Folklore Annotation Guidelines

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1 Folklore Annotation Goal and Task Framing

Folklore stories worldwide often use flora (plants) and fauna (animals) to portray different character archetypes as consistent with their culture. Our goal is to identify where flora and fauna occur in these stories, and if there are any patterns in how they are used cross-culturally as storytelling elements. For this project, we narrow our focus to identifying which flora and fauna are portrayed as protagonists and which are antagonists, as well as whether they are good, neutral, or evil.

We frame this problem as a joint span and attribute labeling task. First, we span label instances of entities corresponding to a plant or animal, like "fox", with varying levels of specificity (family, genus, species) depending on the specific wording used in the story. **Please note that this step is completely automated with an animal gazeteer to save annotation effort, and you should not add or change any of these spans.**

Second, we optionally classify each of these entities with up to two two attribute labels, PROTAG-ONIST/NEUTRAL/ANTAGONIST and GOOD/NEUTRAL/EVIL, based on how the plant/animal is used in the story. A labelled plant/animal does not need to be a character in itself - it is enough for it to simply be associated with a main character for it to be labeled a good protagonist, for example. It is possible for something to be an evil protagonist or a good antagonist.

We use the brat annotation tool to perform these tasks, and store our annotations in .ann files.
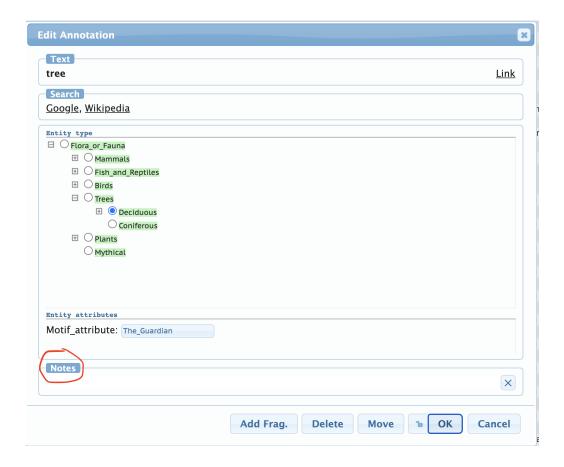
2 Folklore Corpus

Our dataset is a manually curated collection of 120 stories across six cultures (Cherokee, Filipino, Cherokee, Korean, Japanese, Seneca, Maori, and Zulu), sourced from various online sources like Project Gutenberg (Okazaki, Seneca Myths and Folktales, etc) and cultural websites (www.native-languages.org). We convert each story into a text file, and label the culture each story comes from as metadata. To download this corpus, you can simply drag the folder of text files, as well as the provided .config file, into the "data" directory in brat.

3 Flora/Fauna Tags

Again, please note that this step is completely automated, and it should show up as preannotated labels in brat. You should not add or change any of these spans, but feel free to flag any entries you believe are misidentified. These are tags indicating instances of flora/fauna. All spans will be marked for you already, and each span will be classified with an entity type as shown below. As such, for the descriptions below, only general descriptions are provided rather than explicit examples for every species.

In all instances the tags go from general to specific, with the hope that having more general tags will allow us to tie together similar flora/fauna and will allow for more vague references in stories that are less scientific. If tagging of flora/fauna appears unclear or incorrect, please add a note to the tag using brat's notes option of the bottom of the annotation editor, as shown below, but there is no need to correct the annotation.

3.1 Flora

The Flora is split into trees, shrubs, flowers, ferns, moss, algae, crops, and mushrooms. These are not as in depth as the fauna, but cover many flora and their appearance in stories.

3.1.1 Trees

Trees include tall plants with a central trunk or plants that seem tree-like in the public persona. They're split into deciduous, coniferous, and fern.

3.1.2 Crops

This is common foodstuffs, such as corn or wheat. Plants that are known for flowers and food are placed under crops, such as wild onions.

3.1.3 Shrubs

Tree-like plants that do not have a central trunk.

3.1.4 Flower

Common flowering plants, such as daisies, sunflowers, and roses.

3.1.5 Moss

Moss only has the label moss.

