

stage until strictly necessary. This attitude of what could be described as a “scenic *laissez-fair*” requires dancers to begin inhabiting a “real time”, not the time given in a written play or that of the director, but the time perceived with a phenomenological acuteness directed to the space, the other performers, the situation and, more than anything, their inner impulses.

The value of this book transcends the aesthetical or social resonance of the plays referred (“Alina.06” and “La Señorita Wang soy yo”) and it becomes interesting for specialists of dance anthropology to grasp the kind of creative processes conducted by South American directors who resonate with the so-called post-dramatic perspective. The application of which proves to require an eclectic exercise of composition that is always performed *in situ* and *ad hoc*. This topic might be of relevance following the somatic trend in dance studies since the author clarifies that the results obtained are not only materials with aesthetical connotations, but expressions of embodied knowledge. Nevertheless, Ortiz avoids touching upon how this type of knowledge can glint as substantial for other people beyond the few involved in such creative processes or how it can become significant from a larger scope, which is precisely the quality that knowledge has to have in order to surpass the level of plain anecdote.

Pócs, Éva: *Népi vallás és mágia Közép-Kelet-Európában. Válogatott tanulmányok II.* [Popular Religion and Magic in East-Central Europe. Selected Studies II]. 2018, Budapest: L'Harmattan – PTE Néprajz – Kulturális antropológia tanszék. 768. ISBN 978-963-4144-31-1

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On picking up the second volume of the selected studies of Éva Pócs, the first thing that strikes you is the sheer weight of the book. The first volume, published 17 years ago, contained 11 studies that filled 297 pages; the second volume comprises 24 studies and runs to 764 pages. Both volumes are structured according to similar principles, the first into three thematic clusters, and the second into five. In both volumes, the first cluster, which establishes the logical and theoretical framework of the inquiry, has the title “Belief system, belief beings.” The titles of the other clusters, in both volumes, indicate the phenomena and the imaginary beings explored by Éva Pócs over the past decades. In the 2002 volume, these are assumed under the headings “Seers, sorcerers, *táltoses*” and “On the borderline of religion and magic.” In the present volume, the titles are “Archaic religious techniques,” “Magic, sorcery,” “Witchcraft” and “Samples from the history of the discipline.”

Alongside the similarities, however, there are some slight but nevertheless important differences. While the title of the first volume is “Hungarian folk belief on the border of Central and Eastern Europe” (*A magyar néphit Közép- és Kelet-Európa határán*), the title of the present volume is “Popular religion and magic,” since, as Éva Pócs mentions in the preface, the traditional notion of ‘folk belief’ as a “separate entity, independent from

religion” has been questioned in recent research. Another interesting difference is the disappearance of the reference to ‘borders.’ Her previous research on witchcraft and fairy beliefs analyzed the exchanges, mergers, and transformations occurring in the border zone between Latin and Orthodox Christianity, and between Hungarian folk beliefs and those of the neighboring peoples of South-Eastern Europe. Her research on incantations explored the confrontation between the theologically elaborated ceremonies, liturgies, and symbols of the Christian church on the one hand, and the system recognized in ‘popular’ magical practices on the other, by examining their mutual impact and entanglement. In her present work, however, the emphasis is not so much on the borderlines that separate religion and magic, but on the characterization of a unified whole, the generic system of communication with the supernatural, and its mediators. The “border of Central and Eastern Europe” has thus become “East-Central Europe,” and the “borderline of religion and magic” has become simply “popular religion and magic.”

Faithful to this principle, most of the 24 studies collected in the present volume provide a systematic, quasi-monographic, theoretically founded investigation of the individual subjects, complemented by ample documentation, each compressed into the space of 30 to 60 pages. Since not all of them can be presented in a single review, I have selected a few examples that illustrate the problems Pócs addresses and the solutions she proposes.

