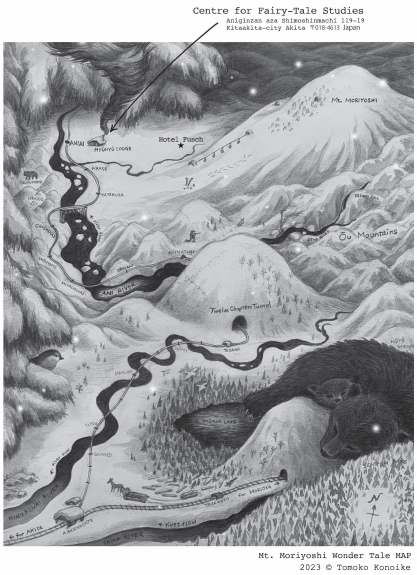
Synthesis: an Anglophone Journal of Comparative Literary Studies

No 15 (2022)

Re-Storying the World for Multispecies Survival



Re-Storying the World for Multispecies Survival

Synthesis 15. 2022

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Making a Multispecies Fairy-Tale Library

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doi: 10.12681/syn.35725

Making a Multispecies Fairy-Tale Library[1]

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Abstract
What kind of multispecies story-scape may emerge if we make a library of multicultural fairy tales by classifying them according to the experiences of other-than-humans? When re-classified from a multispecies point of view, the same old stories may reveal hitherto unnoticed narratives that have been unfolding in the more-than-human world. In this essay, I will first point out the anthropocentric biases in the tale classification system known as the Aarne-Thompson-Uther tale type index, which has been used widely by international researchers working on folktales and other kinds of traditional narratives. I will then explore the possibilities of repurposing the existing classification system for designing a new framework that would better reflect other-than-human worldviews by shifting the focus from human-centred dramas to multispecies relationalities. Finally, I will explain my idea of making a Multispecies Fairy-Tale Library across different narrative traditions and suggest possible uses of this library for imagining a multispecies future.

Introduction

What kind of multispecies story-scape may emerge if we make a library of multicultural fairy tales by classifying them according to the experiences not only of human beings and their fictional alter egos in animal form, but also of other-than-human beings who perceive, experience, and inhabit the world in different ways from the ways humans do? In fairy tales from around the world, a plot often involves, and sometimes even requires, interspecies interactions, and nonhuman animals are generally endowed with cognitive powers, emotions, and agency just like humans. In this sense, it can be said that fairy tales advocate an equal, if not always harmonious, relationship between human and nonhuman animals, and there is something that we can learn from

this rich and enduring repository of multispecies narrative imagination across cultures.

As a first step towards reinterpreting fairy tales from a multispecies perspective, this essay explores the possibilities of repurposing the existing tale classification systems in order to design a new framework that would better reflect multispecies worldviews across different narrative traditions. The reason I focus on the classification of tale types is that the way we classify things, be they stories or species, both reflects and defines the way we perceive our place in the world and relate to the world around us. Therefore, if we want to change the way we read familiar tales so as to see them from a new perspective which would foster multispecies coexistence, we must begin by examining the anthropocentric biases underpinning the existing classification systems.

The ATU Tale Type Index

The Aarne-Thompson-Uther (ATU) tale type index is a standard reference in folklore studies worldwide today. The tale type index was first designed in 1910 by Antti Aarne as a system of European tale types and was twice revised in 1928 and 1961 by Stith Thompson to include non-European tales. It was revised again in 2004 by Hans-Jörg Uther, who expanded its range of international tales and incorporated the results of historical-comparative folklore research available at the time. The ATU index lists tale types numbered from 1 to 2399, which are divided into seven broad categories. Each category is assigned a group of numbers, and tale types from 1 to 299 are classified under the category of Animal Tales as follows:

1. Animal Tales	1-299
2. Tales of Magic	300-749
3. Religious Tales	750-849
4. Realistic Tales	850-999
5. Tales of the Stupid Ogre (Giant, Devil)	1000-1199
6. Anecdotes and Jokes	1200-1999
7. Formula Tales	2000-2399

This system of tale type classification allows researchers to identify the underlying structure of a tale and to find other tales which share the same elements or motifs. Each motif has a number which can be cross-referenced with *The Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, a six-volume catalogue of motifs compiled by Thompson between 1932 and 1958. Thompson's motif index is

commonly used together with the ATU index for comparative analysis of folktales.

