

PROVERBIUM

Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship



40:2023



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PREFACE

Editing this new volume of the *Yearbook* presented numerous challenges and opportunities for innovation. For the first time, the entire process was conducted using the *Open Journal System*. As editors, we learned a great deal, along with our esteemed authors and reviewers. Therefore, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to all of you who successfully completed the entire process, from submitting the papers to reviewing, copy-editing, and, ultimately, the production of the articles, obituaries, book reviews, and bibliographies. A special thanks goes to our esteemed reviewers who once again demonstrated exceptional professionalism and, most importantly, adhered to our policy of double-blind peer review process within the given timeframe. We greatly appreciate the dedication and effort of the following individuals: Péter Barta, Mario Brdar, Christian Grandl, Galit Hasan-Rokem, Anna Konstantinova, Outi Lauhakangas, Anna T. Litovkina, Marcas Mac Coinnigh, Matej Meterc, Wolfgang Mieder, Draženka Molnar, Aderemi Raji-Oyelade, Kathrin Steyer, Aneta Stojić, Grzegorz Szpila, Katalin Vargha, and Damien Villers.

As editors of *Proverbium*, we have taken further small, yet significant steps towards internationalization and enhancing the visibility of our *Yearbook*. *Proverbium* has been indexed in the Sherpa/Romeo database, serving as a starting point for its inclusion in other renowned databases. Additionally, we have made arrangements to launch the *Proverbium Online Supplement Series*, where we welcome original monographs, bibliographies, and other volumes related to the topic of proverbs. Following a positive double-blind international review, selected books will be published as open-access books by the Faculty of Humanities

and Social Sciences, University of Osijek. The current plan is to publish up to two *Proverbium Online Supplements* per year. Submissions can be sent to proverbium@ffos.hr.

We are happy to present to you the current issue of *Proverbium* 40 (2023) featuring ten highly captivating articles that were selected as the best by our reviewers. These articles delve into the proverb lore of English, Fon, German, Indonesian, Kashmiri, Nzema, Russian, and Yoruba speakers, as well as explore the use of proverbs in the works of George B. Bryan, Septima Poinsette Clark, and Johannes Salat. Additionally, the issue contains a thought-provoking obituary for Shirley L. Arora, where we can find an engaging correspondence between her and Professor Wolfgang Mieder. The two book reviews offer valuable critical insights on four books, while Wolfgang Mieder's bibliographies are a treasure trove for all scholars in the field of paremiology.

We sincerely hope that reading the 40th volume of *Proverbium* will be as enjoyable for you as it was for us.

Melita Aleksa Varga and Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt

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RASAQ ATANDA AJADI
TAIWO OLORUNTOBA-OJU

CORPORA ISSUES IN PROTOPROVERBIALS AND POSTPROVERBIALS OF YORUBA CULTURE

Abstract: Protoproverbials have been established as residual knowledge and wisdom bequeathed by culture and tradition. However, variants of these traditions frequently emerge, thereby placing a burden of classification and demarcation on scholars of paroemia. The authenticity, authority and relative influence of these variants have also been the subject of scholarly debates. This paper explores the problem of corpora in ‘protoproverbial’ and ‘postproverbial’ studies in Nigeria with a view to elaborating existing taxonomies of paroemia in the country, and suggesting improvements to existing data-gathering methodologies. Employing desk research and advancing a data-driven approach, the paper observes that some of the methodological issues in postproverbial studies do detract from claims made concerning emerging variants of traditional proverbials. For example, samples of variants dubbed ‘postproverbials’ or ‘pseudoproverbials’ are too minute and too transient to be significantly threatening to the authority and influence of proto-texts, as sometimes celebrated, or feared, in the literature. Rather, the African protoproverbial remains etched on communal consciousness and exerts continued influence on modern culture. The study recommends that, to maintain the integrity of ‘postproverbial’ data, and validate related arguments, the data gathering process and parameters for the classification of samples should be empirical and emulate universal practices in paroemia studies.

Keywords: postproverbial, pseudoproverbial, protoproverbial, rhetorical affixes, corpora, transgressive paremiology

1. Introduction

While the precise dates of most African traditional proverbs, or “protoproverbials,” are in doubt due to the late emergence of written records on the continent, their status as ancient and revered cultural bequests is hardly debated. What has rather been debated is the classification of variants that have emerged from the traditional proverbials, and the condition for their emergence. Additionally, questions have been raised about the methodologies employed to gather these variants and whether they inspire confidence in their authenticity or validity. Protoproverbials (Oloruntoba-Oju 1997; 2014) have been described as comprising proverbs and varied paroemia, including hypernymic variants such as aphorisms, witty sayings, idiomatic expressions, adages, etc., that constitute residual knowledge and wisdom bequeathed by culture and tradition in various communities. The protoproverbials follow a ‘prototype,’ in that they are recognizably marked by age, philosophical and aesthetic depth, as well as distinctive rhetorical and linguistic patterning. However, occurring alongside these protoproverbials over time are emerging variants which are also called “paraproverbials”, and which include “counterproverbials,” “metaproverbials” and “pseudoproverbials” (see section 2 below). Some variants have also been described as “postproverbials” (Raji-Oyelade 1997; 2004), and elaborated as “modern proverbs” that are products of modernity, generational shift, and/or linguistic and cultural “neocompetence”. As explained later in this paper, some of the postproverbials are also pseudoproverbials in the frame of Mieder’s (2004: 28) “antiproverbs” or Halliday’s (1978) “anti-languages.” The postproverbials echo “the urban imagination of Africa, appearing in literature, music, film, social media, and other fictional and non-fictional spaces” (*Postproverbial* n.d.). Raji-Oyelade (2012: 12) observes that they are “situated in the subfield of transgressive paremiology, that is, the collation, study, and interpretation of alternate proverbs which are radical and parallel compositions instead of conventionally accepted and given proverbs in traditional societies.”

The debate over the classifications above has gathered momentum over some three decades of academic discourse on protoproverbials and their variants. While urbanity and modernity

are indeed important factors that motivate the emergence of post-proverbials, the dynamic nature of society, its culture, and language, including sociolinguistic fluidity, had always stimulated the production of alternative or new proverbs even in traditional societies. They are, therefore not always, the product of “modernity.” For example, “antonymous proverbs” (proverbial units that propose opposing philosophical options)¹ often emerge as a result of the ambivalent nature of life, and not necessarily as a function of modernity, while the art of punning, twisting, and “rupturing” of traditional proverbs can be traced to the earliest times even before the advent of “modernity” (Oloruntoba-Oju 1997; Mieder 2004). Socio-cultural dynamics, and the consequent questioning of the truth or universality of some proverbials, often results in the birthing of antonymous variants. Such antonymous proverbs are not like the “playful blasphemies” that have been termed postproverbials. This is because, though they may express divergent realities and wisdom, they are considered *bona fide* alternatives and accommodated within the moral-philosophical and prototypic structural frames of traditional proverbs of a society.

Our attempt in this paper is to review some prominent terminologies and categorisations of paroemia in Nigeria, and how the methodologies leading to some of the taxonomies may be improved upon. This is what we have referred to above as the problem of corpora in “protoproverbial” and “postproverbial” studies in Nigeria. We are not reviewing the terminologies only, but also the associated data, with a view to commenting on the validity or otherwise of claims made for emerging pseudoproverbials within the community.

2. Accounting for new paroemic texts in the Nigerian context

In his taxonomy of the Yoruba proverbial, Oloruntoba-Oju (1997) uses the term “protoproverbial” to refer to source proverbs in es-

¹ Examples drawn from traditional Yoruba corpora include the apparent “antithetical pair” *Ẹsin iwajū ni teyin n wo sáré* [“the horse behind sets its pace by the horse ahead”] Vs *A kii’ wo ago aláago sị ẹ.* [“We do not set our tasks by other people’s time pieces”], among many others (Oloruntoba-Oju 1997: 112).

established traditional forms. All proverbial derivatives (proverbs deriving from or relating “metaproverbially” to other proverbs) are “paraproverbials,” occurring alongside and contracting one form of relationship or the other with the protoproverbial. The paraproverbials “stand beside” the original proverbs in a manner that may be complementary, oppositional or transformative. They therefore include “counterproverbials,” which Olorunto-ba-Oju also called *idàkeji èdè* in local Yoruba parlance (roughly translatable as “opposite view or expression”); “metaproverbials” or *àwíjò èdè* (roughly translatable as “analogous expressions that resemble a protoproverbial both philosophically and stylistically” 117) and “pseudoproverbials” or *àlùfànsá èdè* (banal, trite or “trivial discourse or expression”). The latter, which Olorunto-ba-Oju refers to as “pseudoproverbials”, are what Raji-Oyelade calls “postproverbials.” A later terminology for pseudoproverbials in the literature is “pseudo-wisdom” (Mandziuk 2021). The terms are used interchangeably in this paper.

The term “paraproverbial” is usefully embracing, as it accommodates any and every relation of the proverbial derivative to its source, including relations of “antithesis,” “temporality” and “ephemeral”[ity] (See Olorunto-ba-Oju 1997). The “pseudoproverbial,” which is one of the paraproverbial forms also involves a moral-philosophical trajectory, being trivial, and being philosophically and morally less attractive than the original. The alternative nomenclature, postproverbial, does not appear to provide such a critique. The term postproverbial, therefore, appears to account for only one type of paraproverbial, which is the pseudoproverbial. Instead, the term postproverbial, as strongly upheld in Raji-Oyelade’s works, relates more to “verbal inventions [which] can be connected relatively to the notion of the anti-proverb” (Raji-Oyelade 2004: 302), which in turn involves twisted traditional proverbs (Mieder 2004). It may be argued that any proverb that appears to be related to, and postdate, another, can nomenclaturally be seen as a “postproverbial”; however, the conceptual focus of the term as deployed by Raji-Oyelade is on those proverbials that “blaspheme” or are “philosophically uninspiring” relative to protoproverbials. Most illustrations of the “postproverbial” in the literature have conformed to this definition. The postproverbial is also by its “post-ness” limited in tem-

poral scope, in that it can only account for those proverbs that come after an original protoproverbial but not those that may be parallel in time, or whose time sequence may be indeterminate. Such a problem of dating may sometimes affect the validity of the postproverbial corpora.

The foregoing has exposed protoproverbial and “postproverbial” discourses to appraisal and reappraisal, with different frontiers of research trying to justify postproverbials as either a product of linguistic creativity or a “child of ambivalence.” As a postproverbial scholar with concerted and dedicated research on the concept, Raji-Oyelade’s conceptualisation tilts towards exploring the “indigenous glottophagic” processes that have influenced the “Yoruba traditional proverbs” (Raji-Oyelade 1999: 76). In this regard, Daniel (2016) reiterates Raji-Oyelade’s view that postproverbials validate the creative potential of language and the innovativeness of the language users’ communicative prowess. While culture and tradition may provide a compass for understanding the driving philosophy and wisdom of society and predispose humans to the basic reality of their existence, they do not limit their perceptive and interpretive capability to evaluate society and recreate or innovate new concepts and traditions. In an apparent counterpose to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s expressed belief that “what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence,” Raji-Oyelade observes that rather than “pass over in silence,” the innovators of postproverbial attempt to rupture the traditional proverbs. On the other hand, one of the very distinguished scholars of Yoruba proverbs, Owomoyela (2005: 19), considers the term, “postproverbial” as “grandiose.”

Although the views above appear to be contestant, what is indisputable is that both Oloruntoba-Oju (1997; 2012) and Raji-Oyelade (1997; 1999) have tried to account for new paroemic texts that relate to source texts in an African setting. They both begin with the assumption of an original or traditional proverbial text, which Oloruntoba-Oju calls the protoproverbial, and attempt to classify the variants. The term, protoproverbial, finds theoretical anchorage in the concept of proverb corpora as cultural bequeaths, a kind of knowledge that encompasses “shared beliefs satisfying specific (epistemic) criteria of an (epistemic)

community” (Dijk 2005: 73). The classical orientation about culture argues for forms of communal commonality and communal continuity. In this regard, culture is a paradigm of “social homogeneity, ethnic consolidation, and intercultural delimitation” (Welsch 1999). Proverbs, as cultural aesthetic products, exude relative rigidity both in structure and contexts of use and are perpetuated in subsequent generations. This sometimes occurs through the social agents who [un]consciously take it up as a duty to protect this memory and the associated prototypical expressions.

It is this protectionist stance that accounts for prototype sayings in Yoruba paroemia, such as *Àgbà kù wà l’òj à k’òrí omo tuntun ó wó.* (“with the presence of the elders, things will not go wrong”) and *e nu àgbà l’obì ti ñ gbó* (“it is in the mouth of the elders that the kola nut is attested ripe”), which encapsulate wisdom as an attribute of age. In other words, these proverbs make protoproverbials a privilege of age and cultural competence. The protectionist stance also accounts for the “signature expressions”, referred to as “rhetorical affixes” (Oloruntoaba-Oju 1997; 2014) or “pre- and post-proverb hedges” (Omoloso 2016), which typically precede or succeed a traditional African proverb, and which also attribute the wisdom of the proverb to the elders. Examples such as *èyin àgbà le máa n pa l’owe wipe ...* (it is you the elders that say the proverb that...), *tótó, o se bi owe eyin àgbà* (by the leave of you, the elders), etc. revere the elders as the custodians of proverbs/culture, and make proverbs cultural artefacts that should be treated with respect. The non-use of these rhetorical affixes is often perceived as rude representations and cultural mischief in traditional reckoning. The practice of pseudoproverbials, or postproverbials, tends to rupture this cultural understanding. A new transculturality and the interpenetration of different ways of life, which results from the “inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures” (Welsch 1999: 197), has bred new, albeit less aesthetically satisfying language corpora. Relating this to post- or pseudoproverbials, it can be argued that these are products of youth culture which is rapidly propagated in verbal art forms in music, films, and other communication media such as social media forums in contemporary forms.

The notion that “elders are the custodian of proverbial wisdom” has actually been challenged (see Oluayamo 2006 cited in Daniel 2016; Daniel 2008 and Balogun 2010) as a strategy to coerce the youngsters into believing in the universal truth value of traditional proverbs. The argument here rests on the view that proverbs “are a product of linguistic employment and [instrument for] communicative intent” (Daniel 2016: 67). In this view, signature rhetorical affixes, as cited above, would seem to be perceived as an age-related communicative strategy meant to coerce “the younger generation to fall in line with the perceived ‘tradition’ of the race” (Daniel 2016: 69). In our view, language, which gives proverbs expressivity, as well as its many communicative paradigms, is an instrument of communication in its multifarious forms and in many cases may be an instrument of power and tool of coercion. However, proverbs often derive authority from their persuasive, not coercive, rhetorical orientation – rhetoric itself being, quintessentially, the art of persuasion. Nonetheless, the view of certain age-old paroemiological practices as “coercive,” complements the idea of postproverbials as products of “cultural rebels” who for mischief or jocular reasons create them to suit their discourse needs. Wolfgang Mieder, a leading scholar of proverbial studies, opined that “more often than not, proverbs are used innovatively: they are changed and twisted until they fit the demands of our modern age” (Mieder 1993: 58; Naciscione 2015).

Mieder’s assertion here also points to a status elevation for innovated variants of proverbials, and exposes the dynamic nature of creativity in the use of proverbs over time. However, while modernity is one of the factors in the production of variant paromias, paraproverbials, including postproverbials, always have the potential to emerge due to “the dynamic world view of the community concerned... and the natural transformative potential of discourse” (Oloruntoba-Oju 1997: 109). Equally implicit in Mieder’s position is the theory of anti-proverbs. Like Oloruntoba-Oju’s “pseudoproverbials” and Raji-Oyelade’s “postproverbials”, Mieder’s “anti-proverbs” are specialist coinages that reflect the “instantial stylistic use” (Naciscione 2015: 230) and “new communicative phraseological units” (Valdaeva2003: 390) of proverbs which question the contextual rigidity, illocutionary

stringency, and structural fixity of traditional proverbs in instant discourse. One may therefore agree with Naciscione's (2015: 230) that the varying terms employed by the theorists such as those referred to above can be regarded as products of academic scholarship and are linked "inextricably to specialist knowledge."

However, the analysis of the postproverbial poses sharp questions about the corpus, its identification, its agency, its repository, and its analysis. It is to these problematic areas that we now turn attention.

3. Methodology

The foregoing serves as a launchpad from which to examine other fundamental issues relating to postproverbial studies. First, what are the important corpora problems encountered in postproverbial studies, and second, how have the data-gathering methods in previous research helped to advance, or hinder, the concept of the postproverbial? Employing desk research methodology, we attempt, in the following sections, to identify the data-gathering methods that postproverbial scholars have adopted, and the methodology employed in the sampled articles. The paper uses the purposive method to select four journal articles published on the subject matter between 2013 and 2020. These include: Jegede (2013), Ademowo and Balogun (2015), Daniel (2016), Raji-Oyelade and Ango (2020). In addition, the theoretical postulations of two Nigerian scholars who have worked on proto-, para-, pseudo-, and post-proverbials (Oloruntoba-Oju, 1997; 2014, and Raji-Oyelade 1997; 1999; 2012), are used as primary resources. This, as envisaged, will allow for an in-depth and rigorous examination of the issues of corpora in the publications, on the one hand, and an investigation of the contributions of the relevant methods to advance Yoruba postproverbial studies on the other hand. It will also enable us to propose ways of improving on the data-gathering methods in postproverbial studies, and of clarifying opaque aspects of the concept of the postproverbial.

4. The problem of corpora in postproverbial studies

Corpus has been defined as "a collection of naturally-occurring language text, chosen to characterise a state or variety of

a language” (Sinclair 1991: 171). As a research practice, corpus linguistics deals with the study of language from a social perspective and investigates the symbolic content, meaning, and discourse value of corpora (Ope-Davies 2021). Also, as instantial discourse forms and minted expressions, postproverbials are said to pose serious corpora issues, given the diverse contexts of genres and discourses. However, where are postproverbials or pseudoproverbials located; who are their authors and how are they to be analysed?

4.1 Analysis of postproverbial/pseudoproverbial corpora

The analysis of the postproverbial or pseudoproverbial would typically involve a tripodal process. First is the identification of the relevant protoproverbial, then of its pseudo derivative or anti-thesis, as well as its agency and or repository, and then its analytical implications.

As noted by Oloruntoba-Oju (1997), the pseudoproverbials “contravene the illocutionary imports of their [co-related] antecedents,”); identifying the antecedent expressions is, therefore, an inevitable part of identifying a suitable corpus. In other words, postproverbials belong to a specialised corpora category as their text constituents are drawn from a particular genre or register and deployable in specific cultural and communicative contexts. They are a genre suitable for particular occasions and championed by the new generation of language users who often manipulate proverbs for humorous and satiric ends.

In other words, since postproverbials draw their existence from protoproverbials, the valid corpora must include references to an original context and to the deconstructed context. This consideration also informs the analytical methodology and sequencing in the investigation of paroemic derivatives.

4.2 Sequencing

In both Oloruntoba-Oju and Raji-Oyelade’s explications, the protoproverbial is first listed, followed by the postproverbial, as the following examples show:

1a. **Protoproverbial:** *Ọbẹ́ tí baúlé ilé kù jẹ́, iyálé ilé kù' sè é*

Translation: The stew that is forbidden to the husband, the wife does not cook it.

1b. **Postproverbial:** *Ọ̀bẹ̀ tí baálé ilé kù jẹ, ẹranínú rẹ̀ ní kò pò.*

Translation: The stew that is forbidden to the husband, can only be lacking in sauce and assorted beef.

4.3 Postproverbial as pseudoproverbial or pseudo-wisdom

The above examples show that “postproverbials” or “pseudoproverbials” do derive locus from an existing protoproverbial but subvert the epistemic logic of the original. While the protoproverbial (1a. above) indexes the sociocultural reality of a people that believe that peaceful co-existence is a product of playing mutually complementary roles, the postproverbial or pseudoproverbial (1b.) dismisses the important philosophical import of the original and substitutes it with a rather banal or jejune interpretation. The assessment of such violations in the literature has given rise to characterisations that may not always be complementary. For example, Raji-Oyelade (1997; 1999) identified markers or indicators of banality in postproverbials, while Olorunto-ba-Oju (1997) is more caustic in appraising them as not only “banal” but also as often “literal and aesthetically uninspiring” (1997: 120). Mandziuk (2021: 24) also points out that such proverbs encapsulate pejoratives and “pseudo-wisdom.”

Some examples (with their translations) cited in Olorunto-ba-Oju (1997: 121-122) are reproduced below:

2a. *Dàda ọ̀ lẹ̀ jà, sùgbón ọ̀ ní àbúrò t’ógbójú.*

Translation: “Dada cannot fight, but he has a younger sibling who is fierce.”

2b. *Dàda ọ̀ lẹ̀ jà, ọ̀ n sá lọ.*

Translation: “Dada cannot fight; he runs away.”

3a. *Ọ̀ gbọ̀ kíkù òjò, ọ̀ da omi agbada nù, tí òjò kò bá rẹ̀ mọ̀ nkó?*

Translation: (“[Just because] you hear the rumble of [rain] you throw away the water in the reservoir, what if it does not rain after all?”)

3b. *Ọ̀ gbokíkù òjò, ọ̀ sá wole; mi ọ̀ bá ẹ̀ wí ọ.*

Translation: (“You hear the rumble of rain, you flee into the house; I don’t blame you, my friend”.)

Such pseudoproverbials as the ‘3b’ examples above fit perfectly with the jocular anti-proverb classification of the genre and can be tolerated within the appropriate contexts. In both cases, the grave philosophical of the protproverbial is subverted, but they cannot constitute a clear threat to the philosophical authority of the relevant protproverbial. The jocularitas does mean that the individual’s wit and discourse or rhetorical skills are usually keyed into the use of proverbs to playfully outwit a co-interactant. Therefore, communicative intent, social influence, and situational experience provide the rhetorical resources for the dynamism in the use of proverbs and the creation of postproverbials. These indices – intention, social influence, and situational experience – can drive the proliferation of postproverbials in discourse and a study on postproverbials may need to consider these indices in carving a methodology for gathering data on the subject. More important, however, is the question of agency and repository of the pseudoproverbial.

4.4 Agency and repository of postproverbial corpora

Agency constitutes a fundamental source of consideration here. Whereas modernity and technological innovations have largely been credited with birthing the parodied proverbs in postproverbial theory, a key element or ingredient is the associated human agency that is consciously “parodying, twisting or fracturing” (Mieder 2004: 28) the traditional proverbs, thereby creating new corpora and provoking a scholarly search for same. Where the protproverbial is communal property entrenched in traditional consciousness, the postproverbial is a child of chance and a transient phenomenon, typically produced by youngsters and bearing the marks of liminality or transitionality, hence hardly attaining wide recognition by the cognate speech community. Since data gathering is key to the success of the postproverbial project, as noted earlier, the procedure for this process comes inevitably under scholarly scrutiny.

4.5 Anonymity, ephemerality, competence, and propriety

It is observed in this study that, from collection and documentation of postproverbial data to their transcription and transla-

tion, the bulk of data sampled in postproverbial studies often lacks verifiable procedures. A critical issue here is the source of data. Often, there is the issue of anonymity of the source. For example, in Ademowo and Balogun (2015), fifteen (15) “popular” sex-related proverbs were claimed to be randomly selected from day-to-day “anonymous users” and a critical approach was applied in the analysis (Daniel 2016). The anonymity of sources creates the problem of verifiability. As most articles (Ademowo and Balogun 2015; Daniel 2016; Raji-Oyelade and Ango 2020; Mandziuk 2016; etc.) in the postproverbial corpus do not name their sources, the method of data gathering becomes a serious issue in the study of postproverbials.

Corpus linguistics provides a methodological foundation for examining communicative behaviour in real-life situations and deals with the utilisation and collection of large and principled language samples for qualitative and quantitative analyses (Reppen and Simpson-Vlach 2010), in order to ensure proper social memory representation and balance. “Language technology, large data collections, and sophisticated automatic methods allow the exploration of current proverb use based on authentic language mass data in a new dimension” (Steyer 2017: 46; Omowoyela 2005). Engaging proverbials with a corpus linguistic approach can take different dimensions: the qualitative and quantitative dimensions. However, whether qualitative or quantitative, these source texts are mostly available in automatic internet searches. On the other hand, postproverbials are not readily available, as most are newly emerging, different from the Yoruba traditional proverbials that are culturally and readily available and mostly documented.

The absence of electronic data for Yoruba postproverbials makes it difficult to subject the phenomenon to corpora linguistics methods. While we acknowledge the effort at gathering postproverbials (*Postproverbial* n.d.), we observe that this is at a nascent stage of development and cannot be favourably compared to the vast databases of traditional paroemia. Corpora of Yoruba protoproverbials can be found in large quantities in established studies and anthologies, popular oral sources², and also on the

² Proverbials have a long history even as an oral medium passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. Oloruntoba-Oju (2014; 2017) has frequently cited

web, as noted above, while postproverbials studies still depend on a small set of data whose proprietary and acceptability threshold is currently minute. It may well be argued that a large set of data would not be necessary for qualitative analysis; however, to ascertain the syntactic, semantic, and functional (dis)similarities between protoproverbials and their postproverbial counterparts, there is the need to adopt an approach that allows for a quantification of the degree of association maintained by both. The distributional patterning and functional or illocutionary imports are two factors that make “corpus-driven exploration of proverb” patterns a creative and important aspect of proverb studies. A corpus-driven exploration of postproverbials will go a long way to reveal the continental features and illocutionary functions of these variants of proverbs.

A related problem is ephemerality. Postproverbials, as “accidental variants,” involve an obvious twist of common belief that poses as an affront to cultural knowledge. This is precisely because they are situational, spontaneous conversational variants and regarded as “cultural outcasts”; postproverbials, as pseudo-proverbials, soon fade out as new situations arise and contexts change. As characteristic of popular culture, they are transitory. In other words, while the relatively fixed clauses of traditional proverb corpora can be subjected to an automatic search, variants, reductions, or extensions of the same sentences cannot be so automatically harnessed as digitised data. A number of literary corpora are also being produced especially in Yoruba literature. For example, Adeyemi (2012) brought out several “anti-proverbs” from the novel *Réyè` Rún* by Oladejo Okediji. Many of these examples are actually also pseudoproverbials. While most postproverbial scholars operate largely within English language disciplines, extended access to new corpora of Yoruba proverbs requires deliberate efforts at interlingual and interdisciplinary cooperation with Yoruba scholars.

In awareness of the last point, we again acknowledge the effort that produces the webpage <https://postproverbial.com>, where the proprietor of the site has launched a collection and up-

the testimony of Ajayi Crowther who, as far back as 1850, observed paroemia as a communal conversational practice found “in the mouths of all” among the Yoruba.

date of postproverbials from different African languages, in order to encourage researchers who are interested in postproverbial studies to build analytical and empirical research frontiers. Such an effort is in tandem with Reppen and Simpson-Vlach's (2010: 90) view that "researchers interested in exploring aspects of language use that are not represented by readily available corpora [...] will need to compile a new corpus". By the same token, the analytical empiricism guaranteed in corpus linguistics is characteristically encouraged through the collection and utilization of large and principled naturally occurring data to "ensure representativeness and balance" (89). However, pseudoproverbials are quite easily constructed, since they mostly parasite on traditional protoproverbials and carry no burden of deep philosophical contemplation. Postproverbials generated through such efforts may not readily accord with the cultural status and potential of traditional proverbs especially in terms of the level of communal awareness and degree of recognition or of acceptability. The issue being raised here is not whether postproverbials exist or not; rather, what this contribution advocates is the need to collect data that ensure "social representativeness and balance" from both primary and secondary sources of spoken and written natural texts and sources and contexts that can be verified (see Oloruntoba-Oju 1997).

4.6 Agency and competence

A related problem is the issue of competence. What distinguishes protoproverbials from postproverbials is the social domestication of aged cultural and historical wisdom in the former and the banalizing of the same within the latter corpora. Protoproverbials are well situated in the social and cultural values of a people and, therefore, constitute the "incast" paremiography in the culture. The term "incast", according to *Merriam-Webster* online dictionary (n.d.), refers generally to "something added for good measure"; hence, the idea that traditional proverbs are deployed to ensure conversational propriety and added philosophical values in discourse. It also implies the agency of a competent speaker of the source language that births the proverbs. Of particular interest here is what has been described as "paroemic competence" which "confers discursive authority on the compe-

tent discussant” (Oloruntoba-Oju 2014: 1712). Competence in this context is not only measured by linguistic competence, but by the comprehensive cultural immersion and associated cultural communicative skills that ensure the deployment of paroemia in situationally relevant contexts. The knowledge of the world must be fused with knowledge of the relevant linguistic system to facilitate the relevant cultural interconnectivity or cultural discursive competence.

Paroemic competence is, therefore, a complex skill that is made up of several sub-skills or levels of competence that are required in the production and or appreciation and analysis of the proverbial. Three levels of competence have been identified in the discussion of the protoproverbial and its variants – a generalized cognitive or awareness competence involving the awareness of the protoproverbial and its performative/illocutionary imports; a creative competence, which is necessary to appreciate and possibly transform its semantic horizon, and a creative-stylistic or rhetorical (non-literal) competence that allows for the expansion of the rhetorical frontiers of the protoproverbial in a way that is aesthetically noteworthy (Oloruntoba- Oju 1997: 122-125). It follows that the postproverbial or pseudoproverbial activist must also demonstrate sufficient competence to be able to identify the relevant corpora and evaluate the associated cognitive relations in relation to the original and, above all, its discursive limitations. It would appear that pseudoproverbials, or postproverbials, have sometimes been romanticized in the Nigerian context beyond their discursive significance within the overall framework of paroemia.

4.7 Definitional scope of postproverbial

Perhaps the most important problem of the postproverbial corpora is that the paroemic type that constitutes the “postproverbial” is sometimes in dispute. The data adopted in the identified studies appear to often vary in scope and express different levels of subjectivity. Raji-Oyelade (2012, p. 126) opined that “for every popular traditional proverb in use, there is at least one postproverbial as its prosthesis.” However, what exactly constitutes the postproverbial is sometimes indeterminate in the mixed practice of the scholars.

i. Creativity, subversion or sheer incompetence

It will be recalled that “postproverbials” as conceptualised for Nigerian/African settings (Raji-Oyelade 1997; 1999) centre on subversive and comic renditions of protoproverbials. Prominent examples from antecedent scholarship include the following where the ‘a’ samples are the protoproverbials and the ‘b’ samples are the post- or pseudoproverbials:

- 4a. *Eṣin iwájú nì, t’èhìn n wo sáré.*
 (“The leading horse, is an example to other racers”)
- 4b. *Eṣin iwájú nì o gba ‘pò kiníi.*
 (“The leading horse, will surely take the first position”)
 Comment: In this illustration, there is a shift from the logic of the exemplar to a tautological statement (Raji-Oyelade 1997: 101-102).
- 5a. *Dàdà ò lè jà, ṣùgbón ó ní àbúro` t’ó gbójú.*
 (“Dada cannot fight, but he has a younger sibling who is fierce.”)
- 5b. *Dàdà ò lè jà, o nsá lọ.* (Dada cannot fight; he runs away)
 Comment: The pseudoproverbial alters the philosophical orientation of the protoproverbial without offering an alternative depth of perception (Oloruntoaba-Oju 1997: 120-121).
- 6a. *Igi gogoro má guń mi lójú, àt’òkèrè lati n wòò.’*
 (For the tall pointed tree not to pierce my eye, one watches it from afar off).
- 6b. *Igi gogoro má guń mi lójú, ma dọqjì è nì.*
 (For the tall pointed tree not to pierce my eye, I will dodge it).
 Comment: While the postproverbial version is comical, the protoproverbial “retains some metaphorical content that makes it appear mysterious” (Daniel 2016: 73).
- 7a. *Ọpẹ l’obinrin, gbogbo ẹnì bá ní condom lo n bawọn sun.*
 (Women are ever ready for fucking, just get a condom and cajole.)
- 7b. *O pẹ l’obinrin, gbogbo ẹnì bá ní igbà lọwọ ní guń uń*
 (Women are palm trees, anybody with a ladder climbs them). (Anonymous)
 Comment: the traditional proverb depicts women as weaker vessels while the postproverbial emphasizes this weak-

ness in relation to sexuality (Ademowo and Balogun 2015: 16).

The above examples and the comments indicate that “postproverbials” are almost invariably theorized by their proponents as an erroneous and trite distortion of the wisdom inherent in protoproverbial. As noted by Oloruntoba-Oju (1997), originally the samples named “postproverbials” were first noticed as errors, and not as competent or creative re-renditions. He observes that:

In contemporary Nigerian history, the emergence of the pseudoproverbial [postproverbial] is popularly traced to the frustrated school certificate examinee in Yoruba subject. Confronted with a task to complete a protoproverbial, whose opening is stated, the incompetent youngster (some say gangster!) simply provides a literal complete that is not only wrong but is ludicrously banal. Initially setting off an outrage, this failed examinee soon became the butt of jokes among teachers and examiners who also propagated the phenomenon by default during such hilarious sessions. (123–124)

ii. Youngsters and classroom “postcompletives”

Indeed, classrooms continue to be a setting for harvesting “postproverbial” renditions produced by students who are deficient in the language. Table 1 below presents some examples from the “language and society” class taught by one of the authors in 2021.

Table 1: Some particularized postproverbials and their protoproverbial variants

s/n	Protoproverbials	Post-/pseudoproverbials	Comments
1.	<i>Aki i ko èlè...</i> (one does not take a loan...;) Ans.: <i>şę .’şó.</i> (for a fashion spree)	<i>Aki i ko èl é...</i> ; (one does not take a loan...;) Ans.: <i>kí á má lèè jẹ pizza.</i> (and be afraid of giving oneself a good treat, like a pizza)	The post-/pseudoproverbial subverts the philosophical logic and seriousness required in investing ones’ hard earnings on thoughtful and profitable projects rather than on frivolous items.

s/n	Protoproverbials	Post-/pseudoproverbials	Comments
2.	<i>B'irinbá kan'rin</i> ,... (When two iron rods strike each other;) Ans.: <i>ikan à tè fun'kan</i> . (one of them bends)	<i>B'irinbá kan'rin</i> ,... (When two iron rods strike each other;) Ans.: <i>wón má sà'na</i> . (there will be sparks) <i>B'irin bá kan'rin</i> ,... (When two iron rods strike each other;) Ans.: <i>won dan'gbara wo ni</i> (it is a mere test of strength)	The post-/pseudoproverbial mischievously focuses on the physical or surface manifestation of a power tussle rather than the metaphorized, and deep consequences indicated in the proto- text.
3,	<i>Af'opin á ton í oun ó pa fit il á</i> ...; (The firefly that wants to put out the candlelight) Ans.: <i>ara e niyo pa</i> . (will end up killing itself.)	<i>Af'opin á to fẹ pana-a suy á</i> ...; (The firefly that wants to put out the smoke of rast) Ans.: <i>eranpošini</i> . (makes the beef surplus [by its own addition])	The post-/pseudoproverbial turns a serious warning into jest.
	<i>Alašeju ù ní í gbé sar aa</i> ... (only the overzealous takes his alms...) Ans.: <i>kojá mošal as í</i> (beyond the threshold of the mosque)	<i>Alašeju ù ní í gbé .bọ</i> ... (only the overzealous takes his ritual...) Ans.: <i>kojá id í ešu</i> . (beyond <i>ès ù</i> 's shrine)	The post-/pseudoproverbial, in this case, can be said to be reactionary in that it attempts to twist the religious sensitivity involved in the two variants.

As seen from the above, the postproverbials (or pseudoproverbials) all manifest the principles of literalness, banality, and verbal play. They generally “vary the protoproverbials in a manner that is banal, literal and often aesthetically uninspiring” (Oloruntoba-Oju 1997: 120) and are “trite,” “banal,” “deforming,” as well as being alternative creations derived from and which stand against traditional proverbs” (Raji-Oyelade 1999: 75). Another feature is the limitless potential for iteration or rapid viral reproduction since the “pseudocomplete [of the postproverbial] is informed neither

by deep philosophical considerations nor by aesthetic ones” (Oloruntoba-Oju 1997: 126). The following examples are apposite:

- 8a. Protoproverbial – *B’irin bá kan’rin, ikaṅ á tẹ̀ fuń’kan.*
(When two iron rods strike each other; one of them bends)
- 8b. Postproverbial 1 – *B’iriń bá kan’rin, wón má sá’ná.*
(When two iron rods strike each other, they throw up flashes of light)
- 8c. Postproverbial 2 – *B’irin bá kan’rin, wón dań `gbará wò ni.*
(When two iron rods strike each other, it is a mere show of strength).

iii. *Erroneous categorizations*

Samples that do not fit the above categorization often find their way into the corpus. Citing one or two examples from Jegede (2013) will suffice here.

9. He who borrows a dozen yam seeds at the threshold of planting but declines payment by the twilight of harvest rolls boulders across the path of kindness at the next hour of need (*Naked*, 47)
10. Odo-Ogun does not stop to look back/Amid the season’s torrential rain (Gods 70)

Jegede (2013) considered the above to be postproverbial variants of the protoproverbials below.

Eni tí ó yá egbàfà tí kò sán; ó bẹ̀ ̀gi di nà egbèje.

(He who refuses to pay back a loan of one thousand two hundred is not likely to get help in the future.)

Odò kii san kó b’oju w’eyin (A river does not flow backward).

However, these examples do not fit with the classic recast of the protoproverbial as literal, banal, and philosophically-emptied renditions of these protoproverbials. In the examples above, the philosophy, moral import, and structure of the protoproverbial are retained in Jegede’s renditions, whereas postproverbials usually entail “de-formation” and “loss of poetic flavour” (Raji-Oyelade 1997: 104). Renditions such as the above are actually accounted for by Oloruntoba-Oju’s (1997: 111) classification of paraproverbials (i.e., “every and any proverbial that is related to a protoproverbial in whatever way”), particularly, the variant that he calls “metaproverbial”, referred to as *Afiwé orọ or àwijo èdè* (“analogous rendi-

tions” or “a variation of the protoproverbial”). The classification reveals the complex grammatical and discourse values as well as “illocutionary imports” or patterns of the paraproverbial. *Àfíwé òr'ò* or *àwíjò èdè* can be regarded as exposé or interpretive “metadiscourse” forms that share intertextual relationships with the prototexts or protoproverbials in a mutually relevant context. Such translational or intralingual re-renditions of the protoproverbial “hardly [query] the philosophical orientation of the protoproverbial but mostly [supply] a contemporary and situationally relevant context where such a context *appears* not to be well served by the philosophical purview of the original” (Oloruntoba-Oju 1997: 117). The objective is usually to achieve some “stylistic/rhetorical effect,” as Oloruntoba-Oju explains further:

While the philosophical orientation of the protoproverb remains intact, the rhetorical frontier of the protoproverbial is expanded to achieve an effect that is sometimes comic, sometimes serious/sober, but always rhetorically uplifting. The terseness of the original proverb, which is lost in the expansion, is compensated for in the pleasant stylistic rhetorical structure of the metaproverbial variant. (119)

Clearly, examples such as the above, again, attune more with the classification, “metaproverbial” while they hardly fit with the classification “postproverbial,” whose conceptual fount lies in features such as literalness, banality, subversion, and comicalness. This observation has important implications for postproverbial corpora. It seems clear that, for an empirically valid study of postproverbials, corpora must attune with the interactional and communicative values of particularized variants of proverbs. To properly accommodate samples such as those under reference above as *bona fide* data within postproverbial studies, there may be a need to reconceptualise what constitutes “postproverbial,” expand its theoretical frontier and streamline it with other paraproverbials long identified in the literature.

5. Conclusion

Like pseudoproverbials, postproverbials are re-renditions of traditional proverbials to produce literal and often banal parodies for comic effect, reflecting the linguistic and communicative pro-

density of particular language users. However, as seen from this study, considerations regarding the corpora for postproverbial studies reveal a plethora of problems or issues. Among these is the tendency to harvest duplicative and redundant “postproverbial” samples for a single protoproverbial, resulting potentially in a glut of non-remarkable samples. Unlike the protoproverbials which are established communal products, postproverbials, or pseudoproverbials are often accidental variants that emerge from an individual’s communicative ingenuity or lack of it. Also, postproverbials are often compiled from “anonymous sources,” leading to a glut of data that may not be easily verifiable. The ease with which a banal rendition of an original proverb can be produced almost by anybody (including researchers), therefore, tends to cast doubt on the authenticity or true extent of the use of postproverbials among the populace. It would appear in the circumstance that the use of digital procedures for gathering data is recommendable to produce a verifiable and dependable corpus. A deliberate effort at interdisciplinary and interlingual cooperation with scholars in Yoruba studies would also open up access to unknown literary corpora in the subject area.

A related problem is the ephemeral nature of samples. Since postproverbials are usually not deep philosophical renditions, compared with protoproverbials, they hardly form part of the communal stock of proverbs. Accordingly, it has been difficult to raise a strong or genuine database for postproverbials to promote empirical studies of the phenomenon. Again, researchers in the area have demonstrated the capacity to generate intuitive or hypothetical corpora that mimic traditional proverbs but lack access to a large corpora base that is associated with protoproverbials. The dearth of large and reliable naturally occurring spoken or written data of postproverbials would often put the validity of scholarly arguments on the phenomenon to the test. Again, ways of improving the validity of postproverbial data need to be deliberated upon by scholars.

Finally, scholars of the postproverbial as originally theorized in Nigeria need to be cognizant of the paroemic types that fit into the conceptual frames. The term, postproverbial has been conceptually “patented” for banal, literal, comic, and “blasphemous” (Raji-Oyelade, 1997; 1999) re-renditions of traditional proverbs

associated with some youths. The equivalent term for such renditions in Nigerian proverbial studies has been “pseudoproverbial” (Olorunto-Oju, 1997; 2014). However, as demonstrated in the foregoing, samples that do not fit this description often find their way into a number of postproverbial analyses, and, again, this draws attention to the issue of corpora for postproverbial studies. To accommodate other types of proverbial samples, the theory of postproverbials would need to be re-conceptualised in relation to other taxonomies of the proverbial that appear to account more fully for the different manifestations of paroemia in African contexts. In all, it is recommended that to maintain the integrity of postproverbial data and validate related arguments, the data gathering process and parameters for the classification of samples should be made more empirical.

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Rasaq Atanda Ajadi
Federal University of Health Sciences,
Ila Orangun, Nigeria
rasaq.ajadi@fuhsi.edu.ng

Taiwo Oloruntoba-Oju
University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Nigeria
ttobaoju@unilorin.edu.ng



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ADENIYI ASIYANBI

EXPLORING YORUBA FIRE CULTURES THROUGH PROVERBS

Abstract: This article explores Yoruba proverbs as an essential source of popular wisdom on socio-environmental practices, in particular fire knowledge and practices. It suggests that popular wisdom around fire can be accessed through the creative reconstruction and interpretation of the historical contexts of Yoruba proverbs. Learning from the everyday knowledge and accumulated wisdom of ordinary people holds significant promise at a time of unprecedented socio-environmental crisis and widespread calls for transformative change across scales. Drawing on a collection of Yoruba proverbs, broader Yoruba oral literature, Yoruba popular culture, and a cross-disciplinary selection of academic literature, this article curates ten Yoruba proverbs on the theme of fire, using these as an entry point to interrogate aspects of ecology, local understanding and cultural practices of living with fire among the Yoruba people.

Keywords: Yoruba, fire, history, environment, proverbs

1. Introduction

There are complex and evolving debates about Yoruba proverbs and their roles in the Yoruba oral traditions and in the Yoruba culture more broadly (Raji-Oyelade 2012; Fayemi 2010; Adesoji 2006; Owomoyela 2005; Delano 1972). But at least there is explicit agreement that proverbs reflect something of the norms, experiences, philosophies, and practices of the Yoruba culture – a culture which is itself dynamic. As in other cultures, the Yoruba

proverbs are cherished for their moral value and their transmission of cultural wisdom and traditions (Fayemi 2010; Owomoyela 2005; cf. Akporobaro 2006). They infuse oral communication with efficacy, aesthetic qualities, and appositeness, aptly captured in Chinua Achebe's famous praise of proverbs in *Things Fall Apart*: "proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten". The Yorubas themselves stress the critical role of proverbs in their oral traditions when they say "The proverb is the horse of speech. When speech is lost, the proverb is the means we use to hunt for it". Indeed, proverbs take such a central position in Yoruba oral tradition that the poet Niyi Osundare observed in his book, *Midlife*: "A thousand books may not total one strand of the beard of a quiet proverb" (Osundare 1993).

If Yoruba proverbs have long been treasured for their metaphoric meanings, the context of these proverbs and their basis in socio-cultural and place-based experiences (Ayinola and Edwin 2014) suggest that they are also a source of the factual history of social practices. Adesoji (2006: 3) notes that some Yoruba proverbs are known to "recall particular events in the life of the community which created them and in which they are used... they sometimes contain historical information while at the same time a clue to facts". Because proverbs are in widespread and popular usage (compared to the sacred aspect of Yoruba oral traditions, which are reserved for priests and special occasions) and because they have been passed down from generation to generation, historical accounts derived from proverbs may be more reliable than those obtained from other forms of oral literature (Adesoji 2006; Delano 1972, 1973).

This article thus draws on the factual uses of proverbs and their relative reliability as a cultural source to respond to the growing need to reclaim indigenous and local environmental knowledge and practices in efforts to address the escalating environmental crisis. I ask how the Yoruba people conceived of, used, controlled and lived with fires, particularly in their southern Nigeria rainforests and savanna heartland. What can the historical contextual practices that gave rise to Yoruba proverbs on fire teach us about local uses of fires and the protection of communities against fire hazards? The article grapples with these questions by curating ten Yoruba proverbs from the compilation

by Oyekan Owomoyela (2005) of about 5,500 Yoruba proverbs and their meanings – the fruit of 40 years of research! In making sense of these proverbs, I situate them in the broader Yoruba oral tradition, Yoruba popular culture, and a cross-disciplinary selection of academic literature. In doing so I show how proverbs could be a veritable source of some of the vital fire knowledge and practices of the Yoruba people, along with their associated cultural and ecological contexts, which are essential for understanding those practices today. This piece thus contributes to what Bewaji (2015: 17) calls the “rediscovering [of] cultural intelligence” in relation to environmental sustainability and human wellbeing.

The rest of the article is structured as follows. The next section provides an overview of relevant literature that ground the article in debates in both Yoruba paremiology and eco-cultural studies. This is developed alongside an argument for transdisciplinarity in the exploration of proverbs as a source of local ecological knowledge and popular wisdom. Next, each of the curated list of ten proverbs is presented, translated, and discussed. The article then concludes.

2. Yoruba proverbs and paremiology

The literature on Yoruba paremiology is well established – from the pioneering work of such scholars as Isaac Delano (1972, 1973) and Oyekan Owomoyela (1981, 1988, 2005) to the recent advances in the field typified by such works as that of Raji-Oyelade (2012) on Yoruba postproverbials. Yoruba proverbs continue to be analyzed as a source of Yoruba history and culture (Adesoji 2006; Delano 1973). Yet as Owomoyela (2005) notes, Yoruba paremiology, despite its parallels with English paremiology, is sufficiently differentiated by the various peculiarities of Yoruba proverbs or *òwè*. For instance, while speech features that are regarded as false proverbs in English are also present in Yoruba speech practices, they are not considered to be proverbs or *òwè* in Yoruba. Rather they are called *èébú*. An example is the epithet *Sámùgà, eléyín okó* (Samuga, with hoes for teeth) which is further elaborated with the saying *kòróun fálejò ó wayín sáwo* (lacking the means to entertain a guest, he scoops teeth into a

dish) (Owomoyela, 2005). While English proverbs are typically expected to be “pithy, concise, succinct, brief, terse and so on”, it is not uncommon for Yoruba *òwe* to be “long-winded” (Owomoyela 2005: 6).

Proverbs, like traditional oral materials in general, are living materials in that they refuse rigid fixity, but rather “respond to each occasion and each audience according to the dialectical, idiosyncratic, or any other particularity of the performer” (Owomoyela, 2005: 30). This continued performance of proverbs as a living material means that proverbs are not only affirmed over time; they may also be refined, transformed, or may fall out of use altogether in line with the dynamics of social norms, experiences and realities. Fayemi (2010: 4) observes that proverbs allow for the “storing and retrieving [of] any aspects” of the Yoruba cultural worldview. Yet, reconstructing historical knowledge and practices from proverbs entails more than “retrieving”. It requires some degree of intersubjective meaning-making, cross-interpretation among related proverbs, and supplementation with historical and contemporary understandings of reality across bodies of knowledge and knowledge types. In this sense, reconstructing social practices from Yoruba proverbs typifies what Bewaji (2015: 13) describes as “epistemic responsibility [which] values the collective efforts, memory, and ownership of knowledge”. Yoruba proverbs manifest attributes of popular African epistemology: interdependence, incompleteness and interconnectedness (cf. Nyamnjoh 2017). They also reflect both the rupture and limits of colonial rule since ancient origins of Yoruba proverbs and broader oral traditions of the Yoruba culture did not only survive the period of cultural imperialism and colonization, but many Yoruba proverbs were also forged through the peoples’ experience of colonization.

The dynamic nature of Yoruba proverbs is perhaps best typified by one of the important aspects of Yoruba paremiology which Raji-Oyelade (2012) elaborated as postproverbials. Postproverbials signal the centrality of quotidian engagement with proverbs in ways that respond to prevailing social norms, expectations, and experiences which often differ from those that constitute the historical context of the proverbs. Revising long-held proverbs in such witty and sometimes provocative ways is

what Raji-Oyelade describes as “playful blasphemies”. Postproverbs have now become common enough to deserve dedicated paremiological attention. Postproverbs are an invitation to take seriously the historical context and the ongoing relevance of Yoruba proverbs, in order to achieve the profound task of making proverbs reflect and respond to the moment – to the prevailing popular wisdom.

Despite the dynamic nature of Yoruba proverbs, “historical markers” are important elements of Yoruba proverbs that help to anchor proverbs in time, emphasizing proverbs as a source of history. “Historical markers” are the dating information embedded in proverbs indicating the approximate period when the proverb began to be used (Owomoyela 2005). For instance, the proverb *Olórun ò pin dógba. Sajiméjò-ó ju Kòrófo* (God has not apportioned things equally. The Sergeant Major outranks the Corporal) makes mention of British Military ranks, indicating that the British presence in the Yoruba land had been established by the period this proverb came into existence. This possibility of historically anchoring Yoruba proverbs to better appreciate the context in which certain proverbs developed is critical for unpacking Yoruba proverbs and decoding the factual practices to which they often refer.

Factual historical practices, particularly those captured in eco-proverbs and proverbs relating to society’s understanding of and interactions with nature, hold significant potential to revitalize sustainability practices at a time of unprecedented socio-environmental crisis, partly a product of modernity itself. Calls for socio-ecological transformation continue to centre the need for a plurality of knowledge, values, and perspectives. Scholars of democratization of environmental knowledge also foreground the role of citizens’ knowledge in co-creating visions of more just and sustainable futures (Jasanoff 2004). Addressing the current environmental crisis will require the centring of a ‘pluriversal politics’, in which knowledge, philosophy and practices of Indigenous, Afro-descendants and other place-based groups are brought to the fore alongside many other philosophies and practices (Escobar 2020). Similarly, amid the sterility of ‘colonizing’ or what Fokwang (2012: 327) calls ‘ready-made’ epistemologies, which are incapable of fully nurturing African potentialities,

scholars like Nyamnjoh (2017: 4) call for a convivial epistemology that takes seriously the “popular African ideas of reality and social action” as revealed by the people. Yoruba proverbs reflect some of the most enduring aspects of popular African ideas of reality and social action. They offer generative potentials for understanding the Yoruba people’s conception of and interactions with the natural world, contributing to a trans-disciplinary space in which a plurality of knowledge and values can be integrated.

In this piece, I approach the theme of fire by focusing on fire practices, emphasizing the practices and knowledge that help constitute the *socionatural* aspects of fires in Yoruba proverbs – that is, the entanglements of human and nonhuman natures in this specific coproduction of fire and society. An important strand of eco-critical work already takes Yoruba proverbs as a focus of analysis (see Ayinuola and Edwin 2014), re-assessing literary work through an eco-centric lens. In this paper, however, I focus on proverbs, an essential aspect of Yoruba oral tradition, partly to unsettle what Ignatov (2016: 76) calls the “colonization of the aural–oral by the literary” in ecophilosophy more broadly. I emphasize *fire cultures* (in plural) to recognize the inherent plurality and diversity of Yoruba culture in time and space. Yoruba communities, sub-cultures and practices have coevolved with different ecological zones and landscape types, as it is popularly held that culture sits in places, even if oral traditions are at the same time dynamic.

While there is some truth to the observation that “all peoples live their history; but those who do not write it down live it more consciously than those who do” (Biobaku 1956: 43), changing socio-ecological conditions within which the Yoruba people have always and continue to live out their history means that historical lessons also need to be (re)framed in the present considering changing realities. If invoking ancient Yoruba proverbs on the environment is an invitation to live out history, the contemporary environmental realities of the Yoruba people suggest an imperative to (re)make history through inventive practices which serve as a basis for new proverbs. The rest of this article takes the ten proverbs one after the other, providing two forms of English translations: the literal and the metaphoric, as given by Owomoyela (2005) with very few minor modifications. Based

on the literal translation, each proverb is then followed with an attempt to reconstruct and interpret the historical contexts and their constitutive social practices.

3. *Analysis*

1. *Iná kùjò kí ògiri sá*

Literal meaning: Fire does not rage and cause a wall to flee.

Idiomatic meaning: this means that certain entities are invulnerable to certain dangers.

Walls have a fundamental significance in Yoruba society. Since ancient times, Yoruba societies have built their homes with earthen clay walls. Compounds surrounded by similarly constructed walls typically surround homes where the extended families lived. And in turn, many Yoruba towns and cities were historically surrounded by systems of walls, sometimes combined with ditches or moats.

Indeed, ancient Yoruba kingdoms were known for extensive systems of walls, earthworks and moats built around many Yoruba towns and cities. The earliest of them, Sungbo's Eredo in Ijebu-Ode, close to Lagos and Ibadan, Southwest Nigeria, dates back a thousand years (Darling 1998). The Eredo is a 160-kilometre-long and 20-meter-high defensive wall system and shallow moat winding through the rainforest (Darling 1998). Sungbo's Eredo was said to have been commissioned by *Oloye* (Chief) Bilikisu Sungbo, a wealthy woman and an Ijebu chief who had no children and was much revered among the Ijebu people. A much more extensive system of walls and earthworks with a combined length of about 16,000 kilometres was built over centuries to fortify and demarcate various sections of the Benin Kingdom in Southern Nigeria. These two walls (Sungbo's Eredo and Iya of Benin) are still standing and are currently on the Tentative List of the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage.

So, what about walls and fire in these ancient Yoruba societies? These walls were built with clay, whether built around homes or cities. These clay walls were fire resistant and stood

firm in the face of fire, even if the thatched roofs on homes were often the first to burn, especially when struck by lightning which is abundant across Africa and Yoruba land. But the walls themselves, considered the most critical structure of a house since such walls were continuous with the foundation of the house, often stood firm and were even strengthened by urban or wild-land fires. This is because of the unique property of clay made up of aluminum and silicon ions, which are bonded into tiny plates by interconnecting oxygen and hydroxide ions. These minuscule plates are tough and flexible when wet. They are, however, transformed into increasingly hard and strong mineral materials through dehydration, particularly by firing. This is terracotta on a large scale. With every successive fire on these clay walls, they got even stronger – strong enough to make them withstand the other main element of the rainforest heartland of Yoruba communities: rainstorms.

What’s interesting, then, is how ancient Yoruba cultures built walls and structures which, at least, as far as withstanding the fire was concerned, became almost taken for granted to the point of being inscribed in proverbs. As architects, builders and city planners globally are now rediscovering the usefulness of clay as an important eco-friendly building material, appreciating its strengths in thermal insulation, soundproofing, and low-carbon properties compared to concrete, they may also have found a naturally fire-resistant material in their hands at a time of more intense, climate change-impacted mega-fires across regions of the world (Asiyanbi and Davidsen 2023; Tedim et al. 2018).

2. *Omo iná la ńrán síná*

Literal meaning: It is the child of fire that one sends on an errand to fire.

Idiomatic meaning: It is best to match the remedy to the problem.

This proverb suggests a historical context in which the Yoruba people sought to deal with large and out-of-control fires. And one of the ways the Yoruba people did it was to actively use (child

of, or small) fires to control fire on the landscape. The Yorubas had to learn how to deal with fires. As John Iliffe (1984, see also Smith 1962) rightly observed, the fire was historically common in Yoruba towns during the dry season. Also, given the various uses of fires among the Yoruba people – from farm preparation to hunting, from forest hygiene to biodiversity maintenance and the prevention of destructive fires, and from rituals and communication to crafts and food preservation – one could expect detailed knowledge of fire ecology and fire control to keep these practices ongoing for generations. Some of these long-standing African indigenous fire knowledge and practices have been highlighted by researchers (see, for instance, Laris and Wardell 2006; Kull 2004; Komarek 1972; Jeffereys 1945).

After all, Africa is often called the ‘fire continent’ (Komarek 1972) because more fires burn in the continent than any other. Even in current times, as NASA observatory recently estimated, about 70% of the land area burned by fires globally burned in Africa still (Voiland 2019). But these are relatively small-sized fires set regularly by communities to manage the landscape – a practice that goes back millennia. Colonial suppression of local fire uses on the landscape in Africa was largely unsuccessful (Laris and Wardell 2006). But this widespread use of fires on the landscape also meant that despite local expertise at timing and managing farm fires to avoid escalation, there was also the risk of fire occasionally getting out of control and extending into broader areas, including forests. Farms and forests often blended into each other in these settings. Strong fire control skills were, thus, needed to suppress fires whenever they escaped.

Another reason Africa is called the ‘fire continent’ is that it has the greatest occurrence of lightning, which is the leading cause of natural fires during fire weather periods (Komarek 1972). More than half, 283, of the top 500 places with the highest lightning frequency in the world are in Africa, followed by Asia with 87 places (Albrecht et al. 2016). So it’s not surprising that the Yorubas (and many other African cultures) have *òrìsàs* (deities) for thunderstorms, lightning and fire. The most well-known of the Yoruba deities of thunder and fire is Sango. The fierce Sango was the legendary fourth king of the Oyo Empire – the most powerful of the ancient Yoruba Kingdoms for centuries.

Yoruba oral tradition has multiple accounts of Sango's life. One of the more popular ones (see Adamo 2017; Awolalu 1979) holds that Sango had gone to try out his new-found magical powers, which gave him the capacity to produce thunder and lightning. While he tried out his powers, he inadvertently caused thunder and lightning to strike his palace, killing his wives and children. In repentance, Sango left his Kingdom and went and hanged himself at Koso. Following this event, some of his enemies cast aspersion on his name, and they were struck by lightning. Seeing how Sango avenged the assault on his name even in death, his followers deified him. In addition to the religious deification of Sango, Sango also personifies the abundance and the power of thunderstorms, lightning and fire in Yorubaland.

The Yorubas have, thus, learnt how to manage landscape fires. Like many other African societies, the Yorubas fought fires by using fires to create fire breaks. They burned the landscape at appropriate periods before and after the dry seasons to reduce the risk of out-of-control fires. This reflects what fire scientists have recognized as "remarkable knowledge of fire ecology" among many African communities (Kolarek 1972: 498). *Omo iná la ñrán síná* is a reminder that fire is a suitable means of dealing with fire.

3. *Bí abá mu ina kuro loko, aṣi agbe ti yo jogédé; bí a bá mú ti Ìbikúnlé Olókè kúrò Balógun Ógbórí Efòn, à di agrase.*

Literal meaning: If one removed fire from the farm, only the farmers satisfied with a diet of bananas [and plantains] would be unconcerned. But for *Ìbikúnlé Olókè*, General *Ógbórí Efòn*, we could achieve nothing.

Idiomatic meaning: Deprived of their founts of power, people are ineffective

This proverb speaks to the historical context of the proverb and the centrality of fires to farming systems in Yoruba societies. Without fire, the farmer is reduced to a diet of bananas and plantain because fire is necessary for creating and sustaining the very diverse landscape (and these landscapes blended farm and

forest) that produced the range of food – plant-based and animal-based – that went into the diet of the Yoruba people. Fire was critical for farm preparation and management, the management and hunting of wildlife, and the maintenance of ranges for livestock. Fire was also necessary to cook and preserve a wide variety of food. Without fire, the landscape could not produce the rich diversity that the Yoruba people relied upon.

So, what does it mean for a farmer to be left with a diet of plantains and bananas? First, bananas and plantain are significant staple crops across sub-Saharan Africa. They are one of the easiest crops to grow. They require little land preparation and grow under a light forest canopy, which does not require significant land clearing using fire. Once planted, they regenerate naturally through suckers. Apart from the fruits, which have high calorific value, the large leaves are used locally in food packaging. Because of the ease of cultivation and high energy content, plantain and bananas were a kind of safety net for poor farmers. And bananas could also be eaten as a fruit without any processing, which often required fire.

Yet, there is also the need to understand the value of plantain and banana in the Yoruba food culture. Plantain and bananas are not favourably ranked on the Yoruba hierarchy of foods. Indeed, a Yoruba proverb says:

4. *Orí tó máa je ògèdè sùn kì í gbó; bí wón bá ñgbéyán bò wá fun, yó fòò ni dandan*

Literal meaning: A head destined to eat plantains for supper will not escape that destiny; if pounded yam is being brought, it [the dish] will unfailingly break.

Metaphoric meaning: There is no antidote or cure for ill luck.

Another proverb says of Bananas:

5. *Ògèdè mbàjé a ní ó ñpón*

Literal meaning: The banana is rotting; people say it is ripening.

Metaphoric meaning: It does not help to rationalize a brat's behaviour with silly explanations.

Compared to a diet of Iyan (pounded yam), a plantain diet is considered relatively inferior in the Yoruba food hierarchy. Even the ripening of bananas is somewhat seen negatively as rotting. Without fire, plantain and bananas are one of the few food crops the farmer could keep going on the farm. And to be limited to a diet of banana or plantain is not only to be left with a monoculture but also an inferior one. The point here is that removing fires from the traditional landscape of the Yorubas was to put the community and the landscape in the most desperate situation. This points to the centrality of fire in maintaining traditional Yoruba farm-forest landscapes.

The second part of the proverb refers to a famous war chief of Ibadan in the nineteenth century. Ibadan, Nigeria's largest city by area, was recognized for being the leading Yoruba city-state that once competed with the longer-established Oyo Kingdom. Balogun *Ògbórí Efòn* was said to have valiantly defended Ibadan and its allied towns against several aggressions. As such, the proverb likens the usefulness of fire on the farm to the benefit of this war chief at the war front. At the same time, the reference to this particular war chief is also a historical marker in the proverb (Owomoyela 2005). It points to the likely period when the proverb was first used after the reign of *Balogun Ògbórí Efòn* in the late 19th century. Given the central role of fires in Yoruba farms, this contemplation of the possibility of removing fire from the farm may well have been in the context of challenging European attempts to control the use of fires in Yoruba farms from the early 20th century when colonial administrators and foresters began to regulate timber and rubber extraction, and when forest conservation and plantation agriculture began to be introduced (Grove and Falola 1996; Egboh 1985). Komarek (1972: 500) pointed to the widespread documentation in Africa in the 1920s of "the attitudes that sprung from anti-fire attitudes of European forestry".

