

Genealogies of Wilderness and Domestication in Children's Narratives: Understanding Genesis and Genetics in the Untangling of Identity

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Like every work of art, stories for children explore questions that have preoccupied people's minds for thousands of years and which have come to constitute an integral part of ontology. These stories challenge, negotiate, and play with the previously accumulated knowledge vested in the cultural motifs that act as the aggregate in the economy of epistemological expression¹.

Because Vikings have settled the British Isles long before Christianity came along with its patriarchal and hierarchical culture and colonised the Scandinavian world, H.R. Ellis Davidson invites us to consider the legacy of the Scandinavian world-view in Northern Europe whose conceptions about the world branched out and intersected with the geographical areas of the three children's books chosen for this study – an imaginary that informs the authors' cultures and knowledge in the most fundamental way.

Animist conceptions of the forces behind our universe inform and blend into the chorus of the scientific and Judaeo-Christian perspectives, which form the fabric of East and North European epistemologies at the basis of the literary creations for children by Nikolai Nosov, living in Slavic-Soviet space, of Tove Jansson emerging as a writer in the cold winter of World War II in Finland, and of Alan Alexandre Milne conceiving the world of one lord and his vassals of small brains in the imperialist epoch of British supremacy.

The prevalent topos in animist cosmogonies that had a lasting impact on monotheistic genesis and on science is that of the life-giving and world-forming tree that permeates the imaginary of folklore and along with stories of inundations, of battles between cosmic forces of good and evil, often depicted as the battle between the Bird of the Sky and the female Serpent of the Land, of various creatures from different worlds, et al., provide the topoi that have come to occupy a central place in literary, scientific, and spiritual knowledge of who or what we are and how we have all come about. These topoi form the foundation of ontology.

The explanations that these motifs offer on genesis function as justifications for our actions and pave the direction for our interactions and culture – also known as socio-economic and political

¹ For the notion of the economy of expression, I draw largely on Bourdieu's concept of the economy of effort in *habitus* and *praxis*. As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson demonstrate in *Metaphors We Live By*, cultural topoi in folklore are widely used in science as metaphors to communicate relationships and characteristics of phenomena. This reliance on known cultural topoi is what allows the authors to economise time, effort, and elaboration of new language by imbuing their texts with encoded historical interpretations and perspectives. Creatively, this allows for endless play of interpretation. Yet, concomitantly, it is problematic because it ensures the stasis of meaning and knowledge.

systems – and provide a language pregnant with metaphors for the formulation of religious and scientific principles that conceptualise our existence².

Therefore, my examination of the cultural and scientific heritage at the basis of the worlds of Nosov's mites, Jansson's moomins, and Milne's 100 Aker Wood, pulls together an amalgam of disciplines that explore the topoi of origins and examine how characters' actions respond to explanations of genesis and the understanding of our relatedness – or its lack – to other living beings and even to non-living matter. Topoi of transformation reflect these underlying concepts of relatedness from two conflicting perspectives: that of wilderness and that of domestication. These two perspectives inform my inter-disciplinary examination of the question of “nature” and “identity”, of “what” we are and “what” our world is as presented in children's books.

The premises at the basis of the three literary worlds become apparent right from the opening paragraphs with the rest of the books building upon the postulates in the first scenes: Jansson opens *The Little Trolls and the Great Flood* with Moominmamma and Moomintroll crossing the deep dark forest; Milne begins *Winnie-the-Pooh* with the assumption that the reader knows that this is a continuation of a supposedly already existent story of possession and the power to name, when in fact, this one is the first; while Nosov's book opens with a depiction of mites (general, not the specific “protagonists”) living in a town of flowers surrounded by wilderness. In all the three books, there are spaces called forests and rivers, but they are characterised differently as the characters live with them, live by them, or domesticate them.

1: Tiptoe Lightly Among the Trees: Rebirth into the Wilderness of Moominforest

It must have been late in the afternoon one day at the end of August when Moomintroll and his mother arrived at the deepest part of the great forest. It was completely quiet, and so dim between the trees that it was as though twilight had already fallen. Here and there giant flowers grew, glowing with a peculiar light like flickering lamps, and furthest in among the shadows small, cold green points moved.

'Glow-worms,' said Moominmamma, but they had no time to stop and take a closer look at them. They were searching for a nice, warm place where they could build a house to crawl into when winter came.

...So they walked on, further and further into the silence and the darkness. Little by little, Moomintroll began to feel anxious, and he asked his mother if she thought there were any dangerous creatures in there. 'Hardly,' she said, 'though we'd perhaps better go a little faster, anyway. But I hope we're so small that we won't be noticed if something dangerous should come along.' (Jansson 1945 [translated '96], 1).

² George Lakoff and Mark Johnson explore in-depth the metaphoric nature of language, while John Zerzan in *Running on Emptiness* provides an important critique that links language to symbolic thought and alienation.

The very first characters we meet when we open the first moominbook, *The Little Trolls and the Great Flood*, are a child and his mother. We see them in the depth of a great, dark forest and we realise that a whole universe already exists as we plunge into the lavish forest – a timeless place beyond any physical or geographic location.

At the moment of the birth of the narrative, mother and child are in movement; they are coming from some-place else travelling to a new home. In order to get there, they must learn how to tiptoe lightly past the trees and the beings, without touching or disturbing them because everything exists for itself, for its own purpose, and, in this world of trees, Moomintroll and Moominmamma must find their own wilderness.

The motif of the world as having been founded on trees, or the tree that holds existence, permeates all the disciplines of knowledge around the world. We have met it as the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge and as the forest trees in the Garden of Eden, it reappears throughout folk wisdom all over the world, and in science inspired by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's tree of life in *Philosophie zoologique* (1809) or by Edward Hitchcock's application of the metaphor to geological forms in the late 18th - beginning of 19th century, Ernst Haeckel proposed the tree of life for the pedigree of *homo sapiens sapiens* in the 19th century; and numerous others have relied on this metaphor to map an interpretation of familial relations of humans in and to their world.

Finally, its most famous incarnation appeared in Darwin's Tree of Life, which he placed at the heart of his theory of evolution “by natural selection or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life”.

In this respect, the motif of the Tree of Life, even after all the adaptations in the scientific, theological, and mythological theorising before, during, and after Darwin's era, has retained a major element throughout the trajectory of the myth: it is literally a topos and has always mapped genealogical connections.

In Norse mythology, for instance, it connects the different worlds and the creatures dwelling in them; in evolutionary thought it maps the relationship between life and non-life connecting the *homo sapiens sapiens* to the animal kingdom and to all that has lived and died before (Stearns 2005); in religious imaginary the family tree connects the bloodlines and through genealogy explains the history and fate of the world.

This archetypal tree is also common throughout Scandinavian mythology and is directly relevant to Moominland. For instance, the Edda of Norse mythology³ is constructed around the World Tree with a sacred spring at its foot. This tree is believed to have given life, provided food

³ Sturluson, Snorri (translated from Icelandic by Jean I. Young) interwove the various heathen and monotheistic mythologies to offer a tale of genesis, apocalypse and redemption.

and drink for the gods and linked their domains to the worlds of humans, giants, the living, and the dead⁴. “The tree marked the centre of the universe, and united the cosmic regions. Some Finno-Ugric tribes believed that the gods feasted upon its fruits, and that souls were born among its branches. It was characteristic of this World Tree that its life was renewed continually : thus it became a symbol of the constant regeneration of the universe, and offered to men the means of attaining immortality” (Davidson 1964, 192).

However, the dangerous journey not only leads the moomins to discover life in the forest, but also maps their trajectory through the domains of life and death. They face monsters, descend into the centre of a mountain and finally, in the manner of the archetypal inundations recounted in Edda or in the Middle Eastern mythological and biblical texts, overcome the rushing waters of the Great Flood and in the Great Tree reunite with Moominpappa.

This itinerary reflects the mythical odysseys for immortality, which, in a metaphorical sense, they attain in the eternally peaceful Moominvalley even as their presence and absence flicker from book to book.

The quest “for a nice, warm place where they could build a house to crawl into when winter came” (Jansson 1945, 1) thus sets them off on “a long and perilous journey from one world to another over mountains and desolate wastes of cold and darkness, or of a tedious and fearsome road down to the abode of the dead. Long before astronomy revealed to men the terrifying extent of the great starry spaces, the idea of vastness and of distances to tantalize the mind was already present in heathen thought. In Norse mythology also, as in that of many other peoples further east, we find the image of a bridge that links the worlds” (Davidson 1964, 193).

The moomin books contain so many of the elements of Scandinavian mythology that one can easily replace a synopsis of the moominbooks with Davidson's text on the poems and prose of Edda, as the above exercise demonstrates revealing the rich mythological fabric of the Moominworld.

For example, a bridge over the river is the first thing that Moominpappa builds when they find the house he had built sometime, someplace else. Movement is presented as the nature of being. And it is that enormous river, grown pregnant with life during the flood that carries it Home to Moominvalley – their paradise found.

The fact that Jansson chooses to open the first moominbook onto the majestic and intricate world of trees and the diverse forms of life that it sustains while telling a story about a Great Flood and Small Trolls ties the narrative, not only to the archetypal tree, but also to the motif of water as

⁴ Davidson notes that this idea probably came from the Near East in the first place (Davidson p. 191)

possessing both life-giving and destructive powers: great bodies of salt and fresh water is a recurrent theme in pre-domesticated creation stories as well as in the domesticated narratives.

These archetypal forces of water also warn of divine wrath summoning great destructive floods, such as depicted in *The Epics of Gilgamesh*, *Ziusudra*, *Atrahasis*, *Utnapishtim*, *Enûma Eliš*, and of course in the biblical tradition, either as a general expression of cosmic anger or specifically to punish the people gone astray. Moreover, in all of these motifs, water pre-dates the genesis of the world, where by divine will life springs out of chaos from pre-existing realms and, usually, water. Scientific narratives too propose that life came out of water and that the various historical floods shaped the fauna of today. Even in the biblical tradition, it appears that water pre-dates creation and God finds it already present as he roams over the deep:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters (Genesis 1:1-2).

Or, as God creates darkness and light and orders “a firmament in the midst of the waters” (1:6).

Floods and storms appear throughout these children's books in a variety of colourful contexts and at one point, Snufkin is compared to Moses, even though Jansson plays with her reader and then in *Midsummer Madness*, a later book, depicts a much closer parallel with Moses who was found in a basket among the reeds in the scene where Snufkin finds Little My sleeping in Moominmamma's work-basket in the reeds after having been carried away by water, again, during another great flood (Jansson, 1954 [translated 1955]). In the *Comet in Moominland*, when Moomintroll and Sniff first meet Snufkin, the question about the absence of Snufkin's mother leads them to comparing him with Moses:

“Haven't you got a mother?” asked Moomintroll, looking very sorry for him.

“I don't know,” said Snufkin. “They tell me I was found in a basket.”

“Like Moses,” said Sniff” (Jansson 1959, 114).

Jansson thus presents the concept itself of genesis as inextricable from motherhood and love. However, as my analysis shows, because her concepts of kinship are horizontal and limitless, the Moominbooks blend the topos of genesis with chaos theory and the anarcho-primitivist perspective resulting in a rich text where trees, water, a living and throbbing universe, constant movement are all understood to be integral elements of being and that invite the reader on a journey of exploration of childhood, motherhood, and belonging – such as expressed in friendships and kinship with the world – and of the various dimensions of life, including the forces that threaten it.

2: *On Monsters, Wilderness, and Love*

Most important, however, is that the opening scene presents the forces of life as contingent on mother's love, which allows her child to build knowledge of the actual world as together they search and face difficulties. The viability of that knowledge, of that child, of that mother, and of the whole Moominworld depends on the existence of the forest and on knowing how to go through it and in it find life.

Jansson wrote this story during the harshest winter of WWII and, whether intended or not, Moominpappa's taking off with the hattifatteners who live permanently on the move, as a mob with no individual thought, in search of that which they do not even yearn for, could serve as an allegory for the departure of the fathers to the war. As Moominmamma walks with Moomintroll and the newly adopted "small creature" to life, she is mostly greeted by a generous and kind universe with occasional danger.

This danger can spring out from the depth of a dark forest marsh in the form of a giant serpent (another archetype) or descend out of nowhere, on a quiet sunny day on the beach in the form of a tiny but territorial and vicious ant-lion. But regardless of whether the enemy is stronger or weaker than her, Moominmamma refuses to engage in violence, not even for self-defence or to dispute claims and property rights. She chooses to flee (Jansson, 1945[96], 2 & 9).

Her statement to Moomintroll in the opening scene that smallness and inconspicuousness make for effective self-defence strategies in the face of danger is Jansson's implicit response to war, for, as Nietzsche (1989, 89) puts in in one of his aphorisms, "Whoever fights monsters, should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And when you look long into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you".

The moomins refuse to be monsters and, here again, Jansson plays with tropes and challenges our preconceptions.

Traditionally feared creatures, Jansson depicts trolls as small, cute, and loving and thus subverts their image in Scandinavian folklore as dangerous tricksters. Presenting them as harmless, even as fair and respectful (no one, especially the children, is ever forced to do anything against her will), Jansson invites the reader to question the premises of an ontology that portrays the world as populated by dangerous creatures and to challenge its implicit logic of war: dangerous creatures must be fought back and killed and, by extension, beware of the yellow peril, get the red scare, fear the blacks (anarchists or people of colour), annihilate the terrorists (Arabs/Muslims interchangeably), just to cite a few examples from history.

At the same time, the books elaborate that Moominmamma's calm, accepting, generous, and forgiving manner is not an essential quality, but rather a process of search and learning. The relationship between the Groke, the world, and Moomintroll demonstrates this philosophy and echoes Nietzsche's aphorism, for, by looking into the Groke's eyes, the abysmal loneliness of her soul gapes back at Moomintroll and awakens his understanding.

The Groke appears as absolute terror in the third book, *Finn Family Moomintroll* (*Trollkarlens Hatt*) and, reappears throughout the four subsequent books. Whenever she approaches, the world freezes around her and everything dies. However, in the eighth book, *Moominpappa at Sea*, Moomintroll discovers that the Groke is that way because of the unbearable emptiness that comes with everyone fearing and avoiding her. The more everything that she touches dies, the colder she becomes. Still, his empathy leads him to reach out to the Groke and befriend her, a gesture of understanding and care that needs no words and which causes her to thaw.

Moominmamma explains in chapter one: “we're afraid of the Groke because she's just cold all over. And because she doesn't like anybody. But she's never done any harm” (Jansson 1966, 15). In other words, Moominmamma believes that the Groke has a right to *not* like others and in no way should we be afraid or intolerant of her even if she dislikes us. After all, it is the deeds that count, not knowledge or lack of it.

“The Groke. Did somebody do something to her to make her so awful?”

“No one knows,” said Moominmamma... “It was probably because nobody did anything at all. Nobody bothered about her, I mean. I don't suppose she remembers anyway, and I don't suppose she goes around thinking about it either. She's like the rain or the darkness, or a stone you have to walk round if you want to get past” (ibid, 27-28).

Indifference and apathy, the narrative tells us, breed horror. What the Groke is looking for, without even knowing it herself, is the warmth of light. However, every time she approaches it, she extinguishes it with her freezing loneliness. “The light from the lamp shone on the grass and on the lilac bush. But where it crept in among the shadows, where the Groke sat all on her own, it was much weaker” (ibid, 12). Moomintroll “knew that if she sat on the same spot for more than an hour, nothing would ever grow there again. The ground just died of fright.... She couldn't help it, she had to come as close as possible, and everything died” (ibid, 17-18). “She came over the water in her cloud of cold like somebody's bad conscience” (ibid, 116).

Despite the terror that the Groke instills, Moomintroll seeks her out and throughout the book, she keeps returning to the spot of their tacitly agreed upon nightly rendezvous to stare at the light he brings with him. “She stared at the lamp, following a ritual of her own.... The Groke was dancing! She was quite obviously very pleased, and somehow this absurd ritual became very

important to Moomintroll. He could see no reason why it should stop at all, whether the island wanted it to or not” (ibid, 147).

In other words, Moomintroll learns how to respond to this terror and to take the time to explore her need by imagining what it would be like to be the other; thus, “Moomintroll imagined he was the Groke” (ibid, 18).

Moomintroll's empathy warms up the Groke and she begins to look forward to his company every night. At first she fears that he might not show up, and when he appears she greets him with song and dance. Little by little, the Groke realises that she no longer needs the lamp, because the light is in the warmth of Moomintroll's commitment and he goes to a great length not to disappoint her. While the Groke learns how to trust, the island learns how to live with her:

Moomintroll “could hear the beating of the island's heart... Suddenly the Groke started to sing... There was no doubt about it: the Groke was pleased to see him. She didn't mind about the hurricane lamp. She was delighted that he had come to meet her” (ibid, 212). “Somehow he knew that she wasn't afraid of being disappointed any longer” (ibid, 222).

Jansson's response to the feared requires trust and the basic premise that allows us to know the world as mostly harmonious, albeit without falling into the trap of idealising it as being completely safe. Rather, like Petr Kropotkin's⁵ thesis on evolution by means of cooperation and mutual aid and not through the struggle of competition, yet without dismissing the occasional horror, she chooses to focus on the prevailing goodness and the striving of beings towards the balance of life, who in the face of threatening forces, meet the challenge with dignity, understanding, and love.

For the moomins, thus, the knowledge of how to live can be acquired, transmitted, and safeguarded by entering the world of trees and going through it with confidence and humility (i.e. smallness) – all of which is provided by Mother's love and her trust in the child's abilities to take care of himself and do things right in a benign, even though constantly moving and changing, universe.

Moominland thus echoes the basic principles of chaos theory which depicts the universe, in spite of the regularity of the constants and the particles' responsiveness to the observer, as also unpredictable, and, therefore, as ultimately unknowable, yet, harmonious and self organising (Davies 1977; Hawking 1993; Jantsche 1980).

The narrative echoes a number of other ontological disciplines about the place of humans in

⁵ Petr Kropotkin (2006 (1902)) was a late 19th century Russian naturalist and anarchist political theorist, who presented extensive research to challenge Darwin's theory of evolution by means of natural selection. He argued that the world is bountiful, even in the Tundra, where he observed the principles of cooperation and mutual aid between animals during several winters in Siberia. Competition, violence and war, he concludes in his research, is characteristic of civilised human culture not of wild life.

the world. This place varies, as my further discussion on domestication reveals, but nevertheless, all – science, folklore and religion – characterise the human as small, fragile and dependent in spite of the claims by the civilised to have killed God and despite the arrogant attempt of science to conquer nature, even with a few centuries of “development” behind it, civilisation still fails to conquer the nature of our dependence on forests and wild spaces and therefore the question of our own wilderness remains crucial to our understanding of the world and of ourselves.

Just like Jansson's trolls, throughout the scientific and literary narratives, we appear as specks in an unknown, immense, probably endless, universe – or as some quantum physicists argue, possibly simultaneously in multiverses⁶ – in which, still, our very survival depends on whether we succeed to leave *no* mark behind and to *not* get noticed⁷.

The civilised societies that value grandeur, monumental exaggeration, and history dismiss and denigrate the wild understanding that smallness and inconspicuousness is what can save us from harm. Endless World Wars are a testimony to that. Defying these civilised values, tiny Moominmamma treads confidently with her child through silence and darkness amidst tremendous trees, armed with her trust in the kindness of wilderness and with a glowing flower inhabited by a girl with sparkling blue hair. At the end of their odyssey, a bird brings them to Moominpappa atop an enormous tree, a moment of rebirth that brings them home, to movement and chaos, which is harmony and which is life.

3: *Questions of Choice: Discerning the Truth*

Jansson integrates and re-imagines the mechanisms of the world as told in traditional and scientific narratives and points to the forest and water, not only as the point of our birth, but also as the place of our liberation from history. More precisely, since she depicts place and characters in movement, she points to a path of salvation from a world of war and civilisation back to paradise: Moomintroll and Moominmamma flee to that world of trees, transcend the underworld with its false seductions, elude giants, meet magical creatures, survive the great flood and having interacted with everyone they meet in a spirit of serenity, acceptance, mutual trust and aid⁸, escape violence and,

⁶ For further discussions on chaos theory, universe, and multiverses see Brian Greene (1999), ed. Michel Cazenave (2005), Stephen W. Hawking (1988), among others.

⁷ Many aboriginal peoples stress the importance of leaving the world unchanged and unmarked, just as we found it, for example, the Ainu of Japan. In an interview with BBC (Sunday, 25 April 2010) and Time (April 25, 2010), the astrophysicist, Stephen Hawking, said that it was best NASA did not send out signals to “alien” forms of life as it would be best not to get noticed as the result may be as devastating as the Europeans noticing Africa, Australia, Asia, and the Americas (basically, the whole world).

⁸ It is not a coincidence that the author chooses to depict the scene in which Moominfamily helps the stork-bird find glasses and the stork-bird helps them find them Moominpappa on the great tree, a reunion that leads them back to

finally, regain the paradise lost.

These steps from civilisation to the forest are traced in the first four pages in which Moominmamma and Moomintroll adopt another member of the family, the small creature, who goes by the name Sniff in the rest of the books⁹ and Tulippa, the dweller of the glowing flower, joins them on their journey after having saved them from the serpent. Moominmamma explains to them what brought them to the forest.

“You see, we're looking for a nice, sunny place to build a house in... (2).
...Moominmamma told them stories. She told them about what it was like when she was young, when moomintrolls did not need to travel through fearsome forests and marshes in order to find a place to live in.

