

NIEMI Emma / НИЕМИ Эмма

Independent scholar / Независимый исследователь

Russia, Petrozavodsk / Россия, Петрозаводск

[kivameowth@gmail.com](mailto:kivameowth@gmail.com)

## THE IMAGE OF TROLLS IN THE GRAPHIC NOVEL SERIES *HILDAFOLK*

### ОБРАЗ ТРОЛЛЕЙ В ГРАФИЧЕСКОМ РОМАНЕ «ХИЛЬДАФОЛК»

**Аннотация:** Исследование посвящено сверхъестественным существам, обитающим в горах и лесах и носящим имя тролль. Автор выявляет интертекстуальные отсылки используемого британским иллюстратором Люком Пирсоном образа к древнескандинавским мифам, текстам Средневековья и раннего Нового времени, а также народным легендам и верованиям Северной Европы. В работе проанализированы пять черт, которые характерны для образа троллей в североευропейских нарративах и используются в графическом романе Люка Пирсона «Хильдафолк»: превращение в камень, обитание в горах или лесах, страх перед колоколами, влияние солнечного света и мотив подменыша.

**Keywords / Ключевые слова:** Trolls, Scandinavian folklore, Nordic Europe, Luke Pearson, *Hildafolk*, Hilda, supernatural, stone, mountain, bell, sunlight, changeling / Тролли, скандинавский фольклор, Северная Европа, Люк Пирсон, «Хильдафолк», Хильда, сверхъестественное, камень, гора, колокол, солнечный свет, подменыш

*'Wait... I've seen this before...  
Back in the mountain...'  
(Luke Pearson, Hilda and the Mountain King)*

### Introduction

Trolls being supernatural creatures are widespread in corpus of the Old Norse narratives: myths, Scandinavian mediaeval and Early Modern texts such as Icelandic, Norwegian sagas and historical works of that period. Furthermore, from a geographical point of view the term troll is used in oral and literal sources throughout all the Nordic Countries. This article covers the image of trolls constructed in the modern children's graphic novel series called *Hildafolk*.<sup>1</sup> Keeping in mind that trolls occur not only in fictional narratives such as fairytales but before that in vernacular traditions, tracing allusions to Scandinavian folk legends and beliefs is of a high importance. This research reflects explicit and implicit references to these interactions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Luke Pearson, *Hilda and the Troll* (London: Nobrow Press, 2010); Luke Pearson, *Hilda and the Midnight Giant* (London: Nobrow Press, 2011); Luke Pearson, *Hilda and the Bird Parade* (London: Nobrow Press, 2012); Luke Pearson, *Hilda and the Black Hound* (London: Nobrow Press, 2014); Luke Pearson, *Hilda and the Stone Forest* (London: Nobrow Press, 2016); Luke Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King* (London: Nobrow Press, 2019).

However, imposing preconceptions of the recent past to old sources results in a distortion of the image. In the nineteenth century following the tendencies of post-enlightenment movements and taxonomy in natural kingdom, folklorists began to work on systematisation of supernatural beings. Legends and beliefs were collected and written down primarily in rural areas of Scandinavia during that time. Therefore, such narratives only partly reflect Old Norse oral traditions of the distant past but are still comparatively fully absorbed by the modern scholarship discourse. Contemporary researches are conducted predominantly through a lens of such perception and systematisation.<sup>2</sup>

The starting point for the analysis in this study is the beliefs and legends about supernatural beings as they appeared in written collections one or at least two centuries ago. A popular consciousness is determined by those narratives. Since the theme of this article is to show how trolls are presented in a contemporary novel for children folklore narratives are a good base to reflect them. Although the attention is also paid to the misnomer of the older meanings. However, the focus of the research is still in part based on the Old Norse terms as prototypes for the more modern ones.

A junior audience is very receptive to any magic. With their open minded attitude and a belief in wonders, crossing the otherworld boundaries seems to be easy and obvious. In the Middle Ages children themselves were called *others* as they possess uncertain drives and awkward behaviour from the adult's point of view.<sup>3</sup> Whereas the term *other* means something 'mysterious, inexplicable and unknowable'.<sup>4</sup> Nowadays children are considered to be fully human. However, numerous novels about magic, sorcery and supernatural are addressed to them. Scandinavian culture provides a wide range of prototypes for such narratives. The creator of *Hildafolk* is a British cartoonist Luke Pearson. Although being an author from the United Kingdom, he draws heavily on Scandinavian folklore.<sup>5</sup> He is aware of it as his grandfather told him a lot about Norse oral traditions when Luke was

---

<sup>2</sup> Ármann Jakobsson, *The Troll inside You: Paranormal Activity in the Medieval North* (Goleta, CA: Punctum Books, 2017), 171, [https://www.academia.edu/32484922/The\\_Troll\\_Inside\\_You\\_Paranormal\\_Activity\\_in\\_the\\_Medieval\\_North\\_Punctum\\_Books\\_2017\\_](https://www.academia.edu/32484922/The_Troll_Inside_You_Paranormal_Activity_in_the_Medieval_North_Punctum_Books_2017_) (accessed December 7, 2021); Ármann Jakobsson, "The Taxonomy of the Non-existence: Some Medieval Icelandic Concepts of the Paranormal," *Fabula* 54 (2013): 200, 201, 205, [https://www.academia.edu/5527070/\\_The\\_Taxonomy\\_of\\_the\\_Non\\_Existent\\_Some\\_Medieval\\_Icelandic\\_Concepts\\_of\\_the\\_Paranormal\\_Fabula\\_54\\_2013\\_199\\_213](https://www.academia.edu/5527070/_The_Taxonomy_of_the_Non_Existent_Some_Medieval_Icelandic_Concepts_of_the_Paranormal_Fabula_54_2013_199_213) (accessed December 7, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Ármann Jakobsson, "Viking Childhood," in *Childhood in History*, ed. Reidar Aasgaard, Cornelia Horn, Oana Maria Cojocaru (London: Routledge, 2017), 294.

<sup>4</sup> John Lindow, *Trolls: an Unnatural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 21.

<sup>5</sup> Luke Pearson, "Q & A with Luke Pearson," interview by Dan Wagstaff, *The casual optimist. Books, Design and Culture*, September 25, 2013, <http://www.casualoptimist.com/blog/2013/09/25/q-a-with-luke-pearson> (accessed December 9, 2021); Luke Pearson, "I Wanted a Character Who Was Very Positive": An Interview with Luke Pearson," interview by Chris Mautner, *The Comics Journal*, September 19, 2014, <https://www.tcj.com/i-wanted-a-character-who-was-very-positive-an-interview-with-luke-pearson> (accessed December 9, 2021).

a child.<sup>6</sup> Later William Pearson even published a book about Beowulf,<sup>7</sup> an Anglo-Saxons' epic poem about pagan times in Scandinavia.

Norse origins can be traced not only in *Hildafolk* but are a common trait of British fantasy authors in general. References to Old Norse literature, Germanic mythology and Scandinavian folklore are either obvious or implied, but still traceable and noticeable in such famous books as about Middle-Earth of John R. R. Tolkien,<sup>8</sup> Hogwarts of Joanne K. Rowling<sup>9</sup> or Narnia of Clive S. Lewis<sup>10</sup>.

The explanation for such a tendency is found not only in the richness of the Old Norse culture and geographical closeness of the British Islands to the Scandinavian peninsula, but also in the absence of the mythology unique to England. The use of the Scandinavian one as an inspiration is almost a must among British writers. As Martin Wettstein claims after researching J. R. R. Tolkien's narratives 'England itself had no own mythology.' Narratives from nearby countries cover events and persons as it could be in the English vernacular beliefs. Therefore in *The Lord of the Rings* we find Celtic, Roman, Christian, Greek, Eastern, and finally Norse oral traditions but 'none especially of England.'<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, according to Corbin Scott Carnell C. S. Lewis engulfed him in *Northernness* as it contained elements he lacked in his religion although it ought to be there.

<sup>6</sup> Luke Pearson, "Luke Pearson and George O'Conner discuss Hildafolk," interview by George O'Conner, Strand Book Store, May 6, 2014, *YouTube*, video, 02:04, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMDTOJk7WAY> (accessed December 8, 2021).

<sup>7</sup> William Pearson, *Beowulf the Jute; His Life and Times: Angles, Saxons and Doubts* (s. l.: Xlibris, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Martin Wettstein, "Old Norse Elements in the work of J. R. R. Tolkien," October 2002, Academia.edu, [https://www.academia.edu/228734/Norse\\_Elements\\_in\\_the\\_work](https://www.academia.edu/228734/Norse_Elements_in_the_work) (accessed December 9, 2021); Petra Bence, "Nordic and Germanic Myths and Legends in the Work of J. R.R. Tolkien," (Undergraduate thesis, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, 2014); N. Shtoll, "Germano-Skandinavskie mifologicheskie prototipy kliuchevykh personazhei legendariuma Dzh. R. R. Tolkina" in *Iazyk. Kultura. Perevod. Kommunikatsiia*, no. 2 (Moscow: KDU, Dobrosvet, 2018), [https://bookonline.ru/lecture/14-germano-skandinavskie-mifologicheskie-prototipy-kluchevykh-personazhey-legendariuma-6?search\\_text=shtoll](https://bookonline.ru/lecture/14-germano-skandinavskie-mifologicheskie-prototipy-kluchevykh-personazhey-legendariuma-6?search_text=shtoll) (accessed December 9, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Lenka Šerešová, "Norse Mythology References in 'Harry Potter'" (Essay, Universität Leipzig, 2016), <https://www.grin.com/document/345533> (accessed December 9, 2021); Cindy Härcher, "Myths in 'Harry Potter'. How Joanne K. Rowling Uses Real Mythology in Her Novels" (Term Paper, University of Bayreuth, 2014), <https://www.grin.com/document/307971> (accessed December 8, 2021); D. Shabunina "Mifologicheskii polifonizm v tsikle romanov Dzh. Rouling o Garri Pottere" in *Kommunikativnye aspekty iazyka i kul'tury. Sbornik materialov XII Mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferencii studentov i molodykh uchionykh*, 2012 (Tomsk Polytechnic University, 2012), 281–284, <https://www.lib.tpu.ru/fulltext/c/2012/C77/V1/069.pdf> (accessed December 9, 2021).

<sup>10</sup> Nancy-Lou Patterson, "Narnia and the North: The Symbolism of Northernness in the Fantasies of C. S. Lewis," *Mythlore. A Journal of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature* 4, no. 2 (December 1976): 9–16, <https://dc.swosu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1550&context=mythlore> (accessed December 8, 2021); Lenka Šerešová, "The Use of Mythological Elements in 'The Chronicles of Narnia' by C. S. Lewis" (Master's Thesis, Universität Leipzig, 2017), <https://www.grin.com/document/377232> (accessed December 9, 2021); Salwa Khoddam, "Balder the Beautiful: Aslan's Norse Ancestor in The Chronicles of Narnia," *Mythlore: A Journal of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature* 22, no. 3 (October 1999): 66–76, <https://dc.swosu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1350&context=mythlore> (accessed December 7, 2021).

<sup>11</sup> Wettstein, *Old Norse Elements*, 1, 7.

