

flexibility, accuracy and, in the context of this volume, comprehensiveness are basic requirements. Professor McDowell has gone a long way towards meeting them, and though one might have looked for shorter annotations in favor of greater inclusiveness, or more systematic organization, such compromises would have rendered impossible the special achievements of the work. Now that these have been gained, however, perhaps a supplement will satisfy those who look for other connections from the material of a bibliography.

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Kola-Lappish Folk Tales

The Lappish (Lappic) people, live in four Northern European countries: Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Russia. They speak different dialects, but can, more or less, understand one another. Kola-Lappish is the part of the Lappish people who live in Russia, on the Kola Peninsula. There is one area of great similarity, however, irrespective of the country in which they live: that is their beautiful folk tales.

In this article I would like to survey briefly a few of the typical features of Lappish stories which I collected some twenty years ago, translated into German¹ and Hungarian,² and studied from a linguistics point of view.³ These stories are extremely exciting and fascinating, for they not only reflect the realities of everyday life in the North, but also deal with fantastic motifs such as demons, ghosts, monsters, and biform creatures. A special place is reserved in these stories for their favorite animal, the reindeer, which is always depicted as a half wild and half tame friend. Recurring characters in these tales are an old man and an old woman who are in the center of most of these narratives. A plot outline of the following story might illustrate this point.

An old man made a clay ball, and went into his tent to repair his fishing net. He told his old wife, who was knitting and cooking: "Look what I made!" The old woman looked out of the window and saw that the clay ball had come alive, and was entering the tent. After it came in, the clay ball swallowed the old man and the old woman; then it proceeded to swallow three young girls who were going for water, three women who were going to pick berries, three fishermen who were going to fish, and three men who were going to build a house. At this point, it saw a beautiful reindeer on the hill. It called to the reindeer: "I'll eat you up!" The reindeer answered: "Wait, I'll come down to you and jump right into your mouth." The reindeer then shook its beautiful head, ran down the hill and hit the huge stomach so powerfully that it burst freeing all those who had been swallowed. The old man and the old woman went back to their tent, the three girls went to haul water, the three women

¹Laszlo Szabo, *Kolalappische Volksdichtung: Texte aus den Dialekten in Kildin und Ter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966); and *Kolalappische Volksdichtung (aus den Dialekten in Kildin und Ter): Zweiter Teil nebst grammatischen Aufzeichnungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968).

²Laszlo Szabo, *A ravasz pókasszony: Lapp népmesék* (Budapest: Móra Könyvkiadó, 1968).

³Laszlo Szabo, "Das Referat im Kolalappischen," *Glossa: A Journal of Linguistics*, 3, No. 2 (1969), 165-89.

went to pick berries, the three fishermen went to fish, and the three men went to build the house. Finally, the young girls held the reindeer, the men brought gold, which the women smeared on the horns of the beautiful animal, thus creating the reindeer with the golden horns.

In another story a reindeer is in the company of a seal and a crow. They are half animals and half human beings. Here again, there are an old man and an old woman. The old man and the old woman had three daughters who married three young men who could change themselves into animals; one of these three men became a crow, the other a seal, and the best and most beautiful was a reindeer. It is very obvious that to the Lappish people the reindeer is a symbol of beauty and happiness, its presence is the source of joy whilst its absence signifies sadness; it appears in their stories, and is an integral part of all plots that have a happy ending.

Another good, but extremely powerful character is the Old Ice Man, a supernatural Father Frost, who guides the lost, saves the innocents, and looks after children. Just as the Old Ice Man represents the forces of good, a cunning old woman or a spider represents the forces of evil, which can be overcome either by luck or with the help of the good forces; in some of these tales the spider and the wicked old woman are one and the same. In one such tale a woodcutter was warned not to cut a certain tree where an old-woman-spider lived. He did not heed the warning, and a whole range of disasters befell him and his family.

