

## **Meaning and symbolism of the Salamanca rite in Argentinean popular culture**

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**Abstract:** The aim of this presentation is to analyze an aspect of the Argentinean Cultural Heritage connected with oral traditional lore, transmitted from one generation to another according not only to the natural environment but also to the cultural landscape dealing with social beliefs which conform its cultural identity. Belief, understood as a modal certainty, whose true value depends on a personal agreement or a social consensus (Greimas & Courtés 1982) can be expressed in nightmares such as the one of the coven, which makes room for black rites as the one we deal with. Considering the rite as a praxis, whose distinctive feature is the sequential repetition of actions with performative effects on the context (Rappaport 1991), we deal with the “Salamanca rite”, as worshiped in the Argentinean provinces of La Rioja and Santiago del Estero, which generates both legends, folktales and songs whose main topic is the deal with the Devil. As the Grimms have pointed out long ago, legends are folktales historically grounded, which cross the boundaries of reality towards the modal arenas of belief (Dégh 1976). Even grounded in local times and spaces, local rites such as the “Salamanca” share symbols connected with universal folk narrative patterns, such as ATU tale type No. 330 “The smith and the Devil”.

We focus the attention in the verbal explanation and iconic representation of this rite by the Argentinean craftsman Marino Cordoba, author of a series of ceramic statuettes regarding the Salamanca, exhibited both in the Argentinean folk museum of La Rioja and in the Devil Museum of Kaunas, Lithuania as examples of Argentinean cultural heritage. We pay attention to how Cordoba narrates this rite with synechdotic logic of fragmentation (Briggs 2002) and visual metaphors connected with rhetoric of mystery belonging to the vernacular quechua-diaguíta culture, which is part of Argentinean cultural heritage.

**Key words:** cultural heritage- Salamanca –Argentina

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### **The legend as Intangible Cultural Heritage**

The legend, as an oral literature issue which reactivates the collective memory, is part of the intangible heritage and depends on the will of all for its permanence in time. With the legend we enter the domains of a fictional discourse, which is both anchored in reality and part of the domain of the marvelous, fantastic, strange and out of ordinary semantic domain. Such liminal distinctive feature, linked to the paranormal, contributes to the process of invention of tradition, considered as actualization of the past from the present (Fine 1989 whose purpose is the transmission of certain cultural representations and values, both in rural and urban areas.

Intangible cultural heritage or "living heritage" refers to practices, expressions, knowledge or techniques transmitted by communities from generation to generation. Since 2003, UNESCO has been underlining the relevance that intangible cultural acquires in contemporary societies. Its transcendence, however, derives not only from the declaration made annually by said organization regarding certain works of humanity, but also from the recognition of the existence of subjects, relationships and social practices that undoubtedly intervene in the processes of production of material and symbolic expressions that have a potential patrimonial value, turned into myths or legends by the subjects of daily life, who recreate symbolic expressions of local cultures.

As aforesaid, the legend, as well as the myth and the folktale, refers to past events historically grounded, connected with the arenas of belief (Dégh op. cit). Both folktales and legends share the same folk narrative matrices, characterized as a combination of thematic, structural and stylistic features, identified by an intertextual comparison of different narratives (Palleiro 2004, 2018). Thematic regularities of the folktale have been classified into tale types. As used by folklorists, tale type is a term that identifies a group of stories that are configurable into a set and identifiable in a common way because they share a common plot, designated by a

number and descriptive title from Aarne's index.<sup>1</sup> Such Index allows to identify each type as one of the multiple tellings of a particular story and hence as one of multiple versions of the same tale type. The Aarne's Index has been revised both by Stity Thompson (Helsinki, 1961) and, recently, by Hans Uther (2011 /2004/). (Georges and Owen Jones, 113). Both tale types, motifs and narrative matrix, which share not only thematic but also structural similarities such as the ones identified by Propp as "functions", conceived as a structural component that is "an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action, such as the absence of home of the hero (function 1), the difficult task of the hero/heroine (25) or the "solution" (26). Along with thematic and structural regularities, tales share stylistic common features, such as the ones identified by Olrik (1995 /1909/) as the "law of opening", the "law of the to "law of repetition", the "law of two to a scene", the "law of importance of initial and final position", the "law of patterning", the "law of unity of plot" and the "concentration on a leading character", the law of three and the law of antithesis. Both thematic, structural and stylistic features configure the narrative matrix, whose versions and variants can be identified in diverse contexts, as narrative messages whose semantic contents express the differential identity of each social groups (Bauman 1972). One of these differential features deals with social beliefs, which are expressed in legends, as stressed by Dégh. Dégh affirms that belief is the stimulator and the purpose of telling any narrative within the category of the legend genre; and it is also the instigator of the legend dialectic. She also points out that the current confusion caused by the whimsical application of terms such as "truth," "rationality," "belief," and "believability" in scholarly legend interpretations, should caution to avoid making biased, outsider's judgements instead of presenting the viewpoint of tellers and audiences (Dégh, *Folklore* 107 (1996): 33-46. When studying traditional storytelling in a Hungarian peasant community, Dégh stressed that from the narrator's viewpoint, authority and credibility play an important part, as well as faithfulness and respect for tradition, but a storyteller's language, style and dramatic recital shape a story being told, making it "inconceivable" that he or she should repeatedly tell a long tale, letter-perfect", since constant transformation of a tale is logical and follows its own law (Dégh in Georges and Owen Jones, p. 259). . This means that believability is a relevant aspect of legendary discourse, to the extent that vernacular narrators are capable of creating the right climate for the story to appear alive, which does not mean simply a spoken word or a verbal recount of situations and objects, but rather an oral aesthetic, which becomes evident and becomes perceptible in the spoken style of each of the narrators, who have, in general, an exceptional memory and a good command of words and gestures. Therefore, the concept of legend cannot be separated from oral narration and folk narrators. It cannot even be separated from the Maerchen or fairy tale, since the same narrative patterns are shared by folktales and legends, in which the dimension of belief acquires a special relevance.

Belief narratives transcend borders, regions, nations and social classes, since they are part both of individual and social memory, in a tension between local and global, and in an intertwining between universal patterns and local contextual rites such as the Argentinean one of the Salamanca, which, according to vernacular narrator Marino Cordoba, is a ritual ceremony in which "a man or a woman sell their soul to the Devil", whose climax is the moment in which this "deal with the Devil" is achieved (Cordoba in Palleiro 2016: 54-58). The deal with the devil is even a tale type, classified in the International tale type Index by Aarne- Thompson-Uther as ATU 330: "The smith outwits the Devil", which can be considered as well as a narrative matrix whose sequential structure is based on the episodes of the meeting of a man or a woman with the devil, the accomplishment of the deal and the benefits obtained by the human being, with alternative itineraries in which both the man or the woman outwits the devil by trickery, or the devil manages to take the soul back. The rhetoric structure is based on the personification of evil forces, and the antithesis between devilish forces and human cunningness. Such narrative pattern acts in some versions as a pre-text for fictional elaborations such as the one by José Corso (in Palleiro 2016) "Pedro Ordimán and the Devil" which follows this sequential structure, according to which the Argentinean trickster Pedro Ordimán manages to outwit the devil after having made a deal with him. This universal pattern has also been studied by folklorists such as Ulo Valk (2001) in Estonian folklore, both as a folktale and as a religious rite, associated with social beliefs. Contextual variations transform in fact such universal patterns in local expressions of the differential identities of different social groups, as it happens with the Salamanca rite, dealing with indigenous quichua-diaguaita culture and with Spanish cultural

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<sup>1</sup>As Georges and Owen Jones (p. 24) point out, folklorists use the term "tale type" to identify a group of stories configured into a set and identified in a common way because the similarities discernible in their plots are judged to be too striking and significant quantitatively or qualitatively to be attributed to chance or coincidence, such as "Cinderella" or "Little Red Riding Hood" which have been documented as having been told often over time and through space. Folklorists use the word "motif" to refer to phenomena found in traditional prose and poetic narratives such as tales and legends, as the minimal thematic unit. As Margaret Read Macdonald explains, the motif is "each small (thematic) part of a tale,"[1] to refer to the recognizable and consistently repeated story elements (e.g., common characters, objects, actions, and events) that are used in the traditional plot structures.

heritage in the Argentinean context. Such dynamics anchored in celebrations, commemorations, festivities and rituals give meaning to the daily life of towns, cities and different local spaces, becoming forms of cultural expression that are part of the shaping processes of vernacular identities such as the one of the Argentinean northwest, whose cultural distinctive features are recreated in the Salamanca ritual ceremony.