In those days they lived together with the house-trolls in the houses of human beings, mostly behind their stoves. 'Some of us still live there now,' said Moominmamma. 'But only where people still have stoves. We don't like central heating.'

'Did the people know we were there?' asked Moomintroll.

'Some of them did,' said his mother. 'They felt us mostly as a cold draught in the backs of their necks sometimes – when they were alone.'” (Jansson 1945[96], 4).

By explaining the reasons for Moominmamma and Moomintroll's journey right in the beginning, Jansson weaves into the story a critique of technological development: the moomins have been ousted by civilisation and its accomplishments in sealing cracks, constructing reliable doors, and switching to electric heating – basically, driven by human selfishness to keep things to themselves.

These cracks are the gateways between dimensions and having thoroughly sealed them, humans have shut themselves off from possibilities and interactions with life. Development and technological efficiency thus lead humans to ignorance, since the selfish urge to shut doors to protect possessions (including heat and warmth) keeps the civilised humans out of touch with reality and ignorant of the existence of the moomins dwelling in those cracks behind the wooden stoves and whose presence people previously had felt as a soft breeze.

Civilised, sedentary house-building practices thus displace the non-humans and alienate and segregate the humans from a mysterious, wild, and intricate world.

In some ways, this story of exile is reminiscent of the many variations on the theme, not least, the exile from the Garden of Eden, where civilisation was meted out as punishment on disobedient, greedy and impatient humans:

life in Moominvalley.

⁹ In contrast to Winnie-the-Pooh, which starts with the act of naming, particularly in the first Moominbook, Jansson makes a point of refusing to name.

And to Adam [God] said, “Because you have listened to your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:17-19).

In the Old Testament, civilisation is an affliction brought about by human disobedience of the laws of life; yet, the civilised have mostly interpreted this tragedy as a permanent and ineluctable fate and embraced it as a triumph¹⁰.

Jansson refuses this fatalistic view and projects a world in which it is within the characters' power to change the actions that have brought about the wrath of life and points to the possibility of transcending our fears, greed, and limitations by venturing through the land of trees back into the garden of wilderness.

In other words, she challenges the civilised narrative that sees punishment as an inevitable part of human experience, since, Moominmamma's position assumes that there is no permanence in what we do, for we can always change our actions and interactions and can find new paths back to *what* we are, which is the only constant, whereas the condition of punishment can become an inevitable constant only when there is no intention on the part of the civilised humans to change their way of life. Seeing their sin as a permanence, as an unchangeable part of *who* they are, there can be no forgiveness, only eternal guilt.

Ultimately, this raises the question of choice, albeit not from the predetermining position: a choice of right or wrong with consequences – but the choice to correct the wrong when one discerns the truth. Because one never knows where some choices lead, Moominmamma leaves it up to the individual – be it a child or an adult, from her own species or from another – to make her decisions.

Hence, throughout the book, Moominmamma states explicitly that everyone is invited to join her and her child on their journey or they are welcome to stay where they are or go somewhere else where they are happier. There are no consequences and no strings attached, because the assumption is that none of the creatures is endowed with powers over others or possesses information that is not accessible to others. How can she know more about what's good for the “small creature” than the “small creature” himself, for instance. Moreover, she reassures them that they could always change their minds and come and live with them later.

The small creature therefore has the choice to accompany them or stay behind. He chooses

¹⁰ Several biblical scholars have pointed to the different voices in the Old and the New Testaments. My play *Red Delicious* (2003) explores the implications of wilderness and vegan gathering in the bible. Moreover, in his *Ishmael* trilogy, Daniel Quinn also argues that the original story of the fall has been told from the perspective of non-domesticated society and has subsequently been adopted and adapted by civilisation.

to come. Tulippa chooses to go with them too, but when she finds the tower with the sunlit boy, she decides to settle in that lagoon and they bid one another farewell. Snufkin and other characters move in and out as they please. And even though she voices her reservations to the old gentleman about liking it inside the mountain, she nevertheless, specifies that everyone is allowed to stay as long as they wished and to eat as much as they desired even though they were looking for the real sun and sea and it is porridge and “real” food that is good for children.

In the image of a forgiving God, a loving parent in Jansson's universe cannot be punishing and forgiveness becomes the natural state of a world founded on the premise that all creatures are fundamentally good because they crave harmony and the balance of life. Lack of experience may lead one astray on account of the not perfected skills of discernment, but this is precisely the reason for reaching out to the child, or anyone else for that matter, so that she may hone those skills by diving into a world of life, understanding, and acceptance. It is in this spirit that one learns how to discern truth from lie and the real from the false.

Jansson builds this argument by integrating the various archetypal topoi of punishment and reward, abundance and misery, authenticity and falsehood and once again exploring new ways of understanding them through the perspective of wilderness.

She imbues her characters with the ability to see through and the strength to refuse the deceptive promises of satiation and comfort as promised by civilisation in general, and, in particular, by the old gentleman who invites them to live with him under fake light and behind shut doors inside the mountain where he has built a world of artificial rivers and trees made of sweet food. This is the only instance in the moominbooks when someone shuts the door in order to leave “danger” out. The meaning of this act is interpreted by Sniff as a sign that perhaps the gentleman himself is not to be trusted, that perhaps, more dangerous than the serpent is the kindly, frail, old man, and in his offer of limitless engorgement lies the real danger, the Satan of false hope and deception:

Then [the old gentleman] closed the door very carefully, so that nothing harmful could sneak inside.... 'Are you sure this gentleman is to be trusted?' whispered the small creature.... Then a bright light shone towards them, and the moving staircase took them straight into a wonderful landscape. The trees sparkled with colour and were full of fruits and flowers they had never seen before, and below them in the grass lay gleaming white patches of snow. 'Hurrah!' cried Moomintroll, and ran out to make a snowball. 'Be careful, it's cold!' called his mother. But when he ran his hands through the snow he noticed that it was not snow at all, but ice-cream. And the green grass that gave way under his feet was made of fine-spun sugar. Criss-cross over the meadows ran brooks of every colour, foaming and bubbling over the golden sand. 'Green lemonade!' cried the small creature, who had stooped down to drink. 'It's not water at all, it's lemonade!' Moominmamma went straight over to a brook that was completely white, since she had always been very fond of milk.... Tulippa ran from tree to tree picking armfuls of chocolate creams and candies, and as soon as she had plucked one of the glowing fruits, another grew at once. They forgot their sorrows and ran further and further into the enchanted garden. The old gentleman slowly followed them and seemed very pleased by their amazement and admiration. 'I made all this

myself,' he said. 'The sun, too.' And when they looked at the sun, they noticed that it really was not the real sun but a big lamp with fringes of gold paper. 'I see,' said the small creature, and was disappointed. 'I thought it was the real sun. Now I can see that it has a slightly peculiar light.'

'Well, that was the best I could do,' said the old gentleman, offended. 'But you like the garden, don't you?'

'Oh yes,' said Moomintroll....

'If you would like to stay here, I will build you a cake-house to live in,' said the old gentleman....

'That would be very nice,' said Moominmamma, 'but ... we must be on our way. We were actually thinking of building a house in the real sunshine' (Jansson 1945[96], 5)

The old gentleman's garden, modelled after the real garden, remains only a replica, a falsehood and a substitute for the authentic, which, for Moominmamma, can never replace the real sun, the real sea, or the real trees.

Once again, the wilderness of Moominmamma's philosophy is confirmed with her refusal to punish and in her lack of expectations of obedience. Moominmamma is concerned only with their well-being, safety, and happiness; the minute their tummies get upset from the feasting on fake, sugary food, she rushes to help them, because she trusts them even when they have erred. The children prove right Moominmamma's fundamental premise that loved and happy creatures turn out to be good and kind beings and they eagerly leave as soon as they realise the falseness of the experience and the impossibility of the truly Original Affluent Society existing trapped behind shut doors with fake substitutes. Together, they turn down the invitation and choose the real world with open doors.

When she woke up again she heard a fearful moaning, and realized at once that it was her Moomintroll, who had a sore stomach... Beside him sat the small creature, who had got toothache from all the sweets, and was moaning even worse. Moominmamma did not scold, but took two powders from her handbag and gave them each one, and then she asked the old gentleman if he had a bowl of nice, hot porridge.

'No, I'm afraid not,' he said. 'But there's a bowl of whipped cream, and another one of jam.'

'Hm,' said Moominmamma. 'Porridge is good for them, you see: hot food is what they need. Where's Tulippa?'

'She says she can't get to sleep because the sun never goes down,' said the old gentleman, looking unhappy. 'I'm truly sorry that you don't like it here.'

... 'But now I think I must see to it that we get out in the fresh air again.' And then she took Moomintroll by one hand, and the small creature by the other, and called for Tulippa. 'You'll do best to take the switch-back railway,' said the old gentleman politely. 'It goes right through the mountain and comes out in the middle of the sunshine.'

'Thank you,' said Moominmamma. 'Goodbye then.' 'Goodbye then,' said Tulippa. (Moomintroll and the small creature were not able to say anything, as they felt so horribly sick.)....

When they came out on the other side they were quite giddy and sat on the ground for a long time, recovering. Then they looked around them.

Before them lay the sea, glittering in the sunshine. 'I want to go for a bathe!' cried Moomintroll, for now he felt all right again. 'Me too,' said the small creature, and then they ran right out into the sun's beam on the water (Jansson 1945[96], 6).

It is interesting that when moominbooks begin with this choice of the real, Nosov chooses to end Dunno's trilogy with a similar image. After his adventures inside the moon, Dunno gets seriously homesick and almost dies in capitalism and without the real sun, the blue skies, and the soft and fragrant grass. The only way to save him is for the mites to rush him home to earth.

“Dunno took a few faltering steps, but immediately collapsed to his knees and then falling face down, began to kiss the earth. His hat flew off his head. Tears rolled from his eyes. And he whispered:

-- My mother, my land! I will never forget you!

The red sun gently warmed him with its rays, the fresh breeze ruffled his hair as if caressing his head. And it appeared to him as if some incredible huge feeling has overwhelmed his chest. He did not know what to call this feeling, but knew that it was good and that nothing better existed in the whole world. He nestled his chest against the earth as though it was someone dear and close and felt the strength return to him and the sickness leave all by itself.

Finally, he has wept all the tears he had and got up from the ground and burst out in merry laughter when he saw his friend-mites joyfully greeting their native Land.

-- Well, brothers, that's it!-- he shouted cheerfully. --And now we can start off on another journey!

That's the kind of mite Dunno was (Nosov 1985(b), 221-22 [translation mine]).

For both Nosov and Jansson, reality, even with all its risks and uncertainties, is the only viable option and, hence, one author opts to end his narrative with the characters regaining the real world after a miserable experience in civilisation inside the moon and the other chooses to begin with this same question of reality versus civilisation. In both cases, this choice is a matter of life and death.

Nosov's mites of Flower Town also share Moominmamma's position on the question of forgiveness and acceptance. Hence, Doono and his mates endlessly reach out to help Dunno after he had gotten himself and even them in trouble – in the last book, they go to the moon to save him from his own folly, even though he had stolen their rocket by mistake and found himself harassed by the police and capitalists in the mite society that dwelt inside the moon. For, the underlying

premise guiding the relations in both Flower Town and Moominland assumes that even when actions bring about undesirable consequences, the intentions behind them are good, and hence the trust, support, and love of the community can provide the understanding and strength needed to change the wrong.

Therefore, the minute Moominmamma and the children realise that the deception of the sugary abundance and the artificial light threatens their lives, they choose to continue their search for the true and the real. As they leave the dangerous illusion of safety in the centre of the mountain, they climb out into a sunny world full of life and trees, a world where they find their father in the tree of life.

“There, on one of the highest branches of an enormous tree sat a wet, sad moomintroll, staring out over the water. Beside him he had tied a distress flag. He was so amazed and delighted when the marabou stork landed in the tree, and the whole of his family climbed down on to the branches, that he could not say a word” (Jansson 1945[96], 16). The following morning they walk together into the valley where the flood current has planted the home that Moominpappa had built elsewhere.

Jansson thus maps her conception of the nature of being as a trajectory from where we are to what we are, a path that is revealed to us as we embrace wilderness and renounce domestication. This trajectory is expressed in the first question mark that appears in the book in the fifth paragraph: “What are you?” asked the small creature¹¹ when he met Moominmamma and Moomintroll — not “Who are you?”.

In other words, we are not dealing here with the problem of identity, but with the question of matter and nature. Proper names in Moominvalley are names of the types of creatures: the snorks, the moomins, the snufkins, etc. Yet, at the same time, each snufkin is Snufkin and each moomintroll is Moomintroll, with all the individual idiosyncrasies that make them special and the commonalities that bind them together with the basic denominator which is the experience of life with the underlying yearning for harmony and for the wild expanses of the multiverses – all of which make us an integral part of each others' lives, even with all our squabbles and territorial disputes, such as presented by the aggressive ant-lion who wouldn't share the beach with Moominmamma and her children. Because the demarcation of space, time, and resources is never a constant, it is change and mobility that ensure a rotation of chances and hence dominance can never be permanent or totalitarian. In other words, chaos is what ensures egalitarian biodiversity and the stability of life,

¹¹ “Vad är ni för ena?” frågade det lilla djuret (Jansson 1945[96], 13). There was an implicit question before this one regarding Moomintroll wondering whether there were dangerous creatures and Moominmamma responding “hardly”, which still ties in with the nature of the creatures of the world: what are they? Jansson's implicit response is: hardly dangerous, mostly minding their own business.

not order and identity.

In itself, the permanence promised by the garden of infinite food or the sugar paradise has provided a potent archetype in civilised ontology because it constitutes an effective tool for domestication particularly in conjunction with imposed poverty. Pavlov illustrated this idea scientifically: first, deny the victim of domestication access to food and then reward her when she does what you want; repeat it enough times for the victim to despair and lose hope for an exit from this situation of abuse. In Medieval Europe, with land expropriated and peasants starving, stories about the mythical Cockaigne circulated, where animals walked around and invited people to slice their ribs and eat them and people gorged themselves infinitely. Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, which are all civilised faiths, also promise rewards after death in terms of guaranteed abundance of food and, in some cases, sex. We see the same theme of an artificial, never-ending world of sweets reappearing throughout children's culture as well, with its most notable incarnation rendered by Roald Dahl in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, published in 1964, almost two decades after *The Little Trolls and the Great Flood*.

Considered a classic, Dahl's story is one of the most widely read twentieth century children's books that have been written in English and has been adapted for television and the big screen numerous times, with the latest film by Tim Burton released in 2005 starring Johnny Depp.

Because this brutally civilised perspective predominates in children's literature in spite of the strong criticisms, such as voiced by the NAACP¹² or children's authors, like Eleanor Cameron, I allot considerable space to the discussion of Dahl's book. Moreover, it is reflected in the ontology of Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh and stands in stark contrast with the wild premises in Jansson and Nosov's works.

4: Perils and Traps of Civilisation: Competing for Chocolate Slavery in the Unknowledge of Roald Dahl

Contrary to Moominland – where everyone has a choice to either join or reject the artificial world of deception and where no tickets are ever needed: the moomins' arms are always open for the world; the old gentleman, upon hearing wails, invites them all in, including the flower girl Tulippa, and offers them anything they would like, even to build them a sweet, edible house that they refuse – the plot of Dahl's book centres around a lottery contest, slavery, the desire for control in general and particularly of the production of fake food, and the generation of incessant craving for it: “[Charlie] desperately wanted something more filling and satisfying than cabbage and

¹² National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

cabbage soup. The one thing he longed for more than anything else was...CHOCOLATE” (Dahl 1973, 8).

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory is built on civilised premises of an ontology of wealth and poverty, ownership and slavery, shut doors, deception and abuse, competition and strict criteria for selecting members of the in-group and those to be excluded.

The pyramidal structure of its social relations is framed right from the beginning with the announcement of a lottery: millions of chocolate bars are to be sold, but only a handful of tickets (ten in the first version of the book and five in the revised 1973 edition) are placed inside the wraps granting admission to the secretive chocolate factory whose doors have been shut to visitors for years. Out of these winners, only one, the most obedient participant, is to be named Willy Wonka's successor and of course this is a well known and widely used marketing ruse that appeals to the sense of greed and nurtures it.

The goal of any contest is for one, sometimes two or, perhaps, three persons or teams to win and many – all the other – people or teams to lose, i.e., the winner wins at the expense of the many who lose.

First, on the psychological and emotive levels, giving a prize to one sends out the message to all the other participants that they are not quite “it”, i.e. they are inferior and this inferiority is a precondition for the superiority of the winner. In other words, without losers, there can be no winners.

Second, the winner actually gets what everyone else loses: money, recognition, symbolic capital. There would be no point in competing if the prizes were to be distributed equally among the participants in a contest, lottery, or competition. Contests and competitions reconfirm hierarchy as “natural” and serve as rituals and useful reminders of the place of the many losers in the pyramidal hierarchy. In this respect, even if lottery and gambling depend on luck and therefore are slightly less damaging for self-esteem than the contests and examinations that supposedly evaluate intellectual prowess, a physical ability, or even degrees of beauty, the situation is nevertheless an artificial set up that reconfirms to the participants that, in this world, only a few will win, and the rest lose.

Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* reinstates this order with a sadistic zeal and translates this civilised hierarchy into a tale of adventure in which most readers, even though for the most part lose in the real world (pure probability), nevertheless cheer for the one winner to snatch it all. There are several steps in this seemingly self-contradictory indulgence.

The first step is for the readers to be convinced by the justifications provided for the reasons why the main character deserves to win. They find them convincing, because they identify

themselves with the traits which, in the spirit of the civilised tradition of double-standards, are depicted as positive in favour of the winner while the same qualities become negative in the losers. Thus, even if everybody is greedy in Dahl's book – they all want to inherit Willy Wonka's chocolate factory – Charlie emerges as the only deserving character, and he keeps the prize to himself, that is, he keeps it in the direct, blood-defined family and does not share it with “others”, or, does not “squander the wealth”, while everyone else's greed earns them torture, even Veruca Salt who wants one single slave, a chocolate river, or just one hard-working squirrel. In short, since the readers see themselves as deserving the prize, they agree with the argument that the hero deserves to win.

Yet, the way real-life competitions are set, the majority of the readers lose most of the time and so the next step for them is to also identify themselves with the losers in the book. And here comes the civilised schizophrenia. Paradoxically, they find comfort in witnessing the elimination of the losers because it reconfirms to them that they are not alone to have been defeated, i.e. punished for their inferiority, but concomitantly, they experience a certain sense of relief that, even though personally they deserve the punishment, they nevertheless have managed to escape and someone else gets it instead.

Most important, perhaps, is that the losers need a justification for the injustice, even though it is not always a conscious affair; they need an explanation that there are good reasons as to why there (they) are losers, and it becomes an acceptable explanation that, “in any case, naturally, after all, only one is destined to snatch the wreath of glory”.

The incredible popularity of the book also demonstrates that readers (both the adults who choose the book for the children and the children who enjoy it) may find some masochistic comfort in watching the losers receive unimaginably sadistic punishments for wanting what everybody wants in a society that cuts off access to vital resources and locks them behind doors¹³. Perhaps they castigate themselves for wanting that which they feel guilty to want.

This feeling of guilt is a product of civilisation, because its ontology naturalises violence, suffering, and pain, when deep inside the civilised know that it is this acceptance to suffer and to torture others is what has cost them their paradise and the love of the world.

If people saw their actions as changeable and corrigible – like Moominmamma shows to her children that they are not obliged to stick with their choice, they can still change their minds and the option to leave and heal is still available to them – there would be no syndrome of “guilt” as a

¹³ Children's literature historians, such as Avery, Knowles, Malmkæjer, O'Malley have pointed to the prevalence of punishment and moralism in children's books. An excellent illustration of the naturalising of punishment is Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, in which the boy is punished and sent to his room, he is at first upset, then travels to a dark wild place, tames the wilderness and having destroyed and subdued it, returns back to his room and sees the love in the punishing parents gestures. Needless to say, this book that promotes violence against the wild and the wilderness of the undomesticated self of the child is hailed as a work of genius by the civilised book industry.

constant. Impotence and identity crisis become a problem when people fail to see the possibility to change their actions and to redirect their desires. Thus, as guilt becomes a socially constructed permanence, seeing someone getting punished brings relief, because symbolically, the guilty losers themselves get punished, and that punishment, in their civilised logic, sets things temporarily right. Yet, escaping that punishment personally (since the scapegoat or the symbol receives it instead) also sets things wrong. The sacrifice becomes an integral aspect of institutional symbolism because the punishment of the victim chosen to represent and symbolise everyone who deserves to be punished becomes the ritual of temporary relief constantly re-enacted in a culture of perpetual guilt but, at the same time, the symbolic yet real victim becomes the scapegoat who is the vital and ultimate loser.

In the end, the root of the problem lies in the failure of the civilised to connect their obsessions with possessions and the feeling of guilt with their conception of life as an eternal competition for the survival of the fittest.

In “the Original Affluent Society”, Marshall Sahlins (1972) sees the civilised conception of poverty and affluence as the inversion of reality that stems from the perspective its members hold on life. If a people constructs a cultural view of the world as generous and their needs as modest, the ideal of satisfaction becomes easy to attain and it becomes pointless to grab and obsess, for there will always be plenty tomorrow. Obsessions and avarice occur in the truly poor societies, where expectations are never realised, never meant to be realised and this lack of realisation stimulates the perpetual greed, fear, and inequality.