The volume starts with the 66-page study “Nature and culture – Death or life? Dual beings and initiation for becoming human,” which was originally published in 2002. Éva Pócs has chosen to present, through the figure of the werewolf, dual beings that simultaneously share the features of humans (alive or dead) and demons/animals, and that are able to communicate between the human and the non-human world. Although most of her data derive from popular religion in Hungary and the neighboring peoples of South-Eastern Europe, instead of attempting to identify regional archaic origins she analyzes these mythological beings in the pan-European context with which Hungarian folk beliefs have historically been entwined in multiple ways. She enumerates the werewolf-like beings in these cultures: *prikulici*, *vukodlak*, *loup garou*, *Werwolf*, etc., before providing an overview of the historical and ethnographical sources related to werewolves, starting from Herodotus and extending to the Hungarian Folk Belief Archive, founded half a century ago and still being developed today by Pócs and her team, and the documentation of Hungarian witch trials, which is undergoing a parallel evolution. After a brief discussion of classical and recent international research, she proceeds to analyze this mythological being in three phases.

As a first step, she assembles the ‘werewolf kin,’ meaning all positive or negative beings who are capable of human–animal shapeshifting: vampires, witches, *strigoi*, *mora/Mahr/lidérc*, illness demons, forest spirits, fairies, dragons, wise shepherds, *grabancijaš*, *táltos*, and shaman. She includes here the hybrid monsters of antiquity: the Gorgon, harpies, centaurs, *lamia*, etc. In a second step, she offers a systematic analysis of the conditions required for these beings to undergo their metamorphosis, such as a special birth (a seventh or ninth child, born in a caul, or born with teeth); initiation dreams or rites; the concept of the animal shape being the soul of this double being, capable of departing from the body; the tools used for such shapeshifting (such as the ‘wolf shirt’); and privileged occasions (such as the New Moon). In the third phase, Éva Pócs draws on the theoretical toolkit of structural anthropology: the binary oppositions of ‘raw’ and ‘cooked’ developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss, juxtaposing nature and culture—the wild, uncivilized periphery

and the inhabited, domestic space. This enables her to reconstruct the rites that have served in different cultures as a defense against these ambivalent beings, or for converting such beings back from their ‘raw,’ animal shape to the status of civilized humans. These rituals are tied to daily subsistence activities, objects of the domestic space, or artisanal crafts, such as baking bread; spinning, weaving, and sewing clothes; or forging utensils. The fact that these features can be detected in werewolves’ archaic initiation rites for ‘becoming human’ again also helps to explain the role of ‘good werewolves’ in ecstatic struggles for the protection of agricultural fertility—making them similar, in this respect, to the *benandanti* examined by Carlo Ginzburg, or the Hungarian *táltos*.

The binary oppositions of nature/culture and raw/cooked are further explored in the second study in the volume, which is dedicated to the symbolic aspects of dress. Here, too, the double identity and shapeshifting of the werewolf serve as a starting point. The border of the werewolf’s body is his skin; the metamorphosis, the revelation of the *alter ego*, takes place via the reversal of this skin. In the related beliefs, this is induced by putting on the hairy ‘wolf shirt’ or ‘wolf belt,’ and in the opposite process the naked werewolf must get dressed, putting on a human shirt. The ritual role of nakedness and dress is another field in which numerous parallels can be explored: the ‘baptism shirt,’ ‘bridegroom shirt,’ etc. By examining the protective role of the German *Schutzhemd*, *Glückhemd*, Éva Pócs arrives at significant examples from universal religious history: the spinning/weaving deities, the ‘female fates,’ heavenly shirts, and diabolical cloaks.

Following this insight into the symbolic functions of dress, two further studies in this cluster deal with the anthropology of the domestic space in peasant houses: the religious role of the hearth, or the ‘sacred corner,’ and the cultic memory conveyed through interior decoration (supported by observations from her preferred field, Gyimesközéplök).