### **The Argentinean Northwest**

The Argentinean Northwest is a geographic and historical region of Argentina composed of the provinces of Catamarca, Jujuy, La Rioja, Salta, Santiago del Estero and Tucumán, and the north end of the Province of Córdoba. It comprises very distinct biomes, or geographical and climatic regions which are, from west to east, the following: The Altiplano or "Puna", the high Mountains of the Andes, the fertile valleys, the red-rock canyons and mountain passes, the humid Sub-Andean hills, the Tropical jungles or Yungas, and the ecotone—or transitional zone—between the Yungas and the Chaco region. Besides the Yungas jungle on the eastern fringe of the region, the only fertile lands are those near the river basins, which have been irrigated extensively. Across millennia the erosive forces of these rivers has gradually created a multitude of red-rock canyons, such as the Quebrada de Humahuaca and the Valles Calchaquíes. West of these valleys the peaks of the Andes reach heights of over 6,000 metres (20,000 ft) and the Altiplano, an extensive 3,500-meter high plateau, dominates the landscape and continues far north into Bolivia and Southern Perú

The presence of human population in the region is considered from 12,000 to 10,000 BP. One of the first permanent settlements dates from 3000 and 2000 years one of the oldest archaeological sites that reveal a sedentarization is in Palo Blanco (southwest of Catamarca), the sedentarization allowed an incipience of agriculture (with also incipient irrigation controls, management of the fresh water and accumulation -in deposits- of the surpluses) this corresponded to the development of basketry and, especially of ceramics (until reaching the coroplasty), that is to say; already between 3000 and 2000 years ago There are agro-pottery populations in the region, being in this aspect the first of all the current Argentine territory. Between 500 and 1000 AD occurred the so-called Period of Regional Integration characterized by the establishment of a complex social network with cross-sectional economic exchanges between the various ethnic groups of the region, such exchanges used to be of minerals (copper, malachite, obsidian) obtained in mountain areas in exchange for products plants (like the hallucinogen cebilused exclusively by the "shamans" in the rites) and feathers or nutritious fruits of chañar and mistol from the yungas and the Chaquense region. Between 1200 and 1400 the region suffered extreme droughts which caused fragmentations, endemic wars whose focus is located in regions as distant as the north of Peru and that extend in chain along the space between the ethnic groups to obtain resources; Such a state of interethnic wars imposed the consolidation of differentiated ethnic nuclei in small fortified cities (chichas in the extreme north, atacameños in the Puna and Quebrada del Toro, omaguacas in a large part of present-day Jujuy and northern Salta, "diaguitas" (mainly the Santa Maria Culture in the mountain and pedemontane regions of Salta, Catamarca, during that same period the area received the cultural influence of the Tiwanaku Horizon, such influence is observed not only in the arts but in religious and military practice - boom of the "heads" trophy »of the decapitated enemies -). At the end of that period and taking advantage of the weakness of the existing ethnic groups, the Incas invaded and the annexation of most of the territory to the "Tucumán" of the Tawantinsuyu (several ethnohistorians such as Ana María Lorandi consider that the Tucumán was a territory separate from the Colásuyo), the Inca domain was brief although it left some notorious cultural traces: extraction of natural resources to transport them to the center of their empire, for this the track system was created called KapakÑan (literally «Great way» usually known as « Way of the Inca ») and the imposition of the personal benefit was established among the subjects (the mita if the submission was relatively peaceful, or the yanacozgo and deportations for the most rebellious) accompanied with establishment of deposits such as collcas, and tambos, the demolition of the pre-Inca fortresses and the construction of new fortresses according to the imperial needs ( the pucarás), the uprooting of ethnic groups that opposed resistance as it is verified in the depopulation of Tastil, deportation of mitmakuna (mitimaes) from northern regions, practice of human sacrifice on the mountain peaks as verified in the Lullaillo Volcano, including the destruction of the cemeteries of the "Diaguita" peoples (a word whose meaning comes from the Aymara thyakita = "far away" - in relation to Cusco or Tiwanaku -) to provoke a historical amnesia since the majority of the native peoples of the NOA worshiped their ancestors ; the Incas substituted such belief systems for a state religion in which the Inca caste was homologated to the sun, which allowed them to rationalize the control and alienation of regional economic resources: 1/3 of what was produced was for the Inca, another third for Inti or god-sun and only another third was left for the producing populations. The eastern part of the current provinces of Salta, Tucumán and almost all the territory of Santiago del Estero remained independent of the Incas, carrying out the ethnic groups of that area (vilelas, lules, toconotés, wichis etc.) frequent incursions on the areas controlled by the Incas. The lules and toconotés were called contemptuously «surí» (later transliterated into Spanish as xurí and juridical), the

wichiwere nicknamed "matacos" by other Chaco towns of "cuncos" and "chavancos" by the Quechua invaders and their Aymara allies.

The invasion the Spanish conquerors inaugurated with the Expedition of Almagro to Chile (an expedition that covered much of the Northwest) in 1535, worsened the situation for all the local ethnic groups which after bitter resistance how the Calchaquí wars suffered a great demographic decline, largely due to diseases from Europe (smallpox, measles and certain flu strains) for which the natives lacked immunity and partly due to the destructuring of economies or the exhaustion of the native ones in the exacerbated copy of personal benefits that they made of those already existing from the Inca invasion: the mitas mixed with the encomiendas. The Spanish «Corriente del Norte», inaugurated with the Entry of Diego de Rojas in 1542, owes the definitive foundation of the provincial capital cities, and the foundation of some of the oldest localities existing today in the Argentine Republic.

The eighteenth century has two contrasting features: a consolidation of Spanish power and some rebel movements associated distantly with TúpacAmaru. In any case during the Spanish colonization the mass introduction of cotton cultivation in west santiagueño, the production of wines, olives, wool of sheep and goats, the breeding of mules and horses (particularly in Salta, Tucumán and Jujuy) is undertaken. supply, together with Tarija, the demands of Upper Peru; The economic system then developed implied a first industrialization: -for example- carts, saddlers, brandy in Tucumán, ponchos and various canvases (barracán, picote, barchila, anascote) in Santiago del Estero, Catamarca, La Rioja, Salta and Jujuy. In this way with the creation of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata and the inclusion of the NOA in two municipalities: Salta del Tucumán and (the northern part) of Córdoba del Tucumán the beginning of the nineteenth century found the Creole society mature enough as to associate in the War of Independence that derived from the May Revolution, it was at such a time that the main battles (such as those of the Gaucho War) had as main scenarios the territories of Jujuy, Salta, Tucumán and neighboring areas as, mainly, the one of Tarija.

