

PROVERBIUM

Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship



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WOLFGANG MIEDER

PREFACE

It seems almost like yesterday that last year's volume of *Proverbium* appeared in print, and yet, here the time has already once again come for the next issue to see the proverbial light of day. It is with much delight and satisfaction that I can place the twenty-ninth volume of *Proverbium* for the year 2011 in front of proverb scholars, and it is my sincere hope that it will be greeted with the same enthusiasm and appreciation that has been the case for almost three decades. Each year it is a challenge to bring our annual publication out during the month of July, but with the good will and the expertise of several friends and colleagues this daunting task gets done on time. I owe the smooth work on *Proverbium* to our associate editor Galit Hasan-Rokem, our managing editor Janet Sobieski, and our production editor Hope Greenberg. As always, I wish to express my deep appreciation to them, and the same goes for the good colleagues at Queen City Printers who continue to do an excellent job in printing and binding our *Proverbium* volumes.

It has been a busy year for paremiographers and paremiologists, as can be seen from my two international proverb bibliographies listing this year's collections and interpretive publications from all over the world. But speaking of the globe, I am very excited to report that the present volume is once again a truly international publication. We have always been committed to take the second part of the *Proverbium* title – *Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* – very seriously. As you will see, there are sixteen articles and six book reviews written by paremiologists from Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Portugal, the

Russian Federation, Spain, and the United States. They deal with the multifaceted aspects of proverbs from a comparative and interdisciplinary point of view and represent some of the finest paremiological scholarship of our time.

Let me stop here so that I can dedicate this volume to my long-time friend Janet Sobieski, who will be moving to the state of Idaho with her husband Bill Doucette so that they can be closer to their family. I honestly can state that *Proverbium* would hardly exist without Janet's untiring efforts as our editorial assistant (1988-1997) and managing editor (1998-2011). She has made all the difference over the years, and many of you will recall various messages from her. It will be difficult to carry on without Janet, who also was my administrative assistant for twenty-five years while I was chairperson of the Department of German and Russian. Many of you will also recall the three books we wrote together: *Proverbs and the Social Sciences: An Annotated International Bibliography* (2003), *"So Many Heads, So Many Wits": An Anthology of English Proverb Poetry* (2005), and *"Gold Nuggets or Fool's Gold?" Magazine and Newspaper Articles on the (Ir)relevance of Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (2006). And, of course, it was she who honored me by serving as the editor of *"A Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed": A Festschrift for Professor Wolfgang Mieder* (2004). Everybody will understand how sad I am about her departure from the University of Vermont, where she has been an exemplary employee and the heart and soul of the Department of German and Russian. There will be a void in my life, but I am also happy for Janet and Bill with their new home in Boise, Idaho. On behalf of proverb scholars everywhere I would like to state one more time how thankful I am for Janet's loyal, enthusiastic, and dedicated help over so many years. So let us paremiologists from around the world together with my colleagues here in Vermont wish Janet and Bill the very best, knowing that Janet Sobieski's name will forever be associated with *Proverbium*.

Wolfgang Mieder



JANET SOBIESKI

STEVE COTEUS

“TROUBLE NEVER SETS LIKE RAIN”: PROVERB
(IN)DIRECTION IN MICHAEL THELWELL’S
THE HARDER THEY COME

Abstract: In 1980 Jamaican American author Michael Thelwell novelized Perry Henzell’s film, *The Harder They Come*. Both film and novel have been highly regarded for their significance in postcolonial discourse and realistic depictions of Jamaican society. One of Thelwell’s significant additions was an abundance of proverbs. Every discernable proverb was extracted from Thelwell’s novel and verified by reputable proverb collections, then organized into table format. Building on knowledge from University of Vermont courses in international proverbs and postcolonial studies, research for this essay covered Jamaican history, proverb-oriented and otherwise, reggae music, and all critical works concerning *The Harder They Come*. This essay examines the functionality of proverbs within *The Harder They Come*. The primary goal of the paper is to show how the proverbs of that text are more complexly meaningful than simply establishing local color. The very structures, origins, and contexts of many of these proverbs evince a powerful ambivalence between tradition and modernity, making the Jamaican postcolonial struggle inherent in colloquial speech.

Keywords: Film, Jamaican, Jimmy Cliff, liminality, literature, Michael Thelwell, novelization, Perry Henzell, postcolonial, proverb, reggae

If Perry Henzell’s 1972 film, *The Harder They Come*, was a success (and Michael Thelwell would say it was), then Thelwell’s 1980 novelization of the film was a milestone in postcolonial discourse. At a time in Jamaica when corruption prevailed, the gap between rich and poor was widening, and the nation was trying desperately to form an identity amidst British colonial remnants, American influence, and its people’s West African roots, Perry Henzell made a film that truly embodied the heart of Jamaica’s lower class. To use Thelwell’s distinction, it was not a film about Jamaica, but rather a Jamaican film—the first of its kind to succeed as a gripping reflection of reality (“Film to Novel” 136). In

this visionary, if bold, endeavor Henzell shot the film on location in the slums of Kingston, using a cast of Jamaican civilians (aside from Jimmy Cliff) who spoke in their everyday Creole. We may see just how ambitious this film was if we consider that in the 60s and 70s Jamaican marqueees were stuffed with Hollywood titles, all featuring American white actors in American narratives, and that blaxploitation films, which undercut and mocked black culture, were virtually the only popular films featuring black actors anywhere. While the quality of acting, special effects, editing, etc. was unimpressive, the realist aesthetic to which Henzell stayed true seemed to resonate with all the vital frequencies of Kingston's lower class majority. In fact, that realism was so on point that Thelwell, a native Jamaican himself, initially turned down an offer to novelize *The Harder They Come* because he feared that a novel would undermine and trivialize Henzell's careful work. Indeed, without the powers of true image and dialect or the triumphant seduction of Jimmy Cliff's reggae performances, crafting a distinct yet complementary novel based on the film could hardly have been an elementary feat. Of course, Thelwell stepped up and accomplished just that, weaving a novel that could easily have preceded the film. I sincerely believe, as Thelwell had hoped, that Rhygin (protagonist of Thelwell's novel and legendary hero of Jamaican revolution against colonial power) himself would have thoroughly enjoyed reading *The Harder They Come* (Thelwell, "Film to Novel" 147).

The most important quality which Henzell and Thelwell share is their devotion to Jamaican realism. Thelwell harkened back to his Jamaican upbringing in order to construct the characters and dialogue of his novel, which, according to Edgar W. Schneider and Christian Wagner, are astonishingly linguistically and historically accurate based on the archetypal roles of main characters (Schneider and Wagner 45). On the topic of Jamaican dialect, Thelwell wrote to me, "...proverbs are a natural part of colloquial idiom and discourse in Jamaica. Before I even knew what a proverb was I was accustomed to the ones intended to discipline children...we heard them everyday" ("Re:"). Thus, it is only apt that a proverb appears on average every four pages in Thelwell's novel. Interestingly enough, Henzell's film contains not one Jamaican proverb, as far as I could tell, aside from those in Jimmy Cliff's song lyrics. This is not to discredit Henzell's work, but only to

credit Thelwell's—the two craftsmen wielded different tools, and I will not speculate on the reasons for their differences, for the focus of my paper is the novel. I will argue that proverbs are not only essential components of Thelwell's Jamaican realism, but also that when fully understood and examined closely, some proverbs hold rich, underlying ironies and in a few cases act as leitmotifs for the novel as a whole.

To Jamaicans, both past and present, proverbs are not just clever, collectible statements to add to one's wit, they are essential vocabulary; mortar in the very foundation of Jamaican common vernacular. Children are acquainted with proverbs as they learn how to prepare breadfruit or learn proper manners. Importantly, these sayings have always belonged to the lower class majority, whose language is Creole. As Jamaican proverb scholar G. Llewellyn Watson writes in the Introduction to his 1991 book, *Jamaican Sayings*, "The Sayings are best understood as 'folk' culture, the language of the unlettered, as opposed to the linguistic mode of the 'educated'" (5). While in some respects Jamaican proverbs are much like the traditional proverbs of other cultures—metaphoric and rhythmic, as well as diversely didactic and telling of the culture from whence they came—they are at least somewhat distinguished by their localization in the so called "folk" vernacular. Moreover, the traditional Jamaican proverbs have survived almost entirely in oral culture, traveling from generation to generation, spanning the history and breadth of the Black diaspora since the West African slave trade first populated Jamaica and other European colonies centuries ago (Watson 6). Thus, both the language and character of Jamaican proverbs indicate the blend of West African dialects and cultures (i.e., Fanti, Igbo) with English, flavored by history and locale unique to the island of Jamaica. For example, one Jamaican proverb seen in *The Harder They Come* is "When puss no have cheese 'im nyam pear" (368). The lexicon is mostly English—interspersed with "puss", the Creole speaker's preferred form of "cat", and "nyam", a West African-derived form of "eat"—formed with a syntax more familiar to West African dialects than to standard English. While American or British English speakers might be able to understand the gist of this particular saying because of the familiar reference to a cat's well known favorite food, other common Jamaican sayings, such as "If nanny goat didn't know how 'im batti hole stay 'im shoulden did swallow

pear seed,” would likely be lost entirely on those unfamiliar with Creole (THTC 339—Note: THTC signifies the novel, *The Harder They Come*). Jamaican proverbs are rife with anthropomorphized animals, including but not limited to cats, dogs, goats, cows, birds, horses, monkeys, cockroaches, and flies. The reason that animals dominate Jamaican proverbs is not simply that many Jamaicans farm and own livestock, which may be a contributing factor, but more crucially that “deep in the value system...of Jamaicans...is the belief that the beasts of the field and the birds of the air hold important clues to the mysteries of the universe...” (Watson 17). Other prominent figures and allusions include ideas taken from West African traditions, such as the feared obeah (a kind of witchcraft or sorcery) and folklore figure anansi (a spider known for his cunning), as well as from Christianity (Watson 3).

The cultural diffusion manifested in these proverbs is certainly complex, but traceable to some extent. Western interest in African proverbs dates back to the 19th century, as Roger Abrahams details in a pair of articles in *Proverbium*, “On Proverb Collecting and Proverb Collections” and “British West Indian Proverbs and Proverb Collections,” published in 1967 and 1968, respectively (see also Daniel et al.). Without the admirable work of African (and Jamaican) proverb collectors, such as Richard Burton, Izett Anderson, Frank Cundall, and Martha Beckwith, I would have no foundation upon which to write this proverb-oriented analysis.

The proverbs of *The Harder They Come* are an eclectic bunch; products of the unique mixed influences of postcolonial Jamaican culture, yet far from a messy heap of West African, Biblical, and American proverbs. Generally, they function in relation to one or both of the parallel narratives of Thelwell’s novel: first, the story of Ivanhoe Martin (Rhygin), an ambitious, musically adept boy who moves from his subsistence rural life in the Jamaican countryside, where he has been raised by his conservative grandmother, to the unforgiving streets of Kingston to follow his dream of being a “star-bwai” musician. This first, surface narrative is a tragedy in which the cause of Ivan’s ultimate death is the friction between his zealous ambition and the corrupt, capitalistic government of Jamaica. The second, allegorical dimension of *The Harder They Come* is the rise and fall of postcolonial Jamaica, much of which is synecdochically represented by Ivan. Proverbs are offered as advice and instruction to Ivan, both from his grandmother

(Biblical and traditional mother-to-child Jamaican proverbs) and from streetwise or other acquaintances in Kingston (wide array of Jamaican proverbs), but often ironically foreshadow Ivan's (and Jamaica's) demise. A few repeated proverbs, which function both didactically and allegorically, can be seen as overarching themes of the novel. Most importantly, these few thematic proverbs are crucial in exalting Rhygin to a mythical revolutionary figure, whose status as such empowers the civilians of Jamaica with an invulnerable force.

“Bird who flies too fast flies past his nest”

I will begin my discussion of proverb function in the context of *The Harder They Come* by discussing some of the proverbs that inform (or are informed by) the surface narrative. Disregarding the revolutionary/postcolonial reading of the novel, the narrative is essentially an extended fable or parable. The lesson can be summed up in the collective wisdom of proverbial cautions and advice given to Ivan. Moreover, the tragic end is in fact foreshadowed again and again, throughout the entire novel, via proverbial wisdom. Only seven pages in, the novel's first proverb, “if you born to hang you can't drown,” the subject of which is Ivan, suggests fatality in Ivan's strong spirit (19). In other words, his strong will and rambunctiousness predetermine the fact that Ivan will have to be killed in order to die; nothing short of that will put him in his grave. Our hopes (for Ivan to avert his tragic end) rise and fall with Miss 'Mando's (Ivan's grandmother's) intuitions about Ivan. At rare points, like when Miss 'Mando proverbially reassures herself that Ivan will eventually get on the right path: “No, him spirit really strong...But him is not a bad pickney [child]...She felt like the mother pig who, when asked by her pickney why her mouth was so long, merely grunted and said, ‘Aai mi pickney, you young but you wi' learn’,” we are hopeful about Ivan's future (19). But, to our uneasiness, Miss 'Mando is nearly always pessimistic about Ivan's future. As Ivan's modern ambition (to be a “star-bwai” musician) grows, it clashes more fiercely with Miss 'Mando's conservative grandmotherly concerns, fueling her angst. Finally, days before her death, in the culmination of her frustration and desperation to save Ivan from what she envisions as a path of inevitable demise, Thelwell describes

Miss 'Mando as a sort of short-circuiting, proverb-generating machine:

Nowadays when she spoke it was mostly to herself. To the accompaniment of heavy sighs, she would give voice to dark mutterings, usually from her large store of proverbs about the foolishness, selfishness, obstinacy, and inevitable ruin of children. "Hmm, chicken merry, hawk near," or "Pickney ears hard; him skin better tough," "Who can't hear will feel," "Hard-ears-pickney kill him Mummah," or "Pickney *nyam* Mummah, Mummah no *nyam* pickney." (69)

She dedicates her last spurts of energy to helping her grandson the best way she knows how: proverbial wisdom. Ivan's blatant refusal to heed her words ("I going to great. Then see if she don't glad...") marks an important transition in the narrative: Ivan has now completely embodied the essence of rhygin ("Raging, strong but foolish too, overconfident") and there is no turning back (THTC 69; 20).

Since Ivan decides to move to Kingston, against his grandmother's ardent wishes, Maas' Nattie, Miss 'Mando's closest friend, assumes the role of father and advises the fourteen-year-old Ivan from his knowledge of city life. Aware of his "rhygin" nature, Nattie reminds the boy that "coward man keep sound bone," and, for good measure, that "a fly that no tek advice will follow dead man mouth into grave" (111; 110). To be sure, these are not merely passing words. Maas' Nattie dictates his proverbial and metaphorical advice with such conviction, such passion, that Ivan is brought to tears (110). Still, this effort does nothing more for Ivan than foreshadow his demise. His bones will not be sound; he will be like the fly in the grave.

The event that immediately follows Maas' Nattie's cautions, Ivan's bus ride to Kingston, is an important transition in the narrative. It is both a shocking experience and one that prefaces the wild ride Ivan will soon have in Kingston. If Ivan's explicit unheeding of his grandmother's dying dissuasions marks the emotional transition into the next stage of his life, the bus ride symbolizes his physical transition. This most intensely harrowing trip, which leaves passengers praying for their lives, is followed by a chilling view of folks dressed in rags poring over mountainous

garbage heaps in Kingston's slums (THTC 121). In the middle of all of that, the reckless bus driver delivers a wholly American, briefcase-and-coffee-cup proverb, straight from the heart of Western city slickers: "Time is money, so unu [you all] bettah hol' on good..." (115). Before that moment, Ivan has only heard American proverbs from Maas' Nattie, the only person in his village privileged enough to have traveled and learned of such things. The significance is that Ivan is entering a world where everyone, even the common bus driver, lives in a capitalistic mindset. Any reader who has ever been to a city knows well before Ivan does in what type of no-holds-barred, individualistic society he will soon be immersed.

Within the first few hours of Ivan's arrival in Kingston he is already duped into losing nearly all his money and luggage, crediting Miss 'Mando's proverbial warnings. A concise fable could have ended right there with a moral lesson to the tune of listen to the advice of your elders and make sure your dreams are humble enough so that following them doesn't put you in over your head. Of course, Thelwell's fable of Rhygin is much more grandiose. Rhygin and, consequently, the reader are consoled by proverbial shouts from sympathetic citizens: "Take heart, young bwai, everyt'ing is fe de bes'," "Cho, t'ief nevah prosper, ya hear" (131). Ironically, Rhygin himself, desperate for sustenance, turns to thieving not soon after, and is caught by the would-be victim, a woman selling mangos. With a touch of empathy, she gives him the mango and reminds him, "...because a man sleep ina fowl-nest, it doan mean say fowl-nes' is 'im bed" (176). She feels sorry for Ivan, sensing right away that he is a naïve country boy, so she advises him to go home because he does not belong in the city. Instead of being awakened by that fact, and remembering the lesson he should have learned when he first had his money stolen, he seems to be driven to prove his city survival skills.

By the sheer multitude and one-sidedness of previous proverbial advice (nearly all advice points Ivan away from the city, back to his stable country life), we get the impression that the only way Ivan will survive is if he sucks up his pride and returns home. Of course, this is his tragic flaw. So tragic, in fact, that Rhygin eventually manages to achieve stardom, albeit in a manner of perverse infamy, before Babylon (the police of Jamaica's Western, capitalistic, corrupt government) brings him down.

Merely halfway through the narrative, the dramatic irony amassed by proverb after proverb is sufficient to make the reader throw down the book and shout at Ivan, "Stop what you're doing before it's too late!" By the time Rhygin's chief antagonist, government liaison Jose, begins to criticize Rhygin proverbially, thereby foreshadowing Rhygin's downfall, it is just adding insult to injury. The pithiest, most painfully obvious of Jose's proverbs about Rhygin is, "bird whe' fly too fas' always fly pas' him nes'" (327). Jose comments on the uneasiness created by the friction between the recent marked increase in Rhygin's cockiness and rejection of authority and the stability of hierarchy in the ganja (marijuana) trade in which he and Rhygin participate:

Times was always hard, but de herb was always a comfort. Business was good. The traders made a good living. Babylon was no trouble. There was space for everybody. "But all de same," Jose mused, "dem say bird whe' fly too fas' always fly pas' him nes'." (327)

As if to reassure his conviction about Rhygin, Jose alludes to this proverb again ("Well, 'im way pass 'im nest dis time.") twelve pages later (339). This proverb, while certainly supplemented by other thematically similar proverbs, is sufficiently pointed to be a leitmotif of the didactic surface narrative. It is the keenest, if the bluntest, admonition for Ivan.

The chronological trend for admonitory proverbs directed at Ivan is that they become increasingly unambiguous and direct, thus increasing dramatic irony exponentially. For example, a proverb like "bird whe' fly too fas' always fly pas' him nes'" is objectively more to the point than earlier warnings such as, "because a man sleep ina fowl-nest, it doan mean say fowl-nes' is 'im bed" (327; 176). The latter merely suggests that the streets of Kingston are no place for a country boy like Ivan, whereas the former directly, albeit metaphorically, implies the boy's downfall. Flourishing dramatic irony is also due in part to the cumulative amassment of like-minded proverbial wisdom (which the reader realizes Ivan should heed, but Ivan either ignores or is blind to), as well as to the ever-narrowing plot, which yields growing inevitability and imminence of Ivan's death.

“The harder they come, the harder they fall”

Proverb functionality within the allegorical dimension of *The Harder They Come* is vital to the cohesiveness of that postcolonial reading. In this section I will focus on two proverbs: nearly the only two Ivan says in the entire novel, discounting recollections of other characters' words. Both proverbs are song lyrics credited to Ivan (in fact, Jimmy Cliff's lyrics), and interestingly enough, both are modern American proverbs. The most important component of proverbial function in this dimension of the novel is the delicate, yet powerful, push-pull between the conservative admonitions Ivan receives (and does not forget—he often recalls the advice of Maas' Nattie and others, even though he pays it no heed) and his modern ambition, which is so poignantly captured in the reggae music that pours from his heart. Ivan is a liminal character, caught between the forces of tradition and modernity, just as Jamaica was, or still is, struggling with that postcolonial ambivalence.

Reggae music, the voice of Jamaica's oppressed lower class, is importantly Ivan's chosen medium. Coincidentally, Jimmy Cliff's reggae songs “The Harder They Come” and “You Can Get It If You Really Want” were prominent in Henzell's film because Island Records, Cliff's record label, funded a portion of the movie in exchange for a unique opportunity to advertise its prodigy (Thelwell, “Film to Novel” 142). Regardless, Ivan's medium being reggae sets up poignant, ironic criticism of Western values, while implicitly expressing a feeling of ambivalence toward those values. Furthermore, reggae music is analogous to the highly oral and rhythmic traditional modes of communication of many West African cultures, from which Jamaican proverbs evolved (Prahlad xviii). As Marc Caplan writes in his article about the importance of legend in *The Harder They Come*, “...legend travels through an informal network of communication that trespasses and thereby links ostensibly distinct historical, political, and economic domains” (155). Thus, reggae aptly becomes instrumental in turning Rhygin into a local hero with legendary status.

Cliff's (Rhygin's) proverbial lyric “The harder they come, the harder they fall” is not surprisingly the most dynamic and poignant proverb in both the film and novel (THTC 249). Unlike the numerous proverbs originating from West Africa, no doubt hundreds of years old, this proverb's earliest record is from 1900 in

the United States (Mieder, “Proverbs: A Handbook” 103). Its message is modern too—an embodiment of the rags-to-riches American dream mentality. The proverb’s most salient irony is of course that Rhygin comes the hardest and falls the hardest. The juxtaposition of a capitalistic-value-based proverb with its skin of reggae music, which, as reggae proverb scholar Sw. Anand Prah-lad describes, as a genre “embodies an utter refusal to surrender to the rat race, to Western ideology,” evinces a tension between the lyrics and the mode of their expression (xviii). This friction, considered in the context of Ivan’s tragic death, implies a bitter cynicism toward the (impossible) existence of a rags-to-riches story in postcolonial Jamaica. As if to maximize that cynicism, Ivan is characterized as the epitome of the proper candidate for a rags-to-riches success story. For a poor white kid in the United States with Ivan’s grit and unwavering, lofty ambition, success would be expected. Yet, we know that Ivan will fail to achieve the American dream by the proverbial warnings he receives early on, so Thelwell is effectively telling us that how and why Ivan fails, and the implications of that failure, are of far greater importance than the fact that he fails. Accordingly, Caplan explains that Rhygin (and the protagonist of *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*) “don’t really die, they diffuse throughout their island homelands—this is their single, ultimate triumph over the (neo)colonial authorities which have put them to death” (161). Indeed, it is not the plot, but the character—the very character of legendary hero—that transcends Thelwell’s story and attaches to our hearts. It would undercut Ivan to label him a martyr, for his aspirations were genuinely naïve, his fall was truly tragic, and the novel’s critique of the American dream draws strength from those factors. Ivan’s tragic flaw, greedy determination, is also the primary flaw of the American dream—when you are never happy with what you have you will never be happy.

The flaw of the proverbial warning offered by Rhygin, expressed as irony, has a second, subtler dimension: the means by which it is distributed. Unlike every other proverb in *The Harder They Come* (not including Rhygin’s other song lyric proverb, which I will subsequently discuss), this one is processed and projected through a component of the very system its words are rebelling against, namely, the brutal, corrupt economy symbolized by Mr. Hilton (whose proverbial importance I will return to later).

Moreover, Jamaica's postcolonial struggle is manifested in the way that Ivan must work within the rules of the corrupt system in order to distribute his message of rebellion to the people. Hilton himself explains, "I mek hits. Not the public, not the DJ's. *I* make hits, O.K.?" (284). Legend is propagated from Ivan's words, but necessarily through the speaker-systems of modernity, and through the rules of the corrupt system that is akin to the colonizer.

Rhygin's other proverb, "You can get it if you really want, but you must try, try an' try," informs Jamaica's postcolonial ambivalence (280). The form in context actually seems to be conflating two modern American proverbs: "You get what you try for" and "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again" (Mieder, "Dictionary of American" 250; "Proverbs: A Handbook" 105). Like "The harder (bigger) they come, the harder they fall," this proverb expresses the characteristic gusto of American ambition. Ivan, who idolizes the most materialistic of American values, fervently adheres to these lyrics. In fact, this proverb seems to be a form of self-encouragement for him. With Rhygin's heroic status among the oppressed community and his lyrics blaring through speakers throughout Kingston, the encouragement Rhygin draws from this proverb is extrapolated, while the prospect of achieving whatever one's heart desires remains impossible for virtually all of those oppressed people. If we imagine thousands of hungry, desperate Jamaicans drawing faith from these words, truly believing that if they try hard enough they can achieve anything, the tragic irony of the proverb's naïveté becomes painfully apparent.

The naïve simplicity of Ivan's message (in this proverb) in itself seems to highlight the most pivotal questions of postcolonial liminality: what should we want for ourselves, for our people, and for our children? What should we be trying to get?

Connecting and Comparing Character-Specific Proverbial Speech

Having now discussed the function of proverbs in developing important ironies and major themes of *The Harder They Come*, there still remain proverbs whose functions are most prudently explained with respect to minor themes and through comparing the various ideologies of characters. The remainder of my essay is

dedicated to developing those nuances of proverbial function, beginning with the thread of spiritual faith, particularly Christianity.

Religion

Miss 'Mando is a woman of strong faith, put simply. After the opening pages of the novel it becomes apparent that Miss 'Mando holds strongly to the ideals of Jamaican rural tradition: "A stranger might see there only an undifferentiated mass of lush tropical jungle. But to Miss 'Mando it was nothing of the kind—it was home and history, community and human industry, sweat, toil, and joy" (15). Because she chooses her last (spoken) words to be Jamaican proverbs, she thereby demonstrates her faith in their wisdom. On the other hand, her dying thoughts are not spoken, but manifested in what she holds in her hand even after she has passed away: a page from the New Testament, which states yet another admonition for Ivan. This detail may suggest that her greatest faith was actually in Christianity. Miss 'Mando constantly advises Ivan from the Bible, though only one time proverbially: "Betake dy footsteps from dy neighbor's door, lest he tire of dee" (31; see Proverbs 25, 17). The seeming discord between her dedication to both Jamaican rural tradition and Christianity (the latter being symbolic of the colonizing power), though commonplace in colonized nations, plants a seed for the religious social commentary that will ensue in the narrative.

Christianity does not surface again until Ivan meets his mother, Miss Daisy, in Kingston. Though she is in a state of complete destitute in spite of being a longtime, devoted member of Preacher Ramsey's Tabernacle, she recommends that Ivan seek help from the Preacher. We are left wondering why this Preacher character (synecdochically Christianity) was not able to help Miss Daisy; why she is starving and alone, yet still sends her son on presumably the same path. In contrast to Miss 'Mando, Miss Daisy is a clear-cut urbanite (embodying whatever level of modernity is inherent to that lifestyle), though probably as devout a Christian as her mother. Christianity thereby becomes a control variable for comparing mother and daughter, tradition and modernity.

Preacher is the most stable place for Christianity in the novel. Christianity, because it evokes both conservative and Western values, is in some sense intrinsically inharmonious in a (post)colonial nation. Yet, he transcends that discordance as he

promotes black, urban community hand in hand with conservative Christian teachings. Accordingly, his Biblical proverbial speech is only matched in quantity by one other character (Ras Pedro, whom I will soon discuss). Importantly, Preacher's set of proverbs, Biblical and otherwise, are all highly conservative in their wisdom. For example, "God do not slumber, nor do he sleep" invokes God's watchful eye; "Obedience is better than sacrifice" straightforwardly commands subservience, both to God and one's elders (219; 235). Like all of the characters in the book, Preacher adheres strictly to the values he proverbially promotes. He is actually so uncompromising in his conservatism that he condemns Ivan to jail, where he is brutishly whipped nearly to death (the sentence is technically for assault with a deadly weapon, but Preacher's animosity toward Ivan had been progressively building in response to Ivan's free-spiritedness and modern ambition such that the assault against Longah is merely a spark for the powder keg). Moreover, Preacher is the first and most direct vehicle via whom Rhygin collides with colonial power because, according to Caribbean postcolonial literature scholars Keith Booker and Dubravka Juraga, the lashing Rhygin receives is historically in line with the way the British punished their colonized peoples, even though such brutish sentences were centuries out of practice in the mother country (82-83).

In stark contrast to Preacher by interpretation of Christianity stands Ras Pedro, a Biblically well-versed Rastafarian character whose proverbs chiefly advise peace and acceptance. For instance, the Biblical "A wise man fearet' and departet' from angah; but de heart of de fool *rageth*" (Proverbs 14, 16) is a level-headed caution to Rhygin; "Who de lord lovet'...he chastiset'...and scourget'..." (Proverbs 3, 12) is Pedro's turn-the-other-cheek response to being tortured for information regarding Rhygin's whereabouts (306; 386). Ras Pedro eschews the rigid conservatism of the Bible's wisdom championed by Preacher, and instead applies the Holy Book's pacifism to his brand of Rastafarianism: nonviolent resistance. Rastafarianism, which is at heart the language of resistance of Jamaica's oppressed lower class (hand in hand with reggae music), can be interpreted variously, as evidenced by the disparity between Ras Pedro's Rastafarianism and that of the angry mob who battles police earlier in the narrative. Thus, Pedro is not a simple symbol of Rastafarianism, but rather a highly crafted

persona, one of several perspectives that oppose Rhygin's general course of action.

Ras Pedro's proverb cautions to Ivan should also be considered vis-à-vis the advice given to Ivan by other characters. As I previously detailed, the admonitions of other characters foreshadow Ivan's demise because of the way they accumulate without any immediate corresponding escalation in the plot (Ivan's initial ups and downs in Kingston are relatively minor) and because of their increasingly unambiguous nature. Conversely, the wisdom of Pedro's advisory proverbs generally seems understated and temperate, albeit sincere; it is too little too late. His wisdom does not chiefly serve to foreshadow, it is merely soothing relief from the rapidly escalating plot tension. For instance, the gentle spirituality of "Sometimes you worse enemy live inside you" does not warn Ivan of imminent failure or tell him not to follow his dreams, it only suggests that he consider his own faults. The proverb might have been judicious some 150 pages earlier, when Ivan was just starting out in the city and may still have been slightly impressionable and open to the right kind of advice from the right person, but not at all when it appears after Rhygin has purchased two guns and is already planning to subvert Jose's control over the ganja trade. Any foreshadowing accomplished by Ras Pedro's proverbial advice is strictly of short-term events, not of Rhygin's culminant failure. The Biblical proverbial epitaph "*He dat increaset' knowledge, increaset' sorrow*" (Ecclesiastes 1, 18), which precedes the chapter where Rhygin returns to the country only to find, to his dismay, that it has been exploited and commercialized, exemplifies such inconsequential foreshadowing (311). Similarly, when Rhygin considers buying guns for protection, Pedro's benign caution to him is "Wisdom is bettah dan weapons an' war..." (310; see Bible: Ecclesiastes 9, 18). The proverb is more a philosophical statement—Ras Pedro suggesting the merits of his own personal disposition—than a harsh warning. At most, it foreshadows Ivan buying the guns, but it has none of the poignancy of Midnight Cowboy's conviction when Rhygin finally does buy the guns from him: "Dese is you fuchah [future]" (326).

A Proverb Battle and the Man Who Stands Above It All

I have not tried to imply that there is some crux in plot escalation after which ironies and foreshadowing are automatically ren-

dered inconsequential. The case is much to the contrary. Jose and Maas' Ray, with their abundant Jamaican/West African proverbs, effectively curse (condemn to his grave) Rhygin, even when Rhygin appears to have the upper hand on his adversaries. Jose warns Ivan jeeringly, "You know dem say, 'when man know say 'im chairback weak 'im no lean back!'" (333). As if to emphasize the conviction of Jose's taunting proverb, it is juxtaposed against Ras Pedro's temperate "Sometimes you worse enemy live inside you," which appears on the very next page. Perhaps at his bluntest, Jose says, "If nanny goat didn't know how 'im batti hole [anus] stay 'im shoulden did swallow pear seed," crudely implying that Rhygin bit off more than he could chew, so to speak. Even after Rhygin has been shot and is hiding in a cave, virtually defenseless, Maas' Ray appeals by way of proverb to his commissioner's concern that Rhygin is still at large: "is not the same day chicken eat cockroach that 'im get fat" (366). Though Maas' Ray is noticeably nervous and inarticulate when speaking to his superior, this proverb, which is his conclusive statement, comes off with an air of smug self-pride, accompanied by a snicker. He has seemingly found exactly what he wanted to say, and will henceforth see to it that his prophecy is fulfilled. However, in the escalating action Rhygin and his allies are not without retaliatory proverb force. In fact, a climax of proverb war parallels the climax of plot action. For one, "The Harder They Come" and "You Can Get It If You Really Want" are heard (indicated in the text by indented italicized lyrics) with increasing frequency as Rhygin's battle against Babylon becomes more intense. Additionally, the civilians of Kingston become allies of Rhygin, committing crimes in his name and confusing police, rallying with the strength of his proverbial lyrics. Thus, Ivan's determination is constantly reiterated and his proverbs echo with increasing volume. When Jose is so desperate to find Rhygin that he asks Bogart, Ivan's best friend, where to find him, Bogart laughs and stings Jose proverbially: "Trousers too big fe Horse: Dawg say 'give me yah, I wi' wear it'" (361). This jeer mirrors Jose's earlier attack on Rhygin, in which he compares Rhygin to a goat who swallowed too large a seed.

Positioned outside of all this tension and chaos is Mr. Hilton, the manifestation of capitalism. Playing to a (perverse) strength of Jamaica's corrupt "free market" economy, Hilton capitalizes on the growing attention surrounding Rhygin's escapades by making

his record a radio hit, then sitting back and reaping the profits. Hilton explains, with smug satisfaction, his superior position: "...why buy cow if milk free" (241). Dislikable nature aside, Hilton is a key intermediary between Rhygin, Babylon, the public, and the Western/colonizing force that looms over the whole conflict. He has the respect of people at every level of society. Lower class citizens either live vicariously through him or at least respect his power enough to not steal from him, Babylon come to him for help in finding Rhygin, and Rhygin himself, the symbol of revolution, only resists Hilton for less than a month before submitting to his rules (regarding producing a record) (THTC 244; 369; 284). Even when Maas' Ray tries to exert some power over Hilton and ban Rhygin's record from the radio, the move is seen as desperate and clearly disadvantageous to catching Rhygin, as it causes the public to loot and riot, shrouding Rhygin in the ensuing chaos and confusion (THTC 371). The ban actually demonstrates the extent of Hilton's control. He may live by exploiting, but he is the voice of soundest reason in the novel. His capitalistic power is made infallible by the wisdom of a simple American proverb: "...business is business..." (THTC 282).

It would be naïve, and indeed wrong, to attempt to contrive a moral out of the revolutionary/postcolonial dimension of this novel. One thing is certain though: in the struggle for power in postcolonial nations, tradition and modernity are inextricably linked. Such is what makes *The Harder They Come* a timeless story. I argue that Michael Thelwell, Perry Henzell, and Jimmy Cliff are themselves liminal characters, caught in the push-pull between tradition and modernity in the ongoing, international postcolonial story.

In Thelwell's case, if by nothing else, his seamless yet effectively frictional weaving of eclectic modern and traditional proverbs in his writing evinces my conviction. The proverbs of *The Harder They Come* are as diverse and complex in functionality as they are in origin. Whether analyzing from the perspective of religion, music, fable, legend, or postcolonial discourse, proverbs weigh in. Proverbs are markers of the past, indicators of the present, and clues to the future. In Jamaica, where "proverbs are a central element of the colloquial discourse," they may well exist day to day and year to year as perpetually updated archives of social history, untainted by conscious intent (Thelwell, "Re:"). Just

ask Michael Thelwell how naturally the hundreds of instances of proverbs from around the world flowed into his Jamaican-novel writing. He'll tell you, "No research" (Thelwell, "Re:").

Proverb Index

All proverbs from *The Harder They Come* (©1980 Grove Press), listed by order in which they appear

Proverb Text from THTC, page	Speaker	Verified Proverb Form	Found in (author, page, #)
"if you born to heng, you can't drown" p. 19	Villageperson	<u>Varied</u> : Man bawn fe jown cyan heng. (A man who is born to drown cannot die by hanging)	Morris-Brown, p. 181, #463; Mieder, p. 278, #7
"She felt like the mother pig who, when asked by her pickney why her mouth was so long, merely grunted and said, 'Aai mi pickney, you young but you wi' learn.'" p. 19	Narrator: Miss Mando	"Pig say: 'Mammy, wha' mek your mout' long so?' — 'No min', me pickney, You a grow you wi' see.'" p. 19	Beckwith, p. 96, #699; Anderson & Cundall, p. 68, #716; Watson, p. 95, #307
"Coward man keep sound bones" p. 26	Narrator: Dudas	"Coward man keep sound bone."	Beckwith, p. 29, #135; Anderson & Cundall, p. 33, #244; Morris-Brown, p. 20, #12
"Old age is a bad thing, it worse dan obeah." p. 29	Miss Ida	<u>Varied</u> : "Bad luk wuss dan obeah"	Morris-Brown, p. 108, #251
"Betake dy footsteps from dy neighbor's door, lest he tire of dee." p. 31	Miss 'Mando (to Ivan)	<u>Varied</u> : "Go not unto your neighbor's place too often lest he tire of you."	Mieder, p. 427, #11; Bible: Proverbs 25, 17
"Tek care what you going to see don't blin' you." p. 31	Miss 'Mando (to Ivan)	<u>Varied</u> : "Interest blinds some people, enlightens others."	Mieder, p. 333, #3
"Whatever you looking for will soon fin' you." p. 32	Miss 'Mando (to Ivan)	"Seek and you shall find."	Mieder, p. 530, #1(a)

"Hungry better dan sickness." p. 35	Miss 'Mando	"Hunger is better than sickness."	Used in Chinua Achebe's <i>Arrow of God</i>
"...reaping,' as the Bible said, 'where they had not sown.'" p. 36	Narrator	"You reap what you sow."	Mieder, p. 555, #1(k)
"The devil an' 'im wife fighting over fishhead!" (sunshower)	Ivan	<u>Varied</u> : "When the sun is shining during a shower, the devil and his wife are fighting."	Kuusi, p. 119
"'fraid can kill you" p. 42	Narrator: Ivan	<u>Varied</u> : "Fear kills more than illness."	Mieder, p. 203, #13
"Tek care of the land and you wi' nevah hungry." p. 45	Ivan remembering Maas' Nattie's saying	<u>Varied</u> : "At the workingman's house, hunger looks in, but dares not enter."	Mieder, p. 318, #1
"Man can't work without a little heat ina 'him belly." p. 46	Maas' Nattie	<u>Varied</u> : "'Empty bag cyaa stan' up.' meaning: 'A hungry man cannot work.'"	"Jamaican Proverbs" (Jamaican-tips.com)
"Strong man never wrong. Weak man can't vex." p. 53	Miss 'Mando	<u>Varied</u> : "Poor man can never vex."	Beckwith, p. 96, #705
"Whin-the-gawin-gits-taff-the-taff-gits-gawin" p. 59	Maas' Nattie-got it from traveling in Alabama	"When the going gets tough, the tough get going."	Speake, p. 135
"Winnas-nevah-quit-an-quitahs-nevah-win" p. 59	Maas' Nattie-got it from traveling in Alabama	"A winner never quits, and a quitter never wins."	Mieder, p. 658, #1
"When corn time come all bird fat." p. 65	Miriam		No verification
"Dem think say man a go pen up yah 'pon mountain-side like goat-kid all 'im life?"	Ivan	<u>Probable allusion to</u> : "Goat feed wha' him tie."	Beckwith, p. 52, #336
"Hmm, chicken merry, hawk near." p. 69	Miss 'Mando (to Ivan)	<u>Varied</u> : "When fowl merry, hawk ketch him chicken."	Beckwith, p. 118, # 889; Anderson & Cundall, p. 56,

			#564; Watson, p. 40, #44; Morris-Brown, p. 19, #9
“Pickney ears hard; him skin better tough” p. 69	Miss ’Mando (to Ivan)	Varied: “You no yearry a you aise, you wi’ yearry a you ‘kin.” (If you do not hear with your ears, you will hear with your skin)	Anderson & Cundall, p. 66, #694
“Who can’t hear will feel” p. 69	Miss ’Mando (to Ivan)	Varied: “You no yearry a you aise, you wi’ yearry a you ‘kin.”	Anderson & Cundall, p. 66, #694
“Hard-ears pickney kill him Mummah” p. 69	Miss ’Mando (to Ivan)	Varied: “Hard-ears pickney go a market two times.”	Beckwith, p. 57, #374; Watson, p. 109, #2
“Pickney nyam Mummah, Mummah no nyam pickney” p. 69	Miss ’Mando (to Ivan)	“If you kill pickney gi’ momma, momma won’t eat; but if you kill momma gi’ pickney, pickney wi’ eat.” (“Pickney will nyam ma, but ma no nyam pickney”)	Beckwith, p. 95, #698; Anderson & Cundall, p. 93, #1045; Morris-Brown, p. 134, #321
“It was a lesson to Izaak and his father for their reckless ambition, for flying, like the bird in the story, ‘past their nest.’” p. 80	Narrator	“Bud fly too fas’ pass him nes’.”	Beckwith, p. 20, #65; Anderson & Cundall, p. 18, #60; Watson, p. 11, #i; Morris-Brown, p. 137, #332
“...For behold your young men will dream dreams and your young men shall see visions...where dere is no vision the people perish...” p. 97	Miss ’Mando’s spirit spoken through Mad Izaak (to Ivan)	“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”	Mieder, p. 634, #2
“‘Y’know,’ he began musingly, ‘dem say ‘a fly that no tek advice will follow	Maas’ Nattie (to Ivan)	Varied: “A greedy mek fly follow coffin go a hole”	Beckwith, p. 13, #8; Anderson & Cundall,

dead man mouth into grave, huh'?" p. 110			p. 58, #530; Watson, p. 75, #212; Morris-Brown, p. 144, #348
"You no see t'ief yet. Wait, you see! Dem <i>love</i> fe work dem brain fe get what is not fe dem, to reap where dey have not sown." p. 110	Maas' Nattie (to Ivan)	"You reap what you sow."	Mieder, p. 555, #1(k)
"Is so life go—strong man nevah wrong an' weak man can't vex." p. 111	Maas' Nattie (to Ivan)	Varied: "Poor man can never vex."	Beckwith, p. 96, #705; Watson, p. 234, #132
"Dem say 'coward man keep sound bone.'" p. 111	Maas' Nattie (to Ivan)	"Coward man keep sound bone."	Beckwith, p. 29, #135; Anderson & Cundall, p. 33, #244; Morris-Brown, p. 20, #12
"Old age worse dan obeah fe true." p. 111	Maas' Nattie (to Ivan)	Varied: "Bad luk wuss dan obeah"	Morris-Brown, p. 108, #251
"You live long enough, everyt'ing wi' happen to you." p. 112	Maas' Nattie (to Ivan)	Varied: "De longer yu liv, de more yu larn."	Watson, p. 249, #76
"Time is money, so unu bettah hol' on good." p. 115	Coolie Man	"Time is money."	Mieder, p. 599, #77
"You can' trus' nobody, y'know." p. 129	Boy on street (to Ivan)	Varied: "You should never trust a man, but if you do, never trust the same one twice."	Mieder, p. 614, #11
"The boy seemed retarded—fool-fool—at least was acting that way, 'playing fool to ketch wise,' as Maas' Nattie would say." p. 129	Narrator: Ivan	"Faam fool to ketch wize." ("Pretend to be a fool to catch the wise.")	Morris-Brown, p. 88, #197
"Tek heart, young bwai, everyt'ing is fe de bes'." p. 131	Sympathetic person on street	"Everything happens for the best."	Mieder, p. 48, #1
"Cho, t'ief nevah prosper, y'hear." p. 131	Sympathetic person on street	"Thieves never prosper."	Mieder, p. 93, #2

“ <i>Aaiie</i> , but is true wha’ dem say, ‘to poor is sin an’ to black is crime.’” p. 135	Narrator: Daisy Martin		No verification
[indented lyrics] “ <i>You cannot go to Zion/Wid a carnal mind.</i> ” p. 154	Jose (to Ivan)	“You cannot go to Zion with a carnal mind.”	Song: “Carnal Mind” Artist: Yabby You, 2006
“...dem say ‘because a man sleep ina fowl-nest, it doan mean say fowl-nes’ is ‘im bed.’” p. 176	Market woman (to Ivan)	“Man sleep in fowl’ nes’, but fowl nes’ no him bed.”	Beckwith, p. 82, #583; Anderson & Cundall, p. 80, #874; Watson, p. 131, #97
“But still and all, tell the truth and shame the devil...” p. 181	Narrator: Preacher	“Tell the truth and shame the devil.”	Mieder, p. 615, #23
“...like those the Bible warned about, those dressed in the skins of lambs, but who inwardly were ravening wolves...” p. 186	Narrator: Preacher	“Outwardly a lamb, inwardly a wolf.”	Mieder, p. 359, #2
“This was not really, as some suggested, that ‘two bulls can’t rule in the same pen,’...” p. 187	Narrator	<u>Varied:</u> “Two bull can’t ‘tan’ a one pen.”	Beckwith, p. 112, #839; Anderson & Cundall, p. 24, #145; Watson, p. 40, #41
“But as they said, ‘after a t’ing happen every tom-fool did ben know.’” p. 191	Narrator		No verification
“Hindsight required no genius...” p. 191	Narrator	<u>Varied:</u> “Hindsight is better than foresight.”	Mieder, p. 301
“...it was only something Bogart used to like to say because it sounded good: ‘Live fast, die young, have a good-looking corpse.’” p. 202	Ivan remembering Bogart’s words		No verification
“...danced to an orchestra of drums chanting, ‘ <i>You cannot go to Zion with a carnal mind.</i> ’” p. 207	Narrator	“You cannot go to Zion with a carnal mind.”	Song: “Carnal Mind” Artist: Yabby You, 2006

[epigraph beginning chapter] "You cannot go to Zion/wid a carnal mind... – Rasta Chant" p. 218	Epigraph	"You cannot go to Zion with a carnal mind."	Song: "Carnal Mind" Artist: Yabby You, 2006
"God do not slumber nor do he sleep." p. 219	Narrator: Preacher		Bible: Psalms 121, 4
"...After all trouble never sets like rain." p. 220	Preacher (to Elsa)	"Trouble never set like rain."	Beckwith, p. 111, #833; Anderson & Cundall, p. 114, #1306; Watson, p. 222, #219
"As dem say, what go roun' come roun'." p. 230	Narrator: Bogaert's story	"What goes around, comes around."	Speake, p. 134-135
"Dem say 'chicken merry, hawk near?'" p. 232	Narrator: Longah	Varied: "When fowl merry, hawk ketch him chicken."	Beckwith, p. 118, # 889; Anderson & Cundall, p. 56, #564; Watson, p. 40, #44; Morris-Brown, p. 19, #9
"Obedience is better than sacrifice." p. 235	Preacher (to Elsa)	"Obedience is better than sacrifice."	Mieder, p. 435, #1
[Chapter 11 title] "You can get it if you really want" p. 237	Chapter title	Varied: "You get what you try for."	Mieder, p. 250, #11
"Different culture-different strokes." p. 238	Narrator: Tourist guest of Mr. Hilton	Varied: "Different strokes for different folks."	Mieder, p. 569, #1
"Better to have it an' not need it than to need it an' not have it." p. 240	Mr. Hilton (to his tourist guest)	"It is better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it."	Mieder, p. 285, #3
"Only live once." p. 241	Mr. Hilton (to his tourist guest)	"We only live once."	Mieder, p. 381, #26
"I always say, why buy cow if milk free" p. 241	Mr. Hilton (to his tourist guest)	"No buy cow if you can get free milk."	Watson, p. 44, #62; Morris-Brown, p. 102, #237

		<u>Varied:</u> "Who hab cow, him look fe milk."	Beckwith, p. 122, #933
"Life hard but it sweet." p. 247	Narrator: Mr. Hilton	<u>Varied:</u> "What is hard to bear is sweet to remember."	Mieder, p. 282, #9
"De harder Dey Come' eh?" p. 249	Mr. Hilton (to Ivan)	<u>Varied:</u> "The bigger they come, the harder they fall."	Mieder, p. 51, #7
" <i>You can get it, nex' week, if you really want. Him say nex' week. But you mus' try, try, try an' try....Next week.</i> " p. 250	Ivan (singing to himself)	<u>Varied:</u> "You get what you try for."	Mieder, p. 250, #11
"Watch and Pray as the good book said." p. 253	Narrator: Preacher		Bible: Luke 21, 36
[indented lyrics] " <i>For the harder they come...Is the harder they faall.</i> " p. 254	Ivan (singing)	<u>Varied:</u> "The bigger they come, the harder they fall."	Mieder, p. 51, #7
[indented lyrics] " <i>Because, the harder they come...</i> " p. 254	Ivan (singing)	<u>Varied:</u> "The bigger they come, the harder they fall."	Mieder, p. 51, #7
"One had to look on the bright side." p. 263	Narrator: Preacher	<u>Varied:</u> "If you try to make some people see the bright side, they will complain that it hurts their eyes."	Mieder, p. 71
"You make your bed hard, you will lie in it." p. 264	Preacher (to Elsa)	"You spread you' bed hard, you will lie down hard."	Beckwith, p. 72, #496; Anderson & Cundall, p. 16, #32; Watson, p. 113, #19; Morris-Brown, p. 31, #45
"Dust to dust, ashes to ashes. Let the dead bury the dead." p. 265	Preacher (beginning a sermon about Elsa)	"Ashes to ashes and dust to dust."	Mieder, p. 29, #3
"Watch and pray" p. 276	Elsa (to herself)		Bible: Luke 21, 36

[indented lyrics] " <i>Win or lose you gotta get your share</i> " p. 280	Ivan (singing)		Song: "You Can Get It If You Really Want" Artist: Jimmy Cliff, 1972
[indented lyrics] " <i>You can get it if you really want./But you mus' try, try an' try, try-an'-try...</i> " p. 280	Ivan (singing)	Varied: "You get what you try for."	Mieder, p. 250, #11
[indented lyrics] " <i>De harder dey come.../Is de harder dey fall</i> " p. 281	Ivan (singing)	Varied: "The bigger they come, the harder they fall."	Mieder, p. 51, #7
[indented lyrics] " <i>Ohyeh, De harder dey come.../Is de harder dey fall</i> " p. 281	Ivan (singing)	Varied: "The bigger they come, the harder they fall."	Mieder, p. 51, #7
"Hell, business is business and life hard." p. 282	Narrator: Mr. Hilton	"Business is business."	Mieder, p. 75, #5
"But...jug no bruk; milk no dash way." p. 283	Mr. Hilton (to Ivan)	Varied: "No mug no bruk, no caw-fee no dash way."	Morris-Brown, p. 17, #1
[Chapter 14 title] "Whosoever Digget' a Pit" p. 286	Chapter title	Varied: "Dig a ditch fe Sammy, you fall down in da yourself."	Anderson & Cundall, p. 38, #310
"'osoever digget' a pit/ Shall fall in it" p. 286	Epigraph	Varied: "Dig a ditch fe Sammy, you fall down in da yourself."	Anderson & Cundall, p. 38, #310
" <i>But the harder they come...</i> " p. 293	Record played in club (Ivan)	Varied: "The bigger they come, the harder they fall."	Mieder, p. 51, #7
"A tune day call 'De Hardah Dey Come'..." p. 295	Jose	Varied: "The bigger they come, the harder they fall."	Mieder, p. 51, #7
"Bullfrog say 'What is joke to you, is death to me.'" p. 297	Narrator: Ivan	"Freg se, 'wat iz joke tu yu iz det tu mi'." Varied: "What is fun to the boy is death to the frog."	Morris-Brown, p. 107, #249 Beckwith, p. 113, #855; Anderson & Cundall, p. 61, #615; Watson, p. 81, #242

“You hear dat tune ‘De Harder Dey Come’?” p. 298	Jose (to Ras Pedro)	<u>Varied:</u> “The bigger they come, the harder they fall.”	Mieder, p. 51, #7
“Dey dat sowet’ iniquity an’ plowet’ wickedness, reapet’ de same...” p. 301	Ras Pedro (to Man-I, his son)	“You reap what you sow.”	Mieder, p. 555, #1(k)
“...an’ ‘hosoever digget’ a pit shall fall derein” p. 301	Ras Pedro (to Man-I)	<u>Varied:</u> “Dig a ditch fe Sammy, you fall down in da yourself.”	Anderson & Cundall, p. 38, #310
“They dialed the DJ...and asked for ‘De Harder Dey Come’...” p. 304	Narrator: referring to Ivan and Bogart	<u>Varied:</u> “The bigger they come, the harder they fall.”	Mieder, p. 51, #7
“Ask me no question, I tell you no lie” p. 306	Ras Pedro (to Ivan)	“Ask me no questions and I’ll tell you no lies.”	Mieder, p. 29, #2
“For like a dog returneth to ‘is vomit, so returnet’ a fool to ‘is folly” p. 306	Ras Pedro (to Ivan)		Mieder, p. 161, #16 Bible: Proverbs 26, 11
“A wise man fearet’ and departet’ from angh; but de heart of de fool <i>rageth</i> .” p. 306	Ras Pedro (to Ivan)		Bible: Proverbs 14, 16
“Wisdom is bettah dan weapons an’ war...” p. 310	Ras Pedro (to Ivan)		Bible: Ecclesiastes 9, 18
“ <i>He dat increaset’ knowledge, increaset’ sorrow.</i> –Ras Petah” p. 311	Epigraph	<u>Varied:</u> “Increase your knowledge and you increase your griefs.”	Mieder, p. 353, #10
“If you born to heng, you can’ drown” p. 312	Ivan (to himself)	<u>Varied:</u> Man bawn fe jown cyan heng. (A man who is born to drown cannot die by hanging)	Morris-Brown, p. 181, #463; Mieder, p. 278, #7
“But so is life go all the same. Nothing was fe ever.” p. 318	Narrator: Ivan	<u>Varied:</u> “Ongle salvashan lass fi ebba.”	Morris-Brown, p. 152, #374
“ <i>Ayeh—win or lose, I’m gonna get my share...what’s mine.</i> ” p. 319	Ivan (to himself)		Song: “You can get it if you really want” Artist: Jimmy Cliff, 1972

“ ‘E dat increaset’ knowledge, increaset’ sorrow.’ As Ras Pedro would say.” p. 323	Ivan (remembering Ras Pedro’s words)	<u>Varied:</u> “Increase your knowledge and you increase your griefs.”	Mieder, p. 353, #10
“You can not go to Zion wid a carnal min’.” p. 327	Ras Pedro (to Ivan)	“You cannot go to Zion with a carnal mind.”	Song: “Carnal Mind” Artist: Yabby You, 2006
“dem say bird whe’ fly too fas’ always fly pas’ him nes’.” p. 327	Jose	“Bud fly too fas’ pass him nes’.”	Beckwith, p. 20, #65; Anderson & Cundall, p. 18, #60; Watson, p. 11, #i; Morris-Brown, p. 137, #332
“Business as usual.” p. 331	Narrator: Ivan	Business is business.”	Mieder, p. 75, #5
“You know dem say, ‘when man know say ‘im chairback weak ‘im no lean back!’” p. 333	Jose (to Ivan)	“When man know him chair-back no ‘trong, him shouldn’t lean back.”	Anderson & Cundall, p. 84, #935
“Sometimes you worse enemy live inside you.” p. 334	Ras Pedro (to Ivan)	<u>Varied:</u> “We carry our greatest enemies within us.”	Mieder, p. 181, #34
“Reap not where dou has not sown” p. 335	Ras Pedro (remembering advice he often gave to Ivan)	“You reap what you sow.”	Mieder, p. 555, #1(k)
“Firs’ time fe everyt’ing” p. 337	Jose (to Ras Pedro)	“There must be a first time for everything.”	Mieder, p. 597, #45
“Well, ‘im way pass ‘im nest dis time.” p. 339	Narrator: Jose	“Bud fly too fas’ pass him nes’.”	Beckwith, p. 20, #65; Anderson & Cundall, p. 18, #60; Watson, p. 11, #i; Morris-Brown, p. 137, #332
“...business is business...” p. 339	Narrator: Jose	“Business is business.”	Mieder, p. 75, #5

"If nanny goat didn't know how 'im batti hole stay 'im shoulden did swallow pear seed..." p. 339	Narrator: Jose	Varied: "If nanny-goat know how him belly 'tan', him no swalla jackfruit seed."	Anderson & Cundall, p. 62, #634
"...you can' heng but once." p. 343	Narrator: Ivan	Varied: "A man can die but once."	Mieder, p. 396, #6
[indented lyrics] "Ah say, De harder dey come.../is de harder dey faall" p. 344	Jukebox (Ivan)	Varied: "The bigger they come, the harder they fall."	Mieder, p. 51, #7
"Easy to say, hard to do" p. 346	Woman (to Ivan)	Varied: "It is easier said than done."	Mieder, p. 525, #4
"If you live long enough, every t'ing wi' happen to you" p. 347	Ivan (remembering Miss 'Mando's words)	Varied: "De longer yu liv, de more yu larn."	Watson, p. 249, #76
"You know dem say, 'cat no have cheese, him eat pear.'" p. 360	Maas' Ray (to Jose)	"If puss no hab cheese, him eat pear."	Beckwith, p. 64, #132; Anderson & Cundall, p. 98, #1114; Watson, p. 241, #136
"Trousers too big fe Horse: Dawg say 'give me yah, I wi' wear it.'" p. 361	Bogart (to Jose)	"Trousers too big fe horse, daag say 'gi' me ya'."	Beckwith, p. 111, #835; Watson, p. 62, #149
"...you can cuss dawg, but you can' say 'im teeth not white?" p. 361	Narrator: Jose (to himself)	"Cuss darg but nebber say him teet' no white."	Anderson & Cundall, p. 44, #394; Watson, p. 60, #141
"Dem say dawg shit fly like dus' dus' ina breeze blow." p. 363	Duffus		No verification
[indented lyrics] "Ah say de hardah dey come/Is de hardah dey fall" p. 364	Jukebox (Ivan)	Varied: "The bigger they come, the harder they fall."	Mieder, p. 51, #7
"...the peasants say 'is not the same day chicken eat cockroach that 'im get fat.'" p. 366	Maas' Ray (on phone to Commissioner)	"A no same day fowl nyam cockroach him fat."	Anderson & Cundall, p. 60, #604
"When puss no have cheese 'im nyam pear." p. 368	Maas' Ray	"If puss no hab cheese, him eat pear."	Beckwith, p. 64, #132; Anderson & Cundall, p. 98, #1114; Watson, p. 241, #136

“Business a business” p. 379	Fudgehead	“Business is business.”	Mieder, p. 75, #5
“Business a business” p. 379	Fudgehead	“Business is business.”	Mieder, p. 75, #5
“...Ol’ time people say, ‘every fish nyam man, but is shark alone get blame.’” p. 379	Sidney	“All kind of fish eat man, only shark get blame.”	Beckwith, p. 16, #26; Anderson & Cundall, p. 53, #522; Watson, p. 72, #196; Morris-Brown, p. 143, #347
“...dem say ‘when tiger wan’ nyam him pickeny, him say dem favor puss.’” p. 379	Sidney	“When tiger want nyam him pickney, him say him fabour puss.”	Anderson & Cundall, p. 113, #1280; Watson, p. 30
“Sorry sista, rules is rules.” p. 384	Ambulance driver (to Elsa)	“Rules are rules.”	Whiting, p. 541, R 162
“You hear dem say hungry belly mek dog lick sore foot?” p. 386	Maas’ Ray (to Ras Pedro)		No verification
“Monkey nyam red pepper?” p. 386	Maas’ Ray (to Ras Pedro)	“Hunger made the monkey eat red pepper.”	Mieder, p. 318, #10
“Who de lord lovet’...he chastiset’...and scourget’...” p. 386	Ras Pedro	“Whom the Lord loves He chastises.”	Mieder, p. 385, #3; Bible: Proverbs 3, 12
[indented lyrics] “because de harder dey come...jis de harder dey fall” p. 391	Radio (Ivan)	Varied: “The bigger they come, the harder they fall.”	Mieder, p. 51, #7

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BEYOND THE BOUNDARY OF AGE: PROVERB
VARIATION IN AGATULAND

Abstract: In the native wisdom of the Agatu people of Benue State, Nigeria, proverbs belong to the domain of the elders' speech. That is, there is an understood linguistic *chasm* between the older generation and the younger generation in matters of speech wisdom. Increasingly, with a gradual sense of rebellion, the younger people in Agatuland are also speaking in proverbs, often to the disapproval of the elderly ones who think proverbs should come *naturally* to a person as the person reaches that "age of speaking in proverbs". What is of interest to this writer in the younger people's attempt to speak in proverbs are the proverb variations that they consciously produce to suit the peculiarities of their generation. That is the crux of this paper.

Keywords: African; Agatuland; Nigerian; proverb variation; speech wisdom; youth; generation ga

I

In recent years, among the Agatu people of Benue State, Nigeria, proverbs have experienced what we may call a transition from the domain of the high to that of the low, i.e. from being the preserve of the elderly people to being a realm of speech in which the youths "forage" into in order to experience speech-wisdom. The established linguistic chasm between the speech delivery of the elders and that of the young people shrinks as a result of the adjusted speech habit of the youths. It is a self-satisfying incursion by the youths into the elders' proverbial realm, breaking the boundary of age the elders consider vital to the native wisdom of social stratification. The youths break the boundary with enthusiasm, considering it ego-boosting to partake in a proverbial behaviour deliberately denied them. In this paper, I attempt to identify the gap between the proverbs spoken by the elderly ones, which may be regarded as the real, traditional proverbs and their versions spoken by the youths which, I in-

tend to establish, have undergone a process of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic change. It will be seen that in spite of the transition, the pragmatic aim of the proverb is achieved in the sense that the versions used by the youths serve the same purposes as those used by the elders. The variation offers the youths a socio-linguistic aura that distinguishes what one may call the *traditional* youths from the *cosmopolitan* youths of Agatuland. The youths who consider themselves traditional are those inclined to create proverb variations to show, apart from boosting their egos, their closeness to their communal and cultural philosophy. Proverb variation, whether positive or negative, is largely functional, not only giving leverage to the youths in their speech, but also expressing certain social motives that are beyond mere signification.

II

Like all African languages, the Agatu language, a dialect of the Idoma language of Benue State, is rich in proverbs whose sources, as Idris O. O. Amali has pointed out, include “poetry, songs, talking instruments, individuals, natural phenomena, riddles, folktales, discussions, debates, [and] interviews” (1). In spite of the diverse sources of proverbs among the Agatu people, it is on the lips of the elderly ones that proverbs are mostly heard. A proverb, to these elders, has a nature of esotericism; only the elders can preserve and maintain its structure and meaning, guarding it from the propensity of the youths to be flippant and exuberant with speech. Recently, I asked an elderly man called Ibakwu Osu who lived in Usha village of Agatu local government area, Benue State, why only the elderly people spoke proverbs, even though today youths have started producing the “corrupt” versions of some proverbs which they interspersed in their speeches. Ibakwu Osu said that as a matter of fact, proverbs, considered as speech-wisdom in Agatuland, came to one naturally as he/she grew older. He confirmed that the elderly ones frowned at the flippant (and by this he meant “linguistically damaged”) use of proverbs by the youths. While he did not as much frown at the use of proverbs by the youths, he thought the youths should be patient until proverbs came to them

naturally when they reached the age. He however admitted that there were precocious youths who could *genuinely* use proverbs as the elders.

After listening to some young men in Agatuland, mostly under the trees in their villages where they sat, told stories, chat about everyday issues, and exchange banter, I decided to collect the proverbs studied here from elder Ibakwu Osu. I insisted he gave me the proverbs in their original, traditional forms. With the original proverbs, I decided to fraternise with the young men, trying as much as I could to introduce issues that would make them respond with the proverb variations of the proverbs I had. While some of them spoke the proverb variations self-consciously, others spoke naturally, giving the impression that they had been using them for quite some time. It was as much for the purposes of passing across messages as for the purposes of amusing themselves with the *tongue* of the elders that they created and patronised proverb variations. Proverb variation is therefore a deliberate process or creation by youths in Agatuland.

In his study of the shifting nature of Yoruba proverbs in which he refers to proverb variations as “postproverbials”, Aderemi Raji-Oyelade implies that the influence of cosmopolitanism on the younger generation has made the Yoruba proverb to move away from what Ruth Finnegan calls “relative fixity” (393). He opines that

“[the] emergence of postproverbials in contemporary Yoruba society is undoubtedly the effect of the interplay of orality and literacy-modernity, the critical correspondence between an older, puritanistic generation and a younger, disruptive, and somewhat banalistic generation” (75).

This suggests a certain tension between the older generation and the younger one, which is rather supported by Ibakwu Osu’s claims above. Indeed, Raji-Oyelade captures this tension, no matter how mild, in the phrase “playful blasphemy” which, according to him, is derived from the understanding that the older generation in Yorubaland considers any “wilful undermining of [proverbs’] rigid structure” (75) as blasphemous, although among the younger generation “the conscious undermining, or subversion, of traditional proverbs is generally regarded as play-

ful” (75). Similarly, in her study of proverb variation among the women of Kasena in Ghana, Helen Yitah talks of “joking behaviour” or “proverbial jesting”(234) which is the starting point of the phenomenon of proverb variation that overtly has a feminist function. Yitah writes,

It has become common in joking situations to hear Kasena women subvert both the form and meaning of existing proverbs in order to thereby draw attention to gender inequities, to address misogynist perceptions, or to arrogate themselves certain powers not conferred by traditional society” (235).

Clearly, proverb variation, as we have seen in the case of Raji-Oyelade and Yitah, starts from playfulness, although it is also clear that motives exist behind proverb variation, pointing to the overtly pragmatic nature of proverbs.

As in the case of Yoruba and Kasena, proverb variation in Agatuland begins from playfulness or joking situations. Beyond that, there is also the consciousness among the younger generation in Agatuland to speak like the elders which is purely a matter of envy. In a way, there is a kind of arrogance which comes with the expression that “I can also speak in proverbs which the elders have kept away from me.” It goes beyond an epiphanic submission or sublimity in the sense that the younger generation expresses triumph over a concerted effort to keep them unwise in a land seething with speech-wisdom. A point to note here is that, unlike in the case of Kasena women, the Agatu youths do not use the proverb variations to *get* at the elders who are custodians of the original proverbs. Rather, they use the proverb variations most often, as we will see in the proverb variations studied here, to settle scores among themselves and exhibit manhood and egotism. Indeed, if you are an Agatu youth who grows up in the city and if you have no grasp of the speech tradition, your mates who grow up in the villages have a tendency to *intimidate* you with proverb variations, reducing you to an outsider, a diasporan, who is yet to know your folkways. Given this premise, proverb variation in Agatuland is not, as Raji-Oyelade’s study shows, a product of “the interplay of orality and literacy-modernity” (75). The variation, in structure, meaning and rhetoric, does not suggest an

influence of western education although there are a few exceptions. There is no doubt that Western civilisation and foreign religions have exerted influences on the folkways of the Agatu people and have, consequently, corrupted the *sanctity* of the Agatu proverbs. However, proverb variations in Agatuland are a conscious invention of the youths to appropriate for themselves the wisdom they think they deserve, and which should not be *hidden* from them on account of age.

III

In considering some Agatu proverbs that have variations as a result of the common use to which the youths in Agatuland have put them, what should be understood from the outset is that these variations are not static; they are susceptible to further variations. Indeed, as long as speech is a *living* thing among the people, other variations of these proverbs may occur, and as casually as conversations occur among peer groups in Agatuland. Proverb variations, therefore, are subjects of specific speech continuum, manifesting themselves in a sociolinguistic domain. Below I give the original proverb and its interpretation, and the proverb variation and its interpretation; a brief commentary on the difference in structure and meaning follows each pair.

Proverb 1: Akaman ukpoci g'oce go gwan ne, a go ihyepu no.

Because you say another man's tree should not bear fruits, yours will not even produce leaves.

Proverb variation: Akaman ukpoci g'oce go gwan ne, a go ibu mnajen.

Because you say another man's tree should not bear fruits, yours will not even grow.

This proverb is spoken to evil men and women who do not want to see progress in the community. Once a person is known to have bewitched his neighbour or relation, the community becomes curious of what the evil doer is going to achieve in life. This proverb indicates the Agatu people's belief in the law of retribution. Semantically, the proverb variation presents a bleaker repercussion to the evil doer. In other words, the youths do want the evil doer to see the grave consequences of the man who

bewitches his neighbour or relations. This may be a result of the moral and ethical decadence in Agatuland, in this generation, caused by materialism since the militarisation of Nigeria whose most destructive index has been the superiorisation of a moneyed tradition over human dignity. Some of the elderly ones in the community have taken to bewitching the children of other men who have chosen to pursue education, foreseeing that they will turn out better than their own children. Among the youths, there are those who are either not gifted for education or choose a less dignified path, and envy those who are educated to the extent of bewitching them. This situation, as instances have shown in Agatuland, is heightened by the undue riches that the educated ones flaunt around as a result of corruption.

Proverb 2: In lipihi ti g'eho me, oji ca wa g'iyu ge

I have been in a market with bees, it is nothing to be with flies.

Proverb variation: In lipihi ti g'eho me, iyu ijama tu kwun no.

I have been in a market with bees, flies dare not come near me.

This is a proverb for the boastful youth. Beyond being competitive, most Agatu youths, especially the male, quarrel and fight over women, farmland, family feud, fishing pond, and football matches. In such situations, they find themselves trading this proverb. He who utters this proverb means that he is evidently stronger than the person he confronts, and, if at all a fight occurs, it will take him no time to win. The proverb variation, commonly used by the youths in Agatuland today, expresses a deadlier aggression of the speaker to the supposed weaker person. In most cases, this proverb provokes the youths into a fight, especially as cowardice is generally mocked at in Agatuland. Interestingly, the proverb variation does not substitute the metaphor “flies” with something else, but concentrates on the degree of the hostility implied in the proverb.

Proverb 3: Oda ni by'oi g'ofye w'ogbo gi j'ije lo, ebo ni doka g'ene nu ti g'adanu ma

What brings the son of a slave to the dance circle has made people to ask who his mother and father are.

Proverb variation: Oda ni b'yoì g'ogbele w'ogbo gi j'ije lo, ebo ni doka g'ene nu ti g'adanu ma.

What brings the son of a mad man to the dance circle has made people to ask who his mother and father are.

This is a proverb meant to check the excesses of people who have no authentic lineages, considered vital in Agatuland. Beyond that, however, it is also meant to guard people who have committed moral, ethical, cultural and criminal offences from being judges over others. In their variation, the youths substitute “a mad man” for “a slave” in order to make the import of the proverb more pungent and caustic. Indeed, it is assumed, among the Agatu people, that a slave is far better than a mad man; to be a son of a slave is, therefore, better than to be a son of a mad man. The proverb is used to confront, as most of the proverbs used by the youths in Agatuland, and may provoke an outrage from the person confronted. The dignity of a child in Agatuland often emanates from the child's family. A man is measured, most often, by the family name he has. It is a society where everybody avoids being known as a son of a slave or a son of a mad man.

Proverb 4: Oh'eho g'ogwu ikwampe no.

A hired farmer cannot plant pawpaw.

Proverb variation: Oh'eho g'ogwu iwundu g'enu no.

A hired farmer is not the owner of the hoe.

Among the Agatu people, hired farmers are underrated and mocked at. It is assumed that a farmer who cannot farm for himself or his family but moves from place to place tilling the ground in order to earn money does not earn respect from the community. This is a proverb the elderly ones in the community often use to challenge the younger ones so that they can be composed and settle down to a life that is befitting of communal respect. While pawpaw is the metaphor that conveys the ownership of land and other landed properties in the version used by the elderly people, the youths prefer to strip the hired farmer of the

implement he takes from farm to farm. What this implies is that even as a hired farmer he has to be given a hoe before he can earn some money. Really, the satire here is that the hired farmer who lives by the hoe does not even know the importance of possessing one. If he does not know the importance of possessing a hoe, he cannot know the importance of possessing a farm through which he can establish his life since the major occupation of the Agatu people is farming.

Proverb 5: Onye j'efu ni by'ola jaluce?

Who knows the firewood that can keep fire for the community?

Proverb variation: Ony j'efu ni c'ola fye?

Who knows the firewood that can give more fire?

Youths who display an exemplary life are seen as “firewood that can keep fire for the community.” This is about the future of the community. Elders entrust the spirit and truth of the community in the hands of youths who have proven their integrity and manhood. Such youths are given the art and craft of masquerades, are given opportunities to participate in the ruling council of the community, are taken into confidence about the most guarded secrets of the community, and are generally looked upon as the useful elders of tomorrow. Every father in the community hopes that his sons fall into this category. In an ambience made competitive for the youths to display acceptable qualities, some people feel underrated perhaps because they are naturally not able to measure up to certain yardstick. This proverb then becomes vital. The proverb variation clearly embeds the typical nature of competitiveness among the Agatu youths where the thrust is not whether one is going to be a formidable “fire” for the community, but the degree to which one considers himself a better “fire” than others.

Proverb 6: Iyenji Kaman owo ijanu igbepa no

The hare says rain will not beat him twice.

Proverb variation: Iyenji Kaman owo janu igbepa, anu lei ganu nmo.

The hare says if rain beats him twice, it will commit suicide.

The hare is simply displaying bravery characteristic of the youths here. Similar to proverb 2 above, most young men use this proverb to boast about their strengths in certain things. It can also be seen as the Agatu equivalent of the English saying: once bitten, twice shy. It is all about caution, and a determination to stand against any further occurrence of something deemed harmful. When this proverb is spoken by the elderly ones in the Agatu society, it is most likely to be in the second sense in which wisdom is implied. In their variation, the youths do not just stop at implying wisdom, they also imply a certain boastfulness hinged on the all-powerful nature of the heroism common among the younger ones in Agatuland. Committing suicide is pushing the stake to the extreme, a situation rooted in the exuberance of the youths.

Proverb 7: Oyi g'ogbeha it'Atu no.

The child of the poor does not wear Atu.

Proverb variation: Oyi g'ogbeha iy'inapi no.

The child of the poor does not wear nappy.

“Atu” is a locally made woven cloth which is highly valued in Agatuland. In those days, it was only the rich people that wore it because of how expensive it was. It became a material with which people measured the riches of others and it was quite uncommon for a poor person to wear it. Similar to proverb 3, the import of this proverb is that one should learn to, as the English say, cut his cloth according to his size. You do not hanker after something, especially a piece of materialism, you cannot have. In Agatuland, the elders use this proverb to call to order the over-ambitious and dreamy youths in the community. The proverb variation here may be seen as a matter of linguistic innovation as “nappy” is a recent linguistic item that finds its way into the Agatu language with the advent of Western civilisation. But the choice of “nappy” as a substitute for “Atu” reinforces the functional dimension of the variation in the sense that “nappy”, apart from being a Western piece of materialism, is nothing compared to “Atu” in matters of material values even in the present society.

Like some other proverb variations earlier discussed, this one is aimed at provoking whomever the proverb is spoken *against*.

Proverb 8: Ekwuchala iy'ole n ne, aje j'Owuna

Because Ekwuchala is not at home, Owuna can brag around.

Proverb variation: Ekwuchala iy'ole n ne, Owuna ga gbele me

As Ekwuchala is not at home, Owuna has gone crazy

Ekwuchala and Owuna are two masquerades, that is, masks that appear either during the funeral ceremony of an elderly person in the society or during the popular masquerade festival called Eje G'Ekwu (Wine of the Masquerade). The two masquerades have a number of things in common: they both carry whips or canes with which they lash at children and youths on their way; they both hardly walk, only run or trot around; they are both feared because of their temper. The major difference between the two, apart from their clothing, is that Owuna, always having a flutist at his behest, may be seen dancing to the tune of the flute, but Ekwuchala does not dance at all. The Agatu people consider Ekwuchala superior to Owuna because the former is harsher, and far more temperamental. He hardly talks and even adults and elderly people are wary of his whips which he carries in both hands. It is the preserve of Ekwuchala that the day he appears there will be no other masquerade in the village/community. But usually Owuna will be found moving around even on the day Ekwuchala is expected to appear. Once Ekwuchala appears and calls out loudly to the community that he has come, Owuna disappears wherever he is. The import of this proverb is that there can be no two masters in a given circumstance. This proverb is spoken, with sarcasm, to a younger or junior person who takes charge of an event in the absence of an elderly or senior person who ought to be in charge of the event. The variation from the youths, whom this proverb is mostly spoken to, emphasises that if the opportunity presents itself, they will not only take advantage of it but do so in their own youthful way. For them, the absence of Ekwuchala, a symbol of harsh authority, is one opportunity that must be fully utilised.

Proverb 9: Iyenji tei g'aho ne, o l'aho pye

Because the hare asked for ear, he got it in big size

Proverb variation: Iyenji tei g'aho ne, o py'olodu g'aho

Because Iyenji asked for ear, he is a wealthy owner of ear

For anyone who has seen a hare, this proverb is self-explanatory. The proverb is quite common in Agatuland and it is used often to mock at the stupidity of the younger ones in the society. When a young person insists on doing something or taking an action that his parents and/or elder brothers and sisters do not approve of, such as marrying a woman deemed unsuitable for marriage, and such a young person faces serious troubles as consequences of his actions, this proverb is used against him. The variation is interesting in the sense that the young person is also using this proverb to show that even if his/her decision is unacceptable to his parents and/or his older siblings, there are some benefits for him which may put him at a greater advantage than the others. One interesting way the younger people in Agatuland have used this is when a young man marries an educated and civilised woman (considered by most elderly people to be too sophisticated to be submissive to a man) who eventually turns out to be a blessing in the sense that she can make economic and material contribution, in a civilised form, to the running of the family.

Proverb 10: Anya l'ewa, amma onya yeha

There are many women but there is no wife

Proverb variation: Anya l'ewa, anya w'onya

There are many women but women are always wives

This is a proverb that is often found on the lips of parents whose son is planning to choose a wife. The parents use the proverb, in their view, to guide their son in making the right choices. The import of this proverb is that not all women can function as wife, especially in the way that the Agatu people consider a woman to be a wife. For a woman to be worthy of marriage, or of being a wife, she must be humble, must respect her husband and his people, including all his younger siblings. She must recognise

that she is not only married to her husband alone but to the entire family, and must attend to the request, such as demand for food or help, of every member of the family. Because of the services that a wife must render to her husband's people, there often arises a situation in which the wife, probably feeling that the task is too much for her, often rebels and when she does that she is considered a bad wife. But most educated Agatu young men have come to realise that the society demands too much of the wife, and will rather side with their wife even in cases of rebellion. Any young man who is ready for that will counter his parents' proverb with the proverb variation. The proverb variation asserts that any woman is indeed a wife, depending on how she is being treated. The variation is a way of rebelling against the cultural conception of a wife in Agatuland. This is no doubt as a result of Western education. Most educated young men in Agatuland do not think their wives should be subjected to servitude and drudgery, as the case is with the older, uneducated people.

IV

Proverb variation in Agatuland, as this study has attempted to show, occurs from two dimensions: the linguistic dimension that asserts the *livingness* of speech, the sociolinguistic continuum that begets innovations in speech situations giving rise to the natural desire to *alter* what has long been existing through a social behaviour; and what we may consider as the functional dimension in which proverbs undergo a variation-process in order to satisfy the ego or motive of the user. Proverbs, it is incontestable, are a part of a functional speech, inherently situational, pragmatic and targeted at achieving a purpose. In this premise, we can understand what a proverb-preserver, as some Agatu elders are, may see as a *frivolous* use of proverbs among the youths in Agatuland. It is worth stressing that in Agatuland, the elders make *unspoken* efforts to deny the younger ones from using proverbs because they think the younger ones are not mature enough to use proverbs. It is agreed that this incursion of the youths into proverbial speech resulting in the variations of proverbs is entirely a new thing. Elder Ibakwu Osu admitted that when they were youths, they waited for that age when proverbs

came to one naturally. Evidently, the youths, whether considered as impatient or not, feel they can break the boundary of age and acquire the speech-wisdom available to them. It is expected that proverb variation will continue to be a speech reality among the newer generations to come in which case variations will be determined by the social matrices of a generation.

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PROVERBS IN FEATURE INTERVIEWS: A COGNITIVE-
DISCURSIVE STUDY OF OPRAH WINFREY'S
INTERVIEWS

Abstract: In this article Anglo-American proverbs are studied within the framework of the cognitive-discursive approach in linguistics. Oprah Winfrey's print feature interviews were selected as the material for analysis. First, we single out the characteristics of O. Winfrey's interview discourse relevant for our research. Next, we look at the functions proverbs fulfill on the structural level of the interview discourse. Last, we analyze the way proverbs (and proverbial expressions) function on the thematic/content level.

Keywords: context, feature interview, discourse, cognitive-discursive function, magazine, mass media, Oprah Winfrey, *O. The Oprah Magazine*.

Conversation consisting of a chain of questions and answers is typical of everyday communication in different situations and social settings. The same question/answer structural principle implying turn-taking is used for the organization of interviews. Generally speaking, an interview is a form of dialogue aimed at retrieving relevant or important information. Thus, the interview is an institutional interaction with the clearly defined roles of interviewer and interviewee whose relations are asymmetrical. The former coordinates the flow of the conversation; the latter is rather passive being involved only in providing necessary information by answering questions. What differentiates a professional interview from everyday conversation is the mass audience for which it is intended.

Today's popular genre of interview is relatively young. The word itself, although known since 1514 (Anglo-French *entreveue* = meeting of great people), has been used in its now accepted meaning for a little more than just a century, since the 1860s. It has gone through criticism¹ to omnipresence in the mass media of

today. Some scholars even go as far as to brand the modern society as ‘the interview society’ (Fontana, 2001:161).

Popular as this journalistic genre is, the interview discourse is not sufficiently studied both by social sciences and linguistics (Platt, 2001:33, Briggs, 2001:137). Most research has been done into the news interview discourse, which is a genre of ‘serious journalism’ aimed at delivering serious and timely information.

David L. Altheide argues that interviewing has been transformed to an ‘entertainment vehicle’ (2001:411). According to him, this transformation was caused by “the media logic that has developed since the early days of print journalism.” His basic thesis is that a major reason for interviewing being so relevant nowadays is its shift “from an information orientation to an impact orientation that is more characteristic of our media culture.” (ibid.)

Today many new ‘infotainment’ media products aimed at providing information in an entertaining manner enjoy great popularity. They deal with human interest topics, like art and entertainment, health and life style, fashion and celebrities.

For our research we selected the interviews done by Oprah Winfrey, one of the best-known American media persons and most influential women in show business. The stunning popularity of the Harpo Productions, Inc. Company’s products accounts for this choice as well. We studied her print feature interviews published in *O, The Oprah Magazine*.

The magazine industry is considered one of the most highly sophisticated and innovative parts of the media industry (Niblock, 1996:72). *O, The Oprah Magazine* is a monthly women’s edition with a clearly stated mission of helping women “see every experience and challenge as an opportunity to grow and discover their best self.” Thus, frank conversation with readers is the magazine’s priority. The interviews featured in some issues serve this goal really well, too.

Nowadays, interviewing is widely used on TV, radio, and in the press. Numerous interview discourse scholars note the main role of television in setting standards for the interview (Altheide, 2001:411). O. Winfrey gained her popularity working in the field of the so-called celebrity journalism thanks to her ability to make contact with her interviewees on The Oprah Winfrey Show. It is worth mentioning that the topics discussed in her interviews are of

high social significance and concern spiritual growth, knowing oneself, fighting bad diseases, charity, and community service. Barbara Walters, another legendary American TV host, called Oprah an extraordinary person who changed many people's lives². The celebrated journalist Les Payne of *Newsday* believes that she is very well "attuned to her audience, if not the world."³ These, as well as many other reviews and quotes, may account for the fact that Oprah Winfrey's interviews provide exciting material for cognitive-discursive study.

We should start our analysis with the description of the key features of Oprah Winfrey's interview discourse. We will mainly focus on such significant discursive characteristics as structure, goal, interviewer and interviewee's interrelations, their roles, and the style of communication.

According to celebrity journalism scholars, the now existent publicity concept gave birth to the celebrity profile formula, i.e., a number of standard structures and key elements typical of feature interviews (celebrity profiles) found on pages of large newspapers and mainstream magazines (Marshall, 2005:24-25). The same publicity concept asks of a journalist to take on an insider's role to be able to get his/her star interlocutor into an intimate conversation to capture readers' attention. The following elements of the print feature interview/celebrity profile are distinguished:

- A. The meeting of journalist and star in either domestic setting or café.
- B. The description of the casual dress and demeanor of the star.
- C. The discussion of their current work-which is essentially the anchor for why the story is newsworthy.
- D. The revelation of something that is against the grain of what is generally perceived to be the star's persona-something that is anecdotal but is revealing of the star's true nature (ibid).

Oprah Winfrey interviews have the traditional print interview structure and include its basic elements, i.e. heading, headline, lead, interview (the text), and pictures. However, we can observe some deviations from the aforementioned celebrity profile formula. Oprah and her respondents typically have their conversation in domestic settings, which she frequently speaks about in the lead. Nevertheless, she prefers not to provide the description of her interviewees' appearance but rather to reflect on some of their bio-

graphical facts, her perception of their demeanor, or to focus on some of their quotes taken from the interview that follows afterwards. It is, as we believe, demonstrative of her not being 'hunt for sensation' oriented, but her pursuing a serious task of retrieving highly valuable information, acquiring new pieces of knowledge, and exchanging bits of life experience.

What distinguishes the Oprah Winfrey interview discourse is a wide circle of respondents. Every time her guests are well-known people, ranging from statesmen, like Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama, spiritual leaders, like The Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh, showmen, like Jerry Seinfeld and Tina Fey, actors, like Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks, sportsmen, like the Williams sisters and Lance Armstrong, writers, like Toni Morrison and Janet Fitch, musicians, like Bono and Stevie Wonder, to ordinary people who have been in all sorts of dire straits in their life and managed to cope, e.g. the Central Park Jogger who was left for dead after having been violently raped in New York's Central Park, or Christine McFadden, a mother of four kids, all of whom were shot by her ex-husband.

Our study shows that *O, The Oprah Magazine* uses interviewing not only as an entertainment vehicle helping to reveal famous interviewees' personalities. Oprah's interlocutors are people with diverse backgrounds, many of whom have gained wealth and reached fame and success. Like any other human being, they are 'storages' of feelings and emotions, opinions and judgments, i.e., elements of life experience. Oprah Winfrey, however, tends to interview those who, in her opinion, possess valuable experience, that can be of use to her readers. Thus, her interviews are acts of cooperation based on the mutual exchange of knowledge and aimed to provide help.

The journalistic interview gives journalists much more freedom compared to the news interview, which requires their neutrality and impartiality. Thus, the interviewer gets the chance to share his/her point of view or make judgments. Oprah's interviews are highly informal being close to everyday talk and following its model. Her interviewees testify to this fact, too. Consider the following extract from the interview with Ralph Lauren, a successful American designer:

Oprah: A lot of people have described you as shy. Do you see yourself that way?

Ralph: I'm not great at cocktail parties. I can sit with you and talk about anything, because this is a real conversation. It's not about bullshit. It's about realness, and that's what I'm good at. If you get me on a subject I know about, I'm very strong. If I don't know much about it, I don't say much.

As an interviewer, Oprah Winfrey adheres to a cooperative style of communication providing equal interaction of interlocutors. It sometimes results in role switch in the course of the interview, when the interviewee takes on the role of the interviewer and asks questions her/himself. This happened, for instance, in the interview with Bono. The topic of joy caused a lively exchange of ideas which led to the respondent asking the interviewer questions. This, as we suppose, manifests their sincere interest in the discussion and the partner as well as their focus on exploring the topic to the fullest:

Oprah: Is joy elusive for you?

Bono: I don't know. Our band has it when we're going off. There's a joy vibration there. It's not miserable-ism.

Oprah: Joy is a very high energy field.

Bono: I'm grumpy. You seem to have a level of joy. Are there months when things aren't going right for you, when you're in a trough, or do you have just, like, one bad day a week?

Oprah: Not even a bad day a week.

Bono: Really?

Oprah: Absolutely not.

Bono: Well, I have a couple of bad days a week.

Another characteristic feature of the Oprah Winfrey interview discourse is frequent extemporization. Beyond doubt, any interview presupposes some degree of interviewer's preparedness, i.e. collecting data about the interviewee, selecting theme/topics for

discussion, making a list of questions to be asked, etc. In her many interviews Oprah speaks about huge preparatory work that she usually does when getting ready for the discussion. However, it should be noted that her interviews don't have a 'fixed' content as in many cases she comes up with on-the-spot questions which are a response to the previous statement. As an illustration let us consider the beginning of the interview with the standup comedy actress Ellen DeGeneres:

Ellen DeGeneres [*After checking her caller ID*]: Harpo Inc.

Oprah: [*Laughs*] I love it. Are you awake?

Ellen: I am. I just woke up. I had a horrible night. The weirdest thing happened. We had some huge pop in the wall at 2:30 in the morning, and then it sounded like our whole house was going to explode. I don't know if a speaker blew or what—it was just this crazy loud vibration that went on forever, and I lay in bed thinking that the house was going to catch fire because there'd been an electrical short. So I went down to the basement—I haven't been down to the basement since we moved in two years ago—and lying next to all the audiovisual equipment is an audiobook called *Being in Balance*.

Oprah: Oh my goodness. Isn't that just how the world works?

Ellen: There's always a reason things happen.

Oprah: You're exactly like I am. I know that everything happens for a reason, so I look at everything like, "Okay, what does *that* mean, *and* What am I supposed to be getting from that?"

Ellen: Right.

Oprah: You know, you can make yourself nuts doing that, though. But it's also the way to live, I think. How long have you been living this way?

Ellen: Well, I think I've always been a searcher <...>

The basic characteristic features of the Oprah Winfrey interview discourse described above are of great importance and, thus, will be taken into account in our cognitive-discursive study of the way proverbs (and proverbial expressions) function within it. We selected 75 interviews published in *O, The Oprah Magazine* (2000-2009).

Like many other glossy women's magazines *O, The Oprah Magazine* profusely employs proverbs in advertisements published on its pages, both in headings and texts of articles. In the interviews under discussion, we have come across numerous cases of proverb use.

Proverbs in headings/titles—one of the strong positions of the text—are known to be efficient attention grabbers. Nevertheless, none were found in the headings of the interviews we studied. The editors of the magazine follow a certain pattern of using the standard phrase 'Oprah Talks to...', which in every separate case is complemented by some famous person's name. Such recurrent headings serve as the magazine's hallmark, and by announcing the celebrated interviewee, they secure readers' interest. In the interviews we studied there are no proverbs in the headlines and leads, too. However, as has been revealed, paremias play a special role in the structural organization of the interview discourse.

Any print interview is based on a written version of a live talk. According to H. Sacks, E. A. Schegloff, and G. Jefferson, the conversation analysis method founders, any naturally occurring conversation is a deeply ordered, structurally organized social practice (Hutchby, 2005:211-212). Much earlier Kenneth Burke likened society to "a conversation where people join in, say their piece and leave" (Machin, van Leeuwen, 2005:41). Conversation analysis is aimed to disclose how interlocutors comprehend each other and respond to each other in their turns at talk, paying special attention to how sequences of social actions are formed, e.g. the beginning/end of talk, invitation to participate in conversation, settling disagreement, etc. Thus, the interview like ordinary conversation possesses global and local structures. The elements of the global structure include the beginning, the main part (unfolding of the main topic, subtopics, secondary topics), and the end of the interview. But for our cognitive-discursive analysis of the way proverbs function in the interview discourse its local structure is of greater interest.

On the local level of its organization the interview has a typical interactional form. The interview is a kind of interaction involving subsequent turn-taking of asking and answering questions by participants. Thus, we refer to the following core elements to the local structure:

- **turn-taking;**
- **question-answer adjacency pairs**, i.e. a sequence of communicative turns;
- **turns**, made up of functional units called ‘**moves**’;
- **continuers/ receipt tokens.**

It is worth mentioning that interaction happening between an interviewer and an interviewee is a process generating the content of the interview. Turn-taking is consequently a means of organizing the content structure of the interview.

We shall start our analysis of the role that Anglo-American proverbs play in the interview discourse structural organization by looking at their functioning in adjacency pairs. In a conventional interview communicants orient to the strict question-answer format. In Oprah Winfrey interviews we studied proverbs are used both as questions and answers. Consider the following extract from the interview with Jamie Foxx (real name Eric Bishop), a successful American actor, musician and film producer. This talented African American, who had to endure great hardships and racist attacks almost every day in his childhood, was honored with an Oscar for his brilliant portrayal of the legendary musician Ray Charles in the biographical movie ‘Ray’ (2004). In the part of the interview where they raise the topic of success and his self-identity, Oprah Winfrey uses a famous American proverb ‘All people are created equal’ in a question:

Oprah: Is there a mantra or phrase you’d use to describe yourself?

Jamie: I think of myself as concentrated Kool-Aid—the kind in the packet. [Once you stir it up, it changes everything around it.] Hundreds of years ago, the slaves sent a message to a kid named Eric Bishop—a boy they knew could grow up to inspire a generation. I want to do great things with great people.

Oprah: Do you think **all people are created equal**?

Jamie: No. If that were true, there'd be no poverty, no shortcomings....We're all energy. Some people are stronger forces than others.

Oprah: I love that. That's what I know for sure. <...>

Taking into account the retrospective plane of Oprah's question, we may assume that it is informed by the interviewee's preceding statements about his being chosen in early childhood ("the slaves sent a message to a kid named Eric Bishop", "could grow up to inspire a generation") and his desire "to do great things with great people." So naturally his reflections on his special place in this world are followed by the question about his stand on the idea expressed by the paremia 'All people are created equal.' This proverb being one of American national principles is conventionally understood in the sense that all people are born equal and, thus, endowed with equal rights. In this case J. Foxx offers his own interpretation of the popular dictum (and is met with support by Oprah!) deduced from the simple fact that some people reach certain heights in life, and others don't.

In several of Oprah's interviews proverbs are used in prefaced questions, which help prepare both the interviewee and the audience for the next question, to herald new topics for discussion, thus providing their smooth switch. The following context is marked by such proverb use. In the interview with the tennis stars Serena and Venus Williams, Oprah Winfrey alludes to the widespread proverb 'Money can't buy happiness', which serves as the preface to her question about happiness:

Oprah: <...> You've been quoted as saying that fame and money are great, but they don't bring you happiness. What does?

Venus: My family. Laughter. Being able to decide what I want to do. My health.

In the course of our study we have encountered some cases of proverbs being used as answers, as, for instance, in the interview with Julia Roberts:

Oprah: So you're not one of those movie people who live or die by the box office?

Julia: <...> I've had people call me with numbers, and I say, "I can't even tell by the tone of your voice whether this is good or bad news." You just have to let it go.

Oprah: And you have?

Julia: Whatever happens is going to happen, whether you're sitting by the phone anxious and worried about it or not.

As we can see, Julia Roberts resorts to the paremia 'What's going to happen will happen', subjecting some components within it to slight grammatical changes and complementing it with her own commentary revealing her understanding of the proverb's meaning.

It must be once again stressed that an interview is a conversation occurring in an institutional setting. Hence, the orientation to turn-taking format (question-answer-next question). However, depending on the type of interview, there can be some deviations. In the canonical news interview the question-answer sequence is obligatory (Hutchby, 2005: 214-215), while it is often the case in the feature interview/celebrity profile that a third position slot is inserted into this pair, e.g. question-answer-acknowledgement, question-answer-evaluation, etc. These continuers situate "their producer as the intended, and attentive, primary recipient of the talk being produced by an interlocutor" (Hutchby, 2005: 214), and in each particular case can fulfill different pragmatic functions, e.g. passing judgments, or evaluating what is being said.

As has been shown above, Oprah's style of communication is rather informal in that she frequently makes some remarks about her respondent's answers. For this purpose she employs proverbs.

One of O. Winfrey's respondents, a talented R'n'B singer, Mary J. Blidge opens up about the spiritual transformation she has gone through after a period of drug and alcohol abuse. This renewal reflected in her lyrics came from the realization of how her artistry may impact her fans:

Oprah: Has your transformation compelled you toward a greater responsibility in your artistry and lyrics?<...>

Mary: <...> After the *No More Drama* album, people came up to me and said, "You saved me. You talked me out of an abusive relationship." Artists have so much influence. <...>A lot of people hate me for this. People say things like "Mary, I liked it better when you were singing them sad songs. You need to pick up a pack of cigarettes and come back down with us." It blows my mind-then again, not really. They just want someone to waddle with them in their environment.

Oprah: Misery loves company. People identify with the rawness and pain in your music. Now that you've outgrown that pain, they think you can no longer relate to them. They have an expectation about you based upon themselves.

In her answer the singer mentions that the changes in her work triggered a negative reaction from her long-time fans and acquaintances. These reflections are not followed by Oprah's next question but, instead, are accompanied by acknowledgement, which begins with the proverb 'Misery loves company.' Proverbs as precedent texts⁴ and elements of the 'cognitive base'⁵ shared by interlocutors reflect some well-known truth, and, thus, are ideal means for third position acknowledgements.

The next proverbial acknowledgement is remarkable due to the fact that it belongs to the interviewee and not to the interviewer. In his interview the famous American comedian and producer Jerry Seinfeld talks about his first encounter with the legendary film director Steven Spielberg⁶. While having dinner in a restaurant, they were suddenly stuck in 'awkward silence' for a while after their conversation had faltered:

Oprah: What about *Bee Movie*?

Jerry: Oh, right! I forgot. [*Laughs*] In the middle of dinner, we're chatting away, and it's all going nicely. When we started talking about kids we were off to the races, but then the conversation ground to a halt.

Oprah: I know— there's that awful moment...

Jerry: It happens to the best of us. As an entertainer, that's when I kick into gear and say something witty to jump-start the conversation. The night before, I was sitting with a couple of friends, eating a Twizzler, and I said, "What if somebody did a film called *Bee Movie*, and it was about bees?" So during the dinner with Steven, I said this to relieve the lull we'd just crashed into. <...> But he didn't laugh; he fixed his eyes on me and said, "We're going to make that movie." <...>

The interviewer's unfinished utterance «I know—there's that awful moment...», which serves as a receipt token, is followed by the interviewee's acknowledgement. The proverb 'It happens to the best of us' is thus used to show that even public figures, thought to be accustomed to all sorts of situations, can sometimes feel ill at ease.

In the extract quoted below, O. Winfrey creates a nonce phrase from the elements of the imagery of the proverb 'Better a big fish in a little pond than a little fish in a big pond', which she uses as a third position evaluation of her famous interviewee's words. Salma Hayek, who came from Mexico to conquer Hollywood, is talking to Oprah about her earnest attitude to the quality of the work she does:

Oprah: So you didn't question whether you could or couldn't—it just was?

Salma: I wanted to do films, and at that time in Mexico, a film industry didn't really exist. So where do you go to do movies? You go to the mecca. I also was afraid I was a very bad actress, because I'd become famous very fast and was making money for people. <...> I never wanted to be a famous bad actress! I had a panic that people would think, She's good only because everyone knows her.

Oprah: Girl, that's deep! Many would've settled for **being a big fish in a not-so-small pond**.

It is noteworthy that O. Winfrey breaks not only the syntactical structure of the proverb, but also adds the negation 'not',

which helps create the opposite image. In actuality, Hollywood is not 'a small pond', that is why Salma Hayek's fear of being a bad actress resonates with the interviewer, who obviously does not support 'the hunt for fame' in actors. We believe that effective use of proverbs (and in this case, of a modified proverb) in third position evaluations is ensured by such proverb characteristics as indirect meaning and evaluative connotation, which help the interviewer to summarize the interviewee's words and to approve of her position.

One more continuer found in Oprah Winfrey's interviews published in *O, The Oprah Magazine* is formulation. This third position slot, complementing the standard question-answer sequence in interviews, can be used as means of packaging or re-packaging the central point made in an interviewee's turn (Hutchby, 2005:217). Formulations, thus, emphasize an interviewee's most important or controversial previous statements. As J. Heritage points out, formulations are relatively rare in everyday conversation but are common "in institutionalized, audience directed interaction [where it is] most commonly undertaken by questioners" (Heritage, 1985: 100).

In Oprah Winfrey interviews proverbs are also used as formulations. The topic of poverty is raised in the interview with the talented singer and composer Alicia Keys. This issue is of special interest to Oprah for she, like her numerous celebrated respondents, was raised extremely poor. By scrutinizing it in her interviews, she aims to show her readers that poverty is not a hindrance to success, and tries to find out how her interlocutors managed to develop their talents and reach heights in what they do, despite of having lacked material resources for it. In A. Keys's case her mother was her support. The woman worked night and day to provide for her family and did her best so that her daughter could proceed with her music classes:

Oprah: <...> I've found that unless you're rooted in something bigger than fame, you start believing your own hype. I'm so impressed with you because you seem grounded. You must've had some kind of mother!

Alicia: She has given me something real to hold on to. She's so strong. When I was younger, there were times

when I'd look at her and think, "Wow, it's just you and me."

<...>

Alicia: She worked around the clock. I don't know how she stood up from day to day. If there was a big trial, she'd come home at 3 A.M., then get up at 6 A.M. and keep going.

Oprah: Where were you on the food chain—poor or lower—middle-class?

Alicia: It fluctuated.

Oprah: You were **robbing Peter to pay Paul**.

Alicia: Definitely. But I realized that if everything fell apart, she'd always be there.

In the extract quoted above Oprah Winfrey uses the proverbial expression 'Rob Peter to pay Paul' to repackage her interlocutor's answer. The indirectness of its meaning and emotive connotations enable the speaker to comment on the humble circumstances of the singer's family in the past.

As has been stated earlier, interaction occurring between an interviewer and interviewee is a generative process in which the content of conversation is formed. In this respect, it is necessary to look at the way proverbs function on the content level of the interview.

One of the acutest issues that Oprah Winfrey raises in her interviews is the problem of terrorist attacks upon the USA, including 9/11. It comes as no surprise that she prefers to discuss this serious problem with high-ranking statesmen, like Rudy Jiuliani, mayor of New York (01.1994-12.2001), Madeleine Albright, former US Secretary of State, and Condoleezza Rice, in 2001 US National Security Advisor. It is our concern now to look at how proverbs function in discussions about this grave national threat.

Soon after the Twin Towers had collapsed Oprah Winfrey hastened to speak to C. Rice and R. Jiuliani, who received national acclaim for his outstanding leadership during the crisis and who was called 'America's mayor' in its aftermath. In both interviews

the journalist uses the proverbial expression “(to wait) for the other shoe to drop.” In the conversation with R. Giuliani it appears in Oprah’s question:

Oprah: Were you ever afraid during the attack?

Rudy: I wasn’t, but when I look back on it, I realize I should have been. That day, a reporter asked me, “Is it true that you narrowly escaped death?” I said, “No, that’s exaggerating.” When I got home that night and I saw how the building came down, I said, “Yeah, I did.”

Oprah: Since the attack, have you felt anxiety that **the other shoe is about to drop**?

Rudy: I don’t have that fear any more than I had it the day before this happened. The risks in life are pretty much what they have always been.

While talking to C. Rice about her perception of the 9/11 tragedy and bringing out her own fears of possible bioterrorist attacks, Oprah employs the same proverbial expression in the preface to her question:

Oprah: Should Americans be concerned about bioterrorism?

Condoleezza: There are a number of threats to the United States—and bioterrorism is one of them. But the American people should not be overly concerned about bioterrorism because there are certainly ways to deal with most of the agents <...> I can’t promise anybody that there will never be an incident, but I don’t think there has ever been this much attention on trying to prevent one.

Oprah: As we’ve received FBI warnings, many have been feeling that at any moment **the other shoe could drop**. Do you feel that way?

Condoleezza: No, but I can’t promise that something won’t happen.