One-third to one-half of humanity are said to go to bed hungry every night. In the Old Stone Age the fraction must have been much smaller. This is the era of hunger unprecedented. Now, in the time of the greatest technical power, starvation is an institution. Reverse another venerable formula: the amount of hunger increases relatively and absolutely with the evolution of culture.

This paradox is my whole point. Hunters and gatherers have by force of circumstances an objectively low standard of living. But taken as their objective, and given their adequate means of production all the people's material wants usually can be easily satisfied....

The world's most primitive people have few possessions, *but they are not poor*. Poverty is not a certain small amount of goods, nor is it just a relation between means and ends; above all it is a relation between people. Poverty is a social status. As such it is the invention of civilization. It has grown with civilization, at once as an invidious distinction between classes and more importantly as a tributary relation that can render agrarian peasants more susceptible to natural catastrophes than any winter camp of Alaskan Eskimo (Sahlins 1974, 36-38).

As Sahlins points out, in a consumer society, people see the world as miserly and life as a struggle – an outlook that justifies locked doors and private property and in turn causes the extensive misery.

In such a world it would be unthinkable to open the gates of the chocolate factory and to share the chocolate with all the human and animal children of the world. Instead there has to be a ceremony that reconfirms the natureness of injustice: while legitimating greed in a few, it chooses a handful of others for a public display of punishment, even cannibalism; for instance, Augustus becomes chocolate fudge and Violet turns into a blueberry for wanting what Willy Wonka has and what Charlie gets, because those who have lost to the winners in this ontology themselves constitute the resources for the winner.

Finally, the smooth operation of this system is secured when the losers express gladness and gratitude for getting consumed either as workforce, as consumers¹⁴, or as ingredients in Charlie and Willy Wonka's profitable venture.

Dahl goes to great length to describe the horrifying and humiliating punishments of each eliminated contestant and justifies the mad cruelty by depicting the characters as disobedient to Willy Wonka's orders. The narrative, thus, also works as a training guide in domesticating children and, contrary to Moominland in which empathy and acceptance even of the horrible is key to life, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory's* appeal stems from the reader's alienation from the suffering of the children who get beaten and consumed; for, only in such emptiness of the mind and of the emotional sphere can anyone laugh at someone's suffering.

There are different methods of forcing the domestic/ated to comply with the will of the domesticator¹⁵. The withdrawal of approval and love is one tactic, the administration of pain and other emotional and physiological tortures is another. Alternating hunger with promises of relief and then relieving it when the child or the animal conforms to the will of the trainer, then inducing it again, finally securing future cooperation with reminders of the threats and intimidation (bad grades, for example, play this role since they threaten with the withdrawal of food and other necessities through poverty in the "future") also constitutes some of the methods of torture¹⁶.

Institutionalised abuse makes sense only on condition that exploitation itself has been institutionalised in a society. Otherwise, who cares if a child learns how to please persons with authority (e.g. teachers, adults, etc.) or if a horse understands "go".

Societies that embrace wilderness do not have a purpose for changing someone else's behaviour because they have no ownership over the other's life, effort, or the fruits of her labour and hence they have no place for punishment in their ontology and, in fact, many such societies have

¹⁴ Cannibalism frequently appears in children's literature, perhaps precisely because the concept of consumers consuming each other, their children and themselves needs to be rendered as normal and natural, and this expression of relations to get used to from early age. The film *Cannibal Holocaust* raises these questions clearly, if brutally.

¹⁵ Of course, Michel Foucault's studies on prisons and methods of punishment come to mind here.

¹⁶ Pavlov and his methods of degradation for dogs and horse trainers such as Paul Patton and Vicki Hearne.

lived for millions of years with no place allotted for punishment or any other form of institutional violence in their world-view. A contemporary example is the Semai people of Malaya. The fact that they still exist to this day, demonstrates that violence is neither indispensable for survival nor an intrinsic feature of life. The Semai lead vibrant lives *without* a structure of leaders or figures of authority at the top with the “resources” at the bottom and are most noted for the fact that they *never* punish their children. These children grow into responsible members of the world community precisely because the Semai follow the principles that ban any forms of punishment and cruelty against the animals and children they raise (Dentan 1979).

In this respect, even though the Moomin books are fictional, their ontology can be traced in ethnographic reports of viable communities who have survived, including, the globalised genocides of people, animals, and forests at the hands of the civilised.

Contrary to the wilderness of Moominland, even the “tamed” and scaled down 1973 version of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* presents punishment, hierarchy, and discrimination as based on some presumed intrinsic and essential inferiority of the resources (such as the slaves) and depicts abuse not only as natural, but also as coveted by the abusers and the abused themselves.

As the reader is invited to join the tour of the mysterious factory through the experiences of the lottery winners, she learns the dark secret behind the factory doors that makes Willy Wonka's production the best and most famous in the world: slaves – animal slaves in the persons of the squirrels and human slaves in the persons of the Oompa-Loompas.

The text still favourably refers to slavery in the revised edition, even though the human slaves have changed from dark skinned pygmies in the earlier version to rosy-white dwarfs in the revised book and are no longer from Africa but “[i]mported direct from Loompaland,” said Mr. Wonka proudly” (Dahl 1973, 73). “...I shipped them all over here, every man, woman, and child in the Oompa-Loompa tribe. It was easy. I smuggled them over in large packing cases with holes in them... They are wonderful workers. They all speak English now. They love dancing and music” (ibid. 76).

Positive descriptions of any form of slavery, human or animal, black or white in a book, especially a children's book, raises questions about the ethical principles in the children's literature industry as well as about the ethical stance of its readership. It becomes even more puzzling, since having applied some cosmetic touches in the revision, Dahl left intact the Africa-specific fauna, descriptions, and the raw products and the favourable depiction of slavery, whereby alluding to the historical inter-racial relations between capitalist/civilised economies and exploited colonies, explicitly chocolate and sugar plantations and implicitly everything else.

The book tells us that these “primitive” “miserable” “wild” creatures cheer the colonial

master because they are incapable of making anything good out of what is available in their own Loompaland.

“And what a terrible country it is! Nothing but thick jungles infested by the most dangerous beasts in the entire world... A whangdoodle would eat ten Oompa-Loompas for breakfast and come galloping back for a second helping. When I went out there, I found the little Oompa-Loompas living in tree-houses. They *had* to live in tree-houses to escape from the whangdoodles.... And they were practically starving to death. They were living on green caterpillars, and the caterpillars tasted revolting, and the Oompa-Loompas spent every moment of their days climbing through the treetops looking for other things to mash up with the caterpillars to make them taste better—red beetles, for instance, and eucalyptus leaves, and the bark of the bong-bong tree, all of them beastly, but not quite so beastly as the caterpillars. Poor little Oompa-Loompas! The one food that they longed for more than any other was the cacao bean. But they couldn’t get it. An Oompa-Loompa was lucky if he found three or four cacao beans a year. But oh, how they craved them. They used to dream about cacao beans all night and talk about them all day. You had only to *mention* the word ‘cacao’ to an Oompa-Loompa and he would start dribbling at the mouth. The cacao bean,” Mr. Wonka continued, “which grows on the cacao tree, happens to be *the thing* from which all chocolate is made.... I myself use billions of cacao beans every week in this factory. And so, my dear children, as soon as I discovered that the Oompa-Loompas were crazy for this particular food, I climbed up to their tree-house village and poked my head in through the door of the tree house belonging to the leader of the tribe. The poor little fellow, looking thin and starved, was sitting there trying to eat a bowl full of mashed-up green caterpillars without being sick. ‘Look here,’ I said (speaking not in English, of course, but in Oompa-Loompish), ‘look here, if you and all your people will come back to my country and live in my factory, you can have *all* the cacao beans you want! I’ve got mountains of them in my storehouses! You can have cacao beans for every meal! ... I’ll even pay your wages in cacao beans if you wish!’

“‘You really mean it?’ asked the Oompa-Loompa leader, leaping up from his chair.

“‘Of course I mean it,’ I said. ‘And you can have chocolate as well. Chocolate tastes even better than cacao beans because it’s got milk and sugar added.’

“The little man gave a great whoop of joy and threw his bowl of mashed caterpillars right out of the tree-house window. ‘It’s a deal!’ he cried. ‘Come on! Let’s go!’

“So I shipped them all over here, every man, woman, and child in the Oompa-Loompa tribe. It was easy. I smuggled them over in large packing cases with holes in them, and they all got here safely. They are wonderful workers. They all speak English now. They love dancing and music. They are always making up songs. I expect you will hear a good deal of singing today from time to time. I must warn you, though, that they are rather mischievous. They like jokes. They still wear the same kind of clothes they wore in the jungle. They insist upon that. The men, as you can see for yourselves across the river, wear only deerskins. The women wear leaves, and the children wear nothing at all. The women use fresh leaves every day....”

“*Daddy!*” shouted Veruca Salt. “*Daddy!* I want an Oompa-Loompa! I want an Oompa-Loompa right away! I want to take it home with me!”... (Dahl 1973, 73-77).

Now, imagine a best selling children's book depicting an Arab sheikh poking his head into the window of an American, Canadian or European home.

What he sees shocks him: miserable people and their children eating processed food, while there are pears growing all over the place and when it is pears they crave the most. “Oh, look at

those poor, skinny fellows,” says the sheikh. “All those pears are growing around them and they can't even have them. I feel so sorry for you. If you come with me to Arabia and work for me in my factory making pear pies, you can have all the pears you want”.

When the tiny, skinny, and miserable American, Canadian, or European chief sees the sheikh's face and learns of his magnanimous intentions to save him from his misery, he welcomes the liberator and begs the sheikh to deliver all of the Americans, Canadians, or Europeans from their atrocious lot. Guided by the generosity of his heart, the sheikh grabs every child, woman, and man in the country, sticks them in a crate, pokes holes in it, and smuggles them into Arabia where they live happily ever after in his factory, receive pears for wages, speak Arabic and sing and dance.

I have never heard of such a children's book, probably because the network of “international” academics, literary critics and the publishing industry is not run by Arabs; and even if such a book managed to come into existence, it would be denounced by the “international” experts, the sheikh would be labelled Hussein or Bin Laden, and the book branded as Al-Qaeda or Taliban propaganda – and we all know what happens to those kinds of people and their little helpers.

I have, however, extensively heard of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. It has been awarded many prizes and nominations, even for the *FIRST* version: in 1972, it received the New England Round Table of Children's Librarians Award in the U.S. and in 1973 the same version received the Surrey School Award in the U.K.; the revised version received two more awards in U.K. In 2000: the Millennium Children's Book Award and the Blue Peter Book Award.

In contrast to Jansson, in both versions, Dahl depicts the forest as a deplorable place and the freedom to look for one's food as a detestable feat, while slavery is presented as a happy and desirable lot for the Oompa-Loompas (though not for Charlie and Willy Wonka). The narrative tells us that it is “natural” that the Oompa-Loompas would fail to access cacao beans – “an Oompa Loompa was lucky if he found three or four beans a year” (ibid) – even though these plants and sugar are endemic to their land, but we are told that there is nothing strange or perverse about Willy Wonka's – in whose country cacao beans do not grow – possession of unlimited supplies of the colonial products and of the power to offer the Oompa-Loompas, in exchange for their lives, the beans that grow in their own homeland. In other words, Dahl's double standards are so fundamental and permeating his world-view that he fails to even see the irony¹⁷.

Furthermore, because they are so grateful, docile, and hard working, the cheerful and dim-witted Oompa-Loompas are in high demand; yet only the deserving have the right to own them. Veruca Salt's desire to acquire an Oompa-Loompa, a chocolate river, and a squirrel sends her down

¹⁷ Even if he saw it, he failed to express it in the book.

the garbage chute, revealing the various niches in the hierarchy of slavery, ownership, and punishment: the “docile savage” gets to work, the “greedy competitor” gets eliminated, etc.. Thus, hierarchy and injustice are explained, justified and reconfirmed and the civilised reader finds satisfaction in the resolution and praises the book as one of the best exemplars of civilised children's literature.

Basically, this narrative normalises discrimination, cruelty, and injustice, and, within this logic, slavery (human and animal) emerges as a natural aspect of order. The forest, which in reality allows wilderness to prosper (since it is the source of life in all its diversity and plenitude), in civilised topos becomes a dangerous place even though in reality the forest gives life and provides independence – it is a place where human and non-human animals see no reason to work for a master since they are capable of procuring their own livelihood. In order for a hierarchical, civilised order to prevail, it becomes crucial to domesticate the dangerous, independent places and the strategy of focusing on the narrative of competition and struggle supports that end, for, it works the same way the symbolic/real punishment does, in which the narrative of horror is used to overwrite the reality of joy and the ritual of competition naturalises the process of selection of rulers from a bunch of some specific humans, while the rest, due to their assumed natural inferiority and general inadequacy, are relegated to servitude, a category justified by their depiction as not capable of surviving without a slave-owner (or the proprietor of human resources in the terminology of business administration) even in their own environments.

For obvious reasons, Dahl fails to connect starvation with private property and blames the victim for not being able to make anything of worth when, in fact, crops and lives have been stolen from her and sealed behind locked doors. Evidently, if the foreigner, Willy Wonka, owns endless supplies of sugar and cacao beans, while the natives cannot access what naturally grows in their land, it is because that land and its crops have been stolen by the foreigner Willy Wonka. To rectify this wrong, Dahl's logic proceeds by spicing up the wound with pepper and salt: if to the stolen land and crops one adds kidnapped children, women and men and enslaves them, then that will make the Oompa-Loompas happy and will make the wrong right. Willy Wonka is happy. Everybody is happy and if there are readers who get depressed by this unbearable joy, well, they can get treated with chocolate, literature and pills.

For a reader to find Dahl's scenario sensible – and the prizes and the sales of the book are testimony to that millions of people, in fact, do – certain cerebral, ethical, and emotive skills, such

as empathy or general reason must have atrophied or been prevented from developing¹⁸.

Many contemporary children's literary theoreticians either fail to notice this problem or intentionally ignore it¹⁹. For example, in his volumes on children's literature whose titles dishonestly claim to be representing the whole of children's literature, yet which blatantly exclude all the children's writers who do not come from "white" countries, the British scholar Peter Hunt admires Roald Dahl's "formidable intelligence" (Hunt 2001, 56-57) and refers to him as a "highly skilful writer" (ibid, 56). He laments the lack of "serious analysis or discussion... beyond polemic for or against" (ibid) even though "Dahl is probably the most successful worldwide children's author of the twentieth century, surpassed in sales only by the far more prolific Enid Blyton, and his popularity must say a great deal about and to the culture" (ibid).

Later in his work, Hunt reveals that Blyton's "bad Gollywogs called Nigger" (ibid, 256) (and she's the one who beat Dahl in sales) were characteristic of their time and because censorship was unfair towards the diary of Anne Frank and towards homosexuals, then his logical argument leads to: "Roald Dahl's black pygmy slaves in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) might well have escaped notice even ten years before" (ibid, 257) and since, according to Hunt, it is hard to find classic works that are not racist or sexist, he has nothing more to say about this subject (he doesn't even see it as a problem).

This phenomenon points to the fact that racism, discrimination, infliction of pain, and humiliation are not unfortunate side effects or some insignificant characteristics of civilised society: they are in high demand and, if we trust the sales to be an indicator of their importance, they are central to civilised ontology and the slave-master relations are often presented in literature and in literary theory as natural, even filled with gladness²⁰.

In order to find plausible the connection between enslavement and happiness, one must first alienate oneself from the experience of the enslaved human or animal and be in a position of power to objectify the victim, belittle her aspirations, and disregard her inner purpose. An important strategy to achieve apathy is identification.

Thus, civilised ontology provides the criteria for identifying and selecting specimens as

¹⁸ For a discussion on development and stifling of intellectual, emotive, and physiological abilities see AbdelRahim on "Modernism and Education", 2003.

¹⁹ Among the few theoreticians of children's literature who take a clear stand against the racism and slavery in the book are John Rowe Townsend in *Written for Children* and Brycchan Carey in *Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays* (ed. Giselle Liza Anatol) who makes an important critique as she compares and contrasts it to Rowling's motifs of slavery in the Harry Potter books.

²⁰ Of course, I am not referring here to slave narratives or to abolitionists, such as the novel *Roots* by Alex Haley or children's authors, such as Christopher Paul Curtis or Margaret Peterson Haddix.

belonging to different categories, a process that formulates identity and limits the spectrum of choices for certain groups. The dynamic by which choices become off-limit to some individuals or groups becomes clear in the example of Willy Wonka's contest, where the winner is carefully selected with many eliminated, and the prize is a world founded on slavery, stolen goods, locked doors, and artificial food, fauna, and light. However, it is often veiled in other books, such as *Winnie-the-Pooh*, to the point of appearing to be almost absent. My argument, though, is that it is present in the premises themselves and this seeming deviation to Willy Wonka's *Chocolate World of Slavery* is a necessary exercise in the discussion of the underlying premises in the ontology of A.A. Milne.

5: Construction of Identity: The Civilised Chore of Cleaning Out the Debris of Wilderness

Identification works on several levels and in various domains. On the one hand, it is the process by which a person recognises certain shared traits or experiences in the other. On the other hand, by identifying oneself with “fixed”²¹ categories, one also finds oneself cut off from the economic networks of “other” categories. Identification thus helps people to rationalise inequality and to structure the bullying by identifying individuals and categories, ranking them on a scale of inferiority and superiority and in terms of “in-group” and “outsiders”. In other words, justifying the discrimination of specific groups kills the discriminator's ability to empathise, because enslavement becomes a mechanistic calculation, a fact of nature, and even, no matter how perverse and outrageous, is often presented as an act of altruism.

The logic is: the victim is little and miserable and therefore deserves to be a victim and miserable (the Oompa-Loompas are short and, before Willy Wonka's “rescue”, are abject)²², but we can help the victim by exploiting her needs and her lack of agency and independence and rewarding her effort unequally when compared with our own (otherwise, how can we have the extra money when the victim does not), that is, we recompense with as little as we identify the victim's worth and so we take the author's word on that being paid with cacao beans, satisfies the Oompa-Loompas, as an example. The master thus identifies the slave's meaning of existence, which surprisingly (or not) happens to be contingent on the master's profit and the good slave is the happy,

²¹ Lesley Milroy's work on linguistic networks and the shifting usage of colloquialisms to signal one's identity inspired my reflections on the relationship between identity and the closed systems of access in civilisation versus wilderness.

²² Endless polls and statistics indicate the racial and height discrimination in salaries: taller and blonder people get higher pay. Again, see Timothy A. Judge et al 1994, 2004 or Nicola Persico, Andrew Postlewaite and Dan Silverman (2004).

singing one, the one who gladly accepts this lot, obeys the master, expresses gratitude for slavery, and harbours no aspiration for agency over her life²³.

To return to my books of interest, both Nosov and Jansson explicitly reject this order. The concept of “work” – particularly when carried out for someone else's profit or in exchange for wages – is totally absent in Moominland, where even a “general cleaning” session can prove fatal: we learn from *Moominpappa's Memoirs* that Sniff's grandparents have vanished during a spring cleaning operation leaving his father, the Muddler²⁴, an orphan and a general cleaning session nearly kills the Fillyjonk in the last book, *Late in November*. In other words, Jansson upholds biodiversity including in questions of personal hygiene.

In contrast, the concept that hard work and cleaning are the inevitable aspects of human experience and indispensable for survival, is at the centre of civilised ontology, where non-human living organisms are presented as a threat to humans and if they cannot be rendered useful to humans, then must be subdued, cleaned, and eradicated.

This attitude fuels the civilised obsession with shaved lawns, armpits and worse, “cleaning” products, antibiotics, vaccinations, etc. – an attempt to kill all the germs, viruses, bacteria, worms, insects, “pests”, “weeds”, and all possible competition to ownership, but which, instead of dying, ends up breeding the super-immune forms of life who respond to the war launched by humans with their own counter-attack.

As anthropologist Mary Douglas proposes in her seminal work *Purity and Danger* conceptions of dirt and cleanliness are cultural constructs. In some places, categories of cleanliness and pollution materialised in the culture of rituals that re-enact distinctions and taboos on a daily basis and costs hours and hours of housewife and other slave labour per day. These categories of cleanliness become part of the categories of identity. For example, Muslims see the non-Muslims as unclean because they do not follow the Islamic ritual of ablutions and strict prescriptions for personal hygiene, and eat pork, which is seen as unclean, and “uncleanly” slaughtered animals. The Jews have the derogatory category of *goi'im* or *gôy* for the non-Jews or the Jews who don't know much about Judaism and the strict rules for the cleanliness and holiness of food – just to cite a few cases of identity that is connected with concepts of cleanliness and discrimination. In other words, categories of cleanliness identify those who would be deemed dirtier, inferior, and in need of civilising, which means domesticated and exploited.

Comparing the concepts of cleanliness with Moominland, Flower Town once again proves

²³ Andrew O'Malley and Gillian Avery discuss the creation of the hard working and docile character in English literature to serve the higher classes.

²⁴ Page 23 in the first version, *The Exploits of Moominpappa* and page 26 in the revised *Moominpappa's Memoirs*.

to be a compromise between the ontologies of civilisation and wilderness. While most mites in Dunno's world choose to be hard-working, occupations are a matter of expression of individual passions, however, unlike in Moominvalley, where obsession with tidiness is deadly, the residents of Flower Town value neatness.