In yet another story, a cunning spider, half human half insect is one of the main characters: Once upon a time there was a woman, the wife of a man, a human being, and another woman, a spider-woman, not quite a human being, the wife of a spider. The human wife had a son and the spider's wife had a daughter. One day the human woman went to the woods to pick some berries and took along her little son in a Lappish baby basket. The spider's wife saw them. She stole the little boy and placed her own daughter in the basket. Time went by. The man's wife brought up the spider's daughter and the spider's wife brought up the son of the man's wife. The boy grew to be a good hunter and one day, when he was hunting, he found the winter tent of the man's wife. He climbed on the top of the tent and looked in through the smoke hole. He saw that his mother was cooking bone soup with the spider's daughter sitting near her. He cut a large piece of meat from the animal he had killed while hunting, and threw it into the tent through the smoke hole, into his mother's kettle. The spider's daughter said: "The soup is cooking, and there is fat on the top." The man's wife told her: "Stir the soup, I'll go outside to see who is there." She recognized her son. They understood the cunning trick of the spider's wife, and they punished her together with her daughter. At the end of the story, the spider's wife is killed, and her daughter is sent away to walk towards the rising sun, which she mistook for a fire where, as she imagined, her real mother was cooking her soup.

The devil who appears in several Lappish tales does not, in spite of his negative role, destroy the optimistic nature of these stories. This is seen in a story about two young people, a brother and sister. The boy who was taken away by the Devil when he was a little baby is still under the Devil's control, and cannot go back to his family and live a human life. But his sister helps him; by finding out what their mother has to repeat three times at the full moon in the middle of the night in order to save the little boy. It is also noteworthy that death does not occur very often in these tales; and when it takes place, there is always some consolation. In one tale two sisters went to

the woods, because they wanted to become bears, and they did become bears. In summer they ate berries and mushrooms in the woods; in winter they slept and sucked their thumbs. One day two hunters met them, and killed one of them. The other bear cried and jumped over her sister's body. While she was jumping, she touched her sister with one of her paws and immediately became a beautiful woman again, except for one of her hands—the hand that had touched her sister—which remained a bear's claw. The hunters were surprised. One of them wanted to marry her. She said: "I'll marry you only after you burn my bear hide and find the soul of my sister." The hunters burned the bear hide and went to look for the bear-woman's soul.

A closer examination of these tales will reveal many thematic and artistic characteristics which they have in common with other folk tales; it will also reveal the most striking qualities of these people and their primitive but fascinating literature.

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Hamlet or Timon: Isak Dinesen's "Deluge at Norderney"

Karen Blixen, better known to English-speaking readers as Isak Dinesen, has explained the title of her *Seven Gothic Tales* as an allusion to "tale" in the sense of Shakespeare's late romance, *The Winter's Tale*.¹ She also intends the word "Gothic" to be understood in the special sense of "the Romantic age of Byron . . . the age of the Gothic revival."² In "The Deluge at Norderney," which Robert Langbaum has described as her witty and perhaps her best tale, Dinesen uses allusions to two Shakespearean tragedies as a means of developing the character of Jonathan Maersk and indirectly of commenting on the characteristic fondness of the Romantics for Shakespeare's Hamlet. By contrasting Timon and Hamlet she presents both a critique of the excesses of the romantic imagination and an affirmation of its value.

"The Deluge" relates the past histories of four aristocrats who spend a night on a barn which is sinking in a flood; ironically, they are sacrificing their lives for a family of peasants who earlier in the day sent their cattle to safety rather than go themselves. The story of Jonathan Maersk has been incorrectly interpreted as Dinesen's criticism of the bourgeois or middle-class individual who rejects appearances, masks, masquerades, and grand gestures.³ It is true that Maersk, who believes himself to be the son of a sea captain from a small town outside of Copenhagen, becomes cynical when he learns that he is probably the illegitimate son of Baron Gersdorff. He realizes that Danish society has made him a favorite, not because of his singing, but

¹Robert Langbaum, *The Gayety of Vision: A Study of Isak Dinesen's Art* (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 56.

²Curtis Cate, ed., "Isak Dinesen," *Atlantic Monthly*, 204 (Dec. 1959), p. 153.

³Eric O. Johannesson, *The World of Isak Dinesen* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1961), pp. 74-75.