As we have seen, in both interviews the serious issue of national security, which became especially acute after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, is raised. Any interviewer’s task is to touch on such

complex problems and ask his/her interlocutor inconvenient questions which are the main public concern at the moment. In our opinion, the way these questions are asked and verbalized attests to a journalist's professionalism. The use of metaphoric proverbial expressions enables Oprah Winfrey to avoid creating intensity of emotions. Thus, by raising the burning problem of probable terrorist attacks on American people, Oprah Winfrey sounds reserved and maximally correct. The two extracts discussed above are a good example of effective proverb use in euphemistic function. Due to their indirectness, paremias help bring down the intensity of communication, whenever it occurs, and eliminate any chance of a conflict.

Of special interest is the interview with M. Albright taken right after the 9/11 attacks and devoted to interpretation of the reasons for what had happened. In the extract quoted below O. Winfrey builds her own aphoristic expression on the basis of the popular proverb 'Beware of a silent dog and silent water (Am. Eng)/Beware of a silent man and still water (of a silent man and a dog that doesn't bark) (Br. Eng)':

Oprah: Could we have protected ourselves against the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks?

Madeleine: I don't know the answer to that. What most Americans don't know is that we have prevented a lot of terrorist incidents before this one. **There's always the dog that doesn't bark that you don't know about.** We need to be very careful not to get so into the blame game that we forget those who died. The challenge is to draw lessons from the past and move forward without spending time finger-pointing.

In the example under discussion the journalist creates a meta-metaphor by first singling out the element 'the dog that doesn't bark' (meaning 'threat') from the standard proverb, and then building a new metaphoric image in the phrase "There's always the dog that doesn't bark that you don't know about." In the given context the phrase coined on the basis of the proverb fulfills the function of semantic foregrounding. The familiar proverbial image captures readers' attention, while its metaphoricity makes them

take a pause when reading and reflect on the speaker's words. Thus, the respondent highlights the idea that there is always some hidden threat which one may not know about, and that it is sometimes impossible to prevent tragic events in spite of the constant efforts by the secret services. This is why after having used this proverbial signal M. Albright appeals to the people, asking them to learn the lessons of the past and warning against searching for the ones to blame, for it could only aggravate the situation.

In the course of the cited interview Oprah Winfrey focuses on her interlocutor's perspective on what psychological impact the terrorist attacks could possibly have on the Americans:

Oprah: After such a crisis, do you think it's possible for us to be better people?

Madeleine: I hope so. I don't want to sound Pollyannaish, but I hope that out of a tragedy like this, something good will come. I hope we understand we're one family. In the past, New York has been seen as a place where people are cold-blooded, yet New Yorkers are behaving wonderfully toward one another and they are helping one another. There's this whole sense of caring for each other. And I think that is excellent. I am also moved by the unbelievable bravery of the firefighters, the police officers, and the rescue workers. **Sometimes the worst can bring out the best in us.**

<...>

The popular modern proverb 'The worst (tragedy) brings out the best in us'—like any other paremia—expresses a generalized idea based on some observations of a regularity or law. Although O. Winfrey doesn't use the whole proverb in her question, but only the proverbial juxtaposition crisis::better, she is intent on disclosing her interviewee's opinion about this observation. Having undergone some structural-semantic changes, the proverb is used in M. Albright's speech to cover all the facts of care and mutual help in the times of crisis and serves as a summary proving the people's observation. By inserting the adverb 'sometimes' and modal verb 'can' into the traditional proverb, the speaker points to her personal experience, which gives credibility to her words.

As has been stated earlier, *O, The Oprah Magazine* is intended for female readership, so its numerous interviews are devoted to ‘women’s problems.’ In some of them the problem of women is a separate topic for discussion; in others it is only touched upon in some utterances. The interview with P. Donahue, a legendary American TV host, who was one of the first to raise ‘female questions’ on air, is remarkable for the use of an anti-proverb coined on the basis of the traditional paremia ‘A man’s home is his castle’ (Br./Am):

Oprah: The bottom line is that we need you, Phil, because we need to be challenged by the voice of dissent. What do your children think of your return?

Phil: They’re surprised. But they’ve also said, “Go get ‘em, Pop.” I’m not 29 anymore, my wife isn’t pregnant, I’m not trying to raise kids, I don’t have a mortgage—so it takes less courage for me to speak up. Maybe I’ll get to talk about things like why this administration is so secretive. Whatever the framers meant, this wasn’t it. I’m an American, just like you, and I am impressed with the Bill of Rights. I believe **a woman’s home should be her castle** <...> People can yell at me, they can criticize me, they can call me names. But there’s one thing they can’t do: They can’t take away my flag.

While speaking about his return to TV with a new show, P. Donahue defines the topics to be discussed on his future program. Each of them is expressed in a separate sentence but for one. The interviewee chooses proverbial language for the problem of women, which makes it prominent. The traditional English proverb ‘A man’s home is his castle’ has become a folk embodiment for one of the fundamental principles protected by the US Constitution, the principle of individual privacy (hence his reference to the Bill of Rights). By substituting the lexeme ‘man’ for the lexeme ‘woman’ and inserting the modal verb ‘should’, the interviewee expresses his belief in the equality of both sexes.

In the interview with Madonna there is the proverb ‘Clothes don’t make the woman’ (Am). It is interesting to note that *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (Speake, 2004) registers the paremia

'Clothes make the man' (1400), while *A Dictionary of American Proverbs* (Mieder, 1992) lists an antonymic proverb 'Clothes don't make the man' (var. Clothes don't make the woman, but they help) (1500). The paremia 'Clothes make the man' was probably reconsidered, and the anti-proverb 'Clothes don't make the man' started to be used, and later gained the status of a proverb in its own right. Consider the following extract from the interview with Madonna:

Oprah: I've read that you no longer want people to dress like you. What do you mean by that?

Madonna: I mean just that. In the beginning of my career, I was consumed with fashion and the way I looked.

Oprah: Aren't you still?

Madonna: I think about clothes all the time—you see the boots and pants I'm wearing. But who cares? You know as well as I do that **clothes don't make the woman**.

<...>

Oprah: The realization that there's something bigger—is that your newest transformation?

Madonna: Shoes won't make me happy. Well, they do make me happy, but not really happy. I'm not going to lie and say I don't care about the way I look or dress. I'm very jealous of your closet! But I know those things don't last, and I know what does. I hope I can impart that to people.

Oprah: But you are the Material Girl.

Madonna: That was meant to be ironic. I'm so not the Material Girl now. There were many years when I thought fame, fortune, and public approval would bring me happiness. But one day you wake up and realize they don't.

When describing her attitude to fashion and fancy clothes, Madonna resorts to a rather popular American proverb 'Clothes don't make the woman', arguing against the common belief that a woman is defined by her looks. Working together with the introductory formula "You know as well as I do" in this context, the

proverb fulfills the function of maintaining contact in conversation. The traditional proverb presents a piece of knowledge shared by the communicants. The introductory formula, in this case used by Madonna, helps show her likeness to Oprah Winfrey and highlight the fact of inner transformation the singer went through.

In the interview with Shonda Rhimes, conducted by Oprah with her long-time friend Gayle King, the use of a proverb helps establish contact between the communicants. Sh. Rhimes is the author and producer of *Grey's Anatomy*, a successful American medical show. The three participants are discussing the character played in these TV series by the actor P. Dempsey. Dr Derek Sheperd (aka McDreamy) is at first portrayed as an ideal man, for whom the main female character Meredith Grey falls in the opening episodes, and who, as becomes known later, is married:

Shonda: So you let the audience fall in love with this guy.

Gayle: And we did.

Shonda: And then you reveal that he has a huge flaw, which is that he has a wife. Which I felt like is how things really happen. You go through that honeymoon period where they're—it's wonderful and fabulous.

Oprah: Been there.

Shonda (laughs): Yeah, as opposed to feeling, like you know, oh we knew he has a wife in the beginning, and oh, we already know the stuff. No, you fall in love with somebody and then—

Gayle: And by then you're hooked.

Oprah: I've heard you say that you too are waiting for McDreamy.

Shonda: Yes. Yes.

Oprah: We're all in that club.

Shonda: Yes.

In the given discussion, Oprah raises intimate questions concerning her respondent's private life. Being a professional, Oprah

Winfrey manages to artfully reach mutual understanding with the interviewee and have her involved in a candid conversation. Needless to say, her own sincerity and readiness to deal with such topics contribute to this effect. In this very context, however, the main role belongs with the choice of verbal means of expression. By using the truncated paremia 'Been there' (Cf. *Been there, done that*) as acknowledgment of Sh. Rimes's answer, Oprah Winfrey opens up about being familiar with this 'love triangle' situation created in the screenwriter's imagination. We believe, this concise phrase ensures contact with the respondent and sets in an intimate mood. Besides, Sh. Rimes responds to Oprah's comment with a laugh, which attests to contact having been established. That is why the journalist's next remark "I've heard you say that you too are waiting for McDreamy," which could be perceived as being inconvenient or private by some, is met with a frank reply from the interviewee. The established contact is then maintained with figurative language. The interviewer resorts to the expression "We're all in that club" (also met with Sh. Rimes's approval), which once again reveals the fact that these two famous interlocutors, as well as many other women, share the same bits of life experience.

Many among O. Winfrey's interlocutors are people whose life stories could teach readers a lesson, inspire to make a serious decision, provide some clues to seemingly impossible questions, or make them see their problems in a different light. As our study shows, most respondents prefer to use proverbs to formulate their 'life lessons'. In this respect, it is worthwhile to look at Oprah's interview with Bill Clinton, in which among other things they discuss the notorious scandal which emerged from his sexual connection with Monica Lewinsky, then a White House intern, and resulted in the impeachment process. Of special interest is the way proverbs function in the following extract:

Oprah: What was the major lesson you took from the crisis?

Clinton: You know what the Greeks said: "**Those whom the gods would destroy they first make angry.**" In November 1995, I was mad. Workaholics like me get so involved in their work. But there is a point beyond which—and I don't care how good you are or how much stamina

you have—no one can go without losing his or her fundamental sense of what ought to be done. It was a very difficult period for me. At the time, I was engaged in a great public war with the Republican Congress over the future of the country, and a private war with my old demons. I won the public fight and lost the private one.

You just have to deal with that stuff and go on. It's not the end of the world. <...> I'm no different from anybody else. An old Irish proverb says that even if the best man's faults were written on his forehead, he would put his cap over his face in shame. Once I got that, it was liberating. Some people think, "Gosh, if I got humiliated like that in front of billions, I'd want to stick my head in an oven." I didn't feel that way. I felt, This is great—I have nothing more to hide. <...> I don't have to pretend anymore.

As we see, the former US president employs two ancient proverbs in his reply 'Those whom the gods would destroy they first make mad' and 'If the best man's faults were written on his forehead, he would put his cap over his face in shame', which fulfill the function of semantic foregrounding in his discourse. They are used to designate the two phases crucial to the critical situation which occurred in the past. The first encapsulates B. Clinton's psychological state, which, according to what the proverb conveys, had been a signal before the crisis broke out. The second marks its critical point and the break-through moment. It is worth noting, that in both cases the interviewee resorts to introductory formulae "you know what the Greeks said" and "an old Irish proverb says" which point out the origin of the paremias and manifest the speaker's erudition. In their own turn, these introductory formulae contribute to semantic foregrounding of the proverbially expressed ideas that follow. In B. Clinton's answer we also observe a phraseologically saturated context, for along with the proverbs he uses several metaphoric phrases. The figurativeness of his speech makes explicit his deep psychological involvement at these two phases of the crisis. The expression 'war with my old demons' (Cf. 'to fight one's demons') conveys his depression and emotional tension before the scandal. The phrases 'it's not the end

of the world', 'stick my head in the oven. I didn't feel that way' signify psychological freedom, admitting his faux pas, and realization of the fact that the truth sets you free.

The next proverb we should look at is 'Life is a voyage/journey' (that's homeward bound), which, according to G. Lakoff and M. Johnson (2003), is one of conceptual/cognitive metaphors shaping the way people think and communicate. This well-known *paremia* appears in the interview with the famous American actress Bette Midler:

Bette: <...> When I turned 50, I threw myself a big birthday party, and I looked seriously at what my life has been about. <...> When I did this assessment of my life, I said to myself, "It was really good." <...> in all those years, I saw a lot. I went to foreign lands. I met interesting people. And I got it!

Oprah: What did you get?

Bette: I got that **a person's life is a journey, a road.** Sometimes you go off the road and sometimes you stay on all the way through. But you are the only one on that road. It's your road.

Oprah: Yes.

Bette: And in a funny way, when you realize that, it demystifies everyone else's journey for you. You're not jealous of other people. It takes a lot of anguish out of life.

Oprah: That makes so much sense.

In the interview under discussion the proverb is a kind of proposition (true sentence), a statement which finds proof in the speaker's ensuing reflections. The proverbial image is developed in B. Midler's answer in the sustained metaphor: 'go off the road' (not to be able to resist hardships), 'stay on all the way through' (stay afloat), 'the only one on that road/It's your road' (each person lives his life alone), 'it demystifies everyone else's journey for you'. This sustained metaphor presents the interviewee's take on the proverbial postulate based on her personal life experience. Her reflections show that acceptance of this idea brings comfort into one's life.

There is a whole set of interviews in which Oprah closes conversation with the question ‘What do you know for sure?’ As a rule, it is the final question, so the respondents are pressed for time. It is noteworthy that in every interview, crowned with this question, the respondents use proverbs in their reply, and occasionally build proverbial chains. In such instances proverbs fulfill the function of cognitive economy. Being miniature theories (Honeck, 1997:103), proverbs encompass an infinite number of analogical situations, serve as a kind of quintessence of speakers’ life observations, and present a mosaic made up of different bits of experience. The examples discussed below illustrate that.

If we come back to B. Midler’s interview, we will find there two traditional proverbs in their standard form ‘You have to eat a peck of dirt before you die’, stating that in each person’s life there is a place for positive and negative things, and ‘There is no such a thing as a free lunch’, teaching that you have to pay for everything:

Oprah: On the last page of the magazine is a column I write called “What I Know for Sure”. I was inspired by the late film critic Gene Siskel, who asked, “What do you know for sure?” at the end of every interview. The first time I heard that question, I couldn’t answer. Then I went home and thought about it. Bette, what do you know for sure?

Bette: That laughter feels really good. That there’s a lot of conscious, tangible evil afoot in the world. That the planet will always go on. That you can find peace in nature. That music has great charm and is a great communicator. That dancing is good for the soul. That beauty is very healing and great for the spirit. **That you gotta eat a little dirt before you die.** That payback is a bitch. And that no matter who you are, **there is no free lunch.**

While sharing with Oprah what she knows for sure, Madonna builds a sequence of parallel constructions reduplicating the structure of the proverb ‘We reap what we sow’ and having a synonymous meaning:

Oprah: What do you know for sure?

Madonna: That my husband is my soul mate. That I'm going to meet my mother again someday. That there are no mistakes or accidents. That consciousness is everything and that all things begin with a thought. That we are responsible for our own fate, **we reap what we sow, we get what we give, we pull in what we put out.** I know these things for sure.

Thus, the successive use of a proverb and two synonymous pseudo-proverbs helps the speaker sound confident of what is being said and strengthens her position.

The Oscar-winning actress Charlize Theron provides a succinct answer alluding to the proverb 'Nothing is certain but death and taxes' (var. Nothing is so sure as death), which undergoes splitting, so that its elements appear in two separate successive sentences:

Oprah: <...> What do you know for sure?

Charlize: **That I will die. That's the only thing that's certain.**

It is only natural that in the interviews with such celebrated guests O. Winfrey raises the topic of success, and, above all, she seeks to know her respondents' attitude to what it brings. The Hollywood star Ch. Theron believes luck—an incidental encounter with her future producer in a bank—to have played the main role in the story of her success:

Charlize: There's nothing more powerful than a vulnerable woman. I knew my power. What I didn't know is that I was auditioning for a guy who would end up being my manager. On the way out, the man who'd helped gave me his card. [He was John Crosby, who represented John Hurt and Rene Russo.] He said, "If you're interested, I'll represent you."

Oprah: Why do you think that happened?

Charlize: **I'd be unbelievably wrong to say there isn't such a thing as the right place, right time-luck.** If I hadn't met John, I don't know what I would have done next. I had no idea how to get a manager. If I hadn't been

in the bank that day, I honestly don't think I'd be here right now. There are so many talented actors who don't ever get the chance.

In the quoted extract from the interview the actress modifies the popular proverb 'There isn't such a thing as a free lunch', which, due to its convenient structure, frequently serves as a base for new proverbial formations. In this case the device of contamination, i.e. combining elements of different phraseologisms in one new phrase, is employed. The beginning of the proverb is complemented by an element of the idiom 'to be in the right place at the right time'. By stating 'I'd be unbelievably wrong to say there isn't such a thing as the right place, right time-luck', Ch. Theron insists that luck does exist, as knows it from her life experience.

However, this very statement caused disagreement with O. Winfrey, who adheres to her own theory that luck as a concurrence of circumstances does not exist, but that it is the person who creates conditions for positive events to take place. In the interview under discussion she encapsulates her theory in Seneca's quote 'Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity'. The proverbial lore of the English language stores the proverb 'Diligence is the mother of good luck' (1591), which conveys the same idea contained in a different verbal form:

Oprah: You keep saying you're lucky, and I can't take it. You're not lucky. You are blessed and graced. Luck is just preparation meeting opportunity. For instance, in the moment you met your manager in the bank, if you hadn't been psychologically or emotionally prepared...

Charlize: Things might have gone completely differently.

Let us consider one more interview with O. Winfrey's friend Quincy Jones, a musician, film and TV producer, with whom she discusses his astonishing career, different aspects of his creative work, and, most importantly, his attitude to fame and success. At the very end of their conversation we find the proverb 'Even a blind pig occasionally picks up an acorn':

Oprah: Q, I've never met one person who doesn't love you. Where did your big, open heart come from?

Quincy: It came because people were good to me, honey. Though negative things have happened to me, God somehow let me know that becoming bitter was not the way to go. You die when you do that. Someone once told me that if you fully open your arms to receive love, you'll get some scratches and cuts on your arms, but a lot of love will come in. If you close your arms, you might never get cut—but the good stuff won't come in either.

Oprah: And right now, you're sitting up here on a hill at the top of Bel Air!

Quincy: There is a God! They say **a blind hog will find the acorn one day.**

Q. Jones's fate is really amazing, as this gifted African American raised in a very poor family managed to reach success and wealth, which according to him, was due to his openness to the surrounding world, lack of aggression and anger. It is for a reason that this proverb (Cf. Q. Jones's version «a blind hog will find the acorn one day») is used at the very end of the interview to express, probably, his most important life lesson. Such outcome of a 'fairy' story told in this interview seems to be able to inspire readers, make them embrace the fact that any person, be he/she less privileged than others, can succeed in life.

Of special interest for our study are the cases in which paremias are employed for creating phraseologically saturated contexts, both in respondents' answers and O. Winfrey's questions/remarks. As a rule, in such discursive situations proverbs and proverbial expressions serve to place emotive and semantic emphases. Let us consider the following examples.

In the interview with Laura Bush, the former US first lady, O. Winfrey poses a delicate question regarding caustic jokes in the mass media about her husband's intellect:

Oprah: During the campaign, how did you handle all the jokes about your husband being "not very smart"? Did it hurt?

Laura: It made me mad, actually—though I didn't hear that many of the jokes because we were campaigning eve-

ry day. <...> When you're in politics, all of that is just part of the territory—and you come to terms with it.

Oprah: But did the jokes hurt?

Laura: Yes. Coming to terms with the jokes doesn't mean that your feelings aren't hurt or that you aren't miffed, but you learn to take it with a grain of salt.

Oprah: I don't know if you take it with a grain of salt, or with a whole box of salt!

Laura: It does make you feel like things are unfair. But you just know that happens. As they say, **if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen**.

As we can see, L. Bush expresses her attitude to this mockery of her spouse with two idioms, the expression 'to take something with a grain of salt' and a modern proverb 'If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.' O. Winfrey is persistent in her desire to get an answer from her interlocutor, so she goes on to ask her question for the second time when L. Bush avoids answering it the first time. With her evaluation of L. Bush's remark 'you learn to take it with a grain of salt', O. Winfrey seems to intensify the discussion, by playing with the idiom ('with a whole box of salt') and, thus, stressing how outrageous and painful this situation is. In response to this comment L. Bush uses the proverb, which completes a peculiar phraseological gradation (take with a grain of salt → take with a whole box of salt → if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen) and highlights the idea that politics is for strong people who can resist any biting criticism.

While talking with F. Barrino, an American Idol winner (2004), O. Winfrey touches on the topic of juvenile pregnancy:

Oprah: Your grandmother is a pastor, your mother is an evangelist. What was it like for you to have to tell your family that you were pregnant at 17?

Fantasia: My grandmother already knew <...> My mother was heartbroken. She and my grandmother had both gotten pregnant at 17, and they'd wanted something different for me. This was like a family curse.

Oprah: It's not a curse. It's a family cycle. And **you can break that cycle with knowledge, which gives you power**. That is why you must insist on an education for your daughter. **When you know better, you do better**.

O. Winfrey, who happened to be in the similar circumstances in her adolescence, takes on the role of a teacher, a wiser and more experienced friend. By giving her a different perspective on this situation, the journalist creates phraseologically saturated context. She uses an allusion to the popular proverb 'Knowledge is power' and the aphoristic phrase 'When you know better, you do better', which belongs to her spiritual teacher and friend M. Angelou, and can be treated as a pseudo-proverb. Thus, the subsequent use of two synonymic proverbial phrases strengthens the journalist's belief and stresses the idea that knowledge leads to success.

As for the most frequently used proverb in our material, it is the wide-spread pemia 'One step at a time'. In each discursive context it is modified through the lexical substitution of the component 'step'. Notably, the substituting component is connected with a respondent's profession, outlook, or 'life philosophy'. Thus, in Oprah Winfrey's interviews we registered the following new formations:

- «I choose **one project at a time**» (T. Fey on her approach to work);
- «It happened **one item at a time**» (R. Lauren on his own clothes line);
- «I really just try to live my life **one day at a time** and do what I'm supposed to on that day» (R. Kennedy, Jr. about the future);
- «**One thing at a time**» (Thich Nhat Hanh on his life style);
- «Oprah, I can only take today. **One day at a time**» (W. Houston on her life style).

Our analysis revealed that in Oprah Winfrey feature interview discourse proverbs are used on a regular basis. Proverbs (and, occasionally, proverbial expressions) appear in the interviewer's and interviewees' speech both in standard and nonce forms. As the study shows, proverbs fulfill the following cognitive-discursive functions in O. Winfrey's interviews:

- structural organization of the discourse
- emphatic/semantic foregrounding
- summarizing
- cognitive economy
- euphemistic function (to a small extent).

The functions of emphatic/semantic foregrounding, summarizing, and cognitive economy are specific representations of the proverbs' general function of inner discourse explication. In the interviews we have studied, proverbs are typically used in the function of discourse structural organization, both on its global and local levels.

Notes

¹ In his book *The Language of Journalism*, M. Lasky (2007:164) quotes an extract from London's *The Pall Mall Gazette* (1886): "The interview is the worst feature of the new system: it is degrading to the interviewer, disgusting to the interviewee, and tiresome to the public."

² See <http://www.oprah.com/omagazine/Oprahs-Interview-with-Barbara-Walters>.

³ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oprah_Winfrey.

⁴ Precedent texts are the texts that an average member of a given linguo-cultural community will easily recognize.

⁵ Cognitive base is a complex of pieces of knowledge, ideas, conceptions, etc., shared by the members of a given linguo-cultural community.

⁶ This meeting resulted in their mutual project 'Bee Movie.'

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EINE PRAGMALINGUISTISCHE UNTERSUCHUNG VON
BAUERNREGELN (AM BEISPIEL DES KOMMUNIKATIV-
PRAGMATISCHEN FRAMES "VERBOT")

Abstract: Im vorliegenden Artikel werden die Bauernregeln unter kommunikativ-pragmatischem Aspekt betrachtet. Die besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird auf das Problem der Interpretation der deontischen Verbots-situationen bei den Parömien in der deutschen und in der russischen Sprache gelenkt. Es werden die Realisierungsformen des kommunikativ-pragmatischen Frames „Verbot“ in den vergleichenden parömiologischen Einheiten untersucht.

Keywords: Bauernregeln, parömiologische Konstruktionen, kommunika-tiv-pragmatischer Frame, Sprechakte des Verbots, Prochibitive, kommunikativ-pragmatische Potenzen, Pragmalinguistik.

Die hier skizzierte Untersuchung wird mit der freundlichen finanziellen Unterstützung von DAAD ermöglicht.

Die Bauernregeln stellen ein wertvolles Objekt für die prag-malinguistische Forschung dar, da sie erstens als Mehrfunktions-zeichen zur Realisierung nicht nur der repräsentativen und der expressiven Funktionen, sondern auch zur appellativen Sprach-funktion (siehe K. Bühler 1934) fähig sind, d.h. diese parömio-logischen Konstruktionen können auf den Adressaten eine be-stimmte Einwirkung leisten und ihn zur Ausführung von Hand-lungen stimulieren. Zweitens sind die Bauernregeln ein fester Bestandteil des nationalen Sprachweltbildes, das die reichhaltige Erfahrung bei der Regelung und den Korrekturen des menschi-chen Verhaltens einer linguokulturellen Gesellschaft auf ihre eigene Art widerspiegelt. Die Bauernregeln explizieren eine be-stimmte Schicht von kommunikativ-pragmatischen Informatio-nen im Sprachverhalten eines konkreten Volkes und repräsentie-ren den mentalen Schnitt der jahrhundertelangen Reflexion des Volkes während des langwierigen Umganges mit der umgeben-

den Wirklichkeit im Verlauf des Ablaufens verschiedener kommunikativer Situationen.

Nach unseren Vorstellungen sind die Bauernregeln feste parömiologische Konstruktionen nichtapellativen Charakters, die in Form von einfachen bzw. komplexen Sätzen (Satzgefüge und Satzreihe) existieren und eine Prognose in Bezug auf die meteorologischen Erscheinungen oder die Landwirtschaft enthalten und auf die Modellierung des menschlichen Verhaltens in lebenswichtigen Situationen gerichtet sind.

Aus dem Blickwinkel des kommunikativ-pragmatischen Herangehens stellen die Bauernregeln unseres Erachtens Fragmente einer Sprechsituation in schriftlicher oder mündlicher Form dar, die ein bestimmtes Verhaltensmuster in bestimmten Lebenssituationen beschreiben. Eine einzigartige Besonderheit der Texte von Bauernregeln ist ihr prognostisches Wesen, das in der Oberflächenstruktur in Form von einfachen sowie komplexen Sätzen eines besonderen konditional-temporalen Typs repräsentiert ist (ausführlicher dazu siehe Fattachova 2002; Fattachova 2004). Der kommunikativ-pragmatische Ansatz erlaubt es, in der Tiefstruktur der untersuchten Parömien die Existenz einer Performativität zu konstatieren, welche den auffordernden Charakter der Äußerungsmodalität bestimmt (eine Warnung, ein Verbot, eine Erlaubnis, eine Aufforderung, ein Ratschlag, eine Instruktion usw.).

Die Aktualität des pragmatischen Aspektes bei der Untersuchung der Bauernregeln kann nicht hoch genug eingeschätzt werden, weil es die Betrachtung der gegebenen Konstruktionen seitens ihrer kommunikativ-pragmatischen Potenzen zulässt, das Problem der Repräsentation der national-kulturellen Besonderheiten des einen oder anderen Volkes in den kleinen Folklore-Genres, wie z.B. den Bauernregeln, auf eine neue Art zu betrachten (vgl. auch die pragmlinguistischen Untersuchungen von Sprichwörtern bei Mieder 1977: 80-81; Nahberger 2002a, 2002b; Glenk 2000; Lüger 1999 u. a.).

Vom Gesichtspunkt der Klassifikation der illokutiven Sprechakte kann man den empirischen Korpus von Bauernregeln in zwei große Gruppen einteilen – preskriptive Sprechakte (Direktive nach Searle), die den Adressaten zur Ausführung einer bestimmten Handlung anregen, und informative Sprechakte (As-

sertive oder Repräsentative nach Searle), die eine bestimmte Sachlage beschreiben.

Im vorliegenden Artikel geht es im weiteren um einen Untertyp der preskriptiven Sprechakte – um Prohibitiv- oder Sprechakte des Verbots, sowie um die sprachlichen Realisierungsformen des kommunikativ-pragmatischen Frames „Verbot“ in den Texten der Bauernregeln.

Die Analyse der Semantik von Bauernregeln, die ein Verbot ausdrückt, zeigt, dass das prognostische Wesen der Bauernregeln die Besonderheiten ihres Funktionierens deutlich prägt. Das zeigt sich gesetzmäßig in der Zukunftsgerichtetheit der ausgedrückten Illokutionen in Bezug auf die Regulierung einer Tätigkeit, welche nicht zum Redezeitpunkt ausgeführt wird. Die Verknüpfung des Inhalts der Bauernregeln mit der Zukunft ist eines der charakteristischen Merkmale ihrer funktional-semantischen Strukturierung.

Was die architektonische Struktur der Sprechakte mit der Illokution „Verbot“ betrifft, so kann man sie in mono- und polyintentionelle Konstruktionen unterteilen. Polyintentionelle Konstruktionen kommen in Form von argumentierten und nicht-argumentierten Äußerungen vor.

Das Vorhandensein bzw. Fehlen der Argumente, welche die Notwendigkeit des Verzichts auf die Vollziehung der jeweiligen Handlung erklären, ist in einem gewissen Sinn ein „Indikator“ für den Grad der Kategorität des Verbots.

Wie die Analyse des praktischen Materials zeigt, können als Verbote verschiedene Konstruktionen auftreten, deren explizite Form durch den hohen bzw. niedrigen Grad der illokutionären Kraft einer Äußerung bedingt ist (siehe Kul'kova 2006: 108f.).

Die höchste Frequenz haben in den russischen Texten der Bauernregeln die Konstruktionen mit der indikativischen Verbform in der 3.P.Pl. und der Negierungspartikel *не*:

- (1) На Вознесенье в поле *не работают*. (Dal', 668)
'Zu Himmelfahrt *arbeitet man nicht* auf dem Feld.'
- (2) На Ильин день снопов *не мечут* – грозой спалит.
(Jermolov.rus., 382) 'Am Eliastag *wirft man* die Garben *nicht zusammen* – sonst versengt sie ein Gewitter.'
(Yermoloff.dt., 329)

(3) На Казанскую добрые люди вдаль (в отъезд) *не ездят*. (Dal', 661) 'Am Tag der Kasaner Gottesmutter *fährt man nicht weit weg.*'

(4) На Благовещение на суровую пряжу *не глядят*. (Jermolov.rus., 382) 'Zur Verkündigung *schaut man nicht auf raues Garn.*' (Yermoloff.dt., 148)

(5) От Троицы до Успения хороводов *не водят*. (Dal', 669) 'Von Pfingsten bis Mariä Himmelfahrt *tanzt man keinen Reigen.*'

Die parömiologischen Konstruktionen mit der Illokution des Verbots enthalten nicht immer einen Argumentationsteil, was sich durch eine geringere Stufe der Kategorität der Äußerungen erklären lässt, welche unter den Bedingungen der Beachtung des Höflichkeitsprinzips während der Kommunikation keine zusätzliche „Milderung“ erfordert.

Komplizierte, oder polyintentionelle prohibitive Konstruktionen werden in Form von Satzgefügen mit abhängigem Final- oder Folgsatz gestaltet und können durch die Konjunktionen *чтоб(ы)* 'damit', *а то* 'sonst' markiert werden:

(6) Капусты в четверг не сажают, *чтоб* черви не поточили. (Dal', 673) 'Man darf keinen Kohl am Donnerstag setzen, *damit* er nicht von den Raupen zerfressen wird.'

(7) О Святках гнутой работы не работают (напр., не гнут дуг, не делают колесных ободьев и т.п.), *а то* приплода скоту не будет. (Jermolov.rus., 598) 'In der Christwoche beschäftigt man sich nicht mit gekrümmter Arbeit (d.h. verfertigt kein Krummholz, macht keine Radreifen usw.) – *sonst* hat das Vieh keine Zuzucht.' (Yermoloff.dt., 524)

(8) На Марию Магдалину в поле не работают – гроза уьет. (Dal', 655) 'An Maria Magdalena darf man nicht auf dem Feld arbeiten, *sonst* wird man vom Blitz erschlagen.'

Als ein weniger frequentes Mittel zur Explikation der illokutionären Kraft eines Verbots treten in russischen Bauernregeln die Konstruktionen „*запрещается + инфинитив*“ ('*es ist verboten + Infinitiv*'), „*не должно + инфинитив*“ ('*man soll nicht*

+ *Infinitiv*'), „не надо + инфинитив“ ('*darf man nicht + Infinitiv*'), „не годится + инфинитив“ ('*es taugt nicht + Infinitiv*') auf:

(9) На Благовещение *запрещается подметать* в доме и особенно *выбрасывать* мусор на огород или в поле: от этого разводятся сорняки. (Gruško, 19) 'An Mariä Verkündigung *ist es verboten*, im Haus *zu fegen* und besonders, den Müll in den Gemüsegarten oder aufs Feld *hinauszuwerfen*: davon wird sich das Unkraut vermehren.'

(10) В сырую погоду и в дождь *не должно сеять* ржи; как обмочило оглобли, так и поезжай домой. (Gruško, 288) 'Bei feuchtem Wetter und bei Regen *soll man keinen Roggen säen*; wenn der Rechen nass geworden ist, *fahre nach Hause*.'

(11) На Благовещение *не надо глядеть* на веретено – тогда не увидишь и змей (Jermolov.rus., 176) 'Zur Verkündigung *darf man* auf eine Spindel *nicht schauen* – dann sieht man auch keine Schlangen' (Yermoloff.dt., 148)

(12) В день Рождества Христова хозяину *не годится* со двора *идти*, – не то овцы заблудятся. (Jermolov.rus., 598) 'Am Weihnachtstag *taugt es nicht* für den Wirt (d.h. darf der Wirt nicht) vom Hofe *zu gehen* (den Hof zu verlassen) – sonst verirren sich die Schafe' (Yermoloff.dt., 524)

Kategorischer im Grad der illokutionären Kraft sind die Satzkonstruktionen mit verbotender Semantik, welche durch imperativische Verbformen ausgedrückt werden: „не + императив 2 л. ед.ч.“ (,nicht + Imperativ 2.P.Sing.'):

(13) *Не сей* хлеб, когда днем виден месяц. (Gruško, 265) 'Säe *kein Korn*, wenn der Mond am Tage zu sehen ist.'

(14) На Федоры *не мети* из избы сора. (Gruško, 355) 'An Fjodor *fege keinen Kehrlicht* aus dem Haus.'

(15) До Николы *не сей* гречки, *не стриги* овечки. (Gruško, 205) 'Bis St. Nikolaus *säe keinen Buchweizen* und *schere kein Schaf*.'

(16) На Рождество чистой рубахи *не надевай*, – а то жди неурожая. (Jermolov.rus., 598) ‘Zu Weihnachten *zieh kein* reines *Hemd an* – sonst mach’ dich auf Misswachs gefasst.’ (Yermoloff.dt., 524)

Über den höchsten Grad an Kategorität verfügen Sprechakte mit der Bedeutung des Verbots, die in Bauernregeln durch die Verbindungen *nicht / darf man nicht* und der Infinitivform des Verbs repräsentiert sind:

(17) Навозу *не запахивать* в новолуние, а в последнюю четверть. (Dal', 671) ‘Den Mist *nicht* bei Vollmond *fahren*, sondern im letzten Mondviertel.’

(18) Когда рожь цветет, *нельзя холстов белить*. (Dal', 672) ‘Wenn der Roggen blüht, *darf man keine Leinen bleichen*.’

(19) На Благовещение *нельзя притрагиваться* к бураковым семенам – потому что вырастет из них репа (Jermolov.rus., 176) ‘Zur Verkündigung *darf man* Betsensaat *nicht berühren* – sonst wachsen aus ihr Rüben hervor.’ (Yermoloff.dt., 148)

Als deutsche Äquivalente der russischen verbotenden Wortverbindungen „*не + инфинитив*“, „*нельзя + инфинитив*“ treten die Kombinationen „*Imperativ + kein + N₄*“, „*man + Modalverb + (kein + N₄) / nicht + Infinitiv*“ auf:

(20) *Treibe keinen Handel* bei einer Mondfinsternis, sonst suchen dich Unglück und Misserfolg heim. (Au, 73)

(21) *Gewürz- und Heilkräuter soll man nicht* bei nassem Wetter *pflücken*, vor allem dann nicht, wenn man sie nicht sofort verbraucht. (Au, 249)

(22) Zwischen Weihnachten und dem 6. Januar *darf man keine Wäsche waschen* und *sie* schon gar *nicht* nachts im Freien *aufhängen*, denn sonst fährt in sie die wilde Jagd hinein. (Müller-Kaspar, 181)

(23) Vor Johannistag *keine Gerste man loben mag*. (Kostenzer, 31)

Die obengenannten Beispiele weisen ein breit entwickeltes System deutscher Modalverben im Deutschen (*sollen, müssen, dürfen, mögen* usw.) auf, die in allgemein-persönlichen Konstruktionen mit dem Indefinitpronomen *man* aktiv gebraucht werden.

In nicht wenigen Fällen enthalten die Bauernregeln neben dem Modalqualifikator *нельзя* die Intensifikatoren, welche die prohibitiven (verbietenden) Aussagen am kategorischsten qualifizieren. Es handelt sich dabei um solche Explikatoren wie *никому* 'niemandem', *ничего* 'nichts', *ни в коем случае*, 'keinesfalls', *ни под каким видом* 'unter keinen Umständen' usw., welche die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Unzulässigkeit der Ausführung einer Handlung, unabhängig von den Umständen, betonen. Dadurch wird die Wahrscheinlichkeit der Beachtung des Verbots erhöht:

(24) Когда овца оягнится, нельзя *никому ничего* из дому давать. (Gruško, 220) 'Wenn das Schaf lammt, darf man *keinem etwas* aus dem Haus geben.'

(25) При высаживании капустной рассады *ни в коем случае* нельзя смеяться, потому что капустные листья станут морщинистыми и не будут гладкими. (Gruško, 130) 'Beim Auspflanzen der Kohlsetzlinge darf man *keinesfalls* lachen, weil die Kohlblätter sonst runzelig und nicht mehr glatt werden.'

(26) Телят *ни под каким видом* нельзя бить лучиной, отщепленной от полена; бить теленка можно палкой, веревкой и т.п., но не лучиной: теленок будет от этого худеть и в рост не пойдет. (Gruško, 337-338) 'Man darf *unter keinen Umständen* die Kälber mit einem Holzspan abgespalteten Span schlagen; das Kalb darf man mit dem Stab, Seil u. ä. schlagen, aber nicht mit dem Span: es wird davon abmagern und wächst schlecht.'

Ähnliche Verbotsintensifikatoren werden auch in deutschen Bauernregeln registriert:

(27) In den zwölf Nächten sollten Sie *auf keinen Fall* kochen. (Müller-Kaspar, 32)

(28) Geburtstage sollte man *keinesfalls* im Vorhinein feiern. (Müller-Kaspar, 44)

(29) Einem Sterbenden sollte man *niemals* ein Kissen geben, das mit Hühnerfedern gefüllt ist. Er kann sonst nicht im Frieden sterben. (Müller-Kaspar, 123)

Die parömiologischen Konstruktionen mit einer infinitivischen bzw. imperativischen Ausdrucksform der Semantik eines Verbots gelten als „stärkste“ Äußerungen nach dem Grad der illokutionären Kraft und der geleisteten Einwirkung auf den Empfänger. Sie werden in der Regel durch polyintentionale Sprechakte dargestellt, welche folgende Konjunktionen mit kausaler, zweckbestimmter oder konditional-adversativer Bedeutung enthalten: *потому что / denn; так как, ибо / da, weil; чтоб(ы) / um zu; а то, не то, иначе / sonst*. Z. B. im Russischen:

(30) В день посева гороха нельзя его есть, *так как* он будет от того червив. (Gruško, 59) ‘Am Tag der Erbsensaat darf man die Erbse nicht essen, *da* sie davon wurmstichig werden.’

(31) На Акулину не работать, *чтоб* гречи хороши были. (Dal', 652) ‘Man darf nicht an Akulina arbeiten, *damit* der Buchweizen gut ist.’

(32) На Фрола и Лавра не работать, *а то* падеж будет. (Dal', 657) ‘Man darf nicht an Frol und Lavr arbeiten, *sonst* kommt die Viehseuche.’

Im Deutschen:

(33) Man darf die Spiegel nicht verschenken, *denn* das bringt Streit. (Müller-Kaspar, 44)

(34) Hopfen darf nicht geschnitten werden, während der Mond im Tierkreiszeichen Krebs steht, *sonst* wächst er nicht weiter (Müller-Kaspar, 71) usw.

Wie die angeführten Beispiele (30) – (34) zeigen, wird im ersten Teil des Argumentationstextes einer Parömie das Verbot direkt geäußert, und im zweiten Teil wird die hypothetische Situation des ungünstigen Ausgangs im Falle der Nichtbefolgung der Bauernregel beschrieben.

Die Abwesenheit eines konkreten Rezipienten sowie des Produzenten sieht die Nutzung von parömiologischen Preskriptionen in der Rede beliebiger Sprachträger und die Adressierung an einen beliebigen potentiellen Handlungsvollzieher vor, unter der Bedingung der Statuskoordinierung der Hyperrollen von Preskriptor und von Handlungsvollzieher.

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THE NATURE OF WOMEN AS REVEALED THROUGH ANGLO-AMERICAN ANTI-PROVERBS¹

Abstract: For centuries, proverbs have provided a framework for endless transformation. In the last few decades they have been perverted and parodied so extensively that their variations have been sometimes heard more often than their original forms. Wolfgang Mieder has coined the term “*Antispruchwort*” (*anti-proverb*) for such deliberate proverb innovations (also known as *alterations, parodies, transformations, variations, wisecracks, mutations, or fractured proverbs*) and has published several collections of anti-proverbs in German and English. Women are undoubtedly one of the most frequent themes in Anglo-American anti-proverbs. Similarly to traditional Anglo-American proverbs in general (for example, *A woman’s place is in the home; A woman, a dog and a walnut tree: the more you beat them, the better the be; Women and dogs cause too much strife; Women are the devil’s net; Women are the root of all evil*), the overwhelming majority of proverb parodies are also antifeminist and demeaning to women. The present article makes an attempt to answer the following question: How is the nature of women revealed through Anglo-American anti-proverbs?

Keywords: Anti-proverb, Anglo-American, women, nature, proverb, misogyny, feminism, stereotype, feature, wellerism, appearance, sexuality, housewives.

0. Introduction

In the present study I am going to explore the nature of women² as revealed through Anglo-American anti-proverbs. My discussion is organized in eight sections. While the first focuses on female looks, the second depicts women reduced to the status of sex objects. The third section shows women in the role of housewife, and the fourth demonstrates women’s supposed materialism and hunger for money. The focus of the fifth section is on female talkativeness, and the sixth discusses women’s stubbornness, dominance and strong will. The seventh section portrays women’s intellectual abilities and, last but not least, the eighth section gives an analysis of other main female qualities and characteristics (for

example, quarrelsome and critical nature, wickedness, curiosity, infidelity, greediness, and many others).

While certain themes occur pervasively in anti-proverbs about women, others appear in only a few. For this reason, my discussion might sometimes seem uneven and the treatment of certain thematic categories might seem to be either narrower or broader. It must also be mentioned here that a number of our anti-proverbs treat several thematic categories simultaneously. Such examples could be discussed in various sections of the present study, under various headings. As a rule, anti-proverbs that embrace more than one theme will be quoted and discussed only once, except in cases in which only a few anti-proverbs have been identified to illustrate a specific theme.

Although the title of this study features the word ‘anti-proverbs’, I couldn’t resist the temptation to quote a few examples employing proverbs without any change. The following examples might not be considered anti-proverbs³ but they offer too clear a parallel to omit (the first two represent the wellerism):

“Time works wonders,” as the lady said when she got married after an eight years’ courtship. (OPND 310)

“Every little bit helps,” as the old lady said when she pissed in the ocean to help drown her husband. (OPND 141)

Make love, not war.

I’m married, I do both. (OPND 211).

In order to confirm or argue with some statements expressed in anti-proverbs, American proverbs about women are also cited throughout the article. The overwhelming majority of them are quoted from the largest dictionary of American proverbs—that edited by Wolfgang Mieder (see Mieder *et al.* 1992); on women in American proverbs, see Kerschen 1998 and Rittersbacher 2002; on women in Polish proverbs, see Perlinska 1996; on women in Yoruba proverbs, see Daniel 2008; on women in proverbs from around the world, see Schipper 2003.

The anti-proverbs discussed in the present study were taken primarily from American and British written sources. The texts, and others too numerous to include here, were drawn from hundreds of books and articles on puns, one-liners, toasts, wisecracks,

quotations, aphorisms, maxims, quips, epigrams, and graffiti. Most of the anti-proverbs quoted here can be also found in the books “Twisted Wisdom: Modern Anti-Proverbs” (see Mieder and Tóthné Litovkina 1999) and “Old Proverbs Never Die, They Just Diversify: A Collection of Anti-Proverbs”, or *OPND* (see T. Litovkina and Mieder 2006).

1. “It’s not easy for a beautiful girl to believe that love is blind”

It has been considered a general truth that while men exercise their power over women through their money and physical strength, women’s power over men primarily rests on their looks and sex appeal. The proverb *A man is as old as he feels, a woman as old as she looks* emphasizes that while men are judged by their inner youthfulness, women are judged by their looks. No wonder that by means of various beautifying practices, including clothes, cosmetics, jewellery and hairdoes, women work really hard on their looks in order to charm and seduce men.

Prettiness may be the only virtue of some women, and even so they might still have quite great power and influence on men. Numerous examples stress the advantages and profitability of **female beauty** in everyday life:

Beauty may be only skin deep, but if she were mine I’d skin her. (OPND 102) {Beauty is only skin deep}⁴

It’s not easy for a beautiful girl to believe that love is blind. (OPND 206) {Love is blind}

Opportunity knocks but once, but for a pretty girl it whistles all the time. (OPND 254) {Opportunity knocks but once}.

Many additional anti-proverbs attest to the good fortune of beautiful women. A number of anti-proverbs stress the exaggerated importance placed by men on women’s **appearance**. Everything counts: pretty legs or feet, nice complexion, blonde hair (considered to be more beautiful and sexier than dark), certain height or weight, and so on:

Why should we look for a wife—that is, a young lady whom we intend making our wife— possessing pretty feet?

Because “All’s well that ends well!” (OPND 91) {All’s well that ends well}

Of two evils, choose the one with the better-looking legs. (OPND 243) {Of two evils, choose the lesser}

Gentlemen prefer blondes, especially those who are married to brunettes. (OPND 151) {Gentlemen prefer blondes}.

Certain features might be treated by males with disrespect and contempt, for example, girls wearing glasses are not too popular among men, as the proverb *Men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses* and its transformations below suggest:

Men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses, unless they are contact lenses. (OPND 217)

When a man makes passes at girls who wear glasses, it’s probably due to their frames. (OPND 217).

One of the most stereotypical female features is **vanity**, summarized by the proverbs *Women are wacky, women are vain: they’d rather be pretty than have a good brain; The ugliest woman can look in the mirror and think she is beautiful.*

Naturally, **youth** is an important aspect of women’s physical attractiveness and sex appeal. Unfortunately youth does not last forever:

Boys will be boys and girls will be girls, but not forever. (OPND 109) {Boys will be boys}.

The following example is a pun on an *appeal* submitted in court by lawyers and the *sex appeal* of ageing female lawyers:

Old female lawyers never die; they just lose their appeals. (OPND 246) {Old soldiers never die, they just fade away}.

Let us observe a short dialogue between Dorothy Parker (1893–1967), an American poet and satirist famous for her wit and wisecracks, and a young actress:

Dorothy Parker and a young actress were both about to pass through the same doorway when the actress drew back with the words, “Age before beauty.”

“Yes, my dear,” replied Miss Parker, “and pearls before swine.” (OPND 84) {Age before beauty; Don’t cast your pearls before swine}.

As the proverb says, *With age comes wisdom*, but we could add that age also brings us unwanted wrinkles, overweight, diseases, disappearance of beauty, and so on. Although in the text above Dorothy Parker’s age is not mentioned, nor do we know anything about the young actress’s looks, we presume from the remark in the form of a proverb (*Age before beauty*) that the young actress is beautiful and, consequently, Dorothy Parker is an ageing woman who has lost her beauty, which is so crucial for women, especially in the acting business. On the one hand, on the surface, the young actress behaves politely (she allows another woman to pass through the door first), on the other hand, her remark about age and beauty shows her incredible cynicism, maliciousness and aggression. Dorothy Parker, who had the reputation of a “wisecracker” responds wisely (?), also using a proverb. The young actress might be beautiful but is treated as “swine” by the wisecracker, while she looks on herself as a precious stone which should not be thrown “before swine”. The dialogue above is not only seen as a battle of proverbs but also demonstrates the endless struggle between young and old, beauty and ugliness, wise and stupid.

If women can not any longer look young enough, being very vain, they do not confess their age, and this is stressed in the proverbs *The longest five years in a woman’s life is between twenty-nine and thirty*; *The only secret a woman can keep is that of her age* and in the proverb alteration below:

Time and tide wait for no man—But time always stands still for a woman of thirty. (OPND 307) {Time and tide wait for no man}.

There are many more examples demonstrating women’s worries regarding their ageing. Consider the following transformations of the proverb *A man is as old as he feels, a woman as old as she looks*:

A woman is as old as she looks; a man is old when he stops looking. (OPND 68)

A woman is as old as she looks at you. (OPND 68)

A woman is as old as she looks to a man that likes to look at her. (OPND 68).

Not only a woman's age but her **weight** also counts. Being overweight might be quite problematic for her appearance:

Never underestimate the power of a woman—nor overestimate her age and weight. (OPND 236) {Never underestimate the power of a woman}

Hell hath no fury like a well-known overweight comedienne on a liquid diet. (OPND 164) {Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned}.

Times change, and our ideas about beauty also change. If once upon a time being plump was a sign of female beauty and attractiveness, nowadays slim, thin women are considered more attractive and beautiful. Therefore, scores of women are obsessed with their figures and waistlines. In order to struggle with overweight and to become slimmer, according to these anti-proverbs, females are able to undergo even the cruelest **diets**:

All men are created equal, but necklines, waistlines and hemlines show that women are not. (OPND 84) {All men are created equal}

Give a woman an inch, and she'll start to diet. (OPND 153) {Give her an inch and she'll take an ell [=a measurement of length]}

“Young ladies who feel anxious to preserve the most symmetrical anatomical proportions, should never be in hurry. They should remember that ‘haste’ makes waist.” (OPND 160) {Haste makes waste}.

One of the most decisive things contributing to a woman's appearance is **clothes**. Due to nice garments and finery, even the ugliest women can become quite attractive. Many anti-proverbs stress again and again that females are judged by the way they dress. Witness the numerous parodies of the proverb *Clothes make the man* and of its antonym *Clothes don't make the man*:

Clothes don't make the woman, but they help. (OPND 117)

Clothes may not make the man, but they certainly help a woman to make him. (OPND 117)

Clothes make the man, especially when the right girl is wearing them. (OPND 117).

Some transformations of the proverb *Clothes make the man*, however, emphasize the prevalence and importance of the female body over their clothes, and cynically recommend to them the entire lack of clothes, or nudity. Indeed, that a woman without any clothes might more easily seduce males:

Clothes make the man, and fake the woman. (OPND 117)

Clothes make the man and lack of them the woman. (OPND 117).

For centuries women have been depicted as adoring **jewellery**, see the proverb *Diamonds are a girl's best friend*. It is not only the beauty of a certain piece which is loved. More than that, it is also a symbol of wealth and status the wearing of which, on the one hand, can attract and impress men and, on the other hand, can make other females envious. Jewellery particular popular in our corpus are diamonds and gold:

Diamonds are a man's best friend. (OPND 122) {Diamonds are a girl's best friend}

Love is blind, but not stone blind when a girl gets a diamond with a flaw in it. (OPND 206) {Love is blind}

The only golden thing that some women dislike is silence. (OPND 269) {Silence is golden}.

Since, as these texts would have it, women's worth largely depends on their appearance, in order to attract or not to lose the impact of their looks on the man of their choice, they naturally try to do everything in order to prolong their youth, and therefore, try to **keep abreast with aging**.

Following a piece of advice expressed in the proverb *A little bit of powder and a little bit of paint make a woman look like what she ain't*, women work extremely hard on enhancing their looks, paying frequent visits to hairdressers, delicatessen stores, dress-makers, cosmeticians, and beauticians:

A woman's place is in the delicatessen store and the beauty salon. (OPND 79) {A woman's place is in the home}.

Artificial beautifying might not help women at all, especially if they are depicted in the role of a wife or the generic old woman. Contrarily, it might make things even worse:

A beautician says nothing is less attractive than an elderly woman with bleached or hennaed hair. Only the young dye good, it seems. (OPND 283) {The good die young}.

Women's beautifying inventiveness sometimes has no limits:

Appearances are deceiving: many a girl who puts up a swell front in public is flat-chested at home. (OPND 97) {Appearances are deceiving}.

According to these anti-proverbs, in some women almost nothing natural is left:

"Wife is just one sham thing after another," thought the husband, as his spouse placed her teeth, hair, shape, and complexion on the bureau. (OPND 200) {Life is just one damned thing after another}.

However hard women's pursuits might be in beautifying themselves, their natural beauty is still frequently considered the best attracting power. The variations of the proverb *A man is as old as he feels, a woman as old as she looks* stress that what really counts is how a woman looks before any makeup is used:

A man is as old as he feels before breakfast, and a woman is as old as she looks before breakfast. (OPND 67)

A woman is as old as she looks—at 7 a.m. (OPND 68)

A woman is as old as she looks until she puts her face on. (OPND 68).

2. "*Behind every good moan—there's a woman*"

Many proverb parodies in our material reduce women to the **status of sex objects**⁵:

Behind every good moan—there’s a woman. (OPND 103)
 {Behind every successful [good] man there’s a woman}

A bitch in time saves nine. (OPND 77) {A stitch in time saves nine}.

One of the sexual anti-proverbs even points out rather harshly and cynically:

You are who you fuck. (OPND 339) {You are what you eat}.

Indeed, being a successful man means having a proper sexual partner:

Underneath every successful man there’s a woman.
 (OPND 105) {Behind every successful [good] man there’s a woman}.

Therefore, not surprisingly, having sexual intercourse with a woman is considered to be much more fulfilling than merely talking to her or masturbating:

A girl had in bed is worth two in the car. (OPND 57) {A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush}

A woman in the bushes is worth two in the hand. (OPND 57) {A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush}.

Sexist attitudes and hostility towards women are very prominent in the following sexual⁶ alterations, which rework one of the most widespread anti-feminist proverbs in the English language, *A woman’s place is in the house* (generally interpreted to mean, “a woman should stay at home, doing housework and raising children”; see Mieder and Tóthné Litovkina 1999: 26):

A woman’s place is in the car. (OPND 79)

A woman’s place is in the hay. (OPND 79)

A woman’s place is sitting on my face. (OPND 79).

While the first two examples above demonstrate where sexual intercourse might take place (e.g., “in the car”, or “in the hay”), the last one depicts a form of oral-genital sex called facesitting, in which the receiver (in this case a female) sits on the giver’s face (presumably a man) and pushes her genitals into his face.

The anti-proverb below not only reduces women to the status of sex objects but also brings up one of the most desirable characteristics for women and one of the qualities least frequently possessed by them, the ability to keep silent (the feature discussed in section 5):

Women should be obscene and not heard. (OPND 115)
 {Children should be seen and not heard}.

Similarly to children, who are required by the text of the original proverb above to “be seen and not heard”, women in its transformation above are also instructed to be silent but, more than that, they should also be able to give men “obscene” sexual pleasure. What kind of obscenity might be referred to here? One possible answer might be fellatio, a very rare activity when a woman simply can’t speak at all, since her mouth is “occupied”.

Nowadays it is not only the man who seduces the woman or encourages sexual intercourse; this age-old stereotype is often reversed. Therefore, a number of stereotyping proverb alterations depict women as **promiscuous**, **lustful** and **sexually active**. As the proverb says, *Once a crook, always a crook*, that is, referring to the anti-proverb below, a once promiscuous woman will always remain promiscuous. Therefore, when men meet a woman who has been known for having had a rich “history” of sexual life, they hope that they will also be gratified with sexual pleasures:

A woman with a past attracts men who hope history will repeat itself. (OPND 167) {History repeats itself}.

Being **seductive**, women may catch the man of their choice (be it a boss, a coachman, or a future husband):

Give a boss with a sexy secretary enough rope, and he’s bound to be tied up at the office. (OPND 152) {Give a man enough rope and he will hang himself}

It’s the early girl that catches the coachman. (OPND 280)
 {It’s the early bird that catches the worm}.

More than that, females in return also expect men to be sexually seductive; this is the reason why girls might be disappointed if boys don’t behave in such a way:

Boys will be boys, otherwise the girls would be disappointed. (OPND 110) {Boys will be boys}.

An interesting fact needs to be mentioned here: while in many anti-proverbs about women the adult word “man” is used for males, the immature and derogatory “girl” is used for their counterpart, females:

The way to a man’s heart may be through his stomach, but a pretty girl can always find a detour. (OPND 295)
{The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach}

Spring–1. When a young man’s fancy lightly turns to what the girl has been thinking about all winter. 2. The season of balls–golf, tennis, base and moth. (OPND 182) {In the spring a young man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love}.

3. “*All work and no pay makes a housewife*”

For centuries nothing else has been considered to be more important for a woman than serving her husband and children. In fact, a number of proverbs even emphasize that women should not leave their homes: *A woman’s place is in the house; A woman, a cat, and a chimney should never leave the house*. Numerous anti-proverbs from our corpus express the idea that **women were created for housework**. While these anti-proverbs portray women as working bees, they also show men’s negative attitudes towards women, their anti-feminism and chauvinism (on male chauvinism in American proverbs, see Mieder 1985c).

Housework is considered to be hard work but the difference in it and other kinds is that a housewife is not paid:

All work and no pay makes a housewife. (OPND 88) {All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy}.

The following anti-proverb, continuing the statement expressed in the original proverb, that is that it is necessary to find the appropriate person for each assignment, also adds one small detail: who else other than a woman is the person to be delegated:

Never send a boy to do a man’s job–send a woman. (OPND 236) {Never send a boy to do a man’s job}.

Waiting patiently is not enough for getting something you want, you also have to work in the meanwhile, is drawn attention to in the proverb transformation below:

Everything comes to she who waits...if she works while she waits. (OPND 144) {Everything comes to him who waits}.

In the alteration above the pronoun *he* of the original proverb text, which applies to both males and females and is used in many other proverbs (for example, *He who hesitates is lost; He who laughs last, laughs best*), is changed into *she* in the proverb mutation, clearly demonstrating that it is woman—and not man—who should work.

While a man's duties are usually over when he comes home from work and, therefore, he can be involved in any kind of free time activities such as watching TV, reading a newspaper, and so on, **woman's household jobs do not have an end**. Women are depicted as constantly busy with cooking, washing the dishes, cleaning, raising children and any other household task, as the proverbs *A woman's work is never done* and *Man works from sun to sun, but a woman's work is never done* and their numerous transformations below suggest:

Men and women work from sun to sun; then men watch "Seinfeld"⁷ while women do the laundry. (OPND 213)
 A woman's work is never done—by men! (OPND 80)
 Just about the time a woman thinks her work is done, she becomes a grandmother. (OPND 80).

A mother's duties, especially child rearing, do not have an end. Everything has its appointed time and place but rest is the only thing she never has:

To the mother of young children, there's a time and place for everything, except rest. (OPND 299) {There's a time and place for everything}.

Despite the fact that raising children has been considered for a long time the only domain where women are more influential than men, the meaning of the traditional proverb *The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world* (which means "Mothers who look after

their children and shape their personalities have the most power and influence”, see T. Litovkina and Mieder 2006: 285) is frequently contested in our corpus:

On the matrimonial sea, the hand that rocks the cradle
very seldom rocks the boat. (OPND 285)

The hand that cradles the rock rules the world. (OPND
285)

The hand that cooks the meal is the hand that rules the
world. (OPND 285).

The last example above stresses that a woman who feeds someone properly is the woman who exercises power and is exactly in line with the proverb *The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach*.

Doing the shopping is considered to be women’s obligation, as well as their favorite activity:

A woman’s place is in the mall.

Bumper sticker. (OPND 79) {A woman’s place is in the
home}.

4. “*The way to a woman’s heart is through the door of a good restaurant*”

One of the characteristics consistently attributed to females is their materialism and hunger for money. Not surprisingly, many anti-proverbs portray females as materialistic, calculating species chasing after rich men:

When money talks, some women don’t miss a word.
(OPND 230) {Money talks}

Every man has his price, and every woman has her figure.
(OPND 142) {Every man has his price}.

Beautiful, attractive women might be especially materialistic, since they can demand much more, and, therefore, their choice to choose and to be chosen is simply higher. As reflected in the proverb *Gentlemen prefer blondes*, stereotypically, blondes are considered to have more sex appeal than brunettes. Hence the proverb alteration is showing a reversed picture: it is not only gentlemen who have preferences, but blondes do too, though they do not concern appearance but wealth:

Blondes prefer gentlemen with money. (OPND 151).

Certain **status symbols** (such as expensive cars, homes, cruises, jewellery, fur coats, and restaurants) in these biased texts are very important for women:

For the modern girl, opportunity doesn't knock. It parks in front of her home and honks the horn. (OPND 253)
{Opportunity knocks but once}

Behind every successful man is a woman, who didn't have jewelry [*sic*], a mink coat, and an expensive home. (OPND 105) {Behind every successful man there's a woman}

Behind every successful man is a woman who wants to go on another cruise. (OPND 104) {Behind every successful man there's a woman}.

Contrary to the idea expressed by the original text of the internationally spread proverb *The way to a man's heart is through his stomach*, a number of its alterations express the idea that the best way of making a woman love a man is to spend a lot of money on her, for example, buying her clothes, jewellery, invite her to expensive restaurants, and so on:

The way to a man's heart is through his stomach, but the way to a woman's heart is a buy-path. (OPND 295)

The way to a woman's heart is through the door of a good restaurant. (OPND 295)

The way to a woman's heart is through your wallet. (OPND 295).

For many centuries women have economically depended on men's material achievements; and such dependence is also frequently emphasized in our corpus. Therefore the financial status of her future husband might be crucial for a woman. Moreover, the anti-proverbs below, as well as many other ones from our corpus, express that she might even be seduced into marriage by money:

Love may be blind, but when a girl examines her engagement ring it's evident she's not stone blind. (OPND 206) {Love is blind}

Man proposes and the girl weighs his pocketbook and decides.⁸ (OPND 212) {Man proposes, God disposes}

The man to whom money isn't everything, should marry the woman to whom everything isn't money. (OPND 226) {Money isn't everything}.

The two examples below point out that it doesn't matter if a man courts a woman in a gentle or an aggressive way, the only thing which matters for a woman is "a full purse":

Faint heart never won fair lady—but a full purse can always pull the trick. (OPND 146) {Faint heart never won fair lady}

None but the brave deserve the fair, but only the rich can support them. (OPND 240) {None but the brave deserve the fair}.

Marriage has meant, and in many families still means, that a husband has to support his wife materially. Naturally, financial support is what many women still expect men to do after they marry them. Here come the numerous transformations of the most frequently parodied proverb about women in our corpus, the proverb *Behind every great [successful] man there is a woman* (the number of its transformations in our corpus is 36):

Behind every successful man is a woman who makes it necessary for him to make money. (OPND 104)

Behind every successful man is a woman who wanted a mink. (OPND 104)

Behind every man who lives within his income is a wife who doesn't. (OPND 104).

In fact, in these anti-proverbs, there is no end to women's financial wishes and demands. The more they have, the more they want, and their obsession might cost men quite a lot (see the proverb *A woman can throw out of the window more than a man can bring in at the door*), even **bankrupting** them. The numerous transformations of the proverb *Clothes make the man* will help us to prove the last statement:

Clothes may make the man, but his wife's may break him. (OPND 118)

The clothes that make a woman can break a man. (OPND 118)

Clothes make the woman and break the man. (OPND 118).

Some other examples point out that the cost of women's beautiful looks or their other purchases might lead to a man's empty purse:

It takes nine tailors to make a man and one woman to break him. (OPND 185) {It takes nine tailors to make a man}

Talk is cheap, but one word sometimes, like a woman's yes, can cost you thousands. (OPND 275) {Talk is cheap}.

5. "A woman never puts off till tomorrow what she can say today"

Talkativeness is usually depicted as an inborn female characteristic, and the tongue is a body part primarily associated with women (see the proverbs: *Wherever there is a woman, there is gossip; A woman's hair is long; her tongue is longer; A woman's strength is in her tongue; One tongue is sufficient for a woman*). Observe the transformation of the latter proverb below which satirically plays on the polysemy of the word "tongue"⁹ (meaning "language" as opposed to the body part):

Milton was asked by a friend whether he would instruct his daughters in the different languages; to which he replied, "No, sir, one tongue is sufficient for a woman." (OPND 253).

A number of additional anti-proverbs from our corpus also contemptuously portray women as talkative. A woman's **talkative** nature is referred to in the following example (naturally, the first one can't remain true any longer, with the spread of cell phones):

A woman's place is in the home because that's where the telephone is. (OPND 79) {A woman's place is in the home}

A woman never puts off till tomorrow what she can say today. (OPND 234) {Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today}.

Women speaking is presented in our material not only as talkativeness, but also as chattering and gossiping:

Many a woman never puts off till tomorrow the gossip she can spread today. (OPND 235) {Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today}

A chatterbox is known by the silence she doesn't keep. (OPND 69) {A man is known by the company he keeps}.

Ideally, as the anti-proverbs would have it, the ability to be silent is considered to be one of the most appreciated female characteristics (although a very rare one), as expressed in:

The only golden thing that some women dislike is silence. (OPND 269) {Silence is golden}.

The following wellerism might express the man's fantasy and desire to be with a submissive woman, the one who is ready to fulfill all his sexual needs and desires, without a quarrel or fight, without even saying a word, without asking anything in return. Even if she is dumb, many men would rather be with such a woman:

"Silence gives consent," as the man said when he kissed the dumb woman. (OPND 269).

Similarly to the wellerism above, the following debasing anti-proverb which, pointing out the power of silence in a woman, also draws a parallel between her silence and her sexual submissiveness:

Women should be obscene and not heard. (OPND 115)
{Children should be seen and not heard}.

Women's talkativeness (or *words*) is frequently set against their deeds (or *work*). In the following three examples reworking the proverb *A woman's work is never done*, "work" is transformed into "word" (or "talk") as the positive notion of a hard-working woman is traded for the image of a female who talks too much:

Women talk more than men because woman's work is never dumb. (OPND 80)

A woman's word is never done. (OPND 80)

Woman's work is never done, probably because she can't get off the telephone long enough to do it. (OPND 80).

6. "Where there's a woman, there's a way—and she usually gets it"

A number of proverbs argue that women are **stubborn, manipulative**, and **bossy** (one of the most deep-rooted stereotypes of women in a role of wife). **Having a strong will**, they persistently try to **get their way** and, therefore, whenever they can, they **exercise their power and dominance** on men, for example, *Women will have both her word and her way; Two things govern the world—women and gold; While there's a world, it's a woman that will govern it*. Let us have a look at some anti-proverbs reflecting the qualities discussed above:

Where there's a woman, there's a way—and she usually gets it. (OPND 334) {Where there's a will, there's a way}

Man proposes, then woman imposes. (OPND 212) {Man proposes, God disposes}.

As it is portrayed, stubborn women, even being familiar with facts, might simply ignore them, when necessary. This is why we might smile reading what a 'sweet' stubborn woman is called by her partner:

In Cincinnati there lives a man who calls his better half Fact because she is a stubborn thing. (OPND 145) {Facts are stubborn things}

For many centuries, the main goal of females has been to get married—and they are still portrayed as quite artful in achieving this, see the transformations of the proverb *Give a man enough rope and he will hang himself*, and there are many more transformations to this effect in our corpus:

Give a man enough rope and he skips; give a woman
enough rope, and she makes a marriage knot. (OPND
152)

Give a girl enough rope and she'll ring the wedding bell.
(OPND 152).

Whenever a chance is given, a woman "makes a marriage knot". The two anti-proverbs above show the eternal struggle between two sexes emphasized by the metaphor of the rope. According to these examples the rope connects the women's dominance and the man's acceptance of it, even in spite of his strong resistance.

The fight for power and dominance remains one of the most important aspects in a wife-husband relationship, all the way through their marriage. Since men are afraid of losing their power and dominance not surprisingly a number of anti-proverbs picture bossy, dominant wives who rule. The three examples below even employ the words "boss" or "bossed":

If experience is the best teacher, how is it that some hus-
bands still think they're the boss of the family?
(OPND 145) {Experience is the best teacher}

'Tis better to have loved and lost than to marry and be
bossed. (OPND 191) {It's better to have loved and lost
than never to have loved at all}

A bachelor is a rolling stone that gathers no boss. (OPND
74) {A rolling stone gathers no moss}.

As we can see from the last two examples, the figure of the bachelor is treated with envy, contrary to the one of the spinster, who is primarily viewed in our material as an unfulfilled and unhappy woman who deserves pity.

Other proverb alterations demonstrating wives' dominance and power over their husbands follow. In the first example a poor man is surrounded by two bossy women: his wife and his daughter who, in line with the proverb *Like mother, like daughter*, possesses qualities similar to those of her mother:

No man can serve two masters, unless he has a wife and
grown-up daughter. (OPND 237) {No man can serve
two masters}

A man's home is his wife's castle. (OPND 71) {A man's home is his castle}

Behind every successful man is a wife who tells him what to do, and a secretary who does it. (OPND 104) {Behind every successful man there's a woman}.

Even food preparation, one of the most stereotypical female activities, might be delegated by bossy women to their husbands and become their duty, especially if they wake up early. Hence two transformations of the proverb *The early bird catches the worm*:

The early bird gets up to serve his wife breakfast in bed. (OPND 281)

"And remember, my son," said the father of the groom, "the early husband gets his own breakfast." (OPND 280).

The proverb transformations below clearly state that wives' wishes have to be accomplished without any disputes or arguments, otherwise there might be a problem for most husbands. Experienced husbands supposedly know it too well:

To most husbands: A word from the wives is sufficient. (OPND 81) {A word to the wise is sufficient}

Experience teaches wisdom: the experienced husband has learned to think twice before saying nothing. (OPND 306) {Think twice before you speak}.

How can women achieve dominance and exercise their power? According to the anti-proverbs anything goes, as far as women's **achievement of goals** is concerned, for example, tears, flirting, lies, woes, sex appeal, beauty, young looks, and so on. Women are so artful and cunning in getting what they want that men must always be on the alert, as pointed out by the proverb *A woman's in pain, a woman's in woe, a woman is ill when she likes to be so* and a number of anti-proverbs below.

Tears are considered to be the inborn attribute of the "weaker sex" which are used to exercise their power and gain whatever they wish (see also the proverbs *A woman laughs when she can but cries whenever she wishes; As great a pity to see a woman*

weep as to see a goose go barefoot which are a clear warning that women's tears should not be trusted). As we can see from the examples below, tears are supposedly used by the most "successful" representatives of the "weaker sex" whenever other ways of manipulating or controlling don't have influence:

Ladies, to this advice give heed—
 In controlling men;
 If at first you don't succeed,
 Why, cry, cry again. (OPND 175) {If at first you don't succeed, try, try again}.

Another possible way of influencing men might be to **flirt**:

A flirt is as strong as her weakest wink. (OPND 59) {A chain is no stronger than its weakest link}.

Lies and woes might also help women a lot:

Figures don't lie, unless they are women's. (OPND 148)
 {Figures don't lie}
 All the world's a stage, and some women are always rehearsing their woes. (OPND 86) {All the world's a stage}.

Sex appeal, beauty, young looks, or partial nakedness might also be used by women in managing all their affairs:

Girls often wear bathing suits with bare midriffs because the way to a man's heart is through the stomach. (OPND 295) {The way to a man's heart is through his stomach}.

7. "A word to the wise is sufficient, a word to the wife never is"

And now comes an eternal topic in the battles of the so-called weaker and stronger sexes, the subject of intelligence. While in life, as well as in proverbs and anti-proverbs, beauty is being associated with women, intelligence is with men. According to a number of our examples, women do not have brains or bright minds, in line with the proverb *Long hair, little brains*. Moreover, men don't like women be smarter than they; what's more, one proverb even points out that *It takes a smart woman to be a fool*. Therefore, if a really smart woman wants to exercise her power over a man of her

choice, she sometimes has to pretend to be stupid and even look like a *dumb blonde* (a stereotype of a stupid and sexually promiscuous woman, very frequently being the butt of dumb blonde jokes):

Never judge by appearances: the girl who looks like a dumb blonde may really be a smart brunette. (OPND 233) {Never judge by appearances}

Women's **stupidity**, **silliness**, **foolishness**, **craziness**, **mindlessness** and **ignorance** are portrayed in a number of Anglo-American proverb transformations and wellerisms:

"Two heads are better than one," quoth the woman when she had her dog with her to the market. (OPND 320) {Two heads are better than one}

In the wellerism above a parallel is brought between the head of the woman and the head of her dog. Since it is the woman herself who equates her dog's intelligence to hers, we might presume that her remark in the form of a proverb is not what she really thinks but shows her sarcasm in her own regard and ability to use self-disparagement, self-depreciative humour.

A woman in the role of wife is frequently depicted as possessing the negative qualities discussed above in this section (the first one also refers to females' revengefulness, a quality to be discussed in section 8):

"Tit for tat," quoth the wife when she farted at the thunder. (OPND 310) {Tit for tat}

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, especially when your wife has it. (OPND 66) {A little knowledge is a dangerous thing}.

A woman, especially when cast in the role of a nagging wife (characteristics discussed below, in section 8), might be viewed as lacking in **wisdom**, that is, "wise" is antonymous with "wife", reflected in numerous transformations of the proverb *A word to the wise is sufficient*:

A word to the wife is never sufficient. (OPND 81)

A word to the wise is sufficient, a word to the wife never is. (OPND 81)

One word to the wife is sufficient: say “Yes.” (OPND 82).

Especially the generic *old woman* and the *young girl* (frequently referred to as *the old lady* and *the young lady* in our corpus) are those whose intellectual capacities, wit and wisdom are belittled as much as it is possible. Young females might lack such qualities due to their age and lack of experience:

Why ought very young ladies mind their P’s and Q’s?

To enable them to discover the difference between being Polite and Quiet, and being Pert and Quarrelsome. (OPND 218-219) {Mind your p’s and q’s}

Early to bed and early to rise is the way of a girl before she gets wise. (OPND 134) {Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise}.

Old women in our corpus, however, might be considered as those who have already lost all their intellectual abilities. Consider the examples below (all in the form of wellerisms) all of which might be also a good indication of women’s ability to look at themselves with sarcasm and to use self-disparagement, self-depreciative humour in regard to themselves:

As the old lady said, “What you don’t know can’t hurt you.” (OPND 327)

“Every little helps,” as the old woman said when she beat up a dead fly in her currant cake. (OPND 141) {Every little (bit) helps}

“Good blood will always show itself!” as the old lady said when she was struck by the redness of her nose. (OPND 109) {Blood will tell}

Representatives of some professions and occupations might be considered to be ignorant and foolish:

Waitress: A girl who thinks money grows on trays. (OPND 222) {Money doesn’t grow on trees}.

Despite the stupidity, foolishness, ignorance and lack of wisdom associated with the “weaker” sex, women are very skillful in

making men entire fools (in line with the proverb *Any wise man can be fooled by a foolish woman*):

Nature makes some men fools all of the time but women make all men fools some of the time. (OPND 340)
 {You can fool some of the people all the time, all the people some of the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time}.

In particular, extracting money is one of the ways to fool old men by their young lovers:

Old playboys giving fur coats to young mistresses:
 There's no fuel like an old fuel. (OPND 301) {There's no fool like an old fool}.

8. *Miscellaneous*

Similarly to the proverbs *There was never a conflict without a woman; Women and dogs cause too much strife; There's hardly a strife in which a woman has not been a prime mover*, a number of Anglo-American anti-proverbs reflect a **quarrelsome, conflicting, fighting**, and **reprimanding** nature of women (especially if they are portrayed in the role of a wife):

A word to the wife is sufficient—to start a quarrel. (OPND 80) {A word to the wise is sufficient}
 It is the late husband that catches the lecture. (OPND 280)
 {The early bird catches the worm}
 Make love, not war.
 I'm married, I do both. (OPND 211) {Make love, not war}.

As it has been emphasised in section 6, numerous anti-proverbs depict women as bossy, ruling, powerful, and dominant creatures. However, it is not always the case. Contrary to the anti-proverbs mentioned above, many additional anti-proverbs emphasize women's **submissiveness** (examples of sexual submissiveness have already been demonstrated earlier, in section 5) and absolute **lack of power**:

On the matrimonial sea, the hand that rocks the cradle
very seldom rocks the boat. (OPND 285) {The hand
that rocks the cradle rules the world}.

Women are considered to be species of a **second sort** by some
men:

Some men treat all women as sequels. (OPND 85) {All
men are created equal}.

Females are often depicted as **demanding, nagging, com-
plaining** and **critical**, especially when they are in the role of wife.
Observe also the numerous transformations of the proverb *Behind
every successful man there's a woman*:

Behind every famous man there's a woman—telling him
he's not so hot. (OPND 103)

Behind every successful man is a woman who wants to go
on another cruise. (OPND 104)

Behind every successful man there's a great...nag, nag,
nag. (OPND 105).

When husbands can't provide their wives with what is, in their
opinion, the best, the most expensive, the most luxurious, if they
can't compete with their colleagues, friends or neighbours, their
wives become dissatisfied, which leads to their constant complaint
and criticism:

Behind every successful man is a woman who is trying to
keep up with the Joneses. (OPND 104)

Behind every successful man is a woman who keeps re-
minding him that she knows men who would have
done even better. (OPND 104)

Behind every successful man is a woman complaining she
has nothing to wear. (OPND 104).

One can always have a number of reasons for complaining,
and thus, simply by their nature, women are seen as those **never
satisfied with anything**; this idea is exemplified in the proverb *Is
a woman ever satisfied? No, if she were, she would not be a wom-
an* and the joke below:

Wife (heatedly)—“You're lazy, you're worthless, you're
bad-tempered, you're shiftless, you're a thorough liar.”

Husband (reasonably)—“Well, my dear, no man is perfect.”¹⁰ (OPND 239) {No one is perfect}.

Women’s endless criticism and **opposition** to whatever a man around says are reflected in the following three anti-proverbs about mothers-in-law who are uniformly depicted in our material as a man’s biggest enemy:

Man proposes, and a mother-in-law opposes. (OPND 212)

{Man proposes, God disposes}

No man is a hero to his mother-in-law. (OPND 237) {No man is a hero to his valet}

Love is blind, but your mother-in-law isn’t. (OPND 206) {Love is blind}.

Even though section 4 has demonstrated the calculating, financially-hungry type of woman, in our corpus we can also find—although very rarely—the female being depicted as romantic, as Juliet dreaming about her Romeo:

To a romantic girl, all roads lead to Romeo. (OPND 85) {All roads lead to Rome}.

Women are inherently considered by proverbs to be **bad, ill-natured, wicked**, and even **evil**, for example, *Women are the root of all evil; Women are necessary evils; The world is full of wicked women*. Here are the transformations of the proverb *Of two evils, choose the lesser* which reinterpret the word of the text of the original proverb “evil” by referring it to a female:

Of two evils, choose the one with the better-looking legs. (OPND 243)

Of two evils, choose the prettier. (OPND 243).

Although the stereotype of an ideal woman (especially a wife) is that of a hardworking bee, working diligently, looking up to her husband, not all women in our anti-proverbs can fit it. On the contrary, some females are shown as quite **lazy**:

Advice given to a rather lazy girl: ‘Marion, haste and repent at leisure!’ (OPND 216) {Marry in haste and repent at leisure}.

And even if such a lazy woman hurries up and gets married, she might remain lazy. When she does anything at all, even something insignificant (for example, a little sewing), her husband might be more than bemused:

A stitch in time is a surprise to many a husband. (OPND 77) {A stitch in time saves nine}.

Women are shown as **revengeful furies with terrible outbursts of anger**, see the numerous variations of the proverb *Hell¹¹ hath no fury like a woman scorned* in which a woman's place is not "the house", indicated by the traditional proverb *A woman's place is in the house*, but something worse—"hell", the Devil's dwelling place:

Hell hath no fury like a woman at a bargain counter. (OPND 164)

Hell hath no fury like a woman driver. (OPND 164)

Hell hath no fury like a woman who has waited an hour for her husband on the wrong corner. (OPND 164).

Additional anti-proverbs demonstrating women's anger and revengefulness:

When angry with her husband, a wise woman always counts ten—but not over him. (OPND 329) {When angry count to ten}

A Chicago man calls his sweetheart Revenge because she is so sweet. (OPND 265) {Revenge is sweet}.

Women's **curiosity** and **nosiness** to find out more about their men's (primarily husbands') business is reflected in the three variations of the proverb *Half the world doesn't know how the other half lives*:

What every wife wants to know: how the other half lives. (OPND 159)

Half the world doesn't know how the other half lives, but that isn't the half that's made up of women. (OPND 158)

Half the world doesn't know how the other half lives: the women can't keep track of the men. (OPND 158).

A few further examples—all referring to **other** (negative) **aspects of female nature** not discussed earlier:

infidelity:

When the husband comes in at the door, the lover flies out of the window. (OPND 331) {When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window}

An oriental wife gave birth to a white child and explained: “Occidents will happen.” (OPND 82) {Accidents will happen}

When the husband is away, the wife will play. (Schipper 2003: 221) {When the cat’s away, the mice will play}

greediness:

Beware of the girl who likes to eat her cake and have yours too. (OPND 344) {You can’t eat your cake and have it too}

Her motto is, ‘Every man for myself.’ (OPND 142) {Every man for himself}

An old maid was attending a wrestling match when one of the wrestlers was thrown in her lap. She refused to give him up and kept yelling, “Finders keepers!” (OPND 148) {Finders keepers}

inability to get ready (or to be somewhere) in time:

A woman on time is one in nine. (OPND 77) {A stitch in time saves nine}

A man is judged by the company he keeps, a woman by how late she keeps company. (OPND 69) {A man is known by the company he keeps}

incapacity of saving money:

Some women don’t believe in saving up money for a rainy day, because that’s the worst day for shopping. (OPND 267) {Save for a rainy day}

Save your pennies, and your wife’s dressmaker will take care of the pounds. (OPND 273) {Take care of your pennies and the pounds [the dollars] will take care of themselves}

Money makes the mare go...and woman makes the money go. Old postcard. (OPND 227) {Money makes the mare go}

lack of thriftiness:

In women's hosiery, what's sheer today is gone tomorrow. (OPND 165) {Here today, gone tomorrow}

strangeness, weirdness:

Another thing stranger than fiction is woman. (OPND 315) {Truth is stranger than fiction}

As Naomi admitted later, "Ruth is stranger than fiction." (OPND 315)

exaggeration:

The wife who makes a mountain out a molehill probably has a husband who makes a molehill out of a mountain. (OPND 131) {Don't make a mountain out of a molehill}.

Many more features of the female character exemplified in anti-proverbs (for example, unreliability, irresponsibility, irrationality, changeability, fickleness, unpredictability, arrogance, egoism, naughtiness, opportunism, mysteriousness, and many others) could be considered in the present article but I must come to a conclusion now.

Summary

Let us summarize here how a woman's nature is revealed through Anglo-American anti-proverbs. As has been demonstrated above, a number of anti-proverbs focus on the exaggerated importance placed on women's appearance and on their vanity. In fact, women are obsessed with their age, sex appeal, and weight. They work hard on enhancing their looks, and their beautifying inventiveness sometimes has no limit. Therefore, they are constantly criticized for their hard work on their appearance, as well as high expenses invested in clothes, jewellery, slimming diets, hairdressers, beauticians, and so on. Women are frequently reduced to the status of sexual objects, being depicted as promiscuous and lustful. They are mainly shown as dependent on men economically; moreover, they are also seen as materialistic and hungry for money. The more they have, the more they want; not sur-

prisingly, their greediness might lead to breaking many a man. While traditional proverbs dream of submissive, powerless, silent women who quietly perform their duties in the home, who, looking up to their husbands, serve them with smiles and admiration, who bring up the children, and do all possible household jobs, in the corpus of our anti-proverbs, women (especially wives) are rather shown as powerful, dominant, manipulative and bossy creatures. Both in proverbs and anti-proverbs women have the reputation for being awful chatterboxes and gossips; women's talkativeness is contemptuously set against their deeds. Similarly to traditional proverbs, anti-proverbs also deny the "weaker" sex keen intelligence and wit, and also reflect women as stupid, silly, foolish and ignorant. Especially critical in this respect are anti-proverbs treating old women or women in the role of wife. Women in our corpus are also portrayed as quarrelsome, ill-natured, curious, and overcritical, and never satisfied with anything. Last but not least, a woman's 'anti-proverbial' reputation includes the following qualities as well: infidelity, greediness, anger, revengefulness, inability to get ready in time, incapacity to save money, weirdness, and lack of thriftiness.

As we have just seen, similarly to traditional Anglo-American proverbs in general (for example, *A woman, a cat, and a chimney should never leave the house; A woman, a dog and a walnut tree: the more you beat them, the better they be; Women and dogs cause too much strife; Women are saints in church, angels in the street, devils in the kitchen, and apes in bed; Women are the devil's net; Women are the root of all evil; A whistling girl and a crowing hen always come to no good end*), the overwhelming majority of proverb parodies in our corpus are also antifeminist and demeaning to women. The fact that females in our corpus are depicted as primarily possessing negative stereotypical qualities might show once again that not only proverbs but also anti-proverbs tend to be created primarily by men, in the male dominant world.

Why are women constantly assigned inferior or abnormal qualities? Why are they still shown as species of a second sort? One of the possible answers to these questions might be: men create and use the anti-proverbs in order to provide themselves with a sense of their own worth and, therefore, feel better about them-

selves, enhance their own self-esteem and superiority. The following quotation—although it refers to proverbs, and not anti-proverbs—might prove this thought:

One of the richest sources of proverbs is [a] man's fears and hatreds of his fellow man, his xenophobia. [A] Man is always willing, even eager to characterize, deride, spoof his fellow man, especially if in doing so he thinks he is raising himself in the eyes of the world or in his own. In such proverbs there are of course numerous examples of [a] man's earliest objects of derision, women—antifeminism, fear and hatred of women, especially wives." (Coffin 1968: 201).

While examining a woman's nature as revealed through proverbs, that is, old pieces of wisdom, might be a way of looking back to "the tradition", examining a woman's nature in anti-proverbs, that is, proverb alterations, might be a way to look forward to the change in gender relationships in the modern world. As we have seen, despite modern enlightenment, women, in the overwhelming majority of our examples, are still frequently shown as subordinate to men, as people of a second sort, as a species who can constantly be ridiculed and made a fun of. A number of additional anti-proverbs, however, show that women, not always accepting their subordination, struggling with old stereotypes, demanding a place in the sun different from what is "prescribed" for them by men, create new truths, not always favourable to men, and not always accepted by men.

Even in spite of all the negative attributes and characteristics assigned to women in the Anglo-American anti-proverbs, the men portrayed in them are very far from avoiding the so-called "weaker" sex. As we can see from a number of examples, men don't want to give up women, even if it is needed for their health and prescribed by a doctor, as the following proverb transformation suggests: *Advice to the exhausted: When wine, women and song became too much for you, give up singing* (OPND 337) {*Wine, women, and song will get a man wrong*}. Whatever men might cynically say about the "weaker" sex, whatever sexist sentiments they might use in women's regard, however they might neglect or despise them, if men have a chance, they simply can't resist women's power and charm. The "rope" might not even be needed any

longer for a woman to tie a man to her. Based on his free will, he ties himself to her, as is expressed in the following anti-proverb: *Give a man a free hand, and he'll put it on a woman every time* (OPND 152) {*Give a man enough rope and he will hang himself*}!

Notes:

¹ I owe much gratitude to Fionnuala Carson Williams for her friendly help in proofreading the study, her critical comments, and suggestions.

² An earlier, shorter, version of this study, under the title *Women in Anglo-American Anti-Proverbs*, was delivered at the Europhras 2010 Conference in Granada (Spain) in June 2010.

³ Wellerisms are certainly considered to be anti-proverbs by Mieder and T. Litovkina and, therefore, are included in their collections of anti-proverbs (see Mieder and Tóthné Litovkina 1999; T. Litovkina and Mieder 2006).

⁴ For the reader's ease all anti-proverbs are followed by their original forms, given in { } brackets.

⁵ Men, however, may not appreciate it when the tables are turned, and when they are used as sex objects:

My friends say their boyfriends use them as sex objects. I'm making it with my boyfriend and using him as a sex object.

...shame on you! Two wrongs don't make right! (OPND 321) {Two wrongs don't make a right}

Attention girls: Always save a boyfriend for a rainy day—and another one in case it doesn't rain. (OPND 266) {Save for a rainy day}.

⁶ For discussion on sexuality in Anglo-American proverb transformations, see Tóthné Litovkina 1999a, 1999b; T. Litovkina 2005: 87–99.

⁷ *Seinfeld* is an American television situation comedy (or *sitcom*) that originally aired on NBC from 1989 to 1998.

⁸ It has to be said here that money is also very important for men as well; naturally, it might also have an impact on men when they choose a wife: *The rich man and his daughter are soon parted*. (OPND 62) {*A fool and his money are soon parted*}.

⁹ A tongue (or woman's tongue) is metaphorically associated with a sword and other cutting objects or weapons in a number of Anglo-American proverbs, e.g., *The boneless tongue, so small and weak, can crush and kill*; *The tongue destroys a greater horde than does the sword*; *The tongue is not steel but it cuts*; *The tongue is sharper than the sword*; *A woman's tongue is the only sharp-edged tool that grows sharper with use*; *No sword bites so fiercely as an evil tongue*.

¹⁰ A similar example about women from the mouth of men: *I've got a new girlfriend. She reads modern novels, likes classical music and impressionist art*

and loves visiting museums. But then, nobody's perfect. (OPND 239) {Nobody's perfect}.

¹¹ In many other proverbs women are associated with the Devil (e.g., *Women are the devil's net; A woman knows a bit more than Satan; Tell a woman she's a beauty and the devil will tell her ten times; He that has a good wife has an angel by his side; he that has a bad one has a devil at his elbow; Women are saints in church, angels in the street, devils in the kitchen, and apes in bed*) or hell (e.g., *When a man takes a wife, he ceases to dread hell; The hell of women is old age*).

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THE ROLE OF THE PROVERB IN LEO TOLSTOY'S
NOVEL *ANNA KARENINA*

Abstract: Like many of his literary predecessors, Leo Tolstoy displayed a considerable fascination for employing the folk wisdom of Russian proverbs into his literary works. This is no more apparent than in his masterpiece novel, *Anna Karenina*, where he inserts more than 80 proverbs into the speech of key characters. This article breaks them down into five major categories of usage, ranging from stock peasant utterances (household and field servants) to the various levels of use in the speech of members of St. Petersburg and Moscow society. Finally, it examines how Tolstoy extends the role of Russian proverbs for purposes of character and thematic development throughout the novel.

Keywords: Russian proverb; peasant speech; *Anna Karenina*; Leo Tolstoy; mowing scene; Russian folk wisdom; Konstantin Levin; the “righteous man.”

Like Alexander Pushkin, Nikolai Gogol, and Fyodor Dostoevsky before him as well as his successors, Boris Pasternak and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Leo Tolstoy's fiction bears a heavy imprint of the profound influence and presence of the Russian proverb. Tolstoy was particularly drawn to the simplicity and native folk wisdom of the Russian peasants as reflected in their fondness for proverbial speech. Similar to the practice of his twentieth-century successor, Solzhenitsyn, Tolstoy developed a habit of copying large numbers of Russian proverbs from Vladimir Dal's dictionary, *Poslovitsy russkogo naroda/Proverbs of the Russian People* (1862) and other Russian lexicographers, but on occasion seemed more inclined to eavesdrop on the peasant speech of the countless passers-by, who traversed the long dirt road past his estate at Yasnaya Polyana en route to Kiev. As described in Henri Troyat's biography of the Russian literary genius, Tolstoy would don his peasant shirt and boots, grab his walking stick and depart for the roadside, where he would listen in on the numerous conversations taking place among the peasants,

often engaging them in discussion himself. His friend and prominent literary critic, Nikolai Strakhov, once observed to a colleague, "Tolstoy is very interested in the language of the people. He finds new words every day."¹ From his correspondence and diaries, we know that Tolstoy's notebooks were filled with numerous proverbs and proverbial expressions garnered from his roadside visits or, as he would describe them, his treks to "the Nevsky Prospect." Prominent Russian paremiologists, Valery Mokienko and Olga Lomakina, have recently ascertained that the stock of Tolstoy's proverb fund contains more than 1,200 proverbs, proverbial expressions, and proverb variants.² We also know from an entry in his 1862 diary that early on Tolstoy had intended to write a number of brief short sketches keyed to a Russian proverb or proverbial saying, which would subsequently appear in his journal, *Posrednik/The Intermediary*.³

An examination of his masterpiece novel *War and Peace*, as well as numerous other writings between the 1850's-1870's, underscores Tolstoy's fascination for the pithy wit and wisdom contained in Russian proverbs. Who could forget the homespun knowledge and proverbial wisdom of Platon Karataev in *War and Peace*? And, as we know from his various biographers, Tolstoy periodically turned his interests to life at Yasnaya Polyana, especially to working with, teaching, and learning from the peasants on his estate. Shortly after his publication of *Anna Karenina* (1878), Tolstoy founded a publishing house, *Posrednik/The Intermediary*, which would enjoy healthy commercial success producing works designed almost exclusively for the popular audience, and selling for only five kopecks apiece.⁴ Tolstoy himself contributed a number of short stories to *Posrednik*, which he called his *narodnyye rasskazy*, or literature for the people. As Gary Jahn has observed, the genre of "popular literature" in Russia had existed at least since the eighteenth century, and Tolstoy's contributions in the nineteenth open a new direction in seeking "to enlighten or edify the masses rather than to profit by entertaining them."⁵ Even earlier, in an 1863 article titled "Who Should Learn to Write from Whom: the Peasant Children from Us or We From the Peasant Children?" the Russian author had clearly stated that his contemporaries had much to learn from the language and views of the Russian peasant. He sounded this

theme again in an address that he gave at his Moscow home in February, 1884, in which he chastised his fellow Russian writers for neglecting the speech patterns to be found in Russian villages and going so far as to say that he considered the Russian literary language to be inferior to that of the common people.⁶

Turning now more specifically to Tolstoy's employment of Russian proverbs in his novel *Anna Karenina*, we see how the epigraph that opens Tolstoy's novel adumbrates the didactic injunction that the author intends to convey: "Vengeance is mine, I shall repay/Мне отмщение, и аз воздам."⁷ Numerous critics since the appearance of *Anna Karenina* have attempted to deconstruct the author's meaning here, but for purposes of this essay its derivation from and relationship to the original biblical source will be adhered to.⁸ As will be discussed later in this article, Tolstoy clearly intends a direct interpretation that one should not assume to judge Anna's character as well as her actions, and that this role remains the domain of God alone. In light of the Russian author's strong religious views and practices, his reference to the biblical proverb is not surprising. The "absolute language" Tolstoy employs in this epigraph leaves no doubt to its didactic message, which the author characteristically enshrines in a biblical proverb.⁹

Further suggesting the significant role the Russian author intends to assign Russian proverbs in his novel is the opening sentence that immediately follows the epigraph: "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way/ Все счастливые семьи похожи друг на друга, каждая несчастливая семья несчастлива по-своему."¹⁰ While not deriving from nor reflecting folk wisdom *per se*, this literary proverb-comparison has long been held to originate in Tolstoy's novel, reflecting the literary provenance of so many of the proverbs and proverbial expressions in the Russian language. Gary Saul Morson underscores the peculiar nature of the sentence in noting that it is not so much "...a statement *in* the story, it is a statement *about* the story, a statement spoken by an anonymous voice securely outside the story. It is a fabular moral displaced from the end to the beginning; everything that follows illustrates it but cannot qualify it."¹¹ More recently, Morson has made a convincing argument that Tolstoy's original aphorism relates to the French proverb he used in *War and Peace*, "Happy people have no his-

tory”/”Les peuples heureux n’ont pas d’histoire.”¹² In the context of *Anna Karenina*, this proverb pre-shadows what is arguably the major underlying theme of Tolstoy’s novel: the role of the family in attaining harmony with the “life force.” While not giving away the plot that will gradually unfold, the Russian author cleverly employs this proverb to alert his readers both to the impending action of his novel as well as to its major theme: that is, the Levin story-line with its life-affirming theme, as well as the Anna story-line and its life-destroying theme. Structurally speaking, as well, this proverb provides the perfect opening to the scene of chaos and oblivion in the Oblonsky family, stemming from the marital infidelity of Stiva Oblonsky. As witnessed in Valery Mokienko’s recent three-volume *Bol’shoi slovar’ russkikh poslovits*, the subsequent sentence that opens the second paragraph of Tolstoy’s novel likewise has attained proverb-like status over the decades since the novel first appeared: “All was confusion in the Oblonsky’s house/Всё смешалось в доме Облонских.”¹³ Like the preceding sentence, this now proverbial utterance both summarizes as well as introduces readers to the chaotic state of affairs in the Oblonsky household, where family members from the children to the house-servants find themselves out of sort: “The Children were running all over the house as if lost; the English governess quarrelled with the housekeeper and wrote a note to a friend, asking her to find her a new place.”¹⁴

An analysis of proverbs and proverbial expressions in Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* reveals a number of major categories of thematic usage and provenance. Not surprisingly, one of the main sources relates to the speech and utterances of Russian peasants and household staff on the various estates and homes of the Oblonsky, Schcherbatsky and Levin families. Understandably, the folk provenance of proverbs explains both the source as well as the frequency with which peasants and household staff employ them. The family nanny, Matryona Filimonova, for instance, attempts to comfort her disconsolate master in the opening scenes of Chapter Two of Book One with the timeless religious message “God is merciful/Бог милостив” so characteristic of the god-centered moral-didactic universe of the Russian peasant world.¹⁵ Equally characteristic of the peasant world’s simple and reductive universe is Matvei’s (the valet to Stiva) proverb-

like utterance that “everything will shape up/всё образуется” which Matvei and, later, Stiva Oblonsky himself, will repeat throughout the novel in response to the seemingly hopeless state of affairs in the household.¹⁶ Shortly thereafter Matryona addresses another timeless Russian proverb to Stiva Oblonsky in an attempt to convince him to apologize to his wife, Dolly: “Apologize, sir. No help for it! *After the dance, you must pay the... /Повинитесь, сударь. Что делать! Люби кататься.../*¹⁷ When Stiva replies that his wife will not listen to him, Matryona, too, invokes this very same proverb introduced by Matvei. Ironically, while the nanny is Dolly’s chief friend in the family, we learn that she sides with Stiva Oblonsky in this matter.

Another dimension of the Russian peasant mind-set reflected in Tolstoy’s use of Russian proverbs applies to the stubborn resistance and opposition that Konstantin Levin’s estate steward, Vassily Fyodorovich, shows for his master’s ambitious plans for spring projects on the estate. To Levin’s frustrations over the slovenly attitude of his peasant workers and steward in the early spring-season plans and preparations, the narrator observes: “The steward listened attentively and obviously made an effort to approve of the master’s suggestions; but all the same he had that hopeless and glum look, so familiar to Levin and always so irritating to him. This look said: ‘That’s all very well, *but it’s as God grants/Всё это хорошо, да как бог даст.*’¹⁸ Both in terms of Tolstoy’s development of Levin’s character as well as reflective of one of the underlying themes of the novel, this innate peasant sloth grounded in an unwillingness to tackle more than God deigns fit remains foreign to Levin’s ambitious personality and firm beliefs. Throughout nearly the entire novel he has dedicated himself to writing a book advocating the role of the peasant’s personality when planning for agricultural reform in Russia. Now, however, the very people whom he champions seem to oppose his ideas for them. When Levin suggests to his steward that he himself will contribute his own physical labor to working the estate, Vassily Fyodorovich responds with a characteristic Russian proverb: “You don’t seem to sleep much, as it is. *More fun for us, under the master’s eye..../Да вы и то, кажется, мало спите. Нам веселей, как у хозяина на глазах....*”¹⁹ Confirming this sense of the peasantry’s innate understanding of how to please the master while at the same time expending as little per-

sonal effort as possible, the reader meets yet another peasant field worker a few pages later in the same chapter who once again calls upon the timeless wisdom of a peasant proverb to state his case to Levin. Attempting to persuade his superior of his efforts to perform only the best quality of work on the Levin estate, the peasant states he abhors careless work: “I don’t like doing bad work myself and I tell the others the same. *If the master’s pleased, so are we*/Я и сам не люблю дурно делать и другим не веляю. *Хозяину хорошо, и нам хорошо.*”²⁰

Part Three of the novel also benefits from a number of typically Russian peasant proverbs that contribute both to character development in the novel as well as to major underlying themes key to the deployment of Tolstoy’s didactic messages. Not surprisingly, the famous mowing scene in this Part of the novel reflects the major epiphany Levin experiences literally in learning how to move harmoniously with the flow of the strip mowing, as well as metaphorically in gaining an insight into a way of life that depends less on rational cogitation and deliberative thought processes and more on a life of harmony with the life force so central to Tolstoy’s way of thinking. Sensing that his body requires physical exercise to offset what he fears to be an existential deterioration, Levin resolves to mow the fields with his peasants (forty-two in number) regardless of how awkward he may appear before them or his older half-brother Sergei Koznyshev, currently visiting the estate. Having completed the initial swaths, the team of peasants seems pleased with Levin’s first efforts. One of them, however, cautions with the wisdom of a timeless Russian proverb: “Watch out, master, *Once you start there’s no stopping*/Смотри, барин, *взялся за гуж, не оставать.*”²¹ Levin cheerfully responds that he will try to keep up, and takes a place once again behind Titus, his tutor in mowing. Having completed a second and, then, a third swath, he makes an important personal discovery:

A change now began to take place in his work which gave him enormous pleasure. In the midst of his work moments came to him when he forgot what he was doing and began to feel light, and in those moments his swath came out as even and good as Titus’s. But as soon as he

remembered what he was doing and started to do better, he at once felt how hard the work was and the swath came out badly.²²

This realization of the bliss one experiences when acting in concert with the normal flow of one's body suggests a brief glimpse of the spiritual lesson Levin will learn by the end of the novel. In opposition to the constant cerebral impulses that engage Tolstoy's hero throughout seven books of the novel, Levin gradually comes to translate this physical epiphany he has realized in the mowing fields to his personal life. As we will see later in this paper, yet another peasant will lead the way for this existential discovery. At the close of the mowing scene in Part Three, however, Titus imparts one final proverbial lesson in response to Levin's concern that the hay will be spoiled in the falling rain: "Never mind, master, *mow when it rains, rake when it shines*/Ничего, барин, *в дождь коси, в погоду гребу!*"²³ Here again Tolstoy displays a preference for the natural, innate wisdom of the peasant experience over the more cognitive, cerebral reasoning of the constantly searching Levin.

Following the famous mowing scene in Part Three of the novel, yet another major peasant in Levin's life exerts an important influence on him, his house servant Agafya Mikhailovna. Tolstoy informs his readers that Agafya was familiar with all the details of Levin's plans for his estate, down to the finest detail. She implicitly understands, therefore, the dubious foundations of the logic-ridden, all-too-cerebral thought processes that inform his book about the future role of peasants in the coming agricultural reforms for rural Russia. Levin, on the other hand, believes that his book will result in a revolution in political economy and yet, would "abolish that science altogether and initiate a new science—of the relationship of the peasantry to the land."²⁴ To Levin's assertion that his own profit is linked to the quality of work produced by his peasant workers, Agafya invokes the wisdom of an old Russian proverb: "Whatever you do, *if he [the peasant] is a lazybones, everything will come out slapdash*/Да уж вы как не делайте, *он коли лентяй, так всё будет чрез пень колоду валить.*"²⁵ As it turns out, Levin already understands the wisdom of his house-servant's words, having experi-

enced precisely the same attitude and behavior from his steward and the estate peasants earlier in the day.

