Spaces of Passage into Supernatural Time*

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ABSTRACT. This paper focuses on the connection between the concepts of time and space in the motif of the "supernatural passage of time" (motif F 172, F 377). The narratives in which this motif appears are about people who in one way or another enter a space where time runs differently than it does in the human world (faster or slower). The author attempts to determine whether the type of space is crucial for a change in the perception of time; and if it is, why a different time flow happens at precisely these places.

KEYWORDS: time, space, supernatural passage, folklore.

Mikhail Bakhtin in his essay *Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel* discussed the "intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships" expressed in literature. He used the term *chronotope* (literally, "time space") to denote the "inseparability of space and time" (Bakhtin 1986: 84) and he also particularly emphasized the characteristics of the "folkloric chronotope" (ibid: 146–224). Time and space in traditional conceptions, which are reflected in folklore as well as in rituals, religious texts etc., are indeed closely linked with each other in various ways: chronological and spatial cycles are presented as homologous, with one cycle matching the other (Gaborieau 1982: 20–21), the same space having different values at different times of day: a place which is safe during the daytime can be dangerous at liminal times (Mencej 2007/2008) etc.

In this paper I will focus on the connection between the concepts of time and space in the narratives containing a motif of the "supernatural passage of time" (F 172, F 377 – see Thompson 1989). The stories in which this motif appears tell about people who in one way or another enter a space where time runs differently than it does in the human world – usually faster, sometimes more slowly. When

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they return to the human world, they realize that while it seemed to them that they had been gone only a short time, in reality much more time had passed – a few hours instead of a few minutes, a few years instead of a few hours, 100, 300 years instead of a few days etc. Or the opposite occurs: while it seemed to them that days or years had passed in the other world, when they return it appears that only a few moments have passed. This motif is a part of legends and songs, exempla and religious texts, widespread both in European and Oriental literature. I will focus particularly on the places where the supernatural passage of time occurs in these texts, and try to determine whether the type of space is crucial for a change in the perception of time; and if it is, why a different time flow happens at these very places. A cross-cultural spread of the motif requires the extension of the research beyond the framework of only one culture and within a longer time span. Searching for the answers to the above questions, I found a comparative method to be the most appropriate.

LEGEND TYPES

In European folklore the motif of the supernatural passage of time[1] appears primarily within the framework of certain types of legends[2]. One of the most widespread types of tales characterized by this motif is *ATU 470*, *Friends in Life and Death* (cf. Uther 2004: 275–276; see examples in: Petzoldt 1970: 129–130, no. 206; Bruford 1978: 148; Le Goff 1984: 27; Bošković-Stulli 1999: 144; Šašel, Ramovš 1936–37: 14–15; Kotnik 1958: 22–25; Vėlius 1987: 167–168). The subtype of this legend type, *ATU 470A*, *The Offended Skull*, is also often associated with this motif (cf. Uther 2004: 276; see examples in: Bošković-Stulli 1999: 147; Lang 1914; Hartland 1891: 167–168; Bruford 1978: 148, 1994–95: 7–8; Petzoldt 1968) as is the other subtype, *ATU 470B*, *The Land Where No One Dies* (cf. Uther 2004: 277). The legend type *ATU 471A*, *The Monk and the Bird*[3], the content of

1 Opinions regarding what gave rise to the motif differ. Alexander Haggerty Krappe, while discussing the "supernatural lapse of all sense of time" writes that "the consumption of certain drugs, notably hashish, will produce dreams or hallucinations of precisely this nature" (Krappe 1930: 12, cf. also 115–117). Katherine Briggs argued that the feeling of the relativity of time may well have been founded on the experiences of a dream or of a state of trance (Brigs 1978: 11; cf. also Bruford also 1978: 148, 150; Lecouteux 1992: 28). In some legends the supernatural lapse of time is indeed directly conditioned by sleep or takes place during an enchanted sleep (cf. Hartland 1891: 181; Röhrich 1962: 145, no. 17) or during meditation (the legend about Brahman's experience in Briggs 1978: 11).

2 In the ATU categorized as Tales of Wonder.

3 Lutz Röhrich, who has studied the tale type *471A*, *The Monk and the Bird* in detail, places this type in the large group of *Entrückungssagen*, which share the characteristic of telling about a person

which is also frequently verbalized in folk songs and exempla at least from the beginning of the 12th c. onward (Röhrich 1962: 128–130), has the same motif at its core (Uther 2004: 278–279; see examples in: Hartland 1891: 187–189; Štrekelj 1980 (1895): 348–349, no. 306; Röhrich 1962: 122–145; Petzoldt 1970: 128–129, no. 205; Bruford 1978: 148, 1994–95: 7; Bošković-Stulli 1999: 145; Unuk 2002: 438–440).