6. *Omodé kì ní iná nilé kí tòde má jo*

Literal Meaning: A child does not have fire at home and therefore escapes being burned by the one abroad

Metaphoric meaning: Being secured and respected in one's home does not secure one from vicissitudes outside the home.

This proverb speaks to a historical context in which a child might expect not to be burned by fire elsewhere because they had become accustomed to dealing with fire at home or in familiar territory. The proverb stresses the difference that context makes in understanding and handling fire. It speaks to how geophysical and socio-cultural contexts matter for how the Yorubas understood and lived with fires. Failure to grasp and respond to fire context appropriately could result in danger. It also speaks to fire as both familiar and strange across geographies. Fire is projected as both domesticated and wild, which is experienced in the known past and will be experienced in the unknown future.

To ignore fire's geographies of difference is to be a child about fire. And to ignore these contextual differences in wildfires is to court danger. The proverb suggests that a child – the immature, the untrained and the inexperienced – falls into such danger. This proverb notes the place of training, experience, and maturing in the embodiment of the knowledge of fire ecology and behaviour. Moreover, it points to the importance of caution and openness to learning in apprehending unfamiliar fire terrains.

7. *Bí iná kò bá l'áwo nínú, kìi gun òkè odò*

Literal meaning: If a fire is not endowed with mysterious powers, it does not jump rivers

Metaphoric meaning: When matters take a mysterious turn, they are driven by unusual forces

The historical context of this proverb relates to the Yoruba people's keen observation of fire behaviour and their acknowledge-

ment of the powers and mysteries of fire. It speaks to the unusual fire behaviour that was probably observed from time to time which had become common knowledge critical for understanding, predicting, categorizing, preparing for, and responding to fires. The proverb speaks to one category of fire, which has an unusual quality – the capacity to jump rivers. This refers to large and intense fires, which can jump large rivers through their dispersal of long-range fire embers or spread by tree crowns or climbers growing over small rivers or streams.

The proverb also points to the productive tension between familiar and unusual fires. This can be extended to capture the trusted accumulated knowledge of fire behaviour, on the one hand, and a sense of curiosity, openness and wonder at unusual, surprising fire behaviour, on the other hand. Acknowledging the mysterious in fire behaviour is, in a sense, a declaration of the tentative, incomplete, and thus dynamic nature of traditional fire knowledge – and indeed all knowledge in Yoruba culture. It is an invitation to explore and seek new understandings in the interactions of human and nonhuman nature. Indeed, as Bewaji (2015: 14) notes, “the Yoruba culture celebrates wonder and inquisitiveness, encouraging evidence-gathering efforts, as means of gaining knowledge”. One could also think of this in terms of what Nyamnjoh (2017) describes as the ‘in-between’ nature of popular African knowledge, where, in this case, fire is both known and mysterious at the same time. This attitude of anticipating and responding to the mysterious, to the yet unknown, would have been an important aspect of the adaptiveness and dynamism of the Yoruba fire knowledge.

8. *Ina kì í wo odò ko rójú sayé*

Literal Meaning: Fire does not enter a stream yet retain the opportunity to live.

Metaphoric meaning: Whoever ventures into dangerous situations deserves the repercussions.

This proverb complements the preceding one to demonstrate further the knowledge of fire behaviour among the Yoruba people.

While the preceding proverb recognizes the unusual attribute of particular kinds of fires – fires that can jump rivers – this proverb reflects a generality in fire pattern. It precisely reflects the understanding among the Yorubas of the role of water bodies as natural fire barriers. Yet, this is a qualified understanding, given the clear awareness of kinds of fires that ‘jump’ rather than ‘enter a stream’. The differences in the verbs ‘jump’ and ‘enter’ also matter here. These two action words point to the different mechanics of fire spread. The verb ‘enter’ reflects fire spread through direct contact with the head fire. Such direct contact of the head fire with rivers and streams on the ground causes the fire to be extinguished. Yet, fires can jump rivers by sending far-reaching fire-brands or by spreading overhead through the contact among tree crowns and climbers, which are abundant in the tropical rainforest heartland of the Yorubas.

These understandings of fire are crucial in everyday uses and control of fires. They are also important in distinguishing different types of fires and in predicting fire behaviour based on landscape features. Confident of the capacity of rivers and streams to serve as fire barriers, it is not unreasonable to imagine that the Yoruba people probably deployed all kinds of strategies to harness this natural barrier for fire management and control. For instance, fires to clear farm debris may have been set close to water bodies to serve as natural fire stoppers and to grant easy access to water in case a fire had to be put out by people. Preventing the spread of fire in landscapes with overhead climbers may have meant managing some of the climbers to limit fire spread. People may also have strategically used litter and other biomass to lead ground fires toward rivers to extinguish them, mainly when the prevailing wind was favourable to doing so. “Fire does not enter a stream and yet retain the opportunity to live” may not have been an inert truism for the Yorubas but one borne of experience and performed through fire practices.

9. *Iná kú feérú bojú; ògèdè kú fomo è rópò*

Literal Meaning: The fire dies and covers its face with ashes; the banana tree dies and replaces itself with an offshoot.

Metaphoric meaning: When a person dies, survivors inherit their property.

When a fire is not extinguished by entering a river or any other means, it eventually dies by itself when it runs out of one of the fire triangle elements – heat, air (oxygen) or fuel. For the Yoruba people, it matters that one is sure of the end of a fire. Ashes tell the end of a fire. But ashes reveal more than that. They sometimes reveal the nature of the fuel (i.e. trees) and the nature of the landscape. While ashes reveal the dynamics of fire, they at the same time hide the dynamics of heat. That is why another Yoruba proverb says

10. *Ìkókó omo tó towó bo eérú ni yó mò bó gbóná.*

Literal Meaning: The little child who thrusts their hand into ashes will find out for himself if they are not

Metaphorically, this means that experience best teaches that one should avoid dangerous ventures.

In this instance, ashes are shown to be dangerous because mere visual inspection is insufficient to know for sure whether a pile of ashes is still hot. And it is not worth finding out with bare bodily contact. Only the untrained and the inexperienced would take that risk. But this proverb also reflects Yoruba's appreciation for the transformative power of fire – its capacity to change materials from one form into another. This capacity is valued for its productive and valuable purposes. Given the widespread use of ashes of various kinds in Yoruba land, the power of fire to produce ashes is also actively harnessed. Burning forest litter to produce ashes is one of the popular processes of soil enrichment. Ashes of various plant materials are also used in soap making and medicinal practices.

11. *Bí iná bá jó lóko, màjàlà a fò wá silé.*

Literal Meaning: When there is a fire in the forest, the soot flies home.

Metaphoric meaning: Events that happen afar send their news back home.

This proverb, like the preceding ones, reflects the Yoruba awareness of fire behaviour. Aside from embers, forest fires also produce soot. The Yorubas distinguish between the embers and the soot with respect to their effects and the responses each of them calls for. Unlike embers which are responsible for the spreading of fires for instance across streams and rivers (as in Proverb No. 7), soot goes further to the 'home', not spreading fire but only giving the indication that a fire burns somewhere not too far from home. As such, the distance over which the soot travels matters here, and so is the rather passive response that the presence of soot commands – the soot merely indicates that there is fire burning at a distance. Yet, the soot may also have served as an early warning sign of an approaching but distant fire. This proverb also reflects an awareness of the wider, 'home-bound' air pollution caused by the particulates of forest fires.

12. *Iná jó lóko kò jó erùpè ilè; òràn ti ñseni ò solùkù eni*

Literal Meaning: Fire consumes the forest but not the earth; what plagues one does not plague one's friends.

Metaphoric meaning: Nobody shares one's fate.

This proverb bears on the Yoruba peoples' appreciation for both the capacity of fire and its limit. Fire did consume the forest in Yoruba land. There was such regularity to fire consuming the forest that this proverb and others acknowledged the fact. But it is the limit of fire with respect to the earth, the soil, that the proverb highlights even more. Like water, the earth stops the raging fire by denying it air and fuel. When the fire has consumed all the litter and fuel on the land, it comes in contact with the earth itself. The solidity of the earth limits the powers of a raging fire, no matter how intense. This was why sand was also used to put out fires.

But this understanding of how earth protects from the power of fire also underpins the use of earth in particular kinds of burn-

ing. As Olorunnisola (2023) notes, charcoal production has a long history among the Yorubas, particularly in the northernmost savanna regions of the Yoruba heartland. The process typically involves wood charring using the earth as a barrier. This could take the form of an open pit in which dried wood is layered into a pit and covered up with earth and fire is introduced through a whole. It could also take the form of a mound in which dried wood piled on the earth's surface is covered with sand and allowed to char. As such, the liminal cognitive zone where fire is known as capable of consuming the forest yet unable to burn the earth is where productive activities like charcoal making are carried on. Charcoal making at this boundary of the capacity and limit of fire is another reflection of the experiential and performative attributes of Yoruba knowledge of fire.

13. *Nnkan méta la kì í pe ni kékeré: a kì í pe iná ni kékeré; a kì í pe ijà ni kékeré; a kì í pe àisàn ni kékeré.*

Literal Meaning: three things one must never treat as of little consequence: one must never treat a fire as of little consequence; one must never treat a quarrel as of little consequence; one must never treat an illness as of little consequence.

Metaphoric meaning: Attend to every potential problem early before it gets out of hand

One must never treat a fire as of little consequence. Like illness or quarrel, fire can easily grow beyond one's control. And even little fire can have irreversible consequences. This is the power of fire to change whatever it touches – judged as destructive or productive by humans. For all their uses of fire and their extensive body of knowledge and practices on fire ecology, the Yorubas still caution against underestimating the capacity of fire to get out of control. But asking that one “never treats a fire as of little consequence” speaks not only to fire behaviour as observed over time, it also relates to psychological and social entanglements with fire, which determine how one responds to an unwanted fire. It calls for preparedness at the individual and

collective levels, and the readiness to attack an unwanted fire while it is still small.

4. Conclusion

This article has taken Yoruba proverbs as an important source of popular Yoruba knowledge and practices on fire. By emphasizing the factual and historical character of these selected Yoruba proverbs, the article shows that Yoruba proverbs offer more than moral and aesthetic functions. They provide a window into some contexts in which the proverbs were forged, used, circulated, and passed down to generations. However, like all historical work, decoding the factual historical essence of Yoruba proverbs is an invitation to engage in a necessarily incomplete, interconnected, and creative interpretive process. This article has pursued such by bringing together insights from the broader Yoruba oral literature, popular Yoruba culture, geographies of Yoruba heartland, and a cross-disciplinary selection of academic literature.

Changes in the socio-ecological landscapes, cultural landscapes, and social lives of the Yorubas mean that a linear transposition of these proverbs or the practices and knowledge they relate to would be inappropriate. For instance, forests have declined, and populations have grown in and around many Yoruba towns. While many rural homes are still built from clay, homes in Yoruba towns are made from concrete and other materials. Dedicated fire-fighting squads now fight urban fires. In short, as the last proverb in the collection indicates, context does matter in understanding and living with fire, whether as a tool for landscape management or as an untamed force of nature on the landscape. As such, while the principles underlying these Yoruba fire knowledge and practices are worth contemplating across other contexts, the knowledge, and practices themselves – like all practical and indigenous knowledge – are rooted in *place*.

Nevertheless, learning from the everyday knowledge and accumulated wisdom of ordinary people holds significant promise at a time of unprecedented socio-environmental crisis that calls for cultivating diverse, more sustainable ways of living. The rise of more intense, climate change-impacted mega fires calls for renewed interest in exploring ways of living well with fires which

are increasingly severe in regions such as the Mediterranean, North America, and Europe. Popular and Indigenous sources of knowledge, particularly Yoruba fire proverbs, have something to offer in this respect.

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Adeniyi Asiyambi
 Department of Community, Culture and Global Studies,
 University of British Columbia Okanagan, Canada.
 pasiyanbi@yahoo.com



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LUIS J. TOSINA FERNÁNDEZ

ADDENDUM TO G. B. BRYAN’S “THE PROVERBIAL SHERLOCK HOLMES”: EXPANDING THE PAREMIOLOGICAL CATALOG IN THE HOLMESIAN CANON

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to reassess the use of proverbs in the adventures of Sherlock Holmes, taking as a starting point the article previously published by G. B. Bryan on this same topic in *Proverbium* in 1996. In it, Bryan came to the conclusion that proverbs did not abound in the series. For this reason, the collection of stories and the four novels published have been surveyed for their use of paremias in order to establish their frequency of appearance and how they are used by the author. Once a rather extensive catalog of sentences susceptible to being considered proverbs had been gathered, they were individually checked against dictionaries to establish whether they could be labeled as such.

After a detailed examination of the materials obtained, this paper contradicts the thesis presented by Bryan and demonstrates that Conan Doyle uses proverbs in his detective stories quite often, most frequently through the character of Holmes.

Keywords: G. B. Bryan, A. Conan Doyle, Index, Proverbs, Sherlock Holmes, Victorian Literature

1. Introduction

In 1996, the late George B. Bryan (1939-1996) published a paper in *Proverbium* entitled “The Proverbial Sherlock Holmes: An In-

dex to Proverbs in the Holmesian Canon” with the purpose of assessing whether a figure that has become “proverbial” achieved that status “through the use of proverbs as a stylistic device” (Bryan 1996: 47). In his article, the author resorted to one of the fathers of modern Paremiology, B. J. Whiting, to justify his own interest in a form of literature that was seen by many as low and undeserving of an intellectual of such stature. Whiting analyzed the works of important authors for the development of the investigative genre such as P. Wentworth, F. W. Crofts, R. Stout, E. S. Gardner, D. L. Sayers, G. Simenon, M. Allingham, M. Innes, J. Creasy, C. Aird, and A. Christie (Bryan 1996: 47-48), possibly one of the few authors that could dispute A. Conan Doyle’s status as the absolute reference in the genre. Nonetheless, a scholar should not have to justify his or her interest and defend its legitimacy, particularly when dealing with a character, as well as a franchise, that has become ingrained in the folklore of the Western world, if not globally, having transcended his original geographical, linguistic, and temporal context to become one of the most recognizable fictional characters in the world. Proof of this are the continuous transmedial reiterations of the adventures of the consulting detective, from the original novels and short stories to radio broadcasts, film, television series, comic books, and even video games over the last few decades.

The adaptability and universality of the character of Sherlock Holmes were noted early on and in the third of the cinematic adaptations of his adventures into film, starring B. Rathbone as Holmes and N. Bruce as Watson, *The Voice of Terror* (1942), the audience is presented with a title screen that reads,

Sherlock Holmes, the immortal character of fiction created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is ageless, invincible and unchanging.

In solving significant problems of the present day, he remains -as ever- the supreme master of deductive reasoning.

As is known, this film is a contemporary adaptation of the last adventure of the detective in the chronology of the canon: “His Last Bow”, but adapting it to the context of World War II instead of World War I, which was the setting of the original story. As can be assessed without any fear of incurring false impressions,

this is as valid today as it was 80 years ago when the film was first released amid global conflict.

Recently, and following the trend of adapting the characters and plots of the original stories to present-day contexts, in 2010 BBC released a miniseries titled *Sherlock* (Gatiss and Moffat 2010-2017) of 3 episodes running for four seasons, plus a special episode, starring B. Cumberbatch as Holmes and M. Freeman as Watson, resulting in astounding global success. This TV fiction, together with *Elementary* (Doherty 2012-2019), starring J. Lee Miller as Holmes and L. Liu as Watson, have contributed to reinforcing the timeless character of Conan Doyle’s hero and have helped to take his relevance well into the 21st century. Also responsible for this are films starring R. Downey Jr and J. Law first (Ritchey 2009, 2011), and, regrettably, the shameful spoof *Holmes & Watson* (Cohen 2018), starring W. Ferrell and J. C. Reilly, unworthy of the legacy of the pair after whom the film is named. Moreover, 9 videogames (Harrison 2021) have been released since the turn of the century, allowing players to take on the detecting powers of Holmes and play as him in order to solve various mysteries, proving that the detective remains relevant not only to those nostalgic of the original adventures but also among younger audiences at whom these kinds of productions are most frequently targeted. All of this should suffice to demonstrate that the character continues to be as popular with the public as ever.

It is for this reason that a study on the use of proverbs in the adventures of one of the most popular fiction heroes in the history of literature is still considered to be of relevance. This is especially true taking into account that Bryan concluded that in the Holmesian canon, it “cannot be maintained that the proverbial detective employed more than marginally proverbial language” (Bryan 1996: 51). As is the intention of this piece of work to prove, after a close inspection of the canonical adventures from a paremiological scope, Bryan’s affirmation seems rather inaccurate and, taking his 1996 paper as a starting point, some clarifications and expansions need to be made in order to demonstrate that the proverbial language in the adventures of Sherlock Holmes is, in fact, richer than what Bryan noted. Thus, elaborating on Bryan’s article and following his organization and formatting to facilitate cross-referencing, a few commentaries and amplifications will be made over the next pages.

2. Preliminary remarks on Bryan's "Index"

To begin with, it must be pointed out that in his work, Bryan includes not only proverbs but other types of phraseologisms, particularly, nominations (Fielder 2007: 39-40) and stereotyped comparisons (Fielder 2007: 43-44), which despite potentially having a certain proverbial character, lack one of the most relevant defining features of proverbs: syntactic independence as a self-contained grammatical sentence (Mieder 2006: 2-4; Fielder 2007: 44-45). For this reason, in this paper, only proverbs that are unquestionably considered as such by dictionaries of proverbs will be presented, accompanied by a reference to their location in said dictionaries. Consequently, examples such as the following have not been considered for the present work, as their consideration as proverbs has not been proved after consulting various authoritative reference works.

GODFREY EMSWORTH I hoped against hope (056: 1266) (Bryan, 1996: 61)

However, J. Ayto (2008: 179) lists the phrase in his *Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms*. This proves that the phrase is indeed a phraseological unit, just not of the kind that is of interest to this piece of research.

On his part, Bryan (1995: 49) affirms that throughout the canon, Holmes employs a total of only 11 proverbs, a pitiful amount considering that the collection of the stories spreads across almost 1500 pages and Holmes' words, as the obvious protagonist, make up for a significant percentage of the total, establishing Shakespeare as the primary source for Holmes' proverbial knowledge. Indeed, Holmes does cite the works of the Bard multiple times, contradicting the famous description by Watson in which the doctor assesses the knowledge of his recent roommate in relation to various disciplines and stating that Holmes' knowledge of literature is "nil" (Doyle 2004: 20). Moreover, Holmes also cites Goethe twice (002: 126, 174),¹ G. Flaubert (004: 468), T. De Quincey (008: 521), or H. D. Thoreau

¹ To facilitate cross-referencing with Bryan's paper, his organization has been used here as well. Thus, the adventure in which the quotation is to be found is identified with a number. The complete list can be found in the *Appendix* at the end.

(012: 605), proving that Watson’s judgment was quite rushed. However, no evidence supports that the following phrases found in Shakespeare are proverbs,

HOLMES “Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just” (045: 1192) (*King Henry VI Pt. 2 3: 2*)

HOLMES Journeys end in lovers’ meetings,’ as the old play says. (027: 861; 044: 1139) (*Twelfth Night 2: 3*)

Apart from the fact that Holmes explicitly cites “the old play”, i.e. *Twelfth Night*, as the source for the second sentence, Bryan seems to have been misled by his mastery of theater and his knowledge of the works of Shakespeare. Even though it is true that both statements have a certain proverbial resonance to them, none of the reference works consulted for the composition of this paper credit them as proverbs. M. P. Tilley does reference the first one in his prestigious dictionary, with which Bryan was unquestionably more than familiar, not as a proverb *per se* but as an allusion to the proverb “innocence bears defense with it” (Tilley 1950: 341); whereas for the second quotation, there is no reference whatsoever. Consequently, these two instances do not seem suitable for consideration as proverbs but, rather, as quotations that may be indicative of Holmes’ fondness for theater and Shakespeare’s work. After all, theater in Victorian England was a popular pastime “for Londoners ‘[h]igh or low, rich or poor” (Schoch 1998: 1).

A case of an inconsistency related to Shakespearean intertextuality, while also broadly considered a proverb, has to do with the proverb “this world’s a stage and every man plays his part” (Wilson 1970:918), a paremia that was well-established in Shakespeare’s time (Tilley 1950: 759) and which the playwright cited, quite conveniently, several times across various plays, arguably, most memorably in *The Merchant of Venice* (1:1). Thus, Holmes in two different instances states,

HOLMES This, then, is the stage upon which tragedy has been played, and upon which we may help to play it again. (040: 196)

And again,

HOLMES ... for it is more than likely that you will have your part to play. (054: 1244)

Even though these may be just an accidental choice of words, Holmes' knowledge of Shakespearean works, as shown in the previous examples, could be taken as indicative of a deliberate allusion. Furthermore, the fact that Bryan omits both instances is surprising and cannot be justified by not being canonical uses of the proverb as he includes the modification of the well-known proverb "the exception proves the rule" (Wilson 1970: 234) when Holmes states "I never make exceptions. An exception disproves the rule" (002: 105).

Another dubious proverb uttered by Holmes as cited by Bryan (1996: 49) is

HOLMES The wages of sin, Watson, the wages of sin! (054: 1252)

In this case, we seem to be dealing with another literary allusion, rather than a proverbial one, in this case referencing *The Bible* in Romans (6:23), where it is stated that "the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Finally, the last case of inconsistency found in Bryan's paper has to do with the mistaken attribution of the proverb "let bygones be bygones" (Wilson 1970: 96) to Culverton Smith, the villain in "The Adventure of the Dying Detective", the story in which Holmes pretends to have contracted a fatal disease to get the former to confess to the murder of his own nephew. Reading the story, it becomes apparent that it is indeed Holmes who uses the proverb (046: 1178). This makes quite a difference, both quantitatively and qualitatively, because it is one of the few cases in which, according to Bryan, Holmes makes a canonical use of proverbs, which also contributes, to a certain extent, to undermining his portrayal of Holmes as a not very proverbial character.

3. Expansion to Bryan's "Index"

Having made some clarifications that seemed necessary in relation to Bryan's observations, in this section, Bryan's "Index" will be expanded by presenting well-documented instances of the use of proverbs in the different adventures of Sherlock Holmes that were overlooked by the author. For this purpose, and in or-

der to facilitate the identification of the different paremias, these are listed alphabetically in relation to the first noun included in them, following the style and formatting used by Bryan in his original work and identifying the adventure in which it was featured with a number in relation to their chronological order of original publication as indicated by Bryan. However, two minor modifications have been made in order to provide as consistent and uncontroversial a work as possible: on the one hand, next to the proverb, there is a reference to a dictionary of proverbs in which the paremia is found, so as to prove its existence and consideration as such by prestigious reference works; on the other hand, for each quotation from the Holmesian canon provided, the character that uses the proverb is identified with the purpose of easily determining which characters, or character-types, are particularly fond of the use of proverbs and whether Conan Doyle used this as a device to present certain characters in a certain way. For this purpose, and in order to reach a better understanding of the use of paremias in Conan Doyle’s Holmesian corpus, a triple distinction has been made between proverbs used canonically, i.e., word-for-word as one would expect to find them in a dictionary; proverbs that show some modification in relation to that canonical, dictionary wording in order to adapt the sentence to the particular context to which it is applied; and, finally, allusions to proverbs. The last may be the most debatable category as it may be considered open to interpretation or biased by an inclination of the paremiological reader to find proverbs everywhere. Nonetheless, considering how troublesome this might be, out of the dozens of allusions noted, only a set of seemingly irrefutable examples will be presented here.

3.1. Canonical uses of proverbs

It is widely accepted that proverbs, as elements of folklore, may manifest with slight variations that are due to their preeminently oral spread (Mieder, 2004: 5, 9). It is for this reason that some of the following examples may seem to differ from the wording included in the dictionary quoted. Yet, they can only be considered the variants of the same proverbial idea given that all the main concepts are present with no significant, conscious modification made by the speaker in order to adapt their use to a particular

conversational context. Thus, the following 18 examples have been found, which in itself, is comparable to the total number of proper proverbs listed by Bryan and which amount to 11 including the aforementioned dubious instances, as well as the celebrated “Persian saying” from “A Case of Identity” and which seems to have been an invention of Conan Doyle’s (Bryan 1996: 49) as no evidence of the existence of the proverb has been found (Waterhouse 1990).

1) *Appearances are deceptive* (Speake 2008: 7)

HOLMES: “And how deceptive appearances may be, to be sure!” (028: 879)

2) *Better late than never* (Wilson 1970: 54)

HOLMES: “I confess that I have been as blind as a mole, but it is better to learn wisdom late than never to learn it at all.” (008: 536)

2) *You can’t make bricks without straw* (Speake 2008: 36)

HOLMES: “I can’t make bricks without clay.” (014: 641)

4) *The die is cast* (Wilson 1970: 186)

WATSON [*as the narrator*]: “I clasped his hand in silence, and the die was cast.” (041: 1107)

5) *Familiarity breeds contempt* (Wilson 1970: 243)

MRS MERRILOW: “...as usual, familiarity begat contempt.” (059: 1377)

6) *Honesty is the best policy* (Wilson 1970: 380)

DUKE OF HOLDERNESSE: “I agree with you that complete frankness, however painful it may be to me, is the best policy in this desperate situation” (031: 942)

7) *The darkest hour is that before the dawn* (Wilson 1970: 168)

WATSON [*as the narrator*]: “...it was the darkest hour which precedes the dawn” (032: 954)

8) *Every man is a master in his own house* (Wilson 1970: 229)

WATSON [*as narrator*]: “My own complete happiness, and the home-centred interests which rise up around the man who first finds himself master of his own establishment, were sufficient to absorb all my attention.” (003: 429)

HOLMES: “It’s easy to see a man who is master of his own house.” (031: 935)

9) *Misfortunes never come alone (single)* (Wilson 1970: 535)

PERCY PHELPS: “Misfortunes never come single” (025: 820)

10) *Money isn’t everything* (Speake 2008: 213)

MRS WARREN: “Money’s not everything.” (044: 1136)

11) *If you gently touch a nettle it’ll sting you for your pains; grasp it like a lad of mettle, an’ as soft as silk remains* (Speake 2008: 224)²

HOLMES: “Grasp the nettle, Watson!” (049: 1273)

12) *Once a parson (priest), always a parson (priest)* (Wilson 1970: 594)

MR WILLIAMSON: “Once a clergyman, always a clergyman.” (030: 917)

13) *Promise is a promise* (Mieder, Kingsbury and Harder 1996: 486)

HILTON CUBITT: “...a promise is a promise.” (029: 887)

HILTON CUBITT: “A promise is a promise, Mr. Holmes.” (029: 888)

14) *Revenge is sweet* (Wilson 1970: 673)

ENOCH DREBBER: “I had always known that vengeance would be sweet, but I had never hoped for the contentment of soul which now possessed me.” (001: 87-88)

² Note that in the entry to this proverb, the author explains that “The metaphorical phrase to grasp the nettle, to tackle a difficulty boldly, is often found” (Speake 2008: 224).

15) *It takes all sorts to make a world* (Wilson 1970: 11)
 MRS MARKER: "...it takes all sorts to make a world, and the professor hasn't let it take his appetite away" (036: 1021)

16) *No time like the present* (Wilson 1970: 824)
 MCMURDO: "No time like the present." (048: 377)

17) *The truth will come out* (Wilson 1970: 845)
 ANNIE HARRISON: "If we keep our courage and our patience the truth must come out." (025: 818)

18) *Come what come may* (Wilson 1970: 135)
 HALL PYCROFT: "However, come what might, I had my money." (018: 700)
 TREVOR SR: "But you shall know, Victor. I'll see that you shall know, come what may." (019: 713)
 HOLMES: "Meanwhile, come what may, Colonel Moran will trouble us no more." (027: 865)

As can be seen, some of the examples above show some deviation from the wording gathered in the dictionaries cited, most noticeably, Holmes' substitution of "straw" for "bricks" in "you can't make bricks without straw", a proverb of Biblical origin that makes a reference to Genesis (5: 7-18). But the majority of the changes that can be observed have to do with the use of synonyms, such as 'frankness' for 'honesty', 'clergyman' for 'parson' or 'priest', or 'vengeance' for 'revenge', apart from minor changes in the tenses of verbs as in "the die was cast" (041: 1107) or "familiarity beget contempt." (059: 1377); a third type of variant shows the inclusion of modal verbs different from what is registered as canonical as in "how deceptive appearances may be, to be sure!" (028: 879) or "truth must come out." (025: 818). Nevertheless, as mentioned above, proverbs are subject to small variations that do not affect their general idea and use, which is the case for all the items listed above, and therefore, they can only be considered canonical uses.

3.2. *Modified Proverbs*

It is generally accepted in Paremiology that despite their fixedness, “In actual use, especially in the case of intentional speech play, proverbs are quite often manipulated”, as Professor Mieder (2004: 7) categorically states. This implies a “creative alteration of the structure and/or components of a PU in order to adapt it to a particular communicative situation, thus creating specific effects” (Rodríguez Martín 2014: 4), which can be carried out in three ways: through substitution, expansion, reduction, and permutation (Fielder 2007: 95).

Surprisingly, though, the number of consciously manipulated, or modified, in the words of Rodríguez Martín and Fiedler, proverbs in the Holmesian canon is quite underwhelming, with just the following 10 examples found:

- 19) *Extremes meet* (Wilson 1970: 235)
HOLMES: “You may have noticed how extremes call to each other.” (054: 1242)
- 20) *Fields have eyes* (Wilson 1970: 255) / *Walls have ears* (Wilson 1970: 864)
COWPER: “Be quick. The very rocks have ears and the trees eyes.” (001: 80)
- 21) *The darkest **hour** is that before dawn* (Wilson 1970: 168)
CHAPTER TITLE: “5. The darkest hour” (048: 402)
- 22) *One does not wash one’s dirty **linen** in public* (Speake 2008: 340)
JAMES WINDIBANK: “...it is far better not to wash linen of the sort in public.” (005: 479)
- 23) *What **must** be must be* (Wilson 1970: 552)
SIR ROBERT: “Well, if it must be, it must.” (060: 1394)
- 24) *Never too **old** to learn* (Wilson 1970: 563)
JOHN FERRIER: “Guess I’m too old to learn.” (001: 69)
- 25) *As they **sow**, so let them reap* (Wilson 1970: 767)

TEDDY BALDWIN: “You’ve sowed—and by the Lord, I’ll see that you reap!” (048: 377)

26) *All things are possible with God* (Speake 2008: 4)
 JACK STAPLETON: “...all things are possible upon the moor.” (040: 228)

27) *Changing of works is lighting of hearts* (Wilson 1970: 114) / *A change is as good as rest* (Speake 2008: 49)
 HOLMES: “One of our greatest statesmen has said that a change of work is the best rest.” (002: 149)

28) *Virtue is her own reward* (Wilson 1970: 861)
 HOLMES: “As to reward, my profession is its own reward.” (010: 560)
 HOLMES: “The work is its own reward.” (028: 882)

As can be seen in the examples above, various cases of proverbial modification by substitution have been found as in the following examples:

1. “...extremes call to each other.” (054: 1242)
2. “The very rocks have ears and the trees eyes.” (001: 80)
3. “...it is far better not to wash linen of the sort in public.” (005: 479)
4. “Well, if it must be, it must.” (060: 1394)
5. “...all things are possible upon the moor.” (040: 228)
6. “One of our greatest statesmen has said that a change of work is the best rest.” (002: 149)
7. “As to reward, my profession is its own reward.” (010: 560) / “The work is its own reward.” (028: 882)

It must also be noted that sometimes, various types of modification may occur, as in examples number 2 and 5, where apart from a substitution, an expansion can be observed. In relation to pure cases of expansion, just one example has been found:

8. “You’ve sowed—and by the Lord, I’ll see that you reap!” (048: 377)

Similarly, there is only one case of reduction, the one employed as the title for chapter 5 in *The Valley of Fear*:

9. 5. The darkest hour (048: 402)

Finally, even though no case of permutation has been found, a fifth type of common phraseological modification appeared, which according to Fiedler (2007: 96), implies the negation of an affirmative phraseologism or *vice versa*. This can be observed in

10. “Guess I’m too old to learn.” (001: 69)

Consequently, it can be stated that proverbial modification in the adventures of Sherlock Holmes seems to be an oddity and despite being consistent with the precepts of phraseological and paremiological scholarship, it is not as frequently used as canonical proverbs or, as shall be seen in the following section, proverbial allusions.

3.3. Proverbial Allusions

Quite often, proverbs are employed in such a manner that includes various types of modification at the same time, or their combination with other stylistic devices (Fiedler, 2007: 95). In those cases, the term ‘allusion’ would be more accurate. As Mieder (2004: 7) states, “proverbs are often shortened to mere allusions owing to their general recognizability”. However, “proverb allusions run the risk of not being understood, even if they refer to very common proverbs” (Mieder, 2004: 177); furthermore, in the eye of an avid paremiologist, random strings of words may be considered to have a certain proverbial resonance, or they may be considered to present some connection with a well-established proverb. It is for this reason that this last category seems the most conflictive to present and deal with in an unbiased approach. Consequently, out of the 111 allusions to proverbial wisdom found across the different adventures, the following 13 cases seem to be the most straightforward, indubitable, and illustrative for their inclusion here:

29) *Appearances are deceptive* (Speake 2008: 7)

SIR ROBERT: "Appearances are against me." (060: 1394)

HOLMES: "Never trust to general impressions, my boy, but concentrate yourself upon details." (005: 477)

30) *The best defense is a good offense* (Speake 2008: 72)

JONATHAN SMALL: "I believe the best defence I can make is just to hold back nothing, but let all the world know how badly I have myself been served by Major Sholto." (002: 173)

HOLMES: "...there are times when a brutal frontal attack is the best policy." (053: 1314)

31) *The devil is in the details* (Speake 2008: 74)

HOLMES: "It has long been an axiom of mine that the little things are infinitely the most important." (005: 473)

HOLMES: "It is, of course, a trifle, but there is nothing so important as trifles." (008: 533)

32) *Like father like son* (Wilson 1970: 248) / *Like breeds like* (Wilson 1970: 646)

HELEN STONER: "Violence of temper approaching to mania has been hereditary in the men of the family, and in my stepfather's case it had, I believe, been intensified by his long residence in the tropics." (010: 561)

HOLMES: "My dear Watson, you as a medical man are continually gaining light as to the tendencies of a child by the study of the parents. Don't you see that the converse is equally valid. I have frequently gained my first real insight into the character of parents by studying their children. This child's disposition is abnormally cruel, merely for cruelty's sake, and whether he derives this from his smiling father, as I should suspect, or from his mother, it bodes evil for the poor girl who is in their power." (014: 651)

HOLMES: "I have no doubt at all that a family mannerism can be traced in these two specimens of writing." (021: 753)

HOLMES: "But the man had hereditary tendencies of the most diabolical kind. A criminal strain ran in his blood." (026: 832)

HOLMES: "...the reason why I tell you is that I hope frankness may beget frankness." (043: 1214)

33) *One does not wash one's dirty **linen** in public* (Speake 2008: 340)

ROBERT ST. SIMON: “...it is not my custom to discuss my most intimate personal affairs in this public manner.” (012: 611)

GRANT MUNRO: “One does not like to speak of one's domestic affairs to strangers.” (017: 680)

DR LESLIE ARMSTRONG: “Where your calling is more open to criticism is when you pry into the secrets of private individuals, when you rake up family matters which are better hidden, and when you incidentally waste the time of men who are more busy than yourself.” (037: 1037)

34) *Though **modesty** be a virtue, yet bashfulness is a vice* (Wilson 1970: 537)

HOLMES: “I cannot agree with those who rank modesty among the virtues.” (024: 785)

35) *No **news** is good news* (Wilson 1970: 572)

MRS ST. CLAIR: “No good news?” Holmes: “None.” Mrs St. Clair: “No bad?” Holmes: “No.” / “Thank God for that.” (008: 531)

36) *Bad **news** travels fast* (Speake2008: 11)

SCANLAN: Oh, it got about—things do get about for good and for bad in this district (048: 373)

DR LESLIE ARMSTRONG: “...when once such a whisper gets about, it is not long before everyone has heard it.” (037: 1044)

37) ***Self-preservation** is the first law of nature* (Wilson 1970: 712)

ABE SLANEY: “If I shot the man he had his shot at me, and there's no murder in that.” (029: 902)

38) *One scabbed **sheep** will mar a whole flock* (Wilson 1970: 702)

MCGINTY: “There's no room for scabby sheep in our pen.” (048: 399)

39) ***Silence** gives consent* (Wilson 1970: 733)

HOLMES: “You can refuse to answer; but you must be aware that your refusal is in itself an answer, for you would not refuse if you had not something to conceal.” (048: 338)

ALEXANDER HOLDER: “Why is he silent, then, if he is innocent?” (013: 624)

40) *The sun does not shine on both sides of the hedge at once* (Wilson 1970: 786)

HOLMES: “...you may possibly remember that you chaffed me a little, some hours ago, when the sun seemed on your side of the hedge, so you must not grudge me a little pomp and ceremony now.” (028: 881)

41) *Truth/fact is stranger than fiction* (Wilson 1970: 884)

HOLMES: “...life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent.” (005: 469)

WATSON: “The crudest of writers could invent nothing more crude.” (005: 469)

Consequently, it can be stated that there are some widespread proverbs that seem to motivate or justify the utterances of various characters. These proverbial allusions are repeated multiple times by the same character, e.g., “promise is debt” (Wilson 1970: 649), by various characters, e.g. “One does not wash one’s dirty linen in public” (Speake 2008: 340), and even by the same character across various stories, e.g., “like father like son” (Wilson 1970: 248) or “like breeds like” (Wilson 1970: 646). All of this is indicative of a certain tendency by the author to have his characters use proverbs in such a way as to become a distinctive element of their personality that can help the reader form a certain idea in his or her mind of the personality of said character.

4. Conclusions

G. B. Bryan concluded his original paper by stating that “it cannot be maintained that the proverbial detective employed more than a marginally proverbial language” (1996: 51) and in relation to this, the first and foremost conclusion that can be drawn from the present work is that this is indeed not the case and if

anything, the adventures of Sherlock Holmes show an interesting tendency towards the use of proverbs, most frequently through allusions to proverbial pieces of wisdom.

Moreover, out of the 60 items that make up the Holmesian canon, between novels and short stories, only 7 have been found to not contain any kind of proverbial reference, whether as a canonical use, a modification, or an allusion: "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle", "The Adventure of Silver Blaze", "The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual", "The Adventure of the Second Stain", "The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans", "The Adventure of the Creeping Man" and "The Adventure of the Retired Colourman". In relation to this, through successive processes of refinement and sieving, from an original catalog of 250 proverbial uses noted, a final sample of 141 seemingly undisputable proverbial references have been found, the vast majority of which are allusions to proverbs.

To demonstrate the actual proverbiality of *Sherlock Holmes*, 18 proverbs have been found to be used canonically, some of them on multiple occasions. This exceeds Bryan's list by 7 items, notwithstanding all the different types of phraseologisms included in his article, which despite their alleged proverbiality, cannot be considered proper proverbs. Additionally, another 10 cases of proverb modification and 13 of proverbial allusion, none of which are found in Bryan's work despite the repetition of some of them, have been presented in order to provide a better understanding of the complexity and elaborate character of the use of proverbs in the Holmesian canon.

Finally, albeit unsurprisingly, Sherlock Holmes arises as the character most inclined to use proverbs in the series. This, which might have been presupposed, as the entire collection is made up of his biographical account as taken down by Dr Watson, can now be firmly stated and it is relevant inasmuch as it may challenge some of the archetypal representations of the detective, particularly in film, given that, traditionally, the use of proverbs was expected to be avoided by individuals in an attempt to come across as refined due to the consideration of proverbs as tasteless and vulgar (Mieder, 2000). Yet, this fact is just another demonstration of Holmes' ability to "[move] effortlessly through all levels of society" (Boyd et al., 2015: 301), which may be part of

the reason why Conan Doyle's creation became so popular at the time of publication and has remained so over a century later, in spite of all the changes that society has undergone.

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Appendix: The Holmesian Canon (as presented by Bryan) ³

- 001 *A Study in Scarlet* (1887)
- 002 *The Sign of the Four* (1890)
- The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892)
- 003 “A Scandal in Bohemia” (1891)
- 004 “The Red-Headed League” (1891)
- 005 “A Case of Identity” (1891)
- 006 “The Boscombe Valley Mystery” (1891)
- 007 “The Five Orange Pips” (1891)
- 008 “The Man with the Twisted Lip” (1891)
- 009 “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle” (1892)
- 010 “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” (1892)

³ There are some inconsistencies between the editions consulted by Bryan and myself. Numbering follows Bryan’s to facilitate cross-referencing. The differences are indicated in the footnotes below.

- 011 “The Adventure of the Engineer’s Thumb” (1892)
 012 “The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor” (1892)
 013 “The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet” (1892)
 014 “The Adventure of the Copper Beeches” (1892)
The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes (1893-94)
 015 “The Adventure of Silver Blaze” (1892)
 016 “The Adventure of the Cardboard Box”⁴ (1893)
 017 “The Adventure of the Yellow Face” (1893)
 018 “The Adventure of the Stockbroker’s Clerk” (1893)
 019 “The Adventure of the ‘Gloria Scott’” (1893)
 020 “The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual” (1893)
 021 “The Adventure of the Reigate Squires” (1893)
 022 “The Adventure of the Crooked Man” (1893)
 023 “The Adventure of the Resident Patient” (1893)
 024 “The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter” (1893)
 025 “The Adventure of the Naval Treaty” (1893)
 026 “The Final Problem” (1893)
The Return of Sherlock Holmes (1905)
 027 “The Adventure of the Empty House” (1903)
 028 “The Adventure of the Norwood Builder” (1903)
 029 “The Adventure of the Dancing Men” (1903)
 030 “The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist” (1903)
 031 “The Adventure of the Priory School” (1904)
 032 “The Adventure of Black Peter” (1904)
 033 “The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton” (1904)
 034 “The Adventure of the Six Napoleons” (1904)
 035 “The Adventure of the Three Students” (1904)
 036 “The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez” (1904)
 037 “The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter” (1904)
 038 “The Adventure of the Abbey Grange” (1904)
 039 “The Adventure of the Second Stain” (1904)
 040 *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902)

4 Included in *His Last Bow* in the edition referenced in this paper.

His Last Bow (1917)⁵

- 041 “The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge” (1908)
- 042 “The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans” (1908)
- 043 “The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot” (1910)
- 044 “The Adventure of the Red Circle” (1911)
- 045 “The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax” (1911)
- 046 “The Adventure of the Dying Detective” (1913)
- 047 “His Last Bow: The War Service of Sherlock Holmes” (1917)
- 048 *The Valley of Fear* (1914)

The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes (1927)⁶

- 049 “The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone” (1921)
- 050 “The Problem of the Thor Bridge” (1922)
- 051 “The Adventure of the Creeping Man” (1923)
- 052 “The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire” (1924)
- 053 “The Adventure of the Three Garridebs” (1924)
- 054 “The Adventure of the Illustrious Client” (1925)
- 055 “The Adventure of the Three Gables” (1926)
- 056 “The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier” (1926)
- 057 “The Adventure of the Lion’s Mane” (1926)
- 058 “The Adventure of the Retired Colourman” (1926)
- 059 “The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger” (1927)
- 060 “The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place” (1927)

Luis J. Tosina Fernández

Universidad de Extremadura, Spain

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Avenida de las Letras s/n 10003 Cáceres

tosina@unex.es

5 Stories follow a different order in the edition consulted.

6 Stories follow a different order in the edition consulted.



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STEPHAN FRECH

SPRICHWÖRTLICHES IN DER REFORMATIONSSCHRONIK VON JOHANNES SALAT (1498–1561)

Abstract: Die Chronik des Luzerner Gerichtsschreibers Johannes Salat schildert die Anfänge der Schweizer Reformation aus katholischer Sicht. Durch die Weisheit, die Parömien zugesprochen wird, stellt Salat die Vorgänge in einen vorstrukturierten Deutungskontext und bleibt als Chronist unparteiisch.

Die Untersuchung will den Gebrauch der Sprichwörter in ihren konkreten Erscheinungsformen aufzeigen: Meist werden sie als sprichwörtliche Redensarten bzw. Phraseme in den Text eingebunden und müssen deshalb syntaktisch angepasst werden. Um sie auf den Kontext abzustimmen, werden sie inhaltlich modifiziert und oft auch ergänzt.

An Beispielen wie dem *Wolf im Schafspelz* soll dargestellt werden, mit welchen Sprachbildern, in denen Sprichwörter und Phraseme zu erkennen sind, der Chronist vor den Gefahren warnt, die aus Sicht eines Altgläubigen von den Lehren Luthers und Zwinglis ausgehen: Versuchung, Vernichtung und Chaos.

Schlüsselwörter: historische Phraseologie, Sprichwort, Reformation, Johannes Salat

Abstract: The chronicle of the Lucerne court clerk Johannes Salat describes the beginnings of the Swiss Reformation from a Catholic perspective. Through the wisdom attributed to proverbs, Salat places the

events in a pre-structured interpretive context and remains impartial as a chronicler.

The study aims to show the use of proverbs in their concrete manifestations: Mostly they are integrated into the text as proverbial sayings or phrasemes and therefore require syntactic adaptation. In order to adapt them to the context, their content is modified and often supplemented.

Examples such as the *Wolf im Schafspelz* will be used to illustrate the linguistic tropes, in which proverbs and phrasemes can be recognised, with which the chronicler warns of the dangers that emanate from the teachings of Luther and Zwingli from an Old Faith perspective: Temptation, destruction and chaos.

Key words: historical phraseology, proverb, Reformation, Johannes Salat

1. Einleitung

1.1. Die Reformationschronik und ihr Verfasser

Die Reformationschronik von Johannes Salat (1498–1561) ist zwischen 1530 bis 1536 in Luzern verfasst worden (Jörg 1986: III 48–50). Sie beschreibt – als einzige Schweizer Chronik – die Anfänge der Reformation aus katholischer Sicht und umfasst die Jahre von 1517 bis 1534 (zum Folgenden s. Jörg 1986: III 11–64). Die Chronik gilt als Auftragswerk der *Fünf Orte* – gemeint sind die katholischen Orte Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden sowie Zug und Luzern; die Frage nach den Auftraggebern ist allerdings umstritten (ebd.: III 42–48). Zusammenfassend hält Jörg fest: „Zweifellos hat Salat die Chronik aus eigener Initiative in Angriff genommen, aber er wußte, daß ein derartiges Werk von offizieller Seite als wünschenswert erachtet wurde“ (ebd.: III 47).

Für die Schweizer Urkantone sowie für Luzern und Freiburg wurden fünf handschriftliche Kopien erstellt, weitere Exemplare sind wahrscheinlich (ebd.: III 50); erhalten geblieben sind die Handschriften (HS) von Luzern (L), Schwyz (S) und Unterwalden (U). Die wissenschaftliche Edition von Ruth Jörg (1986) beruht auf der Handschrift L, die verschollen war und erst seit 1960 wieder zugänglich ist. Sie wurde ganz von Salat geschrieben und

diente als Vorlage für weitere Kopien; Salat gilt auch als Hauptschreiber der beiden Handschriften S und U (ebd.: III 58–64).

Die Biographien von Baechtold (1876) und Cuoni (1938) beruhen auf Salats Tagebuch sowie Briefen und Gerichtsakten, die es erlauben, seinen Lebenslauf nachzuzeichnen (zum Folgenden s. Jörg 1986: III 12–19). Salat wurde 1498 im luzernischen Sursee geboren. Vom Vater erlernte er das Seiler-Handwerk, zog als Reisläufer und Schreiber ins Feld, erhielt das Luzerner Bürgerrecht und wurde Gerichtsschreiber. Er verfasste literarische Werke, darunter auch Theaterstücke, fiel aber aufgrund seines Lebenswandels und seiner Schulden immer tiefer in Ungnade. Nach einem Betrug 1540 musste er Luzern verlassen und starb 1561 in Freiburg im Üechtland.

Nach seinem Handwerk wurde Salat auch *Seiler / Seyler* genannt, selbst nannte er sich Hans bzw. Johannes Salat, in offiziellen Akten steht *Johannes*. Da sein Name schon zu Lebzeiten Anlass zu spöttischen Bemerkungen gab – Bullinger betitelte seine Streitschrift gegen den Chronisten mit *Salz zum Salat* (1532) –, ist anzunehmen, dass der Chronist gewissermaßen vegetarisch wie die Speise auszusprechen ist (ebd.: III 11). Ähnlich wie Thomas Murner, der sich selbst ironisch als *Murrnarr* bezeichnete, dichtete Salat über seinen Namen:

*Rat an, wie heißt das krütli güt,
Daran man öl und eßig thüt?
So findst den namen an der that,
Der disen spruch gemachet hat.*

Antwort

*Anders ich's nit erkennen kan,
Salat muß es den namen han!*

(Salat 1532; zit. nach Baechtold 1876: 136)

1.2. Edition und Sprichwörter der Reformationschronik

Die Reformationschronik von Hans Salat kann man als Opus magnum der Herausgeberin Ruth Jörg bezeichnen: Die Edition umfasst zwei Textbände von rund 950 Seiten und einen Kommentarband (ca. 270 S.) zu Salats Biographie und Sprache (Stil, Syntax, Rhetorik, Interpunktion, Quellen), mit Stellen-, Sach-,

Orts- und Personenverzeichnissen sowie einem ausführlichen Glossar; im Druck ist die Reformationschronik 1986 erschienen.

Bei der Beschreibung von Salats Sprache greift Jörg die Bildhaftigkeit des Autors auf:

Die Freude am Bildhaften ist überhaupt ein charakteristisches Merkmal von Salats Sprache. Vor allem in den Abschnitten, in denen Salat weitgehend von einer Vorlage unabhängig ist, stößt man häufig auf bildhafte Umschreibungen, auf anschauliche Vergleiche, auf Redensarten, die sich auf Sinnenfälliges beziehen, auf Sprichwörter, auf Anspielungen an volkstümliche Erzählungen. (Jörg 1986: III 26)

Auch wenn man in Chroniken des 16. Jh. noch nicht eine strenge Objektivität im Sinne einer modernen Textsorten-Definition erwarten darf, ist die Frequenz der bildhaft-kommentierenden Wendungen in der Reformationschronik augenfällig, denn Sprichwörter sind eher in literarischen Werken und besonders in den satirischen Texten von Sebastian Brant oder Thomas Murner, in den lehrhaften Fabeln oder auch in humoristischen Texten wie den Schwänken Hans Sachs' zu erwarten (s. Röhrich und Mieder 1977: 33). In seiner Streitschrift *Salz zum Salat* – eine Antwort auf Salats *Tanngrotz* (1531) – fordert der Zürcher Reformator Heinrich Bullinger aber genau diese Objektivität:

Welcher ein historien schriben will, soll unpartyisch schriben, einfaltigklichen und trüwlichen, wie sich die sach zů beiden theilen verloufen hat. Er sol ouch die warheit nit anders färwen oder verstellen, dann wie es die sach an iro selbs vermag. Und so du Salat das gethan oder aber gar nit geschriben hettest, were dir baß angestanden (Bullinger 1532; zit. nach Baechtold 1876: 228)

Trotz dieser Vorwürfe kann Salat als glaubwürdiger und gewissenhafter Chronist angesehen werden (s. Jörg 1977: 12–14; 1981/2: 432). Mit den Sprichwörtern und historischen Phrasemen kritisiert und kommentiert er die Reformation, aber er greift bei der Charakterisierung der Neugläubigen nicht zu Grobianismen, die in anderen Werken Salats durchaus auftauchen: „*Ich dacht, oho, botz leberwurst!*“ (Salat 1532, zit. nach Baechtold 1876: 122), „*ich scheid und seicht vor angst und not*“ (ebd.: 123), „*Du verfluchte, schantliche, eeliche hur*“ (ebd.: 127).

Nach Jörg verfolgt Salat in den Zitaten und Anspielungen die Absicht, „den Gedankengang [des Lesers] in bestimmter Weise zu Ende zu führen, der Chronist kann es mit Andeutungen bewenden lassen“ (Jörg 1986: III 68). Über die Bibel-Zitate hält Jörg fest:

[...] der Chronist selbst spricht kein Urteil aus, er verweist nur auf einen Richterspruch des höchsten Gerichts in gleicher Sache. Dem liegt ein tieferes Denken zugrunde: indem das verwirrende aktuelle Geschehen, in dem der Mensch befangen ist, biblischen Vorgängen, deren Beurteilung festliegt, zugeordnet wird, rückt das Geschehen selbst in eine klare Ordnung, und der Mensch erhält eine sichere Orientierungshilfe. (Jörg 1986: III 68)

Ähnlich wie den lateinischen Bibelstellen kommt nach Jörg auch den deutschen Sprichwörtern ein Autoritätsanspruch zu, der nicht hinterfragt werden muss und in einer Interpretations-Tradition steht: „Im Prinzip werden die deutschen Zitate und Anspielungen gleich eingesetzt wie die lateinischen“ (Jörg 1986: III 67). Ebenso spricht auch Bässler den Sprichwörtern eine „nahezu religiöse Weihe und Autorität“ (Bässler 2003: 41) zu und hält mit Bezug auf Erasmus fest: „Durch ihr [der Sprichwörter] hohes Alter ist ihr Ursprung nahe der göttlichen Uroffenbarung zu verorten, was ihre Weisheit umso unverfälschter erscheinen läßt und ihren Anspruch auf Wahrheit fundiert“ (ebd.).

Die Bibelstellen der Reformationschronik sind im Kommentarband aufgelistet (Jörg 1986: III 221–223) und besprochen (ebd.: III 64–69). Die Sprichwörter und historischen Phraseme sowie Anspielungen auf volkstümliche Erzählungen hat Jörg erfasst, ohne sie bisher selbst auswerten zu können.

2. Forschungslage

Die Chronik von Johannes Salat ist ein bedeutendes Dokument für die Schweizer Reformationsgeschichte. Für sprachwissenschaftliche Untersuchungen kann auf die Arbeiten von Ruth Jörg im Literaturverzeichnis verwiesen werden; das Glossar der Chronik wurde von den beiden Wörterbuch-Projekten *Schweizerisches Idiotikon* (idiotikon.ch) und *Frühneuhochdeutsches Wörterbuch* (fwb-online.de) ausgewertet.

2.1. Fragestellung

In dieser Studie soll der Versuch unternommen werden, ausgewählte Sprichwörter und historische Phraseme der Reformationschronik zu bestimmen und in ihrer Funktion zu beschreiben. Für die parömiologische Zuordnung wird auf die Grundlagenwerke von Wander, *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon* (1867–1880)¹, und Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten* (2001), Bezug genommen sowie auf die großen Sprichwort-Sammlungen des 16. Jh. von Johannes Agricola (1534), Sebastian Franck (1541) und Christian Egenolff (1548) (vgl. Seiler 1922: 112–131; Röhrich und Mieder 1977: 41–51).

- Einerseits soll die konkrete Erscheinungsform der Sprichwörter und Phraseme im Kontext aufgezeigt werden, die meist syntaktisch angepasst werden müssen, wenn sie in den Chronik-Text eingebunden stehen, und modifiziert, um sie im jeweiligen Kontext zu aktualisieren.
- Andererseits soll vorgestellt werden, mit welchen Sprichwörtern und Phrasemen Salat die Erschütterung und Verführung auszudrücken versucht, die die Reformation aus altgläubiger Sicht ausgelöst hat.

2.2. Sprichwort, sprichwörtliche Redensart und Phrasem

Die Definition von Röhrich und Mieder „Sprichwörter sind allgemein bekannte, festgeprägte Sätze, die eine Lebensregel oder Weisheit in prägnanter, kurzer Form ausdrücken.“ (Röhrich und Mieder 1977: 3) liegt auch dieser Studie zugrunde. Die sprichwörtliche Redensart ist ein Begriff, der seit dem 17. Jh. belegt ist (s. Röhrich und Mieder 1977: 15–22; Donalies 2009: 92–99). Nach Komenda-Earle kann man von einer *sprichwörtlichen Redensart* sprechen, wenn eine idiomatische Bedeutung vorliegt:

Das unterscheidende Merkmal zwischen der allgemeinen Redensart / feststehenden Redensart und der sprichwörtlichen Redensart bildet somit nicht die Metaphorizität, sondern die idiomatische Bedeutung, die mit der synchronen Undurchsichtigkeit gleichge-

¹ Zum Nachschlagen in den digitalisierten Wörterbüchern von Wander und Adelung (wörterbuchnetz.de) wird in den Belegen das jeweilige Lemma angegeben.

setzt wird und in eine kulturelle Komponente umgewandelt wird. (Komenda-Earle 2015: 43)

Aus phraseologischer Sicht ist der Begriff *sprichwörtliche Redensart* unbefriedigend, Burger zählt sie zu den Phrasemen (Burger 2012a: 50). Diese Studie unterscheidet zwischen *Sprichwort* im Sinne der Definition von Röhrich / Mieder und dem *Phrasem*, in dem Komponenten eines Sprichworts im jeweiligen Kontext aktualisiert werden.

Zu berücksichtigen gilt es aber auch, wie „weit die Schere zwischen einem modernen Sprichwortverständnis und einem des 16. Jahrhunderts auseinanderklafft“ (Bässler 2003: 26), so dass „ein frühneuzeitliches offenes, Spruchgut absorbierendes Sprichwortverständnis gegen ein modern-kompaktes“ steht (ebd.: 27).

3. Sprichwörter in der Reformationschronik

3.1. Sprichwörter und Phraseme im Kontext

Nach Seiler haben Dichter „volksläufige Sprichwörter umgearbeitet und veredelt in ihre Sprüche aufgenommen“ (Seiler 1922: 8). Johannes Salat war Dichter, aber auch Gerichtsschreiber und ein gewissenhafter Chronist. Er benutzte Sprichwörter und Phraseme nicht, um die Chronik stilistisch zu *veredeln*, nicht um humoristisch oder lehrhaft moralisierend auf volksläufige Lebensweisheiten hinzuweisen, menschliche Eitelkeiten und Schwächen bloßzulegen, sondern er kommentierte gezielt Personen und Vorgänge, von denen die Reformationschronik handelt. Dieser Sprichwort-Gebrauch und die Funktion (vgl. Mieder 1972b: 141) unterscheidet die Reformationschronik von den Werken Brants oder Murners, von volksnahen Erzählungen oder der didaktisch-moralischen Predigt-Literatur. Dieser Sprichwort-Gebrauch rechtfertigt aber auch eine weitere Studie über Sprichwörter im Humanismus (s. dazu Burger 2022: 9).

Eigentliche Sprichwörter sind in der Reformationschronik selten, meist liegen Sprichwort-Komponenten als Phraseme vor: „Die Grenzen zwischen Sprichwort und sprichwörtlicher Redensart werden in dem Augenblick fließend, wo Sprichwörter bzw. Redensarten in einen dichterischen Text eingeflochten wer-

den“ (Röhrich und Mieder 1977: 17). Dieser Befund kann auf den Sprichwortgebrauch in Salats Chronik übertragen werden.

3.2. *Variation und Modifikation*

Sprichwörter und Phraseme in historischen Texten zu erkennen kann auch dann schwierig sein, wenn ein noch heute bekanntes Sprichwort die Grundlage bildet. Die nicht normierte Sprache bzw. Schreibweise und besonders dialektale Formen, regionale Synonyme im Wortschatz sowie die syntaktische Einbindung in den Text können das Phrasem neben Variation und Modifikation zusätzlich verschleiern. Als lexikalische Variante kann *Schafkleidung* neben *Schafpelz* erklärt und auf die Übersetzung Luthers zurückgeführt werden (s.u.). Als Modifikationen gelten dagegen abweichende Formulierungen, die vom Autor intendiert sind. Nach Burger ist aber „nicht immer klar auszumachen, ob eine Modifikation vorliegt, weil es kaum möglich ist, die übliche Form und Bedeutung des Phrasems für die damalige Zeit festzumachen“ (Burger 2022: 13).

Um Nuancen herauszuarbeiten, modifiziert Salat die Phraseme oft, was am Beispiel einer Randglosse Salats aufgezeigt werden kann:

(1) *Wirt mach dürten* (Salat 1986: II 572)

Bei Franck lautet das Sprichwort (1a) „*Die zech vor der yrthen machen / oder on den wirt rechnen*“ (Franck 1541: 3 v). Wie in dem heute bekannten Phrasem *die Rechnung / Zeche (nicht) ohne den Wirt machen* weist auch Franck das Sprichwort in Varianten aus.

Offensichtlich ist *dürten* als ‘die Ürte’ zu verstehen, denn Salat verbindet den Artikel proklitisch mit dem Substantiv, wie es heute im Alemannischen noch üblich ist: *dhasen* ‘die Hasen’ (Salat 1986: I 195), *dmüsfallen* ‘die Mäusefallen’ (Salat 1986: I 162). Das Idiotikon (1881: I 488) erklärt den Begriff *Ürte* als Anteil einer Trink- und Essgesellschaft, den der einzelne Teilnehmer zu bezahlen hat (vgl. auch Jörg 1986: III 209; Spreng 2021: VII 3953f.). In der hier vorliegenden Form als Randglosse ohne syntaktische Einbindung muss die Wendung als Imperativ und indirekt als Aufforderung an den Leser verstanden werden.

Salat kommentiert an dieser Stelle, dass die katholischen Orte ihre Freiheit in den Spannungen von 1529 verteidigen werden, dass also die Neugläubigen die *Rechnung ohne den Wirt* – die *Altgläubigen* – gemacht haben.

Das Sprichwort erscheint auch in der Form (1b) „*jetz schweyg der wirt so die ürten uf wot nen*“ (Salat 1986: II 742). Das Phrasem ist auf Zwingli gemünzt, der 1531 im Kappeler Krieg gefallen war und nichts mehr sagen konnte: *Nun schwieg der Wirt, der die Rechnung aufnehmen wollte* (i.S.v. dass Zwinglis *Rechnung nicht aufgegangen war*). Dieses Phrasem wird von Salat vorbereitet und mit einem Hinweis auf Zwinglis *fäler* (‘Fehler’; Salat 1986: II 741) vorweggenommen, der sich in politische Ränke-spiele verstrickt hatte, die auch in Zürich an den Tag gekommen waren, so dass (1c) „*Zwingli (als eyn gschyber / weltwyser [‘schlauer und weltgewandter Mann’]) sin rechnung macht*“ (ebd.) und einen Krieg gegen die altgläubigen Orte provozierte.

Komplexer ist der folgende Beleg, in dem beschrieben wird, wie die Zürcher vom besetzten Kloster Muri abziehen, da die Luzerner im Anmarsch sind:

(1d) *Erhübend sy [die Zürcher] sich z^o Mure schnäll / unabgerechnet mit herren appt als irem wirt / dem ouch nit vil um sin ürten gabend* (Salat 1986: II 564)

Eine literale Lesart ist hier denkbar, i.S.v. dass die Zürcher abgezogen sind, ohne für die Verpflegung aufzukommen, aber da zuvor der Abt von Muri als standhafter Vertreter des alten Glaubens beschrieben wurde, ist eine Allusion auf das Sprichwort wahrscheinlich. Demnach haben die Zürcher die Rechnung ohne den standhaften Abt – ihren Wirt – gemacht und mussten vor den Luzernern zurückweichen. Die Komponenten *unabgerechnet*, *Wirt* und *Urte* sind hier auf zwei Aussagen aufgeteilt, die nahelegen, dass die Zürcher plündernd abgezogen sind. In dieser Auslegung vermischen sich die wörtliche und übertragene Lesart.

