

KULTURNI BESTIJARIJ (A CULTURAL BESTIARY). ED. BY SUZANA MARJANIĆ AND ANTONIJA ZARADIJA KIŠ. ZAGREB: INSTITUTE OF ETHNOLOGY AND FOLKLORE RESEARCH AND CROATIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2007. Pp. 789.

Reviewed by Smiljana Djordjević*

The Zagreb-based Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research and Croatian University Press (*Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada*) have recently published, within the "Ethnography" series, the edited volume *Kulturni bestijarij (A Cultural Bestiary)*. The term *bestiary* in the title of this "handbook of cultural zoology" refers to the books with relatively similar contents that have a long tradition in the history of literature and culture (from the ancient *Physiologus* and medieval *Bestiaria*). Association with this type of literary tradition does not imply its absolute affirmation, however. Namely, as specified by the editors, Suzana Marjanić and Antonija Zaradija Kiš, one of the goals of this project is "an attempt to create a bioethical meeting point between human and non-human animals" (p. 15). Besides, *A Cultural Bestiary* fully represents its time with its diversity of approaches, interdisciplinarity, multivocality, and multidimensional perspectives from which different problems in the field of cultural zoology are being formulated, discussed and resolved.

The volume contains papers by 39 authors, mainly Croatian academics, but also scholars from other centres, such as Moscow, Ljubljana, Budapest, Kiev and Ghent, and is organized into six chapters: The biblical spirituality of animals (pp. 21–96); From mythic and ethnic fauna (pp. 97–308); The boškarin and the dormouse: from exhibit to "speciality" (pp. 309–352); Zoolinguistics (pp. 353–426); Litterarum bestia (pp. 427–528); Animalistic ecofeminism (pp. 529–608); and "Machina animata" and animal rights (pp. 609–782).

A highly instructive introduction penned by the editors is followed by the

paper of Antonija Zaradija Kiš discussing the role and symbolism of animals in the Book of Job, and pointing to the difficulties the translator into a *glagolitical* text must have faced when attempting to make these aspects of the biblical story more accessible to a reader with a different biogeographical and cultural experience. Jadranka Brnčić looks at the attitude towards animals as reflected in biblical texts, in the works of pagan and Christian writers, from a contemporary perspective. Animals in medieval Istrian wall-painting are discussed by Rosana Ratkovčić.

Ethnologic, ethnolinguistic and folkloristic texts are assembled in the chapter "From mythic and ethnic fauna". Insects in the traditional culture of the Slavs (names, origin legends, role of and connection with various rituals, folkloric texts) are discussed by Aleksandar Gura. Drawing upon ample ethnographic, folkloristic and lexical material, Pieter Plas reconstructs the obscured link between wolves and epilepsy in the traditional culture of the western South-Slavic area (Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia), and Mirjam Mencej analyzes the role of the "lord of the wolves" legend in the structure of the annual cycle. Jadran Kale views constellation names from the perspective of re-actualizing the myths concerning animals in the night sky, while Jadranka Damjanov brings very interesting and useful data about the Hungarian mythic and ethnic fauna (including representations of animals in the tangible and intangible heritage). Ivan Lozica considers the role of animals, both real and symbolic, in the Carnival/Shrovetide (animals

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as food, zoomorphic masks, the use of live animals in the procession — from mistreatment to killing). Jadranka Grbić relies on the classical Croatian ethnographic material to analyze the relationship between man and animals, both domestic and wild, in traditional culture, seeking to decode different forms of ritual behaviour which she interprets as an endeavour to establish a “correspondence, equilibrium, and cohabitation between man and the world”. A valuable document — the text of an eighteenth-century manuscript *ljekarūša* in Kaykavian dialect (containing instructions for the medical treatment of horses) — is presented by Alojz Jambrih. The characteristics of demons whose main attribute is the ability of zoomorphic transformation (or zoomorphic metempsychosis), on the basis of Croatian ethnographic material, are reconstructed by Luka Šešo. Looking at the symbolic level of such beliefs, the author seeks to make sense of the “logic of coding” good and evil.

