

PROVERBIUM

Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship



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PROVERBIUM

Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship

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PREFACE

It is with my usual excitement and pleasure that I present yet another volume of *Proverbium* to the international community of proverb scholars. It is my sincere hope that this thirty-second *Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* will once again be received positively. It represents an engaged effort of communicating significant articles, reviews, and bibliographies from around the world, and as a glance at the table of contents will reveal, this new book includes truly exciting material. I am also particularly pleased that the contributors stem from Botswana, France, Germany, Greece, India, Iran, Japan, Latvia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, Spain, Tanzania, and the United States, thus attesting to the commitment of serving paremiologists worldwide.

As my two annual bibliographies indicate, the past year has seen an incredible amount of superb publications in the form of collections, monographs, essay volumes, and articles. There can be no doubt that paremiology is flourishing everywhere with special interest being shown in how proverbs, proverbial expressions, and other phraseologisms are employed in the modern age and how new proverbs are becoming part of today's communication. The topics regarding proverbs are limitless, and it is important to note that scholars from a multitude of disciplines are engaged in serious paremiological work. Anthropologists, cultural and literary historians, folklorists, linguists, and philologists have traditionally occupied themselves with proverbial matters. But proverbs have also become of great interest to scholars and students of the mass media, the internet, and all modes of modern communication. Above all, social and medical scholars are looking at proverbs to see how the brain processes proverbial metaphors and how proverbs can be used in studying various brain dysfunctions. There is no doubt that psycholinguists and neuroscientists are making important use of proverbs as they study such matters as Aphasia and Alzheimer's as well as the cognitive function of the brain in general. The articles in this volume of *Proverbium* certainly reflect the wide range of topics

treated by paremiologists who are fascinated by the important role that proverbs play in all modes of communication.

As proverb scholarship advances and gains ever more importance in cognitive and other studies by scholars who have not previously occupied themselves with proverbs, it becomes ever more important that some of the older paremiological scholarship is not forgotten. It so happens that this year is Archer Taylor's (1890-1973) 125th birthday (see my short article in this volume), and that certainly should remind all of us of his invaluable book *The Proverb* (1931). It still represents the best general treatise on proverbs and it should be read by anybody interested in proverbs. Of course, this is also true for the publications by such famous deceased paremiologists as Démétrios Loukatos, Matti Kuusi, Grigorii L'vovich Permiakov, Lutz Röhrich, and many others. We must never forget how indebted we are to them and that it is a privilege and honor to stand on their broad shoulders. Their work is by no means outdated, but I can well imagine their excitement if they could see the brand-new treatise on the entire field of paremiology and paremiography that has just reached me, namely Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gothardt and Melita Alekса Varga (eds.), *Introduction to Paremiology. A Comprehensive Guide to Proverb Studies* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014). Here is an abbreviated table of contents with the authors and titles of the 15 chapters:

- Neal R. Norrick: Subject Area, Terminology, Proverb Definitions, Proverb Features
- Wolfgang Mieder: Origin of Proverbs
- Outi Lauhakangas: Categorization of Proverbs
- Peter Grzybek: Semiotic and Semantic Aspects of the Proverb
- Marcas Mac Coinnigh: Structural Aspects of Proverbs
- Vida Jesenšek: Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects of Proverbs
- Anna Lewandowska and Gerd Antos: Cognitive Aspects of Proverbs
- Peter Ďurčo: Empirical Research and Paremiological Minimum
- Kathrin Steyer: Proverbs from a Corpus Linguistic Point of View

Tamás Kispál: Paremiography: Proverb Collections
Roumyana Petrova: Contrastive Study of Proverbs
Charles Clay Doyle: Proverbs in Literature
Anna Konstantinova: Proverbs in Mass Media
Sabine Fiedler: Proverbs and Foreign Language Teaching
Anna T. Litovkina: Anti-proverbs

The valuable book with its 368 pages also includes an introduction by the two editors, a glossary of key terms, a list of tables, a list of figures, and an index.

On a more personal note, let me in all humility mention that I received the unexpected and special honor of receiving a “doctor honoris causa” on December 16, 2014, from the prestigious University of Athens in Greece. My dear wife Barbara and I traveled to Athens where the proclamation festivity took place in the main building of the university at Athens with many administrators, professors, and students in attendance for the special celebration. It was an event that we both shall never forget and for which we shall always be thankful. It was the wish of the colleagues and friends at the University of Athens that the various speeches of the evening would be published in *Proverbium* as a sign of the high regard of not only my contributions to international folkloristics in general and international paremiology in particular but also as a tribute to proverb scholars throughout the world. Wishing to honor this request, I am including the speeches and some illustrations in this volume. I do so with deep humility and appreciation and hope that this will not be considered as self-aggrandizement.

As always, I wish to express my appreciation at the end of this short preface to all the support I have received during this year as I have worked to bring this thirty-second volume of *Proverbium* to publication. First of all, let me thank the individuals and libraries that continue to subscribe to our *Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*. Their continued interest and support by way of subscriptions make it possible to publish *Proverbium* as a printed book, even though the postage for the packages to many countries is truly prohibitive. Luckily, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Vermont and the Manager of the University of Vermont Book-

store provide us with a much-appreciated subvention, and there are a number of colleagues and friends who have made contributions towards the considerable costs of publishing *Proverbium*. To all of these kind and generous people I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation.

Finally, I wish to thank three very special friends without whom *Proverbium* would certainly not exist. Galit Hasan-Rokem from the Hebrew University at Jerusalem, Israel, has been my treasured Associate Editor right from the beginning, Hope Greenberg from the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Vermont has been the invaluable Production Editor for about twenty-five years, and Brian Minier, the administrative assistant of our Department of German and Russian here at the University of Vermont, has been the Managing Editor for the past three years. It is such a pleasure and joy to work with these three colleagues and friends, and together as a great team we present this new volume of *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* to the paremiological community. May it bring scholarly delight to scholars and students dedicated to and interested in the fascinating world of proverbs.

Wolfgang Mieder

HALIMA IDRIS AMALI

USE, MEANING AND FUNCTION OF IDOMA MARITAL PROVERBS

Abstract: The main thrust of this paper is to analyze selected marital proverbs in Idoma. These are proverbs which relate to issues in marriage and that directly and indirectly apply to other situations in human life. It discusses the functional appreciation of each proverb and the lesson that an individual or the community stands to gain from these proverbs. Ten Idoma marital proverbs are translated and analyzed from the functional point of view. In this light, the paper examines appropriate application of the proverbs with focus on the lessons derived from each. Marital proverbs are applicable in varying situations in the family and the society in general. Such situations are in relationships between men and women, children in the family and in the community siblings, friends, relations and neighbours. This suggests therefore that marital proverbs are useful in many situations in and outside the family, as well as in the community at large and can be applied in situations of misunderstanding for amicable resolutions.

Keywords: African, community, culture, family, function, Idoma, meaning, marriage, situation, society, structural-functional theory, women

Introduction

Idoma people are found in the lower Benue of Nigeria where they are spread in ten out of the thirty Local Government Areas which constitute Benue State. As a group which appreciates traditional norms and tradition, the proverb as a traditional oral genre is frequently employed by Idoma people in daily situations which warrant its usage. They are employed in resolving misunderstandings, quarrels and also for stressing a powerful view in whatever situation the proverb is applied. It is expected to perform some desired functions. Particular attention is hereby paid in this paper to use, meaning and functions derivable from Idoma marital proverbs whose background of coinage is the marriage institution. Marriage is an institution highly respected and held

with high degree of significance among Idoma people. Marriage promotes unity, good behaviour, sanctity, sincerity, honesty, good morals, love and care amongst others. Proverbs provide impetus to speech. The proverb is an expression clothed with deep meaning in a compressed statement. Each proverb according to Nwadike (1989:31) "has something to underscore such as caution, praise, encouragements, discussion, children's upbringing, self-control, thrift, hard work etc". Traditionally, a proverb is a wise saying which is not carelessly used in speech but when necessary in resolution of conflicts as well as instilling some lesson on people or correcting them in family discussions, conversations, social gathering or at cultural meetings for purpose of emphasis and to make stronger points. They make people reason with opinions of others. A proverb is formulated bearing in mind the thinking and values of the people or community from which it originates as has been acknowledged by the various definitions of the term proverb made by proverb scholars.

As a very versatile and articulate proverb scholar, Wolfgang Mieder (1985:19) defines a proverb as a:

statement of the folk which contains truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form.

The proverb is said to contain words of wisdom. These words of wisdom are put together to enhance deeper meaning and as put by Mieder above, they reflect the people's traditional values and views which include their social life, belief, and traditional hierarchy.

Social units in Idomaland consist of the family, the lineage, the village and the district. Apart from the social units above, there are also age groups. The age groups perform functions such as promoting unity among folks, community service, projects and communal works.

In family life among the Idoma people are to be found both monogamous and polygamous homes. The practice of polygamy where a man marries more than one wife is actually not comfortable to the womenfolk. It is in fact detested by women especially those who find themselves in polygamous homes in their married lives. This is because they feel cheated by the man who has to share his love feelings amongst his wives. This feeling pushes

the womenfolk into nursing hatred against one another, they become “passive-aggressive in nature and transfer patriarchal domination onto their co-wife as a form of challenge” (Bashir & Amali:18). Sometimes there are co-wives, where the man has probably three or four wives. This results into conflict more often than not. Polygamy, though still practiced in Idomaland, is not a welcome reality by the women and they regard it as “the most glaringly inequitable and sexist feature of traditional African society” (Frank 1987:18). No woman loves polygamy, it is only tolerated where the woman finds herself entangled in it.

In all these social units in the community, proverbs are generously used in various situations in line with their societal values and norms for tailoring behaviour and checking excesses of people. A major function of proverbs is as stated by Bwala (2012:460):

One of the major functions of folklore, especially the proverb, is that it is a mirror or a reflection of the collective attitude and ideas of the people or the grammar of their values.

Societal values are encapsulated in proverbs, thereby projecting the people’s traditional ways and values. They are commonly used in discussions amongst elders of the community to drive points home and for emphasis. Omijeh (1968:40) opines that proverbs are “indispensable in conversation and discussion or in supporting one’s arguments”. This attests to the important role of the proverb in daily discussions in the traditional community. Proverbs also have “various functions as a medium of offering advice, a teaching device, insult, praise, and lament or as an allusion” (Peters 1971:98). Further to these, proverbs are employed in judgments or arguments between parties as put by Argungu (2013:33):

Nearly all dialogues, conversations or discussions in Africa whether in rural or urban settings, are replete with proverbs, almost confirming the oft-quoted Igbo saying that proverb is the palm oil with which words are eaten.

It is widely known and accepted among the Idoma people that correct application of proverbs in situations of contending issues goes a long way in resolving conflicts or offering advice. This

idea is also reflected in the proverbs analyzed in this paper. The proverb lore is an aspect of literature, and literature mirrors the societal way of life as put by Achufusi (1986:1):

African traditional literature like literatures of other countries or nationalities is a product of man's long reflections on life. It has been moulded out of personal experience in life, his struggles with the land, his movements from one part of his country to the other, conflicts...

Marital proverbs in Idoma address issues related to marriage as well as other situations outside marriage. The marriage institution, as put by Yahaya and Abdullahi (2010:25), is “one of the basic avenues through which relationship between men and women is formulated and strengthened”. The value and important function of proverbs in this formulating and strengthening process cannot be overemphasized. Proverbs impact lessons, offer didactic functions, emphasize points or issues, thereby significantly adding impetus to speech in resolving conflicts or arguments. This point is affirmed by Darthorne (1966:70):

Proverbs (like all other forms of oral literature) have their didactic function, and this is to help people cope with a situation as it arises by regarding it in the light of something that has occurred before.

Further to this, Kabir (2012:526) regards proverbs to be:

An effective mode of expressions not only because of their truthfulness but also because they are philosophical in nature and tend to awaken a sense of responsibility in the speakers and the listeners.

Proverbs are regularly employed among the Idoma people in discussions because “they are a rich source of imagery and succinct expression” (Finnegan 1972:389). The proverb, apart from functioning in didactic ways and educating the people on cultural values as reflected in them, also “displays enormous potential to commenting on a situation, ridiculing the speaker, criticizing another's action or comportment” (Okoh 2008:34). We consequently present in this paper ten marital proverbs. Each of the marital proverbs is written in the Idoma language and translated

into English. The analysis briefly presents the meaning of each proverb and appropriate context for usage as well as the function derivable from it. Like African proverbs generally, Idoma marital proverbs have important functions derivable from their usage. Subsequently the importance and functions of Idoma marital proverbs are here analyzed. Marital proverbs as presented in this work may not necessarily be used or function in marital situations alone but are also applied to other social situations or structures which exist in the community as analyzed here. Just like folklore generally, proverbs "mirror a society's way of life in terms of its social structure and its method of regulating social behaviour" (Yahaya 1979:1). It serves as mirror of the society's life which is reflected in Idoma marital proverbs as presented and analyzed in this paper.

Theoretical Framework

Various theories exist upon which analysis of proverbs or any other oral genre can be premised. This study on marital proverbs in Idomaland examines the proverbs and analyses their meanings and functions. The need therefore arises for the theory applied here in the analysis to focus on achieving the main objective of this paper, thus the adoption of the Radcliffe-Brown structural-functional theory. This theory focuses on functions as derived from the oral genre. When a proverb is said to somebody, or it is applied in discussions, the one to whom it is directed at is expected to draw meaning from it, as well as lessons learnt. Marital proverbs are therefore applied to intervene when there are misunderstandings or where certain points are expected to be strongly made for good impact. The proverb also clarifies issues with its power of language which provides deeper meaning by way of metaphorical expressions. The Radcliffe-Brown structural-functional theory examines the relevance, significance and function of this oral genre, the proverb lore. It focuses on social structures which moderate societal issues. It views the society as a whole and not as individuals, and focuses on functions derivable from societal elements. These relate to the people's culture, values, tradition and their environment. Each proverb in this paper is written in Idoma, translated to English and analyzed highlighting its meaning and the functions derivable from each. The Radcliffe-Brown structural-functional theory

observes society from the functions derived from its contributions in maintaining unity and upholding their culture through harmonious living.

The analysis of the marital proverbs in this paper is therefore on the premise of this structural-functional theory. The proverbs concern women, men and family life generally. It is a fact that women in Idomaland are rated as second-class status in the family. This asserts that they have to be submissive to their husbands, a traditional position held seriously by Idoma men generally. Men are the bread winners in the family and so are armed with authority, power and control. As a result, "male power in our society is expressed in economic terms ... women's activity in the home has been undervalued, at the same time their labour has been controlled by men" (Mann 1994:42). So we may well ask, how does the proverb come to assert its role, its situation of use, and the lesson it offers? These are tenets upon which the analysis in this research work is done in order to assert the use, meaning and function of the marital proverbs presented and analyzed in the paper. This study reveals that the proverb adds impetus to speech, makes expressions more meaningful, is didactic thereby correcting societal vices, teaches morals, advises people, and it is instructive and directs the mind.

Literature Review

Various studies have been carried out by scholars globally in the area of proverbs. The African proverb has been studied and the proverb lore has enjoyed much scholarly research. Some of this work on proverbs that relates to this present study are here reviewed.

Amali (2000) portrays the image of women in traditional Idoma society as expressed through Idoma proverbs. It highlights the importance of women in the traditional society where women are seen and believed to be the heart of societal living and the society may not be able to exist without them. Some Idoma proverbs analyzed in the paper attest to this position and portray women as care givers in the family, engineers in facilitating economic, political as well as social well-being of members of her family and also facilitators of religious ideals in the society. As contained in these Idoma proverbs, the place of women in Idoma society is a significant and an appreciable one. The socie-

ty holds her in high regards and accords her such regards as exemplified in the proverbs. Amali in this paper presents and analyses twenty-six Idoma proverbs which all attest to the significance of the woman in Idoma traditional society. Each proverb highlights the meaning and context of its usage.

Angela (1998) analyses various categories of Mernyang oral literature. One of these categories is the proverb which the writer asserts to be one of the regularly used oral genres of the Mernyang people. The paper observes that the proverb is used in daily conversations and it plays several important roles, some of which are in their customary procedures during disputes and in social gatherings.

The use of proverbs in the dispensation of justice in the traditional setting is discussed in Amali (1997). He observes that proverbs play very active and effective roles in this process of the administration of justice. With the main focus of the study being on the Idoma people, Amali highlights and stresses the power of Idoma proverbs in the determination of justice where the correct employment and application of this very important oral genre x-rays the issue at hand and brings in clarity for better understanding. The proverbs are therefore applied as an intervening tool in the resolution of misunderstandings and the parties involved get clearer pictures of the issues and decisions made.

In his work Ohaeto (1994) portrays the importance attached to the Igbo proverb on the issue of power. Studies of various Igbo scholars are used to highlight critical insights into Igbo proverbs. He believes power to be a metaphor which provides a gateway for understanding the proverbs and that metaphors are quite valuable in the coinage of proverbs. Proverbs of Igbo extraction are elaborately analyzed to project their impact and power in their context of usage.

In his paper Nwadike (1989) discusses Igbo proverbs on a perspective of their usefulness, derivation, origin, users and functions. He likens it to pregnancy such that the speech in proverbial expression is pregnant and the meaning is the pregnancy. He observes that proverbs are derived from our natural environments, cultural experiences such as beliefs, norms and values. Further to this, he asserts that Igbo proverbs originate from four main sources, namely from the ancestors, observations, social circles and Igbo praise names. According to this paper, users of

proverbs are mainly of adult age who employ them in praise of people, assert caution in correcting children and such other functions. The paper ends with a suggestion for the preservation of the Igbo proverb.

The main genres of African traditional literature which include prose narratives, the riddle, elegiac poetry, religious poetry, myths, legends and proverbs are the focus of Achufusi's (1980) paper. It x-rays these genres as used in African traditional set-ups. These genres portray African cultural life and attest to the existence of African literature. Understanding the African way of life and literature are significantly derived through these African oral genres. Achufusi views the proverb to be a concise form of speech which adds meaning to speech for a weightier expression.

Amali (1984) analyses Idoma proverbs with a focus on explicating literary qualities contained in them. It contains a collection of three hundred Idoma proverbs which are translated and analyzed. The work observes the traditional and significant role of proverbs in the Idoma society. In the daily happenings and activities of the people, a lot of things may go wrong and many others are well done. Behaviours of people may also be questionable and various societal ills and vices occur. The proverb is employed as a tool in speech to check excesses of people in various behavioral attitudes as guided by societal norms and values. In this work, Amali highlights and discusses various themes of proverbs, some of which are the significant role of women in society, the image of the child, precautions and reciprocity.

The work by Skinner (1980) presents samples of Hausa literature and oral genres with translations of the examples presented. Aspects of Hausa literature discussed include Tatsuniyoyi (folktales), Karin Magana (Proverbs), Praise songs, Poetry Waka (Songs), Littattafin Hira (Fiction), and Kirari (Precise-Songs) of the Hausa culture. Other aspects of Hausa literature discussed in the book include Islam and the language which has contributed to the Hausa people's zeal to hold on to the survival and growth of their Hausa culture. Of more interest to this present work is the aspect of proverbs, which directly relates to it. Skinner observes the importance of proverbs by referring to them as powerful expressions used at various gatherings and significantly during courting processes.

Omijeh (1968), in stressing the significance of proverbs, refers to them as indispensable in various situations which he outlines. One of these situations of the use of proverbs is their employment even in Bini names, whereby such names speak the mind of the people in naming their offsprings. He refers to them as proverb-names. He analyses what each category reflects, such as Bini's belief in predestination, individual responsibility, future brightness, indifference of outsiders, conduct, value and human behaviour.

From the foregone review of related literature, it is imperative to note that the proverb is an important aspect of oral literature which has attracted considerable research to highlight its significance. Idoma proverbs have also benefitted from such studies and have been brought to the limelight. Consequently, the Idoma marital proverbs selected for this work are presented and analysed.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Fifteen marital proverbs of the Idoma people of lower Benue are here presented and analyzed. Proverbs play quite significant roles in daily life situations and activities.

Amali (1997:28) asserts that "amongst the Idoma people of Benue state, proverbs play an important role". Such importance of the usage of proverbs is highlighted in the following presentation, interpretation and analysis of Idoma marital proverbs.

1. Idoma – Oce noo lonyooligwu
aa anu jigbeno gee
gwuta mlanu le a (p. 13)

English – The person who has the wife
with the hunched back is the
one who knows how to lie with her

A wife is expected to be close to her husband and for both of them to enjoy the spirit of togetherness from each other. However, a husband may not be very comfortable with a hunched back wife because the hunch constitutes a kind of obstacle as to how she can lie down. She is therefore limited to specific positions. This is a difficult situation to manage. However, as put by the proverb, a man who finds himself in such a fix knows best how to manage it. The proverb can be interpreted to mean that any-

body who is directly involved in any issue knows how best to handle it.

This means that one may find oneself in an unusual situation but should not be discouraged. The proverb encourages people to manage any situation they find themselves in order to yield the best result possible, or to achieve what is desired. This proverb can be effectively applied in situations of confusion, unexpected happenings, difficulties, or in family-life situations, where there may be misunderstandings between the spouses which may lead to regrets by either party. This proverb if applied in such a situation would definitely serve as a reminder that one should adjust to whatever condition one finds himself or herself. This therefore directs that tolerance, patience and focus should thrive while problems confronting a person are taken and accepted in good faith. It simply teaches a lesson of “claiming what is yours”.

2. Idoma – Itodo kanoo lebeebe buje
anoo lotu ce ta uhugbonyanoo

English – The porcupine says: I have every
part of my body in thorns
but I have left open my chest
because of my wife (p. 33)

This proverb emphasizes love and the significance attached to a wife in Idomaland. Despite having its entire body covered in thorns, the porcupine realizes the need to have his chest bare and free of thorns to enable it to embrace his wife. He puts away thorns from the chest in order to accommodate her for their mutual union. This also goes further to call for the need for understanding between a man and his wife for peaceful co-existence. Such understanding would keep off issues that may result in misunderstandings and quarrels in the family. As put by Yahaya and Abdullahi (2010:25), “The family is sometimes bedeviled by certain forces which profoundly militate against its peaceful existence”. This proverb can also be applied to encourage people to make sacrifices for the benefit of each other, and also to indicate value attached to anything.

The proverbs can be interpreted to mean giving consideration to others in all dealings. That allows room to accommodate fellow-beings in decisions made for selflessness to thrive. So

finding yourself in the comfort of any place, the individual is advised by this proverb to allow room for others to enjoy or be accommodated in whatever it is that you are involved with. It directs and encourages people to accord each other their due regards.

3. Idoma – Onyabei fioine a

English – A wife is placed in higher esteem than a brother (p. 33)

The literal meaning of this proverb signifies the degree of appreciation accorded to a wife in Idomaland. It specifies that a wife is a worthier person to a man than his siblings. It therefore encourages a total commitment on the part of the man to take good care of his wife first and foremost before his siblings. It places the wife all above his siblings. It reminds siblings of the need for them to note the importance of a wife and there is no contest of who is more important to a man between siblings and a wife. Furthermore, this proverb decries taking undue advantage over other people in any situation. This means that everybody must bear in mind his right to anything and not to trample upon other people's rights to gain advantage over them. In situations of such crooked angles to issues and cutting corners, the proverb can be applied to remind the person involved of the need for him to consider others, and place such a person in the right direction.

4. Idoma – Ikinabo konya noo oo moin nana
Enyoma noo coikpo oo je

English – The tortoise says. Even though my wife has not delivered a child, the mere fact that the amniotic fluid has passed between her thighs is good enough (p. 67)

This proverb can be interpreted to mean “half a bread is better than none”. When a person attains any level of achievement without necessarily getting to the maximum, he should be appreciative of whatever he gets. This is to say that one must not have all that one desires before he is satisfied. Relating this to family situations too, it is said to childless couples to calm them down from being tensed up and anxious. In Idoma traditional society,

marriages are looked at beyond passion, as the major benefit looked forward to in any marriage is to produce children, as put by Yahaya and Abdullahi (2010:25):

Procreation, from one generation to another, which happens in peaceful and culturally bound manner is also another type of very important function of marriage.

So a childless couple would be seen not to be fulfilling the basic function of marriage in traditional Idoma. However, a lesson derived from the proverb above suggests that not getting what you desire does not warrant a “do or die” situation. The proverb teaches the need for patience, endurance and gratitude. It suggests that we should accept what fate offers us and appreciate any gesture offered us in good faith in any circumstance of life endeavours. So in situations where we need to encourage anybody who may feel dampened by getting little of what he desires, the proverb can be said to him to reason. Even farmers in their yields may be dissatisfied with the outcome of their harvests, asserting that they should have had more probably if the rains were more or if fertilizer had been applied. A speaker can state this proverb to the farmer so that he remembers to appreciate what he has got, and make do with it.

5. Idoma – Oba wugu konya a

English – A husband is the respect (source of respect) of a woman

Respect is held in Idoma traditional society with a great significance. It is based on age, gender and social status. Every category of the members of the community desires and deserves to be granted respect as due to it. The proverb here can be interpreted to mean that women are no equals to men. The success of a woman is tied to her husband and her achievements are said to be due to his pedigree. Sometimes, too, there is the tendency for people not to accept that others are ahead of them in status both in the family and in the larger community, in social programmes, activities and beyond. The important function desirable from this proverb is that it is a reminder to whom it is said, to realize or probably accept that he has people above him and he earns respect by respecting those ahead of him.

Similarly, the proverb above is a reminder to women that a husband is not to be undermined because his successes, achievements and respect are equally for the wife. It suggests that the womenfolk must work towards upholding the respect of men to earn theirs as well. Further to the above, the proverb may be applied to a man to ginger him to live up to his responsibility as the head of the family. He is expected to serve as a protective umbrella to his wife, thereby standing as a source of pride to her. This can also be interpreted to mean that a woman is expected to marry to earn respect in the Idoma community, if she remains unmarried she loses that respect which would have been due to her if she were married to a man. This further highlights the suppression that women experience, having their successes, respect, achievements and whatever tied to men, as if women are incapable of earning all the above on their own.

6. Idoma – Onya ikwobaa

English – The wife is the cause of the death of the husband (p.33)

It is believed in Idoma tradition that a man's life revolves around his wife. She is expected to be cooperative to him in running the family. Where she fails to live up to this expectation and undermines the role of her husband, many things may go wrong. She has to encourage him in his pursuit of activities in running the family, advise him on issues in family life, and stand by him always. Doing otherwise on all the above means her taking an antagonistic posture. She disrespects him, is careless about offering him assistance in whatever way, like in the farm, in the home, not according him love and respect. Having an uncooperative wife can push a man into a helpless condition of health. The result is unpalatable and better imagined. This proverb can be said to a stubborn woman whom the community may observe to be too assertive and uncaring to her husband. Another situation in which the proverb can be used is where a woman is adulterous. In Idoma traditional society, the traditional Alekwu god strikes a man who is discovered to be aware his wife commits adultery yet disregards it. Adultery is a grave sin in Idomaland and is highly detested if committed by women, yet pushed away by a wave of the hand when it is the menfolk that is involved.

The proverb may also be used to alert or remind a person that the one closest to him or her is the most dangerous to him or her. This is because such a person has close and easy access to you and thus is capable of doing anything against you at will. The proverb puts you on alert to be conscious of the possibility of your most loved or close relation committing an evil act against you, and the proverbs also calls for necessary precautions to be taken.

7. Idoma – Akpaabana legba de kpellalala
Onyanu kebo flolololo

English – When the male thunder shouts kpllalala
Its wife says peace flololo (p.46)

The Idoma tradition holds that thunder is both of the masculine and feminine genders. Thunder sounds can be loud and powerful or soft and not very loud. According to Idoma people, the loud sound is often referred to as the male thunder while the soft sound is the female. Whenever the male thunder strikes “kpllalalala”, which is interpreted to be high and a demonstration of the tone of anger, the female thunder sounds in a softer and lower tone “flololo” signifying calmness. The import of this proverb is that where there is conflict or misunderstanding between two parties, there is bound to be heightened tension. When this occurs, one of the parties is advised to calm down and be unaggressive. The proverb can be used to resolve the misunderstanding and bring the people involved to calm down to an amicable resolution.

The major function derived from the haulage of this proverb is that it calms down parties in disagreements, misunderstandings and quarrels for a peaceful talk to resolve issues. This is so because it reminds them that where the parties are in heated arguments, there can be no discussion for a mutual resolution. It therefore seeks that patience and understanding should prevail.

Similarly, in the family circle, when a spouse is angry and speaks in an angry tone, the other should calm down and sue for peace. Traditionally, the Idoma woman lies below her husband in family hierarchy and as such is expected to act like the “female thunder”. This is, however, not to say that it is the female that would always be calm. The proverb applies to men too and

can be applied where he yells in anger against anybody within or outside his family. It is therefore not necessarily a proverb used only in the family but in any situation, anywhere where there is need to calm down tension and make peace between disagreeing people.

8. Idoma – Eca koba anu weca konya a

English – The insult of the husband
is the insult of the wife (p. 101)

This proverb is similar to No. 5 which states that “a husband is the respect of a woman”. Similarly, the insult of a husband also falls on the woman. Since a husband and his wife are seen to have come together as a couple, they have become one. What affects one affects the other. This means they have to work together and not to undermine each other. The husband as the head of his family works hard to live up to his responsibility, and his wife stands by him to achieve his goals. The proverb can be said to a woman where she is seen to be unperturbed by what concerns her husband. She is therefore reminded by this proverb to realize that she cannot be detached from what affects her husband.

Furthermore, it can also be applied where there is need for group work and unity. Every member of the group is by this proverb advised to be committed to working as a team. It means that what affects one, affects the other. So if there is no team work and there is failure, the failure is everybody’s.

9. Idoma – Okpliconya tugece kalo gwuta
anu lohi fiagoodo aanca a

English – Old woman shift a bit
That we may lie down
Is better than an empty bed.

This proverb is similar in meaning to proverb (4) which points to making do with what you have and value it. It means that a half of something is better than nothing. So in a person’s desire to have something, where he fails to get his ultimate desire, he should make do with what is available to him, and make the best out of it.

Furthermore, a family cannot exist without a woman. It takes two to make a couple. Where there is no woman in a family, it is incomplete. The proverb above reaffirms the popular saying that “half a bread is better than none”. The old woman referred to in the proverb can be seen as “half a bread” in a literal interpretation. Since she is old, she may not be as useful and effective in the family as a younger wife would be, but it is still better to have the old woman than having no woman at all since the family is incomplete without a woman. In attesting to the above, Amali (2000:27) states that:

The Idoma society believes in a well-organized and productive family. This cannot be achieved without women being fully involved. The society therefore conceives women as indispensable. A family without a wife cannot last long.

In the light of the above, the proverb suggests that even an old woman has a role to play in family life. In the absence of a woman in the house which renders the bed rather empty, having an old woman to occupy the bed space makes a difference. The proverb can also be applied to people to suggest to them to make do with what they have, be contented with what they have on hand and appreciate it. In the absence of a vibrant woman who can satisfy the man perfectly well, the old woman may well serve in a little way. Again it teaches us to be dynamic by adjusting to situations as we find them and be able to make headways for our own betterment.

10. Idoma – Anya ole anya onma,
Anya oci noo kwoonma bi
I yon onma le ca.

English – Women are the home
Women are the fence
The poles which hold the fence
If the poles are not available
The fence would collapse (p. 33)

The import of this proverb, metaphorically put, refers to women serving as pillars to a building (in this case family). The role played by women in the family cannot be overemphasized. The

woman is accorded a very significant recognition in an Idoma family. The proverb asserts that a family is held together by a woman. So her absence from any home crumbles the home. She is likened to pillars which hold the stilts of a home together. If those pillars are not available, the home cannot stand. This proverb can be cited to emphasize the important role played by anybody in a given situation. It also encourages the persons to whom the proverb is being said to live up to their role or bidding in whatever situation they find themselves.

The proverb also is useful in advising mothers. The emphasis is on the woman who should realize from the proverb that her presence and participation is needed in the upbringing of children. If she is unavailable, things go bad with the kids. The proverb is assertive on the significance of women generally in the society.

Summary

Idoma marital proverbs perform significant social functions. The proverbs analyzed in this paper highlight functions derivable from the application of each. Proverbs are employed to enhance meaning in speech, according them depth in meaning. The proverbs, applied in clothed language, performs appreciable functions such as encouraging the individual or group in a particular condition as in proverbs (1) and (4) analyzed in this paper. They emphasise the need to have the mind to expect any uncertainty in life and have the ability to absorb it. The need to be conscious of other people's rights as well as having the mind to accommodate others around you is reflected in Idoma marital proverbs as in examples (2) and (3). They encourage to accord others what is due to them and not to be selfish. A wife is accorded high degree of respect. She is held in high esteem and even placed above siblings to her husband, as exemplified in proverbs (3) and (10). In proverb (10), it is stressed that no home stands without the presence of a woman. This asserts the importance of a wife to any man, and this importance is highlighted and reflected in Idoma marital proverbs. The need to make do with what you have, and appreciate it in good faith is reflected in examples (4) and (9). These proverbs discourage ingratitude and greed. Where the desire is not achievable, one is expected to accept what is on hand, because "a bird in hand is worth two in the bush". Respect is an

aspect in traditional Idoma society that is taken very seriously. Every member of the community is entitled to one form of respect or the other and the individual should be accorded his or her due respect. Women, for instance, enjoy respect from the status of their husbands as asserted in examples (5) and (8). She also takes and suffers his insults. Infidelity is detested among Idoma people, and this is proclaimed in some of their marital proverbs as in proverb (6). Emphasis is made by way of a husband facing the consequences of his wife's infidelity by, with punishment from the traditional gods. Some of the marital proverbs in Idoma are used to resolve crises or misunderstandings between parties. This is reflected in example (7) where the proverb sues for calm and the exercise of patience. It further suggests that when two people are tensed and are at each other's throats, one of the parties should calm down.

Application of marital proverbs is useful in various situations in the society. Though they are marital proverbs, their application does not only concern marital issues but also across various other social situations.

Conclusion

From the analysis above, it is clear that marital proverbs in Idoma are applicable in various situations which cut across the social sectors of the people's daily-life activities. Women are projected as of great significance in the home. They are seen as the major poles which hold a house firmer and keep it in place. These proverbs emphasize the fact that no home can exist without a woman. Some of the proverbs focus on peaceful approaches to resolving crises. In such situations, the proverb is hauled to remind an aggrieved person to calm nerves down for an amicable talk to resolve the crisis. The people's way of life, values, morals and traditions are also reflected in marital proverbs. For instance, infidelity is seriously detested and severely punished. The extent of the seriousness of this crime is demonstrated in the proverb which suggests a man suffering the consequences of his wife's infidelity where he has knowledge of her act and ignores her or looks the other way. This study x-rays the functions of Idoma marital proverbs and holds that the proverbs are very useful in their applications in the communal life of the people in their dai-

ly interactions, discussions, love life, children's upbringing, marital life, love life, traditions and culture.

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THE RELEVANCE OF THE SETSWANA PROVERB TO THE 21ST CENTURY SPEAKER OF SETSWANA

Abstract: The most important knowledge that people have is knowledge borne from long experience and passed from one generation to another in their languages about their local environment and surroundings. Local proverbs are one of the ways in which local knowledge is embodied and transmitted in a community. Mieder (1980:119) defines a proverb as “a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form which is handed down from generation to generation.” Jang (1999:83) sees proverbs as statements which represent traditional wisdom within shared cultural experience in a way that summarizes issues of importance to local communities. Jang’s definition underscores “shared cultural experience” suggesting that the meaning of a proverb could be obscure and irrelevant unless one shares in the knowledge, experience, wisdom and understands the language and culture underlying it. The question is; does the modern day speaker of Setswana share and understand the imageries, philosophies and language used in these statements? This paper questions the position and relevance of proverbs to the 21st century speaker of Setswana who does not share the same cultural experience as the creator of the proverbs. Specifically, the paper interrogates some of the commonly held views of the proverb such as its old and fixed structure and its ability to cut across generations and ages. These questions basically compel us to interrogate the relationship between indigenous and contemporary knowledge.

Keywords: African, Setswana proverbs, contemporary speaker of Setswana, intertextuality, modernity, truth

Introduction and objectives

Proverbs are part of African heritage and culture and therefore constitute local indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge creates an information base for a society which in turn ensures sustained communication and development. This knowledge is

sustained by passing it from one generation to another but it is eroded or lost with the passage of time and changes in society. The major challenge for speakers of African languages is how to make this knowledge relevant in their contemporary lives. In many parts of Africa, proverbs are seen as diminishing heritage that is associated mostly with the rural and old population. This paper attributes the low usage and fading away of proverbs to some views that we have about proverbs. Rather than be viewed as old and fixed statements, proverbs need to be seen as dynamic structures that can accommodate internal creativity, experimentation as well as contact with external forces.

There are many definitions of a proverb though none of them enables us to identify positively a sentence as proverbial. Finnegan (1970.393) defines a proverb as “a saying in a more or less fixed form marked by popular acceptance of truth tersely expressed in it.” Mieder (1985.119) defines a proverb as “a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorically fixed, memorable form, which is handed down from generation to generation.” Jang (1999.83) says it is a “statement which represents traditional wisdom within a shared cultural experience in a way that summarizes issues of importance to local communities.” Sheba (2006.vii) says proverbs are apparent truths reflecting human experiences. These definitions, collectively or individually, elucidate several commonly held views of proverbs; old, fixed, image laden expressions which contain wisdom or truth within a shared cultural experience. Such characterizations or views of the proverb are sometimes problematic given the fact that we live in dynamic and variable societies which may and may not share the same cultural experience that inspired the creation of the proverbs. This paper probes some of these widely held views about proverbs. Using examples from Setswana proverbs, the paper examines two central characteristics of the proverb: their old and fixed imageries and their ability to express the truth. Basically, the paper asks how an old, fixed, metaphorical statement could express contemporary wisdom or truth and what or whose truth a proverb expresses? In other words, the paper attempts to find out the extent to which the Setswana proverb is relevant to the 21st century speaker of Setswana.

Old wine in a new wineskin

Bagwasi (2003.329) argues that Botswana society, like many societies, is experiencing rapid environmental, social and economic changes due to increasing industrialization, literacy, urbanization and Englishization. Evidence from history suggests that before the era of industrialization in which we live, human beings lived by gathering and hunting. Thereafter, they moved into the agriculture stage which consisted of domesticating animals and growing crops. Factories, industries, and computers came in the modern stage. Owomoyela (2005.12) argues that “proverbs are deduced from close observation of and reflection on life, life forms and their characteristics and habits, the environment and natural phenomena.” Adeleke (2009.463) has also observed that Yoruba proverbs are used to recall past events in the life of the community which created them and in which they are used. The events include wars, famines and other social experiences which are characteristic of the history or past of such a community. And indeed, the images and symbols used in Setswana proverbs, or many African languages for that matter, depict mostly the past, the hunting-gathering and agriculture stage. There are simply no imageries or symbolisms of the contemporary age. There are no proverbs that contain images of contemporary objects such as cars, airplanes, telephones, computers and televisions. This observation is intriguing not only in terms of demonstrating the age of the proverb but also in as far as it shows an averseness of the Setswana proverb to employ modern objects as its symbol.

Akporobaro and Emovan (1994) state that proverbs are determined by the socio-geographical situation of an area. The nature of the imagery in which they are expressed reflect the nature of the natural environment of the people who created the proverb. Amongst communities where farming is the dominant occupation, the local proverbs will reflect this occupation and where fishing is the case the local proverbs will reflect that lifestyle. Setswana proverbs mostly contain images of animals, beasts, snakes, plants and trees on which the lives of the creators of the proverbs were dependent. Bagwasi (2003.329) argues that there are a lot of imageries of domestic animals (especially cattle) in Setswana proverbs because domestic animals, especially cattle, play a major role in the social as well as economic lives of many

traditional Batswana. Proverbs that depict Batswana's pastoral life include:

1. *Mmapodi ga a ipone se se mo tlhogong* (a she goat cannot see what is on its head). The proverb means that a person cannot judge himself or herself.
2. *Mosima o o duleng kgomo ga o ke o thijwa ka bobi* (a hole from which a cow came out of cannot be hidden by cobweb). This means that one cannot conceal a big thing.
3. *E e masi ga e itsale* (a cow that produces a lot of milk will not have an offspring that also produces a lot of milk). Children do not usually inherit their parents' good traits.
4. *Kgomo ga nke e nyela boloko jotlhe* (a cow does not discharge all its dung). This means that a people do not usually tell the whole truth.
5. *Bopodi go kgonana ba ba dinaka* (in a fight, goats with horns are a good match for other goats with horns). When it comes to conflicts people with the same kind of character are a good match for each other.

These proverbs are widely known and used by many speakers of Setswana, not just pastoral farmers who have probably observed their animals depicting the same type of behavioral patterns depicted by the proverbs. Even urban and modern day speakers of Setswana who are less familiar with animal behavioral patterns have come to accept the wide application of proverbs and their symbols. This is evidence of the vitality, currency and transient nature of the proverb to transit from one context, generation or meaning to another.

There also exist those proverbs that depict old hunting-gathering and agricultural practices in Setswana society. The imageries and symbols used in these proverbs are mostly old and not familiar to the 21st century speaker of Setswana, see proverbs 6, 7, 8, and 9 below. Most 21st century speakers of Setswana have never heard of such words as; *sefifadu*, *nkgotua*, *lerutla* and *makubelo* contained in them. Modern Setswana dictionaries do

not contain these words making it difficult for young and contemporary speakers of Setswana to decode or understand proverbs containing such images.

6. *E a re go longwa ke sefifadu ore o bona pilo o tshabe.* (Once a person has been bitten by a ‘creature’ at a certain place they often avoid the place. The proverb means that when something negative has happened to you, you often try to avoid putting yourself in a similar situation. This has a similar meaning to the English “Once bitten, twice shy”).
7. *Mmotlana ga a bege boroku, o itlhoma loe bonye bo fetoge nkgotua.* (A young hunter does not declare tree sap in fear that it might turn into ‘something useless’. This refers to an unlucky person whose good deeds often turn bad).
8. *Moamoga tshwene lerutla o e lebatsa ka mogwang.* (The person who has stolen a baboon’s possession often appeases it by giving it something. The proverb means that when you deny or take away something precious from a person they never forget about it until you make up for that in some way).
9. *Mothedi wa lekuka o salelwa ke makubelo.* (The person who has been maintaining the sack in which sour milk is made often eats ‘whatever is left in the sack’. The proverb means that there is often a reward for the one who has worked hardest).

Teachers of Setswana at both primary and secondary school find proverbs with archaic words challenging for young and urban speakers of Setswana. This challenge could be a demonstration that the contemporary Setswana proverb user is not part of the “shared cultural experience” in which these proverbs were created. Shared knowledge refers to the knowledge of any people who have lived together for a certain period of time. Promoters and proponents of culture will argue that even though the images used in these proverbs are archaic the meanings are not because proverbs do not express their meanings literally but metaphorically. For that reason proverbs that have archaic forms still carry

meanings that are contemporary and relevant. However, this paper argues that imageries and symbols are as important as their meanings. It is often easier for one to decode and interpret an image or symbol that they are familiar with. Thus the use of familiar symbols and images could facilitate the use and learning of proverbs in Setswana and other African languages.

The Botswana imported education system is also not really well equipped to teach Setswana proverbs and their cultural importance to young people. Often, learners pick up a few proverbs from proverb competitions or they are left on their own to acquire them from their grandparents at home. However, during examinations or tests, these contemporary bilingual and cosmopolitan Setswana learners are asked to explain or provide examples of proverbs that they have hardly studied. The learners' reactions and responses in these situations is often consistent with modern day thinking; they often try to decontextualize and unfix the Setswana proverb and situate it in their modern lives by infusing contemporary images and symbols into it. Mieder (1993.90) argues that alterations of existing proverbs, known as anti-proverbs, which sometimes result in "mere humorous word play represent a critical reaction to the world view expressed in seemingly antiquated proverbs." He further argues that these anti-proverbs represent a fascinating interplay between tradition and innovation in the use of proverbs. Mieder gives a couple of such proverbs in English;

10. A new broom sweeps clean but an old one knows the corners.
11. Garbage in and garbage out.
12. You can judge a car by its colour.
13. It takes two to quarrel but one gets hurt.

Unfortunately, anti-proverbs are generally not tolerated and appreciated by teachers and adult speakers of Setswana. The learners' attempts to modernize and decontextualize the proverb are often ridiculed, mocked and dismissed by Setswana language practitioners and the general Setswana speaking community, mostly because the proverb is believed to have a fixed structure and content which do not ordinarily change. Finnegan (1981.10)

has also observed that, except for minor variations, “the wording of Bantu proverbs seems to be relatively fixed in outline so that these general patterns are maintained or recalled in their various citations.” Setswana proverbs occasionally allow some stylistic and dialect variations, but for the most part their structure and lexicon are fixed and rigid. Though there is no published study on the use of proverbs by young Batswana, some Setswana teachers, especially from English medium schools in the capital city Gaborone have, for amusement purposes, collected and compiled “amusing and modernized” proverbs from their learners. Table 1 below, shows some of the learners’ modified and modernized Setswana proverbs that contain words from other languages, such as English, and contemporary images such as makeup, tarmac and The Voice and DIS which are found in their modern society and environment.

Table 1: Modified Setswana Proverbs by learners of Setswana in Gaborone

LEARNER'S VERSION	ORIGINAL VERSION
14. <i>Meno masweu, thanks to Colgate.</i> (White teeth, thanks to Colgate)	<i>Meno masweu a bolaya a tshega.</i> (People who smile at you do not necessarily like you or wish you well)
15. <i>Mosadi tshwene o batla make-up.</i> (An ugly woman needs a makeup)	<i>Mosadi tshwene o jewa mabogo.</i> (An ugly woman is useful for the work that she does with her hands)
16. <i>Sekukuni se bonwa ke the Voice/ DIS.</i> (A sneaky person is often caught by the Voice Newspaper or the Directorate on Intelligence and Security (DIS))	<i>Sekukuni se bonwa ke sebataladi.</i> (A sneaky person is caught by another sneaky person)
17. <i>Tsela kgopo ga e na setontere.</i> (A windy road has no tarmac)	<i>Tsela kgopo ga e latse nageng.</i> (A windy road will still get you to your destination)
18. <i>Mmangwana o tshwara tshelete ya maintenance.</i> (A mother collects money for maintenance)	<i>Mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka fa bogaleng.</i> (A mother will do anything to defend her child)

The only concern with these modified versions could be that they tend to represent literal rather than metaphorical interpretations of the proverbs. However, this paper argues that they need to be taken seriously in so far as they represent a serious attempt by

the young 21st century bilingual speakers of Setswana to move the proverb from the past into the present, modernize it and make it relevant to their new experiences. Mieder (1993.90) also argues that “it is important to recognize that proverbs are no longer sacrosanct bits of wisdom laying out a course of action that must be adhered to blindly.” Failure to recognize these modifications perpetuates conservatism of the proverb that I believe is responsible for the stunted growth of the proverb. Conservatism, according to Toelken (1979.35), “involves all those processes and forces that result in the retaining of certain information, beliefs, styles and customs and the attempted passing of those materials intact through time and space in all channels of traditional expressions.”

Intertextuality of the proverb

As an aspect of language, a proverb cannot remain completely unscathed and conservative, the new technologies and practices that continuously affect language are bound to transform and modify the proverb so that it is adaptable to today’s context. Despite its fixed structure, the contemporary Setswana proverb users have managed to make it fluid and flexible so that it fits different meanings and mediums. The Setswana proverb now exists in both an oral and written form, it is used both in the traditional Setswana settings such as kgotla and in modern mediums such as internet and advertising. It is also used in English conversations. This ability of the proverb to move from the voice of the oral performer to the modern writer and author, to different languages and modes of transmission is evidence of its intertextuality. Ju-lien (1992.15) explains inter-textuality of the proverb as “a continuous dialogue of works of literature among themselves which helps in expanding the field of genres in which proverbs and other linguistic elements may be examined and researched.” Mokitimi (1996.55) argues that the occurrence of proverbs in various genres should be seen as a strategy for enhancing the macro-texts in which proverbs are found. These new uses and mediums of the proverb also illustrate the dynamism of the proverb. Toelken (1979.35) sees “dynamism as comprising of all those elements that function to change features, contents, meanings, styles performances and usage as a particular traditional event takes place repeatedly through space and time.”

In contemporary Zimbabwe and many parts of Africa, the proverb has permeated virtually all economic activities; by means of radio, television, and newspaper. Proverbs are employed to promote retail businesses, industrial products, transportation industry and preventive health practices and many other ventures. Proverbs are used as titles of programs and infused in commercial advertisements to encourage certain behaviors or to summarize the advert's primary message (see Tatira 2001:30). In Botswana, the proverb "Pitse e sule ka disale" (a horse lays dead with its saddles), which means that something is plentiful and free, is used by many retail businesses to advertise a sale or good bargain. There is also a Botswana Television magazine program that is called "Sedibeng," a short form of the Setswana proverb "Sedibeng go iwa ka tsela" (you get to a well using a road), the proverb means that one has to follow a certain path to get to their destination. There is even a football club affectionately known as "Moya goleele," a short form of the Setswana proverb "Moya goleele o lefa ka marapo" (a long distance traveller needs a lot of stamina). These examples demonstrate new uses of proverbs. The new uses demonstrate that the advent of both electronic and print media did not kill the proverb, rather it has extended its use from regional localities to national and global arenas.

Further, because of its broad and general nature, the meaning of a proverb has been difficult to fix. Users of a proverb are often able to manipulate its meaning so that it fits their context and intended meaning. For example, in typical traditional Setswana egalitarian communities, the proverb "*Monna selepe o a adimana-wa*" (A man is an axe which is sharable) will be interpreted to mean that a man should serve his family and extend his services to his neighbors who require his help. Thus, a family that does not have a man may ask the man next door to chop fire wood for them because "a man is an axe that is sharable." But in line with traditional Setswana polygamous practices, the proverb can also be interpreted to mean that a man can sleep with more than one woman. Thus a man who is cheating on his wife may justify his actions by saying that "a man is an axe that is sharable."

Bagwasi (2003) discusses the use of Setswana proverbs in English conversations. This new use of Setswana proverbs in English is one of the ways in which proverbs have adapted to

new trends. However, Bagwasi (2003:332) claims that when the proverb changes habitat, say from one medium to another, one language to another, problems of misrepresentations and misunderstandings sometimes arise. She states that during the British protectorate, the British sometimes used Setswana proverbs to help them understand and resolve local controversies such as those concerning chieftaincy or governance. For example, they found the Setswana proverb “Lentswe la kgosi le agelwa mosako” (build an enclosure around the chief’s word) pertinent and suitable for explaining the powers of the local chiefs. The British interpreted and understood the proverb to mean that the “chief’s word is law” which empowers him to do whatever he wants. This interpretation led to the chiefs’ abuse of power being tolerated and justified by the British administrators who assumed and understood that the chiefs’ actions were in accordance with the native’s philosophy which is enshrined in the local proverb “Lentswe la kgosi le agelwa mosako.” The British interpretation led to a lot of dissatisfactions and arguments among the local activists who wrote letters to newspapers and the British administration to clarify the meaning of the proverb as seen in the excerpt below:

Tshekedi’s claim that he was above and beyond the laws of the protectorate can be substantiated by government documents which say “the chief’s word is law.” Now, this is not a Secuana proverb, where the administration got it, I do not know. Our proverb has no such autocratic meaning. The Secuana expert officials must have adopted it wrongly. Lentswe la kgosi le ageloa losaka means that the chief’s promise will be fulfilled. Yet the chief’s word is law has become a familiar decision of the protectorate courts in any matter concerning the ruling chief with his subjects even where European residents are involved.

(Extract from a letter by Simon Ratshosa in Star Newspaper, October 7, 1933).

When local proverbs are used in a different language, such as English, they become decontextualized and isolated from the local culture which is embodied in the proverb. For Batswana

natives, “Lentswe la kgosi le agelwa mosako” could not be interpreted to mean the chief’s word is law because there are other proverbs and cultural contexts that contravene that meaning. Bagwasi (2003.333) argues that in the 1930s, when such letters were written, Batswana chiefs wielded a lot of power, they were the sole rulers of their communities, were responsible for all the land allocation and awarding of mine prospecting permits. However, they could not do as they liked because the length and success of their reign was dependent on the approval of their communities, hence another Setswana proverb which says “*Kgosi ke kgosi ka batho*” which means a chief is only a chief through the will and approval of his people. The two proverbs are related and are often used together. The latter proverb serves as a reminder to the chief that he got to his privileged position through the approval and will of the people and thus he must reciprocate by fulfilling the promises he gives them. All this knowledge and information is lost when the proverb moves from one language to another. Bagwasi (2003.328) argues that since the content of a proverb transmits a particular culture and certain shared values users of the proverb from a different language and generation must grapple with a cultural mindset which is not theirs when considering the meanings of the proverbs.

The arguments above show that both the forces of conservatism and dynamism are at work on the proverb. The conservatism of the proverb is found in the rigidity of its structure and content and its dynamism is found in its uses, meanings, mediums and languages. Bagwasi (2003.239) argues that the contemporary proverb users in Botswana are both conservative and dynamic. They are protective over the structure of the proverb and employ traditional concepts of proverb performance, but modify them according to the functional and aesthetic needs of their audience and their language. Innovation and modification of the proverb is one way of integrating indigenous knowledge and traditional knowledge systems and ensuring that indigenous knowledge continues to be passed on to future generations. Use of proverbs to solve contemporary problems legitimizes old beliefs, values, and approaches and provides incentives to solve problems with local ingenuity and resources which in turn promotes cultural pride.

Proverbs as an expression of truth

Many definitions and descriptions of proverbs underscore the truth value of proverbs. For example, Tatira (2001.231) says that “proverbs have a feeling of universal *truth* because humans everywhere are shaped by past experience.” Finnegan (1970. 393) defines a proverb as “a saying in a more or less fixed form marked by popular acceptance of *truth* tersely expressed in it.” Mieder (1985.119) says it is “a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, *truth*, morals and traditional views ...” Delano (1973.77) says that “Yoruba proverbs are self-evident *truths*, which help to drive home a point or describe a situation in a few striking words.” It would seem from the above statements that the word ‘truth’ is bandied a lot in definitions and descriptions of proverbs though there is very little agreement as to what truth is. Truth is synonymous with several English words such as; genuine, honest, loyal, faithful and original, but what does the word truth mean?

It is not the intention of this paper to embark on the colossal task of defining truth, but there is a need for us to work out some common understanding of the phenomenon of truth since it is an integral part of a proverb and arguments about the authoritative, guiding and didactic force of proverbs really hinge on this truth value of proverbs. Owomoyela (2005.12) argues that since proverbs are considered to express accepted truth, their use in discussions or arguments indicates an appeal to established authority. Malunga and James (2004.3) also argue that proverbs are guidelines for individual, family, village and community behavior built upon repeated real experience and observations over a period of time. Because proverbs are seen as truth, they are internalized and become conscious or unconscious standards, socialization maxims that reinforce certain behaviors and attitudes in the community which uses them. The above arguments provoke further interrogation of the “truth value” of a proverb.

There are many theories of truth but this paper will make reference to the constructivist theory which holds that truth is constructed by social processes, is historically and culturally specific, and it is in part shaped through the power struggles within a community. According to this theory, perceptions on truth are viewed as contingent on convention, human perception and social experience. It is for this reason that Foucault (1970)

finds any attempt to see truth as an objective quality problematic. He finds truth to be something that is in itself embedded within a given context, power struggle, shifting through various episteme throughout history. The above theory clearly suggests that truth is neither absolute nor universal. This view of truth is relatable or pertains to truth in proverbs because truth in proverbs is relative, it is a social construct, just like race and gender and it is not permanent and therefore often difficult to apply across generations and contexts. Mieder (1993.13) agrees that proverbs only make sense in a given situation or context and that we always choose proverbs that suit the situation best, an indication that proverbs do not have universal applicability. Mitchison and Pilane (1967) also see the truth as being relative to culture, history, language and society.

Proverbs usually reflect one point of view, one kind of experience and one type of truth and there are many situations or contexts in which that view or experience is not applicable and is questioned and even refuted. That is the reason many languages have proverbs that are diametrically opposed to one another, this is to accommodate the different views and vicissitudes of life. Yankah (1994.129) says this kind of opposition represent the “different classes of men and the possible absence of unanimity in a society’s view of life.” Users of language often reject the use of certain proverbs when they feel that they are used out of context or they do not agree with them. This means that whenever society’s perceptions, views and experiences change, the applicability and relevance of certain proverbs can also change. For example, in these days of democracy and equal rights, there have been a lot of objections and reluctance by Batswana women to accept the relevance and applicability of proverbs that demean them especially where issues of gender, leadership and marriage are concerned. Nhlekisana (2009.142) condemns such proverbs, sees them as encouraging male dominance in Setswana society and propagating negative influence against women. Further, she laments the fact that scholars often extol proverbs as value laden statements which are repositories of social and cultural wisdom but ignore their sexist tone.

The arguments above clearly show that proverbs do not express universal truth but express an opinion or view that others, especially from a different generation or gender, may not agree

with. Arora (1994.7) agrees that the level of authority that a proverb has differs from one family or community to another. Sexist proverbs that are commonly highly debated in Botswana include proverb 19 below which suggests that a woman has to be beautiful, if she is not, then she can be made useful by making her use her hands to provide for her family. Proverb 20 compares a woman to a dog which is attracted to whoever gives it a bone. Proverb 21 says that women cannot keep a secret, so they cannot be trusted with confidential information. Proverb 22 says that women talk too much and their talk brings about conflicts between people.

19. *Mosadi tshwene o jewa mabogo.* (A woman is a baboon whose usefulness lies in the use of her hands). The proverb means that an ugly woman/wife can make herself useful by using her hands to provide for her family.
20. *Mosadi ntsa o okwa ka lerapo.* (A woman is a dog who is enticed by a bone). The proverb means that a woman is materialistic, goes after any man who can support her materially.
21. *Basadi ga ba na thwadi.* (Women cannot keep a secret).
22. *Loleme la basadi lo lotlhanya metse.* (Tongues of women cause conflicts between villages). The proverb means women talk too much and their talk brings about conflicts between people.

On the other hand, proverb 23 bestows upon a man unlimited freedom and prowess to have many partners or get involved in multiple sexual relationships. Proverb 24 encourages a man to show bravery at all times, even when he is hurt, crying or showing emotions is for women, for men it is a sign of weakness. Proverbs referring to men legitimize their authority, bravery and domination which are central in power relations.

23. *Monna phafana o a faapanelwa.* (A man is a calabash of beer which is sharable). The proverb means that a man is like a calabash of beer which is passed from one beer drinker to another, that is, he can manage multiple sexual partners).

24. *Monna ga a lele go lela mosimane.* (A man does not cry, only boys cry). A man should not show emotions, lest the emotion be seen as a sign of weakness.

Some proverbs pertaining to leadership have also been challenged and contested. For example, in today's democratic societies many people have difficulties accepting proverb 25 below;

25. *Ga di nke di eteletwa ke manamagadi di ka wela ka seloma.* (Cattle should not be led by a cow (female) otherwise they will fall into a ditch).

Nhlekisana (2009.143) argues that this proverb negatively affects women's participation and access to leadership positions in Botswana. History has shown that females can lead successfully. Indira Ghandi of India, Queen Elizabeth II of Britain, Joyce Banda of Malawi and Kgosi Mosadi Seboko, chief of Balete in Botswana, are just a few examples of female leaders. Equally, in today's democratic societies where there is regular consultation and there are governance structures that are made up of several people Proverb 26 will be seen as undemocratic and downright dictatorial.

26. *Poo ga dinke di nna pedi mo lesakeng.* (There cannot be two bulls in one kraal). There can only be one leader in a community.

The existence of such proverbs is an indication of a certain point of view that was prevalent in patriarchal societies at a certain time. Increasingly, such views and societies are coming under heavy attack. If we accept Foucault's argument that truth is embedded within a given context, it is about power and shifts throughout history, then it is clear that men's domination in patriarchal societies had determined what was true. Feminist authors around the world vehemently criticize sexist proverbs. Asyanbola (2007) argues that most Yoruba proverbs are biased against women, they portray them negatively; as sexually immoral, extravagant and responsible for most societal ills. Hussein (2005.6) also argues that African proverbs demonstrate the complex relationships between power and sexuality and hegemonic masculinity in African societies. These proverbs are challenged

by many 21st century women who refuse to accept them as being applicable or relevant to their lives.

Proverb 27 will nowadays be seen to contravene certain public health standards. Before Batswana pastoral farmers were taught about all the deadly transmittable diseases in cattle and other domestic animals, they could eat meat from sick animals because it was considered a waste to throw away meat of a cow, no matter what the cow suffered from, as illustrated by proverb 27 below;

27. *Lebitla la kgomo ke molomo*. (The grave of a cow is the mouth), meaning that meat from a cow cannot be thrown away, it has to be eaten).

Though Tatira (2001.230) argues that proverbs are able to survive in today's economies because of "the genre's sense of timelessness, the feeling that they represent comprehensive summaries of past experiences, truths that have been tested by earlier generations and offer an informed empirical view," the above examples show that proverbs are not as timeless as we have been made to believe. In fact, they are applicable within given contexts, situations and time periods. For example, women and men's roles have changed in modern times. Proverbs that try to enforce old gender stereotypes are often met with reluctance. Proverbs should be able to address these new roles of women. The examples used in this paper indicate that some of the existing proverbs have become debatable, an indication that the society's perception and view about certain things is changing.

Conclusion

The intention of this paper is not to discredit the proverb and render it irrelevant in today's society but rather to draw attention to some indefinable views that we have about proverbs. Chessaina (1991.26) argues that most proverbs are as relevant and as contemporary as they were when used by previous generations. Tatira (2001.236) also argues that though the situations to which proverbs are applied to are new, the social context is not. He argues that the fact that proverbs often comment on widespread human experiences enables them to remain relevant and fit any place, time and function in spite the technological advancement of a particular community. The innovative uses of the proverbs

are proof of its continuity and survival in the modern age. The paper agrees with these sentiments but cautions scholars in their characterization of the proverb as truthful and fixed. The truth value and the fixed structure of the proverb need to be qualified. The so called anti-proverbs should be recognized and accepted by speakers of Setswana. Mieder (1993:58) argues that proverbs are used in innovative ways that force them to be changed in order to fit the demands of the modern age. "Changing times and situations require forms of expression that the traditional proverb can longer supply." If language provides an indication of a society's thought pattern which is ever changing, then proverbs should also be allowed to change accordingly. The arguments above urge us to review existing perceptions and definitions of proverbs with the view to free the proverb so that it more efficiently and effectively represents contemporary times.

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REPRESENTING THE FEMALE BODY AND THE CONCEPT OF FEMININE BEAUTY IN THE CONTEXT OF ASSAMESE PROVERBS

Abstract: Female body has always been considered to be the symbol of grace, modesty, simplicity and submissiveness. This stereotype is strengthened in oral literature. Proverbs constitute one of the most important components of oral literature. Beauty is universally considered the main criterion of women. However, every society has its own notion of beauty regarding women. There are certain stereotypical expectations of female body in every society. But the standards of beauty differ from people to people, society to society. If a woman does not fulfill these norms of the society that she belongs to, she is not regarded as a perfect woman. Women, who are outside the prevailing norms of beauty, are considered to be abnormal, witch, evil-like, disobedient, cruel etc. Therefore, notions regarding female body are socially constructed. Such, and many other related norms of feminine beauty and the female body are found in women related Assamese proverbs. The present paper tries to analyze the construction of ideas regarding womanhood with special reference to female body and feminine beauty through Assamese proverbs. It is an ethnographic study of the Nagaon district of middle Assam in India.

Keywords: Assam, gender stereotypes, female beauty, female body, India, male gaze, misogyny, patriarchy, proverbs, somatism, stereotypes, women, worldview

Introduction

[...]
when I was growing up, my sisters
with fair skin got praised
for their beauty, and in the dark
I fell further, crushed between high walls.
(Wong quoted in Kesselman, et al. 1995: 97)

Beauty may be a state of mind but all through the ages every society has laid its priority on beauty as the chief criterion in the assessment of womanhood. Women in most societies adorn their bodies to look beautiful. There are certain stereotypical expectations of the female body in society. As Naomi Wolf points out:

'The beauty myth', has a powerful effect on all women. It consists of the belief that women must possess an immutable quality called 'beauty' in order to be successful and attractive to men. Our culture is permeated by the conviction that beauty is the central measure of women's worth. (quoted in Kesselman, et al. 1995: 92)

But the standards of beauty differ from people to people, society to society. What is deemed beautiful by one society may not be considered so by another. The concept of beauty is also seen to vary from time to time. Among the Chinese, women having long feet were derogatorily treated and in the past there were practices of shortening the feet for beautification (Schipper 2003: 50). However, this tradition may not always be in vogue among the people of other societies. Every society has its own norms regarding the concept of beauty and if a woman does not fulfil those norms of the society she belongs to, she is not regarded as a perfect woman. Women who remain outside the prevailing norms of beauty are considered abnormal, evil, disobedient and cruel. Therefore, the notions regarding the female body are nothing but social constructs. People, after interacting with one another from one generation to another, acquire some concepts in their minds and behave accordingly. Gradually those concepts become naturalized into certain roles and with the passing of time those roles gain recognition from the society, which are, in fact, not real. It is common to represent any socially constructed concept in various literary forms. Notions regarding the female body, as stated above, are nothing but a kind of social construct.

A Brief Account of Assam and Assamese Paremiography

Assam is one of the states of India which is situated in the north-eastern part of the country. It has 27 districts. It was earlier known as *Kāmarupa* and *Prāgjyotispura*. The name *Assam* literally means incomparable. Assamese is the most widely spoken language in this area. But this land consists of several ethnic

groups with their own languages and cultures. Assam is rich in folklore like all other societies, and as an important genre of folklore, proverbs are in abundance in this region.

The proverb represents one of the most important and popular genres of folk literature. According to Wolfgang Mieder:

Proverbs contain everyday experiences and common observations in succinct and formulaic language, making them easy to remember and ready to be used instantly as effective rhetoric in oral or written communication. (2004: xi)

The term proverb falls under the analytical category; in almost every language there are several terms which are used to mean proverb and these terms fall under the ethnic genres of folklore, e.g., in the Assamese language there are terms like *Prabacan*, *Prabād/Pravād*, *Paṭantar*, *drṣṭānta*, *bacan* etc. which can be called the ethnic genres of the proverb. Paremiographical publications in Assamese have already been done by several persons and P.R.T. Gordon compiled the book *Some Assamese Proverbs* (1896) which stands out as a milestone of such studies in Assamese. There are several other folklorists who have also done a lot of paremiographical work in Assamese. Significant among them being Gopal Ch. Das's *Asamīyā Paṭantarmālā* (1900), Prafulla Chandra Barua's *Assamese Proverbs* (1929), Sarbeswar Rajguru's *Asamīyā Prabād* (1972), Dandiram Datta's *Sāñthar*, *Phakarā-Jojanā*, etc.

Representation of the Female Body and Feminine Beauty in Assamese Proverbs

Representation of the female body is an important area of research for the feminist scholars. Human biology is a significant key to understand human behaviour as proverbs referring to the female body illustrate. The female body is the subject of numerous assumptions and projections in oral traditions regarding what is good, bad, desirable, repugnant from hair to toes; the female body and feminine beauty are commented upon. Representation of female body is one of the most common features of Assamese proverbs. Ideological conception regarding the construction of female bodies can be seen in many Assamese proverbs. The pre-

sent study discusses a few proverbs in Assamese where the female body and feminine beauty are represented.

In Assamese society, a woman with puffed cheeks, for instance, is considered to be ugly. An example is here excerpted from the *Dākar Bacan* (Sayings of *Dāk*), a sub-genre of proverb:

*Nājāni daivar gati
Ophondā gālio hai pārvati.*

(Woman with puffed cheeks is generally considered unlucky but if fortune favours, she might turn out to be the lucky one.)

It is important to study how beauty is constructed in a particular society. The term ‘*ophandā*’ has a derogatory connotation in Assamese, e.g., *ophandi gangātop howā* (to be puffed up with vanity), *ophondā bhem* (great vanity). So a woman, having such cheeks, is considered to be arrogant, haughty or proud and is not liked by others. In spite of her ugliness she may attain success with the help of luck.

Almost every literary genre of a language is used as the medium of representation of the female body. Assamese literature is no exception. The female body is represented in both oral and written literatures in Assamese. *Burhi Air Sādhū*, the famous collection of Assamese folktales, is one of the most important examples of such medium of representation like the tales of *Tejimala*, *Ou- Kuwari* (The *Ou* Princess), *Cilanir Jiyekar Sadhu* (The Tale of the Kite’s Daughter). In the marriage songs of Assam, the stereotypical notions of the female body are described. Moreover, some Assamese terminologies can be seen as the representative medium of the female body and its association with female beauty e.g., *Kaṇkāl khāmuciā cowāli* (girl with slim waist), *Māgur baraniā cowāli* (girl with the colour of *Māgur* fish [*Magur* is a type of fish which is more popular in eastern India. It is generally dark olive colour. The scientific name of this fish is *Clarias batrachus*]), *Bhomorā kaliā culi* (hair as black as bumble-bees) *Dālim gutiā Dānt* (teeth like the seed of the pomegranate).

It is interesting to observe that the gendered notion of Assamese proverbs is not free from stereotypical norms. Such stereotypical representations of the female body will be mentioned in the following discussion.

*Onthar opare gophar sāri
Nitchai sito bidhavā nāri.*

Variation,

*Onthar opare gopher sāri
Sei tiri dekhante bāri.*

(A woman who sports a moustache will definitely attain widowhood.)

The moustached woman is doubly cursed because like all women she is categorized as the ‘other’ but along with it she is also considered to be an ‘error’. Being a deviation from the normative model of female structure, she is flawed. She is neither a “normal” male nor female. The moustache of a woman upsets the clean binary division between men and women. Just as effeminity in man is highly undesirable, any sign of masculinity is even more unwelcome. One can see the focus on the importance for a woman to look good and any woman who looks like a man or vice-versa is an anomaly.

Consider, for instance, another proverb which goes like this:

*Jār gharat matamuwā tiri
Tār gharat nāi ciri.*
(Houses consisting of women having masculine appearance have no prosperity.)

Women lacking such stereotypical features are alienated from the society. Though the transformation from female to feminine is constructed, yet it is considered to be a natural process and for that very reason people accept these feminine qualities of a woman as ‘real’.

While talking about representation or rather social representation we should be very much clear about the term. Social representations are the social constructs which are ideologically structured in the society. Every social being acquires such constructs not in a conscious way but it can be possible with the help of the day-to-day practices. People become so much involved in all those representational activities that those activities seem to be natural but not constructed. Such institutes can help in constructing the ideological mind set of the people in a society irrespective of their gender. Gradually they adopt all those social

constructs through that process of socialization. Any study that denotes representation has a relation with the concept of a value system that prevails among the people of one society e.g.,

Kutkura culi khajatir guri.

(Women having curly hair are supposed to be quarrelsome by nature.)

A woman possessing curly hair is not quarrelsome but it is the stereotypical norm that people have in their mind while creating any ideological concept. Such woman is represented as quarrelsome through the medium of the proverb. The concept of representation can be seen in every aspect of society and its culture. The representation of the curly hair in case of the females can help us in understanding the stereotypical model of the patriarchal society that women should maintain their hair in a very systematic manner. It may refer to other aspects of the social structure. It is known to all that the domestic duties including cooking are supposed to be done by women. While preparing food it is the duty of the cook to be conscious of cleanliness and hygiene. Earlier, among the Assamese people, women maintained long hair. Since they had long hair, they had to maintain themselves in a disciplined way so that the food was not spoilt. Wastage of food in this way creates a host of other problems. This proverb provides us with a clue to our understanding of many issues related to women. Firstly, the interior of the house is always meant for women; secondly, quarrelsome women are discarded from the society; thirdly, women having curly hair are not desirable.

In any form of literature, one object is acted upon or substituted by another object which is real and there is a difference between the real one and the represented one. Thus, there is always a relationship between the thing which is represented and the person before whom it is represented, and here the concept of ideology plays an important role. The ideological concept regarding a particular object is more important than the innate quality that the object carries and it is important to understand that ideological concept because according to Ferdinand de Saussure, there is no intrinsic relationship between the signifier and the signified; it is only based on arbitrariness (Hartley 16). It is the concept of ideology of a person that makes it meaningful. In other words, ideology can be called the bridge between the

object or person that is represented and the person for whom that representation is constructed, e.g.,

Topanir neocan ratipuā

Tirir neocan sarumuwā.

(It is good to get rid of sleeping in the morning as it is not good for health; likewise, a woman with a small face should be discarded as she is considered to be quarrelsome.)

In Assamese society people may have an ideology about women's appearance. Being governed by such ideology, there is a prevailing notion that women's appearance should be distinct. If someone deviates from those norms, she will be categorised as a non-woman in day-to-day practices as well as in literature where they are found in the represented form.

The object of representation is always incomplete without the context. The object or person which is represented for another object or person can be understood only in the presence of a certain context. In semiotics, any object or person can be called a sign which has meaning in the presence of a particular context, for example:

Cowāli nānibā nāgini cakuwā mukhat micikiā hāṇhi.

Two interpretations regarding this saying were encountered during field work and the difference particularly centered around one word, *nāgini*. It connotes two meanings – firstly, a female snake and secondly, a Naga woman, member of an ethnic community of Assam as well as of North-East India. The first meaning goes like this – girls having snake-like eyes and a smiling face are not suitable for marriage. To appreciate this one must have some knowledge about what the 'snake' stands for as a symbol. In Assamese society, the snake is often represented as a silent killer or revengeful, and many proverbs have references to such qualities of this reptile. For example:

Sāp māri negurat bis thowā.

(Contextual meaning: Vanquish a foe after having brought him under control.)

Here the snake is used to symbolize a foe.

Sāpe kankālar kob nāpāhare.

(Contextual meaning: The defeated will always harbour feelings of revenge towards his malefactor.)

A proper understanding of a proverb therefore demands knowledge of the motifs and symbols regularly used in literature. It is not possible to separate a representational sign from the context because that sign can only be understood in the presence of other signs that are related to it. The whole process of representation is a system which may be called the ‘codes’ as in the words of W.J.T. Mitchel:

[...] codes refer to a body of rules for combining and deciphering representation signs. When something stands for something to somebody, it does so by virtue of a kind of social agreement – ‘let us agree that this will stand for that’ – which once understood, need not be restated on every occasion. (1995: 24)

The second interpretation of the saying *Cowāli nānibā nāgini cakuwā mukhat micikiā hānhi* is that girls having eyes like the Naga women and a smiling face should be discarded. During the field visit for this present study, it was found that earlier in Assamese society it was believed that the people of the Naga community, especially the women, should not be taken in good faith. They were believed to be cheats who exploited people with their beauty and so this proverb is a kind of warning against the people of such a society. From this proverb we can understand how ethnicity is constructed and represented in the society and to understand this, one has to take the help of several literary texts, whether oral or written, into account.

Language not only refers to the voiced forms, it refers to any kind of communication where the eyes play an important role, too. The eyes are considered to be one of the main expressive media of communication. With the help of eyes we can acquire knowledge regarding the whole world. Along with the physical world that we live in, the people that we meet can be inserted into our body and mind through the eyes. It is the eyes which have impact on our mind. The eyes can be called the way through which we can study the mind or the heart of a person. An Assamese proverb describing women’s eyes goes like this:

Cowāli nānibā bijuli cakuwā mukhat mickiā hāṇhi.

Or,

Cowāli leterā bijuli cakuwā māre micikiā hāṇhi.

(Meaning: Girls, having eyes like lightning, should be shunned or regarded as foul beings.)

Proverbs of similar types in other languages can also be cited here:

A house without curtains is like a woman without eyebrows. (Romanian proverb)

Beautiful eyes, villainous heart.

(Creole, Guadeloupe) (Schipper 2003: 29)

For an understanding of the concept of ideology, we can cite an example here from the *Dākar Bacan* (Sayings of the Dak), a sub-genre of the proverb:

*Kutkura culi meli phurai
Dāke bule tāi giri nāsai.*

(Meaning: A woman having curly hair is considered to be the destroyer of the family.)

The relation between woman with curly hair and destroyer of a family is nothing but arbitrary. It is the ideological set-up which bridges these two things. So ideology is a set of some fixed rules which cannot be disobeyed and people accept the ideas that have been carried by the ruling class as the ideas given by the whole society. The most important thing is that this set of ideas is accepted as the natural process of the society by each of its members. Women accept these ideas as natural. The concept of ideology helps in naturalising the state of things in society and the people's psyche is ready to accept what is prevalent in society. Women become the object of commodity and they are judged within the framework of the male gaze. For instance,

*Āhu cābā gadhuli, Sāli cābā puwā,
Khoj kārhote cowāli cābā, kon kenekowā.*

(Meaning: The *Āhu* rice is pleasant to be seen in the evening, the *Sāli* rice is pleasant in the morning; likewise a girl is pleasant to be seen or judged by her gait.)

The male gaze seems to objectify women as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ and women feel a kind of alienation from what they really are.

Most of the time, it is believed that women get beautifully dressed only because of their lovers or husbands. As in an Assamese historical ballad ‘Barphukanar Git’, when the Barphukan or Viceroy of Guwahati has to flee suddenly in order to escape the wrath of the Prime Minister of the land, and his wife expresses her sorrow vividly. In the words of Prabhulladatta Goswami:

*I no longer put on my bangles...
I shall pull off my gold necklace...* (1982: 21).

Therefore, women are supposed to be projected through the male gaze and become the object of commodity. According to Patricia Uberoi, “Women have become objects or things to be appropriated, possessed and exchanged in the social relations of cooperation and competition among men” (2007: WS41).

In any communicative genre, women are portrayed as the objects or commodities and represented as the objects of male desire. They become the sex symbols of the society. From earlier times the devaluation of women as sex objects and commodities has been done with the help of various representative genres. By commodifying women, such communicative genres limit the role and position of women in society. For instance:

*Keñcā bacā rihāre balāba pāro mai, kutkurā culi dekhi
bhāge.*

(Meaning: If a woman has curly hair, she will be rejected by society in spite of her abilities in other household chores.)

By abusing woman, society wants to show that if she lacks the normative criteria or if there is any deviation from the particular normative criteria, she should be regarded as disobedient. Her beauty depends on the male gaze, i.e., how the male members of the society wish to see her. The desires of the male members to observe the female members initiate all kinds of representation

and construction of womanhood in a society. In the words of Leela Dube:

Considerable importance is attached to the way a girl carries herself, the way she sits, stands and talks and interacts with others. A girl should walk with soft steps: so soft that they are barely audible to others. Taking long strides denotes masculinity...A girl has to be careful about her postures...To establish her feminine identity; a young girl should avoid masculine demeanour and behavior. (2008: WS16)

An Assamese proverb can be cited in this context:

*Akāji tirotār tinitā gun, khojar terā-bekā, mātar
henāhucā, bhātar domādom.*

(Meaning: An unskilled woman has three features—winding gait, indistinct speech and a ravenous appetite.)

To conclude, proverbs are commonly considered to be the creation of the masses and what is created by a group of people is usually full of common sense. It is important to know that the commonsensical knowledge is often constructed by the powerful section of society. Proverbs or any other literary genres can be used as the tool for establishing such knowledge. Women, who deviate from the stereotypical model of a society, are unfortunately regarded as the ‘other’ and such deviated women are then represented in literature, whether written or folk, as anomaly. Therefore, the female body and the feminine beauty are clear examples of constructing stereotypes in society. Regrettably, some proverbs become weapons used for disseminating such stereotypes.

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MARINUS A. VAN DEN BROEK

“EENMAAL IS GEEN MAAL, ZEI DE BRUID”:
SPRICHWORTPARODIEN UND PSEUDOSPRICHWÖRTER
IM NIEDERLÄNDISCHEN

Abstract: In this article the frequency and practice of proverb parodies and pseudo-proverbs in current Dutch are investigated. This research is based on a corpus of 635 proverbs and expressions taken from (dialect) dictionaries, literary texts, newspapers, magazines, advertising texts and related websites. In addition a number of items were provided by oral information. The endeavour to replace existing proverbs and expressions, according to the initiators difficult to comprehend for today's generation, with new ones has been heavily criticised.

Keywords: anti-proverbs, frequency, Dutch, pseudo-proverbs, practice, weather sayings, wellerisms.

Sprichwörter sind, wie es der niederländische Dichter Jacob Cats (1577-1660) in seiner Sprichwörtersammlung *Spiegel van den ouden en nieuwe tyt* (1632) ausdrückt, “die Töchter der täglichen Erfahrung.”¹ Sie erfreuen sich, vor allem bei der älteren Generation, immer noch einer großen Beliebtheit und werden gern im mündlichen wie im schriftlichen Sprachgebrauch verwendet. Aber Worte, die oft zitiert werden, unterliegen auf die Dauer einem gewissen Verschleiß. Sie verlieren ihre Aussagekraft und geraten häufig in die Schusslinie des Sprachparodisten. Das gilt auch für viele Sprichwörter, die jahrhundertelang als unumstößliche Wahrheiten galten. Ihr belehrender und manchmal altväterlicher Charakter passt nicht mehr zu unserer modernen Gesellschaft. Man empfindet sie deshalb als altmodisch und zieht ihren Wahrheitsgehalt – zu Recht oder zu Unrecht – in Zweifel. Sie kommen außer Gebrauch und werden parodiert oder sogar in ihr Gegenteil verwandelt. Damit entstehen neue Sprichworttypen wie die *Sprichwortparodie* oder das *Antisprichwort*, und das *Pseudosprichwort*. Zur ersten Gruppe gehören auch die sogenannten

Sagwörter, soweit das Diktum ein allgemein übliches Sprichwort darstellt.

Die vor zwanzig Jahren von dem polnischen Niederlandisten Stanisław Prędota gemachte Feststellung, dass das Interesse für niederländische Antisprichwörter sehr bescheiden sei, ist auch heute noch gültig.² Das beweist die Tatsache, dass es bisher nur ganz wenige Sammlungen solcher Sprichwörter und ebensolcher Redensarten gibt. Prędota nennt die beiden Anthologien des belgischen Lexikographen Gerd de Ley³ und in seinem Artikel über niederländische Antisprichwörter im Internet mehrere Web-sites, die zahlreiche Verhaspelungen und Verdrehungen von Sprichwörtern und Redensarten enthalten, in weitaus den meisten Fällen jedoch wenig oder gar nichts mit Antisprichwörtern zu tun haben.⁴

Als Grundlage für den vorliegenden Artikel diente ein Korpus, das 635 Antisprichwörter und Antiredensarten enthält, die unter anderem den gängigen Sprichwörtersammlungen und Dia-lektwörterbüchern entnommen wurden. Weitere Belege lieferten Tageszeitungen, Zeitschriften, Werbetexte, Schriftsteller, Rund-funksprecher und Fernsehmoderatoren. Außerdem wurden viele Items aus dem Internet aufgezeichnet oder von Informanten beige-steuert. Die Tatsache, dass der Informantenkreis sich aus Ange-hörigen der verschiedenen Bevölkerungsschichten zusammensetzt, widerlegt die These des niederländischen Soziologen Turksma, dass das Phänomen der Antisprichwörter nicht von großer Be-deutung sei, weil es sich nur in intellektuellen Kreisen mani-festiere und nicht zum Gemeingut aller Sprachteilhaber gehöre, eine Auffassung, zu der sich u.a. auch der Lexikograph Heinz Cox bekennt.⁵ Solche Annahmen unterschätzen die sprachschöp-ferischen Kräfte, wie sie vor allem in den peripheren Bereichen der gesprochenen Sprache walten.

Während die bereits erwähnten Untersuchungen von Prędota sich in der Hauptsache auf die phonischen Aspekte zur Bildung von Sprichwörtern und Redensarten richten, werden hier vor allem die Thematik und die Verwendungsmöglichkeiten erörtert.

Den im Folgenden aufgeführten niederländischen Sprich-wörtern wird das deutschsprachige Äquivalent in Klammern hinzugefügt. Falls ein solches nicht existiert, folgt eine möglichst wortgetreue deutsche Übersetzung.

Manches Antisprichwort entsteht spontan im täglichen Sprachgebrauch und bezieht sich häufig auf Themen und Erscheinungen, die im alltäglichen Leben eine mehr oder weniger wichtige Rolle spielen, wie etwa Liebe, Sexualität und Alkohol. „Die Liebe und der Suff reiben den Menschen uff“, heißt es im deutschen Volksmund, und die Vielzahl der diesbezüglichen (Anti-)Sprichwörter und Redensarten erhärtet diesen Befund ebenfalls für den niederländischen Sprachraum.⁶

Dass solche Parömién sowohl sprachlich als inhaltlich oft einen ziemlich derben Charakter tragen, ist angesichts der angesprochenen Materie nur selbstverständlich. So wird das Sprichwort *Beter hard geblazen dan de mond gebrand* (Besser blasen als sich verbrennen) in den nicht gerade feinfühligen Ratschlag *Beter goed getrokken dan slecht geslapen* (Besser tüchtig wachsen als schlecht schlafen) umgewandelt, während der von der Behauptung *Dromen zijn bedrog* (Träume sind Schäume) enttäuschte Schläfer aus der These *Natte dromen zijn geen bedrog* (Feuchte Träume sind keine Schäume) wieder neuen Mut schöpfen mag.

Ausgesprochen derb und nicht gerade frauenfreundlich ist die auf den Sexualbereich übertragene Variante des Sprichworts *Het oog van de meester maakt het paard vet* (Das Auge des Herrn macht das Pferd fett), nämlich *De hand van de meester maakt de poes nat* (Die Hand des Herrn macht die Möse feucht).

Men moet de dag niet prijzen voor het avond is (Man soll den Tag nicht vor dem Abend loben) ist eine Warnung, die durch Auswechslung des Objekts und in neuer zeitlicher Perspektive auch dem just vermählten Bräutigam gelten mag, wie die Parodie *Men moet de bruid niet prijzen voor het ochtend is* (Man soll die Braut nicht vor dem nächsten Morgen loben) zeigt. Dass es auch Bräute gibt, die sich erwartungsgemäß verhalten, beweist das Sprichwort *Eenmaal is geen maal, zei de bruid* (Einmal ist keinmal, sprach die Braut).

Een goede buur is beter dan een verre vriend (Ein guter Nachbar in der Not ist besser als ein ferner Freund über Land) ist eine Wahrheit, die unter Umständen auch auf die Nachbarin und die getrennt wohnende Lebensgefährtin zutreffen dürfte, oder wie es das Antisprichwort ausdrückt: *Een willige buurvrouw is beter dan een verre vriendin* (Eine willige Nachbarin ist besser als eine ferne Freundin).

Die Worte Salomonis *Wie de roede spaart, haat zijn kind* (Wer die Rute schont, hasst seinen Sohn) werden sogar zweimal abgewandelt, wobei die vulgärsprachliche Bedeutung des Schlüsselworts den Sinngehalt dieser Weisheit jeweils ins Erotische überführt, nämlich: *Wie de roede spaart, haat zijn vrouw* oder *maakt geen kind* (Wer die Rute schont, hasst seine Frau bzw. macht kein Kind). Im letzteren Fall lässt der Spruch *Oefening baart kinderen* (Übung macht Kinder) dagegen einen positiveren Ton hören.

Manchmal werden bestehende Sprichwörter als Bestandteil eines apologischen Sprichworts zur Rechtfertigung eines tadelnswerten Verhaltens eingesetzt. So wird der Seitensprung des Ehebrechers mit den Worten *Verandering van spijs doet eten, zei de boer, en hij ging met de meid naar bed* (Abwechslung macht Appetit, sprach der Bauer, und er ging mit der Magd ins Bett) entschuldigt. Dass der Fremdgänger dabei nichts überstürzt und sich Zeit nimmt, wird mit dem Spruch *Goede dingen moeten tijd hebben, zei de boer, en hij viel bovenop de meid in slaap* (Gut Ding will Weile haben, sprach der Bauer, und er schlief auf der Magd ein) motiviert. Aber nicht nur der Landwirt, sondern auch der Wissenschaftler vermag sein nicht immer einwandfreies Benehmen sprichwörtlich zu begründen, denn *Alle goede dingen bestaan in drieën, zei de seksuoloog, en hij ging met de moeder en de dochter naar bed* (Aller guten Dinge sind drei, sprach der Sexologe, und er ging mit der Mutter und der Tochter ins Bett).

Dass Enthaltsamkeit in dieser Hinsicht auch ihre Vorteile haben kann, beweist das Adagium der alten Jungfer, die sich ihre Keuschheit immer bewahrt hat: *Wie wat bewaart, die heeft wat, zei het oude vrouwtje, en ze was al tachtig jaar maagd* (Wer spart, hat morgen etwas, sprach das alte Weib, und sie war schon achtzig Jahre Jungfrau).

Wer sich dennoch sexuell betätigen möchte, sollte niemals die Rationalität aus den Augen verlieren. *Het verstand komt na het paren* (Der Verstand kommt nach der Paarung) lehrt die Erfahrung, und unüberlegtes Handeln dürfte in solchen Fällen unverhoffte Folgen haben. Dass solche Risiken dennoch manchmal in Kauf genommen werden, zeigt das Sagwort *Waar gehakt wordt, vallen spaanders, sprak het meisje, toen ze een kind kreeg* (Wo gehobelt wird, fallen Späne, sagte das Mädchen, als sie ein Kind bekam). Von entwaffnender Leichtherzigkeit in erotischen An-

gelegenheiten zeugen die Worte *Zo gewonnen, zo geronnen, zei het meisje, toen ze haar maagdelijkheid verloor* (Wie gewonnen, so geronnen, sprach das Mädchen, als sie ihre Jungfräulichkeit verlor).

Heiratslustige Paare, sollten sich eine Eheschließung wohl überlegen, denn: *Liefde is blind, maar het huwelijk is een eye-opener* (Liebe macht blind, aber die Ehe ist ein Augenöffner). Dass man in der Liebe nicht selten unangenehme Erfahrungen machen kann, gilt übrigens nicht nur für Menschen, wie das folgende Sprichwort lehrt: *Geen rozen zondern doornen, zei de haas, toen hij met het egeltje vrije* (Keine Rose ohne Dornen, sagte der Hase, als er mit dem Igel knutschte).

Der Herd gilt seit altersher als Mittelpunkt des Hauses und hat damit eine zentrale Bedeutung für Haus und Familie.⁷ Der selbst-versorgende Biertrinker setzt da andere Prioritäten und verworitet seine Sehnsucht nach häuslichem Glück und Geselligkeit mit dem Sprichwort *Eigen tap is goud waard* (Eigener Zapfhahn ist Goldes wert). Der Mensch lebt nicht nur von Hoffnung, sondern nach Ansicht vieler Bierfreunde auch vom Hopfen, eine Überzeugung, die durch die Behauptung *Hop doet leven* (Der Mensch lebt vom Hopfen) unterstützt wird.

Een spin in de morgen geeft kommer en zorgen (Spinne am Morgen, Gram und Sorgen) sagt der Volkmund. Biertrinker und Junkies halten wenig von solchen Prophezeiungen. Sie bekunden ihre Lust am Leben mit dem Wahlspruch *Een pint / joint in de morgen geeft een dag zonder zorgen* (Ein Bier / Ein Joint am Morgen, ein Tag ohne Sorgen). Der Skeptiker ist dagegen überzeugt, dass es auch noch andere Werte gibt, und bekennt sich zu der Einsicht *De mens leeft niet van bier alleen* (Der Mensch lebt nicht von Bier allein). Das hier zugrundeliegende Sprichwort wird auch als Entschuldigung für ein erotisches Fehlverhalten verwendet: *De mens leeft niet van brood alleen, zei de pastoor, en hij ging naar een seksclub* (Der Mensch lebt nicht vom Brot allein, sprach der Pfarrer, und er ging ins Freudenhaus). Dass es im geistlichen Bereich überhaupt nicht immer mit rechten Dingen zugeht, zeigt das Beispiel des geldgierigen Seelsorgers: *Veel kinderen, veel zegen, zei de pastoor, en hij stak het doopgeld in zijn zak* (Viel Kinder, viel Segen, sprach der Pfarrer, und er steckte das Taufgeld in die eigene Tasche), oder das Benehmen der frivolen Begine: *Gemak voor eer, zei de begijn, en ging op het bed*

van de pater liggen (Bequemlichkeit geht vor Ehre, sprach die Begine, und sie legte sich in das Bett des Paters). Ausgesprochen zynisch ist wohl die Warnung *Als de pater de passie preekt, broer, pas op je broekje!* (Wenn der Pater die Passion predigt, Bub', pass auf dein Höschen auf!).

Wer Wein trinkt, sollte immer auf die Qualität achten. Was nämlich unter Umständen für die oben erwähnte Braut gilt, hat auch für den Rebensaft seine Gültigkeit: *Men moet de wijn niet prijzen voor het ochtend is* (Man soll den Wein nicht vor dem nächsten Morgen loben). Außerdem kann sich der Alkoholkonsum nachteilig auf die Manneskraft auswirken, denn *Als de wijn is in de man is de potentie in de kan* (Ist der Wein im Manne, ist die Potenz in der Kanne). Trotzdem schlagen viele, namentlich jugendliche Trinker solche Warnungen in den Wind und sprechen, vor allem wenn die mütterliche Kontrolle fehlt, dem Alkohol tüchtig zu. Daher die sprichwörtliche Feststellung *Als moeder van huis is, komt de fles op tafel* (Wenn die Mutter aus dem Haus ist, kommt die Flasche auf den Tisch). Wer jedoch das rechte Maß einhält, braucht sich keine Sorgen zu machen. Eine Schwalbe macht noch keinen Sommer, das heißt in diesem Zusammenhang: *Een borrel maakt nog geen dronkenschap* (Ein Schnäpschen macht noch keinen Rausch). Und dass der Alkohol nicht nur negative Wirkungen hat, beweist das Antisprichwort *Drank heelt alle wonden* (Der Alkohol heilt alle Wunden).

Die gleiche segensreiche Wirkung hat das Geld. Daher die Variante *Geld heelt alle wonden*. Wer Reichtum zu erwerben sucht, nimmt es nicht immer so genau mit den ethischen Prinzipien, sondern handelt nach dem Motto *Eerlijk duur het langst om rijk te worden* (Ehrlich währt am längsten, um reich zu werden). Und außerdem: *Geld stinkt niet, je moet er alleen een fijne neus voor hebben* (Geld stinkt nicht, man muss nur den richtigen Riecher dafür haben). Wenn beide Lebenspartner berufstätig sind, ist die steuerliche Belastung aber dementsprechend hoch, denn *Tweeverdieners op één kussen, daar slaapt de fiscus tussen* (Doppelverdiener auf einem Kissen, da liegt der Fiskus mitten dazwischen). Man sollte übrigens den Wert des Geldes sowieso nicht überschätzen: *Tijd is geld, maar vrije tijd is goud* (Zeit ist Geld, aber Freizeit ist Gold).

Das weibliche Geschlecht hat nicht nur im älteren, sondern auch im modernen Sprichwort oft kein günstiges Image. Das zeigt

sich ebenfalls in mehreren Antisprichwörtern, in denen das leider noch allzu oft bestehende negative Bild der Frau seine Bestätigung findet. So zeigt der Spruch *Niemand kan twee heren dienen, laat staan twee vrouwen* (Niemand kann zwei Herren dienen, geschweige denn zwei Frauen), dass es keineswegs immer leicht ist, es ihr recht zu machen, und wird der Entscheidungsprozess innerhalb der Ehegemeinschaft mit den Worten *De mens wikt, het mens beschikt* (Der Mensch denkt, das Mensch lenkt) charakterisiert. Manche Frau fürchtet sich vor dem Altwerden und versucht die Spuren des Verfalls – manchmal sogar mit einer gewissen Selbstironie – mithilfe kosmetischer Chirurgie zu beseitigen: *Hoe ouder, hoe gekker, zei het oude wif, en nam een facelift* (Je öller, je döller, sprach das alte Weib, und entschied sich für ein Facelifting). Dass Ehemänner nicht immer gut mit der Mutter der Ehepartnerin auskommen, beweisen nicht nur die vielen Schwiegermutter-Witze. Auch im Anti-Sprichwort kann eine solche Abneigung zum Ausdruck kommen: *Een gegeven paard moet men niet in de bek zien, zei Hannes, en hij keek de andere kant op toen zijn schoonmoeder gaapte* (Einem geschenkten Gaul sieht man nicht ins Maul, sprach Hannes, und er schaute weg, als seine Schwiegermutter gähnte).

Die sogenannten *weerspreuken* (Wetterregeln) – in früheren Zeiten eine wichtige Informationsquelle für den Landwirt – werden oft nicht mehr so ganz ernst genommen, weil sie sich nämlich trotz der Tatsache, dass sie auf jahrhundertelanger Erfahrung und Intuition beruhen, häufig widersprechen. So kann ein regnerischer Januar sowohl eine fruchtbare als auch eine schlechte Ernte prophezeien: *Valt in januari veel regen, dan brengt hij de vruchten veel zegen // In januari veel regen brengt de vruchten weinig zegen* (Fällt im Januar viel Regen, so bringt er den Früchten viel Segen//Im Januar viel Regen bringt den Früchten wenig Segen). Das Wetter im August wird sich, egal wie es aussieht, allemal günstig auf die Weinernte auswirken: *Geeft augustus zonneschijn, zeker krijgen we gouden wijn // In augustus regen geeft de wijnoogst zegen* (Gibt der August Sonnenschein, so kriegen wir sicher goldenen Wein//Im August Regen gibt der Weinernte Segen). Auch manchem Vogel ist in meteorologischer Hinsicht nicht ganz zu trauen. Man vergleiche: *Als de kwartel rusteloos slaat, weet dat het spoedig regenen gaat* (Wenn die Wachtel rastlos schlägt, so weiß man, dass es bald regnen wird)

mit *De vaak herhaalde kwartelslag voorspelt de boer een droge dag* (Der oft wiederholte Wachtelschlag prophezeit dem Bauern einen trocknen Tag).

Im Hinblick auf solche Widersprüchlichkeiten ist es daher nicht verwunderlich, dass die Richtigkeit dieser Sprüche oft in Zweifel gezogen wird. Infolgedessen entstehen dann Pseudosprichwörter, wie etwa die überraschende Prophezeiung *Als het regent in maart komt er water in de vaart* (Wenn es regnet im März, fällt das Wasser in den Graben), oder *Valt de regen in het huis, dan is het met het dak niet pluis* (Fällt der Regen in das Haus, so ist es mit dem Dach nicht ganz geheuer). Ein hübsches Beispiel ist weiter die bemerkenswerte Feststellung *Groen op de sloot en rijp op de daken hebben geen moer met elkaar te maken* (Entengrün in dem Graben und Reif auf den Dächern haben absolut nichts miteinander zu tun). Ebenso wie bei der deutschsprachigen Wettervorhersage *Wenn der Hahn kräht auf dem Mist, ändert sich das Wetter oder es bleibt wie es ist*, zeigt sich der absolute Unglaube an den Wahrheitsgehalt dieser Weisheiten in der niederländischen Entsprechung *Kwaakt de kikker in het riet, dan gaat het regenen of niet* (Quakt der Frosch im Schilfrohr, so wird es regnen oder nicht). Aber auch bestehende Wettersprüche werden ad absurdum geführt, wie etwa das Sprichwort *Brengt januari ons strenge vorst, dan lijden we 's zomers geen honger en dorst* (Bringt der Januar uns starken Frost, dann haben wir im Sommer keinen Hunger oder Durst), dessen zweiter Teil in *dan eten we boerenkool met worst* (dann essen wir Winterkohl mit Wurst) verwandelt wird.