Mit dem Sprichwort – Franck führt es als Entsprechung zu *Encomia canere ante uictoriam* (Franck 1541: 3 v) an – beschreibt Salat dreimal eine Situation, in der die Reformierten sich verrechnet und den Widerstand der Katholiken unterschätzt haben. Realisiert wird das Sprichwort durch seine Phrasem-

Komponenten, die Salat syntaktisch und stilistisch variiert und an den Kontext angepasst modifiziert. So kann Salat die historischen Ereignisse kommentieren, ohne den eigentlichen chronikalischen Erzähl-Text zu verfälschen.

4. *Sprachbilder in der Reformationschronik*

4.1. *Verkehrte Welt*

Diese Kommentar-Funktion wird besonders in den Phrasemen deutlich, die die sog. verkehrte Welt abbilden (vgl. dazu Röhrich und Mieder 1977: 96–98; Seiler 1922: 266):

(2) *Da wotend dhasen den jeger braaten* (Salat 1986: I 195)

Das Hasen-Phrasem bezieht sich auf die Zürcher Forderung, die Bilder aus den Kirchen zu verbannen und die Messe abzuschaffen; das Phrasem erscheint ein zweites Mal 1525 im selben Kontext in den Handschriften L, U als Randglosse (2a) „*Da wend dhasen den jeger braaten*“ (ebd.: I 295).

Im *Struwweltpeter* (1844) von Heinrich Hoffmann findet sich die Bildergeschichte vom *Wilden Jäger*, dem ein Hase das Gewehr entwendet, um auf ihn zu schießen. Das zugrundeliegende, scheinbar drollige Bild zeigt eine satirisch verzerrte Szene der *verkehrten Welt*, in der die Weltordnung auf den Kopf gestellt wird (zum *gewalttätigen Hasen* s. Graf 2020; Pfrunder 1990: 409, 413). Isoliert und ohne Kontext bleiben solche Bilder harmlose Geschichten wie *Das Diethmarsische Lügenmärchen* der Brüder Grimm (2003: 597; KHM 159) oder das im Volksmund tradierte Scherz-Gedicht *Dunkel war's, der Mond schien helle*. In derselben Funktion ist auch das seit ca. 1970 aufgekommene Phrasem *die eierlegende Wollmilchsau* zu sehen: eine Wunschvorstellung, die es nicht gibt (vgl. Krause [o.J.]).

Im Kontext der Reformation hat das Hasen-Phrasem aber eine klare Aussage: Für Salat ist die Welt aus den Fugen geraten.

Salats Phrasem ist seit dem Mittelalter in verschiedenen Varianten überliefert: (2b) „*sô jaget unbilde mit hasen eberswîn*“ (Reinmar dem Alten zugeschrieben; wohl Mitte 13. Jh.; zit. nach Brunner 2014: 16), und Michel Beheim (15. Jh.) dichtet: (2c)

„*der has den jegermaister veht*“ (ebd.: 72); das Phrasem ist auch bei Fischarts *Flöhaz* und in Hans Sachs' Schwank (2d) *Die hasen jagen und praten den jeger* belegt (s. Bolte 1907: 425–428; Schüppert 1992).

Unter dem Lemma 'Jäger' sind bei Wander weitere Beispiele für die Komponenten *Hase* / *Jäger* belegt: (2e) „68. *Ueber einen todten Jäger springt der Hase.*“, (2f) „75. *Wenn sich der Jeger für dem Hasen fürchtet, so ist alles verloren.*“, (2g) „82. *Wenn der Jäger vorm Hasen flieht und der Blinde die Fuchsspur sieht.*“ (Wander 1870: II 983).

Bei Franck führt der Hase als Fähnrich eine militärische Abteilung an: (2h) „*Dem hasen wird das fendlin beuolhen.*“ (Franck 1541, 2 r [Aii r]), was in einem eigenartigen Spannungsverhältnis zum *Hasenpanier* steht, das dieselben Komponenten *Hase* und *Fähnlein/Banner* enthält und ebenfalls seit dem 16. Jh. belegt ist (vgl. Röhrich 2001: II 669). Dieselbe Diskrepanz zwischen der verkehrten und der normalen Welt ist auch in den folgenden Hasen-Phrasemen erkennbar: (2i) „178. *Dem Hasen das Fähnlein anvertrauen.*“ und (2k) „10. *Dem Hasen muss man nicht das Fähnlein anvertrauen.*“, vgl. auch Nr. 118, 179 (Wander 1870: II 367–375).

In Francks Sprichwörtersammlung von 1541 werden im Absatz „*ABSVRDA. PRAEPOSTERA. Von vnfüglichen vngereimpten verkerten dingen.*“ (Franck 1541: [1v] A v) weitere Sprichwörter der verkehrten Welt aufgezählt, die aus der Antike ins Deutsche übertragen wurden. Darunter findet sich auch (3) „*Der Saw das berlin fürgeworffen*“ (ebd.: 2r [Aii r]): Das Phrasem *Perlen vor die Säue werfen* ist biblischen Ursprungs (Mt. 7.6) und wurde durch Luthers Bibelübersetzung in der heutigen Form allgemein bekannt (vgl. Röhrich 2001: IV 1148). In der Reformationschronik erscheint es zweimal und bezieht sich auf die Zürcher Disputation von 1523. Das Phrasem steht in der Chronik jeweils als Randglosse, die in den Handschriften voneinander abweichen, so dass drei Varianten nebeneinander stehen:

(3a) *Da sind die b̄arlj w̄st für die schwyn geschütt* (Salat 1986: I 158; HS L, U)

(3b) *Da hand sj nit die b̄arlj für dye schwyn gworffen* (Salat 1986: I 158; HS S)

(3c) *Da müstend aber die b̄arlj f̄urd schwyn* (Salat 1986: I 193; HS L, U)

Ebenfalls seit dem Mittelalter belegt ist das Bild aus der verkehrten Welt, dass man den (4) *Wagen vor die Pferde* spannt; das Sprichwort ist auch im Russischen bekannt: (4a) *запрягать / ставить телегу впереди лошади* ('den Karren vor das Pferd stellen / einspannen').

Die relevanten Komponenten *Zugtier* und *gezogenes Gefährt* können variieren: Bei Reinmar heißt es: (4b) „*wirt danne der wagen für diu rinder gēnde*“ (zit. nach Brunner 2014: 16), und bei Hans Sachs steht: (4c) „*vier wegen spant er an ein pfert*“ (ebd.: 76). Sebastian Franck legt das Sprichwort aus und erklärt es mit dem heute noch bekannten *Das Pferd beim Schwanz / von hinten aufzäumen*: (4d) „*Currus bouem trahit. Den wagen für den züg spannen. Wir sprechen: Das Roßlin beym hindern auffzäumen / wann ein ding verkert zügehēt / das der wag die roß sol ziehen.*“ (1541: 2r [Aii r]); eine weitere lateinische Variante findet sich in den *Carmina Burana* (4e) „*bos [...] | sequitur carpentum*“ (*Carmina Burana* 2011: 88; vgl. auch Seiler 1922: 266). Mit diesem Bild warnt Salat vor der neuen Lehre:

(4g) *aber keyne [Prophezeiung] wyyst / das zur letzten zytt erst das recht evangely / und gloub harfür kon / das man dann an nemmen solle / alls die nüwen ungloubens junckern / den karren für die roß setzend* (Salat 1986: I 40).

Wer den Neugläubigen folgt, tut demnach etwas Unsinniges. – Im gleichen Kontext steht auch (5) „*tünd also das hemd über dhen rock an*“ (Salat 1986: I 49; vgl. Wander 1870: II 500–502; Lemma 'Hemd': Nr. 64, 86 und 26).

4.2. *Verführung durch die falschen Propheten*

Um vor den Gefahren zu warnen, die von den reformatorischen Kräften ausgehen, braucht Salat besonders zwei Phraseme: (6) *den Wolf im Schafspelz* und (7) *die Schlange, die verborgen im Gebüsch lauert*. Diese Phraseme enthalten im Kern die Aussage, dass sich jemand verkleidet bzw. im Hinterhalt liegt und Böses im Schilde führt.

Diesem Konzept fügt Salat die Figur des (8) *Schalks* hinzu, der sich ebenfalls verkleidet, den man aber an seinen Augen und Ohren erkennen kann (vgl. Jörg 1986: III 26, 39).

Obwohl sich die drei Phraseme in ihrer Tiefensemantik überschneiden, kann man dennoch Nuancen herauslesen: Das Wolf-Phrasem betont die *Verkleidung*, die Täuschungsabsicht. Die *Schlange* ist die todbringende *Verführerin im Paradies*, und der *Schalk* kann als Metapher dafür gelesen werden, dass die Ränke durchschaubar sind. Die drei Sprachbilder verbindet Salat kunstvoll zu einer Sprichwörterreihe (s. Mieder 1972a: 69) bzw. zu einer Verkettung (Burger 2022: 81–85; 212).

4.2.1. Der Wolf im Schafspelz

Das Phrasem *ein Wolf im Schafspelz* ist in der Reformationschronik viermal belegt. Auf Martin Luther bezogen schreibt Salat: (6a) „[Luther] Überzog sin **zuckenden wollff** gar und wol / mit eyner **schafhut**“ (Salat 1986: I 68). Mit der Autorität der Bibel klagt Salat die Reformatoren als falsche Propheten an, denn das Phrasem geht zurück auf Mt. 7.15 (vgl. Röhrich 2001: V 1740f.). Es lautet in der Übersetzung Luthers von 1545: (6b) „*SEhet euch fur / fur den falschen Propheten / die in Schafskleidern zu euch komen / Inwendig aber sind sie reissende Wolfe*“ (Luther 1989: 28).

Die Charakterisierung Luthers als falschen Propheten bereitet Salat schon im ersten Beleg sorgfältig in vier Schritten vor: Zunächst wirft er Luther vor, dass er [a] sich unter einem *Deckmantel* versteckt habe und [b] seinen Gegnern fachkundig das *Wasser abgrabe*, [c] hinterlistig als *teuflischer Fuchs* sich einen frommen Anschein gebe und [d] sich im *Schafspelz* präsentiere. Salat beginnt das Porträt mit der griffigen Metapher *Deckmantel* und schließt den Absatz mit dem bekräftigenden Schafspelz-Phrasem ab, was ähnlich schon bei Zwinglis *Fehler* und dem *Urte*-Phrasem zu beobachten war (s.o.).

(6c) [a] *hatt sich Lutrer jn disen **teckmantel** gewunden / synem anfang damit gar groß hillff und zúgang funden / und gemacht / und jnsunders by den gelerten / und aller gelerten • [b] Hatt hierin tan alls da jst rechter bruch und art / so man ein **wasser ab graben wil** / faat man nit an by dem*

*rechten furt und wasser / sunder ferr darvon und an dem end / da man das wasser vermeint hin zů bringen / • [c] Also der **tüfelsch fuchs**² stalt sich ferr von der sach / und furt / sins wüttenden fürnemens / und fieng zů usserst an mit eynem subern fromen schin / und gstattl • [d] **Überzog sin zuckenden wolff gar und wol / mit eyner schafhut** / gieng süberlich dahar / und rürt die mißbrüch an • (Salat 1986: I 68)*

In den folgenden Belegen modifiziert Salat das Wolf-Phrasem und beschreibt die Entwicklung Luthers, bis zur letzten Nennung (6g), worin Salat die Metapher *Deckmantel* nochmals aufgreift.

(6d) *und namm erstlich zů handen **ein schafcleidung über sin ryssenden wolff** / tratt har jn siner schwarzen augustiner kutt (Salat 1986: I 77)*

(6e) *und den **wolfskopf zů der schafhut us stracktt** / die schlang under dem krut harfür spöützet (Salat 1986: I 79)*

(6f) *Erfräfnet er / **schut die schafhut** / ja ouch die augustiner kutt mit hin gar von jmm / und stalt dar ein blossen wolff (Salat 1986: I 81)*

(6g) *namlich und erstlich / underm schin / und **teckmantell eins güten schafs** (Salat 1986: I 142)*

In (6d) zieht Salat eine Parallele zwischen dem *Schafspelz* und der schwarzen Kutte der Augustiner; *Schafskleider* und *reißen-der (Wolf)* können als lexikalische Varianten erklärt werden, in denen der Einfluss (6b) der Bibel-Übersetzung Luthers erkennbar wird.

In (6e) reiht Salat den Wolf unmittelbar an die *Schlange*, die er zuvor schon im Kontext (6d) genannt hat, und verbindet die beiden Phraseme mit dem Schalk, den man erkennen kann, weil er aus seinem Balg herausbricht (s.u.).

In (6f) – nach dem Thesenanschlag, dem Reichstag und der Bibelübersetzung – konnte Luther seine Kutte ablegen, so dass sein wahres Gesicht zum Vorschein kam: ein unverhüllter Wolf.

² Zum *Fuchs* als Inkarnation Satans s. Röhrich (2001: II 481), zur Austauschbarkeit von *Fuchs* und *Wolf* ebd.: 483.

In (6g) fasst Salat das Vorgehen Luthers zusammen, anstelle des eigentlichen Wolf-Phrasems schreibt der Chronist, dass Luther sich als *Deckmantel* den *Anschein eines guten Schafes* gegeben habe; das Wolf-Phrasem klingt hier nur noch metonymisch an.

Dieselbe Bibelstelle zieht auch Urbanus Rhegius in seiner Schrift *Wie man die falschen Propheten erkennen ia greiffen mag* (1539) bei, aber aus neugläubiger Sicht. Das Titelblatt ziert eine Darstellung, auf der zwei Wölfe ein Schaf zerreißen, die Wölfe stecken aber nicht in einem Schafspelz, sondern sind als *Canonicus* und *Monachus* angeschrieben und tragen die entsprechende Kleidung (vgl. Röhrich 2001: V 1741).

4.2.2. Die Schlange im Kraut

In den bei Wander (1876: IV 222–225; Lemma ‘Schlange’: Nr. 13, 21, 83; 1873: III 7125; Lemma ‘Rose’: Nr. 43) und Röhrich (2001: IV 1358) verzeichneten Varianten kann *Kraut* durch *Blumen*, *Rose*, *Gras* variiert werden, mit Begriffen, die eine vordergründige Harmlosigkeit ausdrücken und damit die Heimtücke der Schlange hervorheben.

Mit insgesamt fünf Belegen ist das Phrasem (7) vergleichbar oft wie der *Wolf im Schafspelz* belegt, aber in jeder Variante ergänzt Salat das Phrasem um eine Nuance, die auf den Kontext abgestimmt ist: Die Schlange ist zwar verborgen, aber ihre Anwesenheit kann wahrgenommen werden. Die Belege (7a) und (7b) beziehen sich auf Luther, (7c, d, f) verteilen sich über die ganze Chronik.

(7a) *und doch allweg die schlangen verborgen underm krut / nit gar sechen / doch eins teils mercken lies* (Salat 1986: I 77)

(7b) *die schlang under dem krut harfür spöützet* (Salat 1986: I 79)

(7c) *By dem sich ouch der schlang fūgtt under das krut* (Salat 1986: I 332)

(7d) *Es lag aber ein schlang under disem krut / dann der anschlag was gemacht die v ortt der vogty Baden ze entsetzen* (Salat 1986: II 543)

(7e) *da man sy [die 5 Orte] ouch mit gnaden gantz wol bedacht / verzigen / und wider uf gnan / **lag doch die schlang stätz / under dem krut** / pfysen / und kychen* (Salat 1986: II 858)

Die Schlange ist (7a) zwar verborgen bzw. *kaum zu sehen*, aber doch bemerkbar, und (7b) sie *spuckt [ihr Gift] hervor*. Sie (7c) *passt sich an* („*sich [...]* fügt“) steht im Kontext der Verwirrung, die 1523 auch die alten Orte erfasst hatte. In (7d) belegen sogar die Fakten, ein Anschlag gegen die fünf Orte, die Anwesenheit einer Schlange; am Artikel – „*ein schlang*“ statt *die* –, ist ablesbar, wie geschmeidig Salat das Phrasem auf den Kontext abstimmt. Und die Schlange ist (7e) *immer* („*stätz*“) da und man kann sie „*pfysen / und kychen*“ (‘zwischen und keuchen’) hören.

4.2.3. Der Schalk

Zu den beiden biblischen Versuchern *Schlange* und *Wolf* tritt der (8) *Schalk* hinzu. Die moderne Bedeutung ‘lustige Person, Spötter’ bildet sich erst im 18. Jh. heraus; ursprünglich bezeichnete der Begriff einen ‘Knecht’ bzw. ‘Diener’. Seit dem Mhd. wird *Schalk* als ‘hinterlistiger Mensch; Schurke’ gebraucht: Nach Adelung ist der Schalk eine „*Person, welche die Fertigkeit besitzt, andern bey einem unschuldig scheinenden Verhalten zu schaden*“ (Adelung, Lemma ‘Schalk’; zit. nach wörterbuchnetz.de, abgerufen am 29. Januar 2023; vgl. auch Idiotikon 1920: VIII 673ff.). Auch die Parömien in Wander sprechen eine klare Sprache: (8a) „*21. Ein schalck erzeigt an allen orten sein bossheit mit wercken oder worten.*“, (8b) „*22. Ein Schalck gehöret an den Galgen.*“ (Wander 1876: IV 80; Lemma ‘Schalk’). Im Zusammenhang mit Luther und Zwingli kann man *Schalk* also als Metapher für einen ‘heimlichen Diener des Bösen’ lesen.

Eine eindeutige Zuordnung zu einem Sprichwort ist in der Reformationschronik kaum möglich, aber erkennbar bleiben die entscheidenden Sprichwort-Komponenten: Dass sich der Schalk – wie der Wolf und die Schlange – *versteckt*, und zwar *kriechend* in einem *Balg* (‘Tierfell’, i.S.v. *die ganze Tierhaut*); vgl. Wander: Lemma ‘Schalk’: (8c) „*113. Wann kroch ein Schalck in Zobelsbalg, wer er doch darinn ein schalck.*“; (8d) „*80. Jeder Schalk hat seinen Balg.*“; (8e) „*43. Ein Schalk kann sich leicht verbergen.*“ (Wander 1876: IV 79–86). Doch unter seiner Verkleidung

bleibt er, was er ist, so dass man ihn durchschauen kann: (8f) „4. *Den Schalck kan niemand bergen, den man einem in den Augen ansihet.*“ (8g) „168. *Es sihet jhm der Schalck zum Augen heraus.*“ (ebd.).

Diese Komponenten *Verkleidung* und *erkennen/durchschauen* lassen sich auch in der Reformationschronik aufzeigen. Die ersten Belege sind auf Luther gemünzt, dem Salat vorhält, dass Luther sich anfänglich noch zurückhaltend verstellt habe: Das Phrasem (8h) „*Hiellt den schalk so heimlich | das jnn niemand spüren kond*“ (Salat 1986: I 68) braucht Salat zusammen mit dem *Wolf im Schafspelz* und erinnert an Goethes Faust: (8i) „*Den Teufel spürt das Völkchen nie, / Und wenn er sie bey dem Kragen hätte*“ (Faust I, Auerbachs Keller; vgl. Wander 1876: IV 1128; Lemma ‘Teufel’: Nr. 1649). In dieser Verkleidung findet Luther *offene Türen* für seine Kirchenkritik: (8k) „*Da was jmm [Luther] nun schon die tür uftan / und der jngang gemacht zu dem bapst siner heylickeyt stül [...] stünd doch noch suber daran / verbarg den schalk*“ (Salat 1986: I 78). Der dritte Beleg bezieht sich auf Zwingli, der Leutpriester in Zürich geworden war und inzwischen begonnen hatte, unverhohlen für den neuen Glauben einzutreten:

(8l) *Das jar nun ouch hartzu^o ruckt / und Zwingli anfieng / sim verborgnen schalk die oren sechen lan* (Salat 1986: I 124)

Das Ohren-Motiv ist seit der Antike durch Midas bekannt (vgl. Röhrich 2001: IV 1113f.), aber auch aus dem Märchen, in dem Rotkäppchen zum Wolf sagt: „*Ei, Großmutter, was hast du für große Ohren!*“ (Grimm 2007: 135; KHM 26). Die Ohren als Erkennungsmerkmal für nicht-menschliche Wesenszüge sind bei Wander belegt: (8m) „*1. An den Ohren erkennt man den Esel.*“; (8n) „*2. An den Ohren erkennt man die halben, am Schreien die Stocknarren.*“ (Wander 1873: III 1124; Lemma ‘Ohr’). Wer die *Tirggeli* liebt – ein Zürcher weihnachtliches Honig-Gebäck –, kennt auch den Spruch *Suchst du einen Toren | fass dich bei den Ohren*.

5. *Schlusswort*

In seiner Reformationschronik greift Johannes Salat oft auf Sprichwörter und Phraseme zurück, die sich in den Sprichwortsammlungen und literarischen Schriften des Humanismus be-

legen lassen und in den Referenzwerken von Wander und Röhrich erfasst und erklärt sind.

Die Sprichwörter werden i.d.R. nicht in einer Vollform zitiert, sondern sie erscheinen verkürzt als Phraseme. Diese freie Behandlung erlaubte es dem Chronisten, sie syntaktisch und inhaltlich zu modifizieren, sie bei Bedarf zu erweitern und mit dem Chronik-Text zu verknüpfen.

Indem Salat solche Phraseme in die Chronik einfügt, stellte er die Reformation und Reformatoren in einen Kontext bzw. Interpretations-Zusammenhang, der bereits vorstrukturiert war.

Im Zusammenwirken bilden die Phraseme einen Subtext, der den chronikalen Text aus katholischer Sicht kommentiert. Dies zeigt besonders die Verkettung vom *Wolf im Schafspelz*, der *Schlange im Kraut* und dem *Schalk*, der sich trotz seiner Verkleidung erkennen lässt, und in den *Bildern einer verkehrten Welt*, mit denen der Chronist ausdrücken kann, dass die Welt durch die Reformation aus den Fugen geraten ist.

Danksagung

Im Sommer 2020 hat Ruth Jörg mir ihre Sammlung von Sprichwörtern in der Salat-Chronik anvertraut. Mit diesem Aufsatz möchte ich Ruth für diese *Edelsteine* danken.

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Stephan Frech
Kantonsschule Rychenberg Winterthur / Zürich
Rychenbergstr.110
CH-8400 Winterthur
stephan.frech@krw.ch

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MUNEJAH KHAN

THE DISCOURSE OF POWER/THE POWER OF DISCOURSE: ANALYSING FOLKLORE THROUGH SELECT KASHMIRI PROVERBS

Abstract: The Valley of Kashmir has rich Folklore, and folk literature is integral to Kashmiri Culture. Folkloristics maintains that the message conveyed through folklore may appear simple but is intertwined with complexities. This paper attempts to study the folklore of Kashmir through an analysis of twenty-eight Kashmiri proverbs to uncover the complex/straightforward message transmitted through proverbs. The endeavour is to highlight how folklore is informed by Power relations and how the concept of Power interlaces the content, milieu, and purpose of folklore. Michel Foucault traces the role of discourse underlying the seemingly neutral context of speech, representation, and knowledge.

Along with Foucault's concept of discourse, insights from the feminist theory have also been employed to expose the discourse of patriarchy, religion, and authority in Kashmiri folk literature. The study investigates the power structure inherent in the proverbs of Kashmir and attempts to unravel how discourse constructs unequal power relations. The attempt is to illustrate how power abuse is enacted, reproduced, and legitimised.

Keywords: Kashmir, folklore, proverbs, discourse, gender, religion, feudalism

1. Introduction

In the contemporary scenario, critical attention has shifted from Canonical works to the study of folk and contemporary indigenous literature. Folkloristics as a discipline has contributed to revisiting the folklore of varied cultures. The erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir was divided into three prominent geographical regions, the Valley of Kashmir, the Plains of Jammu, and the Plateau of Ladakh. The geographical diversity of these three regions blessed the State with equally diverse folklore.

1.1. Folklore Collections of Kashmir and the Place of Folklore in Kashmiri Society

The Valley of Kashmir has a vibrant folklore. Folklore occupies a significant place in Kashmiri society; proverbial sayings and folktales are part of the collective inheritance of all community members. Folklore envelops all facets of human life worldwide, which also holds for Kashmir. Not only does folklore “refer to a particular psycho-social impulse of the given human society; instead, carries in its fold the entire make-up of society” (Fayaz 2008: 10). Any attempt to research the socio-cultural traits of a people would require taking into account the group behaviour, rituals and practices. All these dimensions are exemplified in folklore, and “social history abounds in references about legendary tales, operational in a particular linguistic area or cultural region” (Fayaz 2008:13). The folktales include historical truths in some form or the other. Deliberating on the interdisciplinary nature of folklore Richard Dorson writes that a “cluster of skills involves the folklorist with other disciplines. He needs sufficient familiarity with literature to investigate *literary use of folklore*, with anthropology to explore the *relationship of folklore to culture*, and with history to comprehend the *historical validity of oral tradition*” (1972: 7).

Kashmiri society abounds with folklore, and there are innumerable examples that show how daily life activities are part of folklore and how folklore influences everyday life. Archer Taylor writes, “Folklore is the material handed [down by one generation to another], either by word of mouth or by custom and practice. It may be folk songs, folk tales, riddles, proverbs

or other materials preserved in words..." (1965: 34). Kashmiri folklore also is a repository of tales, proverbs, anecdotes, ballads, songs, rituals, etc.

The earliest Kashmiri folk literature compilations available were by amateurs. The collections were made either by British officials or by European missionaries "in the course of their administrative and professional duties for the government and religious missions" (Islam 1970: 29). These officers and missionaries were generally drawn towards folklore because they wanted to acquaint themselves with the language and culture of the natives.

Mazharul Islam notes that the work of Hinton Knowles is notable of all the folklore collections by missionaries. Knowles believed that the rich folklore available in Kashmir could not be "surpassed in fertility by any other country in the world" (qtd. in Islam 1970: 57). Knowles's collection of the Kashmiri proverbs is a repository of almost all the proverbs used by the people and additionally "it contains ninety-one fables, anecdotes and legends illustrating proverbs" (Islam 1970:58). Knowles purpose of collecting proverbs was to get an idea of the actual speech expressions used by people. He learnt the language and, as a missionary, had access to people from all walks of life.

Notable works in the field of Kashmiri folklore compilation are J. Hinton Knowles' *A Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings* (1885), J. Hinton Knowles' *Folk Tales of Kashmir* (1888), Sir Auriel Stein's *Hatim's Tales: Kashmiri Stories and Songs* (1923), Omkar N Koul's *A Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs* first published in 1992, S.L. Sadhu's *Folk Tales from Kashmir* (2002) and the latest addition is Oniza Drabu's *The Legend of Himal and Nagrai* (2019).

2. Background of the Study

In Kashmir, feudalism, religious, and patriarchal discourse pervades the masses' life. This study attempts to understand the implications of the amalgamation of these discourses as exemplified in folklore. Critics note that there are instances where folklore has given voice to the oppressed. Alan Dundes writes that for the theorists of Marxism, "folklore is the weapon of class protest. It cannot be denied that some folklore does ex-

press protest—numerous folksongs, ...articulate discontent with social ills, racism, and other issues. But there is also right-wing folklore expressing the ideology of groups of a conservative political philosophy” (1978: 8). This paper endeavours to answer the following questions by a threadbare analysis of the Kashmiri proverbs.

- Is Folk Literature imaginative, or does reality colour it?
- Is the language of proverbs neutral, or are there biases involved?
- Do proverbs act as a tool for socialisation, propagating the acceptable/unacceptable categories?
- Are proverbs used to influence and subjugate?

2.1. Research Methodology

The paper investigates the power structure inherent in the folk literature of Kashmir and has attempted to unravel how discourses have constructed unequal power relations through the analysis of twenty-eight well-known Kashmiri proverbs. Attempts have been made to illustrate how power abuse is enacted, reproduced, and legitimised. This study has analysed Kashmiri proverbs informed by Foucault’s concept of discourse and highlights how the creation of knowledge and power relations is intertwined. Emphasising that power is central to the human condition, he argues “that human relations, science, institutions are all caught up in a power struggle, and discourse is a terrain on which this struggle is carried out. The person/institution that controls discourse also controls the subjects in those discourses” (qtd. in Nayar 2010: 35). Along with Foucault’s concept of discourse, insights from feminist theory have also been employed to expose the discourse of patriarchy, religion and authority in folk literature. Using Foucault’s concept, feminists argue how the discourse of patriarchy has marginalised women and pushed them to peripheral spaces. The discourses of patriarchy categorise/represent women as “pure woman, the seductive woman, the hysterical woman, the vulnerable woman” and “have been institutionalized in the uneven structures of marriage, education, religion, the law, history, literature, science and politics” (Nayar 2010: 36). Discourses legitimize disproportionate power dynamics and all discourses have an object, a language and a central

figure; an authority who employs language to categorise the object. Therefore, the authority figure (men) employs the discourse of patriarchy to subjugate the object (women) by categorising them as 'pure women', 'seductive women', etc., to propagate the acceptable/non-acceptable category of females.

Alternatively, the discourse of religion has also been employed to propagate and legitimise unequal power equations. Unequal power relations are also present in feudal societies.

3. The Purpose of Folklore

Not only does folklore validate and justify acceptable behavioural patterns, but it also exercises considerable pressure and control on individuals to act according to societal dictates. Folklore plays a crucial role in order "to express social approval of those who conform.... In many [communities] folklore is [used] to control, influence, or direct the activities" and actions of others (Bascom 1954: 346). Parallels can be drawn between culturally accepted behaviour and its reinforcement through folklore genres. According to HONKO, folklore "is a group-oriented and tradition-based creation of groups or individuals controlled by the expectations of the community as an adequate expression of its [socio-cultural] identity" (qtd. in Das 1993: 2). Therefore, specific rules govern the practice of folklore and it acts as a tool for the socialisation of the young and inculcates community values and customs. Folklore is an essential tool for children's education, especially for the members of non-literate societies, because it appears to be the principal feature through which animal fables teach moral lessons, also riddles sharpen the abilities to critical thinking.

3.1 The Politics of Folklore

Folklore also has been used manipulatively by the powerful, and examples of folklore being exploited by the dominant can be seen in Germany & Russia. Folklore is said to have

proved to be a formidable and diabolic weapon of propaganda ...Nazi Germany harnessed folklorists to buttress the ideology of a master race united through mystical bonds of blood and culture, including folk culture. Soviet Russia has laid down a party line for folklore, con-

veniently finding in workers' songs and legends the communist spirit of social and revolutionary protest. (Dorson 1963: 96)

Hitler used folklore for his political purpose, and the same was done by the government in Russia when folklore was woven around Marxist concerns.

4. Proverbs

“Wisdom in a nutshell” would not be an inappropriate expression to describe a proverb. Proverbs are succinct of the varied folklore genres, but terseness does not imply minimalism. Proverbs are the undoubted wisdom of the past generations transmitted through the ages. Folklore scholars, linguists and historians have long been occupied with the origin and meaning of proverbs and their variants, if any. They say that every proverb tells a tale. It is usually a sizable task to deal with just one text in “this diachronic and Semantic fashion” (Mieder 2005: 96). People have been drawn to proverbs for ages. The interest in proverbs can “be traced back to the earliest Sumerian Cuneiform tablets. Then philosophical writings of Aristotle” (Mieder 2005: 80). Critics have attempted to define proverbs in the proverbial style of short and crisp definitions, and some scholars have laboured to give detailed definitions. Lord John Russell’s definition has taken on a proverbial status of sorts: “A proverb is the wit of one and the wisdom of many” (qtd. in Mieder 2004: 9). Proverbs are an amalgamation of experiences and observations summarised and depict a message to which all the members of the community can relate.

4.1. Characteristics of Proverbs

A proverb serves as an organ for transferring ethical values from older generations to posterity using the minimal possible words. The proverbial stock sometimes refers to terms unknown to modern man. Archaic words render the interpretation and understanding difficult, and scholars across the disciplines of folklore, history and linguistics come together to resolve such difficulties. Scholars pay attention to the history of individual proverbs and are concerned with the specific use of proverbs through different historical periods. This helps build scholarship about the

socio-cultural circumstances. The critic Milner mentions that a proverb has the following characteristics:

(a) it is pithy, concise and easily remembered by the use of rhyme, rhythm, repetition, or alliteration; (b) it is vivid, homely, sometimes coarse, deals with people's primary interests; (c) it singles out something abstract and universal based on experience and observation which might be stated literally or figuratively; (d) it sums up a situation by appealing to humour; (e) it is often linked to another saying which appears to give it the life; and (f) its effect is to raise a statement from the ordinary to emphatic level in order to urge, teach, praise or convince, or alternatively, to warn, blame, restrain or discourage. (1969: 199)

To gain the stature of a proverb, expressions and observations expressed in terse language have to be handed down from generation to generation. For emphasis, proverbs are usually prefixed with words/phrases like 'they say', 'Elders say' etc. Proverbs are preferred because they can be used figuratively and are usually "based on indirection, and much can indeed be said or implied by the opportune use of such proverbs as "Don't look a *gift horse* in the mouth," "Don't count your *chickens* before they [hatch]," "Every *cloud* has a silver lining," "you cannot teach an old *dog* with new tricks," or "All that *glitters* is not gold" (Mieder 2004: 8).

4.2. Importance of Proverbs

Proverbs interest all strata of society; on the surface, they seem very simple. But paremiology uncovers the didactic, the moral and the social message that proverbs hold together. The study of proverbs requires that the paremiologist "get to the bottom of that "incommunicable quality" of what may be called proverbiality" (Mieder 2004: 4). The didactic function of proverbs has been recognised since times immemorial. Alongside proverbs, the other folklore genre used for education is the riddle. Religious scholars, parents and teachers have used proverbs for indoctrination, orientation, and education. Thereby proverbs "continue to play a [pivotal part] as a pedagogical tool in modern societies, especially among family members and at school. They deserve to be taught as part of general education, and since they belong to the common knowledge" (Mieder 2005: 98). Since

proverbs have no authors, the whole community is recognised as the curator of proverbs. All the members are bearers of the message communicated through them. Proverbs are the cultural legacy inherited by all members of society.

4.3. Are Proverbs Biased?

But does the ‘wisdom’ symbolised by a proverb give a biased reality? Do proverbs advance the viewpoint of those in authoritarian positions? Is truth compromised and ‘acceptable’ and ‘not acceptable’ attitudes defined according to those with the prerogative to determine? If controlled by the dominant, the discourse created through proverbs can be distorted and compromised.

The study of proverbs should accommodate all aspects, including the context, which refers to the social situation in which it is used. Seitel states that proverb studies bring to light the relevance of proverbs:

[B]y pushing around these small and apparently simply constructed items, one can discover principles which give order to a wider range of phenomena. Proverbs are the simplest of the metaphorical genres of folklore – songs, folktales, folk play, etc. – a genre which clearly and directly is used to serve a social purpose. [Scrutinising] the relatively simple use of metaphorical reasoning for social ends in proverbs, one can gain insight into the social use of other, more complex metaphorical genres. (1976: 141)

4.4. Context of Proverbs

Proverbs are deeply rooted in specific cultures, and their meaning cannot be separated from the context. Devoid of the context, “the proverb loses its force of appeal and relevance. Akin to the proverbs are the wise sayings which reflect and transmit the collective wisdom of the group in concise and condensed forms and are easy to remember” (Egonu 1987: 115). The purpose and sense of proverbs are realised with reference to the social situation in which they are used.

To uncover the meaning of proverbs in specific contexts, it is essential to remember that proverbs are generally “employed to disambiguate complex situations and events. Yet they are par-

adoxically inherently ambiguous because their meaning depends on analogy” (Mieder 2004: 133). At times, uncovering a simple proverb’s meaning is very complex. Kwesi Yankah, in his article, “Do Proverbs Contradict?” (1984), also emphasises that “the meaning of any proverb is actually evident only after it has been contextualized” (qtd. in Mieder 2005: 93-94) because they serve as tools for communication.

5. Proverbs in Kashmir

The Kashmiri term for proverbs is “Zarb – Ul – Misl”; alternatively, “Kahvat” is also used to denote a proverb (Fayaz 2008: 31). Kashmiri society also thrives on the use of proverbs and all facets of Kashmiri life are coloured by these wise sayings. Proverbs are the beacon lights of wisdom, but they also serve as tools to propagate the norms of society. Proverbs “pass judgement, recommend a course of action, or serve as secular past precedents for present actions” and play a vital role in the culture of a society (Arewa and Dundes 1966: 52). Society validates the ‘acceptable’ and ‘not acceptable’ attitude through proverbs. They are also used to exercise social control. The Proverbs are instrumental in setting up moral and ethical standards, as praise and censure come from witty remarks. Laced with humour, irony and satire, they aptly convey the approval or disapproval of the community to its members.

About the proverbs in Knowles’ collection, Mazharul Islam writes that the proverbs “are classified and arranged according to their subject matter and translated into English with notes, illustrating the social customs, popular superstition and everyday life of people” (Islam 1970: 61). Knowles in the preface to *Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings* gives an anecdotal account of the genesis of his compilation. He writes:

I have now spent two long quiet winters [in Kashmir] and this “Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings” is the result of many hours of labour, study, and anxiety during these leisurable months. As a missionary, on arriving in [Kashmir], I at once devoted my attention to the study of the language; and believing that Proverbs taught “the real people’s speech,” discovered “the genius, wit and spirit of a nation,” and embodied its “current and practical

philosophy,” I quickly began to make a collection of them. This book, I believe, contains nearly all the Proverbs and Proverbial sayings now extant among the Kashmiri people. They have been gathered from various sources. Sometimes the great and learned Pandit instinctively uttered a proverb in my hearing; sometimes ... the barber [told me] me a thing or two, as he polled my head; and sometimes, the poor coolie said something worth knowing, as carrying my load he tramped along before me. A few learned Muhammadan and Hindu friends also, ... helped me in this collection and its arrangement, and here I again heartily acknowledge their kind and ready service. (1885: iii-iv)

Knowles also writes about his apprehension about the reception of the book. He says, “What will the little world say, ...? How will the philologist, the ethnologist, the antiquarian, the student of folklore, and the general reader regard this which has cost some considerable time and study” (1885: iv). The hard work put in by Knowles is commendable since several problems surmounted him. He reports that there was no notable Kashmiri dictionary and Grammar around his compilation, and he tried to translate the proverbs into Roman characters.

O. N. Koul, in his *A Dictionary of Kashmir Proverbs*, credits the work done by Knowles. Koul defines a proverb “as a statement that may contain a piece of advice, a warning, a prediction or [just] an observation” (2005: 3). He divides proverbs into three categories- proverbs wherein the “meaning is quite prominent”, proverbs dealing with the “great mysteries and complexities of life” and metaphorical proverbs wherein “the literal meaning is merely redundant” (2005: 3). According to Koul varied opinions exist about the ‘wisdom’ content of proverbs. Notable among these are:

- A good proverb is never out of season.
- Hold fast to the words of ancestors.
- Proverbs are the condensed good sense of nations.
- Wise men make proverbs, and [others] repeat them.
- A proverb is the wit of one and the wisdom of many.
- Time passes away, but sayings remain.
- Proverbs are like butterflies; some are caught others fly away. (2005: 4)

‘Proverbs’ are culture realised in words and bind together people from all strata of society. The social, political and cultural conditions have influenced the folklore of Kashmir. The discourse of folklore expresses the ideology of the powerful, and there are pieces of evidence that proverbs are used to indoctrinate and persuade. In many instances, proverbs have also been used to voice discontentment under the garb of folklore.

6. Power Discourse in Kashmiri Proverbs: Analysis

The proverbs analysed in this paper have been primarily selected from the *Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings* (1885) compiled by J. Hinton Knowles and *A Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs* (1992) compiled by Omkar N. Koul. Additionally, some of the analysed proverbs have been selected from discussions held with friends and family members, and a few proverbs have been selected from the ones quoted by Farooq Fayaz in his book *Kashmir Folklore: A Study in Historical Perspective* (2008)

6.1. Proverbs about Rulers and Atrocities on the Masses

The political history of Kashmir is witness that during the Sikh and Dogra rule, the government adopted “the apparatus of coercion” (Fayaz 2008: 48). Under both regimes, the rulers followed the policy whereby they created-

a group from both Hindu and Muslim communities, who in turn, received rich incentives and acted as custodians of the alien rule. This privileged section of Kashmiri would seldom miss an opportunity to fleece the people, even of their meagre belongings and possessions. These collaborators, in turn, to appease the greed of ... masters resorted to every kind of mean device to command” complete submission before the government. (Fayaz 2008: 48)

The masses were mortally afraid of these officials and seldom raised their voices for fear of punishment. The condition of the Kashmiris presented a gory picture under the Sikh and the Dogra rule. The Sikhs levied heavy taxes, and the Dogras introduced the inhumane practice of ‘begar’ or ‘forced labour’.

The victimised Kashmiris, unable to fight against the oppressive regimes, suffered in silence. Folklore was not untouched by the plight of Kashmiris, and many tales and proverbs gave voice to the discontentment of the public. The proverb that follows shows the displeasure of Kashmiris due to alien rule:

1. *Kashir che par-dwarac.*

The exploitation of Kashmir by non-natives (Source Friends)

The proverbs mentioned below aptly attack the “collaborators” who made a profit while their fellow Kashmiris suffered. The corrupt Kashmiri officials supported the ruthless rulers.

2. *Baidh kani chu lokchev kanyev seeth rozit hykan*

The big stone can consolidate its position only because of the support of the small stones (source family members)

3. *Ekis dazaan deer to byaakh vushnaavaan athe*

One’s bread is on fire, the other warming his cold hand over it (qtd in Fayaz 2008: 50)

The atrocities committed did not go unnoticed, but ordinary Kashmiris thought confrontation and rebellion would enhance their miseries. The following two proverbs indicate how silence was preferred to revolution and escaping the situation was a better alternative.

4. *Tul palav te voth tsalav*

Pickup your clothes and let us runaway (qtd in Fayaz 2008: 51)

5. *Tshopt chey ropt stnz, karakh tay sontstnz*

Silence is silver, but if you keep silent, it is golden (qtd in Fayaz 2008: 51)

Kashmiris were betrayed by their own people; otherwise, foreign rulers could not consolidate their position. These ‘privileged few’ were rewarded with “*Jagirs* (fiefs)” and “*Dharmath* (religious fief)”, “besides declaring a host of influential supporters as *Arziwalias* (land owners)” (Fayaz 2008: 53). The Dogra rule replaced the Sikh rule in 1846. Still, this replacement further deteriorated the socio-political conditions. The practice of ‘*begar*’ forced many to migrate to far-off lands to avoid becoming forced

labourers. The comparison of the atrocities faced by people under the Sikh rule and Dogra rule and the Dogra rule being far more ruthless is brought out vividly in the following proverb:

6. *Koli khog kol che sardy*"

Every new stream is icier than the old one (qtd in Fayaz 2008: 51)

6.2. *Proverbs about the victimisation of the Common man by Feudal Lords and Religious Leaders*

The ordinary Kashmiri was oppressed under feudalism while the feudal lords reaped the benefits of the labour they put in. However, feudal lords were not the only ones who occupied a privileged position in society. The *Pandits* and the *Pirzadas* were "collectively known as the *Safedposh* and also privileged and "being respectable sections, the state favoured these *Pandits* and *Pirzadas* by lightly taxing their land". The burden of the taxes was "exclusively borne by the common peasantry. Besides *Pirzadas* and *Pandits*, the privileged class comprised *Lambadars*, *Patwari* and *Wadadars*" (Fayaz 2008: 246). Each of these classes fully exploited its position and oppressed the masses. Innumerable examples from folklore narrate the harsh attitude adopted by these classes towards ordinary people. The Hindu and Muslim religious priests also took full advantage of the reverence of ordinary people for their authority. The following proverb shows how the priests were always in a comfortable position:

7. *Gora senzi kotshi sowri na zanh*

The priests make profit irrespective of whether the event is pleasurable or painful (source family members)

The displeasure of common Kashmiris towards *Pirzadas* and *Pandits* can be exemplified through the following proverbs:

8. *Bate go grate*

Kashmiri Pandit is just like a stone grinder (qtd in Fayaz 2008: 246)

9. *Pirs che Ponsech Zir*

The Pir knows nothing but to earn money (qtd in Fayaz 2008: 247)

10. *Gora senzi kotshi sowri na zanh*

The priests make profit irrespective of whether the event is pleasurable or painful.

6.3. Proverbs about how wealth determines Ones' Position on the Social Ladder

Wealth is associated with respect, and poverty makes you ignoble. The following proverbs imply that if you are rich, you are considered noble. Economic position determines one's worth in society and penury is associated with embarrassment. One of the greatest misfortunes is an empty stomach, and relatives avoid poor relations.

11. *ašraph gav suy yas ašraph ia:san*

The man with gold is a gentleman.

12. *The rich person is considered noble. Money is power*

The rich can do no wrong (Koul 2005:28)

13. *a:sun chu hechina:va:n, na a:sun chu mandicha:va:n*

Prosperity teaches one, and poverty puts one to shame.

Prosperity improves one's personality; adversity cripples it (Koul 2005: 33)

14. *y əd dag cha bəd dag*

The stomach pain is a great pain. The pain of hunger is most severe (Koul 2005: 170)

15. *vušin'beni:, yu:r'val i; t ir in'beni:, u:r'gatsh*

O warm (affectionate or rich) sister, come over here. O cold (unaffectionate or poor) sister, go over there. Rich or affectionate relations are always welcome, and poor or unaffectionate ones are repelled (Koul 2005: 203)

The following proverb shows that even the heavens detest the poor:

16. *a:sma:n i vətsh bala:y ti kha:ni gəri:b kujast*

Misfortune descended from the heavens and sought a poor man's hut. Poor people suffer even in natural calamities (Koul 2005: 33)

6.4. *Women in Proverbs*

As stated earlier, folklore is shaped by socio-cultural factors. But does folklore present a biased reality? This question is relevant to feminist folklorists who examine women's lives in varied cultural milieus to seek answers to questions such as: Is 'gender construction' at work in folktales? Do folktales stereotypically represent women? Focusing on women's experiences, female folklorists have unveiled genres previously disregarded. They believe that "traditionally, knowledge, truth, and reality have been constructed as if men's experiences were normative as if being human meant being male" (qtd. in Kousaleos 1999: 19). Folklore is no exception, and the female experience was not acknowledged and valued in the production of knowledge. A critic notes, "Patriarchy is a social system that promotes hierarchies and awards economic, political and social power to one group over others. Patriarchy is essentially androcentric and hierarchical by nature" (Huffel 2011: 260).

Moreover, folklore as a whole has been used to advance the agenda of patriarchy. Countless proverbs can be cited as indoctrinating gender lessons. Women, through proverbs, are educated about legitimate female ambitions and aspirations.

The analysis of select Kashmiri proverbs endeavours to showcase how everyday proverbs exemplify the unequal power distribution in Kashmiri society. Gender relations are articulated through the use of Kashmiri proverbs. The proverbs selected for analysis show how gender roles are advanced and validated through folklore, and the study unravels the marginalised position of women. Nyla Ali Khan questions:

...the victimization and subjugation of women selectively enshrined in the social practices and folklore of Kashmiri culture, ... the kudos given to the hapless wife who agrees to live in a polygamous relationship; the bounden duty of the woman to bear heirs; the unquestioned right of a husband to divorce his barren wife; ... the hallowed status of the woman who conforms to such cultural dogmas; the social marginalization of the woman who defies them. (2007: 23)

6.5. Gender Bias in Proverbs

A few proverbs are analysed to bring out gender discrimination inbuilt in these sayings. The purpose is also to focus on the stereotypical representation of men and women in the proverbs and unearth how the passive representation of women is strategic and beneficial to the patriarchal enterprise.

The birth of a girl child in Kashmiri society is not considered auspicious, and the community reminds time and again what a curse the female offspring is to her parents. Folklore, especially tales and proverbs, reminds females that they are inferior and cause worry and shame for their parents. The following proverbs showcase that right from birth, the girl child is thought of as a burden:

17. *Kúr chhēh khúr*

A daughter is as a heel (i.e., a great hindrance. (Knowles 1885: 119)

The girl child is not only a cause of embarrassment to her parents, but she is also responsible for the economic burden on her parents. This economic dimension is again aptly expressed in the following proverbs:

18. *ku:r cha a:snas chenira:va:n ti na a:snas mandicha:va:n*

A daughter decreases the wealth of the rich, and is a cause of shame to the poor

(Koul 2005: 46)

The expenditure incurred on the wedding of the daughter impoverishes the family. The parents wish to unburden themselves as soon as possible, as is evident from the following saying:

19. *hə:zas gɔbe:yi l ɔli, dits in də:rith kɔli*

The boatman felt the weight (of his daughter) in his lap, and threw her into the river. To marry off one's daughter at a very young age (Koul 2005: 222)

Proverbs educate women about legitimate feminine aspirations and the importance of following patriarchal norms. The females in folklore are controlled and judged by societal precepts. Any move on the part of the female which disturbs the patriarchal

cosmos is severely dealt with. Women in Kashmiri society are often compared to insignificant objects compared to men. The fidelity of women is also a matter of debate in proverbs. The following proverb draws a parallel between an animal, a woman and an inanimate object:

20. *gur, zana:n tī šamši:r, yim tren ivay chi bevapha:*

A horse, a woman, and a sword, all the three are not loyal (Koul 2005: 67)

A famous proverb discusses the shortcomings of a man's wife by comparing her to the stone placed on the doorstep of the house:

21. *Chāni barāndah kani chhai nah sēz*

Your doorstep is not straight. Something wrong with the wife (Knowles 1885: 39)

6.6. Gender Indoctrination through Proverbs

Proverbs encourage men to be tough and resolute; women, conversely, are indoctrinated into submissive and passive roles. The proverb that follows propagates the gender roles through the comparison between the siblings:

22. *bo:y gav kən', beni gəyi thən'*

A brother is (as hard as) a stone, and a sister is (as soft as) butter. A brother is considered a stone hearted person, and a sister is considered very compassionate (Koul 2005:153)

Patriarchy tries to control women's lives in totality, and folklore plays a vital role in instructing women to exhibit moral values tailored by patriarchy. Proverbs are also stuffed with issues concerning the chastity, decency and modesty of women:

23. *vachas hay kuluph a:si, lachas paki daki dith*

If a woman is strong in character, she can brush aside lakhs of men without being harmed (Koul 2005: 198)

Proper moral conduct is encouraged through such proverbs. Another quality desired in a woman is the ability to refrain from expressing her opinion. A female is thought of as an epitome of

modesty if she has no say in matters concerning her marriage alliance:

24. *baji ko:ri hinz tsh opay cha ã:ka:r*
A grown-up girl's silence means her willingness (Koul 2005: 138)

The females are expected to be homely, accommodating, submissive and docile. The patience exhibited by Lal Ded becomes the measuring rod, and all women are expected to be patient. The following proverb censures women who are ill-tempered as women are expected to be accommodating:

25. *adal ti vadal zana:n cha pašas zadal tshey*
A snobbish and ill-tempered woman is like badly thatched grass on the roof. (The badly thatched grass on a roof does not prevent rain from pouring through it). A snobbish and ill-tempered woman is a curse in the family (Koul 2005: 23)

A woman is expected to be an 'ideal wife', and if she cannot come up to the expectations of the husband, the reproach is swift, as is seen through the proverb:

26. *'ə:s im kəl iya: mo:su:m cham*
I have a wife but she is innocent (incapable, delicate) (Koul 2005:16)

Here the 'innocence' of the wife is a term of censure and has no positive connotation. Another proverb cautions against pampering the girl child:

27. *kha: ni ma:jen ta:ni ba:gay*
A pampered girl (who is brought up with a lot of care and affection) may not get a husband of her choice (Koul 2005: 54)

The caution probably indicates that a pampered girl may be unable to adjust at her husband's place. Another proverb discusses the treatment meted out to a woman by her in-laws:

28. *Nosh gayih rēti zan ās yeti*

The daughter-in-law went for a month (to her father's house) and it was as if she had not been away at all (time passed so quickly because they were so much happier during her absence).

"Daughters-in-law are a continual stumbling-block to the other inhabitants of the house." (Knowles 1885: 157)

7. Conclusion

The seemingly neutral proverbs showcase how power discourse works through folklore. The analysed proverbs highlight that the concerns of caste, class and gender colour the meaning and interpretation of the proverbs. Proverbs do not only transmit wisdom but are also used to indoctrinate socio-cultural norms. The proverbs tell the stories of atrocities at the hands of the powerful; proverbs recount the socio-political circumstances, and gender roles are also propagated through proverbs. Through a hand full of words, proverbs map the socio-cultural history of communities and people.

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Munejah Khan
Department of English Language & Literature
Islamic University of Science & Technology
Kashmir
munejahk@gmail.com

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SEWANOU MARTIAL JUPITER LANMADOUSSELO

„EINE BÜFFELÄHNLICHE STÄRKE EINSETZEN“ – ZUR TIERMETAPHORIK IN DER AFRIKANISCHEN IDIOMATIK AM BEISPIEL DER FON-REDENSARTEN AUS BENIN

Zusammenfassung: Von einer Tiermetapher ist die Rede, wenn tierische Eigenheiten auf den Menschen und seine Verhaltensweisen u.a. übertragen werden. Um die Eigenheit und den Charakter der Fon-Sprache zu verdeutlichen, werden in der vorliegenden Studie 37 Fon-(Benin)Ausdrücke exemplarisch ausgewählt. Der Fokus liegt ganz auf der Tiermetaphorik. Die ausgewählten Fon-Redensarten werden zum einen transkribiert und ins Deutsche übersetzt, zum anderen kontextorientiert kommentiert, um ihre semantischen Bedeutungen hervorzuheben. Letzteres wird durch Beispiele erläutert.

Schlüsselwörter: Tiermetaphern, Fon-Redensarten, Fon-Sprache, semantische Bedeutungen, Verwendungsbeispiele, Fon-Tierkenntnisse

Abstract: An animal metaphor is spoken of when animal characteristics, among other things, are transferred to humans and their behaviour. In order to illustrate the peculiarity and character of the Fon language, 37 Fon (Benin) expressions are selected as examples in this study. The focus is entirely on animal metaphors. The selected Fon idioms are, on the one hand, transcribed and translated into German, and on the other hand, contextually annotated in order to highlight their semantic meanings. The latter is illustrated by example.

Keywords: animal metaphors, Fon idioms, Fon language, semantic meanings, usage examples, Fon animal knowledge

1. *Einleitendes*

In einem Beitrag mit dem Titel „Einführung in die afrikanische Idiomatik am Beispiel der Fon-Redensarten aus Benin“ (Proverbium vol. 39: 123 – 141) untersuchte ich 17 Redensarten der Fon aus Benin unter syntaktischem, semantischem und pragmatischem Blickwinkel. Hauptziel der Studie, die eine Pionierarbeit in der beninischen Parömiologie im Besonderen und in der Parömiologie südlich der Sahara im Allgemeinen darstellt, war, einen Überblick über die Kultur der Fon und ihre Weltanschauung zu schaffen. In der besagten Studie gab es poetische und stilistische Elemente, auf die nicht eingegangen werden konnte. Die vorliegende Studie holt das nach und widmet sich dem Reichtum der Tiermetaphorik in den Redensarten der Fon. Sie trägt dazu bei, diese Redensarten als eine „ausgeprägtere Form uneigentlichen, metaphorischen, bildlichen Sprechens“ (Bausinger 1968: 93; hierzu auch Mieder 2015¹) zu verdeutlichen. Aus einem zur Verfügung stehenden Korpus von ungefähr 500 Fon-Redensarten, von denen ein beträchtlicher Teil Tiermetaphern sind, werden hier 37 ausgewählt. Von Metapher ist die Rede, wenn ein sprachlicher Ausdruck aus seinem eigentlichen Bedeutungszusammenhang in einen anderen übertragen wird, ohne dass ein direkter Vergleich die Beziehung zwischen Bezeichnendem und Bezeichnetem verdeutlicht.² Von einer Tiermetapher spricht man dann, wenn Tiere bzw. Tierelemente mit Menschen, Pflanzen, Objekten oder sogar mit anderen Tierarten verglichen werden (vgl. Abdulrahman 2018: Zusammenfassung auf der Buchrückseite).

Die Redensarten werden transkribiert und dann ins Deutsche übersetzt. Danach wird jede Redensart – hier Bezeichnende – kommentiert, um die Bedeutungen, die dahinter stecken, hervorzuheben. Letztere werden durch Beispiele erläutert.

¹ „No pain, no gain: Warum wir immer noch in Sprichwörtern sprechen.“ Interview mit Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Mieder am 28.10.2015. <https://www.dw.com/de/no-pain-no-gain-warum-wir-immer-noch-in-sprichw%C3%B6rtern-sprechen/a-18809256> [08.02.2022].

² Ein sprachliches Zeichen vereint in sich zwei Seiten: den sinnlich wahrnehmbaren Ausdruck, die Buchstaben- oder Lautfolge (Bezeichnendes), und die damit verbundene Bedeutung, das Bezeichnete. Vgl. Duden-Online.

2. Tiermetaphern in den Fon-Redensarten

(1) *A dù senlàn wè á?*

Wörtl.: [haben; du; essen; das Fleisch der Zibetkatze]

Dt.: Hast du das Fleisch der Zibetkatze gegessen?

Kommentar: Die afrikanische Zibetkatze (wiss. N.: *Civettictis civetta*) ist eine Raubtierart aus der Familie der Schleichkatzen. Ihre Fellfarbe ist grau, mit schwarzen, streifenförmig angeordneten Flecken und unregelmäßigen Streifen. Das Gesicht weist eine schwarze Augenmaske auf, die an Waschbären erinnert.³ Die Körperlänge der afrikanischen Zibetkatze kann 67 bis 89 Zentimeter betragen, der Schwanz kann 35 bis 47 cm lang werden.⁴ Afrikanische Zibetkatzen schlafen im Allgemeinen geschützt in dichter Vegetation, und dies während des Tages. Letzteres liegt der Redensart zugrunde. Die Redensart kann sowohl für den Menschen als auch für das Tier verwendet werden.

Bedeutung: während des Tages lang bzw. viel schlafen

Beispiel: Die ganze vergangene Woche hat diese Frau geschlafen. Ihr Mann fragte sie scherzhaft: „Hast du das Fleisch der Zibetkatze gegessen?“

(2) *Ájòtor dókpó gbor dókpó*

Wörtl.: [Dieb; ein; Ziegenbock; ein]

Dt.: ein Dieb, ein Ziegenbock

Kommentar: Ziegen(-böcke) sind oft Ziele von Diebstählen bei den Fon in Benin. Interessant ist hier die Art und Weise, wie der Dieb auf den zu raubenden Ziegenbock lauert, um nicht auf frischer Tat ertappt zu werden. Allerdings wird mit der Redensart die Vorsicht des Diebs in den Vordergrund gestellt. Die Redensart wird oft auch metaphorisch in mehreren Kontexten eingesetzt.

Bedeutung: einen gegnerischen Spieler decken (Sport), ein Partner mit seiner Partnerin (Liebe)

Beispiel: Während des Trainings sagte der Trainer zu den Spielern: „Für das nächste Spiel werden wir unsere Verteidigungstaktik wechseln. Wir werden nach der Taktik „ein Dieb, ein Ziegenbock“ verteidigen.“

³ <http://www.transafrika.org/pages/tiere-in-afrika/raubtiere/afrikanische-zibetkatze.php> [04.06.2022].

⁴ Ebd.

(3) Atútwì cé yì bò gbé**Wörtl.:** [Kätzchen; meine; gehen; Zauberkunde Bò; Suche]**Dt.:** Mein Kätzchen ist auf die Suche nach der Zauberkunde Bò gegangen**Kommentar:** Wie folgt definiert der beninische Kulturanthropologe Germain Sagbo den Begriff Bò:

Obo [hier in der Aizo-Sprache] sollte also vielmehr als ein traditionelles Wissensaufbausystem angesehen werden, das die Verwendung von okkulten Kräften ermöglicht, um auf die physische Welt einzuwirken, und das sowohl von Vodún-Priestern als auch von anderen Initiierten beherrscht und gehandhabt wird (Sagbo 2012: S. 130).

Die Fachbegriffe „Vodún-Priester“ und „Initiierte“ verweisen auf die traditionellen Religionen im Süd-Benin. Der „Bò“ ist somit kein im Volk umlaufendes Wissen. Wer damit nicht vertraut ist, muss auf die Expertise eines „Wissenden“ zurückgreifen. Dem Kulturanthropologen Apovo Cossi Jean-Marie zufolge gibt es zwei Kategorien von Riten, die mit dem „Bò“ assoziiert werden: die öffentlichen religiösen Riten und die profanen Riten (vgl. Apovo 1995: 156).

Es gibt viele Formen von Bò: z. B. Chakatu, Ayícéjí, Sukpa usw. Über die Wirkungskräfte des Ersteren schreibt Sagbo: „Chakatu: damit können Glasscherben, Krabben oder alle anderen denkbaren verletzenden Dinge in den Körper des Opfers geschickt werden, um ihm tödliche Schmerzen zuzufügen“ (Sagbo 2012: 130). Bevor der „Bò“ seine Wirkungskraft hat, muss er gesprochen bzw. ausgesprochen werden. Deshalb wird dem „Bò“ der Begriff „Gbè“ hinzugefügt. Hiermit ist in diesem Zusammenhang nicht jedwede Sprache gemeint, sondern die Sprache der Vodún-Priester und der Initiierten. Diese kann mehrere Formen wie Schwur, Wunsch, Gebet, oder einfaches Wort annehmen (vgl. Lanmadousselo 2021: 25).

Die Redensart verweist auf den Tod von Kätzchen. Allerdings müssen gleich nach ihrem Tod, so die Fon-Glaubensvorstellung, Kätzchenleichen auf einen Weg geworfen werden, damit Passanten ihre Leichen mit Blättern bedecken können. Die auf der Leiche eines Kätzchens abgelegten Blätter holen die Fon, die sich mit der Zauberkunde auskennen, denn die besagten Blätter

dienen als Zaubermittel. Dies begründet die Redensart, wobei es nicht das Kätzchen selbst ist, sondern die Fon, die sich in diesem Fall auf die Suche nach der Zauberkunde Bò begeben.

Bedeutung: Mein Kätzchen ist tot

Beispiel: Das neue Kätzchen des Nachbarn hat sich auf die Suche nach der Zauberkunde Bò begeben.

(4) *Awii ta wè á dù á?*

Wörtl.: [Katzen; Kopf; sein es; du; essen]

Dt.: Hast Du einen Katzenkopf gegessen?