In tales categorised under Animal Tales in the ATU index, main roles are given to nonhuman animals. However, animals also often appear as important characters in tales classified under the category of Tales of Magic, which always involve supernatural elements, and which largely correspond to tales generally referred to as 'fairy tales' in English. Whereas folktales classified under the other categories may also have supernatural elements, the supernatural is vital to the plot development of Tales of Magic.

From a multispecies point of view, having Animal Tales as a separate category from Tales of Magic causes at least two problems. On the one hand, it can be regarded as a way of systematically excluding tales which feature animals as main characters from Tales of Magic, a category usually seen as the standard genre of fairy tales. On the other hand, because Aarne's selection of tales in Animal Tales includes many animal fables which are meant to be interpreted allegorically rather than as Tales of Magic, this classification leads the reader to see animal actors in this category more as allegorical characters representing human attributes than as nonhuman beings who have their own needs, desires, and complex lives. On the other hand, animals in Tales of Magic are regarded in this classification system as subsidiary characters who play merely functional or marginalised roles, such as helpers or adversaries of human protagonists, even when they seem to play a chief role in the plot. Re-framing these tales with a more animal-oriented classification system would encourage the reader to recognise animal characters in both categories as more autonomous subjects.

In what follows, I will first point out some of the anthropocentric biases inherent in the ATU tale type index. I will then suggest a way of re-organising the categories so as to bring out less anthropocentric worldviews often embedded in traditional narratives of multispecies entanglements. In doing so, I will also refer to the Japanese adaptation of the ATU index by Keigo Seki and compare the way it treats animal characters with the way the ATU index does. My aim here is not to replace the categories in the ATU index but to offer a new use of the ATU index for the purpose of developing what mightA be called multispecies narratology. It must be noted that my project is still only in the embryonic stage, and I will only suggest broad categories and sketch out the strategy below. I will then explain the idea of a Multispecies Fairy-Tale Library consisting of a set of picturebooks arranged according to the classification of what I call Multispecies Fairy Tales, the idea I will discuss in more detail below. I intend to develop this library to be used by people of all

ages and diverse backgrounds, and their feedback will be used to review and revise the classification. Therefore, my project consists of two components: a selection and classification of multispecies fairy tales and a creation of a library based on the classification in progress. It is meant to be an organic and open-ended project, as it is tied to what is happening in the real world and how each species, including humans, relates to the constantly changing environment in their attempt to ensure the survival of their own as well as other species.

Anthropocentric Biases in the ATU Index

Before discussing the problems with the classification of Animal Tales in the ATU index, let me quickly explain the two basic key terms, "tale type" and "motif," used in folktale research. A "tale type," according to Alan Dundes, "is a *composite* plot synopsis corresponding in exact verbatim detail to no one individual version but at the same time encompassing to some extent *all* of the extant versions of that folktale" (196; emphasis in original). To put it simply, a tale type is a recurring self-sufficient plot composed of a group of motifs. And a "motif" in folktale research, according to Stith Thompson, refers to "the smallest element in a tale having a power to persist in tradition" (1946, 415). Motifs can be actions, occurrences, settings, objects, and characters.

Problems with the category of Animal Tales in Aarne's tale type index have been pointed out by folklorists. Aarne divides Animal Tales into seven sub-categories:

1. Wild Animals
2. Wild Animals and Domestic Animals
3. Man and Wild Animals
4. Domestic Animals
5. Birds
6. Fish
7. Other Animals and Objects