The concept of ‘archaic techniques,’ which features in the title of the second large thematic group, is a reference to the title of a classic monograph on shamanism and ecstasy by Mircea Eliade, and it indeed starts with a synthetic study on “Trance and vision in European popular cultures.” Here, the methodology used by Éva Pócs to address her subjects, and the ambition behind her inquiry are readily apparent: she interweaves historical and contemporary phenomena and manifestations of elite and popular culture, and approaches them with the integrated analytical concepts of folkloristics, anthropology, and psychology. She argues against the fragmented treatment of this “psychobiological and cultural variety,” instead proposing the need for a holistic understanding of ‘trance techniques’ and visionary experiences that show surprising similarities across ages, regions, and ethnic traditions.

Her analysis starts with an overview of the types of experiences that belong to this group: ecstasy, trance, *unio mystica*, vision, apparition, dream, ‘soul journey,’ near death experience (NDE), altered state of conscience (ASC), and extrasensory perception (ESP). Medieval ‘otherworld journeys,’ Christian visionary experience, and Marian apparitions are treated by using and critically appropriating the insights of Ernst Benz, Jacques Le Goff, Peter Dinzelsbacher, Aron Gurevich, Jean-Claude Schmitt, Carlo Ginzburg, William Christian, and many other authoritative international researchers. Communication with the dead is illustrated on the basis of witch trial documents and ethnographic data from Central and South-Eastern Europe. She devotes special attention in all these visionary experiences to the mediators (seers, saints, prophets, shamanistic sorcerers), and to their individual or collective ritual trance techniques (also present in New Age sects).

The monograph-style theoretical essay is followed in this chapter, too, by some interesting case studies on recent Transylvanian seers (Ilona Jánó, Rózsika Marián) and the Hungarian shamanistic Christmas-cycle ritual *regölés*. This cluster contains another large synthetic study, again 60 pages long, on the related theme of possession—by the dead, by fairies, spirits, demons, the devil, or God. This study, which provoked interesting debates in Hungarian academia, was the starting point for a large international conference organized by Éva Pócs together with András Zempléni in 2012 in Pécs, which brought to Hungary almost all renowned international researchers on this topic from the fields of anthropology, history, and psychology. The materials from this conference are still being edited.

Given the limited space in the present review, I provide only a brief overview of the third and fourth thematic clusters in Éva Pócs's collection of studies, each of which comprises five essays on the central field of her research: magic, sorcery, and witchcraft. Her contribution to this field of Hungarian research is well known, thus there is no need to enumerate her many merits, as illustrated in her monographs, conference proceedings, source editions, and databases, and in the Hungarian Scientific Research (Országos Tudományos Kutatási Alapprogramok, OTKA) and European Research Council (ERC) workgroups that she has organized and directed. The present volume includes studies on incantations, rain sorcery, the evil eye, the flight of witches, magical beliefs related to Saint George's Day, and the attribution of witchcraft first and foremost to women—with new insights and important findings in each case. In what follows, I explore one 60-page study in greater detail—"Maleficium narratives – conflicts – witch types (Sopron County, 1529–1768)." It is well known that Éva Pócs's witchcraft research is closely linked to the research group that she founded in the 1980s (in which I was an active participant). The initial objective of this group was the computer-based investigation of between 30,000 and 40,000 testimonies given by the accusers of around 4,000 witches in the documentation from over 2,000 Hungarian witch trials in the 16th to 18th centuries. The purpose of the research, besides collecting and indexing the wealth of witchcraft beliefs, was to document a 'sociology of accusation' (as proposed in the historical anthropology of Keith Thomas and Alan Macfarlane) and to characterize the types of stereotypical narratives contained in these accounts (following the morphological approach elaborated by Vladimir Propp). While the extensive exploration of witch trial documents by the research group has led, in the past four decades, to more than a dozen volumes of precious source editions, the related database is still under construction, and the various digital techniques for coding and indexing these *maleficium* narratives has not yielded the expected easy access to meaningful observations.

