

Anansi comes to Holland

The trickster spider as a dynamic icon of ethnic identity¹

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Abstract

In the following article, the famous spider stories with Anansi as the main character will be approached from an ethno-cultural angle. In this article, Anansi, a cultural and narrative expression of the Dutch Creole community, is regarded as a particular expression of the cultural identity of a specific group. In the context of the historical dynamics and the metamorphoses that this narrative character has undergone in the past, this study primarily emphasizes the contemporary narrative material in the Netherlands. On the basis of the cultural analysis of a corpus of orally-transmitted stories and a number of folktale illustrations, we will examine the position the spider presently occupies in the cultural identity formation of the Dutch Creoles.

Introduction

Anansi, the crafty spider, outsmarts everybody in the animal world. He is a gluttonous gourmet, a lazybones who prefers to remain lying in his hammock all day and who will try anything to fill his stomach. He is selfish, immoral and lascivious, and he does not shy away from breaking taboos to reach his goals. But at the same time, he is a master in the art of living, who manages to escape from the awkward situations his gluttony gets him in to, using his cunning tricks. Time and again, he manages to come away unscathed and to survive his predicaments.

The aforementioned is a brief characterization of the villainous and clever Anansi, the main character of the Caribbean spider stories. He is a liminal character, a paradoxical borderline case: he is constantly situated between two worlds, belonging to the establishment on the one hand, while incessantly withdrawing from that same establishment on the other. The stories about Anansi originate from West Africa and travelled along with the slaves to the Caribbean area. With the deportation to the New World, Anansi changed from a divine trickster into a more human trickster with a family. His stories were and are an integral part of

the narrative culture of the Creole inhabitants of the Caribbean islands in Central America and the surrounding parts of the American mainland.² As a consequence of the twentieth-century migration to Europe and some other factors, Anansi gradually transforms into a world citizen.

This article focuses attention on a study into the Anansi stories of the Creole inhabitants of the Netherlands, who took along their animal tales from Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles to the Netherlands – the former colonial ruler – during the large migration waves in the twentieth century. Within just a few decades, the spider has shown he is capable of standing his ground in the Netherlands too: Anansi has become a popular story character among both the ethnic Creole groups and white Dutch admirers. For Creoles, Anansi has a clear symbolic value: the spider represents a link with their past and roots, and Anansi increasingly symbolizes their ethnic identity in a multicultural society. The stories about Anansi have, however, also reached a Dutch audience: through storytellers and theatrical performances, thanks to children’s books and the attention paid to the stories in schools. Anansi even managed to work his way into the Dutch “canon with the small c”, a canon containing stories and songs, which attempts to join in with the fifty windows of the historical Canon of the Netherlands, for the benefit of education. Finally we can observe a growing interest in Anansi in Dutch scholarly circles. The research presented in this article sheds a new light on the many possibilities for the interpretation of the Anansi stories. It regards the stories as cultural manifestations carrying a specific cultural meaning for the present Surinamese and Antillean communities in the Netherlands. This research does not only include the animal tales, but also the folktale illustrations of Anansi, because today’s specific cultural value of the spider can also be demonstrated in such visual means of expression. After all, both the folktale illustrations and the stories themselves are deeply rooted in the surrounding culture. They express the cultural identity of the artist and of (part of) the intended audience, and as such, they may serve as a basis for cultural analysis.

The research corpus was formed in part on the basis of the website and the DVD of *Anansi Masters* (a digital platform project focusing on Anansi stories). On both the (Dutch) website www.anansimasters.net and their double DVD from 2008, entitled *Waarom alle verhalen Anansi’s naam dragen* (“Why all stories carry Anansi’s name”), a selection of video recordings of contemporary spider stories in oral circulation can be found. For our research, we mainly concentrated on the recordings made in 2006 and 2007 in Amsterdam and Rotterdam of animal tales told by Surinamese, Antillean and Dutch storytellers. For additional recorded story material we occasionally consulted the various text editions and the Dutch Folktale Database of the Meertens Instituut in Amsterdam.³ The visual materials we studied originate from the children’s books by Noni Lichtveld, a well-known contemporary Dutch-Surinamese illustrator of Anansi stories, and from the recently published *Hoe Nanzi de koning beetnam* (“How Nanzi tricked the king”), an

illustrated bilingual reissue in Dutch and Papiamentu of Antillean spider stories previously recorded in Papiamentu.⁴