Tarija. The active process of urbanization is clearly visible, being the majority mestizo population product of the mixogenesis of the original indigenous populations, the influx of Spaniards as of 1535, with these between the XVII and XVIII centuries an important percentage of population with African origins that in smaller measure has left its traces visible, then (especially in the province of Tucumán) was added the important immigration from the "Old World" (Italians, Lebanese, Syrians, and even a small number of Sikhs - the Sikh community was established in the Province of Salta at the beginning of the 20th century, mainly in Rosario de la Frontera-, in Tucumán has also been of some importance the settlement of French and Jewish immigrants). The population of the NOA throughout the 20th century has been grouped mainly in the provincial capitals (Gran San Miguel de Tucumán, Great Salta, Great San Salvador de Jujuy, Santiago del Estero - La Banda, Great San Fernando of the Catamarca Valley, La Rioja and the city of Oran).

In the most inhospitable areas of the Puna and the ravines there are groups in which the indigenous ancestry predominates, the "coyas" (descendants of the Diaguitas, Atacameños, omaguacas and chichas) peoples that suffered the Quechua-Aymara influence during the invasion Inca occurred between ca. 1475-1535) and then the Spanish between 1535-1811 for which his current culture is highly syncretic, for this reason are lexical Quechua loans in words such as "Pachamama" (mother land), "coca", "supay" ( demon), "llastay", "quisquinar" or "quisquidar" (constipar, constipate), "machado" (intoxicated), "chango" (boy), "guaso" (coarse), "churo / a" (cute), nice), "cerviñacu" (kind of marriage to test or premarriage, practiced among some coyas from the most remote areas of Salta and Jujuy in which the couple lives for three years "to see if you get along" and can then specify a definitive marriage), "tantanakui", "ura" (vulva), "urquía", "torcacita") (dove), "chaya" (or challa) among some others mixed with the Spanish language (which has different forms of intonation according to the zones of this region) and with the indigenous languages pre-existing to the Inca invasion such words are used occasionally, in some of In the province of Santiago del Estero, the so-called Quechua language, lexically based largely on the Quechua language itself, is spoken. It is noteworthy that "the Quichua" (as it is called among the people of Santiago) is spoken by Creole populations whose indigenous ancestors (lules, toconotés, sanavirones, etc.) were indoctrinated after 1536, during the Spanish domination, by Catholic missionaries who, from Peru and Upper Peru, used Quechua as a vehicular language, especially in catechisms. Diaguitas, atacameños, omaguacas and chichas were people who lived in small cities and who dominated the techniques of irrigation of crops (especially corn), the art of weaving and ceramics, the metallurgy of gold, copper and silver.

In short, this pluriethnic region shows the blend of vernacular indigenous cultures and the cultural heritage of Spanish conquerors, in the scenery of a heterogeneous landscape, from the Andes to the Omawaka creek and the fertile valleys. Such a blend is reflected in the different versions of the Salamanca legend and the Salamanca performances we will deal with in this paper.

### **Legends as Intangible Cultural Heritage issues**

Legends can be considered as part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, according to the categories of UNESCO. Through the oral word we penetrate into traditional beliefs and ways of life, resignified in the present days through the power of verbal discourse. The word discovers behaviors, thoughts, feelings and favors the identity in different times and spaces, because it is inseparable from the life of man and his memory. By means of the word we enter into the culture of the peoples constituted by values, beliefs and taking positions with respect to the environment.

The safeguard of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (PCI) is equivalent to guaranteeing its viability between the new and future generations. The communities and professional groups and other depositors of the tradition throughout the world have developed their own systems for the transmission of their knowledge and techniques, which usually depend -or depended- on the oral tradition, such as the one transmitted by legends, more than on the written texts. The safeguarding by means of the compilation and the documentation implies the responsibility to spread the accumulated patrimony through the technologies and the suitable channels, so that the means of mass communication and the technologies of the information contribute to strengthen the traditions and oral expressions instead of weakening them. Communities, researchers and institutions should establish norms for the safeguarding of oral traditions in all their richness, including the textual variants and the different styles of interpretation that are revealed through the verbal contribution of the narrators, in the case of legends we are dealing with in this presentation.

### **Legends, beliefs and worldviews**

For a good part of society, the existence of an invisible world of paranormal powers is a given fact. There are many authors who approach the paranormal as magic or try to explain beliefs as errors, as failures of analytical thinking. (Harris and L. Strauss). In the development of Folkloristics as a historical science, beliefs have been connected with magical practices, which cantake the form of an imaginary cause-effect relationship: for example, a person can believe that there is a relationship between seeing a black cat pass and suffering a stroke of bad luck. An old idea, especially between evolutionists, is that these superstitious beliefs or behaviors have been able, even if irrational, to spread among the population because they may represent a selective advantage. Therefore, from this evolutionism perspective, natural selection could favor the superstitions. Ritual practices have been also considered within the framework of relationships with the deity, with which they negotiate through ordinary requests and rituals, reminding them of their fidelity and compliance with the precepts, but also when they have transgressed by requesting their forgiveness. In the Christian, Jewish and Muslim cultures, in addition to the creative and beneficent divinity, there is the presence of evil or "evils", which although they do not have the same powers as God, they emulate it, and can provide parallel access to certain benefits or cause illness and death and to which requests or rituals are also made to obtain the requested favor.

Nowadays, instead, from a semiotic perspective, belief can be considered as a modal expression of truth, in which the true value of discourse depends on a subjective agreement or on a social consensus (Greimas&Courtès 1982, Palleiro 2008a).

In the call for papers for a recent conference dealing with belief narratives and folklore studies, held in Guwahati, India, on February 2019, whose title has been »Belief Narratives in Folklore Studies: Narrating the Supernatural«, Dr. Ulo Valk stressed that one of the earliest genres in folkloristics has been the belief narrative in which traditional folk beliefs in the supernatural are given shape (and often credence) in popular narratives that, in the past, tended to be passed on in oral form. Over time other forms of transmission havenaturally evolved, ranging from the broadsheet to the internet and social media. This material, found in numerous archives and collections of folk legends, still evolves and comes into being around us in daily life. Such narratives commonly reflect the psyche of individuals, groups and society as a whole at a deeper level. These narratives, as Elliott Oring has shown draw on a rhetoric of truth (Oring 2012) and a rhetoric of belief in social discourses (Palleiro 2008). For those who are convinced, such narratives commonly evoke or strengthen beliefs and have the potential to affect behaviour and even change society.

Belief narratives can take the form of migratory narratives moving between countries and even continents, while others are naturally more localized. In the case of the legend, most of them contain a universal pattern of event followed by individual and/or social interpretation, as Honko (1989) stresses in his article regarding the nature of the memorate. According to Tangherlini (1990), legends are better characterized as historicized narratives, whose process of historicization may be likened to diachronic ecotypification, being the believability of the narrative underscored by the historicization of the account. The author stresses as well that, connected to the historicized nature of legend is the relation between legend and folk belief, since at the root of this relationship is the "trueness" of the legend narrative. Tangherlini (1990: 385) characterizes the legend as »a short (mono-) episodic, traditional, highly ecotypified, historicized narrative performed in a conversational

mode, reflecting on a psychological level a symbolic representation of folk beliefs and collective experiences and serving as a reaffirmation of commonly held values of the group to whose tradition it belongs». In this way, as Valk wisely points out, while legend may appear to be a historical narrative because of reference to readily verifiable topographic and geographic features, as well as a reliance on culturally credible characters, legend has been misinterpreted as a fundamentally "true" narrative. In this sense, Dégh has shown how contemporary legends incorporate beliefs about the supernatural in a manner consistent with a contemporary world view, rather than discard those beliefs (Dégh 1971) Simply because it is often performed as "true," the narrative content itself is not necessarily an actual reflection of historical event (Tangherlini 1990). More than dealing with truth, legends do deal with the aforesaid "rhetoric of truth" and "rhetoric of belief".

