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Zilia Zara-Papp
Saitama University, Japan

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Landscapes as Identity and Cultural Heritage in Animation– The Australian Bushland, Japanese Urban Agglomeration and Eurasian Steppes

Cover Page Footnote

In Memoriam Yoram Gross and Isao Takahata

Landscapes as Identity and Cultural Heritage in Animation – The Australian Bushland, Japanese Urban Agglomeration and Eurasian Steppes

Zilia Zara-Papp (Saitama University, Japan)

Introduction

The world of animation adapted from literature including short stories, folk tales and ancient myths showcases diverse approaches of reinventing and reimagining elements of landscape as cultural identity for the animated works depending on their specific cultural sources. This paper aims to compare elements from Australian, Japanese and European animated works where geographical elements are used in order to recreate the original world of the literary work the animation is based on, where landscape defines the identity of the individuals and groups of enchanted animals and human custodians of the respective land and location.

Case studies of Yoram Gross (*Dot and the Kangaroo*, 1977) Australia, Takahata Isao / Studio Ghibli (*Raccoon Wars Pom Poko*, 1994) Japan, and Marcell Jankovics (*Song of the Miraculous Doe*, 2002) Hungary will provide examples of the creative use of graphic elements by the animator to represent a given visual source in animation adapted from literature. The three works are chosen from three contemporaneous representative animation auteurs from the three continents and further as a dedication to the memory of Yoram Gross (1926 – 2015) and Takahata Isao (1935 – 2018), and the retirement of Marcell Jankovics from animation in 2017.

In the case of Australia's outstanding live action/animated film *Dot and the Kangaroo* the paper takes a look at the 1899 original book illustration by Frank P. Mahony and the animator's use of elements of live action, cave paintings and animal characters in order to convey the image of the Australian bush at the end of the 19th century. In the case of the works of Studio Ghibli and Takahata Isao the paper aims to show the use of Japanese art historical elements reinvented and reimagined for

animation, including the simulation of brush stroke, picture scrolls and woodblock prints, in order to represent the Tama region of the Tokyo agglomeration, as incorporated in the greater Tokyo region, and the associated environmental trauma. In the case of Jankovics' work, the paper aims to show how traditional folk art patterns are reimagined in animation in order to show the migration patterns of Central Asian tribes and nations and their changing identity as tied with the changing landscapes and climates they travel through before settling in the Central European Carpathian Basin.

Dot and the Kangaroo

The animated film *Dot and the Kangaroo* was produced in 1977, and its narrative is based on Ethel C. Pedley's book with the same title, originally published in 1899, with 19 full-page illustrations by Frank P. Mahony (Pedley 1899). There are a few differences between the original book and the animation narrative, as it will be shown, but both works retain Pedley's original tone of being both comical and aimed at children audiences while at the same time expressing the timelessness of the Australian bush, its underlying sadness and pensiveness as well as social criticism related to European settler culture, trying to draw a conclusion of achievable coexistence.

The illustrator of the original book, Frank P. Mahony (1862-1916) was a prominent and active member of the circle of late 19th and early 20th century Australian authors, poets and artists residing in Sydney, with a Western classic art education in painting and drawing at the New South Wales Academy of Art. Mahony excelled at drawing animals and local Australian wildlife, and became a successful illustrator for contemporaneous magazines and books. He also extensively illustrated the *Picturesque Atlas of Australia, Victoria and its Metropolis* (1888). Mahony's oil paintings mirror his close relationship as an artist with the bush life of Australia. His powerful yet intimate gaze at the life of outback Australia and its animals earned recognition for him during his lifetime, including the purchase of several of his oil paintings for Australian galleries, such as *Rounding up a Straggler* (1889), *The Cry of Mothers* (1885), *The Bullock Team* (1891) and others for the Art Gallery of New South Wales. His artistic reputation as a wildlife illustrator led him to illustrate nature conservationist Ethel Pedley's book *Dot and the*

Kangaroo in 1899, as one of his final works in Australia, before Mahony left for England two years later, where he died without earning similar artistic success.