The analysis is based on Geert Hofstede’s framework for assessing culture (2006, 22). Within this framework, Hofstede developed a set of instruments for the description of several different cultural manifestations. He proposes to conceptualize the culture of a specific group in a hierarchical way, in an onion diagram of symbols, heroes, rituals and values. The symbols, heroes and rituals are externally perceptible and refer to the underlying norms and values of the culture in question. This framework has been further enhanced by an extra layer pertaining to “locations”, as proposed by Beheydt (2009, 12-13). As it happens, locations of action have a substantial function in the process of the cultural attribution of meaning, both in these stories and these drawings. The interpretation of the stories and the images on these four levels will lead to the search for cultural meanings in the spider stories and will make clear that cultural identity is a process of dynamic attribution.



Image 1: Anansi comes to Amsterdam. Drawing by Ernest Hofwijks (Tjon-A-Ten 1986, 23).

The proposition we put forward is that such animal tales and illustrations can be read culturally and that they are carriers and transmitters of particular cultural

values for the narrative community. We intend to demonstrate that contemporary Anansi stories and illustrations represent a specific cultural value to the Creole storytellers and audience in the Netherlands. For this reason, we will also briefly look into Creole culture and history, and the cultural context in which these stories have been handed down through the ages. We will then discuss the historical development of Anansi from an African mythological figure to a Dutch folktale hero. After this, we will present the research on the basis of the contemporary material.

Creoles in the Netherlands

The approximately 400,000 Creole inhabitants of the Netherlands have been an important cultural factor during the last decades. They largely migrated from the former overseas colonies, Surinam and the Antilles. The majority of the migrants arrived during the second half of the twentieth century. There has been the occasional Creole in the Netherlands since as early as the seventeenth century, but upto World War II, their number remained very limited. After the war, the “myth of the Dutch paradise” (Kempen 2002, 226) attracted an increasing number of people from the Creole middle classes to the European continent, in the hope of better living conditions and upward social mobility.

After the declaration of independence of Surinam on 25 November 1975, a large migration wave towards the North Sea coast ensued. The obligatory choice between Surinamese and Dutch citizenship, the uncertainty about the future, the adverse economic situation and the tensions between the different social communities led to this exodus to Europe (Van Oostrom 2006-2007, volume B, 100). Large numbers of immigrants came from all ranks of society, but the lower, non-educated social groups were not too well-prepared for an adjustment to Dutch society. Precisely during these years, the Dutch economy was facing a crisis with a tight job market. Many immigrants who did not succeed in finding suitable employment ended up in the margins of society and / or became involved with crime. For this reason, the Surinamese were increasingly viewed as a problematic group in the Netherlands in this period (Bakker, Dalhuisen, Hassankhan [et al.] 1993, 163). The present situation is different, though; there are positive tendencies in the socio-cultural integration of the Surinamese community (Liem & Veld 2005, 2). Many Surinamese people have found decent jobs, we can discern a positive trend in their educational development and the social integration of large sections of these immigrant groups can be called a success (Kempen 2002, 938). This integration takes place with the retention of their own identity. The Surinamese today, like the Antilleans, are still a closely-knit social group possessing their own customs, a rich cultural heritage and a consciously manifested cultural identity.

According to the Polish cultural theoretician Smolicz, certain societies contain some specific factors that keep recurring as culturally-determining elements. These factors are then repeatedly called upon to identify the culture in question and subsequently they are promoted as criteria for the preservation of the culture (Beheydt 2009, 8). The historical tradition is one such foundation the members of a common culture can appeal to. The *common past* is the basis of the cultural identity of a group, and serves as the embedding of the national memory and as the justification for the value system (Beheydt 2009, 8). For the Creole communities, the slave past is still a vital anchor point for the establishment of their cultural identity and it is still very much alive in the collective memory.⁵ Some clear evidence of this is the *Keti Koti*, the commemoration of the abolition of slavery (1 July 1863), which is celebrated every year with great festivities – e.g. the Kwaku Summer Festival in Amsterdam is linked to this, even though it takes place over a longer period. *Keti Koti* has become a vital instrument in the construction of the cultural identity of the Creoles. By means of theatrical performances and stories, the past is commemorated and relived every year. The joy about the freedom and the pride of the resistance of the ancestors is celebrated with music and dance. The frequent reliving of the heroic deeds of the forefathers has provided the past with a didactic exemplary function (Beheydt 2009, 23). The entire celebration is imbued with a sense of “moral historicism”, which attempts to convey the value of freedom and power for the present generation in an exemplary fashion. In this process of commemoration, the slaves (the original ancestors) belong to the “*exempla virtutis*”; the positive role models (Beheydt 2009, 11), whereas the Dutch oppressors are presented as negative heroes; “*exempla contraria*”.

