

Beata Wałęciuk-Dejneka

FOLK IMAGE OF WOMAN

The Perspective of Otherness.

Folklore and Literature

Aureus

Beata Wałęciuk-Dejneka, *Folk Image of Woman.*
The Perspective of Otherness. Folklore and Literature

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And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.
(Ps. 23,6)

Eternity of the dead lasts as long as they are paid with memory
Wisława Szymborska, *Rehabilitation*

TO MY MOTHER – KAZIMIERA WAŁĘCIUK

*Certainly there exist incarnations of the Other different from the woman;
but the woman is always the Other.*
Simone de Beauvoir, *The Other Sex*

Introduction

Finding, revealing and studying the vision of the world and man in the traditional cultures of various communities leads to the emergence of cognitive complexes in a given culture, its specificity and properties, as well as to the formation of contemporary image of these presentations. Such a conviction, lying at the source of understanding the essence of any culture has already got its tradition in Polish humanist reflection¹. In this sphere, the scientifically empty area remained the symbolic analysis and interpretation of the image of woman in traditional folk culture in the aspect of otherness (being different), where the procedures of giving meaning to the world to events, figures, gestures and words have been encoded. The idea of deciphering and presenting that image on the grounds of Polish traditional folklore in the Slavic context, as well as their literary realizations, is undertaken by the foregoing study, suggesting an interdisciplinary approach to the subject (in the area of folklore studies as a science of verbal and nonverbal forms of presentation, as well as in the area of literary theory)². The material basis of our divagations is formed by folcloric- ethnographic sources (mainly Oskar Kolberg's *All works* „Lud” and numerous field monographs, as well as other collections of 19th and early 20th century texts), as well as the selected literary works (inspired by folklore), zboth (romantic and neo-romantic), poetry and prose, characterized by representative presentations of the other *femina*, corresponding with folk images.

The interest in magical culture, its domains, manifestations and models, is still valid and intriguing for people today – not only historians, anthropologists or folklorists.

Perhaps one of the reasons why they are interested in them is,

– as Piotr Kowalski suggests –

its exoticism and difference in imagination. The more one can feel tired with the civilization progress, achievements of mind and information overload in the technicized world, the more often clear images of the old literary culture seem to be. Another reason for the interest, or even fascination with traditional cultures is finding in them the idealized and desired paradise, as it is currently felt – irretrievably lost, which the world of primitive people and tribes seems to be. (...); publishing a novel or book about various experiences of the world, by people who perceive it in magical terms, turns into an important cultural event³.

A glance at folk character (the folk portrait of woman) from the perspective of otherness reveals the senses immersed in it, goes beyond the borders of knowledge, safety and order, because strangeness on one hand tempts, fascinates and enchants, while on the other it excludes, evokes fear and incomprehension. Therefore, is difficult to describe all sorts of understanding and defining otherness. This category, as multi-aspectual, diverse and heterogeneous, can be treated ambivalently in scientific studies. On one hand, it is perceived as a stigmatized feature that has become the reason for alienation, rejection and contempt against a given individual. On the other hand, it can be considered as an element of identity serving as an asylum to a given person, because it was frequently entitled to separate rights, principles, and norms, and changed, non-stereotypical perseverance and conduct became allowed⁴. In meeting with strangeness, what seems an important issue is recognition of identity, acceptance, ability to create relationships, as well as one's own identity, because otherness constitutes denial, negation, the other side of what is known. That is why a dialogue is always required when we stand up to it⁵.

The discourse of difference presents situations where <the stupid philosopher> himself becomes a sort of a <philosophical> problem: the difference is good for thinking. A clash with it can make us realize different possible points of view upon the same aspects of everyday life, or more significant matters: morality, ethics, religiousness, etc. It creates an <ironic> perspective. Otherness does not become a source of authority, or an authentic mental or symbolic alternative, but an attempt to understand it and cognitive problems which it poses, make us aware of possible alternatives⁶.

Researchers believe that the concept of otherness is indispensable to understand and present the mechanisms of excluding women, and their position as outsiders, those who were on the margin, between. In looking for the stem of femininity, way of living and experiencing reality in different cultural discourses, including also the traditional awareness, the key issue is to assume the concept of „otherness as a cultural construct”⁷. Such a structure (identity) of woman – the Other will make us able to show different kinds of understanding and defining her. On one hand, it will allow to prove why she was chosen, respected and predestined to the role of life-giver (in the literal and metaphorical sense, here and in the other world), while on the other, why, by breaking the taboo,

crossing the limit, escaping the patriarchal stereotypes and threatening the society, she frequently remained lonely and excluded, pushed outside the margin. There will always be a similar answer – because she remained „the One who knows”, „the Other”: „otherness – Kinga Gajda emphasizes – is a feature of the world and man, which comes to the front when discussing the characteristics of a given individual or group, frequently shown in opposition or on the basis of similarity to others”⁸.

Analyzing and investigating the problem of „folk otherness” from the whole field of multi-aspectuality, I chose one, focusing on understanding woman as the other⁹. That perception is discussed here on two levels: as an individual „different than man”, different compared to man¹⁰, which was determined by patriarchal nature of folk culture, where woman was in opposition to man, inferior towards him (as the subject), and also as a person who is different from stereotypically modeled peasant women. In the context of folk otherness of women, what I am interested in, is the way of perceiving and treating her, based on the status recognized in this world, and the status in the other world formed by mythological-symbolic images. Therefore, I watch the tasks, privileges and duties assigned for her, ranks given to her and roles occupied by her, as well as fantastic imaginations and presentations, which always carry certain meanings with them. Together with her and by her a certain vision of the world and man was formed in the traditional folklore was formed, as well as rules of folk ontology and communicational systems (i.a. dialogue with transcendence)¹¹.

The foundation of the traditional folk imagination, in the existence, was a dichotomous vision of Cosmos (this world and the other world), as well as the dialectics of the sacred and the profane based on it. The man perceived and interpreted the universe through a set of categories, imperatives and prohibitions, which guaranteed him a safe and harmonious life in this world, as well as a sense of calmness and certainty in persisting in the afterlife. Thus, he strived for stability and meaningfulness, for observing the rules, as well as for correct contact with the sacred. The woman, in turn, was the one located near liminal beings, on the outskirts of existence, on the brink of life and death. She herself was becoming a medium of nature’s harmony, a voice from the other world, and sometimes a personification of demonic supernatural forces.

Revealing primary structures of magical imagination through the analysis and interpretation of various female figures allows grasping the essence in rural way of thinking that involves combining utilitarian and symbolic elements (duality of knowledge), important to the archaic stage of consciousness: rational, practical, mythological and ritual. I look at the conducted divagations and investigations through a comparative: folkloristic and literary, or, sometimes more

extensively: cultural approach. Thus, I use the anthropological perspective in literary and folkloristic studies, transferring the struggles of scientific investigation to the areas of symbol, myth and ritual, as well as that of structural-semiotic-functional procedures and the solutions developed by feminist criticism (i.a. an outlook on the world from feminine perspective). Therefore, I am quite close to the works and views of i.a.: Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Bronisław Malinowski, Mircea Eliade, Manfred Lurker, Gilbert Durand, Maria Janion, Joanna Mizielińska, or Grażyna Borkowska. I recognize these methodological operations as the most appropriate for the specificity of the issue discussed in my book. The sign nature of culture – pan-semioticism – the term coined by Stefan Żółkiewski – is also important to me.

The specificity of research field, which is the image of woman in folklore and literature in the aspect of otherness, determined the layout of the book. The study: *Folk Image of Woman – Perspective of Otherness. Folklore and Literature*, was divided into two parts, subordinated to the following categories:

1. chthonic – aquatic nature of women
2. *rites de passage*: life/death, death/life; this world/the other world
3. cultural assumption – woman as the Other.

Thus, the women selected by me are always located on the border (in part I – this and the other world; in part II – the other and this world), and identified by the following traits: transgressiveness, mediative character, and liminality, which, as interstructural quantities, accompanied all the transformations and transgressions connected with cosmic and biological rhythms of passages. The projects, or creating a new, different reality, where selected types of women took part, were assisted by established parameters of that liminality, which could be determined, i.a. by pairs of oppositions: open/closed, visible/invisible, living/dead, pure/impure, lonely/common, possessing/lack (nakedness). That „ambiguity of liminality”, as Anna Brzozowska-Krajka remarks, „through the existence of the past and future status was becoming dangerous for the subject, whose individual imagination, together with the right of dissociation, created demons”¹², brought fear and dismay.

Part I of the book: *Non-stereotypical, different, excluded: this world/earth*, consists of three chapters, where I discuss examples of untypical folk representatives of this world, ascribed to the element of earth, in accordance with what Simone de Beauvoir stated: „the earth is a woman, and the woman hides the same, unknown powers, as the earth”¹³. In the spaces of culture: philosophy, aesthetics, religion, folk culture, etc., earth is a matter, an area, a substance, ascribed to woman and her nature, so it symbolizes the feminine and maternal element. These connections were exhaustingly discussed by Mircea Eliade, who

emphasized the mystical and magical communication: giving birth on the human level as a variant of telluric fertility, conception and delivery as a micro-cosmic version of the act that is ideally fulfilled by the earth. Every woman/mother, through her fertility, ability to issue offspring, approaches the cosmic model – the fertility of Terra Mater¹⁴. It is also worth adding that for the carriers of traditional culture the earth was first of all a mother, a being who had feelings and received stimuli, while humans were her children. Giving birth to plants, giving life to humans and animals, it was sacred and eternal, fertile and rich, it symbolized the whole world and reality. It provided existence, work, maintenance, and eternal rest after death. In the relationship with Heaven it created the female-male whole¹⁵. Also in the Bible (the Book of Job and Ecclesiastes) the earth is understood as a mother:

Then Job arose (...) fell to the ground and worshipped.
He said:
«Naked came I out of my mother's womb,
and naked shall I return thither.
The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of
the Lord.
(Job, 1, 20-21)

A great travail is created for of every man,
And a heavy yoke [rested] upon sons of Adam,
From the day that they go out of their mother's womb,
Until the day that they return to the mother of all things.
(Ecclesiastes, 40, 1)

In the traditional Slavic culture the Earth-mother was surrounded by great respect, adored, admired and worshipped, it could not be hit, spit on, or injured¹⁶, it was regarded as morally pure and righteous, hence oaths given upon earth and the archaic rite of confessing sins to the soil. In Russia (in the Orthodox Church) its image is overlapping with the worship of the Mother of God, and in Poland – with the folk cult of Virgin Mary.

In the context of feminine and maternal nature of the earth, in this part I describe the women of wisdom: midwives, healers and prophetesses (chapter1), „voiceless” women: mourners, spinners/weavers and dancers (chapter.2), who are joined together and distinguished in their milieu not only by the fact that they are female, but also by their age (they are mainly elderly), the acquired experience, wisdom, common sense, extraordinary skills, as well as esteem, authority and power. They evoke fear, anxiety and determination among the inhabitants of villages. All the representatives of the second sex are untypical examples of peasant women, in whom a symbolic bond with nature can be noti-

ced, as well as the archetypal structure of great femininity (The Lady of Plants) and the character of a goddess or nymph¹⁷. In chapter 3 I present the „village beauty”, and simultaneously a peasant *femme fatale*: that is Jagna Boryna, the protagonist of W. S. Reymont’s novel. Innocent or sinful, yet she is strong, healthy and beautiful, permeated with eroticism and sensuality, she was inscribed by the novelist into the rhythm of earth and nature. Overpowered by the need for intimate contacts with men, Jagna gradually loses her value, sullyng even what was sacred (romances with her stepson Antek and Jasio – the clerical student), ultimately becoming totally indifferent to everything, and lonely, as time passes – „morally and spiritually impure”, and, first of all, excluded from her native community.

Part II of my study: *The mysterious, the dangerous, the other ones: the other world/water* also consists of three chapters. There I deal with extra-terrestrial portraits of women, originating from folklore, and ascribed to the element of water, of which Carl Gustav Jung wrote: „water is the symbol of woman (...)”, the matter of female essence, and another researcher added: „it is in it (in water), according to the oldest beliefs, different (...) powers, dangerous and hostile to man, find their habitats”¹⁸. Many scholars agree with the statement that water is a sign of life and death, a destructive and constructive element, giving life and carrying death (e.g. „water of life”, baptism, as well as floods and deluges). As a symbolic space, featured with sacredness and mysteriousness, in many cultures was regarded as a deity, a fertility factor and regeneration, constituted an indispensable fluid to stimulate, heal and revive. It repelled and fascinated, helped and killed, created and destroyed. With its ambivalence and sense-creating quality water formed an important property of the other world in traditional thinking: amorphism, chaos, transformation and liminality, at the same time being in opposition towards the orderly earth and world¹⁹.

That is why, looking from the point of view of the aquatic nature and the nature of the other world, in these chapters I discuss the selected figures of the female demons. These are water nymphs (chapter 1) as a female apparitions of temptation, seduction and killing, mermaids (chapter 2) – dangerous and „bloody heroines”, as well as field nymphs (chapter 3), ugly specters, persecuting and punishing the immoral and the dishonest. They all personify dread, cause dismay and fear, and at the same time they fascinate, enchant and infatuate. As personifications of folk female demons, fatal women and crazy dragons, reveal the behavioral mechanisms of “lustful”, immoral, passionate and covetous virgin beauties. They are all connected by unusual and mysterious character, and defined by destructive power. Being inscribed in the folkloristic and literary (more extensively: cultural) world of magic and wonders, imagination and illusion,

they confirm the assumption stemming from the significance of folk faith that the world is not absolutely certain, safe and familiar and that supernatural beings can enter it any moment and interfere in the lives of the mortals, dazzling them with their transgressive properties.

Finally, in this context, it is worth referring to the statement of Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Jean Guitton, “that the woman is similar to water and earth, while the man resembles flame and air. Man, turned to the outside, is to create history. When he describes the act of time, the woman depicts the presence of eternity in time. And this is deeper and truer, as time passes and eternity lasts”²⁰.

The otherness of women, discussed both in part I and II, shows their positions occupied and outlined for individuals in culture who were perceived by the surroundings as other, different. Thus, these women, their behavior and manners, caused difficulties in understanding, and even acceptance in the local community. With the use of culturally formed (magical-religious) tools of interpreting (social, cultural) reality applied in everyday life, these forms of behaviour could not be accepted in universal circulation.

* * *

The book *Folk Image of Woman – Perspective of Otherness. Folklore and Literature* is therefore an attempt to tell about a female experience and order the world and the other world in the traditional culture and its literary realizations, in the dimension of otherness, strangeness and foreignness. Such a journey into the past (here: that of folklore and literature) can always turn out to be an adventure, sometimes a confrontation, discovering the meanings important to our imagination and sensitivity. However, reading culture from every perspective (here: feminine, other) opens the field for the dialogue with what passed, what is old, sometimes forgotten and hidden, because, as Jan Harold Brunvand wrote about folklore (folk culture): „only through turning to folklore of the peoples, penetrating its meanings, patterns and functions, as well as looking for connections between various spheres of tradition, we can hope for understanding (...) the spiritual life of humanity in its broadest dimensions”²¹.

PART I

NON-STEROTYPICAL, DIFFERENT, EXCLUDED:
THIS WORLD, EARTH

Chapter 1

Women of wisdom – midwives, healers, prophetesses

Venerability is wisdom in people.

(Wisdom of Solomon 4,7-15)

It is not enough to gain wisdom, you should also take advantage of it.

(Cicero)

Supernatural skills are ascribed to old women

(Simone de Beauvoir)¹

„Come on, Simone de Beauvoir is an old lady!”² [she was 50 then – comment: B. W.-D.]. – is what a well-known French writer and philosopher – Simone de Beauvoir is saying about herself in her tale of old age.

In recent centuries the expression <old age> has been burdened with pejorative meaning: „it sounds like an insult”, excludes, ridicules, humiliates, causes silence, raises fear, anxiety, sometimes even shame, brings closer to death. Myths, stereotypes and lies have distorted portraits of old people throughout the ages, deprived them of their irreproachability, ability, dignity, and that is why they have been perceived as Others. The modern culture created two extremely different images of an old man: one is a sage with gray hair, „rich in experience and worth admiration, watching human fate from a distance (...), and the other – a crazy old man, who talks nonsense and is ridiculed by children. In both cases – as virtuous old men, and as old weirdos, they are not compatible with the rest of humanity”³, that is, with the cultural norms.

Meanwhile, both in the Bible, in the letter to Titus, in which we read: „That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience” (Titus 2,1-8.11-14), and in the traditional thought, old age was an appropriate, respected and significant category. The son obeyed his father, daughter – her mother, children respected their parents and grandparents, the young respected their elders, who had authority in their families. The power of father and mother

did not decrease with age, quite contrary – they strengthened their positions. An old man was a real Other, with whole ambivalence of that notion, he was inscribed in an area, which was quite different from the everyday, ordinary human experience. Thus, in this chapter old age will be understood transgressively, meditatively – as living on the border of the two worlds and, for this reason – differently.

From the point of view of linguistic studies, in Slavic and non-Slavic areas the expression *old age* used to have many meanings. *Stary /old/* is therefore „would be constant” (connected with the verb <stać>/ <stand>), so, in the old meaning it is: “unchangeable, constant”. Besides, the words: *stary/starość (old, old age)* might also have other, related meanings: „mocny”, “tęgi”/”strong”, ”stout”/, „duży, wielki”/”big”, ”great”/, „gruby”, “szeroki”, “wyrośnięty”/”fat”, ”broad”, ”overgrown”/, ,having a common root with „rok” /”year”, „przeszłoroczność”/ ”being of past year”. The notion of old age was also close in its sense to “well fed”, “well formed”, „tall”/”high”. That brief etymological outline shows variety in the term formation, multiplicity of its connotations, as well as variety in designation⁴.

Advanced age deprived people of physical strength, but frequently gave them wisdom, knowledge and experience, made their sight and hearing weak and impaired, made their hair grey, increased tiredness, but also the need for peace, quiet and reverie. The person changed their attitude towards the world, and as time went by, they gradually backed out of it. Behavior of the elderly caused a specific attitude towards them in the traditional folk culture. They were treated specifically, regarded as God’s messengers, mediators between the known and unknown reality, prophets, healers, almost “saints”. Their attitude was believed to serve to communicate with the other extra-human sphere, it helped to call the specific, extraterrestrial powers, while the impaired sight and hearing made them see and hear better inside; they could touch the mystery, which was outside the world, sensed when they were alone and silent. Therefore, age was the measure of dignity and real power. All that resulted from the conviction, deeply rooted in an individual’s magical awareness, that there existed constant rules and principles in the world, which organized life and governed the reality. The certainty of their functioning could be found in the order of the sacred, different from that of the profane. Thus, humans aimed at their own safety and certain orderliness in nature, securing order in the world and best possible existence in the other world. It was done in many verbal and non-verbal areas of human activity, among others on the grounds of „building” an image of a human being, including that of an old person.

In the traditional hierarchy such properties as: maturity, experience, skills,

common sense and knowledge, caused by age, gave a person a certain rank, e.g. a guide, a guardian, or a medium. This was also connected with guidance, respect and authority. It was believed that such a status „was rooted in the other world and recognizing it was the wisdom of subsiding to the obvious dominance of those stronger than humans”⁵ – Anna Zadrożyńska emphasizes.

The meanings, in which elderly persons had been equipped in the magical culture, as well as the functions and dignities therefore attributed to them, strictly established in the plan of symbolic causativity, properties and rights, though they could concern specific and practical matters, they always had to be sanctioned in the order of the rite⁶.

Elderly women were distinguished in village community. They had their position and role in the family, village, local group, in ritual and occasional activities (human life cycles: birth, marriage, death and other – such as sickness) and natural cycles (calendar, cyclic rebirth and “dying” of nature)⁷, during which they kept an eye on adequacy to the ritual and consistence with the magical-symbolic scenario. Their attitude towards life, sometimes looks, origin and placement, wisdom and experience acquired throughout the years, as well as their age caused that they were included in the category of ambiguous, hybrid and mediating beings. The status granted to them also resulted from gradual loss of the fertility powers, which determine the opposition between sexes, which, in turn, constituted the basic taxonomical division governing the world of humans. In a sense, they ceased to have the marks of femininity (e.g. loss of menstruation, connected with the possibility of getting pregnant)⁸, acquiring the attributes of strangeness, transgressiveness and mysteriousness. In the Bible the elderly women are treated as a model worth following, and they are entrusted with tasks of teachers of a noble and sedate life: „the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God” (Tt 2, 1-8.11-14).

The image of wise women presented in this chapter will include portraits of those alienated, to a certain extent excluded from their community, yet taking a very important position in the structure of traditional village, first of all, due to their sacred-magical abilities and the possibility of communicating with the world of spirits. Their actions, regardless of the assumed form of communication, verbal or nonverbal, were characterized by relativity. They were to secure the effectiveness of the whole ritual undertaking⁹, where the presence of old women was never accidental, or, much less – “decorative”. That group will include midwives,

healers (e.g. the “whisperers” from Podlasie), “grandmothers”, prophetesses and experts. They all, as Oskar Kolberg wrote, were called “wise” or “possessed”:

These women can be attributed with nearly the same role, as the so called sciae played in antiquity, which seems quite similar even in pure translation into our language comes out as the Wise (or the Knowing) Ones. (...) The Wise One is, according to what the folk believes, a person equipped with higher abilities, in whom, by virtue of divine visitation, a lot of demons live, and at least three devils. As a result of the belief such a person from heavenly permission visited by them, is also simply called by the folk the Possessed, and is not included in the group of spiteful witches, but regarded as a creature that is beneficent for them¹⁰.

These exemplifications of folk images will also have their literary equivalents in this chapter.

We will start decoding cultural meanings with two important rites in the family cycle, constituting existential „thresholds” in the life of local community – that is from birth and funeral. These two extreme ritual events, taking place in crucial phases in the life of an individual, apart from the earthly time also included the time of pre-existence (birth) and post-existence (funeral). They opened the perspective of contacting the other world¹¹, imposing the necessity of magical protection and observing the ritualized actions upon the persons concerned.

„she is called „the Wise One” in Baranów”
(Henryk Biegeleisen)

In traditional culture childbirth is always accompanied by the village midwife, “the grandmother”/*babka*/, (“the old woman”), a woman, who was well-known and respected, accepted by the family and neighbors, vastly experienced and skilful. „It is a kind of dignity, rather than the profession of midwife” – Henryk Biegeleisen writes – „In Poland and in Russia the one who performed that function was expected to be serious, for <her attributes are partly transferred onto the child>. In Baranów she is called the Wise One”¹². The designation “*babka*”, “*baba*”/grandmother/, initially meant the relationship of kinship that she entered into with the family thanks to the ritual actions she performed. That is why in Belarus or in Russia „the grandmother called the woman in childbirth granddaughter and her husband –grandson”¹³. According to the ethnographer, the village folk regarded being a „grandmother” as honor, so she could not be remunerated with money, she was only entitled to material gifts: „The time and form of giving the gifts indicates their ritual character [she got them on Christmas Eve – B. W-D] – payment in cash is avoided. This is how it is explained why being a *babka* cannot become a profession”¹⁴. In the region of Chełm her basic function was reduced to paramedical abilities, so “*babka* was also called a „doctor”, i.e.

the woman who was a midwife at childbirth”¹⁵, helped with it¹⁶. She ruled the chamber where childbirth was taking place; she was burdened with the duty to take care of the correctness of subsequent events: preparing the woman for birth, taking care of her, preparing the bedclothes, helping the baby to get to this world, its appropriate reception, giving the profane features to the “newcomer from the other world”¹⁷. Therefore, her tasks included: assisting and supporting the mother during pregnancy and then in childbed, taking care of her baby: “*babka* diligently attended the woman in childbed. First, she cooked vodka with honey (i.e. she prepared the alcoholic beverage called *krupnik*), gave a glass to the weak [woman] an hour after childbirth and poured a few drops into the baby’s mouth”¹⁸. In the symbolic code of meanings, both alcohol – a hallucinogenic beverage, causing visions, and honey, were connected with the other world and belonged to the sacred sphere. They were included into the drinks of gods, priests and the chosen ones. Such overlapping of a few symbolisms in one act (alcohol, honey, woman in childbed – being impure, so „belonging to the other world”¹⁹, the baby – the „newcomer from there” and the midwife (*babka*) was supposed to increase the expected effect: make the situation stable as soon as possible, bring back the order that was shaken for a moment, achieve ordinariness. The person who performed the acts turned out to be the most important. In the cultures, religions and mythologies of different countries the woman has been assigned connections with death and ghosts, and that is why she could guide both the individual coming into this world (emerging from nonexistence), and departing this world (entering into nonexistence).

The Slavic “patron” of the midwife (*babka*) was the mythological *Złota Baba* /Golden Woman/, also known as *Jeży Baba* or *Baba*, bringing obvious associations with *Baba Jaga* (the Witch). The connections are emphasized by their places of living and functions: “*Złota Baba* lived in the woods and scared people there, she told them about future and warned against danger, and, finally, she knew the way to the Slavic world of the dead”²⁰. First of all, however, she was the goddess of midwifery, „she accepted the fetus emerging from its mother’s womb into the daylight”, and she took care of children since they were conceived. Her looks were also of importance: “the statue of *Złota Baba* is in the shape of an elderly woman holding one child in her lap, and the other, as her grandchild, next to her”²¹. *Baba Jaga* (the Witch), in turn, known first of all as the character of fairy tales, a scary old hag, eating children and living somewhere in the wilderness, is also the woman who guards the kingdom of dead. Wladimir Propp described her as an unmarried, large-breasted old woman, who was not the mother of humans, but the mother and ruler of the forest animals, but she also “presented the stage when fertility was shown only in a form of a woman,

without participation of a man (...). Being the personification of her sex, she does not live the life of sex. She is a mother only, not a wife"²². As a woman, she has all the attributes of femininity, connected with hearth and stove (transformation). Borys Rybakow connects her with Mara (Moriēna, Morana), the image of death, whereas Aleksander Afanasjew juxtaposes the figure with winter²³. Such a portrait of woman, old woman, mother, ruler of life and death, granting magical properties, has its roots in the archaic matriarchy and refers to the magical thinking²⁴.

Babka, who took care of the woman giving birth, attempted to relieve her pains by performing numerous acts ordered by the ritual: she sung prayers and opened everything that was in the chamber: windows, doors, wardrobes, chests, boxes and drawers, she unbraided her tresses, unbuckled the buttons of her shirt, untied knots on her clothes (the magic of Alkmene: opening, untying in one, magical plane – is accompanied by opening and untying in the other – human, earthly plane; here, we can add that in rural areas childbirth was often referred to as “dissolution/delivery/”, e.g. “a happy dissolution/delivery/”). In some regions, as ethnographers report, “(from Horodenka) a peasant woman about to give birth, instructed by the midwife (*baba*), walks round the table three times, opens chests and wardrobe, tidies up the benches and shelves, <so that nothing is tied up or closed>”²⁵. Analogical behavior of the midwife can be found in antiquity. In Athens, as Adrienne Rich emphasizes, the pregnant woman „was often accompanied by priestesses who recited or chanted spells (prayers), to ease the birth”²⁶. In especially difficult situations, when the birth was delayed, *babka* asked for opening the church door and exposition of the Holy Sacrament, or for opening the holy gates in the Orthodox Church²⁷. She did so to enable the child – that stranger, stigmatized with impurity, to safely appear in the new reality, as well as in order to facilitate its way from orbis exterior to the human oecumena. In the folklore of Eastern Slavs woman’s womb was called “the gate”, whereas the act of birth – „the journey”. The parallelism: woman’s womb – house (its interior), presented as mother – children, is confirmed in many texts of folklore and ritualized types of behavior²⁸. In the quoted example it is worth paying attention to coexistence of old magical forms with Christian faith (dwojewieria, double faith), when in extremely difficult cases people referred to God and the saints.

In primitive imaginations birth was treated as the process of emerging from nonexistence²⁹, transition from the sphere of death, Chaos and danger, to the sphere of life, Cosmos and order. That is why all the ritualized actions undertaken by the individual were aimed at enabling the child to be born, accepting it to the family and local community, creating for it good life and positive future. In

the folk ontology procreation was regarded as the foundation of the family existence, a special gift and blessing from God, so reproduction was not limited. It was treated as an order determined by religious, social and cultural aspects, together with a specific need to be a mother and a father. Lack of children, in turn, was understood in the categories of a punishment from God³⁰.

Being in the marginal phase, when one no longer belongs to that space, but not yet to this one, was very dangerous in the folk culture and required, except meticulous observation of all acts, also the participation of persons who were specially prepared and entitled to contact sacrum. It was *babka* who was such a figure and her special role in the ritual situation referred to here was connected with liminality (between the world of the mortals and the beyond), providing conflict-free, safe and successful “delivery” of the baby from the beyond and receiving it into this world. The procedures performed at the baby, in the effect threatened her with pollution³¹, so it was necessary for her to undergo a ritual ablution. Also the mother underwent purification, and this authorized both the women to apply towards each other the magical action called *zleviny* / “pouring over”/ (the region of Wolyn). For this purpose *babka* scattered the new mother’s hands with grain, saying: „oczyszczaju twoju duszu od hrycha twojoho”/I am purifying your soul from your sin/, whereas the woman in childbed did the same to *babka*: „oczyszczaju ruki twoje od brudu mojoho”/I am cleaning your hands from my dirt/³². The words with purifying properties closed the dangerous time of chaos (pregnancy and childbirth) and at the same time opened the passage of communication with this world. Grain (symbol of life), just like alcohol and honey before, was used for regaining the lost strength, the symbolic purification of two women, stigmatized with impurity, to transmit to them the life-giving strengths contained in grain, securing vitality and levelling „<the energetic potential> impaired by the contact with the Other world”³³.

Mediation ability – the privilege that, according to magical outlook on the world, the midwife was gifted with – allowed her also to perform many other gestures towards the baby, for instance, the sign of “domiciling”, encouraging him/her to stay among people. For this purpose, the village midwife put the little one near the stove, on the ground, or under the bench. She cut off the umbilical cord and tied the newborn’s navel with a white thread, as well as performed the initial acts of “humanization” (this is how Anna Zadrożyńska expressed it): first bath, or slapping the baby three times on its bottom, so that he/she utters first human cry or scream³⁴. Let’s quote a fragment from the region of Lublin: “*Babka* prepared the baby’s first bath in trough; heats water in an unused pot, which they do not change until after six weeks”³⁵ (so ca. 40 days – exactly as much time as the isolation of a woman in childbed lasts – until she is churchd).

In the cultural interpretation, stove constituted a symbol of woman, mother, home, family atmosphere. It was connected with the home hearth and the role of woman as its guardian. Therefore, stove was connected with the female side of existence. Situated in the corner of the compartment, it gave light, warmth and certainty of existence, was symbolically connected with fire that gave and destroyed life (the semantic ambivalence of fire). In the archaic mythologies woman was the giver of fire, “and as the carrier of energy, she also fulfilled educational functions, as fire was always accompanied by secret knowledge, which should have been transmitted further”³⁶. It can also be attributed with a certain analogy to a crucible or a pot, the vessels mainly assigned to witches and sorceresses. As Tsultrim Allione writes: “a woman’s work is to transform, create something from nothing, to give shape to shapeless energy. In this job her tools are a trivet and a pot”³⁷. Let’s refer for a while to the presentations of femininity in the phenomenological aspect, confirming the symbolism of stove, vessel and female body (pregnancy). Namely, as Erich Neumann writes, “woman as a body – a vessel – is a natural form of expressing the experience that a woman is the one who carries a child inside her”, which, in further interpretational perspective, gives the following scheme: „woman = body = vessel = world. That basic formula is valid at the matriarchal level, that is, in the phase of a humanity’s life when <The Great Femininity> dominates over masculinity”³⁸.

The special respect for the stove (analogically: for the thresholds and the table) in this situation may also be connected with expecting support or help from the dead ancestors or house demons, because the particular parts of the tamed space in the magical imagination were connected with appropriate mythical figures (the so-called ghosts, demons, protectors), so for symbolic-ritual actions it was not indifferent, which places were chosen for transformation. The bench was one of the basic pieces of furniture in a village cottage, it frequently replaced the table, meals were eaten on it, and so it „took over” the semantic areas of the table: as the central, sacred place, the home „altar” on which sacrifices were made. The ambivalence of the meanings of water makes us treat it, on one hand, as a destructive element, while on the other – as the source of life. That liquid, essential to life, also constituted a purifying, regenerating and recreating agent. Applied during baby’s first bath, not only symbolically removed pollutants from the beyond, but also gave it the features of this world (“humanized” him/her), brought to life in another existential dimension (initiation for this world). Analogically: scream, shouting, noise as metonymies of that reality, signals of earthly existence, were necessary when the child was included into the family and local community.

The importance of village midwife’s causative acts and her uniqueness, caused by her hybrid nature and paranormal abilities, are also distinctly emphasi-

zed by her further role. Immediately after the newborn baby was bathed and wrapped in swaddling bands, before he/she was given to his/her mother, the village midwife passed him/her to his/her father, who kissed the baby and raised him/her up and then gave him/her back to *babka*³⁹. That necessary gesture, dictated by the ritual, in the eyes of local community confirmed his acceptance of the baby as his own and expressed the father's satisfaction with the birth of a new family member. Similar acts of official approval were applied for instance in the ancient Rome⁴⁰. *Babka* also dealt with the post-partum remains (waste: placenta, umbilical cord and cull). As the person authorized to contact the sacred sphere, she could undertake such procedures and was not exposed to any blemish. The happy father was obliged to treat the midwife with vodka, called *pep-kówka* ("navel vodka") in many regions of Poland. Sometimes, to increase strength, butter was added to alcohol⁴¹. Such mixture was applied only in exceptionally important situations. Alcohol drunk together, the transgressive drink, confirmed the transformation of reality and mediated in crossing the borders⁴². Fat, a strong symbol of life, strengthened and increased creational powers⁴³.

Babka also celebrated the ritual accompanying baptism. In the regions of Krakow or Chełm, "with the father, she took the baby and they went to church. After baptism she took the child back and they headed home", the father with godparents "goes to (the orthodox) church with the baby and midwife. When the child is to be taken out, *babka* or mother put a small piece of bread and a clove of garlic into the nappies, so that bread was always near him/her and garlic took away the influence of evil spirit"⁴⁴. In the region of Masovia (Mazowsze) it was analogical – "*babka* washed and dressed the baby for the baptism"⁴⁵. The experienced specialist prepared the baby and accompanied him/her also during the final act of "humanization", introducing him/her into a totally new social situation – during baptism in the temple and when his/her name was given to him/her. As that role was her vocation, she knew best how to form the baby's life in balance, how to strengthen his/her bonds with the family and local community, how to lead him/her (by means of initiation rites) into the period of childhood (the first phase of being a human). As a guardian of rituals, she secured safe functioning to the community. Here bread and garlic are worth mentioning, as requisites applied towards the baby. Bread, symbol of human life and any existence, as food, had to be found near the newborn, to provide him/her, already at this initial stage, with all abundance and affluence, metonymically expressing prosperity and well-being⁴⁶. Garlic, due to its unpleasant, sharp taste and smell occurred in the traditional culture as a strong anti-demonic agent, an apotropeion. It was also a curative plant, fighting many illnesses.

Age and looks, wisdom and experience, respect in the village and authority

in the local community, ascribed to an old woman (person)⁴⁷, also gave her other rights being in force in the folk code. In the Pokucie region *babka* was granted the right to solemnly greet parents with the child coming back home from baptism. She “played” the main role in this rite. As they came back from the church, they stopped in front of the cottage and led the ritual dialogue with those who were inside. The chosen person asked: “Is the baby good?” and the response was: „Good, good”. Then the oldest woman in the house came out with bread and salt, put it on the baby’s pillow and invited everyone to the feast⁴⁸. Then the newly baptized child became a fully legitimate member of the traditional community, everyone wished him/her prosperity, abundance, success and good luck. The effectiveness of gesture and wishes in the ritual situation, referred to above, was additionally strengthened with special objects: bread and salt, which constituted obligatory products in the system of communication between man and the sacred. Especially “holy” food was bread, what we already know: the symbol of life, birth, wealth and affluence, but also salt, an important operation of modification, transformer sanctioning the change that was to take place after birth: “the baby was to be “cultured”, which meant that it was necessary to deprive him/her of any features or connections with Nature, to which, as it was believed, the child still belonged after birth”⁴⁹. Salt deterred the bad powers and demons lurking for the baby. It also meant wealth. The ritual dialogue served as multiplication and securing of the wealth. It took place on the threshold, which is a place stigmatized with mediation character. The threshold constitutes a synonym of crossing and breaking the borders, defining the situation of those who came to the world of mortals from the beyond. That is another overlapping of symbolisms in birth ritual complex (here: liminality of village midwife and the threshold) that strengthened the act of aggregation and emphasized its significance.

In the context of the discussed midwife’s tasks and privileges, it is worth remarking that midwives had their own holiday in Bulgaria, called “*babin den*”, celebrated in January. It was devoted to midwives and old women assisting at delivery. The holiday was connected with water. The ways of celebrating it, respect for women and detailed rituals made ethnographers pose the thesis that “the day had to contain the echoes of the forgotten worship of the Great Goddess that survived in Bulgarian folk embroideries in a stylized form”. Besides, on the day of midwives and old women, mothers brought their children to midwives who “painted their cheeks red with berry juice, coloring them with the hue of life”⁵⁰. Men were not allowed to participate in the celebrations, while the „Bacchants” themselves, under the influence of substantial amounts of alcohol, became truculent and aggressive. The midwives’ ceremonies were celebrated in Bulgaria until the 17th century.

The synonymy of birth and funeral rites, caused by the role of *babka* in them, which we are trying to demonstrate in the foregoing chapter, will now be traced in the ritual situations focused on the “moribund”⁵¹.

In the agrarian culture death, the final act of earthly life, was not treated as definite end of life itself. However, unquestionably, it was an intriguing fact, beyond all recognition. It was the transition from one world to another and had to be accompanied by fear and dread of dying. As Zdzisław Kupisiński SVD remarks: “man feared the finiteness of his life, which he explained by mysteriousness of death’s actions and strange ways in which that force occurred in his surroundings. And man experiences it in a special way, because, as the only one among living beings, has a certain notion of death”⁵². Crossing the border of existences required, however, numerous ritualized procedures, preparing the dying person for safe departure from this reality and entry into the other world.

The person appointed to contact transcendence, authorized to prepare the deceased person and organize his/her extraterrestrial expedition was *babka*, who, in many regions of Poland, was entrusted with regulating the relationship between this world and the other world, and above all, bidding farewell to the moribund. According to the magical thinking, the departed had already broken all the bonds connecting him/her with this world, so for the village community he/she became someone dangerous, strange, and impure, causing fear. *Babka*, due to loss of feminine features (she was already barren) and due to the fact that she had the features of a mediator, in contact with the body and its impurity did not sense any threat⁵³. As the guardian of contact with the sacred, she watched over physical and spiritual survival of the family and local community. By performing her tasks she also took care of the social order. The way in which *babka* is referred to in the regions of Żarki, Siewierz and Pilica, mentioned by Adam Fischer, is quite interesting: “the same women, most often fortune tellers took care of the dead body, and during dressing the deceased they sing religious songs and for that last service they get: old clothes and shoes, and <rags> (underwear) that used to belong to the deceased”⁵⁴.

In Masovia (Mazowsze), near Sanok, Krosno and in the region of Poznań⁵⁵ the farewell ritual started from preparing and washing the corpse: “the deceased will be washed by an old man or woman who had been begged for it, that person will dress him/her and sing religious songs over him/her”⁵⁶ or „when he/she dies, old women take him/her, wash the body and put it on the boards. They put a shirt on him/her”⁵⁷. Water, as we already know, as an amorphous substance, fulfilled purifying functions, enhanced change and transformation⁵⁸ (analogically to the baby’s first bath). Ritual ablutions that the corpse underwent had even a double sense: they washed earthly traces off the body and led to transforma-

tion, rebirth in the other world. Then *babka* dressed the body in the best, previously made clothes that had no knots⁵⁹ (magic of Alkmene), talked to it, or called the deceased by his/her first name to make putting on a shirt easier: “While dressing they talk to the dead person, calling him/her by his/her name, so that it is easier (...) the old women called upon, call the deceased while dressing him/her, and putting on the particular pieces of clothing they say: <give me your arm, (name), so that I will put your clothes on you>”⁶⁰. To make the image complete, it is worth referring to the literary description of preparing Maciej Boryna for his burial, which was done by two old women, Agata and Jagustynka: “Jambroź chased everyone out of the house and closed the room to start taking care of the dead together with Jagustynka and Jagata, who had just dragged herself with that sacrificial prayer (...) they had just clothe Maciej in the clean shirt”⁶¹. Prepared like this, he was expecting last visits from his family members and neighbors. In the region of Kalisz tasks of the old woman included also the all-night vigil at the body, guarding it, saying prayers and singing mourning songs: “at the body of the deceased an old man or woman sing mourning or religious songs in the evening or at night. In Stradom <a beggar-woman> watches over the body”⁶². Let’s now refer to Reymont’s novel once again: “it became absolutely quiet at Boryna’s, only the voice of Jagata, saying the litany for the dead came from open doors and windows. (...) Until late at night they sung at Boryna, and when they dispersed, only Jambroź and Jagata stayed awake until morning. And they sung, first loudly...”⁶³

The main function of the old woman (more extensively: a woman in general), stemming from her basic features, which are already known to us – liminality and mediating character, as well as her connections with the death, made her play an important role also when the deceased person was leaving his/her family and local community: at home, on the way to cemetery and in the cemetery, where she bewailed the deceased and moaned over the body (more extensively in chapter 2 on the ritual mourners).

Therefore, the old woman led the man out of the earthly reality, supporting the contact with the spiritual, sacred space. It was there she drew advice and instructions on how to act, how to help others and how to affect events. As the wise one, she knew the appropriate time and mechanisms governing that time, she knew the rhythm of nature and man. She was the voice of the one who had no voice any more, did not speak and did not act. It was her who spoke and acted on behalf of the invisible world.

There, among meadows and dark forests
 Behind the winding ribbon of the stream
 Far from the noises of cities
 The whisperer declines her spells
 (Adam Świącki)⁶⁴

In accordance with the principles of traditional folk culture, age, authority and the possessed abilities in a given domain allowed the village “specialist” to be on the border of two spheres: ecumena, real experiencing of everyday life, and anecumena, what is strange, different⁶⁵. Thus, on the earth, she performed tasks requiring untypical properties based on superhuman features. Such duties, except peri-natal and peri-funeral activities that had been discussed before, included the medicinal practices applied by folk “doctors” (generally men and women): “old age is connected with a lack of strength, illnesses and death, but also wisdom and knowledge. That brings old people closer to the category of healers and magicians. The old, especially the old women, were commonly suspected of witchcraft. They frequently became healers”⁶⁶. Let us now refer to the examples from the scope of traditional etiology⁶⁷.

In the traditional notion illness was a special state, which destroyed the already existing order and disturbed ordinary functioning of the organism, and sometimes of the world (epidemics); it is also the moment of stopping between the two phases, dangerous and strange for an individual being in the liminal phase⁶⁸. A specific ritual of healing secured going out of that phase. It repaired the suspended order and brought back the man’s physical strength. It was referred to as passing from the situation of crisis (the seeming death) to health (life). Sickness was seen as a consequence of contacting the extraterrestrial beings and phenomena, “it is an enemy sent from outside, from the other world”⁶⁹, or cooperation with the devil: “illnesses – tools used by the devil”⁷⁰. The ill person, in turn, was seen as a threat to the surroundings, as someone impure, dangerous, with unstable status (ill = dead). That was a person who did not fully belong to earthly reality, and as if simultaneously contacting two worlds (this world and the other one)⁷¹. Diseases sent upon people were, in the magical awareness, “signs of exclusion from local community: announcement, testimony and effect”. He, who does not live righteously and chooses sin, bears the effects of it in the form of the curse involving disease. The disease leads to death”⁷². As the researchers point out, the list of <curse diseases>, in accordance with the dualist logic of folk worldview, was consistently combined with sin and the devil, for from the point of view of the traditional anthropological myth “it was the devil, when, together with God, co-created man, made holes in his body and put diseases there”⁷³.

That temporary situation of destruction, where a given individual found himself/herself, required, therefore, besides the appropriate time and sometimes place, also the application of appropriate procedures and action of an awaited person: trustworthy, wise, experienced and skillful, who, through appropriate behavior, led the person out of bad condition and put them in a good state. The role of a healer was also a correct decoding and understanding of information from the beyond “sent” in sickness, as well as assistance in solving these difficulties. Such a person could be a healer (“whisperer”, healer, hag), practicing “medicine” using herbs and methods known only to her, frequently spells, magic and ordered spell-casting formulas. In the opinion of the village people she knew more than a doctor: “a healer knows more than a doctor”, “a poor old woman will help a sick one with her simple herbs faster than the best doctor”, for she got from God “higher qualities of spirit and the power of making the miracles”⁷⁴. It’s worth mentioning that in the traditional culture people differentiated witch doctors and divided them into specialties, in which they had best practices: “the folk from the region of Krakow differentiate a wise woman specialized in women’s and children’s diseases, a healer specialized in internal diseases, a shepherd and a woman – the surgeons, a blacksmith as a village dentist, someone who could prevent and cure all diseases”⁷⁵.

A female village doctor, raising controversies, perceived as incompatible with the reality, exceeding the limits of her sex (non-feminine), mysterious and inaccessible, bore on her a certain category of ambivalence and stigma: people were afraid of her, rejected her, but they also obeyed and admired her and went to ask for help or support. Sometimes, however, they treated her derisively and with mockery. Here is a fragment of a dialogue taken from the novel *Stara baśń/ An Old Fairy Tale/* by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski: “You know how they pull you, persecute, make fun of you and taunt you”⁷⁶. As a weird, different one, she was condemned to isolation. As a field researcher from the early 20th century wrote: “every villager pays the highest respect to these women, fearing some witchcraft or “gunshot”. For they possess the mystery of magic, by virtue of which, in the folk’s conviction, they can do good and evil”⁷⁷. For confirmation, let’s use the quotation from the novel mentioned above: “Jaruha, who was also the terror of housewives and neighborhood, for it was easy for her to take milk away, knot a tie in the corn, cast a spell on water, make bread dough sour – she was doing fine...”⁷⁸.

However, there was the common belief among folk that “woe betides the one who would dare to scorn or snigger at the psychics, for they are convinced will soon become mute (...), his tongue will wither”⁷⁹. The peasants were certain as to the effectiveness of the healers’ advice and procedures performed by them; that is why they usually believed in them. After all, it was dictated by the view

that “the one, who does not believe in their practices and does not keep their rules, cannot expect any relief nor help from them. And the other way round. The belief in their infallibility and skillfulness is necessary for the patient to regain health and make their wishes come true”⁸⁰. The female and magic strength of the healer-wise woman was revealed also in other, personal, situations. In Kraszewski’s novel she saved her life only because she was known from her charms and healings: “It was the unhappy Jaruha, who was not killed by the Pomeranians, she survived as a witch, whose magic they feared”⁸¹.

The folk expert, except secret knowledge, had internal calmness, greatness and power, did not talk much, but she understood a lot, knew the connections that took place in nature, secrets of nature, she often lived close to earth, fauna and flora and in agreement with them (e.g. in the forest, in the wilderness), and through her relationships with the lunar rhythm (woman = moon) she knew the secrets of universe, instinct, feeling and intuition. Let’s quote the field information once again (the region of Wieluń): “When administering medicines they utter mysterious whispers, apply incensing and obviating, each of which takes place in appropriate time”⁸². Ways and techniques of treatment, the applied prescriptions and medicines, herbs and ointments, procedures and magical formulas were secret and known to nobody except the herbalist: “peasant women keep the ways of treatment secret and they do not reveal them even to their nearest and dearest. Only in advanced age the doctor (...) initiates the girl (...). The fortune teller has not only the right, but also the obligation to leave the ways of obviating after her”⁸³.

“The medical specialist” usually did not collect money for her work. Like at birth, or during a funeral, she performed her tasks only for gifts in kind: “In the region of Raba River almost all women undid the bad spells selflessly, free of charge”⁸⁴. However, other cases happened as well: “Jewdokia Bojczuk, a healer and fortune teller from Pokucie <had a difficult youth, experienced a lot of poverty, frequently starved. And here the reason for her devotion to fortune-telling and curing illnesses can be found>”⁸⁵.

The healer of body and soul communicated with transcendence, with the world of nature, brought harmony back to everyday life, rebuilt the order disturbed by sickness, aimed at renewing the whole breached by an ailment; she knew what and how to do facing human suffering. In these situations she took advantage of the process of transformation (of the state of sickness into the state of health), which constituted the basis of healing⁸⁶. We already know that transforming, transubstantiating constituted the work of woman and belonged to her. Let’s also add that “the word <to heal> in German is derived from the word “holy” or “whole”. Thus, healing was a kind of returning to the whole, unity with nature”⁸⁷.

Frequently the unknown origin of the herbalists constituted the basic source of their alienation; they were „foreigners”, not from here, so they were strange, unknown. Let’s, once again, refer to the literary example of Jaruha from Józef Ignacy Kraszewski’s *Stara Baśń*. This is what she says about herself:

a prince abducted me, took me to a building with walls made of gold. There was an apple tree that bore fragrant apples and at its foot a nurturing spring was running. I reigned for seven years, I sung songs for seven years, plaited and undid my braids, everything served me... then it got dark and I, in rags, leaning on a stick, found myself in the forest. Ravens knocked at my head, looking for my eyes⁸⁸.

They were also distinguished in the village environment by their appearance and behavior. They did not always have to be mysterious, severe and inaccessible. For instance:

in Komarowicze (in the region of Polesie) the healers were usually old women: cheerful, outspoken, ingenuous, good-natured, and sympathetic to the sick. (...) the doctor from the village of Hledowicze was thin, short, with round, blushed face, black, smiling eyes, mild and calm facial expression, she lisped, but, she did like vodka⁸⁹.

The protagonist of *Stara Baśń* has a different image. She was presented as an ugly, old woman, whose inevitable attributes were: a stick, a small pot and a bag, proving her nomadic lifestyle. Her looks also proved her different existence – on the verge of normality: her hair was gray and tangled, and you could see madness in her eyes⁹⁰. The healer’s untypical appearance is also confirmed in other Slavic (Russian) ethnographic-folkloric notes: “the mad Masha Muchanowska of Muchanow (the province of Riazan), who enjoyed great renown and popularity (she used to consult even a several dozens of patients) (...) In the same province another madwoman: Anuszką of Padowiecze only diagnosed diseases and told fortunes”⁹¹. Jaruha from the novel, mentioned above, was compared to female night demons that took the appearance of very ugly beings and were out to act to the detriment of humans:

Such witches were expected in the forest (...). Forests, waters and fields were populated by these mysterious beings in female figures, almost all of whom were scary, as they were lurking for your life and health. Most of black spirits took female forms. Mares, fiery serpents, stream-nymphs, wind-nymphs, night-ghouls, shrews and bloodsuckers (strzygas) appeared as old women as ugly as the one who was sitting here on the log, humming⁹².

In the traditional, magical awareness, a female healer was most frequently imagined by village people as a “possessed” person, that is, one who “by divine retribution is visited by one or a few (3, 7, 9) demons (i.e. they stay inside her)”. In the region of Wielkopolska (Great Poland) she was called “the Visited (by a good spirit) or the Possessed (by an evil one)”⁹³. In the rural numerical system three, seven and nine, as odd numbers, were special ones. They symbolized the fullness, whole, holiness and sometimes happiness. The ambivalence of their meanings, on the one hand, connected them with perfection and orderliness, while, on the other, with initiations and a significant role in mysteries and ecsta-

sy. In folk magical formulas (the ordered spell-casting, spell) it was odd numbers: three, seven and nine that occurred most frequently.

The literary presence of Jaruha resting in the forest also brings associations with a hunch-backed, scary fairy-tale Baba Yaga living in the middle of the forest, where it is extremely difficult to get to⁹⁴. Jaruha most often lived in the open space, wandering in the forest, sat on logs, cured and helped: “The old woman was well acquainted with diseases and cures, cast spells, undid them, tied and untied”⁹⁵. The sylvan territory was her shelter, hiding from this world, provided her with her phyto-therapeutic means, it was here that she felt safe, at home. In the magical outlook on the world forest was regarded as a mysterious area of “the beyond”, a place of possible contact with transcendence, sacrum, so herbs and grasses originating from it had exceptional properties. In the folk symbolism high specimens of trees were connected with the creative power of a deity; the mighty old trees constituted the signs of wisdom and indestructibility. The beyond, that is forest, especially the eastern one, was a primeval, impenetrable place, inhabited by pagan spirits of ancestors, the zone between normal human existence and non-existence, the domain of mysterious phenomena.

Let’s now focus on the already mentioned mendicant nature of Jaruha. In the traditional community beggars, poor and old people belonged to the category of hybrid ambiguous, liminal beings, they had the traits of sacredness and were regarded as God’s envoys. Deprived of the permanent place of residence and social location, they were strange and dangerous, as they were not compatible with the cultural norms. Their difference, just like the difference of the healers, in confrontation with them and their personalities caused both fear and respect in people, for, as we know, all that did not match what we know, caused fear and anxiety, disorientation in the world around. The folk believed in transcendental possibilities of the poor, in their merits in the world beyond and intercession with God⁹⁶. The stick that the old woman leaned on played the role of a ritual stick, used also by prophetesses or witches. Leaning on it had the meaning of symbolic journey to the world of spirits. As a symbol of “traveling or <flying> to the world of spirits – Brian Bates writes – the stick also constitutes a means of transport, symbolizing the spiritual journey. A few centuries later (...) witches were frequently pictured as creatures flying on sticks (brooms). For them it meant a spiritual journey”⁹⁷. In the broader context, Jaruha’s little pot is the melting pot of a witch – the place of transformations, metamorphoses and changes.

Sexually unattractive Jaruha – situated outside her sex, however, with age, became the leader of nature. She had an extremely acute sense of smell. As an herbalist she could read the signs of nature, ruled over the animals, knew the languages of even the wild ones, she talked to the “winged children of the air”,

translated them into the language comprehensible for humans: “And she went slowly, humming, laughing loudly to herself, hooting towards the woods, talking to the birds flying by”⁹⁸. She also could establish contact with snakes: “suddenly enormous snakes raised their heads from the grass. However, none of them attacked Jaruha, who addressed them with some strange words”⁹⁹. A dialogue with snakes promised acquiring properties that characterized the land on the other side of the world of the mortals. Through its appearance, state and behavior the snake has been connected with water, vegetation and the female element. It also found itself among motifs and signs that different religions attribute to the Great Goddess (or the Snake Goddess, more about her in part II of the book). The rhythm of changes visible in its life included it in the field of associations with death, destruction, passing away, transformations and rebirth. An appropriate person, with preservation of security and observation of appropriate rituals, could make it become her helper and protector. This presentation of Jaruha’s supernatural powers confirms that she belonged to the circle of witches (so those who know) and had the features of archetypal “wild woman” that Clarissa Pinkola Estés writes about, not very young, inhabiting thickets, avoiding people, belonging more to the world of animals and plants than that of humans, a guide, an ally, even a sort of pattern¹⁰⁰. In her was the essence of the wild, the female intention (intuition), tradition. According to the Slavic beliefs, the snake was also a good sign for people. As Piotr Kowalski remarks, it stemmed from “the possible presence of the late ancestor in the snake’s body, as well as from the snake’s connection with the beyond – that is the place where all what is good comes from”¹⁰¹. Jaruha the witch could also recognize plants and collect them, she talked to plants, which determined her acquired ability to be well oriented in their properties. That helped her to select grasses and herbs and recognize the sources of ailments and to fight illnesses. She gathered and sorted out plants, which was her favorite activity: “Here, on a sore log an old woman was sitting, all covered with a sheet, heaps of picked herbs next to her. Dirty bags lay near her. She sorted out the herbs she had picked, humming (...)”¹⁰². She regarded curing illnesses as her mission; it was her “profession”: “medicines and magic constituted her craft”¹⁰³. In magical culture gathering herbs was connected with numerous restrictions and orders. They concerned the place, time of the day or night, clothing, way of picking, tools etc. Strictly defined procedure and taboos had to be respected. For instance, in German tradition the best time for herb picking was the period between mid-August and the eighth day of September, which was called woman’s thirty (in the Catholic tradition – between Virgin Mary of Herbs day and Virgin Mary of Sowing day). That cycle “was closely connected with three figured goddess or with the number three (...) it was the so-called Big and Small Women’s Day”¹⁰⁴.

The curing ritual applied by the healers to the patients constituted a distinct example of using secret practices: words and gestures. They strictly obeyed the orders and bans, acted according to an established scenario: “The wise one obviated the disease making different crosses and figures in the air, waving her arms and incensing (...)”, touched, breathed and spat, “the witch from the region of Lublin, knife in her hand, made different movements over the sick one in the middle of the room, walking around him, calling the saints, so that the illness left his body (...), finally she whispers some incomprehensible, mysterious prayers”¹⁰⁵. Analogical actions can be found in *Stara Baśń*, where Jaruha cures the wounded Domana or Znosek:

The old woman reached for the mug standing next to her, took a sip of a drink, wiped her mouth and went, carrying some wet herb to the sick one. She put it on his breast, started to hum, raised both her arms over him, tapping her fingers she spat both sides (...). I am doing my job. I have charmed the blood, boiled the herbs, spread the sheets¹⁰⁶. And further on: she started to dress his wound, whisper over it and spit to all the sides. Then she got herbs from her bundles, poured some liquid from her small pot and, ordering Znosek to sit with his head hung low, she tied him again¹⁰⁷.

In this perspective it is worth looking closer at the symbolism of certain activities performed by the wise one. The healer, whispering, murmuring, addressed the ailment, asking it to leave the ill person. She applied the formulas known only to her. The magical language of the recited text, which could not be understood by anybody else except the herbalist, did not serve just to transmit information, but, above all, to create the desired reality¹⁰⁸ – recovery. That intention, giving direction to all the verbal-gesture acts performed by the healer, constituted a mighty prime mover. The unknown, unheard words, specific little prayers, incantations, constituted the principal element, strengthening any traditional healing. The mystery and silence are also the metonymies of death. In this way the healer established a “dialogue with the beyond”, asking for granting assistance to the sick one, she referred her question or request to transcendence and waited for the response. Concealing her knowledge about treatment and the medicines applied may also be related to yet another thing, which is indicated by researchers: with a broadly spread belief “that the healers’ magical knowledge is indivisible and not to be shared, it can be used secretly and transmitted in total to persons chosen by them”¹⁰⁹. The herbalist also spat. All bodily secretions, also saliva, in accordance with the mythical logic, „were medial substances – as Adam Paluch writes – situated on the border of what belongs to man and what does not, so on the border of life and death”¹¹⁰. Saliva, due to its connection with creative forces, and thus – with the beyond – was used in folk diagnostics as a curative agent. That procedure meant removing illness from inside of the patients, throwing it out of their body. In mythical thinking arm was connected

with power, authority and strength, and a raised arm meant action¹¹¹. Exhaling and blowing were connected with breath and with the belief that a certain force from the beyond was transmitted through the mouth. A folk source explains such activities in the following way: “spirits come by breath, vapor through the mouth inside her (...) in the effect she makes sounds: murmurs, howls, squeaks...”¹¹². A deeper interpretation refers to the symbolism of a mouth as an entrance, path into a man’s interior and as a place where the border of the body is broken. It is about controlling mediation between the different spatial orders. In the mythical thinking soul was introduced into the body in breath and the revival took place, or the other way round – it was led out and death took place, whereas the soul flew away as a bird, a fly, or a bee¹¹³.

The symbolic wealth of many overlapping meanings in one act of a magical therapy distinctly emphasizes the importance of the person and the order of particular curative procedures. It also metonymically reproduces the extraterrestrial order, which, together, constituted a guarantee of the desirable change – the returning of health. The prominent role in home treatment, as Zbigniew Libera writes, “is mainly based on the fact that the internal space of home is the female space. Besides, women, due to their impure nature, became <doctors>”¹¹⁴.

Kraszewski, describing Jaruha, focused on presenting not only her pejorative features. He also presented her as a person who was mild towards people, helping them not only in treatment but also in undoing charms, in household, in love magic: “She was suspected of great power, but she was also known not to be too spiteful”¹¹⁵. It was her skills and age that took her away from people and thus she could have more and more distinct insight into the future beyond the world of humans, it was from the beyond that she drew her wisdom: “She knew many secrets, she took away malaria, calmed down those who were thrown against the ground by spirits, she herself was sometimes bewildered that she could do so much (...). I am the healer, I know everything”¹¹⁶.

Anna Zadrożyńska adds: “In many cultures it was believed that the old people are worthy of respect and even worship (...) Respect for gray hair, knowledge, skills and experience of the old did not put them aside, to the margin of social matters (...). The wise societies took care of the elderly and took advantage of their experiences”¹¹⁷.

**And there was a prophetess, Anna (...) She was advanced in years
(Luke 2, 36-40)**

The folk specialists, doctors, herbalists are also partially prophetesses and clairvoyants, that is, women who deciphered future, had the sense of truth and

what was consistent with the reality, what was at the base of all things, served with their wise advice, practical solutions and sensible warnings. It was women, who could take from the depth of the glance, appropriately interpret the present, reach with your sight beyond what is outside, and understand the senses of events properly, adequately interpret the occurring phenomena. They were able to bring the powers giving fertility to the earth and abundant yields; they had the power of connecting people with the invisible world, with the spirits, the privileges of performing sacred rituals. Then they took an appropriate pose, a specific facial expression, an appropriate way of acting, so that the situation, in which the patient found himself, was given appropriate seriousness, grandeur and dignity. For herself she created conditions for better contact with the sacred. Here is an example from the turn of 19th and 20th centuries:

in Wisła there lived a renowned herbalist called Hadamczykula, who was regarded as a seer. She healed exclusively with herbs and did not take money for her favors. She asked about the patient's name, age and then she closed her eyes, fell into a pensive mood. After a while she defined the illness the patient suffered from and administered herbal medicines. Sometimes she found that nothing can help the patient and, allegedly, it came true¹¹⁸.

Closing one's eyes, falling into a pensive mood, constitute a symbolic "journey to the beyond", entering the extra-human reality, establishing contact with the spirits, the transcendent power, in order to obtain advice and help from them. Such behavior resembles the shamans' trance. In this way shamans – female or male – prepared to take over and deliver the supernatural messages to the patient: "the shaman's awareness – as they remark – includes what is inaccessible to the five senses (...) the shaman has to know how to establish contact with the spiritual cosmos, which is outside the three dimensional, physical world. That is why the reality is for us the world of the spirit, the living cosmos, based on the soul and not on the external form"¹¹⁹.

Also blindness that is lack of sight, in the traditional folk culture was treated as a specific state of the soul that leaves a mysterious stigma on the blind one, an element of distinction, disorder, manifestation of sanctity, a gift that belonged only to the chosen ones. The persons with a sight dysfunction, in the magical consciousness were regarded as God's favorites and the chosen ones, having properties and possibilities for establishing contacts with transcendence, and thus to further treatment, fortune telling and helping others. Blindness was a sign of the unknown and mysterious world, also of the death. In the Bible the blind were compared to the dead:

Like the blind we grope along the wall,
feeling our way, like people without eyes.
At midday we stumble as if it were twilight;
among the strong, we are like the dead.
(Is 59, 10)¹²⁰.

That special group of people was treated by rural communities with due respect, seriousness and reverence. Analogically to the previous examples, on the one hand, they were adored and admired, and on the other, people were afraid of them as they could harm them. The lack of sight was understood as having the inner sight, and thus – easy and quick contacting with the beyond, seeing what cannot be seen by an ordinary human and hearing the voice that a villager could not hear. Blindness made the favorites seers: “the Moscow fortune teller, Uljanka, was blind; it was believed that all those who cannot see in this world can see the other world, are clairvoyants”¹²¹. In the mythologies of certain countries a myth was known about blindness of the sun and the blind gods¹²². The lack of sight was also regarded as a sign of prophecy, knowledge and wisdom: “God gave him blindness, gave him misfortune, but gave him also reason and wisdom, so that he could not forget what he would hear”¹²³.

In parapsychology clairvoyance is an ability enabling people to perceive persons, phenomena and objects in time and space without the participation of sensual perception. Already in antiquity the cases of female prophesizing: the famous Cassandra, daughter of the king of Troy, Sybil, foretelling the future, or Erato – a dryad, a priestess of god Pan. Gaius Julius Caesar in his *Gallic War* reports about the gift of seeing of Germanic woman: “among Germanics there is a custom that mothers of their families, through throwing lots and divinations decided whether it would be advisable to fight a battle or not”¹²⁴. Similar observations were reported by a Roman historian – Tacit in the 1st century: “They [Germanics] even believe that in them [i.e. women – note: B.W-D] there is something holy and prophetic and neither do they despise their advice, nor do they neglect their divinations”¹²⁵. Aeschylus, in turn, in the tragedy *Oresteia* puts the following phrase into the mouth of Pythia, the prophetess, an old priestess in the temple of Apollo: “In my prayer I pay my respects to the Earth/ the pre-prophetess as the first of deities (...)”¹²⁶. The Earth-Mother was regarded as the foreseeing deity and all prophetesses-daughters come from her, also herself – Pythia.

Also the Bible introduces the figures of prophetesses. The best known was Miriam, sister of Aaron and Moses. As a prophetess, by her song, she explained the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the miracle at the Red Sea:

Miriam the prophetess, Aaron’s sister, took the drum in her hand. All the women followed her with drums and dancing. Miriam led them in the response,
<Sing to God for His victory is great,
He has cast horse and rider into the sea>.
(EX 15, 20-21).

Miriam saw God's action in this event and who fulfilled his intentions as to his people, releasing them from the yoke. It was not men who took part in the event, but women: they understood what had happened: through song, dance and drums, and they eulogized the victory.

Prophetesses and clairvoyants allowed all information from outside to penetrate inside them and they would appropriately transmit them further. They acted as media, mediators and transmitters of important information, spiritual guides into the other world. They are also specific carriers of the word, leaders and organizers of the events¹²⁷. That internal strength connected with the female aspect, the female side of existence, created the possibility of such leading. That power was, in a substantial measure, connected with the creative forces of earth, abilities to bear a fruit and appoint for the existence, as well as the archetypal manifestation of the universal female energy. Their natural wisdom and mysterious abilities were related to the rhythm of birth, life and death. Here, it should be added that in Greek *Sophia* (wisdom) is described as a goddess, expressed in feminine gender. Erich Neumann, the disciple of Carl G. Jung remarks that a wise woman is different from a wise man in that her wisdom is always connected with the earthly basis of reality¹²⁸.

The ability to foresee future, to cope with family and social crises, as well as to help people as the mystical and magical abilities of women were indispensable to understand the forces governing the world. In the traditional culture human life depended upon many factors: meteorological, tribal, economical, on good harvest, health, etc. These were the existential matters that the contemporary man is not aware of, thinking rationally, not magically.

The examples of women of wisdom referred to and described in this chapter – midwives, healers and prophetesses – first of all prove their indestructible, matriarchal strength, which, according to the Creator's decision, determines the existence of man and the world. The women, referred to and described here, as mysterious, vague beings, on the one hand – threatening and dangerous, on the other – bringing help and protection, became a metaphor of transgression, the eternal Other. As Others – due to sex, age and status – they represented what was desirable and forbidden, because the ambiguity constituted a distinctive feature of the other. Finishing, let's quote the words of Simone de Beauvoir: "The man is looking for the Other in the woman, but once he sees a human being similar to him in her, while some other time he sees Nature in her. Nature brings contradictory feelings to the person. Humans draw benefits from Nature, but Nature also crushes them"¹²⁹.