The study of context and social function of legend performance is another critical aspect of the legend genre (Abrahams 1975), we will deal with in this paper when analyzing the Salamanca one. Narratives of this kind are naturally found in early epics and medieval narratives of saints, demons, and devils, and they are nonetheless not limited to the sphere of the folk legend, but can also result in new forms of behaviour such as rumour-spreading, prejudice, witch-hunts or activities (even sacrifices) designed to protect people from the influences in question, even in our own time. This conference, as the Guwahati one, gives us, researchers worldwide, the opportunity to share, discuss and engage with a range of aspects relating to the nature and role of belief narratives past and present.

The Argentinean vernacular »Salamanca« rite and the »Salamanca« legend is very good example of such belief narratives coming from the past whose impact in the present days can still be seen in cultural performances which are part of our cultural heritage.

### **The Salamanca in the context of créole (mestizo) South and Mesoamerican beliefs**

With the Spanish conquerors arrived to the American continent, they brought with them a Christian Catholic worldview with a series of conceptions regarding good and evil, God and the Devil, dogma and heresy, magic and religion, alien to the vernacular cultures of this "new world". These vernacular indigenous cultures, constituted by different ethnic groups with great differences among them, had as well different cosmologies and sociopolitical structures, that did not coincide with the European ones. In fact, in vernacular religious conceptions, there is no absolute difference between good and evil; but a principle of complementarity clearly represented in their gods, which are neither absolutely good or bad, and, according to the circumstances, they could behave as allies or adversaries of human beings.

The European concepts of witchcraft and sorcery are not the same of the vernacular American cultures, even though if some cultural representations could be associated with some of the distinctive features of European evil magic, which helped the first evangelizers interpret the ritual practices and ways of worshiping the vernacular people carried out as diabolic expressions and to proclaim so to those who tried to catechize. The créole society assumed those concepts and applied them to their environment, describing as witchcraft and sorcery formerly coherent religious practices. Thus a mestizo magic was formed that spread among the different strata of colonial society.

Regardless of the many other reasons – such as political and economic ones - to dominate the newly discovered lands and how violent it could be, the moral justification of the conquest was based on the bull *Inter caetera* issued by the Pope Alejandro VI on May 3, 1493 in which entrusted to the Catholic Kings, Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, the mission of expanding and exalting the Catholic faith and the Christian religion to the newly discovered lands and seek the salvation of the souls of its inhabitants through catechization. The difficulties that the missionaries had to face are well known, as well as the results of these interventions. The chroniclers, witnesses and actors of the event, left us their testimonies. However, the word of God was not the only spiritual baggage they brought. In this way, authors as Gustav Henningsen speak of a "Black Godspell", that traveled in the shadow with the Spaniards transplanted to America, apart from the official religion. In fact, in addition to the evangelizers, people prepared to carry the official voice of the Catholic religion, based on the doctors of the Catholic church and written religious literature. Besides, the men and women who arrived in waves to the American continent had their own popular religiosity that little by little it was spreading and introducing among the common people: Spaniards, blacks, mestizos, Africans. Henningsen classified the magic that came from Europe into two categories: a popular, oral, whose depositaries and transmitters were mainly women; and a scholar, written ones, spread mainly by men. These social beliefs were closer to the religious conception of the Indians, so the different cultural products were syncretized, and later enriched with the magical practices of the black slaves. During the three centuries of the Viceroyalty, a set of beliefs has been conformed, and it was no longer Spanish, nor indigenous, nor African, but créole, and different social strata shared some of these beliefs, outside the official religion.

A very good example of this heterogeneous mixture of vernacular, African and European non official beliefs is the one of the Salamanca. The Salamanca is a traditional narrative, punctuated in people, time and

place, that is to say, a historicized narrative. The version we will deal with, performed by the Argentinean craftsman in a conversational format, reflects in fact both a psychological level a symbolic representation of folk belief and collective experiences that serve as reaffirmation of commonly held values of the group to whose tradition it belongs. Such distinctive features fit with Tangherlini's definition of the legend, to which we can add other features dealing with the aforesaid »rhetoric of truth«. This rhetoric comprises the personification and animalization of specific characters such as the Devil, that constitute metaphorical representation of a vernacular worldview; as well as the accumulation of details juxtaposed around an initial nucleus; the temporation and location in a historical context, framed in the daily environment of the narrator, they name the places of known actions in the geographical area where they live.

The Salamanca ceremony takes place in a hidden place with a difficult access, whose entrance leads to a wide and gloomy cave. There the participants dance, they make music, and celebrate covens and orgies. During such ritual ceremony, the old become young, the sick heal, the ugliness is covered with beauty. But we will never know if these actions actually happen or not. Completely naked, the neophyte, male or female, must enter Salamanca with an initiate. At the entrance to the cave there is a Christ "head down" to be hit and spit. Already, in the underground enclosure, the most disgusting and disgusting animals are seen: hairy spiders, toads and large schools, ampalaguas, vipers and umucutis, before which the initiate must remain impassive "even if the vipers are wrapped in the body". If he or she is able to overcome the disgust or fear that such animals produce, he or she is subjected to new tests, and in the end, if he wins, the neophyte "can ask whatever he or she wants". Otherwise, it goes crazy when leaving. As entertainment, during the meeting, music is made with hype, violin, guitar and harp; burning rockets are burned; and Bacchanalia are celebrated that last all night. It is generally believed that the music of Salamanca only stops ringing when someone approaches the cave and that the animals that pass by are "frightened" and flee in terror.

### **The Salamanca rite in the voice of the vernacular narrator Marino Cordoba: verbal and iconic discourse**

In this paper, we will deal with one version of the Salamanca rite, told by Marino Cordoba, author of a series of pottery pieces representing the different episodes of the "Salamanca" rite, nowadays exposed in the Folkloric Museum of La Rioja, Argentina, and some of them, as well, in the Museum of the Devil of Kaunas, Lithuania. In a personal interview held by Palleiro in La Rioja in 1987, Cordoba described the Salamanca as a "rite" in which "a man or a woman sell their soul to the Devil" whose climax is the moment in which this "deal with the Devil" is achieved (Cordoba in Palleiro 2016: 54-58).. The rite consists of a sequential repetition of actions, with a performative intention of achieving effects on the context ( Rappaport, 1992; Palleiro 2008b ) In the Salamanca rite, one of these performative effects is the aforesaid punitive action, oriented towards the dancer who has not fulfilled the act of giving his soul to the devil . The climax of this ritual ceremony, as explained by Marino, is, in fact, the "deal with the devil" (Cordoba in Palleiro, 2011b). In this personal interview that took place in his atelier, Cordoba explained the different ritual steps of the Salamanca by showing a series of statuettes in which he had recreated the sequential development of this rite



The Salamanca as represented in La Rioja Museum by Marino Cordoba Photo: Analía Patricia Canale

There are different steps, or proofs, or tasks, or tests, those of the Salamanca rite...

The Salamanca ... is the encounter with the devil. And the devil comes, in the shape of a black goat, or a pig, a dog, any animal ... [The artisan shows a statue of the devil represented in the form of a goat].