A second category of proverbs in Tolstoy's novel relates to the conversations and expressions employed by the various social circles that comprise Anna's St. Petersburg and Moscow life. Unlike the previous category of expressions uttered by peasants and house servants, many aspects of this second group of proverbs reflect rather negatively on the more well-healed members of Russian society. In addition, these proverbs are often delivered in the foreign language of their origin, typically French, English, German or, in a few cases, Latin.

Unlike the more "natural" and harmonious agrarian world of Konstantin Levin, which the author consistently depicts in the most positive of terms, the description provided of the three Petersburg societies that define Anna's existence offer a strikingly more negative impression. The first subdivision of this society relates to the official service circle of Aleksei Aleksandrovich, Anna's husband. The second circle, in which Aleksei Aleksandrovich had made his career, revolved around Countess Lydia Ivanovna and is painted as a circle of "elderly, unattractive, virtuous and pious women and of intelligent, educated and ambitious men."²⁶ The final circle in which Anna moves and which she comes to frequent and prefer following the consummation of her affair with Vronsky is located in society proper—"the society of balls, dinners, splendid gowns, a *monde* that held on with one hand to the court, so as not to descend to the *demi-monde*, which the members of this circle thought they despised, but with which they shared not only similar but the same tastes."²⁷ Revolving around Anna's cousin's wife, Princess Betsy Tverskoy, this is the circle in which Anna and Vronsky openly conducted their relationship. It is richly characterized by the shallowness, banality, and duplicity of its members. Tolstoy has Princess Betsy, for example, mis-quote a biblical proverb in response to Vronsky's lengthy account of how he acted as peacemaker between a husband and his wife's offender: "'*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be saved,*'" said Betsy, remembering hearing something of the sort from someone/ *Блаженны миротворцы, они спасутся*,--сказала Бетси, вспоминая что-то подобное, слышанное ею от кого-то."²⁸

The scene at Princess Betsy's soiree in Book Two of the novel introduces a host of vapid, silly, and morally-challenged members of Petersburg society by way of contrast to the more stable and moral world in which Levin lives. The insipid tenor of a conversation about the nature of love one evening is a case in point. Among the guests is an unnamed Russian diplomat, who manages to insert two weakly-motivated proverbs into the course of the conversation—one taken from the French language, the other from English: “‘*No one is pleased with his fortune, but everyone is pleased with his wit,*’ said the diplomat, quoting some French verse/ *Никто не доволен своим состоянием, и всякий доволен своим умом.*”²⁹ When the conversation turns to the question of a perceived need in a successful marriage for both partners to have sown their oats in their youth, Princess Betsy, the ambassador's wife, and the same diplomat have the following exchange:

“No, joking aside, I think that in order to know love one must make a mistake, and then correct it,” said Princess Betsy.

“Even after marriage,” the ambassador's wife said jokingly.

“‘It's never too late to repent.’ The diplomat uttered an English proverb/

‘Никогда не поздно раскаяться’,--сказал дипломат английскую пословицу.”³⁰

Perhaps the most insipid yet representative member of Anna's new social circle is Princess Miagky, who manages to enjoy the respect of its members for her skill in uttering the most simple-minded of statements-- even when they were quite inappropriate to a given context or conversation. For example, in the earlier conversation about the nature of love, she manages to observe: “When I was young, I was in love with a beadle,...I don't know whether that helped me or not.”³¹ In the same conversation that evening at Princess Betsy's, Princess Miagky manages entirely to misrepresent and wrongly attribute a Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1871) fairy tale to the Brothers Grimm. When the ambassador's wife snidely alludes to Vronsky as a “shadow”

that Anna recently has brought back with her from Moscow, Princess Miagky characteristically responds with the kind of nonsensical statement for which she has become famous in Anna's social circle. Tellingly, in Tolstoy's attempt to ridicule the shallow nature of Anna's newly-embraced social circle, the ambassador's wife in this scene had just finished making herself look silly by referring to a Grimm fable whose meaning she never fully understood. Metaphorically alluding to Vronsky as the "shadow" whom Anna had recently brought with her from Moscow, the ambassador's wife opines: "What of it? Grimm has a fable—a man without a shadow, a man deprived of a shadow. And it's his punishment for something. I could never understand where the punishment lay. But it must be unpleasant for a woman to be without a shadow."³² As Richard Pevear has observed, as maladroit in peppering their puerile conversations with foreign proverbs, Princess Miagky and her circle seem equally ill-at-ease with the provenance of Danish fairy tales and German fables.³³

Princess Betsy's shallow society world of petty morals and self-indulgent manners continues to unfold in Book Three of the novel, when Anna is once again invited to a croquet party at the Princess's home, this time in the company of the young and unfaithfully married Liza Merkalov, who has been joined by two of her constant and much older suitors. When Anna asks Princess Betsy about the mysterious relationship between Liza and one of these suitors, Prince Kaluzhsky, Betsy responds in her native Russian tongue but characteristically employs a French proverbial expressions, "It's the new way,...they've all chosen this way. *They've thrown their bonnets over the mills/Они забросили чепцы за мельницы*. But there are different ways of throwing them over."³⁴ As often is the case in the self-absorbed world of Petersburg society, Tolstoy reveals the vapid values of Russia's social elite through the medium of foreign expressions, proverbs, and speech. Princess Betsy, for instance, responds to Anna's question about Liza Merkalov with a Russian version of a French phrase: "It's the question of a terrible child/Это вопрос ужасного ребёнка."³⁵ Later in Book Five of the novel, when Anna and Vronsky's affair is not fashionably viewed and embraced in Princess Betsy's social world because they no longer

are merely involved in a passionate liaison, but have actually fallen in love with one another, Betsy will repeat the same French proverb to Vronsky. Uncomfortably aware of the negative attention Anna and Vronsky have attracted in society, Betsy inquires of him news about the impending divorce: "You haven't told me when the divorce will be. Granted *I've thrown my bonnet over the mills/Я забросила свой чепец через мельницу*, but other starched collars will blow cold on you until you get married."³⁶

Tolstoy employs Russian proverbs not only to help depict the views and attitudes of social groups representative, for instance, of peasants and Petersburg society circles, but attaches them as well to the thematic development of individual characters in his novel. A case in point is Alexei Alexandrovich Karenin, whose cold, aloof personality is readily enhanced by a flair for peppering his speech with proverbial wisdom. Unlike so many of the characters from Princess Betsy's fashionable social circles and their preference for speaking French or inserting French proverbs and proverbial expressions into their speech, the bureaucratic and staid Karenin is more comfortable with German proverbs. For example, Tolstoy provides the following description of both Karenin's character and hectic life style towards the end of Book One: "Every minute of every day was occupied and scheduled. And in order to have time to do what he had to do each day, he held to the strictest punctuality. '*Without haste and without rest/Без поспешности и без отдыха* was his motto."³⁷ It is not difficult to imagine that following her seductive introduction to Vronsky, Anna found her husband's cold and punctilious mind set less attractive. Later in the novel, Aleksei Aleksandrovich characteristically incorporates a bookish Latin proverb in his thoughts upon learning the news that his political rival, Stremov, had been appointed to the government position that he coveted: "*Quos vult perdere dementant, /Кого бог хочет погубить, того он лишает разума*, he said, meaning by *quos* those persons who had furthered this appointment."³⁸

Not surprisingly, given Karenin's zealously proper personality, Aleksei Aleksandrovich and his closest associates display a predilection for biblical proverbs, as seen in his conversation with Aleksei Vronsky when he manages to insert two biblical expressions into one sentence:

When I received her telegram, I came here with the same feelings—I will say more: I wished for her death... But I saw her and I forgave. And the happiness of forgiveness revealed my duty to me. I forgave her completely. *I want to turn the other cheek/Я хочу подставить другую щеку, I want to give my shirt when my caftan is taken/Я хочу отдать рубаху, когда у меня берут кафтан*, and I only pray to God that He not take from me the happiness of forgiveness.³⁹

This biblical proverb seemingly appeals to the boorish Karenin, as he employs it again shortly thereafter in a conversation with Vronsky as his wife lies on her deathbed.

Following Anna's consummation of her affair with Vronsky in Book Two, her husband's attitude and behavior towards her understandably become even more painfully awkward and uncomfortable. Resolving not to chastise his wife in public for her adulterous conduct, Aleksei Aleksandrovich vacillates between mild derision and tedious moralizing in conducting day-to-day household affairs with her. In the scene at the horse races, for example, he rather awkwardly reminds Anna of her financial dependence upon him by inserting a Russian proverb into their painful exchange of words: "I also came to bring you money, since *nightingales aren't fed on fables/соловья баснями не кормят*. You need it, I suppose."⁴⁰ By Book Four of the novel, Karenin becomes even more distraught by the openness of Anna's affair with Vronsky. Having awkwardly bumped into his wife's lover on the porch of his own home, Karenin finds himself reflecting in the middle of the night on all that has gone wrong with his formerly precise and ordered life. Tolstoy employs his characteristic quasi-indirect narrative discourse style (*skaz*) in reflecting the frustration of Karenin's anxieties and embedding a proverb to summarize his troubled state of mind:

The feeling of wrath against his wife, who did not want to observe propriety and fulfill the only condition placed upon her—not to receive her lover at home—left him no peace. She had not fulfilled his request, and he must now carry out his threat—demand a divorce and take her son from her. He knew all the difficulties connected with this

matter, but he had said that he would do it and now he had to carry out his threat. Countess Lydia Ivanovna had hinted to him that this was the best way out of his situation, and lately the practice of divorce had brought the matter to such perfection that Alexei Alexandrovich saw a possibility of overcoming the formal difficulties. Besides, *misfortunes never come singly*/беда одна не ходит, and the cases of the settlement of the racial minorities and the irrigation of the fields in Zaraysk province had brought down on Alexei Alexandrovich such troubles at work that he had been extremely vexed all the time recently.⁴¹

Tolstoy reflects Karenin's formulaic, reductivist mindset as well as that of the social world in which he exists through a series of proverbs and proverbial expressions throughout the novel in general, but particularly in Books Four and Five. The divorce lawyer whom Karenin consults, for example, strikes readers as a more odious version of Aleksei Aleksandrovich in Chapter Five of Book Four. Seeming to enjoy far too much the awkward circumstances in which his client finds himself, the lawyer entertains himself by catching moths with his hand while Karenin relates the sordid details of his wife's infidelity. Calling upon the age-old wisdom of a proverb, the lawyer then attempts to convince Aleksei Aleksandrovich that he should place himself totally in his hands: "And, in general, if you do me the honour of granting me your trust, you should leave me the choice of measures to be employed. *He who wants results must allow for the means*/Кто хочет результата, тот допускает и средства."⁴²

Another relationship where Tolstoy employs proverbs for purposes of character and theme development relates to the rather close friendship between Aleksei Aleksandrovich and the excessively-pious Countess Lydia Ivanovna. As a member of the highest echelons of Petersburg society, she of course is prone to using French expressions in her speech. In addition, however, the sanctimony of her Russian "pietist" religious influence accounts for frequent recourse to biblical expressions. In Book Five, for example, in a scene where Aleksei Aleksandrovich accedes to her wishes to play a greater role in his family life, Lydia Ivanov-

na cites the wisdom of Luke: “But, my friend, don’t give in to that feeling you spoke of—of being ashamed of what is the true loftiness of a Christian: “*He that humbleth himself shall be exalted/Кто унижает себя, тот возвысится.*”⁴³ Indicative of the true nature of her piety and humility, Lydia Ivanovna leaves the room and goes to Anna’s and Aleksei Aleksandrovich’s nine-year-old son to tell him that his father is a saint and that his mother is dead. A few pages later Tolstoy depicts each of the two using a biblical proverbial expression in a conversation they conduct over the the response Anna had written to Aleksei Aleksandrovich regarding the question of their divorce:

‘No,’ Countess Lydia Ivanovna interrupted him. ‘There is a limit to everything. I can understand immorality,’ she said not quite sincerely,...’but I do not understand cruelty—and to whom? To you! How can she stay in the same town with you? No, *live and learn/век живи, век учись.* And I am learning to understand your loftiness and her baseness.’

‘And *who will throw the first stone/A кто бросит камень?*’ said Aleksei Aleksandrovich, obviously pleased with his role.⁴⁴

While Tolstoy held great regard for the power and expressiveness of the proverb, he clearly penetrated the falseness and shallowness of those, like Aleksei Aleksandrovich and Countess Lydia Ivanovna, who sought to abuse and overuse proverbial speech for their own petty advantage. Another example of this pretentious convention occurs in Book Seven of the novel, when the Countess approaches Anna’s brother, Stiva Oblonsky, at a formal dinner party with the gratuitously French expression: “I’ve known you for a long time and am very glad to get to know you more closely. *Les amis de nos amis sont nos amis.*”⁴⁵ Clearly, her designs in this scene are to protect the influence she holds over Karenin by making certain that Stiva does not succeed in gaining Karenin’s acquiescence to a formal divorce from Anna. The French expression she uses in greeting Stiva reflects both the undue preference of the Russian nobility for French proverbs

and proverbial expressions as well as her own intention to keep Anna's brother at arms' length.

A whole host of secondary characters in Tolstoy's novel also employs proverbial speech, with the author attaching certain kinds of proverbs to those characters associated with the more natural and folk world of Konstantin Levin, and still other categories of proverbial speech to characters related to Anna's more socially-oriented way of life. Konstantin's estranged brother, Nikolai, for example, could not be further removed from Anna's demi-world and, consequently, is characterized by uttering the more simple and folk-related proverbs characteristic of his brother's essentially rural existence. When Nikolai defensively introduces Marya Nikolaevna, a former prostitute and now a live-in companion, to his younger brother, he utters a timeless Russian proverb: "And this woman...is my life's companion.... I took her from a house.... She's the same as my wife, the same. ...And if you think you're lowering yourself, *here's your hat and there's the door*/*мак вам мебе боз, а вам нопоз.*"⁴⁶

Kitty's parents, Prince and Princess Scherbatsky, provide another example of Tolstoy's tendency to associate Russian proverbs with those characters in touch with his and Levin's more natural and Russian existence, and French or other foreign expressions with characters who lack the simple, wholesome, family-oriented values that Tolstoy and Levin prefer. For example, in Book Two of the novel, Princess Scherbatsky characteristically employs a French proverb as she finds her daughter succumbing to the influence of Mme. Stahl, a Russian pietist vacationing at the same German health spa as the Scherbatskys: "All this [Kitty's behavior] would have been very good, had it not been for its excessiveness. But the princess saw that her daughter was running to extremes, which she proceeded to tell her. '*Il ne faut jamais rien outrer*, she told her."⁴⁷ Kitty's father, Prince Scherbatsky, on the other hand, uses more earthy "wholesomely" native Russian proverbs in his speech. In Book Four of the novel, for example, in a scene at Stiva Oblonsky's dinner party, Prince Scherbatsky offers his opinion about what he sees to be the questionable value of women's education in contemporary Russian society: "'Remember the proverb?' said the old prince, who had long been listening to the conversation, his mocking little eyes twinkling. 'I can say it in front of my daughters: *long*

hair, short.../волос долог...” The Russian prince uses a truncated version of this well-known, paternalistic Russian proverb, *long on hair, short on brains/волос долог, да ум короток*.⁴⁸ Later in the novel (Book Eight) Prince Scherbatsky employs a proverbial comparison to characterize his (and Tolstoy’s) views on the “mob-mentality” tendency among the Russian intelligentsia at the time to converge previously diverse opinions into one unified voice of support for rapidly changing social views and opinions. The Russian prince singles out the news media as the primary culprit: “‘It’s the newspapers that all say the same thing,’ said the prince. ‘That’s true. And it’s so much the same that it’s *like frogs before a thunderstorm/что точно лягушки перед грозой*. You can’t hear anything on account of them.’”⁴⁹

Finally, Vasenka Veslovsky, the neer’-do-well Russian dandy, characteristically entones a French proverbial expression as he gorges himself on chicken following the disastrous first day of hunting, when he managed to run Levin’s horses into a puddle of mud: “*Bon appetit—bonne conscience! Ce poulet va tomber jusqu’ au fond de mes bottes.*”⁵⁰ Clearly, the Scottish-attired Frenchified dandy suffers no conscience for failing to help Levin dig the horse carriage out of the mud or for having nearly shot him during the hunting that day. By the second day of their hunting trip, even Stiva utters a proverbial expression at the expense of Vasenka, who shamelessly has been flirting with Levin’s wife: “*Heavy is the hat of Мономакh/Тяжела шапка Мономаха!* Stepan Arkadyich joked, obviously alluding not only to the conversation with the princess but to the cause of Levin’s agitation, which he had noticed.”⁵¹ Part of the genius in the structure of Tolstoy’s novel relates to Veslovsky’s visit in Book Six to both Levin’s and Vronsky’s rural estates. As a consequence of his rude behavior and boorish manners in the initial visit to Levin’s, Veslovsky is kicked off the estate by Levin himself. Significantly, however, he is not only welcomed by Anna and Vronsky at their estate, but he seems to fit in exceedingly well there. To ridicule Vasenka’s character even further—beyond his garrish attire, Tolstoy portrays the Russian dandy uttering a Russian proverb (translated into German) followed by a French language expression proclaiming his love for German: “*Wünscht man*

Roubles, so hat man auch Troubles,' said Va-senka Veslovsky, teasing the German. *'J'adore l'allemand.'*"⁵²

The two major protagonists of Tolstoy's novel, Anna and Konstantin Levin, similarly deploy a host of proverbs and proverbial expressions in their speech. Significantly, however, the nature of the proverbs they use says an awful lot about their personalities as well as about the message Tolstoy wishes to convey about their character. Anna, for instance, demonstrates a predilection for biblical expressions that relate directly to her social and moral predicament in the novel. In the famous scene at the ball toward the end of Book One, for example, Tolstoy implicitly foretells for his readers one of the major themes of the novel to come: that of who determines the guilt of others. As Kitty approaches the irresistible Anna, she barely overhears Anna's response to her host in a conversation to which neither Kitty nor the reader is party: "'No, *I won't cast a stone*/Я не брошу камня,' she replied to something, 'though I don't understand it,' she went on, shrugging her shoulders, and with a tender protective smile turned at once to Kitty."⁵³ The intended irony Tolstoy suggests here relates to the fact that while Anna is not the kind of person to condemn the behavior of others, as the novel unwinds she will become the subject of scorn and condemnation by her friends and family. As we have seen previously in our discussion of proverb usage in *Anna Karenina*, this particular biblical expression is uttered by a variety of characters, becoming *leitmotifs* in various scenes throughout the novel. Another irony relates to the fact that as a result of Anna's undisguised beauty and grace at the ball to which Vronsky will fall prey, Kitty will subsequently come to resent and even condemn Anna.

Later in Book One, Tolstoy telescopes yet another allusion to the important theme of guilt in his novel in a scene where Dolly expresses her gratitude to Anna for interceding in the marital strife in which she and Stiva find themselves: "'Without you, God knows what would have happened! You're so lucky, Anna!' said Dolly. 'Everything in your soul is clear and good.' [Anna] *'Each of us has his skeletons in his soul*/У каждого есть в душе свои skeletons, as the English say."⁵⁴ Characteristically, Anna uses an English proverbial expression to make her point rather than employing a phrase from her own, native Russian language. As we have seen previously, those characters whom

Tolstoy deems to operate outside the accepted conventions of proper moral conduct and behavior tend to employ proverbial speech from French or English rather than from their native tongue. Anna's reference to the "skeletons in her soul" is one of the earliest indications that she possesses inner secrets, passions, turmoils, which she alone seems to recognize. Tolstoy explicitly alters the original English proverbial expression in this scene from "skeletons in one's closet" to "in [one's] soul" to emphasize the turmoil Anna experiences as a result of the path she has chosen to pursue in her adulterous affair with Vronsky.

Earlier in Book Two Tolstoy inserted a proverbial expression into Anna's thoughts and reflections on the nature of the closed and accusing society in which she lives: "It was hard now for Anna to remember the sense of almost pious respect she had first felt for all these people. Now she knew them all as people know each other in a provincial town; knew who had which habits and weaknesses, *whose shoe pinched on which foot* *кого какой сапог жмёт на ногу...*"⁵⁵ Tellingly, as the narrative develops all three levels of Petersburg society will condemn and exclude Anna from their respective levels of social life and activities. This is one of the few instances where she uses a Russian proverbial expression rather than a French or English one. Another example occurs in the following Book (Three), where Anna mentally responds with a proverbial comparison to the painfully recriminating letter her husband, Aleksei Aleksandrovich, had sent her: "I know him, I know that he swims and delights in lies *like a fish in water*/*как рыба в воде*. But no, I won't give him that delight, I'll tear apart this web of lies he wants to wrap around me, come what may."⁵⁶

Anna characteristically returns to her preferred use of French expressions in the final scene before her death in Book Seven. Ruminating wildly in her thoughts about how Vronsky and, even, Kitty would react to her impending suicide, Anna fleetingly observes a passer-by in another carriage, who "...as he drove by in the opposite direction, took her for an acquaintance...." 'He thought he knew me. And he knows me as little as anyone else in the world knows me. I don't know myself. *I know my appetites*/*Я знаю свои аннетиты*, as the French say."⁵⁷ Aside from the disjunct nature of her stream-of-consciousness thoughts, Anna is

correct: throughout the novel she has failed to understand herself, the causes and consequences of her actions. But in the other respect she is equally correct: she has, indeed, known and understands her sexual appetites. After all, she has elected to break up her family, abandon both her son and her daughter, and to devote herself totally to her passions. This is quite unlike her foil in Tolstoy's novel, Konstantin Levin, who ultimately achieves a sense of harmony in his life defined by an essentially Russian understanding of Christian devotion and dedication to his family. In Tolstoy's moral universe, it is fitting that the character who lives outside the Russian notion of harmonious family life should find understanding and solace of sorts in a foreign idiom—the wisdom of a foreign, that is, non-Russian proverbial expression.

If Anna takes comfort in French and English proverbs and proverbial expressions, Konstantin Levin far more characteristically primarily uses Russian expressions in his speech throughout the novel. This tendency on Tolstoy's part reflects one of his main interests in shaping the personality of Levin: to depict the underlying native Russian aspects of his soul shown in harmony with the "life force" that the author juxtaposes to Anna's celebration of her passion and ego through an abandonment of Russian family values. Tolstoy projects Levin's fondness for Russian proverbs in much the same way that he prefers Russian groats and cabbage soup over the fine European wines and elegant dishes favored by the more epicurean Stiva Obonsky, when the latter invites Konstantin to lunch at a fashionable Moscow restaurant early in Book One of the novel. In a similar thematic parallel, Tolstoy develops a preference in his protagonist for a more natively-Russian approach to operating his agricultural estate in contrast to the West-European innovations employed by so many of his fellow landowners.

The first proverbial statement Levin utters illustrates this appreciation for the simple values of Russian life: to his housekeeper's, Agafya Mikhailovna's, observation that he has returned earlier than expected from Moscow, Levin characteristically replies, "I missed it, ... *there's no place like home/В гостях хорошо, а дома лучше.*"⁵⁸ Unlike Anna and so many other characters in the novel who look upon the Russian countryside primarily as a place to escape the demands of urban life, Levin considers rural life not an escape from real life but as, in-

deed, as real life itself. Less than a hundred pages later, in Book Two, Levin reflects the same sentiment in another proverb, when reminded by Oblonsky of Kitty's refusal of his marriage proposal: "Levin frowned. The offence of the refusal he had gone through burned his heart like a fresh, just-received wound. He was at home, and *at home even the walls help/A дома стены помогают.*"⁵⁹ The motif of home and family values operate as a major theme in Tolstoy's novel, shaping both character and plot as well as contributing to the novel's underlying theme.

Later, in Book Four, Levin inserts a reference to a well-known Russian proverb in a casual conversation with Aleksei Karenin at a dinner party hosted by Stiva Oblonsky. Seemingly cheerful owing to the attention Kitty has paid him that evening, Levin uncharacteristically relates an amusing account of the first time he and Karenin had met years earlier on a train ride from Tver: "The conductor, contrary to the proverb, *judged me by my clothes/хотел по платью проводить меня вон.*"⁶⁰ Tolstoy similarly implies Levin's uncharacteristic mirth later in the novel, in a scene where Levin reviews the frivolous and profligate way he had spent his early days in Moscow when he and Kitty returned from the countryside: "Only during his very first days in Moscow had Levin been struck by those unproductive but inevitable expenses so strange for a country-dweller... What had happened to him in this respect was what they say happens with drunkards: *the first glass is a stake, the second a snake, and from the third on it's all little birdies/первая рюмка—колом, вторая соколом, а после третьей—мелкими пташечками.*"⁶¹ In his recent three-volume dictionary of Russian proverbs, Valery Mokienko describes this expression as an instance of proverb-humor intended to reflect the effect of alcohol on a drunk. Tolstoy employs this metaphor to capture the unsavory effect that Moscow urban life has had on the country-dweller Levin, who finds himself writing checks and paying countless bills at every turn of his day. The Russian author attaches another proverbial comparison to Levin several pages later in the chapter, in a scene where he painfully realizes that he has mischaracterized the details of a court trial that he has just learned about: "Speaking of the impending sentencing of a foreigner who was on trial in Russia, and about how wrong it would be to sentence him to exile

abroad, Levin repeated what he had heard the day before from an acquaintance. 'I think that exiling him abroad *is the same as punishing a pike by throwing it into the water/всё равно что наказать щуку, пустив её в воду.*'⁶² Similar to the drunkard who can't distinguish the first glass of alcohol from the third, Levin only later realizes that this witticism that he earlier had tried to pass off as his own, actually derived from one of Ivan Krylov's (1769-1843) fables, "The Pike," about a corrupt court trial that punishes the guilty pike by throwing it into the river.

In view of Tolstoy's passion for proverbial speech, it is not surprising that the climactic moment in Levin's eight-hundred-page existential journey is rendered through the agency of Fyodor, one of his Russian peasants working on the estate. In response to Levin's question about how the innkeeper, Mityukha Kirillov, successfully makes a profit from a plot of land that he rents from Levin, Fyodor opines that Mityukha always pushes until he obtains his goals, unlike another local peasant, Platon, who "won't skin a man" and who lets others off even when it means that he will come up short. When Levin fails to understand why Platon should let anyone off, Fyodor responds: "Well, that's how it is—people are different. One man just lives for his own needs, take Mityukha even, just stuffs his belly, but Fokanych—he's an upright old man. He lives for the soul. He remembers God."⁶³ As a result of this exchange, Levin finally realizes that, unbeknownst to even himself, he has always been attempting to live like Fokanych. Suddenly, he understands that all of his cerebral attempts to discover the meaning of life had been for nought. All that he needed to do, he had already been doing intuitively his entire life—living for God, living for his soul. Understandably, Levin feels astounded by the simplicity of this miraculous epiphany he has experienced through the age-old wisdom of one of his peasants. Unlike Anna, who similarly had waged a search for a meaning to her life, Levin has come to realize that one cannot live for passion or for self but must, instead, live in harmony with a life-force above and beyond one's own personal desires.

While Levin's epiphany may strike some Western readers as contrived and poorly motivated, it conforms nicely to the timeless tradition of the 'righteous man,' the 'pravdivyi chelovek,' in Russian literary culture. Vladimir Dal' provides, perhaps, the

most insightful definition of the ‘righteous person’ as someone who is without sin and who lives in accordance with God’s law, and who acts justly in all matters.⁶⁴ While Fyodor’s moral ‘lesson’ comes as a surprise to Levin himself, readers have been aware from the opening pages of the novel of his wholesome goodness, child-like simplicity, and unstinting generosity. Unlike the cold dictates of reason, to which Tolstoy and Dostoevsky alike objected, Levin comes to understand that he must act more in accordance with a true life force that will free him from the despair that he and Anna have suffered throughout the novel. If the pride of ego eventually led to Anna’s despair and death, Levin has suffered from a pride of intellect, or reason that nearly brought him to a similar ruin. In this regard, I find myself in agreement with Saul Morson’s interpretation of this particular scene: Levin does not so much discover “truth” through a particular proverb, rather, he comes to realize an essential aspect of himself that has eluded him for much of his life.⁶⁵ In this regard Fyodor’s role in this scene recalls the character Platon from *War and Peace*, another peasant who similarly employs native folk wisdom to enlighten Pierre regarding his own existential quest in the novel.⁶⁶ That Fyodor’s and Platon’s innate peasant wisdom, often encapsulated in nuggets of proverbial speech, serve as the catalyst for this realization is not at all surprising: as the Russian proverb has it, «От пословицы не уйдёшь/You cannot escape a proverb.»⁶⁷

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Notes:

¹ Quoted in Henri Troyat, *Tolstoy* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1967), trans. from the French by Nancy Amphoux, 463.

² V. M. Mokienko, "O slovare pskovskikh poslovits i pogovorok," in *Slovar' pskovskikh poslovits i pogovorok*, compiled by V. M. Mokienko, T. G. Nikitkina (Sankt Peterburg: Olma, 2001), and Ol'ga Lomakina, "Frazeologiya L. N. Tolstogo: Tipologiya transformatsii paremii," in *Slovo, Tekst, Czas X: Jednostka frazeologiczna w tradycyjnych i nowych paradygmatach naukowych*, ed. by Michaił Aleksiejenki and Harry Walter, [Greifswald: Szczecin, 2010], 251.

³ *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennaya literatura] vol. viii, 1953, 302.

⁴ Estimates at the time reported that by the 1890's *Posrednik* published more than three-million copies yearly. For more information on this successful commercial publishing venture, see: George Rappall Noyes, *Tolstoy* (New York: Duffield, 1918), 287; Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literature and Popular Literature, 1861-1917* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 337-340; Thais Lindstrom, "From Chapbooks to Classics: The Story of the *Intermediary*," *American Slavic and East European Review*, No. 2 (1957), 190-201; Gary R. Jahn, "L. N. Tolstoy's Narodnye Rasskazy," *Russian Language Journal*, vol. 31, no. 109 (1977), 67-78;

⁵ "Tolstoy as Writer of Popular Literature," in *The Cambridge Companion to Tolstoy*, ed. by Donna Tussing Orwin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 114.

⁶ Described in Jahn, "Tolstoy as Writer of Popular Literature," 116.

⁷ V. M. Mokienko, T. G. Nikitkina, E. K. Nikolaevna, *Bol'shoi slovar' russkikh poslovits/ The Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs*, (Moskva: Olma, 2010), 634. All English-language citations from the novel are based on the Richard Pevear/Larissa Volokhonsky translation, *Anna Karenina* (New York: Penguin Group, 2000). Original Russian citations are based on L. N. Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina* (Leningrad: "Khudozhestvennaya literatura," 1967, vol. 1 and vol. 2.

⁸ See Turner for analysis on p. 126. *Deuteronomy* 32:35; quoted in *Romans* 12:19 and *Hebrews* 10:30.

⁹ For an enlightening discussion of Tolstoy's "absolute language," see Gary Soul Morson's seminal article, "Tolstoy's Absolute Language," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 7.4 (1981), 667-687. For additional consideration of the epigraph, see Rebecca Hogan, "Set Phrases of Consolation and Exhortation: Judging Proverbial and Biblical Wisdom in *Anna Karenina*," in *Proverbs in Russian Literature: From Catherine the Great to Alexander Solzhenitsyn*, edited by Kevin J. McKenna (Burlington, Vermont: Supplement Series of *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*, 1998), 75-89. Professor Mokienko includes this biblical proverb in his recently published *Tolkovyi slovar' bibleiskikh vyrazhenii i slov/Explanatory Dictionary of Biblical Expressions and Words* (Astrel': Moskva, 2010), 348.

¹⁰ AK, vol. 1, 1/3. Hereafter page references to the English language translation of the novel will appear first, followed by a slash symbol (/) and the page from the Russian original. While not listed in Russian proverb collections, the wisdom of this literary proverb soon entered into the proverb-lexicon of the Russian language immediately following the publication of Tolstoy's novel in 1877.

¹¹ Morson, "Tolstoy's Absolute Language," 674.

¹² *Anna Karenina in Our Time: Seeing More Wisely* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 35 and note 1, 235-236.

¹³ AK, vol. 1, 1/3.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 6/8. Mokienko, *Tolkovy slovar' bibleiskikh vyrazhenii i slov*, 87.

¹⁶ AK, 5/8.

¹⁷ Ibid., 6/8. Mokienko, *Bol'shoi slovar' russkikh poslovits*, 783. Both Tolstoy and the English-language translation truncate the original Russian proverb, deleting the ending to the second half of the proverb "...люби и саночки возить." Hence the full Russian literal translation would read: «If you want to ski, you must carry the sleigh [uphill].»

¹⁸ AK, 156/170. Mokienko, *Bol'shoi slovar' russkikh poslovits* 58.

¹⁹ Ibid. Mokienko, *Bol'shoi slovar' russkikh poslovits*, 961.

²⁰ Ibid., 158/171. Mokienko, 162.

²¹ Ibid., 249/271. Mokienko, 229. Tolstoy provides a variation to this proverb by changing the wording and inserting the verb "there's no stopping," in place of the original proverb cited in Vladimir Dal' and Mokienko: *Взялся за гуж, не говори, что не дюж/Once you've taken on the yoke, don't say that you're not strong enough.*

²² Ibid., 251/271.

²³ Ibid. Mokienko, 285.

²⁴ Ibid., 343/373.

²⁵ Ibid., 345/375. Mokienko, 644.

²⁶ Ibid., 127/138-139.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 129/141. This misquotation from *Matthew 5:9* highlights Princess Betsy's light-headed attitude toward the scriptures and the more normative values they represent. It also reflects her eagerness to spur on what she sees to be a humorous account of Vronsky's interceding between a jealous husband and one of his fellow officers. The original form of this biblical proverb is: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Mokienko, *Tolovy slovar' bibleiskikh vyrazhenii i slov*, 84, 318.

²⁹ Ibid., 136/148. This is an almost literal translation of '*Nul n'est content de sa fortune, ni mécontent de son esprit*,' a line from the French pastoral poet Mme Antoinette Déshoulières (1637-1694).

³⁰ Ibid., 138/150.

³¹ Ibid., 138/150.

³² Ibid., 135/147.

³³ See the *Notes* section to his translation of Tolstoy's novel, where Pevear states there is no such tale in the collection of the Brothers Grimm, and that Princess Miagky fails to realize that the motif of the lost shadow relates to *The Extraordinary Adventures of Peter Schlemihl*, by Adalbert de Chamisso de Boncourt (1781-1838), a German Romantic writer of French origin. The Russian translation of "The Shadow," by Hans Christian Andersen appeared in 1870, three years before Tolstoy began writing his novel, 823.

³⁴ *Anna Karenina*, 297/323-324. The first saying literally translates the French: *jeter son bonnet pardessus les moulins* which means to throw caution to the winds.

³⁵ Ibid. Princess Betsy's latter expression is another literal translation of the French *être un enfant terrible*.

³⁶ Ibid., 529/ II, 103.

³⁷ Ibid., 109/ I, 120. While not a Russian proverb, this expression represents a Russian version of the German saying.

³⁸ Ibid., 409/442. Similarly, this Latin proverb is not found in Mokienko's dictionary of proverbs.

³⁹ Ibid., 414/448. *Luke*, 6:29.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 206/224. Mokienko, 854.

⁴¹ Ibid., 362/393. Mokienko, 39.

⁴² Ibid., 369/400. Mokienko, 967.

⁴³ Ibid., 510/II, 82. *Luke*, 14:11.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 519/II, 92. *John*, 8:7: "He that is without sin among you, *let him cast a stone* at her."

⁴⁵ Ibid., 733/II, 319. Tolstoy provides the Russian translation of this French expression: "*Druz'ia nashikh družei—nashi druž'ia* in a footnote."

⁴⁶ Ibid., 87/97. Mokienko, 62. The Pevear translation of this Russian proverb inserts the word "hat" for "God." The reference in the original proverb to God alludes to the corner in a Russian peasant hut, where the icons hang.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 225/244.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 388/421. Mokienko, 144.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 808/II, 400. V. M. Mokienko, T. G. Nikitina. *Bol'shoi slovar' russkikh pogovorok/The Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbial Expressions*, (Moskva: Olma. 2008), 153.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 581/II, 158. The English translation of this French humorous expression is: A good appetite means a good conscience! This chicken is going to drop right to the bottom of my boots [that is, it is going to go down very well].

⁵¹ Ibid., 598/II, 177. Tolstoy refers here to Prince Vladimir Monomakh (1053-1126), whose Byzantine "hat" became the hereditary crown of the Russian tsars. V. M. Mokienko, T. G. Nikitina. *Bol'shoi slovar' narodnykh sravnenii/The Great Dictionary of Folk Comparisons*, (Moskva: Olma. 2008), 745.

⁵² Ibid., 631/II, 211. This proverb that Veslovsky translates into German appears in Russian as *Кто хочет иметь доходы, тот должен иметь хлопот*.

номы/A man who wants roubles will also have troubles. Ironically, Veslovsky expresses his love for the German language in French.

⁵³ Ibid., 79/88. Mokienko, *Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs*, 399. See note 32.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 97/108.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 126/138.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 293/318.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 760, II, 349.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 93/103. Mokienko, *Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs*, 218.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 172/186. Mokienko, Ibid., 874.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 385/417. Mokienko, Ibid., 621. The original Russian reads: "One is received according to his dress, but seen off according to his intellect/По одежке встречают, по уму провожают.

⁶¹ Ibid., 677/II, 259. V. M. Mokienko, T. G. Nikitina. *Bol'shoi slovar' narodnykh sravnenii/The Great Dictionary of Folk Comparisons*, (Moskva: Olma, 2008), 272.

⁶² Ibid., 688, II, 272. Mokienko, *The Great Dictionary of Russian Folk Comparisons*, 770

⁶³ Ibid., 794/386.

⁶⁴ Vladimir Dal', *Tolkovy slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo yazyka*, (Moskva: Ripol Klassik, 2002), vol. 3, 373. Such righteous persons have appeared throughout Russian culture, beginning in medieval times and continuing to present day Russia in the person of the recently deceased Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008).

⁶⁵ *Anna Karenina in Our Time: Seeing More Wisely*, 209-210.

⁶⁶ *War and Peace*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), edited by George Gibian, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, 858/437.

⁶⁷ Mokienko, *Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs*, 703.

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

“LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS”:
MARTIN LUTHER KING’S PROVERBIAL STRUGGLE FOR
EQUALITY

Abstract: In barely forty years of life Martin Luther King (1929-1968) distinguished himself as one of the greatest social reformers of modern times. A vast array of biographies and studies have celebrated him as a civil rights leader, a defender of nonviolence in the struggle of desegregation, a champion of the poor, an anti-war proponent, and a broad-minded visionary of an interrelated world of free people. His large amount of verbal and written communications in the form of sermons, speeches, interviews, letters, essays, and several books are replete with Bible proverbs as “Love your enemies”, “He who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword”, and “Man does not live by bread alone” as well as folk proverbs as “Time and tide wait for no man”, “Last hired, first fired”, “No gain without pain”, and “Making a way out of no way.” He also delights in citing quotations that have long become proverbs, to wit “No man is an island”, “All men are created equal”, and “No lie can live forever.” King recycles these bits of traditional wisdom in various contexts, varying his proverbial messages as he addresses the multifaceted issues of civil rights. His rhetorical prowess is thus informed to a considerable degree by his effective use of his repertoire of proverbs which he frequently uses as leitmotifs or amasses into set pieces of fixed phrases to be employed repeatedly.

Keywords: African American, American, anaphora, authority, Bible, civil rights, communication, context, folklore, Martin Luther King, leitmotif, metaphor, oratory, politics, proverb, quotation, repertoire, rhetoric, set piece, variation

A vast array of biographies and studies have celebrated Martin Luther King (1929-1968) as a civil rights leader, a defender of nonviolence in the struggle for desegregation, a champion for the poor, an anti-war proponent, and a broad-minded visionary of an interrelated world of free people. The proverbial truths expressed in the beginning of the Declaration of Independence that “All men are created equal” and that they have the right for “life, liberty,

and the pursuit of happiness” form the basis of his engaged and heartfelt fight for freedom, universal suffrage, anti-racism, and socioeconomic improvements for minorities. As a communicator *par excellence*, he made ample use of fixed phrases as leitmotifs in his effective oral and written rhetoric in the service of a plethora of topics and causes. Even though the term “proverb” does not belong to King’s active vocabulary, he most certainly delights in using folk and Bible proverbs, famous quotations (of which some have taken on a definite claim to proverbiality), and a wealth of proverbial phrases.

It is incomprehensible that the vast scholarship on King’s magisterial use of the English language has hardly commented on the proverbial nature of his multifaceted communications. It is as if the study of rhetoric as a discipline by not stressing phraseological matters has prevented any attention being paid to such preformulated language. As the massive two-volume collection of recent essays entitled *Phraseology: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research* (Burger et al. 2007) shows, this picture is slowly changing, since rhetorical scholars are now more eager to include the disciplines of phraseology in general and paremiology (the study of proverbs) in particular (Mieder 2009a). Nevertheless, regarding the proverbial language of Martin Luther King, the studies dedicated to his highly expressive and emotive language have almost completely ignored his reliance on proverbs and proverbial expressions, with my former student Dženeta Karabegović’s revealing short essay “‘No Lie Can Live Forever’: Zur sprichwörtlichen Rhetorik von Martin Luther King” (2007) being the big exception.

Having surveyed the extant secondary literature on King’s sermonic and sociopolitical language, there is little to report. Mervyn A. Warren deals with the “vividness and imagery” as well as the “figures of speech” (Warren 1966: 201; also in Warren 2001: 145) in King’s style, but no mention is made of proverbial matters in the discussion of alliteration, anaphora, comparison, metaphor, repetition, and simile (See Warren 1966: 201-208; also in Warren 2001: 145-151). Other scholars speak of King’s “figures of speech – similes, metaphors, allegories, and personifications” (Boulware 1969: 254), his “metaphoricality” (Spillers 1971: 17 [1989: 879]), and his stylistic preoccupation with metaphors,

repetition, parallelism, and antithesis (Ensslin 1990: 120-122), with Lewis V. Baldwin at least referring in passing to "King's eloquence and brilliant use of imagery and the folk idiom [that] help explain the ease with which he found a route to the hearts and eventually to the heads of his people" (Baldwin 1991: 296). Jonathan Rieder makes the keen observation that "A King [sermonic or rhetorical] performance was a collective act [...]: his [...] sermons and speeches were collage compositions. [...] If he was able to provoke assorted audiences, it was because his life lay at the junction of diverse lines of affiliation that taught him to speak in many tongues. Those networks formed a transmission belt through which the raw materials of song, argument, homily, citation, inflection, philosophy, sermon, rhythm, examples, authors, theology, and ideas flowed" (Rieder 2008: 10-11). All of these remarks are perfectly fitting, but why are proverbs and proverbial phrases missing in these enumerations of King's elements of style?

Especially scholars who have pointed out that King's language is very much informed by orally transmitted speech patterns might have been expected to make a point of his reliance on fixed phrases. They discuss the sense of community during sermons that often included call-response or testifying between King as the preacher and his audience (Harrison and Harrison 1993: 169; Baldwin 1988:81-82 [1989: 41-42]). This give and take of the sermonic practice in African American churches (see Daniel and Smitherman 1976: 33-39; Daniel 1979) requires a language filled with formulaic expressions that help the audience to react as a group to statements made in the pulpit. Bruce Rosenberg has shown that repetition of familiar words, phrases and stories from the Bible enhance the comprehensibility and effectiveness of orally delivered sermons (Rosenberg 1970: 105), and Walter J. Ong has pointed out that traditional and formulaic phrases take on an extremely important communicative role in sermons and speeches that address audiences orally:

Formulas help implement rhythmic discourse and also act as mnemonic aids in their own right, as set expressions circulating through the mouths and ears of all. 'Red in the morning, the sailor's warning; red in the night, the sailor's delight.' 'Divide and conquer.' 'To err is human, to forgive is divine.' [...] 'Chase off nature and she returns at a

gallop.’ Fixed, often rhythmically balanced, expressions of this sort and of other sorts can be found occasionally in print, indeed can be ‘looked up’ in books of sayings, but in oral cultures they are not occasional. They are incessant. They form the substance of thought itself. Thought in any extended form is impossible without them, for it consists in them. (Ong 1982: 35)

Referring to Ong’s findings, Keith D. Miller, as the undeniable expert on King’s differentiated rhetoric, has characterized his discursive use of formulaic language as “shared treasure, voice merging, and self-making” (Miller 1990: 77; see also Farrell 1991, and Miller 1991b). Miller also observed that “In the folk pulpit, one gains an authoritative voice by adopting the persona of previous speakers as one adapts the sermons and formulaic expressions of a sanctified tradition. Like generations of folk preachers before him, King often borrowed, modified, and synthesized themes, analogies, metaphors, quotations, illustrations, arrangements, and forms of argument used by other preachers. Like other folk preachers, King typically ended his oral sermons (and almost every major speech) by merging his voice with the lyrics of a spiritual, hymn, or gospel song” (Miller 1991a: 121). In other words, while many of his powerful formulaic statements are not his own, it is the “blending” (Rieder 2008: 160) of them with his own voice that assures the discursive powers of Martin Luther King as a speaker and writer.

David Fler has spoken in this regard of King’s impressive and innovative “reformation” of his vast amount of sources. Reminding scholars and others that by 1957 King gave at least two hundred sermons and speeches a year (in later years one or two a day!), it should not be surprising that he had to rely on voice merging and certain sets of materials that he could easily intersperse into his sermons and speeches. This voice merging is part and parcel of his compelling and persuasive oral and written rhetoric, with his creative transformation or reformation of his sources making King a rhetorical artist (see Fleet 1995: 158-160). Similar thoughts and arguments were also presented by Keith D. Miller, arguing that King borrowed from many sources of which a considerable amount “are highly familiar – the modern equivalents

of the commonplaces of classical rhetoric" (Miller 1986: 249 [1989: 643]).

Rosa Louise Parks (1913-2005), the seamstress and civil rights champion who precipitated the successful bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, by her refusal on December 1, 1955, to adhere to the segregated bus-seating policies in that city, has perhaps characterized King's proverbially informed oratory the best: "But let us remember that what gave his speeches and sermons legitimacy was that Dr. King didn't just talk the talk; he walked the walk from Montgomery to Memphis, enduring jails, beatings, abuse, threats, the bombing of his home, and the highest sacrifice a person can make for a righteous cause" (Carson and Shepard 2001: 4). Yes, indeed, Martin Luther King is the epitome of the black folk wisdom of "talking the talk and walking the walk." He breathed, talked and walked civil rights by word and deed, setting an example for millions of African Americans in particular and Americans in general. In his nonviolent but compassionate and unbending struggle for "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" he left no proverbial stone unturned, making ample use of Bible and folk proverbs as well as proverbial expressions and proverb-like quotations to add metaphorical and emotive expressiveness to his oral and written messages (see Mieder 2011).

Even though King is not prone to use the term "proverb" he certainly based a number of sermon outlines and actual sermons on the explication of proverbs, citing them at times as leitmotifs but not explicitly referring to them as Bible or folk proverbs. Always being the preacher and teacher, it is not surprising that he would call on such proverbial wisdom as a base of his religious and social messages. An early example can be seen from a minuscule sermon introduction with the proverb "Life is what you make it" as a title:

Life Is What You Make It

INTRODUCTION

Many people wander into the world, and they pick up everything they can get their hands upon looking for life. They never get it. What they get is existence. Existence is what you find; life is what you create. Therefore, if life ever seems worth while to you, it is not because you found it that way, but because you

made it so. (VI,83-84; Nov. 30, 1948 – Feb. 16, 1949; all Roman numerals refer to the six volumes of Clayborne Carson et al. [eds.], *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.* [1992-2007])

Always having yet another sermon in mind, King also wrote down short sermon conclusions that might come in handy when another text needed to be composed in a hurry. These introductions and conclusions were kept in folders for ready reference. The following example is once again of special interest, since King uses the introductory formula “there is an old saying” to indicate that he is citing a folk proverb. The “saying”-designation implies a proverb, of course, but even this term appears very seldom in King’s communications:

Success In Life

There is an old saying, “If wishes were horses beggars would ride.” Friends, the great highroad of success lies along the old high-way of steadfast well-doing; and they who are the most industrious and the most persistent, and work in the truest spirit, will invariably be the most successful. Success treads on the heels of every right effort. (VI,85; Nov. 30 1848 – Feb. 16, 1849)

While such paragraphs are mere rudiments, King also has left us with complete sermons with a proverbial title and an ensuing explication of that very text. The quintessential example is King’s preoccupation with the Bible proverb “Love your enemies” (Matt. 5:44) which he explicated in a number of related “Loving Your Enemies”-sermons. In fact, King used the proverb “Love your enemies” a total of 53 times, and it will be no surprise to anyone that it is Martin Luther King’s most favorite proverb as an expression of his Christian-based “fundamental concept of nonviolence” (Hedgepeth 1984: 81 [1989: 543]). In his “Loving Your Enemies”-sermon delivered on November 17, 1957, at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, King points out that the idea of nonviolence is perfectly expressed in the “Love your enemies”-proverb of the New Testament:

So I want to turn your attention to this subject: “Loving Your Enemies.” It’s so basic to me because it is a part of

my basic philosophical and theological orientation: the whole idea of love, the whole philosophy of love. In the fifth chapter of the gospel as recorded by Saint Matthew, we read these very arresting words, flowing from the lips of our Lord and Master: "Ye have heard that it has been said, 'Thou shall love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.' But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" [Matt. 5:43-45]. (IV,3126; Nov. 17, 1957)

When he gave yet another version of this sermon on March 7, 1961, at Detroit, his words and the Bible verses were quite similar, but they do show that he usually does not cite himself *verbatim*. In this later paragraph he argues from a much more personal vantage point and also connects the idea of loving one's enemies with civil rights issues:

Now this afternoon I would like to have you think with me on a passage of scripture that has been a great influence in my life and a passage that I have sought to bring to bear on the whole struggle for racial justice, which is taking place in our nation. The words are found in the fifth chapter of the gospel as recorded by Saint Matthew. And these words flow from the lips of our Lord and Master: "Ye have heard it said of old that thou shall love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" [Matt. 5:43-45]. (VI,422; March 7, 1961)

Additional references of this all-pervasive proverb in these and other sermons all illustrate the many mutations of King's basic argument that love is the key element in a world of nonviolence. Adding the folk proverb "Hate begets hate" as a warning to his emphasis on the Bible proverb "Love your enemies", he makes the following strong statement in yet another restatement of this sermon in his book *Strength to Love* (1963):

Why should we love our enemies? The first reason is fairly obvious. Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction. So when Jesus says “Love your enemies” [Matt. 5:44], he is setting forth a profound and ultimately inescapable admonition. Have we not come to such an impasse in the modern world that we must love our enemies – or else? The chain reaction of evil – hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars – must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation. (King 1963: 37)

This paragraph becomes a proverbial cautionary tale, as in fact many of King’s sermons might well be classified. Of course, despite all of this anxiety, gloom, and despair, King always has the audacity of hope for a better world. The purpose of his sermonic explications of proverbs is thus an uplifting attempt of finding a better way for humankind to struggle for freedom and peace throughout the world. His favorite Bible proverb “Love your enemies” is without doubt the wisdom that can lead us there.

Martin Luther King was above all a preacher whose “rhetoric was of the *Biblical vernacular*” (Marbury 1971: 4 [1989: 626]). He knew his Bible, and he spoke and wrote with the Holy Book always on his mind. He could cite entire passages from the Bible, and he used its well-known passages to add authority to his views and arguments (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites 1993). The scriptures were always with him, but as he quoted them, he also was perfectly capable to apply them to the sociopolitical issues of his time. While he was steeped in the Bible and believed in the word of God, he most certainly used its language and wisdom to help the cause of desegregation and civil rights along. There is thus hardly a page in King’s oeuvre that does not at least contain a reference to the Bible (Stevenson 1949; Mieder 1990). At times he retells Biblical parables or cites entire verses, but more often than not he restricts himself to but a sentence or two from the Bible.

Sometimes he explains the specific meaning that they might have for the modern world, and in other instances he employs them to add argumentative weight to his religious and social rhetoric. Since he is a social reformer wearing the preacher's robe, he is clearly also a moral teacher relying heavily on Bible proverbs to spread the good word. Preachers have always made use of Biblical proverbs (McKenzie 1996 and 2002), with his namesake Martin Luther having been a champion of Bible and folk proverbs in Germany during the Reformation (Cornette 1942 [1997]).

When King delivered one of the versions of his well-known sermon "The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life" on April 9, 1967, at New Covenant Church in Chicago, he included the proverb "Love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Gal. 5:14) as an expression of reciprocal love and two additional proverbial Bible passages from Amos and Isaiah. Above all, he summarizes the three dimensions of a complete life by way of the golden rule "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Matt. 7:12). This proverb that is known in various forms in the world's religions could easily have become King's proverbial leitmotif for his nonviolent struggle for human rights (Hertzler 1933-1934; Griffin 1991: 67-69; Templeton 1997: 8-12), but he chose the shorter and more direct proverb "Love your enemies" (Matt 5:44) instead. But here then is King's rhetorical masterpiece that amasses four Bible proverbs into a powerful statement of love, justice, peace, and morality:

Go out this morning. Love yourself, and that means rational and healthy self-interest. You are commanded to do that. That's the length of life. Then follow that: Love your neighbor as you love yourself [Gal. 5:14]. You are commanded to do that. That's the breadth of life. And I'm going to take my seat now by letting you know that there's a first and even greater commandment: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, [*Yeah*] with all thy soul, with all thy strength." I think the psychologist would just say "with all thy personality." And when you do that, you've got the breadth [King meant to say: height] of life.

And when you get all three of these together, you can walk and never get weary. You can look up and see the morning stars singing together, and the sons of God

shouting for joy. When you get all of these working together in your very life, judgment will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream [Amos 5:24].

When you get all the three of these together, the lamb will lie down with the lion [Isaiah 11:6]. [...]

When you get all three of these working together, you will do unto others as you'd have them do unto you [Matt. 7:12].

When you get all three of these together, you will recognize that out of one blood God made all men to dwell upon the face of the earth. (Carson and Holloran 1998: 139; April 9, 1967)

And yet, despite of its grand Biblical and moral rhetoric, this passage says nothing about racial and social matters. But such exclusion is relatively rare. In fact, the many sermons and the various versions of one and the same basic message offer valuable opportunities to illustrate Martin Luther King's *modus operandi* with the religious *and* sociopolitical implications of the proverbial wisdom included in them. A fine example involves the widely known Bible proverb "Man does not live by bread alone" (Deut. 8:3, Matt. 4:4) that appears in both the Old and New Testaments. King used it in a sermon on "The Christian Doctrine of Man" on March 12, 1958 at the Council of Churches' Noon Lenten Services at Detroit, stating that he as a minister has a moral and social obligation to his parishioners and the world at large. But there is also an extremely important interpretive twist of the proverb in this text when King states that the word "alone" in the proverb implies that Jesus was very well aware that man cannot live without bread nor by it alone (Turner 1977: 52 [1989: 1000]; Rieder 2008: 289). And this in turn gives King the proverbial argument that poverty must be combated in the United States and throughout the world:

And so in Christianity the body is sacred. The body is significant. This means that in any Christian doctrine of man we must forever be concerned about man's physical well-being. Jesus was concerned about that. He realized that men had to have certain physical necessities. One day he said, "Man cannot live by bread alone" [Deut. 8:3, Matt. 4:4]. [*Yeah*] But the mere fact that the "alone" was added

means that Jesus realized that man could not live without bread. [*Yes*] So as a minister of the gospel, I must not only preach to men and women to be good, but I must be concerned about the social conditions that often make them bad. [*Yeah*] It's not enough for me to tell men to be honest, but I must be concerned about the economic conditions that make them dishonest. [*Amen*] I must be concerned about the poverty in the world. I must be concerned about the ignorance in the world. I must be concerned about the slums in the world. (VI,332; March 12, 1958)

Usually relying on the proverbial wisdom of Jesus (Winton 1990), King found the perfect metaphor for his social agenda in the New Testament proverb "He who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword" (Matt. 26:52). It became *the* symbolic argument against all the ills of violent mistreatment of others. In his address on "The Montgomery Story" at the Annual NAACP Convention on June 27, 1956, at San Francisco, he cites the Bible proverb as a metaphorical sign of violence that must be overcome by a philosophy of nonviolence:

From the beginning there has been a basic philosophy undergirding our movement. It is a philosophy of nonviolent resistance. It is a philosophy which simply says we will refuse on a nonviolent basis, to cooperate with the evil of segregation. In our struggle in America we cannot fret with the idea of retaliatory violence. To use the method of violence would be both impractical and immoral. We have neither the instruments nor the techniques of violence, and even if we had it, it would be morally wrong. There is the voice crying [*applause*], there is a voice crying through the vista of time, saying: "He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword" [Matt. 26:52]. [*applause*] History is replete with the bleached bones of nations who failed to hear these words of truth, and so we decided to use the method of nonviolence, feeling that violence would not do the job. (III,305; June 27, 1956)

Many other passages with this "sword"-proverb could be cited, but suffice it to quote this one additional text from an address on

“Some Things We Must Do” that King gave on December 5, 1957, at the Second Annual Institute on Nonviolence and Social Change in Montgomery. It is once again a rather general statement on the opposition of violence and nonviolence, with such statements as “Violence solves no social problems” and “Violence is not the way” taking on the role of quotational slogans by Martin Luther King, even though they have not been recorded in books on King’s famous utterances (see Hoskins 1968; Ayres 1993):

We must plunge deeper into the whole philosophy of nonviolence as we continue to move on in our quest for freedom. As I look at our situation and the situation of oppressed peoples all over the world, it seems to me that there are three ways that oppressed people can deal with their oppression. One is to rise up in armed revolt, one is to rise up with violence, and many people have used that method. It seems that violence has become something of the inseparable twin of western materialism. It’s even become the hallmark of its grandeur. Violence nevertheless solves no social problems. It only creates new and more complicated ones. Yes, violence often brings about temporary victory, but never permanent peace. This evening as I stand before you, it seems that I can hear the voice crying through the vista of time, still saying to men in this generation: “He who lives by the sword, will perish by the sword” [Matt. 26:52]. [*All right*] History is cluttered with the wreckage of nations and communities that failed to hear that command. Violence is not the way. [...] It seems to me there is a third way. There is a third way that is more powerful and enduring and lasting than the first two: that is the way of nonviolent resistance. (IV,340-341; Dec. 5, 1957)

While Martin Luther King has numerous favorite Bible proverbs and literary quotations that he cites on numerous occasions as rhetorical leitmotifs, he does not show this great fascination with any particular folk proverb. This does not mean that he shies away from using such folk wisdom when it suits him, but as a preacher he is clearly more steeped in Biblical truths. As has been pointed out already, King does not even use the term “proverb” when cit-

ing proverbs from traditional folk speech. If he uses introductory formulas at all, he prefers such designations as truism or saying, but usually he simply integrates folk proverbs without calling special attention to them. He might well have thought that they are so well known that they need no label. After all, he assumes the same with many of the Bible proverbs that he also often does not identify as such. In any case, the fact remains that the frequency of Bible proverbs outweighs that of folk proverbs (there are plenty of proverbial expressions from folk speech!), and this might in part well be due to his pride in having obtained a Ph.D. degree. That does not automatically need to result in a lesser emphasis on folk speech in the form of proverbs, but it is a known fact that King used a rather elevated style in his oral and written communications. While some of the transcriptions of sermons in his home church include some colloquial speech, he usually speaks and writes in an uplifting style that is intended to reach audiences of varied racial, social, economic, and intellectual levels. His sermonic and agitating rhetoric is based on a conscious attempt to address his listeners and readers on a demanding linguistic and intellectual level. But, of course, that does by no means exclude the significant integration of proverbs and proverbial expressions in his highly emotional and argumentative language. As preformulated or ready-made linguistic units they flow quite naturally into his messages and add considerable wisdom and expressiveness to them. Even though King does not overemphasize folk proverbs by using them as sapiential leitmotifs, he uses numerous proverbs with much rhetorical skill. Actually, just as Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass have done before him and as Barack Obama is doing now, it is the combined emphasis on Bible and folk proverbs that makes their sociopolitical statements so effective (Mieder 2000, 2001, 2009c). People then and now could easily identify with this wisdom (see Mieder 1993) and subsequently marched along with their champions in the struggle for equality and freedom. There certainly is no doubt that proverbs have played a significant role in political discourse over the centuries, and they continue to be of considerable effectiveness in (inter)national politics today (see Nichols 1996; Mieder 1997, 2005, 2008a/b; Louis 2000).

King certainly utilizes various proverbs and proverbial expressions in his depictions of segregation and the necessary fight

against it. There is in fact most fitting proverb that King found to describe how African Americans have fought segregation in a nonviolent way by, proverbially speaking, straightening up their backs and thereby validating the proverb “You can’t ride a man’s back unless it is bent”. The passage that includes both the proverbial phrase and the proverb in tandem appears in the published version of an interview in the January 1965 issue of *Playboy*. In this statement King is also reflecting on the best way of protesting against segregation, arguing that more specific approaches in certain locales are better than general arguments against segregation as a whole:

The mistake I made there [at Albany, Georgia] was to protest against segregation generally rather than against a single and distinct facet of it. Our protest was so vague that we got nothing, and the people were left very depressed and in despair. It would have been much better to have concentrated upon integrating the buses or the lunch counters. One victory of this kind would have been symbolic, would have galvanized support and boosted morale. But I don’t mean that our work in Albany ended in failure. The Negro people there straightened up their bent backs; you can’t ride a man’s back unless it’s bent. Also, thousands of Negroes registered to vote who never had voted before, and because of the expanded Negro vote in the next election for governor of Georgia – which pitted a moderate candidate against a rabid segregationist – Georgia elected its first governor who had pledged to respect and enforce the law impartially. And what we learned from our mistakes in Albany helped our later campaigns in other cities to be more effective. We have never since scattered our efforts in a general attack on segregation, but have focused upon specific, symbolic objectives. (Washington 1986: 344; Jan. 1965)

In his stirring address of June 23, 1963, at the “Freedom Rally in Cobo Hall” at Detroit, King cites the modern proverb “Last hired, first fired” as an unfortunate truism especially regarding the employment injustice that African Americans face in light of racial discrimination:

We've been pushed around so long; we've been the victims of lynching mobs so long; we've been the victims of economic injustice so long – still the last hired and the first fired all over this nation. And I know the temptation. I can understand from a psychological point of view why some caught up in the clutches of the injustices surrounding them almost respond with bitterness and come to the conclusion that the problem can't be solved within, and they talk about getting away from it in terms of racial separation. But even though I can understand it psychologically, I must say to you this afternoon that this isn't the way. Black supremacy is as dangerous as white supremacy. [Applause] And oh, I hope you will allow me to say to you this afternoon that God is not interested merely in the freedom of black men and brown men and yellow men. God is interested in the freedom of the whole human race. [Applause] And I believe that with this philosophy and this determined struggle we will be able to go on in the days ahead and transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. (Carson and Shepard 2001: 68-69; June 23, 1963)

The element of time in eradicating such racial injustice wore heavily on Martin Luther King's mind. In his chapter on "The Dilemma of Negro Americans" of his book *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (1967), he alludes negatively to the two folk proverbs "Time heals all wounds" and "Time and tide wait for no man", with the first alteration implying that the evils of segregation will not be forgotten and the second variation stating that the time has surely come to rid the country of this racial injustice once and for all:

The challenge we face is to unite around powerful action programs to eradicate the last vestiges of racial injustice. We will be greatly misled if we feel that the problem will work itself out. Structures of evil do not crumble by passive waiting. If history teaches anything, it is that evil is recalcitrant and determined, and never voluntarily relinquishes its hold short of an almost fanatical resistance. Evil must be attacked by a counteracting persistence, by the day-to-day assault of the battering rams of justice.

We must get rid of the false notion that there is some miraculous quality in the flow of time that inevitably heals all evils. There is only one thing certain about time, and that is that it waits for no one. If it is not used constructively, it passes you by. (King 1967a: 128)

In his constant concern for the progress in the fight for civil rights, King found another proverb to express that there is no easy way or quick fix, namely “No pain, no gain”. King cites the less frequent variant “No gain without pain” in his already mentioned address at the “Freedom Rally in Cobo Hall” (1963) to explain that there is a heavy price to pay (an additional proverbial phrase) for social advancement:

And I do not want to give you the impression that it's going to be easy [to get civil rights]. There can be no great social gain without individual pain. And before the victory for brotherhood is won, some will have to get scarred up a bit. Before the victory is won, some more will be thrown into jail. Before the victory is won, some, like Medgar Evers, may have to face physical death. But if physical death is the price that some must pay to free their children and their white brothers from an eternal psychological death, then nothing can be more redemptive. Before the victory is won, some will be misunderstood and called bad names, but we must go on with a determination and with a faith that this problem can be solved. [*Yeah*] [*Applause*] (Carson and Shepard 2001: 70-71; June 23, 1963)

One thing is for certain in King's socially conscious mind and heart, however, and that is that something must be done against the incredible poverty among citizens of all races in the richest country of the world. In the chapter on “Nonviolence and Social Change” in his book *The Trumpet of Conscience* (1967) he describes a planned march on Washington in support of the poor to his listeners. And he is quick in modifying the proverb “Beware the man who has nothing to lose” to include the word “revolutionary”. Since he supplies the information that “people say” this, he acknowledges, albeit indirectly, the proverbiality of the statement:

The only real revolutionary, people say, is a man who has nothing to lose. There are millions of poor people in this country who have very little, or even nothing, to lose. If they can be helped to take action together, they will do so with a freedom and a power that will be a new and unsettling force in our complacent national life. Beginning in the New Year, we will be recruiting three thousand of the poorest citizens from ten different urban and rural areas to initiate and lead a sustained, massive, direct-action movement in Washington. Those who choose to join this initial three thousand, this nonviolent army, this "freedom church" of the poor, will work with us for three months to develop nonviolent action skills. Then we will move on Washington, determined to stay there until the legislative and executive branches of the government take serious and adequate action on jobs and income. (King 1967b: 60)

Despite his constant struggle against violence and injustice, King also has a good sense of humor. This can also be seen from King's retelling of an occasion where a student hit the proverbial nail on the head when he cited the folk proverb "If rabbits could throw rocks, there would be fewer hunters in the forest". Readers of King's essay on "The Time for Freedom Has Come" in the *New York Times Magazine* of September 16, 1961, must have enjoyed this relatively little known animal proverb. But as King is quick to point out in his explication of this piece of wisdom, there is much more to this witticism than meets the eye:

It is not a solemn life, for all of its seriousness. During a vigorous debate among a group of students discussing the moral and practical soundness of nonviolence, a majority rejected the employment of force. As the minority dwindled to a single student, he finally declared, "All I know is that, if rabbits could throw rocks, there would be fewer hunters in the forest."

This is more than a witty remark to relieve the tensions of serious and even grim discussion. It expresses some of the pent-up impatience, some of the discontent and some of the despair produced by minute corrections in the face of enormous evil. Students necessarily have conflicting reac-

tions. It is understandable that violence presents itself as a quick, effective answer for a few.

For the large majority, however, nonviolent, direct action has emerged as the better and more successful way out. It does not require that they abandon their discontent. This discontent is a sound, healthy social response to the injustice and brutality they see around them. Nonviolence offers a method by which they can fight the evil with which they cannot live. It offers a unique weapon which, without firing a single bullet, disarms the adversary. It exposes his moral defenses, weakens his morale, and at the same time works on his conscience. (Washington 1986: 163-164; Sept. 10, 1961)

The one thing that these young people and everybody need to remember is that all of life and existence is interconnected, and King found the perfect quotation long turned proverb to express this idea on numerous occasions. He began referring to the first line of John Donne's "No Man is an Island" (1624) in the early 1950s, citing much more of the actual poem in his address on "Facing the Challenge of a New Age" at the First Annual Institute on Nonviolence and Social Change on December 3, 1956, at Montgomery. Even at this early date, King already speaks of an absolutely interconnected world, where people must try to find ways to interrelate in a humane fashion. Everybody's very existence depends on other people, and the bell of accountability rings for all, as Donne exclaims. This statement has long become a proverbial phrase as well, and King often uses both proverbial lines from Donne's poem together to point to this common fate of people throughout the world:

This says [...] to us that our world is geographically one. Now we are faced with the challenge of making it spiritually one. Through our scientific genius we have made of the world a neighborhood; now through our moral and spiritual genius we must make of it a brotherhood. We are all involved in the single process. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. We are all links in the great chain of humanity. This is what John Doane [*sic*] meant when he said years ago:

“No man is an island, entire of it selfe; every man
 is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine;
 [...] any mans death
 diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde;
 And therefore never send to know for whom the bell
 tolls;
 it tolls for thee.”
 (III,456-457; Dec. 3, 1956; also in Washington 1986:
 138; April, 1957)

Typical for Martin Luther King, this statement went through several mutations in a number of sermons and speeches (Boesak 1976: 28 [1989: 86]); Lischer 1995: 43) with the last one appearing in his sermon “Remaining Awake Through a great Revolution” at the National Cathedral (Episcopal) on March 31, 1968, at Washington, D.C., once again including “John Donne’s famous dictum ‘No man is an island’ to reinforce his argument about America’s interrelationship with the rest of the world and therefore its need to be concerned about all citizens not just its own” (Sharman 1999: 98):

Through our scientific and technological genius, we have made of this world a neighborhood and yet ... we have not had the ethical commitment to make of it a brotherhood. But somehow, and in some way, we have got to do this. We must all learn to live together as brothers. Or we will all perish together as fools. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way God’s universe is made; this is the way it is structured.

John Donne caught it years ago and placed it in graphic terms – “No man is an island entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent – a part of the main.” And he goes on toward the end to say, “Any man’s death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind. Therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.” We must see this, believe this, and live by it ... if we are to

remain awake through a great revolution. (Washington 1986: 269-270; March 31, 1968)

In his book *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (1967) King had included a chapter on “The World House”, arguing that “We have inherited a large house, a great ‘world house’ in which we have to live together – black and white, Easterner and Westerner, Gentile and Jews, Catholic and Protestant, Moslem and Hindu – a family unduly separated in ideas, culture and interest, who, because we can never again live apart, must learn somehow to live with each other in peace” (King 1967a: 167). And here, in this uplifting passage from his sermon, he speaks of a brotherhood (sisterhood is implied) that is poetically “tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality”. As we speak today of globalization and an interconnected world, it behooves us to remember such passages from Martin Luther King to appreciate what great visionary he really was not only for civil rights in the United States but for justice, equality, and freedom all over the globe.

After such spirited call for a united world connected by basic human rights, it might come as quite a surprise that the well educated and sophisticated orator King would turn with all seriousness to such a mundane American proverb as “If you build (make) a better mousetrap, the world will beat a path to your door” (Mieder et al. 1992: 420). Actually, considerable scholarly work has been done on the origin of this text (Stevenson 1935: 343-381), and even though King always credits Ralph Waldo Emerson with having coined it in his eight citations of it between 1956 and 1963, matters are not quite as definite about Emerson’s coinage of the proverbial metaphor (regarding such questionable attributions see Taylor 1931: 34-43). As Fred Shapiro and other quotation sleuths before him have pointed out, what Emerson actually wrote down and which might have given rise to the proverb as it is known today appears in a journal entry by Emerson from 1855: “I trust a good deal to common fame, as we all must. If a man has good corn, or wood, or boards, or pigs, to sell, or can make better chairs or knives, crucibles or church organs, than anybody else, you will find a broad hard-beaten road to his house, though it be in the woods” (Shapiro 2006: 244-245; see also Stevenson 1935:

343-181, and 1948: 1633). But be that as it may, King used it repeatedly as an Emerson quotation – he might well have simply used it as a proverb but probably liked the quotational authority – as for example in his lecture on “The Rising Tide of Racial Consciousness” on September 6, 1960, when he talked to the National Urban League in New York City:

We must constantly stimulate our youth to rise above the stagnant level of mediocrity, and seek to achieve excellence in their various fields of endeavor. Doors are opening now that were not open in the past, and the great challenge facing minority groups is to be ready to enter these doors as they open. No greater tragedy could befall us at this hour but that of allowing new opportunities to emerge without the concomitant preparedness to meet them. Ralph Waldo Emerson said in a lecture back in 1871 that “if a man can write a better book, or preach a better sermon, or make a better mousetrap than his neighbor, even if he builds his house in the woods the world will make a beaten path to his door.” This has not always been true. But I have reason to believe that because of the shape of the world today and the fact that we cannot afford the luxury of an anemic democracy, this affirmation will become increasingly true. We must make it clear to our young people that this is an age in which they will be forced to compete with people of all races and nationalities. We cannot aim merely to be good Negro teachers, good Negro doctors, or good Negro skilled laborers. We must set out to do a good job irrespective of race. We must seek to do our life's work so well that nobody could do it better. The Negro who seeks to be merely a good Negro, whatever he is, has already flunked his matriculation examination for entrance into the university of integration. (V,506; Sept. 6, 1960)

There is one more quotation turned proverb that needs to be mentioned, namely the historian Charles A. Beard's insight based on the natural phenomenon that “When it gets dark enough you can see the stars” that King cites for the last time in his sermon “I See the Promised Land” on April 3, 1968, just one day before his assassination at Memphis, Tennessee.: “I know, somehow, that only

when it is dark enough, can you see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that men, in some strange way, are responding – something is happening in our world. The masses of people are rising up. And wherever they are assembled today, whether they are in Johannesburg, South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Accra, Ghana; New York City; Atlanta, Georgia; Jackson, Mississippi; or Memphis, Tennessee – the cry is always the same – ‘We want to be free’” (Washington 1986: 279-280; April 3, 1968). Yes, indeed, stars of hope were everywhere when Martin Luther King spoke of freedom with his typical eloquence that was at least in part informed by his perfect utilization of quotations with a certain claim of proverbiality.

It should not be surprising that someone who is so inclined to the use of proverbial quotations and proverbs would not also amass them into paragraphs of utmost rhetorical authority. Once King found a certain combination of quotations and proverbs that he liked as “set pieces”, he usually kept them in the same order when making use of these ready-made collages in his sermons and speeches (Miller 1992: 153-155; Lischer 1995: 104-105). Whenever appropriate, he could simply call on this impressive repertoire that he basically had memorized and could employ to add Biblical, literary or folkloric authority to his often quite spontaneous remarks.

His preference of stringing together two or more quotations and proverbs to express a certain belief or conviction can clearly be seen by his frequent reliance on two famous statements from the Declaration of Independence. By citing the proverb “All men are created equal” and the proverbial triad “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” in tandem as they appear originally in this American creed (Aron 2008: 91-96), King knows that his listeners and readers will identify positively with the fundamental ideas of equality and freedom expressed in them. And while King always cites this wisdom with positive conviction, it gives him the rhetorical opportunity to show that the ideal expressed in them has not been achieved regarding the African American citizens, to wit the following paragraph from his stirring sermon on “The Christian Doctrine of Man” that he delivered on March 12, 1958, at Detroit. Judging by the responses of the audience, people must have been

quite taken by King's sermonic stroke of genius of letting God talk to them through their preacher:

The God of the universe stands there in all of His love and forgiving power saying, "Come home. [*Yeah, Amen, Amen*] Western civilization, you have strayed away into the far country of colonialism and imperialism. You have taken one billion six hundred million of your brothers in Asia and Africa, dominated them politically, exploited them economically, segregated and humiliated them. You have trampled over them. But western civilization, if you will rise up now and come out of this far country of imperialism and colonialism and come on back to your true home, which is freedom and justice, I'll take you in. [*Yeah, Oh amen*] America, I had great intentions for you. I had planned for you to be this great nation where all men would live together as brothers – a nation of religious freedom, a nation of racial freedom. And America, you wrote it in your Declaration of Independence. You meant well, for you cried out, 'All men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights. [*Yeah*] Among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' [*Preach*] But in the midst of your creed, America, you've strayed away to the far country of segregation and discrimination. [*Say it, Amen*] You've taken sixteen million of your brothers, trampled over them, mistreated them, inflicted them with tragic injustices and indignities. But America, I'm not going to give you up. If you will rise up out of the far country of segregation and discrimination [*Amen*], I will take you in, America. [*Amen, Amen*] And I will bring you back to your true home." (VI,337; March 12, 1958)

As can be imagined, Martin Luther King is not always satisfied with just citing his favorite proverb "All me are created equal" and the proverbial triad "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness". To add even more rhetorical credence to his arguments, he expands this double dose of authority by one, two or even three additional quotations or proverbs in the same paragraph. And in order to add a somewhat satirical twist to these phrase collages, he constructs them around the idea of a responsible person having to be

“maladjusted”. Employing the anaphora “as maladjusted as” and other uses of the word “maladjusted”, King claims that it takes maladjusted people to bring about equality, justice, and freedom. In his speech of September 2, 1957, at Monteagle, Tennessee, on “A Look to the Future”, King the stylistic tinkerer and “mix-master, blending and layering different elements of talk” (Rieder 2008: 104), augments Jefferson’s proverbial words with three Bible proverbs, namely “Let judgment run down like waters and righteousness like a might stream” (Amos 5:24) “He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword” (Matt. 26:52) and “Love your enemies” (Matt. 5:44). With that anaphoral *tour de force* he has indeed found an authoritative statement for the future in which people will be courageously “maladjusted” to bring about social change:

But there are some things in our social system to which I am proud to be maladjusted and to which I suggest that you too ought to be maladjusted. I never intend to adjust myself to the viciousness of mob rule. I never intend to adjust myself to the evils of segregation and the crippling effects of discrimination. I never intend to adjust myself to the tragic inequalities of an economic system which takes necessities from the masses to give luxuries to the classes. I never intend to become adjusted to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating method of physical violence. I call upon you to be maladjusted. Well you see, it may be that the salvation of the world lies in the hands of the maladjusted. The challenge to you this morning as I leave you is to be maladjusted – as maladjusted as the prophet Amos, who in the midst of the injustices of his day, could cry out in terms that echo across the centuries, “Let judgment run down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream” [Amos 5:24]; as maladjusted as Lincoln, who had the vision to see that this nation could not survive half slave and half free; as maladjusted as Jefferson, who in the midst of an age amazingly adjusted to slavery could cry out in words lifted to cosmic proportions, “All men are created equal, and are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among

these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Yes, as maladjusted as Jesus of Nazareth who dared to dream a dream of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. He looked at men amid the intricate and fascinating military machinery of the Roman Empire, and could say to them, "He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword"[Matt. 26:52]. Jesus, who could look at men in the midst of their tendencies for tragic hate and say to them, "Love thy enemies. Bless them that curse you. Pray for them that despitefully use you" [Matt. 5:44]. The world is in desperate need of such maladjustment. Through such maladjustment we will be able to emerge from the bleak and desolate midnight of man's inhumanity to man into the bright and glittering daybreak of freedom and justice. (IV,276; Sept. 2, 1957)

While this rhetorical set piece in its various mutations can be found several times in King's sermons, speeches, and books, mention should also be made of a similar often repeated and reformulated paragraph that begins with two at first unidentified quotations and eventually is expanded to include a third quotation and a Bible proverb. In his "Statement on Ending the Bus Boycott" on December 20, 1956, at Montgomery, King quotes the abolitionist Theodore Parker and the poet William Cullen Bryant in support of his argument that justice had indeed prevailed:

These twelve months [in Montgomery] have not at all been easy. Our feet have often been tired. We have struggle[d] against tremendous odds to maintain alternative transportation. There have been moments when roaring waters of disappointment poured upon us in staggering torrents. We can remember days when unfavorable court decisions came upon us like tidal waves, leaving us treading in the deep and confused waters of despair. But amid all of this we have kept going with the faith that as we struggle, God struggles with us, and that the arc of the moral universe, although long, is bending toward justice [a statement from the abolitionist Theodore Parker that became a leitmotif in King's oratory]. We have lived under the agony and darkness of Good Friday with the conviction that one day the heightening glow of Easter would

emerge on the horizon. We have seen truth crucified and goodness buried, but we have kept going with the conviction that truth crushed to earth will rise again [line from the poet William Cullen Bryant]. (III,486; Dec. 20, 1956)

By the time King gives his emotionally charged speech “Our God is Marching On!” on March 25, 1965, at Montgomery, he adds Thomas Carlyle’s “No lie can live forever” and the Bible proverb “As you sow, so shall you reap” (Gal. 6:7) to this set piece of “messianic discourse” (Charteris-Black 2005:64) and reverses the order of the other two in this peroration of merged quotations and proverbs (Luker 2003: 41-43). This might well be yet another example of how King works from memory as he calls on his repertoire of such proverbial collages at the spur of the moment:

Our aim must never be to defeat or humiliate the white man but to win his friendship and understanding. We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience. That will be a day not of the white man, not of the black man. That will be the day of man as man.

I know you are asking today, “How long will it take?” I come to say to you this afternoon however difficult the moment, however frustrating the hour, it will not be long, because truth pressed to earth will rise again.

How long? Not long, because no lie can live forever.

How long? Not long, because you still reap what you sow [Gal. 6:7].

How long? Not long. Because the arm [*sic*, arc] of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.

How long? Not long, ‘cause mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored. He has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword. His truth is marching on.

He has sounded forth the trumpets that shall never call retreat. He is lifting up the hearts of man before His judgment seat. Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him. Be jubilant, my feet. Our God is marching on. (Washington 1986: 230; March 25, 1965)

According to fellow civil rights advocate and now U.S. Representative John Lewis "this is poetry" (Carson and Shepard 2001: 116), and it would have been absolutely ridiculous, if King had in fact included the names of Bryant, Carlyle, and Parker or the precise Bible reference in his powerful anaphora "How long? Not long, because ..." (Lischer 1995: 128; see Carter 1996: 128 and 141, who mistakenly thinks Parker's statement to be King's "own metaphor"). Jonathan Rieder, referring to this set piece, very appropriately speaks of King's "theology of hope" (Rieder 2008: 322) that it expresses, calling to mind Barack Obama's more secularly stated "audacity of hope" (Obama 2006) for humankind.

Martin Luther King's struggle for freedom and equality moved forward in many different ways, and as he spoke about the various paths taken, he frequently used proverbs and proverbial phrases that have the noun "way" in them. They are by their very nature usually future oriented and are thus perfectly suited as metaphors to describe and reflect upon the way to progress. There is no doubt that King himself never tired of going out of his way for the civil and human rights movement, giving his energy and time for the cause of justice and equality in the United States and far beyond. With all the setbacks and defeats he never faltered, citing the proverbial phrase "to have come a long way" to emphasize the progress that had been made while at the same time stressing with the proverbial phrase "to have a long way to go" that much work still lies ahead. He connects these two phrases for the first time in his philosophically informed article on "The 'New Negro' of the South" that appeared in the June 1956 journal the *Socialist Call*:

Like the synthesis of Hegelian philosophy, the realistic attitude seeks to reconcile the truths of two opposites and avoid the extremes of both. So the realist in race relations would agree with the optimist in saying, we have come a long way, but he would balance that by agreeing with the pessimist that we have a long long way to go. It is this realistic position that I would like to set forth: We have come a long long way, and we have a long long way to go. (III,282; June 1956)

By citing both proverbial phrases twice together, King presents a convincing realistic argument that finds a synthesis between the optimistic and pessimistic assessment concerning the progress of

race relations. Clearly he is always more interested in looking to the future, realizing that the end of the road towards racial justice is still far off. King exhibits an incredible faith in the future, with his strong belief in a benevolent God giving him the strength to continue on the long and treacherous way that lies ahead.

But there is one speech with the title “A Long Way to Go” that wins the proverbial prize so to speak. King delivered it on April 27, 1965, on the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles, and it was published six years later in Arthur L. Smith’s and Stephen Robb’s edited volume *The Voice of Black Rhetoric: Selections* (1971), with the editors commenting very briefly that “‘A Long Way to Go’ demonstrates King’s mastery of the classical canons of style and arrangement. Clearly delineating introduction, body and conclusion in this speech, King’s rhetorical organization is presented at its best. While there is little that is creative about the two-section arrangement (it has been used by many speakers), King’s content allows suspense to be a key factor in this speech” (Smith and Robb 1971: 183). Agreed, but what would have been wrong in also saying that the speech has a proverbial title and that both the proverbial expressions “to have come a long way” and “to have a long way to go” as individual and combined leitmotifs (always with the emphatic double use of “long”) inform the structural and rhetorical mastery of this address? As it is, the two folk metaphors are part of the dual structure of the lecture, and it cannot possibly be a surprise to learn that this rhetorical genius does begin his speech with a juxtaposition of them to set the stage:

Many of you want to know, are we making any progress? That is the desperate question, a poignant question on the lips of millions of people all over our nation and all over the world. I get it almost every day. It is a question of whether we are making any real progress in the area of race relations. And so I’m going to try to answer that question and deal with many of the issues involved using as a subject from which to speak, the future of integration. Now there are some people who feel that we aren’t making any progress; there are some people who feel that we’re making overwhelming progress. I would like to take what I consider a realistic position and say that we

have come a long, long way in the struggle to make justice and freedom a reality in our nation, but we still have a long, long way to go. And it is this realistic position that I would like to use as a basis for our thinking together. (Smith and Robb 1971: 188-189; April 27, 1965)

Having said this, the realistic King is ready to present a short history lesson regarding the progress in racial relations, couching this optimistic view into the proverbial leitmotif "to have come a long way". In the second half of the speech King gives an overview of what still remains to be done, now using the proverbial phrase "To have a long, long way to go" as his hopeful leitmotif. Altogether, the speech becomes a prophetic vision of the future.

But in addition to these proverbial expressions commenting on the "long way" of the civil rights movement, there is also Martin Luther King's ingenious use of the spiritual (faith) and secular (hope) proverb "God can (will) make a way out of no way." It grew out of the African American experience of searching to carve out a life of equality and dignity. Strange as it might seem, very little is known about the actual origin, history, and dissemination of this hopeful piece of folk wisdom. It does not appear in any of the standard proverb collections that are notoriously slow in registering new proverbs (Doyle 1996; Mieder 2009b; Mieder et al. 2011). But there is no doubt that it is indeed a folk proverb with considerable amounts of recorded references. Its original version "God can (will) make a way out of no way" yields 2950 Google hits, with its truncated and secular variant "Making a way out of no way" easily reaching 84300 references in Google. The proverb does not appear to have been registered in print before 1900, which does not mean that it might not have been in oral use prior to that date. Certainly Jack L. Daniel, Geneva Smitherman-Donaldson, and Milford A. Jeremiah, who have studied the rich proverb lore of African Americans, know this text, as can be seen from the title of their article "Makin' a Way out of No Way: The Proverb Tradition in the Black Experience" (1987). However, strangely enough, they do not present the proverb in their list of fifty proverbs collected from African Americans. All that their article does include is the statement "that the essence of the Black Experience is: to make a way out of no way" (Daniel et al. 1987: 494; see also Daniel 1973; Smitherman 1977: 245-246; Barnes-

Harden 1980: 57-80; Folly 1982; Mieder 1989: 111-128; Smitherman 1994; Prahlad 1996). This, however, is proof positive that these scholars consider this proverb to be reflecting the African American worldview of trying to cope and advance with God's help in a world that is not exactly supportive of their efforts.

Among the King scholars, it is Jonathan Rieder who has recognized that Martin Luther King did not only cite the proverb but that his entire life and work is the epitome of its basic idea. In fact, his book *The Word of the Lord Is Upon Me: The Righteous Performance of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (2008) contains a short section entitled "The Lord will make a way out of no way" (Rieder 2008: 152-157), but while he refers to King's use of the Bible proverb "Justice will run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream" as well as to King's "grandiloquence" and "mobilization talk" (Rieder 2008: 154, 155, and 157), he does not mention the folk proverb itself. However, later in his book, Rieder does have this to say: "Like a cheerleader, King offered counter-depressive aphorisms to rouse the spirit: love will not go unredeemed; God will make a way out of no way; my God is a good God; my God is marching on. Such phrases echoed the theology of hope King preached to his congregation, to whom he offered balm that would 'make the wounded whole'" (Rieder 2008: 207).

With this background we can turn to Martin Luther King's obvious knowledge and multiple use of this proverb. For example, in the chapter on "Desegregation at Last" of his book *Stride Toward Freedom. The Montgomery Story* (1958), King speaks of God being part of the struggle during the bus boycott and that it is the faith in His power that will give African Americans the strength to carry on. So when King writes "We must believe that a way will be made out of now way", the hidden subject of this passive sentence is in fact God who can find a way out of now way, as the original proverb has it:

The evening came, and I mustered up enough courage to tell them the truth. I tried, however, to end on a note of hope. "This may well be," I said, "the darkest hour just before dawn. We have moved all of these months with the daring faith that God was with us in our struggle. The many experiences of days gone by have vindicated that

faith in a most unexpected manner. We must go out with the same faith, the same conviction. We must believe that a way will be made out of no way." But in spite of these words, I could feel the cold breeze of pessimism passing through the audience. It was a dark night – darker than a thousand midnights. It was a night in which the light of hope was about to fade away and the lamp of faith about to flicker. We went home with nothing before us but a cloud of uncertainty. (King 1958: 158-159)

This is, of course, a typically optimistic statement by King that is much enhanced by the inclusion of the folk proverb that "The darkest hour is just before dawn." Later, during his interview with the *Playboy* editors that appeared in the January 1965 issue, he recounted what he had said to the people involved in the Montgomery bus boycott. And while his memory is quite correct, he now states the proverb with God as its clear subject: "God will make a way for us when there seems no way." By expanding its text slightly, King does in fact explicate its meaning to the editors, who, most likely as whites, might not have known the African American proverb at that time:

There was one dark moment when we doubted it [to be successful with the bus boycott]. We had been struggling to make the boycott a success when the city of Montgomery successfully obtained an injunction from the court to stop our car pool. I didn't know what to say to our people. They had backed us up, and we had let them down. It was a desolate moment. I saw, all of us saw, that the court was leaning against us. I remember telling a group of those working closest with me to spread in the Negro community the message, "We must have the faith that things will work out somehow, that God will make a way for us when there seems no way." It was about noontime, I remember, when Rex Thomas of the Associated Press rushed over to where I was sitting and told me of the news flash that the U.S. Supreme Court had declared that bus segregation in Montgomery was unconstitutional. It had literally been the darkest hour before the dawn. (Washington 1986: 343-344; Jan. 1965)

On August 16, 1967, King cites the proverb once again in his last address as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, entitling his remarks with the question “Where Do We Go from Here?” Almost as expected by now, the proverb is to be found in the last paragraph of the entire speech in which King looks with much hope to a better future. While the two quotational proverbs “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice” and “Truth crushed to earth will rise again” together with the Bible proverb “As you sow, so shall you reap” (Gal. 6:7) imply that morality, honesty, and diligence will be rewarded, it is also made clear that there is “a power [i.e., God] that is able to make a way out of no way” for the African America people:

When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe, working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice [Theodore Parker].

Let us realize that William Cullen Bryant is right: “Truth crushed to earth will rise again.” Let us go out realizing that the Bible is right: “Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” [Gal. 6:7]. This is for [*sic*] hope for the future, and with this faith we will be able to sing in some not too distant tomorrow with a cosmic past tense, “We have overcome, we have overcome, deep in my heart, I did believe we would overcome.” (Washington 1986: 252; Aug. 16, 1967)

The fact that Martin Luther King quotes the proverb in these variants is an indication that he could rely on his audience knowing it in its basic wording. More importantly, its encouraging wisdom and orientation to the future made it the perfect proverb 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. But there is one more fact that deserves to be registered at this point: Martin Luther King’s oral and written rhetoric would perhaps not have held people’s attention to the degree it did without its proverbial language adding life, spice, and wisdom to it by way of traditional and innovative metaphors.

Finally, there is one more metaphor that needs to be addressed that goes hand in hand with the proverb “Making a way out of no way”. In order to look for the ways of social improvements, humankind needs to have a visionary and prophetic dream that promises that a solid faith and unwavering hope in the struggle for civil and human rights will eventually lead to progress. King himself adhered to this dream of equality and justice for all during his entire life. King and the many participants of the civil rights movement fortunately had the audacity to dream of making a way out of no way, and it should thus not be surprising that dreams of an interconnected new world house for all of humanity are a leit-motif in many of King’s sermons and speeches, with the very word “dream” repeatedly appearing in their titles.

A passage from an NAACP address on “The Negro and the American Dream” that King delivered on September 25, 1960, at Charlotte, North Carolina, shows this very convincingly in the first three paragraphs (Sundquist 2009: 27). It begins with a quotable statement – “America is essentially a dream – a dream yet unfulfilled” (see Kelly-Gangi 2009: 52) – and almost predictably includes the two proverbial claims from the Declaration of Independence. But as always, dreaming the dream is not enough for King with the challenge of changing America’s dream into reality demanding that all people are willing to pay a high price, as King concludes with yet another one of his favorite proverbial expressions:

This afternoon I would like to speak from the subject, “The Negro and the American Dream.” In a real sense America is essentially a dream – a dream yet unfulfilled [*sic*]. It is the dream of a land where men of all races, col-

ors and creeds will live together as brothers. The substance of the dream is expressed in these sublime words: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” This is the dream. It is a profound, eloquent and unequivocal expression of the dignity and worth of all human personality.

But ever since the founding fathers of our nation dreamed this dream, America has manifested a schizophrenic personality. She has been torn between [two] selves – a self in which she has proudly professed democracy and a self in which she has sadly practiced the antithesis of democracy. Slavery and segregation have been strange paradoxes in a nation founded on the principle that all men are created equal.

Now more than ever before America is challenged to bring her noble dream into reality. The shape of the world today does not permit America the luxury of exploiting the Negro and other minority groups. The price that America must pay for the continued oppression [*sic*] of the Negro is the price of its own destruction. (V,508-509; Sept. 25, 1960)

This is indeed a memorable paragraph, of which there can be found so many in King’s oeuvre. But it should once again be noted, that while this great orator takes his audience to lofty heights regarding the American ideals of democracy, he is very quick to point out that they are still far from having been achieved. Democracy, equality, freedom, etc. demand work and struggle, and the best way to verbalize these demands is by way of proverbial language.

To a certain degree, these “dream”-speeches foreshadow King’s famous “I Have a Dream” oration of August 28, 1963 (Carson and Holloran 1998: xvi-xvii). But before turning to that address with its unforgettable “I have a dream”-anaphora, there is at least one of several precursors that needs to be mentioned, for it has been established that “in the spring and summer of 1963, ‘I have a dream’ became one of King’s most frequently delivered set

pieces" (Hansen 2003: 111). On June 23, 1963, King delivered his major "Address at the Freedom Rally in Cobo Hall" at Detroit. This speech, a mere two months before the one at Washington, D.C., is an excellent example for how King integrates certain rhetorical set pieces with some variations again and again into his speeches. This version of the "I have a dream"-speech includes such fixed phrases as "If a man has not discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live", "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere", "Love your enemies", "Love or perish", "Last hired, first fired", "No gain without pain", "to put on the brakes", "to be called names", "to have clean hands", and "to pay the price for something". But here is the actual "I have a dream"-sequence that adds the proverbs and phrases "to join hands with someone", "to be judged by the content of one's character and not by the color of one's skin", "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream" (Amos 5:24), "All men are created equal", "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness", and a repetition of "to join hands with someone". This is indeed a powerful collage of preformulated language, with the "'I have a dream"-anaphora adding a contagious rhythm to it, as can be seen (heard) from the almost sermonic testifying by the Detroit audience:

And so this afternoon, I have a dream. [*Go ahead*] It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day, right down in Georgia and Mississippi and Alabama, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to live together as brothers.

I have a dream this afternoon [*I have a dream*] that one day [*Applause*], one day little white children and little Negro children will be able to join hands as brothers and sisters.

[...]

I have a dream this afternoon [*Yeah*] that my four little children, that my four little children will not come up in the same young days that I came up within, but they will be judged on the basis of the content of their character, and not the color of their skin. [*Applause*]

I have a dream this afternoon that one day right here in Detroit, Negroes will be able to buy a house or rent a house anywhere that their money will carry them and they will be able to get a job. [*Applause*] [*That's right*]

Yes, I have a dream this afternoon that one day in this land the words of Amos will become real and justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream [Amos 5:24].

I have a dream this evening that one day we will recognize the words of Jefferson that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." I have a dream this afternoon. [*Applause*]

[...]

I have a dream this afternoon that the brotherhood of man will become a reality in this day.

And with this faith I will go out and carve a tunnel of hope through the mountain of despair. With this faith, I will go out with you and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. With this faith, we will be able to achieve this new day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing with the Negroes in the spiritual of old:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last! [*Applause*].

(Carson and Shepard 2001: 71-73; June 23, 1963)

Had this address in Detroit drawn as large a crowd and as much (inter)national attention by the press, it might well have become the most treasured speech by Martin Luther King, giving Detroit (my first home when I arrived in the United States as a German immigrant in August of 1960) a much needed boost as a city that is struggling to this day with racism, poverty, unemployment, and many other social problems.

By the time King delivered his "I have a dream"-speech with its set of quotational and proverbial statements at the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963, it was billed as the keynote address

of the “March on Washington, D.C., for Civil Rights”. The press from here and abroad was present, a quarter million people had assembled, and Martin Luther King found himself at the largest public event of the civil rights movement. It gave him and his idea of nonviolent struggle for equality, justice, and freedom a national and subsequently an international forum, never to be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to be present at this momentous occasion, who witnessed the speech on television or listened to it on the radio, read it in the papers the following day or have come across it on film or in print ever since. Not surprisingly, then, much scholarly attention has been directed to this very speech (see Solomon 1993; Bobbit 2004; Vail 2006; Sayenko 2008), including two invaluable books by Drew D. Hansen, *The Dream. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Speech that Inspired a Nation* (2003), and very recently by Eric J. Sundquist, *King's Dream* (2009).

As is well known, King began his speech reading from a carefully prepared manuscript, but sensing that it prevented him from reaching the large crowd, he spontaneously switched to his “I have a dream”-sequence, as Drew D. Hansen has shown in a revealing side-by-side comparison of the written manuscript with the actual oral delivery (Hansen 2003: 71-86). As was his custom, he now relied on his “repertoire of oratorical fragments” or “his own storehouse of oratory” (Hansen 2003: 70), knowing intuitively that his “dream” set piece, spoken as an orally performed conclusion (Patton 1993: 114-116), would give him the desired conclusion that he had not been able to compose during his work on this all-important address the days and night before its delivery. Here then is the “I have a dream”-peroration with but three proverbial statements, i.e. “All men are created equal” and the proverbial phrases “to be judged by the content of one’s character and not by the color of one’s skin” and “to join hands with someone”, with the latter being cited twice as a verbal sign of true brother- and sisterhood in an America of equality, justice, and freedom:

So I say to you, my friends, that even though we must face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed – we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day, even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by content of their character. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, that one day, right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with the little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today!

[...]

With this faith we will be able to hear [*sic*, i.e. hew] out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning – “my country 'tis of thee: sweet land of liberty; of thee I sing; land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride; from every mountain side, let freedom ring” – and if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

So let freedom ring [...]

And when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and hamlet, from every state and city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children – black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants – will be able to join hands and

to sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last; thank God Almighty, we are free at last."
(Washington 1986: 219-220; August 28, 1963)

It goes to Eric J. Sundquist's credit that he draws attention to King's formulaic "Not by the Color of Their Skin" statement at the beginning of his long chapter with that title in his book *King's Dream* (2009: 194-228): "Even though it does not provide the Dream speech's most famous phrase, one sentence stands alone for the philosophy it appeared to announce and the contentious use to which it has since been put: 'I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.' If King's dream began to be realized with passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, his apparently clear elevation of character over color proved central to subsequent arguments about the reach and consequences of that landmark legislation. Those thirty-five spontaneous words have done more than any politician's polemic, any sociologist's theory, or any court's ruling to frame public discussion of affirmative action over the past four decades" (Sundquist 2009: 194). Regarding the use of the "phrase" – Sundquist comes close to calling it a proverbial phrase – he is correct in referring to its "spontaneous" use in the context of this particular speech. It was in fact not included in the original manuscript and King added it during his extemporaneous peroration: "'I started out reading the speech,' recalled Martin Luther King, Jr., then 'all of a sudden this thing came out of me that I have used – I'd used it many times before, that thing about 'I have a dream' – and I just felt that I wanted to use it here. I don't know why, I hadn't thought about it before the speech'" (Sundquist 2009: 14). King was thus obviously aware of his recycling of the "I have a dream"-sequence in a number of variants, and I would assume that he also knew about his previous use of the "character/skin"-phrase in his "dream"-peroration of the address in Detroit two months earlier. If Sundquist with his reference to "spontaneous words" means to imply that the use of the phrase was new in the Washington speech, then he would be mistaken. In fact, as it were, King quite liked its metaphor and meaning, citing it three more times in sermons and speeches during 1967, thereby effectively helping his formulation along the path of becoming a proverbial expression.

By the end of 1967, the “I have a dream”-anaphora, modified to “I still have a dream” after its (inter)national exposure at the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963, at Washington, D.C., had doubtlessly become King’s rhetorical signature phrase. Of course, it represents but one of his quotational and proverbial leitmotifs that made his sermons, speeches, letters essays, and books to such effective and memorable statements in the cause of civil and human rights. Quotations turned proverbs, Bible proverbs, folk proverbs, and a plethora of proverbial expressions are an intrinsic part of King’s rhetorical prowess, providing his messages with colorful metaphors and authoritative strength. His noble dream of an America and a world interconnected by equality, justice, freedom, love, and hope had to be expressed through language so that the nonviolent movement for civil and human rights could march forward. Individual words and sentences were needed to bring these dignified ideals across, and there can be no doubt that proverbs and proverbial phrases as ready-made expressions served King extremely well in adding imagery and expressiveness to his numerous oral and written communications. His dream needed words and deeds, and being a master of both, Martin Luther King was and remains the visionary champion of making a way out of no way for all of humanity that due to him has come a long way but still has a long way to go. Moving on with an adherence to the Biblical triad of “faith, hope, and love” and the acceptance of the African American proverb “Making a way out of no way” will keep Martin Luther King’s proverbial dream alive for future generations as they confront their fate in the world house of brotherly and sisterly mutuality.

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

“HAT ALLES SEINE ZEIT”: SPRICHWÖRTER IN
OTTO LUDWIGS DRAMEN

Ein Florilegium zu Barbara Mieders
vierzigjährigem Doktorjubiläum

Mit diesem kleinen Beitrag möchte ich meiner lieben Frau eine ganz gewiß unerwartete Freude bereiten. Diese wissenschaftliche Überraschung geht auf unsere gemeinsamen Jahre als Germanistikstudenten an der Michigan State University in East Lansing zurück, wo wir uns im Jahre 1967 kennengelernt hatten. Am 23. August 1969 hatten wir dann in North Muskegon (Michigan) geheiratet, und ich konnte 1970 ein Jahr vor Barbara mein Studium mit einer Dissertation über *Das Sprichwort im Werke Jeremias Gotthelfs. Eine volkskundlich-literarische Untersuchung* abschließen. Inzwischen saß sie ebenfalls an ihrer Dissertation über *The Use of Gesture as a Stylistic Device in the Prose and Dramatic Works of Otto Ludwig*, die sie 1971 zum Abschluß bringen konnte. Das ist nun vier Jahrzehnte her, und ich meine, daß man dieses Ereignis feiern sollte.