'Northernness had a quality of aesthetic exaltation [...] which Lewis had not found in Christianity.'<sup>12</sup>

It is also worth mentioning that vital motifs concerning trolls are the same in the Old Norse and in the Celtic worlds. For example, Elisabeth Hartmann mentions a conception of changeling and abductions among such motifs.<sup>13</sup> Moreover another scholar also claims that the mediaeval Icelandic culture was formed predominantly by Norwegian but with the impact from the Celtic world.<sup>14</sup>

Thus British authors have a relevant ground for their fantasy narratives in the nearby countries. Luke Pearson is not an exception. More than that, a British cartoonist was inspired by William A. Craigie's *Scandinavian Folk-Lore* published in late 1896.<sup>15</sup> It is a collection of narratives that were a 'part of the unwritten literature of a people which read little or not at all.' Therefore, oral narratives were a tool to hand down folk legends and beliefs to children and grown ups. Folklore contained both instructions and an amusement 'in order to make the long wanderings lighter for the child' and 'to keep their eyes open' while helping adults.<sup>16</sup> The vernacular image of trolls and the most susceptible audience as children are form an ambiguity of implicit references of *Hildafolk* to the Scandinavian legends and beliefs and their listeners. As legends and beliefs present 'more or less believable stories,' on the one hand, and were told 'to persuade, amuse or amaze,'<sup>17</sup> on the other hand, using such motifs in a children book is some kind of a tradition that Luke Pearson gains. Another source used in the research is *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends* published by Reimund Kvideland and Henning K. Sehmsdorf.<sup>18</sup> As the analysis is not objective and comprehensive adopting only folklore without attempts to trace its roots the references to the Old Norse narratives are of a great value.

Trolls are a sort of the real world's reflection among human beings. Despite the fact they are fictional creatures in a fictional world trolls form some kind of a mirror-image where wilderness in general, and the forest in particular, maintain the attributes which human community lacks but wishes to have. A wondrous sphere becomes an idealised

<sup>12</sup> Corbin Scott Carnell, *Bright Shadow of Reality: Spiritual Longing in C. S. Lewis* (Grand Rapids, MI — Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 42.

<sup>13</sup> Camilla Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of Trolls. *The Case of a Finland-Swedish Folk Belief Tradition*" (PhD diss., Åbo Akademi, 2004), 8, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305775779\\_The\\_Genre\\_of\\_Trolls\\_The\\_Case\\_of\\_a\\_Finland-Swedish\\_Folk\\_Belief\\_Tradition](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305775779_The_Genre_of_Trolls_The_Case_of_a_Finland-Swedish_Folk_Belief_Tradition) (accessed December 7, 2021).

<sup>14</sup> Jakobsson, *The Troll inside You*, xii.

<sup>15</sup> Pearson, "I Wanted a Character Who Was Very Positive."

<sup>16</sup> *Scandinavian Folk-Lore. Illustrations of the Traditional Beliefs of the Northern Peoples*, selected and trans. by William A. Craigie (London: Paisley and Paternoster Square, 1896), vii–viii, <https://archive.org/details/scandinavianfol00craigooog> (accessed December 7, 2021).

<sup>17</sup> Lindow, *Trolls: an unnatural history*, 9, 11.

<sup>18</sup> Reimund Kvideland & Henning K. Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

model and attempts to liberate human beings from oppressive norms of their society. Troll encounters as a part of a such sphere means braking taboos and social boundaries.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, trolls were not just heroes of a fictional world but ‘they were also in the landscape, to be glimpsed from time to time.’ They were not something remote but believed to be occurred in the everyday events. Therefore a trolls’ encounter was a form of empirical feeling, having the origin ‘in actual emotional experiences.’ Whereas fairytales, on the contrary, possess more fictive traits and descriptions and being fully a product of imagination. Thus the trolls’ image in legends is ‘tangibly close and vivid,’ while fairytales provide a ‘stiff and unrealistic’ image.<sup>20</sup>

Applying the conception of Alexei Losev, vernacular beliefs as a primary genre are not ‘a fantasy, or fiction.’ They compile folktales creating motif out of a real life. From the point of view of mythological consciousness myth is ‘the most vivid and true reality’ and ‘the most real and lively, the most ingenuous and even emotional existence’ that contains its own, out-of-science, mythological truth and authenticity.<sup>21</sup> Folk beliefs play a similar role as myths do. Relying on a scholarly term of the early twentieth century *folk beliefs* originate the way legends manifest themselves. They form ‘a shared system of views and conceptions about the world in which people live.’ Folktales are ‘more poetic’ whereas folk beliefs are ‘more historical’ meaning ‘more realistic’ and ‘more believable.’<sup>22</sup>

Another point is that a legend’s simplicity and a flexible structure can reflect unmediated utterances of everyday life. They represent generic quotations that broaden the narrative of more complicated genres where they are embedding.<sup>23</sup> Therefore folk narratives can be studied using a ‘performed dimension’ when a researcher looks not at the content of the narrative but at the society where narratives are produced with its determination of supplying basic necessities.<sup>24</sup> One more point of view is that physical environment can become a predominating factor. In this case exact places with their peculiarities construct folklore.<sup>25</sup> Then the meaning of the narrative is found by analysing its structural elements and at a lesser scale by its content. Complete narratives distinguish

<sup>19</sup> Asplund Ingemark, “The Genre of Trolls,” 86, 88, 92; Laura Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises. Ritual and the Supernatural in Orthodox Karelian Folk Religion* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society — SKS, 2002), 133–134, <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/32110> (accessed December 9, 2021).

<sup>20</sup> Asplund Ingemark, “The Genre of Trolls,” 13–14.

<sup>21</sup> Alexei F. Losev, “Dialektika Mifa,” in Alexei F. Losev *Mif. Chislo. Sushchnost’* (Moscow: Mysl, 1994), 8–9, 31.

<sup>22</sup> Lindow, *Trolls*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Lotte Tarkka, “The Poetics of Quotation. Proverbial Speech, Entextualization and the Emergence of Oral Poems,” in *Genre — Text — Interpretation. Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Folklore and Beyond*, ed. Kaarina Koski and Frog with Ulla Savolainen (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society — SKS, 2016), 184, <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/31124> (accessed December 8, 2021).

<sup>24</sup> Ivan Strenski, *Malinowski and the Work of Myth* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), xi.

<sup>25</sup> Ülo Valk, Daniel Sävborg “Place-Lore, Liminal Storyworld and Ontology of the Supernatural. An Introduction” in *Storied and Supernatural Places. Studies in Spatial and Social Dimensions of Folklore and Sagas*, ed. Ülo Valk, Daniel Sävborg (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society — SKS, 2018), 12, <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/29738> (accessed December 8, 2021).

a lot but their elements and happenings are similar.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, as legends are told not as a typical storytelling event but ‘within the give and take of conversation’ an observer should extrapolate ‘what they say, rather than how or why they say it.’<sup>27</sup>

However, while legends and beliefs are ‘more conversational and thus have a more fluid structure’<sup>28</sup> and a ‘more commonplace genre’ depending on circumstances, their historical absorption creates more complex network such as epic narratives that can link diverse texts presenting a ‘dialogical nature of narrative discourse.’<sup>29</sup> When legends are put on a piece of paper they gain their form but are still variable. Furthermore, they reflect an interpretation of the researcher who makes an attempt to freeze the legend’s content. Therefore, we have ‘already established patterns of meaning’ that vary but are still ‘recognizable by the addressee and excepted by the addresser.’<sup>30</sup> To explain such a notion in the perception of trolls, intertextual analysis becomes a perfect tool. The merit of intertextual conception in folklore studies is to construct interaction between text as a narrative and text as a speech (oral) production in a certain but not necessarily a physical environment with distinct context interaction. An intertextual approach provides tools to analyse a text bearing in mind all aspects of probable meaning included by a narrator who is identified with a certain mental model, and perceived by a listener, being a professional folklorist, and later by a reader with no defined background.

## Methodology

Intertextual analysis is a perfect tool to analyse the supernatural beings in general and a troll’s image in particular. Folklore as a conception is considered to be a process of interaction that involves both a narrator and an audience. Not only the text matters, but the process through which the text gains its meaning.<sup>31</sup> Narratives being told or written down are inherently unstable. They possess none of the fixed connotations and objectivity. Uttered texts being considered unique are full of allusions, implicit and explicit references. This notion was first introduced by Julia Kristeva: ‘Each word (text) is an intersection

<sup>26</sup> Claude Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 17–18; Vladimir Ia. Propp, *Morfologiya skazki* (Moscow: Nauka, 1969), 23.

<sup>27</sup> Lindow, *Trolls*, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Kaarina Koski, “The Legend Genre and Narrative Registers,” in *Genre — Text — Interpretation. Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Folklore and Beyond*, ed. Kaarina Koski and Frog with Ulla Savolainen (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society — SKS, 2016), 130, <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/31124> (accessed December 8, 2021).

<sup>29</sup> Lotte Tarkka “Transformations of Epic Time and Space: Creating the World’s Creation in Kalevala-metric Poetry,” *Oral Tradition* 11, issue 1 (1996): 54, [https://journal.oraltradition.org/wp-content/uploads/files/articles/11i/8\\_tarkka.pdf](https://journal.oraltradition.org/wp-content/uploads/files/articles/11i/8_tarkka.pdf) (accessed December 9, 2021).

<sup>30</sup> Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2011), 18.

<sup>31</sup> Koski, “The Legend Genre and Narrative Registers,” 122.

of other words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read.<sup>32</sup> A conception of words' and texts' intersection was inspired by Ferdinand de Saussure's notion of a differential sign as a stabilised, abstract and determined system,<sup>33</sup> and by Mikhail Bakhtin's model of utterance<sup>34</sup>. Lotte Tarkka, in her turn, claims based on Bakhtin's and Kristeva's approaches that folklore as an epic universe is an 'intertextual network of the oral corpus' that is characterised by density and permeability. More than that, legends and beliefs consist of thoughts occurred in the bulk of sources existed previously 'varying more freely according to narrator, context, and communicative channel.'<sup>35</sup> Such records form a subjective attitude making a compilation of the previous texts that are transformed either by an author or extracted later by a reader. The independent meaning is an illusion created while reading. Therefore, process of reading itself is an interpretation. That leads to pure intertextuality.<sup>36</sup> But as any narrative is not a self-contained system intertextuality being a conception presents 'a series of oppositions and questions.' Therefore, a point concerning any text that in the modern scientific discourse is determined 'as lacking in any kind of independent meaning' must be considered from the point of view of dualism.<sup>37</sup> An author's narrative is still original as far as it possesses ideas and thoughts already existed but expressed uniquely according to the social, cultural background and surrounding. In the same way the addressee (reader in more sophisticated and consumer in less complex way) compiles the text determining his/her own experience and points of view. Such ambiguity should be neither neglected nor tried to be overcome. It forms a unit weaving in the content and 'being the text-between of another text,' on the one hand, and a unique item with own value and not falling in 'with the myth of filiation,' on the other.<sup>38</sup>

When developing his story, Luke Pearson builds a subjective attitude towards the previous texts and incorporates them in a new narrative. Being unique in contextual frames any text contains a cultural feedback, dominating discourses, as well as corpus of information perceived by the narrator during his previous experience. The picture seen in the childhood, the book read on the way to school, the words heard from the groupmates, the interaction with colleges finally reflect in the subjective mental model of the personality. Gained experience is extracted and results into references in a newly conducted narrative. The same way a reader being an addressee looks at the narrative through his/her

---

<sup>32</sup> Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," in Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. L. S. Rodiez, trans. by N. Gora, A. Jardine, and L. S. Rodiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 66.

