Judíos, Sefardíes, Paremiología, Refranes

### *Introducción*

#### *1. Judíos sefardíes*

El 31 de marzo de 1942, los Reyes Católicos dictaban una orden obligando a toda la población judía que residía en los reinos españoles a abandonarlos en el plazo improrrogable de cuatro meses. Podían llevar consigo todas sus pertenencias “salvo oro o la plata”. Así, con excepción de una exigua minoría que se convirtió al catolicismo y que siempre será acusada de practicar a escondidas el judaísmo, alrededor de 150.000 personas abandonaron

España para establecerse en diferentes lugares del norte de África, Palestina e Imperio Turco. Se trata de los sefardíes o sefarditas, es decir de los judíos originarios de Sefarad (España en hebreo). Sobre la tristeza que debieron sentir, sirva este mismo refrán sefardí que recomienda no hablar al judío del destierro o de su diáspora: “Que dizes al gidió de galút pesgado”.

Con el tiempo los principales asentamientos sefardíes se producirán sobre todo en Turquía y norte de África, también en Siria, Palestina, en las riberas del mar Adriático, centro de Europa, Francia, Rusia e incluso Inglaterra y continente americano. Los propios estudios paremiológicos utilizados en nuestra investigación, indican los lugares donde mejor se conservaba la lengua española.

Los judíos que a lo largo de la diáspora se fueron estableciendo en la península ibérica, durante la dominación musulmana hablaban generalmente el árabe. Pero, a medida que progresaba la reconquista cristiana, para adaptarse a las nuevas circunstancias y al ambiente que debían soportar a la fuerza, paulatinamente fueron adoptando la lengua castellana que hicieron suya durante varios siglos. En español escribían a mediados del siglo XIII médicos, filósofos, literatos y rabinos judíos, y a este idioma traducían obras árabes de controversia religiosa, cirugía, astronomía o de artes industriales. El uso del español estuvo tan generalizado que, en algunos lugares, llegó a reemplazar al hebreo (parcial o totalmente olvidado) incluso en las ceremonias religiosas.

Los judíos sefardíes desterrados que se asentaron en otros lugares de Europa, pronto adoptaron la lengua que se usaba cada territorio, pero los que lo hicieron en regiones de Oriente donde vivían sin mezclarse comunidades procedentes de Asia y de Europa, para entenderse entre sí y para comunicarse secretamente y facilitar sus tratos mercantiles, continuaron usando la vieja lengua española que también hablaban en el seno de sus hogares como una manifestación de cariño hacia la tierra donde nacieron.

Se trata de un español, o judeo-español como prefieren los filólogos, en su esencia tan arcaico y puro como la vieja lengua romance que llamamos “ladino”, cuajado de solecismos, palabras desusadas y giros arcaicos, que con el tiempo incorporó neologismos y extranjerismos. En suma, un castellano antiguo bastardeado por el roce durante siglos con el árabe, turco, griego, italiano y francés, repleto de viejos refranes, coplas y romances populares.

## 2. *Refranes médicos sefardíes*

Conscientes de la riqueza lingüística y cultural que encerraban estas comunidades judías que utilizaban todavía en sus conversaciones la vieja lengua sefardí, una serie de investigadores iniciaron a fines del siglo XIX una recogida sistemática de vocablos, refranes, coplas y otras formas de literatura popular en los principales asentamientos sefardíes que entonces existían. Fruto de estos trabajos son una serie de estudios sobre la lengua sefardí, con sus vocabularios y repertorios paremiales que constituyen las fuentes por nosotros consultadas.

Paralelamente se realizaron encuestas y consultas con las comunidades hablantes de esta lengua, conscientes de la importancia que tenía recuperar en breve plazo la mayor cantidad posible de información sobre las mismas. La situación política y social que por entonces se vivía en los territorios donde se asentaban estos judíos, presagiaba una rápida desaparición de la lengua sefardí ... e incluso de los mismos hablantes, como dolorosamente se confirmó unas décadas después.

Los refranes, sentencias, paremias o dichos populares, lo mismo que el resto de manifestaciones de la literatura popular, suelen tener un origen más o menos culto y, con el tiempo, cuando la experiencia confirma su valor y el pueblo decide hacerlos suyos, los introduce en sus conversaciones habituales facilitando así su difusión. En este sentido deben considerarse las paremias como una forma de sabiduría popular indiscutible, con la garantía que proporcionan siglos de uso continuado que hacen decir a los mismos sefarditas: “No ay refrán ke no sea verdadero” (Lévy, 1968: 174).

Repasando las colecciones consultadas, estimamos en más de tres mil el número de refranes sefarditas conocidos, de los cuales una quinta parte son verdaderamente originales para el refranero español, lo que indica una notable originalidad. Originalidad que se extiende a los refranes médicos en general y a los que se ocupan de asuntos psiquiátricos, tal como hemos podido confirmar en nuestros estudios sobre paremiología médica española. Por cierto que las propias sentencias sefardíes tienen un buen concepto de la capacidad intelectual de esta etnia: “Judío tonto no hay” (Saporta, 1957: 156).

La medicina que practican los judíos sefardíes, como los árabes o cristianos del Renacimiento, es un galenismo arabizado,

filosófico, con toques teológicos, cuyo mejor exponente es Avicena. Los judíos españoles trasladan a sus refranes los conocimientos médicos que tienen sobre cualquier tema. Con ironía festiva revelan los conocimientos empíricos del pueblo llano. Algunos de ellos, en el terreno también de la salud mental, tienen hoy vigencia por su carácter preventivo o por su buen sentido práctico.

Naturalmente, cuando decimos que los refranes reflejan la sabiduría popular de las gentes que los usan, no queremos decir que constituyan un cuerpo de doctrina sólido y preciso, imposible de encerrar en una frase o en unas pocas palabras, pero sí que recogen la opinión o el remedio puntual a determinadas dolencias del alma. Precisamente sobre estas sentencias hemos compuesto lo que podemos también llamar el Refranero psiquiátrico judeo-sefardí.

### ***Hipótesis y objetivos***

Cuando a finales del siglo XV fueron expulsados los judíos españoles, llevaron consigo una rica tradición oral que supieron conservar y transmitir de generación en generación. Desde finales del siglo XIX y durante la primera mitad del XX directamente de sus labios fueron recogidos sus refranes por investigadores que los publicaron en libros y artículos. Conscientes que los mismos constituyen un reflejo de la sabiduría popular, en este estudio de carácter bibliográfico nos planteamos como hipótesis general la posibilidad de averiguar si los conocimientos que encierran los refranes que tratan sobre cualquier aspecto de la salud mental constituyen un cuerpo sólido de saber psiquiátrico o bien un conjunto disperso de conocimientos. También confirmar la posible relación existente entre el refranero español y el sefardita, así como comprobar si el trauma de la expulsión tuvo algún reflejo en estos mismos refranes.

Para mejor desarrollar estas hipótesis, nos hemos planteado los siguientes objetivos:

1. Dentro de los refranes que se ocupan de la salud mental, conocer los asuntos que se tratan con más frecuencia.
2. Analizar las principales características que presentan las personas consideradas genéricamente tontas, bobas o simples.
3. Averiguar la actitud o el trato que las sentencias populares recomiendan aplicar a los enfermos mentales en toda su variada manifestación.



4. Aceptando la dificultad que existe para distinguir con claridad en los viejos refranes sefardíes los que se refieren a patologías mentales, tratar de reconocer algunas de ellas.
5. Conocer los tratamientos que la sabiduría popular aplicaba a determinadas dolencias psíquicas.

### ***Metodología***

Nuestro trabajo tiene un carácter bibliográfico para el que hemos seguido el siguiente método:

1. Recopilación y análisis de las principales colecciones de refranes sefardíes.
2. Selección y clasificación de los refranes que tratan sobre cualquiera de las diferentes facetas de la salud mental.
3. Estudio, análisis y exposición por temas de los refranes sefardíes que abordan las dolencias psíquicas.
4. Comparación entre refranes españoles y sefarditas que tratan sobre salud mental, para apreciar las posibles diferencias y similitudes.

Lo mismo que hacen todos los autores consultados, incluso aquellos que publican sus investigaciones en lengua inglesa, los refranes sefardíes los expresamos tal como aparecen en sus colecciones, es decir, en idioma español antiguo mezclado con vocablos procedentes de otras lenguas, a continuación de cada uno va la cita correspondiente y, con el objeto de facilitar su comprensión, añadimos una breve explicación de su significado.

### ***Materiales***

La base de nuestro estudio la constituye los estudios paremiológicos que reflejamos en la bibliografía, siendo especialmente útiles los siguientes que indicamos por orden cronológico con el número entre paréntesis de refranes sefardíes sobre salud mental que contienen:

- Haim Bidjarano (1885): 155 (7) refranes orientales
- Meyer Kayserling (1889): 767 refranes de Servia, Bulgaria, Turquía y Holanda
- Raymond Foulché-Delbosc (1895): 1.313 refranes de Constantinopla, Andrianópolis y Salónica
- Abraham Galante (1902): 462 refranes de Rodas

- José Benoliel (1927): 178 (15) refranes y numerosas locuciones recogidas en Marruecos
- Henry V. Besso (1935): 220 (12) refranes de la zona de Salónica
- Mosco Galimir (1951): 646 (31) refranes sefarditas
- Alberto Hemsí (1954): 220 (10) refranes de Alejandría publicados por J. Subira
- Enrique Saporta y Beja (1957): 1.844 (96) refranes, casi todos de Salónica
- Denah Lida (1958): 300 (11) refranes
- Isaac Jack Lévy (1969): 765 (10) refranes recogidos en Nueva York, Atlanta y otras ciudades de EEUU
- Zamila Kolonomos (1976): 1.187 (38) refranes y dichos sentenciosos de Bosnia y Hercegovina tomados de diversos manuscritos que se hallan en el Jewish Historical Museum of Belgrado, siendo los más importantes los de Samuel B. Pinto, Daniel Danon y Avram Pinto que indicamos en cada caso.
- Zamila Kolonomos (1978): 1.000 (28) refranes y dichos sentenciosos macedonios, recogidos en Bitola y Skopje.
- Jesús Cantera Ortiz de Urbina y Julia Sevilla Muñoz (1997): 931 (46) refranes
- Leonor Carracedo y Elena Romero (1981): 334 (11) refranes, 108 citas y 14 reseñas de refraneros sefardíes
- Tamar Alexander-Frizer y Yaakov Bentolila (2008): 1.040 (42) refranes y sentencias recogidas de los judíos sefardíes del norte de Marruecos, muchas de ellas acompañadas de sus versiones haketinesca, hebrea, hispánica, judeo-árabe o ladina.

### **Resultados**

Consultadas las colecciones de proverbios que vemos en la bibliografía, lo primero que nos llama la atención es no encontrar absolutamente ninguno que hable mal de Sefarad, la tierra que siglos atrás se vieron en la obligación de abandonar estos judíos españoles. Ni siquiera queda un mal pensamiento hacia los cristianos que ordenaron, toleraron o se aprovecharon de su destierro. No hubiera sido nada extraño que una decisión tan traumática dejara en el alma o en la mente de aquellos emigrantes forzosos (o en sus descendientes), un sentimiento de rencor hacia los españo-

les. Nada de eso. Al contrario, la misma actitud de conservar en sus casas durante siglos el idioma y los refranes que utilizaron sus antepasados, muestra la delicadeza espiritual de esta comunidad judía que se expandió por territorios tan dispersos y variados.

En los dichos sentenciosos sefardíes que figuran en las colecciones consultadas, en total hemos encontrado 223 refranes distintos que de un u otro modo tratan sobre salud mental. ¿Es alta esta cifra en el contexto general de la paremiología sefardí? Dicho de otro modo, ¿los refranes de esta comunidad judía están verdaderamente interesados por la salud mental de las personas? Creemos que sí, al menos si lo comparamos con los refraneros españoles renacentistas que, en general, muestran menor inclinación hacia estos temas. Indicar que cuando aparecen sentencias que expresan un mismo pensamiento con textos levemente distintos, en nuestro trabajo anotamos sólo la más antigua.

Como puede apreciarse enseguida, muchos se refieren genéricamente a locos, bobos o tontos (a veces bajo el apelativo de “asnos”). Tampoco los hay que aludan a enfermedades mentales concretas, no se olvide que el uso de estos refranes se remonta a los años finales del siglo XV cuando apenas se distinguían patologías psiquiátricas.

Dentro de la dificultad que entraña toda clasificación, hemos agrupado los refranes de la muestra en los siguientes apartados:

#### *1. Locura (44):*

Numerosas sentencias atienden a las limitaciones intelectuales de las personas consideradas genéricamente locas, dementes, tontas, bobas o torpes. Conviene recordar que entendemos por locura la privación del uso de la razón o del buen juicio. Relacionada con la demencia (etimológicamente “alejado de la mente”), en la época en que usaban los sefardíes estos refranes se consideraba loco simplemente al que rechazaba las normas sociales establecidas. El apelativo de tonto o de bobo se aplicaba a personas de escaso entendimiento o inteligencia (“asno” muchas veces en sentido coloquial).

Tratan también estos refranes de la testarudez, del nerviosismo o de la rudeza mental. Tal como ocurre con los refranes españoles, la mujer es generalmente considerada de escaso talento, desde luego intelectualmente inferior al hombre. Alguno advierte de los peligros del estudio excesivo para la buena salud mental,

así como de la tardanza que tienen los judíos para lograr la plenitud mental. En cualquier caso, reconocen que Dios no deja nunca de la mano a estas criaturas menos dotadas de intelecto. Refranes:

“Al gidió le viene el meollo tadre” (Saporta, 1957: 156). El judío tarda en alcanzar la madurez intelectual.

“Al nervioso le cae el bocado y dice que es de ojo malo” (Galimir, 1951: 12). Torpeza de los muy nerviosos.

“Al torpe ayuda el Dió” (Hemsi, 1954: 327).

“Azno de Tevarià” (Saporta, 1957: 46). Los asnos de Tiberíades (Palestina) son de gran tamaño. Contra los muy bobos.

“Cabeza de leño” (Galimir, 1951: 13). Testarudez.

“Cada loco con su locura” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:125). Variedad de dolencias mentales.

“Cada uso se dice amigo, pero loco quien lo cree, nada más común que este nombre, nada más vale que esta cosa” (Galimir, 1951: 14). El loco es demasiado crédulo.

“Calavasa vazía no va al fondo” (Saporta, 1957: 68). El bobo tiene hueca la cabeza.

“Cavesa de chop” (Saporta, 1957: 76). Testarudez.

“Cavesa de partir piniones” (Saporta, 1957: 76). Testarudez.

“De enamorado a loco va muy poco” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:159).

“De poeta, de medico, de arquitecto y de loco, cada uno tiene un poco” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:164).

“De poeta, medico y loco, todos tenemos un poco” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:164).

“El consejo de la mujer es poco, ma quien no lo toma es loco” (Besso, 1935: 212).

“El meollo de la mujer es poco, el que lo toma es loco” (Saporta, 1957: 198).

“El meollo es poco, más quien no lo toma es loco” (Galimir, 1951: 22). Seguir el consejo hasta de los tontos.

“El pariser y no saver es un ramo de locura” (Kolonomos, 1976: 46 [Daniel Danona]).

“El tonto callado, por listo es contado” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:184).

“Es loco con mellollo” (Galimir, 1951: 23). Loco con cerebro (listo).

“Es loco con plumas” (Galimir, 1951: 23). Loco estudioso (listo).

“Giohá, alevantate, picharás” (Saporta, 1957: 157). Alude al apellido turco Nasreddin Hogia considerado bobo pues olvida lo elemental.

“Giohá fue a la plasa; a lugar de ganar piedrió” (Saporta, 1957: 157).

“Il loku fazi la bode il sihiludu si la komi” (Kolonomos, 1978: 97).

“Il loku lu ece il sihiludu l’arikozi” (Kolonomos, 1978: 100).

“Johá antes de cazar mercó la cuna” (Besso, 1935: 213).

“Kada yida kun lukura, la mansives kun todas” (Kolonomos, 1978: 129).

“La loca con su mano la derroca” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:267).

“La mujer loca, por la vista pierde la toca” (Kolonomos, 1976: 55 [Avram Pinte, Daniel Danona]).

“La mujer savia fragua su caza, y la loca con sus manos la derroca” (Kolonomos, 1976: 55 [Avram Pinte, Daniel Danona, Samuel Pinte]).

“Lenio de banio” (Saporta, 1957: 177). Torpe.

“Lo que va a fazer el tiempo, que lo haga el meollo” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 255). La inteligencia se adelanta a los hechos. Consejo talmúdico.

“No saber dar migas al gato” (Benoliel, 2012: 26). Torpeza extrema.

“Pariser y no saver es una rama de locura” (Kolonomos, 1976: 66).

“Pedaso de azno” (Saporta, 1957: 242).

“Pensar y no saver es una rama de locura” (Kolonomos, 1976: 66 [Avram Pinte]).

“Prove de meollo y prove de parás” (Saporta, 1957: 254). Corto de inteligencia y de dinero.

“Que sabe el azno de mués muscada” (Saporta, 1957: 48). El tonto no entiende de cosas delicadas.

“Quien no tiene meollo, que tenga patchás” (Saporta, 1957: 198). El torpe trabaja inútilmente.

“Ramo de bovos” (Saporta, 1957: 265). Grupo de tontos.

“Sal en la meyoyera” (Galimir, 1951: 24). Inteligencia.

“Si a la mar va, agua no topa” (Galimir, 1951: 45). Muy torpe.

“Sos punta de leño” (Galimir, 1951: 45).

“Todos locos; el chelebí, sezudo” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 282). Todos locos menos el jefe. Ironía.

“Yoren las señoras, las que tienen la razón” (Benoliel, 2011: 56). Maldición a la mujer lista.

## 2. *Señales de la locura (16):*

Unas pocas sentencias buscan en la fisionomía el anuncio de posibles taras mentales. Están convencidas que por el rostro puede conocerse el estado anímico o moral de las personas, que la cara es el reflejo del alma. Incluso tratan de adivinarlo por los surcos de la palma de la mano, lo mismo que ocurría en la época medieval. No hay que olvidar la importancia que la medicina clásica, el galenismo arabizado que domina todavía en el Renacimiento, concede a la teoría de los temperamentos, a su vez condicionados por los cuatro humores orgánicos. Refranes:

“Asegún tiene la cara, tiene el corazón” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 217). El rostro indica el estado anímico.

“Cabello largo, meollo corto” (Galimir, 1951: 13). Torpeza de la mujer.

“Caras vemos, corazones no conocemos” (Besso, 1935: 212). El rostro no siempre expresa nuestra situación.

“Como hay adentro sale afuera” (Saporta, 1957: 25). Como es el temperamento es el comportamiento.

“Corasón espejo del otro” (Kolonomos, 1976: 38 [Daniel Dannon]).

“El bien i el aver, en la cara se ven” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 233).

“El bien y el mal en la cara se ve” (Saporta, 1957: 53).

“Escrito está en la palma, lo que va a sufrir la alma” (Galimir, 1951: 24). Las líneas de la mano anuncian los sufrimientos del alma.

“La ansia del corazón se ve en la cara” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolía, 2008:258).

“La cara descubre lo que el corassón encubre” (Benoliel, 2012: 58). La cara refleja nuestros sentimientos íntimos aunque tratemos de esconderlos.

“La cara dice lo que el alma siente” (Benoliel, 2012: 58).

“La kara es el espezo del alma” (Lévy, 1969: 160).

“Los ojos son el espejo del alma” (Benoliel, 2012: 59). La mirada muestra también el ánimo.

“Miralo la cara, le coneserás el corasón” (Kolonomos, 1976: 61 [Avram Pinte]).

“No hay más falso que la riza y la cara” (Bidjarano, 1885: 26).

“Su alma en su palma” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:233).

3. *Características de la locura (49):*

Se trata del apartado paremialmente más rico de nuestro estudio, donde se recogen cuantas sentencias tratan de lo que el pueblo llano aprecia o ve en las enfermedades y en los enfermos mentales. Así, nos habla de la imprevisibilidad del comportamiento de los dementes, sus obsesiones, hipermotilidad, verborrea, inocencia, infantilismo, trastornos de personalidad, carácter hereditario de algunas demencias, etc. Sus preguntas recurrentes y constantes son capaces de hacer perder la paciencia. También recuerdan que ciertas personas sensibles pueden perder fácilmente el juicio, especialmente las que están sometidas a grandes esfuerzos intelectuales, así como las principales características que sirven para detectar la locura. Refranes:

“Al bovo le corre la bava” (Kolonomos, 1976: 30 [Samuel Pinte]).

“Al loco y a la criatura les viene la nevuah” (Kolonomos, 1976: 30 [Daniel Danona]). Nevuah: verdad, profecía.

“Al loco y al bobo, según les da” (Galante, 1902: 14).

“Aspides y diablitos, no se están quieditos” (Galimir, 1951: 13). Los nerviosos siempre están en movimiento.

“Bovu para si no ay” (Kolonomos, 1978: 111).

“Cada uno tiene su hora de locura” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:125).

“Comerle a uno la miga del meollo” (Saporta, 1957: 90). Obsesión excesiva.

“¿Cuál es el loco? El que se alaba solo” (Kayserling, 1889: 137).

“Del loco y de la criatura hay que apañar” (Galimir, 1951: 18). Apartarse.

“Del loco, del bobo y de la criatura, se sabe todo” (Foulché, 1895: 265).

“Del loco y del bovo sale la vedrá” (Saporta, 1957: 178). Inocencia de los enfermos mentales.

“Disgracia de otros, alegría de locos” (Galimir, 1951: 19). Locura es alegrarse del mal ajeno.

“Duró lo que dura la piedra en la mano del loco” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:180).

“El hijo del judió al mes anda y al año gatea” (Benoliel, 2012: 30). Peligros de la inteligencia precoz de los judíos.

“El hombre loco e liviano tantas preguntas faría, que Catón non bastaría a le dar consejo sano” (Foulché, 1895: 602).

“El loco da, el sezudo toma” (Saporta, 1957: 179). Loco aconsejador.

“El loco gasta, el savio gosa” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 237). Loco derrochador.

“El loco huye del borracho” (Galimir, 1951: 22). El loco huye del que ha perdido el juicio.

“El loco lo gasta, el sesudo se lo come” (Galimir, 1951: 21).

“El loco y el chico hablan la verdad” (Galante, 1902: 109).

“El meollo del ombre es una tela de sevoya” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 238). Se pierde fácilmente la razón cayendo en la locura como se quita una hoja de cebolla.

“El sabio se demanda a sí mismo la razón de sus mancuras, ma el torpe la demanda a otro” (Carracedo y Romero, 1891: 549).

“Escuza de muchos, escuza de bovos” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 245).

“Esperar de otros, oficio de locos” (Galimir, 1951: 24).

“Está bolando en los ayres” (Saporta, 1957: 126). Vuela la mente por los aires cuando ha perdido la razón.

“Está loco piedrido” (Saporta, 1957: 128). Ha perdido definitivamente la cordura.

“Gidió bovo no hay” (Saporta, 1957: 156). No hay judío tonto.

“Il bwenu i il bovu tyenin mucu simizanti” (Kolonomos, 1978: 116).

“La criatura y el loco lo dize todo” (Besso, 1935: 213).

“Loco callado, por sezudo es contado” (Benoliel, 2012: 59).

“Maestro es, bovo es” (Saporta, 1957: 187). Demasiada inteligencia acaba en locura.

“Mal de mutchos, consolación de bovos” (Saporta, 1957: 188).

“Niervozos y huerquitos, no están calladicos” (Saporta, 1957: 219). Los hipernerviosos hablan mucho.

“Quen veye y no deprende, de bovedá le viene” (Lida, 1958: 27).

“Quien demanda al Dió poco, es loco” (Saporta, 1957: 104).

“Quien mueve meses está a la tripa de la loca, algo le toca” (Besso, 1935: 217). Ciertas demencias son hereditarias.

“Razón de muchos, razón de bovos” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 294). Los bobos se les da siempre la razón.

“Rompedor de celebros” (Saporta, 1957: 272). Loco que habla demasiado.



“Roto con rota, puntos de locos” (Kolonomos, 1976: 74 [Daniel Danona]).

“Salga loco tirando piedras” (Benoliel, 2011: 52). Locura violenta.

“Salió perro loco” (Saporta, 1957: 275). Enloquecer.

“Se etchó al lunar” (Saporta, 1957: 131). Demente, alunado por recibir malas influencias de la luna.

“Tomarse con sus cavellos” (Saporta, 1957: 293). Desesperarse, enloquecer.

“Un soplo al forno un consejo al loco” (Besso, 1935: 219). Inutilidad.

“Un loco demanda lo que siete sabios no responden” (Kolonomos, 1976: 80 [Daniel Danona]).

“Un loco hace ciento” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:414).

“Un loco quita sien” (Kolonomos, 1976: 80 [Daniel Danona]).

“Ya avló el bovo” (Lida, 1958: 31). Habló el bobo y dije bobadas.

“Ya favló Giohá” (Saporta, 1957: 136). Habló el necio.

#### 4. *Depresiones, pesadumbres* (29):

Aunque no aparece de forma explícita el término “depresión” que procede del latín “depressio” y “depressus” (literalmente “abatido” o “derribado”), a este trastorno emocional severo que hace que la persona se sienta triste y desganada aluden unas cuantas paremias. Muchas se ocupan del peligro que suponen para la salud psíquica las pesadumbres, disgustos, pesares, tristeza de ánimo, pensamientos oscuros y otros síntomas como los bruscos cambios de humor o la visión pesimista de la vida con ideas de muerte o de suicidio. Advierten los refranes sefarditas del riesgo que entraña este conjunto de fenómenos para el buen equilibrio mental. Refranes:

“Barrena de cabesal hace mucho mal” (Bidjarano, 1885: 26). Peligro de los pesares.

“Barrena vieja, debajo de tierra” (Saporta, 1957: 50). Conviene ocultar las pesadumbres que viene de atrás.

“Bwenu sta ken kol une landre al kurasón” (Kolonomos, 1978: 105).

“Camina la tortuga, camina con su caza” (Saporta, 1957: 69). Como la tortuga lleva su caparazón, los pesares nos acompañan y afectan la salud.

“El cuerpo que pena la alma, y la alma va penar al cuerpo” (Kolonomos, 1976: 44 [Avram Pinte]).

“El loco la echa, el savio la lleva” (Kolonomos, 1976: 45 [Daniel Danona, Samuel Pinte]). La pesadumbre.

“El savio se ayra de lo que ve, el loco de lo que pensa” (Saporta, 1957: 278).

“El vivo no puede fazer oficio de muerto” (Saporta, 1957: 57). Necesidad de superar las tristezas.

“En corasón amargoroso no entra ni riza ni gozo” (Kolonomos, 1976: 48 [Daniel Danona]).

“Esperanza larga aflige el corazón y el alma” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:211).

“Gayles azenes a mí mi fazin vyeze” (Kolonomos, 1978: 98).

“Giohá que no podía etcharse con sohorá vieja” (Saporta, 1957: 158). Olvidar las pesadumbres al acostarse.

“Hay lloros de alegría y cantares de tristeza” (Benoliel, 2012: 57).

“L’alme yeve mas ki la pyedre” (Kolonomos, 1978: 101).

“La mujer y la barrena quitan al hombre de la carrera” (Saporta, 1957: 212). Peligro de los disgustos.

“Las penas no matan, pero arrematan” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:275).

“Lo que no se va en ansias, se va en suspiros” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:284).

“Lo que no va en penas, va en suspiros” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:284).

“Los males no se van por las muntañas; van por la cavesa de los ombres” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 256).

“Mal de cavesal, es mucho mal” (Saporta, 1957: 188). Las penas de la mente son peligrosas.

“Mal y mal y piedra por cabecera” (Benoliel, 2012: 61). Peligro de los pensamientos funestos.

“Me está desvaneciendo el meollo” (Saporta, 1957: 106).

“Mosotros debemos de estar contentes por todos los males que no mos vienen en la cabeza, porque la mancanza de mal es bondad” (Carracedo y Romero, 1891: 521). No padecer enfermedades mentales debe ser motivo de contento.

“Ni loco, ni bovo, ni salido a taburrá” (Saporta, 1957: 180). Huir del trato con enfermos mentales.

“No me des por esposa a la que presto ríe i presto llora” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 269).

“No venga mal que no se pueda arsar” (Benoliel, 2012: 21). El corazón humano puede soportar grandes pesares.

“Topar la belá” (Saporta, 1957: 293). Los disgustos son peligrosos.

“Yarmiá el llorón” (Saporta, 1957: 313). A los pesimistas en recuerdo del profeta Jeremías.

“Yermiá el marido, Yermiá la mujer” (Saporta, 1957: 313). Pesimismo contagioso en el matrimonio evocando a Jeremías.

#### 5. *Monomanías (14):*

La monomanía o preocupación exagerada y caprichosa que presentan muchas personas por ideas concretas a las cuales vuelven de forma recurrente una y otra vez, merece unas pocas sentencias que destacan la variedad de las mismas, sus peligros e, incluso, su posible carácter contagioso entre la población de los centros de atención psiquiátrica. Refranes:

“Cada loco con su tema, y cada llaga con su postema” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:125).

“Cada uno con su tino, y la vieja con su tallarino” (Hemsi, 1954: 327). Monomanías variadas.

“Cavesa abocada, no le acoza filo de espada” (Saporta, 1957: 76). Contra testarudos y obcecados

“Cutí sobre cutí, manía goyerí” (Lida, 1958: 6). Manía de los adornos

“En el lodo, no cave manía” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 242). Los pobres tienen pocas manías.

“Gallico loco” (Saporta, 1957: 151). [“Mariposa loca”]. Rareza mental.

“Kada loko kon su tema” (Lévy, 1969: 142). Cada loco tiene su propia manía o inclinación.

“La alma sale y la manía no” (Kolonomos, 1976: 53 [Avram Pinte]).

“La mania, de la faxa fin la mortaja” (Kolonomos, 1976: 54 [Samuel Pinte]).

“La manía la tchapa” (Saporta, 1957: 193). Peligro de las monomanías.

“Manías hay como castanias” (Saporta, 1957: 193).

“Ni manías iguales ni vida sin males” (Kolonomos, 1976: 63 [Daniel Danona]).

“Quen tiene manías mete, quen non, mira de enfrente” (Carracedo y Romero, 1891: 545). Los maniáticos contagian sus fobias.

“Quieres matar a un savio, mete un bovo al lado” (Besso, 1935: 218). Contagian sus manías.

6. *Celos y temores (13)*:

Derivados del sustantivo latino “zelus” que puede traducirse como celo o ardor y sinónimo de “apasionamiento”, los celos se consideran como una respuesta emocional que surge cuando una persona percibe algún tipo de amenaza hacia algo que considera de su entera y exclusiva propiedad. A los mismos dedican los sefardíes unos cuantos adagios que ponen de relieve su capacidad para trastornar gravemente la razón, hasta el extremo de llevar a ejecutar acciones violentas que rebajan su dignidad y pueden conducir a la locura extrema. Refranes:

“El celo quita a su amo el seso” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:185).

“El celo pudre los güesos” (Carracedo y Romero, 1891: 499).

“El selo es un castigo del sielo” (Kolonomos, 1976: 47 [Daniel Danona]).

“El selo y la envidia quita al hombre de la vida” (Besso, 1935: 213).

“La ravya es mal kunsizeru” (Kolonomos, 1978: 124).

“Le subió la birra” (Saporta, 1957: 285). Colérico, temeroso.

“Marido seloso, no tiene reposo” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 258).

“Mil muertes y un celo no” (Saporta, 1957: 210).

“Poco vive el que cela” (Foulché, 1895: 886). Peligrosidad de los celos.

“Ravia en los nesios es topada” (Kolonomos, 1976: 74 [Daniel Danona]).

“Sospecho y selo no dan consuelo” (Kolonomos, 1976: 77 [Daniel Danona, Samuel Pinte]).

“Tener celo es rebajarse a sí mismo” (Carracedo y Romero, 1891: 551). El hombre celoso pierde su dignidad.

“Zeris y fatigas, punchan como las urtigas” (Kolonomos, 1976: 82 [Daniel Danona]).

### 7. *Insomnio (10):*

De nuevo hay que buscar el origen latino de la palabra insomnio (“insomnium”), pues hace referencia a los problemas que a veces se plantean para conciliar el sueño al acostarse. Cuando se presenta de forma crónica puede estar causado por otros problemas médicos, entre los cuales las sentencias judías destacan las preocupaciones, la ansiedad o la misma depresión. También recuerdan el riesgo que esta vigilia supone para la salud mental. Refranes:

“Echar y no dormir, asperar y no venir, traye siniales de morir” (Kolonomos, 1976: 43 [Avram Pinte]).

“El suenio carréa suenio” (Saporta, 1957: 284).

“El sueño no tiene dueño” (Bidjarano, 1885: 26). Nadie controla los sueños.

“Hacer y no agradecer, esperar y no venir, hechar y no dormir no son cosas de sufrir” (Bidjarano, 1885: 26). El insomnio es peligroso para la salud.

“Il ishweñu fazi ulvidar todas las ansyas” (Kolonomos, 1978: 126).

“Pues que yo no duermo, todos tengan negros sueños” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:398).

“Reposar y no dormir, esperar y no venir, hacer y no agradecer, es lo más malo que puede ser” (Galimir, 1951: 42). Peligro del insomnio.

“Si yo no duermo, que todos tengan mal sueño” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:398). Pesadillas.

“Suenio sin soltura” (Saporta, 1957: 284).

“Tres cosas son de morir: esperar y non venir, meter la mesa y non comer, echar en cama y non dormir” (Carracedo y Romero, 1891: 553).

### 8. *Actitud ante el loco (29):*

Cuando nos enfrentamos a personas con un carácter irascible, fuerte, violento, irracional, con dificultades para razonar adecuadamente, lo que el pueblo llano ha considerado siempre un “loco”, con carácter práctico los refranes recomiendan una discreta escucha, mantener la calma y las distancias, pero sobre todo no responder con violencia. Esperar a que se calmen, pero también huir de su trato, alejarse de ellos. En cualquier caso se muestran muy

pesimistas respecto a las posibilidades de regeneración o de mejora en su patología. Refranes:

“A la criatura i al loco, se les dise todo” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 210). Hablar claro al demente.

“A palabras lokas, urezas sodras” (Lévy, 1969: 115). No se debe prestar atención a lo que dicen necios y locos.

“A quien a los quinze no le viene bueno, a los veinte no lo aspere” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 210).

“Agudos me maten, que no bobos me den la vida” (Benoliel, 2012: 75). Rechazar el trato de necios.

“Al loco y al aire dales calle” (Kolonomos, 1976: 30 [Daniel Dagona]).

“Azno no muere de tiquía” (Besso, 1935: 211). A los bobos ningún disgusto les afecta.

“Bien savi la roza en ki mano poza” (Lévy, 1969: 120). La persona (la rosa) conoce si busca locura o hermosura.

“Bovo el que cree a otro bovo” (Saporta, 1957: 62).

“Deja decir a los tontos, el saber tiene su precio” (Galimir, 1951: 18).

“Del azno y del malo hay que espantar, no del seheludo” (Saporta, 1957: 47). Huir de los tontos, tratar a los listos.

“Del loco y de la creatura hay que apañar” (Galimir, 1951: 18).

“El mal entontece, el bien engodrece” (Saporta, 1957: 189). El mal trato afecta negativamente al intelecto.

“Hijo sabido, gusto de su padre; hijo loco, angustia de su madre” (Kayserling, 1889: 132).

“Honra al loco, antes que lo tengas de menester” (Foulché, 1895: 504).

“La bovedad me pasa, ¿para qué quiero el érremo zéjel?” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 249). Envanecido el tonto de su éxito rechaza la inteligencia.

“La buvura no pasa in un mes” (Kolonomos, 1978: 118).

“La roza i el onor savin en ke manus pozan” (Lévy, 1969: 162). El mérito busca la hermosura y no la locura.

“Más save el loco en su caza, que el seheludo en la plasa” (Saporta, 1957: 179, 277).

“Más savi il loku in kaza ke il sizudo en la azena” (Lévy, 1969: 167).

“Más vale perder con un sesudo que ganar con un bobo” (Galimir, 1951: 30). Rechaza el trato con dementes.

“Más vale un bovo conocido, que un savio para conocer” (Saporta, 1957: 63).

“Meollo con cutchara no se etcha” (Saporta, 1957: 198). Inutilidad de la educación de dementes.

“Mil sezudos que te maten, y no un loco que te abedigüe” (Saporta, 1957: 281).

“Milizina de cualquier ansia es la pasensia y la toleransia” (Kolonomos, 1976: 61 [Daniel Danona]).

“Mochico fue a Safet. Más negro vino de lo que fue” (Saporta, 1957: 206). El tonto aunque vaya a la Academia de Safet (Palestina) vuelve tonto.

“No digáis al loco ni tanto ni poco” (Bidjarano, 1885: 26).

“Razonar como un loco no tiene ningún senso” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 294).

“Si al trege no vino, al quinze no lo asperes” (Saporta, 1957: 294). Si no tiene conocimiento con 13 años (mayoría de edad religiosa de los judíos), tampoco a los 15.

“Si el dizidor es loco, que el entendedor sea cesudo” (Hemsi, 1954: 332). Se necesita sentido común para atender dementes.

#### 9. *Tratamiento de la locura (19):*

Como era previsible teniendo en cuenta que los refranes sefardíes se usaban en pleno Renacimiento, cuando se ocupan de la forma de tratar a los locos muestran toda la gama de violencias que les aplicaba entonces. De ahí que mencionen castigos corporales como apaleamientos, chorros de agua fría, camisas de fuerza, aislamiento y soledad, preferiblemente en manicomios (“timbaraná” en el idioma turco). De nuevo muestran su pesimismo sobre los tratamientos para que recuperen la cordura, pues aceptan de forma unánime que es una pérdida de tiempo y de medios. Inexorablemente consideran que el que nace loco muere loco. Refranes:

“A loco, no lo contraríes; llévalo con sus aguas” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 213).

“Al hombre biervos, al azno lenia” (Saporta, 1957: 166). Al hombre palabras, al loco palos.

“Amor es demencia y el merco es la absencia” (Saporta, 1957: 35). La locura del amor con la separación se enfría.

“Asno nació, asno quedó; si asno entrare, asno sarlá” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 218). Inutilidad de los tratamientos contra la locura.  
 “Aunque majes al loco en el majadero, no sanará de su locura” (Alexander-Frizer; Bentolia, 2008:116).

“El pan de la boba, el forno lo adoba” (Benoliel, 2012: 56). El tiempo corrige a veces los defectos de los necios.

“En él no hay nada de atar” (Saporta, 1957: 118). Los locos de atar no dicen nada de provecho.

“Etchado y no vijitado” (Saporta, 1957: 130). Soledad y aislamiento de los enfermos mentales.

“Kavesa loka no kerí toka” (Lévy, 1969: 144). El loco no acepta la corrección ni la educación.

“La buvura no pasa in un mes” (Kolonomos, 1978: 118).

“Loco y bovos a la timbaraná” (Saporta, 1957: 180). Los enfermos mentales deben vivir en manicomios.

“Los mejores doctores del cuerpo son la alegría, el comer liviano y el caminar ligero” (Carracedo y Romero, 1891: 519). La alegría como remedio para la salud mental.

“Milizina de cualquier ansia es la pasensia y la toleransia” (Kolonomos, 1976: 61 [Daniel Danona]).

“Nombrar al malo, aparecer il palu” (Lévy, 1969: 175). Tradicionalmente se trataba a los locos con castigos corporales.

“Quien azno nace, azno muere” (Saporta, 1957: 48). El tonto de nacimiento no tiene remedio.

“Quien lava la cavesa del hamor piedra la lesía y el savon” (Besso, 1935: 216). Inutilidad del tratamiento de las enfermedades mentales.

“Quien trontcho nació, trontcho murió” (Saporta, 1957: 295). Tratar las dolencias mentales es perder tiempo y dinero.

“Si no la trushiste con ti, no la bushques en Salamanca” (Cantera y Sevilla, 1997: 297). El bobo de nacimiento no aprende nunca.

“Tchorro que le caiga” (Saporta, 1957: 288). Con chorros de agua fría se calmaba antiguamente a los locos más violentos.

### **Conclusiones**

Del estudio detenido de las sentencias sefardíes que tratan de cualquier aspecto relativo a la salud mental, se desprende que forman un conjunto poco cohesionado de conocimientos que, en cierto modo, reflejan el atraso de los conocimientos médicos sobre salud mental en el Renacimiento. También que no hay en los



mismos el menor reflejo del posible trauma psíquico que sin duda padecieron los judíos españoles en el destierro que padecieron desde 1492.

Dado el carácter práctico de las paremias, no debe extrañar que se ocupen preferentemente de aspectos como las características que permiten identificar la locura, la actitud a adoptar frente a los enfermos mentales o sobre la locura en general. Menor interés muestran ante algunas dolencias psíquicas que difícilmente conseguimos identificar entre el complejo conjunto de locos, dementes, bobos o tontos que desfilan en los refranes sefardíes.

Con mayor amplitud se ocupan del trato que debe dispensarse a los enfermos mentales. Al margen de algunos refranes que recomiendan tener paciencia y escucharlos, en general prefieren siempre rechazar su trato y adoptar con ellos las medidas coercitivas que aconsejaba la medicina de la época: aislamiento en manicomios sin renunciar a la violencia cuando se muestran agresivos (castigos corporales, ligaduras o duchas de agua fría). En resumen, para los refranes sefardíes la locura es incurable y no se debe perder el tiempo tratándola.

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ZUR VALENZDIACHRONIE AUSGEWÄHLTER  
VERBPHRASEME. AM BEISPIEL DES WORTFELDS  
„AUFMERKSAMKEIT UND WAHRNEHMEN“\*

**Abstract:** Den Hintergrund für den vorliegenden Aufsatz bildet ein gemeinsames Forschungsprojekt der germanistischen Sprachwissenschaft der Universitäten Regensburg und Helsinki. Ziel des Projekts ist es, zwei historische Valenzwörterbücher (zum einen ein Historisch syntaktisches Verbwörterbuch und zum anderen ein Kleines historisches Valenzlexikon) zu erstellen, die alle Sprachperioden des Deutschen einbeziehen. Die Ausführungen in diesem Aufsatz orientieren sich weitgehend an der Darstellungsweise im letztgenannten Valenzwörterbuch. Als Untersuchungsgegenstand dienen 12 Verbphraseme, deren Vorkommen und Valenzverhalten im Althochdeutschen, Mittelhochdeutschen, Frühneuhochdeutschen, Neuhochdeutschen und Gegenwartsdeutschen verfolgt wird. Für jedes Phrasem wird anhand von Belegen aus historischen und modernen Wörterbüchern sowie aus Korpora verschiedener Art eine Gesamtvalenz ermittelt, in der sowohl die Anzahl als auch die Art der valenzbedingten Bestimmungen (Ergänzungen) festgehalten ist. Eine der wichtigsten Erkenntnisse der Analyse bezieht sich auf die Entwicklung des Genitivobjekts: Es wird nachgewiesen, dass neben verbalen Einwortlexemen auch Verbphraseme vom Rückgang des Genitivs als Objektkasus betroffen sind, dass sich aber der Genitiv bei bestimmten Phrasemen bis heute erhalten hat. Desgleichen zeigt sich, dass für eine möglichst umfassende Erfassung der Gesamtvalenz von Verbphrasemen außer lexikografischen Beschreibungen auch ausgedehnte Korpusrecherchen erforderlich sind.

**Keywords:** Verbphrasem, Wortfeld, Sprachperioden des Deutschen, Gesamtvalenz, Valenzumgebung, Ergänzung, quantitative und qualitative Polyvalenz, Valenzentwicklung, Valenzlexikografie, digitale und nicht digitalisierte Korpora, Morphosyntax, Satzgliedfunktion

**1. Einleitung**

Anfang der 2010-Jahre wurde am Institut für Germanistik der Universität Regensburg eine Idee entwickelt, zunächst ein umfassendes Historisch syntaktisches Verbwörterbuch mit Schwerpunkt auf der Valenz (HSVW) und später ein Kleines historisches Valenz-

lexikon (KHVL) zu erstellen. Die Idee stammt von Albrecht Greule, der schon im Jahr 1999 ein syntaktisches Verbwörterbuch zu den althochdeutschen Texten des 9. Jahrhunderts veröffentlicht (= Greule 1999) und danach ein entsprechendes Valenzlexikon für das Mittelhochdeutsche angeregt hat (vgl. Greule 2003; 2005; 2016; 2018; Greule/Lénárd 2004; Greule/Korhonen 2021). Das HSVW soll in Teamarbeit von mehreren Forschern, das KHVL wiederum in Zusammenarbeit von Albrecht Greule und mir erarbeitet werden.<sup>1</sup>

Die Darstellung der historischen Entwicklung der Valenz wird sich sowohl im HSVW als auch im KHVL auf alle Sprachperioden des Deutschen beziehen. In beiden Wörterbüchern sind neben verbalen Einwortlexemen auch verbale Mehrwortlexeme, Verbphraseme, als Beschreibungseinheiten vorgesehen. In der gleichen Weise wie Verben, verfügen Verbphraseme über Valenz und sind damit in der Lage, eine bestimmte Anzahl von Leerstellen in bestimmter Form und syntaktischer Funktion sowie mit bestimmtem Inhalt um sich zu eröffnen.<sup>2</sup> Für die Bestimmungen, mit denen die Leerstellen gefüllt werden, wird im Folgenden der Terminus „Ergänzung“ verwendet. Hinsichtlich ihres phraseologischen Status lassen sich die valenzfähigen Verbphraseme in Kollokationen, Funktionsverbgefüge und Idiome einteilen. Die syntaktische Funktion, die ein Verbphrasem im Satz ausübt, ist das Prädikat.

Im Mittelpunkt werden unten Verbphraseme stehen, die zum Wortfeld der Aufmerksamkeit und des Wahrnehmens gehören. Dies geht darauf zurück, dass es für das HSVW ursprünglich geplant war, verbale Ein- und Mehrwortlexeme anhand bestimmter Wortfelder zu analysieren, und dass ich für das oben genannte Wortfeld bereits ausführliche Vorarbeit geleistet hatte (inzwischen wurde auf den Wortfeldgedanken verzichtet, und die in beide Wörterbücher aufzunehmenden Verben und Verbphraseme sollen jeweils bezüglich ihrer gesamten Bedeutungspalette beschrieben werden). Der lexikografischen Erfassung der verbalen Valenzträger werden sowohl Wörterbuch- als auch Korpusbelege zugrunde gelegt. Die Wörterbuchquellen sind synchroner und diachroner Art; falls zeitgenössische Wörterbücher vorhanden sind, werden sie mitberücksichtigt. In den meisten Fällen sind in den historischen Wörterbüchern keine expliziten Angaben zur Valenz enthalten, sondern das Valenzverhalten des jeweiligen Lexems muss aus den in den betreffenden Wortartikeln zitierten Belegen erschlossen werden.

Die synchronen und diachronen Wörterbücher sowie die Korpora, die für den vorliegenden Aufsatz benutzt wurden, sind in der Bibliografie aufgeführt. Bei den Korpora handelt es sich zum einen um digitale Belegrepositorien, zum anderen um nicht digitalisierte Belegsammlungen. Zu den Letztgenannten gehören die Belegkartei des Althochdeutschen Wörterbuchs<sup>3</sup> und das Korpus mit Belegen aus der Bibelübersetzung Martin Luthers, das unter meiner Leitung in den 1980-er Jahren an der Universität Oulu in Finnland zusammengestellt wurde. Das Bibelkorpus ist ein Teil eines umfangreichen Luther-Korpus, dessen anderer Teil aus valenzbezogenen Belegen aus den Schriften Luthers besteht. Das letztere Teilkorpus stellte ich Anfang der 1980-er Jahre im Luther-Archiv der Universität Tübingen zusammen. Im Ganzen umfasst das Luther-Korpus 300 verschiedene Verben und Verbphraseme, wobei die Gesamtzahl der Belege rund 38.000 beträgt. Im Jahr 2015 wurde das Tübinger Korpus an der Universität Regensburg digitalisiert, steht aber nicht online zur Verfügung.

Die Verbphraseme, die im nächsten Kapitel analysiert werden, sind die althochdeutschen (ahd., 750–1050) *in thia ahta neman*, *giwar werden*, *innana werden* und *wara neman*, die mittelhochdeutschen (mhd., 1050–1350) *ahte gewinnen*, *ahte hân*, *ahte nemen*, *ah-tunge hân*, *gewar werden*, *inne werden*, *innen werden* und *war nemen*, die frühneuhochdeutschen (fnhd., 1350–1650) *acht geben*, *acht haben*, *acht nehmen*, *in acht nehmen*, *achten haben*, *achtung haben*, *gewahr werden*, *inne werden*, *innen werden* und *wahr nehmen*, die neuhochdeutschen (nhd., 1650–1950) *Acht geben*, *Acht haben*, *Acht nehmen*, *in Acht nehmen*, *Achtung geben*, *Achtung haben*, *gewahr werden*, *inne werden*, *innen werden* und *wahr nehmen* sowie *Acht geben*, *Acht haben*, *Acht nehmen*, *in Acht nehmen*, *gewahr werden*, *innewerden* und *wahrnehmen* aus dem Gegenwartsdeutschen (1950–). Die letzten beiden Ausdrücke werden heute zusammengeschrieben und haben damit ihren Phraseologiestatus verloren. Der Vollständigkeit halber werden sie hier jedoch einer ähnlichen Valenzanalyse unterzogen wie die anderen auch.

Die Valenzdiachronie der untersuchten Verbphraseme wird folgendermaßen dargestellt: Für jedes Phrasem werden zuerst alle für die einzelnen Sprachperioden ermittelten Valenzumgebungen angegeben. Diese setzen sich aus den Kombinationen der Ergänzungen zusammen und werden als sog. Gesamtvalenz festgehalten. An der Gesamtvalenz sind zwei Eigenschaften des Valenzträgers

abzulesen: einerseits die quantitative, andererseits die qualitative Polyvalenz. Das erstere Phänomen bedeutet Variationen in der Anzahl, das letztere Variationen in der Art der Ergänzungen.<sup>4</sup> Zur Kennzeichnung der Ergänzungen werden Symbole verwendet, die die morphosyntaktische Form und die Satzgliedfunktion in sich vereinen (zur Erläuterung der Symbole vgl. das Abkürzungsverzeichnis am Ende). Auf die Präsentation der Gesamtvalenz folgt eine Aufstellung der verschiedenen Valenzumgebungen, die mit einschlägigen Beispielen veranschaulicht werden. Zum Schluss wird die Valenzentwicklung des Phrasems in Bezug auf Anzahl und morphosyntaktische Form der Ergänzungen in einem Kommentar zusammengefasst.

## 2. Analyse

### 2.1. Acht geben

**Althochdeutsch** (keine Belege)

**Mittelhochdeutsch** (keine Belege)

**Frühneuhochdeutsch:** Nn; Nn+Ng/pNaufA

Nn: *gib wol acht, ich will schon acht geben* (DWB)<sup>5</sup>

Nn+Ng: *so du **der dingen** acht gibest* (DWB)

Nn+pNaufA: *das ich .. **auff mich selber vnd meine feinde** besser acht gebe* (DWBN 1, 1396)

**Neuhochdeutsch:** Nn; Nn+Ng/pNaufA/NSdass/daraufNSdass/NSob/NSw-/daraufNSw-

Nn: *Habt ihr wohl A. gegeben, Kinder?* (GWB)

Nn+Ng: *Und haben die/ so dises in Zweifel ziehen wollen/ gewißlich **Pauli denckwürdiger Worten** nicht recht Acht gegeben.* (DWDS: Gotthard Heidegger 1698)

Nn+pNaufA: *Seit dieser Zeit gab er [Wilh] mehr **auf Jarno's Handlungen** A., [...]* (GWB)

Nn+NSdass: *geben sie A. **daß er nicht ritze, vielleicht gar treffe*** (GWB)

Nn+daraufNSdass: [...] ***darauff** muß er aber acht geben/ **daß er sie mercke** [...]* (DWDS: Joachim Lütke mann 1652)

Nn+NSob: [...] *die alten Raub-Vögel [...] geben acht, **ob irgend ein anderer Raub-Vogel allernechst vorbey flieget**, [...]* (DWDS: Hans Friedrich von Fleming 1719)

Nn+NSw-: *Gieb nur Acht, **welchen Weg Dich die Schöne noch führen wird**, [...]* (DWDS: Goethe 1796)

Nn+daraufNSw-: [...] *daß sie [...] allein **darauff** acht geben/ **was zu ihrer erbauung diensam** [...]* (DWDS: Philipp Jakob Spener 1676)

**Gegenwartsdeutsch:** Nn; Nn+Nd/pNaufA/pNvorD/INFzu/daraufINFzu/NSdass/daraufNSdass/NSob/daraufNSw-

Nn: *In der Küche muß man besonders achtgeben.* (DWDS: Carl H. Schmidt-Rogge 1973 [1969])

Nn+Nd: [...] *bohre mich über den Eiter des Körpers in den Eiter meiner Person, **dem** ich so lange nicht achtgegeben habe, [...]* (DWDS: Volker Elis Pilgrim 1983 [1977])

Nn+pNaufA: [...] *ich mußte hinter ihm gehen und genau **auf ihn** achtgeben.* (DWDS: Ulrich E. Hasler 1967)

Nn+pNvorD: *Dabei müsse man **vor zwei Gefahren** acht geben: [...]* (DWDS: Archiv der Gegenwart 2001 [1958])

Nn+INFzu: [...] *wobei ich achtgab, **nichts von dem Gerümpel in den Mund zu bekommen.*** (DWDS: Walter Moers 1999)

Nn+daraufINFzu: [...] *andererseits müsse sie **darauf** achtgeben, **das rasante Wachstum der Kredite zu verlangsamen.*** (DWDS: Die Zeit 5.3.2015)

Nn+NSdass: *Dabei wird man acht geben, **daß der Kork nicht durchbohrt wird, [...]*** (DWDS: Alfred Kölling 1962 [1956])

Nn+daraufNSdass: [...] *aber man muß **darauf** achtgeben, **daß man die Sehnen nicht zerrt.*** (DWDS: Die Zeit 5.3.1993)

Nn+NSob: [...] *wird früher oder später der erste Gigant [...] achtgeben, **ob wirklich niemand davon erfährt.*** (DWDS: Die Zeit 16.9.1999)

Nn+daraufNSw-: *Es ist lohnend, einmal **darauf** achtzugeben, **wie viele Menschen heute die unmöglichsten Dinge lohnenswert finden.*** (DWDS: Die Zeit 19.6.1959)

In der quantitativen Polyvalenz von *Acht geben* hat sich nichts geändert, d.h., das Phrasem wird seit dem Fnhd. sowohl ein- als auch zweiwertig verwendet, wobei im einwertigen Gebrauch das Subjekt (Nn) die betreffende Ergänzung ist. Während das Genitivobjekt (Ng) im Fnhd. und noch im Nhd. begegnet, ist es im Gegenwartsdeutschen nicht mehr vorhanden. Anstelle des Genitivobjekts steht heute das Präpositionalobjekt mit *auf* + Akkusativ (pNaufA), das bereits fnhd. neben das Genitivobjekt tritt. Die für das Nhd. belegten Nebensatzobjekte mit *dass*, *ob* und *w*-Frage (NSdass usw.) sind im Valenzplan von *Acht geben* heute noch erhalten. Als Korrelat

erscheint nhd. nur das Präpositionaladverb *darauf* (und nicht etwa auch *dessen*), obwohl der Genitiv bei den Nomina als Objektkasus anzutreffen ist. Eine weitere Objektrealisation im heutigen Deutsch ist das Infinitivobjekt mit *zu* (mit und ohne Korrelat; INFzu bzw. *darauf*INFzu). Das Dativobjekt (Nd) und das Präpositionalobjekt mit *vor* + Dativ (pNvorD) stellen sicherlich keine typischen Ergänzungsklassen von *Acht geben* dar.

## 2.2. *Acht gewinnen*

**Althochdeutsch** (keine Belege)

**Mittelhochdeutsch:** Nn+pNaufA/pNzu

Nn+pNaufA: *der nie dehein ahte ûf mich gewan* (MWB)

Nn+pNzu: *daz ir ze manslahte immer gewinnet ahte* (BMZ)

**Frühneuhochdeutsch** (keine Belege)

**Neuhochdeutsch** (keine Belege)

**Gegenwartsdeutsch** (keine Belege)

Das Phrasem kommt nur mhd. vor. Bemerkenswert ist, dass als einzige Objektrealisation eine Präpositionalkonstruktion nachweisbar ist. Denkbar wäre wohl auch der Genitiv gewesen (vgl. z.B. mhd. *ahte hân* unten).

## 2.3. *Acht haben*

**Althochdeutsch** (keine Belege)

**Mittelhochdeutsch:** Nn+Ng/pNaufA/pNum

Nn+Ng: *der frowen [...] die min deheine achte hat* (MWB)

Nn+pNaufA: [...], *die habent dehein acht auf daz gotes rich* (MWB)

Nn+pNum: *das sú enkeine concienzie darumbe nût enhant noch enkeine ahte* (MWB)

**Frühneuhochdeutsch:**

Nn; Nn+Na/Nd/Ng/pNaufA/pNvorA/NSdass/daraufNSdass/NSw-/daraufNSw-

Nn: *dass alle .. unsere zolner .. und aufsecher guet acht und aufsehen haben und nichts unverzolt .. passieren lassen* (DWB 1, 1398)

Nn+Na: *das gestiern des summers ist acht zûhabint durch den uffgang des sternen canicule* (FWB)<sup>6</sup>

Nn+Nd: *Er hat seinen reben kein Acht noch rechnung gehabt* (JM 10a; FWB)<sup>7</sup>



Nn+Ng: [...], *das wir ja zu sehen und uns lassen einen ernst sein und **unser** wol acht haben*, [...] (Luther: WA 36, 469)

Nn+pNaufA: *Aber du woltest ja nicht acht haben **auff meine sünde*** (Luther-Bibel: Hiob 14,16)

Nn+pNvorA: [...], *denn so die in jhrer art gut, hat man mehr sorg vnd acht **vor sie als vor ein diener*** (DWB 1, 1398)<sup>8</sup>

Nn+NSdass: *Darumb sollen wyr [...] vleyssig seyn und acht haben, **das wyr ynn der liebe zunemen und*** [...] (Luther: WA 15, 500)

Nn+daraufNSdass: [...], *unnd habt ye wol acht **drauff**, **das jr aus den Euangelien leernet***, [...] (Luther: WA 10 I 2, 441)

Nn+NSw-: [...], *denn das du acht habst, **wie du dich gegen deynem nehisten erzeygist*** (Luther: WA 15, 500f.)

Nn+daraufNSw-: *ein iglicher sol **darauff** achte habenn, **was gott mit yhm wirckt*** (PHD 1, 40)

**Neuhochdeutsch:** Nn; Nn+Na/Ng/pNaufA/NSdass/daraufNSdass/NSob/daraufNSw-

Nn: *Habet Acht und haltet zusammen!* (GWB)

Nn+Na: *Er hat **sein armes Täubchen** nicht Acht* (DS 1, 8)

Nn+Ng: ***Der Dörfer und Städte** groß Acht zu haben* (DS 1, 8)

Nn+pNaufA: *Auch dem Grafen ward er vorgestellt, der aber wenig Acht **auf ihn** hatte* (GWB)

Nn+NSdass: *Darumb wir denn [...] acht haben sollen/ **daß wir reines Hertzens seyn mögen*** [...] (DWDS: Johann Holfeld 1650)

Nn+daraufNSdass: *So sollen die Gerichts-Verwaltere **darauff** gute Acht haben/ **das zufferst die Civil-Sachen** [...] **vorgebacht und gehört*** [...] (DWDS: Der Stadt Hamburg Statuta und Gerichts Ordnung ca. 1680)

Nn+NSob: [...] *diesmal sollst du mit gehen und Acht haben **ob Zweiäuglein draußen ißt*** [...] (DWDS: Grimms Märchen 1850)

Nn+daraufNSw-: [...] *daß sie **darauff** acht hatte / **was von Paulo geredet ward*** [...] (DWDS: Joachim Lütke mann 1652)

**Gegenwartsdeutsch:** Nn+Ng/pNaufA/INFzu/NSw-

Nn+Ng: [...] *und wie man doch mit rechtem Bürgersinn **solcher Zeichen** eher hätte acht haben sollen; [...]* (DWDS: Die Zeit 7.6.1956)

Nn+pNaufA: *Wir müssten künftig selbst **auf ihre Einhaltung** Acht haben*, [...] (DWDS: Die Zeit 3.4.2014)

Nn+INFzu: *„Wir müssen in der Europoliga Acht haben **zu gewinnen**, [...]"* (DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel 3.11.1999)

Nn+NSw-: [...], *wenn man acht hat, wie bald der Knall hinter den Blitz drein kommt*. (DWDS: Die Zeit 5.8.1988)

Obwohl der einwertige Gebrauch von *Acht haben* nur für das Fnhd. und Nhd. registriert werden konnte, war er sicherlich auch im Mhd. und ist im Gegenwartsdeutschen möglich. Das Genitivobjekt hat seinen Platz in der Gesamtvalenz dieses Verbphrasems bis heute behauptet, das Gleiche gilt für das Präpositionalobjekt mit *auf* + Akkusativ. Das Akkusativobjekt (Na) im Fnhd. und Nhd. sowie das Präpositionalobjekt mit *um* im Mhd. und das Präpositionalobjekt mit *vor* im Fnhd. sind als seltene Erscheinungen anzusehen. Die satzförmigen Objekte im Fnhd. und Nhd. haben mehrere Gemeinsamkeiten, im heutigen Deutsch wiederum stellt der Nebensatz mit *w*-Frage die einzige entsprechende Objektrealisation dar. In der gegenwartsbezogenen Valenzumgebung von *Acht haben* tritt zwar ein Infinitivobjekt mit *zu* als eine spezifische Ergänzung auf, aber im Ganzen ist die Gesamtvalenz deutlich geringer als im Fnhd. und Nhd. Dies dürfte seinen Grund darin haben, dass *Acht haben* heute nicht mehr so häufig vorkommt wie früher (laut DUW ist das Phrasem veraltend und gehört der gehobenen Stilebene an).

#### 2.4. *Acht nehmen*

**Althochdeutsch** (keine Belege)

**Mittelhochdeutsch:** Nn+Ng

Nn+Ng: *sî hât vil gilacht / mîns herzen siuften; des nam ich danne acht* (MWB)

**Frühneuhochdeutsch:** Nn; Nn+Na/Na/pNaufA/HS/NSdass/NSw-Nn: *die mögen wol acht nemen und sich hüten; aufs fleiszigste acht zu nemmen* (DWB)

Nn+Na: *der künig .. der do mer die schöne ires leibs acht vnd war-genomen het dann die andern* (DWBN 1, 1404)

Nn+Ng: [...], *nemlich das man fur allen dingen der sunden acht neme*, [...] (Luther: WA 19, 215)

Nn+pNaufA: *Ach das doch deine oren wolten achtnemen auff das geschrey meins bittens* (Luther: WA 1, 207)

Nn+HS: *Hie hor, o mensch, nym eben achte, / Dis ist der wor cristenlich glaub* (FWB)

Nn+NSdass: *so hab ich auch nicht gnommen acht, / das eur gnad gwessen ist hierinn* (DWBN 1, 1404)

Nn+NSw-: *der fuchs nam .. acht, wie diese mauß kein hunger erlitten* (DWBN 1, 1404)

**Neuhochdeutsch:** Nn+Na/Ng/pNaufA/NSdass/daraufNSdass

Nn+Na: *Nun hatte dieser gleich sein Geschwätze mit Klodius Schwester/ daß ers nicht acht nahm [...]* (DWDS: Andreas Heinrich Bucholtz 1659)

Nn+Ng: [...] *daß jene den ersten Eifer bald ablegten/ und ihrer Schanze besser acht nahmen [...]* (DWDS: Andreas Heinrich Bucholtz 1660)

Nn+pNaufA: [...] *so soll er nach Aristotelis gutem Rath und Meinung/ auff hell und trucken Wetter gut acht nehmen [...]* (DWDS: Johann Jacob Agricola 1677)

Nn+NSdass: *Man mus aber mit brennenden Fackeln wol versehen seyn/ auch im hinein gehen acht nehmen/ daß durch die/ in grosser Menge darinnen enthaltenden Fleder-Mäuse/ solche nicht ausgelöscht werden.* (DWDS: Johann Heinrich Seyfried 1679)

Nn+daraufNSdass: [...] *vnd muß darauff achten/ daß nichts im Raht vorgehe/ [...]* (DWDS: Dietrich Reinkingk 1653)

**Gegenwartsdeutsch:** Nn+pNaufA

Nn+pNaufA: [...] *dass sie auf ihre Gesundheit acht nehmen sollen.* (DWDS: Die Zeit 17.3.2015)

Als eine Besonderheit der Valenzentwicklung von *Acht nehmen* kann betrachtet werden, dass sowohl für die erste als auch für die letzte Sprachperiode jeweils nur eine Valenzumgebung (Ng bzw. pNaufA) belegt werden konnte. Dies zeugt davon, dass das Phrasem im Mhd. sehr selten war und es im gegenwärtigen Deutsch wieder geworden ist; *Acht nehmen* wird z.B. in neueren und modernen Allgemeinwörterbüchern (u.a. 1BW, 2BW, DUW und DWDSWB) nicht aufgeführt. Im Gegensatz zum Fnhd. ließ sich im Nhd. für den einwertigen Gebrauch kein Nachweis erbringen, was nicht bedeutet, dass dieser Gebrauch ausgeschlossen war. Die Realisationen des zweiwertigen Gebrauchs ähneln stark einander: Die nominalen Objektklassen sind identisch, und in beiden Sprachperioden kamen auch satzförmige Objekte vor. Die einzige Objektrealisation im Deutsch von heute ist im untersuchten Material zwar eine Präpositionalkonstruktion, aber analog zum Phrasem *Acht haben* käme hier wohl auch ein Genitivobjekt infrage.

2.5. *in Acht nehmen*

**Althochdeutsch** (*in thia ahta neman*): Nn+Na

Nn+Na: *firmonames ... anderero armuati ... ni nemen in thia ahta manno scalkslahta* (AWB)

**Mittelhochdeutsch** (keine Belege)

**Frühneuhochdeutsch**: Nn+Na

Nn+Na: *Strabo rühmet den Homerus, dasz er die eigenschaft eines jedwedern dinges sehr genau in acht genommen* (DWB)

**Neuhochdeutsch**: Nn+Na/Ng/NSdass/NSob/NSw-

Nn+Na: .. *nimmt er auch den todten Hirsch in Acht* (DS 1, 8)

Nn+Ng: *Der Markung nicht in Acht genommen* (DS 1, 8)

Nn+NSdass: [...] *er hat aber nicht darbey in acht genommen/ daß ein wenig dürre Holtz bald von der Flamme des Feuers angezündet [...] wird [...]* (DWDS: Johann Balthasar Schupp 1663)

Nn+NSob: *Und hören ob alles wol aufeinander klinget/ sonderlich aber in Acht nehmen/ ob die Distinctiones also gleich geordnet/ daß [...]* (DWDS: Georg Philipp Harsdörffer 1653)

Nn+NSw-: *Und also in acht nehmen/ welchen Milch oder starcke Speise gebühre/ [...]* (DWDS: Christoph Banner 1652)

**Gegenwartsdeutsch**: Nn+Na

Nn+Na: [...] *wenn er nur den rechten Gebrauch und Ordnung in acht nimmt, [...]* (DWDS: Die Zeit 6.2.1958)

Die Analyse lässt erkennen, dass *in Acht nehmen* nur im Nhd. häufiger in Gebrauch war. Für die Sprachperioden Ahd., Fnhd. und Gegenwartsdeutsch konnten Belege jeweils nur für eine Valenzumgebung gebucht werden, für das Mhd. wiederum wurden keine Belege gefunden. In jeder Periode wird das Phrasem mit zwei Ergänzungen verwendet. Das Genitivobjekt in der nhd. Gesamtvalenz von *in Acht nehmen* ist insofern augenfällig, als das Ahd. und das Fnhd. nur den Akkusativ als Objektkasus aufweisen (allerdings kann das Fehlen des Genitivobjekts in den letztgenannten Sprachperioden an der knappen Beleglage liegen). Das Phrasem *in Acht nehmen* ist heute in der Bedeutung ‚gut auf etw. achten, auf etw. aufpassen‘ weniger üblich. So wird seine Bedeutung beispielsweise im DUW wie folgt definiert: ‚etw. vorsichtig, sorgsam behandeln‘. Dagegen ist *sich vor jmdm., etw. in Acht nehmen* (‚sich vor jmdm., etw. vorsehen‘) ein fester Bestandteil des heutigen Phrasemguts.

2.6. *Achten haben***Althochdeutsch** (keine Belege)**Mittelhochdeutsch** (keine Belege)**Frühneuhochdeutsch:** Nn+pNaufA/daraufNSdass/daraufNSw-Nn+pNaufA: [...], *eyn iglicher muß selb achten auff sich haben und seynen leyb regirn nach dißem spruch Pauli: [...]* (Luther: WA 10 I 2, 20)Nn+daraufNSdass: *Denn du must darauff achten haben, das es tzeychen seyn sollen; [...]* (Luther: WA 10 I 2, 101)Nn+daraufNSw-: *Hab nur achten drauff, wie sich dieselbigen leutt stellen tzu der ander leutt sund oder geprechen, [...]* (Luther: WA 10 I 1, 649)**Neuhochdeutsch** (keine Belege)**Gegenwartsdeutsch** (keine Belege)

Wie für das Phrasem *Acht gewinnen* sind für *Achten haben* Belege nur für eine Sprachperiode vorhanden. Auch im Fnhd. ist das letztgenannte Phrasem selten (Belege dazu sind etwa bei Luther zu finden). Das nominale Objekt realisiert sich als Präpositionalkonstruktion, vorstellbar wäre aber auch ein Genitivobjekt wie bei *Acht haben* (vgl. oben) und *Achtung haben* (vgl. unten).

2.7. *Achtung geben***Althochdeutsch** (keine Belege)**Mittelhochdeutsch** (keine Belege)**Frühneuhochdeutsch:** Nn+pNaufANn+pNaufA: *Gib nur achtung auff meinen Sohn* (GH 13)**Neuhochdeutsch:** Nn; Nn+pNaufA/NSdass/daraufNSdass/NSob/NSw-/daraufNSw-Nn: [...] *daß die Fürsten/ in ablesung der Brieffen/ und überreichter Schriften/ gute Achtung geben sollen [...]* (DWDS: Martin Zeiler 1660)Nn+pNaufA: [...] *daß er auff den Catechismum, auff die Tauff/ vnd Wohlfahrt der Seelen oder Seeligkeit/ achtung gebe.* (DWDS: Johann Conrad Dannhauer 1653)Nn+NSdass: [...] *doch müßte man nothwendig Achtung geben/ daß nicht etwan seine Feinde jhm dieses Bad fälschlich zugerichtet hetten.* (DWDS: Sigismund Friedrich Wartmann 1652)

Nn+daraufNSdass: *Darauff mag man achtung geben/ daß man wisse / was wir an dem Evangelischen Ampt haben.* (DWDS: Joachim Lütkeermann 1652)

Nn+NSob: [...] *auch muß man achtung geben/ ob sie bewurzelt/ sintemahl sie ohn wurzeln schwerlich anschlagen.* (DWDS: Johann Sigismund Elsholtz 1666)

Nn+NSw-: [...] *daß wir selbst/ persönlich achtung geben/ Wie diese Pest vergeh* [...] (DWDS: Andreas Gryphius 1650)

Nn+daraufNSw-: *Darnach mögen wir freylich wol fragen / vnd darauff achtung geben/ auff was weise ein solcher Mann habe können in Heucheley vnd Sicherheit gerathen.* (DWDS: Joachim Lütkeermann 1652)

**Gegenwartsdeutsch** (keine Belege)

Für *Achtung geben* lassen sich die meisten Belege im Nhd. beobachten. Überhaupt scheint das Phrasem besonders im 17. Jahrhundert häufig verwendet worden zu sein; z.B. im Luther-Korpus ist es nicht vertreten. Wenn die Gesamtvalenz von *Achtung geben* im Fnhd. und Nhd. mit der von *Acht geben* verglichen wird, zeigt sich, dass es hier folgende Unterschiede gibt: *Acht geben* weist im Fnhd. auch einen einwertigen Gebrauch auf, und sowohl im Fnhd. und Nhd. kommt neben einem Präpositionalobjekt auch ein Genitivobjekt vor. – Im jetzigen Deutsch ist *Achtung geben* als Phrasem der Aufmerksamkeit und des Wahrnehmens nicht mehr vorhanden (*Achtung* beschränkt sich heutzutage auf die Bedeutung ‚Hochachtung‘).

## 2.8. *Achtung haben*

**Althochdeutsch** (keine Belege)

**Mittelhochdeutsch:** Nn+Ng/pNaufA

Nn+Ng: [...] *dann beyden wir biß off das letst und verließen yne, so han wir syn umb sust so lang gehut und achtung gehabt* (MHDBDB: Prosa-Lancelot)

Nn+pNaufA: *als wir [...] hân meinunge oder ahtunge ûf ihtes iht anders dan ûf got* (MWB)

**Frühneuhochdeutsch:** Nn; Nn+Ng/pNaufA/pNum/pNvorA/NSdass/daraufNSdass/NSob/NSw-/daraufNSw-

Nn: *hie sol man imerdar achtung haben* (DWB)

Nn+Ng: [...] *das ir vnsers wiltprets allenthalben gut achtung vnd auffsehen zu haben bestellet* (DWBN 1, 1410)

Nn+pNaufA: [...] *sonderlich, wenn wir auff das gegenwertig übel oder unglück achtung haben und nicht auff Gotts wort*, [...] (Luther: WA 10 I 2, 226)

Nn+pNum: *daz sy (Dorothea) keyne achtunge odir sorge mochte haben umme di liplichin vorgenclichin dinge* (DWBN 1, 1410)

Nn+pNvorA: *habt achtunge in ewern stetin vor verretenisse vnd vor füer* (DWBN 1, 1410)

Nn+NSdass: [...] *wirdt mit grosem ernnst vnnd hohestem vleis achtung gehabt, das Schulen [...] zu guter zucht der Jugennt auffgericht vnnd erhaltten werdenn*. (Luther: WA 30 II, 249)

Nn+daraufNSdass: [...] *das wir ye achtung darauff haben sollen, daz sie uns nicht verführen* [...] (Luther: WA 10 I 2, 244)

Nn+NSob: [...] *darnach kan man auch achtung haben, ob sie Christlich leben* (Luther: WA 15, 491)

Nn+NSw-: *Yr habt [...] wenige ader kleynne achtung, wann das feuerwerck wolfeile ist* (FWB)

Nn+daraufNSw-: [...] *wie Christus [...] die schefflyn weydet [...] und achtung drauff hat, welche kranck seind*, [...] (Luther: WA 10 I 2, 243)

**Neuhochdeutsch:** Nn+Ng/pNaufA/NSdass/daraufNSdass/NSw-/daraufNSw-

Nn+Ng: *Ein jeder führer hat bey sich zwölf tapffre knaben/ Die mit geschwindem lauff sein fleißig achtung haben* [...] (DWDS: Publius Vergilius Maro 1668)

Nn+pNaufA: [...] *daß jhr auff die innerliche Lüste vnd Zuneigung deß Hertzens gute achtung haben sollet*. (DWDS: Joachim Lütke mann 1652)

Nn+NSdass: [...] *daß man mit dem Baden anhalten solte/ biß die Haut außschlüge/ darneben aber gute Achtung haben/ daß der schadhaffte Ort/ vor viertzig Tagen/ nicht zugeheilet würde*. (DWDS: Martin Zeiller 1658)

Nn+daraufNSdass: [...] *solt du drauff achtung haben/ Daß du bedecket trägst/ dein haupt und angesicht* [...] (DWDS: Publius Vergilius Maro 1668)

Nn+NSw-: [...] *drum muß Er wohl achtung haben/ wann warme Herbst seyn*. (DWDS: Johann Jacob Agricola 1677)

Nn+daraufNSw-: [...] *daß er nicht soll darauff achtung haben/ was für Pfarrherrn und Prediger die kirchen wehlt*. (DWDS: Gottfried Arnold 1700)

**Gegenwartsdeutsch** (keine Belege)

Aus einer Gegenüberstellung von *Achtung haben* und *Achtung geben* ergibt sich, dass das erstere Phrasem im Fnhd. wesentlich häufiger gewesen sein muss; dies spiegelt sich auch in der Gesamtvalenz von *Achtung haben* wider, die deutlich vielseitiger ist als die von *Achtung geben*. In den nhd. Valenzumgebungen dagegen sind keine großen Abweichungen zu erkennen. Bei beiden Phrasemen liegt sowohl ein einwertiger als auch ein zweiwertiger Gebrauch vor. Werden dann *Acht haben* und *Achtung haben* miteinander verglichen, so lässt sich feststellen, dass *Acht haben* im Ganzen in der deutschen Sprachgeschichte weiter verbreitet ist. Allerdings können in der fnhd. und nhd. Gesamtvalenz keine bedeutenden Unterschiede registriert werden. – In Bezug auf das Vorhandensein von *Achtung haben* als Phrasem im Deutsch von heute trifft das Gleiche zu wie bei *Achtung geben*.

## 2.9. gewahr werden

**Althochdeutsch:** Nn+Ng/NSdass; Nn+Na+INF

Nn+Ng: *du gîenge sament demo diêbe. dâr du sîn gewâr wurde* (DWB)

Nn+NSdass: *laz mih keuuar uuerden, daz du mih obesehest* (AWB Belegkartei)

Nn+Na+INF: *Sîe uuûrten guâr die sângcûtenna darzû fâren* (AWB Belegkartei)

**Mittelhochdeutsch:** Nn+Na/Num/HS/NSdass/desNSdass/desNSob/NSw-

Nn+Na: *in den hof er nu geschreit. / sa daz der lewe wart gewar, [...]* (MWB)

Nn+Ng: *niheinis urlougis wart man giwari* (MWB)

Nn+pNum: *ir bichtere wart iezu gewar, [...] umme disen unflat, [...]* (MWB)

Nn+HS: *der gast wirt schiere gewar, enist er niht ein tôre gar, [...]* (DWB)

Nn+NSdass: *do der uater geware wart / daz daz kint geboren was [...]* (MWB)

Nn+desNSdass: *wirt sie des an mir gewar, / daz ich alsus mit zorne var, [...]* (MWB)

Nn+desNSob: *[...] daz nieman wurde des gewar, ob er ez wære oder ich.* (DWB)

Nn+NSw-: *ir der weder [...] gewar wart, / wer der ander were* (MWB)



**Frühneuhochdeutsch:** Nn; Nn+Na/Ng/NSdass/desNSdass/esNSdass/NSob/NSw-; Nn+Na+INF

Nn: [...], *das die warheytt unuorsehens und ßo heymlich untergehet* [...] *Ja, auch ßo heymlich, das die rechtglewbigen nit wurden gewar, wenn sie nitt mit vleyß nach der warheytt trachten* (Luther: WA 10 I 1, 321)

Nn+Na: *Was sihest du einen splitter in deines brüders auge und den balcken in deinem auge würstu nit gewar* (Luther: WA 10 I 2, 321)

Nn+Ng: [...] *vnd wirst nicht gewar des Balcken in deinem auge* (Luther-Bibel: Mt 7,3)

Nn+NSdass: *Wo er aber gewar wurd. das wyr diß gepett wollten vben* [...] (Luther: WA 9, 265)

Nn+desNSdass: *denn wo ich des gewar und gewisz wurde, das sie solch giff auß meinen büchern sugen*, [...] (DWB)

Nn+esNSdass: [...], *und niemand wird es gewar, das es ein solche krafft hatt*, [...] (DWB)

Nn+NSob: [...], *so wirstu nymer gewar, ob eyn winckel ledig sey*, [...] (Luther: WA 15, 366)

Nn+NSw-: *Denn sie wirt gewar, wie tzwischen yhr unnd eynem offenberlichen sunder odder ßunderynn keyn unterscheydt ist*, [...] (Luther: WA 10 I 1, 346)

Nn+Na+INF: *da wurd ich gewar / auß einer tieffen holen / [...] gegen mir herauß kommen / einen Ritter* (FWB)

**Neuhochdeutsch:** Nn+Na/Ng/pNaufA/NSdass/NSw-/dessenNSw-  
Nn+Na: *begebenheiten, die, wenn ihr sie nur gewahr werdet, euch in erstaunen setzen sollen*. (DWB)

Nn+Ng: [...] *ward sie ihrer allerliebsten Tochter alsbald gewahr* [...] (DWDS: Andreas Heinrich Bucholtz 1660)

Nn+pNaufA: *er [...] war auf derselben Spur wie ich auf den Irrthum Newtons gewahr worden* (GWB)

Nn+NSdass: *Wenn er gewahr wird daß sein Gegner ihm an moralischen Kräften zu sehr überlegen ist*. (DWDS: Carl von Clausewitz 1834)

Nn+NSw-: *als er erst deutlich gewahr wurde, wohin ihn die betrachtungen, denen er sich überliesz, nothwendig führen muszten*. (DWB)

Nn+dessen/NSw-: [...] *sondern hat auch die erfahrung davon in seiner seelen/ welche gewahr wird dessen/ was in ihr geschihet* [...] (DWDS: Philipp Jakob Spener 1701)

**Gegenwartsdeutsch:** Nn+Na/Nd/Ng/INFzu/NSdass/NSob/NSw-;  
Nd+NSdass/NSw-

Nn+Na: *Er sah sie freundlich an, [...], nicht ganz behaglich, aber so, daß sie **den Blick** nicht gewahr wurde.* (DWDS: Uwe Johnson 1970)

Nn+Nd: [...], *als ich mich noch einmal umwandte und **dem schrecklichsten Anblick meines Lebens** gewahr wurde.* (DWDS: Raoul Schrott 2003)

Nn+Ng: [...] *weil er die Widerstände, die Hemmnisse, die Barrieren und die Barrikaden nicht kennt oder nicht wahrhaben will oder **ihrer** nicht gewahr wird.* (DWDS: Wolfgang Hildesheimer 1981)

Nn+INFzu: *Ihm jagt Angst ein, dass er gewahr wird, **in etwas hingeraten zu sein, das sein Verstand nicht zu fassen vermag.*** (DWDS: Die Zeit 19.8.1999)

Nn+NSdass: *Aber wer ihn aus der Nähe beobachten könnte, würde rasch gewahr werden, **daß er gar nicht arbeitet, sondern** [...]* (DWDS: Hans-Ulrich Horster [d.i. Rhein, Eduard] 1991 [1950])

Nn+NSob: *Ich wurde nie gewahr, **ob sie unseren Rekord zunichte machten;** [...]* (DWDS: Erwin Strittmatter 1983)

Nn+NSw-: *Wem das nicht aus dem erzählenden Werk Kafkas schon aufgedämmert ist, wird bei dem Blick in seine täglichen Aufzeichnungen [...] gewahr werden, **mit welch rabiater Verbissenheit sich Kafka vor jedem [...] Selbstbetrug zu hüten wußte.*** (DWDS: Die Zeit 13.9.1951)

Nd+NSdass: [...], *dass **vielen Abgeordneten** erst so langsam gewahr wird, dass über Nacht eine tragende Säule des konservativen Wertegebäude [sic!] abmontiert worden ist.* (DWDS: Die Zeit 9.6.2011)

Nd+NSw-: *Sie schrak auf, als **ihr** plötzlich gewahr wurde, mit welcher Sicht sie ihre Reise betrachtete.* (DWDS: Erik Neutsch 1964)

Aus der Zusammenstellung der Valenzumgebungen ist ersichtlich, dass die quantitative Polyvalenz von *gewahr werden* einen ein-, zwei und dreiwertigen Gebrauch umfasst. Hier ist jedoch gleich anzumerken, dass das Vorkommen ohne Objekt wie im Fnhd. bzw. mit zwei Objekten, d.h. mit Akkusativ und Infinitiv ohne *zu* (INF) wie im Ahd. und Fnhd., nicht zu den typischen Valenzeigenschaften von *gewahr werden* gehört. Das aus dem Ahd. stammende Genitivobjekt hat sich bis heute gehalten, auch wenn es bereits seit dem Mhd. mit dem Akkusativobjekt konkurriert. Das Schwanken

zwischen Akkusativ und Genitiv tritt z.B. im Sprachgebrauch von Luther deutlich zutage: Unter den oben angeführten Beispielen weist das Substantiv *Balken* diese beiden Kasus auf (in seiner Übersetzung des Neuen Testaments von 1522 und der gesamten Bibel von 1545 hält Luther aber konsequent am Genitiv fest). Das für das Gegenwartsdeutsche belegte Dativobjekt sowie das mhd. Präpositionalobjekt mit *um* und das nhd. Präpositionalobjekt mit *auf* sind eher Ausnahmen in der Gesamtvalenz von *gewahr werden*, ebenso dürfte das im heutigen Deutsch auftauchende Infinitivobjekt mit *zu* keine übliche Ergänzungsklasse sein. Bezüglich der satzförmigen Ergänzungen ist zuerst darauf hinzuweisen, dass auch ein Hauptsatz (HS) als Objekt auftreten kann; dies wird in der mhd. Gesamtvalenz von *gewahr werden* sichtbar. Bei Nebensätzen wiederum kann ein Korrelat stehen oder fehlen. Wenn es vor einem Nebensatz erscheint, ist der Kasus Genitiv (mhd. und fnhd. *des*, nhd. *dessen*), fnhd. auch Akkusativ (*es*). Die Konstruktion Dativobjekt + Nebensatzsubjekt (Nd+NSdass/NSw-) im gegenwärtigen Deutsch ist wohl keine häufige Valenzrealisation. Das kommt auch darin zum Ausdruck, dass sie nicht lexikografisch kodifiziert ist.