3.1.6 Mushrooms

Lichen and mushrooms, for simplification, as lichen are both algae and mushrooms, but if lichen appears in stories it's usually to indicate edible species and treated as mushrooms.

3.1.7 Algae

Algae only has the label algae.

3.2 Fauna

3.2.1 Mammals

For mammals, if we are subdividing them further we are explicitly stating so. Otherwise the examples given are to assist in understanding what creatures belong to what category.

- Lagomorph : rabbits, hares, pika, bunnies. We will group all this into lagomorph. This family of animals is distinct for their poop-eating trait.

- Bear

- Canine

- Mustelid : are the weasel family. Think badgers, wolverines, pine martens, and otters. They're some of the best hunters on earth, are very smart, shy around humans, and curious.

- Rodent : Rats, Mice, other (beavers/capybaras, etc)

- Ungulate : These are hoofed animals. We are subdividing this into even-toed and odd-toed hooves. Odd-Toed would include zebras, rhinos, horses, donkeys. Even-Toed would include bovines, deer, giraffes, pigs, camels.

- Elephant :Including elephants and hyraxes.

- Feline : domestic, non-domestic.

- Bat : Any bats.

- Marsupial : have pouches for their young. The most famous is the kangaroo.

- Primate : human and ape, with the human tag only used to track mythological creatures that may be part human part animal.

- Marine-Mammal : Creatures like whales, dolphins, and manatees.

- Other-Mammal : Creatures like raccoons or platypuses which defy easy categorization.

3.2.2 Marine

- Fish

- Chondrichthye

- Decapod

3.2.3 Reptiles

- Snake

- Turtle

- Serpent

- Lizard

3.2.4 Molluscs

3.2.5 Small Creatures

- Insects

- Spiders

3.2.6 Birds

- Stringiform (owls)

- Raptor

- Corvid (raven, crow, Clark's nutcracker)

- Fowl

- Aquatic Bird (gulls, herons, etc)

- Scavenger

- Columbidae (doves, pidgeons)

- Small non-aquatic bird - brown/not brown

- Medium non-aquatic bird - brown/not brow

- Large non-aquatic bird - brown/not brow

4   Archetype Tags

This is your main annotation task, archetype labeling. We classify each flora and fauna with up to two attribute labels, PROTAGONIST/DEFAULT/ANTAGONIST and GOOD/NEUTRAL/EVIL. Both attributes are optional, meaning you do not have to label every entity with two attributes if it is unclear or there is not enough information. Please only annotate entities that have been recognized by the automatic classifier - you can access the attribute dropdown at the bottom of the annotation menu when you select any flora/fauna annotation.

Only annotate a single span of each character, even if they occur multiple times in a story. Try making the span that you want to annotate closest to the defining act of that character (such as when they slay a monster, or distract the protagonist), so that it is placed in context. Do not label misclassified spans.

4.1   Protagonist/Antagonist

These tags serve to tell us the role of characters in the story to determine their importance to the narrative.

4.1.1 Protagonist

Description	A protagonist is a central character or limited set of central characters. The story revolves around or follows this character and we are often rooting for them. There will be people or obstacles pitted against an internal or external goal of theirs, which they need to overcome.
	An internal goal is often a trait they grapple with. For example, a character may start a story afraid of cats. They don't explicitly say 'I want to overcome my fear of cats', they're too embarrassed to admit it, but every day they have nightmares about cats and they don't want nightmares anymore. This is an internal goal to overcome fear.
	An external goal is making something happen in the world. Maybe the character also needs to create a dress for a masquerade. This is an external goal, they're making something physical.
	It's important to note the protagonist may do evil things or be morally questionable. They may even be an unwilling protagonist and want nothing to do with their own story. Maybe this dress-maker despises sewing, and the cat king of the forest has coerced them into making the dress for the annual forest masquerade. The protagonist burns down the forest in retribution and in return overcomes their cat phobia, and gosh darn it you're cheering because the cat was so mean, and the protagonist has developed courage!
	Is the protagonist a good person for burning down a forest and ruining the habitat and home of the forest animals? This doesn't matter. If the story centers around this person as the main character and you're (probably) rooting for them then it's the protagonist. It is important not to confuse 'good' with protagonist and 'evil' with antagonist. Think: is this a main character we're following around?
	If there is someone who helps a main character, that is not necessarily a protagonist for this task. That is a neutral character who helps the protagonist. For example, this dress-maker has a knitting friend who teaches them to sew. The story does not center around the knitter, so they are not a protagonist, even if they are still important to the journey.