While Pedley's story of a vulnerable yet clever little girl who ends up in an absurd and fantastic world after chasing a little hare into the bush echoes the narrative of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, published in 1865; Mahony's illustration also shows influence from *Alice's* illustrator, John Tenniel (1820-1914). Mahony's and Tenniel's graphic styles for the illustrations differ as Tenniel used woodblock engravings for his master images, which served as the source of the electrotyped copies. His character design for the animals and creatures of *Wonderland* was informed by his long experience as a political cartoonist at *Punch* magazine. Mahony, on the other hand, relied on his experience as an oil painter and illustrator in color, fusing his engravings with full color shading, which helped him recreate the atmosphere of the bush at different times of day with richness and depth. While his cover image is reproduced in color, his illustrations for the book were reproduced in monochrome shades.

Despite the differences in style, Tenniel's influence can be seen in the composition of Dot meeting the Koala to that of Alice meeting the Cheshire Cat, with both illustrations depicting the little girl conversing with a magical animal that looks down on her from the branch of a tree. Similarly the bird and dinosaur depictions of Australia echo Tenniel's illustration of the Dodo bird in *Alice*, while the final court scene in both stories also show similarities in their depiction of chaos and disorder.

And yet, while Tenniel's influence can be proposed in these instances, it is important to note that Mahony displays a very distinguished personal style informed by oil painting tradition, and his depiction of the bush and its creatures as well as Dot's human world is powerful and conveys the artist's deep understanding of and compassion for the Australian bush. The image of the hunted kangaroo is an outstanding example of this, as Mahony depicts the jump of the Kangaroo over an abyss with two dingoes chasing and spears being thrown at her, in a style that fuses oil painting techniques while at same time also evoking Aboriginal cave painting depiction of kangaroo hunt with spears. Aboriginal cave paintings were already being catalogued at the time Mahony was

active, with discoveries in The Kimberleys starting in the 1830s, and these images clearly informed the artist.

Yoram Gross' animation takes this influence one step further with the animated images of the Bunyip, a mysterious supernatural creature of Aboriginal lore, as well as the animated recreation of Aboriginal cave-painting depictions of native animals and groups of humans. Gross uses the x-ray technique in his rendering of Aboriginal cave paintings of animals - the giant red kangaroo, the emu, the tortoise, fish and even humans - and he utilizes the dot painting method of later Aboriginal artists, including the Papunya school, to depict dingoes, some fish and the texture of the Bunyip, as well as known symbols of waterhole and foot marks. Gross uses the warm colors of the ochre and pigmented soft rocks that were traditionally used in cave paintings, dominated by shades of brown, tangerine, yellow, black and white.

Gross created a unique style in animation, imposing animated characters on a live action background for feature films, that earned him a distinguished place in the history of world animation, and that brought the unique flora and fauna of Australia to life on screen to a worldwide child audience. Gross, an animator originally from Poland, was informed by the comical animal character design palette of Disney as well as the Eastern European and Soviet studios, and he was very successful in recreating Australian bush animals in that well-established, internationally conforming style, most notably creating Blinky Bill, the Koala, which became a globally recognized cartoon mascot of bush creatures. While the Dot series also developed into a series of eight animated/live action feature films with Dot as central character visiting different ecosystems in Australia, the original *Dot and the Kangaroo* is the only one that is a direct adaptation of children's illustrated literature.

Significantly, Gross changed a few elements from the original narrative while staying true to Pedley's penchant for native wildlife. In the animated film, Dot runs away chasing not a rabbit, like the British Alice, but a grey Australian hopping mouse, or tawakara (*Notomys alexis*), which is native to the Central and Western Australian arid zones, as the animator tried to focus on the Australian fauna and significantly lessen the *Alice in Wonderland* visual references. However, the original *Dot* narrative also

introduces a wide range of Australian animals including the platypus, the wombat or the koala, which are more common in the relatively temperate Australian climates in the Eastern, South-Eastern regions and in Tasmania. Gross also identifies the mawpawk, or Tasmanian spotted owl (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*) as one of the comical characters in the animation. At the same time, the live action footage of the animated film uses extended scenery from the Blue Mountains National Park, in the relatively temperate South-Eastern region of the State of New South Wales.