Apart from history, *language* is a universal factor of identity establishment. The ethnic language of the Dutch Creoles from Surinam is Sranan Tongo or simply Sranan. Although this language is decreasingly used by the second-generation immigrants and Dutch takes over the role as the primary language, Sranan can still function as an important identity reinforcer as we will delve into later in this paper. Language is a cultural element capable of creating solidarity, but also exclusion: those who speak the same language are included, but the groups which do not are out (Beheydt 2009, 8). Sranan, the result of the combination of the West-African languages that travelled with the slaves to the New World, pre-eminently embodied this function. As it happened, the language was an identity marker and a shared value among the Surinamese slaves, and even though the slave masters also occasionally had to speak “Neger-Engelsch” (the former designation of Sranan, which literally translates as “Negro English”; another historical pejorative synonym is “Taki-Taki”), it remained the language of the slaves, which they used to partially exclude the colonizers from their communication. Until the mid-twentieth century, the language had an exclusively oral status. It was not until the development of a Surinamese cultural self-awareness in the 1950s that people began to appreciate and consciously cultivate Sranan. The prestige of Sranan vis-

à-vis colonial Dutch began to grow; it gained the status of a literary language. Like so often, the codification of the language was an act of confirming people's cultural identity. For the Creoles in the Netherlands, the use of this language equally signifies a choice and a confirmation of their own identity. The same applies for the language of the Antilleans: Papiamentu still plays a marking and an identifying role, even though Dutch as their spoken language gradually gains territory in the Netherlands.

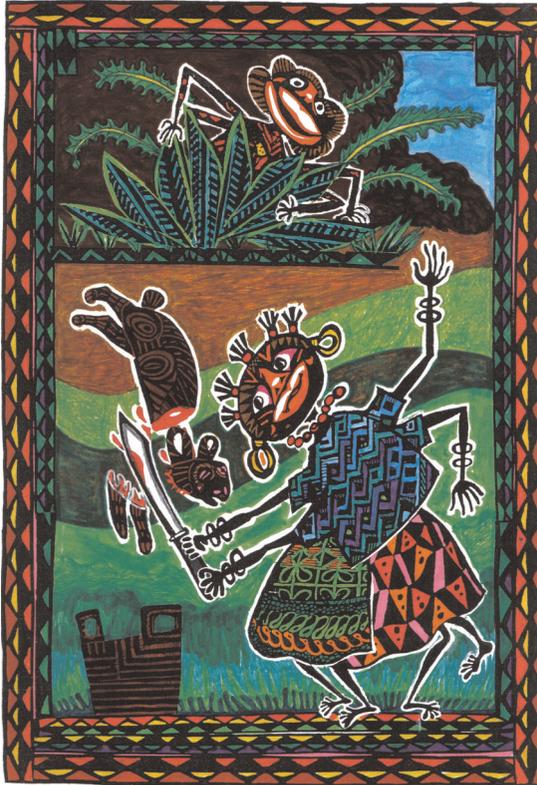


Image 2: Trickster Anansi has found a way to kill his fellow animals. What seldom happens, here does happen in the story “Smarter than Anansi” by Johan Ferrier: wife Akuba is Anansi’s accomplice and skillfully cuts up Mat Konkoni. Drawing by Noni Lichtveld (Ferrier 2010, 80).