Example	One fine snowy day, <mark>Bear</mark> was walking through the snow in the forest. When he walked up on a little hill and stood up on his hind legs he was so much taller than anything else he could see, that he was very proud. Bear loved to brag about how splendid he was,so he thumped himself on the chest and roared, "I'M THE BIGGEST ANIMAL IN THE FOREST!" And nobody made a sound, because Bear really was awfully big. Bear got an itchy spot on his back, so he walked through the snow to a little tree, leaned against it and wiggled around. While he was scratching, the whole tree broke with a snap! Bear was so impressed with how strong he was, once more he roared out, "I'M THE STRONGEST ANIMAL IN THE FOREST!" And nobody said anything, because Bear really was very strong. Bear began to run down off that little hill. Now, every human child learns very early that you can run like the wind downhill. But Bear was so impressed with how fast he could run, he skidded to a halt by a little frozen lake and roared, "I'M THE FASTEST ANIMAL IN THE FOREST!" Then Bear heard a little voice pipe up from the edge of the lake, "No you're not, Bear! I'm a lot faster than you!" "WHAT?!" Bear couldn't believe his ears. Then he couldn't believe his eyes! Because that voice little green water turtle, who was sticking his head up through a hole in the ice. From the Cherokee "Bears Race with Turtle". This is an example of a protagonist that you may be tempted to tag as antagonist. The bear is the protagonist here, a boastful, arrogant protagonist who is annoying enough you might think they're the antagonist. The turtle would be the antagonist.
Example	*As he was crossing a river he met an* <mark>*alligator*</mark> *which called out to him: "Where are you going, "Dogedog?" "To the cock-fight at Magsingal," replied the man as he fondly stroked the rooster. "Wait, and I will go with you," said the alligator; and he drew himself out of the water.* From the Filipino "The Dodgedog." The alligator offers and then joins the dodgedog on his quest, but because the alligator is not the main character, we do not tag it as the protagonist.
Example	*A little boy was walking down a path and he came across a rattlesnake. The rattlesnake was getting old. He asked, "Please little boy, can you take me to the top of the mountain? I hope to see the sunset one last time before I die." The little boy answered "No Mr. Rattlesnake. If I pick you up, you'll bite me, and I'll die."* From the Cherokee "Boy and the Rattlesnake". Here the boy has the goal to go on a walk. The rattlesnake says it could bite the boy, which could kill the boy. At the end of the story it does bite the boy. For much of the story you're left wondering who is the protagonist, if the boy and the snake are protagonists together, and may be tempted to tag the snake as a protagonist. But in the end the snake does bite the boy, which goes against the boy's goal of survival/walking, and therefore the boy is a protagonist while the snake is an antagonist.
Example	*They agreed that such a trickster had no right to enter the race at all, so they gave the horns to the* <mark>*Deer*</mark>*, who was admitted to be the best runner, and he has worn them ever since.* From the Cherokee "How the Deer got his horns," even though the Deer doesn't actually do anything to be a hero of the story and is simply victimized (the race never even happened), they are the central character for which the story is about.