Kommentar: Nasenausfluss oder lautes Schnarchen ist bei Katzen keine Seltenheit:

Typische Anzeichen für Atemwegserkrankungen bei Katzen sind Niesen und Nasenfluss, Schnarchen und Würgen. Sind die unteren Atemwege von einer Erkrankung betroffen, äußert sich dies meist durch Husten, Kurzatmigkeit, oder Atemnot und Atmung durch das geöffnete Mäulchen.⁵

Die Fon essen gerne Katzen, deren Köpfe im Prinzip aber kaum. Die Redensart verweist vergleichend auf eine Person, die ab und zu wie auch Katzen an Atemwegserkrankungen (Schnupfen, Husten) leidet, wobei hier das unübliche Verspeisen eines Katzenkopfs (bildhaft) der Auslöser ist. Die Redensart entspricht dem Französischen „avoir un chat dans la gorge“ (dt.: „eine Katze im Hals haben“). Die Ursprünge dieser Redensart gehen auf das 19. Jh. zurück. Damals sagte man „avoir un maton dans la gorge“ (dt.: einen „Maton“ im Hals haben). Dabei bezeichnete „Maton“ eine Ansammlung von Haaren, die Körperöffnungen verstopfen können.⁶ Im Laufe der Jahre wird das Wort zu „Matou“ (dt.: „Kater“) und dann zu „Katze“.⁷ Die Redensart entspricht dem Englischen „to have a frog in one’s throat“. Im besonderen Fall kann sie auch für andere Tiere verwendet werden.

Bedeutung: Schnupfen bekommen, eine heisere Stimme haben

⁵ <https://www.zooplus.de/magazin/katze/katzengesundheit-pflege/atemwegsprobleme-bei-katzen> [19.07.2022].

⁶ Vgl. <https://www.europe1.fr/culture/dou-vient-l-expression-avoir-un-chat-dans-la-gorge-3997982> [19.07.2022].

⁷ Ebd.

Beispiel: „Du niest jetzt zu viel. Hast du einen Katzenkopf gegessen?“, fragte Adama seinen Kameraden.

(5) blò awiivor

Wörtl.: [machen; Mungo]

Dt.: den Mungo machen

Kommentar: Mungo ist eine Verkürzung von *Manguste*, der Bezeichnung für zwei Arten von kleinen Raubtieren innerhalb der Gattung *Herpestes*. Es wird zwischen dem kleinen und dem indischen Mungo unterschieden.⁸ Mungos sind in Afrika, in Südeuropa sowie in Südostasien beheimatet. Sie gelten als äußerst geschickte und schlaue Tiere. Diese Eigenschaften ermöglichen es ihnen, Wildtieren zu entkommen.

Bedeutung: versuchen, jmdn. irrezuführen, heucheln, vortäuschen

Beispiel: Der Mann wollte nicht, dass man weiß, dass er ein Stipendium bekommen hat, und machte den Mungo.

(6) don gbor gúngún kàn gúngún mè ton

Wörtl.: [ziehen; Ziegenbock; fest; Seil; fest; von; jmd.]

Dt.: jmdn. wie einen Ziegenbock fest am Seil ziehen

Kommentar: Die Redensart verweist auf ein Seil, das am Hals eines Ziegenbocks befestigt ist, an dem man kräftig zieht, während der Ziegenbock sich nicht bewegen will. Da das Kräfteverhältnis in diesem Fall jedoch immer auf Seiten des Menschen liegt, gelingt es ihm, die Bewegung des Ziegenbocks zu erzwingen.

Bedeutung: aus Zwang etwas erzielen, jmdn. zu etwas zwingen

Beispiele: Während der Sklaverei wurden die Sklaven in den Plantagen in den USA wie ein Ziegenbock an einem Seil gezogen.

(7) è dó agbò honhlon

Wörtl.: [einsetzen; Stärke; Büffel]

Dt.: eine büffelähnliche Stärke einsetzen

Dt.: Büffel sind vor allem in Afrika und in Asien anzutreffen. Der afrikanische Büffel, auch als Kaffernbüffel (wiss. N.: *Synce-*

⁸ Vgl. www.Biologie-schule.de [06.02.2021].

rus caffer) bezeichnet, gehört zur Unterfamilie der Rinder. Über seinen Körper gibt es folgende Angaben:

Der afrikanische Büffel erreicht eine Kopf-Rumpf-Länge von 210 bis 340 cm, eine Schwanzlänge von 70 bis 110 cm, eine Schulterhöhe von 100 bis 170 cm und ein Gewicht von 320 bis 900 kg, wobei die Männchen größer sind als die Weibchen. Die Farbe des Fells reicht von braunschwarz über rotbraun bis zum leuchtenden rot. Das Fell selber ist dünn und grob. Der Körper ist massig, die Beine stämmig. Die Ohren tragen an den Rändern Haarfransen. Der Schwanz endet in einer Quaste. Die Hörner der Schwarzbüffel sind sehr groß und weit zur Seite hin ausladend – bis zu 1,6 m. Männchen wie Weibchen tragen Hörner. Die Hörner der Rotbüffel dagegen sind kleiner, kurz, konisch und nach hinten gerichtet.⁹

Der Büffel wird als ein Tier betrachtet, das große Körperkraft besitzt und einsetzt. Letzteres liegt der Redensart zugrunde, wobei der Büffel mit einem Menschen verglichen wird. Die Redensart verweist im übertragenen Sinne auf Anstrengungen jeglicher Art, die alle Erwartungen übertreffen bzw. beeindruckend sind.

Bedeutung: viel Kraft einsetzen, stark sein, übergroße Anstrengungen machen

Beispiel: Obwohl er nicht gut bezahlt wird, hat er seiner Verlobten ein pompöses Geschenk gemacht. „Ich habe eine büffelähnliche Stärke eingesetzt“, gestand er.

(8) è dor awí mlon

Wörtl.: [wie; schlafen; Katze; Schlaf]

Dt.: Wie eine Katze schlafen

Kommentar: Beim Schlafverhalten von Katzen lassen sich zwei Phasen unterscheiden, nämlich die leichte Schlafphase und der Tiefschlaf. Erstere dauert zwischen 15–30 Minuten, wobei die Katze jederzeit aufwachen kann, ihre Ohren aufgestellt lässt, auf alle Umgebungsgeräusche reagiert, die Schnauze ab und zu bewegt und ein Auge geöffnet lässt.¹⁰ Die Tiefschlafphase dauert nur bis zu 6 Minuten.¹¹ Die Katze schläft also entweder nicht

⁹ <https://www.das-tierlexikon.de/afrikanischer-bueffel/> [04.08.2022].

¹⁰ Vgl. <https://tractive.com/blog/de/gut-zu-wissen/katzen-aktivsten-warum-schlafen-katzen-viel> [31.01.2022].

¹¹ Ebd.

sehr lange oder nicht sehr tief. In der Redensart wird das Schlafverhalten der Katze mit dem eines Menschen verglichen.

Bedeutung: kurz schlafen, nicht tief schlafen

Beispiel: Dieses Baby schläft in der Nacht wie eine Katze.

(9) è dì xèsi hú lǎ

Wörtl.: [ängstlich; sein; als; ein Kob]

Dt.: ängstlicher sein als ein Kob

Kommentar: Das Wort „Kob“ (wiss. N.: Kobus Kob) ist ein Sammelbegriff für verschiedene afrikanische Antilopenarten aus der Gattung der Wasserböcke. Der Kob ist vor allem in Westafrika (u.a. Benin und Senegal) und Ost- und Südostafrika anzutreffen.¹² Der Name „Kob“ wurde der Wolof-Sprache (Senegal) entlehnt.¹³ Der Kob ist überwiegend tagaktiv und ausgesprochen sozial. Er hält sich oft im Flachwasser auf, und Nilkrokodile, Leoparden und Löwen sind seine natürlichen Hauptfeinde.¹⁴ Die Redensart verweist auf die Gewohnheit des Kobs, bei jedem – auch beim geringsten – Geräusch die Ohren zu spitzen.

Bedeutung: ständig Angst haben bzw. auf der Lauer sein, sehr vorsichtig sein

Beispiel: Beim Anblick der Katze ist der Junge davongelaufen. Man sagt von ihm, er sei ängstlicher als ein Kob.

(10) è fá hú avunwonnū!

Wörtl.: [kalt sein; als; die Hundeschnauze]

Dt.: kälter sein als eine Hundeschnauze

Kommentar: Dass Hunde kalte Nasen haben, erklärt sich wie folgt:

Die Nase ist das wichtigste Sinnesorgan des Hundes und ist daher auch sensibler und ausgeprägter als beim Menschen. Der Hund hat Stellen rund um seine Nasenlöcher, wo keine Haare wachsen. Dieser Bereich wird Nasenspiegel oder Rhinarium genannt. Die Stelle hat eine niedrigere Temperatur als der Rest des Körpers und weist außerdem viele Nerven auf. In einer Studie haben Forscher vermutet, dass die Hundesnase deswegen so sensibel auf Wärme

¹² <https://tierlexikon.fandom.com/de/wiki/Kob> [02.08.2022].

¹³ <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kob> [02.08.2022].

¹⁴ Vgl. Fn. 15.

reagiert. Bei einem Experiment wurde deutlich, dass der Bereich des Gehirns, der Reize über die Nase aufnimmt, besonders aktiv wurde. Für die Forscher hat dies bewiesen, dass Hunde Wärme mit ihrer Nase fühlen können. Der Hund ist bisher das einzige Säugetier, was diese Fähigkeit besitzt.¹⁵

Bedeutung: sehr kalt sein

Beispiel: Der Fisch, den ich gestern gekauft habe, ist kälter als eine Hundeschnauze.

(11) è fàn hwlensúvor dohún

Wörtl.: [zwitzchern; ein Dorfweber; wie]

Dt.: wie ein Dorfweber zwitschern

Kommentar: Der Dorfweber, auch Textorweber (wiss. N.: *Ploceus cucullatus*), auf English „Village Weaver“, ist eine Art aus der Familie der Webevögel (*Ploceidae*), die südlich der Sahara relativ weit verbreitet¹⁶ und somit auch in Benin anzutreffen ist. Der Dorfweber ist sehr gesellig und bildet in der Brutzeit Kolonien von jeweils 25 bis 150 Vögeln dieser Art.¹⁷ Die Körpergröße des Dorfwebers erreicht 15 bis 18 Zentimeter. Der Dorfweber gibt von früh bis spät ein dauerhaftes Gezwitscher von sich, das nur bei einer Störung oder Gefahr verstummt. Hat sich die Lage beruhigt, geht das Gezwitscher weiter bis zum Sonnenuntergang.¹⁸ Auf Letzteres verweist die Redensart.

Bedeutung: dauerhaft schwatzen

Beispiel: Nach dem Abendessen zwitschert der deutsche Tourist mit seinen Kollegen wie ein Dorfweber.

(12) É gbà tí'zìn á

Wörtl.: [das; zerbrechen; der kleine Vogel Tí; Ei; nicht]

Dt.: Das kann nicht einmal das Ei des kleinen Vogels „Tí“ zerbrechen

¹⁵ <https://www.edogs.de/magazin/darum-haben-hunde-kalte-nasen/> [19.07.2022].

¹⁶ Vgl. <https://www.safari-afrika.de/tierwelt/voegel/dorfweber/> [03.08.2022].

¹⁷ Vgl. ebd.

¹⁸ Vgl. ebd.

Kommentar: Der Vogel *Tí* ist eine kleine Vogelart, mit dem Zaunkönig vergleichbar, die in den ländlichen Gebieten Südbenins anzutreffen ist. Er legt sehr kleine Eier.

Bedeutung: unbedeutend sein, belanglos sein

Beispiel: Der Lohn dieses Tagearbeiters kann nicht einmal das Ei des kleinen Vogels „*Tí*“ zerbrechen.

(13) è gbè gbor bó yí nyì

Wörtl.: [es; ablehnen; Zicklein; und; annehmen; Rind]

Dt.: Das Zicklein ablehnen, um das Rind anzunehmen

Kommentar: Hinter dieser Redensart versteckt sich eine Glaubensvorstellung der Fon, nämlich die Orakelbefragung und das Opfern von Tieren. Die Orakelbefragung wird von den traditionellen Priestern mit dem Namen *Bokonon* durchgeführt, um die Zukunft vorherzusagen oder den Grund eines Unglücks zu erkunden. Dabei beinhaltet die Orakelbefragung nicht selten das Opfern von Tieren. Das Huhn, das Zicklein und ausnahmsweise auch das Rind sind einige der Opfergaben an die Gottheiten, um ein Unglück abzuwenden. In der Zeit, in der es z. B. keine Krankenhäuser in den Fon-Gebieten gab, pflegte und pflegt die Bevölkerung bis heute im Krankheitsfall einen der traditionellen Priester aufzusuchen, die als Heiler fungieren. Ihnen obliegt die Aufgabe, nach einer Orakelbefragung den Gottheiten Opfergaben darzubieten, damit die kranken Personen geheilt werden können. Dieser Brauch ist nicht nur unter Fon-Angehörigen, sondern auch bei weiteren Volksgruppen Südbenins und in vielen Ländern Westafrikas verbreitet. So meint der von der Elfenbeinküste stammende Ethnologe *Manou Kouassi*:

Bei Krankheit und anderen wichtigen Anlässen sowie zur „Behebung“ von Unfruchtbarkeit ist der geistige Beistand vonnöten, der durch Opferzeremonie erfolgen soll. Meist sind es Priester oder Hellseher, die die Opfer bestimmen; im Traum kann auch der Betreffende „sehen“, was er opfern soll. Muss jemand größere und im volkstümlichen Sinn wichtigere Tiere darbringen (sie reichen von Hühnern bis zu Rindern), so ist dies ein Hinweis auf den Ernst der Lage (*Kouassi 1986: 140*).

Bedeutung: schlimmer werden, sich verschlechtern

Beispiel: Trotz aller Maßnahmen, die die Regierenden gegen die Corona-Pandemie ergriffen haben, steigt die Zahl der mit Corona Infizierten immer weiter an. Die Lage hat das Zicklein abgelehnt, um das Rind anzunehmen.

(14) è gú hú lengbor

Wörtl.: [dumm; als; Schaf]

Dt.: dümmen sein als ein Schaf

Kommentar: Im Allgemeinen werden Schafe für dumm gehalten. Viele Sprüche, auch auf Deutsch, weisen darauf hin.¹⁹ Dies stimmt Studien zufolge aber nicht. Dass Schafe intelligent sind, ist anhand von Tests u.a. an der Universität von Cambridge schon systematisch untersucht worden.²⁰ Die Redensart geht wahrscheinlich von einer Beobachtung der Verhaltensweisen von Schafen aus, nach der diese Menschen – sogar Fremden – instinktiv folgen.

Bedeutung: sehr dumm sein

Beispiel: Dieser Mann ist dümmen als ein Schaf.

(15) è hùn vǎ

Wörtl.: [jmd.; aufmachen; Schwanz]

Dt.: den Schwanz aufreißen

Kommentar: „Vǎ“ bezeichnet auf Fon den Schwanz eines Vogels oder eines Fisches. Bei der letzteren Tierart bezeichnet das Wort auch die Schwanzflosse. Die Redensart verweist auf den Sexappeal des Weibchens der angesprochenen Tierart und darüber hinaus auf deren jeweilige Verhaltensweisen vor bzw. bei der Paarung. Auf den ersten Blick verweist die Redensart auf Personen weiblichen Geschlechts. Sie wird manchmal auch übertragend für Personen männlichen Geschlechts verwendet.

Bedeutung: mehrere Liebhaber haben, pervers sein, verwöhnt sein

Beispiel: Seitdem diese Studentin nicht mehr mit ihren Eltern zusammenlebt, hat sie den Schwanz aufgerissen.

¹⁹ Vgl. <https://www.schafsnase.com/2014/09/16/schafe-und-dumme-witze-oder-sprueche/> [22.07.2022].

²⁰ Näheres unter: <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/der-schaerfste-verstand-auf-dem-bauernhof-100.html> [22.07.2022].

(16) è jijon azìn nyinyon jí

Wörtl.: [sitzen; Ei; faul; auf]

Dt.: auf faulen Eiern sitzen

Kommentar: Faule Eier stinken, wenn sie zerbrochen werden. „Auf faulen Eiern sitzen“ bedeutet implizit, dass man die Eier nicht nur zerbrochen hat, sondern auch deren charakteristischen schwefelartigen Geruch einatmet, was unangenehm ist.

Bedeutung: fehl am Platz sein, in einer schwierigen Lage sein, Problemen bzw. einer Gefahr ausgesetzt sein

Beispiel: Seitdem der Leiter dieser Firma der Korruption verdächtigt wird, sitzt er auf faulen Eiern.

(17) È mà dò tó gbor gbè o, é mà kà dó tó nyi gbè o

Wörtl.: [nicht; hören; Ziegenbock; Stimme; nicht; auch; hören; Rind; Stimme]

Dt.: weder auf das Meckern des Ziegenbocks noch auf das Muhen der Kuh hören

Kommentar: Ziegenböcke und Kühe sind laut schreiende Tiere. Bei Letzteren ist der Schrei schriller. Die Redensart fordert dazu auf, bei Unternehmungen nicht auf böse Zungen zu hören und zielstrebig vorzugehen.

Bedeutung: bösen Zungen nicht Rechnung tragen, zielstrebig vorgehen

Beispiel: Wenn ihr bis zum Ende eures Lebens zusammenleben möchtet, solltet ihr weder auf das Meckern des Ziegenbocks noch auf das Muhen der Kuh hören.

(18) è mè gbor bor fún dèwù

Wörtl.: [man; abflammen; Ziegenbock; und; Haar; stehenbleiben; darauf]

Dt.: den Ziegenbock abflammen und es sind noch Haare darauf zu finden

Kommentar: Das Ziegenfleisch gilt als eine der am häufigsten verzehrten Fleischsorten bei den Fon. Nicht von ungefähr wird dort ein Markt Bohicon genannt. Das Wort ist eine Verzerrung des Fon-Wortes Gboxicon und setzt sich aus „Gbo“ (Ziege), „xi“ (Markt) und „con“ (unweit von) zusammen und bedeutet „Ziegenmarkt“, also den Markt, wo Ziegen verkauft werden. Heutzutage werden aber allerlei Produkte auf dem Markt verkauft (vgl.

Lanmadousselo 2021: 167). Ob bei Volksfesten, kulturellen oder kultischen Veranstaltungen schlachten die Fon häufig auch Ziegen. Das Fell der geschlachteten Ziege wird abgeschabt, um sich ihrer Haare zu entledigen. Anschließend werden die Eingeweide der Ziege entfernt und die essbaren Teile davon gesäubert. Ein abgeflammter Ziegenbock, auf dem noch Haare zu sehen sind, ist nicht gut bzw. nicht professionell abgeflammt worden.

Bedeutung: eine Arbeit bzw. Aufgabe nicht vollständig ausführen, ein Versprechen nicht halten

Beispiel: Du hast mir gestern versprochen, zu mir zu kommen. Aber du hast dich nicht sehen lassen. Wie hast du denn den Ziegenbock abgeflammt und es sind noch Haare darauf zu finden?

(19) É nyi ajakà mlon gbá jí

Wörtl.: [sein; Maus; legen; Kiste; auf]

Dt.: eine auf der Kiste liegende Maus sein

Kommentar: Die Maus ist ein Nagetier aus der Überfamilie der Mäuseartigen. Die Maus, von der in der Redensart gesprochen wird, ist eine Hausmaus. In Benin leben Hausmäuse in vielen Fällen mit den Menschen zusammen. D. h. sie sind in vielen Wohnhäusern zu finden und nagen oft an Lebensmitteln und manchmal auch an Wertsachen wie Kleidungsstücken. Dabei gehen Mäuse sehr geschickt vor, um nicht ertappt und getötet zu werden. Um ihre Gegenstände vor dem Nagen der Mäuse zu schützen, legen manche Fon diese in Kisten. Auf solch eine Kiste verweist die Redensart. Mit der Redensart ist implizit gemeint, dass eine Maus, deren Versteck sich auf solch einer Kiste befindet, nicht geschickt ist und getötet werden kann. Die Redensart wird in mehreren Kontexten verwendet.

Bedeutung: dumm sein, ein Dummkopf sein, unschuldig sein, nicht für etwas (Schlimmes) verantwortlich sein, nicht versiert sein

Beispiel: Im Fach Politik bin ich eine auf der Kiste liegende Maus.

(20) è nyi kànnùgbor mèdè ton á

Wörtl.: [sein; um den Hals Ziegenbock; jemand; von; nicht]

Dt.: kein Ziegenbock sein, der von jmdm. an der Leine geführt wird

Kommentar: Ziegen werden in den meisten Fällen bei den Fon und weiteren Volksgruppen Benins zuhause in Ställen gezüchtet. Neue Ziegen, denen das Zuhause nicht vertraut ist, werden zuerst an die Leine gelegt und festgebunden, damit sie nicht nach draußen gehen können und sich verirren. Man bringt sie oft mit der Leine hinaus.

Bedeutung: keiner sein, den man leicht manipulieren kann; nicht jmds. Sklave sein

Beispiel: „Es reicht! Ich habe für heute genug für Sie gemacht. Ich bin nicht Ihr Ziegenbock an der Leine“, sagte der Tagelöhner seinem Vorgesetzten.

(21) *è nyin xú bò ján dó vègò mè nú mè*

Wörtl.: [sein; Gräte; stecken bleiben; Hals; in; einer]

Dt.: die Gräte sein, die einem im Hals stecken bleibt

Kommentar: Eine Fischgräte, die einem im Halse stecken bleibt, ist sehr unangenehm und verursacht Hustenreiz. Man sollte sie deshalb schnell aus dem Hals entfernen.

Bedeutung: ein hinderliches Element sein, ein Hindernis sein

Beispiel: Korruption ist die Gräte, die der Entwicklung afrikanischer Länder im Hals stecken bleibt.

(22) *è nylä kàn hú hă*

Wörtl.: [hässlicher sein; als; Cynocephalus]

Dt.: hässlicher sein als ein Cynocephalus

Kommentar: Der Cynocephalus, auch „Kynocephale“, ist eine Bezeichnung für alle Affen, deren Schnauze wie die eines Hundes verlängert ist, z. B. Paviane, Drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*) und Mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*). Die Cynocephala gehören zur Familie der Cercopithecidae.²¹ Der Name Cynocephalus bezieht sich nicht auf eine bestimmte Primatenart²². Die Redensart wird als Schimpfwort an einen Menschen gerichtet und verweist nicht nur auf die Nase der beschimpften Person, sondern auf ihr ganzes Gesicht.

Bedeutung: im Gesicht einem Cynocephalus ähneln, sehr hässlich sein

²¹ Vgl. www.wikispecies.de [03.06.2022].

²² <https://fr.wiktionary.org/wiki/cynoc%C3%A9phale> [03.06.2022].

Beispiel: Der Mann dort ist hässlicher als ein Cynocephalus.

(23) è sà gbor bó hen kàn ton

Wörtl.: [verkaufen; Ziegen(bock); und; Halsband; für sich behalten; sein bzw. ihr]

Dt.: eine Ziege bzw. einen Ziegenbock verkaufen und das Halsband noch behalten

Kommentar: Ziegen bzw. Ziegenböcke, die auf dem Markt zum Verkauf angeboten werden, tragen in Benin oft ein Halsband, damit sie nicht entwischen. Insofern kann nicht von einem Verkauf eines Ziegenbocks die Rede sein, wenn dieser immer noch an der Leine festgehalten wird und der Besitzer bzw. die Besitzerin die Leine in der Hand hält.

Bedeutung: etwas ist eine Täuschung, ein Betrug

Beispiel: „Eine Ziege verkaufen und das Halsband noch behalten“, so interpretieren viele frankofone Afrikaner die Selbstständigkeit ihrer Länder.

(24) è vivi hú gbortó

Wörtl.: [das; lecker sein; als; ein Ziegenbockohr]

Dt.: leckerer sein als ein Ziegenbockohr

Kommentar: Der Ziegenbock ist bei den Fon u. a. ein Haustier, dessen Fleisch häufig konsumiert wird. Ein Körperteil des Ziegenbocks, der den Fon besonders gut schmeckt, ist das Ohr.

Bedeutung: sehr lecker sein, sehr interessant sein

Beispiel: Goethes Werk „Iphigenie auf Tauris“ ist leckerer als ein Ziegenbockohr.

(25) è xwédó mè corcorcor lengbor dorhún

Wörtl.: [man; folgen; jmdm.; dummerweise; ein Schaf; wie]

Dt.: jmdm. dumm wie ein Schaf folgen

Kommentar: Die Redensart geht wahrscheinlich von einer Beobachtung der Verhaltensweise von Schafen aus, nach der diese Menschen – sogar Fremden – instinktiv folgen.

Bedeutung: jmdm. instinktiv bzw. ohne zu überlegen folgen, bedingungslos auf jmds. Seite stehen

Beispiel: Dieser eifersüchtige Mann folgt seiner Frau dumm wie ein Schaf.

(26) *É yi hamè hú jigan***Wörtl.:** [Er bzw. sie; eingehen; Freundschaft; als; Sandfloh]**Dt.:** Wenn es darum geht, sich Freunde zu machen, ist er bzw. sie bohrender als ein Sandfloh (wiss.: *Tunga penetrans*).**Kommentar:** Der Sandfloh kommt vor allem in tropischen Gebieten vor. Er ist ein Insekt, das Säugetiere und Menschen beißt. Der Sandflohbiß löst im Vergleich zu anderen Insekten einen stärkeren Juckreiz bei den Opfern aus. Das Sandflohweibchen kann sich bei Säugetieren und Menschen in die Haut, vor allem am Fuß, einbohren und Eier legen.**Bedeutung:** gut vernetzt sein, sich leicht und schnell Freunde machen**Beispiel:** Der 1961 in Senegal geborene Karamba Diaby kam in den 1980er Jahren nach Deutschland. Seit 2013 sitzt er als afrodeutscher Abgeordneter für die SPD im Deutschen Bundestag. Man sagt von ihm, er sei bohrender als ein Sandfloh, wenn es darum geht, sich Freunde zu machen, weshalb er sich in Deutschland leicht integriert hat.**(27) *Gbàgbà wè ká nú wè à?*****Wörtl.:** [Ziegenbock; sein; du]**Dt.:** Bist du ein Ziegenbock?**Kommentar:** Ein Ziegenbock kann sich mit mehreren Ziegen paaren. In der Zucht wird ein Bock für 30 bis 40 Ziegen eingesetzt.²³ Allein diese Tatsache ist schon eine große Leistung. Wird ein Mann in dieser Hinsicht mit einem Bock verglichen, verweist das auf seine große erotische und sexuelle Leistung.**Bedeutung:** ein Schürzenjäger sein**Beispiel:** Der Mann dort sucht ständig Frauen für sexuelle Beziehungen. Ist er ein Ziegenbock?**(28) *Hwí jè non tòn awì lè sín dàdà*****Wörtl.:** [du; nur; kennen; Katzen; die; ihre; ältere Schwestern]**Dt.:** Die älteren Schwestern der Katzen kennst du allein!**Kommentar:** Das Katzenalter wird nicht wie das Menschenalter berechnet. Einer alten Legende zufolge, die in den westlichen Gesellschaften verbreitet war, entspricht ein Menschenjahr sie-

²³ <https://www.ziege.ch/ziegenhaltung/ziegenbocktipps/index.html>. [04.02.2023].

ben Katzenjahren. Doch wie wird ein Katzenalter in Menschenjahren berechnet? Eine Katze altert nicht linear. In den ersten Lebensjahren altern junge Katzen schneller als im Erwachsenenalter. So kann eine 12 Monate alte Katze als ein „Teenager“ betrachtet werden. Erst mit zwei Jahren wird sie erwachsen, was einem Alter von etwa 24 Jahren bei einem Menschen entspricht. Danach entspricht jedes weitere Jahr vier Menschenjahren. Man schätzt also, dass ein Katzenalter von 10 Jahren etwa 56 Menschenjahren entspricht. Nach 20 Jahren kann eine Katze als „hundertjährig“ betrachtet werden. Hierbei ist hinzuzufügen, dass die durchschnittliche Lebensdauer eines Katers 13 Jahre beträgt, die einer Katze dagegen 15 Jahre.²⁴ Die komplexe Umrechnung des Katzenalters ins Menschenalter liegt der Redensart zugrunde.

Bedeutung: ein Besserwisser sein, enzyklopädisch gebildet sein, sehr gut informiert sein

Beispiel: Der Mann dort kennt die Namen aller Abgeordneten auswendig, die 2022 im Europäischen Parlament sitzen. „Die älteren Schwestern der Katzen kennst du allein!“, sagte ihm sein Gesprächspartner.

(29) *hù agbò dó mè*

Wörtl.: [töten; Büffel; für; jmd.]

Dt.: für jmdn. einen Büffel töten

Kommentar: Der Büffel ist ein Wildtier, das in Benin schwer zu erschießen ist. Für jemanden einen Büffel zu töten, ist in diesem Fall ein Zeichen von Großzügigkeit, Dankbarkeit und Wertschätzung.

Bedeutung: jmdm. gegenüber Großzügigkeit, Dankbarkeit zeigen

Beispiel: Indem der Sohn seiner Mutter zu ihrem Geburtstag ein neues Auto geschenkt hat, hat er für sie einen Büffel getötet.

(30) *Jorhon ná nyí òn bor é ná mon nuklún jè kokló adorwé yonú*

Wörtl.: [Wind; werden; wehen; gleich; und; man; werden; sehen; in; Silberreihler; Hinterteil]

²⁴ Alle Informationen zur Berechnung des Katzenalters wurden dem folgenden Link entnommen: <https://www.lefigaro.fr/animaux/esperance-de-vie-calcul-en-annes-humaines-tout-savoir-sur-l-age-de-votre-chat-20211027> [04.08.2022].

Dt.: Der Wind wird gleich wehen und man wird das Hinterteil des Silberreihers sehen können

Kommentar: Der Silberreihher (wiss.: *Ardea alba*) ist ein Vogel aus der Familie der Reiher aus der Ordnung Pelecaniformes, der in Afrika, Europa und Asien verbreitet ist. In Afrika im Allgemeinen und in Benin im Besonderen ist er vor allem in der Trockenzeit zu finden. In Deutschland war er bisher eine Ausnahmeerscheinung, obwohl seit einigen Jahrzehnten die Zahl seiner Beobachtungen zugenommen hat²⁵. In der Redensart ist von den langen Schulterfedern und Schwanzfedern des Silberreihers die Rede. Allerdings verstecken diese das Hinterteil des Silberreihers, so dass man es nicht sehen kann, es sei denn, der Wind hilft dabei.

Bedeutung: hoffen, dass durch das Zusammentreffen einer Situation etwas Verborgenes entdeckt wird, die Wirklichkeit entdecken

Beispiel: Obwohl der reiche Geschäftsmann dubiose Geschäfte macht, wird er noch nicht von der Polizei festgenommen. „Hoffentlich bald“, sagte seine Nachbarin. „Der Wind wird gleich wehen und man wird das Hinterteil des Silberreihers sehen können“, fügte sie hinzu.

(31) *Kpò é do awonnu gbà nu gbor lè wè or nè*

Wörtl.: [Stock; der; dabei sein; Nasenrand; brechen; die Ziegenböcke]

Dt.: Das ist der Stock, der die Ziegenböcke ins Gesicht trifft.

Kommentar: Der Stock wurde und wird nach wie vor zu verschiedenen Zwecken eingesetzt. Im Königreich von Danxomè im südlichen Benin z. B. wurden Personen (vor allem Sklaven), die geopfert werden sollten, geknebelt, indem man ihnen einen Stock in den Mund steckte. Zum Stock wird auch gegriffen, wenn man Ziegenböcke (in Benin Haustiere) wegzagen will, die im Freien getrocknetes Getreide fressen. Ein Schlag mit dem Stock aufs Maul ist in diesem Fall angebracht, denn er ist schmerzhaft und verhindert, dass die Ziegenböcke wiederkommen. Letzteres liegt offensichtlich der Bildung der Redensart zugrunde.

²⁵ <https://www.nabu.de/tiere-und-pflanzen/voegel/portraits/silberreihher/> [04.02.2023].

Bedeutung: Auf die Ursache bzw. die Konsequenz/en eines Handelns oder auf eine negative Situation verweisen bzw. darauf aufmerksam machen

Beispiel: Die Corona-Pandemie (COVID 19) ist derzeit der Stock, der weltweit die Ziegenböcke (die Menschen) ins Gesicht trifft.

(32) *Làn non bló mon nú gbétor á?*

Wörtl.: [Wildtier; nicht sollen; tun; so; der; Jäger; nicht]

Dt.: Darf das Wildtier sich so dem Jäger gegenüber verhalten?

Kommentar: Jäger kennen sich gut mit Tierverhalten aus. Da sie oft auf die Jagd gehen, kennen sie erfahrungsmäßig nicht nur die Stärken, sondern auch die Schwächen vieler Tierarten. Tierverhalten, das *Jägern unbekannt zu sein scheint*, ist somit eine Ausnahme.

Bedeutung: *Überraschung äußern*, Verärgerung ausdrücken, jmdn. verraten, verzweifeln

Beispiel: Dieser reiche Mann wurde nicht von seinen Kindern besucht, als er stationär im Krankenhaus behandelt wurde. Darf das Wildtier sich so dem Jäger gegenüber verhalten?

(33) *sin konyi kpakpa nengbé*

Wörtl.: [Wasser; gießen; Ente; auf dem Rücken]

Dt.: Der Ente Wasser auf den Rücken gießen.

Kommentar: Der Begriff „Ente“ bezeichnet den weiblichen Vogel. Die Ente gehört zu der Familie der Entenvögel und ist ein Schwimm- bzw. Wasservogel. Als solcher ist die Ente an ein aquatisches Leben gewöhnt. Das französische Pendant der Fon-Redensart lautet: „verser de l’eau sur le dos du canard“.

Bedeutung: vergebliche Mühe

Beispiel: Die Korruption in Benin zu bekämpfen, ist wie der Ente Wasser auf den Rücken zu gießen. Ungeachtet der Bemühungen der verschiedenen Präsidenten vergeht kein Tag, ohne dass man von einem Skandal hört.

(34) *Sor wè t’afor xo ton mè á?*

Wörtl.: [Pferd; ist; reiten; sein bzw. ihr; Bauch; in]

Dt.: Hat ein Pferd in seinen bzw. in ihren Bauch getreten?

Kommentar: Pferde sind vor allem im Norden Benins zu finden. Dort ist es Tradition, Pferde zuhause zu dressieren. Könige und ihre bedeutenden Hofleute benutzten und benutzen bei bestimmten Zeremonien immer noch Pferde als Verkehrsmittel. Bei den Fon, die im Süden Benins wohnen, spielt das Pferd keine so wichtige Rolle. Die Redensart bezieht sich zum einen darauf, dass das Pferd ein Dauerfresser (vor allem Heu und Stroh) ist und ca. 60% seiner Zeit mit Fressen zubringt.²⁶ Zum anderen bezieht sich die Redensart auf einen Pferdetritt, der in der Regel lebensgefährlich sein kann. Im Sinne der Redensart wird die Schwere des Pferdefußes metaphorisch in den Vordergrund gestellt: Ein Pferdetritt in einen Menschenbauch kann eine schnellere Verdauung des Essens verursachen.

Bedeutung: nie satt werden, immer hungrig sein

Beispiel: Zweimal hintereinander hat der Bauer schon am Vormittag gegessen und ist trotzdem immer noch hungrig. „Hat ein Pferd in deinen Bauch getreten?“, fragte ihn seine Frau.

(35) *Xètablè wè nú wé á?*

Wörtl.: [Xètablè; sein; du;?]

Dt.: Bist du der pfefferfressende Vogel Xètablè?

Kommentar: Der „Xètablè“ stammt aus der Familie der Nashornvögel (wiss.: *Bucerotidae*), die im Südbenin, vor allem in den Fon-Gebieten, anzutreffen ist und sich von Pfeffer ernährt. Er kann mit dem Pfefferfraß²⁷ verglichen werden.

Bedeutung: Bist du ein bzw. eine Paprikafresser/in? Magst du Paprika essen?

Beispiel: Ich habe bemerkt, dass du nur scharfe Speisen kochst. Bist du der Vogel Xètablè?

²⁶ Vgl. <https://www.offenstallkonzepte.com/dauerfressen-offenstall/> [31.01.2022].

²⁷ „Die Papageyen, Nashornvögel und Pfefferfraße haben im Verhältniß ihres Körpers unproportionirlich große und dabey sehr leichte Schnäbel. Einige Zergliederer neuerer Zeit haben geglaubt, daß sie diesen Thieren zu Verstärkung des Geruchs, gleichsam als verlängerte Nasenknochen gegeben wären. Dieß ist irrig. Die hier befindlichen anatomischen Präparate von diesen Vögeln erweisen, daß es bloße Luftbehälter sind, so wie andre Luftzellen der Vögel in den Flügelknochen, im Unterleibe etc. die ihnen zur Leichtigkeit des Flugs, zum lang aushalten der Töne, theils auch zur Entledigung des Unraths, nutzen.“ (<https://www.germanhistory-intersections.org/de/wissen-und-bildung/ghis:document-193>) [21.06.2022].

(36) *xú asorbè dò***Wörtl.:** [stoßen; Rebhuhnschnabel; auf dem Boden]**Dt.:** dem Boden einen Rebhuhnschnabelhieb geben**Kommentar:** Als typische Bodenvögel leben Rebhühner vor allem von Insekten, Würmern und Larven, aber auch von Pflanzenteilen, Getreidekörnern und den Samen von Wildkräutern. Dabei bedienen sie sich ihrer Schnäbel, um Insekten zu fangen und zu fressen. Es kommt aber manchmal vor, dass Schnabelhiebe von Rebhühnern fehlgehen und statt Insekten und Würmern den Boden treffen.**Bedeutung:** fehlschlagen, misslingen, keinen Erfolg haben**Beispiel:** Der beninische Geschäftsmann Germain Ajavon hat versucht, Politik zu betreiben, dabei aber wie das Rebhuhn mit seinem Schnabel nur den Boden getroffen.**(37) *Yónu ton non hú asinzen à*****Wörtl.:** [Gesäße; sein bzw. ihr; töten; Ameisen; keine]**Dt.:** Sein bzw. ihr Gesäß tötet keine Ameise.**Kommentar:** Ameisen treten oft in tropischen Gebieten wie Benin auf. Sogar in den Häusern bzw. Wohnzimmern sind sie manchmal zu finden. Nicht selten kommt es vor, dass man sich aus Unachtsamkeit auf sie setzt bzw. legt und gebissen wird, wobei die gebissene Person instinktiv aufsteht und sich auf die Suche nach der Ursache des Schmerzes begibt. In der Redensart wird die Zeit zwischen dem Ameisenbiss und dem Aufstehen der gebissenen Person in den Vordergrund gestellt.**Bedeutung:** mobil sein, sich viel bewegen, viel unterwegs sein**Beispiel:** Dieser Geschäftsmann hat viele Firmen im Ausland. Aus diesem Grund tötet sein Gesäß keine Ameise in seiner Heimat.**3. *Schlussbetrachtung***

Aus der Studie geht hervor, dass Tiermetaphern eine besondere Stellung bei der Bildung der Fon-Redensarten einnehmen. Davon zeugen die 37 ausgewählten und analysierten Fon-Redensarten. Alle erwähnten Tiere stammen aus der Umgebung der Fon und ihrer Wohngebiete. Savanntiere bzw. Wildtiere (der Büffel, die Zibetkatze, der Cynocephalus, der Silberreiher, der Mungo) und

Haustiere (die Katze, der Hund, das Schaf, der Ziegenbock, die Ente, die Maus) belegen das. Nicht wenigen Redensarten liegen tierische Elemente wie z. B. das Ei oder der Schwanz zugrunde. Die bildlichen Übertragungen der Tiere auf den Menschen beinhalten physische (z. B. Redensarten 2, 6, 7, 12), psychische (z. B. Redensarten 5, 6, 9, 13) und physiologische (z. B. Redensarten 1, 4, 8, 10, 11, 15) Elemente. Sie berücksichtigen ebenfalls die kulturelle Signifikanz der Tiere in der Fon-Gesellschaft (z. B. Redensart 3). Somit gibt die Studie auch einen Überblick über die Tierkenntnisse der Fon. Die reiche Verwendung der Tiermetaphern zeigt, wie poetisch die Fon-Sprache ist. Man sollte sie gut beherrschen, um die Metaphorik in einem Gespräch auch richtig anwenden zu können.

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Sewanou Jupiter Martial Lanmadousselo
Université de Parakou
co FLASH UP/BP 123 Parakou
Benin
jupitomartio@yahoo.fr

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POLINA OLENEVA

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MONEY IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN PROVERBS: A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

Abstract: The present article is an attempt to investigate the metaphorical dimension in English and Russian money proverbs. A sample of English and Russian proverbs has been selected from various sources such as dictionaries, previous research, and the internet. The analysis was within the framework of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory as suggested by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), and the FORCE money system by Kövecses (2018). The analysis showed that the money concept in English and Russian proverbs can constitute both the source domain and target domain. Also, it was found that both languages mostly exhibit similarities in the conceptual metaphors that trigger off money proverbs. Nevertheless, in English proverbs, money as a source domain was slightly higher than it is in the Russian proverbs of money. On the contrary, Russian money proverbs showed that money constituted a target domain roughly more than it did in the English proverbs of money. This was an endeavour to explore conceptual metaphors in money proverbs in two distinct languages. It is recommended to investigate the metaphors in further areas of proverbs such as health and human relationships between English and Russian.

Keywords: English and Russian proverbs, money, money proverbs, the conceptualization of money, conceptual metaphor theory

1. Introduction

According to the work of de Saussure (1959: 66-67), meaning is based on two components, one related to the language and the other beyond it. This interplay between the linguistic expressions, i.e., *signifier*, and the world they portray, i.e., *Signified* is a mental one, as language speakers can classify their knowledge and systematize their experience in the world using languages. These two cognitive processes related to schematization and categorization are labelled conceptualization (Sharifian 2003: 188), which in turn is in the arena of cognitive semantics, which is closely connected with language and the meanings that represent the meaning (Langacker 2008: 4). Proverbs are one of the examples showing how conceptualization can occur.

Moreover, the meaning is not always dependent on language structures and senses. There are other factors that can add to the meaning beyond language, e.g., culture, experience, and shared knowledge. The extralinguistic variables can derive meanings from our bodies, which can make the meaning “a crucial aspect of mind, language, and culture” (Kövecses 2006: 3). One of the areas where these three aspects interact is the idiomatic expressions. *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms* defines an idiom as “a group of words which have a different meaning when used together from the one it would have if the meaning of each word were taken individually” (Sinclair 1995: iv). Accordingly, the meaning of idioms cannot be understood based on their constituent parts in isolation (Kövecses and Sazbo 1996: 326).

In other words, meaning in language is based on two components: the linguistic expressions (signifiers) and the world they portray (signified). The cognitive processes of schematization and categorization, also known as conceptualization, are used by language speakers to organize their knowledge and experiences in the world. Proverbs are one example of how conceptualization can occur in language. However, meaning is not always dependent on language structures and senses alone, as extralinguistic factors such as culture, experience, and shared knowledge can also contribute to meaning. Idiomatic expressions are an example of how these extralinguistic factors can interact with language to create meaning that cannot be understood based on the individual meanings of the constituent words.

Hence, the current study will explore the meaning of some English and Russian proverbs as a mirror of our world. In particular, our main goal is to explore the metaphoricity of money proverbs in the English and Russian languages. According to Kövecses (2018), the FORCE metaphor of money needs further investigation. The current study aims at exploring the money domain in some metaphorical English and Russian proverbs. In addition, the FORCE metaphor of money will be stressed in the analysis. Besides, the analysis will include other conceptual metaphors of money.

Idiomatic expressions will be beyond the scope of the current study. In addition, a lot of proverbs have metaphorical meanings (Mieder 2004: 8), which makes the analysis in the current study also limited to those proverbs from English and Russian that have metaphorical meanings. The proverbs that have literal meanings were not included in the analysis, although they are part of the data to see to what extent money proverbs can be metaphorical.

More specifically, the following research questions need to be addressed:

- 1. To what extent can the Conceptual Metaphor Theory explain the metaphorical aspects of certain English and Russian proverbs of money?*
- 2. What are the main conceptual metaphors identified in English and Russian proverbs of money?*

The primary research methods for this study are a literature review and a comparative analysis of the sources available. In addition, we are planning to conduct a statistical frequency analysis to find out the main topics that money proverbs address in English and Russian.

2. Theoretical background of the research

Proverbs generally have the characteristic of idiomaticity since there are many proverbs that are based on idioms. Mieder (2004: 3) defines a proverb as “a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and which is hand-

ed down from generation to generation.” This definition can provide a distinction between a proverb and an idiom. Based on this definition, where a proverb is a complete sentence and an idiom is just a group of words, not necessarily a sentence (Belkhair 2021: 559), the data in this study will be limited to the proverbs.

Metaphor can be defined as “understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain” Kövecses (2010: 4). Then, the basic attribute of metaphor is experiencing one thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 5). Hence, there is one main domain (i.e., target domain) that is understood through another domain (i.e., source domain). The former is abstract, whereas the latter is more concrete (Kövecses 2010: 4). For example, in the proverb ‘*Money talks*’, there is a conceptual metaphor MONEY IS A POWERFUL PERSON. The source domain here is a human being, and the target domain is the power of money. The target domain is understood through the source domain, as there is a relationship between both domains. This kind of relationship can be explained according to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) by mappings, which are a set of systematic correspondences between both domains. The analysis of the data in this research will be within the Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

The way we think and act, according to Lakoff & Johnson (1980, p. 3), is inherently metaphorical within our ordinary conceptual system. Thus, there should be a mechanism or a way to effectively distinguish the metaphors around us. Pragglejaz Group (2007) introduced a procedure to detect metaphors (as well as metonymies) in language. The current paper will follow the same procedures to identify target metaphorical occurrences in the data. The ‘metaphor identification procedure’ (MIP) follows certain stages to identify the metaphorically used instances of language in any discourse. Firstly, the whole text should be read to understand the general meaning and determine lexical units. Then, based on the context, the lexical item’s basic meaning must be identified, which can determine whether the basic meaning is different from the contextual meaning. In case the contextual meaning and the basic meaning are similar, the lexical items are marked as non-metaphorical. However, when the contextual meaning and the basic meaning are different, the

reader should find out if the meanings have some similarities. In case there is any similarity between the two meanings, the lexical item is marked as metaphorical. If not, it is marked as non-metaphorical and excluded from the data.

Most money-related idioms as well as proverbs that exhibit a high degree of idiomaticity in English and Russian are based on metaphor (Kövecses 2018). In this view of metaphor, the concept of money is called the ‘target domain’ and that of (moving) liquid the ‘source domain’ “The moving substance/object/liquid” source domain is one of the major ways to conceptualize money — not only for everyday purposes but also in scientific (economic, financial, commercial, etc.) parlance and thought (as in expressions like currency, cash flow, money circulation, liquidity, and frozen assets, which all have to do with liquids)”. Kövecses (2018) stated that the FORCE metaphor has not attracted linguists when they studied metaphors of money since money has a significant role in daily life. The current study will pay more attention to the metaphor of money with a different kind of corpus from Kövecses 2018, i.e., in English and Russian proverbs.

On the other hand, in the English proverb, “time is money,” it can be noticed that “money” is not a target domain. Money in this proverb is a source domain, whereas “time” is the target domain. In this realization of metaphor, “time” is construed as an important entity in life. Money is important; thus, it is being used as a source domain in this proverb. Consequently, the discussion in the current paper will not be limited to money as a target domain in English and Russian proverbs. The analysis will depict the cases in the data when money is a source domain and when money is a target domain.

3. Literature review

There have been numerous attempts to study the concept of money in English, Russian, and other languages from various perspectives. Kövecses (2018), Denisenkova, (2013&2016), Fedyanina (2005), Golubeva (2008), Mayorenko, (2005), Osheva (2015), and Paleeva (2010), among others. Kövecses (2018) studied how English idioms about money can disclose the conceptualization of money. He analyzed the metaphorical meaning

of certain idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and sayings in English. He focused on the conceptual metaphor *MONEY IS A FORCE*. He indicated that the force domain of money is employed to refer to the relationship between people and money. Thus, according to him, there are two forceful entities in the conceptualization of money, i.e., the human attitude toward money and the money itself (p. 367). Kövecses presented a categorization of the money metaphors based on the conceptual metaphor *CAUSES ARE FORCES* as presented by (Lakoff 1993). In this categorization system, he included the cause as a target domain, which can be “social power, a desire, a source or origin, an essential condition, an enabling cause, and a multiplier.” (p. 368). The analysis of the data in the current study will be based on this categorization by Kövecses. Nevertheless, the data will include proverbs of money exclusively. Idiomatic expressions will not be included in the analysis. In addition, the current study will show how money can constitute a source domain in English and Russian proverbs.

Isahakyan (2021) focused on the metaphorization of the concept of *MONEY* in English linguistics and conceptual pictures. The aim of that paper was to examine the *MONEY* concept in English proverbs and describe its meaning. The analysis showed that most examples of *MONEY* are presented metaphorically in English. The research was based on the methods offered by G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, and Russian linguist L. Cherneyko. According to them, *MONEY* is a creature, power, plant, stream, river, etc. The author draws the conclusion that *MONEY* in the English language is understood metaphorically and presented as a creature. The study only examined English proverbs, which may not represent all metaphorical uses of money. The research did not consider the cultural and historical context and relied heavily on methods without evaluating their applicability. Further research is needed to fully understand the metaphorical use of money in the English language.

Kilyeni and Silaški (2014) studied money metaphors in economic and business terminology in English. In particular, the authors focused on the *MONEY IS SOLID* metaphor, which is used for the conceptualization of money and finance in English. The terms for analysis were extracted from various English dictionaries of business and economics. The authors chose 55 terms and expres-

sions that linguistically express the MONEY IS SOLID metaphor and categorized them according to the conceptual mappings (e.g., THE AMOUNT OF MONEY IS BUILDING, LOSING MONEY IS SINKING, THE AMOUNT OF MONEY IS FLOATING, etc.). As a result, the authors concluded that the conceptualization of money as a solid matter reflects a higher degree of productivity than the conceptualization of money as a liquid matter in the frame of metaphorical mappings. Kilyeni and Silaški's study on money metaphors in English economic and business terminology is insightful but has limitations. They only used terms from dictionaries, and the categorization may not fully capture nuances. Additionally, cultural and historical contexts are not discussed. More research is needed to fully understand the metaphorical use of money in English.

Osheva (2015) made another attempt in her study to examine the MONEY concept in English and American proverbs. The aim of the paper is to reveal the cultural components of the MONEY concept in both English and American cultures. The data was taken from the proverb dictionary by W. Mieder. The proverbs were classified into semantic groups, such as money means value, MONEY MEANS EVIL, EASY MONEY, LACK OF MONEY, etc. The author stated that people from English culture do not talk about money: it is a cultural taboo, while in American culture, parents encourage their kids to earn some pocket money, and it is appreciated to work hard to have more money. The study only uses data from one proverb dictionary and makes broad generalizations about culture without sufficient evidence. The author's conclusion oversimplifies complex cultural attitudes and beliefs. More research is needed to understand the metaphorical use of money in these contexts.

Denisenkova (2013) conducted a diachronic analysis of the concept of MONEY in English and Russian. Thus, she analyzed the development of money in Russia and Great Britain and tried to conduct research on the formation of MONEY terminology in both languages. The author showed the abnormal connection between money development and money evolution in English and Russian. In conclusion, she demonstrated similar features of MONEY concepts in the two languages.

In another study, Denisenkova (2016) researched money proverbs in the English and Russian languages from a semantic

perspective. The author selected 100 proverbs (50 English proverbs and 50 Russian proverbs about money), and divided them into semantic groups, such as money is the engine of our society, the corruptive nature of money, money as an award for hard labor, money as a social tool, etc. Also, the author attempted a comparative analysis of money-related proverbs and made a correlation between the mentalities of Russian and English speakers. In addition, she stressed the role of money in both cultures based on the results of the study. The analysis in Denisenkova's two studies was not within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, unlike the current study. Further research is needed to fully understand the concept of money in both languages.

Ermakova (2012) examined the overlapping of the concept of MONEY in Russian and French in her work. The goal of this study was to investigate the means of expression MONEY concept in both Russian and French paremiology. The author chose 73 Russian and 55 French paremias about money. Next, she classified two groups of paremias about money. The first group includes paremias with the same meaning and lexical content, and the second group contains paremias with similar meanings but diverse lexical content. Ermakova's study on the overlap of money concepts in Russian and French paremiology has interesting insights but some limitations. The sample size of paremias analyzed is small, and the classification of paremias into two groups oversimplifies the complexities of their metaphorical use. Additionally, the study does not employ the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which limits its ability to fully understand the metaphorical use of money in both languages.

In addition, Korbut and Huizi (2015) made an attempt to investigate the traditional layer of the MONEY concept in Chinese and Russian. The authors studied Chinese and Russian fairy tales and proverbs. They discovered that the Russian MONEY concept mainly has negative connotations about money, while the Chinese include positive connotations.

Moiseeva, Remizova, and Nesterova (2019) investigated the protheconomic concept of MONEY. The researchers clarified that this concept is manifested differently in commonplace and scientific spheres. According to the authors, the concept of MONEY is one of such protheconomic concepts as WEALTH, POVERTY, LA-

BOUR, AND PROPERTY. The results of the study state that ‘the scientific conscience deals with concrete terms, while the common national collective conscience gives preference to brief figurative statements, in which it stores the whole nation’s experience and centuries-old wisdom’ (p. 4). Based on that assumption, the current paper will try to highlight the issue of a common national collective conscience, and how it varies from one culture to another, i.e., Russian culture vs. American/British culture in terms of the concept of money.

Another investigation of the concept of MONEY was conducted in the St. Petersburg population at the beginning of the 1990s by Rathmayr (2004). The author discussed the conceptual change of money by devising data that was collected from a corpus of interviews recorded in St. Petersburg in 1993 (16 interviews in total with Russian native speakers). Rathmayr compared the concept of MONEY before and after the Perestroika period. The analysis was made through the examination of assertive expressions with metaphors, mitigation, hedging, and direct and indirect judgments. The final stage of the study was to consider the respondents’ thoughts and convictions that were not obvious. To sum up, the author stated that ‘MONEY in reality and the concept of MONEY have undergone fundamental changes’ (p. 187). He identified the following concepts of money: for instance, money as an active personified subject, money as a concept that is judged from a moral perspective, and money as an object that the respondent or other subjects use to carry out a certain inventory of actions (money is earned, spent).

Furthermore, Zalavina, Yuzhakova, Dyorina & Polyakova (2019) studied the concept of MONEY in the context of national linguacultures. The authors did a comparative analytical review of papers in cognitive and cultural linguistics regarding the money concept in Russian, English, German, and French. This research demonstrates the scientific interest in investigating money concepts in different languages. It shows the theoretical and practical contributions to cognitive linguistics and linguistic culturology. However, the study’s focus on previous research may not capture all the nuances of the money concept, and its comparative approach may oversimplify cultural attitudes toward money in each language. Further research is needed to ful-

ly understand the concept of money in the context of national linguocultures.

Zalavina (2020) investigated the concept of MONEY in Russian and French linguistic cultures in her work. The author identified lexical units in Russian and French linguistic mentalities, classified proverbs based on the concepts, and reviewed the linguistic awareness of Russians and French. Zalavina used definitional analysis in her work to describe the conceptual content of MONEY concepts. She studied proverbs using cognitive and semantic approaches. She concluded that the concept of money is universal and stressed: “Any concept has a cognitive layer with an imagination-based core because, without it, the concept cannot function as a discrete cognitive unit in the universal subject code” (p. 441). This study presented the method of frame classification of proverbs for identifying their meaning.

As far as money metaphors in other languages are concerned, Sundblom (2016) investigated the money theme in Japanese from the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The main goal of this study is to understand how money is conceptualized through the metaphorical meaning of money in Japanese. The data was taken from the *Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese*, which contains a total of 2,549 sentences. All examples contain metaphors where money is the target domain. The author concludes that there are several definitions of money in Japanese. Most of the metaphors describe money as a negative object. Meanwhile, Japanese metaphors from source domains are mainly neutral or negative. The study is limited to written Japanese and does not consider spoken Japanese or the nuances that can exist in different dialects. Additionally, the study only focuses on the metaphorical meaning of money and does not take into account the broader cultural and historical contexts that may shape how money is understood in Japan. Moreover, while the study suggests that most of the metaphors in Japanese describe money as a negative object, it is unclear how representative the sample of sentences used in the study is of the broader Japanese language and culture.

Furthermore, Maria-Crina (2017) examined money metaphors in English and Romanian with a comparative approach. The main aim of this paper is to analyze the conceptual cate-

gories of money in metaphors in both English and Romanian. The author focused on the mappings between the source domain and the target domain, and the frequency of money-related metaphors. She built two parallel corpora for English and Romanian with a total of 600.000 words each. The author used manual annotation with the MIP method and automated annotation using the corpus-based approach. She drew the conclusion that English corpora have more positive connotations of money than Romanian; besides, not all money-related metaphors contain the word “money” in Romanian. Thus, it was quite difficult to identify them without the help of special programs.

Kamyshanchenko and Nerubenko (2012) did a comparative analysis of English and German proverbs and sayings about the MONEY concept. The goal of the study was to discover the cultural components of the MONEY concept in English and German. The researchers concluded that the MONEY concept has similarities and differences in the German and English languages. For instance, there are semantic groups such as THE POWER OF MONEY, THE INFLUENCE OF MONEY FOR A PERSON, etc., in both languages. All the proverbs under study reflect money’s power in society.

Although anti-proverbs are beyond the scope of the current study, it is important to mention a study of Russian anti-proverbs from a conceptual perspective compared to another European language, i.e., German. Samozhenov and Matveyeva (2019) examined money-related anti-proverbs in German and Russian. The purpose of the study was to make a comparative study of anti-proverbial images of the world for conceptual analysis. In the conclusion, the authors showed the topics that are present in money-related anti-proverbs in both languages, such as happiness, poverty, power, and enrichment. Furthermore, a statistical analysis of the most popular themes in both languages was conducted, based on cultural aspects. For instance, thrift and ‘money is happiness’ take first place in German, while in Russian the ratio is slightly different.

Another study was made by Oleneva (2022), in which she investigated the conceptualization of money in English anti-proverbs from a cognitive perspective. The aim of the paper was to explore the metaphorical meaning of the money theme in a group of English anti-proverbs based on the Conceptual Met-

aphor Theory and the work done by Kövecses (2018). The main source domains to conceptualize money were a force, human beings, objects, plants, and animals. In total, the author analysed 170 English anti-proverbs about money. The sample size of anti-proverbs analyzed is relatively small, and the focus on anti-proverbs may not fully capture the breadth of money metaphors in English. The study heavily relies on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the work by Kövecses, which may limit alternative perspectives on the money concept. Therefore, further research is needed to fully understand the metaphorical use of money in the English language.

In addition, Oleneva and Litovkina (2021) examined Russian proverbs and anti-proverbs about money. The authors demonstrated numerous mechanisms of proverb transformations, discussed the semantic field of the word MONEY, and mentioned examples of proverbs about money in other languages. Moreover, they presented a detailed analysis of money proverbs and anti-proverbs in Russian. In total, they covered 33 Russian proverbs and 88 anti-proverbs. The authors focused on the types of changes inside proverbs and the most common types of transformations in the corpus. These two studies by Oleneva (2022) and Oleneva and Litovkina (2021) focused on the money anti-proverbs in English and Russian, unlike the current study, which will focus on the money proverbs in these two languages. Nevertheless, Oleneva and Litovkina's study on Russian proverbs and anti-proverbs about money offers valuable insights but has some limitations, including a relatively small sample size and the lack of a theoretical framework. The study's focus on Russian proverbs and anti-proverbs may also limit its generalizability to other languages. Further research is needed to fully understand the metaphorical use of money in proverbs and anti-proverbs across different languages.

4. Data collection and methodology

The current study aims to explore the metaphoricity of money proverbs in both the English and Russian languages. The total number of money proverbs in the sample is 168, including both English and Russian proverbs. The English money proverbs

comprise 116 proverbs, whereas the Russian sample consists of 52 proverbs related to the theme of money. After applying the MIP (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) to identify the money proverbs in both languages, it was found that 138, or 82% of the 168 proverbs have metaphorical meanings. Unsurprisingly, this higher frequency of metaphorical money proverbs conforms with the widespread view that “Not all but most proverbs contain a metaphor” (Mieder, 2004:8). Table 1 illustrates that 79% of the English sample contains proverbs with metaphorical meanings, while nearly 89% of the Russian money proverbs have metaphorical meanings. The analysis excluded the 30 money proverbs with literal meanings from both languages, as the emphasis of the analysis is on the metaphoricity of money proverbs in two distinct languages. Therefore, the remaining 138 money proverbs from English and Russian will be analysed to examine how money can constitute a source domain or a target domain in various cases.

5. Discussion and data analysis

The current study aims to explore the metaphoricity of money proverbs in both English and Russian. Of the 168 money proverbs in English and Russian, 82% were found to have metaphorical meanings after using the MIP. Table 1 shows that 79% of the English and almost 89% of the Russian proverbs are metaphorical. A total of 138 proverbs will be analyzed to examine how money is used as either a source or target domain.

Table 1. The English and Russian proverbs of money

Proverbs	Metaphorical meaning	Percentage	Literal meaning	Percentage	Total	Percentage
English	92	79.3	24	20.7	116	69
Russian	46	88.5	6	11.5	52	31
Total	138	82.1	30	17.9	168	100

Table 2 presents the frequency of money as both a target domain and a source domain in metaphorical proverbs in the English and Russian samples. The frequency of the proverbs that include money as a target domain is significantly higher, at approximate-

ly 70%. This clearly demonstrates the common tendency to use money metaphors when discussing money itself. In both languages, money serves as a source domain in nearly 36% of the money proverbs. This means that out of the 168 proverbs, 35 English proverbs and 14 Russian proverbs use money as a source domain. On the other hand, money is identified as a target domain in 57 English proverbs, which accounts for 62% compared to almost 70% of the Russian proverbs. The frequent use of money as a source domain, and not only as a target domain, illustrates that money proverbs are not confined to talking about money alone. Consequently, money can be conceptualized to address other themes in life, which will be further explored in the discussion section.

Table 2. The frequency of money as a source and a target domain in the data

Proverbs	Money as a source domain	Percentage	Money as a target domain	Percentage	Total	Percentage
English	35	38	57	62	92	66.7
Russian	14	30.4	32	69.6	46	33.3
Total	49	35.5	89	64.5	138	100

The discussion now will focus on the main source and target domains in the money proverbs in English and Russian. The analysis reveals that money can constitute a target domain in most of the English and Russian proverbs in the data. In addition, the analysis highlights the primary source domains in proverbs where money is the target domain, as well as vice versa in other English and Russian money proverbs.

First, English money proverbs include 57 instances of money as the target domain. These proverbs metaphorically address the topic of money by utilizing other concepts. Table 3 presents the main source domains used to talk about money, such as HUMAN STANDS FOR [2] [3] MONEY, POWER STANDS FOR MONEY and OBJECT STANDS FOR MONEY. These conceptual metaphors are the most prevalent in English money metaphors. Furthermore, there are other conceptual metaphors (see Table 3) that are less frequent than these three main conceptual metaphors including FOOD STANDS FOR MONEY, PLANT STANDS FOR MONEY, OBJECT STANDS FOR MONEY...etc.