Nevertheless, Dunno's lack of commitment to washing and cleaning, as well as his resistance to literacy are tolerated. In extreme cases, however, hygiene can become an issue when it disturbs the community. That is when in Sunny City, Dunno and Floss pressure Smudges Bright²⁵ to wash himself and to brush his teeth. Notwithstanding, because the characters are depicted as striving towards the maximum freedom of self-expression, neither work nor learning nor cleanliness are imposed and, in this way, Flower Town mites also echo the principles of the Semai, where public opinion is the most effective means to guard the community against disruptions of harmony, not coercion and subjugation (Dentan 1979).

In a nutshell, the genesis of a literary world, such as illustrated above with the opening of the Moominbooks, is tightly connected with how the author conceives the creation of the world and the mundane interactions of characters (and humans) with that world. Knowing themselves as only small particles among the wide diversity of the universe, prompts the characters to make choices in favour of diversity and the reality of other beings and life becomes vital for the life of the characters, just as the other's pain, deception or falsehood has repercussions on the quality of their own lives. Questions of hierarchy, hygiene, food, labour, and economy are thus contingent on the perspective of the actors and on how they relate to other living beings and even to non-living matter. In other words, understanding genesis leads to questions of identity and kinship and in the case of moomintrolls, they reach beyond the horizons. They enter wilderness with trust, learn how to empathise with it, how to live *with* it and by learning how to live *in* it, they regain their own wilderness.

This stands in stark contrast to civilised narrative, such as discussed in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. In the case of civilisation, empathy gets on the way of “cleaning” the civilised space of competition and independence. One of the strategies towards the “cleaning” and civilising goal of domestication is ordered “knowledge” and an operable process of identification. The end of this civilised knowledge, again so explicitly described by Roald Dahl, is an ordered society and a subdued and dominated nature by means of deception, falsehood, inequality, alienation, objectification, and cruelty. In other words, the goal is not biodiversity, but *monogeneity*: one compact socio-economic body comprised of one species, the human, with everything else

²⁵ Пачкуля Пёстренький in the original (translation mine).

(including the dehumanised humans) turned into resources for that group.

Identity becomes a fundamental vehicle of this knowledge and civilised narrative gives it its form and voice by means of symbolic representation²⁶. This relationship between civilisation, alienation, (un)knowledge, and identity arises in the civilising process itself, because in order to successfully domesticate, the domesticator must be able to identify the resources, then separate himself from his victim and objectify “it” as a “resource”, and since the suffering of the objectified victim gets ignored and overwritten with this “knowledge” of what the victim “is” and of what she wants or needs, or what her purpose in life is, one can conclude that this knowledge itself justifies torture.

Anthropologists have paid endless attention to various sado-masochistic cultural rituals – spanning the spectrum from as drastic as genital mutilation to as subtle as grading or beauty contests – and in this respect, the knowledge of classification, discrimination and apathy is constantly re-enacted in elaborated rituals that reinforce these categories inscribing them as reflexes, almost on the anatomical level of the civilised beings. The outcome is the concept of identity – a sum of feelings, “facts”, reactions, and a certain order.

6: Ignorance is Bliss: Questions of Identity

The concept of identity consists of an assemblage of fixed, essentialist traits whose ultimate goal is to highlight distinctions of one category from another and thus secure rights of access to resources. It is an ontological construct of the self that requires the self-awareness as being different from the awareness of others. For example, when Canadians are asked what makes them Canadian, most respond that Canadians are not Americans²⁷. Identity thus expresses the premises of domestication because it plays an important role in juxtaposing persons and people in a context of competition or even war, i.e. fighting for symbolic or material resources. For example, proper names and professional/personal identities are important during a selection process for a job: what I can do and what I have been doing. However, when dealing with police or authority, it is the valid numbers on identity cards that play the more important role in negotiating bills, taxes, fines, etc. that are the responsibility or the right of one person and no one else.

Former Yugoslavia and Soviet Union are excellent illustrations of the rearrangement of the criteria for identity that had dire repercussions with regard to economy and politics. As soon as

²⁶ For an in-depth discussion of the role of symbolic thought and representation see John Zerzan's *Running on Emptiness*.

²⁷ Seymour Martin Lipset uses the word “distinguish” throughout his essay on Canadian Identity, chapter 9 in Ksenych's *Conflict, Order and Action: Readings in Sociology* (2001).

these states collapsed under the pressure of the cold war, they merged into the hierarchy of the civilised Western political space and, accordingly, reorganised the structure of the distribution of access rights to land, “real estate”, and natural and symbolic resources following the selection criteria of western “post-colonialist” racist order based on ethnic and national identity. The result was an outburst of violence between the emergent groups with the newly highlighted identities and this system of differentiation immediately got to reflect the civilised structure, with the “European” races ranking higher in this network of resources than the “polluted” (Bosnian supposedly with Turkish, for example) or the non-European races. This new civilised standard played a crucial role in the adopted classificatory system that sanctioned who should kill whom and hence the genocides of the 1990s in the Balkans and the former U.S.S.R.: the “international” community (led by the white men's interests in North America and Europe), for example, who previously trained the Taliban and denounced the Russian support of the Afghani socialists, now have invited the Russians to kill people and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The Russian men in power, then got away with justifying murders in Chechnya and Dagistan, the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis didn't get along either, just to cite a few more examples.

On the nation-state level, identity also entails the lack of rights of all to the privileges and resources of some: for example, nobody around the world has the right to participate in the economic structure of France except for people who are identified as, both, human and French citizen. To take another example, American, British, Swedish, or Canadian citizenship grants certain individuals the permission to commit acts of violence against people who are identified as Taliban or Al-Qaeda on territories that are far from the U.S., British, Swedish or Canadian possessions and include lands that officially belong to those who are identified as Pakistani, Iraqi, or Afghani, yet at the same time, these same American, British, Swedish, or Canadian citizens are denied the right to join the Taliban or Al-Qaeda and to commit the same acts of violence against the American, British, Swedish or Canadian killers even on the lands that belong to Pakistan, Iraq or Afghanistan. There are numerous cases of captured Western “traitors” in the Middle East like Adam Pearlman, the Canadian Khadr family, or Tomoya Kawakita, a dual U.S.-Japanese citizen who worked as an interpreter for the Japanese military during WWII and was sentenced to death in 1948²⁸.

²⁸ Even though Kawakita's sentence was later changed to life and pardoned during Kennedy's presidency, the U.S. Oath of Allegiance, modelled after the British Oath of Supremacy spells out clearly the violence of the civilised nation state order and the purpose of “belonging”: “I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law... and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God”. Therefore, it is assumed that accepting an American identity, one

In other words, in wilderness, the “rights” are an egalitarian concept and a constantly shifting practice: everyone has the right to live, feed, drink, and to enjoy leisure and where needs and access options constantly rotate. Disputes happen, but most of the time, creatures pass each other by calmly on the way to the waterhole. In civilisation rights are not universal and access to waterholes, including to lakes, sea-ports, beaches, etc. becomes a permanence that immediately gives rise to classification categories of those who have the right to own something or someplace and those who do not²⁹.

For example, civilisation sees murder as the natural state of the world. However, there are groups that are denied the right to practice this nature, while there are those who are assigned the legal right to kill – a right for which they are rewarded: the ones identified as “soldiers”, “military”, “executioners”. Those who respond to these groups with violence are then identified as “criminal”, “terrorist”, and such. Studies have shown that whether on the legal or the illegal side, these groups of killers possess a strong sense of identity with moral and ethical codes which supposedly differentiate one group from another.

The turn of the twentieth century sociologist, Edwin Sutherland, brought to the attention the strong code of honour in the underground networking between professional thieves throughout the U.S.A. of the 1930s (Sutherland, 1937). Studies like Francis Lord's (1960) or Mark Dunkelman's (2004) talk about the strong identity and code of honour in the military, where soldiers often use tattooing and body markings, just like their illegal counterparts, such as the Mafia, as symbols of belonging to their regiment or division that makes everyone else an outsider and a potential threat to the group. None of these groups would be effective as killing machines without these strong convictions and justifications for group violence, symbolism and identity.

Other examples of terms that are important for fostering identity are the “illegal alien” versus “citizen”. Hence, Turks become illegal if they enter Germany without a visa, Gypsies are ousted from most economies, Mexicans are captured for hard labour camps to build the wall in the south of the U.S. against themselves, the “illegal alien Mexicans”, and so forth.

Because in a domesticated order many people themselves constitute resources, identity becomes the fundamental expression of the structure of civilisation, with nationalism, racism, sexism, and speciesism as its most notorious manifestations in which plants, insects, animals, and many, mostly people of colour occupy the lowest ranks in civilised economic networks.

In other words, personal identity functions by alienating constituents from each other and

will kill and die in defence of the interests of the property, resource, and business owners.

²⁹ In this regard, Werner Troesken conducted illuminating research on the history of control over water and black disempowerment, titled: *Water, Race, and Disease* or the anthropological work of Paul Gelles titled: *Water and Power in Highland Peru*.

social identity works on the basis of assignment of commonalities – such as common origins, blood, a mythical or historical figure or experience – that differentiate one group of people from another.

Self identification and being identified by others is an important mechanism of control of access to material and symbolic resources in civilised society with severe repercussions that touch on all the aspects of the identified persons' or groups' lives. And even though the various details of the demarcation lines may shift over time, these variations work to mask the system of discrimination, but do nothing to eradicate the system or the structure itself. So, as an example, white women can boast more access to well-paid jobs, but African women or Asian children pay the price in the “exported” dirty businesses which the white women no longer do, or, women from the “third world” are brought to the rich countries in the manner of the Oompa-Loompas to live with their “employers” and provide them child-care, senior-care, and house-keeping services (Anthias and Lazaridis 2000).

In either case, it is taken for granted in civilised society that many human and non-human animals are expected to provide services for certain human animals in exchange for the right to eat and live. Studies indicate that even among members of the same ethnic and gender categories (e.g. white men or white women), there are differences in income according to height, the colour of the eyes and hair³⁰ in favour of the taller and lighter coloured individuals (Johnston 2009,'10; Judge & Cable 2004; Presico et al. 2001), which is, once again, reflected in Willy Wonka's exploitation dynamics: the Oompa-Loompas are short (and used to be dark until Dahl was ordered to lighten them up) and consistent with the “blame the victim” position, since gain in height is proportionate to academic success and both are proportionate to the wealth and nourishment one receives in childhood (Glewwe, Jacoby & King June 2000).

For the knower, thus, external and “knowable” features of the “other” constitute reasonable criteria for identifying the “other”. Also, a claim to knowledge of the internal mechanisms and meaning of the “other” in this system gives the “knower” the right and the power to place others into categories, an act that has dire repercussions on the lives of the objects of knowledge.

In summary, identification of people and animals plays an important role in the selection process of inclusion in or exclusion from economic networks of those designated as in-group members and as outsiders: thus, a monkey cannot be a human, a Zulu cannot be a Tamil, a Japanese cannot be an Anglo-Saxon, a prostitute cannot be a queen³¹, one i.d. number, e.g.: 573, cannot be

³⁰ See page 21 above. Endless polls and statistics indicate the racial and height discrimination in salaries: taller and blonder people get higher pay. See 1994 study published at Cornell University by Timothy A. Judge, Daniel M. Cable and Boudreau, also their 2004 updated publication, or Nicola Persico, Andrew Postlewaite and Dan Silverman (2004).

³¹ Identity may be “upgraded” or modified, or there could be multiple identities, however, each one is used to

valid for anyone except its holder who can be *identified* even in an ice-cave in Antarctica, and Mohamed cannot be Ingrid, just to take a few random examples.

Even intimate personal preferences and practices, such as sexuality, are thrust into the claustrophobic categories of permanence and knowledge in which people have to choose once and for all whether they are homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, or trans-sexual because personal taste in sexual partners at any moment in the civilised system is taken to reflect the totality of the person foreverwas and foreverafter and define her once and for all, again, for the purpose of determining her economic and social networks³².

Basically, regardless of the domain of knowledge – be it science or folklore – exploring the place of humans in the world as fixed in a specific topos, requires the assumption of a definite identity and hence needs the construction of essential qualities that can then be organised into categories based on differentiation from some and assimilation into others thereby turning into a useful tool for domestication.

Tools that humans used to produce themselves have also been monopolised in civilisation, their production professionalised and externalised. Animals mostly develop their tools physiologically: for example, the waterproof feathers of ducks, the pigmentation that alters according to surroundings as a protection mechanism of chameleons or the long nose of the anteater could be regarded as tools in the sense that they help them achieve a certain task. Furthermore, birds and animals have been observed to make external tools and use them, as Joshua Klein's ten year work with crows shows³³ or Nold Egenter's or Mike Hansell's (2005) research on the architectural practices of apes demonstrates.

On an unprecedented scale, humans have externalised their limbs and tools like no other animals and the secret lies in the connection that John Zerzan (2002) draws between abstraction and technology. Technology and technological production (including of the machines themselves) has atrophied the human ability to grow tools or even make them³⁴. Thus, by having subtracted

access the specific network to which others are denied access. Thus, a queen cannot be a prostitute at the same time. She can become one, but membership in the club of royalties will be denied to her forever. Another example is the even suspected membership in Al-Qaeda would banish a Canadian citizen, for example, from participation in Canadian rights and privileges. Lesley Milroy has discussed the linguistic aspects of marking various identities and George Bernard Shaw raises the question of class exclusions according to the identity of the speaker in *Pygmalion* and the economic and social repercussions by being discovered to be an “imposter”. Bourdieu discusses at length in various works the elaborated system of devaluating knowledge and symbolic capital to shut off access, participation and belonging by economically alienated classes, for example see his book *Distinction*.

³² Jim Sinclair has written and spoken extensively against this trend and the totalitarianism of “curing” from autism and the demand of society for clear and permanent gender and sexual identities and allegiance. Demonstrating by personal example, Sinclair believes that people have a right to be neuter and asexual as well as autistic.

³³ http://www.ted.com/talks/joshua_klein_on_the_intelligence_of_crows.html

³⁴ Lasse Nordlund (2008) argues that the effort that goes into machines and technology, as well as domestication, is completely unsustainable and only self-made tools make sense. John Zerzan discusses throughout his work the

themselves from their internal possibilities and external experience, people have forfeited self-reliance and independence and created a civilisation in which technology becomes the prosthetics of our capacities, but more important, perhaps, is that even here the division of labour designates which people become the limbs and tools for others but not of themselves. For instance, although manual and service labour is performed by the poor for the rich, their own neighbourhoods – the “ghettos” – remain neglected (Collins 2007; Cohn & Fossett 1996).

In this sense, abstraction, or symbolic thinking, and identity help to distinguish and separate those who become the tools, the machines and the makers of machines – but not in the liberating sense that Donna Haraway saw in her *Cyborg Manifesto* – because the human and the non-human animals that are thus turned into tools and resources, themselves, become as alienated from suffering, including their own, as those who utilise them. In this respect, domestication is further ingrained as we lose the ability to grow our own tools.

Often, in scientific literature, such as anthropological and palaeontological textbooks, we read: “like no one else, humans are the only ones to use tools”, or “humans are the only species to possess language and symbolic thought”, i.e. a constant repetition of our alien identity.

In reality, however, there is no certainty as to whether such differences truly exist, after all, every decade scientific literature is outdated because assumptions that have previously been presented as knowledge are disproved and the frontiers between species become more and more blurred. But even if it were true – and the scope of the unprecedented destruction at the hands of civilised humans points to that the humans have become less than the rest of the animals and more like a viral epidemic – the link between symbolic thought and mutation should be investigated further, just as it has been observed in the effects of literacy on the brain (Ong 1986). In other words, this “unique” development could have occurred due to a mutation in a certain group that chose a civilised perspective because its members dared to explore the territory of death while every wild human and non-human chose not to partake from the Tree of Knowledge of Life and Death and of Good and Evil, opting to leave the world intact just like the biblical text warned and just like Jansson depicted.

In other words, religious, folk, literary, and scientific ontologies have historically explored the same questions. What separated those approaches of knowledge was not so much the frontiers between the disciplines as the perspectives at the basis of the premises with which the questions

escalating alienation with the self and the world that is inherent in human reliance on technology but also on symbolic representation discussed further in this essay. For example, see his *Twilight of the Machines* (2008). Nikitina, Ukhtomski, and Arshavski discuss “technological” childhood as physiological and moral malformation and the atrophy of muscles and skills in a culture that substitutes personal management and practice with commercial and artificial substitutes and the lack of movement and exploration in modern childhood institutions, starting from pregnancy and spanning through all of schooling (AbdelRahim 2002 and 2003 (b)).

were asked: i.e. viewed either from the perspective of the wild nomadic ontology or the sedentary identity of the civilised.

As I further explore the civilised premises in Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*, I also probe the topos of genesis in the 100 Aker Wood and the implications of human identity as it contrasts and compares with Jansson's and Nosov's systems of relatedness and kinships and the issuing socio-economic relations.

7: Honey like Chocolate: the Names and the Whys of Existence

Even though, at first glance, the 100 Aker Wood may appear simpler than the children's books discussed above, it still contains many of the archetypes and concepts of civilised ontology. The topoi of forest and water, for example, figure throughout the books. Although the concepts of work and cleanliness are not as clearly articulated, there is a brief scene at the end of chapter two in which Christopher Robin takes a bath, and because it is presented so matter-of-fact it is easy to miss its relevance.

Nevertheless, it makes sense when understood within the ontological hierarchy of the book, since its characters are divided into the “real” human (one character plus the voice of the narrator) and the “unreal”, the “toys”, which is everybody else. The basic premise in the narrative assumes that whatever applies to the human does not apply to the toys. Hence, if, in the real world, people take baths and since Christopher Robin is real, then this is what he does; he minds his cleanliness; but nobody else in the 100 Aker Wood needs to do that.

In the context that the realness of Christopher Robin justifies his rank as the head of the kingdom (the kingdom, after all, is the result of what goes on in his head), the rest of the characters are by implication juxtaposed to him – they are not real and therefore have no purpose, no yearning, no dreams and no head to dream, no heart to yearn, no reason for purpose. In other words, they are fake and anything goes in the fake world, so we need not bother with long dark scary nights, wondering what they may be feeling, what is it like to be them or try to ease their lot, like Moomintroll does with the Groke.

Perhaps the emotionally undemanding narrative earned its high popularity in civilised culture precisely because it allows the reader to indulge in apathy, which is a precondition for domestication, i.e. submit and express gladness when domesticated and when domesticating, one needs to be able to easily objectify these others who are rendered less real than “us”; that is how the reader can laugh at the characters' nonsensical fidgeting, be amused by their cruelty, avarice, and deceit, and be able to easily dismiss their suffering, just like we do with the children, the squirrels

and the Oompa-Loompas at Willy Wonka's factory or any other factory in the world, for that matter.

The realness of the *human* Christopher Robin thus sets out the hierarchy of the characters' worth. Since the others are all toys, i.e. replicas and their falseness objectifies and subjugates them vis-à-vis the human, who is the real agent in his domain of replicas deceiving one another, even if he is not agent enough in his relationship with the narrator, who, in this case, is the author himself.

This hierarchy is set right in the opening paragraph:

“If you happen to have read another book about Christopher Robin, you may remember that he once had a swan (or the swan had Christopher Robin, I don't know which) and that he used to call this swan Pooh. That was a long time ago, and when we said good-bye, we took the name with us, as we didn't think the swan would want it any more. Well, when Edward Bear said the he would like an exciting name all to himself, Christopher Robin said at once, without stopping to think, that he was Winnie-the-Pooh. And he was” (Milne 1992, introduction).

Contrary to Moominland's opening into the depth of a dark forest, Winnie-the-Pooh begins with civilisation in both the Introduction and the first chapter, which takes place indoors: the introduction refers to a previous text, presents the concept of possession, and imbues the human character with the power to name. The monarchical structure of the 100 Aker Wood places Christopher Robin as the head of the kingdom and a being apart with no kinship to the other dwellers of the Wood. This separateness and otherness is thereby enunciated both at the beginning of the narrative and at the end where Christopher Robin is the only one free to break out of the locked space – in which everyone lives behind a door and “under the name of” – and transition into the “real” world.

Of course, both, the act of naming and the reference to the world as a pre-existent textual reality (the mentioned book) tap into the biblical topos of creation as interpreted through a civilised lens, a topos that naturalises ownership and hierarchy by presenting a parallel between the creation of Man as owner and namer of the world and of Christopher Robin as owner and namer of his.

The similarity of the above passage with Genesis 2:18-19 is striking:

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”¹⁹ So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

The 19th century biblical scholar Julius Wellhausen suggested in his literary criticism of the bible that there are different perspectives and voices throughout the Old and the New Testaments which suggested several different sources at work in recording the biblical texts. The interpretation of the Man as the namer thus appears to be the civilised “evolutionary” human and contests the image of man the creature of divine wilderness. Daniel Quinn elaborated these differences in terms

of the nomadic perspective versus the sedentary agriculturalist point of view (Quinn 1992; 1993). Another contemporary biblical scholar, Christine Hayes points to the expressly vegan, gatherer diet that God specified for the humans and which indicates an egalitarian creation of humans and animals³⁵:

1:29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.

1:30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

1:31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

The two humans in the bible are created on the sixth day when the other animals were ordered to come forth from the earth (1:24-26) and everyone alive, including the human beings, were to eat seeds, fruits, and greens. Hayes enunciates that there meant to be no competition between the species in this version of creation and there was no domestication: no chicken soup, no cattle, no milk, all of which came much later as humans persistently disobeyed and continuously negotiated for a stronger, more equal position with God.

