Going Public… PhD Colloquium 17. – 18. February 2022 (via zoom)

**Potentials and Challenges of European Public Anthropology, Ethnology, Literary and Folklore Studies when engaging with contemporary problems in the 21st century**

Participating Universities: Univ. Athens, Bukarest, Stockholm, Tübingen

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## Program

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9.30 – 10.15 Alexandra **Hosszu** “Coming to Terms with Digitization - A Sociological Study of the Digital Society”. (Supervisor Campeanu & Craciun)

10.15 – 11.00 Artemis **Konstantidelli**: “The Folktale as a Means of Education, Socialization and the Development of Intercultural Ability among Refugee Children”. (Supervisor: Chryssanthopoulou)

11.15 – 12.00 Lenita **Kefala**: “There is no place like home’, women with temporal rental contracts in Stockholm, Sweden”. (Supervisor: Bäckmann)

12.00 – 12.45 Kassiani **Plati**: ”The ‘B. Papantoniou’ Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation in Greece: practicing public folklore through educational programs”. (Supervisor: Chryssanthopoulou)

13.30 ­– 14.15 Irina **Ion** “Adolescent parenthood in Romania”. (Supervisor Professor Maria Voinea)

14.15 ­– 15.00 Franca **Webel**: “Health as an individual and public resource in the COVID 19 pandemic”. (Supervisor: Alex)

15.15 ­– 16.00 Gabriel **Tamas**: “The dialectics of Sticker bombing. Political discourse in urban art”. (Supervisor: Narcisa Stiuca)

**Friday,18.2.2022**

9.00 – 9.45 Katerina **Schoina**: “Cultural interpretations of natural disasters due to the climate change in the Attica region: Folkloristic approaches, field research and narratives”. (Supervisor: Kouzas)

9.45 – 10.30 Poonam **Kamath**: “Contested Conceptions: The Genealogy of ‘Kinderwunsch’ in Germany (1871-2021)”. (Supervisor: Polit)

10.45 – 11.30 Aida **Jobarteh**: “Roots, Routes and Ruptures. Border narratives by Gambian men”. (Supervisor: Farahani)

11.30 – 12.15 Angeliki **Zampa**, “Yiannis Ritsos and the Ancient Myth: The myth as a research object and tool in Folklore Studies”.(Supervisor: Kaplanoglou)

13.00 – 13.45 Andra **Samson**: “The leader – self-heroisation and de-heroisation. Challenges to the hero stance in the leader’s profile in contemporary culture from a narrative identity perspective”. (Supervisor: Prof. Mircea Vasilescu)

13.45 – 14.30 Aphrodite-Lidia **Nounanaki**: “Contemporary Legends as Creepy-pasta”. (Supervisor: Dr. Rea Kakampoura)

14.45 – 15.30 Monica Irina **Chiorpec**: “Culture and subculture in 1970s Romania. Ethno-rock and its representations". (Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Călin Cotoi)

## Alexandra Hosszu (BUK)

## Title: Coming to Terms with Digitization A Sociological Study of the Digital Society

Internet and digital devices became part of our daily lives. It would be hard to imagine working without computers or internet, communicating with others without WhatsApp or Messenger, enjoying our social moment without posting pictures and videos on Instagram. The social existence is shaped by digital experiences and the quality of life is affected by the access to the digital world.

Studying the digital society through sociological lens is more relevant than ever within the pandemic context which has influenced an even faster growth in the use of digital technology: one third of the European population started working from home (Eurofund, 2020) and 90% of all students worldwide had been affected by the partial or total interruption of offline classes, with 191 national states closing the schools at the national level (UNESCO, 2020). Moreover, specialists (Fried, 2020) (Howard & Borenstein, 2020) (Smith, 2020) are concerned with the fact that COVID-19 pandemic could lead to an increase of the disadvantages and unfair outcomes for certain groups as the use of algorithms is growing in areas related to employment, health, governance etc.

Sociology contributes to the academic debate about the social changes mediated by technology, focusing on (1) the construction and re-construction of knowledge through digitization, (2) the way social interactions are shaped by digital experiences, and (3) inequalities and divides enhanced by uneven access to the digital world. In addition, the digitization offers the opportunity of readjusting research methods and analytical frameworks in Sociology in order to respond to the digital society.

My thesis aims to analyze the modalities of human – non-human interaction bringing to spotlight the creation of knowledge about oneself and about the others, with a focus on the impact of the massive digitization that occurred during COVID-19 pandemic, as well as on digital identities and the social construction of digital divides discourse.

The perspective used throughout the study is that human and non-human entities shape the social realities and experiences. The digital objects are not seen as perfectly objective and accurate, but rather they achieve meaning through the interaction and they have their own existence. **The methodological approach of the thesis is mainly qualitative**, focusing on thematic content analysis of public discourse (online posts, journalistic articles) and students’ and teacher’ testimonies.

The main **research questions** of the thesis are:

**RQ1.** How does technology shape social intersections? How does the use of digital technology affect the creation and recreation of knowledge about self, groups and society in general?

**RQ2.** What disadvantages and privileges are implied by the use of digital technology? How does digitization reshape power structures and inequalities?

**RQ3.** What are the concerns about the massive digitization facilitated by COVID-19 pandemic as perceived by various actors?

The thesis follows two dimensions of analysis: (1) the **narratives of apps usage** and how they change knowledge (study cases about mental health apps and sleep apps) and (2) **the experiences and meanings of online education in Romania**. Both dimensions capture the ambivalence of the digital society, the negative and the positive experiences with digitization and its complexity.

The main findings of my research show that, in Romania, continuing the educational process during the pandemic has been a challenge for both central and local authorities and for the groups directly affected by these changes - students, teachers and parents. Authorities' messages were sometimes confusing, and frequent changes and lack of predictability led to anxiety, lack of motivation, and limited confidence in the effectiveness of education during the pandemic. Online education has been a compromise in order not to completely stop education for a long time.

One of the challenges of online education was the limited interaction between students and teachers which negatively influenced the results of the educational process. The webcams usage during online classes is still a significant debate between students and teachers. If for the teachers, the opening of the rooms contributes to the quality of the educational act by the fact that the facial expressions can be seen, and the communication is more personal, from the students' perspective, the pressure to open the rooms increases their anxiety.

The new educational environment requested strategies of adaptation from all the social actors involved in the process. In the online context, the interaction felt less authentic for students and teachers which caused anxieties and fatigue for them.

According to Goffman (1956) analysis of how individuals present themselves in social interactions, people try to enact a suitable appearance for the spectators’ expectations in a given social situation. Thus, individuals define the specific situation in which they find themselves, and act taking into account how they believe the others expect them to act using impression management techniques (Goffman, 1956). By using Goffman’s metaphor of the dramaturgical play, I analyze the online education in terms of performance, observing changes of perspective compared to face-to-face educational activities.

In traditional education, the front stage is at school (the physical space) where each of the actors (students and teachers) present themselves in a performance based on their statuses and assumed roles. For example, a student that wants to be perceived as hardworking and diligent will do her homework, will answer in class, will pay attention to the teacher and will struggle to obtain good grades. The back stage in face-to-face education is at home where they have different statuses and roles and they will leave some of the masks off. In the online education context, the distinction between back stage and front stage is vague especially if one is compelled to turn on their webcam. When turning on the webcam, the students cannot control their backstage anymore and it is possible for the rest of the class to see scenes of one’s personal life that are very intimate (e.g., seeing a parent naked or yelling). While keeping the webcam turned off, the students can maintain the front stage appearance the colleagues were already used to from school. The aim of the performance is to present one’s best self in accordance to the others’ expectations. Thus, in some cases, the self is portrayed more positive if the webcam remains turned off and the others do not have the possibility of judging the back stage. Even if nothing unexpected really happens when having the camera turned on, the fear of the back stage becoming the front-page leads to students’ anxiety and reluctance towards turning on the webcam. According to the teachers’ stories, the parents also take part in the performance and they try to help their children have a more positive image. Parents whisper the correct answers for the children hoping they won’t be embarrassed or judged by the others.

The pandemic context also provided the time for reflecting on ways of improving educational outcomes and experiment new apps, platforms and online activities. The future of education is linked to digital technologies as means for achieving better educational results and improved competences for the labor market. The post-pandemic educational realities will be shaped by recent transformations: better digital infrastructure and competences, more autonomy for students and teachers, stronger awareness of digitalization risks and opportunities, teachers becoming facilitators rather than instructors. For sure, there is still much work to be done for universal access to education and to reduce gaps in learning, but the theme of equity has become a priority on the public agenda and many actors are collaborating for finding technical and social solutions.

**Points for discussion**

* How to better integrate the two dimensions (apps and online education)?
* How to improve the theoretical perspectives?

## Artemis Konstantidelli (ATH)

## Title: The Folktale as a Means of Education, Socialization and the Development of Intercultural Ability among Refugee Children

I do my doctoral thesis in folklore studies in the Dept. of Philology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. My supervisor is Vassiliki Chryssanthopoulou, Assistant Professor of Folklore, while Associate Professor Marianthi Kaplanoglou and Associate Professor Eugenia Arvanitis, a folklorist and an educator respectively, also constitute members of my supervising committee. I embarked on this research in NGOS and have completed my fieldwork. Now I am at the stage of writing up the chapters of my thesis.

The research hypothesis of the study is that the myth and the folktale as genres of popular narrative and given their ecumenical nature, can be a means of education, socialization and cultivation of intercultural empathy and ability for children with refugee and often traumatic backgrounds.The main research questions are how the myth and the folktale as genres of popular narrative can be used in the education of refugee children and how digital storytelling could be used positively and the applications it offers as a pedagogical tool in this direction. Also, the purpose of the research is to study whether and to what extent myth and folktale as a "common ground" of intercultural dialogue, can have a positive effect on the intercultural ability of those involved in the educational process.

In order to investigate the above, I conducted an extensive bibliographic review of both Greek and international bibliography and I pursued qualitative research in the area of shelter and non-formal education classes for refugee children. Fieldwork research with the tool of participatory observation is a traditional methodological tool of folklore, ethnographic and anthropological studies but is also suitable for studies of smaller groups, closed structures and classes and potentially intercultural environments. I carried out fieldwork instructures that are legally under the status of non-governmental organization. More specifically, I conducted research for a total of 9 months in four different fields: a shelter for unaccompanied minor refugees, an intercultural center for learning the Greek language, at a school that operated in the afternoons providing non-formal refugee education classes and in online classrooms for children refugees.

In this research, the type of participatory observer with an active role in the group was selected, since I was active as a teacher of Greek for these children. Taking on a role within the group automatically means the researcher is practically and emotionally involved with his/her students, who are the subjects of his/her study. This of course carries the risk of obfuscating the boundary between the identity of the researcher as observer and as part of a team. This can lead to confusion of the researcher, identification with the subjects of the research and ultimately non-objective observation and description. For this reason but also for legal, practical and other reasons, Ι chose to take an active role within the groups which I pursued with a predetermined periodicity for a long period of time.

The Greek lessons based on the folktale were systematically attended by 50 children, boys and girls, aged 6-15 years, beginning users of Greek (A1-A2 language level). The countries of origin of the children who participated in the lessons were Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Turkey, China, Tunisia, Egypt, Congo and Palestine. The sample base was common in terms of the refugee background of the children, gender, religion, age group, level of knowledge of Greek and the participation of children in the Greek school. The samples in each case were approached and studied as folk groups with their own special features and codes each.In order to serve the purposes of the research, Greek lessons were designed based on the folktale and according to the criteria set by the Greek Language Center. The courses were designed in the light of the basic principles of Intercultural Education and taking into account the positions that govern it.

The “class”, in both the shelter and the non-formal education classrooms was the core and reference point of the children. Their systematic and equal participation in it had multiple benefits for children, of both cognitive / learning and psycho-pedagogical nature. Within it, either live or in a distance section, the children continued expressing their personal identities and redefining them. They had a point of reference and felt safety based on the consistency on the part of the educator / researcher. Thus the classbecame a springboard helping refugee students to unfold their inclinations and skills, by studying and enjoying/ experiencing the literatures of the 21st centuryparallel to studying the Greek language. Each class constituted a small folk group each time with its own idiom, its own unique characteristics and its own aims.