Table 3. Source domains in the English proverbs that have money as a target domain.

Source Domains	Frequency	Percentage
Human	16	28.1
Power	14	24.6
Object	7	12.3
Food	3	5.3
Plant	3	5.3
Animal	2	3.5
Feeling	2	3.5
Fire	2	3.5
Comfort	1	1.8
Hell	1	1.8
Language	1	1.8
Location	1	1.8
Lubricant	1	1.8
Relationships	1	1.8
Smell	1	1.8
Sport	1	1.8
Total	57	100.0

In both examples (1) and (2), there is a personification of money, where it is viewed as a person or a friend. This personification is a literary device that is used to convey the importance and loyalty of money.

The conceptual metaphor A HUMAN STANDS FOR MONEY is used in these English proverbs. In (1), the three faithful friends are likened to an old wife, an old dog, and ready money, which implies that money is as important and trustworthy as a spouse or a pet. Hence, metaphor is based on the relationship of similarity or analogy between two concepts, where one concept is described in terms of another concept that is different but shares some similarities. In (2), the proverb “no friend like a dollar” uses the word “friend” to describe money, which further reinforces the idea that money can be a faithful and reliable companion. The analogy here stems from the idea that both money and friends in need are the friends indeed.

1. There are three faithful friends: an old wife, an old dog, and ready money.
2. There's no friend like a dollar.

Personification is a common literary device used in proverbs and other forms of literature to make abstract concepts more relatable and understandable to readers. In this case, personifying money helps to emphasize its importance in our lives and the role it plays as a symbol of security and stability.

Also, in example (3), there is a money-related word, namely "banks", in this English proverb, which illustrates that financial institutions operate based on logic and self-interest rather than emotions. In this case, money here is personified to convey the conceptual metaphor that money INSTITUTIONS ARE MERCILESS PERSONS. This conceptual metaphor is motivated by the notion that there are human beings who are merciless when it comes to pursuing their own benefits, thus establishing the conceptual metaphor that a human STANDS FOR MONEY. The metaphorical use of banks in (3) is based on metonymy, as it refers to the physical location where money is usually kept in order to highlight the concept of money itself (see also example 5).

3. Banks have no heart.

Another conceptual metaphor in the English money proverbs is MONEY STANDS FOR POWER. In the following examples, money serves as the target domain where power is the source domain. Example (4) depicts the impact of money as a superpower that can make the earth go around. The proverb in example (5) has a metonymic scenario, where a specific item associated with money, in this case, a purse, is used to represent money itself. The size of the purse signifies the amount of money it contains. The English proverb in (6) also depicts money as a source of power that can change people's attitudes towards the mistakes of others.

4. Money makes the world go round.
5. The longest purse will prevail.
6. Money covers all faults.

In addition, money is conceptualized in English proverbs as an object, as in the following examples. The source domain is an object such as a round object, sinews... etc. These proverbs are motivated by the conceptual metaphor MONEY IS AN OBJECT.

7. Money is round and rolls away.
8. Money is the sinews of trade.

Secondly, money and money-related words are not only considered a target domain. Money also constituted the source domain of the metaphors in many of the English proverbs. These proverbs are not meant to address the issue of money itself. Rather, these proverbs emphasize other themes such as behaviour, life, and relationships as illustrated in Table 4. The table shows the main target domains in a group of English proverbs where money is the source domain. In other words, people do use money and money-related words in the metaphor in the money proverbs. Behaviour, life, relationships, and risk were the most common themes in this type of money proverbs.

Table 4. Money as a source domain in English Proverbs

Money as a source domain in English Proverbs		
Target Domains	Frequency	Percentage
Behavior	15	42.9
Risk	8	22.9
Life	4	11.4
Relationships	3	8.6
Appearance	1	2.9
Corruption	1	2.9
Power	1	2.9
Time	1	2.9
Value	1	2.9
Total	35	100.0

Nearly 43% of these proverbs used money as a source domain to refer to certain behaviours as in the following examples:

9. A bad penny always comes back.
10. Civility costs nothing.

11. Jack would be a gentleman if he had money.

In example (9), a penny is used to talk about a recurring behaviour. A bad penny refers to a person or thing which is unpleasant or disreputable. This metaphor is motivated by the conceptual metaphor *BAD MONEY STANDS FOR BAD BEHAVIOUR*. Example (10) demonstrates that money can stand for positive behaviour. It suggests that civility has a value similar to money. In this proverb, the metaphorical meaning is motivated by the conceptual metaphor *MONEY STANDS FOR GOOD BEHAVIOUR*. Furthermore, example (11) shows that money or the possession of money can signify good behaviour.

Money is also used in the metaphorical proverbs of money as the source domain to discuss taking risks as in the following examples:

12. You can spend a dollar only once.

13. You never accumulate if you don't speculate.

In example (12), the proverb equates taking a risk to spending a dollar once. This proverb is used to encourage people to take risks and seize opportunities because it is thought that opportunity comes once in a lifetime. This metaphor suggests that money or spending money stands for taking risks, reflecting the conceptual metaphor that money stands for risk. The same conceptual metaphor is present in example (13).

Examples (14-16) present an interesting case where money can be both a source domain and a target domain at the same time. In all three proverbs the metaphor of 'scared money' personifies money as a scared or dead person. In this case, the scared/dead money (target domain) is a scared/dead person (source domain), where we can notice the conceptual metaphor that *A HUMAN STANDS FOR MONEY*. Nevertheless, money also constitutes a source domain in these three English money proverbs, representing the concept of taking risks. This proverb is motivated by the conceptual metaphor that *MONEY STANDS FOR RISK*.

14. Scared money can't make money.

15. Scared money is dead money.

16. Scared money won't win.

Thus far, the discussion of money as a target domain in most cases on one hand, and money as a target domain in other cases focused on the English proverbs in the sample. The discussion included examples of the most common domains. The main conceptual metaphors in the English money proverbs are:

1. A HUMAN STANDS FOR MONEY,
2. POWER STANDS FOR MONEY
3. AN OBJECT STANDS FOR MONEY
4. MONEY STANDS FOR A BEHAVIOUR
5. MONEY STANDS FOR RISK

The focus will now shift to the Russian money proverbs. The data consists of 52 Russian money proverbs, out of which only six proverbs have a literal meaning. The analysis was conducted on the remaining 46 Russian money proverbs to determine whether money functions as a target domain or a source domain. It was found that in 32 Russian proverbs money serves as a target domain, whereas in 14 proverbs, money is a source domain. First, the discussion will focus on money as a target domain, followed by an examination of money as a source domain.

Table 5 illustrates the source domains in the Russian money metaphors where money serves as the target domain. The most common source domains, among others, are human, power, and object. Thus, the main conceptual metaphors that motivate these Russian money proverbs are: HUMAN STANDS FOR MONEY, POWER STANDS FOR MONEY, and OBJECT STANDS FOR MONEY.

Among the different source domains, humans are the most prevalent in the Russian sample, accounting for approximately 22% of this group of Russian proverbs. Money is conceptualized as a person as in the following examples:

17. Когда деньги говорят, правда молчит. Lit. 'When money speaks, the truth is silent'.
18. Денежки труд любят. Lit. 'Money loves work'.
19. Копейка рубль бережёт. Lit. 'Penny (kopeyka) is taking care of rubl.'

In examples (17) and (18), it can be noticed that money is given human attributes, such as speaking and loving. This is another example of the personification of concepts as we saw above with the English sample. In these two Russian money proverbs, money stands for a person who speaks and loves. These proverbs are motivated by the conceptual metaphor that a human STANDS FOR MONEY, expressing the idea that money has an impact on our thoughts, actions, and attitudes. The proverb in example (19) is another case of personification where we can notice the *kopiyka* and *rubl* are described as persons that require care.

Furthermore, power is another source domain in the Russian money proverbs where money is the target domain. These proverbs are motivated by the conceptual metaphor POWER STANDS FOR MONEY.

20. Деньги правят миром. Lit. 'Money rules the world'

21. Не воюй с сильным, не судись с богатым. Li 'Don't fight with the strong one, don't sue the rich one.'

Table 5. Money as a source domain in Russian money proverbs

Source Domains	Frequency	Percentage
Human	7	21.9
Power	5	15.6
Object	4	12.5
Animal	3	9.4
Happiness	2	6.3
Liquid	2	6.3
Plant	2	6.3
Beauty	1	3.1
Blindness	1	3.1
Clothes	1	3.1
Evil	1	3.1
Movement	1	3.1
Clothes	1	3.1
Stone	1	3.1
Total	32	100.0

In the above two examples (20) and (21) power is symbolized by money. In the first example, money represents power that controls

the world. On the other hand, strength is presented by money by referring to those who own money, i.e., the rich. This is also a metonymic-based metaphor as it refers to the rich who own the power, i.e., money because the rich without the money are powerless.

Additionally, money is depicted as an object in the following example:

22. Не подмажешь – не поедешь. Lit. ‘If you don’t rub it - you won’t go’.

In example (22), money is presented as an object that needs to be rubbed in order to gain benefits. The proverb is motivated by the conceptual metaphor AN OBJECT STANDS FOR MONEY.

Table 6 shows the target domains in the Russian money proverbs where money is the source domain. These proverbs in the Russian language use money-related words to address other themes beyond the scope of the money issue. There are 14 proverbs that have different target domains. The most common target domains in these Russian proverbs are behaviour, relationships, and time.

Behaviours are described in Russian money proverbs using money-related words, similar to the English proverbs mentioned above. These are some examples where money can stand for behaviour:

23. Чем беднее, тем щедрее. Lit. ‘The poorer, the more generous.’

24. Долги помнит не тот, кто берет, а кто дает. Lit. ‘Debts are remembered not by the one who takes, but who gives.’

These money proverbs include money-related words to address certain behaviours. Thus, the proverbs are not meant to talk about money per se, but to use the topic of money to express thoughts. For instance, in (23) money (rich) symbolizes stinginess, and in (24) money (debts) stands for doing a favour. These behaviours are portrayed in the form of money in these Russian proverbs, motivated by the conceptual metaphor MONEY STANDS FOR BEHAVIOUR.

Table 6. Money as a source domain in Russian proverb

Money as a source domain in Russian proverb		
Target Domains	Frequency	Percentage
Behaviour	5	35.7
Relationships	2	14.3
Time	2	14.3
Agreement	1	7.1
Corruption	1	7.1
Luck	1	7.1
Power	1	7.1
Value	1	7.1
Total	14	100.0

Also, money is used as a source domain in the conceptual metaphors MONEY STANDS FOR A RELATIONSHIP as in example (25), and MONEY STANDS FOR TIME as in example (26).

25. Доброе братство — лучшее богатство. Lit. 'Good brotherhood is the best wealth.'

26. Время - деньги Lit. 'Time is money.'

The analysis of the Russian money proverbs indicates that these proverbs are mainly motivated by the following conceptual metaphors:

1. A HUMAN STANDS FOR MONEY
2. POWER STANDS FOR MONEY
3. AN OBJECT STANDS FOR MONEY
4. MONEY STANDS FOR BEHAVIOUR
5. MONEY STANDS FOR A RELATIONSHIP
6. MONEY STANDS FOR TIME

The analysis of both Russian and English money proverbs reveals both similarities and differences. First, both languages use money as the source and target domain in the money proverbs. Nevertheless, the English money proverbs (with 116 examples) significantly outnumber the Russian money proverbs (with 52 examples). This discrepancy in the use of money or money-related words in the proverbial discourse is an interesting area for future research. A further study may explore the historical, cultural, or economic reasons for such a discrepancy.

Moreover, there are conceptual metaphors of money that are shared by both languages in these proverbs, such as HUMAN STANDS FOR MONEY, POWER STANDS FOR MONEY and MONEY STANDS FOR BEHAVIOUR...etc. This can be attributed to the similar human experiences that people share although they belong to distinct cultures. Nevertheless, the conceptual metaphor MONEY STANDS FOR RISK does not exist among the main conceptual metaphors that motivate the Russian money proverbs. Again, this can be attributed to variations in people's attitudes towards money in different countries speaking these languages, i.e., Russian in Russia on the one hand, and English in the United States of America and the United Kingdom on the other. Probably, this variation in the use of money in certain proverbial contexts or scenarios is related to the various ideologies, societal factors, or economic impact on the language, among other factors.

6. Conclusion

The current paper endeavoured to explore the use of money terms in a sample of English and Russian proverbs. The analysis of the proverbs in this study was conducted within the framework of the Conceptual Metaphor as proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Metaphorical proverbs were detected using MIP (Pragglejaz Group, 2007), and thus, the English and Russian proverbs with literal, non-metaphorical meaning, were excluded from the comparative analysis.

Prior research on money metaphors primarily focused on money as a target domain, emphasizing that money is conceptualized in various ways in English proverbs as well as in other languages.. The current research attempted to be more comprehensive and consider money metaphorical proverbs from two perspectives. The analysis showed that both English and Russian money proverbs are predominantly based on metaphors since most of the proverbs in both languages carry metaphorical meanings.

However, Russian money proverbs showed a slightly higher degree of metaphoricity compared to English proverbs, with a 10% difference. Moreover, it was observed that money can function as both a source and target domain in proverbs of both languages. In English proverbs, money as a source domain was slightly more prevalent than in the Russian proverbs of money,

while Russian proverbs demonstrated a higher frequency of money as a target domain compared to English proverbs. Although these differences may not be statistically significant, they may reflect certain ideological, societal, or economic factors that influence how people in distinct societies look at the issue of money. In other words, the use of money and money-related words in English proverbs to address topics such as taking risks may be more common compared to Russian proverbs. This can be attributed to the capitalist lifestyle in the United States in contrast to the Communist heritage in Russia, formerly the Soviet Union (see also Deberdeeva 2013; Fediunina 2014 for the impact of the cultural differences between American and Russian mentalities, and how Americans and Russians perceive things differently). This issue needs further investigation in the future to explore the impact of lifestyle on the discourse.

The current paper is based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which serves as the underlying framework. This theory provides a cognitive explanation for the metaphorical elements found in English and Russian proverbs. The author of the paper employed this theory to demonstrate how metaphors are influenced in both languages, as well as to highlight the similarities and differences between them. The analysis showed that money proverbs in the Russian language were mainly motivated by the conceptual metaphors: A HUMAN STANDS FOR MONEY, POWER STANDS FOR MONEY, and AN OBJECT STAND FOR MONEY when money served as the target domain. In the Russian sample, when money was the source domain, the proverbs were mostly motivated by the conceptual metaphors MONEY STANDS FOR BEHAVIOUR, MONEY STANDS FOR A RELATIONSHIP, and MONEY STANDS FOR TIME. On the other hand, the main conceptual metaphors in English proverbs with money as the target domain were a human stand for money, power stands for money and an object stands for money. The conceptual metaphors MONEY STANDS FOR BEHAVIOUR and MONEY STANDS FOR RISK are triggered by English money proverbs with money as the source domain. The absence of the conceptual metaphor MONEY STANDS FOR RISK in the Russian proverbs is noteworthy and reflects how the collective conscience can impact language in various cultures. Consequently, intercultural differences can provide an explanation for linguistic variation based on shared values, norms, sentiments, and beliefs.

In conclusion, further research is recommended on the topic of money in English and Russian within other contexts such as media, literature, daily conversations, etc. This would provide insights into cultural similarities and differences between these two distinct languages. Also, another investigation can be conducted to compare the metaphorical use of money in other languages. Such research endeavours can offer valuable information for educators, translators, and language learners when engaging with foreign languages.

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Polina Oleneva
Eötvös Loránd University
Egyetem tér 1-3, 1053
Budapest
Hungary
polina0912@student.elte.hu

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ADITYA RIKFANTO

„ANDERE LÄNDER, ANDERE SITTEN“: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOME GERMAN AND INDONESIAN PROVERBS

Abstract: Apart from their status as a cultural heritage that remains relevant at all times, some German proverbs also have comparable messages to Indonesian proverbs. Therefore, this study aims to compare some German and Indonesian proverbs in terms of pragmatics and semantics with the thematic delineation of customs and cultural norms. Baseline data for this study comes from the online corpus of the OWID Leibniz Institute and a concise German-Indonesian proverb dictionary. In addition, this research also applies the Google Scholar search function to determine how often proverbial texts appear in the scientific literature. The results show that the German proverb referring to customs frequently appear in various academic contexts: „*Andere Länder, andere Sitten*“ (Other countries, other customs). This proverb is also comparable to an Indonesian proverb with the same theme. However, the semantic and pragmatic features of each proverb appeared differently. The German proverb tends to present the denotative statement without metaphorical abstraction, but it appears elliptical. The Indonesian proverb „*Di mana Bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung*“ (Where the Earth is trodden, there the sky is upheld) is somewhat metaphorical. At the same time, the elliptical structure does not appear. The aforementioned adages serve as exemplars that have been sourced, with additional proverbs to be expounded upon in subsequent discourse.

Keywords: comparative analysis, German-Indonesian proverbs, customs, norms

1. Introduction

Proverbs serve as a social tool and have a significant role in conveying life-wise messages (Samir 2021). This social function is directly a part of the language function (Knight, 2000), which allows communication between individuals and communities, whether in oral or written form. Furthermore, Knight asserts that communication means producing complex signals, whereby the interlocutor (listener) should be able to understand these signals attentively (ibid.). The more substantial the stimulus of the signal, the greater the attentional focus of the listener is likely to be directed towards it. Hence, the role of proverbs is closely related to the content (or signal) of the conversation, containing positive ideas and instructions. To reinforce the meaning of their expressions, people often use proverbs.

Although proverbs are often considered archaic wisdom, they continue to exist and have evolved into modern times. There is even a term “modern proverbs” for those that continue to be in use after the 1900s (Doyle et al. 2012). More interestingly, many of the well-known proverbs from one country also have similarities with proverbs from other countries (Hrisztova-Gotthardt, 2016), some of which include Indonesian and German proverbs. Indeed, numerous studies deal with the comparison of proverbs from different languages. This study mainly compares German and Indonesian proverbs regarding their pragmatics and semantics. This way, the parallelism of proverbs from the two languages can be established. The study of parallels in proverbs plays an essential role as it can create emotive cohesion and commonalities between people from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, this investigation narrowed down to the following questions: What is the extent of the prevalence and usage of these proverbs in the scientific literature? What cultural and traditional similarities exist between German and Indonesian proverbs? How do the pragmatic and semantic comparisons between the two languages manifest?

2. Theoretical basis

In Indonesian dictionaries, proverb is a general term that includes idioms, metaphors, maxims, mental wisdom and simile (Sugono

et al. 2008). However, this term leads to a vague understanding of the actual character of proverbs. On the contrary, Burger (2010) posits the proverb as a scientific term for linguistic category designations, as this term encompasses phenomena in everyday language use. According to Langenscheidt's comprehensive German dictionary, a proverb is a well-known sentence that people like to use as advice or a familiar reflection of an experience (Götz 2019). Other scholars consider the proverb a traditional, repeatable, easy-to-remember, generally known, recognised and famous, as well as a firmly coined form of expression that succinctly describes a rule of life or wisdom (Umurova 2005; Albrecht & Frey 2017). Dundes (1979) posits that proverbs belong to the category of formulaic language, characterized by a fixed structure of words and phrases that recur in diverse contexts. The author highlights that proverbs are often brief and succinct, facilitating their memorization and oral transmission across generations.

Though the proverb has different definitions, it is at least a specific expression rich in pragmatic aspects, hidden meanings and similarities between proverbs from different languages. From several complementary definitions, it can be highlighted that a proverb is a traditional, anonymous, self-contained, concise and stable expression, often consisting of one or more sentences. "The traditional expression" means that proverbial expressions have long existed in the tradition of society and have been preserved through daily speech. "The self-contained expression" means that proverbs can stand alone and be understandable without any particular context. "The concise expression" means that proverbs have relatively short constructions and missing syntactic elements. "Stable expression" means they appear in the same fixed arrangement in a context. Unlike idioms, proverbs consist of one or several sentences, either whole or elliptical syntax. Proverbs represent a rule of life or wisdom that has emerged from the social experience of a particular circle over several generations and often have a metaphorical meaning that is recognised by the speech community in a particular language area but whose author is anonymous. Their simple form allows the speaker to remember and recognise them easily. Therefore, proverbs, referred to as lexical verbal stereotypes, allow users to

comment on, standardise and appreciate new situations with the help of familiar social clichés (Lewandowska/Antos 2015).

Discourses on paremiological research devoted to the similarities of proverbs in different languages have been going on for many years (Hrisztova-Gotthardt 2016; Petrova 2015; Mieder 1999; Peukes 1977). It is commonly learnt that some proverbs have equivalents in both the original language (L1) and the target language (L2) (Dobrovol'skij & Filipenko 2007). The similarity can emerge in the word usage, the stylistic features of the language, the grammatical architecture and the contextual meaning of the proverb (Buljan/Gradečak-Erdeljić 2013). By comparing proverbs from different countries, it is possible to see to what extent they have similarities. Thus, the compared proverbs become easier to be identified and learnt. Some of the similarities in proverbs result from cultural assimilation and the transfer of messages among different societies, either through complete translation, partial translation or the transfer of meanings with different elements (Syzykov 2014).

In terms of meaning and linguistic structure, proverbs are inseparable from ellipsis, metaphors and similes (Umurova, 2005), because this style of language appears very frequently in proverbs, both in German and Indonesian. An elliptical sentence is a syntactic structure in which one or more clauses, the subject and the predicate, are missing. The communicative feature of the ellipsis is to reduce pragmatically unnecessary words and redundancy. Therefore, the ellipsis represents an effective means of expression (Salihovna 2020). According to Reich (2018), the omission of functional expressions is due to the need to keep the language as short as possible. Therefore, the most superficial reconstruction of expressions is the removal of elements, such as nouns or verbs. Furthermore, he classifies ellipsis into two types: The first is grammatical ellipsis. This type goes by the grammatical principle, leaving out the linguistically essential elements because they are already generally understood, e.g. „*Wie du mir, so ich dir* (As you sow, so shall you reap)“ (1); „*Andere Zeit, andere Lehre* (Different time, different lesson)“ (2). The second is an anaphoric ellipsis. It is a linguistic term used to describe the omission of a repeated word or phrase in a sentence, where the meaning of the omitted element is inferred from the context of

the discourse. In other words, an anaphoric ellipsis occurs when a word or phrase that has already been mentioned in a sentence or in the preceding discourse is omitted in a subsequent clause or sentence, but the intended meaning is understood by the listener or reader based on the context. An instance that illustrates the concept of anaphoric ellipsis is the German proverb: “*Wie der Herr, so’s Gescherr* (As the master, so the tool)” (3). This proverb features an elliptical construction in which the repeated phrase “*wie der Herr*” is omitted, with the intended meaning being inferred from the context, which is “*so’s Gescherr [wie der Herr]* (the tool is [like its] master)”.

Furthermore, proverbs are often close to the metaphorical aspect. Metaphor is a term used in rhetoric to shift a word or group of words from their actual meaning to another meaning. This meaning shift has nothing to do with literal diction, allowing the reader to interpret it widely. If a speaker uses a metaphorical expression, then it also requires the listener to decode the statement (Nuessel 2006). For example, “*Hunde, die bellen, beißen nicht* (Barking dogs seldom bite)” (4) means an aggressive person, but on the other hand, he is harmless. This proverb demonstrates a transfer of literal to figurative meaning, where the dog symbolises human character. Metaphors usually have a more profound meaning than comparison. They can thus be described as implicit comparisons since they are much more easily remembered and can be inserted more elegantly into a sentence. Dundes (1979) deconstructs the structure of proverbs into constituent parts, which include the literal meaning of the words, metaphorical or figurative significance of the proverb, the cultural context in which the proverb is used, and the social function of proverbs in a given community. These components emphasize the complexity of proverbs as a form of cultural expression, serving to convey important social and cultural values.

On the other hand, simile (comparison) as a linguistic style has metonymic properties (Muliawati et al. 2019). “*Bagaikan air dengan minyak* (Like oil and water)” (5) is an instance of a simile describing two people who can neither be friends nor work together. A simile is thus a linguistic element that compares one object and another based on similarities in appearance or property. The two objects to be compared often present themselves with

the word “like” or “as if”. Schroeder (2007) elaborated further on metaphor and simile. For example, if the sentence uses the formula “A is like B”: “You are like your mother”, then the sentence does not explicitly state how the person addressed, and the mother is similar. Does the person look like their mother’s face, behaviour, or other typical aspects? Typically, the expression of the sentence refers to a particular aspect that arises from the situation. Suppose the person concerned has misplaced his/her keys again. This context shows that the object of comparison (here: the mother) has a particular meaning: a negative characteristic. Metaphors often appear with a single word with a meaning far from the actual object, while comparisons often still require auxiliary words, such as “like” or “as if”.

Concise usage, rhyming endings and metaphorical meanings make up the strengths of proverbs that can attract the attention of learners/readers. Immediately after hearing or reading, they are usually interested in understanding the meaning of the proverbs. Rhymed words are often more memorable and can leave a positive impression than words that do not rhyme (Obermeier et al. 2013). Furthermore, metaphorical messages can evoke a more robust imagination and memory effects, which are significant achievements for human cognition (Forgács 2020). Even abstract human thought is considerable, though not entirely, due to metaphors. Thus, humans live based on insights drawn from metaphors, which Lakoff & Johnson (2003) characterised as metaphorical inferences.

3. Method

This study aims to examine and compare German and Indonesian proverbs within the cultural, traditional, and normative contexts. A descriptive research design incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods was employed to gather and analyse data on the usage of proverbs in contemporary academic settings. Data collection procedures involved screening for lexical and semantic features of proverbs, which were then categorized based on their corresponding topics. Indeed, it is an extensive endeavour to research all proverbs with their various variants. The research can, therefore, be narrowed down to a limited scope based on the

experimental corpus and compare the proverbs that appear most frequently in the existing corpora (Đurčo 2015). In addition to the entries in the proverb text, a corpus or lexicon of proverbs usually contains semantic, pragmatic and etymological information. The availability of this information varies depending on the dictionary (Kispál 2015).

Furthermore, this study analysed and explained in detail how metaphor (implicit comparison), simile (explicit comparison) and ellipsis manifest in proverbs. Furthermore, this study attempted to determine which linguistic aspects appear in the relevant proverbs. 1) If the text structure of the proverb is not entirely formulated and some words are omitted, then it is presumed that an ellipsis is used in the sentence. 2) If the proverbial text has such words as “as if”, one can assume that the simile applies to the sentence. 3) If the keywords in the proverb have other meanings besides the lexical meaning, it can be assumed that it contains metaphorical features. The research data comes from the German online vocabulary information system provided by *Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache*. This website delivers a comprehensive German dictionary containing more than 350 well-known German proverbs. The study also used the Indonesian-German bilingual proverbs dictionary by Herlina & Nandzik (2017): *„Andere Wiese, andere Grashüpfer oder Andere Länder, andere Sitten: Indonesisch-deutsche Sprichwörter und Redensarten im Vergleich“*. This book is the first dictionary of proverbs in Germany, presenting around 950 Indonesian proverbs in German translation or with corresponding meanings in German.

Furthermore, the Google Scholar search engine was applied to verify the frequency of proverbs usage and to ascertain whether the selected proverbs frequently appear in scientific articles. The most critical factors are relevance, citation count, author name, publication title and publisher name. Documents containing the searched terms ranked at the top of the results list. In addition, Google Scholar also allows a specialised search function for ‘recent articles published in the last four or five years (Beel et al. 2010). The text search is limited to the period 2018 to 2022. In addition, the quotation marks function is used in the website to refine the search results to the proverbial sentence as a whole, not just the

text containing the keywords. Ultimately, this study analysed the proverb equivalents collected based on interpreting the words as the outer face of the proverbs and the meanings as the inner face.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Proverbs within the digital corpus

Based on the data provided by OWID and in the Dictionary of Indonesian Proverbs, some proverbs discovered have similar meanings. The German keywords „*Kultur*” (culture), „*Brauch*” (custom), „*Sitte*” (norm), „*Ordnung*” (order), „*Dorf*” (village), and „*Land*” (country) were used to obtain proverbs with related subjects. The systematic screening resulted in five German proverbs (see Table 1) and two Indonesian proverbs (see Table 2).

Table 1. Results of the German proverbs found in the OWID data corpus and their analysis

German proverbs	Meaning	Linguistic features		
		semantic		pragmatic
		Metaphor	Simile	Ellipsis
„ <i>Andere Länder, andere Sitten (Other countries, other customs)</i> ” (6)	Certain matters, such as norms, rituals or values, may differ from country to country.	(-)	(-)	(+)
„ <i>Ordnung muss sein (Order is essential).</i> ” (7)	It is worthwhile having an organized way of life or an orderly character.	(-)	(-)	(-)
„ <i>Ordnung ist das halbe Leben (Order is half the life).</i> ” (8)	Adhering to a particular order or systematic approach in certain situations are essential and valuable.	(+)	(-)	(-)

<p>„Die Welt ist ein Dorf (The world is a village).“ (9)</p>	<p>Although foreigners seem much different, they still have something in common.</p>	<p>(+)</p>	<p>(-)</p>	<p>(-)</p>
<p>„Schlechte Beispiele verderben gute Sitten (Bad precedents decay good customs).“ (10)</p>	<p>The problematic behaviour of specific individuals can negatively impact the attitudes of others.</p>	<p>(+)</p>	<p>(-)</p>	<p>(-)</p>

The corpus provided by OWID contains five German proverbs related to the topic (see Table 1). Proverb (6) refers to the fact that different norms or values apply in a foreign country than in one’s own country, whether they are written down or not. One cannot confront them and should accept them there. Metaphorical words and similes do not appear, as this proverb does not express any simile or comparison. Meanwhile, the omission of words occurs. Thus, it falls into the category of ellipsis.

Proverb (7) points to the conscious adherence to a particular order, even if one sometimes questions it critically. It also implies that Germans often have a strong love of order. This proverb does not show metaphorical words and similes because the elements represent real meanings and are not similes. Grammatically, this sentence appears as a whole with the construction of subject + modal + infinitive verb. Thus, the elliptical form is not present.

Proverb (8) suggests the importance of sticking to a particular order or system because it is helpful in certain situations. This proverb shows metaphorical expressions, such as „das halbe Leben (half a life)”, to describe something essential. Meanwhile, the comparison form needs to appear. Grammatically, this sentence appears as a whole with the arrangement of subject + finite verb + predicate noun. Thus, the elliptical form does not exist.

Proverb (9) refers to the fact that spatial distance or foreign culture can become a global phenomenon through the movement of people or information from the mass media. This proverb shows a metaphorical expression, such as the word “ein Dorf (a

village)”, to depict a small homogeneous community with similar characteristics. Meanwhile, explicit comparisons do not appear. In grammatical terms, this sentence appears as a complete whole, like the previous proverbs, having the subject + finite verb + predicate noun structure. Thus, the elliptical form does not exist.

Proverb (10) states that specific negative individual actions have adverse effects on others. This proverb shows metaphorical expressions, such as the words „... *verderben gute Sitten* (decay good customs)”, to illustrate that negative traits can corrupt good values. The explicit comparison does not occur, as no words indicate comparison. This sentence appears as a whole, like the previous proverb, with the structure of subject + finite verb + accusative object. Elliptical form does not appear in this expression.

4.2. Indonesian proverbs within a printed dictionary

Based on the 950 proverbs in the dictionary by Herlina & Nandzik (2017), two proverbs were found to be relevant to the topic (see Table 2). The exact keywords, culture, customs, ritual, order, village, and country, are not directly shown in the outer language structure of Indonesian proverbs. However, they hide metaphorical meanings behind the outer text structure of the proverbs and can only be found by looking at them in any dictionary.

Table 2. Analysis of Indonesian proverbs in the Proverbs Dictionary by Herlina & Nandzik (2015).

Indonesian proverbs	Meaning	Linguistic features		
		semantic		pragmatic
		Metaphor	Simile	Ellipsis
“Di mana Bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung (Where the Earth is, there the heaven is held high).” (11)	Some rules, rituals or moral values may differ from one country to another. Therefore, one should adapt to the customs of the country where lives in.	(+)	(-)	(-)

<p>“Lain ladang, lain belalang; lain lubang, lain ikannya (Another field, another grasshopper; another hollow, another fish).” (12)</p>	<p>Each country has its own culture. Besides, each community has different attitudes and traditions.</p>	<p>(+)</p>	<p>(-)</p>	<p>(+)</p>
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Proverb (11) points out that norms, rituals or views of life may differ from country to country. Therefore, guests or travellers must adapt to the rules of the country they visit. Regarding stylistics, the proverb shows the characteristic of metaphor, while simile does not appear. This characteristic is particularly evident in transferring one lexical meaning to another without requiring auxiliary or conjunctive words. Based on this, we can infer that metaphor is more effective than explicit comparison and allows for a condensed proverbial structure. However, the ellipsis feature does not appear in the proverb but in the passive voice. This sentence already appears in its shortest form, so component removal is not feasible.

Proverb (12) can mean that every region and community have their cultural imprint. In principle, these differences cannot be coerced into being the same. Metaphors are visible in word field, locust, and fish to allude to regions, people and traditions, even though these proverbial keywords are not directly related. In addition, an ellipsis is applied in the proverb, causing the incomplete construction of the sentence. Proverb (12) is derived from the sentence: “*Di dalam ladang yang lain hidup belalang yang lain. Di dalam lubang yang lain hidup ikan yang lain* (In another field live other grasshopper. In another hole live another fish)”. Some words are omitted and transposed so the sentence becomes concise.

Before comparing the semantic aspects, it is essential to explore how popular the above-mentioned proverbs are used in scientific contexts. Therefore, proverb-related keywords were entered into the scientific text search engine on Google Scholar.

4.3. German proverbs appearing in academic writing

German proverbs continue to appear in many familiar texts, not least in scientific texts. The universal message of proverbs often forms the ultimate basis for summarising important information or getting to the core of concrete phenomena from scientific findings. In this study, the frequency of occurrence of German proverbs was compared with other proverbs in the same language and then ordered, starting with the most frequently quoted proverbs.

The screenshot shows a Google Scholar search interface. The search bar contains the text "Andere Länder, andere Sitten". Below the search bar, it indicates "Ungefähr 274 Ergebnisse (0,04 Sek.)". On the left side, there are filters for "Artikel", "Bellebige Zeit" (with sub-options for "Seit 2022", "Seit 2021", "Seit 2018", and "Zeitraum wählen..."), "Nach Relevanz sortieren", "Nach Datum sortieren", "Bellebige Sprache", and "Seiten auf Deutsch". The main results area displays three entries:

- Andere Länder, andere Sitten.** Oder etwa nicht? W Brog - mobilogschl, 2020 - trid.trb.org. Ein internationaler Vergleich von Daten zur Alltags-Mobilität kann nur serio vorgenommen werden, wenn die jeweiligen Erhebungen mit derselben oder einer gut vergleichbaren ... ☆ Speichern 99 Zitieren Zitiert von: 2 Ähnliche Artikel
- Andere Länder, andere Sitten** L Radbruch - Leidfaden, 2021 - vr-elibrary.de. Vor fünfzehn Jahren wurde ich eingeladen zu einem Workshop zur Opioidtherapie in Afrika-eine für mich fremde Welt: schon auf der Fahrt vom Flughafen zum Hotel in Nairobi (Kenia). ... ☆ Speichern 99 Zitieren Ähnliche Artikel
- Andere Länder, andere Sitten?** Welche kulturellen Unterschiede Flüchtlinge wahrnehmen-und wie sie damit umgehen T Tonassi - 2019 - stiftung-mercator.de. Zwischen 2014 und 2018 haben über 1, 8 Millionen Menschen in Deutschland einen Asylantrag gestellt. 2015 und 2016 ging es vor allem darum. Flüchtlinge aufzunehmen und ... ☆ Speichern 99 Zitieren Zitiert von: 1 Ähnliche Artikel Alle 2 Versionen

Figure 1. „*Andere Länder, andere Sitten* (Other countries, other customs)“ in the period 2018-2022 in German academic texts using the Google Scholar search engine (accessed 08.12.2022).

Within 0.04 seconds, the search engine found 274 entries for the proverb with the corresponding keywords: „*Andere Länder, andere Sitten* (Other countries, other customs)“ (6). The query was employed to determine how often the proverb was used in scientific contexts published in the last four years.

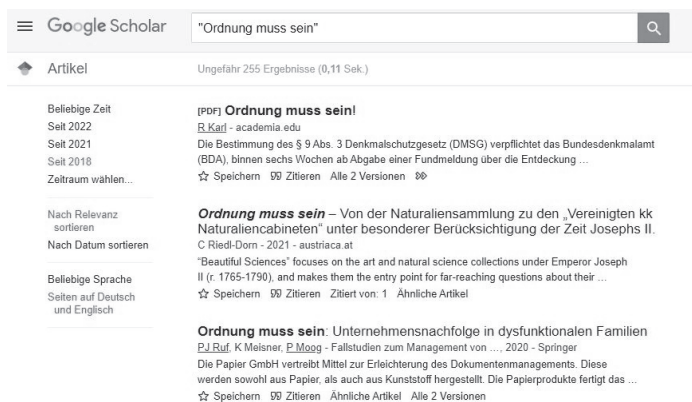


Figure 2. „Ordnung muss sein (Order must exist).“ in the period 2018-2022 in academic texts based on the search engine Google Scholar (accessed on 08.12.2022).

Compared to proverb (6), „Ordnung muss sein“ (7) appears 255 times within 0.11 seconds. This number also implies that the use of the proverb is quite popular as well. However, proverb (7) does not have close linguistic equivalence with Indonesian proverbs, neither in terms of cues nor semantic meaning.

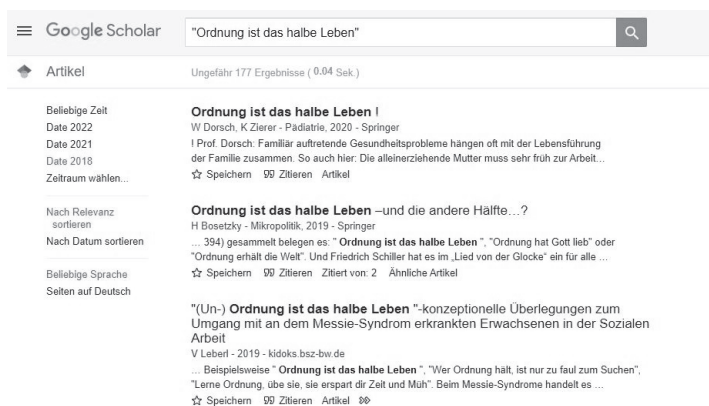


Figure 3. „Ordnung ist das halbe Leben (Order is half the life)“ (8) in academic texts over the period 2018-2022 based on the Google Scholar search engine (accessed 08.12.2022).

Furthermore, a search on proverb (8) was conducted, and 177 results were generated within 0.04 seconds. This finding is significantly fewer than proverbs (6) and (7). This proverb (8) also has no close linguistic equivalent to Indonesian proverbs in terms of keywords and semantic relationships. Therefore, the proverb does not need to be discussed further.

The screenshot shows a Google Scholar search interface. The search bar contains the text "Die Welt ist ein Dorf." and a search icon. Below the search bar, it indicates "Artikel" and "Ungefähr 19 Ergebnisse (0,07 Sek.)". The results are displayed in a list format with filters on the left side.

Filter	Search Results
Bellebige Zeit	Gespräche mit Kinderliteratur
Seit 2022	A Ritter - Grundschule Deutsch, 2021 - elibrary.utb.de
Seit 2021	... Daher schlägt das Buch ein Gedankexperiment vor: Stell dir vor, die Welt ist ein Dorf mit 100 Kindern. Lässt man sich auf dieses Spiel ein, kommen viele Fragen auf: Aus welchen ...
Seit 2018	☆ Speichern 99 Zitieren Ähnliche Artikel
Zeitraum wählen...	
Nach Relevanz sortieren	Die digitale Revolution–Neue Möglichkeiten im Recruiting
Nach Datum sortieren	A Dittes - Arbeitswelt der Zukunft, 2018 - Springer
Bellebige Sprache	... Die Welt ist ein Dorf – mit diesem Spruch wird oft umschrieben, was Globalisierung bedeutet
Seiten auf Deutsch und Englisch	Entfernungen und Ländergrenzen werden irrelevant. In einer digitalen Welt kann man in ...
	☆ Speichern 99 Zitieren Zitiert von: 8 Ähnliche Artikel Alle 3 Versionen
	Statt eines Nachwortes: Vordenken in Szenarien
	S Stenzel - Die Zukunft des Coaching-Business, 2022 - Springer
	Die in den vorangegangenen Kapiteln beschriebenen Sachverhalte werden sich nicht im
	luffileren Raum abspielen, sondern mit speziellen, situativen Variablen der Gesellschaft, (Welt...
	☆ Speichern 99 Zitieren Alle 3 Versionen

Figure 4. „*Die Welt ist ein Dorf* (The world is a village)” (9) in academic texts in the reporting period 2018-2022 based on the Google Scholar search engine (accessed 08.12.2022).

The following German proverb pointing to local manners is „*Die Welt ist ein Dorf*” (9). This proverb appeared less frequently than the previous three proverbs (6-8), whereby the search engine found 19 results in 0.07 seconds. Conversely, proverb (10) has hardly been used in academic contexts in the last four years. After a close examination based on groups of words, the search engine did not identify any proverb with identical syntax. The search engine also suggests stretching the search period when searching for a proverb, using a different search term or a more general word.

4.4. Indonesian proverbs emerging in scientific texts

The selected Indonesian proverbs were also analysed to see if they are commonly used in the current academic context. The search specialised on two proverbs: “*Di mana bumi dipijak, di*

situ langit dijunjung” (11) and “*Lain ladang, lain belalang; lain lubuk, lain ikannya*” (12) (see Figures 5 and 6). These two proverbs were chosen because they resonate with the German proverb: „*Andere Länder, andere Sitten.*” (6).

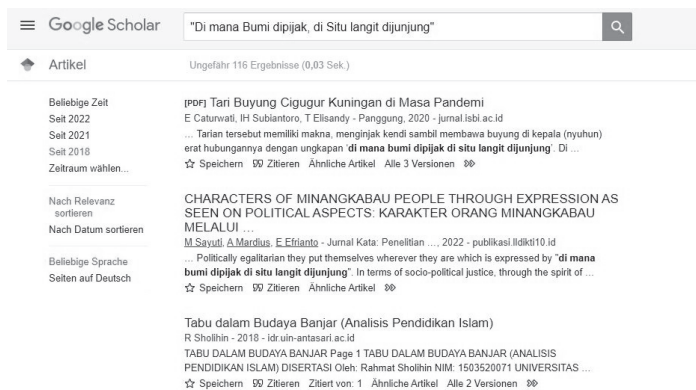


Figure 5. Indonesian proverb “*Di mana bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung*” (11) within the period 2018-2022 in academic texts using the Google Scholar search engine (accessed 08.12.2022).

Within 0.03 seconds, the search engine found 116 results in which the Indonesian proverb (11) is used in various academic contexts (Figure 5). This proverb is common in discourses on art, customs, religion and socio-political justice. In the context of art, proverbs can convey abstract or complex ideas and emotions in a succinct and memorable manner, thereby enriching the artistic experience for the audience. In terms of customs, proverbs are often used to reinforce traditional practices, and may provide guidance or cautionary advice for individuals or communities. Religious contexts frequently utilize proverbs to convey moral or ethical principles and to inspire reflection and introspection. Similarly, in socio-political contexts, proverbs can be used to encapsulate complex issues or to rally support for a particular cause or perspective.

The screenshot shows a Google Scholar search interface. The search bar contains the text "Lain ladang, lain belalang, lain lubuk, lain ikannya". Below the search bar, it indicates "Artikel" and "Ungefähr 77 Ergebnisse (0,10 Sek.)".

On the left side, there are filters for "Beliebige Zeit" (with sub-options: Seit 2022, Seit 2021, Seit 2018, Zeitraum wählen...), "Nach Relevanz sortieren", "Nach Datum sortieren", and "Beliebige Sprache" (with sub-option: Seiten auf Deutsch).

The search results are as follows:

- Lockdown Versi Indonesia**
AS Rahayu - Arsip Publikasi Ilmiah Biro Administrasi ... 2020 - research-report.umm.ac.id
... "**Lain ladang lain belalang, lain lubuk lain ikannya**," itulah kiranya sebuah peribahasa yang sekiranya tempat yang dapat kita simpulkan atas keputusan pemerintah dalam menanggapi ...
☆ Speichern ⓘ Zitieren Zitiert von: 2 Ähnliche Artikel ⓘ
- Local Wisdoms on Luang Island, Southwest Moluccas, Indonesia and Its Implementation in Learning**
K Karuna, H Serpara - Journal of Development Research, 2021 - journal.unublitar.ac.id
Local wisdom included cultural patterns of interpretation of certain localities, pure values, and unwritten norms, which serve the social life of a community and environment to regulate...
☆ Speichern ⓘ Zitieren Zitiert von: 1 Ähnliche Artikel Alle 4 Versionen ⓘ
- Morphology of Journalism Culture in the Context of Local Culture**
S Syamsyah Lestari Sjaffie, P Pawito ... - Journalism ... 2022 - Taylor & Francis
The morphology of journalism culture comprises three factors, namely, micro-, meso-, and macrofactors. Politics and economics are among the many macro factors. However, this study ...
☆ Speichern ⓘ Zitieren Ähnliche Artikel

Figure 6. Indonesian proverb "*Lain ladang, lain belalang*" (12) in the period 2018-2022 in academic texts based on the Google Scholar search engine (accessed 08.12.2022).

On the other hand, proverb (12) emerged in 77 search results within 0.10 seconds (Figure 6). This proverb is commonly used in a society's laws, customs and characteristics. Therefore, it is reasonable to include it in the discussion of comparative proverbs in the next section.

4.5. *Every country has different customs*

Based on the five proverbs listed in Table 1, proverb (6) is chosen as the focus of discussion because this proverb is most closely related to the topic of culture and also becomes a viewpoint in conducting tolerant intercultural communication. Moreover, proverb (6) encourages and challenges everyone to travel to foreign countries. Thus, he or she can observe the phenomenon of unique customs in the society of the destination country and can gather many valuable experiences.

„Andere Länder, andere Sitten (Other countries, other customs)“ (6)

It is indisputable that communities in each region also have traditions and customs which may differ from those of other communities. These cultural differences are unsurprisingly so, as they have developed due to distinct natural factors and historical ex-

periences. Proverbs at least serve as an essential hint to explain the presence of cultural and societal diversity as a representation of world heritage. As complete, the German proverbs above may be expressed in the following way: „*Wenn man andere Länder besucht, dann wird man andere Sitten erfahren* (When you visit other countries, you find out about other customs)” (13). This text presents a typical proverbial pattern where certain circumstances produce certain effects: If something exists, it produces a consequence. Some of the words composing the proverb are omitted to make it more concise and pragmatically focused on its core message: different regions and customs. There is also considerable variety in German proverbs resulting from the substitution of components: „*Andere Zeiten, andere Sitten* (Another time, another custom)” (14); „*Andere Länder, andere Gesetze* (Another country, another law)” (15); „*Andere Länder, andere Märchen* (Another country, another folktale)” (16); or „*Andere Kulturen, andere Sitten* (Another culture, another custom)” (17); and a different one „*Andere Völker, andere Sitten* (Other people, other customs)” (18) (OWID 2012). Lexpan software showed that the usage frequency of proverb (6) is particularly high (Steyer, 2017).

Generally, proverb (6) means that particular things such as norms, rituals, or values may differ from nation to nation or depending on the cultural context (OWID 2012). This proverb originally had a long version: „*Andere Länder, andere Sitten; andere Mädchen, andere Titten* (Another country, another custom; another girl, another breast)” (19). But some of the words in proverb (19) were considered taboo by southeast Asian wisdom, which in Indonesian proverbs does not expose vital parts, whether male or female. In addition, another German proverb of comparable meaning is „*Des Landes Sitten und Gewohnheit soll man halten* (The customs and habits of a country are to be respected) (20)”. This proverb is also found in French: „*Autres pays, autres moeurs* (Other countries, other customs)” (21) or „*Homme doit vivre selon le pays où il est* (One should live according to the situation in the country where he is)” (22). The same applies to the Latin proverb: „*Si fueris Romae, Romano vivito more, si fueris alibi vivito sicut ibi* (When in Rome, do as the Romans do. If you are in another place, then live like the people there)” (23) (Wander 2004). This proverb captures sever-

al key aspects of terms such as imitation, social modelling, empathy and synchronization, both consciously and unconsciously (Ramseyer/Tschacher 2006).

If we develop the context of proverb (6) by relating it to Indonesian proverbs, new insights emerge that complement ideas about conducting ourselves in intercultural relationships. Differences in ethnicity, culture and customs of a nation are a socio-cultural reality and a natural condition that should be appreciated and admired. It must also be looked out for because it has a high intensity of conflict. Culture shapes society's behaviour, mental attitude, and daily life patterns. Conversely, the individual attitudes of those gathered in a community also contribute to shaping the culture (Putra/Darminto 2020). Traditional culture has a long history and will progress with social development. Some equivalent proverbs can be found in the German-Indonesian Proverbs Dictionary, written by Herlina & Nandzik (2017). Thus, proverb (6) can be related to the following two Indonesian proverbs:

“Di mana Bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung (Where the Earth is, there the heaven is held high).” (11)

This proverb shows the following pattern: (where is X, there is also Z). Other examples of Indonesian proverbs using this pattern are: *“Dimana ada kemauan, di sana ada jalan”* (24) or *“Wo ein Wille ist, ist auch ein Weg* (where there is a willingness there will be a way)” (25); or *“Dimana ada gula disitu ada semut* (where there is sugar there are ants)” (26). This type of pattern is also found in German proverbs, for example: *“Wo ein Anfang ist, muss auch ein Ende sein* (Where there is a beginning, there must also be an end).” (27); or *“Wo das Alter einzieht, da zieht es nicht wieder aus* (When age goes on, it will never come back again)” (28); or *“Wo Furcht, da Scham, wo Scham, da Ehre* (Where there is fear, there is shame, where there is shame, there is dignity)” (29).

Proverb (11) implies that one should abide by the rules of the place where he/she lives (Abdol 2013). Every place or region has specific rules, whether they are stated in written language or not. It means that everyone should be adaptable in the new place where they live to be socially accepted. *“Bumi (earth)”* (11) in

this context does not mean continents and oceans entirely but rather a metaphor for an area with particular geographical or administrative boundaries. Within this area, cultural norms apply locally, not globally. “*Bumi*” (11) is comparable in the German proverb to the word „*Länder* (countries)” (6). Although the earth and countries are substantially different in form, both are a concept of habitation for living beings. The keyword “*dipijak* (stepped on)” (11) means to be inhabited. Every human needs a living space in which to reside.

The term “*langit* (heaven)” (11) signifies the celestial canopy that enwraps all sentient entities. It serves as a metaphor for the guiding principles that dictate behaviour and regulate mundane activities. Traditional norms can serve as tools for compelling self-monitoring and self-regulation. These norms are often deeply ingrained in the social and cultural fabric of a community, and individuals within that community are expected to conform to them. In this way, the norms can act as a form of social control, encouraging individuals to monitor their own behaviour and regulate their actions in accordance with the expectations of the community. Compliance with traditional norms is often reinforced through social rewards, such as acceptance and approval from others, and social sanctions, such as disapproval and exclusion. This can create a powerful incentive for individuals to conform to the norms and regulate their behavior accordingly. “*Langit*” (11) can be equated with „*Sitten*” in the German proverb (6). “*Dijunjung*” (11) describes the effort to comply with the rules in force. Individuals tend to want to live without rules, but at a certain level, those freedoms could be destructive. Therefore, it takes a great deal of commitment to honour and practice the rules. When a community is composed of heterogeneous individuals, it can be challenging to determine which traditional values should be adopted. In such situations, it is important to engage in a process of cultural negotiation and to seek common ground among the diverse perspectives and values represented within the community. One approach is to identify the core values and principles that are shared across different cultural groups and to build upon these shared values as a foundation for developing a set of norms that are inclusive and respectful of all members of the community. This may involve a process of dialogue and negotiation among

community members to identify and articulate shared values and to develop norms that reflect these values. Another approach is to recognize and respect the diversity of values and perspectives within the community and to develop a set of norms that allow for the expression and practice of different cultural traditions and beliefs. This may involve developing a set of norms that are flexible and adaptable, and that allow for different ways of thinking and being to coexist within the community.

Indeed, understanding metaphors from a foreign culture is a challenging endeavour, especially if the metaphor is not well-known in the native culture. This is because metaphors are often specific language and their meanings are influenced by various cultural factors such as history, religion, and social norms. When one tries to understand a metaphor from a foreign culture, they need to approach it with an open mind and a willingness to learn about the cultural context in which the metaphor originated. Additionally, researching the culture and language can be helpful, and consulting with native speakers can provide insight into the meaning and meaningfulness of the metaphor. In the case of Indonesian culture, which has a rich language of metaphors, it is crucial to understand the cultural context and background of the referred-to metaphors. Indonesian language uses a lot of metaphors, which may not be immediately understandable to outsiders. However, proverbial comparisons can at least help to bridge the gap between the intended meaning of the metaphor and its interpretation by outsiders.

Although the linguistic formulation of proverb (11) differs from the German proverb (6), both are approximately identical in their meaning. Looking at proverb (11) is also comparable to the following Indonesian proverb:

“Lain ladang, lain belalang; lain lubuk, lain ikannya (Another field, another grasshopper; another hollow, another fish)”
(12)

This proverb has the following pattern: (another X, another Z). It also appears in other Indonesian proverbs: *“lain orang, lain hati (Another person, another mind)”* (30); or *“lain biduk, lain galang (Another boat, another port)”*(31).

Proverb (12) itself means that every country has its society. Besides, each society has different customs and attitudes (Hidasi 2015). If we live in a place and benefit from many advantages, we should contribute positively to the local community. Mutually beneficial relationships should be promoted within the local community. This meaning corresponds to the other German proverb, „*Wessen Brot ich esse, dessen Lied ich sing* (Whose bread I eat, his song I sing)“ (32) also in Dutch with a similar meaning: „*Wiens brood ik eet, wiens woord ik spreek* (Whose bread I eat, their words I speak)“ (33).

“Ladang (field)” and “lubuk (hollow)” in Indonesian proverb (12) are metaphorically equivalent to the word „Länder (countries)” in the German proverb (6). Meanwhile, the words “belalang (grasshopper)” and “ikan” (fish) represent a society and its traditional norms that surround them. Society as a collection of individuals live together and adhere to the same values. In the current context, proverb (12) is used in a very broad context. Van Noordwijk (2001) even takes this proverb as a dedicated occasion to address the rescue of tropical forests, where specific approaches to create local community movements need to be adapted to local cultural specificities.

Are Indonesians wise to learn about the rules and customs of other countries? Conversely, are they also wise in accepting foreigners? Undoubtedly, a general statement cannot be made in response to the question at hand. Indonesia is an intricate and multifarious country consisting of various cultural groups, each of which has their distinctive customs, traditions, and languages. Generally, Indonesians hold hospitality in high esteem and are renowned for their cordial and welcoming attitude towards visitors and foreigners. In fact, Indonesians are often eager to share their culture and traditions with outsiders, and they typically embrace people from other countries. Moreover, Indonesians place great importance on education and possess a strong work ethic. Consequently, many Indonesians are motivated to learn about other cultures, and they have the ability to adapt to diverse social norms and customs. Such adaptability can be interpreted as a type of wisdom, as Indonesians have the capacity to negotiate cultural dissimilarities with ease and regard for others. However, similar to any country, Indonesians experience their own unique set of challenges and

intricacies, and attitudes and practices may differ across distinct regions and cultural groups. It is crucial to approach any cultural interaction with an open mind and a willingness to learn about and appreciate local customs and traditions.

Table 3. Analysing the functional parts of proverbs.

proverbs appearance	functional structure
<i>„Andere Länder, andere Sitten“ (6)</i>	attributive + subject , attributive + subject.
<i>“Di mana Bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung” (11)</i>	adverb + subject + passive verb, adverb + subject + passive verb.
<i>“Lain ladang, lain belalang; lain lubuk, lain ikannya“ (12)</i>	attributive + subject , attributive + subject; attributive + subject , attributive + subject

The functional structure pattern of German proverb (6) resembles Indonesian proverb (12): (attributive + subject) and (attributive + subject). The sentences are constructed clearly in a congruent order. Meanwhile, the external appearance employs the same pattern with different variables of subjects, such as “another x, another y”. Proverbs (6) and (12) feature uncomplicated noun constructions. This structural feature can be comprehended as grammatical parallelism. It represents a rigid form of syntactic repetition where each element is mirrored in the same structure. Often verbs are overlooked from some proverbs, and instead, phrases are simply structurally juxtaposed with the implicit suggestion that there is an underlying semantic relationship (Mac Coinnigh 2015). Conversely, proverb (11) has a complete verbal structure and complex elements, as it applies the passive form and a compound structure with cause-effect relationships.

Proverb (11) tends to employ denotative expressions. Meanwhile, metaphorical forms of expression do not appear in it. Therefore, it is almost impossible for readers to interpret other meanings. From the pragmatic view, this proverb has an ellipsis of the grammatical ellipsis type, in which the verbal element of the sentence is omitted. However, the meaning behind the whole sentence and the resulting sense can be known. This elliptical style allows for a concise formulation.

In comparison to proverb (6), proverb (11) features a metaphorical expression in which the implied significance is con-

cealed within the vocabulary, as previously discussed. The term “*Bumi*” (earth) is polysemous, denoting various concepts, including family, community, village, city, or country. On the other hand, “*langit*” (heaven) connotes customs, regulations, virtuous values, or observances. The implicit meaning inherent in the proverb permits multiple interpretations, thereby rendering it a highly flexible and adaptable communicative tool. Nonetheless, the overarching message conveyed by this proverb centres around the importance of demonstrating respect for and adherence to local customs and traditions.

The elliptical expression applies in proverb (12). It is characterized by omitted part of the verb, so the sentence needs to be completed. In addition, this proverb uses metaphorical words, so the reader needs to learn the implicit meaning. The word “meadow” represents an ecosystem that is home to many insects, such as “grasshopper”, while “hollow” represents a habitat for “fish”. As is well known, both “grasshoppers” and “fish” are creatures that often live communally and move in the same place to survive. Those keywords have figurative meanings that describe the relationship between who, where and what. If we transfer these connotations to the context of human life, then it can be comprehended that one must know the rules that apply in the society in which he or she lives.

In comparative terms, there are many similarities between two or more proverb corpora. Most of the similarities are in the proverbs’ syntactic sentence constructions, their logical patterns, thematic references and especially the intended messages, lessons or advice they convey. On the other hand, there are specific differences in how characters are named within proverbs, especially about animals, exotic plants, weather conditions, daily food, types of clothing and trust (Petrova 2015).

4.6. Does every region, however, have comparable customs?

The following discourse also extends to the question of whether each region indeed has cultural characteristics and customs that correspond to different geographical areas. These cultural characteristics are not the domain of linguists but rather of ethnologists. Despite the trend towards globalization, each region retains its unique cultural characteristics and customs that correspond

to its geographical location. The proliferation of global cultural traits, including technology and consumerism, has resulted from globalization, yet regional cultures continue to maintain distinctive traditions and customs that have been transmitted across generations. These cultural features can significantly differ based on various factors, such as historical and religious contexts, linguistic traditions, and social norms, which are influenced by the geographical and environmental contexts of the region.

However, at least proverb (9) contributes to the assumption that people who are strangers or have cultural traditions that seem far different from each other have something in common. So, this is contrary to proverbs (6), (11) and (12), stating that every tradition is different in a particular region. The following question arises: which of the two proverbs is true? Why are both known if there is only one truth? There are two or more opposing proverbs which can be equally valid. However, they tend to be used in different situations and places (Christoforakos, 2017). Thus, for society and most experts, every proverb continues to express a general truth that is accepted and repeated (Mieder 2014).

5. Summary

Cultural contexts have recently become a preferred topic in almost all linguistic disciplines, and this is also true for many studies on paremiology. The study of proverbs is one particular method of analysing society's language, culture, traditions, religion and worldview (Maneechukate 2018). Language and culture are closely linked and should be considered integrative social life elements (Dineva 2011). Regardless of their concrete function, proverbs represent tight individual but also cultural experiences. They exist in every culture - sometimes also in modified forms across cultures (Albrecht/Frey 2017). The similarities among international proverbs concern the meaning and partly apply to the syntactic structure and the linguistic style. Furthermore, most of the commonalities among proverbs from different countries lie in the logical concepts, topics, lessons or advice they convey (Petrova 2015). Considering the cross-comparison, it concludes that, in some aspects, German proverbs have similarities with some Indonesian proverbs. The following German proverb

may serve as an example: "Andere Länder, andere Sitten" (6). This proverb is closely similar to the Indonesian proverb: „Di mana Bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung“ (11). This paper suggests further research for developing a proverbs teaching course that integrates the comparison of proverbs between countries in it.

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Aditya Rikfanto
Technische Universität Berlin - Germany
Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta - Indonesia
adityarikfanto@uny.ac.id

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RAYMOND SUMMERVILLE

“EACH ONE, TEACH ONE”: THE PROVERBS AND PROVERBIAL EXPRESSIONS OF SEPTIMA POINSETTE CLARK

Abstract: Septima Poinsette Clark (1898-1987) is regarded as “the grandmother” of the Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968). Clark began teaching at sixteen and eventually grew to become one of the movement’s masterminds. One of Clark’s attributes that marks her as an educational guru is the fact that she frequently employed proverbs, and proverbial expressions as she worked diligently behind the scenes teaching literacy to the poor and disenfranchised, so they would be able to register themselves to vote and take part in political decision-making processes that impacted their lives daily. Clark’s autobiographies, interviews, and other biographical materials largely illustrate that proverbial language helped Clark to connect to the important people she taught which included Rosa Parks (1913-2005) and Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968). Proverbial language also helped Clark to communicate important values, beliefs, and pedagogical philosophy. The adult literacy and civics education programs that Clark developed fueled the voting registration drives of several important organizations including: Highlander Folk School (HFC), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). This essay highlights some of the proverbs and proverbial language that Clark used as she helped to shape the Civil Rights Era.