<sup>33</sup> Julia Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 60.

<sup>34</sup> Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 71–72, <https://archive.org/details/SpeechGenresAndOtherLateEssays> (accessed December 7, 2021).

<sup>35</sup> Tarkka "Transformations of Epic Time and Space," 54.

<sup>36</sup> Tarkka "Transformations of Epic Time and Space," 52–53.

<sup>37</sup> Allen, *Intertextuality*, 58, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Roland Barthes, *Image – Music – Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), 160.

lens of perception where all images have their prototypes or even origins in their own past. Any citations are considered to be anonymous, with no obvious traces. Therefore, they are incorporated in the text as ‘quotations without inverted commas.’<sup>39</sup> That differs intertextuality from the primitive compilation or plagiarism and is called motifs. Therefore folklorists consider intertextuality help a lot to analyse emergence, development and connections of legends and beliefs. A Finnish researcher Laura Stark-Arola adopts Lotte Tarkka’s notion of the intertextual universe as an organic whole in which a single text receives its meaning only in a relation to other texts.<sup>40</sup> *Hildafolk* in this case is also considered to be a part of such a universe. Therefore, the intertextual analysis helps to show the origin of the troll’s image in the graphic novel series where legends and beliefs by ‘absorption and transformation’ build ‘a mosaic of quotations.’<sup>41</sup>

The usage in this analysis such folklore units as legends and beliefs is determined by types of discourse representation called genres. A term *genre* according to Mikhail Bakhtin reflects discursive practices that possess ‘relevant properties in their style, thematic contents, or narrative techniques.’ It leads to ‘particular contacts between the meanings of words and actual concrete reality under certain typical circumstances.’<sup>42</sup>

However, more concerned term of intertextuality in folklore is intergenericity. Discourse strategies of legends are more abstract and flexible than of other primary genres. This generic structure as well as epic universe refers to Bakhtinian notion of primary and secondary genres and is articulated within oral traditions by Lotta Tarkka. Primary (or simple) genres represent ‘typical situations [...], typical themes.’<sup>43</sup> They involve utterances in everyday life such as dialogues taking form in unmediated speech communion. Therefore, legends are chronotopic in their cores, covering a certain time span and a concrete locality, thus creating a folklore layout ‘in the here and now.’<sup>44</sup>

But once the oral texts are written down they lose the temporal order of performance and only the time within the narrative is left. The utterances of primary genres are woven in the canvas of more complicated and highly developed cultural interaction.<sup>45</sup> Simple genres are characterised as ‘the unmediated speech communication,’ while so-called complex genres are ‘a part of highly developed and organized [...] communication’<sup>46</sup> such as tales, sagas, myths and novels. Therefore, *Hildafolk* is a net of incorporated primary genres such as legends and beliefs by making explicit links and implicit references to what people thought was real.

<sup>39</sup> Barthes, *Image – Music – Text*, 160.

<sup>40</sup> Asplund Ingemark, “The Genre of Trolls,” 30.

<sup>41</sup> Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, 37.

<sup>42</sup> Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, 87.

<sup>43</sup> Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, 87.

<sup>44</sup> Lindow, *Trolls*, 9.

<sup>45</sup> Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva* (Moscow: Iskustvo, 1986), 234, 243, 251–252, 279.

<sup>46</sup> Koski, “The Legend Genre and Narrative Registers,” 124.



At the same time legends focus on the existence of the boundary of the human world between order within it and chaos meaning outside. Thus a graphic novel is an intertextual universe with its already known but still unique utterances. But at the same time a narrative is ‘prior to its individual fragments’ since the epic universe ‘engages in dialogue across its borders’<sup>47</sup> with permeable boundaries of the oral corpus of legends and beliefs with its natural density.<sup>48</sup> Folklore reflects the phenomenon that genres produce. Imaginary realms are constructed, but it would not be so without verbal actualisation and performance. An oral or at least a literal production is a must in this case. Genres possess notion. Although *Hildafolk* has traits of intergenericity, genres being relatively blur can be hardly called ‘labels for sorting’ of vernacular narratives.<sup>49</sup> As well as supernatural beings can hardly be perceived as taxonomic creatures.

### The term

The main heroine of the graphic novel series *Hildafolk* is Hilda, a girl with blue hair. She has ‘the life of the adventurer’<sup>50</sup> and of constantly meeting supernatural beings. The vital role among them play trolls. They are partly antagonists, partly helpers but still refer to Old Norse sources at any case.

A description is never stable or neutral. Trolls are called cruel beings at the beginning of the story but after incorporating additional traits the image changes and they deserve compassion or even friendship. The target audience is primary school pupils that are of the same age as Hilda is. Therefore, horrifying features are diminished. However, their traces capture children’s attention and help them to experience difficulties with the heroin.

Troll’s characteristics are traced back to the narratives of the folklore and Old Norse eliminating certain traits. The term *Old Norse* according to Tom Grant’s notes is used both for defining the language used for composing mediaeval Icelandic and Norwegian corpus of texts and for pre-Christian Scandinavian mythology.<sup>51</sup> The term *troll* has its specific connotation to the Old Norse with ‘a kernel of very old mythological motifs.’<sup>52</sup> Although scholars keep claiming that mediaeval attitude towards trolls differs a lot from the modern one, not all researchers are willing to investigate the transformation in the term’s meaning and articulate the emergence of a conception. Therefore, the image of trolls borrowed by many writers and absorbed in their narratives refers to more recent past. They are either

<sup>47</sup> Asplund Ingemark, “The Genre of Trolls,” 13, 15, 34.

<sup>48</sup> Tarkka “Transformations of Epic Time and Space,” 53

<sup>49</sup> Valk, Sävborg “Place-Lore, Liminal Storyworld and Ontology of the Supernatural,” 17-18.

<sup>50</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the troll*.

<sup>51</sup> Tom Grant, “A Problem of Giant Proportions,” *Gripla* XXX (2019): 77, <https://gripla.arnastofnun.is/index.php/gripla/article/view/97> (accessed December 7, 2021).

<sup>52</sup> Gunnar W. Knutsen, Anne Irene Riisø “Trolls and Witches,” in *Ann. Nordic Yearbook of Folklore* 63 (Uppsala: The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy, 2007), 35, <https://kgaa.bokorder.se/en-us/download/3aca9605-9b83-4bfd-8ef4-d07b3867b9fd> (accessed December 8, 2021).

remote supernatural beings encountered in the rocks and woods or, much less common, otherworldly creatures dwelling in the human surrounding.

However, the *troll's* image of twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries includes *a strong / large / ugly person, a troublesome person or a troublesome animal, an evil spirit, a ghost, a magical boar, a heathen demi-god, a demon, a berserk, a hag, a giant, a witch and a sorcerer*. The latter was meant even more commonly under the heading *troll*.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, during this period *trolls* were 'a menace to gods and humans alike'<sup>54</sup> as well as referred to *jötunar* (singular *jötunn*), *pursar* (singular *purs*),<sup>55</sup> *proto-beings*. Therefore, trolls of the pagan mediaeval past could be characterised as 'antisocial and disruptive'<sup>56</sup> creatures. They were even considered to be man-eaters and symbolised both the evil and the force of nature. It happened predominantly due to pagan beliefs' integration in Christianity.

For the Middle Ages after Christianisation *trolls* symbolised living dead ancestors. Their existence was associated with the burial mounds of the heathen traditions.<sup>57</sup> However, trolls of late mediaeval Norway and Denmark could be interpreted as witches with an ability to fly.<sup>58</sup> During the Early Modern Period these meanings vanished and witch-hunting in the sixteenth and seventeenth century led to the perception of the trolls as small unnoticeable creatures with an appearance more like *nisse* (or *tomte*) but having 'a new link to the devil.'<sup>59</sup>

In the modern scholarly discourse Camilla Asplund Ingemark analysing the genre of trolls states according to the points of view of Elisabeth Hartmann that 'belief in trolls must be distinguished from that in witches.'<sup>60</sup> Therefore, the term *troll* is used now in a constricted meaning with no references to witches on the contrary to the previous periods. Therefore, even in the cases when the analysis refers to the old sources researchers are preconceived as they tend 'to ignore the older meaning of the word troll.'<sup>61</sup> Although in defence of such attitude 'to give a precise and demarcated description' is really

<sup>53</sup> Ármann Jakobsson, "The Trollish Acts of Þorgrímr the Witch: The Meanings of Troll and Ergi in Medieval Iceland," *Saga-Book* XXXII (2008): 52, 54, [https://www.academia.edu/1348105/\\_The\\_Trollish\\_Acts\\_of\\_%C3%9Eorgr%C3%ADmr\\_the\\_Witch\\_The\\_Meanings\\_of\\_Troll\\_and\\_Ergi\\_in\\_Medieval\\_Iceland\\_Saga\\_Book\\_32\\_2008\\_39\\_68](https://www.academia.edu/1348105/_The_Trollish_Acts_of_%C3%9Eorgr%C3%ADmr_the_Witch_The_Meanings_of_Troll_and_Ergi_in_Medieval_Iceland_Saga_Book_32_2008_39_68) (accessed December 7, 2021); Jakobsson, *The Troll inside You*, 18, 22; Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of Trolls," 7–9; *Scandinavian Folk-Lore*, 41, 48, 56, 59; Lindow, *Trolls*, 12.

<sup>54</sup> Knutsen, Riiso "Trolls and Witches," 31.

<sup>55</sup> Grant, "A Problem of Giant Proportions," 78; Jakobsson, "The Trollish Acts of Þorgrímr the Witch," 55.

<sup>56</sup> Jakobsson, "The Trollish Acts of Þorgrímr the Witch," 54.

<sup>57</sup> Knutsen, Riiso "Trolls and Witches," 33.

<sup>58</sup> Knutsen, Riiso "Trolls and Witches," 39, 47, 49, 53.

<sup>59</sup> Knutsen, Riiso "Trolls and Witches," 54–55.

<sup>60</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of Trolls," 8.

<sup>61</sup> Jakobsson, "The Taxonomy of the Non-existence," 201.

challenging<sup>62</sup> as a separating line among variety of supernatural beings is blurred. However, some scholars ‘examine carefully every instance of the word’ as Ármann Jakobsson does.<sup>63</sup>

Therefore, definitions of the term *troll* vary a lot. For example, in the Swedish National Encyclopedia the term *troll* is called ‘a word of an unclear origin’ and characterised as ‘a common word in Swedish (including Finnish-Swedish), Danish and Norwegian traditions that gains a significantly different meaning when naming a certain supernatural being.’<sup>64</sup> However, only several of such meanings are widespread in the scholarly discourse of the twenty first century. Although none of them is a fixed one. The problems of etymology as well as of determining the primary meaning of the term make the image ‘shifting and changing’ and ‘hard to pin down in the end.’<sup>65</sup> This research possesses the attitude toward trolls as it formed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries among folklorists, although still refers to the Old Norse sources to some extent. As not only a semantic meaning of the term changed in the late mediaeval and early modern periods but a same supernatural being can possess a different heading.