For the needs of the courses, visualized depictions of variations of myths and folktales were created through digital applications and with the method of "Storyboard", as they were indexed from the Catalog of Greek folktales by the well-known Greek folklorist G. Megas. The variants were chosen based on the structure, the episodes and the thematic vocabulary as well as the countries of distribution of each variant. Based on the results of international research so far, it seems that the myth and the folktale are elements of cultural convergence and can act as bridges among cultures. The existence of innumerable variations with their special cultural characteristics, each but a common starting point of the same myths, is what shows that the folktale can emerge as a common interactive element between the cultures of the country of origin and the country of host, hospitality and possible permanent settlement of refugee children, depending on the outcome of their personal life courses. In addition, the repetitive motifs and dipoles [eg. good-bad] on the basis of which the genres are formed, help in this direction. Ethical dilemmas and challenges in relation to my presence in the field were also particularly important in the course of the research. Τhe fluid research field, the age and condition of the children, were some of them.

The results of my research so far show that teaching a language other than their own to refugee children by employing myths and folktales constitutes a fruitful and creative contact with the Greek language. The methods used in this teaching, including digital storytelling, are inspired by the transformative pedagogical approaches of multi-literacies.

## Lenita Kefala (STH)

## Title: ‘*There is no place like home’*, women with temporal rental contracts in Stockholm, Sweden

**Research question(s) and objectives**

In Sweden, there is a shortage of affordable rental housing contracts and in several of the big cities including the capital Stockholm, the waiting time for a lease is estimated up to 10 years. Meantime, many people turn to the informal second-hand rental (subletting) housing market, which is characterized by high costs, insecurity, vulnerability, and frequent mobility.

As a resident of the secondary market, the understanding of a home, as a place where you have control and influence over your privacy is challenged by the home's changing location and shape in connection with moving. Second-hand homes risk replacing each other and make it difficult for people to establish themselves spatially and socially. Living temporarily and moving often creates insecurity that affects all different aspects of everyday life. Leaning toward an understanding of housing precariousness as a position, which can be described as being housed at the margins of society with insecure contracts, this thesis investigates the lived experience of women with second-hand rental contracts. How does women’s housing situation affect their feelings of being ‘at home’?

**The aim and research questions**

The purpose is to contextualize and analyze how several women reflect upon how home-creating is conditioned (economically, socially, and temporal), challenged, and takes shape in temporary houses. The questions that guide the thesis analytical work are:

• How do women create and maintain temporary housing as their homes?

• What makes it possible and difficult for women to design and experience temporary houses as their homes?

• How are norms such as gender, class, age, and ethnicity actualized and interacting in the women's life situation and searching for a place to call home?

By placing women’s experiences at the center of the analysis, the intention is to gain a better understanding of how the specific circumstances affect women’s everyday life. The informant’s narratives are analyzed through the lens of the conceptualization of housing precarity and theory of intersectionality to add insights into the gendered, classed, ethnical, and aged aspects of housing inequality.

**Field and method**

The empirical data is mainly based on interviews collected during 2020-2022. During this period, individual interviews with a total of 15 women were conducted, of which 7 informants were followed up with another one to three interviews. I have also done a group interview with 5 women at a social activity (independent organization) that offers "support for orientation in Swedish society, both socially, existentially, culturally and religiously.

The interviews, which were conducted during the covid-19 pandemic, are mostly done over video link (zoom and skype), by phone, and some at cafés and their apartment.

All of them were semi-structured around themes focused on second-hand homes, the search process, and home creation.

I have also done online observation at different Facebook groups and the website Blocket.se (the most common site for temporary houses in Sweden) because the sublet market is internet-based. I look at how housing advertisement is written, tenants’ self-presentation, comments, and reactions. The purpose of observing and analyzing online advertisements is that it gives a broader understanding of the search process in itself, what the informants are experiencing when they are online, it also shows the importance of social and symbolic capital.

**Theoretical framework**

This is still unclear and I am happy to receive comments and suggestions from you about it.

*Intersectional framing*

To understand women's ways of navigating different spaces (houses), I ask how experiences of renting on the secondary market are characterized by gender-based, classified, aged and racialized relations.

The intersectional analysis can help me to illuminate and focus on how inequality and privileges are created between and within the group of women in different situations.

As the informants themselves and others in the second-hand market express an expected femininity - as a caring, clean and orderly tenant (in Beverly Skegg's words as respectable) attention is drawn to the intersections between gender, class and whiteness.

*Precariousness*

Precariat can in a broad sense be understood as a term that describes the condition of a group of people living in very uncertain, unpredictable conditions. Insecure lives are not just about precarious employment (Listerborn 2021), which research has often focused on. Nor should it be associated with homelessness or the risk of becoming homeless. Rather, housing insecurity should be understood as a broader understanding of the effects of modern housing markets, with increased marketing and neoliberal reforms with a free housing market, maximized competition and the sale of public goods. Clair et al. (2019) define housing insecurity as a social position where people to a greater extent tend to end up in situations where they feel insecure, exploited, excluded.

**Results so far**

The informants’ experiences and observations made by the internet-based housing agency pages and forums show, among other things, how the second-hand market has a clear connection to gender. Where the caring and the calm tenant becomes synonymous with femininity, an ideal that is perceived as offensive and problematic at the same time as it is used as a strategy. The ideal of the caring woman is expressed both in image and text among the sub-tenants themselves and is then described as increasing their chance of gaining access to a home (female gender as a resource). At the same time, this leads to unwelcome messages, pictures, and conversations of a sexual nature from, above all, first-time tenants of the male sex. The ideal of respectability is also something that is embodied in the women’s everyday lives in form of how they use the houses as home, how they perceived expectations of social behavior, and the right to privacy.

*References:*

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## Kassiani Plati (ATH)

## Title: The “B. Papantoniou” Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation in Greece: practicing public folklore through educational programs

**Introduction**

My PhD Thesis entitled "Folklore research and museum utilisation: The case of the "B. Papantoniou" Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation” is carried out within the framework of the Program Postgraduate Studies of the second cycle of the Department of Philology of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens under the supervision of Assistant Professor Vassiliki Chryssanthopoulou and co-supervisors Associate Professor Marianthi Kaplanoglou and Senior Researcher, Dr. Andromachi Economou.

The “B. Papantoniou” Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation (PFF) on which my study focuses, is a non-profit institution based in Nafplion (Greece) [http://www.pli.gr/en]. It was founded in 1974 by the set and costume designer Ioanna Papantoniou in memory of her father Basil. The aim of the Foundation is the study, preservation and dissemination of modern Greek culture. The PFF is made up of the “B. Papantoniou” Museum, the Childhood Museum “Stathmos”, the Research Centre housing the library and the archives of the Institution at Nafplion and two Cultural Centres “Sofroni 13” at Nafplion and “Kanari 4” at Athens. From the first years of its operation, the PFF supported field surveys in villages and cities of Greece in order to record and to salvage information on the local traditional costumes that were no longer manufactured or used, dance, customs, singing and music, technology, etc. At the same time, it utilized and channelled the results of its researches and the knowledge that emerged from them to the public through the documentation and exhibition of museum objects of its collection, publications that include monographs, studies, scientific journals, music records, educational programs, etc.

The structure of the PFF (research centre, library, publications, museum), based on models of museums abroad (e.g., Musée National des arts et traditions populaires - ATP), a result of private initiative, has intrigued me since my first collaboration with the foundation on a voluntary basis to this day. I have been employed as part of its administration since 2014. I have decided to investigate and attempt to analyze its functions in their entirety, giving special clout to the folklore research that was carried out under its auspices and to its museum activities. The search and analysis of the initiatives of institutions such as the PFF have been very important in the development of Folklore studies in Greece. In other words, we need to examine how these institutions were influenced by domestic Greek social needs and scientific trends, but also by international ones, and how, in turn, they co-shaped the academic and public practice of Folklore in Greece. One of the actions of the PFF from the first years of its operation is the educational programs which I will dwell on a little more at this point. Through the presentation of their history and evolution until today, I will analyse their philosophy, themes, design and implementation methodology in order to examine in what ways they constitute a means of practicing public folklore, if they do so.

**Research objectives and questions**

My thesis is structured on two main axes. The first axis aims to study the course and evolution of folklore research in Greece, through the theoretical foundations laid down by Folklore and its related disciplines, both in Greece and abroad, combined with the practices followed by the PFF in carrying out its field research, - mainly in areas such as costume, technology, music, dance, etc., throughout Greece, and the detection of any two-way influences. In the first phase, therefore, I attempt to answer and document the answers with specific data that will emerge from my research in relation to the following questions: a) whether the research which was carried out by the research groups of the PFF, was based on the rules of folklore research of the post World War II period b) was their research influenced by other neighbouring disciplines (e.g., Anthropology, Ethnology, Sociology, History, etc.)? c) to what extent have the methods followed by the research teams, opened new paths in folklore research in Greece? d) Did this research provide the stimulus for further study of various topics of folklore (in Greece, such as customs, technology, dance etc.?

The second axis will focus on the museum utilization of the results of the research of the PFF, both at the level of collections (documentation, exhibition, education) and publications. The questions raised at this point are: a) how did the trends of museology in the period of creation of the museum affect the PFF? b) what form of organisation did the foundation follow, what museological principles did it rely on, and to what extent did it support this structure through its activities? c) in what way and to what extent were the PFF's research and its results used by museums and what is its contribution to museum practice in Greece?

Moreover, in the thesis I will attempt to analyse and evaluate the challenges faced by the Foundation, and in general by non-state actors of this kind, nowadays, both in relation to their contribution to education and culture and as regards their sustainability.

**Data on which the thesis is based**

For the elaboration of the thesis, the following research tools were used:

1. Study of bibliography, both Greek and international, on the history and theory of Folklore and related sciences as well as folklore research in Greece. Also, study of bibliography on the theory of museology, the history of museums for the interconnection of research with the museum (documentation, exhibitions, etc.). The above constitute the theoretical background of both the research and the writing of my thesis.
2. Archival research at the PFF to investigate all those elements related to the field surveys carried out by the PFF in Greece and to collect information about the activities of the institution (museum, publishing, etc.) from its establishment until today.
3. Gathering of oral testimonies from collaborators (members of the research teams and employees of the museum) and interviews provided by its founder and leader, Mrs. Ioanna Papantoniou.
4. On-the-spot participatory observation at the Foundation.

**The educational programs of the PFF**

I have followed the above methods of research throughout my thesis. In this presentation, however, I have chosen to focus more on the topic of the PFF's educational activities. The PFF was a pioneer in this field thus being part of an entire landmark era for the history of museums in Greece together with other major museums in this country. Moreover, I have personal experience in the field of museum education as head of PFF’ s educational programs for the last seven years.

For the presentation I turned to the archives of the PFF and studied the history and the educational programs of the past (archival-photographic material) and I also talked with Ms. Popi Kalkounou, head of the programs from 1981 to 2013 in order to understand the philosophy and method behind them. I also made use of part of the interviews with the researchers who participated in my fieldwork recordings and who had been involved in these educational activities or thus being well-informed about this matter.

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## Irina Elena Ion (BUK)

## Title: Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood in Romania – a Constructionist Analysis

**The Social Construction of**

**Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood in Romania**

Coordinator: PhD Professor Maria Voinea, Faculty of Sociology and Social Assistance of the University of Bucharest

I am enrolled *in the first year* of the Doctoral School of the Faculty of Sociology and Social Assistance of the University of Bucharest. Therefore, my thesis is in *an initial, planning phase*, including in what concerns the topic[[1]](#footnote-1), the title, the methodology. In this stage, I have, until now:

a) made a consistent literature review (but not a complete one), analyzing research published in globally reputed journals and publishing houses;

b) took a look at the Romanian literature on the matter;

c) decided on the ontological and epistemological framework – constructionism.

**Objectives:**

* To better understand the situation and experiences of Romanian adolescent mothers in what regards their pregnancy decisions and subsequent parenthood, by listening to their own voices
* To understand how social actors/claismakers address adolescent pregnancy and motherhood in Romania through the claismaking process
* To offer research insights that could be useful to social policy.

**Research questions:**

* What are the experiences of adolescent mothers, fathers and their families in Romania?
* What is the current discourse/ claimsmaking process on adolescent pregnancy and parenthood in Romania?
* What is the hystory of the social construction of adolescent pregancy and parenthood in Romania?
* Who are the main claimsmakers and what their main interests are?
* How is this discourse being elaborated by different claimsmakers?
* What concepts, ideologies, institutions and other social constructions are emobddied in this discourse?

