

## ARTICLES

**Witches, Wise People, and Werewolves: Traditional Supernatural Powers and Popular Attitudes Toward Their Bearers Among Carpatho-Rusyns in Ukraine**

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## Abstract

This article explores the attitudes of the inhabitants of one village in the Zakarpats'ka Oblast' of Ukraine towards the bearers of supernatural powers. On the basis of my own fieldwork, I describe several supernatural powers known to people in the village: milk-stealing, performed by women; self-protection against attacks; and turning husbands into wolves. Attitudes are shaped by one core value: fairness; the villagers strongly resent unfair usage of supernatural powers against those who cannot protect themselves. However, story characters who use such powers responsibly in self-defense and restore the status quo to punish aggressors are exonerated from blame by story-tellers and their audiences. In daily life, people do not like to be associated with supernatural forces for fear of being accused of using them unfairly.

## Introduction

While folklore is a window into the worldview of a culture, analysis depends on the nature of the collected text. For example, texts published in collections of Carpatho-Rusyn tales often represent the literary standards of the collector rather than the actual performance, which would include the reactions of performers and listeners. (1) Capturing these elements allows one to understand much more about the culture, its attitudes and values. (2) This paper attempts to describe the attitudes and values of Carpatho-Rusyn village culture conveyed in performances of stories about people with supernatural powers.

Rusyns, or Carpatho-Rusyns, are a recognized minority in Slovakia, Serbia, and some other countries of Eastern Europe; in Ukraine their status is dubious. Their language belongs to the East Slavic group (3), and a number of regional varieties exist. (4) The recordings that form the basis of this article were made in the village of Novoselycja, Zakarpattja region, Mižhir'ja district, Ukraine. Some were recorded in 1987 and others between 2011-2016. Most stories and motifs that I have recorded are known in the Carpathian area and elsewhere. (5) I recorded not only stories, but entire sessions and, therefore, I have a vast collection of performers' and listeners' comments on texts and character behaviors. Analyzing this material is similar to reading the comments section of a newspaper article published online; a comment and its replies resemble a

conversation, and the attitudes of the community members are revealed. Of course, attitudes strongly depend on individual people's personalities; nevertheless, certain patterns can be found.

The attitudes of people encountering supernatural forces reveal a great deal about their understanding of themselves and the world. Stories about people with supernatural powers center on the idea of fairness; magical properties serve to punish and prevent unfair use of power by other members of the social group (6), while the unfair usage of magic to the disadvantage of non-magical people is controlled by gossip. If an offense happens, the ideal outcome is for offenders, threatened by magic on the one hand and guided by the society on the other, and given an opportunity to repair the damage done, cede their unfair gains and apologize to victims. This is the ultimate goal for dealing with both non-magical and magical offense as expressed in these stories. Interestingly, that goal, known also to other cultures without a state-supported justice system, has recently been introduced as an alternative to Western criminal justice system under the name of "restorative justice" (see below for discussion).

Types of characters: Witches and milk

Below is the text of a story told in 2012 by a man in his late 80s. I also heard it from several other people in the village. The story is about one of the most common types of supernatural activities: stealing milk from other people's cows by using magic. The speaker told two such stories without pausing; I chose to present only one of them in the interest of space.

### 1. Girl milking a rope (7)

2-07	<i>друга была причта   бив чолóвiк вiн ужé умёр давно i сёмья його поумирала   чолóвiк бив   сам   но тай сёмья у него была якась   трéба было служници допомоги  </i>	There was another incident. There was a man, he died already a long time ago, and his family died since. He was there, and he had a family, so he needed a female servant,
02-08	<i>обы гнала корóвы пасти ци шчóсь обы жóни помочи   i пишóв наяв сóби дéсь туды в зáвицьци ци в тiткiвци ци у прiслóпи дiвочку   вiдданичку   помагати за служницю сұхыр   ...     тай прийшóв тай привьюв   пишлá тотá дойти корóвы ужé</i>	so that she could herd his cows or help his wife. And he went and hired himself somewhere in Zavydka or Titkovec' or in Prysliп, a girl of a marriageable age, to help as a servant. Suxŷr was his name. [...] So he brought her home. She went to milk cows,

02-09	<p>не бде йти хзьяйка дойти  коров[у] бо е служниця дівочка  такá птхдьяшча шчо за  коровы знае дойти тай добре  знае дойти пшла дойти  коровы   айбо она надойла  бльше   тоты коровы нгда  тлько молока не давали г она  роздойла   йой гой   чудуют ся  шчо тото хзьяйн ужэ і тотá  хзьяйка шчо то такое може  быти чому тотó...мы не  додойвали коровы ци шчо   ге    кажут і як тотó кажут ты  бльше молока надойла г я  надойвала   пшла тотá  дойти   ужэ не служниця ай  пшла самá хзьяйка дойти    та де   тотó молоко шчо і  было у неї   того ниэ шчо дівка  заносила   начали сълтковати  за тов   дёков   як пшла  коровы дойти   заходят само  такó   крацьци дивит   а она  само ож мотузок через  геренду поверла в стайни тай  птставила вдрó тай   дойит    молоко течé  </p>	<p>The wife won't milk cows already if there is a servant, a good girl that knows how to milk cows. But she [the girl] got more milk, the cows never gave so much milk as she got from them. The man and his wife are surprised, how could it be, maybe we did not milk cows well enough, or what. Well, they tell her, how come you got more milk than I used to get? She went to milk the cows, already not this servant girl, but the wife - there is again only the amount of milk that she used to get, and that is less than the girl got. So, they started to watch after the girl. When she went to milk cows, they come to the shed, secretly, and they see - she threw a rope over the main beam and put a bucket under it, and milks the rope! And the milk flows!</p>
02-10	<p>занесла до хыжи но небого    льльи го каже ци свиням ци  быкови   і забирай ся та йди  сббї домци з богом   мені такых  служниць не треба   обы  мотузок шчо молоко з нього  течé  </p>	<p>She brought it into the house, and [he] says - hey, pour it to the pigs or to the bull, and go home, I don't need a servant like you that milks a rope.</p>

Milk from one's own cow has long been a major food staple in the Rusyn culture. If a cow starts giving less milk, or the milk contains less fat than before, people often blame a witch who is stealing milk by magic. It is clear for any bearer of the village culture that milk (magically) flowing from a rope does not come from nowhere; it must come from someone else's cow. Stories like this one are very common; they are a large part of many storytellers' repertoires, including

this storyteller who told two of them in sequence. Stealing milk is the main harm brought about by a witch, *bosorkan' a*, a female carrier of supernatural powers. Stealing milk by magic is always considered bad, because it robs someone else of sustenance and dooms them to poverty and hunger while the witch profits. In and of itself, this practice goes against the grain of the peasant “subsistence ethic” [Scott 1976], which considers it moral to ensure the right to enough food for survival to all members of the community. This community share is ensured through an elaborate network of technical and social arrangements.

Stealing food is a grievous offense in village life. Furthermore, depriving people of subsistence by magic is especially unfair, because people without magic abilities cannot protect themselves. In this story, the head of the household displays a common attitude towards magical milk stealing: he could have benefitted from getting more milk from his cow, but he does not want to associate with a wielder of these forces. Indignation and disgust are common attitudes shared by everybody in the village who mentioned milk stealing. The only thing people can say in favor of a person accused of milk stealing is “maybe it is someone else, not her.” On the contrary, expressions of negative attitudes are widespread and various. When a victim goes for help to a wise person (see below) to discover who the witch was, the wise person can offer the victim choices: damage to or even the death of the witch, harm to the witch’s cattle, or simply identification of the witch. The gravity of the options are a clear indication of how people feel towards a person who steals their milk. My interlocutors reported that they chose to identify the witch, but not everybody might be so generous.

The identity of a witch may be discovered unintentionally. For example, villagers might maim a toad or a dog who had strayed into their cowshed. The next day when a woman is found dead or with similar injuries, people might then believe that she was actually a witch. I heard many such stories in Novoselycja (they are generally common in the East Slavic tradition and elsewhere), and neither story-tellers nor listeners have ever shown sympathy for the injured woman. If they commented at all, they would state that she got her just desserts.