When extending his parallel with the biblical topos, again, unlike Jansson who favours the wild, the free, the criminal (Moses, for example), Milne focuses on the domesticated sources and chooses to elaborate the distinction between the human and the rest of the creatures. Thus, the narrative presents Christopher Robin and his world as pre-existent to the 100 Aker Wood and as its namer and the possessor of names. This idea extended further, he is the creator of the 100 Aker World and his superiority is therefore much more pronounced than even in the most civilised of the biblical interpretations. Like Willy Wonka's slaves, Milne projects Winnie-the-Pooh as dependent on his master for name and for brain (he keeps repeating that he is a bear of very little brain), because Pooh cannot know or name himself, again, in contrast with both the Flower Town and Moominland, where names matter only in as much as the reader needs to know who she's reading about, but in reality, the moomin characters are characterised by their lives and in mite towns by their deeds.

On another level, presenting the world of the 100 Aker Wood as not real and its people as fictive impels the reader to disregard the characters' feelings and experience. Thus, Winnie-the-Pooh's fall from the tree is meant to be comical and the reader laughs at his bouncing against the

³⁵ Christine Hayes, Yale University course, "Introduction to the Old Testament", fall 2006.

branches on the way to the gorse-bush, because falling from the height of a third floor has no repercussions for Winnie. The minute he falls, he gets up and begins to deliberate on more effective ways to deceive the bees. After all, the narrative assumes, none of them are real and in any case, bees exist solely to provide us with honey and since this is the purpose of bees, any attempt to procure that honey, including by means of lies and theft, is admirable and in this sense the book works on the same premises of domestication discussed earlier in Dahl's work, in particular the part on slavery – i.e. the existence of the other for the purpose of the subject is inscribed in the ontology of that space and civilises it.

Winnie-the-Pooh rationalises the existence of bees and honey in precisely this logic:

“If there's a buzzing-noise, somebody's making a buzzing noise, and the only reason for making a buzzing-noise that *I* know of is because you're a bee.... And the only reason for being a bee that *I* know of is making honey.... And the only reason for making honey is so as *I* can eat it” (Milne 1992, 6).

The above paragraph could be funny in different ways. From the perspective of wilderness, it could have served as satire because the situation would appear ridiculous if one was to look at it from the following angle: “ha ha ha! We all know that the world does not belong to Pooh or to anyone, for that matter, who is deluded enough to imagine he owns it”. However, nothing in the story hints at this position.

In the way in which it is incorporated in the narrative, it is meant to be funny in a different, “endearing” sort of way: “poor little bear. Of course, we know that bees do not exist for his delight, but in order to give *us*, humans, honey so that those who *possess* the bees can eat it or sell it to those who can afford to buy it”.

Seen from this perspective, Pooh's reasoning is funny because it is ridiculous (stupid bear, he does prove that he is a bear of very little brain) and, most important, by no means is his delusion threatening: neither Pooh, nor other bears like him, are ever going to win that power to rule over *our* bees and *our* honey. The most substantial guarantee against that happening in this book is the unreality of Winnie-the-Pooh that renders his delusions harmless and entertaining, like the delusions of any disempowered and objectified child, old person, or other: their pain is not real because our knowledge of them denies them sentience; their dreams are insignificant, and their expression of suffering and resistance ranges between cute and hysterical (both: hilarious and mental).

The same applies to the intentional deceit underlying the relations between the rest of the characters. Not only does Winnie-the-Pooh try to deceive the bees, the Rabbit lies to Winnie, intentionally faking his voice, to pretend that he is not home. Winnie-the-Pooh asks:

“Is anybody home?”

There was a sudden scuffling noise from inside the hole, and then silence.

“What I said was, 'Is anybody at home?’” called out Pooh very loudly.

“No!” said a voice; and then added, “you needn't shout so loud. I heard quite well the first time.”

“Bother!” said Pooh. “Isn't there anybody here at all?”

“Nobody.”

... “Hallo, Rabbit, isn't that you?”

“No,” said Rabbit, in a different sort of voice this time.

“But isn't that Rabbit's voice?”

“I don't *think* so,” said Rabbit. “It isn't *meant* to be” (Milne 1992, 24-25).

Once again, deceit is depicted as harmless, at best, and cute, at worst. After all, the world of domestication is about who can hide what and from whom and who can trick whom, and the book does let us know that Winnie is a guest who could deplete the host's stock until he wouldn't be able to leave. Hence, it becomes funny who would trick whom between the two of them.

The word itself, *deceit*, is scattered all over the book. For example, Winnie-the-Pooh discusses an elaborate plan with Christopher Robin on how to best deceive the bees: “I shall try to look like a small black cloud. That will deceive them” (Milne 1992, 13). “I wish you would bring it [the umbrella] out here, and walk up and down with, and look up at me every now and then, and say 'Tut-tut, it looks like rain.' I think, if you did that, it would help the deception which we are practising on these bees. ...The important bee to deceive is the Queen Bee” (ibid, 15-16). Or, another instance of deceit appears in chapter seven, the Rabbit, Piglet and Pooh work out a plan to deceive Kanga, kidnap her baby Roo, and kick them out of the Wood.

In other words, the concept of deception permeates the ontological foundation of the 100 Aker wood and appeals perfectly to the domesticated reader who, if having failed to discern the problem with the slavery empire of Willy Wonka, would be even more prone to fail to reflect on the purpose of the existence of bees from the stance of wilderness.

Further, contrary to the constantly shifting and the perpetual movement in the Moominworld, the characters of 100 Aker Wood are stuck in this closed space (Saukkola 2001); they are static, both in terms of experience and movement. The characters are thus locked in a world imagined by Christopher Robin for his own empowerment; they all exist to satisfy his need to be entertained, cared for, and obeyed, in other words, to be consumed by him until he graduates to the “real” world and, in this way, the book reflects the values overtly expressed in *Charlie and the*

Chocolate Factory.

This conception of “growing up” and “growing out of” the carefree idyllic childhood needs to be challenged because it provides the premise of ineluctable suffering as part of the nature of adult experience of life. Instead, theoreticians praise many literary works precisely for their lament and acceptance of the abandonment of the idyllic, presumably unrealistic, carefree childhood upon entering adulthood, a world of inevitable toil and hardship. In other words, the author invites us to join him in his assumption that wild happiness is not real and that as Christopher Robin steps into the “real” world, the happiness and agency that he experienced in his childhood may be accessible only through the memory of something he had imagined. But more important, the definition of happiness that emerges here is that of power over the purpose of others, at first, through identity and naming, and then in the sterile economy of the Wood that contrasts starkly with both Jansson's and Nosov's literary worlds, where joy and goodness are the essential qualities of life.

8: A Town in the Forest: Sedentary Travel as Compromise

Once upon a time, in a town in fairyland, lived some people called the Mites. They were called the Mites because they were very tiny. The biggest of them was no bigger than a pine cone. Their town was very pretty. Around every house grew daisies, dandelions, and honeysuckle, and the streets were all named after flowers: Blue-bell Street, Daisy Lane, and Primrose Avenue. That is why the town was called Flower Town. It stood on the bank of a little brook. The Mites called it Cucumber River because so many cucumbers grew on its banks.

On the other side of the brook was a wood. The Mites made boats out of birch-bark and crossed the brook in them when they went to gather nuts, berries, and mushrooms in the wood. It was hard for the Mites to pick berries because they were so small. When they picked nuts they had to climb the bushes and take saws with them to cut off the stems, for the Mites could not pick the nuts by hand. They sawed off mushrooms, too-sawed them off at the very ground, then cut them into pieces and carried them home on their shoulders like logs (Nosov 1980).

Consistently, Nosov's books present a compromise position between the unyielding wilderness of Moominland and the totalitarian domestication of the 100 Aker Wood. The world of mites opens with their town surrounded by wilderness. The mites are gatherers living on a vegan diet. They are creative and productive, however, use only the tools that they can produce³⁶.

Even though this idyllic community is the most peaceful of the trilogy, the author sees as inevitable the evolutionary trajectory towards the more complex, machine based society, in spite of the fact that this development creates social problems that require the pantoptical surveillance of the police which is completely irrelevant in the simpler structure of household economy of Flower Town. At the same time, as Dunno explains at the end of his visit to the communist Sunny City, the

³⁶ Lasse Nordlund (essay 2008) discusses the expenses of any tool in terms of time, labour, and resources that are needed not only to procure the raw materials for the tool, but also for the food and energy and space required to make that tool and all the other tools and machines needed for the making of the specific tool.

lack of information about the needs and the availability of products for exchange deters the formation of an efficient infrastructure, a lack that causes uncertainty and hampers the possibilities of exchange that may generate right-wing anarchist tendencies, which reveals Nosov's preference for socialist anarchy of Petr Kropotkin based on the theory of evolution by means of cooperation and mutual aid over the Darwinian principles of evolution by means of competition.

Comparing the above opening scene with the previously discussed children's narratives, the space of wilderness and domestication is negotiated carefully in Nosov's book and the question of livelihood occupies a more prominent place than what Jansson allots to the specifics of the moomins' diet, because her assumption is that there is plenty of food in wilderness and Moominmamma will always find a way to make an apple pie or sandwiches, while their lives are nourished by the larger existential questions. Still, Nosov's opening, like Jansson's, contrasts with the assumption in Dahl's book that people prefer the processed food produced by slave labour in Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory that depicts characters as incapable of living on a raw diet and thereby have to be enslaved so as to be able to consume a little bit of the lot they work so hard to produce. While Milne's opening demonstrates the author's preoccupation with proper identification, domestication, and knowledge, the unrealness of the characters makes the question of subsistence obsolete. As the toy-characters depend on the human for name and identity, the child Christopher Robin depends on his parents for food and name, thereby dismissing the problems of economic organisation, access to food, and suffering because these troubles are assumed to be a natural and inevitable part of civilised adult life and can be escaped in the fantasy.

Nosov challenges Milne's perspective on several levels. No one names in the mite-world, where characters become known to all by their inner passions, their choice of avocation and the role of each person is important in his or her community without hierarchical preferences. The problems of identity that figure in the first book result in gender inequality and segregation and are resolved through mites' getting to know each other, understanding each other's needs and then helping one another.

However, unlike Jansson's world without borders between species, Nosov separates animals from humans and civilised space from wilderness. This ontology is revealed in the way in which Nosov treats the topos of transformation.

Because in wilderness there are no strict borders that distinguish and separate beings, transformation is an occasion to exchange knowledge and experience, a topos that reveals the guiding principles in economic and kinship systems. In civilised ontology, with its strict borders between categories and identities, transformation simply does not figure: Willy Wonka cannot become an Oompa-Loompa and Oompa-Loompas cannot become Charlie, for example. Christopher

Robin, Winnie-the-Pooh, Piglet, and Owl are also not interchangeable on the level of basic matter. Thus, examining these books through the lens of kinship and the topoi of genesis in mythologies and science can reveal the ontological underpinnings of the economies projected in these books.

9: Negotiating the Frontiers in the Wilderness of Folklore

Since no clear-cut boundary marks human identity as separate from the animal in the ontology of wilderness, it can be said that humans share kinship with animals and plants, i.e., they are assumed to have common origins or some common basic constituent matter. Totemism, for instance, illustrates the possibility of human identification with the essence of any plant or animal³⁷.

“For example, among the Ojibwa, native hunters of subarctic Canada, personhood is envisaged as an inner essence, embracing the powers of sentience, volition, memory and speech, which is quite indifferent to the particular species form it may outwardly assume. The human form is merely one of the many guises in which persons may materially manifest themselves, and anyone can change his or her form for that of an animal more or less at will” (Ingold 1994, 24).

Such fluidity between animal and human forms provides an important window for the access of vital knowledge about the world and the self through the experience of animals. Folk tales frequently use the topoi of transformation and, despite the numerous adaptations through the centuries of domestication, still retain pre-domesticated elements even as they interweave civilised themes.

This knowledge of transformation leads characters to new turns in negotiations and to additional possibilities for sharing or losing control over “resources” rewarding the transformer with new ontological insights and experience.

In *Tales from the Dena*, Frederica De Laguna et al. (1995) tell of the complex relationships between animals and humans and the gift economy that governs their transactions and interactions. For instance, in one story, a rich man captures the sun and locks it in his home. People see that the sun is gone and bribe Raven to get it back for them. Raven transforms himself into a spruce needle, the rich man's daughter swallows it, gets impregnated and gives birth to a child. When the child cries for the sun, she gives it to him. He then transforms himself from baby to Raven and flies together with the sun out into the world. In other tales, the authors note, it is the doting grandfather who gives the sun to the baby (De Laguna et al. 1995, 321).

In the above example, it is the human hierarchy and greed that threatens the world: the rich man wants everything for himself, even the sun, but the people realise their interdependence with

³⁷ The work of Lévi-Strauss comes to mind here.

animals and birds and each party carries out its part of the bargain to keep the world healthy and safe from the periodic eruptions of violence and conflict of interests.

However, there is never an imbalance of one side as always and rightfully winning and the outcome is never linear or predictable, because folk tales often have no morals, no conclusions, no consequences and no formulae for calculating outcomes and, in this sense, mirror the ethnographic inquiry, where the ethnographer notes down the particularities of a group but hesitates to draw sociological conclusions or devise political theories for future manipulation (also known as organising) (of course, the sociologists and political scientists take over that job).

In negotiating the caught fish with Raven and Bear, in another story, the Siberian Inuit never knows in advance how the interaction will go because each negotiation is a new way of playing out possibilities and in the spirit of cosmic justice and realism, it is only fair and true that the human does not always emerge as the winner of the catch. Often, Raven outsmarts them all³⁸. And it should not be otherwise, for, favouring one species over others would disrupt the balance of biodiversity – precisely the cautionary lesson of our civilisation with its destruction of wilderness and the loss of thousands of forms of life.

In such Russian tales as “The Princess Frog”, “Finist the Falcon”, “Go Thither Know Not Where, Bring That Know Not What”³⁹, “Ivan Tsarevitch and the Grey Wolf”, “The Magic Shirt”, among others, the success of the heroine or the hero in any given quest and in life, here and ever after, depends on the character's ability to either work together with animals, recognise one's mate in the animal, or be able to transform into an animal, sometimes, even into an object, such as a needle or a feather⁴⁰.

In this context, Czaplicka's discussion of Siberian shamans and the importance of accessing knowledge through the experience of an animal or a bird is relevant to the epistemological study of

³⁸ According to Czaplicka (2007) the relationship between ravens, crows, humans and other animals are found throughout the Eskimo and other north American and Asian aboriginal creation stories. Also, see article by Samantha Flemming, 1998.

In North American Indian mythology, the coyote plays that role or in Africa it is the hyena. In the legends of the indigenous people around the world, birds and animals repeatedly appear as spirits or deities with whom humans must reckon because all beings have their rights and place under the sun.

³⁹ My translation of: *Поди туда - не знаю куда, принеси то - не знаю что*.

⁴⁰ A feather is of course an element of animal, but a needle and a thread are inanimate objects. “A Mouse and a Bird”, an Evenkian (East Siberian) tale, for example, tells a story of a girl who saves her beloved from an envious rival by turning him into a thread and herself into a needle. Another example is the Belorussian tale, *Синяя свита-Налево шита Соломенный колпак* (Blue Retinue-Sewn Inside Out-Straw Hat), the Czar promises to give half of his kingdom to the one who succeeds to hide from him. Blue Retinue transforms into a bird, a fish, and then a needle and wins the prize. In the Russian tale, *Go Thither Know Not Where*, a dove turns into Maria-Tsarevna and Andrei-the-Bowman has to befriend the Baba-Yaga, devils, and animals who all through negotiation agree to help him defeat the envious Czar. The genealogy of Maria-Tsarevna-the-Dove goes back to Baba-Yaga, an ambiguous character in terms of evil and good. The spectrum of transformations in folklore is so wide and includes everything, even serpents and insects and inanimate objects.

the topos. According to her, many aboriginal peoples, such the Siberian Chuckchee, hold that, in the days of yore, this knowledge through transformation has been available for any ordinary person, but because humans have augmented the divide by having alienated themselves from the animal world, transformation is rarely accessible for regular people however is still possible through the shaman (Czaplicka 2007).

Traditionally, these transformations were induced at will, sometimes through meditation, ritualistic trance or occasionally with the help of psychotropic herbs or mushrooms. Achievement of the desired state of altered consciousness would bring about the transformation of shape but not of essence, which remains constant throughout the manifestations of matter. That essence can come in touch with other essences and grow and still remain unique and concomitantly connected to the essence of the world, which I mentioned earlier in relation to the small creature asking Moomintroll and Moominmamma “What are you?”.

In contrast to the shamanic transformations that are generated through the expansion of consciousness, folk-tale characters change swiftly, with the help of internally generated magic or by extraneous forces that can change a human person into an animal or an animal person into a human or any of them into an object and often back. The collaboration of these magical human and non-human forces usually brings about a resolution of justice or reinstates harmony for the world of the tale.

Such fluidity in transgressing the realms of human and non-human animals points to the non-domesticated cultures' understanding the essence of humanity as linked horizontally to the origins of non-humans and, in this sense, the genesis of being, whether animate or inanimate, can be traced back to one source – the substance of the universe itself. Knowledge available to one form of being is understood here as, not only available to and applicable for the other, but also vital and indispensable.

10: A General Note on Transformations, Consumption, and Identity

Transformation has also been observed by scientists. For example, biologists study these processes on the micro-cellular level and refer to transformations of cells into something else as transdifferentiation, such as the ones that occur in salamanders, jellyfish, chickens, and in some vertebrates this process involves interconversion of stem cells and cell fate switches between lineages (Panagiotis et al 1985; Furuta et al. 2001). Yet, even though stem-cell research has received much more attention than on transdifferentiation, the ramifications for both scientific and literary knowledge are of great importance on what we understand ourselves of capable of being and of

whether we agree to share or not to the dimensions of being with forms different from our own.

Transformations on the genetic level, on the other hand, have been studied widely from the perspective of evolutionary theory (Snustad, Simmons, and Jenkins 1997; Kandel 1976) – Nosov's *Sunny City* is a good illustration of its literary rendition, which is a compromise between two ways of conceptualising humans in relation to non-humans: (a) understanding living and non-living matter as stemming from an original substance common with the universe and (b) considering the human as a species apart, differentiated through *scala naturae* from the various forms of living matter by either divine creed or its evolutionary pace and direction.

In, both, the monotheistic and the non-domesticated world-views, common origin stems from a source outside of the creation itself. For monotheism, the divine will is the source of the world with all its manifestations and in non-domesticated folklore everything originates from a variety of celestial, earthly and spiritual forces (Kaufmann 1960; 1969), whose original purpose and substance relate to various extents all the living and non-living matter.

With the development of agricultural civilisation, the human has been “evolving” in the theological and mythological re-interpretation of the human identity and ontology, so one can say there have been transformations in the conception itself of the divine, the animal and the human. Hence, the highly playful and capricious ancient gods gradually cede to the evolutionary principle in reincarnation where the human experience/incarnation becomes more valued than that of an animal or an insect and the hierarchy of the castes gets inscribed in the natural order itself (Hopkins 1971).

In the same vein, in the monotheistic biblical tradition, the human evolves from the humble, vegan gatherer of Genesis to the alien to his world attempting to appease his God with bloodthirsty sacrificial rituals blaming his acts of cruelty on divine will⁴¹.

The understanding of genesis throughout civilisation also undergoes a transformation and the original cause gets attributed to an act of violence or treachery, such as depicted in the Indian, Babylonian, or Akkadian stories of creation: for example, the god Marduk chops up the water goddess Tiamat and creates the heavens and the stars, with her suffering eyes forming the rivers Tigris and Euphrates (Sandars 1971; Pritchard 1975, 1-5).

In other words, these adaptations in rendering genesis point to the evolution (more accurately, deterioration) of civilised human relationship with their world as it becomes more and more cannibalistic. Human identity, however, allows the civilised to avoid seeing this relationship in those terms because the assumption in humanist identity is that the human is different from the

⁴¹ John Zerzan's extensive research points to that sacrifice is a feature of societies that practised domestication.

rest and hence is cleared from this accusation because to be a cannibal entails consuming one's own kind. This stands in contrast to the Semai, for example, who see the consumption of an animal that one has raised as cannibalism (Dentan 1979), whereas the civilised Christian human views the ritual consumption of the body and blood of Christ as communion and not as a cannibalistic topos, because the premise is that the human is separate from the divine and the body of the man that the divine spirit inhabited.

By the same token, the topos of cannibalism can be expressed in the process of reading through identification with the anthropomorphic animals that often figure in children's books. At first, the plot of the three little pigs, for example, appeals to the reader through identification with the victim: "look, the little pigs are scared and want to build a good house to hide from the dangerous wolf who wants to eat them; you are like those little pigs; you too are scared of the wolf". But then ham is served in favourite dishes in real life and in literary works and the "little pig", who had previously shivered reading the story, now transforms into the wolf and eats the symbol of its own victimisation and by identifying the pigs as "really" different and as comestible "items" thus consumes itself by devouring that with whom she had previously identified the self.

In other words, consumption patterns are deeply entangled in our conception of self and the question of kinships or relatedness between beings. Often, the cultural prescriptions and taboos of domesticated societies play into the constructs of identity, diet, and hygiene and create Bateson's double bind situation, which he observed in the mental asylum when a person experiences several contradictory injunctions "enforced by punishments or signals that threaten survival" (1972, 206) and one of which prohibits the victim from escaping the conflicting situation which provokes symptoms of schizophrenia in the victim so strongly present in children's reading material, such as illustrated in the above case of the "three little pigs".