Carl Wilhelm von Sydow, in his essay "Popular Prose Traditions and Their Classification," published in 1948, points out that Aarne's categorisation of Animal Tales uses "two different bases of classification, which seem to disagree with each other and cause confusion" (130). Von Sydow states that the first four are divided on the basis of whether animals are wild or domestic, whereas the latter three are classified according to classes of animals. He notes that Aarne himself explained that by "animals" in the first four groups he

meant "mammals" (131). This basis of division, to von Sydow, is problematic in that "it pays no regard to the action or composition of the fables" and that "different variants of quite the same action types must be placed in different groups if the system is exactly followed" (131). Its mammalian/non-mammalian division also seems to show a mammal-centric bias underlying Aarne's classification of Animal Tales, and although Uther's revision in 2004 removes the two categories of Birds and Fish and incorporates them into the last category of Other Animals and Objects, it retains the mammalian/non-mammalian division, which may not be a useful way of classifying animals in folktales. The classification I propose below attempts to re-conceptualise the way we classify animals in folktales in the light of recent research into the lives of nonhuman organisms and human-animal relations, and this requires a collaboration with biologists and experts in other areas.

Another weakness in Aarne's classification of Animal Tales that von Sydow points out has to do with how it handles the situation when there are different kinds of animals who play main roles in a tale and who belong to different sub-categories in the tale type index. Take, for example, tale type number 57, "Raven with Cheese in His Mouth," placed under group 1, "Wild Animals," because the fox, one of the main actors, is a wild mammal. However, the raven, who should be placed under group 5, "Birds," can also be seen to have a chief part in the action and alone appears in the headline of this tale type. As von Sydow points out, "the question about who plays the principal role in the action is not so easily decided" (133), and this also applies to tales which feature human actors. Placing a tale under a certain group in the index, therefore, involves an interpretation of whose actions are more important than others. In the case of "Raven with Cheese in His Mouth," the clever fox, a heavily allegorised mammal in traditional narratives, is given priority over the raven, a non-mammalian wild animal who, in reality, is not as stupid as depicted in this tale.

To overcome these problems, von Sydow proposes that "the trickster and didactic fables about animals…must be grouped together under the general rubric Animal Fables" (143). He also states: "One can almost formulate a rule that if an animal tale can suitably be illustrated by dressing the actors in human clothes and making them pose as human beings it belongs here" (135). This is an intriguing proposition, which in my view introduces another kind of arbitrariness to the classification. Tales like "Little Red Riding Hood," which the ATU index categorises into Tales of Magic, can be read as didactic tales, and the wolf, or other kinds of nonhuman predators in this tale type, could be illustrated as an animal wearing human clothes and posing as

human beings. Under which category would von Sydow place "Little Red Riding Hood," Animal Fables or Tales of Magic? In any case, that he brings the idea of visual representation into the classification of animal characters is important when we re-examine the categories of tales involving multispecies.

Alan Dundes in his article "The Motif-Index and the Tale Type Index: A Critique" (1997) also points out several problems regarding the motif and tale type classification systems. Among them, the problem of "overlapping," which, he claims, "occurs within *both* the conceptualization of motifs and tale types," seems especially relevant here (196-197; emphasis in original). He attributes the main cause of overlapping tale types to Aarne's mistake in his classification scheme:

> Aarne elected—in retrospect unwisely—to classify folktales partly on the basis of dramatis personae. Thus his first section consisted of animal tales (AT 1-299) in which the principal actors in the tales were animal characters… Aarne's mistake was not classifying tales on the basis of narrative plot rather than the dramatis personae. The reality of folktales, for example, demonstrates that the same tale can be told with either animal or human characters. (197)

In his view, the tale type index should be organised according to what characters do, rather than who they are, since attributes of characters including species can be replaceable in folktales. He, therefore, argues that prioritising species on the first level of classification is contradictory. However, why do animals appear so large in the world of folktales? Can they all be replaced by humans? As von Sydow points out, "[t]he animals play such a large role in man's life, that a tale recording the fate and deeds of human beings very often gives room also to animals" (133-134).