Keywords: African-American, Civil Rights Movement (CRM), Highlander Folk School (HFC), Jim Crow, Reconstruction, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)

1. Introduction

One purpose of this article is to illustrate the extent that proverbs, sayings, and proverbial expressions are connected to issues surrounding social justice in America. While it is focused on Septima Poinsette Clark and her use of proverbial language, it is not a chronologically organized account of Clark's life or an attempt to document every single proverb or proverbial expression that Clark has ever used. Studies of this nature were most recently initiated by paremiologist and folklorist, Professor Wolfgang Mieder, whose scholarship on proverbs illustrates several important things: (1) Firstly, Mieder's scholarship proves that folklore, paremiology, and American history can be used in tandem to reexamine important people, places, and events. In fact, proverbs, sayings, and proverbial expressions often mark important events in history, functioning as mnemonic devices (Bowden 1996: 442), reminding us of the past and most recent monumental accomplishments of important Americans, such as the election of the nation's first African-American president ("*Yes We Can*": *Barack Obama's Proverbial Rhetoric* 2009). (2) Secondly, Mieder's scholarship demonstrates that these disciplines may be used together to better understand the important values, beliefs, and worldviews of significant leaders, some of whose important ideals are in accord with basic principles under which the United States was founded ("*Right Makes Might*": *Proverbs and American Worldview 2019; The Worldview of American Proverbs* 2020). (3) Thirdly, Mieder's work is the first to demonstrate that the lens of paremiology offers scholars a unique way to study the Civil Rights Era, because several important leaders used proverbs and proverbial expressions to communicate important messages regarding themselves and the long Civil Rights Movement ("*No Struggle, No Progress*": *Frederick Douglass and His Proverbial Rhetoric for Civil Rights* 2001; "*Making A Way Out of No Way*": Martin Luther King's Sermonic Proverbial Rhetoric 2010; "*Keep Your Eyes on the Prize*": Congressman John Lewis's Proverbial Odyssey for Civil Rights" 2014). (4) Fourthly, works of this nature illustrate that examining the proverbial language of different leaders from the same movement offers scholar's differing perspectives and angles of perception for evaluating important events. (5) Fifthly,

examining multiple viewpoints may ultimately lead to a greater awareness of what some of these historical events mean for us in the present. Mieder’s groundbreaking paremiological scholarship establishes a strong foundation on which other folklorists, historians, and paremiologist may build.

Likewise, this study offers a distinctive look at the Civil Rights Era due to Clark’s unique position as an African-American female, and because of the irreplaceable roles that she played. Clark functioned largely behind the scenes throughout the movement teaching black and white people, many of whom never had the opportunity to receive any formal schooling, to read, so that they could become independent thinkers and registered voters. One of Clark’s most well-remembered sayings is, “I train people to do their own talking” (Collins 2020). Thus, she was a very outspoken and vocal leader, but she gave very few public speeches. In private correspondences, interviews, and writings, Clark used proverbs and coined several well-remembered sayings. She also incorporated proverbial expressions far more often than any other form of traditional language. Furthermore, the proverbial language that Clark used is documented primarily in her autobiographies, interviews, and through other people’s accounts. Clark primarily shared proverbial language as she worked in the background of the movement as an educator, activist, and political organizer, empowering tens of thousands of black people to stand up to racism and oppression and to speak for themselves. To understand the traditional language that Septima Clark used, in the form of proverbs and proverbial expressions, one must first understand some basic information regarding her early life, upbringing, and education.

2. Early life and education

Septima Poinsette Clark (1898-1987) was born in Charleston, South Carolina to Victoria Anderson Warren and Peter Poinsette. Warren was a free, mixed-race, American-born washerwoman who was raised in Haiti, but later returned to the U.S. following the Civil War (1861-1865). Clark’s father, Peter Poinsette, was a man who was enslaved until his early twenties to a wealthy politician and first United States Minister to Mexico, Joel Roberts

Poinsette. He is most widely known for introducing his namesake, the Poinsettia plant, to American soil from Mexico in the 1820s. Clark's parents had a very strong influence on her life. They both valued education highly and though it is unknown exactly how much education they each received, they were very successful in instilling this value in their children. Her mother, Warren, often flaunted the fact that she was born "free issue," and she kept her vow to never become anyone's slave. Warren was known for her very light complexion, religious piety, and fiery temper. Warren was known to utter the saying: "I'm a little piece of leather, but I'm well put together" when she felt that her patience was being tested (Charron 2009: 33). In the 1830s and 1840s Charleston was the largest slave trading hub in the U.S. (Davila). After slavery ended, it remained a segregated city. Racism kept blacks and whites separated, while colorism and class discrimination kept black communities equally divided, and despite being a family of modest means, Clark's parents were very race-conscious and class-conscious. As a dark-skinned former slave, Peter Poinsette was fully cognizant of the low position that he held on Charleston's social ladder, which is one of the reasons why he chose to keep his slave name—he enjoyed the sense of prestige that it brought him. Likewise, Warren refused to let her daughters date and hang around with what she called "two-for-fives" or commoners who followed crowds and had no sense of direction in their own lives. Ironically, she also expressed disdain for all white people and very dark-skinned black people. While Clark embraced her parents' educational values and determined spirits, she did not take on any of her mother's class or color-conscious ways. In fact, Clark was determined to succeed, not because of her parents' background, but rather despite it (Charron 2009: 48).

3. Teaching and activism

Septima Clark became an impressive figure in American history for several reasons. She is known affectionately as the "Grandmother" of the Civil Rights Era (1954-1968) because it is a movement that she helped birth through her work at Highlander Folk School (HFC). Clark is also known as the "teacher" of the

Civil Rights Movement because the adult education schools that she established enabled tens of thousands of black people to become literate and politically active. Clark's teaching career spans many decades. In the early nineteen-hundreds, Clark was one of the very first educators to endorse adult literacy training solely as a means of civic empowerment for scores of illiterate and disenfranchised people in the state of South Carolina and across the South. These people had been barred from voting in several ways, including: physical violence, the implementation of complicated literacy tests, poll taxes, and land-owning requirements. Clark's teachings and teaching methods have enabled countless numbers of people to engage with the political process either through voting, running for public office, or becoming teachers in literacy and civics programs themselves. There were very few people who were involved in the Civil Rights Movement who taught as long as Clark or had the pedagogical skills and knowledge base that Clark had acquired. Clark began teaching in 1916 on Johns Island. She was a devoted teacher who worked diligently to establish a blueprint for educating the poor, illiterate, and dispossessed black and white people of the South. She taught basic skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, so that students could become: literate, independent, self-sufficient, and civically engaged. Clark wanted black people in the South, many of whom still lived on the same plantations that their ancestors were forced to work, to be able to vote, to run for office, and to ultimately take part in shaping their own destinies from a political standpoint. She did not believe that anyone who lacked these basic skills could become politically active in any meaningful way. Likewise, Clark felt that education would enable southern activists to perform the political work that would be necessary to eventually bring an end to segregation throughout the South and the rest of America. Clark also felt that educating the masses would also help to alleviate other problems in the African-American community, such as unemployment, homelessness, and widespread poverty.

At the age of eighteen after having just received her teaching certificate from the highly acclaimed Avery Normal Institute, Clark was assigned to teach the rural poor in a dilapidated, run-down, one-room shack on Johns Island. The practice of assigning

young black teachers to poor rural areas was common in South Carolina. Consequently, like many black teachers, Clark had far too many students of all ages and grade levels in one classroom, little pay, and few resources to work with. In fact, the majority of the black adult population was illiterate. “J.B. Felton, the second state agent for African-American schools, praised the ‘unselfish service’ of black teachers and the ‘missionary spirit’ with which they approached ‘the removal of illiteracy’” (Charron 2009: 77). Felton also acknowledged that without state funding, black educators like Clark were essentially “making bricks without straw” (Mieder 2001: 142; Charron 2009: 78). Despite all the setbacks and challenges that Clark faced in her early years as a teacher on Johns Island, she continued to develop. Later in her career, Clark developed an adult education program that eventually proliferated all over the South. Clark’s successful approach to activism and adult education was influenced by several factors. She was always focused on professional development and on advancing her own education. In addition to earning her teaching certificate at Avery, she earned a B.A. from Benedict College and an M. A. from Hampton Institute, respectively. She sought out additional teacher education training at Columbia University and Clark Atlanta University. Clark was also mentored by several important leaders during her lifetime including South Carolina adult education pioneer, Wil Lou Gray (1883-1984) (Ogden 2016) whom she worked for during the 1930s, and the world-renowned sociologist, W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963) whom she was taught by in the 1940s. Clark gained much of her political organizing experience throughout her career as she participated in and sometimes led local branches of organizations such as the National Association of Colored People (NAACP), the Palmetto States Teacher Association (PSTA), the South Carolina Federation of Colored Women (SCFCW), and the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). By the time the Civil Rights Movement began in the 1950s, Clark’s education, teaching experience, and advanced training had already supplied her with an overabundance of confidence. She was well-versed in pedagogy, civics, and political organizing, but one thing that is often overlooked by scholars is the traditional language that she used to communicate. It is a fact that Clark employed traditional language in the form of proverbs

and proverbial expressions as a way of communicating important ideas and concepts. Paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder most effectively tells us what proverbs are. Mieder’s concise definition is derived from an extensive frequency study that he conducted in the 1980s of words contained in more than fifty proverb definitions. Mieder contends that:

“A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation” (Mieder 2004: 3; Mieder 2008: 11).

The proverbs, sayings, and expressions that Clark uses, stand out like jewels of wisdom that convey a multitude of ideas concerning her personal values and beliefs. Additionally, they are used to convey her teaching philosophy and the unique ways that she conceptualizes notions such as freedom, equality, and justice.

In working with the young or old, Clark relied on several personal principles that have been preserved as proverbs, proverbial expressions, or popular sayings that help to define her legacy. One of Clark’s most widely known sayings which has become proverbial overtime is the simple three-word phrase “Literacy means liberation,” and this proverb communicates a philosophy that Clark spent her entire life teaching. (Collins; SNCC Digital Gateway) The idea that literacy education was a prerequisite to political and economic autonomy is a tenet that Clark stood by.

Another one of Clark’s favorite educational tenets is encapsulated by a proverbial expression. The proverbial statement “to reach a person where they are,” is how Clark approached her daily work and people remembered Clark for this fundamental idea. Of course, the statement is proverbial in the sense that it is not to be taken literally. It is not a reference to an individual’s physical proximity to others. It is instead, a reference to one’s current mental state. Civil rights activist, Victoria Gray explains: “One of the things I learned [from Clark] early on...is never underestimate the intelligence of *anyone* in the community...always try to meet people where they are and receive them at *whatever* point” (Charron 2009: 326). Clark always met the people where they were by focusing on the needs of her students and the needs

of the community, and she demonstrated an unwavering amount of patience in the classroom as many of her students came to her with no literacy skills at all. Additionally, Clark also aimed to instill in her pupils that each student is responsible for passing along the knowledge that they receive to others which Clark best communicated proverbially as — “Each one, teach one” (Doyle et al. 2012: 250). For centuries, this proverb of African origins has been used to describe the process by which a single individual learns to do something like reading and writing, or to perform some other skill, and in turn, shares this knowledge with others. “Each one teach one” is similar in meaning to the proverb “It takes a whole village to raise a child” (Doyle et al. 2012: 268; Speake 2015: 355) which also has African origins, being Nigerian specifically Igbo and Yoruban. (Speake 2015: 355) Clark took special pride in the fact that she did not speak for her students. Instead, she said often that she “trained people to do their own talking” (Charron 2009: 315). The people were then empowered in the sense that they were able to communicate the same literacy lessons and political lessons to others. For Clark, “Each one, teach one” illustrates her “folk” centered approach to learning, and it is a powerful philosophy by which Clark enabled entire communities throughout the South to become literate and politically involved. Proverbs and proverbial expressions are a very important component in Clark’s verbal and rhetorical repertoire, and there is evidence that there are practical reasons why they are one of the primary ways that Clark chose to express herself.

4. Gullah culture and oral tradition

When Clark first began teaching on Johns Island in 1916, she was able to succeed because she came to the Island with a clear understanding of the Gullah language which is a major reason why students, parents, and community members alike trusted her. Years later when Clark returned to Johns Islands to recruit adult students to be trained and educated in literacy and citizenship at Highlander Folk School (HFS), it was again her familiarity with Sea Island culture and language that helped her to gain the community’s confidence. Unfortunately, this same sentiment was not always extended to outsiders. For example, her white

colleague, Myles Horton, who founded HFS in Monteagle in the early 1930s to help poor and disenfranchised coal mining communities in the Tennessee mountains, frequently ran into proverbial brick walls when trying to communicate with black Gullah community members. Horton did not understand their language including the plethora of expressions that they used, and he often wished that instead of incorporating so many folk expressions in their conversations, that Johns Islanders would be more direct (Charron 2009: 250). Clark explains Horton’s difficulty: “Dedicated as he was, ‘It was hard for him to hear them say, ‘Now this happened the night that that cow had its calf on such-and-such a moon.’ ... He wanted them to come right to the point and they wouldn’t do it.’” (Charron 2009: 250). Thus, throughout Highlander’s existence, Horton depended heavily on Clark and her niece Bernice Robinson to be his mediators and facilitators in developing the Adult Education Program curriculum and in getting the Johns Island community involved in it. Clark says that Robinson was her proverbial ‘right arm’ (Clark 1962: 140; Bryan and Mieder 2016: 352) at Highlander. Ultimately, the literacy program that Highlander would implement ran through Clark. Many of Clark’s proverbs, sayings, and proverbial expressions illustrate her deep connection to the Gullah people of the South Carolina Sea Islands. In, *Echo* Clark says, “I’ve been all over the United States and I love this country its differing dialects and geographies and customs. But nowhere else have I found an atmosphere and a people—to me, understand—comparable to the atmosphere and the folk of my native section. The Low Country, I suppose, gets into your blood. More probably, indeed, it’s in it when you’re born” (Clark 1962: 47-48).

Clark also explains an important point concerning the evolution of Gullah culture. She says that the language spoken on Johns Island is a mixture of the French spoken by white Huguenot settlers and the many African languages of the black people who were brought there as slaves. People from all over the world traveled to South Carolina to participate in what were the largest known slave auctions in America. According to records, as many as 600 slaves were auctioned there at one time (Davila). Thus, there is ample evidence that the Gullah language and dialect are the result of a copious cultural contact zone created by

people that have frequented and inhabited the South Carolina Sea Islands for centuries since the onset of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade (c.1500-1800). Consequently, Gullah linguistic and dialectical influence extends to many black and white people all over the state of South Carolina.

Clark even gives readers a unique glimpse into some of the Gullah folk terminology and expressions that have influenced her the most. One obvious example is the word “echo” from which her first autobiography derives its namesake. Clark explains what the word means in Gullah. She says:

You might say to a Gullah woman in speaking of a certain song that you wished her to sing. ‘Sing it your way,’ you might tell her, and she would reply, ‘Well this is my echo.’ By *echo* she would mean *tune*. Others may say, ‘This is my *air*.’ This latter sounds old-English to me, but I never could figure out how they got *echo*. (Clark 1962: 47)

The word echo is most commonly used in reference to literal sounds that reverberate, but Clark applies it as an expression to her own undying passion for social justice. Near the end of *Echo*, Clark reveals that the phrase “echo in my soul” is also featured in a Quaker folk song which she does not name in her biography. Throughout the Civil Rights Era, black and white members of HFS and SNCC held hands and sang after every meeting as a way of bonding. Clark describes the song as “an early Quaker hymn that originated long ago when George Fox and other founders of the Society of Friends were being imprisoned for their beliefs” (Clark 1962: 242). The verse that contains the phrase reads:

My life flows on in endless song above earth’s lamentation;
I hear the real through far-off hymn that hails a new creation;
Through all the tumult and the strife I hear the music ringing.
It sounds an echo in my soul; how can I keep from singing! (Clark 1962: 242)

Another popular Gullah expression involves the substitution of the word *signal* for the word *denomination*, as in religious denomination. As Clark explains, a person might ask the question: “‘Are you going to the preaching at the Methodist church to-night?’, and one’s reply might be ‘No, that is not my signal’”

(Clark 1962: 47). Thus, the term signal may also be equated with the word *preference* or *liking*.

According to Clark, many people who are not from the S.C. Sea islands do not understand the folk expression “too dear” which simply means that an item is too lavish or pricey for one to afford. She says that a person may ask “‘Are you going to buy that hat—or cow, or boat, or pig, or dress?’ And the person may respond ‘Py God, no! It is too dear!’” (Clark 1962: 47) Clark’s example is accentuated by the exclamatory phrase *Py God* which Gullah people often uttered to express anger or surprise.

Clark’s familiarity with and appreciation for Gullah language and culture illustrates that she treasured the Sea Island’s linguistic and dialectical traditions, and they more than likely played a major role in shaping her worldview.

5. Emerging as a leader

Throughout *Echo* Clark employs proverbial language largely when addressing issues that are very important to her such as education, civil rights, freedom, and equality. In fact, one of the very first proverbs that she uses in *Echo* appears as she is explaining the unconventional methods that she uses to gain an education while growing up in segregated Charleston, S.C. during the early twentieth century. As Clark explains, her mother, Victoria Warren, a washer-woman with little disposable income, was determined to enroll young Clark into the prestigious Avery Normal Institute, but she had no idea how she would raise enough money to pay the expensive tuition fee. To sum up her mother’s attitude towards the situation Clark says: “It has always been my contention that there’s much truth to the old adage that where there’s a will there’s a way” (Clark 1962: 23). Clark then explains that she took a job babysitting for wealthy black newly-weds who lived in her neighborhood to make enough money to attend high school at Avery. The proverb “Where there’s a will there’s a way” (Whiting 1989: 683; Mieder 2001: 511-512; Mieder 2008: 115; Speake 2015: 346) helps Clark to explain to her audience that her will to work for what she wanted allowed her to succeed at Avery. Additionally, she describes Avery as a proverbial “paradise” where she instantly “fell in love with

reading and exploring the wonderland embraced in the covers of countless books” (Clark 1962: 24). Clark also enjoyed learning from Avery’s many “dedicated teachers” (Clark 1962: 24). Avery is where young Clark discovered that her life passion would be learning and teaching.

Clark uses proverbial language to describe another significant turning point in her life—which is when she began to work closely with Myles Horton and Highlander Folk School. Clark as an outspoken leader of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), invited Horton and his wife, Zilphia to conduct a workshop on integration in which “twenty-two communities were represented, and some ninety persons participated” (Clark 1962: 112). Horton, who was already known as a “race agitator” would be the group’s keynote speaker. During the workshop information about HFS and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was shared. Clark knew beforehand that the unpopular move would garner plenty of negative attention among some of her moderate colleagues who did not want her “stirring up any trouble,” but she had already decided that she would simply ignore them. Clark brushes their disapproval aside with a proverbial expression saying: “I just resolved in my mind to wear whatever criticism came along simply as a loose garment” (Clark 1962: 115). Despite Clark’s resolve to wear criticism as a proverbial “loose garment,” she still describes this event as the proverbial “final straw” that leads to her being fired by the Charleston School Board in 1956 (Clark 1962: 112). As a result of the controversial workshop, Clark generated a lot of attention from the local news media. After seeing Clark’s name splashed across headlines, a principal admonished Clark for holding this meeting with a well-known proverb. The principal tells Clark that only “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread” (Clark 1962: 115; Mieder 2008: 96). In other words, the principal felt that Clark would only cause trouble for herself and others by getting involved with the social activism of Highlander and the NAACP. As Clark explains, even though there were those who were afraid for her job security, she remained undaunted because she knew that she was only doing the right thing by aligning herself with other advocates of integration and social justice. While her decision would ultimately lead to her firing, it also led

her to work full-time at Highlander Folk School as a teacher and later as director of programs. The adult education programs that Clark would implement eventually reached tens of thousands of students across a dozen states.

At another point in the narrative of *Echo*, Clark explains that Highlander was initially established on private land gifted to Horton by retired professor, former college president, and founder of Western State Teachers College for Women, Dr. Lilian Wyckoff Johnson (1864-1956). It was initially designed through the collaborative efforts of Johnson and Horton in the 1930s to help improve the living conditions for the hundreds of poor coal mine workers and their families who lived in the Grundy County, Tennessee area by educating them about their rights and making them aware of the many political decisions that affected them daily. Once the coal mining industry abandoned Monteagle, Tennessee, it was not replaced by any other industry, which left much of the Grundy County community poor and on welfare. Due to this unfortunate circumstance, many mountain dwellers would leave to find work in factories in larger cities such as Chicago and Detroit only to return after a short time (Clark 1962: 129). Clark employs a revealing proverb to characterize this predicament: “You simply can’t get the mountains out of the people even though the people leave the mountains” (Clark 1962: 129). This is a variation of the proverb “You can take the boy out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of the boy” (Speake 2015: 33). Clark employs this well-known proverb construction to better characterize the mountain population of Grundy County as a close-knit and friendly group who places a great amount of value on their home despite the ever-increasing poverty rate. Despite being among “friendly mountain folk,” Highlander’s stance on integration always presented an especially difficult barrier to get around. In fact, the community and the State of Tennessee did not become hostile toward HFS until Clark achieved success in recruiting larger numbers of black participants. The negative attention that the integrated workshops garnered, prompted the State of Tennessee to raid the facility in 1956 and to eventually close it down in 1961. Horton who remained a steadfast believer that HFS was an “idea” and thus could never truly be destroyed, relocated the school to Knoxville, Tennessee. Afterwards, upon

the request of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the operation of Highlander's Adult Education Program was transferred to King's organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). There it continued as the Citizenship Education Program (CEP), a major component of SCLC's Crusade for Citizenship, under the leadership of Clark and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) founder, Ella Baker. In one interview, Clark sheds more light on the logic behind her philosophy of "reaching her students where they are." She also explains some of the political struggles:

To [teach] them to read and write so that they could register and vote. Because, see, all of these states had these stringent registration laws. They had to write their name in cursive writing here in Charleston and read a section of the election laws. In Georgia they had thirty questions they had to read and give answers to. In Mississippi they had twenty-four questions. And in Louisiana there were thirty questions that they had to read and answer. Now eastern Texas did not have that; in eastern Texas they had to pay poll tax, and we had to work with them to get them not to pay the poll tax. And they had to do that each year. So we had these differences all around. And in each state we had to do different things. (Hall 1976: 79)

Highlander's stance on politics and integration was not popular among racists, which is why Clark defends HFS throughout the narrative of *Echo*. HFS was also attacked because people believed the rumors that were being spread through the media. The media frequently portrayed HFS as either a communist organization, an illegal bootlegging operation, or an immoral group that practiced acts of debauchery, such as having interracial sex on the front lawn. Of course, those who were familiar with HFS knew that none of those things were going on there. In *Echo* Clark capitalizes on this point. She says, "The school that Myles established with Dr. Johnson's help was to be an instruction conducted on Christian principles and on an interracial basis; a place, as her home had been, where brotherhood would be felt, emphasized and practiced. And that is what drew me to Highlander and made it a place of light and hope and refreshment of the spirit" (Clark 1962: 131-132). Clark emphasizes High-

lander’s theme of Christian brotherhood using a proverb. She says, “I like to think of Highlander as a place where the simple but profound ideals of Christianity were not only preached but practiced” (Clark 1962: 132). Not only did they teach brotherhood, but they also “practiced what they preached” (Whiting 1989: 510; Speake 2015: 254; Bryan and Mieder 2016: 606). This proverb helps to dispel any untruths regarding the purpose of the school or Horton’s character.

Clark was instrumental in expanding Highlander’s Adult Education Program to Johns Island, South Carolina. She would then utilize the program to recruit and train other teachers, who would then go on to open their own schools in the area and on neighboring Sea Islands. The program sought to reach all people, but they were primarily concerned about reaching the poor, disenfranchised, illiterate African-American populations. They taught many adults to read and write for the very first time, many of whom were still living and working on the very same plantations that their ancestors had been enslaved upon. Some participants did not even know how to hold a pencil, and some could not even recognize their own names. One of Clark’s biggest fears is that without knowing how to read, they would never be able to pass the complicated literacy tests that were required of most black people who wanted to register to vote. After mastering basic reading and writing skills, students learned more about civics, and about their rights as American citizens, including how to register themselves to vote and how to actively participate in other political processes such as running for public office. As Clark explains, the adult literacy program at Highlander was very well-structured and implemented with a great deal of expertise. Highlander offered them educational opportunities most never had since they usually performed agricultural work year-round from sunup to sundown just to make enough money to survive as sharecroppers. Despite having access to new learning opportunities some of the Sea Islanders still had little interest in book learning or even voting. In fact, at one workshop two participants, a black undertaker from Georgia and a white woman from North Carolina, pointed out to Clark that it was difficult to interest most black people in voting, thus it would be best to just “let sleeping dogs lie” (Clark 1962: 184-185). To just “let

sleeping dogs lie” (Whiting 1989: 176; Speake 2015: 288; Bryan and Mieder 2016: 220) is a bit of proverbial advice that is memorable enough for Clark to include it in her narrative, but had she taken its message to heart, the program would not have continued to flourish. Likewise, Clark also had to contend with potential participant’s fear of violent attacks from racists, and their fear of being fired, or driven away from their plantations because of their affiliation with Highlander Folk School. Therefore, some of the programs were limited to very few participants. “‘Don’t need no education to work in the fields,’ was a sentiment sometimes voiced by black tenants and sharecropping parents, especially within earshot of the white landlords on whom their livelihoods depended” (Charron 2009: 53). Clark uses a proverb from the Bible to describe her attitude towards the conundrum of having to start out with very few students saying: “Nevertheless, as the Scriptures point out, often a small bit of yeast will be the leaven that raises the large loaf” (Galatians 5:9 KJV; Clark 1962: 159). At another point, to describe the growth of the schools, she alludes to yet another proverb. Clark says: “You see, one thing spreading out starts others. It’s like the pebble thrown into the mill pond” (Clark 1962: 162; Whiting 1989: 412; Charron 2009: 259). More proverbial language which mirrors the same exact message comes from Clark biographer and historian, Katherine Mellon Charron who says: “Septima Clark discerned that seeds scattered sometimes disappear into the wind, but others take root and yield a bountiful harvest” (Charron 2009: 350). These ideas reflect Clark’s religious upbringing, the agrarian lifestyle that she remained close to her entire life, and the farming communities that she served daily. Furthermore, the proverbial insights are evidence that Clark was fully aware of the fact that many people would not be on board with her, and they emphasize the notion that having just a few enthusiastic students would be more than enough to continue to expand the programs.

Clark closes *Echo* with two more proverbs from Scripture. At the end of the last chapter, she expresses optimism that the activism that has taken place throughout her lifetime will gradually bring about social justice in America. She says, “Yes, but the new year will be better. And the years after it better, and better. I so desperately hope that they will be, I so earnestly pray

that they will be, I have complete and utter faith if we falter and faint not, if we continue in good will and outreaching love the good fight, the truth some early day if not tomorrow will make us free” (Clark 1962: 242-243). “If we falter and faint not” is an allusion to a proverb from Scripture which reads: “If thou faint in the face of adversity, thy strength is small” (Proverbs 24:10 KJV). Likewise, Clark employs an extended variation of the biblical proverb “The truth shall set you free.” The original verse reads: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32 KJV; Mieder 2001: 8). This is certainly evidence that Clark had a propensity for using biblical proverbs and sayings. Additionally, in an interview conducted by historian, Robert Penn Warren in 1964, Clark uses another proverb from Scripture as she explains to Warren that she does not believe that America will ever become decent or even stable without exercising basic Christian principles. Clark articulates her vision for America’s future as she invokes the proverbial Golden Rule (Mieder 2001: 184-192; Mieder 2008: 198-199; Bryan and Mieder 2016: 322; Mieder 2020a: 30) saying: “When I say the Christian principles... I mean just that...I mean that doing unto others as we would like to be done by. This is what I consider the Christian principles that I feel we’d have to take with us everywhere” (Warren). In the Bible the proverb reads: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12 KJV). In examining Clark’s proverbial language there is no doubt that religious faith is a driving force in her life and one of the main reasons why she refused to stop fighting for the equal rights of all people.

In the very same interview, Clark also displays her knowledge of American history as she quotes a proverb that was made famous by President Abraham Lincoln. Warren asks Clark how she feels about Lincoln, and she responds:

I can’t help but think that he was a wonderful president. I can remember one thing that I admire him for and that is when he was campaigning and this fellow Stanton was his arch enemy and talked against him. When he got ready to find the Secretary of War, he decided that this was the man to be the Secretary of War and he appointed him. All the members of his cabinet felt that this should

not be, but he stood up and said, gentleman I've looked over the nation and I know that this is the best man for the job. It wasn't too long a woman stood beside him and said, Mr. President, you must be losing your mind, this man even talked about your personal appearance, and he said, madam, the best way to destroy your enemies is to make him your friend. And when he died many years after that many great things were said about him, but the greatest thing that was said was the thing that was said by Stanton, the Secretary of War, he said, this was a great man and his name will go down in the ages. So both of them went to their graves as friends and not as enemies. (Warren 2020)

The proverb "The best way to destroy your enemy is to make him your friend," and the anecdote that she shares with it, illustrate that it contains an important lesson, and depicts some of the values that Clark lives by such as friendship, togetherness, and to do as Lincoln and Stanton demonstrate—which is to work along with others to solve difficult problems. Martin Luther King, Jr. whom she taught and worked with also used the proverb in a sermon on loving enemies (King 1963: 39). Throughout Clark's lifetime she made far more allies than enemies. When Warren asks Clark if she knows that Lincoln was racist, Clark responds in the negative saying:

I don't know any of the things that he said that makes me feel that he was a racist. I heard of his 10% plan to free the slave. I heard of him going down to Mississippi on a barge saying that when he became a man that he was gonna strike a blow that would stop this slavery cause he saw the slaves chained there on barges. I can't remember any of the [racist] things that he said. (Warren 2020)

Despite any controversy surrounding Lincoln, Clark does not believe that Lincoln was racist, and this impression was more than likely garnered in part by some of the proverbial wisdom that Clark attained by studying and remembering the president's words. The fact that Abraham Lincoln as a child vowed to one day strike a proverbial blow against slavery, obviously made a huge impression on Clark, and there is at least some evidence that the attitude exhibited by young Lincoln's strong proverbial language helped to motivate Clark as she continued to shape her own life and fight against racial injustice and oppression (Mied-

er 2001: 229-231). In fact, Clark uses the very same proverbial expression as she describes her own calculated and measured approach to practicing social activism saying: “Each time I pass through a new crisis...the sun is barely peeping through the storm clouds... I patiently wait to strike the blow when my inner self whispers, ‘Now is the time’” (Charron 2009: 241-242). Most would agree that in speaking of striking proverbial blows against racial injustice, Clark is clearly stepping outside of prescribed gender roles for her time. However, Clark was still mild-mannered, soft-spoken, and kind, as most women were expected to be in a male-dominated society in the 1950s. Nevertheless, she was also cognizant of the fact that teaching literacy for the purpose of promoting political engagement in black communities is considered by most to be a militant and radical act. If it had garnered more attention, it could have easily gotten her killed. In fact, Clark uses what historian Katherine M. Charron refers to as the “tactical invisibility” (Charron 2009: 350) that most black women possessed to their advantage, and it allowed Clark and the other black women to continue to help manage transformative educational civil rights programs. Charron’s insights and the idea of Clark patiently waiting for decades to strike proverbial blows in the name of social justice provides further evidence that Clark knew she was no passive role player, but one of the masterminds behind the Civil Rights Movement.

The “tactical invisibility” that Charron mentions was caused in part by the subservient roles that black women were expected to play in the community and in churches. Black women were largely viewed as organizers, nurturers, protectors, and moral support to male clergy. They were generally expected to be seen and not heard. This tradition of subservience also carried over to the church-affiliated clubs and organizations. Consequently, women such as Clark, Baker, and other female leaders knew that they were being radical on several different fronts when they held high-ranking positions in organizations and when they openly attacked white supremacy by themselves instead of waiting on their male counterparts to do it for them. Clark explains this scenario using the proverbial expression to live in a “man-made world” in an interview as she acknowledges the fact that she was constantly reminded that her presence was disrupting

the long-held tradition of male dominance (Walker 1976: 11). Clark says that when Dr. King appointed her to the executive board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) her authority was always questioned simply because she was a woman: “Many times we’d go into the meeting and [Reverend Abernathy] always wanted to know why was I a member of that trustee board?” (Walker 1976: 12) Clark sums up the problem best as she employs the popular proverbial expression saying: “Well I think that we live in a man-made world, and because of that, as a man, he didn’t feel as if women had really enough intelligence...” (Walker 1976: 11). In another instance, Clark explains a time when Dr. King gave an SCLC secretary the proverbial devil for allowing Clark to award certificates to program participants in place of himself (Bryan and Mieder 2016: 207):

I found out that they didn’t respect women too much. I went into a small community down here, and, we were getting affiliates started. And I don’t know where Dr. King was, but I presented the certificates to the people who had joined. And he asked his secretary about it. And I wrote a letter thanking them for their help, and I showed it to her. And Dr. King, he too, wanted to know about me as a woman. So I had a copy of the letter, and I showed him that I said in the name of Dr. King, I’m presenting these certificates and so forth. And the little secretary was just fine and wondered why [he had] given her the devil for not letting him be the person to present these certificates. I said, ”Well, of all the [nerve]....“ (Hall 1976: 81-82)

Clark turns to the proverbial expression “man-made world” again as she explains that it was male chauvinism that caused Baker to leave SCLC after initiating the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960. She says Baker “was concerned about not being recognized in a man-made world, and it didn’t bother me” (Hall 1976: 80). Clark reiterates: “And this is a man-made world we’ve been living in all these years. We’re just coming to the forefront” (Hall 1976: 80). Likewise, living in a “man-world” caused Clark to be openly critical of black male leadership whenever they seemed to lack enough courage to stand up to white supremacy. In *Echo*, she uses another popular proverbial expression as she explains a time when she expressed

this very sentiment. In 1955 as school integration debates heated up and black boycotts of white businesses proliferated, due to outside pressure, the president of South Carolina State University threatened to expel any student that participated in a planned NAACP meeting on campus despite the university being historically black. Clark says in a letter to her close friend Mrs. Warring, that although she is very proud of the young students' activist spirit, the university president's actions are a prime example that there is "no spine in the backbone of the professionals" (Charron 2009: 239). In the letter, she also expresses full confidence that "the younger generation" will "ride over this [proverbial] hump" (Charron 2009: 239). While black male leadership often lacked a proverbial "spine" or "backbone," she acknowledges the fact that black women, contrarily have always been the "backbone" of the church and Civil Rights Movement (Hall 1976: 91; Mieder 2001: 117-118; Mieder 2009: 168; Mieder 2010: 217).

On at least two separate occasions Clark uses variations of the proverbial expression "to jump out of the frying pan into the fire" (Whiting 1989: 244). Clark's mother wanted her to marry a wealthy and upstanding member of the black community since in early twentieth-century Charleston, having lighter skin and wealth could easily gain a newly married black woman open access to all the most elite black social circles. Likewise, doing the opposite could just as easily get one barred from the very same groups. In an interview, Clark explains her difficult decision to turn down a marriage proposal from a well-off and popular black minister, and instead choosing to marry a dark-skinned and relatively poor, unknown sailor against her mother's wishes. She says: "My mother was so strict and had all those strict religious ideas, and I'd felt that I'd be jumping into another frying pan if I went into [being] a minister's wife. I didn't know you know, how I could live and please all the people, because I didn't feel as if I wanted to do all those things. And preacher's wives had to endure so much, you know. I didn't think that I could do it" (Hall 1976: 44-45). Shortly after being married in 1921, Clark discovered that her new husband, Nerie Clark, also remained married to another woman and when she confronted him about the matter, he asked her to leave their home. To add to her misfortune they had a child, a girl named Victoria Irma, who died in infancy. She

later gave birth to a healthy son, Nerie David Clark, Jr., who would never know his father because Nerie senior would die from liver failure at the age of thirty-five, before his son's third birthday (Charron: 2009 107-110). To make matters worse, her mother, Victoria Warren, never actually forgave Clark for marrying Nerie, Sr. even though she would later mend her relationship with her mother. This series of unfortunate events caused Clark to believe that she was being cursed by God for going against her mother's wishes, and for some time the deep spiral of depression that she found herself experiencing was pushing her towards committing suicide. Widowed at the age of twenty-seven, teaching the poor on John's Island, and engaging in activist efforts to improve social and economic conditions for black people in Charleston was one way that Clark overcame this difficult time in her life. She also uses a variation of the proverbial expression to describe what it was like to live with her in-laws after the death of her husband saying:

My mother-in-law was of the same type as my mother; in the two families they made the decisions. So actually I had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. And since I was living under the roof of my in-laws, I felt that I should obey the rules of the household. (Clark 1962: 71)

It is rather telling that she would use this proverbial expression to describe one of the most difficult times in her life on at least two separate occasions that span nearly fifteen years apart. Perhaps in using the proverbial expression "to jump from the frying pan into the fire" (Whiting 1989: 244) Clark is signaling to her audience that the most difficult years of her life ultimately functioned as a rite of passage that ultimately helped her to value her own education, independence and voice as a teacher and civil rights activist.

Clark also uses other sayings that involve fire. In *Echo* she includes a proverb that was uttered by a man who was very much against Clark inviting Mrs. Elizabeth Warring, a white woman from the North, who was also an outspoken supporter of integration and staunch critic of all southern white women whom she believed to be inherently racist to speak before a YWCA annual meeting in Charleston. In a phone call, the director of the United

Givers Fund, a major source of funding for Charleston’s YWCA, warns Clark of the controversy surrounding Warring. He says: “I live nine miles from her in Litchfield, Connecticut, and I can tell you there is fire where you see all that smoke” (Clark 1962: 97-98; Speake 2015: 290). As a result of Clark’s decision to invite the integrationist to speak at the meeting, the YWCA executive director attempted to force Clark to sign a public statement saying that the information regarding the invitation was false, and Clark vehemently refused. In describing the media’s reaction to this news Clark says:

Well, the fat was in the fire! Letters and calls began to pour into the newspapers, and a reporter called me. The reporter wanted to know if these reports were true—did I say this and that, did I tell the executive secretary of the United Givers Fund that his paths didn’t cross with Mrs. Waring’s, did I tell them that I would not sign such a letter, did I refuse to sign the statement the trustees had written. I told him that I had refused to sign them, and I answered frankly and truthfully all his questions. The newspapers carried stories, the telephones buzzed, the gossipers had a field day. Never, I’m sure, had a YWCA annual meeting had more advance publicity. (Clark 1962: 98)

Clark uses the proverbial expression “the fat was in the fire,” (Whiting 1989: 215), but she is certainly not alarmed by the proverbial field day that the media had. In fact, Clark communicated to one close friend that she determined that the issue would have to remain a proverbial “hot potato” (Clark 1962: 96; Whiting 1989: 508) because while it angered YWCA leaders and members, Clark did not feel comfortable rescinding a speaking invitation to a Federal judge’s wife whom she felt could be a much more useful ally than donors or even timid black leaders. Despite the controversy that it caused, Mrs. Warring spoke at the meeting, and it became known as the 1950 Coming Street YWCA “shock treatment speech.” Throughout the speech, Warring praised black Charleston women for their activist efforts and she also vehemently attacked white southerners whom she described as being “sick” and “confused” (LDHI). Although Clark did not share Warring’s views of all southern white women, she remained friends with Mrs. Warring and her husband Judge Wa-

ties Warring long after Mrs. Warring gave her infamous speech. For years they continued to break social norms by having integrated meetings and social gatherings at one another's homes angering groups such as the Klu Klux Klan (KKK) and the all-white Citizen's Council (CC) who would continually issue death threats and attempt to intimidate Clark and Warring using violent scare tactics.

Clark and her colleague, Myles Horton took careful notice as sit-in protests that were initiated by four students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, North Carolina on February 1, 1960, proliferated across most of the southern states in a matter of weeks. Clark says on one occasion that in her view, the protest "spread like a wild prairie fire...to more than one hundred cities across the South" (Charron 2009: 290; Mieder 2010: 310). Clark's use of the proverbial expression "to spread like a wild prairie fire" is a biblical reference used to express excitement for the movement's new direction. A passage from Psalms reads:

Like swarming bees, like wild prairie fire, they hemmed me in; in God's name I rubbed their faces in the dirt. I was right on the cliff-edge, ready to fall, when God grabbed and held me. God's my strength, he's also my song, and now he's my salvation. Hear the shouts, hear the triumph songs in the camp of the saved? The hand of God has turned the tide! The hand of God is raised in victory! The hand of God has turned the tide! (Psalm 118: 12-16 MSG)

No matter what version of the Bible one is reading, the verse is an exaltation of victory in the face of attack, and Clark's use of the expression brings attention to how fast the Sit-In Movement spread, and to the fact that the group of student protesters stood their ground in a very dangerous situation. The protestors from Greensboro included: Joseph McNeil, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair, Jr. (a.k.a. Jibreel Khazan) and David Richmond. They became known as the A&T Four, and the Sit-In Movement that they initiated encouraged Horton to reposition his thinking on Highlander's future role in the Civil Rights Movement. While Clark already had confidence in the youth due to several successful integration workshops and conferences that she held at Highlander throughout the 1950s, Horton still held the perspec-

tive that Highlander should remain primarily focused on adults, but because of the exponential growth of the largely student-led Sit-In Movement, Horton began to think more about how to get young people involved (Charron 2009: 290). This is when Clark decided to call Ella Baker of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and together, they organized a three-day conference at Highlander that lasted from April 1st thru April 3rd, and it included “forty-seven African Americans, thirty-five white students, representing twenty colleges in nineteen states and three foreign countries” (Charron 2009: 290). At the conference Clark and Baker helped the students to outline the goals and philosophy of what would be known as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the first and only black organization to be organized and led entirely by students. Clark and Baker’s guidance and tutelage helped to guarantee the students that their proverbial “wild prairie fire” (Psalm 118: 12-16 MSG; Mieder 2010: 310) would continue to grow.

6. American ideals

Clark uses a plethora of proverbial expressions that communicate ways that she conceptualizes American ideals such as the right to education, freedom, justice, and equality. In Clark’s later years she refers to education as the proverbial “tree of life.” Clark retired from the classroom in the 1970s, but she never retired from the movement—continuing to work on behalf of the black community in Charleston, S.C. by serving the public school system as the first female African-American Charleston School Board member. Thus, the very same school system that fired her for belonging to the NAACP in 1956, sought her wisdom and counsel throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Charron 2009: 345). When the school board tried to distribute a pamphlet on American government that did not include any information about black political accomplishments at all, Clark quickly brought this issue to the school board’s attention. In speaking of the incident Clark says: “I wanted to know who the black children would have to look up to in that book. There was nothing in there that would help black children to feel that they had a right to the tree of life, and I know how important that is” (Charron 2009: 345-346). The proverbial

tree of life could have very well been extended to black youth by teaching them more about Clark's legacy.

Another revealing proverbial expression from *Echo* which expresses Clark's American ideals appears in a letter from someone who donated money to Highlander Folk School after it was raided by the State of Tennessee and all assets and property were seized and auctioned off, forcing Myles Horton to relocate the school to Knoxville Tennessee, essentially starting all over again from scratch. In addition to sending a charitable donation, the contributor writes:

The wheels of justice certainly operated in this case on a bent axle. I am sure that you feel as I do that nothing is to be gained by looking backward—only forward, and if determination, courage and vision are needed to create a new Highlander, you are endowed in abundance with all three. I can only stand in awe of what you have done and are willing to do. I hope that within a few weeks I will be able to add to this contribution and help you in whatever way I can to rebuild Highlander. (Clark 1962: 230)

Out of the nearly five-hundred letters that were written in support of HFS, Clark chose to include this letter in its entirety due in part to its proverbial wit and wisdom. There is quite a bit of humor and irony displayed in the idea of America's proverbial wheels of justice operating on a "bent axle." Furthermore, the humor and irony are tempered by the phrase "nothing is to be gained by looking backward—only forward" (Clark 1962: 230). These are the kinds of messages that Highlander needed during its time of calamity, and by including it in her narrative, Clark knew that it would only motivate more people to support the cause.

In addition to America's proverbial "wheels of justice," Clark also makes reference to America's proverbial "lamp of freedom" (Clark 1962: 233). As Clark is reflecting on all the friends that she has made during her nearly decade long tenure at Highlander, she laments the fact that HFS is being forced to close:

These things and these faces I can never forget, and as I pray for the lamp of freedom to burn incessantly, I know that I am not weaving my life's pattern alone. Only one end of the threads do I hold in my hands; the other ends go many ways linking my life

with others, my country with others. My pattern and my country’s pattern will depend largely upon the awareness, the insights, the skills, the personal goals and the incentives of those who hold the other ends of those threads.” (Clark 1962: 233-234)

Clark’s extended weaving metaphor further highlights the fact that she knows that she is not alone in the struggle for social justice and equality. In fact, she views it as a struggle that she shares with the entire world.

Clark also refers to America’s proverbial “fruits of democracy,” and a part of what makes this proverbial expression so interesting is the way that Clark builds up to the proverbial language and uses it to heighten her message:

So I work among the Negro people, who, we must agree, have the fewest of the democratic freedoms and many of whom have inadequate education or none at all, who live constantly under the fear of intimidation, insult and violence, I am reminded that here is the continuing test of our democratic form of government. In the recent rise of the image of hope for the segregated black man and his deliverance from this state of pseudo-slavery I see clearly the form of challenge. If permanent social patterns are to be created that are truly democratic, I maintain, then the most lowly being must enjoy equally with every other American the fruits of democracy. Only then will the Negro, and particularly the Negro parent, see the glimmer of light ahead, only then will he see a way out of his dilemma. (Clark 1962: 236-237)

Clark saves all the proverbial language for the very end of her statement so that it may help the reader to realize the enormity of the situation that she is describing. The idea that drastic change is the only thing that can facilitate a process that will still only take place gradually is her overall implication.

When Clark uses the proverbial expression “laws of the land,” it is to point out the government’s own political and social wrongdoing and its failure to practice humanitarianism. One instance of the expression being used appears near the end of *Echo* as she invokes another popular hymn that was sang at HFS. It just so happens that this particular hymn, entitled *Black and White* is as equally critical of the government as Clark is. It reads:

The ink is black, the page is white, together we learn to read
 And write, to read and write;
 And now a child can understand this is the law of all the land;
 The ink is black, the page is white, together we learn to read
 And write, to read and write. (Clark 1962: 241)

The hymn promotes integrated education as the best way to encourage America's youth to believe in freedom and equality. Additionally, Clark repeats the proverbial expression "laws of the land," as she quotes a statement taken from a Highlander press release that she wrote. The statement is so important that she includes it twice in *Echo*, saying it once near the beginning, and then later near the end. In both instances, the proverbial expression "laws of the land" is also accompanied by other ideas regarding freedom that were popularized by Martin Luther King, Jr.:

Highlander was established three decades ago it had been fighting for the rights of all people, whatever their race, religion or political persuasion, to meet together and discuss their problems, And it is because of this meeting together, and only because of this, I insist, that Highlander intermittently has been attacked by forces that oppose not only the principles of human brotherhood, but also the very law of the land as interpreted by our highest courts. (Clark 1962: 11, 207)

Clark then adds that despite the attacks, HFS will continue to serve all people. This statement is then followed by two ideas that were largely popularized by King although it is unknown if King or Clark used them first. Clark says: "Freedom has always been lost by a people who allowed their rights gradually to be whittled away. The threat to silence and to keep forever silent the voice of Highlander is a threat to the very existence of every organization in this nation and to the basic freedom of thought and expression of every American" (Clark 1962: 11, 207). The notion that "Freedom has always been lost by a people who allowed their rights gradually to be whittled away" and also her variation of the proverb "A threat to justice in one place is a threat to justice everywhere" (Mieder 2010: 354-356) may not have been popular when she first publishes her press release or *Echo*, but the ideas were popularized greatly by her former stu-

dent, Dr. King as he attracted a great deal of attention whenever he spoke in public.

There are other proverbial expressions that Clark uses in reference to social justice. In *Echo* she refers to the proverbial “good fight,” (Clark 1962: 242). Historian and Clark biographer, Katherine M. Charron discusses the fact that Clark garnered much self-satisfaction from fighting proverbial good fights and winning them all. In fact, early in her career she did so on at least two separate occasions—once in 1919 when she worked with the NAACP to have more black teachers hired in the city of Charleston and when she worked with NAACP lawyers (including Thurgood Marshall) to force the cities of Columbia and Charleston to pay equal salaries to black teachers. With Clark’s help, the NAACP won their case against the City of Columbia in 1944 and they later won their case against the city of Charleston in 1945 (Charron 2009). As a result of the court’s verdicts and as a form of backlash, the Columbia School Board expanded their control over black educators by requiring all teachers to take recertification exams that would then determine their level of pay. Some teachers refused to take the exam, choosing resignation instead. Others performed so poorly on the test that their pay either stayed the same or they only saw marginal increases. Only a small number of black teachers performed well, and Clark was among them. She expresses a tremendous amount of confidence as she employs a proverbial expression to motivate her colleagues to take the recertification exam. At a meeting, as Palmetto States Teacher Association (PTSA) president, Clark says to distraught members: “If you say that you are not going to take that examination in the morning...I will be with you. But if some of you say tonight that you are on the fence on this proposition, then I know you will be the first ones there to take it. So I will let you know right now that I am going. I’m not afraid to take that examination” (Clark 1962: 83). This statement depicts a very self-reliant Clark, who demonstrates nothing but poised confidence as she tries to empower her colleagues to not straddle the proverbial fence on this one important issue. Clark says that her activists efforts paid off, not only in the satisfaction of having made the good fight, but also in actual cash (Charron 2009: 165). After earning an A on the recertification exam, Clark’s once mea-

ger teacher salary tripled. Likewise, Clark also makes it known that there is still a proverbial price to pay (Mieder: 2009 286-288; Mieder 2020b: 172-173) for anyone who wishes to engage in any form of activism. She says: "I feel that before a person goes into work of this kind, he must search his soul and decide once and for all that this is the price he may have to pay for the freedom he is trying to establish" (Clark 1962: 11,12). Clark was always aware of the personal sacrifices that she made to stay involved in activism. The work that she did often left no time for friends or family. Additionally, there was the constant threat of violent retaliation from racists; so much so, that her immediate family was often afraid for her life. Likewise, her friends at times, were afraid to be associated with her. Once at an event in her honor, some of her sorority sisters, AKAs, refused to be photographed with her for fear of losing their jobs (Charron 2009: 245). Clark would continue to "pay the price" on behalf of her race and all people throughout her entire career.

There is another proverb that Clark uses in acknowledgement of her calculated and measured approach to political organizing. In the early 1960s as Clark's Citizenship Education Programs became increasingly popular, black organizations throughout the South requested training for their own members. Organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) began to realize that if they wanted to empower the black communities from a political standpoint they must heed Clark's philosophy and first focus on education. People would then be able to use the basic literacy and civic skills that they have acquired to fill out voter registration forms, vote for the most viable candidates, and even run for political offices themselves. Clark was not surprised by the sudden upswing in participation, and she realized that the tens of thousands of newly registered black voters would be difficult for any political party to ignore. She uses a popular proverb to convey her belief that success was to be expected saying: "The acceptance of these services by other civil rights organizations says that great designs are based on method not madness" (Charron 2009: 319). "Great designs are based on method not madness" is an appropriate proverb that attests to

the program’s positive results (Whiting 1989: 408; Bryan and Mieder 2016: 505).

7. Clark’s enduring legacy

There are at least a few statements made by Clark which have become well-known sayings that most people can easily attribute to her. One such saying conveys the fact that Clark believed ignorance to be a far more immediate threat to humanity than some of its consequences such as racism or even segregation. In support of this conviction Clark famously states: “We need to be taught to study rather than believe, to inquire rather than to affirm” (Charron 2009: 341). This saying emphasizes the fact that she was always proud of teaching her students to study, think, and speak for themselves.

Finally, in her eightieth year, Clark was content that she had devoted her entire life to fights for civil rights and social justice. She was satisfied with all that she had accomplished. In fact, she says in her second autobiography, *Ready from Within* (1990) that old age is “the best part of life” (Clark 1990: 124). Clark then shares her reason for having this attitude, with a brief sentence which has since become a popular saying: “It’s not that you have just grown old, but it is how you have grown old” (Charron 2009: 12). As Clark continues, she also alludes to a popular proverb: “I feel that I have grown old believing there is always a beautiful lining to that cloud that overshadows things” (Clark 1990: 124-125). This statement is an allusion to the well-known proverb “Every dark cloud always has a silver lining” (Mieder 2008: 12; Doyle et al. 2012: 39). Clark then delivers another brief sentence which has since become her most famous saying: “I have a great belief in the fact that whenever there is chaos, it creates wonderful thinking. I consider chaos a gift, and this has come during my old age” (Clark 1990: 125). The saying, “whenever there is chaos, it creates wonderful thinking” at first glance seems like an oxymoron or paradox. Many consider the Civil Rights Era to be the most chaotic years in American history, but it is also an era that Clark learned to navigate well. Amid the chaos, Clark demanded basic rights like the freedom to vote and equal pay for black teachers. Over time, with the calm, meticulous, and obser-

vant air of a veteran teacher, she taught others how to demand freedom and equality for themselves as well. Thus, it only makes sense that Clark would view chaos as a gift. One may even argue that she looked forward to chaos. Perhaps our present generation of Americans may benefit from viewing chaos as a gift as well.

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Raymond Summerville
Department of English: Literature, Teaching,
Pre-Law, and Professional & Creative Writing
Fayetteville State University
1200 Murchison Road
Fayetteville, N.C. 28301
USA
raymondmjs@gmail.com

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MOHAMMED YAKUB

A CONTEXTUAL-ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF NZEMA PROVERBS RELATED TO SOME ‘MEDICAL CONDITIONS’

Abstract: Proverbs are terse but ‘condensed’ expressions which contain moral lessons. In every culture, proverbs form part of the nuggets of popular wisdom, expressed in the form of wise sayings (Maledo 2015). Among the Nzema of Ghana, proverbs permeate almost all communicative encounters. They are ‘injected’ into discourses to motivate people to behave well, and to repudiate vices in the society. This paper discusses the didactics and communicative values of Nzema proverbs related to health conditions (and impairments) such as blindness, deafness, leprosy, hunchback, goitre, hernia, rickets and migraine. Using primary data recorded during arbitration proceedings among the Nzema, the paper examines the advisory role of the proverbs. The findings demonstrate that many virtues are concealed in Nzema proverbs that incorporate certain medical conditions, which paradoxically are not about the mere experiences of such conditions; rather, the deeper meanings highlight the essence of hospitality, contentment, patience, hard-work, and genuine love among others. The paper has also shown that the Nzema employ such proverbs in appropriate discourse contexts to rebuke deviants, and to redirect the paths of members of the society. It is argued that the advisory messages entrenched in this category of proverbs largely promote ethical standards and help maintain social equilibrium and solidarity. The paper engages Hymes’ Ethnography of Communication model in the data analysis.

Keywords: Nzema proverbs, ailments, ethnography, communication, pragmatic implications

1. Introduction

The Nzema people are located in the South-west part of the Western Region of Ghana, West Africa. In terms of political demarcation and jurisdiction, they represent three constituencies in the Western Region of Ghana; namely Nzema East, Nzema Central (Ẽlẽmbẽlẽ) and Nzema West (Dw̃m̃m̃l̃õ) (Kwaw 2008). The Ghana Population and Housing Census carried out in 2021, revealed that the total number of Nzema was 342, 090. Their language is also known as Nzema, which forms part of the Kwa languages family (Annan 1980; Kwesi 1992). Most of the Nzema population engage in subsistence farming, while some relish in fishing to supplement their livelihood, since the Nzemaland stretches along the coast (Yakub and Agyekum 2022). Most Nzema philosophical principles and worldview can be identified in some of the manifestations of oral literary genres, such as libation rituals, riddles, folktales, myth, and proverbs — the most prominent one being their proverbs (Kwesi 2007; Yakub 2019). These proverbial expressions largely incorporate animal and plant imageries, including features of rocks, rivers and mountains among other creatures within the ecosystem (see Yakub and Wiafe-Akenten 2023). Most proverbs in Nzema are also ‘coined’ based on human body-parts, the experiences of certain ailments, and the imagery of ‘food and consumption’ (Yakub 2022).

Recent studies on Nzema proverbs, e.g., Yakub (2019) and Yakub and Owu-Ewie (2023) have discussed the pragmatic functions of animal metaphors and plant metaphors respectively. However, little seems to be known about the discourse relevance of Nzema traditional proverbs that are basically grounded in ailments, but communicate deeply by means of implicature. The current paper, therefore, focuses on Nzema proverbs that literally talk about some medical conditions and/or impairments, which are embedded in rich metaphoric meanings and ethno-pragmatic interpretations. The paper aims to unravel the various medical conditions that are incorporated in the oral composition of Nzema proverbs and how these proverbs are used to entreat people during arbitration for a change of attitude. I demonstrate that the Nzema depend on proverbs related to ailments such as blindness, deafness, leprosy, rickets, hunchback, goitre, migraine, and hernia to make constructive comments on critical issues that need

to be addressed, especially in the context of arbitration. It is important to emphasise that these ailment-related proverbs are not basically about the physical features of the sufferers (victims) and the inconveniences that they encounter; rather, they convey pragmatic implications that transcend the basic perceptions that people have about such conditions. I also demonstrate that many positive virtues are encoded in these proverbs, which portray fundamental Nzema cultural values and ideologies. The paper is significant to deepening our understanding of the Nzema cultural worldview, as it unravels folk perceptions and philosophies that are entrenched in ailment-related proverbs.

Beyond the introductory section, I provide an overview of the concept of proverbs, looking at its nature and function in section 2. Section 3 draws on the methodology employed in carrying out the study, whereas section 4 provides an orientation on the theoretical framework adopted to guide the analysis. The data presentation and discussion are done in section 5, and the conclusion is presented in section 6.

2. The concept of proverbs

Achebe (1958) described proverbs as ‘the palm oil with which words are eaten’. This alludes to the fact that proverbs serve as a lubricant to facilitate ‘language consumption’. In other words, speakers can rely on proverbs to make succinct comments and contributions, whereas listeners can easily interpret the intended meanings with the aid of such proverbs. Finnegan (1970) sees proverbs as a body of short statements built up over the years, which reflect the thought and insight of a group of people. According to Mieder (2004: 24), “proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphoric, fixed and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation”. Strengthening the observations made by Finnegan (1970) and Mieder (2004), Oludare (2017) contends that:

African proverbs are short, witty and pithy statements with implicit truths. They are a distillation of the wisdom of the people derived over the ages from careful observation of everyday ex-

perience, involving human beings, nature and animals, as well as natural phenomena and social events (Oludare 2017: 55).

Gleaning from the above, we can notice that proverbs deal with pithy sayings which contain traditional truism and belong to a specific cultural group. They abound in moral lessons and can portray the thoughts and beliefs of a people. Taking the Akan socio-cultural context as an example, Agyekum (2005: 10) remarks that “*ebe ne akasa mu abohemaa* ‘the proverb is the most appropriate aspect of speech’, *etwa asem tia* ‘it curtails matters’, *enka asem ho a enwie de ye* ‘without the proverb, a speech does not acquire its seasoned nature’”. In the words of Agyekum (2019: 319), “proverbs are interpretations of traditional wisdom based on the experiences and socio-cultural life of our elders”. He explains further that proverb can emanate from religious systems, philosophical principles and the overall cultural ideologies of a people instituted by their forefathers based on life encounters. Advancing the popular notion that proverbs are socio-culturally oriented, Degener (2022) also opines that:

Proverbs reflect notions about society and human behaviour; they express common observations and experiences as well as normative values. Their status as culturally transmitted and formalised figurative utterances qualifies proverbs as indicators of the values and habits predominant in given societies (Degener 2022: 1).

Ashipu (2013) attempts to explicate the relevance of proverbs in the use of language. He proffers that, in traditional African societies, a speech without a proverb is as unproductive as a skeleton without flesh, and as a body without soul. Similarly, Agyekum (2017: 30) asserts that proverbs are aesthetic devices of vitality in speech, and the ‘salt’ of language, without which the real taste of the ‘language dish’ cannot be felt. Insights from the above postulations reveal that proverbs are indispensable ‘discourse ingredients’ which contribute to effective communication, especially in the African context.

It is ascertained that speakers who are culturally-oriented, also demonstrate communicative competence by employing proverbs in suitable discourse situations (Obeng 1996; Mensah and Eni 2019; Agyekum 2022). Communicative competence, as Hymes (1972) explains, underscores the importance of the so-

cial-cultural context in language use. Inherent in this view is the assumption that speakers just do not know the grammar of their language, but also how the language is used appropriately in varying social contexts. Scholars such as Yankah (1989), Hallen (2000) and Moshood (2016) share the view that effective use of proverbs in discourse interaction is largely 'context-dependent'. As Yankah (2012) mentions, each new socio-cultural milieu or context affects the performance of proverbs. This suggests that context of communication occupies a significant place in the use of proverbs. Adesina (2015) makes a contribution to corroborate Yankah's position such as follows:

Proverbs in every culture depends on context for use in communication among the people. Meaning in relation to speech situation seems to be the major concern of pragmatics and whatever intrinsic meaning the grammatical categories may have, context plays a crucial role in the interpretation of such meanings (Adesina 2015: 3).

In this paper, we will notice that, like in other African cultures, the Nzema do not just garnish their speech with proverbs; rather, they quote them in discourses within the befitting socio-cultural context to ensure conciseness and clarity in the communication process. Proverbs are used mainly to admonish, rebuke and reprimand, direct, praise, encourage, educate, and to entertain people (Adesina 2015; Oludare 2017). Crucially, it will be shown that Nzema proverbs that capture some medical conditions are not meant to ridicule people with such conditions and/or disabilities, but are used to make pertinent contributions that encourage desirable attitudes, and to repudiate vices in the Nzema society.

3. Methodology

The study employs qualitative ethnographic research design. According to Duranti (1997), ethnography deals with the description of social organisation, social activities, symbols and material resources, and interpretive practices characteristics of a particular group of people. "Ethnographies are based on first-hand observation of behaviour in a group of people in their natural settings" (Wardhaugh 2006: 249). The primary data for this

study were obtained through participant and non-participant observations, as well as semi-structured interviews.

As a native speaker of Nzema who had lived with the people for over thirty years, I attended traditional gatherings such as marriage and naming ceremonies and arbitrations, among others within the Nzema society. At various arbitration settings, I sought permission as a matter of ethics and had the opportunity to audio-record the proceedings with an android phone. The duration of data gathering was from January, 2021 to December, 2021. I recorded such proceedings because the gathering usually involved elders who used proverbs profusely in their communication. Through semi-structured interviews, I crosschecked the data and sought clarifications from four (4) native Nzema scholars whose ages range between sixty-five (65) and seventy (70) years. These informants (two males and two females) were purposively consulted because they are competent users of traditional proverbs, and for the fact that they have had tertiary education.

I transcribed and translated the data for analysis and discussion. Proverbs related to medical conditions were purposively considered in this study because they were used predominantly in the various conversations (arbitrations), and that they were employed to make critical comments on the issues at hand. The analysis is situated within the framework of Ethnography of Communication. I categorised the data based on the various ailments mentioned in the proverbs and provided the background/context of use of the proverb as well as the excerpts in which the specific proverbs are found.

4. Theoretical framework: The Ethnography of Communication

Hymes (1962) elucidates what he refers to as the ‘Ethnography of Speaking’ framework, popularly known in contemporary discourse and sociolinguistic researches as the ‘Ethnography of Communication’ (EC). The approach is particularly concerned with language use in culture and society (Hymes 1974; Saville-Troike 2003). According to Saville-Troike (2003: 2), “the focus of the ethnography of communication is the *speech community*, the way communication within it is patterned and organ-

ised as systems of communicative events, and the ways in which these interact with all other systems of culture”. Ethnography of communication considers communication not simply with language structures, but with language use, taking into cognizance the rules of speaking... the ways in which speakers associate particular models of speaking, topics, or message forms, at a particular setting (Oludare 2017). Hymes (1972) contributes to Chomsky’s notion of linguistic competence from another important perspective; arguing that, beyond one’s knowledge of the structures and rules of language, social context and appropriateness and cultural norms are key to the effective use of language. Hymes stresses the notion of communicative competence, which deals with the social and cultural knowledge speakers are presumed to have which enables them to use and interpret linguistic forms. Communicative competence involves knowing not only the language code but also what to say to whom, and how to say it appropriately in any given situation (see also Saville-Troike 2003). “The ethnography of communication takes language first and foremost as a socially situated cultural form, which is indeed constitutive of much of culture itself”, as Saville-Troike (2003: 3) puts it. Emphasising the significant place of communicative competence, Saville-Troike contends that:

Communicative competence extends to both knowledge and expectation of who may or may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, to whom one may speak, how one may talk to persons of different statuses and roles, what non-verbal behaviors are appropriate in various contexts, what the routines for turn-taking are in conversation, how to ask for and give information, how to request, how to offer or decline assistance or cooperation, how to give commands, how to enforce discipline, and the like – in short, everything involving the use of language and other communicative modalities in particular social settings (Saville-Troike 2003: 18).