Civilisation presents a perfect case of double bind, because people find themselves trapped in contradictory situations with conflicting injunctions in the form of prescriptions, taboos, laws, and contradictory messages in education and up-bringing. The civilised "society" constantly threatens with various forms of punishment, including with, and perhaps its most successful method of coercion, the threat of starvation: it elevates "humanism" and the human identity yet orders humans to constantly wage war against each other; it demands obedience, loyalty, hard labour, and suffering but concurrently punishes the obedient by reduced compensation and instead rewarding the one who leads, not obeys, that is, the powerful and the already wealthy, the leaders and the bullies; it glorifies mercy and compassion, yet ruthlessly forces people to die in poverty, just like Bateson's (1972) examples of contradicting parents who drive their children to schizophrenia and despair and from which the civilised victim or the schizophrenic child finds no exit.

The double bind on this global scale has been made possible because of the contradictory impulses that the process of identification evokes: identify with and against and is thus inextricable from the underlying premises expressed in the cultural taboos and prescriptions regarding food: who is allowed to eat and who isn't; cleanliness: what is clean to be consumed and what isn't and who is clean to consume it with us and who isn't; conception of time, linear or circular or multi-dimensional; permanence, unpredictability, among others – all of which are elemental in our understanding of what we are and refer us back to the question of origins and kinships either from the perspective of wilderness (flicker with form and light and let be) or civilisation (do as you're told but you are free when you enslave others).

Thus, if an ontology rests on the premise of common origins for all and of fluid kinships with no fixed categories and identity, like the Ojibwa or the Chuckchee, there would be no identity of eater and the eaten or, in today's parlance, of consumer and the product of consumption.

Scientists attempt to overcome this inherent conflict in civilised ontology between cannibalism, identity, and “human rights” by adopting Darwin's compromise between civilised ontological violence and the animist position (transposed onto the biological and physiological domains) that all living beings, including humans, can be traced to one common ancestor: the first living protozoa. Ultimately, this attempt fails because the evolutionary principle stands on two fatal assumptions: that the world is a priori hostile to life and, hence, living beings need to constantly struggle to adapt to their environment (like the Oompa-Loompas) and that by adapting some turn out more fit than others (Willy Wonka and Charlie). The deteriorating species become extinct (unless they're enslaved by Willy Wonka) and those who stick around, competing, overpopulating, exterminating, and consuming prove themselves right by virtue of their extensive destruction and persistence .

Thus, even if the Darwinian theory of evolution allows for the flexibility of change, the fixed categories that identify species in a hierarchical order highlight their distinctions – on the basis of genetic, blood, and DNA, among other evidence of kinship – from each other for the purpose of victory in the struggle for immortality.

First, the concept that organisms have to be in a permanent adaptation mode to their surroundings already presumes that the surroundings are tricky (the 100 Aker Wood characters highlight that deceptive nature of being) and even hostile to life and that the environment is in need of modification, manipulation, and conquest and only the best specimens can achieve it (such as epidemic diseases, for example, their conquests are almost as spectacular as the civilised humans').

Second, consumption and reproduction are the concern of evolutionary science that provides a good platform for the theory of “resource” management and exploitation because the premise

itself leaves no room for viewing the world from the wild, non-domesticating position in which the universe welcomes life and does not need ordering and adaptation because it already is good for all⁴² and for itself, otherwise, how could life have happened for all those millions of years?

In other words, the conflict of civilised ontology resides in the foundation of its knowledge and is analogous to Sahlin's reasoning that consumerist affluence breeds poverty while humility brings satisfaction: so does the civilised people's striving for immortality imposes an obsession with murder and sacrifice, their claim that in order to have justice there should be punishment breeds crime – since, in order for punishment to be “just” and not random violence, there has to be the construct of the “crime” prior to it – in contrast to the non-domesticated lore that sees justice in the unpredictability of the results of negotiations and the occasional loss in favour of an animal or a bird and where acceptance of entropy and chaos brings eternity, harmony, and understanding.

The crux of the matter here is that civilisation assumes that the universe is imperfect, that life needs to struggle and adapt to its world, that it needs to be ordered, changed and tamed to suit the demands of the best species. Whether by appealing to religious authority or through science, civilisation claims that Man was decreed by God or by Natural Selection to modify and dominate, because the world was created as his resource or because due to his *unique* intelligence, he has evolved and succeeded to change and domesticate it. In other words, what is most important for my discussion of transformation and common origins is that change is possible in civilised ontology but always towards a higher degree of humanism, alienation and civilisation. Any movement towards the animal is conceived as dangerous, degradation, illness.

In this respect, children's books can project the topos of transformation between animal and human forms as either good or bad. For example, if wilderness sees transformation between animals, plants and humans as chaotic – forms are not fixed once and for all – and as beneficial and adding to knowledge, then civilisation values transformation towards more domestication and sterilisation as a linear, evolutionary trajectory and sees transformation from human to animal as dangerous. In children's books (that de facto are created in a civilised space) transformations are often depicted as imposed by some overpowering alien will, often stemming from evil (wilderness), such as through witchcraft, or by some intrinsic wicked force, an obvious illustration of which would be the folk motif of the werewolf⁴³.

⁴² This is a blending of Kropotkin's theory of evolution by mutual aid and Sahlin's Stone Age Economics elaborated in the chapter titled “the Original Affluent Society”.

⁴³ Monotheism, of course, denies any possibility of transformation, because the forms of the species were differentiated at the moment of creation, and even if their cause and basic element (the divine will) is kindred, Man alone was created in God's image. However, because Man is interpreted as the General Manager of civilisation, even though civilisation itself was meted out as punishment, he takes it upon himself to change and domesticate God's world. In other words, and banal as it may sound, interpretation of monotheism itself is highly contingent on whether one

In Jansson's third book, *Finn Family Moomintroll (Trollkarlens Hatt)*⁴⁴ and in Nosov's second book, *Dunno in Sunny City*, transformations are generated by external, magical forces against the will of the transformed characters and, in both cases, these topoi shed light on the authors' ontologies and approach to questions of kinship and the meaning of being.

Comparing these motifs in the two books, once again, places Jansson in the extreme end of the non-domesticated ontology and Nosov in the compromised middle ground between full domestication and an attempt to negotiate the civilised knowledge of oppression with self-determinism. While in *100 Aker Wood*, no transformations occur since the substance of that universe is presumed to be radically different for the human and the toy-animals that it allows no space for the mixing of experience.

11: Transformation and Recognition: Kinship and Common Origins in Moominvalley

Finn Family Moomintroll opens with a sunny spring morning in Moominvalley as Moomintroll, Snufkin, and Sniff find a black hat with the magical power to transform anything that enters it. However, these transformations – of things, words, animals, and even of Moomintroll himself – into new and unrecognisable shapes only re-affirm the permanence of love that underpins the chaos of the world, i.e. they reinstate harmony, abundance and beauty as a constant in an ever moving entropy, even as this constant of love emerges from ugliness and danger. At first, no-one recognises Moomintroll after he had spent a while hidden in the hat emerging the total opposite of his old shape:

Moomintroll felt quite confused and took hold of a pair of enormous crinkly ears. “But I *am* Moomintroll!” he burst out in despair. “Don't you believe me?”

“Moomintroll has a nice little tail, just about the right size, but yours is like a chimney sweep's brush,” said the Snork.

And, oh, dear, it was true! Moomintroll felt behind him with a trembling paw...

“You are an impostor!” decided the Hemulen.

“Isn't there anyone who believes me?” Moomintroll pleaded. “Look carefully at me, mother. You must know your own Moomintroll.”

Moominmamma looked carefully. She looked into his frightened eyes for a very long time, and then she said quietly: “Yes, you are my Moomintroll.”

approaches it from the perspective of civilisation or wilderness.

⁴⁴ The Wizard's Hat or as translated by Elizabeth Portch, *Finn Family Moomintroll*, and which is one of the four books that Jansson edited in later editions.

And at the same moment he began to change. His ears, eyes and tail began to shrink, and his nose and tummy grew, until at last he was his old self again.

“It's all right now, my dear,” said Moominmamma. “You see, I shall always know you whatever happens” (Jansson 1958, 38).

This transformation, like that of the shaman, prompts Moomintroll and his community to transcend form and access the knowledge of the unchanging essence by recognising and accepting both aspects of the universe, even if they may appear contradictory at first glance: the impermanence of chaos and the permanence of essence seen as stemming from one common substance of origins for all regardless of the ephemeral lineages and changing shapes.

Being children and inexperienced, Snork Maiden, the Snork, Sniff, Snufkin, and especially the Hemul who likes clean-cut categories and lacks imagination, focus on the form and on the category of in-group. By accepting form as at face value, they demonstrate love, appreciation for, and loyalty to Moomintroll as they mistake his form for the “other”, the King of California and miss the opportunity of play with transformation.

“But [Moomintroll] is an impossible fellow, you know! You simply can't have him the house!” [the transformed Moomintroll continued joking].

“How dare you talk about Moomintroll like that!” said the Snork Maiden, fiercely. “He's the best Moomin in the world, and we think a great deal of him.”

This was almost too much for Moomintroll. “Really?” he said. “Personally I think he's an absolute pest.”

Then the Snork Maiden began to cry.

“Go away!” said the Snork to Moomintroll. “Otherwise we shall have to sit on your head” . . . “Take away this ugly king who runs down our Moomintroll.” (Jansson 1958, 36-37).

While noble in their intentions, however, the group is aggressive towards Moomintroll's new form of the King of California and the scene escalates to a fist fight with the kids ganging up against the newcomer and piling up on top of Moomintroll's new king shape.

Moominmamma, on the other hand, recognises this essence in her biological son Moomintroll but also in all the other creatures she calls her children and this recognition and acceptance provides the safety of presence and the knowledge of permanence.

The above scene, thus, works to confirm kinship and permanence through transformation, but this is not the only way to recognise kinship in Moominland. The act of Moominpappa's adoption of Sniff – the child that Moominmamma picked in the wild forest during her period of separation from Moominpappa and who is so very different from moomintrolls – points to the

immateriality of the domesticated-scientific notion of consanguinity in determining kinship for the moominfamily.

Moominpappa said:

“You have no idea what a fine house I had before the flood. Built it all by myself. But if I get a new one, you will be welcome there any time.”

“How big was it?” asked the small creature [Sniff].

“Three rooms,” said Moominpappa. “one sky-blue, one sunshine-yellow and one spotted. And a guest room in the attic for you, small creature.” “Did you really mean us to live there too? Asked Moominmamma, very pleased. “Of course,” he said. “I looked for you always, everywhere” (Jansson 1945).

The above conversation demonstrates that affinity and consanguinity (Moominpappa being the father of Moomintroll and Moominmamma being his mother) by themselves do not warrant the right to live together and to partake in a communal household economy. It is mutual consent and the desire to share a home in the larger, universal sense that is the key to building a family and Sniff has been a welcome guest even before he appears in Moominpappa's consciousness.

This spirit of a shared essence brings creatures together in the Moominworld, regardless of whether they are all so different, with conflicting needs, habits and views and in no way related in the genetic understanding of kinship. Throughout the books, the moominfamily adopts anyone who asks in – even someone as different, boring and pedantic as a Hemul or someone who shape-shifts, like Moomintroll or the transparent child who is then rendered visible by their acceptance and the relationship of mutual understanding and care that she develops with Moominmamma⁴⁵ or, the nihilist philosopher Muskrat who moves into the house in *Comet in Moominland* and traumatises the children with his dark outlook on the meaninglessness of life; in *Finn Family Moomintroll*, two thieves, Thingumy and Bob, bring trouble and notions of crime and punishment; in winter, while the moomins sleep, the reader discovers that unknown creatures move and dwell among them; and in the final book, a whole cohort of strange guests inhabit their house while the moominfamily lives at Sea.

All of these visible and invisible beings who share their space, even while they are here and there, are an integral part of the biodiversity of the Moominworld and its freedom for inter-marriage⁴⁶. For example, we learn in *Moominpappa's Memoirs* that, biologically, Snufkin is the son of the elder Mymble and the Joxter and Sniff is the lost child of the Muddler and the Fuzzy – both

⁴⁵ The “Invisible Child” in *Tales from the Moominvalley*, Jansson, 1963; 1995.

⁴⁶ In-breeding and inter-mixing was of great interest to Charles Darwin and he saw in-breeding (even in his own family situation) as degenerative and inter-mixing as a possibility to express new options in the expression of genes and the suppression of mutation and genetic diseases (Darwin 2008).

mixed couples, but the children live with the moomins, because genetic or blood genealogy is of little significance here. “You, innocent little child, who thinks your father a dignified and serious person, when you read this story of three fathers' adventures you should bear in mind that one pappa is very like another (at least when young)” (Jansson 1994, xii).

Jansson extends the principle of the undistinguishable nature of beings to parents “when they're not so young” in several ways: in the sense that it doesn't matter who one chooses for parents and that parents are as wild and full of dreams as their children; i.e. they are not different intrinsically in their essence. So, in the end, it doesn't matter if Sniff, Little My, the Snorks and even Snufkin when he's not travelling, choose to have Moominmamma and Moominpappa for parents, for, in anthropological terms, it is a viable kinship model known as bilateral⁴⁷ or, in the still used terminology established by L.H. Morgan, is often referred to as the Hawaiian kinship system (Merry 2000; Sahlins 1972)⁴⁸ .

Erica-Irene Daes writes on behalf of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations established in 1982:

Indigenous peoples regard all products of the human mind and heart as interrelated, and as flowing from the same source: the relationship between the people and their land, their kinship with the other living creatures that share the land, and with the spirit world. Since the ultimate source of knowledge and creativity is the land itself, all of the art and science of a specific people are manifestations of the same underlying relationships, and can be considered as manifestations of the people as a whole (quoted in Ingold 2000, 150).

Thus, in the spirit of aboriginal kinship with the world, Moominmamma huddles around her the large group of Moomintroll's friends, including the silk-monkey invited by Sniff (*Comet in Moominland (Kometjakten)*). As they wait in the cave for the comet to hit the earth and destroy it, she calls them “my children”:

“Now everything is all right, and you must go to sleep. You must all go to sleep, my dears. Don't cry, Sniff, there's no danger now.”

The Snork Maiden was trembling. “Wasn't it dreadful?” she said.

“Don't think about it any more,” said Moominmamma. “Cuddle up to me, little silk-monkey, and keep warm. I'm going to sing you all a lullaby.” And this is what she sang:

Snuggle up close, and shut your eyes tight,

And sleep without dreaming the whole of the night.

⁴⁷ In bilateral kinship system, an ego may choose her kinship affiliation to belong to either lineage and horizontal relationships are inclusive of individuals who happen to be in the same generation as siblings even when they are not strictly related (Ingold 1994).

⁴⁸ Lewis Henry Morgan's terminology has largely been updated and refuted. For example, subsequent research into Hawaiian kinship systems have revealed the over-simplification and ethnocentrism of Morgan's and a vast number of anthropologists in approaching Polynesian or “Other” peoples (Ingold 1994).

The comet is gone, and your mother is near

To keep you from harm till the morning is here.

And presently they dropped off to sleep, one by one, until at last it was quite quiet and peaceful in the cave” (Jansson 1959, 189).

In the 1968 revision of the book (twenty two years after the first edition), questions of domestication and kinship remain as prominent and, in fact, Jansson enunciates them even more clearly even though she changes the song and African fauna transforms into European with Sniff befriending a kitten instead of the silk-monkey for whom he risked his life in the first version returning together hand in hand, as equals, to the safety of the Moominparents' abode that, for emergency reasons, was transferred into the cave.

For a European audience, a kitten represents a tamed animal – a pet, and Jansson takes this opportunity to deliberate on the notions of taming and domestication as if in response to Saint-Exupéry's metaphors for taming, cultivation, foxes and roses.

In *The Little Prince*, the fox begs: “Tame me”, and explains that taming entails responsibility for the one you've tamed and the cultivation of ties through nourishment and care (Saint-Exupéry 1994) – a standard civilised view, embraced conscientiously by the French colonisers, that claims that humans (especially the French) have the responsibility to tame the world, decide on its livelihood and pretend that these violent relations of power are there, not for the benefit of the tamer, but of the tamed (a view Willy Wonka wholeheartedly embraces).

What is omitted in *The Little Prince* and in the domestication premise is that “responsibility” for the other can occur only under the condition when that other has been disempowered and has lost agency over her decisions, actions, and responsibilities, while the person who *can* decide for the disempowered Other and who *can* be “responsible” for the Other's well-being is the one who has stolen that power from the tamed.

Jansson questions the concept of domestication and its relationships. In *Comet in Moominland*, she depicts Sniff's attempts to corrupt the kitten “who wandered all by herself”⁴⁹ by means of food as a method of achieving domination over the purpose of the kitten's existence by turning her into his pet for his pleasure and dependent on his kindness. However, unlike the portrayal of the Little Prince who ends up discovering the importance of *him* taming the rose and

⁴⁹ “Och just då fick det lilla djuret Sniff syn på en kattunge som vandrade för sig själv” (Jansson, *Kometen Kommer*, p. 10), obviously a reference to Rudyard Kipling's “The Cat that Walked By Himself” where the cat, even as he accepts the food, does not renounce his will like the horse and the dog.

the fox after which he dies (for, can there be a life in domestication?) and goes “home”⁵⁰, Sniff fails in his task to turn the kitten into a pet existing for Sniff’s needs and whims. He reluctantly comes to realise that the kitten would rather perish than renounce her independence to live where and as she pleased in exchange for Sniff’s power to provide her with food when and how much it pleased Sniff. As the comet is ready to hit the earth and destroy it, Sniff understands that his relationship with the kitten would not develop if he attempted to control her livelihood and circumscribe her space under the guise of protection like the fence that the Little Prince draws around *His Rose*. To become friends, both characters had to accept each other’s terms and learn how to extend a helping hand out of free will, when the other welcomed it and not through coercion and calculated benefit.

Sniff was the last to leave Moominvalley. He walked through the forest, all the while calling the kitten. And finally he caught sight of her. She was sitting in the moss washing herself.

“Hello,” whispered Sniff. “How are you?”

The cat stopped washing and looked at him. Sniff carefully got closer and reached out a paw. She moved away slightly.

“I’ve missed you,” said Sniff and stretched out his paw again.

The kitten took a small leap out of reach. Each time he tried to pet her, she moved away, but she did not go away.

“The comet is coming,” said Sniff. “You should come with us to the cave or you will be smashed to bits.”

“Oh,” the kitten replied yawning.

“Do you promise to come?” Sniff asked sternly. “You must promise me! Before eight!”

“Yeah-yeah,” said the kitten, “I will come when it suits me.” And she continued to wash herself.

Sniff placed the milk saucer in the moss and stood there looking at her for a while (*Kometen Kommer*, pp. 133-4 - translation mine)⁵¹.

The kitten makes it clear, when she welcomes Sniff’s food, that she does not become a dependent pet, rather recognises this act of giving as a gesture of friendship and thus earns a place as a family member on equal terms in the moomin house and with the freedom to change her mind at any time.

⁵⁰ Even if Saint-Exupéry meant the rose and the fox and life and the travel as metaphors for spiritual attainment, these metaphors work only from the perspective of domestication and become meaningless when examined from the lens of the Moominvalley.

⁵¹ Sniff var den sista som lämnade Mumindalen. Hela vägen genom skogen ropade han på kattungen. Och äntligen fick han syn på henne. Hon satt i mossan och tvättade sig.

Hej, viskade Sniff. Hur mår du?

Katten slutade tvätta sig och tittade på honom. Sniff gick försiktigt närmare och sträckte ut tassens. Hon flyttade sig undan en liten bit.

Jag har längtat efter dig, sa Sniff och sträckte ut tassens igen.

Kattungen tog ett litet skutt utom räckhåll. Varje gång han försökte smeka henne gick hon undan men hon gick inte sin väg.

Kometen kommer, sa Sniff. Du ska följa med oss till grottan annars blir du mos.

Äsch, svarade kattungen och gäspade.

Lovar du att komma? frågade Sniff strängt. Du måste lova mig! Före åtta!

Jojo, sa kattungen, jag kommer nu sen när det passar mig. Och så fortsatte hon med att tvätta sig.

Sniff satte ner mjölkfatet i mossan och stod kvar och såg på henne liten stund (Jansson, *Kometen Kommer*, 133-4).

This kinship is highlighted when Moominmamma gives her grandmother's emeralds to the kitten, thus affirming her own and her “blood” family's kinship with, both, the kitten and Sniff for whom this gesture is very important:

“Emeralds!” screamed Sniff. “Family inheritance! To the kitten! Oh, how wonderful. Oh, I am happy!”⁵² (Jansson 1968, 143 – translation mine).

In anthropological terms, the Hawaiian kinship model of the moomins considers as sibling anyone in the horizontal generational group and Moominmamma and Moominpappa as everyone's mother and father. In other words, the moomins do not distinguish between horizontal relationships in terms of priority in the transfer of material and symbolic capital and this kinship system, as Marshall Sahlins notes, is more egalitarian and inclusive than other models as it comprises both elements of kinship: by descent and by alliance (Sahlins 1972).

Further, kinship in moominland can also be said to be cognatic since inheritance comes concomitantly from Moominmamma's female lineage and from all the dads through Moominpappa and his memoirs, in which the transfer of knowledge and experience relates the creatures to each other.

Moominpappa was cut short by Sniff, who sat up in his bed and cried, “Stop!”

“Father's reading about his youth,” said Moomintroll reproachfully.