For the approach to folktale illustrations in this article, it is important to briefly consider the role of art as a specific expression of cultural identity. Folktale illustrations, like paintings, are a reflection of the personality of the maker and of the time and the culture in which they were made. In order to gain an insight into the way in which this reflection takes place, we will have to put the illustrations back into their proper context. To be able to interpret art within its own semiotic sys-

tem, with all its social and cultural denotations, it is necessary to try to see it through the eyes of its contemporaries (Geertz 1973, quoted in Beheydt 2009, 4). In the terminology of Michael Baxandall, one has to observe art with the “period eye”, which is to say with the visual equipment and with the expectations of the intended audience (Beheydt 2009, 68). This theory does not only apply to folktale illustrations, but also to the folktales themselves. After all, as instruments of cultural transmission, they provide an insight into the social background, the cultural experience and the expectations of the intended audience. In this research, we will show that changes in the “period eye” are capable of influencing the stories. The spider stories moved to the Netherlands from an originally African and subsequently Caribbean cultural environment, causing the “period eye” and the stories to change. The “contemporary eye” of both the stories and the drawings has now become that of the members of a multicultural society, in which understanding other cultures does not come automatically and oftentimes requires effort.

Anansi

Anansi, the paradoxical main character of a large number of Caribbean animal tales occupies a special position in narrative culture. In historical perspective, he is a proto-character, archetypal and originally mythological. The Anansi stories can be counted among the trickster tales – which occur in various cultures – with sympathetic yet subversive tricksters as heroes; e.g. Reynard the Fox and Till Eulenspiegel in Western Europe and Nasreddin Hodja in the Middle East. In a great many cultures, there is the “clever underdog” as an often selfish or sociopathic outsider, as an antihero in the margins of society (De Souza 2003) having one adventure after the other. These crafty and often eloquent characters try to hold their ground in life with humour and without scruples (Van Lierop-Debrauwer 2006, 23). As characters they do not give evidence of any sort of inner growth. Their living conditions are characteristic too: they live in poverty, in a context of repressed social discontent and unrest. Anansi is (just like Reynard the Fox) the spiritual equivalent of many roguish animal characters from the oral tradition of several different peoples, such as the Indonesian mouse-deer Kantjil, the African Jekyll, the Afro-American Brer Rabbit and the Indian-American Coyote (Meder 2007b, Geider 2009). In these tales, human society is shown in the mirror of the animal world. In addition, they always contain a critical and a parodic element (Van Gorp 1978, 22). All of these trickster animals are “crafty and derisive to the point of cruelty”, characteristics which are also some of Anansi’s principal features. It seems likely that the character of the both sympathetic and contrary trickster is a universal presence in many different, widely divergent narrative cultures. It must be noted, though, that the character of the trickster is subject to content-related and formal-structural shifts as a result of the influence of several different cultural-historical conditions, and that the tricksters are beginning to display an

increasing number of culture-specific characteristics (Van Gorp 1978, 15; see also Fernandes 2008). In the following paragraphs, we will look into the changes the Anansi figure has undergone over time and from one cultural environment to the next.

Divine trickster

As stated before, Anansi originally was a West-African animal tale character. The stories of the spider are known in the narrative culture of the Ashanti people in many different African countries, like Ghana, Ivory Coast, Togo, Sierra Leone and Liberia (Meder 2007b). The spider is named Ananse or Kweku Ananse there, and has a strongly mythological character. His character links up with the religious world view of the African peoples and various divine qualities are attributed to him. Sometimes he acts as the creator of mankind or as he who brings knowledge and diseases to the world. Furthermore, he possesses the potential for divine creation. In other cases, he appears alongside the heavenly god of Nyankopon, and functions as an intermediary between God and man. In these old stories, he frequently ascends to heaven via his cobweb wire to convey a message or questions of the people to God before returning with an answer.⁶ In present-day Africa, he is still a figure in direct contact with God, e.g. in the story of the Ghanaian storyteller Kojo Anim on Anansi Masters. The folktale explains why all stories begin with Anansi's name. It so happens that all folktales in Ghana are called Anansi tales, even when the spider does not make any appearance in them. Since Anansi has performed an almost impossible task, God has decided that from then on, all tales should begin with his name. The dialogue between Anansi and God at the beginning of the tale is characteristic for the relationship between the two. It goes as follows:

“A long time ago, there lived a person called Kweku Anansi. In the time when every story began with God's name. One day, Kweku Anansi said to God: ‘God, you are the oldest. And you take care of us all. Children are always obliged to mention your name before every story. This is not very nice. Wouldn't it be better to mention the name of an unimportant person like me?’”