**Rationale:**

The rationale for this study derives from: a) the scarce literature on the matter in Romania, in parallel with emergent claims that adolescent pregnancy constitutes a new and serious social problem and b) several gaps and limitations of the international academic literature regarding adolescent pregnancy and parenthood.

a) The Romanian academic studies on teenagers’ parenthood is incipient, assembling mostly medical and psychological insights, in works such as those of Stativa et al (2001), Mitoiu et al (2021) or Trutescu et al (2016). According to a recent joint report of UNICEF and SAMA Association, entitled „Adolescent pregnancy in Romania” „adolescent pregnancies – and adolescent parenthood in particular – carry high social and economic costs and have a bearing on health, social benefits and even crime”. While echoing arguments and preoccupations of the foreign scientific literature, such as those exposed in Cherry and Dillon (2014) that „the number of adolescent pregnancies and childbirth for some is an alarming turn of events and a serious threat to the social and economic order”, the report aims to call our attention to an enduring „social problem” of Romanian adolescent pregnancy and parenthood, based on the argument that Romania is one of the European countries with the highest adolescent birth rate. Despite laudable intentions and merits of the report, several limitations of this document jeopardize the understanding of adolescent pregnancy and parenthood in Romania. Among these limitations there are: the insufficient use of scientific arguments and references in the argumentation of the report, logical contradictions, its reliance on the opinions of professionals and decision-makers, the lack of a qualitative, in-depth analysis, the lack of a sociological perspective and the absence of teenagers’ voices from the analysis.

b) The international literature is far richer than the Romanian one and brings into discussion themes such as adolescence sexuality, gendered sexual relations, family changes, gendered violence, ideologies of reproduction and health and agency. Still, from my initial literature review, I observed that there are several *gaps* in the current research, such as: an insufficient attention paid to the voices of mothers, fathers and their families and a simplified approach of the “problem” exclusively from the point of view of its “causes” or risk factors, rather in a positivistic manner. Also, several authors choose to address the “phenomena” either considering it a “real social problem” or as “social construction”. This dichotomy of perspectives made me reflect on this “tension” and the ontological and epistemological assumptions that could guide my own study of adolescent pregnancy and parenthood. After several readings, I have decided to follow the principles of contextual constructionism, as proposed by authors such as Gubrium and Holstein (2003) and Best (1995, 2019).

**Field and method:**

* **Filed**: Pregnancy, parenthood, adolescence
* **Epistemology:** I plan to use the lens of constructionism, focusing on *contextual constructionism* as proposed by authors such as Gubrium and Holstein (2003) and Best (1995, 2019). Best (2017) considers that researchers should “locate claimsmaking with its context” (p. 348), study social practices through which social problems come to be recognized as such and use various sorts of evidence, including official statistics. Best criticizes the objectivist definition of social problems, generally framed as conditions that are considered widely undesirable, difficult, caused by individual actions or lack of actions and affecting a large number of persons. These definitions involve that “the essence of social problems lies in the objective social conditions and that some conditions are problems” (p. 3). According to Best “contextual constructivists – make assumptions about social conditions in order to better understand how social problems claims emerge and evolve” (p. 347), while remaining focused on the claismaking process. This involves analyzing the discrepancy between the claims and other sources of information and evidence (for example, statistics), even though we accept that these other sources are social constructions too. These sources are accepted because they explain, even imperfectly, the context of the claims. In his 2017 work, Best summarized several methodological steps derived from his epistemological position:

• identifying the location of claims and the analysis of their content (for example, how is the problem typified and what is the rhetoric used to persuade the audience);

• the analysis of claimmakers (who are they, whom do they represent, what interests and ideologies do they represent and how their own profile influences the claims). Typification refers to the characterization of a problem’s nature by claimsmakers (p. 8), i.e., proposing a certain particular perspective for understanding a certain problem, which implicitly locates a cause and a solution. There are also competing, rival ways of typifying social problems, by rival claimsmakers;

• the claismmaking process (public, rival claims).

Gubrium and Holstein (2003) also offer directions for the development of contextual constructivism, aiming to address “both how social realities are constructed and what comprises these realities in the social words under consideration” (p. 191), by proposing an “analytics of interpretative practice” (p. 194). This “technique” supposes leaving aside the foundationalist or ontological horizon, by “analytic bracketing” (p. 198), assuming that the reality is both the result of the members’ construction procedures and a “resource” from which it is formed. Other proposal for improving the constructionist analysis comes from Bogard (2003), that considers that social activities are our interpretation of the word, including the natural word. Her ontology includes the existence of an external real world, such as those of the ecosystems, that exists independently of our awareness and is able to constrain us; its denial is label as “prescientific” and “pre-Copernican” (p. 208). Still, this word, is built and rebuild, interpreted and reinterpreted continuously, in complex ways. Through this process, we transform the natural world into the social world, through “social objects, patterns and objects” (p. 209). According to Bogard (2003), constructionism analyses social problems in terms of the claimsmaking activities of the society members, while rejecting that this construction (or of any other social problem) could be reduced “to a battle over claims versus facts” (Linders and Bogard, 2014, p.150). The claimsmaking process is depended on the claimsmakers’ agendas and is directed towards persuading others. In order to be considered a „real public issue” (Bogard, 2003, p.1), some of the social actors must convince others of its importance.

**Methodology:**

It is not planed and studied yet, for the moment. I’m thinking to collect the following qualitative data:

* *verbal data* frominterviews with adolescent mothers & fathers & families + school colleagues+ teachers + medical staff + social assistance workers and decision makers
* *official written data -* official documents: health policies and strategies, social policies that tackle adolescent mothers + official statistics
* *other written data -*  other reports/studies available
* *other written data –* online interventions in online forums..?

**Theoretical/literature based framework or context of analysis:**According to constructionist studies (Reis, 1993; Vinson, 2012; Dillon and Cherry, 2014; Bonell, 2014), since the 80s, powerful tropes such as “children having children” and “adolescent pregnancy as an epidemic” that needs “prevention” and “treatment” (Belsky and Draper, 1987; Ban Al-Sahab et al., 2012) were constantly alimented by the *scientific and public discourse*. These tropes and discourse emulated mostly from the replication and interpretation of *medical arguments* by non-medical scholars that have put to the table health related arguments such as “adolescent pregnancy, more so than for older women, tends to be more dangerous for both mother and child. Pregnant adolescents are in greater jeopardy of obstetric complications during pregnancy, such as anemia, toxaemia, eclampsia, and hypertension (…) In addition, babies born to adolescent mothers experience health problems. They are more than twice as likely to be premature or of low birth weight (…). These two factors increase an infant’s immediate risk for perinatal mortality, and later in childhood, they lead to a number of adverse conditions including chronic respiratory problems, mental retardation, and dyslexia” (Ban Al-Sahab et al, 2012, pp. 228-229). Other argument used by the public discourse is the *economic one*. For example, in the ‘80s, Belsky and Draper (1987) “revealed” that “the costs contribute to a “massive federal deficits”, that require us “to protect our country from foreign threats” (p. 24). More recent contributions (Ban Al-Sahab et al., 2012; Cherry and Dillon, 2014) also use economic arguments. Ban Al-Sahab et al. (2012) provide “exact” figures of teenage pregnancy cost, considering that: “teen childbearing, therefore, incurs a great economic burden on society. Estimates in 2004 from the United States put the cost at $9.1 billion dollars”.

Many of the existing studies ignore the mothers’ voices from the analysis. This “omission” has conflated the negative portratization of adolescent mothers in the public imaginary. Several studies make central these voices (Bekaert and Bradly, 2019; Rolfe, 2008; Bereheny and Stephens, 2010; Barker et al., 2019; Connolly et al., 2012, Aparicio et al., 2015), depicting adolescent mothers in common terms, such as:

* Adolescent mothers are willing and struggling to formulate counternarratives to their “incrimination” in ongoing discourses of claimmakers (Bekaert and Bradly, 2019; Rolfe, 2008);
* They perceive shame and they feel stigmatized (Breheny and Stephens, 2010; Barker et al., 2019; Connolly et al., 2012);
* They “exercise” their agency (Bekaert and Bradly, 2019; Aparicio et al., 2015). According to Bekaert and Bradly (2019), the decision to continue a pregnancy is *per se* “an expression of agency” and one of “empowerment”, that involves a parental positive approach to parenthood;
* Pregnancy and parenting have important, positive meanings, mainly looking for a new purpose in life that gives sense to their lives (Aparicio et al., 2015; Pryce and Samuels, 2010; Connolly et al., 2012; Haight et al., 2009; Kaplan, 1988, 1996). In Aparicio et al. (2015) teenager mothers (from foster cares) have strengths and “agency directed though self-renewal and being a good parent” (p. 44);
* The pregnancy and the future parenthood are thought to be facilitators of a new family formation (Bell Kaplan, 1988, 1996; Aparicio et al., 2015), which makes the mothers look for “additional relational opportunities” (Aparicio et al., p. 52), in terms of relations with their own family and that of the father;
* A “muted” desire for pregnancy and parenthood was identified in several works (Cavazos-Rehg et al, 2013; Bekaert and Bradly, 2019; Aparicio et al, 2015, Dworsky and Courtney, 2010).
* Mothers feel responsible (Rolfe, 2008; Aparicio et al., 2015) and perceive themselves as good citizens (Bekaert and Bradly, 2019), valuing school, (Bekaert and Bradly, 2019) and associating motherhood with “hardship and reward,” “growing up and being responsible,” and “doing things differently” (Rolfe, 2008, p. 299).

**Arguments/results so far (if applicable):**

* it is not the case

**Points I would like to raise to raise for discussion/questions:**

*Thematically:*

* **Is it too much to focus on both pregnancy and parenthood? In the media, the subject is labeled as “adolescent pregnancy”, but in reality it’s about the decision on motherhood and subsequent parenthood.**

*Epistemology:*

* **Is constructionism appropriate as the main theoretical lens?**
* **Could I combine it with Critical theory…?**

*Methodology:*

* **What types of interviews should I carry out and how should I analyze theme?** I was thinking of:
  + a combination *of narrative/* *life history/biographical narrative and semi-structured interview for* mothers/fathers – analyzed through *narrative analysis*?
  + *semi-structured interview* – for family members – analyzed through *thematic analysis*?
  + *expert interview* for experts/specialists (Flick, 2009) - analyzed through *thematic analysis*?
  + official documents – analyzed through *discourse analysis*? Their number is limited, so I would not opt for content analysis.
  + online interventions in online forums/posts regarding teen pregnancy and parenthood - perhaps *content analysis.*
  + **Would this be too eclectic, in terms of methods for data analysis?**
  + **Would it be feasible in terms of time and effort?**
  + **Does it represent a constructionist analysis…?**

## Franca Webel (TÜB)

## Title: Health as an individual and public resource in the COVID 19 pandemic

“the virus can affect anyone, anywhere – but potentially impacts certain groups more than others due to different living conditions and material circumstances” (Ward 2020: 729).

This quotation by the sociologist Paul Ward, who worked on inequality and focused on the situation and perspectives of marginalised groups, seems suitable for me because I have an interest in these topics as well and would like to investigate more about health and social care services, or support groups. In my last ethnographic fieldwork, between January and September 2020, I participated in 25 support group meetings for people coping with depression. Besides that, I visited various workshops with focus on mental health in Berlin. The investigation was based on participant observation, notes from my field diary, individual- and group interviews (semi-structured qualitative interviews that were audio-recorded and transcribed), informal conversations, and the analysis of media presentations. I have been pursuing this interest through fieldwork on support group meetings about suicide and public events like the *Woche der Seelischen Gesundheit* (Mental Heath Week) from 2018 to 2019 in Berlin. Then, I decided to focus on depression for my master thesis at the end of 2019. I wanted to understand how affected people describe their situation and explain the illness. My research questions had been the following:

How do people speak about depression? Which words and phrases do members of the support group use? How do they narrate and which life stories do they tell? The second question focussed on the work of support groups: Which official role obtain support groups in the German health care system? How are they working? Which importance/meaning has the group for their members?