“And about my daddy's youth,” replied Sniff with unexpected dignity...

“You forgot my *mother!*” Sniff cried.

The door to the bedroom opened and Moominmamma looked in. “Still awake?” she said. “Did I hear somebody cry for Mother?” (Jansson 1994, 142).

Not only egalitarian, Sahlins considers the Hawaiian kinship system the most economically efficient with regards to, both, family wealth and environmental sustainability. In the case of the moomins, this is particularly sustainable since rotation and movement (nomadism or semi-nomadism) are a characteristic of their lifestyle in which recycling and sharing is the norm. Again, Sahlins' analysis of the Hawaiian kinship system applies neatly to, both, the relationships in the Moominvalley as well as to the household economy in Nosov's Flower Town:

Where Eskimo kinship categorically isolates the immediate family, placing others in a social space definitely outside, Hawaiian extends familial relations indefinitely along collateral lines. The Hawaiian household economy risks an analogous integration in the community of households. Everything depends on the strength and spread of solidarity in the kinship system. Hawaiian kinship is in these respects superior to Eskimo. Specifying in this way a wider cooperation, the Hawaiian system should develop more social pressure on households of greater

⁵² Smaragderna! Ropade Sniff. Familjearvet! Åt katten! O, så underbart. O, vad jag är lyckling! (Jansson, book 2, second version, p. 143).

labor resources, especially those of the highest *c/w* ratios. All other things equal, then, Hawaiian kinship will generate a greater surplus tendency than Eskimo. It will be able also to sustain a higher norm of domestic welfare for the community as a whole. Finally, the same argument implies a greater variation in domestic per capita for Hawaiian, and a smaller overall variation in intensity per worker” (Sahlins 1972, 123).

Integration of creatures into the moomin household is thus an available cultural option for living with and among beings. Her elaboration on the kinship theme in subsequent revisions of the books reveals Jansson's intent to present relationships and lineage as linked to origins common for all creatures regardless of their “genre” and where form and transformation do not alter the common cosmic essence. Belonging is a matter of choice and is not an abstraction based on random rules for concrete purposes generated by a domesticated and alienated vision of the world.

Yet, Jansson does not ignore the existence of conflicts of interest and danger. On the contrary, the genesis of the moomin world goes back to World War II and its most harrowing winter. Schoolfield (1998, 572) saw in the comet an expression of the “author's anxiety about atomic or hydrogen bombs”:

Moomintroll “proceeded to tell them everything that the Muskrat had said.

“And then I asked pappa if comets were dangerous,” he went on, “and pappa said that they were. That they rushed about like mad things in the black empty space beyond the sky trailing a flaming tail behind them. All the other stars keep to their courses, and go along just like trains on their rails, but comets can go absolutely anywhere; they pop up here and there wherever you least expect them.”

“Like me,” said Snufkin, laughing. “They must be sky-tramps!”

... “It's nothing to laugh at,” [Moomintroll] said. “It would be a terrible thing if a comet hit the earth.”

“What would happen then?” whispered Sniff.

“Everything would explode,” said Moomintroll, gloomily.

... Then Snufkin said slowly: “It would be awful if the earth exploded. It's so beautiful.”

“And what about us?” asked Sniff (Jansson 1946[57-8).

Jansson's universe is unpredictable including in terms of creatures attacking each other; it's laws – difficult to discern. Still, one principle can be traced: if one navigates with peace and tact, one would avoid violence. The closest analogy to the moomin universe comes from quantum physics, in that the creatures of the moomin world are like cosmic particles in a constant move towards entropy, following unfathomable principles of a self-organising universe with mysterious passages between dimensions and a constant play between the realms of being – here and there, and

of nostalgia for the cosmic non-time and non-place generated by the flickering tune that Snufkin sometimes captures during his perpetual travels in its pursuit. The harmony of the universe in Moominland is like the melodious anarchy of jazz achieved best, not by means of rigid rules or formulae, but through improvisation and attunement with one's own nature as well as with nature at large. There, in the vast Moominuniverse by embracing chaos and tuning to its music we can enjoy the ride atop its tumultuous waves.

12: Transformation and Alienation: Renunciation and Kinship in Sunny City

Unlike Jansson's depiction of the transformation of Moomintroll, which is filled with confusion but also with revelations of loyalty and love, Nosov sees transformation between animals and humans as tragic, unnatural, unenlightening, even dangerous.

The kinship model in the world of mites comprises aspects of the Hawaiian kinship system but, concurrently, Nosov's socio-economic vision, revealed by his use of the transformation motif, incorporates elements from, both, the anti-domestication paradigm and the domesticated ontology. In other words, even as the author presents an egalitarian human society and stresses the importance of compassion towards all living beings, including animals (the magician rewards Dunno for being kind to a dog), the perspective on which he posits his ideal society is evolutionary progress in the divided space between wilderness and civilisation, where wilderness exists for itself and the civilised space is there for the purpose of humans. In this respect, Nosov also questions Saint-Exupéry's definition of taming "responsibility" since Nosov's ideal world rests consistently on the separation of humans from animals and not assimilating them into a domesticated human space in the manner of *The Little Prince*.

At the same time, however, neither does the book propose integration and biodiversity that Jansson projects in Moominland and Nosov uses the motif of transformation of humans into animals and of animals into humans to further differentiate the categories of human from animal thereby highlighting their alienation from each and warning about the dangers posed for humans should wilderness invade their space. He concedes, however, that neither should the humans impose themselves on animals and wilderness.

The first book presents a healthy world and a strong community in Flower Town surrounded by wilderness and, like that of Moominvalley, as rooted in a gathering life-style. Yet, unlike the goodness of Moominland that is rooted in random and unpredictable change and the moomin renunciation of civilisation and machines, Nosov depicts change in this idyllic community as a linear and inevitable fate of evolutionary progress with technologies imported from the

agriculturally and technologically more advanced Greenville Town or the socially problematic but totally mechanised Sunny City.

Nosov's optimism towards technology, like that of the other "leftist" thinkers, ignores the inherent paradox of an attempt to free a society from hierarchical relationships by means of machines that in themselves depend on a hierarchical infrastructure and an essentialist division of labour. For, in order to make the machines, there must be someone to oversee those who imagine and invent, those who dig the mines for metals and ores, those who ravage quarries and tar-sands, those who suck out petroleum to make plastics, ad infinitum. Then, there are those who make the machines and those who feed everybody else.

In other words, differentiation, identity, professionalisation and inequality are the prerequisites for a technological society and Nosov attempts to solve the conflict, like Roald Dahl, not by revealing it, but by essentialising these identities by rooting the explanations for professions in the nature of each person: the Oompa-Loompas are meant to work for Willy Wonka and that fulfils their meaning and makes them happy; and so are the mites, pleased to be mechanics, cooks, scientists, doctors, designers, etc., and find their fulfilment in work in contrast to the moomins who never do the same thing twice (how boring life would be) and hence have no jobs and no professions but do a variety of things and explore different dimensions of inner and outer world.

One can agree or disagree with organised social order, but an attempt to conflate technological development with an egalitarian system can lead to double bind, schizophrenic misnomers and such oxymorons as "happy slaves".

This conflict between horizontal kinship and hierarchical economy also constitutes an important part of Sahlins' critique of the Hawaiian kinship model particularly revealed when it faced a hierarchical, non-kinship organisation of an invading European structure. The confusion stemmed from the imperialists' misreading the kinship based on hierarchical obligations that extended horizontally with the head holding the title of king, albeit not in the sense of the structure of a nation-state, yet which was forced to comply with the imperialist economic interests of the invaders⁵³. Further, he observes that this extended kinship model is never free of individuation or conflict of interests. However, these conflicts are regulated by the concept of reciprocity" (Sahlins 1992, 124), which Jansson humorously and dexterously interweaves in her books, which Milne ignores, and which are present but without receiving their due in Nosov's trilogy.

The Adventures of Dunno and Friends opens onto the household based economy and the diet and habits of the mites echoing the biblical genesis where, according to Christine Hayes, God's first

⁵³ Sahlins discusses this in-depth in chapter 3 "The Domestic Mode of Production: Intensification of Production" of *Stone Age Economics*.

concern was for the well-being of his creatures “you will eat fruits and grains,” he tells the humans, and the animals will eat plants and there should be no competition for food⁵⁴.

In the same way, Nosov opens his trilogy: in this vegan, gathering lifestyle, there is no competition between the mites or the mites and wilderness. The mites live in houses and each member of the household contributes with her or his effort and skill. For example, the mechanics, Bendum and Twistum, fix things and invent new machines, Dr. Pillman heals, Trills plays music and Blobs paints, the hunter Shot and his dog Dot presumably hunt sometimes, and so forth. Like a Hawaiian king who is kin to his people, Doono is deemed important because he represents knowledge and science (perhaps even the Academy). However, he does not monopolise power, because he is kin and equal and is checked in balance by other mites, some of whom with authoritarian aspirations, such as Dr. Pillman, but mostly by the sound judgement of all.

Thus, even though Doono has access to important knowledge, he is not the head of that household and the fact that each character is significant and indispensable for the community resolves the horizontal and vertical tensions; even Dunno, who doesn't know anything and doesn't do anything except travelling and telling stories, contributes with his passion, stories and discoveries. That is, everyone participates in the sustainability of the community.

In one of the houses in Blue-bell Street lived sixteen boy-Mites. The most important of them was Doono. He was named Doono because he did know everything, and he knew everything because he was always reading books... and so everybody admired him and did whatever he said. He always dressed in black, and when he sat down at his writing-table with his spectacles on and began reading a book, he looked for all the world like a professor.

In this same house lived Dr. Pillman, who looked after the Mites when they fell ill. He always wore a white coat and a white cap with a tassel on it. Here, too, lived the famous tinker Bendum and his helper Twistum. And here lived Treacly-Sweeter who, as everyone knew, had a great weakness for fizzy drinks with lots of syrup in them. He was very polite....

Besides these there was a hunter named Shot. He had a little dog he called Dot and a gun that shot corks. There was also an artist named Blobs and a musician named Trills. The others were called Swifty, Crumps, Mums, Roly-Poly, Scatterbrain, and two brothers. P'raps and Prob'ly. But the most famous of them all was a Mite by the name of Dunno. He was called Dunno because he did *not* know everything –in fact he did not know *anything* (Nosov 1980, 11-12).

At this point, it appears that the tensions between knowledge, authority, and the Hawaiian kinship system are resolved, particularly when the mites solve their main problem in the first book: the alienation of genders. When Dunno's house-mates befriend the girls of Greenville and the boys of Kite Town, peace and harmony are restored and the household based economy here parallels Jansson's vision of economy – both authors are explicit that both societies are doing perfectly well

⁵⁴ http://cojs.org/cojswiki/Genesis_1-4_in_Context,_Christine_Hayes,_Open_Yale_Courses_%28Transcription%29,_2006

with cooperation and sharing and *without* money or other symbolic representations for exchange.

However, the sequel reveals that by accepting evolution as ineluctable, a process that *must* drag the little people from their gatherer lifestyle and household based economics to a more complex future, Nosov falls into the trap of binarism, where his vision of that future allows for only two options: either capitalism or communism. He thus fails to examine the source of conflict, namely that, even though they vary in the extent of their destructiveness and specific detail, nevertheless, the two systems are based on the same ontology that knows humans as separate and superior to other living beings.

In other words, both, the capitalist and the communist perspectives are humanist visions of the world that present professionalisation (including the profession of being human) and alienation as fundamental and natural aspects of evolution. That is why, the narrative explains, after Dunno has made a mess of the human/animal transformations, Sunny City plummets into the wild and dangerous chaos, which leads Dunno to share with Floss his critical analysis of his home-town household based economy as compared with the economy of Sunny City:

“At home, if you wanted an apple, you'd have to climb a tree; if you craved for strawberries, you'd need to grow them first; if you fancied some nuts, you'd have to go to the forest. Here you've got it all easy: simply walk to a dining room and eat to your heart's content, but at home you need to work first, and then eat.”

“But we also work here,” objected Floss. “Some work in the fields, gardens, others make various things in the factories, and then each takes what he needs from the store.”

“But you have machines to help you with work,” answered Dunno, “whereas we don't have machines. And we don't have stores. You all live collectively, but at home, each house stands by itself. Because of that we get in a big mess. Our house, for example, boards two mechanics, but not a single tailor. While some other house may be accommodating only tailors and not a single mechanic. If you needed pants, for instance, you would go to the tailor, but he won't give them to you for free, since if he started to give out pants for free...”

“He won't have any left for himself!” Floss burst out laughing.

“Worse!” Dunno motioned with his hand. “He'll end up, not only without pants, but without food, because surely he can't be sewing clothes and procuring food at the same time!”

“Of course, that's right,” agreed Floss.

“So, for a pair of pants, you'd have to give the tailor, say, a pear,” Dunno went on. “But if the tailor doesn't need a pear, but needs, let's say, a table, then, you'll have to go to a carpenter, give him the pear for making a table, and then swap the table for pants. But the carpenter might also say that he doesn't need a pear, but needs an axe. So, you drag yourself to a smith. It could also happen that when you come to the carpenter with an axe, he tells you that he no longer needs it since he'd already acquired it somewhere else. And there you are, ending up with an axe instead of a pair of pants!”

“Yes, that's a great misfortune!” Floss laughed.

“That's not the problem, because there's always a way out from any situation,” Dunno responded. “In the end, friends won't let you perish and someone will give you a pair of pants or lends them to you for a while. The tragedy is that some mites develop a terrible disease – greed or rapacity. Such a rapacious mite drags home everything that falls in his hands: whatever is needed and whatever is not. We have one such mite – Rolly-Polly. His whole room is filled with every conceivable piece of junk. He pretends that he might need it all for trading them for needed things. Apart from that, he has a whole load of useful things that someone could have used, but they're only acquiring dust and rust with him”⁵⁵ (Nosov 1984, 195-6, translation mine).

Prior to the above dialogue, Nosov does not voice any serious reservations towards household economy in the first book whose plot centres around the conflict between genders, the resolution of which establishes a flow of knowledge between household units and towns with the economy still remaining local based on gathering. This lifestyle contrasts strongly with the large society of Sunny City with its complex infrastructure, where things are still shared communally, albeit relying on police force and a panoptical surveillance system to keep mites in order.

Apart from fulfilling the political requirements of soviet censorship, the above extract presumes that cooperation and a smooth exchange of effort and products will malfunction without an organised infrastructure and as Dunno explains, exchange could thus turn into an element of oppression instead of liberation. The author projects this organisation of infrastructure as self-ordered in the autonomous, anarchist sense while accepting Marx's vision of the liberating aspects

⁵⁵

-- У нас если захочешь яблочка, так надо сначала на дерево залезть; захочешь клубнички, так ее сперва надо вырастить; орешка захочешь -- в лес надо идти. У вас просто: иди в столовую и ешь, чего душа пожелает, а у нас поработай сначала, а потом уж ешь.

-- Но и мы ведь работаем, -- возразила Ниточка. -- Одни работают на полях, огородах, другие делают разные вещи на фабриках, а потом каждый берет в магазине, что ему надо.

-- Так ведь вам помогают машины работать, -- ответил Незнайка, -- а у нас машин нет. И магазинов у нас нет. Вы живете все сообща, а у нас каждый домишко -- сам по себе. Из-за этого получается большая путаница. В нашем доме, например, есть два механика, но ни одного портного. В другом каком-нибудь доме живут только портные, и ни одного механика. Если вам нужны, к примеру сказать, брюки, вы идете к портному, но портной не даст вам брюк даром, так как если начнет давать всем брюки даром...

-- То сам скоро без брюк останется! -- засмеялась Ниточка.

-- Хуже! -- махнул рукой Незнайка. -- Он останется не только без брюк, но и без еды, потому что не может же он шить одежду и добывать еду в одно и то же время!

-- Это, конечно, так, -- согласилась Ниточка.

-- Значит, вы должны дать портному за брюки, скажем, грушу, -- продолжал Незнайка. -- Но если портному не нужна груша, а нужен, к примеру сказать, стол, то вы должны пойти к столяру, дать ему грушу за то, что он сделает стол, а потом этот стол выменять у портного на брюки. Но столяр тоже может сказать, что ему не нужна груша, а нужен топор. Придется вам к кузнецу тащиться. Может случиться и так, что, когда вы придете к столяру с топором, он скажет, что топор ему уже не нужен, так как он достал его в другом месте. Вот и останетесь вы тогда с топором вместо штанов!

-- Да, это действительно большая беда! -- засмеялась Ниточка.

-- Беда не в этом, потому что из каждого положения найдется выход, -- ответил Незнайка. -- В крайнем случае, друзья не дадут вам пропасть, и кто-нибудь подарит вам брюки или одолжит на время. Беда в том, что на это почве у некоторых коротышек развивается страшная болезнь -- жадность или скопидомство. Такой скопидом-коротышка тащит к себе домой все, что под руку попадется: что нужно и даже то, что не нужно. У нас есть один такой малыш -- Пончик. У него вся комната завалена всевозможной рухлядью. Он воображает, что все это может понадобиться ему для обмена на нужные вещи. Кроме того, у него есть масса ценных вещей, которые могли бы кому-нибудь пригодиться, а у него они только пылятся и портятся (Носов 1984, 195-6).

of technology, yet ignoring that the division of labour, or professionalisation, inherent to this socio-economic structure necessarily leads to stratification. He thus omits to critique the logic of technoculture, whose nature is alienation and professionalisation, and instead focuses on only an aspect of it: the oppressive nature of symbolic currency, dramatised and elaborated in the sequel, *Dunno on the Moon*, where symbolic economy – money – creates stratification, poverty, illness, capitalism, and tragedy. In this respect, Nosov's books are an attempt to resolve the conflict between technologies, the symbolic, and oppression by ignoring the connection between alienation by technologies and alienation through the symbolic⁵⁶.

John Zerzan's critique of the symbolic is imperative in the examination of all the elements of civilised culture, including children's literature, because it touches on all its manifestations: language, art, money, professionalisation, identity among the other aspects of life that the civilised take for granted. It is precisely the reason why kinship systems and other forms of expression of connections to common origins can be substituted, alienated and symbolised with sacrifice occupying an integral place in civilised ontology.

In a fundamental sort of falsification, symbols at first mediated reality and then replaced it. At present we live within symbols to a greater degree than we do within our bodily selves or directly with each other.

The more involved this internal representational system is, the more distanced we are from the reality around us. Other connections, other cognitive perspectives are inhibited, to say the least, as symbolic communication and its myriad representational devices have accomplished an alienation from and betrayal of reality.

This coming between and concomitant distortion and distancing is ideological in a primary and original sense; every subsequent ideology is an echo of this one. Debord depicted contemporary society as exerting a ban on living in favor of its representation: images now in the saddle, riding life. But this is anything but a new problem. There is an imperialism or expansionism of culture from the beginning. And how much does it conquer? Philosophy today says that it is language that thinks and talks. But how much has this always been the case?

Symbolizing is linear, successive, substitutive; it cannot be open to its whole object simultaneously. Its instrumental reason is just that: manipulative and seeking dominance. Its approach is "let a stand for b" instead of "let a be b." Language has its basis in the effort to conceptualize and equalize the unequal, thus bypassing the essence and diversity of a varied, variable richness.

Symbolism is an extensive and profound empire, which reflects and makes coherent a world view, and is itself a world view based upon withdrawal from immediate and intelligible human meaning (Zerzan 2002, 2).

⁵⁶ One of John Zerzan's points is a critique of Marx's abandonment of his original interest in examining the nature of technology based on the assumption that in itself technology is neutral and that the result of its use depends on the user's intentions and its implementation: "But they [technophiles] want to be a little more canny about it, so again, my point is that if you say it's neutral, then you avoid testing the truth claim that it's positive. In other words, if you say it's negative or positive, you have to look at what it is. You have to get into it. But if you say it's neutral, that has worked pretty well at precluding this examination" (Against Technology: A talk by John Zerzan (April 23, 1997)).

Nosov's critique of money reflects Zerzan's above observations only in the part that highlights the inherent alienation in the act of exchanging the real effort for the symbolic, but, unfortunately, he ignores the problems that arise from organised city infrastructure based on machines and its reliance on the division of labour. He proposes that identification with one's profession solves this conflict by allowing people to nurture their passions but fails to see that identification and professionalisation are a crucial part of the problem that causes stratification by suppressing the knowledge of common origins with the very first matter and thus of kinship with the living and even the non-living matter: after all, the raw materials for the machines come from the same source as the living beings and are then modified and manipulated by living beings thereby connecting everyone and everything, through time and space, particularly when those are domesticated.

Technicized city structure needs someone to run others thereby relying on stratification and the symbolic way of notifying and keeping records⁵⁷ – which Nosov criticises in the capitalist system on the moon, but believes that a compromise of horizontal household identities could be extended on a city and city-state scale therewith solving the injustice. This explains the ending of *Sunny City* with the yearly ritual of exchanging mittens that pronounces the mites who have exchanged mittens between them as brothers and sisters, i.e. Hawaiian, horizontal kin.

However, focusing exclusively on the micro household model of cooperation it is easy to miss the relationship between professionalisation, stratification and the limitation of access to resources all of which constrict internal movement (change of interests as in Moominland) and spacial mobility (how can one travel if the household unit or a larger community depends on his or her skill). Nosov's solution is to, occasionally, have the whole household travel but, more often, only Dunno is flexible and free to explore, because his interests are not of immediate urgency for the group. In other words, professionalisation limits freedom and choice and makes coercion a more readily available tool for achieving order. In the end, like identity, professionalisation relies on the same basis for discrimination as speciesism, racism, sexism, and other forms of “kinship” distinctions.