Hymes’ speaking model takes into account the participants at discourse, channels for transmitting messages, the codes, setting, genres, topics, comments generated from discourse, the events, and characters (see also Maledo 2015). In the view of Hymes, therefore, ethnography of speaking (communication) describes

all the factors that are necessary for understanding and interpreting a particular discourse interaction. For the sake of suitability, he outlines his proposition with the acronym, SPEAKING; giving the following description/explanation:

- S** – Setting or scene (context): The setting and scene of any discourse situation constitute the situational background context of the discourse.
- P** – Participants (interlocutors): The participants are the people who are either actively or passively involved in the speech event.
- E** – Ends (purpose, function, reasons for the communication): Every conversation is meant to achieve some **goal**. In the SPEAKING Model, “Ends refer to the conventionally recognised and expected outcomes of an exchange as well as to the personal goals that participants seek to accomplish on particular occasions” (Wardhaugh 2006: 247). In my analysis in this paper, I will discuss the discourse relevance of the various proverbs under the component labelled *Ends*, highlighting the themes and purpose of the use of the proverbs.
- A** – Act sequence or ordering: The act sequence refers to the **form and content** of the specific speech act. This component of the art of speaking looks at the various things that are said in the different speech scenarios, the words that are used and how they are relevant to the precise issue being spoken about.
- K** – Key (the tone, manner, spirit): Key concerns how we speak and what body language we employ when we speak. The message could be light-hearted, serious, humorous, precise, pompous, mocking, sarcastic and so on (Wardhaugh 2006: 248; Maledo 2015: 27). Hymes (2003: 43) indicates that “[k]ey is introduced to provide for the tone, manner, or spirit in which an act is done”.
- I** – Instrumentalities (code or channel): Instrumentalities relates to the **channels** or **modes** through which we communicate. These channels are the **media** we employ in our daily interactive enterprises and so it includes whether the speech act is done through a written, spoken or telegraphic medium.

- N** – Norms of interaction: Norms relate to standard patterns of behaviour, the “specific behaviours and properties that attach to speaking that one must not interrupt...” (Hymes 2003: 44). The norms have to do with interaction and interpretation of speech. They refer to the form of behaviour that accompanies language. Some of these are speaking turns, loudness, interruptions and pauses (Oludare 2017: 60). To this end, when we interact, we are bound to the various norms that go into structuring the entire speech act.
- G** – Genres: Genre is the type or **category of utterance** that is used in the speech event. It is concerned with whether the utterance is a poem, letter, novel, play/drama, magazine, lecture, song, commercial, editorial, proverb, riddle, curse, prayer, oration, sermons, casual speech, or interview, etc. In this study, **Nzema proverbs related to medical conditions** represent the key Genre that is used to encourage positive attitude in the society, and to disapprove vices.

From the foregoing orientation, it is obvious that Hymes’ SPEAKING model benefits the analysis of data in this study, since the use of proverbs in the Nzema community subscribes to the above factors that ensure meaningful communication. As will be seen in the analysis below, the use of Nzema proverbs satisfies these factors, as for instance, there is the indication of time and place (Setting), speakers and hearers/audience (Participants). There is also an indication that the ‘ailment-related’ proverbs are used to arrive at a goal/an outcome (Ends), which aims at reshaping the psychological and moral attitude of the addressees, which in turn promotes peaceful societal coexistence.

The Key, which specifies the general tone or manner under which a speaker quotes a proverb, either serious, harsh, mockery or persuasive etc. is also indicative. The Instrumentality appears obvious, as the use of Nzema proverbs is in the spoken form. The proverb users, who are elders of the Nzema society with higher communicative competence to apply the rules that ensure effective communication, makes the Norm obvious. Finally, the Genre, which concerns the category of utterance, whether it is a poem, riddle, novel, lecture, song, proverb etc. is obvious, since this paper relies on the use of proverbs.

5. Data and discussion

In this section, ten (10) proverbs related to some medical conditions are discussed within the purview of Hymes' SPEAKING model. The ethnographic context/background where the proverbs were employed have been presented, as well as the excerpts that contain the proverbs.

5.1. Proverb related to leprosy

Ethnographic background 1: [On Sunday, 14th March, 2021, at *Anagye* (a community in Nzema East), there was arbitration to settle dispute between a young man and his wife. The man decided to divorce his wife because of his stepdaughter's misconduct. In addressing the man (husband), one of the elders employed the proverb shown in excerpt 1.]

Excerpt 1: Speaker (elder): *Nrenyiakpa, kakye ke agyale bekɔ ye meke mɔɔ enea a wɔnyia raale mɔɔ edawɔ ekulo ye la. Ene adwuleso mraale nee mrenyia bedabe yee bekɔ be agyale a. Saa wɔgya raale na ɔ ra bie enla subane kpale ali a mmaafa ekɔ e ye anwo zo, ɔluake mgbanyima se saa ekulo kokobevole a ekulo ye nee ye mbgɔlaboa (proverb 1).* "Youngman, note that a man decides to marry when he thinks he has found a good partner. You the youth of today do not allow any elderly person to make choices for you in terms of selecting a marriage partner. Now, if you are not satisfied with your stepdaughter's character, do not extend your anger to affect your wife. Remember, our elders said that **whoever decides to love the leper must appreciate his/her footwear as well (proverb 1).**"

Analysis:

Saa ekulo kokobevole a ekulo ye nee ye mbgɔlaboa (proverb 1)
 'Whoever decides to love the leper must appreciate his/her footwear as well' (proverb 1).

- S – Proverb (1) was used during arbitration at the chief's palace at *Anagye*.
- P – The participants were a man and his wife, some traditional elders and other bystanders. The speaker (proverb user) was actually an elderly man.

- E** – The speaker uses the proverb to persuade the man to show **genuine love** to his wife, despite his stepdaughter’s misbehaviour. A leper’s footwear, according to this proverb, and for that matter from the Nzema cultural perspective, does not appear very attractive. However, once one decides to love the leper, the person must admire the footwears as well (see also Ibrahim et al. 2022: 36). The proverb therefore advises the man not to reject his wife and stepdaughter. He must rather strategize to reprimand the girl to change for the better in order to maintain peace within the family.
- A** – The elder quoted this proverb after the young man and his wife each had narrated their side of the story (issue). The **leprosy-related proverb** used is relevant to persuade the man.
- K** – The tone is that of light-hearted (persuasive).
- I** – The mode of communication is verbal.
- N** – There was no interruption, speakers had the opportunity to make their contributions.
- G** – The genre is the use of proverb.

5.2 Proverbs related to blindness

Ethnographic background 2: [There was arbitration to resolve conflict between two brothers at *Akpatam* (a community in Nzema East) on Saturday, 24th July, 2021. The elder brother promised to sponsor the younger one to go into apprenticeship. When the date set for his departure elapsed, the younger brother got furious and decided to leave the house. In the course of settling the matter, the proverbs in excerpt 2 emerged.]

Excerpt 2: Speaker 1 (elder) addresses the younger brother: *Nea, edawɔ mumua ne wɔ awovole wule nde mɔɔ enee enle neavole biala a. Ɔti saa ε diema ye elebede ke ɔkedo wɔ gyima nu a ɔwɔ ke edi pilasili, ɔboaleke bese saa ε nye bazi na edele tenla zo a enee wɔva ye zo (proverb 2).* “Look, your parents passed on when you were still a toddler, and so you did not have anybody to look after you. So, if your elder brother is hustling in order for you to go into apprenticeship, you have to be happy because it is said that **for one to suffer from cataract is better than total blindness (proverb 2).**” Speaker 2 also addresses the young-

er brother as follows: *Yemɔ ala yɛɛ ɛ nlenyia eze wɔ la. Mame, menea a ɔwɔ ke nzelele bɔbɔ a eye ke ɔkenyia ezukoa na ɔkedo wɔ gyima nu a na te ke ɛfi sua nu, ɔluake bese **anyenzinliravole ɔdaye ɔnva ɛya wɔ kpɔke nu (proverb 3)***. “That is exactly what your grandfather has told you. For me, you must rather pray for your brother to get the capital to let you start the apprenticeship, but not to pack your luggage away, because it is said that **a blind person must not become angry in the forest (proverb 3)**.”

Analysis:

Ɛnye bazi na edele tenla zo a enee wɔwa ye zo (proverb 2)
 ‘For one to suffer from cataract is better than total blindness’
 (proverb 2).

- S – Proverb (2) was used during arbitration at the forecourt of the chief’s palace at *Akpatam*.
- P – The participants were two brothers, some traditional elders and other bystanders. The speaker was an elderly man.
- E – An elderly man used the proverb to inform the younger brother on the essence of **contentment**. This is in line with what an informant observed that the Nzema cherish people who appreciate any little thing they possess and/or whatever a benevolent donor would offer them. Though cataract is not a convenient health condition, one would prefer it to absolute blindness. The proverb seeks to say that the boy must, at least, be ‘satisfied’ and appreciate the fact that his elder brother has good plans for him, since his life could have been more miserable because of the untimely demise of his parents.
- A – After the two brothers had spoken, an elderly man cited this proverb in his speech. The **blindness-related proverb** used is relevant in advising the boy to be content.
- K – The tone is that of seriousness.
- I – The mode of communication is verbal.
- N – There was no interruption, the speakers had the opportunity to make their contributions.
- G – The genre is the use of proverb.

Analysis:

Anyenzinliravole enva eya wɔ kpɔkɛ nu (proverb 3)

‘A blind person must not become angry in the forest’ (proverb 3).

S – Proverb (3) was used during arbitration at the forecourt of the chief’s palace at *Akpatam*.

P – The participants were two brothers, some traditional elders and other bystanders. The speaker was an elderly man.

E– The speaker uses the proverb purposely to advise the younger brother **against quick-temperedness**. In this proverb, the boy is likened to a blind person who needs guidance. When a blind person becomes angry with his/her guide dog, especially in the forest, he/she may be left in the forest to fumble. Thus, the proverb informs the boy to live harmoniously with his elder brother because he can become frustrated if the elder brother decides not to sponsor his apprenticeship.

A – Another elderly man quoted proverb (3) right after the first elder had cited proverb (2). The **blindness-related proverb** used is relevant to admonish the boy.

K – The tone is that of seriousness.

I – The mode of communication is verbal.

N – There was no interruption, the speakers had the opportunity to make their contributions.

G – The genre is the use of proverb.

Ethnographic background 3 (another use of blindness-related proverb): [On Wednesday, 20th October, 2021, there was arbitration that was meant to settle dispute between a young lady and her parents at *Kekam* (a community in Nzema Central). The lady, who was an illiterate, rejected a marriage proposal made by a guy who was highly educated. Her reason was that the guy, being educated, may later take her for granted. Therefore, she insisted on marrying another guy who was equally an illiterate. Her parents disagreed to her decision, which generated a conflict between the lady and her parents. During the arbitration, her father quoted the proverb in excerpt 3.]

Excerpt 3: Father: *Me ra raale, ɔle zɔ kɛ kekala edawɔ ekola ekponde nrenyia mɔɔ ekulo ye la, noko mame mennie mendo nu*

kε εkegya mɔɔ ɔdaye noko yeangɔ sukulu la. Ɖboalekε saa anyenzinlirama nwiɔ dua a betɔ kuma nu (proverb 4). “My daughter, it is a fact that you are mature enough and now you have the opportunity to marry a man of your choice. Notwithstanding this, I disagree to your decision to marry the guy who is as illiterate as you are, because **when two blind people move together, they can fall into a pit (proverb 4).**”

Analysis:

Saa anyenzinlirama nwiɔ dua a betɔ kuma nu (proverb 4)

‘When two blind people move together, they can fall into a pit’ (proverb 4).

- S – Proverb (4) was used during arbitration at the forecourt of a family house at *Kekam*.
- P – The participants were father, mother, daughter, some traditional elders and other bystanders. The father was the speaker (proverb user).
- E – Using this proverb, the father warns his daughter not to forgo such opportunity of grabbing an educated man as a husband. Here, the proverb reminds the lady on the essence of **circumspection**. Through the proverb, her father tells her to recognise that she is illiterate, and so must choose to marry the guy who is educated. This, in a way, can contribute to their progress and success in life. However, as an informant highlighted, this proverb does not seek to say that uneducated people are inferior, but to indicate how much importance the Nzema attach to education; describing EDUCATION figuratively as an EYE-OPENER. As one can infer from the proverb, the Nzema conceptualise ILLITERACY as BLINDNESS. Therefore, the proverb suggests that when the lady and the young man get married, both as illiterates, they may not be enlightened, and that they may face many difficulties that can hinder their progress in life (as captured in “they can fall in a pit”).
- A – The father said this proverb to his daughter after her mother had offered some advice. The **blindness-related proverb** used is relevant to warn the lady.

- K** – The tone was that which indicated seriousness.
- I** – The mode of communication is verbal.
- N** – There was no interruption, speakers had the opportunity to make their contributions.
- G** – The genre is the use of proverb.

5.3 Proverb related to hunchback

Ethnographic background 4: [On Friday, 26th February, 2021, there was arbitration to settle a case between a woman (single parent) and her son at *Samenye* (a community in Nzema West). The boy, who had finished his fitting apprenticeship, demanded a shop in haste in order to start his business independently. As a single parent, the mother could not afford to provide the shop immediately. This resulted in misunderstanding between them. One of the elders used the proverb in excerpt 4 in entreating the boy during the arbitration.]

Excerpt 4: Elder: *Me anlɔnra, ɛdawɔ eze ke ɛ ze ende aze ɔti ɛ nli fe dɔɔnwo wɔ be enleanle nu. Eleka mɔɔ ɔwɔ ke besiezie bɛmaa eyɛ wɔ gyima ne la bahyia ezukoa koatee. ɔti, nyia abotane maa ɛ nli eziezie nwole ezukoa ɔluake bese afuvole teladeɛ betɔ alagye a bebu a (proverb 5).* “My grandson, you are aware that your mother is widowed, and so she struggles a lot to cater for you (and your siblings). The shop you are demanding requires a huge amount of money to furnish it for you. So, do not be in hurry, as our forefathers said that **it takes ample time to sew a perfect dress for the hunchback (proverb 5).**”

Analysis:

Afuvole teladeɛ betɔ alagye a bebu a (proverb 5)

‘It takes ample time to sew a perfect dress for the hunchback’ (proverb 5).

- S** – Proverb (5) was used during arbitration at the forecourt a family house at *Samenye*.
- P** – The participants comprise a mother and her son, some traditional elders and other bystanders. The speaker was an elderly man.

- E**– According to an informant, this proverb is significant in advising a person to avoid rush in dealing with ‘sensitive’ issues that require careful examination and attention. In excerpt 4 above, the goal of the proverb is to inform the boy on the virtue of **patience**. Basically, the proverb says that, in order to sew a dress perfectly for the hunchback, the tailor/seamstress must be patient and meticulous. This is likened to providing a well-furnished fitting shop, where the woman (as a single parent) needs ample time to mobilise resources (money) to be able to accomplish it. The proverb instils in the boy the ‘spirit’ of avoiding rush in life.
- A**– The elderly man used the proverb after the boy and his mother each had told their side of the matter. The **hunchback-related proverb** cited is essential to inform the boy to avoid rush in life.
- K**– The tone is that of seriousness.
- I**– The mode of communication is verbal.
- N**– There was no interruption, the speakers had the opportunity to make their contributions.
- G**– The genre is the use of proverb.

5.4 Proverb related to rickets

Ethnographic background 5: [A father decided not to pay his son’s admission fee to enter university because the boy unlawfully impregnated a lady, a situation which caused the father to pay a fine of Ten Thousand Ghana Cedis (HG¢ 10.000). Some traditional elders sat with the father and his son to settle the case, which was meant to beseech the father to pay the admission fee. It happened on Sunday, 31st January, 2021 at *Nsein* (a community in Nzema East). Excerpt 5 reveals the ailment-related proverb that was cited.]

Excerpt 5: Elder: *Egya X, ε ra ne ambɔ ebela kpale mɔɔ ese ke edi ɔ nzi a ɔbaye edweke dɔɔnwo. Noko nea na fa ɔ nwo edweke kye ye maa ɔdoɔ ye sukulu zo ɔluake bese saa betenre ananda a eza bengyea ye (proverb 6).* “Mr. X, we acknowledge that your son has done wrong, however, if you consider this it will result in a lot of problems. So, we implore you to let him further his

education, and note that **in trying to straighten the rickets, one must not end up making it more crooked (proverb 6).**”

Analysis:

Saa betenre ananda a eza bengyeya ye (proverb 6)

‘In trying to straighten the rickets, one must not end up making it more crooked’ (proverb 6).

- S – Proverb (6) was used during arbitration at the forecourt a family house at *Nsien*.
- P – The participants comprise a father and his son, including some traditional elders and other bystanders. The one who quoted the proverb (speaker) was an elderly man.
- E – The purpose of citing the proverb is to entreat the father to pay his son’s admission fee. As an informant explained, among other cultural values, the advisory content of the proverb teaches **tolerance** and **forgiveness**. The fact that the son has unlawfully put a lady in family way is rather unfortunate, a situation that can disparage the young man as well as his parents. Therefore, the father is implored to be tolerant, and to strategize to comfort his son, but not to ‘worsen’ his case by denying him access to tertiary education. Hence, the use of proverb (6) above.
- A – After the father had spoken, an elderly man employed the proverb. The **rickets-related proverb** used is essential to advise the father to be tolerant.
- K – The tone is that of light-hearted in order to arrive at the persuasive function of the proverb.
- I – The mode of communication is verbal.
- N – There was no interruption, the speakers had the opportunity to make their contributions.
- G – The genre is the use of proverb.

5.5 Proverb related to inguinal hernia

Ethnographic background 6: [On Sunday, 19th December, 2021, at *Bolfo* (a community in Nzema East), there was arbitration to settle conflict between two men (one of them was a stranger who had come to live with the other in search of a job).

The man who owned the residence complained bitterly about the overstay of the stranger. During the arbitration, one of the elders quoted the proverb in excerpt 6 in persuading the landlord.]

Excerpt 6: Elder: (addresses the man): *Me diema, yenwu kpale mɔɔ wɔye la amuala. Kemɔ enwunle ke eyevole ye anvunvone na eliele ye la, bɔ mɔdenle maa ye meke ekyii boka nwo maa ɔkponde sua ne bie. Akee kakye ke bese **tuoke amba ndɔmale ma evoanle na ɔrale ke ebarakponde tenlabela ala (proverb 7).*** “My brother, we recognise your good hospitality. Since you realised that a stranger usually encounters challenges, and thus allowed him to live with you, kindly spare him to look for another accommodation within a few weeks. Then also, remember that **the hernia came not to drive away the testicles, but to seek a place to settle (proverb 7).**

Analysis:

Tuoke amba ndɔmale ma evoanle, ɔrale ke ebarakponde tenlabela ala (proverb 7)

‘The hernia came not to drive away the testicles, but to seek a place to settle’ (proverb 7).

- S** – Proverb (7) was used during arbitration at the forecourt of a man’s house at *Bolɔfo*.
- P** – The participants comprise a landlord and a tenant (stranger), some traditional elders and other bystanders. The one who resorted to the proverb (speaker) was an elderly man.
- E** – The purpose of ‘injecting’ the proverb into the advisory discourse is to persuade the landlord to allow the stranger to live with him for some time, while searching for other accommodation. The proverb underscores the essence of **Hospitality**, as an informant reported. Just as inguinal hernia comes to live with the testicles, usually in harmony, so is the landlord expected to embrace the stranger during their stay.
- A** – After the landlord and tenant each had narrated their issues, the elderly man cited proverb (7). The **hernia-related proverb** is relevant to beseech the landlord.
- K** – The tone is less harsh in order to enhance the persuasion.

- I – The mode of communication is verbal.
- N – There was no interruption, the speakers had the opportunity to make their contributions.
- G – The genre is the use of proverb.

5.6 Proverb related to goitre

Ethnographic background 7: [On Tuesday, 23rd November, 2021, there was arbitration to resolve dispute between a marriage couple at *Yediyesele* (a community in Nzema East). The man owned 20 acres of land, but he used only 5 acres for rubber plantation project and left the rest uncultivated. His wife had continuous quarrels with him because he refused to cultivate greater portion of the land. During the arbitration, one of the elders employed the proverb in excerpt 7 in admonishing the man.]

Excerpt 7: Elder: *Kpavole, wɔmɔ ɛ ti eye boɛ kɛ wɔnyia azele koatee zɛhae. Eza noko etede anwosesebe ɔti anree ɔwɔ kɛ emia ɛ nwo eye ɛya ne kpole. Kakye kɛ bese eye ekɔminzale kpɔke a ɔwɔ kɛ eye ye kpole na yeamaa ɛ ne api (proverb 8).* “Youngman, you are very fortunate to own such a vast land. Besides, you are strong and energetic enough, so you could have cultivated greater portion of the land as rubber plantation. Remember that our early people said **if you decide to develop goitre, target the bigger size in order to amplifier your voice (proverb 8).**”

Analysis:

Saa eye ekɔminzale kpɔke a eye ye kpole na yeamaa ɛ ne api (proverb 8)

‘If you decide to develop goitre, target the bigger size to amplifier your voice’ (proverb 8).

- S – Proverb (8) was cited during arbitration at the chief’s palace at *Yediyesele*.
- P – The participants comprise husband and wife, traditional elders and other bystanders. The proverb user was an elderly man.
- E – The purpose is to rebuke the man for being indolent. As an informant pointed out, the Nzema detest laziness, but believe in **hard-work**, as this is inherently celebrated in proverb (8).

Here, the proverb reprimands the man for failing to expand his farm (rubber plantation), since he owns enough land and also very healthy to work. The ‘bigger size of goitre’ that can ‘amplifier’ one’s voice, as the proverb describes, implies that the man will be able to extend his (financial) support for the benefit of his relatives and the society at large if he expands his plantation project. This among other positive behaviours is what the people of Nzema cherish.

- A – The wife was the first person who spoke to express her displeasure, followed by the husband who tried to defend why he cultivated a small portion of his land. The elder then used the **goitre-related proverb** to advise the husband against laziness.
- K – The tone is that of seriousness in order to put the man on his toes.
- I – The mode of communication is verbal.
- N – There was no interruption, the speakers had the opportunity to make their contributions.
- G – The genre is the use of proverb.

5.7 Proverb related to deafness

Ethnographic background 8: [There was arbitration on Saturday, 3rd April, 2021 at *Salman* (a community in Nzema Central) to settle dispute between husband and wife. The man gave money to the woman to buy stationery and foodstuffs for their daughter in a boarding school. The woman spent part of the money on her clothing, a situation which resulted in a quarrel. During the arbitration, an elderly man said the proverb seen in excerpt 8.]

Excerpt 8: Elder: *Raale ye, maa menga mengile wɔ ke wɔanyɛ deɛ fee. Asoo ɛ ra ne nwomazukoale hyia wɔ ɔ? Duzu a maanle evale ezukoa ne edɔle edanle a? Kakye ke ayile mɔɔ befa beayɛ anzodilira la benwɔza ye be gyake anwo (proverb 9).* “Woman, I tell you that you did not do what is right at all. Do you really care about your ward’s education? What motivated you to use the money to buy your clothing? Remember that **one does not apply medication on the feet when it is meant for curing deafness (proverb 9).**”

Analysis

Ayile mɔɔ befa beaye anzodilira la benwɔza ye be gyake anwo
(proverb 9)

‘One does not apply medication on the feet when it is meant for curing deafness’ (proverb 9).

S – Proverb (9) was cited during arbitration at the chief’s palace at *Salman*.

P – The participants comprise husband and wife, some traditional elders and other bystanders. The proverb user was an elderly man.

E – The purpose of the proverb is to rebuke the woman for misuse of resources, and for not attending directly to a problem to solve it. Applying the medication for deafness on one’s feet, as the proverb describes, does not result in curing the deafness. Similarly, for the woman to spend the money on her clothing, while it is meant for buying items for the student, is a deviation from solving the exact problem.

A – The elders allowed the husband and wife each to narrate their concerns. Then one of the elders used the **deafness-related proverb** to rebuke the woman for waste of resources.

K – The tone is that of seriousness in order to reprimand the woman.

I – The mode of communication is verbal.

N – There was no interruption, the speakers had the opportunity to make their contributions.

G – The genre is the use of proverb.

5.8 Proverb related to migraine

Ethnographic background 9: [On Tuesday, 23rd November, 2021, some elders sat during arbitration to resolve conflict between two young men at *Kegyina* (a community in Nzema East). One of the young men had alleged that the other was flirting with his wife who worked in a restaurant owned by the accused person. Later, the situation escalated into a serious confusion. In the arbitration, the accuser insisted on knowing the truth, and so he requested for curses to be applied. The accused, in proving innocent, resorted to the proverb illustrated in excerpt 9.]

Excerpt 9: Speaker (the accused): *Mame meze ke metefale e ye eti mɔɔ ekulo biala la ye. Saa bewa amonle bɔbɔ a ɔnrɛha me, ɔluakɛ bɛse atimbakyele ba azule nu a bie engā kanra (proverb 10).* “For me, I know I have not had any sexual affair with your wife, and so you can do whatever pleases you. Even when you rain curses, I will not incur the wrath of the gods because it said that **an outbreak of migraine does not affect the crab (proverb 10).**”
Analysis

Atimbakyele ba azule nu a bie engā kanra (proverb 10)

‘An outbreak of migraine does not affect the crab’ (proverb 10).

- S – Proverb (10) was cited during arbitration at the chief’s palace at *Kegyina*.
- P – The participants comprise a man (i.e., the owner of the restaurant), husband and wife, some traditional elders and other bystanders. The proverb user was the accused.
- E – The accused employs the proverb for the purpose of indicating **sincerity**, and to prove that he is innocent. The use of ‘crab’ in the proverb is actually symbolic. According to the Nzema cultural worldview, as an informant indicated during an interview, the crab is perceived to be headless. Thus, unlike other inhabitants of the river/stream, the crab cannot be affected should there be an outbreak of any head-related disease in the river. In this context (excerpt 9), the accused uses the proverb to imply that he is not guilty (meaning that he has never had sexual intercourse with the lady), and so he is not bothered about the repercussions of any curses. In other words, no curses can harm him as far as the alleged sexual affair is concerned.
- A – The accused, after some participants had spoken, quoted the **migraine-related proverb** essential to show sincerity.
- K – The tone is that of seriousness in order to express sincerely that he is not guilty.
- I – The mode of communication is verbal.
- N – There was no interruption, the speakers had the opportunity to make their contributions.
- G – The genre is the use of proverb.

6. Conclusion

Employing the Ethnography of Communication as a theoretical lens, the paper has unravelled the pragmatic imports of ailment-related proverbs in Nzema language and culture. It has been shown that Nzema-speakers resort to such proverbs related to medical conditions to express the innate principles and cultural values and ethics of the society. The specific ailments which featured in the proverbs include: deafness, blindness, leprosy, rickets, hunchback, goitre, migraine, and hernia. It is observed that these proverbs are not cited to derogate victims of the various ailments. The sampled proverbs, though may sound disparaging or ridiculous on the surface level of meaning, tend to communicate deeply, aiming at maintaining social equilibrium and enforcing morality. Crucially, the didactic messages of the proverbs seek to foreground the essence of virtues like patience, circumspection, hard-work, contentment, hospitality, guanine love, and truthfulness among others. We observe that in order to cite the proverbs in a way that will make the addressees keep the message and act accordingly, some verbs like *remember*, *note*, *know* and *recognise* were employed before the actual proverbs. These are what Agyekum (2019) referred to as **advisory verbs**.

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Mohammed Yakub
 Department of Akan-Nzema Education
 University of Education, Winneba,
 Ghana
 myakub@uew.edu.gh

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Obituary
Received on 21 April 2022

WOLFGANG MIEDER

**AN OBITUARY, BIBLIOGRAPHY, AND LATE
CORRESPONDENCE**



SHIRLEY L. ARORA (3 June 1930 – 23 March 2021)

Shirley L. Arora was a renowned folklorist and paremiologist with a national and international reputation. She was an expert on the *La Llorona* legend as well as other folk narratives, beliefs, and the folklore of birds. But paremiological matters informed her scholarly work throughout her long tenure at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and throughout the rest of her long life. She investigated the rich appearance of proverbial comparisons in the works of the Peruvian writer Ricardo Palma (1966), and she published one of her invaluable books

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on *Proverbial Comparisons and Related Expressions in Spanish* (1977). It was based on actual field research among Spanish speaking citizens of the greater Los Angeles area in California. She authored numerous articles on various paremiological topics in the yearbooks *Proverbium* in the United States and *Paremia* in Spain. They appeared in English as well as Spanish, with the most important theoretical contribution being her essay on “The Perception of Proverbiality” (1984) that also appeared in Spanish translation as “El reconocimiento del refrán” (1997). It is one of the most cited publications on proverbs in the world. She was a beloved professor, a diligent administrator, and an engaging lecturer at conferences in the United States and elsewhere. There is no doubt that she had a major impact on modern proverb scholarship and will most certainly be remembered with respect and admiration.

When her life came to an end in March of 2021, the pandemic made it impossible to organize a special tribute to her. But such an event could finally take place on April 6, 2022, and it was my honor as her long-time friend to be invited to say a few words in her memory. I had edited volume 12 (1995) of *Proverbium* as a special *Festschrift* to my dear friend and dedicated volume 27 (2010) of *Proverbium* to her on her eightieth birthday. On the same occasion I published our letters as “*True Friends Are Like Diamonds*”: *Three Decades of Correspondence Between the Folklorists Shirley L. Arora and Wolfgang Mieder* (2010). It was natural that our mutual friend Julia Sevilla Muñoz, esteemed paremiologist at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, asked me to write a necrology about Shirley Arora that appeared in the *Paremia* yearbook in 2021. Naturally I could draw on all of these materials for my remarks in California, also rereading the letters that we exchanged since 2010 to the time that she could no longer write. I wish that we could have recorded our final conversations on the phone.

In any case, I thank Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt and Melita Aleksa Vargha, the editors of the electronic version of *Proverbium*, for the welcome opportunity to publish my short address – there were several other speakers – together with our additional correspondence and a list of Shirley Arora’s paremiological publications. As will be seen from the hitherto unpub-

lished letters, she and her sons David and Alan were strong financial supporters of *Proverbium*, ensuring that this *Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* could be sustained as a print publication from 1984 until 2021. Our final letters are a touching testimony of the respect and admiration that we had for each other's work and of our special professional and deep personal friendship. They are, of course, also an invaluable part of what in German is called "Wissenschaftsgeschichte" (history of scholarship) in which Shirley L. Arora will forever occupy a distinguished place as far as international paremiology is concerned.

Here then are my remarks delivered on April 6, 2022, at the Luskin Conference Center on the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles:

In preparation of my words for the tribute being paid to Shirley Arora today I reread our many epistles that I published in 2010 in celebration of dear Shirley's eightieth birthday with the proverbial title "*True Friends Are Like Diamonds*": *Three Decades of Correspondence Between the Folklorists Shirley L. Arora and Wolfgang Mieder*. These letters and those that we continued to exchange for another decade are a heart-warming testimony of the personal and scholarly friendship between two dedicated and diligent proverb scholars. Here is her reaction upon receipt of the book on May 15, 2010:

My dear Wolfgang, I'm absolutely overwhelmed! I don't know what to say! (Can one be "speechless" via email?) The dedication to [our spouses] Harbans and Barbara is an especially warm touch. I've leafed through a good portion of the book, more or less at random, and it brought back so vividly the many years of our friendship and our shared interest in proverbial language. I shall treasure the book and turn to it again and again. And whenever I do, it will be like having another conversation with you.

Once we met in the late 1970s, our friendship together with our respect and admiration for each other's work continued to grow, and we stayed in touch all the way to the end of Shirley's long life. Her son Alan even arranged it that I could take part in the virtual birthday celebration that he organized when she turned ninety not too long ago. Our correspondence went on,

with my letters usually including the following *leitmotif* as for example on December 19, 2019: “Please know how often I think of you and how much my students like your publications.” Just three months before her death, my letter to my dear friend began with this sentence on December 29, 2020: “This morning on my way to the office I thought of you, Shirley, as I often do. Then when I came home, there was your most welcome Christmas card waiting for me. When I opened it, I found two beautiful pictures – one of you and one of Alan and his family. I also noticed that you signed the card. Thank you so much for thinking of me. Barbara and I enjoyed hearing from you so very much.”

What tied us together was our engaged work on paremiological matters. There is no doubt that her published dissertation on *Proverbial Comparisons in Ricardo Palma’s “Tradiciones Peruanas”* (1966) is one of the very few literary investigations of an individual author for the use and function of proverbial comparisons. Several articles followed, of course, but about ten years later appeared one of Shirley’s major contributions with the title *Proverbial Comparisons and Related Expressions in Spanish* (1977). In addition to being a valuable collection of Spanish proverbial comparisons as they are used in the Los Angeles area today, this book also presents a fundamental guide for effective field research on proverbial language. It discusses various types of comparisons, their style and metaphors as well as their frequency and distribution in Spain and South American countries. The book with its large bibliography represents a magisterial accomplishment in Hispanic paremiology and paremiography.

Speaking of bibliographies, I would like to point out that all of Shirley’s publications are based on her vast knowledge of secondary sources, to wit her “Critical Bibliography of Mexican American Proverbs” (1982). In the same year she also published her article “Proverbs in Mexican American Tradition” (1982) that is the basis for all subsequent studies on the proverbial language brought by immigrants from Mexico to the United States. Naturally Shirley also looked at how these Spanish language proverbs survive in the United States in their original language and by way of loan translations. The beginning of my long letter of January 31, 2013, relates to this:

My dear Shirley,

This has been a wonderful day! This morning I was teaching my lecture course on “‘Big Fish Eat Little fish’: The Nature and Politics of Proverbs,” and guess what? We were talking about the proverbs that immigrants have brought to the United States, and so your ears should really have been ringing! I had brought some of your publications to class and explained to the students the exciting field work that you have undertaken in the greater Los Angeles area. Of course, I told them also about your *magnum opus* of a comparative dictionary of Hispanic proverbs that you are working on now. The students were very interested, and they were impressed that we proverb scholars are all such good friends. Then, when I got back to my office, our secretary told me that we had been informed that we have received a \$1000 donation from you for *Proverbium*. Now that was a surprise, and I hasten to thank you and your sons Alan and David for your incredible generosity.

Numerous articles followed once again, including a fascinating look at how proverbial language functions among academics: “Proverbial Speech and Leadership in Academe” (1988). Here she documents that proverbs and proverbial phrases do in fact play a considerable role in the oral communication among professors. Shirley showed that the intellectually sophisticated professors used proverbial language for the purposes of instruction, persuasion, commentary, humor, and as expression of familiarity during committee meetings at UCLA. I must admit that I play this “game” as well during long meetings while I think of my dear friend.

But the *magnum opus* among her published articles is without any doubt “The Perception of Proverbiality” (1984) which I had the honor of including as the lead article in the first volume of *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* that I have edited for the past thirty-eight years. I still remember receiving the manuscript of this article, knowing instantly that it represents a truly seminal accomplishment. As I wrote to her on February 22, 1984: “I would like to take this opportunity to

thank you for contributing this excellent study to *Proverbium*. The first issue is supposed to be a particularly fine one, and your paper will most certainly strengthen the merit of this yearbook.” In fact, there is no doubt that this article belongs to the most quoted publications in international paremiology. For this reason, I included it in my essay volume *Wise Words. Essays on the Proverb* (1994) ten years after its original publication once again, and three years later it also appeared in Spanish translation as “El reconocimiento del refrán” (1997). What makes this article of not quite forty pages so special and cutting edge to this day? It basically deals with the problem of what people perceive to be proverbs. She argues that proverbiality depends upon traditionality, currency, repetition, certain grammatical or syntactical features, metaphor, semantic markers (archaic words, etc.), and phonetic markers (rhyme, meter, alliteration, etc.). The more a given statement possesses such markers, the greater are its chances of being perceived as a proverb. Innumerable subsequent proverb studies throughout the world have cited and continue to refer to this publication. I know that I have quoted from it numerous times in my own work, and I shall definitely continue to do so with thanks and appreciation as I remember my special friend.

Many additional articles continued to appear in *Proverbium* and its Spanish equivalent *Paremia* that spread Shirley’s paremiological expertise worldwide. The fact that Shirley’s last publications all appeared in essay volumes dedicated to me on various advanced birthdays (I am but fourteen years younger than she) is especially meaningful to me, and I shall forever be thankful for her efforts of writing them at a time when her health was already not the best any longer. They inform my own work as all her publications have done for such a long time. In fact, when I was working on a paper a couple of years ago about modern Anglo-American proverbs that have their origin in various sports, I was lucky that Shirley had published her article on “Baseball as (Pan)America: A Sampling of Baseball-Related Metaphors in Spanish” (2004) some years earlier. Her very last article, written when Shirley was 85 years old, appeared in a *Festschrift* dedicated to me on my seventieth birthday as “‘Crossover’ Proverbs: Spanish to English?” (2015). Here, in her final statement

as a world-class paremiologist, she returns one more time to her paremiological “love”, i.e., the influence of Spanish proverbs on Anglo-American proverbs and vice versa. Her city of Los Angeles with its multitude of Spanish speakers was the perfect background for her life’s work. She did all of this as a scholar, of course, but there was much more to it. There was also always the human element that encouraged and inspired her to undertake her scholarly work. In our modern interconnected world, it behooves all of us to pay attention to fellow human beings of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds together with their proverb treasures.

Shirley worked on her giant comparative manuscript of Hispanic proverbs as long as she possibly could. In later years it had become an Albatross of sorts around her neck, but she happily labored along, writing to me on May 12, 2012: “I am continuing to work on my proverb project, but I’m beginning to suspect that there’s no end to it. I think perhaps I’ve just been trying to include too much. For instance, I began with the idea of two annotations as a minimum, but then I find variants and add those, and soon might have as many as four or five annotations instead of a minimum.” I responded on the same day by stating: “It is not important whether everything is absolutely perfect and detailed, etc. Your materials are simply too important not to be finished. Your strength, eyesight, health etc. are limited, dear Shirley, and you must not drive yourself too hard.” But on she went until she had to put her dream project aside with my repeated promises that I would try to get her proverb compendium finished somehow. In fact, I suggested to her that her former assistant and now Professor Alejandro Lee and I could team up for this purpose – something that we are now beginning to discuss. It would indeed be an honor to complete her diligent and dedicated work on this monumental comparative collection of Hispanic proverbs that she loved so much for our departed friend.

Let me close these observations in celebration and memory of my dearest friend Shirley L. Arora by stating that she was the embodiment of the proverb “True friends are like diamonds.” She was an educator *par excellence*, serving and inspiring generations of eager students with her informed lectures and challenging seminars at the University of California at Los Angeles. She

was also a diligent and respected administrator of a large Department of Spanish and Portuguese at that famous university. For all of this she deserves our appreciation and thankfulness. But she was also an eminent scholar of folklore with a national and international reputation. Above all, she was a leading proverb scholar for many decades here in the United States, in Europe, in Mexico in particular and in South America in general. She has influenced proverb scholars everywhere, and her remarkable scholarly achievements will continue to inform and influence paremiological studies. Paremiology has lost one of its greatest champions, who as a woman broke through many glass ceilings as she carved out her career with courage, determination, and dedication. She now rests in the hall of fame for paremiologists and will influence both paremiology and paremiography by way of her scholarly accomplishments, hopefully including the publication of her Hispanic proverb collection. We, who continue to benefit from and build on her significant work, will remember and treasure our dear colleague and special friend Shirley L. Arora as an exceptional professor and mentor, a world-class scholar, and an all-around wonderful person.

Shirley L. Arora's Proverb Publications:

"Some Spanish Proverbial Comparisons from California." *Western Folklore*, 20 (1961), 229-237.

Proverbial Comparisons in Ricardo Palma's "Tradiciones Peruanas." Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1966. 205 pp.

"'El que nace para tamal ...': A Study in Proverb Patterning." *Folklore Americas*, 28 (1968), 55-79.

"Spanish Proverbial Exaggerations from California." *Western Folklore*, 27 (1968), 229-253; 30 (1971), 105-118.

"'Como la carabina de Ambrosio'." *Proverbium*, no. 15 (1970), 428-430.

"Proverbial Exaggerations in English and Spanish." *Proverbium*, no. 18 (1972), 675-683.

"The 'El que nace' Proverbs: A Supplement." *Journal of Latin American Lore*, 1 (1975), 185-198.

Proverbial Comparisons and Related Expressions in Spanish. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1977. 521 pp.

- “‘To the Grave with the Dead ...’: Ambivalence in a Spanish Proverb.” *Fabula*, 21 (1980), 223-246.
- “A Critical Bibliography of Mexican American Proverbs.” *Aztlán*, 13 (1982), 71-80.
- “Proverbs in Mexican American Tradition.” *Aztlán*, 13 (1982), 43-69.
- “The Perception of Proverbiality.” *Proverbium*, 1 (1984), 1-38. Also in *Wise Words: Essays on the Proverb*. Ed. Wolfgang Mieder. New York: Garland Publishing, 1994. 3-29. Also in Spanish as “El reconocimiento del refrán.” *Lingüística y Literatura*, 18 (1997), 77-96.
- “‘No Tickee, No Shirtee’. Proverbial Speech and Leadership in Academe.” *Inside Organizations. Understanding the Human Dimension*. Eds. Michael Owen Jones, Michael Dane Moore, and Richard Christopher Snyder. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publishers, 1988. 179-189.
- “On the Importance of Rotting Fish: A Proverb and Its Audience.” *Western Folklore*, 48 (1989), 271-288. With 1 illustration.
- “Weather Proverbs: Some ‘Folk’ Views.” *Proverbium*, 8 (1991), 1-17.
- “A Woman and a Guitar: Variations on a Folk Metaphor.” *Proverbium*, 10 (1993), 21-36.
- “Proverbs and Prejudice: El Indio in Hispanic Proverbial Speech.” *Proverbium*, 11 (1994), 27-46. Also in *Cognition, Comprehension, and Communication: A Decade of North American Proverb Studies (1990-2000)*. Ed. Wolfgang Mieder. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, 2003. 17-36.
- “El refranero español en Los Angeles (California).” *Paremia*, 6 (1997), 67-76.
- “‘Como decimos nosotros’: The Transcultural Use of Spanish Proverbs.” *Proverbium*, 15 (1998), 37-58.
- “Una familia de refranes ‘destinistas’.” *Paremia*, 7 (1998), 27-34.
- “Tradición, invención y autoridad en el refranero actual.” *Paremia*, 8 (1999), 37-46.
- “Paremiología hispanoamericana: Un campo en peligro de extinción?” *Paremia*, 9 (2000), 35-42.
- “Baseball as (Pan)America: A Sampling of Baseball-Related Metaphors in Spanish.” “*What Goes Around Comes Around*”: *The Circulation of Proverbs in Contemporary Life. Essays in Honor of Wolfgang Mieder*. Eds. Kimberly J. Lau, Peter Tokofsky, and Stephen D. Winick. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2004. 58-85.
- “Proverbs and Narratives: Some Observations from Contemporary Spanish-speaking Tradition.” *Res humanae proverbiorum et sententiarum*.

Ad honorem Wolfgangi Mieder. Ed. Csaba Földes. Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2004. 27-35.

“Crossover Proverbs: A Preliminary Sampling.” *The Proverbial “Pied Piper”*. *A Festschrift Volume of Essays in Honor of Wolfgang Mieder on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. Ed. Kevin J. McKenna. New York: Peter Lang, 2009. 47-62.

“‘Crossover’ Proverbs: Spanish to English?” *“Bis dat, qui cito dat”*. *“Gegengabe” in Paremiology, Folklore, Language, and Literature. Honoring Wolfgang Mieder on His Seventieth Birthday*. Eds. Christian Grandl and Kevin J. McKenna. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015. 43-49.

“The Collection of Spanish Proverbs in Los Angeles (California).” *Paremia*, 29 (2019), 43-48.

See also:

Mieder, Wolfgang. “Shirley L. Arora: Paremiologist par excellence. Laudatio on Her Sixty-Fifth Birthday (June 3, 1995).” *Proverbium [=Festschrift for Shirley L. Arora]*, 12 (1995), 1-12. With 1 illustration.

Mieder, Wolfgang (ed.). *“True Friends Are Like Diamonds”*. *Three Decades of Correspondence Between the Folklorists Shirley L. Arora and Wolfgang Mieder*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2010. 314 pp. With 2 illustrations.

Mieder, Wolfgang. “Shirley L. Arora: Folklorist and Paremiologist (3 June 1930 – 23 March 2021).” *Paremia*, 31 (2021), 11-18. With 2 illustrations.

Correspondence from 2010 to 2020:

My dear Shirley,

May 9, 2010

We have not heard from each other for some time, but I assume, as always, that “No news is good news!” Those proverbs come in so handy, don’t they?

This is one of the shortest letters I have written to you! You know, some of us are still working, and it is final examination and paper time! I imagine I will not miss this when I retire in a few years.

I am writing to you, Shirley, just to verify your address. I want to send you a small package, and I want to make sure that I send it to where you will actually be!

So please drop me a quick note – all the very best and regards to your family – Barbara sends her best as well,
 Wolfgang

Dear Wolfgang,

May 10, 2010

It seems to me that every letter I write to you starts with an apology for being so slow in communicating, but be assured that if I'm "busier" than a retiree is expected to be, it's because so much of my time goes into the proverb project. Several hours a day, literally. (I can't imagine what it would have been like to do it without a computer!)

I'm back up north, and the address is PO Box 14, Point Arena, CA 95468. Just now it is pouring rain outside, although that may change in a few minutes. But rain is always welcome to redwoods and to people like me who depend on a well for their water supply. We've had a lot more rain this year than we've had for several years in a row, and for the first time since I've been living here I haven't had to have water trucked in from the Navarro River north of here to put in my big redwood storage tank.

I have been working especially hard on the "sample" I want to send you, and I hope to actually get it off to you by the end of this month. I have a lot of questions that I want to put in such a way that answering them won't take a lot of your time. For example, I keep wondering if I'm trying to include too much in the project – too many variants, for example – and whether besides having a "minimum" of two annotations for each country I should have a "maximum" (two? three? four?), and either just ignore the variants or divide them into "major" and "minor" differences and ignore the latter. (I'll give you examples to show what I mean.) Anyway, I do want you to know that I'm still at it, and still enjoying it, too!

Has Spring come to Vermont by now? Besides the rain, our signs of Spring are the redwood violets (which happen to be bright yellow) and now the wild rhododendrons, which are pink. The wild azaleas will bloom a little later; they are mostly white and extremely fragrant. The blackberry bushes are finally beginning to bloom; I was beginning to worry about them. And the jumping mice have come out of hibernation and are appearing in unexpected places, including the glove compartment of my car.

(I have a catch-and-release campaign going on, but it's hard to tell whether I've caught ten mice or the same mouse ten times.)

And now, having done my email, I'm going to get to WORK!

All the best to you both,

Love, Shirley

My dear Shirley,

May 11, 2010

Thank you so much for your kind letter and the notification where you are right now. I can now put a little package into the mail to you.

Do not worry about not having written lately. The main thing is that you continue to work on your collection. It also shows me that you are doing well, and that's just wonderful.

I will have to make this a short note since we are right in the middle of final examinations. Aren't you glad that you don't have to grade any longer? It takes so much time, but it is part of it all, as we know.

Things are going well otherwise. I also have two scholar friends here using my archives: Elena Arsenteva from Kazan, Russia, and Pedro Martins from Siena, Italy (his home is near Porto, Portugal). They are great people, and I love having them around.

All the best for now - back to grading!

Wolfgang

Dear Shirley,

May 11, 2010

I hope you will like my little birthday present about us. A package with more copies is on its way to you

Please let me know how many copies you, Alan, and David would like. They are all *free*! I have sent a box to Alejandro [Lee] to send to some of your former students.

250 copies are on their way to North American libraries, and 250 copies will be mailed out with *Proverbium* in mid-August.

Enjoy the book and all the best,

love, Wolfgang

P.S. I need addresses for Alan & David!

[this is the text of a card included in the package with two copies of the book with our correspondence edited by me: "*True Friends Are Like Diamonds*". *Three Decades of Correspondence*

Between the Folklorists Shirley L. Arora and Wolfgang Mieder.
Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2010.]

My dear Wolfgang, May 15, 2010

I'm absolutely overwhelmed! I don't know what to say. (Can one be "speechless" via email?) The dedication to [our spouses] Harbans and Barbara is an especially warm touch. I've leafed through a good portion of the book, more or less at random, and it brought back so vividly the many years of our friendship and our shared interest in proverbial language. I shall treasure the book and return to it again and again. And whenever I do, it will be like having another conversation with you.

You asked for the addresses of David and Alan. Here they are:

David Arora, PO Box 672, Gualala, CA 95445

Alan Arora, 1080 S. Oak Knoll Ave., Pasadena, CA 91106

Alan has recently taken up a new job at a company in Orange County – a good position, but it means a 45-mile commute from Pasadena each day. It's likely that he'll be putting his present house on sale and moving somewhere closer to his work. That means I'll also be planning to sell my little Pasadena house, which was originally part of Alan's property (a garage and chauffeur's quarters) and would logically be sold along with it, either as a guest house or as a rental (which it used to be when Harbans was alive). The real estate market being what it is, the selling process will likely be quite prolonged, and getting a property ready to sell is a huge project in itself.

Spring seems to have come at last to Point Arena. We had more or less "normal" rainfall this year – twice what we had last year – and now the wildflowers are coming out – wild pink rhododendrons in the woods, wild azaleas (white and intensely fragrant), redwood violets (which happen to be bright yellow, with faint red streaks), and wild Douglas irises, which are deep blue. There are flocks of quail and of goldfinches, and the feeders I have hanging around my house are always busy. The jumping mice are out of hibernation and keep finding ways to come into the house, or perhaps they spent the winter here. (I run a catch-and-release program for them, and that keeps me busy.) All in all it's good to be back here, although I may be making a quick trip

down to L.A. to see my granddaughter graduate with her A.A. degree next weekend. The details haven't been worked out yet.

I imagine your school year is coming to a close also. What are your current travel plans? Looking through the book you sent reminded me of how much traveling I did in those days – it's almost hard to believe, in contrast to now. (I just went an entire week without leaving my house! Or, to be more precise, without leaving my property – I did go into the woods to let the mice go, and down into my orchard to check on the progress of the fruit trees.) The apple trees have finished blooming and the blackberries are just beginning. There was some very cold (for California) weather here in March and it seems to have destroyed the plum and apricot blossoms before they could set fruit. Too bad. The figs are doing well, though.

I'm going to sign off now, with one more attempt to express my gratitude and appreciation for the book as well as for the years of friendship that it represents.

All the best to you and Barbara, and to everyone else involved in the publication process.

Love, Shirley

My dear, dear Shirley,

May 20, 2010

Your big day is quickly approaching! I wanted to make sure that you received the book in time [of your 80th birthday on June 3, 2010], and so I mailed it out plenty early. In the meantime you probably also received the box with about twenty additional copies. Today – just now – I have mailed twenty copies each to your sons David and Alan. I believe that I have also told you that I sent an entire box of 34 copies to Alejandro Lee who will distribute them to some of your former students.

How about your Department at UCLA. Would you like me to send a bunch of the books there to be distributed? If so, please send me a contact person and a number of how many books I should send there.

Also, of course, if you or your sons need more copies, just let me know. We have already mailed out 250 copies to North American libraries. Another 250 copies will be mailed to all *Proverbium* subscribers throughout the world in mid-August. In any case, I am thrilled to know that you like the book. I think it is

a wonderful testimony to our long friendship and it tells a great story of two paremiologists and folklorists working together for over thirty years. Above all, it is a document for our discipline, and I am sure that the many people whom you have touched and who love you will enjoy reading about you personally and your work – especially your many students.

As always, I am glad that you are doing well, Shirley, and that you are making progress with your collection. My work is also going quite well. It is my hope to complete my investigation of the proverbial rhetoric of Martin Luther King by the end of this month. It has been a fascinating study, and I am so excited that I will now have worked on three truly superb African Americans – Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King, and Barack Obama.

This weekend we have graduation, and then I am free. You will like to hear that I will travel to Granada, Spain, at the end of June to participate in the meeting of the European Society of Phraseology, speaking, you guessed it, on Martin Luther King. I will be gone only a total of five days with a one-night stop-over in Madrid to visit [my colleague] Juan Maura.

Here then is wishing you the very best, dear Shirley. Thank you for having been such a faithful and supportive friend for all these years. I wish you the very best for your birthday and above all good health and super working spirit for many, many years to come. I also hope that we will be able to see each other again soon. The Western States Folklore Society meeting next year will be at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, but that will once again be too far for you to come, I suppose.

All the best and much love,

Wolfgang

Dear Shirley,

June 3, 2010

Happy birthday, dear friend, and many good years of joyful proverb work. Thank you for being such a dear friend for so many years,

love, Wolfgang & Barbara

[just a message on a birthday card mailed earlier]

My dear Shirley,

June 3, 2010

Today is your big day! Congratulations on your 80th birthday! I have been thinking about you during the past few days in great anticipation of this special day. I wish you the very best, my dear friend, and I hope that you will have many more wonderful years with your family, your friends, your colleagues, and former students. As always, I hope that you will remain healthy, wealthy, and wise, and that you will have the strength to continue with your proverb collection.

Your book "*True Friends Are Like Diamonds*": *Three Decades of Correspondence Between the Folklorists Shirley L. Arora and Wolfgang Mieder* (2010) has already arrived in 29 libraries according to OCLC. Many more will be registered in the next few weeks. As you know, I sent out about 250 copies to various North American libraries. David and Alan also have received twenty copies each, and Alejandro [Lee] got 34 copies (an entire box) to distribute to former students. If you want copies to be sent to your former Department at UCLA, please let me have an address and a number of copies that should be made available. Another 250 copies will be mailed internationally in August together with volume 27 (2010) of *Proverbium*. I was so glad that I could put this together in celebration of your special birthday.

Here then is wishing you once again a wonderful birthday with your family, Shirley. Rest assured that you are admired and loved by many people and that you will forever be a super paremiologist and special friend to me.

Best regards to your family, from Barbara as well,
love, Wolfgang

Dear Wolfgang,

September 20, 2010

It's been so long since we've exchanged letters, and I think it's probably my fault. I was away from home for six weeks and just returned, and am still trying to catch up with things. I went originally to the Bahamas to attend my son Alan's 50th birthday bash at a resort down there (interesting, though not really my kind of "vacation"; some 50 of his friends and associates met there to celebrate). Afterward I spent some time in Pasadena, taking care of medical appointments and that sort of thing, and now at last I'm back home in my little house in the redwoods.

One of the things I was able to do in Pasadena was to get those “proverb” clippings [of cartoons and comic strips] ready to send off to you. I went through them briefly and removed those that were completely extraneous, but you will no doubt find a good many that are of no interest to you. Anyway, I hope that some of them will be useful. I left them with Alan to be sent after I left, and I hope they will reach you soon. They are from the Los Angeles Times (LAT). Some of them are in files, but after a while I gave that up and just put them all together. I have some more saved up here that I will send to you eventually, if you find them useful.

I was not able to do much work on my proverb project in Pasadena, since all of my references were up here, but now that I’m back home I hope to tackle it with renewed energy. I seem to remember setting myself a “deadline” of the end of June to send you some sample pages, and although the time is long past, I still intend to do that. I won’t set another “deadline,” but I’ll do it as soon as possible.

I suppose the trees in your area are now taking on their gorgeous fall colors; my two maple trees are just beginning to “blush”, but they will eventually turn bright red. They are not native to this area – David and I had them shipped down here from Oregon. Our weather has been unusually cool and everything is late in blooming or ripening. By the time I arrived all of my figs were gone (the raccoons and squirrels got them) but the blackberries are still in full fruiting mode, and the apples and pears are getting ripe. The plums and apricots never did bear fruit, apparently because of a heavy frost during the time the trees were blooming.

I’m going to say “good night” now and spend an hour or so on proverbs before turning in. Give my regards to Barbara. I hope everything is going well with you.

All the best,

Love, Shirley

My dear Shirley,

September 20, 2010

It is always a special day when a letter arrives from you! I had been wondering what had happened to you, and I must admit that even just yesterday those promised newspaper proverb clippings

[of cartoons and comic strips] jumped into my mind. That should indicate to you how very excited I am about the package of references that should more or less be on its way. You are so kind to let me inherit your collection on proverbial materials from the LA Times. I will thoroughly enjoy looking through all of them, and they will become a special treasure in my International Proverb Archives. So let me already thank you today for this wonderful and very special present, but I will be in touch once the package has arrived and I have had a chance to look at your clippings.

Thank you also for the update of your travels, celebrations, etc. I can well understand that you did not have time to work on your proverb project while you were in the Bahamas and in Pasadena. But now your life should return to normalcy, and as you say, it is time to get back to those proverbs again. Speaking of proverbs, I am just thrilled with my large proverb lecture course this semester ["Big Fish Eat Little Fish": The Nature and Politics of Proverbs]. Seventy-nine students are enrolled, and they do come on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30-9:45 in the morning! How do you like that? Alan [Dundes] used to push me to do such an English course, but it just never was quite possible. Now, on the other hand, the administration is pushing us to teach larger course so that our enrollment figures would increase. This is now the second time that I have offered this course, and I just love it!

On Thursday I am off on a quick trip to Germany. Two nights with my mother as well as my sister and her family near Hamburg, then to Frankfurt and on to Mannheim for an international proverb conference. I am speaking on Barack Obama in German!

Barbara and I are well, but this might well be Barbara's last year of teaching. If she stops in June 2011 (at 66), she will have taught German and Latin for forty years! A fantastic accomplishment. I too have been at it forty years, but I am not quite ready to throw in the towel yet. I hope I can go to seventy, and that would give me four more rewarding years of teaching, etc.

Let me stop here, Shirley. We have a departmental meeting coming up in a few minutes. I am so excited to hear from you and to know that you are well. I can't wait to get the clippings! Stay well, dear friend, and I will be in touch, greetings from Barbara as well,

love, Wolfgang

My dear Shirley,

October 13, 2010

Please forgive me for not having written to you sooner, but I was in Germany for a conference, and when I returned, there was so much catching up to do. Now I am leaving for Nashville, Tennessee, tomorrow to attend the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society. But before I do, I want to write to you to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the incredible treasure of clippings included in the package that you had sent to me. The other reason why I have not written to you was, of course, that I wanted to spend some time with the clippings first!

Well, I have had the greatest time starting to look at the clippings one at a time! Incredible materials, and I don't know how to thank you enough for handing them on to me for my International Proverb Archives. It is amazing what you were able to amass over the years, and I know that I will spend many hours looking through every clipping in the box.

Of course, I will also try to put some order into all of the materials. You had started doing this, but as you mentioned, there is a lot still to do. In any case, I am so very excited in having inherited these proverbial treasures from you, and I do want to thank you once again for your kindness and generosity.

I sure wish you could come to Nashville. It would be so good to see you again and to talk with you about our proverb projects. But I realize that this would be a far trip for you. But I have mailed off one box with the books of our letters to Nashville so that I can distribute it to various friends. So in a way you will be there after all!

Everything is going well here. I just love my proverb course with its seventy-nine students at 8:30-9:45 in the morning on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It is an elective for the students, and they come from all areas of interest, ranging from first year students to senior citizens. It has never been my policy to check on who is coming and who is not, telling the students that they are here to learn and that I would do my best for them. I think most of them come very regularly, and yes, once in a while I can see a student closing his/her eyes that early in the morning. But altogether it is a great group of wonderful students, and I just love teaching this large class. It gives me a chance to talk about

you, Alan [Dundes], [Anand] Prahlad, Steve [Winick], and others who have done such great work on proverbs.

I hope you are doing well! Autumn is here, and I have been thinking of you and Harbans, knowing how much you enjoyed our fall colors when you visited our beautiful state of Vermont.

Take good care of yourself, my dear friend,
Wolfgang

Dear Wolfgang,

August 28, 2011

It's a long time since we exchanged emails, and I'm afraid the fault is mine. I've had some continuing health issues (though, fortunately, nothing really serious), and I spent several rather strenuous months down in Pasadena getting my little house there ready for sale, and then after it was sold (which only took about ten days!), vacating it for occupancy by the new owners. I'm very glad to be back up north in my house-in-the-woods, but I'm still dealing with the problem of amalgamating essentially two households into one. I'm going to miss the convenience of having a place to stay in Pasadena, but I had no strong personal ties to the house itself. It was one that Harbans and I purchased because it was adjacent to the house we lived in before we moved to Mandeville Canyon near UCLA. In fact, the little house and our larger one had been part of the same property years before. Alan had been living in the larger one for a number of years, and it was his decision to sell that one (which became his after Harbans's death) and move to one with an easier commute that started this whole process. His house sold in a few days, and he is now living in a smaller, rented house in Playa del Rey, which is not particularly close to where he works (in Orange County) but is ten minutes from the airport – an important advantage since he travels a great deal. He is engaged to be married, and the rental house is convenient to where his fiancée works. The wedding will be February 29, 2012 (!), but the place has yet to be decided.

David is on a research trip in connection with a new article he is writing on a certain genus of mushrooms. He had planned to go as far as New England, but the hurricane predictions intervened. He might still make it there, if the situation is not as serious as predicted, or he might go to Michigan instead, or just come home.

I continue to plug along with my proverb project and am currently concentrating on filling in gaps in the annotations and adding explanatory comments where needed. I have been trying to reduce the number of “variants” in the annotations by eliminating those that involve only differences in singular/plural nouns, or differences in word order when the words themselves are the same (you know how flexible Spanish word order can be; even the same informant may give the same proverb, on another occasion, with a different word order), or differences in verb tense, or differences in the use of articles or prepositions – things that usually have no effect on the meaning. I still haven’t decided about subjunctive vs. indicative, because in Spanish as in English the use of the subjunctive appears to be lessening (especially among U.S.-born informants), but there is a difference of meaning involved. And so far I’ve been including variants that use different nouns or verbs, even if the meaning is essentially the same. Just to be on the safe side, I keep backup copies of everything in case I need to refer to them. As I recall, I was able to discuss some of these points with you some years ago, and I hope I’ve succeeded in applying the results of that conversation. I’ll send you a sample of the “thinned out” pages to compare with the original ones – not with this email, but in the near future.