Witches’ magic abilities are also said to interfere with the normal transition from life to death. Women who steal milk are reported not to be able to die until they transfer their powers to someone else. When they finally die, they cannot take the stolen milk with them, so that it pours out of their eyes, nose, and ears. When the transition to the other world finally happens, witches receive punishment there. In one story I collected in Novoselycja in 2012, told by a female teller in her 70s, a woman has been asked by her daughter why she has a lot of butter, but the daughter has little. The woman throws a piece of her butter in a river, where frogs and snakes consume it. The mother tells the daughter devils in hell will tear apart her soul in the same way, because she gets her butter through witchcraft. The woman could have taught her daughter to magically increase the fat content of her cows’ milk too, but she chose not to, protecting her daughter’s soul from suffering in the afterlife. The connection between milk stealing and suffering in hell is clear, as demonstrated for the naive daughter, but it is common knowledge in the village, as these stories (and others I have collected)

demonstrate. Negative attitudes to milk stealing are so pervasive in the culture that even children become frightened when they believe they have witnessed witchcraft. Below is a vivid childhood memory of a woman born in 1936, recorded in 2012, some seventy years after the actual encounter, and her comments:

## 2. Children see a woman doing witchcraft

<p>  а я рас скотарила невелика я была иче́ дитвако́м   та то́же на сяко́е сято   мы скотарили   тай ви́диме   йде́ жона́   зави́та у ви́лах   та́к шчо́ і не ви́тко гёт ви́лах до   до то́го   іде́ та усé   усé схы́лить_ся та де́ коро́ва ста́ла та съ_сліда́ берé   гли́ны   та ду́маю сбѣ́ го́споди а мы́ ті́чеме бо мы́ ся боі́ме   ді́ты   а те́перь си́ ду́маю о́споди ко́ была́ то́то   мні́ нне́сь та та́к бы́ла м і́ іма́ла та та́к бы́ла я бы́ла і́ подиві́ла шчо́ то́то за она́  </p>	<p>And once I herded cattle, I was little, still a child, and [it was] also on a holiday, we herded cattle, and [we] see, there goes a woman wrapped in a homemade cloth, so that one cannot see her at all, the cloth is up to... there... [she] walking and all the time [she] bending where a cow stood and, from the footprint, [she] takes clay. And [I] think to myself ‘Oh, my God.’ And we run away because we are scared, children. (8) And now I think – ‘Oh, my God, if I were... had I met her today, I would have caught her and I would have seen who she was.</p>
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This excerpt demonstrates the range of feelings, both as a child and as an adult, at witnessing activities associated with milk stealing: children get scared, while a more powerful adult woman feels indignation and is ready to expose, and possibly punish, the witch.

Another thing witches can do is transfer disorders such as *plač* (persistent night-time crying) from their own babies or children to other people’s children. To transfer *plač*, witches bring bathwater used on their own child and pour it onto the patch of ground lit by a light from the window of a house where another baby lives. Here again, they do magic for selfish gain, while subjecting unsuspecting people without magic powers to harm. Even worse, the spell is directed toward babies. People might know who has harmed their child (especially if the suspect had a child of her own who reportedly had been crying previously), but sometimes they have no clue. However, usually knowledge of who the offender is does not help to cure the condition. Even though sometimes people ask the suspected witch to take the *plač* back, she typically denies the accusation. Curing *plač* is painstaking business involving a number of possible remedies (such as washing the child with water where a certain number of live coals have been extinguished, or washing the child with rainwater that drips from the roof, etc. - all with appropriate spells), and it does not always work. Therefore, attitudes toward

witches who make others' children sick are no better than attitudes toward those who steal milk from cows; in fact, these witches are particularly resented.

Despite the dismay associated with witchcraft in general, there are also grey areas. Most people agree there are women (and even men), who bring bad luck if they cross one's path—they are called *nedobri na perexid* 'bad for crossing.' Not all agree whether this is an innate quality or the result of some event, e.g., some say that if a person has been weaned twice, s/he might acquire this trait. There is also disagreement about intention: perhaps a person just cannot prevent the bad luck or perhaps people curse others out of spite. The term 'witch' (*bosorkan'a*) is usually not applied to these people. If a person with specific powers, or even without any recognizable powers, looks at someone with malevolence or envy, they might inadvertently jinx that person. One can take preventative measures against a curse, such as putting a safety pin in child's clothes or wearing something red, but even if one suspects someone, one cannot tell whether they were jinxed purposefully or not. Stealing milk or transferring *pláč*, on the other hand, cannot happen involuntarily; both require ill will and a series of intentional acts. Thus, a witch is evil; she does these two things with a distinct intent to harm. In addition, her magical abilities give her an unfair advantage over others. Evil intent and unfair advantage are why these activities, and the people who perform them, invoke such distinct, strong, negative feelings.

### Wise people

Luckily, there are other types of people with supernatural abilities: the wise men or women [*mudri l'uđe / žony*]. Below is a story recorded in 2014, co-performed by two people, a 89-year old woman (HK) and her 54-year old adopted son (IS). It is from the repertoire of the deceased *dido* [old man], HK's husband and IS' adoptive father, who was known a good story-teller.

### 3. "The Old Man and the Builders"

21- 1:42	ГК <i>і дідо наш   є славу́ників   славу́ник  </i>	HK: And our old man [told us], [there was this one,] from the family of Slavunyk.
21- 1:43	<i>колі на рѠну ходіли   но тай йшли́   на рѠну   он туды́ гет за ху́ст   на рѠну давнѠ з бочка́ми сякы́ми ходіли та  </i> IC <i>у солѠтвино  </i> ГК <i>ісь_кїньми   а</i> IC <i>у солѠтвино</i>	Once he went to get the brine, they were riding there, beyond Khust. Long ago, when they went to get brine, they took barrels like these. IS: To Solotvyno. HK: In horse-drawn carts. IS: To Solotvyno.

	<p>ГК <i>но та йшли вітты   а будовали   хьжу люде   но тай ишли тай   рас коні стали   і коні не підут  </i>          ІС <i>на місьці ся топчут  </i>          ГК <i>на місьці ся топчут і   вішта вішта вішта ай коні не підут   на місьці ся топчут   а яксь там бьв   каже а ну   каже іди та принеси ми каже   тріску   вітты з будовы   но   тай пак   дідови тоту тріску тот приніс   но тай дідо шчось я не знаю шчо там уже робів   і   дідо   вішта   і коні пішли   і   дідо іде  </i></p>	<p>HK: So, they went from there, and people were building a house, and they were passing by this house, and there, the horses stopped and wouldn't go on.          IS: They were stamping their feet, but not moving, stamping in place.          HK: They were stamping their feet, but not moving, stamping in place. [people said:] 'Gee! but the horses wouldn't go, they were stamping their feet in place.' And there was this man there [in the cart with the brine party], and he says, 'Go and bring me a sliver. From there, from the building site.' And he brought the old man that sliver, and the old man did something, I don't know what he was doing there, and then he said: 'Gee!' and the horses started moving. And the old man is riding,</p>
21-1:44	<p><i>туї   збїкают із заду   чекайте чекайте чек... а дідо шчі май коні   рушат   обь   коні   ишли   агá   но та пак  </i>          ІС <i>дівит ай чоловік біжїт із заду  </i>          ГК <i>чоловік біжїт біжїт доганят   но тай   дідо уже мало хотів   і пѣмуштровати того   тьх   тай   дідо уже став   а шчо є шчо   дідо такїї му   шчо є шчо   їдї каже бїйте ся бѣга   каже   чоловік каже   ци прубав ся ци умї(і)рат   шчось такѣ   агá   но каже но іди іди каже   ніч му каже не бде каже   но обь сьте каже бїльш каже такѣ не робїли каже   дідо пѣв   тай дідо шчѣзь_ знав і  </i></p>	<p>and here someone is yelling from behind "Wait, wait, wait!" And the old man makes his horses run faster, so that they run. And then...          IS: They look, and a man is running towards them from behind.          HK: A man is running after them, and catches up with them. The old man wanted to teach them a lesson. So, the old man stopped his horses: 'What is it?' that's what the old man asks him: 'What?' 'Oh,' he says, 'What are you doing, don't you fear God?' he says, 'A man back there, either he cut himself</p>

	<p>ІС <i>но   але якби́сь то́же зна́в   іс тьі́х  </i></p> <p>ГК <i>і та́м зна́в і ді́до знав   відверну́ти   та́м зна́в то́т іспе́рти фу́ру  </i></p>	<p>badly, either he is dying, something like that.’ ‘Aha. Well,’ the old man says, ‘Go now, nothing bad will happen to him, but you guys don’t do that again,’ he says. That’s what the old man said. The old man knew something.</p> <p>IS: Yes. But someone out of these guys also knew something.</p> <p>HK: There, a guy knew something, and the old man knew how to undo it. The guy there knew how to stop the cart,</p>
21-1:45	<p><i>а ді́до зна́в то́же шчо́б   но   а хто́ його́ зна́с шчо́ він   но тай шчо́ він робі́в   на ті́ трі́сьці   де о́ні будова́ли  </i></p>	<p>and the old man also knew something. And who knows what he... and what he did with this sliver from the building site.</p>

This story belongs to another common type in my collection: stories of contests between two people with supernatural powers (most often men) or stories of attack and retribution. In these stories, a person who is knowledgeable about magic attacks the main character, thinking him to be a non-magical person. However, the main character has supernatural powers too. He can both repair the damage and mete out retribution. The attacker is punished for using supernatural powers against a supposedly non-magical opponent. In these situations, people usually consider use of magic by the main character justifiable. The main character who uses his powers in self-defense usually has the sympathies of both the teller and the audience. In this story, both tellers mention the fear and haste of the builder after the old man caused another builder to hurt himself; neither teller expressed any sympathy for the builders. Remarkably, the builder running after the cart asks if the old man has the fear of God, i.e., blames the old man for using magic to cause harm (and also for the seriousness of the harm), but in his desperation, he forgets that it was the builders who started the magical attack. The old man, on the other hand, is shown in a positive light, as powerful but generous. Oftentimes, as in this story, the main character forgives the offender when the later demonstrates his pitiful state and/or asks for help, and may revoke the punishment. As the story-teller in this story notices, the old man just wanted to teach the builders a lesson.