Nosov acknowledges the difficulties of projecting this kinship model onto a city scale that relies on police and media to regulate but which are concomitantly unreliable and in themselves problematic: the witnesses are always exaggerating, the journalists are looking elsewhere and printing lies, the police capture the wrong people and punish them for the wrong things, ad

⁵⁷ Goody (1968) and Ong (1986) trace literacy to the need to record debts in the hierarchies of the early civilisations. In other words, literacy itself is deeply linked with the violence of domestication and the concept of debt.

infinitum. Most important, the economy necessarily becomes stratified and agricultural space takes over the Sunny world, just like in the real world: “According to calculations by Paul MacCready (1999), at the dawn of human agriculture 10,000 years ago, the worldwide human population plus their livestock and pets was ~0.1% of the terrestrial vertebrate biomass. Today, he calculates, it is 98%” (Dennett 2009).

Finally, Nosov's assumption of the uncompromising separation of humans and animals stands in stark contrast to the shamanistic ontology of Jansson's book. There are several episodes of transformation in the second and third books. First, the transformation happens when Dunno turns Leaf⁵⁸ into an ass by means of a magic wand, then he turns the three donkeys into mites, and in the last book the mites exiled to the Island of Fools with unlimited entertainment turn into sheep with Dunno and his friend Kid barely escaping that fate.

Unlike the shamans, none of these transformations is self-generated and, unlike the case of Moomintroll's change as experience of chaos that illuminates and reinstalls harmony, security, and belonging, neither do these transformations increase knowledge but rather work as cautionary tales. This speciesism becomes apparent already at the level of the original cause that generated the first transformation of Leaf: Dunno's rage, will, and magic, like the gods of ancient civilised religions discussed above.

Unbridled anger and vengefulness prompt Dunno to wave his magic wand and order Leaf's transformation into an ass, because Leaf had accidentally knocked off Dunno due to the habit Leaf had of reading when walking on the street. In an attempt to correct his misdemeanour, Dunno reads in the newspapers that supposedly the donkey was sent to the zoo and believing this media to be a reliable source, he heads there to fix his mistake. But the media had misreported and once there, he transforms the wrong asses into mites. In the meantime, the real mite, Leaf, ends in forced labour in a circus amusing the insatiable crowds always craving for more entertainment – a critique of which, Nosov develops by resorting once again to the motif of transformation in the third book, where endless entertainment on the Island of Fools, turns mites into sheep – again an undesirable change.

Thus, Dunno fails to rectify his error and, instead, turns “real” donkeys into people, while the human mite remains a beast. This confusion between animal and human form and nature, contrary to the resolution of love and harmony that it brings to the Moominworld, here leads to havoc in the otherwise highly ordered city and unleashes beastly spontaneity and cruel animal desires that transform the personalities of the inhabitants, many of whom become aggressive and thoughtless.

⁵⁸ Listik – Листик – translates as both a page and a leaf. It appears that the author's intention was to play on both aspects of the name. In English this association with literacy and nature is also retained with Leaf (translation is mine).

By exploring the topos of transformation in this light, Nosov centres the book around questions of authority, discipline and self knowledge as Dunno gets into a debate with his conscience. This debate reveals the author's reliance on civilised categories that distinguish wilderness (independence in questions of subsistence) from domestication (dependence on the permission of authority to subsist) as Conscience appeals to Dunno's sense of empathy for the plight of the transformed boy:

Conscience got quiet for a minute, but soon enough Dunno heard her voice again:

“Here you are, lying in a soft bed, under a blanket; you're warm, cosy and well. But do you know what the mite who turned into a donkey is doing? He's probably lying on the floor of some stable. For, donkeys don't sleep in beds. Or, perhaps he's rolling somewhere on the cold ground, under the open sky... For, he doesn't have an owner, and there is nobody to look after him.

... And maybe he is hungry,” the voice continued. “He can't even ask anyone to give him food, since he doesn't know how to talk. What if you needed to ask for something but weren't able to utter a word?”⁵⁹ (Nosov 1984, 85 – translation mine).

The above exercise in empathy is structured on the juxtaposition of the categories of human and animal, domestication and wilderness: Dunno is told that he should feel sorry for the boy because the boy now sleeps on the bare ground under the open sky, but not for the animals, because the nature of humans is assumed to be different from theirs.

In other words, Conscience's argument boils down to: because Dunno has committed a serious wrong by having denied the studious and passionate Leaf the pleasures and comforts of humanhood with its civilised privileges (these privileges have become human attributes and limbs), Leaf now can no longer sleep in a bed like Dunno, he is out on the street in the cold and cannot keep himself warm or find food, because the city leaves no space for wilderness and independence. Cities are made for humans and, hence, if you are an animal in the city you perish.

The story is thus centred around civilised “fact” of comfort and dependence and the author assumes that even as a donkey, Leaf's nature is still human and therefore domesticated and dependent on someone/something keeping him warm, providing food, etc.. Like the Oompa-Loompas are in need of Willy Wonka to eat even what is available in their world and unlike the Moomins who can live anywhere they go, Leaf cannot survive alone without his community,

⁵⁹ Совесть на минуту умолкла, но скоро Незнайка опять услышал ее голос:

"Ты вот лежишь в мягкой постели под одеялом, тебе тепло, хорошо, уютно. А ты знаешь, что делает коротышка, который превратился в осла? Он, наверно, лежит на полу в конюшне. Ослы ведь не спят в кроватях. А может быть, он валяется где-нибудь на холодной земле под открытым небом... У него ведь нет хозяина, и присмотреть за ним некому".

Незнайка крякнул с досады и беспокойно завертелся на постели.

"А может быть, он голодный, -- продолжал голос. -- Он ведь не может попросить, чтоб ему дали поесть, так как не умеет говорить. Вот если бы тебе надо было попросить что-нибудь, а ты не мог бы произнести ни слова!" (Nosov 1984, 85).

without the agricultural and domesticated space of Sunny City, and without the artificial limbs of comfort and protection.

This dependence on the city's infrastructure is not so prominent for the mites of Flower Town who rely on smaller scale community cooperation and on gathering nuts, berries, mushrooms and wild fruit and vegetables. However, because Nosov perceives survival as dependent on cooperation, he cannot envision a person outside society and so the mites of Flower Town would probably find it difficult to survive alone just like it is for Leaf without his community, which consisted of Letter⁶⁰, the audience of their book theatre, and the whole infrastructure of professionals in Sunny City.

Again, between the total independence of the moomins and the total dependence of the toys on Christopher Robin, the interdependence of mites, each of whom plays a unique and indispensable role in the lives of the monolithic community, presents another attempt by Nosov at a compromise between the perspectives of wilderness and civilisation and connects the topos of transformation to the ontological problems of genesis, kinship, cleanliness, food, and identity.

13: Conclusions on Cosmogonies in Science and Art

In an attempt to “make sense” of our present, people have presented narratives that strive to understand our beginnings because they could offer us convincing explanations (etiologies) of why things are and how they got to be this way, while justifying our decisions and actions.

During the twentieth century, many scholars of literary theory and anthropology turned their attention to human knowledge as a product of such narratives, an approach that converged disciplines like medicine, astronomy, palaeontology, anthropology, politics, religion, cultural studies, folklore, linguists, literature, among others⁶¹.

But prior to the twentieth century and to the merely fifteen thousand years of agricultural civilisation, there were millions of years of wilderness, a fact mostly skimmed over by our myopic scientific storytellers who invariably tie the genealogical account of humans to European history as based on the historical narratives of civilisation, mostly Greek, but also of the Fertile Crescent with an occasional applause to the Egyptians – all slave societies.

In these accounts, the construction of knowledge of what constitutes human and non-human is based on the methodology of isolating, classifying, and categorising – in other words, of alienating the various genealogical branches from one another based on either a mythological or

⁶⁰ Bukovka – Буковка – in Russian means a letter of the alphabet.

⁶¹ For examples, see Misia Landau, Cheryl Mattingly, Linda C. Garro on narratives in science and Jameson in literary studies and politics.

scientific understanding of blood relations, linguistic⁶², or genetic groups, thereby leaving everyone who doesn't belong to the civilised genealogy outside narrative or “outside history”, to borrow Amilcar Cabral's expression (although he used it specifically with regard to Marxist historical narratives that saw the history of people as the history of class struggle thereby leaving out all the people who suffered before civilisation and under imperialism (Cabral in Arrington 2001, 8) and of course all the non-humans).

We thus construct our knowledge on the basis of our perspectives on life which then guides us in our cultural, political, and economic decisions and scientific and literary creations. In other words, every epistemological attempt in a civilised narrative is informed by the scientific method of observation and inference, but as Lakoff and Johnson demonstrate, even scientific methodology is not bias-proof, because what and how we see is contingent on the linguistic metaphors used and those, I argue, depend on the underlying perspectives that direct our gaze. What we deduce, therefore, is coloured by the culturally fostered premises and manipulated, domesticated desires.

Hence, even if microbiologists, physicists, palaeontologists or anthropologists often rely on tangible pieces of the puzzle, the choices of what goes into the larger picture and the conclusions they draw are structured by the previously acquired knowledge, language, assumptions; and ultimately, in putting the pieces together, scientists rely on imagination and the ability to narrate. In other words, science is as much a product of imagination and preconception as art and religion are a product of truth and it is imperative to study them together.

No wonder, then, certain topoi have pervaded the animist, heathen, pagan, monotheistic, and scientific epistemologies. The adaptation and reinterpretation of the fundamental tenets in these topoi had direct repercussions on the world since what we think of the world and how we choose to narrate our birth and the birth of the universe constructs meaning and provides practical guidelines on how to navigate through life and what to make of – and do with – its diversity.

Cosmogony, thus, informs our ethical, moral, legal, and political constructs and, by offering explanations, legitimises the stance we take vis-à-vis such crucial matters as, for example, the anthropogenic destruction of forests, to take one actual example, the formulation of which can turn into a question of life or death: do we choose to view desertification and the extermination of thousands of species as a natural manifestation of an amoral order of “natural selection” in Evolution's battle for the “preservation of favoured races in the struggle of life”? Or, should we

⁶² For example, Franz Fanon pointed out how the Europeans view of the Africans as without language allowed them to classify them as inferior with the animals thereby justifying their brutality and exploitation. Jeremy Bentham, on the other hand, saw reason and language as insufficient categories of distinction that would justify torture and exploitation of either humans or animals. Sentience or the capacity to suffer was the only guideline that should guarantee the human or the animal person the right to be free.

judge it as an immoral act of a people gone rampant with megalomania and thus should strive to stop the tragedy? Or, yet, is it another expression of divine will in response to the dark forces of evil that either earns us the punishment or absolves us of responsibility?

Children's authors have always struggled with these questions and the books discussed above reflect the different approaches adopted in tackling mythological, theological, and scientific topoi – in that chronological order, with the mythological topoi of genesis infiltrating all the disciplines.

As Davidson notes, the “mythology of a people is far more than a collection of pretty or terrifying fables to be retold in carefully bowdlerized form to our schoolchildren. It is the comment of the men of one particular age or civilization on the mysteries of human existence and the human mind, their model for social behaviour, and their attempt to define in stories of gods and demons their perception of the inner realities” (9).

In other words, the mythology of a people, not only points to a cultural effort to define the self and the world, but, at its core, informs the scientific and judicial perspectives that structure and direct individuals and society in how they interact with the world and the way they impact it.

In the end, the laws we devise, the stories we narrate, the food we eat, and how we go about our daily lives are some of the components that constitute culture and whose existence owes to the way epistemologies have come to influence our aspirations, desires, and strife. Culture is thus, a consequence of both, perspective and knowledge, and knowledge is, concomitantly, a scientific and a poetic narrative that drives us with culture through our lives.

Misia Landau expresses eloquently this connection between narratives, history, scientific methods and texts in her article “Human Evolution as Narrative”:

“Have hero myths and folktales influenced our interpretations of the evolutionary past?”

Scientists are generally aware of the influence of theory on observation. Seldom do they recognize, however, that many scientific theories are essentially narratives. The growth of a plant, the progress of a disease, the formation of a beach, the evolution of an organism – any set of events that can be arranged in a sequence and related can also be narrated. This is true even of a scientific experiment. Indeed, many laboratory reports, with their sections labeled “methods,” “results,” and “conclusions,” bear at least a superficial resemblance to a typical narrative, that is, an organized sequence of events with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Whether or not scientists follow such a narrative structure in their work, they do not often recognize the extent to which they use narrative in their thinking and in communicating their ideas” (Landau 1984: 262).

Because everything – what we do or do not do in civilisation, that order in which the world has been divided and capitalised – has political ramifications, then, on the deepest level, the premises of our knowledge influence our, to borrow, Fredric Jameson's terms, “political

unconscious”.

Narrative plays a crucial role in the articulation of this knowledge and history as they get extracted from both the conscious and the unconscious and materialise our present in that “single vast unfinished plot: “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles...” It is in detecting the traces of that uninterrupted narrative, in restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history, that the doctrine of a political unconscious finds its function and its necessity” (Jameson 2002, 4).

Nosov's mite trilogy shows how a fictional narrative for children may intersect with biblical and mythological topoi, Kropotkin's evolutionary theory through mutual aid, and Marxist theory that ultimately leads from class struggle to socialist anarchy through the withering away of the state⁶³. However, even if, at first glance, it may appear that Nosov presents a classical evolutionary theory scenario: he begins with an anarcho-primitivist or gatherer society that gets infected by the developments of a socialist state in Sunny City and, as the technologies get perfected, ventures to outer space, landing into full-bloom capitalism on the moon – i.e. the narrative itself seems to follow a linear evolutionary pattern in which the world of mites “progresses” from no technology to technology and then to capitalist technology – he ends the narrative with the *return* of the mites to the state-free, community-based Flower Town, and there they find health, happiness, sunshine, and life.

In the 100 Aker Wood, on the other hand, domestication renders the characters static due to immobility and locked space. Except for the human character, who inevitably leaves for the real dimension of adulthood, literacy, education, and then probably a job, the “unreal” characters remain trapped in their perpetuity and domestication, sometimes named and sometimes their names taken away by the human Christopher Robin. In other words, the underlying assumption is that imagination can empower the child to invent his own world to dominate, while he himself is being domesticated – after all the book opens with the information that Christopher Robin goes to school to get domesticated and then, as civilisation declares, the nature of things is to graduate, leaving behind the idyllic happiness, and move into the dominated “reality”. If Nosov ignored the problems inherent in identity and professionalisation, Milne starts his book with the act of naming, i.e. domestication and knowledge and this spirit is present throughout the relationships of the dwellers of the 100 Aker Wood.

For the moomins, life always was, always is, and always will be. Apocalyptic events, such

⁶³ Although Marx and Engels state that in the Communist Manifesto, there has been disagreement about how much they both agreed on an anarchist outcome. For further debates on the question see Adamiak's essay: “The “Withering Away” of the State: A Reconsideration”.

as great floods and comets, that threaten their world are cosmic caprices that are to be accepted, negotiated, often avoided. Death is a part of life – a season in the various dimensions that in *Moominland Midwinter* is characterised by the little squirrel who dies because he looks into the eyes of the Lady of the Great Cold after which the Snow Horse puts the squirrel on his back and carries him away to everland. The squirrel himself or a new version of his self reappears in spring.

Jansson consistently refuses the traps of domestication: no names, no professions, living in a world of chaos, actions change, there is movement in what we cause and what we do, which makes identity impossible. Hence, Moominpappa travels, but he is not simply a traveller. He writes, but he is not only a writer. They explore the theatre, but they are not always actors and playwrights. The same with Moominmamma: she sews, she cooks, she plants, she cures, she travels, she paints, she dreams. Even after they settle down, they are sometimes there in the valley, sometimes they venture to the mountains or to the sea. The last book is about them not being there and in this respect they never end, even in absence they are in our lives.

In most non-domesticated cultures, cosmogonies often depict life as already existing at the beginning of the narrative and as simply being – no action needed. Gods could be animals, celestial bodies, or women and men. Sometimes, new forms would be created, often for a reason of their own, for instance, to help a god or the sun or a star with some task (Crozier-Hogle, Wilson and Leibold 1997). Mostly, these creations were an act of love.

Tricksters, monsters, strange desires or thoughts could mess things up and add tension to the plot, but the original reason for creation, according to these narratives, is a cosmic goodness and a marvellous universe with an implicit, or sometimes explicit, explanation for the purpose of life as instilled in cosmic balance.

Usually in these stories, the world begins with one or a combination of the following elements: a tree, water⁶⁴, humans, animals, or celestial bodies and gods. The creation narratives of African bushmen, the Masai, Scandinavian mythologies, Australian aborigines, Native Americans, the Slavs, and the Japanese, among others, depict a germ, a tree of life, often a woman, sometimes a man, sky and water as the primeval forces that, with the help of animals, create the world (Anikin et al. 1995).

It also happens that in aboriginal mythologies, like in the monotheistic and scientific versions, life gets created after the story had begun. For example, a California Indian creation tale relates that the world was spun out of a song. The world was given as a gift to children to dwell in, says Darryl Babe Wilson, a California Indian storyteller who teaches Native American oral

⁶⁴ Sea water is often distinguished from fresh water and both are often necessary for the creation of life, a perspective echoed in the microbiological theory of evolution of life.

literature at San Francisco State University and literature at Foothill College in Palo Alto, CA⁶⁵.

Again, Nosov does not concern himself with the origins of the world and of life. He is worried about what are we going to do with it now as it affects the future and this future rests on human actions, desires, and beliefs.

For Milne, the narrator is the first cause of the book and it starts and ends with his progeny: his son. Other (literary) worlds, we are told from the start, have existed, but we are concerned with what happens in this one while it lasts.

In Jansson's books, like in Wilson's cosmogony, Snufkin, the tramp who is afraid of possessions, wanders through the world, sometimes hand in hand with that primordial tune that dwells in the universe outside of him and which he at one time holds under his hat but then it flees, and when it does, he walks the earth in search of it so as to catch it with his mouth-organ and share with the world its magic that announces spring, love, catastrophes, and all⁶⁶.

As Moomintroll and Sniff got nearer they heard quite unmistakable sounds of music, and it was cheerful music, too. They [Moomintroll and Sniff] strained their ears excitedly, drifting slowly nearer. At last they could see it was a tent, and gave a shout of joy. The music stopped, and out of the tent came a Snufkin with a mouth-organ in his hand. He had a feather in his old green hat and cried: "Ahoy! Ship ahoy!"⁶⁷ (Jansson 1959, 54).

Before even meeting Snufkin, Moomintroll and Sniff capture his music and throughout the novels it is that song that, like the Hindu Om which holds in it the singularity of God and the whole existence, fills Moominworld with wonder.

In Wilson's version of genesis, narrative is posterior to thought, voice, and song: First there was a vast void, then there was Thought, then there was song and then came the word. For, how could there have been a word before thought? Wilson asks. Certainly, God couldn't be so thoughtless as to talk without having thought first. Language must have followed an already existing reality filled with concepts and knowledge, and not vice versa as the theory of linguistic

⁶⁵ Darryl "Babe" Wilson's session at the MLA convention, San Francisco, December 2008. In *Oral Tradition*, 13/1 (1998): 157-175 co-authored with Susan Brandenstein Park, Babe cites his ancestors', the Atsuge-wi, creation story. Here, first there was thought who manifested itself as voice and then as the being "Kwaw" or "Quon" - the Silver Grey Fox who with his song created our world because he got tired of sharing the original world with the constantly changing and challenging Coyote.

⁶⁶ For example, see the opening story in the collection of "Tales from Moominvalley", book 7, titled "The Spring Tune".

⁶⁷ The revised edition in Swedish is slightly different:

Vad är det där? Ropade Sniff. Ett Observatorium?

Nej, sa Muminrollet. Det är ett tält. Ett gult tält. Och därinne brinner ett ljus...

När de kom närmare hörde de nån spela på munharmonika inne i tältet. Muminrollet lade om rodret och flotten svängde långsamt in mot land och stannade stadigt i strandkanten.

Hallå? Ropade han försiktigt.

Musiken tystnade. Och ut ur tältet kom en mumrik i en gammal grön hatt och med pipa i munnen.

Hej, sa mumriken. Släng hit fånglinan. Inte råkar ni väl ha lite kaffe ombord? (Jansson, Book 2, pp. 30-31).

determinism maintains⁶⁸.

How we believe the world to have come about, says Wilson, is how we are going to live in it. Seeing the world as punishment for a sin or as a gift of life has radical ramifications on whether one will honour and safeguard its diversity, or whether one will treat it with ingratitude and approach it as the averse consequence of a repugnant act (ibid). The difference between these two stances is the difference between “primitive” society where members express gratitude for the creation and warn against futile loss of life⁶⁹ and between “civilised” (consumer) society that sees its meaning for existence in domestication, exploitation, and a birth-given right to consume “resources”, and most important, an intolerance of any hint at wilderness or the existence for any other purpose than the one decided by the domesticator.

In the Moominworld, it appears that Moominmamma is the original love and Snufkin is the force that links it to the cosmic song.

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⁶⁸ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson see language as the formulating medium that gives rise to awareness of what's out there and hence of all knowledge, including science that is influenced by metaphors.

⁶⁹ There are numerous ethnographic and anthropological accounts of African, American, or Asian tribes, as an example see Moses Osamu Baba's “Iku-Nishi of the Saghalién AINU in Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1949.

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