Are you teaching your “general elective” on proverbs again this year? I hope so. I could tell you were really enjoying yourself, and if I were anywhere around there I would have loved to enroll in, or at least audit, the course. I think my favorite course to teach at UCLA was the undergraduate “folk literature” course, which started with proverbs and went on through riddles, folktales, legends, romances (ballads) and **corridos**. A good many of the students were of Hispanic descent, and I still remember in particular a girl student who chose to do her “term paper” on proverbs and who said to me afterward: “It was the first time I ever really talked with my grandmother!” She seemed to be thrilled, and so was I.

I haven’t heard any news today of the weather on the East Coast, but I hope your area has not been badly affected by the storms. Please forgive me for this long silence, and write when you have time.

Love, Shirley

My dear Shirley,

August 30, 2011

How wonderful to hear from you and to get so much exciting information! I am glad to hear that Alan is getting married in February and that David continues his work on mushrooms. Obviously I am especially pleased to know that your health is okay, that you are working on your proverb collection (I look forward to a few sample pages), that you sold your little house in Pasadena, and that you are now settled solidly in your house-in-the-woods. I can well imagine how difficult it was to downsize from two homes.

About two weeks ago I mailed off the new *Proverbium* volume to you. Actually, you should have received it by now. The postage alone is killing me, Shirley. Prices are going up like crazy, and the postage for all the packages came to almost \$5000. I have no idea what will happen to our yearbook when I cannot do it any longer. The production and printing of each volume costs almost \$11,000 by now. Of the total of \$16,000 we pull in just a bit more than \$6000 from subscriptions, \$2000 from the dean, and \$1000 from the bookstore – and you know from where the rest cometh! I have set up a little money printing machine in our basement. But all joking aside, Shirley. If you could make a small donation again, I would certainly appreciate that support. You and Alan Dundes have always done that, and I have very much appreciated your help. I had a wonderful friend here in Burlington who made several considerable donations, but unfortunately he died last year. But don't worry, *Proverbium* will not die as long as I am in charge of it. Julia [Sevilla Muñoz of Madrid] has now made an electronic yearbook out of her wonderful *Paremia*. She said the university cut all funding, and she simply could not raise enough money any longer. She is fine – I saw her at an international proverb conference at Paris during the summer – and she always asks about you!

Yes, I am teaching my large proverb lecture course again this year. Today was the first day of classes, and I had 72 students! So you can imagine how happy I am with such a great group of young people.

Irene, the hurricane, was a terrible disaster for our little beautiful state. Barbara and I were lucky, since northern Vermont was not hit too badly. But the southern part of the state really got hit!

Bridges swept away, roads washed out for miles, villages cut off, hundreds of trees uprooted, etc. Clean-up has started, but it will take all fall to get back to normal, more or less.

My sad news is that my dear mother passed away unexpectedly at the age of almost 92 a few weeks ago. She was very healthy, living on her own, and still traveling. In fact, she had returned from a trip visiting her best childhood friend and then, a few hours later, she very quietly fell asleep in her chair. So she was very fortunate to have been spared any of those diseases like Alzheimer or Parkinson. But her death came so sudden, and we were not at all prepared for it. In any case, Barbara and I went to Germany for the funeral, etc. (I remember your trip to India after Harbans had died).

There are also good news: As I already mentioned, I went to Paris for a wonderful international proverb conference, giving the keynote address there on modern Anglo- American proverbs. Our [Charles Clay Doyle, Wolfgang Mieder, and Fred R. Shapiro] dictionary with Yale University Press will be out in May 2012 with the title *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs*. You will be one of the first to receive a copy, of course.

AFS is meeting at Bloomington this year, and I can't wait to spend a few days at the Mecca of folklore studies. Sure wish that you could come, but I do understand that you don't want to make this long trip.

If you should need a few more copies of our correspondence, please let me know. I gladly send you some additional copies for former students, friends, etc.

Barbara has just retired after forty years as a German and Latin teacher. It was a tough decision, but at 66 she thought the time had come. She had an incredibly fruitful career, touching a lot of young people in her four decades. There were a number of receptions in her honor, and I was so proud of all of her accomplishments. Many people spoke, and I could tell what incredible influence Barbara had on generations of students. That is the rewarding part of our profession. We all have students who think we made a difference.

Dear Shirley, thank you again so much for your letter. I have been thinking of you a lot lately, and I am sure that I would have written to you during the upcoming long weekend. But now you

beat me to it, and I love you for it. Stay well, my dear friend, enjoy your home-in- the-woods, and keep that collection moving ahead. Barbara sends her regards as well,

Love, Wolfgang

Dear Shirley,

August 30, 2011

Just about an hour ago I wrote to you in response to your kind letter. At that time, I took all my courage and asked you whether perhaps you could make a small donation to *Proverbium*. And now, just now, our administrative assistant Janet Sobieski walks into my office and tells me that you have sent \$100 with a little note attached.

For *Proverbium & Supplements* & a bit extra –

Regards, Shirley Arora

I should have known that you would do this, as you have done so often before. So please forgive me for having asked you to consider sending a bit extra this time as well. Ignore my request, please, and thank you for all of your support over the years.

All the best, dear friend,

Wolfgang

My dear Shirley,

October 31, 2011

The news just reached me that you and your sons have made a most generous donation of \$1000 to *Proverbium*. You have no idea what this gift means to me! I so much appreciate your help and generosity! Your gift makes a giant difference, and it will make it possible for me to continue with *Proverbium*.

I hope that you are doing well, Shirley. I will be at WSFS [Western States Folklore Society] in April at Sacramento and *hope* to see you there.

Thank you all again for being so kind and supportive. Please thank your sons. I think of you often!

Thank you and much love,

Wolfgang

Dear Wolfgang,

May 12, 2012

I was away from home for almost a week (attending my younger son's wedding in L.A.), and when I returned, I found

among my accumulated mail the copy of the *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs*. Congratulations on another indispensable reference for anyone interested in or working with proverbs! I sat right down and leafed through the book and in a few minutes found at least a half dozen English counterparts for items in my Spanish collection – and that’s just the beginning! It’s a wonderful addition to my Mieder Shelf (an entire shelf filled with your publications) and will be an especially valuable source for proverbs that have recently “crossed over” from English to Spanish – a phenomenon becoming more and more common. (“There are no atheists in foxholes,” for example, which was used in Spanish – *No hay ateos en los foxholes* – in conversational context by a Mexican-American friend of mine. You might be interested to know that there is a similar proverb in Bolivia: *En las tempestades no hay ateos.*)

I am continuing to work on my proverb project, but I’m beginning to suspect that there’s no end to it. I think perhaps I’ve just been trying to include too much. For instance, I began with the idea of two annotations as a minimum, but then I would find variants and add those, and soon I might have as many as four or five annotations instead of the “minimum.” I also find many variants in my own collection, and find myself wondering how relevant they are – some of them “vary” just by using a plural noun instead of a singular one, or a subjunctive rather than an indicative verb (which of course can change the meaning of the saying), or by changing the word order (Spanish word order being extraordinarily flexible) so that I sometimes have two different versions of the same saying from the same informant, on different occasions.

I had an email from Julia Sevilla [Muñoz] asking if I would be interested in publishing something on a website that she is developing, and I wonder if perhaps that is the way to go. I could maybe develop one section at a time (e.g., keywords beginning with “a”) rather than working on the project as a whole, as I do now. What do you think? Julia wrote that she would send me the “*pautas*” (requirements or rules for publishing on the website), but I haven’t received them yet.

Are you still enjoying those huge classes of yours? I wish I could enroll! I doubt that I’ll be able to attend any more confer-

ences, so I don't know when we'll meet again. But I think of you often, and I will try to be a more consistent correspondent in the future. And if you have a meeting in Berkeley, or anywhere else in this area, perhaps you could visit Point Arena? It's a beautiful place.

Give my warmest regards to Barbara, and an affectionate pat to your current canine friend.

Love, Shirley

My dear Shirley,

May 12, 2012

It is so wonderful to hear from you! I was starting to worry about you, since I knew that you should have received *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* more than a week ago. But you were away, and you are okay – that's all that counts!

Thank you for your kind reaction to our new proverb dictionary. Hearing your praise means the world to me, as you well know. It was a lot of work, even for three people [Charles Clay Doyle, Wolfgang Mieder, and Fred R. Shapiro] working on it for a number of years.

And here you are working on your giant project all alone. I wish you had someone to help you. Might not Alejandro Lee be pulled in to help you get this project done?

Personally, I do not think much of what Julia wants to do electronically. I don't mean this critical but rather personally. I am simply of a different generation, and I have little interest in electronic publications. I understand that Julia wants to go that way, but at my and your age, I really just as well stick to the old way of getting our work out. This is just my own opinion, and obviously you need to decide for yourself.

I sometimes think that someone like Alejandro should come out to California for a few months and simply help you finish your giant project in a limited amount of time – that is with a definite date for closure. It is not important whether everything is absolutely perfect and detailed, etc. Your materials are simply too important not be finished up. Your strength, eyesight, health etc. are limited, dear Shirley, and you must not drive yourself too hard. I don't want you to get sick because of this project or lose sleep over it. But how about talking to your sons about having someone like Alejandro spend three months with you for some

pay to help you complete what you have in a reasonable fashion? That person could work eight hours a day on doing this job under your supervision. Perhaps Alejandro is looking for summer work to earn some extra money. I would be willing to do this, Shirley, but I do not know Spanish (a big shame). In any case, please give this approach some thought.

My help will come in when we will look for a publisher for your collection. It does not need to be absolutely complete or perfect, Shirley. The key issue is to draw a line in the sand and say that by such a date the project is done!

Things are going well here. Barbara is enjoying her retirement, and yes, I still enjoy my large proverb class and my advanced German classes. A couple of weeks ago I was at Sacramento for the WSFS [Western States Folklore Society] meeting. It was great, but I wish you could have been there or I could have come to see you. I will try harder. It looks as if next year's meeting will be at Berkeley Community College (I did not know that this exists).

Congratulations to your son on his wedding. I am so glad that you were able to travel to L.A. It is great that you are having so much joy with your family, Shirley.

One last thing: Thank you for your comments regarding the loan translation of modern Anglo-American proverbs into Spanish here in the United States. That would make a great paper! Do you feel up to writing it? But then that would take time away from your collection! Please think about my idea about Alejandro taking on an official role in getting your collection finished and published.

Barbara and I are off to France for ten days on May 24 with another couple. We will spend two-and-a-half days at Paris and then go on to the wine region southwest of Bordeaux for one of our bicycle trips with a group of about 18 people. We are very much looking forward to this vacation.

Again, Shirley, thank you so much for your kind words regarding our dictionary. Stay well and rest assured that I often think of you. Barbara sends her best wishes as well,

love, Wolfgang

P.S. Best regards to your sons and their families.

Hello, Wolfgang

November 3, 2012

I'm writing this on my son Alan's computer during a visit to Los Angeles. (I do hope I've remembered your current e-mail address correctly.) It's been a long time since I wrote, having been unwell for some weeks, but I'm much better now, the main purpose of my visit here being to see some of my former doctors that I used to see when I spent the winters in my little house in Pasadena, which I sold last year. However, I've also taken advantage of the opportunity to update some legal documents, and that's what this letter is about.

I mentioned to you quite a while ago that I would like my proverb collection to go to UVM, but specifically to your proverb library. I want to formalize that donation, and the attorney wants to know whether your Proverb Library has a specific name or can you suggest how the bequest should be worded. You can reply to this e-mail at Alan's address.

I find this computer very difficult to use; I'll write more when I get back home.

Love, Shirley

My dear Shirley,

November 4, 2012

You won't believe this, but my plan was to write to you today! But then you jumped the gun, and that is just fine. I am so glad to hear from you, and I am happy that you are doing better! I do worry about your health, Shirley, but since you were able to travel to L.A., things must have improved, and that is very, very good.

I wanted to write to you to tell you that I got back from the AFS [American Folklore Society] meeting at New Orleans, where I received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Folklore Society. What a wonderful recognition, and I still can't believe that I really deserve so much attention. Sharon Sherman gave a wonderful laudatio, and I was allowed to give a short response. Simon Bronner also had arranged a two-hour session in my honor dealing with "Transatlantic Folkloristics", where I gave additional remarks. I am attaching both documents for you.

My trip home was quite an ordeal! It took me three-and-a-half days to get home. Many hours sitting at airports, standing in line, looking for hotels, etc. – and having no clothes to change

into. But I am home safe and sound, and no damage to our home or land.

But now to your kind and wonderful letter, Shirley. Yes, I do remember that you had said on several occasions that your proverb collection would move to UVM eventually. I am obviously deeply moved that you are now proceeding to formalize your eventual donation, and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generosity and for entrusting me with your rich holdings.

The official name of my proverb library is “International Proverb Archives”. I am thoroughly convinced that your proverb collection should be integrated into my international archives. The holdings of Lutz Röhrich (Freiburg, Germany), Ria Stambaugh (Chapel Hill, North Carolina), and Robert Dent (UCLA) have already been integrated. In this way my archives have by now become *the* holding place.

I also have good news for you. Obviously I will not be here forever, and Barbara and I have given much thought to what will happen to my International Proverb Archives eventually. I have not been successful in finding an American library or institution that is willing to take over the giant archives. However, the Institute of the German Language at Mannheim, Germany, has agreed to take everything in due time! This is a great solution, since the institute is also a pioneer in European studies on phraseology and paremiology. This means that the many members of the European Society of Phraseology will have a central European location to use my archives. A representative of the Institute has been here and inspected everything, measuring bookshelf space, etc. The Institute with its eighty employees has the space, and they are committed to this plan. I am traveling to Mannheim this summer to formalize the agreement. I shall keep everything as long as I am able to work with it. Then eventually everything will move to Mannheim. I can already imagine scholars from Spain and elsewhere to come there to use your Spanish language materials! [This plan did not come to pass. Instead, I was able to donate my International Proverb Archives to the University of Vermont. Shirley Arora’s books and materials will now be added to these rich holdings to be used by scholars and students from around the world.]

So, dear Shirley, I think we have a good plan. I am deeply touched that you are trusting me with your proverb collection, and you know that I will treasure it and safekeep it as your dear and good friend. And yes, I do have the space for your holdings. Above all, I wish that both you and I will be able to carry on with our work for a bit longer!

Again, the name is “International Proverb Archives” at the University of Vermont. Good luck with finalizing your donation. It will be good for you to know that matters will one day be in good hands [by the summer of 2022 all materials had arrived at the University of Vermont]. And again, Shirley, thank you for your trust and friendship.

Please give my best regards to Alan and your entire family. Barbara sends her kind regards as well. The WSFS meeting will be in San Diego in April – maybe you will be able to come!

Take good care of yourself, and thank you so very much,
love, Wolfgang

My dear Shirley,

January 31, 2013

This has been a wonderful day! This morning I was teaching my lecture course on “‘Big Fish Eat Little Fish’: The Nature and Politics of Proverbs,” and guess what? We were talking about the proverbs that immigrants have brought to the United States, and so your ears should really have been ringing! I had brought some of your publications to class and explained to the students the exciting field work that you have undertaken in the greater Los Angeles area. Of course, I told them also about your *magnum opus* that you are working on now. The students were very interested, and they like the fact that we proverb scholars are all such good friends.

Then, when I came back to my office, our secretary told me that he had been informed that we have received a \$1000 donation from you for *Proverbium*. Now that was a super surprise, and I hasten to thank you, your sons and their families for your incredible generosity. Your gift makes a giant difference, and I have to admit that we really need your fantastic support. Can you imagine that we now pay \$25 postage for every package we send abroad? The postage bill is \$5500 a year – incredible.

Of course, some people are saying that we should publish *Proverbium* only electronically. But I am simply not ready to do that. We are publishing volume 30 this year, once again with its normal 544 pages – all of this is quite an accomplishment for international paremiology. I am turning 69 in a couple of weeks – so your donation is my greatest birthday present! – and I hope to continue teaching for at least another six years - let's hope my health will continue to be good! In any case, as long as I edit *Proverbium*, I will continue publishing it in print. However, we are now working on getting all the back issues on the web so that people can use it everywhere.

As you can imagine, I will be coming out to California to take part in the WSFS [Western States Folklore Society] meeting in April at San Diego. It would, of course, be wonderful if you were to be able to come !

In mid-February I am going to the University of Georgia. My dear friend Charles Doyle has invited me to give a public lecture, but the two of us will also spend three days looking through the Archer Taylor papers to see if there is something that we should publish – letters, notes, etc.?

Speaking of Archer Taylor, this morning I also showed my students that you had dedicated your massive volume of proverbial comparisons in Spanish to Archer Taylor. I had told them in an earlier lecture that proverb scholars all stand on the shoulder of giants, making me the grandson of Archer Taylor, with my doctoral adviser Stuart Gallacher being Taylor's son and I Gallacher's son. The students liked this idea of the continuity of scholarship and the acknowledgment of the scholarship of those that came before us. Your work, Shirley, is of course getting ever more recognition with the incredible importance of Spanish in the United States.

My own work is going well. *Proverbium* keeps me busy, and there are many projects, as you know. Our *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* appears to be a success, with Yale University Press being very happy with the sales. I enjoy my teaching, and as I said, I hope to carry on for a few more years. Barbara is enjoying her retirement, but she is plenty busy with various boards, talks, and volunteer work.

Well, this is a bit of a report for you, Shirley. I am so very much overwhelmed by your generosity, and I want to thank you and your sons once again for making such a difference for *Proverbium*. Please stay well, and definitely know that I think of you often. Perhaps we can meet somewhere this year. Please give your sons and their families my best regards, and all the very best to you and your work, Shirley. Please carry on with your dictionary when you can. It is a very, very important undertaking, as we all know!

love, Wolfgang

My dear Shirley,

October 16, 2013

It is that time again for AFS [American Folklore Society] that is taking place at Providence, Rhode Island, this time. I have one more class to teach, and then I am driving (about five hours) down. It is so wonderful to go by car rather than by plane. I have the trunk full of books to give away, among them also copies of our correspondence.

Obviously I am thinking of you, wishing that I could see you at the meeting. It was always so nice to have a meal with you, listen to your lecture, and spend time with you. I hope you are doing fine and that you have received volume 30 [2013] of my beloved *Proverbium*.

Things are going well here. I continue to teach full time, this semester also my large English lecture course on proverbs. And yes, the students know who that wonderful lady and great proverb scholar Shirley Arora is out there in distant California.

Barbara is also fine, but we too are getting older. Barbara is retired, but I am just not ready to follow her yet. My various projects are keeping me busy, among them a book on Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony [*All Men and Women Are Created Equal*]: *Elizabeth Cady Stanton's and Susan B. Anthony's Proverbial Rhetoric Promoting Women's Rights*. New York: Peter Lang, 2014]. And I still enjoy teaching, even though the modern students are somehow different than in former times. All very nice youngsters but I miss the enthusiasm and passion for study in them at times. But we all know about the "golden age", and we must be careful not to think that things were necessarily better decades ago. Different yes, but not necessarily better, I suppose.

Well, I better let you go. Class will start in twenty minutes on medieval German epics, and I better get my stuff together and tell them about heroes, love, honor, etc.

I hope you and your family are doing well. Best regards to you all, and you will be on my mind during the next few days, but not just then,

love, Wolfgang

My dear, dear Shirley,

March 10, 2014

Time continues to fly by, even when one has turned seventy. I am happy to report that I survived this special birthday, and I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your wonderful contribution of “‘Crossover’ Proverbs: Spanish to English” in the massive *Festschrift* that I received as an absolute surprise [“*Bis dat, qui cito dat*”. “*Gegengabe*” in *Paremiology, Folklore, Language, and Literature. Honoring Wolfgang Mieder on His Seventieth Birthday*. Eds. Christian Grandl and Kevin J. McKenna. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015]. As you can imagine, I just love your paper since it picks up on something that we are both very interested in, but I also want you to know that it was a special joy to see your name at the beginning of the *Festschrift*. As I hope you know, I think of you so often, and finding your article in the volume, I know that you are doing well! That is a special present for me as well.

The volume has not yet appeared in print, but I received a printed manuscript version of it, and just imagine, Christian and Sabine Grandl as well as Elisabeth Piirainen traveled all the way from Germany to present me the eight-hundred-page volume with contributions by about seventy colleagues and friends from around the world! It was a true surprise, and I had no idea whatsoever that the volume had been planned for at least two years.

Friends here at the university had organized a surprise reception attended by many colleagues, friends, and neighbors. The university president and the dean both gave speeches, and I was overwhelmed by their positive and laudatory remarks. Then I spoke, and I hope that I found the right words in all of my excitement and surprise. I just hope that I really deserve all the praise, recognition, and attention. All that I have ever done is to be good to my students, deliver interesting lectures and semi-

nars, and do good scholarly work. Now that so many colleagues and friends have honored me with the wonderful *Festschrift*, I have the strength and joy to carry on with my work in the service of international paremiology for some more years.

Thank you again for your kind and good wishes and your contribution to my voluminous *Festschrift*. It means so very, very much to me that you are part of this celebratory volume that was the best birthday present in the world!

Unfortunately the annual WSFS [Western State Folklore Society] meeting will be at Logan, Utah, so I know that we will not be able to see each other. But I believe it will be at Berkeley next year, and maybe we will be able to connect then.

My Spanish colleagues still remember you and Harbans here at UVM [University of Vermont], and so does Barbara, of course. We all wish you the very best, Shirley, and I thank you again for taking the time to honor me with your presence in the book. All the best also to your two sons and their families,

love, Wolfgang

Dear Wolfgang,

August 17, 2014

I really do apologize for this very long silence. I've had a few difficulties, though none that I would call truly major, unless one might count being away from my computer for several weeks while recovering from a broken ankle. I was in a local convalescent home – a very nice place of its type – but I was quite immobilized, and of course unable to do any proverb work or send any emails. The ankle has healed very nicely, I'm glad to say, and I'm back home and able to get around quite well with the help of a walker (which I use partly because of the ankle but mostly because of a pre-existing balance problem that I've had for years). I don't travel any more, nor do I drive (or own) a car; but I'm very happy living in my little isolated spot in northern California among the redwoods. It's quiet and beautiful and full of all kinds of wildlife, from migrating whales to hummingbirds and bobcats. Also deer, and an occasional bear or mountain lion. (And lots of raccoons; the young ones are cute but when they grow up they're an awful pest, raiding my orchard before the fruit is even ripe.)

I would have loved to attend your birthday celebration, but since that was impossible, Christian Grandl was kind enough to send me photographs of the event. When I was googling your name to get your email address (which for some reason I couldn't find on my computer), I saw one reference that said you were now retired – is that true, or did it refer only to your leaving the chairmanship of the department? Either way, I'll bet you're as busy as ever if not more so. I have just received my copy of *Proverbium* 31 [2014] plus the accompanying volume of [František] Čermák's studies [*Proverbs: Their Lexical and Semantic Features*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2014], which I've barely had time to dip into but found very stimulating. I must admit that despite the many pleasures of living here, I do miss academic activities – lectures, meetings, interactions with scholars in many fields.

I've been trying to put together a sample of what I've been doing, to get your opinion on how it's being done, but it goes slowly. For one thing, I've been wondering if I've made a mistake by not limiting myself to “real” proverbs (as you did with your American proverbs), and including expressions that informants considered “dichos”, which as you know has a very broad meaning in Spanish; but eliminating all the “non-proverbs” at this point would take an enormous amount of time, even with the help of the computer, and would of course mean that a great deal of time has been wasted. I can sympathize with Spanish-speaking collectors who solve the problem by coming up with titles like Ismael Moya's *Refranero: Refranes, proverbios, adagios, frases proverbiales, modismos refranescos, giros y otras formas paremiológicas tradicionales en la República Argentina* (and he didn't even use the word *dichos*!)

I shall try to be a better correspondent in the future. My warm regards to Barbara, and to you a very, very fond and admiring, though very, very retroactive, “Happy Birthday”!

Love, Shirley

My dear Shirley,

August 23, 2014

You know how happy it makes me when I find a letter from you! I just returned from a short lecture trip to Finland and Estonia, and now I am trying to catch up with way over a hundred

e-mail messages. Many of them are mundane stuff, so it is wonderful to find your epistle among them.

There was, however, also a sad message. Our dear friend Linda Dégh passed away at the age of 96 a few days ago. She was basically well to the very end, and I saw her not even a year ago at a conference. She certainly was one of our truly outstanding folklorists, and we shall all miss her a lot.

No, I have not retired! These rumors float around from time to time, and it makes some sense, I suppose, to think that when an old person at seventy receives a *Festschrift* that that person has now retired. If my health continues to be good I hope to go on for another five years. That would truly be wonderful. The *Festschrift* should finally come out in print at the end of the year. I know that you will receive a copy from the publisher at that time.

I am glad you received the new *Proverbium* [31 (2014)]. Lots of good work going on, including your own. Don't make any changes on your massive collection, Shirley. Just keep going whenever you have the strength to do so. It continues to be my sincere hope that you will finish your *magnum opus* in due time.

Barbara has been retired for a couple of years and loves her new life. We have been married forty-five years today! How time has flown by!

I am glad that you continue to enjoy the wildlife in the woods, Shirley. You know that I love our land, and in the morning and evening we walk with our two Labradors – dogs really are our best friends!

Nice of you to promise that you will write more often. That is great, and I do look forward to hearing from you from time to time. A Finnish friend of mine has just published an article with the title “On the Proverbiality of Finnish Proverbs”, and he bases his article on your seminal study on “proverbiality”. So you see that your scholarship is still very significant, even thirty years later!

The university starts on Monday, so there is much to do. I have sixty students in my lecture course on proverbs! So you can imagine how happy I am with that enrollment.

Dear Shirley, take good care of yourself, keep healthy, wealthy, and wise, and give your sons and families my best regards. Barbara also sends her best wishes, of course,
 love, Wolfgang

My dear Shirley, December 29, 2015

Just in time for Christmas I received the wonderful news that you have once again donated \$1,000 to *Proverbium* – how could I possibly have received a more welcome, needed, and appreciated gift!? It means so much to me that you continue to support my international paremiological efforts. Please do know that your help means the world to me, and I cannot possibly thank you enough. You are indeed a special friend!

I hope that you are doing well out there in California. Barbara and I think of you when we hear about the forest fires and other natural catastrophes. We here in little Vermont do not have such severe weather conditions, at least not very often. In fact, we have had no winter at all until yesterday. It finally snowed during last night and we have about 4 inches of snow. Our winter tourism is far off, and we hope that winter is now here in earnest.

We have had a good year with an exciting bicycle trip to Slovenia – an absolutely beautiful country! I also went to AFS [American Folklore Society] at Long Beach [California] and had hoped that you might just be there. WSFS [Western States Folklore Society] will meet at Berkeley in April, and perhaps you can come for that. I sure would love to see you again!

Barbara and I also traveled to Bucuresti in Romania, where I received an honorary doctorate for my work in international paremiology. It was a wonderful ceremony, and I was deeply touched by this special recognition. As you might recall, I received an honorary doctorate from the University of Athens last year. It must be my age that all of these unexpected honors are coming. I just hope that I really deserve such special awards.

Barbara is enjoying her retirement, but I am still not quite ready. At 71 I would like to go on for four more years to complete fifty years at the University of Vermont. I hope that I will be able to do this. I am still enjoying teaching and doing my scholarly work. Our two Labrador dogs and the land keep me in good physical shape.

I taught my class on “The Nature and Politics of Proverbs” again this fall, and your ears should have been ringing from time to time. It is always a pleasure to refer to your important work, and the students also were touched by the volume of our letters.

Barbara and I think of you often, Shirley, and together we wish you a healthy and happy New Year. Please give our best regards to the rest of your family, and thank you all once again for your generosity and kindness regarding *Proverbium*.

All the very best and many, many thanks,
love , Wolfgang

Dear Wolfgang,

January 2, 2016

I can't tell you how delighted I was to receive your email. It does seem to me that we have been out of touch for way too long, though you are certainly not out of my thoughts. I received my copy of “*Bis dat, qui cito dat*” a while ago and have already read a good many of the contributions (English only; my German is far too rusty). It is a grand tribute to one whom we all honor and admire so much, and I'm glad I could be a small part of it. How I wish I could have been there for the presentation ceremony! Christian Grandl was kind enough to send me some pictures of the ceremony, which I shall treasure. Tell me, did he manage to keep the volume a secret all that time?

I loved hearing about all your travels, and the continuing international recognition of your work. I am no longer able to travel, unfortunately, otherwise I should be thrilled to see you in Berkeley. On the other hand, is there any possibility at all that you might make a brief trip up here to redwood-and-wine country? It's a beautiful area, especially here along the North Coast, and I have a small but comfortable little guest house where you could stay. It would be around a three or four hours' drive, but a scenic one. My place is not right on the coast, although I can see a bit of the ocean from my property; but there are many nearby places of interest to visit. We could even go whale-watching! Do consider it!

I am continuing to work on my proverbs, although I confess I do get discouraged sometimes. When I started out I was recording “dichos” from my informants, but as you know, that Spanish term is a broad one, covering everything from idioms

to proverbs, and I find myself wondering whether I should have limited myself to actual proverbs. I have thought of separating the proverbs from the “other expressions,” as is done in many Spanish collections, but it seemed to be such a time-consuming task that I gave it up after a brief trial. So I just keep plugging along. I work at it every day, and I enjoy it when I’m doing it, and it keeps my Spanish from deteriorating from lack of use.

I no longer have my little dog Chipper, and I miss him; but I do have a cat, an indoor cat, a long-haired calico, who has turned out to be more of a companion than I expected. She belonged to a friend of mine who could no longer keep her, and because she has been declawed (by a former owner, not my friend) she can’t be allowed outside here in the woods; it would be too dangerous for her. I had not thought of getting a cat because one of my greatest pleasures is feeding birds (quails, juncos, jays, etc. etc.), and I certainly wouldn’t want to attract them to be preyed upon. Anyway, the cat and I are getting along fine. The cat spends a lot of time watching the birds through the window, something she couldn’t do before because she lived in a city apartment and the windows just looked out at other buildings. And I have someone to talk to besides myself.

I hope we can stay in somewhat closer touch from now on, though with your busy schedule it may be difficult. Please give my warm regards to Barbara, and a VERY Happy New Year to you both!

Love, Shirley

My dear Shirley,

January 3, 2016

Thank you for your most welcome and detailed epistle! I am so glad to hear from you and to learn that you are doing well! And you are working on your *magnum opus*, something that excites and pleases me to no end, as you know!

And yes, we should be writing more often. Don’t worry, I can always find time to respond to your letters. You are such a dear friend, and Barbara and I think of you often.

We are sorry that you lost your dear dog Chipper. Our black Labrador Sophie also left us a few months ago. We now have a puppy black Lab named Emma, and she loves our six-year old yellow (almost white) Lab Jackson. Both dogs make us very happy.

Our cat died about a year ago, and since we are more dog people, we have decided to stick with just two dogs. We are glad that you have a cat to keep you company.

I would love to come North to visit you in April, but as you know, WSFS [Western States Folklore Society] always meets during the semester, and I can't cut that many classes.

Things are going well here. The *Festschrift* turned out to be a major and massive book, and yes, Christian was able to keep it a definite secret right up to the presentation here last year. I am so glad that you are in it, Shirley.

I enjoyed teaching my large proverb class again last semester, and I am now looking forward to a senior seminar with my German students. Teaching is still a joy for me, and I hope to be able to carry on four more years so that I can complete fifty years of my happy life at the University of Vermont.

Again, Shirley, thank you so much for your *Proverbium* support! Keep going on your project. Every day a bit, as you write. It will be an invaluable publication!

Here is wishing you and your family the very best. Don't worry, I have not forgotten Harbans, who was always so kind to me. It was so good to have you both here in Burlington quite some years ago.

Take good care, my dear friend,

Wolfgang and Barbara

My dear Shirley,

September 21, 2016

Thank you so very much for sending in your payment for vol. 33 (2016) of our beloved *Proverbium*. Can you believe that I have edited the yearbook for 33 years!? While it has been a lot of work, it has also been a pleasure and honor to serve the international paremiological community.

I have noticed your new address, and our secretary Brian Minier and I have looked it up in the internet. Amazing what you can find! Now I even know how your new residence looks like. You are now back in the Los Angeles area, and I am certain that you made the right decision to move into this senior living community. I assume that you are also closer at least to one of your sons and family. I wish you all the best in your new dwelling, and I am glad that you are well taken care of now.

Speaking of *Proverbium*, I wonder at times how much longer we can bring it out in printed form. The expense is incredibly high, and the postage alone is over \$5000 a year. But even more troubling is the fact that libraries and unfortunately also individuals are cancelling their subscriptions for various reasons. I will go on for a few more years, but when I will eventually retire in five years – after fifty years at my beloved University of Vermont – *Proverbium* will doubtlessly move to an electronic publication, if in fact an editor can be found. Right now I need to raise over \$15000 a year to make *Proverbium* possible, and I doubt very much that we can find anybody else to make this kind of commitment. I do get \$2000 from the university and a \$1000 from the bookstore. We take in about \$5000 in subscriptions, and you know where the rest comes from. BUT, I am not complaining, Shirley, as you know. I am absolutely committed to *Proverbium*, and as I said, I am happy to carry on for a few more years. But in five years even Wolfgang will be 77 years old, and when I do retire, there is no way that I could go on with publishing *Proverbium*. Having said all of this, let me thank you once again for your wonderful support over the years. As you might have noticed, I do mention you in the preface of this newest volume [33 (2016)]. And no, Shirley, this is not a letter to ask you for money! You have done enough to keep *Proverbium* alive, and I shall forever be thankful to you and your family.

Everything is going well here. I am still full time and hope to carry on for five more years. I would be excited to make it to fifty years at UVM [University of Vermont]! This semester I am teaching my proverb course in English again. I do this every fall, and you can imagine how excited and thankful I am to do so. Dear Alan [Dundes] used to tell me that I should teach more in English, and I am so glad that I have been doing this course for about seven years now.

Barbara is also doing well. She has been retired for four years, but she is not pressuring me into retiring. So I can go on for a few more years which makes me perfectly happy.

Your ears should have been ringing last week when we covered Spanish proverbs in the United States. I took your big book to class and also our volume of correspondence. The students were very interested in your work, especially also your seminal

article on “proverbiality” – one of the most cited articles in the field. I read a couple of the letters to the students to show them what deep friendships mean among scholars. They were visibly touched by what we had to say.

Here is wishing you all the best, my dear Shirley. I think of you gladly and often, and I just wished that we lived a bit closer so that I could visit you. Now that you are back in the Los Angeles area, it might just be possible when the Western States Folklore Society meets in LA next time.

Take good care,

love, Wolfgang

Dear Shirley,

August 28, 2018

It has been a long time since we have heard from each other. Also, my *Proverbium* package that I had mailed to 5481 Torrance Blvd. #215 at Torrance, Ca., was returned. So now, as you can imagine, I am very concerned about you, my dear friend.

I hope that you are okay, and I look forward to hearing from you. Please let me know your correct address. Also, please do know that I think of you often.

Our new semester will start on Monday, and I am teaching my proverb class. So your ears should be ringing quite often.

All the best for now, and please write me so that I know that you are well,

love, Wolfgang

Dear Shirley,

December 19, 2019

What a *joy* to receive your [Christmas] card and to learn that you now live in Oregon.

Please know how often I think of you and how much my students like your publications on proverbs.

All is well here, but age is moving along – 75 by now, but still working full time. Much love,

Wolfgang & Barbara

Dear Shirley, dear Alan [Arora] and family, December 29, 2020

This morning on my way to the office I thought of you, Shirley, as I often do. Then when I came home around noon, there was your most welcome Christmas card waiting for me. When

I opened it, I found two beautiful pictures – one of you and one of Alan and his family. I also noticed that you signed the card. Thank you so much for thinking of me. Barbara and I enjoyed hearing from you so very much.

We are doing fine in the Vermont countryside with our two Labrador dogs. So we are quite safe in our isolation [during the pandemic]. I had to teach Online and will have to do it again in the spring semester. It is working out okay, and I guess you can teach an old dog new tricks.

After much thought and with a heavy heart I decided in September that I would retire at the end of May 2021. I will have taught fifty years at the University of Vermont, and at the age of 77 it is time to let go. It was a very difficult decision. I am attaching the letter that I wrote to my departmental colleagues to inform them of my decision.

I am allowed to keep my International Proverb Archives, and my large proverb library is also housed at the university after I donated about nine thousand books. So I will continue to be on campus two or three days a week. I certainly will continue my scholarship, as you know I would.

Thank you again for thinking of us. We wish you all the very best for the New Year. Take good care, and be safe,
Wolfgang and Barbara

Wolfgang Mieder
Department of German and Russian
425 Waterman Building
University of Vermont
85 South Prospect Street
Burlington, Vermont 05405
USA
wolfgang.mieder@uvm.edu



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POLINA OLENEVA

ON MODERN ANGLO-AMERICAN PROVERBS: TWO RECENT PAREMIOLOGICAL VOLUMES COMPOSED BY WOLFGANG MIEDER

Wolfgang Mieder is considered to be a famous paremiologist in studying Anglo-American and German proverbs and anti-proverbs. His initial research about anti-proverbs started in the early 1980s with a collection of German anti-proverbs. Later, the term “anti-proverb” was accepted and applied by various scholars on the global level (e.g., T. Litovkina, 2005; 2006; and 2007; Mieder, 1983; 2004; T. Litovkina, and Vargha, 2005; 2006 and 2012; Barta, 2006; among others).

Recently Wolfgang Mieder wrote two books about Anglo-American proverbs, “The Worldview of Modern American Proverbs” (2020) and “‘There’s No Free Lunch’. Six Essays on Modern Anglo-American Proverbs” (2021). These current works are centred around the meanings and origins of Anglo-American proverbs and anti-proverbs.

Wolfgang Mieder. *The Worldview of Modern American Proverbs*. Peter Lang Publishing, 2020, 254 p. ISBN 9781433181931

The first book “The Worldview of Modern American Proverbs” (2020) comprises nine independently written chapters of which five had been previously published in Portugal, Russia, Spain, and the United States (p. IX). According to Mieder, proverbs have a significant part in understanding American culture and different aspects of American life.

Chapter 1 “‘Think Outside the Box’: Origin, Nature, and Meaning of Modern Anglo-American Proverbs” was first published in *Proverbium*, 29 (2012) as an independent paper. The idea of this chapter is to present some of the proverb collections and the most popular syntactical patterns of the listed proverbs.

Chapter 2 “‘The Journey Is the Reward’: Worldview of Modern American Proverbs” deals with the interpretation of the American proverbs that ‘are used in other societies as well and do not necessarily say that much about the American culture or worldview’ (p. 54). In other words, the presented proverbs reflect the American way of life.

Chapter 3 “‘Life Is Not a Spectator Sport’: Proverbial Emotions about Modern Life” consists of “life”-proverbs that indicate common sentiments (p. 92).

The following Chapter 4 “‘Age Is Just a Number’: American Proverbial Wisdom about Age and Aging” discusses proverbs and anti-proverbs related to the concept of age in American culture, such as “Life begins at forty”, “You are never older than you think you are”, “You are as old as you feel”, “A man is as old as he feels and a woman is as old as she looks”, etc.

Chapter 5 “‘No Body Is Perfect’: Somatic Aspects of Modern American Proverbs” examines the concerns of the modern generation about the human body and illustrates the positive and negative aspects of this obsession with proverbs and anti-proverbs.

The next Chapter 6 “‘Time Spent Wishing Is Time Wasted’: Temporal Worldview in Modern American Proverbs” reviews ‘authentic modern American proverbs about temporal matters’ (p. 148).

Chapter 7 “‘Money Makes the World Go ‘Round’: The Pecuniary Worldview of Modern American Proverbs” studies ‘what worldview [...] American proverbs about monetary matters express’ (p. 160).

In the following Chapter 8 a list of authentic American proverbs from literary works and the mass media is presented. The chapter entitled “‘Dogs Don’t Bark at Parked Cars’: Zoological Messages in Modern Anglo-American Proverbs” talks about animal proverbs that ‘can be seen as generalisations referring to animal-like behaviour as such or as metaphorical or symbolic statements of human interaction as social beings’ (p. 188).

The main idea of the last Chapter 9 called “‘Love Is Just a Four-Letter Word’: Sexuality and Scatology in Modern American Proverbs” appears to be tightly linked to the concept of “love” as a whole, and proverbs related to sexuality, lust, sexual desires and sexual conduct, marriage, sexism, and so on.

Based on the ideas elaborated in the chapters mentioned above, it can be concluded that discussed proverbs provide a verbal and visual image of modern American culture. However, Wolfgang Mieder realised that ‘there is a lot more that could be said about the modern proverbs that we had already assembled over the past years. It is due to the fact that I have written six additional essays’ (Mieder, 2021, p. VI). According to Mieder, the new book “‘There’s No Free Lunch’. Six Essays on Modern Anglo-American Proverbs” (2021) also includes proverbs which happen to be of British origin.

Wolfgang Mieder. “*There’s No Free Lunch*”. *Six Essays on Modern Anglo-American Proverbs*. The University of Vermont, 2021, 244 p. ISBN 9781737202905

Chapter 1 of the book has the title “‘There is no Such Thing as a Free Lunch’: New Structures for Modern Anglo-American Proverbs”. It discusses the common structures of the proverbs with the most frequent formulas, such as *Better X than Y*; *Like X, like Y*; *No X without Y*, etc.

The following Chapter 2 “‘A Miss is as Good as a Male’: From Anti-Proverbs to Modern Anglo-American Proverbs” demonstrates numerous examples of proverbs and anti-proverbs and it gives a detailed description of the history anti-proverbs and the term counter-proverbs.

Chapter 3 “‘A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste’: Knowledge and Ignorance in Modern Anglo-American Proverbs” mentions proverbs related to ‘knowledge and ignorance, intelligence and stupidity, wisdom and folly’ (p. 79).

The next Chapter 4 “‘God and the Devil are in the Details’: Secularized Religion in Modern Anglo-American Proverbs” discusses proverbs that originate from the Bible and have become part of the daily discourse, for instance, ‘An eye for an eye, and

a tooth for a tooth'; 'Eat, drink and be merry'; 'Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven', etc.

Chapter 5 "'Eat Right, Stay Fit': Gastronomical Tidbits in Modern Anglo-American Proverbs" studies proverbs about food, traditional meals in Anglo-American culture, the aspects of cooking and eating. For instance, in the chapter we could find such examples as 'There'll be pie in the sky when you die'; 'Keep your eye on the donut and not on the hole'; 'You've got to eat', etc.

The last Chapter 6 entitled "'You Win Some, You Lose Some': Sports and Games in Modern Anglo-American Proverbs" provides a thorough review of Anglo-American cultural passion for sports and sport-oriented proverbs, e.g., 'The bigger they are, the harder they fall'; 'No body is perfect'; 'My game, my rules', and so on.

Conclusion

These current books appear to be original and up to date. It is worth mentioning that Wolfgang Mieder has performed a well-structured analysis of Anglo-American proverbs and anti-proverbs. Hence, his research provokes genuine interest and brings attention to certain social and cultural changes that occurred during the last century and can be spotted by native speakers. The books will be of interest to phraseologists and paremiologists, humour researchers, ethnolinguistics, and scholars specialising in cultural and contrastive linguistics.

To sum it all up, these two recent books by Wolfgang Mieder demonstrate how proverbs as being part of Anglo-American cultural heritage can be analysed cross-linguistically and cross-culturally. Furthermore, the monographs can be found motivating and encouraging for researchers to write analogous papers in other languages. Therefore, they establish an essential framework that enables other scholars to develop their own methodology of proverbs-related research.

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Polina Oleneva
 Eötvös Loránd University
 Egyetem tér 1-3, 1053
 Budapest
 Hungary
 polina0912@student.elte.hu



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PETER UNSETH

TWO BOOKS ON CARIBBEAN PROVERBS AND A SHORT ADDENDUM TO THE TOPIC OF CARIBBEAN AND AFRICAN PROVERBS

This review article first discusses the book by Desrine Bogle on proverbs found in the Caribbean. Then it describes the relatively unknown 1975 work *African and Afro-American Proverb Parallels* by Theophine Campbell, where she compiled lists of proverbs found across the Caribbean. These two sources are noteworthy comparisons of proverbs across the Caribbean, but Campbell adds comparisons to African proverbs. I mention, but do not discuss, Allsopp's recognized book of Caribbean proverbs with African parallels (2004). Following this, I add to the field of Caribbean-African proverb comparison by adding some examples from my own list of African proverbs. This demonstrates that there is much work still to be done in comparing Caribbean proverbs with African and European proverbs.

Desrine Bogle. *The Transatlantic Culture Trade: Caribbean Creole Proverbs from Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean.* New York: Peter Lang, 2020. 100 p. ISBN 978-1433157233 (Hardcover), ISBN 978-1433157257 (eBook), [https://DOI 10.3726/b14121](https://doi.org/10.3726/b14121)

When slaves were kidnapped from Africa, they brought over many parts of their cultures, including proverbs. The preservation of African proverbs in Caribbean cultures has long been recognized, e.g., in 1884 Burnside noted that many proverbs used by the descendants of African slaves in the Caribbean were not

from English, but from their own heritage and the same proverbs were also heard in French and Spanish sections of the Caribbean (1884:137).

Desrine Bogle is unusually qualified to compare proverbs across the multilingual Caribbean, having learned English as a child, then studying French and Spanish, earning her doctorate at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle. This equipped her to read a wide variety of existing published collections of proverbs from individual language communities, e.g., Haiti, Jamaica, Barbados.

A clear contribution by Bogle is that she shows and highlights that many of the same proverbs are found in both English-based and French-based creole languages. She lists 111 proverbs that are documented in both English-based and French-based creoles. (She lists each separately, so her numbering system shows 222.) She described her goal, “This book will expand studies which highlight the commonalities in the Caribbean region rather than the differences” (xiv). Clearly, her focus in doing this was proverbs. She also wrote a section on “Pan-Creole Worldview”, an additional contribution to her broad Caribbean outlook. “Creole speakers share many similar traditions and customs. Caribbean Creole culture transcends its linguistic boundaries as defined by territorial borders. Unfortunately, most are unaware of how much they have in common” (33). But she is also alert to the opposite end of the spectrum, “To counterbalance the homogenizing effect of globalization, concerted attempts must be made by small nation states such as those in the Caribbean to maintain and preserve intangible cultural heritage”, including proverbs (34). She calls for promoting the knowledge of proverbs and intangible heritage, including making proverb collections widely available. These are goals I heartily support for *all* language communities, in the Caribbean and around the world.

Bogle begins by discussing Caribbean history. To answer the question of what is included under the label “Caribbean”, the answer may differ in French and English contexts. Following that, there is a brief discussion of Caribbean languages, a complex blend of European, African, and indigenous vocabulary and grammar. This is useful for readers who are familiar with proverbs but are not familiar with the origin and interrelatedness of creole languages in the Caribbean. It is important to realize that

a creole language is not merely a bad form of a European language. For example, Haitian Creole is a full and legitimate language in its own right, not merely a bad form of proper French. She also introduces readers briefly to the complexity of spelling systems for these creole languages: words derived from English and French are often not spelled according to standard English and French spelling. The spellings also differ from place to place, e.g., the spelling rules for English-derived Creole speech in Belize and Jamaica differ.

Following this is an introduction to proverb study. This is useful for readers who are not familiar with the study of proverbs but are familiar with the language situation in the Caribbean. She briefly discusses the ongoing struggle by proverb scholars to craft a universal definition of a “proverb”, but wisely sidesteps the problem, concluding, “proverbs make us human” (15). In the Caribbean context, she documents that proverbs are used in popular music, editorial cartoons, speeches, conversations, etc. As found in other parts of the world, proverbs are often artistically formed with such features as rhyme, alliteration, parallelism, etc.

The core of the book is her collection of proverbs. Each entry includes a number of elements, as seen in this example from p. 47:

37. EC Cockroach na gat right in fowl house (Jamaica)

[kək.ɹʊətʃ nə ɡat ɹaɪt ɪn fəʊl ɔʊs]

38. FC Ravet pa janm gen rezon douvan poul. (Haiti)

[ʁav pɑv ʒɔŋ ɡɛ rezɔŋ dɔvɑŋ pɔl]

SE A cockroach is never right in front of a fowl.

M Whenever there are disagreements between two parties,
Justice will always be on the side of the stronger one of them.

Abbreviations: EC is English-lexified Creole, FC is French-lexified Creole, SE is Standard English translation, M is meaning of the proverb. The lines enclosed in square brackets are transcribed in the International Phonetic Alphabet. This line is specific only to the individual language that is cited. It is not directly applicable for comparing the same proverb in other languages.

For almost every proverb, Bogle has listed a source location, such as Jamaica (for 74 proverbs) and Haiti (for 29), as seen in the sample entry for 37 & 38. Most entries list only one source

for the English-related form and one for the French-related form, so readers are unable to know in how many Caribbean locations the proverb is found. This is in contrast to the findings and format of Campbell (1975) and Allsopp (2004) as explained below.

The title suggests that the book will discuss Caribbean proverbs that can be traced to African proverbs. However, the book makes no systematic attempt to identify Caribbean proverbs with matching proverbs from Africa and European. She states, "There is empirical data to support the claim that some Caribbean Creole proverbs are borrowings, either from Africa or Europe" (22). To support this, Bogle cites as evidence a Caribbean proverb that matches African proverbs (22). It is about not insulting an alligator until you have crossed the river. She reports it in Jamaica, Belize, and Guyana and notes that Allsopp (2004) had reported it in Ashanti. I have also found documentation for it in Trinidad (Hearn 1885:27), plus Chewa of Zambia (van Kessel 2015:196), Builsa of Ghana Moon 2009:141), and Ffulfulde of a broad band of Africa (Baldi 2015:367).

Bogle also acknowledges the European origin of some proverbs. She presents as evidence the French proverb *Là où la chère est attachée il faut qu'elle broute* ("Where the goat is tied, there it must feed"). She traces this to a 1666 French play by Molière. But the proverb is presently found across Africa, including Ya(w)o of Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania (Dicks 2006:88) and Xitsonga of South Africa and Zimbabwe (Xitsonga Idioms & Proverbs). None of the places just mentioned were French colonies. Did the French borrow the proverb from Africans elsewhere or did Africans borrow it from the French? This is the sort of example that makes the study of Caribbean and African proverbs fascinating.

The main contribution of this small book is that it highlights the similarities of proverbs across the Caribbean, including both English- and French-influenced areas, similarities that include proverbs, but are deeper and wider than merely proverbs.

I always rejoice when a book has a useful index, so I am very pleased that this book has two of them. The first index lists names (e.g. scholars, musicians, leaders, organizations) and topics ("trade", "creolization", "proverbiality"). The second index

lists keywords from proverbs, such as “knife”, “cockroach”, “yam”. These make the book even more useful.

The book includes a list of References for the introductory chapter and gives short lists of References for various islands plus one for the Caribbean region.

The book is published by Peter Lang, a publisher known and respected for its books on proverb studies in the International Folkloristics series, of which this is volume 14. This volume is part of a new publishing pathway, “Peter Lang Prompt”, which is intended to publish books more quickly while still holding to “the high standard of scholarly publishing”. This pathway handles projects which are “outside the traditional length of the standard book,” which describes this 100-page book. The quality of the printing & binding, the editing of the text for grammar & cohesion, and all matters of layout are all up to Peter Lang’s usual standards.

Theophine Campbell. *African and Afro-American Proverb Parallels*. University of California: MA thesis, 1975, 92 p.

This second part of this review article is a description of the contribution to Caribbean proverbs studies by Theophine Maria Campbell. She wrote her MA thesis at the University of California in Berkeley in 1975, titled *African and Afro-American Proverb Parallels*. Sadly, the only way to study Campbell’s work was to read it at Berkeley; the university library would not share it via interlibrary loan. According to Google Scholar, this overlooked thesis has only been cited twice, once by the folklore and proverb scholar Alan Dundes, her thesis supervisor. He quoted some of her examples and gave her credit for her broad comparison of African and Caribbean proverbs (1976). The other citation of her work is by J. O. Ojoade (1987:229), noting that Campbell had identified 36 proverbs in the Caribbean that matched proverbs from Africa. It is sad that other scholars have not been able to benefit from Campbell’s findings. With the help of my wife Carole, who handles interlibrary loans at Dallas International University, I was able to pay the University of California to scan the thesis.¹ The scanned copy allowed me to search the text for specific words, an added value.

¹ I hope that the library at the University of California at Berkeley will now be willing to send this digital copy out to those who request it.

Campbell wrote at a time when Richard Dorson's work (1964, 1967) was being debated. Dorson had raised major doubts as to how much African oral folklore had survived in America, e.g., "African slaves in the United States learned tales from their white masters and mistresses" (1964:231). In contrast, Campbell's Appendix A presents a number of African proverbs that have survived in the USA and in the Caribbean (72 ff). Her work lists a number of proverbs documented in both the Caribbean and the southeastern part of the USA, both areas where African slaves and many of their descendants have lived.

The following is one of Campbell's examples (1975:73). The proverb is documented from the Caribbean, Africa, and the USA.

7. When breeze no blow yon no see fowl back (Jamaica, Cu 579)

It's when the wind is blowing that folks can see the skin of a fowl (Trinidad & Louisiana, H 80)

When the wind is blowing we see the skin of the fowl (Haiti, Bl 19)

Fine feathers are lifted when the wind blows (USA, Br 406)

A single gust of wind suffices to expose the anus of a hen (Ruanda, Ch 578)

In a second appendix, Campbell listed proverbs that were found in both the United States and the Caribbean. In her third appendix, Campbell listed proverbs that are found in both French and English-influenced parts of the Caribbean (85 ff).

Discussion of individual proverbs found in additional places

I present here some proverbs that I have discovered in more places than those mentioned by Bogle, Campbell, or Allsopp.

As an example of how some proverbs are very widespread in the Caribbean and in Africa, I choose one Bogle documented in St. Kitts and Martinique (56): "The baby hog said to its mother: 'Mummy, why is your mouth so long?', the mother says to the pig 'My child, you're growing'." Campbell (76) also found this proverb documented in Jamaica, Surinam, St. Croix, St. Lucia, Dominica, Antigua, Haiti. Additionally, I have found this in collections from Guyana, Montserrat, and Belize. This proverb is then found in 12 separate places in the Caribbean, in both English-based and French-based creoles. Campbell identified the

proverb in Africa, from Ashanti, a language from Ghana. I have identified it in four more African languages, from Ga of Ghana (Burton 1865, 143), Sierra Leone Creole English (Lewis-Coker 2018, 205), Yoruba of Nigeria (p.c. David Oluseyi Ige 2019), and Ibibio of Nigeria (Udosen, Ekah, Offong 2017, 72). Such examples show the richness and complexity of comparing Caribbean proverbs with African proverbs.

One of the proverbs that Campbell and/or Allsopp identified as having corresponding proverbs in Africa is about a person or animal swallowing something too big for their anus, e.g. “The cow must know what his anus is like before he swallows the oil palm seed.” Bogle cites this with two Caribbean languages (46). Allsopp cites additional matches from the Caribbean and African (2004:68). To these I can add Trinidad (Hearn 1885:34).

All of these proverbs are about an animal thinking about its anus while swallowing something unusually large. This proverb is very widely spread across Africa, from the west in Balant of Senegal (Mansaly 2018:28), across to the east in Tigrinya of Eritrea (Täklä, Wäldä-Maryam, & Gäbrä-Sällasse 1985:34), down south to Tswana in Botswana (Gadilatolwe 2006:6), and up to the Gulf of Guinea to Bura of Nigeria (Bwala 2016:32).

This proverb is not found only in Africa and the Caribbean. It is also documented in Pashto of Afghanistan and Pakistan: “Before you swallowed the bone, why didn’t you measure your anus?” (Bartlotti and Khattak 2006:31). This proverb’s history is old, very old. In ancient Sumerian of Mesopotamia, there was a very similar proverb about an animal thinking about his anus as he swallowed a large object, “The dog gnawing on a bone says to his anus, ‘This is going to hurt you!’” (The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, Proverbs: collection 5, Segment D, 5.84 87-89). Paremiology leads us not only across large distances but also back into history.

Bogle, Campbell, and Allsopp documented many proverbs that are found in both the Caribbean and in Africa. Here I present additional interesting proverbs that are found in both the Caribbean and Africa.

The basic form of the first proverb is “If you play with a puppy, he will lick your mouth.” Campbell documented it in two Caribbean islands, plus two places in the southeast USA (81),

where it was documented among African Americans. Allsopp added five more locations in the Caribbean (2004:168,169). Neither noted any link to Africa for this proverb. But I have discovered a similar proverb in the Ga language of Ghana, “When you play with a dog it will lick your mouth” (When you play with a dog it licks your mouth – Shatta Wale tells Okraku Mantey (ghanaweb.com)). I do not think anyone will be surprised that another Caribbean proverb has a link to Africa. Further research will undoubtedly find more Caribbean proverbs with African links.

However, this proverb is interesting because the same proverb is found not only in the Caribbean and in Africa, it is also found in Southeast Asia. In Burmese, it is “Fondle a dog and it will lick your face.” (Min and Thida 2020:1325). Just across the border, in the adjacent section of India, in Manipuri it is “If you show much affection for a pup he will lick the tip of your tongue.” (Shakespeare 1911:473). I am puzzled by this similar proverb being found in places that are so far apart. Mieder has presented evidence for a single proverb being independently created in two different European languages (2017). Is similar polygenesis the explanation here? Or, did a British colonial official learn it in a British colony in Africa, then get transferred to Southeast Asia where he introduced it to the local community? Similarly, the proverb about insulting an alligator or crocodile, mentioned above as being documented widely in the Caribbean and in Africa, is very similar to a proverb in Malaysia, “Do not use bad language on a river or the crocodile will grow fierce” (Winstedt 1950:21). Paremiology is always full of surprises.

Another proverb for which Bogle, Campbell, and Allsopp did not discover an African link is, “When cow tail cut off God-a-mighty brush fly” (Campbell 1985). It is found in Kuteb, Igbo, Yoruba, all of Nigeria (Warner-Lewis 2018:329).

I have discovered three additional Caribbean proverbs that have links to Africa. All three of these are wellerism proverbs, containing a quotation and an identified speaker. The Caribbean forms have preserved not only the meaning and general form of a proverb, but they have also preserved the structure of a wellerism proverb. Proverbs with one quotation are called “wellerism proverbs” and those with two quotations are called “dialogue

proverbs". Both are common in Africa (Unseth et al 2017:13,14; Unseth 2020).

The first of these wellerism proverbs is documented from Jamaica, "Snake says if it does not hold up its head, a woman will use it to tie wood." (Watson 1991:102). This matches an Igbo proverb from Nigeria, "If the snake fails to bite, the women will use it in tying firewood" (Onwuchekwa 2012:219).

The second example of a Caribbean wellerism proverb with an African match is spoken by an animal that has been killed. In Martinique, it is "The snake says he doesn't hate the person who kills him, but the one who calls out, 'Look at the snake!'" (Hearn 1885: 33). In the African examples, the specific animals mentioned vary.

Kipsigis (Kenya): "Antelope that was shot, said it did not blame the hunter but the one who roused it." (Soi 2014:64

Ibibio (Nigeria): "The rat says, it is not the person who kills him that annoys him as the one who says, 'See it going!'" (Iwokedok 2014:193).

The third example of a proverb containing a quotation is about moving quickly. From Sranan Tongo of Guyana, there is a wellerism proverb with one quotation: "The chameleon says, 'Haste, haste is good, but caution, caution is good, too.'" (Herskovits & Herskovits 1936:467). From Ghana, there are two matches. The Chumburung example is a wellerism proverb very close to the form of the Sranan Tongo proverb, with a chameleon speaking. The Ewe example is in the form of a dialogue proverb, the second speaker being a chameleon like the other two examples, but the first speaker is a "hare":

Chumburung: "Chameleon says, 'Quickly quickly is good and slowly slowly is good.'" (Hansford 2003: 79)

Ewe: "The hare says, 'Walking slowly leads to death.' The chameleon says, 'Walking quickly leads to death'" (Knappert 1989, 94).

Conclusion

Bogle's book is a welcome addition to the study of proverbs shared across the Caribbean. She has highlighted the sharing of proverbs between French-derived creole languages and En-

glish-derived creole languages. Bogle's book should be consulted by those studying proverbs in the Caribbean region. Her book would be even more useful if she had listed all of the places where each is found, along with specific citations. Campbell's long-neglected thesis deserves to be read and acknowledged as a pioneering work. Her work, like Allsopp's better-known book, will be consulted by and be useful to those who study not only Caribbean proverbs but also their African links. Allsopp's book is more complete than either of them. However, each of these three works has some contribution missing from the other two and prover scholars studying the Caribbean area will want to study all three.

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Peter Unseth
Dallas International University & SIL Intl.
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Rd.
Dallas TX 75236
USA
pete_unseth@diu.edu

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NEW AND REPRINTED PROVERB COLLECTIONS

In memory of Shirley L. Arora

As will quickly be noticed, this annual bibliography of new and reprinted proverb collections contains an abundance of Spanish-language compilations. The explanation is that I inherited the proverb collections from my dear colleague and friend Shirley L. Arora (1930-2021). At our annual meetings, occasionally even twice a year, my somewhat older friend used to say that upon her death she would want her proverb collections to become part of my International Proverb Archive at the University of Vermont. Her two sons have now mailed them to me, and together with the many collections I already owned, they add up to an impressive Hispanic paremiographical holding. As can be imagined, I miss Shirley very much and continue to think of her often. She was one of my best friends, and together with many other paremiological friends I have benefited and will continue to profit from her expertise and wisdom. It is good to be able to report that her valuable books have found a good new home here in Burlington, Vermont.

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Wolfgang Mieder
University Distinguished Professor
of German and Folklore, Emeritus
Department of German and Russian
425 Waterman Building
University of Vermont
85 South Prospect Street
Burlington, Vermont 05405
USA
Wolfgang.Mieder@uvm.edu



WOLFGANG MIEDER

INTERNATIONAL PROVERB SCHOLARSHIP: AN UPDATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

In memory of Elena Arsenteva

The study of paremiology and phraseology connects scholars throughout the world by way of their publications and international conferences. Having benefited from each other's books and articles over the years, Elena Arsenteva (1956-2022) from the Kazan Federal University and I (1944) from the University of Vermont finally met at the meeting of the European Society of Phraseology in June 2002 at Loccum, Germany. We also saw each other at two subsequent gatherings of that society in August 2004 at Basel and in 2010 at Granada. Another memorable meeting took place at the International Colloquium on Paremiology in July 2011 at Paris. But Elena had also received a grant that made it possible for her to come to Burlington, Vermont, to work in my International Proverb Archive for four weeks in May of 2010. As we remarked during those occasions, there is so much more to scholarly work than to give lectures and publish our research results. Conferences give us the opportunity to meet colleagues, exchange ideas, and build friendships that last years or decades. This was certainly the case for Elena and me who became fast friends and maintained our sincere friendship even though thousands of miles separate Tatarstan and the United States. Over the years I have registered her many publications in my annual bibliographies in *Proverbium*. Her last major edited book *The Discoursal Use of Phraseological Units* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021) appeared just months before her sudden death at a relatively young age. Her scholarly work will live on and so will Elena in our minds and hearts.

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Wolfgang Mieder
 University Distinguished Professor
 of German and Folklore, Emeritus
 Department of German and Russian
 425 Waterman Building
 University of Vermont
 85 South Prospect Street
 Burlington, Vermont 05405
 USA
 Wolfgang.Mieder@uvm.edu