That those who enter the Salamanca, they sell their soul to the devil, they make a deal with the Devil, celebrated in a ceremony, and then, the devil gives them what they want, huh? But firstly, they are tested ...

The first task, or proof, or test, it is said that Christ is head down, and they have to spit it out, they have to trample it ... That's the first task ... Then, the snakes come out, and they are crawling out to the body of the participants, and they can't say holy words, not to lift the spell...

Both man and woman enter there ... And then, the devil comes out, as a shape of a black goat ...the Mandinga comes out, the Zupay, the big devil, the major devil: the boss, the leader of the Salamanca.. He has the wings of a bat, a lion's mane, a goat's head, and the feet of a bird

... And it is said that he's always challenging God, rejecting him.

[Marino Córdoba shows a statuette of the Zupay, who maintains the erectile form of a human body in motion, with the head of a goat, the feet of a bird, with wings instead of arms, and a large mane, trying to trample a crucifix with his feet]

...

Then the woman turns herself towards to the devil, to be possessed, and there is the "consummation" ... and she offers herself to the goat, to the devil, to be possessed ... Then, she is already a witch, since she has made the deal with the Devil and so she has given her soul to the Devil [The ceramist shows the statuette of a woman kissing the ass of a goat].

And then.... the devil gives her what she wants: if she wants money, there he gives her a flask full of gold coins, and banknotes ...

And there are also those who sell the soul to the Devil for love ... And there are also those who sell their soul to the Devil to have luck in gambling ... And there is also the one who plays cards, the one who plays the game of jackstones...

And that another task is the one of water and fire ... That the man or the woman has to walk into the fire... and then they must enter a puddle of ice water ... and you they can't escape, because if they run away, the man or the woman fall into a bottomless pit. And that this bottomless pit finishes in Hell. And that there, in Hell, there are devils, who live in somewhat like cells, there, placed in different floors, below the earth ... And it is said that the ones who want to put a line down for those who had fallen into the bottomless pit, the devil goes and cuts it... so they can't escape any more

And in that bottomless pit, there are black birds flying, a flock of birds, and those birds are in charge of taking back to Hell the women who tried to escape from the Salamanca once they have already entered ...'cause these women are supposed to become witches...

And that there are also the "punished" ones: the toad ... the guacacho ... the toad who comes out after the rain ... This toad has been a singer who has gone to a party in the Salamanca, but he had not fulfilled the proofs, the tests of the rite, all the impossible tasks... He hid inside a guitar, and he did not follow all the ritual steps, so then, the Devil punished him, and he turned him into a toad, full of stains, do you see? And that's why I represent the toad in pottery with all the stains coming out, and with a guitar, do you see? So he is a punished singer, who has not fulfilled all the steps of the rite

[The artisan shows the statuette of a toad covered by stains that protrude from the surface of his skin, with a guitar at his feet]

And the armadillo, the quirquincho, too.. Poor he, too! Do you see? ...He is as well a punished singer. [Marino shows the statuette of an armadillo, called the quirquincho mulita] That the armadillo, the quirquincho, has been a very lively singer,

who has been invited to sing and to play the guitar in the Salamanca ...And he went to sing there, but he refused to fulfill the rite, to worship and to give his soul to the Devil ... So the Devil transformed him into a short, tiny animal ...

[The artisan shows a statuette that represents an armadillo also in standing position, with the front legs folded curvilinearly, longer than the hind legs, similar to those of a human being, with a charango at his feet]

And, since he was very vivacious, he learned the skills that the devil taught the others in Salamanca ... And so he learned to tame the wild horses, and to tie the ropes, and he learned as well how to play card games, and other vernacular games, such as the taba game, which is a game of bet, played with a bone ...so people have to guess in which position a cow bone will fall into the soil

And the armadillo, the quirquincho, has also learned how to braid, from the moment when the devil has taught this craft to the weaving witches ... And it is said that, sometimes, he uses to escape from Salamanca, running through the countryside...

And it is said as well that the armadillo, the quirquincho, is so vivacious, because he learnt a lot of skills of the Devil ... And that's why, there are people who use to tell those stories of the fox and the armadillo, those stories in which the fox is always fucked off, because the armadillo is always more clever, so the fox is always fucked off in those deals made by the fox and the armadillo...But all that happens in the Salamanca is true, it is a rite which must be accomplished. But from this rite, people find inspiration to tell histories and fictional tales (Cordoba in Palleiro 2016:58)...

And there is also the carancho, the raven, a carrion bird, who has been a handsome dancer, a Don Giovanni. But the Devil turned him into an ugly beast because he did not achieve the ritual steps, do you see? [The artisan shows the statuette of a stylized raven who seems to have a human figure]

And this is the end of the Salamanca legend, do you see?

The narrative explanation of the sequential steps of the Salamanca ritual ceremony in the ceramist's discourse took place in his atelier, located in a peripheral zone of La Rioja, city, in August 1987. Such narrative explanation has been anchored in the the visual images of his statuettes representing the different sequential steps of this rite, in a set of pottery figures. In his speech, the craftsman gave this set a sequential order, with a



flexible articulation, based on a poetic work of selection and combination of pieces (Jakobson 1964) which served as an iconic support for the verbal discourse.

The starting point of this rite has been the statuette representing an iconic figure of the devil under the zoomorphic appearance of a goat: "... the Salamanca ... is the encounter with the devil. And the devil comes, in the shape of a black goat, or a pig, a dog, any animal ... [The artisan shows a statue of the devil represented in the form of a goat].

Once exhibited this polymorphic image of a goat, the artisan offered the following narrative explanation regarding the sequences of the rite, with the addition of descriptive issues:

And then, the devil comes out, as a shape of a black goat ...the Mandinga comes out, the Zupay, the big devil, the major devil: the boss, the leader of the Salamanca.. He has the head of a goat, the wings of a bat, the mane of a lion and the feet of a bird

... And it is said that he's always challenging God, rejecting him [Marino Córdoba shows a statuette of the Zupay, who maintains the erectile form of a human body in motion, with the head of a goat, the feet of a bird, with wings instead of arms, and a large mane, trying to trample a crucifix with his feet] [Marino Cordoba shows the statuette by pointing towards it with his right index finger]

This apparition of the Great Devil is the beginning of the ritual ceremony. In a previous work, Palleiro (2016) analyzed the relationship between the iconic and the verbal in the text of this interview, pointing out the relevance of deixis mechanisms or artisan's embodiment strategies and body language, in which the gestures serve the function of shifters between word and image, reinforced by the conative style of the narrator. In this new approach, we are mainly interested in the sequential organization and rhetoric construction of the narrative discourse. The distinctive features of such rhetoric construction are the metaphorical processes of condensation of semantic features of animals and humans in the figure of different characters, whose counterpart is the metonymic processes of fragmentation linked with techniques of visual staging, similar to the iconic representation of Salamanca devil's figure, reinforced by descriptive strategies. The fragmentary combination of human and animal features such as the ones of the "Master" devil, with the head of a goat, , the feet of a bird, whit wings instead of arms, and a large mane, is anchored in the iconic image of the statuettes. In such iconic discourse, the dynamics of movement is embodied in curvilinear shapes, with predominantly spherical volumes, and a rough texture, which underlines the synechdotic effect of a fragmentary figure. This effect of movement also contributes to give an idea of sequential succession, reinforced by the spatial arrangement of the various statuettes of similar shape and size, side by side, based on the material used by the artist in his workshop for the different pieces. In the verbal discourse, the sequential order has been marked by temporal adverbs, which serve as narrative connectors between the different sequences.