Der Gedanke, dass manches Sprichwort nicht mehr als zeitgemäß zu betrachten sei, bildet den Anlass zu der Initiative von zwei niederländischen Kommunikationswissenschaftlern, alte Sprichwörter in einem neuen Outfit zu präsentieren. Weil mancher die Bildersprache vieler Sprichwörter nach Ansicht dieser Initiatoren heute nicht mehr begreift, ist es notwendig geworden, zeitgerechte Varianten zu entwickeln. Das versuchen sie nun mit Hilfe einer eigenen Website⁸ und durch die Anwendung moderner Kommunikationsmittel wie Twitter und Facebook, mit denen sie möglichst viele Niederländer zur Erfindung solcher neuen Sprichwörter anregen möchten. Auf diese Weise entstehen zwar keine Antisprichwörter, sondern neue Gebilde, welche die im alten Sprichwort enthaltene Aussage gleichsam in einer neuen Hülle erscheinen.

nen lassen. Wie die folgenden Beispiele zeigen, handelt es sich dabei um gekünstelte Formen, die sich keineswegs mit den bestehenden, meist organisch im Volksmund gewachsenen Sprichwörtern vergleichen lassen, weshalb man sie in gewissem Sinne ebenfalls als Pseudosprichwörter bezeichnen dürfte.

So wird das Sprichwort *De gestage drup holt de steen uit* (Steter Tropfen höhlt den Stein) ersetzt durch den Spruch *Wie lang genoeg in de file blijft staan, komt vanzelf een keer aan* (Wer lange genug im Stau stehen bleibt, gelangt zwangsläufig einmal ans Ziel), eine Formulierung, die dem im Original enthaltenen Gedanken eigentlich nicht gerecht wird und außerdem die Prägnanz des Originals entbehrt. Formal besser, aber sinngemäß wiederum nicht korrekt ist ein Ersatz für das Sprichwort *Men moet de huid niet verkopen voordat de beer geschoten is* (Man soll den Pelz nicht verteilen, ehe der Bär geschossen ist), nämlich *Je moet je mobiel-tje niet verkopen voordat je abonnement is afgelopen* (Du sollst dein Handy nicht verkaufen, bevor das Abonnement erloschen ist). Statt der altbewährten Volksweisheit *Zachte heelmeesters maken stinkende wonden* (Weichliche Ärzte machen faule Wunden) soll nun die neue Variante *Slappe ouders maken moeilijke kinderen* (Lasche Eltern machen schwierige Kinder) eingeführt werden, weil die heutige Generation – so glaubt wenigstens der Schöpfer dieser Novität – das Wort *heelmeester* (Feldscher) nicht mehr versteht. Das gleiche Argument wird vorgebracht für die Umwandlung des aus dem 17. Jahrhundert stammenden Sprichworts *Om der wille van de smeer likt de kat de kandeleer* (Die Katze leckt den Topf der Milch wegen), weil nicht jedermann die Bedeutung von *smeer* (tierisches Fett) und *kandeleer* (Kandelaber) noch kennen würde. Die vorgeschlagene, allerdings hochaktuelle Alternative lautet *Puur voor de poen geeft de loverboy haar een zoen* (Nur wegen der Kohle gibt der Loverboy ihr einen Kuss).

Obwohl es zahlreiche Reaktionen auf das Bestreben der beiden Sprichwortreformer gibt – so werden auf ihrer Website für das obenerwähnte *Men moet de huid niet verkopen voordat de beer geschoten is* 58 Alternativen aufgeführt(!) – ist es angesichts des oft gekünstelten und manchmal holprigen Charakters dieser Neubildungen mehr als fraglich, ob sie im täglichen Sprachgebrauch Anklang finden oder sich gar durchsetzen werden.

Viele Sprichwörter und Redensarten – in unserem Korpus handelt es sich um 116 (18%) Fälle – weisen mehr als eine Variante auf, wie schon im Vorangehenden sichtbar wurde (*Men moet de bruid/de wijn niet prijzen voor het ochtend is; Wie de roede spaart, haat zijn vrouw/maakt geen kind; Een pint/joint in de morgen geeft een dag zonder zorgen; Drank/geld heelt alle wonden*). Die Zahl der Abwandlungen variiert von zwei bis siebzehn, wobei das Sprichwort *Ieder zijn meug!* (Jeder nach seinem Geschmack) die größte Variationsbreite zeigt. Weitere, mehr als zehn Varianten aufweisende Sprichwörter sind *Liefde is blind* (14), *Eerlijk duurt het langst* (13), *Wie het laatst lacht, lacht het best* (12) und *Waar een wil is, is een weg* (12). Zur Illustrierung eines solchen Variantenreichtums folgt eine Auflistung der Varianten zum Sprichwort *Liefde is blind* (Liebe macht blind):

- Liefde is blind, doof en sprakeloos* (Liebe macht blind, taub und sprachlos)
- Liefde is blind, haat niet minder* (Liebe macht blind, Hass nicht weniger)
- Liefde is blind, maar de buren niet* (Liebe ist blind, die Nachbarn aber nicht)
- Liefde is blind, maar het huwelijk is een eye-opener* (Liebe macht blind, aber die Ehe ist ein Augenöffner)
- Liefde is blind, maar je schoonmoeder niet* (Liebe ist blind, die Schwiegermutter aber nicht)
- Liefde is blind, zei de boer, en hij kuste zijn kalf door een doornhaag* (Liebe macht blind, sprach der Bauer, und er küsste sein Kalb durch eine Dornenhecke hindurch)
- Liefde is blind, zei de boer, en hij kuste zijn kalf op haar gat* (Liebe macht blind, sprach der Bauer, und er küsste sein Kalb auf den Hintern)
- Liefde is blind, zei de vrouw, en ze kuste een nuchter kalf* (Liebe macht blind, sagte die Frau, und sie küsste ein Milchkalb)
- Liefde is blind, zei Marian, en kuste het paard van de groenteman* (Liebe macht blind, sprach Marian, und küsste das Pferd vom Gemüsemann)
- Liefde maakt blind, eigenliefde het meest* (Liebe macht blind, Eigenliebe am meisten)

Liefde maakt blind en niet zelden een kind (Liebe macht blind und nicht selten ein Kind)

Liefde maakt blind, maar wel gelukkig (Liebe macht blind, aber glücklich)

Liefde maakt niet blind, maar wel kortzichtig (Liebe macht nicht blind, aber kurzsichtig)

Liefde mag dan blind zijn, maar in het donker vindt ze de weg wel (Liebe mag blind sein, aber im Dunkeln findet sie schon den Weg)

Fast 22% der 635 Antisprichwörter erscheinen in der Gestalt eines Sagwortes, wobei der Bauer in 25 Fällen die Rolle des Sprechers übernimmt und meistens als Prototyp des dummen oder primitiven Menschen dasteht. Eine ebenso große Anzahl redender Figuren wird durch Vor- oder Familiennamen dargestellt. Im Weiteren kommen die Frau, das Mädchen, die Magd, der Junge, der Teufel und die verschiedensten Berufe, wie etwa Bäcker, Chirurg, Hausierer, Pastor, Pilot, Riemenschneider, Schiffer oder Sexologe, vor. Außerdem treten in 12 Fällen sogar Tiere als Sprecher auf. Dieser Befund deckt sich im Großen und Ganzen mit der Rollenverteilung in den im Niederdeutschen vorhandenen Sagwörtern, was wegen der engen Verwandtschaft beider Sprachen nicht zu verwundern ist.⁹

In mehr als 10% aller im Korpus vorhandenen Sprichwörter und Redensarten spielen die Frau, die Magd oder das Mädchen die Hauptrolle und zwar, wie bereits oben ausgeführt wurde, fast immer im negativen Sinne.

Was die inhaltliche Substanz betrifft, so sind mehr als 20 Prozent der Antisprichwörter dem erotischen Bereich zuzuordnen, während 9% sich auf den Alkoholkonsum und dessen negative oder vermeintlich positive Wirkungen beziehen. Damit machen diese Parömien fast ein Drittel des gesamten Korpus aus. Im Übrigen werden alle möglichen Themen oder menschliche Eigenschaften und Unzulänglichkeiten wie etwa Dummheit, Einfältigkeit, Eitelkeit, Geldgier, Eifersucht, Neid und Untreue angesprochen.

Anmerkungen

¹ M.A. van den Broek, *De Spreekwoorden van Jacob Cats*. Antwerpen/Rotterdam 1998, S. 134

² S. Prędota, *Over de vorming van Nederlandse antisprekwoorden* (in: *Neerlandica Wratislaviensis VII*, 1994), S. 217

³ G. de Ley, *Al te zoet is buurvrouws bed*. Antwerpen/Amsterdam 1974, und *Eeuwig duurt het langst*. Helmond /Antwerpen 1981

⁴ Vgl. S. Prędota, *Phonische Mittel bei niederländischen Antisprichwörtern im Internet* (in: *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 52/1, 2007), S. 236

⁵ Vgl. L. Turksma, *Over spreekwoorden en uitdrukkingen. Een inleiding tot de paremiologie*². Zoetermeer 2005, S. 25 und H.L. Cox, *Spreekwoordenboek in zes talen*. Utrecht/Antwerpen 1994, S. 370f.

⁶ Vgl. M.A. van den Broek, *Alcoholisch Spreekwoordenboek. Spreekwoorden, zegswijzen en zeispreuken in alcoholisch perspectief*. Amsterdam/Antwerpen 2000, und *Erotisch Spreekwoordenboek*. Amsterdam/Antwerpen 2002

⁷ Vgl. H. Bächtold-Stäubli, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Berlin 1931, Sp. 1764f.

⁸ www.paarsekrokodillentranten.nl

⁹ Vgl. etwa I. Simon, *Sagwörter. Plattdeutsche Sprichwörter aus Westfalen*. Münster 1988, S. 14f.

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“HE WHO LIVES IN A GLASS HOUSE SHOULD NOT THROW STONES”: NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV’S PROVERBIAL SPEECHES AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Abstract: Premier Nikita Khrushchev’s two visits to the United States in 1959 – 1960 were a historical event due to the fact that it was the first time that the Soviet leader arrived in America. People from all over the world focused on his personality as well as his behavior and manner of speaking. Khrushchev’s fondness for the simple peasant phrase was one of his most striking features that was frequently demonstrated in unofficial talks as well as in different formal settings. Considering the fact that little is known about the use of pithy folk sayings by the Russian politician at the United Nations, the paper aims to examine Khrushchev’s proverbial rhetoric in this official environment.

Keywords: Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet Union, the United Nations, proverb, proverbial expression, proverbial speech, rhetoric.

Although every language has its thesaurus of proverbs, the employment of these succinct words of wisdom by individuals can be highly varied. Whereas some people use them on a regular basis in different situations, others try to avoid the utilization of adages in certain settings or prefer not to apply them at all, considering them as vulgar sayings inappropriate for educated intellectuals.¹ Internationally acknowledged paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder questioned the assumption that proverbs are more applicable for common parlance of everyday communication than for any formal environment. In a number of celebrated books and seminal articles, the scholar provided much evidence that some well-known erudite public figures were masterful employers of proverbs in their political speeches as well as in their writings.² As pointed out by Mieder (2012b), “even debates in the United Nations are often interspersed with proverbs which can become verbal weapons that are difficult to argue against” (p. 31). It must be stressed, however, that very little research has

been done on the proverbial rhetoric of individual politicians at the United Nations.³

There is some scholarship on the use of proverbs by such Soviet/Russian leaders as Vladimir Illich Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, and Mikhail Gorbachev.⁴ While Nikita Khrushchev's inclination towards the employment of proverbs and proverbial expressions has been noticed and paid some attention to⁵, there is merely a very short study that refers to his use of a variety of proverbial texts, but there are no textual examples, and the proverbial matters have not been scrutinized yet. Thus, this gap in the research needs to be filled, and the present article focuses on the peculiarities of Nikita Khrushchev's proverbial speeches at the sessions of the UN General Assembly in 1959 – 1960.⁶

A few comments about the terminology used in this paper are in order. First, while debate exists regarding a precise definition of a proverb (Whiting, 1932; Taylor, 1931; Gallacher, 1959; Mieder, 2012a), for the purpose of this article, a proverb is defined as "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, 2012a, p. 3). Second, in his landmark study, Grigorii L'vovich Permyakov, the greatest Russian paremiologist, underlined the importance to distinguish between two concepts: the Russian *poslovitsy* (proverbs) and *pogovorki* (proverbial phrases/expressions). The scholar pinpointed that "for the most part, the term *pogovorki* is used to refer to allegoric sayings expressing 'an incomplete statement', whereas *poslovitsy* refers to allegoric sentences formulating 'a complete statement'" (Permyakov, 1979, p. 9). Finally, such a proverbial subgenre as proverbial comparisons should be mentioned. According to Mieder (2012a), proverbial comparisons are "fragmentary and for the most part metaphorical phrases that must be integrated into a sentence" (p. 13) and are based on a verbal comparison with "like" or "as".

Being born in a peasant family, Nikita Khrushchev (1894 – 1971) was frequently exposed to a plethora of "folk nuggets of wisdom" that were always popular among Russian common people. According to Taubman (2003), "Khrushchev's speech was as pungent as the earth, filled with tangy proverbs" (p. 28),

when he communicated with peasants. That is why these pithy sayings became quite certainly part of Nikita Khrushchev's political rhetoric at the time when he held the position of Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR (1958 – 1964), and he has certainly left a considerable legacy of proverbial wit and wisdom in his speeches at the United Nations.

On September 18, 1959, the Soviet leader delivered a speech that was replete with quite a number of various adages. For instance, in his comment on the problem of joining Taiwan to the Chinese People's Republic, the medieval proverb "the sooner, the better" (DAP, p. 552)⁷ / "чем раньше это будет сделано, тем лучше" in the slightly different wording: "the sooner it is done, the better" was used as the speaker's advice not to delay the annexation:

After all, China is not Taiwan. Taiwan is only a small island, a province, that is. A small part of a great state, China. China is the Chinese People's Republic, which has ten years now been developing rapidly, which has a stable government recognized by the entire Chinese people, and legislative bodies elected by the entire people of China. China is a great state whose capital is Peking. Sooner or later Taiwan, as an inalienable part of the sovereign Chinese State, will be united with the whole of People's China, that is, the authority of the Government of the People's Republic of China will be extended to this island. And the sooner it is done, the better. (*Khrushchev in America*, 1960, p. 71)

Ведь Китай – это совсем не Тайвань – это всего лишь небольшой остров, провинция, то есть небольшая часть великого государства – Китая. Китай – это Китайская Народная Республика, которая вот уже 10 лет развивается быстрыми темпами, которая имеет свое прочное, признанное всем китайским народом правительство, имеет избранные всем народом Китая законодательные органы. Китай – это великое государство, столицей которого является Пекин. Рано или поздно Тайвань, как неотъемлемая часть суверенного китайского государства, будет объединен со всем народным Китаем, то есть на этот остров будет

распространена власть правительства Китайской Народной Республики. И чем раньше это будет сделано, тем лучше. (Khrushchev, 1961, p. 147)

In the same speech, Khrushchev made a general statement, alluding to the sixteenth-century proverb “deeds, not words” (DAP, p. 141), employed in its variant: “by deeds, and not just words”/ “не только словами, но и делами” to underscore the significance of the efforts undertaken by the USSR to deal with the problem of disarmament:

All peoples need peace. Following the conclusions of the Second World War, the Soviet Union submitted concrete disarmament proposals to the United Nations. We proposed the complete prohibition of atomic weapons, a substantial reduction of armed forces and armaments, and a steep cut in arms expenditures. We urged the dismantling of military bases on foreign territory and the withdrawal of armed forces from foreign territories.

We have proved our desire to solve the disarmament problem by deeds, and not just words. Time and again the Soviet Union has taken the initiative and undertaken concrete steps towards ending the arms race and getting down with all speed to practical disarmament measures. Immediately after the end of the war, our country carried out an extensive demobilization of its armed forces. The Soviet Union has given up all the military bases it had after the Second World War on the territory of other states. (Khrushchev in America, 1960, p. 79)

Мир нужен всем народам. Когда закончилась Вторая мировая война, Советский Союз выступил в Организации Объединенных Наций с конкретными предложениями по разоружению. Мы предложили полностью запретить атомное оружие, существенно сократить вооруженные силы и вооружения, резко сократить расходы на вооружение. Мы выступили за ликвидацию иностранных военных баз на чужих территориях и за отвод вооруженных сил государств с иностранных территорий.

Свое стремление к решению проблемы разоружения мы доказали не только словами, но и делами. Не раз Советский Союз проявлял инициативу и предпринимал конкретные шаги, направленные на то, чтобы положить конец гонке вооружений и как можно скорее приступить к осуществлению практических мер по разоружению. Сразу же после окончания войны в нашей стране была проведена широкая демобилизация вооруженных сил. Советский Союз полностью ликвидировал свои военные базы, которыми он располагал после Второй мировой войны на территории других государств. (Khrushchev, 1961, p. 156)

The next example is a telling one and centers around three instances of the application of proverbial language:

The distinguishing characteristic of a properly functioning international organ is that questions ought to be settled there not by a formal count of votes but by a reasonable and patient quest for a just solution acceptable to all. After all, one cannot expect countries against whose will an unjust decision is taken to agree to carry it out. It leaves a bitter taste in the mouth. Recall how many such instances there have been in the history of the United Nations! Therefore, the United Nations should pass only such decisions as all will vote for, seeing in them an expression of the common will and the common interest. Such decisions would be recognized as the only correct and the only possible ones both by our generations and by future historians.

Naturally, a group of states which at a given moment commands a majority can put through the decision it wants. But this is a Pyrrhic victory. Such "victories" injure the United Nations, they disrupt it.

It should also be borne in mind that in the voting of one question or another the majority in the United Nations is a variable quantity. It could change against those who today so often bank on the voting machine. As the Russian saying goes, "You reap what you sow." And so, the wisest and most far-sighted policy is one of seeking

jointly for mutually acceptable decisions stemming exclusively from concern for safeguarding world peace and noninterference in the internal affairs of other nations. (*Khrushchev in America*, 1960, pp. 85 – 86)

Особенность правильно действующего международного органа заключается в том, что здесь вопросы должны решаться не формальным подсчетом голосов, а путем разумных и терпеливых поисков справедливого решения, приемлемого для всех. Ведь нельзя себе представить, что государства, вопреки воле которых принимается несправедливое решение, согласились бы его выполнять. У них останется от этого горький осадок. Вспомните, сколько было таких случаев в истории Организации Объединенных Наций! Поэтому в ООН надо принимать только такие решения, за которые будут голосовать все, видя в них выражение общей воли, общих интересов. Такие решения были бы признаны как единственно правильные и единственно возможные нашим поколением и историками в будущем.

Конечно, группа государств, которая в данный момент располагает большинством, может добиться принятия выгодного ей решения. Но это будет «Пиррова победа». Такие «победы» наносят ущерб Организации Объединенных Наций, они разрушают ее.

Надо иметь также в виду, что большинство при голосовании тех или иных вопросов в ООН – это переменная величина, и она может измениться не в пользу тех, кто сейчас столь часто делает ставку на механизм голосования. Как говорят в русской пословице, «что посеешь, то и пожнешь». Таким образом, самая разумная и дальновидная политика – это политика совместных поисков взаимоприемлемых решений, продиктованных исключительно заботой об обеспечении мира во всем мире и невмешательстве во внутренние дела других государств. (Khrushchev, 1961, pp. 164 – 165)

Khrushchev utilized the varied proverbial expression “to leave a bitter taste in the mouth” (the standard form of the phrase is “to leave a bad/nasty taste in the mouth” (TTEM, p. 355)⁸/ “оставлять горький осадок”) and the classical phrase “Pyrrhic victory”/ “Пиррова победа” (GDRPE, p. 506)⁹. The latter alludes to the event in Roman history and “the exclamation of Pyrrhus after the battle of Asculum in 279 BC when he defeated the Romans at too high a cost, ‘One more such victory and we are lost.’” (TTEM, p. 413). Most likely, the purpose of using the proverbial phrases by the Soviet leader was to express his disagreement with the way of how decisions were made at the United Nations. In addition, the employment of the biblical proverb “You reap what you sow” (Gal. 6:7; DAP, p. 554) served as a prophetic statement, figuratively saying that the existing procedure of voting could be the origin of some problems in the future: the consequences of the actions undertaken by a group of countries from the so-called “capitalist camp”¹⁰ would depend entirely on the actions themselves. It is particularly noteworthy that Nikita Khrushchev referred to this biblical proverb as a Russian adage. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the proverb “You reap what you sow”/ “Что посеешь, то и пожнешь” obviously was quite current throughout Russia as the biblical loan proverb, having been registered in Ivan Snegiryov’s “Russian Proverbs and Parables” in 1848 (see Snegiryov [1999]), as well as later, in 1861, in the famous dictionary of Russian proverbs compiled by Vladimir Dal’ (1993). It is interesting to notice that, in his fascinating book *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era*, Taubman (2003) mentioned that Nikita Khrushchev’s mother was very religious, and “he even claimed, in a speech given in France in March 1960, to have been a ‘model pupil’ in religion” (p. 27). In that case, it is highly likely that the Soviet leader could be well aware of the biblical origin of the proverb “You reap what you sow”/ “Что посеешь, то и пожнешь”. However, the speaker called it a Russian adage, thus proving the fact that this pithy bit of biblical wisdom has certainly become a bona fide proverb in the “atheistic” Soviet Union, the Russian-speaking country.

In another passage of the same speech, Nikita Khrushchev used one more biblical proverbial text, namely, “the bottomless pit” (HBMFP, p. 1799)¹¹ as part of the colorful proverbial com-

parison “as into a bottomless pit”/ “как в бездонную бочку” (GDRC, p. 63)¹² to claim that it was not worth spending enormous valuable human resources on the arms race. The application of this saying definitely gave him an opportunity to communicate this complicated matter in a vivid and easy recognizable image:

It is well known, moreover, that the arms race is already a heavy burden on the peoples. It is causing rising prices on consumer goods, depressing real wages, harmfully affecting the economy of many states, disrupting international trade. Never before have so many states, such masses of people, been drawn into war preparations as present. If we consider, in addition to the military, the number of people directly or indirectly connected with the production of arms and involved in various forms of military research, we shall find that over 100 million people – and, moreover, the most capable and energetic workers, scientists, engineers – have been taken from their peaceful pursuits. A vast fund of human energy, knowledge, ingenuity and skill is being spilled as into a bottomless pit, consumed by the growing armaments. (*Khrushchev in America*, 1960, p. 78)

Кроме того, ведь это же хорошо известно, что гонка вооружений уже сейчас тяжелым бременем ложится на плечи народов. Она влечет за собой рост цен на предметы народного потребления, сокращение реальной заработной платы, пагубно влияет на экономику многих государств, расстраивает международную торговлю. История не знает, чтобы в военные приготовления вовлекалось такое число государств, такая масса людей, как в наши дни. Если к военнослужащим прибавить и тех, кто прямо или косвенно связан с производством вооружений и вовлечен в различные военные исследования, то окажется, что от мирного труда оторвано более 100 миллионов человек, причем наиболее энергичных и работоспособных людей труда, людей науки и техники. Огромное количество человеческой энергии, знаний, изо-

бретательности, мастерства падает, как в бездонную бочку, поглощается растущими вооружениями.
(Khrushchev, 1961, pp. 154 – 155)

In another speech delivered on September 23, 1960, Khrushchev argued against Henry Lodge's allegation that the Soviet proposals concerning the disarmament problem were obscure and unrealistic:

The experience of the work in the Ten Nation Committee showed that there arose difficulties in the negotiations in the Committee on practical problems of disarmament as a result of the unwillingness of the Western powers to solve the disarmament problem. The proposals of the Soviet Union submitted for consideration by the Ten Nation Committee are widely known and have been appreciated by world public opinion as clear and realistic. It is necessary to emphasize that they took into account some wishes and proposals of the Western powers. Nevertheless Mr. Lodge, the US representative in the United Nations Disarmament Commission, alleged that the Soviet Union was proposing buying a pig in a poke. In this case one may wonder whether Mr. Lodge, like the hero of oriental fairy tales, has not put himself into a poke which prevents him from seeing what is well seen and understood by all. (*Khrushchev in New York*, 1960, pp. 43 – 44)

Как показал опыт работы Комитета десяти государств, при переговорах в этом комитете по проблемам разоружения возникли трудности в результате нежелания западных держав решать проблему разоружения. Предложения Советского Союза, внесенные на рассмотрение Комитета десяти, широко известны, и они были оценены международной общественностью как совершенно ясные и вполне реальные. Надо подчеркнуть, что в них были учтены некоторые пожелания и предложения западных держав. Между тем представитель США в ООН по разоружению господин Лодж заявил, будто бы Советский Союз предлагает «купить кота в мешке». В таком случае сле-

дует спросить, не загнал ли господин Лодж сам себя, подобно герою восточных сказок в мешок, который мешает ему видеть то, что хорошо видят и понимают все? (Khrushchev, 1961, p. 319)

The Soviet leader cited the proverbial expression “to buy a pig in a poke” (MPPS, p. 489)¹³/ “купить кота в мешке” (GDRPE, p. 322) which originated with the French phrase “acheter chat en poche” (ERPD, p. 811)¹⁴ and means to gain something without being aware of its qualities or real value. Speculating on the situation, the speaker asked the sarcastic rhetorical question whether Mr. Lodge, the US representative in the United Nations Disarmament Commission, was himself like someone who had been put in a sack and was not able to see what was around him. In other words, Khrushchev implicitly criticized the US official for his “political blindness” because of his reluctance to recognize the value of the initiative taken by the Soviet Union.

In order to try to disarm his opponent, a representative of the USA, in the debate on the question of democracy in the capitalist and socialist countries (October 1, 1960), Premier Nikita Khrushchev applied the popular proverb “People who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones” (DAP, p. 253) with but a small change: “He who lives in a glass house should not throw stones.” The Russian variant “Чья бы корова мычала, а твоя молчала” (GDRP, p. 438)¹⁵, that is “Better let others’ cows bellow and your’s keep still” (CREDRPS, p. 363)¹⁶ with its earliest registration in the “Collection of 4291 Old Russian Proverbs” (as cited in Snegiryov, 1999) is still well known today and advises to “judge well yourself before you criticize” (CREDRPS, p. 363):

In America Negroes are lynched and hanged only because they are black. All the world knows this. This is the subject of books, of press reports. Turn to your history, representative of the United States! We bow our heads to Abraham Lincoln, the great American who raised the banner of the struggle for the liberation of the Negroes. He was an American and he fought against other Americans for the equality of peoples, for justice. But racial discrimination exists in the United States even today.

To this day in a number of localities in the United States Negro children cannot attend schools together with whites. Is this not a shame for a civilized society? And the United States representative designs to smear the truly democratic regime of the People's Republic of China, which is building socialism. In our country we have a saying in such cases which runs somewhat like this: "He who lives in a glass house should not throw stones. (*Khrushchev in New York*, 1960, pp. 123 – 124)

В Америке личуют и вешают негров только за то, что они черные. Это же знает весь мир. Об этом пишут книги, об этом сообщают в печати. Обратитесь к своей истории, представитель Соединенных Штатов! Мы преклоняемся перед Авраамом Линкольном, великим американцем, который поднял знамя борьбы за освобождение негров. Он был американец и воевал против других американцев за равенство между народами, за справедливость. Но и сейчас расовая дискриминация существует в Соединенных Штатах. До сих пор в ряде мест в Соединенных Штатах дети негров не могут учиться в школах вместе с белыми. Разве это не позор для цивилизованного общества? А представитель США берет на себя смелость клеветать на действительно демократический режим Китайской Народной Республики, которая строит социализм. У нас говорят в таких случаях: «Чья бы корова мычала, а твоя молчала». (Khrushchev, 1961, p. 403)

In yet another speech conducted on October 3, 1960, Nikita Khrushchev severely criticized Dag Hammarskjöld, the U.N. Secretary-General, for being pro-American as well as for his insufficient efforts towards the decolonization of Africa. He included the nineteenth-century proverb "It is the last straw that breaks the camel's back" (TTEM, p. 392) / "Чаша терпения переполнилась" (GDRP, p. 731) in its significantly varied form: "the last straw that has exhausted our patience"/ "последняя капля, которая переполнила чашу терпения," that is "the limit of controllable vexation" (TTEM, p. 392). The speaker did it in

order to add some expressiveness and colloquial color to his negative evaluation of Hammarskjöld's activities in the Congo:

Mr. Hammarskjöld has never been objective toward socialist countries; he has always defended the interests of the United States of America and other countries of monopoly capital. The developments in the Congo, where he played a most unseemly role, were but the last straw that has exhausted our patience. Indeed, had the composition of the Secretariat and the Security Council been different, no particular tense developments would have taken place in the Congo. The colonialists would not have dared to seize power again; and had they done so, the United Nations forces not only would have expelled them but would have created conditions for the normal functioning of the Parliament and government lawfully elected by the Congolese people. (*Khrushchev in New York*, 1960, p. 131)

Господин Хаммаршельд всегда был необъективен к социалистическим странам: он всегда защищал интересы Соединенных Штатов Америки и других стран монополистического капитала. События в Конго, где он сыграл просто скверную роль, – это лишь последняя капля, которая переполнила чашу терпения.

В самом деле, если бы был другой состав секретариата и Совета Безопасности, то никаких особо напряженных событий в Конго не произошло бы. Колонизаторы не решились бы вновь захватить власть, а если бы они это и сделали, то войска Организации Объединенных Наций не только выдворили бы их, но и создали условия для нормальной работы законно избранного конголезским народом парламента и правительства. (*Khrushchev*, 1961, p. 415)

On a number of occasions, the Soviet leader alluded to proverbial expressions in a playful manner that added much humor to his statements. The following instance (October 11, 1960) is one of them:

Among the speakers here were Mr. Greene, for Canada, and the United States representative – since his name is hard to pronounce I shan't do it in order not to get my tongue twisted. I think everyone will guess whom I mean without any mistake. They said that Khrushchev, you see, was also planning to leave. Yes, I am planning to leave for Moscow on Thursday, October 13, at midnight. But if you really want disarmament I will not only put off my departure for Moscow, but will confer here until a disarmament agreement is reached. (*Khrushchev in New York*, 1960, p. 195)

Здесь выступали господин Грин, представляющий Канаду, и представитель Соединенных Штатов – его фамилию произносить очень трудно, поэтому я не буду ее выговаривать, чтобы язык не сломать. Думаю, что никто не ошибется и догадается, о ком я говорю. Так вот, они говорили, что Хрущев, дескать, тоже собирается уезжать. Да, я собираюсь уехать в Москву в четверг, в 12 часов ночи, 13 октября. Но если вы действительно хотите разоружения, то я не только отложу свой отъезд в Москву, но буду заседать здесь до тех пор, пока не будет достигнуто соглашение о разоружении. (Khrushchev, 1961, p. 472)

The proverbial phrase “to get your tongue round it” (TTEM, p. 127) / “язык сломаешь” (GDRPE, p. 770) with but its small change: “to get my tongue twisted” was employed by Khrushchev to ironically explain why he could not articulate the name of the U.S. Representative to the United Nations James J. Wadsworth. Even though the English sounds [w] and [θ] could be quite a challenge for a Russian speaker to pronounce, it is plausible to consider the possibility that the Soviet Premier did not enounce the last name deliberately in order to prompt the listeners’ attention to his speech in such an original way.

Nikita Khrushchev appeared to be inclined to underscore his rhetoric with proverbial wisdom to strengthen his points and arguments. The following passage from his speech delivered on October 13, 1960, is a convincing illustration of it:

Before speaking on the question of the aggressive actions of the USA, for which the Chairman has given me the floor, I should like to say a few words as a reply. I, too am not deprived of that right, and I should like to make use of it. I want to say briefly and confirm the fact that the gentleman representing the Philippines is not a hopeless case; he does possess a rational kernel which may take root in his mind. He will come to understand things correctly and judge them correctly. But some time is probably needed for this. We have a saying, "Each vegetable ripens in its time." This gentleman is probably in the ripening stage right now. He will ripen, I think, and come to understand problems correctly. (*Khrushchev in New York*, 1960, p. 224)

Прежде чем начать свое выступление по вопросу об агрессивных действиях США, по которому мне предоставил слово господин председатель, я хотел бы сказать несколько слов в порядке ответа. Я тоже не лишен такого права и хочу им воспользоваться. Хочу кратко сказать и подтвердить, что господин, представляющий Филиппины, все-таки не безнадежный человек, и у него есть здравое зерно, которое может укрепиться в его сознании. Он будет понимать вещи правильно и иметь правильное суждение о них. Но для этого, видимо, нужно время. У нас есть такая пословица: «Каждому овощу – свое время». Так и этот господин, видимо, находится в процессе созревания. Думаю, что он созреет и правильно будет понимать вопросы. (Khrushchev, 1961, p. 493)

It should be noticed that the Russian proverb "Каждому овощу – своё время" (GDRP, p. 616)/ "Each vegetable ripens in its time" (the Latin conceptual corresponding proverb is "Everything has its time" [CREDRPS, p. 68]) can be used in many ways. According to Rosenthal (1952), this adage can be employed "to show contempt for a small country delegate whom the Soviet leader has branded a Western lackey, or to indicate patience and prudence on the part of the Russian speaker" (p.14). It is likely that in this particular situation, the Soviet leader chose the proverb to emphasize the point that the representative of the

Philippines might change his opinion on some vexing issues after a while. Moreover, it seems that Khrushchev made allowance for the man's "current inability" to be more understanding in viewing the current state of political affairs.

With a second occurrence in his speeches at the United Nations, the proverb "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones"/ "Чья бы корова мычала, а твоя молчала" can be considered a favorite leitmotif for Nikita Khrushchev:

The representative of the United States said that Khrushchev was wrong when he declared that the U-2 incident was the reason for the collapse of the conference of the heads of the four powers. He said that even prior to the conference the newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia* had come out sharply against the United States. He added that these were newspapers which did not express public opinion. Well, I should like to tell you that you are throwing stones even though you live in a glass house. In our country the press represents the people, while your press represents a handful of capitalists. He who has money in the United States can own newspapers. If the editor writes contrary to the wishes of the monopolists, he is fired, sent to the devil. And the United States representative is well aware of this. (*Khrushchev in New York*, 1960, pp. 230 – 231)

Представитель США сказал, что Хрущев не прав, заявляя, что инцидент с «У-2» послужил причиной срыва совещания глав четырех государств, что мол, еще до совещания газеты «Правда» и «Известия» выступали в резком тоне против Соединенных Штатов Америки. При этом он сказал, что это газеты, которые не выражают общественного мнения. Ну, знаете, я бы сказал вам, что чья бы корова мычала, а ваша молчала. У нас прессы представляет народ, а ваша прессы – кучку капиталистов. В Соединенных Штатах те, кто имеет деньги, те и владеют газетами. Если редактор будет писать не то, что хочет монополист, он его к чертовой бабушке со службы выгонит. Это хорошо знает представитель США. (Khrushchev, 1961, p. 505)

Once again the Soviet leader used this particular proverb, though in a varied form: “You are throwing stones even though you live in a glass house,” trying to disarm the USA representative in his argument about the problem of the mass media in the Soviet Union. In addition, Khrushchev applied the proverbial phrase “to send somebody to the devil” (ERPD, p. 287) / “к чёртовой бабушке” (GDPE, p. 23) to describe American monopolists’ cruel attitude towards people who would not obey their orders.

The Table below shows the number of proverbial texts employed by Nikita Khrushchev in his six speeches delivered at the United Nations:

Speech	Number of Proverbs	Number of Proverbial Expressions	Number of Proverbial Comparisons	Total Number of Proverbial Texts
1. September 18, 1959	3	6	2	11
2. September 23, 1960	0	8	0	8
3. October 1, 1960	1	4	1	6
4. October 3, 1960	1	1	0	2
5. October 11, 1960	0	5	0	5
6. October 13, 1960	2	3	0	5
Total Number	7	27	3	37

Thus, as can be seen in the Table, the Russian politician’s predilection for proverbial rhetoric is obvious. The provided data and the foregoing analyzed excerpts from Premier Nikita Khrushchev’s speeches at the United Nations convincingly prove the fact that the Soviet leader integrated the ready-made bits of folk wisdom in his official presentations on numerous occasions: in his six speeches, he incorporated 37 proverbial texts (7 proverbs, 27 proverbial expressions, and 3 proverbial comparisons). Eleven proverbial texts were utilized in Nikita Khrushchev’s first speech delivered on September 18, 1959, when he was so excited about his first visit to America and the opportunity to “speak

from the lofty tribune of the United Nations" (*Khrushchev in America*, 1960, p. 68) on behalf of the people of the Soviet Union. Among the most frequently used sayings were "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones" and "to send somebody to the devil." The contextualized proverbial references employed in his oral presentations were argumentative, didactic, explanatory, and highly emotional in nature. There is a good possibility that it was Nikita Khrushchev's colorful proverbial language (in addition to his spontaneity, simplicity, and sense of humor) that helped him gain considerable popularity among many Americans during his visits to the USA in the period of the Cold War.

Notes:

The author would like to express her gratitude to Wolfgang Mieder for his helpful advice and assistance in locating some of the publications related to the theme of the article.

¹ For an intriguing article on Lord Chesterfield who stated that "a man of fashion never has recourse to proverbs and vulgar aphorisms," while utilizing a variety of adages in his instructive letters to his illegitimate son Philip Stanhope, see Mieder (2000).

² For the use of proverbs in the political rhetoric of American public figures (Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, Franklin Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Barack Obama), see Mieder (2001; 2005; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2013).

³ For more information on the proverbial speeches of individual politicians at the United Nations, see, for instance, Rosenthal (1952), Raymond (1981), Mieder (2011).

⁴ For the discussion of the employment of proverbial texts by Soviet/Russian leaders, see Wein (1963), Zhigulev (1970), Morozova (1979), Meščerskij (1981), Mokienko (1997), McKenna (2002), McKenna (2003), Reznikov (2005).

⁵ For example, in his article in *The New York Times* (September 13, 1959), Horace Reynolds (2006) wrote that "One cannot live without proverbs" is one of several Russian sayings that praise the proverb. As all the world knows, Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev is a devoted subscriber to this adage" (p. 28). This is in line with Kevin McKenna's (2000) view that this Soviet leader "showed a thorough appreciation for the usage and rhetorical effect of Russian proverbs and proverbial expressions" (p. 218).

⁶ Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, was on his first visit to the United States, September 15 – 27, 1959. During his stay in New York, September 19 to October 13, 1960, he was

Chairman of the Soviet delegation to the Fifteenth Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

⁷ See W. Mieder, S. A. Kingsbury, & K. B. Harder. *A Dictionary of American Proverbs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. (= DAP)

⁸ See P. R. Wilkinson. *Thesaurus of Traditional English Metaphors*. London: George Routledge, 1993. (= TTEM)

⁹ See V. M. Mokienko & T. G. Nikitina. *Bol'shoy slovar' russkikh povedenii* [Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbial Expressions]. Moskva: OLMA Media Grupp, 2008. (= GDRPE)

¹⁰ It relates to the countries of the so-called Western Block (the USA with NATO and others) in the period of the Cold War (1947 – 1991), the time of a sustained state of political and military tension between the aforementioned powers and the powers in the Eastern Block (the USSR and its allies in the Warsaw Pact).

¹¹ See B. E. Stevenson. *The Home Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Familiar Phrases*. New York: Macmillan, 1948. (= HBPMFP)

¹² See V. M. Mokienko & T. G. Nikitina. *Bol'shoy slovar' russkikh narodnykh srovnennyi* [Great Dictionary of Russian Comparisons]. Moskva: OLMA Media Grupp, 2008. (= GDRC)

¹³ See B. J. Whiting. *Modern Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989. (= MPPS)

¹⁴ See A. V. Kunin. *Anglo-russkiy frazeologicheskiy slovar'* [English-Russian Phraseological Dictionary]. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoye izdatel'stvo inostrannyykh i natsional'nykh slovarey, 1956. (= ERPD)

¹⁵ See V. M. Mokienko & T. G. Nikitina. *Bol'shoy slovar' russkikh poslovits* [Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs]. Moskva: OLMA Media Grupp, 2010. (= GDRP)

¹⁶ See P. Mervagoo. *The Comparative Russian-English Dictionary of Russian Proverbs & Sayings*. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1995. (= CREDRPS). It is necessary to make the point that the context itself can change the standard meaning of the proverb. For example, Wolfgang Mieder (2012b) provided an interesting illustration of the employment of the proverb “People who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones” in Edward Thomas’s poem “I Built Myself a House of Glass” with a different, contextualized figurative meaning that alluded to a man’s loneliness (p. 76).

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CHARLES CLAY DOYLE

“HEAVEN IS AS NEAR . . .”: THE EVOLUTION OF AN
ENGLISH PROVERB

Abstract: The proverb “We are as near Heaven by sea as by land,” or “The way to Heaven is the same from all places,” or the formula “Heaven is as close to X as to Y” entered the English language toward the end of the fifteenth century. The proverb—or at least the concept expressed by the proverb—has classical roots. It was famously used in the English Renaissance, and its currency persists into modern times.

Keywords: Historical proverb study, English proverbs, classical proverbs, medieval proverbs, Renaissance proverbs, modern proverbs, Thomas More, Humphrey Gilbert.

On 9 September 1583, a ship commanded by the famous English explorer Humphrey Gilbert, half-brother to Walter Raleigh, sank in the North Atlantic ocean. According to a witness aboard the nearby *Golden Hind*, Sir Humphrey could be seen “sitting abaft with a booke in his hande” as he cried out “*Wee are as neere to heauen by Sea, as by lande.*”

That anecdote first appeared in Richard Hakluyt’s *Principall Nauigations, Voiages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 1589 (sig. 3Q5^v), and its retelling in Thomas Fuller’s highly popular *History of the Worthies of England*, 1662, contributed to keeping the anecdote alive: “Instantly a terrible Tempest did arise, and Sir Humphrey said cheerfully to his companions, *We are as neer Heaven here at Sea as at Land*. Nor was it long before his ship sunck into the Sea” (sig. 2M1^r [first signing]). In 1848, the New England poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow repeated the anecdote in a memorable stanza of his ballad “Sir Humphrey Gilbert” (which avails itself of the rhyme embedded in Hakluyt’s account):

He sat upon the deck,
The Book was in his hand;

“Do not fear! Heaven is as near,”
He said, “by water as by land.”¹

In 1942, Winston Churchill, himself a “navy man,” seemed to recall the anecdote (but not the identity of its protagonist); the diary of Charles McMoran Wilson, Churchill’s personal physician, includes this entry for 6 January, as he and the prime minister sat nervously aboard a “flying boat”:

[Churchill:] “Do you realise we are fifteen hundred miles from anywhere?”
[Wilson:] “Heaven is as near by sea as by land,” I reminded him.
[Churchill:] “Who said that?” he asked.
[Wilson:] “I think it was Sir Humphrey Gilbert.”
(Wilson 1966, 25).

Sir Humphrey was speaking a proverb; he needed no book from which to derive the idea, the sentiment, or even the phrasing.² Be that as it may, the book that offered moist courage and comfort to the legendary explorer and his crew could have been Thomas More’s *Utopia*. So surmised the eminent historians Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager in 1942: “that book must have been Sir Thomas More’s *Utopia*. The Utopian ideal for America[,] which was on the mind of every important group of English pioneers from Massachusetts to Georgia, takes off from this *Utopia* . . .”³

In More’s fanciful travel narrative, the mariner and explorer Raphael Hythloday is said to have “two sayings . . . constantly on his lips: ‘He who has no grave is covered by the sky,’ and ‘From all places it is the same distance to heaven’” (“quippe cui haec assidue sunt in ore, *Caelo tegitur qui non habet urnam, & Vndique ad superos tantundem esse uiae*” [More 1965, 50-51]). In the sixteenth-century translation by Ralph Robinson, the second of Hythloday’s sayings is given as “The way to heauen owt of all places is of like length and distance” (More 1551, sig. B4^r). In the more concise seventeenth-century translation by Gilbert Burnet, Hythloday “often used to say, That the way to Heaven was the same from all places” (More 1684, sig. B7^r).

A marginal notation printed in the first edition of *Utopia* (Louvain, 1516)—perhaps inserted by More’s close friend, the

great proverb scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam—identifies one or both of those sayings as an “apophthegma” (More 1965, 281-82). Like Erasmus himself, whose magisterial *Adagia* gave rebirth to such a multitude of classical proverbs, More was probably recovering or adapting an ancient saying, versions of which can be found in both Greek and Latin—though the saying may already have been current as a proverb in English and other modern languages. The Yale edition’s commentary on *Utopia* aptly cites as a prototype of the “apophthegm” a passage from Cicero (c44 B.C.): “It was a noble saying of Anaxagoras on his deathbed at Lampsacus, in answer to his friends’ inquiry whether he wished in the event of need to be taken away to Clazomenae, his native land: ‘There is no necessity,’ said he, ‘for from any place the road to the lower world is just as far’” (“*undique enim ad inferos tantundem viae est*” [Cicero 1927, 124-25]). As the Yale annotators remark, More has (so to speak) Christianized the expression in Cicero, substituting “*ad superos*” for the pagan “*ad inferos*”—the road “to heaven” for the road “to the underworld.”

Ordinarily, of course, a single Ciceronian “source” would be insufficient to mark a sentence as a proverb.⁴ Erasmus—and presumably More as well—would have been aware of other ancient texts standing behind Hythloday’s cherished utterance. Indeed, one defining mark of proverbiality can be the tendency for an expression to get attached to various personas in differing situations. In the third century A.D., the saying still belonged to Anaxagoras (who lived in the fifth century B.C.). But whereas Cicero presented Anaxagoras speaking of himself, Diogenes Laertius in his Greek *Lives of the Philosophers* has the ancient sage applying his proto-stoic perception to somebody else’s case: “To one who complained that he was dying in a foreign land, his answer was, ‘The descent to Hades is much the same from whatever place we start’” (Diogenes Laertius 1925, 1:140-41). Perhaps it is worth noting that the un-“Christianized” version of the saying that Erasmus in his *Apophthegmata* (1531) attributed to Anaxagoras seems at least as close to the utterance of Diogenes Laertius’s Anaxagoras as to that of Cicero’s: “*Bono animo es, inquit, idem enim undelibet ad inferos descensus est*” (Erasmus 1703, col. 331).⁵

An epigram ascribed to Leonidas of Tarentum, from the third century B.C.—one not included in common versions of the *Greek Anthology*—had anticipated the general idea:

Push on, push on, with manful cheer, and tread
 The path to Death: it is not hard to go,
 Not rough and zigzag, nor bewildering
 With tricks and turns, but straight as straight can be
 And downhill all the way, and travelers
 Err not therein who walk it with shut eyes.

(Leonidas 1931, 12-13)

The point about eyesight being no requisite to finding one's way to the next world also appears in Diogenes Laertius, reporting a bon mot from Bion of Borysthenes (3rd century B.C.): "The road to Hades, he used to say, was easy to travel; at any rate men passed away with their eyes shut" (Diogenes Laertius 1925, 1:426-27). Perhaps the saying from one of those Greek sources is what the Welsh epigrammatist John Owen, in 1612, grafted onto the "broad highway" to destruction mentioned in St. Matthew's gospel (7:13):

Via lata.

Lata via est, et trita via est, quae dicit ad Orcum.
Invenit hoc, etiam se duce, caecus iter.
 (Owen 1976-78, 2:98)

As translated (awkwardly) by Thomas Harvey in 1677:

Broad is the way, much trod, unt' Hell that leads;
 The Blind, himself the Guide, this broad way treads.
 (Owen 1677, sig. H3^v)

An anonymous epigram in the *Greek Anthology* (10.3)—probably written as an epitaph—centers on a similar conceit:

The way down to Hades is straight, whether you start from Athens or whether you betake yourself there, when dead, from Meroe. Let it not vex thee to die far from thy country. One fair wind to Hades blows from all lands.

(Paton 1916-18, 4:4-5)

The idea can be found in Virgil, when the Sibyl advises Aeneas concerning his intended journey to the underworld:

facilis descensus Averno;
noctes atque dies patet atri ianua Ditis;
sed revocare gradum superasque evadere ad auras,

hoc opus, hic labor est. (6.126-29)

The descent to the underworld is not arduous; night and day the halls of Pluto are easily accessible; but to retrace the steps and come back up to the open air—*this* would be an effort indeed[!]

(Virgil 1916, 1:540-41)

In the Greek epigrams and the lines from the *Aeneid*, it is the uniform ease of the journey, rather than the equality in distance from all points, that receives the emphasis. We might note that Burnet’s 1684 translation of *Utopia* (unlike Robinson’s of 1551) lends itself to non-spatial understandings of the “way”: Burnet’s Hythloday was fond of noting that “the way to Heaven was the same from all places” (More 1684, sig. B7¹).

Something of the same idea—though not especially analogous in its expression—occurs in St. Augustine’s *Confessions*. When Augustine’s mother, Monica, was asked if she fears to die far from her home, she replied, “Nothing is far from God; nor is it to be feared lest he should not know[,] at the end of the world, the place whence he is to raise me up” (“*nihil inquit longe est deo, neque timendum est, ne ille non agnoscat in fine saeculi, unde me resuscitet*” [Augustine 1912, 2:56-57]).

In the fifteenth century, a book that Thomas More would almost certainly have known attributes to Pythagoras (sixth century B.C.) the saying elsewhere credited to Anaxagoras and to Raphael Hythloday. Possibly the first book ever printed in England, *The Dicte or Sayengis of the Philosophers* (Westminster: Caxton, 1477) was a translation from the French by Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers—the printer William Caxton’s patron and a grand courtier whom More had emblazoned in his *History of King Richard III* as “brother vnto the Quene, a right honourable man, as valiaunte of hande as politike in counsayle.”⁵ Of Pythagoras, Woodville’s English says, “It fortuned his wyf was decessed in a ferre countre / and some axed him If there were eny difference to dye in their propre lande orellis ferre from theirs / He ansuerd / whersomeuer one dye / the wey to the other worlde is all like” (fol. [20]¹). Woodville’s Pythagoras remains noncommittal as to whether the other world is up or down!

The omnipresence of God is, to be sure, a Christian commonplace. The more specific conceit of the equidistance of

heaven, as a place, from all points on earth has been expressed in modern times not only in the English proverb but also in Icelandic, Danish, Norwegian, and German analogs. A German form, attested from the nineteenth century, is “*Der Himmel ist uns überall gleich nahe*” (Düringsfeld and Reinsberg-Düringsfeld 1872-75, 1:384; Wander 1867-80, 2:647). Not previously noted, I believe, is an occurrence in a work by Martin Luther from 1525. Luther put the expression into the mouth of Henry of Züttphen, a Netherlandish priest who had been martyred the previous year en route to visit Luther in Wittenburg: “*der hymel were da also nahe als anderswo*” (Luther 1908, 235). Luther, of course, was the contemporary (and bitter enemy) of Thomas More.

In 1577, Timothy Kendall’s *Flowers of Epigrammes*, in a section with the heading “Out of Greek Epigrams,” included this poem, titled “It matters not where a man dye”:

IT makes no matter where thou die:
 the waie to heauen on hie
 From euery countrey is a like,
 be it farre of[f], or nie.

(sig I4^r, missigned “H4”)

If those lines are intended as an Englishing of one of the Greek epigrams referred to above, they translate very freely indeed. Kendall’s poem more nearly resembles simply a versifying of our proverb itself.

In 1583, the same year that Humphrey Gilbert sank, the English theologian John Prime may have had the proverb in mind when he declared, “. . . faith alone in sauing doeth the deede, and not workes. For the way to heauen is but single, and one & the same to all” (Prime 1583, sig. H5^v). Here the *way*, which has been referred to more-or-less concretely in other versions of the saying, becomes abstract and non-spatial, signifying ‘means’ rather than ‘road’ or ‘route’.

In 1621, Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* expressed the point thus: “Banishment is no grievance at all . . . All places are distant from heaven alike, the Sunne shines happily as warme in one citty as in another, and to a wise man there is no difference of climes” (Burton 1989-2000, 2:174-75). In the anonymous *Tragedy of Nero*, 1624, the noble Cornutus consoles himself in the face of exile from Rome:

The farther, still, I goe from hence, I know,
 The farther I leaue Shame and Vice behind.
 Where can I goe, but I shall see thee, *Sunne*?
 And Heauen will be as neere me, still, as here.
 (act 2; sig. C4^r)

The character Cornutus, it is clear, shares Raphael Hythloday's low opinion of courtiers and potentates! In a shortened and badly-printed edition of the play in 1676, now titled *Piso's Conspiracy*, the third (quoted) line reads, “Where can I go, but I shall see the Sun?” Like Burton, it may be observed, the playwright (in either version) has coupled the proverb with a reverential reference to the ubiquitous radiance of the sun—an idea slightly reminiscent of Raphael Hythloday's other favorite expression, “He who has no grave is covered by the sky.” (In fact, mention of the sun in connection with our proverb has been somewhat common; for instance, in 1790 a pastor, John Newton, wrote to “a lady” to reassure her: “The same sun shines at London, Bedford, and Hernhuth. And the way to heaven is equally open and near from every place” [Newton 1817, 833].)

In 1630, Robert Willan's published sermon *Elijah's Wish / A Prayer for Death* implied an attribution to St. John Chrysostom:

Elias was persecuted by *Iezabell* a Queene, *Chrysostome* by *Eudoxis* an Empresse, both threatened with death: The holy Father taking it into his meditations writing to his friend, thus hee Resolues, What if an angry Empresse banish mee my natvie soile and sweete country? all the earth is the Lords, and I shall be as neare to heauen anywhere, as at *Constantinople*: what if I bee throwne into the sea? *Ionah* prayed in the whales belly . . . (sig. C2^v)

The words “and I shall be as neare to heauen anywhere, as at *Constantinople*” are Preacher Willan's proverbial insertion into what is otherwise a translation from Chrysostom's letter to Bishop Cyriacus (possibly on the basis of Willan's false attribution—or a common source—a few later writers have credited the proverb itself to Chrysostom).

In *The Strange and Dangerous Voyage of Capt. Thomas James, in His Intended Discouery of the Northwest Passage into the South Sea*, 1633, Captain James perhaps remembered the

words of his predecessor among seamen and explorers, Humphrey Gilbert, when, on 30 November 1631, James addressed his ship's crew, icebound for the winter in Hudson Bay: "I comforted them the best I could with such like words: . . . If it be our fortunes to end our dayes here, we are as neere heauen, as in *England*; and we are much bound to God Almighty for giuing vs so large a time of repentance . . ." (sig. G4^r).

The English Quaker and American colonist William Penn in 1682 attributed the apothegm to a different ancient figure from the ones cited by other writers. The second part of *No Cross, No Crown*—"Containing an Account of the Living and Dying Sayings of Men Eminent for their Greatness, Learning, or Virtue"—gives it among the sayings of Diogenes the Cynic (fourth century B.C.): "To one bewailing himself, that he should not dye in his own Country: *Be of Comfort*, saith he, *for the Way to Heaven is alike in every Place.*"⁶ Penn was Oxford educated; conceivably he derived the attribution from a classical source. Or, considering the affinities between the texts, he may simply have confused the cynical philosopher Diogenes with the historian Diogenes Laertius, whose Anaxagoras plays precisely the same role as Penn's Diogenes. Or perhaps Penn carelessly read (or carelessly remembered) Cicero, who recounted the Anaxagoras incident just after quoting some sayings of Diogenes the Cynic.

In its 1693 edition, an edifying "self help" book titled *Humeane Prudence, or the Art by Which a Man May Raise Himself and Fortune to Grandeur*—sometimes credited to one William de Britaine (a pseudonym?)—contained these helpful words (added to what is called the "sixth edition"): "I am prepared against all Misfortunes and Infelicities . . . : Must I be poor? I shall have Company: Must I be banished? Ile think my self born there; and the way to Heaven is alike in all Places" (139-40).

Ralph Waldo Emerson's notebooks from the 1840s show that New Englander drafting several versions of some lines that were to include the proverb; they were never published:

Be of your country & house & skin
 Though you reap nothing but your chin
 Tho you farm your body & sweat
 For the morsel that you eat
 Ax or scythe or mallet wield

Cedar swamp or cranberry field
 Stone, or ice, or fisher's flakes
 Or a shoe your labor makes
 Get your rent & stipend there
 Way to heaven is just as near
 From every cabin in the sphere.

(Emerson 1986, 256-57)

To return, specifically, to the *water/land* version of the saying, purportedly on the lips of the subsiding Humphrey Gilbert in 1583: The English Catholic Nicholas Harpsfield (1519-1575), in a manuscript eventually published as *A Treatise on the Pretended Divorce between Henry VIII. and Catharine of Aragon*, told of an encounter between King Henry's Protestant henchmen and the noncompliant Franciscans William Peto and Henry Elston (commonly miswritten as “Elstow”), in 1533:

[A]fter many rebukes and threats a nobleman told them that they deserved to be thrust into a sack, and to be thrown and drowned in the Thames; whereat Friar Elstowe smiling, “Make these threats” (saith he) “to the courtiers, for as for us we make little accompt, knowing right well that the way lieth as open to heaven by water as by land.”

(Harpsfield 1878, 204-05)

The 1615 edition of John Stow's *Annals* embellished the anecdote:

[A]nd when the Lords hadde rebuked them, then the Earle of Essex tolde them, that they had deserued to be put into a Sacke & cast into the Thames, whereunto Elstow smyling sayd[,] threaten these things to rich and dayntie folke, which are clothed in purple, fare deliciously and haue their chiefest hope in this world, for wee esteeme them not . . . and with thankes to God wee know the way to heauen, to be as ready by water as by land, and therefore we care not which way we goe.

(Stow 1615, sig. 3A4^v)

It seems that Friar Elston may actually have been ironically playing on the *water/land* dichotomy in what must already have been a familiar version of the proverb. Certainly to be “put into a Sacke & cast into the Thames” is an uncommon and vividly grotesque notion

of death by water—and one that does not involve any significant *spatial* distance from death by ax, rope, or pyre on the river's shore. So an ordinary, non-ironic interpretation is precluded.

In 1567—35 years after the prospective martyrdom by drowning of Friar Elston and 16 years before Humphrey Gilbert's watery death—George Turburville published an English epigram titled “Epitaph of Maister Win drowned in the Sea” (the identity of Mr. Win is unknown):

But since his fate allotted him to fall
Amid the sowing seas and troublous tide,
Let not his death his faithful friends appall [,]
For he is not the first that so hath died,
Nor shall be seen the last: As nigh a way
To Heaven by waters as by land[,] they say.⁷

That final phrase, “they say,” clearly indicates that the proverb in its *water/land* form, which Friar Elston’s remark had ironically adapted in 1533 (if we are to credit the reports), was well fixed in the 1560s.

In the year 1600, a blank-verse meditation “Of Heaven,” by John Bodenham, piously rhapsodized:

All powers are subiect to the power of Heauen.
Nothing but Heauen, is perfect happinesse.
What Heauen will haue, that needs must come to passe.
The Soule is heauenly, and from heauen relieu’d.
Heauen is as neare to sea, as to the land.

(Bodenham 1600, sig B3^r)

The very irrelevancy of the last line, in context, may somehow indicate the proverbiality of its wording; the reader is expected to *know* the saying as it can function traditionally.

The *water/land* form of the proverb, however, seems not to have been especially prevalent after the seventeenth century—except in specific reference to the death of Sir Humphrey Gilbert. In the late nineteenth century, some maudlin verses titled “The Captain’s Daughter, or The Ballad of the Tempest,” by the New England writer James T. Fields, included these stanzas:

As thus we sat in darkness,
Each one busy in his prayers,—

“We are lost!” the captain shouted,
 As he staggered down the stairs.

But his little daughter whispered
 As she took his icy hand,
 “Is not God upon the ocean,—
 Just the same as on the land?”
 (Fields 1881, 63-64)

There is no indication that a reader is expected to recognize the daughter’s precociously pious words as proverbial, and the *ocean/land* dichotomy here refers simply to the omnipresence of God—not to the equidistance of water and land from the next world.

Likewise, an undated epitaph inscribed on a gravestone in Westmoreland, England:

Underneath this humble stone
 Sleeps a skull of name unknown
 Deep in Eden’s bed ’twas found
 Was the luckless owner drowned?
 What matter since we all must die
 Whether death be wet or dry?

(Spieg 1973, fols. 23^v-24^r)

Although the *water/land* version of the proverb faded in its popularity, other dichotomies have occurred abundantly—in contrast to versions (in several languages) which note simply that heaven, or the underworld, is equally near to everywhere on earth.

Just a decade after Luther used the proverb (if it already was a proverb in German) in connection with the death of the Reformer priest Henry of Zütphen, and one year after the reported statement by Friar Elston under threat of death for his adherence to the Roman Catholic Church, Thomas More began his own road to martyrdom, entering prison in 1534. Dame Alice chided her husband for what seemed to her like his willful perversity and stubbornness. As recounted by More’s son-in-law William Roper, Alice visited her confined husband and berated him:

“I mervaile that you, that have bine alwaiers hitherto taken
 for so wise a man, will nowe so play the foole to lye heare
 in this close, filthy prison, and be content thus to be shut

vpp amongst mise and rattes, when you might be abroade at your libertye, and with the favour and good will both of the kinge and his Councell, If yow wold but doe as all the Byshops and best learned of this realme haue done. And seinge you have at Chelsey a right faire house, your library, your booke, your gallery, your garden, your orchard, and all other necessaries so handsome aboute you, where you might in the company of me your wife, your children, and howshold be meerye, I muse what a gods name you meane heare still thus fondly to tarye."

After he had a while quietly heard her, with a chearefull countenaunce he said vnto her:

"I pray thee, good mistris Alice, tell me one thinge."

"What is that?" quoth shee.

"Is not this house," quoth he, "as nighe heauen as my owne?"⁸

There, More was neatly echoing in English the proverb he had assigned, in Latin, to his fictional character Raphael Hythloday a decade earlier, in *Utopia*: "From all places it is the same distance to heaven." Now, however, we have a formula: "Heaven is as near to X as to Y," in this case, as near to a dank and dingy cell in the Tower of London as to More's own idyllic home in Chelsea. Into the formula, as it became traditional, a traveler might consolingly insert the names or identities of almost any two places—especially a familiar, comfortable locale counterpoised with a remote, exotic, or dangerous one.

An early version of the formulaic saying was attributed to Eleanor of Castile, a romantic favorite of late-medieval legend, although the anecdote first appeared in print in John Camden's *Remains Concerning Britaine*, 1605:

Eleanor wife to king *Edward* the first, a most vertuous and wise woman, when hee tooke his long and dangerous voyage into the holy land, would not be dissuaded to tarry at home, but woulde needes accompany him, saying; "Nothing must part them whome God hath joyned, and the way to heaven is as neare in the holy land, (if not nearer) as in England or Spaine.

(Camden 1984, 237)

Prince Edward departed on his crusade in 1270, and the devoted Eleanor went along. Camden's source for the quoted incident has not been discovered; almost certainly he did not invent it, since he included it in his section “Grave Speeches, and wittie Apothegmes of worthie Personages of this Realme in former times.” Whatever the source, scholarly or popular, More might have encountered it as well as Camden.

Still earlier, in the late fourth century A.D., St. Jerome counseled his far-away friend Paulinus, “*Et de Jerosolymis et de Britania æqualiter patet aula cælestis*” (Jerome 1845, col. 581). In a sermon preached in 1630, the great poet and divine John Donne translated: “Heaven is as neare England, (saies S. Hierom) as it is to Jerusalem” (*England* anachronistically translating *Britannia* [Donne 1953-62, 9:210]). Jerome was also cited, following an innovative version of the proverb, by the Spanish Jesuit José de Acosta in his *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, 1590; as translated by one “E. G.” in 1604 (in reference to the “many Spaniards, who beeing here [in the ‘West Indies’] sigh for Spaine”): “to whom we answere, that the desire to returne to Spaine, doth nothing trouble vs, being as neere vnto Heaven at Peru, as in Spaine”; for, as St. Jerome said, “the gates of Heaven are as neere vnto Britannie, as to Ierusalem” (Acosta 1604, sig. C1^v).

In the eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, *ad hoc* versions of the formulaic proverb have abounded, especially in letters, diaries, articles, and fiction concerning missionaries, soldiers, emigrants, and other earthly sojourners: Generically, heaven is as near “the great city” as “the breezy down”; “a cottage” as “a palace.” Demographically, it is as near “the poor” as “the rich.” Geographically, heaven is as near “Russia” as “England”; “St. Helena” as “England”; “Basutoland” as “England”; “Ireland” as “England”; “America” as “England”; “London” as “York”; “Cairo” as “London”; “Italy” as “America”; “China” as “America”; “the Western Territories” as “New York”; “Constantinople” as “Hartford”; “Port-au-Prince” as “Washington”; “Rancho El Grande” as “Stony Hill Farm”; “Kentucky” as “our childhood home” in Australia; “Kansas” as “any other country.”

Nor has the formulaic saying, in modern times, applied exclusively to Christian concerns. In 1855 an unsigned editorial

titled “The American Jew” appeared in the *San Francisco Sun*; presumably, it glances skeptically at a custom widely known (if not so widely practiced) by post-diaspora Jews, the placement in a burial site of a small amount of earth or a few pebbles from Jerusalem (Robinson 2001, 188):

The American Jew is only less proud of his country than of his religion. To say that he is a mere dweller upon the soil, because it affords him the means of support, is to libel the most noble traits of his character. The graves of his ancestors are around him. His heaven is as near to him on the golden shores of the Pacific, as upon the sacred Mount of Olives or within the classic walls of Jerusalem.⁹

By the late nineteenth century, the proverb (in one or more of its forms) was so well-known that quoting just a fragment of it could be sufficient to allude to the entire expression or concept. A young man prepares to move to Minnesota; in response to apprehensive dissuasions, he remarks, “It is a long way off, but that makes little difference. ‘Heaven is as near’ you know; though I have every intention of living, if I can” (Wheaton 1878, 67).

To summarize, as regards early occurrences of the proverb in English—in its various forms: I assume that Eleanor of Castile, in the thirteenth century, if she actually uttered the proverb—as, in 1605, she was reported to have—would not have spoken it in English. Otherwise, of the instances I have located, the earliest in English was Pythagoras’s saying as translated by Anthony Woodville in the late fifteenth century. The second-earliest appearing in English was Friar Elston’s pronouncement in 1532—if he really said it—as recounted in the middle third of the sixteenth century. Next was Thomas More’s reported riposte to Dame Alice in the Tower of London in 1534. Next would be Ralph Robinson’s 1551 translation of *Utopia*; then George Turberville’s epigram in 1567; then Timothy Kendall’s epigram of 1577; then Humphrey Gilbert’s vocal immersion of 1583, and John Prime’s use of the proverb that same year to justify justification-by-faith-alone; then John Bodenham’s meditation “Of Heaven” in 1600.

Of course, if we can assume that Thomas More was thinking in English when he wrote *Utopia* in 1515 or 1516, then that oc-

currence attains an early position in the ranking. In the context of More’s fictional narrative, a jesting implication may be that Heaven is not a “place” at all—just as *U-topia* itself is ‘no-place.’

Notes

¹ *Poems and Other Writings*, edited by J. D. McClatchy (New York: Library of America, 2000), 130. Longfellow obviously knew *Utopia*, from which he quoted, without attribution, in his little essay “Where Is Peter Grimm?”: “The grave tells no tales. He was huddled into it like a malefactor, a handful of earth thrown over him—no tears shed, no bell tolled, no dirge sung. After all, what matter it where or how? ‘The way to heaven is the same from all places, and he that has no grave has the heavens still over him’”; *Prose Works* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1886), 1:501-02. Longfellow was quoting (or slightly misquoting) from Bishop Burnet’s translation (More 1684, sig. B7).

² Identified, in some form, as a proverb and illustrated (skimpily) by M. P. Tilley, *Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1950), W171; F. P. Wilson, *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 872; and B. J. Whiting, *Early American Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings* (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP), W75. A related proverb, “The descent to hell (Avernus) is easy,” appears in Tilley (D205); Wilson (177); and Whiting’s *Modern Proverbs* (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1989; D114).

³ *The Growth of the American Republic*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (New York: Oxford UP, 1942), 1:35; the first two editions do not contain the quoted matter. Some years later, Morison rhapsodically elaborated: “The book that Sir Humphrey was reading on the last day of his life was undoubtedly Sir Thomas More’s *Utopia* That book, which has given its name to all other utopias, may be called the blueprint to the American dream of a good life He [More] foretold that a model republic might be founded somewhere in the new countries recently discovered; and that mankind might find what they had always sought—plenty, peace, liberty, and security, under a government of calm philosophers” (*Oxford History of the American People* [New York: Oxford UP, 1965], 44).

⁴ The most extensive treatment of More’s proverb lore, John Cavanaugh’s unpublished doctoral thesis “The Use of Proverbs and Sententiae for Rhetorical Amplification in the Writings of Saint Thomas More” (Saint Louis University, 1969), adds no information to the Yale edition’s note on this point. The probability that Cicero was one of More’s definite “sources” is bolstered not only by the closeness of the verbal echo but also by the fact that Peter Giles, the narrator, has just remarked on Hythloday’s contempt for all Roman authors except Seneca and Cicero. (However, the other saying constantly on Hythloday’s lips comes from the Roman Lucan. Irony?) Given the geocentric notion of the cosmos, the statement that heaven is the same distance from every point on earth would have had a kind of literal accuracy, since everything beyond the outer planetary sphere is *Coelum empireum habitaculum Dei et omnium electorum* (as it is labeled in a famous engraving from Peter

Apian's *Cosmographia*, 1524). On the other hand, as Walter Gordon has pointed out, the presence of God is not to be understood in spatial terms; "Time, Space, and the Eucharist," *Downside Review* 95 (1977): 110-16.

⁵ Edited by Richard S. Sylvester (New Haven CT: Yale UP, 1963), 14. *The Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophers* had a complicated ancestry. The eleventh-century Syrian Mubashshir ibn Fatik compiled *Mukhtar al-Hikam*, which was translated into Spanish as *Bocados de oro* ('Golden Mouthfuls'). In the thirteenth century Johannes de Procida translated the Spanish into Latin—from which, about the year 1400, Guillaume de Tignonville made the French translation that Woodville possessed.

⁶ *No Cross, No Crown / A Discourse Showing the Nature and Discipline of the Holy Cross of Christ . . . : To Which Are Added the Living and Dying Testimonies of Divers Persons of Fame and Learning in Favour of This Treatise* (London: Printed and sold by Benjamin Clark, 1682), sig. Y1^r. This is one of several editions (from different printers) that call themselves the "second"—all dated 1682. It corresponds to P1330 in Donald Wing's *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England . . . , 1641-1700*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1972-88). The title, of course, quotes a proverb.

⁷ *Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs and Sonetes* ([London,] 1567), fol. 129^r (the second epigram in the book that bears the title "Epitaph of Maister Win drowned in the Sea"). Conceivably, the *water/land* versions of the proverb represent (on some level) a stoic response to Aristotle's insistence that death by water can occasion no genuine courage: "[W]e do not call a man courageous for facing death by drowning or disease Not that the courageous man is not also fearless in a storm at sea (as also in illness), though not in the same way as sailors are fearless, for he thinks there is no hope of safety, and to die by drowning is revolting to him, whereas sailors keep up heart because of their experience. Also courage is shown in dangers where a man can defend himself by valour or die nobly, but neither is possible in disasters like shipwreck" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 3.6.7-12, translated by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [London: Heinemann, 1934], 156-57). Presumably Aristotle here was countering Plato, who in *Laches* had Socrates assert that courage can be displayed not only on the battlefield but also in the face of peril by sea, sickness, poverty, or political turmoil. Toward the end of his life, Thomas More might have found sustenance in that Socratic conception of quiet and lonely courage—the "better fortitude of patience and heroic martyrdom" (in the words of *Paradise Lost*).

⁸ *Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore, Knight*, edited by Elsie V. Hitchcock, E.E.T.S., no. 97 (London: Oxford UP, 1935), 82-83. The anecdote was repeated, with little variation from Roper's wording, by More's other early biographers: Nicholas Harpsfield, *Life and Death of Sir Thomas Moore, Knight*, edited by Hitchcock, E.E.T.S., no. 186 (London: Oxford UP, 1932) 95-96; Ro: Ba: *Life of Syr Thomas More, Somtymes Lord Chancellour of England*, edited by Hitchcock and P. E. Hallet, E.E.T.S., no. 222 (London: Oxford UP, 1950), 134-35; Cresacre More, *Life and Death of Sir Thomas Moore Lord High Chancellour of England* (Douai, 1631), sig. 2Q2^r.

⁹ Reprinted in *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 45 (1955-56): 268-70.

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THEODORE FORTSAKIS,
MINAS AL. ALEXIADIS,
MARIANTHI KAPLANOGLOU,
ARISTEIDES N. DOULAVERAS,
AND WOLFGANG MIEDER

“DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA” – WOLFGANG MIEDER

On December 16, 2014, Professor Wolfgang Mieder from the University of Vermont received the special honor of a “doctor honoris causa” from the prestigious University of Athens in Greece. The proclamation festivity took place in the main building of the university at Athens with many administrators, professors, and students in attendance for the special celebration. It was the wish of the colleagues and friends at the University of Athens that the various speeches of the evening would be published in *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* as a sign of the high regard of not only Prof. Mieder’s contributions to international folkloristics in general and international paremiology in particular but also as a tribute to proverb scholars throughout the world. The speeches were delivered in Greek and are presented here in English translation. Prof. Mieder’s address was given in English.

THE PROCLAMATION OF
PROFESSOR WOLFGANG MIEDER
AS AN HONORARY DOCTOR OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS
DECEMBER 16, 2014



ΕΘΝΙΚΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΠΟΔΙΣΤΡΙΑΚΟΝ
ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟΝ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ

ΨΗΦΙΣΜΑ
ΤΗΣ ΤΩΝ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΩΝ ΣΧΟΛΗΣ

ΤΥΧΗ, ΑΓΑΘΗ,

Πριντανεύοντος ἐν τῷ Ἀθήνησιν Ἐθνικῷ καὶ Καποδιστριακῷ Πανεπιστημίῳ Θεοδόσιο Ν. Πελεγρίνη, κοσμητεύοντας ἐν τῇ τῶν Φιλοσόφων Σχολῆς Ἀμαλίας Λ. Μόζερ καὶ προεδρευόντας ἐν τῷ Τμήματι Φιλολογίας Ἐλένης Μιχ. Καραμαλέγκου, ἔδοξεν ὁμοφώνως

WOLFGANG MIEDER

ἄνδρα μάλιστα περιστήμονα περιάνωμόν τε, γῆς τῆς γερμανικῆς ἔξανιόντα καὶ ἐν τῇ πέραν τοῦ μεγάλου Ὡκεανοῦ γῆς τῆς νῦν καθουμένης πλαισίου φιλοσόφων διδάσκαλον ἐπιφανῆ, εύρυμαθῆ τε καὶ ποιῆγμασσον, τῆς πλαισίου φιλοσόφων διδάσκαλον θεράποντα διτρόπον, ποιητὴ τῇ ἐρεύνῃ προσενεγκόντα τῆς δὲ θεματολογίας τῆς παροιμιολογικῆς μέγαν ἀνανεωτὴν καὶ τοῦ πλόγου τοῦ παροιμιακοῦ τὴν πλειονεύοντας ἀναδείξαντα καὶ ἀνὰ τὸν κόσμον κεκυρωκότα, καινοτόμους μετέπειτας ποιητὰς συγγράψαντα, ὡστ' ἐνδίκιας ἐκ τῶν ὁμοτέχνων ἐπαίνου τυγχάνειν, αὐτὸν τε αἰνέσαι καὶ ἐπίτιμον διδάκτορα τῆς τῶν Φιλοσόφων Σχολῆς ἀναδεῖξαι, τὸ δὲ ψήφισμα τόδε εἰς μεμβράναν ἀναγράψαι, τὴν δὲ τοῦ Τμήματος Πρόεδρον δημοσίᾳ ἐν τῇ αιθούσῃ τῇ μεγάλῃ ἀναγνοῦσσαν καὶ τὰ τιμᾶς ἀνειπούσαν, ἐπιδοῦναι αὐτῷ, ἥ δὲ ἡμέρα ἡ ἀναγόρευσις γέννηται, καθ' ἄνενδηται.

Ἐγένετο Ἀθήνησι, μηνὸς Ἰουνίου δεκάτη, ἔτει τρεισκαὶ δεκάτῳ καὶ δισκιθιοστῷ.

Ἡ Πρόεδρος τοῦ Τμήματος
Φιλολογίας

ΕΛΕΝΗ ΜΙΧ. ΚΑΡΑΜΑΛΕΓΚΟΥ

ΑΝΑΓΟΡΕΥΣΙΣ

Ἐπειδήπερ τὸ Τμῆμα Φιλολογίας τῆς τῶν Φιλοσόφων Σχολῆς τοῦ Ἀθήνησιν
Ἐθνικοῦ καὶ Καποδιστριακοῦ Πανεπιστημίου

WOLFGANG MIEDER

ἄξιον ἀπέφηνε τοῦ ἐπιτίμου διδάκτορικοῦ ἀξιώματος, ἡ δὲ τῶν Φιλοσόφων Σχολῆ τοῦτον ἀπεδέξατο καὶ ὁ Πρύτανις τῇ τῆς Σχολῆς γνώμῃ ἐπινεύει,
διὰ ταῦτα ἐγὼ

ΕΡΑΣΜΙΑ-ΛΟΥΓΙΖΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ

καθηγήτρια Νεοελληνικῆς Φιλολογίας, νῦν δὲ τοῦ Τμήματος Φιλολογίας
Πρόεδρος, χρωμένη τῇ δυνάμει, ἢν παρὰ τῶν πανεπιστημιακῶν νόμων καὶ
τοῦ Τμήματος ἔχω παβοῦσα,

WOLFGANG MIEDER

ἐπίτιμον διδάκτορα τῆς τῶν Φιλοσόφων Σχολῆς τοῦ Ἀθήνησιν Ἐθνικοῦ καὶ
Καποδιστριακοῦ Πανεπιστημίου δημοσίᾳ ἀναγορεύω καὶ πάσας τὰς προνομίας
τὰς τῷ πανεπιστημιακῷ τούτῳ ἀξιώματι παρεπομένας ἀπονέμω.

Ἐγένετο Ἀθήνησι, μνὸς Δεκεμβρίου ἔκτη καὶ δεκάτη, ἔτει τεσσαρακαιδεκάτῳ
καὶ δισκιθιοστῷ.

Ἡ Πρόεδρος τοῦ Τμήματος
Φιλολογίας



ΕΡΑΣΜΙΑ-ΛΟΥΓΙΖΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ



From left to right: Associate Professor Marianthi Kaplanoglou, Professor Theodore Fortsakis (Rector of University of Athens), Professor Wolfgang Mieder, Editor of *Proverbium* (honoured person), Professor Helen Karamalegou, Dean of the School of Philosophy, Professor Erasmia-Louise Stavropoulou, President of the Department of Philology, Professor Minas Al. Alexiadis, Director of the Section of Byzantine Philology and Folkloristics, and Associate Professor Aristeides N. Doulaveras.



Professor Wolfgang Mieder

GREETINGS
OF THE RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS
PROFESSOR THEODORE FORTSAKIS

Mrs Dean,
Mrs President of the Department of Philology,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Students,

With great joy our University welcomes today Mr. WOLFGANG MIEDER, Professor at the University of Vermont in the United States, a leading scientist of international repute and tremendous contributions in the field of folklore and especially that of paremiology.

The University of Athens is proud, because it is able to honor those eminent personalities from Greece and abroad who have been recognized and distinguished for their work, for their contributions and their productive life in the minds of their peers and of the society in general.

The offering of such an honor is a moral debt to the people who spent their lives in science and teaching, giving great services to our world to go up “a little higher.” They are people with a rich spiritual culture, with a social conscience and a deep sense of responsibility. So they become “spiritual beacons” that illuminate the path of our society to progress and to success.

We need such persons for the contemporary critical times we live in, in order to give a good example to younger generations and to the current leaders, an example of faith and devotion to duty, a selfless giving example, an example of sustained commitment to humanitarian and universal values.

Today we honor such a great personality in our university. We honor Professor Wolfgang Mieder, who in spite of our technocratic contemporary time—and even in a country where the humanities are underestimated—is dedicated to the study of popular culture, especially to the popular wisdom in its contemporary expression. It is no coincidence that his academic qualifi-

cations led him to be elected Assistant Professor at the age of just 26 years old.

Since then, he continues his academic career by teaching many subjects of his scientific field, with many lectures, articles and books, by promoting research, by supervising many doctoral dissertations and master's in paremiology but also with rich administrative work and especially with huge published work in Folklore and Paremiology, which has international appeal. We also mention the editing of the important Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship “Proverbium” for 31 consecutive years.

We are very happy and proud that our University welcomes him today to our university community.

[The address was delivered in Greek, but the following remarks were in English.]

Dear Professor Wolfgang Mieder,

We are proud that you are with us today, that we welcome you to our university community and we wish you to always continue your thriving academic and research work. We also hope to have the pleasure of your presence here in the future.

Theodore Fortsakis
Rector of the University of Athens
Professor of Administrative and Tax Law
Department of Law
University of Athens
GREECE

PROFESSOR WOLFGANG MIEDER
 AND MODERN FOLKLORISTICS IN THE UNITED
 STATES:
 THE EXAMPLE OF PROVERBS

PROFESSOR MINAS AL. ALEXIADIS

Mr Rector of the University of Athens,
 Mrs Dean of the School of Philosophy,
 Mrs President of the Department of Philology,
 Mr President of the Greek Folklore Society,
 Dear Colleagues,
 Ladies and Gentlemen,
 Dear students,

With great joy and pleasure I will speak today about the internationally acclaimed folklorist and paremiologist in particular, Wolfgang Mieder, professor in the Department of German and Russian at the University of Vermont, at Burlington, USA, and I will present to you in brief his personality and his rich work.

Professor Mieder is coming from Germany. His parents lived in Leipzig, but because of the war left temporarily to the nearby town Nossen, where Wolfgang was born, on 17 February 1944. In 1960 he went to North America. He graduated from Olivet College and he received his M.A. from the University of Michigan and Ph.D. from Michigan State University.

In 1970 he was elected assistant professor at Murray State University in Kentucky, at age 26. In 1971 he was elected assistant professor at the University of Vermont, in 1975 associate professor, and in 1978, at the age of 34 years old, as professor. Barbara Mieder is his wife and also valuable companion in his life.

In his long university career, based on his erudition and solid scientific foundation, he taught and still is teaching many subjects of his scientific field, such as: German Language and Culture, History of the German Language, German Literature, German Folklore, The Proverb, The Tales of the Brothers Grimm, Folklore and Oral Culture, The Politics of Proverbs. Folklore and Advertising, etc.

Wolfgang Mieder, in addition to his other qualifications, is an excellent teacher. That's why he has received many awards such as: Award for the best teacher of the year in Vermont (1991¹), the Kroepsch-Maurice Award for outstanding teaching ability (1995²) and the excellence award from the American Association of Teachers of German (1995³). On September 13, 2012, he received the European Fairy Tale Prize for his entire work and at the same year the Lifetime Achievement Award of the American Folklore Society.

His administrative work is also large and very important during his long university life, with posts of responsibility at the University of Vermont and in various other managerial positions in scientific societies. He served the Department of German and Russian as its chairperson for thirty-one years. He has repeatedly received scholarships and prizes from 22 organizations, university departments, Institutes and Foundations and is a member of 14 scientific associations in his field. He also has been honored with 25 distinctions by universities, scientific societies, associations and companies.

By March 2012⁴ Wolfgang Mieder had published 205 books. He has authored himself 93⁵ books and co-authored with another or other authors 15 books. Meanwhile he is the editor of 43 books and the co-editor of 21. Many of these proverb books were out of print and were reissued by W. Mieder. He also is the editor of seven series of paremiological books in America and in Germany.⁶ Valuable is also his two-volume *International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology*,⁷ compiled and edited by him.

Since 1984 Wolfgang Mieder has been publishing the international yearbook *Proverbium*, with articles in five languages. He has edited 31 volumes (1984-2014) so far.

I had the honor to meet this indefatigable colleague personally, known to me originally from his great work, at the International Congress of Folk Narratives organized in Athens in June 2009 by the Research Center for Folklore of the Academy of Athens, and so I had the opportunity to know him better and to appreciate his academic wisdom, his ethos, generosity, simplicity and kindness.

Wolfgang Mieder beyond his contribution to international paremiology—Associate Professor Doulaveras will address

this—is also among those who contributed to the promotion of modern folklore in America. Very remarkable works of his serve this scientific field, such as:

1. *German proverbs in literature, politics, newspapers and advertisements.*⁸
2. *Proverbs, proverbial expressions, sayings: traditional formulaic language in modern times.*⁹
3. *Proverbs are never out of season: Popular wisdom in the modern age.*¹⁰
4. *Anti-proverbs from literature and media.*¹¹
5. *Proverbial iconography.*¹²
6. *Modern anti-proverbs.*¹³
7. *Proverbs are the best policy. Folk wisdom and American politics.*¹⁴
8. *Modern folktale memories in literature, media and cartoons.*¹⁵
9. *Articles in magazines and newspapers for the relevance or not of proverbs.*¹⁶
10. *Paremiological studies in literature and the media.*¹⁷
11. *Folk proverbs in art, culture, folklore, history, literature, and mass media.*¹⁸
12. *Contemporary tale memories in literature, media and cartoons.*¹⁹
13. “Yes, we can.” Barack Obama’s proverbial rhetoric,²⁰ etc.

W. Mieder proves through his studies that folklore is a living science that monitors and studies the culture of modern man and not only a science of the past.

I will briefly touch upon one of those books that is related to proverbs and politics, and upon a second one, related to the contribution of Wolfgang Mieder to so-called anti-proverbs, a term coined by him and already internationally recognized.

The first book is titled *Proverbs are the Best Policy. Folk Wisdom and American Politics.*²¹ For over ten years Mieder has made the study of proverbial political discourse one of the most important areas of his research, having written seven books.²² This particular book is a valuable contribution to this matter. It consists of eight individual chapters, five of which were previously published and three are published for the first time.

The first chapter is entitled “‘Different Strokes for Different Folks.’ American Proverbs as an International, National, and Global Phenomenon” and explains why American proverbs are an international, national and global phenomenon, noting that the proverbs today play the role that Latin proverbs did in former times. Moreover, with their orientation to a democratic society, they have a noticeable effect on global and political discourse. English today is an international language, lingua franca, and English proverbs are traveling around the world.

The second chapter is entitled “‘Government of the People, by the People, for the People.’ The Making and Meaning of an American Proverb about Democracy.” In this chapter the author investigates when the triadic sentence (*government of the people, by the people, for the people*) has started and how it became an American proverb, defining the idea of democracy. The words were spoken by Abraham Lincoln on November 19 (1863). Similar phrases had been spoken by Thomas Cooper (1794), John Adams (1798), John Marshall (1819), Daniel Webster (1830), Alphonse de Lamartine (1850) and Theodore Parker (1850). The author examines methodically the origin, the form and the course of this proverb, citing multiple sources.

The third chapter has the title “‘God Helps Them Who Help Themselves.’ Proverbial Resolve in the Letters of Abigail Adams.” The author attempts a paremiological analysis of the letters of Abigail Adams and examines how this great woman influenced her husband John Adams, her family and many politicians with her correspondence, full of proverbial wisdom.

The fourth chapter is entitled: “‘A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand.’ From Biblical Proverb to Abraham Lincoln and Beyond.” In this chapter Wolfgang Mieder examines the role played by this adage in American politics and he mentions specific examples of politicians who used the proverb.

The fifth chapter is titled: “‘Do Unto Others as You Would Have Them Do Unto You.’ Frederick Douglass’s Proverbial Struggle for Civil Rights.” Douglass (1818-1895), a former slave, was the collective voice of 3-4 million African-American slaves. This chapter examines the profound relationship of Frederick Douglass with religion as expressed in proverbial speech. Douglass uses proverbs knowing the social significance and val-

ue of folk wisdom in the struggle against slavery and for civil rights of these people.

In the sixth chapter “‘It’s not President’s Business to Catch Flies.’ Proverbial Rhetoric in Presidential Inaugural Addresses.” it is investigated whether various U.S. presidents knew proverbs. For this purpose W. Mieder examines 55 official presidential speeches. Among others he highlights the proverbial quality and superiority of Lincoln and Kennedy speeches.

The seventh chapter is titled “‘We Are All in the Same Boat Now.’ Proverbial Discourse in the Churchill-Roosevelt Correspondence.” In this chapter the author analyzes the 1161 and 788 messages respectively, exchanged by Churchill and Roosevelt in the troubled years 1939-1945. The two leaders fought as allies against the dictatorial forces during the Second World War and their deliberations were clearly based on proverbial language for an effective communication.

In the eighth chapter on “‘Good Fences Make Good Neighbors.’ The Sociopolitical Significance of an Ambiguous Proverb,” the author examines the beginning, the story, the dispersion, the function and importance of this American proverb, through many examples from the 19th century until today. In the field of politics the proverb means that the defensive armor of a country acts effectively as a deterrent for neighboring peoples.

The book is documented with the necessary notes and references and also contains a Bibliography, an Index of Persons and Things and a Table of Keywords of the Proverbs.

In general, this book is a great work and a substantial contribution to the study of the relations between proverbs and politics, which is a topical issue that he has interpreted in many books. With convincing arguments and documenting his views every time, the author demonstrates the power of proverbial discourse in politics, especially since it is used by leading politicians and U.S. Presidents.

At this point, I would like to remind you that in Greece Dem. S. Loukatos, as is well known, was the first to deal with the relationship between proverbs and politics. I mention two of his articles: “*Proverbes et commentaires politiques: Le Public devant les Télécommunications actuelles*”²³ and “*Proverbs in Modern Political Cartoons*.”²⁴ In the spirit of this topic, I published my study in the Scientific Yearbook of the Department of Philology

of the University of Athens, titled “*The Proverbial and Maxim Discourse of Greek Politicians. Samples of the Athenian Press.*”²⁵

Another contribution of W. Mieder in Contemporary Folklore is related to his books on anti-proverbs. The term, which was first suggested by him, means the modification of the traditional proverbial text for the sake of humor or parody or advertising, etc. Dem. S. Loukatos in his article “*Folklorica Contemporanea*”²⁶ had pointed out these changes in the body of traditional proverbs, although he had not given a definition.²⁷ For the theme of anti-proverbs in the Greek press we have recently published a relevant essay.²⁸ Below I give two examples of Greek anti-proverbs:

1. *Beware of Danae bearing gifts.*
(Original text)
But we saw it in the Press with the form:
Beware of politicians bearing “packages.”
(Anti-proverb)
2. *Girasko ai didaskomenos.*
(Original text)
Meaning: I am getting older and I am always learning.
But we saw it in the Press in the following form:
Gerasko aei parakolouthoumenos.
(Anti-proverb)
Meaning: I am getting older and have always been
under watching.

W. Mieder initially issued three volumes²⁹ with anti-proverbs in German. Then, with the cooperation of A.T. Litovkina published the book “*Twisted Wisdom. Modern Anti-proverbs,*”³⁰ that I will mention in brief. This book is the first that records this kind of proverb in 1999 in the Anglo-American language and it is the beginning of the study of this rich material that awaits systematic collection and study. The anti-proverbs are listed alphabetically and for each text there is a precise citation. Of course, the anti-proverbs can be effective means of communication, only if the traditional proverbs are well known. Otherwise the possibility of understanding and of communication will be lost. The two authors recorded 3000 anti-proverbs, coming from the 300

traditional ones. This big number of anti-proverbs shows the large and varied inspirations of modern man, who does not hesitate to use old proverbial texts, modifying them where necessary, to meet the current needs of communication and persuasion and mainly to satisfy his criticism and mocking mood, but also to laugh himself.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have presented briefly Professor W. Mieder through some of his rich curriculum vitae elements and by examining two important books of his. However, we all understand "the lion from its tail." Professor W. Mieder is today considered as a leading international scientist in the field of Folklore and Paremiology, having contributed in a unique way to international scientific research and having variously enhanced the work of paremiologists and encouraging many colleagues and students in their efforts. He is a leading paremiologist with international appreciation and recognition.

[the address was delivered in Greek, but the following remarks were in English]

Dear colleague and friend, Professor Wolfgang Mieder,

The fact that we are awarding you an honorary doctorate from the Department of Philology of the University of Athens is the result of the immense esteem that we feel towards you in person. It is also the outcome of the international recognition that your work in the area of Folkloristics and proverb studies enjoys. We, my colleagues and our students, are delighted today that you now belong to the ranks of those honoured by the Department of Philology of the University of Athens, since you are a most distinguished academic, the leading scholar of paremiology, a widely recognized university teacher, a tireless writer and a kind and humble man, full of goodwill to all.

Since I have the honor to welcome you to the academic family of the Department of Philology of the University of Athens, I would like to wish you, *ab imo pectore*, health, strength and long-lasting happiness, so that you may continue your splendid work.

I would also like to welcome your wife, Barbara Mieder, and wish you both a happy stay in Athens.

Thank you very much.

Notes for Alexiadis:

- ¹ Vermont Professor of the Year (CASE, 1991).
- ² Kroepsch-Maurice Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1995.
- ³ Goethe Institute/American Association of Teachers of German, Certificate of Merit, 1995.
- ⁴ <http://www.uvm.edu/~grdept/documents/MIEDERvita030512.pdf>
- ⁵ See his last book: Wolfgang Mieder, *Behold the Proverbs of a People. Proverbial Wisdom in Culture, Literature, and Politics*. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2014.
- ⁶ *Sprichwörterforschung*, Book series published by Peter Lang Co. in Bern, Switzerland 1983. – *Sprichwörtersammlungen*, Book series published by the Georg Olms Co. in Hildesheim, Germany 1986. – *Studien zur Phraseologie und Parömiologie*. Book series published by the Norbert Brockmeyer Co. in Bochum, Germany 1993-1999. – *Supplement Series of “Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship”*, Book Series published by the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont 1997. – *Phraseologie und Parömiologie*, Book series published by Schneider Verlag Hohengehren in Baltmannsweiler, Germany 1999.
- ⁷ Wolfgang Mieder, *International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology*. Volume 1: A-M, Volume 2: N-Z. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009.
- ⁸ Wolfgang Mieder, *Deutsche Sprichwörterforschung des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1984.
- ⁹ Wolfgang Mieder, *Sprichwort, Redensart, Zitat. Traditionelle Formelsprache in der Moderne*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1985.
- ¹⁰ Wolfgang Mieder, *Proverbs Are Never Out of Season. Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- ¹¹ Wolfgang Mieder, *Phrasen verdreschen. Antiredensarten aus Literatur und Medien*. Wiesbaden: Quelle & Meyer, 1999.
- ¹² Wolfgang Mieder & Janet Sobieski, *Proverb Iconography. An International Bibliography*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999.
- ¹³ Wolfgang Mieder & Anna Tóthné Litovkina, *Twisted Wisdom. Modern Anti-Proverbs*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 1999.
- ¹⁴ Wolfgang Mieder, *Proverbs Are the Best Policy. Folk Wisdom and American Politics*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2005.
- ¹⁵ Wolfgang Mieder, “*Hänsel und Gretel*.” *Das Märchen in Kunst, Musik, Literatur, Medien und Karikaturen*, Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2007.
- ¹⁶ Wolfgang Mieder & Janet Sobieski, “*Gold Nuggets or Fool’s Gold?*” *Magazine and Newspaper Articles on the (Ir)relevance of Proverbs and Proverbial Phrase*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2006.

¹⁷ Wolfgang Mieder, *Sprichwörter sind Goldes wert. Parömiologische Studien zu Kultur, Literatur und Medien*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2007.

¹⁸ Wolfgang Mieder, "Proverbs Speak Louder Than Words." *Folk Wisdom in Art, Culture, Folklore, History, Literature, and Mass Media*. New York: Peter Lang, 2008.

¹⁹ Wolfgang Mieder, "Märchen haben kurze Beine." *Moderne Märchenreminiszenzen in Literatur, Medien und Karikaturen*. Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2009.

²⁰ Wolfgang Mieder, "Yes We Can." *Barack Obama's Proverbial Rhetoric*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009.

²¹ See a book review by Minas Al. Alexiadis: W. Mieder, *Proverbs Are the Best Policy. Folk Wisdom and American Politics*, in the Greek Daily Newspaper *Kathimerini*, October 20, 2009.

²² Wolfgang Mieder, "A House Divided." *From Biblical Proverb to Lincoln and Beyond*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 1998. – Wolfgang Mieder & George B. Bryan, *The Proverbial Winston S. Churchill: An Index to Proverbs in the Works of Sir Winston S. Churchill*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995. – Wolfgang Mieder, *The Politics of Proverbs. From Traditional Wisdom to Proverbial Stereotypes*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997. – Wolfgang Mieder, "No Struggle, No Progress." *Frederick Douglass and his Proverbial Rhetoric for Civil Rights*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001. – Wolfgang Mieder, "Call a Spade a Spade." *From Classical Phrase to Racial Slur. A Case Study*. New York: Peter Lang, 2002. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Proverbs are the Best Policy. Folk Wisdom and American Politics*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2005. – Wolfgang Mieder, "Yes, We Can." *Barack Obama's Proverbial Rhetoric*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009.

²³ Arist. N. Doulaveras (ed.), *I paroimiologiki kai paroimiografiki ergografia tou Dem. S. Loukatou (The Paremiological and Paremiographical Writings of Dem. S. Loukatos)*. Athens : Poreia Publishing, Athens, 1994, pp. 453-456.

²⁴ Dem. S. Loukatos, "H paroimia sti sygkroni politiki gelografia" (The Proverb in Modern Political Cartoons), *Laografia* 34 (1985-1986), 143-150, Athens 1988 (= Arist. N. Doulaveras (ed.), *I paroimiologiki kai paroimiografiki ergografia tou Dem. S. Loukatou (The Paremiological and Paremiographical Writings of Dem. S. Loukatos)*), ibid., pp. 457- 463.

²⁵ Minas Al. Alexiadis, "O paroimiakos kai gnomikos logos ton Ellinon Politicon" (Proverbial and Maxim Discourse of Greek Politicians. Samples of the Athenian Press), *Scientific Yearbook of the Philosophical School of Athens University*, 40 (2008-2009), 45-66. See also: Zoe Gavriilidou, "Le proverbe dans la presse grecque," *Proverbium* 20 (2003), 187-203.

²⁶ Dem. S. Loukatos, *Synxrona Laografica (Folklorica Contemporanea)*, Athens : A. Myrtidi, 1963, pp. 33-37.

²⁷ Arist. N. Doulaveras, *Neoellinikos Paroimiakos Logos (Modern Greek Proverbial Discourse)*. Athens : Stamoulis Publishing, Salónica, 2010, p. 73.

²⁸ Minas Al. Alexiadis, “Antiparoiomies (Anti-proverbs) in Athenian newspapers,” International Scientific Conference, “*Popular Culture and Artistic Discourse (Poetry-Prose-Theatre)*,” organized by the Research Centre for Greek Folklore, Academy of Athens (8-12 December 2010) (= Minas Al. Alexiadis, *Entypa mesa epikoinonias kai laikos politismos (Printed Means of Communication and Popular Culture. Modern Folklore)*. Athens: Institute Book – A.Kardamitsa, 2011, pp. 83-124. See also: Minas Al. Alexiadis, *Entypi diafimisi kai laikos politismos (Printed Advertising and Popular Culture)*. Athens: Armos Publishing – Institute of Folk Culture of Karpathos, Department of Philology of University of Athens, 2014, pp. 113-131).

²⁹ Wolfgang Mieder, *Antisprichwörter*, 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache, 1982, 1985, and 1989.

³⁰ Wolfgang Mieder & A. T. Litovkina, *Twisted Wisdom, Modern Anti-Proverbs*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 1999.

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“MANY DROPS OF WATER MAKE AN OCEAN”¹
METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS IN
WOLFGANG MIEDER’S PAREMIOLOGICAL WORK

PROFESSOR MARIANTHI KAPLANOGLOU

Minas Alexiadis’s introduction has given us an idea about the size and depth of Wolfgang Mieder’s work. I would concentrate on a brief account of certain methodological aspects of this work and try to explain why it is theoretically and methodologically framed by the discipline of folklore.