Chapter 2

Women “with no voices” – mourners, spinners/weavers, dancers

Dealing with the Otherness,
man in one way or another collides with silence, [lack of voice]
and conversely: in experiencing silence we recognize the reality of Otherness
(Kontantin Bogdanov)¹

Dying Hamlet says: “*The rest is silence*”². It is, as if he wanted to confirm the well-known opinion that death belongs to the sphere of silence, lack of voice, emptiness. But in the semantic field of “the rest” there also appears the metaphorical complement of that silence, which, so far had been speaking, shouting, voice. From the anthropological point of view, silence assumes a parallel existence of speaking, energy and life. As Kwiryna Handke writes:

Silence and speaking are given to us, humans, and we can take advantage of them as we like and to our fill. During our lives, each of us at least twice deals with transcendent silence: at birth and at death. We emerge from silence to earthly existence. The moment of passing we do announce with a scream, but then, for some time we fall into dumbness: we are babies (in Polish: *niemowlęta* – *beings who cannot speak*. (...) Another encounter with transcendent silence takes place inevitably when we leave this world and return to the sphere of silence³.

Therefore, silence is a social, cultural, religious and historical category, and sometimes even, to some extent – a geographical category (within the same society in various regions there are different types of behavior)⁴. Through silence, lack of words and voice many kinds of human behavior are executed. They are of ritual, sacred or creative nature. In this way man defines their attitude towards the world and the other man, “communicates”, informs about emotional states, models the space where he finds himself.

In the traditional folk ontology acts of communication were some of the central qualities of the human universe. They assumed the forms of ritualized activities taken up in everyday plan or holiday time, and were of transmitting-

receiving nature. The relationship of an individual could take its course on three levels: man-man, man-community and man-irrational forces (God, the beyond). Such behavior guaranteed security, provided order in life and success, gave the sense of sensibility, as well as built the dialogue with the beyond, which was also necessary for living in this world, and created a positive direction after death. In magical culture, what turned out to be especially dangerous, were all the situations of change, transformation, violation, the breakthrough, liminal moments, both in the life of an individual (e.g. funeral, wedding, everyday activity: spinning, weaving), and these in the life of nature (e.g. change of seasons, procedures providing good harvest, magical practices stimulating fertility and abundance, etc.). They introduced chaos and destroyed the hitherto stabilization. That is why the established system of dos and don'ts had to be observed, people had to act in accordance with the folk code, monitor the system of individual and community behavior.

In the traditional ritual situations, specified above, it was the woman who was a privileged person, who could create harmony and security in this world, as well as have a dialogue with transcendence, project the "heavenly living" in the beyond. Through her closeness to nature (the biological cycle), life and death (the giver of life), she "span and wove" (i.e. formed) duration, prepared and transferred an individual into the beyond, and also supported the earth and nature in fertility and reproduction, ordered and stabilized the creation.

Family and yearly rituals, as well as ritualized activities undertaken in the sphere of everyday life were symbolically convergent in folk culture, organized by the phase of death, which was central in *rites de passage*⁵. In magical imagination „the beyond" was understood as the land of transgression and dread, the "back to front" area, a tenebrous, dull, remote and dangerous place, patterned by reverse categories (left, quiet, bottom, night, moon, etc.), that, however, one had to be subjected to. It is a space filled with "deathly silence", inaccessible, unknown, strange, which is clearly illustrated by the 19th century Slavic allegory: "Death (...) though it accepts gifts, never eats, nobody had heard its voice, because it was mute."⁶

In this chapter, we will start our scientific explorations, based on Slavic source material, with deciphering the meanings contained in the silhouettes of the folk mourners, present in two holiday events in the family cycle: during the funeral and during the wedding⁷. Further, we will refer to the women who, imitating God's act of creation "wove and span (parabolically: formed) the life of man and nature" through every day, ordinary effort and work. Finally, we will refer to the figures of "dancers", who metaphorically and magically created good

harvest, stimulated the reproductive forces of earth and nature, so that the crops were successful and abundant. In the traditional consciousness it was the only way the circle of human life and the life of nature, cyclically established by the rhythm of the universe, could last and function without interruption.

Who knows how to cry
– can be a human
(Stare Dobre Małżeństwo)

The mystery of the death is inscribed in the essence of human existence and the thought of it occurs on all levels of man's experience. On the one hand it is a shocking phenomenon, making a person dumbstruck and confused, and on the other, arousing respect, majesty, towards which an individual turns out to be completely powerless. Death reveals to man his helplessness, irretrievably destroying all his dreams and plans, also making him aware of his loneliness. Sooner or later, everybody has to experience it, stand up to that inexorable, mysterious force⁸. In the world of traditional thought, contacting sacrum was the only possible on the sacred territory. That could take place through creating the appropriate conditions, referring to the adequate gestures or states, reproducing the order of the beyond. In the situation when communication with transcendence (a deity, God, the beyond, the spirits of the dead) had to be established, what seemed to be most important was the liquidation of human conditions of communication, and the state of the person – "leader" – the guide working on the encounter with sacrum, had to be full of drama and dismay, elation and solemnity, commitment and devotion⁹. As Piotr Kowalski remarks: "after all, you have to lead to destruction of the ecumena order, suspend the whole ordinariness, and colloquialism of the experience. You have to be prepared to the encounter with strangeness, and the most radical one"¹⁰.

In the traditional folk culture such convictions were mainly expressed in funeral ritual behaviors, i.a. through lamentations or bewailing the deceased person, which, symbolically, took their course between scream and quiet, crying and silence¹¹, lack of voice and prayer. Roch Sulima emphasizes: "the scream that determines the structure of lament is establishing the bond with what is alive. Silence is supporting the bond with what is dying"¹². In certain regions (e.g. that of Opoczno or Radom) the persons who lead prayers and performed lamentations, were commonly called "the singers":

Not everyone, however, could become such a leader –Zdzisław Kupisiński remarks – (...). It is an extremely responsible function. Frequently the office of "the singer" passed from father to

son or from mother to daughter. (...). The <singers> were invited by the family, so that they could prepare the dying person for the death, led prayers at his/her bed, and then at the coffin. This function was conducted both by men and women. (...) They did not take any remuneration for their service, thinking that <if God gave me such voice and talents, I have to serve others as well, and the dead in their last path>. In their private lives, they were distinguished from the background of village community with their righteousness, piety and even with some forms of ascetism¹³.

Therefore, the folk funeral was acted out between the scenes of silence, quietness, lack of voice, and the ritual tumult, din and noise. Already at the time of dying, in many regions of Poland, it had to be quiet, as if human voices profaned that sacred moment. Not only couldn't people talk, but also whispering and singing were forbidden¹⁴.

In many regions of Poland, it was woman who helped the dying person to leave this world and enter the beyond, leading and guiding them safely. In the customs of ancient Greece or Egypt she is referred to as a professional mourner. She was "chosen" by magical culture: "the mourning person in folk culture was a woman"¹⁵, she is also described as such in the Old Testament (The Book of Jeremiah, Lamentations):

This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Consider now!
Call for the wailing women to come;
send for the most skillful of them.
Let them come quickly
and wail over us till our eyes overflow with tears
and water streams from our eyelids>.
(Jr 9, 16-17).

Crying, tears and lament as a certain liminal reactions and forms of expression in the traditional culture reproduced the order of the beyond and located themselves outside the scope of human existence, played the role of change operators, mediators between two different orders. They symbolically purified and protected the initiated persons. Tears constituted a magical apotropeion, protecting the participants of the rite against destructive powers, which stemmed from the contact with the dangerous sphere. And as "protectors", they could mediate between the worlds, securing for the deceased person undisturbed passage to the extra-terrestrial sphere¹⁶.

As Helmuth Plessner writes, "crying is giving a sort of response, in which a man is getting involved internally, grasped, moved, shocked, internally surrendered, crying is overwhelming him, and he gives up to the process of crying"¹⁷. These considerations can be referred to the ritual acting of the mourners. The wailing women, symbolically, answered the beyond, conducted a dialogue with the other world, sought for a dignified life in the other world for the deceased.

The abundance of a ritual order to cry and wail in Slavic funeral rites could

be heard several times. In Poland, in the region of Kielce, "right after death, one woman of the nearest relatives runs out of the house and starts to weep"¹⁸. Also in Pokucie, when laying the body to the coffin, most often, it was "wife who started to wail", but also other women¹⁹. In the regions of Chełm or Masovia the crying could be heard while carrying the coffin out of the house, on the way to cemetery and at the cemetery, when it was lowered down into the grave: "when the priest signaled that it was time to carry out the coffin, tumult, crying and weeping increased at the moment", and when "the cart with the body set off, a cry of sorrow and farewell rose up again (...), the present women wept loudly"; „at the cemetery, until crying and lamenting is heard, the coffin is not lowered into the grave and covered with sand"²⁰. All these ritualized behaviors should be explained, first of all, by the symbolic-magical meaning of farewell, as leaving forever, as breaking off all the bonds with the world left behind and a fear of the commencing other, unknown life. The analogical behavior of mourners is confirmed by the literary texts. In *Staraj Baśń* Józef Ignacy Kraszewski carefully outlined the course of funeral rite, describing the actions of the wife (Jaga) after she had lost her husband (Wisz), as well as the behavior of the ritual mourners. Let's quote the appropriate fragment:

In the calm forests, you could hear the procession from far away. They walked crying, roaring (...), wailing, tearing hair off their heads, and the primeval forest sounded with groans far away. Old Jaga went in the front. She had let her gray hair loose on her shoulders, with her hands wrung and eyelids closed (...). That laments and crying, together with that wailing song caused that everyone was filled by grief and dismay (...). Old Jaga moved after it, only the mourners left on the ground, moaning (...). Then the mourners, with hair let down, beating hand on hand, scratching their faces, sung sad songs : <You left us – cried the mourners – you are not here, lord, you left us, poor orphans. You went to your ancestors, to light spirits, fighting the black ghosts (...)>. The mourners encircled the body, wailing new songs again and again, making fearful moans. (...). As the mourners moaned, the body was brought on the stack (...), the moan rose more and more fearfully²¹.

In the ritualized practices: folkloric and literary, outlined above, the effectiveness of crying was enforced by the "performer" of that action, the woman, as we already know. It was mainly elderly, married women, who shed tears, though in certain situations girls were the one who cried. These were, as field notes report, "hired funeral mourners"²², who, due to their age, common sense and skills, could do it perfectly. Their age, a certain authority and experience in performing the task (here: crying) included them into the category of selected persons, stigmatized with mediation. They became the guides who fulfilled their duties that required untypical properties based on features different from ordinariness (contact with transcendence). They were also predestined to it by their closeness to nature and living according to its rights. It is worth mentioning that the deceased was encircled and thus separated from the rest of the mourners: "pre-Christian Slavic rites assumed the shape of a circle, being the object of Pagan worship"²³. In this way a magical closed circle was formed (the magic of

Alkmene) that separated from the rest of the world, isolating from other people.

The custom of ostentatious bewailing of the dead was known as early as in ancient Greece and Egypt, where there were professional mourners. They were to cry aloud, wail, tear hair off their heads, tear their clothes, hit their heads, stand up and sit down, hit their chests, nod their heads and whole bodies²⁴, that is – make noise facing the eternal silence – death, but not speak. Their appearance always specified the exceptional character of the situation, and the applied gestures become meaningful, featured with symbolic senses. Hair, especially long and loose, connected with chthonic, in magical culture was treated as the carrier of extra-terrestrial forces, an element belonging to the beyond, indicating abandonment of normality, ordinary character²⁵, emphasizing the connection with the primeval, wild power, the chaos of nature; they also became the symbols of death. In that situation they could also constitute a kind of sacrifice for the deceased person, who was sometimes covered with strands of hair. That is why Jaga, quite justifiably, in the literary tissue of the novel, let her gray hair loose. Lamenting, wailing, and moaning, from a phenomenological point of view, are the symptoms of an interpersonal relationship, but also a sign of being with another person, next to the other person²⁶. Hitting one's chest is, from the Christian perspective, a gesture of penance and compensation, as well as regret for committed sins. Tearing clothes is a symbolic sign of destruction, lack of order and chaos.

Also, in the traditional Slavic culture we can find similar behavior of the mourners, where complaining and shedding tears were universal procedures. Ethnographers even assume that in the old days, “in pre-history”, there were tear bowls – special vessels into which the tears of crying women were collected and then they were put into the grave of the deceased persons²⁷. Near Żarki, Siewierz and Pilica, after death of a family member, a woman from the family ran into the road and, going through the village, she wailed: “Oh my, oh my, Mother Mary of Częstochowa, hu, hu, hu”. The Other women of the family and neighbors, called out by loud crying, ran to the thresholds of their houses and cried loudly, roared and wept, frequently making gestures with their arms²⁸. In Ukraine, in turn, the person who bewailed the deceased louder and stronger, making more noise, made better impression²⁹.

The emblematic meanings are brought by gesture communication of wailing and lamenting mourners. For all the activities and movements performed by them located them and the whole community outside the sphere of Culture, far from the known, safe and ordered world. The state of wildness and disorder was restored for a moment, besides, these acts additionally constituted conventionalized signs of despair, mourning, collective martyrology. Lamenting, sob-

bing and wailing were quite important. These are kinds of non-verbal complaints, sorrows, even some grudge, assuming the character of stereotypical forms, uttered from memory, spontaneously and automatically, for the mourners "as if *ex officio* they are used to it"³⁰. Their tasks also played the role of a ritual, usually non-verbal dialogue with the deceased person, included in the funeral scenario.

This special role of women in the magical worldview, as we already know, was associated with the simultaneous connection with life and death ascribed to them, together with the rights given to them by their sex. It was them who, at some time, had the privilege of giving birth to a child, so now they should show the way to the dead, help them (through crying) with leaving their place in the earth³¹. Thus, they acted as guides on the way from one reality to the other: "a mourning person, (...) is someone who leads the community into the other dimension"³². Wailing and sobbing women in the funeral procession created a symbolic "image of the crying way". By their behavior they confirmed the presence of the death in a given family, local community or village. Such women are mentioned by St. Luke in the *Gospel* (Christ's Way of the Cross): "And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him" (Luke 23, 27). They inscribed themselves with their sex into the cultural triad:

voice, shout = life – crying, lamenting = being in between – silence, lack of voice = death.

Being in liminal phase, so in between – and the unburied deceased person and the mourners found themselves in this phase – was, as we know, very dangerous, and required, besides rigorous observation of all actions, also specially prepared persons, authorized to contact the sacred.

The ritual mourners, wailing and shedding tears, can also be found in the traditional wedding rituals, where the symbolism of death, expressed in various ways, was present in many stages of this celebration. For the magical consciousness, the act of unifying two persons and the start of their life together was one of the most scrupulously cherished patterns of behavior, had sacred and magical meanings and was aimed at safe achievement of the new status by the bride and groom, as well as granting them the right to procreation. Thus, all the procedures, gestures and words were directed at creating and building positive relationships with transcendence, to secure successful life for the newlyweds. The range of ritualized practices should also include those connected with crying of women.

Crying occurred in many actions undertaken during folk weddings, not only the bride was crying, but also her mother, mother-in-law or bridesmaids. In the

region of Lublin, already at engagement, the girl hiding behind the stove “is pulled out by her parents or relatives (...) and, having opened the cabin door; they bring her out to the threshold, confused and crying”³³. Similarly, during extensive preparations for the wedding, bridesmaids, who gathered in the bride’s house, sung:

czemu Marysiu nie płaczesz, o Łado /Why don’t you cry, Marysia, oh, Łado
pono ty żalu nimajesz, o Łado!³⁴. /you aren’t sorry, oh Łado/

In the regions of Krakow and Radom crying accompanied blessing: “the sorrowful mother is crying and lamenting that her house will be bereaved, that she is losing her child (...). The daughter cries loudly as well”³⁵. The very gesture of good wishes, and putting the cross on the children, who “fell to their parents’ feet”, enforced the ritualized behavior “full of crying, sorrow, sobbing”³⁶. When leaving for the church, the mother, sorrowed by loss of her daughter, wailed and “cried aloud”³⁷. Crying sometimes occurred at setting out for the wedding, at apologizing rite³⁸, and even at the climax of the event – at unbraiding the tress and during “capping”/*opczepiny*/. In the region of Krakow “as the bride cried, tearfully bidding farewell to the times of freedom and girly happiness, the merciless godmothers cut her tress off, which is the sign of her losing liberty”³⁹. In the region of Kujawy, in turn, when her wreath is taken off and the cap (bonnet) is put on, the following song was sung:

Siadajże, siadaj moje kochanie/ Sit down, oh, sit down, my darling,
Nic nie pomoże twoje płakanie./ Your crying won’t help/

If the bride did not conform to it, she would be regarded as a “shameless girl” in her local community⁴⁰.

In wedding ritual complex women’s weeping referred to the symbolism of the bride’s ritual death, became a conventionalized signs of the manifested sorrow. It is worth adding here that breaking that imperative, that is lack of crying at the specified stages, had its explication on the level of emic interpretations. For instance, a Czech bride who was laughing was to die soon. In Germany, in turn, the bride who did not cry in front of the altar would certainly cry during her married life⁴¹.

The moments of breakthrough taking place in the family (and also yearly) cycle were always accompanied by ritual actions where noise or silence predominated. Through different gestures or responses inscribed in these planes, protection from the attack of bad forces and the lurking threat to the initiated persons (the bride and the groom, the deceased), as well as all the participants of a given

rite was sought. Shedding tears in both quoted events should be explained by a symbolic and existential identity with any farewell (saying goodbye to the daughter leaving her home, bidding farewell to the deceased), but also breaking the bonds with the hitherto, safe, familiar world, which is now being left, as well as the fear occurring when crossing the border, fear of the beginning of the other, unknown life (in the new home, with her husband, or in the other world)⁴². For, as Roch Sulima emphasizes: "Bewailing is nothing but <notifying> the community about change, about its <transformation>, about disturbing the biological balance"⁴³, where woman committed herself to the real mission of escorting the community "to the other side", "the mission of reproducing and recognizing what is unknown and uncertain, covered by the mystery of existence and nonexistence"⁴⁴.

A maiden spins, God gives threads (a folk proverb)⁴⁵

In the perspective of "female" (feminist) anthropological (folklorist) conditions, a mourner can be considered on a common interpretation plane with a weaver or spinner, that is, a ritually active woman, whose activities (weaving, spinning) of extraterrestrial origin, repeat God's act of creating, appointing for existence. Our research inquiries will be referred to Slavic traditional everyday women's activities, though research and literary or painting contexts will also be necessary.

All the folk aitiological transmissions report that at the beginning there was the Creator, whose works are: the sky, earth, sun, moon, hell, then man, animals and plants, cities and all the rest⁴⁶. In the Slavic traditional mythical awareness, there were two concepts of creating the world: creation through sowing (grain)⁴⁷ and weaving (threads). According to an apocryphal legend of Southern Slavs, forming the world through weaving, also present in the ritual verbal folklore, illustrates how God was teaching the man to plough and the woman to weave:

A woman was weaving linen. Weaving, she was threading the shuttle, every time cutting the thread off and starting again from the same side. Seeing that, God said to her: <Woman, do not weave like that! Press the footrest, thread the shuttle through the warp and do not cut the thread, just lower the reed with the other footrest, and then thread the shuttle again!> – and that's how He taught her to weave⁴⁸.

Dorothea Forstner, referring to the world of Christian symbolism, confirms God's analogical actions. She writes:

On old Christian stone sarcophagi, often richly decorated with biblical scenes, sculptors present the duty to work that God imposed on the first man by attributing Adam with a bundle of ears

of grain as a symbol of work in the field, and Eve with a lamb, as an allusion to the duty of spinning wool that rests on a woman⁴⁹.

This idea is also confirmed by folk formulas – riddles:

Babskie rzemiosło dokoła obrośło: pośrodku ma dołek aby weń wbić kołek	<i>Wives' craft</i> hairy around: in the middle there is a hole to put a stake in it [distaff]
Siedzi panna w bruździe, trzyma konia na uździe, konik chodzi bockiem panna mruży ockiem	A maiden is sitting in a furrow holding a horse in a bridle the horse goes to the side the maid is blinking her eye [spinning wheel] ⁵⁰

and proverbially: “distaff is unbecoming of a man, sword is unbecoming of a woman”⁵¹.

It is worth remarking that in numerous folk adaptations of the Bible (including those concerning the creation of the world and man), special emphasis is put on the mediational character of events, places, people from the border of the world, mediators between separate categories of being or different orders. We can observe in them the use of the symbolism of old mythical thinking to express the relationship between the Christian sacred and the profane⁵².

In certain Slavic cultures, for instance Russian, the so-called craftsman’s cosmogonic model is known⁵³, according to which the process of creating the world was presented as passing from chaos to order similarly to the transformation of a shapeless material (clay, dough, thread) into a form (pot, bread, fabric). Thus, the act of creation was connected with symbolic actions, such as spinning the thread and weaving linen. In the “rich Russian folk tradition – Agnieszka Gołębiowska-Suchorska emphasizes – images and motifs are preserved that are the relics of the myth, according to which the act of creating the Cosmos proceeded analogously to that of clothing manufacturing process”⁵⁴. Weaving and spinning, as sacred acts, also alluding to the mythological idea of fate (spinning a thread), bring explicit associations with ancient Roman Destinies or Greek Moiras, the goddesses of human destiny, who wove the thread of human life and cut it at the moment of death. However, the image of the thread of life also frequently appears in the Scriptures. King Isaiah complains on his bed of suffering:

Like a weaver I have rolled up my life,
and he has cut me off from the loom.
(Is. 38; 12),

analogically Job:

My days fly faster than weaver's shuttle
(J 7; 6).

These two ancient female powers, omnipotent beings, lunar deities connected to the moon, probably used to be the deities of birth⁵⁵. Originally, as researchers report, the notion of Moira, Greek: *moíra* meant "part", "share", "allotment", "destiny" and "fate" – all that refers to initiation of individual life. Moira, however can also mean a "phase" of moon⁵⁶. These remarks are confirmed by the words of Plato, who writes in *The State* (book 10):

And there were another three who sat round about at equal intervals, each one on her throne, the Moirai (Moirae, Fates), daughters of Ananke, clad in white vestments with filleted heads. Lachesis (Lachesis), and Klotho (Clotho), and Atropos (Atropus), who sang in unison with the music of the Seirenes. Lachesis singing the things that were, Klotho the things that are, and Atropos the things that are to be. Klotho from time to time touches the external circle of the spindle with her right hand and accelerates its rotational movement; similarly Antropos pushes the internal circles with her left hand. And Lachesis touches with her one or other hand one and the other⁵⁷.

Analogical meanings are evoked by the Great Mother from the matriarchy epoch, who, in that culture, was seen as the Goddess of Destiny, weaving the fates of all that is alive. As Erich Neumann emphasizes, referring to phenomenology of archetype:

The primeval mystery of spinning and weaving was experienced in the form of projection to the Great Mother spinning and weaving the threads of destiny, regardless of whether it was her who was the Great Spinner, or – as it often happens – she was seen in the lunar trinity. (...) Thus, the Egyptian great goddesses are – like among Greeks, Germans and Mayas – spinners, and as <reality> is what they have managed to spin, all activities, such as plaiting, weaving, threading and tying, are the deeds of femininity determining fate, and the feminine nature is to be the Great Spinner and Weaver⁵⁸.

The Great Mother, as a spinner, spun not only human life, but also the world's fate, its darkness and light. Undoubtedly, the figure of Greek princess Arachne is associated with a weaver. Arachne – a master of weaving and embroidering won a weaving duel with Athene. The angry goddess torn her work. Arachne committed suicide in despair. Athene felt sorry for the girl, so she brought her back to life, however, not in human figure, but as a spider. Kazimiera Szczuka remarks that the transformation into a spider – "is a distinct transfiguration of a woman-creator into woman-nature, already deprived of her voice"⁵⁹. Let's add that in natural sciences there is a species of large spider, called a *giant weaver* that weaves webs of the surface often larger than one square meter. They are so strong and durable that in some countries they were used for fishing. Frequently birds or other small vertebrates are caught in the webs⁶⁰. It is noteworthy that, as Mircea Eliade remarks, moon is connected with woman, her

fertility, as well as with the dead, in many beliefs, was “the one who weaved human fate in the form of a deity”, occurs in the myths of various folks as a giant spider:

since <to weave> means not only to predestine someone (in the anthropological plane) or to unify various realities i (in cosmological plane), but also <to create>, leave one’s own substance – as a spider does it when it spins the web out of its own substance⁶¹.

In Slavic folklore moon is referred to as *miesiąc* (month), whereas in the folklore of some European countries “so far it is still a spinner”⁶². In Icelandic mythology one of the sisters is called Urd(r) i.e. Wyrð, which means “revealing, developing life”⁶³, from the Indo-European verb “uert” – “rotate, spin”⁶⁴.

Remaining with the relationships of weaving with moon, we must add, after Jerzy Sławomir Wasilewski that this activity “is a good way of visualizing the idea of time, therefore, perhaps in mythological motifs there is its connection with moon – the measure of the flow of time”. The researcher confirms Eliade’s connections of the moon with the first weaver-spider, who “started the time run on the earth”, so he suggests that weaving (and bans connected with it) should be placed in its connections with a given time. He writes: “Thus, it is worth risking, assuming such a more general interpretation of that activity and its position in the system of mythical imaginations about cultural activities”⁶⁵.

In traditional Slavic beliefs, *rodzanice* – small female deities who right after a child’s birth determined his/her fate, constituted the equivalent of antique goddesses. They usually occurred in threes. They were connected with another deity – *Dola* (Fortune)⁶⁶. Another deity, originating from folk religiousness, also important for our divagations, is the old Russian female deity called *Mokosza*, related to “the mother of damp earth”. Among Eastern Slavs she took care of female activities: sheep-shearing, flax spinning and sexual activity⁶⁷. The name is not completely clear, “there were attempts to derivate it from the Slavic language (from *mok* “to wet”), from Sanskrit *makhá* “noble, rich”), and to connect it with the name of a Finnish tribe *Moksha*”⁶⁸. Yet another etymology goes back to the “Buddhist term *moksha*, concerning the last phase of life activity, and that word means <the art of dying, liberation>”⁶⁹. In Slavic folklore *Mokosza* appeared until the 20th century. She took the figure of a woman with long, loose hair, large head and long arms. At night she visited chambers and spun at the abandoned spinning-wheels⁷⁰. In the north of Russia she was shown as a blind spinner, close to another Slavic goddess – *Paraskiewa*, also called *Piatnica* (personification of Friday, as a sacred day like Sunday), and among Southern Slavs – *Petce*, responsible for crops and protecting from draught⁷¹. Borys Rybakow sees two segments in the name of *Mokosza*: “Indo-European *ma*, i.e. “mother” and *ksz* – that is: “kosz”/ basket/, which, in Old Church Slavonic would mean: harvest, gleanings, Mother of Good Harvest”⁷².

As Boris Uspienski remarks, the worship of Piatnica,

was broadly spread and went back to its pagan roots (...), and was connected with worship of Sunday and Mokosza (...), in Ukraine Pjatnica can be included in the group of nymphs (...), the folk reception of Pjatnica is connected with her as with the <water and earth mother>". The connections between Piatnica and Mokosza are also proven by a "special folk bans imposed on spinning on Friday and Sunday. In Ukrainian legends <Pjatnica goes round villages, all pricked with needles and twisted by spindles and St. Sunday ascertains the spinners that they do not spin flax, but her hair, showing her ruffled tress>"⁷³.

The goddess was very cruel towards disobedient weavers who breached these bans (on spinning and weaving). She ripped skin off them and hanged it on the looms, tangled spinners' fingers and pricked their bodies with a spindle until the first blood appeared, deprived them of eyesight and did not help them during childbirth⁷⁴. It should be remarked that in Russian folklore there is a fairytale plot, in which Nicholas helps to do the work imposed by Piatnica: to spin the yarn within one day (on spinning/weaving within one year – see below). As a patron of women she was given sacrifices of fabric, yarn, threads or animal coat, she was also referred to in prayers for help with getting married and childbirth. He is also mentioned in folk charms and vows of women⁷⁵. The Russian researchers give an interesting etymology, deriving the name of Piatnica "from Belorussian *patnica* meaning <impure power> or Mokosza – from Great Russian *mokoša* – <an impure spirit>"⁷⁶. The divine genealogy of the categories of female ritual (everyday) activity referred to here – spinning, weaving – in the traditional culture is proven not only by numerous connections with Mokosza or Piatnica, but also by the similarity of women's activities with folk image of Mary's activities. A noteworthy fact is that there exists a not very well-known and not very well-studied motif – in literature, art and folklore – that of Mary weaving a gown for Jesus.

It was inspired by a mediaeval apocryphal legend connected with the life of St. Mary, who weaved before the Annunciation. In James's Proto-Gospel we read: "And the priest said: <Cast lots before me to see who will spin the gold, the asbestos, the fine linen, the silk, the sapphire blue, the scarlet, and the true purple>. And Mary drew true purple and scarlet. And after she had taken them she left for her house (...) And Mary, having taken the scarlet, started to weave"⁷⁷. The conviction that Jesus's tunic is "Mary's work was initiated in the 8th century at the latest, which is proven by the hymn about Holy Mary, probably coming from that period (according to the tradition, it's author was St. Cuchuimne)"⁷⁸. For none of the canonical Gospels mentions that. St. John, however only gives information about a woven, not sewn, tunic (without mentioning the person who made it) for which the soldiers threw lots after Christ had been crucified (J 19,23-24)⁷⁹. The most important feature of that gown was that it was

seamless, which perhaps allowed it to “grow” with Jesus⁸⁰. It is worth adding that theologians from the 12th century also wrote about that St. Mary made that robe herself: in the East it was Zigabenos, in the West – Rupert of Deutz. Simultaneously the legend started to spread in connection with worshipping the relics of St. Robe, e.g. in the Argenteuil Abbey and in the Trier Monastery⁸¹. In the Polish literature the motif of Mary weaving the miraculous robe occurs mainly in Mediaeval texts – for instance in the following works: *Objawienia św. Brygidy, Rozmyślanie o żywocie Pana Jezusa/ The St. Brigida’s Revelations. A Meditation on the Life of Lord Jesus* (Meditation from Przemyśl), *Sprawa chędogo o Męce Pana Chrystusowej/ A Good Story of Christ’s Passion/*.

Additionally, spinning or weaving, included in most basic tasks of a woman or housewife in folk beliefs about St. Mary, which was also shown in the Old Testament. This is how they are described in the Book of Proverbs:

She obtains wool and flax
and makes cloth with skillful hands (...)
She reaches for the distaff, She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her fingers ply the spindle.
(Prov. 31; 13, 19).

There are analogical presentations in visual arts. The motif of Mary the Spinner can be seen in Veit Stoss’ figure, *The Holy Family*, where in a gothic chamber with a barred window Madonna is shown sitting and weaving a robe. The naked Baby, placed by the artist on earth, is passing a ball of yarn to His Mother, grabbing a fold of her coat with His other hand. In the door, behind the threshold of the house, St. Joseph is shown, busy with his carpenter’s work. A similar compositional scheme and the image of Holy Family was applied by the maker of Lusina altar and the altar from St. Mary Magdalene’s church in Wrocław (today it can be found in the National Museum in Warsaw): Our Lady is weaving a robe for Jesus⁸². Here we should refer to a cycle of xylographs by Albrecht Dürer, among which there is *The Holy Family in Egypt*, showing Our Lady preoccupied with the usual woman’s activity – spinning⁸³.

In Polish folk art Mary has usually been presented with a spindle and distaff in hand, like in the painting *Yarn of the Mother of God* by Piotr Stachiewicz, a painter and illustrator, who came from Podole and worked in Krakow at the turn of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. There are also folk legend traditions where a spindle and distaff are the attributes of Madonna, used by Her to learn a new profession and addressed to women. In the collection of legends about Our Lady, collected and compiled by Józef Grajnert, a 19th century education activist, folklorist, ethnographer and writer there is a short legend: *The miraculous beginning of weaving and cloth-manufacturing* about how Mary, assisted

by angels, taught a modest and well-behaved girl the new industry: how to wet the gathered flax, then dry it, swingle it, card, then spin and weave canvas on the loom (...) and in this way She taught the world to take advantage of flax, weaving and cloth-manufacturing⁷⁸⁴. The extended version of that legend can be found in another collection, collected by Marian Gawalewicz, a playwright, novelist and feature journalist who lived at the turn of 19th and 20th century, who worked mainly in Lvov – *The Queen of Heaven*. The Heavenly Spinner "intentionally drops a long thread from the spindle, when autumn darkness begin, to remind the thrifty women about the distaff for long, winter evenings"⁷⁸⁵, which is also confirmed by time, when village women gather to spin and weave. The story is also about Virgin Mary, who herself weaved, dropped threads and yarn on the earth, which the wind reeled in the air, that is why old woman's summer (*babie lato*) is called Our Lady's yarn. She herself "held a simple distaff instead of a scepter"⁷⁸⁶. In the traditional folklore, besides Mary—the spinner there are traditions that the biblical Eve was also occupied with weaving and she learned that art from spiders. She was forced to do it by necessity – being expelled from Eden⁸⁷. The weaver spider, which has already been mentioned, appears in folklore in the context of both biblical women. These are aitiological tales and fables. In Krzyżanowski's classification, plot T 2626 presents spider as the animal who was punished by God with poison, because it tried to spin more beautifully than Virgin Mary and because it had torn Her gown. In folk aitiology, concerning the formation of the animal world, a tale entitled: *Why does a spider have poison in its saliva?* can be found. It confirms God's punishment imposed on it for conceit and swagging⁸⁸. Not everything, however, which was connected with a weaver-spider, was conditioned negatively. The semiotic ambivalence, typical of magical consciousness confirms here the general principle functioning in the whole traditional culture – the dualist vision of the world, man and all phenomena, events, subjected to the principal idea of *sacrum-profanum*. Namely, the inhabitants of traditional villages believed that spider web must not be destroyed, because "peas would not go off well"⁸⁹. In the context of semantic connections between St. Mary and the spiders, it should be indicated that peas was regarded as St. Mary's plant, and, according to folk tradition, it was created from Her tears. That fact is referred to in legends, such as *Lzy Matki Boskiej /Our Lady's Tears/*, from, the already mentioned, Józef Grajner's collection. During the great famine on the earth, which was a punishment for sins, when God would not be appeased, Our Lady felt sorry and "she started to cry over the starved people: Her heavy tears fell from the heavens onto the earth and turned into peas, which people were picking and eating"⁹⁰. The relics of that faith can be noticed even today, in the form of interpreting spider web or its makers: that spiders make their networks or live in the houses of kind people.

In the broader perspective spindle and distaff were attributes of mother-goddess in general, they were symbols of ideal femininity, which also Rudolf Otto indicated in the context of Virgin Mary. Many goddesses were presented with such attributes: Istar, Athene the Counselor, who taught girls “household chores”, an Ephesian, Hetic, or Syrian Goddess⁹¹. The meaning of weaving, as everything that is archetypal, embraces what is positive and negative, and spinning (of fate) is the motif, which, like weaving accessories, “can be encountered with Great Cosmic Mothers, regardless of the fact whether it is Isis, Eiletya or Athene, or Urd (...), the same can be said about fairy tale witches”⁹². Identifying weaving with imitating the divine creative gesture, “expressed the creation of the whole world” – Iwona Rzepnikowska writes. And each woman occupied with spinning or weaving “underwent nobilitation, as she entered into magical-sacred cooperation with nature and divine powers”. Thus, she hid in herself “the great female power”, whereas the activities performed by her “expressed order and harmony”⁹³, which in folk consciousness were decoded as the act of creation and establishing the structure (e.g. of Cosmos). Both spinning/weaving and distaff/loom evoke in the semantic field deep symbolic meanings connected with female principle of existence; the spindle in them was attributed to male activity⁹⁴. These subordinating women activities in traditional culture were also used by the protagonists of folk magical fables, fairy tales and literary works based on folk plots, e.g. Baba Jaga/ Baba Yaga/⁹⁵, siostra siedmiu kruków /Sister of Seven Ravens/⁹⁶, or all girls serving their stepmother, old woman, witch or water witch⁹⁷. The motif of a spinner became fictionally attractive and semantically receptive for the fables by the Grimm brothers: *O trzech prządkach; Leniwa prządkka; Wrzecziono, czótenko i igła /The Three Spinners; The Lazy Spinner; The Spindle, The Shuttle and The Needle*/⁹⁸. In Russian folk tale there occurs the motif of the Witch spinning: “behind a high fence there is a hut on hen’s legs, with sheep’s horns and inside there sits the Witch – bone leg, spinning canvas”⁹⁹. Therefore she performs archetypal women’s activities, and she is, as Grażyna Lasoń-Kochańska writes, “the guardian of female dark powers, known from the matriarchal mythologies”¹⁰⁰. A young girl, coming to the witch for a needle and thread (sent by her cruel stepmother), before she gets these objects, she must work a bit: “The girl sat under the little window and she took to spinning”¹⁰¹. The cruel Old Woman at that time was preparing to eat her guest. However, this did not happen, because the girl managed to escape, assisted by animals and nature. The analogical plot of the Witch-eater, occurs in another Russian fable from the collection of Alexandr Afanasjew – *Piękna Wasylisa/ The Beautiful Vasilisa*/¹⁰². The modification of Russian fairytale witch found its “novel setting” in a version of Oskar Kolberg’s folk “wonder tales” from the region of Krakow. The image of a cruel,

anthropophagous witch, functioning in oral literature of that area, was written as a short story *O zjadarce-przędce/ On Spindler-Eater/*. It is worth quoting in total:

An old, ugly woman is walking through the road and sees a poor girl, an orphan, is going through the same road and crying. The old woman tells her: "Wouldn't you like to come and be my servant?" – And that orphan answers that she cannot do anything, but spin the distaff. And the woman says: "Good, I have a lot of distaff, and you will spin".

So that woman goes forward and the girl follows her until they came to that old woman's house, to the hallway. The woman is looking, and the door is closed not with a bar, but with a human arm. She was so scared with it that she said: "Oh, landlady, what have you got here?" – And the old woman: "Eh, nothing, that is only my staple". – Again, she goes further and there a human head is hanging on a peg. And she asks: "Landlady, what is this?" – And the woman: „Eh, that is my Pail" – She goes further and a long intestine (bowel) is hanging. And she asks: „And what is this?" – And the old woman: "My rope that I hang kerchiefs on". – So the girl was scared to death, sitting in the corner, looking at the walls and everywhere. Finally, she looks into the pot as well, and there is blood in it. The girl asks: "And what have you got that red thing in the pot?" – And the woman: "Eh, you silly, that is our soup for dinner". – The girl was terribly scared, because she understood what it all meant.

Suddenly the woman went to get water and as she was leaving, she said to the girl: "Do not peek in anywhere and go nowhere away from here". – But the girl, right as she saw that the woman went quite far away, being curious whom she had got to, started to look around the house and she noticed the chamber door; so she forgot about the ban, opened it and peeped into there. And then she sees the pile of human bones, so many, just countless, and a child sits there on them, quite big one, six or seven years old. She asks the child: "What are you doing, sitting here like that?" – and the child answered: "The two of us were caught by the eater; she has already eaten my sister, she will eat me today and she will eat you tomorrow. But try to escape through the top (attic), through the hole; because you won't escape through the door, where the staple is". – So the girl escaped through the top. And the child told her to escape there, so the old woman won't follow her so easily. The old woman comes, opens the door and the girl is nowhere to be found. And she got scared, as she thought that the other one, the little one, run away too, and she peeps in, and the other one is there. And she asks the little one: "Haven't you seen anybody here?" – And the child says: "I haven't seen anyone and don't know anything". The woman ran around her hut, but could find nothing and nobody. Because the girl luckily escaped and came to the road where a man was driving a wagon with hay and asked him to take her with him and hide her in the hay, because she was chased. The peasant took the girl with him and brought her to his house and there she stayed with him as his servant¹⁰³.

Spinning/weaving, called "spinning" or "spinning evenings", as ritual women's activities in traditional folk culture, as all other activities, were governed by specific principles and rules. As regional researchers emphasize, they were manifested in "girls/women gathering for work"¹⁰⁴. As we already know, due to their sacred character, they were tasks worth emphasizing. Zygmunt Gloger, referring to the mediaeval text by Jakub Kazimierz Haur on gentry economy¹⁰⁵ remarks:

Spinners should observe this: having beautiful water in a clean vessel, they should not spin with saliva, not only for order and cleanliness, but also to make canvas and threads white faster and make them whiter. Not to have the yarn on spindles for a long time, not to make it rot in damp, but to wind it up on reels earlier to rest. Reel, boil, wash, dry and reel all yarn, and have

it in separate place so that it will not get tangled up and mixed up and to prevent it from being bitten up or destroyed by mice or some vermin¹⁰⁶.

This fragment from the 16th century contains advice not to use saliva for spinning, which can be understood as a ban at performing that action, regarded as sacred. The old Polish author explains that act with better quality of canvas. However, this is connected with deeper meanings and the magical symbolism of that secretion as a “body juice”¹⁰⁷. And although, on the one hand, in the traditional consciousness saliva was connected with all humidity, rain, water and also creation, on the other – as for the ambivalence of mythical thought – with destruction, damaging and devastation. The folk motivation refers to the fact that “cows and sheep will salivate” as a consequence of wetting the threads with saliva¹⁰⁸, which in the subsequent stage may lead to the spitting of a man by the animals and through that – to illness. The very gesture of spitting is regarded as offensive and dangerous, it is connected with abomination and disgust, with fear of ritual impurity. The deeper interpretation of that “ban” on saliva refers to Slavic violation of the prohibitions of spinning, weaving or sewing,

guarded by impure force: <in Belarus it is believed that on the days of St. Vasilij and Marina, 28th February, only wool can be spun, which does not need to be wetted by saliva. However, flax and hemp cannot be spun, because in this way <the bricked up winter will be back and the winter frosts will come back>¹⁰⁹.

The secondary, already Christian, justification is based on the analogy between saliva used for reeling threads and spitting on Christ by the torturers crucifying Him (Mt, 27, 30)¹¹⁰, who seriously insulted Son of God. This is how it is justified in Russian folklore: “Не прясть в пяток, потому что в сей день Спаситель претерпел оплевание а на пряджу нельзя плевать” (“Do not spin on Friday for on that day our Savior suffered spitting on Him, and you cannot spit on the yarn”)¹¹¹, similarly in Polish folklore: “for the Jews spat on Lord Jesus”¹¹².

Weaving also occurs in different female apotropaic kinds of behaviour. In this way, referring to supernatural forces and powers, embedded not only in women, the real world was created. People also believed in the reality of the undertaken procedures, in their effects – both positive and negative, and the identity of words existing at it (e.g. charming formulas) and gestures, i.e. verbal-gestural isomorphism, served to strengthen the act. In the region of Lublin, as late as in the 2nd half of the 20th century, an activity was reported, called “night weaving of cloth for the altar prevents typhoid fever”. An informer said:

In our place, during German occupation there was a typhoid fever. You had to spin flax, weave and make a cloth for the altar, under the holy relics. I was doing it and I remember – in German times, during the occupation. Almost the whole village was doing it. And we spun flax, real flax, because under the holy relic there must be a flaxen cloth, under the very relic, in church, on every altar. And we made that cloth. And there is a chapel in Bukowice, and they took that

cloth there before the day, put it on the altar to that chapel. During that day you had to spin, weave and make it. And they brought that cloth to the altar, and the illness is to recede. And, indeed, the disease receded, that typhoid fever¹¹³.

In the mentioned event, we can notice the two-faith, typical for folk culture – coexistence of pagan structures with the contents of Christian religion: the magical activity of weaving the tablecloth and the belief in regression of illness and the holy place, where the cloth should be put – the altar in the chapel¹¹⁴. The altar is the central and special point of sacrum in church/temple, which, in many religions serves as a place of giving sacrifices to God/deities. In Christian religion it symbolizes Christ's Last Supper with His disciples and is the most important zone in the House of God. Hence, its "share" in preventing a contagious disease, consequently leading to death. The temporal aspect also deserves attention: the cloth had to be woven during one night and then the performed magical activity would reverse the time to the moment before the crisis. Besides, as Russian sources indicate, the custom of ritual weaving during one day/night, excessively used in folk fairy tales¹¹⁵, "originated from the conviction of weaving genesis of the world"¹¹⁶. That special fabric, created by women, designed especially for the situation of crisis – typhoid fever, has its source in the traditional faith: its symbolic function – regression of illness – generally amounts to bringing back the original order and creating the world (here: the village) once again, giving it the new, "healthy" status¹¹⁷. Within the logic of ritual, the manufactured handicraft gained the features of sacral procedure, which has already been mentioned – imitation of the creation act. Women, who, as persons specially appointed and predestined to perform a task, had to do it faultlessly. It was believed that as life givers = the ones who gave birth, they could also bring health back, performing magical-symbolic actions (re-creation of the state before the crisis). Also the temporal and substantial elements remain important: night (weaving and its connection with the idea of time, which was mentioned before, (we will soon refer to the night) and flax (the material substance creating the basis of that work, what will be discussed in the next sub-chapter).

Preparation of the yarn and also weaving took place in a traditional village mainly in late autumn and winter period. Spinners usually gathered in the evenings and at nights, from October/November to the end of February. In Russian song formulas, spinning was a symbol of winter, so, as peasant wisdom proclaimed, from March it was doomed to failure. In Polish folklore, in turn, the ban on spinning, (which was in force already during Shrovetide, so at the threshold of Great Lent) was explained in different ways. Researchers explain it by:

people connecting their activities with unstable situation in nature. In the time deprived of balance and disordered, it was not appropriate to do work aimed at visible order. Spinning was almost a reproduction of that state of affairs. For a distaff is nothing else than a tangle of flax,

hemp or wool. Stranding threads, in turn, is sort of ordering the disorder. Thus, such an activity could be practiced only when winter passes into spring, that is, when the normal order of the world actually occurs, which could happen only after the first thunder strike¹¹⁸.

In the traditional imagination the time of dusk was burdened with a range of axio-normative meanings, “in the folk understanding of the evening day time is the beginning of the next day”¹¹⁹. Thus, it had the hallmarks of temporal border, where the elements of life crossed with the elements of death. Night and evening, in anthropological and ontological plane, as Edmund Leach indicates, are metonymies of death and the beyond, an element of the rite of passage¹²⁰. In the rural worldview, then, a specific time-space was re-created (in this way entrance into another sphere, the sphere of sacrum, was marked, as an area of symbolic death)¹²¹. In the folk perception of time, the autumn/winter evening or night had features of extraordinariness and specific power, because winter (and especially the time of winter solstice) is “destroying the old (order) and forming the new”, it is the time of metamorphosis, changes, becoming (metamorphosis of yarn into fabric)¹²², and with reference to the specificity of perception and sensing time, it is a guarantee of the success of the activities that are important to humans.

The time of work was called “spinning the distaff”¹²³, and it was held “usually in the most spacious chamber in the village”¹²⁴ or “in places regarded as impure – baths, barns or specially separated compartments on the edge of the village”¹²⁵, sometimes in inns. The work was diversified with stories, songs and laughter: “girls come to an inn in groups; the spindles whirr, flax cracks torn with fingers and one of them tells a story she has heard from her mum or grandmother. Many songs will be revived here”¹²⁶. Such places, the largest, special, remote or separated (isolation), so peripheral, located outside the center and impure, had their symbolic attribution. In the mythical thought these areas were attributed with mediation, liminal properties, where it was possible to make contact with transcendence. These zones were often (like in this case) only accessible to women (mainly to spinners) and strengthened by their female power (driving force). As Jerzy Sławomir Wasilewski writes, the idea of isolation “can be (...) the intention of creating fetal (uterine), and at the same time paradisiacal conditions”. Another motivation of that behavior is connected with transformation performed by women at that time (from yarn into thread; and a substance appears again! – thread): their workplace “like a holy place, must be protected from human sight”, for the sense of sight (like touch or smell) is of reversible nature¹²⁷. Yet another feature deserves discussing: impurity. Dirt, in mythical awareness, as most phenomena, has a double meaning (we remember that from our earlier divagations on folk ambivalence). Litter, as other impurities (e.g. feces and other bodily excreta), in the symbolic language of traditional structures as-

sume the meanings of gold, wealth and money, whereas, on the other hand, they are associated with removal, destruction, taboo, ban, and further – with death¹²⁸. The Overlap of these several symbolisms of liminality (place, time, season, performer, yarn: flax or hemp) served as multiplication of actions and in this way granting it sacred, divine and creator's features. It is also a state of intensifying mediation properties (persons, time, location and substance), the necessity of doubling the action. To emphasize the diversity of the activities of spinning/weaving, let's quote an example from the region of Wieluń, where there was an interesting custom of finishing "spinning" with a feast: "in memory of nicely spent frosty season girls have a banquet in a place where they met. They share money for vodka and beer, invite boys from nearby villages and have all night fun. That banquet at the end of the spinning is called *kłakociny* or *kłaczko-winy*"¹²⁹.

Every feast, in traditional folklore, evoked peculiar sacred qualities, and the excess (to food and drink), as its constant element, secured the expected effect of the rites. Besides, through eating, playing and dancing, on the one hand, the completion of female activity was emphasized, while on the other – the creative time was put into effect, the time that is yet to come (run around the wheel of time), the world was symbolically recreated: "we start celebrating each holiday in the period of solstice taking place in the seasonal rhythm, when nature seems to be renewed, when the obvious transformation happens: with the beginning or the end of winter" – Roger Caillois emphasizes¹³⁰.

**Women are in the lead at dancing. That is how it is. Young men, give way.
(Leontios)¹³¹**

Creating, fertility-enhancing and mediating gesture of women, analogical to crying, spinning and weaving, also include various circular, vertical and horizontal movements, jumps and leaps contained in the semantics of dance moves. These three categories of women: mourners, spinners/weavers and "dancers" create the cultural triad of "voiceless" women, gifted with special creative powers, symbolically "appointing for existence", re-vitalizing a given status. In the traditional folk culture, it was believed that women – "dancers", through their gestures, movements and leaps aimed at the so-called "dancing the world out" (in the words of Jolanta Kowalska). The actions undertaken by them, dynamic, lively gestures and activities were directed towards seeking and discovering the principles of existence of the universe and the rules of its ordering. It was believed that their dancing conditioned the proper functioning of the world, was a means of

forming reality, a factor in the stabilization of creation, and an element of internal order.

As Jolanta Kowalska remarks, dancing is a kind of agreement with the mysterious power, gods, transcendence, extraterrestrial strength, “its execution was confirmed by sacrum”¹³². It was addressed to the higher instance as a request, charm, and prayer or as a response and fulfillment of given recommendations, a repetition of actions¹³³. The most important were dances in circles and all their variations. They were understood as “space penetration”, thus bringing the world or its constitutive elements out of the abyss of the arch-ocean”¹³⁴. Consequently, the earth was “woven” (created), (compare earlier notes on creating the world through weaving). Different understanding of circular dancing was connected with the technique of making it, which was close to the motif of creating, moulding. This is a variety of a “working tool, potter’s wheel [understood as an appliance for making clay objects and tools using rolling technique – note: B. W-D] of the Creator, on which first people were formed”¹³⁵. However, this interpretation can be seen in a broader context, and in the light of our divagations, refer it to spinning wheel and spindle as women’s working tools, which used them to model the thread and yarn. The circular/turning movement is also a “metaphor of all creative actions”¹³⁶. In mythologies of different nations, there are stories about the creation of the world by means of dancing, for instance in the Pelagian myth. Lonely Eurynome, the goddess of all things, dancing on the waves of the arch-ocean, ultimately separated the sea from the sky. The Homeric myth of the birth of the globe is the version of that story (Thetis ruled the sea like Eurynome)¹³⁷.

In the Polish traditional folklore, in the context of Slavic folklore, the best known “dancers” and their symbolic “stunts” are the so-called women’s vegetative dances for good harvests: “for flax” and “for hemp”. “Dances for good harvest” are included in the group of ritual behaviors connected with fertility and abundance. They are performed by women, mostly married. Jumping up, down and through they stimulate the reproductive powers of the earth and seeds, evoking the future harvest. These magical-symbolic procedures mean prosperity, wealth, gathering and good growth of plants. According to the principle of the magic of similarity, women’s Shrovetide dances were performed “for high flax” (for hemp). So, women, most frequently gathered in the inn, made dancing steps – leaped as high as they could, so that the flax/hemp grew well. Depending on the region, the movements were differentiated. Near Pilica, married women gathered on Ash Wednesday created a circle, held their hands, turned several times, when others were singing, and they jumped over benches: “so that hemp grew as big as jump this year”¹³⁸. All the actions performed by the wives were

directed at one goal – to stimulate fertility in plants and good harvest in the coming year. The circle made by women played an important magical role among Slavs, symbolically protected from the unfriendly force, was a strict barrier, hindering or preventing the access of evil, constituted fullness, perfection, whole. Circular movement, in turn, positively marked, served to increase, accelerate, provided development, dynamics, "generated the magical protective power"¹³⁹. The leaps of women – upwards, downwards, leaping over – provided the height of plants, were directed upwards or downwards. Sowing hemp (*Cannabis sativa*), as botanical sources report, reaching only 1,5 m in height, is a small plant (sometimes it reaches 2,5 m), it is branched, with broad, rough leaves. Flax, in turn, reaches the height of 30-70 cm, is thin, with small, twisted leaves¹⁴⁰. They had to be symbolically provoked to grow more intensely. The leaping women "demonstrated in the dance movement the archetype of the journey of life-giving power from the sphere of sacrum to man and the earth, as well as from man to the sacrum"¹⁴¹. Their dance constituted a form of ritual cooperation of human being, strictly speaking – woman, with the sacred sphere. The additional, magical power was also in the performers of the dances, restricted to married women, serious, respectful and especially those who had already had sexual initiation and given birth. It was believed that married women will provide the plot with fertility. Near Kozięgłowy women also boiled peas and cabbage in the inn for the hemp dance, and after they finished, they sat at table to start the feast¹⁴². Peas and cabbages, served on Ash Wednesday, bring associations with fasting and Christmas Eve supper. Both these dishes were connected with the beyond, with products designed to be a sacrifice for the ghosts of the dead, having meditative properties. Besides, peas symbolized fertility, which explains their presence on women's feast: the abundance of hemp. And any feast constituted a sign of "building" a bond, the common future, which was sought; it also brought to mind the sacred peculiarities, focused the living energy, which was soon to be used for another growth of plants. In the magical culture worshipping the dead coincided with the ceremonies devoted to vegetation, because, as Mircea Eliade remarks, "agrarian or harvest holidays frequently coincided with holidays devoted to the dead, and often connected with the cult of fertility, created a unity"¹⁴³. Also the temporal-locational aspect of the dances with leaps is also important to our divagations. Time: Shrovetide and Ash Wednesday, coincided with the time of vegetation, was connected with spring ritual complex, focusing on fertility, stimulating to life. In the traditional culture, Shrovetide was the time when the formula was implemented from chaos to order. The word "zapusty" (Shrovetide), as researchers indicate, was first reported in the year 1424 as "stary sapust"/ "the old Shrove" (in the Book of Czersk Region), and in 1439 as "zapust" ("shrove") (in

the court books of the region of Warsaw) and regarded as the synonym of “mię-sopust”, that is “farewell to meat” (time without meat). Shrovetide “therefore means the time from New Year’s Day and Epiphany to Great Lent (...) or from Christmas Day to Ash Wednesday, or the last three days before Great Lent. The terms <ostatki> and <zapusty> are treated as synonyms meaning Shrovetide”¹⁴⁴. The place, in turn, most often an inn, as a type of a village tavern (guest house), where the community life concentrated, where the big family rituals took place (wedding parties, wakes (consolations)), occasional dances, is nobody’s zone, a foreign zone, appropriate for such procedures¹⁴⁵. As researchers write, to define an inn “there is a beautiful word in Polish: <gościniec> (guesthouse). It is derived from the word <gość> (guest). In some regions of Poland the word <gościniec> is used for a public road or route”¹⁴⁶. A guest is a person who comes from somewhere to us, invited, so it is a stranger, meaning: not familiar, not from here, living somewhere else, visiting a hotel, restaurant or inn. Tavern-inn was “was the only house in the village designed for the people <from the world>”¹⁴⁷, but it was also a place of debauchery, “burdened with guilt for the loss of virginity by girls”¹⁴⁸, which increases strangeness and extraterrestrial character of the inn (sexual intercourse, especially the first one, in folklore was understood as connection with the beyond, whereas a virgin was a woman with mediation, demonic and hybrid features, closer to transcendence than women who were not virgins)¹⁴⁹.

To confirm numerous peasant frolics for good harvest, let’s now quote an example from the region of Lublin, where in the evening of Shrove Tuesday, the peasants in the inn “danced till they fell (...) until the church bell announced the commencement of Lent. Not everyone, however, went home afterwards. Housewives and some men stayed in the inn to drink and dance <for hemp>, so that it grew well”¹⁵⁰. An interesting way of magical growth-provoking occurred in Masovian and Pomeranian villages. Near Warsaw, right after sowing hemp into the ground, women jumped in the field¹⁵¹. They behaved similarly in other places, like, for instance, near Tykocin, jumping over a tree trunk placed in the middle of the room in the inn: “for the growth of flax”. This was, of course, accompanied by a meal that all women ate at one table. The delicacies included “osuszki” – lanten cakes made of potatoes and flour, as well as vodka. Jumping over the trunk, feasting, eating and drinking were repeated the next day¹⁵². In the Pomerania, however, the ritual magical procedures “for flax” had a binary structure. In Połczyn, in the morning, “until 11 a.m., on Shrove Tuesday women spun and then they went dancing with distaffs”. Similarly in Obłuże, the dancing peasant women attached bunches of flax to their clothes, whereas in Gdynia women jiggled “around the distaff or with distaff in hand around the spinning

wheel"¹⁵³. The importance of procedures performed and strong folk belief in their success is proven by a story from Koźyczkowo, of a bed-ridden woman who rose from her bed and "toddled to the flax"¹⁵⁴. The *pakuliny* rite from Wieluń is included in a similar symbolic space. As it is reported in ethnographic notes, "on Ash Wednesday old women make an enormous distaff of hemp and go in a group from house to house, where there is a young woman married that year. If they find her at home, they won't take no for an answer, she must properly "smear their throats". If she wants to avoid the expense, she runs away from home, or hides away for good, because if they find her – it is even worse for her. She must spin the hard hemp distaff remains and fund as much liquor as they want"¹⁵⁵. In the ritualized vegetation activities referred to, connected with making, creating, appointing for existence, a special role fell upon woman – the active performer of the tasks assigned to her. By her own person, her reproductive strength, appropriate behavior and movement, she increased and even stimulated the vegetative energy of the soil. Therefore, in the interpretation, two series of associations built on the observations of Eliade appear: married woman – fertility – hemp/flax (symbols of fertility) and fertility of woman = fertility of soil¹⁵⁶. In these practices woman and her fertility constituted a center of concentrated energy and a starting point for abundance and prosperity. All movements and dances, in turn, had a creative nature, which increased women's vegetation "frolics" and dynamically spread the power of dance¹⁵⁷.

It is also worth mentioning the symbolism of flax and hemp, as they are universally recognized as "women's plants" (such a term often appears in source literature). Through their connection with the beyond, both plants were associated first of all with fertility, which we already know, but also with wealth, gold, and the liminality between worlds¹⁵⁸. Especially stalks, deprived of nodes/knots, and thus associated with the idea of continuity, could serve as means of communication between parts of the world¹⁵⁹. Besides, the appearance of flax and hemp looked brought explicit associations with long hair or a long, gray beard (hair of the bride, beards of shrovetide mascarons). Thus, the thread from these plants constituted a symbolic equivalent of a hair. In connection with that analogy they can be ascribed the properties/functions characterizing hair, i.a. the role of a carrier, transmitter or mediator, broadly understood power from the beyond¹⁶⁰, but also wealth, abundance, fertility (like any animal coat)¹⁶¹. The connection between hair and the beyond can be proven by the ritual from Belarus: women weaved death robes for themselves using their own hair as warp and tied plaits of distaff to graves (that may be a reminiscence of making a sacrifice of hair)¹⁶².

The inhabitants of traditional villages believed in the magical power of hair. One of the confirmations of such power was the fact that it grew back: thus,

there was some great mystery in it. “And as it grows back – Kazimierz Banek remarks – it must be the source of life”¹⁶³. Besides, long, fair (golden) hair let loose was a distinctive element of extraterrestrial beings, related to water and the underground (e.g. nymphs, dryads, sirens; cf. part II of the book)¹⁶⁴, also goddesses, such as the ancient Athena, Leto, Demeter, or Helen of Troy, Ariadne, Thetis¹⁶⁵. In certain cultural circles such hair was treated as the seat of erotic desires, lust and prostitution. It is enough to recall the evangelical parable of the harlot who, during a meal in a Pharisee’s house, poured tears on Jesus’s feet and wiped them with her hair (Luke, 7, 37-38)¹⁶⁶. Beard, in turn, was perceived as a symbol of virility, wisdom, maturity and strength, the seat of specific powers giving transcendental predispositions (e.g. wizards, charmers). Russian culture – as Boris Uspienski remarks – “is known from its specific attitude towards the beard, created during the reforms of tzar Peter I, maintained until the present times among the old believers (...) in the Old Russia, pulling out or shaving the beard was regarded as one of the hardest insults”¹⁶⁷. The beard acquired the sacred sense. Besides, it was connected (like hair and animal coat) with fertility, abundance, wealth and the beyond¹⁶⁸.

All dances of women took place in the moments of breakthrough, liminal, both for man and nature. People sought success, abundance, wealth in household and in the field, fertility of nature and success in personal life. In the region of Poznań, near Siekierki, as it is reported in field materials, in the evening of Ash Wednesday, when all married women from the village were already gathered in the inn, they invited men to come. Each of them “took her husband or a friend for a dance and with him she wanted to dance vividly round the room at least once so that her linen grew well that year”¹⁶⁹. They played and danced also for themselves. Projecting growth and good harvest in general originated from the conviction about the existence of special force, unknown to man that manifests itself in crops. Therefore, the undertaken and performed ritual procedures (here: feminine) aimed at establishing friendly relationships between an individual and nature and to secure the periodical rebirth of nature. The time when the peasant women played was important – it was Ash Wednesday, so fasting time already. The word “post/“fast”/ (and “pościć”/ to fast/) is a borrowing from German, in Poland the terms : “suszyć”, or like in Podlasie: “zagowiny”, “zagowki”, “zagowić” were used. These terms have their etymology in the Old Church Slavonic language: “gov’ti”: “live godly, respect, restrain from”. But in other cultures “to fast” has deeper meanings: it also means “to stay silent out of respect” (Bulgarian), “stand still” (Serbo-Croatian), “lie uselessly” (a Russian dialect) or “rest” (Czech). Therefore, fasting is the time of quietness (“noiselessness”), restriction or limitation of activity, not performing certain tasks, but also

"one of the ways of updating the mythical order", recalling the primary time and building new relationships. "The metonymy of death has to be seen in it as well", the metonymy of lifelessness and the rule of strange order (chaos)¹⁷⁰.

The Shrovetide behavior from the region of Tarnobrzeg, reported by Donat Niewiadomski has an extensive symbolic interpretation. Let us look at it. Young boys dressed up themselves, one as a woman, the other as a bear and walked from house to house, knocking at every door. Housewives brought them eggs, grain, or money, but, first of all, they danced on litter with "the bear", additionally dressed in straw. The motivation was unambiguous: "on the litter danced over by the bear, hemp grows well"¹⁷¹. A slightly different version existed in the region of Poznań: "on Ash Sunday wives go round the village with a hick dresses as a bear. Leading him, they beat the drum, whistle and shout, whereas he turns somersaults and plays different tricks"¹⁷².

The disguisers, like Christmas carolers, in the traditional village were treated as "pilgrims", visitors, people from somewhere outside, and so strangers, unknown people, who came to this world (from house to house) and "announced the fact" of existence, creation of the new order¹⁷³. A stranger in the Slavic magical folklore is someone who is excluded from what is well known and familiar, someone who indicated the divergence from the established norm, "designated by the learning subject or a social or ethnic group"¹⁷⁴. Someone who is comprised by a taboo and stigmatized with contacts with the beyond, in this culture constituted someone who is, on the one hand, accepted and respected, and on the other – rejected and regarded as an enemy¹⁷⁵. The mascarons coming to the houses stopped at the liminal place – at the door of the cabin, which, in folk thinking, symbolized the contact of two areas: the external and internal one, the sacred and the profane, present and future time, and they divided two spaces: the familiar and the strange one. Through that they also emphasized and stressed their dissimilarity¹⁷⁶. In this context, it is worth recalling the special time when the event is taking place. We already know that Shrovetide is the period of spring regeneration of strength in man and nature, stimulating fertility and life. Thus, all benefits were initiated in various ways, and the numerous undertaken gestures and practices permeated faith in creational properties and in achieving the foreseen state. Also the outfit of the scarecrows deserves attention. It proved not only the extraordinary, special time of Shrovetide, but also "calling" and "creating" fertility conditions. The coat (of a bear) and straw symbolized the abundance of crops, good harvest, fecundity of soil¹⁷⁷. The animal itself meant fertility, awakening (from hibernation into spring), rebirth of life, protection. It was mainly associated with the sexual sphere, and through connection with woman/women (walking and dancing) the aspect of good harvest was streng-

thened and increased¹⁷⁸. Another interpretation, indicated by researchers, can also be assumed:

Modeled on the actual animal, distinguished by a great physical strength, constituting a special kind of vital powers, the presence of bear mask also had a significant effect on the strengthening of vital powers, necessary during early spring, of all the people with whom this figure was in direct contact. Visits of <the bear> in particular homesteads were therefore specific and conventional transmission of the fertility powers represented by it to their inhabitants¹⁷⁹.

Dancing on litter had a specific expression. The woman literally and metaphorically transmitted to the manure, soil and, consequently, to the plant, her energy and the energy of the “animal” dancing with her. Besides, like all other faeces, excretions of the body, in the symbolic language of traditional structures assumed the meanings of gold, wealth, money, success in household. On the other hand, however, what has to be emphasized, they were associated with destruction, degradation, removal, taboo, ban, and, further, with death¹⁸⁰. Also gifts given by housewives: eggs, grain and money were directed at abundance, life, wealth, energy of fertility and proliferation. The ritual noise accompanying the visits: shouting, whistling, drum-beating, belonged to obligatory, protective and preventive activities. Screaming, whistling, hitting the drum therefore assumed the nature of apotropaic procedures: they were aimed at chasing all evil or negative forces away to prevent disturbance in this special time of projecting good harvest and stimulating fertility. Also through that the influence of the animal upon the sowings was emphasized. The tumult, as the opposite to silence, in magical culture belonged to ritual activities connected mainly with life, was the sign of life, contrary to silence, quietness and calmness. As Piotr Kowalski emphasizes: “Both noise and <deadly> silence become characteristic elements of the Other World”¹⁸¹.

The images of “voiceless” women presented in the chapter: mourners, spinners/weavers and “dancers” explicitly indicate that in folk belief there was the conviction about the magical power of the connection between woman and nature, transcendent force, life and death. Numerous examples of ritualized female behaviors, recalled in the chapter, emphasize the principal rule existing in the traditional worldview: aiming at harmony, order and security, as well as abundance and prosperity in this world and also securing stability and inviolability in the other world. They also emphasize the conviction about the existence of mysterious forces ruling the world, as well as about the possibility of referring to them in an appropriate way (according to the assumed scenario, rules or norms), to obtain help and protection in individual and community life, in the household and family life. In the context of the examples discussed above, the already quoted world of Simone de Beauvoir becomes apt and significant: “The whole strangeness of nature is summarized in a woman, she creates life everywhere”¹⁸².