While I was investigating depression and the work and meaning of the support group, I became aware that social problems, such as loneliness, social conflicts, domestic and sexualized violence, the struggle to make ends meet, and other health issues – were the main topics of conversation. Most participants were living alone, had no partner during the investigation, and felt lonely. Almost all members of the group were unemployed or retired, only one person had a job. Therefore many participants rely on social assistance (Sozialleistungen). According to age, I noticed that the younger the participants were, the more experiences they had with psychotherapy, clinics, and medicaments.

Furthermore, I analysed their experiences and explanations about depression, and compared them with descriptions from organisations, such as the World Heath Organisation, TED-Ed, *Aktionsbündnis Seelische Gesundheit* (association of about 125 organisations, who worked about mental health in Germany), and *gesund.bund.de* (organised by the Federal Ministry of Health in Germany). I noticed that, besides the formal language, which is the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manuel of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) by the *American Psychiatric Association* and the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (ICD-10-WHO) by the World Health Organisation (WHO), participants of the group used also various metaphors to describe depression. My interview partner Sarah described depression like “being in a phase of numbness”, as “Nirvana”, or feeling “like a zombie” – she described her situation as “dark clouds above me”, or “stage of emptiness, indefinability” (interview, 1 May 2020).

1

In the anthropological literature about depression I noticed similar descriptions, even though they came from an English speaking context (Kemp 2003: 195; Good 1994: 120). For example, different interview partners said: “It feels as if I am a ghost—I cannot touch or see the world clearly and it all becomes grey and transparent” or “I feel as if I am in a bubble” (Ratcliff 2014: 32). In the Article by Dan Kotiliar persons characterised depression as a “black hole” or an “empty hole” and described it as “Terrible when you can feel the black cloud settling over you and pressing down” (2016: 7-8). The authors Junko Kitanaka and Stefan Ecks argue: “just as much as sadness, depression is associated with being numb and without emotional sensitivity. Thus a recovery from depression involves recovering emotions“ (2021: 11). And the philosopher Matthew Rattcliff explains:

“sufferers consistently indicate that depression is qualitatively different from what many of us regard as ‘everyday’ experience. The depressed person finds herself in a different ‘world’, in an isolated, alien realm that is cut off from the consensus reality where people have more mundane experiences of feeling ‘more *x*’ or ‘less *y*’ than usual. As I also mentioned, sufferers often emphasize that the experience is extremely difficult or even impossible to describe” (2014: 15).

I also observed various changes on an individual and public level related to the COVID-19 pandemic. When I started fieldwork in January, a few months later, in March the support centre had to be closed because of the shutdown in spring. The spokesperson of the group organised meetings via WhatsApp and Zoom, but not everyone had access to internet. So some of the members were excluded. Furthermore discussions about the security of online platforms were raised. In the summer months the meetings were planned outside, in public space. Due to rainy days or very hot temperatures the conditions were not as good as in the support centre. Furthermore, people passing by could hear the conversations and there was no kitchen or toilet room – before having breakfast together was an integral part for the support group. Since September 2020 the group was able to organise the meetings in the centre again, but the rules and measures did not convince everyone, but, as all members mentioned, these meetings were better than being without any support.

In reference to Rattcliff I had also the impression that depression is difficult to explain. I assumed that metaphors are used to describe the phenomena due to the fact that formal descriptions, as the DSM and ICD, are insufficient. Furthermore, I realised a correlation between experiences with therapy and a language use full of variety in reference to depression.

My results about the meaning of support groups were manifold. Formally they are understood as a complementary treatment to psychotherapy and medicalisation. But in some cases, they are working as an alternative as well, when participants are waiting for a place on a treatment programme or reject therapy. Furthermore, I agree with Emily Martin who identified six social tasks (2009: 143- 147), arguing that group meetings are of high value for participants.

During the pandemic cases of domestic violence and violence against women increased, loneliness and depression were on the rise and the end of the pandemic is uncertain. I am currently developing a new project that examines the role of support groups, healthcare services and social care services during the pandemic. I am interested in the question how the COVID-19 pandemic affected organisations and people asking for help. Furthermore I want to investigate the equity of access to these services and focus on vulnerable and marginalised population groups, such as women and migrants.

2

I would like to further investigate support groups and their coping with mental health problems regarding the changes due to the pandemic. According to the WHO 10% to 20% of people are suffering prolonged symptoms after they have had COVID-19. Most common symptoms are fatigue, memory, concentration or sleep problems, and also depression and anxiety (WHO 2021). Since there also were groups focussing on Long Covid, I have an interest in the perception of the group members dealing with symptoms and stigma.

In line with the work of Susann Huschke (who worked for an organisation that arranges medical care regardless of residency permit or health insurance status in Berlin), I am also concerned with the experiences of migrant women in Hamburg. I asked for permission to engage voluntary and to conduct fieldwork in an anti-racist and feminist group who supports women with health care, resident permission, job-seeking, etc. in Hamburg and at the moment I look forward to a positive response.

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## Gabriel Tamas (BUK)

## Title: The Dialectics of sticker bombing. Political discourse in urban art

Gabriel Tamaș, PhD student, assistant lecturer, University of Bucharest

Visual Street Art, through its many genres, types and practices has become an undisputed constant in the contemporary urban environment. Its liminal existence, between vandalism and street decoration, as well as its taboo functions, in constant dispute with its overwhelmingly public status, make out of Street Art a „breeding-ground” for all sorts of social and political practices – from anti-globaslist and neo-nazi slogans to voicing minor political grievances or promotion of certain revolutionary messages. These practices seem as a most genuine physical and visual manifestation of “the voice of the people”, with no regard to their political stance. They can also be understood as an outlet for militant and revolutionary feelings among the silent masses, again adding to the social function that they accomplish.

Nevertheless, given that, especially in urban agglomerations, there is a multitude of political stances, reactions to current events, affinities and animosities, it can be easily predicted that street art itself will be affected by them as well. Thus, there can be observed a sort of “dialogue”, a so called “dialectic of street art” that can be easily noticed, where voices from all sides of the political spectrum take part, through various methods and voicing various levels of extremism or moderation in their discourse.

Thus, the objective of this paper is to observe this constant public discourse manifested exclusively through street art, more specifically the action of placing stickers on public places, better known as “sticker bombing”. As a cultural practice, it could be understood as an offshoot of graffiti and paste ups, yet more accessible, which leads to a plurality of voices and trends. Given this particular practice isn’t as covered in the academic discourse, I was inclined to make use of the arguments brought in relation to graffiti, politics and identity of public urban spaces, making use of more recent studies (Awad, Wagoner, 2017; Carastathis; Tsilimpounidi, 2021), but also works observing connected areas of interest such as studies by Tufecki: Twitter and tear gas (2017), Flam, Kleres; Methods of exploring emotions (2015), Malcom Miles; Art, space and the city (1997), coupled with several other studies curated by Roth and Brunnbauer (2006)

The study was achieved in a hands-on manner, building itself as a qualitative analysis of said stickers, observing the specificities mentioned above. The study was an observational one, led in three Romanian cities, two major and one provincial (although in the vicinity of the Capital City and greatly influenced by it). Thus, using the terrain available in Bucharest, Brașov, and Târgoviște, I plan on creating an overview of sticker bombing through observing how they manage to claim and reclaim public spaces, with a focus on the dialogue between rivalling factions (especially political, but not exclusively).

I took into account a series of particularities and specificities of Visual Street Art in order to demonstrate how the public opinion of the “silent masses” is reflected. The main objectives of the study will not concern art styles, quality or aesthetics, but rather will observe

more functional, utilitarian and socially oriented aspects of this form of public revolt. Thus, the main concerns will be the following:

Placement. The placement of street art and stickers seem very well premeditated. Such manifestation, especially when highly political, will be put up in visible, usually central parts of the cities. When not central, they can be found in places with a historical or political importance, or overall localisations traditionally linked with revolt, revolutions, liberty etc. (for example Piata 1 Decembrie from Bucharest or Piața Sfatului in Brasov), or on or around buildings that are under the scrutiny of the certain parts of the public (administrative buildings, police stations, governmental buildings, pray places for religious minorities)

Method. Given the public status of the medium of manifestation, street art will come in various versions, genres and manifestations. Thus, it was observed that, in order to create a response to previous art with which one didn’t agree, the “artist” will employ the most varied methods. The most prominent will be stickers, for reasons we will observe in the following pages, but graffiti, stencils or simple marker scribbles will also be among the most preferred methods of voicing political and social concerns (or ideals).

Dialectics. This is in fact the main goal of the study. As mentioned, given the public status of the medium, everyone may take part in this muted discussion. I say muted because, in verity, the dialogue isn’t represented by a face-to-face interaction or debate between two antagonising factions. Thus, this back and forth political warfare will be employed through various methods, as follows:

1. defacing (scratches, ripping out)
2. overlapping (pasting up or sticking over previous messages you don’t agree with)
3. addition (responding, in written form, to previous messages already posted)
4. altering (writing over certain parts of the message to entirely shift its meaning)  All of these represent particularities of the urban militant practice known as “sticker

bombing” and will be detailed and analysed in our paper, with a series of photographs taken by me. The obstacles raised by this study are of a more practical nature, concerning mainly the ephemeral and volatile state of the study subjects (i.e. the stickers) due to the fragile nature of the medium and the interactions people or other natural phenomena have with them. At the same time, the lack of valuable terrain easily reachable might have led to a vitiated result, given that most of the material gathered came from only one major city in Romania. Of course, the phenomenon can be studied in other as well, but for the current stage of the study, Bucharest and the two other cities where the only ones to deliver a satisfactory amount of information. Lastly, given the anonymity behind such endeavours, another main issue would be the lack of insight from the sticker users or artists themselves, many preferring to remain unknown. In the future, a follow-up study should deal with these aspects, thus eliminating the risk of a reductionist view on the topic.

## Katerina Schoina (ATH)

## Title: Cultural interpretations of natural disasters due to the climate change in the Attica region: Folkloristic approaches, field research and narratives

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Intro: A natural disaster due to the climate crisis can be a field of research for the humanities, as it can cause significant changes in the society. The science of Folklore can also make a decisive contribution to the research of these changes. The region of Attica in Greece has suffered many disasters from dangerous phenomena in the last twenty years. Natural disasters are associated with the death of hundreds of people and on the other hand have caused irreparable damage to the natural environment in this area. According to experts, every year the negative effects of climate change (natural disasters) will be repeated, while the intensity of the phenomena will increase. The doctoral dissertation is entitled **“Folkloristic approaches to natural disasters due to the climate change. A case study from Attica (2000-2020). Traumatic memories, narratives and collective representations”**. The aim of the research is the study of the folkloristic interpretations of natural disasters, related to the climate change, in the Prefecture of Attica during the period 2000 to 2020. In particular, we will focus on three cases: a) floods in Mandra and Nea Peramos in 2017 and b) wildfire in Mati in 2018, which we will approach through extensive on-site ethnographic research in these areas.

Research questions and objectives: In Greece, as far as the science of Folklore is concerned, although the subject was first raised by Nikolaos Politis in his work Paradoseis (Legends) in 1904 (Indicatively: “Sunken places and towns”, “Weather”), there is no corresponding extensive study concerning major natural disasters. And this research gap aspires to be filled in this doctoral dissertation. This research will focus on two main areas:

a) identification, description and interpretation of the creation and dissemination process of modern legends and beliefs, related to natural disasters in Greece, through on-site ethnographic research. There will also be content analysis of website posts.

b) highlighting and analysing the concepts of “trauma” and “traumatic memory”, through the study of oral history and traumatic memory, both the primary traumatic memory (the memory of those who experienced the events) and the secondary, which is transmitted orally or online from one generation to the next.

The main research questions of the doctoral dissertation are the following:

• How are the old legends about natural disasters being transformed today into urban legends and conspiracy theories?

• How can a natural disaster change the structure of a community?

• What is the relationship of a modern man with his natural environment and in what ways has this primordial relationship (nature-man) changed?

• What changes have occurred, as a result of natural disasters and climate change, in people’s daily lives?

• How are the effects of natural disasters preserved in people’s memory?

• What is the drastic effect of traumatic memory in the emotional world of people who have experienced a natural disaster?

• How are the negative effects of climate change reflected in the area?

• How is memory stored and fed back into the Internet?