In the beginning we may wonder why proverbs occupy the central stage in his pioneering research. Let me propose an explanation:

The study of folklore and its expressions, like customs, folktales, proverbs etc., is carried out by the discipline of Folklore and other related disciplines in essentially two differentiated directions: the first one (we may call it the direction of social anthropology) studies folklore under the prism of unifying concepts as in the concept of the underlying structure. The same discipline often uses the term “construction” referring to cultural products, a term somehow rigid; what happens then with the dynamism of folklore which can be under continuous reappropriation?

The discipline of Folklore follows a different approach: it considers folk culture as a procedure of constant transmission and change; for example, it considers every specific genre of folk speech not as a typological abstraction but as “an ontological entity with a defined set of relations between language, symbols and reality” (to quote Dan Ben-Amos’s famous phrase). In this framework a single person is not a passive tradition bearer but an active agent taking part in the process of its transformation. Thus the polysemanticity and polyfunctionality (as are the terms used by W. Mieder) of a folklore genre can be fully explored.

In his paremiological and other pioneering studies, Mieder always holds this synthetic view of folklore research: he focuses on proverbs as expressions of worldview as well as personal

communicative strategies; through the prism of intertextual analysis of oral variants and written texts he charts the historical itineraries of proverbs as well as their ongoing reappraisal in our times, even in the present (like his study on *Barack Obama’s Proverbial Rhetoric*). Thus he breaks new ground on complex matters generated by the appropriation of folklore in the new media technologies and its inscription in an international agenda of cultural politics. He studies proverbs at a global level always taking into account their local variants.

Although he considers structural analysis important, he does not abstain from the contextual usage of proverbs in active verbal communication. He examines proverbs as a symbolic system representing collective mentality and the so-called common sense but he does not consider proverbs as universal truths; he rather pays attention to their contrasting aspects which hide a deeper reality of unsolvable tensions in the social sphere. In this way Mieder enlightens us on the very genre of folk literature and on the societies which use it. In his own words, “one could go so far as to say that there is a ‘story’ behind every proverb, and it is usually a sizeable task to deal with just one text in this diachronic and semantic fashion.” If every proverb or better every single variant is a drop, then Mieder’s interest for each drop amounts to the mastering of a whole ocean which as a semantic whole is bigger than the simple sum of its parts.

[the address was delivered in Greek]

¹ Wolfgang Mieder, Stewart A. Kingsbury, and Kelsie B. Harder (eds.), *A Dictionary of American Proverbs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 169.

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF
PROFESSOR WOLFGANG MIEDER
TO INTERNATIONAL PAREMIOLOGY

PROFESSOR ARISTEIDES N. DOULAVERAS

Mr Rector of the University of Athens,
Mrs Dean of the School of Philosophy,
Mrs President of the Department of Philology,
Mr President of the Greek Folklore Society,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear students,

It's a great honor and unique privilege for me to speak from the tribune of the University of Athens for the distinguished folklorist and paremiologist, professor at the University of Vermont, Wolfgang Mieder, and I want to thank Prof. Minas Al. Alexiadis for his kind invitation to participate in this prestigious event and also the authorities of the University of Athens.

It was in 1984, when as a young philologist teacher I have had the first contact with Wolfgang Mieder. My memorable professor Demetrios S. Loukatos had recommended that I should subscribe to *Proverbium*, a Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship, in the U.S.A, the publishing of which had been undertaken by Professor Wolfgang Mieder. Since then, we occasionally had communication and collaboration in the yearbook, while our meeting in Athens in 2009 at the International Conference for Folk Narratives, renewed our relationship and gave us great pleasure.

It is certain that Dem. S. Loukatos from the world of divine bliss will rejoice and smile with happiness knowing that his special friend and colleague Wolfgang Mieder is honored today by the University of Athens.

Professor Wolfgang Mieder is a distinct personality, internationally known for his vast folklore and especially for his paremiological work. He has opened new ways of study in the field of Folklore and promoted paremiological studies much more than anybody else.

His work is mainly related to German, English and American folklore, history of the German language, Middle Ages and especially to the study of the proverb.¹ It is of course of great scholarly interest because of its theoretical pursuits and its contemporary and original research approach. His contribution to the field of International Paremiology can be summarized as follows.

He has taught mainly paremiological subjects for decades at the university and gave instructions for the work on proverbs to students at the undergraduate, Master and Ph.D. levels. Wolfgang Mieder has supervised 34 theses at the Master degree and he participated in 14 others as a committee member. He was also primarily responsible for the preparation of 17 doctoral theses.

Professor Mieder is the author and publisher of largely innovative books for the study of proverbs.² The number of his writings is incredible! By March 2012 he had published 205 books, as you have already heard. In his books he studies the meaning and morphology of proverbs, the proverbial language, the relationship of proverbs with politics, press, mass media and advertising, the iconography of proverbs, their presence in fiction and poetic texts, the Biblical proverbs, the contemporary function of proverbs, the anti-proverbs, etc.

He has issued many books on International Proverb Bibliography,³ which are valuable and necessary books for every paremiological study. In this work a lot of international paremiological research has been recorded. For example, in Mieder's *International Proverb Scholarship. An Annotated Bibliography* in four volumes,⁴ 7.368 entries have been registered, which clearly shows the great extent of international proverb research.

He also published numerous articles, around 465, in various related journals on folklore but mainly on proverb issues.

He participates willingly in international congresses with interest announcements on folklore and proverbs. His participation was always expected with great interest from his colleagues and they all waited for his scientific paremiological wisdom.

He has written 120 book reviews, in which he in fact gives lessons on proverbs but also highlights the global proverb research.

He has promoted the study of the proverb in Europe and America, even with a lot of lectures (over 327) on proverb top-

ics. He published a massive *Dictionary of American Proverbs* based on oral sources and he reprinted remarkable collections of old proverb books, providing valuable research tools to paremiologists.⁵

He also published his own correspondence⁶ with distinguished and leading folklorists and paremiologists such as Alan Dundes, Lutz Röhrich and Shirley L. Arora. In this correspondence they often talk about various interesting and topical proverb issues and they give the opportunity to the readers to enjoy their dialog and the essence of their thoughts. In the forthcoming issue 43 of the Greek yearbook "Laographia" his correspondence with Dem. S. Loukatos will be printed, under Mieder's and my editorial care.

Finally, in 1984 he began to publish the highly valued and well known *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* with its by now 31 volumes (2014). It is an annual publication of about 550 pages that includes studies on proverbs in five languages. A member of the editorial board was also Dem. S. Loukatos along with other leading folklorists and paremiologists like Shirley L. Arora, Alan Dundes, Iver Kjaer, Arvo Krikman, Matti Kuusi, G.L. Permyakov, Lutz Röhrich and Vilmos Voigt.

The contribution of *Proverbium* to international proverb scholarship since then till now is huge. *Proverbium* is an international forum where the world's paremiologists express their ideas, their thoughts, the results of their research and they learn about new publications. In this yearbook Wolfgang Mieder himself published excellent articles. He also wrote remarkable book reviews for publications and, most importantly, he recorded unfailingly new and reprinted proverb collections and the new international proverb scholarship – very important tools for the study of proverbs.

The recognition of his excellent and internationally known work was expressed repeatedly with 25 awards received from associations, universities, academies of sciences and other bodies, as we have already heard.

Five books also are dedicated to him. Three of them on his 60th birthday⁷, another on his 62nd⁸ and a fifth on his 65th⁹ birthday.

In short, Wolfgang Mieder has been a prolific writer, a prominent scientific personality in the field of international paremiology, a worldwide highly esteemed scholar, an indefatigable researcher, an inspiring teacher and the reference center of international proverb studies. His main purpose was to do his best and serve others, especially his students, colleagues, and fellow paremiologists throughout the world. Let me mention here that Wolfgang Mieder is the first professor of Folklore from abroad who is honoured by the University of Athens as Honorary Doctor.

The international assessment of this eminent and distinguished man, for his own personality and his unique work, is obvious in the following words in the *Festschrift* dedicated to him on his 60th birthday¹⁰:

“When it comes to proverb scholarship, we have all been taught by the same master, Wolfgang Mieder, without question one of the greatest paremiologists of all time. His body of work on proverbs is so extensive as to make it nearly impossible to say anything new, but we nonetheless dedicate our efforts to that very purpose as a way of thanking him for his brilliant leadership in the field of international proverb scholarship, his unsurpassed intellectual generosity, and his incredible humor, kindness, and spirit....”

[the address was delivered in Greek, but the following remarks were in English]

My dear Colleague Professor Wolfgang Mieder,

I feel extremely happy to participate in today's commemorative event, organized by the famous University of Athens for your personality and your work. Congratulations *de profundis*! Of course, your dearest wife Barbara Mieder, the valuable companion of your life, who is with us tonight, deserves to share this honor with you.

Dear friend and distinguished Colleague,

Welcome to the academic family of the University of Athens!

Notes for Doulaveras:

¹ See his Curriculum Vitae in his website: <http://www.uvm.edu/~grdept/documents/MIEDERvita030512.pdf>

² See some of them: Wolfgang Mieder, *Das Sprichwort in unserer Zeit*. Frauenfeld: Huber Verlag, 1975. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Antisprichwörter*. 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache, 1982, 1985, and 1989. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Honig klebt am längsten: Das Anti-Sprichwörter Buch*. München: Heyne, 1985. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Deutsche Sprichwörter in Literatur, Politik, Presse und Werbung*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske, 1983. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Tradition and Innovation in Folk Literature*. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1987. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Proverbs Are Never Out of Season: Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Behold the Proverbs of a People. Proverbial Wisdom in Culture, Literature, and Politics*. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2014, etc.

³ Wolfgang Mieder, *International Bibliography of Explanatory Essays on Individual Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1977. – Wolfgang Mieder, *Proverbs in Literature: An International Bibliography*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1978. – Wolfgang Mieder, *International Proverb Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography*. 4 vols. New York: Garland Publishing, 1982, 1990, 1993, and 2001 (New York: Peter Lang). – Wolfgang Mieder, *African Proverb Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: African Proverbs Project, 1994. – Wolfgang Mieder & Janet Sobieski, *Proverb Iconography: An International Bibliography*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999. – Wolfgang Mieder, *International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology*. Volume 1: A-M, Volume 2: N-Z. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009. – Wolfgang Mieder, *International Bibliography of Paremiography. Collections of Proverbs, Proverbial Expressions and Comparisons, Quotations, Graffiti, Slang, and Wellerisms*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2011.

⁴ See note 34.

⁵ See the book review: Aristeides N. Doulaveras: W. Mieder, St. Kingsbury, K.B. Harder, *A Dictionary of American Proverbs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, *Loagaphria* 36 (1993), 301-304.

⁶ Wolfgang Mieder, “Best of All Possible Friends.” *Three Decades of Correspondence Between the Folklorists Alan Dundes and Wolfgang Mieder*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2006. – Wolfgang Mieder, “Freundschaft ist des Lebens Salz.” *Dreieinhalb Jahrzehnte Korrespondenz zwischen den Folkloristen Lutz Röhrich und Wolfgang Mieder*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2007. – Wolfgang Mieder, “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.

⁷ Janet Sobieski (ed.), “A Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed.” *A Festschrift for Professor Wolfgang Mieder on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, Febru-

ary 17, 2004. Burlington, Vermont, The University of Vermont, 2004. – Csaba Földes (ed.), *Res humanae proverbiorum et sententiarum. Ad honorem Wolfgang Mieder*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2004. – Kimberly J. Lau, Peter Tokofsky, and Stephen D. Winick (eds), “What Goes Around Comes Around.” *The Circulation of Proverbs in Contemporary Life. Essays in Honor of Wolfgang Mieder*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2004.

⁸ Chilukuri Bhuvaneswar, *Down the Proverb Lane. Musings of a Paremiologist. An Interview with Wolfgang Mieder. A Festschrift for Mieder at 62*. Hyderabad, India: The Proverbial Linguistics Group, 2006.

⁹ Kevin J. McKenna, *The Proverbial “Pied Piper.” A Festschrift Volume of Essays in Honor of Wolfgang Mieder on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009.

¹⁰ Kimberly J. Lau, Peter Tokofsky, and Stephen D. Winick (eds.), “What Goes Around Comes Around.” *The Circulation of Proverbs in Contemporary Life. Essays in Honor of Wolfgang Mieder*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2004, p. 1.

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“DIFFERENT PROVERBS FOR DIFFERENT TIMES”
PROVERBAL DISCOURSE AT THE
CROSSROADS TO MODERNITY

WOLFGANG MIEDER

Rector of the University of Athens,
Dean of the School of Philosophy,
President of the Department of Philology,
Director of the Section of Byzantine Literature and Folklore,
President of the Greek Folklore Society,
Dear colleagues, friends, and students,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Permit me to begin these remarks by expressing my sincere gratitude for the great honor that I am receiving from the internationally renowned University of Athens. I would like to thank the Rector of this distinguished university Professor Theodore Fortsakis, the Dean of the School of Philosophy Professor Helen Karamalegou, the President of the Department of Philology Professor Erasmia-Louise Stavropoulou, and the colleagues of the Department of Philology for their unanimously approved proposal for my proclamation as an honorary doctorate recipient. I also would like to thank my three eminent colleagues for their kind words regarding my scholarly work: Professor of Folklore Minas Al. Alexiadis, Director of the Section of Byzantine Philology and Folklore, Associate Professor of Folklore Marianthe Kaplanoglou, and Associate Professor of Folklore Aristeides N. Doulaveras. Of course, I also thank all of you in the audience for being present this evening at a most special occasion of my scholarly life.

When I received the incredible news in the summer of 2013 that the University of Athens would bestow the title of Honorary Doctor of Philosophy in the field of Philology upon me, I spontaneously wrote to Prof. Minas Alexiadis with a copy to Prof. Aristeides Doulaveras that stated in part:

Today is the 4th of July, and you know that is our big national holiday here in the United States. We remember the birth of this country on this day, and everybody is in

a festive and joyful mood, thankful for everything that this democracy, based on the old Greek idea of a free society, has accomplished during more than two hundred years. So you can imagine how excited I was when I discovered on my computer screen the line “Honorary Doctorate” [the official announcement of June 25, 2013, arrived by airmail a few days later]. My heart raced, and I nervously opened your letter, and then I read your wonderful letter with the most exciting news of my life! I simply cannot believe it, Minas! An honorary doctorate for little Wolfgang from the prestigious University of Athens! What an incredible honor for me and all paremiologists in the world! As I receive this honor, I know it is not just for me personally but for all proverb scholars of all times, starting right in your country with Aristotle all the way to Demetrios Loukatos, Archer Taylor, Matti Kuusi, Lutz Röhrich, Alan Dundes, Aristeides Doulaveras and, of course, yourself. It is a sincere recognition of proverb scholarship throughout the world, and I am so deeply honored to have been selected for this special award for my labors. [...]

Both my dear wife Barbara and I were so overwhelmed that we were literally speechless about this generous academic recognition by one of the most famous universities in the world. I say we, because it is important for you to know that I would not be standing in front of you without my wife’s support and love during the past forty-five years. And, of course, I would also not be standing in the limelight today were it not for my deceased best friend, the internationally celebrated folklorist Alan Dundes, who should be positioned in front of me right now.

But speaking of friends, I also want to mention another departed internationally recognized friend, namely Demetrios Loukatos from Greece, whom I met together with Alan Dundes the first time in the summer of 1974 at the Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research at Helsinki in Finland. I learned so much from these two great scholars and many others, on whose broad shoulders I have had the privilege and joy to stand for several decades. My vast correspondence with both of them and many other philologists in general and folklor-

ists in particular reveal how important such scholarly and personal connections are for the meaningful advancement of knowledge. I will never forget how Demetrios Loukatos influenced me when I began my paremiological studies, especially since he was one of the first paremiologists who looked at the use and function of proverbs in politics and the mass media of the modern age. And what a welcome surprise it was when Aristeides Doulaveras in 1994 sent me a massive volume of writings on proverbs by Loukatos that he edited in appreciation of this doyen of Greek paremiology. In the meantime, Evlampia Chelmi, Carlos Crida Álvarez, and Zoe Gavrilido have also made important contributions to the proverbial discourse in modern Greece. But it is Aristeides Doulaveras who has been of major influence regarding proverbs in the modern world, notably by his study on the proverbial materials in Nikos Kazantzakis' novel *Zorba the Greek* (1946) and the invaluable volume of his essays on *Modern Greek Proverbial Discourse*. The same holds true for Minas Alexiades whose articles on proverbs in Greek newspapers and in the speeches of Greek politicians provide ample proof that proverbial wisdom plays a significant role in journalistic and political communication in Greece, where traditional proverbs are also changed into innovative anti-proverbs that fit the signs of the time. All of this is convincingly argued in his important book on *Printed Media and Popular Culture: Studies in Contemporary Folklore*. The three of us, Minas Alexiades and Aristeides Doulaveras in Greece, and I in distant Vermont in the United States, make a wonderful folkloric and paremiological triad, and I especially want to thank my two friends from the bottom of my heart for recommending me for the very special honor that I am receiving here at the University of Athens today.

From what I have said thus far it becomes clear that as I am about to speak a few words about the proverbial discourse at the crossroads to modernity I am in a way carrying owls to Athens, as the ancient Greek proverbial expression would have it. The people from my old homeland Germany still employ the German loan translation "Eulen nach Athen tragen," but the English equivalent "To carry owls to Athens" has been replaced by the British "To carry coals to Newcastle" that is on its way to distinction in the United States. It is a shame to lose such expressions from our cultural literacy, and I am trying to convince my

proverb students in Vermont, known for its sweet maple syrup, that they should adopt my invention of “To carry maple syrup to Vermont,” but that has not yet happened. Their professor is simply not important enough to influence the Anglo-American language to that degree. But fear not, there are many proverbs and proverbial expressions of ancient Greek times that continue to be in frequent use as loan translations throughout the world, to wit “Big fish eat little fish,” “One swallow does not make a summer,” and “One hand washes the other.” Many of the classical Greek, Roman, and medieval Latin proverbs that were spread throughout Europe and beyond in part by Erasmus of Rotterdam’s *Adagia* and its translations into the vernacular languages will survive because they represent what the great Finnish paremiologist Matti Kuusi, close friend of Demetrios Loukatos, Alan Dundes, and me, has called “monumenta humana,” that is concise generalizations of apparent truths reflecting basic and common experiences and observations of human existence.

But we live in a mightily different world today! Not that there have not been revolutionary changes during the past three millennia, but the societal changes that have taken place during the past hundred years or so occur with such extraordinary speed at all fronts including science, technology, mass communication, electronics, and much more, that we must not be surprised that these modern developments and upheavals bring about changes in worldview and mores that find their way into bits of wisdom that make up a whole new array of modern proverbs for which no antecedents before the somewhat arbitrarily chosen year 1900 can be found. Yes, indeed, as we should expect, the modern age creates its own folklore and consequently also its unique proverbs that are spread with never before imagined or experienced speed by way of the printed, audial, visual, and electronic communication available throughout the world. Twenty years ago I entitled one of my books *Proverbs Are Never Out of Season. Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age*. That is still true today, because we appear to need these ready-made sapiential formulas to hit the proverbial nail on the head in our oral and written communications. I showed all of this in that book, and I recall also that it led to an awareness worldwide of so-called anti-proverbs, that is the intentional serious or playful modification of standard proverbs to express a different point of view. What I did not

stress at that time is the ever more noticeable prevalence of absolutely new proverbs that could only be created because of our drastically changed existence. It is this aspect about which I would like to say a few words in the time allotted to me this evening, and by making use of the established proverbial formula “Different Xs for different Ys,” I would like to put my remarks under the heading of “Different proverbs for different times” that might become a proverb in its own right just as some anti-proverbs have become *bona fide proverbs* among the folk of today.

In the modern world the ancient languages of Greek and Latin have been replaced by English as the *lingua franca* not just of Europe but the entire world. Not surprisingly, older Anglo-American proverbs like “The early bird catches the worm” and “Good fences make good neighbors” as well as new American proverbs like “A picture is worth a thousand words” and “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence” are now conquering the world in their original English language or as loan translations. This is also true this late for the Bible proverb “A house divided against itself cannot stand” (Mark 3:25) that became a secularized folk proverb because of Abraham Lincoln’s frequent use of it as he dealt with the ills of slavery that were tearing the young American nation apart. In German, Martin Luther’s translation of this Bible verse had not become proverbial, but Willy Brandt, the former mayor of Berlin and federal chancellor, had discovered the English text when he gave a lecture at the celebration of Lincoln’s 150th birthday in 1959 at Springfield, Illinois. And then, when the unification of Germany took place in 1989/90, he remembered it and employed it numerous times in public speeches in his very own and good translation “Ein in sich gespaltenes Haus hat keinen Bestand.” As such, it was picked up by the media, and it has now in a very short time become a German proverb many centuries after the Bible by way of the United States and a politician aware of the expressive power of proverbial rhetoric.

These examples alone illustrate that it is high time that folklorists and especially paremiologists pay even more attention to the phenomenon of how traditional proverbs survive in the modern age and, very importantly, what new proverbs have been created in recent time. After all, the creation of new folklore has not

come to an abrupt end. In fact, the treasure trove of folkloric materials is an ever changing phenomenon, with some elements most likely remaining in circulation forever, while others, as for example misogynous and stereotypical proverbs, might hopefully disappear. All of this is happening while the changing times with their new attitudes and values will bring about innovative proverbial wisdom that spreads via the English language worldwide with never before observed rapidity. My friends Charles C. Doyle, Fred R. Shapiro, and I have documented over 1400 such proverbs in our *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs*, and it is our hope that similar collections will now be assembled for other languages and cultures as well. While these new proverbs follow long established structural patterns and poetic devices, their realia and images reflect new insights into life's tribulations, trials, successes, and joys. At least in English texts, their average length remains seven words, with the shortest proverbs consisting of but two words, namely a topic and a comment, as it was already the case with proverbs like the Greek “Time flies.” But modern two-word proverbs like “Life sucks,” “Sex sells,” and “Speed kills” have their at times pessimistic, sexual or prophetic wisdom. Many modern proverbs proceed in a similar fashion, to wit a few short proverbs about life: “Life begins at forty,” “Life comes at you fast,” “Life is a bitch,” and “Nothing in life is simple.” But there are also longer more metaphorical proverbs about the modern challenges of life: “Life is not a spectator sport,” “If life hands you lemons, make lemonade,” and “Life is a journey, not a destination.” The latter proverb refers to the idea that life should be filled with life-long learning and never ceasing activity, where people face new demands in a committed and engaged fashion, as can be seen from such proverbs as “A crisis is an opportunity,” “Dreams can't come true unless you wake up,” “The glass is either half empty or half full,” “There is no such thing as a free lunch,” “Miracles take hard work,” “Progress comes in small steps,” and “Think outside the box.” While time does not permit that I go into more detail about the origin, distribution, and contextualized use of these proverbs and others, let it be stated in general that for quite a few modern proverbs we actually know the author or where they appear in print for the first time, be it as a newspaper headline, an advertisement, a statement in a movie, a line in a poem or a song, etc. Be that as it

may, I certainly think that modern proverbs can match the wisdom of traditional proverbs in their new, albeit at times sexual if not obscene, language. Erotic and scatological folklore and proverbs have always existed, but collectors of older times have usually not recorded such matters. Those times have changed, and we included ample texts of that sort in order to present an authentic record of today's folk wisdom couched in proverbs.

I truly value the proverbs that I have already cited, and that is also true for new proverbs that express the complexities of the modern sociopolitical world, as for example "Freedom is not for sale," "Give peace a chance," and "Think globally, act locally." We have traced this last proverb back to 1942, a bit of a surprise for my proverb students who think that it originated more recently by way of the environmental movement and its concern with globalization. Of course, there is also the somewhat related proverb "It takes a village to raise a child" that the African American author Toni Morrison used during a 1981 interview. Since then, it is often cited as an African proverb, but no prototype from Africa has hitherto been found, with the Swahili proverb "One hand cannot bring up a child" at least also referring to the fact that raising a child is a communal effort. It appears that the proverb is actually of American coinage, and once former first lady, senator, and secretary of state Hillary Rodham Clinton entitled her acclaimed book *It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us* in 1996, its wisdom spread throughout the United States and beyond. Here are her introductory words to the book with the proverb acting as a powerful leitmotif throughout:

It takes a village to raise a child. I chose that old African proverb to title this book because it offers a timeless reminder that children will thrive only if their families thrive and if the whole society cares enough to provide for them. [...] The village can no longer be defined as a place on the map, or a list of people or organizations, but its essence remains the same: it is the network of values and relationships that support and affect our lives. (Clinton 1996: 11-13; Mieder 2014: 202)

Clearly, today's children are citizens not only of a village in a particular country but of the entire interconnected world. The moral values with which they will be raised will not only come

from their home environment but also from the ethics that govern the globe. My own creation of the anti-proverb “It takes a village to change the world” takes these considerations from the local and national sphere to global concerns, emphasizing the need for responsible thinking and humane acting in a world committed to the safeguarding of the environment, human rights, and world peace where no person is an island in a brotherly and sisterly network of mutuality.

There are so many more proverbs I would like to comment on in much more detail, but I am afraid your patience with me will run out. So let me conclude with three of my favorite proverbs that I instill in my students in a large lecture course on proverbs that I offer every second semester. There is first of all the quintessential and liberating American proverb “Different strokes for different folks” that was coined among urban African Americans, with the earliest reference thus far being from a May 1945 newspaper account. It was popularized by way of heavyweight boxing champion Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) in 1966, the refrain in the song “Everyday People” (1968) by the group Sly and the Family Stone, and the successful television comedy show *Diff'rent Strokes* (1978-86). The general meaning of this modern piece of folk wisdom is that people should accept and respect the differences that exist among them and that everybody ought to have the chance to act out individual freedoms. The term “strokes” in slang actually has a sexual connotation, and it might well be that the proverb at its beginning referred indirectly to differences in coital practices. Be that as it may, in general parlance today “strokes” are understood as signifying ways, means, actions, movements, approaches, etc. The proverb originated in a country where individual rights and modes of behavior are valued, encouraged, and championed. Civil rights and freedom of expression belong to the basic principles of the American way of life. It is truly a liberating piece of proverbial wisdom and as such considerably different from the many prescriptive and proscriptive proverbs that abound in verbal communication throughout the world. After having discussed the origin, dissemination, meaning, use, and function of this proverb in literature, the mass media, songs, cartoons, comic strips, greeting cards, etc., I always add an important caveat for my students. After all, care must be taken that the liberating message of the

proverb is not interpreted to imply the absolute rule of individual egocentricity without proper consideration of social mores and behavior, that is, the emphasis on diverse freedoms must not be perverted to an ethical relativity. The proverb does not signify a *carte blanche* for “everything goes”!

The second proverb is the hopeful African American proverb “God can make a way out of no way” and its more popular secular variant “Making a way out of no way.” The earliest printed reference found thus far is from 1922, and it gained greater currency by way of Martin Luther King, who as civil rights leader, defender of nonviolence in the struggle of desegregation, champion for the poor, anti-war proponent, and visionary of an interrelated world of free people made the proverb to his credo as an expression of hope for oppressed and disadvantaged people everywhere. The proverb’s encouraging wisdom and orientation to the future made it the perfect verbalization for King’s religious and secular messages filled with faith, hope, and love for a world house of peace and freedom. Against all odds and obstacles, Martin Luther King, as a servant of God and humanity, was indeed a man who believed in and succeeded in “making a way out of no way” in words and deeds. There is then no doubt that this proverb epitomizes the entire civil and human rights movement in the United States and throughout the world, and as such it is the perfect verbal sign for unwavering hope and courageous action. And as their professor, I feel that my students would do well to keep this proverb of hope in mind as they face their own challenges and struggles during their life ahead.

Finally, during the semester and at its end, I draw my students’ attention to the significance of the golden rule that in the Bible appears as “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Matthew 12:7). During the semester we look at the effective use of this ultimate moral code by such renowned politicians and social reformers as Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Harry S. Truman, and Martin Luther King, with the final discussion being devoted to President Barack Obama’s reliance on this humane law of life. As a powerful example I cite what the new President Obama said on June 4, 2009, to several thousand Arabic students at Cairo University in Egypt. It is a call for a new world order of brother- and sisterhood informed by empathy and mutual re-

spect, with the center of this powerful peroration being occupied by the proverbial golden rule:

All of us share this world for but a brief moment in time. The question is whether we spend that time focused on what pushes us apart, or whether we commit ourselves to an effort – a sustained effort – to find common ground, to focus on the future we seek for our children, and to respect the dignity of all human beings. [...] There's one rule that lies at the heart of every religion – that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us. This truth transcends nations and peoples – a belief that isn't new; that isn't black or white or brown; that isn't Christian or Muslim or Jew. It's a belief that pulsed in the cradle of civilization, and that still beats in the hearts of billions around the world. It's a faith in other people, and it's what brought me here today. (Mieder 2014: 192-193)

This is rational and emotional rhetoric, coming both from the mind and the heart, as it calls for a new world order based on ethical values that bind humankind together. As their “grandfatherly” professor I simply want to leave my students with these three proverbs that might guide them through the exciting times that lie before them. An informed and empathetic adherence to their wisdom and that of other old and new proverbs should set them and all of us on a responsible and fulfilled life's journey in which vigorous proverbial discourse will doubtlessly play a major communicative role in the confrontation with the challenges of modernity.

I am deeply honored and humbly proud of having become a member of your most excellent University of Athens.

Sas epharisto poli!

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NAEIMEH ALSADAT GHARAVI

EINE KONTRASTIVE UNTERSUCHUNG ÜBER
AUSGEWÄHLTE PERSISCHE UND DEUTSCHE
SPRICHWÖRTER

Abstract: Sprichwörter sind in jeder Sprache beliebt und geläufig und sie spiegeln unterschiedliche Aspekte einer Kultur wider, deswegen ist das interkulturelle Studium derselben notwendig. Wenn man die jeweilige Kultur und den Ursprung von Sprichwörtern nicht gut kennt, dann wirken sie teilweise wie sinnlose Sätze und sind manchmal unverständlich; ist ein Sprichwort nicht verständlich, kann dann weder die gegenseitige Kultur verstanden werden noch können die Menschen in gutem Kontakt miteinander stehen. In diesem Sinne geht es in dem vorliegenden Aufsatz um eine interkulturell-kontrastive Untersuchung von persischen und deutschen Sprichwörtern. Zu diesem Ziel geht die Arbeit von persischen Sprichwörtern aus; es wird der Ursprung der Sprichwörter bis zu den heiligen Schriften, in der Literatur und im Volksmund zurückverfolgt, damit die kulturellen Eigenschaften der beiden Sprachen, Persisch und Deutsch, einander näher gebracht und ihre Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten herausgearbeitet werden.

Keywords: persische Sprichwörter, deutsche Sprichwörter, religiöse Sprichwörter, literarische Sprichwörter, Sprichwörter aus dem Volksmund, kontrastive Untersuchung, Übersetzung der Sprichwörter.

Einleitung

Sprichwörter benutzt man in unterschiedlichen Situationen, ohne auf Sachen oder Personen direkt Bezug zu nehmen; sie benutzt man, um die eigene Meinung, Einstellung oder Erkenntnis zu äußern, also muss man sie kennen, um in sozialen Gemeinschaften und Alltagssituationen, die Gedanken des anderen nachzuvollziehen. Interkulturell betrachtet wirken Sprichwörter teilweise wie sinnlose Sätze, wenn man die jeweilige Kultur nicht gut kennt. Dieser Aufsatz ergibt, dass Sprichwörter manchmal unverständlich sind, wenn man ihre Entstehungsgeschichte nicht kennt. Und wenn ein Sprichwort nicht verständlich ist, kann dann die gegenseitige Kultur auch nicht verstanden werden. Verstehen und

Verständigen durch Sprichwörter hilft Menschen, sich der Standpunkte der anderen bewusst zu werden und zueinander Beziehung aufzunehmen.

Beim Betrachten des Standes der Forschung gibt es jedoch, trotz der genannten Wichtigkeit, schwerlich Werke, die, entweder auf Persisch oder auf Deutsch, Sprichwörter der beiden Sprachen gegenseitig miteinander vergleichen. Zu den wichtigsten Werken im Bereich der persischen Sprichwörter gehören die folgenden:

Muhamed Ali Hablerudi ist ein iranischer Wissenschaftler, der in Indien lebte und zwei Bücher über persische Sprichwörter geschrieben hat: *Dschame-o-Tamsil* (*Sprichwörtersammlung*) und *Madschma-ol-Amsal* (*Das umfassendste Sprichwortwerk*); in manchen Fällen beinhalten sie die Geschichten hinter den Sprichwörtern. *Allameh Dehkhoda* hat auch eine bedeutsame Sprichwörtersammlung namens *Amsal-o Hekam-e Dehkhoda* (*Sprichwörter und Weisheiten Dehkhodas*), die in vier Bänden erschien und etwa dreißigtausend Sprichwörter und Redewendungen beinhaltet; für etwa zweihundert von ihnen sind Entstehungsgeschichten angegeben worden. Nach Dehkhoda hat *Amir Qoli Amini* zwei Sammlungen namens *Farhang-e Awaam* (*Kultur der Völker*) und *Dastanha-ye Amsal* (*Geschichten hinter Sprichwörtern*) herausgegeben. Diese Bücher erwähnen auch die ursprünglichen Geschichten hinter den genannten Sprichwörtern. Später publizierte der Dozent an der Teheraner Universität *Ahmad Bahmanyar*, *Dastan Name-ye Bahmanyari* (*Sprichwörtersammlung von Bahmanyari*), in der er rund sechstausend Sprichwörter gesammelt hat. Aber noch eine wichtige Sammlung im Bereich der persischen Sprichwörter ist das Werk *Ketab-e Kutsche* (*Das Buch der Straße*) in elf Bänden, das der iranische Dichter und Schriftsteller *Ahmad Schamlu* zusammentrug, und soweit wie möglich auf die Herkunft der Sprichwörter hinwies. Weiter veröffentlichte *Hasan Zolfagari* eine persische Sprichwörtersammlung namens *Dastanha-ye Amsal* (*Geschichten hinter Sprichwörtern*), in der ungefähr zwei-tausendfünfhundert Einträge vorkommen. Der Autor hat Geschichten hinter den gesammelten Sprichwörtern aus etwa dreihundert Quellen untersucht, und sie in Form von Prosa oder Gedicht wiedergegeben. Kontrastiv betrachtet gab *Alireza Amouzandeh* das *Deutsch-Persische Sprichwörter Lexikon* heraus, in welchem er Hunderte deutscher Sprichwörter und Redensarten und ihre Äquivalente auf Persisch sammelte. In

manchen Fällen gibt der Verfasser die Herkunftsgeschichte der Sprichwörter oder Redensarten auf Persisch wieder (Gharavi, 2012, S.19f.).

Im Bereich der deutschen Sprache erschienen ebenfalls Sammlungen über Sprichwörter und Redensarten: Das bedeutsamste Werk über deutsche Sprichwörter heißt *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon*, herausgegeben vom deutschen Germanisten Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander in fünf Bänden, die circa 250.000 Einträge umfassen. Karl Simrock veröffentlichte auch eine Sammlung, namens *Die Deutschen Sprichwörter*. Später wurde *Die Deutsche Sprichwörterkunde* von Friedrich Seiler publiziert, sie enthält die im Volksmund geläufigen Sprichwörter vom Althochdeutschen bis zum 19. Jahrhundert sowie einige Redensarten. Und weiter informiert das *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten* von Lutz Röhrich über rund 15000 Redensarten und ihre Herkünfte (ebd., S.21).

Die oben genannten Werke sind die bedeutsamsten Untersuchungen im Bereich Sprichwörter, sowohl auf Persisch als auch auf Deutsch. Es bestehen Lücken, sodass kaum eine Untersuchung gemacht wurde, die die persischen und deutschen Sprichwörter interkulturell vergleicht, womit sich der vorliegende Aufsatz beschäftigen möchte.

Gliederung der Sprichwörter

Persische Sprichwörter können auf drei Ebenen untersucht werden: religiöse Sprichwörter, literarische Sprichwörter und Sprichwörter aus dem Volksmund (vgl. Gharavi, 2012, S.5f.; Fazelzad und Gharavi, 2012, S.43). Nachdem Iran islamisiert wurde, sind die meisten Perser zum Islam konvertiert, und da das heilige Buch des Islams, Koran, in der arabischen Sprache verfasst ist, prägte sich die persische Sprache stark von der arabischen. Aus diesem Grund ist diese Sprache reich an Sprichwörtern, die aus dem heiligen Koran stammen. Diese Sprichwörter sind entweder Auslegung der koranischen Verse auf Persisch, oder die koranischen Verse selbst, d.h. auf Arabisch (vgl. Hekmat, 2008, S.84ff.). In der deutschen Sprache wurden viele biblische Verse sprichwörtlich benutzt, nachdem Luther die Bibel in diese Sprache übertragen hatte (vgl. Amouzandeh, 2007, S.18; Schäfer, 1998, 2004, S.8). Also haben viele deutsche Sprichwörter entweder

genau den Wortlaut der Lutherbibel, oder sind von ihr abgeleitet (vgl. Schäfer, 1998, 2004, S.9).

Ein großer Teil von persischen Sprichwörtern gehört zu den literarischen Sprichwörtern. In der persischen Literatur gibt es zwei Formen von Sprichwörtern: 1. Sprichwörter in Gedichtform, 2. Prosaische Sprichwörter (Zolfagari, 2007, S.43). In der persischen Dichtung gibt es zahlreiche Verse, die sprichwörtlich benutzt werden. Diese können in zwei Gruppen gegliedert werden: Manchmal dichtet ein Dichter einen Vers, der so lehrhaft ist, dass er sprichwörtlich gebraucht wird, ein solcher Vers wird *Massal-e Manzum* bzw. Sprichwortgedicht genannt (vgl. Zolfagari, 2007, S.49). Aber manchmal gebraucht ein Dichter ein Sprichwort in einem Vers, das schon im Volksmund umläuft. Wenn dies der Fall ist, kommt das Sprichwort in zwei Formen vor: Der Dichter gebraucht entweder dasselbe Sprichwort oder eine sinngemäße Wiedergabe. Dies wird auf Persisch *Erssäl-ol-massal* genannt, und wenn in einem Vers zwei Sprichwörter vorkommen, dann wird diese Form *Erssäl-ol-massalain* genannt (vgl. Zolfagari, 2007, S.47ff.; Ersal-ol Masal, o.J.). Auf prosaische Sprichwörter stößt man meistens in literarischen Genren wie Parabeln und Fabeln, aber es kann nicht bewiesen werden, ob literarische Sprichwörter zunächst in geschriebener Form vorkamen oder vom Volksmund in der Literatur aufgenommen wurden (vgl. Zol-fagari, 2009, S.15). Diese Sprichwörter haben viele Ähnlichkeiten in beiden Sprachen, Persisch und Deutsch.

In der Alltagssprache äußern Menschen viele Bemerkungen bei unterschiedlichen Anlässen, die wegen ihrer belehrenden Tendenz geläufig werden (vgl. Wander, 2001, Bd.1, S.6). Da sie diese Eigenschaft haben, auf Dinge und Personen nicht direkt, sondern indirekt Bezug zu nehmen, werden sie rasch beliebt und bald sprichwörtlich. Diese sind Sprichwörter aus dem Volksmund. Manchmal sind Urheber und Entstehungsgeschichte dieser Sprichwörter bekannt und manchmal bleiben sie absolut unbekannt. Auf Persisch können diese in vier Gruppen unterteilt werden: 1. Sprichwörter ohne bekannte Urheber; 2. Sprichwörter mit historischem Hintergrund; 3. Sprichwörter von bekannten Figuren; 4. Sprichwörter aus Märchen und Epen (Gharavi, 2012, S.81ff.).

Definition des Begriffs Sprichwort

In der persischen Sprache heißt das Sprichwort *Massal*. Dieses Wort wurde aus der arabischen Sprache in die persische übertragen; über seine Bedeutung gibt es unterschiedliche Meinungen. Einige Gelehrte sind der Meinung, dass *Massal* Ähnlichkeit bedeutet. In diesem Sinne werden zwei Sachen einander angenähert, um einen eigenen Gedanken anschaulich zu machen; und dies heißt Vergleich. *Massal* ist demnach ein Satz, der eine Situation mit unterschiedlichen Wörtern beschreibt (vgl. Razavi, 2009, S.13f.).

Es wird jedoch nicht jeder Satz Sprichwort genannt, deswegen haben sich seit jeher viele Sprachwissenschaftler mit Sprichwörtern beschäftigt und Untersuchungen auf diesem Feld gemacht. Sie haben unterschiedliche Definitionen vom Begriff Sprichwort gegeben, die uns helfen, die Bedeutung dieses Wortes besser zu verstehen: Unter persischen Gelehrten hat Bahmanyar (2002, zit. n. Amouzandeh, 2007, S.2) eine umfassende Definition von *Massal* bzw. Sprichwort gegeben: „*Massal* ist ein kurzer Satz zusammengesetzt aus Vergleich oder einem weisen Inhalt, der wegen fließender Wörter, anschaulicher Bedeutung und eleganter Kombination unter Völkern beliebt wurde; und sie werden ohne Änderung oder mit geringer Änderung in den Unterhaltungen gebraucht.“¹

Nach Erhard Agricola (1969, zit. n. Mieder, 1991, S.16) leitet sich der Begriff Sprichwort von den mittelhochdeutschen Worten *diu spriche* und *wort* ab. Beide Teile bedeuten das Gleiche: Etwas, das ausgesprochen, das oft gesprochen wird. Friedrich Seiler (1922, S.2) fasst zusammen: „Im Volksmund umlaufende, in sich geschlossene Sprüche von lehrhafter Tendenz und gehobener Form.“ Aber der Germanist Wolfgang Mieder (Anonym, 2005, S.4) ist mit der oben genannten Definition nicht einverstanden: „Das Sprichwort als in sich geschlossene Form zu bezeichnen, ist irreführend. Es handelt sich beim Sprichwort zwar um vollständige Sätze, aber nur selten um Sprüche von mehreren Zeilen.“ Also sollte seiner Meinung nach die Definition deutlich machen, dass es sich bei Sprichwort meist nur um einen kurzen Satz handelt.

Die Erklärung von Lutz Röhrich (2000, Bd.1, S.23) stimmt mit der gesuchten Beschreibung schon überein: „[...] einen

festgeprägten Satz, der eine unser Verhalten betreffende Einsicht oder eine Aufforderung zu einem bestimmten Verhalten ausspricht“. Aber auch Hermann Bausinger (1968, zit. n. Mieder, 1991, S.16) liefert einen Zusatz zu dieser Definition: „Das Sprichwort ist eine partiell gültige Lebensregel.“ Das Wort *partiell* deutet hier darauf hin, dass das Sprichwort keinesfalls immer Gültigkeit besitzt. Schließlich definiert Wolfgang Mieder (1991, S.17): „Sprichwörter sind allgemein bekannte, festgeprägte Sätze, die eine Lebensregel oder Weisheit in prägnanter, kurzer Form ausdrücken.“ Diese Definition hat anscheinend die wichtigsten Merkmale in sich, die ein Sprichwort besitzen soll: bekannt, lehrhaft und kurz. Da es jedoch eine allgemeingültige Definition des Begriffs Sprichwort noch nicht gibt, wird sich diese Arbeit an die Definition Mieders halten, die verständlicher, deutlicher und bündiger scheint.

Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Redensarten

Die sprichwörtlichen Redensarten unterscheiden sich von Sprichwörtern dadurch, dass sie keinen ganzen Satz darstellen. Sie sind also feststehende Ausdrücke in einem Kontext. Ein Beispiel dafür ist: Jemandem die Daumen drücken. Es muss also erst durch Subjekt und Objekt ergänzt werden, sonst ist es unvollständig und sinnlos. Ein anderer Punkt ist, dass bei der Verwendung der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten, die Zeit, das Subjekt und Objekt geändert werden können (vgl. Röhrich, 2000, Bd.1, S.22). Die oben genannte Redensart könnte also folgende Formen haben:

Ich drücke dir die Daumen.
Er hat mir die Daumen gedrückt.
Drück mir die Daumen!
Wir drücken ihnen die Daumen.
usw.

Auch in der persischen Sprache begegnet man den sprichwörtlichen Redensarten. Ein Beispiel dafür ist: Die Füße in die Schuhe eines anderen stecken. Im Deutschen sagt man: Den Löffel in anderer Töpfe stecken (vgl. Simrock, 2003, S.336). Unterschiedliche Personen können in diese Redensart eingesetzt werden. Ein Beispiel dafür ist: Steck deine Füße nicht in meine Schuhe! Ein anderes Merkmal der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten ist, dass sie eine übertragen-bildliche Bedeutung haben und ihre Gebrauchs-

funktion sich weit von der primären Bedeutung der Einzelwörter entfernt hat (vgl. Röhrich, 2000, Bd.1, S.32). In diesem Sinne ist mit der oben genannten sprichwörtlichen Redensart gemeint, dass man sich nicht in die Angelegenheiten anderer einmischen soll (Gharavi, 2012, S.17). Auch haben sprichwörtliche Redensarten gar keine lehrhafte oder ethische Tendenz (Röhrich, 2000, Bd.1, S.23).

In den meisten Fällen können Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Redensarten zueinander umgebildet werden. In diesem Zusammenhang kann eine sprichwörtliche Redensart zu einer allgemein gefassten Lehre umgebildet werden; dann ist daraus ein Sprichwort geworden. Auch umgekehrt können viele Sprichwörter zu sprichwörtlichen Redensarten umgebildet werden, indem eine einzelne Person zu ihrem Subjekt gemacht wird (vgl. Seiler, 1922, S.12). Ein Beispiel dafür ist die sprichwörtliche Redensart *sich nach der Decke strecken!*, die Goethe (zit. n. Röhrich, 2000, Bd.1, S.24) als Sprichwort in sein Gedicht so aufgenommen hat: Wer sich nicht nach der Decke streckt, dem bleiben die Füße unbedeckt.

Es gibt jedoch auch Sprichwörter, die als sprichwörtliche Redensarten verwendet werden. Zum Beispiel das Sprichwort *Gebranntes Kind scheut das Feuer* lässt Bert Brecht (zit. n. Röhrich, 2000, Bd.1, S.24) seine Mutter Courage redensartlich sagen: Ich bin ein gebranntes Kind. Die Grenze zwischen Sprichwörtern und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten ist schwer zu finden, denn sprichwörtliche Redensarten haben das sprechende, kräftige und einprägsame Bild, das wie Sprichwörter in ihrem Wortlaut traditionell festgefügt ist (vgl. Röhrich, 2000, Bd.1, S.24). Aus diesem Grund werden in diesem Aufsatz beide Formen verwendet.

Vergleich zwischen persischen und deutschen Sprichwörtern

Unter Phraseologie versteht man „Gesamtheit typischer Wortverbindungen, fester Fügungen, Wendungen, Redensarten einer Sprache“ (Duden, 2012). Übersetzung der Phraseologismen soll möglichst bezüglich einer Kultur sein, besonders wenn zwei Kulturen fremd voneinander sind. Kühn (1994, zit. n. Alkok, 2007, S.59) ist der Ansicht, dass Phraseologismen in drei Formen übersetzt werden können: 1. Wörtlich, wenn in der Zielsprache ein gleichlautender Phraseologismus existiert; 2. Übersetzung eines

Phraseologismus durch ein Synonym in der Zielsprache; 3. Umschreibung durch nicht-phraseologische Formen. In diesem Zusammenhang werden persische und deutsche Sprichwörter in drei Gruppen gegliedert (vgl. Gharavi, 2012, S.17ff.; Fazelzad und Gharavi, 2012, S.46):

1. Sprichwörter, die wortwörtlich übereinstimmen. In diesem Fall gelten die folgenden Feststellungen: „1. Gemeinsamkeiten der historisch-gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung; 2. Gleiche ethnisch-moralische Wertvorstellung, dadurch der gleiche Symbolwert gewisser sprachlicher Ausdrucksmittel oder Formulierungen; 3. Gemeinsamkeiten in Sitten, Volksbräuchen; 4. Unmittelbare Übernahme aus dem Ausgangstext in den Zieltext, ohne spätere semantische und syntaktisch-strukturelle Modifizierung; 5. Eine DrittSprache als gemeinsame Quelle der Übernahme, gemeinsames Kulturgut wie etwa die Bibel, die Antike, große Werke der Weltliteratur“ (vgl. Hessky, 1987, zit. n. Alkok, 2007, S.46f.). Beispiel dafür ist folgendes Sprichwort, das eine Übertragung aus einer Fabel Äsops ist (vgl. Röhrich, 2000, Bd.4, S.1428):
Eine Schwalbe macht noch keinen Sommer (ebd., S.1428). Die Perser verwenden ebenso dasselbe Sprichwort mit gleichen Bildern und ähnlicher Aussage auf Persisch.²
2. Synonyme Sprichwörter; wenn dies der Fall ist, gibt es in der Ausgangs- und Zielsprache, Äquivalente, die unterschiedliche Bilder, aber gleiche Bedeutung bzw. Aussage haben. Ein Beispiel dafür ist:
Eulen nach Athen tragen. Diese Redensart lautet auf Persisch, wenn man dies wörtlich ins Deutsch überträgt: Kreuzkümmel nach Kerman tragen. Kerman ist eine Provinz im Iran, wo Kreuzkümmel angepflanzt wird (vgl. Ketabi, 2005, S.135), wenn also jemand Kreuzkümmel dorthin trägt, hat er was Überflüssiges gemacht. In beiden Sprachen werden diese Redensarten in Fällen verwendet, wo etwas überflüssig und nutzlos ist (vgl. Röhrich, 2000, Bd.1, S.19; Ketabi, 2005, S.133). Diese Redensarten haben normalerweise unterschiedliche Äquivalente, die „in ganz unterschiedlichen Kulturbereichen beheimatet“ (Röhrich, 2000, Bd.1, S.19) sind. Im oben erwähnten Fall sagt man beispielsweise auf Deutsch folgendes Sprichwort:

Wasser in die Elbe schütten (Röhricht, 2000, Bd.1, S.19). Und auf Persisch: Flüsschen in die See schütten (Ketabi, 2005, S.138).

3. Sprichwörter, die durch nicht phraseologische Formen umgeschrieben werden. Wenn es in der Zielsprache keine Äquivalenz für ein Sprichwort gibt, so muss das wortwörtlich oder sinngemäß übersetzt werden. Ein Beispiel dafür bietet die persische Dichtung von Saadi:

Rat der ganzen Welt ist in den Ohren der Narren, wie Wind in einem Käfig und Wasser im Sieb.³

Religiöse Sprichwörter (aus dem Koran und der Bibel)

In der persischen sowie deutschen Kultur stößt man oft auf Sprichwörter, die ihren Ursprung in heiligen Büchern haben (vgl. Amouzandeh, 2007, S.18). Da die heiligen Bücher aus einer gemeinsamen Quelle stammen, haben religiöse Sprichwörter in beiden Kulturen gleiche Aussagen. Wie oben erwähnt, sind die meisten Perser nach Islam konvertiert, und da das heilige Buch Islams, Koran, auf Arabisch verfasst ist, prägte sich die persische Sprache stark von der arabischen. Aus diesem Grund stößt man in dieser Sprache auf viele Sprichwörter, die aus dem heiligen Koran stammen. Diese sind entweder Auslegung der koranischen Verse auf Persisch oder die koranischen Verse selbst, d.h. auf Arabisch (vgl. Hekmat, 2008, S.84ff.).

In der deutschen Sprache wurden viele biblische Verse sprichwörtlich benutzt, nachdem Luther die Bibel von griechischen und hebräischen Sprachen in diese Sprache übertragen hatte (vgl. Amouzandeh, 2007, S.18; Schäfer, 1998, 2004, S.8). Also haben viele deutsche Sprichwörter entweder genau den Wortlaut der Lutherbibel, oder sind von ihr abgeleitet (vgl. Schäfer, 1998, 2004, S.9). Es gibt jedoch einen Unterschied zwischen biblischen und koranischen Sprichwörtern: Sprichwörter, von koranischen Versen übernommen, sagen die Perser auf Arabisch und nicht auf Persisch. Beispiel:

إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

(in schā' Allā)

Wenn Allah will.

Aber die Deutschen verwenden die biblischen Sprichwörter auf Deutsch; d.h. die Übersetzung Luthers aus den hebräischen und griechischen Sprachen. In Bezug auf oben genannte Erklärungen werden Sprichwörter aus den heiligen Büchern in drei Kategorien untersucht (vgl. Gharavi, 2012, S.24; Fazelzad und Gharavi, 2012, S.49):

1. Sprichwörter, die Erklärungen von heiligen Versen sind; diese stammen aus dem religiösen Glauben und Lehren und äußern die Aussagen, die in heiligen Versen eingebettet sind. Beispiel:

Auf die Worte kommt's nicht an, die Tat macht den Mann (Wander, 2001, Bd.5, S.398).

Dieses Sprichwort wird dann benutzt, wenn jemand viel redet und wenig oder gar nichts tut!

Auf Persisch sagt man wortwörtlich übersetzt: Ein Mann ist der, der den Mund zumacht, und die Arme öffnet⁴ (Bahmanyar, 1990, zit. n. Razavi, 2009, S.186). Mit *Mann* ist hier *der Mensch* gemeint, und mit *die Arme öffnen*, meint man *Hand anlegen* (Gharavi, 2012, S.30).

Sowohl das deutsche als auch das persische Sprichwort haben ihre Wurzel in heilige Schriften. In der Bibel gleichen jene, die reden und es nicht halten, der Wolke ohne Regen: Wer viel verspricht und hält nicht, der ist wie Wolken und Wind ohne Regen (Luther 1912, Spr. 25:14). Und im Koran steht:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ أَمْنَوْا لَمْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَكُونُونَ.

O, die ihr glaubt, warum sagt ihr, was ihr nicht tut? (Koran, 61:2).

2. Sprichwörter, die entweder ein ganzer koranischer Vers oder ein Teil eines Verses sind. Diese sind unter Persern auf Arabisch geläufig. Beispiel:

إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
(in schā' Allāh)

Das bedeutet übersetzt: Wenn es Allah (Gott) will (Koran, 37:102).

Unter Persern, wenn man etwas beabsichtigt, dann sagt man „in schā' Allāh“, damit Gott einem in der Aufgabe hilft (Gharavi, 2012, S.58). Im Koran liest man:

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بْنَيَ إِلَيْيَ أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ إِفْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمِرُ سَجَدْنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ.

Als dieser das Alter erreichte, daß er mit ihm laufen konnte, sagte er: „O mein lieber Sohn, ich sehe im Schlaf, daß ich dich schlachte. Schau jetzt, was du (dazu) meinst.“ Er sagte: „O mein lieber Vater, tu, was dir befohlen wird. Du wirst mich, wenn Allah will, als einen der Standhaften finden.“ (Koran, 37:102)

3. Biblische Verse, die entweder ein Teil eines biblischen Verses oder ein ganzer Vers sind. Diese sind sprichwörtlich unter Deutschen üblich. Ein Beispiel dafür lautet:

Suche, so wirst du finden (Simrock, 2003, S.507).

Dieses Sprichwort ist ein Teil eines biblischen Verses, der besagt:

Bittet, so wird euch gegeben; suchet, so werdet ihr finden; klopft an, so wird euch aufgetan. Denn wer da bittet, der empfängt; und wer da sucht, der findet; und wer da anklopft, dem wird aufgetan (Luther 1912, Matthäus 7:7-8).

Literarische Sprichwörter

In der persischen Literatur gibt es zwei Formen von Sprichwörtern: 1. Sprichwörter in Gedichtform, 2. Prosaische Sprichwörter (vgl. Zolfagari, 2007, S.43). In der persischen Dichtung gibt es zahlreiche Verse, die sprichwörtlich benutzt werden. Diese können in drei Gruppen gegliedert werden (vgl. Gharavi, 2012, S.64ff.; Fazelzad und Gharavi, 2012, S.50ff.):

1. Manchmal dichtet ein Dichter einen Vers, der so lehrhaft ist, dass er sprichwörtlich gebraucht wird, ein solcher Vers wird Massal-e Manzum bzw. Sprichwortgedicht genannt (vgl. Zolfagari, 2007, S.49). Als ein Beispiel dafür gibt es den folgenden Vers von dem iranischen Dichter, *Ferdausi* (2001, S.50):

اگر چند باشد شب دیر باز بر او تیرگی هم نماند دراز

Dieser bedeutet: Nachdem das Wasser dunkelt, leuchtet es, nach der dunklen Nacht kommt die Sonne (Gharavi, 2012, S.65).

Die deutsche Äquivalenz lautet: Auf einem bösen Tag gehört ein guter Abend (Simrock, 2003, S.510).

Diese Sprichwörter deuten darauf hin, dass nach etwas Bösem etwas Schönes folgt. Der Unterschied zwischen persischen und deutschen Sprichwörtern liegt darin, dass die Deutschen *böser Tag* als Metapher für etwas Böses gebrauchen und *guter Abend* bildlich für etwas Schönes, während die Perser *Nacht* und *Dunkelheit* bildlich für böse Zeiten, und *Sonne* oder *Helligkeit* als Metapher für gute Zeiten gebrauchen (Gharavi, 2012, S.65).

2. Erssal-ol-Massal: manchmal gebraucht ein Dichter ein Sprichwort in einem Vers, das schon im Volksmund umläuft. Damit möchte der Dichter auf eine Weisheit hinweisen. Wenn dies der Fall ist, kommt das Sprichwort in zwei Formen vor: der Dichter gebraucht entweder dasselbe Sprichwort oder eine sinngemäße Wiedergabe (vgl. Zolfagari, 2007, S.47ff.). *Rohani* (zit. n. Amouzandeh, 2007, S.183), ein iranischer Dichter, bietet dafür das folgende Beispiel:

فقیه شهر چه خوش گفت به گوش حمارش هر آنکه
خر شود البته می شوند سوارش

Der Vers bedeutet übersetzt: Der Weise flüsterte seinem Esel ins Ohr: wer sich zum Esel macht, dem sitzt man auf (Gharavi, 2012, S.68). Dieser beinhaltet ein Sprichwort, das wortgetreu lautet: Wer sich zum Esel macht, dem sitzt man auf (ebd., S.68).

Die deutsche Äquivalenz lautet: Wer sich zum Esel macht, der muss Esels Arbeit thun (Wander, 2001, Bd.1, S.872).

Esel stellt in beiden Sprachen *Dummheit* dar, so wird er metaphorisch für eine dumme Person gebraucht. In diesem Sinne meinen diese Sprichwörter, wenn jemand sich dumm stellt oder verhält, werden ihn andere ausnutzen (Gharavi, 2012, S.68).

3. Erssal-ol-Massalain: wenn ein Dichter zwei schon im Volksmund geläufige Sprichwörter in seinem Vers braucht, dann ist die Rede von Erssal-ol-Massalain (vgl. Zolfagari, 2007, S.47ff.). Der folgende Vers von *Saadi* (2001, S.781), einer der großen Dichter Irans, ist ein Beispiel:

نصیحت همه عالم چو باد در قفس است به گوش
مردم ندان چو آب در غربال

Dieser bedeutet wortwörtlich übersetzt: Rat der ganzen Welt ist in den Ohren der Narren, wie Wind in einem Käfig und Wasser im Sieb (Gharavi, 2012, S.71). Der Vers beinhaltet zwei persische Redensarten in sich:

Wind in den Käfig sperren, und: Wasser im Sieb halten (ebd., S.71).

Die beiden Redensarten weisen auf eine unmögliche Sache hin, also meint der sprichwörtliche Vers, dass es nutzlos ist, den Narren einen Rat zu geben (ebd., S.71). Auf Deutsch gibt es keine genaue Äquivalenz für das genannte Sprichwort, aber es kann als Folgendes übertragen werden: Ein Sieb hält kein Wasser (Wander, 2001, Bd.4, S.551).

Die zweite Gruppe von literarischen Sprichwörtern gehört zu jenen aus prosaischen Werken. Das Genre dieser Werke ist normalerweise die Parabel oder die Fabel. Die großen Schriftsteller haben einige Geschichten so lehrhaft geschrieben, dass deren Ergebnis und Aussage sprichwörtlich gebraucht werden (vgl. Gharavi, 2012, S.72; Fazelzad und Gharavi, 2012, S.52). Es ist zu betonen, dass in Persisch zwei unterschiedliche Wörter für prosaische Sprichwörter benutzt werden: Wenn Tiere, Pflanzen oder andere Dinge so personifiziert werden, dass es in der realen Welt unmöglich ist, dann heißt das Sprichwort *Massal*, aber wenn die Rede von Personen und realen Möglichkeiten ist, dann nennt man dies *Tamssil* (vgl. Zolfagari, 2009, S.17).

1. Sprichwörter aus Fabeln: Fabeln sind kurze, belehrende Erzählungen, die meistens von Tieren oder Mischwesen zwischen Menschen und Tieren (Fabelwesen) handeln. Am Ende einer Fabel steht immer eine Moral, die normalerweise sprichwörtlich gebraucht wird (vgl. Gharavi, 2012, S.77). Ein Beispiel dafür bietet eine Fabel von Äsop:

„Die Feier vom Fuchs und Storch ist doch bekannt. Der Storch brachte dem Fuchs eine Speise in einem langhalsigen Geschirr und schlürfte selber mit seinem Schnabel, während der Fuchs nur das Äußere des Geschirrs lecken konnte. Als Rache lud der Fuchs den Storch ein, setzte eine dünne Speise auf ganz flachem Teller vor ihn undleckte sie dann, während der Storch nur seinen Schnabel nass machen konnte.“ (vgl. Bahmanyari, 2002, zit. n. Zolfagari, 2009, S.810)

Aus dieser Fabel stammt das persische Sprichwort: Feier vom Storch und Fuchs⁵ (Gharavi, 2012, S.79). In deutscher Sprache gibt es auch ein ähnliches Sprichwort mit gleichen Bildern: Wenn der Fuchs und Storch einander zu Gast einladen, so betrügt einer den anderen (vgl. Wander, 2001, Bd.1, S.1252).

Die beiden Sprichwörter werden verwendet, wenn zwei einander wechselseitig betrügen (Röhrich, 2000, Bd. 2, S.483).

2. Sprichwörter aus Parabeln: Parabel ist eine kurze, moralische und ethnische Erzählung, in der stets die Menschen Protagonisten sind. In der persischen Sprache wird dieses literarische Genre *Hekāyat* (Pluralform: *Hekāyāt*) genannt (Gharavi, 2012, S.72). Es gibt viele Sprichwörter, deren Wurzel in den Parabeln bzw. *Hekāyāt* zu finden ist (Razmdschu, 1991, S.179). In der persischen Sprache sind die bedeutsamsten Parabeln jene von *Saadi*. Hier ist ein Beispiel:

„Einmal war ein König mit seinem Knecht auf einem Schiff, und der Knecht hatte nie vorher die See gesehen und die Härte des Schiffes erfahren. Er fing also an zu weinen, und ein Schauder ergriff ihn. Sosehr man auch mit ihm freundlich umging, er wurde nicht ruhig, und es störte des Königs Genuss. Man wusste keinen anderen Ausweg. ,Wenn Sie es befehlen, werde ich ihn auf irgendeine Art und Weise zum Schweigen bringen‘, sagte da dem König ein Gelehrter, der auf dem Schiff war. ,Das ist doch sehr lieb von Ihnen‘, sagte der König. Da befahl der Weise, den Knecht in die See zu werfen. Er ging ein paar Mal unter, dann griff man ihn an den Haaren, zog ihn ans Deck und band ihn mit beiden Händen ans Ruder. Als er sich sicher fühlte, setzte er sich in eine Ecke und beruhigte sich. ,Was für eine Lebensweisheit war das?‘, fragte der König überrascht. ,Er hatte vorher nie das Leid

erlebt, zu ertrinken und war nicht dankbar für die Sicherheit auf dem Schiff‘, sagte der Gelehrte. Also ist der, wer gelitten hat, für seine Gesundheit dankbar.⁴ (vgl. Saadi, 2001, S.40)

Der letzte Satz dieser Parabel wird auf Persisch sprichwörtlich gebraucht: Der, wer gelitten hat, ist für seine Gesundheit dankbar⁵ (Gharavi, 2012, S.72). Auf Deutsch gibt es die folgende Äquivalenz: Wer kein Unglück gehabt hat, der weiß von keinem Glück zu sagen (Simrock, 2003, S.203).

Sprichwörter aus dem Volksmund

In der Alltagssprache äußern Menschen viele Bemerkungen bei unterschiedlichen Anlässen, die wegen ihrer belehrenden Tendenz geläufig werden (vgl. Wander, 2001, Bd.1, S.6). Manchmal sind Urheber und Entstehungsgeschichte dieser Sprichwörter bekannt und manchmal bleiben sie absolut unbekannt. In diesem Sinne werden Volksmundsprichwörter in der persischen Sprache in vier Kategorien untersucht (Gharavi, 2012, S.81ff.; Fazelzad und Gharavi, 2012, S.53ff.):

1. Sprichwörter ohne bekannte Urheber: Einige Sprichwörter stammen aus Geschichten, die Menschen selbst gestaltet haben, und sie sind im Laufe der Zeit von Mund zu Mund weitergeleitet worden, also haben sie keinen bekannten Urheber. Diese sind wegen ihrer lehrhaften Aussage beliebt und umlaufend (vgl. Zolfagari, 2007, S.41). Ein Beispiel dafür ist: Ein Gast bleibt einen Tag oder zwei Tage⁷ (Gharavi, 2012, S.83).

Damit ist gemeint, dass wenn ein Gast lange bleibt, dann wird er dem Gastgeber zur Mühe (ebd., S.83). Hinter diesem steckt die folgende Geschichte:

„Einmal geht ein Vater vom Dorf zur Stadt, um seinen Sohn zu besuchen. Nach ein paar Tagen langweilt sich die Schwiegertochter. Als sie einmal ihr Kind in die Babywiege gelegt hat, schiebt sie das Kind vor und sagt: „Schlaf schlaf schlaf Kind, ein Gast bleibt ein Tag oder zwei Tage.“ (vgl. Zolfagari, 2009, S.807f.)

Auf Deutsch gibt es viele Sprichwörter mit gleicher Aussage, z.B.: Dreitägiger Gast ist jedermann zur Last (Simrock, 2003, S.167). Wander (2011, Bd.1, S.1348) meint:

„Nicht allein darum, weil seine Bewirthung mit Kosten und Umständen verbunden ist, sondern weil nach der Verfassung der alten Deutschen der Wirth für das Thun und Lassen eines Gastes, den er länger als zwei Tage beherbergte, verantwortlich war. Von diesem Gesichtspunkte aus konnte freilich der Gast für den Wirth zu einer Last werden.“

2. Sprichwörter mit historischem Hintergrund: Es gibt ein paar Sprichwörter, deren Wurzel auf die Geschichte zurückgeht, das heißt einige bekannte Leute, wie Könige, Gelehrte und andere, benutzten in früheren Zeiten Sätze, die bald sprichwörtlich gebraucht wurden (vgl. Zolfagari, 2007, S.41). Hier ist ein Beispiel:

„Einmal besuchte ein Dichter Karim Khan Zand⁸ und las eine Lobballade, die er für ihn gedichtet hatte. Der König befahl seinem Wesir, Scheich Ali Khan Zanganeh⁹, dem Dichter eintausend Aschrafi¹⁰ als Belohnung zu geben. Scheich Ali Khan, der diese Summe als zu hoch befand, schob auf, sie zu bezahlen und jeden Tag hatte er eine Ausrede, bis endlich der Dichter hilflos zum König ging und berichtete, dass Scheich Ali Khan ihm die Belohnung nicht gebe. Der König blickte in Richtung von Scheich Ali Khan und befahl, dem Dichter zweitausend Aschrafi zu geben. Scheich Ali Khan hatte schon verzögert eintausend zu bezahlen, geschweige denn zweitausend. Der Dichter ging nochmals zum König und beschwerte sich bei ihm über Scheich Ali Khan. Der König befahl diesmal, ihm dreitausend Aschrafi zu geben. Scheich Ali Khan zog es immer weiter hinaus, bis der Dichter sich so viel bei dem König beschwerte, dass seine Belohnung mehrere Tausend erreichte, und das letzte Mal, wo der König befahl, dass Scheich Ali Khan ihm eintausend mehr schenken solle, blickte er in Richtung von Scheich Ali Khan und meinte: ,Wir wissen doch, warum du die Bezahlung verzögertest, aber ich mache keinen Fehler, sondern du machst einen großen Fehler. Ich habe deswegen befohlen, ihm eintausend Aschrafi als Belohnung zu geben, weil diese Summe in unserer Staatskasse nutzlos herumliegt, und da sogar weder das Volk noch der Staat einen groschen benutzt, muss es unter dem Volk aufgeteilt werden. Aus diesem Grund erhöhe ich

jedes Mal um eintausend Aschrafi, damit der Dichter mit dieser Summe, was weiß ich, vielleicht ein Haus baut, so verdienen einige Bauarbeiter ihr Brot und kaufen Haushaltsgeräte, einige andere erreichen was, und so kommt jeder Groschen, den sie ausgeben, aus unserer Staatskasse unter das Volk.‘ Da gehorchte Scheich Ali Khan und bezahlte dem Dichter die Summe, ohne nachzudenken.“ (vgl. Amini, 1324, zit. n. Zolfagari, 2009, S.605)

Aus dieser historischen Geschichte stammt das persische Sprichwort: Der König gibt, Scheich Ali Khan aber nicht¹¹ (Gharavi, 2012, S.85). Die deutsche Äquivalenz besagt: Dazu hat Buchholz kein Geld (Simrock, 2003, S.87).

Wenn ein Untergebener nicht zulässt, dass ein Vorgesetzter den anderen hilft, verwendet man dieses Sprichwort (ebd., S.85). Die deutsche Variante hat ebenfalls ein historischer Ursprung, wie Wander in seinem *Deutsches-Sprichwörter Lexikon* (2001, Bd.1, S.499) gemeint hat:

„August Buchholz, eine stattliche Figur von 5 Fuss 10 Zoll, war, als er gerade zur Universität Halle abgehen wollte, von den Werbern Friedrich Wilhelm's I. aufgegriffen und in das Regiment gesteckt worden, welches Friedrich der Grosse noch als Kronprinz erhielt. In diesem Regiment hatte der ehemalige Studiosus theologiae 25 Jahre untadelhaft als Soldat, Corporal und Feldwebel gedient, als ihn eine Kanonenkugel bei Mollwitz zu ferner Dienst untauglich machte. Der König, der seine Treue genau kannte, ernannte ihn zu seinem Hofstaatsrentmeister und in der Folge zum Schatzmeister. Wenn dem Könige ein Vorschlag oder ein Anliegen vorgetragen wurde, das ihm nicht zusagte und zu dem er nichts bewilligen wollte, so beschied er in der obigen Form, welcher Bescheid besonders sehr oft nach dem Siebenjährigen Kriege erging, wodurch er zur sprichwörtlichen Redensart wurde. So legten ihm seine Minister einmal einen Bauanschlag vor, die Grosse Kurfürsten-Brücke am Schloss müsse hergestellt werden und es möge eine Summe von 1982 Thalern auf die Hofstaatskasse angewiesen werden; aber der Antrag ging aus dem Cabinet mit dem Vermerk zurück: »Dazu hat Buchholz kein Geld nicht!«“

3. Sprichwörter von bekannten Figuren: *Nasruddin* ist eine sehr alte Figur im persischen Geschichtenerzählen. Man kann ihn jedoch Weltbürger nennen, denn er ist in so vielen Orten gewesen, dass man nicht genau sagen kann, wo er geboren ist oder zu welcher Nation er gehört. Diese Figur ist auf Türkisch *Nasreddin Hoca* genannt und auf Arabisch *Nasraddin Joha*. Ihn bezeichnet man als dumm, aber die Wahrheit ist, dass ein Dummer zur selben Zeit weise sein kann, also werden einige seiner Weisheiten sprichwörtlich in der persischen Sprache gebraucht (vgl. Hekmat, 2008, S.69; Dehkhoda, 1986, Bd.45, S.1052; Gharavi, 2012, S.86). Eine der bekanntesten Geschichten Nasruddins lautet:

,Mullah Nasruddin ging auf eine Feier. Da seine Kleidung alt war, hat man ihn an der Tür sitzen lassen und alle anderen am besten Ort des Zimmers. Mullah übersah das, und der Tag verging. An einem anderen Tag gab es noch ein Fest in demselben Haus. Mullah trat ein mit feiner Kleidung, teuren Gebetsperlen und aufwendigem Gehstock. Sofort als er eintrat, standen alle vor ihm auf und hießen ihn willkommen. Als er sich an die Tür setzen wollte, sagten alle, Gott behüte!‘ und ließen ihn am besten Ort des Zimmers sitzen. Beim Mittagsessen legte man einen Teller voll Reis vor dem Mullah, und dieser füllte seinen Ärmel mit Reis und sagte: „Iss mein neuer Ärmel, iss!“ (vgl. Zolfagari, 2009, S.49)

Der Satz „Isst mein neuer Ärmel“¹² wurde nach dieser Geschichte unter Persern sprichwörtlich üblich. Das wird verwendet, wenn großer Wert auf Kleidung bzw. das Äußere gelegt wird (Gharavi, 2012, S.87). Die gleiche Aussage hat das deutsche Sprichwort: Das Kleid macht den Mann (Simrock, 2003, S.294). Es gibt ebenso eine andere Variante auf Deutsch, die besagt: Kleider machen Leute (Röhrich, 2000, Bd.3, S.853). Das letzte hat seine Wurzel sowohl im volkstümlichen Erzählgut als auch im literarischen Texten (ebd., S.853), zum Beispiel hat es Gottfried Keller als Titel für seine Erzählung verwendet. Die Geschichte handelt von einem Schneider, namens Wenzel Strapinski, der sich trotz Armut gut kleidet. Er kommt in einer fremden Stadt an und wird dort wegen seines Äußeren für einen polnischen Grafen gehalten. Er versucht dann zu fliehen, denn er hat diese Verwechslung aus Schüchternheit nicht aufgeklärt. Da lernt er

die Tochter eines angesehenen Bürgers kennen und die beiden verlieben sich ineinander, daher spielt der Schneider die Grafenrolle weiter. Bald wird Strapinski entlarvt und flieht, seine Braut aber findet ihn, und überzeugt davon, dass seine Liebe echt ist, heiratet sie ihn. Wenzel gründet dann ein Geschäft, verdoppelt sein Vermögen und wird ein angesehener Mann (vgl. Keller, 1959).

4. Sprichwörter aus Märchen und Epen: Märchen sind Erzählungen, in denen Fabelwesen und magische Elemente auftreten. Der Leitgedanke ist eine fiktive Welt. Märchen wurden früher vor allem durch Nacherzählen weitergegeben, wodurch sich die Geschichten immer wieder etwas veränderten, bis sog. Märchensammler sie zusammengetrugen und aufgeschrieben. Märchen haben keine festen Formen und Vorgaben in Stil und Aufbau (vgl. Best, 1982, S.303). Auf Persisch ist das Wort *Afsāneh* die Äquivalenz für Märchen. Das bekannteste Werk in der persischen Sprache gehört *Firdausī*, dem Dichter von *Schāhnāme* (vgl. Hekmat, 2008, S.25). Sein Werk ist ein Heldenepos; d.h. eine „erzählende Versdichtung größeren Umfangs in gleichmäßiger Versform“ (Duden, 2012). Aus diesem Heldenepos stammen einige persische Sprichwörter (vgl. Zolfagari, 2008). Eines von diesen Sprichwörtern ist:

Lebenselixier nach dem Tod *Sohrāb*¹³ (Gharavi, 2012, S.89). Es geht zurück auf ein Heldenlied *Schāhnāmes*.

Rostam ist der größte Held in *Schāhnāme*. Einmal als er mit seinem Pferd *Rachs* auf die Jagd geht, überschreitet er die Grenze Irans. Da beschließt er zu übernachten, und während der Nacht stiehlt man ihm sein Pferd und bringt ihn nach *Samangan*, eine Stadt von *Turan*, dem Nachbarstaat des damaligen Irans. Am nächsten Morgen geht er auf die Suche nach seinem Pferd und kommt in Samangan an. Da sieht er *Tahmine*, die Tochter des Königs von Samangan und bittet um ihre Hand. Sie heiraten und verbringen eine Nacht zusammen. Am nächsten Tag wird *Rachs* gefunden, und *Rostam* verlässt *Tahmine* und schenkt ihr zum Abschied einen Armreif.

Tahmine bekommt später einen Sohn, den sie *Sohrab* nennt. Als er erwachsen wird, fragt *Sohrab* *Tahmine* nach seinem Vater und sie sagt, dass sein Vater *Rostam* sei, und übergibt

ihm den geschenkten Armreif. *Sohrab* beschließt, in den Iran zu ziehen und seinen Vater zu suchen. Er stellt ein Heer zusammen, um *Kaykawous*, den Schah Irans, vom Thron zu stoßen und *Rostam*, seinen Vater als neuen Schah einzusetzen. Wenn Vater und Sohn dann vereint sind, könnten sie auch *Afrasiab*, den Schah von Turan, absetzen und Turan und Iran zu einem Reich vereinen.

Als *Afrasiab* diese Nachricht erfährt, denkt er sich einen teuflischen Plan aus. Er sendet ein weiteres Heer zur Verstärkung zu *Sohrab*, damit *Sohrab* und *Rostam* miteinander kämpfen und sich gegenseitig aus dem Weg räumen. *Sohrab* fällt mit seinem Heer in Iran ein, und die Nachricht erreicht Schah *Kaykawous*. Er stellt ein Heer zusammen und lässt *Rostam* rufen, um das iranische Heer anzuführen.

Am folgenden Tag kommt es zum ersten Aufeinandertreffen der Heere, wobei sich zunächst die beiden Anführer *Rostam* und *Sohrab* bekriegen. *Sohrab*, der vermutet, der Kämpfer könnte sein Vater *Rostam* sein, und ihn nach seinem Namen fragt, erhält von *Rostam* keine Antwort, da *Rostam* hinter der Frage eine Falle vermutet. Da keiner der beiden Kämpfer an diesem Tag den Sieg davonträgt, verabreden sie sich für einen entscheidenden Zweikampf für den kommenden Tag.

Am nächsten Tag treffen sich die beiden Kämpfer auf dem Schlachtfeld. *Sohrab*, der in dem ihm unbekannten Kämpfer seinen Vater vermutet, spricht *Rostam* direkt an und bietet ihm an, auf den Kampf zu verzichten und sich friedlich zu verständigen. Doch *Rostam* will den Kampf. In dem nun folgenden Ringen fällt *Rostam* zu Boden und *Sohrab* zieht seinen Dolch zum tödlichen Stoß. Da kann *Rostam* ihn mit einer List aufhalten, indem er *Sohrab* davon überzeugt, dass nach einem verlorenen Zweikampf erst bei der zweiten Niederlage der tödliche Stoß gesetzt werden darf. Wenn man als Ehrenmann gelten wolle, müsse man dem zunächst unterlegenen eine zweite Chance einräumen. *Sohrab* lässt sich darauf ein und gibt *Rostam* frei.

Rostam verlässt den Kampfplatz und geht zu einem Bergbach, an dem ein Berggeist wohnt, bei dem er vor vielen Jahren einen Teil seiner übermenschlichen Kraft gelassen hat. Der Berggeist gibt ihm seine Kraft zurück und wie verjüngt stellt sich *Rostam* nun dem weiteren Zweikampf. Mit dieser über-

menschlichen Kraft zwingt *Rostam* nun *Sohrab* zu Boden und versetzt ihm einen tödlichen Stoß mit seinem Dolch. Im Sterben eröffnet ihm *Sohrab*, dass er der Sohn *Rostams* sei und zeigt ihm den Armreif, den ihm *Tahmine* als Erkennungszeichen für seinen Vater mitgegeben hat. *Rostam*, entsetzt von seiner Bluttat, brüllt wie ein verwundeter Löwe und fällt in Ohnmacht. *Sohrab* erkennt nun, dass er von seinem eigenen Vater tödlich verwundet wurde.

Ein Bote wird gesandt, um *Kaykawous* zu überreden, mit einem Lebenselixier *Sohrab* zu helfen. Doch er lehnt ab, wenn *Rostam* ihn nicht persönlich darum bittet. *Rostam* bezwingt seinen Stolz und will *Kaykawous* um das Lebenselixier bitten, doch *Sohrab* ist in der Zwischenzeit verstorben. (vgl. Ehlers, 2002, S.109ff.)

Das persische Sprichwort lässt sich mit dem folgenden deutschen Sprichwort übersetzen:

Wenn der Kranke todt ist, kommt die Arznei zu spät (Wander, 2001, Bd.2, S.1581).

Schlussfolgerung

Die vorliegende Untersuchung über ausgewählte persische und deutsche Sprichwörter zeigt, dass sie in beiden Sprachen, Einstellungen, Glauben und Weltanschauung der beiden Nationen mit ähnlichen und manchmal auch unterschiedlichen Bildern und Metaphern widerspiegeln.

Die Studie hat den Ursprung der persischen Sprichwörter bis zu den heiligen Schriften, in der Literatur und im Volksmund zurückverfolgt, und für die genannten Beispiele passende deutsche Äquivalente gefunden. Es scheint, dass die religiösen Sprichwörter in beiden Sprachen, Persisch und Deutsch, ähnliche Inhalte und Aussagen haben; denn diese stammen aus den heiligen Schriften und haben gleiche Quellen. Im Bereich der literarischen Sprichwörter stößt man auf Verse oder Sätze, deren Wurzel in den Werken von großen persischen Dichtern und Schriftstellern zu finden ist. Diese wurden wegen ihrer Attraktivität, fließender Wörter, anschaulicher Bedeutung und eleganter Kombination unter Persern volkstümlich und geläufig. In diesem Bereich gibt es allerdings Sprichwörter in Gedichtform; für diese gibt es entweder eine deutsche Äquivalenz in Prosaform, oder sie sollten wortwört-

lich ins Deutsch übertragen werden. Für persische Sprichwörter in Prosaform gibt es in den meisten Fällen deutsche Entsprechungen. Diese beinhalten in einigen Fällen ähnliche Bilder und Metaphern, denn in beiden Sprachen stammen sie aus einer dritten Quelle, wie Fabeln von Äsop. Sprichwörter aus dem Volksmund haben ihre Quelle in unterschiedlichen Kulturbereichen, die verschiedene ethische und kulturelle Werte entweder in einer bestimmten Ära oder in allen Zeitaltern reflektieren. Für diese gibt es auch meistens deutsche Äquivalente.

Die vorliegende Studie hat versucht, anhand von vorhandenen Quellen passende deutsche Äquivalente für persische Sprichwörter zu finden und so weit wie möglich ihre Entstehungsgeschichten zu nennen, damit die ähnlichen und unterschiedlichen kulturellen Aspekte der beiden Sprachen einander näher gebracht und auch verschiedene Übersetzungsmodelle persischer und deutscher Sprichwörter vorgestellt werden.

Notes

¹ Nach Ali Asghar Hekmat (2008, S.29): Kurze, moralische Geschichten werden auf Arabisch „Massal“, in lateinischen Sprachen „Fabel“ und auf Persisch „Dästan“ oder „Dasstan“ genannt.

² Nach Alireza Amouzandeh (2007, S.110), der Verfasser von „Deutsch-Persische Sprichwörter Lexikon“, kommt die persische Variante so vor:

از یک پرسن تو تابستان نشود.

³ Auf Persisch:

نصیحت همه عالم چو باد در قفس است به گوش مردم نادان چو آب در غربال

⁴ Auf Persisch:

مرد آن است که لب بینند و بازو بگشاید.

⁵ Nach Hassan Zolfagari (2009, S.810) lautet das Sprichwort auf Persisch: مهمانی لک لک و رویا.

⁶ Nach Saadi (2001, S.40) lautet das Sprichwort auf Persisch:

قدر عاقیت کسی داند که به مصیبی گرفتار آید.

⁷ Auf Persisch:

مهمان یک روز و دو روز است.

⁸ Karim Khan Zand war ein Stammesführer, General unter Nadir Schah, später selbst Herrscher von Persien (1760–1779) und Gründer der kurzlebigen Dynastie der Zand-Prinzen (vgl. Karim Khan, 2013).

⁹ Großwesir von Schah Suleiman Safawi (vgl. Sheikh Ali Khan Zangeneh, 2012).

¹⁰ Aschrafi waren Goldmünzen ausgegeben von Muslimendynastien in Nahost, Zentralasien und Südasien (vgl. Aschrafi, 2012).

¹¹ Auf Persisch:

شاه می بخشد، شیخ علی خان نمی بخشد.

¹² Auf Persisch:

آستین نو پلو بخور.

¹³ Nach Alireza Amouzandeh lautet das persische Sprichwort:

نوشدارو بعد از مرگ سهراپ.

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ROSEMARIE GLÄSER

“OUR CHILDREN ARE THE ROCK ON WHICH OUR
FUTURE WILL BE BUILT, OUR GREATEST ASSET AS
A NATION”: MAXIMEN, SPRICHWÖRTLICHES UND
ZITATE IN DER RHETORIK NELSON MANDELAS

Abstract: The article intends to examine Nelson Mandela’s individual style and rhetoric in his autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* (1994) and in the volume of his collected speeches, *Nelson Mandela in His Own Words. From Freedom to the Future* (2003). The personality of Nelson Mandela, the first non-white South African president, was moulded by the native tradition of his Xhosa tribe, by the complex English culture which he interiorized in his adult life, and by the profound knowledge of Afrikaans language, history and politics which he acquired during his 27 years in prison. The repercussions of this varied cultural background may be found in Mandela’s use of proverbs, proverbial sayings, slogans, self-coined maxims and aphorisms, allusions to English and American literature, to antiquity and the Bible. On the whole, Nelson Mandela distrusted the ‘rhetoric’ of the former representatives of the Apartheid system. Instead, in his own political speeches in the light of ‘nation building’ he applied structural devices and figures of speech from ancient rhetoric. Moreover, a rich imagery and well-chosen phraseological units add to Nelson Mandela’s linguistic/stylistic portrait.

Keywords: Xhosa-Stammeskultur; Apartheid rhetoric vs. rhetoric and Nation Building; Sprachporträt; Sprichwörter, sprichwörtliche Redensarten, Losungen; Maximen als Eigenprägungen; literarische und kulturelle Anspielungen, Zitate

1. Einleitung

Nelson Mandela gilt als herausragende Persönlichkeit der jüngsten Zeitgeschichte, weil er das moralische und staatsmännische Format hatte, nach seiner Freilassung aus der 27 Jahre währenden Gefängnishaft auf eine persönliche Rache an seinen Peinigern und den Vertretern des Apartheid-Regimes zu verzichten und stattdessen seine ganze Kraft für die Überwindung

der Rassentrennung und den Aufbau einer Nation aus allen Teilen der Bevölkerung Südafrikas einzusetzen. Nachhaltige Selbstzeugnisse dieses Kampfes sind seine Autobiographie *Long Walk to Freedom* (1994) und seine Reden, die in dem Auswahlband *Nelson Mandela in His Own Words. From Freedom to the Future. Tributes and Speeches* (2003) anlässlich seines 80. Geburtstages erschienen.

Das Ziel der folgenden Untersuchung ist es, diese umfangreichen Dokumentationen, die sich in der Darstellungsweise wie in der Textsorte deutlich voneinander unterscheiden, hinsichtlich der Sprachverwendung Mandelas unter parömiologischem Aspekt zu analysieren, zumal seine Rhetorik auch den politischen Diskurs belegt, an dem er als Präsident Südafrikas maßgeblich beteiligt war.

Das im Titel dieses Aufsatzes angeführte Zitat, die Maxime, „*Our children are the rock on which our future will be built, our greatest asset as a nation*“, ist bezeichnend für Nelson Mandelas Ausdrucksstil, mit sprachlichen Bildern und gelegentlichen biblischen Anspielungen Menschen aller Schichten zu erreichen und richtungsweisende Sentenzen zu prägen, die zu geflügelten Worten werden konnten. Der Ausspruch stammt aus einer Rede, die Nelson Mandela nach 70 Jahren Abwesenheit in seinem Heimatdorf Qunu in der Transkei Anfang Juni 1995 hielt, um dort und im Nachbarort Nkalane eine neue Schule einzweihen (vgl. Reden, p. 253). Er ist zugleich ein Beleg für das sprachliche Material der Texte Mandelas, denen die nachfolgende Untersuchung gilt: Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Redensarten, Lösungen und Maximen, Zitate und Anspielungen auf unterschiedliche Literaturen, die Antike und die Bibel in ihrem situativen Textzusammenhang.

Im thematischen und methodischen Ansatz orientiert sich die vorliegende Studie an den Arbeiten zur „proverbial rhetoric“ amerikanischer und britischer Persönlichkeiten, die von Prof. Wolfgang Mieder an der Universität Vermont in Burlington selbst verfasst oder angeregt worden sind, wie zu den amerikanischen Präsidenten Harry S. Truman (1997); Abraham Lincoln (2000); Frederick Douglass (2001); Barack Obama (2009) sowie dem Prediger und Bürgerrechtskämpfer Martin Luther King (2010) und als Gemeinschaftsarbeit mit George B. Bryan zu dem britischen Premierminister Sir Winston Churchill (1995).

Im Unterschied zu diesen Monographien, deren Textkorpus das Gesamtwerk der genannten Persönlichkeiten umfasst, kann sich der Aufsatz über die Rhetorik des südafrikanischen Präsidenten Nelson Mandela nur auf zwei Hauptwerke stützen und hat daher den Charakter einer Repräsentativinterpretation.

2. Nelson Mandelas Autobiographie und Reden

2.1 Entstehungsgeschichte der Autobiographie Nelson Mandelas

Die Autobiographie *Long Walk to Freedom* ist ein unter Extrembedingungen entstandenes zeitgeschichtliches Werk, zu dem mehrere Personen beigetragen haben, dessen Hauptanteil jedoch Nelson Mandela als Autor zukommt. Das Impressum der Erstausgabe enthält den Hinweis "Copyright© 1994 by Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. The moral right of the author has been asserted".

Den Anstoß zu seinen Memoiren erhielt Nelson Mandela bereits 1974 von seinen Kampfgefährten Walter Sisulu und Ahmed (Kathy) Kathrada im Gefängnis auf Robben Island. Sie ermutigten ihn, seine Lebensgeschichte aufzuzeichnen, damit sie als Buch nach Möglichkeit zu seinem 60. Geburtstag (1978) erscheinen könnte. Das sollte für die internationale Öffentlichkeit ein eindringliches Signal sein und die jungen Freiheitskämpfer in ihren Aktionen gegen die Apartheid bestärken.

Mandela konnte seine Aufzeichnungen nur im Geheimen und in den Nachtstunden vornehmen, da die politischen Gefangenen am Tage in einem Steinbruch arbeiten mussten. Dennoch konnten sie sich über Mandelas Manuskript austauschen, Kritik und Änderungsvorschläge äußern, die beachtet wurden. In diesem Arbeitsstadium gab es bereits eine kollektive Redaktion. Einer der Mitgefangenen übertrug die Manuskriptseiten in winziger Schrift auf besonderes Papier, das ein anderer in den Einbänden seiner Notizbücher des Studienmaterials versteckte und nach seiner Freilassung aus dem Gefängnis schmuggelte, damit sie ins Ausland gelangen könnten. Da im Lauf der Zeit Mandelas Originalmanuskript auf 500 Seiten angewachsen war, beschlossen die Eingeweihten, dieses wertvolle Material auf drei Blechkisten zu verteilen und im Garten des Gefängnishofes zu vergraben. Bei Schachtarbeiten wurden die Behälter jedoch entdeckt und ihr Inhalt von der Gefängnisleitung beschlagnahmt. Mandela und seinen beiden Helfern wurden zur Strafe für die

folgenden vier Jahre sämtliche Studienmöglichkeiten entzogen (vgl. *Auto-biography*, p. 567-572).

Nach seiner Freilassung aus dem Gefängnis wollte Nelson Mandela seine Arbeit an der Autobiographie wieder aufnehmen und seine geretteten Fragmente ergänzen. Die politischen Ämter als Präsident des ANC und gewählter Präsident der Republik Südafrika ließen ihm jedoch dazu kaum Zeit. Die Gefährten seiner Gefängnisjahre auf Robben Island verfügten über die notwendigen Detailkenntnisse und das kollektive Gedächtnis, sodass sie Ausarbeitungen übernehmen konnten. In seiner Dankssagung der Erstausgabe würdigt Nelson Mandela seine Mitkämpfer Walter Sisulu und Ahmed Kathrada sowie den Autor Richard Stengel, der außerdem an einem Dokumentarfilm über ihn als Koproduzent beteiligt war, für ihre Zusammenarbeit an der Endfassung des Werkes *Long Walk to Freedom*.

Aufschlussreich ist Mandelas Bemerkung, dass große Teile des Textes im Gespräch auf wiederholten und ausgedehnten Wanderungen (“early morning walks in the Transkei”, vgl. *Auto-biography*, p. IX) – gleichsam peripatetisch – sowie in Interviews mit Richard Stengel entwickelt und von diesem anschließend niedergeschrieben wurden.

Die Überarbeitung der gesamten Autobiographie oblag mehreren Freunden, Kampfgefährten und Fachleuten, maßgeblich Ahmed Mohamed (Kathy) Kathrada, der auch Zeuge der Verhandlungen Nelson Mandelas mit Vertretern des Apartheid-Regimes war, und dem erfahrenen Publizisten Richard Stengel.

Mandela besaß aber auch eigene autobiographische Textentwürfe, die sich heute in seinem Privatarchiv befinden. Sie wurden im Jahre 2010 veröffentlicht unter dem Titel: Nelson R. Mandela, *Conversations with Myself*, mit einem Vorwort von Barack Obama. Die deutsche Ausgabe von 2014 trägt den Titel *Bekenntnisse*. Die Übersetzung aus dem Englischen stammt von Anne Emmert, Hans Freundl und Werner Roller.

In Anbetracht der dargestellten Sachlage einer – wie auch immer begrenzten – kollektiven Verfasserschaft der Autobiographie *Long Walk to Freedom* entsteht die Frage, inwieweit der Text den individuellen Sprachstil Nelson Mandelas wiedergibt und die phraseologischen Ausdrücke und literarischen und kulturgeschichtlichen Bezüge seine eigene Ausdrucksweise und keine fremde Zutat der Mitarbeiter sind.

Grundsätzlich ist davon auszugehen, dass Nelson Mandela in seinen Interviewauskünften auch Phraseologismen verwendet hat in der gleichen Weise, wie er in seinen persönlichen Briefen aus dem Gefängnis, die er an die Familie richtete, Idiome und andere anschauliche Ausdrücke gebraucht. In seinen politischen Reden als Staatsmann beweist er seine umfassende Allgemeinbildung und seine profunden Detailkenntnisse durch Bezüge auf die römische Geschichte, das Alte Testament, die englische und amerikanische Literatur.

Als Gesamtwerk offenbart Mandelas Autobiographie keine Stilbrüche; sie lässt keine unterschiedlichen Handschriften fremder Beiträger erkennen; sie ist weder kompilatorisch noch eklektisch, sondern wirkt wie aus einem Guss – als authentisches Selbstzeugnis des Autors Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela in Gehalt und Gestalt.

2.2. *Die Ausgabe ausgewählter Reden Nelson Mandelas*

Der Sammelband *Nelson Mandela in His Own Words. From Freedom to the Future. Tributes and Speeches*, herausgegeben von Kader Asmal, David Chidester und Wilmot James, erschien 2003 als Ehrung zum 80. Geburtstag Nelson Mandelas. Eingeleitet wird er durch Vorworte des damaligen UN-Generalsekretärs Kofi A. Annan und des 42. Präsidenten der USA, William J. Clinton. Er enthält 123 Reden Nelson Mandelas aus dem Zeitraum von 1951 bis 2002, die in 12 Themenkreisen jeweils chronologisch angeordnet sind und mit einem einleitenden Beitrag einer prominenten Persönlichkeit präsentiert werden, darunter Ahmad Kathrada, Desmond Tutu, Miriam Makeba und Graça Machel. Schwerpunktgebiete sind „Struggle, Freedom, Reconciliation, Nation Building, Development, Education, Culture, Religion, Health, Children, Heroes“ und „Peace“.

In diesen Reden äußert sich Nelson Mandela als moralische und politische Autorität, als integrierer Freiheitskämpfer des ANC und authentischer Zeitzeuge des menschenverachtenden Unterdrückungssystems der Rassentrennung Südafrikas, aber auch als Präsident des Volkes, der im hohen Alter eine gewaltige geschichtliche Aufgabe, die Überwindung der Apartheid ohne Bürgerkrieg, auf sich genommen hat.

In diesem Band finden sich Reden, die in Entscheidungssituationen seines Lebens entstanden sind, wie beispielsweise Aus-

züge aus seiner Verteidigungsrede vor dem Obersten Gericht in dem Rivonia-Prozess vom 20. April 1964 mit dem entschlossenen Schlusssatz "I am Prepared to Die", aber auch seine Botschaft aus dem Gefängnis "I Will Return", die er Anfang Februar 1985 an sein Volk gerichtet hatte – als Ablehnung einer vorzeitigen und alleinigen Freilassung aus dem Gefängnis, die ihm die Apartheid-Regierung angeboten hatte, mit der Bedingung der Lossagung vom ANC. Seinen Protestbrief verlas seine Tochter Zindzi, wie bekannt, am 10. Februar 1985 im Jabulani Stadion in Soweto.

Die erste Rede, die Nelson Mandela nach seiner Entlassung hielt, hatten noch Kampfgefährten des ANC formuliert. Seine Rede zur Amtseinführung als Präsident am 10. Mai 1994 und die folgenden Ansprachen sind Mandelas eigene Texte. Ebenso verzichtet er auf Redenschreiber für seine Dankesreden bei der Verleihung mehrerer Ehrendoktorate englischer und schottischer Universitäten am 10. Juli 1996. In seiner Erwiderung anlässlich seiner Ehrenpromotion am 25. Oktober 1996 an der Universität Stellenbosch, die in der Vergangenheit von dem Geist der Apartheid geprägt gewesen war und aus der führende Kader der weißen Oberschicht hervorgegangen waren, findet er klare Worte:

"… It would be disingenuous of me to pretend that I was not deeply aware of the special historical symbolism of this occasion. From the ranks of this university's alumni came each of the prime ministers who governed white-dominated South Africa in the era between the two Bothsas. This university was the leading intellectual home of Afrikaner nationalism. It was from this university that apartheid received a great deal of its theoretical justification." (Reden, p. 266)

In seiner Dankesrede nach der Verleihung des Friedensnobelpreises in Oslo am 10. Dez. 1993 sieht er sich in der verpflichtenden Nachfolge Martin Luther Kings.

Von menschlicher Wärme und Solidarität zeugen die Gedenk- und Trauerreden, die Nelson Mandela für seine Kampfgefährten hielt: den 1993 ermordeten ANC-Kameraden Chris Hani, die Organisatorin der Frauengewerkschaften Helen Joseph (1993), den Patrioten Joe Slovo (1995) und den Vorsitzenden des

ANC, seinen engsten Freund und Mitkämpfer, Oliver Reginald Tambo (1993), mit dem er bereits 1952 eine gemeinsame Anwaltskanzlei für Schwarzafrikaner eröffnet hatte.

3. Nelson Mandelas Auffassung von Rhetorik

Wenn das von der Parömiologie vertretene Konzept der „*proverbial rhetoric*“, das in den Arbeiten Wolfgang Mieders und anderer Autoren am Sprachgebrauch prominenter politischer Persönlichkeiten der USA und Großbritanniens erprobt und bestätigt wurde, auf das Sprachporträt Nelson Mandelas, des ersten schwarzen Präsidenten Südafrikas, angewandt werden soll, so ergeben sich bestimmte Einschränkungen und eine Inkongruenz, die in der Persönlichkeit wie auch in den Lebensumständen dieses Staatsmannes zu suchen sind. Dafür lässt sich eine Reihe von Gründen anführen.

Nelson Mandela war in drei Sprachen und unterschiedlichen Kulturen verwurzelt. Seine Mutter- und Stammessprache war Xhosa. Das Englische erlernte er als Fremd- und Bildungssprache und als ehemalige Kolonialssprache in der methodistischen Missionsschule. Das Afrikaans als die offizielle Amtssprache des Apartheid-Regimes eignete er sich in seinen langen Gefängnis-jahren an. In diesen Sprachen verfügte er über eine hohe kommunikative Kompetenz. Die Kenntnis des Afrikaans ermöglichte Mandela, in die Geschichte, Lebens- und Denkweise seiner politischen Gegner einzudringen und seine künftige Handlungsweise darauf einzustellen.