Da ich mit meiner Dissertation bereits fertig war, entschloß ich mich damals, gleichzeitig mit Barbara die Werke Otto Ludwigs (1813-1865) zu lesen. Ich hatte zu der Zeit mit den Vorarbeiten meines Buches *Das Sprichwort in der deutschen Prosaliteratur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (1976) begonnen, das dann schließlich Kapitel über Johann Peter Hebel, Karl Immermann, Berthold Auerbach, Jeremias Gotthelf, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Otto Ludwig, Ludwig Anzengruber, Gottfried Keller und Theodor Storm enthielt. Mich interessierten eigentlich nur die Prosawerke Ludwigs, aber da Barbara sein Gesamtwerk bearbeitete, entschloß ich mich, auch seine Dramen nach Sprichwörtern zu untersuchen. Das Resultat war die hier abgedruckte Blütenlese von 133 Sprichwörtern, die ich fein säuberlich in ihrem dramatischen Kontext auf Karten herausgeschrieben hatte. Vierzig Jahre

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habe ich dieses Material in einem Karton aufbewahrt, ohne je dazu zu gekommen zu sein, einen größeren Aufsatz über Ludwigs dramatische Verarbeitung von Sprichwörtern zu verfassen.

Das soll auch jetzt nicht geschehen, aber ich möchte doch wenigstens das sprichwörtliche Textmaterial retten und einige kurze Bemerkungen zu Ludwigs rhetorischem Sprichwörtergebrauch hinzufügen. Otto Ludwig, auf den der Begriff des poetischen Realismus zurückgeht, hat in seinen theoretischen Schriften zur Literatur wiederholt darauf hingewiesen, daß er in seinen Romanen und Dramen vor allem "typische Schicksale" sowie deren "völlige typische Wirklichkeit" darstellen wollte.¹ Überhaupt "muß das Problem des Dichters ein allgemeines sein, d.h. eines, das womöglich sprichwörtlich und der Vorstellung des Publikums [oder des Lesers] geläufig ist, d.h. es muß eine Regel sein und keine Ausnahme."² In dem Typischen der Darstellung spiegelt sich laut Ludwig "die ganze Weltweisheit des Sprichworts"³ wider, und so sieht er das ganze Anliegen seiner schriftstellerischen Werke in dem elliptisch zum Ausdruck gebrachten Kredo: "Überall nach dem Gesetzbuche [des Typischen], dessen Paragraphen Sprichwörter [sind]; [das sei] immer die Regel."⁴ Aus dieser Darstellungsweise erwächst dann die Allgemeingültigkeit der Aussage und verdeutlicht den eigentlichen Zweck der dem Leben zugewandten Kunst Ludwigs, nämlich "Lebenskunst zu lehren."⁵ Wer seine schriftstellerische Aufgabe darin sieht, Lebenskunst aufzuzeigen, der wird zweifelsohne auf Sprichwörter zurückgreifen, die schließlich allgemeine Lebensweisheiten enthalten.

So verwendet Otto Ludwig in seinen Werken immer wieder Sprichwörter als Ausdruck des Typischen eines Geschehens oder einer Handlungsweise. Dabei achtet er vorerst auf die Ausdruckskraft der Sprache, wie aus einer eigenen Forderung hervorgeht: "[...] wegen der schöpferischen Sprachbildung Studien der deutschen Sprache. Man müßte sehen, daß man Luthers Schriften bekäme, an leidenschaftlichen Stellen fehlt es seinen polemischen Schriften gewiß nicht. In seinen Tischreden fände man wohl die Sprache des Lebens, der Vertraulichkeit. Wenn irgendwo die echtdeutsche Erscheinung von Leidenschaft und Vertraulichem und Weltleben zu studieren ist, so muß sie bei dem urdeutschen Luther zu studieren sein."⁶ Die Sprache Martin Luthers ist bekanntlich voller Sprichwörter und Redensarten, und das gilt ebenfalls für die Werke von William Shakespeare und Charles Dickens,

deren volkstümlich realistische Sprache und Stil sich Ludwig durch eingehende Studien zum Vorbild gemacht hatte.⁷ Zweifels- ohne ist er dabei auch auf ihre zahlreichen Sprichwörter gestoßen, die ihren Werken die gewisse Volkstümlichkeit verleihen und wiederholt als Leitmotve für die Handlung oder für die Redeweise einzelner Personen herangezogen werden.

Mit Recht hat zum Beispiel Fritz Lüder darauf hingewiesen, daß Ludwig bestrebt war, "möglichst jede Person durch eine charakteristische Wendung zu fixieren."⁸ Ludwig selbst spricht diesbezüglich in seinen Studien von "Gesprächstypen",⁹ wobei sich gewisse Sprichwörter zu persönlichen Leitmotiven entwickeln können, die nicht nur rhetorisch sondern auch inhaltlich die Bedeutung eines Dramas unterstreichen können. In seiner Tragödie *Die Waldburg* (1845) übernimmt zum Beispiel das Sprichwort "Wir sind allzumal Sünder" diese Rolle, das von einem Kastellan siebenmal ausgesprochen wird, so etwa "Schlimm, wer der Vergeltung gerade unters Messer kommt. Aber wir sind allzumal Sünder und der Gande bedürftig" und "Mein Herrgott gibt mir Trost. Was soll ich hassen auf dieser Jammerwelt? Wir sind allzumal Sünder" (vgl. im beigefügten Sprichwörter-Verzeichnis Nr. 102 und Nr. 103). Das wiederholte Sprichwort fungiert u.a. als Feststellung, Vorausdeutung, Erklärung, Resignation und eben als charakteristisches Leitmotiv für den Kastellan. In Otto Ludwigs bekanntestem Trauerspiel *Der Erbförster* (1849) geht es um einen auf sein Recht pochenden Förster, der seine Starrköpfigkeit durch fünf auf Rechtsvorstellungen bezogene Sprichwörter legitimisiert (vgl. Nr. 85-89). Besonders deutlich wird dies in seinen beiden sprichwörtlichen Aussagen "So kommt, Jungens. Alles andere kann zum Teufel gehn, Herr; aber Recht, Herr, Recht muß Recht bleiben!" und "Und nun merk' auf. – Es ist kurz. – kein Aber und kein Wenn dabei – es ist klar wie das Recht – und Recht muß Recht bleiben – sonst brauchen wir keinen Gott im Himmel" (Nr. 88 und 89). Doch wer sich wie Heinrich von Kleists Michael Kohlhaas so auf sein Recht versteift, der verschuldet sich schließlich am Tode seiner Tochter und weiß seine Schuld nur durch Selbstmord zu tilgen. Hier also charakterisiert das Sprichwort die unbiegsame Rechthaberei und den Starrsinn des Försters, der dem Sprichwort gemäß laut Aussage eines Bauern "absolut mit der Stirn durch die Wand will!" (Nr. 97).

Einzelne Sprichwörter zeigen Ludwigs "Zug zum Volkstümlichen [...], der durch die Lektüre von Dickens Romanen noch besonders ausgeprägt wurde."¹⁰ Sie fungieren in seinen Werken "als Ausdruck und Merkmal volksmäßiger Lebenshaltung, aber auch als Schlagwort der Umgangssprache."¹¹ Ein offensichtliches Paradebeispiel ist die sprichwörtliche Charakterisierung des Bauernstandes durch den Großbauer Wilkens im *Erbförster*: "'Hm, ja. Wo der Bauer nicht muß, da regt er nicht Hand und nicht Fuß. Da hat er [der Förster] schon recht; das ist so die Bauernmoral. Und ich sag' Ihm, die Bauernmoral ist nicht dumm" (Nr. 7). Erwartungsgemäß greift der Erbförster in seinem übersteigerten Rechtsbewußtsein auch zweimal auf das biblische Vergeltungsspruchwort "Aug' um Aug' Zahn um Zahn" (Nr. 4 und Nr. 6) zurück, das zusätzlich als Leitmotiv von seiner Tochter Marie (Nr. 3) und seinem Sohn Wilhelm (Nr. 5) ausgesprochen wird. Doch die meisten metaphorischen Volkssprichwörter bringen menschlich-allzumenschliche Beobachtungen und Verallgemeinerungen zum Ausdruck, wie etwa "Wes Brot ich esse, des Lied ich singe" (Nr. 11), "So ist der ganze Ehestand nur Mühetag und Wehestand" (Nr. 14), "Hat nur der Fuchs die Pfote im Taubenschlag, bald ist er schlau drin" (Nr. 21), "Ist der Rock Euch näher als das Hemd?" (Nr. 45), "Hätt' der Herrgott die Hasen expreß für den Edelmann gemacht, so hätt' er ihnen gleich sein Wappen in den Pelz gebrannt" (Nr. 48), "Lärmt auch die Katze, wenn sie Mäuse fangen will?" (Nr. 57), "Die Musik muß zu trinken haben" (Nr. 75), "Denn ist die Ratte zum Haus hinaus, dann tanzt die Katze mit der Maus" (Nr. 82), "Jeder Rausch hat seine Nachwehen" (Nr. 83), "Wer einmal gestorben ist, wird nicht wieder lebendig" (Nr. 96) und "Er wird wohl nunmehr kommen. Man darf nur vom Wolfe reden, hochgräfliche Gnaden" (Nr. 124). Es fällt bei diesen Texten auf, daß sie nicht unbedingt in ihrer Standardform zitiert werden, wie sie in Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wanders *Deutschem Sprichwörter-Lexikon* (1867-1880) auftreten. Vielmehr geht Ludwig durchaus frei mit den tradierten Sprichwörtern um und integriert sie auf natürliche Weise in den Redefluß der dramatischen Personen.

Selbstverständlich finden sich in Ludwigs Sprichwortrepertoire auch weniger metaphorische Texte, die sich als leere Sprachfloskeln erweisen und dennoch die realistische Sprechweise der Charaktere widerspiegeln, wie etwa "Besser ist doch besser" (Nr. 9), "Geschehn ist geschehn" (Nr. 28), "Man ist nur einmal jung"

(Nr. 55), “Aber ein Wort gibt das andere” (Nr. 127) und “Wie die Zeit vergeht!” (Nr. 132). Und doch halten solche banalen Weisheiten als formelhafte Argumente, Feststellungen, Erklärungen oder auch Vorausdeutungen her. Sie zeigen sich als überzeugende Argumentationsstützen und sind Teil des volkssprachlichen und realistischen Sprachstils des menschenkundigen Dramatikers, der immerhin auf 779 Seiten 133 Sprichwörter zitiert. Das ergibt eine Frequenz von einem Sprichwort pro 5,9 Seiten, die in etwa der Frequenz von einem Sprichwort pro 5,7 Seiten (151 Sprichwörter auf 860 Seiten) in Ludwigs Prosaschriften entspricht.¹² Interessant ist dabei, daß es mit Ausnahme der Sprichwörter “Besser ist besser”, “Was sich liebt, das neckt sich” und “Ein Wort gibt das andere” nicht zu Überschneidungen kommt. Zieht man diese drei Sprichwörter sowie andere Wiederholungen derselben Sprichwörter in den Prosawerken und Dramen ab, so hat Otto Ludwig 250 verschiedene Sprichwörter in seinen Werken verwendet – kein allzu großes persönliches Repertoire, aber doch von erheblicher intertextueller Relevanz für die sprachliche Ausdruckskraft und den lebensnahen Gehalt seines Gesamtwerks.

Doch hier breche ich ab, denn der Zweck dieses Beitrags ist ja nicht, nun die dramatische Funktion der Sprichwörter in einzelnen Werken zu untersuchen. Die Tragödie *Der Erbförster* verdiente es jedoch auf jeden Fall, gelegentlich eingehender durch eine Analyse des Sprichwortgebrauchs interpretiert zu werden. Ich jedoch schließe nun mit einem Sprichwort, daß der Erbförster gleich in der dritten Szene des ersten Aktes ausspricht: “Hat alles seine Zeit” (Nr. 1). Vierzig Jahre haben meine Sprichwörterkarten zu Otto Ludwigs Dramen in ihrem kleinen Karton auf die Zeit gewartet, um endlich wenigstens als kommentierte Liste veröffentlicht zu werden. Das vierzigste Promotionsjubiläum meiner lieben Frau Barbara, die die eigentliche Otto Ludwig Expertin in unserer Familie ist, bietet mir die willkommene Gelegenheit, diese längst fällige Aufgabe zu erfüllen. Und so widme ich ihr dieses kleine Florilegium als Erinnerung an die schöne Zeit, als wir beide verliebt und jung verheiratet an unseren Dissertationen arbeiteten. Mit Recht heißt es doch so passend in Otto Ludwigs Drama *Die Pfarrose* sprichwörtlich und wahr: “Die Liebe kann ja Alles!” (Nr. 68). Sie kann sogar dazu beitragen, daß ich mich schon vier Jahrzehnte der fröhlichen Wissenschaft der Parömiologie widmen kann.

Sprichwörter-Verzeichnis

Zitiert wird aus Otto Ludwig, *Sämtliche Werke*, hrsg. von Paul Merker, 6 Bde. (München: G. Müller, 1912-1922). Lediglich für das Trauerspiel *Die Makkabäer* wurde der erste Band der Ausgabe *Ludwigs Werke*, hrsg. von Viktor Schweizer, 3 Bde. (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1898) herangezogen.

- E *Der Erbförster. Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen* (1849)
 F *Das Fräulein von Scuderi. Schauspiel in fünf Aufzügen* (1848)
 (nach E.T.A. Hoffmanns Erzählung)
 H *Hanns Frei. Ein Lustspiel in fünf Aufzügen* (1843)
 M *Die Makkabäer. Trauerspiel in fünf Akten* (1852)
 P *Die Pfarrose. Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen* (1845)
 R *Die Rechte des Herzens. Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen* (1845)
 T *Die Torgauer Heide. Vorspiel zum historischen Schauspiel Friedrich II. von Preußen* (1844)
 (24 Seiten des Vorspiels, keine Sprichwörter)
 W *Die Waldburg. Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen* (1845)

ALLES

1. *Förster*: Hat alles seine Zeit, das Du und das Sie. (E,VI,14)
 Wa,I,46,Alles 4. Alles hat seine Zeit.

ALLZU HOCH

2. *Moskirch*: So geht's mit solchem Übermut,
 Ja, allzu hoch das fährt nicht gut. (H,IV,389)
 Wa,I,48,Allzu gut 7. Allzu gut ist nicht gut.

AUGE

3. *Marie*: Schade um Schade, Auge um Auge, Zahn um Zahn.
 Wie er einen Menschen hat verletzt, so soll man ihm wieder tun. (E,VI,91)
 Wa.I.169,Auge 12. Aug' um Auge, Zahn um Zahn
4. *Förster*: Aug' um Auge – Zahn um Zahn. (E,VI,107)
 Wa.I.169,Auge 12. Aug' um Auge, Zahn um Zahn.
5. *Wilhelm*: Wer irgendeinen Menschen erschlägt, der soll des Todes sterben. Wer aber ein Vieh erschlägt, der soll's bezahlen Leib um Leib. Und wer seinen Nächsten verletzt, dem soll man tun, wie er getan hat. Schade um Schade, Auge um Auge, Zahn um Zahn. Wie er einem Menschen getan hat, so

soll man ihm wieder tun. Also daß er ein Vieh erschlägt, der soll's bezahlen. Wer aber einen Menschen erschlägt, der soll sterben. (E,VI,105)

Wa.I.169,Auge 12. Aug' um Auge, Zahn um Zahn.

6. *Förster*: Aug' um Aug', Zahn um Zahn. (E,VI,118)

Wa.I.169,Auge 12. Aug' um Auge, Zahn um Zahn.

BAUER

7. *Wilkens*: Hm, ja. Wo der Bauer nicht muß, da regt er nicht Hand und nicht Fuß. Da hat er [der Förster] schon recht; das ist so die Bauernmoral. Und ich sag' Ihm, die Bauernmoral ist nicht dumm. (E,VI,30)

Wa.I,267,Bauer (der) 314. Wenn der Bauer nicht muss, rührt er weder Hand noch Fuss.

BESONNENHEIT

8. *Lea*: Die Muttersorge heißt mich, mich besinnen, Denn nur Besonnenheit führt zu dem Ziel. (M,I,282)

Wa,II,1788, Langsam 12. Langsam kommt auch ans Ziel.

BESSER

9. *Engeltraut*: Sieh, Rose; besser ist doch besser. (H,IV,324)

Wa,I,332,Besser 227. Besser ist besser.

BLUT

10. *Kastellan*: Blut verleugnet sich nicht; mit dem Kopfe durch, das ist ihre Art. (W,VI,132)

Wa,I,410,Blut 19. Eigen Blut geht vor.

BROT

11. *Wilhelm*: Wes Brot ich esse, des Lied ich singe. Er wird nicht bezahlt, daß Er Herr, sondern daß Er Diener sein soll. (E,VI,30)

Wa,I,480,Brot 303. Wessen Brot ich esse, dessen Lied ich singe.

DAHEIM

12. *Cardillac*: Gib mir mein Hauskleid, Madelon – Daheim Ist doch daheim. (F,V,147)

Wa,I,547, Daheim 7. Daheim ist daheim, nie ist's hässlich es zu sein.

DENKEN

13. *Martinière*: An was man denkt, das träumt man. (F,V,176)
 Wa,I,573,Denken 72. Was er nüchtern denkt, das red't er voll.

EHESTAND

14. *Leblank*: So ist der ganze Ehestand
 Nur Mühetag und Wehestand. (H,IV,352)
 Wa,I,732,Ehestand 19. Ehestand – Wehestand.

EHRE

15. *Fräulein von Scuderi*: Zu große Ehre macht
 Sich selber wohlfeil. Und ein stiller Blick
 Des Gleichversteh'ns ehrt Geber und Empfänger
 Mehr als der Straßen lärmendes Gepränge. (F,V,272)
 Wa,I,740,Ehre 197. Gross Ehr' macht den Beutel leer.
 Wa,I,743,Ehre 331. Zu vil grosse ehr ist halbe schande.

ERPROBEN

16. *Hanns Frei*: Daß ich der Dümmden keiner bin,
 Das sagt sich so von selber hin.
 Doch muß ein Ding man erst erproben,
 Eh' man mit Wahrheit es kann loben. (H,IV,286)
 Wa,III,1406,Proben 2. Probs, dann lobs!

EULE

17. *Albrecht*: Eul' bleibt die Eul' trotz ihrem Stolz. (H,IV,341)
 Wa,I,903,Eule 30. Eulen sind Eulen.

FRAUENHERZ

18. *Fürst*: Das Frauenherz ist weich. Leicht drückt sich etwas ihm
 ein, aber leicht verwischt sich auch der tiefere Eindruck.
 (R,V,105)
 Wa,I,1142,Frauenherz (1). Ein Frauenherz versteht man
 nicht mit dem Kopfe.

FREMDE (die)

19. *Jérôme*: Mein Herr Graf
 Kommt nur so eben aus dem Krieg zurück.
 Wer aus der Fremde kommt – so ist's Gebrauch –
 Der muß – Ihr wißt schon – schwitzen. (F,V,157)
 Wa,I,1160, Fremde (die) 10. Wer aus der Fremde kommt,
 bringt Fremdes (Neues) mit.

FREUDE

20. *Kastellan*: Nein, Mamsellchen, auch die Freude muß man zu mäßigen suchen; sonst macht sie so schlimme Arbeit am Menschen wie der Kummer. (W,VI,165)

Wa,I,1166,Freude 35. Ein Freud soll ein Maas haben wie ein Gewicht an der Uhr oder Schöpff-Brunnen.

FUCHS

21. *Juda*: Im Stärkern wähle Mensch
Und Volk den Herrn, doch nie den Freund, sonst wird
Der Freund zum Herrn. Hat nur der Fuchs die Pfote
Im Taubenschlag, bald ist er schlau drin. (M,I,313)

Wa,I,1247,Fuchs 182. Hat der Fuchs das erste Huhn, so hat er auch das zweite.

GEHEN

22. *Rose*: Aber wo nun schreiben? Hier der Leichenstein muß ein Tisch sein. Der Mond leuchtet. Es geht Alles, was gehen muß. (P,V,348)

Wa,I,1423,Gehen 35. Es geht alles, wie's Beine hat.

Wa.V,1313,Gehen 493. Es geht Alles, wenn man's nur am rechten Zipfel anpackt.

GELD

23. *Cardillac*: Dasselbe, was
Des Menschen Himmel ist, ist seine Hölle.
's gibt Menschen, die nur beten dürfen, und
Ablassen muß der böse Geist von ihnen.
Ich kann der Kirche schenken. Die Kirch' ist feil.
Für Geld verkauft der Priester mir den Himmel.
Für Geld ist Erd' und Himmel feil. Ha ha! (F,V,201)

Wa,I,1789,Gold 51. Für Gold schliesst sich der Himmel auf.

24. *Graf*: Geld ist eine Macht, dem gemeine Menschen nie widerstehen. (W,VI,158)

Wa,I,1483,Geld 328. Geld ist Macht.

GENIESSEN

25. *Wüstenfels*: Und wenn man's so ist wie du, muß man's genießen und genießen lassen. (P,V,308)
 Wa,II,1852,Leben (Verb.) 141. Man muss leben und leben lassen.

GENUG

26. *Fräulein von Scuderi*: Was hab' ich? Nichts hab' ich getan. Wer nicht Genug getan hat, der hat nichts getan. (F,V,251)
 Wa,I,1554,Genug 45. Wer genug gethan, der hat gut (recht) gethan.

GERADEHERAUS

27. *Maltheser*: Muß etwas gesagt werden, denk' ich, ist Geradeheraus das Beste. (R,V,56)
 Wa,I,1560,Geradeheraus (1). Geradeheraus ist Meister.

GESCHEHEN

28. *Försterin*: Nun, geschehn ist geschehn. Aber in acht nehmen darfst du dich vor dem. (E,VI,8)
 Wa,I,1584,Geschehen 34. Geschehen ist geschehen.
29. *Graf*: Aber, Alter, was geschehen muß, das muß bald geschehen. Und es müßte still geschehen. Meine Nerven – ich bin kein Freund von Szenen. (W,VI,158)
 Wa,IV,522,Sein (Verb.) 62. Was sein muss, muss sein.
 Wa,I,1585,Geschehen 54. Was geschehen soll, das fügt sich wol.

GESCHMACK

30. *Albrecht*: Einem andern kann sie Venus sein; Hat jeder seinen Geschmack allein. (H,IV,291)
 Wa,I,1598,Geschmack 12. Jeder nach seinem Geschmack.

GEWALT

31. *Cardillac*: Von Gottes Gnaden war hier ein Tyrann, Nun sind es hundert in der Freiheit Namen. Die Taten nicht, die Täter wechseln nur. Ob einer sie besitzt, ob Hunderttausend – Wer die Gewalt hat, der mißbraucht sie auch. (F,V,187)
 Wa,I,1648,Gewalt 125. Wer gewalt hat, der gebraucht gewalt.
 Wa,I,1648,Gewalt 126. Wer Gewalt hat, der hat auch recht.

GEWISSEN

32. *Caton*: Ein gut Gewissen macht nicht bleich. (F,V,145)
 Wa,I,1671,Gewissen 130. Ein gut Gewissen macht ein
 fröhlich Gesicht.

GLÜCK

33. *Hanns Frei*: Das Glück sei zu bezahlen nicht,
 Zu schau solch liebes Angesicht. (H,IV,298)
 Wa,I,1747,Glück 339. Glück ist nicht auf dem Markte feil.
34. *Paul*: Glück ist schwerer zu tragen als Unglück. Dem Unglück
 hab' ich den Mann gezeigt. Das Glück macht mich zum Wei-
 be. (R,V,91)
 Wa,I,1747,Glück 380. Glück ist schwer zu tragen.
35. *Försterin*: Glück ist wie Sonne. Ein wenig Schatten muß sein,
 wenn's dem Menschen wohl werden soll. (E,VI,13)
 Wa,I,1747,Glück 384. Glück ist wie Aprilwetter.

GLÜCKLICH

36. *Falkenstein*: Ich will glücklich werden! Ihr (Rose) zum Trotz.
 Mein Glück soll im ganzen Land zum Sprichwort werden.
 Damit sie's täglich hören muß. Es soll heißen: Glücklich wie
 Fritz von Falkenstein. Wein! Musik! Kanonen! Ich will glück-
 lich sein! (P,V,345)
 Wa,I,1777,Glücklich *37. Er ist so glücklich wie ein Pilz.

GLÜCKLICHER

37. *Paul*: Glückliche vergessen gern. (R,V,45)
 Wa,I,1778,Glücklicher 7. Der Glückliche verliert das Ge-
 dächtnis.

GOTT

38. *Kastellan*: Geld tut's nicht; an Gottes Segen ist alles gelegen –
 Geld hilft nichts, hilft nichts. (W,VI,158)
 Wa,II,2,Gott 24. An Gottes Segen ist alles gelegen.
39. *Lejean*: Wär't Ihr ein braver Armer,
 So sagt' ich: Geht zu René Cardillac.
 Wenn Gott nicht hilft, so hilft der Cardillac. (F,V,145)
 Wa,II,84,Gott 2033. Wenn Gott nicht hilft, so muss der
 Teufel helfen.
40. *Caton*: Doch, Meister Cardillac,

Wo wir auch sind, sind wir bei Gott zur Miete. (F,V,147)
 Wa,II,96,Gott 2328. Wir sind alle (oder: allenthalben) in
 Gottes Hand.

HALB

41. *Kastellan*: Morgen sprechen wir uns, Heinrich. – Gut. Nein –
 nicht gut – halbgetan ist nicht getan. (W,VI,139)
 Wa,V,1398, Halb 8. Was man halb gethan, ist noch nicht
 fertig.

HANDELN

42. *Michael*: Wer nicht handeln will, überlegt. (R,V,48)
 Wa,I,122, Arbeiten 51. Wer nicht arbeiten will, findet im-
 mer eine Ausrede.

HÄRTE

43. *Fräulein von Scuderi*: Ihr seid wie Alle. So spricht der la Reg-
 nie,
 So Degrais. Ach, an Härte sind die Menschen
 Sich alle gleich. (F,V,221)
 Wa,IV,1241, Tod 343. Vor dem Tode sind alle gleich.

HELFEN

44. *Ernst*: Vater, wer nicht helfen will, der bedauert. Die Bequem-
 lichkeit putzt sich mit schönen Worten. Vater, ich will sie
 nicht bedauern, ich will ihr helfen. (W,VI,168)
 Wa,II,491, Helfen 120. Wer nicht helfen will, hat leicht eine
 Ausrede.

HEMD

45. *Pirkheimer*: Ei, Nachbar, sorgt Ihr schon um Fremde?
 Ist der Rock Euch näher als das Hemde? (H,IV,289)
 Wa,II,499, Hemd 3. Das hembd ligt eim (ist mir) näher dann
 der rock.

HERR

46. *Weiler*: Ja, ich will nicht prophezeien, aber – der Herr hat doch
 allemal recht, weil er der Herr ist. (E,VI,8)
 Wa,III,1520, Recht (Subst.) 48. Das Recht ist des Stärksten.
47. *Wilkens*: Wenn er Herr ist, so muß er doch recht behalten.
 (E,VI,29)
 Wa,III,1520, Recht (Subst.) 48. Das Recht ist des Stärksten.

HERRGOTT

48. *Frei*: Jetzt ist Freiheit, und die Ordnung hat aufgehört; jeder kann machen, was er will, kein Büttel mehr, kein grüner Tisch mehr, sag' ich Euch; kein Turm, keine Ketten. Hätt' der Herrgott die Hasen expreß für den Edelmann gemacht, so hätt' er ihnen gleich sein Wappen in den Pelz gebrannt. War eine Kleinigkeit das für einen Mann wie der Herrgott. (E,VI,62)
 Wa,II,80,Gott 1944. Wenn Gott beschert den Hasen, beschert er auch den Rasen.

HÜBEN

49. *Cardillac*: Das was ein Hüben hat, hat auch ein Drüben; Dasselbe Ding ist licht und dunkel, je Nachdem es steht, die Seite bald, bald die. (F,V,162)
 Wa,V,1438,Hier 10. Was hie, was da.
50. *Cardillac*: Das Drüben ist so nötig
 Als wie das Hüben. Wie der Tag, die Nacht. (F,V,162)
 Wa,V,1438,Hier 10. Was hie, was da.

HÜLFE

51. *Andres*: Der Vater sagt: Wenn's Hülfe gilt, muß jeder tüchtige Mensch einstehn und nachher erst fragen: wem hab' ich geholfen? (E,VI,66)
 Wa,II,815,Hülfe 51. Wo Hülfe noth thut, nützen Worte nichts.

JUGEND

52. *Wüstenfels*: Der Schnitt ging tief. Aber die Jugend verwindet Alles. (P,V,343)
 Wa,II,1046,Jugend 112. Jugend überwindet Tod und Teufel.
53. *Fräulein von Scuderi*: Ja, Jugend hat nicht Tugend.
 Man hat seine Not, in Ordnung euch zu halten,
 Ihr junges Volk. Nun geht; geht. Gute Nacht. (F,V,181)
 Wa,II,1045,Jugend 91. Jugend hat keine (oder: nicht allzeit) Tugend.

JUNG

54. *Wüstenfels*: Es ist wohl keiner, der mit fünfzig Jahren nicht wünschte, er wär' noch einmal zwanzig. Aber er dürfte nichts von dem vergessen, was er weiß. Dummes Zeug! Jung sein ist eben dumm sein. Das göttliche Privilegium, dumme Steiche machen zu dürfen. (P,V,298)
 Wa,V,1471,Jugend 213. Jugend hat keine Weisheit.
 Wa,II,1043,Jugend 41. Die Jugend ist tumküne.
 Wa,II,1054,Jung 41. Jung und weise fahren nicht in einem Gleise.
55. *Falkenstein*: Man ist nur einmal jung. (P,V,308)
 Wa,II,1055,Jung 49. Man ist nur einmal jung.

KALT

56. *Weiler*: Wir werden alle einmal kalt. (E,VI,46)
 Wa,IV,837,Sterben 168. Wir müssen alle sterben.

KATZE

57. *Caton*: Warum denn sonst der Lärmen der Patrouillen
 Mit Räuspfern und mit Stöcken durch die Straßen?
 Als wollten sie den Dieb zu fürchten machen
 Mit ihrer Furcht? Lärmt auch die Katze, wenn
 Sie Mäuse fangen will? (F,V,149)
 Wa,II,1174,Katze 133. Die Katze überlegt nicht lange,
 wenn sie eine Maus sieht

KLÜGELN

58. *Kastellan*: Wer mit Klügeln sich befaßt, der braucht einen Vorwand, nicht handeln zu müssen. Wer klügelt, der will nicht wollen. Einen Kern muß der Mensch haben, Liebe oder Haß, irgendeinen gewaltigen Gedanken oder ein unerschütterlich Vertraun. Daran fehlt's euch Jetzigen. (W,VI,141)
 Wa,V,1124,Denken 160. Wer zu viel denkt, der thut gemeiniglich zu wenig.

KNABE

59. *Simei*: Die wildesten Knaben wurden mit der Zeit
 Die schönsten Männer. (M,I,278)
 Wa,II,1418,Knabe 2. Aus Knaben werden Männer, aus Männern all Leute.

KÖNNEN

60. *Cardillac*: Er ist sich selbst ein Rätsel. Dunkler Drang Regiert ihn, und er kann nicht, wie er will. (F,V,160)
 Wa,II,1493,Können 41. Mancher kann, der nicht will, und mancher will, der nicht kann.

KURZWEIL

61. *Cardillac*: Ich bitt' Euch, geht. Wer Kurzweil' kommt zu suchen,
 Bringt Langeweile mit. (F,V,151)
 Wa,II,1787,Langeweile 6. Langeweile macht Langeweile.

LACHEN

62. *Felicitas*: Der letzte, der am besten lacht. (H,IV,371)
 Wa,II,1746,Lachen 92. Wer zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten.

LEBEN

63. *Baroness*: Wer glücklich sein will, muß leben können. Ich meine: der darf das Leben nicht als ein ernstes schweres Geschäft betrachten, sondern als eine heitere leichte Kunst [...]. Das Leben wird jedem das, wofür er es nimmt. Dem einen wird die Arbeit zum Spiel, dem Andern das Spiel zur Arbeit. – Sie sehen, ich weiß auch zu philosophieren. (R,V,32)
 Wa,V,192,Werden 3. Einem jeden wird, was ihm werden soll.
64. *Försterin*: Ist das das Leben? Ein ewig Abschiednehmen? (E,VI,89)
 Wa,II,1836, Leben (Subst.) 35. Das Leben ist ein Punkt (oder: Augenblick).
65. *Lea*: "Süß ist das Leben." (M,I,325)
 Wa,II,1837,Leben (Subst.) 50. Das Leben ist süß.

LEUTE

66. *Pastor*: Das sind die Leute. Die Leute sind eben die Leute. (P,V,287)
 Wa,II,620,Mensch 670. Menschen sind Menschen.
67. *Pastor*: Sollen wir deshalb keine Menschen sein, weil die Leute die Leute sind? Der Leute wegen das Ebenbild Gottes, der die Wahrheit ist, verunstalten? (P,V,287)
 Wa,II,620,Mensch 670. Menschen sind Menschen.

LIEBE

68. *Rose*: Ich muß sterben. Jetzt, wo die Welt so schön ist, muß ich sterben! Jetzt, wo ich dein bin, muß ich sterben! Laßt mich doch nicht sterben. Es ist Frühling und ich soll sterben! Die Rosen blühen und ich soll sterben! Nein; ich will nicht sterben. Die Liebe kann ja Alles! (P,V,370)
 Wa,III,136,Liebe 160. Die Liebe kann alles.
69. *Rose*: Verachtung zürnt nicht. Nur die Liebe zürnt. Die ver-zweifelnde Liebe. (P,V,346)
 Wa,III,137,Liebe 1919. Die Liebe zankt gern.

LIEBEN

70. *Hanns Frei*: Schon gut, schon gut. Ihr werten Herrn
 Wißt: was man liebt, das neckt man gern,
 Wißt, daß ein allzu heftig Nein
 Pfllegt ein verstecktes Ja zu sein,
 Wißt, daß die Frauen nur sich spreizen,
 Um sicher zum Kampf zu reizen,
 Und dieser Kampf, der ist nur eben
 Ein Vorwand, um sich zu ergeben. (H,IV,285)
 Wa,III,169-170,Lieben 87. Was sich liebt, das neckt sich.

MÄDCHEN

71. *Sabine*: Und, sag' ich, mein Bruder, sag' ich, sagt immer: ein Mädchen ohne Gemüt, das ist wie eine Blume ohne Duft. (P,V,279)
 Wa,III,312,Mädchen 77. Ein Mädchen ohne Lein (Flachs, Linnen) hat keinen (guten) Schein.

MENSCH

72. *Wirt*: Und der Mensch ist zu allem fähig. (E,VI,66)
 Wa,III,598,Mensch 171. Der Mensch kann alles, was er will.
73. *Paul*: Das letzte kämpf' ich dem Himmel ab. Der Mensch kann, wenn er können will! (R,V,62)
 Wa,III,598,Mensch 171. Der Mensch kann alles, was er will.
74. *Fürst*: Einem Hunde einen Tritt. Der Mensch ohne Ehre ist den Tritt nicht wert. (R,V,96)
 Wa,III,608,Mensch 404. Ein Mensch ohne Ehre ist Kohl ohne Speck.

MUSIK

75. *Försterin*: Da sind die Musikanten schon. Wo hab' ich nur den Kellerschlüssel? Die Musik muß zu trinken haben. (E,VI,5)
 Wa,III,1865, Sanger (Singer) 17. Sanger sind immer durstig.
 Wa,III,788, Musikantenkehle 1. Musikantenkehle ist eine tiefe Hohle.

NAME

76. *Leblank*: Ist alles nichts als Eigennutz,
 Vergold't mit schoner Namen Putz;
 Der Namen ist's allein, der's tut,
 Die Sache schlecht macht oder gut. (H,IV,365)
 Wa,III,873, Name 34. Es geht nichts uber einen guten Namen.

NEHMEN

77. *Felicitas*: Ich nehm' es, wie es mir beschieden. (H,IV,390)
 Wa,III,981, Nehmen 21. Man muss nemen, wies kompt.

OFEN

78. *Werner*: Ein Menschenkenner das! und mit sehenden Augen blind. Da heit's: Hinter dem Ofen sitzen auch Leute. (P,V,317)
 Wa,III,1116, Ofen 40. Hintern Ofen ist auch in der Stube.

PARIS

79. *Cardillac*: Dacht ich's nicht?
 Ja; dies Paris; das ist ein neues Sodom.
 Da hilft kein Warnen mehr, kein Himmelszeichen.
 Und schickt der Herrgott einmal eine Pest,
 Mu der Strafengel noch zum Kuppler werden. (F,V,157)
 Wa,III,1183, Paris 8. Paris ist das moderne Babel.

POBEL

80. *Graf*: Der Mann von Stande hat nur eine Pflicht, die Rücksicht auf die Groe und das Wachstum seines Hauses. Er hat andere Rücksichten, als die der Pobel nehmen mu. Der Pobel ist ein Knecht des Bedurfnisses. Das ist der Charakter unseres Standes, da er aus dem gemeinen Bedurfnis heraufgehoben ist. (W,VI,155-156)
 Wa,III,1363, Pobel 8. Der Pobel ist ein Thier mit viel Fusen ohne Haupt.

RATSEL

81. *Cardillac*: Er ist sich selbst ein Ratsel. Dunkler Drang

Regiert ihn, und er kann nicht, wie er will. (F,V,160)
 Wa,II,1010,Jeder 64. Jeder ist sich selbst der Nächste.

RATTE

82. *Albrecht*: Auf, Bruder, trinke. Du sollst leben
 Und dort die Base auch daneben.
 Denn ist die Ratte zum Haus hinaus,
 Dann tanzt die Katze mit der Maus. (H,IV,361)
 Wa,II,1192,Katze 531. Wenn die Katze nicht daheim (zu
 Hause) ist, haben die Mäuse iren freyen lauff.
 Wa,II,1192,Katze 532. Wenn die Katze nicht zu hause ist,
 tantzen die Mäuse auf Tischen und Bäncken.

RAUSCH

83. *Wüstenfels*: Jeder Rausch hat seine Nachwehen. Und hat das
 Herz sich berauscht, müssen sich die Augen übergeben.
 (P,V,333)
 Wa,III,1508,Rausch 9. Einen guten Rausch verschläft man
 nicht in einer Nacht.
 Wa,III,1509,Rausch 12. Nach dem Rausche folgt der Kat-
 zenjammer.

RECHNUNG

84. *Fräulein von Scuderi*: Ihr geltet was beim König und man hört
 Euch.
 Hab' ich die Rechnung ohne Wirt gemacht?
 Helft Ihr mir, Freund? Oder müßt Ihr – Euch schonen?
 Wie? (F,V,219)
 Wa,III,1515,Rechnung 14. Man muss nicht Rechnung ohne
 den Wirth machen.

RECHT

85. *Förster*: Was vor dem Herzen recht ist, das muß auch vor den
 Gerichten recht sein. (E,VI,58)
 Wa,III,1541,Recht (Adv.) 81. Was recht ist, muss recht
 bleiben.
86. *Förster*: Also recht ist's nicht? Und wenn's nicht recht ist, so
 muß es unrecht sein. (E,VI,58)
 Wa,III,1541,Recht (Adv.) 73. Was nicht recht ist, soll man
 recht machen.

RECHT

87. *Wilkins*: In seinem Recht? Hm. Was will Er mit dem Recht? Recht kostet Geld. Recht ist ein Spielzeug für die Reichen wie Pferde und Wagen. Hm. Mit seinem Recht und Unrecht da. Sein Recht, das ist sein Eigensinn. (E,VI,52)
 Wa,III,1529,Recht (Subst.) 208. Recht hat, wer so lange zahlt, bis er's hat.
88. *Förster*: So kommt, Jungens. Alles andere kann zum Teufel gehn, Herr; aber Recht, Herr, Recht muß Recht bleiben! (E,VI,59)
 Wa,III,1530,Recht (Subst.) 233. Recht muss (doch) Recht bleiben.
89. *Förster*: Und nun merk' auf. – Es ist kurz – kein Aber und kein Wenn dabei – es ist klar wie das Recht – und Recht muß Recht bleiben – sonst brauchen wir keinen Gott im Himmel. (E,VI,114)
 Wa,III,1530,Recht (Subst.) 233. Recht muss (doch) Recht bleiben.
90. *Fräulein von Scuderi*: Wer Recht behalten will, behält auch Recht.
 Drum laß mich gehen; mir ist nicht zu helfen –
 Es muß gelingen! Muß! Und drum gelingt's. (F,V,247)
 Wa,II,1534,Recht (Subst.) 316. Wer Recht hat, der habe Recht.

REDEN

91. *Förster*: Er redt, wie Er's versteht. (E,VI,29)
 Wa,III,1556,Reden (Verb.) 65. Jeder redet wie er's versteht.

SCHLANGE

92. *Kastellan*: Oho! Willst du's haben? Willst du's haben? Gut, gut! Nimm dich in acht; die Wespe hat einen Stachel; die Schlange hat einen Zahn. Willst du' haben? Gut, gut! Jeder Tag hat seine Nacht. ((W,VI,169-170)
 Wa.,IV,223,Schlange 38. Jede Schlange hat ihr eigen Gift.

SIEG

93. *Gorgias*: Ich habe manches Sieges stählenden Einfluß gesehn auf Siegerheere wirken Und weiß, daß Sieg den Sieg gebiert. (M,I,357)
 Wa,IV,1441,Unglück 81. Ein Unglück gebiert das andere.

SOLLEN

94. *Hanns Frei*: Sie haben beide nicht gewollt,
Allein darum, weil sie gesollt.
Und gebt nur Acht: wenn sie nicht sollen,
Dann werden sie gerade wollen. (H,IV,297)
Wa,IV,604,Sollen 5. Was wir nicht sollen, das pflegen wir
zu wollen.

STAND

95. *Martin*: Was hilft's. Ein jeder Stand hat seine Rechte.
So wollt' es Gott. Drum laß ich mir's gefallen. (F,V,158)
Wa,IV,774,Stand 46. Jeder Stand hat seine Farbe.

STERBEN

96. *Rose*: Nein; wer einmal gestorben ist, wird nicht wieder le-
bendig. Nein. Nein. Nein. Nein. Nein. Nein. Nein. Nein.
(P,V,316)
Wa,IV,836,Sterben 149. Wer gestorben ist einmal, der
kommt nicht wieder.

STIRN

97. *Wilkins*: Hm! Wenn einer absolut mit der Stirn durch die
Wand will! Der Narr bin ich nicht, der die Hand dazwischen
hält. (E,VI,37)
Wa,IV,867,Stirn 17. Mit der Stirn kommt man nicht durch
die Wand.

STRENGE

98. *Lea*: Sie sind voll Trotz? O freilich! Strenge wirkt nur Trotz.
(M,I,362)
Wa,IV,908,Strenge 3. Grosse Strenge taugt nicht in die Länge.

SÜNDER

99. *Kastellan*: Nun, wir sind alle Sünder. Ein lustiges Völkchen
das in Wien, denken mehr an den Leib als an die Seele.
(W,VI,131)
Wa,IV,970,Sünder 16. Wir sind allzumal Sünder.
100. *Kastellan*: Einer muß den andern ertragen; wir sind allzumal
Sünder. (W,VI,134)
Wa,IV,970,Sünder 16. Wir sind allzumal Sünder.
101. *Kastellan*: Na – wir sind allzumal Sünder. Amen. (W,VI,139)
Wa,IV,970,Sünder 16. Wir sind allzumal Sünder.

102. *Kastellan*: Schlimm, wer der Vergeltung gerade unters Messer kommt. Aber wir sind allzumal Sünder und der Gande bedürftig. Amen. (W,VI,141)
 Wa,IV,970,Sünder 16. Wir sind allzumal Sünder.
103. *Kastellan*: Mein Herrgott gibt mir Trost. Was soll ich hassen auf dieser Jammerwelt? Wir sind allzumal Sünder. (W,VI,143)
 Wa,IV,970,Sünder 16. Wir sind allzumal Sünder.
104. *Kastellan*: Der Herr Graf Heinrich sind jung, und wir sind allzumal Sünder. (W,VI,158)
 Wa,IV,970,Sünder 16. Wir sind allzumal Sünder.
105. *Kastellan*: Als eine Wahnsinnige schloß ich sie ein; da bracht' ich ihr selbst das Essen und – ein Jahr früher oder später wär' sie doch gestorben; na wir sind allzumal Sünder. (W,VI,182-183)
 Wa,IV,970,Sünder 16. Wir sind allzumal Sünder.
- TAG
106. *Kastellan*: Oho! Willst du's haben? Willst du's haben? Gut, gut! Nimm dich in acht; die Wespe hat einen Stachel; die Schlange hat einen Zahn. Willst du' haben? Gut, gut! Jeder Tag hat seine Nacht. ((W,VI,169-170)
 Wa,IV,998,Tag 168. Ein jeder Tag hat seinen Abend.
107. *Cardillac*: Das Drüben ist so nötig
 Als wie das Hüben. Wie der Tag, die Nacht. (F,V,161)
 Wa,IV,1141,That 104. Wie die That, so der Lohn.
- TAUBE
108. *Caton*: Sonst einmal,
 Wenn einem eine Taub' ins Maul geflogen,
 Will sagen: wenn ein Mensch ein Glück gemacht,
 So war er fröhlich auch von Angesicht
 Und lobte Gott und die ihm wohlgetan. (F,V,144)
 Wa,IV,1042,Taube (die) 28. Es fliegen einem keine gebratenen Tauben ins Maul.
- TOD
109. *Förster*: Besser den Tod trinken, wie als ein Schurke leben.
 Und ein Schurke muß ich bleiben vor der Welt. (E,VI,89)
 Wa,IV,1225,Tod 7. Besser den Tod, als ein elendes Leben.

110. *Eugenie* (Brief von Paul lesend): "Deine fürstlichen Ahnen werden den Geächteten unter sich ruhen lassen, wenn es wahr ist, daß der Tod versöhnt." (R,V,75)
 Wa,V,1771,Tod 533. Der Tod versöhnt.

TREFFEN

111. *Caton*: Ihr meint, das geht auf Euch? Nun, wen es traf, Der wird's wohl spüren. (F,V.144)
 Wa,IV,1302,Treffen 34. Wer getroffen wird, der regt sich.
 Wa,IV,1302,Treffen 35. Wer sich getroffen fühlt, der meldet sich (oder: zupft sich an der Nase).

TREIBEN

112. *Felicitas*: Wie heißt das alte Sprichwort doch?
 Was ich – was – ja; ich weiß es noch.
 Was ich nicht treiben soll, ich treib',
 Wo ich nicht bleiben soll, ich bleib',
 Und wo ich soll, da bleib' ich nicht.
 Ist euch so neu die alte Geschichte'?
 Ach, die ist uralt schon, Hanns Frei. (H,IV,297)
 Nicht in Wander.

TUGEND

113. *Cardillac*: Leg' dich. O es ist
 Ein Wohlgefühl das fromme Wollen. Tugend
 Geht über allen Schmuck – den Schmuck – er hat
 Ihn noch – den –. (F,V,191)
 Wa,IV,1364,Tugend 176. Tugend geht über Kunst.
 Wa,IV,1364,Tugend 177. Tugend geht über Reichthum.

VERTRAUEN

114. *Maltheser*: Alter, ein Vertrauen um das andere. Könnt Ihr Euch noch eines polnischen Grafen entsinnen? (R,V,70)
 Wa,IV,1615,Vertrauen (Subst.) 9. Vertrauen weckt Vertrauen.

VERWERFEN

115. *Stein*: Aber was stichst du da gleich, wenn ich mich verwerfe?
Förster: Verworfen ist verspielt. (E,VI,22)
 Wa,IV,1589,Verspielen 1. Es verspielt einer oft mit guten Karten.

WEIB

116. *Förster*: Aber tausend Element! mach' mir nicht soviel Sachen mit dem Mädels, hörst du? Wenn du so fortmachst, hat sie dich in vier Wochen im Sack. Die Weiber wollen immer Herr sein; darauf geht ihr ganzes Dichten und Trachten, ohne daß sie's selber denken. (E,VI,18)
 Wa,V,12,Weib 291. Die Weiber wollen gern das letzte Wort haben.
117. *Kastellan*: Weiber können nichts verschweigen; ich ließ sie mit keinem Menschen sprechen. Als eine Wahnsinnige schloß ich sie ein. (W,VI,182)
 Wa,V,51,Weib 1134. Weiber verschweigen alles (nur), was sie nicht wissen.
118. *Förster*: Sprüche Salomonis, einunddreißig, zehn: "Wem ein tugendhaft Weib beschert ist, die ist viel edler denn die köstlichsten Perlen. Ihres Mannes Herz darf sich auf sie verlassen, und Nahrung wird ihm nicht mangeln. Sie tut ihm Liebes und kein Leides sein Leben lang." (E,VI,15)
 Wa,V,19,Weib 433. Ein gutes Weib is mehr werth als Perlen.

WEIN

119. *Falkenstein*: Der Wein. Ja, du hast recht. Es ist eine Schande. Hilf mir auf. Der Wein ist tückisch. (P,V,344)
 Wa,V,92,Wein 147. Der Wein ist ein Schleifstein.

WELT

120. *Fräulein von Scuderi*: Die Welt ist hart; sie glaubt das Schlimmste lieber.
 Der Angeklagte ist den meisten Menschen
 Schon ein Gerichteter. Was gegen ihn spricht,
 Das weiß man; weiß man auch, was für ihn spricht? (F,V,221)
 Wa,V,166,Welt 229. Die Welt ist spitzig und verlogten.

WERDEN

121. *Hanns Frei*: Ja, wartet nur, Ihr kleiner Dieb!
 Einem jeden wird nach seinen Gaben;
 Ihr sollt einen Tuckmäuser haben. (H,IV,282)
 Wa,V,192,Werden 3. Einem jeden wird, was ihm werden soll.

WESPE

122. *Kastellan*: Oho! Willst du's haben? Willst du's haben? Gut, gut! Nimm dich in acht; die Wespe hat einen Stachel; die Schlange hat einen Zahn. Willst du' haben? Gut, gut! Jeder Tag hat seine Nacht. ((W,VI,169-170)
 Wa,I,373,Biene 23. Jede Biene hat ihren Stachel.

WISSEN

123. *Klara*: Siehst du, man kann nicht wissen, wie die Sache kommt; oft wenn's am finstersten ist, Heinrich, flimmert plötzlich der ganze Himmel von Sternen. (W,VI,163)
 Wa,V,293,Wissen 112. Man kann nich wêten, wî de Hâs löppt.

WOLF

124. *Kastellan*: Er wird wohl nunmehr kommen. (Man hört Heinrich singen.) Man darf nur vom Wolfe reden, hochgräfliche Gnaden. (W,VI,137)
 Wa,V,366,Wolf 348. Wann man den wolff nent, so kompt er gerennt.

WOLLEN

125. *Cardillac*: Schwer ist es, doch wenn man nur wollen will, So kann man können. (F,V,190-191)
 Wa, V,390,Wollen (Verb.) 49. Was man will, das kann man auch.

WORT

126. *Cardillac*: Jetzt möcht ich wissen, was du weißt, was du Von mir zu wissen glaubst – verstehst du? glaubst? Ich hab's gern reinlich zwischen mir und Andern. Ein redlich Wort verhütet Mißverstand. (F,V,163)
 Wa,V,404,Wort 149. Ein sanftes Wort stillet den Zorn
127. *Kastellan*: Aber ein Wort gibt das andere, das andere das dritte, das Größte scheucht ein unscheinbarer Gedanke auf wie ein leises Geräusch das ruhende Wild. (W,VI,178)
 Wa,V,406,Wort 171. Ein Wort gibt (holet) das andre.

WÜRDE

128. *Leblank*: Denn was Ihr nur betrachten wollt, Vielwürd'ge Frau, das ist vergold't. Vergoldet ist der Priesterstand;

Die Würde steckt nur im Gewand. (H,IV,364)
 Wa,I,734,Ehre 44. Die Ehre ist wie das Kleid.

ZEIT

129. *Kastellan*: Die Zeit geht ihren stillen Schritt und die Vergeltung springt über Jahrzehnte, Jahrhunderte, Jahrtausende weg, wenn sie einmal geweckt ist, wie ein Löwe über den Busch. (W,VI,141)

Wa,V,529,Zeit 126. Die Zeit geht und wir mit ihr.

130. *Juda*: Du seufzest nach dem Retter,
 Der Altes wiederbringen soll? Die Zeit
 Geht vorwärts; tot ist das Vergangene
 Und Volk und Kinder greifen nach dem Neuen. (M,I,275)

Wa,V,534,Zeit 220. Die Zeit vergeht, nichts besteht.

131. *Michael*: Die Zeit vergeht und der Teufel holt, was uns noch von Freiheit geblieben ist. (R,V,61)

Wa,V,534,Zeit 220. Die Zeit vergeht, nichts besteht.

132. *Försterin*: Dann hier Herr Möller. Und dort dein Herr Pate, der Herr Vetter Wilkens. Dann hier ich, dort Robert und du. Untenan endlich Andres und Wilhelm. Wie die Zeit vergeht! (E,VI,10)

Wa,V,534,Zeit 220. Die Zeit vergeht, nichts besteht.

ZUVIEL

133. *Wüstenfels*: Zuviel ist vom Übel, Junge. Wer wird so hartherzig sein. (P,V,308)

Wa,V,661,Zuviel 39. Zuviel ist ungesund.

Anmerkungen

¹ *Otto Ludwigs gesammelte Schriften*, hrsg. von Erich Schmidt und Adolf Stern (Leipzig: F.W. Stern, 1981), Bd. 5, S. 535.

² Ebenda, Bd. 5, S. 81-82.

³ Ebenda, Bd. 5, S. 534.

⁴ Ebenda, Bd. 6, S. 76 (aus Ludwigs Romanstudien). Vgl. W. Greiner, *Die ersten Novellen Otto Ludwigs und ihr Verhältnis zu Ludwig Tieck* (Diss. Jena 1903), S. 35.

⁵ Ebenda, Bd. 6, S. 20. Vgl. Albert Meyer, *Die Ästhetischen Anschauungen Otto Ludwigs* (Winterthur: P.G. Keller, 1957), S. 4; und Friedrich Bruns, "Friedrich Hebbel und Otto Ludwig. Ein Vergleich ihrer Ansichten über das Drama," *Hebbelforschungen*, 5 (1913), 14.

⁶ Ebenda, Bd. 6, S. S. 46.

⁷ Vgl. James C. Cornette, *Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions in the German Works of Martin Luther*, hrsgs. von Wolfgang Mieder und Dorothee Racette (Bern: Peter Lang, 1997), Horst Weinstock, *Die Funktion elisabethanischer Sprichwörter und Pseudosprichwörter bei Shakespeare* (Geidelberg: Carl Winter, 1996), und George B. Bryan und Wolfgang Mieder, *The Proverbial Charles Dickens. An Index to Proverbs in the Works of Charles Dickens* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997). Zahlreiche weitere Sprichwortstudien zu diesen drei Autoren in Wolfgang Mieder and George B. Bryan, *Proverbs in World Literature. A Bibliography* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996)

⁸ Fritz Lüder, *Die epischen Werke Otto Ludwigs und ihr Verhältnis zu Charles Dickens* (Diss. Greifswald, 1911), S. 112.

⁹ Ebenda, Bd. 5, S. 535.

¹⁰ Lüder, S. 35. Vgl. auch Johanna Betz, *Otto Ludwigs Verhältnis zu den Engländern* (Diss. Frankfurt am Main, 1929), S. 141; und Edgar Tyroff, *Das Heimaterlebnis in den Werken Otto Ludwigs* (Berlin: E. Ebering, 1931), S. 18.

¹¹ Adrianus Pieter Berkhout, *Biedermeier und poetischer Realismus. Stilistische Beobachtungen über Werke von Grillparzer, Mörike, Stifter, Hebbel und Ludwig* (Diss. Amsterdam 1942), S. 62.

¹² Vgl. Wolfgang Mieder, "Das Sprichwort in den Prosaschriften Otto Ludwigs," in W. Mieder, *Das Sprichwort in der deutschen Literatur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1976), S. 109.

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FÉLIX NETO AND ETIENNE MULLET

LAY CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF FORGIVENESS AMONG
PORTUGUESE ADULTS: A PROVERB ENDORSEMENT
APPROACH

Abstract: Lay conceptualizations about forgiveness were examined using a proverb endorsement approach. Three hundred and three participants living in Portugal were presented with 40 proverbs related to forgiveness, and instructed to assess the degree to which they agree with their content. Through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, four conceptualization factors were found: Positive aspects of forgiveness, Negative aspects of forgiveness, Forgetting is not forgiving, and Forgiveness as moral revenge. Several of these factors had already been found in previous studies but the Forgetting is not forgiving factor nicely complements the series of four conceptualization factors that comprise the Conceptualization of forgiveness model.

Keywords: proverbs, forgiveness, resentment, lay conceptualizations, Portugal.

Forgiveness has been studied under a variety of perspectives, notably cognitive (e.g., Ahmed, Azar & Mullet, 2007), personal (e.g., Neto, 2007), social (e.g., McCullough, Worthington & Rachal, 1997), and cultural (e.g., Takaku, Weiner & Ohbushi, 2001; Neto, Pinto, & Mullet, 2007). Although less studied (Worthington, 2005), lay people's conceptualizations of forgiveness have, nevertheless, been examined through diverse methodological approaches: conceptual questions endorsement (e.g., Mullet, Girard & Bakhshi, 2004), spontaneous definitions (e.g., Kanz, 2000), and prototype analysis (e.g., Friesen & Fletcher, 2007).

Denton and Martin (1998) conducted a survey among clinical social workers. Factor analysis of the responses showed several factors: forgiveness as a release of negative feelings, forgiving is not condoning, forgiveness requires two persons, and forgiveness is a slow process that does not guarantee forgetting or reconciliation. Kanz (2000) instructed students to answer conceptual forgiveness questions. A majority of participants agreed

with the idea that it is possible to forgive someone without that person being aware of it, forgiveness is not a weakness, forgiving does not excuse (or justify) the offender's hurtful behavior, and anger decreases when forgiveness takes place. Younger, Piferi, Jobe and Lawler (2004) showed that four major themes emerged from students' spontaneous definitions of forgiveness: letting go of negative feelings, acceptance and getting over it, going back to the relationship, and forgetting/not forgetting about the incident. Kearns and Fincham (2004) utilized a prototype approach to examine lay conceptions. Truthfulness, sincerity, open-mindedness, caring, giving someone a second chance, learning from mistakes, doing the right thing, finding a solution to a problem, an act of love, accepting someone's apologies, understanding that everyone makes mistakes, and making you feel good afterwards were considered as the more central attributes of forgiveness. Friesen and Fletcher (2007) replicated these results on a sample from New-Zealand.

A Four-Factor Model of Conceptualizations

Mullet, Girard, and Bakhshi (2004) examined the extent to which lay people agree with conceptualizations of forgiveness encountered in the literature (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; McCullough, Pargament & Thorensen, 2000). Through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, four robust conceptualization factors that were largely similar to the ones found in Denton and Martin's (1998) study were identified: Change of heart (e.g., "To forgive someone who has done you wrong necessarily means to start feeling affection toward him again"), Broad process that is not limited to the victim-offender dyad (e.g., "You can forgive the person responsible for an institution which has done you wrong (the state, the church, an association)"), Encourages moral behavior (e.g., "To forgive someone who has done you wrong necessarily means to lead her to accept her wrongs"), and Immoral behavior (e.g., "To forgive someone who has done you wrong necessarily means to approve of what he has done to you").

This four factor structure has proven to have cross-cultural value. The same factors have been evidenced in a sample of Congolese adults (Kadima Kadiangandu, Gauché, Vinsonneau,

& Mullet, 2007), in a sample of Latin American adults (Bagnulo, Muñoz Sastre, & Mullet, 2009), and in a sample of Hindus (Tripathy & Mullet, 2010).

Relationships Between Conceptualizations and General Propensity to Forgive

Ballester, Muñoz Sastre and Mullet (2009) assessed the relationships between conceptualizations of forgiveness and general propensity to forgive. Forgiveness has been shown to be a multidimensional construct involving three factors (Mullet et al., 2003): lasting resentment (an emotional component), sensitivity to forgive (a cognitive component), and unconditional forgiveness (a transcendental component). A positive association was found between unconditional forgiveness and the beliefs that (a) forgiveness corresponds to a change of heart, and (b) forgiveness is a broad process that is not limited to the victim-offender dyad. A positive association between the view that forgiveness is immoral and propensity to lasting resentment was also found.

These associations were evidenced beyond the associations already found with educational level, religious involvement, and personality variables. Unconditional forgiveness appeared as the construct that was most associated with conceptualizations factors (acquired positive conceptions about forgiveness).

The Present Study

The present study examined lay conceptualizations about forgiveness using a proverb endorsement approach. In all time, proverbs provide a means to communicate what has often been too difficult for people to express in their own words (Mieder, 1993). Proverbs encode norms, injunctions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding practically all aspects of social life (Furnham, 1987; Haas, 2002; Mieder, 1993); that is, proverbs necessarily encode conceptualizations about such issues as disputes, forgiveness, revenge and reconciliation. Many proverbs that are specifically about forgiveness exist in the Portuguese literature, and most of these proverbs are repeatedly used in daily life (Costa, 1999). Some of them emphasize the positive aspects of forgiveness (e.g., Forgive and you will be forgiven; Perdoa, e serás perdoado), the ones that have seemingly been captured by the Encourages moral behavior factor. Other proverbs, by contrast, empha-

size the negative aspects of forgiveness (e.g., Forgiveness makes the thief; O perdão faz o ladrão); the ones that have seemingly been captured by the Immoral behavior factor.

There are also proverbs regarding aspects of forgiveness that don't seem to have been rendered in the four-dimension model suggested by Mullet, Girard and Bakhshi (2004). Several of them (e.g., People forgive, but to forget is another discourse; Perdoar, a gente perdoa, esquecer é outra conversa) express the view that forgiving and forgetting are not synonymous, a view that was reported in some of the spontaneous definitions gathered by Younger et al. (2004, see also Denton & Martin, 1999). Still other proverbs express the view that forgiveness is, under certain conditions, the best of revenge (e.g., Forgiveness is the noblest revenge; Perdão é a mais nobre vingança).

It is mainly because the proverb domain seemed to be a complementary source of information about the way lay people conceptualize forgiveness that we decided to systematically examine it from this viewpoint. We gathered no less than 65 proverbs in the Portuguese literature and instructed people to assess the degree to which they agree with their content. Their responses were subjected to structural analyses. Our hypotheses were that (a) several dimensions of conceptualizations that have already been evidenced by Mullet, Girard, and Bakhshi (2004) should also be found through analysis of people's proverb endorsements, in particular, as indicated above, the Encourage moral behavior dimension and the Immoral behavior dimension, (b) one or more dimension(s) of conceptualization should be encountered beyond the four that had already been found by Mullet, Girard and Bakhshi (2004), in particular one dimension contrasting forgiveness and forgetfulness, and (c) these new dimensions should predict additional parts of variance of lay people's propensity to forgive (see Ballester, Munoz Sastre & Mullet, 2009).

Method

Participants

The total number of participants (Portuguese) was 303 (202 females and 101 males). The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 90. Twenty-one percent of the participants had completed

primary education, and 79% had completed secondary education. Twenty-three percent of the participants declared that they did not believe in God, 43% believed in God but did not attend church on a regular basis, and 34% believed in God and were regular attendees.

All participants were unpaid volunteers. They were recruited and tested by one of three research assistants, who were psychology students trained in the administration of questionnaires. The research assistants contacted possible participants at the universities and on the street (usually close to commercial centers), explained the study, asked them to participate, and, if they agreed, arranged where and when to administer the questionnaire. The response rate was 90%.

Material

Four self-report questionnaires were used (see Table 1). The first one was the Forgiveness Proverbs Endorsement Questionnaire (FPEQ). From an initial list of 65 proverbs that included the words forgive, forgiving or forgiveness, a subset of 40 non-redundant proverbs was selected. They are shown in Annex 1. The second one was the Conceptualizations of Forgiveness questionnaire (Mullet, Girard & Bakhshi, 2004). The third one was the Forgiveness Questionnaire (Mullet, Barros, Frongia, Usai, Neto & Riviere-Shaffighi, 2003) that comprises three scales: Lasting resentment, Sensitivity to Circumstances, and Unconditional forgiveness. The fourth one assessed demographic characteristics.

Procedure

Each participant answered individually in a quiet room at home or at the university (the more frequent procedure). Usually the participant immediately accompanied the experimenter to the chosen site. Two versions of the questionnaires were used. They differed only regarding the items' order (direct or inverse order), in order to counterbalance possible order effects. The experimenter explained to each participant what was expected of him/her. Each participant was asked to read a certain number of sentences expressing a feeling or a belief about forgiveness, and rate their degree of agreement with the content of each sentence using an 11-point agreement scale (0-10). The experimenter was, in most cases, present when the participants filled in the ques-

tionnaires. It took approximately 30 minutes to complete the questionnaires.

Results

Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses

The sample was randomly divided into two sub-samples of 201 and 102 participants. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the raw data from the FPEQ, using the first sub-sample. Based on the Scree test, a four-factor solution was retained. As we intended to evidence conceptualizations factors that were, as far as possible, independent the one from the other, this solution was subjected to a VARIMAX rotation. The first factor explained 18% of the variance. It was called Positive aspects of forgiveness since it positively loaded on items expressing positive views about forgiveness (e.g., It is better to forgive than to punish; Mais vale perdoar que castigar). The second factor explained 16% of the variance. It was called Negative aspects of forgiveness since it positively loaded on items expressing negative views about forgiveness (e.g., The one who forgives the wolf does harm to the sheep; Quem perdoa ao lobo prejudica a ovelha). The third factor explained 7% of the variance. It was called Forgetting is not Forgiving since it positively loaded on items clearly expressing this idea (e.g., People forgive; but forgetting is another discourse; Perdoar, a gente perdoa, esquecer é outra conversa). Finally, the fourth factor explained 10% of the variance. It was called Forgiving as Moral Revenge since it positively loaded on items expressing this idea that forgiveness is the sweetest and noblest possible revenge (e.g., Forgiving the offenses has a sweet taste; Perdoa-se o mal que nos faz pelo bem que nos sabe).

Three items were selected for each of the four factors, the ones with the highest loading, and this four-factor model was subjected to confirmatory factor analysis, using the data from the remaining sub-sample. The GFI and CFI values were higher than .90: .92 and .98. The RMSEA value was lower than .08: .02 [.00-.06]. The RMR value was lower than .08: .07. The Chi² value was not significant ($p > .25$), and the Chi²/ df ratio was close to 1: 53/48 = 1.10. The detailed results are shown in Table 2.

Correlation and Regression Analyses

Scores for each variable and each factor were computed over the whole sample. Table 3 shows the correlation coefficients between the four conceptualization factors derived from the FPEQ and the other variables. Positive aspects of forgiveness appeared as a very broad factor that was significantly correlated with every variable, except Sensitivity to circumstances. Negative aspects of forgiveness were above all correlated with Immoral behavior and Lasting resentment. Forgetting is not forgiving appeared as independent from the other variables, except from Change of heart (but the association was weak). Finally, Moral revenge was associated with Encourages repentance.

Table 4 shows the results of a series of three stepwise regression analyses, one with each of the forgivingness scores as the criteria and all the other variables as predictors. The most interesting finding was that Forgetting is not forgiving significantly contributed to the prediction of Lasting Resentment and Sensitivity to circumstances.

Discussion

The way in which forgiveness is conceptualized in proverbs encountered in the Portuguese literature and used in daily life in Portugal has been examined using quantitative approaches, essentially exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. The first hypothesis was that two dimensions of conceptualizations -- Encourage moral behavior, and Immoral behavior -- that have already been evidenced in previous studies using factor analyses (Bagnulo, Muñoz Sastre & Mullet, 2009; Ballester, Muñoz Sastre & Mullet, 2009; Kadima Kadiangandu et al., 2007; Mullet, Girard, & Bakhshi, 2004) should also be found through analysis of people's proverb endorsements. The data supported the hypothesis: As regards forgiveness, proverbs convey both negative and positive messages. It is, therefore, not surprising that when reviewing common conceptualizations about forgiveness, Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) evidenced both aspects (see also Worthington, 2006). It is, however, worth noting that people endorse positive aspects (mean rating higher than 6 on a 0-10 scale) much more than they endorse negative aspects (less than 3).

The second hypothesis was that one or more dimension(s) of conceptualization should be encountered beyond the four that had already been found in earlier studies, in particular a dimension involving forgetting the offense. The data supported the hypothesis. A separate factor was evidenced, and this factor was not strongly associated with any of the previous conceptualization factors. In addition, this factor was the one with the strongest endorsement score (about 8), and it significantly contributed to the prediction of forgivingness beyond other factors; that is, the third hypothesis was also supported by the data.

Overall, people in Portugal, irrespective of age, gender and religious involvement, believe that forgiveness (a) is not forgetfulness, (b) has many positive aspects, (c) can be a broad process that is not limited to the victim-offender dyad, (d) encourages moral behavior in the offender, and (e) is even the noblest form of revenge. Complementarily, people in Portugal do not believe that forgiveness (f) is an immoral behavior, and (g) has many negative aspects. They are hesitant at thinking of forgiveness as a change of heart. When they are the victims of an offense, people in Portugal admit that they are sensitive to the many circumstances of the offense before considering forgiveness, but they don't feel themselves trapped into inescapable resentment or exaggeratedly prone to unconditionally forgive. These results are consistent with the findings by Ballester, Munoz Sastre and Mullet (2009).

Implications and Future studies

The Forgetting is not forgiving factor nicely complements the series of four conceptualization factors that comprise the Conceptualization of forgiveness model suggested by Mullet, Girard and Bakshi (2004). Table 3 showed that this factor is independent from the others. Future studies including the items from the four-factor model and the items involving the idea that forgetting is not forgiving should show that a fifth-factor model of conceptualization is a viable option.

By contrast, the Positive aspects factor appeared as a factor encompassing too many different facets of forgiveness. In the four-factor model of conceptualizations, these facets – Change of

heart, Broad process, and Encourages moral behavior -- have been shown to be separable (although loosely related) ones.

Tables

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics

	<i>N</i> items	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Alpha
Age		18-90	38.28	24.49	
Gender (females)			67%	0.47	
Religious Involvement	2	1-3	2.12	0.76	
Lasting Resentment	5	0-10	3.80	1.70	.84
Sensitivity to Circumstances	7	0-10	5.49	1.82	.69
Unconditional Forgiveness	5	0-10	3.65	2.43	.87
Change of Heart	5	0-10	4.34	2.20	.72
Broad Process	5	0-10	5.89	2.07	.67
Immoral Behavior	5	0-10	2.55	1.83	.82
Encourages Moral Behavior	5	0-10	5.85	2.20	.75
Positive Aspects	3	0-10	6.35	2.29	.69
Negative Aspects	3	0-10	2.94	2.64	.87
Forgiveness Not Forgetfulness	3	0-10	7.71	2.43	.73
Forgiveness as Moral Revenge	3	0-10	5.06	2.67	.71

Table 2.
Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

Item (English Version)	Item (Portuguese Version)	Factors				<i>t</i>
		I	II	III	IV	
Forgive and you will be forgiven	Perdoa, e serás perdoado	.54				5.57
Do not leave the sword over the head of whom asked you for forgiveness	Não levantes espada contra quem peça perdão	.85				8.56
Better forgive than cure	Mais vale perdoar do que remediar	.45				4.50
To forgive the bad person is to tell him/her to be bad	Quem perdoa ao mau, é dizer-lhe que o seja		.88			22.32
Forgiveness makes the thief	Perdões fazem ladrões		.84			19.56
To forgive the bad people is to harm the good people	Perdoar aos maus é danar aos bons		.77			15.25
People forgive ; but to forgive is another discourse	Perdoar, a gente perdoa, esquecer é outra conversa			.99		10.65
Forgetting is not forgiving	Esquecer não é perdoar			.52		5.82
The one who forgive does not forget	Quem perdoa não esquece			.57		6.60
Forgiveness is the noblest revenge	Perdoar é a mais nobre vingança				.70	8.05
Forgive the offender and you become the winner	Perdoa ao ofensor e sairás vencedor				.67	7.73
Forgiving the offenses has a sweet taste	Perdoa-se o mal que nos faz pelo bem que nos sabe				.57	6.20
I - Positive Aspects		1.00				
II - Negative Aspects		-.23	1.00			
III - Forgetting is not Forgiving		.32	.15	1.00		
IV - Moral Revenge		.29	.36	.26	1.00	

Table 3.
Correlations Between the Four Conceptualizations Evidenced from the Proverbs, and the Other Variables

	Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects	Forgetting is not Forgiving	Moral Revenge
Age	.20*	-.08	.20*	-.16
Gender	.04	-.13	.00	.06
Religious Involvement	.31*	-.18	-.06	-.06
Change of Heart	.42*	-.07	.19*	.09
Broad Process	.59*	-.30*	-.06	.08
Immoral Behavior	-.21*	.53*	-.10	.10
Encourages Moral Behavior	.51*	-.03	-.08	.39*
Lasting Resentment	-.43*	.49*	.13	.04
Sensitivity to Circumstances	.12	-.05	.13	.01
Unconditional Forgiveness	.44*	-.26*	-.18	.15

* = $p < .001$

Table 4.
Results of the Stepwise Regression Analyses

Criterion	Predictor	Step	R	R ²	R ² ch.	F	p	Beta
Lasting Resentment	Negative Aspects	1	.49	.24	.24	95.63	.001	.27
	Positive Aspects	2	.60	.35	.11	52.91	.001	-.32
	Immoral Behavior	3	.63	.40	.04	20.66	.001	.27
	Forgetting is not Forgiving	4	.65	.42	.02	11.53	.001	.15
Sensitivity to Circumstances	Age	1	.25	.06	.06	20.92	.001	-.33
	Forgetting is not Forgiving	2	.32	.10	.04	12.06	.001	.20
	Positive Aspects	3	.36	.13	.03	9.97	.001	.17
Unconditional Forgiveness	Broad Process	1	.53	.28	.28	118.07	.001	.39
	Change of Heart	2	.60	.36	.08	37.69	.001	.24
	Encourages Repentance	3	.61	.38	.01	6.44	.002	.14

Annex A.

The 40 proverbs. Means and Standard Deviations

Portuguese Proverb	English Translation	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Esquecer não é perdoar	Forgetting is not forgiving	7.55	2.96
Perdoar, a gente perdoa, esquecer é outra conversa.	People forgive, but forgetting in another conversation	7.10	2.93
Não levantes a espada sobre a cabeça do que te pediu perdão.	Do not leave the sword over the head of whom asked you for forgiveness	6.94	2.75
A mais bela das virtudes é perdoar.	Forgiveness is the nicest virtue	6.72	2.82
Não levantes o braço contra quem peça perdão.	Never leave the arm over a person who beg forgiveness	6.61	2.90
Quem confessa, merece perdão.	The one who confesses deserves to be forgiven	6.48	2.69
Perdoa, e serás perdoado.	Forgive and you will be forgiven.	6.46	2.90
O perdão é divino.	Forgiveness is divine	6.41	3.03
Perdoa e verás, como fizeres acharás.	Forgive, and you will see	6.39	2.80
Mais vale perdoar que castigar.	Better forgive than punish	6.26	2.92
Muito amor, muito perdão.	Much love, much forgiveness	6.24	3.03
O primeiro erro merece perdão.	The first error deserves to be forgiven	6.15	3.16
Perdoa-se, enquanto se ama.	Forgive as a function of love	6.04	2.92
Mais vale perdoar do que remediar.	Better forgive than cure	5.98	2.97
Quem não perdoa não é digno de perdão.	The one who never forgive does not deserve forgiveness	5.94	3.04
Perdoa ao ofensor e sairás vencedor.	Forgive your offender and you will be forgiven	5.83	3.27
Perdoai, e sereis perdoado.	Forgive and you will be forgiven	5.83	3.05
Quem lágrimas escuta, está perto de perdoar.	The one who see the tears is close to forgive	5.67	2.78
O perdão economiza sofrimento.	Forgiveness spares suffering	5.62	3.13
Perdoar e esquecer.	Forgiving is forgetting	5.60	3.37

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Quem perdoa não esquece.	The one who forgives does not forget	5.48	3.18
A quem erra perdoa-lhe uma vez e não três.	A person who errs may be forgiven once but not thrice	5.19	3.60
Perdoa-se o mal que faz pelo bem que sabe.	Forgiving the offenses has a sweet taste	5.12	3.19
Quem não perdoa não sabe amar.	The one who never forgive does not know love	4.67	3.25
O perdão é a melhor vingança.	Forgiveness is the best revenge	4.31	3.49
Perdão é a mais nobre vingança.	Forgiveness is the noblest revenge	4.24	3.57
Perdoa-se o ódio, nunca o desprezo.	Forgive hate but never forgive contempt	3.95	3.06
Quem perdoa ao lobo prejudica a ovelha.	The one who forgives the wolf does harm to the sheep	3.90	3.20
Perdoa toda a ofensa.	Forgive all offenses	3.79	3.25
Perdoar as injúrias é a mais nobre vingança.	Forgiving the offenses is the noblest revenge	3.71	3.10
Como é certo a ninguém perdoar o povo.	As is well known, the people never forgive	3.57	2.52
Perdoar ao mau é animá-lo a ser.	To forgive bad persons is to encourage them to behave badly	3.15	3.01
Perdões fazem ladrões.	Forgiving several times makes several thieves	3.08	3.04
Perdoar ao mau é dizer-lhe que o seja.	To forgive bad persons is to teach them to be bad	2.95	3.09
O perdão faz o ladrão.	Forgiveness makes the thief	2.92	2.92
Perdoar aos maus é danar aos bons.	Forgiving bad persons is to harm good persons	2.92	2.89
Quem perdoa ao mau, é dizer-lhe que o seja.	The one who forgives bad persons tell them to be bad	2.83	2.95
Quem a ruim perdoa a ruindade lhe aumenta.	Forgiving badness increases badness	2.80	2.77
A bondade e o perdão só fazem ingratidão.	Goodness and forgiveness only produce ingratitude	2.30	2.58
Perdoai tudo a todos e a vós nada.	Forgive everything to everybody and nothing to you	2.15	2.48

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ANDREAS NOLTE

“TEN SPOONFULS MAKE A BOWL OF RICE”: AN
INTRODUCTION TO KOREAN CULTURE WITH
THE HELP OF ITS PROVERBS

Abstract: Korea is a rather unknown country and its proverbs are arguably not very well presented yet in paremiological research. Isolated from the West until only recently, the country's unique culture and its rich traditions are still not very well known. As an important player on the world's stage at the beginning of the 21st century, it is time for us to learn about Korea. This paper uses a selection of mostly older Korean proverbs to introduce certain aspects of Korean culture. Based on, and inspired by, a summer workshop in South Korea that the author attended in July 2010 with twelve other Vermont educators, the text introduces a selection of important Korean symbols, norms, and values and shows how these are reflected in the country's proverbs. Using many examples from the handful of proverb collections available in translation, the text shows how looking at the proverbial language of a people can highlight and explain certain aspects of cultural identity. The selection of traditional wisdom provided here serves as a valuable and interesting window into the culture of Korea as well as an opportunity to get to know many unique Korean proverbs.

Keywords: Proverbs, Korea, Culture, Symbols, Norms, Values, Business, Education, Buddhism, Confucianism

Spending time in South Korea for the first time is a mind-bending and eye-opening experience. The traveler finds a modern and vibrant country with energetic people – a place full of excitement, prospects, and beauty. Beneath the surface there is a long and rich history that has shaped Korea, but it is the more recent developments, especially after the Korean War had ended in 1953, that have transformed the country into what the traveler notices as soon as he is on the bus from the airport into downtown Seoul. Highways and streets are wide and multi-lane, traffic is busy at all hours, rows of tall apartment buildings fill the horizon, shiny office towers and modern hotels dominate the seemingly endless

downtown area, and neon signs illuminate the night into every corner. Newer and higher buildings are erected in every neighborhood, it seems, parks are beautified and equipped with fitness equipment and a rubberized trail for a quick morning workout, people are friendly and helpful, sometimes a bit distant, but very proud of their country – past and present – and eager to talk about it to the visitor. Korea has been called “the land of the morning calm” for its tranquil morning mist hanging in the mountains (a loose English translation of the Chinese characters for “Joseon,” the 1000-year dynasty that ended with the Japanese occupation in 1910), and “the hermit kingdom” in its more recent history for the country’s seclusion from the rest of the world. Both of these places – real and mythical – are still present today in some ways, but the calm of the early mornings has largely given way to the noise of construction, and the solitude of the hermit has now widely disappeared in a country well on its way to become one of the largest and most influential economies in the world.

Looking at the many startling developments in South Korea (hereafter called Korea) during the last 50 years – political, economical, religious, and social, just to name a few – one must ask the question how this was possible. In order for a society to achieve what happened in Korea, or better: for its people to accomplish what they did, there need to be certain traits that allow for such evolutionary shifts in a remarkable short period of time. This paper attempts to introduce some of the underlying cultural aspects of Korea that have played an important role in the country’s fast and vast development. The author was able to spend four weeks in Korea this past July (2010) and learned about the people and their culture while on a workshop with twelve other Vermont educators. Organized by the University of Vermont’s Asian Studies Outreach Program in cooperation with Yonsei University in Seoul, and funded by the Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program, this program offered a unique opportunity to explore and experience various aspects of Korean history, culture, and daily life.¹ I will summarize observations and learning without claiming that I fully understand the Korean ways, its people, or the cultural aspects that keep it all together. But especially since Korea is still a somewhat “unknown” and perhaps even “overlooked” country these days, I believe it deserves to be recognized and appreciated for what it is: a nation on the verge of dominance in the region,

and already an important player on the world's stage whose recent achievements and to-be-expected future accomplishments will have significant implications for the global community. We in the West are well advised to make an effort to learn about other peoples and cultures – including Korea's – and try to understand what makes them unique and different in order for us to live and work with them in harmony. In this flat world of ours, Korea is our close neighbor: not even a second away in cyberspace, its products in our homes (and on our roads), its companies building factories in our industrial parks, Korean colleagues in our offices, students from Korea in our schools and universities, and Korean families in our neighborhoods. The more we know about the country and its people, I believe, the better we will be able to coexist with them – all of us citizens of the world with very different pasts perhaps, but in all likelihood an increasingly similar and interdependent future.

Learning about another country and its culture is not easy. Not everyone will have the immediate opportunity to travel to Korea, and perhaps not even an interest to go, in order to see first hand what's left of the morning calm or the seclusion of the past (not much!), or how beautiful the people and places are. How harmoniously and efficiently the citizens seem to live together in this tiny country, and how inviting to the traveler who wants to explore their rich history and culture. There are many publications and Internet resources on Korea that can serve as good introductions for those who don't have any prior knowledge, or who simply want to expand on what they already know, but this paper will take a slightly different route: it tries to introduce "Korean" norms and values, and illustrate certain aspects of Korean culture with the help of their proverbs. I consider these short "sentences of wisdom"² as a meaningful window into the Korean psyche and into the make-up of the social fabric that holds it all together. There is a well-accepted quality in proverbs as this example from old Korea asserts: *There is nothing wrong in old sayings* (II,131).³

For the purpose of this paper, I have decided to limit the discussion to proverbs only, leaving other forms of formulaic language, such as proverbial expressions or aphorisms for another day. I have tried to select only those proverbs that appear to be unique Korean in terms of either the images or the words they employ. Most of the examples chosen here take their imagery from very Korean themes, or their metaphorical meaning highlights a

specific aspect of Korean culture, some of which are not associated at all with characteristics found in the West. Another criterion for quoting certain proverbs here is an easy-to-remember wording, at least as it appears in their English translation.

That proverbs can be effectively used to illustrate certain characteristics of a culture is widely accepted in paremiology, the study of proverbial language. This is true for Korea and its proverbs as well. Tae Hung Ha affirms that the proverbs he collected “came to be regarded as golden sayings which reflected in succinct phrases the social life and philosophy of Korean people.”⁴ In his introduction to a dictionary of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean proverbs, Young H. Yoo expresses hope that his work “is found to be some contribution to those who are interested in the lands, peoples, and their cultures of the Far East.”⁵ And in a scholarly paper on Korean proverbs and how they reflect society, Chong-wha Chung states: “What proverbs say reveal what the lower class people thought, who they were, and how they lived. In this sense proverbs function as an undocumented socio-cultural history of the traditional society of Korea.”⁶ And finally, to further emphasize that the close connection between proverbial language and culture is a valid thesis, Yonsei Professor Chong-ho Ch’oe adds that “proverbs are a product of experiences in the quotidian life of the Korean people,”⁷ and Peter Kim says in a paper on the use of Korean proverbs in psychoanalysis: “proverbs convey culture-bound codes of behavior and rules of conduct, they tend to reflect the national values or ‘cultural ideas’ of their land of origin.”⁸

The origin of Korean proverbs is different from that of their Western counterparts for which Latin and Greek classics, the Bible, and medieval literature often provided the source. Korean proverbs, like those in other Asian countries, are often derived from Chinese and Sanskrit classics,⁹ but many were simply handed down from generation to generation by regular people based on experience and learning in their daily lives. Society of Old Korea, in general, was made up of two distinct groups: the *yangban* class of aristocratic, educated people who held all the powerful positions on top, and the general public below. Chung asserts that the “wisdom of proverbs was, unlike in the West, not shared between the two classes. Proverbs were strictly for the lower class.”¹⁰ Accordingly, these were eventually recorded in *hengeul*, the ingenious phonetic language that Korea’s King Sejong the Great invented in

1443 in order for the common folk to be able to read and write, and not in Chinese anymore, the language used by the upper class.¹¹ Looking at the few collections of Korean proverbs that are available (with English translations), it is obvious that most proverbs are indeed written in a folksy manner. In fact, the Korean word for “proverb” is *sok-dam* (“common language”) or *sang-mal* (“vulgar words”). Their design often appears less “clever” and more straightforward than what is frequently found in Western texts. For example, when comparing the wisdom accepted in many cultures that a good effort has its rewards – or that the lack of effort will yield no result – one can argue that the popular English proverb “The early bird catches the worm” or its German equivalent “Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund” needs some interpretation to fully understand its meaning, while the Korean version *Eat breakfast late and go to closing market* (I,389) is much more unequivocal and comes straight to the point: business on Korea’s weekly open air country markets was best during the noon hours, and he who arrived late would have missed the opportunity to buy or sell. No eating “worms” or missing out on “gold in the mouth” for him who sleeps late, but simply arriving at the market when it is too late for trading.

A good work ethic, as it is depicted in this particular proverb, is one of the predominant values in Korean culture that will be explored in this paper. I will define culture here as “a system of ideas, art, morals, laws, symbols, language, values, beliefs, norms [...] shared by people in a particular society.”¹² Specifically, I will look at a number of important Korean symbols, norms, values, and religions, and I will explore how those are reflected in the country’s proverbs. The goals of this paper, then, are to provide an introduction to Korean culture, but at the same time offer insights into the world of Korean proverbs. In the end, we will have gained an appreciation for both, or as they say: we have caught “two birds with one stone.”

SYMBOLS

Symbols of a culture are objects or concepts that have significance beyond their extrinsic meaning: they stand for something else. There is a small number of animals, for example, that have special symbolic meaning in Korea. As in other Asian cultures, the dragon (power), the crane (longevity), or the turtle (fortune) are depicted in various forms of artistic expression to represent certain

characteristics, but one of the more prominent symbols in Korea is the tiger. Accordingly, this animal that used to roam the northern mountains of the country is found in many Korean proverbs.¹³ It stands for vigor and power, but also for bravery and gallantry, and many of these attributes are promoted in Korean society as well as in traditional Korean sayings. Proverbial wisdom such as *A biting tiger has no horns* (I,628) or *Speak of the tiger and then he appears* (I,634) can be found in traditional sayings of other cultures as well, but in those without the imagery of this particular animal. Proverbs like *Even a tiger excites pity after he is shot down* (II,176) to promote respect for a defeated enemy, or *Where there is no tiger, the hare behaves like the lord* (I,635) to depict how even people of small stature can accomplish great tasks, show the wide range of proverbial meaning relevant to Korean culture where the symbol of a tiger is used.

Another important Korean symbol is *taegeuki*, the country's flag. It is regarded as one of the world's most complex flags in terms of imagery and meaning. The two-part circle in the middle, representing the dual principles of Yin and Yang, as well as balance and equality, is framed by four sections of broken and unbroken sets of lines (earth, heaven, fire, water) on a white background depicting the purity of the Korean people. These values, elements, and properties are found in many Korean proverbs, for example *Do your part and leave the rest to Heaven's decision, Earth accumulated forms a mountain, A buried fire will flare up* (III,78), *There is top and bottom even in cold water* (III,186), *It takes the clap of two hands to make a sound* (I,317), *Though heavens fall, there will be a hole to escape through* (I,326), *Even jade has flaws in it* (I,363), *If one month is long, another month is short* (I,411), *After the rain the ground becomes hard* (I, 492), or *No root, no leaf* (I,659).

Religious signs are very important and widely visible Korean symbols. The traveler notices those immediately in street scenes of modern day Korea. Signs of Buddhism, and more recently of Christianity, are present in many places with their well-known symbols: the swastika and the cross. Walking in the streets of Seoul these days, for example, or looking through the hotel room window, one is surprised to see the large number of crosses, many even neon-lit at night, that adorn all kinds of buildings that host a congregation. The rise of Christianity is a fairly recent phenomenon in Korea – especially during the last 30 years the number of

Christians has grown to almost one third of the population while it was in the low single-digit numbers at the beginning of the 20th century –, and concrete Christian religious proverbs can hardly be found in older collections, but aspects of Buddhist beliefs (about a quarter of today's Koreans declare that they follow this religion) are widely portrayed in traditional sayings.

The core idea of Buddhism (“the four noble truths”) is that life is suffering and that suffering is caused by people’s cravings. In order to overcome this, one needs to follow in Buddha’s path. The goal is to break out of the cycle of rebirth, achieve enlightenment, and enter Nirvana. In a more down-to-earth and practical view, one central idea is the belief that “good actions bring good results.”¹⁴ This concept, though not unique to this particular religion, is found in many Korean proverbs. *If you see one deed, you can tell ten deeds of a man* (I,171) shows that doing well toward others, including giving money to a Buddhist monk on the street, will be noticed and rewarded. That the act of giving is not a difficult task, in fact, it is easier than being on the receiving end, is the theme of the Korean proverb: *Sitting you give and standing you receive* (I,294). The symbol of Buddhism, the swastika, is often seen as a painted sign pointing toward a Buddhist temple or it is used to mark temple buildings themselves.¹⁵ These buildings can be enormous structures on elaborate grounds, often in remote, mountainous locations, but just as well a rather small building in the middle of a busy shopping street in downtown Seoul. To the believer it does not matter where exactly the temple is located – where the symbol points to, or where it is affixed – it is more important, this proverb says, that Buddha’s teachings are followed regardless of location: *Each monk worships the Buddha in his own temple* (I,77).

NORMS

Important aspects of any culture are the norms that are expected from and followed by its people. Norms regulate and coordinate the interactions of individuals in a group. Adhering to certain rules of conduct is especially important in places where many people need to live very close to each other. Korea is a fairly small and extremely mountainous country where only about 20% of the land is arable. The art of living with one’s neighbors in such close proximity plays an important role here. In a place the size of Indiana, there are almost 50 Million people in today’s South Korea

and on average close to 500 people live in a single square kilometer (for Seoul this number jumps to 16,000). Under these circumstances, certain behavior can either tie together or push apart, and the proverb *Habits are at first cobwebs, at last cables* (Chung 151)¹⁶ suggests what is preferred.

The number of Korean proverbs that give advice for proper behavior in order to get along with one's neighbor is significant. That a conduct not in line with commonly accepted and expected norms is often frowned upon, is made clear in *Though a daylong hunger is unrecognized, a moment's shabbiness can be seen* (II,135). Where people live close together and very interdependently, they not only have to get along with each other, respectful and courteous behavior is an important prerequisite for the society as a whole in order to be effective. To show respect, one of the most prominent rituals between individuals in Korea is bowing. The proverb *A person who bows never gets his cheek slapped* (III,10) gives good advice to someone who tends to keep his head arrogantly high and is disliked for this attitude. Similar in meaning, the proverb *The riper the grain, the lower it hangs its head* (II,57) applauds the respected and accomplished person, who bows deep in order to show humility before his common man. Not only do regular norms require that subordinates bow first and deeper to their superiors, but in general it is good policy to show respect to another person by a sincere lowering of the head. The image of food – "grain" (e.g. rice or barley) in this example – is a common theme in Korean proverbs, as we will see in many other examples. As a staple of the Korean diet, especially "rice" plays the role of an effective carrier of meaning and adds didactic weight to many proverbs. But drinks are used as well to promote good behavior: *A full bottle of water does not make a sound* (III,185) speaks of the learned and mature person who does not make much fuss about his accomplishments, while the wannabe might try to compensate for his shortcomings by loud proclamations of his presumed stature. Not sticking out (too much), but rather trying to conform to the norms of the group, is an important rule in Korean society and will be discussed again later when we look at the country's value system.

Many other behaviors in Korea are based on respect and thoughtfulness. These include passing and receiving items with both hands, such as gifts or business cards, or covering one's mouth (especially by females) when laughing.¹⁷ Another important

Korean norm that the visitor may encounter is the ritual of filling other people's glass when drinking – especially alcohol. In general, the younger or more junior person serves the older or more senior person first, and then holds out his glass to be filled. For many business people, going out for drinks after work is a necessary step for forming career-making bonds with supervisors and co-workers. The need to serve each other in proper sequence (and good frequency) is an important interpersonal ritual and can be read into many proverbs such as *Tears fall in one cup of wine* (I,727) and *Half a cup of wine brings tears, a full cup laughter* (III,192).

Norms for behavior based on hierarchical structures like those found in workplaces and within families, also set fairly strict requirements for honorific speaking. Those rules are particularly difficult to comprehend for a Western visitor, and even more difficult to follow properly. People are not addressed by their names, but always with their title or their relationship – even within one's own family. The proverb *Say "uncle, uncle" and give only heavy burdens to carry* (I,669) shows the correct honorifics in addressing a family member (even though there are still a few relationship-defining components missing here), but the demand placed on that person in this example is not consistent with hierarchical norms. The use of honorific language is dependent on strict hierarchies found in families and in other authoritative structures, and we will look at these important aspects of the country's value system next.

VALUES

Besides norms that guide behavior of individuals or groups in a society, values represent additional defining aspects of a particular culture. Among other things, values describe what is commonly regarded as right or wrong, desirable or damaging, beautiful or awkward. One of the values held very high in Korean society is family. This does not only include the living, as it is to a lesser degree the case in Western cultures as well, but also the dead. Ancestor worship plays a big part in a Korean family's life where deceased family members are remembered in traditional rituals. Their influence on the living is a constant reminder as the proverb *If a man fails, he blames his ancestors* (I,1) shows – even if used here with a sarcastic undertone. The ceremony that is typically performed by the oldest son at the anniversary of a father's death will be explained in a more detail below.

The value of family in present-day Korea is undoubtedly challenged by the characteristics of modern life. Too many responsibilities in school and at work, migration into the big cities, apartment living, women working, later marriages, more divorces, low fertility rates, and an aging population – just to name a few – have affected the family entity. The special place as an island in any storm that it had in Korean societies of the past is largely gone. Traditional proverbs, nevertheless, can still effectively communicate certain values to modern families. For example, *Though you eat food at ten different places, sleep in one place* (III,163) reminds the family members to regard home as the one place to return to every day. Working together as a family, as depicted in the proverb *The husband is a bucket and the wife is a jar* (II,73) promotes the functioning family as well. Teamwork between couples in the past, such as bringing drinking water from the well outside into the house, has taken on a more modern form in many Korean families: a husband often turns his salary over to his wife (or has his payroll check deposited automatically into the spouse's bank account), and she has the responsibility to save a portion and distribute spending money to the family members. As another proverb makes clear, the salary belongs to the family and not to the breadwinner: *The food of the monk is the food of the temple* (I,407). In many families, the husband receives an allowance that lets him go out to socialize with colleagues and friends in order to foster the all-important relationships that hopefully ensure his career development. The remaining part of the salary after paying the monthly bills needs to be saved to pay for the most important of all family responsibilities: the education of children. This very Korean value deserves a more detailed look later in this text.

Family as an important value in Korean culture can also become a more conflicting concept, and not always is it a peaceful entity of society. Beyond the nucleus of mother, father, and (these days mostly) the single child, extended family members often complicate the issue. Changes in family dynamics when the son marries, and his new wife moves into his family's house, can bring about issues that challenge peace and quiet around the dinner table. Difficulties between the new family member and the parents-in-law are proverbial in many cultures, but in Korea, with its complicated social structure in which ancestry, age, honorifics, and hierarchy play such important roles, some issues seem to be

intensified.¹⁸ Korean proverbs such as *If the daughter-in-law is detested, the grand-child is also detested* (III,38), *More hateful is the mother-in-law who stops the quarrel than the husband who does the beating* (III,138), *Even a dead mother-in-law is brought to mind when pounding rice* (I,419), or *When a family is going to ruin, a beard grows on the face of the eldest daughter-in-law* (I,248) show the magnitude to which living together as an extended family can have significant side effects. In today's society, however, many families do live in smaller units of only one or two generations, which is not "traditional" in the old Korean value system. But this is just a sign of the times: apartment buildings that fill the horizon and grow high into the sky in order to provide shelter for 16,000 people per square kilometer in Seoul, for example, do typically not allow for multiple generations living under one roof. Sometimes older parents might live in the same apartment complex as their children and grandchildren, so that the "roof" may actually be the same, but an elevator ride – perhaps even a subway stop or two – often separates the generations these days.

Within each family, the roles are clear and the male members and the elders are ranked at a higher level in many aspects of daily life. Korean proverbs such as *No younger brother is half as good as the elder* (I,74), *An old dog never barks uselessly* (III, 44) or "*A women's [sic] lack of talent is in itself a virtue*"¹⁹ illustrate these positions. Great respect for the elderly is a value that sets many Asian cultures apart: old age is not regarded as an unpleasant part of life that should be rejected or masked – older members of society are not looked at as a nuisance – but rather as another fruitful and productive time. That wisdom and experience come with age is a theme in many Korean proverbs such as *The old horse knows the road*.²⁰

While the hierarchy even within one family is of importance in Korea, the emphasis that is placed on hierarchical positions in general is remarkable. As mentioned before, the relationship between superiors and subordinates is an important aspect of the culture. Through its history, Korea has had many strong rulers who had used their power for the benefit of their subjects, but then there were also influential men who abused the authority they had. One does not have to go far back into Korea's history to find such examples. Political leaders in the second half of the last century, during the country's extraordinary rise from the ashes of war, have

caused their share of controversy which cannot be discussed here as part of this paper. But it is not surprising – nor is it unique to Koreans – that there is often a significant level of mistrust for authoritative rule. The cultural value of conforming to hierarchical structures, therefore, is often looked upon with some measure of suspicion or even cynicism. Proverbs such as *The upper waters must be clear for the lower waters to be clear* (I,699) or the aforementioned *Where there is no tiger, the hare behaves like the lord* (I,635) show the mistrust that accompanies the belief in authorities. The proverbial wisdom that *A small pepper is hotter than a large pepper* (I,463) cuts both ways as well: a person of smaller stature can gain a responsible position and influence things in a positive way, but just as well can this same person have reached a level in society that he has not earned. That the belief in authority can lead astray is depicted in the old proverb *Do not go where the big man died, but go where the big man's horse died* (III,115). The criticism here lies in people's egoistic decision to go and console the man of influence when his horse died in hopes that he would return a favor for such an act of kindness, but then they would not go to pay their respect if the man himself died, because no such favor could be expected anymore.

Another value that plays a prominent role in Korean culture is the attempt to uphold a healthy level of social harmony. Many millions living on little land require not only certain rules of behavior, but in general a sense of what works well in living with others – and what doesn't. In recent decades, Korea has seen its share of civil unrests, to be sure, but for the most part, there seems to be a deeply rooted persuasion to get along. Helping each other – and not being afraid to ask for help, because *A monk cannot shave his own head*²¹ –, and placing one's own individual interests below the common good, are important elements of the social structure.²² In Korea's case, one might argue in addition, fairly constant invasions throughout its history have promoted a particularly strong feeling of togetherness and strength on numbers.²³ But working together and getting along does not always need to be a laborious effort: it sometimes simply requires a friendly face – *No one spits on a smiling face* (I,547) – or finding a quick solution: if not persisting on one's own position can solve a bitter or lengthy dispute, then this should be the goal as the proverb *When the host runs out of soya bean sauce, the guest says he doesn't want soup*

(I,352) suggests. Why create a big problem, if a rather small concession can make things easier for everyone?

Korean proverbs not only give advice for proper or expected behavior among people, they sometimes criticize actions that are in need of change, such as in *When the drowning fellow is rescued, he asked for his bundles* (I,687). In this example, a person fails to show the expected level of gratitude to someone who has helped him. The proverb takes its imagery from the bundle of personal belongings that the traveler in old Korea would carry on his back. If, after receiving help from a fellow man, one does not show appropriate gratefulness, it is said that he “asks for his bundle.” He is only interested in his own affairs and simply wants to continue with his life, as if he was not just helped by someone else. Other proverbs used in Korea criticize the spreading of rumors, because those clearly interfere with social harmony and interrupt the interpersonal cooperation that are important prerequisites for effective societies, especially for those where people are living together in small places. Proverbs such as *Talking about other people is eating cold gruel* (III,100), *Food becomes shorter and words become longer the farther they go* (I,734), or *Words without feet travel a thousand li* (I,732), for example, show how easily and far rumors can spread into every corner of society. A similar meaning can be found in *A house with a straight door can be used, but a house with a straight mouth can't be used* (II,103). In this proverb, it is not the spreading of rumors that hinders the people's ability to get along, but the “straight mouth” of someone who quarrels too much with his fellow man – even if there may be some truth in what he is saying. Arguing and quarreling are counter-productive in a society in which attempting to get along with your fellow man is important. The proverb *A fierce dog has no time to see the tip of his nose heal* (III,52) criticizes hostile behavior and marks certain people as outcasts from society. Respectful and harmonious interpersonal skills are valued highly and good advice always is: *Stoke your own fire* (Chung, 115).

Rather than arguing with each other, many Korean proverbs suggest that one should help one's neighbor. This is not only an expressed value that helps society to achieve common goals, it also lends support to the less fortunate in a group. The proverb *If you give barley, why can't you get a musk melon!* (III,3) promotes the idea of sharing toward a mutual benefit. During times of the

year when barley is available in abundance, other foods may not be obtainable for the barley producer because cash is tight. In old Korea, this was often the case during the summer months when barley was harvested and melons to complete the daily meal needed to be purchased from another farmer. The proverb reminds those with “melons” to return the favor of receiving “barley” from someone else. The underlying idea is that sharing and helping each other, especially in times of need or uneven supply, promote peace and harmony. Similar in meaning is the proverb *Ten spoonfuls make a bowl of rice* (III,161) which encourages individuals to work together toward a common goal. This can be especially meaningful if the result of such concerted efforts is used for the benefit of another person: the ten people who each give just one small spoonful of “rice” can feed an eleventh person who is hungry. The benefits for society are borne from the cooperation of its people: *Union is strength* (Chung, 239).

One characteristic that supports social harmony is a certain level of conformity within society. Many Korean proverbs promote the idea of surrounding oneself with the “right” or “same” people: *If sweet, swallow it; if sour, spit it out* (I,591). Finding others who make it easier to live with can be an important step on the way to a more harmonious co-existence. *A crawfish sides with a crab* (III,31) talks about two animals that are found in Korean cooking, but the similarities go beyond the fishy taste: they both move in a similar fashion through water and surf, and so do people of kindred feelings or interests tend to side with each other – either simply for company or as a defense against a common enemy. Hanging with the right crowd, and not sticking out – effectively illustrated by the proverb *A sharply angled stone will be chiseled off*²⁴ – is an important prerequisite for what’s valued: getting along in peace and unity. The proverb *Come near to Indian ink, and you’ll be stained with black* (II,8), then, warns of the negative influences if one associates with the “wrong” people. One should not get too close to that what (or who) might disgrace them – just like the calligrapher who does not keep a safe distance from the inkstone with his writing hand or his sleeves. Very similarly, the proverb *The quince disgraces a fruit shop* (II,124) puts the idea into words that shame and humiliation are to be avoided in order to keep harmony within a group of people. The quince, or *mogwa* in Korean, looks like a melon, but the fruit is usually not eaten

because it is too hard and does not have a taste. Hanging it in a fruit shop disgraces the other fruits and brings dishonor to the shopkeeper, just as a person who surrounds himself with undesirable people loses face and risks to be shunned by society.