Norwegian trolls are characterised as ‘danger, death, and the vastness extending beyond the human grasp of the world’<sup>66</sup> or solitary ‘supernatural creatures, big and ugly, functioning as the opponents of the human heroes.’<sup>67</sup> Such definitions have their roots in the *timeless* mythical or in St. Olav’s (the eleventh century) times when a king and old gods were opponents to an introduction of Christianity.<sup>68</sup>

Another motif is of more neutral or even friendly trolls that inhabit solitary dwellings in Swedish-Finnish and Danish surroundings. A Swedish-Finnish folklorist Jan-Öjvind Swahn argues that ‘the trolls of folk belief, and therefore of legends, were envisioned as anthropomorphic, collective supranormal beings inhabiting mountains, barrows or woods in Central and South Swedish folklore.’<sup>69</sup> Swedish trolls could be even helpers, on the contrary to the Norwegian tradition that gained a lot from the mediaeval notion.

The scholarship society in the second half of the nineteenth century noted three categories of supernatural creatures. Although after the Enlightenment even peasants considered trolls to be fictional the taxonomy was based on classifying the animal kingdom. A development of natural science with its focusing on systematisation and

---

<sup>62</sup> Knutsen, Riisø “Trolls and Witches,” 68.

<sup>63</sup> Jakobsson, “*The Taxonomy of the Non-existence*,” 201.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Troll (ett ord av oklart ursprung), den i svensk (inklusive finlandssvensk), dansk och norsk tradition gängse men till innebörden växlande benämningen på vissa övernaturliga väsen,’ “Troll,” Nationalencyklopedin online, <https://www.ne.se/s%C3%B6k/?t=uppslagsverk&q=troll> (accessed November 9, 2021).

<sup>65</sup> Lindow, *Trolls*, 12.

<sup>66</sup> Jakobsson, *The Troll inside You*, 17.

<sup>67</sup> Asplund Ingemark, “The Genre of Trolls,” 8–9.

<sup>68</sup> Knutsen, Riisø “Trolls and Witches,” 35.

<sup>69</sup> Asplund Ingemark, “The Genre of Trolls,” 8.

categorisation defined the attitude towards folklore with its supernatural beings. The three distinct categories of supernatural were tried to be clearly demarcated. Such groups as *trolls and elves*, *ghost stories*, and *witchcraft and magic* appeared.<sup>70</sup> But distinction is an artificial tool rather than provable taxonomy as one should bear in mind that no supernatural beings belong to the real world. Therefore, a term *troll* can still refer to many connotations. Thus, supernatural beings can be marked as unspecified creatures.<sup>71</sup>

However, commonly all researchers consider trolls to be anthropomorphic creatures with the similar patterns of behaviour and social structure as people have although with some peculiarities. Either trolls are antagonists and even enemies of the church or more neutral creatures living side by side with ordinary people they still consider to be something remote with its own world order. The interaction with people takes place in a form of encounter. Such encounter can result in negative, peace or positive consequences. The difference of attitude towards troll-creatures differs geographically and a demarcating line can be drawn between territories of East Scandinavian and West Scandinavian languages.

At the same time a researcher should remember that a difference in perception is determined not only geographically but also chronologically. Therefore, although the term's usage differs a lot it should be considered not as nonreferential but as having the majority of relations<sup>72</sup> both external such as *troll* with the majority of the mediaeval connotations and internal when a supernatural creature has several names.

Nevertheless, the term *troll* primarily used nowadays has been constructed by folklorists and is defined as 'a supernatural creature inhabiting the forest and bearing this specific name.'<sup>73</sup>

In *Hildafolk*, on the one hand, Hilda and her mother encounter 'the most fearsome of trolls around every corner' when they try to get back home 'doing their very best to not get eaten.'<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, trolls are shown possessing personal emotions, thoughts and feelings, with own motifs and a willingness to interact with humans.

Not only a taxonomy of supernatural beings and their main characteristics fulfilling a certain function and possessing a certain trait but also the very fact of substantiality is a base for classification.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, in addition to the name and behaviour peculiarities a physical form whether it exists or completely vanished also matters. As to trolls they are usually anatomically structured creatures with big eyes or hollow backs and large

<sup>70</sup> Jakobsson, "The Taxonomy of the Non-existence," 200.

<sup>71</sup> Knutsen, Riiso "Trolls and Witches," 48.

<sup>72</sup> Allen, *Intertextuality*, 11.

<sup>73</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of Trolls," 86.

<sup>74</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>75</sup> Elena E. Levkievskaja, "Mifologicheskii personazh: sootnoshenie imeni i obraza," in *Slavianskie etudy. Sbornik k jubileiu S. M. Tolstoi* (Moscow: Indrik, 1999), 249–252, <https://inslav.ru/publication/slavyanskije-etyudy-sbornik-k-yubileiu-s-m-tolstoj-m-1999> (accessed December 8, 2021).

head / heads; or ‘small and grey-clad, with red nightcaps on their’; even ‘is said to be a very fine gentleman’ or a trollless wearing ‘a light green and a pink translucent dress respectively, and their hair is shimmering heads.’<sup>76</sup> Multiple headed trolls occur both in the novel<sup>77</sup> and in the legends (beliefs) as well as texts of other genres<sup>78</sup>: three, six, nine or twelve headed beings having an enormous eye.

Although it is hard to be fixed to a particular taxonomy or classification several peculiarities are fixed to some extent.

### 1. Troll Rock

‘Hey... this rock... It kind of looks like... like... A Troll Rock!’<sup>79</sup> Hilda, a main heroine of *Hildafolk*, comes across the stone that looks like a troll in a rock formation. When the sun hides in the evening the rock becomes alive. ‘By day, it’s nothing but a peculiar looking rock. But by darkness it takes the form of the fierce and powerful troll.’<sup>80</sup> In another chapter of the novel Hilda is chased by the troll and when they both come out of the mountain into the sunlight the pursue freezes.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, Hilda herself turns into a stone in the daylight while being a troll.<sup>82</sup>

The notion of a troll’s transformation is widespread in Norse folklore. Such motif shows the weakness of the troll and its vulnerability towards the power of nature. Although trolls are considered to be ‘nature beings’<sup>83</sup> symbolising nature spirits, they still must obey a fundamental rule of the constant change between day and night. Even if the troll is something furious people can still win the battle remaining diurnal creatures.

Furthermore, bearing in mind that trolls are often characterised as giants it is an additional way to explain huge rock formations occurring in Scandinavia.<sup>84</sup> A motif of transformation is one of the timeless in the descriptions of trolls. Moreover, as trolls still represent a natural force they can pile high rocks and make small lakes by moving and throwing boulders. Therefore, almost all odd looking formations in Nordic Europe could be explained in this way.

When ‘the first rays of dawn appeared’ a *troll-woman* ‘was turned to stone.’<sup>85</sup> It is a motif that goes back to the pagan mediaeval and Christian Early Modern times with references to the majority of narratives. Although a juxtaposing of translation occurred

<sup>76</sup> Asplund Ingemark, “The Genre of Trolls,” 94–95.

<sup>77</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Stone Forest*; Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>78</sup> Asplund Ingemark, “The Genre of Trolls,” 94; *Scandinavian Folk-Lore*, 40–92; Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 297–313; Teodor Kittelsen, *Norvežske volšebne skazke* (Moscow: AST, 2020), 17, 30.

<sup>79</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the troll*.

<sup>80</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the troll*.

<sup>81</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Stone Forest*.

<sup>82</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>83</sup> Lindow, *Trolls*, 9.

<sup>84</sup> Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 299.

<sup>85</sup> Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 312.

several times within this time span. Not only the semantics of the word *troll* has changed a lot but also its connotation in other languages. Translations can't 'capture all of the nuances of the original language.'<sup>86</sup> That is why in the *History of the Northern Peoples* by Olaus Magnus of sixteenth century, first published in Latin, there 'are people who believe that the stone markers along the road used to be giants,'<sup>87</sup> not trolls. However, this citation is still commonly used to illustrate a troll creature and their features rather than giants.

Another vivid example is *Grettir's Saga*. In Icelandic and English versions a term troll is used, whereas in the Russian translation Ol'ga Smirnitskaia called it a giant:

Þá hlupu fylgdarmenn Þorkels upp og sögðu ekki mundu *tröll* hafa tekið manninn um ljósan dag.<sup>88</sup>

Then Thorkel's men sprung up and said that surely *trolls* had not taken the man in broad daylight.<sup>89</sup>

Then Thorkell's men sprang up and said it was impossible that a *troll* should have taken the man in full daylight.<sup>90</sup>

Люди Торкеля остановились и говорят, что не может такого быть, чтобы великаны [*giants*] схватили человека средь бела дня.<sup>91</sup>

As to the *Hildafolk* the term *troll* is a fixed one there. However, the influence of the *giantlike* trolls and *trollish* giants influence the author and Luke Pearson varies, for example, a size of his trolls: a king and an ancestor of all the trolls are colossal creatures.<sup>92</sup> However, in Scandinavian legends and beliefs big titanic beings were also not always *giants*. They could remain trolls just of an enormous size: '[body] was so large that a man on horseback could not with his whip reach up to the bend of her knees' or 'the hollow is undoubtedly well in to two hundred fathoms in length.'<sup>93</sup> Nonetheless, controversial definitions and interchangeable words<sup>94</sup> provide us with materials for only speculations but not clarity in the image of *trollish* and *giantlike* creatures. As to the Hilda's supernatural

<sup>86</sup> Grant, "A Problem of Giant Proportions," 101–102.

<sup>87</sup> Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 298.

<sup>88</sup> "Grettis Saga", 16. kafli, Icelandic Saga Database, ed. Sveinbjorn Thordarson, [https://sagadb.org/grettis\\_saga.is](https://sagadb.org/grettis_saga.is) (accessed December 10, 2021).

<sup>89</sup> "Grettir's Saga," chap. 16, trans. William Morris & Eiríkr Magnússon (1900), Icelandic Saga Database, ed. Sveinbjorn Thordarson, [https://sagadb.org/grettis\\_saga.en](https://sagadb.org/grettis_saga.en) (accessed December 10, 2021).

<sup>90</sup> "Grettir's Saga," chap. 16, trans. G. H. High (1914), Icelandic Saga Database, ed. Sveinbjorn Thordarson, [https://sagadb.org/grettis\\_saga.en2](https://sagadb.org/grettis_saga.en2) (accessed December 10, 2021).

<sup>91</sup> *Saga o Grettire*, trans. Ol'ga A. Smirnitskaia, ed. Mikhail I. Steblin-Kamenskii (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1976), 25.

<sup>92</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>93</sup> *Scandinavian Folk-Lore*, 63.

<sup>94</sup> Ármann Jakobsson, "Where do the Giants Live?," *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 121 (2006): 103, 101–102, 110, <https://journals.lub.lu.se/anf/article/view/11748> (accessed December 7, 2021).

world giants there are a separated species with own peculiarities having no references to the troll's image.