In Nelson Mandelas langjähriger politischer Erfahrung und in seiner eigenen Polemik ist der Begriff *rhetoric* stets auf die durch die Medien vermittelte Ideologie des Apartheid-Systems bezogen. Die Bezeichnung *rhetoric* assoziiert im Verständnis Mandelas eine Verschleierung sozialer Missstände und Unrechtmäßigkeit; Beschönigungspolitik und leere Versprechungen der Regierung; Schönrednerei und Augenwischerei; hohle Phrasen und schwülstigen Sprachgebrauch. Daher ist in seiner Argumentation *rhetoric* negativ konnotiert und Anlass für seine Abgrenzung oder Zurückweisung. Die folgenden Zitate belegen diese Auffassung.

In einer 1976 formulierten Botschaft an den ANC, die aber erst 1980 veröffentlicht werden konnte, schrieb Nelson Mandela

in seiner Verurteilung des Massakers der Polizei in Soweto aus seinem Gefängnis auf Robben Island:

“Apartheid is the embodiment of racism, repression and inhumanity of all previous white supremacist regimes. To see the real face of apartheid we must look beneath *the veil of constitutional formulas, deceptive phrases and playing with words.* [...] what the current wave of unrest has sharply highlighted, is this: that despite all the *window-dressing and smooth talk*, apartheid has become *intolerable.*” (Reden, p. 43 f.) (Hervorhebungen – R.G.)

Noch ehe er Präsident war, sprach Nelson Mandela am 21. August 1993 vor dem South African Jewish Board in Johannesburg in seiner Eröffnungsrede über die Rhetorik des Apartheid-Regimes und über eine zukünftige Regierung:

“[...] It requires a government that will make available resources to the peace structures and eschew *bombastic law-and-order rhetoric.*” (Reden, p. 351)

Und 1993 sagte Nelson Mandela in seiner Rede über “The Efficacy of Culture” auf einer Konferenz in Johannesburg:

“Perhaps one of our greatest challenges facing any nation in transition is to move from protest, defiance and resistance to building and reconstruction. Similarly, in our own case, we have to move from *slogans and rhetoric* to constructive and concrete programmes that will actually engage our beleaguered people, black and white.” (Reden, p. 289)

In den Folgejahren bemühte sich Mandela, die Bezeichnung “rhetoric” wertneutral zu verwenden. Noch 1995 sprach er in seiner Rede zur Lage der Nation (State of the Nation address) im Parlament in Kapstadt deutliche Worte:

“Let me say this from the beginning, that the challenges ahead of us require that we *move away from spectacle and rhetoric*, and bend our backs to the serious work ahead of us.” (Reden, p. 152)

Angesichts der sich in Südafrika rasch ausbreitenden Immunschwäche Aids hielt Nelson Mandela 1992 und 1998 Grundsatz-

referate unter dem programmatischen Titel "Aids: From Rhetoric to Action". Er plädierte für eine Enttabuisierung dieser Krankheit, für eine offene Diskussion in der afrikanischen Gesellschaft, für Aufklärung unter allen Bevölkerungsschichten und für Verhütungsmaßnahmen.

Auch wenn Nelson Mandela über den Begriff *rhetoric* keine theoretischen oder metakommunikativen Betrachtungen ange stellt hat, so beweist er doch in seiner Redepraxis im In- und Ausland, dass er offenbar intuitiv Prinzipien der antiken Rhetorik befolgt. Er nutzt die Möglichkeiten der epideiktischen und deliberativen Rede mit rhetorischen Fragen, die er als Anaphern mehrfach wiederholt; er gebraucht Parallelismen und steigert Argumente zur Klimax. Er wählt in Abhängigkeit von der Situation wirkungsvolle Metaphern, Vergleiche und nutzt neben Sprichwörtern und Anspielungen den Reichtum der Phraseologismen. Solche Stilmittel sind jedoch in seiner Autobiographie und in seinen Reden unterschiedlich ausgeprägt. Den Schlüssel zu seinen öffentlichen Ansprachen und ihrer stilistischen Ausgestaltung findet man in einem Bekenntnis, das er in der Abschlussrede auf der 3. Internationalen Aids-Konferenz in Durban im Juli 2000 äußerte:

"It is never my custom to use words lightly. If 27 years in prison have done anything to us, it was to use the silence of solitude to make us understand how precious words are, and how real speech is in its impact upon the way people live or die." (Reden, p. 402)

4. Materialanalyse

Im Mittelpunkt der folgenden Textuntersuchung stehen Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Redensarten, Losungen und Maximen, Zitate und Anspielungen auf die englische/amerikanische Literatur, das klassische Altertum und die Bibel. Es sind feste Wortverbindungen mit begrenzten Variationsmöglichkeiten, deren Semantik und kultureller Kontext in den Gegenstands-bereich der Parömiologie, aber auch der Phraseologie als linguistische Diziplin fallen. In dem Individualstil Nelson Mandelas sind sie ein unverzichtbares Wesensmerkmal und Bestandteil seines Sprachporträts.

4.1 Sprichwörter

Seit seiner Kindheit war Nelson Mandela durch die Erzählungen im Familienkreise mit Mythen und Geschichten des Xhosa-Stammes vertraut. Er hatte ein ausgezeichnetes Gedächtnis für diese kulturelle Überlieferung und war selbst ein guter Geschichtenerzähler. Eine Enkelin Mandelas erwähnte in Fernsehinterviews nach seinem Tode im Dezember 2013, dass ihr Großvater seinen Kindern und Enkeln häufig Ratschläge in Form von „*stories*“ gegeben habe, aus denen sie die erzieherischen Schlussfolgerungen selbst ableiten sollten. Auch in öffentlichen Reden zu unterschiedlichen Themen pflegte Mandela auf diese Geschichten seiner Stammestradition zurückzugreifen. Seine Berater für solche Auftritte waren ursprünglich irritiert, dass er dieselben „*stories*“ und Anekdoten immer wieder sogar wörtlich erzählte, bis sie deren Wert für die Authentizität des Redners und die vertrauensbildende Kraft für die Zuhörer, unter denen sich auch Analphabeten befanden, erkannt hatten (vgl. Reden, p. 141).

In seinen Memoiren erwähnt Mandela, dass seine Mutter in ihrem Dorf in der Transkei begonnen hatte, ihre Erinnerungen aufzuzeichnen. Die Abschriften dieser wertvollen Blätter gingen jedoch verloren, als ein nächtliches Polizeikommando am 30. März 1960 Mandelas Haus in Pretoria durchsuchte und sämtliche Unterlagen beschlagnahmte:

They turned the house upside down, taking virtually every piece of paper they could find, including the transcripts I had recently been making of my mother's *recollections of family history and tribal fables*. I was never to see them again. (Autobiography, p. 283)

Im Vergleich zu den sprichwörtlichen Redensarten und idiomatischen Wendungen gebraucht Nelson Mandela nur selten Sprichwörter in seinen Reden wie auch in seiner Autobiographie. Sie haben stets eine stilistische Funktion.

Ein afrikanisches Sprichwort und einen Psalm aus dem Alten Testament wählte Nelson Mandela als Auftakt seiner Parlamentsrede über die Weltreligionen, die er im Dezember 1999 in Kapstadt hielt. Er begrüßte die zahlreichen Teilnehmer mit den Worten:

“The truth of *the old African proverb that we are people through other people* is tonight very evocatively being demonstrated by this gathering of so many people from all parts of the world. This coming together here in this southernmost city of the African continent of representatives from such a wide range of faiths of the world symbolises the acknowledgement of our mutual interdependence and common humanity. [...] We are being reminded in *the words of the psalm* that we were indeed *created a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honour.*” (Reden, p. 355; die frei wiedergegebene Bibelstelle ist der Psalm 8 des Alten Testaments.)

Die folgenden Sprichwörter stammen aus Nelson Mandelas Autobiographie.

the mills of God grind slowly

It is said that *the mills of God grind exceedingly slowly*, but even the Lord’s machinations cannot compete with those of the South African judicial system.

Das vollständige Sprichwort lautet im Englischen:

The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small. (Autobiography, p. 273)

the tide turns/is turning

We learned of the successful liberation struggle in Mozambique and Angola in 1975 and their emergence as independent states with revolutionary governments. *The tide was turning in our way.* (Autobiography, p. 596)

the darkest hour is just before the dawn

Now Bisho joined Boipatong as a byword for brutality. Like the *old proverb* that says *the darkest hour is before the dawn*, the tragedy of Bisho led to a new opening in the negotiations. I met de Klerk to find common ground [...] (Autobiography, p. 726)

practise what you preach

Nelson Mandela hielt die Gedenkrede auf den ermordeten Kampfgefährten Chris Hani 1993.

“Chris Hani was a soldier. He believed in iron discipline. He carried out instructions to the letter. *He practised what he preached.*” (Reden, p. 472)

Im folgenden Beleg verknüpft Mandela zwei unterschiedliche Sprichwörter:

Prevention is better than cure und the tide turns.

Er sagte in seiner Rede “Breaking the Silence” zur Bekämpfung von Aids 1998:

“Though we are doing all we can to search for a *cure* for Aids, it has not yet been found and therefore *prevention is the key to turning the tide.*” (Reden, p. 400)

If your man is a wizard, you must become a witch!

In seiner Autobiographie erwähnt Nelson Mandela, dass sein künftiger Schwiegervater wenig erfreut war, dass seine Tochter Winnie einen Freiheitskämpfer gegen die Apartheid heiraten wollte, aber er gab ihr den Rat, es ihm gleich zu tun.

He [her father – R.G.] told Winnie she was marrying a man who was already married to the struggle. He bade his daughter good luck, and ended his speech by saying, “*If your man is a wizard, you must become a witch*”. It was a way of saying that you must follow your man on whatever path he takes. (Autobiography, p. 252)

Es ist anzunehmen, dass dieser Ausspruch eine Stammeserfahrung der Xhosa oder ein Sprichwort ausdrückt. Als okkasionelle bildhafte Metapher ist dieser gewichtige Inhalt sicher nicht zu interpretieren.

One falling tree makes more noise than millions that are growing
Dieses Sprichwort hat in Nelson Mandelas Ansprache zur Lage der Nation vor dem Parlament in Kapstadt am 6. Februar 1998 geradezu die Funktion eines Leitmotivs, das eine auffällig große Anzahl von Phraseologismen einrahmt.

“We are at the beginning of an arduous and protracted struggle for a better quality of life. In the course of this struggle, we shall have immediate successes; we shall have setbacks, but we shall certainly progress, *inch by inch*, towards our goal. *From time to time*, incidents do happen which bring out *in bold relief* the enormity of the challenge we face. *As the saying goes, one falling tree*

makes more noise than millions that are growing. As such, for both good reasons and bad, occasional problems are seized upon by our detractors as the stock-in-trade of this government, indeed as the essence of democracy." (Reden, p. 164)

Im weiteren Verlauf dieser programmatischen Rede unter dem Gesichtspunkt "Nation Building" verwendet Mandela ausdrucksstarke Metaphern und Phraseologismen:

"This is our call to all South Africans to firm up the moral fibre of our nation [...]. As always, we are encouraged, first and foremost, by the fact that South Africans are ready, and they have rolled up their sleeves to build a society that cares. These millions of South Africans are joining hands to sustain their democratic achievement; and they will protect it like the apple of their eye [...]. They shall not be distracted by the noise of a falling tree amidst the dignified silence of a new future starting to blossom, because they know that: The foundation has been laid, and the building has begun!" (Reden, p. 166)

I felt as dry and barren as the Great Karoo desert

Dieser bildhafte Vergleich, der einer sprichwörtlichen Redensart nahe steht, beruht auf einer topographischen Gegebenheit Südafrikas und bezieht sich auf die heiße Wüste und Steppe der Großen Karoo.

To be allowed one letter in six months and then not to receive it is a great blow. One wonders: What has happened to my wife and children, to my mother and sisters? When I did not receive a letter *I felt as dry and barren as the Great Karoo desert.* (Autobiography, p. 475)

Durch seine intensivierende Funktion betont der Vergleich die gefühlte Identität zwischen dem Gefangenen und seinem angestammten Land und die Authentizität der unmenschlichen Verhältnisse im Gefängnis auf Robben Island.

Gelegentlich verwendet Nelson Mandela Redensarten, die er als solche charakterisiert, wie im folgenden Beispiel:

to play hard to get

In seiner Rede vor der International Geographical Union anlässlich der Auszeichnung “Planet and Humanity Award” am 4. August 2002 in Durban sagte er:

“We need to indicate that the effort it entailed to finally conclude the discussions about our participation has nothing to do with an unwillingness to accept this prestigious award, or an attitude of *playing 'hard to get'*, as the colloquial saying goes. We ourselves, as well as our office, long ago indicated to our Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology that we would be extremely honoured to receive the award.” (Reden, p. 225)

Nelson Mandela bedient sich hier einer betont höflichen und diplomatisch ausgewogenen Ausdrucksweise der Bescheidenheit. Er erklärt die sprichwörtliche Redensart metakommunikativ als “colloquial saying”. – LDEI verzeichnet das Idiom *play hard to get* als ‘*coll* to make it difficult for someone to meet or talk with one, often in order to make oneself more attractive to or wanted by someone [...].’

to rub salt into the wound

Bei der Begründung des Warrenton Presidential School Project am 30. August 1996 gab Nelson Mandela eine Analyse der Schulsituation in einem geologisch unsicheren Landstrich Südafrikas. Den Ernst der Lage unterstrich er mit folgender Redensart:

“Apart from there being too few schools, many African and coloured schools were also built along a clay belt that runs across this province. The movement of this belt has caused most of the buildings to crack and deteriorate. [...] *To rub salt into the wound*, though communities were promised proper schools in the past, few were built.” (Reden, p. 246)

In unterschiedlichem Textzusammenhang verwendet Nelson Mandela das Adjektiv “proverbial”, wenn er eine Person typisieren will. In seiner Autobiographie spricht er mit Bezug auf seine eigene Person von “the *proverbial country boy* who comes to the big city” (p. 28) und in seinen Reden von “the *proverbial 'troublemakers'* [...] who are responsible for human progress” (p. 348) und “the *proverbial man and woman in the street*” (p. 524).

Für weitere sprichwörtliche Redensarten in Nelson Mandelas Memoiren können hier nur typische Beispiele angeführt werden.

to take sb. under one's wing

Tall and slender and extremely confident, K.D. was a third-year student and he *took me under his wing*. (Autobiography, p. 52)

to be tied to one's mother's apron strings

From an early age, I spent most of my free time in the veld playing and fighting with the other boys of the village. A boy who remained at home *tied to his mother's apron strings* was regarded a sissy. (Autobiography, p. 11)

to bear the brunt

Accused No. 2, Walter Sisulu, was next. Walter had *to bear the brunt* of the cross-examination that Yutar had prepared for him. (Autobiography, p. 439)

to tighten the screw

Despite protest and criticism, the Nationalist response was *to tighten the screw* of repression. A few weeks later the government introduced the notorious Suppression of Communism Act [...] (Autobiography, p. 134)

to add fuel to the flame

During this time, the government took another action that *added fuel to the flame*. (Autobiography, p. 705)

to drive a wedge between

I was keen to do a number of things in this response, because Botha's offer was an attempt to *drive a wedge between* me and my colleagues by tempting me to accept a policy the ANC rejected. (Autobiography, p. 62)

4.2. *Losungen*

In der Regel entstehen Losungen als Leitsprüche und Parolen in politischen Massenbewegungen, Parteien und Massenorganisationen, wenn gesellschaftliche Missstände kollektives Handeln herausfordern. Inhaltlich vermitteln sie bestimmte Ideen und Kampfziele, mit denen Gruppen von Menschen interessiert und aktiviert werden sollen. Eine Losung ist üblicherweise ein

kurzer Satz mit einer prägnanten, anschaulichen, einprägsamen und überzeugenden Aussage, die glaubwürdig und solidarisierend wirkt. In Zeiten des Wahlkampfes sind Lösungen kurzzeitlich verhaltensteuernd und daher von begrenzter Aktualität. Andere Lösungen allgemeingültigen Inhalts können überzeitliche Geltung erlangen.

Aufschlussreich in diesem Zusammenhang sind die Überlebenden, die Nelson Mandela als Anwalt der unterdrückten Bevölkerung Südafrikas in seinem Gefängnis auf Robben Island über erstrebenswerte Eigenschaften eines politischen Führers und über die Notwendigkeit von Lösungen angestellt hat. Er verwendet dafür die allgemeine Bezeichnung *slogan* (im Sinne von ‚Leitspruch‘), gelegentlich auch *watchword* („Lösung, Parole“) und *precept* („Maxime, Grundsatz“).

In seiner Autobiographie *Long Walk to Freedom* formuliert er grundsätzliche Anforderungen an eine Lösung:

A slogan is a vital link between the organization and the masses it seeks to lead. It should synthesize a particular grievance into a succinct and pithy phrase, while mobilizing the people to combat it. (Autobiography, p. 193)

So schätzt er rückblickend kritisch ein, dass die Lösung „*Over Our Dead Bodies*“ im Anfangsstadium des Kampfes des ANC gegen die Apartheid noch nicht die geeignete war, obwohl sie mobilisierend gewirkt hatte. Seine Gründe dafür sind:

„*Over Our Dead Bodies*“ was a dynamic slogan, but it proved as much a hindrance as a help. [...] Our slogan caught the imagination of the people, but it led them to believe that we would fight to the death to resist the removal. In fact, the ANC was not prepared to do that at all. (Autobiography, p. 193 f.)

Im Verlauf weiterer Aktionen des African National Congress entstanden aus aktuellem Anlass neue, konkretere Lösungen:

There were old women and young wearing Congress skirts, Congress blouses, Congress *doekies* (scarves); old men and young wearing Congress armbands and Congress

hats. Signs everywhere said FREEDOM IN OUR LIFE-TIME, LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE.

(Autobiography, p. 202) (Hervorhebung im Original)

Nach wiederholten Verhaftungen vereinbarten die Apartheid-Gegner vor ihrer richterlichen Vernehmung eine Parole für ihr gemeinsames Handeln. Sie ist eine rhythmisch gegliederte, einprägsame Lösung: '*No bail, no defence, no fine*'.

In the magistrate's court, Sobukwe announced that the PAC would not attempt to defend itself, in accordance with its slogan: '*No bail, no defence, no fine*'. They believed the defiers would receive sentences of a few weeks. (Autobiography, p. 280)

Zur Ermutigung in ihrem internen konspirativen Kampf gaben sich die Führer des ANC selbstgewählte Parolen. Nelson Mandela zeigt am Beispiel Oliver Tambos die Eigenschaften eines politischen Führers, der ein würdiger Nachfolger des Häuptlings Luthuli wurde.

Yet in Oliver Tambo, who was acting president-general of the ANC, the organization found a man who could *fill the chief's shoes*. Like Luthuli, he was articulate yet not showy, confident but not humble. He too epitomized Chief Luthuli's *precept*: '*Let your courage rise with danger*' (Autobiography, p. 523)

Stilistisch merkmalhaft ist Mandelas Gebrauch des Idioms *fill the chief's shoes* als Variante der lexikalisierten Form *step into someone's shoes* (nach LDEI 'to take over the duties, responsibilities, etc. of someone else'). Das semantische Verhältnis dieses Idioms ist eine Metonymie. Interessant ist, dass Luthulis Leitspruch als '*precept*' bezeichnet wird.

Als Nelson Mandela 1962 verhaftet worden war und sich in dem Rivonia-Prozess 1964 selbst verteidigte, stellten sich seine Kampfgefährten in Pretoria mit programmatischen Lösungen an seine Seite:

The initial hearing was set for Monday 15 October 1962. The organization had set up a *Free Mandela Committee* and launched a lively campaign with the slogan '*Free Mandela*'. Protests were held throughout the country and

the slogan began to appear scrawled on the sides of buildings. (Autobiography, p. 384)

Zu einem verstärkten internationalen Appell wurde die Losung '*Free Mandela*', nachdem er und sieben seiner engsten Mitkämpfer als "lebenslänglich" politische Gefangene auf die Insel Robben Island verbracht worden waren. In Großbritannien kam 1980 die bekannte "pop-chart authem '*Free Nelson Mandela*'" in Umlauf.

Eine Reihe politischer Losungen enthält der Band ausgewählter Reden Nelson Mandelas, die anlässlich seines 80. Geburtstages veröffentlicht wurden. Darin vertreten ist auch die Ansprache, die er im Dezember 1951 auf der Jahreskonferenz der African National Congress Youth League gehalten hat. Den Abschluss bildete eine zündende Losung. Der folgende Ausschnitt verdeutlicht die Unterschiede zwischen dem narrativen Stil der Memoiren und dem appellierenden, direktiven Tenor der politischen Rede.

"Sons and daughters of Africa, our tasks are mighty indeed, but I have abundant faith in our ability to reply to the challenge posed by the situation. Under the slogan *FULL DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS IN SOUTH AFRICA NOW*, we must march forward into victory." (Reden, p. 14)

Ein besonderes Gewicht erlangte eine sexistisch geprägte, aber politisch umgedeutete Losung in der Trauerrede, die Nelson Mandela für die ANC-Kämpferin Helen Joseph am 7. Januar 1993 in Johannesburg hielt. Er sagte mit Bezug auf die Federation of South African Women:

"[...] the ANC at the time [...] brought together women of all races, classes and religious affiliation with the aim to challenge the pass laws as a united force. The slogan '*You strike a woman you strike a rock*' was born out of this period." (Reden, p. 473 f.)

Diese Losung, deren bildhafte Symbolik auch als Sprichwort gelten könnte, hat in der Gedächtnisrede und Würdigung authentische Aussagekraft. Gemeint ist hier die Widerstandsfähigkeit, die eine südafrikanische Frau den Schlägen der Polizisten des

Apartheidsystems entgegengesetzt, wenn sie bei einer öffentlichen Aktion ihren diskriminierenden Pass verbrennt.

Als Nelson Mandela nach dem Wahlsieg des African National Congress Anfang Oktober 1994 Präsident des nach Demokratie strebenden Staates Südafrika geworden war, verzichtete er auf eine Politik der Bestrafung der Machthaber des Apartheid-Regimes für die von ihnen begangenen Verbrechen. Stattdessen prägte er die Lösung auf Afrikaans “Wat is verby, is verby” und versuchte alle Bevölkerungsschichten und ethnischen Gruppen auf das Ziel ‘nation-building’ einzuschwören und zu vereinigen (vgl. Artikel von Bartholomäus Grill, *Der Spiegel* 50/2013, S. 88). Für diese Lösung des Verzeihens wählte Mandela absichtlich das Afrikaans, die Amtssprache des Apartheid-Regimes. Er hatte sie sich in seiner Gefängniszeit angeeignet, um durch sie die Kultur und Denkweise seiner politischen Feinde verstehen zu lernen und ihnen später auf Augenhöhe begegnen zu können.

In seiner Amtszeit als Präsident formulierte Nelson Mandela Lösungen im Kampf gegen die Verbreitung von AIDS. Er forderte energisch ‘From Rhetoric to Action’ und ‘A Call for A New Struggle’ (Reden, p. 402). In diesen Aufrufen verwendet er durchgängig die Bezeichnung ‘slogan’.

Gelegentlich variiert Nelson Mandela zwischen den Bezeichnungen *slogan* und *watchword*. Bei seinem Staatsbesuch in den USA am 3. Oktober 1994 begann er seine Rede mit einem als *watchword* deklarierten Appell:

“Our *watchwords* must be justice, peace, reconciliation and nation-building in the pursuit of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist country. In all we do, we have to ensure the healing of the wounds inflicted on all our people across the great dividing line imposed on our society by centuries of colonialism and apartheid.” (Reden, p. 518 f.)

Am Schluss formuliert Mandela Ziele des demokratischen Wandels, den sich seine Regierung und das Volk Südafrikas in seiner ethnischen Vielfalt auf ihr “Banner” geschrieben haben.

“Our political emancipation has also brought into sharp focus the urgent need to engage in struggle to secure our people’s freedom from want, from hunger and from ig-

norance. We have written this on our banners that the society we seek to create must be a people-centred society." (Reden, p. 519)

Die aufgezählten Forderungen bzw. Ziele *freedom from want, freedom from hunger and from ignorance* haben faktisch die Funktion einer Losung.

4.3 Sentenzen und Maximen als Eigenprägungen Nelson Mandelas

Die Losungen des ANC haben ihren Platz in Mandelas Lebenserinnerungen als Authentizitätsnachweis des Chronisten. Sie sind zeitgeschichtlich bedeutsam. Mandela hat sie verbreitet, aber nur wenige selbst geprägt. Sein eigener Beitrag ist, wie bereits erwähnt, die Losung "Verby is verby."

Bemerkenswert sind aber solche markanten Aussprüche und schriftlichen Äußerungen Mandelas, die als *Maximen* und *Reflexionen* im Goetheschen Sinne gelten können, auch wenn sie einem anderen Erfahrungshintergrund entstammen. Es sind knappe Sätze mit einer persönlich erworbenen Lebensweisheit, die durchaus allgemeingültige Züge aufweist. Einige dieser Sentenzen ähneln *Aphorismen* und können im Laufe der Zeit zu geflügelten Worten werden. Sie bewahren ihre Aussagekraft auch außerhalb ihres ursprünglichen Kontextes in Mandelas Autobiographie *Long Walk to Freedom* und der dominierenden Erfahrung seiner Gefängniswelt auf Robben Island.

Beim Nachdenken über sein bisheriges kampferfülltes Leben und eine Zukunft nach seiner Haftentlassung, von der er im Innersten überzeugt ist, gelangt Nelson Mandela in seiner engen Zelle zu tiefgründigen Einsichten, die er in seiner Autobiographie festhält. Die folgenden Sentenzen stammen aus der Erstausgabe von 1994.

In prison, one has time to review the past, and memory becomes both a friend and a foe (p. 590)

Time slows down in prison; the days seem endless. The cliché of time passing slowly usually has to do with idleness and inactivity. (p. 463)

Prison not only robs you of your freedom, it attempts to take away your identity. (p. 396)

Visitors keep one's spirit up in prison, and the absence of them can be disheartening. (p. 379)

Nothing is more dehumanizing than the absence of human companionship. (p. 397)

In prison, the only thing worse than bad news about one's family is no news at all. [...] A letter with ill tidings was always preferable to no letter at all. (p. 475)

Dieser letzte Erfahrungssatz als Reflexion ist faktisch die Umkehrung des Sprichworts *no news is good news*. In den Anfangsjahren ihrer Haft auf Robben Island erhielten die politischen Gefangenen nur einmal in sechs Monaten einen Brief von ihren Familien, aber diese Post war von den Aufsehern censiert und zerschnitten worden, sodass persönliche Mitteilungen unterbunden waren.

Newspapers are more valuable to political prisoners than gold and diamonds, more hungered for than gold or tobacco; they were a most precious contraband on Robben Island. (p. 492)

Andere Sentenzen sind auf Eigenschaften einer politischen Führungspersönlichkeit bezogen, wobei Mandela selbst seine mögliche Rolle im Falle einer Haftentlassung vor Augen hat. Mitunter gelangt er zu einer solchen Einsicht als Schlussfolgerung aus einer geschichtlichen Episode. Das Resultat seines Denkvorganges ist dann ein eigenständiger Aphorismus, was die beiden folgenden Zitate belegen.

*What moved me most was the brief image of Winston Churchill's weeping after he heard the news of the loss of the British vessel [HMS Prince of Wales – R.G.]. The image stayed in my memory a long time, and demonstrated to me that *there are times when a leader can show sorrow in public and that it will not diminish him in the eyes of his people.** (p. 597)

I learned that courage was not the absence of fear but the triumph over it. I felt fear myself more times than I can remember, but I hid it behind a mask of boldness.

Daraus zieht Mandela den logischen Schluss:

The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear. (p. 748)

Die beiden letztgenannten Sentenzen belegen außerdem Mandelas abwägende Betrachtungsweise, vergleichbar einer deliberativen inneren Rede, die in einer antithetischen Schlussfolgerung ihren Ausdruck findet.

Ein Seitenblick Mandelas gilt auch der Rolle der Frau an der Seite eines Freiheitskämpfers:

The wife of a freedom fighter is often like a widow, even when her husband is not in prison. (p. 253)

Notwendig sind auch strategische Entscheidungen.

A freedom fighter learns the hard way that it is the oppressor who defines the nature of the struggle, and the oppressed is often left no recourse but to use methods that mirror those of the oppressor. At a certain point, one can only fight fire with fire. (p. 194)

Die bildhafte Redewendung kann als sprichwörtliche Redensart gelten, auch wenn sie nicht in LDEI registriert ist. Sie ließe sich in diesem Zusammenhang auch als Maxime deuten.

Gegen Ende seiner Gefängnishaft entwickelte Nelson Mandela Grundsätze der Strategie und Taktik für künftige Verhandlungen mit dem politischen Gegner des ANC und den Vertretern der Nationalist Party des Apartheid-Regimes. Die entscheidenden Maximen seines eigenen Vorgehens lauteten:

Only free men can negotiate. Prisoners cannot enter into contracts. (p. 623)

To make peace with an enemy, one must work with that enemy, and that enemy becomes your partner. (p. 590)

A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones – and South Africa treated its imprisoned African citizens like animals. (p. 233)

Die antithetische Betrachtungsweise wendet Nelson Mandela auch auf die Armut und soziale Ungerechtigkeit in seinem Lande an und wählt dafür sogar eine der Physik entlehnte Metapher.

If wealth is a magnet, poverty is a kind of repellent.

Und er setzt erläuternd hinzu: “Yet poverty often brings out the true generosity in others” (p. 90). Der erste Satz könnte sogar als geflügeltes Wort angesehen werden.

Nach Nelson Mandelas Überzeugung können die Armut und Chancenungleicheit der südafrikanischen Landbevölkerung nur mithilfe eines umfangreichen Erziehungsprogramms überwunden werden. Diese Erkenntnis hatte er bereits in den 1950er Jahren gewonnen und in die Sentenz gekleidet:

Education is the great engine of personal development.
(p. 194)

Ohne Kontext könnte diese Aussage als Aphorismus gelten. Aber der Folgetext bietet eine präzisierende Erläuterung:

It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of a mine, that a child of a farmworker can become the president of a great nation. (p. 194)

In seiner fünfjährigen Amtszeit als Präsident Südafrikas, der sich entwickelnden multinationalen Demokratie, hielt Nelson Mandela zahlreiche Reden über “Nation Building” und die “Rainbow Nation”. Dabei vertrat er die feste Überzeugung, dass es überall gute Menschen gibt. In dem Band der ausgewählten Reden Mandelas schreibt G.J. Gerwel in seiner Einleitung zu dem Themenkomplex “Nation Building”:

A favourite *saying* of Nelson Mandela’s will be found in the speeches collected here, namely that *there are good men and women to be found in all communities, groups and political parties*. That simple *precept* he repeated over and over, from one platform to the other. The simplicity of that self-evident yet often ignored truth drove and directed the complex task of nation building for Nelson Mandela. (Reden, p. 147)

Der Kommentar dieses Herausgebers der Mandela-Reden ist auch in parömiologischer Hinsicht aufschlussreich, insofern als hier die Bezeichnungen ‘*saying*’ (als ‘Redensart, geflügeltes Wort’) und ‘*precept*’ (als ‘Grundsatz, Richtschnur, Gebot’) für solche Sentenzen verwendet werden, deren Aussage den Sprichwörtern nahesteht und durch die metaphorische Ausdrucksweise

verstärkt wird. Sprichwörtlichen Charakter hat auch die von Nelson Mandela geprägte erweiterte Sentenz:

*Hating clouds the mind. It gets in the way of strategy.
Leaders cannot afford to hate.*

Sie wurde in einem Gedenkartikel zum Tode Nelson Mandelas in der International New York Times vom 7.-8. Dezember 2013, p. 6, zitiert. (Alle Hervorhebungen stammen von der Verfasserin – R.G.)

4.4 Zitate und Anspielungen auf die englische Literatur

Mit den Dramen William Shakespeares und anderen Werken der englischen Literatur wurde Nelson Mandela bereits bekannt als Sechzehnjähriger auf der Internatsschule in Clarkebury, einer angesehenen Lehranstalt der Methodisten in der Tradition John Wesleys. Hier erhielt der heranwachsende Schüler auch die Taufe.

Im Alter von 21 Jahren wurde Mandela Student am Elite-College von Fort Hare in Alice. Dort belegte er die Fächer Englisch, Volkskunde, Jura, Politik und Eingeborenenverwaltung (vgl. S. Bierling 2012:20). Neben gründlichen Kenntnissen in diesen Ausbildungszweigen vervollkommnete er durch systematisches Lesen seine Kompetenz in der englischen Sprache, Literatur und Kultur.

Ein folgenschwerer Einschnitt in Nelson Mandelas politischer Entwicklung war seine Arbeit im Untergrund, bei der er sich auch Kenntnisse im Gebrauch von Waffen aneignete. Um polizeilichen Verhaftungen zu entgehen, musste er in immer neuen Verkleidungen ständig seinen Aufenthaltsort wechseln. Die Journalisten der Tageszeitungen prägten für ihn den Beinamen „*Black Pimpernel*“. Er ist eine Anspielung auf die Figur des *Scarlet Pimpernel*, einen Romanhelden aus der Zeit der Französischen Revolution. Zu dem literarischen Hintergrund dieses Beinamens nimmt Mandela in seiner Autobiographie selbst Stellung:

I was dubbed the *Black Pimpernel*, a somewhat derogatory adaptation of Baroness Orczy's fictional character the Scarlet Pimpernel, who daringly evaded capture during the French Revolution [...]. I would even feed the mythology of the *Black Pimpernel* by taking a pocketful of 'tickeys' (threepenny bits) and phoning individual

newspaper reporters from telephone boxes and replaying stories of what we were planning or of the ineptitude of the police. (Autobiography, p. 316)

Die erwähnte englische Autorin Baroness Emma Orczy (1865-1947) schrieb unter dem Titel *The Scarlet Pimpernel* ein Theaterstück (aufgeführt 1903) und einen Roman (1905). Der Romanheld, Sir Percy Blakeney, verbirgt seine Identität mehrfach.

In Mandelas Autobiographie finden sich nur wenige Bezüge auf englische literarische Werke und konkrete Zitate. Sie stehen zumeist im inhaltlichen Zusammenhang mit den Zuständen auf der Gefängnisinsel Robben Island, wo Mandela und seine Kampfgefährten ab 1964 eine lebenslängliche Haftstrafe verbüßen sollten und in den Anfangsjahren harten Bedingungen unterworfen waren. Ihre Lebenssituation erinnert Mandela an eine Erkenntnis, die er einmal durch ein Zitat bei William Shakespeare gewonnen hatte:

I was prepared for the death penalty. To be truly prepared for something, one must actually expect it. One cannot be prepared for something while secretly believing it will not happen. We were all prepared, not because we were brave but because we were realistic. I thought of the line from Shakespeare, 'Be absolute for death; for either death or life shall be the sweeter'. (Autobiography, p. 445)

(Die Quelle dieses Zitats ist das Drama *Measure for Measure*, die Ansprache des Duke an Claudio, Act III, Scene I, 5-6.)

In den späteren Jahren steht den politischen Häftlingen zwar eine Gefängnisbibliothek zur Verfügung, doch sind hier politische Bücher verboten. Zugelassen sind die Romane von Daphne du Maurier. Aber ebenso auf dem Index befinden sich Bücher, deren Titel die Wörter *Red* oder *War* enthalten. Diese Zensur gilt selbst für unverfängliche Kinder- und Jugendliteratur und führt mitunter zu paradoxen Entscheidungen auf Seiten des Gefängniskommandanten und seiner Bediensteten.

Political books were off limits. Any book about socialism or communism was definitely out. A request for a book with the word *red* in the title, even if it was *Little*

Red Riding Hood, would be rejected by the censors. *The War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells, though it is a work of science fiction, would be turned down because the word *war* appeared in its title. (Autobiography, p. 585)

Der primitive Gefängnisangestellte, der offenbar nur Afrikaans als die Amtssprache des Apartheid-Systems versteht, kennt nicht das Märchen vom Rotkäppchen, dessen englischer Name *Little Red Riding Hood* lautet.

Nelson Mandela liest zugelassene Bücher über Südafrika, wie die Romane von Nadine Gordimer und einige sozialkritische Werke amerikanischer Schriftsteller, darunter *The Grapes of Wrath* von John Steinbeck. Dessen realistische Schilderung des Lebens der Wanderarbeiter in den amerikanischen Südstaaten vergleicht Mandela mit den Arbeitsbedingungen südafrikanischer Tagelöhner auf den Farmen der Weißen.

Er erkennt auch Parallelen zwischen seiner eigenen Gefängnissituation in dem Hochsicherheitstrakt Pollsmoor südöstlich von Kapstadt, wohin er Anfang April 1982 verlegt worden war, und den von Oscar Wilde, dem englischen Roman- und Dramenautor (1854-1900), beschriebenen Verhältnissen in dem Zuchthaus von Reading in der mittelenglischen Grafschaft Berkshire. Beide Gefängnisse stehen in einem tristen Gegensatz zu der reizvollen Landschaft ihrer Umgebung. Für Pollsmoor gilt:

The prison itself is set amid the strikingly beautiful scenery of the Cape, between the mountains of Constantiaberg to the north and hundreds of acres of vineyards to the south. But this natural beauty was invisible to us behind Pollsmoor's high concrete walls. At Pollsmoor I first understood the truth of Oscar Wilde's haunting lines about the tent of blue that prisoners call the sky. (Autobiography, p. 611)

Die Quelle dieses Zitats ist Oscar Wildes Verserzählung *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* von 1899. In der dritten Strophe des Anfangsteils beschreibt der Autor den Seelenzustand eines zum Tode verurteilten Häftlings. Die Strophe lautet:

“I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon *that little tent of blue*
which prisoners call the sky,
And at every drifting cloud that went
With sails of silver by.”

(Quelle: Oscar Wilde: *Die Ballade vom Zuchthaus zu Reading*. Englisch und deutsch. Insel-Verlag Leipzig 1970, S. 6. Das Kernzitat, das Nelson Mandela hervorhebt, wiederholt sich in anderen Strophen.)

Oscar Wilde verarbeitet in dieser Ballade persönliche Erfahrungen, denn er verbüßte zwischen 1895 und 1897 selbst eine Haftstrafe im Zuchthaus von Reading, zu der er wegen seiner Homosexualität verurteilt worden war. Die schwere körperliche Arbeit und die seelischen Demütigungen zerrütteten seine Gesundheit.

In Nelson Mandelas Reden kommen literarische Zitate und Anspielungen selten vor. Jedoch findet sich ein Bezug auf ein bekanntes allegorisches Werk des englischen Puritanismus in seiner Rede “No Easy Walk to Freedom” von 1953, in der er freimütig bekennt:

“You can see that there is no easy walk to freedom anywhere, and many of us will have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death again and again before we reach the mountain tops of our desires.” (Reden, p. 17)

Dieser Satz erinnert an den Dichter John Bunyan (1628-1688) und sein allegorisches Traktat *The Pilgrim’s Progress from This World to That Which is to Come* (1. Teil 1678, 2. Teil 1684), in dem er den mühevollen Weg des Christenmenschen durch Zweiflung, Anfechtungen und die Schatten des Tals des Todes bis zur Glaubensstärke und der Erlangung des Seelenheils beschreibt. Bunyan ermahnte seine Glaubensbrüder zur Beharrlichkeit, und Mandela wählt diese Analogie als Appell zum energischen Durchhalten, um die Freiheit der Südafrikaner zu erringen.

Ein markantes Zitat aus der amerikanischen Literatur verwendet Nelson Mandela als Einleitung seiner Rede auf der National Conference on Aids am 23. Oktober 1992. Darin

bezieht er sich auf Ernest Hemingways Roman *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) und erklärt:

“When I was asked to open this conference some months ago, I felt greatly honoured by the invitation and at the same time, greatly humbled by the enormity of the problem facing our own country and many other countries. My mind was sharply focused on the words in Hemingway’s novel that:

*Man is not an island
he is not an entity unto himself
therefore ask not for whom the bell tolls
it tolls for thee.*

The reality of the Aids epidemic worldwide is that it is not merely a medical condition, it is a disease with socio-medical implications.” (Reden, p. 388)

Hinzuzufügen ist hier noch, daß Hemingway aus John Donne’s Gedicht “No Man is an Island” (1624) zitiert (W.M.)

4.5 Anspielungen auf die Antike

Die Bezüge auf das klassische Altertum in Nelson Mandelas Autobiographie und in seinen Reden reichen vom Staatswesen der Ägypter über das Griechentum bis in das Römische Imperium. Assoziationen werden hergestellt zu Personen aus Mythen und Geschichte, Philosophen und Dichtern. Mandela zitiert auch klassische Aussprüche, die als geflügelte Worte in die europäischen Sprachen Eingang gefunden haben.

Die folgenden Belegstellen veranschaulichen die Vielfalt phraseologischen und parömiologischen Materials.

the Pharaoh of ancient Egypt

Im Gefängnis auf Robben Island konnten die politischen Häftlinge den Gottesdienst des anglikanischen Geistlichen besuchen. Diese Predigten beschreibt Nelson Mandela in seinen Memoiren besonders anschaulich:

Father Hughes soon preached to us in the courtyard and we found his sermons splendid. He made a point of discreetly inserting *bits and pieces* of news into his sermons, something we appreciated. He might say, for example, that like *the pharaoh of ancient Egypt*, the prime

minister of South Africa was raising an army. (Autobiography, p. 537)

Diese Textstelle enthält als Idiom die Zwillingsformel *bits and pieces*.

Socratic teaching

Im Steinbruch auf Robben Island, wo Nelson Mandela und seine Mitgefangenen schwere Arbeit verrichten mussten, bildeten sie in ihren knappen Pausen Zirkel für ihre Weiterbildung, indem sie zwar ohne Lehrmittel auskommen mussten, sich aber auf ihr Allgemeinwissen und ihr logisches Denken verlassen konnten. In der Folgezeit konnten sie diesen Wissensaustausch durch die Lockerung des Arbeitstemplos ausdehnen. Mandela erinnert in seinem autobiographischen Rückblick an die bekannte Lehrmethode des Sokrates:

Teaching conditions were not ideal. Study groups would work together at the quarry and station themselves in a circle around the leader of the seminar. The *style of teaching* was *Socratic* in nature; ideas and theories were elucidated through the leaders asking and answering questions. (Autobiography, p. 556)

Diese Schilderung bezieht sich auf die Mäeutik, d.h. die Frage-technik („Hebammenkunst“) des griechischen Philosophen Sokrates, durch geschicktes Fragen bei den Gesprächspartnern vorhandenes Wissen zu reaktivieren und auf einen neuen Sachverhalt anzuwenden.

Plato's allegory of the metals

An den griechischen Philosophen Platon erinnert Nelson Mandela in seinem Nachruf auf seinen Kampfgefährten, den Vorsitzenden des ANC, Oliver Tambo, in seiner Autobiographie.

In *Plato's allegory of the metals*, the philosopher classifies men into groups of *gold*, *silver* and *lead*. Oliver was pure *gold*; there was *gold* in his intellectual brilliance, *gold* in his warmth and humanity, *gold* in his tolerance and generosity, *gold* in his unfailing loyalty and self-sacrifice. As much as I respected him as a leader, that is how much I loved him as a man. (Autobiography, p. 730)

Die Symbolik der Metalle Gold, Silber und Blei als Zuschreibung zu dem Charakterbild und der Handlungsweise eines

Menschen erinnert an das Motiv der Kästchenwahl in Shakespeares Drama *The Merchant of Venice*, in dem die reiche, schöne und kluge Erbin Portia auf Geheiß ihres verstorbenen Vaters ihre Freier auf die Probe stellt, sich für das goldene, silberne oder bleierne Kästchen als Symbol und Wertgegenstand zu entscheiden. Nur das bleierne Kästchen enthält ihr Bildnis. Kennzeichnend für Mandelas Rhetorik und sein Pathos in diesem Text sind die Wiederholungen des wertvollsten Metalls *gold*.

Für Oliver Tambo hielt Mandela auch die Trauerrede in Johannesburg am 2. Mai 1993, die sich jedoch im Wortlaut von der autobiographischen Reminiszenz unterscheidet.

the dream of Croesus

Gold-mining on the Witwatersrand was costly because the ore was low grade and deep under the earth. Only the presence of cheap labour in the form of thousands of Africans working long hours for little pay with no rights made gold-mining profitable, for the mining houses – white-owned companies that became wealthy beyond *the dreams of Croesus* on the backs of the African people.

(Autobiography, p. 73)

Mandela variiert in diesem Kontext das auf einem Vergleich beruhende Idiom *as rich as Croesus* in der Bedeutung 'very rich, having great wealth' (LDEI), eine Anspielung auf den siegreichen König von Lydien, der nach seinen Eroberungen mit den erbeuteten Schätzen die ersten Goldmünzen prägen ließ.

Sisyphean labour

The graph of improvement in prison was never steady. Progress was halting, and typically accompanied by setbacks. An advancement might take years to win, and then be rescinded in a day. We would *push the rock up the hill, only to have it trumble down again*. But conditions did improve. We had won a host of small battles that added up to a change in the atmosphere of the island. (Autobiography, p. 535)

Auch ohne Namensnennung wird der Zusammenhang mit der griechischen Sagengestalt des Sisyphus deutlich. Lexikalisiert sind im Englischen die Phraseologismen *Sisyphean task* und *Sisyphean labour* in der Bedeutung einer endlosen und nutzlosen Arbeit.

Trojan horse

Nelson Mandela wählt diese Metapher in seinen Erinnerungen an die Verhandlungen mit dem südafrikanischen Präsidenten Frederik Willem de Klerk, gegen Ende seiner Gefangenschaft, in denen er die Rechte des ANC bei der zukünftigen Staatsform durchsetzen wollte.

I told Mr de Klerk that if that was how his party's paper perceived group rights, how did he think we regarded it? I added that the ANC had not struggled against apartheid for seventy-five years only to yield to a disguised form of it, and that if it was his true intention to preserve apartheid through the *Trojan horse* of group rights, then he did not truly believe in ending apartheid. (Autobiography, p. 664)

Das ODCIE, Vol. 2, erklärt den Phraseologismus *a Trojan horse* als 'a disguised means of introducing something harmful or disadvantageous [...]'.

Auch aus der römischen Antike verwendet Nelson Mandela Zitate und Anspielungen. In einer konkreten Situation, beispielsweise einer Rede im Ausland, dienen sie ihm zur Verortung eines historischen Ereignisses oder als eine Analogie bei einer folgenschweren Entscheidung.

Carthago delenda est

In seiner Rede in Tunís auf dem Treffen der Organisation for African Unity vom 13. bis 15. Juni 1994 erklärte Nelson Mandela:

"In the distant days of antiquity, a Roman sentenced this African city to death: '*Carthage must be destroyed (Carthago delenda est)*!' And Carthage was destroyed. Today we wander among its ruins; only our imagination and historical records enable us to experience its magnificence. Only our African being makes it possible for us to hear the piteous cries of the victims of the vengeance of the Roman Empire. And yet we can say this, that all human civilisation rests on the foundations such as the ruins of the African city of Carthage." (Reden, p. 533)

Mandela verzichtet darauf, den Urheber dieses martialischen Ausspruchs zu nennen: den römischen Staatsmann Marcus Porcius Cato (234-149 v.Chr.). Dieser pflegte jede seiner Reden

vor dem Senat mit den Worten zu enden: '*Ceterum censeo Carthaginem esse delendam*'. Aber im Geiste der friedlichen Zusammenarbeit erinnert Mandela an die Geschichte der Stadt Tunis und das Schicksal des antiken Carthago, auf dessen Fundamenten sie steht. Er will programmatisch die Kulturleistungen der Völker Afrikas würdigen: in Ägypten, in Ghana und Mali, im Benin, in Äthiopien und andernorts. Der Ausspruch des Cato gilt als geflügeltes Wort.

to cross the Rubicon

Noch im Gefängnis hatte Nelson Mandela ein persönliches Treffen mit dem zurückgetretenen Staatspräsidenten der Nationalist Party, Pieter Willem Botha, erwirkt.

While the meeting was not a breakthrough in terms of negotiations, it was one in another sense. Mr Botha had long talked about the need *to cross the Rubicon*, but he never did it himself until that morning at Tuynhuys. Now, I felt, there was no turning back. (Autobiography, p. 659)

Der Phraseologismus *to cross the Rubicon* bezieht sich auf die militärische Aktion Julius Cäsars, der im Jahre 49 v.Chr. mit seinen Truppen den Fluss Rubicon als die natürliche Grenze zwischen seiner eigenen Provinz und dem von Pompeius regierten Gebiet Italien überschritt und damit einen Bürgerkrieg auslöste. Im Englischen bedeutet der Phrasologismus *to cross the rubicon* 'take an action, start a process, which is important, and which cannot be reversed' (ODCIE, Vol. 2).

Der Anlass für Nelson Mandelas intensive Beschäftigung mit einem antiken Theaterstück war die Aufführung der *Antigone* von Sophocles, die von der Theatergruppe der Häftlinge von Robben Island ("our amateur drama society") für das Weihnachtsfest vorbereitet wurde. Auch bei anderen Inszenierungen dieses Laientheaters hatte er bereits in kleineren Rollen mitgewirkt. Die Häftlinge hatten keinerlei Requisiten, lediglich das Textbuch. In der *Antigone* übernahm Mandela die Rolle des Kreon und interpretierte das antike Stück als Parabel ihrer eigenen politischen Lage als Gefangene eines tyrannischen Regimes.

When *Antigone* was chosen as the play I volunteered my services, and was asked to play Creon, an elderly king

fighting a civil war over the throne of his beloved city-state. At the outset, Creon is sincere and patriotic, and there is wisdom in his early speeches when he suggests that experience is the foundation of leadership and that obligations to the people take precedence over loyalty to an individual [...]. But Creon deals with enemies mercilessly. [...] *His inflexibility and blindness ill become a leader, for a leader must temper justice with mercy.* It was *Antigone* who symbolized our struggle; she was, in her own way, a freedom fighter, for she defied the law on the ground that it was unjust. (Autobiography, p. 540 f. – Hervorhebungen: R.G.)

Für Nelson Mandela und seine Kampfgefährten besitzt dieses antike Stück ein aktuelles Identifikationspotential, eine Ermutigung zum Widerstand gegen staatliches Unrecht. In seiner Inhaltswiedergabe spricht Mandela eine Wertung der Charaktereigenschaften und der Handlungsweise der Protagonisten aus. Von einer politischen Führungspersönlichkeit fordert er trotz fester Prinzipien auch Einsicht, Flexibilität, Milde und die Fähigkeit, den Gegner zu verstehen. Es sind solche Qualitäten, die Nelson Mandela in der Folgezeit als Präsident eines jungen demokratischen Staates Südafrika im Umgang mit seinen ehemaligen politischen Gegnern, den Machthabern des Apartheid-Regimes, selbst beweisen sollte.

4.6 Anspielungen auf die Bibel

In seine Reden über politische und religiöse Fragen hat Nelson Mandela wiederholt Anspielungen auf das Alte und Neue Testament eingeflochten und Passagen daraus wörtlich zitiert. Auch in anderen thematischen Zusammenhängen unterstreichen Bezüge auf die Bibel die Überzeugungskraft seiner Ansprachen. So erinnerte er auf der Jahrestagung der Methodistischen Kirche vom 18. September 1994 daran, dass die Apartheid sogar das Glaubensbekenntnis der Menschen in Südafrika erfasst hatte.

“Especially while political leaders were in prison and in exile, bodies like the South African Council of Churches and its member churches resisted racial bigotry and held out a vision of a different, transformed South Africa. Methodist leaders were prominent among the *prophets*

who refused to *bow to the false god* of apartheid. Your ministers also visited us in prison and cared for our families." (Reden, p. 326)

Diese Formulierung erinnert an das lexikalisierte Idiom *worship of the golden calf* (LDEI: 'to believe that money is the most important thing in life') und an die biblische Szene der Götzenanbetung (Exodus 32), auch wenn in dem aktuellen Kontext nicht von der Verführung durch den Reichtum, sondern von der ideologischen Macht der Rassentrennung die Rede ist.

In einer anderen Ansprache über "Religious Diversity" aus dem gleichen Jahr verbindet Mandela zwei Anspielungen auf das Alte Testament, *manna from heaven* und *plague* als Signalwort für die zehn Plagen Ägyptens.

Es sind Vorgänge, an denen der Volksstamm der Israeliter zwar nicht aktiv beteiligt war, wohl aber das Eingreifen ihres Gottes Jahwe erkannte. Mandela hingegen will seine südafrikanischen Glaubensbrüder und -schwestern zum verantwortungsvollen Handeln veranlassen.

"And, yes, there is also something inherently bad in all of us, *flesh and blood* as we are, with the attendant desire to perpetuate and pamper the self.

From the promise arises the challenge to order our lives and mould our mores in such a way that the good in all of us takes precedence. In other words, we are not passive and hapless souls waiting for *manna* or *the plague from on high*. All of us have a role to play in shaping society." (Reden, p. 320)

Neben der Zwillingsformel *flesh and blood* als gängiges Idiom in der Bedeutung 'a human being or human beings in general' (LDEI) enthält dieser Redetext zwei auf die Signalwörter reduzierte Idiome: *manna from heaven* in der Bedeutung 'something that comes unexpectedly and that gives great comfort or encouragement, often at time of trouble' (LDEI) und *plague* ('a visitation of divine anger or justice', 'divine punishment', SOED). Nur biblisches Hintergrundwissen ermöglicht hier Assoziationen mit dem durch zehn Plagen bestraften Pharao.

the promised land

Dieses Idiom mit der Bedeutung 'a pleasant place or situation to which one looks forward with eagerness' (LDEI) hat seinen Ursprung im Alten Testament (1. Mose 12.1) und bezieht sich auf das von Gott Jahwe den Juden verheiße Land Kanaan. Mandela wählt diesen Ausdruck als Vergleich mit der Ortschaft Alexandra bei Johannesburg, in der er sich in seiner Jugend aufhielt.

[...] Alexandra was the urban *Promised Land*, evidence that a section of our people had broken their ties with the rural areas and become permanent city-dwellers [...]. Alexandra occupies a treasured place in my heart.
(Autobiography, p. 89)

to bring down the walls of Jericho

In seiner Trauerrede auf seinen Kampfgefährten Oliver Tambo am 2. Mai 1993 in Johannesburg gebraucht Nelson Mandela ein ausdrucksvolles Bild aus dem Alten Testament. Er vergleicht den Widerstand gegen das Unrechtssystem der Apartheid mit dem Kampf der Israeliter gegen die Stadt Jericho.

"We want to know – when powerful, arrogant and brutal men deliberately *close their ears* to reason, and reply to the petitions of the dispossessed with the thunder of the guns and the crack of the whip and the rattle of the jail keys, is it not right *to bring down the walls of Jericho?*"
(Reden, p. 491)

Der Kontext dieses Zitats aus dem Alten Testament (Josua 6) bildet eine rhetorische Frage, die aus der drastischen Schilderung der gemeinsamen Erfahrungen Nelson Mandelas und Oliver Tambos im Gefängnis und bei der Zwangsarbeit auf Robben Island abgeleitet ist. Außerdem enthält der Text ein somatisches verbales Idiom: *close their ears to reason*..

to beat swords into ploughshares

Ein geflügeltes Wort aus dem Alten Testament gewinnt inhaltliches Gewicht in Nelson Mandelas Eröffnungsrede auf dem 37th Congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in Johannesburg am 21. August 1993, in der er ausführte:

"Peace will not come about by magic. It requires people of goodwill who must help to produce a more tolerant

society where at least some swords will be beaten into ploughshares.” (Reden, p. 351)

Die Bezugsstelle im Alten Testament lautet: ‘And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks’. Es ist die Friedensmission des Propheten Micha (Micha 4,3).

to sell one’s birthright for a mess of pottage

Dieses Idiom auf der literarisch gehobenen Stilebene in der Bedeutung ‘to exchange something of lasting value for something that is of value for a short time only’ (LDEI) begegnet in elliptischer Form als *to sell one’s birthright*, *to bargain away the birthright* und *to be robbed of one’s own birthright* an mehreren Stellen in Nelson Mandelas Autobiographie und in seinen Reden. Dabei steht der Begriff *birthright* in einem politischen und sozialen Kontext für das Recht der schwarzafrikanischen Bevölkerung auf ihr Geburts- und Stammesland wie auch auf ihre ethnische Identität. Die Durchsetzung dieses Menschenrechts ist jahrzehntelang Ziel des African National Congress. Die Bezeichnung *birthright* trägt daher emotionale und expressive Konnotationen. Der Gebrauch des biblischen Zitats (aus 1. Mose 25, 29-34; 1. Mose 27) verstärkt die beschriebene Abwehrhaltung und die Ablehnung einer aufgezwungenen Politik: ‘*to sell one’s birthright.*’

Als die Apartheid-Regierung Nelson Mandela anbot, ihn aus der Haft zu entlassen, wenn er seine Kampfziele im ANC aufgäbe, lehnte Mandela diese Option entschieden ab:

“Not only I have suffered during these long, lonely, wasted years. I am not less life-loving than you are. *But I cannot sell my birthright*, nor am I prepared *to sell the birthright of the people* to be free. I am in prison as a representative of the people and of your organisation, the African National Congress, which was banned.” (Reden, p. 46 f.)

Dieser Text wurde von Nelson und Winnie Mandelas Tochter Zindzi am 10. Februar 1985 als „Botschaft aus dem Gefängnis“ vor einer großen Menschenmenge im Jabulani-Stadion in Soweto verlesen. Den Brief zitiert Mandela nochmals in seiner Autobiographie (p. 622 f.).

to bargain away the birthright

In seiner Eröffnungsrede auf der fünften Sitzung der Independent World Commission on the Oceans in Kapstadt am 11. November 1997 spricht Nelson Mandela von "the birthright of future generations".

"We have to be on our guard against temptations of the short-term benefits and pressures from powerful forces at the expense of the long-term interests of all. We cannot afford to *bargain away the birthright of future generations.*" (Reden, p. 223)

to be robbed of one's birthright

Diese Variante der Grundform *to sell one's birthright* begegnet im 3. Kapitel der Autobiographie, in dem Mandela die Hierarchien unter den Stammeshäuptlingen und Königen der Xhosa-Krieger erklärt. Er erkennt, dass die Abhängigkeit Südafrikas vom British Empire bereits auf einen Verlust der angestammten Rechte auf das eigene Land und seine Stammeskultur hinausläuft:

Chief Joyi railed against the white man, whom he believed had deliberately sundered the Xhosa tribe, dividing brother from brother. The white man had told the Thembus that their true chief was the great white queen across the ocean and that they were her subjects. But the white queen brought nothing but misery and perfidy to the black people; if she was a chief, she was an evil chief. Chief Joyi's war stories and his indictment of the British made me feel angry and cheated, as though *I had already been robbed of my own birthright.* (Autobiography, p. 27)

Der historische Rahmen dieser Erzählung (*war story*) des Xhosa-Häuptlings ist die Kolonialpolitik des British Empire unter der Königin Victoria (Regierungszeit 1837-1901), zumal die Folgen des Burenkrieges und die Entrechtung der indigenen Bevölkerung im kollektiven Gedächtnis noch präsent waren. Königin Elizabeth II, die erst 1952 ihre Regentschaft antrat, hat auch für Südafrika nur noch den Rang des symbolischen Oberhaupts innerhalb eines Commonwealth of Nations.

“Let my people go!”

Nelson Mandela begann seine Rede auf der Osterkonferenz der Zionistischen Christen am 20. April 1992 mit einer Lesung aus dem Klagedlied des Jeremiah aus dem Alten Testament, *Lamentation of Jeremiah, Chapter 5* (2. Mose 5,1), und bekräftigte den Ruf der Israeliter an den Pharao, *Let my people go!* Er zitierte die Verse:

“Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us:
 Consider, and behold our reproach,
 Our land is turned over to strangers, our homes to foreigners,
 We are orphans and fatherless, our Mothers are as widows.
 We have to pay for our water; and our wood is sold unto us,
 Our necks are under the yoke of oppression,
 We labour, and we have no rest.” (Reden, p. 331)

Diese Verse rufen starke Assoziationen mit der Lage der afrikanischen Bevölkerung unmittelbar nach der Aufhebung der Apartheid und den Unruhen im Vorfeld der ersten demokratischen Wahlen 1994 hervor. Die Machthaber des alten Apartheid-Regimes sind noch einflussreich. Mandela erinnert seine Landsleute an den Ruf der Israeliter nach Freiheit von der ägyptischen Gefangenschaft und appelliert an ihre Ausdauer:

“Since 1986 the ANC took it upon itself to search for a path to peace in our troubled land. From jail, from exile, from the underground hideouts inside South Africa, we extended a hand of peace to the South African government. For four long years, like Pharaoh of old, the South African government spurned it and refused to listen to the plea: ‘Let my people go!’” (Reden, p. 334)

Mandela verwendet außerdem ein ausdrucksstarkes verbales soziales Idiom: *to extend a hand of peace*.

Love your enemies

Das Gebot der Nächstenliebe, *Love your enemies*, das Christus in seiner Bergpredigt einer großen Menschenmenge mit auf den Weg gab (Matth. 5,44, LK 6,27), hatte Nelson Mandela während seiner langen Gefängnishaft als sein Leitprinzip erwählt. Es bestimmte seine Haltung gegenüber seinen Peinigern und politischen Gegnern nach seiner Freilassung aus dem Gefängnis. Er vertrat das Prinzip der Vergebung und Versöhnung mit dem Ziel,

die Menschen Südafrikas eine demokratische Nation werden zu lassen.

I was asked as well about the fears of whites. I knew that people expected me to harbour anger towards whites. But I had none. In prison, my anger towards whites decreased, but my hatred for the system grew. I wanted South Africa to see that *I loved even my enemies* while I hated the system that turned us against one another. (Autobiography, p. 680)

Das Bibelzitat der Bergpredigt steht auch im Zusammenhang mit der idiomatischen verbalen Wendung *to proclaim from the mountain tops*. Zwar zählt sie nicht zu den lexikalisierten Idiomen, hat aber eine assoziative Bildkraft. Nelson Mandela gebraucht sie in seiner Rede vor zionistischen Christen auf der Osterkonferenz am 20. April 1992 in Moria. Mit scharfen Worten verurteilt er die Apartheid als Sünde vor dem Herrn. Dieser Textabschnitt verdient wegen seiner rhetorischen Eindringlichkeit und seines religiösen Pathos ausführlich zitiert zu werden.

“Yes! We affirm it and *we shall proclaim it from the mountain tops* that all people – be they black or white, be they brown or yellow, be they rich or poor, be they wise or fools – *are created in the image of the Creator* and are his children!

Those who dare to cast out from the human family people of a darker hue with their racism; those who exclude from the sight of *God's grace* people who profess another faith with their religious intolerance; those who wish to keep their fellow countrymen away from *God's bounty* with forced removals; those who have driven away from the *altar of God* people whom He has chosen to make different, commit an ugly sin! The sin called APARTHEID.” (Reden, p. 333)

Die beeindruckende stilistische Wirkung dieses Satzgefüges entsteht dadurch, dass der Hauptsatz vier Subjekte einschließt, die ihrerseits durch umfangreiche Relativsätze expandiert werden und strukturell einen Parallelismus bilden. Der damit erzeugte Satzrhythmus und die verzögerte Stellung des Prädikats erreichen ihren Endpunkt in der Stilfigur der Klimax, ‘*an ugly sin*’, mit der Mandela ein vernichtendes Urteil ausspricht.

the keeper of my brother/the keeper of our brother and sister

Aus der Szene des Brudermordes Kains an Abel im Alten Testament (1. Mose 4,9; 27, 29) ist die Frage des Herrn an Kain nach dem Verbleib seines Bruders Abel bekannt, ebenso wie die Antwort des Brudermörders Kain: ‘*Shall I be my brother’s keeper?*’ Nelson Mandela greift die Wendung ‘*the keeper of my brother*’ in einer Rede in der Absicht auf, sie in eine affirmative und positive Richtung zu lenken, in dem Sinne, dass der Einzelmensch für seinen Mitmenschen verantwortlich ist. Eine solche Verantwortung sieht Mandela in Verhütungsmaßnahmen gegen die Immunschwäche AIDS in Südafrika. Im Bewusstsein notwendiger Wachsamkeit der Männer *und* Frauen gegenüber dieser Gefahr wendet er sich an “*the keepers of our brother and sister*” und appelliert an ihre kollektive Verantwortung. In seiner programmativen Abschlussrede am 14. Juli 2000 in Durban, betitelt “Aids: From Rhetoric to Action”, spricht er eindringliche Worte in Anlehnung an die bekannte Bibelstelle:

“Let us, however, not underestimate the resources required to conduct this battle. Partnership with the international community is vital. A constant theme in all our messages has been that in this interdependent and globalised world we have indeed again become *the keepers of our brother and sister*. That cannot be more graphically the case than in the common fight against HIV/Aids.”
(Reden, p. 405)

Da die Aids-Seuche ein weltweites Problem darstellt, sendet Mandela seine Botschaft an die internationale Öffentlichkeit.

5. Zusammenfassung

Obwohl das untersuchte Textkorpus auf zwei Hauptwerke Nelson Mandelas, seine Autobiographie *Long Walk to Freedom* (mit 768 Seiten) und seine ausgewählten Reden *Nelson Mandela in His Own Words* (mit 558 Seiten) beschränkt ist und noch keine endgültige Einschätzung seiner ‘proverbial rhetoric’ zulässt, kann man feststellen, dass Sprichwortgut in seinem Sprachgebrauch zwar eine wichtige Rolle spielt, aber keineswegs vordergründig in Erscheinung tritt. Im Vergleich mit den von Wolfgang Mieder analysierten Texten amerikanischer und britischer Politiker ist es weitaus schwächer ausgeprägt. Wenn man jedoch den Begriff *proverb* mit seinen Randzonen und

Übergängen zu anderen gängigen Sentenzen, wie Maximen, Lösungen, geflügelten Worten, Zitaten und Anspielungen als Gegenstand der Untersuchung wählt, dann bieten die Texte Nelson Mandelas reichhaltiges Material. Seine Rhetorik ist Ausdruck seiner Wesensart als Madiba, ein Mann des Volkes, als Worführer der schwarzen Bevölkerung Südafrikas und als Vorkämpfer für eine Republik ohne Rassentrennung. Das Ethos und Pathos seiner Reden entsprechen dieser Überzeugung.

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THE BLASON POPULAIRE IN SWAHILI PAREMIA

Abstract: The stereotypes of self or others, *blasons populaires*, are hereby drawn from the Swahili paremic material spanning the years 1850-1950 along the East African coastal littoral. Specifically, I will focus on how the Swahili at that time verbally stereotyped others in particular their akin neighbors and immigrant foreigners. It seems that the Swahili employed proverbial invectives not only to malign peripheral sub-groups but also to humorously rebuke superior out-groups.

Keywords: Africa, blasons populaires, ethnic stereotypes, ethnonym, in-group, out-group, paremia, prejudice, Swahili, toponym

1.0 Introduction

Lindahl et al. (2000:103) in their copious work, consider “any form of verbal denigration of one group to another based on stereotypes, national character, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, misogyny, homophobia, prejudice, racism” as *blasons populaires*. This French-based term soared to its current international visibility after appearing in the magnum opus of the American paremiologist Archer Taylor’s *The Proverb* (1931). And recently the Irish paremiologist, Mac Connigh (2013:5) has given us the gist of the term blason populaire, it is “nothing more than benign descriptions of the salient characteristics of a people or place, mere drollery based on interethnic or intercultural rivalry in society.” His usage of the phrase “of a people or place” parallels the prominent sociological terms of *ethnonym*, i.e. an ethnic name ascribed to a people or group; and *toponym* i.e. a word associated with the name of a place. Nevertheless, though Roback (1944:251) was relevant enough to coin the term *ethnopaulism* out of the Greek root *ethnos* “national group” and *phaulism* “disparaging”, it is position, in paremiological literature, is currently untenable. Of interest in the study of the blason populaire, as Jansen (1957) has earlier noted, is that a group may esoterically

stereotype itself (inwardly) or exoterically stereotype others (outwardly).

Evidence abound of the presence of blasons populaires in folkloric genres such as proverbs, proverbial expressions, songs, ethnic jokes, traditional phrases, riddles, nicknames etc (Taylor 1931, Jansen 1970, Koch 1994, Dundes 1995, Mieder 2004). This article mainly explores the presence of the blason populaire in the Swahili paremia.¹ The source material is from Taylor (1891), Steven (1981), Knappert (1997), and Wamitila (2001) and which were popular in 1850-1950 along what Mark Horton (1987) calls the Swahili “corridor.”² In so doing, I hope to offer, for the first time, how the Swahili as in-group, exoterically stereotype out-groups.

2.0 The Blason Populaire and Group Stereotyping

The blason populaire tends to manifest itself either through self-stereotyping or stereotyping others on the bases of ethnicity or national origins, sexual orientation, gender disparity, religiosity, race, age, physical ability, economic status, linguistic deficiency or geographical location etc. (Dundes, 1965; Dürmüller (1982). To Dundes (1975), subgenres of the blason populaire are made up of ethnic slurs, prejudiced attitude and stereotype judgments. He considers ethnic slurs as part of the ethnic identity (Dundes 1971:202). But looking deeper at his demarcation of prejudiced attitude and stereotype judgments, we encounter the fact that stereotypes represent the shared over-simplified images of the in-group or out-group. Generally it is a “group bias” or “a false caricature” that is perpetuated by stereotypes (Lippman 1922, Dundes 1971, Druckman 1994).

Ample regional and international studies have exemplified what Lindahl et al. (2000:103) characterize as features of blasons populaires under stereotypical elements of (a) national character (b), ethnocentrism, (c) xenophobia (d) misogyny (e) homophobia (f) prejudice, (g) racism/race. Interestingly some Swahili scholars as well have also made their contributions on studies closely related to the *sine qua non* of the blason populaire. Ken Walibora (2012) in “Asian Others” criticizes his fellow Swahili literary writers who vilify their Asians characters to inflame xenophobic feelings against minority Asians; Katrina Thompson (2006) pinpoints the ethnocentric stereotype in Swahili comics in which the

mainstream Swahili morbidly poke fun of the minority speech communities who instead of conforming to congenial linguistic and cultural forms keep on adulterating and desecrating the standard norms. Impurity features became the idiosyncratic features of the speakers of Arabian Swahili, Hindi Swahili, Makonde Swahili and Masai Swahili; Inyani Simala (1998) critically analyses misogynic use of Swahili metaphors and how they denigrate and dehumanize Swahili women: "Women are to men what honey is to bees; juicy and delicious." His other extreme chauvinistic examples from Swahili metaphoric expressions likened women to rat, donkey, big basket, serpent, and even flowers and finally Carol Eastman (1986) has presented a case of jokes and humor in Siu, the northern variety of Swahili.

As can be noted none of these stereotypical works in Swahili have put to use the expanse paremic material so far available. Elsewhere, an astounding study of the blason populaire in the Irish paremic corpus by Marcus Mac Coinning (2013) is a convincing case worth emulating. However, unlike Mac Coinning who largely scouted the provisional-based blason populaire from the Irish proverbial corpus, our study has found evidence of the intra-ethnic and intra-national blasons populaires from the Swahili paremic stock.

This study employed the dichotomous categorization of the in-group and the out-group stereotyping in which those who considered themselves as dominant at the centre tend to mock the weaker on the fringe. The in-group quite possibly stereotypes itself (esoteric), otherwise it is only "others" who are the main target of the exoteric stereotypes (Jansen 1965, Dundes 1971, Dürmüller (1982).

3.0 The Esoteric Forms of Blason Populaire in Swahili Paremia

Admittedly, there are only few noted cases of the Swahili stereotyping themselves. However, the use of the ethnonym *Mswahili* "the Swahili" in examples nos 1 and 2 offer interesting hints. In example no. 1 the Swahili are self-flattering as "blind lovers", paralleling Shakespeare's maxim of "love is blind." In example no 2, two ethnonyms are contrasted, the Nyamwezi are admired as "cold eyed" out group while the dominant Swahili self-ascribed as "blind lovers."

(1) *Mswahili akipenda chongo huita kengeza*
 “When in love a Swahili will call a one eyed a cross one.”

(2) *Chongo kwa Mnyamwezi kwa Mswahili rehema ya Mungu*
 “It is a one eyed to a Nyamwezi but for a Swahili it is a blessing from God.”

Although only two proverbs were found to exemplify self-image of the Swahili, Antweller’s (2012:127) assures us that there is a close connection between a group self-identification and self-affirmation on one hand, and stereotypes of others on the other side. By stereotyping others, we eventually display our own self identity. Not only the dominant Swahili group displays its own character against the others, but also pinpoints who are their close allies as noted in example no. 3 that shows the link between the Unguja and the Pemba. Equally, example no. 4 emphasizes no inherent distinction between the Pemba and the Mrima dwellers. By analogy the Unguja, the Pemba and the Mrima are all a “band of brothers” through blood tie and shared culture.

(3) *Yaliyopo Unguja na Pemba yapo*
 “What you find in Unguja you will also find in Pemba.”

(4) *Yaliyo Pemba na Mrima yapo*
 “What you find in Pemba you will also find in Mrima.”

It is a stern reminder to outsiders that the three subgroups of the Swahili are a unified block all exhibiting similar outward manners and inner behaviors.

4.0 The Exoteric Forms of Blason Populaire in Swahili Paremia

As noted in § 3.0 only fragments of clues are provided in the paremic stock to account for the esoterically bantering of the in-group. However, vast proverbial material confirm the existence of intra-ethnic blason populaire and the intra-national blason populaire and we can even exclusively demarcate the toponymic blason populaire from the data.

4.1 Intra-ethnic Blasons Populaires in Swahili Paremia

The Swahili paremia material provides almost the entire geographical and cultural traits of the various sub groups, their Bantu neighbors along the Swahili “corridor. There is a clear demarcation of the ethnonyms and toponyms such as Pemba, Unguja, Mrima, Pate, Mombasa (Mvita), Bajuni (Gunya), Digo, Segeju, Chagga and Nyamwezi in the paremic stock. Despite the presence of linguistic and ethnic idiosyncratic features among these inter-ethnic groups, there is no evidence of admonishing each other by referring to the nature of their skin pigment, physiognomic features, misogynic biases, or homophobia. The punch-lines, though most malicious, are mainly directed to the anti-social behaviors, local xenophobia and ridicule personality “disorder” by the out-group.

Series of pernicious stereotypes of out-groups are evident in examples nos. 5 to 6. Here the Bajuni, a sub group of the Swahili, the Chagga and the Digo are verbally maligned by the mainstream Swahili. The Bajuni and Chagga are painted as unsociable groups displaying disliked characters such as untrustworthy, greedy and faithlessness. Accusation of the Bajuni and the Chagga, who were prosperous merchants, were not out of envy or competition, but can be out of involvement in shoddy business deals with the in-group. More specific, the Bajuni might have drawn negative attention following their historical alliances with the Portuguese and Arabs against the Swahili. Their mercenary role to defend as well as assault Mombasa and Pate alongside the colonial masters in the 18th century is a legitimate warrant to attract tormenting slurs towards them (Strandes 1971:246).

(5) *Bajuni ana dhara hata akisali sala tano*

“A Bajuni is a dangerous person even if he/she prays five times a day.”

(6) *Mchaga huahidi akavunja kiaga*

“Chagga promises and later breaks it.”

Serious dehumanizing stereotypes are directed to the Digo in examples nos. 7, 8 and 9. They are branded as burdensome, as well as superstitious by the dominant Swahili. Such depiction has led to a damaging and denigrating prejudice against the entire Digo group by the Swahili. Worse still, the dominant Swahili

advise each other in example no. 9 on how to undo the jinx when encountering the Digo, the black cat in the neighborhood. Mieder (1993, 1997:472) proposes that additional studies need to be undertaken to explore how hateful proverbial invectives inflict harm on innocent people. Indeed, the prejudice against the Bajuni, the Chagga, and the Digo have so far reached the *consensus gentium* with a myriad of negative implications.

- (7) *Mdigo mzigo*
“A Digo is a burden.”³
- (8) *Mdigo Mzito kama mzigo*
“A Digo is like a heavy load.”
- (9) *Mdigo mkanye akirudi, usimkanye aendapo mtagomba-na na safari*
“Rebuke a Digo when he comes back, don’t rebuke him when he goes: you’ll quarrel with each other the whole journey.”

A further look into our paremic stereotypes shows that the dominant Swahili do not disparage other groups all of the time, sometimes they are showing respect for their achievement or competence. Evidence in nos. 10 and 11 indicate that the Segeju and the Nyamwezi are admired by the dominant Swahili. However, to be admired and respected does not mean that the Swahili are fond of them or consider them “sociable.” A group may be respected as competent but resented (Glick, 2002). The Segeju and the Nyamwezi are humorously lashed as “beast-for-nothing” Bantu neighbors. The Segeju are depicted as ferocious fighters who use two stones instead of just one in a catapult. However, it is recorded in the Swahili historiography that the Segeju were both raiders and slave collectors, and sometimes allied with the Portuguese against the Swahili (Gray 1950, Walsh 2013). Similarly, the Nyamwezi, nicknamed as “*the human courier*”, were skilled caravan porters occupying crucial function in trade and transportation of ivory and slaves from the mainland to the ports of East Africa (Rockel 1977). To these days anyone given a tumultuous task or critical problem to solve on behalf of the group can jokingly be idolized as the Nyamwezi of the group.

(10) *Msegeju kumbwewe ya mawe mawili*
 “A Segeju uses two stones in a catapult.”

(11) *Mzigo mzito mpe mnyamwezi*
 “Let a heavy load be carried by a Nyamwezi.”

Other warm characterizations by the dominant Swahili are directed towards the neighboring Pemba in examples nos. 12 to 14. The mainstream Swahili are coaxing the Pemba as a megalomaniac group. The Pemba are painted with numerous narcissistic personality traits as they seem to display grandiose images in whatever things they do; from sewing a container to showing resilience to a little rain. Therefore the Swahili consider the Pemba competent and industrious yet unsociable.

(12) *Mpemba hashoni tomo dogo*
 “A Pemba does not sew a small container.”

(13) *Mpemba hakimbii mvua ndogo*
 “A Pemba does not run away from a little rain.”

(14) *Mpemba akipata gogo hanyii chini*
 “When a Pemba finds a log he will never defecate on the surface.”

As noted in this section almost all stereotypes target the groups on the fringe of the Swahili epicenter and hence abides to the central-periphery direction of stereotyping. These out-groups are Bajuni, Chagga, Digo, Segeju, Nyamwezi and Pemba. In front of the dominant in-group Swahili, these sub-groups exhibit anti-social behaviors and ridicule personality traits including faithlessness, untrustworthy or collective narcissism. None of these groups seem to be liked by the Swahili, hence local xenophobia is prevalent here. As the scale of the likability goes low so is the rise of negative stereotypes by the dominant Swahili. The Bajuni, the Chagga and the Digo are abhorred by the dominant Swahili hence craved as eerie, insidious and dull groups. The Swahili admires the Pemba as extravagance yet harrowing in their eyes.

4.2 Intra-national Blasons Populaires in Swahili Paremia

The Swahili have a long history of intermingling with such non-indigenous dwellers as Arabs, Persians, Indians, Portuguese,

Chinese, French, Germans, British and Malagasy and Oromo. Some Swahili paremia exhibit two major intra-national groups whose presence were the results of the Indian Ocean maritime trade and direct colonial occupation of East Africa during the period of 1850-1950. Although foreigners, especially the Omanite Sultanate, Portuguese, Germans and the British, physically imposed their own sense of nationalism and divided the Swahili world into national entities such as Zanzibar, Kenya, Tanganyika, Comoro, Somalia etc, no such division is vividly attested in Swahili paremia covering the years 1850-1950. Only two sovereign countries are mentioned in the Swahili paremic stock; *Mwingereza* “the British” and *Mmanga* “The Oman Arab or Manga-Arab”, otherwise terms such as *Mzungu* “the Whiteman”, *Mwarabu* “The Arab”, and *Mhindi* “The Indians” are treated as umbrella ethnic terms. The Swahili and related Bantu groups have not considered themselves as part of a “banal” nation. The Arabs and the Indians have had the longest duration of contact with indigenous Swahili (that goes back to the 10th century) compared to Wazungu (Europeans).

Stereotypes directed to immigrant foreigners and colonizers are almost all exhibiting contempt against them to clearly reveal the historical tumultuous relation between the Swahili and their colonial masters. The Arabs and the British are branded as “destroyers” and “bulldozers” in examples nos. 15 and 16. The reasons are not far to find, Zanzibar and the mainland coast of East Africa Swahil fell to the Sultanate of Oman, Seyyid The Sultan had moved his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1840. He established clove plantations and controlled the slave trade and gave the minority Arabs (Wamanga) and Indians (Khoja, Banyan) the fertile land in Pemba and on Unguja Island. Slavery brought social and economic menace and destabilized the once harmonized communal life. The Arabs and Indians became the target of slurs. The Swahili also suffered the colonial brunt by the Portuguese, Germans, and British. However, only the ethnonym *Waingereza* “the British” is clearly mentioned in example no. 16.

(15) *Mwarabu harabu*
“An Arab is a destroyer.”

(16) *Mwingereza hutengeneza akakereza*

“A British tends to create at the same time destroys.”

The Germans colonized East Africa between 1886-1918, but there is no direct mention of them in particular; the use of the ethnonym *Wadachi* “the Dutch” is absent in the paremic stock. Indirectly, in the paremic example no. 17, there is a mention of *Mzungu wa Reli* “lit. Whiteman of Railway” or “The Whiteman the builder or owner of a railway.” Historically, the Germans were the first to engage locals in a forceful construction of the railway upcountry from the port of Tanga in 1893 (Ramaer (2009). The slurring expression *mbumbumbu* “ignorant person” was coined to refer to natives building railway who faced language barrier with their white masters. Such difficulty in communication became a target for a joking slur. Generally now any illiterate person is a *mbumbumbu*.

(17) *Mbumbumbu mzungu wa reli*

“A fool like a railway labourer.”

The Swahili completely show dislike of the Arabs and the *Wazungu* through their anti-colonial stereotypes. They also intensely detest alien cultures and practices by all out-groups including the migrated Hindu-Banyan and the Indian-Khoja. The proverbial materials nos. 18-21 target the Hindu Banyan who are, though positively characterized as “skillful” in example no.18 and admired in no 21, yet stigmatized as unsociable, not “worth marrying” or sharing a neighborhood with as in nos. 19 and 20. The Swahili view the Banyan as blatantly evil in example no. 21 and make their “burial custom” in no 22 subject of a proverbial joke.

(18) *Baniani mbaya, kiatu chake dawa*

“An evil Indian, his shoe is a medicine.”

(19) *Ukimtaka baniani umtaka na ubinda wake*

“If you like a Banyan, you must like his loin cloth too.”

(20) *Ala ala jirani hata akiwa baniani*

“Thanks to God for the neighbour, even if he/she is a Banyan.”

(21) *Adimika kama kaburi la baniani*

“Being lost like the cemetery of the Banyan.”

Therefore the in-group Swahili admire the sly character of the Hindu Banyan but dislike what they consider as strange and “alien” cultural practices such as cremation and adorning of the sari outfits. Likewise, in example no. 22, the Manga-Arab are given credit for introducing the perfumery culture among the Swahili.⁴

(22) *Mfuatana na Mmanga hunukato*

“One who follows a Manga-Arab smells well.”

More importantly, the Swahili as a dominant in-group emphasize the value of co-existence and good neighborhood. They accuse the Manga-Arabs and the Hindi -Khoja for conniving on their own enclave. Social isolation and their fraternizing attitude become the target of stereotypes and the emblem for sub-groups as evidenced in nos. 23 and 24. With low affinity to the main group, the adverse stereotypes are directed towards the out-groups.

(23) *Wahindi Khoja kwao kumoja*

“The Indian Khoja all come from the same area.”

(24) *Waarabu wa Pemba hujuana kwa vilemba*

“The Arabs from Pemba are known to each other by their turbans.”

Apparently, no racial slurs to victimize the minority groups on the bases of their race exist. But the unsociable groups were not tolerated, be they the Bantu relatives, akin sub-groups or foreign immigrants. The out-groups were mocked and jibed on the basis of their anti-social behaviors and social betrayal. According to Freyd (2012), social betrayal occurs when the people or institutions on which a person depends for survival significantly violate that person’s trust or well-being. In the eyes of the Swahili the Sultanates, Indian merchants, the Segeju slave raiders, the Portuguese, the Germans and the British colonialists were all out-group perpetrators who have exerted physical and emotional abuse to the dominant Swahili to rationalize stereotypical bombardment from the in-group.

4.3 Toponymic Stereotypes in Swahili Paremia

Certain Swahili paremic blasons populaires are intertwined with toponyms. Pemba, Mrima, Unguja, India, Manga, Mombasa, Mvita, Pate and Nguu are all place names in our paremic

sources presumably each with “stories” behind them. The importance of using toponyms, as verbal picture, to historically reconstruct stories and historical events, in our case the events between 1850-1950 in the Swahili world, has long been addressed (see Tomalcheva, 1995:26-37).

I found three types of toponymic blasons populaires in my data: The first is what I call prudence toponyms. Four place names have been mentioned in the paremia; Pemba, Mombasa, also known as Mvita “a city of War”, Mrima, and India. These towns are characterized as places full of vice and debauchery, a clear warning to newcomers. They are hedonistic spots marked with a lavish life style, culture decadence, pitfalls and even indecent attires. Examples are found in nos. 25-32 below:

- (25) **Pemba, Peremba**
“Visit Pemba prudently.”
- (26) **Pemba peremba ukija na winda utarudi na kilemba**
“If you go to Pemba with a loincloth, you will come back with a turban.”
- (27) **Mombasa ukiwa na kitu anasa, kama huna mkasa**
“In Mombasa, you will be lured to squander if you have, still a disaster if you have nothing.”
- (28) **Mvita ina mambo tumbi tumbi**
“Mombasa has things in great quantities.”
- (29) **Mvita kwa mwenda pole, mwenda kwa haraka hukwaa dole**
“When in Mombasa go gently; being in a haste will hurt your toe.”
- (30) **Mvita, mji wa ndweo**
“Mombasa is a town of drunkenness.”
- (31) **Mrima nyarima, usipoliwa na nyani, utaliwa na kima**
“Mrima is a land of pitfalls: if not eaten by baboons, you will be eaten by monkeys.”
- (32) **Hindi ndiko kwenye nguo, na wendao tupu wako**
“India is where clothes are made but it’s also the place nudists roam.”

The second type of toponym harbours epic history of warfare. The reference is made here to the battles of Mvita, Pate and Nguu that have involved the Swahili and Bantu relatives. Blasons populaires in nos. 33 and 34 are depicting Pate and Nguu as memorable death spots. As for the term *Mvita*, this in itself was derived from the noun *vita* “war” and the toponym was coined out of the historical warfare between the Swahili and the Portuguese in the 17th and 18th centuries. Between 1807 and 1893 the area of Pate witnessed a ferrous battle among the three famous city-like states of Amu and Mombasa on one hand and Pate Island on the other (Pouwels 1991, Warner 1915:290). As for the toponym *Nguu*, this is only hinted at as the Ngulu gap during the First World War in which the Germans fought against the Allied Forces led by the British around Usambara in Tanga region in 1916:

(33) *Mwenda Pate harudi, kijacho ni kilio*
“One who goes to Pate returns not.”

(34) *Mwenda Nguu kauyu*
“One who goes to Nguu returns not.”

However, landmark calamities like local revolts in 1888-1890 and the Majimaji war (1905-1907) (see Wimmelbucker 2009:17) hardly appeared in all other voluminous Swahili paremic stock.

The third type of toponym heeds the call by Wolfgang Mieder (1984) to help in locating international variants of the proverbial expression “To carry owls to Athens.” Unfortunately, I found only one case in the Swahili paremia as in no. 35 which suggests that it is superfluous to “Send dates from East Africa to Arabia-Manga”:

(35) *Amerudisha tende Manga*⁵
“S/he has sent back dates to Manga-Oman.”

Noted in this subsection on the toponymic blason populaire, is first, that the majority of towns are being castigated for their despicable features. Others, as far as the calendar of Swahili is concerned, are vital anecdotes of historical warfare. And finally, the Swahili paremia also provides their equivalent of the infamous proverbial expression “To carry owls to Athens.”

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

Our analysis of blasons populaires throws light on the cultural history of the Swahili world. Of the paremia we quoted some are still popular and are part of the paremiological minimum of the Swahili and as such still form the basis of their cultural literacy. Our study has shown hallmarks of ethnocentrism, local xenophobia and denigration of “out-groups” with almost no signs of racism or misogyny. This appears to prove Druckman’s (1994:7) statement that the Swahili “evoke biases in favor of their own group” and consider themselves as somehow better off and “civilized” compared to other closely related sub-groups and immigrant foreigners from Asia and Europe. Although much of the paremia we have collected have negative stereotypes, a few notable positive remarks are present as well. Surprisingly, very few proverbial slurs against *Wazungu* are found in this Swahili paremic genre. Wolfgang Mieder (1997:472) convincingly asserts that probably “there is a story behind every proverbs”; if so, it is equally right to suspect that there is a “story” behind every ethnonym and toponym in the paremic blasons populaires.

Notes:

¹ I have adopted the term *paremia* in the broader sense used by Zaikauskiæ (2012) to denote all encompassing proverbs, proverbial phrases, aphorisms, sayings, maxims, literary quotations etc.

² The three former East African countries of Tanganyika, Kenya and Zanzibar share the Western Indian Ocean literally but under various rules including the Omanite sultanate, Germany East Africa, and the British Protectorate during 1850 to 1950.

³ Several youngsters are slurring each other in Facebook, Twitters and Swahili blogs signifying the popularity of this saying.

⁴ The Swahili adopted the culture of spraying their bodies or sprinkling their beds with rose water (*marashi*) and perfumes (*kaa, itiri* or *uturi*) from the Bahrain Islands in the Persian Gulf and India. *Kaa* is a sandalwood from the evergreen tree *santalum album* which yields an *ambar*-hued wood which when dry is very fragrant (Hichens, 1938:75).

⁵ The word “**manga**” is a pejorative term referring to both the Arabia Peninsula and the immigrated Arabs from Oman to East Africa. In Zanzibar there is a place called **Mangapwani** to mean “Arabian Shore.” On the Mozambique coast the term *Maka* stands for *Manga* “Arabian Peninsula” to represent the

coastal communities affiliated with the Swahili-Arabic culture (see Schadeberg and Mucanheia, 2000 and also Nafla, 2013).

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LES PROVERBES DIALOGUÉS FRANÇAIS À LA LUMIÈRE DE L'ANALYSE COMPARATIVE AVEC LES PROVERBES DIALOGUÉS POLONAIS

Abstract: Le statut exceptionnel de proverbes dialogués dans le système parémiologique français est lié à leur rareté et à un fort caractère dialectal. Ce genre de langage qui constitue un commentaire à caractère plutôt évaluatif que ludique, est un exemple de transaccentuation d'un dialogue ou d'une anecdote à sens négatif à leur origine. La plupart des exemples français ne sont pas des dialogues prototypiques mais des formes mi-dialoguées. Le comique de caractères dans les proverbes français a trait à la transgression de toutes les maximes conversationnelles par ces phrases. L'humour de celles-ci se laisse décrire aussi par un contraste entre une présupposition et le sens d'un énoncé que par une opposition entre une implication et le contexte antérieur ou par deux implications en opposition.

Keywords: proverbe, parémiologie, proverbe dialogué, proverbes français, proverbes polonais, l'humour, pragmatique linguistique.

Introduction

Dans ce travail visant à décrire les proverbes dialogués français, après avoir esquissé l'état des recherches concernant ce domaine, nous précisons d'abord leur place parmi les formes parémiques apparentées. Nous aborderons ensuite, l'analyse comparative des parémies dialoguées françaises, considérées par rapport aux phrases polonaises de ce type, en prenant en considération leur quantité, forme, contenu, fonctions pragmatiques des énoncés dans les dialogues, ainsi que les mécanismes de l'humour propres à ces proverbes.

1. Les proverbes dialogués – état des recherches

Archer Taylor, dans son ouvrage *The Proverb* (1931), inappréciable et fondamental pour la prémiologie moderne, a consacré un chapitre aux proverbes dialogués. L'auteur souligne qu'ils restent caractéristiques des langues de l'Orient tandis que dans les

idiomes de l'Europe d'Ouest, ils sont difficilement trouvables. Les travaux des autres linguistes (Leino 1969; 1974; Keren 1966; Świerszczyńska 1974, Krzyżanowski 1980, Bystroń 1933, Szpila 2003, Lipińska 2008; à paraître) sur le sujet des proverbes finois, juifs, allemands, polonais s'occupent du problème de la ressemblance des proverbes dialogués aux anecdotes, de leur lien avec les formes narratives populaires, et aussi de l'origine des parémies, de leur pénétration dans d'autres langues et des mécanismes de l'humour verbal typiques de ces phrases. Le caractère parémique des proverbes dialogués, sur lequel a été mis l'accent dès le début (Keren 1966), a cédé la place, dans les travaux postérieurs, à une vision de l'appartenance des dialogues plus développés aux anecdotes (Leino 1974).

Selon Taylor (1931), très peu nombreux proverbes dialogués ouest-européens constituent des traces de l'influence des parémies orientales d'origine inconnue. Pour celles-ci, relevées surtout en grec et en arabe, la forme concrète du dialogue ou de la narration s'avère plus naturelle que les constatations didactiques abstraites, propres aux langues ouest-européennes. La différence entre les proverbes de l'Orient et de l'Ouest consiste surtout dans la divergance de la forme et non du contenu. Le proverbe polonais non dialogué *Złapał kozak Tatarzyną, a Tatarzyn za łeb trzymał* est un exemple classique du remplacement d'un dialogue originel¹ présent dans plusieurs langues (entre autres en juif et en anglais), dans lequel au lieu d'un Tatar apparaît un ours. Keren (1966) constate pourtant que la forme polonaise non dialoguée est antérieure au dialogue juif avec un Tatar aussi. Taylor cite, entre autres, les exemples anglais, allemands et espagnols de parémies non dialoguées, à plusieurs variantes, lesquelles proviennent de formes autonomes arabes, dialoguées ou narratives, correspondant au proverbe polonais *Przyganiał kocioł garnkowi, a sam smoli* et à l'expression proverbiale *wpaść z deszczu pod rynnę*. (Taylor 1985: 158) Mentionnons aussi après Taylor le proverbe français de la parémiographie de Le Roux de Lincy *Asne convié à nopces eau ou boys y doit apporter* dont la version narrative primitive, d'origine arabe est la suivante, dans la traduction anglaise : *They asked the ass, "Whither?" He answered, "To fetch wood or water"* (Taylor 1931: 157).

Parmi les linguistes polonais, Krzyżanowski admet comme faisant partie des proverbes, les formes citées à quatre phrases au

maximum, tout en constatant que l'appartenance des mini-dialogues autonomes au groupe des parémies est discutable. (1980:133). L'auteur souligne la nature littéraire des proverbes dialogués et leur ressemblance avec l'anecdote. Il indique aussi les dictons polonais de calendrier comme l'une des sources des dialogues parémiques (*Na Święty Wit słowik cyt*)². Selon Bogusławski, les formes citées plus longues qu'une phrase devraient être classifiées comme étant d'autres types de textes, p. ex. des paraboles, de courts récits ou des anecdotes. Le linguiste constate que même si la totalité est porteuse d'une implicature, aux phrases particulières aucune implicature ne peut être attribuée. (Bogusławski 1976: 163-164). Szpila présente des informations précieuses concernant la période de la création et de la plus grande popularité des mini-dialogues, laquelle date du XVIII^e siècle. Ce dernier linguiste, ainsi que Świerszczyńska, attirent l'attention sur le fonctionnement postérieur de ces parémies dans la langue courante, sous forme d'apocopes. Szpila souligne aussi que malgré leur caractère situationnel, les proverbes en question acquièrent un contenu général qui peut s'appliquer à des situations nombreuses et variées. (Szpila 2003: 75).

Dans le travail consacré aux mécanismes pragmatiques de l'humour verbal dans les proverbes dialogués polonais (Lipińska à paraître), on a constaté que la dépréciation de l'un des interlocuteurs est un mécanisme d'humour fréquent. L'effet humoristique de ces énoncés, l'une des conditions de leur réussite, reste en rapport avec certains traits caractéristiques de l'émetteur et du récepteur du proverbe. Les personnes devaient être adultes et avoir une hiérarchie de valeurs semblable. Elles devaient disposer d'un savoir fondamental concernant la culture, et une compétence linguistique incluant entre autres des syntagmes et des lexèmes polysémiques et archaïques. A la base du comique des proverbes dialogués, il y a des mécanismes pragmatiques fondés sur des oppositions diverses, concernant les implications, le sens de la phrase, les présuppositions conventionnelles, culturelles et les présuppositions conversationnelles. L'effet humoristique des parémies est conditionné par la présence de sujets tabouisés. Le comique découle également de la transgression des maximes conversationnelles, le plus fréquemment de plusieurs à la fois dans le même proverbe. Bien que ces phrases ne respectent pas plusieurs règles de communication linguistique, elles restent compréhensi-

bles et réussies en tant qu'actes de langage, parce que le récepteur les interprète conformément à la maxime de coopération en activant les implicatures. L'humour des parémies en question découle souvent de l'accumulation de plusieurs phénomènes pragmatiques. L'application des instruments pragmatiques de l'analyse à la description des mécanismes de l'humour liés aux contenus sous-entendus ou/et conditionnés contextuellement, s'avère la méthode privilégiée pour la description du phénomène précité.

2. *Le proverbe dialogué et les formes apparentées*

Il faut distinguer le proverbe dialogué du wellérsime et de la formule dialoguée. Le wellérisme dans sa forme prototypique se compose d'une citation, d'une expression attribuant une phrase à un personnage concret, réel ou fictif («comme disait X») et de la description de la situation dans laquelle la phrase a été citée (p. ex. *Un bon coup, dit le diable, quand il happe un frère mineur; Dużo krzyku, mało wehny, mówił diabeł strzygqc świnie*). Les formules dialoguées sont des réponses habituelles aux questions souvent irritantes, p. ex. indiscrètes (*Quand? Quand? – Quand les poules auront les dents – Kiedy? Kiedy? – Kiedy będą Szwedy*). Les formules se distinguent fondamentalement des proverbes dialogués par l'absence d'implicature, d'un sens général et, entre autres, de l'humour de caractère. Dans notre travail (Lipińska, Sypnicki 2008: 100) consacré aux mécanismes de l'humour verbal dans les phrases autonomes, nous avons constaté que les mécanismes de l'humour qui dominent dans les formules dialoguées sont: l'absurdité ou l'évidence d'une constatation saisissable au niveau de la phrase, lesquelles se laissent préciser par les termes de figures stylistiques telles que le pariponoïan et la lapalissade. Quant aux wellérismes, comme source de leur comique, du point de vue sémantique, il faut indiquer la polysémie, la transgression de la combinatoire sémantique de lexèmes, le contraste ou l'identité de traits sémantiques distinctifs et l'appartenance des lexèmes à un même champ lexico-sémantique (Lipińska, Sypnicki 2008: 100).