A Japanese adaptation of the ATU index by Keigo Seki, published in 1950, tries to solve this problem not by eliminating the category of Animal Tales, but by classifying tales listed under Animal Tales in terms of their actions, rather than in terms of the kinds of animals, that is, wild or domestic, mammalian or non-mammalian. Seki first classifies Japanese folktales by following the AT index and divides them into three large groups, Animal Tales, Standard Tales (also translated as Ordinary Tales), and Jokes.[2] Although Seki's definition of Animal Tales basically follows Aarne's, that is, tales in which anthropomorphised animals take a main part, Seki's classification seems to reflect a more animal-oriented interpretation of tales, as it focuses on what animals do, what they want, and how they relate to other animals. Seki divides Animal Tales into the following ten sub-categories:

1. Animal Conflict (1-6), in which animals fight against each other.

2. Animal Distribution (7-10), in which animals fight over the distribution of found or stolen property.
3. Animal Competition (11-19), in which apparently unequal animals compete with each other.
4. Animal Competition over *Mochi* (20-24), in which animals compete with each other over the distribution of *mochi* (a rice cake). This is a combination of the two categories above, Animal Distribution and Animal Competition.
5. The Battle of the Monkey and the Crab (25-31), named after the title of a well-known tale in which animals fight against each other out of compassion for an unfortunate animal.
6. Crackling Mountain (32A-E), named after the title of a tale in which animals fight against each other out of compassion for an unfortunate human.
7. The Leak in an Old House (33A-B), named after the title of a tale in which animals fight against each other and humans take part in the conflict.
8. Animal Society (34-45), in which animals relate to each other without leading to conflict.
9. Reincarnation as Birds (46-62), in which humans die and reincarnate as birds.
10. Origin of Animals (63-83), in which origins of animals and plants are explained, i.e., aetiological tales.

Seki states that the classification above does not cover all Animal Tales and that some of the Animal Tales are included in Standard Tales because they do not have the form of Animal Tales (59-60). This explanation is confusing because, although Seki defines Animal Tales as tales with a plot consisting of a single motif, there are a number of tales with more than one motif which are placed under the category of Animal Tales. In fact, Seki's definition of the Standard Tale is rather narrow; he states that it has the form of "a journey to the other world with the aim of marriage" (5). This form, however, does not apply to many of the Japanese tales with supernatural elements as they tend to end with other kinds of resolutions than marriage. Where, then, does his idea of the standard form of fairy tales come from?

It is probably influenced by the very first tale type that the AT index lists under the category of Tales of Magic, that is, "The Dragon-Slayer" (ATU 300). This tale type was regarded by Vladimir Propp as the prototype of Russian fairy tales in his *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928), which attempts to identify a deep structure underlying all fairy tales. From a multispecies perspective, the canonisation of the Dragon-Slayer tale in a folktale classification system needs to be re-examined for its human-oriented bias. The tale is centred on

the human hero's journey and depicts the dragon as an obstacle to be defeated by the hero, who is then rewarded with the princess's hand in marriage. Although the dragon is a fabulous character that does not exist in the natural world, it is generally depicted as a hybrid of real-life animals such as a serpent, an alligator, a lizard, a bird, and a dinosaur. In myths and legends from around the world, the dragon often symbolises the power of nature. In Japanese tradition, for example, the dragon is a deity associated with natural elements, especially with water and air. The dragon, therefore, is a symbol of natural forces taking the form of a hybrid creature combining animals living in the natural world. In this sense, the dragon can be regarded as the prototype of wild animals whose forces cannot be controlled by humans. The Dragon-Slayer tale, therefore, can be read as a story that centres around the human-wildlife conflict and ends with the former's conquest of the latter, as is indicated in the title of the tale, "The Dragon-Slayer." Re-labelling this tale type as "The Slayed Dragon" does not help, as it merely emphasises the object status of the nonhuman character symbolising nature's forces. What is needed for a multispecies classification of folktales is a more radical re-framing than this of tales, characters, actions, and motifs that involve various species.