While regional settlement names are not mentioned in the original literary narrative, and given the wide range of animal characters dwelling in diverse geographical regions, the original story by Pedley serves as a fable conveying a strong moral message of environmental conservation. Moreover, the bush fauna is diverse in order to serve as an allegory for the whole of Australia as one fragile home to both settler and Aboriginal communities and cultures. In the animation, on the other hand, the animator visually pinpoints the Blue Mountains, nearby settlement spots and the Jenolan Caves as the exact location and landscape background of the narrative, including waterholes, rivers and scarps. This visual strategy yields that the bush fable blends with this exact landscape as the cultural identity of the talking animals, who show and voice their oneness with the environment: the Kangaroo points to the soft rock and tells Dot that it became polished by the feet of kangaroos drinking at the water hole for millennia. In the animation the bush landscape is both lethally hostile to outsiders and gently conforming and nurturing to thenatives of the locality, while at the same time evincing the timelessness of the landscape and its co-existence with the flora and fauna.

In this timeless, intimate, and in the case of the animation very specific relationship, both settler and Aboriginal human cultures are portrayed as invasive and ignorant. In the literary work, the closeness of Aboriginal wisdom with the local landscape is shown through the character of the Aboriginal man helping the settlers read the signs of the bush when looking for Dot. In the animation, on the one hand, this character is omitted and Aboriginal tribes are portrayed as scary and superstitious. The Bunyip narrative, on the other hand, is invested with more importance, introducing the traditional narrative of supernatural beings inhabiting local landscapes. In the animation, it is visually narrated through the animation of the character based on

inspiration from Aboriginal cave painting and more recent visual traditions. By identifying the caves as shelters and surfaces of visual communication, the landscape once again comes to life and is personified in the *Dot* narrative in animation, by showing the intricate relationship of landscape and cultural identity in the Australian geocultural setting. In fact, the Bunyip as a supernatural being, like all elements of Aboriginal mythology, is ultimately connected to the landscape, as the tradition would involve geographical spots to narrate different versions and different parts of the myth.

Gross also altered the original mood of melancholy in the literary work to a more joyous undertone in the bush, considering the primary audience of his animation were children, and yet he undercut Pedley's happy ending conclusion of the Kangaroo finding her joey and interacting with the human world. It is in fact an outstanding aspect of Pedley's story, that Dot, unlike Alice or Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz* (Baum 1900), would bring Wonderland to the human world, which would not just be discarded as a strange dream. This aspect is taken away in the animation, with the ending scene of infinite loneliness depicted through a live action shot of a giant red kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*) shown from aerial view hopping away by herself into a vast arid land. This aerial view is a recurring image from Mahony's illustration, which lends a unique observer perspective to the enchanted narrative both in the illustrated book and the film, and ultimately tying together the landscape and its inhabitant as a lyrical cultural unit.

Song of the Miraculous Doe

While *Dot and the Kangaroo* shows a story from the perspective of a miraculous, hunted animal, with mythical links to the homeland/bushland of both Aboriginal and settler communities in Australia, *The Song of the Miraculous Doe*, an epic poem by Hungarian poet Janos Arany from the same era (Arany 1864) narrates the hunt of the magical deer from the perspective of the hunters, who are the mythological ancestors of Hungarian and Hun tribes, from the steppes of Central Asia to the Caucasus and finally arriving to the ancestral homeland of the Carpathian Basin. While geographically distant from the *Dot* narrative and focusing on the human perspective of the chase of a magical animal, the animation *Song of the Miraculous Doe* draws parallels with *Dot and the*

Kangaroo in visually narrating the progressive coexistence of humans and miraculous native animals.

The poem is based on an ancient folk narrative of twin brothers hunting. Hunor and Magyar are the fathers of the Hun and Hungarian tribes and in the tale they chase the elusive miraculous doe, which leads them to reach new and enchanted terrains. *The Song of the Miraculous Doe* is the basis of the animated film of the same title by Oscar-winning Hungarian animator Marcell Jankovics (2002), who has an extensive background in Central Asian archeology and art history research as well as in the study of Hungarian folk art traditions. Jankovics has utilized art-historical visual sources in his animated work since 1977: in his *Hungarian Folk Tales* series (1977-2012) as well as in his animated feature film *The Son of the White Mare* (1981), which is based on Scythian visual culture and mythology. He also animated (1973) the epic poem *Johhny Cornknob* by Hungarian poet Sandor Petofi (Petofi 1845).