Field and method: The doctoral research is based on research methods followed by the science of Folklore, in combination with interdisciplinary approaches and methodological tools of other related sciences. In more detail, the following methods are followed:

**Qualitative Research**: The collection of narratives is carried out through the qualitative method by conducting interviews in Attica with people who have experienced natural disasters. Field research is not limited to one specific field but is multiethnic, following the example of internationally followed practices of multi-sited ethnography. Therefore, the field research is carried out in Mati (Eastern Attica), Mandra and Nea Peramos (West Attica). More specifically, interviews are conducted with Red Cross volunteers, members of the Fire Service, medical and nursing staff, journalists and reporters, as well as scientists specialising in natural disasters and climate crisis. The aim is to examine the perception of the reality of the interviewees on their own terms and almost without the intervention of the researcher. The term “qualitative interview” usually refers to in-depth interviews, semi-structured or loosely structured interviews, that seem to have an informal style but produce rich ethnographic data through interaction. There are several approaches in order to analyse qualitative data, which have different theoretical and epistemological origins. These approaches differ from each other both in the goals they set and in the procedures and techniques they apply. In the present research, the use of thematic data analysis has been chosen. Thematic analysis systematically attempts to detect, organise and understand patterns of meaning (“themes”) within a data set and thus provide cognitive access to collective meanings and experiences.

b.**Archival Research**: In addition, there will be a collection of articles from Athens newspapers. Also, the archives of the Hellenic Red Cross will be searched, as well as the Folklore Museum and Archive of NKUA, where possible recorded testimonies of victims of natural disasters in Attica will be sought.

c. **Online research**: Regarding the material that will be collected and classified from the Internet, the methods of field ethnographic research, as applied in the internet communities, will be used, in order to collect more data, in order to approach the folklore material through digital folklore (e-folklore). The research includes electronic press articles, Social Media posts and videos on the You Tube platform.

d. **Bibliographic Research**: The collected data are based on the Greek language and foreign language literature of the science of Folklore, but also on the sciences of Anthropology and Ethnology. Data will also be collected from electronic press releases, after first validating them.

## Poonam Kamath (TÜB)

## Title: Contested Conceptions:The Genealogy of Kinderwunsch in Germany (1871-2021)

* **Research objectives:**

This chapter deals with the biography of *Kinderwunsch* from the late 1800s to the present in Germany. I take a close look at how the concept of the desire for having one’s own children-*Kinderwunsch*, changes in German society as the century progresses. I argue that this notion for wanting children is not a stable and innocent entity. Rather than being seen as a monolithic category, *Kinderwunsch* becomes malleable across the decades along with the political and socio-economic upheavals in German society in the last century and with biomedical interventions in the current century. This is a historicistic account of the evolution of the category of *Kinderwunsch,* from its meaning as desires/wishes that children have to its contemporary usage in infertility treatment in Germany. Rather than treating the history of *Kinderwunsch* as one of linear evolution, I emphasize the shifts and discontinuities in its employment over several decades which provides a deeper look at the changes occurring in the social management of (in)fertility and the politics of (non)motherhood in Germany

* **Method**

For this chapter, I utilize unobtrusive digital methods as part of the digital ethnographic approach to supplement my ethnographic data (basis for other chapters) through online public domain resources (Hine 2011). Unobtrusive digital methods are those methods wherein the ethnographer’s presence does not cause a “reaction”, is passive and no direct contact is made with participants. I specifically use the “archival material” mode of approach for this chapter (Webb et al. 1966).

Additionally, I conducted two interviews with historians of German fertility politics which formed the basis for good sources for data collection. This was also complemented through content analysis of several popular German novels for each historical period.

I collected data for this chapter via two broad ways: 1. Through mining of information from several online digital archives 2. Through literary texts: both fictional and non-fictional.

1. Online Digital Archives

Prior (2003) and Benninghaus (2017)) have looked at how historical documents and literary texts serve as functional valuable sources for mining information by considering them as situated social products of their historical and socio-cultural time. Accordingly, I consider written works starting from 1870s in Germany such as expert literature, fictional representations, ego documents such as letters, dictionaries, women’s magazines, and newspapers to be dynamic open systems and historical products of collective human endeavours. Content analysis of these archival texts provided a rich source of information on dynamic historical attitudes towards *Kinderwunsch ­*and related fertility politics. Digital archives such as META, Digitales Deutsches Frauenarchiv, EMMA, Magnus Hirschfeld Digital archives were used for data collection.

1. Websites of *Kinderwunsch* related services

Content analysis of websites offering *Kinderwunsch* related services such as Infertility clinics, Kinderwunsch coaches was also carried out.

1. Historical literary texts

I have chosen specific works of fiction based on their popularity, their constructions of the identity of (non)motherhood and femaleness grounded in their contemporary times. For this thesis, the chosen body of historical literature plays an important role as representative of contemporary social and cultural mores in that they “[…] influence Germany’s shared social imaginary as they circulate images of the available social roles for women in German society.” (Walter-Gensler 2016: 6)

* **Theoretical based framework**

In this chapter, theoretically, I borrow heavily from the seminal work of the German historian Reinhart Koselleck in Conceptual History or history of concepts (*Begriffsgeschichte*). I look at the genealogy of *Kinderwunsch* conceptually because the meaning and usage of this concept undergoes shifts when placed in socio-cultural and historical German contexts. Koselleck (Boedeker 1998:51) differentiated between a word and a concept in that a concept is imbued with multiple possible meanings and has the capacity to generate understandable associations within a given context. Contrasted with words, concepts are ambiguous and possess the ability for numerous interpretations – as *indicators of extra-linguistic objects* (Boedeker 1998:60, Koselleck 1996:61)- like socio-cultural histories, structural changes in societies, etc. Concepts can be both, factors as well as indicators of shifts in social attitudes. Concepts are also inherently political and social, in that, they have shared meanings within a given society in each temporal period (synchronic) and maybe used to further these changes through being absorbed into discourses through repetition and recurrence for future changes in meaning which can be mapped through a thorough analysis (diachronic) of the concept (Koselleck 1996:62, Koselleck 2018:5).

I use Koselleck’s Begriffsgeschichteanalysis (Richter 1995) as a starting point for my exploration of the concept of Kinderwunsch, the advantage being that it proposes a diachronic and synchronic approach to closely examine concepts in socio-political Germanic history. This perspective helps to chart minute changes and shifts in the evolution, usage, and interpretations of the concept throughout the chosen time periods (Hampsher Monk et al. 1998: 2). Applying this historical and diachronic approach to the concept of Kinderwunsch also allows for a deeper understanding of value change processes occurring with respect to dynamic reproductive politics and configuring it as a historical and socio-cultural phenomenon. For Koselleck (2018), concepts are inherently social, that is, they are produced from and give birth to social vocabulary and can only be made sensible in a meaningful semantic and cultural context. Concepts, then, are *coproduced* (Jasanoff 2004) along with historical and social change.

I begin with the German Empire (Kaiserreich) after the unification in 1871, the pre-war years and the first World War (1871-1918) followed by the Weimar Republic (1918-1932), National Socialism and the Second World War (1933-1945), followed by the post-war period in which East and West Germany adopted different attitudes towards fertility rates, abortions, and family constellations. The 1960s bought in a different era with the widespread usage of the Pill and mass public adoption of related values like reproductive choice while the 1980s saw the rise of ARTs with the birth of the first IVF baby in West Germany in 1981. I segregate the 2010’s in a different period due to the newer legalities involved and the multitude of IVF treatments. For clarity, I follow this linear timeline, keeping in mind that each of these periods have been influenced by other periods. This chapter will follow the career of the concept of *Kinderwunsch*, diachronically, placing it synchronically in each of the time periods delineated above.

* **Main Argument**:

Through analysis of historical literature such as medical journal archives, historian accounts of (in)fertility and demographic studies of German fertility, ego documents such as letters and diaries, popular novels, newspaper and magazine articles, draft laws, and family policies and contemporary websites of *Kinderwunsch* related services, I argue that the category of *Kinderwunsch* in relation to reproductive narratives, experienced a long term shift in German society after World War 2, especially through demographic studies of population shifts and as a way of naming the desire for children when infertility began to be medicalized and contextualized as part of population politics. I suggest that the category of *Kinderwunsch* has now become medicalized, institutionalized, and is coalescing as a stand-in for infertility and involuntary childlessness in Germany. In doing this, I show that the category of *Kinderwunsch* is socially constructed.

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## Aida Jobarteh (STH)

## Working title: Roots, Routes and Ruptures. Border narratives by Gambian men

I present here my aim and methods, as the practice of remote methods during and before the pandemic has been central to my fieldwork. It would be interesting to discuss methodology during the pandemic with other PhD students.

Aim

The overarching aim in this study is to examine the conjunction of the intersecting and shifting power structures of the European Border Regime in relation to the migrant’s struggle for mobility. I analyze border narratives and the lived experiences of displaced Gambian men who are negotiating within the constantly shifting European Border regime.

The empirical material consists of the lived, narrated and self-documented experiences of Gambian young men who have travelled to Europe through illegalized routes between 2014-2017. Subsequently I have followed their navigation, planning strategies and outcomes in a heavily controlled, heterogenous, complex border regime. By following their footsteps, and analyzing their border narratives I examine race, class and gender is a construction[[2]](#footnote-2) of the border regime and how these categories interfere with and condition the expulsions, categorizations and exploitation conceptualized as *border tactics* (cf. de Genova et al.).

The struggle for mobility is more specifically studied as a lived experience articulated in narratives about subjection to involuntarily immobility (cf. Carling) from three locations[[3]](#footnote-3)

1. The Gambia: A location with a specific historical and contemporary context.
2. The Mediterranean back way: A location én route, with a focus on transit.
3. In Italy: A location where the governing of migration and border tactics affects the lives of the Gambian men

The lived (classed, raced and gendered) experiences of restriction of mobility are a fundamental foundation of this thesis, analyzed through a postcolonial perspective shedding light on the colonial genealogies of the European border regime as well as the contemporary connections between Gambia and Europe in particular. I apply a translocational lens as a way of addressing quandaries about how different forms of hierarchy interconnect with attention to both physical and social locations (cf. Anthias 2021). This lens allows me to study roots of migration and how historical migration patterns have shaped migration aspirations, how the routes have changed and rupture.

Methodology

The men of this study and the material we co-constructed

I have followed a small group of Gambian displaced men between men (between 25 and 40)

What they have in common is that are they have all travelled on the Mediterranean backway and arrived in Italy between 2013 and 2017. I have carried out interviews, observations and been in close contact with the research participants over the course of 3,5 years.

Even though all the participants share the experience of migrating from Gambia to Italy, their living outcomes were different and they exemplify a diversified aftermath of arrival in terms of acquired or deprived work opportunities and housing. Distinguishing factors such as work, residence permit, attaining documents and length of residency in Europe varied for the men throughout my fieldwork.

Seven of the participants I have followed and interviewed multiple times over the course of 3-4 years. These are the core participants of the study where I have spent extended time interviewing, getting to know and getting consistent updates on their migratory processes. These core or key participants will reoccur in every empirical chapter where different scenarios and narratives of their mobility project is explored. This makes the study qualitative in terms of the small number of research participants encompassed. However, the detailed gathering of material through consistent following of the men’s on-going processes over extensive period of time allows for findings about borders and time and migrant temporalities (cf. Sheller 2019). In addition to the core/key participants, I have interviewed six Gambian migrant men two to five times. This group were participants that I did not have the same close contact with as the core participants, but who I interviewed up to three times with at least 6 months between each interview. The last group of participants is the group of Gambian migrants that I only interviewed once. They were participants I met unplanned in connection to spending time with the migrants who then introduced me to their friends.

Due to the distance between me and the research participants (me in Sweden and them in Stockholm) I used remote ethnographic methods where I kept in contact with them through WhatsApp. When the pandemic broke out spring 2020 I developed my remote methods further as it became the only way to keep gathering material. I therefore dicvie the material into the material gathered *on site* and *on line*.

Hanging out - ethnography on site

My ethnographic research methods in Italy consisted of long interviews and *hanging out* with the interviewees doing observations in various environments that shaped their lives in Italy. I have spent time in places and settings that define Gambian migrant men’s everyday life. My fieldwork *on site* has entailed observations and walk-abouts interviews in migrant settlements, hotspots/reception centers, apartments/homes, parks, a bar, multiple cafés, the streets in the inner city of Bologna and on regular train trips between Bologna, Ferrara and Parma. Most of my observations were more in the shape of participatory participation as I always “joined in” on different activities such as cooking, talking, chatting, having tea at regular meetup spots, shopping groceries, window-shopping, and packing a container with items going to The Gambia.