The editors have quite justifiably decided to include in the volume two of M. B. Stulli’s reviews previously published in the *Narodna umjetnost*. Her review of a study by Hannjost Lixfeld (*Gott und Teufel als Weltschöpfer. Eine Untersuchung über die dualistische Tiererschaffung*, Munich 1971) significantly supplements Lixfeld’s research into the dualistic beliefs about world creation with data from the South-Slavic region. The other review, of a book by Rudolf Schend (*Das ABC der Tiere, Märchen, Mythen und Geschichten*, Munich 1995), shows how Stulli has indirectly, through a selection of texts about animals by different authors, espoused a revised attitude towards the animal phenomenon.

Feng shui has proven to be a very challenging topic in cultural-anthropological and zoosemiotic analysis. Koraljka Kuzman Šlogar acquaints the readers with the basics of the original teaching on

the art of harmonizing life with cosmic forces, and in the second part of her paper deals exhaustively with models of symbol transformation in Western culture.

The third chapter, “The boškarin and the dormouse: from exhibit to ‘speciality’”, opens with Ivona Orlić’s text outlining the fate of the Istrian bull, the *boškarin*, from a domestic animal to an “exhibit” and ethno-cultural symbol (in literature, art, film, oral culture). The paper by Nives Rittig-Beljak looks at the dormice from a gastronomic perspective, giving an overview of the tradition of dormouse hunting.

What can be “read” about the human attitude towards animals from language is the question to which the papers assembled in the chapter entitled “Zoolinguistics” seek to find an answer. Nikola Visković questions the anthropocentric understanding of language and suggests that the language of animals can be pondered about on more than one level: animal language as the ability to communicate using signs, the representation and symbolism of animal language in the mythological and folklore heritage, modes of naming animals and the realia associated with them (e.g. zootoponyms). Animal expressions in slang (terms for physical features, personal traits, popular phenomena, settlements etc.) are the object of Stipe Kekez’s attention. Mira Menac Mihalić focuses on dialectal phrasems with zoonymic elements, based on the material encompassing more than a hundred Croatian examples. She analyzes the structure, semantics and areal distribution of several phrasems, ranging from local to international. Ivana Vidović-Bolt’s paper is also dedicated to the phraseological aspect of language, noting that zoonymic (with somatic) phraseology may virtually be described as constituting the most significant portion of the phraseological material. An overview of cultural symbolism (primarily biblical and ancient) is of-

ferred, and the semantics of these linguistic units is determined. It may be inferred that zoonymic phraseology mostly carries negative connotations and is fundamentally stereotypical. Language reveals man's deeply paradoxical attitude towards animals — between anthropocentrism and the need to acknowledge man's own animalistic aspects.

"Litterarum bestia" is the title of the chapter dedicated to the aspect of the heritage known as artistic or written literature. Taking several observations by Milan Rešetar on Držić's literary work as her starting point, Zlata Šundalić discusses the presence of animals (mythic and real) in three of Držić's pastorals (*Tirena, Venera i Adon, Grizula*). This duality of worlds (the fantastic pastoral and the real) is also observable from the frequency and semantics of the zonyms used, but the author notes that not even such analysis can confirm that the two worlds are ever completely separated in Držić. Lada Čale Feldman demonstrates once more the relevance of Michel de Montaigne's thought, recognizing in his views a foretaste of "epistemological relativism". Animal characteristics of demons in romantic and folklore-realistic Slavic literatures are the focus of Dejan Ajdačić's paper. Hrvoje Jurić discusses *The Lives of Animals*, J. M. Coetzee's provocative philosophical and literary work which problematizes the man-animal relationship from several aspects (historical, culturological, scientific). Why cats are a relatively rare occurrence in Croatian poetry is the question raised by Giga Gračan. She seeks to find an explanation for this "lack" in the historical-political context which "demanded" the fixing of different zoosymbols. A reading of Andrić's story *Zmija* (Serpent) in a culturological key is offered by Borislav Pavlovski.