The miraculous doe or female deer is an enchanted animal and a fertility symbol in Hun and Hungarian folk traditions, which is often a shape-shifting deity that is tied to a local landscape. At the same time the animal is also considered to be an allegory for the stary sky-scape that nomadic horse-riding tribes and nations followed in their migration in Central Asia and the Caucasus region. In this sense, the animal represents the Sun, and its spreading antler represents the constellations. According the Jankovics's interpretation based on his background research, the doe wears the morning star (Venus) on its forehead, the Moon on its breast, the Sun between its antlers, and the constellations Gemini, Auriga, Orion, Pliades, Perseus and Cassiopeia represent its body and antlers (Jankovics 2004:51). It is also a totem animal, similar to the horse, the nurturing she-wolf and other local canines or the turul mystical giant eagle-like bird, representing the ancient connection between the tribe and the land.

While the miraculous deer is often represented in Scythian gold figurines, the recorded myth itself is preserved in the codex *Gesta Hunnorum et Hungarorum* (The Deeds of Huns and Hungarians, cca. 1283 CE) by Simon Kezai and it is also mentioned in the chronicle *Chronicon Pictum* (Coloured Chronicle, cca. 1360 CE) by Mark Kalti. These chronicles narrate cartographically the landscape the Hun and Hungarian tribes

travelled on horseback, chasing the miraculous doe from the Ural-Altai steppe (Scythia) to the Sea of Azov (Black Sea, Maeotis Swamp), and culturally the horseback riding cultures mixed with the Dulo Clan of Western Turkic origin, and settled in the Crimean Peninsula region.

Jankovics uses this ancient narrative to produce a timeless animated myth of migration from the late Ice Age landscapes in Siberia to the Sythian flat lands in Central Asia, to the pre-medieval and early medieval cultures of Sogdia and Khazaria in the Caucasus region, and finally to medieval Christian Europe in the Carpathian Basin. In the animation Jankovics superimposes the epic poem, the ancient myth and Central Asian and Ural-Altai cultural narratives of totem animals - the deer, the reindeer and the horse - to create fluidity in the movement from one geographical location and cultural era to the other, while at the same time interlinking the enchanted animals with the landscape as mother to the nomadic tribes.

Jankovics was informed by the 1959 full colour aquarelle and engraving illustrations from the book publication of *The Song of the Miraculous Doe* by painter Gyula Szőnyi (1919-2014), who depicted the hunters as Central Asian horse riders and the fairy girls as Turkic tribes (Arany 1959). However, Jankovics' research is much more extensive in terms of tracing tribal migrational movements from the late Ice Age to the early European Middle Ages. He divides his narrative into four parts (songs), the first of which shows the Central Asian and Siberian dwelling of the early tribes and the thaw of the Ice Age. Here Jankovics uses motifs from Mongolian rock paintings and bone carvings as well as Selkup shaman drum symbols - these symbols would be partially preserved or incorporated into later Hungarian folk art motifs, including the metamorphosis of Sun rays, plant tendrils and birds that become Jankovics' trademark animated symbol system, as can be seen in the animated works *Hungarian Folk Tales* and *Johnny Cornknob*.

In the first song of prehistory, Jankovics personifies the landscape and transforms it into ultrasensory space by animating shaman drum motifs and rock paintings animated by the flickering fire of the narrating tribesmen. In the animation, the shamanistic and animistic tradition of travel between upper and lower worlds is carried

out by drums, totem trees and animal transformations, and the thaw of the frozen landscape is represented by the personification of a young blade of grass, given birth by an ice goddess. The animator consciously uses native flora and fauna from a vast and diverse landscape of the Eurasian landmass from Eastern European highlands to Inner Asian lowlands, with a focus on the Ural Mountain Range and the Ob River. Movement on the landscape is depicted by ski blades on the visual plane of reality, while in the mythological narration tribes move by transforming into a totem bird of prey and fly or into a wolverine and travel on land. In this prehistorical landscape, the totem animals are the prehistoric Eurasian giant deer of the Late Pleistocene era (*Megaloceros giganteus*) and the tundric reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*), which shapeshift into the more agile fallow deer (*Dama dama*), symbolizing a move to the more temperate regions of the Western Eurasian landmass and transforming into a more mobile horse riding culture in the second song.

In the second song, the animation utilizes as visual sources Scythian gold figurines and engravings of horses, deers, hawks and lions as well as Permian bronze plaquettes with animal motifs. In this segment the landscape becomes the Central Asian steppe, and the horse culture fuses with the deer culture, represented by the unity of the Scythian horse-chief Menrot (meaning stallion) and an Ugric deer-priestess Eneh (meaning doe), at the brink of the Don River, North East of the Sea of Azov. This mythological landscaping is complemented by a shift in the celestial constellations representing the enchanted deer, visually implying a shift in geographical location for the newly emerging tribes.