To re-interpret tales like the Dragon-Slayer tale from a less human-centred point of view, it is useful to learn from the substantial work on feminist re-interpretations of fairy tales that has appeared since the 1970s. Among them, feminist critiques of the Proppian morphological model, the tale type index, and the Motif-Index are particularly relevant here. The fact that the Dragon-Slayer tale is chosen as the prototype of fairy tales reveals the androcentrism of this model. In this tale, the princess functions as a passive and static object to be abducted, rescued, and acquired as a reward after the male protagonist goes through an adventure in which he slays the powerful evildoer and saves the princess and the community to which she belongs. From the perspective of feminist narratology developed by such works as Teresa de Lauretis's *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema (1984),* the desire that drives the plot of "The Dragon-Slayer" is that of the male conqueror, and this male-centred narrative desire for self-aggrandisement also drives the plot of popular fairy tales about Innocent Persecuted Heroines such as "Cinderella," "Snow White," "Rapunzel," and "Sleeping Beauty." The canonisation of the Innocent Persecuted Heroine genre as a quintessentially female tale has been criticised by Cristina Bacchilega and other folklorists for its sexist bias emphasising and naturalising the passivity and the victimhood of the female protagonist (Bacchilega; Swann Jones). In addition to these critical works, I find Angela Carter's female-centred collection of multicultural

fairy tales in her two *Virago Books of Fairy Tales* inspiring in the way its labelling of tale groups, such as "Brave, Bold and Wilful," and "Clever Women, Resourceful Girls and Desperate Stratagems," re-draws a map of story-scape so that it gives voice to more diverse heroines all around the world.

Going back to Seki's Japanese tale type index, in contrast to the ATU index's centralisation of the Dragon-Slayer tale, Seki sees the animal bride and bridegroom tales as the most typical kind of Standard Tales in Japanese folktales and places the "Beauty and the Beast" tale type at the beginning of Standard Tales. Identifying a heteronormative marriage as the 'standard' fairy-tale happy ending itself raises important questions about gender and sexuality as well as Eurocentrism, for many of the Japanese tales of interspecies marriage do not follow the plot pattern of "Beauty and the Beast," as I will show below. But here, I would like to focus on the question of the place of animals in Standard Tales, a category which, like Tales of Magic in the ATU index, regards humans as the chief actors.

Looking at the tales catalogued by Seki under the tale types dealing with the motif of interspecies marriage, such as the Nonhuman Bride tale type, one may wonder why these tales are not regarded as Animal Tales. If we follow one of the definitions of Animal Tales regarding the chief actor, these tales of interspecies marriage can also be regarded as Animal Tales, as the animal partners do play principal roles in them. Placing these tales under the category of Standard Tales, which by definition prioritises humans' actions and desires, serves to dismiss the autonomy of animal actors and relegates them to a subsidiary position in a human-centred plot. What is more, many of the animal partners in Japanese tales of interspecies marriage are animals by nature and, even when they transform themselves into humans temporarily, they remain animals until the end of the story and eventually go back to their own realm. This contrasts with European tales of interspecies marriage like "Beauty and the Beast" and "The Frog King," in which the nonhuman partner turns out to be a human in the end. I am not suggesting, however, that tales of interspecies marriage should be classified in terms of whether the character is originally human or nonhuman, because it can be argued that, even when characters are taking animal form only temporarily, the human-animal union is the central focus of these stories. Rather, what I suggest here is a classification of tales which is based on how characters relate to other species in search of happiness and which treats animals neither as completely anthropomorphised nor as props to develop a human-centred plot. This requires not only a re-configuration of the way in which tales are divided between Animal Tales and Human Tales but also a radical re-imagining of

who animals are, and how they are entangled with other species, including humans.

A Classification of Multispecies Fairy Tales

I would like to build on Seki's re-classification of Animal Tales based on animals' actions and suggest creating a new broad category called Multispecies Tales. Multispecies Tales can be defined as tales in which an interaction between different species is essential to the plot development. This category encompasses all the seven broad categories in the ATU index including Tales of Magic, Religious Tales, Formula Tales, and others. It also includes tales involving animal characters that are usually interpreted allegorically, such as animal fables, if they do not preclude non-allegorical readings. The classification places equal emphasis on the significance of actions made by both human and animal characters, rather than prioritising human actions. The aim of extracting and re-classifying existing tale types to create this new category is to re-visit the available corpus of folktales with a new focus on interspecies interactions and multispecies entanglements.