#### 2.10. *innewerden*

**Althochdeutsch** (keine Belege)

**Mittelhochdeutsch:** Nn+Ng/NSdass/desNSdass/NSw-

Nn+Ng: [...] *daz wîr ir helfe inne werden an libe vnd an der sele.* (ReM: PrPa)

Nn+NSdass: *Do ward Tyrus inne/ Das er pey der schwartzen lag* (MWB Belegarchiv)

Nn+desNSdass: [...] *als er des wart inne/ daz diu porte was ûf getân,* [...] (MWB Belegarchiv)

Nn+NSw-: *wir wurden inne/ [...] wie minne flîhtet arme und bein,* [...] (MWB Belegarchiv)

**Frühneuhochdeutsch:** Nn+Na/Ng/NSdass/esNSdass/NSw-/esNSw  
Nn+Na: *Das es sollen inne werden alles volck Ephraim / vnd die bürger zu Samaria* (Luther-Bibel: Jes 9,9)

Nn+Ng: *Alls nw dy küniginne / sich schied von im [...] / ward er des priefes inne* (FWB)

Nn+NSdass: *so wirstu inne, [...] Daz Got ist verre hoer dir* (FWB)

Nn+esNSdass: *Wyr werdens ynne werden, das das werck ynn ynen gegen Gott gerichtet ist* [...] (Luther: WA 15, 701)

Nn+NSw-: [...], *das man ynne werde, was goth vormag durch die, die in ym trawen*, [...] (Luther: WA 9, 587)

Nn+esNSw-: [...] *und sie sollens auch ynne werden, welche frucht sie erlangen und wie feine leute Gott aus yhn machen wird* (RGB 1077)

**Neuhochdeutsch:** Nn+Na/Ng/NSdass/esNSdass/NSw-/esNSw-

Nn+Na: [...] *nachdem man aber die warhafftige Verwirrung inne ward/* [...] (DWDS: Neuer Lust- und Lehrreicher Schau-Platz 1685)

Nn+Ng: *sie werden ihres wahnnes inne werden.* (DWB)

Nn+NSdass: *ich werde inne dasz ich mich getäuscht habe* (DWB)

Nn+esNSdass: *Bist du es inne geworden, daß ich kam?* (JA)

Nn+NSw-: *Hier kannst du inne werden, wie in der Welt sich alles billig fügt*, [...] (JA)

Nn+esNSw-: *Er wird es schon noch inne werden, was das heißt, einen solchen Menschen zu beleidigen* (JC 2, 825)

**Gegenwartsdeutsch:** Nn+Na/Ng/pNüberA/NSdass/dessenNSdass/NSw-

Nn+Na: *Voraussetzung für den Erfolg dieser Nachfolge ist rechte Selbsterkenntnis, die die eigene Sündhaftigkeit innewerden läßt;* [...] (DWDS: Karl Baus 1962)

Nn+Ng: [...], *in denen das historische Menschheitsbild kulminiert und seiner Krise innewird*, [...] (DWDS: Werner Hofmann 1960)

Nn+pNüberA: *Ich hoffe, dass sich viele Menschen trotzdem Mel Gibsons Film nicht nur ansehen, sondern innewerden über das, was Jesus für sie getan hat.* (DWDS: Die Zeit 18.3.2004)

Nn+NSdass: [...] *wird man bald innewerden, daß er tatsächlich perenniert*, [...] (DWDS: Johannes Hirschberger 1952)

Nn+dessenNSdass: *Mögen Sie dessen innewerden, ... daß das Miteinander von Menschen und Völkern nicht zu einem Gegeneinander führt –* [...] (DWDS: Die Zeit 16.10.1959)

Nn+NSw-: [...], *in denen man die schlafenden Höllenhunde wecken muß, um an ihrem Gebelle innezuwerden, wie nahe wir der Hölle noch sind.* (DWDS: Die Zeit 22.1.1960)

Aus der Zusammenstellung der Valenzumgebungen von *innewerden* geht hervor, dass das Phrasem in quantitativer Hinsicht im Mhd., Fnhd., Nhd. und Gegenwartsdeutschen zweiwertig verwendet wird. Trotz der Konkurrenz durch das Akkusativobjekt, das zuerst im Fnhd. auftaucht, bleibt das Genitivobjekt bis heute ein Be-

standteil der Gesamtvalenz von *innewerden*. Entsprechend lässt sich der Genitiv als Korrelat noch im jetzigen Deutsch (vgl. *des-senNSdass*) belegen. Im Mhd. lautet das Korrelat *des*, im Fnhd. und Nhd. steht es im Akkusativ (*es*). Beachtung verdient die Tatsache, dass die Gesamtvalenz von *innewerden* im Fnhd. und Nhd. identisch ist. Das Präpositionalobjekt mit *über* in der heutigen Valenzumgebung des Phrasems ist als eine seltene Ersatzform des Genitivs anzusehen.

### 2.11. *innen werden*

**Althochdeutsch:** Nn+Ng

Nn+Ng: *wanda her **thes** innen is worthan* (AWB Belegkartei)

**Mittelhochdeutsch:** Nn+Ng/HS/NSdass/desNSdass/NSw-

Nn+Ng: *dô er **des tieres** innen wart, [...]* (MWB Belegarchiv)

Nn+HS: *nu bin ieh wörden innen. **du uerstest daz gotes wort geliche. sam div nater** [...]* (ReM: Kaiserchronik)

Nn+NSdass: *do wart er innin uf dem wege/ **das in ir mûst stûnt gein Sodoma*** (MWB Belegarchiv)

Nn+desNSdass: [...] *werde man **des innen**,/ **daz ich in habe betrogen**/ [...]* (MWB Belegarchiv)

Nn+NSw-: [...] *daz romarne iht innen wrden. **waz der haiden boten da wruen** [= würben]* (ReM: KchrF)

**Frühneuhochdeutsch:** Nn; Nn+Na/Ng/NSdass/dasNSdass/esNSdass/NSob/NSw-

Nn: [...], *der solt den Keyser heimlich, **das er nicht jnnen würde, abmalen oder konterfeien**, [...]* (Luther: WA 54, 339)

Nn+Na: *Da **das** Menelaus innen ward [...]* (Luther-Bibel: 2.Makk 4,32)

Nn+Ng: *Da **des** das Volck innen ward / zog es jm nach* (Luther-Bibel: Lk 9,11)

Nn+NSdass: [...], *so wirstu ynnen werden, **das gemeynicklich nur weyber sind geweßen, die umb nachlassen der beycht vordampt seyn**, [...]* (Luther: WA 10 I 1, 663)

Nn+dasNSdass: *pin **das** durch vil sach innen worden, **das der mensch chain gut ent nimet*** (FWB)

Nn+esNSdass: *Vnd die Egypter sollens innen werden / **das ich der HERR bin** [...]* (Luther-Bibel: 2.Mose 7,5)

Nn+NSob: [...] *der wird innen werden / **ob diese Lere von Gott sey** [...]* (Luther-Bibel: Joh 7,17)

Nn+NS<sub>w</sub>:- [...] *was dann der pflug gebenn wirt, solt ir wol innen werden* (Luther: WA 15, 340)

**Neuhochdeutsch:** Nn+Na/Ng/HS/NS<sub>dass</sub>/NS<sub>ob</sub>/NS<sub>w</sub>-

Nn+Na: [...] *wo er **Mangel vnd Abgang** an den Gräntzbäumen oder Steinen innen wird/ [...]* (DWDS: Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff 1656)

Nn+Ng: *er [...] fassete mich beym Halse/ ehe ich **sein** innen ward/ [...]* (DWDS: Andreas Heinrich Bucholtz 1659)

Nn+HS: *Damit die Feinde zuletzt innen werden, **sie haben auf einen vest zusammengepackten Oelbeer Hauffen geschlagen**, [...]* (DWDS: Samuel Lucius 1731)

Nn+NS<sub>dass</sub>: *Fürsten [...] Werden endlich innen werden/ **daß jhr Baw nicht jhnen stund***. (DWDS: Friedrich von Logau 1654)

Nn+NS<sub>ob</sub>: [...] *damit man bey Zeiten innen werde/ **ob man auch gegen alle Fälle gefasset seyn könne oder nicht***. (DWDS: Johann Georg Pasch 1662)

Nn+NS<sub>w</sub>:- *Was ihrer seelig geliebten ältern Frau Tochter Kinder vor eine stütze an Jhr gehabt werden sie mit betrübttem Gemüht und wehmuth allererst recht innen werden/ [...]* (DWDS: Friedrich Albinus 1661)

**Gegenwartsdeutsch** (keine Belege)

Die Einwertigkeit (vgl. fnhd. Nn) ist keine normale Valenzeigenschaft des Phrasems *innen werden*, sondern geht auf kontextuelle Gegebenheiten zurück. Die mhd. Valenzumgebungen von *innwerden* und *innen werden* decken sich fast völlig; der einzige Unterschied besteht darin, dass für das letztere Phrasem auch ein Objekt in Form eines Hauptsatzes belegt werden konnte. Auch im Fnhd. ähneln sich diese Phraseme valenzsyntaktisch stark, desgleichen sind die Abweichungen im Nhd. relativ gering. In diachroner Sicht ist für das nominale Objekt von *innen werden* und *innwerden* das Gleiche zu beobachten: Das Akkusativobjekt tritt im Fnhd. neben das Genitivobjekt, und beide Objektarten begegnen auch im Nhd. Der Kasus des Korrelats vor einem Satzobjekt ist im Mhd. Genitiv, im Fnhd. Akkusativ (unter den nhd. Belegen ist kein Korrelat vorhanden). – Zum Nebeneinander von Akkusativ- und Genitivobjekt im Fnhd. sei noch hinzugefügt, dass Luther bei *innen werden* in seiner Bibelübersetzung diese beiden Objektklassen verwendet (vgl. Nn+Na: *das* bzw. Nn+Ng: *des*). Wie oben festgestellt wurde, steht das Objekt bei *gewahr werden* in der Luther-Bibel immer im Genitiv.

## 2.12. wahrnehmen

**Althochdeutsch:** Nn+Ng/NSw-Nn+Ng: *er fillit aber eiglich sin chint **des** er uuara nimit* (AWB)Nn+NSw-: *also uuara zenemenne ist . **uuio Boetius in primo libro uuas incusans fortunam*** (AWB)**Mittelhochdeutsch:** Nn; Nn+Na/Ng/HS/NSdass/desNSdass/NSob/desNSob/NSw-/dazuNSw-Nn: *dô sprach der voget von Berne: ,nemet alle war, sitzet alle stille und gebet mir iuwern rât.‘* (DWB)Nn+Na: *man maht dâ wol war nemen **zinimîn und zitwar*** (ML)Nn+Ng: *er nam **einer stiege** war* (BMZ)Nn+HS: *ich hân an dir genomen war, **du schînest harte riwevar*** (BMZ)Nn+NSdass: *er nam war, **daz lützel überiger rede ergie*** (BMZ)Nn+desNSdass: [...] *sol man ouch **des** nemen war, **daz dâ iht zu wênic sî oder ubermâze*** (DWB)Nn+NSob: [...] *so sal der brûder [...] nemen war, **ob man iht daran zu bezzerne vinde*** (DWB)Nn+desNSob: *die jungfrouwen [...] nâmen **des** vil rehte war, **ob er lebte oder wære tôt*** (DWB)Nn+NSw-: *die gerne wolden nemen war, **wie dâ wurde gestriten*** (DWB)Nn+dazuNSw-: *daç er **dar zuo** ware neme, **wie er den trugener vertrîbe*** (ML)**Frühneuhochdeutsch:** Nn+Na/Ng/pNaufA/HS/NSdass/daraufNSdass/NSob/daraufNSob/NSw-/desNSw-Nn+Na: *nachdem ich nun .. die grosse statt, gewerb und handlungen erkennet, **ire sîten und gebraûche** zimlich wargenommen* (DWB)Nn+Ng: *Nemet war **der Raben** / die seen nicht / [...]* (Luther-Bibel: Lk 12,24)Nn+pNaufA: *spricht der widerteyl, man sôll **uff syne werck** warnemen und nit uff den wandel* (DWB)Nn+HS: *wann sie zu<sup>o</sup> euch sagen, sihe, nymm war, **Christus ist in der wûsten**, gond nit hinaus, nymm war, **er ist in der zell oder kämer**, so glaubent es nit* (DWB)Nn+NSdass: *Hye in disem Euangelio [...] ist war zunemen, **das wir den rechten eynfeltigen verstandt** [...] **ergreyffen**, [...]* (Luther: WA 10 I 2, 310)

Nn+daraufNSdass: [...] und söllent war **daruff** nemen, **das sü gûte gelt und guldin empfohent** (DWB)

Nn+NSob: [...] das dw eben warnemest, **ob dw dich findest also, das dw ein begird darzu hast** (Luther: WA 9, 642))

Nn+daraufNSob: der klingeler .. soll ouch altzit [...] **daruf** lügen und warnemen, **obe yemans unküsheit dete** (DWB)

Nn+NSw-: der zoller soll [...] warnemen, **was do inne ist ... und dozu sol er ouch warnemen, wohin das getragen wurt** (DWB)

Nn+desNSw-: nu nam sy **des** vil eben war, **war der man die slüssel tet** (DWB)

**Neuhochdeutsch:** Nn+Na/Ng/NSdass/esNSdass/NSw-; Nn+Na+INF

Nn+Na: *Ob doch die kleinen Unterschiede, **die** sie hie und da wahr genommen haben, [...]* (DWDS: Ignaz Aurelius Fessler 1802)

Nn+Ng: *setzt eure ruhe seiner hitz entgegen, ermüdet ihn, nehmt **seiner blößen** wahr.* (DWB)

Nn+NSdass: *Als er wahr nahm, **daß der Passagier ein besonderes Vielek oder Dreiek mit dem rechten Beine über dem Gaule, absizend beschrieb,** [...]* (DWDS: Jean Paul 1804)

Nn+esNSdass: *Ich nahm es nicht wahr, **daß mich etwas stach.*** (JA)

Nn+NSw-: [...] *so habe man wahr genommen/ **wie seine von ihm aufgezogene Jungen umb ihn beweglich sich gestellet/** [...]* (DWDS: Martin Geier 1672)

Nn+Na+INF: *Weil der Andere nur **Alles** nach physischen Gesetzen **entstehn und aufhören** wahrnahm* (DS 2, 419)

**Gegenwartsdeutsch:** Nn+Na/NSdass/NSob/NSw-

Nn+Na: *Und jetzt erst scheint er **den Gast** wahrzunehmen.* (DWDS: Hans-Ulrich Horster [d. i. Eduard Rhein] 1950)

Nn+NSdass: *Sie hat [...] betroffen wahrnehmen müssen, **daß jeder kleine Ansatz zu einem Flirt an der Unnahbarkeit dieses Deutschen scheiterte.*** (DWDS: Hans-Ulrich Horster [d. i. Eduard Rhein] 1950)

Nn+NSob: [...] *dass der Fahrer nicht wahrnimmt, **ob der Elektromotor allein für Bewegung sorgt oder den Diesel unterstützt,** [...]* (DWDS: Berliner Zeitung 6.11.2004)

Nn+NSw-: *Man muß nur einmal als Eifersüchtiger wahrgenommen haben, **wie solche weiblichen Frauen über ihre Weiblichkeit verfügen,** [...]* (DWDS: Theodor W. Adorno 1951)



Der einwertige Gebrauch (vgl. mhd. Nn) ist untypisch für *wahrnehmen*, ebenso kann die Dreiwertigkeit (vgl. nhd. Nn+Na+INF) für eine Ausnahme gehalten werden. Als nominales Objekt erscheint der Genitiv in den Sprachperioden Ahd., Mhd., Fnhd. und Nhd., seit dem Mhd. steht neben ihm der Akkusativ. Der Kasus des Korrelats bei einem Nebensatz ist im Mhd. und Fnhd. Genitiv, im Nhd. Akkusativ. Mit dem Akkusativ- bzw. Genitivobjekt wechselt im Fnhd. das Präpositionalobjekt mit *auf*, dem das Präpositionaladverb *darauf* als Korrelat vor dem Nebensatz entspricht. Ein weiteres Korrelat des Nebensatzes ist *dazu*, das nur für das Mhd. belegbar ist.

### 3. Abschließende Bemerkungen

#### 3.1. Zum Status der Valenzträger

Wie einigen der oben angeführten Belege und darüber hinaus dem hier untersuchten Korpus zu entnehmen ist, können Elemente wie *Acht* und *geben*, *Acht* und *haben* und *Acht* und *nehmen* sowie *wahr* und *nehmen* in bestimmten Sprachperioden sowohl getrennt als auch zusammengeschrieben werden. Trotz der Zusammenschreibung lassen sich die entsprechenden Konstruktionen im Fnhd. und Nhd. als Phraseme klassifizieren. So gibt es noch im Fnhd. mehrere Anzeichen dafür, dass z.B. *acht* ein selbstständiges Substantiv darstellt. Es kann erstens ohne die Verben *geben*, *haben* und *nehmen* verwendet werden, vgl. *on alle acht* (PHD 1, 40). Zweitens kann es zusammen mit einem Artikel oder der Negation *kein* vorkommen, vgl. [...], *das sein adel vnd landschaft des spiels ein acht hetten* (PHD 1, 40) und das Beispiel *Er hat seinen reben kein Acht noch rechnung gehabt* oben. Drittens kann sich an *acht* ein Adjektiv anschließen, vgl. das Beispiel *dass alle .. unsere zolner .. und aufsecher guet acht und aufsechen haben* [...] oben. Viertens kann *acht* mit einem anderen Substantiv in Nektion erscheinen, vgl. die letzten beiden Beispiele sowie das Beispiel [...] *hat man mehr sorg vnd acht vor sie als vor ein diener* oben. Und fünftens kann zwischen *acht* und z.B. *geben* eine Ergänzung treten, vgl. [...], *also das niemands odder gar wenig leute acht drauff geben*, [...] (Luther: WA 21, 20).

Auch *wahr* ist ursprünglich ein Substantiv, und zwar mit der Bedeutung ‚Wahrnehmung, Aufmerksamkeit, Beobachten, Bemerkung‘. Der substantivische Charakter von *wahr* macht sich im Fnhd. noch darin bemerkbar, dass es mit einem Adjektiv (besonders *gut*) verbunden werden konnte und dass *wahr nehmen* ein Genitivobjekt zu sich nahm (der Genitiv war anfangs von *wahr* abhängig, wie

auch im Falle von *acht*). Weiterhin konnte *wahr* zusammen mit einem anderen Substantiv auftreten, vgl. das Beispiel *der künig .. der do mer die schöne ires leibs **acht** vnd wargenomen het dann die andern* oben, und zwischen *wahr* und *nehmen* konnte z.B. ein Präpositionaladverb als Korrelat eines Nebensatzes stehen, vgl. das Beispiel [...] *und söllent war **daruff** nemen, das sü gûte gelt und guldin empfohent* oben.

### 3.2. Wörterbücher vs. Korpora

Im Hinblick auf die Benutzung von Wörterbüchern und Korpora als Hilfsmitteln für die Darstellung der diachronen Entwicklung der gewählten Verbphraseme hat sich herausgestellt, dass es nicht reicht, nur Wörterbücher heranzuziehen, wenn man eine möglichst umfassende Beschreibung der Gesamtvalenz dieser Einheiten anstrebt. Dies trifft sowohl auf historische als auch moderne Wörterbücher des Deutschen zu. In den lexikografischen Quellen können insbesondere Informationen zu satzförmigen Objekten fehlen; falls sie jedoch vorhanden sind, ist den Korrelaten nicht genügend Beachtung geschenkt worden. Aber auch für Kasusobjekte hat die Berücksichtigung der hier zugrunde gelegten Korpora neue Erkenntnisse erbracht, mit denen bisherige Wörterbuchauskünfte vervollständigt werden können. – Die Bedeutung von Korpusrecherchen hebt sich außerdem dadurch hervor, dass einige wichtige Wörterbuchprojekte, von denen man sich auch exakte valenzbezogene Präsentationen erhoffen darf, noch nicht abgeschlossen sind; entsprechende Wörterbücher sind AWB, MWB, FWB und GWB. Belege zum Ahd. können in der Belegkartei des AWB und in digitalen Korpora, zum Mhd. im elektronischen Belegarchiv des MWB und in digitalen Korpora, zum Fnhd. in digitalen und nicht digitalen Korpora<sup>9</sup> sowie zum Nhd. und Gegenwartsdeutschen in den besonders umfangreichen Korpora der Wortauskunftssysteme DWDS und COSMAS II gesucht werden.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.3. Zum Vorkommen der Verbphraseme in verschiedenen Sprachperioden

Anhand der oben durchgeführten Analyse ist weiterhin deutlich geworden, dass die Anzahl der Verbphraseme von Sprachperiode zu Sprachperiode variieren kann. Phraseme, die in allen Perioden vorhanden sind, sind *gewahr werden* und *wahrnehmen*. Vom Mhd. abgesehen kommt *in Acht nehmen* in allen Sprachperioden vor, wobei

jedoch zu beachten ist, dass es als Vertreter des Wortfelds ‚Aufmerksamkeit und Wahrnehmen‘ im heutigen Deutsch kaum noch üblich ist. Auch *Acht haben*, *Acht nehmen*, *innewerden* und *innen werden* gehören zu den Phrasemen, die je mit einer Ausnahme (Ahd. bzw. Gegenwartsdeutsch) in allen Perioden anzutreffen sind (allerdings lässt sich *Acht nehmen* in der Gegenwartssprache sehr selten belegen). Die Phraseme *Acht gewinnen* und *Achten haben* beschränken sich jeweils auf eine Sprachperiode: das erste Phrasem auf das Mhd., das zweite auf das Fnhd. Zu *Achtung geben* und *Achtung haben* ist fernerhin festzustellen, dass *Achtung* einen Bedeutungswechsel erfahren hat, was diese Ausdrücke für das jetzige Deutsch aus unserem Wortfeld ausschließt. Ein weiteres Analyseergebnis ist, dass es Unterschiede in der Häufigkeit eines Phrasems in verschiedenen Sprachperioden gibt. Mit dichtem Vorkommen gehen oft mehrere Variationen in der Valenz des betreffenden Phrasems einher.

### 3.4. Zur Entwicklung des Genitivobjekts

Eines der zentralen Themen in der Erforschung der Geschichte der deutschen Valenzsyntax ist die Rolle des Genitivobjekts. Diese Studie hat bewiesen, dass nicht nur verbale Einwortlexeme, sondern auch Verbphraseme vom Rückgang des Genitivobjekts betroffen sind. Für einen deutlichen Einschnitt in der Entwicklung des Genitivobjekts wird in der Regel der Übergang vom Mhd. zum Fnhd. gehalten. Der Genitiv wurde durch den Akkusativ oder eine Präpositionalkonstruktion ersetzt, konkurrierte aber lange mit einer dieser Formen oder mit beiden. Dies ließ im Fnhd. z.T. eine reiche qualitative Polyvalenz entstehen, die noch im Nhd. weiter bestand (vgl. Akkusativ/Genitiv/Präpositionalkonstruktion mit *auf* + Akkusativ bei *wahrnehmen* im Fnhd. und bei *gewahr werden* im Nhd. sowie bei *Acht haben* und *Acht nehmen* im Fnhd. und Nhd.). Mit dem Akkusativ konnte der Genitiv aber bereits im Mhd. wechseln, wie die Belege bei *gewahr werden* und *wahrnehmen* zeigen. Die Verbreitung des Akkusativs wurde sicherlich durch ein häufiges Vorkommen neutraler Pronomina (*es*, *alles*, *solches* usw.) gefördert. Diese Formen wurden nicht mehr als Genitiv, sondern als Akkusativ empfunden, was später eine Übertragung des Akkusativs auf Substantive ermöglichte. Beispiele für eine frühe Konkurrenz zwischen Genitiv und Präpositionalkonstruktion wiederum sind die mhd. Verbphraseme *Acht haben* und *Achtung haben*, bei denen das Präpositionalobjekt normalerweise die Form *auf* + Akkusativ hatte.

Im Ganzen hat das Genitivobjekt auch bei Verbphrasemen seit dem Nhd. stark an Boden verloren, völlig verschwunden ist es jedoch im gegenwärtigen Deutsch nicht. Vor allem in gehobenem Sprachgebrauch lässt sich der Genitiv heute noch z.B. bei *Acht haben*, *gewahr werden* und *innewerden* beobachten.

### *Abkürzungsverzeichnis*

Nn = Nomen im Nominativ (als Subjekt)  
 Na = Nomen im Akkusativ (als Objekt)  
 Nd = Nomen im Dativ (als Objekt)  
 Ng = Nomen im Genitiv (als Objekt)  
 pNaufA = Nomen mit der Präposition auf + Akkusativ (als Objekt)  
 pNüberA = Nomen mit der Präposition über + Akkusativ (als Objekt)  
 pNum = Nomen mit der Präposition um (als Objekt)  
 pNvorA = Nomen mit der Präposition vor + Akkusativ (als Objekt)  
 pNvorD = Nomen mit der Präposition vor + Dativ (als Objekt)  
 pNzu = Nomen mit der Präposition zu (als Objekt)  
 INF = Infinitiv ohne die Konjunktion zu (als Objekt)  
 INFzu = Infinitiv mit der Konjunktion zu (als Objekt)  
 daraufINFzu = Infinitiv mit dem Korrelat darauf und der Konjunktion zu (als Objekt)  
 HS = Hauptsatz (als Objekt)  
 NSdass = Nebensatz mit der Konjunktion dass (als Subjekt bzw. Objekt)  
 daraufNSdass = Nebensatz mit dem Korrelat darauf und der Konjunktion dass (als Objekt)  
 dasNSdass = Nebensatz mit dem Korrelat das und der Konjunktion dass (als Objekt)  
 desNSdass = Nebensatz mit dem Korrelat des und der Konjunktion dass (als Objekt)  
 dessenNSdass = Nebensatz mit dem Korrelat dessen und der Konjunktion dass (als Objekt)  
 esNSdass = Nebensatz mit dem Korrelat es und der Konjunktion dass (als Objekt)  
 NSob = Nebensatz mit der Konjunktion ob (als Objekt)  
 daraufNSob = Nebensatz mit dem Korrelat darauf und der Konjunktion ob (als Objekt)  
 desNSob = Nebensatz mit dem Korrelat des und der Konjunktion ob (als Objekt)  
 NSw- = Nebensatz mit einer w-Frage (als Subjekt bzw. Objekt)  
 daraufNSw- = Nebensatz mit dem Korrelat darauf und einer w-Frage (als Objekt)  
 dazuNSw- = Nebensatz mit dem Korrelat dazu und einer w-Frage (als Objekt)  
 desNSw- = Nebensatz mit dem Korrelat des und einer w-Frage (als Objekt)  
 dessenNSw- = Nebensatz mit dem Korrelat dessen und einer w-Frage (als Objekt)  
 esNSw- = Nebensatz mit dem Korrelat es und einer w-Frage (als Objekt)

### *Anmerkungen:*

\*Ich danke Albrecht Greule herzlich für die kritische Durchsicht des Manuskripts.

<sup>1</sup> Zu den Plänen mit dem HSVW vgl. genauer Greule/Korhonen (2016), zu denen mit beiden Wörterbüchern Greule/Korhonen (2021).

<sup>2</sup> Zur Valenz von Verbphrasemen vgl. u.a. Korhonen (1995a: 26ff., 74ff., 82ff., 87f., 95–113, 315–336; 2011: 49f., 197–214; 2016; 2018: 210–212), Gréciano (2003), Wotjak/Heine (2007), Stumpf (2015) und Greule/Korhonen (2021).

<sup>3</sup> Ich danke Frau Dr. Brigitte Bulitta, Leiterin der Redaktion des Althochdeutschen Wörterbuchs, herzlich dafür, dass ich die Belegkartei in Leipzig benutzen durfte.

<sup>4</sup> Zum Begriff und Vorkommen der Polyvalenz in der Geschichte der deutschen Sprache vgl. genauer z.B. Korhonen (1995b; 2016; 2018) und Greule/Korhonen (2021).

<sup>5</sup> Im Falle von Wörterbuchbelegen wird nur die Abkürzung des Wörterbuchs angegeben, wenn es online verfügbar ist. Bei anderen Wörterbüchern und Korpusbelegen erscheint eine genauere Stellenangabe.

<sup>6</sup> Dass dem Satz die Umgebung Nn+Na zugeordnet wurde, erklärt sich daraus, dass der Passivumschreibung mit Subjekt in einem Aktivsatz die Struktur Subjekt + Akkusativobjekt entsprechen würde.

<sup>7</sup> Bei dieser Umgebung liegt der Verdacht nahe, dass es sich in JM um einen Druckfehler handelt. Anstelle von *seinen reben* wäre *seiner reben* zu erwarten, denn das Dativobjekt lässt sich in keiner anderen Quelle nachweisen. Auch zu *rechnung haben* finden sich in JM (323c, 326d) nur Belege mit Genitivobjekt (diese Belege werden auch im DWB zitiert). Es überrascht, dass der aus JM stammende Beleg im FWB ohne Kommentar erscheint.

<sup>8</sup> Die Präposition geht hier auf das Schwanken zwischen *vor* und *für* zurück. Dass *vor* bei diesem Phrasem auftaucht, dürfte mit der Nektion von *acht* mit *sorg* zusammenhängen. In semantischer Hinsicht nähert sich *acht haben* in diesem Beleg der Bedeutung ‚sich um jmdn. kümmern‘.

<sup>9</sup> Zu digital zugänglichen Korpora zum Ahd., Mhd. und Fnhd. vgl. Prinz (2016).

<sup>10</sup> Mit Hilfe von DWDS lassen sich auch Belege zum Fnhd. ermitteln. COSMAS II ist über die Internetadresse <https://www.ids-mannheim.de/cosmas2/erreichbar>.

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- GWB = Goethe-Wörterbuch (1978ff.). Herausgegeben von der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen und der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Stuttgart. [http://woerterbuchnetz.de/cgi-bin/WBNetz/wbgui\\_py?sigle=GWB](http://woerterbuchnetz.de/cgi-bin/WBNetz/wbgui_py?sigle=GWB)
- JA = Adelung, Johann Christoph (1793–1801): Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart, mit beständiger Vergleichung der übrigen Mundarten, besonders aber der Oberdeutschen. 4 Bände. 2., vermehrte und verbesserte Ausgabe. Leipzig. [http://woerterbuchnetz.de/cgi-bin/WBNetz/wbgui\\_py?sigle=Adelung](http://woerterbuchnetz.de/cgi-bin/WBNetz/wbgui_py?sigle=Adelung)
- JC = Campe, Joachim Heinrich (1807–1811): Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache. 5 Bände. Braunschweig.
- JM = Maaler, Josua (1971 [1561]): Die Teütsch spraach. Dictionarium Germanicolatium novum. Zürich (Nachdruck Hildesheim/New York).
- ML = Lexer, Matthias (1992 [1872–1878]): Mittelhochdeutsches Handwörterbuch. 3 Bände. Leipzig (Nachdruck Stuttgart). [http://woerterbuchnetz.de/cgi-bin/WBNetz/wbgui\\_py?sigle=Lexer](http://woerterbuchnetz.de/cgi-bin/WBNetz/wbgui_py?sigle=Lexer)
- MWB = Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch (2006ff.). Herausgegeben von Kurt Gärtner/Klaus Grubmüller/Karl Stackmann. Stuttgart. <http://www.mhdwb-online.de/wb.php>
- PHD = Dietz, Ph. (1973 [1870–1872]): Wörterbuch zu Dr. Martin Luthers Deutschen Schriften. 2., unveränderte Auflage. Band 1–2,1 (A–Hals). Leipzig (Nachdruck Hildesheim/New York).
- RGB = Bebermeyer, Renate/Bebermeyer, Gustav (1993ff.): Wörterbuch zu Martin Luthers deutschen Schriften. Wortmonographien zum Lutherwortschatz. Anknüpfend an Philipp Dietz, Wörterbuch zu Dr. Martin Luthers Deutschen Schriften, erster Band und zweiter Band, Lieferung 1 (A–Hals) 1870–1872. Hildesheim/Zürich/New York.

## 1.2. Korpora

AWB Belegkartei = Belegkartei des Althochdeutschen Wörterbuchs.

DWDS = Der deutsche Wortschatz von 1600 bis heute. <https://www.dwds.de/r>

Luther-Bibel = D. Martin Luther (1972): Die gantze Heilige Schrifft Deudsch. Wittenberg 1545. Letzte zu Luthers Lebzeiten erschienene Ausgabe. Herausgegeben von Hans Volz unter Mitarbeit von Heinz Blanke. München.

MHDBDB = Mittelhochdeutsche Begriffsdatenbank. <http://mhdbdb.sbg.ac.at>

MWB Belegarchiv = Elektronisches Belegarchiv des Mittelhochdeutschen Wörterbuchs. <http://www.mhdwb-online.de/lemmaliste.php?buchstabe=A>

ReM = Referenzkorpus Mittelhochdeutsch (1050–1350). <https://www.linguistics.rub.de/rem/>

WA = D. Martin Luthers Werke (1883–2009). Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Band 1–73. Weimar.

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## ANIMALS IN EGYPTIAN PROVERBS

**Abstract:** This study is based on an empirical analysis of all animal proverbs mentioned in the collection of Egyptian proverbs by Taymour. The analysis is both quantitative as well as qualitative. The total number of animal proverbs in the collection has reached a percentage of nearly 14% which indicates their importance. The analysis also categorises the animals according to their frequency. Another aim consists of analysing the portrayal of animals in the proverbs. The analysis lists the features given to the animals. Furthermore, the study tried to answer the question if a possible tie exists between the different kinds of animals and the positive or negative features given to them.

**Keywords:** animal, animal proverbs, Egyptian proverbs, features, pairs, Taymour.

### *Introduction*

This study aims at analysing the portrayal of animals in the Egyptian proverbs. For this purpose, the collection of Ahmad Taymour is chosen as it is considered to be the most important collection of Egyptian proverbs. The analysis is both quantitative as well as qualitative. As this collection will serve as the corpus of the underlying study all numbers and statistics are based on it. Any proverb outside this collection will be ignored, so as to make the statistics as accurate as possible. The study will try to answer the following questions: How many proverbs contain animals in the collection? How frequent is every animal presented in the proverbs? Which animals are the most frequent in the proverbs?

Following the quantitative analysis, the animal proverbs will be analysed on a qualitative basis. Each group of proverbs containing a certain animal will be analysed with the aim of painting a picture of how this certain animal is portrayed in the proverbs. Purpose of the study is to answer the following question: How is

a certain animal portrayed in the proverbs and what features are given to it?

In order to answer these questions, it will be proceeded as follows. Every proverb will be analysed with the aim of finding out the feature that is given to the animal. These proverbs will be grouped together according to the feature they represent. For example, if the monkey is described as ugly this certain feature will be stated and all the proverbs that show this feature will appear under it. This will show the traits of each animal. The numbers of proverbs showing each feature is of great significance as it will show how a certain trait is tied to a certain animal. Not each meaning of a proverb will be given, as the feature under which it is categorised often shows the meaning of the proverb. In brackets we will give the meaning of the proverb as it appears in the collection of Taymour, if – in spite of naming the main feature – the meaning is not clear. Our aim is not to give an explanation for each proverb – as this is not the purpose of the study – but to point out the features of each animal as portrayed in the proverbs. If further explanation is needed, I will give the necessary explanation without putting it in brackets, in order to distinguish between the explanations of Taymour and my own explanations and comments. If a proverb does not indicate a certain feature or a trait it will be left out of the analysis, but still its number will be mentioned in the appendix in order to show the total sum of the proverbs, in which animals occur, as this is one of the aims of this study.

Of special interest are also the proverbs that contain two different animals. It is also one of the aims of this study to answer the following questions: How many pairs are in the corpus? Which animals come in pairs? Which are the animals that usually appear together in pairs? On what basis are the pairs chosen?

It is important to state that some proverbs do not seem to concentrate on a trait or a feature of the animal itself, but despite of that they are going to be analysed in the study as they are indirectly showing a trait of a certain animal as in the following proverb: “The rich man was hurt by a thorn, so the whole town was in confusion, and the poor man was bitten by a serpent, they told him: ‘Hush! Do not talk!’.” (2067) The proverb is about the rich and the poor, but it conveys indirectly that snakes are harmful.

As already indicated not all proverbs have been analysed, as some do not show a certain trait of the animals. The following proverbs should serve as examples: “Did you see the camel, he said I neither saw (the camel) nor the camel driver” (683) (The proverb means being very secretive.), “When we remembered the cat, it came jumping.” (176) As the aim of these two proverbs are not to portray the animals, they were left out of the analysis, which explains the discrepancy between the total sum of the proverbs containing a certain animal and the proverbs which have been part of the analysis.

It should also be noted that out of the total sum of 3188 proverbs in Taymours collection there are nearly 200 similes. In spite of this fact the ones among them containing animals were taken into consideration because some of them emphasize and clarify some traits of the animals.

#### *Explanatory notes*

In order to give an overview over the whole corpus an appendix will list every animal occurring in the proverbs by order of the alphabet. It will also contain the total number of occurrences of each animal. The number of each proverb – as it occurs in the collection of Taymour – will be noted.

The number of each proverb – according to the collection of Taymour – will also be referred to in brackets, every time the proverb is mentioned in the text. The cited proverbs will be put in quotation marks. They will only be written in the English translation. For that purpose, I have translated all the proverbs myself. I tried to preserve the Arabic syntax of the proverbs, as to give a taste of the original wording, knowing that it could be translated in a better way that would be accepted by the English speaker. For example, the proverb “The highest of your horses, ride it.” (159) could be translated as follows: ‘Ride the highest of your horses.’ But the actual meaning of the proverb is: Do the utmost that you can (the highest) but you will not scare or intimidate me. When the proverb is used the emphasis is placed on the “highest of horses”, which is the reason for starting the proverb with these words.

If some animals come in pairs, the proverb is going to be explained only once under the first animal. When mentioning the proverb within the analysis of the second animal only the number of the proverb will occur under the trait that it represents. In brackets it will be referred to the first animal.

The analysis of the proverbs containing a certain animal will appear under the name of the animal. The animals will be arranged on the basis of frequency in a descending order starting with the most frequent. If two or more animals have the same total number of proverbs they will be arranged according to the alphabet.

### *Analysis*

#### *Dog* (50 proverbs):

Dogs are inferior: "Doing my errands with my own hands is better than having to tell the dog oh my master." (162), "If you need something from the dog, tell him oh my master." (644), "The funeral is heated and the deceased is a dog." (973 = worthless), "If the dog sees its status it would not shake its ear!" (2432 and 2550) (If the dog looks at its value it would not shake its ears in pride.), Lions are superior to dogs: "The dog is a lion in its house." (2436) (The dog feels itself superior in its house, because it is appreciated by its home mates or so the dog thinks.) In spite of the fact that lions are superior to dogs, sometimes "A living dog is better than a dead lion." (2434) "A free dog is better than a lion in captivity." (2435) (This is stated in the proverb, because a free or living dog is more useful to itself and others.), "As the horses were scarce they saddled the dogs." (2869)

Dogs are persistent in their (bad) habits: "Cut off the ear of the dog and let it hang, he who has a habit will not change it." (190) (Cutting off the ear of the dog will not change its habits.), "If they dress up the dog with Kashmir and let him walk in a procession, it does not forget the word "keshkesh" (an onomatopoeic sound addressed to dogs) nor its sleeping in the pond of dirt." (664), "The tail of the dog can never be straightened." (1264), "The dog stays a dog, even if its neckband is gold." (2437)

Dogs are fearful: "Like the dog, it only shows courage in its hole." (1522) (It is the place of the dog, where he has someone to protect him.), "Like the dog, it is scared and scares others." (1523), Dogs are only brave in their own homes: "The dog shows bravery only at the door of its own hole (den)." (2438), "A dog

that barks does not bite.” (2442) (This proverb is used for a person used to insulting others, but in the end he is a coward who should not be feared.)

Dogs are mean: “Like the street dogs, they bite with no real reason.” (1517), “If the dog bites me I have no teeth to bite it, and if a mean person insults me, I have no tongue to insult him.” (607) (The meanness of the dog is referred to by the second part of the proverb.), “The fog does not make the dogs blind.” (1749) (It is said of people who want to harm others and nothing can stop them.)

Dogs are impure: “The white one among the dogs is impure.” (47), “That that the lion eats and purifies is better than that that the dog eats and taints.” (426), “Like the dogs, (even) white ones among them are impure.” (1515)

Dogs are useless: “If the wool of the dog becomes long, it is not sheared off.” (2433), “Will the one who shears off the dogs get wool?” (2979 and 2617)

Dogs are dangerous: “A thousand dogs that bark with you, is better than one dog that barks against you.” (237)

Dogs are ungrateful: “I raised a dog and it turned and bit me.” (1303)

Dogs are lazy: “Like the dogs, they love hunger and rest.” (1520)

Some proverbs show the dog as a negative creature without precisely mentioning the exact feature. “A white dog and a black dog. He said they are all sons of dogs.” (2430) (Taymour says that they are not different from each other as they have the same root. God curse them all!)

Dogs are not treacherous: “The dog does not bite its brother’s ear.” (2439 and 2981)

Dogs are hardworking: “Sleep a dog and wake up a lion.” (736) (Work hard like a dog and they will cherish you like a lion.)

*Donkey* (50 proverbs):

Donkeys are of commercial value: “After hunger and scarcity he has a donkey and a female mule.” (787), “Your lame donkey spares you having to ask the mean.” (1093), “My lame donkey spares me (to ask for) your horse oh my cousin on my father’s

side.” (1094), “Your lame donkey and not the camel of your cousin on my father’s side.” (1103), The camel and the horse are more valuable than the donkey. “A donkey that does not belong to you, its strength is of iron.” (1098) (You don’t preserve it.), “A donkey who belongs only to you is better than a horse of noblest breed.” (1099), “Take from the donkey that left its chain.” (1137) (If you lose the donkey at least keep its chain.), “Trading a small donkey for a small donkey is a skill.” (2768)

Donkeys are hardworking: “He is a donkey of work.” (1096) (He is a person who does all that is asked of him and in the best of ways.), “Like the donkey, it likes to carry the heavy weights.” (1410), “Like the donkeys of the grape they carry the grapes but they do not taste them.” (1413) (Donkeys carry grapes under forced labor.), “Oh donkey, you are invited to the wedding, the donkey said: ‘It is either (to use me) for forced labor or to spill dirt’.” (3053) (Refers to a person that nobody bothers to be good to, only if his services are needed.)

Donkeys are a means of transport: “The donkey died and the visits stopped.” (2592) (The visitors used to come on the donkey.)

Donkeys are inferior: “He who has henna can dye the tail of his donkey.” (311) (If you have something in abundance, squander it the way you want and on things that are not worthy of it.), “I am great and you are great, who will drive the donkeys?” (553) also “If I am a prince and you are a prince, who will drive the donkeys?” (2537) Even dealing with donkeys counts as inferior. “What do the donkeys know about eating ginger.” (714)

Donkeys are lazy: “Like the donkeys of the donkey drivers, they long to hear the sound hess (onomatopoetic expression addressed to donkeys).” (1412) (“Hess” means stop. These donkeys want to stop working.)

Donkeys are regarded as stupid: “The person who is not jealous belongs to the donkeys.” (384) (Said about someone who is not moved by the success of others.), “What would you say about a guy who did not love nor hang on to love, they said: ‘He will live a donkey and die a donkey’.” (719), “The words are addressed to you, my female neighbor, and you are a female donkey.” (2428) (The criticism is addressed to you and you are stupid and you do not understand it.)

Donkeys are obstinate: “The donkey has a voice in its head, it will not rest until it screams it out.” (1097)

Donkeys are rough: "Like donkeys when they joke, it's all biting and kicking." (1549)

Donkeys are difficult: "Like the donkey it obeys if it is driven by a prod." (1409) (Donkeys only obey if you treat them with strictness.)

Donkeys are untidy: "Cursed is the peasant with his visit and his donkey." (3164) (Even if the peasant brings gifts and is kind, his donkey will eat and make the place dirty.)

*Camel* (35 proverbs):

Camels are hardworking: "He who makes himself a camel should not complain of work." (484) (He who pretends to be great should not complain from the troubles of his greatness.), "Eat like a camel eats and stand up before the men." (2349) (It is no shame for you to eat a lot as long as you go to work before others.), "Why if you make yourself a camel do you complain?" (2539) (If you make yourself a camel which endures carrying heavy weights, why do you complain?)

Camels are of great commercial value: "If you love, love a moon (pretty woman) and if you steal, steal a camel." (606), 1103 (see donkey), "A cat that only you own is better than a camel shared with others." (2251), "What loading and what carrying, you went on a camel and came back on a cat." (3062) (In spite of the great trouble you endured you did not reach what you wanted, but came smaller in value than before.)

Camels are a means of transport: "Oh how many camels are tied for the pilgrimage." (3098) (People used to go to the pilgrimage on camels.)

Camels are greedy: "Like the camels, its mouth is in a pile of food and its eye on another pile." (1397) (This shows a greedy person who has not finished eating and has his eyes already on other food.)

Camels have flaws: "If the camel looks at its hump, it would cut it off." (967) (The camel cuts it off in order to hide this flaw.), "If the camel sees its hunchback it would fall and break its neck." (2551) (If the camel sees its mistakes, it would die in denial.)

Camels are slow: "He who is in a hurry, should not drive a camel." (2736)

Camels are big (in size): “What the ant gathers in a year, the camel takes in its hoof.” (254), “The door lets a camel through.” (734) and “The lane lets a camel pass through.” (1604) (Told to a person who is being urged to leave.), “Their cat is a camel and their fleas men.” (2261) (This proverb is told of people who exaggerate.)

*Cat* (28 proverbs):

Cats are treacherous: “He who plays with the cat is not safe from its scratching.” (512), “He who catches the cat, the cat will scratch.” (514), “You hit the cat and it will scratch you.” (889) “Talk to the cat, it will scratch you.” (2424) (The proverb is talking about a mean person who is used to hurting others.)

Cats are superior to mice (weasels): “The injustice of the cat is better than the justice of the mouse.” (984) (The cat is better than the mouse.), “The dream of the cat is all mice.” (1090), “The cat is away, play oh mouse.” (2033), “The impulsive mouse becomes the prey of the cat.” (2083), “The cat does not run from a weasel.” (2257) (The strong does not run from the weak.)

Cats are ungrateful: “Like the cats, they eat and deny (having eaten).” (1504) (People believe that cats forget who fed them and that they don’t cling to them like dogs do.)

Cats are not trustworthy: “They gave the cat the key of the tower (of pigeons).” (2738) (It will eat all the pigeons.), “Like a cat, it praises (in prayer) and steals.” (1502) (The cat pretends to be pious.)

Cats are survivors: “Like the cats, they have seven souls.” (1503) (People believe that cats have seven lives.)

Cats are not valuable: 2251 and 3062 (see camel)

Cats are small: 2261 (see camel)

*Monkey* (24 proverbs):

Monkeys are ugly: “On the outside it is a flower and on the inside a monkey.” (770) (The outside is good looking and the inside ugly.), “The monkey looked through its notebooks and found nothing but its fat lips and its nails.” (1257) (The monkey looked at himself and found nothing but ugliness.), “The morning of the monkeys is better than the morning of beardless men.” (1726) (The people regarded it as a bad omen if they saw a grown man without beard or moustache in the morning and they preferred seeing a monkey in spite of its ugliness.), “They told the monkey,



they are going to make you uglier, so it said: 'They will make me a deer!'. ' (2203) (The monkey is so ugly that they cannot make it uglier, they can only make it prettier.), "The monkey is a gazelle in the eyes of its mother." (2234), "A monkey who sells river mus-sels! Damned be the merchandise because of the face of the mer-chant." (2237), "You, who have taken (married) the monkey be-cause it has a lot of money, the money perishes and the monkey will stay as it is." (3116), "Damned be the honey if it comes from the face of the monkey" (3163)

Monkeys are reckless: "What does the monkey care about its face being black." (717) (The monkey doesn't care about the scan-dal.), "They told the monkey to cover its face with a veil, but it said: 'This is a face used to scandal'." (2188)

Monkeys are destructive: "What the grandfathers leave be-hind, the monkeys destroy." (260)

Monkeys are mean: "The people left and the monkey stayed." (1284)

Monkeys are fearful: "Like monkeys, they are afraid of their own shadow." (1500)

Pairs: "An agreeing monkey and not a straying gazelle" (2235)

*Chicken* (21 proverbs):

Chicken is precious food: "Don't feed me a fat chicken, and let me sleep in sorrow." (820), "(He is) a chicken with keshk (= kind of dough)." (2094) He is like a beloved precious meal which means he is very dear and cherished. "A chicken between four is of no use." (2095) (No one will have enough to eat.)

Chickens are of commercial value: "Like the poulterer, he has a chicken, he does not die." (1485) (He has his income secured.) Also: "He has a chicken, he does not die." (2548)

Chickens are useful: "He who has a chicken, will not lose a grain." (313)

Chickens are persistent in their habits: "The chicken always digs up, even on a heap of grain." (2097) (The chicken does not need to dig, but this is its habit.)

Chickens are vulnerable: "He who is afraid of the weasel should not raise small chicken." (448), "A snail kite does not

throw chicks.” (1035) (A snail kite likes to eat chicks, so how do you expect her to give them away.), “Does the snail kite throw chicks.” (2984)

*Horse* (18 proverbs):

Horses are valuable: “The highest of your horses, ride it.” (159) (Show your real good value or enjoy the best of the blessings God gave you.) Today they use it as follows: Do whatever you can, you will not scare or intimidate me. “He did not have a family for himself, so he brought a horse.” (2580), “He who has one qirat (a measure = small share) in the mare can ride.” (T 337), “The coward dies, he becomes a horseman.” (3177) (People exaggerate in praising the dead.) To ride a horse is an asset because of the value of the horse unlike the donkey., “The owner of one qirat (a measure = small share) in the mare can ride.” (1719) also 1094 (see donkey), “The cover does not put down the horse of noble origin.” (2099) (The shabby clothes do not effect the value of a man.), 2869 (see dog)

Horses are strong: “The good one of your horses, strain it.” (1005) (It will not be effected by the great effort as it is strong.)

Horses are a working force: “Like the horses of the mill, neither force nor sight.” (1420) (Those weak defective horses are still able to work despite their poor health.)

*Snake* (18 proverbs):

Snakes are harmful: “He who is bitten by a snake is afraid of its tail.” (279), “He who plays with the snake will have to be bitten by it.” (509) (The habit of the snake is biting, so the one who plays with it must be bitten.), “He who is bitten by a snake is afraid of the rope.” (328 and 2769), “The snake charmer only dies through the snake.” (1014), “The snake charmer does not forget the death of his son and the snake does not forget the cutting off of its tail.” (1015), “The rich man was hurt by a thorn, so the whole town was in confusion, and the poor man was bitten by a snake, they told him: ‘Hush! Do not talk!’.” (2067) (People care for the rich and neglect the poor.), “When there is luck, the ant kills the snake.” (1977), “We were prepared for the snake but did not remember the scorpion.” (1054) (Being prepared for the big evil lets a man forget the smaller evil, which in the end harms him.), “The snake gives birth to a small snake.” (1114) (The small snake is as harmful (evil) as its mother.), “He is afraid of the beetle and plays with

the snake.” (3136) (It is strange that he is afraid of the harmless and plays with the harmful.)

Snakes are mean: “Like the snake it stings and remains motionless.” (1393) (It stays where it is so no one knows who bit. It stands for he who hurts in secret.)

Snakes are superior to worms: “When the worm wanted to imitate the snake it stretched itself so it was torn.” (949)

*Bird* (general term) (15 proverbs):

Birds are hard to hold on to because they can easily fly away: “Cut the feather of your bird and it will stay with you, let its feathers grow, it will go to someone else.” (2249), “A bird in your hand is better than a flying crane.” (1907), “A bird in your hand is better than ten in the tree.” (1908), “Money is like the birds, they come and go.” (2121)

Birds are selective: “If something is of any good, the birds would not have thrown it away.” (98 and 2555) The birds especially the crow would only throw away what is useless.

Birds go quickly from one place to the other (are mobile): “The human is a bird and not a bird.” (834) (The man moves around quickly as if he were a bird.)

Some birds can serve as food: “Not every bird, its meat can be eaten.” (2635) (There are the good and the bad.) There are some people you cannot mess with.

Birds are harmful to the crop: “He who cultivates (his land) should not be afraid of the birds.” (464) (If he is able to cultivate, he should be able to drive the birds away.)

*Mouse* (14 proverbs):

Mice are diggers: “The daughter of the female mouse is a digger.” (832)

Mice are inferior to cats: 984, 1090, 2033, 2083 (see cat)

Mice are small: “The mice opened it (a hole) and the bulls fell in it.” (2088 and 3167)

*Crow* (13 proverbs):

Crows are hard to hold to because they can easily fly away: “A snail kite vouched for a crow, he said both would fly away.”

(1034) The same: "A crow vouched for a snail kite, he said both can fly." (2045)

Crows are dangerous: "While coming out of the fire he met a crow that swallowed him." (1115)

Crows are noisy: "Like the assembly of the crows, it begins with a cak and ends with a cak (onomatopoetic expression)." (1398) (Stands for people in a meeting who shout from beginning to end.)

Crows steal: "The joy has not been completed, the crow took it and flew away." (2092) same "Oh joy that has not been completed, the crow took it and flew away." (3079)

Crows are persistent in their habits: "They told the crow why do you steal the soap, it said to harm is a habit." (2185)

Crows are inferior: "A crow does not give birth to a hawk." (2046) (A hawk is superior.)

Crows are not generous: "Oh how many times has the crow got something for its mother." (3097) (The proverb is meant ironically as the crow never brings anything to its mother.)

*Fish* (general term) (13 proverbs):

Fish are edible and of value: "Throw him into the sea and he will come out with a fish in his mouth." (110) (A person who benefits from every situation.)

Fish are mean: "Like the fish, they eat each other." (1439)

Fish are cautious: "Like the fish it goes to the fishing rod with its tail." (1440) (That way it does not get caught.)

*Goat* (14 proverbs):

Goats have a commercial value: "Your father, what did he leave you, he said: 'A young billy goat and it died'." (42) (His inheritance was of very little value and that too did not last.)

Goats are lazy: "Like the goat of the boat, if it floats it eats and if it sinks it eats." (1395) (Told about a person who eats the food of the people at good times and bad times, but does not share the work with them.)

Goats are vigilant: "The screaming goat, its children are not eaten by the wolf." (2758) (The goat is harmless but vigilant.)

*Cow* (11 proverbs):

Cows are useful: "Only the calf of your cow is useful to you." (2700) (Only that that you actually possess is useful to you.)

Cows are ugly: "There is beauty in the young ones even in the cows." (965)

Cows are easy to handle: "It is easier to lead the cows to pasture than to pull with the rope." (1593) (They pull the rope to get water out of the well).

*Sheep* (10 proverbs):

Sheep are harmless: "The butcher is not afraid of the great number of sheep." (958), "He neither beats the wolf nor starves the sheep." (2514) (He keeps both enemies alive, so he can benefit of their enmity.)

Sheep are vigilant: "The screaming sheep, its children are not eaten by the wolf." (2951) (Sheep are harmless but vigilant.)

Sheep are of commercial value: "They told Goha to count his sheep, he said: 'One is sleeping and one is standing'." (2195) (Goha has sheep are very few.) Goha is a known figure in folklore as a wise fool with many stories told about him.

*Bull* (9 proverbs):

Bulls are hardworking, or are a work force: "A scabby bull, but brings water." (1808) (The bull is so powerful and hardworking that it gets the water out of the soil.), "The plowing bull is not to be muzzled." (1809)

Bulls have a commercial value: "He who sells the bull, should not pick his rodents." (431), "Goha is worthier of the meat of his bull." (950) Goha (see sheep) is the one who should benefit from his bull, because it is his possession.

Bulls are ignorant: "Like the bull of God in his clover." (1465) (It knows nothing and is unaware of his surroundings.)

Bulls are big: 2088 and 3167 (see mouse)

*Calf* (9 proverbs):

Calves are aggressive and difficult: "Milking is better than holding to the calves." (1083) (Females are much quieter than males.)

*Scorpion* (8 proverbs):

Scorpions are harmful even deadly: "He who is afraid of the scorpion will encounter the centipede." (450) (He who fears harm and avoids it will be hurt by greater harm.), "The mother-in-law

is a fever and the sister in law is a quiet (lethal) scorpion.” (1092), “Like a scorpion its sting and (= leads to the) the grave.” (1471), “Like the scorpion it stings and remains motionless.” (1472) (It stays where it is, so no one knows who bit. It stands for he who hurts in secret.), “Hostility among relatives is like the sting of the scorpions.” (1868) (The relatives are worse enemies than strangers.), “The scorpion is the sister of the snake.” (1915) (Both are equally harmful.), “A flower and a scorpion beside it.” (2998) (Good things are surrounded by bad things.)

*Beast* (general term) (7 proverbs):

Beasts have commercial value: “He who does not tie his beast, (the beast) will be stolen.” (370) Same “The untied beast is lost.” (835), “Release the pressure off of your beast, it will live longer.” (1162), “The protection of your beast is its cord.” (1913) (Tying the beast will preserve it.)

Beasts are a work force: “The water is in the heel of the beast.” (2915) (The more the beast works the more water you get.) The beast sets the water wheel in motion, so that water is pulled out.

*Beetle* (7 proverbs):

Beetles are ugly: “A beetle saw her daughter on the wall, she said this is a pearl in a thread.” (1183), “The beetle is considered by its mother a bride.” (1184), “Like the beetle they can neither be eaten nor played with.” (1417) (They are useless and ugly.), “Dress up the beetle, it will be the best of women.” (2518)

Beetles are low: “A cockroach loved a beetle, it ran with it through town not knowing how to please it.” (1736) (They are hard to please.)

Beetles are harmless: 3136 (see snake)

*Fly* (7 proverbs):

Flies are annoying (unwanted): “The closed mouth does not let the flies in.” (810), “Like the flies they gather around the weak.” (1422)

Flies are harmful: “He opens his eyes to the flies and then says this is fate from the Merciful (=God).” (3165) (He did not protect his eyes from the flies and then when they became sore, he said that that was fate.)

*Rooster* (7 proverbs):

Roosters have little value: "Give your daughter away in marriage for a rooster and if you need her, she will come when you call her." (995) (It is better that the groom does not offer valuable bridal money and is near your home than getting lots of money and your daughter is living far away.)

Roosters are fearful: "Every rooster cries a lot on its own pile of garbage." (2365) (Only in its own domain does it have the courage to cry out.)

Roosters are ugly: "The face is the face of a rooster and the general condition does not please you." (3006) (On the whole the rooster is ugly.)

*Snail kite* (7 proverbs):

Snail kites are mean: "A snail kite from the mountain drives away the owners of the land." (1036)

Snail kites are ugly: "Like the youngsters of the snail kite, they are neither to be eaten nor can you play with them." (1555) (They are not edible, and they are so ugly that you cannot play with them.)

Snail kites are hard to hold to because they can easily fly away: 1034 and 2045 (see crow)

Snail kites are greedy: 1035 and 2984 (see chicken)

*Wolf* (7 proverbs):

Wolves are harmful: "The son of the wolf cannot be raised up." (27) (It retains the harmful nature of its species despite its being educated and trained to be different.), 2514 (see sheep), 2758 (see goat), 2951 (see sheep)

*Flea* (5 proverbs):

Fleas are small 2261 (see camel)

*Gazelle* (5 proverbs):

Gazelles are good looking: "Love a gazelle or let it be." (158) (If you do something then it should be worth it.) 2203, 2234 and 2235 (see monkey)

*Hornet* (5 proverbs):

Hornets are harmful: "Stay in your nest until the hornet comes and drives you out." (191) (The hornet will expel you and it is a force more powerful than you.), "Leave him in his nest until the hornet drives him out." (1177) (Leave things as they are until they are forced to change.)

Hornets are unwise: "A hornet buzzed, which caused the destruction of its nest." (1216) (The hornet by its buzzing alerted the people to the existence of its nest.)

*Lion* (5 proverbs):

Lions are not treacherous: "Sleep in the womb of a lion and do not sleep in the womb of a man." (735)

Lions are noble: 426 (see dog), 736 (see dog), "A lion is a lion even if it is in a cage." (1577) (Lions are noble even if they are going through hard times. That does not decrease their value.)

*Mule* (5 proverbs):

Mules are harmful: "Like the headstrong mule it bites the one who walks in front of it and kicks the one who walks behind it." (1384)

Mules are mean: "Don't regard the kicking of the impure mule as too much." (2598) (It might even do more and kill you.)

Mules are of commercial value: 787 (see donkey)

*Ant* (4 proverbs):

Ants are hardworking: "Like ants, they carry what is bigger than them." (1546)

Ants are weak: 1977 (see snake)

Ants are tiny: 254 (see camel), "As small as the ant and it does a big thing (a disaster)." (2231)

*Lamb* (4 proverbs):

Lambs have commercial value: "Give me wool today and take a lamb tomorrow." (95) (Better something small today than big tomorrow.)

Lambs are precious food: "The onion of love or of a beloved one is (considered like) a lamb." (780) (Onion is very cheap food while lamb is expensive.)

*Owl* (4 proverbs):

Owls are bad omen: "Follow the owls it will lead you to ruin." (49) (This is said because ruins are the place where the owls live.),



“Like the owl, it does not love but the ruins.” (1372) (The owl is tied in the eyes of the Egyptians with ruins.)

*Bear* (3 proverbs):

Bears are ugly: “You love your sweetheart even if he is a bear.” (1024)

Bears are dangerous: “He was saved from the bear then fell into the den.” (1612) (The bear is a known beast of prey.)

Bears are clumsy: “They told the bear to embroider, it said this needs manual skill.” (2179) (This proverb is sarcastic, as the bear has fat hands unfit for embroidering.)

*Bee* (3 proverbs):

Bees are harmful and at the same time of commercial value: “He who eats the honey must endure the stinging of the bees.” (418)

Bees are not obedient: “Like the bees, they only get out through using smoke.” (1543) (When harvesting the honey, they use smoke to bring the bees out.), “The Words are like the bees, they don’t get out unless smoke is used.” (2426)

*Goose* (3 proverbs):

Geese are good swimmers: “The son of the goose is a swimmer.” (32) (The son is as good as its parents.), “He threatens the geese with drowning” (3175) (Geese cannot fear drowning.)

*Hawk* (3 proverbs):

Hawks have pride: “The hawk is a hawk and has resolution, it would starve and not go down low.” (1599)

Hawks are superior: T 2046 (see crow)

*Pig* (3 proverbs):

Pigs are inferior: “A hair from the skin of the pig is gain.” (1677) (A small gain from something low and bad is good.), “He pretends to be a prince in the skin of a pig.” (1847) “A purse of silk cannot be made from the ear of a pig.” (2670)

*Animal* (general term) (2 proverbs):

Animals are fast and make great effort: “You run like the animals run, you get only what is meant for you to get.” (874 and 879)

*Buffalo* (2 proverbs):

Buffaloes are big (in size): “He said a mosquito and pretending to be a buffalo.” (2155) (A low small person who appears in front of the people as a great person.)

*Egret bird* (2 proverbs):

Egret birds are partially ugly: “Like the egret bird it is white and dirty.” (1364) (Egret birds are white with black legs. They are useful for the land as they eat worms, but because of that they are dirty.)

*Frog* (2 proverbs):

Frogs are ugly: “The wedding is with a storm and the bride is a frog.” (1880) (A great fuss is made of the wedding, although the bride does not deserve it as she is ugly.), “The wedding and the tumult and the bride is a frog.” (1881)

*Hedgehog* (2 proverbs):

Hedgehogs are ugly: “Like the hedgehog, it can neither be held in the arms nor kissed.” (1507) (The thorns of the hedgehog keep people away.)

*Louse* (2 proverbs):

Lice are dirty: “After the big and small lice it became red and green and painted on the wall.” (793) (After living in dirt and low conditions they are living in wealth.)

*Weasel* (2 proverbs):

Weasels are harmful: 448 (see chicken)

Weasels are weaker than cats: 2257 (see cat)

*Worm* (2 proverbs):

Worms are inferior: 949 (see snake)

*Bug* (1 proverb):

Bugs are unsatisfied (greedy): “She gives birth to a hundred and says: ‘Oh how scarce are the descendants.’” (811)

*Centipede* (1 proverb):

Centipedes are harmful: 450 (see scorpion)

*Cockroach* (1 proverb):

No feature is specified in the proverb regarding the cockroach, the concentration is on the beetle: 1736 (see beetle)

*Locust* (1 proverb):

Locusts fly away and can't be held on to: "One locust in your palm is better than a thousand in the air." (956)

*Mosquito* (1 proverb):

Mosquitoes are small and inferior: 2155 (see buffalo)

*Peacock* (1 proverb):

Peacocks are arrogant: "Like the peacock, it boasts about its feathers." (1457)

*Pigeon* (1 proverb):

Pigeons are volatile: "Like the pigeon it moves from one tower to the other." (1411) (Their love does not last.)

*Scarab* (dung beetle) (1 proverb):

Scarabs are inferior: "The scarab is a sultan (= prince) in its home." (39) (It only has dignity in its home.)

***Summary and general results***

Examining the proverbs from a quantitative perspective indicates the importance of proverbs containing animals. In the collection of Taymour which serves as the corpus for this study and which includes a total of 3118 proverbs there are 429 proverbs which contain animals. This is nearly 14% of the whole corpus. The most frequent animals that occur in the proverbs are the dog and the donkey with 50 occurrences each. Together they constitute nearly 25 % of the corpus. Other animals also appear frequently that means in more than 15 proverbs. These animals are camels, cats, monkeys, horses, and birds. Some animals only come once or twice in the proverbs. The exact numbers are shown in the appendix.

It is important to note that it is not my duty to check if the features or the traits that are given to the animals are true or not, as the purpose in the underlying study is only to show how the animals are actually portrayed in the proverbs of the underlying corpus. The portrayal of the dog can serve as an example. Although dogs are known for their faithfulness – they are not pictured in the proverbs as faithful creatures but – as we see – they are almost entirely tied to negative traits.

As a result of the analysis we find that the negative features that are linked to the animals exceed the positive ones. There are 42 negative features and 20 positive ones which means that the negative features are more than double the positive ones. The proverbs containing negative features are also nearly double the proverbs with positive features, as 163 proverbs contain negative features and 77 positive ones.

The analysis has also shown that there is a certain connection between the species of the animals and the distribution of negative and positive features.

The domestic animals are either purely positive like horses, sheep, calves, beasts and lambs or they show a balance between the positive and negative features like donkeys, chicken, goats, cows, and mules. The purely negative ones are animals with smaller numbers like roosters, pigs, and pigeons.

In my opinion the reason for domestic animals being more on the positive side is that most of them are either a work force, often hardworking, or they are a means of transport or a source of food. In general, they are considered useful for mankind.

As dogs and cats are not considered as a work force by the proverbs, they don't show a balance between negative and positive features. Especially the dog is pictured as mainly negative. The proverbs in which dogs appear bring 10 negative features and only two positive ones. The cats have 8 negative and 4 positive features.

Many wild animals have purely or mainly negative features like snakes, scorpions, wolves, bears, frogs, hedgehogs, weasels, peacocks, monkeys, and mice. Lions and gazelles have purely positive traits.

The proverbs show the birds as having purely or mainly negative features like the birds as a general term, snail kites, owls, and egret birds. The hawk is an exception, as it is given positive features.

The insects which appear mainly in small numbers of proverbs are portrayed in a negative way. The ants are an exception.

It is interesting to know that some features apply to a variety of animals throughout the proverbs and are not bound to a certain kind of animal. The most numerous negative features are the following. It is to be noted that the numbers in brackets indicate the sum of proverbs in which these features appear.

Harmful: dogs (1), snakes (11), birds (1), scorpions (7), wolves (4), hornets (2), mules (1), bees (1), weasels (1), centipedes (1).

Ugly: monkeys (7), cows (1), beetles (4), roosters (1), hedgehogs (1), snail kites (1), bears (1), egret birds (1), frogs (2).

Inferior: dogs (9), donkeys (4), mice (4), crows (1), pigs (3), worms (1), mosquitoes (1), scarabs (1).

Mean: dogs (3), monkeys (1), snakes (1), fish (1), snail kites (1), mules (1).

Fearful: dogs (4), monkeys (1), roosters (1).

The positive features are – as stated before – much less in numbers and they are given to the domestic animals as they are useful for mankind.

Looking at the analysis we find that a number of animals come in pairs. The total number of these proverbs which contain two animals is 47. In order to have an exact total number of the proverbs with animals in the corpus these proverbs have been counted only once. The most common pairs are the ones with dogs and lions with 5 proverbs. As a contrast to the noble lion the dog is regarded as inferior. Another pair is the one with the cat and the mouse. In 4 proverbs the cat is described as superior or stronger opposed to the inferior or weaker mouse. The pair monkey and gazelle with 3 proverbs show the ugly monkey opposed to the pretty gazelle. Other pairs that are fewer in number (only 2 proverbs) are on the basis of size (camels / ants) and (bull / mouse), value (camels / donkeys), size and value (camel / cat). The rest of the pairs appear only in one proverb each.

The underlying study has tried to document the occurrences of animals in the Egyptian proverbs and to show how they are portrayed. Traits that are given to the animals in the Egyptian proverbs are actually reflecting the way the Egyptians see the animals in their culture. These traits might be different from traits given to the animals in other cultures. Not only that but the mere mentioning of certain animals and the frequency of their appearance in the proverbs might show discrepancies between cultures. Some animals are not presented in the corpus of the Egyptian proverbs. These animals might appear in the collection of other peoples and vice versa. Comparing the Egyptian animal proverbs

with other cultures would certainly have very interesting outcomes.

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*Appendix*

Name of the animal	Total number of occurrences	Number of the proverbs
Animal	2	874, 879
Ant	4	254, 1546, 1977, 2231
Bear	3	1024, 1612, 2179
Beast	7	370, 835, 836, 837, 1162, 1913, 2915
Bee	3	418, 1543, 2426
Beetle	7	1183, 1184, 1417, 1418, 1736, 2518, 3136
Bird	15	98, 464, 585, 834, 1486, 1823, 1906, 1907, 1908, 2121, 2249, 2266, 2555, 2635, 3154
Buffalo	2	2155, 2725
Bug	1	811
Bull	9	202, 431, 808, 950, 1465, 1808, 1809, 2088, 3167
Calf	9	251, 579, 1077, 1083, 1305, 1629, 1961, 1976, 2700
Camel	35	254, 484, 606, 734, 967, 968, 969, 970, 1103, 1397, 1399, 1400, 1401, 1444, 1683, 1758, 1879, 2164, 2165, 2174, 2175, 2206, 2248, 2251, 2261, 2349, 2357, 2493, 2539, 2551, 2736, 2904, 2930, 3062, 3098
Cat	28	176, 512, 514, 889, 946, 984, 1090, 1501, 1502, 1503, 1504, 1505, 2033, 2083, 2084, 2251, 2252,

		2257, 2258, 2260, 2261, 2408, 2424, 2526, 2731, 2738, 2986, 3062
Centipede	1	450
Chicken	21	313, 412, 448, 489, 820, 851, 853, 1483, 1484, 1485, 1487, 1951, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2361, 2548, 2984, 3141
Cockroach	1	1736
Cow	11	675, 808, 965, 1069, 1138, 1385, 1593, 2224, 2542, 2692, 2700
Crow	13	687, 1034, 1115, 1398, 1476, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2092, 2185, 3075, 3079, 3097
Dog	50	47, 162, 190, 193, 237, 426, 519, 607, 621, 644, 664, 736, 973, 993, 1110, 1128, 1264, 1303, 1379, 1463, 1515, 1516, 1517, 1518, 1519, 1520, 1521, 1522, 1523, 1749, 2187, 2199, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2550, 2617, 2869, 2979, 2981
Donkey	50	53, 100, 101, 107, 311, 384, 483, 553, 713, 714, 719, 787, 1093, 1094, 1095, 1096, 1097, 1098, 1099, 1100, 1101, 1102, 1103, 1137, 1409, 1410, 1412, 1413, 1414, 1549, 1600, 1633, 2056, 2147, 2154, 2248, 2286, 2312, 2360, 2428, 2537, 2544, 2592, 2633, 2739, 2748, 2895, 2965, 3053, 3164
Egret bird	2	1364, 1365



Fish	13	110, 1381, 1430, 1438, 1439, 1440, 1490, 1614, 1615, 1826, 2167, 2347, 2944
Flea	5	1376, 1377, 1378, 1380, 2261
Fly	7	605, 810, 1211, 1212, 1261, 1422, 3165
Frog	2	1880, 1881
Gazelle	5	158, 2056, 2203, 2234, 2235
Goat	14	42, 181, 276, 411, 483, 799, 1363, 1395, 1982, 1983, 2758, 2759, 2881, 2988
Goose	3	32, 1552, 3175
Hawk	3	1599, 2046, 3052
Hedgehog	2	1506, 1507
Hornet	5	191, 1177, 1215, 1216, 1423
Horse	18	159, 337, 387, 971, 1005, 1066, 1094, 1420, 1719, 2099, 2479, 2524, 2580, 2637, 2869, 2899, 3106, 3177
Lamb	4	95, 222, 780, 924
Louse	2	793, 2588
Lion	5	426, 735, 736, 1577, 1580
Locust	1	956
Monkey	24	106, 260, 451, 483, 565, 717, 770, 812, 1257, 1284, 1500, 1545, 1637, 1726, 1905, 2188, 2203, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2239, 3116, 3163
Mosquito	1	2155
Mouse	14	832, 953, 984, 1090, 1481, 1495, 1850, 2033, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2088, 2186, 3167

Mule	5	787, 804, 1032, 1384, 2598
Owl	4	49, 526, 971, 1372
Peacock	1	1457
Pig	3	1677, 1847, 2670
Pigeon	1	1411
Rooster	7	108, 995, 1263, 1427, 2181, 2365, 3006
Scarab	1	39
Scorpion	8	450, 1054, 1092, 1471, 1472, 1868, 1915, 2998
Sheep	10	767, 958, 1479, 2195, 2514, 2673, 2725, 2951, 2952, 3148
Snail kite	7	1034, 1035, 1036, 1555, 2045, 2984, 3052
Snake	18	177, 279, 328, 509, 568, 949, 1014, 1015, 1054, 1114, 1392, 1393, 1442, 1734, 1977, 2067, 2769, 3136
Weasel	2	448, 2257
Wolf	7	27, 490, 766, 952, 2180, 2514, 2758
Worm	2	949, 1251

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WOLFGANG MIEDER AND ANDREAS NOLTE

„WAS SEIN MUSS, MUSS SEIN“: ZUR POLITISCHEN  
SPRICHWORTRHETORIK OTTO VON BISMARCKS

**Abstract:** In unserem 526 Seiten umfassenden Buch *„Ein Schwert hält das andere in der Scheide“*. *Otto von Bismarcks sprichwörtliche Rhetorik* (2018) haben wir in aller Breite den reichhaltigen Gebrauch von Sprichwörtern und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten des Fürsten Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) aufgezeigt. Als Ministerpräsident Preußens und Deutscher Reichskanzler hat er innen- und außenpolitisch als Realpolitiker ungemein viel erreicht, wobei ihm seine durch Sprichwörter geprägte Sprachgewalt gute rhetorische Dienste geleistet hat. Diese Kurzfassung unserer umfangreichen Bestandaufnahme befasst sich unter Ausschließung zahlreicher Redensarten nur um ausgesuchte Sprichwörter. Zuerst geht es um Sprichwörter im persönlichen und politischen Diskurs, wofür das von Bismarck gebrauchte Sprichwort „Viel Feind, viel Ehr“ als Leitbild stehen mag. Darauf folgt eine Betrachtung einiger politisch angewandter Bibelsprichwörter, wobei sich das Sprichwort „Wes das Herz voll ist, geht der Mund über“ (5. Mose 8,3; Matth. 4,4) als eine Art Leitmotiv erweist. Dann behandeln wir „Lehnsprichwörter eines mehrsprachigen Politikers“, wo zum Vorschein kommt, dass Bismarck wiederholt die französische Fassung „L’homme propose, Dieu dispose“ des deutschen Sprichwortes „Der Mensch denkt, Gott lenkt“ bevorzugt. Zusätzlich kommt es bei ihm als studierter Jurist auch zu lateinischen Sprichwörtern.

**Keywords:** Otto von Bismarck, Bibel, Deutschland, Diskurs, Fremdsprache, Lehnsprichwort, Metaphorik, Politik, Rhetorik, Sprachgewalt.