The motif of a person entering a time that runs differently is also characteristic of numerous memorates and belief legends throughout Europe, which tell of a person meeting supernatural beings, be they fairies, trolls, witches etc. Ingemark C. Asplund, who focuses on enchantment in folk belief narratives, which "usually stems from an encounter with a supranormal being that abducts or otherwise manipulates the human protagonist" (Asplund 2006: 1), emphasizes that the alternation of temporal relations is an important feature in some narratives (ibid: 12). An especially large number of legends in which supernatural beings hold people in their world for a longer or shorter period of time are told in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. These narratives generally associate the supernatural passage of time with a person's entry into a fairy ring (fairies dancing in a circle). A typical example is the legend type which Edwin S. Hartland calls *Rhys and Llewellyn* – two friends are returning home late when one of them steps into a fairy ring, and disappears. He is "caught" there in their dance until his friend rescues him from the ring of fairies in the same place after a year and a day have passed. He is convinced that he has danced no more than a few minutes, usually becomes angry and does not believe that a year has passed. Sometimes the rescue comes too late – when they pull him from the ring, all that is left of him is a skeleton (see examples in: Hartland 1891: 162–166; Briggs 1978: 18; Bruford 1978: 147; Tuathail 1937: 86, no. XI). In several versions of this legend the time and place of the return from the supernatural passage of time are emphasized: the friend caught in the fairy dance has to come back in exactly a year or a year and a day, always at the very same place where he disappeared.

The motif of the dance is often connected with the legends which tell of *musicians* (usually fiddlers), hired by an old man (fairies etc.) to play for a dance in the fairy hill. When the next day they come out everything has changed; eventually it turns out that a hundred years have passed in the meantime (Bruford 1994–95: 2; Hartland 1891: 180; Briggs 1978: 20–21).

who is absent for a long period of time, a year or even a century, but cannot sense the length of time and upon his return to reality is convinced that he was absent for only a short period of time. The purpose of these legends according to L. Röhrich was to indicate the timelessness of the otherworld, in paradise, hell, the land of the gods, fairies, elves, trolls or the extrahuman world in general (Röhrich 1962: 275).

The next type of legend which is sometimes, but not always, associated with the motif of the supernatural passage of time is the *sleeping warrior legend*: a person finds a passage into a cavern, cave or mountain and there sees sleeping warriors, knights, soldiers, monks, or a king with his escort. When he returns, he realizes that a year has passed in the meanwhile. Legends about sleeping heroes or rulers are widespread throughout Europe and are associated with personages such as Frederick (Friedrich) Barbarossa, King Arthur, King Charles, King Waclaw (Vaclav, Wenzel), King Mathias, Thomas the Rhymer, Fionn, Sebastian of Portugal, Marquis John (cf. Hartland 1891: 170–178, 184; Petzoldt 1970: 132–134, no. 211d (where time passes more slowly than in the human world), cf. also 212 and 214; Kuret 1984: 154; Simpson 1986: 207; Bošković-Stulli 1999: 145; Lyle 2007: 21). Sometimes just entering a cave is enough for a person to sleep there for three hundred, seventy-five etc. years (Hartland 1891: 183–184).

TRANSMISSION OF THE MOTIF

Croatian folklorist Maja Bošković-Stulli believes that legends which dealt with the theme of the relation between human and otherworldly time originate in devotional medieval and Baroque literature (Bošković-Stulli 1978: 117, 1999: 144–145). In contrast, Scottish folklorist Alan Bruford postulates that the idea of a different passage of time in ancient beliefs, specifically in Old Irish concepts of the pagan paradise, were absorbed into Christian legends or exempla, e. g. legends of type ATU 470A and 471A (Bruford 1978: 148). According to A. H. Krappe, the story of a hero who believes that he has experienced great adventures in the Otherworld, and then realizes that it was all an illusion and that only a few minutes have passed, whose ultimate origin he sees in an oriental hashish dream, came to Ireland in the early Middle Ages, and there took on a typical Irish form. From Ireland it is supposed to have spread to Italy, where with minor alterations it was included in the oldest collection of short stories, and thence to the collection of stories of the Spanish Prince Juan Manuel, as well as to Iceland (Krappe 1930: 115–117). L. Röhrich discussing only the motif of the singing bird is of opinion that this motif, which is unknown in related oriental and ancient Indian legends, is undoubtedly of Celtic origin[4] and argues that this narrative came to the continent

4 Thus in the Celtic *The Mabinogion*, *The Second Branch*, the magical birds of Rhiannon sing during the feast of Harlech for seven years; they possess marvellous powers – they wake the dead and send the living to sleep (The Mabinogion 2007: 32, cf. also 230, 236). Supernatural birds also appear frequently in Irish legends: in the heavens there are three birds in front of God's throne; fairies' birds bid St. Patrick welcome to Ireland; birds celebrate the *horaecanonicae* etc. Although we find the tale of the bird and the monk in Ireland as well, although quite late, we also find older versions about

from Ireland in the 12th c., where we find the oldest continental version of the legend of the *entrückten* monk in a sermon by Parisian Bishop Maurice de Sully, which is the direct or indirect origin of later versions of this tale in Latin or in the common languages (Röhrich 1962: 276–277). A. Bruford further argues that while it is impossible to be sure whether the ultimate source of the Christian variants of these legends is in Asian Buddhism or in Celtic paganism, the fact that it is a bird rather than an angel singing to the monk suggests that it is a pre-Christian source[5] (Bruford 1994–95: 7).

RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS

In fact, M. Bošković-Stulli's opinion that the motif spread from medieval and later devotional texts into the oral literature does not really seem plausible. It is much more likely that the motif was a part of European and Asian folklore much earlier, before it first appeared in medieval exempla. The same motif, which, as we have seen, appears constantly in European folklore even outside of the tale types which could have developed from exempla, is also found outside of Europe, e. g. in Oriental, Indian and Chinese literature (cf. Krappe 1930: 115–117; Petzoldt 1968: 42; Röhrich 1962: 275). In the ancient Indian *Vishnu Purana*[6] king Raivati during the singing of the quiristers in God's presence imagined the ages that elapsed during their performance to be but as a moment (*Vishńu Puráńa*, book IV, chap. I, HH Wilson translation [1840]: http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/vp/vp093.htm, 4th. June 2008). The motif, although it is not connected with singing, appears also in a narrative from the Matsya Purana: when Prince Kāmadamana asks Vishnu to reveal the *māyā* to him, Vishnu tells him a story about Nārada, who long before had expressed the same desire. At Vishnu's command, Nārada had drowned in water and when he returned to the surface he had been changed into the woman Sushila. Her entire life unfolded before her – her father gave her away in marriage, she fully experienced the delights of love, and had many sons and grandsons, but over time a war broke out between her father and her husband, in which her husband, her father and many of her sons and grandsons died. In despair she threw herself into the

St. Brendan of Clonfert, St. Mochoe or Coelan etc. In Irish oral variants of Ossian it can also be a bird which tempts him into the Otherworld (cf. Röhrich 1962: 276–277).

5 There are numerous Slavic records of belief about birds, which are connected with the other world in various ways – e. g. they winter in the otherworld, where live the souls of the dead, they return to this world together with them in the springtime; the souls of the dead are often represented as birds etc. (cf. Mencej 2004).

6 Puranas were probably written in the 4th century.

conflagration in which the corpses of all of her relations were burned, but in that moment "the blaze became immediately cool and clear; the pyre became a pond. And amidst the waters Sushila found herself – but again as the holy Nārada. And the God Vishnu, holding the saint by the hand, was leading him out of the crystal pool" (Heinrich Zimmer. *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art*, New York, 1946, p. 27; cited in: Mills 1995: 185–188). A tale about Nārada containing the same motif is a part of the Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, the Bengali saint from the 19th century (http:/www.vedantaiowa.org/teachings/thakur/chapter22.pdf, 6th June 2008; cf. also: *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, English translation, 6th revised edition, Madras, 1943, book 4, ch. 22, *Parables*, No. 1110, p. 384, cited in: Mills 1995: 188–189; cf. also Eliade 1961: 70–71[7]).

Similar adventures befell Mohammed, as well as "Doubting Thomas", the Jew who did not believe that in one single night it was possible for the Prophet to have "ascended to the ninth heaven and on the way saw many wonderful things and met all the former prophets and worthies and kings; then (he) passed on into the absolute sphere to the presence of God and there heard His wonderful instruction, and then all the mysteries of all time, and all principles and all matters, were made known to him". After the Prophet narrated his experience the Jew went home. He asked his wife to cook some fish while he went to fetch some water from the stream. There he was transformed into a beautiful woman, who married, bore children but after seven years remembered her previous state and "changed back into the original form of a man and was by the side of the stream with the water-carrying utensil, and on returning home his wife was still cooking the fish which was not yet sufficiently done" (Liu Chai-Lien. *The Arabian Prophet*, Shanghai, 1921, p. 124–126; cited in: Mills 1995: 191).

Thus in all of these narratives, regardless of whether they appear in the form of a legend or a song, an exempla or a religious text, we find the same motif: time which passes differently, either faster or slower, than it does in the human world[8]. Since it has been stated that time and place in traditional beliefs are

7 The narrative in Mircea Eliade's book is slightly different from the other two sources with regard to the details about the water.

8 In the medieval Christian imaginarium, theological conceptions of time are often built into exempla. Time is understood as being subjective: if it is a case of suffering in Purgatory, the people who return from there realize that they spent a very short amount of time there; but if a person returns to earth from paradise, he thinks that he was there for a few hours, but in reality he lived there longer than he could live on earth, and usually turns to dust (Bošković-Stulli 1999: 144). Jacques Le Goff points out that the subjective comprehension of time in Purgatory is popular time in reverse: "Whereas the folkloric traveller experiences a very short period of time in the otherworld, the guest of Purgatory imagines having endured a period of time ten or one hundred times longer" (Le Goff 1984: 33). Robin Gwyndaf connects the motif of a supernatural passage of time in folk legends with man's desire for eternal bliss and man's longing for the "lost paradise, the still centre of the mystics; and the land flowing with milk and honey, as described

closely connected with each other, let us now see the places where such changed perception of time occurs.

PLACES OF SUPERNATURAL PASSAGE OF TIME

Caverns, hills, mountains

One of the most common locations where lapse of time occurs is a hill / mountain or a cavern in a hill / mountain. These locations actually cannot be separated from one another: it is more or less a matter of different emphasis, since entering a hill or mountain means entering a hollow space, i. e. a cavern inside a hill or a mountain. One of the oldest legends in which we encounter the motif of a cavern through which the other world is entered is recorded in De Nugis Curialium by Walter Map (12th century), and it is about the British King Herla, who reigned on the Border of Wales. A pigmy king attends the wedding of King Herla and he, in return, is obliged to attend his a year later. Herla assented and a year later he followed where he was led. *He and his guide entered a cavern in a very lofty cliff, and after a space of darkness they passed into light* <...>. After the wedding the king and his companions return to their country where in the meantime everything was changed. From the shepherd they meet on their way they are informed that Saxons have driven out the Britons and possessed the kingdom for fully two hundred years, which seemed like three days only to King Herla[9] (Briggs 1978: 15–17; cf. also Lecouteux 1997: 24).