Chapter 3

Secular impurity and “daughter of the Earth” – Jagna Boryna, neé Pacześ

Women are definitely more interesting
Impurity and dirt must be excluded,
if order is to be maintained.
(Mary Douglas)¹

The story of unsuccessful, third marriage of Maciej Boryna to Jagna Pacześ constitutes the main contexture of the novel by Władysław Stanisław Reymont *Chłopi* /*The Peasants*/, whereas the story of love between his son, Antek, and Jagusia, completed by other romances the girl was involved in, create not only a significant part of the basic plot, but at the same time introduce the tragic dimension into the novel: father and son love the same woman, they lust for her (the motif of incest), they even quarrel and fight for her, which, as a consequence of other events, leads her to destructive actions: staining the sacred and symbolic death.

To be exact, let's add that the origin of the novel could have been influenced by various factors, e.g. the author's childhood. He was born in the village of Kobile Wielkie, in the district of Radomsko, and then lived near Łódź, in a small town called Tuszyn (Tymów, a small town in his novel, was patterned on it)², which remained in his memory for a long time. The researchers also indicate that the version about the effect of Emile Zola's novel *The Soil* on W.S. Reymont is not quite certain and there is not enough evidence for that. Stefan Lichański claims that Reymont got acquainted with it when he was in France, “and he was deeply outraged by that book. That indignation gave rise to his thought of writing a <true> novel about peasants, which would be an antithesis to Zola's work”³. Franciszek Ziejka, in turn, believes that:

lack of any evidence whatsoever, confirming the fact that Reymont had read Zola's work. It is true, however, that in 1887 <Przegląd Tygodniowy> published a few episodes of that novel

(...). The full translation of Zola's work (...) appeared as late as in 1930. Thus, it must be excluded that Reymont could have read *The Soil* in Polish. Therefore, could he get acquainted with the work of French naturalist in its original version? It should be doubted. (...). Had he read *The Soil*? Most probably he hadn't⁴.

But there are also other premises. As the experts remark: "writing *Chłopi* in the period of Polish Modernism was not accidental. The origin of that work was influenced by changes in the structure and consciousness of Polish rural area, as well as special interest in the peasant of that time"⁵.

The fate of Jagna from W.S. Reymont's novel, in anthropological dimension, is connected with something more general – transgressiveness, on the moral and erotic levels (carnality, sex, prejudices, exclusions), as well as disturbances in the existing order (the occurrence of impurity). In the area of "feminological" (feminine) outlook or anthropologically (folkloristically), phenomenologically oriented methodologies, the main character of the novel can be perceived as earth, the Great Mother (according to the doctrine of Eliade and Neumann). She is inscribed in the category of liminal individuals with her personality, creation and behavior"⁶.

The 58-year old widower, Maciej Boryna, persuaded by his neighbours, took up the challenge and risked another marriage, this time to much younger 20-year old girl, the most beautiful girl in Lipce. However, he soon understood that he had made a mistake. As time went by, the initial desire gave way to prudence and apparent calmness, which hid plans of revenge, both on his unfaithful wife and immoral son. Driven by fury caused by humiliation, having failed to put an end to their affair, torched a haystack, having seen Antek with his mismatched spouse. The lovers, caught red-handed, unmasked by Maciej, who did not give up rights to his wife, scared, dispersed in different directions. The undertaken efforts, worries, as well as other circumstances, finally led the farmer to death, and her young wife to widowhood. Marrying Boryna gave her the status of "queen of the village" and hostess (in carnival convention it was enthronement): "You are the hostess, Jaguś, so it is your right to divide [the blessed wafer] among all [the cows]"⁷. His death, in turn, and acquiring the status of a widow, already like an avalanche "dethroned the carnival queen"⁸. A clear sign of the beginning of indifference and hostility of the village towards her was lack of sympathy after Boryna had left this world:

again she was overcome by terror, because nobody approached her, nobody said a word, especially that on the day before his death she spent the night at her ailing mother's house. So it was not Jaguś, but Hanka, who was surrounded by compassionate people, who came with the news of death of the first farmer in Lipce. Such loneliness penetrated the beautiful widow painfully. She did not shed a single tear⁹.

The traditional village was a severe executor of folk law and morality (including that concerning sexuality), the guardian of correctness and law-abidin-

ness. It was becoming indispensable to observe the village code of conduct, and all offences, breaches of social, ethical and marriage borders, divergences from standards and "frolics" were stigmatized and punished. People feared God's justice, "from different sides the voices, condemning those who brought misfortune to the whole neighborhoods by their <sins> could be heard"¹⁰. Flirtations of maidens, even with married men, sometimes were accepted in the village¹¹. However, special reaction of the village population was reserved for the deeds or misdemeanors violating marital rights and offences in the religious area, diverging from the church rules. It was the protagonist of *Chłopi* who broke all taboos, disturbed the moral order and polluted the sanctity. It was Jagna, who was accused of evil and demoralization. She was lynched – expelled from the village. Reymont describes that deed extremely vividly, suggestively and realistically, equipping it with features of approaching apocalypse, a vision of the end of the world:

Meanwhile, to the village the frightening time of judgment and punishment has come that you just could not tell what was going on. As if Lipce was overwhelmed by typhoid fever [plague] and people were just maddened (...) they gathered at the pond in groups and as if drunk by anger they were boiling more and more furiously, stirring one another up with cries, so everybody was yelling, everybody was cursing, everybody was raging, making a fearful growl (...) And in one minute the whole village was heading to Dominikowa's house (...). They stormed into the cabin (...) Dominikowa barred their way, so they trampled her, Jędrzych jumped up for defence, so they did the same to him, finally Mateusz wanted to stop them (...), but he could not (...). A hundred hands reached for her [Jagna], a hundred hands grabbed her from all the sides with their hungry, greedy claws, pulled her out like a bush and dragged her to the fencings. (...) On the road there was a cart, all ready and waiting, filled up with swine manure and to be drawn by two black cows, they threw her on the dung, tied up like a sheep and started up in terrible muddle. (...) But the whole procession stopped in front of the church. – she has to be stripped down and lash her with twigs at the porch (...) – these ones have always been beaten up in front of church! To the first blood, take her!¹²

The infuriated crowd of villagers was leading Jagna away from her house, from where she was simply pulled out: „they stormed into the cabin”, to the borders of the village, to the outskirts, because every sacrifice had to be executed in this very place, between the tamed and wild spaces, safe and unsafe – at the meeting point. In magical awareness the borders were especially vulnerable and exposed to the activities of demonic forces and beings, unfriendly to humans, as well as ghosts of the dead. Approaching the edge of an area increased fear, caused the increase of the sense of threat and uncertainty. Thus, everything that could threaten an individual, their family and existence, should be removed outside the trusted area, eliminated, pushed out to the margin, which constituted a critical point. Beyond it, the foreign world, unknown to man begun¹³ Jagna, as personified evil, wreaking moral havoc, was finally expelled beyond her own and certain space, „pulled out like a bush”, annihilated, without any possibility of returning: „Just come back and we will set our dogs on you¹⁴ – shouted all the spiteful and most virulent scolds and shrews from Lipce.

That deed was understood by the folk on one hand as a way of making a symbolic sacrifice to the mysterious, transcendent power for misfortunes, demoralizations, divergences and sins, with simultaneous begging for preventing that situation from happening again. The significance of offering in ancient times was proven by its character, because it was accepted only when it was destroyed, in total or in part. Its most determined version was: „offering, first and foremost, is killing”¹⁵. Blood, drawn by whipping a naked woman turned out here to be an echo of ritual cuts and mutilations that purified the flaws, removed the mark and burdening curse, simultaneously giving an opportunity for renewal, repair, rebuilding. An Jean-Paul Roux emphasized: „only accepting that dichotomy of blood allows us to understand that it both attracts and excludes, that it is both masculine and feminine, that it soils and purifies at the same time, that it is useful and harmful, that bloodshed is both a crime and a holy act”¹⁶. The blood, as a substance with ambivalent meanings (like most symbols, words and gestures in the traditional culture), was symbolically close to images of death and life, danger and healing, good and bad luck, purity and impurity.

On the other hand, in traditional Catholic mentality, punishing Jagna in this way was connected with the fact that committing adultery by a married woman was included in the catalog of mortal sins, deserving public stigmatization. Thus, the behavior of persons taking part in “measuring the punishment out” was the response to Jagna’s – the wife’s behaviour, inconsistent with God’s commandments. For she belonged to the community, in which such kind of moral and sexual “liberalism”, as well as religious and moral indifference, was unthinkable.

The literary presentation of condemning Jagna is confirmed by ethnographic fact, reported, for instance, by Bohdan Baranowski:

In especially drastic cases the accused man, or, more frequently, the woman, was expelled from the village. Then this act assumed an especially disgraceful character, e.g. the accused woman was beaten with twigs to the first blood in front of the church, and then she was driven outside the village borders on a manure cart pulled by cows. Sometimes all inhabitants of the village, armed with willow twigs formed two rows, as far as to the border of the village. The sinner was led, with her bare back and everyone hit her with a twig. Sometimes she also had a straw garland on her head, to which fire was set on the edge of the village¹⁷.

Already in the Bible, in the Book of Moses, there is information for those who commit besmirching Lord’s name and blasphemies against the Lord: “the one who blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death” (III Mos. 24, 16).

In the novel Jagna was described first of all as a figure polluted with moral and sexual dirt, the secular impurity trying to invade the sacred space, crossing the sacred taboo. She was burdened with the stigma of sin and guilt, so she could not avoid her fate, inscribed in the structure of doom. Simultaneously, she

was the victim of her own carnal drive and the offences resulting from it, as well as of the social pressure. But she was also a tragic, fallen, and, consequently – excluded woman. On various levels of cultural interpretation – a stranger, whose biologism, temperament and beauty prevented her from joining the village community: „Nature, in its destructive invasion, appears to be as cruel as the brutal soliciting of Eros, giving Jagna the figure of the Stranger”, and the mistakes repeated by her, depending on physiology, made her “a stranger both to herself and the village community”¹⁸.

Otherness excluded: carnality, perversion, „higher erotology”

Jagna Boryna, neé Pacześ is a character untypical for the folk culture, controversial and semantically ambivalent. In the community of Lipce she was commonly regarded as a beauty and men identified her with femininity, spontaneity, sexual energy and, first of all, with carnality and eroticism. Perceiving her in this way made her different from other peasant women: good wives, exemplary mothers and resourceful housewives. Her dissimilarity is formed on several levels, which we will determine in accordance with the research findings of Kinga Gajda, looking at the category of feminine otherness on the example of contemporary revelations of the ancient Medea¹⁹.

We already know that otherness is what, on the one hand, evokes fear – frightens with its state of affairs, and on the other hand, it fascinates, excites and enchants. Jagna, as a whole figure, was dangerous for the women in Lipce, made them anxious, frightened and caused grim forebodings. For instance, this was manifested in her contacts with Hanka, an ordinary peasant woman, not very beautiful and not very wise. What made them very different, was both the attitude to work:

- Is it a holiday that you are not coming to work?
- I won’t go with my hair undone...
- You could have done it ten times since dawn!
- I could, but I haven’t
- Jagna, don’t play with me like that!
- Or what?²⁰

and the attitude to men:

- And you dare to ask, eh? – Hanka said in astonishment, standing in front of her. Don’t make me tell you what I want to tell you!
- Say what you want! I don’t care! – she yelled, more and more fiercely, her anger expanded like fire and she was ready for everything, even for the worst.

Hanka's eyes filled up with tears instantly, the memory of Antek's cheating bit her heart so painfully that she could merely mumble:

– And what were you doing with my man, eh? You will be punished by God for me, you will see!... You wouldn't leave him alone... you were after him like a bitch in estrous... like a... – she couldn't breathe (...)

– I was after him, wasn't I? ! Everybody knows how I chased him off. He whined in front of my door like a dog, so that I showed him but one of my shoes! It was he who raped me! It was him who doped me and did what he wanted with me, silly me! And now I will tell you the truth, but don't regret it! He loved me as much as he could! And he was sick of you, you were like a dirty, old rag to him and the poor man had enough of your loving, he burped as if he had eaten some old lard and spat when he was mentioning you. He was even ready to do something to himself so as not to see you any more (...) if I want, he will dump you and go after me, even if you kissed his feet! Remember that and don't you dare to compare yourself to me, do you understand?²¹

Jagna's pride, arrogance and great ambition, her self-confidence and the sense of dignity and value, mainly based on her beauty, feminine charm and manners forced Hanka to agree with her:

– Yes, I can't be compared to her in beauty, too bad! But I am his wedded wife and mother of his children! – she felt so proud and self-confident. He will run after her and then come back. After all, he won't marry her! – she consoled herself bitterly, looking out on the world²².

Hanka, who was intimidated, overworked and “coarse”, a busy housewife trying hard to get food for her family, quite frequently had anxious, worrying thoughts about her husband, fearing he would leave her:

– He is after Jagusia, after Jagusia... (...) she was sitting up late at night, till after midnight, and there was this miller's saying, like a thread in front of her: <He is after Jagna, after Jagna>²³.

Also other factors and details proved the attractiveness and otherness of the young Boryna from the peasant women: attire, charm, posture and beauty, which influenced her status in the community – priority and leadership:

she seemed so beautiful (...) prettier than all the others. And yet there was Nastka (...) and Weronka, Płoszka's daughter (...) there was Socha's daughter (...) and there were other girls, pretty, overgrown, attractive to the boys (...) – but none of them could equal Jagna, none of them. She outgrew all of them with her beauty, clothing, posture, and these bright blue eyes (...) that is how she outgrew all of them and ruled over them all²⁴.

Also her behavior, the way of self-presentation and kind of work performed were quite important for the formation of Jagna's perception in the village. In fact, she did not do much, as she was spared by her mother, and then by her husband, all days long she dreamt about living in a better world, she was reading, looking out of the window, sometimes walked, sew or spun, made beautiful holiday decorations (paper-cuts and centerpieces), and, above all, she was

sitting in the inn with her lovers. The envious and spiteful villagers were saying: „And does she do anything? all she does is eating and sleeping, how can't she be beautiful..."²⁵. Even when her husband was ill and then, when he died, she could play and satisfy her sexual needs. She lived here and now, she lived for fun, for pleasure, not thinking about the effects of her acts, about the future. Let's quote the appropriate fragment:

– But Jagna has nothing to worry about: she is not stupid and she is enjoying her life to the fullest.

– How come?

She rose and looked at her sister anxiously.

– Nothing special, but she can live good life to the fullest, dresses smartly, visits friends and has a holiday every day. Yesterday, for instance, they saw her with the mayor in the inn, they were sitting in the corner annex, and the Jew hardly managed to bring half-quarts ... She is not so stupid to be sorry for her old man...²⁶

She in turn fascinated and aroused the other sex. Her primary deities were love, sex, unleashed eroticism and passion. She only concentrated on her biological needs, in her life she sought originality, uniqueness, charm, and sensual pleasure, personifying, for herself and for the others, the element of pure eroticism, sexuality. "The energy unused in physical work – as Jadwiga Zacharska writes – this healthy and strong girl, and then young woman relieves in intercourses with men, whom she in fact treats instrumentally, as erotic partners". However, „satisfaction from erotic fulfillment is short and does not motivate her to act and does not lead to the formation of durable emotional bonds, to accepting responsibility for oneself and the other person, at least the partner"²⁷.

Eroticism isolated Jagna from her community, reduced bonds with the people, dehumanized, deprived of thinking and willpower, sometimes also of mind. That is what happened during sexual intercourses with Antek, Mateusz and even with the mayor. Reymont then presented her as helpless, passive, weakened, submissive and "ravished". In order to emphasize the relationship of a woman with earth and nature, the writer frequently compared her to nature or presented her against its background, in this way showing the pure element personified in her as well as the enormous power. Jagna was becoming a child of nature, the daughter of earth, illustrating the all-consuming right to love²⁸. He wrote:

But soon she forgot about them, she forgot about everyone, even about herself, she fell into a holy sensationlessness, like that earth of ours in autumn dead nights – because, like the holy earth was Jagusia's soul – like that earth. It was lying in some depths not recognized by anyone (...) mighty, but with no will, without wanting, without desires – dead and immortal, and as any wind took that earth, covered it with itself and swayed, and carried wherever it wanted... and as that earth was woken up in spring by the warm sun, fertilized with life, shook with the

shiver of fire, desire, love – and it gives birth, because it has to, lives, sings, rules, creates and annihilates, because it has to, it is, because it has to...²⁹.

The fragment above, presenting Jagna's sensations and feelings corresponds with Eliade's metaphor of a woman-earth, about whom we already know from the previous chapters. Reymon's village beauty was inscribed in a fertile soil, in its power of bearing, fertility and abundance.

Mystically, the Earth belongs to women

– Simone de Beauvoir remarks –

they at the same time have religious and legal power over soil and its crops. The bond that connects a woman to the earth is even closer than the property relationship. Matriarchal legal system totally identifies woman with earth. In each of them – through various incarnations – continuity of life is executed, because living is, in its essence, giving birth (...) the earth is a woman, and the woman hides the same unknown powers as the earth³⁰.

Jagna, with her femininity, liveliness, energy, vitality, strength and excitability was inscribed in a series of archetypal goddesses: Mother-Earth, Great Lady Nature and Love, or Great Roundness, which Erich Neumann discusses in detail³¹.

Fulfilling herself exclusively through eroticism, which, however, did not give her a long-lasting satisfaction, she could not build a durable relationship with any man. She was driven by desire rather than by love. She was unable to resist her biologism, sexual drive, natural instinct, erotic wildness and ruthlessness, she broke the limits and taboos, committed sins, exceeded the moral code accepted in rural community – for instance infidelity to her husband or incestuous relationship with Antek (after all he had been her stepson since a certain moment). She did so not of her own free will, but of an internal, uncontrollable and unstoppable urge, some mysterious force that she could not resist and that pushed her to do it. Reymont, outlining the portrait of Jagna in such states, left some room for her self-assessment. Then she was deeply and severely distracted by her deeds, dilemmas and dithers of her soul, she excused herself in front of herself, pulling her own personal brakes. Here is her internal dialogue, resulting from her meeting with Antek in secret from her husband and other people – to go or not to go?:

and her irresistible will to run out behind the house...to the hayshedgrew in her and increased... But she could not decide, she was afraid they will notice... she was afraid of the sin... she restrained herself with all her power and shivered in agony, her soul wailed like a dog on a chain, her heart was breaking... no, she couldn't, she couldn't ... and maybe he is already standing there... waiting... expecting... maybe wandering near the house... maybe he is lurking somewhere in the orchard, looking into the windows and looking at her now... and begging... and he is quailing with sorrow that she has not gone out... Maybe she will run, she won't hold herself any longer... just for a minute, for one word to tell him: go, I won't go out, it's a sin ... She was already looking for her kerchief, she was already going to the door... she

was walking ... but as if something grabbed her by the neck and held in place... she was afraid...³²

But she did not go. Not that time.

Jagna's love exultation, ecstasies, carnal delights and lusts, sexual intercourses, joyful excitations in the contacts with her lovers were outlined by the writer in a strongly naturalist, suggestive way, even with some kind of slight brutality and animal passion (here: with Antek):

He approached her from behind, because she was still sitting by the cow, he strongly embraced her through her breasts, bent her head backwards and bit into her mouth so strongly with his lips that she lost her breath, her arms fell, the pail fell onto the ground, she lost consciousness, but she tautened stronger and stronger and she pressed her lips to his so eagerly that they fell into themselves and for a long while they lasted in such a crazy, wild, unconscious kiss³³,

Or in some other place:

He seated her next to him on the balk and started to bring her close to his heart, hug her, stroked her hair (...) he kissed her trembling lips and these tearful eyes, these dear, sad eyes. He fondled her and calmed her down as carefully as possible (...) But Antek already felt dizzy, because he felt her warmth that made him feel hot that he kissed her more and more voraciously and covered her with his body stronger and stronger... At first she did not understand what is going to happen and what is happening with her. But when she felt totally ravished and when he started pressing her lips with his hot kisses, she started to struggle and beg with fear, almost weeping (...) However, she could not free herself from that dragon holding her so tight she could not breathe and she felt hot and trembling.

– Let me do it just once, last time – he wailed almost breathlessly. And the world whirled with her and she fell like to the bottom of some paradise and he took her like he used to, heatedly, through this dear strength of love and she gave herself to him like she used to, in this sweet helplessness, to the immeasurable happiness, to death.³⁴

also in strong connection with nature, which is achieved by extended epithets, conspicuous comparisons, abundance of words:

the hollow growl of throes, joyful beating of hearts, covered them as if with vibrating heat of the cherry fields: they were like the spring, blossoming crossroads, dipped in the gleaming echo of joy, because their eyes blossomed in the same way, they panted with the hot breath of fields scorching in a sunny conflagration, trembling of grasses growing, vibration and glittering of streams, muffled cry of the birds, their hearts were beating one in one with this holy earth, and their glances fell like heavy, fruitful apple blossoms. And the words were quiet, scarce, important sprung from the very core of the soul, like the dazzling sprouts of trees on May dawns, and breaths were like blows caressing the young undergrowth and their souls, like that spring, sunny day, like crops going up, full of lark singing, glitters, soughs, glittering green and an overwhelming joy of the existence...³⁵

But the states of ecstasy and infatuations, as we have already mentioned, did not result from being in love, from pure love, that could only accompany them. They appeared because of desire, sexual insatiability and the wish to possess a man, out of a sudden passion and weakness for the other sex. From the

perspective of the contemporary psychology of woman, which calls such a case “the neurotic need for love” Jagna’s state can be referred to, after Karen Horney, as follows: “A neurotic person usually is not aware of their inability to love. They do not know that they cannot love, they have no such consciousness (...). The neurotic need for love constitutes a manifestation of particularly strong narcissistic features (...), these people are really unable to love others. They are characterized by authentic geocentricism.”³⁶

Jagna’s otherness should also be considered through her actions. She was a man-eater, “poison ivy”, a femme fatale causing scandals, and openly breaching the rules of decency, despising conventions and breaking the established principles:

Certainly, because of that women were already loudly commenting on such a reverie, shaking their heads, yapping and pitying Boryna (...)

– Father, Antek is dancing with our stepmother and people are grousing about it! – she whispered.

(...) To that Boryna came out of the corner annexe, brought by the scandalized women, he looked and understood everything at once. He felt extremely outraged, so he only grinded his teeth, buckled up his coat, put his hat on and started to push through towards them

– Go home! – he said aloud³⁷.

Jagna turned out to be the most emancipated and arrogant in seducing the young cleric. She was attracted to that “smooth youngster” who spontaneously subdued to her charm and she “satisfied her greedy imagination with dreams about a better world”³⁸:

Anyway, what could she care about, when she could see Jasio any time of the day and drown in his eyes to death (...) His eyes also lightened up and honey sweetness filled up his heart (...), he was looking at her with a strange pleasure (...) She was standing in front of him, blushing like a rose bush, like that apple blossom, fainting in the heat of longing, full of beauty and just like some miracle³⁹.

As befits a *femme fatale* she destroyed her partners, led men to disaster, ridiculed them: Maciej, Antek, the alderman, and finally Jasio. None of them was able to resist the charm, temptations, internal desires, the body, her intensity of love. Like a modernist vamp, she tempted, attracted, captivated, obsessed, snared and devoured. Greedy in love, “delight”, she expressed her needs openly. Then, they absolutely did not care, they only wanted to be with her, look, admire, touch, kiss and love:

[Antek] was scared of meeting Jagna, he knew very well that he won’t be able to restrict himself!⁴⁰

Or somewhere else, at home, next to his wife:

But he did not even move, did not respond, did not feel her [Hanka’s] hug, he did not know about her, he gazed with his eyes open wide in those eyes, in Jagna’s blue eyes⁴¹.

Or in the inn during dancing:

But today Antek just could not care less for anything else when he felt her next to himself, when he pressed her to himself, so she tensed and closed her darling blue eyes, he was totally engrossed! (...) He forgot about the people and the whole world, his blood was hot and his power rose, so haughty and tenacious, that made his chest almost burst!

(...) Only his eyes were mad and such a storm rose in his chest that he could dare to do anything, right now, before her, because he saw admiration and loving in her blue, bright eyes! So he grew more and more, fluffed up and hooted, like that gale before it strikes!⁴².

But Jagna also did not remain indifferent and totally unfeeling in such situations. She subdued to Eros, submerged in delight, loved intensely, did not restrict or calmed herself:

And Jaguś was also as if sunken in delight and engrossed! He raised her high, like a dragon, he did not resist to that, as she could not, when he turned her, carried her, pressed sometimes everything got dark in her and she lost the memory of the whole world and there was happiness, youth in her, and she only saw his black eyebrows, deep eyes and red lips!

And, taken by the love gale, blind to everything, maddened, deprived of memory, melted together as two burning torches, they carried themselves into that dark night, into the emptiness and dull loneliness, to give themselves one to another, to the bottom of their souls, devoured by the eternal hunger of lasting...

They could not speak, only unconscious cries came right from their guts, only whispers, muffled, broken (...), until they felt such a terrible tremble of desire, until they clutched with wild wail and fell... really unconscious....

- I am going out of my mind!...
- Don't shout... hush, Jaguś...
- But I have to... I will go crazy, or what!
- My heart is about to burst!
- I will burn... oh, dear, let go..., let me breathe...
- Oh, Jesus... I will die... oh, Jesus!...
- You are the only one in the world...
- Jantós! Jantós!⁴³

In the novel tissue Boryna's wife exists as an anti-ideal of a peasant woman. Overwhelmed by a desire, passion, erotic exuberance and a strongly felt sexual drive, as time went by, she turned out to be a too innovative, frightening and strange figure for the village community, respecting the fossilized tradition, rejecting debauchery and lack of principles. And such a person was not accepted by the local community. It was necessary to get rid of her. Thus, she became, according to the metaphor used by Mary Douglas the moral "dirt", impurity, "symbolizing both power and threat", and the threat should be eliminated. Do-

uglas writes about such a person: “someone who commits impurity, as an object of condemnation is doubly abominable, firstly because they trespassed a border, secondly because they threatened their environment”⁴⁴.

The formation of female identity – mother and daughter

Driven away on a cart on which swine manure was put, beaten up with lumps of soil and stones, covered with handfuls of sand “she lay like a log, only gazing at the trees swinging over her”⁴⁵ – this is how the village crushed the worst harlot in the community. Probably the punishment turned out to be too severe, because Jagna’s tragedy started to be accompanied by nature, as if wanting to make its anger understandable:

Suddenly the world became clouded, a thick, strong rain started falling (...) the storm became really severe, the sky became dark blue, the dust whirled. Poplars bent to the earth with some weeping and crying, winds wailed (...) thunders went one after another (...) earth trembled and houses were shaking.

People became overwhelmed with terror, they started to be afraid “they were coming back in groups and in strange silence”. The curse thrown at them by Dominikowa, whom they met on their way, as she was rushing to rescue her daughter, made them even more afraid:

She went, covered in blood, in torn clothes, weeping and hardly managing to feel her way with her stick, and when she understood who was passing her, she burst out with a horrible roar: <May plague, fire and water not save you!> Everybody hid his head only and run away, frightened⁴⁶.

She was someone to be afraid of, indeed, as Dominikowa was regarded by the community of Lipce as a healer, folk specialist. Sometimes she was even said to be a witch. Thus, she was commonly known to help, cure, undid bad spells, so people came to her for advice and support, but it was also very well known that her anger could harm, bring plague, disease, evil:

True, but she is a witch, too; and who took away milk from Wawrzon’s cows, eh? And when she said a bad word to Jadam’s boy, who picked plums in her little orchard, then immediately he had such a tangle, and was so twisted, Jesus!

– Dominikowa is so pious, and such a sorcerer – the alderman was laughing.⁴⁷

We cannot disregard Jagna’s relationship with her mother, analyzing the image of Jagna as the other, uncommon and untypical peasant woman. That relationship significantly formed the girl’s identity and affected her behavior, and consequently, also her collapse (transgression).

In scientific research, identity is perceived as an ontic category and considered in the area of individual identification. Most frequently it is understood through the prism of order and stability, explained through the processes that differentiate the structure of "I" and the relationship "I-the world", "I-the other", and finally discovering in this way its own separateness. Thus, it is a certain vision of themselves, consisting of appearance, psyche, behavior and uniqueness, seen by the others⁴⁸. However, the transgression that we have already mentioned, manifesting itself as a certain mechanism in action (here: Jagna's), assumes a conscious, intentional transgressing of all limits: material, social and symbolic, allows to transform and modify the reality, in order to create or destroy it. With reference to the sex-crazy protagonist of the novel, it was destruction that was substantially affected by the relationship with her mother, but also the mother herself.

Paczesiowa, aware of the value, beauty and strength of male desire, the power of femininity and sex, brought up and prepared her daughter to the role in which her beauty, sex appeal and charm would bring benefits to both of them⁴⁹. She allowed her to be lazy, to play and to dress up, always to the detriment of her brothers, which could not be left unnoticed by the villagers:

Jagna, like a lady, like an heiress only dresses up..., washes herself, looks into the mirror, plaits her tresses.

– And only looks who to let into her bed, which one is strong enough!⁵⁰

It is a fact that women have always wanted to be beautiful, seduce, dazzle, provoke jealousy. Such an imperative is inscribed in the structure of their identity. Undoubtedly, the external appearance constituted the basic, initial determinant of identification. They have always been assessed through their physicality and sexuality.

Looking from the position of woman-mother, a dominant person, she made Jagna strongly dependent upon her. She decided and knew about everything, she took part in everything, and she ruled. It was her, who said the final word, categorical and decisive "yes" or "no". "The relationship with mother – Luce Irigaray writes – is a crazy desire, as it creates "the black land" in the most literal sense. It remains in the shadow of our culture, it is its night and hell (...), mother turns into a devouring monster"⁵¹. Finally, such connection must end tragically for the daughter, for the mother, or for both of them.

Dominikowa's behavior was dictated by her own selfishness, self-interest, greediness and desire of material profits. It was easier for her because of her age, status (mother), function (healer), experience and authority in the village community, as well as her determination. She felt her power and greatness, she

knew respect she deserved, servility and submissiveness. To establish her daughter's position in the village, as well as her own, she confirmed her sense of being valuable, beautiful and different from the others. She developed her selfishness, enabled her to satisfy her different wishes, including physical desire, spared her at work, burdening her sons with everything. She also made her notice men early, "and then she not only tolerated the girl's weakness (...), but protected her with her own authority from the envious gossips"⁵². She brought her up, preparing her daughter for the fate better than her own, in this way breaking the traditional hierarchy, upbringing patterns and the norms being in force in the village, as well as division between male and female activities (that concerned work, especially feminine tasks, performed by her brothers, which caused pity and laughter in the community).

Jagna, pampered, protected and petted by her mother, did not make her own, conscious choices in her life, because she did not have to. She was indifferent, passive and aloof, she allowed Dominikowa to manage her, which her mother did extremely efficiently and aptly. The best example of Jagusia's lack of determination and initiative, her passiveness and helplessness was the choice of husband: "if you say so, I will marry Boryna..., and if not, I will stay with you... it is not bad with you"⁵³. Dominikowa, satisfied with that, sought through her daughter's marriage to a much older man – Maciej Boryna, first of all, material profits (farm, land, money), but also an appropriate position in the village hierarchy, house and the family – some security for the future. That is why Dominikowa strongly supported that candidate, pushed and convinced her indecisive daughter:

I want the best for you, the best... Yes, he is old, but still strong and humane, not like other men, he will respect you... You will be a landlady at his place... (...) And you have to get married, you really have to... why should they gossip about you in the village? (...) but Jaguś seemed not to hear her words, she was spinning automatically and as if she did not care for her own fate, she did not think about that marriage at all⁵⁴.

First of all she was driven by self-interest, rapacity and greed. She cared for the bequest of ground, property, a certain stabilization and independence. Her daughter's beauty constituted for her a measurable value – more than 8 acres of land for Jagna, which she already solicited for before the wedding:

– Jagusia will have about seven acres and about an acre and a half of forest...she inherited that from her father.... you could bequeath the eight acres. The eight acres near the road, where you had potatoes this year.

– That's my best field!

– Isn't Jagusia the best in the village (...)

– Yes, I will bequeath it for Jagusia...

– When?

– Ah, even tomorrow! No, on Saturday we will give our announcement and go to town right away. What does it matter, you only die once, right!⁵⁵

She acted according to the traditional view on marriage in a traditional village. It was treated as a transaction, a kind of business, exchange purchase-sale. Mutual love was not that important, what counted was labor force that the farm acquired and the dowry brought in. Henryk Biegeleisen wrote “marital unions out of love between peasants happen very rarely (...) a peasant (...) when getting married, is not governed by his heart, attachment (...), marriage is not a union of hearts, but a bilateral contract, just like purchase and sale”⁵⁶. Besides, the young couple did not have to know each other at all. In many cases they met just before engagement, or on its day. Nobody was asked for permission, everything was arranged by both sets of parents and matchmakers. The wife obtained for her family a guarantee and obligation of help from her future spouse⁵⁷. She was to be kind for him and his family, thrifty and laborious. The husband was expected to be mature, level-headed, and moderate, because he was attributed with the role of bread winner and family protector. Also strong posture and faultless opinion among the people were important, as these features “constituted the esthetic ideal of the best husband. If there was love at all, it was manifested in severe and violent way (...). Primitivism, aggressiveness, instinct, impulsiveness and biologism, are the features permanently indicated (...) as predominant in folk love until the end of the 19th century”⁵⁸. In the traditional folk culture, like in primitive cultures, woman was treated instrumentally, “it is as if <natural> in social mentality to treat a woman instrumentally, as she constitutes a man’s property and is granted any rights whatsoever, being, however, obliged to fulfill all her husband’s wishes, even those unreasonable and irrational”⁵⁹ – Ryszard Polak emphasizes. The neighbours, talking about Maciej Boryna’s bride-to-be, also pay attention to some of her assets referred to below:

– And she is beautiful, that’s true; well-rounded like a heifer, fair faced, and her eyes are [blue] just like blooming flax... and she is so strong that even some men can’t stand up to her...

(...)

A strong girl, a tall one that she can’t cross the fence, as perches break under her..., and she is beautiful, white in the face and buxom like a heifer⁶⁰.

In discussions with her mother Jagna frequently emphasized her indifferent attitude to land, legacy and property, lack of interest and reluctance:

– I am listening and listening, but you are talking to me as if I did not have my own reason...

- It is never too much of good advice... (...) Boryna (...) may bequeath you some ground, or even give you some cash!
- I don't care for that – she muttered impatiently.
- Because you are young and stupid...
- Look, if there was a child, in case the old man dies (...) he or she would have his or her part of bequest, equally with the others, so maybe you would stay with the whole ground...
- You only have one thing on your mind: ground, ground and I couldn't care less...
- Because you are still young and silly and you chatter without any reason! A man without ground is like without legs, wanders to and from and won't get anywhere⁶¹.

The above quotation refers to yet another issue – maternity, so important and significant in traditional folk culture. Jagna's short relationship with Boryna was childless, so she had no chance to work out her maternal instinct, though she showed maternal feelings towards Jasio, sorrowful after Agate's death. Regardless of her contacts with people from Lipce, she did not feel appointed to be a housewife, the first worker in the village and even less so to a mother's function, which some researchers emphasize uncompromisingly and explicitly: "she lived quite freely in the marital union with Boryna – the idea of bearing children has not even passed through her mind"⁶².

Referring to Jung's psychology, Jagna's behavior in her relationship with her mother can be explained as "the complex of mother in daughter". Jung writes:

The complex triggered by mother in her daughter does not mean at all that it will manifest itself in the form of an excessive maternal element. Quite contrary – that instinct can totally vanish. Consequently, the over-developed Eros appears as a substitute, which, invariably, leads to a subconscious incestuous relationship (...). Jealousy of her mother becomes the leitmotif of all her undertakings. The daughter wants to be better, which, finally, gives disastrous results⁶³.

Such complex may manifest itself still differently as "identification with mother", and then the daughter experiences

the paralysis of her womanly initiative. Her personality is totally projected onto her mother, which results from the fact that she is unaware of her maternal instinct. All that reminds her of maternity, responsibility, personal relationships and erotic needs, evokes inferiority complex and forces her to escape – to her mother in whom everything (...) is brought to perfection. Mother as the super-woman (...) experiences everything instead of her daughter (...). The daughter is happy to cling to her mother with selfless devotion (...) living like her shadow.⁶⁴

Let's confirm Jung's assumptions with the quotation from the novel, where Jagna, wondering about her fate, discouraged and indifferent towards life and all that interested the average villagers, thinks:

And wasn't she fine at her mother's? She did what she wanted and nobody said a word against her. She couldn't care less for the grounds, the legacies, the properties – she didn't care at all, or

a husband? So many boys were after her – if she wanted, they could all come to see her in one night... (...) she will marry Boryna, if mother tells her to (...). It's her mother's business to do as it should be...⁶⁵

And, first of all, she was not interested in her husband's love:

But Jagna could not care less for his love, she was dull, irritated with his caressing, angry, everything was getting on her nerves, so she flew through the compartment like an icy wind...⁶⁶

The mother-daughter relationships were not always correct, they quarreled violently, there were conflicts, reproaching for faults, mutual accusations between them, especially when it came to contacts with men. Domikowa repeatedly charged her daughter with inappropriate conduct and open romancing that caused “talking” in the village. However, the biggest row between them took place after Jagna got involved in the affair with Jasio, which could not be accepted by the village people. Then the threat of accumulated, vicious hatred started pending over Jagna. It was fueled by the organist's wife and the mayor's wife. Dominikowa, indignant and angry, also scared about what could happen very soon, yelled at her daughter:

– And do you know what they say about you and Jaś?

– I am not curious about gossip – she answered reluctantly (...)

– Curious or not, you should know that you can hide nothing from the people! And who does something quietly, he is talked about loudly. And God forbid, what they say about you! (...)

– Right at night they judged him, the organist spanked him up and the priest added something to it with his pipe, and, to safeguard him from you, they sent him to Częstochowa. Can you hear? See what you have done! – she shouted in a menacing voice.

(...)

But Dominikowa, disregarding that, started to beat her, as if with a stick, with all her faults and sins she could remember, she did not spare a single one, reproaching her for all that she was angry about for a long time and what she has been viciously bemoaning about.

– It must come to an end at last, do you understand! You cannot live like that anymore! (...) to be considered as the worst one, to be fingered. Such a shame for my old age, such a shame, my God...

– And you weren't better, when you were young, they say! – she threw a bad word at her⁶⁷.

To calm down and hush down the community gossiping and outrage, she advised her daughter to go to confession, being convinced that the priest's authority could appease the disgusting gossips, or remarrying as a remedy for all evil:

– It's time you find one [man], it's time. And people would stop pestering you! Let's say, Mateusz, he is not to be sneezed at, a clever and good-natured man.

She recommended him long and very encouragingly, but Jagusia did not say a word, busy with her work and her worries...⁶⁸

The finale was, undoubtedly, catastrophic, for as Barbara Koc suggests: “The response could have been suggested to Jagusia by the devil himself. Contemptuously, she declared that she was not going to confession and could not see Mateusz as her future husband”⁶⁹.

Jagna is an ambiguous figure, evoking condemnation, outrage, prejudice, or quite contrary – pity, or even understanding (compassion). Elevated and fallen, oscillating on the edge of morality, she lived in the “criss-cross world”, which she had created herself. Her unbridled sexuality and acting according to her own discretion made her “create for herself a strange world” of corruption and depravation, contrary to religion and ethics of the village she lived in. It is the world of attributes directed at herself, selfish, internally strong and proud, deprived of humility, which, however, consequently, led her to isolation and separation, turned out to be a threat both for herself and her surroundings.

Living close to nature and in accordance with its rhythms, sometimes superstitious, deprived of deepened national consciousness (e.g. when Jasio was reading fragments of *Pan Tadeusz*, she did not like them, she preferred Roch’s tales about dragons and apparitions, stories about kings⁷⁰), in the local community she personified the female lustfulness, immodesty and desire. As Barbara Smoleń writes, “a peasant woman, in the Polish symbolic space was not designed for the role of Mother Pole, she did not have to sublimate her drives. The Polish authors allowed her to manifest desire directly, without masks and insinuations about her unleashed character and strength”⁷¹.

* * *

The specificity of women’s images analyzed in these chapters: the women of wisdom, “voiceless” women and the daughter of Earth is inscribed in the horizontal binary system: this world – earth. The spontaneity of earth and woman, regarded by many cultures and religions as a certain unity, submissiveness to the laws of nature (merging into the universe of nature), first of all indicate the manner of female experience of the world, the domineering and powerful property of female, manifested on the level of the cosmic pattern: the giver of life and death.

PART II

MYSTERIOUS, DANGEROUS, IMPERIOUS: THE OTHER
WORLD, WATER

Chapter 4

Female demons of seduction: rusalki¹

*Who is ruled by the seductive love,
Should eternally wander in the woods.*
Jan Barszewski²

In the traditional folk culture, fears, loss or helplessness of a human being were accompanied by the search for miracle and fantasy, extraordinariness and astonishment, mysteriousness and weirdness in the surrounding reality. They were often associated with the imaginations contrasting with everything that is known, common and safe. The basis of this visualization of desires was transgression; and thus the possibility of the free crossing of borders, change of forms, acquisition of various shapes. These states were necessary for the individual because they gave support to thinking, behavior and life, confirmed the interpretation of appearing signs. In the circle of these phobias were the imaginations of rusalki – demonic unearthly feminas existing on the border of two worlds and living mainly in the aquatic spaces.

“charming maiden-like ghosts” – folkloric fascinations

In the general consciousness of people the belief in rusalki was associated with various ideas concerning their origin. For example, they were believed to arise from the souls of the people who died tragically: “prematurely deceased or injured by fate young girls (...), porońce³ – the children unwillingly strangled by their mother, unbaptized (...) or young girls”⁴. Also from the souls of “village young girls who drowned themselves in despair or were drowned by the vengeful hand”⁵. In some areas, as the ethnographers point out, “the folk forces the souls of the young girls to turn into rusalki if they died being fatally drunk during

the wedding”⁶. All lineages of extraterrestrial creatures come from the deceased people and most often concern female souls. Thus, the “genealogical” roots of rusalki date back to the otherworld concept, weirdness, mysteriousness and differentness.

The name: rusalka, as Witold Klinger writes, comes from the Latin word *rosalia*, which meant the feast of roses and was associated with spring, plenitude, bloom, nature that comes to life, energy. The researcher combines the origin of rusalki not only with the Slavic faith, but also with the pre-Christian celebrations in honor of the goddess Karna, who was offered sacrifice of roses on the specific day⁷; also with the ancient Greek nymphs, nereids. Slavic traditional folklore has given various names to nymphs. Well, the most popular and commonly used, was the name rusalka. However, depending on the place, country and the space where they existed, the nymphs were also known as: boginki⁸, leśne⁹ (deities of woods), bogunki, drowned women, undines, nymphs, majki, less often Vilas or dziwożony¹⁰. As their names indicate, the vast majority of them lived in water areas, wetlands, the banks of lakes and ponds. However, there were also nymphs of woods: “two types could be distinguished; they were beautiful and attractive forest and water nymphs (...) inhabiting woods, coniferous and oak forests”¹¹ – underlines Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki.

The woods, coniferous forests, wilderness, as we have already mentioned in the previous part of the book, were considered mysterious and unknown places where the wild and untamed nature could not provide people with the desired shelter and security; and the dense foliage hindering the access of sunlight enhanced the extraterrestrial power. For that reason – the lack of security, clarity, homeliness and serenity – in the human mind, the forest became a traditional areas inhabited by demons, mythical and unknown figures, foreign creatures attributed to the “underworld”, arousing fear. This is the area of the reign of death and evil. Thus, the forest nature was considered to be wild, “uncivilized”, unfriendly to a human being, threatening and terrible.

The magical imagination gave the “little goddesses” a specific appearance dictated by their transgressiveness. Therefore, they were presented as young beautiful ladies with delicate faces, a charming look, which has the power of enticement, and long, fair hair “dressed in wreaths of herbs”¹². Walking naked, they tempted men with their figure, shapely body, “small hands, small and folded legs”¹³ and amazing beauty. They did it for the specific purpose: to seduce the thoughtless ones, “deprive them of mind”¹⁴, and then drown them in the water depth or tickle them to death. They were equally mean and vindictive “towards living young girls”¹⁵ whom they could not stand and which they were jealous of. They were also able to behave “aggressively: they attracted passers-

by, and when they had them in their hands, they caused the killing spasmodic laughter by tickling the victim; they also asked riddles and if a human solved them, then they lost their power over him¹⁶.

In the traditional folklore, laughter was regarded primarily as a sigh of life; it performed regenerative, therapeutic and creative functions. However, it was forbidden in certain situations, for example, in those in which the land of the deceased was entered or in the contact with the sacred. In that case, all the outbursts of joy betrayed the presence of the character causing his death as a result¹⁷. Therefore, the passers-by who were involved into laughter by rusalki died (contact with the nymphs = contact with the otherworld).

The complete absence of clothing is the primary noteworthy feature in their folk image: “rusalki in their proper form do not have any cover; they hide their nakedness with wreaths and sashes of green leaves and forest and field flowers”¹⁸. Nudity – as Kazimierz Moszyński emphasizes – “is primarily a characteristic feature of the female demons (...), for example, in Eastern or Southern Belarus there are entire neighborhoods where villagers see only naked rusalki”¹⁹. In the magical consciousness, nudity was associated with the state of nature and was undesirable during the daytime (thereof, nymphs appeared at night or in the evenings). It was also considered to be a quality belonging to the state of birth, a signal of the reversal of the normal order, common activities or events. It was also understood as a sign of presence of the extraordinary and transcendent powers, a kind of magical decorum. However, they happened to wear the clothes that slightly covered the body; generally airy, delicate, transparent, white. The clothes of this kind indicated their extraterrestrial affiliation and insignificance, existence on the boarder of the two worlds, visibility and elusiveness, indwelling in the space of water. Whiteness was connected with brightness, light, purity but also with cold, coolness, water²⁰, symbolizing the completeness and synthesis of what is distinct.

In the portrait of the nymph, the attractive and charming eyes as well as the face were also important. The eyes “were black, full of splendor of life, love and allure; whose gaze penetrated deep into the heart; white complexion ornamented with the fresh blush on the face”²¹. This appearance represents transgressive characters that are excluded for some reason, but also amazing and unique, and it mainly concerns female beings. It was not without reason that they put on a black color. In many cultures, black was the reason for exclusion from the community (for example, Jewish culture). It is also the color of mourning, departure and isolation, and thus, death. As the basic organ of the senses and the perception of the world in the magical consciousness, they were a boarder place in the human body; so they possessed unusual qualities and specific powers coming to

from here. In the language of folk images, the sight served to explore the world, experience, “define” and organize it²², but also caused harm and bring misfortune to someone. Through eyesight and penetrating observation it was possible to influence someone or something negatively (see, for example, the manifestation of the so-called “charming eyes” in folklore, that is, those that could cast a charm, cause harm to the individual or the environment, human being and nature²³).

The further precision in their appearance is associated with the minuteness and physiognomic accuracy: “water nymphs are shown as shapely figured seven-year-old girls, skillful and agile in their every move. They wear only white skirts without a belt and comb their beautiful hair of the golden color on the banks of rivers and lakes”²⁴. Hair deserves a deeper comment: fair, long, loose and decorated with wreaths, “they are seen with green wreaths on their heads”²⁵, in addition “lush, gleaming, shiny, shimmering and wet”²⁶. Sometimes they could be seen “wearing long raven-color braids...), but after the close look, the hair was not black but green”²⁷. Green hair is one of numerous distinguishing features of the creatures of extraterrestrial origin; they generate associations related to the place of their shelter: river and marsh depths, covered with seaweeds, sweet flag, club-rush and reed beds. In addition, green is the color of nature, youth, freshness and in the deeper semantic layers means immortality, freedom, corporeality, rebirth²⁸. In the culture, hair served as a relay, conveyor, medium of widely understood transcendent power, but also wealth, abundance, fertility (like all kinds of fur), health and strength²⁹. It was also considered to be the tool of erotic lust and lecherousness because nymphs by nature are very amorous and passionate, and often fell in love with encountered and captured youngsters, easily entered into relationships with people³⁰. However, most often they showed up with the loose hair, being an antinomy of hairstyle and haircut that always appeared in the boarder situations, when an individual was in a state of “wilderness”. As we already know, demonic creatures represented a different order, hence there is a lack of trimmed haircut in their appearance. In turn, the brightness, glow and gleam of the nymphs’ hair, recalled associations not only with water as a place of their living, and the drops of dew that they consumed, but also with gold. In magical thinking it was connected with something that was sublime, unusual, highlighted, it was a sign of the otherworld³¹. The braids of water nymphs served them for play, pranks, mischief; “they clung with their help to the lush branches of oak or birch and swung delightfully” looking for victims. “The one who saw a young man enticed him to herself with the words (...), they also lured young girls with singing”³².

We should also recall the external decorum used by female demons of seduction – they were wreaths: “they wore wreaths of wormwood, lovage or ro-

wan” as well as jewelry that decorated neck and hands: “neck and wrists adorned with corals, necklaces and bracelets...”³³. In the traditional culture, wreaths like braids mainly belonged to young girls, maidens (married women were not allowed to wear wreaths). The wearing of wreaths referred to the exceptional situation related to the ritual transition (just like the bride – the transition of a maid into a married woman and the exchange of a wreath for a cap), to the meeting with foreignness, difference, contact with the sinister forces. It should also be admitted that the meaning and function of wreaths depended on their shape. In the mythical thought, circularity meant fullness, completeness, closure, it was also related to the recreation of the mythical reality, *sacrum*³⁴. Wreaths represented undifferentiated other worlds; they were the attributes of the beings who, as specific hybrids, broke out from the taxonomic principles governing the realm of the living. The herbs that are used for the creation of wreaths – wormwood, lovage belonged to the plants associated with femininity, with the female principle of being, through the content connected with them: love and erotic senses. Wormwood as a sacred herb of Artemis, the goddess of hunting, animals, forests, mountains and vegetation, was symbolically connected with the cult of the White Goddess responsible for clarity, light, brightness³⁵. In the folk love magic, lovage was regarded as an aphrodisiac, a herb that arouses love and a state of elation.

Precious stones such as corals were associated with the feminine beauty, for example, coral lips. That specimen referred to the symbolism of life, stimulated love. It comes from the water depths, so it has an aquatic nature, it symbolizes the creative powers of the underwater world. It often appears in the form of the underwater trees as a decorative motif of the local palaces. It also has chthonic connections because it develops in water but its body is built from the element of earth. The polished coral branches are red colored, so it is not a surprise that the color of lips is the same³⁶. Rowanberry is the fruit of rowan, a popular rural tree. Due to its color, shape and decorativeness it was often used in folk love and erotic songs (see the most famous song: Red rowan...) symbolizing love, infatuation, prosperity in marriage and life. In addition, it was surrounded by the cult, it was supposed to be a sacred tree.

Ethnographic sources inform that nymphs consumed dew, salt and flowers (mainly, lovage, wormwood and wild rose), drank honey, water and sage³⁷. In the traditional folklore, dew represented the power of fertility and vegetation; it was a component of life (dew = water). Being connected with the boarder sphere, it was an important element of folk erotic symbolism (like rowan, for example, in folk songs), also the first mediator between night (the otherworld) and day (this world). Due to the connection with the life-giving element, it became a

symbolic key that opens the new day (appearing during the dawn phase), an ambivalent sign of the liminal phase. Alternately, it was also considered to be a means of the magical power that provides wealth, happiness, beauty, good harvest and even health³⁸. Among the Slavs, mainly the Southern ones, dew, rain and wind were believed to be caused by rusalki and nereids.

In the traditional folklore, the salt, being a preservative and fixative and thus the cementing substance, was considered a transformation operator and that is why it was used in funeral rites. Numerous myths and legends tell us that the gods who ruled over all transformations and metamorphoses gave this unusual gift to the human being, taking into account its numerous functions, usability and practical sense. Salt also symbolized immortality, indestructibility, fertility and health. It served to “lead out of the state of nature, harmony and chaos” (rusalki as beings belonged to chaos, so they could consume salt). However, on the other hand, as researchers emphasize, as an ambivalent substance (like many other in the traditional folklore) meant death³⁹. As we already know, lovage is the most well-known herb of love, a plant of rapid and hot ecstasy, passion, heat of heart, which corresponded to the nature of the nymphs. In order to provoke lust and ensure the partner’s love, the inhabitants of the traditional village used it for bathing, added it to dishes and drinks; and young girls implicated it in their hair, in wreaths, and hid it in the folds of the dress. It is also considered a funeral plant; several leaves of this plant were put under the head of the dead⁴⁰. Wormwood is a popular plant known in herbal medicine. It belonged to the favorite plants of witches, thus to the beings from the borderland of the worlds⁴¹. Honey, as the basic food of gods, was among the mediation products symbolically belonging to the beyond; connected different orders. It possessed unusual properties and fertility powers; hence it was often used in the traditional villages for divination, rites and magical activities⁴².

According to the folk beliefs, the nymphs most often appeared at night, their favorite time – in the evenings or at midnight when the moon was full. Kolberg states: “in the silent evening under the moonlight the voices of the little goddesses are heard”⁴³, while Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki adds: “rusalki do not appear in front of the human eyes in another time than at night”⁴⁴. In the traditional culture, the evening was a significant time, particularly favorable for the magical powers and had a number of senses and signs of the temporal borders. The night in the anthropological and ontological meaning, as Edmund Leach points out, “is a metonymy of death and underworld; an element of the transition rite”⁴⁵. In the traditional worldview, the specific space-time was re-created; in this way, the entrance to a different sphere, to the area of symbolic death was marked⁴⁶. This is the time, when the activity of ghosts and creatures

from the otherworld was on its apex; the time of sorcery, wonders, mysteries (see for example, in fairy tales). Additionally, the importance of the night was emphasized by the moon. Being connected with cyclicity, changeability and transformation, it meant immortality; it was connected with water, death and woman. It was believed to be able to evoke and awaken the love feelings. An important aspect was also shine – the ability of giving light⁴⁷.

The voice, singing and dancing of the demonic females' behavior are worth discussing: "the voice of the little goddesses is similar to the bird's humming, but a skillful and clean ear is able to distinguish easily what is the bird's voice and what is the voice of the little goddesses swimming freely in the depths of the Bug"⁴⁸. The image of a singing nymph was not unfamiliar to the traditional folklore. These supernatural creatures enjoyed singing "enchanted a man" who could accidentally become absorbed with the listening to their songs. The inhabitants of villages knew that in such situations it was prohibited to sing better because nymphs were ready for vengeance at that very moment (the singing rusalki are analogous to the sirens, see, chapter II). Sounds and music flowed from their loose and scattered hair: "they lean their heads above the water surface, loose their long braids on the rough waves; and the nice sound is heard at once because each hair produces a separate tone"⁴⁹. Dancing, like singing, was supposed to be as treacherous and dangerous for a villager: numerous demons enjoy dancing (...), in Belarus we hear a lot about dancing and playing rusalki"⁵⁰. They had special places for that: meadows, rivers and forest glades. With his eyes fixed on the dancing nymphs, a human could freeze in that position, fall asleep and never wake up under the spell of their mysterious power.

According to the public opinion, the demonic creatures of seduction possessed primarily pejorative features, because their activity caused harm to people. As we already know, they lured and killed men, turned out to be malicious and vindictive to maids, but they also could cause illnesses, bad weather, drought, hail and death⁵¹. Therefore, for example, in order to avoid revenge it was prohibited to swim in the rivers, ponds, lakes in the certain seasons of the year to avoid the untimely waking up of the dormant little goddesses that were waiting for spring there. The angry ones could cause harm to a human being at once: enlase in his hair, drag him into the abyss, strangle him or bring unhappy love, lack of success with the opposite sex or loss of the beloved person⁵². Let's emphasize the motif of death caused by the hair tangled around the neck, which take a man into sensualistic magical captivity showing the ties of the embracing lovers. Rusalki code the relation with femininity marked by a thanatic stigma, and the hair with a lethal power. This type of belief is confirmed by the folk traditions in Ukraine. In the tale *Bath before Pentecost*, the nymph tempts a young man who

was swimming in the lake with her beautiful naked body: “she is beautiful, attractive and she laughs (...), I do not know her, there is not such a girl in our village”⁵³. The title of the tale points out at the special time – Pentecost. So, these days “were devoted to the celebrations of rusalki. The whole week is called Rusalskaya Siedmica [rus. – ‘rusalka’ and ‘seven’] and the songs that are sung at that day are called by people – Trinitarian⁵⁴. It is worth mentioning here that in Ukraine, in numerous areas still in the 21st century, according to the field researchers, the so-called rusalki’s rite is celebrated; it indicates its strong vitality and deep roots in the worldview of the local people⁵⁵.

It was also forbidden in the special periods of the year to enter the fields, stay in forests and bushes, conduct forestry, fieldworks, build fences or create farm equipment. Among the people and nature, the little goddesses appeared “when the ground began to get green with leaves and grass; when the first colorful pasque flowers leaned out from the snow cover”⁵⁶. Then, they ran, frolicked, made jokes and played tricks, disturbed at work, swung on the branches, played screamed and caused damage. In order to appease and soothe them, young girls offered a sacrifice to nymphs: “they hung pieces of cloth and threads on the oaks to make rusalki busy; otherwise they steal the yarn” (see part I of the book, chapter II). People believed that they threaded flowers and drops of dew on the spider thread. Young married women (and maidens) also conducted their own ritual for rusalki: “they folded branches of birches into wreaths and each of them folded as many branches as many people she cared of in her life, like father, sisters, brother, lover, husband and children. While folding, they sang a song in a chorus”⁵⁷. The fabric and threads, as the objects of spinning, were closely connected with the otherworld, mediation and symbolic movement to various regions (see the fairy-tale characters who travel “through” the cloth to the world of mortals). In the traditional funeral and memorial rites of the Russians, the cloth played a significant transmission function: with the help of a piece of cloth, the coffin is dropped into the grave; as well as the souls of the deceased were invited to the common feast by overhanging the piece of cloth through the window⁵⁸. According to the local Slavic beliefs, the birch is a favorite tree of that little goddesses⁵⁹, a mediator between this and that world. It is confirmed by the song folklore formulas from Smolensk region:

The birch at the gate
became green
it waved with the branches
On that birch
Rusalka was sitting...⁶⁰

It was also considered a tree associated with the feminine principle of the universe. The myths and folk tales emphasize its connection with the young women, purity, fertility and simultaneously with the realm of death. According to one of the legends, the souls of the dead girls lived in the lonely birches. Being a sacred tree, which possessed specific powers, the birch could “accept” various sacrifices offered to it and embraced the supplicants with care. They were mainly women⁶¹.

In the traditional thought, wormwood was an extremely effective protection from the little goddesses. Wójcicki emphasizes: “they hate this herb and flee from it like from a plague”⁶². Symbolically, this herb referred to the transience of life and had pejorative meaning; it was associated with the negative emotions and states: bitterness, sin, despair and death. The bodies of the dead were sprinkled by it in order to secure them in this way⁶³.

Imagined, accepted and sanctioned in this way, they became not only the element of the folk belief but also the source material and inspiration for artists: poets and painters.

“a bunch of virgins in the clear whiteness” – in the spaces of literature

In culture and thus in literature, the need of collection and preservation of oral art appeared at the beginning of the 19th century. It was the artists of Romanticism who were convinced that the folk preserved the ancient traditions, beliefs and customs of pre-Christian Slavs and that it is necessary to take advantage of them. The classical culture was opposed by an equivalent source – Slavic folklore. Its role was appreciated as the matter of inspiration, aesthetic experience and literary themes. Poets and writers became interested in the wisdom of the community, its tales, legends and distant past. The program of the revival of literature through the reference to tradition was born from the conducted research. The inhabitants of the village were considered the most honest, authentic and spontaneous part of the nation, what explains their significant participation in the creation of the motifs and literary themes. “The writers of Romanticism – as Maria Janion writes – had an intuition of the phenomenon, which later became the subject of the scientific research, namely <folk culture as a formation, which was socially different from an elite culture and appointed to the independent symbolic practice of action>”⁶⁴.

Territorial autonomies were supposed to be a very refreshing factor for the development of literature, as well as an important element for the obtainment of its originality. Therefore, the regional differences were searched and the extrac-

ted peculiarities were shown in the artistic works. It is not surprising that the imaginations of the artists of Romanticism activated among others, Polish, Russian, Belarusian Ukrainian folklore, alongside with its incredibility, charm, magic, beauty, but also strangeness, mystery, horror and extraterrestrial beings⁶⁵.

The processes of registering supernatural, existential, eschatological events, and the proximity of the two worlds took place in the poets' imagination, and determined an important cognitive factor, favored the expression of feelings, truths, transformation of consciousness or metamorphosis of personality. The inscrutable, mysterious, unknowable and full of contradictions world became for the Romantics a favorite area of penetration. Anna Martuszevska paid attention to it:

In that period, the presentation of the phenomena that did not fit in the rationalistic worldview and inconsistent with the current empiricism goes far beyond the stylistic embellishment (...). Fantastic phenomena in romantic literature not only co-create the local historical coloring of the depicted events (...) but also allow the extension and deepening of the vision of the world and human being, linked with the philosophical concepts of the nature of being⁶⁶.

The artists of Romanticism combined fantastic phenomena and local coloring with nature, which could be caring, favorable, friendly to the human being but also insensitive, unfriendly and alien. The naturecentrism, which was a characteristic feature of Romanticism, was based on the recognition of the nature's autonomy and giving it what belongs to it. The naturecentric image of the world was rooted in a worldview and framed with a specific constitutive features. As Maria Janion emphasizes:

The most important content of this <naturalism> was determined by the effects of the two cognitive processes. The first one can be called the opening of cosmos (...). The space became the nature of Romantics. Cosmos is understood as an infinite entirety (...). The second cognitive process (...) can be briefly called a way from the mechanism to the organism⁶⁷.

It is about romantic vitalism, spontaneity, a vision of nature as a living organism. Nature entered the romantic imagery and provided it with the most appropriate poetic matter. "The romantic artist collaborated with the infinite formalism of nature and understood poetry as a constant contact with the real language of nature and the mystery of its art"⁶⁸ – Janion writes.

In the group of romantic poets who worked out the motifs taken from Slavic folklore (demonology), nature and village life were Józef Bohdan Zaleski and August Bielowski. Bohdan Zaleski, coming from Ukraine, borrowed his knowledge of folk culture from the living tradition. The artist's childish years were full of contacts with nature, the lush Ukrainian nature and folklore that turned out to be an important inspiration in his poetic activity⁶⁹. It was also not unimportant for him to stay in his childhood with the village healer up from the Dnieper

what allowed him to live with nature and native inhabitants of Ukraine, and also got to know with the local beliefs⁷⁰; he learned about life here and got to know how to be a grownup. The country of the childish years is also a remembered Dnieper Ukrainian landscape, singing Ukrainian land, elegies (dumas) and songs, folk traditions and customs⁷¹.

Among many Ukrainian themes and motifs undertaken by Zaleski, an interesting vision is brought by the poetic analysis of the motif of rusalka. The artist strongly embedded his text in the traditional Slavic (Ukrainian) folklore borrowing from it as many details and components as possible. The nymphs in the works of Zaleski were depicted according to the creations derived from the traditional folklore. They have similar appearance, and behave in the same way while dealing with people. The local coloring, places of stay and time of the action also correspond to the traditional climate. However, they are distinguished by some original features that differ from the prototype being related to poetry, artistic modelling of the romantic world or the author's artistic imagination who bestowed the aspects of idyllic and sentimental femininity upon them. Let's look at these works.

The most important work of the poet devoted to the little goddesses is *Rusalki [Fantasy] [Fragment]*⁷² from 1828, preceded by the motto taken from the paper written by Kazimierz Brodziński *On Classicism and Romanticism and on the spirit of Polish poetry*:

When one wants to expand feeling,
He should create gods and believe in them.

A genre of the romantic poetic imagination was popular not only in Poland but also in Russia and it corresponded to romantic adoration for diversity, changeability and uniqueness. In that way, the artists expressed their longing for something new, different and distinct. Hence there is the predilection for presenting illusions and wonder. Kazimierz Prus writes:

Romantic fantasy was a product of imagination (...) ideas functioned on the border of epistemology and metaphysics, rational and sensual cognition (...), fantasies are literary works, the theme and form of which are the result work and free artistic imagination (...). The most numerous variation of the genre is made up of fantasies touching upon the secrets of being, the truths of eschatology and extrasensory life⁷³.

Zaleski's work consists of five parts, entitled: I *Solstice*, II *Complaint*, III *Quail*, IV *Wonder* and V *Epilogue* with the annotation *To friends*.

In literary terms, the nymphs play the role of a youthful memory of love for the beautiful Zoryna. The text was written, as Stanisław Zdziarski pointed out, "when the memories about the first youth woke up in the poet", when he experienced loneliness, when he could think of the past that was gone forever, when

finally from that memories “he could make a wreath of charming fantasies on the background of his desires and aspirations”, from that source *Rusalki* were born⁷⁴. Thus, the fantasy has a distinct autobiographical undertone; it narrates about a young man who is in love, daydreaming and seeing a beloved woman (Zoryna) surrounded by the nymphs, with whom he identifies her. The fleeting beings are a symbol of fantastic delusions accompanying youth and love. The major place in these reflections was occupied by the beloved “black-browed” Zoryna. Her character “like a living rusalka” has been subjected to idealization and sublimation. Zaleski provided the protagonist with the features that make it possible to identify her with the queen, the most important rusalka, “the primary one in the circle of the virgins”. The motif of the queen of the nymphs, the sovereign, was often exploited not only by legends and fairy tales⁷⁵ but also by Romantic literature. It is enough to recall the ballad of Aleksander Dunin Borkowski *The Queen of the Tide* (1834) or Mikhail Lermontov’s *The Princess of the Tide*⁷⁶ (1841) (more about them in chapter II).

According to the “poetics of charm”, which is also connected with the spirit of folk imaginations, the protagonist of Zaleski – Zoryna, like a queen, possesses a lot of grace and charm in the poem:

What eyes! What a face!
Eyes bright, black, big
That is not faces but roses⁷⁷

The eyes deserve special emphasis in that stanza, playing the role of the uncommon distinguishing feature of the girl. The oxymoron applied by the poet: bright – black emphasizes the incredible eeriness and uniqueness of the protagonist. Thanks to the eyes it was possible to control the existing situation; they were associated with magic (the magic of a look); there was a power of seduction in them. Jean Baudrillard wrote: “the eyes, while seducing, act without words, and only the looks intertwine in a duel, in the direct closeness, leaving others ignorant, beyond their speech”⁷⁸. The one who is looking at rusalka feels like he is bound, possessed by the extraordinary magnetism of her glance. The eyes were a very important part of the body for the artists of Romanticism; they understood it as a mirror of the soul. It is not a coincidence that the protagonist was compared to a rose. Let’s recall that the motif of a girl-rose or a girl-flower was willingly used by the romantic and neoromantic poetry⁷⁹, it was a permanent element repeated in later fairy tales, where the protagonists or their faces were often compared to the beautiful flowers⁸⁰. Researchers point to the medieval and baroque sources of the motif; “in the prayers and songs of Mary as well as in the baroque court love poetry and erotic poetry”⁸¹; sometimes also in painting where artists depicted roses to emphasize the beauty of models. In Christian

culture, that flower was mainly attributed to Madonna, who was usually presented in a rose garden⁸². The rose, symbolizing beauty, spring, youth, perfection, is also an attribute often ascribed to the ancient goddesses of love and fertility. That is the flower worshipped in India, surrounded by respect in Greece, Rome, possessing extraordinary powers and healing properties⁸³. An interesting interpretation of the rose is its connection in ancient Rome with the symbolism of silence. According to the legend, Cupid bribed Harpocrates, the god of silence, with a rose asking the latter not to talk about Venice's love relations. The flower was placed near the festive tables in order to remind everyone of the need to keep silence. Also in wineries and meeting chambers it was placed as a sign of discretion and keeping secret⁸⁴.