Das Schrifttum zu Otto von Bismarcks (1815-1898) Leben und Schaffen ist so überwältigend, dass es kaum noch überschaubar ist. Allein die andauernde Flut von Biographien ebbt nicht ab, wobei es besonders in den früheren Darstellungen zu einer „Bismarck-Mythisierung“ (Paar 1992) gekommen ist, die in neueren Darstellungen differenzierter und kritischer zum Ausdruck kommt (Marcks 1909, Eyck 1941-1944, Sempell 1972, Waller 1985, Engelberg 1990, Pflanze 1990, Krockow 1997, Steinberg 2011). Zu bemängeln ist jedoch ganz allgemein, dass die bis zu drei massiven

Bänden anschwellenden Darstellungen mit ganz minimalen Ausnahmen nichts über die beeindruckende Sprachfähigkeit Bismarcks aussagen. Sie bieten detaillierte Beschreibungen des so einflussreichen Schaffens des ersten Reichskanzlers des Deutschen Reiches von 1871 bis zu seiner Entlassung 1890 und weisen nach, wie Bismarck nicht nur die innerdeutsche Politik, sondern auch die Machtkämpfe Europas als Schlüsselfigur mitbestimmte. Es kann kein Zweifel daran bestehen, dass Bismarck als Realpolitiker die hervorstechende Gestalt seines Jahrhunderts war. Als pragmatisch eingestellter Ministerpräsident des Königreichs Preußen von 1862 bis 1890, als Bundeskanzler des Norddeutschen Bundes von 1867-1871 und natürlich auch als Reichskanzler hat er seine politischen Aufgaben und Herausforderungen pflichtbewusst auf sich genommen, und zwar ohne theoretische Grundlagen, sondern stets aus der Praxis heraus. Er hat seine Vorgehensweise verschiedentlich dadurch zum Ausdruck gebracht, dass er Politik nicht als Wissenschaft betrachtete. So sagte er in einer Rede im Deutschen Reichstag am 15. März 1884:

Ich würde mich nicht ermüden lassen dadurch, daß wir hier nur Kritik finden. Die Kritik ist bekanntlich leicht, und die Kunst ist schwer, Die Politik ist keine Wissenschaft, wie viele der Herren Professoren sich einbilden, sie ist eben eine Kunst [vgl. Lyon 1895a], sie ist ebenso wenig eine Wissenschaft, wie das Bildhauen und das Malen. Man kann sehr scharfer Kritiker sein und doch kein Künstler. (VII,96;R,3/84; alle Bismarck-Zitate kommen aus Gustav Adolf Rein et al. [Hrsg.], *Otto von Bismarck. Werke in Auswahl*, 8 Bde. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001)

Da ist auch noch diese weitere Aussage in einer Ansprache an eine Abordnung der Universität Jena vom 30. Juli 1892, wo Bismarck auf sein Lebenswerk zurückblickend sein *modus operandi* nochmals, und zwar mit von den Akademikern anerkanntem Humor, herausstellt. Als erfolgreicher Gutsherr bezieht er hier seine politische Vorgehensweise zusätzlich auf seine Erfahrungen aus der Natur:

Ich bin von früh Jäger und Fischer gewesen und das Abwarten des rechten Moments ist in beiden Situationen die Regel gewesen, die ich auf die Politik übertragen habe. Ich habe oft lange auf dem Anstande gestanden und habe mich von Insekten umschwärmen und zerstechen lassen müssen, ehe ich zum Schusse kam. Ich habe nie einen Moment in meinem Leben gehabt, in dem ich nicht ehrlich und in strenger Selbstprüfung darüber nachgedacht hätte, was ich zu tun hätte, um meinem Lande – und ich muß auch sagen meinem verstorbenen Herrn, König Wilhelm I. – nützlich zu sein und richtig zu dienen. Das ist nicht in jedem Augenblicke dasselbe gewesen, es haben Schwankungen und Windungen in der Politik stattgefunden, aber die Politik ist eben an sich keine logische und keine exakte Wissenschaft, sondern sie ist die Fähigkeit, in jedem wechselnden Moment der Situation das am wenigsten Schädliche oder das Zweckmäßigste zu wählen. (VIIIb,113;A,7,92)

Vor allem ist Politik für Bismarck mit angestrenzter, praktischer Arbeit verbunden, die sich nicht durch große Reden oder phrasenhaftes Gerede bewältigen lässt: „Ich frage gar nichts danach, ob eine Sache populär ist, ich frage danach, ob sie vernünftig oder zweckmäßig ist“ (VI,696;R.6/82). Ähnlich heißt es in einer Rede vom 15. Januar 1872 im Preußischen Abgeordnetenhaus: „Ich möchte überhaupt dringend empfehlen [...], daß wir die Politik doch etwas mehr vom praktischen Gesichtspunkte aus betrachten; sie ist in der Tat [...] eine eminent praktische Wissenschaft, bei der man sich an die Form, an die Namen, an Theorien, in die es gerade hineinpassen soll, nicht so sehr kehren kann“ (V,140;R,1/72). Schließlich bezieht er sich diesbezüglich auch auf Goethes *Faust*, den er bestens kannte: „Da möchte ich vorschlagen, warten wir das in der praktischen Entwicklung ab. Grau ist alle Theorie, man kann eine bestimmte Schablone unmöglich aufstellen, die alle Fälle, die da eintreten bei diesen verwickelten Fragen, vorher erschöpft“ (VI,154;R, 3/78, vgl. Wunderlich 1898: 122-123, Matthias 1902: 98-99, Mieder 2011: 367-373).

Aus einer undatierten Aussage aus den Jahren zwischen 1890 und 1898 geht hervor, dass Bismarck sich lieber einer allgemein bekannten Bildersprache bedient, um seine Überlegungen allgemeinverständlich und volkssprachlich zu untermauern, wie dies

allgemein auch heute in der politischen Rhetorik gehandhabt wird (Zimmermann 1960: 90-91, Koller 1977: 138-154, Elspaß 1998: 150-216). So bildet die sprichwörtliche Redensart „zwei Eisen im Feuer haben“ eine treffende und knappe Zusammenfassung einer Aussage, die in diesem Fall mit dem Bezug auf das Schachspiel bereits metaphorisch durchleuchtet ist:

Auch die richtige Beurteilung des Gegners ist für den Erfolg unerlässlich. Hier heißt es Vorsicht üben. Man darf nie einen Schachzug in der vollständig sicheren Voraussetzung tun, daß der andere Mitspieler einen gewissen Zug machen werde. Denn es kann kommen, daß dieser Zug doch nicht erfolgt, und dann geht die Partie leicht verloren. Man muß immer mit der Möglichkeit rechnen, daß der Gegner im letzten Moment anders, als erwartet, zieht, und sich darauf einrichten. Mit anderen Worten: man muß stets zwei Eisen im Feuer haben. (VIIIb,258;G,90-98)

Doch bei aller Pflichterfüllung gegenüber seiner politischen Aufgaben sehnt sich Bismarck doch immer wieder nach dem ländlichen Privatleben im Kreise seiner Familie, wie er es in einem Brief vom 4. Juli 1857 an seinen Bruder Bernhard von Bismarck mit den beiden Redensarten „es geht ein und aus wie in einem Taubenhaus“ und „einer gibt dem anderen die Türe in die Hand“ volkssprachlich zum Ausdruck bringt:

In einigen Tagen fahre ich zu Schmiedebach in den Soon-Wald nach Rothwild. Die Jagd ist doch noch das Beste, und im dicksten Walde, wo einen keiner findet und kein Telegraph hin reicht, wird mir erst behaglich; ich habe oft rechtes Heimweh nach dem Landleben, besonders wenn es bei mir wie ein Taubenhaus im Zimmer wird, daß einer dem andern die Thür in die Hand giebt. Man wird alt und will seine Ruhe haben. (II,177;B,7/57)

Alt aber war Bismarck nun wirklich noch nicht im Jahre 1857, doch die Trennung von seiner Familie machte ihm sehr zu schaffen. Aber immer willens, seine Pflicht und Schuldigkeit zu tun, schreibt er am 15. September 1855 an Leopold von Gerlach: „Fürchten Sie dabei nicht für meine politische Gesundheit; ich habe viel von der Natur der Ente, der das Wasser von den Federn abläuft, und es ist bei mir ein ziemlich weiter Weg von der äußern Haut bis zum Herzen“

(II,79;B,9/55). Hier bezieht sich Bismarck offensichtlich auf die Redensart „ablaufen wie das Wasser am Entenflügel“. wobei diese Tiermetapher heute wohl eher durch die weniger bildhafte Redensart „eine dicke Haut haben“ ersetzt wird.

Schon diese wenigen Belege aus der bildhaften Sprachkraft Bismarcks stellen unter Beweis, dass Otto von Bismarck als Virtuose im Gebrauch sprichwörtlicher Sprache zu gelten hat, die all seinen Reden, Gesprächen, Beiträgen, Briefen und vor allem auch seinem autobiographischen Werk *Erinnerung und Gedanke* (1898; der Titel *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* ist nicht authentisch) ihre volkssprachliche Frische verleihen. Obwohl diese Sprachfertigkeit in den zahlreichen Biographien nicht zur Debatte steht, haben Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaftler sich mit Bismarcks Sprachvermögen beschäftigt, womit er ohne Übertreibung zusammen mit Martin Luther, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Thomas Mann und anderen Sprachgenies genannt werden darf (Jaeger 1988). So überrascht es nicht, dass einige umfangreiche Arbeiten zur Sprache und zum Stil von Bismarck vorliegen, die zwischen 1891 und 1933 in der Form von wissenschaftlichen Aufsätzen und Monographien erschienen sind. Seitdem hat man sich scheinbar nicht mehr eingehend mit dem Sprachvermögen Bismarcks beschäftigt, und obwohl die frühen Schriften seine redensartliche und sprichwörtliche Bildersprache erkannt haben und auch Beispiele davon enthalten, ist es an der Zeit, die Sprichwörtlichkeit dieses großen „Künstlers“ der Politik und Sprache wenigstens auszugsweise aus seinem Gesamtwerk herauszustellen (vgl. die früheren Hinweise in Blümmer 1891: 182-188, 1894 und 1895, Lyon 1895b, Vogel 1896, Gerlach 1898, Wunderlich 1898: 143-146, Matthias 1902: 74-80, Schoenfeld 1905, Brauer 1915, Masur 1933).

Immer wieder wird die lebensnahe Bildlichkeit der Sprache Bismarcks hervorgestrichen, was sich nicht nur allgemein auf Metaphern bezieht, sondern eben auch auf sprichwörtliche Redensarten und Sprichwörter. Es besteht kein Zweifel, „daß der bildliche Ausdruck bei Bismarck nichts allmählich Angenommenes, nichts Angelerntes, sondern etwas ihm Angebournes, Ureigenes ist“ (Blümmer 1894: 787). Auch war sich Bismarck durchaus der Sprichwörtlichkeit seiner Sprache bewusst, denn er weist des Öfteren mit solchen Einführungsformeln wie „das gute alte Sprichwort“ und „ein sehr wahres Sprichwort“ direkt auf solche Volksweisheiten hin. Und doch hat sich dieser wortgewandte Stilist nicht für

einen großen Redner oder gar Schriftsteller gehalten, wie aus einer bekannt gewordenen Aussage aus seiner Rede im Abgeordnetenhaus vom 3. Februar 1866 hervorgeht: „Meine Herren! Sie wissen, ich bin kein Redner [...]. Ich vermag nicht, mit Worten spielend, auf ihr Gefühl zu wirken, um damit Tatsachen zu verdunkeln. Meine Rede ist einfach und klar“ (III,637;R,2/66). Wiederum stellt er einige Jahre später im selben Haus am 17. Dezember 1873 „mit einiger Befriedigung“ fest, dass eine ältere Rede von ihm „oratorisch nicht übel“ war (V,407;R,2/73). Es sei bezüglich beider dieser Aussagen jedoch erwähnt, dass Bismarck sehr wohl die rhetorische Bedeutung der (Selbst)Ironie zu schätzen wusste (Gerlach 1898: 12, Wunderlich 1898: 44-45, Masur 1933: 75). Doch wie dem auch sei, als pragmatischer Realpolitiker „muß er den Dingen ganz genau praktisch nähertreten“ (V,137;R,1/72), wobei seine sprichwörtliche Sprache seine oft detaillierten Ausführungen auflockern und volkssprachlich untermauern. Als politischer Sprachvirtuose und auch als umsorgter Familienvater wusste er stets nur zu genau, dass man angesichts der komplexen Welteinrichtung unbedingt mindesten „zwei Eisen im Feuer“ haben muss. Kein Wunder also, dass es in seinen Reden und Schriften auch zu Anhäufungen von sprichwörtlichen Redensarten und Sprichwörtern kommt.

Für Hugo Blümmer sind diese bildhaft-volkssprachlichen Ausdrücke bei Bismarck ein „Schatz an Goldkörnern“ (Blümmer 1891: 198), die zuweilen durch Einführungsformeln in seiner effektiven Rede- und Schreibgewandtheit hervorgehoben werden. Obwohl er nicht direkt vom Sprichwort spricht, ist seine Bemerkung über die Einflechtung der bildhaften Ausdrücke durch Einführungsformeln von Bedeutung:

Er [Bismarck] bedient sich zwar häufig der Formeln ‚so zu sagen‘, ‚möchte ich sagen‘, ‚gewissermaßen‘ u. dgl.; er fügt wohl auch hier und da gleichsam entschuldigend hinzu ‚um mich trivial auszudrücken‘, oder ‚nach einem vulgären Ausdruck‘ u.s.w.; aber diese Einleitungen thun der Gestaltung des Bildes selbst keinen Abbruch. Indem vielmehr Bild und Vergliches eng zu einander in Beziehung gesetzt werden, wird das Bild kräftiger, anschaulicher, lebendiger, als wenn beide getrennt nebeneinander hergehen und lediglich eine äußerliche Verbindung zwischen ihnen hergestellt wird. (Blümmer 1891: 194-195)



Mit so einer „sagen“ Formel leitet Bismarck in einer Rede vom 6. Februar 1888 im Deutschen Reichstag seine Sprichwortvariation „Der Vernünftige gibt nach“ ein, die auf dem gängigen Sprichwort „Der Klügere gibt nach“ beruht. Damit behauptet er, dass er einen erneuten Krieg mit Frankreich aus Vernunftgründen vermeiden will:

[...] wir werden nie Händel suchen, wir werden Frankreich nie angreifen, wir haben in den vielen kleinen Vorfällen, die die Neigung unserer Nachbarn, zu spionieren und zu bestechen, verursacht hat, immer eine sehr gefällige und freundliche Beilegung herbeigeführt, weil ich es für ruchlos halten würde, um solcher Lappalien willen einen großen nationalen Krieg zu entzünden oder auch nur wahrscheinlich zu machen. Das sind Fälle, wo es heißt: Der Vernünftige gibt nach. (VII,611;R,2/88)

Wie aus den folgenden Belegen hervorgeht, wo Bismarck direkt auf die integrierte Volksweisheit hinweist, trifft Blümmers Feststellung durchaus auf Sprichwörter zu. Indem Bismarck sie mit Einführungsformeln umgibt, verstärkt er deren rhetorischen Funktionswert, der Aspekte wie „Warnung, Überredung, Argument, Bestätigung, Trost, Besänftigung, Überzeugung, Mahnung, Zurechtweisung, Feststellung, Charakterisierung, Erklärung, Beschreibung, Rechtfertigung, Zusammenfassung etc.“ (Röhrich und Mieder 1977: 81) einschließt. Die folgenden drei chronologisch wiedergegebenen Belege zeigen auf, dass Bismarck Zeit seines Lebens Sprichwörter benutzt hat, und zwar ohne vordergründige Lehrhaftigkeit und zuweilen mit Ironie oder satirischem Zweck:

Es wird häufig auf unseren politischen Bildungsprozeß das Sprichwort angewandt: wenn wir schwimmen lernen wollen, müssen wir ins Wasser gehen; das mag wahr sein, aber ich sehe nicht ein, warum jemand, der schwimmen lernen will, gerade da hineinspringen soll, wo das Wasser am tiefsten ist, weil sich dort etwa ein bewährter Schwimmer mit Sicherheit bewegt. (I,254;R,9/49)

Es entsteht in jedem Kollegium, wenn eine Sache zu Ende kommen soll, mitunter gewissermaßen die Notwendigkeit, zuletzt Kopf oder Schrift darüber zu spielen, wie es sein soll [...]. Je tüchtiger die einzelnen Charaktere sind, um so

schwieriger ist natürlich die Einigung unter ihnen; zwei harte Steine mahlen schlecht, das ist ein bekanntes Sprichwort, aber acht harte Steine noch viel schwerer. (IV,325-6;R,3/69)

Noch durch einen dritten Gegensatz charakterisiert sich meine Politik, und dieser dritte Gegensatz betrifft die innere, die deutsche Politik, während jene beiden Gegensätze zumeist in der äußeren Politik mit der bekannten Wirkung sich geltend machten, das alte Sprichwort „Ehrlich währt am längsten!“ (VIIIb,55;G,8/90)

Das „Steine“-Sprichwort wird gewöhnlich seit dem Mittelalter als „Zwei harte Steine malen selten klein“ zitiert, doch mag es sein, dass Bismarck die pommersche Dialektvariante „Twe harde Stên malen nig gôd“ (Wander 1867-1880: IV, 817-818) im Sinn hatte. Interessant ist zusätzlich seine gesteigerte Erweiterung des Sprichwortes von zwei zu acht Steinen, womit er nicht nur seine freie Handhabung altüberlieferter Sprichwörter unter Beweis stellt, sondern ein ironisch zu verstehendes Antispruchwort formuliert (vgl. Mieder 2017).

Diesbezüglich ist interessant, wie Bismarck mit dem Sprichwort „Wem Gott ein Amt gibt, dem gibt er auch Verstand“ umgeht, das sich so perfekt auf seine vielen Ämter beziehen lässt, die er verstandesmäßig ausgeführt hat. In einem Brief vom 4. Mai 1851 aus Berlin an seine Gattin spielt er lediglich auf das Sprichwort an, wohl wissend, dass sie genau verstehen wird, was er meint. Im zweiten Text aus *Erinnerung und Gedanke* zitiert er es dann vollständig mit der Einführungsformel „ein altes Sprichwort sagt“, was im Grunde genommen seinen Wert hervorhebt. Doch dann negiert er es als entlassener Reichkanzler verbittert mit einer antispruchwörtlichen Umkehrung bezüglich seiner Ruhestandssituation:

Eben erhalte ich Mütterchens Brief; voll Liebe und Treue; sie nimmt die Sache schwerer als ich. Gott hilft mir tragen, und mit Ihm bin ich der Sache besser gewachsen als die meisten unsrer Politiker, die statt meiner in Fr[ankfurt] sein könnten, ohne Ihn. Ich werde mein Amt thun; daß Gott mir den Verstand dazu giebt, ist Seine Sache. (I,378;B,5/51)

Nach meinem Rücktritt in das Privatleben sind viele meiner ehemaligen Freunde der Ansicht, daß ich nun auch zu völligem Stillschweigen verurteilt sei, daß ich mich wie ein „stummer Hund“ verhalten müsse. Ein altes Sprichwort sagt: Wem Gott ein Amt gibt, dem gibt er auch den Verstand. Bei mir will man das derart umkehren, daß es heißt: Wem Gott ein Amt nimmt, dem nimmt er auch den Verstand. (VIIIb,38;R,6/90)

Wie in diesem Beispielpaar zeigen zwei weitere Textbelege mit dem seit der Antike international überlieferten Sprichwort „Eine Hand wäscht die andere“ (Lat. „*manus manum lavat*“; vgl. Paczolay 1997: 174-178), dass Bismarck die Einführungsformeln recht sporadisch einsetzt. Sie sind bei äußerst bekannten Sprichwörtern mehr oder weniger überflüssig und dienen vor allem der beglaubigenden Hervorhebung, wobei Bismarck in diesem Zusammenhang ausnahmsweise die ältere Schreibweise „Sprüchwort“ benutzt:

Nach ihnen [amtliche Nachrichten] haben wir in Teplitz nichts Definitives versprochen, sondern unsre Leistungen für Oestreich davon abhängig gemacht, daß letztes sein Wohlwollen für uns auf dem Gebiet deutscher Politik zunächst praktisch bewähre; nachdem dieß geschehn, werde es auf unsre Dankbarkeit rechnen können. Damit wäre ich sehr zufrieden; eine Hand wäscht die andre, und sehn wir die Wiener Seife nur erst schäumen, so werden wir gerne die Wäsche erwidern. (II,338;B,8/60)

In Versailles hatte ich vom 5. bis 8. November mit dem Grafen Ledochowski, Erzbischöfe von Posen und Gnesen, Verhandlungen gehabt, die sich vorwiegend auf die territorialen Interessen des Papstes bezogen. Gemäß dem Sprüchwort „Eine Hand wäscht die andre“ machte ich ihm den Vorschlag, die Gegenseitigkeit der Beziehungen zwischen dem Papste und uns zu bethätigen durch päpstliche Einwirkung auf die französische Geistlichkeit. (VIIIa,384; EuG,98)

Als Paradebeispiel für Bismarcks unterschiedliches Vorgehen mit ein und demselben Sprichwort seien einige Belege für die beiden Varianten „Das Beste ist des Guten Feind“ und „Das Bessere ist des Guten Feind“ zitiert. Die erste Textgruppe betrifft die „Beste“-

Variante, wobei bei dem ersten Beleg durch die Einführungsformel „das gute (alte) Sprichwort“ herausgestellt wird, dass es diese Volksweisheit zu „beherzigen“ gilt:

Der fundamentalen Reform haben in der Erfahrung meines politischen Lebens immer nicht nur diejenigen angehangen, die sie wirklich wollten, sondern auch diejenigen, die die Sache überhaupt nicht wollten [...]. Ich erinnere an die langjährigen Strömungen, die wir in Bezug deutscher Reformen erlebt haben. Beherzigen wir dabei doch wohl das gute alte Sprichwort: Das Beste ist des Guten Feind! (V,601;R,11/75)

Ich möchte deshalb auch in dieser Richtung zu Einigkeit ermahnen; und möge der einzelne, der mit dem größeren Teil der Vorlage einverstanden ist, es doch machen wie ich und dem Übrigen nicht so genau ins Gesicht sehen und sich sagen: „Das Beste ist des Guten Feind.“ (VI,311;R,5/79)

Seit den 1980er Jahren gibt es dann den Wechsel zu der „Bessere“-Variante, die in den zwei folgenden Beispielen durch die Einführungsformeln „nach dem Prinzip“ und „das Sprichwort hinweist“ hervorgehoben wird:

Bei dieser Besprechung wollen Ew. pp. auch Gelegenheit nehmen, sich zu überzeugen, ob die, Ihre und meine Berechnung übersteigende, Höhe der kriegsministeriellen Forderung [...] unabänderlich ist, oder ob nicht nach dem Prinzip, daß das Bessere des Guten Feind ist, sich einiges davon abhandeln resp. vertagen läßt. (VII,54;B,11/83)

Mein Kollege v. Boetticher hat gestern schon auseinander-gesetzt, daß wir damit nicht die Absicht verbinden, die übrigen Berufszweige fallen zu lassen und nicht zu berücksichtigen, sondern daß wir uns nur vor den Gefahren in acht nehmen wollen, auf die das Sprichwort hinweist, daß das Bessere des Guten Feind ist, und daß, wenn man zuviel im einzelnen versucht, man Gefahr läuft, gar nichts zu erreichen. (VII,92;R,3/84)

Doch nun kommt noch etwas Besonderes dazu, was bei Bismarck, der die damalige französische Diplomaten-sprache fließend beherrschte, gar nicht so verwunderlich ist. So kennt er das äquiva-

lente französische Sprichwort „Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien“ und setzt es zweimal mit den Einführungsformeln „ein sehr wahres Sprichwort“ und „eins der durchschlagendsten Sprichwörter“ ein. Der erste Auszug aus einem Brief an seine Braut vom 23. Februar 1847 zeigt auf, wie poetisch sein Schreibstil in solchen persönlichen Kommunikationen sein konnte. Sicherlich spielt er hier auch auf das Sprichwort „Keine Rose ohne Dornen“ an, nachdem es wohl zu einem kleinen Missverständnis zwischen Braut und Bräutigam gekommen war:

Findet sich Unkraut im Acker unsres Herzens, so wollen wir gegenseitig bemüht sein, ihn so zu bestellen, daß sein Same nicht aufgehn kann; thut er es doch, so wollen wir es offen ausziehn, aber nicht unnatürlich mit Weizenstroh zu decken und verstecken; das schadet dem Korn und zerstört das Unkraut nicht. Deine Meinung war nun wohl, es allein auszuziehn, ohne mich durch den Anblick zu verletzen; aber laß uns auch darin ein Herz und ein Fleisch sein, und wenn mich Deine kleinen Disteln auch mitunter in die Finger stechen sollten, kehr Dich daran nicht und verbirg sie mir nicht. Du wirst an meinen großen Dornen auch nicht immer Freude erleben, so große, daß ich sie nicht verstecken kann, und wir müssen gemeinschaftlich daran reißen, wenn auch die Hände bluten. Übrigens blühh Dornen mitunter recht hübsch, und wenn auf den Deinigen Rosen wachsen, so werden wir sie doch wohl mitunter stehn lassen. *Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien*; sonst ein sehr wahres Sprichwort, deßhalb mach Dir nicht garzuviel Scrupel über all Dein Unkraut, welches ich noch garnicht entdeckt habe, und laß mir wenigstens die Probe davon übrig. (I,98;B, 2/47)

In den Jahren 1841 und 1842 war mit weniger Mitteln mehr zu erreichen als 1849. Darüber läßt sich unparteiisch urtheilen, nachdem das damals Wünschenswerthe erreicht ist und im nationalen Sinne das Bedürfniß von 1840 nicht mehr vorliegt, im Gegentheil. *Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien* ist eins der durchschlagendsten Sprichwörter, gegen welches zu sündigen die Deutschen theoretisch mehr Neigung haben als andre Völker. (VIIIa,647;EuG,98)

Um gleich bei dem französischen Wort „mieux“ zu verbleiben sei ein ganz früher Brief vom 10. September 1843 an seinen Freund Louis von Klitzing erwähnt, den Bismarck mehr oder weniger spielerisch mit dem Sprichwort „Mieux tard que jamais“ beginnt, wofür er genauso gut das deutsche Äquivalent „Besser spät als nimmer“ hätte schreiben können:

*Mon cher Louis! / Mieux tard que jamais.* Du hast mich ohne Zweifel schon längst für einen so ausgebildeten Pommer erklärt, daß von mir die unter civilisirten Volksstämmen gebräuchlichen Reste der Höflichkeit nicht mehr zu erwarten wären, und Du hast darin nicht ganz Unrecht; böse Beispiele verderben gute Sitten, denn ich habe nur wenig zur Entschuldigung meines ungewöhnlich groben Stillschweigens auf Deine beiden liebenswürdigen Schreiben anzuführen. (I,32;B,9/43)

Dient das französische Sprichwort als oberflächliche Entschuldigungsformel, so erweist sich das ebenfalls auftretende, heute eher unbekannte Sprichwort „Böse Beispiele verderben gute Sitten“ als tiefgründigere Erklärung für sein unberechtigtes Schweigen.

Hier weist Bismarck nicht ausdrücklich auf das Sprichwort hin, während seine Bezeichnung als „Regel“ für das Sprichwort „Vom Feinde soll man lernen“ diese Weisheit überzeugungsvoll hervorhebt:

Man muß sich immer die Regel vorhalten: „Vom Feinde soll man lernen“, und das Zentrum halte ich nach wie vor für einen Gegner des Reichs, in seiner Tendenz, wenn auch nicht in allen seinen Mitgliedern, unter denen es ja auch eine Masse guter ehrlicher Deutscher gibt. (VIIIb,117;R,7/92)

Besonders hervorzuheben ist jedoch die Integrationsweise von drei Sprichwörtern, worauf Bismarck zwar mit „Sprichwort“-Einführungsformeln hinweist, die aber nicht komplett oder gar nur andeutungsweise im Text erscheinen. Im ersten Beispiel weist die Formel „wie ein gemeines Volkssprichwort sagt“ darauf hin, dass es sich bei dem Fragment „einem geschenkten Gaul usw.“ um das seit dem Mittelalter im Deutschen und bis in die Antike zurückgehende Sprichwort „Einem geschenkten Gaul schaut man nicht ins Maul“

handelt (vgl. Singer und Liver 1995-2002: IX, 112-114, Paczolay 1997: 54-58):

Trotzdem glaube ich, daß die Widerstandsfähigkeit des preußischen Königtums hinreichend groß gewesen wäre, um diesem Stoße zu widerstehen. Aber eben dieses Königtum unterscheidet sich dadurch von den konstitutionellen Dynastien in England, Frankreich und Belgien, daß dort die Krone, wie ein gemeines Volkssprichwort sagt: gleich einem geschenkten Gaul usw., aus den blutigen Händen der Revolution überreicht ist unter denjenigen Bedingungen, wie nun die Revolution für gut fand, jenen Dynastien aufzulegen. (I,253;R,9/49)

Bismarcks Zuhörer werden keine Schwierigkeiten gehabt haben, das Fragment zu ergänzen. Das aber sieht völlig anders aus, wenn er etwa fünfundzwanzig Jahre später am 5. April 1876 in einer Rede vor dem Abgeordnetenhaus lediglich auf „ein dargebotenes Geschenk“ hinweist und dann kurzerhand sagt: „ich will an ein populäres Sprichwort nicht erinnern“:

Ich würde an Stelle des Herrn Abgeordneten nicht gern an diese Phase erinnert haben, er zwingt mich aber dazu, ihn darauf aufmerksam zu machen, daß er mehr als jeder andere in der Lage war, ein dargebotenes Geschenk nicht so genau zu kritisieren – ich will an ein populäres Sprichwort nicht erinnern, – aber doch nicht so scharf zu kritisieren an den Formen, unter denen dieses sehr stattliche und hübsche Herzogtum von seinem Herzog und nicht von der Volksversammlung Preußen angeboten wird. (V,667;R,4/76)

Hier gehört bereits ein guter Schuss Kulturmündigkeit dazu, um das gemeinte Sprichwort zu erkennen und so den satirischen Hieb Bismarcks nachzuvollziehen.

Unproblematisch dürfte folgender Text sein, auch wenn das Sprichwort „Morgen, morgen, nur nicht heute, sagen alle faulen Leute“ ohne Einführungsformel nur halb zitiert wird. Dafür ist es einfach im Volksmund viel zu bekannt:

Ich würde an Ihrer Stelle doch das dringende Bedürfnis fühlen, in dieser offenbar sehr zwiespältigen Frage – keine Fraktion ist in sich einig, jede ist gern der Entscheidung

überhoben, sucht sie von heute auf morgen aufzuschieben – „Morgen, morgen, nur nicht heute“ – allen diesen Kreuz- und Querzügen ein Ende zu machen durch ein einfaches Nein. (VII,140;R,5/84)

Schwieriger ist es mit dem folgenden Beispiel, wo es sich um das heutzutage weniger geläufige mittellateinische Sprichwort „Es ist ein schlechter Vogel, der sein eigenes Nest beschmutzt“ handeln dürfte, das als sprichwörtliche Redensart „das eigene Nest beschmutzen“ oder als „Nestbeschmutzer“ (Kunstmann 1939, Röhrich 1991-1992: II, 1089-1090) weiterhin umläuft:

Ich möchte den Herren doch zu bedenken geben, daß die ihnen von Gott gesetzte Obrigkeit, die über uns regiert, auch in den Organen, die Seine Majestät an die Spitze des Reiches stellt, vor dem Auslande wenigstens einen gewissen Anspruch hat – ich will nicht sagen auf persönliche Rücksicht, nein, aber doch auf eine Behandlung vor dem Auslande hat, daß man nicht sich die Aufgabe stellt, die eigene Regierung vor dem Auslande zu verleumden. Man hat von dem Vogel mit seinem Neste ein Sprichwort, das ich hier nicht anführen will, aber für proper halte ich diese Operation nicht. (V,421;R,1/74)

Noch komplizierter wird es schließlich in diesem weiteren Text, wo Bismarck ganz einfach erwähnt, dass es „gewisse deutsche Sprichwörter“ gibt, die auf die von ihm dargelegte Situation passen. Hier muss jemand schon eine gehörige Sprichwortkenntnis besitzen, um ein passendes Sprichwort zu finden, wobei immerhin eine Möglichkeit das Sprichwort „Wen's juckt, der kratze sich“ sein dürfte:

Der Herr Vorredner hat sich über Vorwürfe gerechtfertigt, die ich ihm gar nicht gemacht habe. Wir haben gewisse deutsche Sprichwörter, wenn sich einer getroffen fühlt, die ich hier nicht gerade wiederholen will, aber er sagte, er hätte mir keine Vorwürfe machen wollen. (VI,225;R, 10/78)

Solche Verrätselungen sind allerdings eher selten, und auch die Einführungsformeln sind weniger zahlreich im Vergleich zu solchen Sprichwörtern, die in ihrem traditionellen Wortlaut oder in aufgelöster Form in den Rede- oder Schreibfluss eingebaut werden.



Zuweilen sind solche minimalen Änderungen lediglich durch deutsche Syntaxregeln bedingt. Das zeigt sich an den beiden folgenden Texten, die das Sprichwort „Das Hemd ist mir näher als der Rock“ enthalten. Im ersten Beispiel ermöglicht es die koordinierende Konjunktion „denn“, dass der Wortlaut traditionell erscheinen kann, während im zweiten Beleg die subordinierende Konjunktion „dass“ ihren syntaktischen Einfluss ausübt:

Komme ich nicht in die Lage, daß wir uns nach unsern Bedürfnissen einrichten können, so wird meines Bleibens hier schwerlich lange sein, denn das Hemd ist mir näher als der Rock, und die Anforderungen des Vaterlandes scheinen mir in diesem Falle nicht so nothwendig grade an meine Person gerichtet zu sein, daß mir nicht die Pflichten gegen meine Familie näher ständen. (I,384;B,5/51)

Der etwaige Kampf widerstreitender Pflichten würde nur ein kurzer sein, da jeder dieser Herrn mit seinen Ministern im Grunde ganz ehrlich davon überzeugt ist, daß die Pflichten gegen sein eigenes Haus und seine Untertanen dringender sind, als die gegen den Bund, nach dem Sprichwort, daß ihm das Hemd näher ist als der Rock. (II,120-1;B,11/56)

Es lassen sich aber auch etliche Textstellen finden, wo Bismarck das Sprichwort nicht in seinem gewöhnlichen Wortlaut zitiert, sondern es in aufgelöster Form aufnimmt, um möglicherweise die den Sprichwörtern oft anhängende Lehrhaftigkeit zu vermeiden. Manchmal ist es dabei gar nicht einmal klar, ob er wirklich das betreffende Sprichwort im Hinterkopf hatte. Dennoch scheint es in den folgenden Beispielen berechtigt zu sein, ein Sprichwort im Hintergrund zu vermuten, das im Folgenden in Kursivschrift angegeben wird:

Nicht wir haben Rom, sondern Rom hat uns damals „de haut en bas“ behandelt. Wenn der Schreiber des Briefes annimmt, daß erst durch falsche Maßregeln und Mangel an Informationen aus kleinen Bächen „ein Strom angewachsen sei“, so kennt er die Tatsachen nicht und täuscht sich über die bewegenden Prinzipien der Geschichte. (VI,770; Ber,12/82)

*Viele kleine Bäche machen einen großen Strom.*

Die Leichtigkeit, mit welcher die schwächeren und mehr phäakischen Dynastien 1848 fielen, hatte der Meinung Vorschub geleistet, die preußische Dynastie falle auch in den Märztagen, nicht aus Schwäche, sondern aus tugendhafter Sentimentalität und Bedürfnis der Anerkennung und der Einschätzung in die Kategorie edler Gesinnung, oder aus Schüchternheit im Zerschlagen von Eiern, die den Augen wohlgefällig sind, wenn man den Eierkuchen notwendig braucht. (VIIIa,689;EuG,98)

*Man macht keinen Eierkuchen ohne Eier zu zerbrechen.*

Ja, ich glaube, der Abgeordnete Richter sowohl wie ich kommen, wenn wir bestimmte Ziele verfolgen, recht häufig in die Lage, dieselben Argumente in mäßig veränderter Form öfter als einmal Vorbringen zu müssen, und der Abgeordnete Richter, der darin eine so reiche Erfahrung hat bei den vielen Reden, die er innerhalb und außerhalb dieses Hauses hält, sollte doch, wenn er selbst in einem Glashause wohnt, nicht mit Steinen werfen. (VI,712;R,6/82)

*Wer im Glashaus sitzt, muss nicht mit Steinen werfen.*

Und weshalb trifft mich diese unversöhnliche Ungnade, dieser Kampf gegen mächtige Einflüsse, den ich auf jedem Schritte der mühevollen Bahn zu bestehen habe? Nur weil ich mich nicht dazu verstehe zweien Herrn zu dienen, andre Politik als die Eurer Majestät zu machen, andern Einflüssen als den Befehlen Eurer Majestät Rechnung zu tragen. (III,684-5;B,4/66)

*Man kann nicht zwei Herren zugleich dienen.*

Hier folgen nun noch zwei Beispielpaare, die die Souveränität aufzeigen, womit Bismarck mit vorgeprägtem Sprichwortgut umgeht. Zuerst handelt es sich um das aus dem Mittellateinischen entstandene Sprichwort „Gebranntes Kind fürchtet das Feuer“, das sich bis heute großer Beliebtheit im Volksmund sowie in Gedichten und Aphorismen erfreut (vgl. Mieder 2017: 226-229). Bei den beiden Texten mit dem aufgelösten Sprichwort geht es zum einen um eine politische und zum anderen um eine persönliche Aussage. Hätte Bismarck in beiden Fällen das Sprichwort eigenständig zitiert, hätte es mit seiner vordergründigen Warn- und Lehrhaftigkeit an expressiver Aussagekraft verloren. Das Sprachgenie Bismarck tat gut

daran, das Sprichwort syntaktisch aufzulösen und es semantisch an seine Aussagen anzupassen:

Wir gehen in Deutschland den Weg Frankreichs, und sind jetzt etwa bei 1836 oder 1837 angekommen; es muß uns noch sehr schlecht gehn, ehe es uns wieder gut gehn kann. Die Kinder sind nicht genug gebrannt, um das Feuer zu scheuen. (I,306;B,7/50)

Herr von Below, der diese Zeilen mitnimmt, will in etwa 8 Tagen, nach Beendigung der Diskussion über das Ehegesetz, wieder herkommen, um dann, wenn sich mein Zustand nicht wieder verschlimmert, mit mir wieder nach Berlin zu reisen. Ich würde ihn schon heut begleiten, wenn die allgemeine Opposition dagegen nicht den Arzt auf ihrer Seite hätte und ich, als scharf verbranntes Kind, das Feuer, mit dem man mir droht, doch etwas fürchten gelernt hatte. (II,311;B,2/60)

Bei dem zweiten Beispielpaar dreht es sich um das Sprichwort „Wie man in den Wald ruft, so schallt es heraus“. Im ersten Text kehrt Bismarck das Sprichwort um, womit es ihm gelingt, einem Abgeordneten klar zu machen, dass er sich durch sein aggressives Palavern nur noch mehr Feinde macht. Im zweiten Beleg bezieht Bismarck die Umstellung auf sich selbst und warnt, dass er mit Wort und Tat auf Angriffe reagieren wird:

Aus den meisten Wäldern ruft es so heraus, wie man hineinschreit, und warum will der Herr Abgeordnete Richter sich unnötig noch mehr Feinde machen, als er hat? Er teilt das mit mir, daß die Zahl im Wachsen und schon nicht ganz gering ist; sein Ohr ist nur nicht so geschärft für die Existenz der Gegner, wie das meinige. (VI,529;R,4/81)

Wir sind damals von den Herren Rednern mit so beleidigenden, beschimpfenden Worten und Wendungen angegriffen worden – es sind uns „Lügen“ ins Gesicht geworfen worden und andere Ausdrücke, daß es nicht zu verwundern ist, wenn es aus dem Walde herausschallt, wie man in den Wald hineinschreit; und wenn ich einmal lebhaft werde, so kann ich Ihnen versichern: Es ist mir wirklich so zu Mute, die Sache bewegt mich. (VII,211-2;R,12/84)

An diesen beiden Texten ist in der Tat zu erkennen, dass Bismarck auf emotionale und auch aggressive Weise mit Sprichwörtern umzugehen wusste, wobei in dem vorliegenden Fall ihm das Sprichwort als engagierter „Waldmensch“ besonders am Herzen gelegen haben wird.

Einfacher ist es selbstverständlich, Sprichwörter ohne jeglichen Hinweis in ihrem ursprünglichen Wortlaut aufzunehmen, und dafür gibt es in den Reden und Schriften von Bismarck zahlreiche Belege. Einige treffende Beispiele sind in seinen immer wieder stilistisch und inhaltlich gepriesenen Briefen – ganz besonders an seine Braut und Gattin, seine Geschwister und seine Kinder – zu finden, wo er sich normalerweise als empfindungsvoller Mensch zeigt. Hier folgen einige Briefstellen an seine innig geliebte Frau:

Mein geliebtes Herz / Am Kammertisch gebe ich Dir mit diesen Zeilen Nachricht von meinem Wohlbefinden. Arbeit ist viel, etwas müde, nicht genug Schlaf, aller Anfang ist schwer; mit Gottes Hülfe wird es besser werden und ist ja auch so recht gut; nur das Leben auf dem Präsentir-Teller ist etwas unbehaglich. (III,6;B,10/62)

*Aller Anfang ist schwer.*

Mein liebes Herz / Ich bin sehr erfreut, aus Deinen beiden Briefen zu ersehn, daß es unsrer zerstreuten Schaar überall wohl geht. Wegen der Budget-Ueberschreitungen mach Dir keine Sorgen; was sein muß, muß sein, und ob Du einige hundert von diesen kleinen Gulden mehr oder weniger ausgiebst, hat auf das künftige Erbe unsrer Kinder keinen Einfluß von Bedeutung. (III,562-3;B,7/65)

*Was sein muss, muss sein.*

Wir von der Rechten denken heut „Pack schlägt sich, Pack verträgt sich“; die Linken zanken sich vor unsern Augen höchst leidenschaftlich unter einander über das Wahlgesetz; *bourgeois* gegen Proletarier; laß sie zanken. (I,299; B,4/50)

*Pack schlägt sich, Pack verträgt sich.*

Der letzte Auszug zeigt besonders, dass Bismarck auch in den Briefen an seine Gattin nicht umhinkonnte, auf das politische Tagesgeschehen mit seinen Kämpfen einzugehen. Das stimmt auch noch

betreffe Briefe an Freunde, wie zum Beispiel seinem Göttinger Corpsbruder Gustav Scharlach:

[...] denke lieber zurück, wie es an jenem Pfingsttage mit mir aussah, wo wir in Cardemin zusammen am Fenster standen, und welche Aenderung seitdem in mir vorgegangen ist. Rom ward nicht an Einem Tage gebaut und sehn auch nicht alle Häuser gleich darin aus, so wenig wie die Einwohner, die dennoch alle Römer sind. (I,110-11;B,3/47)

*Rom ward auch nicht in einem Jahr erbaut.*

Doch die Politik macht sich vor allem in den Briefen an die Minister Otto von Manteuffel, Albrecht von Roon und andere Politiker bemerkbar und zeigt sich ebenfalls in politischen Gesprächen und Erklärungen. In einem der folgenden Textbelege kommen dabei sogar gleich zwei Sprichwörter hintereinander vor:

Ich zweifle nicht, daß unsre Ablehnung, trotz der zugesagten Discretion, bei England und in Deutschland benutzt werden wird, um uns zu verdächtigen und um Mithelfer zur Bearbeitung unsrer fernern Entschließungen zu gewinnen. Aber das läßt sich nicht ändern; wo Holz gehauen wird, da fallen Späne, und die Annahme des Vorschlags ist doch so unmöglich, daß man mit dem angestrengtesten Nachdenken schwerlich etwas ausfinden könnte, was im gegenwärtigen Moment unmöglicher für Preußens Politik, nach innen und außen, wäre. (II,238-9;B,7/58)

*Wo man Holz haut, da fallen Späne.*

Lieber ein Ende mit Schrecken, als ein Schrecken ohne Ende. Was sich grün macht, fressen die Ziegen. Deutschland in sich gefestigt, will nichts als sich selbst in Frieden überlassen bleiben und sich friedlich weiter entwickeln. (V,574;G,5/75)

*Was (Wer) sich grün macht, den fressen die Ziegen.*

*Besser ein Ende mit Schrecken, als ein Schrecken ohne Ende.*

Ich glaube noch heute „furchtlos und treu für des Königs Macht und Rechte“ im Gefecht zu stehen, von „der Presse wilder Meute umbellt“ und in dem Geiste der 1813 „Fürst

und Land umschlang“. Auch heut noch darf ich sagen „viel Feind viel Ehr“, nur sind von den damaligen Feinden gegen die ich für „Königs Macht und Rechte“ zu kämpfen hatte, manche ausgeschieden und andere für sie eingetreten. (V,665;B,3/76)

*Viel Feind, viel Ehr.*

Was an diesen letzten Beispielen erneut ins Auge fällt, ist die Tatsache, dass Bismarck Sprichwörter eher selten als Lehren einsetzt. Vielmehr dienen sie ihm dazu, seine persönlichen Umstände und vor allem die politischen Machtkämpfe praktisch und vernünftig zu kommentieren und volkssprachlich zu erklären. Er zeigt sich dabei nicht als pedantischer Lehrmeister, sondern als souveräner Sprachvirtuose, der alle Register, auch die sprichwörtlichen, der deutschen Sprache zu spielen weiß.

Ähnlich geht Bismarck mit den sonst eher lehrhaften Bibel-sprichwörtern um, die vor allem durch Martin Luthers volkssprachliche Übersetzung volkstümlich geworden sind (vgl. Schulze 1860, Grünberg 1888, Krauss 1993, Schmoldt 2002, Mieder 2014). So heißt es bei dem Bismarck-Philologen Hugo Blümmer betreffs solcher Bibelweisheiten in den Briefen: „Ganz besonders reizvoll zeigt sich Bismarcks Eigenart in der Art und Weise, wie er bekannte Sprichwörter oder sprichwörtliche Redensarten von biblischem Charakter anwendet, indem er ihnen zuweilen durch Anpassung ab den bestimmten Fall ein ganz anderes Aussehen zu geben weiß“ (Blümmer 1894: 783). Auch Theodor Matthias spricht „von den Wendungen aus der Bibel, deren Schriften ihm wirklich Ratgeber fürs Leben und Widerspiegelungen eigener Erfahrungen waren, zumal das täglich zur Hand gehaltene Neue Testament und die Psalmen“ (Matthias 1902: 102). In der Tat kann kein Zweifel daran bestehen, dass Bismarcks Reden und Schreiben durch eine bemerkenswerte „Bibelfestigkeit“ (Schoenfeld 1905: xlvii) geprägt ist. Erhebliche literarische Kenntnisse und vor allem ein großes Geschichtswissen sowie Fremdsprachenkenntnisse kommen noch hinzu. All dies wird jedoch seiner praktischen Realpolitik untergeordnet, und so dienen ihm biblische Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Botschaften nicht als lehrhafte christliche Redensarten, sondern als volkssprachliches Mittel zum politischen Zweck. Folgende Aussage aus seiner Reichstagsrede vom 13. März 1884 zeigt recht deutlich, wie er sich einmal zum Christentum bekennt und gleichzeitig

den Jesus-Spruch „Wenn dich jemand auf deine rechte Backe schlägt, dem biete die andere auch dar“ (Matt. 3,39) dazu benutzt, um seine politischen Gegner vor allzu aggressiven Angriffen zu warnen.

Meine Herren, ich bin ein Christ, aber doch als Reichskanzler nicht so, daß, wenn ich eine Ohrfeige auf die eine Backe bekomme, ich die andere hinhalte und sage: Ist dir nicht die zweite gefällig? Wenn man mich angreift, so wehre ich mich. (VII,89;R,3/84)

Bei seiner Bibelfestigkeit war sich Bismarck gewiss bewusst, dass Jesus unmittelbar einen Spruch vorher das Sprichwort „Auge um Auge, Zahn um Zahn“ (Matth. 3,38) aus dem Alten Testament (vgl. 3. Mose 24,20) zitiert, doch so weit wie dieses Vergeltungsspruchwort wollte er dann doch nicht gehen. Man wird seine resolute Aussage auf biblischem Grund dennoch gut verstanden haben.

Von besonderem Interesse sind in diesem Zusammenhang zwei auf das Bibelspruchwort „Man sieht den Splitter im fremden Auge, aber im eigenen den Balken nicht“ (Matth. 7,8) anspielende Belege, wobei die Wortschöpfung „Splitterreißender Balkenträger“ eine herrliche Sprachspielerei gegenüber seinem Freund darstellt:

Du [Schulfreund Karl Friedrich Canitz] klagst über meine faule Korrespondenz?! Splitterreißender Balkenträger! Der mir nur notgedrungen sieben Zeilen schreibt und eine kontemplative Lebensweise führt, während ich zwei Ausschuß- und eine Bundessitzung wöchentlich habe. (VIIIb, 277;B,7/54)

Das alles führe ich nicht an, um es zu widerlegen, sondern um den Herrn Vorredner, wenn er von Gereiztheit und Leidenschaftlichkeit spricht, doch zunächst an den Balken im eigenen Auge zu erinnern. (V,362;R,6/73)

Es gibt jedoch noch einen dritten Beleg in einem Brief vom 23. Februar 1847 an seine damalige Braut und spätere Gattin, worin das „Splitter/Balken“-Sprichwort erscheint, doch kommt noch das weniger bekannte warnende Bibelspruchwort „Wenn das am grünen Holz geschieht, was soll am dürren werden?“ (Luk 23,31) hinzu, das auch als verkürzte Redensart „wenn das am grünen Holz

geschieht“ auftritt (Wander 1867-1880: II, 757, Röhrich 1991-1992: II, 732):

Und doch kann ich die Behauptung nicht zurücknehmen, daß ich ihm [dem Vater] gut war im Grunde meiner Seele. Wenn ich so am grünen Holze handelte, wirst Du da denken, wie werde ich da sündigen, wo ich nicht liebte? Ich wollte Dir darlegen, wie ich mit dem 4. Gebot die Splitter aus Deinem Auge zu ziehen suchte und jahrelang die Balken in meinem geduldet habe, aber auch wie schwer mich das drückt, wenn ich daran denke. (VIIIb,272;B,2/47)

Für heutige Leser dürften diese Zeilen Verständnisschwierigkeiten bereiten, was für Fremdsprachler ganz gewiss der Fall sein wird. Nun gut, seine Braut wird seine ehrlichen Worte verstanden haben, und das gilt ebenso für einige weitere Briefe an sie, wo ihr Bräutigam zu dem Sprichwort „Richtet nicht, so werdet ihr nicht gerichtet“ (Matth. 7,1) greift und sich als verständnisvoller Mitmensch und demütiger Liebhaber zeigt:

Eben kam ein altes krankes Weib aus dem Dorf und bettelte, und ich wies sie mit Härte ab, weil ihre einzige Tochter mit Einbruch 100 Rthlr, gestohlen hat und sitzt, obgleich sie ebenso dumm wie frech läugnet, und ich glaube, daß die Mutter darum wußte. Das war wohl unbarmherzig von mir. Richtet nicht, so werdet Ihr nicht gerichtet. Aber man wird so viel düpiert mit Betteleien, und es sind so viele unverschuldet in Noth. Ich will mich indeß doch noch näher nach ihren Umständen erkundigen und mich nicht in Gottes Vergeltungsamt mischen. (I,99;B,2/47)

Zwei Sachen beruhigen mich besonders darin, daß ich Dir in meinen Briefen nie wehgethan habe und daß Du deutlich und entschieden Deine Nachsicht und Duldung für meine etwaigen Glaubensschwächen und Zweifel aussprichst und daß Du mich doch lieben willst, wenn auch Gott unsre Herzen verschiedene Wege führen sollte. In keinem Felde ist wohl der Spruch „richtet nicht, so werdet Ihr nicht gerichtet“ anwendbarer als grade in Glaubenssachen. (I,109;B,3/47)



Es gibt schließlich noch zwei weitere Briefe an die Gattin, worin Bismarck einmal die zweite Hälfte und dann die erste Hälfte des allgemein bekannten Bibelspruchwortes „Wes das Herz voll ist, geht der Mund über“ (5. Mose 8,3; Matth. 4,4) zitiert (Mieder 1983, Nelson 1986), wohl wissend, dass sie die Fragmente ergänzen kann:

Ich [...] bin überzeugt jetzt, daß unsre Regierung, ohne das Einrücken der Russen abzuwarten, sich sehr bald genöthigt sehn wird, die von ihr selbst aufgewiegelten Polen gewaltsam zur Ruhe zu bringen. Ich langweile Dich mit Politik, mein armes Herz; aber der Mund geht über von der Fülle. (I,173;B,4/48)

Verzeih, daß ich Dir Politik schreibe, aber wessen das Herz voll ist etc.; ich trockne ganz auf geistig in diesem Getriebe, und fürchte, ich bekomme noch einmal Geschmack daran. (I,473;B,6/52)

Man sieht, wie Bismarck selbst in ganz persönlichen Briefen an seine so geliebte Gattin nicht von der Politik loskommt, die ihn Tag und Nacht Zeit seines Lebens beschäftigt hat. Das zeigt sich an zwei weiteren an Politiker gerichteten Briefen, wo der erste Beleg wiederum das Sprichwort nur fragmentarisch enthält, während es im zweiten Brief vollständig doch in einer humorvollen subjektiven Variation zitiert wird:

Ich habe, ohne weitre Nebengedanken, in zwei Briefen an [Otto von] Manteuffel meine Feder von dem übergehn lassen, dessen mein Herz voll war, und begreife noch nicht, wie der Preuße und der Protestant in Ihrem Bruder sich mit dem Auftreten der Rundschau abfindet, obschon ich doch Ihren Bruder in beiden Eigenschaften kennen gelernt habe und als Vorbild ehre. (I,565;B,1/54)

Ich vergesse, daß ich Ihnen nicht Politik, sondern Musik schreiben wollte; wovon aber das Herz voll ist, davon geht das Tintenfaß über. (II,235;B,5/58)

In einem fünften Beleg, dieses Mal aus einer Rede vor dem Deutschen Reichstag am 22. November 1873, erscheint das Bibelspruchwort endlich vollständig und durch Gänsefüßchen als Bibelzitat gekennzeichnet:

In Preußen ist es die Konglomeration von acht Ressorts, deren jedes einen unabhängigen Staat bildet, und es wäre vielleicht nicht schlimmer, wenn jede der elf Provinzen ihren Minister hätte, wie es früher Minister von Schlesien gab [...], in der Tat aber niemand verantwortlich ist und kein Ressort in das andere hineinsehen kann. – Verzeihen Sie, wenn ich weitläufig werde in dieser Sache, aber „wes das Herz voll ist, davon geht der Mund über“ – davon kann ich keine Ausnahme machen. (V,609;R,11/75)

Immer wieder treten Sprichwörter nicht als Lehren sondern als Erklärungen auf, was natürlich etwas damit zu tun hat, dass Bismarck sie recht frei in seine Briefe, Reden und Schriften einbaut. Da man zu seiner Zeit sicherlich bibelfester war als heute, werden Leser und Zuhörer seine von der Bibel beeinflussten Texte verstanden haben und wohl rhetorisch gesehen auch genossen haben, wie der Realpolitiker die Bibelworte befreit von ihrem ursprünglichen Wortlaut dennoch als säkularisierte Weisheiten politisch einsetzte:

Das sage ich freilich in der Voraussetzung, daß S. Majestät fest bei dem System bleibt, jedes erlaubte Mittel im Kampfe gegen die Revolution aller Schattirungen furchtlos zu handhaben; wenn auf irgend einem Gebiete, so ist es auf dem der Politik, daß der Glaube handgreiflich Berge versetzt, daß Muth und Sieg nicht im Causalzusammenhange, sondern identisch sind; wenigstens für einen König von Preußen Gott sei Dank ist es noch so. (I,418-9;B,9/51)

*Der Glaube versetzt Berge.* (1, Korinther 13,2)

[...] da bin ich ganz erstaunt gewesen über die ungeheuerliche geschichtliche Lüge, die in allen französischen höheren Schulen kultiviert wird, von Ludwig XIV. ab bis auf die heutige Zeit. Was hat das für Folgen? Daß der junge Franzose von Haus aus ein falsches Bild über die Bedeutung seiner eigenen Nation, über deren Berechtigung zur Macht bekommt, und daß er mit einem Hochmut in die Welt tritt, von dem das deutsche Sprichwort sagt, daß er vor dem Fall kommt. (VIIIb,211;R,4/95)

*Hochmut kommt vor dem Fall.* (Sprüche 16,18)

Natürlich aber setzt Bismarck gelegentlich Bibelsprüche mehr oder weniger wort- und strukturgetreu ein, wie etwa in diesen beiden Texten mit dem Sprichwort „Man soll dem Kaiser geben, was des Kaisers ist“ (Matth. 22, 21; vgl. Bünker 1987), wobei bei der politischen Verwendung sicherlich auch der Kaiser des Deutschen Reiches, für den Bismarck die höchste Achtung hatte, mitgemeint ist:

Wir hatten gehofft, an einer strengkirchlichen Partei eine Stütze für die Regierung zu gewinnen, die dem Kaiser gibt, was des Kaisers ist, die die Achtung vor der Regierung auch da, wo man glaubt, daß die Regierung irrt, in allen Kreisen, namentlich in den Kreisen des politisch weniger unterrichteten gemeinen Mannes, der Masse, zu erhalten sucht. (V,150-1;R,1/72)

Die Mehrheit der Bevölkerung im Reichslande ist katholisch; wenn man daher einen Statthalter haben kann, der dieser Konfession zwar angehört, dabei aber, die Sicherheit gewährt, daß er dem Kaiser geben wird, was des Kaisers ist, und daß seine Treue gegen den Staat unter seinem katholischen Bekenntnis nicht leidet, so ist letzteres eher nützlich als schädlich. (VII,298;B,6/85)

Seine Pflicht und Schuldigkeit zu tun und getan zu haben, darin sah Bismarck stets das *raison d'être* seiner politischen Tätigkeit. Nationaler und sozialpolitischer Fortschritt ist nur möglich durch ernsthaften Einsatz, auch wenn damit Frustrationen, Misserfolge und Anfeindungen verbunden sind.

Kein Wunder, dass es Bismarck schwerfiel, nach seiner Entlassung sozusagen auf ein Abstellgleis gestellt zu werden. Das war auch nicht absolut der Fall, doch ohne Amt – obwohl mit hohen Würden – kam er sich oft als der biblische aber weise Prediger in der Wüste vor, wie er es in einer Ansprache im Jahre 1893 ausdrückte:

In der heutigen Welt ist für mich kein Platz für amtliche Tätigkeit. Das aber hindert mich nicht, bei Gelegenheit meine Meinung offen auszusprechen, selbst wenn ich dabei im Sinn des alten [Bibel] Textes Prediger in der Wüste bleiben sollte. (VIIIb,160;R,7/93)

*Ein Prediger in der Wüste sein.* (Jesaia 40,3)

Sicherlich hat er sich im Ruhestand an folgende Bemerkung in seiner langen Reichstagsrede vom 12. Juni 1882 erinnert, wo er sein politisches Schicksal prophetisch mit dem längst zu dem Sprichwort „Der Prophet gilt nichts in seinem Vaterlande“ verkürzte Bibelspruch „Ein Prophet gilt nirgend weniger als in seinem Vaterland und im eigenen Hause“ ((Matth. 13,57) zusammengefasst hatte:

Ich komme immer mehr zu der Rolle des Zuschauers, der sieht, wie sich die Sachen auf der Bühne entwickeln, aber ich habe lange genug in diesen Verhältnissen gelebt, um sie zu kennen, und meine Ansichten darüber haben so viel Wert, wie die eines jeden andern in Deutschland, nur außerhalb Deutschlands vielleicht einen höheren. Kein Prophet gilt im eigenen Lande. (VI,707;R,6/82)

Möglicherweise hat er dabei auch an das Schicksal des unverwüstlichen Martin Luther gedacht, den er nicht nur wegen der Reformation schätzte, sondern auch wegen seines bedeutenden Einflusses auf „die Entwicklung unserer deutschen Sprache durch die zutage geförderte Bibelübersetzung“ (VIIIb,115; A,7/92). Zehn Jahre früher hatte er jemandem empfohlen, „einmal wieder Luthers Schriften [zu lesen], wie ich es jetzt getan, lesen Sie vor allem Luthers Brief an den Adel deutscher Nation“ (V,318;G,3/73). Zweifelsohne haben Luther und sein sprichwörtlich geprägtes Bibeldeutsch – er hat sich um 1530 seine eigene Sprichwörter- und Redensartensammlung angelegt (vgl. Thiele 1900, Cornette 1942, Moser 1980) – die gewaltige Sprache Otto von Bismarcks beeinflusst, der, wenn auch bis heute umstritten, dennoch ein Prophet in seinem Vaterlande war.

Ohne Zweifel war Otto von Bismarck ein äußerst sprachbewusster Politiker, der sehr gut wusste, dass das Antispruchwort „Wörter machen Leute“ seine Berechtigung hat (vgl. Schneider 1976). Seine Briefe, Reden und Schriften zeugen von seinem differenzierten Sprachbewusstsein, was auch semantische Aspekte einbezog, wie seine folgenden Überlegungen mit Bezug auf das Wort „deutsch“ zeigen:

Es muß ein eigentümlicher Zauber in diesem Worte „Deutsch“ liegen. Man sieht, daß jeder das Wort für sich zu gewinnen sucht, und jeder das „Deutsch“ nennt, was

ihm nützt, was seinem Parteistandpunkte Vorteil bringt, und damit nach Bedürfnis wechselt. So kommt es, daß man in manchen Zeiten es „Deutsch“ nennt, gegen den Bund sich aufzulehnen, in anderen Zeiten das für „Deutsch“ gilt, für den fortschrittlich gewordenen Bund Partei zu nehmen. So kann es leicht geschehen, daß uns vorgeworfen wird, daß wir von Deutschland nichts wissen wollen aus Parteiinteressen. (III,231-232;R,1/64)

Zehn Jahre später sagte er im Deutschen Reichstag bezüglich des politischen Aneinander Vorbeiredens bei derselben deutschen Sprache etwas Ähnliches: „Wir sprechen gewissermaßen verschiedene Sprachen und verstehen uns gegenseitig nicht, weil wir, obschon beide deutsch sprechend, doch von verschiedenen Grundsätzen, die wir als wahr und richtig annehmen, ausgehen“ (V,499;R,11/74).

Selbstverständlich lag Bismarck ein vereintes Deutschland mit seiner deutschen Sprache stets am Herzen, was nicht ausschloss, dass er Fremdwörter – der deutschümelnde Kampf dagegen war zu seiner Zeit noch nicht so stark (vgl. Lyon 1895c) – oder gar fremdsprachliche Redensarten und Sprichwörter benutzte, auch wenn zuweilen exakte deutsche Äquivalente möglich gewesen wären. Doch Bismarck war so polyglott (Latein, Französisch, Englisch, Russisch, Dänisch – und auch Plattdeutsch!) veranlagt (Matthias 1902: 34 und 92), dass ihm solche fremdsprachlichen Phraseologismen mehr oder weniger automatisch in den Sinn kamen.

An erster Stelle ist hier die lateinische Sprache zu nennen, die Bismarck schon als Schüler zu meistern hatte, wie aus der Einführungsformel „lateinischer Schulsatz“ hervorgeht:

Der Herr Redner hat einen wesentlichen Teil seiner gestrigen Rede und auch der meinigen heute zu wiederholen für nötig gefunden. Ich kann keinen anderen Grund dafür auffinden, als vielleicht den alten lateinischen Schulsatz: *repetitio est mater studiorum*. (V,340;R,5/73)

Das lateinische Sprichwort wurde bereits im Spätmittelalter durch Sprachübungen ins Deutsche und andere Sprachen lehnübersetzt, und so hätte Bismarck hier durchaus „Wiederholung ist die Mutter aller Studien“ sagen können, doch verleiht die lateinische Fassung seiner ironisch gemeinten Aussage vielleicht eine zusätzliche Pointe.

Als Jurastudent hat Bismarck seine Lateinkenntnisse gewiss erweitert, und so sind ihm etliche lateinische Sprichwörter so geläufig geworden, dass er die längst sprichwörtlich umlaufenden deutschen Übersetzungen zur Seite schiebt, wohl wissend, dass sie eben in Bismarcks diplomatischen Kreisen im Lateinischen ebenso bekannt waren, wie etwa:

Und wenn wir dem deutschen Volke etwas zu geben haben, so sage ich: *bis dat, qui cito dat*, und *qui non cito dat*, der schädigt unsere ganze Volkswohlfahrt in hohem Grade. Ich glaube, daß diese Überzeugung die Verhandlungen des hohen Hauses beherrschen sollte, daß das deutsche Volk vor allen Dingen Gewißheit über seine wirtschaftliche Zukunft verlangt. (VI,298;R,5/79)  
*Wer bald gibt, der gibt doppelt.*

Die Sorge vor Krieg ist überall dem Vertrauen zum Frieden gewichen; aber *si vis pacem, para bellum*, nicht unsre guten Absichten, nur unsre verbündeten Streitkräfte sind die Bürgen des Friedens. (VI,401;B,12/79)  
*Wer Friede haben will, muss zum Kriege rüsten.*

Das politische Augenmaß der mittelstaatlichen Minister war damals stets beirrt durch den Lärm der Presse und den Glauben, daß die Presse in Deutschland die Stimme der Öffentlichen Meinung von 45 Millionen Deutschen sei, abgesehen von der Frage, ob diese 45 Millionen [...] Europa gegenüber doch einen schweren Stand gehabt haben würden, lag der Irrtum der meisten, welche an das Wort „*vox populi, vox dei*“ glaubten, in der Überschätzung der Macht der Presse und der durch sie beeinflussten Zeitungsleser gegenüber dem Gewicht der in Deutschland regierenden Dynastien. (VIIIa,268; EuG,98; vgl. Gallacher 1945)  
*Volkes Stimme, Gottes Stimme.*

Von Interesse ist es, dass der Reichskanzler Bismarck und Bundeskanzler Helmut Schmidt sich ein von Cicero stammendes lateinisches Sprichwort als grundlegenden Leitgedanken für ihre politische Tätigkeit auserwählt haben, nämlich „*Salus publica suprema lex*“ (vgl. Nolte und Mieder 2017: 61-64). Das gesunde Gemeinwohl der Bevölkerung als höchstes Gesetz für sein mannigfaltiges

politisches Vorgehen hat Bismarck mehrmals beschrieben, darunter dieser Beleg mit der Kurzfassung des Sprichwortes:

Für mich hat immer nur ein einziger Kompaß, ein einziger Polarstern, nach dem ich steuere, bestanden: *Salus publica!* Ich habe von Anfang meiner Tätigkeit an vielleicht oft rasch und unbesonnen gehandelt, aber wenn ich Zeit hatte, darüber nachzudenken, mich immer der Frage untergeordnet: Was ist für mein Vaterland, was ist – so lange ich allein in Preußen war – für meine Dynastie, und heutzutage, was ist für die deutsche Nation das Nützliche, das Zweckmäßige, das Richtige? (VI,509;R,2/81)

Als kleine Ergänzung zu dieser Selbstcharakterisierung sei noch ein letztes lateinisches Sprichwort aus einem Brief vom 30. Oktober 1872 zitiert, dessen deutsche Übersetzung „Kein Tag ohne Linie“ wohl heute nicht mehr geläufig ist. Da schreibt er nach überstandener Erkrankung schlicht und recht „Mir geht es langsam besser; aber noch immer *nulla dies sine linea*“ (V,232;B,10/72), was heißt, dass die Arbeit kein Ende nimmt.

Damit kommen diese Ausführungen zu den Sprichwörtern, die Bismarck mit seinen exzellenten Sprachkenntnissen aus dem Französischen übernommen hat. Als international geübter Diplomat beherrschte Bismarck diese Sprache völlig und benutzte sie auch gern, obwohl er sich dennoch dafür eingesetzt hat, dass im innerdeutschen Verkehr das Deutsche zu gelten habe:

Der Herr Vorredner hat über französische Redensarten von Diplomaten gesprochen. Ich muß dabei doch mein Verdienst für mich in seinen Augen hervorheben; ich erst habe die französische Sprache aus unserer Diplomatie vertilgt: Ich habe als Gesandter noch französisch berichten müssen – nicht aus Frankfurt, aber aus Petersburg und Paris; unsere ganze amtliche Sprache war französisch, und erst seit 1862, seit ich Minister bin, ist sie deutsch geworden. (VII,317; R,11/85)

Bei den französisch zitierten Sprichwörtern fällt auf, dass es sich oft um im europäischen Raum verbreitete Volksweisheiten handelt, die Bismarck ebenso gut auf Deutsch hätte zitieren können. Hier scheint sich die französische Diplomatensprache vorzudrängen:

Das heißt: *l'appetit vient en mangeant*, und jetzt lege ich allerdings einen ambitiösen Werth auf meine Ernennung, und ihr Ausbleiben seiner Zeit würde mich schmerzen. (I,405;B,6/51)

*Der Appetit kommt im Essen.*

Ich kenne meinen Kollegen sehr genau. Jeder Mensch kann mich einmal betrügen, das zweitemal aber: *Je suis sur ma Garde, Chat échaudé craint l'eau froide*. (V,260;G,12/72)  
*Eine gebriuhete Katze scheut auch das kalte Wasser.*

Ich war inzwischen, am 16. October [*sic*], nach Friedrichsruh gegangen, uneingedenk des Sprüchworts *Les absents ont toujours tort*. (VIIIa,579;EuG,98)

*Die Abwesenden haben Unrecht.*

Erwähnt sei nun noch der Bibelspruch „Des Menschen Herz erdenkt sich seinen Weg; der Herr allein lenkt seinen Schritt“ (Sprüche 16,9), woraus das mittellateinische Sprichwort „Homo proponit, sed deus disponit“ hervorgegangen ist, dessen englische Übersetzung „Man proposes, God disposes“ den lateinischen Ursprung besonders gut erkennen lässt. Es ist also nur begrenzt ein Bibelspruchwort (Mieder 2014: 286-300), und erscheint wie zahlreiche andere lateinische Sprichwörter aus dem Mittelalter in europäischen Sprachen, und so im Deutschen als „Der Mensch denkt und Gott lenkt“ und im Französischen als „L'homme propose, Dieu dispose“. Interessanterweise ist es die französische Fassung, die sozusagen zu einem Lieblingsspruchwort Bismarcks geworden ist. Dabei ist nicht unbedingt klar, warum er das deutsche doch so bekannte Sprichwort nicht zitiert. Aber wie dem auch sei, das Sprichwort drückt auf persönlicher und politischer Ebene einen gewissen Fatalismus des sonst so resoluten Politikers aus und wohl auch, dass er sehr wohl weiß, dass es eine höhere Macht gibt:

Wie mancher Regirungsrath lebt in der Stadt auf elegantem Fuß mit Frau und Kind, bei 1000 Thaler Gehalt oder wenig mehr, und muß Wohnung, Holz, Licht, Kost und Unterhalt für sich, seine Leute, Pferde, wenn er welche hat, baar bezahlen, was wir hier umsonst haben. Doch *l'homme propose, Dieu dispose*. Wer kann in die Zukunft sehn, ob nicht auch uns einst äußere Sorge und Noth hart antreten mag! (I,83;B,2/47)



Wir werden mit den jetzigen Abgeordneten keinen Frieden machen, also wieder ohne Budget schließen, dann vermuthlich einige Verordnungen gegen Beamte und Presse erlassen, um unter deren Einfluß mit Gottes Hülfe in 12 bis 15 Monaten zu besseren Wahlen zu gelangen; *mais l'homme propose et Dieu dispose*. (III,68;R,2/63) (VIIIb, 286;B,2/63)

Ma chère Nièce / en quittant Bade, je m'étais propose de me séparer du Roi à Darmstadt, pour aller de là tout droit à Spaa; j'étais très mécontent de ce que mon auguste maître insistât à m'amener jusqu'à Cobourg, où il rendait visite à la Reine Victoria, et j'étais résolu à partir de Berlin dès mon arrivée, pour Vous revoir enfin. Mais l'homme propose et Dieu dispose. (III,166;B,9/63)

Der letzte Briefauszug aus dem Jahre 1863 an seine Nichte zeigt, wie gerne Bismarck sich der französischen Sprache bedient, in der der Wortlaut des Sprichwortes wie im Englischen seinen mittellateinischen Ursprung mehr als im Deutschen erkennen lässt.

Die englische Sprache spielte allerdings in der Politik des europäischen Festlands zur Zeit Bismarcks eine eher minimale Rolle. Da war das Französische doch eher vorrangig, und wie dargestellt, hatte das Lateinische nach wie vor noch Geltung unter gebildeten Leuten. Für Otto von Bismarck aber waren Sprichwörter aus diesen Sprachen bedeutende Kommunikationsmittel im persönlichen und politischen Leben, die zusammen mit den vielen deutschen Texten unter Beweis stellen, wie sehr ihm Sprichwörtliches am Herzen lag.

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

“WORTSPIELE: SCRABBLE MIT GEDANKEN”  
ZU DEN SPRICHWÖRTLICHEN APHONITIONEN VON  
HANS-JÜRGEN QUADBECK-SEEGER

**Abstract:** Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger (1939) has had an illustrious career as a professor of Chemistry and as a major figure in German industry. Since 1988 he has published several books of aphorisms, his latest being *Aphonitionen: Aphoristische Definitionen* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2019). It contains about 7500 extremely concise statements that he calls “aphonitions” (a wordplay with aphorism and definition). About 275 or 3.7% are definitional aphorisms based on the wordplay with proverbs and proverbial expressions. Quite a few are innovative anti-proverbs that contain sociopolitical statements about modern existence. They are meant to entertain as well as educate without being didactic. Many of these “aphonitions” contain proverbial expressions from classical times and the Bible, while others refer to animals and body parts. Altogether these texts show that there exists a long tradition of the connection between literary aphorisms and folk expressions with the latter adding much metaphorical expressiveness.

**Keywords:** animal, anti-proverb, aphonition, aphorism, Bible, definition, German, Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger, innovation, literature, metaphor, proverb, proverbial expression, somatism, structure, wordplay

Stolpert man über das Wort „Aphonition“ und findet es nicht in Wörterbüchern, so ergibt eine Google-Suche immerhin einen Beleg, und zwar den Titel von Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seegers (geb. 1939) Buch *Aphonitionen. Aphoristische Definitionen* (2019), das in ansprechender Aufmachung mit Illustrationen von Martina Heitzmann-Schulz auf rund 325 Seiten etwa 7500 Aphorismen in der Form von Definitionen enthält. Das ist ohne Zweifel eine kolossale schriftstellerische Leistung des promovierten Chemikers, Honorarprofessors an der Universität Heidelberg und ehemaligen Präsidenten der Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker, der seit 1988 mit mehreren eigenen und herausgegebenen Aphorismensammlungen hervorgetreten ist (vgl. Literaturverzeichnis). Hin und wieder findet

man in diesen Büchern Aphorismen, die als Definitionen formuliert sind, wie etwa in *Im Labyrinth der Gedanken. Aphorismen und Definitionen* (2005):

Abstinenz: Ein Pyrrhussieg über die Freude. (20)

Börse: Tempel, in dem der Teufel los ist. (29)

Unsterblichkeit: Unsere Seele macht sich aus dem Staub.  
(181)

Der Untertitel dieses Buches gibt die beiden Begriffe „Aphorismen“ und „Definitionen“ getrennt an, die nun in der neuen Sammlung zu der eingängigen sprachspielerischen Wortschöpfung „Aphonitionen“ kreativ zusammengestellt sind. Im Vorwort weist Quadbeck-Seeger völlig richtig darauf hin, dass „die besondere Kategorie der Definitions-Aphorismen [...] schon eine lange Tradition hat“ (4), aber eine so reichhaltige Anhäufung dieser Art von Texten hat es bisher noch nicht gegeben! Sie sind alphabetisch nach Schlüsselwörtern angeordnet, wobei das Buch an sich nicht als Lexikon, sondern als Lese- und Denkvergnügen zu bewerten ist: „Ein allzu strenges Reinheitsgebot wurde allerdings nicht eingehalten. So haben sich sowohl einige Wortspiele als auch verkappte und/oder verknappte Aphorismen daruntergemischt. Es sollte ganz bewusst kein Lexikon entstehen. Sehen Sie in dem Buch vielmehr den Ansatz, aphoristisches Denken mit sprachspielerischer Experimentierfreude zu verbinden. Vielleicht regt die eine oder andere wortkombinierende Definition die Lesenden (wie man heute sagt) sogar zum kreativen Weiterdenken an“ (5).

Wie auch andere Aphoristikerinnen und Aphoristiker Definitions-Aphorismen verfasst haben, so steht Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger selbstverständlich ebenfalls nicht allein da mit seinen theoretischen Überlegungen zu den verwandten Spruchgattungen wie Aphorismus, Zitat, geflügeltes Wort, Binsenweisheit, Bauernweisheit, Redewendung und Sprichwort (vgl. Röhrich und Mieder 1977: 1-6). Ich habe in meinem Buch *„In der Kürze liegt die Würze“*. *Sprichwörtliches und Spruchhaftes als Basis für Aphorismen* (2002b, vgl. Spicker 1994) rund 750 Meta-Aphorismen von anderen Autoren zusammengestellt, worunter sich einige aus den früheren Büchern von Quadbeck-Seeger befinden. Hier folgt nun eine neuere Auswahl aus dem *Aphonitionen*-Band:

## Aphorismen:

- Cerebralien
- Denkanstößigkeiten
- Gedanken beim Wort genommen

## Aphorismus:

- Gedanke in verbaler Minikleidung
- Momentaufnahme eines Geistesblitzes

## Aphoristik:

- Verdichtungskunst
- Wort-Spielzeug

## Aphoristiker:

- Verballistiker, die gerne ins Schwarze treffen (16)

## Zitate:

- Geisteshappen
- Make-up für blasse Reden
- Text-Rosinen

## Zitaten-Sammlungen

- Käfige für geflügelte Worte (321)

## Worte, geflügelte:

- die Engel unter den Zitaten
- werden gern verbraten (314)

## Binsen-Weisheiten:

- lange nicht so verbreitet wie Binsen-Irrtümer (32)

## Bauernweisheiten:

- Aphorismen im Trachtenanzug (26)

## Redewendungen:

- Sprachfertigware (225)

## Sprichwörter:

- bunte Weisheiten für den grauen Alltag
- die vom Lande kommenden Verwandten der Aphorismen
- domestizierte geflügelte Worte
- Edelsteine des Wortschatzes
- in den Alltag eingewanderte Weisheiten
- philosophisches Kleingeld
- Urvögel unter den geflügelten Worten
- verbale Volkskunst (258)

Bei aller Wortspielerei enthalten diese Aussagen doch ein tiefes Verständnis über diese verwandten Gattungen, und zwar vor allem dazu, dass es einen Entwicklungsweg vom Zitat über das geflügelte Wort zum Sprichwort gibt. Was Quadbecks Vorliebe für Wortspiele betrifft, sei hier diese treffende Definition zitiert: „Wortspiele: Scrabble mit Gedanken“ (314). Und hier gleich noch einige aus nur einem Wort bestehende Sprachspiele mit persönlichem Schmunzeln über den Text mit meinem Nachnamen:

Donner: Götterhämmerung (54)  
 Grammatik: Sprachkorsett (109)  
 Miedertracht: weibliche Bösartigkeit (179)  
 Seniorenheim: Altersherbergen (248)  
 Vatertag: PantoffelHelden-Gedenktag (291)

Erwähnt seien auch die drei auf Amerika bezogenen Aphorismen, die auf wortspielerische Weise ein Körnchen Wahrheit enthalten: „Americans: born to make money“ (12), „Amerika: vom Monotheismus zum Mammontheismus“ (12) und „USA: Der Kunde ist König und der Dollar ist Gott“ (290).

Offensichtlich findet man bei diesem so gebildeten Aphoristiker solche sprachlich-gedanklichen Manipulation auch mit Zitaten und geflügelten Worten von bekannten Schriftstellern und Philosophen. Oft geht es dabei um raffinierte Wortveränderungen, wozu ich in einigen meiner Bücher viele weitere Texte aus der Literatur und den Medien registriert habe (vgl. Mieder 1997, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2016):

William Shakespeare:  
 Flirt, moderner: To bed or not to bed, that is the question (82)  
 Karriere: Schleim oder nicht Schleim, das ist die Frage (139)

René Descartes:  
 Auto-Zeitalter: Ich gebe Gas, also bin ich (22)  
 Egoist: Ich bin, also denke ich an mich (57)  
 Funktionieren: Ich funktioniere – also bin ich ein Roboter (89)  
 Ich maile: also bin ich – im Internet (125)  
 Philosophischer Suizid: non cogito, ergo bring ich mich um (209)



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe:

Foucault: das ist des Pendels Kern (84)

Lappalien: das Land, wo die Bagatellen blühen (158)

Sozialismus: Die Theorie war grau, doch der Alltag noch grauer (253)

Karl Marx:

Marx heute: Computer aller Länder, vernetzt euch! (172)

Gerechtigkeitsversprechen: Opium fürs arme Volk (99)

Theorie: Opium für die Intellektuellen (272)

Dass lateinische Wörter in solchen Texten auftreten, dürfte bei diesem Universitätsmenschen kaum überraschen. Unter deutschen Intellektuellen und Bildungsbürgern kann man bis heute wenigstens rudimentäre Lateinkenntnisse voraussetzen, was leider in meiner amerikanischen Wahlheimat nicht mehr vorauszusetzen ist, wo selbst Mediziner und Juristen nicht mehr Latein zu lernen brauchen. Doch hier wenigstens einige Sprachspiele mit der früheren lingua franca Latein:

Boxen: lingua fausta (35)

Gewichtsabnahme: carpe diet (102)

Internet: Quo v@dis? (132)

Mercedes: perpetuum mobile (178)

Zukunftsforschung: Quo vadisitis (325)

Zu dem vorletzten Text sei ganz nebenbei vermerkt, dass mein Freund Hans-Jürgen und ich beide überzeugte Mercedes-Fahrer sind. Wir haben auch beide Interesse an Märchen und Sagen, wie aus meinen Büchern und folgenden Texten zu erkennen ist (vgl. 2002a, 2009a, 2020):

Bestseller-Autoren: LeseRattenFänger (29)

Demagoge: ideologischer Rattenfänger (47)

Prinzen: manche müssen vorher Kröten gewesen sein (216)

Prognosen: Märchen mit Zahlen (216)

Schneewittchen heute: sieben Zwerge hinter sieben Müllbergen (240)

Sesam: öffnete sich und zum Vorschein kam Öl (249)

Statistik: Märchen für alles (260)

Zwerge: suchen immer ihr Schneewittchen (326)

Nach diesen mehr oder weniger einleitenden Bemerkungen und Beispielen, die hier und da Redensartliches anklingen ließen, soll es nun in zwei größeren Sektionen um solche Aphorismen von Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger gehen, wo er sich als Virtuose der aphoristischen Verarbeitung von Sprichwörtern und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten erweist. Hiermit gehört er zu der angesehenen Gruppe älterer und moderner Aphoristikerinnen und Aphoristiker, die sich ebenfalls humorvoll oder satirisch mit dieser tradierten Sprachfertigkeit auseinandergesetzt haben, darunter Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, Karl Kraus; Elazar Ben-Yoëtz, André Brie, Elias Canetti, Erwin Chargaff, Nikolaus Cybinski, Hans Leopold Davi, Werner Ehrenforth, Ulrich Erckenbrecht, Wolfgang Eschker, Arthur Feldmann, Klaus D. Koch, Ron Kritzfeld, Hans Kudsus, Gabriel Laub, Werner Mitsch, Žarko Petan, Felix Pollak, Felix Renner, Hans-Horst Skupy und Gerhard Uhlenbruck (Mieder 1999b, 2000, 2010, Spicker 2000 und 2004). Doch anders als bei all diesen aphoristischen Kapazitäten geht es eben in dem hier untersuchten Buch ganz speziell um Tausende von aphoristischen Definitionen oder besser Aphorismen!