in the Bible". In his mundane daily life on earth man desires to taste the bliss of everlasting life, so that man too can proclaim with Peter in his Second Epistle (3:8): "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day" (Gwyndaf 1994: 259–260). In addition to that mentioned by R. Gwyndaf, we find the idea of the relativity of time in another place in the Bible: "But a thousand years mean nothing to you! They are merely a day gone by or a few hours in the night" (Psalm 90.4; http://www.biblija.net/biblija.cgi?Bible=Bible&m=Ps+90.4&id32=1&pos=1&set=3&l=en, 4th June 2008). And when Mohammed speaks of The Last Judgement, he refers to the sentence: *A day in the sight of thy Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning*. (Koran 22: 47; http://www.flex.com/~jai/satyamevajayate/koran.html; cf., also Röhrich 1962: 276). The function of the legend The Monk and the Bird, as L. Röhrich holds, is actually to provide an effective example to illustrate these biblical words; the legend is intended to concretize and illustrate the notion of eternity or eternal blessedness, which is outside man's ability to conceive, since the human scale disappears in the presence of God (Röhrich 1962: 276). A. Bruford similarly suggests that "it may be the Christian moral of the mutability of the temporal world that has made this story <...> widespread <...>" (Bruford 1994–95: 9).

9 This legend is very similar to a text from the 13th c. (author anonymous, ATU 470), in which a young nobleman invites an old friend, actually an angel, to his wedding, who in thanks invites him to a party that will be held three days after the wedding – but (in this version) they pass through a narrow *strait*, which we don't know whether it is in the mountains or elsewhere. They come to a wide plain, covered with flowers, full of fruit trees and birds, where his guest and the young people around him are all dressed in white. The young nobleman goes through three "dwellings",

A lapse of time in a cavern which clearly leads to a world where time passes more slowly is also found in the Slovenian legend *Zaklete duše* (The Enchanted Souls). Although it is not about going to a friend's wedding or a party it is similar to ATU 470: an honest man, who has seen "all of the wickedness of this world", once mumbled that he would rather sink down into the earth and see nothing of this world. "He had barely uttered the words when he saw a *cavern* before him and steps leading into it."A guide leads him over several fields, where he sees souls in various incarnations, depending on the sins or good works that the people had done during their lives. Upon his return to his home village, everything was different, "since five hundred years had passed since the honest man had left on his journey into the underworld" (Möderndorfer 1924: 113–115).

In Scottish legends about a man who joins a dance of the fairies, the dance is most often held inside a *hill* (Bruford 1978: 147, 1904–05: 1; cf. also no. 6, where the passerby hears music coming from the hill, 9, 12, 17; Hartland 1891: 165–167, 180). Particularly in Wales and Scotland we find legends where musicians find themselves among fairies inside a hill or on a hill. For instance, an old man entices two famous fiddlers into a *small hill*, where they are supposed to play for the gathered company – it seems to them that they play for a few hours, but in reality they play for a hundred years. When they return, they enter a church, but when the pastor utters the first word, they turn to dust (Hartland 1891: 180–181). A shoemaker's son living near Pancader in Carmarthenshire one day "put his foot in a fairy circle *on the hillside*, and joined the dancers there, for a few minutes, as it seemed to him" – and when he leaves the dance and returns home, nobody recognizes him, he falls on the floor and turns into black ashes (Briggs 1978: 19). The legend of one of two brothers who joins a fairy dance, recorded in the Scottish Highlands, occurs on a *shian*, i. e. a fairy hill, but it seems to him that the dance is actually happening *inside* the hill, and not *on* it as "*in the darkness it looked like a turret with the door opened* and light streaming out of every crevice" and he is "determined to go *inside*". A year and a day later his brother goes to look for him, "enters the *shian* and pulls him from the dance. He is convinced that only a half hour has passed since he began to dance (ibid: 20). In another Scottish legend we see musicians who were apparently playing in a castle, but were actually playing *inside a hill*: Two fiddlers were asked to play in the castle for the whole night, but when in the morning "they went out of the castle the whole scene was changed. The great tower was a *low hill out of which they crept*" and they realised that a hundred years had passed since they began to play (ibid: 20–21).

and comes to a fourth, where he experiences indescribable happiness, which lasts 300 years, but it seems to him that only 3 hours have passed. He returns home to find his house in ruins. When he puts a crust of bread in his mouth, he turns into an old man and dies (Le Goff 1984: 27).

Underground caverns and cavities in the rocks or in the mountains are also closely connected with the legends in which lapse of time occurs when a person enters the underground home of a sleeping king, warriors etc. (Hartland 1891: 170–173, 184). Thomas of Erceldoune (Thomas the Rhymer), a famous diviner and singer in the Scottish tradition, who is supposed to have lived in the 13th century and then became a figure in the Scottish folklore tradition (cf. Lyle 2007: 3–60), supposedly obtained his powers from a fairy queen, who is said to have taken him to the fairy kingdom in Eildon *Hills* (Hartland 1891: 203–204). In discussing the hiding-place of Thomas the Rhymer, Robert Southey suggests that a possible venue may be "the *cavern* under the roots of the hazel-tree on Craig y Dinas, where King Arthur and all his knights are lying asleep in a circle, their heads outward". According to the version from 19th century by Williams, "*the cave* is discovered under the root of a large hazel" and the poem called The Legend of Shewin' Shiels from James Service's Collection of Metrical Legends of Northumberland (1834) describes how Sir Cuddy is carried off wounded after a battle, and awakes within *a cave* amongst sleeping knights. Afterwards he discovers that seven hundred years have elapsed while he was in the cave. The footnote states that "King Arthur and his court are enchanted near the ruins of Shewin' Shiels castle, in *the cavern of the* '*enchanted warriors*'" (after Simpson 1986: 206–207).