4.1.2 Antagonist

Description	An adversary of the protagonist who plays a large role in the story. Their goals are somehow different from the goals of the protagonist and come in conflict with them. We are often not rooting for these goals. The most classic idea of an antagonist is the old school villain, but it's important not to equate evil/badness with antagonism for this task. Take the dress-making protagonist, but let's setup a new scenario for them. This time they want to make a dress for their younger sister who has never owned a pretty article of clothing in her life. However, their neighbor knows this, but wants to buy all the fabric in the village to sew quilts for the elderly in town anyways. Is this neighbor a big bad evil villain? Probably not, but since they're buying all the fabric they're actively against the protagonist's goal - how will the protagonist sew a dress ? Maybe this fabric-buying neighbor is an absentminded person who doesn't realize the village economy is breaking due to excessive quilt charity. If the neighbor creates more they'll draw the ire of the prime minister who wants to develop a dress-making business sector to temper the enthusiastic quilters, so the protagonist needs to stop the quilt-maker and sew a dress. Is the quilt-maker a 'bad person'? It doesn't matter, their goal is not one you're rooting for and it's a huge hurdle towards the protagonist's goal of making a dress. The questions to ask are: does this character's goal go against the protagonist's? Are they an important character? Do they foil the main character? Are we hoping for them to fail?
Example	*So, the Creator sent the Bee, but the Bee had no stinger. Down came the Bee and it found a suitable tree in which, they could build their hive, live in, produce honey, multiply and feed its young. Soon the people came to the Bee and asked for some of the sweet syrup and the Bee gave each person a container full. The people loved the syrup and greedily ate it, then went back to the Bee for more. But the Bee replied, "I have no more to give you for a while. You will have to wait." The people were not happy, as they craved the sweet syrup. So, they called upon the Creator, saying, "the Bee does not give us enough of the golden syrup. We want more!!!"* This is from the Cherokee "How the Honey Bee got their Stinger". The Bee is the protagonist whose goal is to make honey and thrive. The people go against this goal, they're demanding more honey than the bee can make. Therefore, the people are antagonists.
Example	*An' as him gwine away, pile up dry trash an' light up de head wid fire. Dead shake head when de plat' burn off; and shake again, de odder pla't pop off; an' tak up him bow an' arrow an' run after* <mark>Anansi</mark>*."* From the Jamaican "Anansi and Brother Dead," even though Anansi (spider) is playing tricks in the story, they are still the protagonist and not the antogonist because they are the main character who is playing tricks for fun against the devil. This is the same kind of protagonist as Loki could be in a story in Norse Mythology. They are not neutral or antagonistic, even though their morals may seem to lean evil or neutral at times, as the story centera around the character.

4.1.3 Default (neutral)

Description	Sometimes our characters serve other purposes in the plot besides being a central character to follow or a character pitted against the protagonist. They could assist the protagonist towards their goal, or they could assist the antagonist. There are also stories with very unclear protagonists and antagonists, that the protagonist could easily also be the antagonist and visa-versa. When tagging for a neutral character, first ensure they're not a character the story revolves around and therefore not a protagonist. Next, ensure they're not a major character foiling the protagonist in some way. Using the sewing and knitting story from the antagonist description, here are a few potential neutral characters: -Am character who helps the protagonist, but who is only mentioned once or twice. Maybe there's a knitter who also wants to overthrow the quilters and gives the protagonist leftover sewing thread. -A sidekick who does something to foil the protagonist's plans, but they didn't mean to or want to, and it wasn't their main goal. They would be neutral, as their goals weren't opposed to the protagonist in an obvious way, they're still aligned with the protagonist. Maybe the knitter grows close with the protagonist but needs to buy a quilt one day because moths ate theirs. -Characters who are more set-dressing than characters. They may not even speak. They're just there. Maybe the prime minister never appears in the story as a physical person and is only there to drive the stakes of stopping the quilt-makers. -When there are two or three potential protagonists that all center around foiling eachother's goals, which blurs the lines of protagonism and antagonism.
Example	*"A Raccoon passing a Wolf one day made several insulting remarks, until at last the Wolf became angry and turned and chased him. The Raccoon ran his best and managed to reach a tree by the river side before the Wolf came up. He climbed the tree and stretched out on a limb overhanging the water. When the Wolf arrived he saw the reflection in the water, and thinking it was the Raccoon he jumped at it and was nearly drowned before he could scramble out again, all wet and dripping. He lay down on the bank to dry and fell asleep, and while he was sleeping the Raccoon came down the tree and plastered his eyes with dung."* From the Cherokee 'How the Red Bird got it's Color'. In this story the raccoon and wolf are equally protagonist and antagonistic figures. It is not clear which one the story is centering and they're existing to foil eachother. Therefore, they are neutral, which encompasses both their protagonistic and antagonistic qualities.
Example	*Then Momotaro got up and the dog followed. For a long time they walked over the hills and through the valleys. As they were going along an animal came down from a tree a little ahead of them. The creature soon came up to Momotaro and said: "Good morning, Momotaro! You are welcome in this part of the country. Will you allow me to go with you?"* From the Japenese "Momatoro," as mentioned in the protagonist section, the dog here would be labeled as default because they are not the main character/protagonist, but the sidekick. Similarly, we would label the tree as default because it doesn't serve that significant of a role in the story.