### 

Staying in touch - ethnography on line

My main tool to carry out remote interaction was to use WhatsApp, a communication service for smart/iPhones, and it functioned like a long-distance microphone/recorder and a lens which enabled me to continue my field observations through videos, images, text messages and audio files which was sent to me by the interviewees. WhatsApp was familiar, not only to me but also to my research participants as migration often means separation from friends and families for extended periods of time. Social media and WhatsApp are a way to maintain long-distance family relationships (cf. Wu, A.Y.C. 2021).[[4]](#footnote-4)

The digital material consisting of videos, pictures and audios represents a big part of the material as the participants became more routine in the filming photovoice.[[5]](#footnote-5) Engaging in these remote digital methods generated epistemological and ethical consequences and considerations. Epistemological because the research participants became more like partaking gatherers of material and therefore a shift even occurred in the “researcher- power” and knowledge production. I consider that the loss of control of what to show, who to talk to etc., shift of research positions somehow, was again what came with the digital ethnography. It was no longer my body moving in different settings.  The blurriness of boundaries between being *in and out*, *here and there* came to fruitful findings and contributed to the ethnological dynamic explorative approach.

## Angeliki Zampa (ATH)

## Title: "Yiannis Ritsos and the Ancient Myth: The myth as a research object and tool in Folklore Studies and Literature"

PhD Candidate in Folklore Studies

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**General overview**

The question of the relationship between Laographia (Folklore) and Literature has kept researchers engaged since very early times, not only in Greece but at an international level, as well (Vladimir Propp[[6]](#footnote-6), Christine Shojaei Kawan[[7]](#footnote-7)). In the context of this theoretical reflection, the literary transformations of the ancient greek myth were studied in relation to the questions their relevant social and political contexts. Particular emphasis is given to the folkloric background of the mythical motifs and symbols. In this theoretical framework, the main theme of my study is the ancient greek myth and its utilization in the modern literary tradition. In particular, I study the role of ancient Greek myth in the poetry of Yannis Ritsos, one of the most distinguished Greek poets of the 20th century, as well as the poet’s deepest connection not only with the ancient myth but also with folk culture.

In this presentation I will refer extensively (using examples) to the poem entitled Orestes (1966), from his poetic collection "Fourth Dimension" (1956-1975). This was not only the subject of my Master, but also the trigger to study in detail the ancient Greek myth in the poetry of Ritsos and more specifically in the "Fourth Dimension" at a doctoral level.

It is well known that the "Fourth Dimension" signifies not only the most mature poetic period of Yiannis Ritsos, but also the official introduction of mythological themes into his work, from which it derives. To the monologues of the "Fourth Dimension", as M. Meraklis notes [[8]](#footnote-8), there is a particular preference in ancient Greek mythology, as twelve of them derive from the cycle of the Atreides, the Lavdacides and the Trojan cycle. The myth, of course, goes hand in hand with the poet's social and historical experiences (since Greece was then experiencing the dramatic effects of a civil war), as well as with dramatic family events, symbolically intertwined with the central myth. Essentially, these are ancient myths that renew the dialogue of modernist poetry with Greek antiquity, mainly because they succeed in merging the myth with modern history and society.

Simultaneously, I am studying the way that Ritsos enriches his work with a multitude of references to folk culture based on the mythical symbols he uses. In parallel, the way in which the poet adopts and changes the mythical material is being explored by identifying similarities and differences between the themes and motifs of the poem in his ancient Greek models.

**Research objectives - Methodology**

The aim of the study is to highlight the reason why a modern Greek poet like Ritsos, who was so much engaged with the events Greece experienced during the 20th century, based so many of his poems on ancient models, which, in turn, are based on major themes of Greek mythology. What does the myth provide as a narrative genre to the poet and what does it mean to interpret reality through the myth? All these are the main questions that the study tries to answer.

Ritsos turned to the extended dramatic soliloquy as a poetic form that offered a way out of immobility and silence. He does not speak in these poems in his own name. The use of multiple voices allows him to explore themes at a remove and to experiment with various forms of self-definition, testing the possibilities and limits of each, while retaining the freedom to move among them, to be both defined and protean.

The study is placed on the crossroads between Folklore and Literature (Philology), and will therefore examine the pre-existing Greek and international literature on the relationships, convergences, and divergences between these two epistemological fields. The theoretical concept of narrative genre (here myth), as delineated in folklore studies, forms the base of my research. In terms of methodology, I rely on narrative analysis of themes, motifs and forms and I depend on bibliographical and comparative studies of relevant ancient and modern Greek myths that bring out prominence to the cultural dynamism and permit interpretation of the characters.

A key Lauri Honko -who deal with myth in relation to the criteria of form, content, function, and context-, Alan Dundes and Frog). concept that runs throughout our study is the concept of myth, with its historical and symbolic depth. More particularly, in my thesis I addressed the definition and composition of the myth as a narrative genre in the context of folk theory and research (including approaches from Nikolaos Politis to

Since many modern Greek poets, including Ritsos, use the ancient myth in their poems, we may view it as a more general tendency in order to form a new, deeper consciousness of Hellenism and to express their personal political and poetic ethics. Yiannis Ritsos, in particular, who widely uses the "mythical method", especially in the monologues of the "Fourth Dimension", represents a characteristic example. In general, the poet reverses the weight of the myth, giving a leading role to the anti-hero or the sidelined person. In this way he presents in a mildly low voice the misfortunes and struggles of his nation, but he also gives a universal dimension to his poetry, succeeding in bridging the present with the future.

**Preliminary remarks about:**

**Yiannis Ritsos** (1909-1990) is one of the most important Greek poets with international fame. His poems have been translated into many languages and many of them were performed theatrically, while others were set to music (mainly by Mikis Theodorakis) and became great musical hits. The scholar of Ritsos, Chryssa Prokopaki states that "*if someone wanted to read the history of the century, he would find it intact in the poetry of Ritsos*"[[9]](#footnote-9). This is because Ritsos's poetry was influenced both by his experiences and the social unrest of his country.

Ritsos suffered great losses as a child. The early deaths of his mother and eldest brother from [tuberculosis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuberculosis), his father's struggles with a mental disease, and the economic ruin of his family marked Ritsos and affected his poetry. Ritsos was confined in a [sanatorium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanatorium) for tuberculosis from 1927–1931. During the Second World War Ritsos became a member of the EAM ([National Liberation Front](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Liberation_Front_(Greece))) and authored several poems for the Greek Resistance. Ritsos also supported the Left in the subsequent [Civil War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_Civil_War) (1946-1949). In 1948 he was arrested and spent four years in prison camps. In 1967 he was arrested again by the [dictatorship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_military_junta_of_1967%E2%80%931974) regime and sent to a [prison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prison) camp in [Gyaros](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gyaros), later to Lemnos and Leros in the Aegean. His exile in Leros ended and then he traveled to Samos, where he was under house arrest. Ritsos became ill and was diagnosed with cancer. In Samos, the poet lived in absolute loneliness due to his limitation, he felt the abolition of democracy, as he was neither allowed to circulate nor to correspond. He did not stay long in Samos, as his health deteriorated. In December 1970 he underwent surgery and he remained in Athens, while the home detention was lifted.

**The "Fourth Dimension"**

The poetic collection "Fourth Dimension" consists of seventeen multi-verse compositions, written in the period 1956-1975. Ritsos created these dramatic monologues, based on the ancient Greek myths and mainly on the mythical cycle of Atreides and the Trojan War. Researchers consider that the "Fourth Dimension" as one of his most important works.

In the dramatic monologues of the "Fourth Dimension" Ritsos uses in an original way famous heroes from Greek Mythology and Literature, people from everyday life and existential symbols.

**The mythic cycle of Atreides (as addressed in ancient greek drama)**

Agamemnon and Menelaus were sons of Atreus, who committed a heinous crime when, in a family quarrel, he offered to his brother Thiestes a meal cooked by parts of his children’s body. This act brought a curse on the house of Atreus and the fate of Agamemnon on his return from Troy was in part a punishment for his father's crime. During Agamemnon's ten-year absence from Mycenae, the power passed in his wife Clytemnestra, who was helped by her lover Aegisthus, one of Thiestes's surviving children.

The two lovers had decided to kill Agamemnon as soon as he returned. For this reason Aegisthus had put a guard on a hill, with the promise, if he alerted him on time for the arrival of his cousin's fleet, he would give him a quantity of gold. So, he immediately received news that Agamemnon had arrived and, before giving him time to find out about his wife's relationship with him, decided to trap him. When he saw him, he welcomed and told him that he was very happy with his return and invited him at his house in order to have a meal. Unsuspecting he went with Cassandra. During the meal Agamemnon was beaten by his cousin.

Meanwhile, Clytemnestra, hidden until then in her lover's house, appeared and strucked Kassandra with her sword. She fell down and hugged Agamemnon's body seeking his protection. Clytemnestra killed Priam's daughter and left without close the mouth and eyes of her dead husband. Cassandra's body is thrown naked into a torrent next to the tomb of Agamemnon to be eaten by wild beasts.

**The myth of Orestes**

In Greek mythology Orestes comes from the generation of the Atreides and his parents are Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. He was still a child when Agamemnon returned from Troy and was murdered by Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus. His sister Electra, because she was afraid for Orestes's life, sent him to their uncle Strofios in Fokida. There Orestes linked with a deep friendship with his cousin Pyladis. When he became an adult, Orestes returned to Argos with Pyladis to fulfill the oracle of Apollo: to avenge the death of his father by killing his mother Clytemnestra and the usurper of the throne, Aegisthus.

Orestes could not enter the city, but with a clever plan they succeeded. Aegisthus was in a countryside and made sacrifices to the Nymphs. Orestes and Pyladis were there and pretended the travelers and Aegisthus invited them in the fest. Orestes and Pyladis took part in the sacrifice and Orestes asked for a sharp knife to slaughter the animal and finally killed Aegisthus. Then Orestes killed his mother, too. Orestes was tortured by Erinyes.

## Andra Samson (BUK)

## The Leader – Self-Heroization and De-Heroization

## Challenges to the Hero Stance in the Leader’s Profile in Contemporary Culture

## from a Narrative Identity Perspective

PhD Student, University of Bucharest, Literary Studies Department

Supervisor - Prof. Mircea Vasilescu

[Working Title]

1. **Project overview**

With an active and reflective eye over the evolution of societal changes and challenges over the past few years, my paper proposes a zoom-in look into the tests and trials to which the leader, in its essential profile, if not archetypal, is facing a sudden, accelerated, and urgent need to reinvent, reshape, or even perhaps reconstruct themselves to be able to respond to the new multiple and stringent realities.

A society amidst impactful turmoil which puts pressure or even tears apart its very fabric more than ever is in search of new leadership models, capable to extinguish fires that endanger functional layers of society in its utmost crisis episodes and/or (re)build new visions, new ways of doing and serve higher purpose ideals. Are old models refashioned? Are we in search of a new exemplary narrative regarding our (role)models/heroes/leaders? – are proto-questions that I am considering throughout my research approach.

Placed in this challenging context, which is undoubtedly in the making, my research requires also a granular, diachronic regard into the inner forces (society) that get in contact with the outer, environmental forces (technology blast, climate insecurity, demographic upheavals etc.). Some examples of disruptors that I propose to factor in are very much dealing with a concept present already with us for the past twenty years – i.e. VUCA – volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Although this notion was issued long before it hit the drum, only under the current stretched conditions of living and work could we understand its implications at its deepest. Respectively, the pandemic which has put on high speed all aspects that govern our lives. Within these *wicked problems* (Rittel 1973, 155) that have proven to turn many faces of our lives upside down, more concrete examples indicate selectively issues like: globalized and disruptive economies, digital revolution, remote work, migration waves, climate change, resource inequalities, resurgence of institutional alliances, global movements of cultural reconciliation, restored identities, close the gap between significant types of divide – *digital divide, education divide etc.* – social and cultural identity reclaims – *Black Lives Matter, #MeToo etc.* – DEI (diversity, equality inclusion etc.).