From this union emerge the celestial twin brothers Hunor and Magyar, the mythological ancestors of the Hun and Hungarian tribes, and the cultural and geographical landscape changes once again via their deer hunt; the animator visually acknowledges this geocultural change with a change in representative style using visual sources from Sogdian wall paintings. The new landscape is the Caucasus and the Maeotian swamp region, where the stylized hunter-warriors are drawn in a miniaturized Sogdian style, with facial representation from a side view.

In the third song, Jankovics animates Sogd wall paintings, Persian miniature paintings and Khazarian visual motifs. In the final, fourth song, these visual modes blend with early Christian codex representations as the animation embeds the migrant visual traditions into the European Christian settler culture. Here the landscape, geography and topography are represented by the animation of early Christian codex maps used in historiographies of nations. The topography is represented in the animation in a way that is similar to the codex format, with architectural objects shown from an aerial view while perspective is not yet employed, thereby spreading the structural drawing of the buildings (castles, rocks) in a two dimensional planar representation. Nations and tribes moving along geographical distances are represented by the totem animals of the respective tribe (crow, lion, etc.), and the landscape itself is personified with facial features in the animation with superimposed realistical images of the moving carts and masses. The shamanistic rituals of horse sacrifice is also drawn in the style of a codex illustration.

As the doe and its hunters finally settle within the landscape of the Carpathian Basin, the animation completes its cultural narrative of a landscape that organically formed the cultural identity of the migrating nation.

The Raccoon War Pom Poko

In comparison to *The Song of the Miraculous Doe*, the animated film *Raccoon War Pom Poko* (1994) is founded on the concept of shape-shifting racoon dogs (tanuki) in Japanese folk narratives that are widely published in illustrated children's books in Japan. Additionally, the manga sequential art work of Sugiura Shigeru (1908-2000), *808 Racoons* is used as a racoon dog representational layer in the animation, since animation director Takahata Isao, similar to Jankovics, prefers the use of traditional animation techniques based on hand drawing over computer enhanced animation. Takahata also has a background in using art historical and folk art sources in his animation. In a further comparison to Jankovics, who was fascinated with art history, Takahata wrote an interesting analytical work on Heian period Japanese picture scrolls as possible forerunners of animation (Takahata 1999).

The Raccoon War Pom Poko (Heisei Tanuki Gassen Pompoko) narrates the story of the tanuki, or Japanese racoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides viverrinus*), which is a well-known trickster and shape-shifter character in Japanese folk tales and children stories. In the animation, like the *Miraculous Doe*, three layers of the supernatural animal are juxtaposed and often superimposed on one another: the layer of the natural physical form of the animal, in a realistic rendering style; the layer of the animated animal as main character of the narrative; and a stylized version of the animal - in the case of *Pom Poko*, the manga version of the racoon dog by Sugiura; in the case of the *Miraculous Doe*, a primitivist style of folk art rendering.

Pom Poko, just like *Dot* and the *Miraculous Doe*, narrates and animates the conflict of interaction between the human and animal worlds, that of intruders and victims. The *Miraculous Doe* shows a flow of prehistoric to medieval era migration and Central Asian to Central European geography, where natural coexistence with humans is naturally overwhelmed by human civilisation. *Dot* shows a cross-sectional moment in history, where early settlers' encroachment on the environment causes surreal encounters as well as a sense of anxiety for both animals and humans, which imply the possibilities of future coexistence but also future conflict (for example the encounters in *Dot* eerily foreshadow the *Great Emu Wars* of 1932, the epitome of absurdity spilling over into reality, where humans waged war on a group of emu birds, and where the birds got the upper "hand"). In this instance, Aboriginal human-animal interaction is depicted as timeless but far from harmonious from the perspective of the animals, who would lump the "black" and "white" humans together as fearsome murderers of animals.