Examining the trolls' appearance, in *Hildafolk* rock formations are called trolls if they have solid face features or a distinct nose traced in the stone.<sup>95</sup> In *Grettir's Saga* when a *troll-wife* fought 'the day dawned on her' and she still stands 'on the cliff' with a humanlike features as 'a rock in the likeness of a woman.'<sup>96</sup> In Scandinavian legends at the 'sudden death to night-trolls if day breaks upon them' as 'the dawning was their destruction' trolls 'became a pillar of rock.'<sup>97</sup> Stones that Hilda encounters look like boulders stretching into the air. They remain consciousness and Hilda being surrounded by such pillars notes that 'they don't even know we're here.'<sup>98</sup>

It is worth mention that a tradition of calling unusual stone formations trolls is still alive. As in the sixteenth century trolls' narratives were a part of a self-identification preserving the roots and traditions nowadays trolls are used for commercial purposes such as tourism.<sup>99</sup> They form a so-called *local brand*. Icelandic people still deal willingly with trolls. 'Most Icelanders you meet, if you would ask them whether they believe in elves, trolls, Hidden People, they would say 'I cannot out-rule that they exist' says Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson, Iceland's Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources.<sup>100</sup>

Therefore, defining a troll is thus far from clearance. However, all the confuse nuances 'might easily be avoided by appealing instead to the terms which Icelandic authors themselves used.'<sup>101</sup> However, it is obvious that neither authors nor even the scholars are ready to do so.

Looking back to the problematic, it occurred in the thirteenth – fourteenth centuries when first texts were written down in Iceland. Lotte Motz in 1987 made an attempt to distinguish four categories of giant/troll-creatures. Each type of beings plays its own role in the prehistorical oral sources and further narratives. The categories were: *jötnar*, lords and guardians of nature; *trolls*, mythical magicians; *pursar*, hostile and monstrous beings; and *risar*, heroic and courtly beings.<sup>102</sup> Tomas Grant, in his turn, admits that analysing such terms as *purs* and *troll* with their high level of synonymy is 'a speculative task.' Furthermore,

---

<sup>95</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the troll*.

<sup>96</sup> "Grettir's Saga," chap. 65, trans. Morris & Magnusson.

<sup>97</sup> *Scandinavian Folk-Lore*, 62.

<sup>98</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Stone Forest*.

<sup>99</sup> "Viðhorfsrannsókn um Ísland. Denmark, United Kingdom and Germany," by Market and Media Research Ltd, January 2011, *Íslandsstofa*, 37, [https://www.islandsstofa.is/media/1/2011\\_dk\\_uk\\_ge\\_final\\_final.pdf](https://www.islandsstofa.is/media/1/2011_dk_uk_ge_final_final.pdf) (accessed December 9, 2021); "Travel Destination Iceland. Íslandsstofa. Survey in European Markets. April 2015," by Market and Media Research Ltd, *Íslandsstofa*, 101, [https://www.islandsstofa.is/media/1/islandsstofa\\_vidborfskonnun\\_final.pdf](https://www.islandsstofa.is/media/1/islandsstofa_vidborfskonnun_final.pdf) (accessed December 9, 2021).

<sup>100</sup> Robin Young, Karyn Miller-Medzon, "It Sounds like Magic, but It's Not: Many Icelanders Believe in Elves," *Boston's NPR News Station Wbur*, December 24, 2019, <https://www.wbur.org/herenow/2019/12/24/iceland-elves> (accessed December 9, 2021).

<sup>101</sup> Grant, "A Problem of Giant Proportions," 101.

<sup>102</sup> Jakobsson, "Where do the Giants Live?," 103.

the term *giant* is not 'a product of medieval Scandinavia' but a simplifying adoption of Old Norse terms to make them understandable to the readers. Instead of giant scholars studying Old Norse and Old Icelandic narratives use more authentic *risi* and *jötunn*.<sup>103</sup> However, according to the scholarship analysis of the Prose Edda Ármann Jakobsson states that trolls and giants under different headings can be regarded the same creatures to some extent.<sup>104</sup> But it is all at the level of supposition. However, the places where such supernatural creatures, regardless the type of their headings, semantic meanings, simplifications or translations, could be found are hills and mountains.

## 2. Dwelling

'Wait... You're the troll from inside the mountain!' exclaims Hilda's mother when she finds a creepy looking creature in the bed instead of her daughter.<sup>105</sup>

Hans Lauridsen wrote in 1587 that trolls were nothing but fallen demons who had landed in forests, on hills or mountains, and who now trapped humans inside the mountains.<sup>106</sup> In the narrative of four hundred years later a young girl disappeared while herding the sheep. It was said that 'she had been taken into the mountain.' According to the Norwegian folklorist Bengt Holbek *being taken into the mountain* means behaving in an odd way after mentally traumatic experience.<sup>107</sup> But literally the same happened to the main heroine of *Hildafolk*.

As being a representative of supernatural beings trolls live in the *otherworld*. Researchers consider it to be some kind of a mirror reflecting the world of humanity with its social and interpersonal structures. *Other* is something external but at the same time containing the 'organized reality' explaining human disorder or sufferings.<sup>108</sup> At the same time trolls as something abnormal help in building one's identity and finding one's place in the real world as well as 'orienting oneself in a larger, complex reality,' such as woods or caves.<sup>109</sup> As to the Lotte Tarkka's conception based on studies of previous researchers even if narrative traditions predominate in the text a conventions of metahistorical statements still of a big value. Spacial organisation is always based on *home* and *otherworld*.<sup>110</sup> Laura Stark calls such conception a dichotomy between a place of everyday human operation and other environment. Therefore, breaking boundaries from any side leads to 'an endless, negotiatory dialogue' between humankind and wilderness. Supernatural beings in this case are not only inhabit the otherworld but also become guardians patrolling

<sup>103</sup> Grant, "A Problem of Giant Proportions," 77–78, 101.

<sup>104</sup> Jakobsson, "Where do the Giants Live?," 106–107.

<sup>105</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>106</sup> Knutsen, Riisø "Trolls and Witches," 55.

<sup>107</sup> Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 212.

<sup>108</sup> Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises*, 94.

<sup>109</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of Trolls," 86.

<sup>110</sup> Tarkka, "Transformations of Epic Time and Space", 73.



the boundary between familiar and safe (from the point of view of explanation and recognition) and wild and dangerous (unknown and therefore threatening).<sup>111</sup> Trolls, as John Lindow claims, are associated with ‘the wild rather than domestic or tame; with outside rather than inside; with nature rather than culture.’<sup>112</sup> Order and disorder, predictable and unexpected, always are hand by hand and about to disappear at any moment — these are the contradicts that occur both in folk narratives and in *Hildafolk*.

Rocks and mountains are the places where main encounters with trolls happen. Although sometimes such places are designated as the woods, for example, a copper, silver or even a golden forest<sup>113</sup> or an iron one inhabited by either *troll* or *giant*, depending on the translations:

40. The *giantess* old in *Ironwood* sat,  
In the east, and bore the brood of Fenrir;  
Among these one in monster’s guise  
Was soon to steal the sun from the sky.

40. Austr sat in aldna í Járnvíði  
ok fæddi þar Fenris kindir;  
verðr af þeim öllum einna nokkurr  
tungls tjúgari í *tröl*ls hami.<sup>114</sup>

Luke Pearson binds both dwellings in his novel. Not only his trolls inhabit mountains but Hilda and her mother found themselves in a very strange place, in the ‘cavernous world of the stone forest — the land beneath the mountain and home of the troll’<sup>115</sup>: ‘Then where are we? [...] We’re just in the weirdest forest in the world.’<sup>116</sup>

When Hilda was absent her mother began to search for her and came across the troll. Hilda was not with it ‘but look! The Cave! [...] Wait! Don’t walk away from me! What? No! No! Open up!’<sup>117</sup> cried the mother when a troll disappeared in the mountain and after a while so did the entrance.

A geographical location of trolls’ dwelling is much discussed in Old Norse narratives and myths<sup>118</sup> as well as in folk beliefs. Therefore looking at the spacial organisation instead of geographical location is much more productive. It is always elaborated by ‘symbolic boundaries’ that make *home* a safe place and ‘a source of wisdom, power, and wealth’

<sup>111</sup> Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises*, 133.

<sup>112</sup> Lindow, *Trolls*, 19.

<sup>113</sup> Asplund Ingemark, “The Genre of Trolls,” 96.

<sup>114</sup> “Poetic Edda,” Völuspá, stanza 40, Völuspá.org, <http://www.voluspa.org/voluspa36-40.htm> (accessed October 13, 2021).

<sup>115</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>116</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Stone Forest*.

<sup>117</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Stone Forest*.

<sup>118</sup> Eldar Heide, “Contradictory Cosmology in Old Norse Myth and Religion — but Still a System?”, *Maal og Minne* 106, no.1 (2014): 115–116, <http://ojs.novus.no/index.php/MOM/article/view/226> (accessed December 7, 2021).

whereas *otherworld* is a threat.<sup>119</sup> However, people also combat trolls and capture their original inheritance. The more space humankind subdue the fewer supernatural beings can survive according to the people's consciousness. Asplund Ingemark marks one of the characteristics of the trolls as victims of humankind as the last are main trouble-makers.<sup>120</sup> Trolberg, a Hilda's city, is shown as an intervention. Hilda recalls that supernatural beings 'were here long before Trolberg was. They [people] built the city in the middle of [trolls] home.'<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, giants in the Hilda's world, being a separate species, also suffer from humankind. They left because people came. In vernacular beliefs escaping human beings and loosing previous dwellings such as pagan mounds trolls moved to farms creating a farm trolls' community with more or less neutral attitude toward people. Here comes a thesis that trolls can transform from enemies to assistants as the gratitude of not being combated. Supernatural beings were able to share the territory with human-newcomers. However later trolls move on to the hills and became isolated hostile creatures closer to the perception of the nineteenth century.<sup>122</sup>

At the same time according to Ármann Jakobsson trolls are those who are distinguished not only spatially but also psychologically rather than simply geographically. He submits the hypothesis that trolls can be studies separately not considering people communities. The boundaries are allusive variable according to the level of human consciousness. 'Man and troll are inextricably intertwined.'<sup>123</sup> The same is in Hilda's world. While being a human she feels otherworld and vice versa. She envies the trolls that they are free and 'there's so much space out'<sup>124</sup> there as if she knew what it was like to be a troll. Whereas a trollless wishes that her child is brought up among people as she is sure that the human world is less severe.<sup>125</sup> As a result both Hilda among trolls and a troll-child among people feel more or less associated except being homesick. Here comes a controversial position of trolls, some kind of ambiguity in their attitude towards people in general and own dwelling in particular.

### 3. Bells

'Trolls can't stand the sound of a bell's toll,' writes Luke Pearson providing a troll's description.<sup>126</sup> When Christianity came trolls having origin in the pagan past gained extra features. In Hildafolk they experienced a huge inconvenience of the bell as a Christian artefact. Christian symbols are widely spread in the folklore narratives up till now even if

<sup>119</sup> Tarkka, "Transformations of Epic Time and Space", 73–74.

<sup>120</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of Trolls," 117.

<sup>121</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>122</sup> Knutsen, Riisø, "Trolls and Witches," 51, 54.

<sup>123</sup> Jakobsson, *The Troll inside You*, 50.

<sup>124</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Stone Forest*.