Anansi's liminal position between two worlds is an essential characteristic which was already present in the African tales. He is a cheat and a benefactor at the same time, divine as well as human, bringer of good and evil deeds to the earth.⁷ These traits make him a typical representative of the trickster or benefactor. Such mythological double figures have been encountered in the narrative cultures of highly diverse peoples from Africa to North America. Tricksters are almost exclusively animal figures, possessing contradictory character traits that are partially protohuman, partially superhuman. As protohuman creatures, they are driven by

the most elementary urges of hunger and sexuality, and will shun no means to satisfy their needs. They usually reach their goals at the expense of others, but they also regularly fall victim to their own tricks. Their strategy can be summarized as “a maximization of short-term gain at the expense of long-term social cohesion” (De Souza 2003, 342). According to the psychological interpretation of C.G. Jung, the archetype of the trickster represents the dark side of the psyche; the uncivilized, immoral, wrong and evil side of someone’s personality (Jung 2003, 170).

Despite the immoral tricks, the African spider tales were regarded as a means of transmitting ancient knowledge and morals to younger generations. They were a very important source of socialization in the norms and values of society and had to contribute to the continuity of the cultural transmission. By displaying undesirable behaviour and transgressing the borders of the established social norms, Anansi redefined the values of the social system in the sense of “don’t do it like this”. In actual fact, he functioned simultaneously as a positive role model because of his unequalled art of survival, and as a negative example because of his outrageous tricks.



Image 3: In the story “Tekumbé Timbé” by Johan Ferrier, Anansi is the victim. He has a cacodemon on his back and can no longer do what he likes best: eating. He visits a lukuman (clairvoyant) to get rid of the cacodemon. Drawing by Noni Lichtveld (Ferrier 2010, 119).

Human survivor

During the slave trade, the spider tales ended up in various countries in Central America and the Caribbean as cultural heritage and immaterial possession of the slaves. As with the languages of the slaves, the animal tales underwent a radical process of creolization. The stories were creatively adapted to the new environment, mingled with indigenous and European elements, but nevertheless retained a considerable number of African characteristics. The wide variation in name-giving illustrates this process of acculturation. The spider's original name, Ananse, lives on nowadays in numerous variations: Brer Nancy, Aunt Nancy, Nanancy, Anansi, Ba Anansi, Banansi or Compa Nanzi (Meder 2007b; Arduin 2008). In Surinam, the spider stories were called *Anansitoris*, and on the Antilles people called them *Cuentanan di Nanzi*.

In his new habitat, an important change in the role and the character of the spider has taken place, which could be characterized as demythologization and secularization (Van Duin 2003, 192, Ronhaar-Rozema 1979, 262-264, Van Kempen 2002, 244; Meder 2007b). In the Caribbean region, Anansi loses his divine status as well as his contact with the god Nyankopon; he becomes an ordinary worldly and earthbound character with a family. The king replaces god as his mighty opponent. The intrigues and the motives, however, remain the same, and the spider is still an ambiguous trickster who transgresses all norms in order to gratify his desires. In the context of slavery, the element of "survival" is emphasized more strongly. Anansi is the small, powerless spider, who manages to hold his ground in the imposing animal kingdom, and who successfully hides from those in power whenever he has been up to something. According to some researchers, the character of the spider functions as a provider of comfort and support within a system of oppression and his stories are meant to assist the slaves in their struggle for survival (Van Duin 2003, 186, De Souza 2003, 345, 355). This shift in the interpretation of the spider character clearly shows that cultural manifestations gain new meanings in the historical dynamics of cultural identity. According to recent interpretations, a divine trickster with a religious function develops into a comforter with survival skills who rebels against the establishment to boot.

"And then comes slavery, of course. The people were taken and scattered over the Caribbean area and the south of North America. And then Anansi got another function, right. I thought it was a very important function he then got. All these people could take with them were their thoughts. 'Cause nobody can take those from you. And in those thoughts they went back to their motherlands, of course, and turned Anansi into some kind of hero." (Arduin 2008)

It is unknown when and how this shift in the interpretation of Anansi occurred. It is sometimes assumed that this change in the function and meaning of the folktale character would be just a projection in hindsight (Meder 2007b). Depending on the time, the location and the audience of the tale cultural objects gain new meanings, which would support the changing cultural identity by the use of stories. As a result of the change of the cultural environment and the intended audience, certain characteristics lose their strength, and new layers of meaning are assigned. It goes without saying that this labelling can only be discovered retrospectively.