Zaleski's fantasy, based on romantic dualism: love –lack of love, happiness – sadness, life – death, contains the elements of faith and dream, the desire of what was in the past and will never return. It is a kind of escape into the past, from the current complicated reality to the ideal one. The explanations addressed to the beloved woman reveal the emotional state of the poet who is in love: a spiritual bond, willingness to sacrifice, forgiveness and admiration, cause a situation of longing and crying:

When the background of dreams passes by,
They stand and disappear in a tearful eye
The ghosts of fear and charm,
Stripes of light, stripes of shadow
Image is sketched from the image
In the colored, light tissue
A short moment with the mistress,
And again different, different thoughts⁸⁵

The memories placed in the layer of the character's expression have a significant linguistic and stylistic context, treated like a kind of complement, self-awareness and mood, the wander into the depth of the mental sphere, arouse the emotions of longing, sadness, thoughtfulness, the sense of loss:

I was different with Zoryna,
I was simple, I was tender;
I saw charm and wonders everywhere.
Ah! I loved and trusted!⁸⁶

The role of Zoryna turns out to be like a mission: to restore the authentic, childish naturalness to a man who is lost in the world. Thanks to her assistance and help the protagonist found the vital, long-lasting values, his own identity, and also the features that were seemed to have been long lost – simplicity, tenderness, love and faith.

Rusalka Zoryna possessed supernatural properties being a trans-spherical creature from the borderline of reality and phantasy. She inherited her magical abilities from her mother, who was bathing her in milk that, according to the ancient belief, provided the child with the protection against evil powers, and also strengthened his vital forces:

Mother bathed me in milk
The power taught me magic⁸⁷

Therefore, ritual baths belonged to the magical rite of putting fate under a spell, “coding and tying” happiness to it. It is necessary to look at them in the context of beliefs about the mediational and otherworld properties of water: in certain circumstances it was the extraction of an individual from one world and placing him into the other one; and the cleaning functions were also very important. The ritual ablutions were an important element during all rites in the traditional rituals (for example, birth, wedding), during the movement between the worlds of mortals and the underworld. The properties of initiation were also attributed to baths⁸⁸. Baths in milk also refer to the antiquity; the well-known Egyptian queen Cleopatra bathed in milk to have beautiful and delicate skin and to stay young as long as possible.

“The category of beauty” and “poetics of charm”, in the work of Zaleski, are connected both the portrait of Zoryna and the appearances of other nymphs, based on the traditional imaginations; however, they are strongly poetized in the spirit of Romantic lyrics:

Faces... from whiteness and redness
Like the flowers on a pear-tree in spring (...)
Smile! ...lips! But a curtain
From the ruby sparks of the dawn
It hides, suppresses divine charms
And embraces the white wombs
They shine with their eyes like a mirror⁸⁹.

While creating characters, the poet applies the motifs of nature and colorful palette: pear blossom and noble stones (chooses ruby!), whiteness, redness. He also applies different degrees of color intensity that is complemented by the shiny eye glow. The method serves to expose beauty and emphasize the amazing prettiness of the little goddesses. With accuracy and precision, the author depicted their appearance, outlined their features – face, lips, smile, eyes, also marked the beauty of their figures – “divine charms”, “white wombs”. This way of presentation can be treated as a painter’s instruction to present the image in the painting. A characteristic metaphor of eyes-mirrors is also quite important here; in accordance with the romantic motto, cited before, that the eyes are the mirror of the soul.

In folk culture, the mirror belonged to the objects connecting with borderline, mediation and sacredness. Due to its construction that gives the surface the ability to reflect and duplicate the reality belonged to the magical sphere⁹⁰. The appearance of the nymphs that functioned in folk imagination significantly influenced their literary description, for example, in coloring. Therefore, cold and water-related colors were used: white, silver, blue and green, so the colors symbolizing and emphasizing certain traits: death, longing, expectancy, spirituality, lightness, celeftiality and innocence as well as the otherworld, unreality, immortality (for example green hair of rusalka). This selection of tones is typical for the oneiric imaging. The silver glow was a sign of strength, beauty, magical power. Silver itself was associated with water, female principle and virginity, emanated with metallic luster and cold glow. Let's recall that whiteness is the color of light, joy, purity; it is the color of the beginning, something new but also cold, coolness, calmness, remoteness; the redness on the contrary was ambivalently connected with life (blood) and death (fire); that is the sign of force, youth, also symbolically related to gold⁹¹. Pale face, pale complexion characterize the beings of unusual beauty, females beyond the human reality, personifying "disturbing beauty". Ruby – etymologically derived from the Latin name *ruber* – red⁹² – belongs to the noble stones and is used in the Polish traditional culture as a synonym of expensive stone, a symbol of love and infatuation. The red color of that jewel in the Oriental "speech" means "from the drop of blood of the mother Earth's heart"⁹³.

In the stylized version of the fantasy, Zoryna, like a sorceress from a fairy tale was able to cast spells that enabled her to influence nature and people and turn them into animals. In the folk consciousness there was a belief that witches could turn people into various animals, birds and reptiles, and could turn themselves into them easily as well⁹⁴.

The folk verbal ritual associated with the curse, spell or enchantment was connected with the formula that meant "to cause something to happen with someone (something) with the help of the specific words; to curse is to put a cast a spell, enchant someone, transform someone into something with the help of words"⁹⁵ (similarly to the aforementioned feature of charming eyes). In the traditional culture any "meaningless words" did not exist; the applied verbal rituals (spells) strongly combined thought and action. Michał Buchowski writes about this topic: "thought and action, myth and ritual, symbol and its objective reference form a homogeneous and difficult to imagine and discursive presentation of quality"⁹⁶. Any type of power and force was released through the specific acts of the curse-and-spell structure, which in Polish ethnographic and folkloric records preserved as the "methods" involving different types and practices. Stani-

sław Czernik thinks that all these small folk forms, which include spells, charms, curses, acts of healing and love are probably the earliest form of poetry connected with the belief in power and value of the word, a piece of secret knowledge. These statements were reserved for the chosen people who were privileged to use them⁹⁷. It was this magical power that made Zoryna dominant over the other nymphs and people. She could do everything with the help of her spells:

Seven stars will sparkle in the sky,
Three moons will sparkle in the Dnieper,
The falling stars will shine,
And I'll make anything I want from you.
It's enough for me to blink and wave my hand
To make you a bird, a fish in the river⁹⁸

In the poetic interpretation of Zaleski, Zoryna's actions, as well as the practice of rusalki in the traditional folklore could be performed when stars begin to sparkle and the moon shows out in the sky, and thus, at night. The power of that period of the daily cycle has become a determinant of magic; at that time the spells were the most effective; also the nymphs' manipulations directed to the ordinary mortals were successful. In the translation into the social categories, they manifested themselves in various activities that caused harm to others: "you'll become a bird, a fish in the river". The modeling of anti-world, this damage, belonged to the beings existing on the borderline of two worlds, unrecognizable, flowing and changeable. The moon was often presented with stars, which in folk imagination symbolized purity, beauty and happiness, accompanied birth and death and lovers⁹⁹.

It is worth mentioning that the numbers were also significant in fantasy – three and seven. In the rural system of numbers, three is the number of holidays; it was great and happy. Seven possessing an ambivalent character in the traditional cultures was associated on the one hand with abundance, perfection, ordering¹⁰⁰, on the other hand – with a big role in ecstasy, initiation cults and prophecies¹⁰¹. Therefore, Zaleski chooses both of them on purpose, adapts to the meaning given to them in the magical culture and folk spell formulas where the odd numbers appeared most often: three, seven, nine¹⁰² (see part I, chapter I).

Let's pay attention once again to the way of performing all magical activities in the text. The connection with the traditional culture and its worldview is manifested here above all at the level of description. Gesture formulas are executed accurately and slowly, keeping the order and chronology, for example, circle marking:

She grabs the hand... when following a fortune-teller
I have to walk obediently,

She tells me to sit down on the grass,
 Marks a circle with a small leg.
 “With this circle – she said – I enclose you.
 (...)”
 Do not you dare to step out¹⁰³,

The verbal commentary of the action proved the close connection (cohesion, compatibility) of word and gesture in the traditional ritual, strengthened the magical sense of the performed action and strongly tied the thought, word, action, creating a single unity¹⁰⁴. The presented image of magical practice refers the recipient to the folk beliefs, the village code of behavior, orders and prohibitions. It is also conducted due to the words that were used to specify the stages of action: “obedient posture”, “tells to sit down”, “marks a circle”, “encloses with the circle”, “do not you dare to step out”. In the symbolical meaning, the circle, as we already know, is fullness, defense, corresponds to the number ten, symbolizing perfection as a result, protects from evil and all possible misfortunes. The circle “played an important magical role for the Slavs as well as for other people. Circled or marked in the clear way, it created a magical chain protecting from evil”, distinctly separated the two spaces¹⁰⁵. In different cultures, the circular movement was accepted positively, it served to increase, accelerate, develop, actuate and was “a generator of the magical defensive force”¹⁰⁶.

In Zaleski’s work, the nymphs derived from folklore not always were depicted as malicious and threatening beings. In one stanza, the poet persuades:

No, rusalki do not cause harm,
 And Zoryna for me everywhere,
 Here, or in the sky, will always be
 Both a lover and a goddess¹⁰⁷.

Despite the fact that in the earlier conversation with the lover, the protagonist claimed:

You know what I can: I’ll be severe¹⁰⁸

The quoted verses indicate the human helplessness towards the extraterrestrial powers, that being in the possession of incomprehensible powers for him, he becomes deprived of the all possibilities of action. Her spells, charm, gestures and words make the man/lover lose self-control and unconsciously submits to the influence of the cunning femina. Previously mentioned Jean Baudrillard aptly emphasized that “to seduce is the same as to die as reality and reborn as an illusion. It is so much as to allow yourself to be absorbed by your own illusion and enter the world of enchantment. That is the strength of the seductive woman”¹⁰⁹. Thus, seduction becomes a ritual, deprived of any pulse of spontaneity

and truthfulness of feelings, where every gesture and movement is thought out and should cause the specific reaction from the partner¹¹⁰. In the text, Zoryna's severity is also documented by the intimidation attempts that reveal another aspect of beliefs – the magical power: “be afraid”, “It's enough for me to blink”, “weave a hand”, “I'll make anything I want from you”, etc. The intention inscribed into the referred word formulas is deeper and tends to the specific idea established in traditional thought – the absolute respect of the norm of terrestrial and extraterrestrial coexistence. The predicate of scaring, influencing the psyche by word or deed, emphasized the uniqueness of the time of the action – the emanation of the night¹¹¹. By stimulating fear, it was possible to make him absolutely respect the norms of terrestrial and extraterrestrial coexistence.

In the fantasy, as we know, many rusalki appeared. The author counts no less than ten nymphs:

And then I see: what a wonder!
Five, six, seven, up to ten¹¹²

Let's go back to the numbers again. The ten symbolizes fullness, perfection, borderline, unity¹¹³; it is also a symbol of infinity, divinity, inception, future, the dual understanding of existence (life and death)¹¹⁴. These demonic feminas were in the habit of being in a group; all of them followed the one they chose to be their leader; one could rarely meet a lonely nymph¹¹⁵.

The author characterized them in the following way:

In the yard, under the apple tree,
A group of maidens in bright whiteness
Adored, because it was Sunday,
They are paying chasing one another¹¹⁶.

In the cited fragment they were shown as unruly, joyful, cheerful and at the same time gentle girls who enjoyed games and pranks and frolicked carelessly “in the yard under the apple tree”. As we remember, this is the image that corresponds to the traditional prototype. The apple tree is a typical tree in a village garden as well as in the orchard; it is a heavenly tree of “good and evil”; the Slavs treat it as the tree of abundance, fertility, vegetative prosperity. In the traditional culture, it was treated as the plant of life and death and the value of mediation was attributed to it. The Celts treated it as a funeral tree and planted it in the middle of graveyard. Its fruits were considered the symbols of love, beauty, fertility and abundance. The Slavs considered them as one of the elements intended for oblation, which means that they were treated as the food of the dead¹¹⁷.

The life of the nymphs depicted in the text was carefree, filled with dance, singing, mutual chasings, swimming by boat on the lake. They all were suspicio-

us and timid, reluctant to make contacts with people. Their essential features were fleetingness and elusiveness. Even the outfit – airy, white dresses – highlights these features. The lightness of the outfit is emphasized by the comparison to the clouds flowing in the sky. It is worth mentioning the extraordinary dynamics of the presented image that the artist has achieved thanks to the use of numerous verbs showing the movement: running, twisting, rocking, flying, swimming, etc., also with the help of dancing. Dancing and singing are depicted in the following stanzas:

And Zoryna in the middle of the circle
She is running in this and that side
The exit is barred everywhere
A cheerful song sounds everywhere¹¹⁸

or

and the fizzes are twisting, humming
Dance, one song then another one
Like a stream flowing with a noisy sound¹¹⁹

And also:

It's rusalki over the lowland!
They are bouncing in rapid cloud,
Towards me, towards me,
As if flying, as if flowing¹²⁰.

The cited verses captivate with the lightness of the form and content. However, the virginity, expressiveness, delicacy, which was interesting to Romantics; also “the disturbing antiquity” were associated with the landscape impressions. The romantic landscapes with a variety of themes expressed the attitude of the human being to the surrounding world: contemplative, majestic, mystical, tender and reflective. The individual was “inscribed” into nature, harmonized with it. Nature has been subordinated to the situation of the hero, finding in it the analogies of his own emotional states or impression, for example, melancholy and longing. They were striving to show the truth, thanks to which both the artist and the recipient could see in the landscape something more than the forms of nature “traces of God, history or motherland”¹²¹.

To make the work more dynamic, the poet introduced a folk Ukrainian game – a quail. It is a popular game of the village girls during Easter, symbolizing the spring rebirth of nature. The maidens formed a circle and in its middle there was one chosen young woman who was called a quail. The girls mentioned various parts of the body with singing and “the quail” had to point each of them on herself. After the end of the countdown, applause and laughter broke out¹²². The

footnote to the text informs that it is also the name of the Ukrainian dance performed in the field¹²³. In the same way, rusalki make fun in the text:

Flap, flap, flap, flap, quail,
A beautiful, shapely quail
You will not escape from us to the grain
You will not run away, my love¹²⁴

The folk roots of the worldview (the belief in the power of nature) have been exposed in the fantasy through the other elements of the Romantic literary convention: a specific animalistic comparison – to swallows, cranes and fish:

While flying the cranes sound
When they return here in spring (...)
And like a fish just following a fish
Like a swallow following a swallow¹²⁵

These are not random images. The swallows are the signs of sunlight, spring and the rebirth of nature¹²⁶. The cranes were the equivalents of sublimity, conceit, vigilance, sharp mind, which corresponded to the classical set of the attributes associated with rusalki; while the fish had the power to induce fertility and also symbolized durability¹²⁷. Let's remind that according to the East Slavic beliefs, rusalki could transform into various animals¹²⁸.

Piotr Chmielowski noticed Zaleski's mastery in the creation of portraits of nymphs in fantasy: he wrote – *Rusalki* “established Bohdan's fame as the most remarkable poet of the younger generation. In *Rusalki*, he truly and skillfully recreated the fantastic folk world from the charming and alluring side, which has nothing do with the gloomy and horrific color in comparison with Bürger's ballads”¹²⁹. In addition to the native elements, one can also notice foreign influences in the text. Stanisław Zdziarski wrote about them, emphasizing that “the creatures dancing with Zoryna” differ from the Ukrainian folk imaginations, which as “the creatures striving to cause harm to people, wasting them in the water depths or tickling them to death”, in the work of Zaleski possess a completely different character; they favor people, they are delicate, subtle, “ethereal and light”¹³⁰.

The fantasy of *Rusalki*, which permanently inscribed the poet to the well-known, appreciated artists who skillfully handling the irrationality and wonder, had its predecessors like Adam Mickiewicz and Alexander Pushkin. In Pushkin's ballad *Rusalka* (1819) “a beautiful whiter than snow maiden”, emerging naked from the water and combing her wet hair, stands up and looks at the old monk, tempting him with “flirtatious shapes, sending him jocular kisses, jumping along the bank and bathing lazily in the water”. However, the ballad's final is tragic; it complies with the folk beliefs that nymphs bring men to waste and death becau-

se “people searched for him in vain and only boys saw the gray beard in the glassy wave”¹³¹. Pushkin’s text is an attempt to popularize the elements of folklore and fantasy. As Lucjan Suchanek writes: “the trend of folk beliefs strongly entered Pushkin’s art when he found himself in Mikhaylovskoye, where he came across the world of folklore as a mature man. Here he once again heard the fairy tales and stories of his nanny, Arina Radionovna”¹³². While Mickiewicz, in the ballad *Świtezianka* (1821), showed a beautiful and seductive nymph, which brought a young man to death (the punishment for not keeping the oath given to his lover). There were also successors who undertook the motif from the field of folk demonology that has always been intriguing and interesting to artists; one can mention, for example, Jan Barszczewski (*Rybak*, 1842; *Rusalka zwodnica*, approximately 1843) or August Bielowski (*Rusalka*, 1838, more about it in chapter II). From the East Slavic circle fascinated by magic, charm and amazingness of folklore, was the Ukrainian Romantic, Taras Shevchenko, who in his work *The drowned maiden (Topielica)* (1843) elaborated a literary theme of the unsuccessful mother-daughter relationship based on the mother’s great jealousy, whose beauty was dying, and the daughter, whose beauty was flourishing. The end of the ballad is tragic as the text is based on the folk beliefs: a cruel mother goes with her daughter to a pond to drown her in the water depth; however both of them die: “the wave is raging, boiling, babbling / mother is absorbed with the daughter”¹³³. It is necessary to mention *Forest song* by Lesia Ukrainka, a dramatic fairy tale written in three acts, in which the author portrayed the love of a water maiden to a young man and their love conversations on a bank¹³⁴.

It is worth referring to the ballad *Lubor* that was written in 1822, the plot of which was taken from two sources: “from the ballad *Harald* by Ludwig Uhland (probably through the Russian translation of Vasily Zhukovsky)¹³⁵ and folk *Duma o Iwasiu Konowczence* known in several dozen variants”¹³⁶. Harald is the legendary Harald Fairhair from the Scandinavian tradition; the hero of not only ballads, but also well-known Scandinavian sagas¹³⁷. Iwaś Konowczenko, on the other hand, is a well-known hero of the Ukrainian Cossack dumas. The *duma* about it is one of the most beautiful and popular in the entire Ukrainian folklore¹³⁸.

The ballad *Lubor* presents another, less sentimental vision of rusalki. It informs of their anger and revenge against the brave and valiant commander Lubor, who “sunk in blood unsympathetic...” for years, and “mothers, mistresses cry in mourning”¹³⁹. The author writes about nymphs in this way:

Near the old oak, in the deaf silence
The forest goddesses gathered
It was a group of the grim rusalki
One of them shouted gravely¹⁴⁰

and gives a footnote that serves as its own comment and definition:

in the ancient Slavs, according to the prevailing beliefs between the people of Little Rus', the deities are the witches that are eager for blood who hate people. Their common dwellings are old oak forests, streams, etc. Numerous examples of the rusalki's craft of skillful creeping towards the non-conscious individuals can be heard in the stories of that people¹⁴¹.

The vision of ominous, malicious, harsh and blood-thirsty rusalki, as in *Lubor*, did not appear anymore in the author's career, even though there were texts touching upon these nymphs. Their creations, as we saw earlier, were deprived of the traits of cruelty, ruthlessness and endowed with beauty, youth, charm and magic. The use of the term "witch" is connected with the traditional Slavic identification of rusalki with witches inasmuch as some nymphs could also fly on broomsticks¹⁴². Magical properties were also attributed to them due to their connection with evil forces¹⁴³. The witch is an expression that has its roots in Proto-Slavic *čarovinica* (literally, "a woman who practices charm"), which is used in relation to a person who is practicing charm, who is able to cast spells; it is also another name of a sorceress. These female demons belonged to the category of the weird, different, excluded people who were disturbing the harmony, prevailing in the world. They lived in seclusion, in the periphery, beyond the norm, or the accepted rules¹⁴⁴.

The literary "goddesses of the forest" chose an old oak for the meeting place. In the traditional culture, it was considered a sacred and divine tree; it was the "king of trees" surrounded by the special cult. On the one hand, it was connected with its impressive size, hardness and power, and on the other hand with longevity and indestructibility. For many people it was the element of the religious system; it performed various cult-ritual functions; compared with the sun, and was located in the center of the world; sometimes represented a cosmic tree. In Greece, it was the tree of Zeus; for the Slavs it embodied the god of lightning, fire and heaven. It was offered sacrifices in sacred forests; sacrifices were also offered for gods on it what emphasized the transmission properties of the oak. As the researchers point out, the etymology of the word comes from Indo-European *dheu-b*, *dhum-b* – deep, a deeply located place¹⁴⁵. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that the little goddesses, as well as the nymphs reigning in its space, meet at the old oak, in the center of the forest. Here they consult, make important decisions. They are accompanied by silence, as a result the lack of voice, noise and muteness. These are the elements of the underworld, media communicating with the sacred extraterrestrial sphere and favoring the dialogue with the sacred. Particularly "deaf muteness" was disturbing and associated with danger and the dread of death¹⁴⁶.

The rusalki, that were created in the two mentioned works of Józef Bohdan Zaleski, strongly refer to the traditional Slavic folklore. The author also gave them the features of poetry adapted to the artistic needs, going beyond the original prototype. These are the features of the romantic nature: femininity, care, sensitivity, tenderness. However, the traditional culture did not limit the author's imagination and did not deprive him of the freedom of creation. As a result, the texts filled with poetic lyricism and unusual moodiness appeared. Romanticism, the era of "intuition", "feeling and fate", fantasy and artistic imagination, favored the creation of the texts from the borderline of the world and the underworld. The nymphs enlivened and fascinated the authors' imagination of that epoch, and the folk stories about them were a source of inspiration. In ballads, supernatural powers could always appear because everyday life was full of mystery, charm and unearthly beauty.

Among the group of the less known Romantics was August Bielowski, historian, writer, poet, the director of the National Ossoliński Institute in Lviv; also a participant of the November Uprising. Frequent scientific journeys to search the archives and libraries in Russia, Austria and Germany served to discover the sources of Polish history. He was the originator and the first publisher of the series "Monumenta Poloniae Historica"; in 1856-1864 he published volume 1 at his own expense; 6 volumes appeared. He was the author of such works as: *Myśli do dziejów słowiańskich* (1841), *Początkowe dzieje Polski* (1842), *Pokucie* (1856) and others.

According to the information placed in *Ballada polska* in the edition of the National Library of Poland¹⁴⁷ the text of *Rusalka* was initially placed in *Dumki*¹⁴⁸ by August Bielowski and Lucjan Siemieński and published in Prague in 1838¹⁴⁹ and later in *Poezye* by August Bielowski published in Petersburg in 1855¹⁵⁰.

Bielowski like Zaleski was fascinated by the charm of Ukrainian folklore; therefore, his ballad was based on the traditional Ukrainian folk beliefs. Ukrainianism was popular in the first half of the 19th century; to such an extent that it was called ukrainomania. The reason for the popularity of that country and its heroes lay in the institution of Cossacks. The Cossacks were treated as the most typical representatives of the nation, the history of which was filled with heroism and courage. They charmed Romantics with pride and dignity, a tradition of independence and fight for it. The attractive strength of the peasant-Cossack Ukrainian land was enhanced by the beauty of its folk, lyrical and epic song. That folklore provided artists with examples, delighted with the richness of themes and genres and brought something that was very interesting at that time: the image of a hero from the crowd¹⁵¹. As Krystyna Poklewska writes, Poles:

Rejecting the *krakowiak* as something being inconsistent with their ideas about people and its soul, reached out to the art that was the closest to them, the poetry of the lands where they were born, brought up or lived – to the folklore of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland or directly to the folklore of Ukraine¹⁵²,

which struck with wonder, amazement and introduced harmony between the human being and nature.

Bielowski belonged to the literary group called “Ziewonia”, established in Galicia in 1832 and operating until 1838, which was headed by Seweryn Goszczyński. The name of the group derived from a “pseudo mythological figure, the goddess of life and youth”¹⁵³ and meant liberation, freedom, youth, spring joy, waking up to life¹⁵⁴, which matched with the postulates of the members: the creation of national literature through the proper imitation of the folk art of the Slavic people and reaching out to the “revealed poetry”. The members of “Ziewonia” were interested in travesties and folklore stylization; they were looking for inspiration in folk. The world of beliefs was supposed to be the reality for them, which was indicated by *dumki* and songs. They shared the romantic belief that the real poetry is born by the primitive people; it is the cradle of wisdom, flowing not from reason, but from intuition or fantasy. The primitive poetry as the original form had to be a collection of the unadulterated truths about history, culture and morality. In the art of the people “separated from civilization and religion, the pure image of the natural world, the natural human being, the natural values were preserved”. They claimed that the “poet of the people is a part of the people (it is balladeer, bard, minstrel); he speaks from its midst, he speaks in such a way as the people-poet; there is neither interval nor difference between them”¹⁵⁵.

The action of *Rusałka*, created in 1838, took place in spring in the Dnieper Ukraine area, where “the strange girls wander along the meadows”¹⁵⁶ and stylized into the form of a folk song. The original song of this kind was discovered by Zorian Dołęga Chodakowski (actually Adam Czarnocki), a Polish ethnographer, archeologist and historian, one of the leading precursors of the study of Slavdom, the author of, among others, *About Slavdom before Christianity* (1818), *Slavic Songs Collected under the Village Thatched* (partially published in 1833, the whole text in 1973) and others¹⁵⁷. Undoubtedly, August Bielowski borrowed the idea from the Ukrainian text, giving it a form and stylistic frame of a ballad. We will come back to the analogy with the original text later.

In the initial parts of the song, the poet created mysterious, light and incredible atmosphere, through the image of the dancing and joyful nymphs and their entertainment. In the following parts, he changed the climate to atmosphere marked with terror, fear and death according to the rules of the romantic decorum.

Here are the rusalki “like a group of lilies (...) are dancing and singing”. We already know from the previous analysis that those nymphs loved the dance that manifested their vital forces, creativity; it was close to chaos as well as the singing, enchanting the people who were listening to it. Especially the dance circles served for improvement, achievement of fullness and unity. It is not without reason that the author compared the little goddesses to lilies, which imply the senses related to beauty, grace and perfection. That flower was associated in culture (both folk and literary tradition) with the exceptionally elevated symbolism: it represented virginity, nobility and sinlessness (that’s why it was considered the flower of Mary). However, lilies arouse connotations with the otherworld; they fit to the catalogue of the tombstone flora. Since, in the traditional culture, they were treated like the habitat of the soul of the deceased, they were often planted on graves; they also grew on the graves of the maidens who died because of the unhappy love¹⁵⁸. The connection of the lily with death can be found in the well-known ballad *Lilies* written by Mickiewicz in 1820:

It is an unprecedented crime
A lady kills a man;
Having killed him buries [him] in a grove,
On the meadow at the stream,
Sowing the grave with lilies...¹⁵⁹,

also earlier, in *Aeneid* by Virgil, where the hero who was descending to hell saw lilies on the bank of the Lethe river:

Meanwhile, Aeneas sees in a far valley
A separate grove, thickets, from where the silent noise flows
And a river, the Lethe (...)
So in the weather, a winged swarm of bees in the meadows
Floats in the circle of herbs and the flowers of lilies
Snowy (...)¹⁶⁰.

The little goddesses shown in Bielowski’s poem are busy with the specific work, which is indicated by the verbs of motion: slip, tangle, sway:

That one threads on the spider’s tread
The corals from flowers and pearls from dew
Another one entangled the scrolls of the long birches
Slightly with the wind blow sways¹⁶¹.

The mentioned verse draws attention to another thing – the motif of the weaving nymph. In the traditional folklore, the extraterrestrial were known as the ones that were weaving/spinning linen/hair. They were said to steal linen, spin it, and then they weaved it and made clothes from the white linen¹⁶². There

also acted as those that “span a distaff from the spider web, combed themselves in the fields and forests, and washed common shawls on the wet meadows”¹⁶³. The rusalka from the poem performs a very delicate action: she threads the coral flowers and pearls from dew on the spider thread. And again, the symbolism of the noble stones appears. Let’s recall that the corals are the specimens referring to the symbolism of life, stimulating love and being connected with the feminine beauty. Analogously, the pearls are associated with the flawless whiteness, shine, sparkling, for example, teeth like pearls. The pearls were the attributes of Aphrodite and Venus, and thus, the goddesses of love. Biologically, they are the products of the natural organic origin, formed in the tissue of the shell of molluscs that affects their value and pricelessness. Among the jewels, they appeared as the quintessence of light and femininity, delicacy and fragility. Due to the opalescent color, they were connected with the moonlight, while the gloss was treated as a carrier of magic and a sign of deity. They were also assigned healing and protective powers. In the folk imagination, it symbolized tears. Together with corals and amber, pearls naturally and symbolically belonged to the sphere of water, which is the matrix of existence¹⁶⁴.

It is worth mentioning that the motif of the weaving nymphs was used by Alexander Pushkin in a little-known and unfinished drama from 1829-1832 called *Rusalka*¹⁶⁵. He talks about the love of the miller’s daughter to the prince who, however, betrayed his beloved young woman. He fell in love and married another girl, left the miller’s daughter, giving her a pearl necklace for consolation. The girl lost her mind in despair and jumped into the Dnieper. She drowned together with the baby she was carrying. In the water depth she transformed into rusalka and decided that one day she would take revenge on the prince. That day has come. She sent her daughter-nymph ashore to seduce the prince and tell him the truth who she was... Here the drama breaks off.

The “plagiarism” of Bielowski with the folk song is evidenced by the almost literal translation of the riddles asked by the nymph to the girl she met in the forest¹⁶⁶. This is the favorite kind of entertainment of those little goddesses because the intention of mistake and wrong answer was encoded in them. The one who did not answer, or did it wrong, fell into their snares and was tickled by them to death or lost life in any other way. In *Rusalka*, the riddles were asked to a girl, whom a jealous nymph chased stubbornly to take revenge on her:

A young girl was going, grace lights her (...)
The fresh wind is blowing from the groves
The girl is running, rusalka is running (...)¹⁶⁷.

The girl approaches a crossroad:

The wind breaks off the cross road,
The feral rusalka catches the girl¹⁶⁸.

In the traditional culture, crossroads were treated like the places known for the activity of the evil forces and demons, their favorite points of residence. These are the negatively and medially marked areas; these are the boundaries of passages from this to that world and from that to this one. The places of contact between different spaces were dangerous to a human being because these demonic forces, unfriendly to an individual, enter the interior, tear down the established order and disrupt its normal functioning¹⁶⁹. Therefore, it was necessary to beware and protect from the interference of destruction. At that time, a human being used a lot of apotropaic means, for example, amulets, barriers, gestures. As we already know, wormwood protected from nymphs. However, the girl from Bielowski's poem does not possess any safety tools, that is why she falls into the "snare" of the little goddess.

In spite of the pleas and begging of the girl who relies on her tough fate, the absence of her father, the sorrowful loneliness and the difficult fate of her mother, the rusalka does not have any intentions to let her go:

<Let me go, oh, let me go, with brothers, neighbors,
The father disappears for long destinations> (...)
<Let me go when fate takes everyone from home,
I'll go to calm down my sorrowful mother>¹⁷⁰

She agrees only to:

<Listen to me, girl, I'll give you three riddles
Think and find the truth in the dark
If you solve them, I'll let you go to your mother
If you don't, I'll tickle you>¹⁷¹

However, the girl fails to give the right answer:

The orphan girl didn't solve the riddle
The young rusalka tickled her¹⁷².

The motif of the demon asking people questions and giving riddles for solution, the result of which depended the fate of the questioned, was known in many cultures and religions. It will be enough to recall the ancient myth about Sphinx that was depicted as a winged female monster with the body of a lion and the head of a woman¹⁷³.

In the ballad, the poet created the image of a ruthless and insidious nymph that was dangerous to the young girls, in this way inscribing her into a romantic image of *femme fatale* and the paradigm of a demonic woman. Such an assumption resulted from the program of Romanticism that the folk world is generally

the reality of the dramatic clashes, tragic events, harsh, uncompromising and cruel, and the narrator is the only one who describes the phenomena, but does not interpret or change them. Fabulous and fantastic beginning of the action in *Rusalka*, the little goddess banter with the girl, contrasted with the cruelty of ending. There was no way for rescue. Modernism took over the romantic fascination with superficiality, wonders, charms and the manifestations of demonism in nature. They eagerly reached up to folklore, beliefs, borrowed ideas from the past and referred to the magic, cult and fantasy. At the same time, in their references artists used various embodiments of woman and femininity, and the most favorite and frequently applied motif was *femme fatale*. In Modernism, the woman became a field of penetration and experiment. The folk and romantic visions of rusalki were used enthusiastically, because a variety of the female discourse, love or existential realizations were shown through their figures. Among the Young Poland artists who used folklore material for ‘processing’ were among others Bronisława Ostrowska¹⁷⁴, Kazimiera Zawistowska¹⁷⁵, or Kazimierz Przerwa Tetmajer. Let’s briefly look at the modernist version of rusalka in the poem *Rusalki* by Kazimierz Tetmajer.

The text was published in the III series of Poetry, was written in 1898. It consists of four four-line verse parts that tell about the meeting of rusalki with a child, particularly with his soul. Such a treatment of the source material inscribes the text into the neoromantic stylistics, into the modernist saturation with otherness, fatalism of nature, its ruthlessness and fascination with the water element. Young Poland was charmed by the aquatic themes and everything that was connected with them: animals, plants. “let’s also add to this the water deities depicted by the artists: naiads, rusalki, water nymphs”¹⁷⁶.

Tetmajer also followed this trend, using water and its deities for his poetic purposes. The elements, from which the artist later built a lyrical image, were derived from their nature and properties. As Podraza-Kwiatkowska writes:

Tetmajer was extremely sensitive to the beauty of the outer world: he described it in all the richness of shapes, colors and shades of light. He was a sensualist who absorbed with all his senses the charm of nature, the uniqueness of the landscape or the beauty of the female body. Pessimism, the sadness of existence constantly accompanying the poet, a sense of loneliness and emptiness – in this absorption of the beauty of the world they found an antidote: oblivion and relief. (...) but the poet also feels the sphere of another being. He writes in this way: <Oh God! After all, elsewhere is created / another world, on the inaccessible depths>¹⁷⁷.

The sense of existence of “another world” or non-existent entities appears in the artist’s work and returns in the poetry over the years when Tetmajer was thinking more and more about vanishing, death and the end of existence. It was a simple human fear of the end. This fear takes on various forms of realization: it combines with a dazzle, shine, light, mist, rising up to the sky, flight, idealized

characters, superhuman miraculous, fleeting, winged, with the landscape apotheosis, nature, fragrant meadows, flowers, etc.¹⁷⁸. Some of these images appear in *Rusalki*.

Tetmajer presented the little goddesses according to the folk tales. Therefore, they are the ethereal, light nymphs, who “at shiny quiet night” (under the moonlight) dance on “swamps and marshes”, in the mist and water’s vapor”, winding in a dance circle. We already know from the previous analysis that that time of the village clock was treated like a borderline and favored the activity of the extraterrestrial beings. When the world plunged into “the gloomy mist”, and therefore disappeared slowly in the occurring darkness, the destructive forces revealed. Twilight evoked connotations with the end, emptiness, slow collapse of the light, emergent catastrophe, indeterminacy, death, suspension, being in between. The vital forces died out slowly, the human being merged into darkness, hence in the traditional folk culture the evening was understood in the eschatological perspective. The human activity was closed, and the beings from another world started operating. The coexistence with the world of nature was understood personally¹⁷⁹. The evening/twilight also evoked negative emotions and feelings. At that time, there was a complete agreement with the otherworld. The communication with it was established only by the individuals who were empowered to it, such as the elderly and children. It happens in Tetmajer’s poem. The author introduces the figure of a child who is submitted to the charm of the little goddesses, is fascinated with them and “looks at them, opens his eyes widely”. The child as a sexless, immature, undetermined, culturally amorphous, heterogeneous being was close to the borderline with the otherworld, it possessed the ability to establish a dialogue with the transcendence. The special features of unreality were attributed to “the romantic child”, “formed in another way”, having the so-called “second sight” or the internal sight. Thanks to it, the child perfectly saw the ghosts from another reality and experienced the extraterrestrial mysteries. It was on the side of madness, folk, fairy tale. Tetmajer stylized his boy in the similar way: frail, light, winged, etheric, not material¹⁸⁰.

A clear dominant of the evoked reality is darkness, as well as silence, emphasized only by the phrase “the wind whispers on the meadows”. The clasp that unites the whole text is a repeated nearly in every line verse: “from the fields rusalki fly”¹⁸¹. The motif of flight is not completely typical for them. The folk sources recall only the thing that “from the sky or clouds they step down on earth, when the wheat spits out its ear”¹⁸², we can only guess that they land down to the ground. However, the child is more important for our analysis, who “astonished silently looks” at the dance of the nymphs. It is not a coincidence that the boy is stylized for an angel in the song:

A winged boy towards him,
Is stretching his hands up¹⁸³

Wings are primarily the attributes of the heavenly beings and angels. But not only. They were also a distinguishing feature of solar deities, geniuses, demons and fortune-tellers, for example, Strzyga, Sphinx, Pegasus and also Satan and his helpers. The wings attribute is “exaltation”, “elevation to a higher sphere”, equalization with the supernatural powers; it was a symbol of God-Creator, Merciful God¹⁸⁴. The popularization of the angelic cults mainly in rural environments, as Leonard Peřka proves, has been achieved by the Catholic clergy from the middle of the 18th century as a belief in the caring domestic spirits¹⁸⁵. The view into the existence of the demonic beings with the positive traits (angels in particular) was an acculturative result, which perfectly suited into the specifics of the magical folk worldview. That is why, in the folk pantheon, they accompanied first and foremost the transition times¹⁸⁶. The wings as a means of transport of the soul to the otherworld space are pointed out at numerous primary folklore texts, such as, for example, folk prayers, referring to the concept of anthropological dualism¹⁸⁷. The folk eschatology inscribed into the magical folklore strongly emphasizes this function of angels – soul distributors. The wind also plays an important function in the text: “and the wind whispers in the meadows”. With this triad – flight, wings and wind – the poet unites the motif of separation of soul from body and its exaltation:

And his soul to them
The winged soul runs¹⁸⁸

Such a unity can bring associations not only with an angel but also with a bird. The ornithological identification constructed according to the logic of primitive associations proves that the birds were understood as the envoys from the otherworld; the ones who “supplied” the underworld with information. In the literary creation of the demonic beings, in the text of Przerwa Tetmajer, it is worth paying attention to the “poetics of charm”, which was used by the author to create and depict rusalki, oscillating around the expensive metals and noble stones. First of all, the “golden convention”. We already know that the gold characterizes the otherworld and beyond-the-earth creatures. In the text that interests us, it appears several times. The little goddesses are “gilding groves with dew”, “gilding a child’s soul”. A certain variation of gold is splendor, then silver that was used by the poet in the descriptions: “are silvering the meadows with dew”, “will shine in splendor”, “the splendor of the wave”. In addition, the used epithets also include “pearls”, “pearl mists”, the milky “whiteness of the bodies”. The symbolism of whiteness is worth mentioning here. This color gene-

rates the meanings related to life, joy, but also death, the world beyond the limits of human reality¹⁸⁹. Also silver, as we already know from the previous analysis, is associated with water, female principle and virginity, emanates with the metallic gloss and cold splendor.

The demonic feminae (rusalki) in Tetmajer's poem, in spite of the presented joy and entertainment and dancing, are, however, sinister and dangerous. This is confirmed by the finale where the poet reached to the familiar folk motif of tickling to death. Although it is not mentioned in the poem directly, the "wingless soul" and the "broken bloody wings", created according to the poetics of ugliness, evoke no other associations but the ones related to the death of a child. Careless and ruthless nymphs after "tickling" return to their games:

They saw a silent soul
And already wingless
The broken, bloody wings
Fell into dust and ashes...
(...)
They saw the bloody wings
And rush to dance again¹⁹⁰.

In the folk belief, rusalki were sometimes seen as merciless, stern and unmoved as female demons. This is evidenced by the story recalled by Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki, in which the nymph killed a baby, with pure premeditation: "he lay fossilized under the tree and his face curved awfully with convulsive laughter. Tears jerked from Zazuli's eyes; he just realized that it was the forest rusalka who tickled his poor friend to death"¹⁹¹.

The Tetmajer's scenery: fields, mists, wetlands, swamps, meadows, and the nymphs reigning over everything there, brings association with the metaphysical existential symbolism of Young Poland; it was used to convey the most important life issues. It cannot be ignored. In the modernist version, the metaphor of wetland, swamp, marshy meadow is the place of spiritual decay as well as a places of trial, struggle with oneself, meeting with the transcendent force. As the researchers say "Tetmajer repeatedly expressed that Nature was for him a sphere of contact with infinity as well as the source of determinism"¹⁹².

The personification of a demonic femina, in the form of the female demons of seduction – rusalki, implied by the Romantic and Modernist poets, perfectly fits into the world of the mysterious charm and wonder, longings and human desires, human dreams and feelings. They refer to the artistic imagination, poetic decorum and fascination with folklore. However, they symbolize certain destructiveness, desire of these beings, reveal the behavioral mechanisms of the dangerous "lustful" women, and also visualize love memories and fantasies.

Chapter 5

Romans with a sea maiden: mermaids

*More and more she began to love people,
More and more she was eager to stay with them, (...)
Mermaids have no immortal soul, and can never get one,
Unless they win love of a human being.*
Hans Christian Andersen¹

The awareness of the existence of the supernatural worlds and communication with the spirits of the ancestors, and thus with the otherworld, belonged to the primary imaginary categories in Romanticism. It was Romantics who created new phantasm theories, revealed the double reality where one could be at the same time; therefore, moving within these areas that belonged to humans and spirits, reality and sleep, ordinariness and dream, became the condition of the balance of human existence. The most common term “romantic” is suggested by Maria Janion:

It is <the one who dreams>, <dreamer>, <dreaming>. The term <romantic> (...) drew into the aura of dreaming of some ancient times, of some incredible adventures, of some fantastic landscapes and characters. At the same time, dreaming was raised to the level of a divine creative force².

The richness of imagination through anthropomorphizing, personification or naming became less terrible and mysterious for a human in traditional folk culture, though equally dangerous and different. All demons, ghosts or phantoms, being a projection of the human subconscious, were created by an individual so that she could fight her fear. The defined, marked and positioned phobia was not so dangerous and unknown. It could be opposed and defeated³. The group of these anxieties included the beliefs related to mermaids inhabiting water areas, demonic half-women, half-fish, very close relatives of rusalki.

„women-birds, women-fish, women-snakes” – on the level of culture

Legends and beliefs about mermaids were widely known on the level of the traditional folk and literary culture. It will be enough to recall the legend of the Warsaw mermaid, the femina, which soon became a symbol of the capital of Poland and was inscribed into its coat of arms. There were several legends. The first one, the most known and modified, claimed that in the place of the current street Szeroki Dunaj in Warsaw there was a source once and a stream or a spring possessed that name; also there was a small square, on which a fish market was founded in the 17th century. A mermaid lived in that stream⁴. Another legend was given by Artur Oppman (Or-Ot). He described the Warsaw fishermen, fascinated by the singing of a girl with a fish tail. They decided to catch her, and during the full moon, they set up the nets and brought her bounded to the village. However, she managed to convince the guard that she could not sing in captivity. The merciful young man released the maid. Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina presented another version. Her legend is the story about a water lady who showed the lost prince the way to his destination, with the golden arrow, released from the bow. There he met a poor fisherwomen with two twins; the boy named Warsz and the girl Sawa. Therefore, the metropolitan mermaid is a transformed undine, “Old Warsaw Dziwożona”⁵.

All the mentioned legends indicate mainly one important aspect of the mermaid: it is a water lady with a fish tail, half and woman, half a fish, possessing a wonderful voice, which enchants mostly fishermen. These characteristic features of the undine are consistent with the traditional folk beliefs and myths originating from antiquity; which have, however, undergone their modifications.

The motif of sirens known from antiquity gained its popularity in Europe mainly due to Homer’s *Odyssey*. The poet presented them as chthoic-aquatic creatures, inhabiting the Island of the Sirens, tempting sailors with singing. Having seduced them, they sucked their blood and threw those dead ashore⁶. Odysseus, parting with the sorceress Circe, was warned and instructed by her how to behave in case of meeting the sirens. In song XII we read:

You will come to the country of the Sirens, the witches that betray
All those who recall about them there
The madman who comes near and the singing of that Sirens
Hears! He will not see as long as he is alive
The wife, children or the native land
This is how the sweetly fluent song of the Sirens,
Which sit in the meadow surrounded by the bones
Of humans that lie in piles and rags of the dry bodies

Avoid them and close ears to your companions
 With the layer of the honey wax! Let no one hear
 Their voice; however if you are interested
 To listen, order to the mast of the nave
 Tie up strongly, your legs and hands,
 Then, listen to the song of the two Sirens
 But if you break out or ask to untie you
 You should be tied even harder with a rope⁷.

Circe advises to cover the ears with the layers of honey wax in order not to hear their wonderful but very seductive and dangerous voice. However, if Odysseus would like to listen to the women's singing, he should be strongly tied to the mast with his legs and hands in order to be unable to make himself free; otherwise he would perish.

Approaching the Island of the Sirens, the sailors recognized them due to the loud and beautiful singing coming from the distance:

Listen how beautifully we are singing!
 Nobody has ever flited on the black vessel
 Not to stop at the sound of our songs
 Yes, everyone is amused with this singing
 Enlighted by wisdom they flow on / (...)
 That's how they sang, and lust is awakening inside of me
 To listen to that songs; so I blink at people
 In order to release me (...)
 Meanwhile, the Island of the Sirens has been behind us⁸

Odysseus and his crew, despite the encouragement and misleading words of the Sirens, managed to avoid the island without any problems.

The voice of sirens was also mentioned in Plato's *Republic* where he described the universe including Tartarus, earth and sky. Presenting all the circles in Book X, he writes briefly: "There at the top, on every circle there is Siren who revolves together with him and produces the same voice, the same tone. All together, and there are eight of them, make up one harmonious chord"⁹. It is worth referring to another text from the circle of ancient culture – to *Metamorphoses* by Ovid. The author calls the sirens Acheloids (the daughters of Achelous):

But where do you, Acheloids
 have a maiden's face from,
 And the wings are not different from the birds?¹⁰

In the footnote, in the edition of Polish National Library, we find an explanation: "The Sirens, the Achelous' daughters, the god of the river in Aetolia and the muse Melpomene". Achelous in Greek mythology is the name of the biggest river in Greece, flowing through the land called Aetolia and at the same time, the

god of that river. Achelous-god was considered the eldest among three thousand of his brothers – river gods. Myths assign to him various love affairs with muses, among others with Melpomene, with whom he had daughters – sirens. He was considered the father of many sources¹¹. Melpomene is a subordinate muse that is responsible for the tragedy. The whole number of daughters of Mnemosyne and Zeus was nine; they always performed as “singers” during the great ceremonies of gods, participated in weddings, every of them was attributed a certain love affair¹². However, this origin of sirens is not entirely certain. In Greek mythology there is a term “children of the sea” and the explanation that the Nereids served for the sea goddess Tethys, were nice and kind sirens, daughters of the nymph Doris and the old sea prophet Nereus, who possessed the ability to change figure¹³.

The sea, as the most common and well-known place of their inhabitation, implies the connection with sensuality, incredibility and certain mysteriousness; it is associated with femininity, motherhood and mother, life-giving and threatening at the same time. In the matriarchal beliefs of some nations, the Great Goddesses were often called “Sea Stars” or “Queens of the Seas”. The sea depths also depicted passions and the strength of feelings. Zdzisław Górnicki writes: “sea waters (seas and oceans) are the <lower> waters (...), an inaccessible and even foreign element. The taste of that waters is salty and disgusting. In them, according to the earliest beliefs, various monsters and evil forces that are dangerous and hostile to human find their habitats”¹⁴. The sirens of Ovid are the creatures with women’s faces and bird wings, which is confirmed by the dictionary source: “sirens are the sea gods, half-women, half-birds”¹⁵ and numerous figural performances, about which soon. However, Ovid adds that they did not always have bird wings; they used to be common girls, joyful and playful companions of Cora:

When Proserpina collected flowers in the meadow
Nice Sirens were having fun with her
Looking for her, they ran around the whole world¹⁶

Only when Persephone was seized by Hades to the underworld, the sirens asked gods to give them wings to be able to seek for her both at sea and on earth:

Looking for her, they ran around the whole world
And they wanted to make the seas witnesses of their worries
They desired to fly over waters on the wings
Gods agreed; their body covered with feathers¹⁷

Being winged, they were ready to fulfill their mission. When they found Cora, they stayed in the underworld and became Hades’ helpers. Then they be-

gan to seduce sailors with their singing, bringing their vessels to break and them – to death. Not all stories are compatible with this aspect. Some legends say that such a transformation into a bird was a punishment directed against them by Demeter, because they did not object to the abduction of her daughter. Others say that it was Aphrodite who gave them a bird shape being angry with their love gusts. Their punishment was not to tempt gods but humans. Another – that after the alteration they wanted to compete with muses, however, the latter, being angry, plucked their feathers¹⁸. But the sirens are also sea monsters, symbols of death and immortality, connected with the souls and cult of the dead. On the ancient tombstones, they appeared as the figures of women with wings. They were not always half-animals; there were depictions where they “embodied ghosts”. In Greek art they were presented with a mirror or tambourine in a hand. The mirror belonged to the heterogeneous materials, the status of which was connected with mediation, borderline, sacredness and therefore, the world of souls. The features attributed to the mirror resulted from its construction that gives a dual character to the surface, manifesting itself in the possibility of reflection and unusual properties of light (splendor). It itself marked the border between the worlds, different orders; it was the way to the otherworld and corresponded to the symbolism of the water space¹⁹. The dictionaries of symbols also add that the mirror belonged to the obligatory attributes of rusalki and sirens. In legends and folk tales, fairytales and stories, it often appeared with magical powers making the impression of reality of the image visible in it. Because of its passivity, it was the emblem of a woman; and turning the direction of the reflected image – a sign of foreignness. It served to evoke phantoms, giving the images that had previously taken or to take away the distance: it reflected what once stood before him. In addition, Juan Eduardo Cirlot writes that “the mirror is lunar, (...) like the fan, the feminine attribute; the mirror is associated with the moon (...). Among the primitive peoples, it is also the symbol of multidimensionality of soul; its mobility and adaptation of the objects that haunt it and capture its attention”²⁰, which completely explains the relationship between sirens and mirrors in art. Tambourine, on the other hand, is a kind of a drum, a percussion instrument in the form of a rim with a stretched membrane and plates or bells around it. In English translation, in addition to the obvious *tambourine*, there is sometimes an equivalent that occurs in music circles, the term – *marine*, which corresponded with the depictions existing in art²¹.

They were also considered as the personification of excitement and blood-thirstiness, the symbol of spiritual temptations – death, the last gasp, the gust of the wind that carried souls to the otherworld. The same features were attributed to sirens in the Middle Ages. The symbol of Luxuria – promiscuity and body

temptations was also seen in them. The motifs of sirens belonged to the most favorite and eagerly used animal themes in medieval art²². The sirens' blood-thirst and belonging to the otherworld may be additionally testified by their specific representations – they were seen and understood as the personification of fever. On the Stymphalian coins there were birds in helmets, which were depicted in the medieval English sculptures as the birds sucking the breath of sick people, “in fact, they are bird-legged sirens”²³. The analogous images of barbaric, cruel and tricky sirens, and moving further, cannibal creatures, can be found in French maritime legends. It is confirmed by the lyrics of the song:

Sing, sing, the Siren
 you can sing
 you have the sea to drink
 my beloved to devour²⁴.

In Greek beliefs, sirens were the spirits of the dead people or the souls of individual dead. Later, “they turned into the tombstone sirens, mourners or musicians striking off the harmful demons with their music. As the souls of the deceased, they took female or male faces; therefore, they appeared with beards on men's graves. Thus, they represented death and the posthumous fate of a human”. On the tombstones and monuments they appeared as these images and played the role of “crying or playing music mourners. The bird element (from antiquity) connects the siren with the theme of the bird-spirit, which survived in numerous folk conceptions”²⁵. Destrudo associations of sirens prove their belonging to the traditional folk culture. The most characteristic were their conceptions in the Slavic world. They were associated with one of the oldest religious representations – the cult of Bird Goddess. She was worshipped alongside with the admiration for the Serpent Goddess. The sophisticated images of both appeared about 5000 BC, when, as Marija Gimbutas writes: “Old Europe has achieved the cultural fullness”²⁶. The figures were found in Macedonia, among them about 40% had ornithomorphic, birdlike features: convex rear (bird's backside), holes in the place of shoulders for feathers. The author also mentions and discusses other archeological finds. She also states that “Bird and Serpent Goddesses were the dominant images in the pantheon of Old Europe. They appeared as the combination of a snake and water bird with a long phallic neck that was inherited from the Magdalenian culture. However, they could also appear separately”²⁷. Some figural presentations of Lilith, the first Adam's wife, according to the Talmud, were also interesting. Well, the Babylonian-Assyrian sculpture from 1950 BC depicts it as a beautiful, naked winged femina with bird's feet, standing on two lions. On the other hand, the later portraits confirm that she was shown as a female-bird of prey, with bird claws instead of fingers or as a snake-woman²⁸.

Birds in the symbolic conceptions represented a spirit, soul, “inter-spherical unity”, dialogue between gods and humans (through their flight). Through their participation, the female principle, lightness and even certain pleasure was expressed. In folk beliefs, the soul leaving the body after death sometimes took the form of a bird, flying to the sky. The issues related to the metamorphosis of birds are important for our discussion: messengers, envoys or prophets possessing the ability to frequent alterations. The universal symbol was a water bird that made a cosmic egg – the nucleus of the world. Basically, the symbolism of a bird, as in many cases interpreted in relation to the traditional culture, is ambivalent: they are good and evil, pure and impure, they help humans and harm them. A few remarks about feathers are also worth mentioning. Most often, they symbolize soul, flight, contact with another reality. A person adorned with bird feathers makes contact with another sphere, with power, possesses magical force. Some goddesses received feathers (for example, the Scandinavian goddess Freyja was depicted in a feather robe – possessed specific strength and skills)²⁹.

In Slavic traditional culture, the beliefs about sirens were very close to those of rusalki. Inhabitants of villages often treated them analogically or interchangeably:

rusalki are the girls who died before wedding. Their body is half-human, half-fish. While being in the waters, they carry all out of the water; and while sitting so peculiarly during the days of St. George, St. John, and St. Peter and Paul, they make up various songs, tales and prayers. At that time, people eagerly listen to them, learning stories from them³⁰.

Adam Fischer presents similar information:

the people talk about water creatures, which are called *luzony*, “meluzyny” and “sea people”; they originate from the girls who died before wedding, and have the form of a mermaid – half-woman half-fish; they live only in great waters, and they go ashore during the days of St. George, Peter, John and Pentecost³¹.

As we already know from the previous chapter, according to Kazimierz Moszyński, rusalki originated from the souls of the “prematurely deceased or injured by fate girls”³². They also usually appeared during Pentecost, but also during other celebrations. It is also worth mentioning the holidays when one could come across or see rusalki or mermaids. The day of St. George in the Eastern calendar is celebrated on May 6, while the saint is regarded as a patron of healthy powers, fertility, abundance in the household and home. In the legend, he appears as a brave and courageous knight in a battle with the dragon that he defeated. In Polish folklore (for example, in fairytales, legends) he functions in the same way: as a defender of an endangered girl. In the battle against the monster, he is victorious³³. Villagers worship St. George as the patron of property who protects crops and cattle from all damage³⁴. The day of St. John

(the night from July 6/7) is connected with St. John's Eve and the old Kupala Night, celebrated mainly by girls; with ritual dances and singing, fire burning and placing wreaths on the water. It is the rite of the summer solstice, a strong emanation of warmth, energy, fertility. On the symbolic plan "from the spring equinox the order was gradually created, especially needed at the time of harvesting and its ripening"³⁵. Anna Zadrożyńska interprets the time of Pentecost or the day of St. John as "the last acts of the magic of good beginning and harvest. They were also the rituals of parting with the spirits, both with those friendly and not very well-disposed to people. They seem to be a laborious cleansing of the world from the newcomers from the otherworld"³⁶. Some researchers say that Kupala is a "goddess of green" because she knew about healing more than any other gods. "Kupala should be of female gender. It was supported by the authority of Lomonosov who <clearly called Kupala a goddess>. Others also wrote: <The goddess remained a goddess and did not transform into a god, especially that it was women but not men who produced medicine in ancient times>"³⁷. The holiday of St. Peter and Paul in the Orthodox Church is celebrated on July 12; it is the apex of summer, the power of the sun, and what follows it – the abundance of harvest and fertility of spring sowing.

In Mazovia, according to Kolberg's notes, the fishermen said that "the girl in white often showed up on their ships; like an angry Vistula spirit with dissolved hair, overgrown with the green hair, crying"³⁸. According to the people of Eastern Slavdom, what was later confirmed by the romantic Polish literature (about it below):

Depending on the area, mermaids were called sirens (*sareny*), sea people, sea princesses. In the sea (...) there were many varieties of mermaids with different names. They all sang very beautifully and taught people various tales and songs. Sometimes, they even left special books for the people (...), and when they sang, the sea stopped waving from impression and the man listened forever³⁹.

Such an image of rusalka, a nymph that fell in love with a man, was presented by Bolesław Leśmian in his klechda⁴⁰ *Majka* where a water maiden presented a book bound in moss to her lover. The author collected Ukrainian folk beliefs and modified them with a poetic fantasy⁴¹. Wiktor Gomułicki, a poet, novelist, essayist and researcher of the history of Warsaw presented a slightly different poetic image. In a brief sketch, Mermaid (picture) he described the adventure that happened to the protagonist, Maciej Wrona, who along with his Lord Kasztelan Płocki arrived to Warsaw to his relative Perz, a barber from the Denube. Here he fell in love "with all his heart" with the wonderful voice that sounded from the tower in the Old Town. He was sure that it was a siren. He wanted to meet and marry her. He could not sleep, eat, live. However, the guard of that

tower, a deaf old man, claimed that it was “the Italian boy from the royal choir” who sings. Being angry, he left Warsaw⁴².

Overtime, in culture, there appeared the element of a scaled fish tail in the descriptions of sirens, displacing women-birds. As Jorge Luis Borges writes: “the image of a fish-tailed siren could be influenced by the appearance of mythological tritons, half-humans, half-fish, the sea gods; in art they are generally presented as the creatures blowing into the huge conches”⁴³. In Greek mythology, Triton is the sea god, the close equivalent of Nereus, sometimes, the god of the lake; the upper part of the body is similar to the human, the bottom is shaped like a fish⁴⁴. But not only it. Some experts in sea legends believe that at some point there was a “confusion of sirens with nereids (...); the form of nereids is not fantastic, the only thing is that scales cover their bodies even in such places that have a human shape (...), so sirens-nereids, not losing their voices, lost the appearance of women-birds and became women-fish”⁴⁵. In Greek mythology, the nereids were sea nymphs famous for extraordinary beauty; they were generally depicted as naked maidens with long beautiful hair to the waist (see, for example, the painting of a British artist Edward John Poynter *The Cave of the Storm Nymphs*). It is worth mentioning here that nereid (*nerajdha*) is rusalka in Greek⁴⁶. Aphrodite took the shape of fish, escaping from Typhon, a giant of the half-human, half-animal figure; therefore, the fish became the attribute of the goddess as a symbol of love and fertility. The fish scales presented in culture (for example, in literary texts) belonged not only to the distinguishing features (tail) but also decorated their dwellings in palaces (for example, a roof of scales; see below). In ancient times, the authors of texts, writing about sea creatures or presenting them in engravings, tended to cover their whole bodies with the fish scales, emphasizing in that way that they are the inhabitants of seas and rivers⁴⁷.

It is necessary to mention some other important aspects of the fish. They were distinguished not only by the connections with death (for example, the passage to the underworld by swallowing) but also fertility and related to them maternity features⁴⁸. In archeological excavations, the fish often appeared on urns or in the graves just as the symbol of fertility, life (in the otherworld of course), and thus femininity and aquatic spontaneity. Such a presentation of the goddess (with the fish), dressed in a robe decorated with the motif of wavy water is on the Boeotic vase from the 9th to 8th century. Włodzimierz Szafranski also mentions the existence of a goddess with a fish, known in Euphrates, in Mari, in the form of half-woman, half-fish and worshipped “before the origin of the Homeric gods in the 8th-7th centuries BC”. It was Eurynome, in Greek mythology called Oceanid, a sea nymph, whose cult persisted for a very long time, “withstanding the competition with the Olympic gods.

As Szafranski continues writing, the circular road, through which the Greek model of the goddess with the fish got to Polish lands seems to be true-to-life. I mean the Carthaginian-Etruscan mediation. Taking into account the striking convergence of the appearance of the goddess Tanit and the emblem of a female deity from the example of a bronze pendant from Gorszewice near Szamotuły, it is impossible to deny the existence of some relations of our lands with such an exotic, because of the distance, North African environment in the late Hallstatt period. It is also known about the borrowings in the field of cult in Greece practiced by Carthaginians and concerning, *inter alia*, the goddess of fertility. Finally, we know about the presence of a grave stele in Carthage with the stylistic presentation of the goddess Tanit with a huge fish and a wavy ornament that marks water on the figure of the deity⁴⁹.

Discussing the cultural image of the siren, it seems necessary to refer to the legendary woman-snake. The most well-known and popular woman with the serpent ending was Melusine, the protagonist of the medieval French tales. According to one version, written in the years 1387-1393 by Jehan or Jean d'Arras, a courtier of Prince Jan de Berry, she was a sorceress who had power over humans and nature. When she got married, she ordered her husband to make a promise that he would never try to see her on Saturday – otherwise, his family would fall into disaster. The husband did not keep the promise and when Melusine was taking a bath on Saturday, he looked into the bathroom. It turned out that from the waist down her down was in the form of a snake tail. The horrified husband was silent about what he had seen, but when the discovery brought the disaster on his family in the form of the internal quarrels, he could not resist reproaching his wife. The offended Melusine jumped out of the window and turned into a winged serpent in the air⁵⁰.

The cult of snakes was common in ancient countries. In Egypt, as a chthonic deity, the serpent was connected with the cult of the dead – it was the guardian of souls in the underground. It is evidenced by the archeological finds: serpent tombs, tombstones, gifts for the graves in the form of vessels with the depicted serpents. In Mesopotamia, the serpent deity (Der or Tiâmat) was worshipped as a goddess, donor and lord of life. The statues of goddesses with snakes in their hands were found on Crete. In Greece and Rome, the phallic character of the serpent was associated with the rituals in honor of fertility in the mother-earth, stimulation of the fertile powers in nature. In Slavonic beliefs, it appeared primarily as a chthonic deity, the symbol of fertility of nature, the guardian of the deceased ancestors⁵¹. The relations of the woman and the serpent are primarily testified by the Old Testament description of Eve's seduction; also the images of ancient goddesses possessing serpent hair: Medusa, Graeae, Erinyes. It is impossible not to mention the images of Hindu goddesses (for example, Manasa) or Mother Goddess, which are depicted with snakes⁵², or the Celtic Great Mother Bride (Brigid). She was worshipped as a serpent goddess during the rituals. As

experts note, there is not a more widespread and ambiguous cult than a serpent's cult, symbolically diverse and ambivalent. The serpent is a symbol of both male and female principles, a solar, and lunar being, a symbol of life and death, good and evil, treatment and poison. In the accompaniment of Great Mother it became the personification of wisdom and enigma. It was considered an intermediary between heaven, earth and underworld⁵³. The rhythm of the alterations visible in the life of a snake, and the features that connect it to the field of death, destruction, passing away and at the same time with birth, rebirth, vegetation, bind it with femininity and lunar sphere. It can be confirmed by a belief from Central Europe that the torn hair of a woman buried in the ground turn into snakes under the influence of the moon⁵⁴. The motif of a woman changing into a snake was not uncommon in the magical fairytales. In the volume of Russian folk fairytales from the collection of Afanasieva, we will find a fairytale with the number 270 – *Viper – the King's Daughter*⁵⁵. It tells of the adventures of a brave Cossack, who thanks to his goodness (saves the viper from fire) and patience (for 14 years fulfills the task assigned by the viper-princess) saves the king's daughter from the captivity of Koschei the Deathless, and after completing the next deeds, marries her.

Let's now follow, on the selected examples, how the Polish romantic literature presented mermaids (in the Slavic context) referring in the creation of their image to the examples of the female demons of seduction encoded in the traditional folklore as well as to the depictions originating from antiquity.

“the tail of a fish, the breasts of a woman” – the fantasies of romantic literature

Feminine demonology became an inspiring literary material for Romantics. They were encouraged not only by the fantasy of the world of ghosts and apparitions of the folk provenance. The artists saw in these presentations the ways to convey the program principles of their epoch or the key to revealing the national identity. An important element of romantic thinking about the world and human was trust in non-rational sources of cognition: faith, feeling, intuition. Due to them the contact with the non-real dimension of reality was possible. In the authors' texts, the world was uncertain, threatened, not fully researched and known, full of transgressive creatures, intruding into the world of the mortals⁵⁶. The arrangement of the supernatural entities became significant, among others, demonic feminas with unearthly bodies that filled the pages of the literary texts. Alongside with rusalki, described in the previous chapter, it is necessary to add the description of mermaids – water maidens who gladly engaged into romances

with men, to seduce them with their wonderful singing or appearance and deprive them of their lives. The romantic artists modified, transformed and diversified these creations, adapting them to their artistic needs and requirements of the epoch.

According to the categories of the traditional culture, Adam Mickiewicz in the ballad *Rybka/The Fish*, presented the water lady giving her the appearance of a mermaid. He added an important note to the text: “from the communal singing”, thus marking in that way a certain mood that is dominant in the text: listening to folk tales, enchanting fairytales, known to him from childhood. The footnote to the article about Karpiński from 1827 informs of Mickiewicz’s understanding of that note: “By communal singing (...) we understand Polish singing, ballads and idylls, repeated by the small nobility and the class of servants speaking Polish”⁵⁷. It is noteworthy to add that the notion of tradition (cultural or national heritage) was very important to Mickiewicz. This is evidenced by the two complementary meanings of this term in the artist’s discourse: “a legend, tale passed in the oral way usually from generation to generation” and “the national spiritual culture inherited from generation to generation”⁵⁸.