Multispecies Tales can be divided into the following six sub-categories:

1. Tales of Interspecies Empathy: for example, the Japanese tale "The Tongue-Cut Sparrow" can be included here. This tale is classified as ATU 480, a Tale of Magic with the heading "The Kind and Unkind Girls," which shows that it has been given a human focus, but it can also be said that the tale centres on the interaction between the sparrow and the kind human. Another Japanese tale "The Old Man Who Made the Withered Tree Blossom," also classified as ATU 480, should belong here because it centres on a dog-human interaction based on empathy. "The Grateful Wolf" (Seki 228), a tale found in Japan and other regions, is another example.
2. Tales of Interspecies Conflict: e.g., "Little Red Riding Hood" (ATU 333), "The Battle between the Monkey and the Crab" (ATU 9 "Unjust Partner")
3. Tales of Interspecies Cooperation: e.g., "The Bremen Town Musicians" (ATU 130), "The Giant Turnip" (ATU 2044)
4. Tales of Interspecies Transformation, in which interspecies marriage may occur, but the focus is on transformation: e.g., "Brother and Sister" (ATU 450), "Umaoidori (Horse Chasing Bird)" (Seki 52)
5. Tales of Interspecies Marriage, in which interspecies transformation may occur, but the focus is on marriage and/or interspecies offspring: e.g., "Beauty and the Beast" (ATU 425C), "The Dog Bridegroom" (Seki 106)
6. Tales of Multispecies Society, which depict more neutral interactions among different species than empathy, conflict, or cooperation. I will discuss this category in more detail below.

Due to space constraints, here I will explain only the last category, Tales of Multispecies Society, as this may be the least clear idea among them.

In Tales of Multispecies Society, the main emphasis of the story falls not on individual characters' actions and fortunes, but on the way a society works and survives in the face of a crisis. The story that first comes to my mind is a popular African tale about a magic tree that bears delicious fruit even in a time of a severe drought if someone says the name of the tree underneath it. Various versions of this story can be found throughout Africa with different names for the tree and with different kinds of animals. In a tale originating in Gabon, called "The Magic Bojabi Tree," Python is guarding the magic tree, "covered in red, ripe fruit smelling of sweetest mangoes, fat as melons, juicy as pomegranates" (Hofmeyr), and he will only let the hungry animals eat the fruit if they can tell him the name of the tree. Elephant, Giraffe, Zebra, Monkey, and Tortoise take it in turns to travel across the plains and ask Lion, the King of the Jungle, for the answer. Tiny Tortoise is the only one who manages to remember the name of the tree.

This tale is often interpreted as a fable about the virtue of being slow but steady. However, it can be also read as a story about how a society which consists of different species overcomes a challenging situation, in this case, a drought. One may classify this tale as a tale of Interspecies Cooperation, but the tale does not particularly emphasise how animals cooperate with each other; each animal acts independently by choosing to travel alone and does not seem to be interested in working together and bonding with the other animals. And the tale is not focused on the trials and tribulations of Tiny Tortoise, who may be regarded as the hero of this tale. Rather, the focus of this tale seems to lie on the survival of a community bound by a common destiny. It is also important that there is no villain to be slayed in this tale—not even Python coiling around the Bojabi tree. Apparently, it is not Python who caused the drought, and, as a member of the animal society, he follows its rule and simply slides away when he hears the magic word.

Another tale that falls under the category of Multispecies Society is a Ukrainian tale called "The Mitten." There are different versions of the tale, but generally a person loses their mitten in a forest on a snowy day. One by one, various animals come and settle inside the mitten to stay warm. The animals get progressively larger, and eventually, the mitten spills out all the animals into the cold. The tale is popular in modern Ukraine and other countries including Japan, where the picturebook adaptation published in 1965 has been widely read. This tale may be read as a tale of Interspecies Empathy, but to me the emphasis seems to fall less on the animals' empathy for each other's

predicament, than on the sharing of a resource that becomes available only by chance when a person drops their mitten inadvertently. Before settling in, each newcomer asks permission from the animals already inside, who respond in a not particularly friendly way, but nevertheless tolerate their request, saying "Well, OK then," or "If it can't be helped."