The leader’s profile is already subject to a tremendous literature reshuffle, especially in the recent period due to new factors that expanded threats – economically or politically. The last decades are showing an abundance of leadership styles as solutions for temporary trends or specific problems, but perhaps all too often, especially from a pragmatic angle, this was *in extenso* produced and proposed by leaders of all sorts and less by followership. So, my research seeks to explore this angle with an in-depth touch to unveil triggers, reasons and needs that in a challenging environment requires a different approach. In truth, many scholar views regard this period as a tipping point for further development of societal relationships among other turning points, therefore the voice and views of the communities, groups, redefined social tribes, followership in essence becomes a significance force worth researchable.

1. **Arguments for the proposed angle study**

The association or dissociation – upon research findings – between the leader’s figure and the hero’s comes central in my research project. Two faces of the same coin in many analyses advanced by leadership literatures (Fisher 2018, 70-77) the leader and the hero begin to elasticize under disruptors of the contemporary fast-paced world. The need for defining, redefining, and refining the two notions indicate a need for a much better grasped understanding of their own identities and the way they are built. Specifically form this angle – that of a fluid and elastic narrativity ground in which such new identities surface – is my research proposal to approach the topic. More specifically, that of the narrative identity (Ricoeur 2016) as a tool and manifestation of a supple adaptation in an ever-changing environment unsurpassed in history.

In parallel, if a significant number of strategic directions that comprise the digital (r)evolution, work environment redefinition in a globalized world, inclusive practices etc. were somewhat integrated by the private sector which cannot afford lack of vision and needs to stay on top of innovation and development, with the push given by the pandemic, they are fast absorbed. Such (re)constructions of various groups (*followership*) in search for solutions seem to be no longer engaged by the monolithic, hierarchical, autocratic type of rhetoric, but a new/different narrative is emerging. An organic new edifice is sought after, capable to prevail the maelstrom provoked by such ample events.

If the leader identity recomposition could, most certainly, be analyzed from multiple angles, the one selected for the research is that of transformation from a discursive perspective, of understanding what type of new narrative is now sprouting and designed to bring meaning. Among the questions that will be the basis of the investigations, here are some samples: What values are shattered and why? What values remain iron clad? What beliefs are crushed and what new ones replace them? How does the new true north look like? And how does it respond better to inspire individuals/followership to contribution or (re)construction? Do we attach a hero figure to the leader now? How would it look like? Is the hero (complete) obsolete? Does another get invented to answer better to the zeitgeist? How does exemplarity look like now? How does this fall into the post-truth, relativism discourse? What force can the group/followership have? Agent / Catalyst? / Pivot? etc.

In the light of the above sketched context, the positioning proposed for this research comes from the needs of the *followership* (Zaleznik 1964, Uhl-Bien 2006) directly consequential in the way they express new/different needs from their leaders, with whom they can no longer operate and perform in organizational environments which are subjects to permanent, accelerated change and generated by the fast-tracked challenges they need to address.

1. **Hypothesis articulation [Tentative]**

The conjunction between the leader’s and the hero’s appearances will be tackled from two stances: that of **self-heroization** (from a narrative self-construction of the leader perspective), respectively that of **de-heroization** (from a deconstruction done by the teams/followership). The aim is to operate with an equality regarding the identity as follows: a) leader = hero, where I cover the romantic(ized) vision as leader-centric, respectively, a dichotomy between the two, as in b). leader ≠ hero, where leadership is seen as a new or multitudes of roles and processes created by the followership, a potentially new vision, adapted to the changing world. In other words, starting from the supposition that between the romantic leadership model and the current one(s) where the focus – mostly centered around the person of the leader and their competences, traits, profile in general a leader-centric view, where such qualities served to lead in hierarchical structures, but suitable to more stable and predictable environments – well, this profile is not only obsolete, but could be detrimental, failing current unprecedented challenges. More specifically, unpredictability today transmutes our view from one spinning around the person of the leader to a process-centric one, hauling a new leader profile necessary to cope with the hostile and unstable environment.

The approach will seek to exhaust the leader representations as archetypal hero in the romantic sense of the term (Campbell 2008) and the transition to an actual model that brings solutions to current problems that affect the world. A ramification of this approach is given by the dichotomic pair made by the hero as archetype, fixed and cardinal posture and today’s leader, with a clear volatile, supple and agile character granted by the myriad of roles to which he is called to act upon. This type of regard will require a two-split analysis: on one hand a potential portrait of the (newly emerged) leader, on another a processual vision, collaborative and engaging – seen within *leadership*.

Both in the self-heroization as well as the de-heroization posture, the aim is to follow the evolution of these phenomena through the lenses of the narrative identity definitions, in an attempt to answer questions such as: a) What kind of narratives define / are prevalent into the self-heroized leader? (servient to the leader’s perspective) respectively b) Through what narratives is the leader de-heroized? What narratives does the followership propose for the new substance of the leader? (servient to the followership perspective).

1. **Research premises and objectives**

For a more precise formulation of the hypothesis advanced a particular examination has shown as necessary, that of a closer look to the double stances from which we can look at the relationship between the leader and the hero – one in which we have a superimposed image between the two terms and at the opposite side one in which one deflects the other. In other words, in the first circumstance, we operate with an equality between the two notions, while in the other we annul it.

**LEADER = HERO LEADER ≠ HERO**

Leader-centric view definitionFollower-centric view definition

(romantic vision) (new vision, adapted to the changing world)

How do I propose to interpret this binary posture? Between the romantic model of defining the leader(ship) and the current a shift is refocusing the attention for defining the leadership through the person of the leader and their competences, traits, and generally their profile/portrait, construed in time as a result of the necessities to lead the teams or to answer higher layers of hierarchy. This type of narratives that built the bricks of the leadership (Clifton 2012) was serving a stable and predictable environment with functional characteristics in the long run. However, current *wicked problems* permeating the fabric of our society lead to the afore mentioned focus shift towards a processual narrative framework, imposing a new, redefined or reinvented leader identity/representation designed to cope, prevail and move forward in a constantly changing environment.

So, considering the above listed premises the hypothesis issued is tentatively the following: *The higher the unpredictability and complexity, the less is the leader juxtaposed onto the hero. Less power is detained by one (the leader), but it becomes dissipated, multiplied throughout followership.*

The research aims for a confirmatory output, through field research, and adopting an abductive type of approach by gathering possible inexhaustive observation leading to best prediction. It will comprise an exploratory angle, through theoretical literature to chart obsolete models of leadership, while mapping those that emerge. Also, the niche stance will be to observe models of defining leadership filtered through the narrative identity construction. The research goal is a) to determine the role of the narrative in the formulation of the leader’s identity/representation in the shift from self-heroization to de-heroization and b) capture and record/project the new narrative parameters and new semantics that reshape the moving reality.

1. **Data on which the thesis will be based /field work**

To investigate the directions afore-presented the selected methodology involves: (1) qualitative research through in-depth interviews with leaders in which I will examine topics such as the hero profile and its relevance as critical element in leadership, directions for rewriting mythologies both individual and collective (at group/team level), interventional aspect and agency in reshaping personal and group narratives etc. and (2) case study in which I will apply a more granular look into a group/-s of people carved out from (study group to be further defined) with a descriptive-exploratory subset of elements designed to validate/invalidate the hypothesis. The interviews will be developed based on semi-structured interview guide, and built on a selection of research pillars, followed by the interpretative analysis of the collected data.

Beyond the theoretical consolidation of these research dimensions hero/leader with enlarged perspectives on ramifications of the concepts, my intention is to subsume a double perspective in the research guide, as follows:

1. **Self-heroization level – in the instance of Leader = Hero**.

The intention is to follow the composition, purpose, and role of the already existing and working narratives, with impact on the teams, generated and promoted by leaders. Methods used: analysis of the internal discourse within the organizations i.e. analysis of internal text content, study of rhetoric dynamics during formal interactions (meetings, conferences) from a composition perspective.

1. **De-heroization level – in the instance Leader ≠ Hero**

The elements that will be in focus will include aspects of organizational culture, among which: reformulations of vision, mission, values, organizational jargon, vernaculars and identity signatures, as marked by formal and informal conversations between members of the teams, along with the analysis of speech content and relationship with the leadership during the internal interactions. This qualitative research methodology will be accompanied by a quantitative step, where I would try to confirm/infirm through surveys if the elements identified in the initial qualitative section can be sustained.

1. **Literature framework**

The main concepts that will make the object of study for theoretical foundation will treat aspects such as:

1. **Myth and mytho-sphere** (Dumézil, Lévi-Strauss) – The hero seen from the multiple perspectives of the myth, as symbolic construction, functionalist *telus –* in a teleological sense or identity heritage.
2. **Narrative construction/genesis of the stories** (A. Van Gennep) – Singular and collective storymaking via the individual as creator of culture – dissonance, convergence, belonging or marginalization/isolation from the group they identify with – as factors toward a new narrative.
3. **Post-modernism and post-modern condition** (J-F. Lyotard) – treated in its relation to the societal context that impact ways of thinking and relationships with models, new manifestations of the sacred or secular visions, new ritualization expressions, new identity interpretations within the large basin of thought.
4. **Imaginary and constructions of the imaginary** (G. Durand, C. Braga) – Compositions of the *imaginarium* as elements that nurture this pool, what elements incessantly nourish it along with antagonistic elements that risk depleting the imaginary universe.
5. **Narrative identity** (P. Ricœur) – Treated from the discursive expression of the individual both in singularity as well as belonging to the group. Also treated from the modularity proposed by the concept in the sense of the multi-faceted roles taken by the individual in a changing environment.
6. **Leadership and leadership styles** – Hero stances manifested situationally or programmatic under specific leadership styles seen as potential needs to adapt: A special attention will be given to carving out dimensions of (de)heroism in crisis situations etc. Selective examples: the narrative of micromanagement and control (algorithmic management) vs. trust (humanizing at work), servant leadership and the utilitarian view; ego-fueled leadership vs. ego-stripped leadership; machismo/warrior leadership vs. peaceful/constructivist leadership etc.
7. **Globalization** – Analyzed both as context as well as catalyst of some phenomena of the cultural exchange, acculturation, enculturation as effects of inclusion, diversity, boundary dilution and identity redefinitions etc.

1. **Points for discussion:**

What problems are focal due to this research in evolution / diachrony? Is the research methodology optimal? Is there a need for further narrowing the research field? Is the field research time sufficient? What fallacies should I be aware?

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## Aphrodite- Lidia Nounanaki (ATH)

## Title: Contemporary Legends as Creepy-pasta

Research question(s) and objectives:

The complete title of my PhD is “Greek contemporary legends on the internet”, so the research questions are relative extensive. In this presentation I am going to focus on some main features that seem to prevail in the legends circulating in the field. So, these main points are going to be about the function of contemporary legends online and the interaction of the genre with the environment in which it was approached.

Theoretical/literature based framework or context of analysis:

Due to the fact that Greek folklorists have located the genre rather recently and that it has received little attention by them since, the main literature framework is the international one. In this case research on the genre followed a long course of inquiry at a theoretical level that revolves around the identification of the genre itself, its relationship with its pre-industrial counterpart and other genres that resemble to it, the proper use of terms and so on. It was suggested by Hobbs and Bennett that it should be treated as broadly as possible, because there seemed to be no consensus on many levels of its definition among the genres’ scholars (Smith, 1991: 1-3). So, to describe the genre in this research, several given definitions were combined:

Contemporary (or Urban) legend is a genre of folk narratives that emerged after the Industrial Revolution, incorporating elements of modernity into its earlier counterpart, the traditional legend (Klintberg, 1990: 268-277). Stories belonging to this genre circulate spontaneously mainly wherever informal encounters take place. Thus, a word-of-mouth spreading is most common. That is the reason why the textual structure of the narrative was considered to be loose, and it is not conveyed in the same way every time. These are stories transmitted through 'a friend of a friend' and are reflecting multiple aspects of the unfamiliar, the delinquent, and the supernatural experienced in the modern urban cultural context, claiming to be believed as real experiences. Their plot often revolves around stress caused by modern attitudes and behaviours, and their content is usually bizarre, scary or macabre.

They function as a means of disciplining cultural groups, as defined by Dundes (1980: 6), which consist of people who have at least one thing in common perceiving them as true stories. For this reason, the narrated event is delimited close to the place and time of its transmission, creating conditions of appropriation by the group in which it circulates (Pettitt, 1996: 7-14). In fact, until the first decade of the 21st century, urban legends are perceived by their scholars as a living genre that is spreading - either through word of mouth or digitally - in order to maintain or shape the social norm, so the narrative is considered a "political act" (Ellis, 2001b: 64, see also Fine & Turner, 2001: 17).