As mentioned before, one of the most important values in Korean culture – and the most prominent reason given in answering the question how Korea’s rapid economic development in the second half of the last century can be explained – is education. The traveler to this country, who sees uniform-clad school children on the streets at any time of day (or night!), and seven days a week, immediately gets a sense of the importance that is placed on learning and studying. This zeal for education is on a very different level from the situation in the US, for example, and even from how it is in other Asian countries like Japan or China. The so-called “education fever”²⁵ in Korea where the majority of children go to cram schools after the regular instructions at a public or private school have ended, takes the urge to learn to an extreme. It is not uncommon for middle- and high school age children to go to these *hagwons*, study until about midnight, and then go home either for more studying, or for finally going to bed. Many children reportedly do not get more than four hours of sleep before another extended day of studying begins. The goal for all of this is an as-perfect-as-possible result in the national college entry exam that determines which college or university the student will be able to attend. Everyone’s aspiration is to go to one of the three most reputable universities – collectively and very appropriately called “SKY,” an acronym for Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yonsei University.

The basis for this extremely high value placed on education in general, and on attending one of the SKY-universities in particular, can be found in Confucian ideals. Korea has been called “the most Confucian society in the world”²⁶ and many Confucian sayings promote the value of learning. *Education is the meaning of life, I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand*, or *Study the past if you would define the future* show how important learning is. Sometimes one can see quotes from Confucius posted in public places, for example *Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous, The scholar who cherishes the love of comfort is not fit to be deemed a scholar, or He who learns but does not think, is lost! He who thinks but*

*does not learn is in great danger*²⁷ do not have a particular proverbial quality as far as their diction goes, but they do show the influence that Confucian thought has on Korean culture, and especially on education in this country. Old Korean proverbs such as *The dog that is raised in the school can recite classical poetry of the beauties of nature*²⁸ were meant to stress the importance of school and learning, but portray the education fever in a rather ironic way when read in our times: rogue studying of only what is tested on the exam – as it is practiced to an extreme in the current education system in Korea – largely undervalues learning important practical life skills or an appreciation of literature and art.

Despite the criticism one can raise when looking at education in Korea, especially pertaining to its negative effects on emotional and physical developments of young adults, the success the country has seen in terms of knowledge-based industrial growth is remarkable. That “education” must have played an important role, as it is widely and proudly mentioned by Koreans, is without any doubt. Economic success – moving up in worldwide rankings of various economic indicators, being awarded prestigious roles in international organizations and summits, negotiating favorable free trade agreements with other leading economies, etc. – is a value ranked high in Korean culture. Money plays an important role in society: *There is not a man who will spit on money* (III,133), and the resulting economic accomplishments made in the process are very visible characteristics of Korean life.

People in Korea are rightfully proud of the stunning achievements made during the last fifty years when the country transformed itself from one of the poorest places on earth in the 1960s to one of the richest countries today.²⁹ But not just on statistical data sheets, also in the appearance of its cities and its people, it is obvious that Korea is a very affluent place. Signs of growth and improvements everywhere impress the visitor to Korea who admires the new buildings for their architectural boldness and sheer size, notices an impressive variety and quality of products in stores, is amazed by the number of well-dressed people and the most advanced technical gadgets they all seem to hold in their hands, appreciates the safe, clean, and efficient public transportation system that reaches into every corner of the country – as does the Internet – and is in awe of the many things he sees that attempt to make life easier and more enjoyable for Korean citizens (and

for tourists the country hopes to attract in increasing numbers). Big Korean conglomerates such as Samsung, Hyundai, or LG are among the largest – and most successful – companies in the world, and they provide many of the cutting-edge products that Koreans and other people around the globe use in their daily lives. The standard of living in Korea has improved at almost unbelievable pace over the last five decades and its entrepreneurial achievements are the envy of countries and companies everywhere.

There are a number of reasons for the country's economic success – besides good education. In Korea's case, a good part of these rapid developments is rooted in underlying cultural attitudes and aptitudes. Many Korean proverbs emphasize that a good work ethic is a prerequisite for financial success.³⁰ The aforementioned *Eat breakfast late and go to closing market* (I,389) is a good example. Similar in meaning is the proverb *Eat like a devil and work like a devil-post* (III,65) which takes its imagery from the wooden posts engraved with faces and Chinese characters that were placed along the roads in old Korea to indicate distances, but also to fend off evils from travelers. Since those posts did not do any "work," however, and stood idle by the roadside, the proverb uses them as a negative example for a lazy person who dallies his life away. The opposite message is found in proverbs like *Work like an ox and eat like a mouse* (II,160) or *A diligent beggar may eat hot rice* (III,5) which promote the idea that spirited work will yield good results. The direct correlation seen here between success and "eating" is a very common theme in Korean proverbs that often take their metaphors from food items. Rice, barley, melons, persimmons, peppers, and many other ingredients commonly used in Korean cooking play a prominent role in the country's proverbial wisdom. Koreans believe that *Eating is heaven* (III,66). They like to eat – fresh, colorful, nutritious, and very spicy – and they enjoy sharing their meals with others by placing many small bowls of different foods in the middle of the table. The significance of food and eating is a widely accepted carrier of proverbial wisdom and adds persuasive power.

Besides emphasizing the value of self-motivation, hard work, and diligence, as it pertains to business success, Korean proverbs depict other important entrepreneurial traits as well. *A frog shrinks into itself before it leaps* (III,91) uses the frog, another symbolic animal found in many genres of Korean folklore³¹ as a reminder

that a person should prepare carefully in order to make a successful step forward in his business. Good preparation, thinking things through properly, and not rushing to quick decisions, is promoted in other proverbs as well, such as *Even a soft, soft persimmon must be eaten slowly*³², *A quickly heated room cools easily* (I,517), or *Swim with both hands on the ground* (I,592). *A candy seller does as he pleases* (III,22) addresses sales and marketing skills necessary to run a successful business. It takes its imagery from the selling practice of the candy man in old Korea who would hawk his sweets (typically made of rice) on the streets or markets and then selling uneven portions – “as he pleases” in order to maximize his profit – by pulling the glutinous mass in longer or shorter pieces and cutting those off with scissors after being paid.

Another important characteristic of a successful businessman is experience. The proverb *The new year's soup plays the trick* (II,140) refers to the Korean custom of asking “How many years have you eaten?” in order to find out another person's age. Every New Year, Koreans eat one bowl of traditional soup, and accordingly the number of bowls eaten determines one's age. The Lunar New Year (*seol-nal*) is the second most important holiday in Korea (after the Harvest Moon Festival (*chuseok*) in mid autumn when many of the ancestral rituals take place), and its importance for a Korean's life cycle is great.³³ The proverb suggests that the more “new year's soup” a person has eaten, the more experienced and knowledgeable he has become with age, and his entrepreneurial abilities are of greater value. That success in business can be an ambiguous notion, however, is addressed in proverbs as well. *A big gate makes a big house* (II,52) depicts how a person may want to show his accomplishments by the size of the house he lives in – as it was done by rich aristocrats in old Korea – or by the massive gate he places between himself and others. That this is often merely a conceited idea of success, and not necessarily based on reality, can sarcastically be implied by using the proverb *A big drum makes a big sound* (III,60).

Some Korean proverbs convey wisdom that may help find success in business. *Bent trees guard an ancestor's grave* (I,650) suggests that everything – no matter how useless or imperfect it may appear – can be good for something, for example, that certain people can make good employees if placed in the right position. *The man who walks wants to ride when he sees a horse* (II,128)

can be used to depict a successful manager's decision at one point in his life to have other able people (typically the oldest son) carry on the work for him. For those offered that job, even if it sounds impressive, waiting for another opportunity that may lead to success more likely, the proverb *Even the Governorship of Pyongyang is refused if not wanted* (I,301) may be good advice. General wisdom for a certain behavior, much of which will support good business decisions as well, is communicated in many Korean proverbs such as *Unless you enter a tiger's den, you cannot capture a tiger cub* (I,629), *Unless you go up the mountain, you cannot catch a tiger* (I,630), *Keep cool even if the tiger carries you off* (I,637), *A debtor is a slave* (III,40), *The blindman blames his stick if he falls* (III,9), *The high branches are more easily broken* (II,14), *Put off for one day, and ten days will pass* (II,123), or *Don't whip a horse that is going as fast as he can* (Luomala, p.493).

Many of the values and norms found in Korean culture, as already mentioned, have their roots in religion. Religions themselves, therefore, are important sources and carriers of proverbial wisdom. It can be said that "Korea is one of the most religiously diverse societies in the world,"³⁴ and its proverbs hint at many different religious themes or take their imagery from one of the multiple beliefs followed by people in the country. There are four main religions in Korea, or better said schools of thought: Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, and Shamanism.

Some scholars suggest that Shamanism was the original Korean religion. "Shamanism has been the enduring core of Korean religious and cultural thought, exercising a profound influence on the development of Korean attitudes and behaviors as well as cultural practices."³⁵ Its main focus is on this world: rituals are performed to ask spirits for success and prosperity, as well as health and a long life. People visit shamans in order to make contact with spirits and to ask that material wishes be fulfilled. Shamans act as mediators between this world and the spiritual world and their method of communication typically involves food, music, and dance. Surprisingly, there are not many proverbs that seem to be closely related to this traditional folk religion. Those found are often reminders that patience and trust are necessary to see wishes come true, or that the rituals performed are not always crowned by success: *If you want to watch the dance-seance of a sorceress, watch till the feasting cake is laid out* (I,561) or *A sorceress can-*

not dance out her own devils nor can a blind fortuneteller tell the day of his own death (I,568).

Buddhism, until the recent rise of Christianity in Korea the largest religion, is not as old as Shamanism. As already shown earlier, many proverbs are related to this particular religion. Buddha, monks, temples, and a variety of Buddhist beliefs or values are found as direct or indirect references in many proverbial sayings. Most of these proverbs, such as *Chant the Buddha's call while the mouth is idle* (I,78) or *Hold a Buddhist mass for Buddha!* (III,15) remind believers that only praying and following the Buddha's teachings is the path to enlightenment. Traditional proverbs of Korea typically don't have distinct Christian motives because this religion was introduced to the country only in the outgoing 18th century and Christians were persecuted severely at times for the next 100 years or so. While it has gained a phenomenal following in the later part of the last century, much more influential on Korean culture is Confucianism. More a system of ethical rules and moral codes than a strict religion, it is probably correct to say that most Koreans are Confucian in some way, even if their religious faith goes to Buddha or God.

Daily life in Korea revolves very much around Confucian ideas. Most of the values that have already been mentioned above, such as ancestor worship, the importance of family, respect for the elderly, social harmony and conformity, and especially the relevance of education, are all directly related to Confucian values. Central to Confucianism is the importance of relationships and bonds. Among those, filial piety ranks very high. Since it is an expected behavior, and deeply rooted in the Korean psyche, many proverbs do not state the obvious, but rather take a look at situations where the traditional duty of children for their parents is amiss. For example, the proverb *There is no filial child in a long illness* (I,361) is used when a person loses patience after doing something for a long time, and *Three cups of wine after death are not worth one cup in life* (III,195) reminds children that parents need to be treated well and respectfully, especially while they are still alive. This saying takes its imagery from the annual ceremony to commemorate the ancestor's death, when the children (the eldest son) pour wine three times and lay out a splendid meal for the spirit of the deceased. The food is prepared ready to eat, chopsticks provided, and the tops of various fruits cut off so that the

spirit can enter (and “eat”) easier. The criticism lying in this proverb is that this meal is often more sumptuous than what the children had prepared for parents during their lifetime.

With this last example of many different aspects of Korean culture given here, it can be said that trying to introduce a foreign culture will always be an incomplete endeavor, because it has too many characteristics that all have their own special place in the total picture. Nevertheless, it is important to find at least some level of access to norms and values of other peoples in order to better understand what they do and what they say. Traveling is perhaps the best way to get to know people of other cultures and the country they live in – and to learn a lot about one’s own at the same time – but this is not always possible. Using various media resources is relatively easy in today’s digital world, but where to start? This paper tried to highlight some of the most prominent cultural aspects that one encounters when traveling to Korea and hopefully the reader will find that its culture is now not so “foreign” anymore. Korea is a country on a fast-paced track in many ways, and without doubt, especially as we go forward, will be one of the more influential participants in the global community. If the reader should remember a few cultural characteristics – or some of its powerful proverbs – the author shall regard this paper as a successful attempt to catch “two birds with one stone,” as mentioned in the beginning, or better, as they say in Korea: “two pigeons with one bean.”³⁶

Notes

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² Mieder, Wolfgang. “Popular Views of the Proverb.” *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*, 2 (1985), p.119. Print.

³ Most proverbs used in this paper are taken from the book *Maxims and Proverbs of Old Korea* by Tae Hung Ha (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2000) which was first published in 1964, and I owe many interpretations of proverbs to his detailed comments. The title “Old Korea” suggests that the proverbs found in this collection are predominantly Korean in nature, because the influence of other (Western) proverbial language in this long secluded country should be relatively minimal. Accordingly, using this book – and to a lesser extent other collections which will be identified below – also means that more recent aspects of Korean life and thought may not be represented here. This paper, therefore, does not include proverbs directly related to topics such as the Japanese occupation, thoughts about re-unification, or the recent rapid industrialization and opening of the country in general. All proverbs taken from *Maxims and Proverbs of Old Korea* are quoted here with their number in this collection (part and proverb number).

³ Tae Hung Ha, Preface (no page number).

⁴ Tae Hung Ha, Preface (no page number).

⁵ Yoo, Young H. *Wisdom of the Far East. A Dictionary of Proverbs, Maxims, and Famous Classical Phrases of the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean*. Washington DC: Far Eastern Research & Publication Center, 1972, p. xiii. Print.

⁶ Chung, Chong-wha. “Identity of the Underprivileged and Reality of Poverty as Reflected in Korean Proverbs.” *Memoirs of '96 Tokyo International Proverb Forum*. Tokyo: The Japan Society for Proverb Studies, 1996, p. 31. Print.

⁷ Ch'oe, Chong-ho. “The Concept of Language in the Traditional Korean Thought.” *Korea Journal* 1985, p. 19.

⁸ Kim, Peter and Cohen, Ronald. “Verbal Abstraction and Culture: An Exploratory Study with Proverbs.” *Psychological Reports* 1977, No. 41, p. 967. Print.

⁹ Paczoly, Gyula. “Korean, Chinese, and Japanese Proverbs.” *Papers on intercultural communication*. Budapest: College for Foreign Trade, 1995, p. 54. Print.

¹⁰ Chung, Chong-wha, p. 32.

¹¹ Not only did the new language bring about significant social and cultural changes, the success of King Sejong's invention can be seen today: Korea boasts one of the highest literacy rates in the world and the language has been placed as a treasure on the UN's World Heritage List.

¹² Kim, Eungi. “Understanding Korean Culture.” Korean Studies Workshop for American Educators 2010. Lecture given on July 21, 2010 at Yonsei University, Seoul. For the purpose of this introduction to Korean culture, I am following his selection of the country's most important cultural aspects.

¹³ See also *Tigers, Frogs, and Rice Cakes. A Book of Korean Proverbs*. Auburn, Ca: Shen's Books, 1999. This children's book includes 20 proverbs and proverbial expressions of which three use the symbol of the “tiger.” In some Korean proverbs, the tiger takes the place of animals typically found in Western equivalents, such as in *A tiger out of the mountain; a fish out of water* (III,177).

¹⁴ Vermeersch, Sem. “Korean religion.” Korean Studies Workshop for American Educators 2010. Lecture given on July 7, 2010 at Yonsei University, Seoul. No slide number.

¹⁵ The symbol of the swastika can be seen in Korea in another connection, because it is also used by Shamans. The swastika painted on house walls, as part of billboards, or hung in windows, typically point to a Shaman's place of business. Shamanism and Confucianism – the latter without any visible “symbols” – are of significant importance in Korean culture and will be discussed later as part of the country's value system.

¹⁶ This text is found in Chung, Chong-wha, on p. 151. Proverbs taken from his book will be quoted in parentheses.

¹⁷ It is important to note that there is a small number of Korean proverb collections that are not available in English translation and could not be included in this study. This is one reason why not every cultural aspects mentioned here is supported by a proverb.

¹⁸ A disturbance to the family structure, one must imagine, that was more prominent in old Korea, was the custom of men having concubines. Many Korean proverbs take their imagery from such situations that were talked about more openly in the past than it would be the case in our days. Two of many examples are *A concubine can not bear the sight of another concubine* (II,26) which shows the competition for relationships with married men of wealth, and *The village wench takes a yaman husband* (II,74) that depicts how not only officials took concubines, but how they were sometimes seduced by women with a certain lack of moral standards.

¹⁹ Kim, Eugenia. *The Calligrapher's Daughter: a Novel*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2009, p. 170. Print.

²⁰ Paczolay, Gyula. *European, Far-Eastern and some Asian Proverbs*. Veszprém: Central Library of the University of Veszprém, 1994, p. 64. Print.

²¹ Yoo, p. 60.

²² Recent examples of such demonstrations of unity in Korea are the “Gold Collection Campaign“ in 1997 (3.5 million Koreans gave 160 tons of gold, approx. \$2 billion, to support their country during the economic crisis), the “screaming Red Devils” (24 million Korean soccer fans supported their team enthusiastically in public places during the 2002 FIFA World Cup), or the Taean Oil spill in 2007 where a million volunteers sped up the clean-up from an estimated 7-10 years to a mere two years. These three examples were given by the Korean Ministry of Strategy and Finance in a presentation to Wall Street investors in March 2010 (by Vice Minister Kyung-wook Hur, slide no. 13). Copy provided by Prof. Joon Ho Hahm for his lecture “Korean Economic Development” at Yonsei University on July 3, 2010 as part of the Korean Studies Workshop for American Educators 2010.

²³ Korea's unique geo-political position between two powerful neighbors (China and Japan) that invaded or challenged the small country frequently over many centuries, is reflected in the proverb *In a fight between whales, the backs of shrimps are burst* (Yoo, p. 184) which provides yet another good illustration of how Koreans see their country.

²⁴ Yoo, p. 237.

²⁵ Seth, Michael J. *Education Fever. Society, Politics, and the Pursuit of Schooling in Korea*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002. Print.

²⁶ Barry, Patricia. "Confucian Society: A Mixed Blessing." Lecture notes at <http://www.koreasociety.org>

²⁷ These quotes at <http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Confucius>

²⁸ Yoo, p. 306.

²⁹ Based on Gross Domestic Product per capita: \$87 in 1962 to about \$20,000 in 2007. Source: Joon-Ho Hahm at his lecture "Korean Economic Development" at Yonsei University on July 3, 2010 as part of the Korean Studies Workshop for American Educators 2010. Slide no. 2.

³⁰ In annual working hours alone, Korea ranks highest of all OECD members (see <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/38/58/39696376.pdf>).

³¹ *A frog in a well* (I,285) is a famous Korean saying about someone or something disconnected from the outside world, which describes Korea itself well during the country's seclusion from the rest of the world until the mid 20th century.

³² Luomala, Katharine. "Four Aspects of Twelve Korean Proverbs Used In Hawaii" In: *Proverbium 1 (1965) – 15 (1970)*, ed. Wolfgang Mieder. Bern: Peter Lang, 1987, p. 493. Print.

³³ Birthday celebrations in Korea are important cultural events. Especially the first birthday (*tol*) is celebrated on a large scale (as well as the 100th day) because the death rate of children younger than one year used to be very high in the country. The birthday guests bring various objects such as books, writing utensils, or money and the child is asked to pick one object. If the child picks up a writing utensil or a book, it is expected to become a scholar and if it picks money, it will be wealthy. Other objects may include food items (government official), a sword (military career), or threads (long life). Another important birthday is one's 60th at the completion of a cycle in the Oriental zodiac. A Korean's "age" is often confusing for Westerners because in addition to the actual birthday (counting as age one), every Korean advances in age on Lunar New Year.

³⁴ Vermeersch, Sem. No slide number.

³⁵ Kim, Eungi. No slide number.

³⁶ Chung, Chongwha. *Dictionary of Korean and English Proverbs*. Seoul: Tam Gu Dang, 1995, p. 95. Print.

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TECHNOLOGY OF MODERN TIMES AS A SOURCE OF
THE “LEXICON OF COMMON FIGURATIVE UNITS”

Abstract: The topic of this paper is widespread idioms (WIs) originating from the domain ‘modern technology’. These idioms are only a small part of the entire “Lexicon of Common Figurative Units” (i.e. the inventory of idioms which exist in a large number of European languages in a similar lexical structure and in the same figurative core meaning). The six idioms discussed here belong to one of the most recent layers of the common European figurative language.

Keywords: Lexicon of Common Figurative Units, intertextuality, languages of Europe, modern source concepts of idioms, widespread idioms

1. Introduction

Idioms reflecting aspects of the technological age, of modern industrialization and mechanization, are not frequent in the European languages in general. The German idiom *die Schallmauer durchbrechen*, for example, originates from the domain ‘aviation’ which has left only few traces in figurative lexical units. The literal reading of the idiom refers to a type of aircraft that were particularly known only since the 1950s and, therefore, the idiom seems to be among the most modern ones of the source domain of technology. Initially, the expression was applied to airplanes which had reached supersonic speed, but then developed secondary figurative meanings like ‘to break an unparalleled record, to exceed a limit which was regarded as insurmountable, etc.’

This idiom was part of the project “Widespread Idioms in Europe and Beyond” which is aimed at identifying those idioms which are common to many languages of Europe.¹ Our surveys carried out with the help of many experts from a total of 70 European and some non-European languages have shown that the idiom is not widespread: More than a dozen European languages possess expressions which can be translated literally as “to break

the sound barrier”); most of them, however, are not used in the secondary figurative meanings, as is the case with the German idiom.² Such results are unpredictable and can only be achieved by extensive empirical work.

About 50 further potentially widespread idioms from the source concept ‘modern technology’ have been tested for many languages via questionnaires. Only six WIs from this domain have been observed so far. Their source frames do not make reference to the latest high technology but to technical achievements from early modern times. Two of them go back to motorized transport and railroad technology, (section 2), one to radio broadcast or telecommunication (section 3), two refer to steam engine technology, gears and engine mechanics (section 4), while one WI refers to electricity (section 5).

2. Motorized transport and railroad technology

Source frames like ‘modern transportation’, ‘railway system’ or ‘motorcar’ can be recognized in several idioms. However, only two of them gained a wide distribution across the languages of Europe.

- (1) *to give someone the green light* ‘to encourage or allow someone to proceed, to give someone permission to do something that they were planning to do or have asked to do’

Idiom (1) evokes the image of a traffic light that switches to green authorizing the road users to go ahead. The image originates in the late 1800 for the signal used by railroads to indicate that a train could proceed and has been transferred to more general use in the first half of the 1900s. As our research shows, the idiom is remarkably widespread; it exists in at least 52 European languages and, moreover, in various standard languages spoken outside Europe. Most of these languages use also the nominal phrase, “green light” ‘permission to do something’, or forms such as “to give green light to a project, plan, etc.” Let us look at the data given by our informants.

Indo-European Languages in Europe*Germanic Languages*

Icelandic	<i>að gefa e-rjum grænt ljós</i>	“to give sb. the green light”
Faroese	<i>at geva einum grønt ljós</i>	“to give sb. the green light”
Norwegian	(Bokmål) <i>gi noen grønt lys</i> (Nynorsk) <i>gje nokon grønt lys/ljos</i>	“to give sb. the green light” “to give sb. the green light”
Swedish	<i>ge någon/något grönt ljus</i>	“to give sb. the green light”
Danish	<i>give ngn. grønt lys</i>	“to give sb. the green light”
English	<i>to give sb. the green light</i>	
Scots	<i>tae gie a body the green licht</i>	“to give at sb. the green light”
Dutch	<i>het licht op groen zetten</i> <i>iem. het groene licht geven</i>	“to set the light at green”
North Frisian	(Sylt) <i>hoken green Leecht dö</i>	
West Frisian	<i>immen it griene ljocht jaan</i>	“to give sb. the green light”
German	<i>jm. grünes Licht geben</i>	“to give sb. green light”
Luxembourgish	<i>engem d'gréng Luut/Luucht ginn</i>	“to give sb. the green light”
Swiss Germ.	<i>öpperem grüens Liecht gäh</i>	“to give sb. green light”

(No equivalents for Low German and Yiddish)

Celtic Languages

Irish	<i>olas glas a thabhairt do dhuine</i>	“to give green light to a person”
Welsh	<i>rhoi'r golau gwyrdd i rywun</i>	“to give the green light to sb.”

(No equivalents for Cornish and Breton)

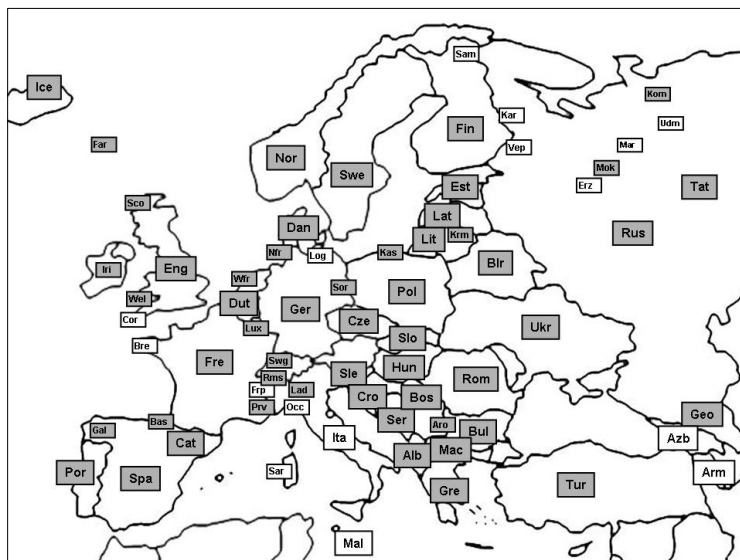
Romance Languages

French	<i>donner le feu vert à qqn.</i>	“to give the green traffic lights to sb.”
Ladin	<i>ti dè löm vërda</i>	“to give green light”
Romansh	<i>dar glisch verda ad insatgi</i>	“to give green light to sb.”
Spanish	<i>dar a alguien la luz verde</i>	“to give the green light to sb.”
Catalan	<i>donar llum verd a algú</i>	“to give green light to sb.”
Galician	<i>dar luz verde a alguén</i>	“to give green light to sb.”
Portuguese	<i>dar luz verde a alguém</i>	“to give green light to sb.”
Romanian	<i>a da cuiva undă verde</i>	“to give sb. green wave”
Aromanian	<i>lj-fatsi cali s-treacã</i>	“to give sb. the green light”

(No equivalents for Occitan, Francoprovençal, Italian and Sardinian)

Baltic Languages

Latvian	<i>dot zaļo gaismu kādam</i>	“to give (the) green light to sb.”
Lithuanian	<i>duoti kam žalią šviesą</i>	“to give (the) green light to sb.”



Map 1: Equivalents of “to give sb. the green light” in European languages

Slavonic Languages

Russian	<i>дать зелёный свет кому-л.</i>	“to give (the) green light to sb.”
Belorussian	<i>даць зялёнае святло</i>	“to give sb. (the) green light”
Ukrainian	<i>дати комусь зелене світло</i>	“to give sb. (the) green light”
Czech	<i>dát někomu zelenou</i>	“to give sb. green ”
Slovak	<i>dat' niekomu zelenú</i>	“to give sb. green ”
Polish	<i>dać komuś zielone światło</i>	“to give sb. (the) green light”
Kashubian	<i>pòkazac kòmùs zelony wid</i>	“to show sb. (the) green light”
Sorbian	<i>zelenu swěcu dać někomu</i>	“to give sb. (the) green light”
Slovene	<i>dati komu zeleno luč</i>	“to give sb. (the) green light”
Croatian	<i>dati komu zeleno svjetlo</i>	“to give sb. (the) green light”
Bosnian	<i>dati kome zeleno svjetlo</i>	“to give sb. (the) green light”
Serbian	<i>dati kome zeleno svetlo</i>	“to give sb. (the) green light”
Macedonian	<i>дава зелено светло некому</i>	“to give sb. (the) green light”
Bulgarian	<i>давам зелена улица на няког</i> <i>давам зелена светлина</i>	“to give green street to sb.” “to give (the) green light”
Albanian	<i>jep dritën jeshile dikujt</i>	“to give green light to sb.”
Greek	<i>δίνω (το) πράσινο φως σε νβ.</i>	“to give (the) green light to sb.”
Armenian	<i>kanatsch lujs tal</i>	“to give green light to sb.”

Finno-Ugric Languages in Europe*Ugric Languages*

Hungarian	<i>zöld utat ad vkinek</i>	“sb. gives sb. the green road ”
	<i>zöld utat biztosít vkinek</i>	“sb. provides the green road for sb.”

North-Finnic Languages

Finnish	<i>näyttää vihreää valoa jklle</i>	“to show green light to sb.”
Estonian	<i>kellelegi rohelist teed andma</i>	“to give sb. the green road ”
	<i>kellelegi rohelist tuld näitama</i>	“to show sb. the green light”
Karelian	<i>ozuttua zelenästii valguo</i>	“to show the green light”
(No equivalent for Veps)		

Permic Language

Komi-Zyrian	<i>турунвиж би сетны</i>	“to give the green light”
(No equivalent for Udmurt)		

Volgaic Languages

Moksha	<i>киндиге сянгяря тол</i>	“to give the green traffic light
Mordvin	<i>максомс мезевок тиемс</i>	to sb. to do sth.”
(No equivalents for Mari and Erzya Mordvin)		

Turkic Languages in Europe

Karaim	<i>ješil ot jandyрма</i>	“to switch the green light”
Turkish	<i>birinel/birşeye yeşil ıřık yapmak</i>	“to switch on the green light for sb.”
Tatar	<i>яшеп ум бупу /yashel uram birerge</i>	“to give a green street ”
(No equivalent for Azerbaijani)		

Georgian	<i>mtsvane shukis anteba</i>	“to give green light to sb.”
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Maltese	No equivalent	
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Basque	<i>argi berdea eman</i>	“to give green light”
	<i>argi berdea erakutsi</i>	“to show sb. the green light”

Esperanto	<i>doni verdan lumon</i>	“to give the green light”
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Non-European Languages

Egyptian Arabic	<i>iddii-lu l-achdar</i>	“to give sb. the green ”
	<i>iddii-lu l-loon il-achdar</i>	“to give sb. the green color ”
Tunisian Arabic	<i>ja'fī ddaw laxdar</i>	“he gives the green light”
Farsi	<i>cheragh saby neshandadn</i>	“to show green light”
Kirghize	<i>биророго ачык жол берүү</i>	“sb. gives the green light”
Mongolian	<i>ногзоон гэрлээр хийх</i>	“to do sth. with/at green light”
Chinese	<i>kāi lù dēng</i>	“to open green light”
Vietnamese	<i>bật đèn xanh cho ai</i>	“to switch on the green light for sb.”
Korean	<i>cheong-shinho ida</i>	“this is green/blue signal ”
Japanese	<i>ao shingou wo dasu</i>	“to give green/blue signal ”
Thai	<i>hai fai-kiew</i>	“to give green light”

Usually, the idiom is seen as a good example for the increasing impact of Anglo-American English on the languages of Europe.³ The explanation of its wide distribution, however, cannot be based on one single cause (like borrowing from English into all the other standard and lesser-used languages) but must include several reasons, among them extra-linguistic ones. The sudden dissemination of a technical innovation such as traffic lights has certainly supported the spread of the idiom.

A large group of idioms are lexically almost identical to the English one, apart from the use of the article (definite article vs. no article). Other idioms reveal some differences (marked in bold type above), cf. the verbs meaning ‘to show’ in Kashubian, Finnish, Estonian, Karelian and Basque as well as verbs meaning ‘to switch (on)’ in Karaim and Turkish. Especially worth mentioning are the variants among the nouns: Apart from French *feu* ‘traffic light’, Czech *zelenou* and Slovak *zelenú* ‘(the) green’ or Romanian *undă* ‘wave’, several idioms show words for ‘road’ or ‘street’: Bulgarian *улица* ‘street’, Hungarian *utak* ‘road’ (accusative), Estonian *teed* ‘roads’ and Tatar *uram* ‘street’. Most different is the Dutch *het licht op groen zetten*. These idioms probably cast doubt on a direct influence from English. The Bulgarian and Estonian variants with “green light” are much younger and are used only in journalism of very recent times, as stated by our informants. The same holds for an Italian expression *dare la luce verde* “to give the green light” which can be understood figuratively, but is not

yet an idiom. A near equivalent idiom is *dare via libera*, literally “to give free way/street”. Because it contains no adjective for ‘green’ we do not count it among the WI (1). Apart from Italian neither Sardinian nor Maltese possess the idiom which points to areal connections.

In contrast to idiom (1), the wide spread of idiom (2) has not been noticed before.

(2) *to see the light at the end of the tunnel* ‘to get an indication, that a long period of hardship or adversity is nearing an end; to get hope for the future and for the end of an unpleasant situation’

The idiom literally refers to the distant light at the end of a railway tunnel, which is seen when a train travels in the dark. It has been used with reference to an economic upturn since the 1920s and is said to have been exploited by Winston Churchill in 1940 and 1941 (Mieder and Bryan 1995: 288; Brewer 2005: 818).

Indo-European Languages in Europe

Germanic Languages

Icelandic	<i>sjá ljós við enda hinna myrky ganga</i> <i>sjá ljós við endann á göngunum</i>	“to see light at the end of the dark tunnel” “to see light at the end of the tunnel”
Norwegian	<i>se lys i enden av tunnelen</i>	“to see the light in the end of the tunnel”
Swedish	<i>se ljuset i (slutet av) tunneln</i> <i>se ljuset i tunnelns andra ände</i>	“to see the light in (the end of) the tunnel” “to see the light in the tunnel’s other end”
Danish	<i>se lys for enden af tunnelen</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
English	<i>to see the light at the end of the tunnel</i>	
Scots	<i>tae see licht at the end o the tunnel</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
Dutch	<i>het licht zien aan het einde van de tunnel</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
West Frisian	<i>der is ljocht oan it ein fan de tunnel</i>	“there is light at the end of the tunnel”
German	<i>Licht am Ende des Tunnels sehen</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”

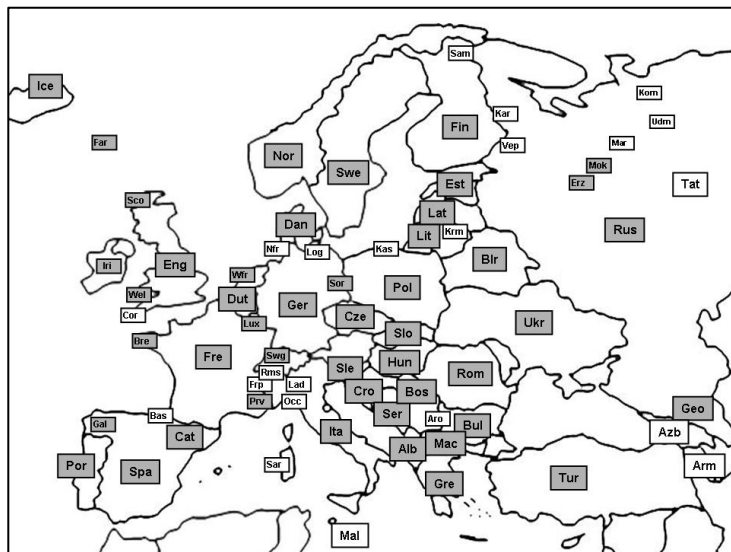
Luxembourgish	<i>et gesait een rem Luut um Enn vum Tunnel</i>	“one sees again the light at the end of the tunnel”
Swiss German	<i>Liecht am Ändi vom Tunne gseh</i>	“to see light at the end of the tunnel”

(No equivalents for Faroese, North Frisian, Yiddish and Low German)

Celtic Languages

Irish	<i>solas ag deireadh an tolláin</i>	“light at the end of the tunnel”
Welsh	<i>(gweld) golau ar ddiwedd y twnel</i>	“(to see) the light at the end of the tunnel”
Breton	<i>(gweled) penn an tunnel</i>	“(to see) the end of the tunnel”

(No equivalent for Cornish)



Map 2: Equivalents of “to see the light at the end of the tunnel” in European languages

Romance Languages

French	<i>voir le bout du tunnel</i>	“to see the end of the tunnel”
Provençal	<i>veire lou but dei tunnel</i>	“we see the end of the tunnel”
Italian	<i>vedere la luce in fondo al tunnel</i>	“to see the light in bottom of the tunnel”
	<i>vedere la luce alla fine del tunnel</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”

Spanish	<i>ver luz al final del tunel</i>	“to see light at the end of the tunnel”
Catalan	<i>veure la llum al final del túnel</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
Galician	<i>ver a luz ao final do túnel</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
Portuguese	<i>ver a luz ao fundo do túnel</i>	“to see the light at the bottom of the tunnel”
Romanian	<i>a vedea luminița de la capătul tunelului</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”

(No equivalents for Occitan, Ladin, Romansh, Francoprovençal, Sardinian and Aromanian)

Baltic Languages

Latvian	<i>gaisma tuneļa galā</i>	“the light at the end of the tunnel”
Lithuanian	<i>matyti šviesą tunelio gale</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”

Slavonic Languages

Russian	<i>(у)видеть свет в конце туннеля</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
Belorussian	<i>(у)бачыць святло ў канцы тунэл</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
Ukrainian	<i>світло в кінці тунелю</i>	“the light at the end of the tunnel”
Slovak	<i>vidieť svetlo na konci tunela</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
Czech	<i>vidět světlo na konci tunelu</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
Polish	<i>(widać) światło/światelko w tunelu</i>	“(one can see) light/little light in the tunnel”
Sorbian	<i>swěca/swětło w tunlu</i>	“the light in the tunnel”
Slovene	<i>videti luč na koncu predora</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
Croatian	<i>vidjeti svjetlo na kraju tunela</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
Bosnian	<i>vidjeti svjetlost na kraju tunela</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
Serbian	<i>угледати светло на крају тунела</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
Bulgarian	<i>виждам/вижда се светлина в (края на) тунела</i>	“sb. sees light in (the end of) the tunnel”

(No equivalents for Kashubian and Macedonian)

<i>Albanian</i>	<i>te shohesh driten ne fund te tynelit</i>	“to see the light at the end of the tunnel”
<i>Greek</i>	<i>βλέπω φως στην άκρη του τούνελ</i>	“to see light at the other side of the tunnel”
<i>Armenian</i>	No equivalent	

Finno-Ugric Languages in Europe

Ugric Languages

<i>Hungarian</i>	<i>már látni az alagút végét</i>	“the end of the tunnel already can be seen”
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North-Finnic Languages

<i>Finnish</i>	<i>nähdä valoa tunnelin päässä</i>	“to see light at the end of the tunnel”
<i>Estonian</i>	<i>tunneli lõpus valgust nägema</i>	“to see light at the end of the tunnel”
(No equivalents for Karelian and Veps)		

Permic Languages No equivalents

Volgaic Languages

<i>Moksha Mordvin</i>	<i>туннельть омба пняльде ши валда няемс</i>	“to see light of the day at the end of the tunnel”
<i>Erzya Mordvin</i>	<i>неемс тол туннельень пецэ</i>	“to see light at the end of the tunnel”
(No equivalent for Mari)		

Turkic Languages in Europe

<i>Turkish</i>	<i>tünelin sonunda ışık göründü</i>	“at the end of the tunnel light has been seen”
(No equivalents for Karaim, Tatar and Azerbaijani)		

Georgian	<i>gvirabis bolos sinatlis danakhva</i>	“to see the light at the end of a tunnel”
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Maltese and Basque No equivalents

Esperanto	<i>vidi lumon je la fino de la tunelo</i>	“to see light at the end of a tunnel”
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Non-European Languages

Vietnamese	<i>(nhìn)thấy ánh sáng cuối đường hầm</i>	“to see light at the end of the tunnel
Korean	<i>tennel-ui kkeut-i boin-da</i>	“to see the end of the tunnel”
Mongolian	<i>хонгулуйн үзүүрм зэрэл харax</i>	“to see light at the end of the tunnel”
Aklanon	<i>kasiga sa punta it tanel</i>	“light at the end of the tunnel”

The material sent in by our informants reveals that equivalents of the idiom are known in at least 44 European and some non-European languages with a quite consistent syntactic and lexical structure (cf. the words in bold type above for some differences).⁴ Most languages have also the shorter nominal form “light at the end of the tunnel”, meaning figuratively ‘hope for the future, after a long and difficult period’ (e.g. Albanian *drite ne fund te tunelit*, Estonian *valgus tunneli lõpus*). Other variants omit either the word for ‘end’ (like Polish and Sorbian): Greek *βλέπω φως στο τούνελ* “to see light in the tunnel” or the word for ‘light’ (like French and Provençal): Dutch *het einde van de tunnel zien*, Catalan *veure el final del túnel* and Galician *ver o final do túnel* “to see the end of the tunnel”.

3. Radio broadcast or telecommunication

Modern forms of radio- and telecommunication are the source frames of various figurative units in individual languages. The German idioms *eine Antenne für etwas haben* ‘to have a feeling for sth.’, *es herrscht Sendepause* ‘there is deadly silence’ or *eine lange Leitung haben* ‘to be slow in the uptake’ are typical of the colloquial language, but they have not spread far beyond this linguistic variety. Out of our pretested “WI candidates” from these domains only one widespread idiom has been found to exist, cf. (3). The source concept is ‘radio transmission’ where the broadcasting transmitter and the receiver must be on the same frequency. A radio program cannot be heard unless the radio is tuned to the correct wavelength.

- (3) *to be on the same wavelength as someone* ‘to have similar ideas, interests, and opinions (to another person’s); to understand each other very well’

The material from our informants confirms that equivalents of the idiom occur in 36 European languages. The idiom has also been reported for Korean (*ju-pa-su-ga matt-da* “sb. has the same wavelength as sb.”). Many of the lesser-used languages do not possess the idiom.

Indo-European Languages in Europe

Germanic Languages

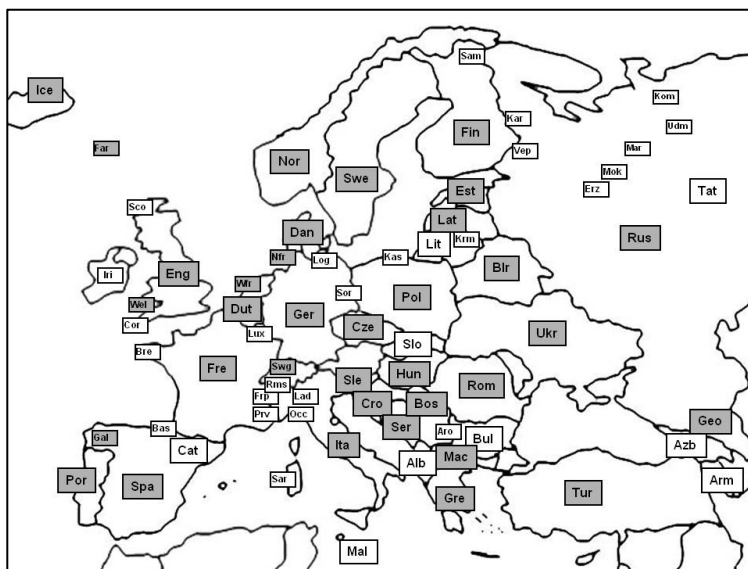
Icelandic	<i>að vera á sömu bylgjulengd (og e-hver)</i>	“to be on the same wavelength (as sb.)”
Faroese	<i>at vera á bylgjulongd (við einum)</i>	“to be on the wavelength (with sb.)”
Norwegian	<i>være på (samme) bølgelengde (med noen)</i>	“to be on the (same) wavelength (with sb.)”
Swedish	<i>vara på samma våglängd (med ngn)</i>	“to be on the same wavelength (with sb.)”
Danish	<i>være på bølgelængde (med ngn)</i>	“to be on the wavelength (with sb.)”
English	<i>to be on the same wavelength as sb.</i>	
Dutch	<i>op dezelfde golflengte zitten (met iem.)</i>	“to sit on the same wavelength (with sb.)”
	<i>op gelijke golflengte zijn</i>	“to be on similar wavelength”
North Frisian	<i>üp di salew Welenlengdi wüis</i>	“to be on the same wavelength”
West Frisian	<i>op deselde golflingte sitte</i>	“to sit on the same wavelength”
German	<i>(mit jm.) auf der gleichen Wellenlänge</i>	<i>liegen</i> “to lie on the same wavelength (with sb.)”
Swiss German	<i>uf dr glüiche Wällelengi süi</i>	“to be on the same wavelength”

(No equivalents for Scots, Luxembourgish, Yiddish and Low German)

Celtic Languages

Welsh	<i>bod ar yr un donfedd â rhywun</i>	“to be on the same wavelength as”
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(No equivalents for Irish, Cornish and Breton)



Map 3: Equivalents of “to be on the same wavelength” in European languages

Romance Languages

French	<i>être sur la même longueur d’onde (avec qqn)</i>	“to be on the same wavelength (with sb.)”
Italian	<i>essere sulla stessa lunghezza d’onda</i>	“to be on the same wavelength”
Spanish	<i>estar en la misma onda</i>	“to be on the same wave ”
Galician	<i>estar na mesma onda</i>	“to be on the same wave ”
Portuguese	<i>estar na mesma onda</i>	“to be on the same wave ”
Romanian	<i>a fi pe aceeași lungime de undă</i>	“to be on the same wavelength”
(No equivalents for Francoprovençal, Provençal, Occitan, Ladin, Romansh, Catalan, Sardinian and Aromanian)		

Baltic Languages

Latvian	<i>būt uz viena viļņa</i>	“to be on the same wave ”
(No equivalent for Lithuanian)		

Slavonic Languages

Russian	<i>быть с кем-л. на одной волне</i>	“to be with sb. on one wave ”
Belorussian	<i>быць на адной хвалі</i>	“to be on one wave ”
Ukrainian	<i>бути на одній хвилі</i>	“to be on one wave ”

Czech	<i>být na stejné frekvenci (s někým)</i>	“to be on the same one wave (with sb.)”
Polish	<i>działać/myśleć/... na tej samej fali</i>	“to act/think/... on the same wave ”
Slovene	<i>biti na isti valovni dolžini</i>	“to be on the same wavelength”
Croatian	<i>biti na istoj valnoj dužini/duljini</i>	“to be on the same wavelength”
Bosnian	<i>biti na istoj talasnoj dužini</i>	“to be on the same wavelength”
Serbian	<i>biti na istoj talasnoj dužini</i>	“to be on the same wavelength”
Macedonian	<i>na ista branova dol'ina e so</i>	“to be on the same wavelength”
(No equivalents for Slovak, Kashubian, Sorbian and Bulgarian)		
<i>Albanian</i>	No equivalent	
<i>Greek</i>	<i>είμαι/εκπέμπω στο ίδιο μήκος κύματος (με κάποιον)</i>	“to be/ radiate on the same wavelength (with sb.)”
<i>Armenian</i>	No equivalent	

Finno-Ugric Languages in Europe

Ugric Languages

Hungarian	<i>egy/azonos hullámhosszon van vkivel</i>	“sb. is on the same/on one wavelength with sb.”
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North-Finnic Languages

Finnish	<i>olla samalla aaltopituudella (jkn. kanssa)</i>	“to be on the same wavelength (with sb.)”
Estonian	<i>ühel lainel olema (kellegagi)</i>	“to be on the same wave (with sb.)”

(No equivalents for Karelian and Veps)

Permic and Volgaic Languages No equivalents

Turkic Languages in Europe

Turkish	<i>birisiyle aynı frekansta olmak</i>	“to be on the same frequency with sb.”
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(No equivalents for Karaim, Tatar and Azerbaijani)

Georgian *ert talgaze kopna* “to be on the same wave”

Maltese and Basque No equivalents

Esperanto *esti je la sama ondolongo* “to be on the same wavelength”

No particular emphasis should be laid on the morpho-syntactic structures: Types such as “to be/lie/sit on the same wavelength (with sb.)” and “to have the same wavelength (as sb.)” or “the two have the same wavelength” are used side by side in many languages. Some lexical variants should be noticed as well. The word used for ‘same’ can be omitted (as in Faroese and Danish), just as the element meaning ‘length’ (e.g. Spanish, Latvian, Belorussian, Ukrainian, Georgian). Similar to ‘wavelength’ is ‘frequency’ in Turkish. Whereas all the idioms listed above have the same figurative meaning, the seemingly similar Bulgarian idiom *на същата вълна съм* “I am on the same wave” reveals a different semantic structure. It turns out to be a “false friend” in view of its figurative meaning ‘I busy myself with the same problems or with similar ideas (as sb.)’.⁵

4. Steam engine technology, gears and engine mechanics

Source frames like technical engineering, gears and other means of mechanization have left some traces in figurative units of individual languages but contribute to the “Lexicon of Common Figurative Units” with only two WIs. Korhonen (1997: 162) assumes an “international” distribution for the idioms *to have a screw loose/missing* ‘to be slightly crazy’ and *to let off steam* ‘to abreact, work off (anger, tension)’. This assumption could not be confirmed by our investigation (both idioms have only few near-equivalents in other languages).

Idiom (4) has no literal counterpart in English (cf. *the dead center*):

- (4) German *der tote Punkt/ein toter Punkt* “the/a dead spot/point”
 ‘a stage when no progress can be made; a state of greatest exhaustion or stagnancy; at a standstill’

The idiom originates from (steam) engine technology. It refers to the moment (technically two moments) in the cycle of an engine when the connecting rod and the crankshaft form one straight line. At this point, the connecting rod moves neither forward nor backward but reverses its direction, and there is temporarily no turning force.

Idiom equivalents occur also in verbal constructions such as “to surmount the dead spot” (German *den toten Punkt überwinden* ‘to recover from fatigue; to overcome the point of exhaustion or

stagnation’) or “to reach the dead spot” (Estonian *surnud punkti jõudma* ‘to become completely exhausted, tired or to reach the point that something cannot move on’). However, all of our informants recorded the noun phrase in the first place (varying only in the use of the article). For reasons of space we will present our data in a short overview and with a schematic grid instead of a map. The grid represents 36 European major languages.⁴ Languages marked on gray rectangles possess equivalents.

Norwegian *et dødpunkt*, Swedish *en död punkt*, Danish *et dødt punkt*, West Frisian *it deade punt*, Dutch *het dode punt*, French *le point mort*, Italian *un punto morto*, Spanish *el/un punto muerto*, Portuguese *um ponto morto*, Romanian *punctul mort*, Russian *мёртвая точка*, Belorussian *мёртвы пункт*, Ukrainian *мертва точка*, Czech *mrtvý bod*, Slovak *mŕtvý bod*, Polish *martwy punkt*, Sorbian *mortwy dypk*, Slovene *mrtva točka*, Croatian *mrtva točka*, Bosnian *mrtva tačka*, Serbian *mrtva tačka*, Bulgarian *мъртва точка*, Albanian *pikë e vdekur*, Greek *νεκρό σημείο* and Finnish *kuollut piste*. The Hungarian compound *holtpont* “dead-point” is a full equivalent. Both Baltic languages use a different syntactic structure, “the point of the death”: Lithuanian *mirties taškas* and Latvian *nāves punkts*. A semantic shift can be observed in Icelandic. Expressions such as *sjaldan/aldrei dauður punktur í e-u* “rarely/never a dead point in sth.” can be used figuratively in the sense of ‘there is always something going on, that’s where the action is.

Ice	Nor	Swe	Fin	Est	Lat
Eng	Dut	Dan	Lit	Blr	Rus
Fre	Ger	Pol	Cze	Slo	Ukr
Sle	Cro	Hun	Rom	Geo	Azb
Cat	Ita	Bos	Ser	Mac	Bul
Por	Spa	Mal	Alb	Gre	Tur

Idiom (5) originates from a similar concept. The image is that of a machine consisting of many small interlocking gearwheels, where an individual gearwheel, or cog, only transmits or receives motion but has no power or control itself.

- (5) *to be only a cog in the wheel/machine/works* ‘to be only one of many entities in a large business, organization, system (in a subordinate position, function, without personal responsibility)’

Although nowadays the idiom will most probably be associated with “modern” engines, we cannot rule out the possibility that the original cultural concept underlying the idiom is different, since cogwheel gears are much older (cf. e.g. construction of watermills or clockwork mechanism in bygone days). The idiom occurs with a quite consistent syntactic and lexical structure across the languages, varying just between the words for “wheel/cog” and “machine, machinery”. Here follows a short overview of our data and a grid.

Icelandic *vera tannhjól í gangverki e-s* “to be (a) cogwheel in sb.’s gears”, Swedish *vara en kugge i maskineriet* “to be a cog in the machine”, German *nur ein Rädchen im Getriebe sein* “to be only a little wheel in the gears”, French *n’être qu’un rouage (parmi d’autres rouages)* “to be only a wheel (among other wheels)”, Italian *non essere che la rotella/rotellina di un ingranaggio* “to be only the little wheel of a gears”, Lithuanian *mažas (didelio mechanizmo) sraigtelis* “a little wheel in the big gears”, Russian *быть только колесиком в механизме* “to be only a small wheel in the gears”, Ukrainian *бути лише дрібний гвинтик* “to be only a small cog”, Czech *být jen kolečkem v mašinérii* “to be a little wheel in the machinery”, Slovak *byť len kolieskom v súkolí* “to be only a wheel in the gears”, Polish *być tylko trybikiem w maszynie* “to be only a cog in the machine”, Sorbian *być kolesko w mašineriji* “to be a small wheel in the gears”, Hungarian *vki (csak) egy (apró) fogaskerék/csavar a gépezetben* “sb. is (just) a (small) cog/bolt in the machine”, Finnish *olla vain pieni ratas koneistossa* “to be only a small cog in the gears” or *olla yksi koneiston pyöristä* “to be one of the wheels in the gears”, Estonian *vaid väike mutrike/rattake suures masinavärgis olema* “to be only a little wheel/cog in the big gear”. Different lexical structures can be found in Dutch *een klein radertje in het geheel zijn* “to be a small wheel in the whole” or in idioms with ‘screw’, e.g. Serbian *бути ситан шраф у механизму* “to be a screw in the mechanism” (a Russian variant is *быть только винтиком в механизме*; in Latvian it is the only form: *tikai skrūvīte ritenī* “only a little screw in the wheel”) and ‘bolt’: Bulgarian *винтче в машината* “a little bolt in the machine”.

Ice	Nor	Swe	Fin	Est	Lat
Eng	Dut	Dan	Lit	Blr	Rus
Fre	Ger	Pol	Cze	Slo	Ukr
Sle	Cro	Hun	Rom	Geo	Azb
Cat	Ita	Bos	Ser	Mac	Bul
Por	Spa	Mal	Alb	Gre	Tur

5. *Electricity*

Only one widespread idiom has been found which can be traced back to the modern technical domain of ‘electricity’, cf. (6).

- (6) *to recharge one’s batteries* ‘to take a break from a tiring or stressful activity in order to relax and recover one’s energy, to regain one’s energy after working hard for a long time’

The idiom is based on a comparison of a person’s physical shape with the state of an electric motor or an engine that needs electricity to start. If the battery of the electric device is too low, the battery needs recharging before work can continue. The idiom is attributed to Winston Churchill in a letter of February 1921 (Allen 2006: 51). The idiom is quite young and not registered in all dictionaries. Several informants found evidence for the existence of the idiom in the Internet, e.g. in tourism advertising. As the grid shows, the idiom exists in the majority of the European standard languages. Lexical variants can be set aside. The variants with “battery/batteries” clearly dominate over such with “accumulator”.

With “battery/batteries”:
Icelandic *hlaða batterín*,
Norwegian *lade batteriene*,
Swedish *ladda batterierna*,
Danish *at lade batterierne*
op, Swiss German *sini Batterie wider uflade*, French *recharger ses batteries*,

Ice	Nor	Swe	Fin	Est	Lat
Eng	Dut	Dan	Lit	Blr	Rus
Fre	Ger	Pol	Cze	Slo	Ukr
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Por	Spa	Mal	Alb	Gre	Tur

Italian *ricaricare le batterie*, Spanish *(re)cargar (las) baterías/pilas*, Catalan *carregar les piles*, Portuguese *recarregar as baterias*, Romanian *a-și (re)încărca bateriile*, Latvian *uzlādēt savas baterijas*, Czech *dobít si baterky*, Slovak *nabit’ si znovu batérie*, Slovene *napolniti baterije*, Croatian *napuniti baterije*, Bosnian *napuniti baterije*, Serbian *napuniti baterije*, Bulgarian *зареждам си батериите*, Albanian *i mbush bateritë*, Greek *γεμίζω τις μπαταρίες μου*, Estonian *patareisid laadima*, Maltese *tiċċargja l-batterija*; with “accumulator”: Dutch *de akku opladen*, Polish *naładować akumulatory*, Finnish *ladata akkunsaa*; with both variants: West Frisian *de batterijen/de akku oplade*, German *seine Batterie/seinen Akku wieder aufladen*, Polish *naładować*

baterielakumulatory. Expressions without one of these words, however, as Russian *зарядиться энергией* “to charge oneself with energy”, Ukrainian *зарядитись енергією* “to charge energy” or Hungarian *feltöltődik* “to charge oneself”, must be excluded”.

6. Outlook

Unlike cross-linguistic phraseology which usually focuses on two or three languages, our project “Widespread Idioms in Europe and Beyond” has included all European languages accessible to idiom research. Among the 70 European languages we analyzed are also such languages which were hardly ever the subject of idiom research (although they are known in paremiology), such as the Celtic, Permic and Volgaic languages or Albanian, Maltese, Azerbaijani and Basque. However, there is currently no access to another 70 languages spoken in Europe, i.e. to the many (partly declining) minor and minority languages of east and southeast Europe.

The objective of the project was to systematically discover figurative units which are common to many languages, in order to create a “Lexicon of Common Figurative Units”⁷ (Piiirainen forthcoming). More than half of the ca. 350 units of this lexicon fall under the umbrella term of *intertextuality*, i.e. they originate from texts like classical writings, the Bible, fables, folk narratives, light fiction, cinema films or quotations from prominent people. Except for idioms originating from ‘modern technology’, to the most recent layers of the common figurative language belong idioms from the domains of ‘historical events of the recent past’, ‘modern warfare’, ‘financial system’ and ‘sports’. These widespread idioms have been identified by extensive empirical studies and distinguished from others (which probably also occur in various languages) according to strict criteria (cf. Piiirainen 2010a: 16). It was unpredictable and surprising in many cases which these common figurative units in fact are and which items fell short of our criteria. Therefore, one should not speak of “widespread” or “international” idioms without appropriate investigations.

Not all WIs of the modern layers can be traced back to recent Anglo-American influence: Idiom (4) does not exist in English. Parallels of idiom (1) in other languages are “to set the light at green” or “to give green street/way to sb.”, among other things, where English as donor language can be excluded. On the other

hand, the role of intertextuality should be considered here as well. Early instances of both idiom (2) and idiom (6) are ascribed to Winston Churchill. Maybe the domain of modern technology is not the major factor here, but the quotation of a prominent personality. All these questions can only be answered on the basis of thorough investigations. The study presented here should be regarded as a first step into this direction.

Notes

¹See Piirainen (2010a, b, c) and www.widespread-idioms.uni-trier.de for more details.

²These idioms are, for instance, French *franchir le mur du son*, Italian *superare il muro del suono*, Spanish *romper la barrera del sonido*, Portuguese *quebrar a barreira do som*, Romanian *a sparge barierele (sonore)*, Slovene *prebiti zvočni zid* or Polish *przekraczać barierę dźwięku*. Secondary figurative meanings can be excluded definitely for expressions like Croatian *probiti zvučni zid*, Greek *σπάω το φράγμα του ήχου* or Turkish *ses duvarını aşmak*.

³The statements in dictionaries are contradictory: According to Brewer (2005: 614), the English idiom dates from the 1970s. The French equivalent is frequent since 1955-1960 (Rey/Chantreau 1993: 357) and the German idiom is recorded from the 1960s (Spalding 1959ff: 1156). Several studies refer to the idiom as *internationalism* (e.g. Korhonen 1997: 161; Mieder 1010: 449).

⁴The abbreviations stand for Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, Estonian, Latvian, English, Dutch, Danish, Lithuanian, Belorussian, Russian, French, German, Polish, Czech, Slovak, Ukrainian, Slovenian, Croatian, Hungarian, Romanian, Georgian, Azerbaijani, Catalan, Italian, Bosnian, Serbian, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Portuguese, Spanish, Maltese, Albanian, Greek and Turkish.

⁵The Celtic idioms are recent calques: in Breton from French and in Irish and Welsh from English. The Irish idiom is sometimes seen as *sólás ag deireadh an tolláin* “solace at the end of the tunnel”, a word-play on the English translation.

⁶The antonymous idiom is just as frequent: Bulgarian *на друга вълна съм* “I am on the other wave”, meaning ‘I occupy myself with different problems, I am thinking about something very different’.

⁷The focus is not so much on “European” because many WIs exist also in non-European languages; cf. also Paczolay 1997.

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ANNE-MARTHE SCHEELKE

ZUM SPRICHWORTGEBRAUCH VON KINDERN UND
JUGENDLICHEN – EINE EMPIRISCHE STUDIE AN
REGIONALSCHULEN DER HANSESTADT ROSTOCK

Abstract: Proverbs as a traditional component of language are part of everyone's life. There has been a link between proverbs and school for centuries which still seems to exist, even though proverbs aren't necessarily a curricular topic in modern schools. This paper deals with the usage of proverbs in German secondary schools. It checks if children and teenagers know common proverbs and anti-proverbs and tries to evaluate if they create new proverbs. The empirical study consists of a random sample of 200 fifth, seventh and ninth graders. The results show that proverbs are still known and common with today's youth. A special finding is the fact that former best known proverbs don't seem to be the most famous with the 10-17 year olds. Especially the shifting of the number one proverb *Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund* is surprising

Keywords: Alter, Antispruchwort, Bekanntheit, Didaktik, Empirie, Erziehung, Fragebogen, Frequenz, Gebrauch, Geschlecht, Innovation, Kenntnis, Kinder, „Morgenstunde“, Schule, Variation

Einleitung

In diesem Aufsatz geht es speziell um den Sprichwortgebrauch von Kindern und Jugendlichen – Schülern.

FRIEDRICH SEILER stellte in seiner Sprichwörterkunde fest, dass das Sprichwort im Kontext Schule stets einen gewissen Wert behalten hat, obwohl es, bezogen auf den allgemeinen Gebrauch, insbesondere in der Aufklärung, an Ansehen verlor (vgl. SEILER 1922, 36). Es ist auffällig, dass weltweit bekannte Sprichwortforscher wie KARL FRIEDRICH WILHELM WANDER und SEILER in ihren Sprichwörterkunden den Aspekt Schule berücksichtigen. Bereits der Titel von WANDERS grundlegendem Werk ‚Das Sprichwort, betrachtet nach Form u. Wesen, für Schule u. Leben, als Einleitung zu einem großen volkstümlichen Sprichwörter-schatz‘ von 1836 verweist auf WANDERS Interesse an dem Zu-

sammenhang Sprichwort – Schule. Tatsächlich war WANDER nicht nur Sprichwortforscher, sondern auch ein fortschrittlicher, bildungspolitisch engagierter Volkslehrer. Unter dem Titel ‚Der Kampf um die Schule‘ verfasste er bildungspolitische und pädagogische Schriften. Er sprach sich u. a. über den Gebrauch der Sprichwörter in der Erziehung aus. Deutlich bekannter als WANDERS Sprichwörterkunde ist die SEILERS. Wie WANDER hat auch SEILER ein großes Interesse daran, das Sprichwort in die Schule zu bringen. In seinem Vorwort heißt es: „Das vorliegende Buch soll dem Leser Kenntnis des vaterländischen Sprichworts und Verständnis für seine Eigenart vermitteln und ihn zu weiterer Beschäftigung mit dieser Seite deutschen Volkstums anregen. [...] Als Vermittler [...] denke ich mir ganz besonders die deutschen Lehrer, und zwar die Lehrer an Schulen jeder Gattung“ (1922, V).

Das Erkenntnisinteresse der folgenden Untersuchung zielt darauf, am Beispiel von Regionalschülern der Hansestadt Rostock, den Sprichwortgebrauch von Kindern und Jugendlichen, zumindest in Ansätzen, zu erfassen. Anliegen dieser Studie ist einerseits festzustellen, ob allgemein bekannte¹ Sprichwörter bei den Schülern ad hoc zitierbar sind, andererseits das Schüler-Verständnis von Sprichwörtern abzufragen. Dabei spielt auch der Gebrauch bzw. die Bildung von Antisprichwörtern oder gänzlich neuer Sprichwörter eine wichtige Rolle. Im Mittelpunkt der vorliegenden Arbeit steht die Frage: Sind Sprichwörter heutzutage (in einer modernen Gesellschaft) im Gebrauch von Kindern und Jugendlichen? Typischer Weise scheinen Sprichwörter zum Sprachgebrauch älterer Menschen zu gehören. In dieser Studie wird der Gebrauch von Sprichwörtern bei 200 Schülern im Alter von zehn bis 17 Jahren untersucht.

Das Vorgehen dieser Arbeit gliedert sich in zwei Schritte: Im ersten Abschnitt (Punkt 1.) wird ein kurzer Theorieteil dargeboten, dessen Gegenstand der Sprichwortgebrauch in der Schule ist und damit verbunden der didaktische Wert des Sprichworts. Als zweiter Schritt folgt der Hauptteil dieser Arbeit, der empirische Teil. Hier werden zunächst konkrete Fragen gestellt und Arbeitshypothesen zu ihrer Überprüfung gebildet (Punkt 2.). Darauf folgt die Darstellung des methodischen Vorgehens (Punkt 3.) sowie die Darstellung und Interpretation der Ergebnisse (Punkt 4.). Abschließend werden die Ergebnisse der Untersuchung in Hinblick

auf den Sprichwortgebrauch von Kindern und Jugendlichen diskutiert und ein Ausblick gegeben (Punkt 5.).

1. Zum Sprichwortgebrauch in der Schule

Das Sprichwort hat eine lange Tradition in der Schule. Nach MATHILDE HAIN „[benutzte] [d]ie hellenistische Schule das Sprichwort in den sogenannten Scholien bei der Erklärung der griechischen Schriftsteller und Philosophen. Von dort aus ging die Wertschätzung des Sprichworts auf die mittelalterliche Klosterschule über [...]“ (1999, 28). Dort mussten die Schüler deutsche Sprichwörter als Sprachübung ins Lateinische übersetzen. Durch die Übersetzungsübungen der Schüler wurde „die mittelalterliche Schule ein wichtiger Überlieferungsträger antiken und deutschen Spruchgutes“ (ebd.). Nach LUTZ RÖHRICH/ WOLFGANG MIEDER „[waren] [s]päter dann besonders erläuternde Aufsätze über einzelne Sprichwörter beliebt, wobei der Schüler eine detaillierte Gliederung und schließlich eine moralische Auslegung zu verfassen hatte. Schul- und Lehrbücher enthielten meist eine Reihe von Musteraufsätzen“ (1977, 105; s.a. SEILER 1922, 417). Diese sind SEILER zufolge „Muster dafür, wie Sprichwörter durch aufsatzmäßige Behandlung unerträglich breit getreten und durch einseitiges, an den Haaren herbeigezogenes Moralisieren verwässert und entstellt werden können“ (1922, 417). SEILER kritisiert diese pedantische Sprichwörterauslegung scharf und plädiert nachvollziehbar für Arbeitsthemen, die ein wirkliches Interesse am Sprichwort bei den Schülern wecken (vgl. ebd., 417–445). Es bleibt nicht bei der bloßen Forderung. SEILER macht selbst Vorschläge für eine sinnvollere Behandlung von Sprichwörtern im Unterricht. RÖHRICH/ MIEDER fassen einige seiner vorgeschlagenen Arbeitsthemen zusammen: „Schüler [können] Sprichwörter und deren Funktion in literarischen Werken herausarbeiten, sie können Sprichwörter verschiedener Sachgebiete sammeln, Sprach- und Stilstudien betreiben, Geschichten zu Sprichwörtern erfinden, [...], Vergleiche mit Sprichwörtern anderer Sprachen anstellen etc.“ (1977, 105). Die Schule hat sich in den vergangenen acht Jahrzehnten stark verändert, ebenso der Sprichwortgebrauch. Trotzdem sind SEILERS Arbeitsansätze so fortschrittlich, dass sie noch heute Verwendung finden.

Sprichwörter sind in den aktuellen Rahmenplänen der Regionalschulen in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern nicht erwähnt und sind

damit nicht zwangsläufig Gegenstand des Deutschunterrichts. Allerdings wird der didaktische Wert des Sprichworts, also die Frage, inwiefern es ein wichtiger Lehrinhalt für Schüler ist, seit mindestens 180 Jahren und bis heute erörtert (vgl. WULFF 1990, 49–68). WANDER war nicht bloß ein großartiger Sprichwortsammler und -forscher, er „gehört zu den bedeutendsten Pädagogen unseres Volkes im neunzehnten Jahrhundert“ (HOHENDORF 1979, 9). Als Lehrer und Sprichwortsammler erstellte er die erste Sprichwörter-sammlung (‘Weihnachtsnüsse’) für Kinder (1832) (ebd., 19). Nach WANDER enthält unser ‚Sprichwörterschatz‘ alle „Erziehungsregeln. [...] Sie enthalten die Hauptgrundsätze, tausendmal bewährt, in bündiger Kürze und können das Abc der *Erziehungskunst* genannt werden“ (WANDER 1979, 351). MIEDER fasst zusammen: „Sprichwörter galten ihm vor allem als pädagogisches Werkzeug für den Volksschulunterricht, und in seinen muttersprachlichen Lehrbüchern kam er immer wieder auf dieses volks-sprachliche Lehrmittel zurück“ (MIEDER 1983, xiii). WANDER richtet einige Worte über die Sprichwörter an die Kinder. Er sagt, die Kinder würden in diesen ‚Nüssen‘ überall mindestens einen Kern finden und weiter: „*Diese* Nüsse werden Eurem Verstande Nahrung, Eurem Urteile Schärfe geben, sie werden Eurem Scharfsinn und Witze ein wahrer Turnplatz sein“ (WANDER 1979, 330). An diesen Worten WANDERS erkennt man, welchen großen Wert er dem Sprichwort als Bildungsmittel zumisst. Die Funktionen des Sprichworts als Erziehungs- und Bildungsmittel sind nicht abzustreiten, jedoch können aus heutiger Sicht weniger Sprichwörter WANDERS Anspruch, zu höherer Wahrheit und reinerer Erkenntnis zu führen, genüge tun (vgl. ebd., 355).

Obwohl Sprichwörter nicht durch die aktuellen Rahmenpläne gefordert werden, sind sie doch oft Gegenstand des Deutschunterrichts. Eine Einheit zu Sprichwörtern kann kurz gehalten und bei Bedarf spielerisch gestaltet werden. Sprichwörter sind für den Deutschlehrer ein sehr dankbares Thema. Inwiefern zeigt u. a. GÜNTHER HAMPEL. Er stellt sieben Argumente auf, die für die Behandlung des Sprichworts im Deutschunterricht sprechen (vgl. HAMPEL 1999, 91–120). Mit seinem ersten Argument übernimmt er einen der Hauptargumentationspunkte von WANDER und SEILER, die die Autorität des Sprichworts u. a. darin erkennen, dass es Volksgut und Erbgut der Vorfahren ist (vgl. SEILER 1922, 414).

Bei HAMPEL heißt es: „*Man kann mit ihm zeigen, was volkstümliches Überlieferungsgut ist*“ (1999, 91). Gleichzeitig kann man die soziale und kommunikative Kompetenz der Schüler stärken, indem man sie zum Beispiel mit ihren Eltern und Großeltern ins Gespräch bringt. Darüber hinaus „*[kann] [m]an zeigen, daß und wie das Sprichwort in fremden Sprachen, Völkern und Kulturen verbreitet ist*“ (ebd., 92). Hier bietet das Sprichwort eine besondere Möglichkeit, Kindern mit Migrationshintergrund eine rege Beteiligung am Unterricht zu ermöglichen. Weiterhin können nach HAMPEL Möglichkeiten fachübergreifenden und fächerverbindenden Lernens mit der unterrichtlichen Behandlung des Sprichworts erprobt und genutzt werden (ebd.). Zum Beispiel könnten lateinische oder auch religiöse Sprichwörter betrachtet werden, aber auch Sprichwörtliches in der Musik (s. dazu COLE 2007, 1–24; GUTMANN 2007, 177–194) oder in Bildern (Kunst). Mit dem folgenden Argument greift HAMPEL den lehrhaften Charakter des Sprichworts, den auch WANDER deutlich herausgestellt hat, auf: „*Man kann den didaktischen Wert des Sprichwortes für die Erziehung der Schüler nutzen*“ (1999, 93). BERND WOLLENWEBER, der die Gedanken SEILERS 50 Jahre später weiterführt, formuliert das folgende Ziel: „*Der Schüler soll lernen, die veränderte historische Lage zu erkennen und daraus dem Sprichwort entsprechende oder widersprechende Strategien des Handelns zu formulieren*“ (WOLLENWEBER – z. n. WULFF 1990, 56). D. h., Sprichwörter sollen unter kritischen Gesichtspunkten gesammelt und beurteilt werden. Durch die Stellungnahme zu bedenklichen Sprichwörtern wird nach WOLLENWEBERS Ansicht auch das Handeln der Schüler beeinflusst: „*Richtiges Verhalten in Konfliktlagen kann durch Sprichwörter nahegebracht, falsches Verhalten an ihnen verdeutlicht werden*“ (Ebd.). Auch MIEDER/ DEBORAH HOLMES, die ein Schuljahr lang Sprichwörter in den Unterricht einer vierten Klasse eingebunden haben, sind überzeugt, dass Sprichwörter das Verhalten der Schüler positiv beeinflussen (vgl. MIEDER/ HOLMES 2000). Das Lieblingssprichwort ihrer Schüler ist die sogenannte ‚goldene Regel‘: *Was du nicht willst, was man dir tut, das füg auch keinem andern zu* (vgl. ebd., 198; s. a. WITTMER 2007, 63–82).

HAMPEL sieht den Umgang mit dem Sprichwort, dieser dichterischen Kleinform, außerdem als ‚Motivator‘ für die Beschäftigung mit anspruchsvollere Literatur und formuliert dazu: „*Man*

kann durch das Sprichwort zugleich die Freude an der Literatur, an ihrem Erlebnis- und Unterhaltungswert, erfahren und vermitteln lernen“ (1999, 93). Für sein letztes Argument macht HAMPEL sich die Bildhaftigkeit als wesentliches Gestaltungsmerkmal des Sprichworts zu Eigen: „Das Sprichwort bietet in seiner bildhaften Rede Anlaß und Gelegenheit, in seiner literarischen Darstellungsweise Grundformen menschlicher Rede- und Ausdrucksweise als Antwort auf die Wahrnehmungsweise der Welt zu reflektieren und zu begreifen“ (ebd., 94). HAMPELS zweites Argument, „[m]an kann auf induktivem Wege eine Beschreibung und Bestimmung der Eigenart der literarischen Form leisten“ (Ebd., 92), wurde bewusst übersprungen. HAMPEL bezieht sich hierbei explizit auf Schüler der Sek 2 oder „besonders leistungsfähige[...] Klassen am Ende der Sek 1“, welche mit Definitionen des Sprichworts konfrontiert werden sollen, damit „ein besseres Verständnis literaturwissenschaftlicher Terminologie erreicht [wird]“ (ebd.).

KARLHEINZ DANIELS präferiert Aufgabenstellungen, die die Kommunikationssituation berücksichtigen (vgl. WULFF 1990, 57). Dabei kann das Sprichwort zum Beispiel als besonderes, strategisches Redemittel in Gesprächen untersucht werden. Aber auch Beobachtungen wie unterschiedliche metasprachliche Hinweise oder Kommentare können in diesem Zusammenhang untersucht werden (vgl. LÜGER 1999, 117–120).

Abschließend bleibt zu wiederholen, dass das Sprichwort eine lange Tradition in der Schule hat. Neben den dargestellten didaktischen Aspekten bringt das Sprichwort in Hinblick auf den ‚modernen‘ Sprichwortgebrauch ein großes Potenzial an möglichen Aufgaben für die Schüler mit sich. Die vielen Arbeitsmittel, die den Lehrern zum Thema Sprichwort zur Verfügung stehen, machen das Thema für die Lehrer dankbar und sorgen dafür, dass der Umgang mit Sprichwörtern vielen Schülern Spaß bereitet (vgl. MIEDER/ HOLMES 2000, 208f.). Es ist zulässig zu sagen, dass das Sprichwort von großem Wert für die Schüler ist und es wäre durchaus gerechtfertigt, es in die Rahmenpläne mit aufzunehmen. Nach MIEDER/ HOLMES verdient es das Sprichwort gelehrt zu werden (vgl. ebd., 47). Eine mögliche Kritik wäre, dass es ‚wichtigeren‘ Lehrstoff gibt, doch schon SEILER stellte fest: „Wer die Pflege des [...] Sprichworts auf deutschen Schulen befürwortet, der braucht keine Vermehrung der deutschen Stunden zu verlan-

gen, der will auch den übrigen Unterrichtsgebieten des Fachs [...] keine Zeit und Kraft entziehen. [...] Also nicht etwa eine systematische Sprichwörterkunde auf Schulen, wohl aber eine dauernde Föhlung mit dem Sprichwort“ (1922, 414).

2. Empirische Untersuchung

Die Fragestellung dieser Arbeit, ob Sprichwörter heutzutage im Gebrauch von Kindern und Jugendlichen sind, wird für die empirische Untersuchung spezifiziert. Es werden vier konkrete Fragen formuliert. Im nächsten Schritt werden Arbeitshypothesen aufgestellt, mit denen die Fragestellungen überprüft werden.

2.1. Fragestellungen und Arbeitshypothesen

Fragestellungen dieser empirischen Untersuchung sind folgende:

1. Kennen Kinder und Jugendliche allgemein bekannte Sprichwörter?
2. Sind bei Kindern und Jugendlichen Antisprichwörter oder Sprichwortneubildungen geläufig?
3. Gibt es einen Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch zwischen Jungen und Mädchen?
4. Gibt es einen Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch zwischen Schölern der fünften, siebten und neunten Klassenstufe bzw. Kindern und Jugendlichen unterschiedlichen Alters?

Die Frage, inwiefern das Elternhaus oder das engere (verwandtschaftliche) Umfeld der Kinder und Jugendlichen den Sprichwortgebrauch beeinflusst, kann im Rahmen dieser Studie leider nicht gestellt werden. Eine entsprechende Befragung könnte lediglich innerhalb einer umfangreicheren Studie geleistet werden.

Ebenso findet die Frage, ob es einen Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch zwischen nativen Sprechern und Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund gibt, keine Berücksichtigung.

Zur Überprüfung der vier Fragestellungen werden vier Arbeitshypothesen aufgestellt:

Arbeitshypothese 1: Der Großteil der erfragten Sprichwörter ist bei den Schölern bekannt und zitierbar.

Arbeitshypothese 2: Bei den Schölern sind Antisprichwörter und Sprichwortneubildungen geläufig.

Arbeitshypothese 3: Es gibt einen offensichtlichen² Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch zwischen Jungen und Mädchen.

Arbeitshypothese 4: Es gibt einen Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch zwischen Schülern der fünften, siebten und neunten Klassenstufe. Schüler der neunten Klassenstufe zeigen die größte Kenntnis von Sprichwörtern. Je älter die Schüler sind, desto größer ist ihre Kenntnis von Sprichwörtern.

3. Darstellung des Vorgehens

3.1. Versuchsplan

Zur Überprüfung der Fragestellungen und der Hypothesen sollen Schüler der Klassenstufen fünf, sieben und neun befragt werden. Es sollen jeweils drei Klassen an einer Regionalschule der Hansestadt Rostock befragt werden. Die Befragung findet einmalig in einer Klasse statt.

Zur Überprüfung der Ergebnisse wird die Befragung zusätzlich in zwei Kontrollgruppen³ durchgeführt.

3.2. Erhebungsmaterialien

Zur Datenerhebung wird ein Fragebogen benutzt, der speziell für diese Studie entwickelt wurde. Insgesamt umfasst der Bogen fünf Aufgaben, die im Folgenden dargestellt und erläutert werden.

Aufgabe 1 ist eine Multiple-Choice-Aufgabe, mit der die Kenntnis des Sprichworts nicht allgemein, sondern präzise erfasst wird. Abgefragt wird in dieser Aufgabe das Sprichwort *Es ist nicht alles Gold, was glänzt*.

Die Schüler sollen das richtige Ende des Sprichworts aus vier Antwortmöglichkeiten auswählen:

- Es ist nicht alles Gold, was
- a) glitzert.
 - b) funkelt.
 - c) glänzt.
 - d) glüht.

Die Lösung *glänzt* ist durch das Sprichwort vorgegeben. Die drei Distraktoren (,glitzert‘, ‚funkelt‘ und ‚glüht‘) wurden unter Berücksichtigung des Lösungswortes *glänzt* und nach Kriterien der semantischen, visuellen und phonologischen Ähnlichkeit ausgewählt:

- a) glitzert: semantische, visuelle und phonologische Ähnlichkeit
- b) funkelt: semantische Ähnlichkeit
- c) glüht: visuelle und phonologische Ähnlichkeit

Aufgabe 2 ist eine Ergänzungsaufgabe. Die Schüler haben die Aufgabe fünf Sprichwörter zu vervollständigen. Den Schülern werden keine Lösungsvorschläge gegeben. Mit dieser Aufgabe wird die Kenntnis der Sprichwörter abgefragt. Es handelt sich dabei um folgende Sprichwörter:

- a) Wer A sagt, muss auch B sagen.
- b) Hochmut kommt vor dem Fall.
- c) Lügen haben kurze Beine.
- d) Übung macht den Meister.
- e) Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund.

Aufgabe 3 wird in 3a und 3b gegliedert. Die Grundaufgabe ist zunächst gleich. Es werden zwei Bilder gezeigt, die ein Sprichwort darstellen. Die Schüler werden gefragt, welches Sprichwort das jeweilige Bild zeigt. Die Bildlichkeit als zentrales Merkmal des Sprichworts wird hier zur Darstellungsform erhoben.

In Aufgabe 3a geht es um das Sprichwort *Ein blindes Huhn findet auch mal ein Korn*.

Es wird davon ausgegangen, dass dieses Sprichwort bei den meisten Schülern bekannt ist.



Im Gegensatz dazu handelt es sich bei dem in Aufgabe 3b erfragten Sprichwort *Man soll das Kind nicht mit dem Bade ausschütten* um ein sehr altes und weniger geläufiges. Aus diesem Grund wird die Aufgabenstellung erweitert. Die Schüler sollen, sofern sie nicht wissen, um welches Sprichwort es sich handelt, das Bild beschreiben.

Abbildung 1: Ein blindes Huhn findet auch mal ein Korn (Aufgabe 3a)

Aufgabe 4 ist eine Wahlaufgabe. Die Schüler sollen sich eins von zwei Sprichwörtern aussuchen und dessen Bedeutung kurz erläutern.

Zur Auswahl stehen die Sprichwörter *Wer zuerst kommt, mahlt zuerst* und *Wer andern eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein*.

In **Aufgabe 5** sollen drei weitere Sprichwörter genannt werden.



Abbildung 2: Man soll das Kind nicht mit dem Bade ausschütten (Aufgabe 3b)

3.3. Durchführung der Untersuchung

3.3.1. Stichprobe

In der vorliegenden Untersuchung wurden insgesamt 200 Schüler der fünften, siebten und neunten Klassenstufe dreier Regionalschulen in Rostock befragt. Sie stellen die Gesamtstichprobe der Untersuchung dar. Diese wird für die Untersuchung in drei Stichproben (Klassenstufe 5, 7 und 9) unterteilt. Einen genauen Überblick bietet Tabelle 1.

Tabelle 1: Darstellung des Stichprobenumfangs und der teilnehmenden Schulen

Regionalschule	Schülerfrequenz (Jungen/ Mädchen)		
	Klassenstufe 5	Kassenstufe 7	Klassenstufe 9
Heinrich-Schütz-Schule (Reutershagen)	28 (21/ 7)	19 (16/ 3)	18 (12/ 6)
Ehm-Welk-Schule (E-vershagen)	27 (17/ 10)	20 (8/ 12)	13 (8/ 5)
Nordlichtschule (Lichtenhagen)	22 (14/ 8)	20 (10/ 10)	16 (6/ 10) 17 (10/ 7)
Stichproben	77 (52/ 25)	59 (34/ 25)	64 (36/ 28)
Gesamtstichprobe	200 (122/ 78)		

Die Datenerhebung fand im Juni 2010 statt. Dieser Zeitraum war nicht optimal, da die neunten Klassen Abschlussprüfungen hatten. Die Schülerfrequenzen der neunten Klassen waren verglichen mit den fünften und auch siebten Klassen sehr gering. Um das Frequenzverhältnis auszugleichen, wurde eine vierte neunte Klasse befragt und in die Stichprobe aufgenommen.

3.3.2. *Methodische Überlegungen zur Auswertung*

Die Auswertung der Fragebögen erfolgt manuell. Es liegt keine bestimmte Auswertungshilfe vor. Für alle Aufgaben gilt, dass die Ergebnisse in Prozent angegeben werden. Dabei stellt die Teilnehmerzahl der jeweilig betrachteten Stichprobe 100 Prozent dar. Bei dem Vergleich der Ergebnisse von Jungen und Mädchen stellt jeweils die Anzahl der Jungen bzw. Mädchen 100 Prozent dar. Sämtliche Prozentwerte dieser Studie werden mit einer Stelle hinter dem Komma angegeben und ggf. entsprechend gerundet.

3.3.2.1. *Aufgabe 1*

Bei der Multiple-Choice-Aufgabe gibt es vier Antwortmöglichkeiten. Es wird für jede Stichprobe in Prozent errechnet, wie viele Schüler Antwort a, b, c oder d angekreuzt haben. Wenn keine oder mehrere Antworten gegeben wurden, wird das als fünfte ‚Antwortmöglichkeit‘ gezählt.

3.3.2.2. *Aufgabe 2*

Aufgabe 2 wird in 2a, 2b, 2c usw. unterteilt und unter den Kriterien richtig oder falsch bewertet. Ist die Ergänzung im Wortlaut nicht korrekt, aber in der Bedeutung gleichbleibend, wird die Antwort als falsch gewertet. Es wird für jede Stichprobe in Prozent dargestellt, wie viele Schüler die richtige bzw. falsche Antwort gegeben haben. Wenn keine Antwort gegeben wurde, wird dies als falsch gewertet.

3.3.2.3. *Aufgabe 3*

Die Antworten zu Aufgabe 3a werden den folgenden Kategorien zugeordnet: richtig, erkennbar, geraten (falsches Sprichwort), keine Antwort. Die Ergebnisse werden auch für diese Aufgabe prozentual für jede Stichprobe errechnet und angegeben.

Aufgabe 3b wird nach den Kategorien richtig oder falsch bewertet, wobei hier eine Ausnahme gemacht wird. Obwohl MIEDER die Redensart *Das Kind mit dem Bade ausschütten* als „äußerst populär“ darstellt (1995, 161), wurde das Sprichwort in 3.2. als

weniger geläufig bezeichnet. Aufgrund der Annahme, dass weder die Redensart noch das Sprichwort heutzutage von Kindern und Jugendlichen verwendet wird bzw. nicht bekannt ist, wurde einerseits die Aufgabenstellung erweitert und wird andererseits neben dem Sprichwort auch der Verbal-Ausdruck als richtig gewertet.

3.3.2.4. Aufgabe 4

Da Aufgabe 4 eine Wahlaufgabe ist, wird sie unter zwei Aspekten ausgewertet. Zum einen wird geguckt, welches Sprichwort gewählt wurde. Zum anderen, ob dieses richtig oder falsch erklärt wurde. Das Sprichwort kann sowohl durch ein konkretes Beispiel als auch durch das ihm zugrunde liegende Modell erklärt werden. Wenn beide Sprichwörter erklärt werden, wird lediglich die erste Antwort gezählt

3.3.2.5. Aufgabe 5

Die Auswertung dieser Aufgabe unterscheidet sich in einem wichtigen Punkt. Im Sinne der zweiten Fragestellung werden nicht nur ‚echte‘ Sprichwörter betrachtet. Es werden auch Antisprichwörter und Ausdrücke, die der Form und Struktur des Sprichworts entsprechen (Sprichwortneubildungen), gezählt. Das Verständnis, was ein Sprichwort ist, wird **für diese Aufgabe** entsprechend modifiziert.

Gefragt wird in der Aufgabe nach drei weiteren Sprichwörtern. Zunächst wird geguckt, ob ein, zwei, drei oder kein Sprichwort genannt wurde. Wenn es sich erkennbar um ‚echte‘ Sprichwörter handelt, werden lediglich richtige gezählt. Das heißt, wenn ein Schüler drei Sprichwörter nennt, wovon nur zwei korrekt sind, werden nur zwei als genannt gezählt. Zum Beispiel *Wer im Glashaushaus sitzt, sollte nicht mit Steinen* würde nicht gezählt werden. Wenn Sprichwörter, die in einer der anderen Aufgaben bereits erfragt wurden, angegeben werden, werden diese als falsch gewertet. Falls Schüler statt eines Sprichworts eine sprichwörtliche Redensart genannt haben, wird diese im Sinne der Aufgabe ebenso als falsch gewertet und nicht mitgezählt. Obwohl angenommen wird, dass nur wenigen Schülern die Differenzierung zwischen einem Sprichwort und einer sprichwörtlichen Redensart gegenwärtig ist.

Es wird für die gezählten Sprichwörter eine Rangliste erstellt. In dieser Liste werden die Häufigkeit der Nennung, die Nummer

des Sprichworts und das Sprichwort angegeben. Jedes Sprichwort wird einmal genannt. Variationen werden durch Klammern gekennzeichnet. Die Liste beginnt mit dem am häufigsten genannten Sprichwort. Für den Vergleich der Stichprobenergebnisse wird eine Rangliste der Gesamtstichprobe erstellt.

Aus Raumgründen werden unter Punkt 5. jeweils die zehn häufigsten Sprichwörter aufgeführt, die jedoch mindestens zweimal genannt wurden.

4. Darstellung und Interpretation der Ergebnisse

Im Folgenden werden die Ergebnisse der Stichproben dargestellt und interpretiert. Für die Aufgaben eins bis einschließlich vier werden die Ergebnisse der jeweiligen Stichprobe insgesamt und nach Geschlechtern getrennt betrachtet. An dieser Stelle muss darauf hingewiesen werden, dass insbesondere das Zahlenverhältnis von Jungen und Mädchen der fünften Klassenstufe und der Gesamtstichprobe ungünstig ist. Die Anzahl der Jungen ist generell größer. Für Aufgabe fünf wird auf die getrennte Betrachtung von Jungen und Mädchen aus zwei Gründen verzichtet. Zum einen, weil die Auswertung insgesamt weniger konkret im empirischen Sinne ist als bei den vorangestellten Aufgaben (vgl. 3.3.2.5.); zum anderen, weil die Aufgabe, da sie den Schülern ohne Vorbereitung gestellt wird, die Problematik mit sich bringt, dass nicht jedem Schüler auf Anhieb weitere Sprichwörter einfallen, obwohl er sicher noch weitere kennt. In Aufgabe fünf geht es darum, die genannten Sprichwörter, Antisprichwörter und Ausdrücke, die in Form und Struktur einem Sprichwort entsprechen, darzubieten.

4.1. Darstellung und Interpretation der Ergebnisse von Klassenstufe 5

Die Stichprobe der Klassenstufe fünf besteht aus 77 Schülern. Darunter sind 52 Jungen und 25 Mädchen. Das durchschnittliche Alter der Stichprobe beträgt 11,2 Jahre.

4.1.1. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 1

Die folgende Tabelle zeigt die Ergebnisse von Klassenstufe fünf insgesamt und nach Geschlechtern getrennt.

Tabelle 2: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 1 – Klassenstufe 5

Antwort	a	b	c (richtig)	d	keine oder mehrere
Prozent (alle Schüler)	15,6	19,5	51,9	7,8	5,2
Prozent (Jungen)	15,4	21,1	51,9	5,8	5,8
Prozent (Mädchen)	16	16	52	12	4

Mit 51,9 Prozent hat knapp über die Hälfte der Schüler die Multiple-Choice-Aufgabe richtig gelöst und damit gezeigt, dass sie das erfragte Sprichwort genau kennt. 15,6 und 19,5 Prozent wählten einen Distraktor mit semantischer Ähnlichkeit, wodurch der Sinngehalt des Sprichworts erhalten bleibt. Die Antwort *Es ist nicht alles Gold, was glüht* ist am wenigsten korrekt. Sie wurde von 7,8 Prozent der Schüler gewählt. Die verbleibenden 5,2 Prozent gaben keine oder mehrere Lösungen an.

Es gibt bei Aufgabe 1 keinen offensichtlichen Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch zwischen Jungen und Mädchen (vgl. Anmerkung 2).

4.1.2. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 2

In der folgenden Tabelle werden die Ergebnisse von Klassenstufe fünf insgesamt und nach Geschlecht getrennt dargestellt.

Tabelle 3: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 2 – Klassenstufe 5

Aufgabe 2 (richtig)	Alle Schüler (%)	Jungen (%)	Mädchen (%)
a	83,1	80,8	88
b	22,1	26,9	12
c	72,7	65,4	80
d	72,7	73,1	72
e	23,4	17,3	36

Bei den Ergebnissen der Ergänzungsaufgaben ist es augenfällig, dass eine größere Anzahl der Schüler Aufgabe 2a, 2c und 2d, im Gegensatz zu Aufgabe 2b und 2e, richtig vervollständigt hat. Das Sprichwort *Wer A sagt, muss auch B sagen* kennen 83,1 Prozent der Fünftklässler. Jeweils 72,7 Prozent der Schüler kennen die Sprichwörter *Lügen haben kurze Beine* und *Übung macht den Meister*. Diese drei Sprichwörter haben einen lehrhaften Charakter inne. Ihre Bekanntheit bei den Schülern ist durchaus durch die

Annahme zu erklären, dass die Schüler sie als ‚Erziehungsmittel‘ erfahren haben.

Es gibt eine Auffälligkeit bei den Ergebnissen von Aufgabe 2c und 2d, die sich in der Tabelle nicht darstellt, da für die Auswertung schlicht zwischen richtig und falsch unterschieden wurde. Das in Aufgabe 2c erfragte Sprichwort *Lügen haben [...] lange Beine* wurde von vier Schülern dieser Stichprobe (5,2 %) mit der Ergänzung „lange Beine“ vervollständigt. In einem Fall lautete die Ergänzung „kleine Beine“. Hier wird deutlich, dass auch diesen fünf Schülern das Sprichwort bekannt ist. ‚Kleine Beine‘ steht der richtigen Lösung ‚kurze Beine‘ am nächsten. Der Sinngehalt des Sprichworts bleibt erhalten. ‚Lange Beine‘ hingegen kehren den Sinn des Sprichworts ins Gegenteil. Lügen, die lange Beine haben, kommen weit(er). Weiterhin wurde Aufgabe 2c durch unterschiedliche Erfahrungswerte der Schüler ergänzt. Nach 5,2 Prozent der Schüler haben Lügen „kein (gutes) Ende“. Jeweils ein Schüler (1,3 %) ergänzte „Rügen“, „Folgen“ und „Grenzen“.

Bei Aufgabe 2d wurden für den zu ergänzenden Teil (‚Übung‘) einige Varianten gewählt, die ebenfalls darauf schließen lassen, dass auch diesen Schülern das Sprichwort bekannt ist. 10,4 Prozent ergänzten „Üben“, 3,9 Prozent „Arbeit“ und 1,3 Prozent „Lernen“.

Die Sprichwörter *Hochmut kommt vor dem Fall* (Aufgabe 2b) und *Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund* (Aufgabe 2e) sind bei den Schülern relativ unbekannt. In diesen Fällen gibt es auch keine nennenswerten Varianten, die darauf schließen lassen, dass die Sprichwörter doch bekannt sind. *Hochmut kommt vor dem Fall* stammt aus dem Alten Testament (Spr 16, 18). Es ist ein altes Sprichwort und entspricht ebenso wie *Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund* offenbar nicht dem alltäglichen Wortschatz eines Fünftklässlers. Durch die Unwahrscheinlichkeit, dass die Wörter *Hochmut* und *Morgenstund* zum Sprachgebrauch der Schüler gehören, erklärt sich auch die Unkenntnis der Sprichwörter.

Bei Aufgabe 2b sind die Jungen offensichtlich besser (14,9 %). Der festgelegte Grenzwert von 12 Prozent wurde überschritten. Die Abweichungen von 14,6 Prozent bei Aufgabe 2c und 18,7 Prozent bei Aufgabe 2e sind zugunsten der Mädchen.

4.1.3. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 3

Die Tabelle zeigt die Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 3a für die Stichprobe insgesamt und nach Geschlecht getrennt.

Tabelle 4: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 3a – Klassenstufe 5

Antwort	richtig	erkennbar	geraten	keine Antwort
Alle Schüler (%)	14,3	5,2	5,2	75,3
Jungen (%)	13,5	3,8	1,9	80,8
Mädchen (%)	16	8	12	64

Der Höchstwert beträgt 75,3 Prozent. Die Anzahl der Schüler, die gar keine Antwort gegeben haben, beträgt demnach knapp über ein Drittel der Stichprobe. 14,3 Prozent haben das Sprichwort richtig genannt und bei 5,2 Prozent war es erkennbar. Als ‚erkennbar‘ gelten zum Beispiel Antworten wie „Auch ein blinder Vogel findet einen Korn“ oder „Auch ein blindes Küken erntet mal ein Korn“.

Es gibt keinen offensichtlichen Unterschied zwischen den Ergebnissen der Jungen und Mädchen.

4.1.4. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 4

Die Tabelle stellt dar, welche Aufgabe gewählt wurde und wie viele Schüler das jeweils erfragte Sprichwort richtig erklärt haben bzw. wie viele Schüler keine Antwort gegeben haben. Die Tabelle zeigt sowohl die Gesamtergebnisse der Klassenstufe als auch die Ergebnisse der Jungen (J) und Mädchen (M) dieser Stichprobe.

Tabelle 5: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 4 – Klassenstufe 5

Wahlaufgabe	a			b			Keine Antwort		
	Alle	J	M	Alle	J	M	Alle	J	M
Gewählt (%)	36,4	38,5	32	29,9	21,1	48	33,7	40,4	20
Richtig erklärt (%)	92,9	95	87,5	60,9	45,5	75	---	---	---
Falsch erklärt (%)	7,1	5	12,5	39,1	54,5	25	---	---	---

Ungefähr ein Drittel der Stichprobe hat jeweils Aufgabe a oder Aufgabe b gewählt bzw. keine Antwort gegeben. Wobei die Tendenz zu Aufgabe a geht. Aufgabe a wurde im Vergleich von mehr Schülern (32 %) richtig erklärt und insgesamt von 92,9 Prozent.

60,9 Prozent der Schüler, die Aufgabe b gewählt haben, erklärten das erfragte Sprichwort richtig.

Ein offensichtlicher Unterschied zwischen den Ergebnissen der Jungen und Mädchen besteht bei Aufgabe 4b. Es haben mehr Mädchen das Sprichwort *Wer andern eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein* richtig erklärt (29,5 %).

4.1.5. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 5

Die folgende Tabelle zeigt, wie viele weitere Sprichwörter die Schüler bei Aufgabe 5 genannt haben.

Tabelle 6: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 5 – Klassenstufe 5

Antwort	Keine	1	2	3
Richtig Gegeben (%)	49,3	29,9	15,6	5,2

Etwa die Hälfte (49,3 %) der Schüler nannte kein weiteres Sprichwort. 29,9 Prozent nannten eins. 5,2 Prozent konnten drei weitere Sprichwörter nennen.

Die folgende Tabelle zeigt die zehn am häufigsten genannten Sprichwörter dieser Stichprobe.

Tabelle 7: Rangliste der in Aufgabe 5 genannten Sprichwörter (Stichprobe Klassenstufe 5) – Top 10

4(6)=10	1.	Wer einmal lügt, dem glaubt man nicht, auch (selbst) wenn er dann die Wahrheit spricht)
7	2.	Ohne Fleiß kein Preis
6	3.	Wer zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten
4	4.	Übermut tut selten gut
3	5.	Der frühe Vogel fängt den Wurm
3	6.	Was du heute kannst besorgen, (das) verschiebe nicht auf morgen
2	7.	Der Apfel fällt nicht weit vom Stamm
2	8.	Erst die Arbeit, dann das Vergnügen
2	9.	Es ist noch kein (nie ein) Meister vom Himmel gefallen
2	10.	Wie gewonnen, so zerronnen

Die Rangliste der zehn am häufigsten genannten Sprichwörter zeigt, dass die Schüler weitere (allgemein bekannte) Sprichwörter kennen. Unter den Top 10 sind keine Antisprichwörter oder gar neu gebildete Sprichwörter. An erster Stelle steht eines der längeren Sprichwörter *Wer einmal lügt, dem glaubt man nicht, auch wenn er dann die Wahrheit spricht*. Dabei wurde das Sprichwort

auch viermal in verkürzter Form genannt. Insgesamt wurden in dieser Klassenstufe 28 verschiedene Ausdrücke genannt.

Darunter wurden auch Antisprichwörter (4) und eine Sprichwortneubildung genannt. Ein Beispiel für ein Antisprichwort ist das einmalig genannte „Hochmut kommt selten gut“. Hier wurden zwei Sprichwörter miteinander gemischt (*Hochmut kommt vor dem Fall* und *Übermut tut selten gut*). Zudem wurde als Sprichwort „Wer Cola trinkt, bekommt schwarze Füße“ genannt. Der Ausdruck entspricht nach Form und Struktur einem Sprichwort, ist aber sicherlich nicht als volksläufig zu betrachten. Aus unterschiedlichen Internetseiten geht hervor, dass Eltern oder Erzieher Kindern erzählen, man würde vom Cola-Trinken schwarze Füße bekommen. Obwohl diese Aussage nicht der Wahrheit entspricht, könnte man sagen, dass der Ausdruck das Potenzial zum Sprichwort hat. Ob das zu befürworten ist, ist eine andere Frage.

4.1.6. Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse von Klassenstufe 5

Die Ergebnisse der fünf Aufgaben zeigen, dass Kinder und Jugendliche allgemein bekannte Sprichwörter kennen und zitieren können. Aus Aufgabe fünf wird ersichtlich, dass die Fünftklässler auch Antisprichwörter sowie eine Sprichwortneubildung kennen. Der Anteil an ‚echten‘ Sprichwörtern überwiegt deutlich.

Zum Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch zwischen Jungen und Mädchen kann nur begrenzt Stellung genommen werden. Insgesamt sind die Mädchen dieser Stichprobe in Aufgabe 2 und 4 offensichtlich stärker, wobei die Jungen bei Aufgabe 2b stärker sind. Bei Aufgabe 3 gibt es keinen offensichtlichen Unterschied.

Arbeitshypothese 1 und 2 können für die fünfte Klassenstufe angenommen werden. Arbeitshypothese 3 nur in eingeschränkter Form. Unterschiede gibt es nur bei zwei Aufgaben tendenziell zugunsten der Mädchen und generell ist die Stichprobe zu gering. Die Ergebnisse müssten mit einer größeren Stichprobe und gleicher Jungen- und Mädchenfrequenz kontrolliert werden.

4.2. Darstellung und Interpretation der Ergebnisse von Klassenstufe 7

Die Stichprobe der Klassenstufe sieben besteht aus 59 Schülern. Darunter sind 34 Jungen und 25 Mädchen. Das durchschnittliche Alter dieser Stichprobe beträgt 13,5 Jahre.