Vor gut zehn Jahren habe ich bereits den Beitrag „Theorie erklärt, Praxis lehrt“. Zu den sprichwörtlichen Aphorismen von Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger“ (2009b) verfasst und darin unter Beweis gestellt, dass dieser Aphoristiker als Superstar auf dem Gebiet der sprichwörtlichen Aphoristik zu gelten hat. Dort habe ich auch ganz kurz mit einigen Beispielen aus seinem Buch *Im Labyrinth der Gedanken. Aphorismen und Definitionen* (2005) darauf hingewiesen, dass er zuweilen entstellte Sprichwörter als Definitionen heranzieht, wie etwa „Computer: In einer harten Schale steckt ein softer Kern“ (34) oder „Kommunikations-Kettenreaktion: Ein Wort spaltet das andere“ (104). Für solche Sprichwortmodifizierungen, die tradierte Sprichwörter in Frage stellen, habe ich vor vielen Jahren den Begriff „Antispruchwort“ geprägt (Röhrich und Mieder 1977: 115), und dass vor allem Aphoristiker Sprichwörter humorvoll oder satirisch entstellen, habe ich in zwei umfangreichen Sammlungen nachgewiesen: „*Verdrehte Weisheiten*“. *Antispruchwörter aus Literatur und Medien* (1998) und „*Entkernte Weisheiten*“. *Modifizierte Sprichwörter in Literatur, Medien und Karikaturen* (2017). Auch Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger hat zahlreiche auf Sprichwörtern beruhende Aphorismen ausgearbeitet, die sich in mehrere Gruppen aufteilen lassen. Die folgenden Belege geben zu erkennen, wie

souverän Quadbeck-Seeger mit diesem vorgeprägten Sprachmaterial umgeht. Zu dem in der ersten Aufzählung auftauchenden Sprichwort „Zeit ist Geld“ sei noch bemerkt, dass es sich damit um eine Lehnübersetzung des englischen Sprichwortes „Time is money“ handelt, das zum ersten Mal in der britischen Zeitschrift *Free Thinker* vom 18. Mai 1719 aufgefunden worden ist. Benjamin Franklin hat es daraus in seinen Aufsatz „Advice to a Young Tradesman“ (1748) aufgenommen und drei Jahre später erneut in seinem weit verbreiteten *Poor Richard's Almanack* (1751) zitiert. Das Sprichwort geht also keineswegs auf ihn zurück, obwohl sein Name bis heute in Amerika und anderswo mit dem Sprichwort identisch ist (Villers und Mieder 2017):

traditionelles Sprichwort mit unerwarteter Ergänzung:

- Geld: stinkt nicht, kann aber dennoch beschmutzen (95)
- Glaube: versetzt Berge, verrichtet aber keine Arbeit (103)
- Gottes Mühlen: mahlen langsam, doch der Beamtenapparat übertrifft sie (107)
- Irren: ist menschlich, etwas zugeben ist übermenschlich (133)
- Hoffnung: stirbt zuletzt, aber qualvoll (120)
- Kleider: machen Leute, Wäsche macht Waschlappen (142)
- Reproduzierbarkeit: Einmal ist keinmal, zweimal heißt immer (228)
- Zeit ist Geld: aber Geld braucht Zeit (319)

traditionelles Sprichwort mit Austausch eines Wortes:

- Eigentum: verpflichtet – zur Mehrung (59)
- Enkel: Alles Gute kommt von Opa und Oma (64)
- Kindermode: Kleider machen Gören (141)
- Kommunikation: Plappern gehört zum Handwerk (145)
- Opportunist: Wende gut, alles gut (198)
- Reue: eine Hand watscht die andere (228)
- Tod, Devise des: VorbeiSein ist Alles! (275)
- Zahnarzt-Weisheit: Eiter-Herd ist Goldes wert (317)

beibehaltene Sprichwortstruktur mit mehreren Auswechslungen

- Autoritäre Erziehung: böses Kind soll Keile haben (23)
- Labor-Weisheit: der Dreck heiligt den Kittel (157)

Pille: Wo eine Pille ist, ist auch ein Bett (209)  
 (als Sponti-Spruch schon 1986 belegt; Mieder 2017: 477)

Rock-Festival: viel Nichts um Lärm (231)

Spießer: bleib bei deinen Pantoffeln (255)

Tod, stiller: wenig Lärm um alles (276)

erste Hälfte eines Sprichwortes mit verändertem Schluss:

Jugend forscht: Früh krümmt sich, wer mit dem Fragezeichen leben will (136)

Nihilismus: viel Lärm ums Nichts (193)

Tragik: Der Geist ist willig, aber unfähig (278)

Zweck: heiligt keine Mittelmäßigkeiten (326)

zweite Hälfte eines Sprichwortes mit verändertem Anfang:

Adel: schützt vor Torheit nicht (8)

Jugend: aller Laster Anfang (136)

Kuss: sagt viel mehr als 1000 Worte (156)

Stoßstange: aller Laster Anfang (264)

(als Sponti-Spruch schon 1974 belegt; Mieder 2017: 314)

Vermögen: kommt in den besten Familien vor (295)

kompliziertere Sprichwortmanipulationen bzw. -anspielungen:

Besen, alte: kehren sich um nichts (29)

Neue Besen kehren gut.

Bildungsweg, zweiter: für Hans, der als Hänschen nicht lernen wollte (32)

Was Hänschen nicht lernt, lernt Hans nimmermehr.

Diabetiker: verzichtet auf süße Rache (50)

Rache ist süß.

Ordnung: halbiert das Leben (198)

Ordnung ist das halbe Leben.

Spatz in der Hand: besser als ein Vogel im Kopf (254)

Ein Spatz in der Hand ist besser als eine Taube auf dem Dach.

Verdacht schöpfen: gehe so lange zum Brunnen, bis du den Grund siehst (293)

Der Krug geht solange zum Brunnen, bis er bricht.

All dies lässt sich summa summarum sozusagen daran zeigen, wie Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger mit dem bekannten Sprichwort „Reden ist Silber, Schweigen ist Gold“ in immer neuen Variationen umgeht:

Bauernregel: Regen ist Silber, Düngen ist Gold (26)  
 Opportunist-Motto: Reden ist Silber, Jasagen ist Gold (198)  
 Reden: ist Silber, Überzeugen ist Gold (225)  
 Silber: bringt zum Reden; Gold: bringt zum Schweigen (250)  
 SportlerRegel: Reden ist Silber, Schwitzen ist Gold (256)  
 Wein: Regen ist Silber, Sonne ist Gold (307)  
 Werbung: Reden ist Silber, Übertreiben macht Gold (309)

Und natürlich fehlt bei Quadbeck-Seeger auch das Spiel mit lateinischen Sprichwörtern nicht:

Weinstube: Wahrheitshort, denn: in vino veritas (307)  
 Werbung: ora et decora (309)

Schließlich sei noch die äußerst interessante sprichwörtliche Aphonition „No body is perfect: but some parts are excellent, mostly“ (194) zitiert. Sie beruht auf dem bekannten seit Mitte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts überlieferten englischen Sprichwort „Nobody is perfect“ (Mieder, Kingsbury, Harder 1992: 431), das zum ersten Mal als das frappierende Antispruchwort „No body is perfect“ am 1. Juni 1958 in der *Los Angeles Times* aufgefunden wurde und längst zu einem modernen amerikanischen Sprichwort geworden ist (Doyle, Mieder, Shapiro 2012: 23). Vielleicht hat Quadbeck-Seeger das neue Sprichwort mit seiner Körperbezogenheit von englischsprachigen Kollegen gehört oder irgendwo gelesen, oder aber er hat es von sich aus wortspielerisch kreiert. All dies zeigt, dass Polygenese bei dem Spiel mit Sprichwörtern nicht auszuschließen ist.

Die strukturmäßig fixierten Sprichwörter sind schwieriger in den sehr kurzen Aphonitionen unterzubringen als die sprichwörtlichen Redensarten, die erst durch die Einfügung in einen Zusammenhang ihren Sinn bekommen. Dennoch sind sie vorgeformte verbale Metaphern, womit sich gerade wegen ihrer Geläufigkeit gut „spielen“ lässt. Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger meint ganz überzeugend dazu:

Redewendungen: Sprachfertigware (225)  
 Metapher: Bild aus Worten (178)

Natürlich aber ist er sich auch bewusst, dass zu oft verwendete Redensarten zu Klischees erstarren können:

Phrasen:

ausgestopfte Begriffe  
dröhnen besonders in hohlen Köpfen  
gestanzte Parolen  
WortHülsenFrüchte (209)

So fordern sie regelrecht zum wortspielerischen Widerspruch heraus, was besonders gut in solchen redensartlichen Aphorismen zum Vorschein kommt, wo Quadbeck-Seeger zwei Redensarten miteinander verbindet. Es gehört schon eine Menge sprachlicher und gedanklicher Akribie dazu, solche doppelbödigen und aussagekräftigen Aphorismen zu erstellen. Der erste Beleg macht deutlich, dass der Autor keineswegs vor der Analsprache zurückschreckt, um in diesem Fall auf die Probleme einer allzu freien Erziehung hinzuweisen:

Erziehung, moderne: vom Hosenscheißer direkt zum Klugscheißer (69)  
Haar in der Suppe: wird gerne auch noch gespalten (112)  
Hebel: Wer nicht am längeren sitzt, glaubt zu kurz gekommen zu sein (115)  
Licht am Ende des Tunnels: kann ein Armleuchter sein (163)  
Liebe auf den ersten Blick: Verführung durch den Augapfel (164)  
Milchmädchenrechnung: entsteht, wenn die Flaschen rechnen (179)  
Rosinen im Kopf: getrocknete Trauben, die zu hoch hingen (232)  
Sand im Getriebe: oft das Körnchen Wahrheit (235)  
Strohköpfe: sollten nicht mit dem Feuer spielen (265)  
Taschen, leere: Man leert uns die Taschen, damit wir den Gürtel enger schnallen (268)  
Teufelskreis: arbeitet effektiver mit Sand im Getriebe (271)  
Zwischen den Stühlen: bester Platz für Fettnäpfchen (326)

Wie in diesen Verdoppelungen zu erkennen ist, beginnt Quadbeck-Seeger wiederholt seine Aphorismen mit einer Redensart im ersten Teil, die dann im zweiten Teil kritisch beleuchtet wird. Das

geschieht ebenfalls in solchen Texten, die nur eine Redensart enthalten:

- Bank, lange: des Teufels liebstes Möbelstück (25)
- Holzweg: meist der bequemste Ausweg (121)
- Holzweg, medizinischer: führt auf den Friedhof (121)
- Handtuch: erst werfen, wenn es total durchgeschwitzt ist (113)
- Mist bauen: Gegenteil von düngen (181)
- Potemkinsche Dörfer: Hauptsache, die Misthaufen sind echt (214)
- Wahrheit: liegt zu oft in der Mitte, sollte eigentlich stehen (304)

Wiederum können die sprichwörtlichen Redensarten auch erst im zweiten Teil der Aphonitionen auftreten, wo sie die vorgestellte Aussage bildhaft sowie sprachspielerisch kommentieren. Eine sinn-ergebende Überraschung tritt meistens noch dazu. Als Schokoladenliebhaber gefällt mir das Spiel mit den beiden letzten Buchstaben von Kakao und der Redensart „das A und O sein“ in dem Text „Kakao: A und O der Schokolade“ (137) ganz besonders:

- Begräbnis, bürokratisches: zu den Akten legen (27)
- Charaktertraining: gegen den Strom schwimmen (41)
- Frohsinn tuten: Gegenteil von Trübsal blasen (87)
- Parteiprogramm: Die Potemkinschen Dörfer sollen schöner werden! (203)
- Postmortale Gymnastik: sich im Grabe umdrehen (214)
- Steuerrad: fünftes Rad am Wagen (262)
- Umweltschutz üben: kein Wässerchen trüben (284)
- Volk: notwendiges Übel der Politik (299)

In einer weiteren Beleggruppe kommentiert die Redensart ebenfalls den vorangestellten Begriff, doch wird sie nun syntaktisch mit ihrem konjugierten Verb zitiert:

- Adam: stellt sich an wie der erste Mensch (7)
- Alkoholiker: dem kann keiner das Wasser reichen (9)
- Bestattungsinstitute: ihre Werbung geht über Leichen (29)
- Börsenmakler: bei ihm fällt der Groschen eher als der Kurs (35)
- Burgruinen: was der Zahn der Zeit übrig ließ (38)
- Luftverschmutzung: wird gerne unter den Teppich gekehrt (167)
- Patient: steckt mit seiner Krankheit unter einer Decke (204)

Pfeifenraucher: tanzt nach seiner Pfeife (207)  
 Skinheads: lassen sich alle über einen Kamm scheren (251)  
 Unsterblichkeit: Unsere Seele macht sich aus dem Staub (287)  
 Waschlappen: werfen als Erste das Handtuch (305)  
 Zeit: Sie totzuschlagen oder zu quälen, sollte verboten sein (318)

Von Interesse sind auch solche Texte, die sehr bekannte redensartliche Zwillingsformeln enthalten. Hier spürt man ganz besonders Quadbecks ironische Ader:

Arbeiterparadies: wo es Arbeit in Hülle und Fülle gibt (17)  
 Chaoten-Biotop: Kraut und Rüben (41)  
 Chemiker: Experimentieren mit Feuer und Flamme (42)  
 Inquisitoren: waren mit Feuer und Flamme bei der Sache (130)  
 Kapelle, schlechte: spielt mit Ach und Krach (138)  
 Wurzellosigkeit: Übel, ist mit Stumpf und Stiel auszurotten (315)

Schließlich gibt es auch noch Aphonitionen, worin Schlüsselwörter der Redensarten durch den Austausch eines Buchstabens oder eines Wortes sowie knappe Ergänzungen zu sogenannten Antiredensarten entstellt werden (Mieder 1999a und 2018). Großartig, wie Quadbeck-Seeger die minimale sprachliche Modifizierung der Redensart „vom Regen in die Traufe kommen“ gleich zweimal gelingt:

Bekehrung: vom Segen in die Taufe (28)  
 Christianisierung: vom Regenwald in die Taufe (43)  
 Computer: kann nicht gegen den Strom denken (44)  
 Enthüllungs-Journalismus: die Nadel im Misthaufen suchen (64)  
 Kosmetik: potemkinsche Gesichtsfassade (150)  
 Langeweile: Flaute im Wasserglas (158)  
 Masochisten: Hiebe auf den ersten Blick (172)  
 Thermodynamiker: Hans Dampf in allen Gasen (272)  
 Unzuverlässiger Computer: hat Dreck am Stecker (288)  
 Zahnarzt: lebt von der Hand im Mund (317)  
 Zweifeln: für unbare Münze nehmen (326)

Man spürt an einigen dieser and bereits zitierter Texte, dass Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger Naturwissenschaftler ist, dessen Forschungen zu mehreren Patenten geführt haben. Überhaupt ist er auf



so vielen Gebieten bewandert, von der Universitätslehre bis zur Laborarbeit, von der Industrie bis zur Buchproduktion, so dass ihm 1998 das Bundesverdienstkreuz Erster Klasse verliehen wurde. Überall zeigt sich sein großes Wissen auf mannigfaltigen Gebieten, was auch die klassische Philologie und Bibelkenntnisse einbezieht. Kein Wunder, dass er wiederholt auf Redensarten zurückgreift, die seit der Antike in vielen Sprachen bis heute geläufig sind (Mieder 2013). Als Wissenschaftler und Industriefachmann hat er zweifelsohne wiederholt den gordischen Knoten innovativ durchschlagen müssen, und so gehört diese bis heute bekannte Redensart zu seinen bevorzugten Metaphern:

Chemie: löst Gordische Knoten in Königswasser (42)  
 Krebs: gordischer Knoten der Medizin (152)  
 Mensch: ein Gordischer Knoten, den irgendwann der Tod durchschlägt (176)  
 Paradoxon: erzeugt Gordische Knoten im Hirn (202)  
 Welt, moderne: Netzwerk von Gordischen Knoten (308)

Eine meiner Lieblingsaphonitionen ist das so gelungene Wortspiel mit dem Ausruf „Eureka“ von Archimedes mit der sprichwörtlichen Redensart „die Nadel im Heuhaufen finden“ zu „Heureka: habe die Nadel im Heu gefunden“ (118). Hier sind noch einige andere Belege, die sich mit antikem Sprachgut befassen und es auf moderne Zustände anwenden. Mit redensartlichen Begriffen wie „Damoklesschwert“ und „Pyrrhussieg“ vermag Quadbeck-Seeger sehr überzeugend seine Kritik an der Moderne zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Wie ungemein passend auf die schlimme weltweite Covid-19 Situation ist allein die Aphonition „Viren: genetische Trojanische Pferde“ (298)!

Abstinenz: Pyrrhussieg über die Freude (7)  
 Blinddarm: Achillesferse des Darmes (33)  
 Erfolgsautoren: Pegasus mit Düsenantrieb (67)  
 Damoklesschwert: altmodisch – heutzutage hängen Atombomben am Faden (46)  
 Schere: Damoklesschwert für Marionetten (238)  
 Umweltverschmutzung: Das Damoklesschwert ist vergiftet (284)  
 Viren: genetische Trojanische Pferde 298)  
 Zivilisation: Pyrrhus-Sieg über die Natur (322)

Zahlreiche Texte zeigen Quadbeck-Seeger als skeptischen Zeitkritiker, der dennoch seine Hoffnung für die Menschheit nicht aufgibt: „Leben: Sisyphus-Arbeit gegen den Tod“ (159). Das Leben gesehen als unablässiges Engagement am Dasein also, was ungemein an Albert Camus' *Le mythe de Sisyphe. Essai sur l'absurde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1942) erinnert, wo es zukunftssträchtig heißt: „La lutte elle-même vers les sommets suffit à remplir un cœur d'homme. Il faut imaginer Sisyphe heureux“ (S. 166). In die Zukunft blicken auch diese vier weiteren Sisyphus-Aphonitionen:

Sisyphus: kein Ende der Dienstzeit  
 sollte Atlas um Hilfe bitten  
 sollte glauben, um den Berg zu versetzen  
 sollte in eine Gewerkschaft eintreten (251)

Damit sind Aphonitionen erreicht, die es mit biblischen Sprichwörtern und Redensarten zu tun haben, denn bereits bei dem mittleren Text geht es um das indirekt erwähnte Sprichwort „Der Glaube kann Berge versetzen“, das auf folgenden Bibeltext zurückgeht: „Und wenn ich weissagen könnte und wüsste alle Geschehnisse und alle Erkenntnis und hätte allen Glauben, also dass ich Berge versetzte, und hätte der Liebe nicht, so wäre ich nichts“ (1. Korinther 12,3). Hier nun noch drei weitere auf diesem Bibelspruchwort basierende Texte:

Berge: Glaube versetzt sie, Korruption verschiebt sie (28)  
 Glaube: versetzt Berge, verrichtet aber keine Arbeit (103)  
 Glaube: versetzt Berge, reißt aber Gräben auf (103)

Mehrere Aphonitionen beziehen sich auf die biblische Redensart „vom Baum der Erkenntnis essen“ (1. Mose 2,9 und 3,2-6), was bei einem Kenntnissucher wie Quadbeck-Seeger kaum überraschen sollte. Der erste Text bietet eine besonders ironische Definition für die Forschung um jeden Preis:

Forschen: im Baum der Erkenntnis herumturnen (83)  
 Spin-offs: Fallobst vom Baum der Erkenntnis (256)  
 Vorurteile: Blattläuse am Baum der Erkenntnis (301)  
 Zweifel: Dornen am Baum der Erkenntnis (326)

Interessant ist diesbezüglich, was der Autor mit dem recht langen Bibelspruchwort „Es ist leichter, dass ein Kamel durch ein Nadelöhr gehe, denn dass ein Reicher ins Reich Gottes komme“ (Matthäus

19,24) macht, das kurz und bündig zu der Aussage „Nadelöhr: Albtraum der Kamele“ (189) reduziert wird. Es ist wohl anzunehmen, dass mit den Kamelen hier nicht die Tiere, sondern Menschen mit geringer Intelligenz gemeint sind. Und auf wen bezieht sich wohl der Text „Elfte Gebot: Du sollst nicht twittern“ (62)? In den Vereinigten Staaten zweifelsohne auf den leider unermüdlichen Twittermeister Präsident Donald Trump! Wie dem auch sei, für einige andere Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Redensarten aus der Bibel (vgl. Mieder 2014) gibt es jeweils zwei aufschlussreiche Aphonitionen. Manche sind bitter satirische Aussagen, die sich durch den Austausch von Schlüsselwörtern als kritische Antiredensarten entpuppen:

seine Hände in Unschuld waschen (5. Mose 21,6; Psalm 26,6; Matthäus 27,24)

Beamter: wäscht seine Hände in Unzuständigkeit (27)

Unschuld: beliebtes Waschmittel für schmutzige Hände (287)

Liebe deinen Nächsten wie dich selbst (3. Mose 19,18; Matthäus 22,39; Galater 5,14)

Kundendienst: kapitalistische Nächstenliebe (155)

Marketing, christliches: Liebe deinen Kunden wie dich selbst (171)

Perlen vor die Säue werfen“ (Matthäus 7,6)

Analytik: Perlen in die Säure (13)

Perlen: selbst nicht echt, im Gegensatz zu den Säuen (206)

Schwerter zu Pflugscharen (Jesaja 2,4)

Konversion: Schwerter zu Pflugscharen und TV-Schüsseln zu Bratpfannen (149)

Schwerter: zu Stoßstangen (245)

wie in Sodom und Gomorrha zugehen (1. Mose 19; Psalm 10,7; Matthäus 11,23)

Tourismus: Sodom und Gomorrha wären heutzutage sehr nachgefragt (277)

Unzucht: Sodomina und Gonorrhoe (288)

Schließlich ist da noch ein modernes Sprichwort, das in zwei Varianten mit recht internationaler Verbreitung umläuft: „Gott steckt im Detail“ und „Der Teufel steckt im Detail“. Obwohl sie sich

entweder mit Gott oder dem Teufel befassen, sind sie nicht biblischen Ursprungs, sondern treten erst seit 1925 auf (vgl. Doyle, Mieder, Shapiro 2012: 53-54 und 103-104). Auch hier spürt man erneut den Naturwissenschaftler am Werke:

Elektronik: der Teufel steckt in den Platinen (61)  
 Menschen: für Gott die Details, in denen der Teufel steckt (177)  
 Präzision: steckt immer im Detail (215)  
 Teufel: noch lieber als im Detail steckt er im Dekolleté (271)  
 Übersichtreferat: Entführung aus dem Detail (283)

Mit dem Dekolleté sind aus somatischen Redensarten bestehende Aphorismen erreicht, von denen wenigstens einige repräsentative Belege genannt sein sollen. Sie ermöglichen es Quadbeck-Seeger, seinen Texten eine gewisse Emotionalität zu verleihen. Körperbezogene Ausdrücke bringen ganz automatisch menschliche Aspekte in die oft sozialkritischen Bemerkungen oder Verallgemeinerungen hinein:

Beipackzettel: nach dem Lesen kräftig den Kopf schütteln (28)  
 Emanzen: nehmen kein Feigenblatt vor den Mund (62)  
 Germanen: in der Evolution blauäugig davongekommen (99)  
 Grippeviren: leben von der Hand in den Mund (109)  
 Psychische Hygiene: hin und wieder das Herz ausschütten (219)  
 Seminarsozialisten: Arbeiter mit zwei linken Händen (248)  
 Tod: ist tolerant – drückt beide Augen zu (275)  
 Unsinn: muss meist tatsächlich aus dem Kopf geschlagen werden (287)  
 Volkszorn: spielt Demagogen in die Hände (300)  
 Zunge: wer sie raussteckt, ist noch lange kein Einstein (325)

Der letzte Text bezieht sich bekannterweise auf das ikonenhafte Witzbild Albert Einsteins mit ausgestreckter Zunge, was ihm den Anschein affenmäßiger Ignoranz gibt. Das führt zu den zahlreichen Redensarten mit Metaphern aus der Tierwelt, die Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger zu vielen auf Menschen bezogene Aphorismen angeregt haben. Auch hier zeigt sich seine Vorliebe für Wortspiele wieder, so dass zum Beispiel aus der biblischen Redensart „ein Wolf im Schafspelz sein“ (Matthäus 7,15) kurzerhand die frappierende Umkehrung „Schafe im Wortpelz“ wird:

Dichter: Schafe im Wortpelz (51)  
Flugzeugzusammenstoß: Der Tod schlägt zwei Flieger mit einer Klappe (82)  
Mensch im Kosmos: Eine Eintagsfliege will die Ewigkeit verstehen (177)  
Pawlowsche Reflexe: auf den Hund gekommene Verhaltensweisen (205)  
Pferd: war die heilige Kuh der Germanen und Indianer (207)  
Priester: kleidungsmäßig die schwarzen Schafe der Gemeinde (216)  
Schafe, schwarze: treiben es oft am buntesten (236)  
Sündenböcke: bekommen mit der Zeit ein dickes Fell (267)  
Tiger im Tank: nutzlos, wenn ein Ochse am Steuer sitzt (273)  
Unentschlossene: schleichen noch um den Brei, obwohl der längst kalt ist (285)

In dem letzten Text hat Quadbeck-Seeger die Katze der Redensart „wie die Katze um den heißen Brei schleichen“ direkter auf die Menschen bezogen, indem er von Unentschlossenen spricht. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit verdienen auch vier Texte um die bekannte Redensart „die Ratten verlassen das sinkende Schiff“, die seine sprachliche Erfindungskraft bestens unter Beweis stellen:

Lotse: geht noch vor den Ratten vom Schiff (166)  
Piratte: fieser Seeräuber, der das sinkende Schiff verlässt (210)  
Raten: verlassen das bezahlte Schiff (223)  
Ratten: suchen das stinkende Schiff (223)

Schließlich verdienen noch zwei längere Aphonitionen besondere Aufmerksamkeit, die auf der verbreiteten Sprichwortstruktur „Lieber X als Y“ beruhen. Bei „Journalismus: Lieber ein Spatz in der Hand als eine Ente in der Zeitung“ (135) handelt sich um den ersten Teil des geläufigen Sprichwortes „Lieber ein Spatz in der Hand, als eine Taube auf dem Dach“, den Quadbeck-Seeger geschickt mit der Anspielung auf die Redensart „eine Zeitungsente sein“ verbindet. Wiederum beruht die „Forschungs-Maxime: Lieber viele Frösche küssen, als eine Kröte schlucken müssen“ (83) sicherlich auf dem Sprachspiel mit dem modernen Sprichwort „Du musst viele Frösche küssen, bis du deinen Prinzen findest“ und der Redensart „eine Kröte schlucken müssen“ (vgl. Mieder 2019).

Und wie steht es um den „Schweinehund“, den es als eigentliches Tier bekanntlich gar nicht? Das Wort bezieht sich als Schimpfwort auf einen unanständigen, nichtswürdigen, verächtlichen Menschen und ist auch in den beiden sprichwörtlichen Redensarten „bei jemandem zeigt sich der innere Schweinehund“ und „seinen inneren Schweinehund bekämpfen (besiegen, überwinden)“ geläufig (Röhrich 1991-1992: III,1443). Wie dem auch sei, hier sind gleich zehn höchst variierte aphoristische Definitionen dazu von Quadbeck-Seeger:

- Bereuen: den inneren Schweinehund streicheln (28)
- Gewissen: hält den inneren Schweinehund an der Kette (102)
- Gewissen, ruhiges: der innere Schweinehund schläft (102)
- Gewissensbisse: Abwehrversuche gegen den inneren Schweinehund (102)
- Innerer Schweinehund: Haustier des Teufels (130)
- Pflicht: wenn sie ruft, flüstert der innere Schweinehund (207)
- Reue: den inneren Schweinehund zur Sau machen (228)
- Selbstkritik: Prügel für den inneren Schweinehund (247)
- Tierschutz: halten Sie bitte Ihren inneren Schweinehund artgerecht! (273)
- Vorsätze, gute: beliebte Beute für den inneren Schweinehund (300)

Überall zeigt sich ein ehrliches Menschenverständnis, ohne dass Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger als didaktischer Lehrmeister auftreten will. Er ist tiefsinniger Moralist ohne Predigt, er macht seine Beobachtungen und Feststellungen und kleidet sie durch Sprichwörtliches in wortspielerische Metaphern, die zum Nachdenken über die gebrechliche Einrichtung der Welt auffordern. Kein Wunder, dass er sich mit der Redensart „ein Brett vor dem Kopf haben“ mit Mitmenschen auseinandersetzt, die mit Blindheit gegenüber der vielen Probleme des modernen Daseins geschlagen sind. Wie die Definition zu „Geistiger Horizont“ und „Niveau“ zeigen, kann es bei einer so großen Vielzahl an Texten auch einmal zu einer Wiederholung kommen:

- Engstirnige: haben die breitesten Bretter vor dem Kopf (64)
- Geistiger Horizont: Oberkante des Brettes vor dem Kopf (94)
- Niveau: Oberkante des Brettes vor dem Kopf (194)
- Sinneswandel: neuer Zuschnitt des Brettes vor dem Kopf (251)

Starrsinn: das Brett vor dem Kopf ist auch noch vernagelt (260)

Mit solchen Leuten möchte man redensartlich ausgedrückt lieber nicht in einem Boot sitzen. Die Wendung hat ihren Anfang mit Ciceros „In eadem es navi“ vom Jahre 53 vor Christi, ist in viele Sprachen lehnübersetzt worden und tritt seit langem in Literatur, Medien und Karikaturen auf (Mieder 1995: 140-159). Natürlich hat Quadbeck-Seeger sich auch mit diesem Sprachbild auseinandergesetzt, wie diese drei neuartigen Texte zeigen:

Boot: Wir sitzen zwar alle im gleichen, gehen aber unterschiedlich über Bord (35)

Styx: wir alle warten auf dasselbe Boot (266)

Wohlstandsgesellschaft: Wir sitzen alle im gleichen Motorboot (313)

Bei dem letzten Aphorismus denkt man unwillkürlich an die unerreichbaren Luftschlösser, die sich in vielen Sprachen als redensartige Metaphern etabliert haben, und zwar im Deutschen als „Luftschlösser bauen“ (Mieder 2010: 341-362). Gerade damit hat sich nun Quadbeck-Seeger interessanterweise recht oft auseinandergesetzt:

Alte Menschen: haben Lifte in ihren Luftschlössern (10)

Anlageberater: Immobilienhändler für Luftschlösser (14)

Ideologien: politische Luftschlösser (126)

Illusion: Gespenst in Luftschlössern (127)

Luftschlösser: Datschas für die Seele (167)

Luftschlösser: Eigenheime der Phantasie (167)

Luftschlösser: Fluchtburgen aus dem Alltag (167)

Luftschlösser: Zweitwohnsitze der Phantasie (167)

Träumen: Luftschlössern (279)

Traumjob: Butler in einem Luftschloss (279)

Traumschiffe: maritime Luftschlösser (279)

Zeitgeist: Gespenst in kollektiven Luftschlössern (319)

Liest man diese Aussagen hintereinander, so macht sich eine gewisse Ambivalenz bemerkbar. Da ist einmal die realistische Auffassung der Nutzlosigkeit von Luftschlössern, und dann kommt jedoch auch die Idee zum Vorschein, dass ein gewisses Träumen von Luftschlössern auch zum Leben gehört. Wie dem auch sei, Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger hat es mit der ehrlichen Wahrheit zu tun,

wofür ihm die Redensart „die nackte Wahrheit“ zum Leitbild geworden ist:

- Anstand: gebietet, die nackte Wahrheit zu verschleiern (15)
- Anständigkeit: Man schaut der nackten Wahrheit nur in die Augen (15)
- Existentialismus: die nackte Wahrheit über das nackte Leben (71)
- Liebende: kennen die nackte Wahrheit über einander (164)
- Lügner: halten nackte Wahrheiten für pervers (167)
- Notlüge: Bikini für die nackte Wahrheit (195)
- Wissenschaftlicher Playboy: liebt nackte Wahrheiten (312)
- Zynismus: will mit der nackten Wahrheit schockieren (327)

Ein Zyniker aber ist Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seeger beileibe nicht! Wie diese letzte Belegkette nochmals verdeutlicht, weiß er nur zu gut Bescheid über die Ambivalenz des modernen Lebens, wo die nackte Wahrheit zu oft in Luftschlössern verschwindet oder unter den Teppich gekehrt wird. Das alles in aller kürzester Form auszudrücken, dazu sind seine Aphorismen das beste sprachliche Mittel. Von den etwa 7500 aphoristischen Definitionen beruhen rund 275 auf Sprichwörtern und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten. Das sind nicht einmal 3,7%, und dennoch verbergen sich gerade in diesen Aphorismen gedankenreiche Aussagen, deren sprachliche Bilder und anregende Ideen ungemein viel zu Hans-Jürgen Quadbeck-Seegers aphoristischer Sprachkunst beitragen und ihn zu einem menschlich-allzumenschlichen Wissensvermittler machen.

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ARE PROVERBS ENFORCING DESIRABLE HUMAN  
BEHAVIOUR? COMPARING AND CONTRASTING ROMA-  
NIAN PROVERBS WITH THEIR ENGLISH VERSIONS

**Abstract:** When stating that “Proverbs mean more than they say” – which can be in itself a proverb and a definition – we might need to rethink some of the fundamental terms in the study of these particular linguistic patterns. If, on the other hand, we believe that “Proverbs do more than they mean”, then, we have to take into account possible different approaches and explore the latest terminology in paremiological research.

Beginning with the literal meaning of words, phrases or sentences, proverbs can offer a perfect image of a literary translation. Proverbs are real challenges, when referring to the transfer of meaning from one language to another and it is interesting to see how two languages, the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) can complete each other if a certain version is preferred. Exploring translation as an act of communication, we can understand how the negotiation of meaning between interactants is related to coherence and cohesion, as “a covert potential meaning relationship among parts of a text” or as “an overt relationship holding parts of a text, expressed by language specific markers” [Blum-Kulka, S: 2002, pp. 298-299]. From a pragmatic point of view, proverbs can be seen as speech acts, conveying reflections of humans themselves.

My analysis will target human thoughts, feelings, beliefs, realities and attitudes that might link *homo religious* to *homo modernus*, passing from ethnological fields like *baptism, confession, faith* to *man, work, social hierarchy* of Romanian proverbs and their English versions adopting a cognitive and a systematic approach. The paremias samples have been selected from Virgil Lefter’s *Dicționar de Proverbe Englez-Român și Român-Englez* and from Pr. Alexandru Stănciulescu-Bârda’s *Sfintele Taine și proverbele românești*.

**Keywords:** communicative strategy, English, interaction, modification, Romanian, variability, version

### ***Introduction***

When acquiring languages, people learn words and expressions meant to label the world around them, the concepts and values that make sense of what they see and understand, of the society they live in.

Proverbs belonged more to the oral code than to the written one and were conceived and transmitted by adult members of a completely or predominately oral society. The importance of orality has been proved while acknowledging the expanding function of writing. If we admit with Walter Ong that only about 78 of the 3000 languages in existence have a literature, we can ask ourselves about the relevance between the oral techniques used in the space of the written word and narratives recorded after many generations and changed from what was told yesterday and what might be told tomorrow.

It was in action and interaction that the most profound interrelations between language and society were to be found and proverbs should not be overlooked.

It is only within the past five or six centuries that Romanian as a written language was recorded. It went the same for English (perhaps three centuries earlier) but tales and proverbs appeared much later in collections that have been published in the 19th - 20th centuries. What is obviously a common feature for both languages is that proverbs became an antecedent to literary history and a mirror of social changes.

Speakers are well aware of the fact that successful management of interpersonal relationships is a difficult task. Anticipation of the action of others, calculation of short and long term costs and gains, people's behaviour are illustrated by proverbs. Predictability is very important. Proverbs function at different degrees of ritualisation of the interaction.

That is why I have selected proverbs that can be grouped in three ethnofields: *man*, *social hierarchy* and *work* (ethnofields that I have explored in another article too) referring at the same time to what can be considered with Mircea Eliade's words – the sacred – people's myths, beliefs and rites - and the profane[Eliade, M, 1995].

### ***I. Comparing and Contrasting***

1.0. Romanian is a language that has its roots in the Latin and the Dacian languages. When comparing and contrasting Romanian proverbs and their English versions, I am interested in revealing certain characteristics that encompass both the expression and the content. More than that, my approach will search the actants' attitude from a pragmatic point of view.

Proverbs do not always display the **sender** of the message. Even if from a pragmatic angle the sender takes into account social factors like:

- the social distance between the speaker and the hearer,
- the relative power of the speaker over the hearer,
- the ranking of imposition in a certain culture.

The paremic units of the corpus I selected are, in their great majority, lacking personal pronouns. Still such an example like:

R(omanian): **Eu** dorm, **tu** dormi, cine să ducă *sacul*?

E(nglish): **I** proud/stout and **thou** proud/stout who shall bear *the ashes* out?

implies the two poles of the dialogue and the personal pronouns are very clearly displaying them.

In its very early beginnings mankind wanted to feel and find God's presence, to live in a perfect world. And soon mankind realized that the sacred and the profane are two ways of being in the world, two existential situations were assumed by man throughout his history [Eliade, M, 1995, p.13]:

R: Numai **la Dumnezeu e dreptate**.

E: Only **in God is justice**.

1.1. The dichotomy between *superior* and *inferior* is seen in very many paremic units and there is even a variety of ranks:

R1:... **în satul tău fruntaș** decât *codaș* la oras.

E1:... **be first in a village** than *second* at home.

R2: **..fruntea cozii** decât *coada frunții*.

E2:.. **the head of an ass** than *the tail of a horse*.

The country area is seen through “the peasant”, “the yeomen” and “the noblemen” while the town is targeted led. For everybody there is a Government because:

R: *Schimbarea domnilor*, **bucuria nebunilor**.

E: **Only fools exult** when *Governments change*.

1.2. Culturally re-constructed identity is very important when discussing how people see themselves in social settings.

R: **Mai bine țăran în picioare** decât *boier în genunchi*.

[Better standing as a peasant than kneeling as a boyar]\*

E: **Better be the head of the Yeomanry** than *the tail of gen-try*.

The strong hierarchical sense of values is felt in the paremic units where ability and cleverness in everyday situations appear when setting one's place in society:

R : **Răzeș c-un sac de hârtie** și-un *petic de moșie*.

[A Yeoman has a piece of paper and a shred of land]\*

E : **He that hath lands**, *hath quarrels*.

[ \* In the following examples, the square brackets contain my English word-by-word translation of the selected Romanian proverbs.]

Religious proverbs contain true folk sayings that circulated among people and have been retained in various ancient texts included later in the Bible [Petrova, R & Stefanova,D: 2017 p. 8]:

R: Răbdarea-i din rai.

E: Patience from heaven.

According to Al. Stănciulescu-Barda's opinion "religious Romanian proverbs form a solid documentary basis for the composition of a Romanian ethnotheology":

- proverbs and expressions of dogmatic character, those regarding God as a creator, leader, savior and judge:

R: **Numai Dumnezeu crează**, *omul doar educă*.

E: Only God creates, *man educates*.

- proverbs targeting the creation of the world, man (body, soul, salvation), Mother of God, church, cross, saints, icons, the Holy Sacraments:

R: **Cine-ntr-altă lege sare/Nici un Dumnezeu nu are.**

E: **Who in another law jumps/No God has.**

- proverbs and expressions of a moral character, concerning virtues (faith, hope, love, courage, justice, compassion, wisdom, etc.):

R: **Sufletul când pătimește, tot trupul se topește.**

E: **When the soul is suffering, the whole body melts.**

There are in this particular category, more than in other domains, significant *contextualizers* or *markers* that favour possible associations with the image of the translator's interpretation:

R: **A fi botezat cu zeamă de varză (este un om rău din fire).**

E: **To be baptized with cabbage juice (he is a bad man by nature).**

1.3. It seems that the Latin tradition makes *man* an authoritative figure in his home:

R: Tot omul **e împărat** în casa lui.

[Any man is an emperor in his house].\*

E: A man's **house is his castle.**

Within the ethnofield *man* there are several subthemes like:

- appearance/behaviour:

R: **Chipul omului** e oglinda sufletului.

[The man's face is the mirror of his soul].\*

E1: Good **face**/fair face.

E2: A good face is a letter of recommendation; A fair face cannot have a crabbed heart.

- honesty/ business:

R: De la **omul cinstit** e destul un cuvânt.

[From an honest man a word is enough]\*

E: **An honest man's word is as good as his bond.**

- wisdom:

R: **Omul cuminte** își cumpără vara sanie și iarna car.  
[The wise/good man buys the sledge in summer and the cart in winter]\*

E1: In fair weather prepare for foul.

E2: He is **wise** that *is ware in time*.

- fate:

R: Când **te apuci de vreo treabă**, *n-o lăsa fără ispravă*.

[When you begin a task, get the result, too].\*

E: Better never **to begin** than never *to make an end*.

*Man's* characterisation is nevertheless multi-featured even if not multi-dimensional. There is, no doubt, a stereotypic valuing role when such a sentence is transmitted.

R: **Omu-i om** și numai om.

[Man is only man].\*

E: Remember *thou art but a man*.

1.4. The relative power of the speaker/sender over the hearer can be seen through:

- material control (economic distribution and physical force):

R: Cum vei **sămăna**, așa vei **secera**.

[As you sow, ypu will harvest].\*

E: As *they sow*, so *let them reap*.

- meta-physical control:

R: **Dă din mâini** și Dumnezeu îți va ajuta.

[Use your hands and God will help you].\*

E: *God helps* those who **help themselves**.

The absolute ranking of impositions leads to the situation when the speaker minimizes costs to certain interlocutors and maximizes benefits to others:

R: Ce nu poate face un singur om, **fac mai mulți împreună**.

[What one man cannot do, many men can do together].\*

E: **Many hands make light work**.



If the power of the speaker and the hearer are more or less equal like in:

R: **Cine nu lucrează** *să nu mănânce*.

E1: **He that will not work** *shall not eat*.

E2: **A horse that will not carry a saddle** *must have no oats*.

The imposition is a warning.

The independence of the ranking can also be shown if the speaker's power is small and the "difference" (social distance) is great:

R: Când te **apuci de vreo treabă** *n-o lăsa fără ispravă*.

[When you begin a task, get the result, too].\*

E: If you buy **the cow**, take the tail into the bargain.

The choice of strategy will determine the choice of an adequate linguistic form:

R: *Treaptă cu treaptă*, **te urci pe scară**.

E: *Step after step*, **the ladder is ascended**.

The symmetry and correspondence of the terms are almost perfect in the above Romanian and their English versions: noun+noun vs verb and noun+noun vs noun+verb. This symmetry is not the common rule because the asymmetry between the speaker and the hearer appears in the *criticism* vs the *complete approval*:

R: *In lipsa cârmaciului*, **corabia se scufundă**.

[Helmsman absent, the boat is sinking]\*

E: *Master absent* and **house dead**.

Vs

R: În **casa lăutarului** *fiecare joacă*.

E: In a **fiddler's house** *everyone sluggards*.

## ***II. Cultural translation between the transfer of meaning and the translator's interpretation.***

2.0. A modification of the communicative strategies in the proverbs of the corpus I have mentioned, may include:

## a. positive politeness:

R: **Lucru** laudă pe *meșter*.

[Work praises the master]\*

E: A *carpenter* is known by **his chips**.

## b. offers:

R: *După lucru* e bun **repausul**.

[After work the rest is good]\*.

E: *All work* and no **play** makes Jack a dull boy.

## c. assumptions:

R: **Cum vei sămăna**, *așa vei secera*.

[As you sow, so you reap].\*

E: **As** they **sow**, so let them reap.

## d. questioning:

R: Văzut-ai vreun ciubotar cu ciubote bune?

[Have you seen a shoemaker (wearing) good boots?]

E: None more bare than the shoemaker's wife and the smith's *more*.

## e. being pessimistic:

R: **Cine spune multe** *face puțin*.

[Who speaks much does little].\*

E: **They bray most** that *can do least*.*Good words without deeds are rushes and reeds*.

## f. impersonalizing the speaker and the hearer:

R: **Multă lucrare** face pe *meșter bun*.

[Much work makes a good master].\*

E: Use maketh **mastery**.

Use/Practice makes perfect.

## g. being ironic (an apparently friendly way of being offensive):

R: **Găina care cântă** *nu ouă*.

[The hen that cackles does not lay eggs].\*

E1: **You cackle** often, but *never lay an egg*.

E2: Much bruit, little fruit.

2.1. According to Vinay and Darbelnet [in Venuti, L: 2000, pp.84-93], there are different methods of translating, each one representing a degree of complexity:

- direct translation based on parallel categories:

R: **Pune mîna** și o să pună și Dumnezeu milă.

[Use your hand and God will give you his blessing].

E: **Use the means** and God will give the blessing.

- direct translation based on parallel concepts:

R: Cel mai bun **vînător**, cel ce vine cu **vînat**.

[The best hunter is the one who brings the venison].\*

E: He **plays** best that **wins**.

Proverbs may offer sometimes the image of *transposition*. The above example is displaying not only an interchange (referring to the concept of “hunting” in the source text (ST) as opposed to the idea of “winning” in the target text (TT)) but it also allows a particular nuance of style, transforming a statement into a metaphor – the hunter is a player and [eventually] a winner.

Along with *transposition*, *modulation* is considered a variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view: what is a statement and a negation in the ST:

R: Omul cu rușine pierde/ Nimeni nu-i dă pâin’ nu cere.

[An ashamed man loses. Nobody gives him anything until he asks for it].\*

becomes a warning in the TT:

E: He that cannot ask, cannot live.

2.2. The diversity of the *equivalence* types can be felt in the relationship between the ST and the TT. Within the proverbs’ translation, the *linguistic equivalence* is to be searched in the structures’ level, the syntagms’ level and even the words’ level. The correspondence that is established through different categories and classes leads to a *semantic equivalence*. It is stated that proverbs are the image of *equivalences* in most of the cases:

R: In lipsa **cârmaciului**, corabia se scufundă.

[Helmsman absent, the boat is sinking].\*

E: **Master** absent and house dead.

The Romanian proverb uses the nouns 'helmsman' and 'boat' while the English version uses the nouns 'master' and 'house' with the meaning of 'coordinating and taking responsibilities'. The equivalence of the above example is felt through the Romanian word 'corabia'/'boat' that conveys the idea of 'house' and 'master'. If there is no master, the house is dead.

*Adaptation* is a special kind of *equivalence*. The cultural gap between the SL and the TL imposes sometimes a new situation that can be considered as being equivalent. For most of the examples, it is a *situational equivalence*:

R: **Harnic ca o albină**, strângător ca o furnică.

[**As busy as a bee**, as *industrious as an ant*]\*

E: Industry is fortune's right hand, and frugality her left.

The *adaptation* in the case of the previous example went a bit farther than expected: the 'bee' and the 'ant' from the Romanian proverb have as equivalents the nouns 'industry' and 'frugality'. In such a way the *adaptation* covers very many terms, passing from the living world to the world of concepts.

The three levels of expression, i.e., lexis, syntactic structure and message seem to work together within the same proverbial unit as in the following one:

R: **Vizitiul prost bate calul bun.**

[**The bad coachman beats the good horse**]\*.

E: **A bad workman** quarrels with his tools.

The paradox of the above example is that the cultural gap between the SL – Romanian – and the TL – English – allowed the figurative use of the Romanian word 'vizitiu'/'coachman' with the meaning of the English term 'workman'. The possible *adaptation* and the *equivalence* between the two terms was permitted by the fact that a 'workman' is a person employed to do manual work while the 'coachman' uses the whip to make the horse work. The common denominator is the verb 'to work' which is not expressed either in the Romanian or the English proverb. The particular feature of the *equivalence* procedure in such a context is the message in its totality.

If we are to question the notion of *equivalence* as an 'identity' between ST and TL, we can admit that there is information only in possible differences and a translation is a code in its own right:

R: Fapta bună laudă pe om.  
 [A good deed praises the man].\*  
 E: An ill deed cannot bring honour.

### ***III. Variability vs modification in proverbs***

3.0. The study of *proverb variability* goes back to A. Taylor's work [1931] and opened the path towards proverb *variants* studies. The difference between the two concepts is very important because a proverb *variation* does not change the proverb's basic meaning, while a proverb *variant* modifies it.

A proverb *variation* can be seen in:

R1: Cine lucrează, acela, se cade să mănânce.  
 E1: A horse that will not carry a saddle must have no oats.  
 R2: Cine nu lucrează să nu mănânce.  
 E2: He that will not work shall not eat; A horse that will not carry a saddle must have no oats.

A possible example of a proverb *variant* is:

R1: Meșterul se cunoaște la lucru.  
 [Master is known through his work].\*  
 E1: The workman is known by his work.  
 R2: Lucru laudă pe meșter.  
 [Work praises the master].\*  
 E2: A carpenter is known by his chips.

Romanian variants have one noun – 'meșter' – while English variants use 'workman' and 'carpenter' for rendering the idea of working.

3.1. Proverb *variability* is a mechanism that shows how a proverb system can renovate itself. Proverb *modification* is also a mechanism but it refers to proverb transition to another linguistic unit [Vager, M, 2015 in *Proverbium* no 32. p. 359]:

R: Nu-i nimeni sfânt pe pământ.  
 [There is no saint on Earth].\*  
 E1: Men are not angels.  
 E2: Every man has his faults.

*Men and saints* are compared and contrasted and the conclusion is a very direct one: there is no saint on Earth and men are not saints or angels. The verdict is even sadder: every man has his own faults (making mistakes or sinning).

When analyzing a *modified* proverb, one has to know the original form. Between the *modified* proverb and the *proverb-synonym* [Vager, M, 2015 in *Proverbium* no 32. p. 362]. figurativeness disappears and the statement becomes a potential maxim. The proverb *modification* can be researched through contrastive analysis implying semantics, syntactic structures, morphological and stylistic devices. Belonging to an open system, proverbs can be modified, these modifications giving birth to different patterns. What remains in the end is the message.

R: Omul ca lumânarea, când luminează atunci se sfârșește.

[The man is like the candle, when he lights he consumes himself].\*

E: A candle lights others and consumes itself.

### **Conclusions**

Paremiology has proved itself an interdisciplinary field of study, borrowing methods from very many other sciences and domains. Proverbs can be a very useful teaching instrument when we refer to communication, management or simply human interrelationships.

Summarizing the observations I have already included in this article, I can affirm that:

- proverbs do influence people's behaviour containing instructions for life; they can be studied through linguistic, semantic, literary and translation approaches;
- proverbs still remain an open system that interacts with socioeconomic and cultural influences and undergo qualitative and quantitative alterations;
- translating proverbs or using equivalence when having a TT from a ST means accepting the idea of a process of signification that might be either formal or primarily dynamic; while the former focuses on the message, the latter produces a dynamic change based on the relationship between the TT and ST.

Proverbs have a cognitive nature that reveals their universality [Konstantinova, A, 2017, p.175]. In terms of communicative strategies proverbs' expression and interpretation cannot be reduced to general principles governing human interaction or other cognitive/pragmatic abilities that are independent of language. Their structure is constrained and partly determined by linguistic forms across languages. They lead to clear pragmatic effects and that is why we can refer to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of sentences. Differences in form correlate with profound differences in meaning, with corresponding truth-conditional effects. Their pragmatic effects influence the speaker's/hearer's ability to select a relevant context for interpretation and adequate human behaviour.

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DIETMAR PEIL

## SPRICHWÖRTER UND IHRE ILLUSTRATIONEN IM *THESAURUS PHILO-POLITICUS*

**Abstract:** Im folgenden Beitrag wird zunächst die umfangreichste lateinisch-deutsche Emblem-Enzyklopädie aus dem frühen 17. Jahrhundert vorgestellt. Dann wird am Beispiel von einem der insgesamt 16 Teile (I,4) nach den Möglichkeiten der Visualisierung von Sprichwörtern gefragt. Dabei gilt dem Vergleich der teilweise unterschiedlichen Text- und Bildstrukturen besondere Aufmerksamkeit. Auch die Verwendung von Zitaten wird berücksichtigt. Im Anhang werden die verschiedenen Sprichwörter aufgelistet. Maßgeblich für die Identifizierung der Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten ist dabei das *Deutsche Sprichwörterlexikon* von Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander.

**Keywords:** Emblem – Sprichwort – sprichwörtl. Redensart – Doppelpictura – Intertextualität – Personifikation – mythologische Anspielung

Eines der umfangreichsten emblematischen Sammelwerke, das in Deutschland erschienen ist, dürfte das *Politische Schatzkästlein* sein, das zwischen 1623 und 1631 in Frankfurt am Main von Daniel Meisner († 1625) und Eberhard Kieser († 1631) unter dem Titel *Thesaurus Philo-Politicus. Das ist: Politisches Schatzkästlein guter Herren vnnd bestendiger freund* ediert wurde.<sup>1</sup> In der abgeschlossenen Ausgabe umfaßt das Werk zwei Bände mit jeweils acht Teilen, die neben diversen Rahmentexten 52 ganzseitige Tafeln enthalten.<sup>2</sup> Das Sammelwerk wurde unter verschiedenen Titeln im 17. Jahrhundert neu aufgelegt,<sup>3</sup> was auf einen gewissen Erfolg schließen läßt, und ist im 20. Jahrhundert mehrfach nachgedruckt worden. Die insgesamt 830 Tafeln - das dritte Buch des zweiten Bandes hat nur 50 statt der 52 Tafeln - bieten unter einem lateinischen, mitunter auch deutschen Motto in Kombination mit einer Stadtansicht<sup>4</sup> eine emblematische Darstellung,<sup>5</sup> deren Sinn über lateinische Distichen und deutsche Knittelverse zu erschließen ist und darüber hinaus zu Beginn des jeweiligen Buches in lateinischen und deutschen Prosa-Erklärungen knapp erläutert wird. Insofern entsprechen die

Embleme nicht dem dreiteiligen Standardtyp, sondern sind sechs- oder siebenteilig; neben der *pictura* mit dem deutschen oder lateinischen Motto gehören auch die lateinische und die deutsche *subscriptio* zu den emblematischen Bestandteilen, und auch die beiden Prosaerklärungen, die außerdem auch die anderssprachige Variante des Mottos vermitteln, sind mit dazuzuzählen.<sup>6</sup>

Sprichwörter finden sich in allen Teilen des *Thesaurus Philo-Politicus* und können in allen Komponenten der Embleme eingesetzt werden. Auch scheinen die Herausgeber das Sprichwort durchaus auch als ein Mittel der Werbung einzustufen, denn in den Teilen 1 und 5 des zweiten Bandes nennt das deutsche Titelblatt das Sprichwort noch vor den Emblemen und den Stadtansichten: *THE-SAVRI PHILOPOLITICI Oder Politisches Schatzkästleins Zweyten Buches Erster Theil. In welchem zwey vnd fünffzig schöner Sprüchwörter / oder Sententzen / bey vns Teutschen bräuchlich / Emblematischer weise / nicht allein in Figuren / also entworffen vnd für gestellt / daß jhr Verstand vnd Inhalt darauß leichtlich zu fassen / sondern auch mit beygefügt Lateinischen vnd Teutschen Versen erkläret werden.*

Dagegen werden auf den lateinischen Titelblättern des ersten Bandes die Embleme besonders hervorgehoben:

THESAVRI PHILO-POLITICI PARS QVARTA HOC  
EST EMBLEMATA SIVE MORALIA POLITICA IMA-  
GINIBVS ARTIFICIOSIS IN ÆS INCISIS ILLVAST-  
RATA, DESCRIPTA AC continuata studio a[tque] inven-  
tione.

Da der Nachweis aller Sprichwörter im *Thesaurus Philo-Politicus* den in einem Zeitschriftenbeitrag üblichen Umfang weit übersteigen würde, beschränke ich mich in meiner Analyse auf Teil I,4, in dem (wie auch in I,7) deutsche Motti der *pictura* beigegeben sind.<sup>7</sup>

Sprichwörter können als direkte oder als bildhafte Aussage formuliert sein. Die bildhaften Sprichwörter – so scheint es – lassen sich relativ einfach visualisieren. Das als Motto eingesetzte Sprichwort *Man muß schmieden, wenn das Eysen glüend ist* (Nr. 38)<sup>8</sup> legt es nahe, in der *pictura* die Umsetzung dieses Ratschlags zu zeigen (**Abb. 1**). Zwei Wolkenhände bearbeiten ein Eisenstück auf einem Amboß. Die deutschen Knittelverse wiederholen das Sprichwort und ergänzen es um die Empfehlung, eine angefangene Unternehmung zügig zu einem guten Ende zu bringen:

*Mann muß schmieden wann zu der frist,  
 Das Eysen noch recht glüend ist.  
 Hastu was wohl gefangen ahn,  
 Schaw, daß es ein gut Ende mög han.*

Damit ist das lateinische Distichon adäquat wieder gegeben:

*Dum ferrum calet, est cudendum: si bene ceptum,  
 Fac, fine optato quo bene currat opus.*

Der deutsche Prosa-Kommentar geht nicht über die Empfehlung der Verse hinaus:

*Begefügtes Emblema gibt den verstand / daz man eine  
 sach recht angreifen und verrichten soll / wen man nahe  
 darbey / unnd nit warten / biß man weit darvon ist.*

Der etwas weitschweifiger formulierte lateinische Kommentar setzt das bildhafte Sprichwort in die unbildliche Handlungsanweisung *Occasione vtendum* um und sichert den Rat durch ein Dictum Alexanders des Großen<sup>9</sup> ab:

*Occasione vtendum.*

*Fabrorum disciplina eos instruit, vt candens ferrum vstrina  
 exemptum continuo incudi imponant, malleisque tundant,  
 non expectato donec refrigescat, ictusque respuat. Sic  
 vtendum occasione, et vt Alexander se vicisse orbem  
 dicebat μηδὲν ἀναβαλλόμενος.*

Die Visualisierung bildhafter Sprichwörter kann auch 'im Doppelpack' erfolgen. So zeigt zum Motto *Alte Krähen seynd böß zu fangen* (Nr. 24) die pictura zwei Krähen auf einem Baum, die skeptisch auf die im Baum aufgehängte Schlinge eines Vogelstellers blicken; am Fuß des Baumes schreckt ein Fuchs vor einer weiteren Schlinge zurück (**Abb. 2**). Das lateinische Distichon wie auch die deutschen Verse bringen beide Bildmotive zur Sprache:

*Difficile est: quo defraudetur ab Aucupe Cornix:  
 Annosa et Vulpes non capitur laqueo.*

*Ein alte Kräh läst gar schwerlich,  
 Vom Vogelsteller fangen sich.  
 Ein altr Fuchs solchs nicht anders macht,  
 Wird mit keim Strick herbey gebracht.*

Der deutsche Prosakommentar verleiht beiden Sprichwörtern einen positiven Sinn:

*Beyde alte Krähen / sampt dem alten Fuchs / so von keinem  
Vogelsteller oder Jäger haben können gefangen werden /  
zeigen an den witz und die weißheit alter verstendiger Leuth.*

Ähnlich wie das Krähen-Fuchs-Emblem zeigt auch das Elstern-Krebs-Emblem (Nr. 15) eine Doppelpictura und versucht somit, zwei Sprichwörter zu visualisieren (**Abb. 3**). Dies gelingt jedoch nur in begrenztem Maße, da die Tiere in einer Ruhestellung und nicht in Bewegung gezeigt werden.<sup>10</sup> Während das Motto nur die Elster erwähnt und das lateinische Distichon nur den Krebs, gehen die deutschen Verse auf beide Tiere ein:

*Die Atzel läst das Hüpfen nicht.*

*Ingreditur recta pro consuetudine nunquam  
Cancer: de hoc facile est dicere iudicium-*

*Der Krebs kreucht niemahls recht herein,  
Die Atzel kan ohn ihr Hüpfen nit seyn.  
Hiervon kan man (wie sichs wil gbühn)  
Gar leichtlich, doch recht iudicirn.*

Der deutsche Prosakommentar ergänzt das Spektrum der Sprichwörter um zwei weitere Varianten:

*Gleich wie der Krebs seinen Gang / die Atzel jhr hupffen  
vnd ein jeder Vogel seinen Gesang nicht lassen kan: Also  
ist es auch bißweilen vnmöglich / daß Arth von Arth lassen  
könne.*

Das letzte Sprichwort bietet eine allgemeine Formulierung, die in den drei anderen Varianten jeweils spezifiziert wird.

Der lateinische Kommentar übersetzt das deutsche Motto, trägt zum Krebs ein Horaz-Zitat<sup>11</sup> sowie ein entsprechendes Sprichwort<sup>12</sup> nach und spielt auf die übrigen Varianten nur an, da keine Verständnisprobleme für das Emblem erwartet werden:

*Pica saltare non desinet.  
Naturam expellas furca tamen vsque redibit.  
Nunquam hercle efficies, vt ingrediantur cancri.*

*Sic Poetae. Germani de pica et cantu avicularum idem vsurpant. Emblema per se clarum est.*

Mit einer Doppelpictura ist auch das Emblem versehen, das der Ansicht von Inzlingen beigegeben ist (Nr. 26). Zum Motto *Es ist nichts so klein gesponnen, es komt an die Sonnen* sieht man rechts im Bildvordergrund einen Spinnrocken. Das deutsche Epigramm führt noch ein weiteres Sprichwort an:

*Es wird gewiß nichts so klein gesponnen,  
Es komt doch letztlich an die Sonnen.  
Was unter dem Schnee liegt verborgen,  
Jst er zergangn, man sights, ohn sorgen.*

Der deutsche Kommentar wiederholt die beiden Sprichwörter nicht, erläutert aber unmißverständlich ihre Bedeutung:

*Dise Schrifft vnd Emblematische Figur / ist gut vnd klar  
zuverstehen / dann alles was man in diser zerbrechlichen  
Welt thut vnd handelt / es geschehe so heimlich es immer  
wolle / kommet es doch entlich herfür ans tagsliecht vnd  
wird kund vnd offenbar*

Das lateinische Motto bietet eine unbildliche Aussage (*Omne occultum reuelabitur*), während das Distichon nur auf den Schnee verweist, der sich dem Betrachter nur aus den angedeuteten Fußspuren erschließt:

*Temporis est veridos Filia: sub nive cunque  
Quod tegitur, si nix deperit omne vides.*

Der lateinische Kommentar fällt entschieden umfangreicher aus. Er bietet ein einleitendes Bibelzitat (Mt. 10,27), dem ein Augustinuszitat folgt, bevor gleichsam als Beweis für die Gültigkeit der Lehre an die Ibykos-Episode erinnert wird. Erst der abschließende Satz spielt auf das deutsche Sprichwort im Motto an:

*Domini ac Seruatoris nostri sententia haec est, vt & illa:  
Quod alter alteri in aurem dixerit, de tectis praedicabitur.  
Omnia facta nostra proferuntur in lucem alia citius alia  
tardius. August[inus] ita alloquebatur hominem peccaturum:  
Pecca o homo, quantum libet: sed vide sis vt locum  
quaeras, vbi te nemo vifeat. Facile hoc est, inquis. At ne  
Deus quidem? Impossibile: reddes n[on] rationem de*

*omnibus. Notum est quod Ibycus vel grues caedis suae  
vltrices inuenerit. Pictura Germanicorum proverbium ex-  
primit, quod a nenda texendaque tela desumitur.*

Während in den bisher vorgeführten Beispielen die Doppelpictura mit ihren verschiedenen Bildelementen unterschiedliche, aber in ihrer Aussage annähernd identische Sprichwörter visualisiert hat, ist das der Ansicht von Klus (Nr. 11) beigegebene Emblem anders strukturiert. Zum Motto *Ein kleiner Vogel, ein kleines Nest* wird auf der rechten Seite unter einem kleinen Baum mit drei Vogelnestern ein ruhender Mann gezeigt. Links wird ein Gegenbild geboten: Ein großer Baum trägt ein Vogelnest mit vier großen Vögeln und illustriert so das konträre Sprichwort *Grosser vogel, gross nest*, das im Text nicht angeführt wird. Unter dem Baum liegt ein deutlich größerer Mann (**Abb. 4**). Die deutsche subscriptio wiederholt das bildhafte Sprichwort, verknüpft damit aber eine unerwartete Deutung, die vielleicht an ein Sprichwort wie *Kleine Leut haben auch Hertz vnd Verstand*<sup>13</sup> denken läßt:

*Es ist ein Sprichwort lang gewest:  
Ein kleiner Vogl, ein kleines Nest.  
Im kleinen Cörpr bißweillen Man  
Viel herrlichr Tugent finden kan.*

Der deutsche Prosakommentar ist hingegen viel allgemeiner gehalten und geht auf das sprichwörtliche Bildmotiv nicht ein:

*Diese Emblematische Figur gibt uns zuerkennen den grossen  
underscheid eines kleinen und grossen / eines hohen  
und nidrigen Dinges / dann waz groß und hoch ist / muß  
viel haben / was aber klein und nidrig / behilfft sich mit  
einem geringen.*

Das lateinische Distichon blendet blendet das Vogelnest ebenfalls aus und konzentriert sich auf die kleine Gestalt:

*Parvum parva decent: doctrinae parva labore  
Corpore in exili gratia saepe latet.*

Der lateinische Kommentar hingegen übersetzt das deutsche Motto und erweitert das dichotomische Klassenmodell der pictura zu einem Gesellschaftsmodell, das von drei Ständen ausgeht und diese Ordnung befürwortet; der in der pictura gestaltete Gegensatz von

'groß' und 'klein' wird in ein Stufenmodell überführt, das durch die Raumkategorien 'oben', 'in der Mitte' und 'unten' bestimmt ist:

*Parvarum avium exigui nidi*

*Non idem est omnium mortalium captus: etsi n[on] omnes eodem nascimur modo, eodem orimur fonte, non pauca tamen sunt, quae nos distinguant, interque alia fortunae beneficia, quae illum in summo locat, hunc in imo deprimit. Avium natura idem loquitur. Sunt quae in summis arborum fastigijs inacessisque rupum latibulis nidificant, aliae in salictis inter dumeta vepresque, quae velut medium obtinent, tertiae plane humi ponunt ova eaque fovent. Nidus vnicuique conveniens, magnis aptior, parvis angustior, omnia concinne.*

Das Besondere in der Bildgestaltung dieses Emblems besteht darin, daß nicht nur das sprichwörtliche Bild geboten wird, sondern mit den beiden menschlichen Figuren auch ein erster Hinweis auf die mögliche (soziale) Deutung erfolgt.

Die Verwendung einer Doppelpictura zur Kombination eines bildhaften Sprichworts mit seiner Deutung ist besonders überzeugend in dem Emblem, das der Stadtansicht von Urbino beigegeben ist (Nr. 49). Unter dem Motto *Wer den kern essen wil, der beiß die Nuss auff* zeigt die pictura zwei Männer an einem Tisch; der eine beißt eine Nuß auf, der andere schüttet aus einem Beutel Münzen auf den Tisch (**Abb. 5**). Das deutsche Epigramm widmet jeder der beiden Figuren ein Verspaar:

*Welcher den Kern recht essen will,  
Der beiß die Nuß auff, ohne Ziel.  
Und wer einen Gewinn wil han,  
Der muß zuvor was setzen dran.*

Genau genommen werden nicht ein bildhaftes Sprichwort und seine Bedeutung ins Bild gesetzt, sondern zwei Sprichwörter, von denen das zweite eine direkte Aussage trifft.<sup>14</sup> Der deutsche Kommentar erläutert das Emblem sehr ausführlich:

*Dieser Mann / so ein Nuß auffbeist / gibt zuverstehen / daß  
/ wer was haben will / selbst die hand anlegen muß: Der  
ander aber so einen Beutel mit Gelt auff einem Tisch*

*außschüttet / bedeut / daß / wer etwas gewinnen wil / der  
jenige sich weder müß noch arbeit verdrüssen lassen  
müsse.*

Dass lateinische Distichon kombiniert wie das deutsche Epigramm das bildhafte Sprichwort mit einer eher unbildlichen Variante:

*Qui nucleum vult esse, nucem quo frangat oportet:  
Qui quaerit lucrum, sumptum fecisse necesse est.*

Der lateinische Kommentar präsentiert ein komplexes intertextuelles Gefüge verschiedenen Dichterzitaten und einem weiteren lateinischen und einem griechischen Sprichwort<sup>15</sup> und gelangt zu der allgemeinen Empfehlung, daß alle Ziele nur durch eigene Anstrengungen erreicht werden können:

*Omnia dii laboribus vendunt generi mortalium, dicebat  
ille, non male. Ita Graeci τῆς ἀρετῆς ἰδρωτά θεοὶ  
προπάρουθεν ἔθηκαν. Per angusta ad augusta. Belle  
Prudentius: Via panditur ardua iustis, et ad astra doloribus  
itur. Pugnandum est si coronari velis, laborandum si frui.*

Ein besonders komplexes Beispiel der Visualisierung bildhafter Sprichwörter ist mit der Ansicht von Lissberg in Hessen (Nr. 29) verbunden. Unter dem Motto *Es seynd nicht alle Jäger, die Hörnlin führen* erscheint als emblematischer Sinnträger eine männliche Figur, die in der linken Hand einen Jagdspieß hält und ein Horn an den Mund setzt; auf dem Kopf trägt sie eine kostbare Haube und auf dem Rücken eine Harfe (**Abb. 6**). Während das Motto sich auf ein Sprichwort beschränkt, führen die deutschen Knittelverse auch alle visualisierten Varianten an:

*Es seind nicht alle Harpffenschlägr,  
Die Harpffn tragn: all seynd nicht Jägr,  
So Hörnlein führn / welch Sammat Haubn  
Tragn, darff man nicht für Doctr auffklaubn.*

Das lateinische Distichon begnügt sich mit der Übersetzung des deutschen Mottos und einer Variante:

*Non omnes citharum gestantes sunt citharoedi:  
Nec Venatorem cornifer omnis agit.*



Der deutsche Prosa kommentar wiederholt das Motto, beschreibt den emblematischen Sinnträger und interpretiert das Sprichwort als Warnung vor Selbstüberschätzung:

*Es seynd nit alle Jäger, die Hörnlein Führen.*

*Durch diesen seltzamen Agenten / welcher mit einer Harpfen / Jägerhörnlein / Spieß / Sammaten pareth oder Doctor hauben auffgezogen kompt werden / alle setzame Phantasten / welche in jhrem sinn viel zu seyn vnnd alles zu können vermeynen / agiret und vorgestellt.*

Der lateinische Kommentar bietet eine weitere (gelehrt-mythologische) Motto-Variante,<sup>16</sup> spart den Hinweis auf den Harfenspieler aus, wandelt den angemessenen Doktor in einen Philosophen um und führt außerdem eine weitere deutsche Variante ('Es sind nicht alle Köche, die lange Messer tragen') an:

*Multi Thyasigeri, pauci Baubi.*

*Multi sunt in hanc sententiam proverbis. Non omnes sunt Philosophi, qui pallium, baculum et peram ferunt, prolixamque barbam mulcent. Germani dicunt, non omnes esse coquos, qui longos cultros ferant, itemque, non omnes venatores, qui cornibus citantur, quod posterius Emblemate expressum est. Dictum est in eos qui plura profitentur de se quam praestare queant.*

Insgesamt visualisiert die *pictura* mit nur einer Figur und ihren unterschiedlichen Attributen drei oder, wenn man den Spieß als Waffe eines Landsknechts versteht, vier Sprichwörter; das vierte Sprichwort, das im Text nicht aufgegriffen wird, könnte lauten: *Es sind nit all landsknecht, die lang spiess tragen*.<sup>17</sup> Der lateinische Kommentar bietet darüber hinaus drei weitere Varianten, die im Kupferstich jedoch nicht berücksichtigt werden.

Auch sprichwörtliche Redensarten haben Eingang in den *Thesaurus Philo-Politicus* gefunden, allerdings nur einmal als Motto. Zur Redensart *Ein Roß umb ein Pfeiffen geben* (Nr. 7) zeigt die *pictura* einen Flötenspieler vor einem berittenen Kaufmann und am linken Bildrand eine Krone sowie das Löwenfell und die Keule des Herkules (**Abb. 7**). Die anspielungsreichen lateinischen und deutschen Verse lassen die Frage nach dem Zusammenhang zwischen

der Redensart und den Vertretern der griechischen Sagenwelt noch unbeantwortet:

*Quid Diomedis erat, quid permutatio Glauci?  
Rex Thracum armipotens Hercule victus erat.*

*Diomedis und Glauci Gschicht  
Gibt uns einen guten Bericht,  
Ein Roß umb ein Pfeiffen zu gebn,  
Hercles übrwind Diomedm ebn.*

Der deutsche Prosakommentar erläutert nur die Redensart, ohne auf die mythologischen Anspielungen einzugehen:

*Durch diese Figur / da ein Krämer ein schlechte und vnan-  
sehenliche pfeiff vmb ein Roß gibt / wirt ein ungleicher  
tausch / auch der grosse betrug im tauschen / der so wol bey  
Frembden / als bey guten Freunden vorgehe t/ verstanden.*

Im lateinischen Kommentar wird in der Überschrift eine wörtliche Übersetzung des Mottos geboten, der dann die mythologische Entsprechung folgt, bevor ein historisches Exempel nachgeschoben und der Sinn der Redensart in eine allgemeine Aussage überführt wird. Über Herkules wird kein Wort verloren:

*Equum pro vtriculo.*

*Germanicum proverbium hoc est nostri dicunt, Glauci et  
Diomedis permutatio. Dionysius cum Syracus perdidisset  
aliud exiguum oppidum in Sicilia cepisset, de seipso dicere  
solebat, Urbem perdidit, Tyrocnestini cepi. Videtur tamen et  
Emblema et inscriptio non de permutationibus solis loqui,  
sed communiter in omnes fraudes, omnia deceptelarum ge-  
nera sub hoc schemate invehit.*

Offensichtlich zielt das zweisprachige emblematische Sammelwerk auf zwei unterschiedliche Rezipientenschichten ab. Nur den Gelehrten, die der lateinischen (und griechischen) Sprache mächtig sind, werden offensichtlich mythologische Anspielungen zugemutet, die im deutschen Kommentar ausgespart bleiben, aber ihren Niederschlag in den Versen gefunden haben, die somit rätselhaft bleiben. Mit *Glauci et Diomedis permutatio* ist der in der *Ilias* (VI,234ff.) berichtete ungleiche Rüstungstausch gemeint, bei dem der Lykier Glaukos seine goldene Rüstung gegen die eiserne des Diomedes

weggibt. In den lateinischen und deutschen Versen wird der Heerführer Diomedes mit dem thrakischen König verwechselt; diesen hat Herkules besiegt, als er in seiner achten Aufgabe die menschenfressenden Rosse des Diomedes nach Argos bringen sollte.<sup>18</sup>

Eine besondere Form des bildhaften Sprichworts verwendet das Stilmittel der Personifikation, die dann auch als Bildelement der *pictura* erscheinen kann. So wird das Sprichwort *Wann Gewalt kombt, ist das Recht todt* (Nr. 25) dadurch veranschaulicht, daß eine prächtig gekleidete Figur die Personifikation der Gerechtigkeit, die ihre Attribute noch in den Händen hält zu Boden getreten hat (**Abb. 8**). Die *subscriptio* macht jedoch nicht, wie aufgrund der Kommentare zu erwarten wäre, den Krieg für den Untergang des Rechts verantwortlich, sondern den bösen Juristen:

*Inter ut arma silent leges: sic nullus habetur  
JurisConsultus, qui sacra jura premit.*

*Wann Gwalt kompt, so ist Todt das Recht,  
Im Krieg schweigen die Gesetz fein schlecht.  
Der ist ein Jurist arg und böß,  
So dem Recht gibt har harte stöß.*

Die Übernahme der jeweiligen Personifikation in die *pictura* ist keineswegs zwingend. So wird die Gültigkeit des Sprichworts *Der hunger ist ein guter koch* (Nr. 32) dadurch veranschaulicht, daß ein Soldat einen Holzapfel pflückt und ein Bote sich eine Rübe aus dem Acker zieht. Auch kann mit einem zweiten Sprichwort das erste bestätigt werden. Zu *Vntrew trrifft ihrn eignen Herrn* (Nr. 2) wird gezeigt, wie jemand in eine Grube fällt, die er einem anderen gegraben hat. Die deutschen Verse erwähnen dieses zweite Sprichwort nicht, wohl aber der Prosakommentar:

*Durch den Mann / so unversehens hinderlich trit / und in  
eine Gruben fellt / die er einem andern gegraben hat / wirt  
verstanden / daß untrew offtermahlen jren eignen Herrn zu  
treffen pflege.*

Zu den Sprichwörtern mit einer Personifikation kann auch *Kein Unglück kompt allein* (Nr. 23) gerechnet werden, wenngleich es Varianten gibt, die das Stilmittel klarer erkennen lassen wie etwa *Ein Unglück bringt das andere auf dem Rücken* oder *Ein Unglück tritt*

dem andern auf die Fersen. Im *Thesaurus Philo-Politicus* wird hierfür der Typus des Exempel-Emblems eingesetzt, bei dem eine Exempelfigur zum Motiv der *pictura* gemacht wird.<sup>19</sup> Die Verse wiederholen das Sprichwort und vertrösten auf Gottes Hilfe, geben aber dem Betrachter, der mit der biblischen Ikonographie nicht vertraut ist, keinen Hinweis zum Verständnis des Bildinhalts:

*Nulla adversa foret sors sola: at crede per unum  
Res tantas tolli rite potese Deum.*

*Kein Unglück kompt uns Zwar allein,  
Jns gmein, etlich beysammen seyn.  
Darumb glaub nur ein iederman,  
Daß Gott solchs endn und wendn kan*

Der mit der ikonographischen Tradition nicht vertraute Leser kann die biblische Gestalt nur durch den Prosakommentar erschließen:

*Diese Emblematische Figur begreiffet in sich die viel und  
mancherley gefehrlichkeit des armen / elenden / menschli-  
chen lebens / auch wie wir nicht einem / sondern mit dem  
lieben frommen Job / vielen unglücken / bey diesen elenden  
zeiten / unterworffen seyn.*

Mehr als die Hälfte der deutschen Motti sind unbildlich formuliert. Dabei muß allerdings bedacht werden, daß die Entscheidung über die Bildhaftigkeit nicht immer eindeutig zu treffen ist. Zum als Sprichwort in dieser Form nicht belegten Motto *Der nicht gefallen darff nicht aufstehn*<sup>20</sup> setzt die *pictura* das Gegenteil ins Bild um (Nr. 46): ein Mann und eine Frau sind rückwärts bzw. vorwärts über einen Stein gestolpert, liegen auf dem Boden und müssen wieder aufstehen, denn *Fallen ist kein schande, aber lang ligen vnd nicht wollen wider auffstehen, ist schande*<sup>21</sup> und *Es fällt keiner, der nicht gern wider auffstunde*.<sup>22</sup> Das lateinische Distichon und der deutsche Vierzeiler machen aber deutlich, daß das Motto bildhaft im Sinne einer religiösen Belehrung zu verstehen ist:<sup>23</sup>

*Non ubi peccatum est, ibi non est poenitudo:  
Felix in Christo, qui resipiscit homo,*

*Der nicht gefalln, darff nicht auffstehn;  
Wo kein Sünd ist (thu recht verstehn)*

*Alda ist auch zur Rew kein Muht.  
Wohl dem, der Buß in Christo thut.*

Zu Habsburg im Kanton Aargau zeigt die *pictura* unter dem Motto *Gute waar find leicht einen Kauffmann* (Nr. 22) eine Wirtshausszene (**Abb. 9**) und greift damit auf ein weiteres Sprichwort zurück, das im deutschen Epigramm als Variante zum Motto angeführt wird:

*Gute Waar bald ein Kauffmann find,  
Den guten Wein verkaufft man gschwind.  
Also bedarff der Tugent Ehr  
Nicht rühmens groß, noch plauderns sehr.*

Das lateinische Distichon begnügt sich mit dem Sprichwort vom guten Wein, schließt aber ebenfalls die Übertragung auf die Tugend an:

*Non opus est hedera genero ut stipite vino:  
Sic non virtutum gloria laudis eget.*

Dieses Beispiel zeigt, daß Sprichwörter zusätzlich zu ihrer direkten Aussage auf einen anderen Bereich bezogen werden können und ihnen dadurch der Status einer bildhaften Aussage zukommt. Im deutschen Kommentar wird das Motto nur als Überschrift geführt, während das Wein-Sprichwort (wie schon im Distichon) präziser formuliert und der ganze Eintrag mit einem weiteren Sprichwort beendet wird:

*Gleich wie es nicht nöthig / daß man einen guten Wein ein  
zeichen herauß strecke / damit derselbe desto eher ver-  
kaufft werde: Also ist es auch nit noth<sup>o</sup> / daß man einem zu-  
gehör sein tugend herauß streiche / vnd ihn sehr lobe /  
dann das Werck lobet den Meister.<sup>o</sup>*

Da die Übertragung auf die Tugend ebenfalls als Sprichwort belegt ist (*Tugend spricht (rühmt, preist sich nicht) selbst*),<sup>24</sup> wird in diesem Emblem auf vier verschiedene Sprichwörter zurückgegriffen. Doch beim genaueren Hinsehen stellt man fest, daß der Stecher das lateinische Sprichwort im Distichon wohl nicht verstanden und den deutschen Kommentar nicht gelesen hat, denn im Gegensatz zu der Behauptung *Guter wein darff keins aussgesteckten reyffs (keines Busches, keines Kranzes)*<sup>25</sup> ist der ausgesteckte Kranz sehr deutlich zu erkennen.