The initial sequence of the "Encounter with the Devil" is opened with an explanatory clause which explains the global significance of the rite, combined with the topic of zoomorphic metamorphosis, alluded in the linguistic discourse and expressed in the iconic image through a combination of curved surfaces and volumes. Such metamorphoses constitute a metaphorical expression of the whole rite, whose distinctive feature is the continuous and progressive metamorphoses, reflecting a worldview which affirms the dynamic relationship between the domain of the supernatural and the one of the natural world. In the iconic code, such relationship is embodied in the aforementioned effect of movement printed to figures such as the one of the Zupay, which conserves in its visual organization the human morphology of the body and the head, represented by an undulating shape, juxtaposed with a fragmentary combination of diverse zoomorphic forms, in a dynamic between metaphoric and synechdotic process. Such dynamics shows a poetic work, connected with the symbolic expression of a cosmovisional model. The major Devil, called Zupay in quechua language, and Mandinga in Afro-Brazilian communities, is introduced with a descriptive presentation, through the aforesaid cumulative mention of members of different animals. Such descriptive presentation introduces the dimension of spatial simultaneity in the temporal succession of actions and gives rise to the gestation of "spectacle processes" (Génette 1970), in a juxtaposed display of corporal members of different animals, such as the bat, the lion, the goat and the bird. This descriptive presentation appears in the statuette in a complex figure, fused in the basic morphological scheme of a human figure, by means of a technique of juxtapositions, connected with the "scheme of additive combination of heterogeneous semantic units", considered by Mukarovsky (1977) as compositional principle of folk art.

It is interesting as well to consider the plural nomination of the Devil as "Mandinga" - noun associated, as aforesaid, with the Afro-Brazilian culture- and Zupay -linked to the Quichua culture- together with the reference to the Hispanic culture, manifested in the designation of the rite as the "Salamanca", associated with the famous Spanish University, which refers to a learning situation. In such a way the rite denominated acquires the character of an initiatory learning, led by a "teacher" associated with a supernatural devilish order. This

plural reference to the devil takes account of the cultural syncretism of the group, characterized by the heterogeneous convergence of vernacular and European cultures.

The climax of the rite is the sequence, the "consummation" of the deal with the devil, anchored in Cordoba's discourse in the visual image of the statuette of a woman kissing the ass of a goat:

Then the woman turn herself over to the devil, to be possessed, and there is the "consummation" ... and she offers herself to the goat, to the devil, to be possessed ..... Then, she is already a witch, since she has made the deal with the Devil and so she gave her soul to the Devil [The ceramist shows the statuette of a woman kissing the ass of a goat].

This is in fact the climax, the point of the narrative (Labov&Waletzky 1967)

The image of the devil is constructed, in the same way as in other pieces, with the synecdochic logic of corporal fragmentation, which combines human forms with the zoomorphic figure of a goat. The union between the woman and the devil can be considered as a metaphorical symbol of this initiation rite. From this perspective, the woman represents any member of the community willing to make a deal with the Devil in such a ritual ceremony.

### **Ritual steps and impossible tasks: fiction, belief and rhetoric of truth**

In an analeptical organisation of the narrative, Marino refers then to the sequence of the "tasks" that the man of the woman has to fulfill before reaching the climax of the rite, which is the union with the Devil. Such tasks, which acquire in this ceremony the value of ritual steps, can also be connected with the thematic motif of the "impossible tasks" of the folktale, as it appears in tale types such as Aarne-Thompson-Uther 330A, "The smith and the Devil". Regarding this connection, it is worth considering the metanarrative clause in which Marino Cordoba makes a distinction between the fictional tale and the rite, dealing with the ontological dimension of beliefs:

all that happens in the Salamanca is true, it is a rite which must be accomplished. But from this rite, people finds inspiration to tell histories and fictional tales (Cordoba in Palleiro 2016:58)...

In this clause, Cordoba stresses the difference between the semantic domain of fictional discourse, in which he places the folktales, and the domain of the rite, associated with "true" actions. From this perspective, the personification of animals acquires not only the value of a rhetoric strategy but also the meaning of a social belief, dealing with zoomorphic metamorphosis of human beings into animals caused by devilish forces, which are connected with the antithesis between reality and appearance. In this way, this antithesis becomes both the axis of the Salamanca rite and the dominant rhetoric strategy. Cordoba's discourse regarding "la Salamanca", presented both as a rite and as a legend, deals in fact with a "rhetoric of believing" (Palleiro 2008) oriented to convince the audience of the credibility of the narrative discourse.

As affirmed in the introductory part of this article, belief narratives deal both with the ontological dimension of truth and with a social consensus that expresses relevant aspects of the collective identity and with the worldview of a social group. It is worth noticing as well that Marino Cordoba considers both "tales" and "histories" as fictional discourses, in an implicit allusion to the poetic recreation of history (White, 1973). In fact, in this metanarrative clause, Cordoba makes a distinction between "fiction", "history" and "belief", according to which the genesis of the "fictional tale consists in reworking of the historical experience and the universe of beliefs of the group, through fictionalization procedures. Thus, Cordoba's discourse sustains the fictional status of the "tales" such as the ones of the fox and the armadillo, attributed to the choral voice of the community, which works as well as a testimonial endorsement of a shared belief, referred to the linking of armadillo skills with a demonic origin. Such distinction both between "tale" and "history" and between the "rite" and the "legend" implies in fact a demarcation between the different narrative species connected with social beliefs, which gravitate in ritual and legend (Dégh and Vázsonyi 1976), while "tales" and "histories" are connected, as aforesaid, with the semantic domain fiction.

The first of these ritual steps is to trample and to spit the Holy Cross, in a reversion of a sacred order, which is the gateway to an upside down world. Other ritual steps are to bear the snakes crawling out of the body of the participants, and to walk into the fire, and to enter a puddle of ice water. As I pointed out in a previous research (Palleiro 1992), such ritual practices have been documented in communities of the Argentinean Northwest by the psychiatrist Dr. Fernando PagésLarraya, as a part of a research regarding collective hallucinations, developed in the framework of a research project on ethnopsychiatric epidemiology. This documentation, which has numerous episodes reported, reveals the effective gravitation of the dimension of belief put into practice in ritual ceremonies.

Thus, the episodes of the "impossible tasks" acquire the ritual meaning of a performative act of blasphemy against God and of submission to the devil, symbolized in the initial task of rejection of the Holy

Cross, as a symbolic icon of the Hispanic-Catholic culture. It is worth remembering the intertextual connection of such "impossible tasks" with the ones that the hero must overcome in his trip to the underworld, whose literary recreations can be found in the Greco-Roman literature, from the Homeric Hades, to the Aeneid of Virgil, and the Hell of Dante in Italian literature.

### **The Salamanca rite and its connection with local cases**

In all these literary recreations of a folk narrative matrix, the hero manages to return from the underworld, which is separated both from Paradise and from the earthly world. In the Salamanca, instead, the devilish forces have a strong incidence in everyday life, to the extent that Cordoba's discourse mixes up the narration of the rite with local cases from everyday life, such as the following:

Just yesterday, a rascal was telling to me that once he was returning home late at night, and he arrived to a canyon... And there, he heard music coming from the canyons ...so he went walking...and he saw that there was a sort of ballroom, there, in the cavern, in the canyon...And he was invited to dance...and he said that he kept on dancing the whole night long, until dawn... And he said that the main musician was an old, toad-faced, ugly creature...And so, he danced and danced, and he ate some tasty food...He said that it was a very good food, excellent dishes, so he ate until dawn...and he was very well treated... And when he was about to return home, they gave him a packet, a parcel, to take it to his mother. – Take it along!- someone told him –Take along this tasty stuff and give it to your mother! He took the packet, the parcel, and he returned home. And the following day, he woke up, he said, and he went to open the package, e wanted to give it to his mother. So he went to open it, and he realized that the tasty stuff had been changed into waste, somewhat like donkey dung... And he told this to his friends, and his friends asked him- Do you know where have you been? In a Salamanca!