In the case of *Pom Poko*, the era depicted is more or less modern day, 1960s Tokyo. More precisely this is time of the development of the Tama (多摩) new residential region of Western Tokyo, which was reclaimed from the forested areas and riverbed in the foothills of the Okutama mountain region and the Tama River, South-West of Central Tokyo and North of the Kanagawa Prefecture. Tama might be a play on words as *tama* (玉) also means ball and tanuki racoon dogs are famous for their giant testicles in Japanese folklore. Tama is the symbolic habitat of the racoon dog, which should be their birthright. When their habitat is threatened, the shape-shifter tanuki launches a number of trickster attacks on humans, but is finally forced to give up hope and join human

society in the shape of a human salaryman (a Japanese white-collar worker). In this sense, they follow in the footsteps of the Japanese red fox (*Vulpes vulpes japonica*), another known shape-shifter from Japanese folk tales, and sacred animal of the Inari Shinto worship tradition, who, in the animation, is also forced to settle in human society. The defeat of the tanuki, and allegorically, humans - humans are also the victims of reckless urbanisation - is shown both with dark realism as well as deep symbolism, with a realistic depiction of tanuki animals as roadkill and the sailing away of cartoon racoons to Nirvana.

The epitome of the shape-shift culminates in the Japanese yōkai monster parade of the racoon dogs on the streets of Tokyo, a scene from the story. This is where Takahata uses a plethora of Japanese art historical sources for the depiction of supernatural beings. The parade is based on the *Hyakki Yagyō*, or Parade of One Hundred Demons tradition known to take place on the streets of Kyoto city, dating back to the earliest Heian period in literature (*The Tale of Genji*, early 11th century) and to the Muromachi period in visual arts (*Hyakki Yagyō* picture scrolls, 14th-16th century), that are later adapted and reinvented in ukiyo-e woodblock prints in the Edo and Meiji periods (17th to 19th century). Besides the *Hyakki Yagyō*, the comical characters of rabbits and frogs from the *Chōjū Giga Picture Scroll of Frolicking Animals* (12th century) are also utilized in the cavalcade, a visual reference and homage to the picture scroll that Takahata considers to be the visual forerunner of Japanese animation. Other sources include an art-historical depiction of yōkai Japanese monsters as well as that of the fox as a spirit being.

The landscape as cultural identity is portrayed in a layered manner in the animation. Maps, maquettes and blueprints show the map of Japan and the urban designs of the new city blocks, a new theme park and the development of infrastructure in the region, in a manner that suggests that the humans seem like larger than life gods or supernatural beings to the tanuki, who can toy with the landscape of their habitat. The racoons themselves travel to the islands of Shikoku and Sado, which represent an idealized nostalgic homeland of “traditional Japan”, where the tanuki are still revered in local shrines. In contrast, the human urban architecture of their once colloquial landscape is cold, dangerous and threatening. The cityscapes of the depersonified metropolis, Tokyo, are often juxtaposed with traditional rural Japanese landscapes in the

narrative. Like the animation *Dot and the Kangaroo*, the final undertone of the narrative is extremely melancholic and bitter, showing that a loss of native landscape is a loss of personal and cultural identity. It is also a bitter message to the human inhabitants of Tokyo, that the loss of traditional landscapes results in the loss of traditional folklore, after which human life is also reduced to a hollow, lonely and stressful existence.

The main characters, the racoon dogs, or tanuki, are also the symbols of this vanishing folklorism and cultural landscape, as the shape-shifting tanuki together with the fox (kitsune) belong to the folklore category of *yôkai* (妖怪), supernatural beings who are themselves the representatives of metamorphosis and change, traditionally inhabiting the liminal spaces between built and natural landscape. This liminality in Japanese traditional folk narrative is called the *sato-yama* (里山), referring to the buffer region where *sato* (里, village, cultural landscape) and *yama* (山, the mountain, natural landscape) meet. *Yôkai* in Japanese folk tradition appear on the borderline in a physical sense on the landscape: at river banks, bridges, cross-roads, sea-shores or forest glades: at dusk or dawn, at times of seasonal change, at the harvest, during the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, as well as the summer and winter solstices. In a metaphysical sense, they occupy the liminal space between the world of *kami* (神, Shinto gods), humans, animals, plants and objects, since *yôkai* are entities that can transform from one form to another (Papp 2011:41).

In this sense, the tanuki *yôkai* is used in this animation to represent the transformation of the landscape and the trauma caused by the interaction of the natural, supernatural and human worlds at a time of aggressive urbanisation and accelerated human encroachment on the natural habitat. This metaphor was further explored in Studio Ghibli's *Princess Mononoke* (*Mononoke Hime*, dir. Hayao Miyazaki, 1997), where a deer god, not unlike the miraculous doe, a mountain dog, boar gods and other supernatural forest entities (*yôkai*) manifest their transformational power to represent the fight for habitat between the natural and human landscapes.