Zum Motto *Es kan auch ein böser Vatter ein frommes Kind haben* (Nr. 6) zeigt die *pictura* einen Knaben, der mit gefalteten Händen zwischen Rosenbüschen gen Himmel blickt. Die direkte Aussage des Sprichworts wird in nachvollziehbarer Weise bildlich umgesetzt; die Darstellung der entsprechenden Gebärden weist den Knaben als *frommes Kind* aus, während der böse Vater im Bild nicht unmittelbar erscheint. Dieses Visualisierungsproblem wird dadurch gelöst, daß ein zweites Motiv hinein genommen wird: die blühenden Rosen unter den Dornen. Das fromme Kind erscheint somit als menschliche Figur wie auch als Rosenblüte, der böse Vater ist nur über die Dornen vermittelt. Dem unbildlichen Sprichwort wird in der *pictura* wie auch im deutschen Epigramm eine bildhafte Variante beigegeben, während das lateinische Distichon sich auf das Rosensprichwort beschränkt:

*Atque vepres inter nascuntur tempore Veris  
Flores, praesertim dulcis, odora Rosa,*

*Es kan ein böser Vater auch  
Ein fromm Kind habn (nach altem Brauch.)  
Dann man sicht ia die Rosen schön  
Im Frühling untern Dörnern stehn.*

Das Motto *Gemach kombt man auch weit* (Nr. 10) wird durch ein allegorisches Stilleben visualisiert. Auf einem Tisch liegt ein aufgeschlagenes Buch, links davon ist eine Schildkröte, rechts eine Schnecke zu sehen. Im Distichon wird die weit verbreitete Devise *Festina lente* wiederholt,<sup>26</sup> im deutschen Epigramm das Sprichwort *Eile mit Weile*. Das Buch ist ein Hinweis auf den Bereich, um den es hier geht, das Studium:<sup>27</sup>

*Festina lente: nam quid properare necessum est?  
Venturo aquidem tempore doctus eris.*

*Gemach kompt man auch zimblick weit:  
Drumb eyll mit weyll, dann mit der zeit  
Kann noch wol werden (glaub du mir)  
Ein wolgeschickter Mann aus dir.*

Als allegorisches Stilleben ist auch die *pictura* zum Motto *Was ver-  
seht das lehrt* (Nr. 18) angelegt. In Verbindung mit der lateinischen Motto-Variante *Nocumenta documenta* könnte das aufgeschlagene Buch, auf dem eine Rute liegt, den Eindruck erwecken, das Emblem

sollte die Wissensvermittlung über körperliche Züchtigung empfehlen. In diese Richtung verweisen auch das Distichon und die deutsche subscriptio:

*Quaeque nocentque docent: dictu mirabile verbum,  
Non est, quod neceas, quando docendo doces.*

*Diß hab ich all mein Tag gehört,  
Waß da versehrt, dasselbig lehrt:  
Es ist nicht, daß Du schadest ie,  
Wann du nur vleissig lehest hie.*

Der lateinische Kommentar scheint außerdem auch auf das Sprichwort *Aus Schaden wird man klug* anzuspielden, wenn es einschränkend heißt: *Vir prudens non suo sed alieno damno sapit*.<sup>28</sup> Doch dann bringt der Kommentar unerwartet eine religiöse Deutung, die im deutschen Kommentar ausschließlich vermittelt wird:

*Hierauß lernen vnd erkennen wir / daß wiewol der liebe  
Gott die seinigen züchtige vnd vnder der Ruthen halte°/ er  
jedoch unser nicht vergessen°/ sondern zu seiner vns erret-  
ten vnnd endlich in das Buch der Lebendigen°/ durch sol-  
che züchtigung°/ bringen wolle.*

Dabei wird das der Bibel entnommene Sprichwort *Gott züchtigt die Seinigen* in die Argumentation eingebracht und die sprichwörtliche Redensart *jem. unter der Rute halten* eingesetzt. Das Emblem hat somit eine doppelte Deutung erfahren.

Zu den unbildlichen Sprichwörtern gehört auch die Empfehlung *Thu recht, laß es Gott walten* (Nr. 37), der eine scheinbar rätselhafte *pictura* beigegeben ist. Ein Mann, der sich mit seinen Armen auf einen Anker stützt, sitzt, von sechs Löwen umgeben, innerhalb einer Ringmauer (**Abb. 10**). Der deutsche Vierzeiler, der das Motto nur paraphrasiert, bietet ebenso wenig wie das lateinische Distichon einen Hinweis, der das Bildverständnis erleichtern könnte:

*Fac, quaecunque bene, juxta jussa Jehovahae:  
Et comitte tuo cuncta regenda Deo.*

*Thu recht, laß Gott walten allein,  
Nach Gottes Gboten dich halten fein.*

*Befehl Jhm all dein Thun und Lassn,  
Er wird dich gwißlich nicht verlassen.*

Auch der deutsche Prosakommentar hilft nicht weiter, während der lateinische ein abweichendes Motto und zwei Zitate bietet:

*Alhier erkennen wir (wenn wir recht thun vnd es Gott wal-  
ten lassen) den vberauß grossen vnd gewaltigen Schutz  
Gottes darbey wir bestendig bleiben vnd vns nichts irren  
lassen sollen.*

*Hic murus Aheneus esto.*

*Conscia mens recti famae mendacia ridet. Fide Deo et  
curis caetera liber age. Θεῷ μέλει περὶ ἡμῶν ait D. Petr.*

Das lateinische Motto ist ein Horaz-Zitat (Ep. 1,1,60), während Meisner den Kommentar mit einem Ovid-Zitat (Fasti IV,311) einleitet und mit 1. Petrus 5,7 in leicht abgeändertem Wortlaut beschließt.<sup>29</sup> Für die pictura hat Meisner offensichtlich auf Typotius zurückgegriffen und den Anker als Zeichen der Hoffnung hinzugefügt. Allerdings hat er die emblematische Aussage leicht abgeändert, denn Typotius hat die pictura mit dem Motto *SI DEVS NOBISCVM QVIS CONTRA NOS* versehen.<sup>30</sup>

Nicht immer gelingt die Visualisierung des Sprichworts in überzeugender Weise. Zum Motto *Jch hab das gewust, ehe du deine Mutter hast erkennt* zeigt die pictura zwei Männer (Nr. 51), von denen der eine auf ein Kind in einer Wiege hinweist (**Abb. 11**). Die subscriptio wirft die Frage auf, wer als Sprecher anzusehen ist:

*Hocce mihi notum, Vates celeberrimus ante  
Quam natus graeca matre Theognis erat.*

*Jch hab das gewust (mercks behendt)  
Ehe du dein Mutter hast erkennt.  
Ja eh Theognis ward geboren,  
Hab ich solchs alls gewust zuvorn.*<sup>31</sup>

Der deutsche Kommentar hilft nicht entscheidend weiter:

*Jch hab das gewust / ehe du deine Mutter hast kennet.  
Hierinnen wirdt die Erfahrung vnd wissenschaft eines  
wolgeübten erfarnnen vnd dapffern Menschen vorgebildet*



*/ Sintemal es sehr rühmlich etwas gutes können / vnnd sehr  
schändlich etwas böses wissen vnd sich darinnen vben.*

Diese Charakterisierung des älteren Mannes als *wolgeübten erfahrenen vnd dapffern Menschen* wird mit einer moralischen Bewertung verbunden (*gutes können*) und mit ihrem Gegenteil kontrastiert (*böses wissen vnd sich darinnen vben*); diese Bewertung wird vom Bild so nicht vermittelt.

Der lateinische Kommentar charakterisiert den jüngeren Mann als Besserwisser. Das einleitende griechische Sprichwort<sup>32</sup> legt die Sprecherrollen eindeutig fest; der Ältere tadelt den Jüngeren, ohne daß klar wird, mit welcher 'Belehrung' der Jüngere sich den Unmut des Älteren zugezogen haben könnte:

*Hac ante te natum scivi.*

*Πρὸ τῆς γενειάδος διδάσκει τοὺς γέροντας αἰὺν  
Graeci. Dicitur in sciolos, qui scire volunt, quod Jupiter  
Iunoni in aurem dixerit quique grandes natu ipsi iuvenes,  
expertes ipsi rudes, doctos indocti ignorantiae arguere non  
verentur.<sup>33</sup>*

Der Verweis auf Theognis ist mehrfach in der griechischen und lateinischen Literatur anzutreffen und läßt die Belehrung des Jüngeren als 'uralt' erscheinen.<sup>34</sup> Auch die Anspielung auf Jupiter und Iuno, die Stefan Merkle auf Plautus, Trinummus 208, zurückführt, ist negativ zu verstehen, wie der Kontext des Plautus-Zitats Trinummus 205-212) zeigt:

*Die wollen Alles wissen, ja, und wissen Nichts.  
Was Jeder denkt und denken wird, das wissen sie.  
Ja, was der Fürst der Fürstin leis' in's Ohr gesagt,  
Was Juno selbst mit Zeus geschwätzt, das wissen sie.  
Was nie gescheh'n wird, nie geschah, sie wissen's doch.  
Ob wahr sein Lob ist oder falsch, sein Tadel trifft,  
Ist Jedem gleichviel, weiß er nur, was ihm gefällt.*

Die Schwierigkeiten in der Visualisierung des Sprichwortmaterials im Emblem Nr. 51 sind darin begründet, daß der Rezipient nicht in der Lage ist, die Sprecherrollen eindeutig festzulegen, weil der Künstler (Eberhard Kieser oder einer seiner Gehilfen) die im Text gegebenen Hinweise nicht genutzt hat. Das den lateinischen Kommentar einleitende griechische Sprichwort hätte es nahe gelegt, einen

der beiden Männer mit einem Bart abzubilden. Offensichtlich hat der Künstler das griechische Zitat nicht gelesen oder lesen können. Aber ob damit wirklich alle Verständnisprobleme behoben wären?

### Anmerkungen

\* Stefan Merkle, München, und Markus Hafner, Graz, danke ich für tatkräftige Unterstützung bei der Auseinandersetzung mit den klassischen Zitaten. Werner Patzelt, Karlsfeld, bin ich für die Bildbearbeitung sehr verbunden.

<sup>1</sup> Zum Folgenden vgl. Dietmar Peil: Emblematisierung zwischen Memoria und Geographie. Der *Thesaurus Philo-Politicus*. Das ist: Politisches Schatzkästlein, in: Wolfgang Frühwald, Michael Schilling und Peter Strohschneider: Erkennen und Erinnern in Kunst und Literatur. Kolloquium Reisenburg, 4.-7. Januar 1996. Hg. von Wolfgang Frühwald [u. a.] Tübingen 1998, S. 351-382.

<sup>2</sup> Zu den Titelkupfern vgl. Dietmar Peil: Titelkupfer / Titelblatt – ein Programm? Beobachtungen zur Funktion von Titelkupfer und Titelblatt in ausgewählten Beispielen aus dem 17. Jahrhundert. In: Die Pluralisierung des Paratextes in der Frühen Neuzeit. Theorie, Formen, Funktionen. Hg. von Frieder von Ammon / Herfried Vögel (Pluralisierung & Autorität Bd. 15), Berlin 2008, S. 301-336, hier S. 319-329

<sup>3</sup> Die neuen Titel spiegeln einen Wandel in der Rezeptionserwartung wider; dazu ausführlicher Peil (wie Anm. 1), S. 354-358.

<sup>4</sup> Die Bezeichnung 'Stadtansicht' ist ungenau, denn es werden auch Burgen, Schlösser und Klöster abgebildet.

<sup>5</sup> In der Regel gibt es keinen erkennbaren Zusammenhang zwischen den Stadtansichten und den ihnen zugeordneten Emblemen.

<sup>6</sup> Siebenteilig sind die Embleme in I,4, I,7 und I,8. In den anderen Teilen sind die Embleme sechsteilig, denn in I,1-3 und I,5-6 gibt es keine deutschen Motti, und im 2. Band hat man auf die lateinischen Prosakommentare verzichtet.

<sup>7</sup> Die Vorlage für den Nachdruck ist fehlerhaft. Die lateinischen Prosakommentare enden mit Nr. 50; tatsächlich liegen 51 Kommentare vor: unter Nr. 21 werden sowohl Granada als auch Habsburg (Kanton Aargau) geführt. Nr. 25. Lissberg (Hessen) wird ausgelassen, und unter Nr. 27 (Loreto) wird der Kommentar zu Nr. 25 geboten. Die deutschen Kommentare sind nicht durchnummeriert aber in der richtigen Abfolge, werden allerdings unter dem (irreführenden) Zwischentitel *Kurtze Erklärung der Emblematischen Figuren im Fünfften Theil* geboten.

<sup>8</sup> Im Haupttext zitiere ich die Motti nach dem Wortlaut auf den Tafeln, im Anhang nach dem Wortlaut im Kommentar.

<sup>9</sup> Als Entsprechungen für das Alexander-Dictum kann Stefan Merkle *Gnomologium Vaticanum* Nr. 74 sowie zwei Homer-Scholien zu Ilias, 2,435f., anführen und weist auf einige Schreibfehler hin, deren Korrektur ich stillschweigend übernehme. Für Gnom. Vat. 74 bietet Merkle folgende Übersetzung an: 'Alexander sagte, als er von jemandem gefragt wurde, wie er solche Taten in kurzer Zeit vollbracht habe: nichts aufschiebend.'

<sup>10</sup> Der Stich läßt nicht eindeutig erkennen, ob man sich die Elster als auf dem Krebs stehend oder über den Krebs hüpfend vorzustellen hat.

<sup>11</sup> Horaz, Ep. 1,10,24.

<sup>12</sup> Vgl. Wander, S. 26011 (vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1598).

<sup>13</sup> Wander, S. 28320 (vgl. Bd. 3, S. 80).

<sup>14</sup> Wander, S. 23726 (vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1233), bietet die Variante *Wer nicht setzt, kann nicht gewinnen*.

<sup>15</sup> Das vermeintliche griechische Sprichwort ist eigentlich ein Hesiod-Zitat ('Werke und Tage', 289f. [im Sinne von: Vor die Tugend haben dir die Götter den Schweiß gesetzt]), das mehrfach in der griechischen Literatur ohne Nennung des Autors zitiert wird (vgl. Platon Protagoras 340d; Politeia 364d; Nomoi 718e), sodaß es wohl als Sprichwort angesehen werden kann. Insofern gleicht es Schillers 'Axt im Haus ...', auch wenn Wander die Wendung als Übernahme eines Sprichworts deklariert, für das er in den gängigen Sprichwortsammlungen keine Parallele nachweisen kann (Wander, S. 3402; vgl. Bd. 5, S. 881, Nr. 36).

<sup>16</sup> Wander, S. 25109 (vgl. Bd. 2, S. 170), zitiert die Variante: *Multi Thyrsigeri, pauci Bacchi* (mit Verweis auf Erasmus).

<sup>17</sup> Wander, S. 26020 (vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1780), mit Verweis auf Franck, Tappius und Petri.

<sup>18</sup> Vgl. Der Kleine Pauly, Bd. 2, S. 55.

<sup>19</sup> Zur Differenzierung der Embleme nach verschiedenen Typen vgl. Dietmar Peil: Emblem Types in Gabriel Rollenhagen's *Nucleus Emblematicus*. In: *Emblematica* 6 (1992), S. 255-282. Das Exempel-Emblem ist seltener anzutreffen als das hermeneutische und das allegorisierende Emblem.

<sup>20</sup> Vergleichbar ist die Variante: *Wer nicht fällt, bedarf keines Aufstehens* (Wander, S. 10357; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 923).

<sup>21</sup> Wander, S. 10353; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 922.

<sup>22</sup> Wander, S. 10351; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 922.

<sup>23</sup> Der lateinische Kommentar bekräftigt die Deutung mit dem Sprichwort *Qui nunquam male, nunquam bene* und zitiert Luc. 5,31f. und Hieronymus.

<sup>24</sup> Wander, S. 48390, vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1367.

<sup>25</sup> Wander, S. 52269, vgl. Bd. 5, S. 97.

<sup>26</sup> Vgl. dazu den lat. Kommentar.

<sup>27</sup> Im deutschen Kommentar wird die Bedeutung des Sprichworts stärker verallgemeinert.

<sup>28</sup> Wander bietet als passende Variante: *Der Weise wird durch fremden Schaden klug* (S. 52472; vgl. Bd. 5, S. 134).

<sup>29</sup> Wander, S. 16052 (vgl. Bd. 2, S. 45), bietet das Sprichwort mit Berufung auf Henisch und Petri (*Gott sorget für die seinen*), scheint aber nicht die Nähe zu 1. Petr. 5,7 bemerkt zu haben.

<sup>30</sup> Jacobus Typotius: *Symbola divina et humana*. T. 1-3, Prag 1601-1603, Nachdr. Graz 1972, hier T. 2, S. 32 (Abb.) u. 34 (Kommentar).

<sup>31</sup> Zu Theognis vgl. Der kleine Pauly, Bd. 5, S. 706f.

<sup>32</sup> Stefan Merkle verweist auf Parallelen bei Gregor von Nazianz (Orat. 39,14) und dem byzantinischen Parömiographen Michael Apostolios (*Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum* 14,94).

<sup>33</sup> Vgl. Wander, S. 3735 (vgl. Bd. 1, S. 240, \*95): *Ohne Bart die Alten lehren*.

<sup>34</sup> Stefan Merkle verweist auf u. a. auf Plutarch (*De Pythiae oraculis* 395d) und Gellius (*Noctes Atticae* 1.3.19).

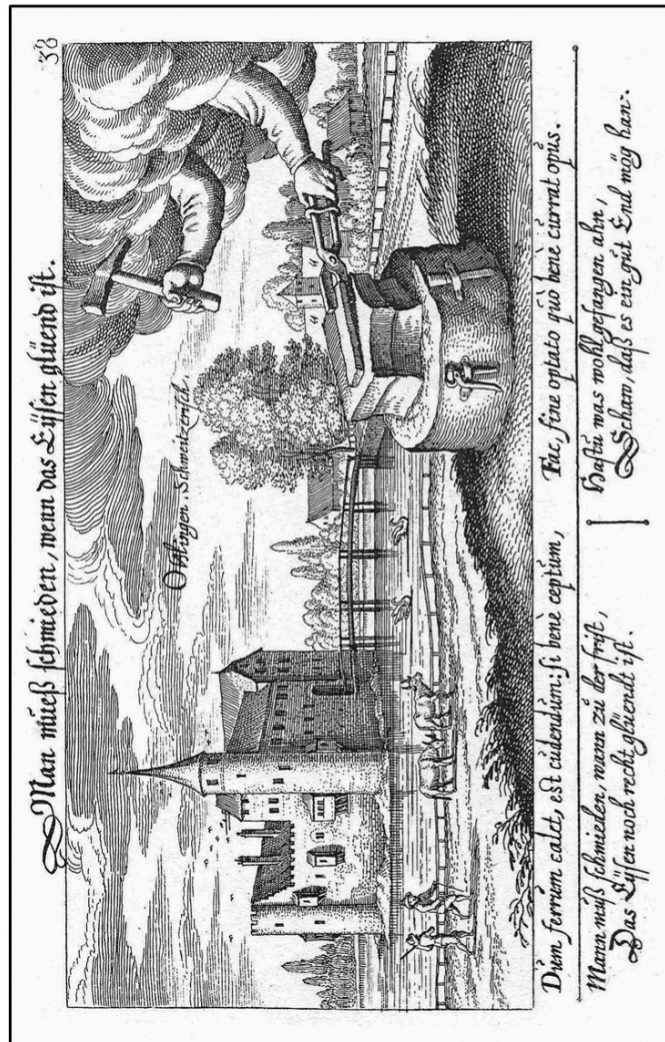


Abb. 1 Emblem Nr. 38

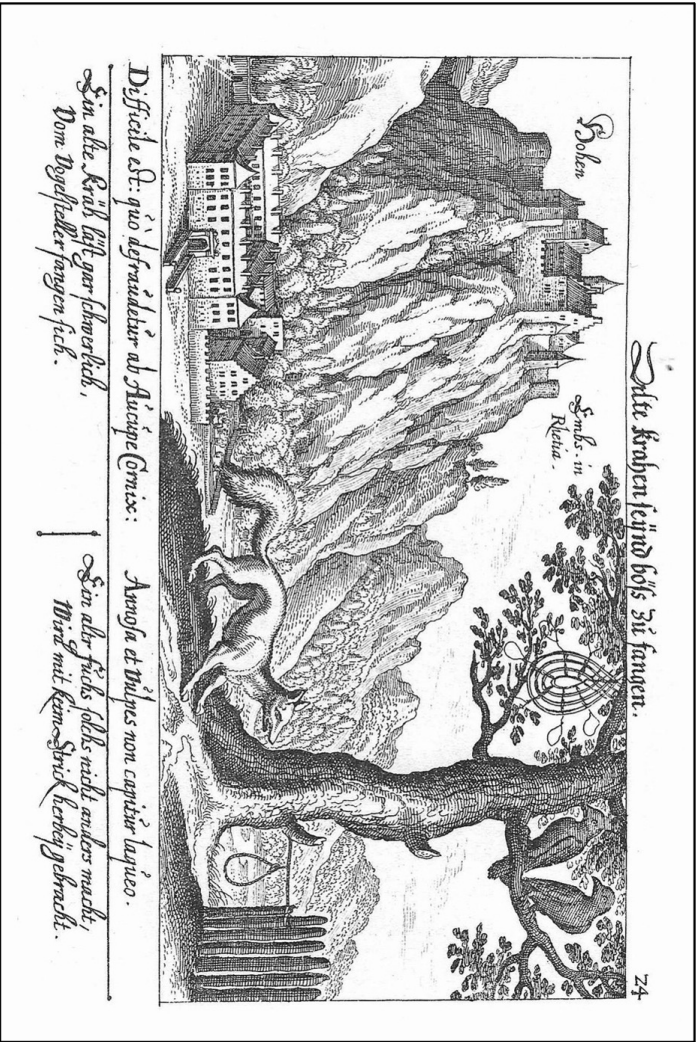


Abb. 2 Emblem Nr. 24

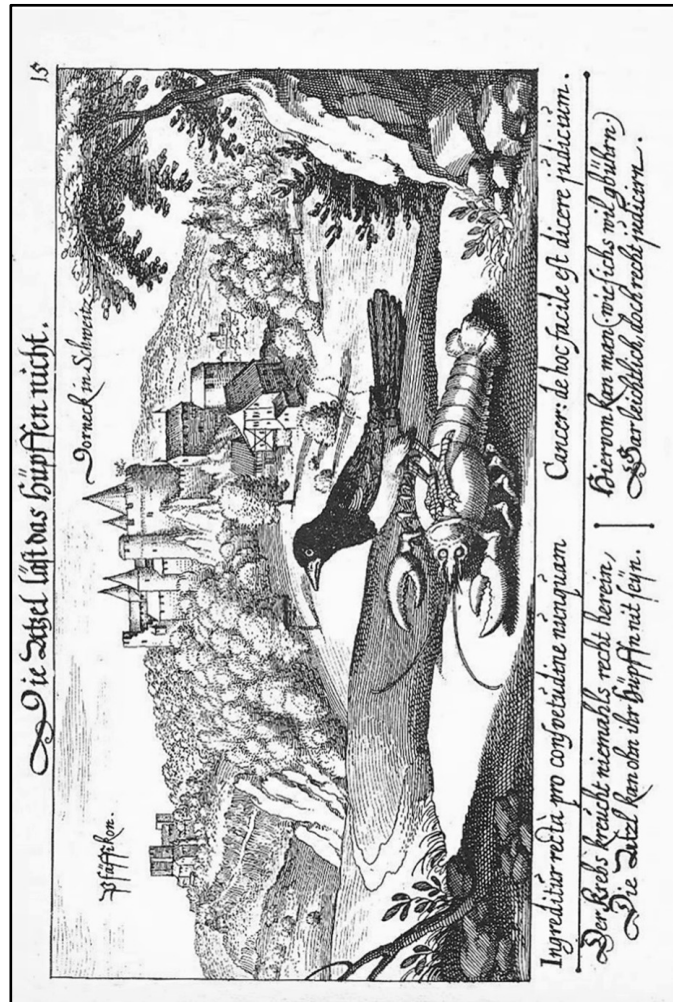


Abb. 3 Emblem Nr. 15



Abb. 4 Emblem Nr. 11

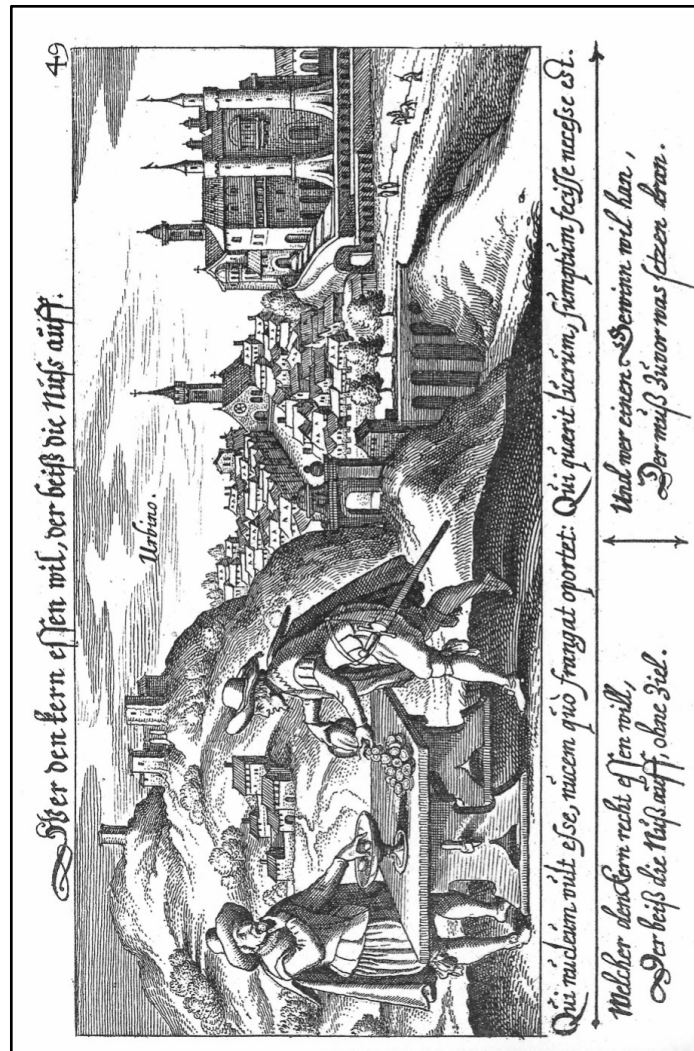


Abb. 5 Emblem Nr. 49



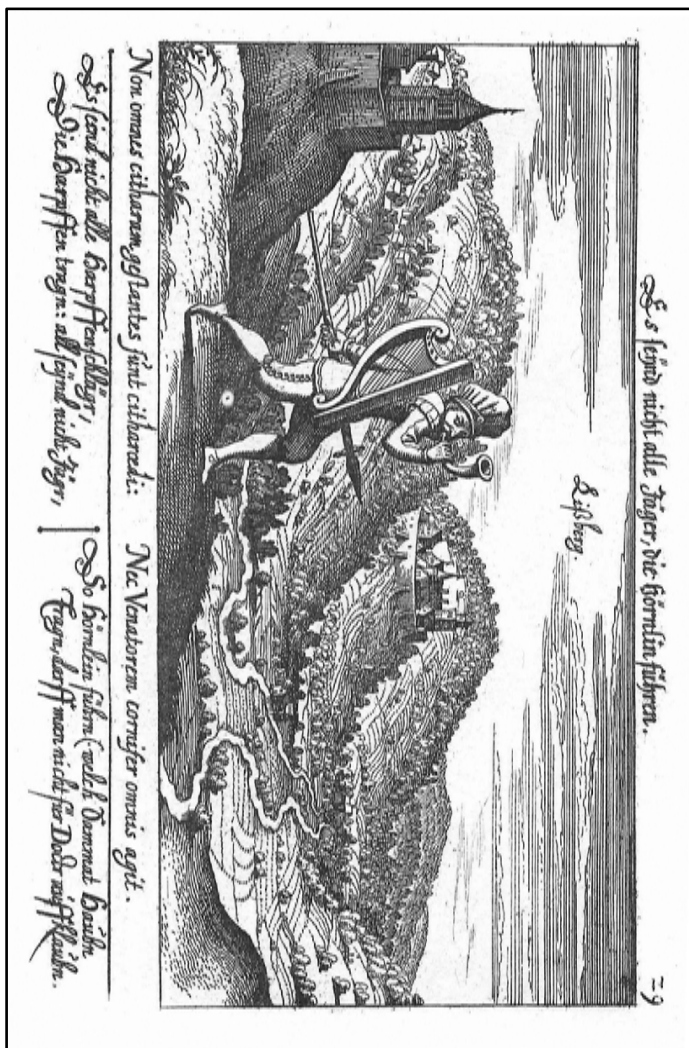


Abb. 6 Emblem Nr. 29

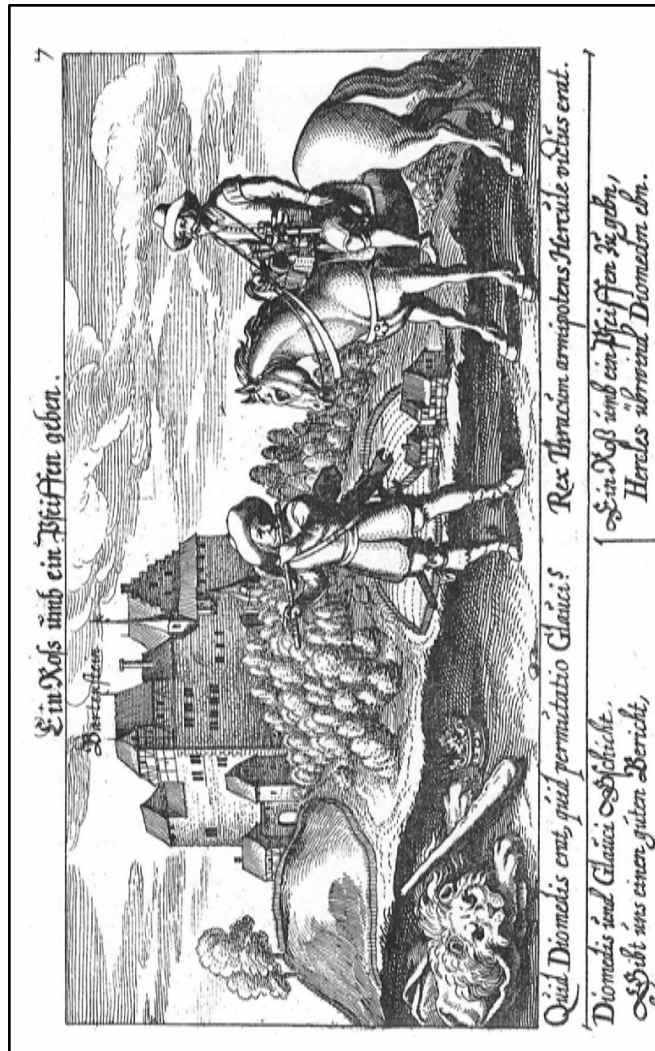


Abb. 7 Emblem Nr. 7

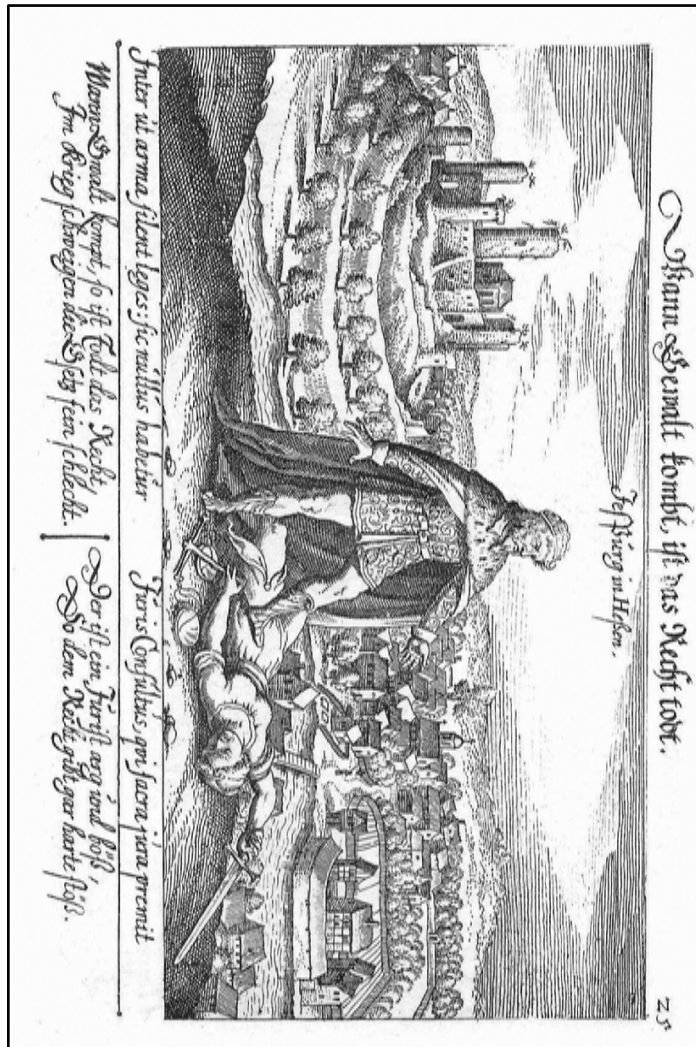


Abb. 8 Emblem Nr. 25

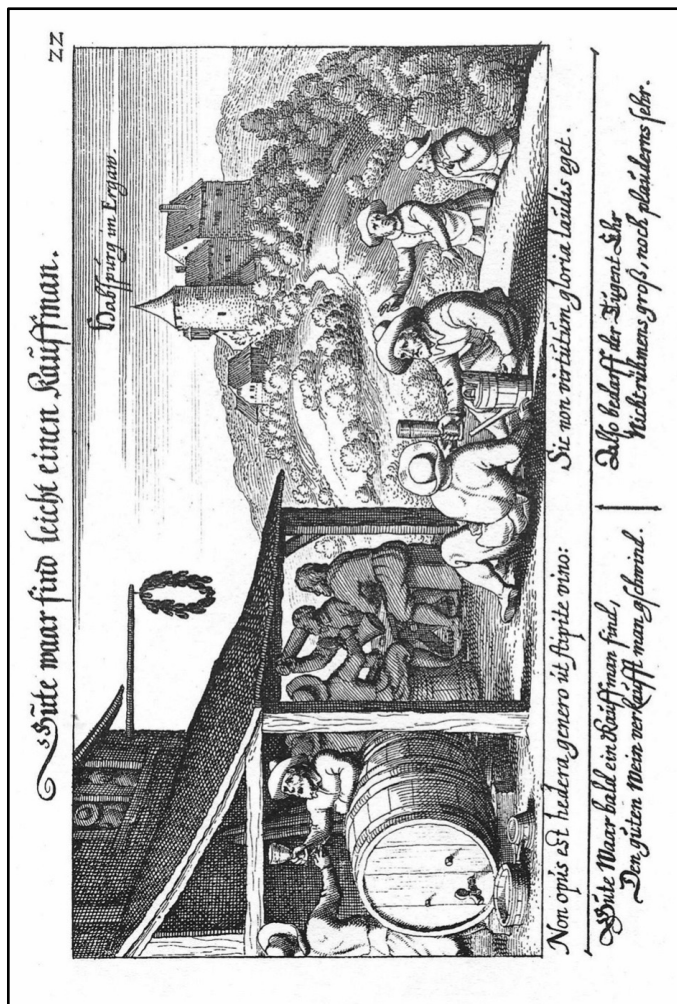
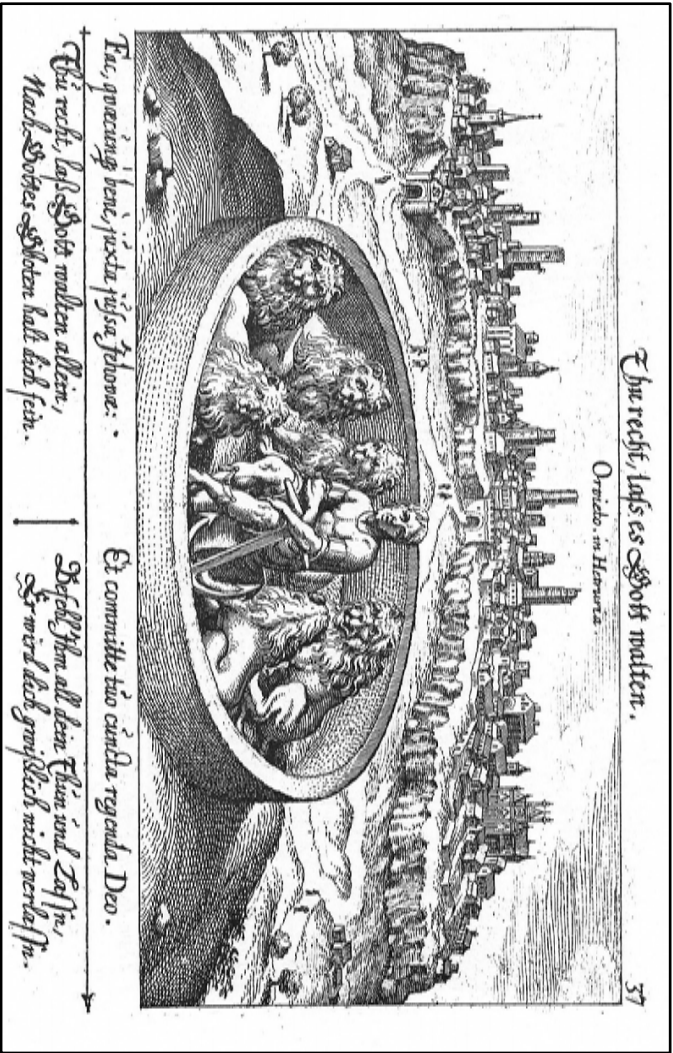


Abb. 9 Emblem Nr. 22



Fac, quæcumque bene, iuxta iugis, felix eras:  
Ei recte, laus, sibi nullatenus aliena,  
Nec sibi, nec sibi non habet seipsum.

Ei committit tuo cuncta regenda Deo.  
Bis seipsum ad deum, tuum iugis, dactylum,  
Et non dactylum, quod non dactylum.

Abb. 10 Emblem Nr. 37

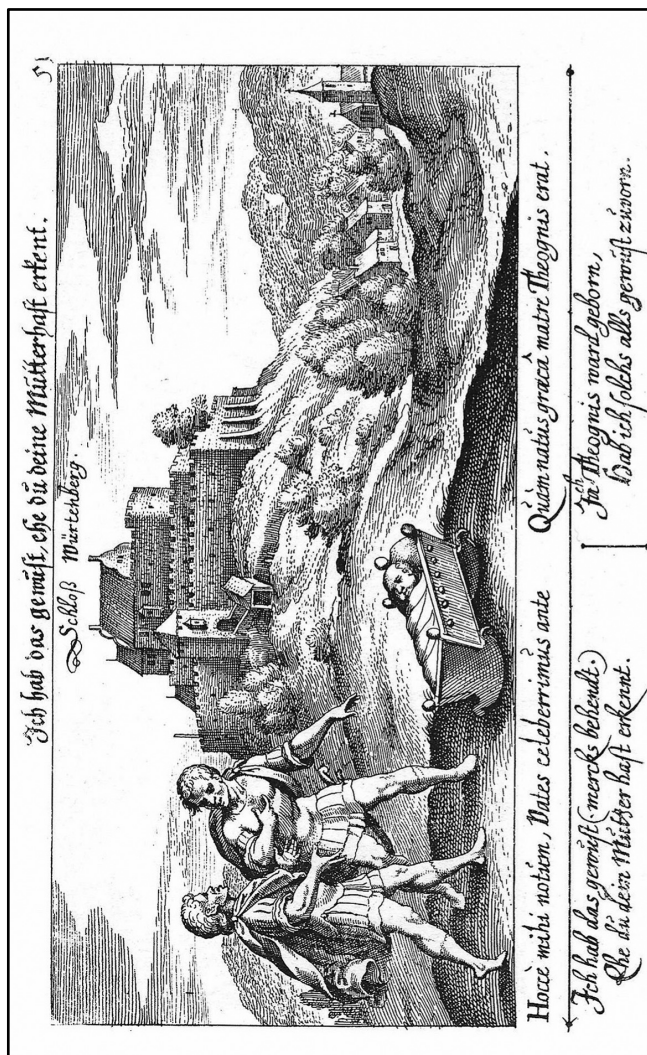


Abb. 11 Emblem Nr. 51

### Anhang

Im Folgenden sollen alle Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten erfaßt werden, die im *Thesaurus Philo-Politicus*, Band 1, Teil 4, enthalten sind. Die Einträge orientieren sich an der Abfolge der Orte, deren Schreibweise aus dem Nachdruck, Unterschneidheim 1979, Band 2, S. 1\*- 32\*, übernommen wird.

Die einzelnen Einträge berücksichtigen zuerst die Motti (M:), dann die subscriptiones (S:) und schließlich den Kommentar (K:), wobei den lateinischen Versionen Priorität eingeräumt wird. Sprichwörter, die in einem Emblem wiederholt auftauchen, werden nur einmal berücksichtigt. Der deutsche Text der Motti wird in der Form geboten, wie er als Überschrift im Kommentar erscheint. Gelegentlich gibt es zwischen dem Motto im Emblem und der Überschrift zum Kommentar Abweichungen.

Ein Sprichwort aus dem *Thesaurus Philo-Politicus* gilt dann als nachgewiesen (und wird durch Fettdruck markiert), wenn es in Wanders Sprichwörter-Lexikon in ähnlicher Form verzeichnet ist. Mehrfacheinträge bei Wander werden nicht berücksichtigt. Die Seitennachweise stützen sich auf die Edition Digitale Bibliothek Band 62: Wander: Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon; zusätzlich wird auch auf die Buchausgabe verwiesen.

#### 1. Ambras (Tirol)

M: **Similis simili gaudet.**

Wander, S. 15355; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1713.

M: **Gleich vnd gleich gesellet sich gern.**

Wander, S. 15359; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1715.

S: **Noscitur ex socio, quod non cognoscitur ex te.**

Wander, S. 30320 (Noscitur ex socio, qui non cognoscitur ex se); vgl. Bd. 3, S. 436.

K: **pares cum paribus facillime congregantur.**

Wander, S. 15359; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1714.

K: **Fuchsschwäntzer**

Wander, S. 12489 (Er ist ein Fuchsschwänzer); vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1261.

#### 2. Angenstein (Kanton Bern)

M: **Malum consilium consultori pessimum.**

Wander, S. 49293; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1487.

M: **Vntrew trifft jhren eignen herrn.**

Wander, S. 49290; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1486.

K: **Fodiens alteri foveam ipse labitur in eam.**

Wander, S. 16740 (nur Varianten wie z. B. Effodit foveam vir iniquus, incidet illam); vgl. Bd. 2, S. 153.

K: **in eine Gruben fällt / die er einem andern gegraben hat**

Wander, S. 16738 (Wer einem andern eine Grube grebt, der felt selbst hinein); vgl. Bd. 2, S. 153.

3. Assenheim (Hessen)

M: Quod non sentitur, non dolet.

M: **Was man nit weiß / thut nit weh**

Wander, S. 53397 (Was einer nit weyss, das thut jm nit wee); vgl. Bd. 5, S. 297.

4. Bacharach (Rheinland-Pfalz)

M: Gaudium sine libertate nullum.

M: Wo kein freyheit / ist kein Freud.

S: **Luscinia in cava bene non decanta**

Wander, S. 33068 (In cavea minus bene canit luscinia); vgl. Bd. 3, S. 850

S: **Die Nachtigal singt nicht allzeit Jm Vogelbauer wohl und schön**

Wander, S. 33068 (Die Nachtigall singt im Käfig nie so schön als im Freien); vgl. Bd. 3, S. 850.

5. Baia (Italien)

M: **Male parta male dilabuntur.**

Wander, S. 15026; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1663.

M: **Wie gewonnen / so zerrunnen**

Wander, S. 15023; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1662.

6. Bamberg

M: Quandoque mali patris bona soboles.

M: **Es kan auch ein böser Vatter, ein frommes Kind haben.**

Wander, S. 49453 (Böser Vater hat auch wol einen frommen Sohn); vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1504.

S: **Atque vepres inter nascuntur tempore Veris Flores**

Wander, S. 8264 (Rosa etiam inter vepres); vgl. Bd. 1, S. 677.

S: **man sieht ja die Rosen schön Jm Frühling unter Dornen stehn**

Wander, S. 8264 (Auch unter Dornen wachsen Rosen); vgl. Bd. 1, S. 677.



## 7. Partenstein (Bayern)

M: Equum pro vtriculo.

M: **Ein Roß umb ein pfeiffen geben.**

Wander, S. 38851; vgl. Bd. 3, S. 1737.

S: **Quid Diomedis erat, quid permutatio Glauci?**

Wander, S. 38852 (Diomedis et Glauci permutatio); vgl. Bd. 3, S. 1737.

## 8. Bottmingen (Kanton Baselland)

M: Praestat iniuria affici quam afficere.

Wander, S. 4770; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 333 (Melius est injuriam ferre, quam inferre).

Wander, S. 49161; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1470 (Accipere quam facere praestat injuriam).

M: **Besser ist vnrecht leyden / als vnrecht thun.**

Wander, S. 4770; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 333.

## 9. Birseck (Kanton Baselland)

M: **Occasio facit fures.**

Wander, S. 14128; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1529 (Occasio facit furem).

M: Gelegenheit stiftt viel vbels.

Wander, S. 14126; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1529 (Gelegenheit macht Diebe).

## 10. Kandia (Insel Kreta)

M: Qui tarde movet, etiam promovet.

M: **Gemach kompt man auch weit.**

Wander, S. 14203; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1542.

S; **Festina lente**S: **eyll mit weill**

Wander, S. 9201; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 777.

## 11. Klus (Kanton Solothurn)

M: **Parvarum avium exigui nidi.**

Wander, S. 50519; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 1659 (Exiguum nidum conquirat parva volucris).

M: **Ein kleiner Vogel / ein kleines Nest.**

Wander, S. 50519; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 1659 (Kleine vögel bedürffen kleine nester)

S: Im kleinen Cörpr bißweilen Man Viel herrlichr Tugent finden kann.

Wander, S. 28320; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 80 (Kleine Leut haben auch Hertz vnd Verstand).

## 12. Komorn (Ungarn)

M: Vnius fortuna alterius infortunium.

M: **Eines Glück ist des andern Unglück**

Wander, S. 15514; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1742.

S: Hora bona est homini nullo (Proverbia dicunt)

## 13. Kronborg (Dänemark)

M: Tergit os, sic reddit gratiam.

M: **Er wüsch das Maul vnnd geht darvon.**

Wander, S. 30833; vgl. Bd. 3, S. 513.

## 14. Kransberg (Hessen)

M: Stultorum vita optima.

M: **Die Narren haben das beste Leben.**

Wander, S. 33286; vgl. Bd. 3, S. 887.

## 15. Dorneck (Kanton Baselland)

M: **Pica saltare non desinet.**

Wander, S. 2669; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 158 (Pica suos saltus dissimulare nequit).

M: **Die Atzel laßt das hupffen nicht.**

Wander, S. 9513; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 809 (Die Elster läßt ihr Hüpfen nicht).

S: **Der Krebs kreucht niemals recht herein**

Wander, S. 26011; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1598 (Der Krebs ist nimmer tüchtig, zu gehen recht und richtig).

K: **jeder Vogel seinen Gesang nicht lassen kann**

Wander, S. 26660; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1698 (Der Kukuk behält seinen Gesang, die Glocke ihren Klang, der Krebs seinen Gang, Narr bleibt Narr sein Lebenlang).

K: **unmöglich / dass Arth von Arth lassen könne**

Wander, S. 2563; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 148 (Art lässt nicht von Art).

## 16. Eichendorf (Hessen)

M: Caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.

M: **Es flucht ein Gans vbers Meer vnd kompt ein Gans wieder.**

Wander, S. 12930; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1, S. 1328 ((Ein Gans flucht vber meer, ein ganss herwidder).

K: **Ein Gickgack flucht ubers Meer und kompt ein Ganß wieder**

Wander, S. 12932; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1328 (Eine Gans ist geflogen aus, ein Gickgack kommt wieder nach Haus).

17. Falkenstein (Kanton Solothurn)

M: **Quisque suae fortunae faber.**

Wander, S. 15563; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1754 (Fabrum quemque esse fortunae ajunt).

M: **Darnach einer thut / darnach hat er Glück.**

Wander, S. 15520; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1743.

18. Farnsberg (Kanton Baselland)

M: **Nocumenta documenta.**

Wander, S. 50062; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 1587 (Nocumenta sunt documenta).

M: **Was versehrt das lehrt.**

Wander, S. 50062; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 1587.

K: wiewol der liebe Gott die seinen züchtige

Wander, S. 16182; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 1587 (Wen Gott liebhat, den züchtigt er).

K: **vnder der Ruthen halte**

Wander, S. 39199; vgl. Bd. 3, S. 1782 (Einen unter der Ruthe führen).

19. Fürstenstein (Hessen)

M: Irrisor deniquae sit fabula.

M: Spöttisch seyn wir, spöttisch gehts vns.

20. Freudenberg (Baden)

M: Praestat reuerti quam semper errare.

M: **Es ist besser vmbkehren / als stets jrrr gehen.**

Wander, S. 48770; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1415 (Es ist besser vmbkeren, dan vnrecht lauffen).

21. Granada (Spanien)

M: Iracundia seipsam laedens.

M: **Boßheit thut jhr selbst den grösten Schaden.**

Wander, S. 5905; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 441.

22. Habsburg (Kanton Aargau)

M: **Bona merx facile emptorem reperit.**

Wander, S. 50886; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 1713 (Merce proba emptor adest).

M: **Gute waar find leicht einen kauffman.**

Wander, S. S. 50887; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 1713.

S: Den guten Wein verkaufft man gschwind.

**K: nicht nöthig / dass man einen guten Wein ein zeichen herauß strecke**

Wander, S. 52269; vgl. Bd. 5, S. 97 (Guter wein darff keins ausgesteckten reyffs).

**K: das Werck lobet den Meister**

Wander, S. 52791; vgl. Bd. 5, S. 196.

23. Heidelberg (Schloß)

M: Nulla calamitas sola.

**M: Kein vnglück kompt allein.**

Wander, S. 49007; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1442 (Ein Unglück kommt selten allein).

24. Hohenems (Vorarlberg)

M: Cornix anus haud facile capitur.

**M: Alte Krähen seynd böß zufangen.**

Wander, S. 25781; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1562.

**S: Annosa et vulpes non capitur laqueo.**

Wander, S. 25782; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1562 (Annosa vulpes non capitur laqueo).

S: Ein altr Fuchs solchs nicht anders macht, Wird mit keim Strick herbey gebracht.

Wander, S. 12378; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1240 (Alt fuchs sindt böss zu betriegen).

25. Jesberg (Hessen)

M: Ius vi opprimitur.

**M: Wann Gewalt kompt / ist das Recht Todt.**

Wander, S. 14937; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1648.

S: Im Krieg schweigen die Gsetz fein schlecht

**K: mit Füßen treten**

Wander, S. 12473; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1303.

26. Inzlingen (Südbaden)

M: Omne occultum reuelabitur.

**M: Es ist nichts so klein gesponnen / es kompt an die Sonnen.**

Wander, S. 44432; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 718.

**S: Was unter dem Schnee liegt verborgen, Jst er zergangn, man sights, ohn sorgn**

Wander, S. 43831; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 620 (Wenn die Sonne den Schnee weggleckt, so blickt hervor, was er bedeckt).

27. Laupen (Kanton Bern)

M: **Lupus in fabula.**

Wander, S. 53806; vgl. Bd. 5, S. 379.

M: Wann man des Wolffs gedenckt / so ist er da.

Wander, S. 53775; vgl. Bd. 5, S. 371 (Wann man den wolff nennt, so kompt er gerennt).

28. Loreto (Italien)

M: **(fehlt).**

M: **Wie Gott wil / so ist mein Ziel.**

Wander, S. 16249; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 95.

29. Lissberg (Hessen)

M: **Multi Thyasigeri, pauci Baubi.**

Wander, S. 8148; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1780 (Multi Thyrsigeri, pauci Bacchi).

M: **Es seynd nit alle Jäger / die Hörnlin führen**

Wander, S. 22030; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 981.

S: **Non omnes citharam gestantes sunt citharoedi**

Wander, S. 8148; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 669 (Non omnes qui habent citharam, sunt citharoedi).

S: **Es seynd nicht alle Harpffenschläger, Die Harpffen tragn**

Wander, S. 55006; vgl. Bd. 5, S. 594 (Nicht jeder, der eine Zither trägt, versteht sie zu spielen).

S: **welch Sammat Haubn Tragn, darff man nicht für Doctr auffklaubn.**

Wander, S. 8148; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 668 (Es seind nicht alle doctoren, die rote paret „, aufftragen).

K: **Non omnes sunt Philosophi, qui pallium, baculum & feram ferunt, prolixamque barbam mulcent.**

Wander, S. 36175; vgl. Bd. 3, S. 1341 (Es sind nicht alles Philosophen, die lange Bärte tragen).

K: **... non omnes venatores, qui cornibus citantur ...**

Wander, S. 22027; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 981f. (Nr. 44: Es seynd nit alle Jeger, die krumme Hörnlein führen; Nr. 47: Es sind nit alle jäger, die hörnlein füren).

K: **... non omnes esse coquos, qui longos cultros ferant ...**

Wander, S. 25108; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1446 (Es seind nicht alle köche, die lange messer tragen).

## 30. Loewenstein (Provinz Geldern)

M: *Audentes fortuna iuvat.*

M: Hilff dir / so hilfft dir Gott auch. (korr.)

Wander, S. 18873; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 489 (Hülff dir selbst, so hülfft dir Gott).

## 31. Manderscheid (Rheinland-Pfalz)

M: **Durum necessitatis telum.**

Wander, S. 32672; vgl. Bd. 3, S. 789.

M: **Muß / ein bitters kraut**

Wander, S. 32671; vgl. Bd. 3, S. 789.

## 32. Miltenberg (Bayern)

M: **Optimum fames condimentum**

Wander, S. 21560; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 909.

M: **Der Hunger ist ein guter Koch.**

Wander, S. 21558; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 909

## 33. Münchenstein (Kanton Baselland)

M: *Ludendo citius pauper quam dives evaseris.*M: **Es spielen sich eh zehen arm / als einer reich.**

Wander, S. 44347; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 705.

## 34. Ulrichstein-Mulstein (Hessen)

M: *Qui cadit ab omnibus proteritur.*M: **Wer darnider liegt / vber den laufft jederman.**

Wander, S. 49220; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1478 (Wer vnten ligt, auff dem will jederman sitzen [oder: über den will jedermann laufen]).

S: **Qvivis ligna secat qvoque colligit illa, ruente arbore**

Wander, S. 4089; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 279 (Arbore dejecta quivis colligit).

S: **wann der Baum auch liegt darniedr, Als dann will Holtz samlen ein iedr**

Wander, S. 4096; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 281 (Wenn der Baum am Boden liegt, will jeder Holz auflesen).

## 35. Neuhäusel (Slowakei)

M: *In Polylogia mendacium.*M: **Wer viel schwätzt / leugt auch viel.**

Wander, S. 42609; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 429.

36. Novigrad (Kroatien)

M: *Sibi soli sapit.*

M: Er ist ein Mensch für sich.

37. Orvieto (Italien)

M: **Hic murus Aheneus esto.**

Wander, S. 15060; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1669.

M: **Thu recht / laß es Gott walten.**

Wander, S. 12271; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1222.

K: Wander, S. 16052 (vgl. Bd. 2, S. 45), (Gott sorget für die seinen).

38. Ottingen (Südbaden)

M: *Occasione vtendum.*

M: **Man muß schmiden / wenn das eysen glüend ist.**

Wander, S. 9440; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 801 (Man soll dz eisen schmiden, dieweil es heiss ist).

S: **Dum ferrum calet, est cudendum**

Wander, S. 9440; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 801 (Ferrum cudendum est, dum candet in igne).

39. Parenzo (Italien)

M: *Iustitia postremo victrix.*

M: **Der recht thut wirts einmahl finden.**

Wander, S. 37664; vgl. Bd. 3, S. 1534

S: **tandem bona causa triumphat**

Wander, S. 43432; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 558.

40. Pozzuoli (Italien)

M: *In nihil agendo occuparis.*

M: **Du hast viel zu schaffen / aber wenig ist dir anbefohlen.**

Wander, S. 40111; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 74 (Du hast vil zu schaffen vnd wenig ist dir befolhen)..

41. Raab (Ungarn)

M: **Quod capita tot sententiae.**

Wander, S. 25472; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1512.

M: **Viel köpff / viel sinn.**

Wander, S. 25471; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1512.

S: *Qvot sunt mortales, sensus*

42. Rödelheim (Hessen)

M: *Quae periere non redeunt.*

M: **Nach verlornen Dingen / soll man nit viel Ringen.**

Wander, S. 7910; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 642.

K: **Fluit irrevocabile tempus.**

Wander, S. 54615; vgl. Bd. 5, S. 527 (Fugit irrevocabile tempus).

43. Röteln (Baden)

M: Qui non peccauit non luet.

M: Aber nit mit gessen / darff nit mit zalen.

Wander, S. S. 54544; vgl. Bd. 5, S. 515 (Wer nicht mit zecht, darf nicht mit zahlen).

S: **Qui non in culpa est, non est in tramite poena**

Wander, S. 54544; vgl. Bd. 5, S. 515 Qui non est in culpa [causa], non est in poena [culpa].

44. Saarburg (Rheinland-Pfalz)

M: Vicini te laudent.

M: **Laß dich deine Nachbawren loben.**

Vgl. Wander, S. 32894; vgl. Bd. 3, S. 824: Die Nachbawren sind jm fern, er muss sich selber loben.

S: **eigen Lob das stinckt gar sehr**

Wander, S. 9168; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 773.

45. Chenonceaux (Frankreich)

M: Mortuum leonem vellicas.

Vgl. Wander, S. 29233; Bd. 3, S. 239: Leonem mortuum et catuli mordent, calcat jacentem vulgus.

M: An einem Todt wollen alle zu Ritter werden.

46. Vienne (Frankreich)

M: Qui non labitur non surgit.

M: **Der nit gefallen darff nit auffstehn.**

Wander, S. 10357; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 923 (Wer nicht fällt, bedarf keines Aufstehens).

S: **Non ubi peccatum est, ibi non est poenitudo**

Wander, S. 10357; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 923 (Vbi non est peccatum, ibi nec poenitudo).

47. Fuelek (Ungarn)

M: **Sutor ne ultra crepidam.**

Wander, S. 42404; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 399 (Ne sutor supra drepidem).

M: Nimb dich nit mehr an als du kanst.



**S: Jedr Schuch ghört nicht an ieden Fuß**

Wander, S. 42108; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 351 (Für jeden Fuss passt nicht jeder Schuh).

48. Vincennes (Frankreich)

**M: Ne Hercules quidem contra duos.**

Wander, S. 21265; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 861 (Ne Hercules quidem adversus duos).

**M: Viel Hundt seind des Hasen todt.**

Wander, S. 21263; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 860.

49. Urbino (Italien)

**M: Nucleum esse qui vult, nucem frangat oportet.**

Wander, S. 23856; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1253.

**M: Wer den Kern essen will / beiß die Nuß auff.**

Wander, S. 23855; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1253.

**S: Qui quaerit lucrum, sumptum fecisse necesse est**

Wander, S. 23726; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1233 (Necesse est facere sumtum, qui quaerit lucrum).

**S: Und wer einen Gewinn wil han, Der muß zuuor was setzen dran.**

Wander, S. 15020; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 1662 (Wer etwas gewinnen will, der muss etwz daran setzen).

**K: Omnia dii laboribus vendunt generi mortalium**

Wander, S. 15936; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 16 (Dii bona laboribus vendunt).

**K. Per angusta ad augusta**

Wander, S. 9581; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 820.

50. Wallberg (Bayern)

M: Scelera gignunt supplicia.

**M: Weren keine Dieb / so wer kein Galgen.**

Wander, S. 7663; vgl. Bd. 1, S. 593.

51. Württemberg (bei Canstatt)

M: Haec ante te natum scivi.

M: Ich hab das gewust / ehe du deine Mutter hast kennet.

**S: Hocce mihi notum, Vates celeberrimus ante Quam natus graeca matre Theognis erat.****S: Jch hab das gewust (...) Ja eh Theognis ward geboren**

Wander, S. 53430; vgl. Bd. 5, S. 305 (Hoc noveram, antequam Theognis natus est).

K: Du belehrst (noch) vor dem Bart die Alten.

Wander, S. 3735; vgl. Bd. 1. S. 240 (Ohne Bart die Alten lehren).

52. Zwingen (Kanton Bern)

M: **Tollat te qui non novit.**

Wander, S. 23793; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1241 (Te qui non novit, tollat).

M: **Wer dich nit kennt / der kaufft dich.**

Wander, S. 23793; vgl. Bd. 2, S. 1241.

K: **Vide cui fidas.**

Wander, S. 47924; vgl. Bd. 4, S. 1289 (Fide, sed cui vide).

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RAYMOND M. SUMMERVILLE

“ETERNAL VIGILANCE IS THE PRICE OF LIBERTY”: THE  
PROVERBS AND PROVERBIAL SAYINGS OF IDA B.  
WELLS-BARNETT

**Abstract:** This essay seeks to recontextualize some of the proverbs and proverbial expressions that Ida B. Wells Barnett used throughout her life by examining biographies, personal diaries, articles and letters, and analytical texts about her life. Her proverbs and proverbial language come from a variety of different sources including literature, the Bible, and other famous leaders. She used proverbs in diverse and ingenious ways for a multitude of purposes. Her primary reasons for employing proverbial rhetoric was to persuade political leaders to put an end to lynch laws and mob violence in America. She also used them to bring attention to the temperance movement and to other causes that she cared deeply about. One overarching idea in this essay is that by understanding Wells-Barnett’s use of proverbs and proverbial language, one may also gain a more thorough understanding of various aspects of her worldview.

**Keywords:** African American, American, Anti-lynching movement, autobiography, Bible, clergy, civil rights, Civil War, clergy, folk, folklore, human rights, Jim Crow, paremiology, politics, proverbs, proverbial expressions, proverbial rhetoric, race, Reconstruction, slavery, suffragist, segregation, temperance.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett (July 16, 1862- March 25, 1931) is an important figure in American history for a number of reasons. She initiated and was at the forefront of the anti-lynching movement and women’s suffrage movements respectively. She also fought for the civil rights of all people. She is regarded as one of the first African-American female journalists and the very first black female investigative journalist. During the course of her life she played many different roles, she was affectionately known as “Joan of Arc,” “the mother of the club movement,” and also “the princess of the black press.” Wells displays what historian Patricia A. Schechter identifies as *visionary pragmatism* which is “a distinctive blend of religious and political commitments involving

African American Christianity and a particular understanding of Reconstruction's unfinished business in the United States" (Schechter 2001: 9). She is also what historian Paula J. Giddings refers to as a "radical interracialist," or an African American woman who was "determined to enter the mainstream" (Terborg-Penn 1998: 119). In *A Red Record* (1895), her longest anti-lynching publication, Wells writes: "Virtue knows no color line, and the chivalry which depends upon complexion of skin and texture of hair can command no honest respect" (Harris 1991: 147; Bay and Gates 2014: 155). As a long-lasting testament to her radical interracialist ideals the proverb "Virtue knows no color line" would become one of her most well-known sayings (Harris 1991: 147; Bay and Gates 2014: 155). Wells embarked on fairly new territory when she became one of the first African-American women to run for public office when she unsuccessfully sought a senate seat in the state of Illinois the year before her death. However, the most significant and inspiring label that Wells wore proudly was given to her by her many detractors—that of "race agitator." In fact, at one point the Military Intelligence Division considered Wells to be "a far more dangerous agitator than Marcus Garvey" (Giddings 2008: 575). As a teen in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Wells was the first African-American woman to attempt to sue a railroad company, which even precedes the landmark railway car discrimination case, *Plessy vs. Versus Ferguson* (1892) (which resulted in the expansion of Jim Crow laws). Wells's case also precedes the successful campaigns against the racially bias employment practices of railroad companies led by Asa Phillip Randolph (1889-1979) throughout the mid and late twentieth century. Even though she was always willing to confront racism early in her life, Wells became a "race agitator" when her writings began to awaken America's conscience regarding lynching.

There is an old riddle that goes, "If a tree falls in the woods and no one is around to hear it fall, does it make a sound?" Wells would become that sound for countless numbers of black lynching victims throughout her lifetime—victims whose deaths would go unnoticed otherwise. During the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877), the decade following the Civil War (1861-1865), lynching became common practice in the South and continued to happen well into the twenty-first century. The Tuskegee Institute recorded nearly five thousand lynchings that took place between 1882 and 1968.

Lynching often involved the apprehension of unsuspecting victims and then hanging them from trees or light posts. Additionally, lynch mobs burned their victims alive and filled their lifeless bodies with bullets. Victims were also mutilated by incensed crowds and photos, and small pieces of their charred flesh, teeth, articles of clothing, etc. were often distributed as souvenirs. Some victims were lynched under the assumption that they had committed a criminal offense and the lynchings generally took place whether the offense was actually committed by an accused individual or not. The most popular excuses provided for lynching black victims was often the sexual assault or rape of white women and stealing, but victims were also murdered for standing up to their white employers, and crimes as petty as being “sassy” to whites. Investigations of these crimes generally ended with the superficial determination that the murder(s) took place “at the hands of parties that are unknown.” For over a century lynching was a wide-spread practice that usually went uncontested and lynch mobs were hardly ever brought to justice.

Ida B. Wells was one of the first to publicly contest this practice, and she began to do so after three of her closest friends, Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell, and Will Stewart, were lynched in 1892, all of whom were known to be successful, law-abiding, upstanding citizens. Devastated, angry, and heartbroken, Wells religiously and vigilantly began to use the black press to make the world aware of the deceptive and fraudulent nature of lynch law in the U.S. She went to physical locations where crimes took place and gathered specific details from eyewitnesses and others involved. In all of the articles and pamphlets that she would feverishly produce following her friends’ murders such as *Southern Horrors* (1892), *A Red Record* (1895), *Lynch Law in America* (1900), and many others, she questioned the validity of the practice of lynching, proving in many of the cases that victims were not guilty of any crime at all. In fact, most of the time, as in the case of her friends, the victims’ only crimes had been their very own success. For instance, Wells’s friends ran a successful grocery store in Memphis called The People’s Grocery Company, which began to infringe on the profits of a neighboring white-owned store. Furthermore, two of the three victims were postmasters, a government appointed position that was generally viewed as being reserved for whites only. Through her painstaking inves-

tigative work, journalistic talent, and public speaking engagements, she revealed repeatedly that racial hatred and jealousy were the underlying causes of most lynchings. By openly contesting the false accusation of rape that preceded most lynchings of black men, she helped to open America's eyes to the gendered politics of southern racism and ultimately motivated law makers to pass more anti-lynching legislation despite the fact that the actual enforcement of such legislation would take even longer to achieve. Wells devoted her entire life to advocating for black people and her wide-reaching social, cultural, and political influence is still felt today. Unfortunately, her work is overlooked and ignored, but she certainly deserves to be in the very same conversation as other American political heroes and pioneers of the Reconstruction and Civil Rights eras such as: Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), Asa Phillip Randolph (1889-1979), and Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) due to the immeasurable global impact that she had and continues to have, nearly a century after her death.

Wells made a conscious effort to incorporate traditional language in her work. By traditional, I am referring to her use of proverbs and proverbial language. Her subjects are very serious, and in turn, she uses adages and proverbial expressions to make very serious-minded observations. For instance, Wells grew very concerned when racial tensions began to escalate in Chicago in 1919. After witnessing the deaths of nearly three hundred African Americans in the East Saint Louis race riots of 1917, Wells begs the city of Chicago to intervene. When she and her delegates are turned away from the Mayor's office on two separate occasions, Wells sends an open letter to the *Chicago Tribune* editor dated June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1919. The letter is subsequently published on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1919 and it urges government officials to take action. She closes her letter by saying: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. And in all earnestness I implore Chicago to set the wheels of justice in motion before it is too late, and Chicago be disgraced by some of the bloody outrages that have disgraced East St. Louis" (Thompson 1990: 123; McMurtry 1998: 325). Nearly forty people would die in the Chicago race riots which began on July 27<sup>th</sup>, and lasted seven days, but had Mayor William Hale Thompson heeded Wells's bit of proverbial wisdom and "set the wheels of justice in motion," dozens of lives might have been saved in East St. Louis.

Wells also incorporates traditional language from some of America's most sacred and well-known texts in order to shed more light on the deadly southern rite of passage known as lynching. In doing so, she simultaneously emphasizes that the practice of lynching contradicts all of the values and principles on which the nation was founded. In a speech entitled "Lynch Law in All Its Phases" delivered at Tremont Temple in Boston on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1893 Wells incorporates sayings from the Declaration of Independence (1776), the Gettysburg Address (1863), and the Star Spangled Banner (1814). She says:

And yet, the observing and thoughtful must know that in one section, at least, of our common country, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, means a government by the mob; where the land of the free and home of the brave means a land of lawlessness, murder and outrage; and where liberty of speech means the license of might to destroy the business and drive from home those who exercise this privilege contrary to the will of the mob. Repeated attacks on the life, liberty and happiness of any citizen or class of citizens are attacks on distinctive American institutions... (Bay and Gates 2014: 77)

The first saying "A government of the people, by the people, and for the people" was popularized by way of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (Mieder 2005: 15-55). The second saying "land of the free and home of the brave" is from "The Star-Spangled Banner." Wells's reference to "life, liberty and happiness" alludes to the Declaration of Independence. All of these sayings are easily recognized by her audience as being derived from distinctly American texts. Wells employs this rhetorical strategy on a number of separate occasions throughout her career. In "Afro-Americans and Africa" (1892) Wells says: "In no other country but the vaunted 'land of the free and home of the brave' is a man despised because of his color. As Irish, Swede, Dutch, Italian and other foreigners find this 'sweet land of liberty,' the Afro-American finds it the land of oppression, outrage and persecution" (Bay and Gates 2014: 47). In "Our Country's Lynching Record" (1913) Wells writes:

Civilization cannot burn human beings alive or justify others who do so; neither can it refuse a trial by jury for black men accused of crime, without making a mockery of the respect for law which is the safeguard of the liberties of white men. The nation cannot profess Christianity, which makes the golden rule its foundation stone, and continue to deny equal opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to the black race. (Bay and Gates 2014: 287)

In “The East St. Louis Massacre: The Greatest Outrage of the Century” (1917) Wells states:

The race prejudice of the United States asks Americans of black skins to keep an inferior place and when the Negroes ask an equal opportunity for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, they are lynched, burned alive, disfranchised and massacred! Wherever a black man turns in this land of the free and home of the brave—in industry, in civic endeavor, in political councils in the ranks of Christians (?)—this hydra headed monster confronts him; dominates, oppresses and murders him! (Bay and Gates 2014: 311)

In “The Arkansas Race Riot” (1920) Wells writes about a group of black men sentenced to death for defending themselves from a vicious mob:

The other white man mentioned in the record, Clinton Lee, met his death next day while he and hundreds of other white men were chasing and murdering every Negro they could find, driving them from their homes and stalking them in the woods and fields as men hunt wild beasts. They were finishing up the job they began the night before. As a group of Negroes ran before the mob two shots were fired from a rifle one of them carried, and Clinton Lee fell dead. For his death five of the twelve men sentenced are awaiting death by electrocution. Yet no man in this ‘land of the free and home of the brave’ will say that a man is not justified in firing back on other men who are after him armed with shotguns to take his life! (Bay and Gates 2014: 318)



According to historian Angela D. Sims, statements like these that incorporate American proverbial rhetoric may serve two distinct purposes: “She wanted to promote a collective positive self-definition of African Americans in the public sphere and ‘at the same time arouse the conscience of the American people to a demand for justice to every citizen, and punishment by law for the lawless’” (quoted in Sims 2010: 41-42). Wolfgang Mieder asserts that American quotations that have become proverbial can easily serve as “guidepost for humankind “by reminding everyone that “we are tied together globally in a network of mutuality,” and this was certainly one of Wells’s intentions (Mieder 2019: 298).

It is well-known that proverbs and proverbial language are a defining feature in American and African-American political rhetoric. It is well-documented by paremiologist and folklorist Wolfgang Mieder who asserts that “...traditional proverbs are indeed a living part of all political discourse. They play a significant role in the speeches and writings of major politicians, who employ them both positively and negatively to reach their political goals” (Mieder 2019: 35). Mieder has written about the proverbs and proverbial sayings of famous political figures such as Douglass, “*No Struggle, No Progress: Frederick Douglass and His Proverbial Rhetoric for Civil Rights* (2009); Obama, *Yes We Can: Barack Obama’s Proverbial Rhetoric* (2009); King, “*Making A Way Out of No Way: Martin Luther King’s Sermonic Proverbial Rhetoric* (2010); Lewis, ““Keep Your Eyes on the Prize’: Congressman John Lewis’s Proverbial Odyssey for Civil Rights” (2014), and a number of others. Mieder’s scholarship illustrates that proverbs have and always will be an integral part of American history and the American political scene. Furthermore, Mieder’s work provides ample evidence that the study of proverbs and proverbial language may highlight essential aspects of leaders’ lives, such as ways that social and political injustices have influenced them. In many cases the proverbial utterances of leaders encapsulate their reactions to socio-political wrongs. Paremiological evidence demonstrates that many important politicians and leaders have benefited in a multitude of ways from the use of proverbs. Likewise, an examination of the works of Ida B. Wells’s illustrates that they were an important component of her communication style. She used them in her public speeches, private writings, correspondences, and in her many publications. Sometimes proverbs

and proverbial sayings were spoken or written in reference to her by others, and she was in turn, responsive to them. This illustrates that they were a popular and meaningful aspect of communication during her lifetime.

Proverbs may be defined as “concise traditional statements of apparent truths with currency among the folk” (Mieder 2004: 4). They generally originate from people who communicate an idea using a concise and memorable phrase. The phrase is then used by others which often results in variation. In addition to oral transmission, the process of dissemination is abetted by literature and other forms of media. Despite being recognized and understood by ordinary people or “the folk,” proverbs should not be regarded as absolute truths, but they are used precisely because they sound “true.” According to folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Neat symmetries and witty convergences of sound and meaning, tight formulations of logical relations, highly patterned repetitions, structural balance, and familiar metaphors encapsulate general principals and contribute to the feeling that anything that sounds so right must be true” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1981: 111-112). On the contrary it is widely accepted that proverbs such as “If the shoe fits, wear it,” and “Good fences make good neighbors,” etc. should be understood according to the context in which they are used. As Mieder emphasizes, “proverbs are apparent truths about experiences and each proverb does not have universal applicability. In special situations...any proverb will express some short wisdom of sorts that comments or reflects on a given situation, even though the truth of it could be put into question when looked at from a larger philosophical framework. Proverbs are context-bound, and so is their wisdom, no matter how minute that kernel of truth may be” (Mieder 2019: 267).

Wells may have acquired proverbs and proverbial expressions that she uses from a number of different sources. These sources may include but are not limited to: her family and friends, preachers, and political figures that she often listened to, and the vast amount of literature that she was exposed to as a young child and throughout her lifetime. There is also evidence that Wells may have been a folklorist at heart, habitually recording proverbs and proverbial sayings that she encountered as she travelled. In one of her diary entries, marked Thursday July 8<sup>th</sup> 1886, Wells writes, “Have been in the city four days and this is the first opportunity

I've had to record the sayings & doings of the people whom I've met and the impressions of the country I've received" (DeCosta-Willis 1995: 86). This was written when Wells was twenty-four years old as she was travelling to Topeka, Kansas with friends for a National Education Association conference. The city that she is actually referring to is Kansas City, Missouri where they stopped along the way. If it actually exists this document of "sayings and doings" has not yet been recovered by scholars, but if it is found, it could possibly reveal new or previously unrecorded proverbs while also shedding more light on the origins of some proverbs and sayings that are still in circulation.

Due to the fact that Wells did not leave behind a record of sayings, as she expressed interest in doing, one must rely on historical background information and her actual writings to contextualize the proverbs and proverbial expressions that she uses. Ida B. Wells was born enslaved in Holly Springs, Mississippi on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1862 to enslaved parents, James "Jim" Wells and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Warrenton, three years before the end of the Civil War and a mere three days before Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States, who would reveal his intentions to end slavery to a few select members of his cabinet. When Lincoln finally announced his Emancipation Proclamation on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ida B. Wells was two months old, but it would not go into effect until January 1, 1863 (Davidson 2007: 12-13). It was the Dred Scott decision of 1857 that ultimately determined, by way of the Supreme Court, that "the black man had no rights which the white man is bound to respect" (Davidson 2007: 15). This decision was not reversed until April 1866 when Congress passed the Civil Rights Act. It was followed by the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment in June 1868 which "put the guarantee of citizenship into the constitution and added the promise of due process of law" (Davidson 2007: 20). While African Americans were technically and legally free, they were reminded repeatedly that they were not full-fledged citizens. The enactment of Black Codes, vagrancy laws, and later Jim Crow laws would limit the freedoms and movements of African Americans for more than one-hundred years.

Ida's father, James "Jim" Wells, was born enslaved in 1840 in Tippah County, Mississippi in an area known as Hickory Flats. He was the son of a wealthy slave master, Morgan Wells, and an en-

slaved woman named Peggy, who arrived at the Morgan estate earlier that very same year. It was a very common and unquestioned practice during the Ante-Bellum era for slave owners to father children with their own slaves. Morgan Wells never had any children with his lawful wife, "Miss Polly," and possibly for this reason he may have placed a considerable amount of value on James. In the mid-nineteenth century cotton or "King Cotton" as it was sometimes called, was the primary cash crop in Mississippi, and for plantation owners, it made slave labor a necessity. Most slaves worked in the fields from "can see" to "can't see," and endured scorching heat and unbearable working conditions. Morgan made sure that his only child was educated and skilled in the trade of carpentry. James would remain a carpenter for twenty years. He worked seven years while still enslaved and then he worked another thirteen years as a carpenter after gaining emancipation (Sims 2010: 36). By being a skilled tradesman, James was afforded opportunities that most enslaved African Americans were not. The most important benefit of being a carpenter was being "hired out" to neighboring towns and cities, and thereby evading the dehumanizing treatment that often accompanied backbreaking field labor. At eighteen years of age, James was apprenticed to Spires Bolling in Holly Springs. In the Bolling household James Wells would meet his future wife Elizabeth "Lizzie" Warrenton (1844-1878) who was a very skilled cook. In the nineteenth century Holly Springs which was also known as "the City of Flowers," was a bustling township that was growing at an exponential rate. In 1840 the population of Holly Springs was 17,536 which included 8,260 slaves and 8 free African Americans. Twenty years later in 1860 the population grew to nearly 29,000 which included 1,295 slave owners who collectively owned 17,439 slaves. The free black population remained at eight during this two-decade time span and did not include James Wells. However, being skilled in a trade was the very next best thing to having freedom (McMurry 1998: 3-5).

Wells's mother, Elizabeth Wells did not enjoy any of the protection or comforts that often came along with being the offspring of a slave master. Elizabeth was one of ten children born to slaves in Virginia. She could easily remember being separated from her parents and two sisters at the auction block. Although she tried to relocate them years later, she was unsuccessful, and would never

see them again. According to family members, Elizabeth never forgot the many beatings that she endured. When Morgan Wells died, Miss Polly ordered Peggy to be stripped of her clothing and beaten severely, which was then carried out. This is something that Miss Polly knew that her husband Morgan would never allow if he were alive. Despite such extenuating circumstances, James and Elizabeth Wells married while both still in bondage. However, they would marry again, officially, shortly after being freed (McMurry 1998: 3-5). Growing up listening to her parents talk about their lives under bondage would provide young Ida with her first glimpse into the racialized and gendered politics of slavery which she would spend her entire life trying to change.

Ida B. Wells would inherit many values and beliefs from her parents. They instilled in her the importance of work ethic, family, and education. They also helped to shape her political and religious views. James, as a freedman, was what many at the time would call a "race man" meaning that he maintained an active civic life and was committed to procuring equal rights and political power for African Americans. He was a Freemason, also known as Masons, and he was also a member of a very secretive organization called the "4-L's" which stood for Lincoln's Legal Loyal League which started holding meetings at some point before the end of the Civil War. 4-L's was organized by people from Northern states that had relocated to Holly Springs. It was a private and guarded organization that incorporated an intricate system of "passwords, special knocks, and signs." There were branches of the 4-L's organization all over the South (Davidson 2007: 21). James Wells knew the significance of the ballot for black people and he stayed well informed about politics by having young Ida read the newspaper aloud to him. In fact, she would recount later in interviews that she was reading at such a young age that she could not remember ever being taught. It is unclear if her father James actually knew how to read himself, but the evidence certainly leans toward the affirmative. He made it known that the education of all African Americans was very important to him. It is also a cause that Ida would later champion herself. James was elected to the Board of Trustees at Shaw University in Holly Springs which was a new school for blacks which Ida would later attend for some time. The name was later changed to Rust College.

Elizabeth Wells also shared many of the same values as her husband. She taught Ida at a very young age how to prepare food, wash clothes, and clean house—essential skills that would make her more independent as a young woman. Many people believe that Ida learned and developed the strong work ethic that she would exhibit later in life from her parents. Much like her husband, Elizabeth Wells also valued learning. In the South, it was a misdemeanor or punishable offense to teach slaves how to read. Some slaves would learn by secretly watching their master's children as they were learning to read. This was a very risky practice that one must assume that Elizabeth was not willing to try. However, she longed for the opportunity and made it a priority to learn upon gaining her freedom. In fact, she accompanied her young daughter Ida to school until she had learned enough to read the Bible on her own. Elizabeth encouraged Ida to read everything that she could. In fact, in her autobiography Wells writes, "I used to sit before the blazing wood fire with a book in my lap during the long winter evenings and read by firelight. I had formed my ideals on the best of Dickens's stories, Louisa May Alcott's, Mrs. A.D.T. Whitney's, and Charlotte Brontë's books, and Oliver Optic's stories for boys" (Duster 1970: 21). Despite Wells's insatiable enthusiasm for literature, on Sundays Elizabeth would only allow the reading of the Bible, which Ida did read in its entirety. There is no doubting that Ida's parents were a strong influence on her, although she would benefit from having them for only sixteen years of her life. Both James and Elizabeth Wells would die within twenty-four hours of one another of yellow fever during the epidemic that hit Holly Springs, Mississippi in 1878. Ida would find out about this tragedy while away in Tippah county helping her grandmother Peggy in the cotton fields. Upon receiving the news of her parents' deaths, she returned home.