There are also stories where a non-magical offender, (male or female), causes harm to a wise man in a natural way (stealing something from him, detaining his horse for trespassing on his land, etc.). The wise man would respond



using supernatural powers (e.g., send snakes to the offender's house; make the offender's mouth droop; have the offender bring back the stolen goods and stand with them on his shoulders until forgiven), but often he would revoke the punishment if the offender came to him with apologies. In a similar story type, wise men or wise women can repair magical damage caused to others. They usually find and punish the witch who stole a cow's milk. All these types of stories evoke the feeling of rightful retribution; attackers, whether natural or supernatural, are punished or warned, at the very least. Apparently, using supernatural powers for self-defense and protection of one's well-being is not perceived negatively nor as a threat to the wielder, since it is employed explicitly to counteract unjust acts. The same idea of just retribution underpins the above mentioned stories where a witch goes to a cowshed as a toad to steal milk. After the toad gets maimed or killed, the next day a woman in the neighborhood turns out to be injured. The only difference between them is that the antagonist here is a good person with no supernatural powers who triumphs over an evil magical person.

#### Female self-defense: Two wolf stories (9)

Below are two stories I recorded in 1987 from a skillful female story-teller born in 1920. She talks about two cases of a rare supernatural power: transforming from a human into a wolf. These stories are particularly interesting in the light of the conclusions above about justified retribution. They discuss the fairness of using supernatural power in more complicated cases, comparing and balancing the advantages of magic with more earthly societal powers and privileges.

#### 4. Two stories about a husband turning into a wolf

4-50	...  <i>я знаю як то́то чичі́ і мѐні́ была́(!) і не чу[д]жа́   шчо́ была́ чолв́іка пусти́ла у в́окуны́   та́к было́ уже́   тюбра́ли ся́ ай   а ві́н йе́йі збыткóвв   всѐ ві́н на нь(//)у збыткóвв та́ ка́же   я́ тебе́ нау́чу ... я́ то́бі ука́жу  </i>	I know how it was, [she] also was my kin, the one who made her husband into a wolf [lit.: werewolf]. It was like this. A couple got married, they got married, but... but he beat her, he constantly beat her, and she says: 'I will teach you, I will show you,'
4-51	<i>та́й тогды́ піде́ у ха́щчу   і прійде́ в́о́к   і́д жо́ні   і ты́рмат   йшли́ у по́ле робі́ти сі́но   я́ уже́ ссе́ ка́жу шчо́ як сі́но пішли́ робі́ти   шли навпе́ред сі́но робі́ти   та́ то уже́ на по́слітку   ні́т на упе́рет   і пішли́ у по́ле сі́но робі́ти но і́</i>	and then he goes to the forest, and a wolf comes back, to the woman, and he pulls her... they went to the field to make hay. I will tell it how it was. They went to make hay. First, they went to make hay... no, that was later... no, it was first. So, they went to the field to make hay,

	<p><i>він пішов у хайчу і вітты приходить вóвк і люде відбіли і лéдвы збіли бо вóвк гэт на ній півку півва і   но й він вітты пішов у хайчу назат він ся ужé розробів   прийшов   шчо ты туй пиичала шчо тотó было тай шчо   та вóвк кáже чóлóвіче бóжый туй б́ыв   та кáже мáло ня не іззів тай шчо   но тай і оні ужé по ... с́іли пòдб́іда ... попòдудновали   тай с́іли тай   ужé їсти   хóтят   пòпòіли   тай він ї кáже   шчобы му подівила у гóлов   подівила   і она йóму д́ивит у гóлов д́ивити ї в зóбы</i></p>	<p>and he went to the woods, and from there, a wolf comes, and people beat it and barely chased it away, because that wolf, it totally tore her skirt. And he came back from the forest, he already turned back [into a man]. He came: 'Why did you cry, what was it, what?' 'But there was a wolf,' she says, 'Hey, man [lit: God's man], it was here,' and, she says, 'It very nearly ate me.' So, what then... And they already... sat down, ate lun... ate lunch, and they sat down, they wanted to eat, they had a lunch, and he says to her: 'Check my head for lice, check it.' And she looks at his head, she looks at the teeth,</p>
4-52	<p><i>а то тóчно ниткы   з йéї ні(то)вки   но ужé лицé півку   а у зубáх із_ йéї півкы   ниткы   кáже она ты слухай кáже   васілю   слухай кáже та ты кáже   та ты кáже мáеш із мóєї півкы   у тебе у зубáх ниткы   а він кáже еé айбо кáже ци напудила сь ся   йóй як я ся кáже напудила   я ся напудила   а він кáже ты кьёт хочеш кáже відіти но як ты тотó зрòбиш но она йóму зачала но як ты стáнеш чóлóвік у вóвка стáнеш   і ты вóвком нáрас прійдеш вóвком   і ты чóлóвік но косів   йóй кáже я ся кáже бóю я бим ти кáже указáв   айбо .... ти ся тілько дурный був бо шчо пòвів лише оби сь кáже не пòвіла скамёнів би сь   я кáже пиду́</i></p>	<p>and exactly there were the exact threads from her skirt, that one makes a skirt with (?), in his teeth there were threads from her skirt. She says: 'Listen,' she says, 'Vasy! listen, but you,' she says, 'but you have, from my skirt, there are threads between you teeth.' And he says, 'Ah, did you get scared?' 'Oh how I got scared,' she says, 'I got scared.' And he says, 'If you want,' he says, 'to see...' 'But how will you do that?' she started saying to him, 'but how you will become, you are a man, and you will become a wolf? and you will immediately come back as a wolf? And you are a man?' 'See,' he mowed the hay. 'Oh,' he says, 'I am afraid, I would tell you,' he says, 'but you...' He must have been stupid (?), because he said: 'Only don't say <i>I wish you become a rock.</i>' He says: 'I will go...'</p>
4-53	<p><i>і він она ужé пидметáв копіцю выосóко май   бо она ся б́ояла  </i></p>	<p>and he... she... he already made the haystack a little higher, because she</p>

	<p>гадат собі заклят би съ кѣдь ты      такый йѣсь та я тя уже і не      хочу кажеши шчо обы не повѣла      скамѣнів бись а ге а она уже        тай тогды він ся она обвѣдила      він ся перекотів так три рас        настоящчий вѣвк   вѣткыс у      нього і сѣрсьть і всьо і   і вѣвк      тай   настоящчий вѣвк   а она      уже повѣла а він ся зачав      роскачовати   айбо она повѣла      скамѣнів бись   прийшло він      зачав завѣйдав копѣцю   він бы      бѣв і там заѣв   уже   і він на      суд бѣжый пишов   пишов      наохтѣма у вѣвкы   і тогды      прийшло она зачала там      пишчати   на ті ... на ті е онде        на тім   зачала пишчати йѣи      менѣ каже вѣвк ісьць   менѣ        люде  </p>	<p>was afraid. She thinks to herself:      ‘Damn you, if you are like this, I      don’t want you; you say that I      should not say <i>I wish you become a      rock,</i>’ and there, and she already...      and then he... she saw (?) he rolled      [or: did a somersault] like that three      times, and he became a real wolf.      From where did he get wolf’s hair,      everything – a wolf, a real wolf.      And she already said... he started      rolling back, but she said <i>I wish you      become a rock,</i> and it happened...      he started jumping onto the stack      (?), he would have eaten her      already. And he went away forever,      he became a wolf forever. And      then, she started crying there, on      that... there... on that... she started      crying – ‘Oh,’ she says, ‘A wolf is      eating me. Me... people...’</p>
4-54	<p>та пишчѣт но тай люде видят      кругом   і люде ся збѣ(г)ли хто з      вѣлами хто з кѣсов   хто ш      ичим   тай утік   но   та сесѣ      єнна так   ци тото говорѣт      туй   но   та я ичи і ичѣ      докажу   а друга жонѣ пѣбрѣла      ся пѣбрѣла уже мѣли четверо      дѣтѣй   все він збытковѣв і      збытковѣв і і тогды він каже я      йду на свѣтый вѣчѣр на      смѣрѣчку   а она гадат собі а      йди   я тебе пушчу у вѣвкунѣ   і      він пишов і она пустила його у      вѣвкунѣ   то бѣло недалѣко оде      у рекѣтах   і то все моя мама      при... тѣто приказовав   і      пустила у вѣвкунѣ   його ниѣ і      ниѣ   рѣно на свѣтый вѣчѣр о      уже   зрѣна він пѣюшов зрѣна і      на вѣчѣр приходѣт   вѣвком   д      хѣжи  </p>	<p>and she cries, and people around      see that, and people came, one with      a pitchfork, another with a scythe,      everyone brought something, and      [the wolf] fled. Well. And this      one... Does this thing speak here?      [=does this recorder here record      what I say?] Well. Then I will tell      this one too. And another wife, she      got married, got married, they      already had four children, and he      [the husband] beat and beat her.      And then he says, ‘I am going to      get a Christmas tree for the      Christmas Eve.’ And she thinks to      herself, ‘Go, I will turn you into a      wolf [lit.: werewolf].’ And he      went... she made him into a wolf      [lit.: werewolf]. That was not far      from here, there in Rekyty. My      Mom always... my Dad used to tell.      So she turned him into a wolf [lit.:      werewolf]. He is not coming back,</p>