<sup>125</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>126</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the troll*.

the latter describe predominantly the heathen times. Therefore bells symbolise a type of a connection that illustrates exorcism as a ritual to banish the trolls. For example, after one girl had been taken to the mountain ‘they rang the church bells for her, and the girl returned. For a while she seemed rather strange, but gradually she recovered and became like other people once more.’<sup>127</sup>

After spreading of a new religion supernatural beings gained general traits of the Christian antagonists in the vast majority of narratives. Here comes an intertextual connection between folklore and religious narratives. Some kind of a network with a number of associations reveals references both to the Holy texts and to the supernatural realm.<sup>128</sup> A number of such allusions varies. But as an introduction of a new religion went better when unfamiliar symbols were associated with vernacular beliefs they can be traced. Supernatural beings were converted to the enemies that had to be fought. ‘May God grant that the troll-heretics be burned up’, exclaimed a peasant at the trial in the middle of the seventeenth century. Therefore, ‘the Old Norse magic had gradually been completely demonized and transformed into something new — witchcraft wrapped in Christian terms.’<sup>129</sup> Moreover, as folklore is an oral type of discourse narrators added the traits of religion intentionally to make the story more vivid and closer to contemporaries who were baptised listeners.

Folklore is a structured and relatively close system with certain interactions within. Religion is treated in the same way. Therefore, they both are different types of discourses integrated in the broader inter-discursive network. Folklore in this case comes close to national history perception<sup>130</sup> where religion with its signs also plays a vital role. Constructing images based on legends and beliefs helped Nordic counties to build their national identities and at the same time unite them. National movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries made folklore the vital instrument along with national language development and literature studies. Legends and beliefs, therefore, preserve ‘the memory of former independence or statehood.’ Such a heritage was collected, shared, studied and used as a trend of the Romanticism movement<sup>131</sup> but it had already experienced the huge impact from the religion. Furthermore, ‘we err grievously if we attempt to understand the history of the Norwegian troll’ studying the narratives collected at these times as the beliefs had been transformed ‘from menace to entertainment.’<sup>132</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 212.

<sup>128</sup> Asplund Ingemark, “The Genre of Trolls,” 76, 139.

<sup>129</sup> Knutsen, Riisø “Trolls and Witches,” 54, 55.

<sup>130</sup> Camilla Asplund Ingemark, “Legends of Trolls and the Bible,” *Elore* 12, no. 2 (2005): 9–10.

<sup>131</sup> Diarmuid Ó Giollain, “People, Nation and ‘Combative Literatures’: Baltic, Celtic and Nordic Configurations of Folklore,” in *Storied and Supernatural Places. Studies in Spatial and Social Dimensions of Folklore and Sagas*, ed. Ülo Valk, Daniel Sävborg (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society — SKS, 2018), 259, 263, <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/29738> (accessed December 7, 2021).

<sup>132</sup> Knutsen, Riisø “Trolls and Witches,” 32.

It happened due to development of science in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when it constructed 'up against the old generations of mythical.'<sup>133</sup>

There are several points that are obvious allusions to religious rituals. And also vice versa, as in the Christian world exists the realm of trolls being some kind of an alternative to Paradise but containing pagan traits. For people Paradise comes afterlife but trolls' world exists on earth. 'Free from the arduousness of hard physical labour, free from care, and (here is the but) free from the blessings of Christianity' make the otherworld some kind of a patch that helps to cover and neglect all the lacks in the official doctrine.<sup>134</sup> There are three types of such relationships defined.<sup>135</sup>

First, trolls are explicit antagonist to Christianity. For example, in the narrative *The Trolls and King Olaf* trolls are called devils.<sup>136</sup> In *Hildafolk* such opposition is illustrated by describing the measures to protect Trolberg from trolls: the wall, bell towers, a troll safety patrol, etc.<sup>137</sup>

Second, the Christian artefacts protect from trolls and their influence illustrates an implicit conflict. One of the sacrificed symbols is a ringing bell. Asplund Ingemark shows the connection between both types of discourses based on the narratives she studied in her work *The Genre of Trolls*: 'The ringing of the church bells [...] might force the trolls to release abducted persons,' or 'if a church is erected so close to a troll dwelling that the inhabitants can hear it tolling, they move away' or 'the church bells may stir an abducted person from the enchantment, partially or completely.'<sup>138</sup> Luke Pearson shows all the sufferings of the troll vividly: 'Ding. DING! AAGH! Why is it so loud? That ringing in my ears. It won't stop! AAGHHH!'<sup>139</sup>

Third, the co-existence results in no tension. Exactly this kind of an interaction completes the novel *Hildafolk*. After a combat between people and trolls inside the city walls 'trolls turned and left quietly [...]. From that day on [...] the night became known as 'the Night of the Trolls.' Every year on that date, once the sun has fallen, the gates are to be opened, the bells are to be silenced and the people of the mountain aloud to walk peacefully into Trolberg.' Also it is still mentioned that 'many are still fearful of the trolls...'<sup>140</sup> the idea of a peaceful co-existence is evident.

Here are several more examples of the bells as a holy weapon against the trolls. 'As soon as she [trolless] hear the sound of the bells, she grew furious and ran away again with all her might.'<sup>141</sup> In other legends a giant/*jätte*/ogress/troll (as it is hard to distinguish due to instability of connotations and translations) either moved from its original dwelling

<sup>133</sup> Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning*, 1.

<sup>134</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "Legends of Trolls and the Bible," 10.

<sup>135</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of Trolls," 118.

<sup>136</sup> *Scandinavian Folk-Lore*, 45.

<sup>137</sup> Pearson. *Hilda and the Bird Parade*; Pearson, *Hilda and the Black Hound*; Pearson, *Hilda and the Stone Forest*; Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>138</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of Trolls," 119, 129.

<sup>139</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>140</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>141</sup> *Scandinavian Folk-Lore*, 51.

because ‘in Borgås Mountain it was good to dwell, except for the cow with the great big bell’ or left its permanent place of living because ‘bells were brought into the ravine’ by building a church ‘as close to the canyon as possible’ with the bells ringing every Christmas.<sup>142</sup>

#### 4. Sunlight

‘By day, it’s nothing but a peculiar looking rock. But by darkness it takes the form of the fierce and powerful troll.’<sup>143</sup> There is common motif that trolls fear sunlight with its power to turn them into a rock. In some texts trolls explode with the dawn.<sup>144</sup> Therefore, dangerous encounters with troll-creatures happen at night whereas no threat exists during the day.

The attitude towards daylight along with the transformation and ringing bells is another specific trait illustrated by Luke Pearson. In *Hildafolk* the idea is shown by trolls’ inevitable metamorphosis. Whereas, a heroes’ fear of night encounters with trolls resulted into several rules in the novel: ‘The sun is low. You’re surely aware this place isn’t save for a you lady. [...] May I ask you what you’re doing all the way out beyond the wall so late in the day?’<sup>145</sup>

The idea reflects a separation of survival needs while sharing common inhabitant areas. The existence of the boundary between the human territory, for example a farm, and the dwelling of supernatural beings means the usage of the same resources. They are restricted but the inhabitants of both realms need them to survive. This belief was especially relevant to pastures and outer edges of forests. Therefore, it was needed to define ‘the “outer” wilderness’ usage as they were ‘resource-rich zone.’ ‘Spatial and temporal coherence’ must have been created.<sup>146</sup> But as that boundary was blur and those zones could be used by both the human and the supernatural a usage of resources was restricted for people by daylight and for the otherworld by night. In other words, regulations were set not by the territory but by the time. Here comes ‘a system of working in shifts.’<sup>147</sup>

However, it is noticeable that trolls became fully night creatures because of the Christian restrictions towards communicating with diseased ancestors. People were prohibited to ‘sit out and wake up a troll’ ‘in order to gain knowledge’ in twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Such esoteric practices were forbidden not only by the dogmas of a new religion but also stated in the several Norwegian Law codes. Therefore, the folk, especially peasants, used night time for following common pre-Christian customs not to be

---

<sup>142</sup> Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 310–311.

<sup>143</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Troll*.

<sup>144</sup> Asplund Ingemark, “The Genre of Trolls,” 127–128.

<sup>145</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>146</sup> Laura Stark, *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises*, 111, 123, 198.

<sup>147</sup> Asplund Ingemark, “The Genre of Trolls,” 87.

caught and prosecuted for witchcrafting. Finally, it resulted in the night life of trolls suffering from the first rays of dawn. However, according to several laws the night was also mentioned as a forbidden time for going out and communicating with ancestors<sup>148</sup> making trolls become hiding creatures even at night.

The process of trolls' transformation to the stone is vividly illustrated in *Hildafolk* but no allusions can be traced to the folk believes. Legends tell about a trolless that was captures by the sun: '...just as she reached the brow of the ridge, it happened at one and the same moment that day broke in the east, and the church-bells sounded in her ears. She turned into a stone.'<sup>149</sup> But there is no description of the metamorphosis with the view to the feelings of the trolls. People were not ready to identify themselves with the otherworld in order to describe the feelings on the contrary to the fictional narrative: 'There was a bright light and... it hurt and...'<sup>150</sup>

Anyway, a severe suffering from the sun is often mentioned in the legends as well as the trolls' awareness of this threat. One trolless 'climbed down to the giant waiting in the sea as quickly as she could. But they had lingered too long. [...] [T]he sun rose out of the sea, and both the giant and the woman were turned to stone.'<sup>151</sup> In *Hildafolk*, in its turn, a troll-woman warns Hilda when a girl being a troll tries to get out of the cave to the daylight: 'Please don't go out there.'<sup>152</sup>

## 5. Changeling

Hilda's mum was surprised to find her daughter was not in her bed. Instead, in her place, there was an odd-looking child that she didn't immediately recognise.<sup>153</sup> While some trolls are big ugly creatures with big noses and even multiple heads others are short with an abnormally large head, especially if it is a changeling. A conception of changeling is a common one in all kinds of trolls' narratives. It also tends to be one of the most important motifs in folklore as it gave an explanation to the weird appearance and behaviour of the humans. It is remarkable that this motif can be found not only in Scandinavia and Finland but also in the Celtic world.<sup>154</sup> Luke Pearson being a British writer also uses it. Furthermore, changeling becomes one of the main drivers in his graphic novel series. Hilda is abducted by a troll-woman and a changeling appears instead of her. It looks like descriptions in legends and beliefs: a coarse 'little dumpy creature, with a big head, and little eyes as black as coal.'<sup>155</sup> In *Hildafolk* mother finds a short round-headed creature with

<sup>148</sup> Knutsen, Riisø "Trolls and Witches," 36, 37, 41.

<sup>149</sup> *Scandinavian Folk-Lore*, 48.

<sup>150</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>151</sup> Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 313.

<sup>152</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>153</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>154</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of 'Trolls,'" 8.

<sup>155</sup> Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 211; *Scandinavian Folk-Lore*, 106.

small black eyes being capable to pronounce only 'BA-BA-BA.'<sup>156</sup> Therefore, not only appearance but also mental abilities coincide as a troll-child was distinguished in the legends 'because it never learned to talk'<sup>157</sup> or refused to do so not to be discovered. However, not only children could be abducted but also adults were called *taken into the mountain* if a human suffered from a mental disease.

Using an image of supernatural beings was a obvious way to explain abnormal things in the child when the level of scientific knowledge was low. A little human was called a changeling if he/she possessed mental and 'corporeal traits that were the object of derision in folk culture'<sup>158</sup> or had physical and physiological diseases and disorder.