The structure of Marino Cordoba's narrative is extremely flexible, to the extent that the sequential development of the rite is interrupted in its climatic point by the reference to local cases such as the one quoted above, which is followed by the sequence of "the punishments", also developed in the visual display of the statuettes. The semantic axis of this local case or "memorate" is, as the one of the whole Salamanca, the antithesis between a beautiful appearance and an evil essence, represented in this case by the antithesis tasty food /donkey dung. This memorate is interspersed in the sequential development of the rite, presented as a "case" or strange event occurred to a member of the community in a specific place, with an orientation clause which locates the action in a real space and a concrete time (Labov&Waletzky 1967), and a thematic point around the topic of the metamorphosis of the delicacies into rubbish, within the dynamic of transformations which is the distinctive features of the Salamanca rite. The narrative action is referred in a reported speech, which interposes an enunciative distance. In this way, the narrative discourse is presented as a belief narrative, in which the true value of a discourse depends on a collective consensus, in the vanishing zone between "fiction", "history" and "belief" (Palleiro 1992). The interspersing of this local "case" within the narrative explanation of the Salamanca rite serves the function of an argumentative testimonial evidence of the believability of the discourse, endorsed by the group's voice. In this way, the craftsman became a group spokesperson, able to recreate a collective worldview both through a poetic iconic work in a three-dimensional space, and through the verbal narrative discourse.

The final macrosequence related to this rite is the one of the "punishments", that develops the topic of zoomorphic transformations, connected with the cultural syncretism of the group. The dynamism of the transformations is also expressed here in the visual representation of the statuettes through curvilinear figures, through the superposition of planes and images of segments of the human and animal body, in a metonymic fragmentation game, also mentioned in the linguistic discourse. Among the punished ones, the narrator mentions the toad, whose vernacular name is the guacacho, and the armadillo, whose vernacular name is quirquincho

And that there are also the "punished" ones: the toad ... the guacacho ... the toad who comes out after the rain ... This toad has been a singer who has gone to a party in the Salamanca, but he had not fulfilled the proofs of the rite, all the impossible tasks... He hid inside a guitar, and he did not follow all the ritual steps, so then, the Devil punished him, and he turned him into a toad, full of stains, do you see?]

That the armadillo, the quirquincho, has been a very lively singer, who has been invited to sing and to play the guitar in the Salamanca ...And he went to sing there, but he refused to follow the rite, and to give his soul to the Devil ... So the Devil transformed him into a, a short, tiny animal ...

[The artisan shows a statuette that represents an armadillo also in standing position, with the front legs folded curvilinearly, longer than the hind legs, similar to those of a human being, with a charango at his feet]

The verbal discourse is also here anchored in the visual code, which shows a juxtaposed combination of images of the animal world -like the figure of the head and face of the toad and the armadillo- with the morphology of the human body, and in the symbolic element of the guitar, which constitutes a symbolic condensation of the ability for music. The narrator then mentions the skills learnt by the armadillo in the

Salamanca, and such mention connects the rite both with the learning process of skills or abilities, involved in the denomination of "Salamanca", as the famous Hispanic university, and with the concept of a supernatural gift, given by the Devil who those to accept to worship him.

This analytical comment showed the narrative dimension of the rite, that serves as a principle of organization of the set of cultural representations embodied in the statuettes, which function as an iconic anchorage of verbal discourse. The narrative organization makes also room to a metapragmatic dimension dealing with the boundaries between rite, legend, belief and fictional discourse. Other distinctive feature of the narrative is the polyphonic dimension, connected with the process of legitimating the individual discourse with the plural voice of the community. The use of the reported speech is one of the main discursive strategies of such process, dealing with authority of discourse (Bauman 2004). Such polyphonic dimension is connected as well with the intertextual net of allusions to the narrative background of the whole community, which constitutes the collective intangible cultural heritage.

Another evidence of the patrimonial legitimacy of Marino Cordoba's work and art is the location of his statuettes regarding La Salamanca both in the Folkloric Museum of La Rioja and in the Museum of, the Devil of Kaunas, Lithuania. Such location influenced the very genesis of the craftsman's work, conceived as a set of pieces destined for exhibition in a museum setting. Since the decade of 1990, the statuettes regarding the Salamanca have been exhibited in the aforesaid Folkloric Museum. Regarding the disposition of such statuettes in the Museum, I documented two different periods: the first one, in 1994, and the second, in 2001. In 1994, when I went for fieldwork to La Rioja city such statuettes were exhibited in a room with a few explanatory paratexts regarding this rite, and a flexible non sequential order. This exhibition shared the space with other indigenous objects such as mortars, arrowheads, segments of vessels, silver ornaments and other objects cataloged as exponents of indigenous "material culture", assimilable, in terms of Halbwachs (1968) to the "collective memory of things". The classification of "material culture" was used by the Folkloric Museum as a qualifying parameter, which implies the reference to a collectionist paradigm of Folklore, related to the accumulation of objects from the past for the rescue of a cultural memory, according to the sense of Folklore given by William Thoms /1848 cfr) Such way of exhibiting revealed the interest of the Museum for the patrimonialization of the indigenous cultural legacy, easily recognized as "folklore" by the visitors. In a second period, which I documented in 2001, the series of statuettes has been displaced to a special room dedicated to "La Salamanca" with a narrative sequential order and specific explanatory paratexts on the different instances of the rite, combined with some others on "diaguita goddesses" such as the Yacumama / (The mother of the Water) and the Huayrapuca, the goddess of the wind in Diaguita indigenous culture, also represented by Marino Cordoba in statuettes. This is the order in which the statuettes are placed nowadays in the Museum, underlining the authorship of Marino Cordoba, as an individual artist who managed to recreate the cultural heritage of his own ethnic group in ceramic masterpieces. This is how the statuettes are displayed in concentric circles, over wooden trunks, around a "central" set whose the statuettes correspond to the "consummation" of the "deal with the devil", represented in the zoomorphic form of a goat. Such concentric arrangement follows the curvilinear shapes of the statuettes, whose bases of support made out of wooden trunks have an oval or elliptical shape. The whole set produces an effect of dynamism and movement, reinforced by the location in a place full of figures of musicians and dancers, such as the accordionist toad and a couple of dancers who, according to the corresponding paratext, dance in Salamanca, where they learned their art, in honor of the greater devil. Besides, the Museum has provided explanatory sheets that the visitor can consult during the exhibition. Such sheets suggest a "narrative" tour, proposing an order of the statuettes to guide the visitors. Such narrative order emphasizes the ritual sequence of initiation, impossible tasks and punishment, reinforcing the iconic images, dealing with zoomorphic and anthropomorphic transformations of supernatural evil forces, with the verbal discourse. Such transformations correspond, as we have seen, with a dynamic worldview, that mixes up elements of vernacular indigenous cultures such as the Diaguita one, juxtaposed with others connected with the Catholic mythology regarding devilish creatures. Such juxtaposition, reflected in the iconic images, is as well the main principle of folkloric composition, characterized by Mukarovsky as a mosaiclike structure, formed from the juxtaposition of heterogeneous semantic units (Mukarovsky 1977). Such laxity reproduces as well the flexible connections of memory, similar to the labile structure of a virtual hypertext, whose distinctive feature is the potential bifurcation in divergent itineraries, like the ones that the visitor can follow when visiting the exhibition of the statuettes of the Salamanca rite.