		and he is not coming back. In the morning on Christmas Eve... He went in the morning, in the morning, and in the evening, he came as a wolf, to the house.
4-55	<p><i>а діти на тьє тьє тьє та хліба мѣчут   шчо   дають а вна   іді каже загбїкала куме іді оде вбвк убей   но вбвк прийшов вбвк май   жили онї жили   онї уже відбїли того кум стрїлів айбо не устрїлів у нього ай   якбїсь так ббг догадав шчо пішло у люфт   пішов він   і каже но може бїла она вже довго жїла сімдѣ... уже мала вісімдѣсят рбків жїла рокы   і прийшло конати   айбо баба не мбже сконати   пбспбвідать_ся жбны д нї прихбдять тї якбїсь грїх мбси тї якбїсь грїх учинїла   нагадує ся якбї тї грїх учинїла она уже про нього й забїла   а аж не забїла айбо не хбтїла вїявити   она дбты сконати не могла   тогды каже  </i></p>	<p>And the children go, ‘Here, here,’ they throw... they give it bread, and she says, ‘Come,’ she called, ‘Come, <i>kum</i> [godfather of her child/ren], come here, kill the wolf.’ Well, it was a wolf who came, a real wolf. So they lived and lived... They already ... The godfather shot, but did not hit him, but somehow God made it so that the bullet missed. It [=the wolf] went... And they say, maybe she lived long, maybe seventy years... she was already eighty years old, she lived a long life. And it was time for her to die. But the old woman cannot die. She has confessed her sins to a priest, and women come to her, ‘You must have some sin, you committed some sin, go ahead, remember what sin you committed,’ and she already forgot about it, and, if she hasn’t forgotten, she was not willing to tell. And she could not die. Then she says...</p>
4-56	<p><i>она пішла пак цурья зобрала тотб ай дѣ він лишив цурья розобрав ся та лишив   она то цурья забрала та поклала у станбв   пїт? станбв давнб старьїб у давнї хыжї тб поклала там пїт станбв   і каже   но та вївѣзїт ми каже пона   буду ся спбвідати   нагадала ся жбны кумы прийшли   жбно уже дѣсята добб тї уже гѣт їскбнат уже скбнат   уже і не дьхат  </i></p>	<p>she went and took the clothes, where he had left the clothes, he had gotten undressed and left the clothes, and she had taken those clothes and put them into the barrel ... under the barrel, as old things are put in old houses, and she put it under the them. And she says, ‘Well, call the priest to me, I will confess, I remembered.’ Women came, her children’s godmothers. You know, it is the tenth day already, and she cannot die, she is</p>

	<p><i>пришло уже ї   і конат і конат і не може сконати   і оні тогды она ся дораховала тай шчо тай каже беріт каже цурья каже   а   тай попови уже с попом ся сповідала а піп каже як я можу тобі розрішення дати   я тогды тобі можу розрішення дати кедь він прийде домі   твій гріх тобі отпустит   а я тобі розрішення не можу дати  </i></p>	<p>not breathing already, and dying, and dying, and cannot die. And they... she thought it over, and she says, 'Take [his old] clothes and...' and to the priest... she already confessed to the priest, and the priest says, 'How I can give you an absolution, only then can I give you an absolution when he comes home, and forgives you that sin, but I cannot give you an absolution</p>
4-57	<p><i>за сьякій великій гріх   а она каже беріт каже были у неї і діти беріт каже там є   вітьцьово цурья   піт тов становльов там каже перевертайте тоту становь_ і там є цурья   і беріт і несід_ го каже там у свинарьки там мы робили все та гадаю собі   мы бывало ходиме та гадаеме ци на оті борозді тото   скакав та чинів ся і учинів ся вбк ци на оті та мыо пригадуеме собі   бо тато там уже косів тай бывало то приказуе та каже ге туйки пішов   мій уйчаник каже у вбкунь   жона го пустила   но ай каже но ніч   оні уже тогды   пішли понесли   чекают   а то не мож ...   понесли оні там цурья   понесли оні там цурья   айбо тото дєнь айбо тото два   тай нис   тай три  </i></p>	<p>for such a huge sin.' And she says: 'Take...' (she had children), she says: 'take your father's clothes, there, under that barrel,' she says, 'Turn over that barrel, and there are clothes there, and take and carry them,' she says, 'to Svyнар'ky.' We used to work there, and I used to think... We used to walk and think, if it was on that furrow he was running and turning... and was turned into a wolf, or on this furrow, we were trying to guess, because my father used to mow hay there, and he was telling this story, and he would say 'Right there he went, my cousin became a wolf, his wife turned him [into a wolf].' OK, and they then... went and carried [the clothes.] They are waiting, and it is so hard... They went and brought there the clothes, they brought there the clothes, and then a day passed, and two days passed, and he did not come, and three days...</p>
4-58	<p><i>гадат собі уже жоны гвбврят   но безівно як він   дєзь го убїли   у вбках   убїли го   тай вже і она вісімдєсят років має а він єшчє старший бив   та безівно не живе   но нігда не умре та не мож дивїти на муку   діти ім</i></p>	<p>She thinks, and the women already are saying, 'He is most probably dead, he got killed somewhere, while a wolf, he got killed. She was eighty years old, and he was still older, so he is dead for sure.' And she cannot die, one cannot watch</p>

	<p><i>суть   видят в яку муку мама зайде?   і прийшло   дев'ятої доби приходит   дев'ятої доби   прийшов   руки побобівани оброщли   сюды оброщлы   так як настоящий вбк лиш цурья на ся узяв   такой страшный ичо раз   і каже   прийшов і поклонився   і каже   дякую я тобі жано   ичо ты мене иче навернула на свое обысьца   та каже   ушитко ти интедую</i></p>	<p>how she suffers. And there are children, they see how their mother suffers. And then, the ninth day, he comes. The ninth day, he came. His hands were scarred, covered with hair, and here, he was covered with hair... like a real wolf, only he had put on his clothes. He was so scary. And he says... he came and greeted her, and said: 'Thank you, my wife, that you returned me to my household.' And he says, 'I forgive you everything.'</p>
4-59	<p><i>і прийшов і поцольовав її   ушитко ти интедую   і я недобре робив зачав він і свої(е) гріхи казати   і я недобре робив бо я тебе задарь не раз бив   збытковав   нішчив   та каже я тобі ушитко интедую лиш ти тото не интедую ичо на святий вечір діти мені несли хліба   та метали   а ты гойкала куме куме пой убити   а я собі гадаю госсподи та коби м пожив я уже був в вбкунях   та коби м пожив   він собі так подумав тогды   і каже мені ты ся каже снила   ичо ты страшино ся мушиш   ты вісиш на мотузі та не можеши ни до зємли до...   прихылити ся   ни на верьх   а все ожієши та ожієши   та фурт ис ми ся снила в вбках   но а та як ты туды жив та як був  </i></p>	<p>and he came, and he kissed her, 'I forgive you everything, I also did bad things,' he started to confess his sins, 'I also did bad things because I beat you often for nothing, beat you... and,' he says, 'I forgive you everything, only that I cannot forgive that on Christmas Eve children were giving me bread, they were throwing it to me, and you said 'Kum, come and kill it.' And I think to myself, 'Oh, my God, if I lived... I was already a wolf... if I lived...' that is what he thought to himself. 'And,' he said, 'I dreamed of you, that you suffered a lot, that you were hanging on a rope and you couldn't either touch the ground, or go up, and you kept getting alive... and I dreamed about you all the time when I was a wolf.' 'And how did you live there, how were you?'</p>
4-1:00	<p><i>тай каже не интедую тай каже знаєши каже як мы туды бидовали   мы бидовали дуже   бо каже   коли нам бох палицьов покаже   де йти   і мы там підемо і дуже сме были голбонні   бог нам пак палицьов показав до єного тазды   і мы прийшли</i></p>	<p>And he says: 'I don't forgive... You know,' he said, 'Oh, how we suffered there. We suffered a lot, because,' he says, 'every time when God pointed with a stick where to go, we would go there, and we were very hungry. Once God pointed to one peasant's yard, and</p>