Graves

The grave as a place through which a person enters a place where time passes differently usually appears in tale type ATU 470, as it is logically connected with the content of this type, which requires that a bridegroom visits his deceased friend and they come to the dead friend's homeland through his *grave*. In a Slovenian version of the legend of this type, the two friends see fat and thin sheep in underground fields – souls which had been rewarded or punished for their good deeds or sins in their lifetimes, etc. (compare above Möderndorfer 1924: 113–115). After that the dead all of a sudden disappear, and *the living walked for three days back to the world* (Šašel, Ramovš 1936–37: 14–15; Kotnik 1958: 22–25). A variant of the tale type ATU 470 recorded in 1894 in Finland tells of the friends who enter a meadow through a *grave*, in which fat and thin cows are grazing – the moral is similar to that of the Slovenian tales, but the ending is slightly different: "For some reason the bridegroom then fell asleep. When he awoke, *he had been sleeping for seven hundred years*. Everything had changed; it seemed to him that he had *come to a different world*" (Kvideland, Sehmsdorf 1991: 90–91, no. 15.1). Graves or mounds frequently appear as locations in Scottish and Danish legends about people who join fairies or elves dancing in the mound (Bruford 1994–95: 10, 15; Hartland 1891: 185), however,

we have to remember that there were strong interconnections between the fairies and the dead, and that fairies according to traditional folk beliefs inhabited sepulchral mounds (Briggs 1970: 81, 89, 96).

Forest

The forest as a place where lapse of time occurs appears particularly in a tale type ATU 471A or in its poetic form, which tells of a monk who wishes to know heaven. Soon after he hears a bird who entices him with her singing to follow her into the forest, where he listens to her not for three hours, as it seems to him, but for three hundred years. An early German record for instance tells of a monk who at the end of the 11th century knocked on the door of the Abbey of Afflinghem, and said that during the mass he fell into deep meditation and remained in the church after all the others had left. "As he was sitting in the choir a little bird flew in, and sang such heavenly strains that his soul was rapt, and he followed the bird *into the forest* that surrounded the monastery <...>" (Briggs 1978: 12; cf. Hartland 1891: 188). In another German version the monk in the forest listens to a bird not for a half hour, as he believes, but for three hundred and eight years (Petzoldt 1970: 128–129, no. 205). The forest actually appears as a place for listening to birds in all of the versions (German, French, Latin) collected by L. Röhrich in which the place where a lapse of time occurs while a monk is listening to birds is mentioned except for in two variants where only a tree is mentioned ("branches" and *sub arbore*) (cf. Röhrich 1962: 124–145). Forest also appears in Slovenian and Croatian folk songs and parables of this type (Štrekelj 1980 (1895): 348, no. 306; Strohal 1917: 266, no. 40; cf. also Ilešič 1915: 166–167). The forest is a location of entry into a different temporal reality in a Welsh legend which tells of a person who joins a fairy ring, in which he then dances for a year thinking that only a few minutes have passed (Hartland 1891: 165). It could also be assumed for many legends where the location is not mentioned that the joining of the fairy ring occurs in a forest, since such occurrences usually happen when a person is on his way home from a distant place, with the path usually leading through a forest.

Water

In the narrative which is supposed to reveal the secret of Vishnu's *māyā*[10] (the Matsya Purana, see above), a lapse of time occurs when Nārada at Vishnu's

10 The function of the Puranas is explicit in showing the true nature of the human world, i. e. the māyā, which is manifested through time (Eliade 1961: 71). The time of the human world is just an illusion created by Vishnu – it passes differently for the gods than for people, and it can also pass in various ways for the gods: while Indra lives for 71 eons (an eon equals 4,320,000 years), one

command *steps into the water*; he also returns from the "other reality" through water, i. e. through fire which turns into water. Although the text does not mention how much time passes in the meanwhile, the lapse of time in this tale is obvious – while nearly all of Nārada's life unfolds in the form of the woman, when he comes out of the water he is himself again, clearly the same as he was before this adventure. The water (river) is also crucial to Nārada's transformation in a story from the Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna – he sees a girl *by a river* and then begins a new life with no memory of his previous one; when he is fleeing from the disease with his family, *water pours onto a bridge over the river*, and in that moment he is Nārada again and realizes that it was just a lesson about the *māyā* which Vishnu had prepared for him. The unbelieving Jew went to get water from the stream and was there transformed into a woman; when after seven years she remembered her previous state she was changed back to a man *by the side of the stream with the water-carrying utensil*. In short, water is the basic element in all three transformations, as Margaret Mills points out (1995: 192).

Water also clearly plays a role in the story of a Brahman who *by a river* fell into a meditation on the state of the departed (or alternatively: *bathed in the river*) whereby his spirit left him and entered into the body of a new-born child who spent his life first as a cobbler and later as a king in another land. After a while his spirit re-entered his former body which it had only left for a few moments of mortal time and his wife was astonished to see his husband coming back from his morning meditation so early (Briggs 1978: 11; cf. also Hartland 1891: 227–228). The same happens in the legend spread among Scottish Gaels and Lowland travellers where a man with no story to tell on a *ceilidh* is transported in a boat to another world *across the water*, where he believes he has stayed for many years – until later he comes home to find out that the party where he could not tell a story is still going on, and he now finally has a story to tell (Bruford 1978: 149–150, 1994–95: 99; probably the same legend cited as "The Biggest Lie" by Mills 1995: 193–194).