When she arrived, Ida found out that the Masons, who were some of her father's closest friends, intended to split her six siblings up in order to help ease Ida's financial burden, but she vehemently objected to this idea. Ida insisted that her parents would "turn over in their graves" if their family were to be separated. As an alternative solution, Ida requested that the Masons help her to find a teaching position, so that she could afford to take care of her siblings on her own. The Masons obliged and were able to make arrangements for Ida to teach at a small country school nearby for

a salary of twenty-five dollars a month. It was difficult for Wells, but her mother had taught her how to manage a household. She would also receive help from another friend of the family, Rachel Rather, who would look after the children during the week as Ida taught. Every Friday, Wells would return home, traveling six miles on the back of a mule in order to prepare the children's food and clothing for the week (McMurry 1998: 17). In 1880 the two boys were able to be apprenticed as carpenters requiring them to move and become more or less independent. After a few years Wells was invited along with her two younger sisters to move to Memphis to live with an aunt. Her disabled sister Eugenia, who was paralyzed from the waist down from spinal meningitis, was invited to live with another aunt who had a small farm nearby. In the year 1884, at the young age of nineteen, Wells was already becoming acclimated to life as an adult, and she was also adapting to life as a teacher. Wells enjoyed living in Memphis and had many friends. Living with her aunt in Memphis allowed her to maintain two teaching positions, one with Memphis city schools, and another in Woodstock. She would often make the two-hour commute by train (McMurry 1998: 17).

Wells did not particularly enjoy teaching, because schools for black children were often small and kept in very poor condition. Furthermore, classes were also overcrowded. She would sometimes teach as many as seventy students at a time. The terrible conditions would only contribute to the restlessness and unruly conduct of some of her pupils. Wells did not like this aspect of the job, but she continued to teach out of necessity. She had no way of knowing it at the time, but her true calling was journalism. She would make this discovery inadvertently after a life altering occurrence during one of her commutes to Woodstock.

In 1881, Tennessee passed new Jim Crow laws requiring railway companies to make black and white passengers travel in separate cars. The car for whites, also referred to as "first-class," or "the Ladies Coach" was upscale and comfortable while the car designated for black passengers could be considered a health hazard. The colored car was located directly behind the loud engine which would billow huge plumes of black smoke that easily reached passengers. It was often overcrowded and allowed drinking, smoking, and gambling. Furthermore, the loud and boisterous passengers would use the floor as opposed to the spittoons to dis-

card tobacco juice. Sometimes exceptions to the rule requiring segregation would be made. For instance, black midwives traveling with pregnant or nursing white women were allowed to stay in the Ladies Coach and black men were permitted if they were chaperoning a woman. Well-dressed African-American women were also at times permitted to stay in first-class as long as no white person objected to their presence.

On May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1884 Wells read quietly to herself as she travelled to Woodstock in the Ladies Coach. However, at some point during her trip she was interrupted by the conductor who informed her that she would have to move to the colored car. Wells objected and the conductor attempted to remove her by force. Wells reacted by sinking her teeth into his hand causing him to bleed. Realizing that he could not force her to move on his own, the conductor went to get two other workers to help him. This only made Wells even angrier. She braced herself by placing both of her hands and feet on the seat in front of her, forcing the workers to use all of their strength to pry each of her limbs loose one at a time, tearing off the sleeve of her jacket in the process. After the men removed her from her seat, she was left on the platform with her bags. Ironically, she still held on to her first-class ticket throughout the entire ordeal (Fadin 2000: 20-23; Davidson 2007: 64-75).

Wells, at twenty-one years of age, would decide to file a lawsuit against the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad company. On December 24<sup>th</sup> the circuit court judge, who was also a former Union soldier, ruled that the railway company acted unlawfully when they forced her to move. She was awarded five hundred dollars in damages. Unfortunately, having the satisfaction of knowing that she confronted racial prejudice and won would be her only reward. The railroad company unsuccessfully attempted to settle with Wells out of court for several hundred dollars and when Wells did not accept this offer, they decided to appeal the case in the Tennessee State Supreme Court. This time C&O won. The State Supreme Court determined that Wells was merely trying to harass the railroad company and ordered her to pay two hundred dollars in damages. She was crushed by this unfair decision, but it would ultimately propel her towards a life of activism (Fadin 2000: 34; Davidson 2007: 64-75).

Many texts that relate the life of Ida B. Wells mark this point in her life as a major turning point because it is when she became



devoted to confronting racial injustices. It is also when she started writing about it. Wells started to keep a journal in 1885, and also as a young adult, she edited and wrote for *The Evening Star* (which was the newspaper of the Lyceum, a popular literary club that she was a member of), and a black church weekly called the *Living Way* (Fradin 2000: 26-27). Due to the direct and unapologetic tone of her work, her keen eye for details, and her entertaining writing style, her work quickly became popular among the local black public. Subsequently, she would grow to become a prolific journalist, and examining some of the writings that she generated, one can clearly see that proverbs and proverbial language were always an important part of the way that she expressed her ideas. For instance, upon learning of the Tennessee State Supreme Court decision to rule in favor of the railway company, Wells writes in her diary the following:

I felt so disappointed, because I had hoped such great things from my suit for my people generally. I have firmly believed all along that the law was on our side and would, when we appealed to it, give us justice. I feel shorn of that belief and utterly discouraged, and just now if it were possible would gather my race in my arms and fly away with them. O God is there no redress, no peace, no justice in this land for us? Though hast always fought the battles of the weak & oppressed. Come to my aid at this moment & teach me what to do, for I am sorely, bitterly disappointed. Show us the way. (Fadin 2000: 34-35)

The important message and somber tone of this brief diary entry may easily represent the trajectory of her future writings. Wells frequently expressed the emotional pain that she felt in witnessing racial injustices, and she often incorporated figurative language in the process. For instance, she says that she trusted that the “law was on our side,” and because this time the justice system had failed her, as it did for so many other black people in the South, she wants to “gather the race in [her] arms and fly away” (Fadin 2000: 34-35). This is an appropriate metaphor that illustrates that she not only anticipated victory for herself, but for the entire race. It also foreshadows the many migrations that black people in Southern regions would embark on due to the increasingly hostile racial climate. For Wells they are only lines in her diary, but they

still show that she was thinking far ahead of her time, at least from an ideological perspective. More importantly, it illustrates that even as a young woman, she had a genuine desire to improve conditions for black people in the South.

Wells uses another proverbial expression in relation to this momentous event as she recalls it later in her life, and her use of a well-known proverbial expression may be indicative of the extent that she cared about the outcome. For instance, she says in her autobiography: "I had already secured my appointment as a teacher in Memphis before the railroad case was finally settled; so I had my salary to fall back on to help pay the cost against me. None of my people had ever seemed to feel that it was a race matter and that they should help me with the fight. So I trod the winepress alone" (Duster 1970: 21; McMurtry 1998: 30). The proverbial expression, "to trod the winepress alone" is an allusion to the Bible (KJV 63:3). The full verse reads: "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment" (KJV 63:3). In using the expression Wells is showing a number of emotions. On the one hand, she feels betrayed and abandoned because black people did not express any interest in her legal battles. On the other hand, Wells is expressing intense anger because many blacks believed that it was not a racial issue despite the prevalence of Jim Crow laws, and the fact that white presses continually portrayed her in a racist manner, referring to her as the "Darky Damsel" in headlines (Fradin 2000: 23; Davidson 2007: 73-75). In retrospect, Wells feels that the outcome would have been different if more black people had cared.

Proverbs and proverbial language are scattered throughout Wells's many writings, but no Wells biographer ever really says that she was known for this particular feature. However, the proverbs and sayings that she incorporates in her work are significant because much like her diary, they may provide us with a view of Wells from a different perspective. They may offer a glimpse into the way she thought, and they may also illustrate some of the many moral lessons that she has internalized and communicated throughout her lifetime. This essay is not a chronology of her life and writings, nor is it an attempt to document every single saying that Wells has ever spoken or written. It is instead a look at some

of the most important and recurring sayings and expressions that exist in her corpus of work and in the relatively small amount of scholarship that has been written about her life.

Proverbs and proverbial sayings that Wells uses come from a number of different places. On the one hand, Wells uses proverbs from the Bible, from all kinds of literature, and from famous political figures of her day such as Frederick Douglass, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln. On the other hand, some of the proverbs and proverbial expressions that she employs are cultural. They may illustrate some inherent or widely accepted "truth" without being attached to any one particular figure, and there may be a reason for this. In her later years Wells travelled profusely, both nationally and internationally, and while she may not have ever created her list of "Sayings and Doings" of the people that she came into contact with, incorporating proverbs into her work may have been her primary way of documenting these sayings without having to do so explicitly. She devoted nearly all of her time and energy to the anti-lynching crusade, African-American and women's suffrage, and other related causes. The untiring pace at which she worked more than likely did not leave much time or energy for much else. Nevertheless, this may be viewed as a positive because instead of static lists, readers instead see her using proverbs and proverbial expressions through her writings and correspondences for specific purposes and these purposes tend to be invariable and dynamic to convince her readers to think in particular ways that are associated with her causes and to express certain aspects of her worldview.

One of the first proverbs that she uses in support of her cause appears in the publication that launched her anti-lynching crusade, *Southern Horrors* (1892). Ida B. Wells wrote this pamphlet to denounce the murders of her best friends and the practice of lynching in general. Additionally, she sought to expose the wide-spread myth of violent black brutes who go around raping white women as an insidious form of propaganda that was generated to justify murdering and stealing from African Americans and to cover up consensual relationships between black men and white women. Furthermore, since the racial climate in Memphis was becoming increasingly hostile towards blacks, in *Southern Horrors* (1892) she also urges black Memphians to discontinue all patronage of white owned businesses and to migrate to northern towns and cit-

ies and to newly established territories in the West such as Oklahoma, which many black homesteaders were already taking advantage of. The proverb that she uses appears at the conclusion of the very last paragraph of the pamphlet, which reads, "Nothing is more definitely settled than he [the black man] must act for himself. I have shown how he may employ the boycott, emigration and the press, and I feel that by a combination of all these agencies can be effectually stamped out lynch law, that last relic of barbarism and slavery. 'The gods help those who help themselves'" (reprinted in Harris 1991: 45). The proverb "God helps those who help themselves" dates back to the early 15<sup>th</sup> century writings of Dutch Renaissance scholar Erasmus (Mieder, Kingsbury, and Harder 1991: 255; Speake 2015: 128) and is used by Wells here to convince a community of terrified African Americans in Memphis to be pro-active and to engage in activism. After the publication of *Southern Horrors*, six thousand African Americans heeded Wells's warning and left Memphis within two months, and those who stayed followed her suggestion to boycott so closely that many white owned businesses were forced to close down (Sterling 1988: 81). In fact, the owners of a newly established electric trolley system in Memphis assumed that blacks were simply afraid of the new form of transportation and pleaded with Wells to write an article stating that electric trolleys were not dangerous. In response, Wells told them that blacks did not fear electric trains, they only feared discrimination and racial violence, and she refused to redact her message. Wells was out of town travelling with friends when white papers began to reprint some of the explicit messages from her pamphlet. As a result, an angry mob destroyed her newspaper office, which was the office of *Free Speech*, where she was a writer, part-owner, and chief editor. They also published an explicit threat to lynch her and her colleague, J.L. Fleming, if they ever returned to Memphis. Despite her brush with death she moved to New York where she immediately began working in the same capacities for another popular black paper, *The New York Age*, which was owned and edited by T. Thomas Fortune (1856-1928).

Some other proverbs that Wells uses appear in *Mob Rule in New Orleans* (1900). Wells wrote this pamphlet in response to the lynching of Robert Charles, a thirty-four year old African American man, who was killed protecting his own life from police offic-

ers who brutally assaulted him. Wells writes that, "Charles had his first encounter with the police Monday night, in which he was shot in the street duel which was begun by the police officer after Officer Mora had beaten Charles three or four times over the head with his billy in an attempt to make an illegal arrest. In defending himself against the combined attack of two officers with a billy and their guns upon him, Charles shot officer Mora and escaped" (reprinted in Harris 1991: 302). Charles's troubles do not end here. In fact, the scenario only worsens as Wells continues: "Early Tuesday morning Charles was traced to Dryades street by officers who were instructed to kill him on sight. There again defending himself, he shot and killed two officers. This, of course, in the eyes of the American press, made him a desperado, make statements which will be interesting to examine" (reprinted in Harris 1991: 302). Wells's report does a lot to counteract the salacious claim that Charles was a blood thirsty and racist criminal who was simply looking to take his anger out on white officers. Calling him things such as "desperado," "daredevil," and "ravisher," a white newspaper even employs a proverb in an attempt to make it seem as if Charles was motivated to kill white officers by reading racist propaganda. Wells even includes an excerpt from the article in *Mob Rule*. It says: "...an examination of his personal effects revealed the mental state of the murderer and the rancor in his heart toward the Caucasian race. Never was the adage: 'A little learning is a dangerous thing,' better exemplified than in the case of the negro who shot to death the two officers'" (reprinted in Harris 1991: 303). The article then goes on to describe an individual who "burnt the midnight oil" reading back to Africa propaganda with hopes to "conquer the hated white race" (reprinted in Harris 1991: 303). Generally viewed as a positive statement, the proverb, "a little learning is a dangerous thing" (Mieder, Kingsbury, and Harder 1991: 367; Speake 2015: 186) is instead used here by the white press in a negative way, to imply that it is unsafe or risky for Charles to read certain material. This is a notion that hearkens back to the Ante-Bellum era when it was illegal to teach blacks to read. In the same pamphlet, in a section entitled *Died in Self-Defense*, Wells tries to counteract the dangerous public image of Robert Charles created by white presses. Wells instead portrays a hard working student that was not bent on racial hatred, but on bettering himself and conditions for black people: "He knew that

he was a student of a problem which required all the intelligence that a man could command, and he was burning his midnight oil gathering knowledge that he might better be able to come to an intelligent solution. To his aid and his study of this problem he sought the aid of a Christian newspaper, *The Voice of Missions*, the organ of the African Methodist Episcopal Church" (reprinted in Harris 1991: 310). Here Wells clarifies the misconception that Charles's reading materials indoctrinated racial hatred. Contrarily, she asserts that he only "burnt the proverbial midnight oil" reading Christian materials with the intent of gaining more knowledge about problems faced by black people and how to address these issues in moral ways. Three paragraphs later, Wells employs a proverb and some proverbial language to reemphasize this point: "If it is true that the workman is known by his tools, certainly no harm could ever come from the doctrines which were preached by Charles or the papers and pamphlets distributed by him" (reprinted in Harris 1991: 311). The proverb, "the workman is known by his tools" is a well-known saying, although it is not attributed to any single individual. Wells uses the proverb here to make the point that there is no evidence that Charles had any violent intentions based simply on the Christian reading materials that were found in his room. Wells continues: "Nothing ever written in the 'Voice of Missions,' and nothing ever published in the pamphlets above alluded to in the remotest way suggest that a peaceable man should turn lawbreaker, or that any man should dye his hands in his brother's blood" (reprinted in Harris 1991: 311). The proverbial language that appears at the end of this statement may be a subtle allusion to Shakespeare's seventeenth century tragedy, *Macbeth* (1603). As a young child Wells read all of the works of Shakespeare and later, as a young woman in Memphis, she often participated in plays and public readings of his work. Wells's statement "to dye his hands in his brother's blood" is more than likely a reference to act II, scene 2, in which Lady Macbeth, in a delusional state, repeatedly washes her hands imagining that her hands are stained with Duncan's blood. She says: "Will all the water in the ocean wash this blood from my hands?" If Wells's statement is a reference to *Macbeth*, she more than likely uses it to imply that Robert Charles, the criminal minded murderer, is as equally imagined as the blood that stained Lady Macbeth's hands. Another important point that Wells makes in *Mob Rule* is that the false nega-

tive portrayals of Charles in white presses dehumanized him to the point that it ultimately led to his lynching. Wells attempts to bring some form of justice to Robert Charles, posthumously, while also revealing some of the aspects of racism that contributed to his downfall. Her work demonstrates that false characterizations are a common denominator in most lynchings and mob violence against blacks.

Other examples of proverbs and proverbial language used by Wells appear in her autobiography *Crusade for Justice* (1970) which was edited by Wells's youngest daughter, Alfreda M. Duster (1904-1983), and published forty years after her mother's death. In her autobiography Wells discusses what it was like knowing and working with the world-famous abolitionist, and self-freed ex-slave, Frederick Douglass (1818-1895). Wells became good friends with Frederick Douglass during her lifetime, and she regarded him as a father figure and a mentor. Douglass and Wells worked together on a pamphlet that she created in response to the lack of African-American representation at the World's Fair held in Chicago in 1893. The World's Fair was held annually in different places around the globe to display and celebrate scientific and cultural achievements of different nations. In 1893 the fair took place over six months, represented nearly fifty nations, and attracted nearly thirty million visitors from around the world. The one held in Chicago was considered special for a number of reasons. It marked the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in North America and it also marked a time in history when African Americans, thirty years after gaining freedom, had made substantial contributions to American culture. Wells and Douglass attempted to convince the fair organizers to showcase some of the achievements of African Americans—the only American ethnic group that was not adequately represented. Unsatisfied with their results, they decided that they would distribute a pamphlet to expose the fair's racism. The pamphlet is entitled *The Reason Why: The Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition, The Afro-American's Contribution to Columbian Literature* (1893). The Pamphlet is compiled, published, and distributed by Wells and includes contributions from Frederick Douglass, who wrote the introduction, T. Thomas Fortune, and Wells's future husband, lawyer and highly esteemed editor, F.L. Barnett. In the pamphlet they discuss Jim Crow laws and America's history of

racism. Wells also provides detailed accounts of lynchings that have taken place in the South, including the lynchings of her best friend, Thomas Moss. She includes vital statistics regarding thousands of lynching victims, including the years that the crimes take place, the general locations, and the specified reasons. The overall purpose of producing the pamphlet was to help their international audience to realize that the lack of African-American representation at the fair was due to America's inherent racism and not a lack of innovation or intelligence on the part of the black race. Wells was able to distribute over three thousand copies of the pamphlet (Giddings 2008: 268-81).

There were two exhibits at the fair that included black people, but they were considered insults as opposed to accomplishments. One was an exhibition featuring a French speaking indigenous African tribe. The Africans were asked to look and act as primitive as possible. The other was in a section for new products, and featured Nancy Green, "a dark-skinned domestic worker with a wide, flashing smile. She was advertising a premade pancake mix for increasingly time-limited housewives. Trademark for the product was Aunt Jemima" (Giddings 2008: 273). One thing that quickly became apparent to both Wells and Douglass was that "White Americans wanted nothing to detract from their shrine to Anglo-Saxon superiority" (McMurry 1998: 200). The African tribal exhibit took place in the Haitian building which was managed by Frederick Douglass due to his service as United States minister to Haiti. Despite their setbacks, Douglass and Wells did experience a minor victory. The organizers agreed to designate one day on the fair's program as Negro Day also referred to as Colored People's Jubilee Day, and Douglass was given the freedom to organize all of the events. Wells and other African Americans felt that it would be even more demeaning and exploitative than the indigenous tribe exhibit—a sentiment that was only exacerbated by the horticultural department's promise to provide plenty of free watermelons. However, Douglass expressed satisfaction with the plan and he used a proverb to do so. He told Wells that "it was better to accept half a loaf than to have no bread at all" (Duster 1970: 118; Bay 2009: 168). While Wells felt that Negro Day could only result in more degradation for black people, Douglass believed that it was important to do the best that they could with the limited time and space that they had. The proverb "it is better to accept half a



loaf than to have no bread at all” is first documented in the sixteenth century and has a number of variations which all convey the same meaning (Mieder, Kingsbury, and Harder 1991: 274; Speake 2015: 141). Douglass did well orchestrating the event and “Colored American Day,” as they agreed to rename it, turned out to be a success, despite having a very restricted amount of time and resources (McMurry 1998: 204). As Wells would recount in her autobiography: “Mr. Douglass’s oration was a masterpiece of wit, humor, and actual statement of conditions under which the Negro race of this country labored. Paul Dunbar read from his poems, and the Negro music presented was of high order. The thousands of people gathered at the fair who heard the story were given the opportunity they would otherwise have been denied of hearing our foremost orator at his best” (Duster 1970: 119). Wells also communicates that she regretted her previous stance. “...I was among those that did not even go to the meeting—I was so swelled with pride over his masterly presentation of our case that I went straight out to the fair and begged his pardon for presuming in my youth and inexperience to criticize him for an effort which had done more to bring our cause to the attention of the American people than anything else which had happened during the fair” (Duster 1970: 119). All in all, Douglass’s attitude towards the planning of Colored American Day, and the proverb that he uses to point out the brighter side of their predicament, taught Wells an important life lesson that she would never forget, “it is better to accept half a loaf than to have no bread at all.”

It is common for bread as a universal symbol of life sustaining elements to be used in sayings and expressions to express fundamental necessities that one may not be able to survive without. In addition to the aforementioned saying from Douglass, Wells would use expressions involving bread on at least three separate occasions. In a diary entry dated for Saturday, July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1887, her 25<sup>th</sup> birthday, Wells reflects on life and the lessons that she has learned from all of the trials and tribulations that she has endured. Disappointed in herself, Wells vows to be a better person and ultimately regrets any missed learning opportunities that may have come her way:

When I turn to sum up my own accomplishments I am not so well pleased. I have not used the opportunities I had to

the best advantage and find myself intellectually lacking. And excepting my regret that I am not so good a Christian as the goodness of my Father demands, there is nothing for which I lament the wasted opportunities as I do my neglect to pick up the crumbs of knowledge that were within my reach. Consequently I find myself at this age as deficient in a comprehensive knowledge as the veriest school-girl just entering the higher course. I heartily deplore the neglect...Thou knowest I hunger and thirst after righteousness & knowledge" (DeCosta-Willis 1995: 151).

Most would agree that Wells more than made up for any proverbial crumbs of knowledge that she may have overlooked in the past.

In an article entitled "The Negro's Case in Equity" (1900) Wells again uses bread symbolically to make a serious point. "The Negro's Case in Equity" is written in response to an *Independent* article urging black leaders to stop other black people from taking the law into their own hands (Thompson 1990: 112; McMurry 1998: 260; Schechter 2001: 126; Bay and Gates 2014: 256). In response, Wells admonishes the author of the *Independent* article for ignoring the fact that most African Americans obey the law even as they are frequently the targets of most lynching attacks:

The *Independent* publishes an earnest appeal to negro editors, preachers and teachers "to tell their people to defend the laws and their own rights even to blood, but never, never to take guilty participation in lynching white man or black." This advice is given by way of comment on the double lynching in Virginia the other day. Theoretically the advice is all right, but viewed in the light of circumstances and conditions it seems like giving a stone when we ask for bread. (Bay and Gates 2014: 256)

Wells's proverbial expression "like giving a stone when asked for bread" effectively summarizes her opinion of the advice presented to black leaders. She feels that it is an absurd statement to make, especially at a time when blacks were being lynched in the South at alarming rates.

In another article written early in her career entitled "The Model Woman: A Pen Picture of the Typical Southern Girl" (1888) Wells writes about the significance of Victorian ideology

to late nineteenth century life. In accordance with Victorianism, Wells believed that all women should strive to steer clear of sin and to take it upon themselves to enlighten the uneducated and lower classes of the race. Additionally, black women should exhibit diligence and industriousness. In order to illustrate this mentality Wells proclaims in her autobiography to be a “southern girl, born and bred, who tried to keep herself spotless and morally clean as my slave mother had taught me” (Duster 1970: 44; DeCosta-Willis 1995: 188). To further emphasize this point in “The Model Woman” Wells writes:

She is far above mean, petty acts and venomous, slanderous gossip of her own sex as the moon—which sails serenely in the heavens—is above the earth. Her bearing toward the opposite sex, while cordial and free, is of such nature as increases their respect for and admiration of her sex, and her influence is wholly for good. She strives to encourage in them all things honest, noble and manly. She regards all honest toil as noble, because it is ordained of God that man should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. She does not think a girl has anything of which to be proud in not knowing how to work, and esteems it among her best accomplishments that she can cook, wash, iron, sew and “keep house” thoroughly and well. This type of Negro girl may not be found so often as she might, but she is the pattern after which all others copy. (DeCosta-Willis 1995: 189; Bay and Gates 2014: 32-33)

The saying “Man should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow” is derived from biblical text. The original verse from the Bible reads: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (KJV Genesis 3:19). The saying used by Wells equates bread with the valuable and essential trait of work ethic. It illustrates that even in 1888 at the young age of twenty-six, Wells did not only make the decision to be a leader of her people in all matters regarding social justice, but she also wanted to lead her people in matters of moral character.

Wells also had a propensity for using proverbial expressions that incorporate animals when discussing matters of great importance. Perhaps she acquired this particular rhetorical strategy

from her mentor, Douglass. Other scholars such as Wolfgang Mieder also cite Douglass's propensity for using animal proverbs and expressions. Mieder contends: "It should not be surprising that Douglass often cites proverbs and proverbial expressions which contrast innocent lambs or sheep with rapacious wolves where the docile animals represent the victimized slaves while the wild beasts are interpreted as perpetrating slaveholders" (Mieder 2001: 43). One of the most well-cited instances of Wells's use of expressions involving animals appears in her autobiography, and it is written in response to the 1892 lynching of her best friend, Thomas Moss. The following passage illustrates that Wells had expected to be lynched herself in return for urging black Memphians to migrate. She uses the popular proverbial expression "To die like a dog" in the process (Whiting 1989: 178):

I had been warned repeatedly by my own people that something would happen if I did not cease harping on the lynching of three months before, I had expected that happening to come when I was at home. I had bought a pistol the first thing after Tom Moss was lynched because I expected some cowardly retaliation from the lynchers. I felt that one had better die fighting against injustice than die like a dog or a rat in a trap. I had already determined to sell my life as dearly as possible if attacked. I felt if I could take one lyncher with me, this would even up the score a little bit." (Duster 1970: 62; McMurtry 1998: 149; Davidson 2007: 148)

Further along in her autobiography Wells incorporates a proverb involving animals to describe the social and political climate of Memphis immediately following the Moss lynching. Describing the black migration that ensued she says: "Besides, no class of people like Negroes spent their money like water, riding on street-cars and railroad trains, especially on Sundays and excursions. No other class bought clothes and food with such little haggling as they or were so easily satisfied. The whites had killed the goose that laid the golden egg of Memphis prosperity and Negro contentment; yet they were amazed that colored people continued to leave the city by scores and hundreds" (Duster 1970: 63-64). Wells's statement that "whites had killed the goose that laid the golden egg" is a variation of the proverb "Don't kill the goose that

lays the golden egg” (Mieder, Kingsbury, and Harder 1991: 262). Wells’s use of it here describes the sudden and unexpected economic downturn that the city took as black people began to leave.

Wells utilizes the same proverbial rhetorical strategy of incorporating animals in another instance in her autobiography when she expresses a growing sense of urgency felt by black people in Illinois to protect a prominent African-American dentist, Dr. LeRoy C. Bundy, who, immediately following the East St. Louis Riot of 1917, unjustly faced life imprisonment for urging black people to protect their own neighborhoods. Authorities believed that Dr. Bundy’s writings were the primary cause of the deaths of two plain clothed officers who were shot as they rode through a black neighborhood. If authorities did not believe that Bundy caused the officer’s deaths, they were still willing to use Dr. Bundy as their scapegoat. Of course, the tragic events that unfolded in East St. Louis were the result of mounting racial tensions and not the work of any one individual. Immediately following the officer’s shootings, 150 blacks were murdered and millions of dollars of property damage to black communities were recorded. No whites were charged with crimes, but fifteen African Americans would serve over ten years in prison for simply returning fire after whites had shot into their homes (Duster 1970: 391). Dr. Bundy’s case was the worst because he was the only person who faced life imprisonment even though he was never directly involved in the killings. Wells writes: “A meeting was held in Brooklyn, the Negro town, that night at which time all these facts were given and the people urged to take the bull by the horns, open a subscription list, and start at once to employ a lawyer” (Duster 1970: 394-395). Dr. Bundy was eventually released and absolved of all wrongdoing and Wells’s use of the proverbial expression “to take the bull by the horns” (Taylor and Whiting 1958: 46-47); Whiting 1989: 79-80) illustrates that it took a concerted effort to free Dr. Bundy. Ultimately the effort would involve the Negro Fellowship League (NFL), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the popular black periodical, *The Chicago Defender* in which Wells and other black writers were able to convince thousands of people to donate in support of Dr. Bundy’s legal defense.

In a letter to Herbert Hoover (1874-1964), who was campaigning for the presidency which he eventually won, Wells ex-

presses her disappointment with Hoover's lack of regard for the many African Americans who ultimately decided to put their faith in the Democratic Party as opposed to facing continual disappointment caused by the failed promises of Hoover and the Republican Party. In her letter to Hoover, Wells uses the expression "to spend money like water" which she also uses when writing about blacks migrating from Memphis (Taylor and Whiting 1958: 395; Whiting 1989: 419), and she also incorporates the saying "to be a wolf in sheep's clothing" (Taylor and Whiting 1958: 407-408; Whiting 1989: 691-692). Wells who clearly wants Hoover to pay more attention to the needs of black voters writes: "This time the wolf in sheep's clothing is spending money like water to hire our folks in the Democratic camp, but very few of them are going to betray our race for 30 pieces of silver or for the prospect of a drink of liquor" (Thompson 1990: 124; McMurtry 1998: 335). The use of the saying "to be a wolf in sheep's clothing" depicts the growing sense of alienation that Wells experiences at the hands of Republicans and it also shows the extreme sense of distrust that she felt as a result of propaganda and unethical campaign tactics employed by white Democrats. The shifting tide of the black vote from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party that she describes in the Hoover letter becomes a major catalyst for Wells seeking political office as an Independent in 1930.

This would not be the first time that Wells would use her proverbial wisdom in support of abandoning partisanship. In an article entitled "Freedom of Political Action" (1885), writing in agreement with an editorial written by T. Thomas Fortune of *The New York Freeman*, Wells voices her support of Fortune's notion that black people should remain politically independent:

To the Editor of the New York Freeman: There is an old saying that advises to "give the devil his due," and after reading your editorial on "Mr. Cleveland and the Colored People," I was forcibly struck with the thought, that so few people are willing to admit that he has any "due." Evidently there is very little reasoning powers among those who need such a plain rehearsal of historical facts. According to their logic the side they espouse is all good, the opposite—all bad; the Republican party, can do no wrong—however often they use the colored men for

tools; the other, the Democratic side, can do no good—whatever the profession—because of past history. (Bay and Gates 2014: 22)

The proverb “To give the devil his due” (Whiting 1989: 166; Mieder, Kingsbury, and Harder 1991: 146) in this case is appropriate because the imagery evoked by the devil helps to illustrate Wells’s point that the black voter can only attempt to choose the lesser of two evils. Furthermore, this passage is a prime example of how at just twenty-three years of age, Wells was already developing a sarcastic and sharp style. She was becoming known for her brazen choice of political targets and her cutting sense of wit (Bay and Gates 2014: 20).

Wells also used the Bible proverb “You shall reap what you sow” (Mieder, Kingsbury, and Harder 1991: 554-555). On at least two different occasions she either alludes to this saying or creates a variation. In her autobiography she describes the rash of racial riots that seemed to plague the nation in the early twentieth century as “simply a reaping of the harvest which has been sown by those who administer justice...” (Duster 1970: 391). On another occasion Wells alludes to the proverb “You shall reap what you sow” in writing about exiled leader Marcus Garvey whom her husband, Ferdinand Barnett represented in an unsuccessful civil suit against the *Chicago Defender* for libel (McMurry 1998: 323). Wells being very supportive of Garvey and his efforts to uplift the race writes: “It may be that even though he has been banished to Jamaica the seed planted here will yet spring up and bring forth fruit which will mean the deliverance of the black race—the cause which was so dear to his heart” (McMurry 1998: 323).

When Wells was presented with an opportunity to go on a lecture tour in England to talk about American lynch law, she expressed serious doubt over whether it was a good idea to go or not. The invitation was extended to her by English philanthropist, Catherine Impey (1847-1923) and Scottish novelist, Isabelle Fyvie Mayo (1843-1914), who were both organizers of a humanitarian organization called *The Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man* (SRBM), an organization devoted to ending the British caste system in India. The organization also published a newsletter called *Anti-Caste*. They wanted both Wells and Douglass to travel to Europe to speak about lynching, but since

Douglass was too old to travel, Wells felt that she should decline the invitation also: "Thus it was that I received the invitation to go to England. I was a guest in Mr. Douglass's home when the letter came, forwarded from New York. It said that they knew Mr. Douglass was too old to come, and that if for that reason I could not come, to ask him to name someone else. I gave him the letter to read and when he finished he said, 'You go, my child; you are the one to go, for you have the story to tell'" (Duster 1970: 85-86). Wells then states that the invitation, "seemed like an open door in a stone wall" (Duster 1970: 86). She had already spent almost an entire year in the North trying to gain more support, only to no avail, and she uses the proverbial expression, "like an open door in a stone wall" to communicate that the rare opportunity to travel to Europe, at the time, felt like a much needed blessing. Once news about Wells's plans spread, many black presses were divided on the issue. Some of the presses that were against the idea of Wells representing African-American people in Europe felt that Wells's speeches may only serve to fuel British snobbery towards Americans. Others felt that speeches in general would do no good. Likewise, many political leaders felt that the lynching problem would disappear on its own. In fact, Wells uses a couple of proverbs in a *New York Age* article in response to these notions: "They forget...that no wrong ever rights itself and that whom the gods would destroy they first make mad" (Giddings 2008: 327; Speake 2015: 131). While the first proverb may be taken literally, the second proverb has a somewhat figurative meaning. "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad" is a proverb meaning that sometimes evil will appear as good to those who are being led to their own destruction (Mieder, Kingsbury, and Harder 1991: 256; Speake 2015: 131). This statement is no doubt directed towards the black leaders that believe that nothing needs to be done about lynching. Wells issues a similar statement regarding right and wrong on a leaflet advertising one of her many anti-lynching speeches. The leaflet reads: "The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them" (Mia Bay and Henry Louis Gates 2014: 7). In another *New York Age* article entitled "The Lynchers Wincede" Wells targets an aphorism used by a white paper in order to reveal the hypocrisy or double standard that exists in regards to lynch law: "the *Commercial Appeal* drops into philosophy and declares that two wrongs do not make one right; and that while



white people should stick to the law, if they do not do so, the blacks can hope for nothing but extermination if they attempt to defend themselves” (Bay and Gates 2014: 38). All of the Wells sayings regarding right and wrong illustrate that she is certain that her journalistic efforts and public speaking engagements helped to reverse racial injustices done to African Americans.

In addition to the groups that supported her European efforts, there were still some that believed that Wells was only interested in traveling to Europe to make money for herself, which was a misconception. She received very little pay for her efforts. Nonetheless, some black presses supported the move. For instance, *The Parsons Weekly Blade*, uses a popular proverb to summarize Wells’s predicament. The paper replies to the suggestion that Wells will be more effective on American soil by saying that “It would be another case of casting pearls before swine” (McMurry 1998: 218). The proverb, “Don’t cast your pearls before swine” is from the Bible (KJV Matthew 7:6; Mieder, Kingsbury, and Harder 1991: 577; Prahlad 1996: 241; Speake 2015: 245) and it means “do not give valuable things to people who cannot appreciate them” (Speake 2015: 245). The proverb is fitting because many people realized that passing up the offer to travel to Europe would have been a waste of Wells’s talents. Furthermore, it was no secret that many negative sentiments that Wells faced were also attributed to sexism. In fact, Wells’s colleague and friend T. Thomas Fortune used the very same proverb to conceptualize the dilemma faced by women writers: “I think our women are going to stretch our men in the variety of their information, the purity of their expression and in having the courage of their convictions, without which these are but pearls cast before swine” (McMurry 1998: 89). Fortune uses the proverb to illustrate that the men had some growing to do before they could fully appreciate black female journalists. Fortune is also making the point that black female journalists like Wells will be a critical part of that growing process.

While touring Europe, Wells gave hundreds of speeches to highly receptive audiences. Overall, Wells was left with the impression that people of color were accepted more in Europe than they were in the U.S. In a section of her autobiography entitled *What Liverpool Has Learned* she states: “And the city, with its population of six hundred thousand souls, is one of the most pros-

perous in the United Kingdom. Her freedom loving citizens not only subscribe to the doctrine that human beings regardless of color or condition are equal before the law, but they practice what they preach" (Duster 1970: 135). Variations of the proverb, "Practice what you preach" are documented as early as 1377, and it is one of Wells's favorites (Mieder, Kingsbury, and Harder 1991: 479; Speake 2015: 254). She uses this particular proverb a number of times in the diary that she kept as a young woman living in Memphis (DeCosta-Willis 1995: 44, 134). The diary entries that include this proverb also reveal the extent that European Victorianism permeated American culture and dictated interactions between men and women during the nineteenth century. Wells aimed to be a prototype of Victorian womanhood. She always dressed well and spoke properly, but nevertheless, many Victorian ideals still conflicted with her own sense of identity. Women were not supposed to show anger, be outspoken, or even flirtatious, but Wells's use of the proverb "Practice what you preach" seems to illustrate an ongoing inherent struggle with these expectations. In one entry written on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1885 Wells seems to denounce the idea of flirting with a potential male suitor: "Right here comes my temptation to flirt with him; to make him declare himself and forget all others, but I cannot—I *will* not consider it. I have preached and I must practice under *all* circumstances" (DeCosta-Willis 1995: 44). In another diary entry marked February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1887 Wells writes about being criticized by male colleagues who feel that it is unladylike for a female teacher to be seen in theatres. Fearing that she may be setting a bad precedent for her students she accepts this criticism with grace: "Mr. Dardis Jr. walked home with me & read me a severe lecture on going to the theatre; he showed me how his father Prof. Thompson, Mr. Greenlee, Mr. Selectman, Dr. Burchett etc. regarded it, & that he now considered that I was one who failed to practice as I preached. I regretted it more than I can say all along, but not so keenly did I see the wrong, or think of the influence my example would exert until then" (DeCosta-Willis 1995: 134). Her frequent use of the adage illustrates that she has always valued being a good example to others. Wells uses the proverb in reference to Europe because she feels that Europe is a much better example of this proverbial wisdom than America—a place in which democracy and equality are celebrated, but not extended to all citizens. In contrast, Wells says

that Liverpool is a place where “a colored person can ride in any sort of conveyance in any part of the country without being insulted; stop in any hotel or be accommodated at any restaurant one wishes without being refused with contempt; wander into any picture gallery, lecture room, concert hall, theater or church and receive only the most courteous treatment from officials and fellow sightseers” (Duster 1970: 135). At this point in Wells’s narrative she uses a popular proverbial expression to emphasize the point even further: “The privilege of being once in a country where ‘A man’s a man for a’ that,’ is one which can best be appreciated by those Americans whose black skins are a bar to their receiving genuine kindness and courtesy at home” (Duster 1970: 135). Wells may have acquired this particular expression as she traveled throughout Scotland or other parts of Europe. She may have also heard it being sang. The expression, “A man’s a man for a’ that” was popularized by the song, “For a’ That and a’ That” written by Scottish poet, Robert Burns in 1795. Throughout the song the speaker rejects the notion of placing value on a person’s appearance or material wealth and instead preaches that a man’s character is his most valuable possession. As opposed to royal titles, money, or high social status, the speaker of the song values honesty, integrity, and independent thinking. Furthermore, Burns wrote the song to convey the message that people of all social classes should be valued equally, and that all should have voting rights and be afforded with opportunities to own their own land. Wells’s use of the expression, “A man’s a man for a’ that” in reference to her experience in Liverpool illustrates that she was pleased to witness universal value being placed on equality.

While in Europe, Wells also visits the city of Bristol in England where she speaks to a number of prominent people, and she describes the shock and disbelief that her audiences express to her upon hearing the facts about lynching in America. She comments, “There were two drawing-room meetings in the homes of wealthy and influential persons. In these drawing rooms, in which there were one hundred persons each, were gathered the wealthiest and most cultured classes of society who do not attend public meetings. One was presided over by Dr. Miller Nicholson, the pastor of the largest and most influential Presbyterian church in the city, and the other by Mrs. Coote, president of the Women’s Liberal Association of Bristol. Their shock on being told the actual conditions

of things regarding lynching was painful to behold" (Duster 1970: 154). Many members of the group were under the impression that African Americans had been relishing in complete freedom since emancipation while other members of the group believe that lynching only happens to black men that rape white women. After realizing that her audience had internalized a number of popular misconceptions, Wells states: "I read the account of that poor woman who was boxed up in a barrel into which nails had been driven and rolled down hill in Texas, and asked if that lynching could be excused on the same ground" (Duster 1970: 154). In addition to the shock of hearing about American atrocities committed against blacks, the Bristol audience also cannot believe that the American government does nothing to prevent such carnages from taking place. Wells writes: "Again the question was asked where were all the legal and civil authorities of the country, to say nothing of the Christian churches, that they permitted such things to be?" (Duster 1970: 154). In response to this question, Wells explains to her audience that the problem of lynching is largely ignored by all of the institutions that have any power to help, and she uses a proverb that is very similar to the one that she employs to criticize the inactivity of black leaders in America: "I could only say that despite the axiom that there is a remedy for every wrong, everybody in authority from the President of the United States down, had declared their inability to do anything; and that the Christian bodies and moral associations do not touch the question" (Duster 1970: 154). Wells's use of a variation of the proverb, "No wrong without a remedy" (Wilson 1970: 924) seems fitting when one takes into account the imagery that she conveys after employing it: "American Christians are too busy saving the souls of white Christians from burning in hell-fire to save the lives of black ones from present burning in fires kindled by white Christians" (Duster 1970: 154-155). The irony invoked by her statement helps to reveal the paradox that is created by the simultaneous acceptance of both Christianity and lynch law in American culture. Overall, Wells employs proverbs strategically to convince her Christian audience that it is their moral duty to help right the wrong of lynch law in America.

Upon returning to New York from her successful European campaign, Wells was eager to try to gain more support in the U.S., so she sought to improve race relations by reaching out to the

white clergy in America and also the white presses. She wanted them both to take more interest in her anti-lynching crusade, and she used her newly established European ties as leverage. "...I brought back to this country an appeal to the Christian ministers of the United States to give me the same opportunity for speaking from their pulpits as had been given me by the English clergymen. This appeal had been signed by the leading ministers of all denominations in Great Britain, that when I sought an interview with an American minister he was presented with this appeal. Rarely was it unsuccessful, because our American ministers knew that this powerful committee in London would receive reports as to their attitude on this burning question" (Duster 1970: 220).

Before meeting for an interview with the *New York Sun*, Wells is surprised when a group of African-American men waiting for her ask her to "put the soft pedal on charges against white women and their relations with black men" (Duster 1970: 220). Wells adamantly refuses to do so. Wells then tells the men how difficult it had been for her in Europe to reverse the awful stereotype that "black men were wild beasts after white women" (Duster 1970: 220). Furthermore, she explains to them that if she abandons her stance after returning home from overseas it will only give her audiences the impression that the outrageous stereotypes are accurate. Wells is then forced to defend her standpoint in the interview. She explains to the reporter that ever since her findings were published overseas and, in the U.S., she has had to defend her views. She then employs an important proverb from classical literature to make her case:

The subject was mentioned on the floor of Congress, and passionate letters in protest were written. Mr. Richard Henry Dana himself sent for me and questioned me on the subject. I asked him if he ever read Burton's *Arabian Nights*? When he said that he had, my reply was "then you know that I tell of nothing new under the sun." Not only this, but he let me make that same statement in reply to a letter published in his columns which attacked me for "defaming the honor of the white women of the country." In that letter I said, just as I had told Mr. Dana, "those who have read Burton's *Arabian Nights* know that I tell of no new thing under the sun when I say white women have

been known to fall in love with black men, and only after that relationship is discovered has an assault charge been made.” (Duster 1970: 221)

Wells employs this Bible proverb “There is nothing new under the sun” for a number of reasons (Speake 2015: 230). The first and most obvious reason that she uses it is because she knows that many people are familiar with *Arabian Nights* (1885) which is a collection of ancient Middle Eastern tales that have been retranslated and published by Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821-1890). Since it is very popular, she hopes to punctuate her argument if her listeners can recall the proverb in Burton’s text which reads: “‘What hath been shall be, and there is nothing new under the sun,’ is one of the many wise sayings of him whose words, to adopt his own language, are ‘like apples of gold in settings of silver’” (Burton 2011: 270). Wells hopes that being reminded of the extravagant imagery from the scene in *Arabian Nights* will help to convey to her audience the seriousness of her words.

Another reason she employs the proverb is because it is also found in the Bible. The verse reads: “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun” (KJV Ecclesiastes 1:9). Both *Arabian Nights* and the Bible verse contain identical messages. However, while the Bible verse may lack the imagery and popularity of *Arabian Nights*, it does provide Wells with an air of sagacity. Furthermore, the Bible is not considered fiction by most people, especially clergy and others involved in the church. Thus, Wells is able to “kill two birds with one stone” in using a proverb that will appeal simultaneously to two different audiences, the younger crowd, that may enjoy popular fiction, and also the more conservative groups, who may only regard the Bible as being the ultimate “truth.”

Wells was always very keen in pointing out unfair practices and racial double standards in the American legal system and sometimes proverbs played instrumental roles in voicing this discontent. In response to the case of an African-American man who was imprisoned for breaking Indiana miscegenation laws while his white wife was set free Wells writes: “If justice is blind in America it is blind in only one eye” (McMurry 1998: 266). This sharp refutation incorporating the proverb “justice is blind” illustrates

Wells's humorous side (Mieder, Kingsbury, and Harder 1991: 342). It also comes very close to being an anti-proverb. It certainly incorporates the characteristic humor of most anti-proverbs. According to Litovkina and Mieder: "We laugh at some anti-proverbs because they skew our expectations about traditional values, order, and rules. We are, however, sometimes struck by the absurdity of some situations portrayed in parodies, especially when they rely purely upon linguistic tricks employed for the sole purpose of making punning possible" (Litovkina and Mieder 2006: 44). On a more serious note in the same address Wells also called out black male leaders who seemed to be unable to unify themselves and who were too afraid to speak out against racial injustice. According to historian Linda McMurry, Wells labeled this group of black men that she spoke to as "a small body of men who are anxious to pose as white men's niggers" and she incorporates a saying in order to exemplify the message. Wells says: "no man builds well whose foundation is laid upon another's ruin" (McMurry 1998: 266). This is more than likely a variation of the proverb "When a man lays the foundation of his own ruin, others will build on it" (Mieder, Kingsbury, and Harder 1991: 518). Wells's use of this proverb shows the immense value that she placed on unity among black community leaders. It also demonstrates the extent that Wells was committed to reversing what historian Catherine Meeks and Nibs Stroupe describe as the *plantation mentality* or an inherent sense of inferiority and learned helplessness which became internalized by many African Americans during Reconstruction as a direct result of southern "neo slavery" which included indiscriminate violence and unjust economic and legal systems (Blackmon 2008: 8; Meeks and Stroupe 2019: 217).

In addition to her references to lynching, Wells also uses proverbs to advocate for the temperance movement. While on her first European tour Wells met temperance reformer and women's suffragist, Frances E. Willard (1839-1898). Willard served as the president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the most powerful women's organization in America at the time, from 1879 until her death. Shortly after meeting her, Wells learns quickly that Willard was racist. Racism among club women was not at all uncommon during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to historian Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, "The experiences of many leaders indicated the pervasiveness of white female prej-

udice and discrimination against Black females in women's groups, even among those who were part of the woman suffrage coalition" (Terborg-Penn 1998: 119). Willard's racist sentiments were made clear in an interview that was published in 1890 in the *New York Voice*. In the interview, Willard expresses pity for Americans in the South for having to tolerate blacks who "...multiply like the locusts of Egypt. The grog-shop is its center of power" (McMurry 1998: 210). Although Willard is leading the temperance movement, she sees the "grog-shop" or illegal liquor store as being the center of the black community in America. Willard continues by saying that, "Better whiskey and more of it' has been the rallying cry of great dark-faced mobs in the Southern localities where local option was snowed under by the colored vote" (McMurry 1998: 210). In this interview Willard, who is more than likely afraid of losing the support of southern white women, whole-heartedly denies the idea that temperance is important for blacks, and she also suggests that black people are sub-human. Additionally, Willard states, "The safety of women, of children, of the home is menaced in a thousand localities at this moment, so men dare not go beyond the sight of their own roof-tree" (McMurry 1998: 210). Willard's words quickly became the center of attention for black presses. Wells denounced Willard's racist views in an article for the *A.M.E. Church Review* saying: "In his wildest moments he seldom molests others than his own...and this article is a protest against such wholesale self-injury" (McMurry 1998: 210). Wells uses the term "self-injury" because unlike Willard, she sees black intemperance as a serious issue that will ultimately have a negative impact on the black community in two ways. First, it slowly divests the community of valuable resources that could be used in service of education and community outreach. Secondly, intemperance contributes to exorbitant black incarceration rates in the South. To better emphasize these points, Wells invokes a well-known proverbial expression: "It is like playing with fire to take that in the mouth which steals away the brains" (McMurry 1998: 210; Whiting 1989: 226; Speake 2015: 250). For Wells, black intemperance really was "like playing with fire." She goes on to write that intemperance provided "judges and juries the excuse for filling the convict lease camps of Georgia alone with fifteen hundred Negroes," and furthermore, the money



that black men wasted on alcohol only contributed to “enormous profits flowing into Anglo-Saxon coffers” (McMurry 1998: 210).

Wells also wrote a short story that focuses on the issue of intemperance in the black community. At one point in her career she had plans to become a novelist, but soon after she stopped teaching, her anti-lynching efforts took precedence in her life. She published one short story entitled “Two Christmas Days: A Holiday Story” (1894), and it is a romance that many believe is based loosely on Wells’s own life. The protagonist, Emily Minton, is a young well-educated teacher who is being courted by George Harris, a fledgling, but talented lawyer who is just starting out in the legal business. George expresses interest in marrying Emily, but Emily is reluctant to do so due to George’s intemperance. At one point in the story Emily tells George that his intemperance is to blame for his lack of ambition. She says, “The race needs the best service our young manhood can give it, my friend, and it seems so wrong to divert any part of it to the practice of a habit which can bring you no credit and gratify no noble ambition” (Thompson 1990: 231). This is a major turning point in the story and Wells punctuates the tense moment with a bit of proverbial wisdom:

George’s mind was in a conflicting whirl of emotions. He knew she spoke the truth; and yet with all his feelings of anger and mortification, he seemed to feel that this peerless girl was slipping away from him. He wanted her to think well of him and forgetful of the French proverb: “He who excuses, accuses,” he said eagerly: “But this habit of mine never interferes with my business, Miss Emily. Indeed, it rather helps me. I am the only Afro-American at this bar, and I must have some stimulus to help me through the difficulties the wall of prejudice throws my way.” (reprinted in Thompson 1990: 231)

The originally French proverb, “He who excuses himself, accuses himself” (Whiting 1989: 207) contributes to the omniscience of the narrator, and it also adds to the story’s didactic feel. In addition to the proverb, Wells’s use of the phrase “wall of prejudice” helps to emphasize the fact that the American legal system, from a historical perspective, was rooted in racism. Wells also uses the proverb and proverbial expression to help to emphasize the strong moral message which is that black men from all classes and levels

of society should not treat prejudice as an excuse for intemperance. They should resist the urge to drink away pain, anger, or stress that may be caused by bigotry and racial injustice. This point becomes that much more poignant at the end of the tale when George and Emily marry after he finally realizes the errors of his ways.

Wells also concludes her autobiography with an important political proverb, stating that "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and it does seem to me that notwithstanding all these social agencies and activities there is not that vigilance which should be exercised in the preservation of our rights" (Duster 1970: 415). According to paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder, the first recorded instance of the proverb "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty" being used is by Philpot Curran who wrote a speech entitled "Speech upon the Right of Election" which he delivered on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1790 (Mieder 2001: 70). The speech reads: "The condition upon which God has given liberty to man is eternal vigilance; which condition if he break, servitude is at once the consequence of his crime, and the punishment of his guilt" (Mieder 2001: 70). Another recorded instance of the proverb "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty" being used in public discourse is by President Andrew Jackson (1767-1854) on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1837 during his Farewell Address: "But you must remember, my fellow-citizens, that eternal vigilance by the people is the price of liberty, and that you must pay the price if you wish to secure the blessing. It behooves you, therefore, to be watchful in your States as well as in the Federal Government" (Jackson 1837; Mieder 2019: 16). Wells's close friend and mentor Frederick Douglass also used it on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1848 in an article that he wrote for his journal *North Star* which was devoted to abolitionism: "It is strict accordance with all philosophical, as well as all experimental knowledge, that those who unite with tyrants to oppress the weak and helpless, will sooner or later find the ground-work of their own rights and liberties giving way. 'The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.' It can only be maintained by a sacred regard for the rights of all men" (Mieder 2001: 70). In each of the aforementioned instances the proverb is being used in order to advance one's own view of democracy and justice. There is no doubting that Wells's use of it in her autobiography has done a lot to popularize it. Nearly every Wells biographer has mentioned her use of this particular saying (McMurry

1998: 26, 321; Fradin 2000: 161; Giddings 2008: 659; Bay 2009: 315). It seems fitting that she should use it in the forty-sixth and final chapter of her autobiography because it effectively summarizes her life's work. Wells displayed vigilance as a young woman battling Jim Crow laws in Memphis, and the vigilance that she shows in the latter part of her life helped her to initiate countless numbers of clubs and organizations that were devoted to the advancement of African Americans. Furthermore, Wells's investigative journalism and public speaking tours played a major role in reducing the frequency of lynchings around the nation, but despite all of her milestone achievements, she still feels that complacency is the ultimate enemy of black people. It may be the same sense of vigilance expressed in this saying that compelled Wells to run for Congress in Illinois the year before her death. There is plenty of evidence in her writings and actions that illustrate that Wells believed that her struggle for civil rights would never end, and her use of the proverb "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty" may be proof that she also believed that it never should end.

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## CREATIVIDAD PAREMIOLÓGICA EN LAS TRADUCCIONES AL CASTELLANO DE *ASTÉRIX*

**Resúmen:** Este trabajo es el fruto de la investigación del uso de los refranes en las aventuras de *Astérix el galo*, una de las sagas de cómic más relevantes de toda Europa. Concretamente, aquí se examinan varios casos en los que el traductor de las aventuras al castellano ha incluido un refrán en intervenciones de los personajes en las que no se hace uso de las paremias en la versión original en francés. De este modo, la intención del presente estudio es establecer las características y evaluar la efectividad de este proceder como herramienta traductológica, además de determinar si esto es algo propio de la edición en castellano o si, por el contrario, es también habitual en otras ediciones. Para ello, se han contrastado las versiones referidas con las inglesas y alemanas para analizar cómo estas tratan los mismos pasajes de modo que se pueda determinar con un cierto grado de exactitud hasta qué punto el bagaje cultural o folclorístico de estas lenguas, parte del cual es común, se utiliza para solventar algunas dificultades que el traductor pueda encontrar o para aprovechar los recursos visuales que los cómics ofrecen con la intención de proporcionar un producto que resulte más comprensible.

**Palabras clave:** Astérix, cómic, creatividad paremiológica, refrán, traducción.

**Abstract:** This paper is the product of research on the use of proverbs in the adventures of *Asterix the Gaul*, one of the most relevant comic sagas in Europe. Concretely, several instances will be examined in which the translation of the adventures in Spanish includes a proverb in the characters' speech, where no proverb was used in the original version in French. The purpose of the present study is to establish the characteristics of this procedure as well as determining its effectiveness as a translation tool and whether this is typical of the Spanish editions or whether it is also common in others. For this purpose, French and Spanish versions have been compared with the English and German versions, in order to analyze how each handles specific passages. This will help determine, with a certain degree of precision, to what extent the cultural and folkloristic background, a part of which is common across all four languages, is used to deal with some difficulties the translator may encounter. This

could include taking advantage of the visual resources that comics offer, with the purpose of providing a product that is easier to understand.

**Keywords:** *Asterix*, comic, paremiological creativity, proverb, translation.

### **Introducción**

*Astérix el galo*, creación de René Goscinny y Albert Uderzo, guionista y dibujante respectivamente, ha gozado durante décadas de una popularidad incuestionable entre los lectores a lo largo y ancho del continente europeo. Tanto es así que las aventuras de Astérix se han traducido a más de 100 idiomas<sup>1</sup> de todo el mundo, situándolo ligeramente por delante de otro coloso del cómic francófono: Tintín.

El hecho de que se trate de un personaje de cómic hace que estas aventuras a menudo se asocien a un público infantil y juvenil, lo que posiblemente sea el motivo de no haber recibido el interés que merece por parte de la Paremiología, aun cuando ofrece numerosas oportunidades para su estudio desde esta disciplina. En el caso de *Astérix*, es tal la erudición que emana de sus páginas y la riqueza y elaboración de sus subtextos e intertextualidad que lo convierten en un material que trasciende al público juvenil y que incluso las generaciones mayores y más cultivadas encontrarán digno de su atención.

Ambientada en el año 50 a.C., las aventuras de Astérix relatan diferentes episodios vividos por una aldea de galos de la región de Armórica que resiste al hostigamiento por parte de la legión romana para anexionarla al Imperio. Así pues, el dúo de Astérix y Obélix se presenta como los protagonistas habituales de las historietas, si bien la aldea está habitada por otros personajes pintorescos que gozan de momentos relevancia a lo largo de la saga. Por su parte, el papel de principal antagonista de la trama corresponde ni más ni menos que al emperador Julio César, uno de los personajes más reconocidos y reconocibles de la Roma clásica, cuya popularidad actual, especialmente entre las generaciones más jóvenes, se podría asegurar sin ningún género de dudas que se debe en gran medida a su aparición en *Astérix*.

De este modo, el contexto se sitúa en un momento concreto y verídico de la historia europea, el cual, dado el poder acumulado por Roma, los vastos territorios conquistados y el proceso de

romanización al que se sometía a estos territorios, generó una situación de homogeneización cultural sin precedentes hasta entonces en el ámbito europeo y cuyo legado se aprecia en las más diversas esferas de la cultura y el folklore, quizá una de las más relevantes de las cuales es la que aquí nos ocupa: la fraseología. De este modo, al propio Julio César se le atribuyen numerosas citas célebres, algunas de las cuales se repiten recurrentemente a lo largo de los diversos volúmenes que componen la colección. Entre estas destacan “*Alea jacta est*” o “*Vini, vidi, vici*” como ejemplos de citas más repetidas. Asimismo, son frecuentes los usos de otros tipos de fraseologismos, muchos de los cuales aparecen en forma idéntica, o casi, en diversas lenguas europeas y que algunos han dado a llamar ‘europeísmos’ (ver Morvay: 1996).

En este estudio nos centraremos en el análisis del uso de algunos refranes en las traducciones al castellano de las obras de Goscinny y Uderzo, y que desde 2013 publican Jean-Yves Ferri y Didier Conrad. Más concretamente, se analizarán aquellos casos en los que el traductor, o traductores, al castellano han traducido como un refrán, bien en su forma canónica, con algún tipo de modificación o como alusión a algún saber proverbial, de intervenciones de personajes que no hacían referencia alguna a paremias en la versión original en francés. Para ello se han revisado los 38 volúmenes publicados hasta la fecha por los autores originales y sus sucesores, aislando las apariciones de refranes detectadas y comparándolas con el original en francés. Además, con la intención de comprobar si se trata de una práctica generalizada o si, por el contrario, es algo propio de las traducciones al castellano, se han contrastado los elementos analizados aquí con las versiones en inglés y alemán.

De esta manera, aquellos casos en los que se han traducido como refranes afirmaciones de personajes que los autores no habían considerado como tales resultan de especial interés si tenemos en consideración que, por un lado suponen una desviación evidente del mensaje original tal y como los autores lo habían gestado; por otro lado, esto se ve incrementado por el hecho de que, como es bien sabido, una cantidad significativa de fraseologismos

de diferentes categorías existen de forma idéntica o casi en diversos idiomas europeos, lo que plantea en muchos casos la conveniencia y motivación de este proceder. Sin embargo, como se verá a continuación, generalmente el efecto conseguido resulta satisfactorio en la adaptación de la obra original a otra realidad lingüística, convirtiéndola en más verosímil y cercana para el lector.

Finalmente, cabe destacar que el apoyo visual que los cómics proporcionan, siendo esta su característica más relevante y la que los diferencia de otros géneros, juega un papel vital en muchos casos ya que condicionan la elección del traductor de incluir un fraseologismo que, a menudo, hace referencia al contenido gráfico de la viñeta en cuestión. De este modo, las paremias adquieren una gran relevancia como elementos para la traducción, proporcionando al traductor una herramienta para capturar y transmitir la información textual y visual contenida en el original y adaptarla de una forma más natural a la lengua meta, siendo de especial relevancia el hecho de que, generalmente, esta práctica se lleva a cabo desde una interpretación literal del mensaje contenido en la paremia y no como el uso figurado con el que generalmente se asocian y por el que se utilizan en situaciones cotidianas de comunicación.

A continuación se presentarán algunos de los casos detectados que resultan más ilustrativos del uso, en ocasiones libre, que hacen los traductores de las paremias para dotar a su obra de una mayor naturalidad, considerando que los elementos comentados se presentan en un orden cronológico en función a la publicación de texto original en francés.

### ***1. El perro es el mejor amigo del hombre***

En *El Combate de los Jefes* (1966), Abraracúrcix, jefe de la tribu de Astérix, es retado a singular combate por parte de Prorrománix, jefe de la vecina tribu de Serum y adepto al control romano. Según las normas galas de la época, si un jefe retaba a otro y vencía, pasaba a gobernar ambas tribus. Así pues, el centurión del castro de Babaorum, aconsejado por su ayuda de campo, lleva a cabo el plan de este último que requiere secuestrar al druida Panoramix con el fin de evitar que Abraracúrcix pueda recurrir a la famosa poción mágica de cara al combate. De este modo, aunque la patrulla de legionarios encomendada con la captura del druida

no cumple su cometido, este sufre un percance que le nubla el juicio y le hace olvidar la receta de la poción.

Todo se desarrolla según lo previsto por los romanos y el centurión decide enviar a un espía disfrazado de árbol a averiguar si el rumor del accidente del druida es cierto. Por su parte, Astérix y Obélix emprenden la misión de capturar un romano para usarlo de conejillo de indias en los diferentes experimentos que Panorámix lleva a cabo con objeto de recordar la receta de la auténtica poción. Como cabía esperar, ambas comitivas cruzan sus caminos en el bosque, donde el espía está apostado con su disfraz y sobre el que un búho ha anidado tomándolo por un árbol de verdad. El ulular del búho llama la atención de Obélix que propone capturarlo y llevárselo para ver si entabla amistad con su perro, Ideafix, a lo que Astérix responde “El perro es el mejor amigo del hombre, no de los búhos” (Goscinnny y Uderzo, 2019: 22). Esta afirmación contiene en su primera parte un refrán acreditado como tal por autores como L. Martínez Kleiser (1989: 572). Como contrapartida, tanto en el original en francés como en las versiones en inglés y alemán, se puede leer lo siguiente:

Fr.: *Un hibou pour toutou? Tu as vu ça où?* (Goscinnny y Uderzo, 2015a: 24)

Ing.: *Wouldn't he growl at an owl?* (Goscinnny y Uderzo, 2014a: 24)

Ale.: *Eine Eule und ein Hündchen?* (Goscinnny y Uderzo, 2013a: 24)

De este modo, se puede observar que en las versiones original y alemana se expresan en términos equivalentes, con la salvedad de que la última no incluye la rima interna que encontramos en el original. Por su parte, la traducción al inglés hace un esfuerzo por mantener esa rima, a pesar de distanciarse del original en el plano semántico. En consecuencia, se observa cómo la traducción al castellano es la que muestra una mayor creatividad al incluir un refrán que también existe en francés,<sup>2</sup> inglés (Flavell y Flavell, 2004: 79) y alemán.<sup>3</sup> Esto podría deberse a la imposibilidad del traductor de incluir la rima que se aprecia en las otras versiones, por lo que habría optado por la inclusión del refrán como recurso estilístico que supla la mencionada rima. La conveniencia del proceder del traductor puede ser cuestionable pero, comparándolo con cómo se trata el episodio en las otras versiones y el contexto en el que tiene

lugar la inclusión del refrán, se puede afirmar que el lector en castellano encontrará la conversación entre los personajes natural y adecuada a las circunstancias y es únicamente a través de la comparación con otras versiones, algo que dudablemente se produzca con frecuencia, que se pueda percatar de la desviación con respecto al original, especialmente si tenemos en cuenta que, como se ha mostrado anteriormente, la afirmación incluida existe en todos los idiomas que se han analizado.

## **2. La música amansa a las fieras**

En *Astérix y los Normandos* (1967), la aldea gala recibe dos visitas que el desarrollo de los acontecimientos demostrará ser complementarias. En primer lugar, Gudúrix, sobrino del jefe Abraracúrcix, es enviado a la aldea por su padre con el fin de que se aparte de la vida licenciosa que lleva en Lutecia y que aprenda de los irreductibles a hacerse “un hombre” (Goscinn y Uderzo, 2019: 3). El joven muestra unas actitudes hedonistas alejada de la rudeza de los aldeanos armoricanos pero, a pesar de su insolencia, pronto demostrará su pusilanimidad. Por otro lado, un drakkar normando arriba a la costa armoricana. Los normandos viajan al sur con la intención de conocer lo que es el miedo, algo que resulta ajeno a estos toscos guerreros que presumen de saberlo todo y cuyo aprendizaje, según el jefe Grosenbaf, les “permitiría volar como pajaritos” (Goscinn y Uderzo, 2019: 7). Así pues, y como era de esperar, no tardan demasiado en encontrarse con el medroso Gudúrix, al que secuestran para llevárselo de vuelta a sus tierras y que les pueda transmitir sus propios conocimientos sobre el miedo. Posteriormente, Astérix negocia con los normandos para que dejen marchar al joven si, a cambio, él consigue proporcionarles otros medios con los que instruirse. El plan de Astérix consiste en llevarles al bardo de la aldea, Asurancetúrix, cuyo escaso talento musical es un chiste recurrente en la saga, para que les haga una demostración. Tras una serie de desencuentros entre galos y normandos, estos pretenden arrojar a aquellos por un acantilado hasta que, tras un intercambio de golpes, los normandos sienten temor de los galos. Es entonces cuando, como golpe de gracia, Astérix propone al bardo que comience a cantar, lo que causa que los normandos salten por el acantilado *motu proprio*. En ese momento se produce el siguiente intercambio comunicativo:

OBÉLIX ¿Qué ocurre, Astérix?

ASTÉRIX Pues que no sé si la música amansará a las fieras, pero por lo menos las hace huir. (Goscinnny y Uderzo, 2019b: 44)

Aquí, Astérix hace alusión a la bien conocida frase proverbial “la música amansa a las fieras”, que aparece recogida en términos similares en el *Refranero General Ideológico* de L. Martínez Kleiser (1989: 509). De este modo, y a pesar de estar acreditada la existencia de refranes que se expresan en términos similares en diversas lenguas europeas,<sup>4</sup> entre ellas el francés, cuando uno consulta la versión original, no aparece rastro de dicho refrán, ni como alusión, modificación o cualquier otro uso a los que las paremias se someten en actos comunicativos. Lo que se puede leer en el original es lo siguiente:

OBÉLIX *Mais qu'est-ce quis'est passé Astérix?*

ASTÉRIX *En tout cas, ils sauront qu'en gaule, tout finit par des chansons!* (Goscinnny y Uderzo, 2015b: 46)

Al recurrir a fuentes paremiográficas francesas, queda claro que la afirmación de Astérix no incluye referencia alguna a una paremia sino que de lo que se trata es de una cita literaria ya que la frase que emplea el galo aparece en *Le Mariage de Figaro* de Pierre-Agustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1778), comedia que posteriormente recibiría una adaptación operística por parte de Mozart y Lorenzo de Ponte titulada *La Nozze di Figaro* (1786). Además, al contrastar esta intervención de Astérix con la de las ediciones en inglés y alemán, se puede leer lo siguiente:

Ingl.: *Oh, nothing to make a song about, Obelix.* (Goscinnny y Uderzo, 2014b: 46)

Ale.: *Na jedenfalls wissen sie von jetzt an, daßin Gallien alle smit einem Lied endet!* (Goscinnny y Uderzo, 2013b: 46)

En este caso se puede cuestionar la elección por parte de los traductores entre la conveniencia de preservar el original, que podría resultar irreconocible para el gran público, o hacer una adaptación que facilitara la interpretación del texto. Así, mientras que en la versión en alemán se decide mantener una traducción directa del original, los traductores de la versión inglesa eligen desviarse de esta culta alusión y emplear un fraseologismo que si bien contiene

una referencia musical, poco tiene que ver con la idea original: *to make a song (and dance) about something* (Ayto, 2010: 325), cuyo significado es el de darle demasiada importancia a una cuestión menor o el recurrir a evasivas con la intención de desviar la atención. De este modo, al menos en este caso concreto, parece claro que hay discrepancia entre el proceder de los traductores en las diferentes lenguas a la hora de traducir fraseologismos de diversa índole: mientras los traductores en las versiones en castellano e inglés eligen desviarse del original, posiblemente al considerar que la referencia en cuestión no causará el efecto deseado en sus respectivas traducciones, el traductor en alemán decide mantener la afirmación tal cual, a riesgo de que esta resulte forzada o inaccesible para sus lectores. Esto se puede deber a que, al tratarse de cómics, como se mencionó en la introducción, el lector tipo al que se asocia generalmente es el infantil o juvenil, el cual difícilmente podría reconocer la alusión a la obra de Beaumarchais. Podría ser, no obstante, que en determinadas circunstancias la preservación de una unidad fraseológica en obras de gran repercusión contribuyera a la popularización de dicha UF en un contexto lingüístico diferente.

### 3. *El tiempo es oro*

El caso que se comentará a continuación es diametralmente opuesto al grueso de los otros casos incluidos en este estudio ya que se trata de un refrán bien conocido que se emplea tanto en el original como en las otras traducciones consultadas pero que por algún motivo se ha omitido en la versión en castellano.

En *El Escudo Arverno* (1968), Julio César trata de recuperar el escudo que el mítico jefe galo Vercingétorix rindió a sus pies junto con el resto de sus armas como muestra de su rendición para marchar triunfal sobre él ante los rebeldes galos. Paralelamente, Astérix y Obélix se enteran de los planes del César e intentan hacerse con el escudo antes que él. Siguiendo su pista, llegan al negocio de Lucius Coquelus, un fabricante de ruedas que los recibe en su oficina. Tras un primer momento en el que Coquelus teme que los galos hayan ido hasta allí para robarle, Astérix le expone los motivos de su visita, a lo que Coquelus responde: «Como fabricante de ruedas, me gusta redondear las cosas. Hablemos poco y bien: ¿te atreverías a pegarme?» (Goscinnny y Uderzo, 2019c: 29).



Al contrastar esta viñeta con la original, uno descubre que el diálogo tal y como había sido concebido por René Goscinny contiene la modificación del conocido refrán «el tiempo es oro» (Martínez Kleiser, 1989: 693), en el que oro, mediante el uso de una sinécdoque, se sustituye por «sestercios» con el fin de adaptar la paremia al contexto histórico en el que la aventura tiene lugar. Además, al comparar el diálogo con las versiones en inglés y alemán, queda demostrado que la traducción en español es la excepción. De este modo, se puede leer lo siguiente en las respectivas ediciones:

Fr.: *Dans les roues, on estronden affaires. Parlons peu et bien. Le temps c'est des sesterces. Oserais-tu me brutalizer?* (Goscinny y Uderzo, 2007: 31)

Ing.: *I'm a big wheel, you know; in my line time is sestertii, so let's come to the hub of the matter.* (Goscinny y Uderzo, 2005: 31)

Ale.: *In der Radbranche redet man rundheraus, kurz und bündig! Zeit ist Sesterz! Würdest du mir Gewalt antun?* (Goscinny y Uderzo, 2013c: 31)

Por consiguiente, como se ha afirmado, es solamente en la versión en castellano en la que se aprecia una desviación con respecto al original. Esto es destacable porque «el tiempo es oro» probablemente se encuentre entre los refranes más conocidos en varias de las lenguas de Europa. Como prueba de ello está el hecho de que G. Paczolay (2002: 427-29) lo incluye en su refranero políglota *European Proverbs in 55 Languages*, en el que se incluyen versiones del refrán en las cuatro lenguas que aquí se comentan, así como en otras 35 lenguas europeas y 3 asiáticas. Lo que todavía es más digno de mención es que en todas las versiones menos en la inglesa, hay otra referencia a una idea proverbial: la de las bondades de la brevedad. Esta idea se manifiesta en diversos refranes en castellano (ver Martínez Kleiser, 1989: 88) como «Todo lo breve aplace; Bueno y breve, bueno dos veces; Quien abrevia, alevia».

En relación a esto, el traductor en castellano mantiene la alusión en la afirmación «hablemos poco y bien», equivalente al francés «*Parlons peu et bien*» y al alemán «*kurz und bündig*». Por lo tanto, cabría reflexionar sobre si tal vez el traductor en castellano consideró redundante la inclusión de ambas referencias en la

misma intervención y si este es el motivo por el cual decidió omitir el refrán. Otra posibilidad sería la limitación de espacio ya que se ha observado en otras ocasiones que, al ser el apartado gráfico fijo y tener un espacio determinado para la inclusión de los elementos lingüísticos, los traductores a menudo tienen que recurrir a diversas estrategias con el fin de que los diálogos quepan en el espacio dedicado a ellos en los bocadillos. Habría que precisar que este extremo se trata de mera especulación ya que no hay pruebas de que esto sea el motivo y, al menos en apariencia, el espacio no debería ser una razón lo suficientemente relevante como para desviarse tanto del original en un caso en el que se considera que no es necesario. Sea como fuere, sirva este caso para demostrar que lo que aquí se denomina creatividad fraseológica no solo funciona mediante la inserción de refranes donde originalmente no los había sino que también funciona a la inversa y en casos en los que encontramos refranes en la versión original, especialmente aquellos que ha quedado demostrado que existen en las lenguas aquí referidas, el traductor ha decidido omitirlos. Aunque se puede especular sobre el motivo que haya llevado al traductor a proceder así, no se considera que se deba a una carencia de competencia paremiológica, ya que es un refrán de los más conocidos, además de ser de uso actual, como acredita la entrada dedicada a la paremia en el *Refranero Multilingüe*.<sup>5</sup>

#### ***4. Cuando las barbas de tu vecino veas cortar, pon las tuyas a remojar***

*Astérix en la India* (1987) es el cuarto álbum del recientemente fallecido Albert Uderzo<sup>6</sup> en solitario tras la muerte de René Goscinny en 1977. A pesar de los esfuerzos del dibujante a la hora de adoptar también el papel de guionista, la ausencia de su compañero es palpable y se deja notar tanto en lo elaborado de los textos como en la calidad del humor lingüístico característico de la serie, incluso desde un punto de vista fraseológico. Aun así, el vigésimo octavo álbum de la colección resulta uno de los esfuerzos más solventes del dibujante francés. En esta aventura, Ahivá llega a la aldea gala desde la India en busca del bardo Asurance-túrix, objeto recurrente de mofa en toda la serie como se comentó anteriormente, cuya fama de poder hacer llover con su canto ha trascendido hasta el subcontinente indio. En consecuencia, la intención de Ahivá es llevarse al bardo para que cause una lluvia

que acabe con la maldición impuesta por el Gurú Dalekanya, quien ha resuelto que si no llueve en mil y una horas, la princesa Frahazada, hija del Rajá Passayá, ha de ser sacrificada para calmar la ira de los dioses.

Tras un largo viaje en alfombra voladora y diversos acontecimientos, cuando se prevé que los planes del malvado Dalekanya fracasarán por la intervención de los galos, éste exclama «¡Si Ahivá ha dicho la verdad, ya podemos ir poniendo las barbas en remojo!» (Uderzo, 2019a: 30). En este caso se ve cómo el traductor, de forma bastante acertada, hace referencia al refrán «cuando las barbas de tu vecino veas cortar, pon las tuyas a remojar» (Martínez Kleiser, 1989: 243) un refrán que no aparece en ninguna de las otras versiones consultadas al ser probablemente propio del castellano. En las versiones en francés, inglés y alemán, encontramos lo siguiente:

Fr.: *Si Kiçah a dit vrai, les gaulois vont faire couler tous nos projets!* (Uderzo, 2014a: 32)

Ing.: *If Watziznehm is right, those Gauls will put a damper on our plans!* (Uderzo, 2014b: 32)

Ale.: *Wenn Erindjah die Wahrheit gesagt hat, kann es passieren, dass unsere Pläne baden gehen!* (Uderzo, 2013a: 32)

Como se puede observar, no hay rastro del uso de ninguna paremia equivalente en ninguna de las otras versiones. Además, en comparación con lo que se comentó en el apartado anterior sobre la omisión de un refrán popular en la traducción en castellano, la inclusión aquí de la paremia se considera acertada por diversos motivos. Por un lado, la elección parece adecuada ya que, como es característico de la serie, sobre todo bajo sus autores originales, se recurre habitualmente a estereotipos para representar tanto a las diferentes tribus galas como a los pueblos que estos visitan, algo que probablemente resulte incorrecto para lectores contemporáneos y que podría chocar con lo que se considera como políticamente correcto. En este sentido, todos los personajes masculinos indios que aparecen en la historieta tienen barba, de ahí que el refrán escogido parezca especialmente acertado. Por otro lado, al ser el agua un elemento fundamental en el desarrollo de la historia, sobre todo si tenemos en cuenta que son los galos los que la han traído y los que suponen una amenaza para el éxito de los planes de Dalekanya, la conexión establecida por la inclusión del bien

conocido proverbio no desconcierta, como podría suceder en otros casos.

De este modo, si bien el debate entre mantenerse fiel a la creación artística tal y como su autor la había concebido o la conveniencia de realizar ciertas adaptaciones para hacerla más atractiva o accesible para nuevos públicos es una cuestión abierta a diferentes opiniones, en este caso, independientemente de la opinión que se pueda tener al respecto, la elección del traductor resulta natural y, de hecho, puede que al lector en español le resulte perfectamente verosímil. No obstante, parece claro que el refrán incluido aquí es propio del castellano y, a pesar de haber paremias con sentidos equivalentes en todos los idiomas, ninguno incluye los elementos que hacen que este encaje tan bien en el contexto de la historieta.

##### **5. *Le dijo la sartén al cazo: «apártate que me tiznas»***

Una de las peculiaridades de los refranes y que, entre otras características definitorias, los distinguen de otros tipos de fraseologismos, es la posibilidad de someterlos a ciertas modificaciones con respecto a lo que se considera su forma canónica, como ya se ha comentado anteriormente. En el refrán que se va a comentar a continuación, esto sucede con frecuencia, especialmente mediante un proceso de elipsis, siendo relativamente infrecuente su uso en su enunciación completa.<sup>7</sup>

En *Astérix y Latraviata* (2001), el célebre Pompeyo trata de infiltrar a una actriz disfrazada de Falbalá, un personaje que aparece en varias historietas y de la que Obélix está prendado, con el fin de recuperar unas armas suyas que, por avatares del destino, han terminado en posesión de Astérix y Obélix como sendos regalos de cumpleaños por parte de sus padres. Durante el desarrollo de la acción, y tal vez como reflejo del enfrentamiento histórico entre el propio Pompeyo y Julio César, dos legiones romanas se pelean entre sí. Durante esta pugna, un decurión se expresa en los siguientes términos: «¡Ja, ja, ja! ¡Le dijo una cuba a un bidón!» (Uderzo, 2019b: 35). En las respectivas versiones en los otros tres idiomas encontramos lo siguiente:

Fr.: *Ha! Ha! Ha! J'en ricane d'aisance!* (Uderzo, 2001: 37)

Ing.: *While you kick your heels at your own convenience!*  
(Uderzo, 2014c: 37)

Ale.: *Deine eigene stinkt ja III Milia passuum gegen den wind!* (Uderzo, 2013b: 37)

En este caso también se aprecian notables diferencias entre las diversas formas de solventar la dificultad que la adecuada traducción de este pasaje causa a los traductores. Tal como se indica en una nota del autor en el original, Uderzo (2001: 37) plantea un «mal juego de palabras sobre un recipiente desconocido aún».<sup>8</sup> Más exactamente, el juego de palabras en cuestión aprovecha la similitud de los sonidos producidos por la afirmación en francés recogida arriba y la palabra ‘jerrican’, un anglicismo usado en francés que se utiliza para designar a un bidón de gasolina, ‘jerry-can’ en inglés. En consecuencia, y dada la imposibilidad de reproducir dicho juego de palabras en las diferentes lenguas, especialmente en inglés, los traductores tratan el asunto de otras maneras. Por un lado, en las versiones en inglés y alemán se incluyen las expresiones idiomáticas «kick your heels» (Ayto, 2010: 194) y «gegen den Wind stinken» (Schemann y Knight, 2013: 2512) respectivamente; mientras que en castellano, se emplea el refrán anteriormente referido. Así pues, aunque poco tiene que ver la paremia en cuestión con la afirmación original, sí que se mantiene la alusión a tipos de receptáculos, a pesar de ser una conexión un tanto débil la que hay entre ambas versiones.

En cuanto a la paremia propiamente dicha, cabe destacar que existe en términos muy similares en los cuatro idiomas analizados, como se puede comprobar en las versiones recogidas tanto por Gyula Paczolay (2005: 319-21) en su *European Proverbs in 55 Languages* como en el *Refranero Multilingüe*.<sup>9</sup> De este modo, el traductor en castellano parece aprovechar la alusión del juego de palabras original al recipiente para, ante la dificultad de traducirlo manteniendo su sentido, salir airoso de la situación incluyendo un proverbio que generalmente se formula con utensilios de cocina, sometiéndolo a un proceso de modificación para adaptarlo al contexto histórico en el que tiene lugar la historia y evitando caer en un posible anacronismo. Además, el refrán sufre una segunda modificación, muy habitual en el uso de esta paremia como se indicó al inicio de este apartado, omitiendo la segunda mitad.

En suma, se podría aseverar que de las tres versiones comentadas, más allá de la original, la castellana parece ser la que hace una adaptación más acertada ya que incluye un proverbio muy

popular, de uso común y que hace un esfuerzo por preservar, en la medida de lo posible, la conexión con el contenido semántico que se plantea en el original.