In all three analyzed films, *Dot and the Kangaroo*, *The Miraculous Doe* and *Racoon Wars Pom Poko* the *sato-yama* concept, the interaction of humans with supernatural animals at the borders of human and animal worlds, is present. In the case of *Dot*, this

transitional space is the landscape of the bush around the human settlement and around the Aboriginal camp. In the case of *The Miraculous Doe* it is the hunting pasture near the human village and in the case of *Pom Poko* it is the construction site near the newly emerging block houses.

In all three cases, the interaction is caused by human aggression, in the form of hunting and encroachment, which is a source of danger for the natural and supernatural animal world. The interaction between the little girl Dot and the giant red kangaroo is not an exception, and mirrors the *Miraculous Doe* narrative of human curiosity as a catalyst for change, where the meeting is caused by the young human offspring wandering away from her human herd because she was chasing a mouse (a hare in the original literature). While Dot is clearly a representative for human innocence and curiosity, and while the little girl intends the mouse no harm, chasing the little animal is an act of aggression and trauma from the point of view of the fragile animal. We may conclude, that in all three analyzed cases humans are represented as invaders on the natural landscape and their invasion leads to the interaction between humans and supernatural animals.

Conclusion

This article has shown how twentieth-century traditional hand-drawn animation adaptations based on children's illustrated literature in three distinct socio-cultural environments, using art historical sources to reinvent and reimagine the supernatural worlds of the original literary works, narrate the interaction of the (super)natural and human habitats in forming a visual unity between cultural and personal identity and natural landscape.

It has shown that Yoram Gross' animation, *Dot and the Kangaroo*, visually referencing the original book illustrations of Mahony as well as Aboriginal wall painting and dot painting traditions, while at the same time allowing the magnificence of the Australian bush to radiate through the narrative via live action footage, combined to illustrate how the Australian bush land - specifically the Blue Mountains Region, New South Wales - acts as a landscape that embraces and enhances a timeless cultural identity of its inhabitants.

In the case of *The Song of the Miraculous Doe*, based on a Hungarian epic poem, the book illustrations of painter Gyula Szőnyi served as visual reference, while Jankovics took on the task of visually rendering and animating art historical visual sources from Ice Age Siberia, Bronze Age steppe cultures of Scythia of the Ural region: Permian, Sogdian and Khazarian empires in Central Asia as well as early mediaval Christian art from Central Europe. Art historical visual sources in this case range from rock art and shamanistic drum designs to gold figurines, monumental wall paintings, miniatures and illustrated codeces from diverse geographical regions from modern day Mongolia, Central Russia, Iran, Tajikistan, the Caucasus and Central-Eastern Europe. Jankovics' animation intertwines mythological and geographical landscapes, juxtaposing a mythical deer chase with the millenia-long migration of Central Asian tribes and nations. This animated work, based on meticulous art historical and archeological research, illustrates how the changing landscape shaped, altered and reshaped the cultural identity of its inhabitants.

Japanese animator Takahata Isao, on the other hand, based his animated work profoundly on native Japanese visual sources including both twentieth-century manga comics and Heian-to-Meiji Period picture scrolls, ukiyo-e woodblock prints and Nihonga paintings to show a stark contrast between traditional, primarily agricultural landscapes and the rapid urbanisation of metropolitan Tokyo. The urban and rural landscapes of modern Japan show in the animation, how a cultural identity traditionally linked with the local landscape can disappear with the disappearance of the landscape itself.

All three animated works use layers of visual narrative, that of photoreality, stylization and cartoon-like representation, using similar techniques to juxtapose different aspects of the narrative, indicating a dreamlike element of the mythology and psychology connected to a real geographical location, a landscape and its occupying flora and fauna. We may conclude that, while all three animated films reimagined a past visual landscape using different techniques, they are united in their desire to convey a lyrical-visual world of the moment(s) of turmoil experience by vulnerable native fauna and flora as a result of human intruders. Aimed at a young audience, there is clearly a

message of hope, to convey the timeless necessity of nature and landscape conservation as a means of conservation of cultural identity.

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