Rybka/Fish is a part of the series “ballads and romances”, where all works are “devoted to his beloved and almost all of them talk about unhappy love”⁵⁹. Mickiewicz tried the way to the romantic ballads regardless the existing tendencies “completely alone”, as the researchers point out, but not without knowing the previously existing folk dumas, the dumas about the elegiac reverie over the past or the historical-heroic dumas⁶⁰. This ballad is considered to be among the “rusalka” ballads, alongside with *Świtez* and *Świtezianka*. The plot of the all texts concerns the miraculous transformations, binding the human with nature. *Rybka/The Fish* is a story about the fate of Krysia “deprived of the element of terror (...), where everything happens in a simple way, events take place just as usual. Through the child’s eyes, the disarming trust of Krysia is seen – the common village girl and her miracle of turning into a fish”⁶¹. It was based on the motif of betrayal that was severely punished, according to the village codex. So the plot of the text is simple. Desperate and abandoned, the maiden goes to the bank of the river and complains to its dwellers – *świtezians* for the misfortune that met her:

Listen to a difficult adventure
The voice of the betrayed lover⁶².

She talks about the love for a man, about the planned wedding, about his betrayal and the current bride, with whom he marries; she also mentions the baby she is expecting (the similarity with Pushkin’s drama). Being betrayed, suffering and abandoned, she asks the water maidens to accept her to their world:

Accept me, Świtezians (...)
 This saying she will cry badly.
 She will cover her eyes with hands
 And from the bank, jump into the water,
 And drown in the quick water⁶³.

Tears, crying arouse associations with despair, sadness, loss, transgression. Let's recall that as some border reactions and forms of expression, in the traditional culture, they reflected the world order and were located outside the area of the human existence, fulfilled the role of the operators of change, mediators between the two different orders (see more, chapter II, part I). Being desperate and frightened, she lives in the river depths where she lives in cold and fear, where the food is:

(...) corals, flies.
 And I sip cold dew⁶⁴

The drink that was consumed by the protagonist of the ballad – dew – according to folk beliefs, as we remember from the previous chapter, belonged to the drinks eagerly consumed by rusalki.

Let's now pay attention to the literary portrait of the water little goddess shown by Mickiewicz in accordance to the "poetics of charm". The nymph has the appearance of a classic mermaid, half-woman, half-fish:

Among crystal clarity,
 The water will get slightly blurred,
 The fish will jump over the water (...)
 Will look with the eyes of a virgin (...)
 She has a fish fin to the waist⁶⁵

However, she preserved some elements of the ancient sirens, especially those mentioned by Ovid: bird wings and girl faces. The others were added by Mickiewicz according to the folk imaginations concerning rusalki:

Comely golden spots,
 She has red feathers on the sides,
 The head is small like a thimble,
 The eyes are small as beads.
 Then she unveils her fish scale,
 Looks with the eyes of a virgin;
 The light hair comes out of the head,
 A thin neck swells
 The rosy beauty on the faces
 The breasts like milky apples,
 She has a fish fin to the waist⁶⁶

In the referenced description of the mermaid there are several details that are worth attention. Above all, there is a group of color epithets that was used to emphasize the incredible beauty of the water maiden, that is: golden spots, red feathers, small head and eyes, fair hair, thin neck, rose face, breasts like milk-color apples. The “golden convention” was often used by both legends and folk descriptions as well as by literature to depict the images of demons. Let’s recall that the gold is the element connecting these beings with the otherworld, with power and death. Close to this formula are fair hair and milky-color breasts, evoking the obvious associations with the whiteness and thus with perfection and femininity. As we already know, both, rusalki and mermaids occur in folk beliefs as female creatures with beautiful long fair hair. Let’s also add that, for example, “the mermaids from Gers [the river in France – note B. W.-D.] combed it with golden combs. The hair of the water maidens was the tool of their spells. The daredevil will regret if he approaches a water maiden combing her hair, because she immediately embraces him with her hair and draws him into the water depth”⁶⁷ (see: rusalki). The comb as an emblem of the mythical creatures of the feminine nature, was associated with water and fire, evoked connotations with love but also implied destrudo senses. He was also treated like an operator of alterations, a mediator between the two spheres⁶⁸. The dissolved hair also has symbolic dimension. In many cultures, they served as the clear erotic signal. Beautiful hair, the beauty of a rose and shapely breasts testify the unique grace of the water maidens. It is not an accidental phenomenon. These beings created by the traditional imagination had to look beautifully and phenomenally, because only then they could tempt a man. Grace – charm, beauty, and also the old equivalent of a beautiful one – described by the poet as rosy, obviously refers to the symbolism of that flower: its beauty, unearthliness, royalty. In the ballad, Mickiewicz used, mentioned earlier, the popular comparison of a girl to a rose or a flower. It should be noted that the use of the imaging based on the reference to the natural motifs revealed a close bond of these feminas with nature. Friedrich Schlegel, a supporter of androgynism and appreciation of a woman, often compared her to a plant. He proclaimed that flora was a symbolic ideal of a woman, a femininity, becoming at the same time a symbol of its divinity. Such a relation: a woman-plant also points out at the atavistic relationship of the subject with nature and especially with the earth: biologism, fertility, giving birth⁶⁹. Small head, eyes like beads and a thin neck fit into the script of the “poetics of beauty”: they represent a delicate, sophisticated and proportional woman. While creating his protagonist, to emphasize and highlight some features, the artist used diminutives: “she dissolved hair”, “wrings her hands”, “breasts like apples” or “thin neck”.

Water generates meanings related to life, femininity, fertility and love. It is not surprising, therefore, that all the demonic creatures associated with the aquatic sphere also evoked associations with the archetype of mother⁷⁰. Carl Gustaw Jung claims: “the black waters of death are, however, the waters of life and the death itself and its icy embrace are the mother’s womb (...). Water becomes characteristic for the mother”⁷¹. The heroine of the Mickiewicz’s ballad is also the mother:

And she takes the child in her hand,
And hugs it to her white womb,
“Lulla – she calls – my little one,
Lulla, my little, lulla”⁷²

To the archetype of the mother refer such behaviors as tenderness, care, compassion, responsibility, nutrition. Kryisia – the fish, swimming from the sea depths to the shore, transforms: from a fish into a woman:

Then she turns the fish scale away

so that, after feeding and hugging the child, return to the old form:

When the baby stopped crying,
Hangs the basket on the branch
And she squeezes her body again,
And narrows the little head.
The scales cover her again,
The gills pop out on both sides⁷³

Metamorphoses as a phenomenon in culture, had their sources among others in ancient shamanic rituals or popular folk belief. There, supernatural beings were able to assume different forms and shapes themselves: animals, birds, plants and had the ability to turn people into other beings⁷⁴. Transformations could also have their origin in the ancient cults, when priests put on the outfits of animal skins and bird feathers during the ritual ceremonies. Finally, transformations were associated with the obligatory behavior during hunting: hunters dressed in animal skins⁷⁵. As a literary expression of a specific cultural or philosophical concept, metamorphoses often occurred in the fairytale: they are the basis of fairytale emotions or fairytale narration.

As Zbigniew Baran writes, it is worth remembering that the metamorphoses of humans (characters of the fairytale) into animals, plants, stones and other natural phenomena are usually the result of human punishment for disobedience to commands and orders of the fairytale characters possessing supernatural power, and sometimes a form of escape from Evil or release from a difficult situation without a way out and they are often conducted against the will of that people⁷⁶.

The discussed female demons represented, similarly to rusalki, threatening, dangerous and destructive natural forces and its destrudo features. They were harmful and sinister to humans. Thus, a man became an object subjected to their action, subordinated to supernatural powers. The human was depicted in this way in the other two romantic ballads: *The Queen of the Tide* and *The Fisherman*.

Mickiewicz's trail was followed by the less known artists, who placed on the pages of their works the demonic scenes and figures of sea wonders – mermaids. The group of those poets included: Aleksander Dunin Borkowski and Jan Barszczewski. The first one created the literary image of the water maiden from the Dniester, according to the Ukrainian folk tales, giving her the appearance of half-woman, half-fish:

The tail of a fish, the breasts of a woman

and calling her a queen of tide:

The queen of the crystal tide...⁷⁷

The ballad belongs to the romantic ballads of the second period and was created in 1834. It should be added that Borkowski, like Jozef Bohdan Zaleski, was the member of Ziewonia, a literary group seeking inspiration in folklore (see more, part I, chapter I). The characters of the work are the title queen of tide and the fisherman who throws the nets into the Dniester in order to “bring his girlfriend the first thing that goes into the net”. Unfortunately, the end of the ballad is tragic, because the fisherman was not able to meet his girlfriend; he drowned, seduced by the mermaid and absorbed by the water depths:

From the side, the dreamy winds blew at him,
And the water carried the boat away,
The dragnet sank, the oars fell,
And sailed to the neighboring countries⁷⁸

According to the traditional folk belief, the mermaid seduces the fisherman with her appearance,

Her teeth from pearls, the mouth from corals,
And the face from the sky star
... the eyes are pure as springs
On the snow-white breasts, golden gills
And the splendor of a swallow's hair⁷⁹.

The heroine was depicted by the author according to the “poetics of charm”. As a woman of the incredible beauty, firstly seduced the fisherman and then led him to death. A detailed description of the appearance of half-woman, half-fish uses the analogous color epithets like in the previous examples. They all serve to

create the unearthly femina. However, let's pay attention to another thing, namely to the invitation of the fisherman to the underwater chambers:

Everything is ready in my palace,
A coral bed is awaits us⁸⁰

Folk tales based on East Slavic beliefs inform that rusalki, mermaids, water maidens had rich manors and palaces at the bottom of rivers, lakes and seas, with the walls sparkling from gold and amber, decorated with jewelry, diamonds and other noble stones where they spent their lives. Let's recall the klechda, collected and recorded by Ludwik Siemieński *Królowa Bałtyku/The Queen of the Baltic Sea*: "In the depths of the Baltic Sea, there was palace of Queen Jurata in ancient times. The walls of that palace were from the pure amber, thresholds from gold, roof from the fish scale and windows from diamonds"⁸¹ or the legend by Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki *Jurata królowa czeltic/Jurata – the Queen of Czeltic*: "Jurata lived at the bottom of the sea, in the palace of the white marble, the thresholds of which were made of pure gold, the roof from the see scale and windows made of diamonds"⁸².

It is not a coincidence that the Dniester inhabitant mentions a coral bed, the stone that among others stimulated love feelings, increased love. In addition, that stone often functioned as a decoration for palaces⁸³.

Seduction and death of a man are in line with the folk beliefs about mermaids, what we already know. However, the use of voice for this purpose has been modified and reversed by the poet. Dunin Borkowski introduced a magical object, with a wonderful melody, into the space of the text – a fife. One was used by the fisherman to call the femina; he found two of them in the river:

The astonished fisherman dragged on the boat
Two diamond fifes (...)
He blew in the golden mouth of the first one
And the sound came out on the water
And the bobbers sink, he dragged in the dragnet
Some special creature⁸⁴

The second one was used for the final destruction – his death:

The fisherman blew in the second pipe,
And the sound came over the water,
And getting harder and harder in the dragnet,
The bobbers are getting lower and lower⁸⁵

A fife is a folk musical instrument, usually wooden (a tube equipped with a hole), otherwise called as a whistle. In the villages, it was a thing belonging to shepherds, village young men who played to have a better time at work. In the

song, the fife was brilliant. It was an intentional authorial procedure, because the brilliant is a polished and refined diamond, which was associated with power, majesty and mysterious force. It is enough to refer to the etymology of the word, from Ancient Greek *αδάμας* *adamas* and Latin *diamentum* that means “invincible”, “indestructible” and refers to the unique hardness of that mineral. In the traditional worldview, that stone made the human invisible and ensured the favor of women⁸⁶.

The ballad *Rybak/The Fisherman* by Jan Barszczewski is maintained in the similar tone. With this title, it refers to the ballad of Johann Wolfgang Goethe written around 1778. There is no doubt that *The Fisherman* by Goethe was an inspiration for Barszczewski. The plot of the German text is simple and represents a lonely fisherman who meets a mermaid during the fishing:

And from the stormy water she flowed out
A mermaid shining with dew⁸⁷.

The mermaid is tempting and encouraging the fisherman in order to drown the seduced one in the water depths:

There is such a desire in his heart,
as if there was the beloved girl near him.
She whispered something and sang something –
and he disappeared during that song.
He half tilted, half she carried him away –
and no one saw him again⁸⁸.

Rybak/The Fisherman of Barszczewski was written in 1842 and was also based on the Belarusian beliefs. The author, a poor nobleman born in Vitebsk, was regarded as an expert on the folklore of these lands, a collector of applications and songs, a traveler, a publisher and a poet. He graduated from the Jesuit college, the Vilnius Academy, he travelled a lot and after many adventures he settled in St. Petersburg, where he gave lessons in Greek and Latin. He looked as a literate on the “communal news”, as evidenced by the collection of his works <Szlachcic Zawalnia czyli Białoruś w fantastycznych opowiadaniach/Zawalnia the Nobleman or Belarus in Fantastic Stories> (1844-1845). Folklore inclinations have also found a literary realization in his ballads based on the Belarusian folk beliefs⁸⁹.

The action of the ballad takes place on undefined waters. It was divided into three parts, subordinated to the stages of the meetings with the “wonder-girl” and slow seduction. The characters are, like in the previously cited works, a fisherman and a female creature from the aquatic abyss. She was created as a siren, half-woman and half-bird. It is evidenced by the lines:

... winged moth
Flies near her head (...)

or “snowy breasts”, black hair and also:

And she folds her wings on the shore
Folds the feather dresses, (...) ⁹⁰

To the description of the goddess who praises her beauty, which the fisherman enthused and succumbed to, belong, of course, the repeated in the works on this type, numerous color epithets, emphasizing what in those portraits deserves special attention: face, hair, breasts, shapes, charms, to mention for example: “her black hair falls down”, “wonderful charms”. They also emphasize the nakedness of the water maiden and as a result the state of nature due to which she belongs to another world. The heroine herself determines many different names. She was previously mentioned as the “wonder-girl”, also a “witch”, because she “makes wonders”, “virgin”, “deity”, “tern” (a term identifying her with a bird; a tern is of course another name of the seabird from seagulls species).

An interesting name is the “witch” used by the poet (Józef Bohdan Zaleski described the rusalka Zoryna similarly, see chapter I). That word has its ancient Slavic roots *čarovūnica*, and was used in relation to the person dealing with sorcery, who could cast spells; it is another name of a sorceress. The maiden from the ballad “makes wonders”, so she enchants, alters, transforms. The very term “wonder-girl” was often used in the topics and lexicon of the magical fairytales and tales, based on the Slavic folk motifs⁹¹. Numerous princesses, noble women, daughters of rulers called wonder-girls, charming wise girls of extraordinary and unprecedented beauty appeared in them⁹².

The mermaid enchanted the fisherman with her appearance and beauty of her body, limber dances; she encouraged, abused: “she called to herself”, invited to her manor:

when I am a fish and you are in the boat
will swim far away. (...)
There is an island (...)
Golden sands, pure water
My home is there⁹³

He missed her look and meeting, was waiting for her:

The fisherman is sitting, busy with thinking
Still having a sad dream (...)
He still keeps his eyes on the waters
And waits for the maiden⁹⁴.

That was the mermaid's plan, the final of which was the death of the protagonist:

The water is roaring stronger,
The fisherman is sailing in the boat;
A whirlwind tears out an oar from the hands
And he dies in the waves⁹⁵.

One more aspect of contact with the mermaid is also worth mentioning. Barszczewski introduced to the ballad numerous metamorphoses of the “wonder-maiden” being inspired with the German text, as well as the folklore of the Eastern lands. We already know that she could once take the form of a tern, once a golden fish:

A golden fish jumps off the water
Like a lightning⁹⁶

The motif of a golden fish, endowed with the human voice and charm, is known primarily to fairytales. It is enough to mention Pushkin's *The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish* or the version of Brothers Grimm⁹⁷. Let's add that in the biological sciences there is the name of a *goldfish* used for breeding Chinese varieties of the population of one of the golden carp subspecies, commonly known as the decorative carp or veiltail, however, the latter name only applies to some varieties with long fins. Goldfish are also very popular aquarium fish around the world. They have already been bred in pools (ponds) and aquariums in China from the seventh century AD⁹⁸.

The suggestive image recalled by Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki also draws attention to another concept of mermaids and their further alterations

The legends from pre-Christian times and songs of the ancient people say about the sea goddesses (...). They are sea rusalki (...) they wore the outfit made of fish scales, decorated with pearls (...) they had such a charming and lovely voice that their singing could not be resisted by any young man, however, misfortune waited for him because as soon as he touched the white hand, caught in her arms, strangled in hugs, fell like a log to the bottom of the sea⁹⁹.

It is the image of the mermaid-queen of the Baltic Sea known as Jurata. In this case, the pattern of love of a man and a creature from another world accepted in legends and folk beliefs is reversed; the man becomes “enslaved” by a woman, subordinated to her will. The queen fell in love with the young fisherman: “a handsome fisherman woke up in the queen's heart a vivid feeling of love”, therefore, she decided to forgive him his fault for catching fish in exchange for the condition: “that you will love me and will remain faithful. Choose death in the embrace of my first rusalka or love of their queen”¹⁰⁰. It should be mentioned that in the traditional folklore of the eastern lands there was a belief that rusalki

had their leader; they stayed in a group; they all moved with one chosen group leader: the queen.

The young man swore eternal love and from that day they met every day: “as every evening, no matter whether the weather was fine or the sea was rough, Jurata came to see her beloved fisherman”. However, the plot of the klechda, according to the folk categories, had to be tragic. The dangerous god Perkun learned about the mysterious love and decided to put it to an end. He killed Jurata and chained the fisherman to the rock and sentenced to suffering, looking at the dead body of his beloved one.

Let’s recall here the klechda of Leśmian *Majka* where the heroine fell in love with the inhabitant of the village, a common young man – Marcin Dziura. However, their love did not survive the time; on the way to being together, on the one hand, was the common sense of the protagonist and, on the other hand, the fish tail of the majka, “therefore, Marcin married a daughter of a miller”¹⁰¹ – emphasized Edward Broniecki. The analogous situation is found in the original model of the klechda – in *Forest Song* of Lesia Ukrainka, in which a rusalka unhappily in love with a village young man “loses” the love contest to an ordinary girl, a neighbor, who becomes the young man’s wife¹⁰². Being with a human, desire for his love diverged from the natural law, where only the individuals of the same species could couple, that is why the relations of the unearthly creatures with the mortals were primarily marked with defeat, failure, fatalism.

Mikhail Lermontov presented the queen of the sea differently in the poem with the same title. The work was written in 1841, so in the mature period of the poet’s activity. Lermontov received solid upbringing and education provided by his grandmother, a very wealthy landlady. He started writing when he was 14 and he already knew French and German as well as English. The lyric and epic of the mature years of 1836-1841 are characterized by socio-political themes, philosophical issues, intimate and love lyrics, the issues of nature. Ballads occupy a separate place at that time. Wiktor Jakubowski writes that the ballads of Caucasian topic (...) also based on the folkloristic material deserve core attention¹⁰³.

The character of *The Queen of the Sea* combines folk, fairytale, social and historic features. This time, a young prince, a knight who travels along the coastal area on a horse together with his friends, succumbs to the temptation of the mermaid. Lermontov adapted his work to the existing beliefs and legends about mermaids. Therefore, his sea deity, who charmed the prince with singing:

I am the king’s daughter! – a singing voice comes –
Do you want to spend a night at the side of a princess?¹⁰⁴

she turns out to be a classic mermaid, half-woman, half-fish, “a sea freak with a green tail”:

The tail is covered with scales like a snake¹⁰⁵

with the beautiful face, blue eyes, long and shiny braid.

This description is close to the fairytale princesses not only from Russian fairytales, stylized according to the aesthetics of beauty and “poetics of charm”: wonderful faces, long golden or corvine braids, blue eyes and rich outfits, physically perfect. Ukrainian folk legends also name them “sea princesses”, “sea wonders”, “queens”, living in the water depths “having a golden clothes made of fish scales” or representing “a fish to the waist and a woman above the waist” (it is easy to recognize a Greek or medieval mermaid Melusine)¹⁰⁶. Let’s recall, for example, the portrait of the sea queen presented by Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna in *Bajeczna opowieść o królewiczu La-Fi-Czaniu, o żołnierzu Soju i o dziewczynce Kio/Fairytale about Prince La-Fi-Czan, Soldier Soj and Girl Kio*. And although the meeting with her is a side motif, the motif of metamorphosis appears in contact with her. The evil witch transformed the princess into a fish and only a firm resolution of the prince – to stay silently at the fish, protect her like a guard and allow no one to her for the whole year – let her regain the human appearance and, as it happens in fairytales, the prince took her to his palace¹⁰⁷.

The romantic anthropomorphic “shapes of wonders” in paintings of sirens, based mostly on ancient and folk examples, are the embodiment of the artistic visions and dreams of this era. Mermaids impress with their domination, personifying independent and wild femininity; they want to take the total control over a seduced man. They appear as femme fatale, omnipotent and destructive feminas with transcendent and mysterious powers flowing from the otherworld and nature.

Chapter 6

Prosecuted infidelity: dziwożony¹

*as soon as the darkness falls,
various supernatural creatures come out to the world,
the forces that are as mysterious as evil begin to act.*
Przemysław Burchard²

The human in the traditional culture observed and interpreted the surrounding reality, read signs hidden in events, places and characters. He determined his position in the universe, tried to understand and explain the phenomena and processes occurring in nature. He translated them into his own language, image, creating in this way, among others, a wide circle of fantastic demonic images, extremely diverse and different. In the sphere of his vision there were not only beautiful and shapely rusalki, seducing men with the charms of their bodies, mermaids, trying at all costs to seduce and kill a daredevil, or other demonic creatures as witches, Lady Middays, topielice³. In that group there is also a large part of the personified female power demons that are repulsive and ugly, with unnatural, non-human shapes and appearance, with the behavior resembling wild animals or beasts, actions of which cause harm to a human being. We can include to them: dziwożony, the “Tatra hobgoblin”, the creatures full of envy and ruthlessness, disgusting and repulsive, deprived of even a bit of feelings.

“daughters of moisture” – foreign in the world of tradition: folklore and literature

Human imagination in the traditional culture was often expressed through the dark, dangerous images, untranslatable and fantastic visions, deprived of the internal coherence and logic. In this way, the individual built and evoked fear

and anxiety that corresponded to her expectations, the atmosphere of excitement, intimidation and certain suspension, sometimes organization and structure. The predicate of scaring, “and thus affecting the psyche with a word, deed or image, emphasized the uniqueness of time – hierophany perceived as an emanation of power”⁴ – place and character. The analyzed monsters, belonging to a group of female demons, ugly and cruel, possessed the features of intimidation or horror. The legend, written by Lucjan Siemieński, states: “they are the supernatural, malicious woman”⁵. The belief in them, preserved in Slavic legends, and then used in literature, occurred mainly in mountainous areas in Podhale, Carpathians, and also in the legends of Lesser Poland and Upper Silesian religious tales⁶. Let’s add that Lucjan Siemieński came from a noble family living in Eastern Galicia. However, he made his living from his own creative work. He was a friend of August Bielowski, the group Ziewonia; he also belonged to that literary group. Ukraine, as well as the entire Slavdom, its folklore, was the young poet’s passion. In our literary tradition, Siemieński reserved a permanent place primarily as the author of *Dumki*⁷.

The etymology of this word and its connections are worth mentioning here. The name probably derives from the Old Slavic word *divū* that means both something “astonishing, amazing, extraordinary, as well as savage, primeval, remaining in the state of nature”⁸. The 19th century source materials indicate that *dziwożony* were “the wives of Dziw, the god of hell”⁹ or “in some relation with him” that is reported by Kolberg: “the Eastern *diw* is a kind of a malicious genius; our *dziwo* in the most appropriate meaning of that word refers mainly to a phenomenon more or less monstrous and completely corresponds to the image of the spirit that is called *diw* in the east”¹⁰. The encyclopedia of demons explains the term “Dziwo, Dziw” as follows: “a forest demon (...). In order to scare people and make them good, he took on unknown shapes and turned into various monsters (...), also a water devil”¹¹. Boris Rybakov explains the etymology of *diw* in a different way; according to him the name comes from “*dios*, *djy*, *diwy* – or <belonging to god>”¹². In the preserved spelling structures of the Eastern Slavs, dating back to pre-Christian times, there was a pagan reproving and prosecuting deity called Diw, Diwo, Black God: “I wish a black diw came to you”¹³. The semantic and existential closeness of *dziwożona* with Dziw/Diw can also be demonstrated through the places of living and connection with water. That repulsive femina often chose woods, dark forest, wilderness, sometimes a habitat under the ground or in a lake, near streams and springs, or wet meadows for her area of activity and shelter. These are the places typical for demons’ shelters: remote, lonely and empty. In addition, in Podhale or Lesser Poland, she was called a “daughter of moisture”, a water nymph¹⁴.

As a demonic superficial being, she was also called a “wonder-wife”, “wonder-woman” (for example, in Pokuttya), “old woman”, “watery lady”¹⁵. The name of *dziwożona* was also found in other countries: in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria (*diva žena*), in Moldova (*dziwne baby*), in Slovenia (*diva*), in Serbia (*samodiva*), in Ruthenia (*dziwa*) and also in German folk beliefs where it meant “wild woman”¹⁶. In Slavic folk demonology, a “wild woman” was associated with a pre-Christian creature, representing the category of the negative phenomenon, dangerous mainly for the pregnant women and the women in childbirth, also replacing and abducting babies. In this aspect, she was related to a strange woman. In the cultural paradigm, the wild woman described by Angelika Aliti is associated primarily with the ruthlessness of nature, primordial power, severity, mountainous space, insensitivity; “wilderness – the author emphasizes – the impossibility of enslavement appears in numerous and multiple forms, provided that they are feminine in nature. A very carnal aspect is the aspect of a cave woman, [mountainous] (...). The aspect of the spiritual character is manifested in another form of a mother, in the queen of the night. It is a goddess subordinated to the element of air”¹⁷.

According to folk beliefs, *dziwożona* can be met mainly at night, but only “when the moonlight reached the ground without obstacles, when the sky was light and clear, without clouds”¹⁸. Let’s recall that *rusalki* and mermaids chose precisely that time for their practice because of the most intense emanation of power. Analogously did *dziwożony*. The night, as the period of time liked with the appearance of various demons, was the time favorable for their activity. The darkness implied what is unknown, dangerous, untamed, strange, fearful, contrary to the normal, natural system. It was believed that evil spirits, malicious creatures and demons were especially active and powerful at night because darkness is the sphere associated with evil. In the folk belief, the horror of the night, being the result of the insecurity through the disappearance of brightness, light, isolation of the human being (man felt more confidently in a group) was subjective or objective (personal and social fear)¹⁹, referred to the fundamental duality of nature: darkness and light that in many religious and ideological systems gave birth to the moral dualism – evil and good. Fear of the night, as the researchers emphasize, “is one of the most common fears of humanity. It touched upon every form of human existence in the phase of the night – both its proper state of non-existence, sleep, (...), and vigilance, especially while staying outside of the own *orbis interior*”²⁰. The full moonlight obtained positive valorization in folklore. It was connected with fertility, procreation, regeneration, immortality, with the phenomena of life in the plan of nature and men, especially women (world of plants and physiological cycle of a woman). The moonlight was classified as

feminine, and the moon itself symbolically embodied the principle of femininity and passivity. In folk imagination it was associated with the sphere of changeability, establishment of life, emotional uncertainty.

Dziwobaba in the traditional consciousness is primarily a female horror demon related to death, negatively oriented to humans. The folk imagination ascribed to that envoy of the underworld the role of a “moral guarantor”, a guarantor of arrangement of order in private life of an individual giving, her a set of qualities that help her fulfill her role: “dziwożony persecuted unfaithful girls and women. When some maiden or wife, betraying her husband, gave birth to a nice baby, dziwożony stole it and left their own one on its place (...) it happened that they even kidnapped girls if their mothers were unfaithful or did not obey their husbands”²¹.

In the image of this female monster, and thus in the simple folk understanding of the principles of what is good and what is evil, the archaic cognitive structures mixed with the later ones, shaped on the basis of Christianity, the ethical principles determined by the Decalogue. The rules of ethics, applicable laws, personal and group responsibility, proposals and marriages were strictly followed in the traditional village, and all the offenses, immoral and anti-social actions were severely punished. It resulted from the folk code of behavior and belief in the sacredness and inviolability of a married couple, also from the belief in the irreversibility of the wedding oath – once conducted under oath in the face of God, the marriage was irreversible and valid forever. All dangers and threats even to the most elementary values and duties (such as the obligation of a wife towards her husband and vice versa) were limited and removed from the life of a community in various ways (see the chapter about Jagna – the lynch law). One of many was the belief in non-human beings who helped and maintained peace, moral purity and a consensual order of actions among the inhabitants of the village. There was, of course, a certain moral and social freedom but it concerned the unmarried people, however, tolerated within the safe limits. In the anthropological plan, this moralism became at the same time a guarantor of the cosmic order that is constantly exposed to the destructive action of the forces of chaos (evil).

An important element that was guarded by the nymphs was the obedience of wives to husbands. According to them, obedience and discipline originated from the patriarchy of folk culture. It was the men who set the norms, established order, chose punishments, guarded the fulfillment of duties; headed the family and local community. They were masters and rulers, they fought and ruled. It resulted from a general conviction, obligatory for the magical culture –

a dichotomous division based on the cosmos dualism (this world – that world) and the dialectic of the *sacrum* – *profanum*:

God – sunrise – life – right – familiar – male (man)

Devil – sunset – death – left – foreign – female (woman)

The signal of the origin of the water lady as well as the confirmation of her status as a different mythical being from the otherworld, was a non-human appearance: “they were shaggy”, “short, and their faces terrified with ugliness (...)”²².

Shagginess, hairiness are the attributes of belonging to another reality, allowing contact with death, a distinctive element that gives a given creature specific properties and transcendent powers. Such individuals were, for example, the carnival masked people, Easter costumed children or Christmas carol singers who appear in the tame, known, safe, human space in a specific and different time of solstice and metamorphosis; the time open for the unknown powers of nature. Among the wandering strangers there were often the boys dressed as bears, goats, storks, scarecrows; also as strangers: Jews, Gypsies, bearded, dirty, dressed in rags, torn jackets. Their costumes were made of sheepskin coats, old fur coats, peas and straw. The idea of anti-order, festive mess, unearthly chaos culminated in gestures and ritualistic behavior. It was about the temporary suspension of time and human activity, finding oneself in the sacral space, unusual, unique and what is most important – necessary and vital for the restoration of the order and entering into the ordinary human time, time of work and everyday life. The difference and otherness were important; a “topsy-turvy world” where everything became possible; there was a chance for transformation, renewal, change²³.

Both dwarfism and ugliness of the demonic female influenced the formed image and intensified the mystery and anxiety. Dwarfism, from a medical point of view, is a shortage of height, caused by the lack of the hormone deciding growth; it often functions as a chronic disease. The people who suffered from this disease were called dwarves. In folk imagination, dwarfism was also present in fantastic creatures, beyond the reality: in the characters from fairytales and legends – dwarves, from folk beliefs: domestic spirits (*domowniki*), protective spirits (*uboża*) or guardian spirits. They were divided into two categories: good, helpful and friendly, and evil, harmful and unfriendly. Dwarfism had one more important feature – it allowed these demons to settle in various unfavorable and tight places. *Domowniki* and *ubożęta*²⁴ lived in the nooks and crannies of the attic, in the corners of the gloomy hallway, behind the bed, stove, in the crevice below the threshold. Analogously, *dziwożony*, who chose hollows, caverns, grot-

tos, dark forests and narrow halls for their shelter. All these places were related to darkness, far distance, location on the sidelines, isolation. These places generate senses with initiation, alteration, symbolic death, underground, and therefore, something dangerous, undesirable, wild, different. According to the folk belief, in such shelters there were creatures (fairies, prophets) or people (hermits, penitents) looking for peace, tranquility, distance, escaping from the society and contacts with others. They favored their activity, fulfilled tasks and life goals. These “houses” escaped from the earthly order, acquiring magical and ritual properties belonging to transgression and otherworld²⁵. In such a locum (hollow) the heroine of Bolesław Leśmian’s klechda *Podlasiak* lived²⁶.

In order to complete the ugliness, stretched to the limits of abnormality and frightening image of *dziwożony*, let’s quote another extremely suggestive description of the monster: “the breasts were so huge that they washed and mangled their own dresses on them (...), extremely long and dried (...), they tread of these breasts and stumble on them. They have bandy legs, dried and long hands, and the teeth in their mouths are as rare as the rungs on the ladder. They also have long, pointed tongues, very active, winding and rough.”²⁷.

Ugliness, as a lack or the opposite of beauty, belongs to the aesthetic categories shaping our taste. It is a theme, a model that often appears in culture, art, literature, mainly in fairytales (not only based on the folk motifs). Repulsive and unattractive in appearance and behavior, witches, sorceresses, beasts or monsters appear in them. It should be emphasized that both concepts of beauty and ugliness were relative in different cultures and periods. For example, something what could be ugly, strange or abnormal to Western culture – half human, half animal, could be a common and ordinary, benevolent and favorable deity to the representatives of other cultures.

Cultural and historical changes in the understanding of the concept of ugliness almost always were closely connected with the changes in understanding of the problem of beauty. When something was symmetrical and harmonious, it was considered beautiful (for example, as in the 18th century), something that was asymmetrical and disharmonious was considered ugly, while when the criterion of beauty was functionality (as in many genres of art of the 20th century), something that was impractical and non-functional was considered ugly. However, when the moral value was taken into account (as in Victorian times), something that was evil, spoilt and morbid was considered ugly.

In the magical culture, the presentations of ugly and frightening figures, situations, places were mostly connected with the stimulation of imagination, with the implementation of fear, scare, with the increase of expression or with cognition. As we have already written, the invocation of fear also served to con-

struct tension, expectation, and as a result, to change or alter the reality or the part of this reality. It also influenced the intensification of properties, the specific features of the phenomenon, and further – the need for double vigilance and the right attitude, action and being. As Anna Brzozowska-Kajka emphasizes, scaring “perpetuated a specific idea for the traditional thought, with the didactic intention inscribed in it – through scaring, the standards of terrestrial and extraterrestrial coexistence were strictly respected”²⁸. The legends about dziwożony, the belief in their existence indicate the phenomenon of contamination: dziwożona as a demon related to death, darkness, devil and a demon guarding the social order and canonical norms of behavior based on morality, often punishing for an offense with the kidnapping or causing harm.

From that perspective, let’s refer to the cultural field. In the anti-feminine tradition, as it is called by Umberto Eco, the motif of defaming women, developed in literature from the Middle Ages to Baroque, “the ugliness of which expressed internal cunning and the terrible power of seduction”. In addition, there are numerous presentations (mainly in art) of old women who are ugly, with bald heads, faces covered with wrinkles, with a sniffy nose and a deadly look, with the sagging, long breasts, often toothless or possessing only a few teeth, with the dried and skinny hands, sticky nails. Giovanni Boccaccio, in *The Labyrinth*, referred to them as disgusting and misogynistic, writing: “a woman is an imperfect animal tormented by thousands of unpleasant and hideous passions at the mere mention (...). No other animal is less pure than she; even a pig that is bathing in mud cannot reach her ugliness”²⁹.

These medieval representations of women correspond with the literary images of the nymphs: shrunken, emaciated, toothless, with wrinkled, misshapen and haggard faces, unformed breasts. Both of them seem to be awkward, unpleasant, repulsive and at the same time disturbing and frightening. “She was small and flaccid” – Leśmian writes, firm, with big hips, “her eyes were too big, shaggy, too purple and convex, like the infectious lichen, her lips seemed to have unbearable callus, and could hardly have enough room in the thin oval of her parched face (...) there was a wart on her one hand, and a peeling pink nail on the big finger of the other one”³⁰.

The particularly emphasized element in the appearance of the strange women was hair, characteristic for the most female demons – shaggy and disheveled: “they had long, dissolved and tousled hair”³¹. Long hair, as we have already written many times, was the distinguishing feature of the creatures from the otherworld. Let’s recall that in the traditional worldview the lack of hairdo and uncombed hair were the significant components of chaos, wilderness, primordiality, the underworld, and therefore the lack of combing meant being outside

the society. The haircut was an exponent of order, organization, “creation from chaos”, and this meant the surrendering to cultural norms and fitting the order of human ecumenism. Demons could not be combed, because they represented a different system, order. Tousled, disheveled hair, and therefore disordered, were associated with chthonism or aquatism; also with nature, certain inaccessibility and rapidity, animality and wilderness.

Another signal of other worldliness and difference of the demonic female was a superhuman appetite, unlimited greed: “How do you recognize a changeling? By the unstoppable appetite (...) they were constantly hungry”. In order to cope with it, “they sneaked to the windows of huts at the supper time to get something to eat with the help of a trick or request. (...). They especially liked green peas and carrots”³².

Peas (beans and red beans) belonged to legumes due to their shape, number; belonging to the otherworld and being associated with mediation and transgression, death, also with fertility and abundance. Let’s add, for example, that the bean seeds, resembling in shape the human embryos or male testicles, suggested that “there were souls in them”. Peas, beans or broad beans were eaten during a wake or during the holidays dedicated to the deceased; they were (and still are) one of the main dishes of Christmas Eve, time of waking, waiting, passing, transformation. In the traditional Slavic culture, the dishes from the seeds of legumes, were in the basic menu also for the living ones, who celebrated and rituals dedicated to the deceased. The interesting behavior towards the spirits of ancestors was a characteristic feature of the ancient Greeks who, in order to please the ghosts and win their favor, “threw grains on the graves that had been previously burnt in order to deprive them of all contact with life”³³. The carrot, due to its root, belonged to plants associated with the underworld and the land of death. In traditional consciousness, the roots played an important role; they were attributed magic power, some were even considered a means of establishing a contact with transcendence, a mediator between heaven and earth.

The whole excess, abundance, crossing on the physiological sphere also belonged to the elements related to a foreign, non-human reality. They accompanied the unusual situations, special phenomena, fantastic creatures. They were connected with the certain folk way of experiencing the world – through finding oneself, a feeling of such a reality, in which ordinary common principles of human coexistence could not be used. As Roger Caillois emphasizes, excess “is an indispensable condition providing the desired effect (...), striving to restore nature and society”³⁴.

Apart from peas and carrots, the favorite food of water ladies was also a common polypody, “some kind of herb”³⁵, having very sweet roots and eagerly eaten

by shepherds. Researchers say that common polypody is a folk name of *polypodium vulgare*. When a girl ate the herb by mistake or on purpose, she became a dziwożona and obtained the features characteristic for the otherworld and demons³⁶. The literary variety or version of the common polypody that confirmed the greediness of dziwożony is honey and a sweet root of calamus. They occur in Bolesław Leśmian's klechda *Podlasiak*: "Dziwożona likes honey and she constantly takes it from bees (...) regardless of the bites of bees, she devours the most lavish slices of honey"³⁷. In the magical folklore, honey, also all sweetness was associated with gods, transcendence, sacrum, and alongside with milk, it was offered as a sacrificial gifts in honor of the deity or Lady/Mother Earth. Its mediation and transboundary features are the result of such beliefs. There is also a noteworthy fact that the traditional thought considered the bee to be a holy, solar (due to its golden color) insect that was related to a woman, surrounded by the specific honor; it was a mediator between different worlds and orders. It was also believed to be the "incarnation of the souls of the dead ancestors". However, in the matriarchal culture, as researchers point out, it was considered "an image of the female natural potency, a symbol of motherhood (...), bees continue their mother's vocation as nurses feeding with honey". The older beliefs associate bees (honey) with the moon, lunariness: "the connection of bees (...) with the moon is manifested in such a way that the priestesses of the lunar goddess are called <bees>; it was believed that honey originates from the moon and that bees are stars"³⁸. However, honey is connected not only with the symbolism of life; also with death. This is evidenced by its use in the preparation of All Souls' Day and funeral dishes, where it was an obligatory ingredient. Besides, what is no less important, as a mediation means, a substance connected with the otherworld, and thus demonic creatures, it could simultaneously represent chaos, disorder "so to portray the character of that sphere, in which all the decisive forces of human life were to be located. Only thanks to this, it was possible to secure the favor of the forces from another world that were to help make a change"³⁹.

As well as sweet flag, a waterside plant, growing in ditches, banks of rivers, lakes; with pink and serrate roots, juicy, "bittersweet" in taste, and at the same time fragrant and shimmering, was the food of dziwożony: "she put it between her lips and dipped her white sharp teeth into its pulp"⁴⁰. Sweet flag was used in medicine, cosmetics; its rhizomes were used to flavor sugars, tinctures and liqueurs.

Let's pay attention to the contacts of the nymphs with humans, their attitude towards women and men, the way they treated and "gained" the representatives of the opposite sex. Therefore, as the researchers note, these "daughters of moisture" "hunt for young men similarly to other nymphs. However, their lovers are treated very mildly. The used ones are left in the forest and they restore their

strength quite quickly. They eagerly interact with mamuny⁴¹, take advantage of bodily delights with them, sometimes they also like to kidnap a girl for pleasure⁴²; “they were bold for women and the elderly ones or awkward young men; they were afraid and they preferred to avoid the stout and young ones”⁴³.

Therefore, dziwożony applied the analogous mechanisms of actions and the same scheme of behavior in relation to men that characterized the actions of rusalki and mermaids – firstly, they observed, then grabbed, used and finally left (did not kill). As we remember, rusalki tempted with their beautiful and shapely bodies in order to tickle the seized candidate to death in the end; the mermaids seduced with the wonderful singing, which brought the daredevils to death; dziwożony treated the captured men kindly; they did not completely deprive them of energy, thanks to which they could quite quickly recover after being “exploited”. What is interesting, “they prefer unshapely humans who are clumsy and ugly but full of kindness, warm heart and volatile thoughts. They treat the beautiful ones much worse; sometimes they even torment and disfigure them, licking the skin from their bodies”⁴⁴. The conclusion arises itself, because they were ugly themselves in comparison with the rusalki and mermaids, they preferred plain humans. Interaction between the human and dziwożona brought unusual delight and anxiety at the same time. This state of ambivalence, so characteristic for mythical thought, on the one hand, pushed away from them, distracted and aroused disgust (due to the lack of beauty), on the other hand, attracted, enticed and encouraged (due to the gentle nature and kindness). The contact with the water lady caused the sense of dissonance, forced to think and act. Some positive elements in the interaction with a dziwożona should also be pointed out. Especially in case of men “they give the tremendous faith in the rightness of their own actions, even if it was against the opinion of the whole world”. However, in general, they were known for their harmfulness: “they push people to strange things, to strange thoughts, to the dark paths of mind, thought confusing, but emotionally grounded, where thinking ends and where emotions reign”⁴⁵.

An important issue that is worth attention is their already mentioned “interaction with mamuny and practice of the bodily delights”. In the traditional folklore, mamuny are the demonic creatures, the goddesses with the appearance of the young women dressed in white cloths, “not very nice, stubby, with rosy faces, broad hips and full faces. Their eyes are narrowly set, slightly cross, skin is smooth and breasts are large. Their breasts are as hard as if they are made of iron, so full of milk and their nipples are huge, swollen, long, ending in a peak”. They annoy and hurt pregnant women and the women in childbirth⁴⁶. The bodily contacts with other demons of the same sex is the unexplored phenomenon in the traditional folklore, as well as the entire problem of sexuality. These actions

can be referred to the group of the orgiastic behaviors, and even to the “orgiastic culture” (according to Lech Starowicz). All forms of sexuality, homosexuality, deviation, partner interchange, group sexual interactions were accepted in that culture. Love games were the source of fun and pleasure⁴⁷. In ancient cultures, for example, such sort of behavior was often associated with a specific time of ritual: the solstice of seasons, “temple prostitution”. The worship of the goddess that was related to the temple prostitution took roots in the specially raised temples, around 10 000 BC; priestesses lived and worked there; “they owned and managed land on behalf of the community; here they practiced an old religion with its typical sexual rituals, thanks to which everyone had access to the power of the goddess”⁴⁸. Temple prostitution was a religious ritual, during which there was a bodily contact, intercourses between women, and which became an integral element of religious worship. However, as Nickie Roberts writes, with the run of time “male rulers opposed to the cult of the Great Goddess and introduced the institution of male priests (...) who were to supervise and exploit the women in temples. Nonetheless, the overthrowing of goddess was not an easy task (...). People continued to worship her in temples by participation in sexual rites (...). It is at this point that the real history of prostitution begins, begins with priestesses (...), they are the first whores in history”⁴⁹.

In the traditional culture there were some manifestations of sexual activity, mainly related to annual rituals – soil fertility. These were often the acts that imitated sexual intercourse performed by an individual in the field or the so-called wallowing naked on the ground – everything to induce fertility of the soil, maintain its reproductive powers and supply it with vitalism, sexual human energy and, as a result, achieve rich crops. In the case when naked women (by the bodily contact) wallowed on the ground; they were symbolically supposed to support the soil fertility and transfer the reproductive energy from a woman to the field; in the thought of the sympathetic magic, they filled the ground and grain with their breeding potential⁵⁰. Nudity is a state of nature, birth, a signal of reverse of the ordinary practices “belonging to the universal magical *decorum* that made the creative act, effective through a sequence of associations provoking transmutation”⁵¹. These mysterious reproductive powers of a woman and the resemblance of her breasts, womb and hips to the round shape of the globe caused her to be in the center of the archaic symbolism. And the identity of both her and nature became obvious. (cycles of nature = the cycle of a woman). It is worth mentioning here that in scientific research on sexuality, the closeness of human sex and nature is often emphasized, where morality and positive intentions are subjected to the primordial impulses. The sphere of erotica, perversion is an excluded place, excluded from the normal circulation, covered with taboo

and “sex is daimonic”⁵². *Daimon* is from Greek a “demon, supernatural power, fate, also a creature with half-divine human qualities, dangerous, less kind”⁵³.

Let’s return to our female monsters. The most favorite activities and behaviors of wonder-women were dancing, applauding, hooting, shouting and screaming, so making noise. They also liked music. Thus, the musicians “returning drunk from a wedding, baptism and fun were at a risk. (...) once they managed to kidnap a drunken musician, they dragged him to a cave or other hideout and ordered him to play until they fell asleep. Then, the musician had a chance to escape”⁵⁴. In addition, they were characterized with the joyous and full of vitality lifestyle, solid internal energy. They were also distinguished by certain feminine activities, “they picked raspberries, mushroom and berries and they ate them”⁵⁵. The most surprising phenomenon recorded on the basis of the mountainous legends by Kazimierz Przerwa Tetmajer was that they “spoke human language”⁵⁶. Let’s add in this place that Tetmajer, being fascinated with mountains, mountainous folklore and the life of Highlanders, wrote under impression a series of stories *On the Rocky Podhale* and, moreover, the epic *The Legend of Tatras*, also numerous other works. Living in his youth in Ludźmierz, he got to know Podhale, Spirz, Liptów and Tatras well. In the years 1881-1891 he made many mountain trips, reaching the peaks. He knew the environment, customs and beliefs of the inhabitants of these areas, their stories and tales; hence he managed to transfer everything to the pages of his works.

Screams, noise as the inverse of silence belonged in the magical culture to the ritual activities related above all to life; it was a feature of life, opposed to silence, muteness, peace. However, as Piotr Kowalski points out, “sometimes the sphere of death can be also expressed through noise, chaotic <wild> tumult. Both noise and <deadly> silence become the characteristic elements of the Other World. They are not always oppositional; together they are on the opposite side of the life that goes in the orderly world. (...) chaotic noise was considered a distinguishing feature of another world and primarily connected with the presence of (...) demonic creatures”⁵⁷. Screams, yells, hooting are also the sounds that are heard in the wild space: in forest, in wilderness, in wasteland; they are usually released by wild animals or birds. These are the sounds that are meaningless, indistinct, incomprehensible, beyond the human domain (let’s recall the analogous mutterings and whispers of witch doctors, establishing contact with the transcendence in order to restore health, see: chapter I, part I). It was in this ambiguity and chaos where was the power that set a request, question, task to the otherworld in order to return with a positive or negative response from the side of sacrum. Let’s recall that another world, the land of death was characterized by the mirror reflection of this world; it is an “upside-down world”, modeled

using the opposite categories: left, open, outside, backwards, down, cold, night, moon, etc.

In the group of activities that “the daughters of moisture” also liked to do were “kidnapping girls or women for fun or entertainment” also various mischiefs, sometimes malice: “They scare people, mislead, inflict mischief (...) even grownup girls were not safe from them: frequent cases of kidnapping happened to them”. In order to avoid it, “women and girls had to cut their hair so that dziwożony would not have any chance to catch them”⁵⁸. Let’s repeat that the long hair was a signal of the otherworld, belonging to another space, chaos; the short or lack of hair became the signs of this world, a determinant of reality and familiarity, order. Hair cutting can be additionally treated, on the symbolic level, as “cutting off” the contact or the possibility of its establishment with the fantastic creatures. In accordance with the magical principle “similar makes similar”, women cutting their hair, prevented water maidens from seizing and being taken into captivity, because they became different, belonging to the earthly safe area.

The danger that came from dziwożony was the exchange of children: “They were the most horrible for mothers because they kidnapped children (...), they waited at the huts of the women in childbirth and when they found a mother without a husband at home, they took the baby and left their own one on its place, usually noisy, evil and very ugly”⁵⁹. In order to steal a baby, “they waited for hours until it was alone in the covered cradle in the empty room”. They,

hidden in the lush nettles, huge bushy burdocks, sheltered from the human eye by gray candles of mullein or bitterly smelling stalks of mugwort, cradled their clumsy offspring making sure it would not cry loudly. When everybody left the house, in the blink of an eye, dziwożona together with the cherub in her hands stood above the child’s cradle (...) she placed her offspring in the place of the baby, and the human child was carried to the place where she used to live⁶⁰.

They also used other methods. In the folk tales about changelings, quoted by Julian Krzyżanowski, sometimes they took the appearance of housewives and “in the form of village women they tried to get to the hut where a mother lay with the newborn, lured her out of the house and taking advantage of her inattention, replaced the nice, healthy baby with their own, ugly, big-headed one”⁶¹.

In order to take the child back, the traditional folk thought developed a certain ritualized model of behavior and appropriate technique of action, a set of the readymade patterns. According to the folklore and local notes: “in order to make the little goddess give the kidnapped child back, the foundling had to be beaten; the cry makes demons return the human baby and take their own one away” or: “hurt mother carries the foundling to the dump, smuggles it with a rod, makes it drink an egg from the shell [i.e. feeds it with a raw egg – add. B. W.-D.] and exclaims: <take yours, give me mine>. Being touched in a motherly feeling

of a crying, beaten child, dziwożona secretly brings a kidnapped child, and takes her own one back”⁶².

Let’s take a brief look at the meanings of the gestures and the used things or places. The dump, where the foundling is thrown away, evokes obvious associations with dirt, impurity. All rubbish, fecal matter, excretions of the body were associated in the symbolic language and traditional structures with destruction, degradation, removal, poison, taboo, prohibition and consequently with death, and on the other hand they assumed the meaning of gold, money, prosperity in the household⁶³. Violation of the taboo meant contamination, pollution without the possibility of returning to the original state. Detention and renewal were identified through taboo. Anna Brzozowska-Krajka notes: “taboo, as a kind of categorical imperative, served to ensure the compliance with the natural order established *in illo tempore*, and thus to maintain the mythical unity between the human and cosmos”⁶⁴. Therefore, the rubbish had a double taxonomic status, because on the other hand, they evoked disgust and loathing (similarly the meaning of fecal matters, see: chapter I, part 3: the motif of expelling Jagna from the village on a pile of dung), which in the given situation seems to be understandable if we consider the dziwożona as a repugnant and ugly creature. Her child is analogous, and therefore, on the basis of the magic of similarity, ugly is connected with ugly, with something that repels and arouses reluctance, the foundling is left in the dump. In addition, as a consequence of human contact with it, an individual also becomes a taboo – hence in similar situations there are gestures of spitting, throwing feces, mud, urine, or, as in our case, throwing away on the dump and beating – they are supposed to annihilate the target⁶⁵.

With the help of striking, beating, inflicting blows, and thus making noise, people tried to deter, drive off demons and the entire evil that threatened the life and existence of the individual in the traditional village. Clamor was also made for apotropaic purposes. However, beating, whipping also has a deeper meaning. Thus, “to whip is to punish” – emphasizes Jean-Paul Roux, so whipping is a certain form of punishment “in the hope of redemption or forcing to compulsion”. Nonetheless, the researchers also see in that gesture “restoration of vital force by adding energy or also increasing the reproductive power (...), whipping (...) increases fertility”⁶⁶. Ancient goddesses – mothers or women of fertility often were deities who beat, were armed with rods, with sticks in their hands. The whip “can act like a medicine that cures in small doses and kills in a bigger ones”⁶⁷.

According to the ethnographic sources, the crying of the whipped foundling attracted dziwożona-mother, who immediately made an exchange. Let’s add that such exchanges/substitutions were often made by demonic females. We can mention another nymph that acted in the same way as dziwożona or mamuna. It

is a mourner “changing a baby; she usually takes a good, calm, beautiful, plump child and tosses a bad, noisy, skinny, pale one (...) the stolen child is often whipped in order to let its mother know and hear its cry: this torture takes place in front of the house and on the garbage of the mother’s child”⁶⁸.

In the same group of religious behaviors there are also defensive actions against the dziwożony and a system of dealing with them and the “fight” mechanism. It was possible to tame them and win their favor “only with the help of St. John’s bell-wort, a wreath or nawęza⁶⁹ from it, or also dried flowers and leaves in kaptorga⁷⁰. If we have any bell in our clothes, even its very soft and gentle ringing will scare the dziwożony away”⁷¹. The villagers also knew how to behave in the situations when they met wonder-women. The folk etiquette of confrontation with the demon, especially the first contact, included a specific stereotype of behavior – above all, common sense and thinking were needed. For this purpose, Seweryn Goszczyński cites a story that was heard in Łopuszna. One day a girl disappeared from a village. After some time, one of its inhabitants recognized her washing the linen in the mountains. She admitted being kidnapped by the nymphs and asked him for help. In the appointed day, the highlander came to her place on horseback, seized her and headed to the village. But the “daughters of moisture” noticed it and began chasing them. They were already catching them but the young were very lucky. The girl shouted to her companion: “keep to the St. John’s bells! The highlander obeyed and directed the horse between the bells, to which dziwożony could not approach because of some mysterious property of that flower; so when they had to circle, during this time the fleeing ones had a simpler road, escaped from the wilderness and came to the village”⁷².

Seweryn Goszczyński was interested in the spiritual culture of Podhale. He knew that the Tatra region had wonderful, romantic themes that were attractive to artists. At the end of 1831 he lived in the estate of Tetmajer and together with Józef Tetmajer he took trips to Podhale, spending most of his time in Łopuszna, a village located at the foot of Gorce. He was fascinated by all the differentness of the mountains, everything that was new and unknown⁷³. Podhale was for him a strange, exotic country, a reality uncontaminated by civilization, with a rich folklore and beautiful nature. Collecting information about the everyday life and customs of the highlander’s village, he tried to capture and systematize the basic features of the culture of Podhale; hence he developed a comprehensive image of highlanders in his works. As Alina Kowalczykowska points out: “The diary... became a model for the contemporary local history researchers, because they found an example of a landscape in it, in which an extensive description was subordinated to the emotions of a Pole and an artist”⁷⁴.

In folk beliefs there are numerous examples emphasizing human work for

demons, they take the form of cautions. Legends and stories also show dziwożony, little goddesses, Lady Midday or nocturnes fulfilling various kinds of female work: washing linen, weaving cloth, feeding babies or guarding their own farmyard⁷⁵. All the stories about works for extraterrestrial feminae served to present the natural inclinations of the demonic creatures, which most often were damage, and in the further consequence, even killing. In order to avoid these penalties, many memoranda – warnings addressed to those who violated bans or inadvertently got into the field of demons' activity, adopted a model of instructions, a pattern of ready-made methods of action. One of them was the use of a magical plant remedy with the function of an amulet: St. John's bell. The traditional thought has preserved the reflex of the ethno-botanic superstition informing of that the bell (plant) was an effective protection against dziwożony. St. John's wort was considered its botanic prototype, the herb that was blessed on August 15 at the Assumption of Mary and put into the door and windows of the household (border, transgressive, "open" places for the arrival of demons), to protect the residence from evil⁷⁶.

St. John's wort belonged to the protective and medical plants, widely used in herbal medicine. In addition, it appeared as a magical herb recommended in the situations of protection against demons, spells, enchantments and charms, mainly due to the color of its flowers, confirming the obvious connection with the sun⁷⁷. It was blessed in the church on St. Mary's Day; with its power of purification, given through the religious ritual, it was one of the common sacramental with the function of an anti-demonic "scarecrow". Magic and religion thus served for a common purpose – defense (double-faith). As a plant transponder serving for the protective practice preventing demons' activity, it possessed its source of power in the specific properties of the bell as a musical instrument. Even a small bell was able to scare the nymphs away with its weak sound. Bells are the semantically ambivalent items; they belonged to mediation products, which, by their sound range, determined a certain border, "connected the terrestrial and extraterrestrial sphere", constituted the equipment of sacral objects (church bells). They played an important part in the rites of passage: especially during funerals. They were located in the group of the tools that perform apotropaic, defensive and magical functions⁷⁸. As an example confirming this vague behavior of dziwożony, avoiding contact with St. John's bell plants, let's recall the human behavior in relation to another demon strzyga, which could be deprived of its harmful power if "you run to the belfry and ring the bell with the bell's heart and then fear will spill like goo"⁷⁹. All the association groups illustrate the spectrum of functional abilities of the bell and its sound: the marker of ritual temporality, the controller of unusual time (time of prayer) or uncertain time

(important events that are not necessary beneficial for the village) and the controller of the whole life of the village community, as well as the apotropaic that drives ghosts and demons away, the speaker with the transcendence. Pre-Christian thinking patterns have laid on the Christian system of meanings, improving their original symbolism.

Czesław Białczyński also mentions *nawęza* and *kaptorga* (see: earlier). He writes that it is possible to tame them “only with the help of St. John bell-wort, a wreath or *nawęza* from it, or also dried flowers and leaves in *kaptorga*”. *Nawęza* is a Slavic amulet, belonging to the element of protective magic, the task of which was to protect against charms, spells and insurance of happiness to the owner. *Kaptorga* was the kind of bag or box carried on the neck by the traditional Slavs where they put *nawęzy*, perfumes and later – relics.

Another defensive pattern was the use of a knife, especially against demons. In the traditional thought, the knife, as well as other metal and iron tools, was treated as an important and necessary, vital for existence. Hardness and durability determined that the symbol of strength, inflexibility, power, which nothing can resist, a sign of severity and vigor were seen in them⁸⁰.

An important detail in the appearance of *dziwożony*, which was mentioned in source texts and ethnographic and literary notes, was the red cap. Goszczyński, Kolberg and Siemieński write that one day a highlander caught a nymph stealing turnips in the field. He caught her, but she managed to break free, but left “a red cap in the highlander’s hand”. The poor one came to his window every evening and sang mournfully:

Boy, boy, give my cap back,
I will no longer steal your turnips

And she begged and complained so hard that he gave her the cap back because of pity⁸¹.

In another place – in *Sobótka/Kupala Night*, Seweryn Goszczyński mentions the same motif of the red cap. It presents the highlander celebration of St. John’s Night. The girls sang a song, warning in it of the nymphs that were lurking for both small children and young women. A special and distinctive sign of the demonic females is:

red cap
dissolved braid –
ah, it is *dziwożona*!⁸².

Also, the already mentioned, Lucjan Siemieński in the legend about *dziwożona* writes: “they wear a red cap on the head for a costume”⁸³. Sometimes the cap has an additional decorum in the form of a plant: “there is a red cap on the

head with a branch of fern”⁸⁴. But not only it. Kazimierz Przerwa Tetmajer also mentions wreaths: these were “the wreaths made from jaskiernik”⁸⁵.

All the headwear (caps, hats, hoods, crowns) in comparison with the other clothes are the significant carriers of symbolic meanings, mainly due to the importance of the head in magical culture. Already in pre-Christian times it was considered a symbol of a concentrated vital force, a habitat of the most important activities of the senses that define and direct human activity, also an apotropaic symbol. It was also associated with solar symbolism, the image of the world, totality (due to its shape) and center⁸⁶. In addition, the red cap does not only play the role of the element of decorum in text, but defines the belonging to a specific group. So it is possible to include *dziwożony* to the group of the fantastic supernatural creatures, and in addition small, dwarfish, as we have already mentioned, such as gnomes that are generally friendly to people. They were also distinguished by the red peaky cap. Additionally, headwear activates the senses associated with power, wisdom and authority. It is not a coincidence that the cap is also red. The ambivalence of red, as we already know, is connected with life (blood), energy, power, but also with the certain aggression, fire and destruction. It remains in the semantic connection with femininity, demonism, fatalism and fertility. In the negative aspect, it is associated with evil. In connection with femininity, fullness, fertility and mysterious power, there are also wreaths, which in the traditional culture covered women’s heads but also female demons (for example, see: chapter 1). *Jaskiernik*, about which Tetmajer writes, is probably a buttercup, herbaceous plant, a flower with the bright-yellow heads preferring boggy and marshy, or rocky and mountainous areas (hence, the name of some species: rock buttercup, alpine buttercup, mountainous buttercup) is considered a poisonous herb. Due to its look and name it is associated with solarism, sun, warmth.

Literary versions of folk tales about *dziwożony*, highly fantasized and imagined, draw attention to another aspect associated with them – treasures. Tetmajer writes: “they were to have fabulous underground treasures: golden bridges in caves on the water, walls, ceilings and floors from expensive stones, corridors stretching under the ground for many miles. But no one could enter there, and whoever came in, could consider it a miracle, if managed to get out of there”⁸⁷.

We have already known from the previous chapters that in the folk belief there was a conviction about beautiful underwater palaces of *rusalki* and mermaids made from precious ores (gold, amber, corals and pearls). The symbolism of these noble metals and stones refers to the otherworld, mysteriousness and incredibility, as well as to femininity, otherness and the feminine principle of existence. Let’s also recall in this place a few words about the symbolism and understanding of the bridge in the traditional Slavic culture. It is considered

a place of mediation, it connected but also separated two spheres, your own, safe, and foreign, dangerous (like a border). It was also a point of holiness. For example, in the Russian folklore, in order to simplify the way to the underworld for the deceased, a footbridge that improvised a bridge was put across the water. In Belarus, footprints were cut in the footbridges, which reminded the living ones of the obligation to sigh for the deceased⁸⁸. The deadly jump from the bridge to the Vistula of the legendary queen Wanda, “who did not want a German” is worth mentioning here; who in this way, after thankful prayers “sacrificed herself to the gods jumping from her own will (...), going to the land of the dead”⁸⁹.

The demonic femina from outside of the world, which is a dziwożona in this chapter, fits into the possibilities of the human imagination, next to rusalki and mermaids. It improves the atmosphere of weirdness, embodies otherness, fills the emptiness. As a guardian of moral iniquity, mainly women, she points at the ruthless subordination of man to the transcendent forces originating from unknown circles. The individual felt enslaved because certain decisions and actions took place outside of the sphere of her consciousness. Therefore, such enslavement was a consequence of subordination of the human to the rhythm and cycle of nature, communication with the supernatural reality, and consequently the guarantor of the peace for all the components of its system.

*

That specific type of enslavement was not established by humans, but was imposed by nature or the powers outside of this world. That is why it had a permanent, timeless and unchangeable character. This is evidenced by the reflexes of this belief in the existence of demons and supernatural controlling beings, which were deeply rooted in the village community and became known in the second half of the 20th century. An example can be the behavior of the residents of a small village in Podhale who faithfully follow the principles and rules of magical procedures in case of contact and protection against ghosts, including dziwożony prowling at night. This is evidenced by the ethnographic notes published in 1985. Their author writes:

I have never thought that I would ever deal with demons; it began on the very first day after my arrival, when I left my apartment with the intention of buying something for supper. (...). I went from house to house asking for eggs, milk, cheese. I was unwelcome everywhere; they excused saying there was a complete lack of these products. Anyway – it was said – if I come the next morning, maybe something will be found. I did not understand. After all, eggs, cheese and milk are very common goods in the village and the offer of selling is usually accepted eagerly by its inhabitants. My mistake was that I started searching for food after sunset. At this time, as soon as the darkness occurs, various supernatural creatures go out into the world; mysterious and evil forces begin to act. The only safe place, to which demons cannot have access, is the

closed interior of the house. If anybody gave an item from his house after the sunset – no matter for money or for free – the evil powers would gain control over the inhabitants of that home through that object. So the refusal to sell was a logical consequence of the belief in the existence of demons⁹⁰.

* * *

The nature of the all three representatives of the female fatal women: rusalki, mermaids, dziwożony, can be observed as ambivalent and paradigmatic, being the equivalent of cultural binarity: the otherworld – water. The element of water and the element of woman (femininity) is a universal problem and it is common in many cultures and religions; it is also the matter of fascination of a given time and epoch (for example, Romanticism and Neo-romanticism), but also a certain consequence on the level of the world model: something that is feminine is the essence of both death and life.

Conclusion

“Images of women served as a kind of bridge between ordinary everyday life and an imagined ideal life”¹ – John Dixon-Hunt wrote, referring to mid-19th century pre-Raphaelitism’ paintings. Therefore, everything that was associated with women constituted realization of material or spiritual reasons, not only according to the rules of opposition and similarity, but rather according to the principle of dissimilarity (other as different, the other one). Any dissimilarity usually astonishes and scares, encourages questions about the image of the world, the human condition, the state of society or culture. It stimulates reflection, enforces divagations and discussions. Science is aimed at presenting and comprehending it. As a certain category or perspective, it contains many varieties, it is based on faith, views, values, and opinions. A vast and variable scope of otherness, its relationships and interdependencies, implies, affect discussions on the experience of transgressiveness and on verifying attitudes.

On the basis of numerous texts of folklore and literature (more extensively: the texts of culture), the folk presentation of strangeness shows the concreteness, conspicuousness and matter-of-factness of the two-dimensional image of the world and man in the traditional culture, together with the meanings encoded in it.

The reality in folklore, together with the existence of an individual, was specifically reflected, „resembling a crystal in which rays of light were refracting. How different were these that entered it, from those that left it”² – Daniel Kadłubiec remarks. Obviously, such modeling depended on many factors, i.a. the features ascribed to particular persons, here: women, who were on the verge, in between, simultaneously here and there. Let’s stress it once again: on the border something unusual has always happened, because two worlds met there, whose qualities and properties intertwined just there. Transgressiveness and liminality of such persons, made them hybrids that bore the marks of both the spaces at the

same time: ours, familiar, human and strange, unknown, non-human. They were situated between the area of the living and the dead³. The most appropriate premises for them to stay and live, characterized by semantic ambivalence, were earth and water. Then, they felt confident and brave, and they could act.

The folk images of women in the aspect of otherness, outlined and reconstructed in this book, based on the 19th and early 20th century Polish folk-ethnographic materials (in the Slavic context), as well as their literary (more extensively: cultural) examples (of various epochs) first of all render the concept of the world and man, typical of magical-religious worldview and confirm the duality of female nature, its mysteriousness, strangeness and the “other world” character, depicted on the level of artistic work. They also illustrate and confirm that the encounter and dialogue between the two worlds (the real and extra-sensual ones), that the woman was the ambassador and spokesperson, turned out to be possible and necessary, could take place at any time, any place and in any space. Doubtlessly, this world existed and was real, as well as the existence of the other world was convincing and distinct. The woman constituted a part of both.