The journey of Thomas the Rhymer to Elfland where he stayed for seven years which seemed only three nights to him also led through *subterranean waters* (Briggs 1970: 87). In essentially all of the narratives about lands of immortality, eternal youth, happiness etc. in which time flows according to different rules than in the human world, these lands are located on islands – so the path to them leads over water. In the Scottish and Irish folklore the fairy Princess Niamh of the Golden Locks invited Oisin (Ossian) to go with her to the land of Tir Nan Og, "the Land of the Ever-Young *across the sea*", where he spends what seems to him

day and one night elapse for Brahma when twenty-eight Indras expired (Brāhmavaivarta Purana; cited in: Eliade 1961: 60).

like a few months. When he returns to his homeland *across the sea*, everything has changed, since many hundreds of years had passed since Oisin went for Tir Nan Og (Hartland 1891: 196–199; Briggs 1978: 21–22). In the medieval Irish narrative *The Voyage of Bran* the hero is lulled by sweet music one day and when he wakes up he sees a woman who starts singing a long lay, describing the splendour and delight of *the world beyond the sea*. Bran travels to the Island of Joy and then the Island of Women. He stays there with his companions and "it seemed a year to them that they were there; it was really many years". When they go back to Ireland one of the women warns them not to touch the land, but one of Bran's companions jumps ashore and "as he touches the ground he becomes a heap of ashes, as though he had been dead for many hundreds of years"[11] (Hartland 1891: 202; Rees & Rees 1989: 314–316; cf. also Briggs 1978: 22–23).

THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF PLACES WHERE TIME PASSES SUPERNATURALLY

Except for isolated tales in which a different temporal reality is entered near the ruins of a mill or in a lonely spot (Hartland 1891: 164, 166), or owing to the logic of the story in a garden or in the vicinity of a church, e. g. before a wedding[12] (ibid: 185–187), more or less all of these legends feature the appearance of one of basic locations in which or near which people experience the relativity of time: a cavern in / and a mountain or hill, a grave or a cave, a forest and water. Why is it exactly these places that trigger such a supernatural experience? In order to better understand the reasons behind the choice of these locations we must first understand the symbolic connotations that these places bear in traditional folk beliefs.

C*avern in a mountain or in a hill* and *a mountain or hill* as such according to folk beliefs of many peoples is the place where the dead go. There are many northern European folk beliefs about the dead residing in the insides of hills / mountains (Šmitek 2004: 50). Entering a cavern, that is, an excavated mountain, is a synonym for death, writes Claude Lecouteux and finds the best example in

11 Beliefs about fairylands all over the world are accompanied by a strong sense of the relativity of time (Briggs 1978: 11). We also find the *Island* of Joy in an Italian fairy tale; in an Estonian one the hero lives in the Land of the Mermaid *Beneath the Waves* for thirty years, and in an Arabic one the hero lives for a hundred years on a "strange *island*". Ogier or Olger, the Dane, one of the Paladins of Charlemagne and King Arthur, supposedly never died but lived forever on the island of Avalon, the same as Don Sebastian on the *Island* of the Seven Cities (Hartland 1891: 199–206).

12 A wedding as such is a liminal period in one's life in which a person more easily enters a different temporal reality.

the Germanic literature in the legend of King Sveigðir, who follows a dwarf into the rocks never to return. The belief can also be traced in the language, where "to enter the mountain" is a synonym for "to die" (Lecouteux 1997: 26). In the School of Scottish Studies archives one finds plenty of records of belief about the otherworld in the hollow mountain (F 131). The Scottish witch trials give plenty of evidence that the fairies who were closely associated with the dead were believed to inhabit the hollow hills (Briggs 1970: 88). In the southern Slavic, especially in the Serbian, Bulgarian and Macedonian magic practices the mountain appears as the most common place of banishment of evil spirits (Radenković 1996a: 59) – clearly as a place of otherworldliness, where evil spirits can do no harm to the living.

A *grave* and *a cave* through which a path leads *underearth* to the abode of the dead in Indo-European folk beliefs seems to be the logical corollary of the fact that in the latest phase of undivided Indo-European history, disposal of the dead was usually by inhumation (West 2007: 388). A Slovenian legend e. g. speaks explicitly of an underground cave as an entrance to the other world (Kelemina 1997: 250–252). In Celtic mythology caves were believed to be entrances to the other world, like the cave St Patrick's Purgatory is believed to be the mouth of Hell (Rees & Rees 1961: 303–304). If we are aware that in traditional conceptions fertility comes from the other world, i. e. from the same world where the souls of the dead go after death, then we can recognize notions of places where children are "stored" before they come into the world as conceptions of the other world (cf. Толстая 2000: 60–61; Виноградова 2000: 359): among the Slavs in general we find many beliefs about caves as the sources of births, places from which new souls come into our world. Veselin Čajkanović, a Serbian folklorist from the first half of 20th century writes that "our nation conceives the lower world (or the entrance into it) as a deep cave". In Bosnia (Žepač) they say "that wind comes out of the earth, from a hole <...> the people once went to close up the hole, and behold: the wind disappeared, but there were no births that year, and they had to uncover the hole again" (Čajkanović 1994: 1 425). According to a record of belief in Tyrol in Germany there is a "Lebenshöhle" ("life cave") in a certain ravine: it contains the same number of lights as there are people; when a light goes out, a person dies (Petzoldt 1970: 127–128, no. 203, Die Höhlemit den Lebenslichtern).