In this way, the Folkloric Museum of La Rioja, as a symbolic space whose function is both to preserve the cultural heritage of the local culture and to encourage new artistic expressions through cultural activities, favoured the patrimonialization process of aesthetic expressions of the social identity of the Argentinean Northwestern people, such as La Salamanca rite. In fact, it provided framing issues to the aesthetic production of the craftsman (Goffman 1992, Lotman 1978), encouraging as well a way of reception the artistic work of Marino as part of the local cultural heritage.

Other artistic manifestation connected with the Salamanca rite is the Salamanca festival, which can be considered as a performative event connected with the invention of traditions, as we will discuss in the following section.

### The Salamamca Festival



This event, which lasts five nights, has been created to spread the art and music of the local culture of Santiago del Estero province and to help, at the same time, the needy communities of La Banda, since part of the earnings of the festival are distributed among social assistance and centres, popular libraries and public local schools of that city.

In the same way as in La Rioja, in Santiago del Estero it is said that La Salamanca is a place of difficult access in the deepest part of the mountain, whose entrance leads to a wide and cavernous cave. It is said as well that who enters there without a previous knowledge, manages to earn a lot of money without any effort, as well as to obtain extraordinary abilities in playing musical instruments, in seducing women, and in enjoying all pleasures. In order to achieve this goal, the salamanquero signs a contract with the Zupay, the devil, who will grant his wishes in exchange for his or her life and soul or even for the life of one of his or her relatives.

Conceived in 1991, this festival was held for the first time in 1992 at the Club Sarmiento of the city of La Banda, a few kilometers from the capital of the province of Santiago del Estero. La Banda, birthplace of the celebration, was born in the 19th century as a small agricultural town that supplied the neighboring city of Santiago del Estero with its products. Decades later, on September 16, 1912, it was elevated to the category of city. Located on the left bank of the Río Dulce, it is only eight kilometers from the capital of the province, with which it forms, through the two bridges that connect it, an important urban conglomerate. Through the city pass the General Miter Railroad, which provides a weekly long-distance service to Buenos Aires and San Miguel de Tucumán, La Banda is one of the busiest stations on the route. Since the very beginning, La Salamanca festival has been a communitarian event held with the support of social centres, sports and social clubs that contributed in the fundraising and organization of the event. At that time, a great effort was required from the organizers - in most cases, non-profit institutions - since the resources were very few. There was not even a theatre stage, and the tents for the show have been made out of straw and cane. In its first edition, the festival offered the public food and beverage stands. In this way, the concurrents to the show has the possibility of enjoying typical dishes such as catfish, grilled dorado and chupín, among other specialties based on river fish. Year after year the event grows in concurrence, both of local assistants and of tourists from diverse points of the country, and it increases as well its prestige not only by summoning an increasing amount of national and international artists but also by the quality of the show. One of the slogans of the organizers is to expand the diversity of folk and other musical genres. In addition to the concerts of prominent national and international musicians such as the Chaqueño Palavecchino, The Carabajal group, Alex Ubago and Raly Barrionuevo, among others, the festival includes as well a musical contest, the TakiMosoj, for amateur or emerging artists who compete in the categories: female vocalist, male vocalist, vocal ensemble and duo. Regarding the stage effects, in each edition of the festival, every night a large poster with the letters LA SALAMANCA is prepared, filled with tow then lit, o simulate the salamanquero fire. In this way, each night, the festival is accompanied by fireworks which illuminate the sky of the city of La Banda, considered as "The cradle of poets and singers." In this festival, folklore and fakelore (Dorson, 1976 in Bendix 1997) –that is to say, the use of folklore by the tourism industry, connected with the “invention of traditions” discussed by the aforesaid Hobsbawm, and with the dicotomy between “genuine” and “spurious” tradition (Handler and Linnekin 1984) which is an argument for further discussion. The main point is that this festival is actually an important performative event, connected both with theatrical and ritual issues, that displays relevant aspects of social life and collective identities on a stage,<sup>2</sup> as it happens in the Salamanca festival, which is part of the cultural heritage of Northwestern Argentinean people.

<sup>2</sup> It is worth remembering the characterization of “performance” of Performance given by Schechner ( , who, following Turner, considers it as an inclusive term, which includes theatrical events as nodes on a continuum that reaches from the ritualizations of animals (including humans) through performances in everyday life –



### **Just to conclude**

Legends are part of the cultural heritage of the most different social groups, that recreate universal folk narrative matrices such as the one of the deal with the devil, in local contexts. Through contextual variations, they express the differential identity of each local social group, as it happens with the Salamanca in Northwestern Argentinean communities. Legendary discourse is closely bound to social beliefs, to the extent that one of its distinctive features is the rhetoric of believing. Legends as the Salamanca one are thus connected with belief narratives, whose boundaries with other discursive genres such as ritual discourse are extremely flexible. In créole societies such as the Argentinean one, legends show an intertwining between European cultural heritage and vernacular indigenous cultures. This blend can be easily be seen in the different versions of the Salamanca, in different channels of discourse, from oral narratives to iconic statuettes, up to performative events such as La Salamanca festival. The contexts in which these aesthetic expressions are displayed show the connection between tangible and intangible heritage, since oral versions such as the one of Marino Cordoba act as pre-texts both of iconic statuettes regarding this rite exhibited in museums and of performative musical and dancing events such as La Salamanca festival. Such event is not only a folkloric communitarian expression but also a touristic attraction which leads to consider it as fanelore, connected with a process of invention of traditions. Museums such as the Folkloric Museum of La Rioja or the Devil Museum of Kaunas, Lituania, act as symbolic spaces which favour the patrimonialization process of collective cultural memories.

In order to have a better knowledge about the life and customs of our ancestors, it is necessary to deepen in their cultural environment and legacy that we have received from them, generally, through oral transmission. Folktales and legends live in different versions and variants, transferred from generation to generation, with different names of beings and places. The boundaries between history, fiction and belief, are relevant aspects of the constructive process of legendary discourse, alluded by Marino Cordoba in a metanarrative clause of his discourse. Historic events and social beliefs are aesthetically recreated in a fictional world, in the frame of a legendary discourse. Other relevant distinction is the one between folktale, rite and legend. The ritual discourse, with its sequential order with a performative effect on the context, closely bound to social beliefs, acts as in the texts we have analyzed a a pre-text of the legend of the Salamanca, in which such beliefs are fictionally recreated. Both the thematic topics, compositional patterns and rhetoric strategies used by the narrators are organized into narrative patterns or “ folk matrices” (Palleiro 2004) which combine tale types, structural and stylistic models such as the ones of “The smith and the Devil” , aesthetically recreated in the fictional world of folktale. As the Grimms pointed out, such tales historically grounded make room to legends, oral histories and even rumors.

This itinerary through the Salamanca rite, the Salamanca legend, the Salamanca festival and the iconic statuettes of the Salamanca ceremony displayed in a museum shows that the cultural and traditional heritage of Argentinean country is still alive, having passed from generation to generation, from grandparents to grandchildren, from parents to children and so on, both in the frame of oral narratives, iconic statuettes and musical and dancing performances.

Narrative discourses such as ritual and legendary ones often explore the boundaries of reality towards the vanishing arenas of believing, in which the truth is sustained by a social consensus. Both considered as fictional trues or true fictions, such discourses offer explanations to facts and answers to questions which scientific discourse didn't provide, entering the dark zones of mystery, whose thrill is the main topic of this Conference.

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