This story is of course fiction, and no mitten would, in reality, stretch to accommodate a rabbit, a fox, a wolf, and a bear. But I was reminded of this tale when I read the Japanese primatologist Juichi Yamagiwa's account of a memorable episode from his fieldwork in Africa (59-61). One day, while he was observing a troop of mountain gorillas high up on a mountain, suddenly rain started to pour down and, because it was about 3,000 metres above sea level, it became extremely cold. In such circumstances, gorillas would take shelter in tree hollows until it stops raining. Yamagiwa also found a tree hollow just the right size for himself and went in. Then a young male gorilla, whom his research team had named Titus, seeing that all the tree hollows were already occupied, decided to squeeze himself into the hollow in which the primatologist was already sheltering. As there was not enough space for two animals, Titus first tried to push Yamagiwa aside, but as the latter would not give up his place, they ended up lying on top of each other face to face in a tiny hole. After a while, Titus started to relax and slept with his chin on the primatologist's shoulder, while the latter could hardly breathe due to the gorilla's weight and smell. This episode of interspecies relationship, also depicted in "The Mitten" in a more fantastical manner, seems to show the importance of sharing the limited resources for the preservation of the self and the other, regardless of species.

A Multispecies Fairy-Tale Library

I believe that making a library consisting of picturebook adaptations of fairy tales would help develop the idea of multispecies re-classification of tales, because the medium of the picturebook, which synthesises words and images, makes visible certain assumptions about animals and their lives in the way words alone cannot do and, in doing so, may encourage the reader to re-think and question those assumptions. As I argued elsewhere,[3] picturing fairy-tale animals such as the wolf in "Little Red Riding Hood" as a biped or a quadruped, clothed or unclothed, and with human expressions or animal expressions reveals social and cultural assumptions about human-animal relations. Picturebook illustrations may also foreground the animality of animals in didactic tales in which animals are used primarily for an allegorical purpose;

in other words, such illustrations may help restore animality to animals allegorised in narrative traditions. The fox and the wolf can be seen as examples of such animals. Moreover, since I started selecting picturebooks for this library, I have noticed that tales from oft-marginalised cultures such as traditional indigenous tales seem to occupy a more prominent position in this new classification. This may be partly because in indigenous societies animals and humans are more intricately entangled and also because the idea of magic concerning human-animal interactions and transformations is conceived differently from modernised societies. Another important point I have noticed is that tales classified as Formula Tales, listed as the last group in the seven large categories of the ATU index, become more visible and even dominant among Multispecies Fairy-Tale picturebooks. The category of Formula Tales seems to be given relatively less attention in folklore research than other categories, perhaps because of its simple structure consisting of a single motif repeated several times and also because of its playful mode. However, this formula seems to work particularly well with the picturebook format of storytelling; every time you turn a page, you expect, but are nevertheless surprised by, yet another larger or smaller creature joining the scene, each one making the world a little bit more diverse than it was on the previous page.

In the future, I am planning to hold a series of Multispecies Fairy-Tale Library workshops while developing the classification system in collaboration with a multicultural and multidisciplinary team of folklorists, literary scholars, librarians, information scientists, environmental biologists, neuroscientists, psychologists, anthropologists, artists, illustrators, designers, and children in various parts of the world.

Conclusion

Through the process of re-conceptualising the classification of fairy tales from a multispecies perspective in the way I suggested above, a new story-scape will gradually emerge, where multitudes of species are inhabiting the world in their own ways and are seeking their own kinds of happiness by sometimes helping each other, sometimes conflicting with each other, and sometimes trying not to get in each other's way. This practice of multispecies narratology will not only help people imagine a society which is more hospitable to other-than-human beings, but also allow them to take renewed pleasure from diverse traditions of storytelling, an art that people all over the world have long been cherishing in pursuit of a better future.

Notes

[1] This research was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP20K00138. This article is based also on the keynote lecture given at the conference *Narrating the Multispecies World: Stories in Times of Crises, Loss, Hope*, organised by the Institute of European Ethnology, University of Würzburg, on 4 August 2023.

[2] All translations from Japanese texts are my own.

[3] See my essay "Entangled Paths: Post-Anthropocentric Picturebook Retellings of 'Little Red Riding Hood."

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