It is sometimes difficult to make a clear distinction between a mountain and a *forest* in folk concepts. The lexeme "mountain" in Slavic languages retained the older pan-Slavic syncretic meaning which encompassed "forest" and "hill", i. e. stood for a "high, wooded place". While, for instance, Southern Slavs banish the evil spirits into the mountain, Eastern Slavs and Poles in their incantations

mostly banish them into the forest (Radenković 1996a: 59–60, 365). In medieval and later European folk beliefs, forests were associated with the otherworldly creatures like Wild Hunt, the procession of spirits or ghosts who roamed around led by Holle / Perchta / Holda etc.; wild men and women, part human, part animal, and part spirit, were also believed to roam medieval forests (Russell 1999: 49–50). In Karelian epic poetry, the metaphors of otherness are interchangeable with epithets of death and the forest (Koski 2008: 341). The forest is the most typical location for encounters with witches in memorates recorded in Slovenia in 2000–2001 (cf. Mencej 2007–2008); same situation holds for people's encounters with fairies in Newfoundland (Narváez 1991: 338). Forest is also a typical entrance to the otherworld in fairytales (cf. Пропп 1986: 151).

Water was very strongly connected with the other world in European folklore. Folk beliefs about Percht / Berchta / Holle / Perchta baba etc. in Slavic and Germanic countries reveal that among her many other functions she is the one who brings newborn children, but also takes them away and the place where she supposedly keeps these souls of the yet unborn children are either water or caverns in the rocks (Timm 2003: 259–262; cf. also Uther 1999: 943, 948; Виноградова 2000: 352; Gliwa 2005: 211). Many Slavic folklore formulae also indicate a belief in children being born of water (Виноградова 2000: 352). The notion about water as a boundary with the other world is fairly well known throughout the world mythologies and is supposed to be a common Indo-European heritage (cf. Lincoln 1982; Vaz da Silva 2008: 91). Indic texts imply that the dead have to cross a river on their way to the otherworld: a funeral ritual song contains a verse *On the fearful path to Yama's gates there is a fearful river Vaitarani: desiring to cross it, I offer the black cow to Vaitarani*; similar notions can be found in the Atharvaveda and in the Upanishads. In the Homeric account several rivers are mentioned, in other Greek authors the river Acheron appears as a stream to be crossed by the dead etc. (West 2007: 389). In Bulgaria folk belief was recorded according to which the soul of the dead "after reaching a field, arrives at some kind of wide and deep river, which is the boundary between this and the other world" (Marinov 1994: 331). Similarly, Serbs are familiar with the folk notion of Jovan's river as an entrance to the other world (Čajkanović 1994: 3 42). In the Vologodskaja region in Russia, it was believed that on the 40th day after death the soul of the dead crossed the so-called "Forget River", thereby forgetting everything that had happened in this world (Успенский 1982: 56)[13]. A Slovenian etymologist France Bezlaj argued that the old Slavic verbal root

13 For more Slavic beliefs on water as a boundary between the world of the living and the world of the dead see Mencej 1997, 1998, 2004.

*ирьјь / *vyrьjьirь* meaning "a pool" (*locus fluminis profundior*, *piscina*, *fons*) or a "whirlpool" (*vortex*) in Slavic languages stands for the path to the world of the dead and at the same time means a place where according to Slavic folk beliefs the souls of the dead abide (Bezlaj 2003: 3, 548, 556, 561–562). According to one possible etymological explanation, the Slavic word *raj* (paradise) is also related to the water: it originates in the proto-Slavic name for a watercourse and would originally have meant "what belongs to the flow, what is located across the water or underwater" (Snoj 1997: 521). Some texts, which describe voyages in which the successive sojourns differ from those carried out in the Christian Hell and Paradise that belong to the Celtic tradition, are close to the pre-Christian models that surface in them. Islands populated with supernatural beings, awesome or enchanting, with frightening or seductive wonders are separated by seas filled with monsters and ordeals (Le Goff 1984: 24–25).

CONCLUSION

All of the places where time passes supernaturally, e. g. a cavern in a mountain or a hill, a mountain or a hill, a grave or a cave, a forest, or water are therefore related to the notions of the otherworld (the path to the otherworld and vice versa, the souls of the dead, the idea of a rebirth of the souls to our world). Even a mill and a garden which appear seldom in these legends bear a similar connotation: gardens are symbols of earthly paradise and have often been designed to underline this idea (Hankiss 2001: 105–106), and a mill is a typical location where, according to South Slavic folk beliefs and magic practices, this and the other world meet (Radenković 1996b: 127). We might wonder why it is exactly these places that actually have such an otherworldly connotation. Yulia Ustinova suggests that "caves became symbolic of the passage from this world to the divine realm of the ultimate truth, because images of the caves (in the form of vortex or tunnel sensations) often appear in hallucinations culminating in experiences of celestial bliss or revelation. Vortex, 'the cave in the mind', took on a physical shape and reality in the world of waking consciousness" (Ustinova 2009: 32). However, not all the places typically connected with the motif suggest such a direct explanation. Nevertheless, according to traditional folk beliefs, all of them are believed to present the borderline, the liminal space between this and that world. In a horizontal conceptualization of the world forest represents a liminal space that divides the inhabited world from the chaotic, dangerous world beyond, a threshold to the otherworld; the same holds for water bodies (rivers, lakes, seas...). According to a vertical structure of space, caves and graves are the places where earthly abode of humans and underearthly abode of the

dead meet. On the other hand, a mountain and a hill are the places where our world meets with the world above (cf. Eliade 1992: 15–58). All of these places are liminal insofar as they represent the dividing line between this and that world, at the same time enabling a communication between the two worlds, as "communication is possible precisely on the borders" (cf. Dragan 1999: 95).