The type of research procedure assumed in this book, taking this awareness of dichotomy of the universe into account, together with a range of parameters delineating the direction of analysis and interpretation of the folk image of woman in the perspective of otherness, which we have already written many times, allows for generalizations concerning mutual cultural connections not only in Slavic countries. They are based on wholeness, globalness and common, ethno-psychological principles of perceiving culture, as well as on affinities in thinking techniques and behavior in the situations of changes, modifications and crises. They simultaneously concern the very essence of traditional patterns: belief in the modeling, forming and creating the role of woman, as well as her destructiveness and degradation, the purpose of which was to preserve and maintain the magical circle of life.

The polysemy of the image of woman, shown on many planes, confirms her significance for the cycle of life-death-life fully and fully indicates the rules aimed at securing the order of life, security and harmony.

* * *

In the texts of culture referred to in the foregoing study, the figures of women: midwives, healers, prophetesses, mourners, spinners, weavers or dancers, as well as nymphs, sirens and dryads always appeared in ambivalent, two-form and liminal categories, which not only deny, condemns, or excludes them, as predestines them for a special role, determined by God, nature or the transcendent forces, for, as John Ruskin emphasizes “the adoration of woman, dead or alive, has never been destructive for mankind”⁴.

NOTES

Introduction

¹ To refer to but a few examples from the rich collection of studies globally presenting the magical culture or its chosen element/aspect: Kowalski Piotr, *Kultura magiczna: omen, przesąd, znaczenie/ Lexicon of the Signs of the World. Omen, Superstition, Meaning/*, Wrocław 1998, Warsaw 2007; Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Symbolika dobowego cyklu powszedniego w polskim folklorze tradycyjnym. /Symbolism of Daily Cycle in Polish Traditional folklore/*, Lublin 1994; Adamowski Jan, *Kategoria przestrzeni w folklorze. Studium etnolingwistyczne/Category of Space in Folklore. An Ethnolinguistic Study/* Lublin 1999; Łeńska-Bąk Katarzyna, *Zapraszamy na wesele... Weselne oracje i ceremonialne formuły /We Invite You for a Wedding... Wedding Speeches and Ceremonial Formulas/* Cracow 1999; Kupisiński Zdzisław, *SVD, Advent i Boże Narodzenie w regionie opoczyńskim. Studium religijności ludowej. /Advent and Christmas in the Opoczno Region /* Warsaw 1997; Kupisiński Zdzisław SVD, *Wielki post i Wielkanoc w regionie opoczyńskim. Studium religijności ludowej/Lent and Easter in Opoczno Region. Study of Folk Religiousness/*, Warsaw 2000; Kowalski, Piotr, *Zwierzęciopiry, wampiry i inne bestie. Krwiożercze potwory i erozja symbolicznej interpretacji /Animal-Human-Phantoms, Vampires and Other Beasts. A Bloodthirsty Monsters and Erosion of Symbolic Interpretation/* Cracow 2000; Zadrożyńska Anna, *Świąty, zaświaty. O tradycji świątowań w Polsce/This Worlds and the Other Worlds. About the Traditions of Celebrations in Poland/* Warsaw 2000; Łeńska-Bąk Katarzyna, *Sól ziemi, /The Salt of the Earth/* Wrocław 2002; *Folklor w badaniach współczesnych/Folklore in Contemporary Studies/*, ed. Mianeki Adrian, Osińska Agnieszka, Podziewska Luiza, Toruń 2005; *Poszukiwanie sensów. Lekcje z czytania kultury/ Looking for Meanings. Lessons in Reading Culture/*. ed. Kowalski Piotr, Libera Zbigniew, Cracow 2006; Kupisiński Zdzisław SVD, *Śmierć jako wydarzenie eschatyczne. Zwyczaje, obrzędy i wierzenia pogrzebowe oraz zaduszkowe mieszkańców regionu opoczyńskiego i radomskiego/ Death as an Eschatic Event. Funeral and All Saints' Day Customs, Rites and Beliefs of the Inhabitants of Opoczno and Radom Poviats/*. Lublin 2007; Rokosz Tomasz, *Od folkloru do folklu. Metamorfozy pieśni tradycyjnych we współczesnej kulturze /From Folklore to Folk. Metamorphoses of Traditional Songs in Contemporary Culture/* Siedlce 2009; Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Tabu.*, Warsaw 2010; Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Chleb w folklorze polskim – w poszukiwaniu znaczeń /Bread in Polish Folklore – Looking for Meanings/*, Siedlce 2010 and many others.

² Here, partial research should be mentioned at least selectively. It concerns the image of (peasant) woman, her activities, words and gestures, both in folklore and literature, cf. i.a. Brzezińska Anna Weronika, *Wiejska baba – rola i miejsce starszych kobiet w tradycyjnej kulturze polskiej wsi/ The Village Old Woman – The Role and Place of the Elder Women in Polish Traditional Culture of the Village/* [in:] *Starsze kobiety w kulturze i społeczeństwie /Elder Women in Culture and Society/*. ed. Zierkiewicz Edyta, Łysak Alina, Wrocław 2005, pp. 113-119; Dragun Gabriela, „Ta, Która Wie”. *Motyw starej kobiety-wiedźmy we współczesnej prozie/“The One Who Knows”. The Motif of an Old Woman-Witch in Contemporary Prose/* [in:] *Starsze kobiety.../ Elder Women...*, pp. 128-138; Simonides Dorota, *Babski comber*, [in:] *Śląskie uciechy i zabawy (materiały etnograficzno-folklorystyczne./Silesian Fun and Games (The Ethnographic-Folkloristic Materials)/* ed. Bukowska-Floreńska Irena, Bytom 1991, pp. 125-152; Kuźma Inga, *Współczesna religijność kobiet: antropologia doświadczenia/Contemporary Religiousness of Women. An Anthropology of Experience/*. Wrocław 2008; Kuźma Inga, *Świat kobiet/ The World of Women/*, „Etnografia Polska” 2003, fol. 1-2, pp. 103-127; Machota Monika, *Wizerunek kobiety i mężczyzny w polskich bajkach ludowych a funkcjonowanie stereotypów płciowych./The Image of Woman and Man in Polish folk Tales and Functioning of the Gender Stereotypes/* „Literatura Ludowa” 2006, no. 4-5, pp. 49-67; Smoleń Barbara, *Chłopka./The Peasant Woman/* [in:] *Polka: medium, cień, wyobrażenie/ The Polish Woman; Medium, Shadow, Image/*. academic ed. Janion Maria, Warszawa 2006, pp. 130-136; Koc Barbara, *Niewinna grzesznica w Chłopach Władysława Stanisława Reymonta/ The Innocent Sinner in „Chłopi”/The Peasants/* by W.S. Reymont/ „Literatura Ludowa” 2006, no. 6, pp. 19-23; Anais Vially, *Kto sieje wiatr, zbiera burzę/Who Sows the Wind, Picks the Storm.* „Literatura Ludowa” 2006, no. 3, pp. 3-10; Ogonowska Agnieszka, *Białogłowy, wiedźmy i rusalki, czyli kreacje kobiet w „Starej Baśni” Kraszewskiego: powieść i film: analiza porównawcza/ White-He-*

aded, *Witches and Rusalki. The Creations of Women in "Stara Baśń"/The Old Fairy Tale/ by Kraszewski: the Novel and the Film. A Comparative Analysis/ „Ruch Literacki” 2007, fol.2, pp. 161-174.*

³ Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon znaki świata. Omen, przesąd, znaczenie/Lexicon. The Signs of the World. Omen, Superstition, Meaning/*. Wrocław 1998, p. 7.

⁴ Cf. works on the subject, i.a.: Janion Maria, *Kobiety i duch inności/Women and the Spirit of Otherness* Warsaw 2006; Gajda Kinga, *Medea dzisiaj: rozważania nad kategorią innego /Medea Today: Divagations on, the Category of the Other/* Cracow 2008; Buchowski Michał, *Zrozumieć Innego: antropologia racjonalności/To Understand the Other. An Anthropology of Rationality/*, Cracow 2004; Benedyktowicz Zbigniew, *Portrety „obcego”: od stereotypu do symbolu /Portrait of the “Stranger”: From Stereotype to Symbol/*, Cracow 2000; Koziński Józef, *Koncepcja transgresyjna człowieka/Transgressive Concept of Man/*, Warsaw 1987; *Kobieta i/jako Inny. Mit i figury kobiecości w literaturze i kulturze rosyjskiej XX-XXI wieku (w kontekście europejskim)/ Woman and/ as the Other. The Myth and Figures of Femininity in Russian Literature and Culture of 20th-21st Century (in European Context)*, ed. Cymborska-Leboda Maria, Gozdek Agnieszka, Lublin 2008; Polak Ryszard, *Status kobiety w różnych cywilizacjach /The Status of the Woman in Different Civilizations/*, “Cywilizacja: o nauce, moralności, sztuce i tolerancji”/“Civilization: on Science, Morality, Art and Tolerance/”, 2007, no. 21, pp. 61-75; *Literackie portrety Innego/The Literary Portraits of the Other/*, ed. Cieliczko Paweł and Kuciński Paweł, Warsaw 2008; *Obcy – Obecny: literatura, sztuka i kultura wobec inności /The Stranger – Present: Literature, Art and Culture towards Otherness*, ed. Cieliczko Paweł and Kuciński Paweł, Warsaw 2008; *Widziane, czytane, oglądane – oblicza Obcego/Seen, Read, Watched – the Faces of the Stranger/*, ed. Cieliczko Paweł and Kuciński Paweł, Warsaw 2008; *Tropy tożsamości: Inny, Obcy, Trzeci/ Tracks of Identity: the Other, the Stranger, the Third*, ed. Kalaga Wojciech, Katowice 2004; *Inny, inna, inne: o inności w kulturze/The Other: on Otherness in Culture/*, ed. Janion Maria, Snochowska-Gonzalez Claudia, Szczuka Kazimiera, Warsaw 2004; Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Inny obraz feminy. Szkice folklorystyczno-literackie/Another Image of Femina. Folkloristic-Literary Sketches*, Siedlce 2012; *Odmieńcy/ Misfits/*, selected and edited by Janion Maria and Majchrowski Zbigniew, Gdańsk 1982; Perzanowski Andrzej, *Odmieńcy: antropologiczne studium dewiacji /Misfits: An Anthropological Study of Deviation/*, Warsaw 2009.

⁵ More cf. Iwasiów Inga, *Literatura jako wiedza o innych – rekonesans/ Literature as a Knowledge about the Others – Reconnaissance/*. [in:] *Literatura i wiedza /Literature and Knowledge/*, ed. Bolecki Włodzimierz, Dąbrowska Elżbieta, Warsaw 2006, p. 346, and *My i oni. Zawila historia odmienności/ Us and Them. A Complex History of the Otherness/*, ed. Górska. Barbara, Taylor-Kucia Jessica, transl. by Myszkiwicz Monika, Cracow 2011.

⁶ Perzanowski Andrzej, *Odmieńcy.../ Misfits.../* (quotation from the cover).

⁷ Iwasiów Inga, *Literatura jako wiedza... / Literature as a knowledge about the others – .../*, p. 346.

⁸ Gajda Kinga, *Medea dzisiaj.../ Medea Today .../*, p. 34.

⁹ According to the findings that have already been established in studies on women, e.g.. Simone de Beauvoir, *Druga płeć/The Second Sex/*, transl. by Mycielska Gabriela, Leśniewska Maria, Warsaw 2003; psychological and psycho-analytical concept of Jacques Lacan (woman as the Other) or in detailed studies, e.g. np. Kinga Gajda, *Medea dzisiaj.../ Medea Today.../*

¹⁰ Gajda Kinga, *Medea dzisiaj.../ Medea Today .../*, p. 15.

¹¹ The rules of folk ontology and communicational theory of culture, which understood folklore as a specific message, associating on the three levels of relationship: man-man, man-community, and man-transcendence (God, irrational powers), formed the basis of various ways of an individual's behavior, inscribed in the cycles of natural or occasional activities, as well as acting and perceiving the extraterrestrial forces, see more on the subject: Leach Edmund, *Kultura i komunikowanie /Culture and Communicating/*, translated by Michał Buchowski [in:] Leach Edmund, Greimas Algirdas J., *Rytuał i narracja /Ritual and Narration/*, Warsaw 1989; Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Tożsamość a interdyscyplinarność – folklorystyka jako struktura otwarta /Identity and Interdisciplinarity – Folklore Studies as the Open Structure*, [in:] *Folklorystyka. Dylematy i perspektywy/ Folklore Studies. Dilemmas and Perspectives*, ed. Simonides Dorota, Opole 1995, p. 83; Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *The Folkloric Encoding of Meanings Natural and Occasional Liminality in Polish Folklore*, translated by R. A. Orr, “Folklore Forum” 2001, no.1/2, see also: Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Liminalność naturalna i okazjo-*

nalna a etnopoetyka gatunku /Natural and Occasional Liminality with Reference to Genre Ethno-Poetics, [in:] *Geneologia literatury ludowej. Studia folklorystyczne /Folk Literature Genealogy. Folklore Studies/*, ed. Miannecki Adrian and Wróblewska Violetta, Toruń 2002, pp. 21-28.

¹² Quoted after: Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Słowiańska wspólnota magiczna wobec liminalności naturalnej (szkic do badań)/Slavic Magical Community towards Natural Liminality (Sketch for Research)*, [in:] *Z polskich studiów slawistycznych/ From Polish Slavic Studies/*, series IX, Warsaw 1998, p. 15.

¹³ Beauvoir Simone de, *Druga płeć.../The Second Sex.../*, p. 88.

¹⁴ More extensively, cf. Eliade Mircea, *Sacrum i profanum/The Sacred and the Profane/*, translated by Reszke Robert, Warsaw 1999, pp. 113-121, cf. also *Estetyka czterech żywiołów: ziemia, woda, ogień, powietrze/ The Aesthetics of Four Elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air/*, ed. Wilkoszewska Krystyna, Cracow 2002 (part: Earth).

¹⁵ *Słownik stereotypów i symboli ludowych /Lexicon of Folk Stereotypes and Symbols/*, ed. Bartmiński Jerzy, vol. 1, Kosmos /Cosmos/, Lublin 1999, pp. 17, 27 (entry: earth).

¹⁶ Cf. e.g. Drozd-Piasecka Mirosława, *Ziemia w społeczności wiejskiej: studium wsi południowo-wschodniego Mazowsza (koniec XIX i XX wiek / Land in Rural Community: A Study of Villages in South-Eastern Masovia (the end of 19th and 20th Century)*, Warsaw 1991; Styk Józef, *Chłopski świat wartości: studium socjologiczne/ The Peasant World of Values. A Sociological Study/*, Włocławek 1993; Niewiadomski Donat, *Orka i siew. O ludowych wyobrażeniach agrarnych /Tillage and Sowing. On Folk Agrarian Images/*, Lublin 1999; Sokolewicz Zofia, *Plon, obrzęd i widowisko: próba etnologicznego ujęcia obrzędów i zwyczajów rolniczych /Harvest, Rite and Spectacle: an Attempt at Ethnological Approach to Farming Rites and Customs/*, Wrocław 1967; Szczepański Jan, *Korzeniami wrosłem w ziemię /I Grew into the Earth with My Roots/*, Ustroń 2009.

¹⁷ See more: Neumann Erich, *Wielka Matka. Fenomenologia kobiecości. Kształtowanie nieświadomości /The Big Mother. A Phenomenology of Femininity. Shaping the Unconsciousness/*, translated by Reszke Robert, Warsaw 2008.

¹⁸ Jung Carl Gustav, *Symbole matki i odrodzenia /Symbols of the mother and of rebirth/*, [in:] Jung Carl Gustaw, *Symbole przemiany. Analiza preludium do schizofrenii /Symbols of Transformation. An Analysis of Prelude to a case of Schizophrenia/*, translated by Reszke Robert, Warsaw 1998, pp. 282-283, Górnicki Zdzisław, *Woda w duchowych przeżyciach człowieka /Water in a Human Spiritual Experiences /*, Cracow 2008, p. 14.

¹⁹ More on symbolism of water and its sense-creating properties, cf. Kowalski Piotr, *Woda żywa. Opowieść o wodzie, zdrowiu, higienie i dietetyce /The Living Water. A Story of Water, Health, Hygiene and Dietetics/* Wrocław 2002; Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon znaki świata. Omen, przesąd, znaczenie /Lexicon. Signs of the World. Omen, Superstition, Meaning/*, Wrocław 1998 (entry: water,river); Eliade Mircea, *Traktat o historii religii /Treaty on History of Religion/* translated by Wierusz-Kowalski Jan, Warsaw 1966 (chapter on water); Simonides Dorota, *Mądrość ludowa. Dziedzictwo kulturowe Śląska Opolskiego /Folk Wisdom. Cultural Heritage of Opole Silesia/*, Wrocław 2007; Conte Francis, *Kilka uwag na temat wody w tradycyjnych kulturach świata słowiańskiego /A Few Remarks on Water in Traditional Cultures of Slavic World/*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Etnograficzne”, fol. 30, 1992; Bartmiński Jerzy, *Rzeka w kulturowo-językowym obrazie świata Polaków /River in Cultural-Linguistic Image of the World according to Poles*, [in:] *Rzeki, kultura, cywilizacja, historia/Rivers, Culture, Civilization, History/* ed. Kołtuniak Jerzy, vol. 9, Katowice 2000; Górnicki Zdzisław, *Woda w duchowych przeżyciach.../Water in a Human Spiritual Experiences.../*

²⁰ Guitton Jean, *Kobieta, miłość, rodzina /Woman, Love, Family/* translated by Durbajto Barbara, Warsaw 1994, p. 24.

²¹ Brunvand Jan Harold, *The Study of American Folklore: An Introduction*, New York 1978, p. 1.

Part I

Chapter I

¹ De Beauvoir, Simone, *Starość/Old Age/*, translated by Styszyńska Zofia, Warsaw 2011, p. 93.

² *Ibidem*, p. 324.

³ Ibidem, p. 8.

⁴ See more: Niewiara, Aleksandra, *Starość starości, czyli wstęp filologiczny/Old Age of Old Age. A Philological Introduction* [in:] *Starość. Wybór materiałów z VII konferencji pracowników naukowych i studentów/Old Age. A Selection of Materials from the 7th Academics' and Students' Conference*/, ed. Nawarecki Aleksander, Dziadek Adam, Katowice 1995, pp. 10-14.

⁵ Cf. Zadrożyńska Anna, *Światy, zaświaty. O tradycji świętowań w Polsce/This World, the Other World. On Tradition of Celebrations in Poland*/, Warsaw 2000, 258-259.

⁶ More on the subject of old people (men and women) in folk culture, in the following articles: cf. Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Przewodnicy po zaświatach – wizerunki ludzi starych w tradycyjnej kulturze ludowej /Guides to the Otherworld – The Images of the Elder People in Traditional Folk Culture*/, [in:] *Dojrzewanie do pełni życia. Starość w literaturze polskiej i obcej/Maturing to the Fullness of Life. A Senility in Polish and Foreign Literatures*/, ed. Kruk Stefan, Flis-Czerniak Elżbieta, Lublin 2006, pp. 631-639; Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata „Zwiastuni szczęścia” – wizerunek żebraka, dziada i starca w polskim folklorze tradycyjnym/“Heralds of Good Luck” – The Image of a Beggar and an Old Man in Polish Traditional Folklore/, „Polonistyka 2009”, ed. Kiklewicz Aleksander, Ważnik Sergiusz, Minsk 2010, pp. 365-377; Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Mądre baby, akuszerki, znachorki... – autorytet władzy kobiecej w tradycyjnej kulturze ludowej/Wise Old Wives, Midwives, Witch Doctors...- Female Authority in Traditional Folk Culture*/, [in:] *Między człowiekiem i człowiekiem. Prace dedykowane profesorowi Zbigniewowi Lisowskiemu/Between Man and Man. Works Dedicated to Professor Zbigniew Lisowski*/, ed. Burta Małgorzata, Kryszczuk Marzena, Sobieraj Sławomir, Siedlce 2013, pp. 299-310.

⁷ Cf. Czerwińska, Hanna *Czas świąteczny w tradycyjnej kulturze ludowej/Holiday Time in the Traditional Folk Culture*/, „Lud” 1984, vol. 68, 71-87.

⁸ Cf. Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon znaki świata. Omen, przesąd, znaczenie/Lexicon of the Signs of the World. Omen, Superstition, Meaning*/, Wrocław 1998, p. 529 (entry: starcy/old people/). On wise women in contemporary world, their stories, tradition, message and power, cf. *Starszyzna Kobiet Radzi Światu. Rada trzynastu Babć przedstawia wizję naszej planety/Elder Women Advice the World. The Council of Thirteen Grannies Presents the Vision of Our Planet*/, ed. Schaefer Carol, translated by Bogdan Katarzyna, Sieklucki Robert, Rzeszów 2010.

⁹ Cf. analogical role of the child as a hybrid and liminal being, Łeńska-Bąk Katarzyna, *Rola dziecka w dawnych obrzędach ludowych/The Role of Child in an Ancient Folk Rites*/, „Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, Folklorystyka 3” 1997, pp. 57-70, see also: Kowalski Piotr, *Dziecko. Rajska niewinność, wróżby, magia. Wstęp do lektury postaci/The Child. A Paradisiac Innocence, Divinations, Magic. The Introduction to figure reading*/, „Literatura Ludowa” 1996, no. 4/5, pp. 19-30.

¹⁰ Kolberg Oskar *Dzieła wszystkie, Poznańskie/All Works. The Region of Poznań*/, vol. 15, Warsaw 1962, pp. 134-135.

¹¹ Cf. Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Symbolika dobrego cyklu powszedniego w polskim folklorze tradycyjnym/Symbolism of the Everyday Life Cycle in Polish Traditional Folklore*/, Lublin 1994, pp. 19-20.

¹² Cf. Biegeleisen Henryk, *Matka i dziecko w obrzędach, wierzeniach i zwyczajach ludu polskiego/Mother and Child in Polish Folk Rites, Beliefs and Customs*/, Lwów 1927, p. 47.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 48.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Chełmskie/All Works. The Region of Chełm*/, vol. 33, Wrocław 1964, p. 176.

¹⁶ Cf. Libera Zbigniew *Znachor w tradycjach ludowych i popularnych XIX-XX wieku./The Healer in Folk and Popular Traditions of the 19th and 20th Centuries*/, Wrocław 2003, pp. 213-216.

¹⁷ Cf. Zadrożyńska Anna *Powtarzać czas początku/To Repeat the Time of the Beginning*/, p. 2, Warsaw 1988, p. 48.

¹⁸ Kolberg Oskar *Dzieła wszystkie/All Works*/, Vol. 33..., p. 174.

¹⁹ The woman after childbirth, until churching (a kind of symbolic purification from pollution of the beyond), that is, ca. for 40 days, was regarded in her community as impure, contaminated with the pollution of the other world, and so was her child. Churching – Biegeleisen writes – „raises all the isolating restrictions” imposed upon the woman, „caused by her impurity”. The catholic church deprived churching of its purifying character, giving it a feature of blessing, but reminiscences of the purifying rite have been retained in folk tradition and the remembrance of celebrating the Purifica-

tion of Blessed Virgin Mary, a holiday that falls in 40 days after Christmas”, Cf. Biegeleisen Henryk, *Matka i dziecko.../ Mother and Child/*, p. 109 and next. Churcing is also confirmed by Ukrainian sources, see: Talko-Hryncewicz, Julian, *Zarysy lecznictwa ludowego na Rusi Południowej/The Outlines of Folk Medicine in Southern Rus' (Ukraine)/*, Cracow 1893, p. 81.

²⁰ See: Linkner Tadeusz, *Słowiańskie bogi i demony. Z rękopisu Bronisława Trentowskiego/Slavic Gods and Demons. Out of Bronisław Trentowski's Manuscript/*, Gdańsk 1998, pp. 62-63.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 62.

²² Propp Władimir, *Historyczne korzenie bajki magicznej/Historical Roots of the Magical Fairy Tale/*, translated by Chmielewski Jacek, Warsaw 2003, p. 75.

²³ Quoted after: Lasoń-Kochańska Grażyna, *Baśniowe wątki inicjacyjne w perspektywie badań genderowych /Fairy Tale Initiation Motifs in the Perspective of the Gender Studies/*, „Literatura Ludowa” 2010, no. 3, p. 12.

²⁴ More on the subject of the image of *Baba Jaga* (the Witch), see: Propp Władimir, *Historyczne korzenie.../ Historical Roots of.../* pp. 49-116; On matriarchal culture, Great Goddess and Great Mother, see: Neumann Erich, *Wielka Matka. Fenomenologia kobiecości. Kształtowanie nieświadomości/The Great Mother. A Phenomenology of Femininity. Shaping the Unconsciousness/*, translated by Reszke Robert, Warsaw 2008.

²⁵ Cf. Biegeleisen, Henryk, *Matka i dziecko.../ Mother and Child.../* 49.

²⁶ Cf. Rich Adrienne, *Zrodzone z kobiety. Macierzyństwo jako doświadczenie i instytucja/Born of a Woman. Maternity as Experience and Institution/*, translated by Mizieleńska Joanna Warsaw 2000, 195, p. 198: “In Rome three handy women were practicing: midwives, their assistants and priestesses who chanted prayers for happy delivery”.

²⁷ Cf. Biegeleisen Henryk, *Matka i dziecko.../ Mother and Child.../* p. 49.

²⁸ Quoted after: Libera Zbigniew, *Medycyna ludowa: chłopski rozsądek czy gminna fantazja?/The Folk Medicine: A Peasant Common Sense or a Communal Fantasy/*, Wrocław 1995, pp. 185-186. Connections of female reproductive organs with window, door, chimney, stove, can be, for instance, explained by the meaning of putting the sick into the stove to cure them (“for three “Aves”, compare: the case of Rozalka – the girl from Bolesław Prus’s short story *Antek* – the healer ordered to put her into the stove); cf. Ibidem.

²⁹ Cf. Tokarska Joanna, Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, Zmysłowska Magdalena, *Śmierć jako organizator kultury/Death as an Organizer of Culture/*, „Etnografia Polska” 1982, fol. 1, p. 107.

³⁰ I write more on the birth in my book, cf. Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Chleb w folklorze polskim – w poszukiwaniu znaczeń/Bread in Polish Folklore – in Search for Meanings/*, Siedlce 2010, pp. 33-42.

³¹ Tokarska Joanna, Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, Zmysłowska Magdalena, *Śmierć.../Death.../*, p. 110.

³² Cf. Poniąkowski Stanisław, *Etnografia Polski/The Ethnography of Poland/*, [in:] *Wiedza o Polsce/Knowledge about Poland/*, ed. Bystroń Jan Stanisław, vol. 3, Warsaw 1932, p. 324.

³³ Cf. Tokarska Joanna, Wasilewski Jerzy, Sławomir, Zmysłowska Magdalena, *Śmierć.../Death.../*, p. 110.

³⁴ Cf. Zadrożyńska Anna, *Światy, zaświaty.../ This World, the Other World.../*, pp. 191-194, cf. also: Biegeleisen Henryk, *Matka i dziecko.../ Mother and Child.../*, 47, 197, cf. Kolberg, Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Krakowskie/All Works. The Region of Krakow/*, vol. 6, Cracow 1962, p. 4.

³⁵ Cf. Biegeleisen Henryk, *Matka i dziecko.../ Mother and Child.../*, p. 137.

³⁶ Ripinsky-Naxon Michael, *Płeć, szamanizm i przemiana/Sex, Shamanism and Transformation/*, translated by Rozwadowski Andrzej, Warsaw 2002, 30.

³⁷ Cf. Tsultrim Allione, *Kobiety mądrości. Tajemne życie Maczig Labdron i innych Tybetanek/ Women of Wisdom. Secret Life of Maczig Labdron and other Tibetan Women/*, translated by Smagacz Henryk, Cracow 2011, 86.

³⁸ Neumann Erich, *Wielka Matka.../The Great Mother.../*, 50-53.

³⁹ Cf. Zadrożyńska Anna, *Światy, zaświaty.../ This World, the Other World.../*, p. 193.

⁴⁰ *W dawnym Rzymie/In Old Rome/*, ed. Łanowski Jerzy et al., translated by Burchardt Jerzy et al., Wrocław 1968, p. 54.

⁴¹ Cf. Zadrożyńska Anna, *Światy, zaświaty.../ This World, the Other World.../*, p. 196.

⁴² Cf. Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon znaki świata.../ Lexicon.../*, pp. 18-19.

⁴³ Cf. Zadrożyńska Anna, *Powtarzać czas początku.../ To Repeat the Time of Beginning.../*, p. 1, Warsaw 1985, p. 126.

⁴⁴ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie.../All Works.../*, vol. 6, ..., 3; vol. 33..., pp. 174-175.

⁴⁵ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie.../All Works.../*, *Mazowsze*, vol. 26, Warsaw 1963, p. 92.

⁴⁶ More on symbolism of bread in birth ritual complex: see my book: *Chleb w folklorze.../ Bread in Polish Folklore.../* pp. 31-42.

⁴⁷ Cf. Smolińska Teresa, *Rodzina o sobie. Folklorystyczny aspekt rodzinnej tradycji kulturowej/ The Family about Itself. A Folkloristic Aspect of Family Cultural Tradition/*, Opole 1992, pp. 90-95.

⁴⁸ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Pokucie/All Works. The Pokucie Region/*, vol. 29, Warsaw 1962, p. 211

⁴⁹ Cf. Łeńska-Bąk Katarzyna, *Sól ziemi/The Salt of Earth/*, Wrocław 2002, p. 93; more: pp. 60-115.

⁵⁰ See: Kohli Anna, *Trzy kolory bogini /Three Colors of the Goddess/*, Cracow 2007, pp. 184-185.

⁵¹ I write more extensively on funeral rites in my book, cf. Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Chleb w folklorze.../ Bread in Polish Folklore.../*, pp. 69-82.

⁵² Cf. more: Kupisiński Zdzisław SVD, *Śmierć jako wydarzenie eschatyczne. Zwyczaje, obrzędy i wierzenia pogrzebowe oraz zaduszkowe mieszkańców regionu opoczyńskiego i radomskiego/Death as an Eschatic Event. Funeral and All Souls' Day Customs, Rites and Beliefs of the Inhabitants of Opoczno and Radom Regions*, Lublin 2007, pp. 21, 111 and next. See also: Levy-Bruhl Lucien, *Primitivni mentalitet*, translated by Clare L.A., Zagreb 1954, pp. 46-47, quoted after: Brencz Andrzej, *Polska obrzędowość pogrzebowa jako obrzęd przejścia/Polish Funeral Ritual Complex as a Rite of Passage/*, „Lud” 1987, vol. 71, p. 219.

⁵³ Cf. Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon... / Lexicon.../*, p. 626.

⁵⁴ Fischer Adam, *Zwyczaje pogrzebowe ludu polskiego/Funeral Customs of Polish Folk/*, Lviv 1921, p. 94.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 92.

⁵⁶ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie/All Works/*, vol. 26, p. 94.

⁵⁷ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Sanockie-Krośnieńskie /All Works. Regions of Sanok and Krośno/*, vol. 49, Kraków 1974, pp. 529, 536. Analogical examples of ritualized kinds of behavior from the regions of Opoczno and Radom are quoted by Zdzisław Kupisiński, cf. Kupisiński Zdzisław, SVD, *Śmierć jako wydarzenie eschatyczne.../Death as an Eschatic Event.../*, pp. 168-182.

⁵⁸ Cf. Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon.../ Lexicon.../*, p. 612.

⁵⁹ In the funeral rite, just like in the case of birth, this time in order to make it easier for the soul to leave for the other world, everything that was in the compartment where there was the deceased, had to be untied and opened (magical opening).

⁶⁰ Cf. Fischer Adam, *Zwyczaje pogrzebowe.../ Funeral Customs.../*, p. 96.

⁶¹ Reymont Władysław *Chłopi/The Peasants/*, Wrocław 1999, BN I 279, vol. 2, p. IV, pp. 366, 367.

⁶² Fischer Adam *Zwyczaje pogrzebowe.../ Funeral Customs.../*, pp. 208-209.

⁶³ Władysław Reymont, *Chłopi.../The Peasants/*, pp. 371, 379. Ritualized behavior of figures in the novel are confirmed i.a. by ethnographic field studies, see e.g. Kupisiński Zdzisław, SVD, *Śmierć jako wydarzenie eschatyczne.../ Death as an Eschatic Event.../*, pp. 182-198.

⁶⁴ Świącki Adam, *Szeptucha*, akt III/*The Whisperer*, act III, series: *Przebudzone legendy/Legends Awaken/*, Szczecin 2008, p. 4.

⁶⁵ Cf. Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir *Po śmierci wędrować. Szkice z zakresu etnologii świata znaczeń/ To Wander after Death. Sketches from the Field of Ethnological World of Meanings/ (II)*, „Teksty” 1979, no. 4, p. 61.

⁶⁶ Quoted after: Libera Zbigniew, *Medycyna ludowa.../ Folk Medicine.../*, pp. 237-238. The issues of old age and wisdom are also connected with the Guardians of Primary Wisdom called the rainbow people, they devote their lives to healing others, cf. Lörler, Marielu, *Uzdrowiający szamanizm. W kręgu medycyny szamanistycznej/The Healing Shamanism. In the Circle of the Shamanic Medicine/*, Katowice 2003, p. 61.

⁶⁷ Cf. more on magical ways of treatment in folk medicine: Libera Zbigniew, *Medycyna ludowa.../ Folk Medicine.../*, Libera Zbigniew, *Znachor.../ The Healer.../*, cf. also Wałęciuk-Dejneka Be-

ata, *Magiczne sposoby leczenia w tradycyjnej medycynie ludowej. Symbolika słów i gestów w aktach zażegnania, zaklania i zamawiania choroby/Magical Ways of Treatment in Traditional Folk Medicine. The Symbolism of Words and Gestures in the Acts of Whispering, Enchanting and Putting Spells on the Disease*, [in] *Między literaturą a medycyną. Literackie i pozaliterackie działania środowisk medycznych a problemy egzystencjalne człowieka XIX i XX wieku/Between Literature and Medicine. Literary and Non-Literary Activities of Medical Environments and Human Existential Problems of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Łoch Eugenia, Wallner Grzegorz, Lublin 2005, pp. 67-76 and Walęciuk-Dejneka Beata, Fr. Nadbrzeżny Antoni, *Magiczne i teologiczne aspekty medycyny ludowej/Magical and Theological Aspects of a Folk Medicine*, „Roczniki Teologii Dogmatycznej” 2012, no. 59, pp. 275-293.

⁶⁸ Ludwik Stomma, referring to the theory of Arnold van Gennep, divided the time of disease into three periods: leaving the state of health, margin and entering into illness; he did similarly to the reverse situation – recovery: leaving the state of illness, margin and entering into the expected state of health, cf. Stomma Ludwik, *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX wieku/Anthropology of Polish 19th Century Village Culture*, Warsaw 1986, p. 155.

⁶⁹ Cf. Paluch Adam, *Etnologiczny atlas ciała ludzkiego i chorób/The Ethnological Atlas of Human Body and Diseases*, Wrocław 1995, p. 177.

⁷⁰ See: Engelking Anna, *Klątwa. Rzecz o ludowej magii słowa/The Curse. About the Folk Word Magic*, Wrocław 2000, p. 253.

⁷¹ Cf. Libera Zbigniew, *Medycyna ludowa.../ Folk Medicine.../*, pp. 58-59.

⁷² See: Engelking Anna, *Klątwa.../The Curse.../*, 253.

⁷³ Tomicki Ryszard, *Ludowe mity o stworzeniu człowieka/Folk Myths about Human Creation*, „Etnografia Polska” 1980, vol. 24, fol. 2, p. 51 and next.

⁷⁴ See: Libera Zbigniew, *Medycyna ludowa.../ Folk Medicine.../*, 236; also Biegeleisen Henryk, *Lecznictwo ludu polskiego/Polish Folk Medicine*, Cracow 1929, pp.355-356. Biegelaisen refers to a female healer also as “a witch”, who cures diseases or gives advice on how to act by means of witchcraft, magic and spell-casting, but she can also do wrong and harm, *ibidem*, pp. 356-357. In Ukrainian villages, in turn, as late as in the second half of the 20th century, as the folklore researchers report, village female witch doctors were often called “wise women” – those connected with knowledge, whisperers, or also *babki* (old women), see: Litwinow, *Sergiej Zdejmovanie uroków jajem. Porady, badania, historia/ Removing Spells with an Egg. Advices, Studies, History*, Cracow 2012, p. 10. The word “lekarz”/physician, doctor/ also has an interesting etymology, referred to by Biegeleisen, as a loanword from the Gothic language: “primarily, among the ancient Slavs – the scholar writes-he was called *babia*, from “*bajanie*” – telling stories, whispering, spell-casting, which, even today, constitutes a significant part of folk curing”, *ibidem*, p. 356. Hence, the words *szeptucha/szeptunka*, referring to village female specialists that were used until the 21st century in the villages of Podlasie.

⁷⁵ Biegeleisen Henryk, *Lecznictwo.../ Polish Folk Medicine/*, p.358.

⁷⁶ Kraszewski Józef Ignacy *Stara baśń. Powieść z IX w/An Old Fairy Tale. A 9th Century Novel/*, edited by Danek Wincenty, Wrocław 1975, BN I 53, p. 150.

⁷⁷ Kołodziejczyk Edmund, *Zwyczaje, obrządk, zagadki i pieśni ludu kaliskiego w okolicach Wielunia/ Customs, Rituals, Riddles and Songs of the Kalisz Folk in the Area of Wieluń/*, „Lud” 1909, vol. 15, p. 101.

⁷⁸ Kraszewski Józef Ignacy, *Stara baśń.../An Old Fairy.../*, pp. 165-166.

⁷⁹ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Kieleckie/All Works. The Region of Kielce/*, vol. 19, Cracow 1963, p. 208.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 208.

⁸¹ Kraszewski Józef Ignacy, *Stara baśń.../An Old Fairy.../*, p. 354.

⁸² Kołodziejczyk Edmund, *Zwyczaje, obrządk.../ Customs, rituals, riddles and songs .../*, p.101.

⁸³ Biegeleisen Henryk, *Lecznictwo.../ Polish Folk Medicine/*, p. 360.

⁸⁴ Libera Zbigniew, *Medycyna ludowa.../Folk Medicine.../*, p. 230.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 233.

⁸⁶ Even nowadays in shamanism transformation is regarded as the basis of healing, cf. von Lüpke Geseko, *Dawna mądrość na nowe czasy. Rozmowy z uzdrowiaczami i szamanami XXI wieku/ Old Wisdom in New Times. Conversations with the Healers and Shamans of the 21st Century*, translated by Bernhardt Barbara, Warsaw 2009, p. 224.

- ⁸⁷ Ibidem, p. 35.
- ⁸⁸ Kraszewski Józef Ignacy, *Stara baśń.../An Old Fairy.../*, pp. 150-151.
- ⁸⁹ Quoted after: Libera Zbigniew, *Znachor.../The Healer.../*, p. 71.
- ⁹⁰ Cf. more on Jarucha, Wenerska Wioleta *Świat słowiański Starej baśni Józefa Ignacego Kraszewskiego/ The Slavic World of Józef Ignacy Kraszewski's Stara Baśń/*, Warsaw 2007, pp. 23-36.
- ⁹¹ Quoted after: Libera Zbigniew, *Medycyna ludowa.../Folk Medicine.../*, p. 243.
- ⁹² Kraszewski Józef Ignacy, *Stara baśń.../An Old Fairy.../*, p. 240.
- ⁹³ Biegeleisen Henryk, *Lecznictwo.../Polish Folk Medicine/*, p. 362.
- ⁹⁴ More on the fairytale witch, see e.g. Wróblewska Violetta, *Mieszkańcy bajkowego lasu – Baba Jaga,/The inhabitants of fairytale forest – the Baba Yaga/*, [in:] *Las w kulturze polskiej/Forest in Polish Culture/*, ed. Łysiak Wojciech, vol. 2, Poznań 2002, pp. 615-621.
- ⁹⁵ Kraszewski Józef Ignacy, *Stara baśń.../An Old Fairy.../*, p. 152.
- ⁹⁶ Cf. more on the subject: Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Zwiastuni szczęścia.../Heralds of good luck.../* p. 366; Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Wystannicy Boga – obraz żebraka i dziada w folklorze polskim/God's Envoys – the Image of a Beggar and an Old Man in Polish folklore/*, [in:] *Актуальные проблемы полонистуки*, ред. Алла Кожинава, Сергюш Важник, Минск 2009, pp. 55-66, also Baranowski Bohdan, *Ludzie gościńca w XVII-XVIII w/The Yard People in the 17th-18th Centuries/*, Łódź 1986; Beggars, who had the power of asking God's grace both for the dead and the living were very often asked for prayers and fulfilling various requests during All Souls' Day rituals or during funerals, cf. various works on the subject: Michajłowa Katia, *Dziad wędrowny w kulturze ludowej Słowian/The Wandering Old Man in Slavic Folk Culture/*, translated by Karpińska Hanna, Warszawa 2010; Grochowski Piotr, *Dziady: rzecz o wędrownych żebrakach i ich pieśniach/The Old Men: On Wandering Beggars and their Songs/*, Toruń 2009; Wodziński Cezary, *Św. Idiota: projekt antropologii apofatycznej/St. Idiot – a Project in Apophatic Anthropology/*, Gdańsk 2009.
- ⁹⁷ Bates Brian, *Zapomniana mądrość wyrdu/The Forgotten Wisdom of Wyrd/*, translated by Rafa, Lidia, Warsaw 2000, p. 112.
- ⁹⁸ Kraszewski Józef Ignacy, *Stara baśń.../An Old Fairy.../*, pp. 167-168.
- ⁹⁹ Ibidem, p. 376.
- ¹⁰⁰ See: Estés Clarissa Pinkola *Biegnąca z wilkami. Archetyp Dzikiej Kobiety w mitach i legendach/Running with Wolves. The Archetype of the Wild Woman in Myths and Legends/*, translated by Cioch Agnieszka, Poznań 2001.
- ¹⁰¹ Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon.../Lexicon.../*, pp. 579-585 (entry: wąż/snake/). pcf. also Ripinsky-Naxon Michael, *Pleć, szamanizm i przemiana/Sex, Shamanism and Transformation*, p. 24.
- ¹⁰² Kraszewski Józef Ignacy, *Stara baśń.../An Old Fairy.../*, p. 240.
- ¹⁰³ Ibidem, p. 181.
- ¹⁰⁴ See: Kohli Anna *Trzy kolory...*, p. 162. Plinius the Second, in *The Natural History* mentions the methods of picking herbs, their applications and curative properties, as well as the magical ways of treatment, cf. Plinius, *Historia naturalna/The Natural History/*, translated by Zawadzcy Irena and Tadeusz, Wrocław 1961, BN II 128, pp. 164-259.
- ¹⁰⁵ Biegeleisen Henryk, *Lecznictwo.../ Polish Folk Medicine/*, p. 363.
- ¹⁰⁶ Kraszewski, Józef Ignacy *Stara baśń.../An Old Fairy.../*, pp. 172-174.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibidem, p. 181.
- ¹⁰⁸ On the language of ritual magic, cf. Burszta Wojciech J, *Mowa magiczna jako przejaw synkretyzmu kultury/Magical Speech as a Manifestation of Cultural Syncretism/*, [in:] *Język a kultura/Language and Culture/*, ed. Bartmiński Jerzy, Grzegorzyczkowa Renata, vol. 4, Wrocław 1991.
- ¹⁰⁹ Libera Zbigniew, *Medycyna ludowa.../Folk Medicine.../*, p. 223.
- ¹¹⁰ Cf. Paluch Adam, *Etnologiczny atlas.../ Ethnological Atlas.../*, p. 138.
- ¹¹¹ Cf. Cirlot Juan Eduardo, *Słownik symboli/Dictionary of Symbols/*, translated by Kania Ireneusz, Cracow 2000, p. 346.
- ¹¹² See: Biegeleisen Henryk, *Lecznictwo.../ Polish Folk Medicine/*, p. 362.
- ¹¹³ Cf. Kowalski Piotr *Leksykon.../Lexicon.../*, p. 571 (entry: usta/mouth/). Most frequently, in mythical imagination the soul took the form of a bird, there was also a reverse concept: birds as soul guides, see: Eliade, Mircea, *Szamanizm i archaiczne techniki ekstazy/Shamanism and Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy /*, translated by: Kocjan, Krzysztof, Warsaw 2011, p. 358.

¹¹⁴ Libera Zbigniew, *Medycyna ludowa.../Folk Medicine.../*, p. 240.

¹¹⁵ Kraszewski Józef Ignacy, *Stara baśń.../An Old Fairy.../*, p. 241.

¹¹⁶ Ibidem, pp. 339, 362.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Zadrożyńska Anna, *Światy, zaświaty.../ This Worlds, the Other Worlds.../*, pp. 256-257.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Tylkowa Danuta, *Medycyna ludowa w kulturze wsi Karpat polskich. Tradycja i współczesność/Folk Medicine in the Culture of Polish Carpathian Village. Tradition and the Contemporary Times/*, Wrocław 1989, 36 and footnote 15.

¹¹⁹ Cf. the interview with the Inca shaman from Peru, G. von Lüpke, *Dawna mądrość na nowe czasy.../The old Wisdom in the New Times/*, 79. There is also an interesting interview with a Maori female shaman-clairvoyant, so let's quote a small fragment of it: "Thanks to the internal contact with the ancestors you can look into the future? – Yes, and I treat that ability with deepest humility. (...) When I look at the wall that is here, in front of me, at first sight I obviously notice the wall. However, when I change the perspective, the wall disappears. (...) I am a raconteurs coming from the other side of the world. The Maori call me matakite, i.e. a seer. (...) the word matakite emphasizes the female energy. I am a seer", cf. the whole interview, Ibidem, pp. 243-264. It has to be remarked, after the works concerning shamanism, that the significant difference between a female shaman and clairvoyant, healer, is the state of ecstasy. The shaman "during the ritual united with the being she called, whereas they [healers, doctors] simultaneously summoned the spiritual world or begged for its help, as a result of which they received signs or images, giving the directions for a particular step", cf. Lörler, Marielu, *Uzdrowiający szamanizm.../The Healing Shamanism.../*, p. 59. The female shaman can contact the reality crossing the dimension of obviousness, with the world of souls and gods, both in the form of an underworld of the dead and the heavenly zones. She perceives the spiritual side of reality, which is invisible in normal conditions, cf. more: Szyjewski Andrzej, *Szamanizm/Shamanism/*, Cracow 2005, p. 8 and next.

¹²⁰ More on the blind in the Bible, see Fr. Tronina Antoni, *Panie, abym przejrzał! Ślepotą i niewidomi w Biblii/Lord, That I May See! Blindness and the Blind in the Bible*, Lublin 1997.

¹²¹ Cf. Libera Zbigniew, *Znachor .../ The Healer .../*, p. 71.

¹²² Quoted after: Michajłowa Katia, *Dziad wędrowny w kulturze ludowej Słowian.../The Wandering Old Man in Slavic Folk Culture*, p. 113 and next.

¹²³ Ibidem, p. 114.

¹²⁴ Caesar Gaius Julius, *Wojna Galijska/ The Gallic War*, translated by Konik, Eugeniusz, Wrocław 1978, BN II 186, p. 51.

¹²⁵ Tacit, *Wybór pism/ Selected Writings/*, translated by Hammer, Seweryn, Wrocław 1956, BN II 82, 327. Tacit also mentions an ancient deity of the Germans – Veleda, who was worshipped as god. Veleda enjoyed enormous influence and authority, and "her name originated from the word *veles*, i.e. <prophet, psychic>". Her unusual popularity was caused by her prophetic visions of future battles and their results, quoted after: Bates Brian, *Zapomniana mądrość wyrdu.../ The Forgotten Wisdom of Wyrdu.../*, pp. 108-109.

¹²⁶ Aeschylus (Ajschylos), *Tragedye Eschylosa/Aeschylus's Tragedies/*, translated by Kaszewski Kazimierz, Warsaw 1895, p. 239.

¹²⁷ About the biblical prophetesses, see: Adamiak Elżbieta, *Milcząca obecność. O roli kobiety w kościele/Silent Presence. About the Role of a Woman in the Church/*, Warsaw 1999, p. 77.

¹²⁸ Neumann, Erich, *Wielka Matka.../The Great Mother.../*, p. 327-337.

¹²⁹ de Beauvoir Simone, *Druga płeć/The Second Sex/*, translated by Mycielska Gabriela, Leśniewska Maria, Warsaw 2003, p. 175.

Chapter 2

¹ Константин Богданов, *Очерки по антропологии молчания. Homo Tacens*, Петербург 1998, p. 256, quoted after: Sływyński Ostar, *Milczenie jako inność/ Silence as Otherness/*, „Przegląd Humanistyczny” 2004, no. 2, p. 53.

² Shakespeare William, *Hamlet*, Warszawa 1965, p. 230.

³ Handke Kwiryna, *Między mową a milczeniem/Between Speaking and Silence/ [in:] Semantyka*

milczenia/Semantics of Silence, ed. Handke Kwiryna, Warszawa 1999, pp. 10-11; cf. also other studies in the volume and *Semantyka milczenia/ Semantics of Silence*/ 2, ed. Handke Kwiryna, Warszawa 2002.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 11. The definition of silence is not easy to formulate. Most often dictionaries quite laconically report that it is “a while, period of quietness” and synonymously to quietness as “lack of any sounds, noises, silence”. Thus, etymology of the words becomes important, as it allows for more precise explanations. Silence “is connected with <fine, tiny>, <deaf, quiet>”, whereas quietness, “quiet, confirmed from the 15th century, meaning: <not loud>, what is more, its original meaning: <straight, even> (<slow, quiet>) approaches to supposed meaning of the word *silence*”, ibidem, pp. 12-13.

⁵ Drabik Wanda, *Cztery pory życia (o współzależności obrzędów dorocznych i rodzinnych)/ Four Seasons of Life (On Interdependence of Yearly and Family Rituals)*, „Polska Sztuka Ludowa”, 1990, no. 1, pp. 15-30; Tokarska Joanna, Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, Zmysłowska Magdalena, *Śmierć jako organizator kultury /Death as an Organizer of Culture/*, „Etnografia Polska” 1982, vol. 26, fol. 1, pp. 79-114.

⁶ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Pokucie/ All Works. The Region of Pokucie/*, vol. 31, Warsaw 1963, p. 93.

⁷ On symbolic convergence between bidding farewell to the deceased and death in wedding ritual complex see: Łeńska-Bąk Katarzyna, *Wesele i śmierć. Weselne pożegnanie i symbolika śmierci w tradycyjnych obrzędach weselnych/ Wedding and Death. Wedding Farewell and Symbolism of Death in Traditional Wedding Rituals/*, [in:] *Problemy współczesnej tanatologii. Medycyna – Antropologia kultury – Humanistyka/ The Problems of Contemporary Thanatology. Medicine – Anthropology of Cultural – Humanities/*, ed. Kolbuszewski Jacek, Wrocław 1998, pp. 251-265.

⁸ I write more on the subject in the article: *Wobec majestatu śmierci... Struktury symboliczne wybranych zachowań obrzędowych w polskim folklorze tradycyjnym/Towards the Majesty of Death. Symbolic Structures of Selected Ritual Behaviors in Polish Traditional Folklore/*, „Acta Albaruthenica, Rossica, Polonica. Беларуско-руско-польские аспекты языкознания, литературоведения и культуроведения”, Витебск 2006, pp. 379-382; see also: Kupisiński Zdzisław SVD, *Śmierć jako wydarzenie eschatyczne. Zwyczaje, obrzędy i wierzenia pogrzebowe oraz zaduszkowe mieszkańców regionu opoczyńskiego i radomskiego/Death as an Eschatic Event. Funeral and All Souls' Day's Customs, Rituals and Beliefs of the Inhabitants of Opoczno and Radom Regions/*, Lublin 2007, pp. 13-14 and next, also: Kupisiński Zdzisław SVD, *Aksjologiczno-biblijne ujęcie śmierci/ Axiological-Biblical Approach to Death*, [in:] *Problemy prawnicze i kanoniczne/ Legal and Canonical Issues/*, ed. Fr. Kasprzak Sylwester Lublin 2002, pp. 127-142.

⁹ More on “funeral leaders” on the basis of ethnographic field studies, see: Kupisiński Zdzisław, SVD, *Śmierć jako wydarzenie eschatyczne.../ Death as an Eschatic Event.../*, pp. 135-140.

¹⁰ See: Kowalski Piotr, *Modlitwa i milczenie. Kilka zdarzeń z historii ciszy /Prayer and Silence. A few Events in the History of Silence/* [in:] The same author, *O jednorożcu, Wieczerniku i innych motywach mniej lub bardziej ważnych. Szkice z historii kultury/ About the Unicorn, the Cenacle and the Other More or Less Important Motifs. Sketches from the History of Culture/* Cracow 2007, p. 159; see also: Stywyński Ostop, *Milczenie jako inność.../Silence as the Otherness.../*

¹¹ Cf. Sulima, Roch, *Między płaczem a milczeniem/ Between Crying and Muteness/*, [in:] The same author, *Słowo i etos. Szkice o kulturze/ Word and Ethos. The Sketches on Culture/*, Cracow 1992.

¹² Ibidem, p. 83.

¹³ Kupisiński Zdzisław SVD, *Śmierć jako wydarzenie eschatyczne.../Death as Eschatic Event.../*, pp. 136-137.

¹⁴ Zadrożyńska Anna, *Światy, zaświaty. O tradycji świętowań w Polsce /This Worlds, the Other Worlds. About the Tradition of Celebrations in Poland*, Warsaw 2000, 262. I also write on the symbolism of silence in the article: *Pozasłowna komunikacja w polskim folklorze tradycyjnym. Symbolika milczenia /Non-Verbal Communication in Polish Traditional Folklore. The Symbolism of Silence* [in:] *Świat Słowian w języku i kulturze/ The Slavic World in Language and Culture/*, vol. 7, ed. Komorowska Ewa, Krzanowska Agnieszka, Szczecin 2006, pp. 209-214.

¹⁵ Sulima Roch, *Między płaczem.../ Between crying and silence.../*, p. 83.

¹⁶ I write more on crying in traditional folk culture in the article: *Sytuacje nakazanego płaczu*

w tradycyjnej kulturze ludowej. Gra znaczeń i symboli w słowiańskich zachowaniach obrzędowych / *The Situations of Commanded Crying in Traditional Folk Culture. The Game of Meanings and Symbols in Slavic Ritual Behavior*/, [in:] *Świat Słowian w języku i kulturze/The World of the Slavs in Language and Culture V*/, ed. Komorowska Ewa, Dziadosz Dorota, Szczecin 2004, pp.120-125.

¹⁷ Plessner Helmuth, *Śmiech i płacz. Badania nad granicami ludzkiego zachowania/ Laughter and Crying. A Study of Limits of Human Behavior*/, translated by Zwolińska Agata, Nerczuk Zbigniew, Kęty 2004, p. 122.

¹⁸ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Kieleckie/ All Works, the Region of Kielce*, vol. 18, Poznań 1963, p. 63, Fischer Adam, *Zwyczaje pogrzebowe ludu polskiego/ Polish Folk Funeral Customs*, Lwów 1921, pp. 234-235.

¹⁹ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Pokucie / All Works, Pokucie*, vol. 29, Poznań 1962, 215-216.

²⁰ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Chełmskie/ All Works. The Region of Chełm*/, vol. 33, Poznań 1964, 181-182, *Mazowsze*, vol. 27, Poznań 1964, 150; see also: Sulima Roch, *Między płaczem a milczeniem.../ Between crying and silence.../*, 81-82; see also: Fischer Adam, *Zwyczaje... /Polish Folk Funeral.../*, 236.

²¹ Kraszewski Józef Ignacy, *Stara baśń. Powieść z IX wieku/An Old Fairy Tale. A 9th Century Novel*/, ed. by Danek Wincenty, Wrocław 1975, BN I 53, pp. 120-122.

²² Cf. Fischer Adam, *Zwyczaje.../Polish Folk Funeral.../*, pp. 235-236; “near Drohiczyn and Mielnik there was a custom of hiring a mourner”, see: Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie.../All Works.../*, vol. 33, p. 179.

²³ Wenerska Wioleta, *Świat słowiański Starej baśni Józefa Ignacego Kraszewskiego /The Slavic World of J.I. Kraszewski's Stara Baśń*, Warsaw 2007, p. 109.

²⁴ Cf. Kerrigan Michael, *Historia śmierci. Zwyczaje i rytuały pogrzebowe od starożytności do czasów współczesnych/The History of Death. Burial Customs and Rituals from Antiquity to Contemporary Times*/, translated by Klimkiewicz Sławomir, Warszawa 2009, p. 65; see also: Di Nola Alfonso N., *Tryumf śmierci. Antropologia żałoby/The Triumph of Death. An Anthropology of Mourning*/, ed. Woźniak Monika, various translations, Cracow 2006, p. 122, cf. also Ikram Salima, *Śmierć i pogrzeb w starożytnym Egipcie /Death and Funeral in Ancient Egypt*/, translated by Aksamit Joanna, Warsaw 2004, p. 150.

²⁵ Cf. Di Nola Alfonso M., *Tryumf śmierci.../The Triumph of Death.../*, p. 128.

²⁶ Cf. Sulima Roch, *Między płaczem a milczeniem.../Between Crying and Silence.../*, p. 83.

²⁷ Cf. Fischer Adam, *Zwyczaje.../Polish Folk Funeral.../*, p. 233.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 234.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 237.

³⁰ Brückner Aleksander, *Dzieje kultury polskiej/The History of Polish Culture*/, vol. 1, Kraków 1930, (reprinting 1991), p. 119.

³¹ Cf. Kerrigan Michael, *Historia śmierci.../The History of Death.../*, p. 142.

³² Cf. Sulima Roch, *Między płaczem a milczeniem... /Between Crying and Silence.../*, p. 83.

³³ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Lubelskie /All Works. The Region of Lublin*/, vol. 16, Cracow 1962, p. 139.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 237.

³⁵ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Krakowskie /All Works. The Region of Krakow*/, vol. 6, Cracow 1963, p. 18.

³⁶ Kolberg Oskar *Dzieła wszystkie, Radomskie,/ All Works. The Region of Radom*/, vol.20, Poznań 1964, p. 198.

³⁷ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie.../All Works.../*, vol. 16, p. 145.

³⁸ See: Majer-Baranowska Urszula, *Stereotyp językowy „płacz” w polszczyźnie ludowej/ Language Stereotype of “Crying” in the Folk Polish*/, „Etnolingwistyka” 1988, no. 1, p. 115.

³⁹ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie.../All Works*/, vol. 6, p. 85.

⁴⁰ See: Kuchowicz Zbigniew, *Obyczaje staropolskie XVII-XVIII wieku /Old Polish Mores in 17th-18th Centuries*/, Łódź 1975, p. 193; Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Kujawy/All Works. The Region of Kujawy*/, vol. 3, Cracow 1962, p. 266.

⁴¹ See: Biegeleisen Henryk, *Wesele/ The Wedding*/, Lwów 1928, pp. 126-127.

⁴² Leńska-Bąk Katarzyna, *Wesele i śmierć.../The Wedding and Death.../*, pp. 251-265.

⁴³ Sulima Roch, *Między płaczem a milczeniem .../ Between Crying and Silence.../*, p. 81.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 83.

⁴⁵ Quoted after: Gołębiowska-Suchorska Agnieszka, „Dziewczę przędzie, Pan Bóg nitki daje”. *O spójności ludowej wizji świata /“Maiden Spins, God Gives Thread”. On the Consistence of Folk Vision of the World /*, Bydgoszcz 2011, p. 7.

⁴⁶ Simonides Dorota, *Dlaczego drzewa przestały mówić. Ludowa wizja świata /Why did the Trees Stop Talking? A Folk Vision of the World/*, Opole 2010, p. 14.

⁴⁷ The folk vision of world and man creation is based on binary oppositions, see: Tomiccy Joanna and Ryszard, *Drzewo życia. Ludowa wizja świata i człowieka /The Tree of Life. Folk Vision of World and Human/*, Warszawa 1975, also: Tomicki Ryszard, *Słowiański mit kosmogoniczny /Slavic Cosmogonic myth*, „Etnografia Polska” 1976, fol. 1, p. 47-97. The sowing concept of creation is broadly analysed in the book by Donat Niewiadomski, *Orka i siew. O ludowych wyobrażeniach agrarnych/ Tillage and Sowing. On Folk Agrarian Images/*, Lublin 1999.

⁴⁸ See: *Jak Pan Bóg przeklął kobietę i jej pracę /How God Cursed Woman and her Work/*, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe Słowian Południowych /Apocriphs and Old Testament Legends of Southern Slavs/*, ed. Minczew Georgi, Skowronek Małgorzata Cracow 2006, p. 276 (translation of the legend by Agata Kawecka, a legend from the territory of Serbia).

⁴⁹ Forstner Dorothea, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej/ The World of Christian Symbolism/*, translated by Zakrzewska Wanda et al., Warszawa 1990, p. 403. In the language of Christianity spinning and weaving become “the image of God’s creative activity in the miraculous formation of nature”. Besides, spinning as a main occupation of women is reminded by some old tombstone plates, where the deceased is referred to as a wool spinner, cf. ibidem, p. 403 and Psalm 139 (13):

„For thou hast possessed my kidneys:
thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb”.

⁵⁰ *Polskie zagadki ludowe /Polish Folk Riddles/*, ed. Folfasiński Sławomir, Warszawa 1975, p. 112, Kasjan Jan Mirosław, *Polska zagadka ludowa /Polish Folk Riddle/*, Wrocław 1983, p. 24.

⁵¹ *Nowa księga przysłów i wyrażen przystowiowych polskich/The New Book of Polish Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions/*, ed. Krzyżanowski Julian, Warszawa 1970, vol. 2, p. 52.

⁵² See more: Zowczak Magdalena, *Biblia ludowa. Interpretacje wątków biblijnych w kulturze ludowej/The Folk Bible. Interpretations of Biblical Motifs in Folk Culture*, Wrocław 2000, p. 484 and others.

⁵³ *Русский праздник: праздники и обряды народного земледельческого календаря. Иллюстрированная энциклопедия*, ред. И.И. Шангина, Санкт-Петербург 2011, p. 509.

⁵⁴ See more: Gołębiowska-Suchorska Agnieszka, „Dziewczę przędzie, Pan Bóg nitki daje”.../The Maiden Spins, God Gives Thread/, p. 27 and next. On using thread in divinations-charms applied in cases of diseases, see: Wójcicka Urszula, *Motyw nitki w dawnych ruskich zaklęciach-zamawianiach/The Motif of a Thread in old Ruthenian Verbal Spells*, „Slavia Orientalis” 1998, no. 3, p. 379-384.

⁵⁵ Cf. Eliade Mircea, *Traktat o historii religii /The Treaty on History of Religion/*, translated by Kowalski Jan, Wierusz, Warsaw 2009, p. 191.

⁵⁶ Kopaliński Władysław, *Encyklopedia „drugiej płci” wszystko o kobietach /Encyclopedia of „the Second Sex”. All about Women/*, Warsaw 2006, p. 318, Gładziuk Nina, *Omphalos czyli pępek świata: płęć jako problem w filozofii praktycznej Greków/ Omphalos as the Hub of the Universe: Sex as a Problem in Practical Philosophy of the Greeks/*, Warsaw 1997, p. 66.

⁵⁷ Plato, *Państwo /The State/*, Introduction: Witwicki Władysław, Warsaw 2010, p. 435.

⁵⁸ Neumann Erich, *Wielka Matka. Fenomenologia kobiecości. Kształtowanie nieświadomości /The Great Mother. A Phenomenology of Femininity. Shaping the Unconsciousness*, translated by Reszke Robert Warsaw 2008, p. 232.

⁵⁹ Cf. Szczuka Kazimiera, *Przędki, tkaczki, pająki. Uwagi o twórczości kobiet /Spinners, weavers, spiders*, [in:] The same author: *Kopciuszek, Frankenstein i inne. Feminizm wobec mitu /Cinderella, Frankenstein and Others. Feminism towards Myth/*, Cracow 2001, p. 33.

⁶⁰ Baehr Barbara, Baehr Martin, *Jaki to pająk? /What Spider is This? /*, Warsaw 2008, p. 123.

⁶¹ Cf. Eliade Mircea, *Traktat.../The Treaty on History.../*, pp. 190-191. In the myth of North American Hopi Indians the figure of god-creator is a female: this is the spider called Lady Spider or Grandma Spider, which means that it is the common ancestress of all human beings. Grandma Spider, according to initiation rites transforms insects into animals with bones, skin and fur, then chan-

ges animals into people. It finishes its work with teaching people the art of weaving and plaiting baskets, see: Panini Giorgio P. *Mitologia. Atlas/The Mythology. Atlas/* translated by Ciechanowicz, Jerzy, Stępniewski, Janusz, Warsaw 1996, p. 30.

⁶² Cf. Szczuka Kazimiera, *Przędki, tkaczki, pająki./ Spinners, weavers.../*, p. 30, cf. Gładziuk Nina, *Omphalos.../*, p. 66.

⁶³ Cf. Bates Brian, *Zapomniana mądrość wyrdu /The Forgotten Wisdom of Wyrdu/*, translated by Rafa, Lidia, Waraw 2000, p. 84.

⁶⁴ Cf. Eliade, Mircea, *Traktat.../The Treaty.../*, p.191.

⁶⁵ Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Tabu.../Taboo.../*, Warsaw 2010, p. 342. The author gives numerous examples taken from folklore, concerning the bans on sewing, weaving, spinning, or spooling thread, see: *ibidem* pp. 338-343.

⁶⁶ Gieysztor Aleksander, *Mitologia Słowian /Mythology of Slavs/*, Warsaw 1986, p. 157.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 154.

⁶⁸ See: *Bogowie, demony, herosi. Leksykon/ The Gods, Demons, Heroes. A Lexicon.*, ed. Pasek Zbigniew, Cracow 1996, p. 270; Strzelczyk Jerzy, *Mity, podania i wierzenia dawnych Słowian /Myths, Legends and Beliefs of Ancient Slavs/*, Poznań 2008, pp. 130-131.

⁶⁹ Kohli Anna, *Trzy kolory bogini /Three Colours of the Goddess/*, Cracow 2007, p. 188.

⁷⁰ See: Szyjewski Andrzej, *Religia Słowian / Religion of the Slavs/*, Cracow 2010, p. 128.

⁷¹ More on worship of the saint, see: Stradomski Jan, *Święta Paraskiewa (Petka) w literaturze, kulturze i duchowości Słowian południowych i wschodnich/ Saint Paraskiewa (Petka) in Literature, Culture and Spirituality of Southern and Eastern European Slavs/*, [in:] *Święci w kulturze i duchowości dawnej współczesnej Europy /Saints in Culture and Spirituality of Ancient and Contemporary Europe/*, ed. Stępnia-Minczewska Wanda, Kijas, Zdzisław J., Cracow 1999, pp. 83-93.

⁷² Quoted after: Kohli Anna, *Trzy kolory.../ Three Colours.../*, p. 188.

⁷³ Uspieński Boris A. *Kult św. Mikołaja na Rusi/ Worship of St. Nicholas in Rus'/*, different translations, Lublin 1985, pp. 200, 203.

⁷⁴ *Русский праздник...*, pp. 364-373.

⁷⁵ Uspieński Boris A. *Kult św. Mikołaja.../Worship of St. Nicholas.../*, p. 202. Uspieński gives the example of Puszkina's *Panna włościanka*, see: Puszkina Aleksander, *Panna włościanka / The Peasant Maiden/*, Warsaw 1959, p. 17: „may I not live until holy Friday, I will come” (these words of swearing are uttered by Liza, the heroine, when she promises Aleksy that she will come and meet him again).

⁷⁶ Quoted after: Uspieński Boris A., *Kult.../Worship of.../*, pp. 200, 203.