4.2   Good/Evil

The purpose of these tags are to give sentiment to how characters seem to be morally presented in the story.

It's very important here to be sensitive to bias and read with the most empathetic lens you can. Maybe you (the reader) are a vegetarian and find the act of killing animals reprehensible. You're tagging a Blackfeet story on a bison-hunter who is presented as a protagonist and provider for their family, who won't survive the harsh northern Montana winters without bison meat. Unless the story goes onto the negative aspects of killing bison and shows this as a net bad for the main character's welfare or overall community, then this tag would likely be good, even if you personally consider hunting evil.

It's not always possible to recognize this kind of bias, and of course there will be differences of opinion on good/evil, but do your best to maintain mindfulness of the cultures and contexts of the stories.

4.2.1   Good

Description	Are the actions of the character lauded? Are the character's goals overall helpful to the community or the character's overall happiness? Do you finish the story and go, 'wow, what a hero!'? These are all indicators of good.
Example	*Along came a little brown bird through the bushes and heard the Wolf crying and asked what was the matter. The Wolf told his story and said, "If you will get my eyes open, I will show you where to find some nice red paint to paint yourself." "All right," said brown bird; so he pecked at the Wolf's eyes until he got off all the plaster. Then the Wolf took him to a rock that had streaks of bright red paint running through it, and the little bird painted himself with it, and has ever since been a Redbird.* -From the Cherokee 'How the Red Bird got Its Color'. The bird helps the wolf, and therefore the bird is bringing the wolf happiness and is good. The wolf helps the bird, but only out of necessity to fulfill a selfish desire, not necessarily out of goodwill, so the wolf is neutral in this story.

4.2.2 Evil

Description	Does the character's goals and actions have negative effects on a community or on other characters? Does the story present the character's actions as bad and vilify them? Do you finish the story and have clear distaste for the character? These are all indications of evil. Maybe the evil character does one or two good or neutral things, but your gut instinct is to say 'this is a bad person, and it seems the story wants us to see them as bad'. Then tag them as evil.
Example	*Far away from here to the northeast of Japan there is an island in the sea. This island is the stronghold of a band of devils. I have often heard how they invade this land, kill and rob the people, and carry off all they can find.* From the Japanese 'Momotaro'. The demon devils invade, kill, and rob, which takes away happiness and health of a community in a pretty significant and extreme manner.
Example	*An' as him gwine away, pile up dry trash an' light up de head wid fire. Dead shake head when de plat' burn off; and shake again, de odder pla't pop off; an' tak up him bow an' arrow an' run after* <mark>Anansi</mark>*."* From the Jamaican "Anansi and Brother Dead," even though Anansi (spider) is, as mentioned in 4.1.2, the protagonist, we will label tricksters like this as evil, because they are still clearly doing morally objectionable things.

4.2.3 Neutral

Description	Is the character set dressing who does nothing of substance to deem good or bad? That's the clearest neutral tag. However, there are characters whose actions don't seem to help or hurt anyone. Maybe a character does something so mundane it doesn't ring as good/evil, or maybe their actions help one part of the community while hurting another part of the community. There are also characters who both help and hurt in abundance and blur the lines between good and evil. Many tricksters fall in this category. These would all be neutral.
Example	This is a great hero introduction here: *Many, many years ago there lived a good old* <mark>man</mark> *who had a wen like a tennis-ball growing out of his right cheek. This lump was a great disfigurement to the old man, and so annoyed him that for many years he spent all his time and money in trying to get rid of it.* From the Japanese "How an Old Man Lost his Wen". Is it good he wants to get rid of his wen? Is it bad? It's unclear, we don't really associate clearing up skin lesions with moral goodness or badness.