A person who steps into these places therefore according to traditional conceptions enters another world and the changed perception of time seems to be a clear sign of that person's entry into another reality. A. Bruford even believed that "the association with named fairy hills in many parts of Perthshire, Argyll, Inverness-shire and Orkney does make it tempting to see this as a survival from the days when every community had a local entrance to the Underworld (and not an obvious one like *a cave* which was likely to provoke such legends by its mere existence, but a *natural hill or prehistoric tumulus* which was identified as a *sidhean*, a fairy dwelling)" (Bruford 1994–95: 16). At any rate, these were the places where those who deliberately sought the contact with the other world, for instance in performing magic practices, could go in order to accomplish their task. On the other hand, these were also the places that those who had no such intention had to avoid. The legends about the passage into supernatural time could therefore also be understood as "folkloric mechanisms for the erection and maintenance of spatial and temporal boundaries" (cf. Narváez 1991: 336, 354) which made people aware of permissible and impermissible movements in their immediate surroundings.

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Perėjimo į antgamtinį laiką erdvė

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojamos sąsajos tarp laiko ir erdvės sampratų, išryškėjančios perėjimo į antgamtinį laiką motyve (F 172, F 377). Pasakojimuose, kuriuose aptinkame šį motyvą, kalbama apie žmones, tam tikru būdu persikeliančius į tokį laiką, kurio tėkmė yra visai kitokia nei žmonių pasaulyje (t. y. laikas ten eina greičiau arba lėčiau). Sugrįžę į žmonių pasaulį, šie pasakojimų veikėjai suvokia, kad, nors patys mano aname pasaulyje užtrukę visai neilgai, iš tiesų prabėgo jau labai daug laiko. Šis motyvas pasitaiko sakmėse ir dainose, didaktiniuose pasakojimuose ir religiniuose tekstuose, jis paplitęs tiek Europos, tiek Rytų šalių literatūrose. Europos folklore jis bene ryškiausias tam tikro tipo pasakose. Iš jų turbūt žinomiausios – ATU 470 „Draugai ir po mirties“ bei jos potipiai – ATU 470A „Numirėlis svečiuose“ ir ATU 470B „Nemirtingųjų šalis“, taip pat tipas ATU 471A „Kunigas ir paukštis“. Žmogaus, patenkančio į kitokį laiką, motyvas būdingas ir daugybei visoje Europoje žinomų memoratų ir mitologinių sakmių, pasakojančių apie susidūrimus su antgamtinėmis būtybėmis. Vienas būdingas pavyzdys – sakmė apie du draugus, grįžtančius namo: vienas jų įžengia į užburtą ratą, kur „įstringa“ ištisus metus ir vieną dieną, nors pats tiki su fėjomis tepašokęs vos keletą minučių. Šis motyvas dažnai jungiamas su sakmėmis apie muzikantus, pasamdytus groti šokiams užburtame kalne. Kai jie kitądien po linksmybių grįžta namo, paaiškėja, kad prabėgo jau visas šimtmetis. Dar vienas sakmių tipas, kartais siejamas su perėjimu į antgamtinį laiką, yra sakmė apie miegančią kariuomenę: žmogus aptinka įėjimą į urvą, olą ar kalno gelmes, ten įžengęs pamato miegančius karius, riterius ar pan. Grįžęs jis sužino, kad per tą laiką praėjo ištisi metai.

Toliau straipsnyje bandoma nustatyti, kokiose vietose pakinta laiko tėkmė ir kokia simbolinė tų vietų reikšmė. Paaiškėja, kad dažniausiai į kitokį laiką patenkama urvuose, esančiuose kalne arba kalvoje, taip pat kape, oloje, miške ir vandenyje. Norint geriau suprasti, kodėl šis pasikeitimas įvyksta būtent tokiose vietose, pasitelkiamos platesnės simbolinės šių vietų konotacijos tradiciniuose liaudies tikėjimuose. Pasirodo, kad liaudies tikėjimuose visos šios vietos siejamos su anapusinio pasaulio samprata. Tokiu būdu įžengti į pasaulį, pasižymintį kitokiu laiku, atrodo įmanoma tiktai erdvėje, kuri pagal tradicinę sampratą laikoma riba tarp dviejų pasaulių: tai gali būti kalnas, kalva, kalne arba kalvoje esantis urvas, kapas, ola, miškas ar vanduo. Pagal tradicinę pasaulėžiūrą žmogus, įžengiantis į tokią vietą, neišvengiamai patenka į kitą pasaulį, o pakitusi laiko tėkmė aiškiai rodo, kad jis atsidūrė kitokioje tikrovėje.

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