4.2.1. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 1

Die folgende Tabelle zeigt die Ergebnisse von Klassenstufe sieben insgesamt und getrennt nach Geschlecht.

Tabelle 8: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 1 – Klassenstufe 7

Antwort	a	b	c (richtig)	d	keine oder mehrere
Prozent (alle Schüler)	10,2	6,8	79,6	3,4	0
Prozent (Jungen)	11,8	8,8	79,4	0	0
Prozent (Mädchen)	8	4	80	8	0

Insgesamt 79,6 Prozent der Siebtklässler wählten das Lösungswort. Es fällt auf, dass kein Schüler keine oder mehrere Antworten angekreuzt hat. Der Distraktor a, der dem Lösungswort am ähnlichsten ist, wurde mit 10,2 Prozent am zweithäufigsten gewählt.

Es gibt keinen offensichtlichen Unterschied zwischen den Ergebnissen der Jungen und Mädchen.

4.2.2. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 2

In der folgenden Tabelle werden die Ergebnisse von Klassenstufe sieben insgesamt und nach Geschlecht getrennt dargestellt.

Tabelle 9: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 2 – Klassenstufe 7

Aufgabe 2 (richtig)	Alle Schüler (%)	Jungen (%)	Mädchen (%)
a	86,4	82,4	92
b	57,6	52,9	64
c	71,2	64,7	80
d	83,1	82,4	84
e	40,7	35,3	52

Aufgabe 2a und 2d sind von mehr als 80 Prozent der Schüler richtig vervollständigt worden. Aufgabe 2c von 71,2 Prozent. Immerhin 57,6 Prozent der Schüler kennen das Sprichwort *Hochmut*

kommt vor dem Fall (2b). Es fällt auf, dass das in Aufgabe 2e erfragte Sprichwort am wenigsten bekannt ist (40,7 %).

In dieser Stichprobe gibt es wie in der fünften Klassenstufe einige Häufungen von Ergänzungen. 15,3 Prozent der Schüler ergänzten Aufgabe 2c mit „lange Beine“. Ein Schüler (1,7 %) gab „schnelle Beine“ an. Diesen Schülern ist das Sprichwort offensichtlich bekannt. Weiterhin wurde jeweils einmal „Nachteile“ und „Strafen“ genannt.

Auch bei Aufgabe 2d gibt es Auffälligkeiten. Jeweils 3,4 Prozent der Schüler ergänzten „Üben“ bzw. „Lernen“, 1,7 Prozent „Arbeit“. Es ist anzunehmen, dass diese Schüler das Sprichwort auch kennen, da der Sinngehalt erhalten bleibt. Zwei weitere Ergänzungen sind ebenfalls nennenswert. Es handelt sich um parodistische Variationen des Sprichworts *Übung macht den Meister*. Einmal wurde statt „Übung“ „Kleister“ ergänzt und einmal „Der Maler“. In dieser Form kann man die entstandenen Sprichwörter als Antisprichwörter anerkennen. Inwiefern diese Parodien beabsichtigt, Zufallsprodukt, oder ob sie bei den betreffenden Schülern geläufig waren, bleibt Spekulation.

Die relevanten Abweichungen im Vergleich der Ergebnisse der Jungen und Mädchen liegen zugunsten der Mädchen. Die Differenzen betragen 15,3 Prozent bei Aufgabe 2c und 16,7 Prozent bei Aufgabe 2e.

4.2.3. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 3

In der folgenden Tabelle werden die Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 3a von Klassenstufe sieben insgesamt und nach Geschlecht getrennt dargestellt.

Tabelle 10: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 3a – Klassenstufe 7

Antwort	richtig	erkennbar	geraten	keine Antwort
Prozent (alle Schüler)	37,3	11,9	3,4	47,4
Prozent (Jungen)	41,2	11,8	2,9	44,1
Prozent (Mädchen)	32	12	4	52

Der Wert 37,3 Prozent spiegelt den Anteil richtiger Antworten wider. Bei weiteren 11,9 Prozent war das Sprichwort erkennbar. 47,4 Prozent der Schülerantworten konnten nicht gewertet werden.

Es gibt keinen offensichtlichen Unterschied zwischen den Ergebnissen der Jungen und Mädchen.

4.2.4. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 4

Die Tabelle stellt dar, welche Aufgabe gewählt wurde und wie viele Schüler das jeweils erfragte Sprichwort richtig erklärt haben bzw. wie viele Schüler keine Antwort gegeben haben. Die Tabelle zeigt einerseits die Ergebnisse für die gesamte Klassenstufe sieben und andererseits die Ergebnisse der Jungen und Mädchen der Stichprobe.

Tabelle 11: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 4 – Klassenstufe 7

Wahlaufgabe	a			b			Keine Antwort		
	Alle	J	M	Alle	J	M	Alle	J	M
Gewählt (%)	39	50	24	42,4	35,3	52	18,6		
Richtig erklärt (%)	95,7	100	83,3	92	91,7	92,3	---	---	---
Falsch erklärt (%)	4,3	0	16,7	8	8,3	7,7	---	---	---

Die Auswahl der beiden Aufgaben ist mit 39 und 42,4 Prozent relativ ausgewogen. Ebenso die prozentualen Anteile der richtigen Erklärungen. 18,6 Prozent der Schüler gaben keine Antwort.

Ungefähr doppelt so viele Jungen wie Mädchen wählten Aufgabe a. 100 Prozent der Jungen, die Aufgabe a wählten, erklärte das Sprichwort richtig. Die Abweichung zum Ergebnis der Mädchen beträgt 16,7 Prozent zugunsten der Jungen. Bei Aufgabe 4b gibt es keinen offensichtlichen Unterschied.

4.2.5. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 5

In der Tabelle wird dargestellt, wie viele weitere Sprichwörter die Schüler in Aufgabe 5 genannt haben.

Tabelle 12: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 5 – Klassenstufe 7

Antwort	Keine	1	2	3
Gegeben (%)	33,9	20,3	23,7	22,1

33,9 Prozent der Schüler nannten kein weiteres Sprichwort. Die Nennungen von ein, zwei oder drei Sprichwörtern sind prozentual relativ ausgewogen.

Die folgende Tabelle zeigt die zehn am häufigsten genannten Sprichwörter dieser Stichprobe.

Tabelle 13: Rangliste der in Aufgabe 5 genannten Sprichwörter (Stichprobe Klassenstufe 7) – Top 10

8	1.	Wer im Glashaus sitzt, sollte nicht mit Steinen werfen
6	2.	Was du heute kannst besorgen, (das) verschiebe nicht auf morgen
6	3.	Der frühe Vogel fängt den Wurm
5	4.	Wer zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten
5	5.	Übermut tut selten gut
4	6.	Hunde, die bellen, beißen nicht
4	7.	Der Apfel fällt nicht weit vom Stamm
4	8.	Zeit ist Geld
4	9.	Was sich liebt, das neckt sich
3	10.	Jeder ist seines Glückes Schmied

Bei der Betrachtung der zehn am häufigsten genannten Sprichwörter fällt auf, dass es sich um allgemein bekannte Sprichwörter handelt. Die Schüler kennen demnach weitere ‚echte‘ Sprichwörter (27). Nennen aber außerdem einige Antisprichwörter (7). Zum Beispiel „Schweigen ist Silber, Reden ist Gold“ wird als Antisprichwort auch in KUN HWAN KIMS Studie genannt (1999, 98). Weiterhin werden zwei Antisprichwörter genannt, die auf dasselbe Sprichwort (*Wer zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten*) zurückgehen: „Wer zuletzt lacht, denkt zu langsam“, „Wer zuletzt lacht, hat es nicht eher begriffen“. MIEDER zufolge, ist zumindest die Variante *Wer zuletzt lacht, hat es nicht eher begriffen* mittlerweile als ‚echtes‘ Sprichwort zu zählen (2006, 208f.).

4.2.6. Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse von Klassenstufe 7

Die Ergebnisse der fünf Aufgaben zeigen, dass die Jugendlichen allgemein bekannte Sprichwörter kennen und zitieren können. Aus Aufgabe fünf wird ersichtlich, dass die Siebtklässler auch Antisprichwörter kennen. Der Anteil an ‚echten‘ Sprichwörtern überwiegt.

In Hinblick auf Aufgabe 2 und 4 gibt es einen Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch zwischen Jungen und Mädchen. Bei beiden Aufgaben sind die Mädchen stärker.

Arbeitshypothese 1 und 2 können für die siebte Klassenstufe angenommen werden. Arbeitshypothese 3 kann für Aufgabe 2 und 4 zugunsten der Mädchen angenommen werden. Die Ergebnisse müssten insgesamt aber durch eine größere Stichprobe kontrolliert werden.

4.3. Darstellung und Interpretation der Ergebnisse von Klassenstufe 9

Die Stichprobe der Klassenstufe neun besteht aus 64 Schülern. Darunter sind 36 Jungen und 28 Mädchen. Das durchschnittliche Alter dieser Stichprobe beträgt 15,8 Jahre.

4.3.1. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 1

Die folgende Tabelle zeigt die Ergebnisse von Klassenstufe neun insgesamt und nach Geschlecht getrennt.

Tabelle 14: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 1 – Klassenstufe 9

Antwort	a	b	c (richtig)	d	keine oder mehrere
Prozent (alle Schüler)	0	3,1	93,7	1,6	1,6
Prozent (Jungen)	0	2,8	97,2	0	0
Prozent (Mädchen)	0	3,6	89,2	3,6	3,6

93,7 Prozent der Neuntklässler wählten die richtige Antwort c und beweisen damit ihre präzise Kenntnis des Sprichworts *Es ist nicht alles Gold, was glänzt*. Antwort a, die der Lösung am ähnlichsten ist, wurde gar nicht angekreuzt. Wobei die Werte von 1,6 bis 3,1 Prozent generell sehr niedrig sind.

Die größte Abweichung zwischen den Ergebnissen der Jungen und Mädchen dieser Stichprobe beträgt 8 Prozent und wird nicht als offensichtlich gewertet.

4.3.2. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 2

In der folgenden Tabelle werden die Ergebnisse von Klassenstufe neun insgesamt und nach Geschlecht getrennt dargestellt.

Tabelle 15: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 2 – Klassenstufe 9

Aufgabe 2 (richtig)	Alle Schüler (%)	Jungen (%)	Mädchen (%)
a	82,8	86,1	78,6
b	53,1	61,1	42,9
c	79,7	80,6	78,6
d	71,9	75	67,9
e	51,6	58,3	42,9

Aufgabe 2a wurde von den meisten Schülern (82,8 %) richtig ergänzt. 79,7 Prozent der Schüler haben Aufgabe 2c richtig. Daran schließt sich das Ergebnis von Aufgabe 2d mit 71,9 Prozent. Aufgabe 2b und 2e sind jeweils mit etwas über 50 Prozent richtig vervollständigt worden.

9,4 Prozent der Neuntklässler ergänzten Aufgabe 2c mit „lange Beine“. In dieser Klassenstufe gab es bei dieser Aufgabe keine weiteren auffälligen Ergänzungen. Aufgabe 2d wurde mit „Üben“ (3,1 %), „Arbeit“ (3,1 %) und „Training“ (1,6 %) ergänzt.

Aufgrund dieser Ergänzungen lässt sich sowohl für Aufgabe 2c als auch für 2d annehmen, dass die Schüler das erfragte Sprichwort kennen.

Es gibt zwei relevante Abweichungen zugunsten der Jungen. Zum einen 18,2 Prozent bei Aufgabe 2b, zum anderen 15,4 Prozent bei Aufgabe 2e.

4.3.3. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 3

Die folgende Tabelle zeigt die Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 3a von Klassenstufe neun insgesamt und nach Geschlecht getrennt.

Tabelle 16: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 3a – Klassenstufe 9

Antwort	richtig	erkennbar	geraten	keine Antwort
Prozent (alle Schüler)	50	6,3	3,1	40,6
Prozent (Jungen)	55,6	8,3	5,6	30,5
Prozent (Mädchen)	42,9	3,6	0	53,5

Die Hälfte der Schüler hat die Aufgabe richtig gelöst. Bei 6,3 Prozent war das erfragte Sprichwort erkennbar. 40,6 Prozent der Schüler gaben keine Antwort.

Mit 55,6 Prozent haben mehr Jungen das richtige Sprichwort genannt als Mädchen (42,9 %). Der Unterschied ist offensichtlich, da er 12 Prozent übersteigt (12,7 %).

4.3.4. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 4

Die Tabelle stellt dar, welche Aufgabe gewählt wurde und wie viele Schüler das jeweils erfragte Sprichwort richtig erklärt haben bzw. wie viele Schüler keine Antwort gegeben haben. Die Tabelle zeigt die Ergebnisse der gesamten Klassenstufe und die Ergebnisse der Jungen und Mädchen dieser Stichprobe.

Tabelle 17: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 4 – Klassenstufe 9

Wahlaufgabe	a			b			Keine Antwort		
	Alle	J	M	Alle	J	M	Alle	J	M
Gewählt (%)	62,5	77,8	42,9	26,6	13,9	42,9	10,9		
Richtig erklärt (%)	90	89,3	91,7	82,4	100	75	---	---	---
Falsch erklärt (%)	10	10,7	8,3	17,6	0	25	---	---	---

Es besteht eine Differenz von 35,9 Prozent bei der Wahl der Aufgabe. 62,5 Prozent der Schüler entschieden sich für Aufgabe a. 90 Prozent der Schüler, die Aufgabe a gewählt haben, erklärten das Sprichwort richtig. Das in Aufgabe b erfragte Sprichwort wurde von 82,4 Prozent der Schüler richtig erklärt. 10,9 Prozent der Schüler gaben keine Antwort.

Das Sprichwort in Aufgabe 4b wurde von 100 Prozent der Jungen richtig erklärt. Die Differenz zu den Mädchen beträgt 25 Prozent und ist damit offensichtlich zugunsten der Jungen. Bei Aufgabe 4a gibt es keinen offensichtlichen Unterschied.

4.3.5. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 5

In der Tabelle wird dargestellt, wie viele weitere Sprichwörter die Schüler in Aufgabe 5 genannt haben.

Tabelle 18: Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 5 – Klassenstufe 9

Antwort	Keine	1	2	3
Gegeben (%)	34,4	35,9	14,1	15,6

35,9 Prozent der Schüler nannten ein Sprichwort, 34,4 Prozent keins. Die prozentualen Werte für die Nennung von zwei und drei weiteren Sprichwörtern sind annähernd gleich.

Die folgende Tabelle zeigt die zehn am häufigsten genannten Sprichwörter dieser Stichprobe.

Tabelle 19: Rangliste der in Aufgabe 5 genannten Sprichwörter (Stichprobe Klassenstufe 9) Top 10

7	1.	Der Apfel fällt nicht weit vom Stamm
6	2.	Der frühe Vogel fängt den Wurm
5	3.	Was du heute kannst besorgen, (das) verschiebe nicht auf morgen
4	4.	Wer im Glashaus sitzt, sollte nicht mit Steinen werfen

3	5.	(So) wie man in den Wald ruft (schreit), (so) schallt es auch wieder heraus
3	6.	Es ist noch kein (nie ein) Meister vom Himmel gefallen
3	7.	Reden ist Silber, Schweigen ist Gold
3	8.	Wer zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten
2	9.	Bellende Hunde beißen nicht
2	10.	Einem geschenkten Gaul, schaut man nicht ins Maul
2	11.	Lieber den Spatz in der Hand als die Taube auf dem Dach
2	12.	Ohne Fleiß kein Preis
2	13.	Weggegangen Platz gefangen
2	14.	Wer andern eine Bratwurst brät, hat ein Bratwurstbratgerät

Bei den zehn am häufigsten genannten Sprichwörtern handelt es sich größten Teils um allgemein bekannte Sprichwörter, aber auch um zwei Antisprichwörter. In der gesamten Rangliste wurden noch weitere Antisprichwörter (3) genannt. Insgesamt wurden 39 verschiedene Ausdrücke genannt.

Darunter auch ein Wetterspruchwort: „Kräht der Hahn auf dem Mist, ändert sich das Wetter oder bleibt wie es ist“. Auffällig ist außerdem das Sprichwort „Je langsamer du fährst, desto weiter kommst du“. Der Schüler, der dieses Sprichwort nannte, gab an, zu Hause russisch zu sprechen. Bei dem Sprichwort handelt es sich um ein russisches, ins Deutsche übersetzte, Sprichwort (vgl. GRZYBEK 2000, 157).

Interessant ist auch das Sprichwort „Nicht verzagen, Duden fragen“. Es stammt zweifellos aus dem Kontext Schule und ist in dieser Form eher ein Merksatz. Es lässt sich hier die Formel *Nicht verzagen, X fragen* herleiten. In der Tat kann die Variable X sowohl durch Personen als auch durch Objekte ersetzt werden. Bei der Suchmaschine ‚Google‘ sind zahlreiche Belege dafür zu finden, dass die Formel als Werbeslogan für alles Mögliche benutzt wird.

In einer neunten Klasse wurde mehrfach „Fliegen wie ein Schmetterling, stechen wie eine Biene“ genannt. Hierbei handelt es sich um ein Zitat des Boxers MUHAMMED ALI. Es handelt sich bei diesem Ausdruck um ein geflügeltes Wort. Es wurde daher nicht in die Rangliste aufgenommen.

4.3.6. Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse von Klassenstufe 9

Die Ergebnisse der fünf Aufgaben zeigen, dass die Jugendlichen allgemein bekannte Sprichwörter kennen und zitieren können. Aus Aufgabe fünf wird ersichtlich, dass die Neuntklässler auch Antisprichwörter kennen. Der Anteil an ‚echten‘ Sprichwörtern überwiegt.

Bei Aufgabe 1 gibt es keinen offensichtlichen Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch zwischen Jungen und Mädchen. Bei Aufgabe 2, 3 und 4 sind die Jungen tendenziell stärker.

Arbeitshypothese 1 und 2 können für die neunte Klassenstufe angenommen werden. Arbeitshypothese 3 kann zugunsten der Jungen angenommen werden.

Die Ergebnisse sollten durch eine größere Stichprobe überprüft werden.

4.4. Vergleich der Ergebnisse und Interpretation

Zwischen den Ergebnissen der siebten und neunten Klassenstufe kann insgesamt nicht überzeugend differenziert werden. Aus diesem Grund wird der Vergleich der Schüler unterschiedlichen Alters für die Aufgaben eins bis vier auf die Ergebnisse der fünften und neunten Klassenstufe begrenzt. Der Vergleich der Ergebnisse der Jungen und Mädchen bezieht sich jedoch stets auf die Gesamtstichprobe.

4.4.1. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 1

Die Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 1 werden zum Vergleich in einem Balkendiagramm dargestellt.

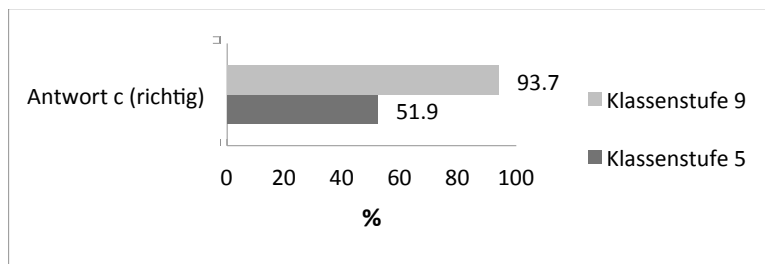


Abbildung 3: Ergebnisse der drei Stichproben von Aufgabe 1

Bei der Betrachtung der Ergebnisse fällt auf, dass die Differenz zwischen der fünften und neunten Klassenstufe mit 41,8 Prozent

offensichtlich ist. Der prozentuale Anteil an richtigen Antworten steigt mit der Klassenstufe (dem Alter).

Beim Geschlechtervergleich der Gesamtstichprobe (122 Jungen/ 78 Mädchen) ist kein offensichtlicher Unterschied bei den Ergebnissen der Jungen (72,9 %) und Mädchen (74,3 %) erkennbar.

4.4.2. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 2

Das Diagramm zeigt die Ergebnisse der zwei Stichproben im Vergleich.

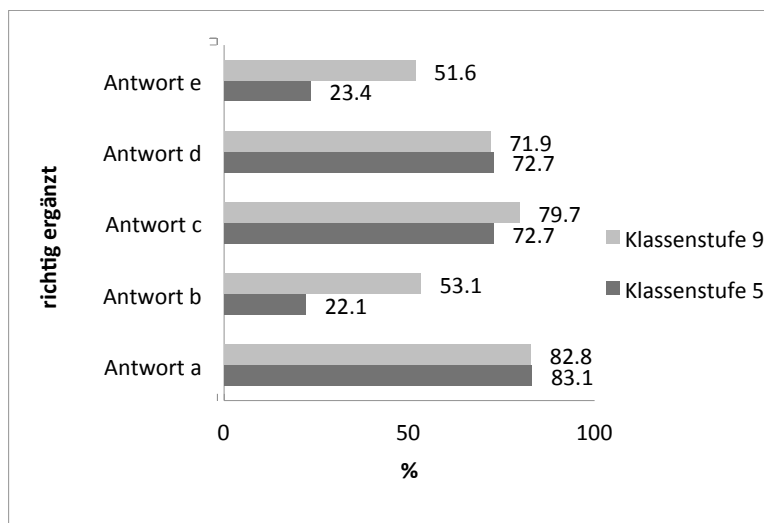


Abbildung 4: Ergebnisse der Klassenstufen 5 und 9 von Aufgabe 2

Es zeichnet sich deutlich ab, dass die in Aufgabe 2b und 2e erfragten Sprichwörter weniger bekannt sind als die in Aufgabe 2a, 2c und 2d erfragten. *Wer A sagt, muss auch B sagen* (Antwort a) ist in beiden Klassenstufen das bekannteste Sprichwort. Die Werte stimmen nahezu überein (83,1 %, 82,8 %). Bei dem Sprichwort *Hochmut kommt vor dem Fall* (Antwort b) ist die Abweichung von der fünften (22,1 %) zur neunten (53,1 %) Klassenstufe offensichtlich. Die Ergebnisse bei Aufgabe 2c sind gut und relativ ausgewogen (72,7 %, 79,7 %). Die Neuntklässler sind hier etwas besser. Aufgabe 2d haben fast gleichviele Fünft- und Neuntklässler

richtig vervollständigt. Das in Aufgabe 2e erfragte Sprichwort ist insgesamt am wenigsten bekannt. *Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund* kennen 23,4 Prozent der Fünftklässler und 51,6 Prozent der Neuntklässler. Bei dieser Aufgabe steigt die Kenntnis des Sprichworts insgesamt mit dem Alter der Schüler.

Bei der Interpretation der Ergebnisse der einzelnen Stichproben wurde auf Ergänzungen bei Aufgabe 2c und 2d hingewiesen, die darauf schließen lassen, dass mehr Schülern die jeweils erfragten Sprichwörter bekannt sind als die Prozentwerte zeigen. In der Gesamtstichprobe dieser Untersuchung haben insgesamt 9,5 Prozent der Schüler ‚lange Beine‘ als Lösung für Aufgabe 2c ergänzt. Deshalb wird auf die Frage eingegangen, ob *Lügen haben lange Beine* allgemein bekannt ist und ob es eine Erklärung für diese lexikalische Änderung im Sprichwort gibt.

Drei Belege sprechen dafür, dass *Lügen haben lange Beine* mittlerweile als volksläufig betrachtet werden kann. Erstens die Tatsache, dass es in dieser Untersuchung in den unterschiedlichen Klassenstufen und an jeder der drei Schulen genannt wurde. Zweitens wurde diese Variante auch zweimal in Kontrollgruppe A dieser Studie genannt. Der dritte Beleg ist der einmalige Nachweis in der Studie von KIM, der die von Deutschen am häufigsten genannten Sprichwörter analysierte (1999, 99). Die Häufigkeit dieser Variante in den unterschiedlichen Studien ist zwar relativ gering, doch scheinbar tritt sie immer wieder auf, in unterschiedlichen Altersstufen und Regionen. Die Frage ist, ob die Variante als Parodie (Antispruchwort) oder einfach als Variante des Sprichworts *Lügen haben kurze Beine* betrachtet werden sollte. Dass der Sinn des Sprichworts ins Gegenteil verkehrt wird, spricht für ein Antispruchwort. Allerdings lässt sich die Entstehung der Variante auch anders erklären. Bei den zwei Fällen in Kontrollgruppe A³ wurde nachgehakt. Als die beiden Personen das Sprichwort *Lügen haben kurze Beine* hörten, schien es ihnen wie Schuppen von den Augen zu fallen. Sie wussten selbst keine Erklärung dafür, dass sie ‚lange Beine‘ ergänzt hatten. Sie haben das Sprichwort nicht bewusst parodiert. Das sich der Sinn des Sprichworts verändert hat, ist ihnen nicht aufgefallen. Die beiden wurden anschließend gefragt, ob sie das Sprichwort mit Pinocchio assoziieren. Denn es gab mehrere Fälle bei der Erprobung des Erhebungsmaterials und einen in der Klassenstufe 7 für die Variante *Lügen haben lange Nasen*.⁴ Dies war nicht der Fall. Eine zweite Überlegung war, dass

Lügen haben lange Beine durch die Gleichklänge flüssiger klingt. Die zwei Befragten waren sich unabhängig voneinander einig, dass die Sprichwortvariante tatsächlich runder klinge. Obwohl sie das Sprichwort kannten, fiel ihnen nicht auf, dass sie eine Variante benutzen. Aus diesen Aussagen kann man ableiten, dass sich die Metapher in einem Sprichwort verändern kann, ohne dass sie ihre ursprüngliche Bedeutung verliert.

Es folgt der Vergleich der Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 2 getrennt nach Jungen und Mädchen.

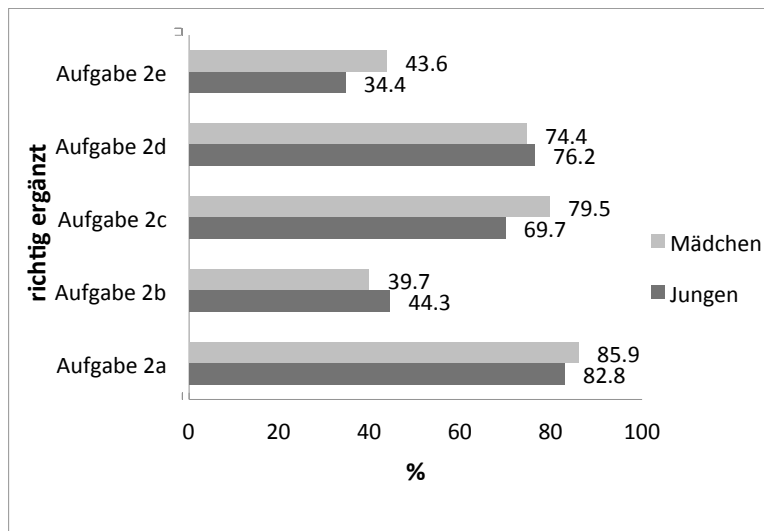


Abbildung 5: Vergleich der Ergebnisse der Jungen und Mädchen der Gesamtstichprobe bei Aufgabe 2

Es gibt bei Aufgabe 2 keine Abweichungen zwischen den Ergebnissen der Jungen und Mädchen, die den angelegten Wert von 12 Prozent überschreiten und damit keine offensichtlichen Unterschiede. Es ist allerdings auffällig, dass die Differenzen bei Aufgabe 2c und 2e mit über neun Prozent deutlich höher sind, als die bei Aufgabe 2a, 2b und 2d. Unter Berücksichtigung der Ergebnisse der einzelnen Stichproben wird deutlich, dass bei Aufgabe 2c die Mädchen der Klassenstufen fünf und sieben deutlich stärker waren. Bei Klassenstufe neun gab es keine offensichtliche Diffe-

renz. Bei Aufgabe 2e waren zweimal die Mädchen und einmal die Jungen stärker. Insgesamt hat sich die höhere Anzahl der richtigen Ergebnisse der Mädchen zugunsten der Mädchen aufsummiert.

4.4.3. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 3

Das folgende Diagramm stellt dar, wie viele Schüler der fünften und neunten Klassenstufe bei Aufgabe 3a das richtige Sprichwort genannt haben.

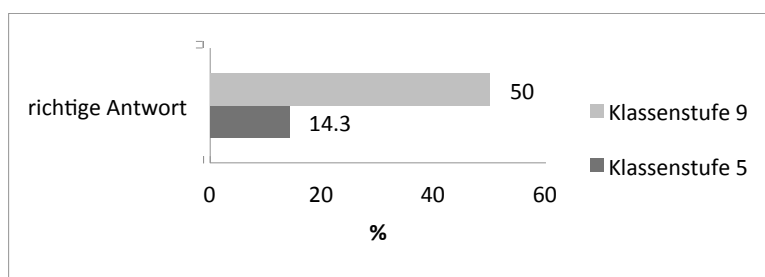


Abbildung 6: Vergleich der richtigen Antworten der Klassenstufen 5 und 9 von Aufgabe 3a

Das Diagramm veranschaulicht, dass die prozentualen Anteile der richtigen Antwort mit der Klassenstufe deutlich steigen.

Es besteht kein offensichtlicher Unterschied zwischen dem Ergebnis der Jungen (33,6 %) und Mädchen (30,7 %).

Aufgabe 3b wird lediglich für die Gesamtstichprobe betrachtet.

Tabelle 20: Ergebnis von Aufgabe 3b – Gesamtstichprobe

Antwort	richtig	falsch
Prozent	0	100

Aufgabe 3b wurde von keinem Schüler richtig gelöst. Damit entfällt der Ergebnisvergleich von Jungen und Mädchen. *Man soll das Kind nicht mit dem Bade ausschütten* ist bei den Kindern und Jugendlichen offensichtlich nicht geläufig. Einige Beschreibungen des Bildes, oft eingeleitet mit „Ich sehe“, entsprechen fast dem Wortlaut des Sprichworts. Die folgenden Beispiele stammen aus der siebten und neunten Klassenstufe: „Ich sehe eine Frau, wie sie ein Kind aus einem Korb schüttet“, „Auf dem Bild sehe ich eine Frau, die ihr Kind gebadet hat und danach wegschüttet“. Viele der Schüler haben das ‚Bild‘ des Sprichworts erkannt und richtig be-

schrieben. Dies zeigt deutlich, dass das Sprichwort nicht bekannt ist.

Vergleicht man dazu die Ergebnisse der Kontrollgruppen ist es auffällig, dass das Sprichwort auch bei den durchschnittlich 23,6-jährigen (Kontrollgruppe A) nicht sehr bekannt ist. Im Gegensatz dazu ist es bei der älteren Generation (Kontrollgruppe B)³ geläufig.

4.4.4. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 4

Das folgende Diagramm zeigt für die fünfte und neunte Klassenstufe, ob bei Aufgabe 4a oder b gewählt wurde und wie viel Prozent der Schüler das jeweils gewählte Sprichwort richtig erklärt haben.

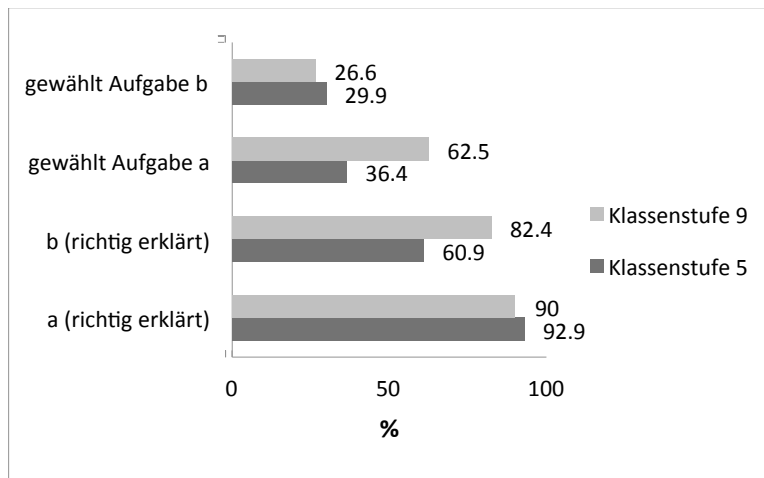


Abbildung 7: Vergleich der gewählten und richtig erklärten Sprichwörter der zwei Stichproben bei Aufgabe 4

Von den Schülern, die Aufgabe a gewählt haben, hat ein großer Anteil beider Klassenstufen das gewählte Sprichwort richtig erklärt. Die Abweichungen zwischen den zwei Klassenstufen sind minimal. Die Fünftklässler sind hier etwas stärker (92,9 %) als die Neuntklässler (90 %). Das Sprichwort aus Wahlaufgabe b wurde dagegen von mehr Neuntklässlern (82,4 %) richtig erklärt. Nur knapp über 60 Prozent der Fünftklässler hat das Sprichwort aus

Aufgabe 4b richtig erklärt. Die Differenzen zwischen den Klassenstufen sind bei Aufgabe 4b deutlicher als bei Aufgabe 4a.

Das gute Ergebnis der Fünftklässler bei Wahlaufgabe a ist damit zu erklären, dass der Großteil das Sprichwort *Wer zuerst kommt, mahlt zuerst* mit einem Beispiel erklärt hat. Offensichtlich kennen sie dieses Sprichwort im Zusammenhang mit Mahlzeiten bzw. Essen. Am häufigsten waren Beispiele wie „Wer zuerst zum Essen kommt, bekommt am meisten oder das beste“. Der hohe Anteil dieser richtigen Erklärungen lässt darauf schließen, dass dieses Sprichwort bei den Schülern nicht nur gekannt, sondern auch verwendet wird.

Es folgt der Vergleich der Ergebnisse der Jungen und Mädchen der Gesamtstichprobe.

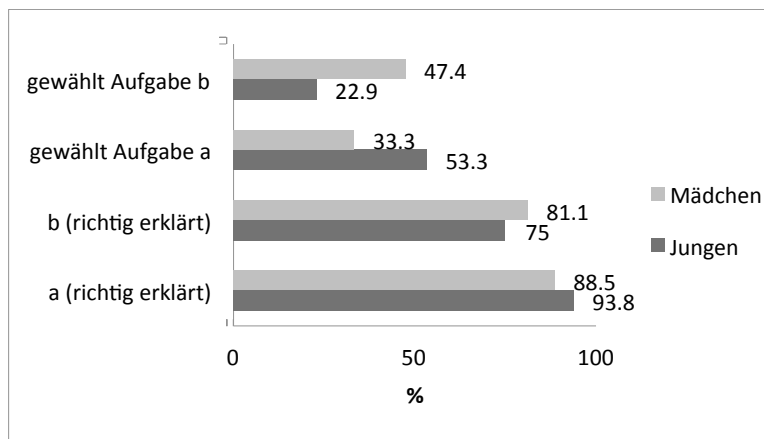


Abbildung 8: Vergleich der richtig erklärten Sprichwörter der Jungen und Mädchen der Gesamtstichprobe bei Aufgabe 4

Es gibt keine offensichtlichen Unterschiede bei den Ergebnissen der Jungen und Mädchen. Die Abweichungen bei den einzelnen Klassenstufen haben sich in Hinblick auf die Gesamtstichprobe angenähert.

4.4.5. Ergebnisse von Aufgabe 5

Das Diagramm zeigt wie viele weitere Sprichwörter in den einzelnen Stichproben bei Aufgabe fünf genannt wurden. Bei dem

Ergebnisvergleich dieser Aufgabe werden alle drei Klassenstufen berücksichtigt.

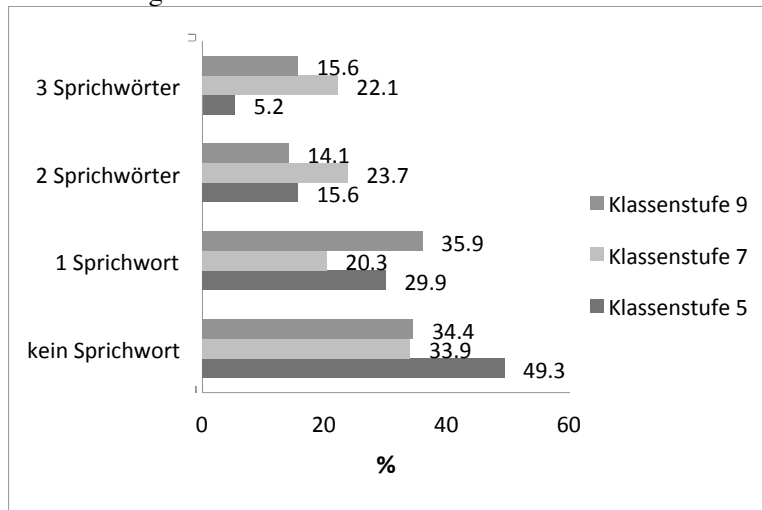


Abbildung 9: Vergleich der Anzahl genannter Sprichwörter bei Aufgabe 5

In der siebten Klassenstufe konnten die meisten Schüler drei weitere Sprichwörter nennen (22,1 %), in der fünften Klassenstufe die wenigsten (5,2 %). Zwei Sprichwörter konnten ebenfalls die meisten Siebtklässler nennen (23,7 %). 15,6 Prozent der Fünftklässler und 14,1 Prozent der Neuntklässler nannten zwei weitere Sprichwörter. Die Prozentwerte der Fünft- und Neuntklässler sind annähernd gleich. Die meisten Neuntklässler (35,9 %) nannten ein weiteres Sprichwort. Die Siebtklässler (20,3 %) liegen hierbei knapp hinter den Fünftklässlern (29,9 %). Mit 49,3 Prozent konnten die meisten Fünftklässler kein weiteres Sprichwort nennen. Die Werte von Klassenstufe sieben und neun sind nahezu ausgewogen. Insgesamt haben die Schüler der siebten Klassenstufe die meisten und die Fünftklässler die wenigsten Sprichwörter genannt.

Die Kontrollgruppen wussten im Verhältnis mehr Sprichwörter. In Kontrollgruppe A hat lediglich eine Person kein weiteres Sprichwort genannt und in Kontrollgruppe B hat jede Person mindestens eins genannt.

Die folgende Tabelle zeigt die zehn am häufigsten genannten Sprichwörter der Gesamtstichprobe.

Tabelle 21: Rangliste der in Aufgabe 5 genannten Sprichwörter (Gesamtstichprobe) – Top 10

15	1.	Der frühe Vogel fängt den Wurm
14	2.	Was du heute kannst besorgen, (das) verschiebe nicht auf morgen
14	3.	Wer zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten
13	4.	Der Apfel fällt nicht weit vom Stamm
13	5.	Wer im Glashaus sitzt, sollte nicht mit Steinen werfen
11	6.	Ohne Fleiß kein Preis
5(6) =11	7.	Wer einmal lügt, dem glaubt man nicht (, auch (selbst) wenn er dann die Wahrheit spricht)
10	8.	Übermut tut selten gut
5	9.	Es ist noch kein (nie ein) Meister vom Himmel gefallen
5	10.	Hunde, die bellen, beißen nicht
5	11.	Zeit ist Geld
4	12.	(So) wie man in den Wald ruft (schreit), (so) schallt es auch wieder heraus
4	13.	Was sich liebt, das neckt sich
4	14.	Wer andern eine Bratwurst brät, hat (selbst) ein Bratwurstbratgerät

Insgesamt wurden durch Mehrfachnennungen 205 Ausdrücke genannt, wovon 72 unterschiedliche sind. D. h., jeder der 200 Schüler kennt im Durchschnitt etwas über ein Sprichwort. Bei dem Großteil der genannten Ausdrücke handelt es sich um ‚echte‘ Sprichwörter, die allgemein bekannt sind. Insgesamt 25 der genannten Sprichwörter sind in mindestens einer der drei (Rang-)Listen bekannter deutscher Sprichwörter (vgl. Anmerkung 1) zu finden und gehören damit zum parömiologischen Minimum der deutschen Sprache. Zweifellos gehören noch weitere der genannten Sprichwörter zum Minimum. In KIMS Studie werden einige weitere Sprichwörter, die nicht in seiner Rangliste der 31 am häufigsten genannten Sprichwörter aufgeführt sind, und auch Antisprichwörter besprochen, die auch in dieser Studie genannt wurden (vgl. KIM 1999, 87–102).

HAIN hat beobachtet, dass „erst der Zehnjährige an[fängt], die Bilder seines Elternhauses selbstständig zu gebrauchen“ (1951, 94). Vergleicht man die Ranglisten der drei Klassenstufen, fällt auf, dass die Sprichwörter der Fünftklässler stark von ihrem autoritären Umfeld (Eltern, Schule) geprägt sind. Die Siebt- und Neuntklässler hingegen nennen mehr Sprichwörter, die mit modernen Medien in Verbindung zu bringen sind. Zum Beispiel: „Wer schön sein will, muss leiden“. Zudem nennen sie mehr Anti-

sprichwörter. Nach HAIN bildet sich in den Altersklassen von 15–20 ein gewisser Jargon heraus, der im bewussten Gegensatz zur Generation der Erwachsenen steht (vgl. ebd.). Heutzutage, jedenfalls in dieser Studie, scheint sich dieser Jargon bereits bei den im Durchschnitt 13,5-jährigen (Siebtklässlern) herauszubilden.

Aus der Rangliste der Gesamtstichprobe sollen einige Sprichwörter etwas genauer betrachtet werden.

Mit 15 Nennungen steht das aus dem englischen (angloamerikanischen) entlehnte Sprichwort *Der frühe Vogel fängt den Wurm* (vgl. MIEDER 2010, 285–296) an der Spitze der Rangliste der Gesamtstichprobe. Mit fünf Nennungen ist es ebenso das am häufigsten genannte Sprichwort in der Rangliste von Kontrollgruppe A. Das ist aus unterschiedlichen Gründen ein interessanter Befund. Das Sprichwort wird in keiner der drei Listen bekannter deutscher Sprichwörter (vgl. Anmerkung 1) genannt. Das Sprichwort *Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund* ist dagegen, so wird es in den unterschiedlichen Forschungsliteraturen immer wieder betont, eins der beliebtesten Sprichwörter der Deutschen. Nach der Studie, die MIEDER zitiert, ist es das bekannteste Sprichwort (vgl. 1992, 15f.). In KIMS Studie liegt es auf Rang zwei. Aufgrund dieser Ergebnisse hält MIEDER es für bewiesen, dass „dieses Sprichwort in der Tat in aller Munde ist, dass es den meisten Leuten egal welchen Alters, Sozialstandes oder Bildungsgrades bekannt ist, und dass es auch am häufigsten benutzt wird“ (MIEDER 1997, V.). Die Sprichwörter *Der frühe Vogel fängt den Wurm* und *Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund* (aus Aufgabe 2e) sind semantisch äquivalent. Bei der Betrachtung von Aufgabe 2e wurde deutlich, dass *Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund* von den in Aufgabe 2 erfragten Sprichwörtern bei den Schülern am wenigsten bekannt ist. Es ist somit ein faszinierender Befund, dass die Schüler das ehemals populärste Sprichwort im Prinzip nicht mehr kennen und stattdessen das deutsche Lehnwort benutzen. Das widerspricht allen früheren Frequenzstudien. MIEDER schreibt, dass das Sprichwort *Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund* nach einer weiteren Studie von 1999/ 2000 rund 17 Mal öfter genannt wurde als *Der frühe Vogel fängt den Wurm* und schlussfolgert daraus: „Anscheinend ist das *Morgenstunde*-Sprichwort noch nicht allzu sehr gefährdet, obwohl das *Vogel*-Sprichwort zweifelsohne im Vormarsch ist“ (MIEDER 2010, 288). Bei den 200 befragten Kindern und Jugendlichen

scheint das neuere Sprichwort der ‚Morgenstund‘ nun sprichwörtlich den Rang abgelaufen zu haben. Beteiligt an dieser Entwicklung ist sicherlich die Tatsache, dass „dieses englische Sprichwort dabei [ist], sich im Deutschen via Fernsehen zu etablieren“ (GÖTZ – z. n. MIEDER 2010, 288f.). Zudem ist mit *Der frühe Vogel kann mich mal* ein durch moderne Medien verbreitetes Antispruchwort im Umlauf, dass der Jugendsprache entspricht.

Abschließend wird auf das Antispruchwort *Wer andern eine Bratwurst brät, hat (selbst) ein Bratwurstbratgerät* eingegangen. Dieses Antispruchwort hat es unter die Top 10 der Rangliste der Gesamtstichprobe geschafft. An dieser Stelle muss auch das ebenfalls genannte Antispruchwort *Wer andern eine Grube gräbt, hat ein Grubengrabgerät* aufgeführt werden. Beide Antispruchwörter gehen auf das Sprichwort *Wer andern eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein* zurück. Es kann hier nicht eindeutig geklärt werden, ob die Antispruchwörter ‚nebeneinander‘ entstanden sind. Allerdings ist die Annahme, dass *Wer andern eine Grube gräbt, hat ein Grubengrabgerät* die Zwischenstufe zum *Bratwurst*-Sprichwort ist, zulässig. In jedem Fall spiegeln beide Parodien das Spiel mit der Sprache bzw. den Sprichwörtern wider.

4.4.6. Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse

Die Ergebnisse zeigen insgesamt, dass Kinder und Jugendliche allgemein bekannte Sprichwörter kennen und zitieren können. Aus Aufgabe fünf wird ersichtlich, dass ebenso Antispruchwörter geläufig sind. Außerdem wurden zwei neu gebildete Sprichwörter genannt. Der Anteil an ‚echten‘ Sprichwörtern überwiegt deutlich.

Die Arbeitshypothesen 1 und 2 können für die Gesamtstichprobe angenommen werden.

In Hinblick auf den Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch zwischen Jungen und Mädchen sind die Ergebnisse aufgrund der geringen Stichproben und des ungleichen Zahlenverhältnisses von Jungen und Mädchen weniger eindeutig und aussagekräftig. Die Vergleichsergebnisse von Aufgabe 2 lassen den Schluss zu, dass die Mädchen tendenziell eine größere Kenntnis von Sprichwörtern besitzen.

Arbeitshypothese 3 wird dennoch abgelehnt, weil lediglich eine Tendenz zugunsten der Mädchen nachzuweisen ist und kein offensichtlicher Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch zwischen Jungen und Mädchen besteht.

An dieser Stelle wird auch zum unterschiedlichen Sprichwortgebrauch von Schülern unterschiedlichen Alters Stellung genommen. Die Ergebnisse sind nicht so eindeutig wie erwartet. Im Vergleich mit den Kontrollgruppen zeichnet sich ab, dass die Kenntnis von Sprichwörtern umso größer ist, je älter die befragte Person ist. Für die befragten Fünft-, Siebt- und Neuntklässler lässt sich diese Beobachtung nicht so pauschal übernehmen. Obwohl die Fünftklässler bei einzelnen Aufgaben positiv hervorstechen (zum Beispiel bei Aufgabe 4a), ist ihre Kenntnis von Sprichwörtern insgesamt geringer als die der Siebt- und Neuntklässler. Zwischen den Siebt- und Neuntklässlern kann jedoch nicht überzeugend differenziert werden.

Arbeitshypothese 4 kann damit nur eingeschränkt angenommen werden. Es besteht kein offensichtlicher Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch von Schülern der siebten und neunten Klassenstufe. Fasst man die Altersstufe 13–16 jedoch zusammen und berücksichtigt die Ergebnisse der Kontrollgruppen, kann man sagen, dass die Hypothese stimmt. Je älter die Schüler sind, desto größer ist ihre Kenntnis von Sprichwörtern.

Insgesamt gilt, dass alle Ergebnisse durch eine größere Stichprobe kontrolliert werden müssten.

5. Diskussion und Ausblick

Das Vorgehen dieser Arbeit hat sich in zwei Schritte gegliedert. Es wurde zunächst der Sprichwortgebrauch in der Schule betrachtet. Im zweiten Schritt wurde der Sprichwortgebrauch von Kindern und Jugendlichen – Schülern der Hansestadt Rostock – untersucht.

Im Rahmen dieser Studie konnte dieser nur in Ansätzen erfasst werden. Deshalb muss explizit darauf hingewiesen werden, dass die Ergebnisse der hier vorgelegten Studie einen begrenzten Aussagewert haben.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen einerseits, dass die Schüler allgemein bekannte Sprichwörter kennen. Andererseits weisen manche Sprichworterklärungen (aus Aufgabe 4) und insbesondere die genannten Antisprichwörter darauf hin, dass die Schüler Sprichwörter auch aktiv verwenden. Durch die in Aufgabe 5 genannten Ausdrücke lässt sich das Schüler-Verständnis, was ein Sprichwort ist, ableiten. Es wurden zwar ein paar sprichwörtliche Redensarten

genannt, ein geflügeltes Wort und zwei längere Sprüche, die als falsch gewertet wurden, aber die Vielzahl waren Ausdrücke, die der Form und der Struktur eines Sprichworts entsprechen bzw. ‚echte‘ Sprichwörter sind. Das Verständnis der Schüler, was ein Sprichwort ist, kann im Großen und Ganzen als konventionell bezeichnet werden.

Der Gebrauch von Antisprichwörtern/ Sprichwortparodien ist ein Zeichen dafür, dass die Schüler mit Sprache spielen und zudem eine kreative Leistung.

Insbesondere mit Blick auf neue Antisprichwörter sollte es ein verstärktes Anliegen der Sprichwortforscher sein, den Sprichwortgebrauch von Kindern und Jugendlichen (sowie jungen Erwachsenen) zu erfassen. Diese Altersgruppe ist sicherlich ein reicher Nährboden für den Gebrauch und die Schöpfung von Sprichwortparodien und neuen Sprichwörtern.

Auch in dieser Studie gab es zwei Sprichwortneubildungen. Dabei ist die Volksläufigkeit sicherlich nicht nachzuweisen, aber nach Form und Struktur haben die Ausdrücke das Potenzial ein Sprichwort zu werden.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen und bestätigen insgesamt, dass Sprichwörter dynamisches Sprachgut sind und von Kindern und Jugendlichen gebraucht werden. Wenngleich sich abzeichnet, dass ältere Menschen eine größere Kenntnis von Sprichwörtern besitzen. Allerdings lässt sich über die Sprichwortkenntnis keine Aussage über die Häufigkeit der Verwendung ableiten.

In einer umfangreicheren Studie könnten und sollten mehr Hintergrundaspekte berücksichtigt werden. Die Ergebnisse aus Aufgabe 5 führen zu der Annahme, dass ältere Schüler eher Sprichwörter aus modernen Medien kennen als jüngere. Interessant wäre die Frage, woher die Schüler die genannten Sprichwörter tatsächlich kennen. Aufschlussreich wäre auch die Befragung der Eltern. Spiegeln die genannten Sprichwörter die Stimme der Eltern wider oder sind manche Sprichwörter, die Kinder und Jugendliche verwenden, bei ihren Eltern nicht bekannt? Ein besonderer Gesichtspunkt ist dabei auch die Betrachtung der genannten Sprichwörter von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund. Werden Sprichwörter aus der Fremdsprache von den Schülern ins Deutsche übertragen? Benutzen diese Schüler tendenziell Sprichwörter, die aus ihrer Sprache entlehnt sind oder deutsche?

Um Aussagen über den Gebrauchskontext zu erhalten, könnte man den Schülern freiere Aufgaben stellen. Zum Beispiel könnte man sie eine Geschichte zu einem Sprichwort schreiben lassen. Diese würde Aufschluss darüber geben, wie die Schüler das Sprichwort verstehen und in welchen Situationen und mit welcher Funktion sie sich seinen Gebrauch vorstellen. Allein diese Aufgabe würde in einer fünften Klasse tendenziell eine ganze Schulstunde einnehmen. Vor dem Hintergrund der Zeit sind sicherlich nicht nur einzelne Befragungen, sondern längerfristige Projekte wie das von MIEDER/ HOLMES interessant. Es fällt auf, dass hoch angesehene Sprichwortforscher wie WANDER, SEILER und MIEDER ein großes Interesse daran haben, Sprichwörter nicht nur zu erforschen, sondern auch zu lehren. Bei der didaktischen Reflexion wurde der Wert des Sprichworts für die Schule deutlich. Ein längerfristiges Projekt, das Sprichwörter und Schule verbindet, wäre für beide Seiten ein Gewinn.

Anmerkungen

¹Die Auswahl der in dieser Studie erfragten Sprichwörter beruht auf den Ergebnissen dreier Studien. Die erste von KLAUS HATTEMER/ ERWIN K. SCHEUCH namens *Sprichwörter - Einstellung und Verwendung* (1983) zitiert MIEDER. Es wurden 400 Personen gefragt, welches Sprichwort sie selbst häufiger verwenden, wenn sie mit anderen Leuten sprechen; vgl. MIEDER 1992, 15–17. Auf eine weitere Studie von RUPPRECHT S. BAUR/ CHRISTOPH CHLOSTA (1996), die zu ähnlichen Ergebnissen führte, verweist BURGER; vgl. BURGER 2010, 120–122. Dazu kommen die Ergebnisse einer dritten und neueren Studie, bei der 1322 Personen um die Notierung spontan einfallender Sprichwörter gebeten wurden; KIM 1999, 87–102.

²Um den Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch als offensichtlich bezeichnen zu können, muss eine Differenz von ≥ 12 Prozent zwischen den Ergebnissen von Jungen und Mädchen vorliegen. Dieser Wert wurde willkürlich gewählt und so hoch angesetzt, dass die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass der Unterschied auf Zufall basiert, ausgeschlossen ist. Ein Unterschied im Sprichwortgebrauch zwischen Jungen und Mädchen wird lediglich bei der richtigen Antwort untersucht.

³Kontrollgruppe A besteht aus 22 Personen. Das durchschnittliche Alter beträgt 23,6 Jahre. Kontrollgruppe B besteht aus elf Personen. Das durchschnittliche Alter beträgt 56,3 Jahre.

⁴Der Gedanke an Pinocchio erscheint relativ weit hergeholt zu sein, ist aber leicht zu erklären. RÖHRICH erklärt in seinem Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten: „So sagen auch die Eltern zu ihren Kindern: ‚Ich sehe dir an der Nase an, daß du lügst‘; RÖHRICH 1994, Bd.3, 1082. Durch Pinocchio wird diese Aussage bildlich. Es ist nicht unwahrscheinlich, dass Kinder dadurch Lüge und ‚Verlängerung eines Körperteils‘ miteinander verbinden. *Lügen haben lange Beine* wäre damit als Mischung des Sprichworts und des Gedankens an Pinocchio zu erklären.

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Bildquellen

- Abbildung 1 (zur Darstellung des Sprichworts *Ein blindes Huhn findet auch mal ein Korn*) ist der folgenden Quelle entnommen: <http://www.imgteufel.de/uploads/blindeshuhnhead54edegif.gif> (18.11.2010)
- Abbildung 2 (für das Sprichwort *Man soll das Kind nicht mit dem Bade ausschütten*) ist folgender Quelle entnommen: RÖHRICH, LUTZ: Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten. Unveränderte Taschenbuchausgabe [des „Großen Lexikons der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten“ (1991/92)]. Bd. 1. Freiburg i. Br. 1994. S. 132f.

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A CULTURE “FULL OF CHOICE APOPHTHEGMS AND
USEFUL MAXIMS”: INVENTED PROVERBS IN C.S. LEWIS’
THE HORSE AND HIS BOY

Abstract: The use of created proverbs in fiction by C.S. Lewis' friend J.R.R. Tolkien has been described in detail, but this is the first examination of the creation of proverbs by Lewis. Lewis created several proverbs in his novel *The Horse and His Boy*, part of six-volume work, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. All of these proverbs are found in just three conversations. This paper identifies and examines the proverbs, showing how Lewis used them to help portray the imaginary culture of the Calormen, a culture proudly described as “full of choice apophthegms and useful maxims”. Additionally, Lewis subtly had his characters use proverbs in ways that revealed aspects of the various speakers’ character. The use of proverb creation by other authors of fiction is also discussed.

Keywords: invention, pseudo-proverbs, C.S. Lewis, Narnia, fiction, Tolkien, proverb-duel, gnomes

Introduction

Many volumes have been written about the work of C. S. Lewis (1898-1963), the widely followed Christian apologist from Oxford, especially about his fictional *Chronicles of Narnia* (e.g. Ford 2005, Lindskoog 1997, Schakel 2002). But despite the fact that Lewis created a number of gnomic expressions or proverbs in *The Horse and His Boy*, the 5th volume in the *Chronicles*, there has been no published study of these proverbs. For example, there is no entry for “proverb” among the over 800 entries of *The C. S. Lewis Reader’s Encyclopedia* (Schultz and West 1998) nor the hundreds of entries in *The C. S. Lewis Handbook* (Duriez 1990). This present study examines his creation and use of proverbs in that novel, filling this lacuna in Lewis studies.

In his *Chronicles of Narnia*, C. S. Lewis created and wrote about different cultures in an imaginary world: Narnia, Telmar, Calormen, Archenland. In *The Horse and His Boy* (1954), much

of the story involves the interaction of young people with each other or horses, but there are two scenes in which Calormene adults have conversations, both rich in proverbs. In one, a nobleman bargains with a fisherman (pp. 4-6).¹ The other conversation is set in a palace, between a ruler, his vizier, and the headstrong crown prince (pp. 105-117). Into these conversations, Lewis inserts at least 10 gnomic expressions and proverbs that he created specifically for this book. Intriguingly, he also used one recognizably English proverb, the significance of this one in particular will be discussed below. It is interesting to note that the word “proverb” is never actually used in the novel.

Defining a “proverb” (even in one's own culture) has been described as “too difficult to repay the undertaking” (Taylor 1931:3). Several scholars have devoted entire articles to the problem of defining a proverb (Mieder 1993), four authors using the title “What is a proverb?” (Blehr 1973, Hamm 2004, Jamal n.d., Milner 1969). When examining texts from another culture, it is even more difficult to definitively identify proverbs, and when one is examining fictional texts from an imagined culture, the challenges are amplified further, since we cannot know the traditionality of a saying.

“Numerous proverb scholars have in fact despaired of the task of defining the familiar subject matter of their expertise. It appears that no definition can both map all of Proverbia and protect the neighboring lands of clichés, maxims, slogans, and the like from unwanted annexation. Rather than legislate necessary or sufficient conditions for Proverbian citizenship, we propose to issue residence permits to all brief, memorable, and intuitively convincing formulations of socially sanctioned advice” (Hernadi and Steen 1999:1). In the spirit of Hernadi and Steen, for the purposes of this paper, I will use the term “proverb” in a broad way, knowing that some of these expressions might best be classified in another specific category. Sherzer (1976) dealt with this sort of uncertainty in the data from *Molloy* by using the more generic term “gnomic expression”, but I will use the simpler term “proverb” and trust my readers to understand I use the term here generously.

Authors who have created proverbs

Other authors have created proverbs in fiction,² also. Probably the best known example in English fiction is the wealth of created proverbs found in *Forrest Gump*, (Winick 1998: 83ff), for which the credit is shared by the novel's author Winston Groom and the screenplay writer Eric Roth, with most Americans knowing the movie, rather than the underlying novel. Invented proverbs from *Forrest Gump*, such as "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're gonna get" and "Stupid is as stupid does" are now well established in American culture. A sign of how established they have become is that these two are each quoted or twisted on at least a dozen different T-shirt designs.³ As another sign of their establishment in American pop-culture, these proverbs are included with several common American proverbs by Bruce Springsteen in his song "My best was never good enough."

More studied by proverb scholars is J.R.R. Tolkien's (1892-1973) creation of many proverbs in *The Hobbit* (Trokhimenko 2003) and *The Lord of the Rings* (Boswell 1969, Stanton 1996). Of these, at least one of Tolkien's created proverbs has gained some currency in English usage, an anti-proverb based on an existing English one from Shakespeare, reworded as "All that is gold does not glitter." As a sign of its currency in America, this proverb, too, is found on T-shirts and bumper stickers.

Other examples of proverb creation by authors of English fiction include a proverb by Graham Greene (1904-1991) in *The Power and the Glory* (de Caro 1989) and a proverb by Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) in the mouth of Sherlock Holmes (Waterhouse 1990). The proverb creation of R. D. Blackmore (1825-1900) in his British rural novels (Kirwin 1973), Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) in *Molloy* (Sherzer 1976), and E. M. Forster (1879-1970) in *A Passage to India* (de Caro 1986 and Gish 1972) is noteworthy but more difficult to count, some gnomic expressions being specifically labeled as proverbs, with others being less clear.

Beyond the world of English, the contemporary Mozambican writer Mia Couto has also been noted for creating proverbs (as well as riddles and such) in his Portuguese fiction, part of his technique in "magic realism" (Coutinho 2008). Also, in Polish, Stanisław Jerzy Lec (1906-1966) is noted for his creation of proverbs in his essays (Frackiewicz 1990). In his novel *Carmen* (the

inspiration for Bizet's opera of the same name), the French author Prosper Mérimée (1803-1870) used a number of Gypsy proverbs, including one that he seems to have made up (Northup 1915: 153). In a film, rather than a novel, the Russian film director Sergei Eisenstein (1899-1948) used some invented proverbs to shape and convey his message (McKenna 2009).

In a series of novels about a British naval officer of 200 years ago, O'Brian has cleverly developed his main character by having him repeatedly blunder in his attempts to quote proverbs, ending up mixing pieces of proverbs together.⁴ Though he cleverly juxtaposes pieces of proverbs together in his fiction, he creates no proverbs but rather creates a more complete character (Brunvand 2004).

Though this brief listing of authors who have created proverbs is in no way meant to be exhaustive, it shows that creating proverbs is a known technique for fiction writers, though one that is not practiced often.

These authors have created proverbs in their fiction to reveal more about a character, to enliven dialogue, to build the plot, or, as in the case of Tolkien and Lewis, they have used proverbs to immerse the reader in the texture of an imagined culture. Of the proverb-creating English authors listed above, only Lewis and Tolkien used their proverbs for creating imagined cultures. Since they were good friends and discussed each other's writing (Coren 1994:45ff), it is natural to wonder if they explicitly discussed the creation of proverbs in fiction.

The culture of the Calormenes

The Horse and His Boy is set in the imaginary land of Calormen, a country whose imperial ruler is the Tisroc. The culture of the Calormenes, as proudly described by Ahoshta, the royal vizier, is "full of choice apophthegms⁵ and useful maxims" (p. 113). Rabadash, the young crown prince, however, viewed this situation negatively, complaining to the vizier that the use of proverbs in speech was so common that "I have had maxims and verses flung at me all day" (p. 106). Though these phrases of Calormene wisdom are usually introduced as quotations from poets,⁶ even a poor, uneducated fisherman is depicted as quoting them three times.

The speech of the Calormenes is very flowery. Myers describes it as “verbose, sententious, and indirect. Lewis slyly undercuts their gravity and mystery by making their proverbs ridiculous” (1998:162). For example, the fisherman cites a proverb, “Natural affection is stronger than soup and offspring more precious than carbuncles” (p. 4). Myers wryly notes “Soup, of course, varies greatly in its strength; ‘carbuncle’ means ‘a red jewel’ in medieval romances, but its modern meaning is ‘a red sore’” (1998:162).

Their verbose speech is characterized by what she calls the “and syndrome”, using two synonyms when one would suffice, such as “desire and propose” and “prudence and circumspection”. Also, she points out, there is a pattern of inserting “O” before people who are addressed (1998:162), “O enlightened prince”, “O loquacious Vizier”, “O ever-living-Tisroc”, “O most inflammable Rabadash”, etc.

The proverbs in The Horse and His Boy

It is not possible for us to know absolutely which statements are to be understood as established Calormene proverbs, and which statements might be spontaneous figures; this study takes a broad view, classifying 10 examples of wise, metaphoric speech as Calormene proverbs.

The Calormene proverbs, most introduced with a reference to a poet, are said to be literary in form, not proverbs that reflect peasant speech (Holbek 1970). They are long and wordy, with little verbal artistry (such as rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance, parallelism), such as the following artless example: ‘Application to business is the root of prosperity, but those who ask questions that do not concern them are steering the ship of folly toward the rock of indigence’ (p. 3). There is one proverb that includes some art, a parallel structure and some alliteration; “Natural affection is stronger than soup and offspring more precious than carbuncles” (p. 4) is quoted by the poor fisherman. Note the repetition of /r/, of labial consonants (*viz.* /f/, /p/, /m/, /b/), and sibilants (/s/, /sh/, /z/). It is interesting that this most artistic of the Calormene proverb forms is spoken by the least educated of the proverb users, the fisherman. Later, the vizier refers to part of the same proverb, saying “sons are in the eyes of their fathers more precious than carbuncles” (p. 112), but he rephrases it into a long-

er, wordier form -- being verbose is one of the hallmarks of Calormene speech (Myers 1998:162).

The proverbs are spoken in two different locations, a fisherman's hut and the palace of the Tisroc. The first is from the fisherman to the boy Shasta, a foundling that he has raised, "One of the poets has said, 'Application to business is the root of prosperity, but those who ask questions that do not concern them are steering the ship of folly toward the rock of indigence'" (p. 3). It is not surprising that a fisherman quotes a proverb about navigating a ship.

The next three are heard in a conversation between the fisherman and a Calormene nobleman who demands to buy the boy Shasta. The fisherman uses a proverb first, claiming a great attachment to the boy (and therefore, requiring a higher price), "Has not one of the poets said, 'Natural affection is stronger than soup and offspring more precious than carbuncles'." (p. 4). The nobleman is demanding, threatening him by replying with, "Another poet has likewise said, 'He who attempts to deceive the judicious is already baring his own back for the scourge'" (p. 5). Realizing that the nobleman has discovered Shasta's foreign origin, the fisherman capitulates saying, "How well it has been said, 'Swords can be kept off with shields but the Eye of Wisdom pierces through every defence!'" (p. 5).

The other set of proverbs are heard in the palace in a conversation between the ruler (the Tisroc), his vizier, and the hot-headed crown prince Rabadash. The prince is angry because the Narnian queen has rejected his advances and is sailing back to Narnia; he proposes to attack Narnia and seize her. His father tries to calm him down, while the poor vizier finds himself in an awkward position, both literally and figuratively, as he is forced to remain in a bowing posture before them, with the prince kicking his posterior when he dislikes the vizier's advice.

The first proverb is spoken by the Tisroc to his son the crown prince in an effort to console him over the departure of the visiting queen, "The departure of guests makes a wound that is easily healed in the heart of a judicious host" (p. 106). As sovereign and father, he cites no poet, having no need to add weight to his argument by referring to any external source for his wisdom.

When the crown prince is still upset, claiming to be passionately in love with the departed queen, the vizier tries to calm him, carefully invoking “a gifted poet” as the source of his thoughts: “How well it was said by a gifted poet... that deep draughts from the fountain of reason are desirable in order to extinguish the fire of youthful love” (p. 106). For this, he earns a kick from the crown prince.

The Tisroc admonishes his son to treat the vizier better, “My son, by all means desist from kicking the venerable and enlightened Vizier... a costly jewel retains its value even if hidden in a dung hill.” Realizing that his son may not understand the proverbial allusion, the ruler feels the need to make it plain that he is referring to the vizier, “So old age and discretion are to be respected even in the vile persons of our subjects” (p. 107). Sadly, a “proverb loses effect if it has to be explained” (Holbek 1970:471), but the Tisroc knows his son lacks insight and needs the explanation.

Lewis teases the reader with the aborted introduction to another proverb. The vizier, still kneeling on the floor, addresses the crown prince, “Gifted was the poet who said...” (p. 109), but noticing “an impatient movement of the Prince’s toe”, the proverb-spouting vizier “became suddenly silent.” With this reference to yet another proverb, Lewis cleverly adds to the tradition of Calormene wisdom sayings without having to actually create a proverb.

Another proverb can be inferred, though it is not actually quoted in full form. When the son proposes an attack on the neighboring kingdom, the Tisroc warns his rash son, “I am determined not to put my hand out further than I can draw it back” (p. 109). Later, as he deliberates on the plan, he alludes to the same proverb by asking his son “How do I draw my arm [back] if all this miscarries?” (p. 111). These two utterances by the king seem to be based on a proverb of the approximate form “Do not put your arm out farther than you can draw it back.”

While the vizier and the Tisroc repeatedly quote wisdom, Rabadash, the crown prince, uses only one proverb, if it can be called that: “It is well known that women are as changeable as weathercocks” (p. 112). This proverb is discussed in greater detail below.

A bit later in the conversation, the vizier says to the Tisroc, “I have often heard that sons are in the eyes of their fathers more precious than carbuncles” (p. 112). Again, the vizier introduces his

proverb with a reference to origin beyond himself. This saying is also used earlier in the book, in fuller form, by the fisherman⁸: “Natural affection is stronger than soup and offspring more precious than carbuncles” (p. 4). As the vizier quotes the latter part of this proverb, the deliberate double meaning of “carbuncle” is delightfully appropriate.

Conversational analysis of proverb use

Lewis astutely captures some common patterns of proverb use: from father to son, from underling to ruler, in argument, etc. Also, he is very perceptive in the way the he has characters use (or, in the case of the ruler, *not* use) introductions for their proverbs. Such introductions identify the proverb as something more authoritative than merely the speaker’s own personal viewpoint, appealing to honored words from their shared tradition. Most of the expressions included here are introduced with a reference to the saying’s origin or currency, e.g. “Has not one of the poets said...”. Such an introduction gives evidence that the following is an established saying. Also, such an introduction gives weight to what follows, invoking the authority of someone greater than the speaker. The only proverbs that are not introduced in this way are spoken by the absolute ruler, the Tisroc. Rulers feel no need to invoke any greater authority.

When the boy Shasta asks his foster father, the fisherman, what lies beyond the northern horizon, the father replies “O my son, do not allow your mind to be distracted by idle questions. For one of the poets has said, ‘Application to business is the root of prosperity, but those who ask questions that do not concern them are steering the ship of folly toward the rock of indigence’” (p. 3). A father speaking to a child is a common use of proverbs, found around the world. In fact, one of the oldest documented examples of a proverb used in a context is from Assyria in the 18th century BC, where King Shamshi-Adad I used a proverb when advising his son (Moran 1978:17).⁹ Also, at the opening of the Biblical book Proverbs, we read, “Hear, my son, your father’s instruction” (1:8). Coincidentally, both of these are from the region many associate with the culture of the Calormenes, as explained below.

When the fisherman uses a proverb in addressing the nobleman, he uses the proverb from a state of weakness, addressing a

much more powerful figure. This is a common use of proverbs around the world, allowing the weak to borrow the authority of those traditionally accepted as great, gaining leverage on powerful people in an argument: “Has not one of the poets said...” (p. 4). However, the nobleman does not give way. Since “a proverb cannot be refuted unless by another proverb” (Gándara 2004:348), he counters with another poet’s words, “Another poet has likewise said...” (p. 5). When the nobleman deduces that the boy Shasta is not the biological son of the fisherman, thus destroying his argument that the price must be high to compensate for his emotional loss, the fisherman salves his wound with a proverb which says that his defeat was inevitable, “How well it has been said, ‘Swords can be kept off with shields but the Eye of Wisdom pierces through every defence!’” (p. 5). In all four of these cases, the speaker introduced his proverb with a formula that gave it more weight.

This interchange between the fisherman and the nobleman is what some have called a proverb duel, speakers refuting a proverb with another proverb (Welsch 1992). Readers of the genre may recall a parallel interchange from *The Lord of the Rings*, when after a council meeting, Elrond the elf and Gimli the dwarf argue by exchanging proverbs (Stanton 1996:336,337).

Table 1 summarizes some features of the use of proverbs by speakers at the fisherman’s home.

Table 1: Proverb use at fisherman’s home

Speaker	Addressee	Intro formula	Number
Fisherman	Boy	yes	1
Fisherman	Nobleman	yes	2
Nobleman	Fisherman	yes	1

In the palace conversation, the ruler uses proverbs to his son, the vizier uses proverbs to gently advise and steer the behavior of those more powerful than himself, and the hotheaded young crown prince only uses one proverb (and a poor one at that) to justify his rash plans.

Proverbs are addressed to the prince six times (counting the aborted attempt by the vizier); no wonder the prince complained “I have had maxims and verses flung at me all day” (p. 106). Four

times the ruler addresses proverbs to his son, common for a parent. The other two times are by the vizier, though the second attempt was aborted.

On the three occasions when the vizier quotes proverbs, once addressing his sovereign and twice the crown prince, he introduces his proverbs by referencing their origins, therefore invoking the authority of tradition, not asserting his own opinion, e.g. “How well it was said by the gifted poet...” (p. 106). The vizier is also mindful that using proverbs is often a way of mitigating a command, in his case done while advising the two most powerful men in the kingdom.

By contrast, the vizier is never addressed by means of a proverb. Perhaps the king did not feel the need to mitigate his words to his servant, or perhaps he did not feel qualified to bandy such learned speech with his scholarly vizier. He showed his lack of standing in scholarly discussion by dodging an issue, saying “This is a question for the disputations of learned men” (p. 109).

Table 2 summarizes some features of the use of proverbs by speakers at the palace.

Table 2: Proverb use at the palace

Speaker	Addressee	Intro formula	Number
Vizier	Ruler	yes	1
Ruler	Prince	no	3 (one proverb twice)
Vizier	Prince	yes	2
Prince	Ruler	yes	1

Sources and inspiration of proverbs

Like Lewis, his close friend J.R.R. Tolkien had created imaginary lands and people, also creating proverbs and riddles as part of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien was explicitly aware of the conscious and unconscious use of existing source materials in writing such, noting that readers might find possible sources of many of his creations. It seems likely that Lewis, like Tolkien, created many of his while still borrowing what Tolkien called “style and method” from existing sources (Carpenter 1981:32,123).

One of the vizier’s quotations, “Deep draughts from the fountain of reason are desirable in order to extinguish the fire of youthful love” (p. 106), seems to find an echo, maybe an inspiration, in English literature. The idea of “Deep draughts from the fountain of reason” is likely inspired by the passage: “...taste not the Pierian spring; there shallow draughts intoxicate the brain, and drinking largely sobers us again,” from Alexander Pope’s “Essay on Criticism” (1711).

However, the single proverb used by the crown prince Rabadash is clearly from an established English heritage: “Women are as changeable as weathercocks” (p. 112). The English saying can be traced back at least as far as the 14th century, though not in precisely this form. In a poem generally attributed to Chaucer (“Against Women Unconstant”), women are compared to weathercocks: “as a wedercok, that turneth his face with every wind.” A later play equated women and weathercocks in its title, *A Woman is a Weathercock* by Nathaniel Field (c. 1612). As a proverb “A woman is a weathercock” was included in the collection of proverbs titled *Bibliotheca Scholastica Instructissima* in 1616 (Pickering 2001:379).

By placing this piece of buffoonery in the mouth of the foolish prince, Lewis accentuated the prince’s lack of wisdom and learning. While his father and the vizier quoted wise and uniquely Calormene proverbs, the prince’s only proverb was the quotation of a shallow English saying, the only proverb in this set that is negative.

Similarities to real cultures

It is interesting to speculate concerning the similarities of the Calormene culture to Arabia. Lindskoog explicitly posits a link between *The Horse and His Boy* and the *Arabian Nights*, noting that just two years before Lewis wrote this book, he had supervised an Arab student writing about translations of Arab literature into English. “It is obvious that... Lewis drew on his familiarity with the *Arabian Nights* when he wrote *The Horse and His Boy* (1997:118).¹⁰ Kopp agreed, “The Horse and his Boy shows the strong influence of the classic Arabian literature, *The Thousand and One Nights*” (2005:129).

The illustrations in the book were drawn by Pauline Baynes, the author having personally chosen her to illustrate the *Chronicles of Narnia*. Her drawing of the Calormene court shows a tent, a man wearing a robe, turban, and shoes with toes that pointed up (p. 105). A Calormene nobleman is described as wearing a silken turban and carrying a curved scimitar, with a beard died red (p. 3). All of this is suggestive of the very real cultures of Arabia and Persia. Not coincidentally, both of these cultures are known for their rich inventories of proverbs.



Vizier being kicked by Prince Rabadash, in illustration by Baynes.

Lewis, an articulate Christian, described *The Horse and His Boy* as being about “the calling and conversion of a heathen”¹¹ (Letter to Anne, Hooper 2007:1245). Based on this, and with hints at an Arabian link, some might think that Lewis cast the Calormenes as Muslims. However, Eugene McGovern gave a pa-

per to the New York C. S. Lewis Society in May 2010 showing that the Calormenes and their religion differ from Islam.¹²

These proverbs used among the Calormenes urge diligence, caution, clear thinking, not judging by appearances, etc. They generally reflect the sorts of positive wisdom found in the proverbs of real cultures (the one used by Rabadash being an exception to “positive”). However, the proverbs are Lewis' original creation, not borrowed. On the hypothesis that he might have borrowed some from Arabic, I searched through Burckhardt's *Arabic Proverbs* (1875), the standard collection of Arabic proverbs that would have been available to Lewis when he wrote. However, a search through this volume failed to find any of the proverbs in *The Horse and His Boy*.

Conclusions

This brief study has presented 10 proverbs used by Lewis in three scenes from *The Horse and his Boy*, all but one of which seem to be original. The use of these proverbs in these passages is part of the author's technique to convey a culture where things were often expressed artfully.

The use of the proverbs in conversations is in line with common patterns of proverb use in many cultures. Though all of the possible proverbs listed above are similar in topic and structure to familiar proverbs from the Middle East and Europe, Lewis skillfully created new proverbs and inserted them into a believable fabric to create the aura of a unique, foreign culture for his readers.

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Notes

¹ Page references to the text are to the Collier edition of 1974.

² This present discussion is about authors of fiction, excluding the invented proverbs of poets, such as William Blake's "Proverbs of Hell". Also, I do not include the many sayings of Charles Dickens' character Samuel Weller in *The Pickwick Papers*. Scholars of phraseology have often referred to his quotation sayings as "wellerisms", but Weller's quotations, though many are quite witty, are not true proverbs. Of Norrick's 11 criteria for a "linguistically founded proverb definition", wellerisms differ from proverbs on four of these 11 (1985:73). Though some wellerisms may contain a quoted proverb, the overall statements are not proverbs.

³ The shirts that misquote these proverbs knowingly do so, creating anti-proverbs, such as "Life is like a box of chocolates, now get your own box!" and "Cupid is as cupid does."

⁴ As an example, "Only this morning I was thinking how right they were to say it was better to be a dead horse than a live lion... No. I mean better to flog a dead horse than a live lion... Yet even that is not quite right, neither. I know there is a dead horse in there somewhere" (O'Brian 1984:341).

⁵ It is worth noting that "apophthegm", an uncommonly erudite word, can also be spelled in a shorter, simpler form "apothegm", but Lewis chose to write the flowery speech of the learned vizier with the more archaic and difficult spelling.

⁶ The fact that the saying is from a poet in no way negates its status as a proverb. Around the world many gnomic expressions and proverbs are taken from poets, e.g. "Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive" is from the poet Walter Scott, and Shakespeare has given us (among others) "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

⁷ Note, the sibilants are not all spelled as sibilants, but can be heard in such words as "natural" and "affection".

⁸ The vizier introduces it with "I have often heard", but the fisherman introduced the proverb citing "one of the poets". Was the fisherman pretending to cite a poet while merely quoting a common proverb, trying to give himself the air of being learned?

⁹ The context of King Shamshi-Adad's proverb is similar to that found with the Tisroc's advice to Prince Rabadash. The ruler reminds his son not to be hasty: "Heaven forbid that, as in the ancient proverb, 'The bitch by her acting too hastily brought forth the blind [pups], you now do likewise'" (Moran 1978: 17,18).

¹⁰ This conclusion should not be lightly discounted since Lewis thought very highly of Lindskoog's book, writing to her "You are in the center of the target everywhere," (Lindskoog 1997: unnumbered front matter).

¹¹ The heathen that is converted in the book is not a Calormene, but rather the foundling boy Shasta.

¹² I am grateful to Mr. McGovern for helpful explanations by correspondence.

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FALL INTO THE (INTERTEXTUAL) GAP: PROVERBS, ADVERTISEMENTS AND INTERTEXTUAL STRATEGIES

Abstract: This paper is an analysis of the specific ways in which American advertisements use proverbs and proverbial phrases to persuade. It proceeds from an understanding of the proverb as an essentially intertextual phenomenon: an entextualized utterance, based on previous similar utterances, which can in turn be quoted, imitated, or manipulated to produce specific instances of proverbial communication. It employs the idea of the “intertextual gap,” theorized by Charles Briggs and Richard Bauman, and postulates that proverbial advertisements create and manipulate intertextual gaps to make meaning. It demonstrates that, through the use of the intertextual gap, proverbial ads can use the authority inherent in the proverb, they can challenge the authority of particular proverbs, or they can challenge the authority of the whole proverb tradition. In all of these cases, the ad claims as its own either the wisdom of the proverb, or a wisdom greater than that of the proverb, in the hopes of persuading audiences. It shows that some ads create fictive worlds, and inside those fictive worlds, coin proverbs, which then have a chance to emerge into everyday speech. It further shows that the language play demonstrated by clever proverb ads gives audiences pleasure, fulfilling a societal need for public poetry, and that this enhances the ad’s selling power.

Keywords: Advertisement, American, Authority, Context, Fictive World, Innovation, Intertextual Gap, Intertextuality, Language Play, Pleasure, Poetry, Proverb, Recurring Social Situation, Wisdom, Wit.

Often a Bridesmaid, Never a Bride
(Listerine Antiseptic)

When it Rains, it Pours
(Morton’s Salt)

Think Small.
(Volkswagen)

It Takes a Tough Man to Make a Tender Chicken
(Perdue Chicken)

Where's the Beef?
(Wendy's Restaurant)

As the examples above attest, advertising copywriters draw on and contribute to the proverb tradition in a variety of ways. Some advertisers use old proverbs as ad copy, while others alter old saws to suit their own needs. Still others create new slogans that are themselves proverbial. And to be sure, advertisers have a motive beyond the need to create realistic-sounding dialogue for their characters. They want to create phrases that are not only memorable and repeatable, but persuasive to the audience; they want to sell their products or services, or sell customers on their ideas.

Proverbs are an ideal tool for advertisers to use in this effort, because the goals of an ad and the goals of a proverb are fundamentally the same. Guy Cook has pointed out that all ads, be they for products, services or charities, against drunk driving, child abuse or cigarette smoking, have one basic feature in common. All ads, he says, are "discourse advocating a change in behavior" (Cook 1992:223). It might be added that a small number of ads, like those from church groups or political parties, advocate a change in belief or attitude. Similarly, as I once noted: "Proverbs are attempts on the part of a speaker to elicit a response from a hearer. This response is at times external, as when a proverb is used to persuade someone to do something, and at times internal, as when it serves to change the way someone feels" (Winick 1994:264).

Both proverbs and ads, then, are strategic verbal actions designed to affect the beliefs, feelings and behavior of hearers.¹ Since the proverb has existed for thousands of years as a device to accomplish this goal, it is only natural that advertisers, who have risen to prominence as creators of culture only in the last few hundred years, should seize on the proverb as raw material for their copy.

Before looking at specific ways in which proverbs are used to persuade, it is worth asking whether proverbs in advertisements really can be used to persuade buyers to make certain purchasing choices. If it could be shown that proverbial ads actually accom-

plished this goal better than other ads, we would be in a position to celebrate the proverb's economic power.

Unfortunately, it turns out to be very difficult to prove whether individual ads have measurable marketing effects at all. For one thing, ads almost always exist in a climate rich with other complementary and competing ads; as Leo Bogart (1984:362) puts it, "under ordinary circumstances, with an existing product, we cannot trace sales back to any one of a particular series of advertising messages." Moreover, as Bogart also shows, there are many other factors that affect sales, even in tightly controlled test markets. This circumstance led Rance Crain, Editor-in-Chief of Advertising Age, Electronic Media, and Crain's New York Business, to point out that nobody even knows if advertising works at all. Criticizing a study that found advertising effective in boosting sales, Crain (1994:21) writes:

We don't even know if advertising had anything to do with the sales increases because the companies involved—Procter & Gamble, General Motors and AT&T—were presumably doing all sorts of things to boost sales....You could substitute any other marketing tool and still get the same result.

However, despite the fact that persuasiveness to the consumer can rarely be measured, persuasiveness is the tool that ads use to justify their continued existence. It is important to remember that the advertising agency's job is to satisfy their customers: companies with items to sell. Persuasiveness is still a primary criterion used to judge ads within the industry. Therefore, copywriters need to convince their account managers that an ad is persuasive. The account managers need to convince marketing directors and shareholders in companies that advertise. To do so, they frequently show them the ad and allow them to judge for themselves. In other words, the ad's true work of persuasion is often accomplished within the industry, not between the industry and the public.

Some ads are tested with consumers before they are run in the national media. Typically, consumers view the ads and then answer questions about them. In these cases, the ads judged to be successful are those that convince consumers that they would persuade them to buy—which is not the same thing as actually persuading them to buy! In almost all cases, then, the measurable

persuasion of advertising is meta-persuasion. We can't be sure whether proverbs really convince consumers to buy a certain product. But the fact that proverb ads have been popular for so long means that proverbs do convince advertisers and consumers of their ability to persuade.

The efficacy of the proverb as a persuasive tool, then, is the most basic reason for its presence in advertising. More specific reasons, all of them subsidiary to this one, have been discussed by Barbara and Wolfgang Mieder (1981), and by Wolfgang Mieder (1978, 1989:293-315) in the most extensive treatments to date of proverbs in advertising. Quoting various authorities on advertising, the Mieders point out that the proverb's brevity, familiarity and clarity help it to "telegraph [the ad's message] in plain language" (cf. Ogilvy 1963:107) making it useful for brief, quickly comprehensible ad headlines. They show that the proverb's memorability makes it a good model upon which to build a slogan, since slogans are "designed to be repeated over and over again word for word" (cf. Kleppner, 1948:40). Finally, they point out that the general authority accorded the proverb may be carried over into the advertisement, making the ad appear trustworthy and self-evidently true.

Most importantly, the Mieders discuss the variation of proverbs in ads. Indeed, their essentially textual scholarship is mainly concerned with demonstrating that proverbs are not only quoted, but consciously varied and manipulated, by advertising copywriters. They do an excellent job of showing the different ways a proverb text may be varied from its standard form when it is incorporated into an advertisement. However, they confine their theoretical comments on the variation process to an observation that "a twisted proverb will serve even better than the original as an attention-getter, since the new wording increases the interest in reading the following copy" (Mieder and Mieder 1977:312). In other words, the Mieders suggest that the manipulation of proverbs serves primarily as a device for attracting attention.

In making this assumption, the Mieders follow generations of advertisers and critics who have seen the ad's purpose to be, in Cook's (1992:225) words, "to attract readers' attention, then trick them into buying the product." While this classic view is partly correct, it is too simple to describe the whole of advertising dis-

course. In the years since the Mieders' paper, scholarship on advertising has examined ads as communication, from linguistic, rhetorical and cultural perspectives (e.g. Andren et. al. 1978, Williamson 1978, Burli-Storz 1980, Dyer 1982, Cook 1992, Twitchell 1996). This body of work suggests that we can build on the Mieders' analyses by examining how different uses of proverbs affect the meanings of the resulting texts.

The Mieders' focus on variation also suggests that the "intertextual gap" can be an enlightening concept for the discussion of proverbs in advertising. Briggs and Bauman (1992:149) defined the intertextual gap essentially as an imperfection in "the fit between a particular text and its generic model—as well as other tokens of the same genre." Proverbs consciously varied would naturally create and manipulate such intertextual gaps.

As Briggs and Bauman's work makes clear, the manipulation of intertextual gaps is usually engaged in with an eye to affecting the social power of the discourse at hand. In the case of proverbial discourse in ads, copywriters manipulate intertextual gaps in order to give their ads persuasive power through a claim to authority. A minimal intertextual gap accesses the seemingly communal authority of the proverb tradition itself; this is the strategy of citing canonical wisdom, of bowing to ancient authority. Maximizing the gap, on the other hand, claims authority by demonstrating individual creativity, cleverness and intelligence; it even sometimes claims an authoritative voice through resistance to or rejection of the hegemonic ideological force generally carried by proverbs.

It is in evaluating the ways in which a given proverbial ad manipulates these gaps to claim authority, and thus persuades a reader of the truth in the ad's message, that an intertextual approach can be the most helpful in supplementing the work of textually-oriented scholars. As an example, take the Mieders' comment on an Avis ad that changed "to err is human" to "to err is humam": "Only the exchange of the final 'n' with an incorrect 'm' makes this advertisement striking enough to get the attention of the reader" (Mieder and Mieder 1977:318). This point is entirely valid, but there are other consequences of the change that deserve analysis as well. Most important is the observation that in creating "to err is humam," the copywriter not only quoted a proverb, accessing its inherent and traditional authority, but also created an

obvious and meaningful intertextual gap, thereby foregrounding his own verbal skill.

The first step in recognizing this is realizing that the change from “human” to “humam” is neither a real error nor an intentionally random change. On the contrary, it is a poetic device aimed at intensifying the message of the proverb text; by simulating an error while citing a proverb about erring, the copywriter has made the form of the proverb mirror its meaning. Furthermore, this ad playfully makes the proverb text not only a statement of an apparent truth, but also a piece of “evidence” in support of its own claim! This phonetic and semantic manipulation is precisely the type of verbal prowess that can convince the hearer of the speaker’s cleverness. Thus, the ad makes a bid for the respect and admiration of its readers.

To see this more clearly, consider that in some contexts, a switch like this would be neither poetic nor clever, but foolish. While “a stitch in time saves nire” would be a similar phonetic and orthographic change, and would certainly serve to grab a reader’s attention, it would not add anything to the semantic load of the proverb, enhance the message, or appear clever. On the contrary, it would seem to be a genuine mistake. On the other hand, “a stitch in time saves Nike” could easily be used in an ad that stressed the superior workmanship of Nike shoes; as in “to err is humam,” the orthographic change here has a clear function and meaning.

Cook (1992:226) documents quite extensively that ads indulge in code play, “focusing attention on the substance and means of communication, rather than using these only to refer to the world.” Viewing the conscious manipulation of proverbs as an aspect of this code play suggests an important rule that is implicitly observed by those who create proverbial advertisements: any change in the text must be perceived as deliberate, playful and poetic. To do this the change must add something to the meaning of the proverb, or at least reconcile the proverb to the context of the ad. If a change fails to do so, it remains meaningless and becomes merely an error.

A focus on code play also suggests that ads are meant to be enjoyed. In fact, Pateman (1985), Thompson (1990) and Cook (1992) all state that part of the function of advertisements is to give pleasure. In doing so, they argue, the ad encourages the read-

er to associate the pleasure taken in the ad with the product being sold. This is certainly one effect of playful slogans like “to err is humam.” There are also other ways in which pleasure informs our readings; it is our pleasure at the poetry of the change, for example, that allows us to perceive the ad as clever. This perception of cleverness, as I argued above, lends authority to the altered proverb text. Furthermore, since no “credits” tell us who wrote the slogan, we give credit and respect for cleverness not to Harry Bates the copywriter, but to the product itself.

In all these general ways, then, the manipulation of intertextual gaps in the creation of proverbial ads can affect our understandings of the texts and the effectiveness of their messages. It remains to be seen exactly how such gaps are established and played with, and what effects they have on different proverbial advertising slogans.

Briggs and Bauman’s formulation of the intertextual gap specifies that it can exist between an utterance and its generic model “*as well as* other tokens of the same genre.” This suggests that there are two distinct types of intertextual gaps that a generically-framed utterance may activate. On the one hand, there is the gap between the individual text and the genre (or ideal mental model of discourse production) that spawned it. On the other hand, there may be a gap between a given text and another specific text, especially when a new text is created based on an older one.²

To put this in proverbial terms, when “ugly is as ugly does” was first spoken, it used an established proverbial pattern and summed up a recurrent life problem—that good people are sometimes judged to be bad (and vice versa) because of their looks.³ These two features helped the speaker to make it maximally interpretable as proverbial, to minimize to almost nothing the gap between the text and the proverb genre. However, “ugly is as ugly does” was obviously created to contrast with the common proverb “handsome is as handsome does” and its variants; this gap, between one text and another, is readily perceptible to most hearers of the proverb. “Ugly is as ugly does” thus managed to emerge both as a parodic imitation of a proverb (through a recognizable text-text gap) and as a proverb in its own right (through a practically imperceptible text-genre gap)⁴.

Because there are two types of intertextual gaps, each of which is subject to manipulation, advertisers who use proverbs

have many strategies at their disposal. They may, of course, quote a proverb in its traditional sense, minimizing all the gaps created by their text. They may also choose to ignore canonical proverbs in favor of brand-new slogans using such proverbial features as repetition, parallelism, rhyme and unconventional syntax; this minimizes the gap between genre and text, and avoids encouraging specific text-text comparisons that might lead to the perception of gaps. Or, they may alter an existing proverb in an obviously perceptible way, highlighting the gap between their text and the individual proverb text. As the Mieders and others⁵ have shown, advertisers use all of these strategies liberally in creating new proverbial slogans, headlines, and copy.

Traditional Proverbs, “Twisted Proverbs” and Proverbial Authority in Advertisements

Citing a canonical proverb in an advertisement necessarily creates what we have called a “text-text” gap; that is, an imperfect fit between this instance of a proverb and other, previously-heard instances of it. Some ads attempt to minimize the text-text gap by quoting proverbs in their traditional senses. Thus, a 1915 ad for Fels-Naptha soap (GH, Dec. 1915:25)⁶ begins with the headline, “Accidents Will Happen.” It takes the traditional stance of the proverb, that accidents are unavoidable and therefore not worth fretting about; it extends this idea in several vignettes, such as “poor little kiddie, he didn’t mean to spill Daddy’s coffee-but it’s not serious. Fels-Naptha Soap will take out the stains in a jiffy, so there’s no harm done.” Similarly, a 1924 campaign for Post’s Bran Flakes (GH Aug 1924:12) begins with the headline:

“an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”
—Old Adage

The ad goes on to explain that the fiber in bran acts to keep the body free of disease; in stating its case, the ad repeats the entire proverb once, and the phrase “ounce of prevention” five more times. (The “ounce of prevention” slogan was so popular it was painted on the sides of Post delivery vans as well.) Like the Fels-Naptha ad, this one uses the traditional sense of the proverb and applies it to the product being sold; it takes its authority directly from the proverb tradition. In case the reader misses this connec-

tion, it supplies the ascription “old adage” to the proverb, attempting to insure the recognition of its traditional authority. This general way of making ad copy has continued, with ads bearing headlines like “home is where the heart is” (GH Aug 1997: 80), “no pain, no gain,”⁷ and “living well is the best revenge” (NY Mar 7 1983). Clearly, copywriters still feel that a time-tested proverb with no fancy wordplay will sell some products.

More often, however, copywriters consciously manipulate proverbs to create and control clearly perceptible intertextual gaps. This manipulation can come in several different forms. On one extreme, there are purely phonetic (and orthographic) differences that can be created between texts; “to Err is Humam” is an example. Differences can also be created at the lexical level, by substitution of words; “different strokes for different folks” can thus become “different Volks for different folks” in a Volkswagen ad (Mieder 1989:328). Thirdly, syntactical changes can be made, so that “it never rains but it pours” becomes “when it rains, it pours” in the famous Morton’s Salt slogan.

Most important of all are changes on the semantic level. These are, by definition, changes in the meaning of the proverb. As we have seen, changes that do not somehow add to the proverb’s meaning, such as “money dalks,” seem foolish and nonsensical. Therefore, it is the semantic gaps that are primarily responsible for the perception of cleverness and creativity. In addition, the semantic gap allows the copywriter to alter the proverb’s message to fit his product.

Semantic gaps are created by all changes in the proverb text. But they can also be created with no recourse to changing or twisting a proverb. This is because the proverb is already extremely susceptible to manifold interpretations. Arvo Krikmann (1984/1974, 1985/1974) has called this characteristic of proverbs “denotative indefiniteness,” and has gone on to discuss it at some length. For our purposes, it is most important to note that proverbs may easily be quoted in ways that produce new meanings; if the text is kept the same, but contextualized in an unusual way, an entirely new and unexpected meaning may emerge. This type of gap, because it is not represented by a textual change, is difficult to spot using a textual approach.

“To err is humam” is an example of a phonetic gap accompanied by a semantic gap. It also indicates how such semantic gaps

can be missed using a largely textual approach. In his 1989 article on ads, Wolfgang Mieder comments further on this text:

With a classical understatement in proverbial form the company admits that its service is not always perfect, but the additional statement ‘That’s why we invented the Wizard of Avis’ immediately stresses that Avis is a company which is trying to do everything to keep problems to an absolute minimum (Mieder 1989:295).

Mieder takes “to err is human” as an admission that Avis makes mistakes, because that is the standard social meaning of the proverb.⁸ In its common usage, the proverb asks forgiveness for the speaker or for someone else; its longer form, “to err is human, to forgive divine” makes this more explicit. In strategic terms, the proverb suggests forgiveness as a course of action by claiming that on the one hand, error is a perfectly normal state of affairs, and that on the other, forgiveness is a behavioral ideal.

The ad, on the other hand, uses the proverb in a completely different way. It does not admit that Avis errs, or ask forgiveness for anyone. Instead, the text of the ad states:

To err is human.
 That’s why we invented the Wizard of Avis.
 [...]
 that rental agreement you get has 14 different trouble spots on it where someone can easily make a mathematical error
 [...]
 Why it’s enough to drive a pretty young girl with a pen up the wall. Give her a break. Rent from the pretty young girl in red. She’s the only one backed by the Wizard of Avis, a super-efficient computer that neatly types out your entire rental agreement without making mathematical errors.
 (Mieder 1989:302)

In other words, the ad claims that since “to err is human,” Avis has eliminated errors by preventing humans from doing its calculations. Rather than commenting on error, normalizing it as a trait all humans possess, this ad comments on humans (and particularly “a pretty young girl with a pen”) and subtly stigmatizes them as be-

ings who routinely commit errors! This semantic difference is primarily created through contextualization, but the use of the poetic device “humam” to intensify and demonstrate the proverb’s meaning is also a contributing factor.

One of the most successful slogans of all time, Morton’s Salt’s “when it rains, it pours,” [Figure 1] uses syntactical changes in a proverb to create a new and startling instance of “denotative indefiniteness”; it maintains its old meaning intact, while simultaneously adding an entirely new meaning that refers directly to the product being advertised. It is thus a fascinating example of the double-voiced quality that proverbs can add to discourse.



Figure 1

The original proverb, “it never rains but it pours” means literally “it never rains without pouring.” Metaphorically, it means that bad things happen in quantity or not at all; either nothing bad is happening to you, or you are beset on all sides with adversity. By changing primarily the proverb’s syntax, the copywriter created “when it rains, it pours,” which is capable of the same literal and

figurative interpretations as the original proverb. Moreover, the new wording is clearer, having lost the archaic grammar and the archaic sense of “but.” This makes the new proverb easier for contemporary Americans to understand and remember than its predecessor.⁹ For these reasons, as Mac E. Barrick (1986:45n2) has pointed out, the new wording has almost completely supplanted the old proverb “it never rains but it pours” in American usage; “when it rains, it pours” is now a canonical proverb, having taken on the meaning of the original.

The meaning of the saying as an ad slogan, however, is very different. To achieve this new meaning, the slogan exploits the inherent ambiguity of the pronoun “it.” In the proverbial form, both instances of “it” are non-referential; the “it” in “it’s raining” or “it’s pouring” is entirely idiomatic, and there is no noun being replaced. In the slogan, however, the second “it” has shifted in meaning, and now refers the product, Morton’s Salt. “When it rains, it pours” becomes a clever way of observing that Morton’s Salt will continue to pour freely (i.e., will not cake or clump) no matter how wet the weather.

This second meaning, created solely for the advertisement, depends upon the new syntax. “It never rains but it pours” could not have meant that Morton’s Salt remains granular in damp weather.¹⁰ Thus, the syntactical changes in the proverb text allowed the generation of a new meaning. This meaning refers directly to the product, but because the text is also already a canonical proverb, the slogan seems proverbial and thus irrefutable even when it is referring to salt.

In many ways, then, “when it rains, it pours” is the ideal proverbial slogan; it has maintained its status as a canonical proverb while also remaining firmly attached to a product. It has been successful on several levels: its creators were obviously quite proud of it, because in most ads for Morton’s salt from the 1910s through the 1930s it appears in three or four different places.¹¹ It has lasted for over eight decades as a symbol of its product, and remains on the Morton’s package to this day. Furthermore, other companies were so convinced of the slogan’s value that they attempted to imitate it; a 1926 ad campaign for Worcester Iodized Salt introduced the shamelessly derivative but comparatively flaccid slogan “when it’s wet, it’s dry” [Figure 2] (GH Feb.

1926:113). Morton's pride and Worcester's envy are due at least in part to the assumption that the obvious cleverness and seemingly effortless authority of the slogan persuade people to buy Morton's.

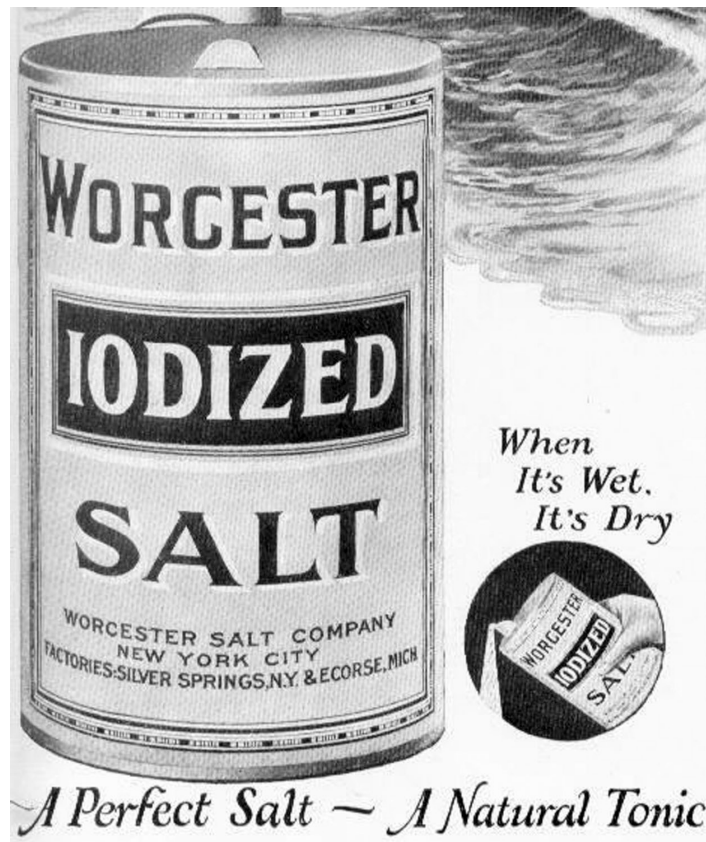


Figure 2

Complexities of meaning on the order of “when it rains it pours” generally do not occur in ads that use lexical substitution as a means of playing with the intertextual gap. The proverb tends to keep close to its original meaning, applying that meaning somehow to the product. The earliest such ad I have found is in the third issue of *Good Housekeeping* (1896:iii). It introduces Dr. T.

Felix Gouraud's Oriental Cream or Magical Beautifier with the headline "A Skin of Beauty is a Joy Forever." The replacement of "thing" in the proverb¹² by the new word "skin" has a relatively mild and predictable effect on the meaning of the new headline; it takes the proverb's basic idea that beauty is a source of joy, and applies it to a woman's skin.

Similarly, Mieder's (1989:328) favorite slogan, "different Volks for different folks," was able to take the proverb's original message, that different people have different needs and preferences, and adapt it to selling cars. The slogan succinctly stated that Volkswagen made more than just one kind of car for one kind of person, that their vans, for example, were perfect for larger families. More recently, Healthy Choice advertised its low fat ice cream with the slogan "wake up and smell the Cappuccino Chocolate Chunk" (WD Oct. 7, 1997:135), suggesting through the proverb "wake up and smell the coffee" that their product should make you sit up and take notice. And Crest offers "More bang for your Brush" (GH May 1998: 29), suggesting not only a more effective toothpaste, but also, through association with the proverbial phrase "more bang for your buck," a better value. Substitutions of this type can even be essentially meaningless, relying on phonetic similarities to create recognizable but nonsensical slogans, as for instance "the end must justify the creams" (GH Mar 1935:229), which was used by Harriet Hubbard Ayer for its skin creams in 1935.