### ***Conclusiones***

En el presente estudio se ha tratado de demostrar que, si bien generalmente la fraseología y en este caso las paremias, se considera un elemento de enorme dificultad para su traducción a otros idiomas, esta también dota al traductor de un recurso de gran utilidad para la adaptación de obras extranjeras a una lengua meta, haciendo que estas resulten más cercanas y naturales a los lectores en dicha lengua.

Utilizando como referencia una de las obras de cómic más populares y relevantes en todo el continente europeo, se han analizado algunos casos en los que el traductor en castellano de la mayor parte de la colección publicada hasta la fecha ha hecho uso de refranes para solventar algunas dificultades traductológicas que se le han planteado. Mediante la comparación con otras versiones de la misma obra, parece clara una cierta inclinación por la inclusión de refranes en las adaptaciones al castellano. Además, con la intención de ilustrar el riesgo de caer en inconsistencias cuando el traductor decide desviarse del camino marcado por la obra original, en el apartado número 3 se ha presentado un caso en el que, teniendo la posibilidad de mantener el texto tal cual había sido concebido originalmente, el traductor opta por eliminar un refrán sin que hubiera una necesidad aparente de hacerlo al ser este bien conocido y de uso común en castellano al igual que en el resto de lenguas comentadas. Esto hace que nos cuestionemos el porqué de este proceder cuando ha quedado patente la mencionada inclinación del traductor a incluir refranes para salvar diversas brechas lingüísticas o culturales que con cierta frecuencia se encuentra.

Finalmente, no se debe obviar el hecho de que el género que aquí se ha tratado consta, además del lingüístico, de un componente gráfico que propicia la inclusión de refranes. Estos a menudo cobran sentido en ese contexto visual, lo que hace que se utilicen en un sentido literal que se aparta del sentido figurado con el que generalmente se utilizan en situaciones de comunicación real. Además, en relación a esto, cabe destacar que cuando el traductor recurre a esta estrategia para solventar dificultades que se le plantean, con frecuencia lo realiza mediante alusiones o

modificaciones del refrán en cuestión, siendo la elipsis una de las licencias que se aprecian con una mayor frecuencia. Por consiguiente, y como sucede con infinidad de paremias, el uso de estos en su forma aceptada como canónica resulta menos frecuente.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ver <https://www.asterix-obelix.nl/> consultado el 7 de abril de 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Ver *Refranero Multilingüe* en <https://cvc.cervantes.es/lengua/refranero/Ficha.aspx?Par=58630&Lng=0>. Recuperado el 12 de abril de 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>4</sup> Ver *Refranero Multilingüe* en <https://cvc.cervantes.es/lengua/refranero/Ficha.aspx?Par=58888&Lng=0> consultado el 27 de marzo de 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Ver <https://cvc.cervantes.es/lengua/refranero/ficha.aspx?Par=58695&Lng=0>. Consultado el 28 de marzo de 2020.

<sup>6</sup> El dibujante francés murió mientras este trabajo estaba en fase de redacción, el 25 de marzo de 2020. DEP.

<sup>7</sup> Ver <https://cvc.cervantes.es/lengua/refranero/ficha.aspx?Par=58520&Lng=0>. Consultado el 29 de marzo de 2020.

<sup>8</sup> «*Mauvais jeu de mots sur un recipient encore inconnu*» (Uderzo, 2001: 37).

<sup>9</sup> Ver <https://cvc.cervantes.es/lengua/refranero/ficha.aspx?Par=58520&Lng=0> consultado el 30 de marzo de 2020.

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GEORGIOS TSERPES

“CLEANLINESS IS HALF OF NOBILITY”: PROVERBS AS  
MEANS OF PERSUASION FOR CITIZEN’S AWARENESS.  
THE CITY OF ATHENS CLEANING PROGRAM EXAMPLE

**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to stress the use of proverbs as a process of communication strategy and means of persuasion in the context of the City of Athens cleaning program. The use of proverbs as an element of collective experience that makes them generally accepted in conjunction with their underlying message, makes them a promotional tool of this initiative.

**Keywords:** proverbs, communication, persuasion, contradiction.

***Introductory remarks***

In this paper we will try to highlight the use of proverbs as part of the City of Athens cleaning program by replacing the garbage bins during the last months of 2020. In particular, what is interesting is the use of proverbs as a communication strategy to the citizens in order to become part of the program themselves and to raise the level of awareness regarding the cleanliness of the city.

After describing the phenomenon by mentioning and analyzing the proverbs used, we will try to highlight some aspects that concern how folklore and especially proverbs are used in various contexts, proving their potential and adaptability in each case, while at the same time this whole process is a playful communicative strategy.

***The City of Athens cleaning program***

As a resident of the municipality of Athens, I could not help but notice the replacement of many garbage bins in the city in the past months. The fact for me could have gone unnoticed if there was not a poster on every trash can with a proverb or a tongue twister written on it.

The common feature of proverbial texts is that most of them include the word “clean” and its derivatives, emphasizing the responsibility of the citizen, while other proverbs are extended (pro-

verbial prolongement) to convey the message that something is changing in the city in the field of cleanliness.

In particular the texts used are the following:

1. *Η καθαριότητα είναι μισή αρχοντιά* (I kathariotita einai misi arhondia) – Cleanliness is half of nobility (image #1).
2. *Καθαρός ουρανός αστραπές δε φοβάται* (Katharos ouranos astrapes de fovatai) – Clear sky is not afraid of lightning (image #2).
3. *Καθαρά και ξάστερα* (Kathara kai xastera) – Clean and sharp (image #3).
4. *Ο καλός γείτονας, κάνει τον καλό νοικοκύρη* (O kalos geitonas kanei ton kalo noikokyri) – Good neighbor makes a good landlord (image #4).
5. *Άσπρη πέτρα ξέξασπρη και απ' τον ήλιο ξέξασπρότερη* (Aspri petra kseksaspri kai apo ton ilio kseksasproteri) – White stone whitewashed and whiter than the sun (image #5).
6. *Βρέξει, χιονίσει, η Αθήνα θα καθαρίσει* (Vreksei, hionisei, i Athina tha katharisei) – Either it rains, either it snows, Athens will be cleansed (image #6).
7. *Η Αθήνα αλλάζει... ξεκάθαρα* (I Athina allazei... ksekathara) – Athens is changing... clearly (image #7).

The first text is a well-known proverb and perhaps the most clear and relevant to the intended message. Cleanliness is everyone's responsibility, so trash cans should be used.

The second text is also a well-known proverb, which refers to clear conscience: “innocent, moral and honest people have no reason to be afraid of slander, control or criticism of others” (Kouvelas, 2018: 1063). Apparently, the proverb is not related to cleanliness except for the fact that the word “clean” is used. However, the reference to the concept of pure conscience raises issues of awareness regarding cleanliness and protection of the environment.

The third text is used in the sense of honesty in words and deeds, without implication and twists (Kouvelas, 2018: 1063). In this case, too, we can argue that the question of liability arises, as no excuses should be used regarding cleanliness.

The fourth text is an anti-proverb of the proverb the bad neighbor makes the good landlord. The bad neighbor “... does paradoxi-

cally a good thing with his behavior, that is, he forces the householder to have his own things and not to borrow from him, to take care of what is his own and not to harm the other. In other words, anyone who has bad neighbors cannot count on their help and is therefore forced to become self-sufficient” (Kouvelas, 2018: 1558).

It is interesting that this anti-proverb is used. A message aimed at raising awareness around an issue would be paradoxical to use the bad neighbor model, which serves as an example to be avoided. On the contrary, the use of the word “good” may imply that we should all take our share of responsibility for the cleanliness of the city and therefore act as a role model for each other.

The fifth text is a tongue twister and not a proverb. However, we consider that it is worthy of attention as on the one hand it is a widely known and used twister, on the other hand the main weight bears the word “white”, which for Greek folk culture is synonymous to happiness, favor etc. Consequently, it refers to cleanliness and its benefits.

In the sixth text the phenomenon of prolongement / enlargement of the proverb is observed. Prolongement is about “in-creasing a proverb’s text, in order to express it more fully and intensely, by defining it narratively, locally, temporally, comparatively, etc.” (Doulaveras, 2010: 44). The proverb (Either it rains, either it snows) means that something is happening or will happen in any case and specifically here that Athens will cleanse.

The seventh text is not proverbial, however we chose to refer to it as in a way it summarizes all the previous ones and states more clearly the desired goal of the Municipality. And in this case, however, it is interesting that an etymologically related word of the adjective “katharos” (clean) is used: the word “ksekathara” (clearly) which is related to clarity and honesty.

### ***Context and communication: Proverbial use as a means of persuasion***

Proverbs are essentially a rhetorical means of persuasion, as well as highly successful communication strategies, as is folklore in general. Dan Ben-Amos defines folklore as “artistic communication is small groups” (Ben-Amos, 1971: 13).

On the occasion of this definition, we consider that at this point a brief reference should be made on how the concept of communication is utilized in folklore studies. Ben-Amos in his attempt to

define folklore, tried to identify on a social level the process that could best be described as “folk culture” and came up with the concept of **communication**.

Communication can be verbal, visual, musical or kinetic. The term artistic should not be understood as evaluative but as descriptive, thus highlighting the aesthetic dimension of folklore. Finally, the reference to small groups, refers to face-to-face communication in an event in which the performers and their audience share the same symbolism and therefore understand each other, so they communicate (Ben-Amos, 2014: 17-18).

The short types of conversational genres allow the delimitation of groups themselves (Abrahams, 1968: 58). Proverbs in particular are uttered as impersonal communication strategies (Arewa & Dundes, 1964: 70) that are used without incurring social costs – despite the fact that they are evaluative (Blehr, 1973: 245), their judgment of people and things is attributed to the “folk”, to the collective experience and is therefore commonly accepted. At the same time, they place a specific situation in a more general, repetitive situation. Their success lies in the fact that the listener will understand the advice that is hidden in the proverb (Lau, Tokofsky & Winick, 2004: 7).

What is important, then, is the way in which the proverb is addressed to the listener and the message it conveys (that is, its function). These two parameters are especially important if we consider that proverbs can work in a specific communication context while at the same time they are mediators between society and its system of values (Jason, 1971: 617, 622).

And in the phenomenon we are dealing with, it seems that proverbs are used as communication strategies in order to promote a political agenda “by giving a folksy touch with which people can identify” (Mieder, 2004: 139). The same applies for anti-proverbs and prolongements of the proverbs as “many of them contain political and socioeconomic messages while maintaining the structure and some of the basic wording of the original proverb” (Mieder, 2004: 251).

However, all of the above is about oral communication. In the proverbs we examine in this paper we observe that the written speech is used, something that brings to the fore the issue of written and oral speech in folk tradition.

Language is duplicitous, spoken and written. The human tendency to narration has its roots in orality, but this disposition did not stop even with the invention of writing. Besides, folk literature includes not only products of the oral tradition, but also texts which were written by the carriers of tradition themselves. Therefore, folk tradition should not be considered as strictly oral (Meraklis, 2007: 11-12).

In addition, this strategy used by the Municipality has not to do with small groups but with a wide range of people. That is because the proverbs used are widely-known, on a national scale, so the message is very easy to be perceived. Thus, oral and written speech are intertwined.

Finally, we consider the use of proverbs to have been done in a playful way, due to the fact that proverbial texts are known to the citizens. This fact refers to the thoughts of the Dutch historian of culture, Johan Huizinga, about play as a cultural phenomenon, as he connects language with play, in the sense that all major archetypal activities are governed by it: "Behind every abstract expression there lie the boldest of metaphors, and every metaphor is a play upon words. Thus in giving expression to life man creates a second, poetic world alongside the world of nature" (Huizinga, 1949: 4).

One of the main characteristics of proverbs is metaphor and their form has a poetic dimension which lies next to reality. So even garbage throwing may be poetic!

### ***Conclusion***

The use of proverbs as a means of persuasion and conveying a message to the general public in a way that is familiar, but at the same time playful, is a widespread and frequent phenomenon. In this way one observes that proverbs are governed by a capacity that makes them useful in each occurrence and therefore are always current.

But beyond the dimension of communication and persuasion, we believe that the proverbial phrases analyzed in this paper simultaneously express a deeper dimension, a worldview that is not limited to conveying the message of cleanliness of the city and the effort to become citizen shareholders and members of this initiative.

The choice of proverbs that are dominated by the words "clean", "cleanliness" and their derivatives and their inscription on posters placed on trash cans, which are actually intended to place

something “dirty” there, the waste, that is, leads to the conclusion that the opposed relationship between cleanliness and dirt is emphasized here.

However, a careful examination leads to the perception that the relationship is not opposite, but rather complementary. The bin as an object in which we place something “filthy” contributes to the cleanliness of the city. Therefore, what is implied on a deeper level is how the insignificant becomes important and the “inside” (contents of the bin) keeps the “outside” clean. While, then, it seems that everything is based on basic contrasts (dirty vs clean, inside vs out, important vs insignificant) the impression is created that things can be perceived on the basis of some simplistic contrasts, but in essence complement each other creating contradictions. Is that so weird? Probably not. Besides, contradiction is the main feature of proverbs that express the contradictions of life itself.

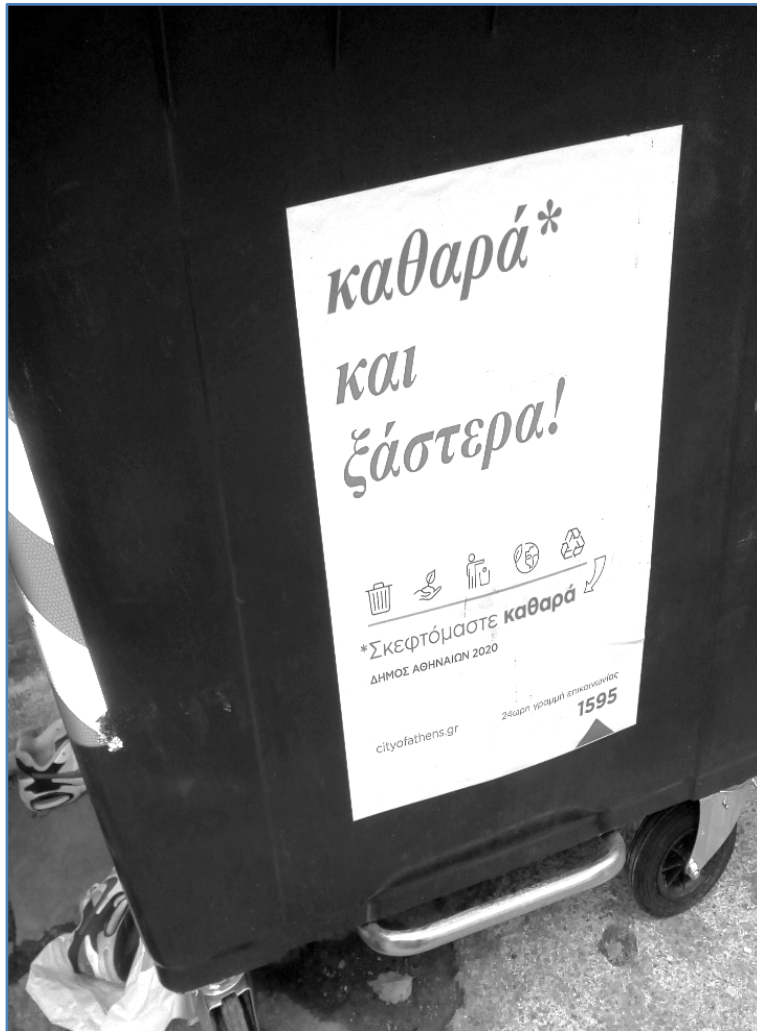
*Image 1*



*Image 2*



*Image 3*



*Image 4*

*Image 5*



*Image 6*

*Image 7*



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MANOLIS G. VARVOUNIS AND GEORGIOS KOUZAS

GREEK PROVERBIAL PHRASES FROM MODERN SATIRICAL PARAPHRASES OF TEXTS AND TITLES OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

**Abstract:** This study presents the phenomenon of satirical paraphrase of ecclesiastical texts, some of which acquired in the passage of time proverbial use in the daily life and communication of the Greeks. The study is focused on: a) proverbial phrases from corruption of liturgical phrases and texts, b) proverbial phrases from the corruption of ecclesiastical administrative titles of Metropolises and c) metropolitans proverbial phrases from the corruption of hymns and prayers.

**Keywords:** proverbial phrases, religious folklore, church, ecclesiastical texts, everyday communication, humour, indiscretion.

**Introduction**

Professor Dimitrios S. Loukatos,<sup>1</sup> in a series of studies, especially with his dissertation,<sup>2</sup> systematically studied the phenomenon of the use of phrases from the Holy Scripture and ecclesiastical texts as proverbs and proverbial phrases by the Greek people. Indeed, in one of his studies he dealt with the phenomenon of satirical paraphrase of ecclesiastical texts, some of which acquired in the passage of time proverbial use in the daily life and communication of the Greeks.

Similar examples have also sporadically been included in their collections both by Mary Koukoule,<sup>3</sup> regarding modern Greek profanity, and George Melikis,<sup>4</sup> referring to outspoken songs of the Greek carnival, which paraphrase holy texts, psalms and hymns of the Greek Orthodox Church and its seasonal rituals. Continuing with this research, we will be occupied with the modern Greek proverbial phrases, which were formed from satirical and, as a rule, outspoken paraphrases of texts, titles and phrases, which are used both in cult and in the administration and daily life of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Before presenting the samples that have been accumulated, it should be noted that these are not misunderstandings and

paraphrases of texts due to ignorance of the older form of the Greek language in which they are articulated. We have to do with intentional variations, which often include outspoken elements, which were made aiming at satire, and which survived in the modern daily verbal communication of the Greek people with a proverbial character.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is a modern genre, which is originating and is under formation, and this is why it is important to examine it here from a folkloric and proverbial aspect.

### ***Research methodology***

The samples that are quoted above result from modern fieldwork based research<sup>6</sup> and recording, which was carried out from 2016 until 2018 at the Municipality of Peristeri, Attica, the island Municipality of Samos at Eastern Aegean, and the continental Municipality of Komotini, in Greek Thrace. Their intersection shows that this is a phenomenon with Pan-Hellenic dissemination and urban origin, since similar examples were not recorded in villages and towns of the Greek territory. In our relevant questions to the informants we insisted that they informed us both regarding the proverbial phrases and the social and cultural occasions where they are used, in order to also examine the social impact of proverbial speech.

In addition, we made an effort to cross the ethnographic material with similar examples from the Internet,<sup>7</sup> since it is widely known nowadays that the Internet is an ideal space for the creation, recreation and dissemination of the types of popular speech.

### ***The results of the research***

However, let's see the categories in which this new Greek proverbial material can be classified, with characteristic examples per case:

#### ***A. Proverbial phrases from corruption of liturgical phrases and texts***

1. *Ειρήνη πάσι – Το κεφάλι σου να σπάσει* = Peace upon everyone – May you break your head [and with the phenomenon of proverbial extension: *το κεφάλι σου να σπάσει / και να γίνει περιβόλι / να χορεύουν οι διαβόλοι* = may you break your head / and it becomes a garden / for evil creatures to dance].



In case of challenging the good intentions and honesty of each mediator.

2. *Κύριε ελέησον – Ο παπάς πίνει Carnation* = Lord, have mercy – The priest is drinking Carnation [from the famous brand of standardized milk widely circulating in the Greek market].

In cases of clichés and words without an essential result.

3. *Και εις τους αιώνας των αιώνων – Και εις τας χελώνας των χελώνων ~ Και εις τους χειμώνας των χειμώνων* = And now and forever (in the ages of the ages) – And in the turtles of the turtles ~ And in the winters of the winters.

In case of hearing words that do not have particular significance, but are spoken conventionally.

4. *Και ελέησον ημάς – Και ελέησον κιμάς* = And have mercy on us – And have mercy on minced meat.

In cases of challenging the truth and the accuracy of the words that have preceded.

5. *Μετά πνευμάτων δικαίων τετελειωμένων – Μετά συσκευών μοντέρνων και εντοιχισμένων* = With just spirits that have passed – With modern and built-in appliances.

In cases of challenging established mentalities, perceptions and behaviors.

6. *Ζώον έντιμον – Ζώον έντομον / τον ορθοτομούντα – τον κέρματα μετρούντα* = Honest animal – Insect animal / the one who cuts in equal parts – the one who counts coins.

In cases of challenging the role, the honesty, the integrity and the offer of a public figure or a spiritual and ecclesiastical leader.

7. *Αμήν – Αμήν και κόντρα αμήν / κι ώσπον να βγει ο μην / θα έχουμε και πάλι την δραχμήν* = Amen – Amen and again amen / and until the month passes / we will have drachmas again.

On the occasion of the rumors regarding the exit of Greece from the Eurozone and the return to drachmas as national currency during the economic crisis in Greece (2010 and onwards). It is said in

cases of challenging the truth of what is heard or repeated as declarations by politicians and public figures.

*B. Proverbial phrases from the corruption of ecclesiastical administrative titles of Metropolises and Metropolitans*

1. *Λαρίσης – Θα λαχταρίσεις* = Of Larissa – You will crave for something.

In cases of intense disappointments. It was occasioned by episodes against the Metropolitans of Larissa by followers of the overthrown Metropolitan of Larissa, Theologos, in 1974.

2. *Λάμπης και Σφακίων – Λάσπης και Σφαγείων* = Of Lampi and Sfakia – of Mud and Slaughterhouses.

In cases of important and rapid changes that cause the opposite of the anticipated result.

3. *Θηβών και Λεβαδείας – Ο φυγών εκ Λεβαδείας / Θυμών και Λαιμαργίας* = Of Thiva and Levadia – The one leaving from Levadia / Anger and Gluttony.

In cases of intense and rapid changes towards the worse. It was occasioned by the coexistence of two former and one active Metropolitans of the specific Metropolis during the '80s.

4. *Τρίκης και Σταγών – Φρίκης και Αναστεναγμών* – Of Trikki and Stages – of Horror and Sighs.

In case of reversal of the existing and prevailing of new unfavorable conditions either at a social, work or family, or at a personal level.

5. *Αμασείας – Αμασίας* = Of Amasseia – Inability to chew.

In cases of poverty and economic distress. It was created by the similar sound between the name of the Metropolis that was based in the city of Amasseia in Pontos and the inability to chew due to lack of food, which entails hunger.

*C. Proverbial phrases from the corruption of hymns and prayers*

1. *Πάτερ ημών – Το βρακί του Σολομών / ο εν τοις ουρανοίς – το βρακί της μαμμής / αγιασθήτω το όνομά σου – το βρακί της μαμμιάς σου / ελθέτω η Βασιλεία σου – το βρακί της θείας σου* = Our Father – Solomon's underpants / who art in heaven – the midwife's underpants / hallowed by thy name – your mother's underpants / thy kingdom come – your aunt's underpants.

In cases of satire of the prevailing class and point of view and expression of challenging regarding the common assumptions of society.

2. *Χριστός Ανέστη – Ο παππάς εχέσθη* = The Christ has risen – The priest shitted himself [and with the phenomenon of proverbial extension: *κι από τη λαχτάρα του / σηκώθηκ' η ψωλάρα του* = and due to his craving / he had an erection].

In cases that small stimuli cause big and rapid changes, or when unforeseen and unexpected changes are observed.

On the other hand, a small research in posts and websites online showed that some of these phrases are repeated in certain posts of texts. This shows that they are proverbial phrases that are rapidly disseminated through the Internet and the various social media, often changing their meaning or getting other conceptual dimensions, depending on the environment and the context of each post or online discourse.<sup>8</sup>

The Greek people often jokes about issues of faith and ecclesiastical persons or rituals, producing facetious narrations and anecdotes, corruptions of hymns etc.<sup>9</sup> As we have ascertained on the occasion of a previous study regarding the anecdotes referring to priests,<sup>10</sup> these do not have the sense of secularism or of the direct challenge of the Orthodox Church and its clergy, but are possibly jokes and indications of the exceptional intimacy Greeks feel for the orthodox faith and the Orthodox Church, its administrative structure and hierarchy, and its rituals.

The formation of these modern proverbial phrases is based on the change and replacement of phonetically identical words in the initial ecclesiastical phrase and on the selection of words based on the rhyme to be accomplished, given that these are verses that rhyme.<sup>11</sup> This conforms to the ascertainment of Professor

Aristides Doulaveras<sup>12</sup> that most Greek proverbs belong to artistic, popular verses, and shows that in the modern Greek proverbial material the main terms and the fundamental requirements that determined the Greek proverbial material and traditional culture continue. In addition, these proverbial phrases are often extended, according to a known phenomenon in the proverbial material, which Dimitrios Loukatos<sup>13</sup> specified as "extension of proverbs." And these in turn show that a structural and morphological continuity exists in popular creation, at least regarding the techniques and the means of expression.

However, the outspoken expression of some of these phrases is also frequent by Greek people, who use similar sexual verbal representations and referral in their daily speech.<sup>14</sup> The phenomenon of popular profanity is known in the Greek popular culture, both in the daily verbal communication of people and in various types of the artistic popular speech.<sup>15</sup> Obscene proverbs, which are widely used in daily life, are also frequent. Therefore, the proverbial phrases that are recorded and studied in this paper fall into the category of Greek popular profanity, and, in this sense, continue the equivalent Greek popular tradition, in which they are transformed depending on the prevailing social, economical, and cultural conditions, and are expressed through new means.<sup>16</sup>

On the other side, based on the explanations that were given above for each case, it results that these modern proverbial phrases are, as a general rule, used in cases of challenging, reversal, violent change, rapid modification and intense differentiation in terms of the conditions that prevailed until then. Therefore, the sense of the reversal of the secular class is expressed proverbially through the corruption and the parody of ecclesiastical texts and titles, i.e. of a material that mainly expresses and shapes the sense of the secular class.

Therefore, what was aforementioned and ascertained may not be integrated either in the form of blasphemy as negative management of religiousness by the people or in the practice of secularism as practical challenge and opposition to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, but have a character of opposition and challenging of meta-data. A character that resembles during periods of crisis the one being experienced by the Greek society since the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century.

Therefore, this is modern proverbial and phraseological material that expresses the Greek society of today. A material that is formed and transformed in front of our eyes, and which is studied by the modern Greek folklore, monitoring its potential evolutions or extensions, in the framework of the study of the modern Greek popular culture and its manifestations.

The existence of anti-proverbs was not ascertained in the proverbial and phraseological material that was quoted above. We do not have here the phenomenon of transformation and anew use of older proverbial material, which gets a new content or is adjusted to new conditions, social and cultural, which are imposed by modernity. On the contrary, in the case of the proverbial phrases that are studied here, the impact of the cultural procedure of secularization, in the sense of the secular use of holy and liturgical texts or titles of ecclesiastical offices, i.e. elements that are traced to religious life and the ritual practice of the Orthodox Church, is ascertained to be intense.

Hereto, it should be noted that several aspects of secularization have already been studied regarding issues relating to popular religious rituals, but the respective impact on types of the Greek popular artistic speech has not been an object of study, as it happens here. It is the phenomenon of the desacralization<sup>17</sup> of these phrases and titles, which, in their first use, are distinguished for their holiness, and the rendering in those of proverbial meaning, which is based on variations of words –usually based on the similar sounds of the initial ones with the ones that replace them– with intense satirical and, sometimes, outspoken elements.

On the other side, it should be noted that these specific proverbial phrases usually circulate and are used in a relatively narrow and closed environment, consisting of people, clergy or secular ones, who have a direct relationship with the Greek Orthodox Church and its daily life.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, they do not experience universal dissemination and use by the Greek people, but they survive within a narrow circle of individuals, constituting part of their daily communication and, sometimes, being used as signs, since, if they are told to people outside this circle, they will not become understood easily.

Therefore, these are proverbial phrases with almost sign use and conceptual signage, and this makes their tracing, as well as their recording and interpretation, even more difficult. Indeed,

sometimes they are connected with specific facts of recent and modern Greek ecclesiastical life and history, as these are recorded in the brief explanatory notes accompanying the samples that were quoted above. In any case, they show that new proverbial phrases are not only produced in everyday life environments and environments of marginal social groups, as indicated by El. Petropoulos,<sup>19</sup> or even in environments of low social prestige, as indicated by G. Kouzas<sup>20</sup> but also in the ecclesiastical environment, which presents specific social and cultural characteristics that differentiate it significantly from the aforementioned.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>A. Doulaveras, "Demetrios Loukatos as a paremiologist" *Proverbium*, 20 (2003), pp.133-158.

<sup>2</sup>D. Loukatos, *La Bible dans le Parler Proverbial du Peuple Grec*, Paris 1950.

<sup>3</sup>M. Koukoule, *Greek Indiscretion*, Athens 20193.

<sup>4</sup>G. Melikis, "Andrika Mounata". *Greek Carnival Songs*, Athens 2000.

<sup>5</sup>D. Loukatos, "Que Dieu Nous Garde de... Proverbes sur les Personnes ou les Choses Dangereuses", *Proverbium Finnoise* 15 (1970), pp.72-74.

<sup>6</sup>E. Tonkin, "Participant Observation", in R. F. Ellen (ed.), *Ethnographic Research. A guide to general conduct*, Academic Press, London-San Diego 200310, pp. 216-219.

<sup>7</sup>Al. Kapaniaris, *Digital Foklore and Education*, Volos, 2017.

<sup>8</sup>M. Gasouka – X. Foulidi, *Aspects of Ethnographic Research in Greek Folklore Studies*, Athens, 2017, pp 23-24.

<sup>9</sup>M. Al. Alexiadis – M. Varvounis, *Obscene Greek Foklore. An analytic Bibliography*, Athens 2013, pp 10-12.

<sup>10</sup>M. Varvounis, "The clergy as an object of satire in folk myth", *Laographia* 40 (2004), pp. 109-129.

<sup>11</sup>D. Loukatos, *Contemporary Folklore*, Athens 1963, pp. 17-20, 44-47.

<sup>12</sup>Ar. Doulaveras, *Modern Greek Proverbial Discourse*, Thessaloniki, 2010, pp. 75-77.

<sup>13</sup>D. Loukatos, "Citations Proverbiales", *Proverbium Finnoise* 20 (1972), p.752.

<sup>14</sup>M. Varvounis, *Obscene and Scurrility in Folk Tradition*, Athens, 2007.

<sup>15</sup>M. Meraklis, *Greek Folklore: Social Establishment – Custom and Practices – Folk Art*, ed. Kardamitsa, Athens 2011, pp. 303-307.

<sup>16</sup>M. Al. Alexiadis, *Printed Media and Folk Culture*, A. Kardamitsa/Institute of the Book, Athens 2011. M. Al. Alexiadis, *Printed Advertising Texts and Folk Culture*, Armos, Athens 2014.

<sup>17</sup>M. Varvounis, *An Introduction to Religious Folklore*, vol. 1, Athens, pp. 25-35.

<sup>18</sup> M. Meraklis, *Greek Folklore: Social Establishment – Custom and Practices – Folk Art*, ed. Kardamitsa, Athens 2011, pp.44-45.

<sup>19</sup> M. Varvounis – G. Kouzas, *An Introduction to Greek Urban Folklore*, Athens, 2019, pp.244-250.

<sup>20</sup> G. Kouzas, *The beggars in the City. Organization - Survival Strategies – Identities*, Athens, 2017.

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JUWEN ZHANG

“OLDER GINGER IS SPICIER”: LIFE-VIEWS ON OLD AGE  
AND AGING IN CHINESE PROVERBS

**Abstract:** While proverbial expressions have the commonality as the “salt” of human cultures around the world, this salt has many nuances in its flavor. Each of these flavors contains its local specialty, and together they make our life diverse and joyful. Those specialties are the verbal reflections of the fundamental beliefs and values in different cultures. In this regard, exploring Chinese proverbs in general, and proverbs about old age and aging in particular, helps understand the essence of Chinese culture. Such an understanding is urgent in an age of global communication, where stories of conflict also increasingly occupy our attention. With this conviction, the author first outlines the history of Chinese proverb collections and studies, then examines a specific proverb, and subsequently concludes by connecting and analyzing the Chinese proverbs about old age and aging and the four life-views that reveal the essence of Chinese culture, with the emphasis on the polytheist/inclusive belief system and its practical expressions in everyday life.

**Keywords:** paremiology, old age, aging, belief system, values, everyday life, Chinese proverb

***1. Introduction***

The primary goal of this essay is to explore the Chinese views of old age and aging through the proverb “older ginger is spicier,”<sup>1</sup> and to propose a theoretical framework for interpreting the connection between Chinese proverbs and the fundamental beliefs and values in Chinese culture. To do so, this essay first sketches the present state of proverb studies in China – mainly in the field of folklore studies. Secondly, it examines the traditional and contemporary concepts and proverbs about old age in Chinese history. Third, this essay focuses on the origin, transformation, and current circulation of the proverb in discussion. Finally, this essay argues that Chinese proverbs about old age express the four life-views which are rooted in the fundamental beliefs and values in Chinese

culture. This study is expected to shed light on Chinese cultural values in contemporary global and cross-cultural communication.

This essay is my first probe into the subject of Chinese proverbs, and it arises out of a commitment to understand Chinese culture from its roots, and especially in cross-cultural context. The central thought is that there is a dynamic force in the transmission of traditions containing two intertwining aspects of vitality and validity (Zhang 2009), and that there is a cultural mechanism of self-healing through the means of traditionalization and historicization (Zhang 2017). Further, these ideas are shown in the adaptation of local and imported folktales (Zhang 2014) and fairy tales (2019), as well as in the integration of disciplinary paradigms (Zhang 2018, 2020a, 2020b).

The motivation for this effort is four-fold: 1) comparative consideration of the evidence in Wolfgang Mieder's essay on "Age Is Just a Number";<sup>2</sup> 2) excitement of finishing translating and editing a collection (in Chinese) of the essays by Wolfgang Mieder;<sup>3</sup> 3) a long standing interest in funeral rituals and *rites de passage*,<sup>4</sup> and 4) personal reflection to the process of aging. The evidences used here are from collections in Chinese by Chinese scholars. In addition, this essay is expected to contribute to the studies of folklore and aging in general because it is "only recently have researchers begun to examine how folk traditions can play an important part in making one's senior years a positive experience and helped to change the prevailing negative view of aging" (Lockwood 2018: 95), and attention is given to "creative aging" from folkloristic perspective (Higgins 2018: 27).

As of now, the number of published studies of Chinese proverbs, in both Chinese and other languages, is small relative to studies of other folkloric genres.<sup>5</sup> Given the nature of this essay and the length limit, I have decided to treat the subject of "the translations and studies of Chinese proverbs" in a separate article. In brief, here are significant stages in the study of Chinese proverbs in European languages:

a) the stage of philological works by the missionaries prior to the 1930s, which included a number of translations and studies (Wilkinson 1761; Davis 1822; Perny 1869; Moule 1874; Lister 1874-1875; Scarborough 1875; Dawson-Gröne 1911; Brace 1916; Van Oost 1918; Plopper 1926; Edwards 1926), and with some analytical studies (Smith 1902; Hart 1937);

b) the stage of limited works between the 1930s and 1980s (Chang 1957; Mateo 1971-1972; Eberhard 1967, 1985; Lee 1979, 1981; Ting 1972; Sun 1981; Hermann 1984; Kordas 1987), but with some academic probes from different disciplinary perspectives;

c) the stage of a surge of publications since 1990s, mostly in the forms of collections or dictionaries (e.g., Kordas 1990; Weng 1992; Yan 1995; Paczolay 1997; Lau 1995; Osterbrauck 1996; Wang 1996; Heng and Zheng 1998; Lin and Schalk 1998; Huang 1998; Clements 2001; Rohsenow 2001; Mah 2002; Rohsenow 2002; Herzberg and Herzberg 2012; Jiao and Stone 2014; Zhou 2016), but with some specific topical studies like proverbs about women (Zhang 1992), power (Park 1998), and face value (Yan 1995).

Those previous works have pried open the lid on a treasure trove of Chinese proverbs, even though there have not been enough theoretical studies to establish a “field” of paremiological studies of Chinese proverbs. Nevertheless, these translations have mesmerized anyone interested in proverbs, because “In no country does the proverb flourish more abundantly than in China,” as noted by a scholar of Chinese literature (Hart 1937: xix). Further, “Even more important, however, is their [Chinese proverbs’] value as exhibitions of Chinese modes of thought,” as a missionary in China observed (Smith 1902:6). Indeed, more than 7 million proverbs were collected all over China in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, as further discussed below.

To establish a framework for this probe, I propose that the developmental history of Chinese proverbs be seen through four chronological stages,<sup>6</sup> and that these four stages also represent the four major sources of Chinese proverbs, which I would call “four strands of Chinese proverbs.”<sup>7</sup> Of course, it is impossible to treat these four stages/sources separately because most of the current proverbs have evolved through different stages and changed in form and/or meaning, with some even gaining opposite meanings of their early forms as “counter-proverbs,” or being twisted with different words to create different meanings for different purposes as “anti-proverbs,” as will be seen in our proverb here, “older ginger is spicier.”

***Stage and Source One: Classical Period (before the 7<sup>th</sup> century).***

While the Oracle Bone Inscriptions (fl. 1300 - 1000 BCE) contain some phrases that are related to the much later proverbial expressions, the overwhelming majority of contemporary Chinese proverbs are from written classics. It was also the time when writing styles were standardized and the technology of paper-making and printing became mature, and when different schools of cosmic, philosophical and religious thoughts took root, such as Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Legalism, or other schools. For example, more than 8,300 proverbs and proverbial expressions are identified from hundreds of classical works and documents during this period and the following pre-modern period (Wen 1989, first two volumes).

The most significant collectanea during this period include the following, to mention only a few. The *Book of Songs (Shi Jing)*, which is known to be edited by Confucius (551 – 479 BCE) contains some proverbs that are still used today. For example, these two proverbs from the chapter of Folksongs:

一日不见，如三秋(兮)	A day without seeing (him) is like three autumns!
投我以木桃，报之以琼瑶	When I am presented with a peach, I return a jade pendant.

This second expression was transformed into a more literary form in a different piece in the chapter of Greater Odes (to the Kingdom by the literati):

投我以桃，报之以李	Present me a peach, I return a plum. (He who gives me a peach shall be rewarded a plum from me.)
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As time went by, this form was further evolved into the unique proverbial expression in the fixed-idiom form of four-character (*chengyu*), as in this one:

投桃报李	Receive a peach, return a plum.
------	---------------------------------

Still further, more variants are developed from this metaphor, and they contain more ethical meaning than in the earlier songs of love:

人敬我一尺，我敬人一丈	He who respects me once will be respected ten times (from me).
滴水之恩当以涌泉相报	A favor of a water drop is to be returned with a flowing spring.

Some recent studies have paid attention to those classics as sources of proverbs (Wang 2015; Sun 2013; Huang 2015; Yue 2015; Xu 1984; Wang 2010). *Lun Heng* (by Wang Chong 27-97) and *Fengsu Tongyi* (by Ying Shao 153?-196) are two such classics (Liu 2009; Wang and Gong 2014). *Shui Jing Zhu* (*Commentary on the Water Classic*, by Li Daoyuan 466?-527) particularly recorded many regional customs and weather proverbs (Xu 2009).

Proverbs related to agricultural production and weather, however, undoubtedly take the majority of the entire Chinese proverb repertoire, given that the history and culture of China are substantially based on agriculture. In the four most important agriculture books,<sup>8</sup> there are numerous weather and agriculture related proverbs and proverbial expressions (Han 2015; Tian 2009).<sup>9</sup> For example, in one of the four books, *Qi Min Yao Shu* of the sixth century, there are not only agriculture proverbs based on experience and wisdom, but these proverbs are also integrated into Confucian ethical values:

耕而不耨，不如作暴	Plowing without harrowing is worse than damaging.
耕锄不以水旱息功	Plowing and hoeing, shining or raining.
顺天时，量地利，则用力少而成功多；任情返道，劳而无获。	Following the celestial timing and measuring the earthly advantage, there is more success with less strength. Following emotional mood against the Way, hard work yields no harvest.

Also from one of the key Confucian classics *Mencius* (by Mencius 372?-289 BCE) are these examples of integrating values into those sayings:

五谷者，种之美者也；  
苟为不熟，不如稊稗。  
夫仁亦在乎熟之而已矣。

It is wonderful to grow the five chief grains, but if they are not ripe, they are worse than other low-level grains. So is the virtue of humanism, its value lies in its maturity.

天时不如地利，地利不如人和。

Fortunate timing is not equal to advantageous location; advantageous location is not equal to humane harmony.

Regarding family life as a key venue for social and ethical education in China, there has been a long history of “Family Books” (*jia xun*) as a category of Chinese literature and moral teaching. For example, *The Family Book of the Yans* (*Yan Shi Jia Xun*) by Yan Zhi Tui (531-591) used many proverbs by quoting “the ancients say” or “the proverb goes” (Yan 2011). In his preface, he said similar “family books” have been many, but he still wanted to write one for his own family, even though it may seem to be repetitious of the old sayings, by saying:

屋下架屋，床上施床

Build a room under a roof; set a bed on top of a bed.

In talking about the importance of teaching young children to love learning and be ethical, he first quoted Confucius’s words:

少成若天性，习惯如自然

Teach the young the habit (of loving learning), their habit becomes natural.

and then quoted an ancient “proverb”:

教妇初来，教儿婴孩。

Teach a wife when she first enters the house, teach children when they are babies.

In punishing young children for their wrongdoing to make them remember the lesson, he said that bamboo sticks could be used to spank them, by saying:

父母威严而有慈，则子女畏慎而生孝矣	Strict and compassionate parents make children respectful with awe and filial.
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This idea was later developed into:

慈威并济方得良子	Compassion and strictness together bring up a good son.
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Today, these expressions are still common, with a more colloquial sentence structure:

严父出孝子	A strict father brings up a filial son.
棍棒底下出孝子	A filial son grows out of sticks.

To encourage learning, he quoted the proverbs from a story written four centuries earlier:

Duke Ping of the Jin State (fl. 6<sup>th</sup> c. BCE) once asked Shi Kuang, a sagely master of music, “I am 70 years old. I have a desire to learn, but I am afraid it is too late.”

“Why not hold a lamp?” replied Shi Kuang.

“How dare a minister make fun of his master?” said the Duke.

“As a blind man, how dare I make fun of my master? I have heard that ‘*To love learning at a young age is like the sunshine at sunrise. To love learning at mid-age is like the sunlight at noon. To love learning at old age is like walking at night with a lamp.*’ Walking at night with a lamp or without a lamp, which is better?”

“Good advice, indeed!” said the Duke.

Therefore, those three lines have become popular proverbs, along with these variants that are still commonly used:

幼而学者，如日出之光	Learning as a young child is like the light at sunrise.
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老而学者，如秉烛夜行	Learning as an old man is like walking at night with a lamp.
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Overall, the classics of this period are one of the four major sources of proverbs in Chinese. The collection, categorization,

and application of proverbs during this period are in line with the use of other forms of oral traditions (e.g., folksong, legends, myths, jokes) as ways of educating and reforming (*jiaohua* 教化) the folk with Confucian humanistic virtue (*ren* 仁) and observing the reactions of the folk to the rulings of the governments by “observing the fashions” (*guanfeng* 观风), “listening to the music being played” (*lingyi* 聆音), and “inspecting governance” (*chaili* 察理).

***Stage and Source Two: Pre-modern Period (7<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> century)***

The separation of this stage from the previous does not indicate any discontinuity of the proverbial tradition, but is solely done for the sake of emphasizing the widespread use of “folk literature” (*suwenxue* 俗文学) from the 7<sup>th</sup> century on, which is considered here as another major source of Chinese proverbs. This term is used to refer to the widespread of non-classical Chinese in writing as well as in forms (genres) beside the orthodox poetry and prose (Zheng 1938:1).<sup>10</sup> This change is seen in the popular use of semi-classical grammar and vocabulary, written records of everyday and/or strange stories, which laid the foundation for the development of fiction writing in Chinese. Printing technology and social mobility were among the factors that should not be ignored. As a result, official and non-official written records during this period contained numerous proverbs and proverbial expressions.

*Extensive Records of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping Guangji* 太平广记) and *Imperial Reader or Readings of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping Yulan* 太平御览), both formed during the tenth century, collected nearly all literatures before the Song Dynasty (960-1279). The former contains the well-known tale of Chinese Cinderella, *Ye Xian* (ATU 510), first recorded in the ninth century.

The proverbs quoted in these two grand collections include:

一饮一啄,系之于分  
一鸡死,一鸡鸣  
不救蚀者,出行遇雨<sup>11</sup>

君子不镜于水,而镜于人;  
镜于水见面之容,镜于人  
则知凶吉

A bite or a drink, all predetermined.  
One chicken dies, another crows.  
Not saving the eclipse will catch  
you in the rain.

A man of virtue does not use the  
mirror of water, but the mirror of  
people. The mirror of water reflects  
a face, the mirror of people tells for-  
tune.



Besides such encyclopedic collectanea, there are also some specific collections of proverbs in this period containing proverbs from the classics and contemporary variants or new proverbs. They are representative of the development from classical literary idioms to folk sayings or proverbs popular then, and some are still used today:

女爱不敝席，男欢不敝轮	Women's love wears out before the mat is worn out, men's love wears out before the wooden wheel gets rotten out.
恭敬不如从命	A better respect from a guest is to submit to a host.
马异视力，人异视识	Strength distinguishes horses, experience tells apart people.
远亲不如近邻	Relatives afar are less beneficial than neighbors nearby.
忠言逆耳利于行，毒药苦口利于病	Loyal words are harsh to ear but good for behavior, strong drugs are bitter to mouth but good for health.
树怕剥皮，人怕伤心	Trees are afraid of skin-peeling; people are afraid of heart-hurting.
若要好，大作小	To do well, to do small. (To get a thing done well, one needs to lower his status or ignore one's status.)
远水不救近火	Water from faraway can't extinguish a fire nearby.
嫁鸡随鸡，嫁狗随狗	Marry a rooster, follow a rooster; marry a dog, follow a dog.
树高千丈，落叶归根	No matter how tall a tree is, its leaves fall to its roots.
衣要新好，人要旧好	New clothes are good, old spouse is good.
千里送鹅毛	Go a thousand miles to deliver a goose feather.

*Zeng Guang Xian Wen* (增广贤文) of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and the early 17<sup>th</sup> century contained nearly 1,000 proverbs. Unfortunately, there is no contextual information for each proverb in this

collection. But many of those proverbs are still used today, and many were translated into English (Perny 1869). Some examples include:

难合亦难分，易亲亦易散。	Hard to be friends, hard to be apart; easy to be together, easy to be apart.
狗不嫌家贫，儿不嫌母丑。	Dogs don't see their owners' poverty; sons don't see their mothers' ugliness.
枯木逢春犹再发，人无两度再少年。	Dried trees sprout when spring returns; people can't be young again.
平日不作亏心事，半夜敲门心不惊。	No wrong doings all the time, no fear at door knocks at night.

*Gu Yao Yan* (*Ancient Proverbs* 古谣谚) of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Du Wen Lan (1815-1881) may be the most important collection and study of proverbs during this period. It is also the most frequently cited work in studying ancient Chinese proverbs. It contains a total of 3,300 proverbs and proverbial expressions (including ballads and rhymes) extracted from 860 ancient books with references (Du 1958). Some examples include:

钱无耳，可使鬼	Money can drive devils.
豹死留皮，人死留名	What is left behind by a leopard when it dies is its skin, what is left behind a man is his reputation.
端午晴干，农人喜欢	A dry day on the fifth of the fifth moon is a farmers' joy.
好事不出门，恶事行千里	Good things don't get out of the house, bad things travel a thousand miles.

While there are numerous proverbs recorded in many anthologies (Wen 1989), the attention from those collectors or even researchers was mostly on the text or the intertextuality of the proverbs (An 2008: 585), but rarely on the broad context of using the proverbs.

### ***Stage and Source Three: Modern Period (20<sup>th</sup> century)***

The pivotal change of the Chinese language (e.g., standardization of pronunciation, new grammar, new vocabulary, new fonts

and low cost of printing), and thus also of literature and arts, is the movement of promoting *baihua-wen* (*baihua* for folk or oral speech, *wen* for writing, i.e., writing literature as it is spoken in everyday life, rather than in traditional classical Chinese) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This change was part of the New Culture Movement that revolutionized Chinese traditional beliefs and values and gave birth to modern folkloristics in China as well (Zhang 2018). As a result, this period also generated a large number of new proverbs and variants of traditional proverbs, being the third major source of Chinese proverbs. They are also vital in connecting the past and the present.

*Baihuawen*, in contrast to classical written style, was promoted to use folk or oral speech in writing as a new genre. Although “*baihuawen*” is often translated into “vernacular,” it was fundamentally about the reform of writing style, while spoken style had a much longer history of being “vernacular.” *Baihua* had been used to mean common speech in contrast to “official” and classical style, while *wen* referred to writing. In fact, *baihua* began from the Tang as seen in the non-orthodox writings (as a marker between the first and second stages discussed above). By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with massive publication of new literature, *baihua* (or *baihuawen*) had become standard in speaking and writing, and largely formed the current “common speech” (*putoghua*) or “Mandarin.”

This linguistic transformation is widely seen in the parallel use of the fixed idioms as proverbs and folk sayings. For example, the classical literary form of

孤掌难鸣

Single palm [is] difficult sounding

was transformed into:

一个巴掌拍不响

One palm claps no sound; You can't clap with one palm. (cf., It takes two to tango.)

Chinese paremiology can be seen to have begun in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the publication of a few specific studies of proverbs (Guo 1925; Xue 1936; Yue 2019; Chen 2019: 28). However, most decades in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in China witnessed wars and social instability, and all academic activities entered a traumatic

period. It was in Taiwan where a prolific paremiologist Zhu Jie Fan (朱介凡1912 -2011) spent his lifetime and compiled an eleven-volume ethnographic collection of Chinese proverbs, containing 52,000 proverbs (Zhu 1989; Guo 1997).

China's economic reform in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century also positively influenced the development of Chinese folklore studies (Zhang 2018). At least two dozen dictionaries or collections were published in the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Chen 2019: 30). A six-volume collection of proverbs from Chinese classical literature included more than 20,000 entries (Wen 1989), and later a one-volume dictionary with 15,000 proverbs (Wen 2011). However, the sources of these works are limited only to the classics and well-known authored literature.

One important paremiological issue of this period is about the definition and "author/creator" of proverbs by various scholars. According to an authoritative linguist, *yanyu* (proverb) is seen as a typical type of *suyu* (popular/vernacular/non-literal saying) (Lü 1987: 1), and, along with *xiehouyu* (two-part proverbs) and *guan-yongyu* (fixed folk and proverbial phrases), is called *suyu* (Wen 2004:1). This view is widely accepted in linguistics, literature, and folkloristics. Similarly, in regard to the authorship of proverbs, the representative view in those academic fields is that "proverbs do not have clearly identified authors, and are created collectively by the folk" (Wen 2004: 9). In the most influential textbook of folkloristics, it emphasizes that "proverbs are collectively created by the folk" (Zhong 1998:310), so states the official website of China Folklore Society.<sup>12</sup> This view is in clear contrast to what has been argued since the 1930s by paremiologists such as Archer Taylor and Bartlett Whiting who argue that "proverbs are not created by the folk but rather by an individual" (Mieder 2014:28).

The unprecedented collectanea of proverbs in Chinese history is the *Grand Collection of Chinese Proverbs*, as part of the trilogy of the national project (i.e., folktale, ballad, and proverb, total of 298 volumes) directed by Zhou Yang (1984-2009). This proverb collection contains a total of 7,180,000 proverbs (Ma 1990-2009; Liu 2006).<sup>13</sup> Naturally, there are some shortcomings in this project. One serious problem is that there is little contextual information about the users and the situations of using those proverbs (Chen 2019: 33), not to mention the origin or history of those

proverbs. Clearly, this remains to be a task for current and future paremiologists – indeed, this challenge is now being answered!

***Stage and Source Four: Contemporary Period (21<sup>st</sup> century)***

The problem of the previous text-centered collections of proverbs without contextual information is now dealt with by another ambitious national project, *Treasury of Chinese Folk Literature* (*Zhongguo minjian wenxue daxi*), launched in 2017 by the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. It is expected to be completed in eight years with 1,000 volumes covering such genres of folk literature as ethnic myths, legends, tales, ballads, proverbs, epics, folk operas, and narrative and singing texts. This *Treasury* includes written and oral materials of the past century. The intention is to collect what was not included in the previous *Three Grand Collections*, with a guiding principle of “improving text with annotated context” by collecting information about the time and region of the use, meaning in use, along with related images, to comprehensive contexts (Chen 2019: 34, quoting Deming An’s words).

Obviously, the *Treasury of Chinese Folk Literature* is an effort of “looking backward” by reviewing the past. For example, a review of the studies in the past 40 years specifically on ancient proverbs lists dozens of publications on the topic (Zhao 2009:122, Ma and Zhao 2019). Another review on proverb studies in the past 70 years reveals that a disciplinary framework for “paremiological studies” is taking shape (Li 2001:30), as well as that of “history of Chinese proverbs” (Fu 2018:117).

Two characteristics of proverb studies in this period can be generalized here: in academic sense, the shaping of paremiology based on folk literature and folklore studies. In a practical sense, the wide use of counter-proverbs and anti-proverbs as well as new proverbs, along with those standard or traditional ones, by means of media technology of computer and Internet. This latter aspect also constitutes the fourth sources of Chinese proverb repertoire. In this regard, the dramatic social and economic changes in the past four decades or so in China can be seen through the similarly drastic change in proverbs.

The use of anti-proverbs in Chinese proverbs is uniquely popular and fashionable because of its linguistic characteristics, that is, a higher percentage of homophonous (and/or tonal) words in

Chinese than in any other languages. For this reason, a large number of symbols in Chinese culture are related to the homophones. For example, apples (*ping-guo*) are used as gifts to mean “peace” (*ping-an*) due to the sound-meaning connection of *ping*). Such uses of anti-proverbs are getting even more popular in commercial advertisements and media reports through the platform of Internet:

一鸣惊人 <i>yi ming jing ren</i> ming = bird singing	To amaze the world with a single sound (act, feat). (Or, To become famous overnight.)
一明惊人 <i>yi ming jing ren</i> ming = clear; bright	To surprise people (oneself) with a clear vision. (Anti-proverb: An advertisement of a medical product of eye-drop.)
随心所欲 <i>sui xin suo yu</i> yu = to desire	To follow your heart as you desire. (A Confucius saying about being at seventy.)
随心所浴 <i>sui xi suo yu</i> yu = to shower	To follow your heart to shower. (Anti-proverb: An advertisement of a shower equipment.)

Ironically, such anti-proverbs are often seen as “abusing” or “misusing” traditional proverbs. There have been times when the governments tried to ban the use of such fixed idioms or proverbs. But the uselessness of those official rules proves that anti-proverbs have their vitality because they are a dynamic part of the language.

As the world began the year of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic changed the world in many ways. Such a historical event is certainly most instinctively reflected in the use of anti-proverbs or fixed-idioms, not only in everyday life,<sup>14</sup> but also in official uses,<sup>15</sup> for example:

义不容辞 <i>Yi bu rong ci</i> yi = righteousness	Justice can't tolerate one's dismissal of duty.
疫不容辞 <i>Yi bu rong ci</i> yi = pandemic; epidemic	Anti-proverb: Pandemic won't let itself be ignored.
仁至义尽 <i>Ren zhi yi jin</i> yi = righteousness	Humanism arrives, righteousness/justice is fully served/fulfilled.
仁至疫尽 <i>Ren zhi yi jin</i> yi = pandemic; epidemic	Anti-proverb: Humanism arrives, pandemic completely disappears.

In addition, there are also some other characteristics of the use of “new” proverbs in the recent decades: the adoption of foreign proverbs through loan translation; even by the national spokesmen, government newspapers and TV. For example, from the most important newspaper/news media in China, there are uses of the proverb “One picture worth a thousand words” (一图胜千言)<sup>16</sup> with an exotic taste. However, the proverb in English has been traced to its origin in the 1910s (Mieder 1989:6, 1990:208), and studies show it to be from a Chinese proverb, “Hearing something a hundred times isn't better than seeing it once” (百闻不如一见) (Stevenson 1949:2611). This circle of “new” proverbs is another feature of the third and fourth stages/sources.

Contemporary proverb studies in China have continued those conventional topics: a) proverbs studies as a field (An 2008; Wen 2000; Xu and Li 2016); b) proverbs of weather (Wang 2018) and agriculture (Li 2016); c) proverbs in classics (Zhao 2009; Ma and Zhao 2019; An 2017); d) compiling collections/dictionaries from different textual sources (Wen 1989; Wen 2002; Zheng and Jiang 2008, Wen 2011); e) proverbs of certain philosophical or religious ideas (Liu 2004; Li 2005).

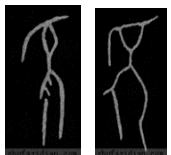



In addition, new topics are being studied: a) the attitudes toward females in ancient proverbs (Zhang 1992; Geng 2005; Wang 2006); b) proverbs of the minority groups in China (Li 1995) like Kazakh (Yuan 2013), Mongolian (Mei 2018), Tujia (Lei 2006), Tibetan (Zhaxihuadan 2011), Uygur (Fu and Chen 2014); c) proverbs in Chinese dialects (Zhang 2012; Hu 2015); d) proverbs in teaching Chinese as a foreign language (Shen 2011; Wang 2012); e) proverbs of occupations like medicine (Luo and Lin 2008), handcrafts (Pang 2017) and martial arts (Peng 1988; Cui 2008); f) proverbs used by contemporary political leaders like Deng Xiaoping and Xi Jinping (Feng 2001; Li 2015).

Unfortunately, there has been an effort to establish a “paremiological minimum” (Mieder 1992), which, by means of statistical investigation and survey, highlights the most frequently used 300 proverbs as the basis of paremiological studies. Clearly, the academic attention to current new proverbs and proverbial phrases is insufficient, because the change and the emergence of new proverbs and proverbial phrases are not just linguistic or sociological issues, but also related to the fundamental beliefs and values in Chinese culture. For example, traditional expressions such as,

“More sons, more happiness” (多子多福), “Raise sons to prepare for old age” (养儿防老), and “Marry a rooster, follow a rooster; marry a dog, follow a dog” (嫁鸡随鸡, 嫁狗随狗) are being replaced by the current ones: “Get engaged with the white-haired” (白发相亲, older parents as matchmaker for their mid-aged child), and “Twilight love” (黄昏恋, older widows or widowers get re-married). Some “new” expressions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are already outdated and in the twenty-first century replaced by “new” ones. For example, words for “senior/nursing homes” (老人院; 养老院; 敬老院) have become everyday words.

## II. Concepts and Proverbs of Old Age and Aging

Semantically, the word “old” (*lao* 老) in the Oracle Bone Inscriptions (fl. 1300 - 1000 BCE) is depicted as a (humped) man with a cane, as shown in the images below. According to a number of records in the early classics, this word referred to the age of 70 and above. But, there were also different definitions: “old man” (*laonan* 老男) meant men above 60 years old, “old women” (*laonu* 老女) meant women above 50 years old.<sup>17</sup>

Oracle Bone Inscriptions (3,300 years ago)	Cleric handwriting (2,000 years ago)	Standard writing (1,000 year ago)	Current handwriting/print (same as 1,000 year ago)
			 (lǎo)

The evolution of the character “old” in Chinese writing shows its image/writing has become more and more abstract and symbolic, but the connotation remains little changed. Similarly, the character “spicy” (*xin* 辛; *la* 辣) has also gone through such a process:



Oracle Bone Inscriptions (3,300 years ago)	Cleric handwriting (2,000 years ago)	Standard writing (1,000 year ago)	Current handwriting/print (same as 1,000 year ago)
			辛 (xīn; 辣 (là)

While longevity (long life, *shou* 寿) is a key term in Chinese, it was further defined to mean “high *shou* for one hundred and twenty, mid-*shou* for one hundred, low *shou* for eighty.” Today, the character *shou* is a must at all birthday celebrations (e.g., in writings, decorations for gifts or food/cake) for those who are above the age of 60 (although it is not rare to use the word to refer to those who are 50 and above).

What has been most popular and influential in terms of proverbial expressions of age may well be Confucius own self-reflection (in *The Analects* 2.4), which is still commonly used today:

“At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm. At forty, I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew the decrees of heaven. At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ *for the reception of truth*. At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right” (Legge 1861: 10-11).

Given that Confucian ideas have been dominant in Chinese thoughts and values, and that Confucius is believed to have died as the age of 73, and his most important follower Mencius (372-289 BCE) died as the age of 84, this saying is more popular in everyday life:

七十三,八十四, 阎王不  
叫自己去

At seventy-three or eighty-four,  
even if the King of Hell does not  
summon, a man will go himself.

(七十三,八十四, 阎王不  
叫自己死) (At seventy-three or eighty-four,  
even if the King of Hell does not  
summon, a man will die himself.)

Obviously, the meaning of “old” or “longevity” has transformed over time. For example, the proverb “Three/four generations under one roof” (三世同堂; 四世同堂) was a marker of “a complete and happy life” (*shou*). But it has changed along with the change of family structure or kinship relations in modern China, not to mention the impact of the one-child (now two children) per-family policy in the past four decades. In fact, the traditional sense of old age is being replaced by the modern legal concepts, including the concept of “retirement” (though the majority of Chinese population is still in rural areas).<sup>18</sup> Thus, the new concept of “aging” (*laolinghua* 老龄化) has also become an everyday term.

Here is a brief outline of some of the proverbs relating to specific age, even though “age is just a number.”

### *Fifty as Old*

When Yan Zhi Tui in the 6<sup>th</sup> century quoted the following ancient proverb, he continued by saying that “since I am now more than sixty, I have no concerns of any kind about my life”:

五十不为夭                      Fifty is not an early death.  
(Death at fifty years old is not an  
early death.)

This mention of the proverb seems to be the earliest written record, but it also reflected a typical concept during those centuries, as in these two uses:

The famous Tang poet Wang Wei (701-761) wrote in his fifties:

老年惟好静                      Quietness is a peculiar favor in my  
old age.

Bai Ju Yi (772-846), another famous Tang poet, used at least twice in his poems, even before he reached his fifties:

五十不为夭，吾今欠数 年      Fifty is not early death, and I have a few years to go.

Of course, Confucius's saying of "at fifty knowing the mandate of fate/heavens" is still influential. In rural areas, the fiftieth birthday celebration as *shou* with a village-wide feast for a man (within family for a woman) is still common.

### *Sixty as Old*

The importance of "sixty" as old, or even as a completion of a life, originated from the naturalistic cosmic view or philosophy. From this early cosmic view there developed the ancient numerological system for calendric or chronological purpose. In this system, the combination of two sets of units (e.g., ten celestial stems and twelve earthly stems) makes a total of "60," which is then a complete cycle, and it repeats in the same combination. Within this system derived the 12 Chinese "zodiacs," still essential to the Chinese everyday life. Therefore, 60-year-old is seen as a completion of the *rites of passage* for human life. This notion was historically related to Daoist and Buddhist concepts of staged transformation of life. Today, this notion is seen in the most popular celebration of "old age" or "*shou*" in China (and Japan, Korea).

Currently, many local and traditional concepts of "old age" have gradually adapted to their national laws which, in turn, are influenced by the international conventions set by the UN, drawing a line of 65-year-old for counting the population of "aging."<sup>19</sup> With this line, as of 2014, China's "old aged" group took 15.5% (e.g., 212 million) of its total population, the highest percentage among all countries in the world, and by 2040, it is estimated that the percentage of the group of 65 and above will increase to 30%. The establishment of the China National Committee on Aging shows the seriousness of this situation in China. This problem is also clearly shown in everyday proverbial expressions, challenging traditional notions in both positive and negative senses.

The terms like "*huajia*" (花甲, grey-haired at 60), "*ershun*" (耳顺, ear-in-tune at 60, in Confucian sense), and "*huanli*" (还历, restart the cycle of the calendar) are metaphorical uses for this age, while these proverbs are common:

五十岁不交钱, 六十岁 不交言 六十不赴宴, 七十不留 宿	Don't deal with money at fifty, don't talk too much at sixty. Don't attend banquets at sixty, don't sleepover at seventy.
--	--

六十岁学吹打, 心有余力 不足	To learn to play trumpet or drum at sixty, sufficient desire with insuffi- cient strength.
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***Seventy as Old***

人过七十古来稀	People over seventy are very few since ancient times.
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人生稀有七十余, 多少 风光不同局	There are only a few who live be- yond 70, customs and times are ever changing. (Trans. by Dawson- Gröne 1911:37).
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七十不留步, 八十不留饭, 九十不留坐。	At seventy, don't keep him for a visit; at eighty, don't keep for a meal; at ninety, don't keep him for a sit.
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In the Confucian *Book of Rites*, there is a saying referring to age and status: "One can carry a cane at home at fifty, in the village at sixty, in the capital city at seventy, in the imperial court at eighty."

Also in everyday life, the expression of "white happiness" (*baixi*) is used for a death of old age, in contrast to "red happiness" (*hongxi*) of a wedding. The common use of "someone is 'old'" (*laole*) in certain context is also a euphemism of "death." Of course, the "old age" has meant different things throughout history, especially the life expectancy of the Chinese, along with the world population has increased dramatically in the past century.<sup>20</sup> In Old China, 70 could be indeed "rare" a century ago, but the average life expectancy in China is now above 70.

Clearly, views and attitudes toward old age and aging are changing in all cultures. For example, in contemporary American society, as shown in the proverb "age is just a number," the belief that "staying young" is important with "denial of the natural aging process" seems to be prevalent (Mieder 2020), meanwhile the mentality of "youth-centered" culture remains strong (Bronner 2016). In contrast, however, even though "immortality" is an

important part of Chinese thought, Chinese proverbs show a mentality and practice of “staying old” or having a “white happiness” as the auspicious ending of this life and a good beginning of the next. Contrary to the pessimistic view in “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks,” the Chinese “Older ginger is spicier” praises the wisdom of the aged and encourages the young to long for the respect and power at the golden age.

### ***III. Text and Context of the Proverb “Older Ginger is Spicier”***

With the contexts drawn above, this section focuses on the origin and context of our proverb, “older ginger is spicier,” in order to prepare for the following discussion about how the Chinese cultural roots are reflected in proverbs about old age and aging.

#### ***1) The origin of the proverb***

The earliest written record of this proverb, according to various dictionaries (Zhu 1985:560; Song and Duanmu 2001:365), is from the official history book of the Song Dynasty (960-1279), *The History of Song (Song Shi)*, written and revised during 1343-1345, with a story as such (Tuo 1985): The well-known minister Yan Dun Fu (1120?-1191?) was an upright official. He was once bribed by the most notorious corrupted prime minister in Chinese history, Qin Hui (1090-1155), to support an agreement forced by the invading northern state, but Yan blatantly rejected it by saying that “I am never to be involved in any conspiracy to destroy my country, not to mention that I have the nature of ginger and cinnamon, the older the spicier.”

Thereafter, the expression carried the virtuous meaning of being “direct,” “straight-forward,” “loyal and righteous,” and became a proverb:

姜桂之性，到老愈辣 (Jiāng guì zhī xìng, dào lǎo yù là)  
The nature of ginger and cinnamon, the older the spicier.

The description of the “spiciness” as the nature of ginger and cinnamon can be traced to the Han Dynasty (221 BCE- 220):

夫薑桂因地而生，不因 地而辛	Ginger and cinnamon grow in various soil, but their spiciness does not change because of different soils.
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夫薑桂同地，辛在本性      Ginger and cinnamon grow from the same place, and have their common nature.

Perhaps two reasons can be drawn to explain why the version used by Yan has been considered as the earliest written proverb, and cited the most in proverb collections. One is that Yan's version revealed a metaphorical context, i.e., his integrity and personality being intolerant of the corrupted deed; the other is the fact that he was facing the most notorious traitor in Chinese history. Clearly, this origin also shows the vitality of this proverb, that is, its underlined ethical values in a metaphorical expression.

## 2) *The transformation and variants of the proverb*

The transformation of this proverb can be seen in three forms or stages. The first is the simplified sentence with only one part of the original two-part proverb, or a condensed simple sentence. This is consistent with the format of the fixed idiom (*chengyu*), that is, using four characters, and is also in consistent with the two-part idiom (*xiehouyu*), that is, using only one part so that the reader/listener is expected to understand the hidden meaning. For example:

姜桂之性      The nature of ginger and cinnamon.  
(Liu 2000:528)

The second is to directly describe or compare a person to the old ginger, a change from literary to vernacular/oral usage:

姜是老的辣      Old ginger is spicy (or spicier).  
(It is the old ginger that is spicy)  
(Dong 2005:156).

The third transformation is by adding the adverb “*hai*” (还, or *jiu* 就, *also, still, indeed*) so that it brings a rhetorical effect by saying:

姜还是老的辣      Indeed, the older ginger is spicier  
(or, nevertheless, the older ginger is still spicier) (Hu and Fu 2006:83).

This usage implies the speaker admits that he/she is not as “spicy” as he/she thought since now there is an older/wiser person in front of him/her. In other words, context is required to determine the meaning, as proverbs often are “double-bladed.”

Thus, over those centuries, the “idea of [its] traditionality” of this proverb, as “the single, and the most crucial, element that empowers proverbs” (Ben-Amos 1995: 20), is affirmed. Thereafter, other variants are also created:

姜桂之性，到老愈辛	The nature of ginger and cinnamon, it grows older and spicier.
姜桂之性，老而愈辣	The nature of ginger and cinnamon, older it gets spicier it is.
薑茶易地味不甘，姜桂到老性愈辣	Ji-herb and tu-veg (are bitter and) don’t get sweet in different places; ginger and cinnamon get spicier as they get older.
薑桂之性，至老不移	The nature of ginger and cinnamon, no change as they get old.

### 3) *Contemporary uses of the proverb: continuity and renovation*

In the recent comprehensive collection of folk sayings with 100,000 entries, including 13,000 categorized as “proverb” (*yanyu*), the variants of our proverb are listed here (Wen 2004: 421). Note how “cinnamon” is gradually dropped from modern uses:

姜桂之性，愈老愈辣	The nature of ginger and cinnamon, the older the spicier ( <i>la</i> ).
姜桂之性，愈老愈辛	The nature of ginger and cinnamon, the older the spicier ( <i>xin</i> ).
姜还是老的辣	Older ginger is spicier. (Older ginger is indeed spicier.)
姜老姜辣，蔗老蔗甜	Old ginger is spicier; old sugar cane is sweeter.
姜老辣味大，人老经验多	Old ginger tastes spicier, older people have more experiences.
姜老味辣，人老胆豪	Old ginger tastes spicier, older people have more guts.
姜是老的辣，醋是陈的酸	Old ginger is spicier, older vinegar is sourer.

姜了老的辣，沟葱白儿长

姜是老的辣，酒是陈的香，辣椒还是老的红

姜是老的辣，梅子嫩的酸，夕阳也晒人

姜是老来辣，茶是后来酹

姜越老越辣，藕越老越粉

姜在地里长，土里要干爽

Old ginger is spicier, scallions in ditches have longer white stems.

Old ginger is spicier, older liquor has better aroma, red peppers have to be older.

Old ginger is spicier, younger plums are sour, twilight can also be scorching.

Old ginger is spicier, longer sit tea tastes bitter.

Old ginger is spicier, older lotus roots are squishier.

Ginger grows in soil, the soil should be dryer.

Among these current variants, there are probably the most frequently used:

姜是老的辣

Old ginger is spicier. (Old ginger is spicy.)

姜还是老的辣

Older ginger is spicier. (The old ginger is indeed spicier.)<sup>21</sup>

姜是越老越辣

The older the ginger, the spicier it is. (The older the ginger is, the spicier it gets.)

The variants about sugar cane, vinegar, wine, pepper, or scallion clearly show the local modes of production and lifestyle. They further prove the proverbiality of our proverb here, showing its versatility in adapting to different regional, dialectic, and occupational contexts. It also shows that a proverb's vitality lies in its adaptation to a new social environment. Here are some rather modern variants, and even in counter-proverb or anti-proverb sense:

姜是老的辣；葱是嫩的香

Old ginger is spicier, younger scallions are tastier.

姜是老的辣；辣椒可是小的辣

Old ginger is spicier, but smaller pepper is spicier.

姜是老的辣；腕是老的大

Old ginger is spicier, older celebrities are cooler.



姜是老的辣; 情是旧的好  
(老婆还是原装的好)      Older ginger is spicier, older love is better.  
(Older ginger is spicier, first wife is better.)

Other variants do not use the “ginger” part, but clearly show the “old age” and “aging” related connotations (more examples in the following section):

老将出马，一个顶俩	When an old general mounts a horse, one is for two. (An experienced hand can get twice as much done.)
初生牛犊不怕虎 老汉不提当年勇	Calves have no fear of the tiger. Good old man does not brag about his youth.
人老不值钱， 拖累讨人嫌 门神老了不捉鬼 长江后浪推前浪， 一代更比一代强	Old men are worth nothing, but burdensome and annoying. Old door gods catch devils no more. The latter wave of the Yangtze River pushes the former wave, each generation grows stronger.
长江后浪推前浪， 前浪把后浪推到沙滩上	The latter wave of the Yangtze River pushes the former wave, the latter wave pushes the former wave onto sand beach.

By now, “older ginger is spicier” has become ever more popular and diverse, though the original political and ethical implication is often outweighed by the practical and experiential implication. All of these changes also revealed the changed history, language, and family and social values, particularly, attitudes about old age and aging.

Here are a few examples of using this proverb in certain social and political contexts, but there are numerous uses by the common people in everyday life as well as in literature. Here is a report in the most important newspaper in China, *People's Daily*, which reprinted a story from another influential newspaper, *China Youth Daily*, about a village head who used the senior villagers to solve one problem, among others:

“It was close to the Spring Festival in 2015. There were two brothers quarreled hard on the issue of splitting household property and their neighbors could not easy ease or remedy the situation no matter what. They then went to the village head who had an idea. He gather a few older people who had good reputation in the village because he thought the brothers would at least care about their “face” (*mianzi*). They went to the brothers and began to chat. “The older ginger is indeed spicier.” Soon the two brothers felt ashamed and guilty of themselves, and compromised to each other. The problem was solved.”<sup>22</sup>

Interestingly, the book, *Conversations with Clint: Paul Nelson's Lost Interviews with Clint Eastwood, 1979-1983* (Kevin Avery, 2011), due to the fact that Clint Eastwood is seen as a great master in the film world, is translated into 姜就是老的辣 (*The Older Ginger is Indeed Spicier*) (2015).

Also, during the regional election in Taiwan in November 2013, the former “vice-president” Lü Xiulian was one of the two front runners. She was criticized to be too old to hold that office, but she responded, “Older ginger is spicier.”<sup>23</sup>

#### **IV. Four Life-views Reflected in Chinese Proverbs**

As “older ginger is spicier” has transformed into the status of a traditional or standard proverb, its proverbiality of duality and agility became more obvious. It can be positive to praise one’s wisdom and prudence as one is getting older (though the idea of moral integrity in the original context has been changed); it can also be negative to indicate one’s cunning and scheming. As seen in the above examples, being old at a certain age meant specific respect and treatment from family and society in ancient China. Today, the changing meaning of the number of ages has blurred the specific social behavior, but those proverbs still reflect fundamental beliefs and values of Chinese culture. I argue that the following four life-views are well reflected in old-age related proverbs.

The term “life-view” (*rensheng guan*, or view of life<sup>24</sup>) is a more or less a direct translation from the Chinese expression. It is really about the views or attitude toward how to live a life. It is not related to the religious “pro-life” view, nor to the concept of “value of life” used in economics, social and political sciences. This “life-view” is not equivalent to the ethical concept of value

(values) for human actions, though it is heavily influenced by Confucian ethics. Therefore, I use “life-view” to indicate the difference between this practical philosophy of “living a life” (生活 *shenghuo*; 过日子 *guorizi*) in Chinese culture and the concepts used in folkloristic studies such as “worldview,” “folk idea,” and “folk fallacy” (Dundes 1971<sup>25</sup>; Bronner 2007), and to echo the idea from Dundes about studying “human thought, rather than follow a natural history model of the collection and classification of items somehow devoiced from contemporary life,” as Bronner (2007: 179) interpreted.

**1) Entering the world (*rushi* 入世)**

This concept embodies these beliefs and values in Chinese culture: a) the immortality of the soul (*linghun bumie* 灵魂不灭), as practiced in ancestral reverence/worship; b) the belief in seeking harmony within maintaining differences in personal life and interpersonal communication (*heer butong* 和而不同), as practiced in the concepts of yin-yang and five-elements; c) the ethics and practice of following local customs (*ruxiang suisu* 入乡随俗), as practiced in being inclusive of different lifestyles and adaptive to new environment in everyday life. This concept emphasizes Confucian values that a person should strive to enter and service the society as a useful member by studying the classics, passing the exams, and holding offices in the government. It encourages a person, especially a young man regardless of family background, to study diligently and be optimistic toward life and reality, and promotes the idea that education is the only ladder to elevate one’s familial and social status. These examples are clearly positive toward old age and aging:

活到老, 学到老	Live to an old age, learn to an old age.
活到老学到老, 一生一世学不了	Live long and learn on, much to learn in one life. (cf. Life is short, art is long.)
蚂蚁爬树不怕高, 有心学习不怕老	Ants are not afraid of high trees, the will to learn is not afraid of old age.
不怕人老, 就怕心老	Old age is not fearful, old heart-mind is fearful.

树老果不多，人老心不老 人怕老心，树怕老根	Old trees yield less fruit, old people have young hearts. People are afraid of getting old at heart, trees are afraid of getting old at roots.
人老志不衰	People get old, but ambition doesn't weaken.
人穷莫泄气，人老莫丧志	Poverty should not deprive ambition, old age should not deprive aspiration.
世无老而不学之理	There is no reason in the world for the old aged not to learn.
年龄长一岁，责任重一分 明珠尽出老蚌	One year added to age, one added share of duty. Bright pearls are all from old oysters.
人老智多，树老根多 (树老根多，人老话多)	Old people are wiser, old trees have more roots. (Old trees have more roots, old people have more words.) <sup>26</sup>
姜老辣味大，人老经验多； 酒陈味香，人老识深	Older ginger is spicier, old people are more experienced; aged wine is aromatic, aged man is sagacious.

Of course, there are twisted ones with dubious meanings, as counter-proverbs or anti-proverbs:

有志不在年高，无志空活百岁	With ambition, one can be young, without ambition, one hundred years is empty.
后生可畏 小人手多，老人口多	The later born is awesome. Little people have too many hands, old people have too many mouths.
狗老咬人痛，人老还击狠	Old dog's bite hurts more, old man's revenge hits harder.
人老无能，神老无灵	Old people are incapable, old spirits are ineffective.
冷铁难打，老竹难弯	Cold iron is hard to strike, old bamboo is hard to bend.

树老生虫，人老无用	Old trees get bugs, old people have no use.
人老珠黄不值钱	Old people are like yellowed plants, they are worthless.
老而不死是为贼	Living old without virtue is harmful. <sup>27</sup>

Overall, thinking about the experience of “entering the world” is essential to the Chinese because it provides an opportunity to emphasize education and love of learning as a path not only to improve individual status, but also to maintain a harmonious family and society. This explains the continuity of the state-wide examination system that has continued more than a thousand years till today.

## 2) *Exiting the world (chushi 出世)*

Since seeking immortality is essential to Daoist practice, beliefs and customs related to seeking an elixir conferring immortality has been an important part. This concept expresses a Daoist notion that “non-action” (*wuwei*) is the way of living a life being an element in the universe, and also related to a Buddhist idea of separating from the human world of desires. Since seeking immortality is essential to Daoist practice, beliefs and customs related to seeking elixir has been an important part of Chinese medicine or early alchemy, and many ways of exercises, not to mention folk-life in general. This life-view complements the *rushu*-view when one fails to be successful to “enter the world” so that one can retreat to the mountains away from the worldly world as a transition. It is largely based on the fundamental belief in the unity of humans and nature (*tianren heyi* 天人合一), as practiced in housing, diet, festivals, arts, and other areas. Proverbs of this lifeview are sometimes seen as cynical or transcendental:

少而寡欲颜常好，老不求官梦亦闲	Less desire at a young age makes you look healthy, no desire for office at old age makes your dream relaxing.
告老还乡	Announce old age so as to return to home village.

百年随时过，万事转头空

A hundred years slip in a blink, ten thousand things disappear when you turn your head.

老年惟好静，万事不关心

Quietness is a peculiar favor in my old age, ten thousand things are out of my concern.

人不可不知有生之乐，亦不可不怀虚生之忧

One must know the pleasure of life, but must not forget the concern about doing nothing in life.

人生知足何时足，到老偷闲且是闲

There is no contented life if one is not contented in life, a leisure taken at old age is a leisure indeed.

### 3) *The next world (laishi 来世)*

This view expresses that hoping for a better future or better life for the descendants is the way to overcome current hardship, and that everything unpleasant or undesirable now will change to be pleasant and desirable in the next life or in the next world. This view has close connection to the Buddhist view, as well as the Daoist original thought. But Confucian practical ethics is also integrated into this idea, as in connecting *fengshui* burial to the prosperity of ethics in a family. Today, this idea is also seen in these expressions/phenomena: “little emperor” (小皇帝 meaning the central role of a child in a family in contemporary kernel families); “little sun” (小太阳 same meaning as the above); “expect a son to become a dragon” (望子成龙); “expect a daughter to become a phoenix” (望女成凤).

This can be seen as a step further of the “exiting the world.” It is related to the belief in the immortality of the soul and the transformation of life. Therefore, many such proverbs are related to death, so as to psychologically prepare people for their old age and aging, not necessarily a negative view.

今天脱下衣和袜，不知明天穿不穿

When you take off pants and socks today, you don't know if you will put them on tomorrow.

人老无用，物老出古，禽兽老了成精

People age and become useless, things age and become antiquities, beasts and birds age and become sprites.

长江一去无回浪， 人老何曾再少年	The river waves never go backward, people can never be young again.
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The following common expressions about old age and death show different Chinese beliefs and values. For example, these often indicate traditional Confucian values:

老了	(Someone) ... is old.	去世	(Someone) ... left the world.
走了	... gone.	谢世	... bid farewell to the world.
作古了	... became ancient.	百年(之后)	... (reached; after) a hundred years.
入土了	... entered the earth.	落叶归根	... fallen leaf returning to the roots.

These have the Daoist implication that death is a transformation to immortality:

升天	(Someone) ... ascended to the sky.	仙去	... left to become immortal.
登仙	... climbed mountain peak (to be an immortal)	仙逝	... died to become immortal.