The texts gathered in the chapter "Animalistic ecofeminism" address some eminently contemporary issues. This modern

ideological strain of thought combines some ideas of the ecological movement and feminism in order to shatter the fundamental myths of Western patriarchal culture, and it involves a distinctive element of activism. The texts in this chapter are strongly coloured by activism, easily recognized as part of the new humanities paradigm. An ecofeministic reading of *Moby Dick* offered by Sanja Kajinić reveals an essential subversiveness of this book in its different attitude towards the *texts of meat*, in its shattering of the cultural constructs of patriarchal colonial culture. Looking at different theoretical views of feminist authors (ranging from ontological veganism to ecological animalism as a compromise solution), Mirela Holy gives an overview of the situation in Croatia and concludes that ecofeminism is still largely unknown there. Sanja Klopotan looks at the strategies of the struggle for animal rights, especially considering the possibility of using the (female) body in such activism. Ankica Čakardić ponders on the ideology of specism, comparing it to racism and sexism. In her view, the position of women and animals as non-humans in patriarchal culture is symmetrical, and this symmetry is reflected in similar types of "otherness" (animals as the biological Other, women as the political Other).

The last chapter in the volume, "Machina animata and animal rights", addresses the question of animal rights and is provocative inasmuch as it points to the hypocrisy of contemporary culture with its attitudes towards animals ranging from the recognized need to redefine this relationship ethically to the use of animals in political campaigns, (re)creation of myths etc. In an analysis of history textbooks, Rajka Polić points to the use of animals in the construction and promotion of the patriarchal matrix. Renata Jambrešić Kirin examines and compares two contemporary art practices (cow parades in the EU countries and the Cheese

and Cream project in Zagreb), emphasizing that “the cultural-artistic act no longer exists outside politics”. Zoran Čiča points to different forms of animal abuse in modern society (from the phenomenon of pets and the absurdity of several articles of the Croatian Animal Protection Law to organized animal fights justified by the idea of “tradition”). Bernard Jan points to the deficiencies in the legal regulations, and mentions the most brutal recent cases of animal deaths in Croatia. An entirely new way of viewing animals, examining the boundaries of the human body (animals as live prostheses, but also the use of animals in experiments), is offered by Boris Beck. The fate of bears during the latest war in Croatia is reflected on by Igor Lasić. The volume closes with Suzana Marjanić’s text on the phenomena of bestiality and zoophilia (using examples from literary works, real cases of bestiality, advertising, films).

A Cultural Bestiary certainly makes for attractive reading, and not only for scholars and experts, but also for a broader reading public interested in the phenomenon of the animal in all of its aspects. The papers gathered in this volume are quite heterogeneous in terms of thematic focus, methodological orientation, or goals (one may even say that they are in a polemical relationship with one another). This heterogeneity, however, does not bring into question the conceptual coherence of the volume, perhaps most broadly expressed by the motto of the opening text: *The animal is the elemental*. The remarkable graphic design and numerous illustrations — from medieval manuscript illuminations and frescoes to provocative photographs of abattoir scenes or visual forms of advertising anthropornography — add a distinct visual dimension to the text, contributing to the quality of the book.

IN MEMORIAM TRAIAN STOIANOVICH (1921–2005)

by Slobodan G. Marković*

Traian Stoianovich was a Serbian-American historian. He was born to a Serbian family in the village of Graeshnitsa near the city of Bitolj in Southern Serbia, present-day Bitola in the FYR of Macedonia. In search for a better life, his father moved the family to the United States when Stoianovich was seven. He completed primary and secondary education in the United States, and received his BA from the University of Rochester. His education was interrupted by a stint in the US army during the Second World War, but he later earned his MA from New York University. He continued his education in Europe, and earned his PhD from the University of Paris in 1952. In 1955 Stoianovich began his academic career at

Rutgers University, the most prominent institution of higher education in New Jersey and one of the oldest in the United States. He remained loyal to it until the end of his life, bequeathing his collection of rare books to the Rutgers University Library. He died in December 2005 at the age of 85.

Stoianovich will be remembered as the most dedicated adherent of the French Annales School among Balkan specialists. He was inspired by the work of Fernand Braudel, and he expressed his dedication to this school of history by publishing the study *French Historical*

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