	<p><i>бо мѡж было кучу розломіти   та бѡг нам лише вѣлѣв по єннѡму ярчати взяти та зьїсти а   а не усьѡ тратіти а оні тогдѣ стали стратіли   та за мїрний рїк нїч не їли   лиш шчо піли вѡду та гліну їли   та траву   а їнче нїч їм не слѡбьодно было взяти   їм рѡт заклинєний   і оні їсти не могли нїч   та кáже виїтко ти кáже ингедую лише тотѡ ти не ингедую   нѡ тай як зáк не пѡвїв ї шчѡбы онá спочивáла з бѡгом дѡты онá не спочїла   і кáже нѡ спочивáй з бѡгом  </i></p>	<p>we came, because we could break into a shed there. And God only told us to take and eat one lamb each, and not to slaughter everything, but we slaughtered everything, so after that for an entire year we didn't eat anything, we only drank water and ate clay, and grass, and nothing else, we could not take.' They [=we] had cursed their mouth, and they could not eat anything. 'And,' he says, 'I forgive you everything, but I cannot forgive you this.' And until he told her to repose with God, she did not die. So, he says, 'Repose with God,</p>
4-1:01	<p><i>я свѡє перебѣв   може я ся спѡкутáв   та тѡ я пѡкуты свѡї прїяв то я тебе збытковáв тебе нїшчив   но тай я недѡбре робїв а тѣ з бѡгом спочивáй і тогдѣ онá сконáла   а я кáже тѣ ми не ингедуй я такїй мáла дурний рѡзум шчо _а тебе у тотѡ пустїла я не рáз жалїла айбо я ужє не мѡгла   шчо былá м те[бѣ] наверхнóла   тѣ бы був   менє збытковáв і шчѣ май дужє нїшчив   я не мѡгла   бо я ся ужє їсь _свѣїта ганьбїла   та я за тѡ тїлько пѡкутáла дѡвго кáже   пѡкутáла і я сконáти не мѡгла   а не мѡгла м тот грїх вѣявити   но тай мусїла го вѣявити бо дѡты не мѡглá сконáти  </i></p>	<p>I got my due. Maybe I already had my penance, I had my penance, because I had beaten you, well, I did wrong, and you repose now with God.' And then she died. 'And me,' she said, 'you forgive me, I had such a stupid mind that I turned you into a wolf, I regretted that many times, but I couldn't already... had I gotten you back, you would have beaten me again, maybe even more than before, so I couldn't, because I had been already very much ashamed. So, I had my penance for that for a long time, that I could not die. I couldn't tell about that sin.' But she had to tell it, because otherwise she could not die.</p>

The first story (beginning at 4 minutes, 40 seconds) reports how a woman's husband went to the forest, returned as a wolf, attacked his wife, disappeared in the forest, and returned as a man; later the woman recognizes him by the threads from her skirt sticking between his teeth. Having discovered this fact, the woman ensures that her husband is trapped in wolf form for the foreseeable future. (10) The teller also describes the wife's motivation. The woman turns her husband into

a wolf because she does not want to live with a werewolf, and also because, as she said at the beginning of the story, she wants to keep him from beating her. Wife-beating is a recognized element of life in Novoselycja. The woman in the story, like many other women past and present, is under the total control of her husband and has no socially recognized means to defend herself. In other cultures, a defenseless party in a desperate situation is known to recourse to magic for self-protection. Kivelson [2013], researching early modern Russian witch trials, notices that for the people of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Russia witchcraft was a tool for the weak to protect themselves from the abuse of the powerful when they acted in unjust and unbearable ways. Kivelson [2013: 8] states that:

Ideas about witchcraft grew, in large measure, out of a consensual understanding of where the limits to abuse resided, where violence or physical torment or exploitation was acceptable, and where it strayed into excess. Magic ... erupted at precisely those points of trespass. In its latent or active threat, witchcraft served to patrol those norms and obligations, to mitigate the harshness.

This story presents a parallel case. The female teller despicts the husband as having an unfair advantage over the wife by having the right to beat her. By using magic, the wife nullifies his advantage and stops the abuse, thus ensuring fair treatment.

However, the abuse the husband might perform as a wolf is even more unjust than the abuse he performed as a man. As we have seen, using supernatural powers against an average person is considered evil in Novoselycja, because the victim does not have similar powers and cannot defend themselves. In the story, the woman wants to prevent her husband from attacking her in the shape of a wolf, i.e., from harming her using his unfair advantage. Remarkably, the wife has no supernatural powers herself (she is only saying the magic words her husband told her not to use). It is a case of self-defense on two counts at the same time: a powerless female defending herself against a powerful male, and a non-magical person defending herself against a magical one. On both counts, turning her husband into a wolf presents an elegant solution to the problem and thus cannot be judged too harshly. The woman is justified, as a defendant in a court of law might be acquitted if she used an offender's gun against him in self-defense..

In the second story (beginning at 4 minutes, 54 seconds), which the teller told immediately after the first one, only stopping to check if the recorder was working, the initial situation is the same: the wife is abused by her husband. However, unlike the woman in the first story, this woman is a bearer of supernatural powers, and she wants to turn her husband into a wolf from the outset. She uses her supernatural powers for self-defense to prevent her husband from beating her; however, when her life comes to an end, she cannot die. This fact, coupled with the prolonged suffering before death, is in Novoselycja a sure sign of a grievous offense committed by the dying person, usually stealing milk



or other manner of using magical gifts for an evil cause against non-magical people. Nevertheless, her use of supernatural powers against her husband is eventually forgiven by the victim, and her deed is thus presented as excusable. Her reversal of the transformation is the primary reason for this attitude. Neither the repentance alone, nor the confession to a priest could bring relief.

Moreover, the priest in the story explained unequivocally that the sin of using magical transformation against a non-magical person needed to be undone, and that it is only the offended person could forgive this sin. This argument does not reflect official doctrine; in the Orthodox and Greek Catholic church practices, (11) sins are commonly confessed by the perpetrator and then absolved by the priest, perhaps after giving the sinner penance. However, in the story, the priest says this sin is especially grievous, and, therefore, it is beyond his powers. The only solution is to reverse the spell. Remarkably, after the woman does that and her husband becomes a human again, he forgives her immediately. After coming back, her husband's first words are thanking his wife for returning him home and forgiving her for turning him into a wolf. He grants her his permission to die peacefully on the spot. Moreover, before dying she has a lengthy conversation with him, asking him about his experiences while a wolf and telling him why she did not return him earlier. During this entire exchange, the husband does not demonstrate any animosity towards her, which indicates that his forgiveness is genuine.

An important detail in the story is that, unlike the transformation from a human into a wolf, which remained secret from the community, the process leading to her husband's reverse transformation unfolds openly and is undertaken with the community's guidance. The transformation into a wolf was not described in the story; such omissions are common in *Novoselycja* whenever an application of supernatural powers is to be mentioned. (12) However, later, when the woman in the story is nearing the end of her life, she is constantly surrounded by people: other women that remind her to confess and to remember a sin she must have committed; the priest who tells her to reverse the transformation; her children who go and take the husband's clothes into the woods and who watch her suffering until their father comes back and forgives her. All these people converse with her, advise her, commiserate with her, and eventually help her on her way to undoing the sin and restoring her husband to his human form. The actual reverse transformation itself occurs in the woods far from people's eyes, but all the steps leading to it, such as getting the man's old clothes from under the barrel and carrying them into the woods for him to put on, and even waiting with anticipation for the transformation to occur, are carried out by other people and in full view. These actions are not secret; they do not need to be hidden, because they are not considered evil. The woman herself functions within the net of social connections. She listens to and eventually follows the advice of the community, thereby adhering to societal norms. While milk stealers are a- and anti-social, she, at this point, is not; she is re-united with the community and its values. By presenting the woman's actions in plain view, under the influence and with the help of the community, the teller indicates her approval of the woman's actions. The

community leads her through the correction of her transgression, and once she completes it, the victim also forgives her.

This second story is typologically a story of an attack on a person who happened to have supernatural powers and who used them for self-defense. As in the stories about people who stole from bearers of magical powers, the transgressor who attacked a magical person is punished. When the spell is reversed, the unfair advantage withdrawn, a state of fairness is restored. Reversing the magical harm and asking forgiveness is the acceptable pathway for redemption in the eyes of the community, even for a bearer of supernatural powers who applied them against non-magical people. These nuanced stories demonstrate that even though the use of magic against non-magical person is forbidden, in the eyes of a female teller it can be justified or at least is presented as justifiable, if it is used to counter a greater evil, such as domestic abuse. In addition, it must be in compliance with other socio-cultural norms, namely the need to reverse the action to obtain the victim's forgiveness, the need to be part of the community, and the like.

#### Magical knowledge: Passing on skills

Since magical powers are dangerous and must be used with great caution, their transmission is also traditionally controlled so as to minimize the potential damage. The question then arises: how do people acquire magic powers? Below is an excerpt from a conversation between HK, a woman 91 years old at the time, L, her daughter-in-law, 53, and B (the author).

