BLOODY MARY OR KRVAVÁ MÁŘÍ? GLOBALIZATION AND CZECH CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE

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Subject(s): Anthropology

Published by: Ústav etnológie a sociálnej antropológie Slovenskej akadémie vied

Keywords: Bloody Mary, children's folklore, contemporary folklore, contemporary legend, globalization, Czech Republic

Summary/Abstract: An expressive cultural practice of invoking a ghostly female figure, most often called Bloody Mary, an important part of the folklore of children and adolescents in the West, represents a unique amalgamation of ritual practices, folk beliefs, and demonological narratives. This phenomenon, extensively studied by Western folklorists since the 1970s, is closely connected to a wider discourse of children and youth ghostlore, and interpreted as a girls' ritual reflecting prepubescent menstrual anxiety, reflection of process of ontological psychological development devoted to mastering emotion of fear of schoolchildren, or, in later adolescence, a reflexion of...
archetypal self-development processes in a Jungian sense. The paper, using data documented during longitudinal field research of Czech contemporary folklore, presents the growing popularity of this expressive practice in a Czech setting in the last fifteen years, starting with the late 1990s. Comparing the Czech situation with similar cultural processes analyzed in Sweden, Spain, and especially Russia, the paper describes the diffusion of this practice by global popular culture and its glocalization to suit peculiar Czech youth ghostlore inspired by historical personages. Reflecting global, ever-shifting contemporary culture flows, especially changes in local realities of “ethnoscapes”, “mediascapes” and “ideoscapes” during the 1990s, the practice of invoking Kravá Mary seem to be both parallel and the transformation of local practices such as schoolchildren's spiritism and horror stories of the 1970s and 1980s.
For other uses, see Bloody Mary. Bloody Mary is a ghost or witch featured in English folklore. She is said to appear in a mirror when her name is called three times or sometimes more while in a dark room, depending upon the version of the story. All languages Abkhaz Adyghe Afrikaans Ainu Akan Albanian Alsatian Altaic Arabic Aragonese Armenian Aromanian Asturian Aymara Azerbaijani Bagobo Bashkir Basque Belarusian Bulgarian Buryat Catalan Chechen Cherokee Cheyenne Chinese Chuvash Circassian Cree Crimean Tatar language Croatian Czech Danish Dolgan Dutch English Erzya Esperanto Estonian Evenki Faroese Finnish French Georgian German Greek Guarani Haitian Hebrew Hindi Hornjoserbska Hungarian Icelandic Idoma urumano Indonesian Ingush Inupiaq Irish. Varitions of the Bloody Mary Folklore. This children's game has a number of variations, including: Using names such as Bloody Mary, Hell Mary, Mary Worth, Mary Whales, Agnes, or Black Agnes. A variety of chants such as, "I believe in Mary Worth," "Bloody Mary," and "I stole/killed your baby Bloody Mary." The apparition is sometimes headless, or only blood appears. Bloody Mary, Mary Worth and Mary Whales (or Mary Wails) are all symbolic names that refer to the emotional response to these physical changes. The use of the mirror is symbolic of the girl's self image and fear of approaching physical changes. Early versions of the story suggest scratches on the cheek, drawing blood, would occur if the girl committed any sins.