Dans ce travail, la forme parémique pluriphrastique à caractère dialogué est traitée comme proverbe, entre autres en raison de son implicature concrète et unique ou de son sens général. La présence d'un mini-dialogue parémique dans le texte, est conditionnée paradigmatiquement, contrairement à, p. ex. une

blague dialoguée, laquelle peut être citée indépendamment du contexte. Un autre trait distinguant le proverbe dialogué d'une blague dialoguée concerne la cohérence sémantique (le sens non compositionnel) et la cohésion formelle (la forme relativement stable) de celui-là. Le proverbe dialogué diffère de la parémie prototypique par le caractère pluriphrasique. La vérité générale, universelle et actuelle indépendamment de circonstances, n'y est pas exprimée par une phrase mais par au moins deux phrases et revêt la forme d'un dialogue ou d'énoncés adressés à un récepteur. Le dialogue peut être aussi désigné comme *dénomination métalinguistique*, ce qui veut dire que comme d'autres unités lexicographiques, il est ou il était généralement connu, ce dont témoigne sa présence dans les parémiographies.³ Comme d'autres proverbes, le mini-dialogue, dans sa structure profonde, constitue une implication ($p \rightarrow q$) laquelle est d'ailleurs formulée explicitement dans certaines variantes non dialoguées de ce type de phrase (p. ex. *Daj leniuchowi kasztany w darze, on ci je z łupin obierać każe*).

3. Les proverbes dialogués français à la lumière de l'analyse comparative avec les proverbes dialogués polonais

Pour décrire une unité linguistique, ce qui s'impose comme méthode efficace, c'est une comparaison avec une autre unité. Le proverbe dialogué n'est pas une unité linguistique au sens attribué à ce terme par Benveniste (1966), mais on peut le traiter comme lexie, c'est-à-dire une unité fonctionnelle de la langue.

La description des proverbes dialogués français s'appuie sur leur juxtaposition aux proverbes polonais respectifs. Dans le système parémiologique français, les proverbes dialogués sont des parémies très rares. L'analyse de la base de données *DicAuPro* (c'est-à-dire du *Dictionnaire automatique et philologique des proverbes français*)⁴ ainsi que l'étude de 56 parémiographies françaises (entre autres dialectales) rassemblant les proverbes, les dictons et d'autres formes sentencieuses, a révélé la présence de six proverbes dialogués (dont la plupart sont dialectaux) et d'une expression proverbiale non dialoguée provenant d'une forme citée narrative en arabe, *tomber de la poële dans le feu*⁵. Julian Krzyżanowski dans *Nowa księga przystów i wyrażeń przysłowiovych polskich* a noté un nombre quatre fois plus grand de proverbes dialogués polonais (Lipińska à paraître).

3.1. *Les proverbes sur la paresse dans les deux langues*

L'un des proverbes dialogués français, appartenant au dialecte picard, se rapporte à un trait de caractère négatif: la paresse. Dans la langue polonaise, il y a huit parémies à implicature semblable. L'une d'entre elles possède une variante non dialoguée. Comparons le dialogue français aux proverbes polonais:

Le dialogue picard: - *Pérécheux, veux-tu dos soupe ?* (Paresseux, veux-tu de la soupe ?) Oui min père (Oui, mon père) Avanche tcheur étn étchuelle. (Avance (pour) chercher ton écuelle) -*Non, min père, éj' n'in veux pus.* (Non, mon père, je n'en veux plus) (Corblet, Dubois, Seurvrat 2010: 30)

Les proverbes polonais:

1. *Leniu! Masz kartofle gotowane!* - *A czy obrane?* (la variante probablement antérieure: *Leniu, nać jaje!* *A czy obłupione?*; la forme non dialoguée probablement postérieure au dialogue: *Daj leniuchowi kasztany w darze, on ci je z łupin obierać każe*) (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 290);

2. *Maćku, wstawaj do roboty!* - *Kiejem chory. Maćku, chodź jeść – A gdzie moja wielka tyżka?* (1894) (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 49)

3. *Babko, do roboty!* – *Nie słyszę. – Babko do jedzenia. – Toć się i zawiłokę.* (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 49)

4. *Grzegorz! – Czegoż? – Pójdź robić! – Kiej nie mogę chodzić. – Pójdź jeść. – Toć muszę poleźć.* (1894) (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 49)

5. *Grzegorz! – Czegoż? – Pójdź do roboty! – Nie mam ochoty. – Weźże śniadanie! – Zaraz mój panie.* (1902) (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 49)

6. *Żono, pójdźmy do kościoła – Nie mam w czym, miły! Pójdźmyż do karczmy. Dziewko, daj sam stare buty, sq tam gdzieś pod ławą.* (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 158)

Plus éloignés sémantiquement sont encore les proverbes suivants, commentant la paresse : le premier – dans le contexte du mariage: *Poszlabyś ty za mąż? – Toć by się polaźło. – A masz ty co? – Może by się znalazło.* – *A umiesz ty robić? – Co wam do głowy wlaźło.* (1896) (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 823) ; le second –

mentionnant aussi le problème de l'hypocrisie: *Umyłeś, chłopie nogi? Umyłem. A pięty? Oj, zapomniałem, panie święty.* (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 272)

Aussi bien le nombre relativement élevé de proverbes polonais concernant la paresse que la présence de leurs variantes, prouvent la popularité de ces phrases à des époques pas si éloignées que cela, c'est-à-dire encore au début du XX^e siècle, ce qui est suggéré par les dates de leur attestation. La plus grande ressemblance formelle et de contenu s'observe entre la parémie française et le premier proverbe polonais où nous trouvons l'apostrophe: *Leniu!* ainsi qu'une description de la paresse plus forte que la faim. Dans les autres proverbes polonais, le trait de caractère en question est accompagné d'une disposition à manger, à boire, à s'amuser.

Les différences entre les proverbes polonais et français concernent les interlocuteurs, les fonctions illocutoires des énoncés dialogués particuliers et le degré de transparence du message dans les deux langues. Dans les proverbes polonais, les interlocuteurs sont caractérisés d'une manière plus précise que dans le mini-dialogue français: seigneur et ouvrier agricole, femme et mari, grand-mère, un autre membre de la famille. Dans le proverbe français, c'est un fils et son père ou bien le curé et un homme ou un garçon.

Les énoncés à l'intérieur des dialogues diffèrent par leurs fonctions pragmatiques.⁶ En français, le dialogue se compose d'une apostrophe en fonction de commande, d'une question en fonction de proposition, d'un consentement, d'un conseil et d'un refus. Dans les parémies polonaises, on distingue, dans le proverbe 1: une apostrophe en fonction de commande, une proposition, une question en fonction de réponse à la proposition; dans les phrases 2 et 3: une commande, un refus, une commande, un consentement sous forme de question ou bien de réponse affirmative; dans les parémies 4 et 5: une apostrophe en fonction de commande, une question, une commande, un refus, une proposition, un consentement; dans le proverbe 6: une proposition, un refus, une proposition, un consentement sous forme de commande.

Le message en dialecte picard n'est pas compréhensible dans son ensemble pour un Français contemporain tandis que le message polonais reste clair pour un Polonais moyen malgré les archaïsmes lexicaux (1. *nać, obłupione*; 2. *kiejem*; 3. *toć* 4. *kiej*,)

grammaticaux (1. *jaje*; 6. *pójdźmyż*) et référentiels (6. *ława*). La réalité archaïque du proverbe français (le fait de manger dans une écuelle et non dans une assiette) n'influence pas la compréhension du message. L'opacité sémantique de celui-ci ne découle que de la présence des formes linguistiques dialectales.

Les mini-dialogues, bien qu'arrachés du contexte, constituent des entités indépendantes. Ils représentent des scènes de la vie quotidienne d'autrefois, probablement à la campagne où l'on mangeait dans des écuelles, il y avait des valets agricoles, des bancs au lieu de chaises ou de fauteuils.

3.1.1. *Les mécanismes de l'humour*

L'humour des proverbes dialogués français et polonais, leur trait non définitoire, reste en relation avec le caractère indirect du message, lequel constitue une citation développée, un énoncé indirect. Il en résulte un contact étroit entre l'émetteur et le récepteur du proverbe. Aussi, le contenu du message et son implicature: la caractéristique négative de l'interlocuteur ou d'une personne tierce, constituent-ils des éléments comiques en tant qu'exemple de négativisme.

L'humour de ces phrases découle de la transgression des maximes de quantité, de qualité, de pertinence, de modalité et de politesse. La violation des maximes de quantité est plus forte dans les dialogues polonais à six énoncés, plus développés que le dialogue français (à quatre énoncés). Toutes les formes citées analysées décrivent des situations fictives, ce par quoi elles dépassent la maxime de qualité. Dans les proverbes polonais 2. 3. 4. 6., la transgression de cette maxime est double car l'interlocuteur ment en affirmant qu'il "est malade", "n'entend pas", "ne peut pas marcher", "n'a pas de souliers". Ce ne sont que des détours, ce que nous apprenons de la partie suivante des parémies. L'incohérence des informations active l'implicature du dialogue, c'est-à-dire la description de la paresse des personnes dont on parle. De même, l'implicature dans le proverbe picard se déduit de deux phrases contradictoires: une personne d'abord veut manger mais quand elle apprend qu'elle devrait avancer pour chercher une écuelle, elle «n'a plus faim». C'est le schéma de la violation de la maxime de qualité ou celui de deux énoncés contradictoires émis par une personne, qui a fait qu'on a traité le proverbe 6 comme faisant partie de mini-dialogues sur la paresse, bien que son

implicature concerne plutôt les traits tels que l'absence de dévotion et une inclination à boire de l'alcool quoique la paresse ne puisse pas non plus être exclue. La règle de pertinence n'est pas gardée dans la mesure où au lieu d'un message concis sur un trait de caractère de quelqu'un, on fait face à toute une anecdote dialoguée. Les proverbes dialogués sont des messages indirects et polysémiques, ce par quoi ils violent la maxime de modalité. La maxime de politesse est transgressée à l'intérieur du dialogue par le fait de s'adresser à quelqu'un avec des mots dépréciatifs tels que: *paresseux* ou *leñ*, et, dans le proverbe considéré comme un tout, par une implicature dépréciative visant un interlocuteur ou une personne tierce.

Toutes les parémies analysées sont des exemples de l'humour de caractère, lequel se laisse déjà saisir dans une forme linguistique aussi minimale que le proverbe. Les mini-dialogues polonais 1. 4. 5. sont rimés, ce qui renforce leur humour. De ce point de vue, le proverbe français non rimé s'avère par conséquent moins comique que ses équivalents polonais.

3.2. *La transaccentuation du genre de langage*

Le proverbe dialogué peut être traité comme un genre de langage au sens conféré à ce terme par Bachtin. Selon Bachtin, le dialogue est «une forme la plus simple et classique de la communication linguistique» (Bachtin 1986: 368). Le proverbe dialogué devrait être défini comme genre intermédiaire à l'opposé de genres primaires (simples) et secondaires (complexes) distingués par Bachtin (Bachtin 1986: 350-351). Il diffère des genres secondaires, dont des exemples ont été donnés par Bachtin (entre autres, romans, drames, études scientifiques créées dans le cadre de la culture – principalement sous forme écrite – art et science, dans la sphère socio-politique, artistico-littéraire) (Bachtin 1986: 350), par une concision et par son caractère quotidien et courant. La parémie en question ne relève pas non plus du genre primaire car en tant que citation fictive, elle perd «sa référence directe à la réalité et aux énoncés réels des autres» (Bachtin 1986: 351). Elle est un énoncé relativement stable du point de vue du contenu, de la composition et du style, et qui possède une fonction définie (Bachtin 1986: 354): elle apparaît en fonction d'un commentaire à caractère plutôt évaluatif que ludique. Elle constitue une variante générique du dialogue ou d'une anecdote tout

en se caractérisant par une forme précise du couronnement d'un tout. (Bachtin 1986: 356) Le proverbe dialogué est un texte qui se compose de deux énoncés au moins et/ou qui admet la présence d'au moins deux interlocuteurs. Sa forme prototypique, c'est l'énoncé d'un interlocuteur (le plus fréquemment une question), suivi d'une pause et de énoncé du deuxième participant au dialogue (la réponse à la question). Dans certaines variantes mi-dialoguées, un interlocuteur est remplacé par un narrateur ou bien il y a deux énoncés (question-réponse) de la même personne.

Bachtin constate que «(...) les genres de langage se laissent facilement transaccentuer; les tristes peuvent changer en joyeux et humoristiques» (1986: 386). En lisant ces mots, on ne peut pas ne pas remarquer que les proverbes cités ci-dessus en constituent des exemples. Partout où nous trouvons une description du comportement illustrant un vice humain (une situation négative), il y a une transaccentuation du mini-dialogue réel et courant, lequel dans son sens primaire n'est pas comique. On peut donc conclure qu'en général le négativisme, dont le rôle créateur du comique est souligné par tous les théoriciens de l'humour (entre autres par Jan Stanisław Bystroń 1933), devrait être lié à la notion de transaccentuation de genres de langage, ainsi qu'au phénomène de l'humour dans la langue.

3.3. *D'autres proverbes français et les parémies polonaises*

Les formes mi-dialoguées appartenant à la langue commune s'avèrent les plus populaires, p. ex. *A qui vendez-vous vos coquilles? À ceux qui viennent de Saint Jacques (de Mont Saint-Michel)*. Ce proverbe a été déjà noté par Fleury de Bellingen au XVIII^e siècle (1794: 60). Il apparaît dans plusieurs parémio-graphies, entre autres celle de Quitard (1968: 16-17), de Blum (2008: 374), de Bérisé (2007: 362). Ses deux variantes prouvent son caractère courant. Deux questions de la même personne “[...] se dit [disent] à quelqu'un qui a la prétention de passer pour habile devant de plus habiles que lui, ou qui a le dessin d'en tromper d'autres par des finesse et des ruses dont ils ne peuvent être dupes [...]” (Quitard 1968: 16-17)

Tout aussi connu, étant donné ses deux variantes (y compris une non dialoguée: *C'est la poêle qui se moque du chaudron*), est un proverbe relevé aussi dans d'autres langues, et pas seulement européennes (entre autres, en anglais⁷, en persan⁸ et en polonais

dans sa forme non dialoguée: *Przyganiał kocioł garnkowi, a sam smoli* : *La poêle dit au chaudron, retire-toi, cul noir.* (La Mésangère 1821)

Le reste, ce sont des formes dialectales parmi lesquelles deux proverbes se rapportent à un autre trait de caractère négatif : l'égoïsme. Le premier appartient au dialecte savoyard: *Cé ke vu kokran : anda ! Ce ké vu ran: manda!* (A celui qui veut quelque chose, (l'égoïste répond): Va-t-en ! A celui qui ne veut rien: demande (Guichonnet 1986: 61). Le second, au dialecte picard : *Quant' o li dit: Donne ! Il est sourd; Quant' o li dit: Tiens ! Il comprind bien.* (Corblet, Dubois, Seurvrat et alii 2010: 69). Les parémies ne sont pas des dialogues typiques mais leurs variantes zéro, avec le narrateur citant deux énoncés particuliers et (dans le deuxième proverbe) les réactions de l'interlocuteur à ces énoncés.

Le mini-dialogue suivant, de la région du Périgord et du Limousin, constitue un commentaire plaisant concernant un arrangement rapide, une affaire rondement menée (et qui n'est pas forcément un mariage: *Me voles tròia ? Te vòle, pòrc. E ben sem d'acòrd !* (- Me veux-tu truie? - Je te veux, porc. – Eh bien! Nous sommes d'accord. (Chadeuil 2008: 174) De même, un autre mini-dialogue proverbial est une remarque sur les particularités du climat caractérisant deux lieux du Sud de la France, dans la région Languedoc-Roussillon : *Nora dit a Mont-Aut: Quand as frech, ièu pas caud: E Mont-Aut respond a Nora: Quand as frech, ièu sond efora* (Nore dit à Mont-Aut: quand tu as froid, moi je n'ai pas chaud, et Mont-Aut répond à Nore: quand tu as froid, moi je suis dehors. (Carrasco 2009: 37)

3.3.1. *La comparaison des implicatures*

En comparant les types de significations générales des proverbes dialogués dans les deux langues, on peut constater que les parémies sur la paresse constituent un groupe unique commun, à caractère dialogué.

A part ce sens, les parémies françaises se rapportent aussi au criticisme subjectif (on reproche à quelqu'un un vice qu'on a encore davantage), à l'égoïsme, à une affaire rondement menée et à une défense contre un blagueur. Elles incluent aussi un commentaire à caractère météorologique.

Les mini-dialogues polonais condamnent surtout le conformisme (le proverbe le plus courant, qui a 6 variantes): *Włodarzu,*

są tu ryby? Są łaskawy panie Ej, podobnoć nie masz? Ha, skądże by się wzięły (1632); - *Są tu ryby? – Są panie. – Nie masz tu ryb? – A gdzie by się wzięły.* (1620) (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 107); *Młynarzu, są tu ryby? – Są, Panie mój! – Wierzę, nie wiem, by były? – Wierzę, nie wiem, panie mój.* (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: XVII); *A biało? Biało. A czarno? Czarno* ((Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 351); *A golono? Golono. A strzyżono? Strzyżono.* (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 696); *A ciepło? Ciepło. A zimno? Zimno* (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 319). Ce sont aussi les remarques sur les malentendus⁹ (découlant, dans le sens littéral de ces phrases, d'une ouïe insuffisante) – 5 variantes: *A czy byłeś w kościele? – A tak, wyjechali w niedzielę.* (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 154); *Jak się macie? Nic po psie, nie chce szczekać; Jak się masz Grzegorze? Niosę gęsi w worze. A dzieci? Zwiążane skrzydła, nie poleci; Jak się macie Bartoszu? Gąsiora noszę w koszu. A nasi jak się mają? Dwa złote za niego daję. A stryj? Nie pstry, cały biały. A dzieci? Nie poleci, skrzydła ma zwiążane. Głupiś ty, Bartoszu, głupi. Kupi kto, nie kupi, to do domu poniosę.; – Jak się macie, kumosie? – A, niosę indora w kosie. – Jak się mają wasze dzieci? – Ma zwiążane skrzydła, to nie poleci.* (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 450) et sur l'absence d'intelligence: *Zgodnijcie, godaczy, jako je moji Margecie – No, Margieta – Na, piekucz po piekuczu, jakoście też to zgodali?* (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 859). Les proverbes dialogués polonais visent non seulement un message à caractère évaluatif mais aussi un message de nature uniquement ludique (calembour, jeu de mots): *Bułeś w kościele? – Byłem – Widziałeś księdza przez głowy?* (la polysémie du mot *przez* lequel peut signifier aussi *bez* ; Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 154). Les autres types de sens se rapportent à l'indifférence humaine : *Dziadku, wieś się pali – A, to pójdziemy dalej.* (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 523), à la vantardise dans laquelle le succès s'avère un échec : *Pojmałem Tatarzyna – Wiedźże go sam. – Nie chce iść. – Pójdzże ty sam. – Nie chce mnie puścić.* (Świerszczyńska 1974: 30-31), à la piété juive : *Żydzie, piękną żonę masz. Bo ja tak chciał. Ale dzieci brzydkie. Bo tak Pan Bóg dał.* (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 990), aux nouvelles transmises par les autres : *Dobra kaszka z mleczkiem? – Dobra. – A jadłeś ją? – Nie, tylko powiadali.* (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 37)¹⁰ et enfin à une observation de calendrier : *Pytał Bóg: – Wicie, czy jest piątka w życiu! – Nie słyszę cię, Panie, niech słowik ustanie. I rzekł Bóg: Słowiku, cyt, bo nie słyszy Wit.*

(Krzyżanowski 1980: 81). Si les proverbes français, dialectaux ci-dessus ne sont pas, en général, compréhensibles pour un Français contemporain, l'interprétation des mini-dialogues polonais, y compris de ceux avec des formes archaïques ou dialectales, ne constitue pas un problème pour un usager moyen de la langue polonaise.

3.3.2. *Les mécanismes de l'humour dans d'autres proverbes dialogués français*

La dépréciation en tant que mécanisme de l'humour s'observe dans le proverbe présentant les gens comme des animaux à connotations négatives: *truie i porc* et dans la parémie avec un vulgarisme (*cul*). La rime et le parallélisme syntaxique renforcent aussi le comique. Les dialogues fictifs entre les animaux ou entre des lieux géographiques transgressent la maxime de qualité. La dépréciation des gens prouve la violation de la maxime de politesse. Les proverbes qu'on cite à la place d'un commentaire direct au sujet d'un trait de caractère propre à une personne, constituent des énoncés apparemment non pertinents donc violant la maxime de pertinence. De même, un commentaire développé sous forme dialoguée, remplaçant une opinion concise sur une personne, est un exemple de la transgression de la maxime de quantité. Il en résulte une forme plus longue et apparemment redondante. Les maximes violées font apparaître des implicatures grâce auxquelles les textes deviennent cohérents et sont perçus comme comiques (le dialogue avec les animaux) ou/et comme caractérisant un interlocuteur ou une personne tierce. Le caractère fictif des interlocuteurs ou le savoir sur le Mont Saint-Michel (d'où “(...) les pèlerins (...) revenaient toujours munis de coquilles qu'ils avaient ramassées sur la grève”(Quitard 1968: 16-17)) font partie du mécanisme du contraste entre la présupposition conventionnelle culturelle et le sens de l'énoncé. Le comique de caractères (p.ex. l'hypocrisie d'un égoïste dans le proverbe *A celui qui veut quelque chose, (l'égoïste répond) : Va-t-en ! A celui qui ne veut rien: demande. A celui qui veut quelque chose, (l'égoïste répond) : Va-t-en !*) est présenté sous forme d'une ironie amère venant d'une opposition entre l'implication et le sens du contexte antérieur (l'acceptation d'une demande implique que quelqu'un d'autre avait eu une intention de demander). Le dialogue à propos des lieux géographiques Nore et Mont-Aut constitue un exemple

intéressant d'un contraste entre deux implications: d'après la première implication, à Nore, il fait un peu plus chaud qu'à Mont-Aut; selon la seconde, à Mont-Aut, il fait parfois beaucoup plus chaud qu'à Nore.

Conclusion

Le statut exceptionnel de proverbes dialogués dans le système parémiologique français est lié à leur rareté et à un fort caractère dialectal. Ce genre de langage qui constitue un commentaire à caractère plutôt évaluatif que ludique, est un exemple de transaccentuation d'un dialogue ou d'une anecdote à sens négatif à leur origine. La plupart des exemples français ne sont pas des dialogues prototypiques mais des formes mi-dialoguées, contrairement aux parémies polonaises qui constituent des dialogues à deux interlocuteurs. Les lexies françaises restent pour un grand nombre incompréhensibles pour un Français contemporain. Par contre, même le caractère manifestement archaïque ou dialectal des parémies polonaises ne nuit pas, en général, à leur transparence sémantique. Les proverbes respectifs polonais s'avèrent quatre fois plus nombreux et beaucoup plus diversifiés quant à leurs thèmes. Les proverbes dialogués sur la paresse dans les deux langues constituent un groupe unique, ressemblant par la même implicature mais se distinguant par les valeurs pragmatiques des énoncés composant les proverbes et par les protagonistes. Le comique de caractères dans les mini-dialogues autonymes français a trait à la transgression de toutes les maximes conversationnelles par ces phrases. L'humour des phrases françaises se laisse décrire aussi par un contraste entre une présupposition et le sens d'un énoncé, ainsi que par une opposition entre une implication et le contexte antérieur ou par deux implications en opposition.

Il serait intéressant d'étudier la présence de proverbes dialogués dans la langue française du Québec ou celle de colonies africaines, et de voir si l'influence de la langue anglaise ou de cultures indigènes, changent un état de choses observé dans le système parémiologique français.

Notes

¹ Pojmałem Tatarzyna – Wiedźże go sam. – Nie chce iść. – Pójdziesz ty sam. – Nie chce mnie puścić. (Świerszczyńska 1974: 30-31)

² Voilà l'une des variantes du mini-dialogue du saint avec Dieu: *Pytał Bóg: Wicie, czy jest piętka w życiu! –Nie słyszę cię, Panie, niech słówik ustanie. I rzekł Bóg: Słówiku, cyt, bo nie słyszy Wit.* (Krzyżanowski 1980: 81)

³ Cf. les traits définitoires du proverbe d'après G. Kleiber. (Kleiber 1994)

⁴ «DicAuPro, (Dictionnaire automatique et philologique des proverbes français), élaboré à l'UCL, Louvain-la-Neuve) est une base de données des proverbes recensés chez Littré, dans le *Larousse du XXe siècle* et le *Grand Larousse encyclopédique*, avec ajout d'environ 200 proverbes récents, souvent ignorés de la lexicographie contemporaine (par exemple : *la tartine tombe toujours du côté de la confiture (ou du beurre) ; les gourmands creusent leur tombe avec leurs dents ; un dessin vaut mieux qu'un long discours*, etc.). Cela constitue un corpus de 1900 proverbes et dictons qui ont connu plus de 25000 variantes. L'enregistrement, réalisé selon un protocole strict respectant les exigences philologiques (références précises), permet d'identifier la source de toutes les variantes proverbiales présentes dans les recueils depuis le Moyen Age. » <http://www.atilf.fr/cilpr2013/programme/resumes/06bceb6fdb065734f429450b6f9fde04.pdf>

⁵ Voilà la traduction anglaise de la forme narrative arabe, citée par Taylor : «*He fled the rain and went to sit under the drip of the gutter*». (1985 : 158)

⁶ Dans l'indication des fonctions pragmatiques, on se sert surtout de la terminologie et du classement de types illocutoires proposés par Z. Nęcki. (1996: 112-113)

⁷ Taylor cite la traduction anglaise: *The kettle reproached the kitchen spoon. "Thou blackee," said, "thou idle babbler"* et un proverbe anglais peu connu: *The raven said to the rok, "Stand away, black coat."* (1985 :158)

⁸ En persan, ce proverbe connaît trois variantes : *L'écumoire dit à l'aiguille : tu as un trou ; La passoire dit à l'écumoire : tu as sept trous ; Le chaudron dit au chaudron : ta face est noire.* (Gouvy 2010 : 30)

⁹ Selon Krzyżanowski, „Sur un sourd ou celui qui ne reconnaît pas bien une situation dans laquelle il se trouve”. (Krzyżanowski 1969-78: 450)

¹⁰ Taylor cite un mini-dialogue analogique en anglais en tant que proverbe typique de ce genre (de l'origine grecque ou russe) ayant le même message bien que différent par le sens littéral: - *How sweet the milk is! – Where did you see it? – My uncle saw another man drinking it on the other side of the river.* (Taylor 1985 : 156)

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PREScriptive AND PROscriptive FEMALE GENDER
ROLE PROVERBS IN TONY UCHENNA UBESIE'S *ISI
AKWU DARA N'ALA*

Abstract: Traditionally, the Igbo culture is remarkable for its prescriptive and proscriptive gender stereotypes for women. Most of the time, if a woman does not subscribe to these gender roles, she is considered a bad woman and sometimes, ostracized. In this paper, I look at prescriptive and proscriptive gender role proverbs in Tony Ubesie's novel, *Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala*. I show that Tony Ubesie's work, though fictional, is grounded in the Igbo culture, as Ubesie bases his story on Igbo oral proverbs that portray Igbo traditions. In doing so I argue that *Isi Akwu Dara n'Ala* is more of a propaganda designed to prescribe and proscribe gender roles to Igbo women, who found freedom and independence, due to their roles as sole providers for their families during the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War. The novel is therefore an attempt to re-subjugate Igbo women to Igbo men after the war.

Keywords: Igbo proverbs, Tony Uchenna Ubesie, *Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala*, Nigerian-Biafran civil war, proscriptive and prescriptive proverbs.

Introduction: Proverbs in Igbo Culture

The Igbo society is a hierarchical one and so respect, for people, deities and institutions is paramount. As such, the culture places a lot of emphasis on the art of communication. Mastery of communication skills is highly valued and the Igbo employ a wide range of styles, such as "folktales, birthsongs, folksongs, riddles, tongue-twisters, or even the Igbo poetic insult (*iko onu - insult.*)" (Agbada, 1994) in communicating. Proverbs are, however, the most important and most employed in conveying messages and in general communication. The Igbo culture is also a highly gendered one, where there are strictly laid down rules, grounded expectations and code of conduct for both Igbo men and women. It is therefore not a surprise that many proverbs

serve as dictums that prescribe as well as proscribe code of conduct to the citizenry. They also establish and reiterate gender stereotypes. It is a general saying in Igbo that "proverbs are the oil that Igbo people use in eating yam", and Chinua Achebe also says so in *Things Fall Apart*. However, Emenanjo also warns that, "much as proverbs form the oil with which the Igbo eat their speech, proverbs do not form the soup" ("Some First Thoughts" 59 cited in Nwachukwu-Agbada, 1997). This is because though yam may be the traditional staple food, it is not the only food. *Fu-fu*, another staple food of the Ibo, is also very important and is eaten with soup. Oil is also an ingredient in soup. While proverbs may be important in garnishing speeches, it should not be the only important aspect of speech. Therefore, the use of proverbs should not be overdone.

Understanding the importance of yam in Igboland will help us to understand the importance of proverbs. Yam is the most important staple food in Igboland and many festivals and rituals are centered around yam. It is also very important, mostly because traditionally, yam is considered, "the king of crops" (*Things Fall Apart* 29) and thus, traditionally, it was produced exclusively by men, while most of the other crops produced by the Igbo are seen as women's crops. Indeed, Achebe expresses it more clearly in *Things Fall Apart* where he reported that "Yam stood for manliness, and he who could feed his family on yams from one harvest to another was a very great man indeed" (*Things Fall Apart*, 29). It is therefore a symbol of patriarchy. There is hardly any festival that does not involve yams.

Yam features in the Igbo cosmology as some believe that it was *Chukwu* (God), who caused yam to grow from the grave of Nri's son after God asked Nri to kill his son and daughter during a period of penury. Cocoyam grew from his daughter's grave¹. For this reason, "Nriland is recognized as the cradle of Igbo civilization and the center of further dispersal" (Manus, 250). In fact, yam farming is a marker of the Igbo calendar year. The ratooning of yams in August, which is the initial harvesting of yams when one just cuts off a portion of the tuber without uprooting the entire plant, is the Igbo New Year. It is marked with lots of celebrations that are accompanied with masquerades. Achebe also confirms assets in *Things Fall Apart*, "Men and women, young and old, looked forward to the New Yam Festival because

it began the season of plenty – the new year" (36). The harvesting period in every part of Igboland is the period of entertainment, wrestling, courtship and marriage and the period that yams are planted in the farms is a period of penury when gods are appeased and lots of sacrifices are made to ensure a great harvest. Yams are traditionally eaten with palm oil. They are used in offering sacrifices to gods and to *Ndi Ichie* (ancestors) as well. When used in sacrifice, they are roasted and mixed with palm oil before being presented to gods, or to ancestors. Therefore, saying that proverbs are the oil that the Igbo use in eating yams shows how important proverbs are among the Igbo.

Proverbs enable Igbo people to talk in a coded language in order to maintain secrecy, so that plans could be made and discussions held in the presence of a non-Igbo without him/her understanding what was said as proverbs are filled with signs and symbols. These symbols could be animals, plants or natural phenomena that have been ascribed special meaning by the Igbo based on their characteristics. An Igbo person can thus speak completely in proverbs or not say more than two sentences without one of them being a proverb, and he/she can definitely not finish a speech without infusing it with proverbs.

As has been said earlier, Igbo proverbs simply portray the Igbo culture. They "record the history, experience, the trauma, and the tension of a society at every stage in its evolution" (see Nwachukwu-Agbada, 1990, 1994) as well as prescribe and proscribe roles for the Igbo citizenry. And, since the Igbo culture is highly gendered as mentioned earlier, some Igbo proverbs are prescriptive, which means that they prescribe roles and some are proscriptive which means that they also forbid roles, (Prentice and Carranza, 2002). However, most of the time, it is women to whom (forbidden) roles are prescribed and proscribed. Because of the importance and role of proverbs to the Igbo, many writers of Igbo descent incorporate Igbo proverbs in their creative works to convey their message.

Methodology

To effectively discuss prescriptive and prescriptive gender role proverbs, I will use the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, an approach that analyses power relations in discourses. CDA also studies dominations and asymmetrical power dy-

namics not only in discourses of all forms, but in ideologies, beliefs and practices within cultural groups. CDA confronts all unequality in leverage in gender relations that “appear disguised as conceptual metaphors and analogies” (Wodak, 8 cited in Amoke and Nnamani, 147), and “assumptions that are treated as if they were common sense” (Agbedo, 1), but which rather function for the servicing and sustenance of “unequal relations of power” (Fairclough, 84). According to Amoke and Nnamani, “analysis of texts... is an important aspect of ideological analysis and critique. Embedded in and disseminated through discourse, ideologies influence the way individuals make sense of their world, the way they act and interact. The centrality of power in CDA stems from the latter’s interest in the discourse of domination, where power undergirds social structures and clearly manifests in social action lopsidedly” (147). They however insist that power is “jointly produced by both the dominated and the dominating” (147), as people can consent to their domination, which is then reiterated in the cultural discourses of the people. Amoke and Nnamani go on to say that “Feminists and gender theorists find CDA attractive owing to the shared border with issues of common interest among them”. I therefore use this approach so that I could take a critical look at gender role proverbs, and why Tony Uchenna Ubesie uses them in his post Nigerian-Civil war novel *Isi Akwu Dara N’Ala*.

Igbo literary giants such as Pita Nwana, Chinua Achebe, F. C. Ogbalu (who published a 162 paged book on Igbo proverbs), and Tony Uchenna Ubesie, to mention but a few, all infuse their works with Igbo proverbs, though some translate them into English. Also, many Onitsha Market Literature pamphleteers also weave Igbo proverbs into their works. In this paper, I look at prescriptive and proscriptive female gender role proverbs in Tony Uchenna Ubesie’s *Isi Akwu Dara N’Ala* and insist that though fictional, *Isi Akwu Dara N’Ala* is grounded in the Igbo culture portrayed through his use of Igbo proverbs. Igbo proverbs portray Igbo ideas, beliefs and traditions. Ubesie’s excessive use of them confirms what Goddy Onyekaonwu said: “Ubesie is very consistent with his use of [proverbs] for the reinforcement of his key ideas. This is perhaps why he is interested in using as many of them as possible” (cited in Agbada-Nwachukwu, 129). However, I also argue that the female protagonist, Ada, is not a faith-

ful representation of the Igbo woman of the period portrayed in the novel, hence, that the novel is not a true representation of the period and therefore a propaganda geared towards the re-subordination of women after the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War of 1967 to 1970.

Tony Uchenna Ubesie (1949-1993): The “Igbo Literary Genius”

Born in 1949, Tony Uchenna Ubesie was only twenty-three years old when he published his first two novels in 1973. His writing was a direct response to F. C Ogbalu's calls for the Igbo to write in the Igbo language in order to promote, and establish the Igbo language and encourage its readership. After Pita Nwana's *Omenuko* (1933) and D. N. Achara's *Ala Bingo* (1937), there was a long period of literary lacuna of works by Igbo authors until 1958, when Chinua Achebe published *Things Fall Apart*, though in English language. In 1967, Léopold Bell-Gam published *Ije Odumodu Jere*. However, this novel, though in Igbo language, is based mostly outside of Igboland and the author is not an Igbo man. Starting from 1973, T. U. Ubesie wrote several novels in Igbo language, which include *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala* (1973), *Ukwa Ruo Oge ya Odaa* (1973), *Mmiri Oku Eji Egbu Mbe* (1974), *Juo Obinna* (1975) and *Ukpana Okpoko Buru* (1975). Though rooted in Igbo cultures and traditions, as well as sometimes, on real historical events, all of his novels are creative and fictional works; and for this reason, Ernest Emenyeonu describes him as the Igbo “creative genius” (Emenyeonu (2003, 755-756), given that he was the first to write major creative works that truly reflect Igbo cultures and traditions in Igbo language.²

The interesting thing about the titles of all his works with the exception of *Juo Obinna* is that they are all Igbo proverbs. *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala* is the short form of the Igbo proverb, “isi akwu dara n'ala edetula aja”, meaning that the bunch of palm fruit (red oil palm) that falls to the ground is soiled (All translations are mine). In other words, it has become dirty. *Ukwa Ruo Oge ya O daa* means that bread fruit only falls when it ripens, in other words, that there is a time for everything, or that everything has its season. *Mmiri Oku Eji Egbu Mbe* coming from the saying “*Mmiri oku ka-eji ebu Mbe*”, literally means that it is hot water that is used to kill the tortoise, referencing that there is a

technique or means of doing things. And *Ukpana Okpoko Buru* is the short form of “*Ukpana okpoko buru bu nti tiri ya*”, meaning that the insect that is caught by the noisy bird, Okpoko (the Crow, which crows loudly and hardly moves alone, making it hard not to hear it), must be deaf. This proverb is an equivalent of another proverb, “*Onye Ugbø gburu bu nti tiri ya*”, anyone who is killed by a train must be deaf, because both the train and Okpoko make loud noises whenever they are in movement and should be heard by someone or an insect in good time to escape from harm. The use of these proverbs even in the titles serve as tips off the iceberg, to already alert the reader as to the moral lesson, content or action of the novel.

Prescriptive and Proscriptive Female Gender Role Proverbs in “Isi Akwu Dara N’Ala”

Isi Akwu Dara N’Ala begins with a prologue and ends with an epilogue that are written entirely with proverbs despite Emenanjo’s disapproval of the belief that “the only way of writing good Igbo is by forcing strings of proverbs down the throats of readers” (“Some First Thoughts” 58). According to Nwachukwu-Agbada, “Ubesie happens to be one of the Igbo novelists to whom these observations are directed. Emenanjo demonstrates what he means by referring to Ubesie’s *Ukwa Ruo Oge*, which contains some 301 proverbs in its 76 pages” (“Traditions and Inventions”, 129). I beg to reproduce the prologue and the epilogue here with their translations, as I intend to show that Ubesie used proverbs that are at the same time prescriptive and proscriptive gender role stereotypes that he substantiates with the story that he weaves together in the body of the novel. In so doing, he dehumanized and denaturalized Igbo women by misrepresenting them through the character of his female protagonist, Ada, whom he made to place more value on material wealth than on her family, children and duties as a wife.

Okwu Mmalite	Prologue
Nwata riwe ihe, taa aru n’aka, Olee aka o ga-eji tanye ozø n’ønø?	If a child is eating and bites his hand, Which hand will he/she use to put another food in His/her mouth?

<p>Nwanyi lelia di ya, Ike akpoo ya nku. N'ahi na di nwe ulo Bu aka ogoli na-ehi n'isi. Maka na nwayi chupu di ya, Isi eruoa ya ala.</p>	<p>If a woman looks down on her husband, She will suffer. (lit. Her buttocks will dry up.) Because it is the husband who owns the home. He is the hand that a wife uses as pillow for her Head. For when a woman drives her husband out of the Home, she will be humbled.(lit. her head will Reach the ground)</p>
<p>Onye na-amaghi na o ga-echi ozo Mechaa chie ozo, O chowa igbanye eriri ozo ya, O gbaruo ya n'ikpere ukwu. Maka na ogoli riwa onu, O kwuwa onu. Ma, mbe fegharichaa O daara awo</p>	<p>If one who is not expecting to be a chief later Becomes one, when s/he wants to wear his/her Chieftaincy regalia, s/he makes sure that it Reaches To his/her knees. For when a wife has eaten more than she should, She speaks more than she should. However, after an insect has flown all it wants, it Will fall for the frog.</p>
<p>Ugo chaa achaa Ma ugo ebela ebe. Onye ugo bere n'isi Bu onye nwuru anwu. Ugo rie awo, Mma ya aruo, Maka na isi akwu dara n'ala edetula aja !</p>	<p>May the eagle soar but not perch. Whomsoever the eagle perches on his head Is a dead person. If the eagle eats a frog Its beauty will fade. For the head of palm fruit that falls to the ground Has been soiled.</p>
<p>Okwu Ikpe azu</p>	<p>Epilogue</p>
<p>O buru na mmadu Chukwu kere eke Dị ka iriro puru n'ubi, Ndi mmadu gara iji ukwu zogbuo ibe ha. Ma onye na-emegbu nwa ogbenye, Ya cheta na Chukwu kere ogbenye, Maara ihe kpatara o ji kee ogbenye,</p>	<p>If people created by God Are like plants in a farm, Some would have trampled others to death. But whoever is maltreating the poor Should remember that God who created the poor</p>

Maka na onye karịjị mmadụ Akaghi chi kere onye ahụ. A si na anụ ụmụ nwanyi gburu, Anaghị agbapụta ọbara. Ma, e nye nwanyi maara ihe anu ka o gbuo, O chọq nwoke nō nso ka o gbuoro ya, Maka na o kwasighi na nwanyi ga- egbu anu ụlo Ma ya fofu na ọ gbaputaghị ọbara. N’ihị na nwata chọq ka ọ hụ ike ya, Isi asụq ya n’ala. Ogaranya na-eri anụ, ya cheta ogbenye. Maka na ogaranya nwụq, Ogbenye esoro buru ozu ya. Onye huru nke ọ na-eri taa, Mara na echị di ime. Maka na oke riwe, ghara inye awo, Awo riwe nke ya, oke ebewe akwa. Na ya gara inyetu awo mgbe ya na-eri.	Knows why He created him/her, For the person who is greater than someone Is not greater than the God who created him/her. It is said that an animal killed by a woman Does not bleed. So if a wise woman is asked to kill an animal, she Looks for a man nearby to kill it for her, For a woman should not kill a domestic animal Even if it did not bleed. For if a child tries to see his bottom, His/her head will hit the ground. The rich who is eating meat should remember the Poor. For when the rich dies, The poor will help to carry his/her corpse. Whoever sees what to eat today Should know that tomorrow is pregnant. For when a rat eats without giving to the frog, When the frog eats, the rat will start regretting Why it refused to give to the frog when it was Eating its own food.
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As you can see, both the prologue and the epilogue of the novel *Isi Akwu Dara N’ala* are written entirely in proverbs and other wise sayings. However, when you look closely, you will see that most of the proverbs show consequences of actions and what one should not do in order for something else to not happen and what could cause someone to regret it later. They warn people to play fair as one good turn deserves another and people need one another either in life or in death. No one is an island, so, if the rich does not need the poor when alive, the rich will need the poor to carry his/her corpse when s/he is dead. These proverbs are thus prescriptive as they show cause and effect. However, some of them are not gender specific as the author

employed generalized subjects such as "someone", "a child", "people"; as well as animals such as the eagle, insects, the frog, etc.

The other proverbs that are not addressed at impersonal or non-human subjects are addressed specifically to women. While some of them proscribe roles to women ("It is said that an animal killed by a woman does not bleed. So if a wise woman is asked to kill an animal, she looks for a man nearby to kill it for her, For a woman should not kill a domestic animal even if it did not bleed"); some tell women what their place is with respect to their husbands, ("The husband is the hand that a wife uses as pillow for her head"), and others state what will be the consequences of certain actions if women take them, thereby prescribing roles to women, ("If a woman looks down on her husband. She will suffer (lit. Her buttocks will dry up) because it is the husband who owns the home. For when a woman drives her husband out of the home, she will be humbled (lit. her head will reach the ground)" [...] "If a wife eats more than she should, she speaks more than she should." These proverbs clearly show the cultural subordination of women to men and prove women to be the inferior "other" in a man's world.

Thus, while Ubesie addresses some unspecified subjects and women, he refuses to address men directly which makes one wonder if the entire proverbs are not directed solely at women. If one assumes this, then the person might not be wrong as the author fleshed out the context of the prologue and the epilogue in the fictional story of the novel. One should bear in mind that this novel is purely fictional as the author states clearly and with this in mind, this novel gives an insight into the mental workings of Tony Ubesie and his regard for Igbo women. By refusing to use proverbs that address men directly in this work, Ubesie indirectly is asserting that men are the "norm" and the "standard", while women are the "other" who should be told how to behave in a man's world, confirming Grace Okafor's definition of otherness in her article "African Literature and Beauvoirism"³:

Otherness is a theory of objectification of women in a world where men constitute the center and the standard. It clarifies the predicament of women in the social, political, and cultural life in terms of their marginalization

and construction as inferior reflections of the standard which is male: woman as man's inferior Other. It clarifies the central/marginal, standard/other dichotomy. 'Otherness' is a universal concept based on the patriarchal order of society in which the authority of the father is paramount and permeates all facets of life. Thus, the concept can be applied in the criticism of African traditional orature and modern written literature. (2)

"Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala": Synopsis and Gender Bias

Tony Uchenna Ubesie's *Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala* is a fictional tale about the effects of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War on the Igbo moral ethics, and how the war turned everything, especially gender roles, upside down. It shows that though the war might have been between Biafra and Nigeria, that the real war was fought at the family level as the war tore many families apart and made many people lose their respect for the Igbo tradition. It depicts women as abandoning their roles of submissive and respectful wives, as well as nurturing and loving mothers. These qualities are seen as innate feminine qualities. Ubesie, through this novel, wants to prove Igbo women's disobedience to Igbo culture and their insubordination to their husbands in times of men's difficulties, as the Igbo proverb that says that "*ukwu jie agu, mgbada abiara ya ugwo*", meaning that when the tiger breaks a leg, then the deer demands its payment. However, as I tend to prove, it is rather a case of "*Ikuku kuo, a hu ike ọkụkọ*" (when the wind blows, one sees the buttock of the fowl), as the war destroyed so many myths about men as the heads, providers for and defenders of the Igbo family.

Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala tells the story of Ada who, despite having a good job, did not have a husband and is therefore always unhappy. After being deceived by so many men, she finally meets and marries Chike, a young but very rich man, who has businesses all over Nigeria and money in American banks. Without wasting much time, he marries her and she becomes a housewife. She bears two children, a boy and a girl and is always treated well by her husband who makes sure that she has everything she needs and that she wears the latest fashion among women. Unfortunately, the war breaks out and for no reason whatsoever, Ada changes. Her materialism, which we never

know about becomes manifest when Chike asks her to gather a few things so that they could run back to their village since the city in which they live has fallen into enemy hands and the city is being bombed down. Instead of doing that, she disobeys her husband and starts making soup as well as carrying all of her expensive clothes. This almost causes them the life of their son as the car breaks down and they cannot find one another in the commotion caused by bombs falling everywhere. Soon after arriving home, their village falls into enemy hands and they have to flee from there. Ada repeats the same thing of going after material things and eventually they settles in another village. Due to the change of currency, and the rationing of money by the banks, Chike is unable to access his money and he is forced to start selling off the little possession he has left. Ada becomes more and more disrespectful and eventually asks Chike to raise money for her to start doing petty trading. Chike sells his bed to raise the money. Unfortunately, Ada becomes wild and turns herself into a whore. She sleeps with Army officers and soldiers. She would claim to go to the market, but would go to spend the time with her lovers instead.

Eventually, when Chike cannot bear it any more, he beats her up mercilessly. Ada abandons Chike and her children, and moves to a neighboring village, where she engages in "Affia attack", by crossing the enemy line and going into enemy zone to purchase salt and other food items that she trades on. She makes a lot of money, which enables her to slaughter several chicken daily and to entertain her boyfriends constantly, while her husband and children are starving to death. Chike is reduced to begging her on his knees for money and food for him and their children. Later, the army takes her apartment from her and she is forced to return to her husband, but she makes it clear to Chike that she has become the boss and is no longer ready to respect or submit to him. Her boyfriends even visit her in her home and she asks her husband to eat on the floor, to enable her to entertain her lovers at the table. If Chike as much as makes a comment, she would threaten to have him conscripted into the army and to have one of her lovers send him to the war front so that he could be killed. Eventually, she succeeds in getting him conscripted into the army, and by the time the war ends, Chike returns from the war and realizes that his younger brother who is in the army

too, has moved their mother, as well as Chike's children, away from where they were before and that Ada has moved in with one her numerous lovers.

Chike recovers his businesses, which a white man was running for him in Lagos during the war and he is thus able to access his money in an American bank, and to rebuild his life and wealth. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about Ada, who is impregnated and abandoned by one of her soldier boyfriends, as he returns to his own wife and children. She goes back to beg Chike to take her back, but Chike who can hardly recognize her, made mockery of her and in a humiliating way reminds her of how she has treated him and their children during the war. Even her children reject her as well. The novel ends with Chike saying this to her:

Onodụ I nọ ugbu a na-ewute m nke ukwu. Ma, I bürüla onye ndị mmadụ luforọ alufo na di. Mu bụ Chike anaghị eri ihe eriforọ erifo. Nne, were ego a gbaa ugbọ lawa be nna gi, ma buru n'uche na ọ dighị ihe ga-eme ka m lükwaa gi ọzọ, maka ne ISI AKWU DARA N'ALA, EDETULA AJA.” (205) (I find your condition now very painful. But you are now a second-hand wife (meaning that many men have married you). I, Chike, do not eat left over food. Woman, take this money to pay for your transport back to your father's house and bear in mind that nothing will ever make me to marry you again FOR THE HEAD OF PALM FRUIT THAT FALLS TO THE GROUND HAS BEEN SOILED.)

So here again, we see the proverb used to compare a woman to leftover food and soiled palm fruit because she has been involved with other men than her husband. In reality, a man is free to do whatever he wants without being reprimanded, punished or corrected by the wife because a woman never tells her husband to return to his father's house since he is already there.

When a man provides for the family, he expects the wife to perform domestic chores and tend to the children, but that is not the case when a woman is the breadwinner among the Igbo. In fact, in a recent 2001 study carried out by Rose Uchem in her dissertation that is based on her research on an Igbo community living in the United States of America⁴, she finds that though

Igbo women in the United States make more money than their husband do most of the time, that “there is still not much sharing of the domestic work by the Igbo men. Rigid gender roles still operate and weigh heavily on the women, who thereby carry a double work load of wage employment and domestic labor” (16). Such is the case in the novel. When Chike is the breadwinner for the family before the war, Ada stays home and caters for the children, as well as does all the house chores, whereas, when she becomes the breadwinner during the war, she is still the one doing all the house work as the author writes, “*Ọ bụ ezi okwu na ọ bụ ya (Ada) na-akpata ihe ha na-eri, ... Chike nwe ya onwe ya, nke bụ na ọ bụ ya nwekwa ego ya.*” (83-84) (It is true that she (Ada) is the breadwinner ... but it is Chike who owns Ada, which means that he owns her money as well.) Thus empowered, when he suspects Ada of adultery, he beats her up so badly that she bleeds profusely from both the nose and the mouth (*Mgbe Chike mechara ike ya, o wee meghee ụzọ. Obara si Ada n’imi na n’ọnụ na-enuputa. O dewere ọnụ ka awụ na-eje okwu nwanyi?*” (81) – “When Chike exhausted himself (from beating Ada – emphasis, mine), he opened the door. Blood was oozing out profusely from her nose and her mouth. Her mouth was like that of a frog that is going to marry a wife”).

Throughout the entire beating, though the neighbors and her mother-in-law for whom she is also providing food heard her screaming and calling for help, they did not come to her rescue because women are considered their husbands’ properties and a husband has the right to treat his wife as he deems fit without interference from anyone. This confirms what Okenwa Olisah (The Strong Man of the Pen), one of the Onitsha Market Literature Pamphleteers, writes in his pamphlet “Ibo Native Law And Customs” (1963) in which he has recorded many Igbo customs from interviews that he has conducted with Igbo elders from different Igbo villages and communities. He states that during traditional Igbo marriages, the middle man (intermediary) would ask both the suitor and the girl to be married some questions to make sure that both understand what they are getting into. One of the questions the girl is asked is “In case, he happens to be annoyed and give you beatings, would you bear that?” (15), and the girl would answer “I will bear it.” And he would ask the suitor “If this girl happens to act foolishly and stupidly, can you bear

that?” and the intending husband would answer “I can bear that”. Traditionally, therefore, abuse comes with the marriage package as everybody expects that the man should beat his wife if he considers her actions foolish and stupid and, of course, it is the man who decides which actions are foolish and stupid, and thus requires the woman to be beaten by way of correction. However, while the man is quick to exercise his traditional right to beat his wife, he conveniently ignores the part where he promised to bear her “foolishness and stupidity”. Women are also so brainwashed that they encourage men to do this as we can see from Chike’s mother who keeps quiet, while his son beats his wife to a pulp and yet, when Ada decides to leave him, she is considered a bad woman. This reiterates the comment by Amoke and Nnachukwu that power imbalance is jointly produced by both the dominated and the dominating.

Igbo Women, Before, During and After The War: What Changed?

We have seen the traditional and patriarchal assigned gender roles for women and how they are expected to behave. Let us now consider how plausible the story of Ada is and if this image is a true representation of Igbo women, especially of the period represented in the novel. After reading the story of Ada, one is convinced that Ada is indeed a bad woman and deserves what happened to her at the end of the story. However, let us not forget that the narrative voice of this story is a man’s voice who weaves a fictional story to buttress and underline his misogynistic ideas about Igbo women. He paints Igbo women really black as well as prescribes roles to them, while brainwashing them to accept abuse as normal as he clearly states, “Ma, onye jee di, o dí mma, o dí njo, ịla azu adighị ya. Onye si na be di ya gbaa ọso, o nweghi mgbe o ji abụ ezi ihe. O masị ya, ya bürü di nwanyị ahụ na-emegbu ya ndị mmadụ anaghị ele onye ọbula si na be di ya laa be nna ya ezigbo anya” (1). (When a woman marries, whether the marriage is good or bad, there is no going back because it is not a good thing for a woman to run away from her husband. Even if the husband is maltreating the woman, people do not look kindly on any woman who leaves her husband’s home to return to her father’s house.)

Ellima C. Ezeani maintains the same by saying that “appearances are very important”⁵ in an Igbo marriage and that “couples at the very least are expected to present a façade of stability for their children.”⁶ He went on to say that “many marriages persist in spite of domestic difficulties which at times could result in violence and death. But no matter how terrible a marriage is, the woman bears the greater burden of maintaining its stability. Invariably, she will receive less public sympathy in the event of a break-up.”⁷ However, the war has altered these ways of thinking, as women discovered their inner strength and abilities to stand on their own. The war has made them realize that they are actually the pillars and backbone of the families and that made them raise their values. Many of them could no longer go back to the gender role status quo, and have started questioning their roles and traditional social status. Many no longer want to remain in the background, while their husbands take credit for everything, and some do not want to attach themselves to men at all, desiring their independence more than answering married women. In short, the war has caused a redefinition and a reinvention of the Igbo woman. Brenda F. Berrian holds the same view that the author Flora Nwapa “reinvents the African woman” in *One is Enough* by disproving that a woman must have a husband to attain respect and success, even self-realization. (“Reinvention” 54; taken from Mary D. Mears, 154).

Many Igbo authors and critics have expressed their views as well as carried out interview-based research on some Nigerian-Biafra Civil War survivors and have reported their findings. Christie Achebe's 2010 article, “Igbo Women in the Nigerian-Biafran War 1967-1970: An Interplay of Control”, confirms through numerous interviews that:

Traditionally, women were the nurturers, traders, and peacemakers of society. The shrinking of food sources during the war was a direct assault on the capability of the women to successfully carry out what they perceived as their traditional role. It was an attack that impugned their very reason for being—to oversee the health of the nation. This was a war of survival that was making a mockery of the women's self-worth and integrity and was threatening to strip them of their status in society.

They had to modify their role to fit the new emergency. Women were determined to recover the control that was slipping in this domain of their life. (794)

Considering the war as personal attack on women's self-worth and integrity is not an over-statement, since indeed it is women who are traditionally in charge of feeding the family, especially in polygamous homes, where the man is just a glorified head and each wife is a matriarch in her own branch of the family. Women thus engage in "Affia (market) attack" by crossing the border and going into the enemy zone in disguise, to procure food and clothing as well as medical supplies and other survival items for their families, whereas men, such as Chike, go into hiding with the pretense that they are protecting their families. This of course is pure irony as they are only protecting themselves, while sending their wives to the war zones, thus exposing them to danger. The women become wealthy through their involvement in the "affia attack" are known as the "Cash Madams" (Mears, 2009, p. 145).

Clearly, women took the most risks during the war as they kept Igbo people from total starvation since the Biafran section was cut off and did not get outside help. It is women who risked their lives to go into the enemy zone to get food. It is women who made sure that their children, husbands and families were clothed. Some joined the army and provided nursing, and other medical services to the wounded because traditionally, many women kept shrines as priestesses, so they already knew so much about herbs. In fact, many of them even worked as bomb manufacturers and served as decoy to help the Biafran soldiers escape to safety. Some also were used as "troop comforters" (Egodi Uchendu, 409). They hid their husbands and male family members from being conscripted into the army. In Jane Bryce's findings, Igbo women "joined civil defense militia units and, in May 1969, formed a Women's Front and called on the Biafran leadership to allow them to enlist in the infantry" (33). Ifi Amadiume also reports that:

Women fed and sustained the economy of Biafra through 'attack' trade, which involved market trips through enemy front lines. Women mobilised Biafrans for all public occasions. Women formed a strong core of

the militia, task forces, etc., while mothers cooked for and fed the whole Biafran nation. Women became the cohesive force in a shifting, diminishing people who were slowly losing what they saw as a war of survival. (183)

However, many women who were in abusive and loveless relationships used the opportunity to abandon their marriages. Many women found their inner strength and ability to survive independently, and away from their husbands. Traditionally, marriage in Igbo land is not based on love, but on family compatibility, the perceived or assumed ability of the man to provide for his wife and children and the ability of the woman to bear children, especially male ones to carry on the man's lineage. So, during the war, marriages declined and according to Christie Achebe, there was even a hair style referred to as *di gbakwaa oku* (husbands go to hell/to hell with husbands), which is the same thing that Ada says to Chike after he beat her mercilessly and she runs off to be on her own. Thus again, roles changed with women launching the "attack" on hunger, starvation and death, while men cowered and went into hiding. Therefore, it is women who kept the Biafran nation going.

This is collaborated by Flora Nwapa, who carried out her own evaluation of the war effects on Igbo women in three novels: *Never Again* (1976), *One is Enough* (1981), and *Women are Different* (1986). Also, in an interview with Maria Umeh in 1995 ("Poetics" 26, cited in Mary D. Mears, 160), Nwapa maintained that the Civil War liberated Igbo women because, during the war, women "saw themselves playing roles that they never thought they would play. They saw themselves across the enemy lines, trying to trade, trying to feed their children and caring for their husbands" (ibid). Besides these tasks, they equally felt good about "their economic independence. So what they used to tolerate before the war, they could no longer tolerate after the war" (ibid). Thereafter, according to Mears,

if a woman discovered her marriage did not give her 'satisfaction' or that her in-laws (who used to be all powerful – my insertion) were worrying her because there were no children, 'whatever the case may be', the woman could 'just decide to leave that family and go to

the big city,’ to Lagos, an urban world in which the woman was ‘anonymous, where nobody seemed to care what [she did] for a living. (160)

Not only that, according Mears, “The ‘Cash Madams’ found it necessary to move to Lagos after the war in order to remain economically independent. They do not define themselves solely by marriage and children.” (*ibid*) Therefore, the war both liberated and empowered Igbo women.

However, the character of Ada is faulty because Ubesie makes her abandon her own children, even though she is living comfortably. Moreover, portraying her as someone who for no reason whatsoever suddenly becomes a bad woman is absurd, and speaks a lot about the author’s sexism. In the story, it is Ada who runs after military men, but according to Egodi Uchendu’s in findings through direct interviews of the civil war victims (bracketed inclusions are mine for emphasis): “Most acts of prostitution and cohabitation were not initiated by the girls (read women). There were many cases of abduction by federal soldiers in Biafra and Anioma. In instances where soldiers directly approached girls (read women), resistance could result in death. A number of victims were killed in full view of their parents, spouses and siblings” (“Recollections” 409).

However, Ubesie chooses to portray Ada, a mother of two children, as willingly abandoning her children and running after soldiers without coercion or force. Also, she is portrayed as being wealthy and slaughtering many chickens in a day. Why then does she not move to a big city after the war to settle down as other “Cash Madams” do? If she is so desperate to be on her own, why does she suddenly feel the need to redefine herself by marriage to the same man she abandons for no plausible reason? All these disparities prove that the author’s representation of Ada is faulty and far from the truth about the capabilities of Igbo women. It is indeed a minimizing of their resourcefulness and a vain attempt at placing women in “their place”, while replacing men on an imaginary higher pedestal.

As we have seen from the recorded history of women’s role during the war, women were involved in the “affia attack” wars whereby they cross the enemy line to go in search of food, to penetrate the enemy zone where they go to market and smuggle

goods into Biafra so that they and their families could survive. But Tony Ubesie again twisted his own tale in a misogynistic way, he minimized this heroic and valiant action by women by presenting it as if women were doing it only for selfish reasons, as Ada was doing.

"Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala": Just Fiction or Propaganda?

Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala was published in 1973, three years after the Nigerian Civil War. Clearly, the war had exposed many Igbo men's weaknesses and made many women lose respect for their husbands who proved to be cowards during the war. Many of them went into hiding to avoid being conscripted into the army as Chike was doing, and in so doing, they could no longer provide for their families and many Igbo wives and mothers were forced to become the sole breadwinners and to cater for their families. Yet, the men continued to demand unalloyed submission and respect from them. Just like Africans discovered the vulnerability of white men when they fought side by side with them during the Second World War, which led to Africans seeking emancipation from colonialism, so did Igbo women realize their own strength and this gave rise to an increased divorce rate and break-up of marriages and families. Ubesie's novel serves to remind women of their patriarchal assigned gender roles and to place them back under the man. Painting Ada in a negative light and making her lose everything at the end is a way of casting fear and doubt in the minds of those who might consider the option of breaking out of their marriages, even if they are being abused.

In presenting this one-sided tale in which we do not hear the voice of the woman, Tony Ubesie presents himself as misogynistic, sexist and having no regards for Igbo women. He casts Igbo women in a negative light and takes away from their qualities of loving and nurturing mothers, because no matter what an Igbo woman does, she does take her responsibility towards her children seriously because traditionally, men do not occupy themselves with children. Tradition forbids them from doing so. An Igbo woman's crown is her children. Children are one's insurance and chief investment against old age. An Igbo woman would rather go naked and hungry than not provide and care for her children. She can condescend and humble herself to any lev-

el for her children. In fact most of the time, the only reason an Igbo woman will stay in a bad marriage is because of her children, as she would fear that her children will be maltreated by a co-wife, or that her children will be sent to the father's relatives who will maltreat them as punishment for her running away. Since children are considered to belong to their fathers especially in patrilineal Igbo communities, women are not allowed to take their children with them back to their places of birth.

Given the new found freedom that Igbo women found and experienced during the war, with many of them moving to big cities to live independently with their children after the war, it is quite clear that the author of *Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala* makes his female protagonist fail and be humiliated at last, and to crawl back to beg her husband to take her back as a cautionary measure to prevent women from doing so. This is wishful thinking, as well as propaganda geared towards scaring Igbo women who seek liberation and independence from their traditional gender roles of inferior, subordinate beings, into falling back and accepting those roles and positions again. The character of Ada is therefore not a sincere portrayal of Igbo women.

Tony Ubesie making his male protagonist remain unforgiving and to overlook the effect that the war had on people is drawing a very strict line between men and women and tearing up the Igbo family. In this regard, the tale of Chimamanda Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) counters that of *Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala* because it tells the story of a couple's travail during the Biafran war. In Adichie's version, it is the man, Odenigbo, who cheats on his wife, Olanna, by sleeping with and impregnating a village girl. In a state of anger and emotional weakness, the wife sleeps with Richard, her twin sister Kainene's English boyfriend. Odenigbo and Olanna later forgive each other and even take in the child born to Odenigbo by the village girl. Thus, Adichie, unlike Ubesie lays the burden on both of them and shows that both of them are fallible people with emotions and that it is not only the woman who can act foolishly and stupidly, but that men can too. Adichie also shows that the burden of forgiveness is not only the woman's and that it takes two to build a strong home and family. Everyone has a role to play to maintain the peace and the continuity of a family.

Conclusion

Tony Uchenna Ubesie's novel *Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala* is based on some prescriptive and proscriptive gender role proverbs which dictate roles for women as well as serve to brainwash women to subordinate themselves to men and not to protest against their maltreatment at the hands of their husbands. He does so by creating a female protagonist who maltreated and abandoned her family during the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War, and who ends up being rejected both by husband and her children after the war. This story is supposed to serve as warning to Igbo women that they cannot be anything without their husbands; that children can do without their mother if she is "a bad woman" and that the society as a whole will reject the person. In so doing, Ubesie shows himself as sexist and without regards for Igbo women as the story does not do justice to the qualities of Igbo women as hard working women, loving wives and nurturing mothers, nor does it portray them as fair players. The novel does also not reflect the events of the period invoked in the novel. *Isi Aku Dara N'Ala* is therefore a propagandistic work, whose aim is to brainwash women into continuing to submit to enslavement and subordination instead of seeking independence and an end to the oppression of Igbo women.

Notes

¹ See Ikenga Emeifie Metuh, 4-5

² Pita Nwana, who was the first to write and publish in the Igbo language, wrote a biography *Omenuko* (1933); D. N. Achara's *Ala Bingo* (1937) does not really portray the Igbo culture. It is more exotic than grounded in Igbo culture and traditions; F. C. Ogbalu's initial works were on promoting the Igbo language and Achebe's classic novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), though about the Igbo, is written in the English Language. But Ubesie published all his novels in the Igbo language.

³ C. G. Okafor. "African Literature and Beauvoirism: The Example of Selected Women's Action And Women Writers". Web. 12 Jul. 2012. <<http://soar.wichita.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/10057/1266/Beauvoir.pdf?seq=1>>.

⁴ Rose Uchem, "Overcoming Women's Subordination in the Igbo African Culture and in the Catholic Church: Envisioning and Inclusive Theology with Reference to Women" *dissertation.com*. Web. 12 Jul. 2012. <<http://www.bookpump.com/dps/pdf-b/1121334b.pdf>>.

⁵ Ellima C. Ezeani. "The Igbo: Why They Are the Way They Are". Web. 13 Jul. 2012. <<http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/elimma-cezeani/the-igbos-why-are-they-the-way-they-are.html>>.

⁶ Op cit.

⁷ Op cit.

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“THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY WOMEN’S SOULS”:
THE PROVERBIAL RHETORIC FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS
BY ELIZABETH CADY STANTON AND SUSAN B. AN-
THONY

Abstract: While much is known about the proverbial rhetoric of such well-known American male politicians and social reformers as John Adams, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Martin Luther King, and Barack Obama, there has been no such interest in the proverbial speech of female public figures. And yet, even a cursory glance at the letters, speeches, and essays of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) and Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) clearly reveals that these two nineteenth-century feminists are any time the equals of the male political giants when it comes to the employment of proverbial language during the fifty years of their unceasing, emotive, and aggressive struggle for women’s rights. The partial justification of referring to Stanton and Anthony as “rhetorical giants” is due to their incredibly effective use and innovative manipulation of proverbial wisdom and proverbial metaphors in the service of feminist rhetoric. Advocating and teaching go hand in hand to a certain degree, and no wonder that Stanton and Anthony often saw themselves in the role of educating women in demanding their self-evident rights as equals of men. Since proverbs among other functions often take on a didactic function, it should thus not be surprising that they would call on them to add generational wisdom to their arguments. Of course, that is not to say that these forward-looking reformers did not also disagree with some of the traditional messages of proverbs! In other words, both Stanton and Anthony made use of proverbial language in whatever way it served their social reform purpose. There is no doubt that proverbs are strategies for dealing with typical situations, and it is thus a natural consequence that for these two feminists they become verbal signs for recurrent social situations that need to be questioned and changed as far as the role of women is concerned. Following some introductory remarks, numerous proverbs and proverbial expressions are discussed in their rhetorical contexts under seven headings: 1. The proverbial partnership of two nineteenth-century feminists; 2. Proverbial language in

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letters of social activism; 3. Folk proverbs in the service of arguments for women's rights; 4. Proverbial quotations in pointed sociopolitical writings; 5. Classical phrases and proverbial quotations in published essays; 6. The proverbial fight for educational and professional justice for women; and 7. The golden rule as a proverbial sign of equality.

Keywords: Susan B. Anthony, anti-proverb, argumentation, Bible, context, didacticism, education, equality, essay, feminism, gender, golden rule, justice, letter, metaphor, politics, quotation, reformer, rhetoric, sign, social activism, speech, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, strategy, wisdom, women, women's rights

While much is known about the proverbial rhetoric of such well-known American male politicians and social reformers as John Adams, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Martin Luther King, and Barack Obama (Mieder 2000, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2010a; Mieder and Bryan 1997), there has been no such interest in the proverbial speech of female public figures. And yet, even a cursory glance at the letters, speeches, and essays of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) and Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) clearly reveals that these two nineteenth-century feminists are any time the equals of the male political giants when it comes to the employment of proverbial language during the fifty years of their unceasing, emotive, and aggressive struggle for women's rights. Of course, they have been praised for their masterful use of the multifaceted English language, but their rather obvious reliance on folk speech in general and proverbs and proverbial expressions in particular has with but one exception received no attention by linguists, cultural historians, folklorists, and paremiologists (Mieder 2013). The many biographies and studies about both Stanton and Anthony go into great detail about their fascinating lives and their progressive sociopolitical causes as they relate to women, but for the most part they fail in analyzing how their fight for abolition, temperance, gender equality, and women suffrage in particular was verbalized and proverbialized in such a way that their messages effected social change over time (O'Connor 1954; Lutz 1959; Clarke 1972; Griffith 1984; Barry 1988; Ward 1999; Gornick 2005, Ridarksy and Huth 2012). In other words, it is one thing to scrutinize what these two effective orators and essayists said in the cause of civil and women's

rights, but it is also of significance to analyze how they used what aspects of language to bring their message across. Just as Abigail Adams (1744-1818)—an early American feminist without a political voice—employed proverbs and proverbial phrases to argue for women's rights in her plethora of letters to her family and many friends (Mieder 2005: 56-89), so did Stanton and Anthony also rely on Biblical and folk proverbs to make their relentless case for the equality of men and women before the law and in social interaction.

The neglect of noticing the proverbial nature of Stanton's and Anthony's language is also apparent in Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's otherwise superb two-volume study *Man Cannot Speak for Her* (1989a-b) that presents and analyzes nineteenth-century female rhetoric as it was practiced by them and some of their significant contemporaries in the struggle for women's rights. In her informative introduction Campbell points out that "men have an ancient and honorable rhetorical history" dating back to ancient Greece and classical Rome, while "women have no parallel rhetorical history" since "for much of their history women have been prohibited from speaking" especially in the public arena (Campbell 1989a: I, 1). She defines rhetoric as "the study of the means by which symbols can be used to appeal to others, to persuade. The potential for persuasion exists in the shared symbolic and socioeconomic experience of persuaders (rhetors) and audiences [as well as readers]; specific rhetorical acts attempt to exploit that shared experience and channel it in certain directions" (Campbell 1989a: I, 2). And she goes on to state that rhetorical analysis has focused on "the rhetor's skill in selecting and adapting those resources available in language, in cultural values, and in shared experience in order to influence others" (Campbell 1989a: I, 2). This makes perfect sense, but those linguistic resources available to women are exactly the aspects that have not been looked at in detail by scholars interested in the feminist movement over time. To be sure, Campbell even speaks of a "feminine style" of the suffragists, whose "discourse will be personal in tone, relying heavily on personal experience, anecdotes, and other examples. It will tend to be structured inductively (crafts are learned bit by bit, instance by instance, from which generalizations emerge). [...] The goal of such rhetoric in empowerment, a term contemporary feminists have used to refer to the process of persuading listeners [or readers] that

they can act effectively in the world, that they can be agents of change" (Campbell 1989a: I, 13). As will be seen, proverbs as generalizations of human behavior and expressions of social norms will add considerable weight to the "rhetorical creativity" (Campbell 1989a: I, 15) of feminists, and it is surprising that the vast scholarship on Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in particular has not stressed this invaluable aspect of the rhetoric of the women's rights movement (see Fuss 1989, Waggenspack 1989: 91, Strange 1998: 18, DuBois and Smith 2007). As will be shown, the partial justification of referring to Stanton and Anthony as "rhetorical giants" (Campbell 1989b: 212) is due to their incredibly effective use and innovative manipulation of proverbial wisdom and proverbial metaphors in the service of feminist rhetoric.

Advocating and teaching go hand in hand to a certain degree, and no wonder that Stanton and Anthony often saw themselves in the role of educating women in demanding their self-evident rights as equals of men. Since proverbs among other functions often take on a didactic function, it should thus not be surprising that they would call on them to add generational wisdom to their arguments. Of course, that is not to say that these forward-looking reformers did not also disagree with some of the traditional messages of proverbs! In other words, both Stanton and Anthony made use of proverbial language in whatever way it served their social reform purpose. There is no doubt that "proverbs are strategies for dealing with situations" (Burke 1941: 256), and it is thus a natural consequence that for these two feminists they become verbal signs for recurrent social situations that need to be questioned and changed as far as the role of women is concerned.

They were masterful rhetoricians and employed all registers of the English language, just as that great British orator Winston S. Churchill did in the following century. When Churchill was made an honorary citizen of the United States on April 9, 1963, President John F. Kennedy described Churchill's rhetorical grandeur with the following words: "In the dark days and darker nights when England stood alone—and most men save Englishmen despaired of England's life—he mobilized the English language and sent it into battle" (Mieder 1997: 66). The same could be said about these two untiring advocates of women's rights.

They mobilized the English language to battle social ills, with Susan B. Anthony on two occasions brilliantly describing her fifty years of fighting for the women's cause with the anti-proverb "These are the times that try women's souls" (SBA, Jan. 14, 1856; cited from Harper 1898-1908: I, 138-139; and SBA, III, 228; June 7, 1876). By simply replacing the word "men" in Thomas Paine's proverbial statement "These are the times that try men's souls" from 1776 with "women" (Shapiro 2006: 576), she was able to encompass the trials and tribulations of half of the population! And Elisabeth Cady Stanton performed a similar linguistic trick, when at the beginning of the women's rights movement she changed the proverb "All men are created equal" to the inclusive "All men and women are created equal" (ECS, I, 78; July 19-20, 1848; see Aron 2008: 89-96). That revolutionary declaration served as the proverbial motto in their dedicated struggle for equality of the sexes, and as will be seen throughout the pages of this book, proverbs and proverbial expressions played a major role in their constant struggle and lasting success.

The proverbial partnership of two nineteenth-century feminists

Once Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony met in 1851, they formed a very close friendship that lasted for five decades until Stanton's death in 1902. They met numerous times at home and at conferences, and they were in constant epistolary contact with each other. With such cooperative and trustworthy spirit informing their work, it should not be surprising that their personal correspondence is a touching testimony to their heartfelt friendship. In their letters to each other they could let their guard down, so to speak. They include honest statements about life's small or large problems, its successes and failures, as well as its joys and sorrows. Both women rely on proverbial expressions in particular to add color and emotion to their epistles to each other. Six years after their first meeting, Elizabeth Cady Stanton makes the following quite cocky comment to her friend, prophesying with two proverbial phrases that they will make many a man shake in his boots or turn over in his grave as they will fight for women's rights for decades to come:

You [Susan B. Anthony] and I [ECS] have a prospect of a good long life[,] we shall not be in our prime before fifty & after that we shall be good for twenty years at

least[.] If we do not make old [Charles] Davies shake in his boots or turn in his grave I am mistaken. (ECS, I, 351-352; Aug. 20, 1857)

In order to advance their women's agenda, it was of utmost importance for them to stay focused, something that Stanton expressed in two sentences to her friend that declare that they should follow the proverb's advice "Let the past be the past" and that they should not waste their proverbial powder on temperance issues because they have much bigger fish to fry as the proverbial phrase has it, and those "fish" represent the fight for women's rights: "Now, Susan [B. Anthony], I do beg of you to let the past be past, and to waste no powder on the Woman's State Temperance Society. We have other and bigger fish to fry" (ECS, June 20, 1853; cited from DuBois 1981: 57; see also O'Connor 1954: 79-83).

Self-doubt as far as the women's rights movement was concerned only seldom enters the picture, even if certain friends appear to disagree with some of their views. The proverb "Time will tell" served Anthony well to put her friend Susan's mind at rest: "All the old friends, with scarce an exception, are sure we are wrong. Only time can tell, but I believe we are right and hence bound to succeed" (SBA, January 1, 1868; cited from Harper 1898-1908: I, 295). They must think positively and plow ahead, and when things look tough and Stanton appears to be faltering perhaps, then Anthony cites the Bible proverb "Sour grapes will set teeth on edge" (Jeremiah 31:29) and the classical proverb "Nature abhors a vacuum" in order to convince her friend to push ahead, putting her on a bit of a guilt trip in addition to it all by stating that she owes it to herself and her friend:

"Sour Grapes will set teeth on edge" still it seems—
 Now you [ECS] [know] *nature abhors a vacuum*—& if
 you at head of our National Committee [don't] step
 boldly to the front at Washington—such a *truckling*
growlers will— *Somebody* surely will be there—& you
owe it to yourself & the cause to be there first— I was
 almost going to say—to *me too*—for *our obligations* to
 the *movement are one*—that is to *hold the helm* & keep
 the ship from running on to shoals & quicksands—
 (SBA, II, 449; Sept. 10, 1871)

Susan B. Anthony can get on quite a proverbial role, when she wants to convince Stanton of a certain idea or plan of action. In a letter of July 10, 1872, she first alludes to the classical proverb "The mountain labored and brought forth a mouse" (see Harder 1925-1926) and subsequently cites the two proverbial phrases "To keep the pot boiling" and "To put something in a nutshell" to add some metaphorical expressiveness to her pleading for continued action in the cause:

The mountain has brought forth its mole, and we are left to comfort ourselves with the Philadelphia splinter as best we may, and [Isabella] Hooker and Anthony propose to make it as large as possible. Hooker and self go to Philadelphia at 7 this eve, and in A.M. she to New Haven and I to Rochester.

Now we must keep the pot boiling by every possible means. First by issuing an appeal to the women of the U.S. to take hold of the *promise* of the Republicans and hold them to it, and demand more and more. [...] Now do you [ECS] at once, put in a nut-shell what you think *more* or different. (SBA, II, 516; July 10, 1872)

But action also meant traveling hundreds of miles under difficult circumstances, and here are two telling excerpts of letters from 1878 and 1879 by Stanton to Anthony, indicating by the descriptive proverbial comparison "To be (feel) like a squeezed sponge" that she is utterly worn out by her constant traveling and lecturing. Surely her long trips with little sleep and many lectures as well as writing speeches and essays must have taken their toll:

I reached home Saturday night and found a telegram asking for my [sp]eech as the Committee intended to print it. I sat up last night until four [o']clock to copy it and sent off this morning 150 pages of manuscript. I got [so] interested in "National Protection for National Citizens" that the night [s]lipped away and I felt neither tired nor sleepy. But to-day I feel like [a] squeezed sponge and have done nothing. With love, Good-night, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. (ECS, III, 374; 14. Jan. 1878)

I [ESC] have been wandering, wandering ever since we parted; up early and late, sleepy and disgusted with my

profession, as there is not rest from the time the [lecturing] season begins until it ends. Two months more containing sixty-one days still stretch their long length before me. I must pack and unpack my trunk sixty-one times, pull out the black silk trail and don it, curl my hair, and pin on the illusion puffing round my spacious throat, sixty-one more times, rehearse "Our Boys," "Our Girls," or "Home Life," sixty-one times, eat 183 more miserable meals, sleep in cotton sheets with these detestable things called "comforters" (tormentors would be a more fitting name) over me sixty-one more nights, shake hands with sixty-one more committees, smile, look intelligent and interested in every one who approaches me, while I feel like a squeezed sponge, affect a little spring and briskness in my gait on landing in each new town to avoid making an impression that I am seventy, when in reality I feel more like crawling than walking. With her best foot forward, Yours. (ECS, III, 440; March 26, 1879)

Notice, however, that the over-tired Stanton nevertheless closes her letter with a literal interpretation of the proverbial phrase "To put one's best foot forward". No matter how worn out, she will march on doing her best for the women's rights movement.

Of course, both women constantly wish that they could "put their heads together" to get their massive work loads done, but the unmarried Anthony also is perfectly capable to write charming lines regarding love, marriage, and family as she knows them from her friend:

I wish you [ECS] were to be with us also— It is too cruel that you must be settled—fastened—so far away—so that I cant [sic] get to you without spending so much time & money— We ought to have our heads together for lots of the work before us now— Love to Maggie & Bob—& Congratulations to Kitt [Henry B. Stanton]— It must be fun to see him petting a lovely little girl!! Well—a fellow is pretty sure to get hit [get married]—at last—even if he does escape for so many years— Lovingly yours[,] Susan B Anthony (SBA, V, 500; Nov. 27, 1892)

However, references to work abound, and it is Susan B. Anthony who turns the proverb “You cannot have two bites at (of) a cherry” into its opposite in order to express that she will have to manage her busy schedule somehow. This proverb is no longer very popular, but it gives a wonderful bitter-sweet taste of what Anthony is facing:

Then I have a letter—giving me until *November 20th* to complete the *Cyclopaedia* article—so that to get any time at all to be with you [ECS]—I shall have to make two bites of a cherry— Then there is another home attraction—and that is that the last of September Miss [Frances] Willard & Miss [Anna] Gordon are to bring Lady Henry Somerset—Lady “Isabel”—I like better—to visit me—and I must not miss this chance— (SBA, V, 642; Aug. 19, 1894)

But here is Susan B. Anthony’s last letter to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, her dear friend of over fifty years, who was to pass away on October 26, 1902. It summarizes one more time their unique and eventful partnership in the cause of women’s rights and their very special friendship:

We little dreamed when we began this contest, optimistic with the hope and buoyancy of youth, that half a century later we would be compelled to leave the finish of the battle to another generation of women. But our hearts are filled with joy to know that they enter upon this task equipped with a college education, with business experience, with the fully admitted right to speak in public—all of which were denied to women fifty years ago. They have practically but one point to gain—the suffrage; we had all. These strong, courageous, capable young women will take our place and complete our work. There is an army of them, where we were but a handful; ancient prejudice has become so softened, public sentiment so liberalized, and women have so thoroughly demonstrated their ability, as to leave not a shadow of doubt that they will carry our cause to victory. (SBA, VI, 451; before Oct. 26, 1902)

Sensing the end of her friend's life, Anthony appears to summarize their joint accomplishments, emphasizing that their "hearts are filled with joy" about their valiant strides toward women's rights. To be sure, woman suffrage had not been reached, but Stanton could rest assured that there was not a proverbial shadow of doubt that the final victory would eventually be won. This final epistle must have meant the world to the dying Elizabeth Cady Stanton, knowing that Susan B. Anthony would carry on the torch with the younger generation of feminists. Unfortunately, she too would not see the nineteenth amendment passed in 1920 that finally gave women the right to vote. It is often referred to as the Susan B. Anthony amendment, but there is also no shadow of doubt that she would have wanted it to carry the names of both yoke-fellows!

Proverbial language in letters of social activism

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony wrote not only numerous letters to each other, but they also corresponded with a multitude of contemporaries, including both women and men and high ranking government employees all the way to the President of the United States. More than their talks and essays they reveal the private lives of the two feminists, as they cover family life, their own anxieties, and, of course, also their constant struggle for women's rights. The epistles are filled with honest feelings, worries, and sociopolitical comments, especially regarding their work for various temperance and suffrage organizations. No matter how insurmountable the obstacles might have appeared, they carried on to make their dream of equal rights for women become a reality. There was nothing that could destroy the optimism of these two feminists.

Somatic phrases and proverbs play a considerable role in Stanton's letters, adding a highly emotional charge to her statements, to wit the following paragraphs that include the phraseologisms "To be bound hand and foot to something", "Two heads are better than one", and "To put one's heads together". It should be noted that in some of these references it is Elizabeth Cady Stanton as mother or grandmother who writes these comments, once again making modern readers wonder how this matriarch handled her incredibly busy life caring for her family and making a way out of no way for women of her time:

Many thanks for the beautiful presents which reached us in safety. I would have responded to your recent letters sooner but the truth is I am bound hand & foot with two undeveloped Hibernians in my kitchen a baby in my arms & four boys all revolving round me as a common centre. (ECS, I, 214; Dec. 6, 1852)

Dear Martha [Coffin Wright],

I have written my answer to cousin G. [Gerrit Smith] but before copying it for the press I should like to take counsel with you & add any good things that you may have thought of. As I am rather larger than you, suppose you come to me instead of my going to you. Come over in the first train some morning this week & we will criticize together. "Two heads are better than one" especially when one head is full of baby clothes & labour pains. I have a month grace still, yours in haste
E.C. Stanton. (ECS, I, 305; Dec. 17, 1855)

How many things you [Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Jr., the daughter of Theodore and Marguerite Stanton] will have to see & learn in this great world. I laugh to think how busy those little hands will be when you commence your investigations of all material things. I shall tell you of the amusing things your Father did when he was a wee fellow. There will be no end to all the nice chats we shall have, when we once put our heads together. Good night my pretty one, with love & kisses from your happy grandmother. (ECS, IV, 165; May 3, 1882)

At this point it should be noted that Susan B. Anthony mirrors her friend's use of somatic expressions that help her as well to describe her never-ending work and to vent her frustration over the reluctance of women to work for the goal of obtaining the ballot. Just as Stanton, she utilizes the proverbial phrases "To be bound hand and foot to something" and "To put one's heads together" to add emotive vigor to her statements. In the second passage the somewhat archaic phrase "To make bricks without straw" also appears:

I fairly tremble at that of Mrs [Clara] Colby's having to give up her paper as you [Elizabeth Harbert] had to

yours & I had to mine— And I shall work all I can to prevent the sad fate coming to her—as I would have done to have saved myself—had I known how—and to save you had it not been that I was bound hand & foot—head & heart & purse to Vol. III [of *History of Woman Suffrage*]—!! I can't tell you how relieved I feel that it is done— (SBA, IV, 521; Oct. 19, 1886)

Instead of going around echoing one or another class of men, it is time for women to put their heads together and demand to have their opinions counted the same as those of the men who make possible “yellow journalism” and prize fighting. They who wish may waste their time trying to make bricks without straw—to change the conditions of society without votes—I shall go on clamoring for the ballot and trying not to antagonize any man or set of men. Don’t you see, if women ever get the right to vote it must be through the consent of not only the moral and decent men of the nation, but also through that of the other kind? Is it not perfectly idiotic for us to be telling the latter class that the first thing we shall do with our ballots will be to knock them out of the enjoyment of their pet pleasures and vices? If you still think it wise to keep on sticking pins into the men whom we are trying to persuade to give women equal power with themselves, you will have to go on doing it. I certainly will not be one of your helpers in that particular line of work. (SBA, December ?, 1897; cited from Harper 1898-1908: II, 924)

As can be seen, nothing could make these women to refrain from expressing their dismay about the vexing opposition of men to equal rights for women. Turning to folk speech, Stanton cites the proverbial expression “To play cat and mouse with someone” and the proverbial comparison “To jump like parched peas on a hot shovel” to formulate a colorful invective:

Our legislative assemblies are simply playing with us [as] a cat does with a mouse. They agree among themselves to give us a good vote to keep us quiet, & they came so close to doing the thing outright in New York recently that two men in hot haste changed their votes at

the last moment. We have had hearings before Congress for eighteen years steadily, good reports good votes, but no action. I am discouraged & disgusted, & feel like making an attack on some new quarter of the enemies domain. Our politicians are calm & complacent under our fire, but the clergy jump round the moment you aim a pop gun at them like parched peas on a hot shovel. (ECS, IV, 504-505; April 27, 1886)

But speaking of the hope for women reaching the ballot box and voting, here are two segments from letters that indicate the pre-occupation with suffrage by Stanton. The first example is of special interest since it uses the proverbial expression “To burn one’s bridges” in a positive rather than its traditionally negative connotation. The second text with the proverbial phrase “To shake in one’s boots” is a satirical prophecy that men had better watch out in light of the fact that women will come on ever stronger in their demands for equal treatment:

Dear Mrs [Isabella Beecher] Hooker

Well I am glad you have burned all your bridges & feel ready to work with all the daughters of Eve, no matter if some have blundered. I am with you for the last long strong pull until we reach the ballot box. I would like to see your call [to join a suffrage organization] when you get one that suits you *before it goes to print*, because I want to be sure that it is worthy the occasion. (ECS, II, 452; Oct. 15, 1871)

With prayers, & songs treating questions of finance, the inviolable homestead, Labor & Capital & woman’s suffrage, we could soon create such a furor as would make these scoffing republicans tremble in their boots. (ECS, II, 478; Feb. 2, 1872)

And to be sure, the suffrage ball is on a roll, as Susan B. Anthony declares proverbially in one of her letters around the same time in 1871. In a letter just a few weeks later, she characterizes opponents as “dead as doornails” (see Barrick 1978) and alludes to the Bible proverb “Let the dead bury their dead” (Matthew 8:22), while at the same time stressing that she is full of vigor and hope that women will be enfranchised in due time:

How rapidly now the ball rolls on—it will henceforth go by its own momentum—almost— Still, not one of us can be excused from constant & earnest effort to help it forward— But how different the times now—then, ridicule & scorn for the few workers who dared to go forward— *now* honor & where there is genius and attraction in the person—profit and emolument—consequently now the strife on the part of the newly awakened, the enrolled workers—to push their way into prominence before the public—& to take the front seat of the public movement—it is pitiable to see—and yet it tokened well of the nearness of the attainment of our demand— (SBA, II, 399; Jan. 2, 1871)

Mrs. [Mary] Livermore, in her speech here in this city, said: “Some able lawyers have said”—not Victoria C. Woodhull had petitioned, and all Congress and the National Woman Suffrage Committee had chimed in with an amen—“that the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments enfranchised women; but she preferred the surer process of education to this short cut. She could afford to wait.” I wish I had the report. I sent it to the Revolution. But all of them are “dead as doornails” to this new and living gospel, and we live fellers must leave them to be buried by the dead. I have never in the whole twenty years’ good fight felt so full of life and hope. (SBA, II, 415; Feb. 4, 1871)

Following this line of thinking, Anthony also relied on the proverb “Three times and out” to marshal women into action for getting people to sign petitions to encourage the federal government to pass the sixteenth amendment. And in yet another letter, she calls on the proverb “In union (there) is strength” to add weight to her argument for a united effort on behalf of women, strengthening her argument even further by the two somatic proverbial phrases “To see eye to eye” and “To stand shoulder to shoulder”:

In three of the most hopeful States of the Union we have marshalled the intelligent, the broad, the just, the generous voters, and seen them out-voted by their opponents three to one, each time. And I now say with the old ad-

age, “three times and out,” and appeal to you and the friends everywhere to rally to the work of petitioning Congress for a 16th amendment. Help to roll up at least a million of signatures, that our Representatives and Senators at Washington may see that we Women Suffragists have a respectable constituency in every State, and one that Congressmen may not very long ignore with impunity. (SBA, III, 328; Oct. 14, 1877)

If all “the Suffragists” of all the States could but see eye to eye on this point, and stand shoulder to shoulder against any and every party and politician not fully and unequivocally committed to “Equal Rights for Woman,” we should, at once, become a balance of power that could not fail to compel the party of highest intelligence to proclaim Woman Suffrage the chief plank of its platform. “In union there is strength.” (SBA, III, 405-406; Aug. 9, 1878)

Major changes would have to be accomplished before this fight would be won, as Stanton had remarked at the beginning of the women’s rights movement: “I should be a jewel in an Association for they say I am good natured, generous, & always well & happy. Oh what bliss is yet in store for us. All our talk about womans [sic] rights is mere *moonshine*, so long as we are bound by the present social system” (ECS, I, 215; Dec. 6, 1852). Their talk, writings, and actions proved to be no moonshine, as the proverbial phrase would have it. In fact, while the suffrage movement started with the basics of equal rights, somewhat ironically expressed by way of the “a, b, c” phrase, the march progressed slowly but surely into a powerful demand for elevating women out of their bondage: “In petitioning Congress for an act of emancipation [of women], we began with the a, b, c. of human rights, and have thus made ourselves a power of freedom with the people and their representatives” (ECS, I, 519; May 7, 1864). And to indicate that she really meant business, Stanton declares that she could never wash her hands of the emancipation of women. By changing the proverbial phrase “To wash one’s hands of something” from the Bible (see Matthew 27:24) into the negative, she declares emphatically that she is in the fight to the end and that there is nothing that would turn her into a Pontius Pilatus!

Anything that is outward, all forms and ceremonies, faiths and symbols, policies and institutions, may be washed away, but that which is of the very being must stand forever. Nothing, nobody could abate the all-absorbing, agonizing interest I feel in the redemption of woman. I could not wash my hands of woman's rights, for they are dyed clear through to the marrow of the bone. (ECS, I, 436; July 12, 1860)

Perhaps not surprisingly, both Stanton and Anthony repeatedly drew on animal metaphors in the form of proverbs, proverbial expressions, and proverbial comparisons to strengthen their arguments against the inhumanity of treating women as second-class citizens or to show that women are perfectly capable to advance their cause by whatever means available to them. The following references may well serve as examples to show how such phraseologisms as "The rats are leaving the sinking ship", "As secretive as an oyster", "To play cat and mouse with someone", and "Every pig will burn its nose in the hot swill" helped them in bringing their points across with accessible folk speech:

I see your [Anna Dickinson] speech is not [in] *The New Republic*—is *not woman*—but only the *black man*—whom, as I told you they would—The republicans *have thrown overboard*— I tell you *Anna rats*—that is *female rats* ought to know enough to leave a sinking ship— I just told this to Mr. Train—he says you ought to write that *stinking ship*—he says with ten minutes talk he could convince you that *woman* is *your mission*. (SBA, II, 114; Nov. 28, 1867)

Who [sic] can we trust with anything. I begin to think our only safety is in living like oysters each within a shell of secrecy without human sympathy or confidence. Only think of that item going the rounds of the papers that I said in Maine that I was convinced that all Mrs [Victoria] Woodhull's statements were false. I said no such thing, but I did say the words she put in my mouth were wholly untrue. (ECS, II, 536; Nov. 19, 1872)

Mrs [Elizabeth] Harbert—to day—tells me of her plan to get out her "*New Era*["]—as a *Quarterly*!! and asks my

opinion—and I have “*sat down!*” on the prop[os]al *heavy*—telling her if any of us had money or brains to invest in the newspaper line—we ought to concentrate both upon the *one paper now in existence*— It does seem a *craze* to start papers— Mrs [Lillie] Blake writes as if she expected me personally to set about working for *The Question*— Well, “every pig will burn its nose in the hot swill.” (SBA, IV, 15-16; March 23, 1887)

But of special interest is what Susan B. Anthony does with the proverbial expression “To be a dog in the manger” that is part of an old fable tradition (Mieder 2011). It is a most fitting animal metaphor for human behavior that far too often is informed by envy, selfishness, and meanness. This figurative phrase is perfectly suited to express the inhumane disregard for the needs of others, and it served Anthony well to vent her frustration about people acting like a dog in the manger. Here are two references that include the phrase, with the first one adding the proverbial expressions “To be (get) between two millstones” and “To throw overboard” for good measure:

I'll tell you a little *private opinion* of mine— “I think the Bureaus are *real humbugs*”—that is, my dealings with them doesn't give me much faith— “The dog in the manger” principle—The “rule or ruin” idea is their basis of action— If there were a cooperative Bureau it might greatly help— But as now Boston against both New York & Brooklyn & they against each other—each & all trying to defeat the success of every lecturer in the hands of any but self—viz you see the poor things are ground to powder between the mill stones— I'll tell you what I've done *thrown* each & all overboard—until I see them in brighter light than now—I like my *own self—no business management* [sic] best— (SBA. II, 389; Dec. 23, 1870)

How I do wish it could be as in the olden time—that the *Ex. Committees* of the state & New England societies would be called together—& we all together study *how to press* on the good work— I have made no engagement for Monday the 4th—& if you [Caroline Dall] can see any way to help me to meet some of the *real workers*—

not “*dogs in the manger*” sort of people—I should love to see them— (SBA, III, 273; Nov. 24, 1876)

There were frustrations and obstacles enough, both human and pecuniary. But resignation simply was not an option for either Stanton or Anthony, even though the problem of raising money for the cause appeared insurmountable at times. In this regard, there is a fascinating use of the Biblical proverbial phrase “To adore (worship) the olden calf” (Exodus 32:4) by Stanton. In fact, she calls for a “golden calf” so that there would be money enough to support the ongoing feminist struggle. Upon careful reading of this paragraph, it should also be noted that “the sinews of war” is an allusion to the proverb “Money is the sinews of love and war”. Stanton’s audience would doubtlessly not have missed this mere “kernel” (Norrick 1985: 45) of the proverb.

I think we are making some progress, but it is a sore tax on human patience to be forty years going through this moral wilderness with no one to give us manna, & no pillar of light to lead the way, & no Moses in direct communication with the ruler of the universe[.] But all this could be endured if we only had a golden calf whose ears & tail & legs could be thrown into the United states [sic] mint by piecemeal to supply us with the sinews of war. But alas on the distant horizon we see no coming calf, to say nothing of rich women who will share their abundance with us instead of giving bequests to Harvard Yale & Princeton, to educate theological striplings for the ministry. (ECS, IV, 147; Jan. 29, 1882)

Despite being plagued by money worries, the two friends moved on, with Anthony frequently comparing their commitment to “herculean labor”, a proverbial phrase from classical mythology. The image of Hercules performing his many seemingly insurmountable tasks is a perfect fit since it implies that the suffragists will succeed with their work just as the strong Hercules did. Here is but one of several references to the “herculean labor”, this time, toward the waning years of their careers, linking the need of finding money to support the incredible work that was done by the early feminists:

I am perfectly willing to bequeath to the young women who are today taking up the suffrage work all of the labor, but I am not willing that they shall have to do the begging to pay for that work, which I have been compelled to do for the last fifty years. I verily believe that more than half of my spiritual, intellectual and physical strength has been expended in the anxiety over getting the money to pay for the Herculean work that has been done in our movement. The strain, of course, has not been so perfectly intense and immense as was your [Jane Stanford] strain while the suit against your estate was pending, but nevertheless it has been so great that I am not willing that the next generation of women shall be compelled to endure it. (SBA, VI, 211; April 25, 1898)

But Anthony never gave up, declaring in one of her letters proverbially: "I shall keep pegging away so long as there is any hope to making ends meet" (SBA, II, 421-422; March 5, 1871). In another letter she simply chose a proverb to declare that the fight must go on: "'Don't give up the Ship'—shall be our motto" (SBA, IV, 318; Dec. 15, 1883), and there is also this one-liner from 1886: "Well—the world jogs on slowly—*too slowly*—for me— Still it jogs!!" (SBA, IV, 495; March 16, 1886). Citing the proverb "Time flies", she had earlier characterized her ceaseless fight for women's right as "How time flies when head, heart & hands are full to brim with work— Who would have believed I should not have written you a line since the Kansas victory" (SBA, II, 121; Jan. 1, 1868).