#### 5. How people pass on supernatural knowledge

<p>L <i>но   є такєє   но   я знаю тепєрь чи хōдяд_ або   колїсь ходїли   бьїла така чутка   шо ходїли молоко: відбєрали від   друкьх кōрїв сōбї там я знаю шōсь там онї робїли там у нїх там   робōта свōя   така шкōла шо там трєба научїти трє передати хтōсь мāv передати кōмусь рōзумїєте та   то передавало ся іс пōкōлїня в пōкōлїня</i></p>	<p>L: There are such things. I don't know if they [=witches] go now or not, but in the old times they would go, people said, they went and took milk from others' cows to themselves, and did something else, some kind of their work. They would learn it, someone would have to transfer the knowledge to them, and otherwise it would not work. It was passed on from one generation to the next.</p>
<p>B <i>то ся передавало ?</i></p>	<p>B: And that got transmitted?</p>
<p>L <i>  ттō ворожбїтство но  </i></p>	<p>L: That sorcery/witchcraft, yes.</p>
<p>B <i>дїйсно?</i></p>	<p>B: Is that so?</p>
<p>L <i>так тāk  </i></p>	<p>L: Yes!</p>

<p>HK так є   як я знала   та я тогды вас учила   а вы дале  </p> <p>L своїх дітей внуків  </p> <p>HK айно  </p> <p>L так передавало ся с покліня хто знав така родина шчо знала оні тым передавали своїм дітям  </p> <p>B мзм</p> <p>L а дахто казав но   як кажут шчо   шчо знав батько або не передав никому бо то був нарёмный тод бы бідү зробив велику другому тому не мож дати   а такій котра людина така шчо была   рбздумана шчо як то робити шо   а то є такі шо нарёмні та хоть кому бідү якусь ....   тадь батько не переда...</p>	<p>HK: For example, if I know, I will teach you, and you will pass it on,</p> <p>L: to your children, and grandchildren</p> <p>HK: yes</p> <p>L: It was passed on from one generation [to the next]. You know, such a family that <i>knew</i>, they would pass it on to their children, you know.</p> <p>B: Uh-huh</p> <p>L: And some said, well, as they say, that a father <i>knew</i>, but he did not pass it on, because his son was impulsive, he could have caused a large misfortune to someone else, he would not be given the knowledge to. And another [= a son in another family] would be more sensible, would think how to do and what... But if someone was impulsive, thoughtless, he could have done bad things to anyone, so father would not pass it on to him.</p>
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Both L and HK agree that magic knowledge had to be transferred, that is, taught and learned. When L wants to elaborate on the topic, she imperceptibly switches from talking about the transfer of knowledge among women (which was apparently the case in the example her mother-in-law gave) to the transfer generally in the family, and then to men passing knowledge on to men (father to son). She says that men feel responsible for transferring the knowledge into good hands, and this kind of cultural selection weeds out those candidates who do not have the right qualities to handle magic power without causing unnecessary harm to others. She does not return to the topic of women's milk stealing, since this activity is inherently bad. Instead, she switches the topic to powers of other sort that only inflict harm when used by bad or impulsive people. According to other narrators' accounts in my collection, some people are born with magic skills (that sometimes comes together with certain physical indicators, such as a tail that a witch may be born with). More often, however, a supernatural skill, just like any skill, is a type of knowledge which can be passed on in a family or learned from someone else. In a different village situated on the other side of the Carpathian ridge, but within 30 km from Novoselycja, I heard a story of a person who knew how to cure snake bites, but had no other supernatural powers; he learned this skill from a woman in America, where he went to work. After returning home, he practiced it a great deal and then passed it on to one of his sons, who, in his turn,

did not pass it on to anyone. Except for the mention of America, this is a typical story of power transmission. The transfer of supernatural knowledge as separate skills also explains why men do not steal milk or transfer diseases to children. In a traditional culture where each gender has specific labor roles, there are skills considered appropriate for one gender, but not the other. This division apparently extends to both natural and supernatural skills. (13) The transfer of magic powers through learning also explains certain concerns village people have today. The teller of the rope-milking story complained to me repeatedly that now that there were a lot of magic books around; every woman could pick a book and learn how to steal milk.

“I won’t do that, why do I need that?”: Denial of knowledge

When I asked people questions about anything to do with the supernatural, they were often eager to share stories about other people with supernatural powers, or about themselves as victims of them. However, when asked for explanations of how the magic was performed, they emphatically denied any knowledge both of the mechanisms and the procedures. As we can see in story cited above (The Old Man and Builders), the narrator gave a very detailed account of how the old man punished the builders, but then added an unsolicited explanation that she did not know how he achieved it and what he did with the sliver. Another woman, when her cow’s milk became less fatty (“like water”) was given advice by her neighbor who *knew*, but she did not follow it:

#### 6. Woman did not pour milk on live coals

<p>  тод брат   йей   мєні казав   а я то   я не робила бо я думую я не роблю бо я не знаю   кєдь я не знаю до путі та нащо я буду щось робити   євочко каже   ты собі каже корову выдй   огня накладй добре в печй   та высып тот молоко всьо в пич   обы му так серце горіло ги тото   ги то молоко кытй   ци розуміете   та в грань высып та знате шчо всьо бде   я то не робила я бы не діждала мєні аж не казали [?] сяк бим занімла   та його ужє нне ннєсь ннє давным давно но він казав мєні   та кєдь бы щось не знав та бы не радив   а я думую я не роблю най дашчо бде нащо мєні то   ай собі хто робит най собі робит я   я то перебуду</p>	<p>And that brother of hers told me - and I didn’t do that, because I thought, ‘I did not know how to do that, why should I do that?’ He told me, ‘Eva, milk the cow, build a fire in the oven and pour all that milk in the oven so that her [=the witch’s] heart boils just as this milk boils. Pour it on the live coals...’ I didn’t do that. I would rather die... when he told that to me, I went numb... He died long ago, but he had told me to do that. Had he not known, he would not have advised me. And I thought ‘I won’t do that, what if something happens, why do I need that? Let the one who usually does it do it, and I will wait, maybe it will stop by itself.’ And it all ended eventually, and there are no witches,</p>
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<p><i>колісь ми вже і не буде тто   тай перейшло та вже ніє ни босорканіє ніє тать молоко є   і сметана є   а т...   чому не было ?   він каже ?   чому не было   на воді бы было   так як вода   та якусь корову ты держши   было   шчо было то было</i></p>	<p>now I have milk and sour cream. And why there had been no sour cream on my milk? Did he say? ... [unclear] ... the milk was like water. You have a cow... It was so, yes, it was so.</p>
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The neighbor who gave advice apparently knew some magic, but the woman did not want to do as he advised to fix her cow's milk, even though she was in dire need. She had ten children, and the quality of the milk was very important. Nevertheless, she decided not to act.

She also described how she “went numb” at the very suggestion of magic, and how horrifying the idea was to her. In the long run, the situation corrected itself. She preferred having lower quality food for an indefinite period of time rather than resort to using magic. One wonders why would she choose being hungry with her children over using magic to defend her sustenance from a magic attack. One reason, according to Scott [1976], is the conservative economic strategy that minimizes risk and stems from a subsistence culture's necessity to avoid failure rather than increase production. However, there are other cultural reasons for her choice. One is likely to be the church's disapproval of magic rituals in general. Since being a good Christian is an important component of villagers' identity, they often explain their distancing from magic in religious terms. This same woman pointed out that “God did not make your/one's mind to do such things, but to work and pray.” Another reason the speaker mentioned was the fear of the magic act going wrong if done without sufficient knowledge, which could lead to unexpected consequences both on earth and in the afterlife. However, she did not mention, because it is obvious to her (14), but which seems at least an equally potent fear is being accused of doing magic by one's neighbors. A person's reputation is an important asset, and people do not want to give others food for gossip, which is greatly feared in the village. This reason is especially worrisome for people who have been accused of witchcraft before, such as the teller of this story. For some reason, she had been targeted by her neighbors, a fact that she did not explain to me. Her emphatic and repeated denial of knowing anything to do with magic and of not doing magic ever, even in a dire situation, is a means to protect herself from nasty rumors and a bad reputation, a stance shared by most village inhabitants.

### Conclusion

The stories and comments about the bearers of supernatural powers in Novoselycja reveal that the essential issue is fairness. It is not fair to use supernatural powers against people who do not have such powers, to take advantage of them, steal their livelihood and threaten their health, or attack them

in a wolf's skin. A person who does any of these things is regarded as evil and their action as an exceptionally grievous offense. (15) On the other hand, if a person with supernatural powers uses them in self-defense in a situation when nothing else works (against a thief, an abuser, or against another magical person), it may be deemed acceptable practice. However, one must reverse the spell eventually, if supernatural powers are to be used only for teaching a lesson, rather than for inflicting permanent harm. Even people who do not possess supernatural powers may find themselves in a situation when they may use such powers. If it is a case of self-defense, they are justified in doing so, and they do not have to (and, of course, they cannot) reverse the spell. Supernatural powers thus are regarded as something similar to natural powers and abilities. They exist in the social world and should not be used for gaining unfair advantage over other community members. (16) Fairness is generally regarded as a fundamental human value; it underlies law and many other cultural institutions, and it has been the subject of much research in moral psychology and ethics. Haidt [2007: 1001] suggests that fairness is one of the "five psychological foundations, each with a separate evolutionary origin, upon which human cultures construct their moral communities." (17)