Although in some narratives a changeling could look unusual, 'the skin is said to have been like the back of an old frog,' in other texts a mother couldn't distinguish it: 'the human child is slightly taller than the troll child, but otherwise the two of them are impossible to differentiate.'<sup>159</sup> It reflects a notion of both associating and dissociating the changeling with the human family.

As the conception has its roots in pre-Christian times the idea of abduction is an additional illustration of trolls as opponents to the Us. When the boundaries are broken the confrontation is highlighted by using vivid images. Changeling is a construction that makes differences between people and trolls obvious from the very beginning, thus such dissimilarities are not always noticable. It shows that even newborns and children are somehow under the influence of the other world. And that influence is terrifying as changeling symbolises the will and victory of trolls but not people. There is always a trolless who initiates the exchange of a child. A process of abductions is usually described in such a way: 'A woman was put into confinement. Then some troll folk came and exchanged her newborn child for one of theirs.'<sup>160</sup> In the Hilda's case the changeling motif is represented also as a spell of a troll. A trolless mentioned that there 'is no place for her [troll-child] at the best of times' among her community and the human realm would be better for her.<sup>161</sup> Hilda's mother wants to return her daughter as soon as possible. But despite it she brings up a changeling with all her might.

According to the folk tradition, although the motif of abduction has its roots in the pagan past, the most reliable way to fight trolls is Christianity: 'a woman who has been raising her own child as well as the offspring of the troll for many years' is eager to return her own child and 'effectuates a disconnection by ritually banishing the changeling.'<sup>162</sup> A new religion gave an impulse to paraphrase old narratives and tell them through the lens

---

<sup>156</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Stone Forest*.

<sup>157</sup> Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 211.

<sup>158</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of 'Trolls,'" 16.

<sup>159</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of 'Trolls,'" 102.

<sup>160</sup> Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 208.

<sup>161</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>162</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of 'Trolls,'" 125.

of a new doctrine. Thus it was said that changeling should have been baptized and it would either disappear at all or become an ordinary person. But in the narratives there was always a force that stopped people from doing this. More reliable way was to pretend that a human-mother wanted to hurt or kill the troll-child. The most common behaviour was to stand in front of the flame and swing the troll's baby like intending to throw it into the fire or mistreating it in some other disgusting way.<sup>163</sup> Therefore, a certain human behaviour forces the supernatural being return the child, hence sorcery vanishes. In Hilda's case the idea is transformed and looks vice versa as children's exchange is not the result of the combating the sorcery but an initial point: 'simply returning them [children] to their true mothers must have brought the spell full-circle.'<sup>164</sup>

The changeling motif shows an ambiguity in human and supernatural beings' interactions. They always remain ambivalent never being only negative or only positive. Although in some parts of Scandinavia trolls are considered to be a threat and are called in abusive terms while in other a perception of trolls is nuanced, more variable and less concrete, the idea of abduction is in focus. Its symbolic role stands for 'manifestations of a more general cultural pattern.'<sup>165</sup> For example, according to the analysis of the childhood in the Old Norse (in mediaeval Icelandic sagas) children can act as others themselves. They are depicted as 'the eerie and slightly frightening beings whose motives and fears are unrepresented in the texts and unknown to the audience.'<sup>166</sup> Therefore, representation of a changeling in *Hildafolk* is a reflection of a child in the adult's world by an awkward blue-haired girl Hilda.

### Conclusion

All the five peculiarities of trolls are reflected by Luke Pearson according to his ideas and drives and possess close connection with Old Norse narratives. Such connection is either visible (explicit links) or only suspect and speculative (implicit references) but still traceable. The corpus of traits that are used in *Hildafolk* were influenced, or inspired or even provided, by Scandinavian folk narratives, Old Norse myths and mediaeval texts from Northern Europe. The narratives were compiled according to the author's interpretation, subjective mental model and dominating discourses.

However, there are units that could be determined as a base for the novel. These are the primary genres reflected in legends and beliefs as multiple modes of a verbal expression. Although they were written down only in the nineteenth century they are still considered to be a reflection of far more old vernacular traditions and customers.

---

<sup>163</sup> Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 209, 211; Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of Trolls," 131.

<sup>164</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Mountain King*.

<sup>165</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of Trolls," 16.

<sup>166</sup> Jakobsson, "Viking Childhood," 294.



They can be called predominant sources for the intertextual net of *Hildafolk*. Among such narratives those about trolls are of the great importance as these supernatural beings play a vital role in the novel.

The image of trolls in *Hildafolk* is ambiguous and inherently unstable, moving from Norwegian traits in physical and behavioural peculiarities to Swedish descriptions of peaceful and friendly creatures. *Hildafolk* is a fictional world created in a fictional discourse. Therefore, it's more relevant to find prototypes not in other fictional worlds of complicated genres but go directly to the bottom level where descriptions are 'both fictitious and based on experience.'<sup>167</sup> Whereas folktales, for example, being a secondary genre not only possess a certain number of primary units but also show a proper behaviour that should conduct people in interpersonal communication. Thus the perception of the trolls' image evidenced in the primary genres is more tangible than that in other oral sources. Legends and beliefs are absorbed, combined, transformed and finally form the intertextual universe becoming naturalised parts of *Hildafolk*.

A general definition describes trolls as solitary or collective supernatural beings; inhabiting mountains or woods; being big, ugly and creepy or humanlike and even beautiful; functioning as antagonists to humans or becoming helpers.<sup>168</sup> Trolls that inhabit Hilda's world possess most of these traits, even controversial ones.

Allusions that can be traced in the novel are primary implied by such sources as *Scandinavian Folk-Lore*,<sup>169</sup> *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*<sup>170</sup> as well as to folklore narratives analysed by Camilla Asplund Ingemark<sup>171</sup>. Obviously the image of trolls is not narrowed by these narratives. They are mentioned just to illustrate a general interaction between a fully fictional modern text and those of the recent and distant past through the network of allusions and references as 'the troll is much older and has changed through the centuries.'<sup>172</sup> The image depicts a transformation of more than nine centuries having its roots in the pagan past and going through Christianisation, Reformation, Enlightenment, folkloric researches and revival in contemporary mass-media.

Anyway, both in an old narrative and in a modern children book the realm of trolls is not an appropriate place for people<sup>173</sup>, however, some kind of interaction is acceptable. Luke Pearson's heroin Hilda is a girl who is constantly finding not 'proper friends'<sup>174</sup> among supernatural beings evoked by 'subtle magical power of words'<sup>175</sup> from national beliefs and

<sup>167</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of 'Trolls,'" 14.

<sup>168</sup> Jakobsson, "The Trollish Acts of Þorgrímr the Witch," 54; Jakobsson, *The Troll inside You*, 17; Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of 'Trolls,'" 7–9.

<sup>169</sup> *Scandinavian Folk-Lore*, 41, 45, 48, 51, 56, 59, 62.

<sup>170</sup> Kvideland, Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Beliefs and Legends*, 206, 208–212, 299, 311–313.

<sup>171</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "The Genre of 'Trolls,'" 95, 102, 119, 125, 127–128, 129.

<sup>172</sup> Knutsen, Riisø "Trolls and Witches," 33.

<sup>173</sup> Asplund Ingemark, "Legends of 'Trolls and the Bible,'" 10.

<sup>174</sup> Pearson, *Hilda and the Midnight Giant*.

<sup>175</sup> Valk, Sävborg "Place-Lore, Liminal Storyworld and Ontology of the Supernatural," 7.

adopted by a cartoonist. Legends, as well as myths, are infinite. Therefore, it is obvious that writers are ready to use them as an inspiration or even as a main motif in their novels. Trolls are reflected in a vast amount of the Old Norse and contemporary modern narratives and make them perfect images to choose from and borrow as Luke Pearson does.

### **List of secondary sources**

Бахтин, М. М. Эстетика словесного творчества / М. М. Бахтин. — Москва : Искусство, 1986. — 445 с.

Левкиевская, Е. Е. Мифологический персонаж: соотношение имени и образа // Е. Е. Левкиевская // Славянские этюды : сборник к юбилею С. М. Толстой / редкол.: Т. А. Агапкина, Л. Н. Виноградова, Е. Е. Левкиевская (отв. ред.), А. А. Плотникова. — Москва : Индрик, 1999. — С. 243–257. — URL: <https://inslav.ru/publication/slavyanskietoedy-sbornik-k-yubileyu-s-m-tolstoy-m-1999>. — (08.12.2021).

Лосев, А. Ф. Диалектика мифа // Лосев, А. Ф. Миф. Число. Сущность / А. Ф. Лосев. — Москва : Мысль, 1994. — С. 5–216.

Пропп, В. Я. Морфология сказки / В. Я. Пропп. — Изд. 2-е. — Москва : [Наука], 1969. — 168 с.

Шабунина, Д. С. Мифологический полифонизм в цикле романов Дж. Роулинг о Гарри Поттере / Д. С. Шабунина // Коммуникативные аспекты языка и культуры : сб. материалов XII Международной научно-практической конференции студентов и молодых ученых, г. Томск, 16–18 мая 2012 г. — Томск : Изд-во ТПУ, 2012. — Ч. 1. — С. 281–284. — URL: <https://www.lib.tpu.ru/fulltext/c/2012/C77/V1/069.pdf>. — (09.12.2021).

Штоль, Н. В. Германо-Скандинавские мифологические прототипы ключевых персонажей легендария Дж. Р. Р. Толкина / Н. В. Штоль // Язык. Культура. Перевод. Коммуникация : сб. науч. трудов [Электронный ресурс]. — Москва : КДУ ; Добросвет, 2018. — Вып. 2. — URL: [https://bookonline.ru/lecture/14-germano-skandinavskie-mifologicheskie-prototipy-klyuchevyh-personazhey-legendariuma-6?search\\_text=shtoll](https://bookonline.ru/lecture/14-germano-skandinavskie-mifologicheskie-prototipy-klyuchevyh-personazhey-legendariuma-6?search_text=shtoll). — (09.12.2021).

Allen, G. Intertextuality / G. Allen. — London : Routledge, 2011. — 244 p.

Asplund Ingemark, C. The Genre of Trolls : the Case of a Finland-Swedish Folk Belief Tradition : diss. / Camilla Asplund Ingemark — Åbo, 2004. — 320 p. — URL: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305775779\\_The\\_Genre\\_of\\_Trolls\\_The\\_Case\\_of\\_a\\_Finland-Swedish\\_Folk\\_Belief\\_Tradition](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305775779_The_Genre_of_Trolls_The_Case_of_a_Finland-Swedish_Folk_Belief_Tradition). — (07.12.2021).

Asplund Ingemark, C. Legends of Trolls and the Bible / C. Asplund Ingemark // Elore. — 2005. — Vol. 12, no. 2 (December). — P. 1–15.

Bakhtin, M. M. Speech Genres and Other Late Essays / M. M. Bakhtin ; transl. by V. W. McGee ; ed. by C. Emerson and M. Holquist. —

Austin : University of Texas Press, 1986. — 177 p. — URL: <https://archive.org/details/SpeechGenresAndOtherLateEssays>. — (07.12.2021).

Barthes, R. Image — Music — Text / R. Barthes ; transl. by S. Heath. — London : Fontana, 1977. — 220 p.