Folk proverbs in the service of arguments for women's rights

Both Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony delivered innumerable speeches during the fifty years of their vigorous involvement in the women's rights movement. Especially between the years 1869 and 1881 they logged thousands of miles criss-crossing the country on their suffrage mission. They had signed up with various lyceum booking agencies that arranged their popular lecture tours that for twelve years gave them the opportunity to speak before local audiences with their speeches receiving even broader distribution by way of newspaper reports (Banner 1980: 110-111 and 121-124, Waggoner 1989: 31-32). As Ann D. Gordon signifies with her essay appropriately entitled "Taking

Possession of the Country" (1999), the two women on the lecture circuit were indeed taking a hold of the nation:

No reformers—indeed, no politicians—rivaled the miles logged by Stanton and Anthony as they crisscrossed the country in the decade after 1869 to take their case for woman suffrage to the people. Leaving home in October or November, with trunk, portmanteau, and several lectures ready for the season, they stayed on the road until spring. With their lives centered somewhere in the Midwest, they adapted to the discomforts of strange beds, dirt, sleeping on trains, and schedules that conceded nothing to ill health. When Anthony boarded the Michigan South Railroad one evening in Ohio, "there sat Mrs. Stanton all curled up—gray curls sticking out—fast asleep—." The travelers talked until the time came to change trains for their next destinations. [...] This was grueling work. As fast as the railroads extended their reach, Stanton and Anthony traveled new lines, reaching California just two years after the transcontinental line opened. Stanton lectured in Texas in 1870, and in 1871 Anthony toured the Pacific Northwest and went into British Columbia. At the termini of rail traffic, they hopped aboard sleighs, boats, stages, and horses to journey farther into the country. They made an enormous sweep across the continent and returned time and again to many towns throughout the decade. (Gordon 1999: 163-164)

The stamina of both women is beyond belief, with Stanton having born seven children to boot. While traveling, they would constantly edit their repertoire of lectures when tiredness would not keep them from working. At the foundation of their struggle lay the call for equal rights for women, an agenda that both women pursued with absolutism that bordered on fanaticism, arguing "that the rights and responsibilities of individual citizenship be granted to women on the same terms that they were granted to men, and [demanding] that state, church, and family adapt to that truth" (Ginzberg 2009: 193). They fought for equal rights by whatever means possible, with powerful words being their most effective weapon. They bombarded their listeners with facts, arguments,

and stories that also included humor, irony, satire, and cynicism. Their oratory could reach eloquent heights but also did not shy away from everyday “plain English and plenty of it” (see Sherr 1995: 132) characterized by their inclusion of folk speech in the form of proverbs and proverbial expressions. In fact, Stanton emphasized this need to use “plain English” in their communications on several occasions (see the index of proverbs and proverbial phrases). This stylistic feature has almost completely been ignored by the considerable scholarship on Stanton and Anthony, even though they frequently employ such designations as adage, axiom, maxim, motto, principle, proverb, saying, etc. to signal their intentional use of proverbial wisdom. Their proverbially informed rhetoric obviously meant something to them, and there is no doubt that it added much colloquial and metaphorical expressiveness to their speeches.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s speech on “Woman’s Rights”, considered by her to be her first full-fledged public speech, was delivered several times in September and October of 1848 after the successful Woman’s Rights Convention held from July 19-20, 1848, at Seneca Falls, New York (see Wellman 2004). It was her manifesto regarding women’s rights, and to be sure, it is replete with proverbial language that set the tone for the dozens of speeches that were to follow. The following paragraphs speak for themselves, but their arguments are most certainly strengthened by the enclosed proverbs and proverbial expressions (here cited for easy identification before Stanton’s statements):

Give an inch, take an ell.

Let us now consider man’s claims to physical superiority. Methinks I hear some say, surely you will not contend for equality here. Yes, we must not give an inch lest you claim an ell, we cannot accord to man even this much and he has no right to claim it until the fact be fully demonstrated, until the physical education of the boy and the girl shall have been the same for many years. If you claim the advantage of size merely, why it may be that under any course of training in ever so perfect a developement [sic] of the physique in woman, man might still be the larger of the two, tho’ we do not grant even this. (ECS, I, 101; Sept. ?, 1848)

Rights and wrongs.

We, the women of this state have met in convention within the last few months both in Rochester and Seneca Falls to discuss our rights and wrongs. (ECS, I, 103; Sept. ?, 1848)

No just government can be formed without the consent of the governed.

We [women] ourselves are thrust out from all the rights that belong to citizens—it is too grossly insulting to the dignity of woman to be longer quietly submitted to. The right [to vote] is ours, have it we must—use it we will. The pens, the tongues, the fortunes, the indomitable wills of many women are already pledged to secure this right. The great truth that no just government can be formed without the consent of the governed, we shall echo and re-echo in the ears of the unjust judge until by continual coming we shall weary him. (ECS, I, 105; Sept. ?, 1848)

To set the wolf to keep (care for) the sheep (lamb).

In nothing is woman's true happiness consulted, men like to call her an angel—to feed her with what they think sweet food nourishing her vanity, to induce her to believe her organization is so much finer [and] more delicate than theirs, that she is not fitted to struggle with the tempests of public life but needs their care and protection. Care and protection? such as the wolf gives the lamb—such as the eagle the hare he carries to his eyrie [i.e., aerie]. Most cunningly he entraps her and then takes from her all those rights which are dearer to him than life itself, rights which have been baptized in blood and the maintenance of which is even now rocking to their foundations the kingdoms of the old world. (ESC, I, 106; Sept. ?, 1848)

Woman is the weaker vessel. (1 Peter 3:7)

I think a man who under the present state of things has the moral hardihood to take an education at the hands of woman and at such an expense to her, ought as soon as he graduates with all his honours thick upon him take the

first ship for Turkey and there pass his days in earnest efforts to rouse the inmates of the Harems to a true sense of their present debasement and not as is his custom immediately enter our pulpits to tell us of his superiority to us "weaker vessels" his prerogative to command, ours to obey—his duty to preach, ours to keep silence. (ECS, I, 109; Sept. ?, 1848)

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (golden rule). (Matthew 7:12)

Oh! for the generous promptings of the days of chivalry—oh! for the poetry of romantic gallantry,—may they shine on us once more—then may we hope that these pious young men who profess to believe in the golden rule, will clothe and educate themselves and encourage poor weak woman to do the same for herself—or perchance they might conceive the happy thought of reciprocating the benefits so long enjoyed by them and form societies for the education of young women of genius whose talents ought to be rescued from the oblivion of ignorance. (ECS, I, 109; Sept. ?, 1848)

Judge not from appearances.

Many men who are well known for their philanthropy, who hate oppression on a southern plantation, can play the tyrant right well at home. It is a much easier matter to denounce all the crying sins of the day most eloquently too, than to endure for one hour the peevish moanings of a sick child. To know whether a man is truly great and good, you must not judge by his appearance in the great world, but follow him to his home—where all restraints are laid aside—there we see the true man his virtues and his vices too. (ECS, I, 111; Sept. ?, 1848)

To be hen-pecked.

On the other hand we find the so called Hen-pecked Husband, oftentimes [sic] a kind generous noble minded man who hates contention and is willing to do anything for peace. He having unwarily caught a Tarter [sic] tries to make the best of her. He can think his own thoughts and tell them too when he feels quite sure that she is not

at hand,— he can absent himself from home as much as possible, but he does not feel like a free man. (ECS, I, 111; Sept. ?, 1848)

To pull a string.

There seems now to be a kind of moral stagnation in our midst. Philanthropists have pulled every string. War, slavery, drunkenness [*sic*], licentiousness and gluttony have been dragged naked before the people and all their abominations fully brought to light. Yet with idiotic laugh we hug these monsters to our arms and rush on. Our churches are multiplying on all sides, our Sunday schools and prayer meetings are still kept up, our missionary and tract societies have long laboured and now the labourers begin to faint—they feel they cannot resist this rushing tide of vice, they feel that the battlements of righteousness are weak against the mighty wicked, most are ready to raise the siege. (ECS, I, 114; Sept. ?, 1848)

Body and (or) soul.

To throw to the wind(s).

The earth has never yet seen a truly great and virtuous nation, for woman has never yet stood the equal with man. As with nations so with families. It is the wise mother who has the wise son, and it requires but little thought to decide that as long as the women of this nation remain but half developed in mind and body, so long shall we have a succession of men decrepit in body and soul, so long as your women are mere slaves, you may throw your colleges to the wind, there is no material to work upon, it is in vain to look for silver and gold from mines of copper and brass. (ECS, I, 114; Sept. ?, 1848)

The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. (Exodus 20:5)

How seldom now is the Fathers [*sic*] pride gratified, his fond hopes realized in the budding genius of the son—the wife is degraded—made the mere creature of his caprice and now the foolish son is heaviness to his heart. Truly are the sins of the Fathers visited upon the chil-

dren. God in his wisdom has so linked together the whole human family that any violence done at one end of the chain is felt throughout its length. (ECS, I, 114-115; Sept. ?, 1848)

These twelve folk and Bible proverbs, proverbial expressions and twin formulas appear on twenty-two pages of text (ECS, I, 95-116) and add up to about one phraseological unit per two pages. Anthony's speeches in comparison are less proverbial, but she too relies on metaphorical folk speech, as can be seen from her important speech "Is It a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?" that she delivered on January 16, 1873, at Washington, D.C. In this politically charged speech she cites a number of revolutionary quotations turned proverbs, but, as Stanton did, she also knows how to make effective use of the proverbial expression "To throw to the winds" in the first paragraph of the address:

To throw to the wind(s).

Our democratic-republican government is based on the idea of the natural right of every individual member thereof to a voice and a vote in making and executing the laws. We assert the province of government to be to secure the people in the enjoyment of their inalienable rights. We throw to the winds the old dogma that government can give rights. No one denies that before governments were organized each individual possessed the right to protect his own life, liberty and property. When 100 to 1,000,000 people enter into a free government, they do not barter away their natural rights; they simply pledge themselves to protect each other in the enjoyment of them through prescribed judicial and legislative tribunals. They agree to abandon the methods of brute force in the adjustment of their differences and adopt those of civilization. (SBA, II, 554; January 16, 1873)

All men are created equal.

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

No just government can be formed without the consent of the governed.

Nor can you find a word in any of the grand documents left us by the fathers that assumes *for government the*

power to create or confer rights. The Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the constitutions of the several states, and the organic laws of the territories, all alike, propose to *protect* the people in the exercise of their God-given rights; not one of them pretends to *bestow* rights.

All men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to *secure these*, governments are instituted among men, deriving their *just powers* from *the consent of the governed.* (SBA, II, 554-555; Jan. 16, 1873)

Taxation without representation is tyranny.

One-half of the people of this nation, to-day, are utterly powerless to blot from the statute-books an *unjust* law, or write there a *new and just one.* The *women*, dissatisfied as they are with *this* form of government that enforces “taxation without representation”—that compels them to obey laws to which they have never given their consent—that imprisons and hangs them without a trial by a jury of their peers—that robs them, in *marriage*, of the custody of their own persons, wages, and children, are—this half of the people—left wholly at the mercy of the other half, in direct violation of the spirit and letter of the declarations of the framers of this government, every one of which was based on the immutable principles of “*equal rights to all.*” (SBA, II, 555; Jan. 16, 1873)

To not give (change, yield) an iota.

Miss Sarah E. Wall, of Worcester, Mass., twenty years ago, took this position [of not paying taxes]. For several years the officers of the law distrained [*sic*] her property and sold it to meet the necessary amount; still she persisted, and would not yield an iota, though every foot of her lands should be struck off under the hammer. And now, for several years the assessor has left her name off the tax-list, and the collector passed her by without a call. (SBA, II, 561; Jan. 16, 1873)

A rose would smell just as sweet by any other name.

There is an old saying that “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” And I submit if the deprivation by law of the right of ownership of one’s own person, wages, property, children; the denial of the right of an individual to sue and be sued in the courts is not a condition of servitude most bitter and absolute, though under the sacred name of marriage. (SBA, II, 571; Jan. 16, 1873)

This speech is also about twenty-two pages long, but it includes only seven phraseologisms or about one per every three pages. This discrepancy between the frequency of proverb use is found throughout the speeches and writings of both women, with Stanton clearly being more proverbial than her friend.

This is not to say that Susan B. Anthony shied away from folk proverbs when they could clearly strengthen an observation or argument. At times they might not immediately be obvious, since she integrates them into the syntax of her sentences, to wit the expansion of the proverb “Money is power” in her description of constant financial woes: “Money being the vital power of all movements—the wood and water of the engine—and, as our work through the past winter has been limited only by the want of it, there is no difficulty in reporting on finance” (SBA, II, 61; May 9, 1867). This free use of supposedly fixed proverbs can also be seen in her break-up of the structure of the proverb “The last straw breaks the camel’s back” in a couple of letters where she replaces the standard “straw” by “ounce” to boot:

How I wish you [Rachel Foster] were made of *iron*—so you couldn’t tire out—I fear all the time—you will put on that *added ounce* [straw]—that breaks even the Camel’s back— You understand *just how* to make agitation—& that is the *secret* of successful work— (SBA, IV, 163; April 5, 1882)

The palm which the University [of Rochester] women sent is flourishing finely. I am glad they selected a palm, because it is a lasting reminder of that day when you [Fannie Bigelow] took me the rounds to get the money and pledges that proved the open sessame [*sic*] to the University. I shall never regret that day’s labor. It was

the added ounce [straw] that broke the camel's back in more senses than one. In the largest sense, the back of the superstition, bigotry, and selfishness that held those old doors shut tight against the women. (SBA, VI, 389; March 8, 1901)

Of course, she also cites proverbs in their traditional wording as she recalls having heard and learned them in her younger years:

I told them, when I arrived there [in Kansas], that I had been told in my youth that two wrongs will not make a right, and Kansas politicians were, to-day, trying to teach their people that two rights would make a wrong. These very men, who would cast their votes for enfranchising the black man, said that enfranchising the woman would be ruinous—that it would kill negro suffrage, and be an unjust thing. They were trying to prove that it would not be politically expedient to vote for woman's suffrage or advocate it in the State. (SBA, II, 106; Nov. 25, 1867)

Again and again Anthony relies on proverbs to argue the point that the women's rights movement must work to get the Congress of the United States to adopt a constitutional amendment. There is no use in working outside of the established political system, and if women were not to pursue this road, then other pressure groups would dominate Congress with their agendas. All of this is splendidly summarized with the proverb "Nature abhors a vacuum" that dates back to classical Latin times:

Our organization is for the purpose of working upon Congress to enfranchise half of the people and it is something we cannot secure in any other way but through Congress, and I believe in continuity. Nature abhors a vacuum and if this National Association deserts Washington some other body will come in and possess Washington and do the work. (SBA, V. 504; Jan. 16, 1893)

With her incredible enthusiasm and optimism for the cause of the right of women to vote, she is simply unwilling to accept setbacks or actual defeat. And folk wisdom like "A word to the

wise is sufficient" and "It is an ill wind that blows nobody good" is of good help in rationalizing political disappointments:

A word to the wise is sufficient. Let every Kansas man who wants the suffrage amendment carried demand full and hearty endorsement of the measure by his political party—be it Democratic, Republican, People's or Prohibition—so that Kansas shall win as did her neighbor state, Colorado. (SBA, V, 608; May 4, 1894)

I [SBA] am not so disappointed in the result with the Constitution Convention as I might be. It is an ill-wind that blows nobody good. This is not a Waterloo, but a Bunker Hill defeat. It only means that we will take a breath, renew and double our forces and renew our attack. Had the Constitution Convention consented to submit the question of woman suffrage to the voters this fall, I doubt if we could have carried our point. The people at large are not educated up to it, and we should have had insufficient time to have enlightened them. (SBA, V, 646; Aug. 22, 1894)

At all times Anthony remained focused on securing the ballot for women, arguing that in a way all women organizations had this right to vote as their ultimate goal. And it is certainly understandable that both Anthony and Stanton tired of the constitutional arguments that were ceaselessly leveled against granting women the right to vote. Thus in 1860 Stanton employed the three proverbial expressions "To sit on the fence", "To hang like (have) a millstone around one's neck", and "To sink or swim" in a powerful and satirical paragraph stating that women should free themselves from their subjugation by men (see Campbell 1989a: I, 101):

The Great Father has endowed all his creatures with the necessary powers for self-support, self-defence and protection. We do not ask man to represent us, it is hard enough in times like these for man to carry back-bone enough to represent himself. So long as the mass of men spend most of their time on the fence, not knowing which way to jump, they are surely in no condition to tell us [women] where we had better stand. In pity for

man, we would no longer hang like a millstone round his neck. Undo what man did for us in the dark ages, and strike out all special legislation for us; strike out the name, *woman*, from all your constitutions, and then, with fair sailing, let us sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish together. (ECS, March 20, 1860; cited from Campbell 1989a: I, 183)

Little wonder that a few months later Stanton in a moment of utter frustration turned to the utterly appropriate proverb “A burnt child dreads the fire” to vent her dismay:

I am actually nauseated with the word constitution[.] It is used as a cover for such base fraud & hypocrisy [*sic*]. I remember [Seymour Boughton] Treadwell, witnessed his vain efforts to get up meetings in Boston & have been bored with him by the hour. My soul has literally groaned under constitutional logic so long that I dread the subject as a “burnt child does the fire.” (ECS, I, 471; Dec. 16, 1860)

But here are two more telling examples of how Stanton never tires of finding popular phrases from folk speech to supplement her arguments with ever different metaphors. Her listeners must have been thrilled to hear her utter such proverbial expressions as “To pluck a goose” or proverbs like “Two dogs over one bone seldom agree” since such animal metaphors made her spirited lectures come alive with everyday imagery:

We find everywhere the radical trouble that our legislators do not intelligently attend to their proper work. In theory, their business is to take care of the whole community. In practice, to a great extent, their business is to take care for themselves and their party—terms which to a politician generally mean the same thing. We see, continually, our Congress and our Legislatures slighting the gravest public interests, and devoting themselves to squabbles in which the people is only the goose to be plucked. And the plucking is not the worst the goose has to suffer. What we complain of is, not chiefly that these gentlemen at Washington and Albany and Harrisburg and elsewhere, make us pay so heavily for their Ser-

vices. It is that we get so little in return. (ECS, II, 633; Aug. ?, 1873)

There is no danger that women will corrupt politics or that politics will corrupt them. But when the women vote they will be pretty sure to demand better and cleanlier [*sic*] places for voting. Law should be a holy thing and the ballot box the holy of holies. It is claimed that the ballot for women will divide the family, or merely duplicate the voting. But it produces unpleasantness in the family now. Give two dogs a bone and they will fight over it. But give them two bones and there is peace immediately. Woman would not be so bothered and perplexed over the finance question as men are. (ECS, III, 83; May 30, 1874)

And yet, as her friend Anthony, she is not only concerned about women's rights. As a mother, she is especially interested in the proper upbringing of children. Thus, citing the proverb "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rocks the world" as folk wisdom regarding the importance of women in child raising, she wrote:

In common parlance we have much fine-spun theorizing on the exalted office of the mother, her immense influence in moulding the character of her sons; "the hand that rocks the cradle moves the world," etc, but in creeds and codes, in constitutions and Scriptures, in prose and verse, we do not see these lofty paeans recorded or verified in living facts. As a class, women were treated among the Jews as an inferior order of beings, just as they are to-day in all civilized nations. And now, as then, men claim to be guided by the will of God. (ECS, *Woman's Bible*, 1895, I: 102)

Ten years later, Anthony followed suit in a satirical comment during an interview, stressing that mothers do not have absolute control over what becomes of their boys once they leave the cradle, become young men, and come under the influence of misguided males that prove to be bad role models:

What does Grover Cleveland know about “sanctity of the home” and “woman’s sphere,” I should like to know? Why isn’t the woman herself the best judge of what woman’s sphere should be? The men have been trying to tell us for years. We have no desire to vote if the men would do their duty. Why are not the laws enforced in regard to saloons, gambling places and houses of ill repute? The women want a chance to see what they can do in making present laws effective. Mr. Cleveland remarks that the “hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world.” That would be all right if you could keep the boys in the cradle always. (SBA, VI, 549; April 25, 1905)

But to return to Stanton and switch from boys to girls, one of her most successful lectures that she delivered many times on her speaking tours was “Our Girls” with plenty of advice for keeping young women in good health. Even though she does not cite the two proverbs “Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise” (see Gallacher 1949; Barbour 1974: 12; Mieder 1993: 98-134) and “A healthy mind in a healthy body” directly in the following excerpts from that speech, there can be no doubt that her listeners recognized their wisdom:

The coming girl is to be healthy, wealthy, and wise . She is to hold an equal place with her brother in the world of work, in the colleges, in the state, the church and the home. Her sphere is to be no longer bounded by the prejudices of a dead past, but by her capacity to go wherever she can stand. The coming girl is to be an independent, self-supporting being, not as to-day a helpless victim of fashion, superstition, and absurd conventionalisms. (ECS, III, 489; winter 1880)

The coming girl is to have health. One of the first needs for every girl who is to be trained for some life work, some trade or profession, is good health. As a sound body is the first step towards a sound mind, food, clothes, exercise, all the conditions of daily life, are important in training girls either for high scholarship, or practical work. Hence, girls, in all your gettings get

health, it is the foundation of success in every undertaking. Sick men and women always take sickly views of everything and fail in the very hour they are most needed. One of the essential elements of health is freedom of thought and action, a right to individual life, opinion, ambition. (ECS, III, 492; winter 1880)

But there is a third proverb of great interest in this speech that Stanton identifies as a German proverb but that is not to be found in the standard German proverb dictionaries (see Wander 1867-1880). Obviously Stanton must have heard it from someone, perhaps not a German at all. But it also does not appear in proverb collections of other nationalities. Just the same, it states an incredibly important truth about the subjugation of women throughout history. Of course, typical for Stanton, she points out that this miserable state of affairs will surely change with better educated women ever more gaining on men in all fields of endeavor (the proverb is mentioned in Waggenspack 1989: 79):

An old German proverb says that every girl is born into the world with a stone on her head. This is just as true now as the day it was first uttered. Your creeds, codes, and conventionalisms have indeed fallen with crushing weight on the head of woman in all ages, but nature is mightier than law and custom, and in spite of the stone on her head, behold her to-day close upon the heels of man in the whole world of thought, in art, science, literature and government. (ECS, III, 504; winter 1880)

A Google search revealed one more reference that includes a slight variant of the proverb, once again identifying it as a German proverb. Stanton cited it in an earlier version of her "Our Girls" speech on January 23, 1869, at Sacramento, California, with parts of her lecture being reported three weeks later in the *Sacramento Daily Union*: "'Every woman is born into the world with a stone on her head,' says a German proverb" (February 16, 1869, vol. 36, no. 5582). But again, those are the only two occurrences of this "proverb", and it has yet to be located as such in any collection.

One thing is for certain, whatever cause Stanton might be championing, proverbs as rhetorical metaphors with the wisdom

of generations behind them are bound to come into play. When she expresses her disappointment with the way reconstruction is handled after the Civil War, she quickly adapts the proverb “Charity begins at home” to “Reconstruction begins at home”, and when she presses the state of New York to push for universal suffrage as part of the reconstruction effort the proverb “Example is better than precept” is well chosen to argue for serious action:

Reconstruction [Charity] begins at home. The President [Andrew Johnson] of the United States, in his veto of the District of Columbia Suffrage bill, says: “It hardly seems consistent with the principles of right and justice for Representatives from States where the colored man is denied the right of suffrage, or holds it on property or educational qualifications, to press on the people of the District an experiment their own constituents have thus far been unwilling to try for themselves.” (ECS, II, 25; Feb. 19, 1867)

Is there anything more rasping to a proud spirit than to be rebuked for short comings by those who are themselves guilty of the grossest violations of right and justice? Does the North consider it absurd for its women to vote and hold office? So views the South her negroes. Does the North consider its women a part of the family to be represented by the white male citizen? So views the South her negroes. Example is better than precept. Would New-York, now that she has the opportunity to amend her own Constitution, take the lead by making herself a genuine Republic, with what a new and added power our representatives could press universal suffrage on the Southern states. The work of this hour is a broader one than the reconstruction of the Rebel States! It is the lifting of the entire nation into higher ideas of right and justice. It is the realization of what the world has never yet seen, a genuine Republic. (ECS, II, 26; Feb. 19, 1867)

These are serious issues, but the main drive for Stanton as for Anthony is women’s suffrage, and whoever joined the cause was advised not to do so half-heartedly since any procrastination or

unnecessary delay would be, proverbially speaking, dangerous to the cause: "The men and women who are dabbling with the suffrage movement for women should be at once therefore and emphatically warned that what they mean logically if not consciously in all they say, is next social equality and next Freedom or in a word Free Love, and if they wish to get out of the boat they should for safety get out now, for delays are dangerous" (ECS, II, 396; c. 1871). In the long run, it is not surprising that Stanton also turned to the fourteenth-century proverb "Might makes right" (Mieder et al. 1992: 410) to characterize men's willful dominance over women. When she used it for the first time, she integrated it syntactically in such a way that the normal structure of the proverb was lost, but her listeners will probably have recognized the proverb. The second time she introduced the proverb by calling it a "principle" with the intent of getting her audience to see the evil of this attitude:

As I read history old and new the subjection of woman may be clearly traced to the same cause that subjugated different races and nations to one another, the law of force, that made might right, and the weak the slaves of the strong. Men mistake all the time their reverence for an ideal womanhood, for a sense of justice towards the actual being, that shares with them the toils of life. Man's love and tenderness to one particular woman for a time is no criterion for his general feeling for the whole sex for all time. The same man that would die for one woman, would make an annual holocaust of others, if his appetites or pecuniary interests required it. Kind husbands and Fathers [*sic*] that would tax every nerve and muscle to the uttermost to give their wives and daughters every luxury, would grind multitudes of women to powder in the world of work for the same purpose. (ECS, II, 626-627; Aug. ?, 1873)

Society at large, based on the principle that might makes right has in a measure excluded women from the profitable industries of the world, and where she has gained a foothold her labor is at a discount. Man occupies the ground and holds the key to the situation. As employer, he plays off the cheap labor of a disfranchised class

against the employee, and thus in a measure undermines his independence, making wife and sister in the world of work the rivals of husband and father. (ECS, V, 366; Feb. 26, 1891)

And finally, befitting an optimistic sociopolitical reformer, there is Stanton's allusion to the proverb "Hope springs eternal" in her remarkable speech on "The Pleasures of Age" on her seventieth birthday on November 12, 1885. Arguing that the hopeful building of proverbial castles in the air is better left to young people (see Gallacher 1963), she maintains that the older generation is justified in being hopeful because of the positive social changes that have taken place:

The young have no youthful memories with which to gild their lives, none of the pleasures of retrospection. Neither has youth a monopoly of the illusions of hope, for that is eternal, to the end we have something still to hope. And here age has the advantage in basing its hopes on something rational and attainable. Instead of building castles in the air we clear off the mortgages from our earthly habitations. Instead of waiting for the winds of good fortune to waft us to elysian fields and heights sublime, we plant and gather our own harvests and climb step by step on ladders of our own making. After many experiences on life's tempestuous seas we learn to use the chart and compass, to take soundings, to measure distances, to shun the dangerous coasts, to prepare for winds and weather, to reef our sails, and when it is wise to stay in safe harbor. From experience we understand the situation, we have a knowledge of human nature, we learn how to control ourselves, to manage children with tenderness, servants with consideration, and our equals with proper respect. Years bring wisdom and charity, pity, rather than criticism, sympathy, rather than condemnation, for the most unfortunate. (ESC, IV, 456-457; Nov. 12, 1885)

Lest it be missed, this statement by the grand lady of women's rights concludes with yet another proverb. "Years bring wisdom" is certainly a truism that fits both Elizabeth Cady Stanton and

Susan B. Anthony as wise champions for women, with their rhetorical use of folk proverbs serving them well to bring their message across to women and men as well.

Proverbial quotations in pointed sociopolitical writings

There is no doubt that the articles and letters to the editor by both Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony are less inspired by natural folk speech than their personal letters and speeches. Apparently they felt that the written word needed to be less colloquial and more intellectual for the reading public. This is particularly true for Anthony, who in comparison to Stanton is less proverbial in all of her writings and speeches. This is not to say that their published missives do not include proverbial metaphors, to wit the aggressive use of the proverbial expression “To throw down the glove”, the Biblical phrases “Fire and brimstone” (Genesis 19:24, Psalms 11:6), “To be a wolf in sheep’s clothing” (Matthew 7:15), and the somatic phrase “To point a finger at someone” by Stanton:

We throw down the glove to any one who will meet us, in fair argument, on the great question of Woman’s Rights. Depend upon it, this soon will be the question of the day. All other reforms, however important they may be, cannot so deeply affect the interests of humanity, as this one. Let it therefore be fairly and candidly met. Ridicule will not have any effect on those who seriously feel themselves aggrieved; argument is far better. (ECS, I, 88; July 23, 1848)

Our petitions will be sent to every county in the State, and we hope that they will find at least ten righteous women to circulate them. But should there be any county so benighted that a petition cannot be circulated throughout its length and breadth, giving to every man and woman an opportunity to sign their names, then we pray, not that “God will send down fire and brimstone upon it,” but that the “Napoleons” of this movement will flood it with Women’s Rights tracts and missionaries. (ESC, I, 288; Dec. 11, 1854)

You who have ridiculed your mothers, wives and sisters since you first began to put pen to paper, talk not of “filial

irreverence.” This is but a beginning, gentlemen. If you do not wish us to paint you wolves, get you into lambs’ clothing as quickly as possible. It is our right, our duty, to condemn what is false and cruel wherever we find it. A Christian charity should make me as merciful towards my enemy as my bosom friend; and righteousness would rebuke sin in either. (ESC, I, 298; Feb. ?, 1855)

Many a man who now wraps the mantle of complacency about himself, and points the slow unwavering finger of scorn at this maligned and persecuted woman, will perchance find her purer, nobler than himself, in that better land where all arts and disguises are removed, and each soul stands revealed in its true character. (ECS, II, 437; Aug. 10, 1871)

To be sure, the women’s struggle had its ups and downs, as can well be seen from two proverbial expressions that Stanton employs in her article on “The Boston Woman’s Suffrage Convention” that appeared on November 12, 1868, in the *Revolution*. There she laments the fact that, proverbially speaking, “like the milkmaid in the fable, our visions of glory were all suddenly dashed to the ground” (ESC, II, 186; Nov. 12, 1868), i.e., they counted their chickens before they were hatched just as the milkmaid did as she thought of the money that she would get for the milk before spilling it all (see Röhrich 1991-1992: II, 1034). But then, just a couple paragraphs further, she is happy to report that at least some “women have seized the bull by the horns, registered their names, gone to the polls and voted” (ESC, II, 186; Nov. 12, 1868). Such proverbial descriptions did not only entertain her readers but their folksy character might well have given them pause to reflect on their colorful message.

And here are two examples from a published letter to the editor by Anthony, employing the proverbial phrase “To put one’s shoulder to the wheel”, an interesting nominalization of “To cut through the red tape”, and an allusion to the Biblical phrase “To see the mote in someone else’s eye and fail to see the beam in one’s own eye. (Matthew 7:3):

Let all, then, come up to New York on the 10th of May,
and let us all put shoulder to the great wheel and push on

to victory now—most emphatically “*Woman's hour*.”
Let there be no laggards—no sticklers for red tapeism—
but all stick together. (SBA, II, 316-317; April 7, 1870)

And it is a shame—it is a *crime*—for any of the old or new *public* workers to halt by the way to pick the “*motes*” out of their neighbors’ eyes. Not one of us, of course, but has blundered; but if only we are *each in earnest*, we shall each forgive, in the faith that that other, like ourself, is earnest—*means right*. How any one can stand in the way of a *united national organization* at an hour like this, is wholly inexplicable. (SBA, II, 317; April 7, 1870)

Stanton even used the traditional proverb “A place for everything, and everything in its place” (ESC, I, 172; Sept. ?, 1850; see Taylor 1975: 129-132) as a motto for her article on “Housekeeping”. As would be expected, she offers loads of advice to women, bringing to mind the modern self-help publications that often include didactic proverbs (see Eret 2001; Dolby 2005: 135-146). But here is Stanton’s conclusion on good housekeeping for women of her time:

Poor Barbary [unidentified person]! she accomplished so little and yet she was so tired when night came. I once ventured to say to her, that she might save a great deal of time and many steps if she would have a place for everything. She promptly replied, “I have no time to be orderly.” I saw by her manner, that Barbary was not prepared to take any suggestions, so I pitied her in silence. But to you who read about Barbary, let me say: have one place for every thing, and train your household to put things in their proper places. Then husband, children and servants can all wait on themselves. In an orderly house a child five years old can tell where every thing is. If you would save time and labor cultivate order. (ECS, I, 173-174; Sept. ?, 1850)

The “place”-proverb obviously was known to every reader, assuring an effective communication by way of traditional wisdom.

Classical phrases and proverbial quotations in published essays

Both Stanton and Anthony assumed a much more educated cultural literacy from their readers. Thus Stanton delights to cite proverbs and proverbial expressions that go back to classical times and mythology, as for example the mere allusion to “Nero fiddles while Rome burns” and “Pandora’s box” (see Hirsch et al. 2002: 40 and 211; Mieder 2013a: 139-148):

Why do not you Boston women galvanize Mr [William Lloyd] Garrison into something higher & better than an admirer & adulterer of Abraham [Lincoln] with the foul serpent of slavery coiled up in his bosom. I say [Benjamin Franklin] Butler or [John Charles] Fremont or some man on their platform for the next President & let Abe finish up his jokes in Springfield. We have had enough of “Nero fiddling in Rome” in times like these, when the nation groans in sorrow, & mothers mourn for their first born. (ECS, I, 514-515; April 22, 1864)

The day is breaking; it is something to know that life’s ills are not showered upon us by the Good Father from a kind of Pandora’s box, but that it is His will that joy and peace should be ours. By a knowledge and observance of His laws the road to health and happiness opens before us, and Paradise will be regained on earth. (ECS, II, 352; May 17, 1870)

Susan B. Anthony’s repertoire of proverbial quotations also includes phrases that go back to classical times, notably her predilection towards the proverb “Caesar’s wife must be free from suspicion”. In the first of two references, she only alludes to it, assuming that her readers will make the connection. But in both paragraphs she argues, of course, against the so-called wisdom of the proverb that not only sets up more rigid rules for women but also enables men to control them. In other words, the proverb appears to condone a double moral standard, with the expectations for women’s morality being much higher than for men:

Woman’s subsistence is in the hands of man, and most arbitrarily and unjustly does he exercise his consequent power, making two moral codes: one for himself, with the largest latitude—swearing, chewing, smoking, drink-

ing, gambling, libertinism, all winked at—cash and brains giving him a free pass everywhere; another quite unlike this for woman—she must be immaculate. One hair's breadth deviation, even the touch of the hem of the garment of an *accused* sister, dooms her to the world's scorn. Man demands that his [Caesar's] wife shall be above suspicion. Woman must accept her husband as he is, for she is powerless so long as she eats the bread of dependence. Were man today dependent upon woman for his subsistence, I have no doubt he would very soon find himself compelled to square his life to an entirely new code, not a whit less severe than that to which he now holds her. In moral rectitude, we would not have woman less but man more. (SBA, May ?, 1870; cited from Harper 1898-1908: I, 385)

We do not want favoritism. What we want is justice. We do not ask that women who commit crimes shall go scot free. The rule is women are punished more surely and more truly for some offenses than men are. You know there are two moral codes, one code for man which allows not only freedom but license in what is called the pet vices, but there is another and a higher code for woman. She must not only be spotless but like Caesar's wife above suspicion. Put the ballot in the hands of woman to-day and you will see that the laws will be executed, and the woman who violates them will be punished equally with the man. She will hold man to as high a moral standard as he now holds her. (SBA, IV, 184-185; Oct. 13, 1882)

But speaking of morality, it is of special interest how Anthony interprets Archimedes' famous utterance "Give me a fulcrum, and I shall move the world" that has also been translated as "Give me but one firm spot on which to stand, and I will move the earth" and exists in additional variants today (Shapiro 2006: 24). The first reference is included in Anthony's major address on "Social Purity" that she delivered on April 12, 1875, at St. Louis. Using Archimedes' claim she argues that if men would only give women the right to vote, they would surely improve society:

She [SBA] protested against women occupying themselves so much in homes for the friendless, asylums, hospitals and other charitable associations. It is women's dependence and subjection that produces the evils which these institutions are established to meet, and it is for emancipation that women should work. If the ballot was in their hands they could easily compel an enforcement of the laws against liquor selling on Sunday, etc. Give woman the ballot for a fulcrum, and she will move the moral world. (SBA, III, 168; April 12, 1875)

The *Repub's* know or feel sure that nearly every individual woman of us will do all we can to help them—whether they do, or don't, help us—or promise to help us—thus you [Elizabeth Harbert] see, while our women will thus allow themselves to be used by and for the Party—while it ignores our just claims—we have no fulcrum on which to plant our lever— So we must go on—like the boy—trying, in vain, to lift our movement by the straps of its boots, into political recognition— I see no chance for us—at present— (SBA, III, 475; Oct. 12, 1879)

This second reference is from a letter of October 12, 1879, this time using part of Archimedes' proverbial quotation to stress that women basically lack the political basis to affect social change. However, by adding the proverbial expression “To pull oneself up by one's bootstraps” from folk speech to it (see Zimmer 2005), she emphasizes that women will without doubt continue their struggle for equality.

As would be expected from two brilliant women of the nineteenth century, they are well versed in proverbial quotations from various literary sources, using them with much agility to advance their various messages. Thus Anthony took William Shakespeare's proverbial line “Every inch a king” from his *King Lear* and changed it to “Every inch a woman” to pay a compliment to Prof. Kate Stephens in a letter to her brother Daniel Anthony of May 11, 1883:

But we did make an excursion to Potsdam—a jolly company of us, Mr. and Mrs. [Aaron and Ellen] Sargent and

their gifted daughter, Ella, also the professor of Greek in your Kansas State University at Lawrence, Miss Kate Stephens. I remembered the fact of her appointment four or five years ago, but had never seen her. She is “every inch a woman,” dignified, easy, graceful, not a bit pedantic, and yet intelligent on every question, imparting information readily, speaking German like a native Dutchman, and interpreting the rapid utterances of the ever-present guide, for the edification of those of us to whom their jabber was worse than “Greek.” (SBA, IV, 233; May 11, 1883)

And Stanton employs Shakespeare's rather non-descript but proverbial “There's the rub” from his *Hamlet* to state that men and above all legislators in England and elsewhere are against enfranchising married women in particular because of not wanting an equal in their homes:

Some of the women in the suffrage movement there [in England] see all this, and have made an active opposition to such half-measures, but the majority are blinded and cajoled by the special pleading of their friends in the House of Commons. Yet it is both pitiful and amusing to see that with all their care to keep the “spinsters” uppermost in the minds of their legislators, that whenever the bill comes up for debate the discussion always turns on the effect the enfranchisement of married women will have on the family. There's the rub. “Men hate,” as John Stuart Mill says, “to have a recognized equal at their own fireside.” (ECS, IV, 389; Jan. ?, 1885)

But Stanton also quotes from other literature, to wit “Self-preservation is the first law of nature” from John Donne (see his “Biathanatos” 1608; Mieder et al. 1992: 531, Shapiro 2006: 619) and “Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow” from Lord Byron (Bartlett 2012: 395):

Now what should we think [all of this is a suppositious case mentioned by ECS] of the common sense of these men, if, in the valley of disfranchisement, they sat singing paens to “universal” womanhood suffrage, instead of blocking the way by an educational qualification that

would be a real benefit to the voters, as well as to the State, and increase the chances of the men to secure political equality? "As self-preservation is the first law of nature," they would say, "we must stop this inflowing tide of foreign women, a dead weight against us. Some of our native-born women are in favor of our emancipation, but the foreigners always vote against us." (ESC, V, 667; Jan. 2, 1895)

Now is the golden time to work. Before another Constitutional Convention is called, see to it, that the public sentiment of this state shall demand suffrage for woman. Remember, "they who would be free must *themselves* strike the blow." (ECS, I, 390; July 12, 1859; see Lord Byron, "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" [1812], canto 2, stanza 76)

It might well be possible that Stanton heard "Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow" from her abolitionist friend and women's rights champion Frederick Douglass, for whom this proverbial quotation of the nineteenth century became a *leitmotif* in his speeches and writings. Here is but his first recorded use of Byron's original from August 5, 1847:

I [Frederick Douglass] would say to the colored men who have not learned their rights in this matter, that it is your business to make yourselves acquainted with them, "Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow." You must say, we feel this wrong, not only in a political view, but it strikes at our social enjoyment. Let us speak out freely, and as sure as right must triumph over wrong, so surely shall we be heard, and in the end will obtain in this state the political franchise. (cited from Mieder 2001: 229)

Neither Douglass nor Stanton called for violence in their struggle for social reforms, but they certainly want deliberate action in support of various causes.

This brings this discussion to a few statements by Stanton and Anthony that should or have taken on a quotational if not proverbial status. There is first of all Anthony's "New rights bring new duties" with but one (!) Google hit, and that being the

following passage from a speech to a women's meeting on March 13, 1889, at Leavenworth, Kansas:

When you had no rights, no power to say yea or nay, you had no duty, no responsibility. But from that hour when the legislature conferred upon you rights and power to say yea or nay, your duty and your responsibility began. If there is a city or settlement in the state where the law is not enforced, it is the fault of the women as much as of the men. New rights bring new duties. Not only have you power over the liquor traffic but there are other sinks of iniquity in this city, as there are in every city in the nation and in the world. There are brothels and gambling houses. You have plenty of law but not enough exercise of it. You have the power to shut up every brothel and gambling hall as well as every grogshop. You cannot say it is the duty of the men alone. The women in Kansas must exercise their rights and not wait for the men. (SBA, V, 183; March 13, 1889)

Anthony might well have followed the structure of such proverbs as "New dishes bring new appetites" when she formulated her sententious remark. If it were to be brought to the forefront by way of the mass media, it could well still attain the general distribution and currency of a proverb. It makes perfect sense, it expresses an apparent truth, and it easily could fulfill the requirements of polysituativity, polyfunctionality, and polysemanicity that are part of the definition of proverbs (Krikmann 2009: 15-31; Mieder 2004a: 9 and 132). Sociopolitically speaking, Anthony's "New rights bring new duties" would have a multitude of instances where it would fit perfectly as a statement of a mature reaction to the demands of a democracy based on equal rights.

Turning to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, it can be said that late in her life she began using the statement that "The few have no right to luxuries until the many have the necessities" with variants like "The few have no right to the luxuries of life while the many are denied its necessities" (this latter form yielding 195,000 Google hits). Such varied formulations indicate that Stanton herself was still searching for the "perfect" form, and doubtlessly she would be pleased to know that her socially con-

scious sententious remark has become known but still awaits entry in quotation dictionaries. Due to its complexity, it will not become a folk proverb, but as a quotation it certainly merits to be employed in social arguments. That can be seen from just two paragraphs by Stanton from June 1897, indicating once and for all that she was not only concerned with women's rights, just as Frederick Douglass was not only occupied with African Americans or Martin Luther with civil rights. They all also dealt with the heartbreaking issue of poverty:

The religion of humanity centres [*sic*] the duties of the church in this life, and until the poor are sheltered, fed, and clothed, and are given ample opportunities for education and self-support, the first article in their creed should be, "The few have no right to luxuries until the many have the necessities." Merely to live without hope or joy in the present or future is not life, but a lingering death. Instead of spending so much time and thought over the souls of the multitude and over delusive promises of the joys to come in another life, we should make for them a paradise here. We are not so sure that the next sphere of action differs so widely from this. We may go through many grades before we enjoy "the peace that passeth all understanding" [Philippians 4:7]. If the same laws govern all parts of the universe, and are only improved by the higher development of man himself, we must begin to lay the foundation-stones of the new heaven and the new earth here and now. Equal rights for all is the goal towards which the nations of the earth are struggling, and which sooner or later will be reached. Such will be the triumph of true religion, and such the solution of the problem of just government. (ECS, VI, 148; June ?, 1897)

The first thought that always strikes me in celebrating the Fourth of July is the great work our fathers accomplished in laying the foundation stones of a republic and our duty to see that the principles they enunciated are fully realized. While we glorify their work we must struggle to attain greater heights than they ever reached and thus help the completion of a Government in which

all our citizens shall enjoy equal rights. The extremes of riches and poverty should be known nowhere under our flag. I would that the women of this republic might inscribe on their National banner this motto: "The few have no right to the luxuries of life while the many are denied its necessities." (ECS, VI, 150; June 30, 1897)

And finally then, there is the following paragraph that concludes Stanton's article on "War or Peace. Competition or Co-operation" published in the *Commonwealth* on May 21, 1898. As can be seen, she cites yet another variant of her luxuries vs. necessities sententious remark, she quotes the Bible proverb "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Galatians 5:14), and then she concludes her hopeful statement for an improved humanity with the sententious remark "Progress is the victory of a new thought over old superstitions" placed into quotation marks:

The startling ideas of our seers and prophets from [Giuseppe] Mazzini, St. Simon [Claude-Henri de Rouvroy], [Charles] Fourier, Thomas Paine, down to [Henry Charles] Carey, John Stuart Mill, [Edward] Bellamy and Henry George, are now commanding the attention of our wisest thinkers, in all civilized countries. The co-operative idea will remodel political platforms, church creeds, state constitutions, social ethics, and make life worth living for all. Then the few will gladly give up the luxuries of life that the many may enjoy its necessities. When the State inscribes on its banner, "Equal rights to all," and our statute laws and constitutions are based on that idea, we shall have no need of suffrage associations. When the Church inscribes on its banner, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," all other creeds will sink into insignificance. When the masses are well sheltered, fed, clothed and educated, there will be no need of temperance societies, as the vice of intemperance and many other evils are the outgrowth of the despair of poverty. When we substitute co-operation for competition, all our fragmentary reforms will be united in one general movement. "Progress is the victory of a new thought over old superstitions." (ECS, VI, 221; May 21, 1898)

It is doubtful that Stanton is quoting someone here, for to this day there are but eight Google hits that cite Stanton as the source! She might simply have placed the sentence into quotations mark at the end of her article to stress the importance of her generalization. Be that as it may, it has not gained any currency and is therefore not included in dictionaries of quotations. But what is of importance is that Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her friend Susan B. Anthony as well as later champions for human rights like Martin Luther King widened their net of social reforms to include not only certain deprived groups like African Americans or women but also the masses and among them notably the poor. With folk and Bible proverbs as well as proverbial quotations and their own sententious remarks they led the way in “Making a way out of no way” as Martin Luther King summarized it all with a most fitting African American proverb (Mieder 2010a: 171-186). And Susan B. Anthony’s very own “New rights bring new duties” should, of course, also be part of a new world order based on equal rights for all people.

The proverbial fight for educational and professional justice for women

If “all men and women are created equal”, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton proclaimed on July 19-20, 1848, at Seneca Falls, New York, then it follows logically that women deserve equality on all sociopolitical fronts beyond the obvious right to vote as U.S. citizens. First among some of the issues beyond equal suffrage was equal education. Obviously Elizabeth Cady Stanton was extremely well qualified to comment on raising and educating children since she did so with vigorous commitment for her five boys and two girls. Little wonder that she developed two popular lectures simply called “Our Girls” and “Our Boys” that she began to deliver in 1869 and 1875 respectively and which she repeated during her speaking engagements throughout the country (see Waggoner 1989: 74-75). Regarding the female gender, “she pleaded for a free and independent life for every girl, for clothes that would give her freedom of action, for an education which would enable her to support herself, for an equal opportunity in business and the professions” (Lutz 1940: 194). Regarding young males, she argued that they should be educated “to both embrace feminine as well as masculine virtues and cultivate

practical as well as abstract knowledge" (Strange 1998: 145). As a pair of influential lectures, they struck "at the root of sexism in the socialization and education of young children and portended the deep and abiding concern of twentieth-century feminists with expanding educational opportunities of girls and young women" (Strange 1998: 145). Both lectures "challenged traditional sex-role stereotypes" and "emphasized practical wisdom [and knowledge] over abstract knowledge" (Hogan and Hogan 2003: 423 and 426). Much of the advice given in these lectures is based on the common sense of Stanton as an experienced mother, but that is exactly what touched a nerve among her many listeners made up predominantly of parents in this case. Leaving the "boys" aside at this point, here is a bit of sapiential advice by mother Stanton to "girls" preoccupied with beauty, as it were (see Strange 1998: 134). It is solid advice, of course, but what a shame that in this case she did not cite the proverb "Beauty is only skin deep":

Remember [you girls] that beauty works from within, it cannot be put on and off like a garment, and it depends far more on the culture of the intellect, the tastes, sentiments, and affections of the soul, on an earnest unselfish life purpose to leave the world better than you find it, than the color of the hair, eyes or complexion. Be kind, noble, generous, magnanimous, be true to yourselves and your friends, and the soft lines of these tender graces and noble virtues, will reveal themselves in the face, in a halo of glory about the head, in a personal atmosphere of goodness, and greatness that none can mistake. To make your beauty lasting when old age with the wrinkles and grey hairs come and the eyes grow dim and the ears heavy, you must cultivate those immortal powers that gradually unfold and grasp the invisible as from day to day the visible ceases to absorb the soul. (ECS, III, 497; winter 1880)

But she also makes use of the Bible proverb "Eat, drink, and be merry" (Ecclesiastes 8:15, Luke 12:19) to stress to the young girls that life is not only fun and games, marriage, and motherhood:

Your life work dear girls is not simply to eat, drink, dress, be merry, be married and be mothers, but to mould yourselves into a perfect womanhood. Choose then those conditions in life that shall best secure a full symmetrical developement [sic]. We cannot be one thing and look another. There are indelible marks in every face showing the real life within. One cannot lead a narrow, mean, selfish life and hide its traces with dye, cosmetics, paint and balm. Regard yourselves precisely as the artist does his painting or statue, ever stretching forward to some grand ideal. Remember that your daily, hourly lives, every impulse, passion, feeling of your soul, every good action, high resolve and lofty conception of the good and true, are delicate touches here and there gradually rounding out and perfecting in yourselves a true womanhood. Oh! do not mar the pure white canvas or marble statue with dark shadows, coarse lines, and hasty chiseling. (ECS, III, 497; winter 1880)

As has been observed by Lisa Strange, “Stanton’s feminist vision stressed the importance of personal responsibility, complete self-sovereignty and self-sufficiency” (Strange 1998: 209). Twenty years later, she expressed similar ideas in a letter to the editor of the *New York Tribune*, stressing that “modern” women at the turn of the century need to occupy their very own space in society that involves more than her traditional roles of wife and mother. A good education will help women to gain such personal independence:

In the main, woman’s work is identical with man’s; that is, looking at men and women as individuals, differing in tastes, capacities and destinies, and not as two distinct classes. They should have alike, the highest and broadest education, prepared to fill all positions. To circumscribe the sphere of all women to wifehood and motherhood, to home life, to cooking and sewing, is to take a very narrow view of their destiny. Hundreds of women never marry, keep house, take care of children, nor choose nursing as a profession, hence, why fit them only for four places when they already fill four thousand? (ECS, VI, 356; Sept. 3, 1900)

Stanton might well have thought of her best friend when she composed these lines. After all, Susan B. Anthony had remained unmarried by choice—she did have suitors—in order to dedicate her energies to the women's rights movement. As a former teacher, she learned to appreciate the necessity of educating women in all subject matters, including the natural sciences: “When women come to care more for scientific facts—than the myths & superstitions of the past—we shall grow more rapidly than we can imagine now” (SBA, VI, 454; Oct. 28, 1902). Of course, just as her friend Stanton, she also maintained that women should not automatically feel that their only roles in life are wife and motherhood: “She must first be a woman—free, trained, above old ideas and prejudices, and afterwards the wife and mother. The old theory of wife and mother needing only the capacity to cook and scrub is rapidly going to the dark ages” (SBA, VI, 35; Jan. 31, 1896). And surely Stanton spoke for Anthony as well when she called for the best possible education of all the people in the land:

If, as a nation, we hope to celebrate the second centennial of our national life, we must give new thought to thorough education of our whole people. We should demand in our schools and colleges a knowledge of those practical branches of learning that self-government involves. Surely an intelligent understanding of the great principles of Finance, Land Monopoly, Taxes and Tariffs, the relations of Labor and Capital and the laws of Commerce are far more important in a republic than a knowledge of Homer and Virgil, their descriptions of the heroes of a forgotten age, or the speculations of Dante and Milton as to the sufferings of lost souls in the Inferno. The one vital necessity to the success of our experiment of self-government is the education of our people, and in the sciences rather than foreign languages and the classics. (ECS, III, 309-310; May 24, 1877)

This is a rather one-sided and pragmatic approach to education that most assuredly flies in the face of the modern ideal of a liberal education, but the key issue is that both Stanton and Anthony recognized that women needed to be granted equal access to education in order to become self-sufficient individuals ready to

compete with the male part of the population in the many tasks that confronted the American society.

There was work enough to do for men and women alike. They themselves were both educated “work-horses” in the same yoke, steadily moving forward in the service of the women’s rights movement. As the sixty-three-year-old Anthony observed in an interview on February 22, 1883, at Philadelphia before departing on a trip to Europe, “I am in perfect health and intend to occupy my time in the saloon [of the ship] writing and preparing for my future work, for I do not intend to be idle. Although I am going for recreation I shall combine some work with it, and shall probably deliver several addresses and lectures in different European cities before returning to America” (SBA, IV, 223; Feb. 22, 1883). About two years later she said in Pennsylvania, “I don’t know what religion is. I only know what work is, and that is all I can speak on, this side of Jordan. I can then on this morning talk simply of work” (SBA, IV, 421; June 6, 1885). This statement includes a splendid allusion to the proverbial expression “To cross the Jordan” that is a classical euphemism for dying (see Reid 1983). And there is also this short description of her life’s story: “The world is full of work & in so many places at the same time—that I do not [know] which thing to do first” (SBA, V, 642; Aug. 19, 1894) followed by her delightful employment of the folk proverb “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy”:

To barely go to Washington and hold a convention, and hurry out of it immediately afterwards, does not and cannot accomplish much. Of course, as all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy and all play and no work makes him a mere toy, so all work before Congress and none in the States, or all work in the States and none before Congress, would result poorly. (SBA, VI, 226; May 27, 1898)

Surely Susan B. Anthony was anything but dull as she pressed her women’s rights agenda forward. Driven by her motto that “Failure is impossible” (Partnow 1992: 842; Sherr 1995), she plowed forward with enthusiastic strength that at times also gave her a chance to let her guard down for enjoyable moments with

family members, friends, and her soul-mate Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Obsessed by work themselves, both Stanton and Anthony had much to say regarding the role of women in the workforce where they traditionally have been treated as second-class citizens. And as the latter explains by way of the negation of the proverb “Father knows best”, the proverbial expression “To know where the shoe pinches”, and the proverb “The mother is the queen of the home”, wives and mothers cannot develop their full potential if husbands continue to play first fiddle at home and in the workplace:

Woman's work commences early and ends late. To her is committed the chief care of the children, laboring more hours than man and gets no credit for anything. The property is supposed to be all earned by the husband, and the woman owned and supported by him too. If woman used the ballot, think you this false condition of things would continue? She must care for the children in almost every regard, and yet they early learn that mother's opinions and authority are worthy of little respect, as “father knows best.” (SBA, II, 327; April 15, 1870)

The mother may have toiled over the same old and rickety cook-stove for many years, and repeatedly received a lecture for poor cooking or poor baking, but she must continue on in the same fatiguing and unhappy way for half a score of years more, while the father secures to himself all the modern improvements in machinery wherewith to accomplish his work. She can't see “where the shoe pinches” unless she wears it. (SBA, II, 327-328; April 15, 1870)

You are looking at the matter of sterilizing milk, which is a good thing, and of guiding children at pivotal times in their lives, which is also a good thing. But of all things, mothers need aid to shape the conditions that should surround the child outside as well as inside the home. The mother is said to be the queen of the home, but you all know that she is often the victim of circum-

stances and that she cannot have absolute sway in her own home. (SBA, VI, 426; Feb. 27, 1902)

Clearly mother and father must work together for the common good of the family. So Anthony has it right when she claims that the “sins of the fathers” of the proverb must be changed into the “virtues of the parents” that then can result in children that will grow into responsible and successful adults. For this to happen, wives must become the equals of husbands, and the best way to accomplish this social change is through her “intelligent emancipation”. Only then can she control and advance the development of the children in a proper way, proving that the proverb “Men are what their mothers made them” can actually be interpreted positively:

If the divine law visits the sins of the parents upon the children, equally so does it transmit to them the virtues of the parents. Therefore if it is through woman’s ignorant subjection to man’s appetites and passions that the life current of the race is corrupted, then must it be through her intelligent emancipation that it shall be purified and her children rise up and call her blessed. [...] I am a full and firm believer in the revelation that it is through woman the race is to be redeemed. For this reason I ask for her immediate and unconditional emancipation from all political, industrial, social and religious subjection. It is said, “Men are what their mothers made them,” but I say that to hold mothers responsible for the character of their sons, while denying to them any control over the surroundings of the sons’ lives, is worse than mockery, it is cruelty. Responsibilities grow out of rights and powers. Therefore before mothers can rightfully be held responsible for the vices and crimes, for the general demoralization of society, they must possess all possible rights and powers to control the conditions and circumstances of their own and their children’s lives. (SBA, May 30, 1901; cited from Harper 1898-1908: III, 1232)

This “unconditional emancipation” of women from all types of subjection is something that Anthony preached throughout her

long life, her goal being their total liberation from servitude and the absolute equality with men. To describe this assertion of their individuality as women, she turned to the Bible proverb “In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread” (Genesis 3:19):

To be esteemed worthy to speak for woman, for the slave, for humanity, is ever grateful to me, and I regret that I can not be with you at your annual gathering to get myself a fresh baptism, a new and deeper faith. I would exhort all women to be discontented with their present condition and to assert their individuality of thought, word and action by the energetic doing of noble deeds. Idle wishes, vain repinings [*sic*], loud-sounding declamations never can bring freedom to any human soul. What woman most needs is a true appreciation of her womanhood, a self-respect which shall scorn to eat the bread of dependence. Whoever consents to live by “the sweat of the brow” of another human being inevitably humiliates and degrades herself. (SBA, Jan. ?, 1859; cited from Harper 1898-1908: I, 169)

No more dependency or subjection but only independence and equality is the message, but this self-assertion meant, as Stanton and especially Anthony well realized, also a change in the attitude towards work outside of the home. Playing off the proverb “A drowning man will clutch at a straw”, Stanton found a fitting metaphor to explain that the newly emancipated women need no longer think that marriage with its pitfalls is their predestined role in life. They certainly should not feel compelled to hold on to a straw offered to them by irresponsible future husbands:

It is said that the 10,000 libertines, lechers [*sic*] and egotists would take a new wife every Christmas if they could legally and reputably rid themselves in season of the old one. [...] [This] objection is based on the idea that woman will always remain the penniless, helpless, relentless victim of every man she meets, that she is to-day. But in the new regime, when she holds her place in the world of work, educated to self-support, with land under her feet and a shelter over her head, the results of her own toil, the social, civil and political equal of the man

by her side, she will not clutch at every offer of marriage, like the drowning man at the floating straw. Though men should remain just what they are, the entire revolution in woman's position now inaugurated forces a new moral code in social life. (ECS, c. 1875; cited from DuBois 1981: 135)

The new position of women in the social order included for Stanton and Anthony also a new understanding of the role women could play in the work force outside of the home. Way too long had women been forced into a subservient corner in the home where their demands of life were reduced to accept the *status quo* that was well expressed by the proverb "Beggars must not be choosers". Quoting this wisdom and also playing off the Bible proverb "There is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9), Anthony argues strongly that this must not remain the attitude as ever more women searched for gainful employment:

You remember the old adage, "Beggars must not be choosers;" they must take what they can get or nothing! That is exactly the position of women in the world of work today; they can not choose. If they could, do you for a moment believe they would take the subordinate places and the inferior pay? Nor it is a "new thing under the sun" for the disfranchised, the inferior classes weighed down with wrongs, to declare they "do not want to vote." The rank and file are not philosophers, they are not educated to think for themselves, but simply to accept, unquestioned, whatever comes. (SBA, ca. 1875; cited from Sherr 138)

In fact, Anthony argued strongly for women entering various professions without being discriminated because of their gender. Proverbially speaking, they should not have to run the gauntlet when looking for work, being sent from one place to another and turned down for most jobs. And Anthony understood that this situation would best be changed if more women could advance so far in a given work place that they would be the ones in charge of hiring new employees:

And it is precisely such a gauntlet that every girl who comes to St. Louis, Chicago or New York has to run

when she goes to solicit work in the shops or offices of our great cities. Now, what we must have everywhere is women employers as well as employes [sic]. We must have women employers, women superintendents, committees and legislators everywhere, ere a poor girl who is compelled to seek the means of subsistence, shall always find good, noble women. Nay, more than that, we must have women ministers, lawyers and doctors; that wherever women go to seek spiritual or legal counsel they will be sure to find the best and noblest of their own sex to minister to them. (SBA, III, 163; April 12, 1875)

She continued this line of thought by looking into the future, arguing that the proverb "The laborer is worthy of his hire" does not hold for women at the turn of the century since they for the most part would have to be classified as unskilled laborers. She foresaw that this would definitely change in the twentieth century, and yet she would be surprised to learn that well into the second decade of the twenty-first century women are still trying to break through the glass ceilings of some professional hierarchies:

We women must be up and doing. I can hardly sit still when I think of the great work waiting to be done. Above all, women must be in earnest, we must be thorough, and fit ourselves for every emergency; we must be trained, and carefully prepare ourselves for the place we wish to hold in this world. The time is passed when the unskilled laborer is worthy of his hire. More and more does the world demand specialists, and women must rise to her opportunities as never before. I shall not be here to see it, but the twentieth century will see as great a change in the position and progress of woman in the world as has been accomplished in this century, but it will have ceased to cause comment, and will be accepted as a matter of course. There will be nothing in the realm of ethics in which woman will not have her own recognized place, and all political questions, and all the laws which govern us will have a feminine side, for woman and her influence, in making and shaping of affairs, will have to be reckoned with. (SBA, VI, 376; Jan. 1, 1901)

But breaking through glass ceilings is only one side of the employment coin with the other side being the appalling salary gap between the genders for the same work that is also still an issue today. Remarkably so, the ever agitating Anthony was on to this discrepancy as early as October 8, 1869, when she wrote in *The Revolution*: “Join the union, girls, and together say, ‘Equal Pay for Equal Work’” (Dorr 1928: 87; Rees 1995: 146-147; Shapiro 2006: 23). Some thirty years later, with the move of women into the work force having become much more widespread, Anthony returned to her sententious remark turned proverb by then and became—how could it be otherwise!—an outspoken champion of its significant message:

What I have been working for all these years is just this. [...] Equal pay for equal work. There isn’t a woman in the sound of my voice, who does not want this justice. There never was one—there never will be one who does not want justice and equality. But they have not yet learned that equal work and equal wages can come only through the political equality, represented by the ballot. (SBA, VI, 155; July 29, 1897)

It is of interest to note that in 1897 Anthony had no choice but to argue that the demand of “Equal pay for equal work” would have no way of becoming law as long as women did not have the right to cast their vote. More than hundred years later the struggle for equal pay for equal work is still going on, but great progress has indeed been made and it behooves modern women to give considerable credit for these advances to Susan B. Anthony in particular.

This cause obviously was dear to Anthony’s heart, but it must be remembered that both she and Elizabeth Cady Stanton always mustered up enough energy and will power to take on ever new tasks, and it must not be forgotten that they were also aware of the fact that many sociopolitical problems could best be addressed and hopefully solved by women and men working together as equal partners. As Stanton observes with a fitting quotation from Alfred Tennyson’s *The Princess* (1847), it is this supportive partnership that could conquer the work that lay ahead:

Yes, the spheres of man and woman are the same, with different duties according to the capacity of the individual. Woman, like all created things, lives, moves, and has her being obedient to law, exploring with man the mysteries of the universe and speculating on the glories of the hereafter. In the words of Tennyson they must be together

Everywhere

Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropped for one to sound the abyss
Of science and the secrets of the mind.

The question is no longer the sphere of a whole sex but of each individual. Women are now in the trades and professions, everywhere in the world of work. They have shown their capacity as students in the sciences, their skill as mariners before the mast, their courage as rescuers in lifeboats. They are close on the heels of man in the arts, sciences and literature; in their knowledge and understanding of the vital questions of the hour, and in the every day practical duties of life. Like man, woman's sphere is in the whole universe of matter and mind, to do whatever she can, and thus prove "the intentions of the Creator." (ECS, V, 724; Nov. 12, 1895)

How pleased both Stanton and Anthony would have been to know that there are now also modern proverbs that encapsulate through folk speech what they had fought for. Thus the traditional proverb "A woman's place is in the home" has been countered by the anti-proverb "A woman's place is any place she wants to be" (earliest reference 1918; see Litovkina and Mieder 2006), and modern feminists have coined the proverb "A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle" (Mieder 1982; Stibbs 1992: 224; Doyle et al. 2012: 279-280) in 1976 to counteract the many anti-feministic proverbs from earlier times (see Kerschen 1998; Schipper 2003) No doubt, the proverbial fight for women's rights at the workplace is in very good hands and continues to make good progress.

The golden rule as a proverbial sign of equality

Finally, on a more philosophical level, it should not be surprising that Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, just as social reformer before and after them have done, turned to the so-called golden rule which in the Christian faith is found in the New Testament as “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Matthew 7:12; see Hertzler 1933-1934, Burrell 1997: 13-27; Templeton 1997: 8-12). It represents the ultimate proverbial law of life that calls for equal and treatment of all people. Already in July of 1848, right at the beginning of the crusade for women’s rights, Stanton and Elizabeth W. McClintock wrote a lengthy letter to the editor of the *Seneca County Courier* in which they accuse “religionists” of having forgotten the golden rule in their support of the unjust treatment of people:

Now, it seems to us, the time has fully come for this much abused book [the Bible] to change hands. Let the people no longer trust to their blind guides, but read and reason for themselves—even though they thus call down on themselves the opprobrious epithet of “infidel,” than which no word in our language is more misunderstood and misapplied. We throw back the charge of infidelity on the religionists of the present day, for though they assert their belief in the Divinity of Christ, they deny, in theory and practice, his Divine commands. Do they not rally around and support all the great sins of this guilty nation? What say they to the golden rule, and the injunction, “Resist not evil”? Why, the self-styled christians of our day have fought in and supported the unjust and cruel Mexican war, and have long held men, women, and children in bondage. (ECS, I, 89; July 23, 1848)

About six years later, Stanton returned to the golden rule in her widely acknowledged address to the Legislature of New York of February 14, 1854. Here “she pointed to the misogyny lurking behind the statutes defining the legal position of married women, and the tone of her speech revealed the intensity of women’s dissatisfaction with their current condition. [...] She linked logic, legal and historical evidence, and the Judeo-Christian tradition to make a case for women’s rights” (Campbell 1989a: I, 94-96). Various commentators have cited the following paragraph from

this speech, stating that by referring to the golden rule and actually citing it *verbatim*, Stanton invoked “God’s *rule of justice (a truth)*” (Waggenspack 1986: 176), that “justice suggested that all women want is the same protection the laws grant men” (Waggenspack 1989: 54), and that “women felt the same love of freedom and had the same ‘clear perception of justice,’ as any man” (Pellauer 1991: 52).

But if, gentlemen [the legislators], you take the ground that the sexes are alike, and, therefore, you are our faithful representatives—then why all these special laws for woman? Would not one code answer for all of like needs and wants? Christ’s golden rule is better than all the special legislation that the ingenuity of man can devise: “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.” This, men and brethren, is all we ask at your hands. We ask no better laws than those you have made for yourselves. We need no other protection than that which your present laws secure to you. (ECS, I, 254; Feb. 14, 1854)

As stated, scholars are well aware of this important passage arguing for women’s equality under the law by offering the golden rule as authoritative support of this demand. However, they apparently have completely ignored several very informative statements by Stanton in which she returned to the golden rule both as a religious but even more so as a secular law of humanity. Thus she argued vehemently against the misinterpretation of the Bible by the clergy, legislators, and others as an authority that supports such injustices as slavery and the subjugation of women:

“Servants obey your masters” outweighed the Golden Rule with the teachers of the people. When the Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1850, the Northern pulpit made haste to teach that it was the duty of Christian men and women to catch “Onesimus” [a slave sent back to his owner by the apostle Paul] wherever they found him, and send him back to the house of bondage. The effort to abolish capital punishment is stoutly resisted by the same class of minds, for the same reason, though not one

text of Scripture can be found in favor of our barbarous system. (ECS, III, 447-448; May 11, 1879)

As one would expect, Susan B. Anthony also turned to the “golden rule”-proverb, and it is her convention speech of May 14, 1863, during the middle of the Civil War that deserves special attention (see Brigance 2005: 2). Accusing the country of having had nothing but war, with the war between slave and slaveholder being one of the worst, she argues that there must be no return to this despicable *status quo* after the war at hand. Above all, slavery must once and for all be eradicated and the Bible proverb “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” must be the guiding principle of a new beginning:

We talk about returning to “the Union as it was” and “the Constitution as it is”—about “restoring our country to peace and prosperity—to the blessed conditions which existed before the war!” I ask you what sort of peace, what sort of prosperity, have we had? Since the first slave ship sailed up the James river with its human cargo and there, on the soil of the Old Dominion, it was sold to the highest bidder, we have had nothing but war. When that pirate captain landed on the shores of Africa and there kidnapped the first stalwart negro and fastened the first manacle, the struggle between that captain and that negro was the commencement of the terrible war in the midst of which we are today. Between the slave and the master there has been war, and war only. This is but a new form of it. No, no; we ask for no return to the old conditions. We ask for something better. We want a Union which is a Union in fact, a Union in spirit, not a sham. By the Constitution as it is, the North has stood pledged to protect slavery in the States where it existed. We have been bound, in case of insurrections, to go to the aid, not of those struggling for liberty but of the oppressors. It was politicians who made this pledge at the beginning, and who have renewed it from year to year. These same men have had control of the churches, the Sabbath-schools and all religious institutions, and the women have been a party in complicity with slavery. They have made the large majority in all the churches

throughout the country and have, without protest, fellowshipped the slaveholder as a Christian; accepted pro-slavery preaching from their pulpits; suffered the words "slavery a crime" to be expurgated from all the lessons taught their children, in defiance of the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you." They have meekly accepted whatever morals and religion the selfish interest of politics and trade dictated. (SBA, May 14, 1863; cited from Harper 1898-1908: I, 228)

This statement echoes the use of the "golden rule"-proverb by her fellow crusaders against slavery. Here is what her friend Frederick Douglass, who cited the golden rule numerous times as an argument against slavery and the ultimate wisdom for equality (Mieder 2001: 95-103 and 184-192; Mieder 2004b: 141-146), said at approximately the same time:

The progress of our nation downward has been rapid as all steps downward are apt to be. 1st. We found the Golden Rule impracticable. 2nd. We found the Declaration of Independence very broadly impracticable. 3rd. We found the Constitution of the United States, requiring that the majority shall rule, is impracticable. 4th. We found that the union was impracticable. The golden rule did not hold the slave tight enough. The Constitution did not hold the slave tight enough. The Declaration of Independence did not hold the slave at all; and the union was a loose affair and altogether impracticable. (May 15, 1863; Blassingame 1985-1992: III, 573; Mieder 2001: 190)

And not a year later, still during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln also turned to the golden rule, attacking in particular the established church of the South for condoning slavery:

When, a year or two ago, those professedly holy men of the South, met in the semblance of prayer and devotion, and, in the name of Him who said "As ye would all men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them" appealed to the christian world to aid them in doing to a whole race of men, as they would have no man do unto themselves, to my thinking, they contemned and insulted God

and His church, far more than did Satan when he tempted the Saviour with the Kingdoms of the earth. (May 30, 1864; Basler 1953: VII, 368; Mieder 2000: 80-81)

One hundred years later, Martin Luther King preached a sermon in which he said that “The acceptable year of the Lord is that year when men will do unto others as they will have others do unto themselves [Matthew 7:12]. The acceptable year of the Lord is that year when men will love their enemies, bless them that curse them, pray for them that despitefully use them [Matthew 5:44]” (cited from Mieder 2010a: 268). For these social reformers the “gold rule”-proverb serves as a beacon of hope for what the world could be if humankind were to adhere to but this simple law of life.

But to return to Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s reliance on this Bible proverb, here is yet another unique passage with the “golden rule”-proverb where she shows herself as quite the scholar of comparative religion. She is absolutely correct in stating that the world’s religions all have the golden rule in one form or another, as has been shown by Albert Griffin in his *Religious Proverbs: Over 1600 Adages from 18 Faiths Worldwide* (1991: 67-69). Even though there are differences in these faiths, the common golden rule as the supreme moral guidepost should enable people everywhere to live in peace and enjoy their human right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness:

“Every race,” says a recent writer [Octavius Frothingham in his *The Religion of Humanity* (1873)], “above the savage has its Bible. Each of the great religions of mankind has its Bible. The Chinese pay homage to the wise words of Confucius, the Brahmins prize their Vedas, the Buddhists venerate their Pitikas, the Zoroastrians cherish their Avesta, the Scandinavians their Eddas, the Greeks their Oracles and the songs of their bards,” the Christians believe the New Testament to be divinely inspired, the Hebrews of our day accept with equal reverence the Old Testament, and thus all along each nation has had its own idea of God, religion, revelation; and each alike has believed its own ideas the absolute and ultimate. Much as these ‘Bibles’ differ in all that is transient and local, the texture of sentiment, the moral and religious principles are the same, showing a responsive

chord in every human soul, in all ages and latitudes. All Bibles contain something like the decalogue; the 'Golden Rule,' written in the soul of man, has been chanted round the globe by the lips of sages in every tongue and clime. This is enough to assure us that what is permanent in morals and religion can safely bear discussion and the successive shocks of every new discovery and reform. (ECS, III, 456-457; May 11, 1879)

More than a century later, presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama said something quite similar in his remarkable speech "A More Perfect Union" on March 18, 2008, at Philadelphia:

In the end then, what is called for is nothing more, and nothing less, than what all the world's great religions demand—that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Let us be our brother's keeper; Scripture tells us. Let us be our sister's keeper. Let us find that common stake we all have in one another, and let our politics reflect that spirit as well. (March 18, 2008; cited from Mieder 2009: 201; Mieder 2010b)

Complete adherence to the golden rule is by no means a reality in the modern age, and both Stanton and Anthony were well aware of the fact that it represents but an ideal state of humanity that all people can do no more but strive towards. They both did this with their souls and minds, and there is no doubt that their social reform activism was informed to a considerable degree by their effective proverbial rhetoric.

Nota bene: This article represents a condensation of some of the chapters in my book "*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). My earlier article "What's Sauce for the Goose is Sauce for the Gander". The Proverbial Fight for Women's Rights by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony," *Frazeologiiia v mnogoia zychno\u043d obshchestve*, ed. Elena Arsentyeva (Kazan': Kazanskii Federal'nyi Universitet, 2013), 21-38, is different from the book and this new article.

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

ZUM 125. GEBURTSTAG VON ARCHER TAYLOR
(1890-1973)

Abstract: Vor über zehn Jahren wurde ich gebeten, eine kurze Übersicht über das Leben und Werk des international berühmten amerikanischen Folkloristen und Parömiologen Archer Taylor (1890-1973) in deutscher Sprache zu verfassen. Leider ist das geplante Zeitschriften-Sonderheft mit solchen biographischen Beiträgen nie erschienen. In der Zwischenzeit hatte ich die große Ehre, einen bedeutend kürzeren Eintrag über Taylor in der *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* ([2010], Bd. 13, Sp. 302-305) auf Deutsch zu veröffentlichen. Da nun das Erscheinen des 32. *Proverbium*-Bandes mit dem 125. Geburtstag von Archer Taylor zusammenfällt, habe ich mich entschlossen, meinen liegengebliebenen Aufsatz doch noch abzudrucken. Besonders Parömiologen in aller Welt stehen auf den Schultern Archer Taylors, als dessen „Enkelsohn“ mich Lutz Röhrlin und Alan Dundes zuweilen bezeichnet haben. Für mich persönlich ist Archer Taylor einer meiner großen Helden gewesen und wird es auch bis zu meinem Lebensende bleiben. Wie ich meinen Studentinnen und Studenten zu sagen pflege, vergeßt nicht die bedeutenden wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisse der früheren Generationen, die den Weg zu neuen Forschungsergebnissen mitgeschaffen haben.

Keywords: Bibliographie, Biographie, Bücherkunde, Einfache Formen, Erzählforschung, Folkloristik, Germanistik, Internationalität, Komparatistik, Literatur, Mediävistik, Parömiographie, Parömiologie, Philologie, *Proverbium*, Archer Taylor, Volkskunde.

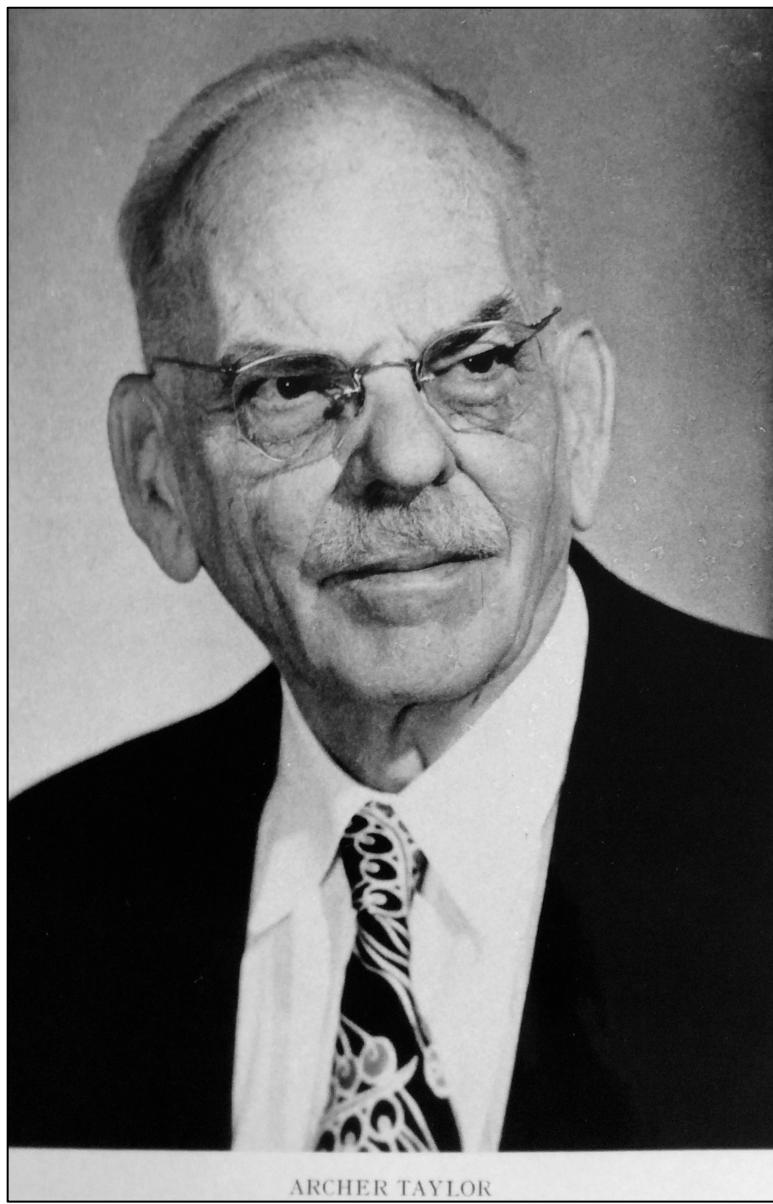
Taylor, Archer, geb. am 1.8.1890 in Philadelphia (Pennsylvanien) als Sohn der Quäker Lowndes und Florence York Taylor, gest. am 30.9.1973 in Napa (Kalifornien). Er studierte Germanistik am Swarthmore College, wo er 1909 seinen Bachelor of Arts erwarb. Seinen Master of Arts erhielt er bereits 1910 von der University of Pennsylvania, und im Jahre 1915 schloß er sein Anglistik-, Germanistik- und Skandinavistikstudium an der Harvard University mit einer Dissertation über *The Märchen-Motifs in Wolfdietrich* ab. Am 9. September 1915 heiratete er seine

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Jugendfreundin Alice Jones. Das Ehepaar Taylor hatte drei Kinder – Margaret, Richard und Cynthia – die ihre Mutter am 16. Juni 1930 als noch junge Kinder verloren haben. Der verwitwete Taylor heiratete am 17. Juni 1932 seine zweite Frau Hasseltine Byrd, die nicht nur eine gute Mutter für die drei Kinder aus der ersten Ehe wurde sondern auch noch zwei weitere Kinder – Mary Constance und Ann Byrd – zur Welt brachte. Beide Frauen haben Taylor in seiner brillanten wissenschaftlichen Karriere aufs Beste unterstützt.

Im Jahre 1915 begann Archer Taylor seine Lehrtätigkeit an der Washington University in St. Louis (Missouri) und widmete sich vor allem der Mediävistik, Philologie, Volkskunde und Bücherkunde (auch Bibliographie). 1925 kam der Ruf an die University of Chicago, wo Taylor bis 1939 lehrte und als Leiter des Departments of Germanic Languages and Literatures fungierte. 1939 akzeptierte er dann den Ruf an die University of California at Berkeley, wo er bis 1958 als Professor für Germanistik und Volkskunde tätig war. Taylor war ein ausgesprochener „Büchermensch“, das heißt, er hat keine Feldforschung betrieben. Vielmehr interessierte er sich vor allem für eine Verbindung von Literatur-, Sprach- und Volkskundeforschung, wobei er sich auf schriftliche Quellen beschränkte, die er von der Antike bis zur Moderne durchforschte. Dabei hat er sich besonders mit Sprichwörtern, Redensarten und Rätseln befaßt, doch sind viele seiner Publikationen auch Märchen, Sagen, Balladen, Volksliedern, Gebräuchen, Bräuchen usw. gewidmet.

Taylor war ein äußerst aktiver Gelehrter, der sich in den Vereinigten Staaten und in Europa für eine historisch und komparatistisch ausgerichtete Volkskunde- und Erzählforschung einsetzte. 1941 war er einer der Begründer der California Folklore Society, und 1942 begann er seine langjährige Tätigkeit als Mitherausgeber der *California Folklore Quarterly* (jetzt *Western Folklore*). 1936/37 war er der Präsident der American Folklore Society, und 1951 wurde er zum Präsidenten der Modern Language Association of America gewählt. Vor allem aber machte Taylor mehrere Europareisen vor und nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, wo er die Volkskundler Europas kennenlernte und seine breiten Sprachkenntnisse vertiefte. Seine über 400 Publikationen lassen erkennen,



daß Taylor über ein einmaliges sprachliches, literarisches, volkskundliches und bibliographisches Wissen verfügte. Seine Bücher und Aufsätze sind daher in vielen Ländern bei den unterschiedlichsten Verlagen und Zeitschriften erschienen. Doch nicht nur war Archer Taylor ein beliebter und engagierter Professor, er war zweifelsohne auch der größte Wissenschaftler in Nordamerika, der es verstand, Philologie, Volkskunde und Literaturwissenschaft wie die Brüder Grimm unter einen Hut zu bringen. Dabei ging es ihm auch immer wieder darum, wissenschaftliche Brücken zu den Kolleg/Innen in Europa zu schlagen. Es überrascht also nicht, daß ihm 1959 die Ehrendoktorwürde der Universität Kiel verliehen wurde.

Seine Freundschaft mit Matti Kuusi in Finnland führte zu der Gründung der Zeitschrift *Proverbium*, die zwischen 1965 und 1975 in fünfundzwanzig Heften erschienen ist (Nachdruck in zwei Bänden hrsg. von Wolfgang Mieder. Bern: Peter Lang, 1987). Überhaupt ist Taylor ganz besonders als Sprichwortforscher bekannt geworden. Sein klassisches Werk *The Proverb* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1931) und der separat herausgegebene *An Index to „The Proverb“* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1934) sind 1962 in einem Band nachgedruckt worden, den Wolfgang Mieder 1985 mit einer ausführlichen Einleitung und Bibliographie erneut herausgegeben hat (Hatboro, Pennsylvania: Folklore Associates, 1962; Nachdruck Bern: Peter Lang, 1985). Taylor hat weit über hundert Bücher und Aufsätze über Sprichwörter und Redensarten verfaßt, und er gilt bis heute als bedeutendster Parömiologe der Neuzeit. Wichtige parömiographische Werke sind *Proverbial Comparisons and Similes from California* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1954) und (zusammen mit Bartlett Jere Whiting) *A Dictionary of American Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions, 1820-1880* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958). Die wichtigsten Aufsätze liegen vor in Archer Taylor, *Selected Writings on Proverbs*, hrsg. von Wolfgang Mieder (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1975), darunter auch der frühe Aufsatz „Sunt tria damna domus,“ *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde*, 24 (1926), 130-146. Weitere Sprichwörteraufsätze sind enthalten in Archer Taylor, *Comparative Studies in Folklore. Asia–Europe–America* (Taipai: The Orient Cultural Service, 1972).

Der internationale Ruf Archer Taylors beruht jedoch keineswegs nur auf seiner parömiologischen Tätigkeit. Um bei den so genannten „einfachen Formen“ zu bleiben, sei betont, daß Taylor sich ebenfalls einen Namen als Rätselforscher gemacht hat. Sein Buch *English Riddles from Oral Tradition* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1951) ist ein mustergültiges und massives Werk, und auch *An Annotated Collection of Mongolian Riddles* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1954) sowie die zusammen mit Vernam Hull herausgegebene Sammlung *A Collection of Irish Riddles* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1955) enthalten wichtiges Material für die komparatistische Rätselforschung. Aber auch *A Bibliography of Riddles* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1939) und *The Literary Riddle before 1600* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1948) waren bahnbrechende Studien, und von erheblichem komparatistischem Wert ist ebenfalls Taylors Aufsatz „„Vogel federlos‘ Once More,“ *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde*, 49/50 (1958), 277-294. Ein weit früherer Aufsatz in den *Hessischen Blättern für Volkskunde* war „Ein Diebeszauber,“ 22 (1923), 59-63, und außerdem hat Archer Taylor noch die kurze Notiz „Die Sonne tanzt am Ostermorgen,“ 41 (1950), 195, sowie vier Rezensionen (30/31 [1931/32], 297-298; 312-313; und 326; 44 [1953], 199-201) in dieser Zeitschrift veröffentlicht.

Einige weitere Höhepunkte der Taylorschen Buchproduktion seien hier in chronologischer Folge kommentarlos angeführt. Sie alle deuten allein schon vom Titel her an, wie ungemein vielseitig Taylor war: *The Black Ox. A Study in the History of a Folk-Tale* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1927), „Edward“ and „Sven i Rosengard“: *A Study in the Dissemination of a Ballad* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), (mit Frances H. Ellis) *A Bibliography of Meistersgesang* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1936), *The Literary History of Meistersgesang* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1937), *Problems in German Literary History of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1939), *Renaissance Reference Books. A Checklist of Some Bibliographies Published before 1700* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1941), (with Gustave O. Arlt) *Printing and Progress. Two Lectures* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1941), *Renaissance Guides to Books*.

An Inventory and Some Conclusions (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1945), (with F.J. Mosher) *The Bibliographical History of Anonyma and Pseudonyma* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), *A History of Bibliographies of Bibliographies* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1955), *The Shanghai Gesture* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1956), *Book Catalogues: Their Varieties and Uses* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1957), *Catalogues of Rare Books. A Chapter in Bibliographical History* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1958), and *General Subject-Indexes Since 1548* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966).

Es überrascht nicht, daß ehemalige Student/Innen sowie Kolleg/Innen aus aller Welt Archer Taylor mit zwei Festschriften geehrt haben: Wayland D. Hand und Gustave O. Arlt (Hrsg.), *Humaniora. Essays in Literature, Folklore, Bibliography. Honoring Archer Taylor on His Seventieth Birthday* (Locust Valley, New York: J.J. Augustin, 1960), mit C. Grant Loomis, „Bibliography of the Writings of Archer Taylor“ (S. 356-374); und Matti Kuusi (Hrsg.), *Archer Taylor, octogenario in honorem 1.VIII. MCMLXX* (=Proverbium, 15 [1970], 417-552), mit Wayland Hand, „Writings of Archer Taylor on Proverbs and Proverbial Lore“ (S. 420-424). Zwei weitere Bibliographien zu Taylors zahlreichen Publikationen befinden sich in dem von Wolfgang Mieder herausgegebenen Sammelband *Selected Writings on Proverbs* (S. 195-203) und dem ebenfalls von Mieder herausgegebenen Nachdruck von Taylors *The Proverb* (S. XL-LIII). Schließlich gibt es noch zwei kurze bibliographische Nachträge: Wolfgang Mieder, „Seven Overlooked Paremiological Publications by Archer Taylor,“ *Proverbium*, 6 (1989), 187-190; und Charles C. Doyle, „More Paremiological Publications by Archer Taylor,“ *Proverbium*, 8 (1991), 191-197. Der Nachlaß und ein großer Teil der umfangreichen Privatbibliothek Taylors befinden sich in der Bibliothek der University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia.

Die zahlreichen Aufsätze und Rezensionen Taylors sind in den ronommieritesten literarischen, philologischen und volkskundlichen Zeitschriften von 1916 bis zu seinem Tode erschienen, darunter *American Journal of Philology*, *American Notes and Queries*, *American Speech*, *California Folklore Quarterly* (=Western Folklore), *Fabula*, *Germanic Review*, *Journal of*

American Folklore, Journal of English and Germanic Philology, Journal of Religion, Journal of the American Oriental Society, Library Quarterly, Modern Language Notes, Modern Philology, Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht, Notes and Queries, Philological Quarterly, Proverbium, Publications of the Modern Language Association, Romance Philology, Romanic Review, Schweizer Volkskunde, Slavic and East European Journal, Southern Folklore Quarterly, Speculum, Studies in Philology und viele andere. Auch hat Taylor etliche Beiträge für das *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* und das *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Märchens* beigesteuert, und Aufsätze von ihm sind in etlichen Festschriften, so zum Beispiel für John Meier, erschienen. Die Themen all dieser Beiträge umfassen ein weites Feld, und sie reichen von kurzen Notizen bis hin zu umfangreichen Monographien über mehr oder weniger alle Gattungen der verbalen Volkskunde.

Archer Taylor gehört in die Gruppe der wirklich großen Folkloristen des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, obwohl er sich nicht so sehr theoretisch mit seinen verschiedenen Wissensgebieten befaßt hat. Es lag ihm fern, laufend neue Theorien und einen besonderen Fachjargon aufzustellen. Stattdessen ging er immer von Texten aus, die er zu großen Sammlungen zusammenstellte, oder die er historisch, komparativ und semantisch untersuchte (geographisch-historische Methode). So sind die meisten seiner Publikationen informationsreiche Fundgruben, die „Geschichten“ erzählen, die Hand und Fuß haben. Das heißt, Taylors Schriften sind nicht tendenziös sondern wissenschaftlich und exakt argumentierte Interpretation an Hand von zahlreichen Belegen. Hier trifft sich Taylor zweifelsohne mit den Brüdern Grimm, die bekanntlich sehr ähnlich gearbeitet haben. Archer Taylor hätte zweifelsohne im brüderlichen Bunde der Grimms der Dritte sein können, wenn er nicht hundert Jahre später gewirkt hätte. In der amerikanischen Folkloristik wird der Name Archer Taylor verdientermaßen mit großer Hochachtung ausgesprochen. Er war in der Tat ein international anerkannter Germanist und Volkskundler, aber er war gleichzeitig auch ein Mensch, der sich liebevoll um seine Familie, seine KollegInnen und seine StudentInnen kümmerte. In den Vereinigten Staaten hat Archer Taylor es durch großes Engagement dazu gebracht, daß in vielen Germanistik-Abteilungen auch Volkskunde gelehrt wird. Das ist ein weiteres großes

Verdienst dieses Gelehrten, der trotz wissenschaftlicher Erfolge stets ein fürsorglicher Mensch geblieben ist. Sein Einsatz für interkulturelle Beziehungen unter Volkskundlern sollte heute weiterhin als Vorbild dienen. Daß Archer Taylor vor und nach dem Kriege in den *Hessischen Blättern für Volkskunde, Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* und auch in der *Fabula* publiziert hat, zeugt ganz besonders von seinem weiten Forschungsblick für eine international ausgerichtete komparatistische Volkskunde.

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ANITA NACISCIONE

RETHINKING BASIC TERMINOLOGY IN PROVERB RESEARCH: A COGNITIVE STUDY

Abstract: A closer look at terminology reveals the need to rethink some of the fundamental terms in the study of proverbs. My aim is to explore the basic terminology in paremiological research and raise awareness of the terms used. My approach is cognitive semantic.

An essential aspect in proverb research is the choice of terminology that forms the conceptual framework for research: the terminology employed discloses part of the author's conception of the phenomenon. In paremiology, attitudes to proverbs have differed greatly. Along with stable positive terminology used in paremiological research since the beginning of the 1930s (Taylor 1931; Whiting 1931; Mieder 1974, 1989, 1993), a number of negative terms have been introduced, displaying an overtly or covertly negative attitude. Most of the negative terms are metaphorical.

Cognitively, the meaning of a metaphorical term is an integral part of the respective research concept (Gibbs [1994] 1999; Naciscione 2006, 2010). Negative terminology raises doubt about the correctness of choice of term. Proverbs have been branded as stereotypes (Moon 1998; Norrick 2007) and clichés (Kirkpatrick 1996b; Rees 1996; Moon 1998; Cresswell 2000; Hayden 2013). Proverbs are often referred to as quotations (Cram 1983; Norrick 2007). They are even called a hodge-podge, a fuzzy category whose "images often fail miserably as models for organizing our perceptions of current situations" (Norrick 2007). I view the use of negative terminology in proverb research as groundless and inappropriate.

Proverbs form part of cultural folk heritage; they are retained in the collective long-term memory of a people. Linguistically, choice of research terms is closely linked with the basic linguistic and cognitive understanding of proverbs in both the system of language and proverbs in use. More clarity and consistency in terminology would make it easier to communicate a message and follow developments.

Keywords: proverb, terminology, metaphor, cognitive semantics, cultural folk heritage, collective long-term memory

Language is charged with meaning.
Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading*

In scholarly research, choice of terminology is of great importance. It is revealing as it forms part of the author's conception of proverbs, their semantic structure and functioning in discourse. My aim is to explore some of the basic terminology in paremiological research and draw attention to the terms used.

Achievements in all areas of paremiology have been truly outstanding, as manifested by annual bibliographies in *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*. Mieder's international proverb archive at the University of Vermont contains close to 10 000 scholarly studies on proverbs as well as about 4 000 proverb collections from many languages (Mieder 2004: xiii, 2009, 2011).

This research has produced a wealth of empirical material in both verbal and non-verbal representation in different languages. Importantly, it has yielded fruitful theoretical findings and has opened up new vistas for further research. Proverbs have been thoroughly researched from many points of view: folklore, anthropology, etymology, ethics, philosophy, culture, mass media, social sciences, and many others. Many of the past and present accomplishments have been presented by Wolfgang Mieder in his chapter *Scholarship and Approaches in Proverbs: A Handbook* (op. cit.: 117-153).

Linguistic aspects of proverbs have been less researched by far. An essential aspect in proverb research is the choice of terminology that forms the conceptual framework for research. The development of paremiology has witnessed a number of terms that have been used to describe the proverbs as a category. Along with stable terminology used in paremiological research since the beginning of the 1930s (Taylor 1931; Whiting 1931), negative terms have emerged in research texts over the last half of the 20th century, and they still linger. Most of these terms are metaphorical. Some of the negative terminology shows disapproval and reveals that proverbs have been, and still are, seen as undesirable or labeled and branded as wrong. The language user may even be advised to avoid using them. Proverb studies contain a

number of basic terms that convey an explicitly or implicitly negative attitude.

Terminology is inextricably linked with specialist knowledge. In the cognitive semantic view, a term reflects the underlying theoretical conception or some part of it. A cognitive approach affords an understanding of the function of metaphorical terms and their significance in abstract reasoning and the formation of figurative terminology. Findings of cognitive linguistics provide evidence that metaphorical terms are theory constitutive metaphors (Gibbs [1994]1999: 169-172). Metaphorical conceptualization plays a constitutive role in framing ideas in any area of research, paremiology included. Proverbs are handed down from generation to generation as part of cultural heritage, and they are kept in the collective long-term memory of a people. Therefore I would argue against use of negative terminology in proverb research. I believe that the meaning of a metaphorical term forms part and parcel of the respective research concept. Negative terminology raises doubt as to the correctness of choice of term and poses a number of questions.

1. Are Proverbs Stereotypes?

In the traditional view, proverbs are often called stereotypes and treated as such (see, for instance, Moon, 1998: 275). Unfortunately, this view also appears in recent publications in this century, e.g., in Neal Norrick's chapter *Proverbs as Set Phrases* (2007: 381-393), published in an impressive two-volume edition *Phraseology: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*. Norrick believes that proverbs are stereotypes: "proverbs provide evidence of stereotypes and standard culture metaphors," supplying ready-made responses to recurrent types of situations (op. cit.: 381).

Negative terminology is catching; it spreads, and is often used without due re-evaluation of its worth. Even the distinguished folklorist and paremiologist, Arvo Krikmann, who has made an important contribution to proverb studies, believes in the stereotypical nature of proverbs. He writes that, "as to the lexical composition of proverbial tropes, they are quite stereotypical and humdrum already" (Krikmann 2009: 28). He contrasts poetry, which tends to use fresh metaphors that are not redundant, and folklore and phraseology (proverbs included)

which are stereotypical, traditional and present no problem in interpretation. “The tropes of folklore and phraseology (incl. the proverbial ones), on the contrary, are traditional, stereotypical, already met and known previously, as a rule, and automatically interpretable” (*ibid.*).

Several reasons may explain the appearance of negative terms in paremiology. In practice, researchers tend to form judgments about proverbs proceeding from dictionary head phrases and recorded core use in the entry, and computer data bases that, as a rule, do not reflect cases of stylistic use, especially extended metaphor, allusion, initial replacement, replacement of the key constituent/s and others which are not recorded by most dictionaries and which computers are as yet unable to capture. It is the discerning eye of the researcher that is capable of perceiving, recognizing and identifying stylistic use in discourse.

Another reason is cognitive semantic. Words have meaning. Choice of the right term is an essential part of research. Let me turn to the semantic structure of the word “stereotype” that contains two meanings:

- 1) (*literal*) a plate cast from a printing surface conforming to a fixed pattern; a fixed, unvarying form;
- 2) (*metaphorical*) sth conforming to a fixed or general pattern; esp. a standardized mental picture that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment; a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image (*Merriam-Webster’s 11th Collegiate Dictionary* 2003).

Understanding proverbs as stereotypes runs counter to the findings on proverbs in many areas of research in folklore studies, literature, anthropology, linguistics, and others. Studies by psychologists and neuropsychologists have proved that proverbs reflect and conceptualize personal and social experiences, human behavior and abstract thought, and their interpretation reveals both how people think and their ability to think and reason abstractly (Gibbs and Beitel 2003: 109-115).

In the cognitive perspective, a metaphorical term is an integral part of research theory; it reveals the importance of metaphorical conceptualization and the role of metaphor as a technique of abstract reasoning. The cognitive view maintains that the very “concepts are cognitive; that is, they are part of human

cognition" (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 111). A metaphorical paradigmatic term should serve as a tool for understanding proverbs and their actual use in all modes of their functioning: oral, written and non-verbal, e.g., in visual representation (e.g., pictures, advertisements, films, gestures).

Linguistically, choice of research terms is closely linked with the basic linguistic understanding of proverbs in both the system of language and proverbs in use. This is a matter of the theoretical stance and the linguistic definition of proverbs. I would argue that the proverb is a stable, cohesive combination of words with a fully or partially figurative meaning and the structure of a sentence (Naciscione 2010: 19, 2013b: 16-19). Thus, this definition includes two categorical features of proverbs: stability and figurative meaning. In cognitive semantic terms, the proverb is one of the modes of conceptualization of the world and human experiences.

If a proverb is stable, it cannot be new: once recognized and used by people, it must have functioned for a longer or shorter period of time. In a dictionary entry the proverb is recorded as the head phrase, that is, it is given in its base form¹ that has been established as a standard out-of-context unit in the system of language due to customary use (Naciscione 2010: 31-35). In practice it is the dictionary form and meaning, e.g., *A chain is no stronger than its weakest link*. The proverb is metaphorical in its base form. Dictionaries also record its variant *No chain is stronger than its weakest link*. In their base form, proverbs never exceed the boundaries of one sentence.

It is worthwhile examining the functioning of proverbs in discourse. In core use², proverbs frequently appear in their standard form and meaning; however, they do not acquire additional semantic and stylistic features. Core use is confined to a single sentence. Contextual changes are insignificant: these are grammatical changes to comply with the requirements of the sentence, but no semantic or stylistic changes occur as compared to the base form, e.g.:

We must also remember that these five As³ of access form **a chain that is no stronger than its weakest link**.

For example, improving affordability by providing health insurance will not significantly improve access.

Leon Wyszewianski, Access to Care:
Remembering Old Lessons, *Health Services Research*, 2002, No 37

The use of this common proverb was recorded in English dictionaries more than 200 years ago. Interestingly, the earliest available occurrence is a case of instantial stylistic use⁴. It is a single instance of a unique stylistic realization of the proverb in actual use that has created significant changes in form and meaning, motivated by the thought and the context. In cognitive linguistic terms, instantial stylistic use is a mode of conceptualization. At the same time the new discursal form remains semantically and stylistically related to the base form:

A chain is no stronger than its weakest link⁵

No chain is stronger than its weakest link

“In every chain of reasoning, the evidence of the last conclusion can be no greater than that of the weakest link of the chain, whatever may be the strength of the rest.”

Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind*, 1786

Some sources indicate the year 1786 as the origin of the proverb. E.g., the Internet thesaurus *The Phrase Finder* (2014) asserts that Thomas Reid converted this notion into a figurative phrase, and in this way established the proverb in the language of the 18th century. I would argue against that assertion as this example is a case of creative stylistic use that is based on allusion⁶ to and extension of the metaphorical image of the proverb. Moreover, the key constituent *chain* is used in two meanings: a) *a chain of reasoning*, which means a series of things associated together, and b) *a chain* as a constituent of the proverb, which signifies an unreliable part of a system, in this way forming a pun based on two figurative meanings of a word. Establishing the origin of the proverb calls for diachronic exploration and etymological proof.

Allusion is a stylistic pattern that frequently emerges in stylistic use of proverbs, acquiring a discourse dimension as we see it in a dialog between Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson, e.g.:

“May I be there to see!” I exclaimed devoutly. “But you were speaking of this man Porlock.”

“Ah, yes -- the so-called Porlock is a link in the chain some little way from its great attachment. Porlock is not quite a sound link -- between ourselves. He is the only flaw in that chain so far as I have been able to test it.”

“But no chain is stronger than its weakest link.”

“Exactly, my dear Watson! Hence the extreme importance of Porlock.”

Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Valley of Fear*, 1915

This unique instantiation forms a figurative network: a metaphorical extension of a common image and the creation of a novel image of a proverb that is so very well known to us. Interpreting a piece of text requires creative processing, as the meaning of the proverb has been developed: it is no longer the same as the figurative meaning of the base form. The explicit figurative constituents serve as associative links and help to retrieve the base form from long-term memory. As the proverbial image is well known, the full form of the proverb can easily be retrieved. The interlocutor (Watson) responds using the standard form of the proverb, presenting the piece of folk wisdom in a nutshell.

The metaphorical thought of this proverb lends itself very well to use in titles of scientific articles, performing a sustainable cohesive text-embracing function which I call umbrella use (Naciscione 2010: 163-170). For instance, the proverb forms the title of a serious piece of research in DNA studies performed by a group of systematic biologists in the year 2000:

A Chain is No Stronger than Its Weakest Link:
Double Decay Analysis of Phylogenetic Hypotheses

Mark Wilkinson et al., *Systematic Biology*, 2000, 49(4): 754

This group of scientists has chosen this metaphorical proverb as the title for their scientific study, as it best conveys the essence of their theory. This is an important theoretical issue for paremiology too: “metaphor resides in thought, not just in words” (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 2).

In the traditional view, proverbs have often been seen as phrases of old-time wisdom that are no longer in use. This approach occasionally appears in modern research, too. For instance, Norrick maintains that proverb images are often “archaic and/or far-fetched,” e.g., *The apple does not fall far from the tree*. He argues that this proverb is certainly confusing and ambiguous (ibid.). He believes that “proverbs and proverbial phrases contain specialized images from pre-industrial lives, *not*⁷ basic-level metaphors or images familiar to speakers today” (2007: 387). My empirical proverb database shows that this is not the case. By way of example, I would like to offer a case of stylistic use of this proverb taken from the lyrics of a song *Being Pretty Ain't Pretty*, written and performed in 2013 by *Pistol Annies*, an American country music group. The girl sings that she is different from her Mama who was sweet as the day is long but who used to wear no makeup at all while she spends all her money on makeup and things:

But I'd spend the house
 Claiming on new cowboy boots
How the hell did the apple
Fall so damn far from the tree

Pistol Annies, *Being Pretty
 Ain't Pretty*, 2013

Stylistic use of the well-known proverb *The apple does not fall far from the tree* in a modern song proves that the proverb is not archaic, confusing or far-fetched. It is alive; it is used in modern texts and is also easily identifiable in a case of stylistic use where the syntactical form of the proverb has been changed by insertion, which shows that the proverb is part of the active paremiological stock of the people. My conclusion is that the proverb is not obsolete because the thought is not obsolete (see also the study of this proverb by Mieder 2000: 109-144).

The proverb *The apple does not fall far from the tree* is a metaphorical generalization, reflecting people's social and individual experience. I agree with Elisabeth Piirainen that similar figurative units have come into being independently in various languages based on common human experiences and general perceptions. They are of polygenetic origin (2012: 518-519, Mieder 2000: 109-111), which explains the existence of this proverb in many languages and cultures, e.g.:

EN *The apple does not fall far from the tree*
RU Яблоко (яблочко) от яблони (от яблоньки)
недалеко падает
HR Jabuka ne pada daleko od stabla
LV Ābols no ābeles tālu nekrīt
LT Obuolys nuo obels netoli rieda
DE Der Apfel fällt nicht weit vom Stamm
PL Jabłko nie spada daleko od jabłoni

Thus, the argument that the proverb *The apple does not fall far from the tree* is archaic does not hold water. I would argue that we bear responsibility for the research terms we choose to use. Even archaic forms that are enshrined in some proverbs do not make them archaic as the proverb survives due to the stability of its structure and figurative meaning, e.g., *Cometh the hour, cometh the man*. On 10 April, 2013, David Cameron made a speech, paying tribute to Margaret Thatcher, saying, "Well in 1979 came the hour and came the Lady. "⁸

To put the use of proverbs in a nutshell, I would offer a table that reveals the three basic types of proverb existence and functioning⁹ (see **Table 1**).

2. Are Proverbs Clichés?

It is quite a commonplace to say that proverbs are clichés (Permjakov 1968; Alexander 1978, 1979; Moon 1998).

Grigoriy L. Permjakov is an original and inspiring scholar, a paremiologist who has done both theoretical and empirical research. In his day, he was one of the leading paremiologists in the Soviet Union. At the same time, he writes that many proverbs appear as clichés in speech (that is, in actual use). Some of them have not become full clichés while the rest of them appear in speech in constant and unchangeable form; in other words,

they are clichés from beginning to end (Permjakov 1968: 277). Proverbs are sentences that have turned into clichés because they consist of constant components that cannot be changed or replaced; hence they are condemned as empty rhetoric (ibid.).

The choice of the term “cliché” conveys a prejudiced attitude. The word has a meaning of its own; it is not a semantic void. Its semantic structure is polysemic. In a similar way to “stereotype,” the first meaning is direct and technical, while the second is metaphorical:

- 1) (*literal*) an impression made by die in any soft metal; an electrotype or stereotype plate;
- 2) (*metaphorical*) a trite, hackneyed idea, theme, plot, form (*Chambers 20th Century Dictionary*. [1983] 1987).

Oxford Dictionary Online (2014) claims that it is overused and “betrays a lack of original thought.”

A number of dictionaries that contain phraseological units, proverbs included, are entitled “Dictionary of Clichés” (Kirkpatrick 1996a; Rees 1996, Cresswell 2000). Kirkpatrick, for instance, points out that the cliché is “a pejorative term for an expression that has lost its first bloom and thus its potency” (Kirkpatrick 1996b: vi). She brands all familiar phraseological units, proverbs included, as clichés which are stale, overused, and over-abused stereotypes, old stock which cannot boast of actions or processes, lacking freshness (ibid.).

An extreme case is Laura B. Hayden’s publication on the Internet *Clichés: Avoid Them Like the Plague* (2013), which means avoiding proverbs along with other types of phraseological units. This is a case of indiscriminate use of the term without giving it due linguistic and cognitive consideration. Importantly, Hayden is a teacher on the Professional and Creative Writing Program at Western Connecticut State University; she has worked out a special program for creative writing: “Left-Brain-Right Brain/Creativity Program.”

A warning to avoid proverbs is frequently given on the Internet among methodological hints and aids to improve student creative writing skills. The aim of *ProWritingAid: Improve Your Writing. List of Clichés* (2013) is to eliminate clichés and redundancies. The huge list of clichés contains very many proverbs.

Their elimination is supposed to improve student language, especially their writing skills.

In contrast to the above programs, a different approach to proverb use and teaching is shown by Mieder's special course "The Nature and Politics of Proverbs" delivered at the University of Vermont, US. The syllabus presents a positive experience in teaching proverb use in different types of texts, e.g., literary texts, political speeches, mass media, advertisements, poems, popular songs, and others (Mieder 2010).

The use of negative terminology directly influences the whole theoretical approach. The premise that proverbs are clichés is linked to the theoretical belief that they are fixed and frozen, even petrified, that is, turned to stone. (Strässler 1982; Cram 1983; Moon 1992, 1998).

This stands in contrast with the theory of stability in phrasiological units (proverbs included) as elaborated by Kunin in the 1960s. Kunin singles out stability of use, structural-semantic stability, lexical stability, morphological stability and syntactical stability (Kunin 1964, 1970: 89-110). I would argue for two other important aspects of the concept of stability: 1) stylistic stability, which is manifest in preservation of the same image and type of figurativeness and 2) diachronic stability, which displays stability of proverbs across time. Stability of the base form does not contradict the dynamic stylistic changes that proverbs may undergo in discourse (Naciscione 2013b: 18).

Mieder has done extensive research on stylistic use of proverbs, and he emphasizes that proverbs are nothing static. Many proverb studies offer ample proof that authors have not stuck to standard proverb forms, but they have varied and modified them to fit their communicative intentions. They prove that "the so-called fixity of proverbs is a myth, once proverbs are integrated into a text" (Mieder 2007: 19).

Cognitively, proverbs provide special interest. Gibbs writes that "proverbs give significant insights into the poetics of mind because they reflect how our metaphorical conceptualization of experience bears on particular social situations" (Gibbs [1994] 1999: 309). He sees proverbs as special cases of the more general process of metaphorical understanding (*ibid.*). He exposes the myth that proverbs are simply dead metaphors (*op. cit.*: 265-268). He continues to argue that "linguistic items of this general

class are not simply frozen, formulaic phrases but are excellent indicators of how people think metaphorically in their everyday lives" (op. cit.: 270).

In the cognitive semantic view, proverbs present original images used in a creative way, reflecting unique emotional and social experiences of the people, their observations and generalizations of people's behavior and the world around them. Stylistic use of proverbs displays creativity on the part of the author. The originality of a stylistic instantiation depends on the author's creativity of mind.

3. Are Proverbs Quotations?

It may be strange to find a language unit called a quotation without any author to support the claim. However, proverbs have been referred to as quotations in proverb research.

Cram (1983) maintains that the proverb should be viewed as a lexical element with a quotational status; "its quotation status derives from the fact that proverbs are typically invoked or cited rather than straightforwardly asserted" Norrick treats proverbs as quotes (2007: 381, 386). In contrast, I believe that people do not quote proverbs: they use them. It is not only the nouns "quotation" and "quote" that are used in reference to proverbs but also the verb "to quote," e.g., "the proverb is quoted" instead of "the proverb is used."

Proverbs are stable language units that are retained in the collective long-term memory of a people, forming an intrinsic part of their language stock and hence their intangible cultural property. The same as words and other structural types of phrasiological units, proverbs are not quoted; they are freely used by people. Thus, proverbs form part of a common heritage, part of their language and culture, while quotations are individual.

The folk character of proverbs has been indicated by the founding father of paremiology, Archer Taylor, who observes that "a proverb is a saying current among the folk" (1931). The same thought is expressed by Whiting, who emphasizes the popular origin of proverbs; he believes that proverbs are felt to be common property as they convey a generalization (Whiting 1931).

Thus, proverbs differ from quotations in several ways:

- 1) In their base forms proverbs are stored in the collective long-term memory of the people, forming part of their language stock; quotations are not.
- 2) Importantly, there is a structural difference: in its base form the proverb has the structure of a sentence. Syntactically, proverbs never exceed sentence boundaries in their base form (Naciscione 2013b: 18). If we go to *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* ([1941]1987) we discover that quotations have no definite syntactical structure: they vary in length from just one word to any length including a paragraph, a stanza or even a whole monologue.
- 3) Another point of essential difference between proverbs and quotations is that a quotation has a source or, to be more precise, an author. It is a question of authorship. Quotations are as good as copyrighted material. I would argue that calling proverbs quotations or to say that they are quoted in a text is unsubstantiated and misleading.

4. Are Proverbs a Disorderly Mass?

The admirable proverb diversity in structure, imagery and lexical composition has given rise to the idea that proverbs constitute a disorderly mass. For instance, Norrick emphasizes that “the linguistic units called proverbs constitute a diverse, organically merging and emerging hodge-podge” that is not different from an ad hoc grouping of recurrent sayings from the discourses of a language community (2007: 381). Surprisingly, this is written by a linguist who has done research on proverbs before. He perceives proverbs as a hodge-podge: a disorderly mass, a mixture, and underlines the “fuzziness of the category” (op. cit.: 382).

Norrick’s research in paremiology has been adversely affected by the theory of “mixed metaphor,”¹⁰ which is clearly seen in his view of proverbs as a “hodge-podge.” He argues that proverb images “fail miserably as models for organizing our perceptions of recurrent situations” (op. cit.: 387). According to Norrick, proverbs “frequently mix metaphors, combining images from separate source domains into complex, sometimes incompatible collages” (*ibid.*). He illustrates separate source domains by the proverb *Every cloud has a silver lining* that presents “a jumble of

incongruous metaphors from unrelated domains" (ibid.). He argues against cognitive linguists who believe that metaphors organize our perceptions, and obviously also against one of the tenets in cognitive linguistics, namely that the human mind is capable of figurative thinking.

Norrick does not view metaphoricity as "an internal semantic property of proverbs," (382) which stands in stark contrast with Aristotle's basic tenet that "proverbs too are metaphors from species to species," expressed in his seminal book "Rhetic" ([350 BC] 1833). Figurativeness in proverbs was early established in proverb research. Taylor devotes a whole section of *Metaphorical Proverbs* to metaphoricity and extension of meaning in proverbs (1931: 10-15). Whiting underscores the figurative nature of proverbs (1931) and speaks of "a second level of meaning in proverbs" (1968: xiv).

In the cognitive linguistic view, figurative meaning is seen as an integral part of all proverbs and their extension; or in other words, stylistic use is treated as a natural discourse phenomenon.

Conclusion

My plea is for a linguistic and cognitive consideration of choice of terminology in proverb research. Empirical study of proverbs provides evidence against the use of negative terminology for a positive language phenomenon. Metaphorical terms have a metaphorical meaning in their semantic structure. Moreover, they reflect the theoretical concept and serve as a way of framing ideas and performing reasoning.

The paremiological stock of a language is a treasure that reflects people's social and individual experience, feelings and emotions, as well as the external world. In cognitive semantic terms, instantial stylistic use of proverbs constitutes a mode of conceptualization that forms part of human cognitive processes, providing a new way of expression and extension of figurative thought. Stylistic use of proverbs discloses the creativity of the human mind.

Table 1: Proverbs as language units

Proverbs in the system of language	base form <i>fools rush in where angels fear to tread</i> <i>can the leopard change his spots?/the leopard does not change his spots</i>	
Proverbs in use	<p>core use</p> <p><u><i>fools rush in where angels fear to tread</i></u> "Sometimes I stop and think, Good God, how did I get into this," she says with a laugh. "<u><i>Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.</i></u>" Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms, p. 152</p> <p><u><i>can the leopard change his spots?/the leopard does not change his spots</i></u> He always was a dirty old man...and <u><i>the leopard does not change his spots.</i></u> J. Scott, Clutch of Vipers</p>	<p>instantial use</p> <p><u><i>fools rush in where angels fear to tread</i></u> The peace-keeping forces in Liberia are the only ones in areas <u><i>where others fear to tread.</i></u> BBC World Service, 12.08.2003</p> <p><u><i>can the leopard change his spots?/the leopard does not change his spots</i></u> King Richard: Rage must be withstood: Give me his gage: <u><i>lions make leopards tame.</i></u> Mowbray: Yea, but not <u><i>change his spots:</i></u> take but my shame. And I resign my gage. W. Shakespeare, King Richard II</p>

Notes:

¹ By the base form I understand the form to which other forms of the proverb can be related and with which they can be compared. In practice, this is the dictionary form and meaning: the form of the proverb outside discourse, or in other words, out of context. In this form the proverb is stored in the collective long-term memory of the language user.

² Core use is use of a proverb in its most common form and meaning that never exceeds the boundaries of one sentence (Naciscione 2010: 35–39).

³ As stands for five characteristics of access to care: *Affordability, Availability, Accessibility, Accommodation, and Acceptability*.

⁴ Instantial stylistic use is a particular instance of a unique stylistic application of a word or phraseological unit in discourse resulting in significant changes in its form and meaning determined by the thought and the context.

⁵ Stylistic instantiation has been highlighted for emphasis: **base forms** are marked bold and underlined; instantial elements are spaced and underlined; replaced elements are double underlined and spaced.

⁶ Allusion is one of the patterns of stylistic use of proverbs in discourse. It is an implicit mental reference, verbal or visual, to the image of a proverb represented in discourse by one or more explicit image-bearing constituents. For a detailed discussion of allusion in proverb use, see Naciscione 2015a (in print).

⁷ Underlined by Norrick.

⁸ See analysis of stylistic use of the proverb *Cometh the hour, cometh the man* in Naciscione (2013a: 41–42).

⁹ For my theoretical conception of the functioning of phraseological units in discourse (proverbs included), see Naciscione (2010: 79–120).

¹⁰ Norrick follows the “mixed” metaphor theory, which holds that if two metaphors are used in close proximity (in one sentence) and they belong to different conceptual domains, they are “mixed” metaphors and hence impermissible. For my arguments against the “mixed” metaphor theory, see Naciscione (2015b).

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VARIABILITY AND MODIFICATION OF PROVERBS IN THE BULGARIAN MASS MEDIA: A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

Abstract: The present research deals with the variability and modification of Bulgarian proverbs in terms of a systematic approach in linguistics. A detailed analysis of proverb usage in the mass media shows that a proverb system undergoes both quantitative and qualitative alterations (in Aristotle's sense), quantitative alterations resulting from proverb variability, qualitative alterations from proverb transition to a phraseme and unproverbial application of a proverb to the mass media. Proverb variability is regarded in the paper as a mechanism of a proverb system to renovate itself, while proverb modification is a mechanism of proverb transition to another linguistic unit. Following the mechanism of proverb variability, new variants of proverbs and new potential proverbs are created within the discourse of the mass media. The linguistic and stylistic means of proverb variability and modification are examined in the paper. The study strives to provide a theoretical foundation for the key notions of proverb variability, modification, proverb variant, variation and invariant, as used in the present paper.

Keywords: Bulgarian National Corpus, definition, linguistics, proverb, open system, qualitative changes, quantitative changes, invariant, variability, variant, variation, modification.

1. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that proverbs occur in forms of *variants*, *variations* and *modifications* in languages. However, the question of how to define and to distinguish these forms is still open in paremiology (Taylor 1931; Mieder 2009; Kapchits 2008; Trendafilova 2008; Sergienko 2010). The problem is complicated by the fact that one and the same proverb can be rendered in different forms in various proverb collections or dictionaries. Nowadays, a majority of linguists believe that language is a system constituted by a set of subsystems. Each subsystem is responsible for a part of the total job – “it takes the output of other

subsystems as its input and distributes its own output to other subsystems" (Fasold & Connor-Linton 2013: 2). In this paper, proverbs are considered to constitute an *open system* and a subsystem within the system of language. The main properties of an open system are the interaction with the surroundings and an ability to undergo alterations (Moore & Spenser 2001: 284, 301-309). The aim of this study is to examine different forms of proverbs in Bulgarian mass media discourse in terms of a systematic approach in linguistics. A discourse is a coherent text considered together with extra linguistic factors (Jarceva 1988: 136). The questions put forth in this study are as follows:

- 1) What is a proverb?
- 2) In what forms do proverbs occur in the mass media?
- 3) How can these forms be defined in terms of a systematic approach in linguistics?
- 4) How can these forms be constructed in the language?

2. *Defining a Proverb*

There is no generally accepted definition of a proverb among paremiologists (Taylor 1931; Mieder 2005; Mokienko 2010; Kotova 2004). This paper defines a proverb as a figurative, aphoristic set expression with the syntactic structure of a sentence that contains both moral and philosophical thought. A proverb has the following categorical (essential) properties:

- 1) A proverb has the syntactic structure of a sentence
- 2) A proverb has an aphoristic character
- 3) A proverb contains figurativeness
- 4) The semantics of a proverb contains both moral and philosophical thought

Paremia is considered to be a broad term for both proverbs and maxims. The main difference between a maxim and a proverb is figurativeness. A proverb is a figuratively set expression while a maxim is a literally set expression, *i.e.*, an expression without figurativeness. The form and the meaning of a proverb are realised only in discourse. This paper considers proverbs listed in dictionaries or collections of proverbs to be paremiographical forms of proverbs. One should bear in mind that not all of these proverbs are commonly used in the language. There are plenty of proverb collections that disregard the principle of fre-

quency of use, thus prioritising another principle, namely the principle of comprehensiveness and representation of paremiological material, for example *Bol'soj slovar' russkih poslovic* (Mokienko 2010).

3. Proverb and Phraseme

A phraseme (phraseology) is considered to be a set expression. Proponents of the broad conception in phraseology consider proverbs to be phrasemes (Mokienko 1989; Telija 1996; Dobrovolskij & Piirainen 2005; Trendafilova 2008; Sergienko 2010). Indeed, proverbs and phrasemes have the same features: they are both set expressions. Studies of proverbs applying methods of historical linguistics show that proverbs can be a source of new phrasemes, while conversely, phrasemes can be a source of new proverbs (Mokienko 1989: 116). However, advocates of a narrow conception in phraseology regard proverbs as constituting a separate subsystem of language, exactly as a paremiological level or subsystem. Thus a phraseme signifies a concept, while a proverb signifies a proposition (Permjakov 1968:225; 1988: 85; Kotova 2004: 22).

4. Variability vs. Modification. Definitions of Invariant, Variant, Variation and Modified Proverb

Perhaps Archer Taylor was one of the first, who gave consideration to *proverb variability* in the language. In his book *The Proverb*, he showed that the existence of proverbs in oral traditions causes them to change over time and that some proverbs are formed on the basis of already existing proverbs. Here are some examples from Taylor's book (1931: 22).

A birde in hond is better than thre in the wode.
A birde in the hand is worth ten in the wood.
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

According to Taylor, the proverb "One man does not make a team" was created on the basis of the proverb "One swallow does not make a summer," the proverb "Politics makes strange bedfellows" was derived from two proverbs – "Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows" and the proverb "Poverty makes strange bedfellows" (Taylor 1931: 19-20). Having researched Somali proverbs, Kapchits came to the conclusion that one should distinguish between proverb variants and proverb varia-

tions. A proverb variation does not make a change to the proverb's basic meaning, while a proverb variant modifies it (Kapchits 2008: 200). Paremiologist Petranka Trendafilova (2005; 2006; 2008) suggests distinguishing between proverb-variants and proverb-synonyms. However, her conception is controversial. It is well known that a proverb signifies not a concept but a proposition and therefore cannot have relations of synonymy in a language. Speaking about the variability or modification of the proverbs, paremiologists point out the various linguistic and extra linguistic factors: time, space, context, language tendency to economy and human memory (Žigulev 1986: 16-19; Alefrenko & Semenenko 2009: 285; Trendafilova 2008: 66; Dobrovolskij & Karaulov 1992: 12).

From my point of view, the existence of variability implies an existence of an invariant. The definition of a proverb invariant is considered in the doctoral thesis of Olesja Sergienko (2010). She regards a proverb invariant to be a proverb norm. According to Olesja Segienko, a norm (invariant) of a proverb is the most frequently used variant of a proverb, discovered as a result of a paremiological sociolinguistic experiment. It should be mentioned that the notion of the most frequently used proverb variant depends on time and space, and therefore cannot be regarded as a proverb invariant. In this paper, I offer the following definition of a proverb invariant: a proverb invariant is regarded as a relative stability of the proverb semantics and structure, with the logical sense of the proverb being maintained. Thus, proverb variants have the same invariant. Let us consider examples (a) and (b) from the Bulgarian language. Example (a) is borrowed from Stojkova's proverb collection:

(a) **Два пъти мери, тогаз отрежи.** [Dva păti meri, togaz otreži] (Stojkova 2007)

Measure twice, and then cut the cloth.

The logical sense of the proverb (a) is: 'think twice before you do something.'

Example (b) is taken from the Bulgarian mass media:

(b) Той припомни българската поговорка «**Три пъти мери, веднъж режи**» [Tri păti meri, vednăž reži]. (Стандарт 2005, бр. 4592)

En: He recalled the Bulgarian saying “**Measure three times, once cut the cloth.**” [Translated by M. V.]

Logical sense of the proverb (b): ‘think twice before you do something.’

Examples (a) and (b) maintain the relative stability of the semantics and structure and have the same invariant ‘think twice before you do something.’ Therefore, they can be considered to be proverb variants.

The well-known international proverb “Appetite comes with eating” can be used both as a maxim (when it is used literally) and as a proverb (when it is used in a figurative sense). The case in which it is used as a proverb is considered below in the examples (c) and (d). Example (c) is borrowed from Kotova’s proverb collection:

(c) **Апетитът идва с яденето.** [apetitъt idva s jadeneto] (Kotova 2004)

Appetite comes with the meal.

Logical sense of the proverb (c): ‘demands grow with consumption.’

Example (d) is taken from the mass media.

(d) Тук на Балканите **апетитът идва още преди яденето** [apetit idva ošte predi jadeneto]. Сръбския [(sic!) Сръбският? M. V.] премиер Джинджич още в началото на ноември заяви, че от международната финансова подкрепа за Сърбия зависи съдбата на полуострова[...]. (Демокрация 2002, бр. 5).

En: Here in the Balkans “**Appetite comes even before the meal.**” In the beginning of November, the prime minister of Serbia declared that the destiny of the Balkan Peninsula depends on financial help... [Translated by M. V.].

Logical sense of the proverb (d): ‘demands grow before the consumption.’

In the example above, one can observe the logical deviation of proverb (d) from proverb (c). I consider proverb (d) to be a variation of proverb (c), because (d) is formed on the basis of the well-known international proverb “Appetite comes with the

meal.” Thus, the proverb variation is characterised by a relative stability of the proverb semantics and structure, while the logical sense of the proverb is changed. I hold that it is possible to use the word *variation* in this sense because the words *variation* and *variant* are not fully synonymous. In mathematics and statistics, the notion of variation has a definite meaning of its own. I believe that the notion of variation can have its own definite meaning in paremiology, as well. Unlike proverb variants, proverb variations have their own logical sense in the language, thus they have the potential to become standalone proverbs in the language. In order to become a standalone proverb, proverb variation should come into use in the language and become a set expression. Since the notion of a set expression presupposes that this expression is approved by the usage of the language. Let us examine the next example:

(e) На всички натюрморти в долния десен ъгъл стои и подписът на главния готвач. След тази кратка и леко шизофренична разходка в културологичния гастроном, ще завърша с една лично моя поговорка: **«Апетитът идва с яденето, хепатитът - с пиенето»** [Appetit idva s jadeneto, hepatităt – s pieneto]. (Егоист 2006, бр. 11)

En: There is a signature of the principal cook in the right bottom of all still life paintings. I shall finish this short and somewhat “schizophrenic” tour with my personal saying, - **“Appetite comes with meal, hepatitis – with drinking-about.”** [Translated by M. V.]

Example (e) cannot be considered to be a proverb variation. In the sense I mean, it is a case of proverb modification, because the proverb loses its figurativeness and philosophical thought in the context. Thus, the modification of a proverb is an alteration of its essential property or properties (see § 2). As a result of the loss of its essential properties, the proverb ceases to meet the criteria for the definition of a proverb and leaves the proverb system. I hold that a modified proverb is no longer a proverb. A modified proverb has associations with the original proverb, but ceases to belong to the proverb system and becomes another linguistic unit. In the case of example (e), the modified proverb can be interpreted as a potential maxim (to become a maxim it must

be approved by the usage of the language). Thus, proverb variability and proverb modification are different mechanisms in the language.

5. Theoretical Bases of the Paper

The theoretical bases of the paper lean on the theory of the open system that is used in thermodynamics. An open system (unlike a closed system) is capable of interacting with its surroundings and of exchanging substances. Therefore, the main characteristic of open systems is the capability for interaction and change (Moore& Spencer 2001: 284, 301-309).

I regard the proverb system as an open system, which interacts with the surroundings and undergoes alterations. Surroundings consist of various factors, *e.g.*, time, space, context, human memory, etc. All alterations that occur in the proverb system are considered in this paper in accordance with the philosophical categories of quality and quantity (Audi 1999: 122-123). The concept of categories of quality and quantity goes back to Aristotle. "Quality is *differentia of essence*," - (Aristotle 1980: 259). Due to its quality, a thing exists as itself and not as another thing. Quantity is either discrete or continuous (Aristotle 1963: 24, 12). Hegel, in his *Science of Logic*, describes quality as determinateness and quantity as magnitude (Hegel 2010: 58, 152). He considers the difference between quality and quantity as follows: Qualitative alteration causes the modification of one thing into another, while quantitative alteration does not cause such alteration (op. cit.: 153).

This paper regards quality as essential properties. Having lost these properties, the essence ceases to be itself and becomes another essence. Quantity is not property of essence. Quantity can be represented as a discrete magnitude (op.cit: 166).

All alterations that affect the essential properties of a proverb are considered to be qualitative changes or modifications. Modification implies that a modified proverb leaves the system of the proverb. Alterations that do not affect the essential features of a proverb are considered in this paper to be quantitative alterations or variability. Proverb variants and variations are the parts of the proverb system. The schema of proverb variability and proverb modification is represented below:

Variability (quantitative alterations):

- { Proverb system:
 - Proverb invariant (relative stability of the proverb semantics and structure, logical sense of the proverb being maintained).
 - Proverb variant (a proverb variant has the same invariant with the proverb).
 - Proverb variation (relative stability of the proverb semantics and structure, logical sense of the proverb being changed).

VS.

Modification (qualitative alterations):

- { ↓ Proverb leaves the proverb system:
 - Proverb loses at least one of its essential properties:
 - 1) Syntactic structure of a sentence
 - 2) Aphoristic character
 - 3) Figurativeness
 - 4) Moral and philosophical thought

6. Data and Methods of the Research

Paremiologists consider mass media as important materials for researching proverb usage. The data for this research were collected in the mass media corpora of the **Bulgarian National Corpus (BNC)**. The BNC was created at the Institute for Bulgarian Language “Prof. L. Andrejchin” by research associates from the Department of Computational Linguistics and the Department of Bulgarian Lexicology and Lexicography. It incorporated several individual electronic corpora, developed during the period from 2001 to 2009. The corpus was constantly enlarged with new texts. I collected data for this study in the summer of 2012. At that time, the mass media corpora consisted of periodical print editions from 1945 to 2009. The total number of newspapers was 3426 units and magazines numbered 1126.

Proverb variability and modification was researched against the background of paremiographical forms of these proverbs in a collection of Bulgarian proverbs (Stojkova 2007) and a collection of commonly known Bulgarian proverbs prepared by Mari-

na Kotova (2004) in her doctoral thesis. Thus, these proverb collections served as supporting data in the study. There was no need to compare the media forms of the proverbs with all other existing paremiographical forms of these proverbs in order to discover the proverb variability or modification in the mass media. It was enough with one paremiographical form for this purpose. Therefore, the choice of paremiographical form of a proverb was not essential to the aim of this study. We investigated media forms of the proverbs against the background of the paremiographical forms of Marina Kotova (if the analysed proverb was recorded there) or paremiographical forms of Stefana Stojkava (in case if the analysed proverb was registered there). Stojkava's collection was prepared on the basis of other proverb collections according to the encyclopaedic principle and represents Bulgarian paremiographical traditions. The encyclopaedic principle is an advantage in the Stojkova's collection, but it constitutes a disadvantage as well. For example, Stojkova's proverbs are often out of date and do not fit the situations of modern life. Kotova's collection was prepared as a result of a sociolinguistic paremiological experiment according to the principal of common proficiency.

The data in this study were retrieved by a method of searching 34 Bulgarian proverbs in the media corpora of the BNC. The data consisted of 99 media forms of these proverbs. The study defined a media form as any form that did not match the paremiographical forms of Stefana Stojkova (2007) or Marina Kotova (2004). The main criterion for data collection was the use of the proverb in media forms.

The aim of the study required complex research methods. These methods allowed one: 1) to consider proverbs as an open system and to introduce the concept of the proverb invariant, 2) to compare media and paremiographical forms of the proverbs, 3) to classify the data, 4) to study the proverb semantics, structure and stylistics.

A proverb invariant was introduced by means of deduction and modelled with the help of the method of semantic modelling. For example, the proverb “Най-дobre се смее онъ, който се смее последен” (“He laughs best who laughs last”) has the following invariant ‘he who wins last, wins definitively.’

In order to study the proverb semantics, I used methods of both context-free and context-bound analysis of proverb semantics (Krikmann 2009:15-17), as well as methods of component semantic analysis and the method of semantic field (Tarlanov 1995).

The proverb structure was studied by means of a traditional syntax analysis of a sentence (op.cit.).

The morphological features of the proverbs were analysed with the help of a traditional method that takes into account the concept of parts of speech and morphological notions of form, inflection, tense etc (op.cit.).

Stylistic devices were studied in the context of the paremiographical forms of the proverbs, the last being regarded as stylistically neutral, since metaphor, rhyme and some other stylistic devices are ordinary and therefore a stylistically unmarkable means of proverb creation (op. cit.).

Proverb variability and modification was researched with the help of a comparative method often used in paremiology. I compared media forms with the paremiographical forms of the proverbs. If paremiographical forms of one and the same proverb differ in various collections, I preferred the traditional form from Stojkova's collection (because her collection represented Bulgarian paremiographical traditions). In order to discover proverb variability or modification, I analysed proverb semantics, structure, stylistics and morphological features.

The research data were classified in compliance with two criteria:

- 1) The essential properties of proverbs. By means of this criterion, I distinguished proverbs from cases of modified proverbs.
- 2) The notion of a proverb invariant (the relative stability of the proverb semantics and structure, logical sense of the proverb being maintained). Using this criterion, all proverbs were divided into variants and variations.

The structure of this article represents a classification of the research data. Part 7 analyses proverb variants, part 8 examines proverb variations, part 9 dwells on modified proverbs. All examples are supplied with a number, a translation into English and an interpretation of the meaning.

7. Proverb Variants

Research material shows that proverb variants can be created by means of lexical, morphological, structural and structural lexical means. Here are some examples:

7.1. Lexical Means

Proverb variability in example (1) is created by means of synonyms *obadilo se/otgovorilo* (*answer*):

Каквото повикало – такова се обадило. [kakvoto povikalo – takova se obadilo]
(Kotova 2004; Stojkova 2007)

One gets an answer in line with the request.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘all that we do can influence our future.’

(1) Вероятно периодът ще премине изцяло под знака на поговорката «**Каквото повикало, такова отговорило**» [kakvoto povikalo takova otgovorilo]. (Пари 2004, бр. 135)

En: It looks like the whole period will go under the saying “**One gets an answer in line with the request.**” [Translated by M. V.]

Example (2) shows that proverb variability is made by means of words that have some similar semantic features. Root is a part of a tree, so the words *дървото* (*tree*) and *корен* (*root*) have some similar semantic features.

Крушата не пада по-далече от дървото. [Krušata ne pada po daleč ot därvoto] (Kotova 2004)

The pear does not fall far from the tree.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘children are like their parents.’

(2) И вярно е, че **крушата не пада по-далеч от корена** [krušata ne pada po daleč ot korena]. (Нова Зора 2004, бр. 1)

En: That’s true that “**The pear does not fall far from the root.**” [Translated by M. V.]

7.2. Morphological Means

In example (3), variability is created by morphological means. Proverb variant (3) has different forms of grammatical number than does proverb (3) (*krotkoto agne/krotkite agne; suče/sučat*):

Кроткото агне от две майки суче. [Krotkoto agne ot dve majki suče] (Stojkova 2007)

A meek lamb suckles milk from two mothers.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘a quiet person is accompanied by luck.’

(3) «**Кротките агнета от две майки сучат**»

[krotkite agneta ot dve majki sučat], - казва

българския народ. (Литературен форум 2000, бр.

3)

En: “**Meek lambs suckle milk from two mothers,**” - say Bulgarians. [Translated by M. V.]

7.3. Structural Means

Example (4a) demonstrates that the proverb variant is created by structural means. Here one can observe change in word order. The predicate (P) changes places with the direct object (O). If we mark the subject as (S), then the formula of word order variability looks like this (S+O+P/S+P+O).

Една лястовица пролет не прави. [Edna ljastovica prolet ne pravi] (Stojkova 2007)

One swallow does not make a spring.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘do not make hasty conclusions.’

(4a) През 1958 съветският астроном Козирев

съзря в единен лунен кратер признания на

изгриване, ала само «**една лястовица не прави**

пролет» [edna ljastovica ne pravi prolet]. (Космос 1962, кн. 2)

En: In 1958 soviet astronomer Kozirev saw features of shining in one crater, but “**One swallow doesn’t make a spring.**” [Translated by M. V.]

Example (4b) reveals the structural lexical means in the creation of the proverb variability. Words *пролет* (*spring*) and *лято* (*summer*) have the same semantic feature of ‘season’; moreover, both words designate the warm season of the year when the swallows come back. In addition, the word order in example (4b) differs from the paremiographical form of the proverb, *i.e.*, (S+O+P/S+P+O).

(4b) Няма съмнение, че той има възможност да се бори за титлата, но все пак не забравяме, че **една лястовица не прави лято.** (Капитал 2008, бр 11)

En: There is no doubt that he has a chance to fight for the title, but let us not forget that “**One swallow doesn’t make a summer.**” [Translated by M. V.]

8. Proverb Variations

Unlike proverb variants, proverb variations have their own logical sense. Proverb variations do not have the same invariant with the original proverb on the basis of which they are created. Therefore, I hold that proverb variations can become potential standalone proverbs if they come into usage in the language. Research material in this study shows that proverb variations can be created through lexical and structural lexical means.

8.1. Structural Means

Example (5a) demonstrates the creation of proverb variation through structural changes in the original proverb, namely by the continuation of a proverb. The well-known international proverb “Appetite comes with eating” (Martinsson 1996) gets a contextual continuation in the Bulgarian mass media. The article in the newspaper tells us about the increase in financial expenses in providing economic assistance for unemployed people. Thus, the proverb gets a new logical sense in the context –‘demands grow with consumption according to the affordability of the consumption.’

Апетитът идва с яденето. [apetităt idva s jadeneto]
(Kotova 2004)

Appetite comes with the meal.

Logical sense of the proverb (5a): ‘demands grow with consumption.’

(5a) Нормално, **апетитът идва с яденето**
толкова по-бързо, колкото «по-безплатно» - е
то [apetităt idva s jadeneto tolkova po-bärzo, kol-
koto po-bezplatno e to]. В самата национална
програма подпомаганите безработни в
трудоспособна възраст се разделят на три групи.
(Капитал 2005, бр. 2)

En: Usually “**Appetite comes with the meal according to the affordability of the meal.**” The National program divides all unemployed people into three groups.
[Translated by M. V.]

Logical sense of the proverb variation (5a): ‘demands grow with consumption according to the affordability of the consumption.’

8.2. Structural Lexical Means

The next example of proverb variation (5b) is constructed by means of a lexical change in the proverb. Namely, the preposition *c* (*with*) is replaced by *преди* (*before*); moreover, the proverb variation (5b) contains a specifying adverb *още* (*even*).

(5b) Тук на Балканите **апетитът идва още преди**
яденето [apetităt idva oše predi jadeneto].
Сръбския [(sic!) Сръбският? M. V.] премиер
Джинджич още в началото на ноември заяви, че
от международната финансова подкрепа за
Сърбия зависи съдбата на полуострова [...].
(Демокрация 2002, бр. 5)

En: Here in the Balkans “**Appetite comes even before the meal.**” In the beginning of November, the prime minister of Serbia declared that the destiny of the Balkan Peninsula depends on financial help...[Translated by M. V.]

Logical sense of the proverb variation (5b): ‘demands grow even before the consumption.’

9. Modified Proverbs in the Discourse of the Bulgarian Mass Media

As I mentioned above, this paper considers a proverb modification to be a case in which a proverb loses its essential proper-

ty or properties. The essential properties of a proverb are: the syntactic structure of a sentence, the aphoristic character, and figurativeness, moral and philosophical thought. Cases of structural, lexical, structural lexical proverb modification were found in the research material, as were cases of stylistic proverb modification.

9.1. *Structural Proverb Modification*

There are many cases of proverb modification into noun and verb phrases in the investigated material. These phrases still retain a fragment of the original proverb figurativeness. If they are frequent in the language, they can become idioms (an idiom is a figurative set expression). I consider such to be cases of structural proverb modification because the proverb loses its essential property, namely the syntactic structure of a sentence. I believe these phrases are potential idioms in the language.

Example (6) demonstrates the case of a proverb modification into the verb phrase. The second part of the proverb (after the comma) is deleted and the first part becomes the verb phrase.

Кови желязото, докато е горещо. [Kovi željazoto na demokracija] (Stojkova 2007) → **да се кове желязото** [da se kove željazoto]

Forge the iron when it is warm. → forge the iron

Modification of the logical sense: ‘do the work in time’
→ ‘do the work.’

(6) Другата Михайлова – Екатерина – се опита да внесе ред и мир. И заяви, че трябва заедно да се кове желязото [da se kove željazoto] на демокрацията. (Нова Зора 2003, бр. 44)

En: Another Mihajlova – Ekaterina – tried to bring order and peace. She declared that we should “forge the iron” of democracy together. [Translated by M. V.]

Example (7) shows a proverb modification into a noun phrase.

Под една мишница две дини се не носят. [Pod edna mišnica dve dini se ne nosjat] (Stojkova 2007) . → **(x) дини под една мишница** [(x) dini pod edna mišnica]

Two melons are not carried under one armpit. → (x)
melons under one armpit

Modification of the logical sense → ‘do not do two jobs simultaneously’ → ‘(x) jobs simultaneously’

(7) Преценете дали събирате **три дини под една мишница?** [tri dini pod edna mišnica] Парите не стигат, никой не ми взема на работа освен като сервитьорка. (Капитал 2004, бр. 23)

En: Try to evaluate if you can take “**three melons under one armpit?**” There is not enough money nobody wants to employ me. The only job I can get is as a waitress. [Translated by M. V.].

9.2. *Lexical Proverb Modification*

A modified proverb (8a) is created with the help of lexical means on the basis of an already existing proverb. The word *цар* (*tsar*) is replaced by a semantically different word, *газ* (*gas*). As a consequence, the modified proverb loses its philosophical meaning and fragment of the proverb figurativeness. Example (8a) can be understood only in its context.

Цар далеко, Бог високо. [Car daleko, Bog visoko] (Stojkova 2007)

The tsar is far away, God is high in the sky

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘government is far away, justice is high up - rely only on yourself’

(8a) **Бог високо, Газ – далеко** [Bog visoko, Gaz daleko]. Колкото по-далеко, толкова по-опасен.

През седмицата се видя ясно въпреки совалките на властта, че газ у нас няма и скоро няма да има.

(Стандарт 2009, бр. 57)

En: “**God is high up on the sky, the gas is far away.**”

The more far away it is, the more it is dangerous. This week, it became clear that in spite of the efforts of the government, we do not have gas and will not have it in the near future. [Translated by M. V.]

Logical sense of the modified proverb (8a): ‘justice is high up, gas is far away.’

9.3. Structural Lexical Proverb Modification

The next example, example (8b), reveals the structural lexical modification of the proverb. As a result of the modification of the second part of the proverb (after the comma), it loses its figurativeness and the modified proverb loses an essential property of being a proverb, namely, its philosophical and moral thought.

(8b) И най-ужасното, че няма на кого да се
оплачеш. **Бог високо, а царят стана премиер.**
[Bog visoko, a caryat stana premier]. Как да се
оплачеш на човек, понижен в ранг. (Демокрация
2001, бр. 193, 17.08.2001)

En: The worst is that there is nobody to receive my complaint. “**God is high up on the sky, the tsar became a prime minister.**” How one can complain to a person that has been lowered in rank. [Translated by M. V.]

Another example of a structural lexical modification demonstrates a contamination of the proverbs. For the purposes of this paper, proverb contamination refers to the combination of two parts of different proverbs in one expression. A part of the proverb is regarded as any proverb component bigger than a word. It can be a phrase, which retains a fragment of the proverb figurativeness. If a proverb is a complex or compound sentence, then the part of the proverb can be either a dependent or independent clause. The contamination of two proverbs is observed in example (9). As a consequence of proverb contamination, the figurativeness of the modified proverb is not clear; it loses its aphoristic character. The meaning of the modified proverb cannot be understood in the context without knowing the original proverbs.

(A) **Най-добре се смее оня, който се смее последен.**
[naj-dobre se smee onja, kojto se smee posleden]
(Kotova 2004)
He laughs best who laughs last.
Logical sense of the proverb (A): ‘he who wins last, wins definitively.’

(B) **Който копае гроб другиму, сам пада в него.**
 [kojto kopae grob drugimu, sam pada v nego] (Stojkova 2007; Kotova 2004)

He who digs the grave for another, falls down in the grave.
 Logical sense of the proverb (B): ‘he who wants to harm another, harms himself.’

The second part of the proverb (A) is attached to the second part of the proverb (B), so we get a proverb modification (9).

(9) Удари един кметски скоч от гербаджийте!
 Викам му! – Бе, аз скоч винаги, ама по какъв случай? Първи сме! – Айде бе? – викам му. Нали BSP беше първа? После пък DPS? Сега вие??!!?
 – **Който се смее последен, сам пада в него!**
 [kojto se smee posleden, sam pada v nego] –
 обърква пословицата Бат Бойко и отново ме издумква по гърба. (Дума 2007, бр. 117)

En: Are we first? – Are we really? - I shouted to him. Was the BSP (political party) first? Was then the DPS (political party) first? Are you first now??!!? – “**He who laughs last, finally falls down**” – uncle Bojko mixed up the proverb and again pat me on the back. [Translated by M. V.]

Logical sense of the modified proverb (9): ‘he who wins, finally loses.’

9.4. Stylistic Proverb Modification

Example (10) demonstrates proverb modification with the help of stylistic means, namely application. In this example, a proverb modification is created by means of a stylistic device: application. Proverb application means applying a proverb as a “building material” to the discourse. As a consequence of such an application, proverb modification loses its aphoristic character, as well as its moral and philosophical meaning.

Гарван гарвану око не вади. [garvan garvanu oko ne vadi] (Stojkova 2007; Kotova 2004)

A raven does not peck the eye of another raven.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘bad people do not harm one another.’

(10) По онova време началничката му Темида работела на принципа «Гарван гарвану око не вади» така че безметежно минали 10 години. Съдията обаче вече не бил сред силните на деня и **на горкия гарван му извадили окото** [na gorkija garvan mu izvadili oko]. (Банкер 2009, бр. 41)

En: During that time, his boss, the Judiciary worked according to the principle of “A raven does not peck the eye of another raven”; ten years passed peacefully that way. The judge did not direct the session of the court that day and **“they pecked out the eye of the miserable raven.”** [Translated by M. V.]

The logical sense of the modified proverb (10): ‘the miserable defendant was sentenced.’

Proverb modification (11) is created by means of a paradox between the logical sense of the original proverb and the meaning of the example (11). As a result, we have a parody on the original proverb. This study finds the parody on the proverb to be a case of a proverb modification creating a comic effect in the discourse. Proverb modification (11) loses its figurativeness and philosophical thought. If it gains common use in the language, it can become a maxim (an aphoristic set expression with a syntactic structure of a sentence).

Най-добре се смее оня, който се смее последен.
[Naj-dobre se smee onja, kojto se smee posleden]
(Kotova 2004)

He laughs best who laughs last.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘he who wins last, wins definitely.’

(11) Това беше виц, нали? **Който се смее последен – бавно загрява**, казваше В. Върбанов на радио «Тангра». (Литературен вестник 2003, бр. 39)

En: It was a joke, was it not? **“He who laughs the last – thinks slowly,”** - V. Vărbanov used to say on the radio “Tangra.” [Translated by M. V.]

Another example of the parody on the proverb can be found in that example (12). The comic effect of the proverb modification is constructed by means of a parallelism of the forms *jadeneto/pieneto* and *apetit/hepatit* in example (12), and by means of a paradox that lies in the comparison of appetite with hepatitis. A modified proverb loses its figurativeness, philosophical thought and becomes a potential maxim.

Апетитът идва с яденето. [apetitъt idva s jadeneto] (Kotova 2004)

Appetite comes with the meal.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘demands grow with consumption.’

(12) На всички натюроморти в долния десен ъгъл стои и подпистът на главния готвач. След тази кратка и леко шизофренична разходка в културологичния гастроном, ще завърша с една лично моя поговорка: «**Апетитът идва с яденето, хепатитът - с pienето**»[apetit idva s jadeneto, hepatit – s pieneto]. Да ви е сладко. (Егоист 2006, бр. 11)

En: There is a signature at the bottom right of all the still-life paintings. I shall finish this short and somewhat “schizophrenic” tour with my personal saying, - “**Appetite comes with meal, hepatitis – with drinking-about.**” [Translated by M. V.]

The proverb modification in example (13) is made by means of the stylistic device of allusion. Allusion to the international proverb creates associations and expressiveness in the discourse. The proverb serves as subtext without which it is hard to understand the meaning of the example (13).

С питане до Цариград се стига. [S pitane do Carigrad se stiga] (Stojkova 2007; Kotova 2004)

Asking how one gets to Carigrad (Constantinople).

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘asking how one can get to wherever.’

(13) Пътят до него не се намира лесно, в тази част на страната ни указателни табели са дефицит, но

нали знаете, с питане докъде се стига [s pitane dokăde se stiga]. (Върхове 2007, бр. 78)

En: The road to this place cannot be found easily – There is a lack of direction signs in this part of the country, but after all you know “**Where one gets by asking, don’t you?**” [Translated by M. V.]

The next proverb modification is created by means of literalisation. In this case, a modified proverb loses its figurativeness and becomes a diet instruction for people that suffer from corpulence. The original proverb is literalised in the context with the help of a lexical change of the word *meri* (*measure*) for word *hapni* (*eat up*). The modified proverb (14) has the potential to become a maxim if it gains common use in the language.

Два пъти мери, тогаз отрежи. [Dva păti meri, togaz meri] (Stojkova 2007)

Measure twice, and then cut the cloth.

Logical sense of the proverb: ‘think twice before you do something.’

(14) **Три пъти мери, веднъж хапни!** [Tri păti meri, vednăž reži] Калорийната везна при вас е задължителна, тъй като килцата ви не подлежат на контрол. (Живот и здраве 2009, бр 1)

En: “**Measure three times, eat once!**” Caloric measurement is compulsory for you because your weight is out of control. [Translated by M. V.]

10. Conclusions

Paremiology is the interdisciplinary field of study that uses methods both of linguistics and of literary study. This paper examines proverb variability and modification in terms of a systematic approach in linguistics. Proverbs are considered to constitute an open system that interacts with the surroundings and that undergoes qualitative and quantitative alterations. The terminological base is developed for the purpose of the study. Proverb variability refers to quantitative alterations in the proverb system. Resulting from proverb variability, proverb variants and proverb variations appear in the language. In order to investigate proverb variability, the paper introduces the notion of a

proverb invariant. Modified proverbs are the result of qualitative proverb changes. As a consequence of the qualitative alterations, proverbs lose their essential properties and become other linguistic units. In order to analyse such qualitative proverb alterations (proverb modification), the essential proverb properties are defined in this paper.

Summarising the results of the study, it should be stated that:

- In addition to their paremiographical forms, proverbs appear in mass media in the forms of variants, variations and modifications.
- The question of whether the discovered forms of variants, variations and modified proverbs are common or occasional (one-day wonders) in the language will be answered in time.
- Proverb variability is created by various linguistic means. Proverb variants are created with the help of lexical, morphological, structural and structural lexical means. Proverb variations are made by lexical and structural means.
- Some creation patterns of proverb variants and variations are discovered in the research. The creation patterns of proverb variants and proverb variations differ from each other.
- Some creation patterns of modified proverbs were found in the study. Proverb modification is created by means of lexical, structural, structural lexical and stylistic devices.
- The analysis performed showed that proverb modification and proverb variability have different patterns.
- Proverb modification can function as a mechanism for proverb transfer into another phraseological unit (e.g., idiom and maxim).

In conclusion, I would like to point out that issues concerning proverb variability and modification are worth studying both in terms of synchronic and diachronic linguistics.

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DAMIEN VILLERS

PROVERBIOGENÈSE ET OBSOLESCENCE: LA NAISSANCE ET LA MORT DES PROVERBES

Abstract: This study deals with the birth and death of proverbs: how and why do they “come and go”? Some English and French proverb specimens will be studied in order to point out the different reasons why some sayings gain proverbial currency while others don’t, and on the other hand why some proverbs lose their currency and fall out of use while others last for centuries. This study will first include the description of the sources for many ancient or modern proverbs and the description of the criteria that boost or grant their status or ‘proverbialization’. This will call for an objective and scientific definition of the proverb that allows the classification and distinction of all sayings and idioms. This will make possible the description of the different steps of a very mysterious phenomenon – proverbial birth – which will be referred to as “proverbio-genesis”. Finally, a part will be devoted to the different ways proverbs can “die”, whether “naturally” or by genre shifting (mutation).

Keywords: proverbe, proverb, saying, définition, naissance, création, usité, currency, proverbialisation, proverbiogenèse, mort, décatégorisation, genre shifting, classification.

Introduction

Comment naissent et meurent les proverbes? Quelles en sont les étapes et les causes? Ces questions ont fait l’objet de très peu d’études dans le domaine de la parémiologie. Pourtant, ces énigmes peuvent nous permettre de mieux comprendre certains phénomènes de masse au sein d’une communauté linguistique. C’est donc pour ces raisons que j’ai décidé de consacrer un article à ces énigmes ethnolinguistiques. À travers l’étude de plusieurs exemples précis de proverbes anglais ou français, seront abordées dans un premier temps les sources, les conditions et les étapes qui mènent à la naissance des proverbes, ainsi qu’une proposition non empirique de définition du proverbe tirée de Villers (2014). Dans un deuxième temps, il sera question de l’obsolescence ou la «mort» des proverbes, ce qui permettra

de constater qu'il existe plusieurs types de «mort proverbiale». Au cours de cette étude, il sera question avant tout de proverbes. Seront donc écartés les énoncés qui sont parfois associés au proverbe, tels que les expressions idiomatiques, les aphorismes et les maximes etc¹.

I. Proverbiogenèse

Ce phénomène mystérieux n'a fait l'objet de presque aucune étude, à l'exception à ma connaissance de Firth (1926), qui a étudié la création de proverbes chez les Maori, et de Schapira (1999/2000) qui commente les conditions nécessaires pour qu'un énoncé devienne proverbe. Cette dernière utilise le terme «proverbialisation», mais j'utiliserais pour ma part le terme «proverbiogenèse» dans cette étude qui aura pour but d'aller plus loin et de décrire avec précision les conditions mais surtout les diverses étapes de ce phénomène. Mais afin de mieux comprendre comment naissent les proverbes, il faut tout d'abord étudier leurs créateurs et les «ingrédients».

Sources proverbiales

Avant d'étudier les sources des proverbes, il est important de préciser qu'il ne sera pas ici question des origines du genre proverbial, qui sont relativement obscures². Il sera question d'individus, de proverbes précis. Malgré tout, leurs origines sont souvent tout aussi obscures bien qu'elles fassent l'objet de plusieurs études. Il est en effet presque impossible de savoir avec certitude quand est né un proverbe, car même en présence d'une source écrite et datée, il reste à établir s'il s'agit d'une invention de l'auteur ou d'un simple emploi d'une formule existante. Le grand âge de nombreux proverbes ne facilite pas la tâche car certains existent depuis des siècles, voire plusieurs millénaires. Une importante découverte archéologique, faite dans les années 60 dans une zone qui correspond de nos jours à l'Iraq, a permis de révéler la présence de proverbes sur des tablettes d'argile contenant des caractères cunéiformes. Cette découverte est détaillée dans Bendt Alster (1993: 1-4), qui décrit des documents rédigés en sumérien, la plus vieille langue du monde: documents administratifs, textes littéraires et scolaires, ainsi qu'une collection de proverbes. La datation des tablettes a permis d'estimer que certains documents remontent à l'an 1900 avant J-C, tandis que les plus anciens datent d'environ 2600 avant J-C, ce qui

correspond presque aux premières sources écrites de l'humanité. Ainsi, parmi les proverbes retrouvés sur les tablettes, Alster (1993: 5-7) cite des exemples tels que *Haste is chaff* ou *Two hearts, two minds*, qui ne sont pas sans rappeler les proverbes contemporains *Haste makes waste* et *So many heads, so many minds*. Il pourrait alors s'agir des mêmes proverbes qui ont évolué et muté à travers les siècles, ce qui permettrait d'affirmer que certains proverbes sont vieux de presque cinq millénaires.

Certes, de nombreux proverbes ne sont vieux que de quelques siècles, mais cela constitue tout de même un problème lorsqu'il s'agit d'en établir les origines. Les deux principales sources connues pour les proverbes en Europe sont, comme le stipulent Mieder (2004: 10-11) et Paczolay (1993: 265), le recueil *Adagia* compilé par Erasme de Rotterdam, et la Bible. Ces ouvrages ont été traduits dans les langues de tous les pays européens et ont ainsi servi de sources dans la plupart. Ainsi, *Adagia*, qui comprend des proverbes latins et quelques proverbes grecs, a été traduit en français et en anglais entre autres, et ont donné des proverbes tels que *Pierre qui roule n'amasse pas mousse*, *Many hands make light work*, *What's done cannot be undone* etc. De la même manière, la Bible a été traduite à partir de l'hébreu, du grec ou du latin dans chaque pays et nous a donné (moyennant parfois quelques transformations) des proverbes tels que *Œil pour œil, dent pour dent* (Mathieu 5.38, Exode 21.24 etc), *A leopard cannot change its spots* (Jeremiah 13.23), *You reap what you sow* (Hosea 8.7). Il est possible d'ajouter une troisième source importante, à savoir les fables antiques d'Esopé, datant des 6^{ème} et 7^{ème} siècles avant J-C. Taylor (1962: 28) met en avant les ouvrages du fabuliste et leur rôle dans la naissance de proverbes tels que *Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs*, *Don't count your chickens before they hatch*, *One swallow does not make a summer*, *Slow but sure wins the race* etc.

Par conséquent, il faut se tourner vers les proverbes plus récents afin de découvrir de nouvelles sources et d'étudier avec plus de précision les conditions et les étapes de leur naissance. Il existe hélas peu de très jeunes proverbes dont les origines nous sont connues. Par «très jeunes proverbes», j'entends des proverbes vieux au plus de quelques dizaines d'années. En effet, il est difficile de prétendre qu'un proverbe de 50 ou 60 ans n'est

pas très récent, lorsqu'on sait que ce genre est en moyenne multi-centenaire, voire parfois millénaire. Pour partir à la recherche de ces jeunes proverbes, il suffit de rassembler les candidats repérés depuis des années, d'aller sur internet et bien sûr de chercher dans les dictionnaires qui font la part belle aux proverbes récents, comme le Flavell et le Wordsworth, mais surtout le *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* (DMP) qui, comme son nom l'indique, recense uniquement les proverbes modernes³. Ces dictionnaires recensent également les origines des proverbes, et permettent de mettre en évidence une quatrième source, qui est la source principale pour les proverbes modernes: les médias. Afin de donner une idée du caractère usité des exemples choisis, ils seront accompagnés de leur nombre d'entrées sur le moteur de recherche Google, qui recense des millions de pages: blogs, journaux, forums, sites officiels et autres médias. Certes, cet outil ne peut servir qu'à titre indicatif, et le nombre d'entrées varie⁴ avec le temps, mais il ne faut pas sous-estimer son efficacité et sa légitimité, comme le font trop facilement certains chercheurs. Ainsi, il sera possible de comparer la fréquence en ligne (et non en Langue) des exemples recensés dans les dictionnaires avec celle de proverbes attestés. A titre d'exemple, voici quelques degrés de fréquence qui nous serviront de point de comparaison:

- Proverbes à haute fréquence: *First come, first served* (9 millions); *Better late than never* (4 millions), *A stitch in time saves nine* (3,9 millions) etc.
- Proverbes à fréquence moyenne: *Don't look a gift horse in the mouth* (140 000), *All roads lead to Rome* (500 000), *Familiarity breeds contempt* (200 000) etc.
- Proverbes basse fréquence: *All cats are grey in the dark* (23 000), *Marry in haste, repent at leisure* (16 000), *Don't wash your dirty linen in public* (11 000) etc.

Voici maintenant quelques exemples de proverbes modernes qui seront retenus dans cette étude, accompagnés de leur nombre d'entrées sur Google et de la date supposée de création ainsi que de la source supposée (seules les plus certaines seront étudiées). Plusieurs catégories semblent se distinguer, toutes plus ou moins liées aux médias:

- Les chansons et la radio: *You can't fix stupid* (11 millions. Devise de J. White sur KMOX), *It takes two to tango* (16 millions. 1952, chanson d'A. Hoffman et D. Manning); *Don't worry, be happy* (2 millions. 1908 dans une publicité puis la chanson de B. McFerrin en 1988)
- Les films et la télévision: *If you've got it, flaunt it* (3 millions. 1968, *The Producers*); *Life is like a box of chocolates* (10 millions. 1994, *Forrest Gump*); *Stupid is as stupid does* (400 000. 1994, *Forrest Gump*); *The truth is out there* (3 millions. 1993, *The X Files*)
- L'informatique et la technologie: *If it ain't broken, don't fix it* (540 000. 1964, *Naval Aviation Safety Review*); *Garbage in, garbage out* (GIGO) (1 million. 1957, *Traffic Quarterly*, au sujet des ordinateurs); *No guts, no glory* (500 000. 1945, devise de pilotes d'avions de chasse)
- La publicité: *What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas* (8 millions. 2002, spot de pub pour le tourisme de la ville); *You snooze, you lose* (360 000. 1950 dans *Waterloo Daily Courier*); *A picture is worth a thousand words* (800 000. Diverses publicités entre 1911 et 1944 pour sa forme actuelle); *Been there, done that* (10 millions. 1982 dans la presse puis 1990: publicité pour PepsiCo)
- La presse: *Black is beautiful* (528 000 / 1927, New York Amsterdam News); *You booze, you lose* (70 000 / 1986 Los Angeles Times); *Bros before hoes* (13,1 millions / 1993, Anchorage Daily News); *Move your feet, lose your seat* (100 000. 1987, Philadelphia Inquirer); *When the going gets tough, the tough get going* (5 millions. 1954, interview de Frank Leahy); *Different strokes for different folks* (460 000. 1945, Philadelphia Tribune)
- Autre sources indirectement médiatiques: *Age is just a number* (956 000 / 1955, discours de Bernard Baruch); *Make love, not war* (700 000. 1965, mouvement anti-guerre); *It's better to be pissed off than pissed on* (25 000. 1974, John Wood dans le livre *How Do You Feel?*); *Don't shit where you eat* (55 000. 1953, S Bellow dans son livre *Adventures of Augie March*)

Le premier constat qui s'impose est le suivant: ces énoncés renvoient autant d'entrées sur les moteurs de recherche que les trois catégories fréquentielles décrites plus haut pour les proverbes classiques. Si l'on ajoute à cela leur présence dans le *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs*, il ne fait nul doute que ces énoncés sont usités, y compris pour les exemples qui figurent dans aucun dictionnaire mais que j'ai inclus à titre personnel, comme *Been there, done that; Stupid is as stupid does*. Le deuxième constat est que certains de ces exemples sont nés en tant que détournements de proverbes déjà existants, à l'instar de *It takes two to tango (It takes two to quarrel), Stupid is as stupid does (Handsome is as handsome does)* etc.

Pour ce qui est des exemples français, il n'est pas possible de citer autant de proverbes modernes, faute de dictionnaires des proverbes modernes français, mais quelques exemples viennent à l'esprit: *Les parents boivent, les enfants trinquent* (slogan anti alcoolisme de l'Assurance Maladie dès 1957); *Un verre ça va, trois verres: bonjour les dégâts!* (campagne de prévention contre l'alcoolisme lancée en 1984); *Pas de bras, pas de chocolat* (qui est la chute d'une blague⁵ en circulation dans les années 80-90); *Un train peut en cacher un autre* (panneaux de sécurité de la SNCF, cf annexes 1 et 2); *On ne tire pas sur une ambulance* (attribué à une journaliste de l'*Express* en 1974). Encore, une fois, le rôle des médias est important dans la naissance de ces jeunes proverbes, mais une question subsiste avant de décrire le processus de proverbiogenèse: dans quelles conditions peuvent parler de «proverbe»?

La définition du proverbe

Afin de devenir un proverbe, un énoncé doit répondre à certains critères de départ qui lui permettront de prétendre à ce statut. Mais il est à ce stade nécessaire de proposer une définition du genre proverbial. Je ne reviendrai pas ici sur les nombreux linguistes qui ont tenté de proposer une définition, ni sur les nombreux constats concernant la difficulté voire le caractère impossible⁶ de cette tâche, car ce sont les points qui servent d'introduction à Villers (2014), un ouvrage entièrement consacré à la problématique de la définition du proverbe, dont l'objectif est de proposer une définition non empirique. J'y ai argumenté

qu'une bonne définition du proverbe doit contenir des ingrédients précis:

- Pouvoir décrire tous les proverbes mais aussi les distinguer des genres «voisins» tels que l'aphorisme ou les locutions proverbiales (une définition n'est légitime que si elle permet de classer et de discerner)
- Incorporer toutes les tentatives précédentes afin de ne garder que le meilleur et d'écartier tous les points contestables après l'étude d'un corpus et d'exemples (faire *tabula rasa* n'est pas la solution)
- Inclure toutes les approches descriptives possibles (narrative, pragmatique, cognitive, stylistique, ethnographique, sémantique, syntaxique etc.)

Ce dernier critère pose souvent problème car de nombreux linguistes ont tendance à se focaliser sur une seule approche et la mettre au centre de la définition du proverbe. Ce genre d'approche unilatérale s'explique par le désir de certains linguistes de vouloir régler l'énigme proverbiale grâce au domaine qui leur est cher, alors que ce même domaine n'est pas le plus pertinent pour décrire les proverbes.

Ainsi, de nombreux linguistes mettent en avant un certain caractère argumentatif dans la définition du proverbe. C'est le cas de Rodegem (1984: 124-128) qui parle de caractère «normatif», tandis que Norrick (1985: 73) définit le proverbe comme étant "didactic". Doctor (1993: 58-59) parle pour sa part de "argumentative topoi", c'est-à-dire des arguments sous-jacents permettant par exemple de passer d'un constat vers une conclusion dans un enchainement logique. Anscombe (1994: 106) base lui aussi sa définition sur la nature argumentative du proverbe en tant que «topos». Grzybek (1995: 429) affirme pour sa part que les proverbes indiquent des "social norms", tandis que Hernadi & Steen (1999: 7) les voient comme des "tools for social manipulation". Cadiot & Visetti (2006: 135, 141, 345) les décrivent également comme des «topoi» qui dictent une visée «morale» et une «norme». Néanmoins, ce critère pragmatique ne peut décrire le proverbe que lors de son usage en Discours, et ne prend pas en compte son potentiel en Langue ni même les autres fonctions du proverbe en Discours (illustrer, résumer etc.). Il sera

donc considéré comme un critère prototypique qui n'est pas obligatoire ou définitoire.

De nombreux linguistes axent leur définition sur des critères stylistiques ou poétiques, comme la rythmique et la structure, notamment Milner (1969: 54) qui met en avant leur «binarisme» structurel, ou encore Rodegem (1984: 128) et Conenna (2000: 29) qui systématisent le «rythme» du proverbe (structure, répétitions etc.). Dundes (1994: 60) y voit pour sa part des structures de type “topic – comment” (sujet – commentaire). Anscombe (2000: 18-19) postule même pour une structure rythmique «poétique» dans le proverbe, tout comme Hildebrandt (2005: 8): “poetic sound techniques”. Il est toutefois étrange, comme l'a souligné à juste titre Gouvard (2006: 197), spécialiste en poésie, de vouloir faire rentrer des énoncés appartenant à la langue de tous les jours dans le moule poétique. D'autres spécialistes considèrent la métaphore comme la solution de l'énigme proverbiale: Greimas (1970: 310-311), Rodegem (1984: 131), Glässer (1998: 127), Hildebrandt (2005: 8) ou Krikmann (2007: 10). Ces derniers considèrent donc les proverbes non métaphoriques comme de simples maximes ou aphorismes, ce qui pose non seulement des problèmes de classification entre ces deux genres et le genre proverbial, mais aussi un problème de hiérarchie, car le critère stylistique n'est pas le plus pertinent pour décrire ce genre essentiellement oral qu'est le proverbe. En outre, se baser sur la notion de métaphore pose des problèmes supplémentaires en raison des différents degrés de métaphorité, et des figures proches telles que la métonymie ou la personnification. Cela revient en définitive à poser des limites stylistiques au déploiement sémantique du proverbe, qui constitue un phénomène plus important que son style. En d'autres termes, je soutiens que «le trope ne fait pas le proverbe».

Enfin, plusieurs linguistes axent leur définition sur des notions assez trompeuses, comme celle de vérité; notamment chez Anscombe (2000: 10), Kleiber (2000: 54), Palma (2000: 60) ou Perrin (2000: 78). Ces derniers considèrent que les proverbes énoncent des vérités générales nommées «typifiantes a priori» qui ne sont pas des vérités absolues ou universelles. Haas (2013: 25-27) parle pour sa part de vérités généralisables pour définir le proverbe (“generalizable truth”). Cette terminologie

tend à faire oublier que le message proverbial peut contenir des affirmations et des vérités de degrés très diverses et que cette apparente vérité ne découle que du caractère usité et donc de la forme fixe du proverbe. Certains spécialistes définissent le proverbe par le biais d'une notion assez proche mais tout aussi trompeuse: la sagesse ou "wisdom". C'est le cas de Taylor (1996: 73) ou encore de John Russell et de la citation qui lui est attribuée: "the wisdom of many and the wit of one" (la sagesse d'un grand nombre et l'esprit/la répartie d'une personne).

Winick (2011: 367) met également la notion de sagesse au centre de la définition du proverbe et va plus loin en affirmant qu'un proverbe est un énoncé qui est *perçu* comme tel: "my own definition, because it is based on the communication of wisdom and wit, makes proverbiality always an emergent quality in discourse, subject to interpretation". Il va même jusqu'à inclure dans la classe des proverbes toute création spontanée, tout détournement ou imitation de proverbe déjà existant, pourvu qu'ils communiquent de la «sagesse». Une telle définition ne peut bien sûr pas être acceptée. Dans un premier temps, force est de constater que baser la définition d'un genre sur l'interprétation et l'impression d'appartenance d'un énoncé à ce genre est relativement empirique. La notion de proverbe devient ici une notion variable et instable, dans laquelle on ne sait plus trop quels énoncés ranger. Qui plus est, cette définition est relativement unilatérale et donne trop d'importance à un critère aussi flou et volatile que la notion de sagesse. De plus, cette définition pose des problèmes de classification, car les énoncés attestés ou «usités», les créations spontanées et les détournements d'énoncés attestés sont tous mis «dans le même panier proverbial», ce qui revient à détruire et fusionner plusieurs classes d'énoncés: les proverbes, les détournements ou «métaproverbes», les aphorismes, les maximes etc. Ignorer des distinctions aussi importantes que le caractère usité / non usité, le statut de citation / création personnelle, l'intention de détourner / s'approprier un énoncé n'est pas acceptable lorsqu'on étudie un genre aussi oral que le proverbe. En définitive, cette définition est une «anti-définition» dans la mesure où elle ne permet aucune classification du proverbe et des genres connexes et où elle ignore de nombreux critères pertinents (ethnographique, cognitif, narratif etc.).

Les tentatives les plus intéressantes sont selon moi celles de Schapira (1999) et Norrick (1985). La première consacre un ouvrage entier aux *Stéréotypes en français*, y compris un chapitre entier au proverbe (et un autre à quelques genres connexes) qu'elle définit comme «anonyme», «autonome», «imitant la structure de la loi scientifique» (donc générique), «investi d'une autorité», «applicable à des situations humaines», «possède un pouvoir prévisionnel» (Schapira 1999: 88). Néanmoins, cette définition se base sur des critères flous tels que l'autorité et fait du caractère usité un critère facultatif, ce qui est plus que contestable. Schapira (1999: 90) admet d'ailleurs que cette définition ne permet pas de supprimer «la zone d'incertitude» autour de la définition du proverbe. La tentative la plus aboutie est selon moi celle de Norrick (1985) qui consacre un chapitre entier dans son excellente monographie (*How Proverbs Mean*) à la définition du proverbe et de quelques genres connexes. Le proverbe doit d'après Norrick (1985: 73) posséder les critères suivants: “free conversational turn” (énoncé autonome), “conversational”, “traditional”, “spoken”, “fixed form”, “didactic”, “general”. Néanmoins, les conclusions atteintes dans Villers (2014) m'ont permis de décrire comme facultatifs les aspects «parlé», «conversationnel» et «didactique»; et de déplorer l'absence de certains critères obligatoires mentionnés plus bas. L'aspect «traditionnel» mentionné par Norrick est ici synonyme de caractère «usité» ou de circulation dans une communauté linguistique, et c'est précisément ce critère qui doit retenir toute notre attention. Son plus fervent détracteur est certainement Winick (2004: 88-89):

Since the 1970s, the discipline has for the most part rejected definitions of folklore based on age or currency, and the notion of tradition has expanded to include much more than repetition from the past. Therefore, few folklorists today would claim that the only way for a segment of discourse to be considered folklore is for it to be repeated many times.

Ce dernier affirme dans un premier temps que la discipline rejette souvent les définitions du folklore basées sur le caractère usité et l'ancienneté. Bien évidemment, je me joins à l'auteur pour faire de l'âge vénérable un critère facultatif, car certains

proverbes étudiés dans cet article n'ont que quelques dizaines d'années. En revanche, l'auteur semble «jeter le bébé avec l'eau du bain» en écartant le caractère «usité», et ne prend pas en compte le fait que le proverbe est la plus petite unité du folklore et la plus conversationnelle: on ne peut donc pas mettre «dans le même panier» les proverbes, qui appartiennent au langage de tous les jours et qui sont insérés dans les conversations, et des genres tels que les comptes, les chansons, les blagues, les légendes etc. En outre, l'auteur calque sa définition du proverbe sur celle du «folklore», alors que le proverbe n'en est qu'une catégorie parmi tant d'autres. Pour finir, lorsque l'auteur affirme que «peu de folkloristes» défendent le caractère «usité» ou «répété» pour définir le genre «folklore», il semble oublier que les plus grands folkloristes qui ont étudié le proverbe et qui en ont proposé une définition mettent en avant ce même caractère usité ou «populaire».

Taylor (1962: 3), qui affirme pourtant que la définition du proverbe est une tâche vaine, admet tout de même: “let us be content with recognizing that a proverb is a saying current among the folk” (Taylor 1962/1931: 3), faisant ainsi du genre «proverbe» une catégorie très (trop) vaste. Le caractère usité se retrouve également au centre de la définition d'autres pionniers. En effet, Trench (1861: 9) parle de «popularité» comme le «critère essentiel»: “almost the only essential – I mean *popularity*, acceptance and adoption on the part of the people”; et Hulme (2007/1902: 6) soutient que la «popularité» est une «nécessité absolue»: “Popularity is an essential feature, an absolute necessity”. Plus récemment, les spécialistes du folklore les plus réputés du monde ont mis en avant ce même critère en utilisant des synonymes: O’Nagy (1979: 645) parle de caractère populaire (“popular”), tout comme Brunvand (1986: 9). Paczolay (1997: 3.2) parle pour sa part de caractère courant (“currency”). Norrick (1985: 73) parle de caractère traditionnel (“traditional”), à l’instar d’Arora (1995: 390), Dundes⁷ (1994: 60) et de Mieder (2004: 4). Ce dernier, qui est considéré comme le maître incontesté en matière de parémiologie dans le monde, insiste sur cette notion: “The crux of the matter lies in the concept of traditionality”. Kuusi (1998: 24), un autre géant de la parémiologie, insiste sur cette même notion: “Proverbs are common sayings among the people; commonness is their state of being”.

Il faut également mentionner les spécialistes français qui les définissent à travers le caractère usité mais en utilisant des termes synonymes, qui font écho à leur présence en Langue: des «discours ON-sentencieux» (Anscombe 2000: 14), des «dénominations» (Kleiber 2000: 40, Perrin 2000: 79), des «stéréotypes» (Schapira 1999). Par conséquent, ce critère aura également une place de choix dans ma définition, car il est le plus pertinent pour décrire un genre aussi oral et conversationnel que le proverbe.

Il existe cependant une difficulté avec le critère «traditionnel» ou «populaire»: il est difficile à quantifier et à délimiter. C'est le problème que soulève à juste titre Winick (2004: 89): “The restriction of proverbs to generally known sayings also begs another question: Which population must know and use the proverb?” C'est ce qui fait toute la difficulté lors de la définition du proverbe: il est impossible de donner une zone précise ou un nombre précis de personnes devant connaître l'énoncé. Ce qui gêne autant est aussi le fait que ce critère ne peut pas efficacement être mesuré par une seule personne: il renvoie en quelque sorte à la relative impuissance des chercheurs ou «simples Hommes» que nous sommes. Il faut donc du recul et recourir à des outils tels que les dictionnaires de proverbes, des panels de locuteurs natifs ou des moteurs de recherche pour statuer sur le caractère usité. En outre, la difficulté à quantifier cette notion ne veut pas dire pour autant que définir le proverbe est impossible ou que le critère traditionnel est à écarter des définitions. Tout est ici une question de *degré*. De la même manière, il est difficile quantifier avec précision le QI minimum pour parler d'intelligence, ou la taille minimale pour dire si une personne est grande. L'approche scalaire adoptée dans Villers (2014) permet de rendre compte des énoncés qui ont un faible degré de «popularité»: un énoncé qui n'est utilisé que dans une zone réduite sera qualifié de «dicton» ou de 'local saying', et un énoncé qui n'est utilisé que dans un milieu social ou professionnel sera qualifié par le terme «adage». C'est le cas de l'adage policier *No victim, no crime* ou de *You can't kill shit*, listés dans le dictionnaire *DMP*, le second étant avancé par Winick (2004: 89) comme un exemple problématique vis-à-vis du caractère usité. Il faut toutefois préciser que le statut de dicton ou d'adage peut tout à fait n'être qu'un statut temporaire et

transitoire pour certains énoncés qui sont en cours de proverbialisation. Ainsi, *You can't kill shit* est un très bon candidat et a de bonnes chances de terminer son processus de proverbiogenèse.

En conclusion, la définition qui sera ici retenue est la suivante: un proverbe est une unité de communication close qui fonctionne comme une citation et qui possède un sens générique, une forme fixe dite «figée»⁸ sous laquelle il circule au sein d'une communauté linguistique où il n'est pas associé à un auteur particulier, et qui concerne plus ou moins directement les Humains. Cette définition permet dans un premier temps de distinguer et classifier de nombreux genres voisins⁹ à travers une approche tridimensionnelle¹⁰ (*nature* de l'énoncé de par son contenu, *fonction* en Discours, *statut* en Langue). Ces genres et cette approche ne seront toutefois pas détaillés ici car ce n'est pas le propos. Cette définition du proverbe est en outre compatible avec le phénomène de glissement catégoriel qui sera repris plus bas. Enfin, cette définition nous permet d'établir les conditions de départ pour le processus de proverbiogenèse.

Critères obligatoires, critères vitaux et critères qualitatifs

Il est maintenant possible de dégager deux prérequis pour qu'un énoncé devienne proverbe: dans un premier temps, l'énoncé doit être autonome sémantiquement et grammaticalement, il doit avoir le statut énonciatif de phrase, et non pas d'un simple syntagme. Il doit en outre posséder un sens général – qui peut changer en devenant proverbe – ce qui signifie qu'une phrase avec un sens spécifique ne peut pas en théorie prétendre au statut de proverbe. En revanche, le critère humain n'est pas vraiment un critère de départ mais un critère d'arrivée car un énoncé qui ne parle pas à priori des Humains peut concerner les Humains par métaphore une fois qu'il est devenu proverbe (*Les chiens ne font pas des chats*). De la même manière, la forme fixe (qui découle du caractère usité en Langue) et le caractère anonyme ne sont pas des critères de départ mais des critères acquis pendant la proverbialisation.

Dans un deuxième temps, il est possible de dégager deux critères vitaux, qui bien que *théoriquement* facultatifs, sont bel et bien décisifs *en pratique*, à savoir la concision et le caractère endossable du message. La longueur est un critère problématique

en raison de son caractère très relatif. De nombreux parémio-logues l'incluent comme critère obligatoire dans leur définition du proverbe, comme Schapira (2000: 84), tandis que d'autres refusent de le voir comme un critère définitoire, à l'image de Norrick (1985: 37), Schapira (1999: 88) ou Villers (2014: 217-229). En outre, il a été établi par Mieder (2004: 7) que la longueur moyenne d'un proverbe anglo-américain est de 7 mots. Dans Villers (2014), la longueur moyenne du corpus de proverbes anglo-américains¹¹ est de 6 mots. Cette tendance à la brièveté n'est pas pour autant systématique, mais il constitue avant tout un critère de *survie*: plus le proverbe est long, moins il a de chances de se proverbialiser ou d'être utilisé en Discours. Il en va de même pour le caractère endossable de l'énoncé. Bien qu'un candidat au statut de proverbe ne doive pas nécessairement contenir un message consensuel ou «vrai», il doit toutefois contenir un point de vue endossable par un nombre suffisant de locuteurs. En d'autres termes plus mercantiles, l'énoncé doit constituer une offre face à une certaine demande, avoir une certaine utilité. Cela rend donc possible l'existence de certains proverbes cyniques ou immoraux (*Pas de bras, pas de chocolat, A woman's work is never done, Charity begins at home* etc.).

La troisième catégorie est celle des critères qualitatifs, c'est-à-dire des critères qui sont entièrement facultatifs mais qui améliorent les chances de proverbialisation et de perception de l'énoncé en tant que proverbe. Les énoncés qui ont une structure de surface argumentative, qui contiennent une métaphore ou des éléments prosodiques (rimes, répétitions, structures parallèles, équilibre métrique etc.) sont plus facilement considérés comme des proverbes. C'est ce que démontrent certains tests menés par Arora (1995: 75) et Villers (2014: 122), ce qui vaut souvent à ces attributs prosodiques le nom de «marqueurs proverbiaux» ou «proverbial markers». Ainsi, les énoncés qui possèdent de tels marqueurs ont plus de chances de se proverbialiser et d'être utilisés comme proverbes car ils sont plus facilement *reconnus* comme des proverbes. Toutefois, je n'irai pas aussi loin que Mieder (2009: 242) lorsqu'il affirme “if a particular statement exhibits at least one of the proverb markers ... it might just catch on”, car cela semble condamner des énoncés tels que *There's a first time to everything, Accidents happen, La vie est dure* ou

L'argent ne fait pas le bonheur qui ont réussi à se proverbialiser sans aucun de ces marqueurs.

Les étapes de la proverbiogenèse

Les prérequis et les éléments facilitateurs étant identifiés, il est à présent possible d'étudier les étapes du phénomène de proverbiogenèse. Le premier à avoir étudié ce phénomène mystérieux est l'ethnologue Raymond Firth (1926), qui s'est penché sur la création des proverbes chez les Maori. Il met en avant trois étapes pour la création des proverbes, à savoir la formulation, l'acceptation par une communauté et des modifications engendrées par le passage du temps:

- “Concrete formulation by one individual in response to some set of circumstances
- Acceptance by the people at large as being appropriate to a more general situation
- Possible modification of phraseology or meaning with the passing of time” (Firth 1926: 263)

Ces étapes proposées par l'auteur sont prometteuses mais restent à être détaillées et inscrites dans une chronologie. En outre, la troisième étape, facultative, est mentionnée alors que d'autres étapes obligatoires ne sont pas décrites, comme je tenterai de le démontrer plus bas. La seconde étude existante se trouve dans Schapira (1999: 126-129), qui met en avant «deux types de proverbialisation» dont le premier est le passage en langue des expressions idiomatiques. Cette catégorie sera écartée d'emblée pour des raisons terminologiques évidentes. Le deuxième type concerne les énoncés qui deviennent des «stéréotypes lexicaux», et c'est ce cas de figure qui nous intéresse. L'auteur relève deux conditions pour ce processus: la perte de référence (paternité oubliée) et la notoriété (emploi fréquent en discours), mais ne développe pas. Schapira (2000: 84-86) aborde de nouveau le phénomène de proverbialisation et avance deux étapes: «une première où la formule s'impose comme proverbe et une deuxième où elle se maintient en tant que tel dans l'usage», c'est-à-dire «devenir proverbe et le rester». Elle mentionne également les deux conditions de la perte de référence et de la notoriété, mais ne précise pas leur place au sein des étapes du processus. En outre, les deux étapes décrites par l'auteur ne

concernent pas la naissance des proverbes mais leur existence: «devenir proverbe» fait bel et bien référence au processus de proverbialisation mais n'est pas détaillé, et «le rester» signifie simplement ne pas sortir de l'usage. Le terme «proverbialisation» devient alors ambigu car il ne fait pas référence à la naissance même du proverbe.

Ces deux tentatives fort intéressantes serviront de point de départ à une analyse plus poussée, consacrée uniquement aux étapes de la *naissance* d'un proverbe et qui permettra d'incorporer une notion de *chronologie*, tout en distinguant les étapes obligatoires des étapes facultatives au sein de ce processus. Afin d'insister sur ces nouveaux objectifs et de se démarquer de la terminologie ambiguë décrite plus haut, le processus de naissance sera ici nommé «proverbiogenèse». Il ne faut pas voir dans ce terme une quelconque analogie religieuse, mais simplement son étymologie qui signifie «création». En outre, le fait qu'il évoque la Bible n'est pas si gênant car comme il a été rappelé plus haut, de nombreux proverbes ont été disséminés dans le monde grâce à la Bible et ses traductions. En quelque sorte, *What goes around, comes around* (*On récolte ce que l'on sème*). Le processus de proverbiogenèse, comme je vais m'efforcer de le démontrer, se compose de quatre étapes obligatoires et d'une étape facultative.

La première étape est l'étape évidente de la création ou de la formulation de l'énoncé par un individu. Cette étape est la seule du processus à faire l'objet de nombreuses études, car elle touche à la paternité et à la source des proverbes. Par exemple, Mieder (1993) consacre un article entier à l'origine du proverbe *The grass is always greener on the other side*. Chaque proverbe serait donc à l'origine une formule créée par un seul individu, et non par un groupe. C'est ce que soutiennent Inyama (1980: 60), Whiting (1931: 55) et Krappe (1930: 143). Ce dernier insiste sur le caractère individuel et non collectif de la création d'un proverbe: “each proverb was coined just once, in a given locality, at a given time, by one mind with some gnomic talent”. Whiting insiste lui aussi sur ce point: “it is [...] incomprehensible that a group, working from whatever impulse and under whatever circumstances, should join in the composition of a proverb”. L'auteur soutient ici qu'il est inimaginable qu'un groupe puisse se réunir dans le but de créer un proverbe. En

effet, si personne n'a la prétention de vouloir contrôler ce processus, il ne faut pas oublier pour autant le cas de figure où un groupe se réunit dans le but de créer un slogan, qui deviendra plus tard un proverbe. C'est le cas par exemple de *What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas*, qui a vu le jour grâce à un brainstorming lors d'une réunion de l'agence de publicité R&R Partners en 2002. Il ne faut donc pas oublier que les proverbes ne naissent pas proverbes. Je ne rejoins donc pas Taylor (1962: 43) lorsqu'il affirme que certains énoncés naissent déjà proverbes ("sayings which are actually proverbs from the beginning"). En effet, nous avons vu que le statut proverbial se gagne sous certaines conditions (y compris le fait de circuler dans une communauté linguistique). Taylor se contredit donc lui-même dans la mesure où sa définition (bien que large) du proverbe se base uniquement sur la notion de "currency" (caractère usité), qualité qui ne peut apparaître dès la création d'un énoncé.

Cette problématique de la création de proverbe soulève une deuxième interrogation: celle du caractère conscient et délibéré. Il est tentant de penser que personne n'a la prétention (ou l'optimisme) de pouvoir contrôler un processus aussi volatile que la naissance d'un proverbe. D'après Whiting (1931: 55), cet acte ne peut en aucun cas être conscient: "none of the sayings we call proverbs can be proved to be the work of a conscious literary artist". Toutefois, bien que ce processus soit incontrôlable, il existe des auteurs qui tentent l'impossible, peut-être avec le désir secret «de laisser une trace» dans l'Histoire ou dans la Langue. L'exemple le plus célèbre est très certainement Benjamin Franklin dans *Poor Richard's Almanach*, qui contient un calendrier, des poèmes, des informations astrologiques mais surtout de longs recueils d'énoncés qui imitent des proverbes en se dotant de «marqueurs proverbiaux» (rime, structure, métaphore etc.). Plusieurs spécialistes des cultures africaines notent même l'existence de personnes spécialisées dans la création de proverbes, comme par exemple dans la communauté Igbo (cf. Nwachukwu-Agbada 2012: 270-271) ou Akan (cf. Yankah 2012: 142). Certains de ces orateurs font même enregistrer leurs créations auprès de conservateurs, mais cela n'empêche pas pour autant certains orateurs de faire enregistrer des créations qui ne sont pas les leurs (cf. Yankah 2012: 159). Taylor (1962: 174-

175) ironise d'ailleurs au sujet du taux de réussite des auteurs qui veulent créer des proverbes:

Intimate acquaintance with the manner of proverbs awakens confidence in the ability to create others. In almost every case the results have given the lie to the belief. James Howell, who in 1659 published the first very large English collection, ventured to compose *Divers centuries of new sayings, which may serve for proverbs to posterity*. Not one of them has, I dare say, found a place in oral or even learned tradition.

Cette tâche, même si elle n'est théoriquement pas impossible, reste imprévisible, et son succès repose en grande partie sur l'étape suivante, qui n'a pourtant jamais été décrite par les parémiologues.

La deuxième étape de la proverbiogenèse est l'*exposition* de la formule créée aux locuteurs d'une communauté linguistique, qui la découvrent grâce à ce que je nommerai un «élément propagateur», c'est-à-dire l'emploi de l'énoncé par une personne célèbre, ou dans une œuvre, la presse ou une publicité, voire même sur des panneaux (*Un train peut en cacher un autre*, voir annexes 1 et 2). Les chances de proverbialisation de la formule dépendent avant tout de la «portée maximale» de ses éléments propagateurs et donc du nombre de locuteurs qui seront «touchés». Cette phase d'exposition intervient en général après la phase de création, mais il n'est pas impossible d'imaginer une deuxième chronologie, comme dans le cas de figure d'une intervention télévisée en direct où une formule serait créée et exposée de manière simultanée. De la même manière, la formule peut être exposée par deux types d'éléments propagateurs: soit des éléments internes (le créateur lui-même, par exemple grâce à l'ouvrage dans lequel il a créé la formule), soit des éléments externes (une autre personne qui aime et utilise la formule). Par exemple, l'énoncé *A picture is worth a thousand words*, est utilisé pour la première fois en 1911 par Arthur Brisbane dans le journal *Printers' Ink*, puis en 1917 par H. DeBower dans *Advertising Principles*. Ce dernier précise qu'il s'agit d'un vieux proverbe japonais avant de le citer. Ces exemples sont des éléments propagateurs externes car ils ne sont pas la source de l'énoncé mais lui offrent une exposition auprès du public, ici

dans la presse. Ce même énoncé sera utilisé en 1944 dans une publicité de Dumont Co vantant les mérites d'un téléviseur, ce qui constitue un autre élément propagateur externe, et une exposition encore plus large auprès du grand public. Ainsi, l'exposition peut se faire en plusieurs fois et par le biais de plusieurs éléments propagateurs, mais un seul élément propagateur peut parfois être responsable de la majeure partie de l'exposition. C'est le cas de *Different strokes for different folks*, qui est utilisé pour la première fois dans une source écrite en 1945 pour *Philadelphia Tribune*, et attribué à «un ami» par le journaliste. Cet énoncé ne fera son entrée dans les dictionnaires de proverbes et les revues sur le proverbe que dans les années 90. C'est le refrain d'une chanson de 1968, *Everyday People* de Sly and the Family Stone, qui a été l'élément propagateur principal comme l'explique le DMP. C'est également le cas de l'énoncé *Life is like a box of chocolates*, qui n'a pas tout à fait terminé sa proverbiogenèse, et qui a été forgé pour, et révélé par le film *Forrest Gump* (1994). Etant donné que ce film a été vu par des millions de téléspectateurs, il représente un élément propagateur (interne) très efficace, voire peut-être trop efficace car l'énoncé est encore souvent associé au film, et donc peut-être son auteur, ce qui pose problème vis-à-vis du caractère anonyme qu'il doit posséder pour obtenir son statut de proverbe.

Cette étape d'exposition révèle une difficulté récurrente, à savoir la confusion entre le créateur réel d'une formule et ses éléments propagateurs. En effet, «on» a tendance à attribuer un énoncé à la première source écrite disponible, alors que cette dernière n'est souvent qu'une réutilisation de la formule. Ce phénomène, que je nommerai «effet de voilage», est encore plus fort lorsque l'élément propagateur est très médiatique ou célèbre. Ainsi, bon nombre de naissances proverbiales ont été attribuées à tort à des auteurs célèbres qui n'ont fait qu'utiliser un proverbe attesté depuis des années, voire des siècles. A titre d'exemple, *All is well that ends well* est souvent attribué à Shakespeare et sa pièce éponyme de 1601 alors qu'il est déjà listé dans un recueil de proverbes datant de 1300 (*Proverbs of Hending*). De la même manière, *Pas de bras, pas de chocolat* est souvent attribué au célèbre film *Intouchables* (2011) alors qu'il circulait dans les années 90 dans la chute d'une blague d'humour noir, et qu'il a été utilisé dans des dizaines de films, chansons, séries, pubs ou

jeux-vidéo depuis 2000. Cet effet de voilage peut même poser des difficultés pour des linguistes comme Conenna & Kleiber (2002: 61), qui affirment que *On ne tire pas sur une ambulance* a été créé en 1974 par la journaliste Françoise Giroud (*L'Express*) à propos du candidat Chaban-Delmas, qui était critiqué malgré sa position de faiblesse. Or, une enquête que j'ai menée auprès d'une vingtaine de collègues enseignants a révélé que l'énoncé est plus ancien. En effet, plusieurs collègues âgés de la cinquantaine et la soixantaine m'ont affirmé avec certitude que l'énoncé était déjà utilisé comme un proverbe et de manière métaphorique dans les années 60 et le début des années 70 (grâce à des souvenirs marquants de leur enfance ou adolescence par exemple). Par conséquent, il est légitime de s'interroger sur les sources citées dans cet article (la Bible, Erasme, les médias etc.), qui ne peuvent pas toutes être vérifiées avec exactitude. Toutefois, cela ne remet pas en question l'importance de ces ouvrages et des médias dans l'exposition et la naissance des futurs proverbes.

La troisième étape de la proverbiogenèse est la *fixation* progressive dans l'usage par citation. Cette étape peut durer des années et peut être comparée à une pandémie, qui se propage à partir d'un grand nombre de foyers. Ces «foyers» sont en réalité des membres de la communauté linguistique qui, sous l'influence des éléments propagateurs, se mettent à leur tour à utiliser la formule et à la citer. Chaque locuteur qui utilise la formule l'aide ainsi à se propager, et pas seulement ceux qui sont célèbres (éléments propagateurs), mais même les locuteurs qui n'exposent la formule qu'à un seul allocataire deviennent en quelque sorte des microéléments propagateurs. Il faut toutefois les distinguer de ceux cités dans la phase précédente, car ils interviennent à la suite de ces éléments propagateurs et sur une échelle bien plus réduite, souvent infime. Dans la mesure où la phase de fixation est longue, elle est plus souvent commentée que la phase d'exposition (qui n'a pas été commentée à ma connaissance), et se voit souvent qualifiée de phase «d'acceptation», notamment chez Whiting (1931: 55) et Taylor (1962: 35). Ce dernier insiste sur l'importance de cette phase: “the acceptance or rejection by tradition which follows immediately upon the creation of the proverb is a factor in its making quite as important as the first act of invention”. Taylor s'avance toutefois

un peu trop lorsqu'il affirme que la phase d'acceptation a lieu *immédiatement* après la création de l'énoncé, car il a été démontré plus haut que plusieurs années, voire plusieurs décennies, peuvent parfois s'écouler entre la création d'une formule et son exposition.

Le mode de dissémination à l'œuvre lors de cette phase de fixation n'a que très peu été commenté, si ce n'est par Mieder (2004: 9):

If the statement contains an element of truth or wisdom, and if it exhibits one or more proverbial markers, it might 'catch on' and be used first in a small family circle, and subsequently in a village, a city, a region, a country, a continent and eventually the world.

Comme il a été démontré plus haut, l'utilisation de notions telles que la vérité ou la sagesse doivent être relativisées, tout comme la nécessité des marqueurs proverbiaux, qui ne sont pas pour autant obligatoires mais des critères qualitatifs qui facilitent la proverbiogenèse. Mais ce qui nous intéresse avant tout ici est la méthode de dissémination décrite dans ces propos: il s'agit d'une propagation unilatérale, qui part d'un foyer ou d'une zone et qui s'agrandit progressivement, à la manière d'une tumeur. Ce cas de figure évoque le cas de *Garbage in, garbage out*, qui a été utilisé au début dans une entreprise d'informaticiens, comme le révèle la première trace écrite mentionnée dans le DMP: "When the basic data to be used by a computer are of questionable accuracy or validity, our personnel have an unusual expression: GIGO... Garbage In, Garbage Out" (Ernest E. Blanche, "Applying New Electronic Computers to Traffic and Highway Problems", dans *Traffic Quarterly* n°11, 1957). La deuxième trace écrite remonte à 1959, et concerne encore le monde de l'informatique: "any results derived from using such data can be no better than the basic data. As one contestant puts it, Garbage in, garbage out" (*Business Quarterly* 24). Ceci tend à démontrer que l'énoncé s'est développé dans une entreprise d'informatique, puis au sein de la communauté des informaticiens, qui ont à leur tour probablement disséminé le proverbe sur Internet. De la même manière, *No guts, no glory*, qui était une devise des pilotes de chasse pendant la guerre, s'est d'abord propagé dans le cercle réduit de l'aviation, avant de se répandre dans tout le pays grâce

à la presse notamment (DMP: 112). Quant à *Different strokes for different folks*, il s'est vraisemblablement répandu en premier lieu dans la communauté des noirs-Américains (d'après le DMP: 241) avant d'être popularisé par une chanson en 1968.

Il existe un autre mode de propagation, qui est selon moi plus fréquent: la dissémination multilatérale. Il s'agit du cas de figure où un élément propagateur touche de manière simultanée plusieurs foyers distincts (locuteurs), qui touchent à leur tour d'autres locuteurs, à la manière d'un virus qui contamine cellule après cellule. Ce mode de propagation est le plus vraisemblable pour les formules qui sont exposées par le biais de médias tels que la publicité ou un film. Ainsi, *Stupid is as stupid does* et *Life is like a box of chocolates*, que l'on doit au film *Forrest Gump* (cf. Winick 2013), n'ont pas été exposés à un seul groupe ou une seule famille, mais à des millions. Il en va de même pour *What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas*, qui a été exposé à des dizaines de millions de locuteurs venant de «cercles» différents par le biais de campagnes publicitaires nationales pour l'office du tourisme de Las Vegas. En France, ce cas de figure se retrouve avec *Les parents boivent, les enfants trinquent* ou *Un train peut en cacher un autre*. Le premier était un slogan dans une campagne de prévention contre l'alcoolisme, et le second un avertissement sur les panneaux aux abords des voies ferrées (voir annexes 1 et 2). En d'autres termes, la fixation en Langue s'opère grâce à divers modes de dissémination, ce qui explique la relative rapidité du phénomène, et son étendue, qui peut inclure un pays, un continent voire le monde (cf. Paczolay 1993, Villers 2012). Il existe cependant une ultime étape que le futur proverbe doit franchir.