The idea of fairness is prevalent in the stories because community members must rely solely on problem-solving mechanisms already present *within* the village social structure. In contemporary Western law the presupposition is that, as a result of the social contract, individuals have delegated to the state their right to implement justice. Any crime is understood as an offense not only against the harmed individual, but also against the state, and thus is responsible for its investigation, trial, and punishment. The state allows citizens' application of justice only in rare and strictly defined cases (e.g. self-defense). However, in the world of the stories, the state does not play any role, as if it does not exist. (18) The procedure and the underlying worldview conforms not with retributive justice meted out by the state and based on punishment, but with the recently emerged, in Western countries at least, community-based restorative justice that "actively involves victims and offenders in the process of reparation and rehabilitation" [Van Ness & Heetderks Strong 2010: 22]. In this system,

the response to crime [is], not to add to the harm caused by imposing further harm on the offender, but to do as much as possible to restore the situation. The community offers aid to the victim; the offender is held accountable and required to make reparation. Attention [is] given not only to the outcome, but also to evolving a process that respected the feelings and humanity of both the victim and the offender. [Wright 1991: 112]

Moreover, since it is not only the victim who is wronged, but also the community whose values have been breached by the offense, a necessary part of the restoration of justice is censure in the legal sense of the word, i.e., condemnation of an offensive action. This step reaffirms the victim's and the community's moral

values. In restorative justice, this act is done jointly by the victim, the community, and the offender; by participating in the process, the offender accepts and reaffirms the values that were violated by his offense [Wenzel et al., 2008: 379-80]. We see a similar process the story about the builders and especially in the second story about the wolf-husband, in which the community is actively involved in reversing the damage and ensuring forgiveness.

The contemporary concept of restorative justice may also include the threat of punishment to make the offender more cooperative [Wenzel et al. 2008]. This is also the case in the context of *Novoselycja* stories: if offenders consider themselves to be in a position of power and entitled to abuse it, powerful mechanisms must come into play to reinforce the restoration of justice. Once a person has a choice between magical punishment and restorative procedures, they are usually much more willing to choose the latter. Moreover, fear of magic is also a powerful deterrent to future offenses. Magic stories from *Novoselycja*, as in Newfoundland and in early modern Russia, where the law-enforcing state is remote (and not involved in local affairs) or abusive, can frighten people into considering fairer treatment of others. This practice is an especially important instrument for the weak in their attempts to “patrol norms and obligations,” [Kivelson 2013: 8]. Accounts of magical punishment serve to put the fear of God, or rather, of crossing one’s neighbor, into the hearts of powerful and abusive husbands, bullies attacking passers-by for the fun of it, and even milk-stealing witches who can be detected and punished by “wise people” possessing stronger magic.

On the other hand, magic is too strong a power to be given free rein in society. An adversary possessing supernatural abilities will win over a non-magical person in every case, which is again unfair and enables potential abuses. For example, if a person decides to use his/her supernatural abilities out of the human failings of greed or spite, s/he will have the upper hand. Thus magic needs to be controlled as well. If a magical person does not want to undo the action and compensate the victim, if s/he insists on keeping the ill-gotten gain, other mechanisms come into play. There are a (super)natural mechanisms to remind magical wrongdoers of their transgressions: they cannot die; or when they die, the stolen milk will spill out of their eyes and mouth. However, that mechanism only works at the end of one’s life. There is another, societal, mechanism which works more quickly: gossip. To be associated with the unfair application of magical practices and to be accused of witchcraft is bad for one’s reputation. Haidt calls traditional communities “reputation-obsessed” [2007: 1000], and rightly so. Spoiled reputation is punished by social ostracism, an easy, low-cost, and very effective technique to make one miserable [Haidt 2007: 1000]. Although belief in magic, which Haidt does not mention, seems to be one of the most powerful traditional instruments of social control, gossip and subsequent isolation are also extremely effective tools. It punishes, justly or unjustly, those suspected of any association with the unfair use of supernatural powers. I venture to suggest that it is rather the fear of that isolation than the fear of the supernatural powers as such

that makes people publicly deny, and possibly avoid altogether, any insider knowledge of supernatural skills. I have so far only met two people who did not deny that they “knew something:” a female healer and a man who said he could bring good luck. Both had a good reputation in the village and therefore were not afraid of being accused of witchcraft.

Thus, knowledge is power, especially if it is magic knowledge. As one of the known types of power, it is built into the traditional system of power and resistance in a traditional culture of Novoselycja.

## NOTES

1 The majority of Rusyn folk texts have been published in L’viv or Uzhhorod starting at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c., and during the turbulent century that has passed since that time, the collecting and publishing norms for Rusyn folklore have also undergone changes. According to Britsyna [2006: 60 ff], a ‘literary’ model of collecting and publishing folk texts that had developed in Eastern Ukraine in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. (i.e., texts were written down and then edited by folklorists according to their understanding of what the text should look like) became dominant in Ukraine in the Soviet period; that was also the model brought into the Rusyn territory after 1944 (see below). A different model that Britsyna calls ‘ethnolinguistic’ [Britsyna 2006: 93] developed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. in the Austro-Hungarian province of Galicia (before WWI, it was represented by Verxrats’kyi, Shuxevych, Hnatiuk, Rozdol’s’kyi, after WWI, Pan’kevych, etc.). The scholars using this model were interested in language as well as folklore; they preserved linguistic and textual features as closely as they could, taking down from dictation being their best option without technical possibilities of sound recording. However, these techniques were not without fault; dictation dispenses with the atmosphere of performance, so that the performers (or folklorists) might choose to omit certain parts, e.g., repetitions [Britsyna 2006: 74-5], or certain linguistic features that might turn out to be structurally valuable (see Boudovskaia [2016: 17] for analysis of one of such features in two tales from the same district in Pan’kevych [1938: 460-463]). Nevertheless, scholars from the ‘ethnolinguistic’ school published Rusyn texts that held high standing up to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. However, the ‘literary’ model of folklore collection and publication, possibly aggravated by the Soviet practices of producing ‘ideologically correct’ fakelore [Britsyna 2006: 88], became the main model for Rusyn folk texts in the Subcarpathian territory from 1944 on. In the Soviet era, Rusyn folk texts were published in literary Ukrainian, i.e., in translation at best, and their syntax and style often were distinctly literary (cf., e.g., Lintur and Chendei 1965, Lintur and Turianytsia 1979, Lintur et al. 1984, Khlanta 1989, etc.)

2 The performance-centered approach to folklore puts material into its social context, studies the clues that the performance sends to its audience about how to interpret its meaning, as well as examines the feedback from the audience and the reaction of the performer(s) to this feedback. Hymes [1975: 18] defined



performance as “cultural behavior for which a person assumes responsibility to an audience.” He [1975: 71-2] concludes that, “1) knowledge of tradition is not the same as performance, though they are interwoven; 2) tradition that had been the emphasis of previous folkloristics, is only a means, while for the participants, performance is the goal, and 3) tradition underpins performance, but performance keeps tradition in existence and also makes change possible.” Similarly, Bauman [1975, 1984] argues that verbal art is performance, which is a social action; the audience evaluates and shapes the performance; and that it is not only the residual culture that is worth of studying, but “the totality of human experience.”

This concept of performance from the works of Bauman [1975, 1977], Hymes [1975], Ben-Amos [1971], Abrahams [1972], Toelken [1969] has become central to the discipline. Sawin [2002] takes issue with Bauman’s model, arguing that it undertheorizes the audience, leaving out the role of emotions in their perception and evaluation of performance. The performance approach by itself is diverse. One of the issues is the role of culture in performance: Bauman takes an anti-cognitivist position, at least in his later work: in 2013 he criticizes Hymes for his ‘mentalist’ orientation, disapproving of Hymes’ [2003] attitude as “preoccupied with what was going on in storytellers’ minds” [Bauman 2013: 36]. He was reacting to Hymes’ conclusion [2003: 11] that “to say that stories exist only in performance is to say that between performances narrators do not think. That they are prisoners of the presence of an audience. That they go about their daily lives, encountering nothing that makes them remember a story. That the stories they know never pose them problems, from perceived incompetence to contradictions, with one another or with their own experience. That, in short, they have very limited minds. We should be embarrassed to denigrate them so. To do so seems to me intellectually constipated.” In this dispute I side with Hymes’ opinion that the culture displayed in folklore pre-exists – and underpins – performance, while performance is a means to both maintaining and changing cultural models of participants. Similarly, I concur with Toelken [2014: 8] when he asked himself at a performance: “What does the [native] audience know that I don’t? What do they bring to this dramatic experience that makes the narrative mean something for them?” His answer is culture-specific knowledge: “A good story ... makes you experience or reexperience something. And that something is an otherwise-abstract but real idea from your culture, made concrete and experiential through the imagination and knowledge | which you bring to the story performance, enhanced by the power of the performer” [Toelken 2014: 4-5]. Both Hymes and Toelken express the conviction that cultural values are an integral component of performance without which it cannot be experienced and understood to a meaningful degree. There has been a large body of research dealing with cultural values within the performance approach, e.g., Hymes [1975] analyzed the performance-based features of a myth and a story based on the same myth, and traced the connection of formal features of the two performances and the two sets of values: the older values reflected in the myth (validation of the life of the native people along the river) vs. contemporary ethic concerns reflected in the story (tall

stories enforcing the limits of sexual exploit and pretense for men, and cautionary stories for women). Among other examples are such diverse works as Foley [1991], Limón [1994], Raby [2007], Toelken [2014], etc., and also work done with narrative and folklore within the cognitive model school in anthropology, such as Hill [1995], Mathews [2005]. Price [1987], etc. However, Rusyn folklore has not yet been analyzed from this point of view.