Sometimes, however, lexical substitutions are accompanied by significant and interesting semantic gaps. Mr. Clean household cleanser used the slogan, "go ahead—make my spray" (GH May 1998:219) which borrows the traditional meaning of the proverbial movie catchphrase: the bald muscleman fears nothing, not even baked-on grime.¹³ It also, however, adds a secondary meaning: Mr. Clean is inviting you to mix his full-strength form with water, thereby "making his spray." (One also wonders whether the semantic contrast between the names of the line's original speaker, Dirty Harry, and its new speaker, Mr. Clean, was an intentional joke by the creator of this clever ad.)

More strikingly, a recent ad for Arm & Hammer cat litter deodorizer asks the question "cat got your nose?" [Figure 3] (GH May 1998:215) The substitution of "nose" for "tongue" applies

the proverb's original meaning—that the hearer seems unable to speak—to a new situation that evokes the oppressiveness of the smelly catbox; it suggests that the reader is unable to smell anything else. However, while the proverbial question is essentially a dead metaphor, the new version makes the image of the cat relevant and concrete, reenergizing the metaphor and making it fresh. And to drive the point home, the text is accompanied by a photo of a cat who is licking his nose with his tongue, thus suggesting both the old proverb and the new slogan simultaneously.

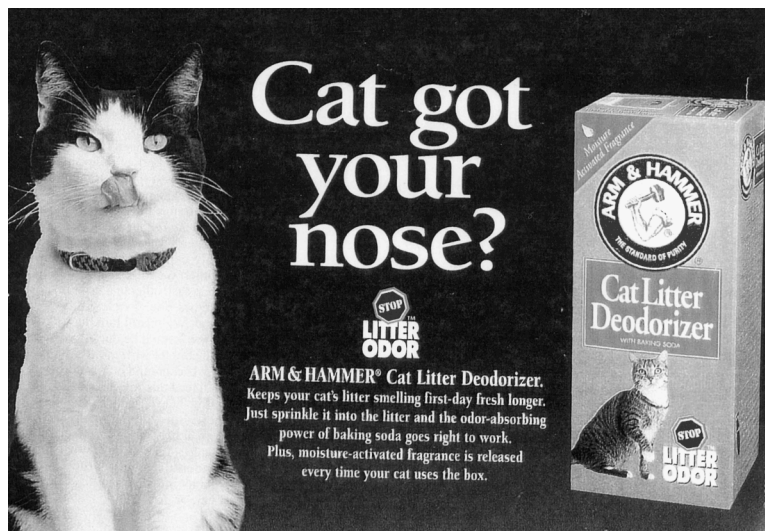


Figure 3

Both “cat got your nose” and “make my spray” thus introduce surprising new meanings to familiar proverb texts, and make the reader aware of the potentially double-voiced nature of all figurative or metaphorical speech. In Powers’s (1923:24) words, these proverbs “leave behind something for the mind to chew upon,” fulfilling the mission of clever copy.

In the effort to create startling new meanings, changes in a proverb’s contextualization can be as powerful as changes in the text. One of the most obvious devices used in the contextualization of proverbs, for example, is an ascription: “as my father used to say,” “a wise woman once said,” or even, in some African

countries, “we have a proverb for that.” Proverbial advertisements also use the quotative ascription as a contextualization device, which can add an important element of meaning to the final copy. An ad for Clopay Garage Doors [Figure 4] (GH May 1998:51) featured a photo of a two-door garage floating in the clouds, with the headline:

The Legendary Architect Mies Van Der Rohe said, “God Is In The Details.”
If That’s So, Could These Be The Pearly Gates?

The claim that “God is in the Details” is a generally popular saying; it is only one of several proverbs using this pattern, for “the devil,” “the truth” and “governing” are all also said to be in the details.¹⁴ Taken together, these four proverbs had by 1998 been used over 6,000 times in the newspapers catalogued by Lexis/Nexis.¹⁵ They have also caught the notice of the editor of at least one proverb dictionary (Titelman 1996) and one dictionary of quotations (Kaplan 1992).¹⁶

Interestingly, however, the copywriter has gone to the trouble of ascribing this version to a specific individual. And despite the fact that this anonymous saying is often attributed to the more famous Gustave Flaubert (as “Le bon dieu est dans le détail”), and also occasionally to Michaelangelo, the copywriter has chosen a comparatively obscure figure, the architect Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe, presumably since, as an architect, Mies Van Der Rohe can claim authority over architectural features like garage doors. Since Mies van Der Rohe is far from a household name among Americans, however, the writer has helpfully attached an explanation, telling us he is a “legendary [i.e. famous] architect.”

James B. Twitchell (1996:132) has pointed out of celebrity endorsements that “the ability to quickly generate celebrity and then link that value to a product is a hallmark of [advertising culture].”¹⁷ Furthermore, as Twitchell (1996:136) has also commented, “the safest human celebrity is certainly a dead one.... No one questions the inappropriateness of an impossible endorsement.” This ad, then, is following two common tricks of advertisers when it links the product to the name of a dead person whose celebrity is partly established by the ad itself.

The Legendary Architect Mies van der Rohe Said,
"God Is In The Details."
If That's So, Could These Be The Pearly Gates?

Relentless attention to detail is what makes a Clopay garage door rise above all others. You can see it in the panel and window styling. In the smooth performance.

In the fit and finish. In the warranty. You simply won't find a better garage door. Not in this life. For more information, call 1-800-2CLOPAY (1-800-225-6729).



www.clopaydoor.com

© 1997 Clopay Corporation. A Gaffney Company

Figure 4

If the Clopay ad is run-of-the-mill for the adman, however, it is a wonderful piece of proverbial discourse, and a fascinating use of quotative shifting. It begins by foregrounding someone of whom the reader may never have heard. It tells the reader that this figure is a famous architect, which in turn establishes his expertise in judging an architectural feature like a garage door. By ascribing the proverb to him, it suggests that he authored the saying, adding to our sense of him as a clever and intelligent man. Finally, by putting Mies Van Der Rohe's name and a quotation from him in the ad, the writer suggests that he endorses the product being advertised. The result is that even a reader who had never heard of Mies Van Der Rohe is left with the impression that a famous architect who was clever enough to originate a common proverb endorses the Clopay garage door. Moreover, despite the fact that Mies Van Der Rohe never heard of the Clopay garage door, the ad never tells an outright lie, for the architect is known to have been fond of this proverb.

For all its cleverness, the above example did not show a strong "semantic gap" created by the proverb's contextualization; in the ad "God is in the details" means the same thing it usually means. However, semantic changes in the proverb are also a possible effect of playing with contextualization. As an example, consider a 1962 Maidenform ad showing a woman wearing a slip, a bra and a boa, gently cradling the tip of a bull's horn in her white-gloved hand. "I dreamed I took the bull by the horns ..." the copy says, "in my *Maidenform* bra" [Figure 5] (Sivulka 1998: 327). Here, the product name is foregrounded by being italicized, as well as by being added, somewhat incongruously, to the proverbial phrase "to take the bull by the horns." The photo makes the idea seem even stranger, and the reader's imagination is set in motion.

Juliann Sivulka (1998:266-267) has shown that the Maidenform "I dreamed" campaign was inspired by motivational research suggesting that American women had subconscious exhibitionist tendencies; in other words, these ads were designed to carry subtextual (not to say subliminal) sexual messages. "Bull" and "horn" are both images with strong, masculine sexual connotations in western cultures, but these connotations are usually not an important part of the meaning of "to take the bull by the horns." In this case, however, the image of the woman in her underclothes

and the suggestive way in which she holds the horn are both calculated to appeal to sex drives. The traditional associations of bulls and horns with sexuality are thus activated by the phrase's contextualization, and a very strong suggestion results that "taking the bull by the horns" is meant here in a sexual sense.

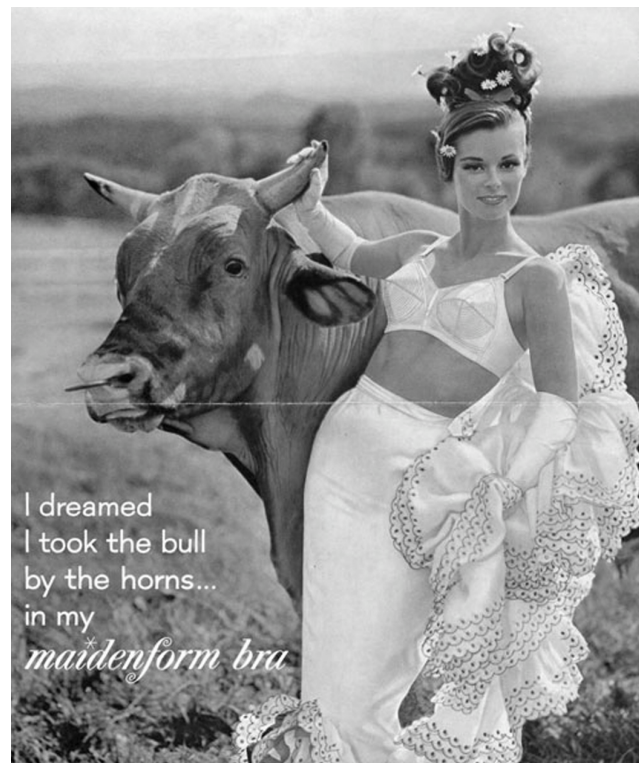


Figure 5

A more subtle semantic gap was achieved by Listerine with its famous "Often a Bridesmaid, Never a Bride" ad in 1925 [Figure 6] (Watkins 1949:72).¹⁸ The original proverb suggests that serving often as a bridesmaid prevents a girl from becoming a bride; it seems to have sprung from a belief that if a girl acted as a bridesmaid three times she would never be married (Addy 1895; Bergen 1896). Later, the proverb came to mean that, if a girl was not competitive by nature, she would be popular with other girls

(hence often a bridesmaid) but would lose her boyfriends to more aggressive young women (hence never a bride).



Often a bridesmaid but never a bride

EDNA'S case was really a pathetic one. Like every woman, her primary ambition was to marry. Most of the girls of her set were married—or about to be. Yet not one possessed more grace or loveliness than she. And as her birthdays crept gradually toward that tragic thirty-mark, marriage seemed farther from her life than ever. She was often a bridesmaid but never a bride.

That's the saddest thing about Edna's condition (bad breath). You, yourself, surely know what you have it. And even your dearest friends won't tell you.

Sometimes, of course, bad breath comes from some temporary organic disorder that requires no treatment at all. But usually—most frequently—mouth is not so good. It is an irritating thing that the well-known author who has written the book that has made Listerine famous has named "halitosis." It is a habit that is not only embarrassing in the mouth but leaves the breath sweet, fresh and clean. Listerine will cure it in a very short time. It is the systematic use of Listerine that has made it so famous. It is the systematic use of Listerine that has made it so famous.

Your doctor will surely prescribe you Listerine. He will tell you that it is the best thing you can do for your bad breath. It is the best thing you can do for your bad breath. It is the best thing you can do for your bad breath.

Get Listerine at any drug store. Listerine, the greatest mouthwash ever made. Listerine, the greatest mouthwash ever made. Listerine, the greatest mouthwash ever made.

—Listerine Pharmaceutical Company, San Francisco, U. S. A.

HALITOSIS LISTERINE

Figure 6

The advertisement explains the proverb differently: as a perfectly wonderful person, Edna has no trouble making friends, but her bad breath prevents her from getting close to a man. Unlike the canonical proverb, there is no relationship in the slogan be-

tween her often being a bridesmaid and her never being a bride. Insofar as that relationship is central to most meanings of the canonical proverb, the new slogan is semantically quite different. Indeed, the recurrent social situation to which the ad refers is subtly different; it includes bad breath. Still, by using the exact wording of the proverb, with no mention of halitosis until later, the ad suggests that the recurrent social situation described in the proverb (the inability to find a husband) can be changed by using Listerine.

An ad for Perma Soft Shampoo [Figure 7] (WD Sept. 1 1997:27) achieves a similar effect, picturing a curly lock of permed hair and bottles of Perma Soft, with the slogan “use it or lose it”; the implication is that you must use the Perma Soft or you



Figure 7

will lose the curl. "Use it or lose it" is also, of course, a generally popular proverb spoken in situations where constant practice is necessary to maintain form, such as athletics and bodybuilding, and is also used to refer to sex drive. Since the proverb can refer to sex drives, muscularity, and other physical qualities, the ad subtly suggests that Perma Soft is good for these areas as well as for your hair.

Like "when it rains, it pours," the Perma Soft slogan achieves its double meaning by the inherent ambiguity of "it"; in the proverb, both instances of "it" refer to the same skill, while in the ad they refer to shampoo and curl respectively. Also reminiscent of "When it rains, it pours" are slogans that manage to achieve a double meaning through contextualization alone. For example, an ad for Hershey's cocoa powder is nothing but a recipe for an easy-to-make cake, printed over a very close-up photo of a slice of the same cake. The headline, "it's a piece of cake," simultaneously evokes the obvious-but-appropriate meaning of the literal statement and the serious-but-appropriate meaning of the proverbial phrase (GH May 1998:155). As in many of the previous examples, the point of this double meaning seems to be that it allows the ad to claim authority twice; once through the forces of community and tradition, and again through the forces of code play and creativity.

I am suggesting here that both older proverbial elements and innovative touches serve to reinforce the authority and power of the speaker (and so, by extension, of the product). I should add that I am not the first to observe this dual claim to authority, nor is this way of claiming authority unique to mass-mediated forms of proverbial discourse. Kwesi Yankah (1989:178-179) points out of his people, the Akan of Ghana:

Akan speakers do not quote the proverb. They delete, elaborate and transpose elements of the proverb; speakers indeed subject the proverb to creative deconstruction. In this creative process, the competent speaker kills two birds with one stone: he demonstrates his creative skills while preserving the traditional identity of the proverb he echoes. As he relies on the traditionality of the proverb to persuade, the witty speaker also relies on his own compository skills to reinforce, modify and transform proverb meaning.¹⁹

It seems that American advertisements are only one example of a wider cultural pattern of proverbial discourse that makes use of the rhetorical power of intertextual gaps to add personal prestige to the culturally shared authority of proverbial speech.

Mind the (Intertextual) Gap: Challenging Proverbial Authority

If the above examples all flirt with both traditional community wisdom and individual cleverness and insight as devices of authoritative speech, some ads use text-text gaps to flout the authority of proverbs. Another Volkswagen ad, this one for the "Beetle," advised people to "think small" (Sivulka 1998:288). In the proverb "think big," a "big" thought is an important thought; paradoxically, a designer might refer to reducing the size of a car as "a big idea," even though it is concerned with smallness!²⁰ In the context of the proverb tradition, then, this text seems anomalous; why would anyone advise you have "small," unimportant thoughts? Because of this intertextual anomaly, "small" is foregrounded in the altered proverb; it is what catches the attention of the reader and makes her wonder, "why think small?" The rest of the text explains, by introducing some of the Beetle's assets: small energy needs, small oil consumption, small insurance premiums, small repair costs, small parking space requirements, and, of course, small price. Thus, the foregrounded element, the semantic reversal of the proverb, is exploited not once, but many times throughout the text of the ad.

The Volkswagen ad shows the shortcomings of "big" as a metaphor for "important," and thus challenges the internal dynamics of the proverb "think big." This is a relatively common way for ads to challenge proverbial wisdom; they point out that a new, opposite perspective on common proverbs suits their product best. Thus, both Mark Cross²¹ and Frigidaire (*Sunset* Oct. 1982:205) claimed their products are "here today, here tomorrow." The Teleram, the first portable computer, argued that "you can take it with you" (NY Sept. 27, 1982) going so far as to show an angel carrying a Teleram, suggesting that the proverb's usual meaning is false. These examples all reverse and thus challenge the wisdom of individual proverbs. By inventing their own opposite proverbs, however, they reinforce the general usefulness of proverbiality in persuasion and decision-making.

Such proverb reversals can also be used more radically, to show the general shortcomings of proverbs as decision-making tools, challenging the way proverbs relate to the world. As an example, consider an ad for a health care corporation which pictures a mother trying to deal with her son's illness. The headline runs: "Feed a fever, starve a cold. Or was it feed a cold? Uhh, starve a fever? Feed a starver?" (FC Aug 5, 1997:64). As in the ads above, the mother's adage is a reversal of an established proverb, "feed a cold and starve a fever." But in this case, it is not the proverb's message that is being questioned. Instead, the ad ridicules proverbs as sources of information, showing them to be hard to remember and easy to scramble. Later in the ad, the copy tells us that "you need access to good information ...so if you need healthcare answers, look to Columbia"; clearly, they imply, "good information" and "healthcare answers" are not to be found in old saws.

The usefulness of proverbs can be challenged without textually altering a proverb, once again through novel contextualizations. Ads may tell you that "whoever said 'no pain, no gain' never got stuck in a 45-minute aerobics class with a bra that quit after 5 minutes" [Figure 8] (GH May 1998:209), or they may follow "it's been said a woman's work is never done" with "maybe so, but our cookware reduces it significantly" (WD Oct. 7, 1997:197). Campbell's soup can claim to be "better than an apple a day," by quoting the proverb "an apple a day keeps the doctor away," but then saying, "take Campbell's Bean with Bacon Soup. Calorie for calorie, it's more nutritious than an apple."²² In all of these cases, the proverb is quoted, but its traditional wisdom is shown to be inadequate, inapplicable, or otherwise undesirable.

How do these ads, which openly challenge proverbial wisdom, relate to those in the previous section, which drew their wisdom from the proverb tradition? Fundamentally, both make use of the proverb's reputation as a wise saying. In both cases, the wisdom of the new slogan is produced in dialogue with the wisdom of the old proverb through the conscious manipulation of intertextual gaps. Ads that more or less agree with proverbs incorporate that wisdom into their own messages, while at the same time displaying verbal cleverness through small adjustments and novel contextualizations. Ads that challenge proverbs make use of the proverb's reputation by showing themselves to be even wiser than

the old saws they draw upon. “‘No pain, no gain’ may be smart,” they say, “but I’m even smarter; I have a sports bra.”

Before every workout,
check your equipment.

Whoever said “no pain, no gain”
never got stuck in a 45-minute aerobics class
with a bra that quit after five minutes.
That’s why full-figured women need Fully Sport.
It’s the bra made by the company
that makes full-figured bras exclusively.
After all, your shoes fit great.
So should your bra.

Good Housekeeping
Premises
THE HOUSE OF QUALITY

AVAILABLE AT
SEARS
AND OTHER FINE STORES

Exquisite Form, 136 Madison Ave., NY, NY 10016

Exquisite
F U R M
Fully
SPORT

Figure 8

New Proverbs in Ad Copy: Minimizing the Text-Genre Gap

As we have seen above, ads use phonetic, syntactic and semantic manipulations of canonical proverbs to play with the intertextual differences between received proverbial wisdom and current situations. But advertising writers also excel at another form of proverbial ad. In a 1933 article in the trade journal *Printers’ Ink*, seasoned adman Marsh K. Powers (1933:24) describes and recommends this genre of ad, asking the question “why haven’t copy-beginners been advised to use as copy-patterns the proverbs that have persisted down the ages?” Powers continues:

In suggesting this I am not recommending parodies of old adages. They are already the instinctive and all-too-easy first refuge of the copy-cub and novice writer. What I have in mind are fresh, new phrasings coined to crystallize and dramatize selected sales-points....When the Insurance Company of North America said, "if you can't afford a premium, you can't afford a loss," it coined a clean-cut sales proverb. (Powers 1933:24)

Clearly, those ads discussed above, which incorporate traditional proverbs either directly or with perceptible changes, are not what Powers has in mind. Instead, he advocates using the poetic features of the proverb, which he identifies as rhyme, alliteration, balanced phrasing and repetition, to create new slogans that carry some of the proverb's "pungency and brevity." A similar approach is suggested in a 1948 piece by Otto Kleppner, who mentions both "proverbs" and "maxims" as worthy of emulation,²³ and adds rhythm, grammatical parallelism and figurative imagery to the list of poetic traits that can help a slogan sell products.²⁴

Even before these articles, ads were using proverbial speech as a model for new slogans. In 1915, Mennen advertised its "borated talcum" with the slogan "best for everybody's baby, best for every baby's body" (GH Jun. 1915:46). In the same year, 3-in-one oil, a combination furniture polish, machine lubricant and rust protector (!) told its consumers that "little drops do big things" (GH Jun. 1915:105). Perhaps most tellingly, a 1914 ad [Figure 9] tells us:

if you want to economize use—"Diamond Dyes."
(GH Nov. 1914:7)

Most of the poetic features mentioned by Kleppner and Powers are clearly evident in these ads: repetition and parallelism (best for ...best for), alliteration (best ...baby's body), rhyme (economize ...Diamond dyes), balance (little drops, big things) and figurative language (drops "doing things" is an example of personification). Most interesting to me is the use of the dash and quotation marks to suggest a pause in the Diamond Dyes ad. Just as we insert pauses before and after the word "saves" in "a stitch in time saves nine," this ad suggests a long pause between "use" and "Diamond Dyes," to help the rhythm scan and create a rhyming couplet.

Good Housekeeping Magazine November 1914 Moneyback Advertisements

If You Want to Economize Use—"Diamond Dyes"



Rose color dyed brown

YOU can economize on your fall clothes without depriving yourself of anything. Give a last season's suit or gown a new color—make a few alterations in the cut and the trimming—the result will be a garment just as satisfying as a new one.

Miss Margaret Sampson, of Yonkers, New York, writes:

"I wanted a new dress for school as the fall term was beginning and all the rest of the girls had new clothes, but father said he could not afford one fast then. I didn't want to wait so I looked over the closet and franks to see if there was anything I could possibly use by making some changes in it. I found a rose color silk dress which I had stopped wearing because it was soiled.

"Some hints on economy which I had cut out of a magazine mentioned the dyeing of old clothes. Our druggist recommended DIAMOND DYES, and said that he knew they gave splendid results. I bought some dark brown dye and, as a result I have a dainty dress to start school with. With a cream lace collar and ruffle at the wrist, I look as well as any girl in school.

Mrs. J. A. Roper, of Detroit, Michigan, writes:

"Recently my husband suffered severe business reverses, and it was necessary for me to economize in every way possible.

"I have always been very fond of nice clothes and bought the very best for myself and the children.

"We have never lived extravagantly and it seemed to me the best way to make immediate saving was on my own clothes. I happened to read an article in a magazine which said that any woman could save money by dyeing their old clothes. I must confess that I bought some DIAMOND DYE feeling that I was making a great sacrifice—and that my last year's clothes dyed would look far from pretty. With a feeling of misgiving, I undertook the work of recoloring several last year's gowns, but now that they are remodeled and retrimmed, and dyed in bright solid new colors, they are just as stylish and fashionable as any new clothes I could have bought.

"I send you my photograph showing one of my costumes (green dyed black), which was particularly successful. I earnestly advise all women to use DIAMOND DYES whether they must economize or not."



Green suit dyed black

Diamond Dyes

A child can use them.
Simply dissolve the dye and boil the material in the colored water.

Truth About Dyes for Home Use

There are two classes of fabrics:—Animal Fibre Fabrics and Vegetable Fibre Fabrics. Wool and Silk are animal fibre fabrics. Cotton and Linen are vegetable fibre fabrics. "Union" or "Mixed" goods are usually 60% to 80% Cotton—so must be treated as vegetable fibre fabrics.

It is a chemical impossibility to get perfect color results on all classes of fabrics with any dye that claims to color animal fibre fabrics and vegetable fibre fabrics equally well in one bath.

We manufacture two classes of Diamond Dyes, namely:—Diamond Dyes for Wool or Silk to color Animal Fibre Fabrics, and Diamond Dyes for Cotton, Linen, or Mixed Goods to Color Vegetable Fibre Fabrics, so that you may obtain the Very Best results on EVERY fabric.

Diamond Dyes sell at 10 Cents per package.

Valuable Book and Samples Free Send us your dealer's name and address—tell us whether or not he sells Diamond Dyes. We will then send you that famous book of help, the Diamond Dye Annual and Direction Book, also 36 samples of Dyed Cloth—Free.

WELLS & RICHARDSON COMPANY, BURLINGTON, VERMONT
—AND 200 MOUNTAIN STREET, MONTREAL, CANADA—

The ★ marking indicates technical analysis of household apparatus, foods and toilet accessories only

Figure 9

In addition to these poetic features, the three ads above are examples of another poetic tendency in American advertising discourse. Two of them clearly divide up their slogans into distichs; the two halves of the Mennen slogan are actually depicted on two separate signs being carried by babies marching in a military band,²⁵ and the Diamond Dyes ad is divided into two lines. The

third slogan, “little drops do big things” is clearly quadripartite in structure. These poetic features have been described as typical of proverbs, explicitly by Milner (1969a, 1969b) and implicitly by Dundes (1981/1975).

Milner was particularly interested in quadripartite structure. He developed a classification scheme based on interpreting each quarter of the quadripartite wisdom saying to carry a positive (good, useful, desirable) or negative value (Milner 1969b). By adding these values together, the proverb itself can be judged to have an overall positive or negative value. Brian Moeran (1985) shows that many English-language ad slogans follow quadripartite patterns (“Less smoke, more heat,” “if it isn’t smooth, it isn’t Smirnoff,” “if you’re not getting More, you’re getting less,” etc.), and that Milner’s proverb classification scheme works just as well with ads. He demonstrates that ad slogans are far more likely to have positive overall value than negative; most ads work by accentuating the positive aspects of products.

As an example from recent times of all these trends in advertising poetics, consider Perdue’s “it takes a tough man to make a tender chicken” (Sivulka 1998:340). Since Americans generally value toughness in their men and tenderness in their chickens, this quadripartite saying has a positive value for each of its quarters. It features rhythm, alliteration (tough-tender), internal rhyme (take-make), semantic opposition (tough-tender), semantic contrast (man-chicken), and grammatical parallelism (tough man-tender chicken). It is, in fact, a tightly-packed, perfectly proverbial poem.

Given that so many sayings like these circulate in the world of advertising, is it fair to say that all such advertising slogans are proverbs? Probably not, for although many of them satisfy some of the requirements for proverbiality (explicit and intentional intertextual reference to previous proverbs), most of them lack sufficient generality to seem proverbial to most people. Proverbs sum up and evaluate recurrent or typical social situations, and most ad slogans, no matter how infused they are with proverb poetry, cannot make this claim. In other words, since most people have never thought or cared about the toughness required to produce tender birds, the slogan above has little chance to apply to our everyday lives.

I do not mean to suggest here that an ad slogan would have to be repeated in another context to qualify as a proverb; unlike many other proverb scholars, I do not think it would need to become proverbial over time. My own definition of the proverb, discussed most fully in Winick 2003, is that proverbs are brief (sentence-length) strategic utterances that derive a sense of wisdom, wit and authority from explicit and intentional intertextual reference to a tradition of previous similar utterances. This intertextual reference may take many forms, including replication (i.e. repetition from previous contexts), imitation (i.e. modeling a new utterance on a previous utterance), or the use of features associated with previous wisdom sayings, such as rhyme, alliteration, meter, metaphor, or ascription to the elders. Finally, proverbs address recurrent social situations in a strategic way. (For a fuller discussion of this proverb theory, see Winick 1998 and Winick 2003.)

Thus, to truly be a proverb, a new slogan would not only have to seem proverbial at the moment of encounter through a successful use of proverbial features, it would also have to sum up a recurrent social situation and solve it or judge it with wisdom and wit. This is how proverbial meaning is communicated. Of course, this means that the proverbiality of a slogan is not constant; it will be a proverb for some readers and not for others. It could be argued that this is a theoretical weakness, but in fact this situation obtains for most other definitions of the proverb as well. For those definitions based on “traditionality” or “currency” (i.e. Mieder 1993, Dundes 1981/1975) the group boundary makes the proverbiality variable; “you can’t kill shit” (cf. Winick 2004) is a proverb only among doctors and nurses, not among truck drivers. Any definition that relies on the “apparent truth” model (e.g. Whiting 1994/1932, Gallacher 1959, Mieder 1993) also makes proverbiality variable; “look before you leap” might be apparently true to some, but apparently false to others. 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.

It is not always easy to predict whether an ad slogan will apply somehow to social life. However, I can offer a few general remarks. Slogans that contain product brand names are generally too specific to be experienced as proverbs; “motorists wise Simoniz” (GH Jan. 1935:96) cannot help but sound like a plug for a

product rather than a piece of generally applicable wisdom. Slogans that are mere descriptions of an item can't be perceived as wise; "tastes great, less filling,"²⁶ "long on resources, short on red tape," (Moeran 1985:38) or "the instrument of the immortals" (Kleppner 1948:42) have some poetic features, but no wisdom.

The slogans that are best at seeming proverbial, on the other hand, are the ones that seem to offer a general rule of thumb that applies to real-life situations, without harping on a product name. "If you can't afford a premium, you can't afford a loss," given above by Powers, is an excellent example; others are the rhythmically appealing and extremely general Sapolio slogan "time is the real test of merit" (GH Jan. 1907) and Victrola's "the better the music, the better the dancing" (LHJ Jul. 1925:1), which suggests many possible metaphorical applications. Even "it takes a tough man to make a tender chicken" is sufficiently general to be an occupational proverb within the poultry world, although without some novel metaphorical insight it cannot be experienced proverbially by the rest of us.

Although I do not think a slogan has to become canonical in order to be a proverb (I agree with Powers, for example, that "if you can't afford a premium, you can't afford a loss" is a proverb regardless of its position in any canon), canonical proverbs do sometimes begin as advertising slogans. Mieder showed this, for example, in his paper on the slogan "One picture is worth a thousand words" (Mieder 1993: 135-151).²⁷ When we think of this common proverb, or of "when it rains, it pours," we may think of the product that first used the statement as a slogan. More likely, however, we think of a typical social situation; these are proverbs that sum up and comment on the events of our daily lives.

As a recent example of this phenomenon, consider the Wendy's slogan "where's the beef?" In the context of the television commercial, "where's the beef?" was entirely literal, and referred to a hamburger with a large bun and a small patty. What makes it a proverb, however, is that it generates meaning on a more general level. There is a typical, recurrent social situation to which it was matched by hearers: the feeling that one is being flummoxed by fancy salesmanship without any real substance behind it. Because it was perceived to carry this general meaning, it was instantly a proverb addressing the daily lives of ordinary people. As a result

of its perceived proverbiality, it was absorbed into vernacular discourse, particularly the discourse of political campaigns, and became canonical (cf. Barrick 1986).

The fact that slogans must refer somehow to real-life situations in order to be proverbial is recognized by some advertisers. Some show their slogans applying to everyday life through a powerful tool: the fictive world of advertising. As Judith Williamson points out in strong terms, ads create a realistic fictive world through a web of intertextual signs:

[Advertisements] are ubiquitous, an inevitable part of everyone's lives: even if you do not read a newspaper or watch television, the images posted over our urban surroundings are inescapable. Pervading all the media, but limited to none, advertising forms a vast superstructure with an apparently autonomous existence.... Their very existence in more than one medium gives them a sort of independent reality that links them to our own lives; since both share a continuity they constitute a world constantly experienced as real. The ad 'world' becomes seemingly separate from the material medium—whether screen, page, etc.—which carries it. (Williamson 1978:11)

The fictive world of advertising has conventions of behavior that differ somewhat from those of the world outside; as Linda Dégh (1994:45-47) has pointed out, for example, people are often absurdly helpful in ads, arriving just in time with dishwashing liquid or fat-free salad dressing.²⁸ For the most part, however, the fictive world of ads mimics our own. Within this setting, ads are able to show slogans operating as general statements, applicable to daily life, and therefore wise. This ability makes the 'ad world' an ideal place to create new proverbs.

The importance of the ad's fictive world to manufacturing proverbiality is perhaps most evident in the "wider is better" campaign for the Pontiac WideTrack Grand Prix, which began with three television spots in the late 1990s, and then moved to print outlets. The slogan's first claim to proverbiality is its own structure and composition. "Wider is better" is clearly modeled on older proverbs: short and pithy, poetic in a homey way, tightly packed with parallelism. The two concepts that are being equated, "wider" and "better," are expressed in words that themselves are

obviously similar: identical in rhythm, the two words both have two syllables with the stress on the first. Moreover, the second syllables are virtually identical, so that the words are the sort of near rhymes that turn up in proverbs all the time, like “honesty” and “policy,” “time” and “nine.” Both words are comparative adjectives, which adds to their similarity, to the phrase’s grammatical parallelism and to the slogan’s general symmetry. The slogan’s unusual grammatical structure, using an adjective as the subject of a sentence, is another feature of many proverbs (handsome is as handsome does, the more the merrier, etc.). Finally, we can point out its relation to the proverbial pattern “the xer, the better,” in which most adjectives can be placed in the x slot.

Equally important as these markers, however, is the suggestion that the slogan is generalizable to refer to many individual social situations, and to two typical, recurrent situations: poor performance in sports due to overly narrow equipment, or good performance due to unusually wide equipment. In one of the original TV commercials, for example, a man with a Scottish accent recounts the story of his grandfather, who invented a wider golf club which allowed him to win all the important tournaments. Toward the end of the ad, the narrator, a youngish man in a kilt, appears on screen. “To this day,” he claims, “the family crest still bears the proverb....” As the proverb is spoken in Gaelic, a subtitle appears on the screen, proclaiming, “Wider is Better.”

The other TV ads feature “wider is better” spoken by different people in different languages and situations. A Hawaiian surfboard designer tells us of his grandfather, who designed a new board using the principle of “E Aho La’ula,” which the subtitle informs us means “Wider is Better.” An Italian high-wire walker laments the death of his father, who died because he let the crowd’s desire for the excitement of “thin rope” override his belief in the old adage “piu largo e piu meglio.” Clearly, “Wider is Better” is being framed as a general rule of thumb for sporting equipment; the Scotsman even uses the word “proverb” to describe it.

The fictive world of advertisements employs other techniques to suggest the proverbiality of new phrases. In each “wider is better” ad, for example, the saying is repeated several times and written on the screen as a subtitle, suggesting its existence as an item

separate from free-flowing discourse, that is, subject to various acts of recontextualization. In each, it is presented as “quoting behavior,” spoken both in the same language as the surrounding discourse and in a different language; it is ascribed to an ancestor, calling attention to previous (fictive) contexts in which it was spoken, and thus further suggesting its existence long prior to the moment of the ad.²⁹ Finally, the ads together as an intertextual package suggest that “wider is better” exists as a linguistic and conceptual resource not only in English, but in Italian, Scots Gaelic and Hawaiian. Exploiting both folk and academic ideas about proverbs, these ads suggest that the statement has a long history and a wide geographic dispersion, both of which add to our perception of the slogan as proverbial.

Because of its introduction in TV spots, the slogan was able to seem like a proverb in print outlets as well. Print ads, in fact, continued to suggest the slogan’s generalizable nature by using it as the basis of more specific sports proverbs; several ads featured “wider is better” along with such other statements as “the wider the ski, the quicker the cut” (GH May 1998:18-19). All of them, however, continue to draw on the set of meanings established for the proverb in the early TV ads.

These ads, and others of the same kind, use their fictive world to create a believable environment for their proverbs. The motive for this is clear: by minimizing the intertextual gap between a new slogan and the tradition of canonical proverbs, ad writers create new proverbs. New proverbs, like their canonical counterparts, speak with authority and carry the elusive ring of proverbial truth. These qualities, transferred onto a message advocating a change in behavior, increase the odds of an ad making a sale. As Mieder points out in his 1978 article, this is indeed “the name of the game” in the world of advertising.

Parasitism, Play and Public Poetry: More Functions of Proverbial Ads

The proverb is not the only genre that is incorporated and transformed by ads. Cartoons, rebuses, poems, limericks, songs, games, conundrums, and all manner of short verbal, visual and musical genres have been absorbed wholesale into advertisements. Even relatively long forms like märchen and legends have left their mark on advertising, as many folklorists have shown (see

especially Dégh 1994, Röhrich 1980, Denby 1971, Mason 1954). Indeed, Cook (1992:29) considers advertisements to be “parasitic discourse,” a term he uses in two ways. Ads, he argues, both incorporate and imitate the forms, themes and structures of other discourses such as songs, cartoons, and (as we have seen) proverbs, feeding upon their communicative strategies and structures. At the same time, he says, ads are parasites within such discourses as magazines and television, feeding off their audiences.

Many of Cook’s observations are valid, but the use of the term “parasitic” to refer to the intertextual relationships among discourse forms seems biased. It might appear to us that ads are “parasites” on TV sitcoms, for example, but given both the history and the current corporate structure of television, it would be more accurate to say that the sitcom exists entirely on the revenue generated by ads, and that its reason for existence is to deliver viewers to advertisers. This is equally true, though in more covert ways, of many mainstream press outlets.³⁰ Therefore, if anything, advertising is the host, and such parasites as the TV news broadcast and the mainstream music magazine thrive by feeding off the profits ads generate. More accurately and sympathetically, ads and accompanying discourses can be seen as symbiotic, each contributing something to the survival of the other.

More importantly, Cook’s second sense of “parasitic” obscures the relationship between ads and other discourses. It is true that ads sometimes absorb or mimic cartoons, songs, proverbs and other speech forms. But it is equally true that proverbs, cartoons and songs rework material taken from advertising; borrowing goes both ways (cf. Dundes 1963). Moreover, the judgment that ads are parasitic is based on the same observation that Bakhtin (1981:301) made about English comic novels: that in them “we find a ...reprocessing of almost all the levels of literary language, both conversational and written.” Abrahams (1968a) has pointed out that many of these genres infuse our everyday conversations as well. In other words, ads are participants in an enormous system of intertextual reference, the same web of meanings occupied by all verbal art, including both the proverb and the novel. Unless we want to consider all discourse parasitic upon other discourse, the concept seems to be inapplicable.

If ads are not parasites on expressive culture, but rather participants in our system of verbal arts, they should fulfill functions and play roles similar to those of other verbal arts. One of the most important of these functions, as I mentioned in passing above, is to give pleasure, to entertain. This pleasure-giving aspect of ads is seen as an important part of their function within the industry; not only does the pleasure taken in the ad come to be associated with the product, enjoyable or entertaining ads are looked at longer and thought about more, as Sean Brierly (1994:200) argues. Brierly (1994:200) also points out that “intertextual references are meant to involve consumers in the advertising more. It is part of a game; spot the reference.” The pleasure-giving aspect of ads is also central to Sw. Anand Prahlad’s (2004) analysis of proverb ads; he finds that proverbs are frequently juxtaposed with fetishes in advertisements, and serve to negotiate between fears and desires. Fear and desire are the anticipation of pain and pleasure, respectively, and the giving of pleasure is thus a way for the ad to suggest that the product will also give pleasure. The kind of code play indulged in by ads that use proverbs thus has important functions within the industry’s stated agenda.

However, there is also a broader view of function: proverbial ads do not function solely in the world of advertising, they also operate in the culture at large. How do the artistic and pleasure-giving aspects of the proverbial advertisement contribute to our culture? Cook has been particularly eloquent in pointing out that ads may fulfill an important cultural need for public poetry:

Some ads may answer a need for light-hearted code play in the public domain, which, though once provided by poetry, is now no longer available to many people, either because they do not come into contact with poetry or because, when they do, they are encouraged to focus only upon its more serious aspects. (Cook 1992:226)

Furthermore, he recognizes that these needs, met in some social strata by “high culture” genres like literary poetry, are the same needs met by genres normally associated with folklore and with pop culture:

Play with language is ...reminiscent of public discourses of a kind associated with very different times and places

in our own—riddles, rituals, spells and incantations.... Though there are other such discourses, such as graffiti, stand-up comedy and pop songs, which bring code play into the public domain, they are often marginalized. Graffiti are regarded as irresponsible and criminal; stand-up comedy and pop songs are denied the status of poetry or drama. Ads' apparently trivial uses of language...are given high status through their association with big business, trade and prosperity. (Cook 1992:226)

Cook's distinction between "marginalized" stand-up comedy and pop music on the one hand, and "high status" advertising on the other, seems odd in the era of Jerry Seinfeld and Tina Fey, Bono and Lady Gaga; as artistic expression, pop songs and stand-up comedy are valued far more highly than advertising. Even graffiti, perhaps the most marginalized of all expressive poetry today, are esteemed in some circles as vibrant vernacular art. Furthermore, Cook's belief that rituals, riddles, and public poetry in general are vanishing is not well-founded, as any introductory work on folklore will confirm. However, Cook's central premise holds: whether "folk" or "pop," "oral" or "mass-mediated," vernacular verbal art, public poetry, is crucial to the experience of contemporary culture.

Although Cook does not mention proverbs as one of the oral folklore forms whose role in society is being filled by advertising, he certainly might have done so without surprising anyone; highly public oral displays of proverbial speech, as of riddles and rituals, are rare. But the advertisement has not "usurped" the role of proverbs and other forms of public poetry, as Cook (1992:230) maintains. Instead, it has provided a new medium for proverbs, riddles, rhymes and songs to continue amusing and entertaining.

Cook seems concerned by advertising's overtly economic motives, writing that "if there is some need for code-play and display in our society, there is reason to regret the fulfillment of this need in a commercial arena" (Cook 1992:230). But if the amusement afforded by proverbial speech-play in advertisements comes with an ulterior motive of selling, this alone does not make it significantly different from folkloric communication in other eras or other places. Economic motivations have often accompanied folklore

performances in marketplace contexts; we need only to think of the melodic street cries of vendors, or the singing of wandering ballad-mongers out to sell broadsides in European towns during the past few centuries. The proverb is no stranger to the marketplace, either; in contemporary Ghana, proverb custodians are paid a direct fee for reciting and explaining proverbs (Yankah 1989:202). Deborah Kapchan (1993:307) points out that folklorists have been reluctant to accept the marketplace as a locus of folklore performance due to “disciplinary boundaries that nostalgize the homogenous,” and Cook shows that this tendency transcends disciplinary boundaries as well.³¹

The proverb’s position as an important part of advertising discourse, then, shows that it can adapt itself not only to fulfill new functions, but more importantly to fulfill its old functions in new ways. Just as its context-specific function of persuasion has been absorbed by advertisers—our professional public persuaders—so has its more general cultural function of fulfilling a deep need for poetry. It is because proverbs have been here for so long, reliably meeting social and cultural needs for persuasion, poetry and play, that they are called upon again and again when these ancient but eternal needs arise in our contemporary world.

Notes

¹ The often-repeated charge that ads “manipulate” people, particularly when it comes from proverb scholars, needs to be interrogated. Why is it perfectly all right for a proverb to manipulate us, but somehow wrong when the manipulator is an advertisement?

² Although Briggs and Bauman do not make the distinction explicitly (treating both types of gap as the same phenomenon), their work supports the observation that there are two kinds of intertextual gap; in their 1992 article, they are primarily concerned with the gap between individual text and generic abstraction, while in his later work Bauman (1998) has concentrated on the intertextual gap between a source text and a target text in mediational or quotative performances.

³ While this has not been recognized by many dictionaries as a proverb, it fits my own criteria (Winick 1998), as well as those expressed by such scholars as Dundes (1981/1975) and Mieder (1994). A quick google search shows that it has been used 106,000 times on the World Wide Web, suggesting that it meets most scholars’ requirements for currency.

⁴ Kapchan (1993:311) has pointed out that utterances may simultaneously minimize and maximize intertextual gaps; parody, for example, must minimize gaps in some places while maximizing them in others.

⁵ The Mieders' work concentrates on the first and third strategies mentioned here: the quoting of proverbs verbatim and the quoting of altered proverbs. For a discussion of the ways in which proverb poetics may be used to create brand-new copy, see Moeran 1985.

⁶ In citing ads from magazines, I will use the following abbreviations: GH for Good Housekeeping, WD for Woman's Day, NY for The New Yorker, LHJ for Ladies' Home Journal, FC for Family Circle.

⁷ I do not have a specific citation for this famous Soloflex ad, which ran in the 1980s. It was so popular that it became a poster that adorned many college dorm rooms of the era. My own copy was photocopied by Regina Bendix from an unspecified magazine.

⁸ Mieder was probably also influenced by his knowledge of Avis' famous "we're number two, we try harder" campaign, in which they did admit their shortcomings.

⁹ The fact that this proverb is hard to understand and thus to remember for contemporary Americans was driven home to me by Mac E. Barrick (1986), who misquoted it as "it never rains but what it pours."

¹⁰ At best, "it never rains but it pours" could mean that Morton's Salt begins pouring from its container whenever rain begins to fall—clearly this is not the intended meaning!

¹¹ Ads in Good Housekeeping in Dec. 1914 (p.25), Aug 1924 (p.111), Feb. 1926 (p.117) and Feb. 1935 (p.145) all contain at least three instances of the slogan.

¹² Some will object that this is a line of poetry from Keats, not a proverb. I consider this to be one of those lines of poetry that has emerged to become proverbial through replication or repetition.

¹³ For a discussion of movie catchphrases that have become proverbial, see Winick 1998:

¹⁴ "Governing" was added to this list by journalist William Safire. More recently, Howard Chua-Eoan (1998:74) remade this proverb into "Godzilla is in the details"; given the right circumstances, this proverb, like any other, acts as a proverbial pattern.

¹⁵ "The Devil is in the details" was by far the most popular of the four, with 5,094 citations on May 4, 1998. "God is in the details" itself had been quoted 915 times on that date. More recent searches using the world wide web as a text base, rather than Lexis-Nexis newspapers, suggest that "God is in the details" may now be more popular than its devilish counterpart.

¹⁶ In the sixteenth edition of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, Justin Kaplan lists it as an anonymous saying.

¹⁷ Some famous actors, like Dallas's Jim Davis and Buffy the Vampire Slayer's Anthony Stewart Head, first became celebrities by endorsing products; Davis was the beef butcher character for the Winn Dixie grocery chain, while Head was half of the couple whose soap opera of thirty-second spots sexily sold Maxwell

House. In these cases, the ads both established them as celebrities and reaped the benefits of their celebrity by showcasing their endorsements.

¹⁸ It has often been asserted (e.g. Sivulka 1998:161; Watkins 1949:73; Rees 1995:146) that “Often a Bridesmaid, Never a Bride” was invented for Listerine by Milton Feasley of Lambert & Feasley. It was, however, already a canonical proverb by Feasley’s time; it seems to have appeared in 1882 as “always a maiden, never a wife” (with maiden being meant in its archaic sense as a bridal attendant). In 1896, it existed on both sides of the Atlantic as the superstition “three times a bridesmaid, never a bride” (Addy 1895, Bergen 1896) and by 1917 was popular enough to be featured in a popular British Music-Hall song as “why am I always the bridesmaid, never the blushing bride?”

¹⁹ The remarkable similarity in the ways in which proverbs are used in Akan society and American ads makes me wonder about the often-repeated assertion that such proverbial manipulation is a recent phenomenon among people of European descent.

²⁰ “Think Big” has not generally been considered proverbial, but it fits most definitions of the proverb, including Dundes’s, Mieder’s and my own. Like “go ahead,” it is paradoxically so common that we tend to overlook its metaphorical nature and thus miss its pithy wisdom. The other paradox of “think big,” that “big” thinking can lead to small results, is touched on in an ad for the low-calorie popcorn flavoring Molly McButter: “watching your weight doesn’t mean you can’t think big” (FC Aug 5 1997:116).

²¹ The 1981 Mark Cross ad was salvaged from an unspecified magazine by Regina Bendix.

²² This ad was photocopied from an unspecified magazine by Regina Bendix.

²³ Clearly, Kleppner is no folklorist. He says that “the ballads of the 14th century were proverbs,” and then cites several “maxims,” all of which are genuine proverbs.

²⁴ Kleppner’s and Powers’s works were brought to my attention, and to the attention of proverb scholars generally, by the work of Wolfgang and Barbara Mieder (1977).

²⁵ The body of the copy of this rather weird ad begins “The militant baby says...”

²⁶ This ad slogan for Miller Lite ran on TV throughout the late 1980s.

²⁷ Mieder’s work in turn was based on that of the lexicographer Burton Stevenson, who in his 1948 dictionary noted the first two occurrences of this proverb in ads written by Fred Barnard.

²⁸ Dégh sees these characters, like Mrs. Olson of Folger’s Coffee, as magical helpers from Fairy Tales, disguised as ordinary people.

²⁹ A fourth TV spot, added to the campaign later, had “wider is better” turning up on an ancient Egyptian inscription, another move in this direction.

³⁰ In the mainstream music press, for example, writers are instructed to write “glowing reviews of whoever bought a full-page ad” (Takiff 1998:54). I have myself been told that I could not write about a group or artist because they had

not recently released an album that could be advertised alongside my article. In other words, articles are assigned and content prescribed based on the available advertising, not the other way around!

³¹ Despite Cook's (1992:230) claim, there is no reason to think that verbal art is always corrupted by patronage; for example, Shakespeare's history plays, which served to legitimize the regime in power, and Chaucer's "Book of the Duchess," which eulogized the deceased wife of Chaucer's patron John of Gaunt, stand centuries later as major masterpieces of poetry and drama. While the authors' political and economic motives may be productively questioned, and while knowledge of those motives may be integrated into informed criticism of the works, one should not dismiss them as inferior to other works of art, which in any case may have hidden motives of which we are unaware.

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CONCEPTIONS OF MOTHERHOOD IN PROVERBS USED
BY GHANAIAW WOMEN

Abstract: Motherhood has been established as a key distinguishing factor of African gender relations. What remain unexplored are the circumstances under which African women find motherhood to be most fulfilling. In this paper I examine this subject by analyzing proverbs used by Kasena women from northern Ghana. The women take advantage of a socially sanctioned medium, the joking relationship that exists between a woman and her husband's kin, to critique traditional constructions of motherhood via an innovative use of proverbs. From using clever and witty modifications of traditional proverbs, to creating brave new ones, Kasena women subvert, critique, and deconstruct the meaning of existing proverbs during joking in order to register their views on motherhood. Via their proverbs women indicate that motherhood is neither the only indicator of female identity nor the sole source of female fulfillment, as 'traditional' Kasem proverbs seem to suggest. They draw attention to other aspects of their identity, presenting themselves as persons with aspirations and ambitions for individual fulfillment and group well being.

Keywords: proverbs, motherhood, gender identity, joking relationships, Ghana, African feminism

Scholarship on the social functions of African proverbs has focused on proverbs as a genre that "invite[s] investment in conservative subject positions" and not as a tradition that "encourage[s] transformative redefinition of roles" (Sawin 2002: 55). Very little work has been done on the way(s) that proverbs are used to challenge or rebel against traditional perceptions in contemporary society. Yet there is evidence that proverb use in modern African societies is undergoing radical transformation in the wake of metropolitan- and gender-consciousness (Raji-Oyelade 1999; Yitah 2007; 2009). In this paper I examine how Kasena women from northern Ghana use a socially approved medium, the joking relationship that exists between a woman and her hus-

band's kin, to critique traditional constructions of motherhood via an innovative use of proverbs. From using clever and witty modifications of traditional proverbs, to creating brave new ones, Kasena women subvert, critique, and deconstruct existing proverbs in order to register their views on motherhood and to articulate the conditions under which they find motherhood fulfilling. Exploring the "antihegemonic potential" (Sawin 2002: 40) of this emerging culture of "proverbial" jesting can point to ways in which it is transforming the limited and limiting gendered space of proverb use and interpretation in African society.

The joking relationship is characterized by what Radcliff Brown terms "permitted disrespect" (1940:103) as well as by license. Joking relationships exist in many African cultures and provide a safe context for expressing subversive views without upsetting social harmony. Joking relationships, according to Ragnar Johnson, are "relationships in which joking or behavior deemed to conflict with the norms of social order [is] contained by its institutionalization" (1978: 131). During joking the women ingeniously critique, appropriate or subvert existing proverbs deployed by their husbands' kin (i.e., their symbolic husbands), creating counter-proverbs in the process. To the extent that the women's counter-proverbs are modifications of existing expressions to suit current situations, they function like the witty anti-proverbs that Wolfgang Mieder (1993) has recorded from English and German, and Harry Walter and Valerii Mokienko (2005) have compiled from Russian. However, while anti-proverbs are said to be created to reflect harsh realities of the moment (Andrey Reznikov pp.468; 473), Kasena women's counter-proverbs deliberately oppose or contradict regnant perceptions of gender while also offering feminine insights. Through the tapestry of philosophical sayings that they weave, women express their ideals and aspirations and determine ways to ameliorate their circumstances.

The majority of the proverbs analyzed in this paper were collected between April 1994 and June 2000, while a few were recorded between December 2008 and January 2010. During these periods I visited my native village, Nogsenia, each visit lasting between two and eight weeks. In all cases I noted down in diary form the context and content of each proverb exchange as I observed it, and in cases where I needed clarification I interviewed

the users of the proverbs. A proverb exchange typically begins as a conversation between a woman and her symbolic husband in a joking situation, during which existing proverbs used by one joking partner, usually the symbolic husband, are subverted or appropriated by the other, usually the “wife”. In the process the women create counter-proverbs that parody the form yet contradict the meaning of the traditional proverbs. Data gathered by documenting proverbs as they are deployed in real life situations has been used by earlier scholars and found to be the most appropriate. According to Kwesi Yankah (1989), who has written extensively about the Akan proverb in Ghana, recording proverbs as they occur in actual life situations is the preferred method of data collection. Yankah contends that, “Doubtless... proverbs recorded in actual life situations, with the full complement of social, situational and discourse contexts would be the ideal data” (1989: 172). The contextualized examples of proverb exchanges that I recorded in joking situations allow me to examine the socio-cultural background to the proverbs and their users, and therefore to present a clear picture of the nature of this “proverbial” revolt.

The women whose counter-proverbs I discuss here are people of minimal or no literacy, although this situation is changing now with more girls staying in school (Mensch et al, 1999: 97). Their ages range from the mid-twenties to the early sixties. For these women, the main sources of income are subsistence farming and petty trading. Living mainly in and around Nogsenia village, a largely rural area that surrounds central Navrongo, the small capital of the Kasena-Nankana District, the women nonetheless have access to the radio, TV and women’s organizations such as the 31st December Women’s Movement founded about thirty years ago by former First Lady, Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings. They are therefore informed about gender issues, and their increasing awareness threatens traditional social organization, noticeable in husband-wife relations where women have wrested from their husbands the right to use their income as they deem appropriate. Their growing gender consciousness is also evident in their recent efforts at commercial farming through their Dezemdaane Women’s Union, a welfare association that doubles as a forum for discussing individual and collective concerns. The women’s “proverbial” revolt, and in particular their

counter-proverbs that turn traditional construction of female roles and worth on its head, can therefore be considered as part of their expanding knowledge of their rights and roles in society.

Many recent specific studies have been done on the role that proverbs and other genres of folklore have played and continue to play in the oppression and devaluation of women in African societies. Among the scholars who have written on this subject are Amba Oduyoye (1979) and Kwame Safro (1995) on the negative images of Asante women in Akan proverbs; Adefioye Oyesakin (1985) on images of women as “agents of indiscipline” and Iyabode Omolara Akewo Daniel (2008) on the low esteem of women in Yoruba proverbs; Kavesta Adagala (1992) on Kenyan oral literature as the root of patriarchal economic domination; Yeshe Habte Mariam (1995) on the role of Ethiopian Amharic proverbs in articulating the interests of the dominant group (men); Obododimma Oha (1999) on the devaluation of the female in Igbo proverbs; Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang (1999), Catherine Ndungo (2002), and Egara Stanley Kabaji (2005) on the construction of gender in the Akan folktale, Gikuyu and Swahili proverbs, and the Maragoli folktale, respectively; and Jeylan Wolyie Hussein (2009) on the discursive representation of women in Ethiopian, Sudanese and Kenyan proverbs.

The works of these writers reveal striking similarities in the way that roles, statuses and identities of women in different African cultures are represented in folklore, particularly in proverbs. The collective image of women that emerges from these publications seems to justify Mineke Schipper’s provocative title for her collection of African proverbs on women: *Source of All Evil* (1991). In all cases gendered ideology is found to be discursively framed in sexist texts. Proverbs are powerful ideological instruments, as their portrayal of women creates “near-indelible impressions” that “lay down the rules of social behaviour [and] determine how boys and girls eventually view each other as wives, husbands, parents, political leaders and owners of resources” (Kiyimba, 2005:253). According to Fasiku (2006: 51), proverbs constitute “a powerful rhetorical device for the shaping of moral consciousness, opinions, and beliefs.” Because of their didactic nature and their “rootedness in social imagination” (Gandara 2004: 347), proverbs are deemed to exert a formidable

moral force. In patriarchal cultures where a male orientation holds sway the proverb's authoritative force is strongest in matters concerning women. Schipper (1991:5) supports this view when she observes that "Although there are cases where the authoritative aspect of the proverb is not so much stressed, in many proverbs on women it apparently plays a role."

The patriarchal mindset that has shaped proverbs in Kasena society is evident in the stereotypical role that they construct of women as wives and mothers. When a Kasena girl is born it is presumed that she will grow up, get married and have children. The Kasena girl is therefore socialized to see marriage as her ultimate goal (see also Onayemi 2004: 125). Marriage is regarded as a matter of honor: it is seen to ensure respect for the woman and secure a good reputation for her family. If she fails to marry she is referred to as *kavello*, which means that she is "a woman adrift" with no defined purpose or destination in life. Once married, however, she is often seen as a destructive force—a point also made by Yisa Kehinde Yusuf (1997: 50) who finds that both English and Yoruba proverbs represent marriage as an "essentially male-serving institution and yet claim that marriage diminishes a man's happiness and increases his exposure to destruction," by the woman.

Although marriage is regarded as the high point of the Kasena woman's life, procreation is deemed the main reason for marriage and it is only when she bears children that she is considered to have attained the highest mark of womanhood. This view is illustrated by Kasena proverbs such as:

1. *Kaane nyoori wo o bulura ne mo* [A woman's worth lies in the children she bears];
2. *Kaane kuri mo lomma, se o ni ba lomma* [A woman's bottom should be warm (enough to bear children), but her mouth must not be warm]; and
3. *Kadiga ye cheeri kuri mo* [A barren woman is (like) an infertile piece of land].

Although Kasena place a high premium on children in general, they give prior place to male children and view females as inferior and less desired. Proverb scholarship on other African societies indicates that a similar perception of females pertains in other societies. Onayemi (2004:125) compares images of women in

classical and African proverbs and finds that women are portrayed as inferior to men. She concludes that this devaluation of women accounts for the preference for male children as articulated in the proverbs she examined, a trend that further places the female in a disadvantageous position. Similarly, Abasi Kiyimba (2005: 255) says of misogynistic Baganda proverbs that they express gender bias in favor of males while also “transmitting to [girls] the sense of being the less wanted.” This perception of the devalued female child has found expression in proverbs used by Kasena women. For example, one woman responded to her joking partner’s remark that “it is a male child that is a human being” with the proverb, *Ba ba zage teo ba li bu* [We do not hack away at a tree to find a child], which was a reminder that it is the woman, who is regarded as less than human, who gives birth to the much cherished male child.

It is such dehumanizing images of women, and specifically those pertaining to their role as mothers, that Kasena women deconstruct in their “proverbial” jesting. Yet women’s reactions to such discourse-based patriarchal oppression has eluded scholars, with the exception of my earlier studies on Kasena women (Yitah 2007; 2009). This is in spite of the disturbing picture of women that emerges from many concrete, rooted studies on African proverbs, and regardless of some concerns that traditional proverbs do not reflect women’s lived realities (Mariam, 1995: 79). Feminist scholars working on gender in Africa have brought the concerns of the subaltern woman into the wider discourse of feminism, but they have yet to give due attention to women’s radical response to society’s instruments of control. Some, like Ogun-dipe-Leslie, contend that African women are “shackled by their own self-image, by centuries of inferiorization of ideologies of patriarchy and gender hierarchy” (Ogun-dipe-Leslie, quoted in Boyce Davies, 1986: 8). For such scholars, to perceive the situation of the African woman in any other way is to ignore the general subordinate position of the female (see Sudarkasa 2004).

Others, including Ifi Amadiume (1987a; 1987b) and Oyeronke Oyewumi (1997), attempt to counter popular myths about the ‘subaltern’ African woman as oppressed and submissive by undertaking to represent African women and to articulate their difference from Western women. To this latter group, to view the Afri-

can woman as oppressed is to subscribe to “a master narrative [which] works persistently to homogenize differences that matter” (Ritchie 1993:368). However, their own nostalgic recourse to a pre-colonial past in their attempt to represent the local on the global stage has drawn much criticism. For instance, Imam (1988:39) remarks that in their representation pre-colonial Africa becomes “a harmonious age of male-female complementarity”. In Imam’s view these feminists inadvertently replace the myth of the subservient African [woman] with another: “the concept of ‘the Golden Age of Merry Africa’ in which pre-colonial Africa is seen as a land of peace and harmony free from conflict—something like the garden of Eden before the serpent” (1988:34).

While Imam may seem to have overstated his case against these African feminists, the positions that some of them take regarding gender relations in Africa indicate that they blame colonialism for “the growing patriarchal systems” on the continent (Amadiume, 1987a: 9) while reinforcing standard stereotypes in a ‘traditional’ African society. For Amadiume, as for others such as Oyewumi, pre-colonial Africa becomes the focal point in their effort to formulate epistemological critiques of feminist concepts such as ‘woman’ and the notion of gender. Their investigation of gender relations also focuses on the analysis of external influences, mainly the consequences of colonialism and modernization (Oyewumi 1997; Zdunnek 1995) and the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Nzegwu 2004) as disruptive forces that significantly altered gender identity in an African context. Such scholarship tends to ignore irregularity, uncertainty, and instability, and to efface the experiencing self. In their effort to present a broad picture of gender relations in pre-colonial Africa through their native cultures, these scholars have paid little or no attention to the network of different types of gender relations that would have ensured a balance between the local and the inter-cultural. Theorizing about African oral literature and about women oral artists in particular demands rigorous analysis, in-depth historicization, and close attention to specificities of time, place, and culture. The rewards of such historicization can be seen in research by scholars such as Gorog-Karady (1994), Mills (1992), and Donovan (1987) which reveals that in Africa, as in Western and other non-Western societies, “performances are often overtly

concerned with deconstructing dominant ideologies and expressive forms” (Bauman and Briggs, 1990: 66).

Schipper (1996:162) has pointed out that “oral literature ...can never be pinned down once for all on the basis of form, content, or perspective. Depending on societal changes, stories are adjusted in various directions.” In order for women to “adjust” existing stories to reflect their changing perceptions, they need a discursive space within which to “edit” the prepared script of female identity and to recreate themselves. This is why the work of feminism involves clearing “a space...from which woman can speak” her own reality (Pathak and Rajan, 1989: 562). From this space she can articulate possible futures, or what Afzal-Khan terms “the radical possibilities for change that can emerge if we really engage seriously with a vision of where our world is headed” (12). One way in which women have demonstrated the way to the future is via the proverbs they create and use. For instance, Mariam (1995), in her work on Amharic proverbs in Ethiopia, has uncovered a few female authored proverbs of rebellion. One of them is on the subject of divorce: “When a peasant gets sated he beats you with a ploughshare; leave him and come home, let him bake his own k’it’a” (p.55; proverb 257 in Appendix). The proverb is a product of women’s changing reality, for as Mariam points out, women’s economic independence has made divorce instigated by them quite common. The second proverb expresses the idea that women’s self-worth should not rest entirely in the rearing of children: “Who has been buried in her children’s hide?” (p.58; proverb 258 in Appendix). It is perhaps no co-incidence that I recorded a similar proverb created by a Kasena woman: “Who has been sacrificed to the gods for failing to bear a child?”

It is important to explore such perceptions of women regarding themselves as women and mothers and the meaning that they make of their experiences of womanhood and motherhood based on lines of thought derived from their proverbs. These new lines of thinking allow for a fresh analysis of African gendered realities in order to develop perspectives for a different future. My analysis of proverbs as they are used by Kasena women reveals that through their appropriation and re-creation of proverbs, those most powerful of instruments “for stifling change [and] silencing ques-

tions,” women seek to delink their individual identities from “their sex roles and the way those biological activities are ‘gendered’ or understood by their culture” (Fontaine 2004:196).

Based on my research, I agree with Carole Fontaine, who has studied women’s use of proverbs in the Bible, that women who define their legitimacy outside of the orbit of motherhood seem to “feel more free—or, more appropriately, are *shown* as more freely using frames and proverbs which do not depend on the tropes of motherhood for their legitimacy” (2004:196). Kasena women do not hesitate to invoke their own or others’ motherhood as a legitimizing base, but they also critique any attempt on the part of their male joking partners to present motherhood as synonymous with *the* identity of women. By thus refusing to don what Fontaine refers to as “the cloak of cultural approval that archetypal images of motherhood could provide” (2004:196), Kasena women seem intent on focusing attention on other aspects of their identity—as persons with aspirations and ambitions for individual fulfillment and group well being.

Achieving their ambitions precludes any anxiety on the part of these women to fulfill cultural requirements for proper womanhood. Therefore, the verbal strategies that they deploy in their proverbs transgress such expectations, as can be seen from examples that follow. The first proverb exchange occurred in the house of a woman who had just had a baby. Her male joking partner had gone there to congratulate her on her safe delivery, as is the custom among the Kasena:

Man (to the woman): My wife, where is my baby? Bring him out and let me see whether he looks as handsome as I do.

Woman: Which child? Who says he is yours?

Man: Go on, bring out my son and stop wasting my time.

Woman: Not until you answer my question. [You are] *The stone that does not know that it gets to taste oil because of the bean*. Did I tell you that I bore the baby for you?

The man’s discourse is typical of “the male-centeredness of both motherhood and parenting that Pandey (2004:117) observes in her study of representation in the works of West African women writers: *my* baby, *my* son, *my* wife. Citing examples from Buchi Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen*, Pandey (2004: 114) argues that in women’s writings the male dominating role comes

through in self-centered references such as “first wife,” “his children,” and “she bore him another child.” Such representations make “a menacing statement about power relations” between male and female (Kiyimba, 2005: 255). They celebrate male power by taking for granted the woman’s subordinate position and her child-bearing role, and rigidly delineate her place in society by affirming the man’s right to demand that she fulfills it.

Hussein (2009: 98) remarks that “one way in which women participate in the patriarchal discourse is through using and maintaining proverbs that disparage them or articulate their subordinate position.” The woman, however, is not persuaded to accept her own subjugation. Instead, she deploys a proverb that critiques and scrutinizes the role society has ascribed to her. She thus rejects the discourse of control and resists the man’s ego-centric gestures, preferring instead to assert her authority to determine for whom she bore the child. By so doing, she also suggests that motherhood is a decision a woman makes *on her own terms*; it does not come about as a result of male expectations. She points out to her male joking partner that, regardless of what he might think or say, he owns neither her nor her baby. Rather, like a tiny stone that gets to taste oil because it happens to find itself among cooked beans, he gets to share the child by his association with her. This is a radical move to displace and replace the ideology that perceives motherhood and parenting as male-centered. Such transgression of male ownership of women and children is at the center of the verbal moves Kasena women make in their proverbs.

In the next example, a similar verbal struggle arises over who gets to decide when a woman should become pregnant. In the process, the woman determines with finality that after one child she is through with childbirth. The exchange took place in front of the woman’s house, where she was sitting under a baobab tree with her two-year old child in her lap. The man had gone to a nearby house and stopped by on his return for a chat with the woman:

Man: Put this big child down and let me have access to my wares
(implying: It is my right to have sex with you).

Woman: Me? Again?

Man: You never know; *there is always a trace of urine over excreta*. (Implying: One birth is a good sign that a woman can bear another child.)

Woman: But what have you done for me and for this child, that I should want another? *Is 'leave my hand' not always better than 'allow me to get up'?* (Implying: Is it not better to avoid trouble than to try to get out of it after it arrives?)

Man: What you said does not make sense to me. When a chief asks you to dance, do you say that *you have trouble with your hips?*

Woman: Eeeeh! *I am telling you that fire has burned sheep, and do you ask me where are the skins?*

All the proverbs used in this conversation already exist in Kasem, but the woman quotes two of them in a context in which they typically do not occur. The first proverb that the man cites, *there is always a trace of urine over excreta*, reveals his assumption that as long as the woman is capable of bearing children it is the prerogative of the male to regulate her reproductive role. This perception is also captured in his use of the possessive form, "my wares," in the first sentence. His second proverb affirms this position, since it casts him in the role of a powerful chief whose command must be obeyed unconditionally. An interesting point about this interaction is that the two speak at cross purposes; throughout the conversation the man is focused on his male privilege, and therefore either oblivious to or dismissive of the woman's meaning. He sees her emphatic expression of unwillingness only as reason to assert his hegemonic masculinity and his authority over her.

The proverb, "*leave my hand*" is better than "*allow me to get up*," is usually cited to indicate the need to deal with undesirable behavior before it gets out of hand. Since traditionally Kasena regard children as a woman's crowning glory, it is inconceivable that they would consider childbirth a problem to be nipped in the bud. In this sense the woman's use of the proverb is subversive and articulates her view of childbirth, which is that one child represents "*leave my hand*" (meaning she is still on her feet and can fight or run away from trouble as necessary) while two or more children would constitute, "*allow me to get up*," implying that at this point she would be hampered and helpless. These

comments about every successive child further weakening the mother's ability to fend for herself and her children must not be construed as portraying African motherhood as undesirable. Instead, they should be considered in light of the huge responsibility that is placed on African mothers in a time of postcolonial economic crisis. Structural Adjustment Programs, Civil Strife, and AIDS have exacerbated the severe threats to life in African countries where women form the majority of the poor, the illiterate, and the under-resourced. In such conditions, one more mouth to feed can make all the difference between survival and starvation; hence, the woman's first proverb.

The second proverb she deploys is a slightly modified version of the traditional saying, *when you are told that fire has burned sheep, do you ask, "where are their skins"?* By quoting it she declares futile the man's insistence that she should bear him a child against her wish, and suggests that his behavior is captured by the idea that the proverb expresses; that is, he is making a desperate effort to save a hopeless situation. It is ironic that the man attempts to assert his authority only to have it undermined at each turn by the woman, and this is probably the most entertaining part of the performance. Yet it is this irony that draws our attention to the grounds for the battle: the question of who has power over the woman's body. Perhaps it is significant that the woman has the last word on the issue—an indication that male power has been dislocated, or at the very least, challenged. Her second proverb, left, as it is, in the air, carries a deafening ring of defeat for the man. It brings the conversation to a dramatic close, literally leaving him speechless, yet making its poignant point that parenthood is not all about numbers.

In the two examples that follow, Kasena women demonstrate their self-assertiveness by challenging the image of the woman as "a beast that produces the man's children" (Ogundipe-Leslie 1994:35). In the first exchange the woman had gone to the man's house to visit his brother who was ill and bed-ridden. The woman's house had earlier been devastated by a storm, but her male joking partner had not yet visited her and sympathized with her as custom demanded. He therefore felt quite uneasy on seeing her and attempted to sooth his conscience by joking on the subject:

Man: Don't worry. I am about to build for you a house of cement and stone, one that you'll live in till you die.

Woman: Hmm hmm! Look at you talking big. Can you even provide a meal a day?

Man: Be careful. Remember that *a woman's bottom may be warm, but her mouth must not.*

Woman: How does it happen that my bottom should be warm but not my mouth? Is it not said that *one mouth does not stay silent while another speaks?*

Man: First of all, because a warm mouth in a woman can destroy a whole clan, and secondly, because your duty is to bear for me children; as many children as I can father.

Woman: I don't need a warm mouth, just an ordinary mouth to tell you that I'm not a nanny goat whose main duty is considered to be littering kids for its owner.

We encounter in this instance the kind of patriarchal discourse that also characterizes the previous exchange, that is, the view of the woman as subordinate to the man, who perceives himself as naturally superior and arrogates to himself the authority to dominate and silence her. The association of women with beasts in the woman's subversive last sentence is an allusion to another proverb: *Noono na tera songo ne, o bone lura bobale mo* [When its owner is absent, the nanny goat gives birth to only males]. The meaning of this proverb lies in the fact that, while Kasena men prefer male children who will ensure the continuity of their lineage, they also stand to benefit from young female goats that will "litter" more young ones. The traditional view is that children are an investment for the man, with the woman being important only as provider of the necessary capital. From this perception comes the proverb that all a woman needs is "a warm bottom" to incubate babies; beyond that she must recognize her subordinate position and not challenge a man's authority.

According to Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:34-35, 36), this perception accounts for "the physical control of woman's body and its products," a practice that she traces back to pre-colonial times. In such a system, the woman is treated as "a beast that produces the man's children on his behalf." In Ogundipe-Leslie's view, in order to bring about the redistribution of power, property, and privilege between men and women, African wom-

en must, among other things, learn not to please and cajole where more self-assertive actions are needed. The woman appears to heed this advice, as she rejects the woman/beast association while also suggesting that she must not be perceived as “having a warm mouth” for rebelling against such a disparaging image of women. Rather, her action should be considered as the natural way to assert her humanity, as *one mouth does not speak while the other stays silent*. She thus takes on one of the paradoxes that confront Kasena women, which is that women are belittled as being stupid, yet when a woman demonstrates intelligence she is severely criticized for “having a warm mouth.”

For other women, however, whenever men express such views, they provide an occasion for demonstrating female intellectual power and for refocusing attention on discourse as a means for broadening conceptual space. Witness the following example, which is an encounter between a man and two of his cousin’s wives on the farm. The man’s farm and his cousin’s were in the same vicinity, and he had gone over to eat his lunch and to joke with his “wives,” with whom I was sitting under a tree.

1st Woman (to man, who was eating bean cakes): Can I have some? I have not eaten all day.

Man: Look at you sitting down empty (i.e., not pregnant) and wanting food to eat. What are you going to eat for? (To second woman, who is visibly pregnant) You take this cake and eat it for me. As for your co-wife, *giving her any food is like planting my millet by the path*; whether or not I will get to harvest it is uncertain.

2nd Woman: Is it not the case that *when you plant your millet away from the path, the path can still widen to meet it*?

1st Woman: Do not mind him. He does not seem to realize that *if you move a load from your head onto your shoulders, it brings you no relief*. Besides, is it not the wayside millet that protects what is further in-land?

Man: Is it me you are speaking these proverbs to? Oh ho! Women have changed!

The man cites an existing proverb in a context in which it “re-morselessly down-plays or nullifies the value of women in society” (Hussein 104). He expresses the kind of outdated beliefs and

values that contemporary African philosophers such as Kwasi Wiredu (1995) and Paulin Houndtondji (1996) contend should be discarded. Before them, Kwame Nkrumah and Franz Fanon were among those who thought that Africa's uncritical wisdom was part of the weakness that left the continent an easy prey to colonialism. Such wisdom, to these thinkers, was therefore contrary to the needs of modern independent Africa (Sumner, 1991: 57-58).

Oblivious to the urgings of these thinkers, the man revels in the perception that childbirth provides as much security as does planting millet away from the wayside. The implication is that, in a patrilineal society such as the Kasena, children are insiders among their father's kin. Conversely, wives are outsiders among their husbands' kin (although married women are considered by their fathers' kin to belong with their husbands), and their main value lies in bearing children who will ensure the survival of the patrilineage. Kasena millet farms typically surround every house, making it necessary for passageways to be made through the farms. A number of factors make planting millet (or any crop) by the wayside a risky affair. If the path is too narrow, as it often is, people may trample the young plants closest to the wayside. During the harvest season, it is also easy for passers-by, particularly children, to fetch some of the millet closest to the path, thus denying the farmer of part of his harvest. In the context of this exchange, the man compares the "empty" woman with wayside millet, which is equated with insecurity. In other words, until the woman is pregnant with his child, he cannot be sure that she will "bring him any yield," and investing in her at this point may be a lost cause. To invest in a pregnant woman, on the other hand, is to "plant away from the path."

However, the women subject to rigorous rational scrutiny and evaluation the ideas he seems to glorify. They deconstruct the proverb that he quotes to support his view, demonstrating the need to transform his kind of ideology and the structures that sustain it. Fontaine (2004:196) has argued that even such proverbs as the one cited by the man:

can be strategically deployed to teach the opposite. Where proverbs are used to restrict and bind, their citation can be undermined in a variety of ways in the arena

of performance, opening the group to new directions in action and thought.

As the second woman points out, planting one's millet further away from the path may keep it protected from passersby for a short while, but people looking to widen the path will soon extend it to fill up the empty space so created, just as devaluing women in an attempt to create space for children can be counter-productive. A woman, they suggest, is worth more than just a potential or actual mother. The women's univocal message, clinched in the last proverb of the exchange, is a sobering one for this man whose untenable position on the relative values of wives and children it effectively debunks.

The futility of trying to pin a woman's worth down to motherhood is also the subject of the next example, in which, unlike her counterparts in the above examples, the woman abandons any considerations of subtlety in her choice of imagery. The conversation, in which I participated, took place between two brothers and their eldest brother's wife under a kapok tree in front of my father's house. It began with one brother making a comment that the woman, who had just finished threshing some millet, was physically weak and therefore of no more use to him:

1st Brother: Is it this little millet that you took so long to pound?

You are really useless to me now. I should let you go and then I'll bring a new wife.

Woman: Make me go. Since you are not useless, why did you not come and take over and pound it faster?

2nd Brother: You must not talk as if she is of no more use to us.
No matter how ugly a tree is, it can still provide shade.

Helen: What does the shade refer to?

2nd Brother: Well, she is still capable of bearing children. If she bears me a child, that is my shade.

1st Brother: But with so many attractive trees around to provide me with shade, what do I need an ugly tree for?

Woman: Whom are you calling an ugly tree anyway?

2nd Brother: Our ancestors said that *it is more than needed is better than it is not enough* (i.e., it is better to have more than you need, than to have less). Do you think they were wrong?

Woman: I see that you two are really concerned with trees and shade today. Do you know that *a person who is enthralled by shade gets no work done?*

Through her spontaneously created proverb, this woman raises a number of crucial issues. First of all, in spite of her question, she clearly understands that she is the “ugly tree” that is perceived to have no use except to provide shade (i.e., children) for her “husbands.” A more crucial (albeit implied) question is, should a tree be thought of only in terms of the shade it can provide? Is a woman worth anything more to her husband than a child breeder? The second brother, by focusing on child bearing, appears to subscribe to the traditional view that *the woman’s worth lies in the children she bears*. By thus critiquing the tree/shade image the woman offers some conceptual possibilities for viewing gender. Her remark about the men being overly concerned with shade seems to imply that a tree, like a woman, has many more uses than just to provide shade, and that focusing solely on shade, even if it is an ugly tree that is being considered, causes them to overlook these other uses. Among the Kasena, who depend mainly on subsistence farming, the shade is a place for relaxation after hours of farm work in the sun. But until the day’s work is done, the hardworking farmer only takes brief rests in the shade. Thus, to be enthralled to the shade is to literally get no work done. Metaphorically, the men’s conversation “gets no work done” in terms of assessing the worth of a woman. While she would be happy to bear children, she considers herself to be worth much more. Interestingly, while other Kasena women have compared polygamy to oppression and servitude (see Yitah, 2007:383), in her focus on her self-worth she ignores the first man’s suggestion that he will marry another wife—an indication that such critiques of polygamy vary according to context and individual interest. A common denominator, however, is that in suggesting alternative paradigms for analyzing gender the women speak *as women*, and not as mothers.

One striking feature of the proverbs discussed in this paper is that the most seemingly un-gendered expressions are invested with gendered meanings, suggesting a high level of consciousness on the part of the women regarding gender identity. Thus, conversations that begin with general topics often veer into gen-

dered territory as the women begin to make connections between what is said and what is left unsaid. In the following example, what is said reveals the man's presumption to determine whether his goat gives birth to males or females. What is left unsaid is the connection between the way he regards his goats and the way he perceives his women and children. The setting is the crowded house of a bereaved family, where the joking partners had just spent the night, as is the custom among clan members during funerals. The initial topic, the sale of groundnuts in the market, soon gives way to a critique of male assumptions about controlling when and to what a female gives birth:

Woman: Did your groundnut sale go well yesterday? The market was rather bad for me.

Man: I had to go home and prepare to come here, so I put what was left of it in the care of my daughter, who "threw it away" [i.e., sold it very cheap] in her hurry to go home. You know, *when its owner is away, the nanny goat gives birth to only males*.

Woman: What could the goat's owner have done to change the situation? I sat by my wares until dark, but still finally "threw them away." [pause]. But there is one thing I don't understand about you men. You want male children from your wives, and females from your goats. One can understand the case with your wives, since it is said that you men determine the sex of a child. But with goats... [laughter from onlookers].

2nd Woman: Let's not even debate that issue. Men *think* they can control what a woman gives birth to, but we all know this is only the case of *the plough claiming to be pushing the bullock*.

The first woman demonstrates a high level of consciousness by reading gender difference into the man's spoken proverb about goats, their offspring, and their owners. She critiques the assumption that a man owns his wife and children in the same way that he does his goats, and that he determines the sex of the offspring in both cases. The laughter that greets her statement from the onlookers suggests not only their perception of the ridiculous nature of such an assumption, but also their admiration for the

woman's ingenuity and her good sense of humor. While some women have rejected the image of the woman as childbearing beast, the second woman associates a woman with a bullock—another instance that indicates that attitudes to such images tend to be context-bound. It is perhaps worth noting that she chooses a bullock and not a cow, which is the female. In her effort to transgress the cow-image in 'traditional' proverbs, which some women have critiqued in other joking situations (Yitah, 2007:384-385), she steps outside the orbit of stereotypical images to construct one that she considers would most appropriately communicate her view.

In a later interview I had with the second woman to establish the meaning of her bullock and plough analogy, she told me that in this era of "opened eyes" (the phrase means consciousness or awareness) a woman could decide whether to fall pregnant, and at what point in her menstrual cycle to do so. "Even in the days of our ancestors," she opined, "women had ways of doing this." As far as this woman is concerned, women have always been in control when it comes to decisions about pregnancy and childbirth, although men, blinded by their anxiety to dominate, have remained oblivious to this situation. Scholars have increasingly recognized the indirect power of women in situations such as the one outlined by this Kasena woman, although they have found it difficult to measure. Some ethnographers have observed that women may appear to be passive actors, but through female strategies, women exercise indirect power by using the marital role to manipulate situations to their advantage (Pellow 1977:31; Louise Lamphere 1974:111). It would seem that women's covert control of their bodies, sexuality, family, and reproduction, forms part of such female strategies.

Women's constant critique of the portrayal of females via animal imagery is also evident in the next "proverbial" exchange, where once again a woman alludes to the proverb about the goat that is expected to do nothing but bear kids for its owner. To focus solely on her reproductive role, she asserts, is to consign her to the status of an animal and therefore to nullify her humanity. Although this proverb is not central to the conversation, it prepares the ground for her spontaneously authored masterpiece, in which is clinched a profound philosophical statement about motherhood and female identity. It was a Navrongo market

day in December, 2008, and my mother was making brisk business selling her locally brewed beer made from guinea corn or sorghum, called *pito*. Among the small group of customers gathered under her shed were two joking partners, my father's cousin and my young aunt (my uncle's twenty-two year old wife). As I was arriving my aunt was leaving, and the following conversation ensued between her and her "husband":

Young Aunt: I am leaving. Give me money for ingredients so that I can go and begin cooking.

Cousin: Give money for what? It is not food I want from you but children. *A woman's worth lies in giving birth to children.* When you begin bearing them then you can ask me for money day and night and I would gladly give you whatever you want.

Young Aunt: But you [the husbands] say that *a woman's glory is in being married.* Then when she marries you demand children as a condition for her peace and successful stay with her husband. Even when she bears children, she is not free unless she has males. Where does all this end?

Cousin: Why should it end? Is it not normal for a man to expect children from his wife?

Young Aunt: All this talk about my bearing you children makes me feel like the proverbial female goat. In any case, *has any woman ever been sacrificed to the gods because she failed to bear children?*

Cousin: You have such a warm mouth! Oh! You women have indeed changed!

The first two proverbs quoted are existing ones that attempt to define women's worth from a male perspective. The man takes advantage of the view that the proverb is a neutral traditional "truth" from an authoritative source, the ancestors. From this perspective the proverb, *a woman's worth lies in giving birth to children*, appears to lend validity to his argument that motherhood is synonymous with female identity, while also allowing him to hide behind a traditionally sanctioned message. The situation recalls Yankah's observations regarding the use of proverbs in Akan oratory. In *Speaking for the Chief* (1995:52) Yankah says that the proverb is effective in communication because,

among other things, it is ascribed to parties other than the interactants, it states a cultural truism, and it saves face. In this proverb exchange the proverb also serves as a convenient vehicle for the man because its connotations are well known and there is no risk of his being misunderstood.

From the woman's standpoint, however, these connotations only reinforce her subordinate position in traditional society. Thus, when she recalls the proverb, *a woman's glory is in being married*, she does so only to distance herself from its "truth." It is significant that she prefaces the proverb with the expression, "but you [the husbands] say that..." As Carole Fontaine (2004:184-185) has rightly observed, the introductory expressions through which performers key in their performance form an important part of proverbial speech. The woman's disclaimer is one such introductory strategy that subverts traditional wisdom while appearing to appeal to it. In order to buttress her point, after citing the proverb she follows it up with the three binding hoops that circumscribe a woman's life in traditional society: marriage, reproduction, and male children. In her discussion of the role that Akan proverbs play in female socialization, Amba Oduyoye (1979:5) has argued that the imagery about women that we find in idioms and proverbs lead us to form sociolinguistic associations of what a person is—associations that then shape what we consider to be that person's capabilities. Proverbs thus "serve as socialization maxims, reinforcing the image of women as well as constituting the justification for their ascribed roles." In a similar context, Mariam (1995:5-7) observes that proverbs on women do not reflect the viewpoints of the whole society, but instead represent the interests of the dominant group in patriarchal societies. Proverbs, says Mariam, reinforce patriarchal structures through persuading the people to accept patriarchal views as normal.

This is why we must take note when women undertake to "halt, reverse, and challenge" the patriarchal perceptions of their male joking partners, "in a word, to interrupt business-as-usual" (Afzal-Khan, 2004: 15). In order to do so these female interrogators have to look beyond the individual male user's interpretation and examine the collective image that proverbs present of women, even if they do so within the seemingly harmless medium of the joking relationship. The female joking partner "interrupts

business as usual” when she creates the proverb, *has any woman ever been sacrificed to the gods because she failed to bear children?* This proverb is remarkable because it deconstructs the idea that female worth is solely located in motherhood, and it does so by drawing evidence from the very culture that discards childless women. Through it the woman articulates a “truth” that had until that moment remained concealed by misogynist rhetoric. Kasena would offer local produce from their farms, such as millet, guinea corn and sorghum, chickens, goats, sheep, or cows to their gods, but they would never sacrifice a human being. The fact that not even the childless woman, who is thought to occupy the lowest status in society, can be sacrificed to the gods and ancestors, therefore proves that society recognizes her humanity and distinguishes it from her reproductive role.

Uncovering a “truth” that was waiting to be made known is also the subject of the next example. The joking situation arose during the naming ceremony for a baby boy, when one man remarked to the new mother that by giving birth to a male she had “produced” a human being. A second woman, who also shares a joking relationship with the man, joined in towards the end:

Man: Congratulations, my wife; you have done well, you have produced a real human being.

New Mother: What is that supposed to mean? That I, the mother, am a goat?

Man: I did not mean to offend you, but let’s face it, *a woman’s worth lies in giving birth to **male children**.*

New Mother: A woman may not be worth much to you, but *we do not hack away at a tree to find a child.*

2nd Woman (to new mother): My sister, don’t mind him. What has he achieved that you have not? *If a woman does not climb a kapok tree, neither should a man.*

Man: So now you women are ganging up against me? My fellow men, where are you?

Among the Kasena and some other peoples in Ghana, it is quite common to hear men refer to male children as “human beings.” For instance, when I had my first child, a son, a male acquaintance from another northern Ghanaian culture jokingly remarked that I had given birth to “a human being.” This type of back-

handed comment may have been received as a compliment in the past, but clearly, in contemporary times it is met with disapproval. The male joking partner realizes this rather late, when his attempt to put the new mother down backfires and he becomes the butt of the two women's jokes. In a feeble effort to support his view, he alters a traditional proverb by adding the phrase, "male children," but the women are not fazed by this misogynist maneuver.

The mother modifies the form and extends the meaning of an existing proverb. A person to whom inhumane treatment has been meted would typically cite the proverb, *I was not cut out of a tree*, in order to indicate that she or he is also a thinking, feeling being and therefore deserves compassion. In the woman's rendition, however, she replaces the speaking "I" with an indefinite "we," a change that transforms the proverb from a specific protest by an individual into a general statement of "truth" about humanity. "Nobody was cut out of a tree," she seems to say; "every person was born of a woman." Through her proverb she criticizes the folly of placing a greater value on male children than on the women who bring them into existence. In this sense she appropriates the existing proverb to achieve "the radical spirit of textual/verbal liberation" (Raji-Oyelade, 1999:76). Through her artistry and wit she wrests from tradition "a meaning of her own" which both derives from and contests the grounds of a traditional proverb. To quote Harold Bloom, she achieves a:

freedom of meaning, the freedom to have a meaning of one's own. Such freedom is wholly illusory unless it is achieved against a prior plenitude of meaning, which is tradition, and is also against language...Freedom of meaning is wrested by combat, of meaning against meaning. (qtd. in Raji-Oyelade, 1999:76)

An analysis of the second woman's proverb indicates that she joins in the meaning wresting war that her counterpart has initiated. Clearly, she invokes the themes that the first woman sets forth in her "proverbial" appropriation. In addition, there are parallels between their gendered interpretations about the rights and statuses of mothers in a patriarchal society. The second woman's proverb is an adaptation of a Kasena idiom, *to climb a mahogany tree*, which denotes a rise in the price of an item or in

the status of a person. When used in the latter sense the saying also connotes putting on airs, boasting, and arrogance, among other things. In the savannah grassland that the Kasena inhabit, where the mahogany appears to be the tallest tree, this expression is not farfetched. In the woman's recreated version, however, the kapok tree is used because not only is it common in her neighborhood, but also its height, particularly its tall stem, makes it a suitable substitute. The joking context suggests that in her proverb it is the connotative meaning of the phrase that is implied. While her "sister" focuses on the primacy of motherhood, she concentrates on the right that women have earned to flaunt their achievements as mothers (that is, *to climb the kapok tree*)—a right that in her view is not due men. Taken together, the proverbs that both women deploy reveal some of the resources available in African women's verbal art for facilitating critical thinking against the grain of stereotypical representation and controlling images.

The proverbial jesting analyzed here allows us to see the processes whereby social relations that determine existence in Kasena society are produced, reproduced, and transformed. The proverbs themselves are texts that people can play with, and through that play, generate new possibilities of being. As is probably clear by now, gender identity in Kasem is a charged space full of moves and counter moves, in which the female mind becomes a mode of self-assertion and a contributor of unique insights. In this space, everyday discourse is not ephemeral, but an important site for psychological and relational transactions. In such joking situations people formulate their mental states, construct themselves, and present their motives to others—all important actions in identity-positioning work. Thus identity and consciousness seem to be created at the point of performance. For the women involved, joking is a discourse that is aimed at reconstituting the world in less oppressive ways and generating new possibilities of being. For men (and women) who want to look and listen, those who can see, those who want to see a more liberated (because less conventional) vision of women's subjectivity, the Kasena women offer it in their subversive proverbs.

While there is some justification in the accusations that African gender theorists have leveled against Western feminists for

their over-commitment to general laws and lack of attention to cultural realities, African scholars' rootedness in their native cultures, as I have indicated, has not entirely eliminated a tendency to represent gender identity in Africa as a closed system built on a shaky ground of gender neutrality. Both groups can learn from Wai Chee Damock's comments on the direction in which literary "families" should be heading. Literature, writes Damock, "needs to maintain an archive that is as broad based as possible, as fine grained as possible, an archive that errs on the side of randomness rather than on the side of undue coherence, if only to allow new permutations to come into being" (90). What emerges from my analysis is a view of African society not as a gender-neutral system, as Oyewumi and others have argued, but as a multi-system in which all interpersonal relationships are determined by gender hierarchies combined with other determinants of priority to construct the place of the individual. In this gender-scape, identity is a position and a place that is achieved rather than ascribed.

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

ALAN DUNDES AS BOOK COLLECTOR

Among paremiologists and folklorists of the world who had the opportunity to visit the beautiful home of Alan Dundes in the Berkeley hills of California, the truly impressive personal library of this giant among scholars will always be remembered. He did in fact collect over 9,000 volumes, and it can well be imagined that this treasure became quite the problem for the Dundes family after Alan Dundes (1934-2005) had passed away. While still alive, Alan Dundes had on occasion expressed the wish and hope that his entire library could some day be housed somewhere to be used by scholars and students alike. After several years of looking for a home for the books, a special room at the Doheny Memorial Library on the campus of the University of Southern California was found and remodeled to house this unique collection of books. It was agreed that there would be an official opening ceremony with a reception sponsored by the Dundes family on April 16, 2011, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Western States Folklore Society. It was my special honor to have been asked by the Dundes family to offer remarks on this memorable occasion, and since various friends and colleagues have asked me to publish my comments, I do present them here in memory of my best friend Alan Dundes.

Reception and opening ceremony for the:

Alan Dundes Folklore Library Collection Room
Doheny Memorial Library, University of Southern California

Welcome everybody to this special event at the end of our annual meeting of the Western States Folklore Society. Let me start by thanking Carolyn Dundes and the entire Dundes family for making the incredibly rich personal library of Alan Dundes in its entirety available to the public. Special thanks go to Alison Dundes Renteln, Lauren Dundes, and David Dundes for their

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work in arranging the transfer of the books from the exquisite Dundes home in the Berkeley hills to the campus of the University of Southern California. But, of course, we also all want to express our appreciation to Catherine Quinlan, Dean of the Library, and Marje Schuetze-Coburn, Senior Associate Dean, for their willingness to house this truly unique collection of books in the Doheny Memorial Library.

In the modern world, the commitment and engagement of assembling such a vast personal library have become somewhat of a rarity, and it is equally rare for a library to find the space to house such a collection of books so that generations of scholars and students might benefit from this treasure trove of international scholarship. The fact that we can assemble here today at the opening of the Alan Dundes Folklore Library Collection Room is then surely an absolutely unique and memorable event!

Prof. Alan Dundes (1934-2005) was an esteemed, distinguished, and loved giant in the multifaceted field of international folkloristics, whose voluminous publications and lectures delivered around the world touched thousands of scholars and over twenty-thousand students of folklore, anthropology, psychology, art, history, religion, literature, language, etc.

He was *the* Pied Piper of Folklore *par excellence*. During his four decades at Berkeley his Folklore Program became internationally known as the ideal place to pursue serious comparative folklore studies, with the Berkeley Folklore Archives serving as a model for gathering various folklore materials from modern oral or written sources. Under his guidance Berkeley became the Mecca for folklore studies.

While Alan Dundes was busy with his own projects, he always had the time to welcome visitors from near and far, thereby practicing what he preached throughout his productive and fruitful life, namely that folkloristics is one of the keys to a better understanding of the human condition and that its practitioners should conduct their work on a comparative and international basis.

Alan Dundes was unique in numerous ways – his untiring commitment to folklore studies, his fabulous abilities as a lecturer in classes that attracted up to five hundred students, his international contacts, his vast knowledge in multiple scholarly disciplines, his incredible scholarly energy, his love and care for his

undergraduate and graduate students, his meaningful friendships, his editorial prowess, and, of course, his massive scholarship. More than anybody else in folklore studies, he knew how to make sense out of incomprehensible or seemingly nonsensical folkloric traditions, from toys to symbols, from folk narratives to myths, from riddles to proverbs, from art to mass lore, from tradition to innovation, from ethnic slurs to national character, from belief to worldview, etc.

But as his many students knew only too well, and as we can see from the books in this room, he was a true lover of books, always eager to instill this fascination with books in his students and fellow scholars. No advanced student got out of having to assemble a major annotated bibliography on a folkloric matter, with the master himself with his photographic memory registering all new articles, dissertations, and books in his mind and heart. Alan Dundes was a philologist in the finest, widest, and most inclusive meaning of that word. He still believed in books and followed in the footsteps of such world-famous folklorists like the Brothers Grimm, Archer Taylor, Lutz Röhrich, Wayland Hand, and others, whose personal libraries and encyclopedic minds we admire to this day.

Of course, Alan Dundes produced plenty of his own books, with most of them belonging to the standard works in folkloristics. They all cover unique folkloric phenomena, combining the two fundamental aspects of folklore studies: identification and interpretation. Let me just mention a few of the titles of his own books and those edited by him that have forever changed and advanced the study of folklore:

The Study of Folklore (1965)

Mother Wit from the Laughing Barrel. Readings in the

Interpretation of African-American Folklore (1973)

Urban Folklore from the Paperwork Empire (1975, with Carl Pagter)

Essays in Folkloristics (1978)

Interpreting Folklore (1980)

The Art of Mixing Metaphors. A Folkloristic Interpretation of the "Netherlandish Proverbs" by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1981, with Claudia Stibbe)

- The Wisdom of Many. Essays on the Proverb* (1981, with Wolfgang Mieder)
- Cinderella. A Folklore Casebook* (1982)
- Life is Like a Chicken Coup Ladder. A Portrait of German Culture Through Folklore* (1984)
- The Wandering Jew. Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend* (1986, with Galit Hasan-Rokem)
- Cracking Jokes. Studies of Sick Humor Cycles and Stereotypes* (1987)
- Little Red Riding Hood. A Casebook* (1989)
- Parsing Through Customs. Essays by a Freudian Folklorist* (1987)
- Folklore Matters* (1989)
- Folk Law. Essays in the Theory and Practice of "Lex Non Scripta", 2 vols.* (1994, with Alison Dundes Renteln)
- The Cockfight. A Casebook* (1994)
- From Game to War and Other Psychoanalytical Essays on Folklore* (1997)
- Two Tales of Crow and Sparrow. A Freudian Folkloristic Essay on Caste and Untouchability* (1997)
- Holy Writ as Oral Lit. The Bible as Folklore* (1999)
- Bloody Mary in the Mirror. Essays in Psychoanalytic Folkloristics* (2002)
- The Shabbat Elevator and Other Sabbath Subterfuges. An Unorthodox Essay on Circumventing Custom and Jewish Character* (2002)
- Fables of the Ancients? Folklore in the Qur'an* (2003)
- Folklore. Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies, 4 vols.* (2005)

We could go on, but if we want to have enough time for me to mention the 9,000 titles of the books that have joined this library and of which many are assembled here in this room, I better stop!

As this treasure trove of books shows, Alan Dundes' love of and interest in books knew no limits. Books from around the world in numerous languages on folklore form the basis of his gargantuan collection. But there are also books on anthropology,

art, history, Judaica, linguistics, literature, mythology, Native Americans, psychology, religion, sociology, etc.

All these books represent a lifelong love and fascination with books. And how much Alan Dundes enjoyed the hunt for them! No second-hand bookstore was safe as he would pull books off the shelves that interested him. Never will I forget our hours together in such stores, finding books for ourselves and for each other. It was an obsession, but a relatively harmless one, as long as the price was not too exuberant. But we really didn't care about the money. I don't think we ever put a book back because it was too expensive. If we wanted it, we bought it, and we faced Carolyn Dundes and Barbara Mieder later. But our wives delighted in our bookish fun and joy!

There was never selfishness in the hunt. Leaving a second-hand bookstore without at least one newly discovered treasure was unacceptable! More often, we would walk out with so many books that we could hardly carry them – a bit like Simon Bronner likes to do now! When Alan and I were together, it was like two little kids edging each other on: Let's go to the bookstores! And let's have some pizza, Alan a coke and I a beer, of course. Oh what great fun it all was – and all in the name of scholarship and putting together personal libraries.

And oh the excitement when a book was found that would mean much more to the friend: "Hey, Wolfgang, look at this, Do you know this? What do you mean you don't have it? You must have it! Buy it!" Some of you know the volume of Alan's and my correspondence that I put out in 2006, and as I bring these short remarks to an end, I would just like to quote a few passages from our letters that show how books permeated our thoughts and scholarly dreams. The search was always on, but as we kept books meaningful to us, we also made sure that we would hand on books that were of importance to the friend. There are many references to this in our correspondence, but let me just cite a few letters from Alan Dundes:

Do let me know when the Serendipity [second-hand bookstore] books get to you. I worry about that French rare book and won't rest easy until I know it is safely in your hands. [The book was Pierre de La Mesangère,

Dictionnaire des proverbes français. Paris: Treuttel, 1821.] Glad you enjoyed your brief Berkeley visit.
April 27, 2001 (p. 168)

I have a favor to ask. I just received via inter-library loan a splendid biographical dictionary of the members of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society 1902-1938. It includes short c.v.'s on dozens of early psychoanalytic pioneers including my friend [Isidor] Sadger (whose book in Japan I may actually get a copy of, thanks to a student of mine there. The book does not circulate, but he can use it in the library and he hopes to photocopy it for me.) Anyway, I would love to buy this book but I don't have contact with German bookstores. The book is: Elke Mühlleitner, *Biographisches Lexikon der Psychoanalyse*. Tübingen: Edition Diskord, 1992. 400 pp. It will not be cheap, but I would very much like to have it. I thought of xeroxing the pages I liked, but came to realize that I would have to xerox nearly the entire book. I have asked our library to order a copy, but that could take weeks if not months. In any case, I would like to own my own copy. I will gladly reimburse you for this. Do you think you could locate a copy for me? Do let me know. Otherwise, I will just xerox the interlibrary copy I now have in hand. [Of course, I did get Alan the book!]
June 22, 2001 (p. 170)

The favor: In reading your latest Supplement [III of *International Proverb Scholarship*], every word! I came across Walter A. Koch, ed. *Simple Forms*, which I confess I did not know about. Our library does have a copy, but there's so much good stuff in it that it would be a nuisance to xerox most of it. Since it was published in Deutschland by Universitätsverlag Dr. Norbert Brockmeyer, Bochum in 1994, and since you seem to have good contacts with German bookstores, I wonder if you could possibly order me a copy. This time I insist I will pay for it as I suspect it is likely to be expensive. I don't recall it having been reviewed in JAF or the like. As I say, I learned about it only from reading your bibliography. I find it [Koch's book] quite impressive although

not always exhaustive. Anyway, I find it a useful reference work and I would like to have it in my personal library. If it is already out of print, then forget about it and I will keep my eyes open for it in American used bookstores. [Yes, I did obtain the book for my friend!] January 24, 2002 (p. 192)

Anyway, in an out-of-the-way small bookstore Carolyn and I stopped to visit on our drive back from Los Angeles (to visit Alison on her January 9th birthday), I saw a small book published by Stanford University Press in 1937. I am almost certain that you already have it, and if you do, no harm done as I can keep it in my own tiny proverb collection. The book is entitled *Seven Hundred Chinese Proverbs*, translated by Henry H. Hart. It has a short but intelligent “preface” and “The Proverb and Its Place in Chinese Life”. It’s quite a handsome little book and if you don’t have it, I will send it to you. Let me know. Hope you and Barbara are surviving the Vermont winter.

January 15, 2003 (p. 210)

Recently Alison was at a Conference in Honolulu and she went to the Bishop Museum bookstore where she called me on her cell phone and asked if I wanted any of the “folklore” books she saw there. I asked for only one: Mary Kawena Pukui, *Olelo No’eau. Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings*. I thought that if you did not have it, I would send it to you. Alison is here for the weekend for a law and society retreat in Berkeley and she brought me the book. So I am asking you now if you have this book by Mary Kawena Pukui. It belongs in your library. Let me know. If you do not have it. I will mail it to you. Hope you are surviving the winter in Burlington.

March 11, 2005 (p. 282)

I hope that these remarks have given you an idea of how this magnificent personal library came into being. Each volume now has an “ex libris” in it stating that “Folklore Matters” with the name Alan Dundes attached to it.

How very exciting to have this book collection saved for posterity in this room! They are proof and testimony of the work of a world-class folklorist, a book lover through and through, and a bookish philologist unequaled in modern times. This personal collection of books will keep the work and memory of Alan Dundes alive, and it will inspire future generations of folklorists to carry on Alan Dundes' conviction that "Folklore Matters"!