The study by Éva Pócs reproduced here provides fascinating proof that the traditional method of manually assembling, counting, and structuring data from sources still serves well in the context of modern, quantitatively framed interrogations. Based on data for 75 witches who were tried in Sopron over 250 years, she was able to distinguish four basic types from the witchcraft accusation narratives provided by witnesses: 'wronged witches' (who do harm out of personal vengeance due to not receiving what they asked for, or to bearing some other grudge against the victim); 'learned witches' (who acquired their magical expertise by learning, or who were practiced in healing or midwifery); 'supernatural witches' (capable of making nightly appearances, flying to the diabolical witches' sabbath, shapeshifting, etc.); and 'persecuted witches' (victims, in periods of

generic witch panic, on the basis of suspicious signs). It is a pity that this well-argued, case study-based essay has not been available to the international public before now (it was first published in 1995), and that it is still available exclusively in Hungarian, as it represents a major contribution to witchcraft research. It contributes to the understanding that, although the same cruel fate of burning awaited all ‘witches,’ the different social and emotional tensions, the nature of the scapegoat mechanism, and the kind of vicious accusations fired at them may have differed greatly.

The volume of selected studies closes with two essays on two prominent figures from Hungarian ethnography: Arnold Ipolyi and Lajos Vargyas. Although the anniversary celebrations for these two ethnographers provided the opportunity for Éva Pócs to write her studies, the intention goes beyond the offering of well-deserved praise for two outstanding scholars. The essays allowed her to formulate her own critical opinions on yet another subject related to those discussed so far in connection with the present volume—the so-called ancient religion of the Hungarians. Éva Pócs has contributed to these debates on several occasions in her research by expressing her critical attitude towards the uncritical and anachronistic backward projection of ethnographic data from the 18th to 20th centuries – owing to their ‘archaic’ flavor – to Hungarian prehistory. Her recent studies on the Hungarian *táltos* – not reproduced in this volume – have expressed serious doubts with respect to the earlier consensus among historians and archeologists regarding the presence and central role of these shaman-like sorcerers in the ‘ancient religion’ of the pagan Hungarians.

The essay on Arnold Ipolyi, author of “Hungarian Mythology” (*Magyar mythologia*) (1854), situates this work in the context of 19th-century national romanticism and the impact of the attractive model of Jakob Grimm. At the same time, by reviewing the impact of Ipolyi, which extends to the present day, she is able to express her reservations with respect to partisans of this type of ahistorical reconstruction. This is certainly not a reproach that can be leveled against Lajos Vargyas, an expert on the history of Hungarian popular ballads and historical folklore in general, and another important authority among seekers of the “ancient religion” of the Hungarians. The essay on his work allows Éva Pócs to demonstrate how Vargyas was constantly changing and revising his judgment on the East–West alternative, the explanation of the origins of certain phenomena in Hungarian culture, obedient to the demands of empirical proof.

This rich second volume of selected studies by Éva Pócs has no conclusion, although it clearly illustrates the ‘state of the art’ in the evolution of her scholarly oeuvre. Her work over many years on the theoretical and critical categorization of the multiplicity of archaic religious techniques and exotic belief figures; and her analysis of the vast amounts of historical and ethnographical data on supernatural, magical figures, have reached a new stage in the past two to three decades. Having carefully constructed synthetic overviews of many individual subfields – incantation, witchcraft, fairy belief, vision, trance, possession, weather magic, shapeshifting, communication with the dead, and ‘ancient religion’ – the moment of completion of the overall synthesis on ‘mediator figures’ in communication with the supernatural is rapidly approaching. As her colleagues are aware, the Hungarian and English versions of this ‘great book’ are almost ready, and publishers and the discipline as a whole are eagerly awaiting its delivery. The present volume of selected studies allows us to witness much of the vast work that has paved the way for this synthesis, and to appreciate the many fascinating paths that have led towards it.