3 Except for the language of Vojvodina Rusyns, see Pugh [2009].

4 For more detailed discussion see Pugh [2009:vii-20].

5 There are numerous systemic similarities between the materials recorded in Novoselycja and materials from other East Slavic traditions, other Slavic traditions, and even neighboring non-Slavic traditions, such as Hungarian and Romanian ones. Some sources will be noted below. Nevertheless, I will not include a consideration of parallels with other traditions, however tempting it might be, because it is beyond the scope of an analysis of attitudes to supernatural powers based on the material from one particular village. The Carpatho-Rusyn material from the territory south of the Carpathian ridge may be found in Bogatyrev [1929/1998], Hnatiuk [1897, 1898, 1900], Lintur & Turianytsia [1979], Lintur et al. [1984], Khlanta [1989], Hyriak [1965], etc. Material from the Northern slope of the Carpathian Mountains is presented in Rozdol'sk'yj [1899, 1900]; Hnatiuk [1899, 1902, 1902a, 1904], Franko [1901-1910]; Onyščuk [1909], to name a few. Relevant material from Polissia, Eastern Ukraine is systematized in Vinogradova & Levkievskaja [2010].; Hungarian material may be found e.g., in Dégh [1989].

6 The concept of fairness I use to describe the values in Novoselycja is not to be confused with the idea of limited good. According to Foster [1965], the idea of limited good is a feature of peasant mentality which considers all good things in the community to be limited: not only wealth, but also social goods such as respect, as well as health, etc. Therefore, if one member of the community increases his/her relative well-being in any regard, other members are suffering because the corresponding amount of good has been taken from them. Thus, the peasant has to either keep the status quo or conceal his advancements from the community. However, fairness as I understand it here is something different than not getting ahead of others; it allows competition, but demands competing on equal footing with other people, using the same means as they do, and not employing stronger tools, such as magic, to secure unfair advantages for oneself.

7 Stories 1, 3, and 4 contain additional information about the number of the recording they are transcribed from, as well as the time in hh:mm. Story 1 is taken from recording #2 in the collection of 2012, minutes 7 through 10. Story 3 is taken from recording #21 in the collection of 2014, hour 1, minute 42, through hour 1, minute 45. Story 4 is taken from recording #4 in the collection of 1987, minute 50, through hour 1, minute 1.

8 The woman apparently was performing witchcraft. Taking clay from cows' footprints is one of the acts people do when they intend to steal a cow's milk. The facts that the woman was wearing only a sack, and that it happened on a holiday, also suggest witchcraft.

9 I am very grateful to Professor Vera Bergelson (Rutgers Law School) for her invaluable advice on the possibilities and limits of application of contemporary legal doctrine to the two werewolf cases.

10 There are other versions of the same story I recorded in this village, but they are shorter. Other tellers ended the story with the recognition, or added that after it, the husband turned into a wolf and fled. All versions were recorded from female tellers.

11 Novoselycja was Greek Catholic until the Transcarpathian territory was annexed to the USSR in 1944-45; from 1946 on, people were forced to convert to Orthodoxy. By 1987 they followed Orthodox rites. However, the two denominations share similar practices of confession and absolution.

12 Speakers may volunteer to provide a description of what they witnessed, but they usually are reluctant to talk about how supernatural powers work, apparently for fear of being accused of knowing too much about magic, which is tantamount to an accusation of actually performing witchcraft. This issue will be discussed below.

13 There is a large body of literature about gender division of labor in traditional agricultural societies; such division is considered to be characteristic of, and historically, possibly the basis for, patriarchy; see, e.g., the discussion in Quinn [in press]; the understanding of such division as normal and morally righteous tends to linger in more modern, but in essence still patriarchal societies, where a person defines their identity through their (gendered) labor [cf. Paoletti & Cavallaro Johnson 2007]. Gender-age groups are known to have distinct roles not only in physical labor, but in rituals and in other forms of folklife; e.g., in Slavic tradition for traditional Russian culture(s); see Bernshtam [1988] and Olson & Adonyeva [2012]. It is not surprising, therefore, that genders in Novoselycja have distinct roles in magic activities: men do building magic and repel thunderstorms, while women engage in milk stealing and transferring diseases. Both genders can magically detect and punish a witch or another offender. A more detailed account of gender-based division of supernatural activities in Novoselycja merits further investigation. This division seems to exist in other Slavic cultures as well. Ostling [2011: 127-8]), basing on material from witch trials. states that in Poland, and throughout Europe, “witches were, above all, thieves of milk.” This is corroborated by Polish court documents from the 15th and 16th centuries, while records of witches harming other household animals are almost non-existent.

14 Silence is often a way of signalling a culturally default point, obvious and not worthy of mentioning in the eyes of community members. However, as in this case, this point is important and worthy of mention for outsiders to understand the culture. As Hill [2005: 180] points out, “one part of finding culture in narrative is noticing what speakers do not tell stories about, and what they seem to ‘leave out’ as they narrate.”

15 Supernatural abilities, as mentioned above, can also be used to ensure fair treatment of the less powerful and to scare the powerful into a more respectful stance towards the powerless; see Kivelson; see also Rieti [2008] describing the

witch lore of Newfoundland, where the main pattern of witch stories is that a woman comes to somebody's house to ask for food or clothing; the owner of the house does not give anything and receives magical retribution. Newfoundland witch lore coincides in its ethics with the lore of Novoselycja in several important points. Firstly, Rieti [2018: xiv] states that the organizing point of Newfoundland witch lore is the idea of reciprocity and fairness. Secondly, Rieti mentions that Newfoundland is the poorest part of Canada in terms of per capita income, but it is also 'a national leader in charitable donations, which may indicate that Newfoundland inhabitants, practicing subsistence economy until recently, also retained the idea of fairness described by Scott [1976], i.e., it is moral that each member of the community should have sufficient sustenance. Thirdly, Rieti [2008: 24] mentions that 'witching offered women a voice' in fishing and other areas that were otherwise exclusively male domains, i.e., witchcraft served to partially compensate for gendered power imbalance. Finally, according to Rieti [2008: xiv] quoting Story [1969: 33], Newfoundland villages had been without administration or state-imposed law for a considerable time in the 18th and early 19th centuries.; instead, people had customs "unenforced by magistrate, constable or town council." See also note 4 [Rieti 2008: 153]. This similarity is striking when compared to the world of Novoselycja, where the state as enforcer of justice is not mentioned at all and seems not to exist.

16 Fair treatment should be given even to mythical creatures. In Novoselycja I recorded a story about a *povitrulja* (in other villages of the Transcarpathian region and the neighboring Ivano-Frankivsk region it is told about *perelisnycja* - Kira Sadoja, personal communication). The *povitrulja* (or *perelisnycja*) is a creature who follows an unmarried young man, sleeps with him, and does not leave him until he becomes magically sick and dies. In this story, a woman starts sweeping the floor in the morning and sees a *povitrulja* sleeping with her son; the *povitrulja*'s long hair is hanging down onto the floor. The woman picks it up and puts it on the bed next to *povitrulja*, who wakes up and says, 'You have shown respect to my hair, and I will show respect to your son.' She leaves and never comes back. Therefore, even an inherently evil creature responds to fair treatment in kind and, after being shown respect, decides to leave the young man alone and spares his life.

17 The other four are: harm/care; loyalty; authority; and purity [Haidt 2007:1001].

18 I am not specifying the type of social organization of village life that this type of ethics might correspond to. One possibility is self-governance, similar to the one Svetieva (2005) describes for Macedonian village of Porece with traditional punishments for common offences meted out by village head together with elected officials. However, my focus is more on the system of ethics than on customary law practices.

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## INTERVIEWS

- Story 1. "Girl milking a rope." Told by M, male, born 1925 in Novoselycja. Recorded 21 July 2012.
- Story 2. "Children see a woman doing witchcraft." Told by A, female, born 1936 in Novoselycja. Recorded 17 July 2012.
- Story 3. "The Old Man and the Builders." Told by HK, female, born 1925 in Novoselycja and IS, male, born 1960. Recorded 16 August 2014.
- Story 4. "Two stories about husband turning into a wolf." Told by P, female, born 1920 in Novoselycja. Recorded in January 1987.



Story 5. "How people pass on supernatural knowledge." Told by HK, female, born 1925 in Novoselycja and L, female, born 1962. Recorded 7 July 2016.

Story 6. "Woman did not pour milk on live coals." Told by E, female, born 1938 in Novoselycja. Recorded 7 June 2016.

All stories recorded in Novoselycja, Mizhhir'ja district, Zakarpats'ka Oblast', Ukraine.