The stories of these legends could be placed somewhere between the trivial secular everyday life and the unusual, giving to that everyday life an unexpected upheaval (Smith, 1995: 99). However, not all urban legends are about the gloomy side of life. Many also refer to funny incidents (Smith, 1986a: 15). Their context, as Smith (1986b: 9-10) points out, may be different, but they are essentially universal, occult and anecdotal about life in the 20th century.

Thus, with main guide the international literature and the respective motif indexes that have been compiled, an attempt was made to locate similar narratives on the Greek internet. Their ‘Greekness’ (locality) is constituted not by their spatial or temporal reference, but the language to which they are attributed and their activeness on the field.

Field and method:

The research was held in two stages. A long-term web research has been carried out in the "surface web" by searching for keywords through the Google search engine. A similar search was conducted in the most popular social media (Facebook, Tweeter and Instagram), which are an intermediate point between the "surface and the deep web", due to their characteristics. From the "surface web" were collected and analysed articles that emerge from a hundred and three (103) websites, fifty-nine (59) (open) blogs, twelve (12) (open) Fora, but also videos from twenty-seven (27) YouTube channels. In the examined social media accounts seventy-eight (78) Facebook pages and groups were located, fourteen (14) Instagram profiles and no results found on Tweeter.

Then a statistical count was made in both of these broad fields, as well as in each subfield in which material was located. This, to highlight the trends prevailing in the projection, uptake and diffusion of the species in these environments. The collected factual material was then analyzed through the method of interpretive analysis, which attempts to highlight the ‘modern fears’ reflected through urban legends.

Arguments/results so far (if applicable):

The contemporary legends that are being transmitted via the internet are really incorporating many of the internet’s features. One of them is the possibility that it provides to the "narrating" user to integrate any kind of multimedia (image, video) in the story sometimes omitting completely any textual form (Lewalenl, 2015) and to repost the same ‘narrative’ without interfering with it in any way.

Thus, contemporary legends have become part of a wider category of "scary stories" that circulate in online environments dedicated to them, with the aim of entertaining the visiting user. This means that the spontaneous reference to such a story in the informal context of a social encounter has been replaced by a structured environment dedicated to such narratives. This category of scary stories on the internet forms a wide and new kind of digital popular lore defined with the emic term ‘creepypasta’, of which it seems that contemporary legends have become part. The term comes from the conjunction of the words ‘copy paste’ with the word ‘creepy’. In short, creepypasta consists of limited size electronic entries created by internet users and reproduced mainly through it. They are usually the subject of fiction with supernatural themes that aim to provoke terror. The fact that this is a result of fiction created exclusively for fun through terror is an inherent element and a familiar feature by the users who opt for this kind of entertainment (Blank & McNeill, 2018: 6-13).

Contemporary legends used to act as a means of disciplining the members of the group in which they circulate, keeping them in their given social norms, by convincing them that they narrate true events. However, having become part of the creepy pasta indicates shows the weakening of their social role that was attributed to them by their scholars. This emerges from the disconnection from any "true" reason attributed to them and emphasising the satisfying feeling of terror they cause - which is also confirmed by users who comment on the stories-, and also by the way of their retransmission (mainly through the copy-paste function).

So, these legends become part of a terrifying entertainment, similar to horror movies, in which various stories are being transmitted with the common point of scaring the user who has fun with them and don’t expect them to be true. It seems that the contemporary legends that fall into this new internet genre have lost some of the main characteristics given to them by their definition. They are still reflecting aspects of the unfamiliar, delinquent and supernatural that are experienced in modern urban culture with their plot revolving largely around stress caused by modern attitudes and behaviours and with content that is bizarre, scary or macabre. But the fears they use to mirror have been turned into just a frame of dread. Thus, these stories are no more perceived as true experiences, seized to be a way of disciplining people in modern social norms, and, hence they spread in the context of websites created specifically for entertaining users.

Other points you would like to raise to raise for discussion/questions:

But if contemporary legends seized to reflect actual fears, is there another genre that has incorporated this feature in a way that meets man’s modern needs? It seems that conspiracy theories are filling this gap.

So, what is the connection between these two folk narrative genres? What are the characteristics of conspiracy theories?

## Monica Irina Chiorpec (BUK)

## Research title: Culture and Subculture in Romania in the 1970s. The Ethno-Rock Phenomenon and Its Representations

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In the 1970s, the emerging ethno-rock genre in Romania was conquering the young audience with its western sounds. Distorted electric guitars and, later, the use of the synthesizer by a few pioneer rock groups had proposed an alternative culture to the official one imposed by the Romanian Communist Party. This alternative culture was becoming more and more visible even in the daily lifestyle of the young seventies, despite the drastic control exercised over the whole society by the repressive institutions. The cultural landscape that took shape in socialist Romania in the middle of the western hippie era raises, today, some questions regarding the nature of the Romanian ethno-rock phenomenon. To what extent could culture become an instrument of propaganda in a totalitarian state? What is the price that art creators had to pay and how did the artistic product thus influence the perception of the reality for the young public? What was the compromise solution between challenging and concluding the pact with the communist regime?

The following doctoral project proposes a comprehensive analysis, from the point of view of sociological, sociolinguistic and political theories, of the socio-political culture proposed by the communist power. We will try to observe the changes in the production and reception of cultural goods after the issue of the Romanian Communist Party theses in July 1971, as well as the socio-political motivation behind the abrupt transition – from the period of the so-called relaxation and openness to the West in the mid-1960s –  towards a total control over the entire cultural field through the censorship apparatus. We will also analyse the way in which, through its cultural policy, the Romanian Communist Party aimed at more than purifying the cultural-artistic manifestations of a generation, in order for them to correspond to the line to be followed in the socialist society. Culture itself, along with language as the main means of expressing ideas, became an ideological mechanism that allowed the transformation of young people's consciences according to the Marxist-Leninist model, in the ambition of the Romanian Communist Party to create the “new man”. Last but not least, we will try to identify the perception of the 1970s generation in the West, how the young people in Romania represented themselves the cultural phenomena in the capitalist world, and the role of Western subculture in a common language of all those who, through their rock 'n' roll music, had opted for escapism.

The ruling of the Romanian Communist Party between 1945 and 1948 implied the hegemony of Marxist-Leninist doctrine and Stalinism. For nearly two decades, until the mid-1960s, the Romanian Communist Party acted with extreme harshness in imposing the societal model of socialism. This led to a sociological finding that George Orwell (1903-1950) formulates in a literary key in the dystopian novel “1984” as the defining feature of totalitarianism: the dialectical materialism, proposed by Marxist theorists as a higher stage of human becoming, predisposes to a “double thinking”. Therefore, all fields of activity in socialist Romania were subject to the same reference system, in which negotiation and constant adaptation to the state of affairs deprived man of the fundamental right to make choices about his own existence. Sometimes this negotiation was necessary to obtain certain advantages or for the purpose of socio-political ascension. At other times, it was necessary for survival, at least the inner one. Emerged from the desire of a social group made up of young students from the urban environment to continue to express themselves artistically, at the same time having to respect the standards imposed by the Romanian Communist Party according to its famous cultural theses, the manifestations of the ethno-rock phenomenon and its relations with the communist ideology which regulated the cultural-artistic activity constitute the subject of this on-going research.

Romanian artists were at the time deprived of any direct contact with the Western cultural manifestations that had inspired them in their creation. The party's directives on the cultural-artistic field and the provisions of the Romanian Communist Party on the education of the youth in the Marxist-Leninist spirit narrows to the point of annulling the area of the potential cultural references and expression modes. At the same time, the partial and inaccurate transposition of the texts of cultural creation imported into Romanian, the language of political discourse that has become mandatory at all levels of society, censorship and limited access to the cultural life of the Western world generated rigid and artificial responses from the 1970s generation. Some young artists took advantage of the proximity of the western border of socialist Romania to access cultural resources from the free states of Europe. They are also the ones who proposed, according to the theses, an ethno-rock current that we can consider a synthesis between the official culture and the artistic expression in agreement with the western *Zeitgeist*. Socialist society, however, generates cultural responses that support, legitimize and proliferate the ideology of power.

The discourse of power and cultural production were the main tools of the continuous legitimation of totalitarian power. The aspiration of the Romanian Communist Party to create the “new man”, which would contribute to the extensive project of consolidating the socialist society, was supported by the Party's Programme and by the cultural directives imposed on artists. By formulating the cultural theses enunciated in July 1971 by Nicolae Ceaușescu, the cultural creation in socialist Romania passed into a new stage, which permanently detached it from the relaxation period of the mid-1960s. The general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party established that the sources of inspiration in cultural production should be exclusively the folklore, the important moments from the past of modern Romania and its historical figures. Autochthonism, which had become the norm in cultural production, supported ideology, while culture, aligned with the same Marxist-Leninist philosophy, was built through the wooden language that had become the ideological vehicle.

The process of transforming consciousness in order to create a communist world, announced through ideological documents, was maintained by the transformation of natural language. A sterile type of discourse, completely torn from the reality of the socialist society, was born and engendered a new kind of thinking that, in turn, fed the new language, the one that party leaders had proposed as the future language of communism. The language emptied of any content became the main means of literary expression and the filter through which the censorship apparatus delimited the ideologized cultural production from the decadent one, of bourgeois, capitalist inspiration. A new model of expression was introduced at all levels of the intellectual life, with educational and cultural institutions subordinated to power. The epistemological imposture was legitimized as dialectical thinking, while self-parody characterized the patterns of official discourse.

Combating all cosmopolitan tendencies and, at the same time, encouraging cultural creation as a promoter of internationalism gave artists little room for maneuver. Although, at a discursive level, the communist power supported a total freedom of creation, the limits imposed on people of culture and art had actually mutilated the artistic expression. The import of cultural productions was strictly regulated, and the selection standards followed a single line, that of the Marxist-Leninist ideology. Cultural autochthonism, doubled by the new type of language, had obviously restricted the means of expression, the artists being forced to give a compromise answer in their musical creation destined for the young generation of the 1970s, an answer that we identify as an ethno-rock synthesis. By preserving the typical elements of western music and hippie subculture, the Romanian artists had resorted to the folk element imposed by the cultural theses and thus had managed to maintain a constant negotiation with the repressive apparatus.

1. Initially I was interested in the social construction of *parenthood*. From this topic, I have migrated to *childhood studies*. I read many current research papers in the field and substantial contributions such as Aries, Pollock, Zelinzer. The problem with childhood studies is that I couldn’t find a novel issue, I had the feeling that common problems and issues of debate, so to call theme, were all already approached by existing research. I had in mind a work in the style of Aries, but I was afraid that such a topic – the construction of the childhood (in Romania) in contemporary times – is too broad, vast and it wouldn’t facilitate rigourosity, from a methodological point of view, and deepness of inquiry. Also, I didn’t know if I have the resources, in terms of time, knowledge, for such a broad approach. Moreover, I somehow perceived, that topics that would touch social problems are somehow preferred. For this reason, and for other discussed in the presentation, I have chosen to address adolescent pregnancy and parenthood in Romania, a “rising” “social problem”. The topic needs approval from the PhD supervisor. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Locations to connnect with translocation positionality [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. We had in these human technology situations “embodied knowing funds of pedagogies, (Vikie Fors cited in Pink 2015, 20) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Photovoice is a method used as a participatory method where the research participants are taking photos of their everyday lives and then discussion the pictures together with policymakers ect for social change in the environments ( cf Lögdberg) but I’m not sure if its exactly that that’s done, but its built on the idea of it. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Vladimir Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore,* Minneapolis 1984. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Christine Shojaei Kawan, «Fairy Tale Typology and the ‘New’ Genealogical Method: A Reply to Willem de Blécourt» in *Fabula,* vol. 52, Issue 3-4, January 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Μιχάλης Μερακλής (Michalis Meraklis), «Η *Τέταρτη Διάσταση* του Γιάννη Ρίτσου. Μια πρώτη προσέγγιση» (“*The Fourth Dimension of Yiannis Ritsos. A first approach*”) in *Αφιέρωμα στον Γιάννη Ρίτσο*, Athens 1981, p. 519. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Χρύσα Προκοπάκη (Chryssa Prokopaki), *Ανθολογία Γιάννη Ρίτσου* (*Anthology of Yiannis Ritsos),* Athens 200011 , p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)