As would be expected, I added spontaneous remarks from memory to these prepared paragraphs that I cannot recall any longer. They certainly added some more anecdotal matters about Alan Dundes' love of books. For more of our letters and my longer tribute to Alan Dundes see:

Mieder, Wolfgang (ed.). *"Best of All Possible Friends". Three Decades of Correspondence Between Folklorists Alan Dundes and Wolfgang Mieder*. Burlington, Vermont: The University of Vermont, 2006. 313 pp.

Mieder, Wolfgang. "'The Proof of the Proverb is in the Probing'. Alan Dundes as Pioneering Paremiologist." *Western Folklore*, 65 (2006), 217-262.

Mieder, Wolfgang. "'Two Happy Workaholics are Better than One'. Additional Letters Between Alan Dundes and Wolfgang Mieder." *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*. 27 (2010), 173-200.

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Theorie und Praxis der idiomatischen Wörterbücher. Ed. Carmen Mellado Blanco. Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 2009. Pp. 255.

Das vorliegende Buch enthält Beiträge, die sich mit aktuellen Fragen der Phraseographie beschäftigen. Die Beiträge sind in zwei Sektionen eingeteilt bzw. der einsprachigen (6 Artikel) und der zweisprachigen Phraseographie (5 Artikel) gewidmet, die von einem einleitenden Beitrag der Herausgeberin eingeführt werden. In den Aufsätzen werden von den Forschern als Wörterbuchautoren empirische Ergebnisse vorgelegt sowie theoretische Fragen aufgeworfen.

In ihrem Aufsatz bedauert Frau Mellado die Kluft, die zwischen der enormen theoretischen Entwicklung der Phraseographie und der noch mangelnden Erarbeitung von idiomatischen Wörterbüchern besteht. Um dieses Problem zu lösen, setzt sich die Autorin ganz besonders für die Anwendung der Methoden und Möglichkeiten der Computer- und Korpuslinguistik ein.

Die Sektion der einsprachigen Phraseographie beginnt mit einem Artikel von Harald Burger, der aus einer vorwiegend strukturalistischen Perspektive eine kritische Analyse der semantischen und pragmatischen Hauptaspekte in Bezug auf die Einträge der phraseologischen Wörterbücher des Deutschen und der besonders schwierigen Inklusion von phraseologischen Einheiten in allgemeinen Wörterbüchern unternimmt. Dabei stellt sich heraus, dass es exklusive Probleme der entsprechenden Makrostrukturen aber auch gemeinsame Probleme gibt, die die in der Mikrostruktur enthaltene Information betreffen. H. Burger bestätigt die o.g. Distanz zwischen phraseographischer Praxis und theoretischer Forschung. Bemerkenswert in diesem Beitrag ist die detaillierte Analyse von zahlreichen Einträgen der verschiedenen Werke.

Auch Hans Schemann entwickelt seine Forschung im Rahmen einer sozusagen traditionellen auch wenn nicht rein strukturalistischen Linguistik. Dabei geht es ihm einerseits um praktische lexikographische Fragen (die Form der Einträge und das Alphabetisierungsschema) und andererseits um zwei semantisch-pragmatische Fragen, die (so wie die von Burger vorgelegten Fragen) einen Hauptkern der phraseogra-

phischen Diskussion darstellen, und zwar die Kontextbeispiele und die Frage der Synonymik. Hervorzuheben ist die Ermahnung, die der Autor in Bezug auf eine seitens des Lexikographen massive Verwendung der neuen technischen Hilfsmittel ohne Beherrschung bzw. Beachtung der Grundprinzipien der Lexikographie macht: die in den Wörterbüchern enthaltene Information muss nicht nur erweitert, sondern auch formal und inhaltlich richtig und praktikabel gestaltet werden.

Des Weiteren enthält diese erste Sektion drei Beiträge, die die modernen Methoden der Computerlinguistik in Betracht ziehen bzw. für deren Anwendung in der besagten Disziplin plädieren:

Stefan Ettinger verfasst seinen Aufsatz im Rahmen der Computerlinguistik. Er fokussiert seine Erörterungen auf die Notwendigkeit der Verwendung von elektronischen Corpora für die Erarbeitung von phraseographischen Definitionen. Er weist darauf hin, wie Erweiterungen oder Veränderungen der ursprünglichen und prototypischen Bedeutung ein Normalfall bei Redewendungen sind und sich innerhalb einer Sprachgemeinschaft dynamisch entwickeln. Das illustriert er am Beispiel der Redewendung *die Hosen anhaben*, wobei er durch zahlreiche Beweise (Texte aus dem Internet) zeigt, wie sich die heutige Bedeutung nicht mehr auf dominierende Frauen einschränkt. Solche Veränderungen werden jedoch in wichtigen und relevanten Wörterbüchern bislang kaum beachtet.

Der Beitrag von Vida Jesenšek ordnet sich auch in den Bereich der Computerlinguistik ein. Diese Autorin plädiert auch für den Computer-Einsatz bei der Erstellung von Wörterbüchern und weist ebenso auf diesen Mangel im Bereich der phraseographischen Praxis hin. Anschließend stellt sie das Konzept und die Struktur einer im Rahmen des von der EU geförderten Projekts EPHRAS erstellten mehrsprachigen (Deutsch und mehrere slawische Sprachen) phraseologischen Datenbank dar. Für Jesenšek besitzen die elektronischen Datenbanken viele Vorteile im Vergleich zu den traditionellen Lexika auf Papier. Eine fachgerechte Aktualisierung und Ausweitung dieser Werkzeuge versichert die Entstehung immer besserer Nachschlagewerke für Sprachinteressierte, sodass sie als die lexikographischen Mittel der Zukunft zu betrachten sind.

Der dritte Artikel dieser Sektion über Computerlinguistik ist der Beitrag von Kathrin Steyer, dessen Hauptthema jedoch nicht die Phraseographie ist. Hier geht es eher um die Diskussion von theoretischen Hauptfragen der Phraseologie mit Hilfe von aus einem korpusgesteu-

ten Verfahren erworbenen Daten. In diesem Zusammenhang postuliert die Autorin eine Beschreibung bzw. Definition der phraseologischen Einheiten im Rahmen einer semantischen allgemeinen Theorie, die Bedeutung als Gebrauch bzw. Funktion auffasst. Für Kathin Steyer wirft eine korpusgesteuerte und konsequente Arbeit neue Fragen aber auch neue Probleme in der Disziplin auf. Als Anschlusspunkt zur Thematik des Bandes weist die Autorin im letzten Absatz kurz auf mögliche praxisnahe Anwendungen ihres theoretischen Standpunktes hin.

Auch teilweise außerhalb des Hauptthemas des Bandes scheint der Beitrag von Elisabeth Piirainen. Wie die Autorin erklärt, mag die Beschäftigung mit Dialektalphraseologie und -phraseographie im Prinzip wohl als eine Randerscheinung vorkommen. Die Autorin behauptet jedoch, dass sich aus der Analyse von Materialien der dialektalen Phraseologie theoretische und praktische Konsequenzen für Forschungen innerhalb des Hauptthemas des Bandes ableiten lassen. In dieser Hinsicht behandelt Piirainen Fragen des Sprachgebrauchs wie Wortspiele mit Phraseologismen, Gebrauchsrestriktionen und diatopische Markierungen.

In zwei von den drei Beiträgen der Sektion der zweisprachigen Phraseographie wird die Erstellung von deutsch-russischen Wörterbüchern thematisiert. Dabei geht es Dimitrij Dobrovol'skij hauptsächlich um theoretische Fragen der Phraseologie, die aus lexikographischer Sicht einen besonderen Wert haben (Phrasem-Auswahl und -Klassifikation, Polysemie, syntaktische Restriktionen usw.). Aus einer zweisprachigen Perspektive sind die Erörterungen zur Frage der Erfassungsarten von Phrasemen in den allgemeinen Wörterbüchern hervorzuheben. Dieser Autor formuliert auch den großen Bedarf nach bzw. Mangel an produktiven Nachschlagewerken in diesem Bereich. Tat'jana Filipenko beschreibt ihrerseits kurz die bedeutendsten zweisprachigen Wörterbücher des o.g. Sprachenpaares, wobei sie auf ihren passiven Charakter hinweist. Anschließend berichtet sie über das *Projekt Moderne Idiomatik. Deutsch-russisches Wörterbuch*, an dem die Autorin zusammen mit Dobrovol'skij arbeitet. In ihrer Darstellung behandelt die Autorin ausführlich theoretische Fragen der Phraseologie, die für die lexikographische Arbeit von Belang sind (Quasi- und Pseudoäquivalente, Polysemie und Kombinatorik in der Phraseologie), sodass der Leser in diesem Band wieder auf die nötige Beziehung zwischen Theorie und Praxis aufmerksam gemacht wird.

Erla Hallsteinsdóttir befasst sich mit dem Thema der Lernerphraseographie. Dabei präsentiert und verteidigt sie die Vorschläge der

Aarhuser Schule und ihrer Funktionslehre, für die der Wörterbuchbenutzer im Mittelpunkt der lexikographischen Theorie und Praxis stehen muss. Im Gegensatz zu einer von der Autorin genannten traditionellen Metaphraseographie sollte also die Beschreibung der linguistischen Phänomene an sich nicht mehr das Ziel des Lexikographen darstellen. Dagegen sollte dieses Ziel die Erstellung eines Werkzeuges sein, das auf Überlegungen über seine potentiellen Benutzer und deren Bedürfnissen basiert. Diese funktionelle Perspektive hat die theoretische Grundlage der Arbeit dieser Autorin an einem Forschungsprojekt gebildet, in dem eine zweisprachige Idiomdatenbank isländisch-deutsch erstellt worden ist.

Die zwei letzten hier besprochenen Beiträge charakterisieren sich durch die Auswahl eines weniger üblichen Forschungsobjektes innerhalb der Phraseologie bzw. Phraseographie. Eva Glenz beschäftigt sich mit den Problemen, die sich aus der Bestimmung der zweisprachigen kommunikativen Äquivalenz bei phraseologischen Formeln des Deutschen und des Portugiesischen (Routineformeln und geschprächsspezifische Formeln) ableiten. In Bezug darauf bespricht sie die Adäquatheit von zwei theoretischen Vorschlägen (Cheons minimale Konstellation und Koneerdings Handlungsframe) für ihre phraseographische Umsetzung in diesem Bereich. Als Beispiel beschreibt diese Autorin ausführlich die zweisprachige lexikographische Beschreibung der portugiesischen Formel *Desculpe qualquer coisa*.

Im letzten Beitrag geht es Antje Heine um die lexikographische Behandlung der Funktionsverbgefüge des Sprachenpaares deutsch-finnisch. Sie beschreibt die Probleme und Aufgaben ihres eigenen Forschungsprojektes, in dem sie an der Erstellung eines korpusbasierten Wörterbuchs deutscher Funktionsverbgefüge mit finnischen Äquivalenten arbeitet. Heine weist auf die Vorteile der Computerlinguistik in dem Bereich hin, hebt jedoch auch die aktuellen Einschränkungen bei der Anwendung neuer Techniken hervor und plädiert für die Entwicklung der nötigen Lösungen seitens der phraseographischen Theorie.

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ELISABETH PIIRAINEN

Inarisaamen idiomisanakirja [Idiomwörterbuch des Inari-Sámi].
By Anna Idström and Hans Morottaja. 3rd ed. Inari: Sämtigge,
2007. Pp. 108.

Innerhalb der langjährigen Geschichte der Parömiologie und Phraseologieforschung nimmt das „Idiomwörterbuch des Inari-Sámi“ sowohl aus empirischer als auch aus theoretischer Sicht eine beachtenswerte Sonderstellung ein, da hier zum ersten Mal die Phraseologie der Sprache einer indigen Bevölkerungsgruppe beschrieben und damit die einzigartige Bilderwelt dieser bedrohten Sprache in ihrer Ursprünglichkeit dokumentiert wird. Das Idiomwörterbuch wurde im Dezember 2006 vom Samtinge, der parlamentarischen Vertretung der Samen in Finnland, herausgegeben und liegt bereits in der dritten Auflage vor.

Den Hauptteil des auf Finnisch verfassten Buches bildet ein Lexikon von rund 500 gut kommentierten bildlichen Ausdrücken (Idiomen und anderen konventionalisierten Metaphern) des Inari-Sámi (S. 11-95). Getrennt davon werden in einem Anhang ca. 90 Sprichwörter, Wetterregeln und im Volksglauben verankerte Sagen angeführt (S. 96-108). In einem einleitenden Kapitel (S. 3-9) werden die Vorgehensweisen und Kriterien für die Sammlung von Idiomen einer bedrohten Sprache sowie die Geschichte, gegenwärtige und zukünftige Situation des Inari-Sámi erörtert.

Das *Inari-Sámi* (oder *Inarisamische*) gehört zur kleineren, östlichen Gruppe der samischen Sprachen. Zusammen mit der westsamischen Gruppe (unter denen *Nord-Sámi* mit ca. 20.000 Sprechern die größte Gruppe bildet) gehört es zum *samischen Zweig der uralischen Sprachfamilie*, der sich als Sprache der Urbevölkerung Nordeuropas über den Norden Skandinaviens und Russlands erstreckt.

Inari-Sámi wird in der Gegend des Inarisees in Nordfinnland (in Ivalo, Inari und einigen weiteren Ortschaften) gegenwärtig von etwa 350 Personen gesprochen. Seit den 1950er Jahren hatte sich ein rasanter Sprachwandel zum Finnischen vollzogen, so-

dass Inari-Sámi Jahrzehnte lang als Kommunikationssprache kaum noch existierte. Seit den 1990er Jahren hat eine aktive Revitalisierung stattgefunden, die in kurzer Zeit großen Erfolg zeigte und bis heute anhält: In Kindertagesstätten lernen die Kinder die Sprache, und immer mehr Erwachsene kehren zum Gebrauch des Samischen zurück, das sie lange Zeit hindurch nicht mehr gesprochen haben. Seit 1996 gibt es eine einheitliche Rechtschreibung dieser zuvor vorwiegend mündlich tradierten Sprache; seit 1998 kann Inari-Sámi auch als Abiturfach gewählt werden. Das Prinzip der Revitalisierung lautet, Inari-Sámi zu sprechen, wo immer es möglich ist, um es mit Leben zu erfüllen und an die nächste Generation weiterzugeben.

Doch erinnern sich nur die älteren Sprecher noch an die ursprünglichen inarisamischen Idiome. Viele bildliche Ausdrücke sind zu einer Zeit entstanden, als die Samen ihrer traditionellen Kultur verhaftet waren. Noch bis um 1900 war ihre Lebensweise vom Verlauf der Jahreszeiten mit Fischfang, Jagd und beschränkter Rentierzucht, von der Kenntnis der Natur, des Verhaltens der Tiere, des Umgangs mit der arktischen Kälte geprägt. Die Phraseologie des Inari-Sámi reflektiert in vielen Einzelheiten das vormalige Weltwissen über diese traditionelle Lebensart und die Bedeutung der Natur für den Menschen.

Die Erstellung des Idiomwörterbuches einer bedrohten, Jahrzehnte lang fast nicht mehr aktiv gebrauchten Sprache stellte für die Autoren eine Herausforderung dar, die zunächst eine Auseinandersetzung mit speziellen Problemen der Herangehensweise verlangte. Es ist das große Verdienst der Autoren, dass sie Methoden entwickelt haben, mit deren Hilfe es den älteren Sprechern ermöglicht wurde, sich an die alten, authentischen Idiome ihrer Muttersprache zu erinnern.

Die bildliche Sprache musste „von innen heraus“ erforscht werden. So wurden bei den von 2003 bis 2005 durchgeführten Befragungen zunächst einfache, konkrete Konzepte, z.B. Tiere, als Ausgangsdomänen vorgestellt, die zahlreiche Assoziationen mit bildlichen Ausdrücken zutage brachten. Später, als schon ein Grundstock an Idiomen gesammelt worden war, konnten mit weiteren Informanten gesamte Bedeutungs- und Symbolfelder besprochen und so die Kenntnis der fast in Vergessenheit geratenen Ausdrücke reaktiviert werden.

Im Verlauf der Untersuchung zeigte sich, dass die Gewährspersonen keinen Unterschied machen zwischen bildlichen Mehrwort-Ausdrücken (*Idiomen* in der linguistischen Definition) und *Einzelwörtern*, deren metaphorischer Gebrauch konventionalisiert ist, und dass diese Unterscheidung für die vorliegende Arbeit irrelevant ist. In beiden Fällen erkennen die Informanten sofort die bildliche Bedeutung und können oft den Grund für die Inferenz zwischen Ausgangs- und Zielkonzept angeben. Als Beispiel sei das inarisamische Wort *čuhčá* „Auerhahn“ in der figurativen Bedeutung ‘Dummheit’ genannt (S. 15). Es ist im Weltwissen der Sprecher verankert, dass der Auerhahn während der Balzzeit im Frühjahr selbst für einen ungeübten Jäger eine leichte Beute darstellt, da er zu dieser Zeit das Herannahen des Jägers nicht bemerkt, was als ‘Dummheit’ gewertet wird.

Die Wörterbucheinträge enthalten neben den wörtlichen Übersetzungen der Idiome und Beschreibungen ihrer bildlichen Bedeutungen oft weitere sprachliche und sachliche Erläuterungen, Angaben zum stilistischen Wert, Anwendungsbeispiele oder kleine Anekdoten, spontan von den Informanten mitgeteilte Begebenheiten, die das Umfeld des Gebrauchs der Idiome illustrieren. Die inarisamischen Idiome sind in ihrer morphosyntaktischen und lexikalischen Struktur weniger fest gefügt, als dies für Idiome der Standardsprachen mit einer Literaturtradition bekannt ist. Vor allem aber ist zu erkennen, dass sich das konzeptuelle System des Samischen deutlich von dem des Finnischen (und anderer europäischer Standardsprachen) unterscheidet. Dazu seien einige Beispiele betrachtet.

‘Jagd’ und ‘Rentierzucht’ bilden herausragende Konzepte der inarisamischen bildlichen Sprache. In dem Idiom *tast šoodâi riävskápvídee* „er wurde ein Schneehuhnjäger“ (S. 66) werden beide Konzepte symbolisch in Beziehung gebracht. Es wird von jemandem gesagt, der keine Rentiere mehr hat, sodass er mit der Jagd auf Schneehühner seinen Lebensunterhalt verdienen muss. Im Vergleich zur hochgeschätzten Rentierzucht gilt das Jagen von Schneehühnern als untergeordnete, minderwertige Arbeit.

‘Fischfang (mit Booten und Netzen)’ bildet ebenfalls wichtige Ziel- und Ausgangskonzepte, die kaum Parallelen in den bisher untersuchten Sprachen kennen. Ein Idiom der figurativen Bedeutung ‘ausgeworfenes Fischnetz, das noch leer ist’ benennt eine unerfreuliche Situation, die mit den Worten *kiärlälii kyes-*

simäälis „des Bettlers Gästesuppe (eine besondere für Gäste bestimmte Suppe)“ euphemistisch umschrieben wird (S. 32). Mit dem Idiom *čuoldâ kaskoo kárbá* „(wie) ein Baumstumpf mitten im Boot“ wird jemand bezeichnet, der beim Fischfang mit im Boot sitzt, aber nicht mithelfen kann; es wird auch im Sinne von ‚jmd., der nutzlos oder hinderlich ist‘ gebraucht (S. 15).

Der Hecht, ein „gefräßiger“ Raubfisch, der in einem fischreichen See großen Schaden anrichten kann, wird als *kyelekumppi*, „Fischwolf“, bezeichnet (S. 40). Ein geiziger Mensch wiederum, der alles nur für sich haben möchte und nichts abgeben kann, wird mit dem „Maul des Hechts“ (*puško njälmi*) verglichen: das Maul hat viele nach hinten gerichtete scharfe Zähne, die die Beute hinein, aber nicht wieder herauslassen (S. 63). Zu dieser Domäne gehören auch Routineformeln, die an einen vom Fischfang Heimkehrenden gerichtet werden (wörtlich: „Wie war der Fisch-Gott?“ oder „Wie viele Fische hast du getötet?“; S. 25, 44).

Häufige Zieldomänen sind ferner Naturerscheinungen des arktischen Raumes, wie die Mitternachtssonne, ein sternreicher Nachthimmel, Sternschnuppen, eine Nacht mit sehr starkem Frost, ein besonders langes kaltes Frühjahr oder die Herbstfärbung. Wenn sich die ersten Blätter rötlich färben, sagt man *riem-njis kamâsijdis koco* „der Fuchs hängt seinem Schwanz hin“ (S. 66). In mehreren Idiomen spielt die Vorstellung vom *talvâsâš*, dem alten Mann des Frostes (einer mythologischen Personifizierung des Frostes), eine Rolle, z.B. *talvasâš jienâid luáddu* „der Frost-Alte spaltet Eis“ ‚wenn das Eis im Winter birst, sodass ein tosendes Geräusch zu hören ist‘ (S. 79).

Die Reihe der aus der Perspektive anderer europäischer Sprachen ungewöhnlichen sprachlichen Bilder ließe sich fortsetzen, wenn z.B. eine stolze Person als *nulpâgiđ*, „Rentier ohne Geweih“ (S. 53), ein Rentierdieb als *kyevitjuálgâg kumppi*, „zweibeiniger Wolf“ (S. 40) bezeichnet und ein habgieriger Mensch, der immer noch mehr dazu haben will, sprichwörtlich mit dem Wolf verglichen wird (der nie genügend Rentiere reißen kann): *kuumpi tuárvi ij lah kuássin* „Der Wolf bekommt nie genug“ (S. 105). Etwas sehr gut oder süß Schmeckendes wird *kuulmâkiárdâš vuáskuliemâ*, „dreifache Brühe aus Barschen (aus kleinen Fischen gekochte aromatische Brühe)“ (S. 39) genannt.

Wenn der Kochtopf mit Brei zu kochen beginnt, heißt es: *aalguj sárnuđ ruošákielâ* „er fängt an, Russisch zu sprechen“ (S. 68).

Zwar scheint es auch Gemeinsamkeiten mit Idiomen der bisher bekannten Sprachen zu geben. So gelten auch im Inarisamischen der Wolf, wie schon erwähnt, als gefräßig und böse, der Bär als stark und der Hase als ängstlich. Doch sollen die Ähnlichkeiten nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, dass die Symbolisierungen der Tiere in den europäischen Literatursprachen durch Fabeln, Tierepik usw. eine Jahrhunderte lange intertextuelle Tradition durchlaufen haben, dies im Unterschied zu einer unmittelbaren Naturbeobachtung, wie sie sich in den Idiomen einer indigenen Sprache widerspiegelt: So wird der Hase im Inari-Sámi aufgrund einer bestimmten Verhaltensweise mit der Ängstlichkeit eines Menschen assoziiert: Wenn jemand in Richtung eines Hasen pfeift, stellt dieser sich tot und beginnt angespannt zu horchen. Der Ausdruck *njurgejum njuámmil* „angepfiffener Hase“ kann daher eine ängstliche, schreckhafte Person bezeichnen (S. 52).

Hochinteressant sind auch die im Anhang angeführten proverbialen Einheiten. Zum einen sind es die für die einstige Wirtschaftsweise der Samen lebenswichtigen Wettervorhersagen, oft aufgrund von Verhaltensweisen der Tiere: Der Ruf der Sumpfschnepfe und des Kuckucks kündigt Regen an. Wenn die Rentiere unruhig hin und herlaufen oder wenn die Schneehühner gackern, so verschlechtert sich das Wetter, wenn letztere auf den Zweigen sitzen, wird es schneien. Spezielles Naturwissen zeigt sich auch in Lehrsprüchen wie *Säpligihe lii valjeihe* „Ein Mäusejahr ist ein Jahr im Überfluss“ (wenn es viele Mäuse gibt, so bleibt mehr Wild für den Menschen übrig, da sich Raubvögel und Füchse dann von den Mäusen ernähren, S. 107) oder *Jis puásui jotá miädás, te itten lii tobbeen pieggâ* „Wenn das Rentier mit dem Wind geht, so kommt morgen von dort ein Unglück“ (Rentiere gehen stets dem Wind entgegen, da sie nur so den – unheilbringenden – Wolf wittern können, S. 97).

Zum anderen sind es Sprichwörter, deren allgemeingültige Ideen oft vertraut anmuten: *Väaldi talle säplig kiddâ, ko vuágun roškáá* „Ergreife die Maus, wenn sie ins Loch schlüpft“ ‘Man soll die Gelegenheit nutzen, bevor es zu spät ist’ (S. 108); *Ij kihheen rigo uáđimáin* „Niemand wird reich durch Schlafen (Nichtstun)“ (S. 103), darunter auch das bekannte Sprichwort *Ji muorâ ovttáin časkemáin viira* „Der Baum fällt nicht mit einem

Schlag“ (S. 103). In mehreren Fällen wird eine finnische Entsprechung genannt, vgl. *Ij kieha pááhun kuuhâ* „Der Kuckuck ruft nicht auf Befehl“ (es gilt als regionaltypische Angleichung an das finnische *Ei kukko käskien laula* „Der Hahn kräht nicht auf Befehl“, in Lappland gab es früher keine Hähne, S. 103), *Ij ohtâgen ásku kiedâst šoodâ* „Niemand wird mit einer Axt in der Hand geboren“, dem das finnische *Kukaan ei ole seppä syntyessään* „Niemand ist ein Schmied bei seiner Geburt“ entspricht (S. 103), oder *Kost lii kozzâsaje, tast lii pottâsaje* „wo es Platz für eine Krallen gibt, dort gibt es auch Platz für ein Hinterteil (wo eine Krallen Platz hat, ist auch ein Sitzplatz für den Hintern)“, das mit der Entsprechung *Wenn man dem Teufel den kleinen Finger reicht, so nimmt er die ganze Hand* erklärt wird (S. 105).

Dass das Inari-Sámi nicht völlig unbeeinflusst von der Kolonialsprache Finnisch und der christlichen Missionierung geblieben ist, zeigen weitere Sprichwörter, sowohl als Ausgangskonzept: *Kal servikode veisid ko lukkár aalgât* „Natürlich singt die Gemeinde, wenn der Kantor beginnt“ (‘Es muss immer jemanden geben, der den Anfang macht und zeigt, wie es geht, Nachmacher gibt es dann genug’, S. 104) als auch als Zielkonzept: *Pase čuáppá peeljijd* „Sonntag schneidet die Ohren“ ‘Am Sonntag soll man nicht arbeiten, es bringt Unheil’. Das Bild stammt von der Markierung der Rentiere am Ohr: Wer am Sonntag arbeitet wird mit dem schlechtesten Rentierbesitzer verglichen (S. 106).

Die Dokumentation der Phraseologie des Inari-Sámi ist für die Phraseologieforschung ebenso wie für die Erforschung indigener und bedrohter Sprachen eine große Bereicherung, wie das vorliegende Idiomwörterbuch eindrucksvoll zu zeigen vermag. Es ist zu wünschen, dass weitere Arbeiten diesem Beispiel folgen und die Sammlung und Beschreibung der Phraseologie der vielen bedrohten Sprachen endlich als vordringliche Aufgaben der Phraseologieforschung betrachtet werden.

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PETER UNSETH

A Contextual Study of the Social Function of Guji-Oromo Proverbs. By Tadesse Jaleta Jirata. Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2009. Pp. 87.

and

Boran Proverbs in their Cultural Context. By Abdullahi A. Shongolo and Günther Schlee. (Wortkunst und Dokumentartexte in afrikanischen Sprachen 24). Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2007. Pp. 139.

It is a wonderful coincidence to have two collections of proverbs that are explained in their contexts, drawn from closely related language varieties published so close together in time, and both with community members as authors. Guji Oromo is spoken in the southern part of central Ethiopia, with Boran Oromo (aka Borana) on the Gujis' southern edge extending down into Kenya. Both claim to have maintained more of their traditions than Oromos to the northwest. The Guji volume acknowledges that the Guji are closer to the Boran than any other Oromo group, but “there is still a clear dialectal and cultural distinction between them” (p. 5). Oromo politicians in Ethiopia claim them both to be part of a single broad Oromo nationality. The large number of proverbs used by the Oromo peoples of Ethiopia has been previously documented, such as by George Cotter's books. A cultural anthropologist would write a fairly different review of the present two books, but this one is written for those interested in proverbs.

Guji

Many proverb collections have been compiled and they are often criticized for their lack of context, simply being lists of proverbs. This author, however, is to be congratulated for having found a way around this problem. Being a community insider, he found a way to gather a large number of proverbs in their natural contexts at two kinds of traditional meetings that are natural con-

texts for frequent proverb use. He recorded speeches and deliberations at two kinds of meetings: *Ebbisa* and *Gumi Ganda*. He describes *Ebbisa*, led by the Qallu, a traditional leader, as an occasion for “traditional blessings, prayers, enumeration of cultural values and ways of life.” The *Gumi Ganda* meetings deal with conflict resolution, mediation, and local problems. Both types of meetings are rooted in tradition and work to reinforce traditions, so it is not surprising that both involve the use of many traditional proverbs. From his recordings at a series of these meetings, he collected about 250 proverbs in their spoken contexts. Later, he interviewed elders to discuss the proverbs he had collected, for a total of 310. Collecting so many proverbs in context by recording them at proverb-rich events is a noteworthy accomplishment both for his own research, but also as an example of methodology which proverb scholars and folklorists can learn from and adapt elsewhere.

The main body of the book consists of discussions of 74 of the proverbs, each with a small amount of the context in which it was recorded, along with some cultural notes and explanations of the proverb. The contexts given deal with topics under discussion, they do not include a transcription of the discussion with the proverb embedded. Since he had recorded all of the proverbs in context, it is hoped that someday he would prepare an expanded book giving all of the proverbs and more of the context in which the various proverbs were used, but that was beyond his resources.

The author classifies the proverbs used in the *Ebbisa* meetings as having a “reflective function” (27 proverbs in chapter four). He divides these into three categories: those reflecting aspects of customary practices, expressing the social values of morality, and reflecting the power of social laws. The *Ebbisa* meetings are led by a traditional religious leader, *Qallu*. An important priority of the Qallu is to maintain Guji traditions, encouraging people (especially the young) to follow the traditions of the Guji. In this context proverbs are doubly useful. First, they serve as lessons, nuggets of Guji lore, passing on Guji traditions, such as “Sin makes someone plump at first, and emaciated later.” Secondly, the use of proverbs reflects and reinforces traditional ways of public discourse. For example, in a discourse urging

maintenance of Guji traditions, in response to an elder's use of a proverb, another elder used the following proverb "One proverb gives rise to a point of discussion and another ends it." The proverbs also place a high value on the position of elders, "Head goes through the door before other parts of the body."

He divides the proverbs used in the *Gumi Ganda* meetings into two broad categories, corrective and reinforcing. The corrective proverbs (22 in chapter five) are classified under three categories, dealing with poverty, misbehavior, and disagreements. The reinforcing proverbs (25 in chapter six) are classified under conformity to social environment and reinforcing ethnic solidarity. The proverbs used in the *Gumi Ganda* meetings dealt with local disputes and problems. In the gatherings, the problems were expressed in ways that fit Guji speech patterns and the communal decisions reflected Guji tradition, both requiring the frequent use of proverbs, such as "Going on the wrong way makes someone face a problem." Land disputes are often discussed with, "Hawks quarrel on the ground for something on the ground."

Proverbs are ideally suited for such matters since they are less direct and less confrontational. Also, they invoke the people's common traditions, rather than being based on the speaker's identity and status.

The categories that the author created to classify the proverbs reflect his insider's view, the emic view. Outsider analysts may try to classify them differently, reflecting an etic view. Therefore, the book should be studied to not only understand the individual proverbs, but also the insider's viewpoint from which they are interpreted. At the end of the book is a listing of 310 proverbs under the categories used in the earlier chapters, adding 234 to the 74 discussed in the previous chapters.

The book is based on Tadesse Jaleta Jirata's MA thesis from Addis Ababa University. Since the book was researched and written in Ethiopia, the author did not have access to large amounts of literature on proverb and folklore study, especially to recent work. Some parts of the first sections of the book are written in a way intended to convince an audience of the importance and relevance of proverbs and folklore studies; many readers of *Proverbium* are already persuaded of this and will skip these parts. However, all should read the section on his methodology,

section 2.3. The table of contents is helpful by showing the contents of subsections, but sadly the page numbers listed do not match the book.

Boran

The Boran volume is a companion to Schlee's 2002 book about the Boran's neighbors, the Rendille, which he prepared with a Rendille co-author. The Boran collection consists of fewer proverbs than the Guji volume (100 proverbs, along with a few citations of alternate and similar proverb forms), and they were gathered without contexts. However, the authors compensate for this by providing word-by-word English translations of the proverbs, grammatical translations into English, explanations of the meaning of the proverbs, cultural notes, and usually a cultural story to illustrate the proverb. The stories are presented in both English and Boran. Some of the stories are real cases, most are fictional but true to life. The majority of the stories contain the proverb in a conversation (providing the conversational context, though fictional, that the Guji volume does not give), but a few only illustrate the value expressed in the proverb. The authors observe, "This book about proverbs has become a book of stories" (p. 10). These stories, in addition to material for proverb study, provide rich material for folklorists, linguists, cultural anthropologists, etc.

The stories can explain a proverb more powerfully than merely an exegesis of the phrases. For the proverb "The ones who travel have seen something and are those who have traveled and those who have become impoverished", the story is two pages long. At the end of it, readers understand not only the enigmatic proverb, but something of the precarious existence of cattle herders, who in times of drought become "those who travel".

The authors give translations and explanations for each proverb they discuss, but they also admit that proverbs can have multiple meanings, such as "The ear pierces through darkness", for which they give four possible meanings (p. 52).

A few topics appeared in proverbs repeatedly. There are many proverbs and stories about legal disputes and the importance of one's reputation (literally "ear"). The reader learns

how such matters are traditionally decided by local elders, and if need be, by a gathering of senior elders from farther away. The pleas and verdicts are not in impersonal legal language, but often include proverbs and references to traditions. The need for individual justice must be balanced against the need for community cohesion, a view upheld by proverbs and verdicts.

Marriage is another topic commonly touched on, as the explanations, stories, and proverbs together give insights into marriage among the Boran, rich material for those who study cultures. Many proverbs about marriage touch on strains and breakdowns, not the joys of harmony (e.g. p. 67, 68). The authors helpfully and insightfully explain that spouses are seen as “neither enemies nor kin... but in some intermediate kind of relationship” (p. 88). Therefore, they are in an ambiguous position in relation to their husband's family.

The book concludes with an index of key words, both English and Boran, a wonderful idea. For example, using the index shows that a large number of proverbs and stories use words related to raising cattle, e.g. “calf”, “bull”, “cattle”, “heifer”, “milk”, most of the Boran living by their cattle. The index refers to these key words in both proverbs and stories, not just to their use in proverbs alone. The index, however, shows a danger in over-reliance on computer searches to create an index; for “hyena/waraabessa”, it missed the (misspelled?) form *waraabesa* in proverb 60 and the suffixed form *waraabesi* in 97.

One point that is not directly related to proverbs: the authors claim that Boran society is “egalitarian” (p. 97). Since status among the Boran is greatly determined by age, gender, and relative birth order, many would not see it as egalitarian.

Comparison of the two volumes

Both of these books are significant contributions to proverb study because their proverbs are rooted in context. The two books have some significant similarities and differences. The Guji volume categorizes proverbs, both according to the context in which they were recorded and also their function, while the Boran volume does not attempt any classification of the proverbs. Both were written in English by non-native speakers, a feat which I salute. (Both would have benefited from editing by a

native speaker of English, the Boran in a few places, the Guji volume in many.)

Though I did not make a systematic comparison, I noted only two proverbs that the two books had in common, though with minor differences in form. The first concerns the blind man saying that he does not like jokes about eyes. The second is about vultures flying in the air, but dying on the ground. Also, both books contain proverbs about dead donkeys being eaten by hyenas.

Though the proverbs contained in the books differ, the values that are promoted and supported by these proverbs are similar: mutual responsibility, deference to elders, forgiveness, cooperation, reconciliation, family harmony, coping with poverty, patience, hard work.

Both books purport to use the official spelling system in use in their areas. Guji follows the Ethiopian *Qube* system and Boran follows the Kenyan system that is influenced by Swahili. Readers who try to compare them must be aware of these differences in spelling, such as the alveolar ejective being symbolized by <t'> in Boran, but <x> in Guji. However, both books contain some inconsistencies in their Oromo spellings

Though there is no discussion of the poetry of their proverbs in either book (that was not their focus), it is a delight to find many proverbs that show clear evidence of poetic art. Oromo proverbs sometimes are formed with complete assonance, containing only the vowel *a*, e.g. Guji *Bara baraan dabarsan* "Time passes after a time" and Boran *Waam lafaat falan, gaalat fan* "That which has been designed on the ground can then be packed on a camel." In the last example, note also the repetition of *l*, *f*, and *n*. In Guji, we also have *Durba qaban qabaa qaddi* "Abusing a girl is causing a problem to one's self", repeating *ba...qa*, plus *d* at both ends. There is also poetic art in the Boran proverb *Mal male man hin seenan* "Without a plan, one cannot enter a house," notice the repetition of *ma(l)*- at the beginning, but *-(a)n* at the end. Also in Borana note the similar sounding final words in each couplet in *Hammeeni d'ala, hammeenna d'ara* "A dispute between relatives is not a genuine dispute."

Points of interest beyond Oromo areas:

Dundes once noted that for quotation proverbs (he said “wellerisms”), “the geographical distribution has not yet been accurately established” (1964:113). Though nearly half a century has passed, there is still too much truth in this observation. The study of proverbs from Ethiopia has not drawn attention to the presence of a number of quotation proverbs in Oromo varieties and in Amharic. Of the 310 Guji proverbs, nine are quotations with their speakers, e.g. “I can see everything now;’ said an old woman after burning down her house.” Additionally, three are quotations with passive verbs and no speaker specified, e.g. “Nothing new’, it is said.” Of the 100 Boran proverbs, four are wellerisms with speakers mentioned. Additionally, two are quotations commonly known to be ascribed to particular speakers, one to a dik-dik antelope, one to a legendary mighty warrior. Clearly, quotation proverbs are a standard form of proverb among the Oromo.

A particularly intriguing Guji quotation proverb is the following: “What is our sin?’ said a dog after giving birth to nine blind puppies” (p. 80). Proverbs that refer to a bitch (female dog) giving birth to blind pups because of her wrong actions are found in ancient Akkadian, Greek, Latin, Aramaic, and Arabic. Alster (1979:5) has described such proverbs as having “a longer history than any other recorded proverb in the world”, going back to “around 1800 BC”. *Ex Africa semper aliquid novi*.

Conclusion

In addition to those who generally collect books of proverbs, these two important books are of particular interest to two groups of proverb scholars. First, proverb scholars who are concerned with the use of proverbs in contexts will want to read these, the Guji volume in particular showing a fruitful procedure for collecting many proverbs in context. Secondly, these volumes will be of interest to those who study culture and worldview as expressed in proverbs, since the notes and illustrative stories (from an insider) give many insights. Additionally, the books are vital for any who are interested in Oromo society and culture. I intend to use and cite them repeatedly.

It is merely a coincidence that I have these two books on my shelf directly between my Bible and Wolfgang Mieder's two-volume *International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology* (2009), but it suggests how highly I value these two volumes studying Oromo proverbs in their social and cultural contexts.

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MELITA ALEKSA VARGA

Acta Ethnographica Hungarica, An International Journal of Ethnography – Humour and Folklore, Volume 54, Number 1, June 2009. Ed. by Anna T. Litovkina and Péter Barta. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2009. Pp. 259.

The fifty fourth volume of *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* has been thematically dedicated to humour. According to the authors, it grew from seven panels and plenary lectures on humour research presented at the first international “Humor and Linguistics/Folklore” symposium, September 14-16, 2007, in Szekszárd, Hungary. Although there were more than a hundred researchers who presented their papers at the conference, this issue of *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* contains fifteen papers selected by the editorial board of Gábor Barna. According to the guest editors of this issue, Anna T. Litovkina and Péter Barta, its value lies not only in the diversity of the selected papers, but in the fact that they had been written in English, Russian, French and German by linguists, phraseologists, paremiologists and humour researchers. Authors who have published in this volume are Péter Barta, Christie Davies, Oleg Fedoszov, Judit Hidasi, Outi Lauhakangas, Anna T. Litovkina, Nancy C. McEntire, David Stanley, Vilmos Voigt, Adrienn Haas, Judit Hahn, Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Liisi Laineste, Piret Voolaid, Grzegorz Szpila, Lesya Stavvtskaya, Csaba Mészáros, Katalin Vargha and Joseph Laure. The editors have emphasized the fact that all authors publish in two or more languages and that they covered the topic of humour from the general linguistic, contrastive linguistic, sociolinguistic, paremiological and cultural aspect. A further volume which can be thematically added to this one on the national basis, according to the editors, is the Hungarian issue of selected papers of the First Hungarian Interdisciplinary Humour Conference *Ezerarcú humor (Thousand Faces of Humour)* edited by Margit Daczi, Anna T. Litovkina and Péter Barta. The re-

view of this publication has been written by Judit Hahn and can be read in this issue of *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica*, pp. 257-259.

If we take a closer look at the papers in this present issue, we can see that they had been divided into four sections. The first section contains four papers connected to the topic of jokes, followed by the paremiological section with five papers. Three articles on tales make up the folklore section, whereas the last section contains papers in Russian. This review will focus on papers dealing with humour from the paremiological point of view.

The five articles in the section on proverbs have been published by six authors. Members of the International Research Group for Folklore and Linguistics Barta, T. Litovkina, Hrisztova-Gotthardt and Vargha submitted two papers in French and German, which present some of the aspects of the results of huge international research on anti-proverbs. The papers deal with different kinds of transformations which can be observed if examining anti-proverbs. The research was conducted on a French, Hungarian, English, German and Russian corpus. The article in French entitled *Polysémie, homonymie et homophonie dans les proverbes détournés – avec des exemples Français, Hongrois, Anglais, Allemands et Russes* (pp. 63-75) elaborates on aspects of polysemy, homonymy and homophony, whereas the paper in German *Paronomasie oder wie ein Sprichwort zum Antispruchwort wird* (pp. 77-94) deals exclusively with paronomasia. It is interesting to note that the authors, while introducing the topic of anti-proverbs, covered almost all the European terms in use and therefore listed the most frequent variations for proverb alterations: anti(-)proverbe, faux proverbe, perverbe, proverbe déformé, proverbe dérivé, proverbe détourné, proverbe modifié, proverbe perverti, proverbe tordu, pseudo proverbe (p. 64). The final choice, however, fell to Wolfgang Mieder's definition PROVERB DÉTOURNÉ or ANTISPRICHWORT.

The first paper concludes that as far as the languages in question are concerned, there is no significant distinction noticed in the usage of polysemy or homonymy as the process of transforming traditional proverbs to anti-proverbs. Homophony, however, is more frequently used in phonetic languages like Hungarian, German or Russian. Homonymy/polysemy is used as fre-

quently as paronomasia, which, according to the results of the research presented in the second paper by these authors, uses similar ways to transform traditional proverbs into anti-proverbs in all the languages covered by the scope of the paper. Some of the interesting anti-proverbs that the authors list in order to exemplify the different modification processes in English and German are *Kleider machen Bräute*, *A fool and his money are soon partying*, *Pissen ist Macht*, *Take it or leave it*, *Steter Tropfen höhlt das Bein*, *Lightning never strikes twice*, *Ohne Eis kein Preis*, *Let sleeping gods lie* (pp. 77-94).

Outi Lauhakangas in her paper *Humour and Functions of Proverbs in Social Interaction* (pp. 95-103) addresses proverbs from the socio-psychological point of view and considers them a special form of strategy used in everyday speech, as they have a humorous element connected to the emotional tensions (p. 96). She lists an example from the Finnish dialect, where humour is connected to the proverb in a typical communicative situation in which the two parties talk, but not communicate: *Good morning. – An axe handle.* (p. 99). In his paper entitled *Humour as a Tool in Communicating Proverbial Wisdom in Polish Graffiti* (pp. 105-114), Grzegorz Szpila concentrates on the proverbs in Polish graffiti. He conducted research on a corpus of a hundred paremic structures from the last decade, which he collected from the Polish internet pages. The authors of the graffiti, while using modified proverbs, question their message and in most cases achieve a humorous effect (p. 106). Some of the examples which are mentioned in the paper are *As you work you will give to a church collection*, *Every spray has its customs* and *The still student makes use of two cheat sheets* (pp. 105-114). The section on proverbs ends with the paper by Vilmos Voigt *Are there humorous proverb texts?* (pp. 115-121), who is questioning the existence of humorous proverbs and is trying to answer the question how can we estimate the degree of humour in some proverbs. According to his opinion, the notion and the meaning of humour is not clear, particularly the label of "wittiness", due to the fact that the majority of humorous proverbs cannot be considered funny.

Even though the topic of this issue of *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* is humour, after reading the volume it can be stated that the contributions in the field of paremiology raise not only

the reader's interest, but contain valuable information for further research in this area. Therefore I can heartily recommend this issue not only to scholars, linguists and folklorists, but to anyone who would like to dive deeper into the proverbial lore of several European nations and find out to which extent and if there is a note of humour attached.

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Bol'shoi slovar' russkikh poslovits/The Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs. By V. M. Mokienko, T. G. Nikitina, and E. K. Nikolaeva. Moskva: OLMA Media Group, 2010. Pp. 1024.

The much-awaited final volume of a trio of paremiological dictionaries under the general editorship of V. M. Mokienko has now appeared. Two previous volumes in this series, *Bol'shoi slovar' russkikh pogovorok/The Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbial Expressions* and *Bol'shoi slovar' russkikh sravnenii/The Great Dictionary of Russian Comparisons* have already met with widespread critical acclaim in the two years since their publication in 2008. Rounding out the compilers of the volume under review are Professor Mokienko's colleagues T. G. Nikitina and E. K. Nikolaeva.

This is the first dictionary of its kind, breaking with the long-held tradition in Russian proverb dictionaries where listings are presented either according to a general thematic principle (as in V. I. Dal's *Poslovitsy russkogo naroda/Proverbs of the Russian People*, 1862, 1984) or in strictly alphabetical order. Mokienko, et. al's *Bol'shoi slovar'* adopts the practice of European proverb dictionaries which are arranged by the first major "key" word (usually a noun), reflecting the basic meaning or message of the pareme. As Professor Mokienko correctly notes in the *Preface* to his volume, this "keyword principle" fully demonstrates the circle of associative semantic connections in the colorful system of Russian proverbs as well as their striking variants. The sheer scope of this dictionary, which contains approximately 70,000 proverbs, roughly 7 times the number contained in Dal's "Proverbs of the Russian People," makes it the most complete collection of Russian proverbs ever published.

In the *Preface* to this ground-breaking volume, which opens with a bit of Russian folk wisdom – *Пословицы на рынке не купишь/You won't find proverbs in the marketplace* – Professor Mokienko traces the history and role of proverbs in Russian oral

and literary culture, beginning with Nestor's *Primary Chronicle* and moving across the centuries down to leading authors of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literature like Krylov, Pushkin, Griboedov, Gogol, and Solzhenitsyn. In addition to a survey of proverb use by Russia's greatest fiction writers, Mokienko provides an informative analysis of the history of changes in the very concept of the terms "poslovitsa/proverb" and "pogovorka/proverbial expression." In ancient Rus', for example, the term was broadly applied to any verbal agreement between individuals. One of the main characteristics dating from this early period of Russian culture was "a short, expressive saying, allegory, or maxim." Another characteristic feature dating from this time was the absence of a distinction made between the proverb and the proverbial expression. Over the centuries, however, a more distinct delineation in the two words has taken place. Vladimir Dal', for example, defined a proverb by the middle of the 19th century as a "brief parable, judgment or verdict or exhortation spoken in plain language with a stamp of folk character."

The *Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs* treats both graphic as well as non-imagistic proverbs as linguistic units of a structural-semantic order. The latter are not categorized under the heading of proverbial expressions, but as proverbs. Mokienko explains in his *Preface* that proverbial expressions required a special type of lexicographic study and, therefore, were treated earlier by his editorial team (2008) in two special dictionaries of proverbial expressions and set comparisons. In this vein he also notes that in some instances readers will find listings that by necessity appear in more than one of the trio of proverb "thesauruses" compiled by him and his colleagues. In particular, this occurs when the proverb bears a comparative structure; for example, the following proverbs appear both in the *Large Dictionary of Russian Folk Comparisons* (2008) as well as in the current volume under review: *Duraku nauka chto rebyonku ogon'/ Knowledge is to a fool as fire is to a child; V monastyre chto v lavke: vsyo za den'gi/It's the same at a monastery as it is at a store-shop: everything costs money.*

In his *Preface* to this volume Mokienko aptly devotes considerable attention to the many aspects of Russian national culture illustrated in the proverbs of the Russian people. As he

notes, he and his colleagues are not the first in a long line of Russian scholars to do so. First and foremost he cites the valuable work of I. Snegirev, whose *Russkie v svoikh poslovitsakh/The Russian People in their Proverbs* appeared more than a century-and-a-half ago. He also describes the contributions in this area of proverb studies by some of Russia's most famous philologists and ethnographers: F. I. Buslaev; A. A. Potebnaya; I. I. Sreznevskii; S. V. Maksimov; M. I. Mikhel'son; B. A. Larin; and V. V. Vinogradov. As examples of the multi-dimensional aspect of Russia's national culture illustrated by popular proverbs, Mokienko cites folk wisdom from the medieval age of peasants and craftsmen: *Plotnik bez topora chto izba bez ugla/A carpenter without his axe is like a peasant hut without a corner room; Vzyalsya za guzh, ne govori, chto ne dyuzh/Once you've taken on the yoke, don't say that you're not strong enough/[Finish what you start]; Kuy zhelezo, poka (pokole) goryacho/Strike while the iron is hot.*

As suggested by the size and scope of this impressive proverb dictionary, Mokienko observes that "its main goal is to provide readers with a complete collection of Russian proverbs, drawing from a majority of earlier proverb collections as well as from excerpts taken from works of fiction and publicistic writings, and nuggets of folk wisdom found in numerous dialect dictionaries and catalogs and the compilers' own recordings of live speech." He further describes the main criterion for selecting material as stemming from B. A. Larin's principle of lexicographic completeness. This principle assumes a full description of the entire body of Russian proverbs from ancient times down to the beginning of the twenty-first century. Or, as Mokienko writes in his *Preface*, "this is a thesaurus of Russian proverbs reflecting everyday life over the entire spectrum of time and space in the existence of the living Russian language."

Complementing the impressive scope of the *Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs*, its editors have delivered the first major compilation of Russian proverbs organized according to a major keyword principle (a much smaller *Shkol'nyi slovar' zhivykh russkikh poslovits/Small Dictionary of Living Russian Proverbs*, edited by Mokienko appeared in 2002). As described in the *Preface*, members of the Petersburg phraseological seminar began creating a card index for the *Great Dictionary* as early as the

end of the 1960s and early 1970s. The result is a large volume of 70,000 proverbs that have been “passportized,” in Mokienco’s term, according to time and geographic region. This annotation includes an “explicit” description of the time and source describing the proverb entries over the centuries. For example, sources for older proverbs include P. K. Simoni’s *Starinnye sborniki russkikh poslovits, pogovorok, zagadok I proch XVII-XIX stoletii/Ancient Collections of Russian Proverbs, Proverbial Expressions, Riddles, etc. of the XVII-XIX Centuries*, 1897, as well as A. A. Barsov’s *Sobranie 2491 drevnikh rossiiskikh poslovits/A Collection of 2491 Ancient Russian Proverbs*, 1770. The latest collections of contemporary proverbs and dialect dictionaries are listed, as well. An examination of a few proverb entries (mentioned above) will reveal the annotated format of the *Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs*, for example:

Vzyalsya za guzh—ne govori, chto ne dyuzh—Petr. gal. nach. XVIII v., 25; *Bogd.* 1741, 70; *Bars.* 1770, 17; *SIRYa XVIII v.* 7, 54; *DP* 1, 194; *DP* 2, 108; *D* 1, 406, 512; *D* 4 1, 194; *DP* 2, 108; *D* 1, 406, 512; *D.* 4, 387; *Mikh.* 1 102; *SOB.* 1956, 86; *Rybn.* 1961, 39; *Raz.* 1957, 43; *Bir.* 1960, 9; *Zhuk.* 1966, 78-79; *Sl. Akchim.* 1, 268; *Spir.* 1985, 161; *An.* 1988, 45; *Permyakov* 1988, 154; *Aleshchenko* 2008, 242-243.

[N.B.: the full, unabbreviated information appears at the end of the volume under the heading; *Spisok istochnikov/List of Sources*. For example: *Sbornik poslovits 6 Petrovskoi galerei nachalo XVIII veka*, 25; *Sobranie poslovits A. I. Bogdanova*, 1961, 65-118; 259-263; *Sobranie 2491 drevnikh rossikikh poslovits, sostavil A. A. Barsov* 1770, 17; *Slovar’ russkogo yazyka XVIII veka* 7, 54; *DP* = *Dal’*, V. I. *Poslovitsy russkogo yazyka*; *D* = *Tolkovyi slovar’ zhivoi russkogo yazyka*; *Mikhel’son* M. M., *Metkie I khoyachie slova. Sbornik russkikh i inostrannykh poslovits, izrechenii I vyrazhenii*, SPB., 1894; *Rybnikova* M. A. *Russkie poslovitsy i pogovorki*, 1961; *Razumov* A. A. *Mudroe slovo: russkie poslovitsy i pogovorki*, 1957; *Biryukov* V. P. *Krylatye slova na Urale*, 1960; *Zhukov* V. P. *Slovar’ russkikh poslovits i pogovorok*, 1966; *Slovar’ govora d. Akchim Krasnovisherskogo r-na Permskoi oblasti (Akhchinskii slovar’)*, 1984-2003; *Russkie poslovitsy i pogovorki*, pod. red. V. P. Anikina, 1988; E. I.

Aleshenko. *Etnoyazykovaya kartina mira v tekstakh russkogo fol'klora*, 2008.]

Kuy zhelezo, poka (pokole)goryacho—*Bogd.* 1741, 90; *Sn.* 1848, 198; *DP* 2, 124; *DP* 2, 124; *D* 1, 384, 532; *Raz* 1957, 86; *Rybn.* 1961, 44, 117; *Spir.* 1985, 101; *An.* 1988, 155.

As an indication of the widespread applicability and interest of this new proverb dictionary, modern transformations and word play involving age-old proverbs are generously contained in the *Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs*. To cite an example derived from the proverb entry cited above, we find the following anti-proverb, with the opening verb *kuy* changed to *khuy*, the vulgar noun form for penis or prick, whose entry below is followed by a brief explanation:

Xuy—zheleznyi, poka goryachii/A prick is iron/hard/good, so long as it is hot. Netsenz. Zharg. Shutl/[Uncensored. Jargon. Humorous.]

*Transformatsiya posl./[A transformation of the proverb] Kuy zhelezo, poka goryacho (ZHELEZO).

One of the most striking features of the recently published *Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs* relates to the wide-ranging inclusiveness of Russian proverb entries. Under the heading of *zhena/wife*, for example, one will find 407 entries over the course of 22 columns covering a total of 8 pages of text. The range of exhortations and advice pertaining to the behavior of a “proper” or “good” wife occupies a large number of these entries. For example:

Bei zhenu molotom, ona stanet zolotom/Beat your wife with a hammer, and she'll become gold. Volgogr. —SDGVO 1, 129.

Bei zhenu kak shubu, a lyubi kak dushu zolotom/Beat your wife like a fur coat, and love her like your soul. Psk. —SR 1, 215; SPPP, 2001, 130.

Bei zhenu k obedu, a k uzhinu opyat'/Beat your wife before lunch, and once again before dinner. Sn 1848, 12; CP 1, 215; SPP 2001, 130.

As noted in the first two of the above entries, Mokienko, et. al's system of “passportization” reflects whenever possible the region from which the proverb first originated. For example, the first entry above indicates the Volgograd area (Volgogr.) of

origin, while the proverb in the second entry originates from Pskov (Psk.). When an area of provenance cannot be determined, as in the third entry above, no geographic region will be noted.

While not quite as numerous as entries for “wife,” the number of proverbs falling under the heading of “husband” is nonetheless impressive: a total of 348 entries appearing on 18 columns over the course of 6 pages. Not surprisingly for a typically patriarchal society, proverbs falling under the heading of “husband” tend to be far less negative than those for “wife.”

Ty mne ne muzh, ya tebe ne zhena/You are not a husband to me, and I am not a wife to you. Perm.—Prok. 1988, 159.

Muzh p'yot, a zhena gorshki b'yot/The husband drinks, and the wife strikes (earthware) pots. Sn 1848, 236; DP 1, 293; Sob. 1956, 105; Raz, 1957, 183; An 1988, 187.

Muzh liubit zhenu zdorovuiu, [a] brat sestru--bogatuiiu/The husband loves a healthy wife, and the brother loves a rich sister. An 1988, 187; Versh 1, 96;5,252.

The sheer scope, structure and organization of the *Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs* make it unquestionably the premier proverb dictionary in the Russian language, surpassing even V. I. Dal's famous nineteenth-century collection. Professor Mokienko and his fellow compilers are to be congratulated on a superb job, one that will not be surpassed for a long time to come, if ever. Its use for scholars and lovers of the Russian language alike make it a must purchase. Kudos on a brilliant and successful undertaking!

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Adleraug und Luchsenohr: Deutsche Zwillingsformeln und ihr Gebrauch. By Hans-Georg Müller. Linguistik International 22. Frankfurt am Main et al.: Peter Lang, 2009. Pp. IX + 579.

Dieses neue Lexikon von Hans-Georg Müller bietet vieles, was Sprachinteressierten gefallen könnte. Sprachwissenschaftlich/ philologisch Tätige (Fachleute) werden jedoch bedauerlicherweise ihre Probleme mit manchen Aspekten der Studie haben. Im Folgenden bemühe ich mich, diese zwei Sichtweisen zu berücksichtigen. Dennoch soll hier das Fachliche im Vordergrund bleiben.

Kernstück dieser Sammlung bildet eine Tabelle circa 2.000 sogenannter deutscher Zwillingsformeln (111-556). Zu Müllers Definition von Zwillingsformel ist einiges weiter unten zu sagen. Zur Tabelle dies vorweg: Die Liste ist in einer ersten Kolumne alphabetisch nach dem ersten Bestandteil der Formel geordnet. Eine zweite Kolumne führt die Zwillingsformel auf, manchmal mit Quellenangabe, manchmal ohne. Erläuterungen werden auch hier aufgeführt. Eine dritte Kolumne trägt die Überschrift „Bedeutung / Erklärung / Verwendung / Gebrauch“, eher gelegentlich werden auch in dieser Kolumne Quellen angegeben, ansonsten schwanken die Angaben hier eher zwischen Definition und Erläuterung; die letzte Kolumne gibt schlicht die Wortart an. Querverweise führen zu Stellen, wo ein Element aufgeführt wird, so etwa *ab* zu *auf* (*und ab*), dies aber unvollständig, so fehlt beispielsweise ein Hinweis unter *O* auf den Eintrag *A und O* (es gibt einige andere Fälle). Bei den Wortartangaben wird beispielsweise bei den Partizipien nicht unterschieden, ob sie adjektivisch oder prädikativ verwendet werden. Die Angabe Partikel zu *plem* wäre in Adjektiv zu verbessern. Der angegebene Beleg weist außerdem *plemplem* (und nicht *plem*) auf. Auffällig ist, unter den Erläuterungen, dass Wortpaare immer wieder als Bedeutungsangaben für andere Zwillingsformeln verwendet werden. So wäre eine Studie zu Synonymen innerhalb der Sammlung denkbar.

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Mit dieser Tabelle ist die Titelangabe „Deutsche Zwillingformeln und ihr Gebrauch“ erfüllt. Man kann mit Freude durch die Seiten blättern und das eine oder andere Neue entdecken. Irritierend wirken allerdings die vielen Quellenangaben, die unvollständig sind. Dieser Mangel ist auch bei Sekundärliteraturangaben festzustellen, was die Arbeit mit dieser Untersuchung erschwert.

In neun der Tabelle voran stehenden Kapiteln bietet Müller eine Diskussion vieler relevanter Aspekte der Erforschung von Zwillingformeln. Einleitend (1-3) werden die Themen genannt, die in den folgenden Seiten in Einzelheit – manchmal bei Wiederholung des schon gesagten – ausgeführt werden. Wohl in Anlehnung an eine altbekannte, wenn auch nicht gerade schmeichelhafte Redewendung – „Was der Bauer nicht kennt...“ (Röhrich, *Großes Lexikon* [zu diesem Werk mehr hier unten], 160) – zitiert Müller einen Rocktext („Was der Teufel nicht kennt, ...“ [sic], 2), um sich vorab von Kritik an der Auswahl seiner Beispiele zu schonen. Diese Distanzierung folgt auf eine einsichtige Feststellung, dass nicht „alle bisher gebildeten Zwillingformeln“ bekannt (und folglich auch nicht gesammelt worden) seien. Dies ist aber halt die Lage vor allem der historisch ausgerichteten Sprachwissenschaft, die ja nur mit überliefertem Material arbeiten kann. Das Material hat je nach Beschaffenheit und Überlieferung unterschiedlichen Stellenwert.

Zur Definition: Müller fasst den Begriff ‚Zwillingformel‘ sehr weit, etwa bis zum Kinderausdruck „Aa“. Es gibt auch manche anderen Fälle, wo Zweifel aufkommen: „ach Gott, ach Gott“; „aber, aber“ (doch zu finden in *Redewendungen* 1992, 21, aus welchem Müller hier offenbar zitiert, aber an dieser Stelle nicht als Quelle angibt); „allein zu zweit“; wenn „alles nichts“ gelten soll, warum nicht „alles Scheiße“ (*Redewendungen*, 32, 615); „mutterseelenallein“. Natürlich dürfen Sammelnde den Begriff so weit ziehen, wie sie wollen. Das Ergebnis von Müllers Bemühungen, wie es sich in dieser Veröffentlichung zeigt, ist eine sowohl von der Quellenauswahl als auch von der „Zwillingformel“ im Einzelfall doch eher zufällige Auswahl aus der Welt der vielleicht besser als „paarigen Ausdrücke“ zu bezeichnenden Redewendungen. Im Folgenden werde ich mich vor allem mit einem Teil dieser Wendungen befassen, der in mancher Hinsicht gut aufgearbeitet ist: stabreimende Wortpaare. Was man unter einer Paarformel

verstehen kann, hat Müller auf seiner eigenen Webseite klarer als im vorliegenden Werk umschrieben: „Durch koordinierte Verknüpfung zweier Ausdrücke entsteht hier [sic] ein neuer Gesamtausdruck“ (hagemueller.homepage.t-online.de/zwilling_w.htm – letzte Änderung 19.6.2010, eingesehen am 4.10.2010). Es ist anzunehmen, dass die hier festzustellenden Aussagen über die stabreimenden Wortpaare auch für das restliche von Müller erfasste Material gelten.

Leider führt der allererste Satz von Müllers Werk schon zu Zweifel: „Es gibt meines Wissens kein spezifisches sprachwissenschaftliches Werk, das ausschließlich den sprachlichen Zwillingsformeln in der deutschen Sprache gewidmet ist“ (1). Abgesehen von des Unterzeichnenden drei historischen Monographien zu stabreimenden deutschen Wortpaaren (von der Definition her enger gefasst) wäre doch überraschenderweise auf ein Werk hinzuweisen, dass der Autor selbst aufführt und zitiert: Elke Peyerl, *Zwillingsformeln in der österreichischen Alltagssprache* (Wien: Infothek, 2008). In der Tat werden Zwillingsformeln oft im Rahmen größer angelegter phraseologischer Untersuchungen behandelt. Müller hätte auch vom sprachwissenschaftlichen Standpunkt her lieber dem Beispiel von Peyerl Folge leisten sollen, eben bei Wortpaaren genau zitierte Beispiele zu liefern. Dazu mehr hier unten. Müller hätte beispielsweise konsultieren sollen: Hans Scheemann, „Wissenschaftliche Einführung,“ *PONS Deutsche Idiomatik: Die deutschen Redewendungen im Kontext* (Stuttgart, Dresden, Pons, 1993), v-xciv.

Das Literaturverzeichnis überhaupt weist Lücken, Unstimmigkeiten und andere Ungenauigkeiten auf, die nicht alle hier aufgeführt werden können. Als Beispiel kann dienen: Lutz Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten*, 2 Bände, 1973 wird verwendet anstatt Röhrichs *Großen Lexikons der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten*, 3 Bände (Freiburg: Herder, 1991-1992), das „eine völlige Neubearbeitung und Erweiterung“ (9) bietet, die früheren Auflagen also etwa abgesehen von fachhistorisch relevanten Fragen ersetzt und in der Forschung benutzt werden soll. Gerade die von Wolfgang Mieder erarbeitete Bibliographie dieser Ausgabe ist unersetzlich (S. 1787-1834). Bei annähernd der Hälfte der Einträge in Müllers unübersichtlichem Literaturverzeichnis fehlt das Jahr. Für die Geschichte der Zwillingsformel wäre bei Angaben aus der Literatur das erste Druckjahr von Bedeutung, auch wenn

man aus späteren Auflagen oder Ausgaben zitiert. Angaben wie Eco oder Stern (26), Sennewald (27) sind wenig hilfreich, ebenfalls solche ohne Seitenzahl. Es hätte doch ein Gesamtverzeichnis der zitierten Literatur geben sollen. Manche Quellenangaben (DU) führen zu nichts oder (ER) zu Ungenauem (sechs Werke sind zu Eugen Roth aufgelistet). Für die Forschung von Bedeutung ist ferner, ob ein Beleg aus einer wissenschaftlichen Abhandlung oder aus einer Primärquelle zitiert wird. Sonst können bekanntlich Karteileichen entstehen beziehungsweise weitertradiert werden.

In einer Art Einleitung ins Literaturverzeichnis findet man die sprachhistorisch richtige Feststellung, dass es häufig der Fall ist, dass das erste Auftreten eines sprachlichen Ausdrucks nicht bekannt ist (572). Manche Quellen werden in der Tabelle angegeben, wobei einerseits der Anreiz für ein Wortpaar gemeint sein kann, andererseits der erste Beleg. Eine für die Frühgeschichte des Deutschen meistens lateinische Bibelstelle etwa stellt den ersten Fall dar, ein früher Nachweis in deutscher Sprache den zweiten Fall. Müller hat ja eingangs erklärt, dass auch Redewendungen, die nicht mehr im Umlauf seien, in seiner Liste aufgenommen wurden (2). Das Verzeichnis führt auch Martin Luther [sic] auf, wobei man in seinem Fall wie bei Bibelzitatzen nicht weiß, welche Texte benutzt wurden. So reichen mit Luther manche Beispiele wohl bis mindestens ins 16. Jahrhundert zurück. Auch das deutschsprachige Mittelalter wird bemüht, leider ohne nähere Angabe (283: „Jahr und Tag“).

Für manche Wortpaare ist aus der Frühgeschichte des Deutschen bekannt, was die Überlieferung bietet. Nachzutragen wären also die nachgewiesenen Fälle, wo ein frühes Auftreten belegt ist. So sind etwa –um nur eine bescheidene Auswahl hier zu nennen – Entsprechungen für „Alpha und Omega“, „Anfang und Ende“, „mehr oder minder“, „Witwen und Waisen“, „Worte und Werke“ im Althochdeutschen, „aus und ein“, „dies und das“, „weder das eine noch das andere“, „singen und sagen“ im Frühmittelhochdeutschen belegt (John M. Jeep, *Alliterating Word-pairs in Early Middle High German*, Baltmannweiler: Schneider, 2006, 99-119). Diese frühesten Sprachstufen sind für die stabreimenden Wortpaare ziemlich erschöpfend und vollständig aufgearbeitet. Fehlende Lücken sollen nach Vermögen geschlossen werden. Im Laufe der Sprachgeschichte verändern sich manche Redewendun-

gen hinsichtlich der Phonologie, Morphologie, Syntax und/oder Pragmatik, wie Müller erkennt. Manche Angaben scheinen sich zu widersprechen, etwa die genannten Daten für „Blut und Boden“ (142f.).

Störend wirkt, wenn man in bekannten Nachschlagewerken (Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Röhrich, *Duden: Redewendungen*) Formulierungen aus Müllers Arbeit wiederfindet, die ohne Einführungszeichen und manchmal auch ohne Nachweis in der Tabelle übernommen wurden. Hat man sich ja die Mühe gemacht, diese Information ausfindig zu machen, sind die Quellenangaben mit aufzuführen und Zitate als solche zu kennzeichnen. Das ist eine Praxis, die nicht nur die Fachleute beachten sollen.

Die Tabelle enthält Ausdrücke, die zum Teil aus der Literatur (im weiten Sinne) zitiert werden, zum Teil aber auch aus Listen von Redewendungen, schließlich auch aus Lexika. Hinzu kommen Wendungen, die der Autor gehört und notiert hat. Wie oben angedeutet, ist es doch wichtig, die Quelle(n) anzugeben, um die Nachprüfbarkeit zu ermöglichen.

Zu den einzelnen einführenden Teilen nun Folgendes. Abstand nimmt Müller selber von seiner einleitenden Forderung nach eine[r] möglichst präzise[n] Definition“ (1) in den folgenden Kapiteln (S. 2, 3, 11, 12, 17). Wie oben angemerkt, darf sich die Forschung für die Definition entscheiden, die zum Unternehmen am besten passt. Gerade Redewendungen umfassen ein breites Spektrum. Auch die Tatsache, dass Wortpaare (im engeren Sinne) manchmal aus präpositionalen Ausdrücken umformuliert werden („Knall und Fall“; „Bock und Gärtner“) soll nicht dazu führen, dass sie unter einem dann ungenau wirkenden Oberbegriff subsumiert werden. Übrigens fehlt „Bock und Gärtner“ bei Röhrich und in den *Redewendungen*, obschon laut Google (4.1.0.2010) dieses Wortpaar etwa 10.000mal (Wiederholungen nicht ausgeschlossen, so auch bei anderen Internetangaben hier weiter unten) belegt ist. Ebenfalls problematisch ist der Begriff „Formel“, weshalb ich mich etwa für die Erforschung der früheren Sprachstufen für eine Sammlung von koordinierten Wortpaaren entschieden habe, um dann auch unter Berücksichtigung der überlieferten Geschichte auf ihre Formelhaftigkeit einzugehen. Mir ist die Pluralform „Idioms“ (vii, 7, 27, 29) im Deutschen nicht geläufig. Warum Beispiele „ohne Wortpaar“ (27f.) in dieser Darstellung von Zwillingsformeln eingebracht werden, ist unklar.

Mit Hilfe des Internets kann man einige Feststellungen leicht überprüfen, so etwa die Behauptung, man sage nicht: "wir gehen zu dir oder mir" (18: anstatt „zu dir oder zu mir“). Die Formulierung „zu dir oder mir“ ließ sich aber am 4.10.2010 laut Google-Suche über 2.800mal im Internet finden (die Formulierung ohne Elision der zweiten Präposition ist über 24.000mal verzeichnet; in umgekehrter Reihenfolge knapp 20.000mal; schließlich ist ‚zu mir oder dir‘ über 2.200mal gebucht). Damit ist natürlich nicht etwa der stilistische Stellenwert der einen oder anderen Formulierung angesprochen.

Sehr ausführlich wird die Reihenfolge der gepaarten Glieder untersucht, und zwar nach Vokalen, nach Silbenzahl und -größe. Darauf folgen semantisch-pragmatische Aspekte. Ohne hier auf Einzelheiten eingehen zu können, sei auf eine lange Forschungsgeschichte hingewiesen, die nach den Angaben nur zum Teil aufgearbeitet worden ist. Zu begrüßen sind Müllers zahlreiche Auflistungen von Phänomenen, die er auch zahlenmäßig auswertet. Um nur auf eine solche Liste einzugehen: die unter Stabreim verzeichneten Ausdrücke (14-15) stellen wohl weniger als die Hälfte der in seinem Gesamtverzeichnis von mir gezählten etwa 355 stabreimenden Wortpaare (im engeren Sinne, das heißt, mit einer Konjunktion verbundene Wortpaare) dar. Im Sinne meines eigenen Forschungsschwerpunkts mit einer engeren Definition von Wortpaar lasse ich, anders als Müller, zudem Personen- und Ortsnamen sowie etymologische verwandte Paarungen („fördern und fordern“, „noch und nöcher“, „wahr und wahrhaftig“) beiseite. Müller unterlässt sämtliche mit Vokal anlautende Beispiele, so dass seine Auflistung vom Konzept her unvollständig wirkt. Die mit Vokal anlautenden Beispiele wären nach meiner Zählung circa 9% der stabreimenden Wortpaare aus seiner Liste. Seit dem Alt- und Mittelhochdeutschen hat sich ferner der Lautwert der Verbindungen /sk-/, /sp-/ und /st-/ aus stabreimtechnisch unterschiedenen Zweilauten zu gleich anlautenden Verbindungen mit /f-/ entwickelt. Das hat für den Stabreim insofern Bedeutung, als ehemals nur untereinander stabreimende Ausdrücke (mit Anlaut /sk-/, /sp-/ beziehungsweise /st/) nach der Lautänderung untereinander stabreimfähig geworden sind. So wäre ein nicht stabreimendes altdeutsches „Schild und Speer“ seit der Lautwandlung eben stabreimend geworden. Müller deutet mit der drucktechnischen Her-

vorhebung von <sch>, <sp> und <st> auf die alte, lautlich seit dem Mittelalter nicht mehr hörbare Unterscheidung hin. Wir lassen hier dialektale Unterschiede unberücksichtigt. Ferner ist bei dem Stabreim (ich unterscheide gern zwischen germanischem Stabreim und sonstiger Alliteration) auf die Betonung zu achten. So wären „wagen und gewinnen“ in einer vollständigen Liste von Müllers Stabreimbeispielen aufzunehmen; „vergeben und vergessen“ unter dem Stabreim auf /g-/ zu verzeichnen. Ferner könnten „bergauf und bergab“, „Gedeih und Verderb“ oder „drauf und dran“ hier aufgeführt werden. Bei „wahr/wirklich und wahrhaftig“ entfielen dann der Stabreim, da „wahrhaftig“ Betonung der zweiten Silbe aufweist. Im letzteren Fall (wie auch bei „Beispiel und Begriff“ wäre halt der Begriff Alliteration in oben angedeuteter Verwendung angebracht und sogar hilfreich.

Andere Listen und Tabellen sind zum Teil vollständiger. In der Tat konkurrieren bei ungleichen Elementen im Paar manche Tendenzen (man spricht auch von Gesetz oder Regel), etwa semantische Relationen mit lautlichen, so dass der Versuch, solche Regeln anhand der Beispiele festzustellen, fehlschlägt. Dort, wo detaillierte Angaben gemacht werden, kann man sinnvoll über Zuordnungen sprechen, so etwa bei „Worte und Werke“, ein Paar, das Müller unter der Rubrik „Allgemeines vor Speziellem“ aufführt, das man aber auch unter „zeitlich Vorhergehendes vor Folgendem“ (82-84) oder aber auch als gleichrangig auffassen kann. Ähnlich unklar ist die Bestimmung für „Was und Wie“ als Zeitfolgeregel (Früheres vor Späterem). Insbesondere folgt Müller den Forschungsergebnissen von Gereon Müller. Die Mehrzahl der Beispiele lassen sich nach Tendenzen einordnen, unter denen sich eine Hierarchie allerdings mit Gegenbeispielen aufstellen lässt.

Durch die Analysen erkennt man die große Rolle, die stabreimende Wortpaare innerhalb dieser wie auch immer bestimmten Redewendungssammlung spielen. Die Bestimmung der Formelhaftigkeit unternimmt Müller mit der gebotenen Vorsicht, wobei phonologische, morphologische, semantische, syntaktische und pragmatische Perspektiven in einiger Ausführlichkeit behandelt werden. In der Tabelle zur Bedeutungshierarchie (33) sind wohl Morpheme statt Silben gemeint. Bei der Beschreibung unterschiedlicher Aspekte wird oft die Bestimmung als Formel eingeschränkt beziehungsweise erweitert, so dass der Eindruck entsteht, dass man nicht richtig weiß, wie man Formelhaftigkeit bestimmen

soll (semantisch, 17, 28; poetisch/rhetorisch, 17; morphologisch/syntaktisch, 18-19). Diese Fälle bezeichnet Müller als Grauzonen.

Anzusprechen im Zusammenhang mit der Zitierweise und mit dem Material insgesamt ist die Verwendung von Internetsites, die (wie natürlich auch Druckmaterial) kritisch zu beleuchten und zu bewerten sind. Mehrmals bringt Müller Hinweise auf opone.de/index/, für die ein Winfried Goebel/Bordesholm verantwortlich zeichnet. Hier findet man viel Information, meistens aber ohne Quellenangabe. Ähnlich verhält es sich mit <http://www.redensarten-index.de> von einem gewissen Peter Udem/Gießen (nicht im Literaturverzeichnis).

Ein Werk, das Müller in der Druckversion zitiert, ist inzwischen online verfügbar: <http://www.ettinger-phraseologie.de/pages/impresum.php>. Allerdings sind die Belege/Zitate zum Alphabetischen Index seit dem 31.3.2010 „aus ‚technischen‘ Gründen“ nicht mehr verfügbar. Man macht ja unterschiedliche Erfahrungen mit Informationen, die ins Internet aufgestellt werden beziehungsweise worden sind. Vor allem ist man wenig bedient mit Impressum-Angaben, die die verantwortliche Person lediglich mit Adresse nennt. Ein Grazer Germanist, Wernfried Hofmeister, bietet eine Liste unter <http://zwillingsformeln.uni-graz.at/>, die seit 2001 mehrmals ergänzt worden ist. Seine Kritik zu Müllers Auswahl überschneidet sich zum Teil mit meiner. Die Zählung der Wortpaare bietet manche Fragen, etwa bei Varianten einschließlich Umkehrbarkeit der Elemente („aus und ein“, „ein und aus“). Hofmeister kommt auf eine ähnliche Zahl wie Müller (circa 1.300), aber diese Listen decken sich nicht.

Die etymologischen Angaben zur Bildung „mutterseeelenalein“ (365f.) widersprechen etwa sowohl Röhrich als auch Kluge.

Aus achtzehn anderen Sprachen führt Müller ausgewählte Beispiele im Anschluss an die Tabelle deutscher Ausdrücke auf. Unter den englischsprachigen Ausdrücken hätten etwa „[one’s] bread and butter“ und „foul and fair“ (verzeichnet bei Müller, 194) aufgeführt werden können, zumal man bei manchen Lehnbildungen vermuten wird.

Hans-Georg Müller legt mit diesem Werk eine interessante, beeindruckende und wertvolle Sammlung von circa 2.000 Redewendungen vor, die mehr oder weniger als Zwillingsformeln oder

deren Ableitungen gelten können. Interessierte wie Neulinge innerhalb der Phraseologie/Parömiologie finden hier reichlich Material, mit dem sie sich beschäftigen können. Wer die breite Masse an Forschungsliteratur sucht, muss aber auch anderswo suchen. Möge dieses Werk zu weitergehender Beschäftigung mit den paarigen Ausdrücken der deutschen Sprache anregen.

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Deutsche und bulgarische Sprichwörter und Antisprichwörter. By Ruska Simeonova. Plovdiv: Koala Press, 2009. Pp. 239.

Allgemeines zur Sammlung

Der erste Eindruck von der neulich erschienenen Sammlung mit etwa 4000 deutschen Sprichwörtern und Antisprichwörtern und ihren bulgarischen Entsprechungen bzw. Übersetzungen ist äußerst positiv: das Layout ist wirklich sehr gut gelungen und lädt den Leser dazu ein, den Band in die Hand zu nehmen und darin reinzublättern. Die ganze Sammlung ist in Blau gehalten und mit wunderschönen Blumenfotos geschmückt. Neben dem rein ästhetischen sollten jedoch zwei weitere Positiva nicht unerwähnt bleiben. Zum einen schafft es die Autorin mit dieser Sammlung einen ersten entscheidenden Schritt zum Abhelfen des seit Jahrzehnten bestehenden Mangels an zweisprachigen Sprichwörtersammlungen mit Bulgarisch als Ausgangs- respektive Zielsprache zu machen. Zum anderen richtet sich die kontrastive Sammlung an ein sehr breites Publikum und kann somit für diverse Zwecke benutzt werden: sie kann u.a. zum Erreichen didaktischer Ziele im Fremdsprachenunterricht eingesetzt werden, als Nachschlagewerk für Übersetzer oder als Korpus für phraseologisch ausgerichtete Untersuchungen dienen. Als Universitätsprofessorin für Lexikologie und Deutsch als Fremdsprache hat Ruska Simeonova nämlich die Erfahrung gemacht, dass sich Sprichwörter (genauso wie sprichwörtliche Redensarten, Sentenzen und geflügelte Worte) im Fremdsprachenunterricht als Mittel zur Wortschatzerweiterung und Festigung der syntaktischen Strukturen sehr gut verwenden lassen. Außerdem findet sie eine kontrastive Beschäftigung mit den Sprichwörtern zweier Sprachen durchaus sinnvoll, weil dadurch Studenten und Forscher nicht nur die Spezifika der beiden Sprachen, sondern auch Besonderheiten in der kulturspezifischen Entwicklung der Sprachgemeinschaften eruieren können (vgl. Simeonova 2009: 5-6). Aus parömiologischer und parömiographischer Sicht besteht ein weiteres Verdienst der Auto-

rin darin, dass sie in ihrer Sammlung nicht nur traditionelle deutsche Sprichwörter, sondern auch ihre scherzhaften, ironischen und zum Teil sogar satirischen Modifikationen verzeichnet. Diese Modifikationen (auch Antisprichwörter genannt) spiegeln die Veränderungen im Weltbild einer Sprach- bzw. Kulturgemeinschaft wider und müssen dementsprechend ebenfalls beachtet und erforscht werden.

Vorwort und Einleitung

Dem kurzen Vorwort in bulgarischer Sprache (S. 5-7), in dem der Leser Informationen über den Inhalt und das Ziel der Sammlung sowie Hinweise zu ihrer Benutzung findet, folgt eine wissenschaftlich angelegte Einleitung in Deutsch (S. 8-29). Diese Einleitung ist laut Autorin als eine Art „Überblick über ausgewählte Probleme der Sprichwörterforschung im Allgemeinen und in kontrastiver Sicht Deutsch/Bulgarisch anzusehen“ (vgl. Simeonova 2009: 29). In diesem Sinne „erhebt sie keinen Anspruch auf eine vertiefte und vielseitige Analyse der Sprichwortproblematik“ (s. ebenda). In Anbetracht dessen könnte man vielleicht über gewisse Unzulänglichkeiten hinwegsehen, wie z.B. über die Auswahl der Sprichwortdefinition. Simeonova hat sich für die etwas veraltete und eher populärwissenschaftliche Begriffsbestimmung von Horst und Annelies Beyer aus dem Jahre 1987 entschieden, die der Autorin „recht einleuchtend zu sein scheint“ (vgl. Simeonova 2009: 9), m. E. aber nicht ausreichend präzise und umfassend ist. Im Gegensatz dazu ist ein solches Versäumnis wie das Fehlen eines Verzeichnisses mit Werken der Sekundärliteratur, auf die die Autorin in der Einleitung verweist, nicht so leicht zu verstehen und zu entschuldigen. Ebenfalls zu bemängeln ist, dass die Autorin in gewisser Weise „Antisprichwort“ mit „Aphorismus“ gleichsetzt. Zwar formulieren beide Gattungen einen geistreichen, betont subjektiven Gedanken, die Antisprichwörter bauen aber im Unterschied zu Aphorismen eindeutig auf traditionellen Sprichwörtern auf, indem sie diese modifizieren.

Summa summarum kann jedoch gesagt werden, dass abgesehen von den oben ausgeführten kleineren Mankos die Einleitung zur Sammlung eigentlich ihr grundsätzliches Ziel erfüllt. Sie bietet dem auf dem Gebiet der Parömiologie nicht bewanderten Leser allgemeine Informationen zu Begriff, Entstehung und Gebrauch der Sprichwörter, zu ihren phonologischen Besonderheiten und ihrer

Bildhaftigkeit sowie zu einigen bedeutenden deutschen und bulgarischen Sprichwörtersammlungen und zu ausgewählten Problemen bei der Klassifizierung von Sprichwörtern.

Teil 1: Sprichwörter

Die Sammlung selbst ist zweiteilig aufgebaut. Im ersten Teil verzeichnet Simeonova „allgemein gebräuchliche deutsche Sprichwörter mit ihren bulgarischen Pendants und Übersetzungen sowie allgemein gebräuchliche deutsche Sprichwörter und ihre bulgarischen Übersetzungen“ (S. 32-201). Zum Zwecke dieser Buchbesprechung haben wir 20 Seiten (S. 32-40; S. 104-114) genauer unter die Lupe genommen und sie aus parömiographischer Sicht untersucht. Die Analyse verlief nach der in der Metalexikographie üblichen Gliederung nach Makro-, Mikro- und Mediostruktur. Dabei bezieht sich die Makrostruktur auf Fragen der Definition, Klassifikation und Selektion des Wörterbuchbestandes sowie der Anordnung der Wörterbucheinträge und der äußeren Zugriffsstrukturen. Die Mikrostruktur thematisiert die Einordnung der Einträge im Wörterbuchartikel und die lexikographischen Begleitinformationen. Die Mediostruktur befasst sich ihrerseits mit dem Verweissystem des Wörterbuchs.

Weiter oben wurde bereits kurz darauf hingewiesen, dass die Sprichwortdefinition, die Simeonova für ihre Zwecke ausgewählt hat, nicht präzise und umfassend genug ist. Dementsprechend konnte die Autorin keine strikten Auswahlkriterien für die Aufnahme von Sprachdaten in die Sammlung formulieren. Im Resultat sind im Band nicht nur Sprichwörter, sondern auch mehrere sprichwörtliche Redensarten aufgelistet worden, wie z.B. *Er weiß, wie man die Kastanien aus der heißen Asche nimmt*. (S. 105) oder *Das Kissen um Rat fragen* (S. 108). Außerdem wird nirgendwo erwähnt, woher eigentlich die verzeichneten Sprichwörter stammen. Zwar findet man am Ende des Bandes eine Bibliographie mit deutschen und bulgarischen Sprich- und Antispichwörterbüchern (S. 239), die genauen Quellen werden aber weder im bulgarischen Vorwort noch in der deutschen Einleitung explizit genannt.

Immerhin bietet die Sammlung hinsichtlich der Anordnung der Daten eine sehr gelungene Lösung. Es wurde die wohl am meisten verbreitete und bekannteste Methode der alphabetischen Anordnung nach Stichwörtern angewandt, wobei als Stich- oder „Schlüsselwort“ meist das erste im Sprichwort vorkommende Nomen fungiert

(vgl. Simeonova 2009: 28). Die Stichwörter sind durch die blaue Farbe und die gut lesbare Schrift deutlich hervorgehoben, was die Suche wesentlich erleichtert. Allerdings bleibt für die Rezensentin unverständlich, warum Simeonova die Ein- und Mehrzahl von einem und demselben Nomen (s.S. 105-106: **Katze/Katzen**), die verschiedenen flektierten Formen eines substantivierten Adjektivs (s. S. 37-38: **arm/Arme (der)/Arme (Pl)/Armen (die)**) bzw. ein Nomen und sein Deminutiv (s.S. 107: **Kind/Kindchen**) als separate Stichwörter verzeichnet. Das führt nämlich dazu, dass Varianten eines Sprichwortes getrennt voneinander unter zwei verschiedenen Schlüsselwörtern angegeben werden:

Katze

[...]

Gebührte **Katze** scheut auch kaltes Wasser.

[...]

Katzen

[...]

Gebührte **Katzen** fürchten auch kaltes Wasser.

(S. 106)

In manchen Fällen werden den separat aufgelisteten Varianten sogar unterschiedliche bulgarische Äquivalente (und Übersetzungen¹) zugeordnet:

Koch

[...]

Es ist nicht jeder ein **Koch**, der ein lang Messer trägt.

Гегата не прави овчаря.

Който носи нож, не е непременно готвач.

Лъжицата не прави готвача.

Köche

[...]

Es sind nicht alle **Köche**, die lange Messer tragen.

Като съм чер, не съм циганин!

Гегата не прави овчаря.

Не всички, които носят нож, са готвачи.

(S. 110)

Zum Fragenkreis der Mikrostruktur – insbesondere im Fall einer zweisprachigen Sammlung – gehört das Aufführen von fremd-

sprachigen Äquivalenten und eventuell Übersetzungen des Ausgangsspruchwortes. Zu begrüßen ist das Vorhaben der Autorin, unter dem führenden deutschen Sprichwort alle ihr bekannten bulgarischen Pendants anzugeben:

arm

Arm und reich sind selten gleich.

Един се родил да сее, друг да пее.

Болярът на кон язди, а сиромашът пешком ходи.

(S. 37)

Kleinen (die)

Besser unter den **Kleinen** der Erste als mit den Großen der Letzte.

По-добре на две къщи господар, а не в Цариград говедар.

По-добре в село чорбаджия, а не в град кюмюрджия.

(S. 109)

Immerhin stellt sich hier die Frage, warum Simeonova oft auch die (nicht immer wörtliche) Übersetzung eines deutschen Sprichwortes angibt, wenn es dazu eine bulgarische Entsprechung gibt:

allein

Allein getan, allein gebüßt.

Сам дробил, сам да куса (сърба).

Сам си забъркал кашата, сам си я сърбал. (freie Übersetzung – Anm. Hrisztova-Gotthardt)

(S. 33)

Die Übersetzungen an sich sind tatsächlich sehr treffend und ausgesprochen sprichwortartig formuliert, trotzdem wäre an dieser Stelle eine klare und konsequente Vorgehensweise zu empfehlen: Simeonova sollte eigentlich lediglich jene deutschen Sprichwörter wörtlich übersetzen, die kein totales Äquivalent im Bulgarischen haben. Diejenigen, die gar keine (d.h. auch keine partielle) bulgarische Entsprechung haben, hätten in ein zweisprachiges Sprichwort-Lexikon gar nicht aufgenommen werden sollen.

Ein weiteres Problem hinsichtlich der Angabe von Pendants sehen wir darin, dass bereits allgemeinbekannte und allgemeingebäuchliche bulgarische Sprichwörter nicht unter den Äquivalenten aufgeführt sind bzw. nur als Übersetzungen fungieren. Um das Gesagte zu illustrieren, werden wir im Folgenden zwei Beispiele anführen.

Dem deutschen Sprichwort *Wer alles wissen möchte, wird schnell alt* wird nur eine wörtliche Übersetzung zugeordnet: *Който иска да знае всичко, бързо остарява* (S.33). Dabei gibt es – wie es eine am 21. Oktober 2010 gestartete Googlesuche mit mehr als 1.700 Treffern bezeugt – ein ziemlich gängiges bulgarisches Proverbium, das als (fast) totales Äquivalent zu betrachten ist, nämlich: *Който много знае, бързо остарява*. Ferner wird unter dem Sprichwort *Ausnahmen bestätigen die Regel* die ziemlich bekannte bulgarische Entsprechung *Изключенията потвърждават правилото* in Kursivschrift gesetzt und damit als Übersetzung gekennzeichnet. Das könnte natürlich ein typographischer Fehler sein, könnte aber auch auf die Tatsache zurückzuführen sein, dass dieses Sprichwort in keiner der von Simeonova benutzten Sprichwörter-sammlungen kodifiziert worden ist. Diese Vermutung bringt uns wiederum zu einem altbekannten Problem, das des Öfteren in der Fachliteratur thematisiert wurde: die meisten Parömiographen verlassen sich bei der Selektion ihres Materials meist auf die bereits bestehenden Sammlungen und sind nur selten darauf bedacht, auch neuere Sprachdaten zu ermitteln und diese in ihren Werken schriftlich zu fixieren (vgl. Mieder 1989; Baur/Chlosta 1996; Doyle 1996). Sollte dereinst eine Neuauflage dieser Sammlung vorbereitet werden, wäre es zu empfehlen, nicht nur die existierenden Sprichwörterbücher zu konsultieren, sondern auch die moderne Belletristik, die Presse und das Internet als Datenquelle in Betracht zu ziehen.

Im Hinblick auf die Mediostruktur sei erwähnt, dass im Fall dieser Sammlung die Verwendung von Verweisen, die separat verzeichnete synonyme Proverbien bzw. Varianten eines und desselben Proverbiums miteinander verlinken, sehr sinnvoll gewesen wäre. Man hätte auf synonyme Sprichwörter verweisen sollen und sie nicht einfach unter unterschiedlichen Schlüsselwörtern als eigenständige, voneinander unabhängige Einträge auflisten wie z.B.:

Kalb

Wenn man ein **Kalb** zurückschickt, kommt ein Ochse wieder.

Телето си е пак теле.

Теле и говедо, се е волско чедо.

(S. 104)

und

Krähe

[...]

Eine Krähe fliegt wohl über das Meer, kommt aber als Krähe wieder her.

Дето да идеш, все си ти.

Дето да иде врана, все е посрана.

(S.112)

Das Gesagte gilt auch im Falle von Varianten eines Sprichwortes, die ebenfalls getrennt voneinander verzeichnet wurden:

Kaufmann

Jeder **Kaufmann** lobt seine Ware.

Всяка циганка своите вретена хвали.

Всеки мечкар своята мечка хвали.

Всеки търговец си хвали стоката.

(S. 106)

und

Krämer

Jeder **Krämer** lobt seinen Kram.

Всяка циганка своите вретена хвали.

Всеки бакалин хвали стоката си.

(S. 112)

Teil 2: Antisprichwörter

Der zweite Teil der Sammlung enthält zahlreiche deutsche Antisprichwörter und ihre bulgarischen Übersetzungen (S. 204-238). Die Autorin hat die Auswahl auf Antisprichwörter begrenzt, „bei denen das ursprüngliche Sprichwort ersichtlich ist und die eine treffende Übersetzung ins Bulgarische erlauben“ (vgl. Simeonova 2009: 19). Dieses Selektionskriterium klingt ganz plausibel, allerdings bezeugen die 5 von uns eingehend geprüften Seiten (S. 204-206; S. 218-219) nicht, dass sich die Autorin immer strikt daran gehalten hat. Das Gesagte soll im Folgenden an zwei Beispielen illustriert werden, bei denen das ursprüngliche Proverbium kaum zu erkennen ist:

Arbeit macht das Leben süß.

[...]

Wenn die Arbeit so leicht wär, so tät's der Bürgermeister selbst.

Ако работата беше хубаво нещо, и дядо владика щеше да работи.

(S. 205)

und

Wenn man mit einem Knochen nach dem Hund wirft, so bellt er nicht.

Beißt du in den Knochen, so wirst du zum Hund.

Захапеш ли кокала, ставаш куче.

(S. 218)

Ihrer in der Einleitung formulierten Zielsetzung entsprechend hätte sich Simeonova nur für Antisprichwörter entscheiden sollen, die eindeutig auf traditionellen Proverbien aufbauen und dementsprechend als ihre Verwandlungen erkannt und bezeichnet werden können.

Die Anordnung der Einträge ist auch im zweiten Teil der Sammlung sehr konsequent durchgeführt worden. Die Modifizierungen sind alphabetisch nach dem führenden Sprichwort aufgelistet worden. Die Sprichwörter selbst sind unter ihrem Stichwort zu finden, was die Struktur übersichtlich und die Suche leicht macht.

Die Übersetzungen sind ausgesprochen gut gelungen. Die Autorin hat sich nicht zum Ziel gesetzt, die deutschen Einträge wörtlich ins Bulgarische zu übertragen, sondern sie war eher darum bemüht, den semantischen Gehalt in eine möglichst sprichwortartige Form einzukleiden:

Wie die Alten sangen, so zwitschern auch die Jungen.

Wie die Alten sangen, darauf pfeifen die Jungen.

Младо старо не зачита.

(S. 204)

Zusammenfassung

Abschließend kann festgehalten werden, dass die Sammlung mit deutschen und bulgarischen Sprich- und Antisprichwörtern aus lexikographischer Sicht noch einiges zu wünschen übrig lässt. Bei einer eventuellen neuen Auflage sollte die Autorin die Selektionskriterien für die Aufnahme von Sprich- und Antisprichwörtern etwas präziser formulieren und sich strikt daran halten. Des Weiteren wäre eine gewisse Logik und Konsequenz bei der Bestimmung der Stichwörter und der Aufführung der Übersetzungen zu erwarten.

Die Verwendung von Verweisen könnte ebenfalls den parömiographischen Wert des Bandes deutlich steigern. Nichtsdestoweniger eignet sich diese äußerst umfassende Dokumentation hervorragend als Korpus für parömiologisch und kontrastiv ausgerichtete Untersuchungen und als Nachschlagewerk für Lerner, Lehrer und Übersetzer.

Anmerkungen

¹Alle Übersetzungen sind von der Autorin in Kursivschrift gesetzt, damit sie von den bulgarischen Äquivalenten unterschieden werden können (Anm. Hrisztova-Gotthardt).

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NEW AND
REPRINTED PROVERB COLLECTIONS

For Metin Yurtbaşı

During this past year I have once again been able to add numerous new and reprinted proverb collections from around the world to my International Proverb Archives at the University of Vermont. Altogether eighty-five collections from many languages and cultures are registered in this annual bibliography. This means that I obtain approximately one additional proverb collection every four days. They range from very small collections in journals to major compilations of over one thousand pages, as for example Valerii M. Mokienko's, T.G. Nikitina's, and E.K. Nikolaeva's invaluable *Bol'shoi slovar' russkikh poslovits* (Moskva: Olma Media Grupp, 2010). I might also mention Helmut A. Seidl's important *Medizinische Sprichwörter. Das große Lexikon deutscher Gesundheitsregeln* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2010), and there is also E.F. Arsent'eva's massive *Russko-anglo-nemetsko-turetsko-tatarskii frazeologicheskii slovar'* (Kazan': Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 2008) that my friend from Kazan' brought to Vermont this fall when she spent one month here working in my archives. I had not registered her publication from almost two years ago before, and this should be taken as a sign how important it is that paremiographers everywhere inform me about their newest publications. It is often difficult for me to find about their new books, and it is usually even more involved to obtain copies of them. As I have stated so many times before, I am more than willing to purchase proverb collections from my private funds, but please do let me know about them so that I can register them in these yearly bibliographies and add actual copies to the archives.

Two years ago I started dedicating my updated bibliographies to colleagues and friends who have been particularly

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helpful in providing me with new paremiographical resources. This year I would like to single out my Turkish friend Metin Yurtbaşı, who is one of the most active and productive paremiographers in the world. Over the years he has sent me numerous Turkish proverb collections put together by Turkish scholars. But he himself has, of course, been *the* scholar with his massive dictionaries of Turkish proverbs. Many of them have naturally been published in his native Turkish language, but I will never forget when in 1993 he sent me his superb bilingual *A Dictionary of Turkish Proverbs* (Ankara: Turkish Daily News, 1993) and *Türkisches Sprichwörterlexikon* (Ankara: Bilsev, 1993). Since English and German are the two languages that I know best, these comparative dictionaries opened up the rich world of Turkish proverbs for me. These books have now appeared in a number of other languages, and there is also Metin Yurtbaşı's polyglot collection *Turkish Proverbs and Their Equivalents in Fifteen Languages* (Istanbul: Serkon Etiket, 1996). There is no doubt that this paremiographer is indefatigable, as can be seen from the fourteen (!) additional collections that he presented to me this year. As the Turkish language and culture gain in international importance, Metin Yurtbaşı's proverb collections are of great importance in letting the rest of the world know about the long tradition of proverbial wisdom in Turkey.

I thank Metin Yurtbaşı for his paremiographical scholarship and for making his many collections available to my International Proverb Archives where they will be appreciated by paremiographers and paremiologists alike. But let me also thank all other colleagues and friends for their help in keeping track of new and reprinted proverb collections and for helping me in maintaining and expanding the paremiographical holdings of the archives.

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WOLFGANG MIEDER

INTERNATIONAL PROVERB SCHOLARSHIP:
AN UPDATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

For Christian Grandl and Sabine Horn

Another very productive year has come to an end, and as I am finishing this bibliography on December 24, 2010, I am once again struck by the plethora of paremiological publications that have appeared. This year's rich harvest amounts to 447 items, ranging from short notes, articles, dissertations, and monographs on to comprehensive essay volumes. A major event were doubtlessly the two volumes containing the many lectures that were presented at the international *Europhras 2008* conference at Helsinki, Finland: Jarmo Korhonen, Wolfgang Mieder, Elisabeth Piirainen, and Rosa Piñel (eds.), *Phraseologie global – areal – regional. Akten der Konferenz Europhras 2008 vom 13.-16.8.2008 in Helsinki* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2010), and Jarmo Korhonen, Wolfgang Mieder, Elisabeth Piirainen, and Rosa Piñel (eds.), *Europhras 2008. Beiträge zur internationalen Phraseologiekonferenz vom 13.-16.8.2008 in Helsinki*. Helsinki: Universität Helsinki, Institut für moderne Sprachen – Germanistik, 2010 (electronic book: <http://www.helsinki.fi/deutsch/europhras/ep2008.pdf>). But there are also several other large essay volumes, among them Michaił Aleksiejenko and Harry Walter (eds.), *Słowo, tekst, czas. Jednostka frazeologiczna w tradycyjnych i nowych paradygmatach naukowych* (Szczecin: Wydawca Print Group, 2010), José Enrique Gargallo Gil, (ed.), *Paremiología romance: Los refranes meteorológicos* (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2010), Vida Jesenšek and Melanija Fabčič (eds.), *Phraseologie kontrastiv und didaktisch. Neue Ansätze in der Fremdsprachenvermittlung* (Maribor: Slavistično društvo, Filozofska fakulteta, 2007), Carmen Mellado Blanco, Carmen, Patricia Buján Otero, Claudia Herrero Kaczmarek, Nely Iglesias Iglesias, and Ana Mansilla Pérez (eds.), *La fraseografía del S. XXI. Nuevas propuestas para el español y el*

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alemán (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2010), and Rui J.B. Soares and Outi Lauhakangas (eds.), *Proceedings of the Third Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs, 8th to 15th November 2009, at Tavira, Portugal* (Tavira: Tipografia Tavirense, 2010).

These massive publications alone contain numerous contributions by scholars from around the world. Of course, there are also the many other invaluable publications that have reached me during this past year. Hardly a day goes by when I don't add another article or book to my International Proverb Archives here at the University of Vermont. I would like to thank all of you for making your work available to me. Most of the publications I find and purchase by myself, but obviously I do appreciate receiving copies directly from the authors. Do please keep in mind that I am perfectly willing to purchase dissertations and books from you. Also, don't forget to send me advertisement fliers for your books. If you send me 250 copies by mid-July, I will be glad to include them at no cost to you or your publisher in the international mailing of *Proverbium*. This is a service that I am glad to provide in order to make these significant scholarly achievements known to paremiologists everywhere.

Two years ago I began to dedicate these updated bibliographies to colleagues and friends who have been especially helpful to me in providing information about new paremiological publications or even sending them to me. Someone who has been incredibly supportive is my dear young friend Christian Grandl, who with his delightful partner Sabine Horn has been an eager participant at the international colloquia organized by Rui J.B. Soars and Outi Lauhakangas during the past four years at beautiful Tavira, Portugal. He is a Ph.D. student in Egyptology at the University of Würzburg in Germany, working on his dissertation about ancient demotic proverbs, proverbial phrases, and wellerisms. He is a remarkable bibliographer, having found numerous publications in his field of expertise that because of his help I was able to include in my two-volume *International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009). But a mere glance into the present updated bibliography will show that I continue to benefit from his diligent and enthusiastic labors. Many of us have met Christian Grandl and Sabine Horn at Tavira and Mannheim, and I know that we older scholars find both of them to belong to a

group of young paremiologists of whom we can all be very proud. As I become ever more aware of the fact that my own paremiological work will not go on forever, I take solace in knowing that this dedicated and well-prepared new generation of paremiologists will carry the paremiological torch on for us.

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