Bence, P. Nordic and Germanic Myths and Legends in the Work of J. R.R. Tolkien : undergraduate thesis / Petra Bence. — Osijeku, 2014. — <https://repozitorij.ffos.hr/islandora/object/ffos:1487>. — (07.12.2021).

Carnell, C. S. Bright Shadow of Reality : Spiritual Longing in C. S. Lewis / C. S. Carnell. — Grand Rapids (MI) ; Cambridge (UK) : William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999. — 180 p.

Grant, T. A Problem of Giant Proportions / T. Grant // Gripla. — 2019. — Vol. XXX. — Bls. 77–106. — URL: <https://gripla.arnastofnun.is/index.php/gripla/article/view/97>. — (07.12.2021).

Heide, E. Contradictory Cosmology in Old Norse Myth and Religion — but Still a System? / E. Heide // Maal og Minne. — 2014. — Vol. 106, no.1 (June). — S. 102–143. — URL: <http://ojs.novus.no/index.php/MOM/article/view/226>. — (07.12.2021).

Härcher, C. Myths in “Harry Potter” : How Joanne K. Rowling Uses Real Mythology in Her Novels : term paper / Cindy Härcher. — University of Bayreuth, 2014. — 20 p. — URL: <https://www.grin.com/document/307971>. — (07.12.2021).

Jakobsson, Á. Where do the Giants Live? / Á. Jakobsson // Arkiv för nordisk filologi. — 2006. — Vol. 121. — S. 101–112. — URL: <https://journals.lub.lu.se/anf/article/view/11748>. — (07.12.2021).

Jakobsson, Á. The Trollish Acts of Þorgrímr the Witch : the Meanings of Troll and Ergi in Medieval Iceland / Á. Jakobsson // Saga-Book. — 2008. — Vol. XXXII. — P. 39–68. — URL: [https://www.academia.edu/1348105/The\\_Trollish\\_Acts\\_of\\_%C3%9Eorgtr%C3%ADmr\\_the\\_Witch\\_The\\_Meanings\\_of\\_Troll\\_and\\_Ergi\\_in\\_Medieval\\_Iceland\\_Saga\\_Book\\_32\\_2008\\_39\\_68](https://www.academia.edu/1348105/The_Trollish_Acts_of_%C3%9Eorgtr%C3%ADmr_the_Witch_The_Meanings_of_Troll_and_Ergi_in_Medieval_Iceland_Saga_Book_32_2008_39_68). — (07.12.2021).

Jakobsson, Á. The Taxonomy of the Non-existence : Some Medieval Icelandic Concepts of the Paranormal / Á. Jakobsson // Fabula. — 2013. — Vol. 54 (November). — P. 199–213. — URL: [https://www.academia.edu/5527070/The\\_Taxonomy\\_of\\_the\\_Non\\_Existent\\_Some\\_Medieval\\_Icelandic\\_Concepts\\_of\\_the\\_Paranormal\\_Fabula\\_54\\_2013\\_199\\_213](https://www.academia.edu/5527070/The_Taxonomy_of_the_Non_Existent_Some_Medieval_Icelandic_Concepts_of_the_Paranormal_Fabula_54_2013_199_213). — (07.12.2021).

Jakobsson, Á. Viking Childhood / Á. Jakobsson // Childhood in History / ed. by R. Aasgaard, C. Horn, O. M. Cojocar. — London : Routledge, 2017. — P. 199–213.

Jakobsson, Á. The Troll inside You : Paranormal Activity in the Medieval North / Á. Jakobsson. — Goleta (CA) : Punctum Books, 2017. — 240 p. — URL: [https://www.academia.edu/32484922/The\\_Troll\\_Inside\\_You\\_Paranormal\\_Activity\\_in\\_the\\_Medieval\\_North\\_Punctum\\_Books\\_2017](https://www.academia.edu/32484922/The_Troll_Inside_You_Paranormal_Activity_in_the_Medieval_North_Punctum_Books_2017). — (07.12.2021).

Khoddam, S. Balder the Beautiful : Aslan's Norse Ancestor in *The Chronicles of Narnia* / S. Khoddam // *Mythlore : a Journal of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoetic Literature*. — 1999. — Vol. 22, no. 3. — P. 66–76. — URL: <https://dc.swosu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1350&context=mythlore>. — (07.12.2021).

Knutsen, G. W. Trolls and Witches / G. W. Knutsen, A. I. Riisø // *Arv : Nordic Yearbook of Folklore*. — Uppsala : The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy, 2007. — Vol. 63. — P. 31–69. — URL: <https://kga.bokorder.se/en-us/download/3aca9605-9b83-4bfd-8ef4-d07b3867b9fd>. — (08.12.2021).

Koski, K. The Legend Genre and Narrative Registers / K. Koski // *Genre — Text — Interpretation : Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Folklore and Beyond* / ed. by K. Koski and Frog with U. Savolainen. — Helsinki : SKS, 2016. — P. 113–136. — (*Studia Fennica Folkloristica* 22). — URL: <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/31124>. — (08.12.2021).

Kristeva, J. The Kristeva Reader / J. Kristeva ; ed. by T. Moi. — New York : Columbia University Press, 1986. — 328 p.

Kristeva, J. Word, Dialogue, and Novel // Kristeva, J. *Desire in Language : a Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* / J. Kristeva ; ed. by L. S. Rodiez ; transl. by N. Gora, A. Jardine, and L. S. Rodiez. — New York : Columbia University Press, 1980. — P. 64–91.

Lévi-Strauss, C. Myth and Meaning / C. Lévi-Strauss. — Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1978. — 64 p.

Lindow, J. Trolls: an Unnatural History / J. Lindow. — London : Reaktion Books, 2014. — 160 p.

Ó Giollain, D. People, Nation and “Combative Literatures”: Baltic, Celtic and Nordic Configurations of Folklore / D. Ó Giollain // *Storied and Supernatural Places : Studies in Spatial and Social Dimensions of Folklore and Sagas* / ed. by Ü. Valk, D. Sävborg. — Helsinki : SKS, 2018. — P. 256–268. — (*Studia Fennica Folkloristica* 23). — URL: <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/29738>. — (07.12.2021).

Patterson, N.-L. Narnia and the North : the Symbolism of Northernness in the Fantasies of C. S. Lewis / N.-L. Patterson // *Mythlore : a Journal of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoetic Literature*. — 1976. — Vol. 4, no. 2. — P. 9–16. — URL: <https://dc.swosu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1550&context=mythlore>. — (08.12.2021).

Pearson, L. “I Wanted a Character Who Was Very Positive” : an Interview with Luke Pearson / L. Person ; interview by C. Mautner // *The Comics Journal*. — 2014. — September 19. — URL: <https://www.tcj.com/i-wanted-a-character-who-was-very-positive-an-interview-with-luke-pearson/>. — (08.12.2021).

Pearson, L. Luke Pearson and George O’Conner discuss Hildafolk / L. Pearson ; interview by G. O’Conner. Strand Book Store, May 6, 2014 // YouTube [Электронный ресурс]. — URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMDTOfk7WAY>. — (08.12.2021).

Pearson, L. Q & A with Luke Pearson / L. Pearson ; interview by D. Wagstaff // *The Casual Optimist : Books, Design and Culture* [Электронный ресурс]. — 2013. — September 25. — URL: <http://www.casualoptimist.com/blog/2013/09/25/q-a-with-luke-pearson/>. — (09.12.2021).

Pearson, W. *Beowulf the Jute; His Life and Times : Angles, Saxons and Doubts* / W. Pearson. — S. l. : Xlibris, 2017. — 732 p.

Šerešová, L. *Norse Mythology References in "Harry Potter": essay* / L. Šerešová. — Leipzig : Universität Leipzig, 2016. — 13 p. — URL: <https://www.grin.com/document/345533>. — (09.12.2021).

Šerešová, L. *The Use of Mythological Elements in "The Chronicles of Narnia" by C. S. Lewis : master's thesis* / L. Šerešová. — Leipzig : Universität Leipzig, 2017. — 63 p. — URL: <https://www.grin.com/document/377232>. — (09.12.2021).

Stark, L. *Peasants, Pilgrims and Sacred Promises : Ritual and the Supernatural in Orthodox Karelian Folk Religion* / L. Stark. — Helsinki : SKS, 2002. — 229 p. — (*Studia Fennica Folkloristica* 11). — URL: <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/32110>. — (09.12.2021).

Strenski, I. *Malinowski and the Work of Myth* / I. Strenski. — Princeton (NJ) : Princeton University Press, 2014. — 216 p.

Tarkka, L. *The Poetics of Quotation : Proverbial Speech, Entextualization and the Emergence of Oral Poems* / L. Tarkka // *Genre — Text — Interpretation : Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Folklore and Beyond* / ed. by K. Koski and Frog with U. Savolainen. — Helsinki : SKS, 2016. — P. 175–199. — (*Studia Fennica Folkloristica* 22). — URL: <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/31124>. — (08.12.2021).

Tarkka, L. *Transformations of Epic Time and Space: Creating the World's Creation in Kalevala-metric Poetry* / L. Tarkka // *Oral Tradition*. — 1996. — Vol. 11, issue 1. — P. 50–84. — URL: [https://journal.oraltradition.org/wp-content/uploads/files/articles/11i/8\\_tarkka.pdf](https://journal.oraltradition.org/wp-content/uploads/files/articles/11i/8_tarkka.pdf). — (09.12.2021).

*Travel Destination Iceland : Íslandsstofa : Survey in European Markets : April 2015* // Íslandsstofa [Электронный ресурс] — URL: [https://www.islandsstofa.is/media/1/islandsstofa\\_vidhorfskonnun\\_final.pdf](https://www.islandsstofa.is/media/1/islandsstofa_vidhorfskonnun_final.pdf). — (09.12.2021).

Troll // *Nationalencyclopedin online* [Электронный ресурс]. — URL: <https://www.ne.se/s%C3%B6k/?t=uppslagsverk&q=troll>. — (09.11.2021)

Valk, Ü. *Place-Lore, Liminal Storyworld and Ontology of the Supernatural : an Introduction* / Ü. Valk, D. Sävborg // *Storied and Supernatural Places : Studies in Spatial and Social Dimensions of Folklore and Sagas* / ed. by Ü. Valk, D. Sävborg. — Helsinki : SKS, 2018. — P. 7–24. — (*Studia Fennica Folkloristica* 23). — URL: <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/29738>. — (07.12.2021).

Viðhorfsrannsókn um Ísland : Denmark, United Kingdom and Germany : January 2011 // Íslandsstofa [Электронный ресурс]. — URL: [https://www.islandsstofa.is/media/1/2011\\_dk\\_uk\\_ge\\_final\\_final.pdf](https://www.islandsstofa.is/media/1/2011_dk_uk_ge_final_final.pdf). — (09.12.2021).

Wettstein, M. Old Norse Elements in the Work of J. R. R. Tolkien / M. Wettstein // Academia.edu [Электронный ресурс]. — URL: [https://www.academia.edu/228734/Norse\\_Elements\\_in\\_the\\_work](https://www.academia.edu/228734/Norse_Elements_in_the_work). — (09.12.2021).

Young, R. “It Sounds Like Magic, But It’s Not” : Many Icelanders Believe In Elves / R. Young, K. Miller-Medzon // Wbur [Электронный ресурс]. — 2019. — December 24. — URL: <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2019/12/24/iceland-elves>. — (09.12.2021).