⁷⁷ *Protoewangelia Jakuba /James's Proto-Gospel/*, [in:] *Apokryfy Nowego Testamentu /The Apocryphs of the New Testament/*, ed. Starowieyski Marek, Fr. vol. 1, *Ewangelie Apokryficzne / The Apocryphal Gospel/*, Lublin 1986, pp. 192-193 (the fragment concerns sewing curtains for the Lord's Shrine).

⁷⁸ *Marienlexikon*, ed. Bäumer R. Scheffczyk, L. vol. 4, St. Otillien 1992, p. 89, quoted after: Walanus, Wojciech, *Przedstawienie Marii tkającej nieszytą suknię Jezusa na rycinie Wita Stwosza. Źródła literackie i obrazowe /The Presentation of Mary Weaving the Unsewed Gown of Jesus on the Figure of Veit Stoss [in:] Wokół Wita Stwosza. Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji naukowej/Around Veit Stoss. Materials from the International Scientific Conference*, ed. Horzela Dobrosława, Organisty Adam, Cracow 2006, pp. 142-143.

⁷⁹ “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,” that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: “They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.” Therefore the soldiers did these things”.

⁸⁰ Sawicka Stanisława, *Ryciny Wita Stwosza/ Figures by Veit Stoss/*, Warsaw 1957, p. 42 (footnote 22).

⁸¹ Walanus Wojciech, *Przedstawienie Marii tkającej.../the Presentation of Mary.../*, pp. 142-143.

⁸² See more on the subject: Sawicka Stanisława, *Ryciny.../Figures.../*, pp. 9, 16-17; also Master's degree thesis of Zofia Herman, „Św. Łukasz malujący Marię” *Jakoba Beinharta. Ikonografia a monochromia /St. Lucas Painting Mary by Jakob Beinhart. Iconography vs Monochromy/*, written in 2009 in the Faculty of History at Warsaw University, computer printout made available to the author of this book.

⁸³ Albrecht Dürer, *Życie Maryi/Life of St. Mary/* ed. by Janocha Michał, Fr., Warsaw 1991, xylograph no. 14, p. 37; The motif of Mary – the spinner, or weaving a robe for her Son is much better analyzed in German literature. It is also mentioned by E. Neumann, Neumann Erich, *Wielka Matka.../The Great Mother.../*, p. 238. The relevance and modifications to the motif are proven by i.a. the preserved and retold legend about an elderly woman from Kresburg, Germany, who for many years has been weaving a woolen top for the Baby who is born (at Christmas). That is going on until the day when, by will of God, Death comes for her. Let's recall the legend:

„In a German land, in Kresburg, every year at Christmas all the bells start to ring with a five minutes delay... The explanation of that extraordinary and probably the only fact was provided by tradition with the legend that is worth telling, as it is very enlightening. It is about a woman from Kresburga, called Margaret, like the protagonist of Dr. Faustus; but she was not a young girl She was a decrepit old woman, but still hard working and extremely pious. One winter evening, on 24th December, old Margaret, in her small and neat house worked by the cresset light, knitting a baby's top. Night had fallen already, when the door of the lonely house opened noiselessly and Death came, barely stroking Margaret with her cold and dry fingers. The elderly lady calmly raised her eyes to her. – Is it time? – she simply asked. – Yes. It's time – Death nodded. Margaret did not stop working. – You must wait – she said and kept knitting. – I know I have lived long and I know that my last hour did not come for too long. I have been prepared to that journey for a long time. But now, in this very moment, I cannot follow you. Please, let me finish that woolen top. – It is impossible – Death responds. – Law is law. You know yourself that it is not me who gives orders here. I only execute God's decision. – However, I beg you, wait a minute – the old lady insists. – This night is different than all the others. – How much time do you need? – Two hours is enough. –Two hours is too long – Death answers. – You want to disobey God's laws. You should be punished for this. – That does not matter – the old lady says. – It is enough that I will finish that top. For so many years, every year I knit a woolen top for the baby who is born. And if I fail to finish, the Baby will freeze. Can't you feel the frost? – Two hours of disregarding the sign I have given to you here – the severe Death insists – means two hundred years of penance there, until you can reach heaven in peace! Margaret trembled. – Two hundred years!... Oh well... The Baby cannot be left without a top. – And she keeps working. She is working like that for two hours, until midnight. When she finishes, she gets up and leaves her house and her night visitor follows her. On their way they met the Baby, who descended naked among people. Margaret knelt before him and for the last time she put the top on Him, so as it would not freeze, like she had been doing for many years. – And now where are you going? – the Baby asked two wanderers. – I am going to serve two hundred years of punishment, to be happy afterwards – the woman answers – and she is accompanying me, because she had been waiting for two hours for me to finish the top for You. – Do not lose your time any more – the Baby said to Death. – I myself will escort that kind old lady to the place where she is expected. – the Baby takes her hand and returns to Eden, where she had just arrived from. He returned as fast as he could, knowing that He was expected on the earth. But He could not get to Kresburg on time, as usual. It was five minutes after midnight already, exactly as much time as it was needed for the additional journey to Eden. And from that time, according to the legend, the bells in Kresburg ring Christmas with five minutes delay in comparison to the rest of the world. And when they sound five past twelve, they seem to remind people that law can be broken only out of love and that this breach cannot be punished, and it even should be rewarded, as if to contradict all the laws of people and time, if it turns out to be necessary”.

Source of the legend: <http://www.apostol.pl/czytelnia/legendy-chrzescijanskie/kaftanik-dla-dzieciatka> (Top for the baby) of 1.01.2013;

⁸⁴ *Legendy o Matce Boskiej, Panu Jezusie i Świętych Pańskich / The Legends about Our Lady, Lord Jesus and Lord's Saints/*, collected and edited by Józef Grajner, Warsaw 1904, pp. 89-91 (access: CBN Polona).

⁸⁵ *Królowa Niebios: legendy o Matce Boskiej/The Queen of Heaven: Legends about Our Lady*, collected and worked out by Marian Gawalewicz, Warsaw 1985, p. 109.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 108-109. Both collections of legends stem from the Young Polish trend of enchantment with folklore and refer to folk worship of Virgin Mary, they mostly constitute a collection of stereotypical images. More on the study of Slavic folk legends and the plot of Queen of Nature, see: Kruszczyńska Anna, *Matka Boska – Królowa Natury w literaturze Młodej Polski/Our Lady – Queen of*

Nature in the Young Poland Literature/ „Literatura Ludowa” 2011, no. 1, pp. 31-45 and Gębarowicz Mieczysław, *Mater Misericordiae Pokrov Pokrova w sztuce i legendzie Środkowo-Wschodniej Europy/ Mater Misericordiae Pokrov. Pokrova in Central and Eastern European Art and Legend*/, Wrocław 1986. Besides, about Our Lady in folk culture, see: Sokolewicz Zofia, *Matka Boska w polskiej kulturze ludowej XIX i XX wieku /Our Lady in Polish Folk Culture of the 19th and 20th Centuries*/, „Etnografia Polska” 1988, fol. 1, pp. 289-303 and Rosa Ewa, *Typy Madonny w literaturze ludowej/ The Types of Madonna in Folk Literature*/, „Literatura Ludowa” 1986, no 3, pp. 19-55.

⁸⁷ See: Grąbczewski Jacek, *Postać Matki Boskiej w ludowych przekazach językowych /The Figure of Our Lady in Folk Language Traditions*/, „Polska Sztuka Ludowa” 1984, no. 3, p. 162.

⁸⁸ Simonides Dorota, *Dlaczego drzewa... / Why Trees Stopped Talking?...*/, p. 101.

⁸⁹ See: Grąbczewski Jacek, *Postać Matki Boskiej... /The figure of Our Lady...*/, p. 162.

⁹⁰ *Legenda o Matce Boskiej... /Legends about Our Lady...*/, p. 91.

⁹¹ Cf. Haavio Maartti *Mitologia fińska/ Finnish Mythology*, translated by Litwiniuk Jerzy Warsaw 1979, 279, also Grąbczewski Jacek, *Postać Matki Boskiej... /The Figure of Our Lady...*/, p. 163.

⁹² Neumann Erich, *Wielka Matka... /The Great Mother...*/, p. 233.

⁹³ Rzepnikowska Iwona, *Rosyjska i polska bajka magiczna (AT 480) w kontekście kultury ludowej /Russian and Polish Magical Fairy Tale (AT 480) in the Context of Folk Culture* /Toruń 2005, p. 107.

⁹⁴ See more extensively: Wężowicz-Ziółkowska Dobrosława, *Miłość ludowa. Wzory miłości wieśniaczej w polskiej pieśni ludowej XVIII-XX wieku/ Folk Love. The Patterns of Peasant Love in Polish Folk Song of the 18th-20th Centuries* /, Wrocław 1991, p. 161.

⁹⁵ More on the Witch in fables is written by: Lasoń-Kochańska Grażyna, *Gender w literaturze dla dzieci i młodzieży. Wzorce płciowe i kobiecy repertuar tematyczny/ Gender in Children's and Youth's Literature. Sexual Patterns and Female Topic Repertoire*/, Słupsk 2012.

⁹⁶ Tale with the same title: *Siostra siedmiu kruków/ The Sister of Seven Ravens*/ to which Janina Porazińska gave literary form, takes the advantage of folk plot of *Seven ravens*, in Julian Krzyżanowski's classification numbered T451; see: Porazińska Janina, *Czarodziejska księga. Baśnie, bajki, bajdurki osnute na tematach gawędek ludu polskiego/ The Magic Book. Fairy Tales, Fables, Rigmaroles on the Basis of Polish Folk Tales*, Warsaw 1985, pp. 17-31; I write about the fable more extensively in the article: *Zaświatowe metonimie. Symbolika struktur niewerbalnych w wybranych utworach literatury dla dzieci/ Metonymies of the Beyond. The Symbolism of Non-Verbal Structures in Selected Literary Works for Children* /, [in:] *Folklor w badaniach współczesnych /Folklore in Contemporary Studies*/, ed. Miannecki Adrian, Osińska Agnieszka, Podziewska Luiza, Toruń 2005, pp. 123-133.

⁹⁷ E.g. a fable from Afanasiew's collection, with the number 104: *Piękna Wasylisa /The Beautiful Vasilisa* /, where the heroine, having served the Witch starts to live with a lonely old lady. Here she undertakes numerous works: spinning flax and weaving linen, and further, sewing 12 shirts for the czar, see: *Rosyjskie bajki ludowe ze zbioru Aleksandra Afanasjewa /Russian Folk Fables from the Collection of Aleksandr Afanasjev* /, various translations, ed. by Łużny Ryszard, Cracow 2001, pp. 77-82. Also the fable by the Grimm brothers *Wodnica /The Water Witch* /: the protagonist, who, together with her little brother, fell into the well, during play, is ordered by the water witch to spin the tangled flax and carry water to a barrel with holes, cf. *Baśnie Braci Grimm /Grimm Brothers' Fairy Tales* /, translated by Bielecka Emilia, Tarnowski Marceli, afterword by Helena Kapętuś, Warsaw 1982, vol. 1, pp. 365-366.

⁹⁸ *Baśnie Braci Grimm... /Grimm Brothers'...* /, vol. 1, 2.

⁹⁹ See: *Czarodziejskie baśnie. Rosyjskie baśnie ludowe /Magical Fairy Tales. Russian Folk Fairy Tales* /, translated by Miecugow, Joanna, Warsaw 1990, p. 133.

¹⁰⁰ Lasoń-Kochańska Grażyna, *Gender w literaturze... /Gender in...* /, p. 63.

¹⁰¹ *Czarodziejskie baśnie... /Magical Fairy Tales...* /, p. 133.

¹⁰² *Rosyjskie bajki ludowe ze zbioru... / Russian Folk Fables from the Collection...* /, p. 78: „... there stood the hut of the Baba Yaga. The fence around it was made of human bones, on the fence there were dead heads sticking out with eyes, at the gates, instead of stakes – human legs, instead of staples – arms, instead of a lock – mouth with sharp teeth”.

¹⁰³ Kohlberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Krakowskie /All Works. The Region of Krakow* /, vol. 8, Warsaw in 1962, pp. 20-21.

¹⁰⁴ Fedorowski Michał, *Lud okolic Żarek, Siewierza i Pilicy /The Folk of the Żarki, Siewierz and Pilica Area* /, Warsaw 1888, p. 171.

¹⁰⁵ *Oekonomika ziemiańska generalna punktami partykularnemi, interrogatoryami gospodarskimi, praktyką miesięczną, modellurami albo tabulami arytmetycznymi obiasniona przez Jakuba Kazimierza Haura [...]. Z nowym przydatkiem Geometrii gospodarskiej napisanej od w.X. Marcina Bystrzyckiego/ General Gentry Economics Explained in Points, Landlord's Questions or Arithmetic Tables by Jakub Kazimierz Haur [...] with New Addition of Landlord's Geometry Written from 10th Century/ [...], reprinted Anno Domini 1744, Cracow 1744.*

¹⁰⁶ Gloger, Zygmunt, *Rok polski w życiu, tradycji i pieśni /The Polish Year in Life, Tradition and Song/*, Warsaw 1900, pp. 371-372 (access: CBN Polona).

¹⁰⁷ Paluch Adam, Libera Zbigniew, *Ślina – „sok” ciała/ Saliva – “juice” of the body/*, „Lud” 1996, vol. 80, pp. 145-155.

¹⁰⁸ Uspieński Boris A. *Kult św. Mikołaja.../The Worship of.../*, p. 257.

¹⁰⁹ Ibidem, p. 256.

¹¹⁰ *And they spat on Him, took a cane and beat Him on the head.*

¹¹¹ Quoted after: Gołębiowska-Suchorska Agnieszka, „Dziewczę przędzie, Pan Bóg nitki daje”.../ „Maiden Spins, God Gives Thread”.../ , p. 88.

¹¹² Paluch Adam, Libera Zbigniew, *Ślina.../Saliva.../*, p. 152.

¹¹³ Adamowski Jan, *Lubelskie przekazy o zachowaniach magicznych/ The Lublin Traditions of Magical Behaviors/*, „Etnolingwistyka” 2001, no. 13, p. 263.

¹¹⁴ Such coexistence of old pagan structures with the contents of Christian religion is very common in folk medicine, see for instance: Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, Fr. Nadbrzeżny Antoni, *Magiczne i teologiczne aspekty medycyny ludowej/ The Magical and Theological Aspects of a Folk Medicine/*, „Roczniki Teologii Dogmatycznej” 2012, no. 59, pp. 275-292.

¹¹⁵ Looking at the plot in a broader context, if we consider the temporal restriction – performing any activity during one day/night, it is enough to mention the popular, well known fairy tale by the Grimm Brothers, about Cinderella, who was to separate poppy seeds from sand (or peas and lentils from ash) during one night, see e.g. The Grimm Brothers, *Czerwony Kapturek, Jaś i Małgosia, Stoliczku, nakryj się, Kopciuszek, Pani Zima /Little Red Riding Hood, Hansel and Gretel, Wishing-Table, Cinderella, Old Mother Frost/*, translated by: Pietras Joanna, Tarnowski Marcei, Wrocław 2007, p. 42.

¹¹⁶ Дмитрий Зеленин, *Избранные труды: статьи по духовной культуре 1934 – 1954*, Москва 1994, pp. 193-213.

¹¹⁷ I write more on illness and bringing back the new order to the world and health to man in article: *Magiczne sposoby leczenia w tradycyjnej medycynie ludowej. Symbolika słów i gestów w aktach zażegnania, zaklęcia i zamawiania choroby /The Magical Ways of Treatment in Traditional Folk Medicine. The Symbolism of Words and Gestures in the Acts of Whispering, Enchanting and Putting Spells on the Disease/ [in:] Między literaturą a medycyną. Literackie i pozaliterackie działania środowisk medycznych a problemy egzystencjalne człowieka XIX i XX wieku /Between Literature and Medicine. Literary and Non Literary Activities of Medical Environments and Human Existential Problems of the 19th and 20th Centuries/*, ed. Łoch Eugenia, Wallner Grzegorz, Lublin 2005, pp. 67-76.

¹¹⁸ *Mazowieckie zapusty 1981-2006. XXV lat. Od obrzędu do teatru obrzędowego /Masovian Shrovetide 1981-2006. 25 Years. From Rite to Ritual Theatre/*, ed. Kotowicz-Borowy Irena, Baraniuk Tadeusz Ciechanów 2006, p. 30.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Symbolika dobowego cyklu powszedniego w polskim folklorze tradycyjnym /The Symbolism of the Daily Cycle in the Traditional Polish Folklore*, Lublin 1994, p. 108, on mediating role of dusk: pp. 107-140.

¹²⁰ Cf. Leach Edmund, *Kultura i komunikowanie /Culture and Communicating/*, [in:] Leach Edmund, Greimas Algirdas J, *Rytuał i narracja /Ritual and Narration/*, different translations, Warsaw 1989, pp. 81-83.

¹²¹ Cf. Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Symbolika dobowego cyklu.../The Symbolism of Daily Cycle.../*, p. 112 and next.

¹²² Cf. Tomicki Ryszard, *Religijność ludowa /Folk Religiousness/*, [in] *Etnografia Polski. Przemiany kultury ludowej /The Ethnography of Poland. The Transformations of a Folk Culture/*, ed. Biernacka Maria, Frankowska Maria, Paprocka Wanda, vol. 2, Wrocław 1981, pp. 39-40, Caillois Roger, *Żywioł i ład /Element and Order/*, translated by Tatarkiewicz, Anna, Warsaw 1973, pp. 121-159.

¹²³ See: Świątkowski Henryk, *Ludowe tkactwo w Łowickiem /Folk Weaving in the Region of Łowicz/*

, „Prace i Materiały Muzeum Archeologicznego i Etnograficznego w Łodzi. Seria Etnograficzna” 1987, no. 27, p. 11.

¹²⁴ Fedorowski Michał, *Lud okolic.../ The Folk of the Żarki.../*, p. 172.

¹²⁵ Gołębiowska-Suchorska Agnieszka, „Dziewczę przędzie, Pan Bóg nitki daje”.../ “Maiden Spins, God Gives Thread”.../ , p. 34.

¹²⁶ Kołodziejczyk Edmund, *Zwyczaje, obrządki, zagadki i pieśni ludu kaliskiego w okolicach Wielunia /Customs, Rits, Riddles and Songs of Kalisz Folk in the Area of Wieluń/ „Lud” 1909, vol. 15, p. 104.*

¹²⁷ Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Tabu.../Taboo.../* Warszawa 2010, pp. 367-368.

¹²⁸ *Wokół śmierci. Praktyka, symbolika, metafora /Around Death. Practice, Symbolism, Metaphor/*, ed. Bobryk Roman, Kryszczuk Marzena, Urban-Puszkarska Justyna, Siedlce 1998.

¹²⁹ Kołodziejczyk Edmund, *Zwyczaje, obrządki, zagadki .../Customs, Rites, Riddles.../*, p. 105.

¹³⁰ Caillois Roger, *Żywioł i ład.../ Element and Order/...*, pp. 126, 134.

¹³¹ Leontios, *Antologia Palatyńska /Palatine Antology/*, XVI p. 286.

¹³² See: Kowalska Jolanta, *Koło bogów. Ruch i taniec w mitach i obrzędach/The Circle of Gods. Movement and Dancing in Myths and Rituals/*, Warsaw 1995, p. 67.

¹³³ Van der Leeuw Gerardus, *Fenomenologia religii/Phenomenology of Religion/*, translated by Prokopiuk Jerzy, Warsaw 1978, p. 422.

¹³⁴ See: Kowalska Jolanta, *Koło bogów.../The Circle of Gods.../*, p. 7.

¹³⁵ Ibidem, pp. 7-8.

¹³⁶ Ibidem, p. 8.

¹³⁷ See: Graves Robert, *Mity greckie /Greek Myths/*, translated by Krzeczkowski Henryk, Warszawa 1992, pp. 41-42, 44.

¹³⁸ Benetowa Sara, *Konopie w wierzeniach i zwyczajach ludowych/ Hemp in Folk Beliefs and Customs/*, Warsaw 1936, p. 34.

¹³⁹ Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Symbolika ruchu obrotowego i rytualnej inwersji/ Symbolism of Eotational Movement and Ritual Inversion /*, „Etnografia Polska”, 1978, fol. 1, pp. 83, 98-99; Cirlot Juan Eduardo, *Słownik symboli/Dictionary of Symbols/* translated by Kania Ireneusz, Kraków 2006, pp. 201-202, also *Mały słownik kultury dawnych Słowian/ A Concise Dictionary of Old Slavic Culture/*, ed. Leciejewicz Lech, Warsaw 1988, p. 198.

¹⁴⁰ Podbielkowski Zbigniew, *Słownik roślin użytkowych/ The Dictionary of Usable Plants/*, Warsaw 2003, 214, p. 243.

¹⁴¹ Kowalska Jolanta, *Taniec drzewa życia. Uniwersalia kulturowe w tańcu /The Dance of the Tree of Life. Cultural Universals in Dancing/*, Warsaw 1991, pp. 51-55.

¹⁴² Benetowa Sara, *Konopie w wierzeniach.../Hemp in Folk Beliefs.../*, p. 34.

¹⁴³ Eliade Mircea, *Traktat.../The Treaty.../*, p. 364. I write more on feasts with the dead in: *Chleb w folklorze polskim – w poszukiwaniu znaczeń /Bread in Polish Folklore – in Search for Meanings/*, Siedlce 2010, chapter: “Dialogue with Spirits” – *Mediative Function of Bread in the Grandfathers’ Eve Rituals*, p. 136-148 and in the article: “Dialog z duchami” – *mediacyjna funkcja chleba w tradycyjnej obrzędowości dziadów/“Dialogue with Spirits”- Mediative Function of Bread in the Traditional Rituals of Grandfathers’ Eve/*, [in:] *Język polski. Współczesność-historia IV/ The Polish Language /Pretent Times-History IV/*, ed. Książek-Bryłowa Władysława, Duda Henryk, Lublin 2003, pp. 343-354.

¹⁴⁴ More on the subject see: Dudzik Wojciech, *Karnawały w kulturze /Carnivals in Culture/*, Warsaw 2005, p. 27 and next. Eating meat was forbidden in fasting meals, its lack enabled the suspension of biology as the law defining the world of mortals. Meat is a clear confirmation of the presence of death and passing, making it difficult or impossible to symbolically return to the original state, initial state of nature, see: Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Tabu.../Taboo.../*, pp. 322-324.

¹⁴⁵ See Kowalska Jolanta, *Taniec drzewa życia.../The Dance of the Tree of Life.../*, p. 55.

¹⁴⁶ Burszta Józef, *Wieś i karczma. Rola karczmy w życiu wsi pańszczyźniane/ The Village and Inn. The Role of Inn in the Life of Serf Village/*, Warsaw 1950, p. 119.

¹⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 120.

¹⁴⁸ Baranowski Bohdan *Polska karczma. Restauracja. Kawiarnia/Polish Inn. Restaurant. Cafe/* Wrocław 1979, p. 119.

¹⁴⁹ Kowalski Piotr *Leksykon znaki świata. Omen, przesąd, znaczenie /Lexicon of the Signs of the World. Omen, Superstition, Meaning /*, Wrocław 1998, pp. 119-121. On folk eroticism in songs and

behavior see more in e.g. Bartmiński, Jerzy *Jaś koniki poił (uwagi o stylu erotyku ludowego)/ Jan Gave Water to Horses (Notes on the Folk Erotic Style)*, [in:] *Teoria kultury. Folklor a kultura/ Theory of Culture. Folklore and Culture*, ed. Waliński Michał, Katowice 1978, pp. 174-185; Wężowicz-Ziółkowska Dobrosława, *Miłość ludowa. Wzory miłości wieśniaczej w polskiej pieśni ludowej XVIII-XX wieku/Folk Love. The Patterns of Peasant Love in Polish Folk Song of the 18th –20th Centuries*, Wrocław 1991 or Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Pocałunek w życiu wieśniaka – o powściągliwości i rozwiązłości w całowaniu się ludowym/A Kiss in a Peasant's Life – on Self-Restraint and Promiscuity in Folk Kissing* [in:] *Историко-филологические исследования: традиции и современные тенденции*, ed. Kozak Ewa and Pogoda-Kołodziejak Adriana, volume 15, „Colloquia Litteraria Sedlcensia”, Siedlce 2014, 73-81.

¹⁵⁰ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Lubelskie/ All Works. The Lublin Region*, vol. 16, Kraków 1962, p. 114.

¹⁵¹ Benetowa Sara, *Konopie w wierzeniach.../Hemp in Folk Beliefs.../*, p. 35.

¹⁵² Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Mazowsze/ All Works. Masovia/* vol. 28, Warsaw 1964, pp. 80-81.

¹⁵³ Stelmachowska Bożena, *Rok obrzędowy na Pomorzu/The Ritual Year in Pomerania/* Toruń 1933, p. 100.

¹⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 102.

¹⁵⁵ Kołodziejczyk Edmund, *Zwyczaj, obrządk, zagadki.../Customs, Rites, Riddles.../*, p. 105.

¹⁵⁶ “magical transformation of bare soil into fecund one, or the effect of a fertile woman or a mother upon sowing”, see: Eliade Mircea, *Traktat.../The Treaty.../*, p. 345.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Niewiadomski Donat, *Orka i siew. O ludowych wyobrażeniach agrarnych /Tillage and Sowing. On Folk Agrarian Images/*, Lublin 1999, p. 32.

¹⁵⁸ See Kalinowska-Kłosiewicz Danuta, *Tańce zapustne kobiet „na wysoki len”. Elementy zaduszkowe w obrzędowości zapustnej/ Shrovetide Women's Dances “for High Flax”. All Souls' Day's Elements in Shrovetide Rituals/*, „Polska Sztuka Ludowa” 1988, no.1-2, p. 78.

¹⁵⁹ Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Tabu.../Taboo.../*, p. 293.

¹⁶⁰ Kalinowska-Kłosiewicz Danuta, *Tańce zapustne kobiet.../ Shrovetide Women's Dances.../*, p. 77.

¹⁶¹ See: Uspiński Borys A., *Kult św. Mikołaja.../Worship of.../*, pp. 244-255.

¹⁶² Ibidem, p. 245.

¹⁶³ Banek Kazimierz, *Opowieść o włosach. Zwyczaj – rytuały – symbolika /The Story about Hair. Customs – Rituals – Symbolism*, Warsaw 2010, p. 25.

¹⁶⁴ In the traditional folklore the extraterrestrial beings, such as nymphs, also called dryads, were known to weave/spin linen/hair. It was said that they stole linen, spun it, then weaved and sew clothing of white linen, see: Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Pokucie/ All Works. The Region of Pokucie/*, vol. 31, Warsaw 1963, p. 98. On weaving nymphs who “spin distaff of spider web, comb their hair in fields and forests and wash ordinary kerchiefs on wet meadows”, see: Dzwigoł Renata, *Polskie ludowe słownictwo mitologiczne/ Polish Folk Mythological Vocabulary/*, Cracow 2004, p. 172 and in literature, Puszkina Aleksander, in the unfinished drama *Rusalka /Rusalka/* [in:] The same author, *Dzieła wybrane /Selected Works, vol. 4*, ed. Toporowski Marian, translated by different authors, Warsaw 1956, p. 224.

¹⁶⁵ More on the subject: Banek Kazimierz, *Opowieść o włosach.../The story about the Hair.../*, p. 200 and next.

¹⁶⁶ “When a sinful woman from that town learned that Jesus was dining there, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind Him at His feet weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears and wipe them with her hair. Then she kissed His feet and anointed them with the perfume”.

¹⁶⁷ See: Uspiński Borys A., *Kult św. Mikołaja.../The Worship of.../*, pp. 252-253.

¹⁶⁸ Ibidem, pp. 254-255.

¹⁶⁹ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Poznańskie/ All Works. The Region of Poznań/*, vol. 9, Poznań 1963, p. 128.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. more: Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Tabu.../Taboo.../*, pp. 300-303, Kowalski Piotr, *Kilka uwag o poszczeniu. Wprowadzenie do problematyki biesiadnej/ A Few Remarks on Fasting . Introduction*

tion to the Problems of Feasting [in:] *Oczywisty urok biesiadowania/ The Obvious Charm of Feasting/*, ed. Kowalski Piotr, Wrocław 1998, pp. 20-23.

¹⁷¹ Niewiadomski Donat, *Orka i siew.../ Tillage and Sowing.../*, p. 31.

¹⁷² Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie/ All Works. The Great Duchy of Posen*, vol. 9, Cracow 1963, p. 130.

¹⁷³ Godula Róża, *Dramatyzacja czasu „przejścia” w obrzędzie kołędowania/ Dramatization of the „Passing” Time in the Carolling Ritual/*, [in:] *Z kołędą przez wieki. Kolędy w Polsce i w krajach słowiańskich/ With a Carol through Centuries. Carols in Poland and in Slavic Countries /*, ed. Budrewicz Tadeusz, Koziara Stanisław Okoń, Jan, Tarnów 1996, p. 344.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon znaki świata.../Lexicon of the Signs.../*, 362; more on the stranger, cf. Benedyktowicz, Zbigniew, *Portrety „obcego”: od stereotypu do symbolu/ The Portraits of a “Stranger”: from Stereotype to Symbol/*, Cracow 2000.

¹⁷⁵ I write more on the stranger in traditional Slavic culture in my article: *Między akceptacją a odrzuceniem – portret Żyda w kulturze słowiańskiej/ Between Acceptance and Rejection – the Portrait of a Jew in Slavic Culture/*, [in:] *Współczesna komparatyka i jej wymiary hermeneutyczne/ Contemporary Comparative Studies and Their Hermeneutic Dimensions/*, “Conversatoria Litteraria Rok” IV – V, Siedlce – Banská Bystrica 2011 – 2012, pp. 83-94.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Benedyktowicz Danuta and Zbigniew, *Dom w tradycji ludowej/ Home in Folk Tradition/*, Wrocław 1992, 57 and Cywian Tatiana W., *Dom w folklorystycznym modelu świata/Home in the Folkloristic Model of the World/* translated by Faryno Jerzy „Literatura Ludowa” 1978, no.3, 53. For instance Piotr Kowalski writes about spatial borders: Kowalski Piotr, *Prośba do Pana Boga. Rzecz o gestach wotywnych/A Request to God. On Votive Gestures/* Wrocław 1994, pp. 58-64.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Caraman Piotr, *Obrzęd kołędowania u Słowian i Rumunów/ The Caroling Ritual of Slavs and Romanians/*, Kraków 1933, p. 362, cf. also: Stomma Ludwik, *Antropologia kultury.../ Anthropology of Culture.../*, pp. 29-49.

¹⁷⁸ Kiersnowski Ryszard, *Niedźwiedzie i ludzie w dawnych i nowszych czasach. Fakty i mity/ Bears and Humans in Old and Contemporary Times. Facts and Myths/*, Warsaw 1990, pp. 324-339, (especially the chapter: *Niedźwiedź i kobiety/Bear and Women*). Also Borys Uspienski writes a lot about connections with the bear, cf. Uspienski Borys A., *Kult św. Mikołaja.../ The Worship of St. Nicholas.../*, pp. 131-168.

¹⁷⁹ *Mazowieckie zapusty 1981-2006.../ Masovian Shrovetide 1981-2006.../*, p. 32.

¹⁸⁰ *Wokół śmieci. Praktyka, symbolika, metafora/Around Litter. Practice, Symbolism, Metaphor/* ed. Bobryk Roman, Kryszczuk Marzena, Urban-Puszkarska Justyna, Siedlce 1998.

¹⁸¹ Kowalski, Piotr, *Leksykon znaki świata.../Lexicon of the Signs.../*, p. 69.

¹⁸² de Beauvoir, Simone, *Druga płeć/ The Second Sex/*, translated by Mycielska, Gabriela, Leśniewska, Maria, Warsaw 2003, p. 89.

Chapter 3

¹ Douglas Mary, *Czystość i zmaza/ Purity and Stain/*, translated by Bucholc Marta, Warsaw 2007, pp. 9, 81.

² Lichański Stefan, *„Chłopi” Władysława Stanisława Reymonta/ The Peasants by Władysław Stanisław Reymont/*, Warsaw 1987, p. 5.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 19.

⁴ Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi/ The Peasants/*, edited by: Ziejka, Franciszek, vol. 1, Wrocław 1999, BN I 279, . XXXV (introduction), see also the whole passage, XXXII-XLI.

⁵ *„Chłopi” Władysława Reymonta/ The Peasants by Władysław Stanisław Reymont*, edited by: Osmoła Józef, Lublin 2006, p. 9.

⁶ As we already know from the previous chapters, the category of liminality, i.e. being in between, on the border (worked out as a three-phase ritual structure by the French ethnologist, Arnold van Gennep) in the traditional culture was assigned to individuals who revealed abilities to establish

contact with transcendence. Let us recall – the women gifted with it were old (midwives, healers, prophetesses, ch.1) and “voiceless” women (ch. 2). However, liminality, mediativeness, transgressiveness was also attributed to i.a. „the wealthiest, the strongest and the prettiest” (so the ones like Jagna), see more about that: Drabik Wanda, *Cztery pory życia (O współzależności obrzędów dorocznych i rodzinnych /Four Seasons of life (On Interdependence of Seasonal and Family Rites)*, „Polska Sztuka Ludowa” 1990, no. 1, p. 20; see also: Van Gennep Arnold, *Obrzędy przejścia. Systematyczne studium ceremonii /Rites of Passage. A Systematic Study of Ceremony/*, translated by Biały Beata, Warsaw 2006.

⁷ Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi.../The Peasant.../*, vol. 1, 393.

⁸ Cf. article by Vially Anaïs, *Sow the wind and reap the whirlwind*, „Literatura Ludowa” 2006, no. 3, pp. 3-10, deciphering the figure of Jagna and her fate in the category of carnival “upside down world” of Michail Bachtin.

⁹ Koc Barbara, *Niewinna grzesznica w Chłopach Władysława Stanisława Reymonta/An Innocent Sinner in The Peasants by Władysław Stanisław Reymont/*, „Literatura Ludowa” 2006, no. 6, p. 22.

¹⁰ See: Baranowski Bohdan, *Życie codzienne wsi między Wartą a Pilicą w XIX wieku / The Everyday Life in Villages between the Rivers Warta and Pilica in 19th century/*, Warsaw 1969, p. 120.

¹¹ Koc Barbara, *Niewinna grzesznica.../ An Innocent Sinner.../*, p. 19.

¹² Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi... /The Peasants/* vol. 2, 666-667.

¹²Cf. Kowalski Piotr, *The border. An attempt at ordering anthropological categories*, [in:] *Borderland as a Problem of Culture*, ed. Smolińska Teresa, Opole 1994,143

¹³ Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi.../ The Peasants/*, vol. 2, p. 668.

¹⁵ Cf. Roux Jean-Paul, *Krew: mity, symbole, rzeczywistość /The Blood: Myths, Symbols, Reality/*, translated by Perek Marzena, Kraków 1994, p. 256.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p.13.

¹⁷ Cf. Baranowski Bohdan *Życie codzienne wsi.../ The Everyday Life .../*, p. 121. It has to be remarked that Baranowski’s publications were written in 1950s and 1960s (the times of socialism), so they were included in literature that presented certain facts and folk realities tendentiously, with critical attitudes towards village morality.

¹⁸ Vially Anaïs, *Kto sieje wiatr, zbiera burzę .../ Who Sows the Wind, Picks the Storm.../*, 9.

¹⁹ Gajda Kinga Anna, *Medea dzisiaj. Rozważania nad kategorią innego /Medea Today. Divagations on the Category of the Other/*, Kraków 2008, pp. 13-29.

²⁰ Władysław Stanisław Reymont, *Chłopi.../ The Peasants.../*, t. 2, p. 221.

²¹ Reymont Władysław, *Chłopi.../ The Peasants /*, vol. 2, pp. 453-454.

²² *Ibidem*, vol. 2, p. 455.

²³ *Ibidem*, vol. 1, pp. 345, 346.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, vol. 1, pp. 457-458.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, vol. 1, p. 17.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, vol. 2, p. 64.

²⁷ Zacharska Jadwiga, *O kobiecie w literaturze przełomu XIX i XX wieku /On Woman in Literature Between 19th and 20th Centuries/*, Bydgoszcz 2000, pp. 86, 87.

²⁸ Ziejka Franciszek, introduction [in:] Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi.../ The Peasants/*, LII.

²⁹ Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi.../ The Peasants /*, vol. 1, p. 156.

³⁰ de Beauvoir Simone, *Druga płeć/The Second Sex/*, translated by: Mycielska Gabriela, Leśniewska Maria, Warsaw 2003, 88. The old Anglo-Saxon proverb is: “Hail, Earth, mother of people, be fertile in God’s arms and fill up with crops for man’s benefit”.

³¹ Neumann Erich, *Wielka Matka. Fenomenologia kobiecości. Kształtowanie nieświadomości /The Big Mother. A Phenomenology of Femininity. Shaping the Unconsciousness*, translated by Reszke Robert, Warsaw 2008, 217-271. Also see the previous chapters.

³² Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi.../ The Peasants /*, vol. 1, 416-417.

³³ *Ibidem*, vol. 1, p. 435.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, vol. 2, p. 515.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, vol.1, p. 537.

³⁶ Horney Karen, *Psychologia kobiety /Psychology of Woman/*, translated by Majewski, Jacek Poznań 1997, pp. 262, 267. The author quotes the example of her patient, which can also be referred

to Jagna: „A patient once told me: <I am absolutely not afraid of sex , but I am really scared of love>” – it is a fear of any form of love, Ibidem, p. 264.

³⁷ Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi...* / *The Peasants* /, vol. 1, pp. 461, 462.

³⁸ Koc Barbara, *Niewinna grzesznica...* / *An Innocent Sinner...* /, p. 22.

³⁹ Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi...* / *The Peasants* /, vol. 2, pp. 603, 648.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, vol. 1, p. 366.

⁴¹ Ibidem, vol. 1, 351.

⁴² Ibidem, vol. 1, 459, 462.

⁴³ Ibidem, vol. 1, pp. 459-460, 534-535.

⁴⁴ Douglas Mary, *Czystość i zmaza...* / *Purity and Stain...* /, pp. 130, 171.

⁴⁵ Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi...* / *The Peasants* /, vol. 2, p. 668.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, vol. 2, p. 669.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, vol. 1, 16, vol. 2, p. 174.

⁴⁸ The issues of identity in literature are undertaken in i.a. the following works: *Staropolski ogląd świata. Tożsamość i odmienność / The Old Polish View upon the World. Identity and Difference* /, ed. Rok Bogdan, Wolański Filip, Toruń 2011; *Tropy tożsamości: Inny, Obcy, Trzeci / The Trails of Identity: The Other, the Stranger, the Third* / ed. Kalaga Wojciech, Katowice 2004; *Tożsamość kulturowa i pogranicza identyfikacji / Cultural Identity and Borders of Identification* /, ed. Iwasiów Inga, Krukowska Aleksandra, Szczecin 2005; Boski Paweł, Jarymowicz Maria, Malewska-Peyre Hanna, *Tożsamość a odmienność kulturowa / Cultural Identity and Difference* /, Warsaw 1992.

⁴⁹ See: Zacharska Jadwiga, *O kobiecie w literaturze...* / *On Woman in Literature...* /, p. 86.

⁵⁰ Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi...* / *The Peasants* /, vol. 1, p. 15.

⁵¹ Irigaray Luce, *Ciało-w-ciało z matką / The Bodily Encounter with Mother* /, transl. Araszkievicz Agata, Cracow 2000, pp. 8, 15., tłum. Agata Araszkievicz, Kraków 2000, pp. 8, 15.

⁵² See: Zacharska Jadwiga, *O kobiecie w literaturze...* / *On Woman in Literature ...* /, p. 86.

⁵³ Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi...* / *The Peasants* /, vol. 1, 155.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, vol. 1, p. 155.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, vol. 1, p. 194.

⁵⁶ Biegeleisen Henryk, *Wesele / The Wedding* /, Lwów 1928, p. 6.

⁵⁷ More on the subject, see: Zadrożyńska Anna, *Światy, zaświaty. O tradycji świętowań w Polsce / This Worlds, the Other Worlds. About the Tradition of Celebrations in Poland* /, Warsaw 2000, pp. 211-243.

⁵⁸ Wężowicz-Ziółkowska, Dobroślawa, *Miłość ludowa. Wzory miłości wieśniaczej w polskiej pieśni ludowej XVIII – XX wieku / Folk Love. The Patterns of Peasant Love in Polish Folk Song of the 18th-20th Centuries* /, Wrocław 1991, pp. 43-44 (the author quotes statements after Bohdan Baranowski).

⁵⁹ Polak Ryszard, *Status kobiety w różnych cywilizacjach / The Status of Woman in Different Civilizations*, [in:] “Cywilizacja: o nauce, moralności, sztuce i tolerancji” / “Civilization: on Science, Wisdom, Art and Tolerance” /, 2007, no. 21, p. 62.

⁶⁰ Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi...* / *The Peasants* /, vol. 1, pp. 17, 43.

⁶¹ Ibidem, vol. 1, 239-240, 386.

⁶² Koc Barbara, *Niewinna grzesznica...* / *An Innocent Sinner ...* /, 20.

⁶³ Jung, Carl Gustaw, *O naturze kobiety / On Woman's Nature* /, translated by Starski, Magnus, Poznań 1992, 19.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, p. 20.

⁶⁵ Reymont Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi...* / *The Peasants* /, vol. 1, pp. 155-156.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, vol. 1, p. 383.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, vol. 2, pp. 655-656.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, vol. 2, p. 657.

⁶⁹ Koc Barbara, *Niewinna grzesznica...* / *An Innocent Sinner ...* /, p. 22.

⁷⁰ Reymont, Władysław Stanisław, *Chłopi...* / *The Peasants* /, vol. 2, pp. 607-608.

⁷¹ Smoleń Barbara, *Chłopka / The Peasant Woman*, [in:] *Polka: medium, cień, wyobrażenie / The Polish Woman: Medium, Shadow, Imagination* /, scientific editing. Janion Maria Warsaw 2006, p. 130.

Part 2
Chapter 4

- ¹ Rusalka [ru'salka], pl. rusalki [ru'salki] – a water nymph in Slavic mythology and folklore.
- ² Barszczewski Jan, *Rusalka zwodnica/Rusalka the Deceiver*, „Niezabudka” 1841, p. 35.
- ³ Poroniec [po'ronets], pl. porońce [po'ronce] – an evil demon in Slavic mythology originating from the soul of the baby that died because of miscarriage or abortion.
- ⁴ See: Moszyński Kazimierz, *Kultura ludowa Słowian/Slavic Folk Culture*, vol. II, pt. 1, Warsaw 1967, pp. 603, 678.
- ⁵ See: Ludwik z Pokiewia (Jucewicz, Adam), *Litwa pod względem starożytnych zabytków, obyczajów i zwyczajów/Lithuania in Terms of Ancient Monuments, Traditions and Customs*, Wilno (Vilnius) 1846, p. 35.
- ⁶ Moszyński Kazimierz, *Kultura ludowa Słowian/Slavic Folk Culture*, p. 678.
- ⁷ Klinger Witold, *Wschodnio-europejskie rusalki i pokrewne postaci demonologii ludowej a tradycja grecko-rzymska/Eastern-European Rusalki and Related Creatures of Folk Demonology and Greek-Roman Tradition*, Lublin 1949, p. 15 and the next; also Moszyński, Kazimierz, *Kultura ludowa Słowian.../Slavic Folk Culture.../*, p. 641.
- ⁸ Boginka [bo'ginka], pl. boginki [bo'ginki] – literally, eng. “little goddesses” – a female deity of water in Slavic mythology and folklore. The same as bogunka, pl. bogunki.
- ⁹ Leśna [le? na], pl. leśne [le? ne] – a female deity of woods in Slavic mythology and folklore.
- ¹⁰ Dziwożona [d?ivo' ?ona], pl. dziwożony [d?ivo' ?oni] – a female swamp demon in Slavic mythology and folklore.
- ¹¹ *Klechdy starożytne, podania i powieści ludu polskiego i Rusi/Ancient Legends, Folk Tales and Novels of the Polish People and Rus'*, collected by Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki, selected by Ryszard Wojciechowski, Warsaw 1972, p. 234. (NB. Klechda [klehda] – a Slavic legend, myth). The division and names are also proved by the notes of Oskar Kolberg from the area of Mazovia, see: Kolberg, Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Mazowsze/All Works, the Region of Mazovia*, vol. 42, Cracow 1970, pp. 387-388.
- ¹² Moszyński Kazimierz, *Kultura ludowa Słowian.../Slavic Folk Culture.../*, p. 602.
- ¹³ *Klechdy starożytne, podania.../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales.../*, p. 235.
- ¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 241.
- ¹⁵ Moszyński Kazimierz, *Kultura ludowa Słowian.../Slavic Folk Culture.../*, p. 678.
- ¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 602-603. In Ukraine there was noted a song-riddle sung by rusalka to a passing-by girl (what grows without roots?/what runs without reason?/what blossoms without flowers?), see: *Klechdy starożytne, podania.../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales.../*, p. 235.
- ¹⁷ Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Tabu.../Taboo.../*, Warsaw 2010, p. 311, also Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Komunikacja niewerbalna w wybranych tekstach folkloru. Magia płaczu i milczenia, symbolika śmiechu/Non-Verbal Communication in the Selected Folklore Texts. The Magic of Crying and Silence, the Symbolism of Laughter*, [in:] *Teksty kultury. Oblicza komunikacji XXI wieku/Texts of Culture. The Faces of Communication of the 21st Century*, ed. Mazur Jan, Rzeszutko-Iwan Małgorzata, Lublin 2006, pp. 304-309.
- ¹⁸ *Klechdy starożytne, podania.../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales.../*, p. 238.
- ¹⁹ Moszyński Kazimierz, *Kultura ludowa Słowian.../Slavic Folk Culture.../*, p. 623.
- ²⁰ Forstner Dorothea, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej/The World of Christian Symbolism*, transl. Zakrzewska, Wanda and others, Warsaw 1990, p. 115.
- ²¹ *Klechdy starożytne .../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales.../*, p. 235.
- ²² Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon znaki świata. Omen, przesąd, znaczenie/Lexicon of Signs of the World. Omen, Superstition, Meaning*, Wrocław 1998, p. 384 (word: eye), also Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Postrzeżenie świata. Kilka uwag o symbolice oczu w polskim folklorze tradycyjnym/The Perception of the World. A Few Remarks about the Symbolism of Eye in Polish Traditional Folklore*, [in:] *Symbolika oka w literaturze i sztuce. Od religii do popkultury/Symbolism of Eye in Literature and Art. From Religion to Pop-Culture*, ed. Borkowski Andrzej, Borkowska Ewa, Sawicka-Jurek Jolanta, Siedlce 2009, pp. 43-49.

²³ In the traditional culture, the possession of harmful eyesight, intentions of cursing was most often attributed to women, strangers, newcomers; more about this topic in the book: *Inny obraz feminy. Szkice folklorystyczno-literackie/Another Image of Femina. Folkloristic-Literary Sketches*/, Siedlce 2012, pp. 13-31.

²⁴ *Klechdy starożytne, podania/Ancient Legends, Folk Tales...*/, p. 240.

²⁵ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Mazowsze...* / *All Works, the Region of Mazovia...*/, p. 388.

²⁶ Białczyński Czesław, *Stworze i zdusze czyli starosłowiańskie boginki i demony/Creatures and Spirits or Old Slavic Goddesses and Demons*/, Cracow 1993, p. 143.

²⁷ *Klechdy, starożytne podania/Ancient Legends, Folk Tales...*/, p. 235.

²⁸ See: Rzepińska Maria, *Historia koloru w dziejach malarstwa europejskiego/The History of Color in the Examples of European Painting*/, Cracow 1983, pp. 119, 130, also Rochecka Mirosława, *Tajemnice światła i koloru. Abstrakcja i sacrum/The Mysteries of Light and Color. Abstraction and Sacrum*/, Torun 2007, pp. 66-67.

²⁹ See: Uspieński Borys A., *Kult św. Mikołaja na Rusi/The Worship of St. Nicholas in Rus'*/, transl. Janus Elżbieta and others, Lublin 1985, pp. 244-255; more about hair see: Banek Kazimierz, *Opowieść o włosach. Zwyczaje – rytuały – symbolika/The Story about Hair. Customs – Rituals – Symbolism*/, Warsaw 2010.

³⁰ I write about such a relationship between rusalka and a man in the chapter concerning the tale of Bolesław Leśmian *Majka*, see: *Inny obraz feminy.../Another Image of Femina...*/, pp. 57-80, and in wider perspective in connection with Jacek Malczewski's painting, see: *Zaśaskotany na śmierć. Motyw rusalki w twórczości literackiej Bolesława Leśmiana (klechda Majka) i malarskiej Jacka Malczewskiego (obraz Zaśaskotany)/Tickled to Death. The Motif of Rusalka in the Literature of Bolesław Leśmian (legend Majka) and the Art of Jacek Malczewski (the painting Tickled)*/, [in:] *Barwy twórczości. Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana Profesorowi Stanisławowi Leonowi Popkowi/The Colors of Creativity. A Jubilee Book Dedicated to Professor Stanisław Leon Popek*/, ed. Kuśpit Małgorzata, Lublin 2013, pp. 359-368.

³¹ See: Czernik Stanisław, *Stare złoto. O polskiej pieśni ludowej/The Old Gold. About Polish Folk Song*/, Warsaw 1962, pp. 287-288; see also: Uspieński Borys A., *Kult św. Mikołaja.../The Cult of St. Nicolas...*/, p. 96.

³² *Klechdy starożytne, podania.../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales...*/, p. 235.

³³ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie/All Works*/, vol. 42..., p. 388; Białczyński Czesław, *Stworze i zdusze.../Creatures and Spirits...*/, p. 155.

³⁴ See: Kowalski Piotr, *Wianki i wieńce. Próba rekonstrukcji znaczeń/Wreaths and Crowns. An Attempt to Reconstruct Meanings*/, „Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Opolskiego. Folklorystyka 2”, Opole 1996, pp. 78-79.

³⁵ See more: Kohli Anna, *Trzy kolory bogini/Three Colors of a Goddess*/, Cracow 2007, pp. 99-106.

³⁶ Świerżowska Agata, *Bursztyń, korał, gagat: symbolika religijna i magiczna/Amber, Coral, Jet: Religious and Magical Symbolism*/, Cracow 2003, pp. 135-150.

³⁷ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie/All Works*/, vol. 42..., p. 388; Białczyński Czesław, *Stworze i zdusze.../Creatures and Spirits...*/, p. 155.

³⁸ See: Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Symbolika dobowego cyklu powszedniego w polskim folklorze tradycyjnym/ The Symbolism of the Daily Cycle in the Traditional Polish Folklore*/, Lublin 1994, p. 80.

³⁹ See more: Łeńska-Bąk Katarzyna, *Sól ziemi/The Salt of the Earth*/, Wrocław 2002, p. 60 and others, also Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Tabu.../Taboo...*/, pp. 213-215.

⁴⁰ Wenerska Wioleta, *Ziela-dziwy. Z literackiego zielnika romantycznego/Wonder-Herbs. From the Literary Romantic Herbarium*/, Lublin 2005, pp. 48-49 and others.

⁴¹ Pastuiak Kazimiera, *Pogranicze polsko-białorusko-ukraińskie w świetle danych językowych i etnograficznych na podstawie nazw roślin/The Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian Borderland in the Light of Linguistic and Ethnographic Data on the Basis of the Names of Plants*/, Warsaw 2007, p. 145.

⁴² Łeńska-Bąk Katarzyna, *Obrzędowa funkcja miodu/The Ritual Function of Honey*/, „Literatura Ludowa” 2006, no. 4-5, pp. 32-33.

⁴³ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie/All Works*/, vol. 42, p. 388.

⁴⁴ *Klechdy starożytne, podania.../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales...*/, p. 238.

⁴⁵ See: Leach Edmund, *Kultura i komunikowanie/Culture and Communication*/, transl. Buchowski Michał, [in:] Leach Edmund, Greimas Algirdas J., *Rytuał i narracja/Ritual and Narration*/, Warsaw 1989, pp. 81-83.

⁴⁶ See: Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Tabu a paradygmaty etnologii/Taboo and the Paradigm of Ethnology*/, Warsaw 1989, p. 117.

⁴⁷ *Słownik stereotypów i symboli ludowych/Dictionary of Stereotypes and Folk Symbols*/, vol. 1, Cosmos, ed. Bartmiński Jerzy, Lublin 1996, pp. 158-169.

⁴⁸ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie/All Works*/, vol. 42, p. 388.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, pp. 387-388.

⁵⁰ Moszyński Kazimierz, *Kultura ludowa Słowian.../Slavic Folk Culture.../*, p.640.

⁵¹ *Ñäääyñęäy ìòòïëäëy/Slavic Mythology*/, ed. Tolstaya Svetlana, Belgrad 2001, p. 473 and *Ñäääyñęäy ìòòïëäëy/Slavic Mythology*/, ed. Petruhina Elena, Moscow 1995.

⁵² See: Białczyński Czesław, *Stworze i zdusze.../Creatures and Spirits.../*, p. 158.

⁵³ *Na przełęcz światów. 150 ukraińskich baśni, gadek, humoresek i podań ludowych/ At the Pass of the Worlds. 150 Ukrainian Fairy Tales, Stories, Anecdotes and Folk Tales*/, ed. And transl. Kasjan Jan Mirosław, Toruń 1994, p. 357.

⁵⁴ *Klechdy starożytne, podania.../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales.../*, p. 238.

⁵⁵ This is how the description of such a celebration from around Kyiv looks like:

In the evening, after the ritual, women and maidens put on maple wreaths, they all met on the main street in the village and went together singing songs to Rusalki, escorting them to the cemetery, to the graves. In front of the cemetery, the fires were lit, they took one another by hand and sang: <And you, Rusalki, may only in the ground sleep, and we, the young, only reap> The wreaths were taken off, put on the grave crosses and after the singing put on again and carried home and to the field. Young girls rolled through the graves. After that ritual, Rusalki – that is the women and men who died within a week from Trinity Sunday – returned to the afterlife for a year. After a year, they will appear again for a week and will interact with the mortals. At that time, they should be treated amicably – this was done by decorating homes with sweet flag – but be careful! Especially for children, because Rusalki can kill them, drown them – children were not permitted to stay alone at home or in the field, it is a very dangerous week. Only after begging and escorting Rusalki to the cemetery, you can have peace for a whole year.

See more: Bieńkowski Andrzej, *1000 kilometrów muzyki. Warszawa – Kijów/1000 Kilometers of Music. Warsaw – Kyiv*/, Warsaw 2009, 189 and the nest ones.

⁵⁶ Wójcicki Kazimierz Władysław, word: rusałka [in:] *Encyklopedia powszechna/Universal Encyclopedia*/, vol. 22, Warsaw 1866, 531-532.

⁵⁷ *Klechdy starożytne, podania.../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales.../*, pp. 240, 238-239.

⁵⁸ Cit. for Gołębiowska-Suchorska Agnieszka, „Dziewczę przędzie, Pan Bóg nitki daje”. *O spójności ludowej wizji świata/A Girl Weaves, God Gives the Threads*/. *About the Cohesion of the Folk Vision of the World*/, Bydgoszcz 2011, p. 121.

⁵⁹ Pastusiak Kazimiera, *Pogranicze polsko-białorusko-ukraińskie.../Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian Borderland.../*, p. 27.

⁶⁰ Cit. for: Kohli Anna, *Trzy kolory.../Three Colors.../*, p. 167.

⁶¹ Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon znaki świata.../Lexicon of Signs of the World.../*, p. 34.

⁶² *Klechdy starożytne, podania.../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales.../*, p. 240.

⁶³ Rotter Lucyna, *Symbolika kwiatów i ziół/The Symbolism of Flowers and Herbs*/, [in:] *Symbolika roślin/The Symbolism of Plants*/, ed. Marecki Józef, Rotter Lucyna, Cracow 2010, p. 85. In the Old Testament, a negative meaning is also attributed to it, for example, “Therefore, the God of hosts, the God of Israel says: I’ll give them – this people – wormwood as food and poisoned water as a drink”, (Jeremiah 9, 14) or

“But eventually it will be bitter like wormwood

And sharp as a double-edged sword” (about somebody else’s woman) (Prov. 5, 4).

⁶⁴ Janion Maria, *Niesamowita Słowiańszczyzna. Fantazmaty literatury/Amazing Slavdom. Phantasms of Literature*/, Cracow 2007, p. 27 and the next ones.

⁶⁵ Compare the research on Slavic demonology in Romanticism: for example, Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, Wenerska Wioleta, *Akwatyczne figury Wandy – w poszukiwaniu znaczeń/The Aquatic Figures of*

Wanda – *In the Search of Meanings*/, „Literatura Ludowa” 2009, no. 3, pp. 45-54.

⁶⁶ *Słownik literatury polskiej XIX wieku/Dictionary of Polish Literature of the 19th Century*/, ed. Bachórz Józef, Kowalczyk Alina, Wrocław 2002, p. 254.

⁶⁷ Janion Maria, *Gorączka romantyczna/Romantic Fever*/, Gdańsk 2007, pp. 210-212 and the next ones.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 222, see also the whole chapter, pp. 209-243.

⁶⁹ See: Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezyj/Selection of Poetries*/, ed. Stelmaszczyk-Świontek Barbara, Wrocław 1985, BN I 30, p. V-VI (preface).

⁷⁰ See: *Literatura polska/Polish Literature*/, ed. Krzyżanowski Julian, Warsaw 1985, vol. 2, p. 665.

⁷¹ See: Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezyj.../Selection of Poetries.../*, p. VI.

⁷² As the footnote in BN states, the first manuscript of the text was lost and Zaleski reconstructed it with the help of notes and memory. The genesis of the work is connected with childhood and youth spent among the inhabitants of the village, with the love he experienced and also with the Ukrainian folk poetry, Józef Bohdan Zaleski, *Wybór poezyj.../Selection of Poetries.../*, p. footnote, 80.

⁷³ Prus Kazimierz, *Rosyjska liryka romantyczna. Gatunki nietradycyjne/Russian Romantic Lyrics. Non-Traditional Genres*/, Rzeszów 2009, pp. 19-20 and the next ones, see also *Manifesty romantyzmu 1790-1830. Anglia, Niemcy, Francja/The Manifests of Romanticism 1790-1830. England, Germany, France*/, ed. Kowalczyk Alina, Warsaw 1995, p. 130.

⁷⁴ See: Zdziarski Stanisław, *Charakterystyki literackie pisarzy polskich – Bohdan Zaleski/The Literary Characteristics of Polish Writers – Bohdan Zaleski*/, Lviv [1923], pp. 40-41.

⁷⁵ Based on the existing legends, folk tales and fairy tales see, for example, a 20-century edition, Oleksik Klemens, *Królowa jezior/The Queen of Lakes*/, [in:] *Królowa jezior. Baśnie i legendy Warmii i Mazur/The Queen of Lakes. Fairy Tales and Legends of Warmia and Masuria*/, Olsztyn 1988, pp. 53-63.

⁷⁶ Dunin Borkowski Aleksander, *Królowa toni/The Queen of the Tide*/, [in:] *Ballada polska/Polish Ballad*/, ed. Zgorzelski Czesław, Wrocław 1962, BN I pp. 177, 274-276; Lermontov Mikhail, *Wybór poezji/Selection of Poetries*/, transl. Belmont Leo, ed. Jakubowski Wiktor, Wrocław 1972, BN II pp. 173, 136-137.

⁷⁷ See: Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezyj.../Selection of Poetries*/, p. 81.

⁷⁸ Baudrillard Jean, *O uwodzeniu/On Seduction*/, transl. Margański Janusz, Warsaw 2005, p. 76.

⁷⁹ For example: poem of the Russian poet Victor Benedictov *The Rose and the Maiden* from 1835, ballad of Stanisław Witwicki *Ksenor and Zelina* from 1822:

“Like a beautiful young lily

So a virgin springs in the age”,

or the ballad of Antoni Odyniec from 1828 *Wesele/The Wedding*/:

“A bride is like a rose, like a berry...”,

Or also a ballad of Bronisława Ostrowska *Cud-królowna/Wonder Queen*/ from 1901:

“You, lady, with the beauty of your face

is similar to a rose”.

See: Victor Benedictov, *Poems*, Leningrad 1983, 85, see also *Ballada polska.../Polish Ballad*/, pp. 141, 187, 602.

⁸⁰ For example, Krüger Maria, *Dar rzeki Fly/The Gift of the Fly River*/, Warsaw 1973, p. 18 or Rostworowska-Morawska Konstancja, *Baśń o zaklętym kruk/A Fairy Tale about the Cursed Crow*/, Warsaw 1986, p. 60.

⁸¹ See: Baran Zbigniew, *Idee, mity, symbole w polskich baśniach literackich wydanych w XIX i XX wieku/Ideas, Myths, Symbols in Polish Literary Fairy Tales Published in the 19th and 20th Centuries*/, Cracow 2006, p. 78.

⁸² Rotter Lucyna, *Rośliny jako atrybuty świętych/Plants as the Attributes of the Saints*/, [in:] *Symbolika roślin/Symbolism of Plants*/, Cracow 2010, p. 192.

⁸³ See: Kopaliński Władysław, *Słownik symboli/Dictionary of Symbols*/, Warsaw 1990, p. 361; Szafrńska Zofia, *Róża: kwiat pośród kwiatów/The Rose: a Flower of Flowers*/, Warsaw 2005, pp. 18, 25-34 and the next ones.

⁸⁴ Rotter Lucyna, *Symbolika kwiatów i ziół.../The Symbolism of Flowers and Herbs.../*, p. 82.

- ⁸⁵ Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezyj... /Selection of Poetries.../*, p. 85.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 81.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 81.
- ⁸⁸ See: Kowalski Piotr, *Woda żywa. Opowieść o wodzie, zdrowiu, higienie i dietetyce/Living Water. A Story of Water, Health, Hygiene and Dietetics/*, Wrocław 2002, pp. 55-72.
- ⁸⁹ Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezyj.../Selection of Poetries.../*, p. 95.
- ⁹⁰ See: Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Tam gdzie odbija się świat... Wśród ludowych zachowań magicznych w polskim folklorze tradycyjnym/Where the World is Reflected... Among the Folk Magical Behavior in Polish Traditional Folklore/*, [in:] *Lustro (zwierciadło) w literaturze i kulturze. Rozprawy – szkice – eseje/The Mirror (the Looking-Glass) in Literature and Culture. Dissertations – Sketches – Essays/*, ed. Borkowski Andrzej, Borkowska Ewa, Burta Małgorzata, Siedlce 2006, pp. 292-293, see also: Wallis Mieczysław, *Dzieje zwierciadła i jego rola w różnych dziedzinach kultury/The History of the Mirror and its Role in Various Areas of Culture/*, Łódź 1956, pp. 69, 74-75.
- ⁹¹ See: Forstner Dorothea, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej/The World of Christian Symbolism/*, transl. Zakrzewska Wanda and others, Warsaw 1990, pp. 115, 117-119.
- ⁹² *Słownik stereotypów i symboli ludowych/The Dictionary of Folk Stereotypes and Symbols/*, vol. 1, Cosmos, ed. Bartmiński Jerzy, Lublin 1996, pp. 438-439.
- ⁹³ Gübelin Eduard, Erni, Franz-Xaver, *Kamienie szlachetne. Symbole piękna i władzy/Noble Stones. The Symbols of Beauty and Power/*, transl. Łukomski Stefan, Warsaw 2001, p. 60.
- ⁹⁴ See: Baranowski Bohdan, *Pożegnanie z diabłem i czarownicą/The Farewell with the Devil and the Witch/*, Łódź 1965, p. 110; Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Ruś Karpacka II/All Works, the Region of Carpathian Rus II/*, vol. 55, Wrocław 1961, p. 432.
- ⁹⁵ More about the magic of words, Engelking Anna, *Kłątwa. Rzecz o ludowej magii słowa/The Curse. About the Folk Magic of Word/*, Wrocław 2000, 97, 107 and the next ones.
- ⁹⁶ Buchowski Michał, *Magia i rytuał/Magic and Ritual/*, Warsaw 1993, 111.
- ⁹⁷ See: Czernik, Stanisław, *Trzy zorze dziewicze. Wśród zamawiań i zaklęć/Three Virgin Dawns. Among Spells and Charms/*, Łódź 1968, p. 20.
- ⁹⁸ Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezyj... /Selection of Poetries.../*, pp. 81-82.
- ⁹⁹ More about the topic of stars: *Słownik stereotypów.../ Dictionary of Folk Stereotypes.../*, pp. 203-211.
- ¹⁰⁰ See: Forstner Dorothea, *Świat symboliki.../The World of Christian.../*, pp. 46-47.
- ¹⁰¹ See: Eliade Mircea, *Szamanizm i archaiczne techniki ekstazy/Shamanism and Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy/*, transl. Kocjan Krzysztof, Warsaw 2001, pp. 274-279.
- ¹⁰² See, for example, spells, magical enchantments related to the healing ritual, Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, ks. Nadbrzeżny Antoni, *Magiczne i teologiczne aspekty medycyny ludowej/The Magical and Theological Aspects of Folk Medicine/*, „Roczniki Teologii Dogmatycznej” 2012, no. 59, pp. 275-292 and Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Magiczne sposoby leczenia w tradycyjnej medycynie ludowej. Symbolika słów i gestów w aktach zażegnania, zaklinania i zamawiania choroby/The Magical Methods of Treatment in the Traditional Folk Medicine. The Symbolism of Words and Gestures in the Acts of Whispering, Enchanting and Putting Spell on the Disease/*, [in:] *Między literaturą a medycyną. Literackie i pozaliterackie działania środowisk medycznych a problemy egzystencjalne człowieka XIX i XX wieku/Between Literature and Medicine. Literary and Non-Literary Activities of Medical Environments and Human Existential Problems in the 19th and 20th Century/*, ed. Łoch Eugenia, Wallner Grzegorz, Lublin 2005, pp. 67-76.
- ¹⁰³ Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezyj.../Selection of Poetries.../*, p. 88.
- ¹⁰⁴ See: Cyvian Tatiana, *О роли слова в тексте магического действия/About the role of a word in the text of magical action/*, [in:] *Славянское и балканское языкознание. Структура малых фольклорных текстов/Slavic and Balkan Linguistics. The Structure of Small Folklore Texts/*, ed. Tolstaya Svetlana, Cyvian Svetlana, Moscow 1993, pp. 44-45.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Mały słownik kultury dawnych Słowian/A Small Dictionary of Old Slavic Culture/*, ed. Leciejewicz Lech, Warsaw 1988, p. 198.
- ¹⁰⁶ Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Symbolika ruchu obrotowego i rytualnej inwersji/Symbolism of Rotational Motion and Ritual Inversion/*, „Etnografia Polska” 1978, vol. 1, pp. 83, 98-99; also Cirlot Juan Eduardo, *Słownik symboli/Dictionary of Symbols/*, transl. Kania Ireneusz, Cracow 2000, pp. 201-202.