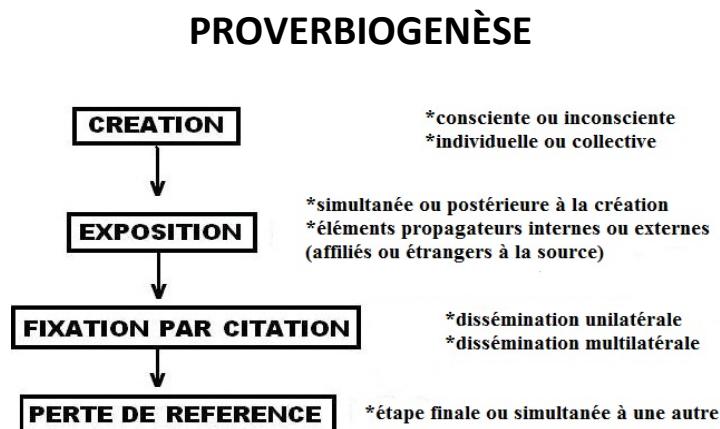
La quatrième étape est la perte de référence. Afin d'être considérée comme un proverbe, la formule doit par définition ne pas être associé à un auteur précis dans la conscience collective, sinon elle ne deviendra qu'une citation célèbre attribuée à tel auteur ou à tel film. Cela démontre encore une fois le caractère incontrôlable du processus de proverbiogenèse, car tout est ici une question de degré et de dosage, et si le créateur ou un élément propagateur de la formule est trop célèbre, il y restera associé dans la conscience collective, comme *To be or not to be, that is the question*, qui n'a pu se «défaire» de Shakespeare à cause de sa notoriété. La question se pose alors pour plusieurs

«proverbes modernes» tels que *Life is like a box of chocolates*, qui est encore associé pour le grand public au film culte *Forrest Gump*, même si l'auteur du film et donc le créateur de la formule ne sont pas du tout connus du grand public. Peut-on alors considérer que la perte de référence a eu lieu? Il est difficile de répondre à cette question mais il me semble que cet énoncé n'a pas complètement terminé son processus de proverbiogenèse, mais elle est en bonne voie, car de nombreux locuteurs découvrent la formule autrement qu'avec le film et la référence sera progressivement perdue aux yeux du grand public. Cette perte de référence intervient en général à la fin du processus, mais elle peut également se produire lors d'une étape précédente. Ainsi, *Pas de bras, pas de chocolat* a très vite obtenu sa perte de référence car la blague dont il provient circulait déjà sans source précise avant même que la formule ne commence à être citée seule (sans le reste de la blague) et ne devienne un proverbe.

Il existe une cinquième étape facultative, celle des modifications ou transformations de la forme du proverbe qui peuvent intervenir à tout moment de la proverbiogenèse. C'est en quelque sorte le cas pour les proverbes latins présents dans la Bible et les *Adages d'Erasme* qui ont été traduits au mot à mot dans la langue de chaque pays, et qui ont donné des proverbes dans bon nombre d'entre elles. La traduction, qui peut alors presque être considérée comme «une création» pour chaque langue donnée, permet de remettre à zéro le processus et de le transposer vers d'autres pays. Une autre possibilité est la modification par un élément propagateur très connu qui expose la formule au grand public après l'avoir quelque peu modifiée. Toutefois, il n'est pas possible de mettre dans cette catégorie les proverbes qui sont nés en tant que détournements d'autres proverbes. Par exemple, *It takes two to tango* a été créé sur le modèle du proverbe *It takes two to quarrel*, mais en plus du changement au niveau des termes et de l'image, il y a un changement au niveau du sens, qui ne concerne plus (uniquement) les conflits mais toute activité comparable à une danse (l'énoncé perd donc sa connotation négative). Cet énoncé est donc né en tant que détournement proverbial ou «anti-proverbe» mais son succès lui a permis d'accéder au rang de proverbe. Il faut donc voir ces énoncés comme deux proverbes indépendants. En outre, le proverbe originel continue de circuler, même s'il est train de s'essouffler

car le terme *quarrel* ne lui permet d'être appliqué qu'à un nombre limité de contextes.

En résumé, la proverbiogenèse est un phénomène fugace et polymorphe, dont l'ordre des étapes est potentiellement variable. Chaque étape comporte son lot de variantes: les proverbes peuvent être créés de plusieurs manières, peuvent être exposés au grand public de plusieurs manières, et peuvent se disséminer de plusieurs manières. Toutes ces variations sont rappelées dans ce schéma récapitulatif cidessous:



Chronologie de la proverbiogenèse

Le problème le plus épineux concernant la proverbiogenèse est sa durée: combien de temps faut-il à un énoncé pour qu'il devienne proverbe? Bien sûr, ce processus est très variable, et il peut se passer des décennies voire des siècles avant qu'une formule créée ne soit exposée au grand public, mais il est plus intéressant de se pencher sur la durée minimale de ce processus. Est-il possible pour un énoncé de devenir proverbial en seulement quelques jours comme le prétend Mieder (2009: 242): "while it might have taken decades in earlier times for a precise statement and its variants to become proverbial, this currency might now be accomplished in a few days". Il est vrai que les médias offrent une exposition immédiate, mais il ne s'agit là que d'une étape de la proverbiogenèse, et ces propos sont à nuancer. La durée minimale

du processus dépend avant tout du degré de circulation exigé par la définition du mot «proverbe». Ainsi, un auteur qui considère qu'un énoncé qui circule dans un cercle fermé (une famille, un groupe, une entreprise, une profession) peut être considéré comme un proverbe, prétendra en effet que le processus peut être complété en quelques semaines, voire quelques jours. Toutefois, ce n'est pas la position que j'adopte dans ma définition du genre proverbial, et ce n'est pas non plus la position adoptée par Mieder (2009: 242), qui précise un peu plus loin que pour parler de «vrais proverbes» ("bona fide proverbs"), il faut le caractère usité ("general currency") et donc plus de temps. Mais combien de temps exactement? Afin d'évaluer la durée du processus, il faut choisir les rares exemples de proverbes modernes dont les origines sont certaines et datées avec précision.

Voici quelques exemples qui permettront de faire plus de lumière sur la chronologie de la proverbiogenèse:

- *Garbage in, garbage out*: les premières sources sont d'après le DMP des rapports d'informatique qui remontent à 1957 et 1959, dans lesquels l'énoncé est attribué à des membres du personnel, ce qui montre qu'il n'était pas encore attesté à l'époque. Le Wordsworth fait état de deux autres emplois en 1964 et 1966, le premier dans un glossaire de termes informatiques (*Glossary of Automated Typesetting and Related Computer Terms*) qui répertorie l'énoncé qualifié «d'expression» et le deuxième est un manuel informatique (*Integrated Data Processing Systems*) qui évoque le «GIGO principle: Garbage In, Garbage Out». Ces deux exemples démontrent que l'énoncé avait déjà une certaine notoriété dans le milieu de l'informatique, car il est une «expression» et un «principe» tellement connu qu'il est réduit à la formule GIGO. En outre, le caractère anonyme est déjà acquis car aucune source n'est jamais mentionnée, ce qui montre que la phase de perte de référence a déjà eu lieu. Des recherches sur Internet révèlent d'autres emplois: A. Lappen l'utilise comme titre d'un article de *Forbes* le 25 mai 1981, tout comme le magazine *Flight international* 5 jours plus tard. Les archives en ligne du *New York Times* révèlent que l'énoncé est utilisé par le journal dès 1965, et

en masse dès 1972. Toutefois, les journalistes qui l'utilisent font systématiquement référence au monde des ordinateurs ou à l'informatique (“maxim of computer science” (02/04/1972), “computer experts like to refer to GIGO” (24/02/1973), “adage in the computer trade” (03/01/1974), “the computer men like to say Garbage in, garbage out” (22/10/1974), “the first axiom of computers operators” (10/06/1980) etc. Cet emploi massif dans la presse, bien que faisant référence à l'informatique, montre tout de même que l'énoncé était déjà relativement connu des journalistes et donc du grand public. Rathje et Hughes l'utilisent pour faire un jeu de mot dans le titre d'un article sur les déchets en 1979 (A Garbage Project a as Non-Reactive Approach: Garbage in ... Garbage Out?). Cela montre que l'énoncé est déjà en circulation. De plus, S. Kanfer le qualifie de “folk saying” dans son article du *Time* du 11 juillet 1983. L'énoncé finit par faire son entrée dans le *Dictionary of American Proverbs* en 1992.

- *If it ain't broken, don't fix it:* Les deux premiers emplois sont d'après le DMP dans des revues sur l'aviation en 1960 et 1964 (*Signal et Approach*), et sont crédités à une personne (pseudonyme Dabnovich) ou «quelqu'un» (“as someone recently said”), ce qui tend à démontrer que l'énoncé n'était pas encore attesté. Les usages suivants sont trouvés dans *Guide to Managing People* (1968, J. Van Fleet), *Implementation of Transportation Controls* (1973), puis le *New York Times* (26/09/1976, 31/08/1980, 05/10/1980 etc.) et le *Washington Post* (23/12/1976). Le forum phrases.co.uk recense un emploi en décembre 1976 dans le *Big Spring Herald*. Les dictionnaires Flavell et Wordsworth révèlent un emploi célèbre fait dans *Nation's Business* le 27 mai 1977 par Bert Lance (adjoint du président Carter). Les archives en ligne du *New York Times* permettent de remarquer que la formule est systématiquement associée ou attribuée à Bert Lance jusqu'en 1980, mais par la suite à d'autres sources (sauf ironie): “an old Congressional adage” (28/08/1980), “old piece of Southern wisdom” (31/08/1980), “To quote the recent Time's editorial” (06/04/1983), “the pragmatist's motto” (12/08/1984), “quotes the Association of the US Army”

(04/09/1984), “the cartoon” (01/09/1985), “the dictum” (06/10/1985), “the theory that if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” (13/12/1985), “There is a saying: If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” (21/09/1986). Ce dernier emploi suggère que la formule était anonyme dès 1986, ce qui est confirmé plus tard: “as the saying goes: If it ain’t broken, don’t fix it” (12/04/1991). Audelà de 1984, l’énoncé n’est associé à Bert Lance qu’une poignée de fois parmi des dizaines d’emplois, ce qui prouve son caractère anonyme et usité, et donc son statut proverbial plusieurs années avant son entrée dans un dictionnaire de proverbes en 1993 (Flavell).

- *What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas*: l’énoncé a été créé en 2002 par les publicistes de la firme R&R Partners, qui se basent probablement sur la formule déjà existante *What happens in X, stays in X*. Ce slogan figure dans les campagnes publicitaires pour la ville de Las Vegas dès 2003. L’auteur (la firme) est oublié dès le début et l’énoncé se répand très vite. Billy Crystal l’utilise pour clôturer les 76^{ème} Academy Awards en 2004, Laura Bush l’utilise en mai 2004 dans le *Tonight Show* de Jay Leno et plusieurs films très connus l’utilisent soit comme titre (*What happens in Vegas*, 2008), soit comme phrase choc ou humoristique (*The Hangover*, 2009). Quant aux journaux, ils utilisent l’énoncé dès 2003 comme le révèlent les archives en ligne du *New York Times*. Jusqu’en 2005, l’énoncé est systématiquement qualifié de «slogan» ou «devise» de la ville, mais dès 2007, il commence à se dissocier de sa source comme le suggèrent plusieurs formules qui introduisent ou qualifient l’énoncé: “The general rule” (07/01/2007), “You know what they say” (20/01/2008), “commonplace” (04/09/2008), “they say” (10/12/2012, 15/11/2012, 06/12/2012), “the What happens in Vegas … code” (25/08/2012), “the What happens in Vegas … rule” (09/05/2013) etc. Les archives révèlent également que dès 2007, l’énoncé est nettement moins souvent rattaché à la campagne publicitaire, et qu’il est de plus en plus utilisé sans aucun qualificatif, hormis quelques structures généralisantes telles que «comme on

dit» (“they say”). L’énoncé fait son entrée dans le *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* en 2012.

Pour résumer, le premier exemple (GIGO) dont la source – rapidement oubliée – date de 1957, est considéré comme un principe ou axiome dans le monde de l’informatique dès les années 60. Il est utilisé en masse dans la presse dès les années 70, servant même de référence à un jeu de mot dans le titre d’un article (qui ne traite pas de l’informatique) de 1979, puis se voit qualifié d’expression courante en 1983. Ces recherches permettent d’affirmer que le processus de proverbiogenèse a pris au maximum 26 ans, et au minimum 13 ans. Le deuxième exemple, *If it ain’t brokne, don’t fix it*, dont la source date de 1960, apparaît dans la presse dès 1976 mais il est utilisé en masse dès 1980. Toutefois, la phase de perte de référence semble n’être complète qu’entre 1985 et 1991. Par conséquent, la durée de la proverbiogenèse pour cet énoncé peut être estimée à 25 ans environ. Enfin, *What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas*, créé en 2002, est utilisé en masse dès 2003 grâce à des éléments propagateurs très efficaces (publicités) et après une phase d’acceptation ou de fixation très courte, il complète l’étape de perte de référence vers 2008. Cet exemple montre à quel point le processus peut être rapide, car l’énoncé a terminé sa proverbiogenèse en environ 6 ans. Par conséquent, il est vrai que les proverbes «modernes» naissent rapidement, mais le processus nécessite au moins une dizaine d’années pour bon nombre d’entre eux. Cette intuition est renforcée par les propos de Mieder (2012: 186-187) qui remarque une baisse du nombre de «nouveaux proverbes» nés lors de ces vingt dernières années (“a noticeable drop-off during the two most recent decades”). Il base cette remarque sur un tableau comptabilisant le nombre de proverbes nés dans chaque décennie. Voici une reproduction de ce tableau:

1900-1909	155
1910-1919	169
1920-1929	152
1930-1939	149
1940-1949	124
1950-1959	139

1960-1969	154
1970-1979	152
1980-1989	116
1990-1999	86
2000-2009	26
2010/2011	0

Ces chiffres ne sont pas surprenants et confirment les résultats obtenus plus haut, à savoir la durée moyenne du processus de proverbiogenèse. Il en va de même pour le constat fait par Mieder (2012: 174): “it is surprising that our corpus includes but 24 (1.7%) texts that exhibit at least some relationship to technology”. Il faut pour expliquer ce phénomène prendre en compte le caractère fluctuant de la technologie et surtout la durée de la proverbiogenèse. En effet, c'est la date de création supposée (début du processus) qui est utilisée pour comptabiliser les proverbes par décennie. Or, ce processus met en général pour les proverbes «modernes» entre 10 et 30 ans, et les proverbes nés entre 2000 et 2014 ne pourront être identifiés et enregistrés que dans plusieurs années. Il est toutefois possible d'anticiper la naissance de certains proverbes et de parier sur des énoncés qui sont prometteurs. C'est le cas par exemple de l'énoncé *The cake is a lie*, tiré du jeu vidéo *Portal* (sorti en 2007), et qui circule déjà au sein de la communauté geek en tant qu'avertissement implicite signifiant «certaines promesses sont trompeuses». Cet adage «geek» est donc un candidat potentiel. De la même manière, *Winter is coming*, qui sert d'avertissement récurrent (face à une menace) dans la série *Game of Thrones* (lancée en 2011) et les livres dont elle s'inspire (*A Song of Ice and Fire*, lancé en 1996), circule déjà au sein de la communauté des fans avec un sens général qui par métaphore désigne toute menace. Il s'agit encore une fois d'un candidat prometteur, mais seul le temps pourra en décider. Time will tell. Néanmoins, il est d'ores et déjà possible d'affirmer que le genre proverbial n'a pas subi de mutation (cf. Villers 2013) et qu'il est loin d'être mort, car le «taux de natalité» ne subit pas pour l'instant de chute inexplicable. Comme le rappelle Mieder (2012/1993) dans le titre d'un de ses ouvrages: *Proverbs are Never Out of Season*.

II. Obsolescence et mort proverbiale

La mort des proverbes est un phénomène tout aussi fugace que leur naissance et qui n'a jamais été commenté à ma connaissance, si ce n'est le cas de quelques rares proverbes bien précis. Ce phénomène est pourtant fréquent: il suffit d'ouvrir un vieux dictionnaire de proverbes pour se rendre compte que bon nombre d'entre eux ne circulent plus. Par conséquent, l'étiquette de «proverbe» ne peut être conservée pour ces énoncés qui redeviennent de simples maximes, aphorismes ou préceptes etc. Pourtant, une tendance se dégage au sein des parémiologues, celle de continuer d'appeler ces énoncés «proverbes», comme si ce terme était un privilège qui, une fois acquis, est conservé *ad vitam aeternam*. J'utiliserai pour ma part le terme de «proverbe déchu», ce qui permet d'éviter des termes ambigus tels que «vieux proverbe» ou «ancien proverbe». Le phénomène de mort, à l'instar du phénomène de proverbiogenèse, peut s'opérer de plusieurs manières.

Mort par glissement catégoriel

Avant d'étudier le premier type de mort proverbiale, il est nécessaire d'introduire la notion de glissement catégoriel, développée dans Villers (2014: 402-446). Comme démontré plus haut, ma définition du genre proverbial révèle une approche tridimensionnelle (*nature*, *fonction* en Discours, *statut* en Langue) qui permet de classer les genres connexes mais aussi de décrire certains changements de catégorie (par exemple un proverbe qui *fonctionne* comme un slogan dans un contexte précis). Ce sont ces changements de catégorie qui seront nommés «glissements catégoriels». Ces derniers se produisent essentiellement en Discours et de manière intentionnelle. Le cas le plus intéressant est sans doute le détournement humoristique de proverbes, qui altère la forme et le sens de l'énoncé proverbial qui glisse alors vers la catégorie des «métaproverbes». En voici quelques exemples: *A cock in the bush is worth two in the hand* (*A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*), *Beauty is in the eye of the beer holder* (*beholder*), *Chassez le naturiste, il revient au bungalow* (*Chassez le naturel, il revient au galop*), *Comme on fait son lit, on se touche* (*on se couche*) etc. Ces détournements reçoivent diverses appellations: «perverbes» ou «proverbes pervertis» chez les Oulapiens, «anti-proverbe» («anti-proverb»,

terme inventé par Mieder) chez bon nombre de parémiologues, mais aussi «jeu de mot proverbial», “proverb punning” ou “proverb twisting”. J’utilise pour ma part le terme «métaproverbe» en référence à la fonction langagière métalinguistique¹² et afin d’adoucir le terme agressif «anti-proverbe». Lorsqu’il est involontaire, ce phénomène est souvent appelé «défigement involontaire» ou «écorchement», comme dans le cas d’un énonciateur qui maîtrise mal une langue et qui estropie un proverbe sans le savoir. Les auteurs et les humoristes sont assez friands de ce procédé qui leur permet de décrédibiliser un personnage, d’Elie Semoun à Jamel Debbouze, en passant par Frank Dubosc, ou encore la série télévisée NCIS¹³. Certains de ces détournements, qu’ils soient volontaires ou involontaires, peuvent donner naissance à des proverbes, comme par exemple *Life is like a box of chocolates, (you never know what you’re gonna get)*, qui est tiré du film *Forrest Gump* (cf. Winick 2013). Cet énoncé est basé sur le proverbe *Life is a bowl of cherries* (que le personnage principal tente de contester mais estropie: “life is no box of chocolates”). Toutefois, il existe un autre type de «glissement» qui peut «tuer» un proverbe.

En effet, ces changements de catégorie peuvent intervenir en Langue, c’est-à-dire de manière progressive mais permanente. Parler à ce sujet de «mort proverbiale» est certes un peu exagéré, mais il s’agit bel et bien d’une perte de statut définitive, d’une mutation. Le cas le plus frappant est celui de l’énoncé *Every little helps*. Ce proverbe est attesté dès le 18^{ème} siècle d’après les dictionnaires spécialisés tels que le Flavell ou le Wordsworth, soit deux siècles avant la création de Tesco, une chaîne d’hypermarchés qui a choisi ce proverbe comme slogan. Mais après des années de campagnes publicitaires, cet énoncé est maintenant associé à Tesco dans l’esprit de la majorité des locuteurs anglais – 75% d’après une rapide enquête sur un panel d’une dizaine d’anglophones – et cela surtout chez les locuteurs de moins de 30 ans qui ont été exposés depuis plusieurs années au marketing de Tesco. En revanche, les locuteurs plus âgés sont plus souvent conscients que ce proverbe est antérieur à Tesco. La conséquence de ce phénomène est que le caractère anonyme de l’énoncé, qui est un critère définitoire du proverbe, est annulé puisque Tesco s’immisce dans la conscience collective, faisant ainsi glisser l’énoncé vers la catégorie du slogan. Ce phénomène

de glissement catégoriel permanent est provoqué par ce j'ai nommé plus haut un «effet de voilage», c'est-à-dire lorsqu'un proverbe est utilisé par une personne ou une source célèbre, et que cette personne est perçue à tort comme en étant le créateur.

Ce phénomène est fréquent avec des auteurs aussi célèbres que Shakespeare, à qui l'on attribue souvent l'énoncé *All is well that ends well*. Or, comme l'attestent les dictionnaires de proverbes Flavell et Wordsworth, ce proverbe figure déjà dans le recueil *Proverbs of Hending* (circa 1300) ainsi que dans un recueil de John Heywood intitulé *A dialogue conteinyng the nomber in effect of all the prouerbes in the Englishe tongue* datant de 1546, soit plus de cinquante ans avant l'œuvre de Shakespeare à laquelle le proverbe sert de titre. Il est donc possible d'affirmer que cet énoncé a lui aussi commencé son glissement catégoriel (proverbe → citation célèbre ou «apophategme»), mais à un stade moins avancé, car l'énoncé n'est pas associé à Shakespeare dans l'esprit de tous les locuteurs, mais un peu moins de la moitié d'après mon panel expérimental d'anglophones. En outre, les jeunes générations associent rarement ce proverbe à Shakespeare (moins d'un quart de mon panel), il faut donc préciser que le glissement catégoriel ne sera peut-être jamais complet. Time will tell... En français, la notoriété du film *Intouchables* a des conséquences similaires sur le proverbe *Pas de bras, pas de chocolat*, mais à un degré bien moindre. Le glissement vers le statut de «phrase culte» est donc loin d'être complet et ne le sera probablement jamais, car l'interprétation erronée de quelques locuteurs ne suffit pas à modifier le statut d'un énoncé au sein d'une communauté linguistique. En définitive, ce phénomène reste très marginal et très difficile à quantifier, et le phénomène de mort proverbiale le plus fréquent reste de loin la mort «naturelle».

Mort naturelle ou «obsolescence»

Le phénomène de mort naturelle du proverbe se produit lorsqu'un énoncé devient de moins en moins usité, au point de devenir «obsolète» et de tomber en désuétude. Si un énoncé perd son caractère usité ou «populaire», point central de la définition du genre proverbial, il perd de ce fait son statut et devient un «proverbe déchu». Ce terme ne fera donc référence qu'aux proverbes victimes de mort «naturelle», et non aux mutations ou

glissements décrits dans la partie précédente. Afin de trouver des proverbes déchus, il suffit d'ouvrir un vieux dictionnaire de proverbes ou de les glaner dans les articles de parémiologie (je ne citerai pas de noms car le but n'est pas ici de critiquer les exemples cités par les spécialistes). Afin de démontrer leur caractère désuet, le nombre de résultats sur le moteur de recherche Google sera indiqué entre parenthèses pour chaque proverbe déchu. Encore une fois, ce chiffre est variable et indicatif mais il est très révélateur: il n'est pas possible d'affirmer qu'un énoncé qui ne renvoie que quelques dizaines de résultats sur Google est usité, alors que même les proverbes «basse fréquence» renvoient au minimum des milliers de résultats. Un nombre si faible de résultats renvoie en général à des forums sur les proverbes ou des listes de vieux proverbes. Toutefois, il est difficile de quantifier ce phénomène et de tracer une limite entre la fréquence des énoncés proverbiaux et celle des proverbes déchus. De ce fait, je considérerai qu'un énoncé qui se situe entre les deux est soit un proverbe en train de se déproverbaliser, soit un énoncé qui n'a pas terminé sa proverbiogenèse. Mais il est temps de laisser de côté ces problématiques quantitatives et de se demander pourquoi certains proverbes disparaissent.

La première cause de mortalité est la disparition d'un certain mode de vie qui est présent dans le sens phrasique du proverbe. Ainsi, le proverbe *An ell and tell is good merchandise* (0) contient un terme qui fait référence à une unité de mesure du tissu (*ell*) qui n'est plus utilisée de nos jours, et qui donc n'évoque plus rien pour bon nombre de locuteurs. De plus, comme ce terme est un élément clé du jeu d'assonance, il n'a pu être mis à jour au fil du temps. De la même manière, les proverbes *The best payment is on the peck bottom* (134) et *The blind man's peck should be well measured* (4) contiennent un terme qui fait référence à une unité de mesure du grain (*peck*), ce qui n'évoque plus rien pour de nombreux locuteurs dans la mesure où l'achat de grain au marché ne fait plus partie de la vie quotidienne. Les proverbes qui font référence à la culture des champs et aux semaines sont eux aussi susceptibles de disparaître, à l'instar de *Turnips like a dry bed but a wet head* (223) et *Sow wheat in dirt and rye in dust* (122), tout comme le proverbe *The willow will buy a horse before the oak will buy a*

saddle (6). Ce dernier, qui a une thématique très précise (la croissance des arbres), rappelle que les saules poussent plus vite que les chênes, et fait référence à la selle et au cheval comme moyen de transport, ce qui n'est plus en adéquation avec les principaux moyens de transport de notre ère. Parmi les modes de vie disparus, il est aussi possible de citer l'esclavage, ce qui a logiquement mené à la disparition de proverbes sur les esclaves tels que *Give a slave a rod and he'll beat his master* (60).

Une évolution au sein de certaines professions peut être la cause de la mortalité proverbiale, comme par exemple la disparition ou raréfaction d'un métier. Les meuniers, qui n'ont certes pas complètement disparu dans certains milieux ruraux, ne sont toutefois plus au centre de notre quotidien, ce qui a entraîné la disparition de nombreux proverbes sur cette profession: *Millers are the last to die of famine* (7), *Millers and bakers do not steal, people bring it to them* (1), *That miller is honest who has hair on his teeth* (183). La majorité des proverbes (déchus) sur les meuniers révèlent que ces derniers n'étaient pas appréciés et considérés comme malhonnêtes, mais il existe une autre profession qui est beaucoup moins présente dans notre quotidien et qui n'était pas très appréciée jadis: les tailleurs. Cela se retrouve dans les proverbes déchus suivants: *Never trust a tailor that does not sing at his work* (245), *There is knavery in all trades but most in tailors* (8). Le métier de serviteur est lui aussi devenu plus rare dans notre société actuelle, ce qui explique la disparition du proverbe *A servant and a cock must be kept but a year* (28), et le métier de cordonnier est lui aussi bien moins fréquent de nos jours, ce qui explique en partie la disparition entamée du proverbe *Let the cobbler stick to his last* (70 000), qui malgré un nombre élevé d'entrées sur le moteur de recherche, est beaucoup moins usité, surtout chez les locuteurs les moins âgés, comme j'ai pu le constater grâce à mon panel anglais. Les mentalités vis-à-vis des chirurgiens ont-elles-aussi évolué et le proverbe *Surgeons cut, that they may cure* (39) n'est plus usité, tandis que le proverbe *Where the sun enters the doctor does not* (1500) est en cours de déproverbialisation et n'est plus usité (d'après mon panel de locuteurs anglais) malgré les résultats sur le moteur de recherche. Certains conseils médicaux sont également sortis de l'usage, comme *Dry feet warm head bring safe to bed* (1000).

Une autre cause de mortalité est la syntaxe de certains proverbes qui est un peu archaïque et qui donc freine son utilisation en Discours, à l'image de *He who slowly gets angry keeps his anger longer* (59), *He that looks in a man's face knows not what money is in his purse* (8), *They that think none ill are soonest beguiled* (67), *He that desires but little has no need of much* (212). Les pivots implicatifs "he who", "he that" etc. (correspondant à Qui en français) ne sont plus usités dans le langage de tous les jours et sont accompagnés dans les deuxième et troisième proverbes de structures grammaticales elles aussi archaïques: "knows not", "none ill". L'énoncé *If thou hast not a capon, feed on an onion* (1740) est en train de se déproverbialiser pour les mêmes raisons, car malgré le nombre assez élevé de résultats sur le moteur de recherche, le pronom et la négation ne correspondent plus au langage actuel. Le registre de langue peut aussi être à l'origine du processus de déproverbialisation. Le proverbe *The fair and the foul by dark are like store* (73) n'est plus vraiment usité, comme confirmé par mon panel anglais, et cela en grande partie à cause de son registre soutenu qui complique son utilisation en Discours. En revanche, certains exemples parviennent à survivre grâce à des mises à jour lexicales et syntactiques. Ainsi, *The cowl does not make the monk*, trop religieux, a fait place à *The clothes don't make the man*; *You reap what you sow* a remplacé *He who sows the wind, reaps the whirlwind*, à la structure trop archaïque, tout comme *Far from home, near thy harm* qui a évolué en *Far from home is near to harm*. L'exemple le plus intéressant est celui de *First come to the mill, first grind*, décrit par Mieder (2004: 44), et qui a été mis à jour par suppression des éléments lexicaux faisant référence au moulin et au fait de moudre son grain, pour donner la version moderne *First come, first served*.

Il existe souvent pour un même énoncé plusieurs causes de déproverbialisation. *Choose none for thy servant who has served thy betters* (6) fait non seulement référence à un mode de vie en grande partie révolu (le fait de posséder des serviteurs) mais comporte des éléments lexicaux qui ne sont plus en adéquation avec le langage quotidien (thy etc.). Les diverses causes de mortalité se retrouvent également dans certains proverbes déchus français: *Oignez vilain, il vous poindra, poignez vilain, il vous oindra* (13000) n'est plus usité – bien que listé sur de nombreux

sites – pour des raisons évidentes de registre, *On ne fait pas de bon pain avec du mauvais levain* (5) est en cours de déproverbialisation à cause de sa thématique qui renvoie à un mode de vie révolu, et *Un âne gratte l'autre* (50) est sorti de l'usage en partie à cause de sa thématique trop «rurale». En revanche, il est possible de remarquer que certains proverbes résistent malgré ces mêmes thématiques et des structures archaïques. Le proverbe *On ne peut pas être au four et au moulin* (150 000) continue d'être usité en français, malgré la quasi-disparition des moulins; *Make hay while the sun shines* (4 millions) est encore très usité en anglais, malgré la thématique rurale. De nombreux exemples peuvent être avancés, ce qui montre que tout comme la naissance des proverbes, même quand les ingrédients sont rassemblés, leur mort ne peut pas vraiment être connue d'avance.

Conclusion

Le présent article a permis de faire un peu plus de lumière sur les phénomènes assez mystérieux que sont la naissance (proverbiogenèse) et la mort (obsolescence) des proverbes mais afin d'en affiner les résultats, le nombre d'exemples étudiés doit être augmenté de manière significative. Les outils tels que les archives en ligne et les banques de données constituent des sources précieuses d'information qu'il faut continuer d'exploiter afin d'observer l'évolution de l'emploi des proverbes, ce qui implique de ne pas se contenter de relever les premières occurrences connues comme cela est le cas des dictionnaires de proverbes. Cette étude n'est donc qu'un premier pas et beaucoup de travail doit encore être accompli. En attendant de nouveaux résultats sur le sujet, il faudra rester attentif et surveiller les candidats prometteurs au statut de proverbe. Toutefois, des progrès plus concrets ont été faits: la description du phénomène de proverbiogenèse et d'obsolescence, la définition du proverbe proposée et le système de glissement catégoriel ont permis de classifier les différentes catégories d'énoncés de manière non empirique et de rendre compte des énoncés qui posent problème pour des raisons géographiques ou quantitatives, montrant par la même occasion qu'il n'est pas justifié d'écartier certains critères de la définition du proverbe (le caractère usité), comme certains linguistes l'ont proposé. En revanche, l'étude de la pro-

verbiogenèse et de l'obsolescence a révélé que même une fois les étapes, les ingrédients et les facteurs identifiés, ces phénomènes demeurent incontrôlables et laissent une part de choix au hasard, et c'est ce qui en fait toute la beauté.

Annexes



Panneaux de la SNCF ayant donné naissance au proverbe français et modèle proverbial *Un train/X peut en cacher un autre*. Photos de Renald Guyon (bzhoo.com) et David Pesce.

Notes

¹Voir Villers (2014: 376-446) pour une classification de ces genres connexes en relation avec la classe des proverbes.

²Hildebrandt (2005: 27) avance trois théories au sujet de l'apparition du genre proverbial: pour des raisons pédagogiques à l'école, au sein des clans familiaux, ou sous la plume des scribes de la cour royale. Il considère que la vérité se trouve à la croisée des trois théories et que ces trois scénarios ont été à l'origine du genre proverbial. Ieraci-Bio (1984: 85) et Karagiorgos (1999: intro) optent pour une autre théorie qui se base sur l'étymologie grecque *paroimia* signifiant «de long des routes». Ainsi, les proverbes seraient apparus le long des routes et chemins de pèlerinage afin de conseiller les voyageurs.

³Seuls quelques rares autres exemples de ce dictionnaire peuvent être contestés en raison de leur circulation trop restreinte, ou de leur manque de généricité comme avec That's the way the cookie crumbles (p273).

⁴Pour réduire ces variations, il est préférable d'effectuer la recherche en mode «navigation privée» afin que l'historique de recherche et la localisation physique n'influent pas sur le nombre d'entrées. Les recherches ont été effectuées sur un PC le même jour et en tapant l'énoncé entre guillemets, afin de limiter les résultats aux occurrences exactes. Quelques variantes communes sont intégrées dans le chiffre total.

⁵«– Maman, maman, j'ai faim.
– Oui mon cheri, prends le chocolat dans le placard.
– Mais maman, je ne peux pas, je n'ai pas de bras...
– Ah ! Pas de bras, pas de chocolat !»

⁶De nombreux linguistes «pessimistes» affirment qu'il est impossible de définir le proverbe, le plus célèbre d'entre eux est Archer Taylor (1962/1931: 1) dont les propos restèrent célèbres dans le milieu de la parémiologie: “the definition of a proverb is too difficult to repay the undertaking”.

⁷Il faut toutefois préciser que bien que Dundes reconnaît le caractère traditionnel du proverbe, il base avant tout sa définition sur la structure du proverbe: “traditional propositional statement consisting of at least one descriptive element [...] consisting of a topic and a comment”.

⁸La notion de figement, utilisée par de nombreux linguistes français (Gross 1996, Schapira 1999 ou Kleiber 2000 via le terme de «dénomination»), a été la cible de nombreuses critiques en raison de la connotation extrême de ce terme, qui laisse à penser que les unités dites «figées» ne peuvent pas évoluer en diachronie (avec le temps) ou en synchronie (posséder des variantes), ou que leur sens ne peut pas être transparent ou compositionnel, à cause d'une soi-disant opacité sémantique, qui rendrait impossible la déduction basée sur une lecture «littérale». C'est pour cela que les termes «fixité» ou «stabilité» sont préférés. La notion de figement n'est pas pour autant à écarter (Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater), à condition d'incorporer la possibilité d'évolution et de variation, et de ne plus systématiser le phénomène d'opacité sémantique, comme défendu dans Villers (2014: 166-197).

⁹Pour ne citer que quelques exemples de distinctions tirés de Villers (2014: 375-446), le critère de fréquence en langue, bien que difficile à quantifier, permet d'écartier les créations spontanées en Discours (y compris les aphorismes ou maximes) et les phrases dites «proverboïdes» qui imitent la forme des proverbes, mais aussi d'écartier les métaproverbes ou «perverbes» qui détournent des énoncés en circulation (L'oignon fait la soupe = L'union fait la force, Behind every good moan there's a woman = Behind every good man there's a woman). Ce critère va de pair avec la forme fixe, qui permet également d'écartier les détournements, même ceux qui ont une certaine popularité.

Le critère d'unité de communication close, plus complet que le terme «phrase», permet de distinguer le proverbe des locutions proverbiales (mettre la charrue avant les bœufs/to put the cart before the horse qui n'est qu'un fragment du proverbe Il ne faut pas mettre la charrue avant les bœufs/Don't put the cart before the horse), des expressions idiomatiques (avoir un chat dans la gorge/to have a frog in one's throat) et autres idiotismes ou collocations (nuit noire/pitch

dark); mais aussi d'écartier les proverbes tronqués (Quand on veut...) et les devinettes que Haas (2013: 32) nomme "proverbial interrogatives" (A: Where does a 500 pound gorilla sit? – (B): Anywhere it wants to!). Dans ce cas de figure, l'énoncé n'est pas clos et fait appel à la participation de l'allocataire qui doit compléter la formule.

Quant au critère de la généricté, il permet lui aussi d'écartier les expressions idiomatiques et locutions proverbiales, mais également les phrases idiomatiques telles que Un ange passe ou That's the way the cookie crumbles, ou encore You're fired ! et Is that your final answer?, tirées d'émissions télévisées (The Apprentice et Qui veut gagner des millions) et considérées comme des proverbes par Lau/Tokofsky/Winick (2004: 9), alors que ces énoncés ne possèdent pas de sens générique à proprement parler.

Enfin, le caractère anonyme permet d'écartier les énoncés tels que les slogans, rattachés à une marque ou entité (Just do it, Yes we can), les apophétemes (Veni, vidi, vici) et autres citations célèbres associées à une personne précise, ou encore à une émission précise, comme les deux exemples dans le paragraphe ci-dessus.

¹⁰Cette distinction en trois dimensions (nature, fonction et statut) permet de faire coexister les différents genres connexes à travers ce que je nommerai des glissements catégoriels. Ainsi, un énoncé qui de par sa structure de surface descriptive a la nature d'un aphorisme, peut fonctionner comme un slogan, une devise ou un précepte. Il peut également changer de statut et passer par exemple du statut de simple maxime (formule personnelle et non répandue) au statut de proverbe s'il entre en circulation au sein d'une communauté linguistique. Cette approche tridimensionnelle est développée dans Villers (2014: 402- 446).

¹¹Il va sans dire que les résultats seraient probablement différents avec un corpus de proverbes africains par exemple.

¹²Cette fonction métalinguistique, développée par Roman Jakobson après le modèle de Karl Bühler, fait référence aux cas de figure où le langage est utilisé pour expliquer ou commenter ce même langage, c'est alors le «code» qui est au centre du message.

¹³Cette série télévisée fera l'objet d'une communication à Tavira en novembre 2014 (Zivaisms: the strategies and challenges behind proverb and idiom twisting in NCIS)

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JOSÉ DE JAIME GÓMEZ (14 diciembre 1921 – 24 enero 2014)

El pasado 24 de enero fallecía mi padre José de Jaime Gómez. Tenía 92 años y juntos habíamos publicado un buen número de libros y de artículos sobre paremiología. Veterinario por sus estudios y catedrático de Ciencias naturales en Enseñanza media de profesión, muy temprano se aficionó al colecciónismo de refranes y de dichos populares que recogía directamente de la conversación de la calle. Con el tiempo se dedicará a la búsqueda y estudio de manuscritos y libros raros que trataran de paremiología.

Había nacido en Calamocha (Teruel) en 1921. Muy joven se aficionó a la paremiología mientras acompañaba a los trabajadores en sus labores campesinas. Siempre con un pequeño lápiz y una libreta donde anotaba cuantos refranes o dichos sentenciosos pronunciaban en sus conversaciones. Enterados de esta afición, los propios campesinos de su pueblo rivalizaban luego para proporcionarle cada uno los dichos que recordaba.

Tengo varios recuerdos infantiles de las primeras colecciones de refranes de mi padre. Uno era una voluminosísima carpeta con hojas finas en las que, alfabéticamente, iba colocando todos los refranes agropecuarios que escuchaba. Como separadores de las letras del alfabeto, 28 cartulinas pegadas a distintos niveles. El otro recuerdo es la obra de Nieves de Hoyos Sancho, *Refranero agrícola español*, obra con bellísimas ilustraciones que hacían las delicias del niño, entonces, que ahora escribe estas líneas. “Lluvia de enero, cada gota vale un dinero”, y en la imagen un campesino extendía lacónico la mano recibiendo monedas junto a las gotas de lluvia; o “Diciembre, leña y duerme”, mientras el labrador descansaba junto a la lumbre del hogar.

Pronto advirtió José de Jaime que, además de la pesquisa directa, había también que acudir a las viejas fuentes bibliográficas del refranero. Siguiendo al principio el *Catálogo* de Melchor García Moreno, pronto empezó a desempolvar manuscritos de refranes diseminados por las bibliotecas de toda España.

Recuerdo en mi etapa estudiantil en Madrid los encargos que me hacía de ir a tal o cual biblioteca para consultar o reprografiar este o aquél libro, artículo o manuscrito de refranes. En la década de los 70 del pasado siglo, no era fácil la consulta de fondos bibliográficos para quienes vivíamos en provincias.

Es en este tiempo cuando empieza a formar sus grandes colecciones de refranes y de dichos populares, pues siempre entendió la necesidad de abordar toda suerte de frases sentenciosas que englobaba bajo la denominación de Gran Paremiología. Desde un principio abordó los siguientes temas paremiales: Zoología, Ciencias de la salud, Enseñanza, Aragón y Bibliografía paremial. Pero siempre buscando las fuentes más antiguas del refranero, manuscritos o viejos impresos, tratando de llegar al origen medieval de muchas sentencias.

Juntos formamos una magnífica biblioteca paremiológica, seguramente la colección privada más importante de España, lo que nos permitió seguir en cada refrán los diferentes autores que lo han citado a través de los tiempos, con sus variantes y sus modificaciones. Esta es una de las principales características de sus estudios, buscar las menciones más antiguas de cada refrán, reconocer las influencias entre colectores, las variaciones geográficas y semánticas, así hasta situar cada dicho en el contexto histórico de su posible nacimiento.

Yo creo que el momento culminante en su carrera como paremiólogo lo tuvo mi padre poco después de su jubilación. Acompañado de mi madre marchó en 1991 a un Curso de verano de la Universidad Complutense sobre “El Refranero español” a El Escorial. Lo dirigían tres grandes nombres de la literatura española Camilo José Cela, Joaquín Calvo Sotelo y Francisco Yndurain Hernández, y mi padre tuvo la gentileza de regalarle a cada uno una copia mecanografiada de nuestro *Catálogo de bibliografía paremiológica española*. Un éxito. Automáticamente lo designaron secretario del Curso. Él estaba encantado. Es decir, el único que había pagado la cuota de inscripción era el que se iba a encargar de la tarea más ardua que era levantar acta de todo lo que se tratara, tarea que evitaba a los que verdaderamente cobraban por participar. Pero a mi padre eso le daba igual. Sólo el enorme reconocimiento, oral y escrito, que en el Curso se hizo de nuestra *Bibliografía*, y el poder alternar llanamente con aquellos literatos



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que admiraba, compensaban con creces los trabajos que durante meses tuvo que hacer entre memorias, cartas y otros documentos que debió cumplimentar.

Inmediatamente publicamos por nuestra cuenta la *Bibliografía*, como asimismo hemos hecho con muchas otras obras paremiológicas, siempre firmadas por los dos. Desde aquí quiero reconocer que en este tipo de trabajos que hicimos y firmamos juntos, siempre ocupé un discreto segundo plano. No es falsa modestia, en otros trabajos que también realizamos en común, fui yo quien llevó siempre la iniciativa. Pero en asuntos refraneros era él quien marcaba la pauta. Con los años había perfeccionado una metodología muy eficaz y, además, tenía una enorme capacidad de anticipación, de ver adónde los demás no alcanzábamos.

Un detalle significativo. A partir de la larga y grave enfermedad de su esposa Rita, mi madre, el interés investigador de José de Jaime decae notablemente. Es el momento en el que ambos dejamos de publicar sobre refranes de forma asidua. Mi padre no tiene ánimos, y yo busco otros temas de investigación. Tras la muerte de mi madre, todavía recupera el interés por la paremiología. Ya era un poco tarde, dos meses antes había sufrido una serie de pequeños infartos cerebrales que lo postraron en una silla de ruedas. No obstante conserva prácticamente plenas sus facultades mentales, y todavía durante algunos meses llenará fichas con apuntes refraneros, pero la movilidad de toda la parte derecha es muy limitada y de poco sirven estos esfuerzos heróicos.

En su despacho de trabajo queda su biblioteca paremiológica, numerosas carpetas con apuntes, anotaciones, fotocopias, microfilms y separatas. Y en mi casa de Calamocha (Teruel) una montaña de ficheros con un refrán en cada ficha y la relación de autores que lo han recogido en sus colecciones a lo largo de los siglos.

Esta es la relación de las comunicaciones a congresos, obras y artículos que sobre paremiología hemos publicado los dos, paternofilialmente bien unidos:

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1986.- VI Jornadas de Cultura Popular Altoaragonesa. Tamarite de Litera (Huesca), 9-15 Diciembre. Comunicación: "La obra paremiológica de mosen Pedro Vallés, de Sariñena".

1989.- IX Congreso Nacional de Historia de la Medicina. Zaragoza. Comunicaciones: "La Higiene en refranes castellanos (1870), del Dr. Pedro Felipe Monlau" y "Paremiología médica judeo-española".

1993.- Congreso de Paremiología, celebrado en Orleans (Francia). Comunicaciones: "Inventario de los refraneros manuscritos españoles (siglos XIV-XIX)", "Índice de las obras clásicas de la literatura española, en cuyos títulos figuran refranes y frases hechas (siglos XV-XVIII)".

1996.- I Congreso Internacional de Paremiología (Homenaje al Prof. Pedro Peira Soberón). Madrid, 17-20 Abril. Comunicaciones: "Pedro Vallés, refranista aragonés del siglo XVI", "Índice de las obras clásicas de la literatura española, en cuyos títulos figuran refranes y frases hechas (siglo XIX)".

1997.- Congreso "Las campanas: Cultura para un sonido milenario". Santander, 6-8 Diciembre. Comunicación: "Refranerillo de las campanas e instrumentos similares".

1998.- II Congreso Internacional de Paremiología. Córdoba, 6-9 Mayo. Comunicaciones: "Índice de las obras clásicas de la literatura española de los siglos XV al XVII, en cuyos títulos figuran refranes y frases hechas", "Conocimientos empíricos de endocrinología y biotipología humana contenido en las colecciones paremiológicas españolas".

2001.- VI Jornadas Nacionales de Historia de la Veterinaria. Valencia, 16-17 de noviembre. Comunicación:
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2003.- VI Jornades d'Historia de la Farmàcia Catalana. Barcelona, 15-16 de noviembre. Comunicación: "Percepción social de la farmacia según los refranes españoles".

2004.- V Trobades de salut i malaltia dels municipis valencians. Ontinyent, 23 i 24 d'abril. Ponencia: "La imagen social de los farmacéuticos y de la farmacia en los refranes españoles".

2005.- VII Jornadas de Historia de la Farmacia Catalana. Montblanc (Tarragona), 21-23 de octubre. Comunicación: "Un puñado de refranes sobre medicamentos".

2007.- Jornada del aceite de oliva de Segorbe y comarca del Palancia. Universidad CEU-Cardenal Herrera, 11 de mayo. Comu-

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2010.- Seminario sobre Farmacia y Ciencia a través de las fallas valencianas, 24 de noviembre. Universidad CEU Cardenal Herrera. Conferencia: “Consideración social del farmacéutico y del médico a través de los refranes y de la literatura popular”.

Libros y artículos

1985.- *Exposición paremiológica. Catálogo*. Valencia, Instituto de Bachillerato Fuente de San Luis, 14 p.

1987.- El medicamento en cien refranes castellanos. Bases para un Refranero Farmacéutico. *Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Historia de la Farmacia*, 149-150, 47-62. Este artículo fue posteriormente reproducido por las revistas: *Farmacéuticos* (Madrid) que edita el Consejo General de Colegios de Farmacéuticos, y por *Minutos Menarini*, 159, 8-13; 160, 19-23. Barcelona

1987.- La obra paremiológica de mosen Pedro Vallés, de Sariñena. *VI Jornadas de cultura popular altoaragonesa. Actas*, 137-144. Tamarite de Litera

1991.- La Higiene en refranes castellanos (1870), del Dr. Pedro Felipe Monlau. *IX Congreso nacional de Historia de la Medicina. Actas*, 1243-1254. Zaragoza

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1993.- *Bibliografía paremiológica española*. Valencia. Edit. Nau Llibres, 230 p.

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1994.- Refranero geográfico turolense. *Cuadernos del Baile de San Roque. Revista de Etnología*, 7, 17-38. Calamocha, Centro de Estudios del Jiloca

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1995.- Refranerillo de la gaita. *Gaiteros de Aragón*, 6, 15-17; 7, 23-24. Zaragoza, Agrupación de Gaiteros de Aragón

1995.- Autocrítica paremiológica. Los refranes españoles enjuiciados por el refranero. *Paremia*, 4, 117-125. Madrid

1997.- Refranerillo de las campanas e instrumentos similares. *Congreso "Las campanas: cultura para un sonido milenario. Actas*, 567-602. Santander, Fundación Botín

1997.- Índice de las obras clásicas de la literatura española del siglo XIX, en cuyos títulos figuran refranes y frases hechas. I. *Paremia*, 6, 343-348. Madrid

1997.- Pedro Vallés, paremiólogo aragonés del siglo XVI. *Paremia*, 6, 349-354. Madrid

1998.- *Catálogo de bibliografía paremiológica española. Apéndice 1*. Calamocha, 107 p.

1999.- *Paremiología aragonesa. Refranero aragonés. Más de 5.500 refranes, aforismos, dichos, frases hechas, mazadas ... originarios de Aragón*. Calamocha, 254 p.

1999.- Índice las obras clásicas de la literatura española en cuyos títulos figuran refranes y frases hechas (siglos XV-XVIII). II. *Paremia*, 8, 301-306. Madrid

1999.- Presentación del "Apéndice 1 al Catálogo de Bibliografía Paremiológica Española". *Paremia*, 8, 307-308. Madrid

2001.- *Paremiología médica española. Más de once mil refranes de medicina, farmacia y veterinaria*. Calamocha, 438 p.

2001.- *Refranero de la vida intelectual y de la enseñanza*. Calamocha, 113 p.

2001.- La profesión veterinaria según el refranero español. VI *Congreso nacional de Historia de la Veterinaria. Actas*, 144-146. Valencia

2001.- Las profesiones sanitarias a través del Refranero Español. *Proverbium. Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*, 18, 205-218. Vermont, USA

2002.- Agua del Tajo hincha la tripa y afloja el badajo: Paseo paremiológico por *El río que nos lleva* de José Luis Sampedro. *Paremia*, 11, 14-17. Madrid

2003.- *Refranero aragonés. Más de 5.500 refranes, sentencias, dichos, frases hechas, mazadas ... originarios de Aragón*. Zaragoza, Institución Fernando el Católico, 398 p.

2003.- Percepción social de la farmacia según los refranes españoles. VI *Jornades d'Historia de la farmàcia catalana. Llibre d'actes*, 135-148. Barcelona

2003.- La elaboración del vino en el refranero. *Paremia*, 12, 27-39. Madrid

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2004.- Pedro Vallés. *Libro de refranes* ... [Recensión de la obra] II *Paremia*, 13, 216-218. Madrid

2004.- Un puñado de dichos sentenciosos espigados en las “Cartas” y “Relaciones” de Antonio Pérez, secretario que fue del monarca Felipe II. *Proverbium. Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*, 21, 109-117. Vermont, USA

2004.- Pedro Vallés: Libro de refranes copilado por el orden del ABC ... [Recensión]. *Proverbium. Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*, 21, 461-464. Vermont, USA

2005.- Un puñado de refranes sobre medicamentos. *VII Jornades d'Historia de la farmàcia catalana. Llibre d'actes*. CD

2006.- El cerdo y la industria chacinera a través de la historia y de la literatura popular. *Proverbium. Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*, 23, 211-242. Vermont, USA

2008.- La imagen social de los farmacéuticos y la farmacia en los refranes españoles. *Trobades*, 6. *Salut i societat als municipis valencians: una perspectiva històrica*, 385-400. Seminari d'Estudis sobre la ciència. Ontinyent

2008.- El queso en la refranística castellana. *Proverbium. Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*, 25, 159-178. Vermont, USA

2012.- Refranero de la Música. Temático, de José Ramón Carbonell Beviá [Recensión]. *Proverbium. Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*, 29, 385-388. Vermont, USA

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CHARLES-LOUIS MORAND MÉTIVIER

Les Proverbes dans l'Europe des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles: réalités et représentations. Actes du colloque international organisé à Nancy (17, 18, 19 novembre 2011). Eds. Marie-Nelly Fouigny et Marie Roig Miranda. Nancy : Groupe "XVI^e et XVII^e siècles en Europe", 2013. Pp. 579.

Dans son avant-propos à cet ouvrage, Mary-Nelly Fouigny souligne l'importance et la grande richesse du proverbe, liées au paradoxe même de son existence, qu'elle explique en indiquant "il réalise sans arrêt le grand écart entre la constance de son sens figé et multiples variations auxquelles il peut se prêter dans les circonstances particulières de son emploi en situation" (7). Force est de constater que les articles qui composent ces actes, parfaitement organisés et mis en avant par les éditeurs, sont une parfaite illustration de la complexité de l'étude parémiologique dans cette période charnière qu'est l'époque prémoderne.

Ce qui est remarquable dans ce recueil, c'est avant tout le grand sentiment d'unité qui transpire entre les différentes communications. En effet, quand bien même les trois chapitres qui regroupent et divisent les articles présentent des analyses touchant à ce qui pourrait sembler au premier abord comme des champs différents de l'étude parémiologique, ils sont au contraire complémentaires, en offrant tout un panel d'analyses concordant à une meilleure articulation de la place du proverbe dans l'environnement intellectuel, littéraire et socioculturel de l'époque. Cette transdisciplinarité est d'ailleurs au cœur du projet ALIENTO (Analyse Linguistique et Interculturelle des ENoncés sapientiels brefs et de leur Transmission Orient/Occident et Occident/Orient) de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme de l'Université de Lorraine, qui permet, comme le relèvent Marie-Christine Bornes-Varol et Marie-Sol Ortola dans leur article de conclusion au volume, de "confronter des traditions scientifiques différentes à travers le croisement de textes issus de traditions culturelles différentes, annotés collectivement de façon semblable" (569). Ce

sentiment de pluridisciplinarité, pour et par le proverbe, transparaît de façon claire tout au long de ce recueil, les différents articles apparaissant comme complémentaires les uns aux autres, offrant ainsi au lecteur néophyte un panorama d'introduction à la parémiologie prémoderne, et au connaisseur des études de cas lui permettant d'approfondir et d'élargir son champ d'études.

La première partie, "Le Paradoxe du proverbe : constance et variations" propose des études sur l'origine et la formation de la forme proverbiale, et sur ses nombreuses variations. Guy Achard-Bayle présente une étude sur l'origine du proverbe en se basant sur son étymologie, pour expliquer comment le proverbe est le produit, mais également le reflet de la société qui l'engendre. Jorge Chen Sham montre comment, dans *Don Quichotte*, le proverbe s'enrichit de façon constante, en réévaluant son sens ancien afin de se réadapter de façon constante. Sonia Fournet-Pérot utilise également l'œuvre de Cervantes, ainsi que *La Célestine*, pour montrer comment le proverbe peut être perverti de son sens original en devenant une exhortation au libertinage ou à la luxure, selon le contexte de lecture, montrant ainsi sa richesse et la palette de lectures qu'il offre. Delphine Hermès, Marie Roig Miranda et Rafaële Audoubert se focalisent toutes trois sur les proverbes dans l'œuvre de Quevedo. Hermès s'intéresse à l'altération syntaxique d'un proverbe, et la façon dont celle-ci légitime la violence et différentes horreurs. Elle démontre ainsi comment Quevedo, par ce procédé, soulignait l'énorme pouvoir qui pouvait être donné aux proverbes. Miranda étudie la déconstruction du proverbe qu'il effectue, démontrant que Quevedo refusait une utilisation de sa forme attestée. Audoubert, quant à elle, étudie les utilisations à des fins politiques qu'en fait l'auteur, par le biais de leur polysémie.

Marie Eugénie Kaufmant se focalise sur *Del monte sale* de Lope de Vega. Elle démontre comment le poème est une part intégrale de la pièce, jouant sur et avec son intrigue, mais également sur la personnalité des personnages. Sabine Guffrat explique comment l'utilisation des proverbes dans les fables de La Fontaine a pour but de faire réfléchir le lecteur, en l'obligeant à opérer des choix sur son sens et à portée. Catherine Gaignard, dans *Don Quichotte*, se penche sur l'utilisation des proverbes animaliers. Elle explique qu'ils sont liés à la personnalité de Sancho Panza. Leur traduction en est particulièrement difficile, car leurs différentes acceptations sont liées à une mise en contexte avec la personnalité de Sancho.

Finalement, Cristina Adrada Rafael et Marie-Hélène Garcia étudient les difficultés qu'ont rencontrées au XVIIe siècle des auteurs espagnols à traduire des proverbes français.

La deuxième partie, "Le Proverbe et la littérature parémiologique" se focalise sur, notamment, les différents recueils de proverbes parus lors de cette période. John Nassichuck, dans son étude sur l'œuvre de Filippo Beroaldo, explique comment celle-ci influença Érasme. Il souligne également la façon dont Beroaldo organise son choix de proverbe autour d'une idée directrice philosophique. Véronique Jude étudie la *Philosophia vulgar* de Juan de Mal Lara, également en se basant sur l'idée que ce recueil est moins un classement des proverbes qu'une organisation de ceux-ci autour d'une volonté de présentation philosophique de leur portée. Marc Zuili s'intéresse quant à lui à un recueil bilingue de proverbes de César Oudin, et la façon dont ce recueil a été d'une grande importance dans la dissémination de la culture espagnole en France.

Janine Strauss s'intéresse aux commentaires et gloses des *Maximes des pères* par le Maharal de Prague. Elle souligne la façon dont ceux-ci ont permis le passage d'une langue à l'autre des proverbes contenus dans le texte original. Alberto Frigo s'intéresse à l'œuvre du Cardinal Domenico Toschi, et au lien inhabituel entre la profanité du proverbe et le sacré de la réflexion théologique engendrée, dans le but de montrer la richesse de ce genre, et les contrastes qu'il met en place. Bérangère Basset et Marie-Nelly Fouligny analysent toutes deux les *Adages* d'Érasme. Basset étudie les origines plutarquiennes de cette œuvres, qui analysent l'origine du proverbe, et Fouligny la façon dont le théâtre de Plaute et Térence a influencé Érasme, et réciproquement comment Érasme a "enrichi" en retour ses sources. Alexandra Oddo Bonnet étudie l'influence réciproque entre "comedias" et proverbes, et la façon dont les deux s'auto-enrichissent au contact de l'autre. Finalement, Danuta Bartol explique la façon dont l'image des femmes est reflétée dans des recueils parémiologiques de France et de Pologne aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles.

La troisième et dernière partie s'intitule "Le Proverbe dans les arts et la littérature". Damien Villiers effectue une introduction parfaite à cette partie en proposant une analyse de la place du proverbe dans la littérature et dans les arts de l'époque. Anne-Marie Chabrole-Cerretini explique comment le proverbe est utilisé dans le *Dialogo de la lengua* de Juan de Valdés, une grammaire de la

langue castillane pour Italiens, en démontrant que les proverbes, en tant que miroirs de la langue, sont une parfaite démonstration de celle-ci. Fabrice Quero étudie l'usage des proverbes dans les œuvres du franciscain Luis de Maluenda, et comment le message religieux est vulgarisé par le biais de proverbes parfois vulgaires. Jean-Claude Colbus, quant à lui, montre comment les proverbes de la *Chronique* entraînent "l'épiphanie d'une pensée originale" (31) chez Sébastien Franck. Alain Cullière se penche de son côté sur la vulgarisation de la pensée profane de Sénèque par le biais des proverbes. Maxime Normand étudie les usages des proverbes bibliques chez La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, Pascal et La Fontaine. Mariana Gois Neves étudie la façon dont le proverbe pourrait être vu comme le message de l'auteur dans le *Pronto de Maria Parda* de Gil Vicente. Maria Proshina étudie, chez Rabelais, la façon dont l'utilisation des proverbes est utilisée dans une attaque du comportement monacal, mais également afin de défendre l'usage du vernaculaire. Patricia Ehl étudie la façon dont l'œuvre du jésuite Pierre Mousson répond à un intérêt de l'époque pour la tradition théâtrale antique. Charles Bruckerméier en relation proverbes et emblèmes chez Simon Bouquet. Richard Crescenzo étudie la façon dont les *Jeunesses* de Jean de La Gessée, inspirées des *Regrets* de du Bellay, balancent entre citations massives de proverbes et originalité. Du Bellay ayant lui-même été inspiré des *Adages*, Crescenzo défend le fait que l'on a affaire à une réécriture poétique. Finalement, Florence Dumora conclut cet ouvrage en se focalisant sur l'œuvre de Sébastien de Horozco, afin de démontrer la dimension poétique du proverbe.

Ce recueil superbe se doit d'être lu par quiconque a un intérêt pour la parémiologie prémoderne, mais également par quiconque s'intéresse à l'étude de l'écrit au cours de cette période. Il s'agit d'une œuvre sérieuse, riche et intellectuelle, qui mérite la plus grande attention de tous.

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YOKO MORI

Warai to kotowaza (Laughter and the Proverb). Ed. by the Japanese Society of Paremiology. Tokyo: Ningennokagakushinsha, 2013. Pp. 354 (in Japanese).

Instead of a normal review of this essay volume by Japanese scholars, Yoko Mori is providing a list of the authors, the titles in Japanese and English translation, and the page numbers of the individual essays. This information indicates the exciting and important paremiological work that is going on in Japanese by members of the Japanese Society of Paremiology.

1. Yamaguchi, Masanobu
“Warai to kotowaza ni kakeru hashi.”
(Bridges between Laughter and Proverbs.), pp. 9-16.
2. Yamaguchi, Masanobu
“Kotowaza no warai wo himotoku.”
(Exploring Laughter in Proverbs.), pp. 21-38.
3. Ooyama, Rie
“Kotowaza ga tsumugu warai wo motomete.”
(In Pursuit of a Laugh with Japanese Proverbs.), pp. 39-51.
4. Komori, Hideaki
“Zen no warai to kotowaza.”
(Laughter and Proverbs Regarding Zen Buddhism.), pp. 53-68.
5. Takagi, Ryo
“Kirieyakaruta no dekirumade.”
(How to Make Parody Card Games.), pp. 69-86.
6. Yamaoka, Toshio.
“Wagahai wa hito dearu. Warai to kotowaza yo kon-nichiwa.”
(I am Human. Hello, Laughter and Proverbs.), pp. 87-104.

7. Mori, Yoko
“Warai no zuzougaku ni yomu kotowaza: 16, 17seiki no Fulandoru- and Olandakaiga wo chushin toshite.”
(Proverbs in the Iconography of Laughter: Focus on the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Centuries Flemish and Dutch Paintings.), pp. 107-130.
8. Kobayashi, Yu
“Manteiouga no gesaku *Kyokunukiyomegane* ni miru kotowaza no parodihou: kotobagaki to zuzou no yumoa.”
(The Interpretation of Proverbs from the Book, *Kyokun Ukiyo Megane* by Mantei Oga: The Humor of Drawings and Explanation.), pp. 131-154.
9. Tokita, Masamizu
“Kotowazasugoroku ni okeru warai.”
(Laugh on Proverb of Japanese Parcheesi.), pp. 157-168.
10. Nakao, Nobumi
“Kotowaza kara mieru kazokuzou: Keiryobunseki no koromi.”
(Family Image as Portrayed through Proverbs: A Statistical Analysis.), pp. 171-191.
11. Nakamura, Fumi
“Kotowaza ni mamorarete: Watashi no seikatsutaiken to kotowaza.”
(Supported by Proverbs: My Life Experience and Proverbs.), pp. 193-208.
12. Kawashima, Hiroshi
“Wakamono niyori roudoukan wo arawashita 50ku no sousakukotowaza: 'Hatarakazarumono kuubekarazu' wo dou toraerunoka.”
(50 Student Generated Proverbs: Work Ethics Revealed.), pp. 209-230.
13. Ishihara, Hitoshi
“Sosakukotowaza kara mita gendaitsalaryman jijou.”
(Twisted Proverbs through the Eyes of the White Collar Employee.), pp. 233-250.

14. Ito, Hisae
“Ongaku to kotowaza: kotowaza ga tsukawareteiru ongakusakuhin no hanashi.”
(Music and Proverbs: Proverbs in Song Lyrics.), pp. 251-267.
15. Shimizu, Yasuo
“Intaanettojisho to kotowaza, kanyouku.”
(Proverbs and Idiomatic Phrases from Internet Dictionaries.), pp. 269-283.
16. Tuji, Chinatsu
“Kotowaza, knyouku no nihongokyouikufukukyouzai ni tsuite.”
(A Report on Supplementary Educational Materials Pertaining to Proverbs and Idioms in the Japanese Language Classroom.), pp. 285-298.
17. O’Callaghan, Kate
“Honyakuban Gerikku no kotowaza ni miru yuumoa no taipu.”
(Wit and Gaelic Proverbs.), pp. 301-310.
18. Okamura, Shii
“Hawai no kotowaza ni arawareru shokumotsu.”
(Food in Hawaiian Proverbs.), pp. 313-326.
19. Anada, Yoshiyuki
“Kyoudo no kotowaza saihakken: Kotowazashakaishinrigaku no shiten.”
(A Socio-Psychological Look at the Semantic Concept of “Hometown” as Represented in Proverbs.), pp. 327-349.

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

Narratives Across Space and Time: Transmissions and Adaptations. Proceedings of the 15th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (June 21-27, 2009 Athens). Ed. by Aikaterini Polymerou-Kamilaki, Evangelos Karamanes, and Ioannis Plemmenos. 3 vols. Athens: Academy of Athens, Hellenic Folklore Research Centre, 2014. Pp. 2039.

What follows is not a book review as such but rather the celebratory comments that I made at the official presentation of these three massive volumes of *Proceedings* on December 17, 2014, at the Academy of Athens in Greece:

Let me start my short remarks by thanking Aikaterini Polymerou-Kamilaki and Evangelos Karamanes of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens for inviting me to participate at the official presentation of the three massive volumes of *Narratives across Space and Time: Transmissions and Adaptations. Proceedings of the 15th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (June 21-27, 2009 Athens)*. They, Ioannis Plemmenos, and many others deserve our admiration and appreciation for editing over 125 articles comprising 2039 exquisitely produced pages of scholarship written by international folklorists. The third volume even includes abstracts of all the papers, the entire program of the unforgettable Congress at Athens, and numerous pages of colored pictures of special events and participants. In one of them I found myself represented, bringing back all those unforgettable memories of one of the most significant meetings ever assembled in the field of international folkloristics. When one considers the sociopolitical and economic challenges that Greece and its people have endured during the past few years, it is somewhat of a miracle that these invaluable volumes were published at all. When the books arrived at my office at the University of Vermont about six weeks ago, I was absolutely overwhelmed by their heftiness and found myself running from office to office in order to show them off to my colleagues. My repeated

questions to them were simply: “Can you believe this scholarly accomplishment by our Greek colleagues during these hard times? How did they do this and where did they find the funding to accomplish this Herculean labor? Could we possibly have mastered such a giant publication here in the United States?” Very honestly, I have never seen such a gargantuan congress publication, and on behalf of all members of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research and folklorists everywhere, I would like to express our sincere thanks and deep appreciation for these invaluable proceedings.

To us who had the good fortune to travel to beautiful Athens in June of 2009, the content of these books brings back treasured memories of excellent scholarly presentations by renowned folklorists at the end or middle of their careers but also by younger colleagues and students who represent the future of international folklore research. As we proceeded from lecture to lecture in various languages and on topics too large to enumerate, we learned from each other, we shared old and new insights, and we delighted in rekindling old and forming new friendships. There was, of course, also time for socializing and for enjoying unique events with special meals and drinks, all very conducive to advancing knowledge in the multifaceted field of folk narratives. Indeed, the general theme of the congress was well chosen by calling for contributions about “Narratives across Space and Time: Transmissions and Adaptations”. Consequently there were close to 300 presentations dealing with the history and future of folk narrative research, the relevance of narratives to modern concerns of ecology and the environment, the importance of narratives for maintaining memory during migration and in the diaspora, narratives as social strategies and as expressions of identity in a changing world, the importance of storytelling and storytellers in old times and today, and, how could it be otherwise, the relevance and innovative use of folk narratives of all kinds in the modern print and electronic media.

This all reminds me of the title *Tradition and Innovation in Folk Literature* that I gave one of my books in 1987. As a motto for my elaborations on how folk narratives are not only traditional, constant, and static but also innovative, changing, and dynamic, perfectly capable of surviving in the modern age in their original form or in adapted mutations, I chose the title of Johann Wolfgang

von Goethe's poem, "Dauer im Wechsel" from 1803 that might best be rendered into English as "Constancy in Change". As the three congress volumes show, folk narrative studies are rightly and properly characterized by such dichotomies as stability and variability, traditional forms and new creations, cultural continuity and discontinuity, and the simultaneity of tradition and innovation. Parallel to the understandable emphasis of tradition in folklore studies, the contemporaneity and modernity of folklore must not be forgotten. Cultural heritage changes and evolves as it is transmitted and adapted across space and time. Especially today in an interconnected globalized world it behooves folklorists to pay attention to the role that folk narratives in the form of fairy tales, legends, tall tales, nursery rhymes, proverbs, etc. play in various modes of communication as people are no longer restricted to a regional space but can travel worldwide, watch television, read the papers, and above all communicate via social media instantaneously with people literally everywhere. And transmissions and adaptations of folk narratives across time and space are part of the modern age, with the three giant volumes of the Congress on Folk Narratives at Athens bearing witness that folk narrative scholars are paying attention to the interplay of tradition and innovation.

It has always been true that folk narrative studies at their best consider diachronic and synchronic aspects and if possible on a comparative and interdisciplinary basis. While thus investigating linguistic and culturally specific phenomena showing local, regional, and national peculiarities, modern scholarship is casting its investigative net wider by comparing narratives of all types from folk tales to proverbs on a continental or even global dimension. By doing so, folkloristics is not necessarily emphasizing differences among people but rather, and perhaps more importantly, stressing the similarities among the inhabitants of the world over time. This in turn leads to the idea of ethics of place that goes beyond the local and encompasses all of humanity throughout the world with a global or universal view of morality. Yes, there are tensions between individualism and collectivism, local and global, particularism and universalism, but scholars from various disciplines, including folklorists, do well in reflecting on ethical principles that tie humanity together into a common network of mutuality in which compassion, empathy, love, and hope might ensure a

world of peace governed by the proverbial golden rule of doing unto others as we would have them do unto us.

All the lectures presented at the 15th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research in 2009 at Athens and the selection of papers now published in the magnificent three volumes of *Narratives across Space and Time: Transmissions and Adaptations* (2014) attest to this all-encompassing worldview. Folklorists from all corners of the world came to Athens to present their research results as an extended family of scholars. But much of this encounter and knowledge would be lost if it were not for the three-volume set of books being presented here this evening. They are a lasting testimony to the fact that the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens served the international community of folklorists extremely well by organizing this marvelous Congress. With this published record in hand, we can, as Aikaterini Polymerou-Kamilaki has stated it in her introduction to this invaluable publication, “look forward to the future of narratological research, free academic discourse and the globalization of universal human values that are today more necessary than ever, to bring about a worldwide sense of peace and brotherhood among peoples.”

Thank you very much – Sas efharisto poli!

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JOHN M. JEEP

Usuelle Wortverbindungen: Zentrale Muster des Sprachgebrauchs aus korpusanalytischer Sicht. By Kathrin Steyer. Studien zur Deutschen Sprache 65. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag, 2013. Pp. 390.

Vorliegende phraseologische Studie aus dem Mannheimer Institut für Deutsche Sprache (IDS, Redaktion Elke Donalies) geht von der durch eingehende korpusbasierte Untersuchungen gewonnenen Einsicht aus, dass sich Mehrwortverbindungen quantitativ erfassen und ihnen zu Grunde liegende Muster nachweisen und lexikalisch darstellen lassen. Ziel der Analyse und deren Darstellung ist ein Wörterbuch, das, in welcher Form auch immer, sowohl der einzelsprachlichen Lexikographie als auch der Fremdsprachenpädagogik dienlich wäre. Hier werden erste Versuche an Hand eines weit verbreiteten Beispiels zum Druck gebracht. Wortverbindungen jeglicher Art – Idiome, Kollokationen, Formeln, Sprichwörter, Phraseme u. a. m. – stellen für beide Bereiche (Wörterbuch und Lehre) besondere Herausforderungen dar. Elektronisch unterstützte Programme sind in der Lage, besonders große Textmengen zu erfassen und nach bestimmten Elementen zu befragen. Die seit einigen Jahren gesammelten, zum Teil auch eigenen Erfahrungen wertet Steyer bündig aus, und zwar fachhistorisch als auch praktisch. Auf Grund von philologisch gesicherten Erkenntnissen kann man natürlich auch nach Entsprechungen in anderen Sprachen suchen. Dabei hofft man, im günstigsten Fall auf den Ursprung einer Prägung beziehungsweise auf sprachliche Universalien vorzustoßen. Einige europäische und sonst international orientierte Projekte laufen derzeit.

Nutzer der vorliegenden Studie werden sich, falls sie nicht in der elektronischen Fachwelt bewandert sind, an Termini wie *Chunk*, *Cluster*, *Marker*, *Slot*, *Tool* u. a. m. gewöhnen müssen. Eine hilfreiche Liste verwendeter Abkürzungen (im Anhang) leistet immer wieder Abhilfe, vor allem bei Angaben zur Methode. Webseitenadressen (samt ihrer Abkürzungen) findet man

von der anderen Literatur gesondert abgedruckt. Einträge (siebzehn bzw. sieben an der Zahl) in einem Anhang "Terminologische Festlegungen des UWV-Modells" und "Abkürzungen und Musterauszeichnung" (377f.) werden allerdings seltsamerweise nicht alphabetisch aufgelistet. Im Anhang findet man des weiteren alle im Buch referierten Suchanfragen und je zwei Abbildungen aus dem *Digitalen Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (=www.dwds.de, nicht, wie S. 389, "des 20. Jahrhunderts") und im Wortschatz-Portal (wortschatz-uni-leipzig.de); beim letzteren muss man auf die detailliertere Darstellung klicken, um zu dem abgebildeten Netzgraph zu gelangen.

Auf die Einleitung folgt ein erstes Kapitel, das die Terminologie und die Methodik (Form-Funktions-Modell) klar darlegt. Kapitel zwei erläutert den korpuslinguistischen Ansatz unter Verwendung einer Analyse von Daten deutscher Sprichwörter (dazu mehr hier unten) und die Aufbereitung der Daten zu usuellen Wortverbindungen.

Mittelpunkt gewissermaßen der Studie (Kap. 3) ist die systematische, detaillierte Aufarbeitung der usuellen Wortverbindungen um das Lexem *Grund* (42, 65, 97f., 151-287, 323-6, 329-35, 342-6, 350f.). Andere Beispiele, die zwecks Vergleiche und oder methodologischer Klarstellung herangezogen werden, sind: *allen* (239-55), *auch immer* (227, 255-67, 346), *bekanntlich X* (104-6), *berechtigterweise* (18, 165-74, 344), *Daumen drücken* (43-47, 55f., 300-306, 342, 337f., 346), *fixe Idee* (52f., 131-5), *sich fragen (lassen)* (59f.), *jetzt heißt es X* (46f., 137f., 345f.), *Liebe* (317-22), *mit ein* (267-72, 346), *Mühe(n)* (320-2), *nicht zuletzt* (275-81, 346), *eine Nummer zu X* (306f.), *ohne ... von* (272-5, 346), *Ohren* (42, 47f., 53f., 57f., 60-62, 98-104, 107-9, 112-31, 135f., 138f., 342-6), *englisches Sprichwort* (106f.) und *das* (281-7, 345f.). Diese wohl kaum vollständige Auflistung ist deshalb sinnvoll, weil das Buch kein Register der behandelten Wortverbindungen bietet. Eine längere Liste enthielte auch die vielen Einzelbeispiele, die Steyer aufführt: *Weniger ist mehr, Alles hat seine Zeit* usw. usf. Ganze 85 Abbildungen – für eine Liste dieser (384-8) ist man dankbar – verdeutlichen die Arbeitsweise (Kookurrenzprofile, KWIC [Key Word in Context; dabei ist zu beachten, dass Steyer in der Darstellung eine zweckdienliche Unterscheidung zwischen engerem Kotext und soziolinguistisch breiter gefasstem Kontext anwendet], Füllertabellen, Webseitenartikel und andere mehr, die meisten als

Ausschnitt), daneben gibt es zahlreiche Schemata, die die Gliederung der Elemente der Mehrwortlexeme darstellen.

Grundlage der Studie und Herausforderung zugleich ist die philologische Erarbeitung der egal wie vielen Belege, was Steyer wiederholt als intellektuelle Interpretation, tiefere Analyse, systematische Auswertung, qualitativ, induktiv, differenziert bezeichnet.

Die Analyse der Mehrwortlexeme um *Grund* – *Grund* mit seinen verschiedenen Formen liegt in über 1.600.000 Belegen in der Datei Deutsches Referenzkorpus, Stand 2013, vor – wird exemplarisch für fünf präpositionale Syntagmen (*mit, ohne, im, auf, aus*) vorgeführt. Steyer entscheidet, die konkreten, nicht-kausalen *Grund*-Belege in den Hintergrund zu stellen, um sich auf die abstrakteren Anwendungen zu konzentrieren. Die drei erstgenannten Präpositionalwendungen weisen das Muster binär neben rekurrenten lexikalischen Erweiterungen auf. Mit *auf* hingegen liegt eine Ergänzung Determinierer + Substantiv vor. Bei *aus* muss schließlich eine Ergänzung erscheinen, da das Syntagma **aus Gründen* nicht allein stehen kann. Zum letzten Beispiel besteht eine Variante: *aus welchen Gründen auch immer*. Die Erweiterungen folgen feststellbaren Mustern, die den muttersprachlichen SprecherInnen gemeinsam zur Verfügung stehen. Im Vergleich zu Einwort-Entsprechungen für die präpositionalen Wendungen stellt Speyer vorläufig fest, dass letztere oft pragmatische Bedeutungen enthalten, die den Monolexemen fehlen. Im Ganzen dient also das 'Grund'-Muster auch als solches. Unterschiede in der Darstellung stellt man fest, wenn man den Eintrag auf der Webseite OVID – Online-Wortschatz-Informationssystem Deutsch am IDS – einsieht (9.8.2014): http://www.owid.de/artikel/193155/Motiv?module=elex_b; ob diese in Zukunft behoben werden sollten, ist nicht klar. Manche Abweichungen sind darauf zurückzuführen, dass Steyer nur ausgewählte Muster in Betracht zieht. Den Sprachmustern übergeordnet sind schließlich Konstruktionen, die eventuell tiefer liegenden Elemente der Grammatik darstellen. Ein Beispiel, *allen Ernstes [all-SUB-G_{Nachgestellt}]*, hält Steyer für eine mögliche solche Konstruktion.

Nach der detaillierten Darstellung ausgewählter Musterbeispiele (Kap. 4) weitet Speyer die Perspektive auf lexikographische Fragen, mit einer hilfreichen Übersicht bestehender Projekte. Längerfristig wird man deren gegenseitige Vernetzung

unter Berücksichtigung verschiedener Methoden und erwünschte Zugriffsmöglichkeiten klären wollen. Gerade hier kann man wegen teils kaum vorhersehbarer rasanter technologischer Entwicklungen gespannt sein. Auf die Praxis folgt die Theorie. Auf den Webseiten sind besonders die Projekte (Steyer nennt sie auch Produkte, 289) zu begrüßen, die Links zu den Belegen führen. Zu viele andere führen lediglich Listen von Redewendungen auf, deren philologische Grundlagen a) unzuverlässig und oder b) nicht rekonstruierbar sind. So werden auch manche früher Karteileichen genannte Daten lediglich weitergereicht. Ein Beispiel sei genannt, das auch in der Literaturliste von Steyer steht: <http://www.operone.de/spruch/suche.php> (die Angabe <http://www.operone.de/spruch/spruchin.html> [373] führt [11.8.2014] zu keiner Seite). Steyer warnt zu Recht vor der unkritischen Verwendung von solchen Informationen.

Unter den allgemeineren Schlussfolgerungen, die durch diese verdienstvolle Untersuchung an den Tag treten, seien einige hervorgehoben: Die Erkenntnis, dass unterschiedliche Textdatensammlungen oft ähnliche Resultate hervorbringen, was zur methodologisch zu begrüßenden Zuversicht führt. Bei der großen Menge der Daten kann man davon ausgehen, dass die durch die Darstellung gewonnenen Muster gültig seien. Mehrwortlexeme unterliegen, wie alles Sprachliche, der Evolution; Festigkeit ist eher selten als die Regel. Vielmehr ist von einem Spektrum an Festigkeitsgrad auszugehen. Wortverbindungen weisen oft pragmatische Komponente auf, die monolexematischen Synonymen fehlen.

Für die Sprichwortforschung besonders interessant ist ein Exkurs, "Sprichwortverifizierung im Korpus" (79-94). Steyer war Projektleiterin des IDS am EU-finanzierten Projekt SprichWort-Plattform 2008-2010, das Mitwirkende auch aus Österreich, Slowenien, der Slowakei und Ungarn zusammenführte, die Sprichwörter in den verschiedenen Sprachen und Kulturen untersuchten und ins Internet gestellt haben. Auffällig und meiner Meinung nach äußerst zutreffend innerhalb der Darstellung ist die mehrmals angesprochene Erfahrung, dass gesammelte Daten dann doch im Einzelfall der sorgfältigen philologischen Überprüfung bedürfen. In diesem Sinne folgen ein paar Anmerkungen.

Didaktische Überlegungen entscheiden, welche Sprichwörter auf der SprichWort-Plattform stehen sollten. Von acht Beispielen (93), die wegen fehlender Äquivalente in mindesten zwei der hier

berücksichtigten Sprachen nicht aufgenommen wurden, weisen drei Endreim, eines Stabreim und zwei eine Entsprechung im Englischen auf. Elemente, die rhetorisch relevante phonologische Merkmale enthalten, finden selten gleichartige Entsprechungen in anderen, vor allem in nichtverwandten Sprachen. Man kann über solche Entscheidungen unterschiedlicher Ansicht sein. Man soll aber nicht unbedingt davon ausgehen, dass Informationen im Internet inhaltlich besser seien als andere. Die Einordnung von *Pech im Spiel, Glück in der Liebe* (322, mir fehlt die Variante, *Glück im Spiel, Unglück in der Liebe*, sieh auch <http://www.owid.de/artikel/401712>) unter 'Sport' scheint mir fraglich, handelt es sich beim Sprichwort eher um Glücks- oder Kartenspiele (so etwa *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 8, Sp. 237). Allerdings kann es sich hier auch um diachronische Sichtweisen handeln, was für die Gegenwart ja durch Sprecherbefragung zu klären wäre, ob jedes Spiel etwa auch eine Sportart sein kann. Hierbei kommt die historische Phraseologie ins Spiel. Wie die Feststellung der Variabilität bei der Formfestigkeit von Redewendungen sei auf die Semantik von *und so weiter* (337) hingewiesen, bei der meines Erachtens übersummative Bedeutung nicht unbedingt angenommen werden muss.

Steyer weist wiederholt auf die Tatsache hin, dass die verschiedenen grammatischen Bereiche stets im Zusammenspiel miteinander agieren. Die gelungene Darstellung der morphologisch-syntaktisch-semantisch-pragmatischen Komponente von einem Teilkomplex um das Lexem *Grund* erhärtet diese Einsicht eindrucksvoll. Vergleichbare Untersuchungen zu anderen phraseologischen Einheiten seien erwünscht. In diesem Sinne kommt man Hermann Paul, den Steyer eingangs ("einfache Grundgedanken") und zum Abschluss (Muster) der Studie zitiert, gerecht nach.

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EVE KULBERG

Mataluna: 151 Afghan Pashto Proverbs. Collected, edited, and translated by Edward Zellem. Edited by Hares Ahmadzai. Illustrations by Marefat High School in Kabul, Afghanistan. Tampa, Florida: Cultures Direct Press, 2014. Pp. 182.

“One flower doesn’t bring spring alone,” nor does a proverb collector working alone bring flourishing community involvement that crowdsourcing cultivates. American military officer and Dari speaker Captain Edward Zellem used crowdsourcing methods—gathering content through the involvement of individuals in online communities—to gather Pashto proverbs and bring Pashto speakers together. The resultant publication, *Mataluna*, demonstrates that crowdsourcing can both create a valuable cultural, linguistic book and also a transformative community project. The proverbs included in *Mataluna* grew in Pashto homes, were offered up on social networking sites, and arranged into a bouquet that displays Pashto linguistic and cultural flourishing.

Dari and Pashto speakers in Afghanistan value equality for the two languages: what exists in one language should also exist in the other. Therefore, after Zellem gathered one hundred and fifty-one Dari proverbs while living in Afghanistan and published an award-winning, illustrated book, *Zarbul Masalha* (2011), Pashto speakers asked him (in essence); “where is our book of Pashto proverbs?” Zellem met the challenge innovatively while living in America. He compiled *Mataluna: 151 Afghan Pashto Proverbs* by tapping into his online network of Pashto-speaking contacts and requesting submissions of Pashto proverbs. After eliciting proverbs through multiple forms of social media, particularly Twitter, he sorted and checked the submissions to discover which proverbs his online contacts considered to be most appropriate for a bound publication. He explains the process in detail on his website, *Afghan Proverbs*. He selected only proverbs that do not promote revenge, violence, or values inconsistent with a general desire for sustainable peace in Af-

ghanistan. After selecting one hundred and fifty-one violence-and revenge-free Pashto proverbs with a Pashto scholar, Zellem asked the illustrators of his earlier book of Dari proverbs (high school students at Marefat High School in Kabul) to create images to accompany the Pashto sayings. The result? An illustrated book *and* a process well worth replicating *with* (rather than *for*) other language communities.

After a preface describing the process of the book's creation and a brief foreword, Zellem offers a simplified guide to the Pashto alphabet. Each page in the text's body presents one proverb in Pashto, a Roman script transliteration below, a "literal" translation into English below that, (usually) an explanation, other comment, and/or an informative, explanatory note. The transcriptions simplify the Pashto vowels and attempt to distinguish retroflex consonants by doubling a letter. The transcriptions may not always accurately represent proper pronunciation. A visual illustration of the proverb or an ornamental leaf graces each page.

The first proverb in *Mataluna* speaks of self-reliance and the importance of work. Setting this proverb first provides an artful touch of irony, since this work is primarily valuable because it is a uniquely cooperative work. By my estimation, at least twenty-one of the one hundred and fifty-one proverbs underscore the value of hard work. About sixteen proverbs champion the value of honesty, and around fourteen treat wisdom or general advice on how to live. About eleven proverbs emphasize the value of acting in a careful manner. The book seems not to categorize the proverbs in any readily discernable manner, but some portions lump together general topics, such as four consecutive proverbs on pride/humility (pp. 53-56). Other topics include friendship (nine proverbs), human nature (eight), patience (eight), enemies (six), persistence, power, money, time (five each).

To a reader familiar with Pashto language and culture, proverbs concerning violence and revenge appear conspicuous by their absence. One proverb reflects the Pashtun code of honor known as *Pashtunwali*: "Better killed by a sword than defiled by an enemy." Zellem comments on this proverb that this unwritten code of honor also includes values of "hospitality, asylum, re-

venge, loyalty, bravery, justice, love of God and nation, and protecting the honor of women" (p. 60).

Thirteen proverbs provide particular insight into practice or expressions of Islam in Pashto culture. These include statements on how God works in relationship to peoples' actions (pp. 4, 33, 36, 77, 105, 122, and 135), perception of alcohol consumption (p. 115), Muslim clothing (p. 38), and the festival time of *Eid* (p. 130). Zellem provides an understanding of a few proverbs that reflect a Muslim perspective. For instance, he explains the proverb, "*Here the steps and the moment are being counted*" with, "Everything you do or say matters, even when you think no one is watching. God sees everything, and holds people accountable for their words, thoughts and actions" (p. 26). Similarly, he comments that "all people ultimately will be held accountable in this life or the next" in part of his explanation of the proverb, "*Even if the night is dark, the apples have been counted*" (p. 57). Zellem seems to avoid citing Galatians 6:7, even though his "Literal" translation of the proverb, "*As you sow, so shall you reap*" (p. 121) is identical to multiple English translations of the New Testament passage.

For most of the proverbs, Zellem includes a proverb in English which conveys a similar sense and/or could be used in similar context. He labels each one "*English equivalent*." For a few Pashto proverbs, Zellem includes a brief comment, such as a suggestion for the proverb's origination, an explanation of when Pashto may use the proverb, or other comment. In a few instances, his wording in English lacks some clarity and explanations of at least two proverbs left me still scratching my head. The description, "An ironic Matal [proverb] that means a person should not be greedy or selfish" seems to fail at fully elucidating, "*When things come to me, they are all mine*" (p. 68). Zellem explains the proverb, "*First eat your own meat, then eat hunted meat*," with, "Try to learn things, develop expertise, and become skilled and self-reliant..." (p. 62). Without an understanding of Pashto hunting culture, I wonder why hunted meat would not be considered one's "own" meat.

Arguably, proverbs often reflect a language community's culture. So may illustrations. *Mataluna* might provide another level of cultural insights through its pairing of illustrations and proverbs. The pictures the Afghani high school students chose to

draw for at least some of the proverbs may surprise and interest a non-Pashto. For instance, to illustrate, “*A weighing scale does not favor anyone*” the picture shows a beautiful woman, in a flowing head scarf and long shawl, considering her reflection in a mirror (p. 49). For the illustrator to choose to represent a woman’s internal struggle provides an intimate, valuable glimpse into the female experience within Pashto culture. Where women usually keep from showing their faces, let alone their hair, to unrelated men, for the illustrator to choose to represent the women with a bit of hair showing causes me to want to look deeper into the little illustration’s possible intentions.

The picture accompanying “*Mountains do not draw nearer to each other, but people do*” shows an imprisoned man looking sorrowfully through the bars of his cell, and a prison guard standing nearby. In a second frame, the prison guard sits huddled up on the floor, looking sad. The prisoner stands by his cell bars, looking with compassion on the guard. Zellem explains the proverb with the words, “It is important to recognize that all people are fellow humans...” (p. 25). Interestingly, at least two pictures included elements which are not typical of Pashto culture. A man in the illustration to the proverb on page 61 wears a hat perhaps only slightly similar to the Afghani *pacol*. The illustration of one man bowing at the waist, apparently greeting the other man, reflects a greeting not at all common in Pashto culture (p. 61).

About six of the Pashto proverbs in *Mataluna* appear very similar to proverbs in Zellem’s Dari collection. Versions of at least fourteen of the 151 proverbs in Zellem’s collection also appear in Tair and Edward’s collection of 1,350 Pashto proverbs, *Rohi Mataluna: Pashto Proverbs* (2006). Unlike Zellem’s work, *Rohi Mataluna* contains an index and organizes the proverbs alphabetically by the first word in the original Pashto proverbs.

Because of *Mataluna*’s illustrations, limited scope, relatively simple explanations, and “friendly” layout, the book holds great value for English speakers wishing to gain an introduction to Pashto culture. Any outsiders seeking to understand a Muslim culture have much to gain by reading this collection of proverbs. This book should find its way into the hands of any troops who have (or will) put their boots on the ground in Afghanistan.

As well as capturing a sliver of insight into a culture vitally valuable for contemporary international interest, *Mataluna* suggests how well a scholar may create a valuable work out of material gathered online and from high school students. While Zellem's work lacks some refinement and scholarly qualities that academic readers may seek, his work may inspire paremiologists to use the idea of crowdsourcing to attempt more scholarly methods to use the internet for collecting and analyzing proverbs. Perhaps Zellem's work provides a solution to the age-old challenge of the observer's paradox, which hinders effectively gathering proverbs in context. By crowdsourcing, a paremiologist may potentially accomplish volumes more collections than could ever be possible through traveling or library research. Paremiologists should add this book to their shelves and consider following its trailblazing collecting method. Time to open a Twitter account and start collecting proverbs online!

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NEW AND
REPRINTED PROVERB COLLECTIONS

For Rev. Joseph G. Healey

During this past year another 89 paremiographical publications have been added to my International Proverb Archives at the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont (USA). This means that I am adding one new collection every four days, and it is always with much pleasure and excitement that I receive these books from all corners of the world. As always, some of them have been published decades ago while others are reprints of earlier collections. Of course, there are also many new collections of proverbs, proverbial expressions, quotations, and other phraseological units that have appeared during the year 2014. By now I have assembled almost 4,000 collections from various languages and cultures that include monumental scholarly works as well as small collections for the popular market. All of them register the rich treasure trove of preformulated language that informs our oral and written communication.

During a visit with Valerii Mokienko and Harry Walter in the summer of 2014 at the University of Greifswald at Greifswald, Germany, I discovered and copied Adolf Eduard Graf's significant *1200 neue russische Sprichwörter. Aufgezeichnet nach der grossen sozialistischen Oktoberrevolution* (1963) that I had not come across before. Let me also mention Annelies Häcki Buhofer's massive *Feste Wortverbindungen des Deutschen. Kollokationswörterbuch für den Alltag* (2014) that includes much proverbial material. The same is true for William Walsh's *Hand-Book of Literary Curiosities* (1892; rpt. 1966), another significant resource that had escaped me. But the following two books also deserve to be singled out as especially valuable new publications: Liwei Jiao and Benjamin Stone, *500 Common Chinese Proverbs and Colloquial Expressions* (2014) and Janice Raymond, *Mongo-*

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lian Proverbs. A Window into Their World (2014). In any case, this annual bibliography is once again solid proof that paremiography and phraseography prosper everywhere.

I would like to dedicate this bibliographical compilation to Rev. Joseph G. Healey. We have been good friends ever since we met in October of 1995 during an Interdisciplinary Symposium on the African Proverb in the 21st Century at the University of South Africa in Pretoria, of which the proceedings were edited by Willem Saayman as *Embracing the Baobab Tree. The African Proverb in the 21st Century* (1997). An outgrowth of this unforgettable conference was the creation of the African Proverbs Working Group that Father Healey has led for the past twenty years. One of this group's goals is the collection and publication of African proverbs from languages for which no such compilations exist. By now numerous collections of usually 100 richly annotated proverbs from small and endangered regional African languages have been published in Nairobi, Kenya. As has been the case for some time, the present bibliography also contains several such invaluable and truly unique collections. They register proverbs that would be lost due to the disappearance of such languages that are spoken by ever smaller numbers of native speakers. We thus owe a great debt to Joseph Healey and his hard-working group of field researchers for registering and saving these important proverbs. Some day we shall have a giant data-base of thousands of African proverbs that will unlock the wealth of proverbial wisdom from the large African continent. In the meantime let me refer you to the website www.afriprov.org and Rev. Healey's e-mail address JGHealey@aol.com for further information. Thank you, Father Joseph Healey, for everything you have done for African paremiography.

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

INTERNATIONAL PROVERB SCHOLARSHIP:
AN UPDATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

For Valerii M. Mokienko and Harry Walter

The paremiological harvest for the year 2014 with its 497 registered publications has once again been very rich indeed, with one of the big surprises being Tellervo Korgerus' massive biography of the internationally acclaimed paremiologist and paremiographer Matti Kuusi with its 856 pages: *Sanottu. Tehty. Matti Kuusen elämä 1914-1998* (2014). It was published in Kuusi's native language of Finnish, and it is to be hoped that it might in due time appear entirely or abridged in English translation as well. One of Kuusi's friends, the Estonian scholar Arvo Krikmann was honored with the celebratory volume *Scala naturae. Festschrift in Honour of Arvo Krikmann for His 75th Birthday* (2014), magisterially edited by Anneli Baran, Liisi Laineste, and Piret Voolaid. In fact, some of us travelled to Tallinn, Estonia, on August 18, 2014, in order to participate in a symposium organized in his honor. This is not the place to go into detail with specific publications, but I do at least want to mention Damien Villers' superb book *Le proverbe et les genres connexes. Domaines anglais et français* (2014). It is a detailed survey of proverb scholarship with an emphasis on English and French proverbs. Damien Villers is one of the young paremiologists who without any doubt will carry international proverb studies forward.

There have also been numerous extremely important essay volumes with the three gargantuan volumes of *Parémiologie. Proverbes et formes voisines* (2013) edited by Jean-Michel Benayoun, Natalie Kübler, and Jean-Philippe Zouogbo winning the prize. They include the papers of a most memorable international conference that took place at the beginning of July 2011 at the University of Paris-Diderot at Paris, France. Many of us remember this unforgettable scholarly gathering, and it is good to know that the papers could be published at the end of 2013. This is also true

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for five additional essay volumes that appeared too late to be catalogued in my annual bibliography last year: Mary-Nelly Fouigny and Marie Roig Miranda (eds.), *Les proverbes dans l'Europe des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles: Réalités et Représentaions* (2013); María Isabel González Rey (ed.), *Phraseodidactic Studies on German as a Foreign Language / Phraseodidaktische Studien zu Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (2013); Inés Olza and Elvira Manero Richard (eds.), *Fraseoprágmatica* (2013); Joanna Szerszunowicz, Bogusław Nowowiejski, Katsumasa Yagi, and Takaaki Kanzaki (eds.), *Research on Phraseology Across Continents* (2013); and Harry Walter and Valerii M. Mokienko (eds.), *Nationales und Internationales in der slawischen Phraseologie / Natsional'noe i internatsional'noe v slavianskoi frazeologii* (2013).

The newest essay volumes, in part also resulting from exciting international conferences, are Elena Arsenteva (ed.), *Phraseology in Multilingual Society* (2014); Vanda Durante (ed.), *Fraseología y paremiología: enfoques y aplicaciones* (2014); Vida Jesenšek and Dmitrij Dobrovolskij (eds.), *Phraseologie und Kultur / Phraseology and Culture* (2014); Carmen Mellado Blanco (ed.), *Kontrastive Phraseologie. Deutsch – Spanisch* (2014); and Rui J.B. Soares and Outi Lauhakangas (eds.), *Proceedings of the Seventh Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs, 3rd to 10th November 2013, at Tavira, Portugal* (2014). Finally there is the very new essay volume *Paremiologiia v Diskurse* (2014) that Olga V. Lomakina edited in Moscow just in time to be included here. It was a special honor for me that Mikhail Bredis from Moscow translated one of my papers on Martin Luther King into Russian so that it could be included in this significant publication.

As has been my custom of late, I would once again like to dedicate my updated bibliography to someone special. This time they are my dear two Slawist friends Valerii M. Mokienko from St. Petersburg (Russia) and Harry Walter from Greifswald (Germany). The three of us have been good friends for a long time, and we form a wonderful paremiological triad. I have long admired their untiring efforts on behalf of proverb scholarship, and it certainly was one of the highlights of my life when I met them for three days in June of 2014 at Greifswald. There was so much to talk about, and I also had the welcome opportunity to present a lecture on the proverbial rhetoric of President Barack Obama. We also discussed the opportunity of arranging an international con-

ference on paremiology in Russia, and it is one of my dreams that this will indeed happen so that I finally can visit St. Petersburg and Moscow. In any case, my friends Valerii and Harry represent the excellent paremiological and paremiographical scholarship that is taken place throughout the world.

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