These have obvious Buddhist influences that the “west” is where Buddha/nirvana is:

西去了	(Someone) ... went to the West.	驾鹤西归 (去)	... returned (left for) the West on the crane.
上西天了	... went to the West Sky.	见阎王了	... went to meet the King of Yama.

There is also this expression for death among those who are the communist party members or people in government offices:

去见马克思	To go to meet with Marx.
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#### 4) *Passaging the world (dushi 渡世)*

This life-view reflects one of the fundamental belief and values in Chinese culture by seeking auspiciousness and avoiding

inauspiciousness (*quji bixiong* 趋吉避凶), as seen in the practice of fortunetelling. On the surface, it may seem to be fatalistic or cyni-cal view about life, but, essentially, it is a positive and active belief and behavior to live a meaningful life in this world, often by such expressions as, “seek good luck” (求好运), “seek life of good fortune” (求福命) or “cumulate good deeds/virtue” (积善积德).

Daoist view of life echoes this, emphasizing that one’s life is but one of the myriad things in the universe, and thus one’s deeds should be in accordance with the movement of nature, but not to be against it. By not doing anything (to change what the universe is), or non-action (*wuwei*), one fulfils the meaning of life by doing everything (a life is supposed to do). In practical life, one seeks “long life” or “immortality” by retreating from the worldly affairs, but maintaining harmonious relations with the universe and leaving it as one once entered. Similarly, Buddhist ideas also took root in this system of fundamental beliefs and values in Chinese culture, because the essential goal of practicing Buddhism is to help the passage of all lives from this world to the other world, widely used as *pudu zhongsheng* (普渡众生) in Chinese (in which *du* means to transit/passage).

In fact, as shown in the model of *rites de passage* (van Gennep 1909), old age and death are one of the three stages of the life cycle that all human beings go through from “separation” to “margin” and then to “aggregation” (departing the world of the living and entering the world of the dead). Thus, one’s life from birth to death is a long marginal transition (Zhang 2012).

Clearly, this *dushi* life-view is related, at various degrees, to the *rushi*, *chushi*, and *laishi* views. When living a life becomes too harsh, people would believe that life is to pass through a stage and pave way to *laishi* for the good of their next generations. This view is sometimes negatively expressed as dilly-dallying the world (*hunshi* 混世), as shown in the proverb:

好死不如赖活 着	A good death is not as good as making a shameless living.
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But, the counter-proverbs for this are:



雁过留声，人过 留名	Wild geese leave their sounds as they fly over, people leave their names as they pass by.
积善积德，必有 余庆	Cumulate goodness and virtues, there must be more to celebration in the future.

Since life is good but short, there have developed various ways to prolong or better this life. All kinds of “art” or “technique” (术 *shu*) of fortunetelling have thrived as ways of seeking auspiciousness and avoid inauspiciousness (*quji bixiong*). In addition, the *dushi* life-view also reflects the other fundamental beliefs and values in Chinese culture: following local customs (*ruxiang suisu* 入乡随俗) as a practice of the Confucian idea of seeking harmony within maintaining differences (*heer butong* 和而不同). After all, Confucian ethics is a practical philosophy about living a life in this world, as seen in these proverbs (particularly about dealing with aging, old age, and death):

家有一老，黄金活宝	An old person in a family is the golden living treasure.
牛老角硬，人老艺精	Older bulls have harder horns, older people have finer skills.
不听老人言，吃亏(苦) 在眼前	If one does not listen to the old aged, one will eat losses (bitterness) be- fore his eyes.
树老半心空，人老事事 通	Old trees are half-hollowed, old people know everything.
老马识途	Old horses know their roads.
吃过的盐比吃过的饭 都多， 走过的桥比你走过的路 都多	(The old man) has eaten more salt than the food you have eaten; walked over more bridges than the road you have taken.

In “passing the world,” cultivating body-mind (*yangsheng* 养生) is an ancient idea mostly influenced by the Daoist concept of seeking immortality. Chinese medicine, martial arts, and even diet systems are all related to this concept. As one can see in any neighborhood in China, there are old people --- of course, there are always young people as well --- doing all kinds of exercise such as *taiji* and modern dances. Naturally, there are thousands of

proverbs and proverbial expressions about cultivating life/health (Peng 1988).

能动能静，所以长命 动则体壮，练则寿长	Combine action and inaction, one gets a long life. Action makes the body strong, exercise makes life long.
饭后百步走，能活九十九	Walking a hundred steps after a meal makes you live ninety-nine years old.
一日三笑，人生难老	Three laughs a day, one's life won't be old.
一日三恼，不老也老	Three exasperations a day, one gets old before old.
遇事不恼，长生不老	Not to be irritated by anything, you will never be old.
笑一笑十年少	Laugh often, you are ten years younger.
笑口常开，青春常在	Frequent laughing keeps you young forever.
老来忙，寿命长	Keep busy as you age, your life will be long.
今年笋子来年竹，少 壮体强老来福	This year's bamboo sprouts will be bamboo next year, strong body at a young age brings happiness at old age.
千斤难买老来瘦	You can't buy slimness in old age with a thousand gold.
山中易找千年树，人 中难找百年翁	It is easy to find a tree of a thousand years old in the mountain, but it is hard to find a man of a hundred years among humans.
蚂蚁爬树不怕高，有 心锻炼不怕老。	Ants are not afraid of the height of trees, exercise is not to be limited by old age.
人老不以筋骨为能	Old people can't show off muscles.
筋长一寸，寿长十年	An inch longer in tendon, ten years longer in longevity.
生命在于运动	Life lies in movement (exercise).

Recognizing aging and identifying others who are old, whether people or animals or trees, are the most humorous way for old people to adapt to reality, and to prepare themselves for the next steps. Proverbs are thus best in drawing the analogies to comfort the aging people:

人老猫腰，树老焦梢

树老根多，人老话多

马老腿慢，人老嘴慢

人老先从腿上多

树怕空，人怕松

Old people have cat's backs, old trees have dried tops.

Old trees have more roots, old people have more words.

Old horses have slow legs, old people have slow mouths.

People first age from legs.

Trees are afraid of being hollow, people are afraid of getting loose.

In fact, the "passing the world" is more about dealing with social life than family life. Even those who are tired of social life would find ways to keep happy family life as a way of have good fortune or auspiciousness (*fu* 福, or *xingfu* 幸福) so that old age would not be miserable. One proverbial expression is *tianlun zhile* (the destined happiness of enjoying family love and joy with children/grandchildren around 天伦之乐), reflecting the Confucian values of family:

老婆孩子热炕头

患病需要好医生，

年迈需要好老伴

不怕年老，就怕躺倒

树老怕空心，人老怕冷清

人老疼孩儿，猫老嚼孩儿

要求子孝，先敬爹娘

敬老得富，敬田有谷

(*tianlun zhile* for men) on a warm bed with wife and children around

A sickness needs a good doctor to cure, old age needs a good old partner.

Old age is not scary, laying down is alarming.

Old trees are afraid of being hollow, old people are afraid of being lonely.

Old people dote their children, old cats eat their kittens.

To have filial sons, to respect your parents first.

Respect the old you get rich, respect the field you get grains.

### ***V. Conclusion***

To argue that the fundamental beliefs and values in a culture are often expressed through proverbs, this essay proposes an interpretive framework to connect proverbs to the fundamental beliefs and values in Chinese culture by: 1) drawing a broad picture of the history of collecting, using, and studying proverbs in China as a way to enforcing core Chinese values, and a brief history of translating Chinese proverbs; 2) contextualizing the meaning of being old in Chinese culture and history; 3) investigating the origin and development of the proverb “older ginger is spicier”; 4) examining proverbs about old age and aging from four life-views.

This essay is also intended to present some problems in the construction of paremiology in China, and in the translation of Chinese proverbs from different life-views. It thus is expected to draw attention by interested students and scholars to further the studies on Chinese proverbs in global context. After all, “Chinese proverbs are literally in the mouth of everyone, from the Emperor upon his throne to the woman grinding at the mill” (Smith 1902:7). This observation remains true: “Those who have not examined the proverbial sayings of the Chinese are surprised at the richness of the language in this respect” (Smith 1902:i). What is significantly different from the Western culture, however, is the veneration of age and great respect for elderly persons in Chinese culture. Thus, Chinese proverbs are a treasure trove waiting to be further opened, especially as the role of Chinese proverbs is increasingly significant in today’s global communication. Subsequently, knowing more about the views toward old age and aging in the old Chinese culture will surely help our own self-cultivation of body-mind-heart (*xin* 心) as we are all, at different speed, aging.

### ***Notes***

<sup>1</sup> The translations of the proverbs in this essay are quoted with references, otherwise they are my attempts to better express the cultural implication and context.

<sup>2</sup> See, Mieder (2020). Unfortunately the meeting was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020.

<sup>3</sup> I have recently completed the labor of love of compiling a collection of 21 essays by Wolfgang Mieder in Chinese translation (forthcoming in China).

<sup>4</sup> My dissertation was based on funeral rituals in a Chinese American community, and I translated *Les Rites de Passage* (van Gennep 1909) into Chinese (2010) and published a study of the model in English (Zhang 2012).

<sup>5</sup> As shown in the major databases in Chinese (www.cnki.net; www.cqvip.com) and in English (e.g., JSTOR, ProQuest, ProjectMUSE, MLA International Bibliography) by searching the keywords, “Chinese proverbs,” “proverbs of Chinese,” or “proverbs in Chinese.”

<sup>6</sup> For the sake of paremiological studies, I use the term “history of Chinese proverb” without following the conventional divisions in the fields of Chinese history (Bai 1980) and Chinese literature (Yuan 2005) in China and outside China (Ebrey 2010; De Bary and Lufrano 1999; De Bary and Bloom 1999). My consideration is fundamentally consistent with An’s (2008) consideration, that is, Pre-Qin (prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE); Qin to Tang Dynasty (3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE–10<sup>th</sup> c.), and Song to Qing Dynasties (10<sup>th</sup> c.–20<sup>th</sup> c.), but he did not include the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>7</sup> This may be of interest to compare with the four major sources of common European proverbs: Classical, Biblical, Medieval Latin, and cross-Atlantic along with the rise of modern proverbs (Mieder 2014: 32).

<sup>8</sup> They are, *Fan Sheng Zhi Shu* (by Fan Sheng Zhi fl. 33–7 BCE), *Qi Min Yao Shu* (by Jia Si Xie fl. 533–544), *Nong Shu* (by Wang Zhen 1271–1368), and *Nong Zheng Quan Shu* (by Xu Guang Qi 1562–1633).

<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to relate this point to one definition of proverb which emphasizes metaphor in a proverb (Dundes 1984). The metaphorical meaning of a proverb is also determined by the context of using it (Mieder 1996, 2006). An example of this point is how Wolfgang Mieder peels through the origin and use of “No Tickee, No washee: Subtleties of a Proverbial Slur” (Mieder 1996) by emphasizing the context of using a proverb, rather than looking at the text only. See also, Mieder’s further analysis of Dundes’s definition (Mieder 2006).

<sup>10</sup> The Chinese term *suwenxue* is also translated as “vernacular literature.” In Chinese context, the concept was first about the non-official language (e.g. non-literary spoken style in grammar and vocabulary), as discussed here. But later it also implied the genre/form and content what was not orthodoxy. In Chinese, *su* is often interchangeably used as a noun and an adjective as in “folk” literature, “vulgar” or “customs,” without the implication as it has in European history.

<sup>11</sup> This proverb also shows the custom that has continued today: people would bang the gangs or pots when there is a sun eclipse, believing that it would scare away the dog that is biting the sun. Thus, the translation can be: He who does not bang the gang to save the eclipsed sun will encounter rain when going out.

<sup>12</sup> See, China Folklore Network, CFN: <https://www.chinesefolklore.org.cn/web/index.php?NewsID=2427>. Accessed: May 13, 2020.

<sup>13</sup> This number is the total from 30 provincial volumes. Clearly, there are regional variants and even repetitions in this calculation. There is now separate calculation of “standard” proverbs and their counter-proverbs and anti-proverbs.

<sup>14</sup> See, 关于这次疫情的谚语 防控抗击疫情的谚语 关于疫情的顺口溜 (<https://www.fangjial.com/yanyu/26925.html>). There also numerous proverbial expression and images in Internet, and via the popular social media of “WeChat” in the Chinese language. Accessed May 20, 2020.

<sup>15</sup> See, 仁至疫尽、疫不容辞: 上海司法局推出依法战“疫”成语新编 ([https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_5893673](https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_5893673)). Accessed May 20, 2020.

<sup>16</sup> See, 一图胜千言: 世界各地海浪攫人心灵的美 <http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2017/1120/c107182-29656718.html>. 其他翻译有, 一图值千言。See also, 长江日报: 一图胜千言 当惊江城殊 by 杨京, August 13, 2018: <http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/n1/2018/0813/c1003-30223962.html>. Accessed May 20, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> For example, *Book of Guan* 《管子·海王》, formed during 5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE – 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE. It was only in recent years that China changed its legal retirement age for women from 50 to 55, and men from 55 to 60, with the except for certain occupations to extend a few more years (e.g., full professors in universities can retire at 65, but professors with lower ranks must retire at the age of 60).

<sup>18</sup> The legal age for retirement in China since 1978) was: 50 for female physical workers; 55 for female non-physical workers; 60 for males. The new law since 2015 revised it and planned to gradually extend the age to 65 all males and females by 2045.

<sup>19</sup> See, in the UN document, “World Population Aging 2019: Highlights”: “Globally, the share of the population aged 65 years or over increased from 6 per cent in 1990 to 9 per cent in 2019. That proportion is projected to rise further to 16 per cent by 2050, so that one in six people in the world will be aged 65 years or over” (p. 1). (<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/aging/WorldPopulationAging2019-Highlights.pdf>). Previously, 60 was used to define the old age population.

<sup>20</sup> The life expectancy of human beings from mid-1500 to 1900 was under 50 years, but thereafter, the world average is over 70 years by the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. See details in, Our World In Data (<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/life-expectancy?year=2015>); UN’s Population Division (<https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>)

<sup>21</sup> Given the above contexts and discussion, I choose to use this translation, though other translations may be more appropriate in certain contexts.

<sup>22</sup> See, 罗松: 为贫瘠的贾角村注入“活水” ([ccn.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0815/c366510-28636607.html](http://ccn.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0815/c366510-28636607.html)), August 15, 2016. Accessed May 20, 2020.

<sup>23</sup> See, 吕秀莲新文宣走仕女风 改强悍作风变“温柔” ([tw.people.com.cn/n/2013/1125/c14657-23646182.html](http://tw.people.com.cn/n/2013/1125/c14657-23646182.html)), November 25, 2013. Accessed May 20, 2020.

<sup>24</sup> One example of using this term and studying it from a philosophical perspective is the book, *The Chinese View of Life*, by Thomé H. Fang (1956), who examined this view in a systematic interpretation regarding how it was effective in the shaping of Chinese culture, and how it was different from other views of life in the Western philosophies.

<sup>25</sup> Alan Dundes defined “folk ideas” to be “traditional notions that a group of people have about the nature of man, of the world, and of man’s life in the world” and thought that “other terms” could be “more appropriate than ‘folk ideas’,” but his point was to emphasize “the task of identifying the various underlying assumptions held by members of a given culture” (1971:95, 96). The effort here to identify

“life-views” in Chinese culture can be seen as a step toward that direction, without using the unclear terms like “worldview” or “thought.”

<sup>26</sup> These counter proverbs demonstrate the ambiguity of proverbs, in which “old trees have more roots” can be supportive of “old people are wiser” with “roots” symbolizing wits in the first proverb, whereas “more roots” can also be illustrative of “more words” to mean that old people are talkative or wordy in the second proverb.

<sup>27</sup> This line is from the *Analects* (*Lun Yu*, 论语·宪问). The context of this usage is in this story: “Yuan Rang was squatting on his heels, and so waited the approach of the Master, who said to him, ‘In youth not humble as befits a junior; in manhood, doing nothing worthy of being handed down; and living on to old age -- this is to be a pest.’ With this he hit him on the shank with his staff.” This translation is from Legge (1861:156-157).

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CHILUKURI BHUVANESWAR (12 JULY 1951 – 23 JULY 2020) AND HIS KA:RMIK LINGUISTIC THEORY IN PROVERBIOLOGY

*Work as though you were to live forever.*

The great Indian linguist and proverb scholar Chilukuri Bhuvaneshwar, whose life can be fitly described by the English proverb used as a motto to this obituary and who left this world suddenly in July of this year, has contributed enormously to proverb scholarship in ways which are yet to be critiqued and appreciated. It would indeed take practically years of research and quite a number of dedicated scholars versed in both traditional Indian scholarship and English language linguistics to truly unravel the outstanding contribution to what Bhuvaneshwar termed *proverbial linguistics* or *proverbology* and to properly assess his work. Being entrusted by Professor Wolfgang Mieder with the task of writing an obituary for Chilukuri Bhuvaneshwar, which I am doing with great reverence, love and admiration, I must right from the start acknowledge to my readers my own limitations, as apart from my genuine long-standing interest in Indian philosophy, I realize I can make no claims whatsoever of being an expert in the field. It is hoped, though, that this obituary will set the beginning of a longer and more detailed in-depth discussion and critique of the remarkable genius of our late friend, which should best be undertaken by other scholars of his calibre, preferably among his Indian colleagues.

Before embarking on the main theme of this obituary, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Professor Wolfgang Mieder for his energetic support and encouragement in initiating its writing and its appearance on the pages of this year's (2021) issue of *Proverbium*, as well as to Dr Srinivas Gunturi, Professor Bhuvaneshwar's nephew, who kindly offered us a lot of biographical information about his uncle, which I am going to present in the paragraphs below in italics. I have taken the liberty to add my own remarks to Dr. Gunturi's account, as I have been very actively

involved with our great friend's work since 2003, when we first 'met' on the Internet. Our virtual friendship of nearly two decades started when he began publishing a long series of Sanskrit nyayas (wise maxims and expressions) on the Internet, which he used to translate into English and then interpret in the light of the philosophy of Vedanta advaita.

*Prof. Chilukuri Bhuvaneswar was born on 12 July 1951 in Bhimavaram, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, India. After graduation from D.N.R college, Bhimavaram, he completed his MA Literature from Andhra University, in 1972. Prof. Chilukuri Bhuvaneswar continued to work for his Ph.D. at EFLU, Hyderabad and later joined as an Assistant Professor at University of Maiduguri, Nigeria in 1980. After working for 15 years he returned back to India and began teaching at the Department of Linguistics, Arts College, Osmania University, Hyderabad since 2014.*

Before returning to Hyderabad, in the course of several years Professor Bhuvaneswar taught English in the University of Sebha, Lybia.

*Prof. Chilukuri Bhuvaneswar was founder of Ka:rmik Linguistic Theory vis a vis the other linguistic theories. It has branches spreading into language teaching (Ka:rmik Language Teaching Approach) and literary criticism (Ka:rmik Literary Theory). His main area is proverbbiology. He initiated Proverbial Linguistics as a special branch. His interested areas are in theoretical and applied linguistics. He pioneered Ka:rmik Linguistic Theory. He loved horses and rode them when he was in Nigeria; planted trees and collected proverbs; he collected 325 Hausa proverbs on horses (**Hausa** (/ˈhaʊsə/; Harshen/Halshen **Hausa**). It is a Chadic language spoken by the **Hausa** people, the largest ethnic group in Sub-Saharan Africa, mainly within the territories of Southern Niger and Northern Nigeria). It is the largest collection so far in the history of African oral literature; 157 Telugu proverbs on horses from books, etc.; and 150 Libyan Arabic proverbs on camels from field work and books. He discovered a sub-tale of folktales: equine folktales. He has given new definitions to: Proverb; Metaphor; and Culture. He initiated for the first time in Telugu and probably in any world language a functional-structural discourse analysis of proverbs by collecting 250 + prover-*



*bial exchanges from real life – mainly from his mother Mrs. Chilukuri Kantamanigaru – and proposed a discourse model. He also proposed the Ka:rmik Linguistic Theory – an event in Indian linguistic history. After Panini, no major linguistic theory has been proposed. He was interested in receiving proposals from linguists to apply Ka:rmik Linguistic Theory to their respective languages.*

In 2003, Chilukuri Bhuvaneshwar also created and maintained a well-stocked site called *EProverbiallylinguist* (*proverbiallylinguists@yahoo.com*), where members of the *Proverbial Linguistic Group*, mainly from India but also from many other countries were invited to discuss and publish their research. This site contained not just proverbs from various cultures and diverse and highly innovative scholarly research on proverbs and other linguistic matters, but also pictures, poems (by established poets like Gondikatta Rama Subbarao) and various other works of art, mostly visual. It soon became the meeting ground of a large number of scholars and men of art, who freely engaged in interesting and rewarding discussions. It was indeed a joy to visit this remarkable site and participate in it.

*In February, 2014, Language Forum published Bhuvaneshwar's four articles on Ka:rmik Literary Theory and paved the way for a new literary theory in India after almost four hundred years. He was also the Editor-in-Chief of The Indo-Libyan Linguist, Sri Su:ryakamalam Series of monographs on proverbs. His latest papers were "A Plenary Speech on Proverbs" at the University of Diderot, Paris and "Dissenting Voices" (against Derrida) in Language Forum. Later, he taught at Department of Linguistics, Arts College, Osmania University from 2014 until his demise. He taught Historical Linguistics, Government and Binding Theory, and Translation Studies. He supervised many M.A. Projects and conducted 4 conferences. His main research interests were on Linguistics, Language Teaching, Literary Theories and Proverbology.*

*Prof. Bhuvaneshwar has established an association called Ka:rmik Linguistic and Literary Association (KLLAS). The Ka:rmik Linguistic and Literary Association is a registered linguistic association established on the auspicious day of Gitajayanti in 2013 to promote linguistics, literature, and language teaching through the model of Ka:rmik Linguistic Theory pioneered by Prof. Chilukuri Bhuvaneshwar. He has extensively pub-*

lished his research papers on *Ka:rmik Linguistic Theory*. He was the Scientific Committee member of *African Proverbs and Phraseology Society (AFRICAPPS)*.

The School of Languages and Culture, Sharda University, Gurgaon, India, organized *Ka:rmik Literary Theory and Practices* in collaboration with *Ka:rmik Linguistic and Literary Association (KLT)* and a one-day Workshop/FDP on *Ka:rmik Literary Theory and Practices* where Prof. Bhuvaneshwar delivered a lecture on *Ka:rmik Literary Theory and Practices* on 01<sup>st</sup> November 2018. This workshop was organized to popularize KLT as a holistic theory, the causal linguistic theory that integrates form-function-cognition into a unified theory of lingual action and provides a principled account of the creation, application, transmission, retention and perpetuation of language and to teach the application of KLT as an alternative approach to linguistics, language teaching, literary studies, translation studies and research.

On 23<sup>th</sup> July 2020 Professor Bhuvaneshwar left all of us on his heavenly sojourn after a brief ill-health.

However brief, Dr Gunturi's account above clearly testifies to the magnitude, originality and unquestioned uniqueness of Chilukuri Bhuvaneshwar's extensive work in the course of nearly five decades and his unparalleled commitment to what he saw as his great mission in life.

The discussion of Bhuvaneshwar's unique Ka:rmic Theory in relation to proverbs can much better unfold, if first we try to explain it in more general terms, namely, from the point of view of its role as an underlying linguistic theory *per se* with offshoots in second language teaching and learning, the study of literature, and elsewhere. The author, who himself was fluent in several languages apart from English, e.g., Telugu (his mother tongue), Sanskrit, Hindi, Hausa, and some more, has propounded his ideas in a series of papers (some of which listed in the Literature section), which reflect his extremely broad and varied teaching experience. Sadly, he did not manage to publish them in a book, although, as he shared with me late in 2019, he had already begun working on such a book, but his untimely death put a sudden end to his plans.

Below, I will attempt to outline the basic ideas regarding his linguistic theory. As his approach is very specific and truly complex, I would use the limited space of this obituary to present various aspects of it rather than explaining and critiquing it at the

depth it deserves. Hence, there will be many quotations from his various papers, which he sent to me some months before he left this world. I should however warn the readers of this obituary of Chilukuri Bhuvaneshwar's very rich and somewhat 'dense' style, which itself presents a formidable challenge to the researcher. This highly specific, florid style truly reminds us of the well-known dictum 'The style is the man.'

Let me start with Bhuvaneshwar's broad definition of his own linguistic theory: 'KLTA [i.e., Ka:rmik Language Teaching Approach as an extension of his KLM/T, Ka:mik Linguistic Method, or Theory] is an integrated approach that takes an integrated view of form-function-cognition-disposition in a network and lays more emphasis on teaching language in a *cause-means-effect model through the construction of a dispositional (experiential) reality rather than communicative reality alone.*' (1, p. 2) Put another way, '[l]anguage is used as a resource for the construction of actional reality at the lower level, dispositional reality at the middle level, and ka:rmik at the higher level of a holarchy [i.e., a holistic system]. ... [E]ach reality from the top is realized as the lower reality by apparent transformation in an a:nushangik process [i.e., a process where the properties of one level are (automatically) inherited on the next]'. (8, p. 177)

In the lines below, by giving various examples, I will try to show how Chilukuri Bhuvaneshwar understands and applies the term 'dispositional', which is closely related to his term 'ka:rmik' and which plays a central role in his linguistic theory. The dictionary meaning of *disposition* is 'natural temperament, tendency, inclination' (Longman), hence *dispositional* should mean 'pertaining to or having to do with all of these.' But when placed in the context of his Ka:rmik Theory, the term acquires some specific meanings, which build on these basic ones. We can see from Bhuvaneshwar's quotation above that *dispositional* has to do with personal experience, that is, with real life situations and the way they are experienced by the individual himself: '[k]a:rmik reality and dispositional reality are two terms which are *interchangeably used* in the discussion of the ka:rmik linguistic theory since ka:rmik reality is variable dispositional reality even though the former is a higher reality. In addition, dispositional reality is immediate and easily understandable whereas ka:rmik reality is remote and more

difficult to empirically understand. The term *dispositional reality* is only used most of the times since it refers to the individual.’ (8, p. 177) It appears then, that *ka:mik* should designate more generally human experience as such, where *disposition* (and by extension *dispositional*) should mean individualized experience, or to put it differently, the relation between *ka:rmic* and *dispositional* should resemble the relation between *-emic* and *-etic* (like the relationship between phonemics as the general discipline vs the concrete, specific phonetic system of a particular language). Both of these terms relate to his principal tenet that ‘according to the *Ka:rmic Linguistic Theory* all action [i.e., human experience as such] is generated, specified, directed, and materialized by dispositionally impelled desires. The Principle of Desire for Pleasure (*sukhe:chcha* in Sanskrit) is the most fundamental desire in all human beings – any activity that brings in pleasure is welcome and any other activity that begets pain is unwelcome. Thus, *pleasure* is a great motivator for pursuing action’ (9, p. 2), an idea which, if transferred to an European context, directly takes us to the stoicism and epicureanism of the Ancient Greek and Roman philosophical tradition. In the paragraphs below, both the term ‘*ka:rmic*’ and ‘*disposition*’ will be discussed at greater length.

The author maintains that ‘the focus of KLTA is essentially *dispositional communication*, concerned as it is with the goal of *successful experientiality* (with the goal of *dispositional competence* rather than *communicative competence* for experience of activity, where *dispositional competence* is the competence to use language to construct one’s *dispositional reality* in a context), in which socioculturalspiritual communication is a part of the whole among others: *dispositional*, *cognitive*, *contextual actional*, and *lingual actional*. Here, the whole is *greater than ...* the sum of the parts and language is even *beyond ...* the whole [the dots replace diverse signs that constitute Bhuvaneswar’s highly specific symbolic system, which includes arrows, stars, etc., and is used by the author to designate all possible logical relations]. It is so because social communication, which is undoubtedly an important part of language activity, is not *the end* in itself but only *one* of the major *efficient causes* of language activity, the main cause being *disposition* (at the individual level and *ka:rma* at the higher level).’ (1, p. 2, A) The term ‘socioculturalspiritual’ coined by the author

clearly points to his conviction that there is always a spiritual aspect to sociocultural phenomena.

His first paper on the topic, as its very title, *CLT and KLT: A Contrastive Review*, suggests, compares the traditional communicative approach in second language teaching and learning and his own Ka:rmik approach. The author claims that '[i]f social communication were the end in itself, all lingual social communication should be *monolithic*; there should not be any *social variation* within a group, and in addition, *no possibility* for future deviation and change, since the social structure is already instituted. However, in real life such a possibility is negated; new forms of language and communication come into existence within a society as and when dispositional creativity springs up in the users, and *fashions, innovations and systemic effects* spread in a society. These changes are I-I-Ily [an adverb deriving from Bhuvaneshwar's coinage 'interconnected-interrelated-interdependent' (12, p. 8) networked with socioculturalspiritual divisions and separation as societies function as dissipative structures.' (1, p. 2–3, B)

Further (1, p. 3, C) Bhuvaneshwar explains the variations in language use with the fact that 'language acquisition is more than the acquisition of form, function, and use; it is a matter of dispositional acquisition and internalization of the linguistic system for its dispositional application for its dispositional experience in its variety, range, and depth.' The repetition of *disposition* and its derivatives testifies to Bhuvaneshwar conviction in the prevailing subjectivity of language use. Then the author goes on to add that '*mechanical reproduction of language, focalization, mere utilitarian use* deny the learners 'the resources needed to develop a creative command of the language, which would enable them to express *their own individual and social meanings*' (author's emphasis). Ironically, the communicative approach could often stifle rather than promote the richest kinds of communication (2, p. 38). What is more, CLT is associated with cultural imperialism and denies individual expressivity. In KLTA, these problems are avoided by deriving culture from a higher level of disposition (and culture as dispositionally patterned behaviour). Therefore, there is scope for **delinking** the foreign cultural content and **re-linking** the native cultural content since knowledge is dispositionalized.' (1, p. 5, F)

Judging from this context, by dispositionalized knowledge the author, again, means knowledge that is subjectivized, tailored to the specific needs of the individual, i.e., understood, structured and applied freely and creatively from one's own personal perspective and experience rather than being a (comparatively) fixed, stable and enduring expression or vehicle of a particular linguoculture, which in and out of itself can be compared to a largely standardized and highly specific language mirror, or language picture, of the world that belongs to a particular (large) group of people, namely, the creators and speakers of this language (according to linguoculturology).

Below, in a nutshell, I will present the main points of comparison between CLT and KLT (1, p. 6–8) in a slightly abridged and adapted form. My comments will follow the original passages, quoted in inverted commas or given in summary:

#### *a. Language Theory*

1. 'In CLT, language is a system for the expression of meaning, while in KLT it is a means of the construction of experience; that is to say that meaning is a means for constructing experience.' Indeed, from a Humboldtian point of view (i.e., linguoculturology), a language is a storehouse of all the meanings that reflect the mentality, values, and particular way of life of the people who have been using it in the course of generations. In Bhuvaneshwar's understanding however, language is much more than that, it is a means of constructing one's own individual experience, an idea which, taken one step further, may lead us to the assumption that language may have certain 'magical' powers, i.e., it can not only reflect and present but also imagine and thus create highly diverse and individualized 'realities.'

2. 'In CLT, the primary function of language is for interaction and communication (illocutionary force) whereas in KLTA it is for the coordination of experience (with a perlocutionary force).' This thought, which is an extension of the preceding one, places the function of language firmly in the framework of the Speech Act Theory.

3. In CTL, the structure of language is said to reflect its functional and communicative uses, while in KLTA the latter are reflected through its dispositionally derived structure. Again, Bhuvaneshwar adds a further characteristic to language per se: it is not

just a tool for communication; rather, its functional and communicative uses are structurally determined by the personal experience, mentality, emotions, and worldview of each single speaker.

4. The fourth point is concerned with the main units of language in the framework of the two approaches: 'In CLT, the primary units of language are not merely its grammatical or structural features [by this Bhuvaneshwar obviously means the parts of speech, the parts of the sentence, and the clause or sentence], but categories of its functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse [again, the Speech Act theory is referred to, where the main unit is the conversational exchange]; on the other hand, in KLTA, the primary units of language are **experiential cognemes** (emphasis mine, R.P.) realized through formal, functional, and discourse features' (3, pp. 69–71, where the sources discussing the main views of the language theory in the context of the communicative approach are listed). This latter term clearly places Bhuvaneshwar's theory in Cognitive Linguistics.

Put in a more general way by Mohammed Ansari in his extensive study *Application of Linguistic Theories in Language Teaching: A Review of Formal, Functional and Karmic Linguistic Theories* (11, p. 273), according to the Karmic Linguistic Theory, '[l]anguage is not only used by human beings living in a context as a resource for the construction of dispositional reality but it is also produced by human beings dispositionally to live in the context. To explain further, it is first used dispositionally by the originators of a language, and then what is produced as a language is used to construct dispositional reality.' Ansari maintains that 'although KLTA is new, it deserves serious attention and further application in pedagogy for confirming its value as a viable alternative to the unsuccessful western theories of pedagogy in India and the other African and Asian countries.' (op. cit., p. 247)

### ***b. Theory of Learning.***

Going back to Bhuvaneshwar's first article (1), we see that after outlining the theory of learning that underlies the communicative approach [discussed at great length in sources 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 in the Literature section below], he highlights the main features of the theory of learning that underlay his Karmic approach. The author focuses specifically on practice: 'In CLT and KLTA, *practice* is a common feature in the learning process. However, in CLT,

practice is communicative practice whereas in KLTA it is experiential practice which includes communication. That means, in KLTA, learning is *personalized and subjective* whereas in CLT it is not. In that sense, there is scope for style variation and creativity in KLTA which is missing in CLT. [...] Furthermore, *memorization* is an important factor in KLTA (which is not in CLT) [...] However, rote memory [i.e., memorizing words without their meanings] is not encouraged; on the other hand, experiential memory – remembering language through experience – or even *bilingual memory* of cognates is encouraged in the initial stages until the second language memory is firmly established.’ (1, p. 7)

Further in the same article, Bhuvaneshwar explains why and how the first language is made use of in KLTA: ‘In our daily life, we already have our first language to construct our experiential reality but we need an alternate language to do so (in second language acquisition) and therefore to facilitate easier, quicker and efficient learning we make use of both the first language and experiential reality (as in the primitive stages of language development) to construct second language reality. The only difference is that in second language acquisition, there is already an established lingual reality.’ (1, p. 8) The author thus rightly places this phenomenon within the framework of semiotics: ‘Consequently, *the signified* (or *vachya:m* in Sanskrit) is remembered as the word in KLTA by using *experiential memory* because the *vasa:na:s* [i.e., habits] which impel man to a specific type of action without an antecedent or a precedent cause are stored in *Ka:rmik* memory.’ (ibid.)

Characteristically, as can be seen above, Bhuvaneshwar, who, it should again be stressed, is expertly trained in both the Indian and the modern Anglophone tradition in linguistics, spans a bridge between traditional Indian notions and their projected modern Western counterparts; one might wonder how far this discussion could have gone, had he also been familiar with the writings of Aristotle on semiotics twenty four centuries ago in the original Greek language...

In another article of the same series, *Introduction: Towards De-colonization of ELT Theory: A Critique* (9), the author once again promotes breaking away from the Western ‘atomic’ and ‘defective’ theories of learning and replacing them with a ‘wholistic’ [i.e., pertaining to the *whole* rather than atomistic] theory that is



specifically suited to serve the needs of learners in Asia or Africa: 'India is the mother of linguists which has given birth to such illustrious linguists like PaNini Mahamuni and his predecessors and Sri A:di Samkara Bhagavatpu:jyapa:dah who is the greatest exponent of advaita philosophy as well as an outstanding poet and logician, but all these years, the Indian linguists who did not make proper use of the great Indian tradition have followed and continue to follow these western theories without trying to break out of this lingual imperialism with the help of native intelligence. All these theories are in one way or the other not suitable to our conditions in Asia and Africa, particularly, India. Some of them do not pay necessary attention to the problem of varied pronunciation in India; some are not socioculturally suitable; some are not sensitive to the classroom needs since many are overcrowded; and all are atomic. Ka:rmik Language Teaching Approach is one such attempt to liberate pedagogy from *atomism* and experience the pleasure of *wholism*.' (9, p. 2)

In a third article of the same series, *Ka:rmik Language Teaching Approach (KLTA) and Ka:rmik Language Learning Strategies (KLLS): A Brief Outline* (10), Bhuvaneshwar aptly discusses his theory by explaining the meaning of the word ka:rma: 'Karma is a Sanskrit word derived from the root **kr** which means **to do, to make** and means **action, work and deed**. It is related to Avestan *kerenaoti* 'makes,' and Old Persian *kunautiy* 'he makes.' It has a proto-Indo European base **kwer-** 'to make, form.' This is the main meaning of the word karma. In its secondary sense, it has four meanings according to popular usage: 1. *object* (in grammar); 2. *ritual* (in Hindu religious ceremonies); 3. *fruit-bearing impressions of past actions in the past-present-future births* (in *Sana:tana Dharma aka Hinduism*); and 4. *atmosphere* (in Modern English) (10, p. 142).' The author then goes on to dwell on the non-religious meaning of his adjective Ka:rmik: 'This adjective **ka:rmik**, unlike **karmic**, has no reference to rebirth or destiny and it simply means 'fruit-bearing past actional impressional' in the Ka:rmik Linguistic Theory. This adjective as derived from the word *karma* with the meaning 'action' instead of fruit-bearing impressions of past actions in past lives' is associated with *karmaphalam* and *karmaphalabho:gam*. In other words, it is **a principle of cause-effect reality** where the impressions of the past actions are the CAUSE for the performance of the present actions which are the EFFECT.

The present actions as well as their consequent results are directly proportional to the nature of the cause and their experience is in the form of pleasure or pain. To explain it further, the adjective *ka:rmik* underlies **the experiential principle (of pleasure or pain) of cause-effect reality without reference to rebirth or absence of rebirth:**

*(1) Cause: Effect: Experience*

[which can be read as “A cause produces an appropriate effect according to its nature and the effect an appropriate experience according to the nature of the effect as it impacts on the disposition (personality) of the experiencer].” (ibid., p. 143)

Bhuvaneshwar then goes on to impress on his readers that his term *ka:rmik* has no religious underpinnings whatsoever and is therefore purely scientific, before embarking on the explanation of his other central term, ‘disposition’: ‘Disposition (*svabha:vam*) is a complex of three constituents: 1. Traits, 2. Knowledge, and 3. *Va:sa:nas* (internalized impressions of habituated actions). Disposition generates-chooses-specifies-directs-materializes all activity from its conceptualization-to-its-patterning and structuration-to-its-material realization. This concept lies within psychology and cognitive science.’ (ibid.) In other words, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that, as commented above, disposition is what makes a person an individual human being, as it comprises his character, his knowledge, way of thinking, outlook on life, his habits and both his deepest and most immediate motives.

In an article on computer-assisted language learning, the author reiterates his definition of the *Ka:rmic Language Teaching Approach*, adding an important new dimension to it, that of joyful experience (12, p. 4): ‘[KA:RMICALL] integrates form-function-meaning-discourse levels of language in an atomic-holistic framework and introduces the concept of joyful experience of the teaching-learning situation by games and other extra-curricula activities in the Virtual Learning World of the Computer in ICT’ where language teaching becomes language playing tailored to the personal needs of the learner and placed in his own culture. Indeed, as the author states elsewhere (13, p. 1), ‘[a]ccording to KLTA, living is a matter of seeking pleasure by fulfilling one’s desires and language is used as a resource to achieve this goal. [...] So, if the learning materials can be turned into games, then the learning

burden will be reduced and playing becomes an intrinsic type of motivation in addition to the extrinsic type of motivation derived from it in the form of marks, prizes, etc.’ Or, put another way, in the light of the Theory of the Cultureme in linguoculturology (14, p. 288–299), the terms *ka:rmik* and *dispositional* can be seen not just as designating a whole new range of highly specific meanings but also as two culturemes that are unmistakably positively charged.

Now let us turn our attention to *proverbial linguistics and proverbbiology*, the latter term uniting proverb studies with paremiography. In one of his early paper on proverbs, which is about their indexical meaning (1) Bhuvaneshwar grapples with the semiotics of proverbs in the context of culture understood as communication. After tracing some basic definitions of culture in semiotics (developed by Keesing, Duranti, Geertz, Levi-Strauss, Silverstein, Ortner and others) he suggests the terms *proverbial index*, *proverbial indexical meaning*, and *proverbial indexicality* (op. cit., p. 2). Bhuvaneshwar bases his conclusion on the analysis of several Sanskrit and Telugu proverbs used in conversational exchanges. This study shows that ‘proverbs – apart from conveying the content meaning – also point out indexical meaning which can be general and/or specific. The general index meaning is based on the dialectal and sociolectal features of the spoken proverb while the specific index meaning is based on many features that point to personal characteristics, social relations and types of situations. The features that point to personal characteristics include the use of literary, common and vulgar proverbs as well as opinion oriented proverbs. An appropriate use of a proverb also points to the knowledge and the conversational abilities of the speaker.’ In this first and, to the best of my knowledge, single study on proverbs that has been published in *Proverbium*, Bhuvaneshwar does not mention his Ka:rmic approach. The reason is probably his desire to better prepare his (mostly Western) readers into accepting him as a proverb scholar before presenting to them what might seem his rather exotic theory.

In another study, titled *The Syntax of Proverbs I. The Sentence in American English Proverbs: A Case Study in Quirk’s Model*, which is a good 56 pages long and is part of Chilukuri Bhuvaneshwar’s PhD dissertation, the author examines the syntax of proverbs according to the widely accepted model of the sentence in

English proposed by Quirk and Greenbaum (1989) (17). This very extensive in-depth analysis proves that ‘proverbs [both in English and Telugu] are represented in all the basic types of English sentence [which seems to reiterate Permyakov’s conclusion based on an even more extensive comparative analysis of proverbs in more than 200 languages] that they represent all possible features (syntactic structures included) of a language]...and *proves* that their syntax is not constrained to a limited set of structures.’ (16, p. 2) Bhuvaneshwar maintains that notwithstanding the (widespread) view that proverbs exhibit a limited number of syntactic structures, which is suggested by Dundes, Abrahams, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and some other influential proverb scholars, the finding of his study clearly ‘rules out a syntactically motivated criterion for a definition of a proverb by showing the variability of syntax in proverbs within themselves with some structures present in some proverbs and some others not present (i.e., the syntactic criterion suffers from the defect of *avya:pti* (under extension). In addition, the structures present in proverbs are not unique to proverbs alone and hence a syntactically motivated distinction cannot be made between proverbs and other genres (i.e., the syntactic criterion also suffers from the defect of *ativya:pti* (over extension). Furthermore, it also indexes a positive defining characteristic, namely, prototypicality of proverbs, by contrastively underlying it as a constant factor among all the variable syntactic structures. What is more, it offers counter evidence to the formal (Chomskyan), functional (Hallidayan) and cognitive theories of language because the variation in proverbs is found to be neither genetically inherited nor socially generated nor cognitively anchored but dispositionally generated, specified, directed and realized which supports the Ka:rmik Linguistic Theory of Language.’ (op. cit., p. 1) The latter has to do with the use of proverbs: ‘As the proverb user uses a proverb, he so uses it as a means to coordinate the coordination of action to construct his own proverbial dispositional (ka:rmik) reality and experiences the results of his (lingual) action in terms of success and failure bringing in pleasure and sorrow.’ (op. cit., p. 54) Or to put it differently and in more simple language, the proverb lexis and structure is ultimately determined by the choice of the individual user made from a range of existing options in each instance he uses a proverb to pursue his own desires and intentions.

Let us now compare briefly the findings of two other studies, *The Clause in Proverbs 1. A Case Study of English* (18), and *The Syntax of Telugu Proverbs 1. The Sentence* (19). Overall, they compare meticulously and thoroughly the syntax of two large proverb corpora from the point of view of Quirk and Greenbaum in their *University Grammar of English* (1989) without relating it to KLT. In the case of the English proverbs, it has been found that 'the clause is represented in almost all of its basic structures ... and its representation is highly productive. Hence we understand that the choice of the clause in English proverbs is unmarked.' (18) As far as the Telugu proverbs are concerned, Chilukuri Bhuvaneshwar first extensive study on the topic reveals that '[a]ll the four major syntactic classes of declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences in their simple and complex sentence types with all the clauses except the adjectival clause are represented.' (19)

Another equally thorough and meticulously executed analysis on the same topic, *The Clause in Proverbs 2. A Case study of Telugu* (20), confirms that 'Telugu proverbs are not clause friendly when the same clause can be expressed as a PP [Participial Phrase]. It is also observed that the order in a PP sentence is the opposite of English. This is an interesting finding since it provides evidence for considering language as ka:rmik action ... instead of mental action as in the Chomskyan tradition or as social action in the Hallideyan tradition' (ibid.). Before making this rather challenging claim (given the authoritative position of the two giants, Michael Halliday and Noam Chomsky), in his concluding paragraph the author reiterates the claim made at the outset that 'in all the cases where a clause can be transformed into a participial phrase, the clause structure is abandoned and the PP structure favored. As such, it is a **stylistic choice** [emphasis mine, R.P], which can be motivated only through a ka:rmik linguistic analysis, proposed in Bhuvaneshwar (2002) (21)' (20).

These are by no means the only studies on the syntax of proverbs. They have been chosen as an illustration to Bhuvaneshwar's very demanding, meticulous, thorough and extensive style of writing. He literally leaves no stone unturned in his in-depth analyses. But when making his conclusions, the author always suggests that much work is yet to be done to further prove his findings and that his theses should be extended over more data by further research.

In a more recent work on proverbs and the Speech Act Theory placed in the context of his Ka:rmik Linguistic Theory (22), Bhuvaneshwar suggests that 'it is possible to look at speech acts as dispositionally produced by human beings *by living* in a context and used dispositionally *for living* in the context and provide a principled account of how speech acts are *chosen*, and how their choice in turn contributes to the emergent discourse structure.' (22, p. 1) After discussing Austin's and Searle's classifications of speech acts, Bhuvaneshwar states that 'according to the Ka:rmik Linguistic Theory, language is a *dispositional* action instead of mere *mental*, or *social*, or *cognitive* action. As such, disposition (svabha:vam) generates, specifies, directs, materializes and impels the use of lingual action in all its variety, range, and depth and consequently *the choice of speech acts and the coherence and structure of discourse* also.' (22, p. 2) This study contains several extremely complex graphs showing consecutively the network of sva:bhavam in conversational exchange, the network of talking options, the network of dispositional exchange, the network of type and order of speech acts, the combined triaxial quadrants of cognitive actionality, the materialization of lingual action, and the star network in operation: speech act cogneme – cognition. Several examples of proverbial exchanges are analyzed in very great detail through the speech act theory in combination with the KLT and with the help of the graphs. The study concludes as follows: 'sequentiality in discourse is not only linked to what speech act utterances convey but also to the speech act selection made by the Speaker/Hearer. In addition, the choice of the speech acts and their propositional content for example, between direct and indirect speech acts or between an assertive and a question, and the textual composition of the speech act, for example, a proverb or a non-proverbial utterance in taboo or standard language also contribute to the emergent sequence of discourse. Furthermore, such choices at a higher delicacy are dependent on the psychological state and cognitive character of S/H. He may be co-operative or non-co-operative or neutral in his reply; he may like to use a proverb or no proverb, polite or rude language, straightforward or roundabout or confused explanation in his reply. All these differences affect the coherence and sequence in discourse. Therefore, speech act theory should be supplemented with further conditions on intentionality *for* speech acts in addition to intentionality *in* speech acts. In order

to do so, one should seek a dispositional sociocognitive linguistic approach to speech acts (as outlined in the Ka:rmik Linguistic Theory [discussed in sources 23, 24 and 25 in the Literature section below]).' (22, p. 12) Bhuvaneshwar suggests that the Speech Act Theory should also be supplemented by pragmatics and ethnography of communication, before closing his study with one more suggestion, namely, that this theory should also cover 'The *Principle of Expressibility*: "The principle that whatever can be meant can be said" is further extended to cover its *causality* and restated in the Ka:rmik Linguistic Theory as the *Principle of Ka:rmik Experientiality*: *Whatever can be meant can be said but whatever is meant and said is meant dispositionally for the construction of one's dispositional reality through speech acts.*' (ibid.)

This last study, when placed in the context of his other works, illustrates how wide-ranging his scholarly interests were. With the exception of etymology and historical linguistics, almost no other major branch of linguistics has remained closed to his desire to explore how proverbs 'fare' in its specific context. While reading his works, one is left with the impression that the author is trying to do the job of an institute of proverbiology staffed with a group of scholars, where each is an expert in a specific field. And what is really striking is that his diverse works, through encompassing several branches of linguistics, fundamentally are an ardent attempt at constructing a holistic system. His own ka:rmik approach is intended to do exactly that: unite many disparate blocks of knowledge and build a harmonious whole, at the centre of which is the human being with his inner world and deep, personal motives where desire for happiness, joy and pleasure rules supreme.

Had the author lived in an environment that could have given him greater opportunity for getting his works published, he would no doubt have produced a very substantial series of books, and gained the world reputation he deserves. Chilukuri Bhuvaneshwar spent most of his professional life working tirelessly and in isolation, quietly struggling for recognition even in his most immediate surroundings. Everything he created was a labour of love. For some great men true recognition arrives after they are gone. There is no doubt that now the time has certainly come when Bhuvaneshwar's groundbreaking and highly insightful work will receive the profound interest and great admiration it richly deserves.

**LITERATURE**

Note: Many of the works below are manuscripts kindly sent to me by the author himself shortly before his demise. It is hoped that these papers should receive the due institutional attention and scholarly recognition they deserve and hence get properly edited and published in a book in its own right, which no doubt will be read in the future by generations of scholars across the world in the spirit of gratitude and reverence.

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SUSANNA BERG ROAMNDO

*Ethiopian Amharic Proverbs*. By Fisseha G. Demoze and William H. Armstrong. United States of America: privately printed, 2019. Pp. 15.

Fisseha G. Demoze's and William H. Armstrong's *Ethiopian Amharic Proverbs* is the only Amharic proverbs collection with English translations currently available. Armstrong and Demoze began collecting proverbs in the late 1960's to aid Armstrong in his Amharic language and culture learning; Armstrong was living and working in Ethiopia and asked his language teacher, Demoze, to help him collect and translate proverbs, appreciating the perspectives into Amharic Ethiopian life that the proverbs provided him. Through this collection of 441 Amharic proverbs, Demoze and Armstrong offer these perspectives to a wider audience.

As stated in the introduction, this collection is intended for both Amharic and non-Amharic speaking audiences. As such, each proverb includes a variety of formats: the proverb, first given in Ge'ez letters (e.g. ምሳሌ), is followed by a transliteration in the Roman alphabet and then by an English translation. A further explanation in English follows in italics if the authors decided it was needed, and this is the greatest strength of this collection for non-Amharic speakers. The explanations clarify the meaning and/or intended use of the proverb as well as certain key words that are specific to Ethiopian life; from these, one learns key words for certain plants and foods, drinks, animals, or types of clothing. For example, *Tef* is a staple crop of Ethiopia (44, 404), *Tej* is Ethiopian honey mead (20, 383), *koso* is a bad tasting medicine used to treat tapeworm (61), and a *shema* is a finely woven piece of cloth (12), while donkeys and hyenas are commonly referenced animals. These then help to explain the metaphor being used or the customs related to the proverb. For proverb 95, for instance, the explanation first gives the meaning of *shash* as "a small, thin, white piece of cloth such as priests wrap around their heads" before giving a further brief explanation on burial customs and how this leads to

two possible contradictory meanings of the proverb. Proverb 49 states, “For a person whose day is dark with troubles, the road of life is long, tedious, and narrow.” The more literal translation is “the road of life is *zeng*,” the explanation informs the reader that *zeng* is “a long thin stick with a forked end used to lean on or ward off dogs,” allowing the reader to understand the metaphor being used. The explanations also sometimes provide understanding for certain idiomatic expressions, e.g. 123: “The upper lip is for argument; the lower lip is for testimony.” The explanation tells the reader that ‘the upper lip’ is equivalent to statements used for argument that aren’t true, while the lower lip means “from the heart.” These explanations give further understanding not only of the proverbs but also of the culture from which they come.

Having Ge’ez letters and the transliteration keep the proverbs culturally and linguistically rooted. Having the transliteration also gives clues to the verbal artistry in the proverbs’ composition. The transliteration for 62 is “daget ’rmu, meda wend’mu”; this allows even a non-Amharic speaker to see rhythm and end rhyme in the formation of the proverb. However, the English translations do not always keep the structure of the proverb, so much of the verbal artistry is lost in translation in favor of giving a clear meaning.

A short English introduction orients the reader to the collection and gives an apologia for the proverbs as something enjoyable in themselves as well as expressions of both universal wisdom and culturally specific meanings. The introduction is followed by some information on keystrokes for Ge’ez letters, with more in an appendix. An Amharic speaker would be better suited to comment on the usefulness of this appendix. Some more information on Amharic as a language and the pronunciation would be a useful addition for non-Amharic speakers. The authors include some traditional Ethiopian pictures to begin and close the book which give culturally rooted visual depictions.

The system for ordering the proverbs is unclear, if one was used. An appendix where proverb numbers are grouped based on topic or a keyword would make proverbs easier to find or reference for those using the book for an academic purpose. The purpose of the book, however, was to provide a collection of Amharic proverbs usable for Amharic speakers while giving translations and explanations in English to clarify the meaning for non-Amharic speakers and cultural outsiders. The book fulfills this

purpose and provides explanations to reveal aspects of Ethiopian Amharic culture that the proverbs are drawn from, thus providing insights that would otherwise be easily missed.

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

*Sprichwörterammlung. Mongolisch – Deutsch – Englisch – Französisch – Russisch.* By Naraa Khalzhuu. Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia: Institut für fremde Sprachen und Kulturen der Mongolischen Nationalen Universität, 2021. In print.

A few years ago, I received a surprising but most welcome letter by Dr. Naraa Khalzhuu from Mongolia informing me that she as a German university professor was eagerly at work comparing Mongolian and German proverbs. But not just that! She also announced that she would very much like to come to the University of Vermont in order to discuss her exciting paremiological work with me. I immediately sent her an official invitation, and it then became my pleasure and honor to welcome her together with her friend B. Chimegsaikhan to host her in Burlington between May 10-14, 2014. My wife and I shall never forget this visit! While we dealt with her scholarly work, there was also time to have a festive dinner in our country home. On that occasion she presented us with a beautifully framed proverb inscription in the ancient Mongolian alphabet that reads “Mit Kraft des Körpers besiegt man einen, Mit Kraft des Geistes besiegt man viele” (With the strength of the body one conquers one person, With the strength of the mind many). Ever since then I look at this image and message almost every day since it is prominently exhibited in my International Proverb Archive at the university. We have such wonderful memories of this visit, above all because we had never met someone from Mongolia and someone so very kind before. We learned so much about her beautiful country at that time, and we have stayed in contact ever since.

When Naraa Khalzhuu returned to her homeland, she sent me an abridged version of her dissertation about the comparison of Mongolian and German proverbs. This gave me the perfect idea of what she had in mind during our discussion. Her plan was to expand her comparative work to include not only German but also English, French, and Russian equivalents. This has never been done before, and international proverb scholars will be most thankful and excited

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about her new proverb collection that presents 450 Mongolian proverbs and their equivalents in four major European languages: *Sprichwörterammlung. Mongolisch – Deutsch – Englisch – Französisch – Russisch*. As can be imagined, Mongolian proverbs have not been included in the major polyglot proverb collections. In fact, there is still very much to be learned about the rich treasure trove of Mongolian proverbs. Naraa Khalzhuu's *magnum opus* will make this possible for general readers interested in the folklore and culture of her country but also for paremiologists wanting to study the indigenous proverbs of a distant land.

I can well imagine that there exist studies of Mongolian proverbs in their original language that I have not been able to add to my large International Proverb Archive, but here is a list of publications that I do own. Special mention must be made of the truly superb work by Janice Raymond who wrote her dissertation about Mongolian proverbs and subsequently published an annotated bilingual collection of *Mongolian Proverbs: A Window into Their World* (2010). While she translates the 1419 proverbs and provides cultural and historical comments, her valuable book does not contain a keyword index, making it very difficult indeed to find particular proverbs. Of course, she also does not add English equivalents or those of other languages. That has now been accomplished in superb fashion by Naraa Khalzhuu:

Aalto, Pentti. "Some South-Mongolian Proverbs." *Suomalais-ugrilaisen Seuran Toimituksia*, 98 (1950), 1-12. (a small collection)

Frye, Stanley N. "Two Hundred and Fifty Mongolian Proverbs." *Mongolian Folktales, Stories and Proverbs*. Ed. John R. Krueger. Bloomington, Indiana: The Mongolia Society, 1967. 61-83. (texts in English translation only)

Gül, Bülent. "Aile ve akrabalık anlayışı bağlamında moğol atasözleri [Mongolian Proverbs with Regard to Family and Kinship]." *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 27 (2017), 175-188 (in Turkish).

Hangin, John Gombojab, John R. Krueger, R.G. Service, and William V. Rozycki. "Mongolian Folklore: A Representative Collection from the Oral Literary Tradition. Part One." *Mongolian Studies*, 9 (1985-1986), 13-78 (proverbs and sayings, pp. 13-60;



226 proverbs in English translation only but with explanatory notes)

Harvilahti, Lauri. “‘Zwei Fliegen mit einer Klappe’. Zum Parallelismus der Sprichwörter.” *Finnisch-Ugrische Forschungen*, 48, no. 1 (1987), 27-38. (a few Finnish and Mongolian proverbs)

Kara, György. “‘The Bush Protects the Little Bird’.” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 48, no. 3 (1995), 421-428. (connection of the Mongolian proverb with one from Turkey)

Naranchimeg, Khalzhuu. *Kontrastive Forschung deutsch-mongolischer Sprichwörter*. Diss. Universität für Geisteswissenschaften in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolei, 2001. 35 pp. (summary of dissertation comparing German and Mongolian proverbs; in Mongolian).

Rashidonduk, Sh. “Words of Wisdom and Words of Mockery – Remembered by an Old Mongol.” *Documenta Barbarorum. Festschrift für Walter Heissig*. Eds. Annemarie von Gabain and Wolfgang Veenker. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983. 282-285. (a dozen Mongolian texts with English translations)

Raymond, Janice. *Mongolian Proverbs. A Window into Their World*. San Diego, California: Alethinos Books, 2010. 374 pp. Published again at Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publications, 2014. 351 pp. (a bilingual collection of 1419 Mongolian proverbs with English translations and annotations)

Raymond, Janice. *Monggol soktam p'uri*. Ulaanbaatar: Soimbo Inswaeso, 2011. 286 pp. (Korean edition of J. Raymond's *Mongolian Proverbs*)

Raymond, Janice. *Proverbs as a Window into Mongolian Culture and a Resource for Developing a Contextualized Approach for Evangelism*. Diss. Fuller Theological Seminary, 2012. 209 pp. (cultural and folkloric analysis of Mongolians proverbs and the worldview expressed in them)

Veit, Veronika. “Farbepitheta und Sprichwörter in mongolischen Epen.” *Fragen der Mongolischen Heldendichtung*. Ed. Walther Heissig. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987. IV, 101-115. (color phrases and proverbs in Mongolian epics)

Wang, Jian-Jun, Wurencaodao, and Zhoulina. "A Tentative Analysis of English Translation of Mongolian Proverbs from the Intercultural Perspective." *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 4, no. 2 (2014), 72-77. (a few examples for the difficulty of translating Mongolian proverbs into English)

Whymant, Neville J. "Mongolian Proverbs: A Study in the Kalmuck Colloquial." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no volume given (April 1926), 257-267. (anthropological, folkloric, and linguistic study of a few Mongolian proverbs)

Valuable as all of these publications are, they do not touch on the question how the proverbial wisdom expressed in the Mongolian language relates to equivalent proverbs in English, French, German, and Russian. Naraa Khalzhuu's multilingual collection makes this possible and thus represents a breakthrough for the study and understanding of Mongolian culture and folklore as contained in 450 proverbs.

A close reading of the extensive list of Mongolian proverbs with their literal English translations and followed by English French, German, and Russian proverbs reveals some interesting facts. First of all, as in proverbs from other languages, there are literal and figurative proverbs, with the latter exhibiting fascinating metaphors relating to the Mongolian culture and lifestyle. There are proverbs about age, animals, experience, family, friendship, happiness, knowledge, learning, life, love, marriage, speech, stupidity, wealth, wisdom, work, youth, and many other aspects of normal Mongolian existence. They amount to somewhat of a general worldview in proverbial form that grew over centuries of life in this distant land. Horses have and continue to play a considerable role in this society, and it is not surprising that there are numerous proverbs in which horses appear. Here is a good example:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 14. МОНГОЛ  | Адуу арав хүүрвэл унах юм олддоггүй,<br>Хонь зуу хүүрвэл идэх юм олддоггүй.                    |
| Translation | When you have ten horses, nothing to ride;<br>When you have one hundred sheep, nothing to eat. |
| Deutsch     | Wer die Wahl hat, hat die Qual.  |
| English     | The wider the choice, the greater the trouble.<br>To keep a dog and bark oneself.              |

Français	Souvent qui choisit prend le pire.
Русский	ому выбирать, тому и голову себе ломать.

Another proverb referring to horses appears in this next example, showing the unique equestrian image of the Mongolian proverb. The many equivalents that follow in the four languages of this comparative collection make ample clear how diligently Naraa Khalzhuu has searched for fitting equivalents:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 23. Монгол  | Азарга нь алаг бол унага нь ч алаг.  |
| Translation | <i>If the stallion is dappled, the foal is dappled too.</i>  |
|             | Эх нь хээр алаг бол хүү нь шийр алаг.  |
| Translation | <i>If the mother is dappled, the son is dappled too.</i>   |
|             | А  |
| Deutsch     | Wie der Vater, so der Sohn.<br>Wie die Mutter, so die Tochter.<br>Der Apfel fällt nicht weit vom Stamm.<br>Wie die Alten (sungen), so (zwitschern) die Jungen. |
| English     | Like father, like son.<br>Like mother, like daughter.<br>Blood will tell.<br>True blood will show itself.  |
| Français    | Tel père, tel fils.<br>Telle mère, telle fille.<br>Bon sang ne peut mentir.<br>La pomme ne tombe jamais loin de l'arbre.                                       |
| Русский     | Каков батька, таковы и детки.<br>Каков отец, таков и сын.<br>Какова мать, такова и дочь.<br>Яблоко от яблони недалеко падает.                                  |
|             | Б  |
| Deutsch     | Wie der Vogel, so das Ei.<br>Was von der Henne kommt, das gackert.<br>Art lässt nicht von Art.   |
| English     | Like hen, like chicken.<br>He that comes of a hen must scrape.<br>Like begets/ breeds like.  |

Français	Bon chien chasse de race. Chat et chaton chassent le raton. Chassez le naturel, il revient au galop.
Русский	От свиньи не родятся бобрята, а всё поросята. Род в род идёт.

This next comparative list is also of interest. It concerns the very common European proverb “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” that appears in Mongolian with its very own cultural flavor:

42. Монгол	Аль газар хаа явбал тэр газрын дууг дуулна.
<i>Translation</i>	<i>Wherever you go, sing the song of that land.</i>
	Усыг нь уувал ёсыг нь дагадаг.
<i>Translation</i>	<i>If you drink the water of the land, follow its traditions.</i>
Deutsch	Wes Brot ich esse, des Lied ich singe. In Rom tu, was Rom tut.
English	Every land has its own law. When in Rome, do as the Romans do.
Français	A chaque pays sa coutume. Quand tu seras à Rome, agis comme les Romaines.
Русский	Он doit vivre selon le pays où l’on est. Чей хлеб ешь, того и песенку поёшь. В каком народе живёшь, того и обычая держишь. В чужой монастырь со своим уставом не ходят.

But let me also mention yet another group of proverbs since it involves one of the most popular German proverbs that I remember well from my youth in Germany.

374. Монгол	Худал хугархай хөлтэй Үнэн түмэн хөлтэй.
<i>Translation</i>	<i>Lies have broken legs; truth has ten thousand legs.</i>
Deutsch	Lügen haben kurze Beine.
English	A lie has no legs.

	Lies have short wings/legs. Falsehood never made a fair hinder end.
Français	La vérité finit toujours par se savoir/ par éclater. Les mensonges ont les jambes courtes. Le mensonge ne conduit/mène pas loin. Le menteur ne va pas loin.
Русский	Ложь на тараканьих ножках ходит.

Several equivalents speak of lies having short legs and that they don't get far. The English equivalent "Lies have short legs" that appeared as early as the sixteenth century has by now fallen out of use. It must not be forgotten that proverbs come and go. Some proverbs will forever be current, but some disappear because they do not fit into modern life, and others are created now because they reflect modern mores. In any case, the Mongolian proverb "Lies have broken legs; truth has ten thousand legs" is a welcome piece of wisdom in that it does not only argue against lies but also stresses the high value of truth.

There are many more indigenous proverbs that could be mentioned, such as "Better be a blue-bottle fly's head than a tiger's tail" (no. 77), "One twig can't make a fire, One person can't make a family" (no. 104), "Do not tell the secret word even to a lake frog" (no. 218), "To shoot two rabbits with one bullet" (no. 222), and "You can't use your beautiful face to make a tea with milk" (no. 409). It cannot have been an easy task to find similar proverbs expressing the same ideas but with different metaphors in the other languages! And yet, despite the differences, there are plenty of similarities even if they are expressed in different images and words. After all, proverbs contain common experiences and observations, and it is to be expected that they find similar expression.

But there is another matter that is truly fascinating about the comparative proverb collection that Naraa Khalzhuu has put together after years of serious paremiographical labor. Mongolian proverbs like "No smoke without making fire" (no. 101), "A hand washes the other hand" (no. 107), "Everything that shines (glitters) is not gold" (no. 121), "Forge the iron while it is hot" (300), and "A word uttered is silver; a word non-said is gold" (no. 399) have basically identical parallels in many other languages. In Europe they go back to classical Greek and Latin or later to medieval Latin and

were translated into the vernacular languages. But how did they get to Mongolia? Were they loan translated into the Mongolian language, or were they coined independently from the European tradition? This leads to the fascinating question whether there is such a thing as polygenesis as far as proverb origins are concerned? There is no reason why these common-sense proverbs should not have been coined independently in the far-distant land of Mongolia. It is here where much more work needs to be done. It is a vexing problem especially since there might not be written references for them in Mongolian going back hundreds of years.

By the way, this also relates to stereotypical proverbs, as for example this unfortunate anti-feministic proverb:

425. Монгол	Эм хүн урт үстэй ч богино ухаантай.
<i>Translation</i>	<i>Women have long hair but limited (short) intelligence.</i>
Deutsch	Weiber haben langes Haar und kurzen Verstand.
	Frauen haben langes Haar und kurzen Sinn.
English	Long hair, little brains.
	Long hair and short wit.
Français	Longs cheveux, courte cervelle.
Русский	Волосы долги, да ум короткий.

It is unfortunately a widely disseminated proverb that should long have outlasted its claim to truth! But how did it get into the Mongolian language and culture? Was it brought there and loan translated? Or was it coined by a misogynous male there?

In any case, things are never easy when the question about the origin and historical dissemination of a particular proverb is asked. Here is one more interesting example dealing with the common proverb “Where there’s a will, there’s a way”:

396. Монгол	Хүсэл бий аваас хүрэх зам буй.
<i>Translation</i>	<i>If there is a will, there is a way.</i>
Deutsch	Wo ein Wille ist, da ist auch ein Weg.
	Fester Wille führt zum Ziel.
	Wer will, der kann.
English	Where there’s a will, there’s a way.

	A wilful man must have his way. Nothing is impossible to a willing mind.
Français	Vouloir, c'est pouvoir. Qui veut peut. A cœur vaillant rien d'impossible.
Русский	Там, где воля, есть и путь.

As can be seen, the English, German, and Mongolian proverbs are identical. I have recently established that the English text goes back to only the year 1822 – I would have thought that it is much older. Thirty years later it appeared in 1852 in a German newspaper with the distinct reference that it is of English origin! In other words, the proverb was loan translated into German. And the Mongolian proverb? Did travelers take it there or did Mongolians coming back home from Europe carry it there? Or is this another case of polygenesis?

Finally then, let's take a look at the proverb "Time is money" that has become an international piece of wisdom. For a long time, it was believed that Benjamin Franklin coined it in the eighteenth century in the United States as wisdom underlying the basic principles of capitalism and serious work, the so-called Puritan work ethic. As I have shown, Franklin did indeed cite it in 1748 and 1751, but he had found it in a British newspaper from 1719! Has this globally disseminated proverb found its way to Mongolia by now, perhaps even giving the indigenous Mongolian proverb "Time is gold" (gold probably stands for money?) a run for its money, to put it proverbially with a pun?

403. Монгол	Цаг бол алт.
<i>Translation</i>	<i>Time is gold.</i>
Deutsch	Zeit ist Geld.
English	Time is money.
Français	Le temps, c'est de l'argent.
Русский	Время - деньги.

In any case, I like the Mongolian "Time is gold" since it is more poetic and less mundane or materialistic. The Mongolian worldview looks at time as a treasure of life rather than a pragmatic concept for financial success. Be that as it may, as these short comments show, there is much that can be learned from Naraa Khal-

zhuu's comparative proverb collection. It is a delightful book of proverbial wisdom from five languages and cultures, and it contains much food for thought for general readers, scholars, and students. Above all, it brings Mongolia and the Mongolian people from so far away closer to the rest of humankind. We do owe Naraa Khalzhuu a great debt of gratitude for her labor in the service of proverbial wisdom that continues to play a significant role in an interconnected world.

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*Sekai kotowaza hikaku jiten*. [*Comparative Dictionary of World Proverbs*.] Eds. Masamizu Tokita and Yamaguchi Masanobu. Supervised by The Japanese Society of Paremiology. Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 2020. Pp 395.

The Japanese language has a well-developed set of proverbs derived from diverse sources, including the Chinese and Japanese classics, Buddhist lore and even some Western texts, such as the New Testament and Erasmus' *Adagia*, that reflect its variegated history. Proverbs are a significant component of literary education in the country and are regularly featured in school and university entrance examinations. Japan is also one of the few countries in the world which has an academic society dedicated to proverb studies.<sup>1</sup>

The title under review, appearing from the major academic and educational publisher Iwanami, is yet another sign of the popularity of proverbs in contemporary Japan. One of the two lead editors is Masamizu Tokita, a founding member of the Japanese Society of Paremiology and currently its vice-president who has published several standard reference works in the field in the last two decades. He is also the originator of a collection of about 3500 historical paremiological items such as Edo-period (1603-1868) proverb play cards (*kotowaza karuta*), which is housed in the Meiji University Library and Museum.<sup>2</sup> Yamaguchi Masanobu, professor emeritus of Meiji University specializing in sports linguistics and another founding member of the Japanese Society of Paremiology, served as the second lead editor.

The reviewed title is the culmination of a collaborative project which started in January 2010 within the Japanese Society of Paremiology, which had been founded just in the preceding year. As the preface (second page, no page number) of the book explains, the project was originally one of three separate streams, centering on an international comparison of 300 major Japanese proverbs (the other two were on a comparative study of animals in world

proverbs, and a collection of representative proverbs from selected languages). After nearly a decade of collaborative work involving dozens of collaborators, the number of languages represented in this annotated anthology for a popular Japanese audience grew from fewer than 10 to 25.

The majority of languages whose proverbs are listed in this volume are, unsurprisingly considering the current state of research, Western (including classical ones): Ancient Greek, Latin, English, German, French, Italian, Dutch, Spanish (including Mexican Spanish), Rumanian, Hungarian, Russian, and Georgian. The rest are mostly Asian or Oriental, namely: Nepalese, Mongolian, Arabic, Turkish, Hindi, Indonesian, Tibetan, Taiwanese Hokkien, Chinese, and Korean. Two African languages, Swahili and Kiga or Chiga, round up this polyglot collection.

The entries are each arranged as follows. First comes the Japanese proverb, ordered in the so-called *gojūon* system (the common Japanese equivalent of the Roman alphabetical order). Thus it differs from most current paremiographical collections which arrange entries by keywords or themes, instead ordering them strictly from a the viewpoint of a Japanese language user. When the proverb comes from the Chinese classics or from a Western source it is so indicated, and then a short, single-sentence definition or explanation of the proverb is given. Synonymous and antonymous Japanese proverbs, often several for each entry, follow. After these comes a more discursive analysis, occupying about half a page to a page, which explains the proverb's etymology and historical usage, and lays out cultural, historical, or otherwise general linguistic issues regarding some of its foreign equivalents. Lastly comes a list of similar foreign proverbs, each line consisting of the name of the language, a Japanese translation, and the proverbs themselves written out in their own native letters or characters.

While not all of the 24 non-Japanese languages are represented in every entry (since some languages may not have commonly used equivalent proverbs), the editors seem to have tried their best to have as many of them represented as possible. Most of the entries are followed by synonymous proverbs in 15 or more languages. At times there are also several proverbs in one language listed together (the preface notes that the number of synonymous proverbs in one language had to be limited to a maximum

of 5; p. vii). The preface states that more than 6500 foreign proverbs could be listed in this collection (p. ii).

The breadth of linguistic range is reflected in the registry of 25 cooperators which is found in the end of the volume (no page number). Their geographical, cultural and professional background is quite diverse; among them are the usual researchers and translators as well as a museum curator from Germany and a Rumanian diplomat. Cooperation within such a group, whose diversity reflects the wide reach of interest in proverbs, must have involved much challenge as well as enjoyment. The reviewer has learned for example that the group responsible for the Dutch language, led by Yoko Mori, Professor Emerita of Meiji University, Tokyo, specializing in art history, and Willy F. Vande Walle, Professor Emeritus of Leuven Catholic University whose expertise is Oriental Studies, collaborated across the ocean over a period of about 5 years to collect more than one thousand Dutch proverbs and hammer out the selection as well as their translations.<sup>3</sup> The cooperating authors appear to have taken sufficient care to make the orthography, including diacritics, of the proverbs written out in their native characters all standardized and correct, surely not a small typographical feat (see also notes on the orthography of Kiga/Chiga and Arabic in preface vii-viii).

Two appendices complement the preface and main section of this book. Appendix 1 (pp. 497-8) is a ranked list of the 104 most common proverbs used in the 12 major Japanese newspapers published after 1945, compiled by the chief editor Tokita. The second appendix (pp. 499-517) is a selective index of world proverbs (in Japanese translation) found in the book.

Although the work is clearly aimed at a popular rather than strictly academic audience, the reviewer can easily envisage situations where it can serve as a starting point for more specialized research. For example, one may begin by noting that many Japanese proverbs, as Tokita himself states, are clearly based on Western sources, but that their point of entry has not yet been clearly documented. There are some commonly used Japanese proverbs that do seem to be derived from modern English (e.g. *isseki nichō*, “to kill two birds with one stone”, pp. 40-2, §027; *owari yokereba subete yoshi*, “all is well that ends well”, pp. 95-6, §071; *ki-zuguchini shio*, “rub salt into wounds”, pp. 137-8, §102; cf. also *arashino maeno shizukesa*, “calm before the storm”, pp. 21-2,

§016, which has numerous equivalents in Western languages and may be derived from any one of them), for which Tokita provides some citations of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> usage, but a more exhaustive philological research may contribute to a better understanding of the modernization of the Japanese language which took place in tandem with the reintegration of the country into the Western-dominated global network of knowledge communication starting around the late Edo-Meiji period.<sup>4</sup> Another intriguing set of Japanese proverbs are those that show uncanny overlaps with ancient Mediterranean ones, possibly testifying to older transmissions with western-central Asian intermediaries (e.g. *atono matsuri*, “after the festival” (i.e., too late), pp. 11-3, §008, cf. ancient Greek and Arabic; *amadare ishiwo ugatsu*, “dripping rain bores through a stone”, pp. 17-18, §013, cf. ancient Greek, Latin and Chinese; *kaeruno tsurani mizu*, “water on a frog’s face”, pp. 105-6, §077, cf. ancient Greek and Latin). And to cite one final example that is fitting for our *annus terribilis* of 2020, *yudan taiteki*, “running out of oil is the great enemy” (i.e. one should not let one’s guard down), in pp. 470-2, §374, one may note that while it (or a very similar one) is attested in Japan as early as 1642, it also lacks a clear Chinese precedent (even though it consists of four Chinese characters, and thus appears, deceptively, to be of the classical Chinese type), and that it also recalls the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25.1-13.<sup>5</sup> Could it possibly be traced to the influx of Iberian Catholic culture that took place in the late 16<sup>th</sup> to early 17<sup>th</sup> century which was subsequently blurred due to the intense religious persecution and hermeticization of the country that were in full force from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century? Future research could tell.

Overall, this work is a carefully prepared and very approachable multilingual collection of proverbs. The discursive analyses of the 300 entries, all written by Tokita, are especially valuable as they explain the etymology of the most common Japanese proverbs and compares them with their foreign equivalents in an eminently readable and often humorous style. The extensive lists of foreign proverbs will doubtlessly prove useful to paremiographers and will be a fun playing ground for language enthusiasts. One potential weakness is that since the volume is intended for a popular audience, it lacks a detailed bibliography. Only proverbs originating in the New and Old Testaments, Greco-Roman classics,

and sometimes those taken from Erasmus' *Adagia* are provided with regular citations (cf. pp. viii-ix), in addition to some sporadic mentions of sources or instances of usage in classical Chinese and Japanese literature that are found in the discursive analyses. Still, for reasons explained above, the work will doubtlessly be a suitable addition to paremiological and paremiographical libraries, especially but not only for those familiar with Japanese, as the proverbs are written in scripts native to each language (except in the case of Kiga/Chiga, for which the IPA is used since it does not have a standardized script; cf. pp. vii-viii) and so will be partially accessible to non-Japanese users as well.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Namely the Japanese Society of Paremiology <<https://www.kotowaza-bunka.org/copy-of-home>> within which this book was developed. Other than Japan, there are several paremiological societies across Europe; cf. <[https://cvc.cervantes.es/lengua/pemria/sobre\\_pemria/enlaces\\_en.htm](https://cvc.cervantes.es/lengua/pemria/sobre_pemria/enlaces_en.htm)>.

<sup>2</sup> See <[meiji.ac.jp/koho/pickup/2010/100421.html](http://meiji.ac.jp/koho/pickup/2010/100421.html)>, Suzuki 2010 and Mori pp. 435-6.

<sup>3</sup> Private correspondence of Dr. Mori, November 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. e.g. Lippert 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Not mentioned by Tokita, but cf. e.g. Buchanan 1965, p. 42.

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(The reviewer wishes to thank the following former and current members of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute for Habsburg and Balkan Studies, for their friendly help in evaluating proverbs in some of the languages of which the reviewer is ignorant: Dr. Ilya Berkovich (Russian); Dr. Zsuzsanna Cziráki (Hungarian); Dr. Yasir Yilmaz (Turkish and Arabic)).

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NEW AND  
REPRINTED PROVERB COLLECTIONS

For Harry Walter

Usually this annual bibliography contains at least fifty proverb collections that I have been able to add to my International Proverb Archive here at the University of Vermont. This year I was able to obtain only 25 publications that is due in part at least to the pandemic that has made the purchase and shipping of books more difficult. I will, of course, continue to look out for reprinted and new proverb collections and hope to present a longer list next year. In the meantime, I would like to ask all *Proverbium* readers to help me in locating and receiving paremiographical publications. I am more than willing to pay for them as well as the postage.

Let me dedicate this meager bibliography to my dear friend Harry Walter of the University of Greifswald in Germany. He has been a most diligent paremiographer of annotated proverb collections dealing comparatively with German, Slavic (primarily Russian), and English proverbs and proverbial expressions. His most recent book on *Jetzt schlägt's dreizehn! Deutsche Sprichwörter und Redewendungen mit Zahlen mit ihren slawischen und englischen Äquivalenten* (Greifswald: Ernst-Moritz-Arndt Universität, 2019) is but one impressive example of what he together with his students has achieved over the years.

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

INTERNATIONAL PROVERB SCHOLARSHIP:  
AN UPDATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

For Aderemi Raji-Oyelade

The fact that this annual bibliography of international proverb scholarship is considerably shorter than my usual annual reports might well be blamed on the pandemic. Being isolated at home and teaching only Online has made it just a bit more difficult to gather these invaluable materials. However, I present 352 new publications by scholars from around the world, at least one hundred less items than usual. Nevertheless, as can be seen, great paremiological work is being done. I shall, of course, try to catch up with missed monographs and articles in my bibliography in next year's Proverbium volume. In the meantime, please help me in locating recent publications so that I can make my international bibliography as complete as possible. I should also mention that I owe much gratitude to my friend Peter Unseth from Dallas, Texas, to whom I am indebted for many of the references listed here. And let me also state that all items have once again been added in printed form to my International Proverb Archive here at the University of Vermont. As you know from last year's Proverbium, I have donated my large proverb library to the University of Vermont. More than 5000 proverb collections and well over 10000 paremiological publications are ready to serve international proverb scholars who might be able to come to Vermont. It is a beautiful place to do serious scholarship!

I would like to dedicate this bibliography to my friend Aderemi Raji-Oyelade from the University of Ibadan at Ibadan, Nigeria. It is he who has pioneered the term "postproverbial" for what I have called "antiproverb" many years ago. His designation for intentionally modified proverbs has caught on in Africa in particular and is now at times also used elsewhere. His book *Playful Blasphemies. Postproverbials as Archetypes of Modernity in Yoruba Culture*

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(Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2012) is of utmost importance for an understanding of what he has in mind. It was a great honor for me when he invited me to write a preface to his invaluable book. Now he has also edited a special issue of *Matatu: Journal of African Culture and Society* (2019) with numerous articles on postproverbs by African paremiologists. They are all included in the present bibliography, with Aderemi Raji-Oyelade's and Olayinka Oyeleye's article on "The Postproverbial Agency: Texts, Media and Mediation in African Cultures" being its seminal contribution. We have had the opportunity to meet in person some years ago at a colloquium of the International Association of Paremiology at Tavira, Portugal, and it is my hope that we might meet again when the pandemic is behind us. There is definitely a light at the long and dark tunnel of the corona virus that will without doubt also result in innovative antiproverbs and/or postproverbs!

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