- ¹⁰⁷ Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezji... /Selection of Poetries.../*, p. 95.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibidem, p. 88.
- ¹⁰⁹ Baudrillard Jean, *O uwodzeniu.../On Seduction.../*, p. 70.
- ¹¹⁰ Ryczkowska Emilia, *O uwodzeniu, czyli mit Don Juana dziś/On Seduction or the Don Juan Myth Today/*, [in:] *Przemiany mitów i wartości nie tylko w literaturze/Transformation of Myths and Values not Only in Literature/*, ed. Wiśniewska Lidia, Gołuński Mirosław, Bydgoszcz 2010, p. 213.
- ¹¹¹ See: Ługowska Jolanta, *W świecie ludowych opowiadań. Teksty, gatunki, intencje narracyjne/In the Light of the Folk Stories. Texts, Genres, Narrative Intentions/*, Wrocław 1993, pp. 125-145; see also: Otto Rudolf, *Świętość, Elementy irracjonalne w pojęciu bóstwa i ich stosunek do elementów racjonalnych/Holiness, Irrational Elements in the Concept of the Deity and their Relation to Rational Elements/*, transl. Kupis Bogdan, Warsaw 1968, pp. 99-100, pp. 185-186.
- ¹¹² Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezji... /Selection of Poetries.../*, p. 92.
- ¹¹³ See: Forstner Dorothea, *Świat symboliki.../The World of Christian.../*, pp. 50-51.
- ¹¹⁴ See: Kopaliński Władysław, *Słownik symboli/Dictionary of Symbols/*, Warsaw 2001, p. 77.
- ¹¹⁵ See: Nowacka Ewa, *Bożęta i my/Deities and Us/*, Warsaw 1995, p. 39.
- ¹¹⁶ Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezji.../Selection of Poetries.../*, pp. 87-88.
- ¹¹⁷ See: Kowalski, Piotr *Leksykon.../Lexicon.../*, pp. 169-172 (word: jabłoń/apple tree); Ziółkowska Maria, *Gawędy o drzewach/Tales about Trees/*, Warsaw 1988, pp. 89-97.
- ¹¹⁸ Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezji.../Selection of Poetries.../*, p. 91.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibidem.
- ¹²⁰ Ibidem, p. 93.
- ¹²¹ See more: Kowalczykowska Alina, *Pejzaż romantyczny/The Romantic Landscape/*, Cracow 1982, citation, p. 113.
- ¹²² See: Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Pokucie/All Works, Pokucie/*, vol. 29, Warsaw 1962, pp. 163-164; more about this topic writes in the article: Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Figle i psoty w chwilach przełomu. Tradycyjne sposoby wzbudzania śmiechu w słowiańskich obrzędach cyklu rocznego/Pranks and Tricks in the Moments of Breakthrough. Traditional ways of Raising Laughter in Slavic Rituals of the Year Cycle/*, [in:] *Świat Słowian w języku i kulturze. Kulturoznawstwo. Historia/ The Slavic World in Language and Culture. Cultural Studies. History/*, vol. 6, ed. Komorowska Ewa, Furier Andrzej, Szczecin 2005, pp. 220-224.
- ¹²³ Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezji.../Selection of Poetries.../*, p. 89.
- ¹²⁴ Ibidem, p. 91.
- ¹²⁵ Ibidem.
- ¹²⁶ Kopaliński Władysław, *Słownik.../Dictionary.../*, p. 119.
- ¹²⁷ See: Lurker Manfred, *Słownik obrazów i symboli biblijnych/Dictionary of the Biblical Images and Symbols/*, transl. Bp. Romaniuk Kazimierz, Poznań 1989, pp. 204-205, see also: Heckowa Kazimiera, *Pod znakiem świętego słońca. Dawne wierzenia śląskie/Under the Sign of the Holy Sun. Ancient Silesian Beliefs/*, Wrocław 1961, p. 29.
- ¹²⁸ See: Vinogradova Liudmila, *Народная демонология и миторитуальная традиция славян/Folk Demonology and Mythic-Ritual Slavic Tradition*, Moscow 2000, p. 163, see more about rusalki: Zelenin Dmitry, *Избранные труды. Очерки русской мифологии/Selected Works. The Sketches of Russian Mythology /*, Moscow 1995, pp. 141-233.
- ¹²⁹ Cit. for: Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezji.../Selection of Poetries.../*, p. 80 (note).
- ¹³⁰ Zdziarski Stanisław, *Charakterystyki literackie.../Literary Characteristics.../*, p. 41.
- ¹³¹ Pushkin Alexander, *Liryki i ballady/Lyrics and Ballads/*, ed. Toporowski Marian, Warsaw 1966, pp. 219-221.
- ¹³² Suchanek Lucjan, *Rosyjska ballada romantyczna/Russian Romantic Ballad/*, Wrocław 1974, pp. 74-75.
- ¹³³ Shevchenko Taras, *Wybór poezji/Selection of Poetries/*, ed. Jakóbiec Marian, transl. Bieńkowska Maria, BN II 178, Wrocław 1974, pp. 69-73.
- ¹³⁴ Ukrainka Lesia, *Pieśń lasu. Baśń dramatyczna w trzech aktach/Forest Song. Dramatic Fairytale in Three Acts/*, transl. Litwiniuk Jerzy [in:] Ukrainka Lesia, *Pieśń lasu/Forest Song/*, selection and preface by Nieuważny Florian, Warsaw 1989, pp. 107-257.
- ¹³⁵ See: Uhland Ludwig, *Harald*, transl. Dunin Borkowski Józef [in:] *Niemiecka ballada roman-*

tyczna/*German Romantic Ballad*/, ed. Ciechanowska Zofia, Wrocław 1963, BN II pp. 142, 248; the ballad was written in 1811 while Józef Dunin Borkowski translated it in 1842, thus after it was written by Zaleski (1822).

¹³⁶ See footnote, Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezji.../Selection of Poetries.../*, p. 12.

¹³⁷ *Saga o Haraldzie Pięknokłosym/Saga of Harald FairHair/*; see more: Chrzanowski Witold, *Harald Pięknokłosy (ok.850-933) król Wikingów. Postać władcy norweskiego na kartach <Heimskringli> Snorriego Sturlussona/Harald FairHair (about 850-933) King of the Vikings. The Figure of the Norwegian Ruler on the Pages of <Heimskringli> by Snorri Sturlusson/*, Cracow 2011.

¹³⁸ See: Konowczenko, Iwas, [in:] *Na ciche wody. Dumy ukraińskie/To the Quiet Waters. Ukrainian Dumy/*, transl. and comment. Kasjan Jan Mirosław, Wrocław 1973, p. 131.

¹³⁹ Zaleski Józef Bohdan, *Wybór poezji.../Selection of Poetries.../*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 13. The term "Little Russia" in the official Russian language of the 19th-20th centuries defined those Ukrainian lands that were a part of the Russian Empire until 1917, see more term: Kravciv B.: *Мала Русь/Little Rus*, [in:] *Енциклопедія українознавства. Словникова частина/Encyclopedia of the Ukrainian Studies Vocabulary Part/*. Vol. 4. Ed. prof. Kubiiovich Volodymyr Munich, „Молоде життя” 1955, pp. 1446-1447.

¹⁴² See: Vinogradova Liudmila, *Народная демонология.../Folk Demonology/*, p. 162; more about this topic see: *Славянская мифология. Энциклопедический словарь/Slavic Mythology. Dictionary-Encyclopedia/*, ed. Tolstaya, Svetlana, Moscow 1995, p. 70 (ведьма/witch), p. 337 (русалка/rusalka), see also: *Славянские древности/Slavic Antiquities/*, ed. Tolstoy, Nikita, vol. 1, Moscow 1995, p. 297 (ведьма/witch).

¹⁴³ See: Nenadavets Aleksey, *За смугою мифа/Behind the Strip of Myth/*, Minsk 1999, p. 61.

¹⁴⁴ See: Dzwigoł Renata, *Polskie ludowe słownictwo mitologiczne/Polish Folk Mythological Vocabulary/*, Cracow 2004, pp. 71-85. More about sorceresses see in my book: *Inny obraz feminy.../Another Image of Femina.../*, (part. III – here, among others, about Bolesław Leśmian's klechda [= Eng. legend, myth], *Wiedźma/Witch*), pp. 57-80 and Wenerska Wioleta, *Romantyczne fantazmaty demonicznej kobiecości/Romantic Phantasms of Demonic Femininity/*, Torun 2011, pp. 45-109.

¹⁴⁵ See: Marczevska Marzena, *Drzewa w języku i kulturze/Trees in Language and Culture/*, Kielce 2002, pp. 101-134, also: Ziółkowska Maria, *Gawędy o drzewach/Tales about Trees/*, Warsaw 1998, pp. 65-74.

¹⁴⁶ See more about the topic of silence and muteness: *Semantyka milczenia/Semantics of Silence/*, ed. Handke Kwiryna, Warsaw 1999 and *Semantyka milczenia 2/Semantics of Silence 2/*, ed. Handke Kwiryna, Warsaw 2002. It can be added here, that the same situations occurred for example in different traditional rites when the rituals of transition took place, and thus when an individual had to be shown the way from one sphere to another through the liminal (borderline, margin) phase that was dangerous for her, zob. Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Pozasłowna komunikacja w polskim folklorze tradycyjnym. Symbolika milczenia/Non-Verbal Communication in Polish Traditional Folklore. The Symbolism of Silence/*, [in:] *Świat Słowian w języku i kulturze VII. Kulturoznawstwo. Historia/The World of Slavs in Language and Culture VII. Cultural Studies. History/*, ed. Komorowska Ewa, Krzanowska Agnieszka, Szczecin 2006, pp. 209-214.

¹⁴⁷ *Ballada polska.../Polish Ballad.../*, p. 292.

¹⁴⁸ Dumka, duma [ˈdumka, ˈduma] – a song in the form of a Slavic epic ballad.

¹⁴⁹ *Dumki/Dumy/*, Bielowski A. and Siemieński L., Prague 1838, pp. 3-5.

¹⁵⁰ Bielowski August, *Poezyje/ Poetries/*, Petersburg 1855, pp. 62-64.

¹⁵¹ See more: Janion Maria, *Lucjan Siemieński poeta romantyczny/ Lucjan Siemieński – a Romantic Poet/*, Warsaw 1955, pp. 83-84, also: Kwapiszewski Marek, *Późny romantyzm i Ukraina: z dziejów motywu i życia literackiego/The Late Romanticism and Ukraine: from the History of Motif and Literary Life/*, Warsaw 2006.

¹⁵² Poklewska Krystyna, *Galicja romantyczna: (1816-1840)/Romantic Galicia: (1816-1840)/*, Warsaw 1976, p. 252.

¹⁵³ Jasińska Maria, *Niestuszenie zapomniany poeta Józef Dunin-Borkowski (Próba charakterystyki twórczości)/The Unfairly Forgotten Poet Józef Dunin-Borkowski/*, „Prace Polonistyczne” S. IX, Wrocław 1951, p. 197.

¹⁵⁴ See: Ruszczyńska Marta, *Ziewonia. Romantyczna grupa literacka/Ziewonia. A Romantic Literary Group*/, Zielona Góra 2002, p. 15.

¹⁵⁵ Poklewska Krystyna, *Galicja.../Galicja/*, 246; see also: Janion Maria, *Poezja w kraju. Próba syntezy/Poetry in the Country. An Attempt of Synthesis*/, [in:] *Literatura krajowa w okresie romantyzmu 1831-1863/Domestic Literature in the Romantic Period 1831-1863*/, ed. Janion Maria, Zakrzewski Bogdan, Dernałowicz Maria, Cracow 1975, vol. 1, p. 61.

¹⁵⁶ Bielowski August, *Rusalka/Rusalka*/, [in:] *Ballada polska.../Polish Ballad.../*, p. 290.

¹⁵⁷ Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki writes about it: Chodakowski “found a song in Ukraine undoubtedly, from pre-Christian times that preserved its purity that is depicted to us, what actually were the rusalki” and quotes a song “from the folk dialect”, see: Wójcicki Kazimierz Władysław, *Klechdy, starożytne podania.../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales.../*, p. 235.

¹⁵⁸ See: Sikora Ireneusz, *Symbolika kwiatów w poezji Młodej Polski/The Symbolism of Flowers in Young Poland*/, Szczecin 1987, pp. 52-58; Wenerska Wioleta, „Nie masz zbrodni bez kary”. *Mickiewiczsowie rośliny sprawiedliwości/“There Is no Crime without Punishment”. The Mickiewicz’s Plants of Justice*/, „Ruch Literacki” 2004, vol. 4-5, p. 394.

¹⁵⁹ For example, <http://literat.ug.edu.pl/amwiersz/0018.htm> (access: 4.01.2014).

¹⁶⁰ Maro Publiusz Wergiliusz, *Eneida/Aeneid*/, transl. Karyłowski Tadeusz, ed. Stabryła Stanisław, Wrocław 1980, p. 181 (ks. VI).

¹⁶¹ Bielowski August, *Rusalka.../Rusalka.../*, p. 290.

¹⁶² Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Pokucie/All Works, Pokucie*/, vol. 31, Warsaw 1963, p. 98.

¹⁶³ Dzwigoł Renata, *Polskie ludowe słownictwo mitologiczne/Polish Folk Mythological Vocabulary*/, Cracow 2004, p. 172.

¹⁶⁴ Ratajczakowa Dobrochna, *W kryształ i w płomieniu: studia i szkice o dramacie i teatrze/In Crystal and in Flame: Studies and Sketches on Drama and Theatre*/, vol. 1, Wrocław 2006, pp. 153-154, *Leksykon symboli/Lexicon of Symbols*/, ed. Oesterreicher-Mollwo Marianne, transl. Prokopiuk Jerzy, Warsaw 1992, p. 119.

¹⁶⁵ Pushkin Alexander, *Rusalka/Rusalka*/, [in:] Pushkin Alexander, *Dzieła wybrane/Selected Works*/, vol. 4, ed. Toporowski Marian, different translators, Warsaw 1956, pp. 199-226.

¹⁶⁶ Compare the original version quoted by Wójcicki:

“Oh, there is a nice girl running, running,

And rusalka is behind her.

RUSALKA: Listen to me, sweet lady

I’ll ask you three riddles

If you solve them, I’ll let you go to the father

And if you don’t, I’ll take you for myself

Oh, what grows without roots?

And what runs without reason?

And what blooms without flowers?

GIRL: A stone grows without roots

Water runs without reason

Fern blooms without any flower.

The young lady didn’t solve the riddle

Rusalka tickled her to death”, see: Wójcicki Kazimierz Władysław, *Klechdy, starożytne podania.../Ancient Folk Legends, Folk Tales .../*, p. 235.

¹⁶⁷ Bielowski August, *Rusalka.../Rusalka.../*, p. 290.

¹⁶⁸ Ibidem, p. 291.

¹⁶⁹ Kowalski Piotr, *Granice i mediacje. Uwagi o antropologicznej lekturze świata/Borders and Mediations. Notes on the Anthropological Reading of the World*/, [in:] *Góry – literatura – kultura/Mountains – Literature – Culture*/, ed. Kolbuszewski Jacek, Wrocław 1996, p. 9 and next.

¹⁷⁰ Bielowski August, *Rusalka/Rusalka.../*, pp. 290-291.

¹⁷¹ Ibidem, p. 291.

¹⁷² Ibidem, p. 291.

¹⁷³ According to dictionaries and myths, sphinx is a female monster with a woman’s face, lion’s paws and tail and predatory bird, see, for example, the word: Sphinx, [in:] Grimal Pierre, *Słownik*

mitologii greckiej i rzymskiej/*Dictionary of Greek and Roman Mythology*/, different translators, Wrocław 1987, p. 320.

¹⁷⁴ I write more about her work in relation to the female demonic figures in the chapter of my book: *Inny obraz feminy.../Another Image of Femina.../*, pp. 81-95. That chapter also has a Russian version: *Демонические феминизмы с неземными телами – женский модернистский дискурс на примере избранных произведений Брониславы Островской/Demonic Feminae with Unearthly Bodies – Female Modernist Discourse on the Example of the Selected Works of Bronisława Ostrowska/*, [w:] *Amicus Poloniae*. In Memory of Victor Horev, M., Moscow 2013; (<http://www.inslav.ru/izdaniya/1624-2013-chorev>, (access: 4.01.2014).

¹⁷⁵ For example, poem *Nimfy/Nymphs/*, [in:] Zawistowska, Kazimiera, *Utwory zebrane/Collected Works/*, ed. Kozikowska-Kowalik Lucyna, Cracow 1982, p. 86.

¹⁷⁶ Wallis Mieczysław, *Secesja/Secession/*, Warsaw 1984, 1p. 96.

¹⁷⁷ Podraza-Kwiatkowska Maria, Kazimierz Tetmajer – metafizyk/Kazimierz Tetmajer – Metaphysicist, [in:] *Poezja Kazimierza Tetmajera. Interpretacje/ The Poetry of Kazimierz Tetmajer. Interpretations/*, ed. Czabanowska-Wróbel Anna, Próchniak Paweł, Stala Marian, Cracow 2003, p. 7.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 8-17.

¹⁷⁹ Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Symbolika dobowego cyklu.../ The Symbolism of the Daily Cycle... /*, pp. 107-140.

¹⁸⁰ Łeńska-Bąk Katarzyna, *Dziecko w tradycyjnym obrzędzie weselnym/The Child in the Traditional Wedding Ritual/*, „Literatura Ludowa” 1996, no. 4/5, pp. 61-73; Kowalski Piotr, *Dziecko. Rajska niewinność, wróżby, magia. Wstęp do lektury postaci/The Child. Heavenly Innocence, Fortune-Telling, Magic. Introduction to the Character Reading/*, „Literatura Ludowa” 1996, no. 4-5, pp. 19-30.; Piwińska Marta, *Złe wychowanie/Wrong Behavior*, Gdansk 2005, pp. 11-42. Orcio from Krasicki's drama can be a Romantic example: a demented child and as a result, spiritually ill, or the children from Słowacki's poem (*Do pastereczki siedzącej.../To the Sitting Shepherd.../*), Lenartowicz (*Złoty kubek/A Golden Cup/*). The Romantics knew that happiness exists only in the past tense, hence there are numerous stylizations for children, childhood. The presence of children reminded all the lost moments, countries. Piwińska notes: “Romantic childhood didn't have any specific mission. Children appeared somewhere in the background, in memory, in the vague dream, as if without reason (...). Romantic children are silent, busy with their own business, appear everywhere. There are almost as many of them as in the Baroque art (...). Romantic children are pale and fragile. They appear for a moment and die soon as if they melt in the air. We hear them more often than we see, and we more peep than watch. They are as volatile as birds and ghosts (...) little material”, see: Piwińska Marta, *Złe wychowanie/Wrong Behaviour/*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁸¹ Tetmajer Kazimierz Przerwa, *Rusałki/Rusalki/*, [in:] Tetmajer Kazimierz Przerwa, *Poezje/Poetries/*, vol. 2, Warsaw 1923, pp. 14-15.

¹⁸² Wójcicki Kazimierz Władysław, *Klechdy, starożytne podania.../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales.../*, pp. 239.

¹⁸³ Tetmajer Kazimierz Przerwa, *Rusałki.../Rusalki.../*, p. 15.

¹⁸⁴ Lurker Manfred, *Słownik obrazów i symboli biblijnych.../Dictionary of the Biblical Images and Symbols.../*, pp. 216-217.

¹⁸⁵ Pełka Leonard, *Polska demonologia ludowa/Polish Folk Demonology/*, Warsaw 1987, pp. 128-129.

¹⁸⁶ See: Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, „*Chroń i prowadź do nieba...” Mediacyjna struktura aniołów w folklorze polskim/Protect and Lead to the Heaven...” Mediative Structure of Angels in Polish Folklore/*, [in:] *Anioł w literaturze i w kulturze/Angel in Literature and Culture/*, ed. Ługowska Jolanta, Skański Jacek, Wrocław 2004, p. 420. More about folklore angelology see: Berendt Elżbieta, *Anioł ludowy. Próba portretu zbiorowego/Folk Angel. An Attempt of the General Portrait/*, [in:] *Anioł w literaturze.../Angel in Literature.../*, pp. 397-418.

¹⁸⁷ See, for example, Kotula Franciszek, *Znaki przeszłości. Odchodzące ślady zatrzymać w pamięci/The Signs of the Past. To Keep in Memory the Passing Traces/*, introduction. Hernas Czesław, Warsaw 1976, p. 477.

¹⁸⁸ Tetmajer Kazimierz Przerwa, *Rusałki.../Rusalki.../*, p. 15.

¹⁸⁹ Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon znaki świata.../Lexicon of the Signs of the World.../*, p. 226 (word: kolor/color).

¹⁹⁰ Tetmajer Kazimierz Przerwa, *Rusałki.../Rusalki.../*, p. 15.

¹⁹¹ Wójcicki Kazimierz Władysław, *Klechdy, starożytne podania.../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales.../*, p. 238.

¹⁹² Rusek Marta, *W głęb człowieka i w głęb natury – Salamandra Kazimierza Przerwy –Tetmajera/ Inside of the Human and Nature – Salamander By Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer/*, [in:] *Poezja.../Poetry/*, p. 132.

Chapter 5

¹ Andersen Hans Christian, *Mała syrena. Baśń fantastyczna/The Little Mermaid. Fantastic Fairy Tale/*, Warsaw [1929] (access CBN Polona).

² Janion Maria, *Projekt krytyki fantazmatycznej: szkice o egzystencjach ludzi i duchów/The Project of Phantasm Critic: Sketches of Existence of Humans and Spirits*, Warsaw 1991, p. 30.

³ See: Simonides Dorota, *Nobilitacja podania wierzeniowego jako przedmiot badań/Ennoblement of the Religious Legend as a Subject of Research/*, [in:] *Śląskie miscellanea. Literatura – folklor/Silesian Miscellanea. Literature – Folklore/*, ed. Simonides Dorota, Zaremba Jan, Wrocław 1980, p. 80.

⁴ About it writes, for example, Roman Zmorski in the group of the so called local Warsaw legends, see: Zamarski (Zmorski) Roman, *Podania i baśni ludu w Mazowszu/Folk Tales and Fairy Tales in Mazovia/*, Warsaw 1902, p. 128. See also: *Encyklopedia Warszawy/The Encyclopedia of Warsaw/*, Warsaw 1975, p. 637.

⁵ See: Kuczyński Stefan, *Herb Warszawy/The Coat of Arms of Warsaw/*, Warsaw 1977, pp. 20-32, also *Syrenka – odwieczny symbol Warszawy/The Mermaid – the Eternal Symbol of Warsaw/*, ed. Mróz Wanda, Bydgoszcz 2001.

⁶ This motif was eagerly used by painters who were interested in different scenes and interpretations of *femme fatale*, for example, pre-Raphaelites – Edward Burne-Jones, *The Depths of the Sea* (1887) or John William Waterhouse, *Ulysses and the Sirens* (1891).

⁷ Homer, *Odyszeja/Odyssey/*, transl. Siemieński Lucjan, Wrocław 1992, BN II 21, pp. 239-240.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Plato, *Państwo/Republic/*, transl., introduction Witwicki Władysław, Warsaw 2010, p. 436.

¹⁰ Ovid, *Przemiany/Metamorphoses/*, transl. Kiciński Brunon, Wrocław 1953, BN II, pp. 76, 98.

¹¹ Grimal Pierre, *Słownik mitologii greckiej i rzymskiej/Dictionary of Greek and Roman Mythology/*, Wrocław 1987, p. 2.

¹² Ibidem, 241-242.

¹³ Graves Robert, *Mity greckie/Greek Myths/*, transl. Krzeczkowski Henryk, Warsaw 1992, 121.

¹⁴ Górnicki Zdzisław, *Woda w duchowych przeżyciach człowieka/Water in a Human Spiritual Experience/*, Cracow 2008, p. 14.

¹⁵ Grimal Pierre, *Słownik.../Dictionary.../*, p. 330.

¹⁶ Ovid, *Przemiany.../Metamorphoses.../*, p. 98.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ See: Grimal Pierre, *Słownik.../Dictionary.../*, p. 330, also Drapella Zofia, *Od Lewiatana do Jormungandra. Rzecz o potworach morskich, ludziach z Morza i duchach wód/From Leviathan to Jormungander. About Sea Monsters, Sea People and Water Spirits/*, Gdansk 1976, p. 52, also Antoniewicz Włodzimierz, *Motyw syreny morskiej w sztuce antyku i średniowiecza/The Motif of the Sea Mermaid in Antique and Medieval Art/*, [in:] *Liber Iosepho Kostrzewski Octogenario a Veneratoribus Dicatus, quem Konrad Jażdżewski ed. curavit*, Wrocław 1968, p.450.

¹⁹ Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Tam gdzie odbija się świat... Wśród ludowych zachowań magicznych w polskim folklorze tradycyjnym/Where the World is Reflected... Among the Folk Magical Behavior in Polish Traditional Folklore/*, [in:] *Lustro (zwierciadło) w literaturze i kulturze/The Mirror (the Looking-Glass) in Literature and Culture/*, ed. Borkowski Andrzej, Borkowska Ewa, Burta Małgorzata,

Siedlce 2006, p. 292; Śliwińska Aleksandra, *Zwierzciadło. Studium o magicznej transgresji/The Mirror. A Study of the Magical Transgression*, [in:] *O granicach i ich przekraczaniu/About Borders and Their Crossing*, ed. Kowalski Piotr, a Sztandara Magdalen, Opole 2004, p. 18.

²⁰ See: Kopaliński, Władysław, *Słownik symboli/Dictionary of Symbols*, Warsaw 2001, p. 204, Cirlot Juan Eduardo, *Słownik symboli/Dictionary of Symbols*, transl. Kania Ireneusz, Cracow 2000, p. 237, also Melchior-Bonnet Sabine, *Narzędzie magii: historia luster i zwierciadeł/The Tool of Magic: the History of Mirrors and Looking-Glasses*, transl. Walicka Barbara, Warsaw 2007, p. 173 and next.

²¹ Let's also refer to the Bible. In the Book of Exodus (15, 20) after the successful passage of the Israelites across the Sea (!) The dancing red women hit the drums (or tambourines) in honor of the Lord. It was probably the first instrument that was used to worship a deity. However, it is not quite a convincing premise for the translation of drums as *marine*.

²² See: Antoniewicz Włodzimierz, *Motyw syreny morskiej.../The Motif of the Sea Siren.../*, pp. 449-453, also Kuczyński Stefan Krzysztof, *Wokół początków herbu Warszawy/Around the Beginnings of Warsaw's Coat of Arms*, „Studia Warszawskie”, vol. XIX, Warsaw of the Middle Ages, no. 2, 1975 (offprint), p. 177, and also Le Goff Jacques, *Kultura średniowiecznej Europy/The Culture of the Medieval Europe*, transl. Szumańska-Grossowa Hanna, Warsaw 1970, p. 355.

²³ Graves Robert, *Mity greckie.../Greek Myths.../*, p. 409.

²⁴ Drapella Zofia, *Od Lewiatana.../From Leviathan.../*, p. 60.

²⁵ Kępiński Zdzisław, *Symbolika drzwi gnieźnieńskich/Symbolism of The Gniezno Doors*, [in:] *Drzwi gnieźnieńskie/The Gniezno Doors*, vol. II, ed. Walicki Michał, Wrocław 1959, p. 225.

²⁶ Gimbutas Marija, *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe. 700 to 3500 BC. Myths, Legends and Cult Images*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1974, p. 136.

²⁷ Gimbutas Marija, *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe...*, p. 146, compare also the whole chapter, pp. 112-150. About Bird and Serpent Goddesses also writes Kohli Anna, *Trzy kolory bogini/Three Colors of a Goddess*, Cracow 2007, pp. 143-155.

It is worth mentioning that the motif of a siren – half-woman half-bird was used by the Russian painter of the 19th and 20th centuries, Viktor Mikhaylovich Vasnetsov, who was inspired by the Slavic folklore; a creator of the images of mythological and historical paintings, in the image of *Sirin and Alkonost. The Birds of Joy and Sorrow* (1896). Alkonost is in mythology, Russian folklore, a creature with the body of a bird and a head of a beautiful woman. They are characterized with the wonderful voice that works in this way: when it is heard once, it becomes the only thing one wants to hear. Sometimes it is confused with Sirina, another character of Russian folk legends, the inhabitant of the underground world. The name Alkonost comes from the Greek goddess Alcyone, transformed into kingfisher, see: Grimal Pierre, *Słownik.../Dictionary.../*, p. 24.

²⁸ Tytkowska Anna, *Czar(ne) anioły. Fantazmaty mrocznej kobiecości w młodopolskim dramacie/Black Angels. Phantasms of Gloomy Femininity in Young Poland Drama*, Katowice 2007, p. 18.

²⁹ See: Cooper Jean C., *Zwierzęta symboliczne i mityczne/Symbolic and Mythical Animals*, transl. Kozłowska-Ryś Anna and Ryś Leszek, Poznań 1998, pp. 210, 221.

³⁰ Szuchiewicz Włodzimierz, *Huculszczyzna/The Land of Hutsuls*, Lviv 1908, vol. 4, p. 282. In Ukrainian folk legends, the mermaid's appearance of half-woman half-fish is confirmed: “Clothes made of golden fish scale”, see: Łopaciński Hieronim, *Dwa podania ukraińskie o syrenach/Two Ukrainian Folk Tales about Mermaids*, „Wisła” 1900, no. 5, pp. 597-598.

³¹ Fischer Adam, *Rusini. Zarys etnografii Rusi/Ruthenians. The Outline of Rus' Ethnography*, Lviv 1928, p. 131.

³² Moszyński Kazimierz, *Kultura ludowa Słowian/Slavic Folk Culture*, vol. II, pt. 1, Warsaw 1967, pp. 603, 678.

³³ More about the topic of St. George in Polish folklore, see: Kosowska Ewa, *Legenda. Kanon i transformacje. Św. Jerzy w polskiej kulturze ludowej/The Legend. Canon and Transformations. St. George in Polish Folk Culture*, Wrocław 1985.

³⁴ Oskar Kolberg describes the custom of the Orthodox population, inhabiting the eastern borders of Poland (Terespol, Kodeń, Piszczac), who in the day of St. George feasted in the field in order to thank the patron for the harvest and to ask for the next crops the same and even better, see: Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Chełmskie/All Works, the Region of Chełm*, vol. 33, Poznań 1964, p. 143.

³⁵ Rokosz Tomasz, *Współczesne polskie sobótki – przemiany obrzędu/Contemporary Polish Kupala Night – the Alternations of the Ritual*, [in:] *Przeobrażenia w kulturze i edukacji na przełomie XX i XXI wieku/Transformations in Culture and Education on the Break of the 20th and 21st Centuries*, ed. Karwatowska Małgorzata, Siwiec Adam, Chełm 2010, p. 94.

³⁶ Zadrożyńska Anna, *Światy, zaświaty. O tradycji świętowań w Polsce/This Worlds, the Other Worlds. About the Tradition of Celebration in Poland*, Warsaw 2000, p. 124.

³⁷ See: Linkner Tadeusz, *Słowiańskie bogi i demony. Z rękopisu Bronisława Trentowskiego/Slavic Gods and Demons. From the Manuscript of Bronisław Trentowski*, Gdańsk 1998, pp. 63-64.

³⁸ Kolberg Oskar, *Dziela wszystkie, Mazowsze/All Works, the Region of Mazovia*, vol. 42, Cracow 1970, p. 388.

³⁹ See: Ligęza Lidia, „Klechdy polskie” *Leśmiana na tle folklorystycznym/”Polish Legends”by Leśmian on the Folk Background*, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1968, no. 1, pp. 128-129.

⁴⁰ Klechda [klehda] – a Slavic legend, myth.

⁴¹ I write more about rusalka from klechda *Majka* in the 3rd chapter of my book: *Inny obraz feminy. Szkice folklorystyczno-literackie/Another Image of Femina. Folklore-Literary Sketches*, Siedlce 2012, pp. 57-80.

⁴² *Syrena zawsze zwodnicza. Portrety warszawianki w XIX wieku/A Mermaid is Always Seductive. The Portraits of Warsaw Woman in the 19th Century*, introduction Jodełka-Burzecki Tomasz, Warsaw 1976, pp. 11-22.

⁴³ Borges, Jorge Luis, *Zoologia fantastyczna/Fantastic Zoology*, transl. Chądzyńska Zofia, Warsaw 1983, p.167.

⁴⁴ Grimal Pierre, *Słownik.../Dictionary.../*, p. 354.

⁴⁵ Drapella Zofia, *Od Lewiatana.../From Leviathan.../*, pp. 56-57.

⁴⁶ Kambureli M. Teresa, Kamburelis, Thanasis, *Podręczny słownik grecko-polski/A Handy Greek-Polish Dictionary*, Warsaw 1999, p. 206.

⁴⁷ Drapella Zofia, *Od Lewiatana.../From Leviathan.../*, p. 57. In the cabinets of curiosities from the 18th century, developing in Europe and America, which later transformed into the exhibitions of curiosities (the so-called wandering villages), and finally into human zoos, various “human monsters” (today they would be treated like ill people, with genetic or very rare diseases that could be qualified as the so-called medical puzzles): most often, they were savages (Indians), African-Americans, natural wonders, strange people and others whose color, appearance and behavior did not match with the so-called white and civilized ones. They were treated like objects, kept in cages, surrounded by animal or human bones, making them cannibals; also considered as specimens or wonders of nature, and “used” for the purposes of the spectacle. The performance was arranged in such a way to meet the audience’s expectations. Various stories from their lives were selling very well, so their biographies were modified, making them for example, monkeylike creatures captured on the islands, lands of Africa or in harems. Wildness was arranged for the needs of the spectacle, losing the aspects and limits of humanity. In a broader perspective, it was connected with the strengthening of the ideology of nation states and development of colonialism. Large world exhibitions (organized in many countries: in England, Austria, Italy, France and others), such as London shows, had a special expressive force. One of them was organized in a café on St. James’s Street in 1822, where the audience could see the women-mermaid: “a face contorted in grimace, hands raised as if in a gesture of anger or terror, dried, flagging breasts, torso turning into a fish tail – it was a mermaid”, see more: *Wieczorkiewicz Anna, Kolonizacja dzikich ciał/The Colonization of the Wild Bodies*, „Teksty Drugie” 2002, no. 5, pp. 7-22 and *Wieczorkiewicz, Anna, Monstruarium*, Gdansk 2009. Also Desmond Morris, a British doctor of zoology, a zoo worker who conducted research on mammals, published several works on natural history, among others, about human nature; see, for example, *Morris Desmond, Naga małpa/Naked Monkey*, Warsaw 2000, *Ludzkie zoo/Human Zoo*, Warszawa 2000 (where he describes the behavior of city dwellers and their remarkable resemblance to animal behavior in a zoo) or *Zachowania intymne/Intimate Behaviors*, Warsaw 2000.

⁴⁸ See the combination analogizing the symbol of the fish [in:] *Wierciński Andrzej, Przez wodę i ogień. Biblia i Kabala/Through Water and Fire. The Bible and Kabbalah*, Cracow 1996, p. 37.

⁴⁹ *Szafrański Włodzimierz, Prahistoria religii na ziemiach polskich/The Prehistory of Religions in Poland*, Wrocław 1987, pp. 192, 199. Let us add that „the population of the Lusatian culture in

Poland created at the end of the Hallstatt period terracotta figures of a goddess with a vessel on her belly that symbolizes fertile living water and symbolic emblems of that goddess in the form of a fish-shaped clay pendant. The vessel and the fish are exchangeable symbols of fertile waters that provide life". The culmination of the cult of this goddess was the sanctuary of the goddess with the fish that was established in Ślęża, *ibidem*, pp. 201-202, 207. The Renaissance of the cult of the goddess of fertility lasted from 650 BC and the break of the 2nd and 1st century BC. The Hallstatt culture is the archeological culture of the Iron Age developing in 800-450 BC, see: *ibidem*, 14. Tanit is a Phoenician goddess of fertility, moon, war and snow worshipped mainly in Carthage. Her symbols – pigeon, pomegranate, fish, palm – are found on many steles and stone altars, see: Moscati Sabatino, *Świat Fenicjan/ Phoenician World/*, transl. Gawlikowski, Michał, Warsaw 1971, pp. 160-165 (pic. 36 – a stele with the sign of Tanit and other symbols from Carthage – among the symbols there is a fish or pic. 48 – a sarcophagus with the figure of a winged woman from Carthage).

⁵⁰ The legend was modified, in the collection *Beautiful Stories about a Steadfast Knight Siegfried, Water Maiden Melusine, Princess Magielon and St. Genevieve*, ed. Ługowska Jolanta and Żabski Tadeusz, Wrocław 1992, pp. 43-75, there is a story about Melusine – half-woman, half-dragon: "above the belt she was a beautiful maiden, however, below she had a long dragon tail", page 62 – in the mythological meaning the serpent, snake, dragon appear interchangeably representing the order of the underworld.

⁵¹ Perls Henryk, *Wąż w wierzeniach ludu polskiego/Serpent in the Beliefs of the Polish Folk/*, Lviv 1937, pp. 6, 8, 18, 22, 41, also Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon znaki świata. Omen, przesąd, znaczenie/ Lexicon of the Signs of the World. Omen, Superstition, Meaning/*, Wrocław 1998, pp. 579-585 (word: wąż/serpent).

⁵² Manasa is presented as a women covered with serpents, standing on a serpent or sitting in a lotus position, often under the hood made of seven cobras. More about that topic, see: *The Images of Women in the Culture of India: Goddesses, Weavers, Witches and Dancers/*, ed. Jakubczak Marzenna, Cracow 2005.

⁵³ See: Cooper Jean C., *Zwierzęta symboliczne i mityczne.../Symbolic and Mythical Animals.../*, pp. 281-289.

⁵⁴ Lurker Manfred, *Przesłanie symboli w mitach, kulturach i religiach/The Message of Symbols in Myths, Cultures and Religions/*, transl. Wojnakowski Ryszard, Cracow 1994, p. 252.

⁵⁵ *Rosyjskie bajki ludowe ze zbioru Aleksandra Afanasjewa/Russian Folk Fairytales from the Collection of Alexander Afanasiev/*, different transl., ed. Łuźny Ryszard, Cracow 2001, pp. 255-257.

⁵⁶ About such works where the protagonists are rusalki, witches, dziwożony, Goplans and spirits writes Wenerska Wioleta, *Romantyczne fantazmaty demonicznej kobiecości/Romantic Phantasms of Demonic Femininity/*, Torun 2011.

⁵⁷ Cit. for: Zgorzelski Czesław, *O sztuce poetyckiej Mickiewicza. Próby zbliżeń i uogólnień/About Poetical Art of Mickiewicz. The Attempts of Rapprochements and Generalizations/*, Warsaw 2001, p. 249.

⁵⁸ See: *Słownik języka Adama Mickiewicza/Dictionary of Adam Mickiewicz's Vocabulary/*, ed. Górski Konrad and Hrabec, Stefan, vol. 9, Wrocław 1977, p. 143. More about tradition, culture in Mickiewicz, see: Kuziak Michał, *Wielka całość. Dyskursy kulturowe Mickiewicza/The Great Whole. Cultural Discourses of Mickiewicz/*, Słupsk 2006.

⁵⁹ Przyboś Julian, *Czytając Mickiewicza/Reading Mickiewicz/*, Warsaw 1998, p. 45.

⁶⁰ See more: Zgorzelski Czesław, *O sztuce poetyckiej Mickiewicza.../About Poetical Art of Mickiewicz.../*, p. 223-230.

⁶¹ Opacki Ireneusz, *Ewolucje balladowej opowieści. Zagadnienie narratora i narracji w balladzie lat 1822-1920/The Evolution of the Ballad Tale. The Problem of Narrator and Narration in the Ballad of 1822-1920/*, Lublin 1961, pp. 13-15.

⁶² Mickiewicz Adam, *Rybka/The Fish/*, [in:] Mickiewicz Adam, *Ballady i romanse/Ballads and Romances/*, Warsaw 1898, p. 20 (access CBN Polona).

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 22.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 22-23.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 22-23.

⁶⁷ Wenerska Wioleta, *Romantyczne fantazmaty.../Romantic Phantasms.../*, pp. 27-28.

⁶⁸ See: Wenerska Wioleta, *Prerafaëlickie odcienie kobiecego piękna/The Pre-Raphaelic Reflection of Feminine Beauty/*, Warsaw 2013, p. 24.

⁶⁹ I cite for Baran Zbigniew, *Idee, mity, symbole w polskich baśniach literackich wydanych w XIX i XX wieku/The Ideas, Myths, Symbols in Polish Literary Fairytales Published in the 19th and 20th Centuries/*, Cracow 2006, p. 87; (for the context about the understanding of Romanticism by Schlegel, see: Schlegel, Friedrich, *Fragmenty/Fragments/*, transl. Bartl, Carmen, ed., introduction and commentary Markowski Michał Paweł, Cracow 2009; Zbigniew Baran refers to the work of Schlegel from the year of 1795, maybe he means his early work: *O studiowaniu greckiej poezji/About the Study of Greek Poetry/*, see: Menninghaus Winfried, *Wstręt. Teoria i historia/The Disgust. A Theory and History/*, transl. Sowiński Grzegorz, Cracow 2009, p. 166 and next); Eliade Mircea, *Traktat o historii religii/The Treaty about the History of Religion/*, transl. Kowalski Jan Wierusz, Warsaw 2009, p. 345.

⁷⁰ Bates Brian, *Zapomniana mądrość wyrdy/The Forgotten Wisdom of Wyrd/*, transl. Rafa Lidia, Warsaw 1998, p. 69.

⁷¹ *Symbole matki i odrodzenia/The Symbols of a Mother and Revival*, [in:] Jung Carl Gustaw, *Symbole przemiany: analiza preludeum do schizofrenii/The Symbols of Transformation: An Analysis of Prelude to Schizophrenia/*, transl. Reszke Robert, Warsaw 1998, p. 282.

⁷² Mickiewicz Adam, *Rybka.../The Fish.../*, p. 23.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

⁷⁴ For example, witches were able to alter the human appearance into animals: a dog, cat, see: the transformation of the witch Bartłomiejowa into a dog, in klechdas of Bolesław Leśmian, Leśmian Bolesław, *Klechdy polskie/Polish Legends/*, Cracow 1999 (*Wiedźma/The Witch/*); I write more about that klechda (legend) in the book *Inny obraz feminy.../Another Image of Femina.../*, pp. 57-80.

⁷⁵ Baran Zbigniew, *Idee, mity, symbole.../The Ideas, Myths, Symbols.../*, p. 107.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, 106.

⁷⁷ Dunin Borkowski Aleksander, *Królowa toni/The Queen of the Tide/*, [in:] *Ballada polska/Polish Ballad/*, ed. Zgorzelski Czesław, Wrocław 1962, BN I 177, p. 275.

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 276.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 275.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 275.

⁸¹ *Podania i legendy polskie, ruskie i litewskie/Polish, Ruthenian and Lithuanian Folk Tales and Legends/*, collected by Siemieński Lucjan, selected by Pamuła Kazimierz, Warsaw 1975, p. 52.

⁸² *Klechdy starożytne, podania i powieści ludu polskiego i Rusi/Ancient Legends, Folk Tales and Novels of the Polish People and Rus'/*, collected by Wójcicki Kazimierz Władysław, selected by Wojciechowski Ryszard, Warsaw 1972, p. 242.

⁸³ Wenerska Wioleta, *Romantyczne fantazmaty.../Romantic Phantasms.../*, p. 39.

⁸⁴ Dunin Borkowski Aleksander, *Królowa toni.../The Queen of the Tide.../*, p. 275.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 276.

⁸⁶ Biedermann Hans, *Leksykon symboli/Lexicon of Symbols/*, transl. Rubinowicz, Jan, Warsaw 2003, p. 68.

⁸⁷ Goethe Johann Wolfgang, *Rybak/The Fisherman/*, transl. Gamska-Lempicka Jadwiga [in:] *Niemiecka ballada romantyczna/German Romantic Ballad/*, ed. Ciechanowska Zofia, Wrocław 1963, BN II 142, p. 91.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 91-92.

⁸⁹ Wenerska Wioleta, *Białoruskie fascynacje w balladach Jana Barszczewskiego/Belarusian Fascinations in the Ballads of Jan Barszczewski/*, [in:] *Pogranicze: Obsesje – Projekcje – Projekty/Bordeline: Obsessions – Projections – Projects/*, ed. Bednarczuk Monika, Kucharska Beata, Chełm 2007, pp. 257-258. In Polish Romanticism, next to the Ukrainian and Lithuanian school "the Belarusian school also grew up". More about that topic, as well as about the biography of Barszczewski see: Janion Maria, „Szkoła białoruska” w poezji polskiej/”Belarusian school” in Polish Poetry/, [in:] *Zło i fantazmaty/Evil and Phantasms/*, Cracow 2001, pp. 266-271.

⁹⁰ Barszczewski Jan, *Rybak/The Fisherman/*, [in:] *Ballada polska/Polish Ballad/*, ed. Zgorzelski Czesław, Wrocław 1962, BN I 177, pp. 372-373.

⁹¹ About it writes Wenerska Wioleta, *Romantyczne fantazmaty.../Romantic Phantasms.../*, p. 20.

⁹² See for example the fairytales of Afanasjew Aleksander: *Piękna Wasyliśa/Vasilisa the Beautiful* (104)/, *Helena Arcymądra/Helen the Wise* (236)/, *Mądra dziewczyna i siedmiu rozbójników/The Wise Maiden and Seven Robbers* (345)/, see: *Rosyjskie bajki ludowe.../Russian Folk Fairy Tales*/, pp. 77-82, 222-225, 347-352.

⁹³ Barszczewski Jan, *Rybak.../The Fisherman.../*, p. 374.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 372-373.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 374.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 373.

⁹⁷ Puszkina Aleksander, *Bajka o rybaku i złotej rybce/The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish*/, transl. Tuwim Julian, Warsaw 1950; Brothers Grimm, *O rybaku i jego żonie/The Fisherman and His Wife*/, [in:] *Baśnie Braci Grimm/Fairytales of Brothers Grimm*/, transl. Bielecka Emilia, Tarnowski Marcei, epilogue Kapełus Helena, Warsaw 1982, vol. 1, pp. 104-113.

⁹⁸ Trepka Andrzej, *Ilustrowana encyklopedia ryb/The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Fish*/, Warsaw 2007, 172-173.

⁹⁹ *Klechy starożytne, podania.../Ancient Legends, Folk Tales.../*, 242. The similar version was noted by Siemieński Lucjan, see: *Podania i legendy polskie, ruskie i litewskie/Polish, Ruthenian and Lithuanian Tales and Legends*/, collected Siemieński Lucjan, selected Pamuła Kazimierz, Warsaw 1975, 52-54.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 243.

¹⁰¹ Boniecki Edward, *Archaiczny świat Bolesława Leśmiana: studium historyczno-literackie/The Archaic World of Bolesław Leśmian: Historical and Literary Study*/, Gdańsk 2008, p. 67.

¹⁰² Ukrainka Lesia, *Pieśń lasu. Baśń dramatyczna w trzech aktach/Forest Song. Dramatic Fairytale in Three Acts*/, transl. Litwiniuk Jerzy [in:] Ukrainka Lesia, *Pieśń lasu/Forest Song*/, selection and introduction Nieuważny, Florian, Warsaw 1989, pp. 107-257.

¹⁰³ See introduction [in:] Lermontov Mikhail, *Wybór poezji/Selection of Poetries*/, introduction Jakubowski Wiktor, Wrocław 1972, BN II 173, LXXIV-LXXV.

¹⁰⁴ Lermontov Mikhail, *Morska królowna/The Queen of the Sea*/, transl. Zagórski Jerzy [in:] Lermontov Mikhail, *Wybór poezji.../Selection of Poetries.../*, p. 136.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 137.

¹⁰⁶ See: Łopaciński Hieronim, *Dwa podania ukraińskie.../Two Ukrainian Folk Tales.../*, pp. 598-600.

¹⁰⁷ Hłakowiczówna Kazimiera, *Bajeczna opowieść o królewiczu La-Fi-Czaniu, o żołnierzu Soju i o dziewczynce Kio/The Fairy Tale about Prince La-Fi-Czan, Soldier Soj and Girl Kio*/, Poznań 1990.

Chapter 6

¹ Dziwożona [d?ivo' ?ona], pl. dziwożony [d?ivo' ?oni], Pol. “dziwo” – wonder, “żona” – woman, wife – a female swamp demon in Slavic mythology and folklore.

² Burchard Przemysław, *Za ostatnim przystankiem/Behind the Last Stop*/, Warsaw 1985, p. 226.

³ Topielica [tope'litsa], pl. topielice [tope'litse] – a female water demon with the soul of a drowned young woman.

⁴ See: Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Symbolika dobowego cyklu powszedniego w polskim folklorze tradycyjnym/The Symbolism of the Daily Cycle in the Traditional Polish Folklore*/, Lublin 1994, p. 154.

⁵ *Podania i legendy polskie, ruskie i litewskie/Polish, Ruthenian and Lithuanian Folk Tales and Legends*/, collected Siemieński Lucjan, selected Pamuła Kazimierz, Warsaw 1975, p. 188.

⁶ Podgórski Adam and Barbara, *Wielka księga demonów polskich/The Big Book of Polish Demons*/, Katowice 2005, pp. 184, 185.

⁷ More about Lucjan Siemieński, see: Janion Maria, *Lucjan Siemieński, poeta romantyczny/Lucjan Siemieński, a Romantic Poet*/, Warsaw 1955.

⁸ Budziszewska Wanda, *Z polskiego ginącego słownictwa gwarowego (molązgiewka, molązgać się, dziwożona)/From the Polish Endangered Dialectic Vocabulary (molązgiewka, molązgać się, dziwożona)*/, „Język Polski” 1990, no. 5, p. 208.

⁹ Cit. for: Wenerska Wioleta, *Romantyczne fantazmaty demonicznej kobiecości/Romantic Phantasms of Demonic Femininity*/, Torun 2011, p. 112.

¹⁰ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Góry i Podgórze/All Works, the Region of Góry and Podgórze*/, vol. 45, Cracow 1968, p. 509.

¹¹ Podgórski Adam and Barbara, *Wielka księga demonów polskich/The Big Book of Polish Demons...*/, p. 180.

¹² Cit. for: Kohli Anna, *Trzy kolory bogini/Three Colors of the Goddess*/, Cracow 2007, p. 202.

¹³ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Chełmskie/All Works, the Region of Chełm*/, vol. 33, Warsaw 1964, p. 29.

¹⁴ Linkner Tadeusz, *Słowiańskie bogi i demony. Z rękopisu Bronisława Trentowskiego/The Slavic Gods and Demons. From the Manuscript of Bronisław Trentowski*/, Gdańsk 1998, p. 87, Podgórski, Adam and Barbara, *Wielka księga demonów.../The Big Book of Polish Demons...*/, p. 183.

¹⁵ Podgórski Adam and Barbara, *Wielka księga demonów.../The Big Book of Polish Demons...*/, pp. 181, 183.

¹⁶ Wenerska Wioleta, *Romantyczne fantazmaty .../Romantic Phantasms...*/, p. 113.

¹⁷ Aliti Angelika, *Dzika kobieta. Powrót do źródeł kobiecej energii i władzy/The Wild Woman. The Return to the Origin of Feminine Energy and Power*/, transl. Ptaszyńska-Sadowska Elżbieta, Gdynia 1996, pp. 195-198.

¹⁸ Białczyński Czesław, *Stworze i zdusze czyli starosłowiańskie boginki i demony/Creatures and Spirits, or Old Slavic Goddesses and Demons*/, Cracow 1993, p. 212.

¹⁹ Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Symbolika dobowego cyklu.../The Symbolism of the Daily Cycle...*/, p. 49.

²⁰ Cit. for: Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Symbolika dobowego cyklu.../The Symbolism of the Daily Cycle...*/, p. 55.

²¹ Linkner Tadeusz, *Słowiańskie bogi.../The Slavic Gods...*/, p. 87.

²² Ibidem; shaginess is also confirmed by Oskar Kolberg, Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła Wszystkie.../All Works...*/, vol. 45, p. 508.

²³ More about this topic, see: Smolińska Teresa, *Tradycyjne inscenizacje obrzędowe: bożonarodzeniowe i noworoczne/Traditional Ritual Inscenizations: Christmas and New Year*/, „Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Opolskiego: Folklorystyka 3” 1997, pp. 45-56; Smolińska Teresa, *Kołodowanie: figury i obrazy wędrowania/Caroling: Figures and Images of Wandering*/, [in:] *Wędrować, pielgrzymować, być turystą. Podróż w dyskursach kultury/To Wander, Pilgrim, to Be a Tourist*/, ed. Kowalski Piotr, Opole 2003, pp. 261-276; also Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Między akceptacją a odrzuceniem – portret Żyda w kulturze słowiańskiej/Between Acceptance and Rejection – the Portrait of a Jew in Slavic Culture*/, [in:] *Współczesna komparatystyka i jej wymiar hermeneutyczny/Contemporary Comparative Studies and Their Hermeneutic Dimension*/, ed. Szymonik Danuta, Bobryk Roman, Mnich Roman, Siedlce-Banska Bystrica 2011-2012, pp. 83-94.

²⁴ Domownicy [domo`wniki], ubożeta [ubo`enta] – domestic spirits in Slavic mythology

²⁵ See: Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Podróże do piekieł: rzecz o szamańskich misteriach/The Journeys to Hell: About Shamanic Mysteries*/, Warsaw 1985, p. 201; Vulcănescu Romulus, *Kolumna niebios/The Column of Heaven*/, transl. Bieńkowska Danuta, Warsaw 1979, pp. 16, 18 or Ziółkowska Maria, *Gawędy o drzewach/Tales about Trees*/, Warsaw 1988, p. 68.

²⁶ More about the theme of Leśmian dziwożona see: Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Inny obraz feminy. Szkice folklorystyczno-literackie/Another Image of Femina. Folkloric-Literary Sketches*/, Siedlce 2012, pp. 67-71.

²⁷ Linkner Tadeusz, *Słowiańskie bogi.../The Slavic Gods...*/, p. 87; Białczyński Czesław, *Stworze i zdusze.../Creatures and Spirits...*/, pp. 214, 215.

²⁸ Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Symbolika dobowego cyklu.../The Symbolism of the Daily Cycle...*/, p. 154.

²⁹ *Historia brzydoty/On Ugliness*/, ed. Eco Umberto, collective translation, Poznan 2007, p. 159 and next (citation from Boccaccio, 164).

³⁰ Leśmian Bolesław, *Klechy polskie/Polish Legends*/, London 1956, pp. 204-205.

³¹ See: Goszczyński Seweryn, *Dziennik podróży do Tatrów/Travel Diary to the Tatra Mountains*/, Petersburg 1853, 79; also Linkner Tadeusz, *Słowiańskie bogi.../The Slavic Gods...*/, p.87.

³² Burchard Przemysław, *Za ostatnim przystankiem.../Behind the Last Stop.../*, p. 227.

³³ Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon znaki świata. Omen, przesąd, znaczenie/Lexicon of the Signs of the World. Omen, Superstition, Meaning/*, Wrocław 1998, pp. 128-129 (word: fasola/bean). More about the traditional funeral and All Souls' Day rites I write in the book *Chleb w folklorze polskim – w poszukiwaniu znaczeń/Bread in Polish Folklore – in the Search for Meanings/*, Siedlce 2010.

³⁴ Cailliois Roger, *Żywiół i ład/Element and Order/*, transl. Tatarkiewicz Anna, Warsaw 1973, p. 126.

³⁵ Goszczyński Seweryn, *Dziennik podróży.../Travel Diary.../*, p. 79, *Podania i legendy polskie.../Polish Folk Tales.../*, p. 188, Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie.../All Works.../*, vol. 45, p. 508.

³⁶ Wenerska Wioleta, *Romantyczne fantazmaty.../Romantic Phantasms.../*, p. 124.

³⁷ Leśmian Bolesław, *Klechdy polskie.../Polish Legends.../*, pp. 193-194.

³⁸ Neumann Erich, *Wielka Matka. Fenomenologia kobiecości. Kształtowanie nieświadomości/The Great Mother. A Phenomenology of Femininity/*, transl. Reszke Robert, Warsaw 2008, pp. 269-270. Symonides in the poem *Kobieta/The Woman/* identifies a femina with evil; she also says that Zeus created her from animals: lazy donkeys, huge monkeys, stinging bees and filthy pigs, cit. for: Wenerska Wioleta, *Prerafaelickie odcienie kobiecego piękna/The Pre-Raphaelic Reflection of Feminine Beauty/*, Warsaw 2013, p. 59. Tacitus writes about bees as the synonyms of the priestesses of the goddess of fertility, see more: Szafranski Włodzimierz, *Prahistoria religii na ziemiach polskich/The Pre-History of Religion in Poland/*, Wrocław 1987, p. 239. However, in Lithuanian mythology, bees are not only symbols of women, but they are also connected with the goddesses of fertility; they care for the growth of everything good, and for abundance. It is worth mentioning that in that mythology there is the ancient image of a bee-weaver: the creation of a piece of honey is compared to the weaving of the linen, which is confirmed by the small folklore forms – riddles and guesswork (the girl weaves in a dark room and without workshop and without a chain <a bee>), more about this topic see: Greimas Algirdas J., *O bogach i ludziach. Studia o mitologii litewskiej/Of Gods and Men: Studies in Lithuanian Mythology/*, transl. Marszałik Bogusława, Kęty 2007, pp. 217-248.

³⁹ Leńska-Bąk Katarzyna, *Obrzędowa funkcja miodu/The Ritual Function of Honey/*, „Literatura Ludowa” 2006, no. 4-5, pp. 31-48.

⁴⁰ Leśmian Bolesław, *Klechdy polskie.../Polish Legends.../*, pp. 209-210.

⁴¹ Mamuna [ma'muna] – a female demon causing harm to pregnant women.

⁴² Białczyński Czesław, *Stworze i zdusze.../Creatures and Spirits.../*, p. 215.

⁴³ Tetmajer Kazimierz Przerwa, *Bajeczny świat Tatr/The Fairytale World of Tatras/*, Warszawa 1928, p. 8.

⁴⁴ Białczyński Czesław, *Stworze i zdusze.../Creatures and Spirits.../*, p. 215.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 215.

⁴⁶ Białczyński Czesław, *Stworze i zdusze.../Creatures and Spirits.../*, p. 223; Podgórski Adam and Barbara, *Wielka księga demonów.../The Big Book of Polish Demons.../*, p. 285, also Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła Wszystkie.../All Works.../*, vol. 45, p. 510.

⁴⁷ See: Starowicz Lech, *Seks w kulturach świata/Sex in World Culture/*, Wrocław 1987, p. 108 and next.

⁴⁸ Nickie Roberts, *Dziwki w historii. Prostytycja w społeczeństwie zachodnim/Whores in History. Prostitution in Western Society/*, transl. Engelking Leszek, Warsaw 1997, p. 18.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁰ Niewiadomski Donat, *Orka i siew. O ludowych wyobrażeniach agrarnych/Tillage and Sowing. On Folk Agrarian Images/*, Lublin 1999, pp. 34-38.

⁵¹ Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Symbolika dobrego cyklu.../The Symbolism of the Daily Cycle.../*, p. 179.

⁵² See, for example: Paglia Camille, *Seksualne osoby. Sztuka i dekadencja od Neferetiti do Emily Dickinson/Sexual Personae. Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson/*, transl. Kuźniak Maria, Zapędowska Magdalena, Poznań 2006, p. 3, also Bonnet Gerard, *Perwersje seksualne: historia pojęcia, opis objawów, przyczyny/Sexual Perversions. The History of the Term, Descriptions of Symptoms, Causes/*, transl. Demidowicz-Domanasiewicz Daria, Gdansk 2006.

⁵³ Kopaliński Władysław, *Słownik mitów i tradycji kultury/Dictionary of Myths and Tradition of*

Culture/, Warsaw 2003, p. 223, Mitarski Jan, *Demonologia lęku/Demonology of Fear*/, [in:] Kępiński Antoni, *Lęk/Scare*/, Warsaw 1995, p. 329.

⁵⁴ Burchard Przemysław, *Za ostatnim przystankiem.../Behind the Last Stop.../*, pp. 227-228.

⁵⁵ Tetmajer Kazimierz Przerwa, *Bajeczny świat Tatr.../The Fairytale World of Tatras.../*, p. 7.

⁵⁶ Ibidem.

⁵⁷ Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon znaki świata.../Lexicon of the Signs of the World.../*, p. 69.

⁵⁸ Tetmajer Kazimierz Przerwa, *Bajeczny świat Tatr.../The Fairytale World of Tatras.../*, p. 7.

⁵⁹ Goszczyński Seweryn, *Dziennik podróży.../Travel Diary.../*, pp. 79-80.

⁶⁰ Nowacka Ewa, *Bożęta i my/Deities and Us*/, Warsaw 1995, p. 43.

⁶¹ *Słownik folkloru polskiego/Dictionary of Polish Folklore*/, ed. Krzyżanowski Julian, Warsaw 1965, p. 45.

⁶² *Słownik folkloru polskiego.../Dictionary of Polish Folklore.../*, p. 46, also Goszczyński Seweryn, *Dziennik podróży.../Travel Diary.../*, p. 80.

⁶³ *Wokół śmierci. Praktyka, symbolika, metafora/Around Death. Practice, Symbolism, Metaphor*/, ed. Bobryk, Roman, Kryszczuk Marzena, Urban-Puszkarska Justyna, Siedlce 1998. See for example, the well-known motifs of dirt turning into gold in the legends of the dormant: T 826; T 1529A; T 1645B. the taboo is closely connected with the magical-religious ban and dirt, see more about this topic: Wasilewski Jerzy Sławomir, *Tabu/Taboo*/, Warsaw 2010.

⁶⁴ Brzozowska-Krajka Anna, *Symbolika dobowego cyklu.../The Symbolism of the Daily Cycle.../*, p. 126.

⁶⁵ Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon.../Lexicon.../*, p. 124 (word: ekskrementy/excrements).

⁶⁶ See: Roux Jean-Paul, *Krew: mity, symbole, rzeczywistość/Blood. Myths, Symbols, Reality*/, transl. Perek Marzena, Cracow 1994, pp. 191-192.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 192.

⁶⁸ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie, Radomskie/All Works, the Region of Radom*/, vol. 21, Cracow 1964, p. 146.

⁶⁹ Nawęza [na'wenz] – a Slavic amulet.

⁷⁰ Kaptorga [kap'torga] – a small bag carried on the neck, filled with amulets, herbs, etc.

⁷¹ Białczyński Czesław, *Stworze i zdusze.../Creatures and Spirits.../*, p. 214.

⁷² Goszczyński Seweryn, *Dziennik podróży.../Travel Diary.../*, pp. 80-81.

⁷³ See more about that topic: *Dzieje folklorystyki polskiej 1800-1863: epoka przedkolbergowska/History of Polish Folklore in years 1800-1863: Pre-Kolberg Era*/, ed. Kapeliński Helena, Krzyżanowski Julian, Wrocław 1970, pp. 272-274; Kamionka-Straszakowa Janina, „Do ziemi naszej” podróże romantyków/”To Our Land” Travels of Romanticists/, Cracow 1988, pp. 39-46; Rosnowska Janina, *Goszczyński: opowieść biograficzna/Goszczyński. Biographic Story*/, Warsaw 1977 (for example, chapter *Etnograf góralszczyzny/Highlander's Ethnographer*/); Majda Jan, *Tatrzańskim szlakiem literatury: szkice literackie/By the Tatra Route of Literature. Literary Sketches*/, Cracow 1982, pp. 15-26.

⁷⁴ Kowalczyk Alina, *Pejzaż romantyczny/The Romantic Landscape*/, Cracow 1982, p. 104.

⁷⁵ Dziwożony most often washed linen and stole children or substituted them, see: *Podania i legendy.../Folk Tales and Legends.../*, p. 188.

⁷⁶ Other names of St. John's wort are: Christ's słozki, bells, bells of Our Lady, cross-herb, St. John's herb, see: Paluch Adam, „Zerwij ziele z dziewięciu miedz...”. *Ziołolecznictwo ludowe w Polsce w XIX i pocz. XX wieku/Pick the Herb from Nine Coppers...”. Herbal Medicine in Poland in the 19th and the Beginning of the 20th Century*/, Wrocław 1989, p. 71, also *Słownik folkloru polskiego.../Dictionary of Polish Folklore.../*, p. 46.

⁷⁷ Maciotti Maria Immacolata, *Mity i magie ziół/The Myths and the Magic of Herbs*/, transl. Kania Ireneusz, Cracow 1998, pp. 22, 48.

⁷⁸ More about this topic see: Guźlak Gerard, *Dzwony: ich funkcje kulturowe w literaturze i obyczajach XIX-XX wieku/Bells. Their Cultural Functions in Literature and Customs of the 19th-20th Centuries*/, Bydgoszcz 2011, see also: Kowalski Piotr, *Leksykon.../Lexicon.../*, pp. 121-123 (word: dzwon/bell).

⁷⁹ Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie.../All Works.../*, vol. 21, p. 149.

⁸⁰ Forstner Dorothea, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej/The World of Christian Symbolism*/, transl. Zakrzewska, Wanda and others, Warsaw 1990, p. 150.

⁸¹ Goszczyński Seweryn, *Dziennik podróży.../Travel Diary.../*, p. 81, *Podania i legendy.../Folk Tales and Legends.../*, p. 189, Kolberg Oskar, *Dzieła wszystkie.../All Works.../*, vol. 45, p. 509.

⁸² See: Goszczyński Seweryn, *Dzieła/Works/*, Lviv 1911, vol. 2, p. 115.

⁸³ *Podania i legendy.../Folk Tales and Legends.../*, p. 188.

⁸⁴ Goszczyński Seweryn, *Dziennik podróży do Tatrów/Travel Diary to Tatras/*, ed. Sierotwiński Stanisław, Wrocław 1958, BN I 170, p. 79.

⁸⁵ Tetmajer Kazimierz Przerwa, *Bajeczny świat Tatr.../The Fairytale World of Tatras/*, p. 7.

⁸⁶ See: Forstner Dorothea, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej.../The World of Christian Symbolism.../*, pp. 357-358, Cirlot Juan Eduardo, *Słownik symboli/Dictionary of Symbols/*, transl. Kania Ireneusz, Cracow 2000, p. 138.

⁸⁷ Tetmajer Kazimierz Przerwa, *Bajeczny świat Tatr.../The Fairytale World of Tatras.../*, p. 9.

⁸⁸ See: Urbańczyk Stanisław, *Dawni Słowianie. Wiara i kult/Ancient Slavs. Faith and Cult/*, Wrocław 1991, p. 57, Moszyński Kazimierz, *Kultura ludowa Słowian/Slavic Folk Culture/*, vol. 2, part 1, Warsaw 1967, p. 597.

⁸⁹ *Kronika wielkopolska/Chronicle of Greater Poland/*, transl. Sękowski Jan [in:] *By czas nie zacił i niepamięć. Wybór kronik średniowiecznych/If Only Time and Oblivion Would not Eclipse. Selection of the Medieval Chronicles/*, ed. Jelicz Anonina, Warsaw 1979, p. 82. More about Wanda as a water maiden, her jump from the bridge and literary analysis of the motive, see: Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, *Inny obraz feminy.../Another Image of Femina.../*, Siedlce 2012, pp. 97-115 also Wałęciuk-Dejneka Beata, Wenerska Wioleta, *Akwatyczne figury Wandy – w poszukiwaniu znaczeń/The Aquatic Figures of Wanda – in the Search of Meanings/*, „Literatura Ludowa” 2009, no. 3, pp. 45-54.

⁹⁰ Burchard Przemysław, *Za ostatnim przystankiem.../Behind the Last Stop.../*, p. 226.

Conclusion

¹ Dixon-Hunt John, *The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination 1848-1900*, London 1968, p. 188.

² Kadłubiec Daniel, *Utopiec jako znak /The Drawner as a Sign/*, „Literatura Ludowa” 2006, no. 6, p. 63.

³ Лотман Юрий М., *Внутри мыслящих миров человек, текст, семиосфера, история/ Inside of the Thinking Worlds. Human, Text, Semiosphere, History/*, ĩńęąà 1996, p. 175.

⁴ Quoted after: Paul Jean, *Kobieta w historii i micie /The Woman in History and Myth/*, translated by Szczepańska Barbara, Warszawa 2010, p. 8.

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