Frequently, a connection is made between the Anansi stories and slavery, in which the spider tales are interpreted in the perspective of protest with respect to inequality and oppression. Undoubtedly, the animal tales offered the possibility to “vent feelings of unease by means of a story, which is supposed to take place in a different world” (Baart 1983, 216). The animal tales are thus attributed with the additional function of protest. “In a society in which the powerful ones often oppress the weaker ones, they are a means to protest against the abuse of power” (Baart 1983, 216). The spider tales allowed the slaves to mock people and situations they could not mock in daily life. The spider got new arch-enemies: the tiger and the king, both of whom he managed to defeat despite their positions of power. Van Duin points out that such characters “were identified with supervisors and plantation owners in the time of slavery” (Van Duin 2003, 186).

“And then you get stories in which Anansi tricks the hunter, the tiger and the king. And those stories were told in slavery time. And you had them slave drivers standing by, but didn’t get that those stories were actually about them. How they were fooled, right? So that was actually a ... a way to express their ... their ... their oppression by means of the story, but also to hand on messages through the story.” (Arduin 2008)

The well-known story with Anansi riding on the back of the tiger illustrates the motto of the spider tales in the aforementioned changed context: “If the lion’s skin cannot, the fox’s shall” or simply “It is better to be smart than strong”. The folktale was told in Hoogezand (province of Groningen, Netherlands) by Hector Cruz, and has been added to the Dutch Folktale Database (ID number GROTM059, www.verhalenbank.nl):

“At one point Nanzi said ehh he was bragging about the tiger. He is the mightiest; a big power. And he was bragging: ‘Ah, I’m not afraid of the tiger and I’m not afraid of the tiger and this and that.’ And all those other people were passing it on. Cha Tigri, the tiger is called Cha Tigri. ‘Cha Tiger, Nanzi says he’s not afraid of you and he can bring you to your knees if he wants to, and this and that.’ So Cha Tiger gets angry and Cha Tiger runs and runs and

runs and – aachhhh – stops in front of the house and says: ‘Nanzi! What have you been telling everybody? Come out if you dare!’ And Nanzi starts moaning and groaning: ‘Ah, I’m ill, I’m so ill, I’m in bed, I’m ill, I have to see a doctor, I have to see a doctor.’

Cha Tiger looks at him and says: ‘Are you really ill, Nanzi, or are you pulling my leg again?’

‘No, I’m really ill, I’m really ill, I have to see a doctor, I have to see a doctor. Don’t you wanna take me there? Don’t you wanna take me there?’ Cha Tiger gets closer and says: ‘OK, climb on my back, and then I’ll take you to the doctor quickly.’ Nanzi jumps on Cha Tiger’s back and Cha Tiger starts running through the village. And Nanzi has this whip and Nanzi goes ching, ching, ching, ching, ching. And he says: ‘There you go! There you go! I can ride on the back of the tiger. This beast doesn’t scare me!’”

At the same time, one cannot deny that stories about tricksters and picaresque novels are universal and that they challenge existing power and authority structures, always in a context of hierarchical (dis)proportions, but by no means always in a context of slavery. The use of animals to demonstrate the virtues and vices of man in a lucid and humorous way occurs in animal tales across the world. Slavery as such is no condition for the development and (continued) existence of trickster tales. It is true, though, that these tales are capable of generating extra layers of meaning in a specific social situation – in such cases, the tricksters are beginning to display more culture-specific characteristics, which can in turn be connected to the cultural identity formation of the narrative community. What is more, it must be noted that in many an Anansi tale, powerful opponents such as the king or the tiger are fully absent, and that Anansi is often equally ready to take his equals, his fellow animals, his friends and his own family for a merciless and antisocial ride. For this phenomenon too, storyteller Hilli Arduin finds an explanation in the changing socio-cultural circumstances:

“Well, and then slavery was abolished and there was this period of great hunger, right? Poverty. And then you get these stories where Anansi is actually ruthless. He becomes a thief, he steals food ... All those stories tell about how Anansi’s gotta have food, ‘s gotta be rich... And then he also cheats on his friends, right? But really to get... And it’s usually about getting food.” (Arduin 2008)

In all the stories, Anansi is a survivor, but in no way is he always the noble popular hero or freedom fighter people sometimes want to see in him. The interpretation of Anansi as a heroic freedom fighter and as an icon against oppression can only be maintained for a minority of the stories, and seems to be primarily a

projection in hindsight, as a result of the awakening Creole cultural and historical self-awareness.

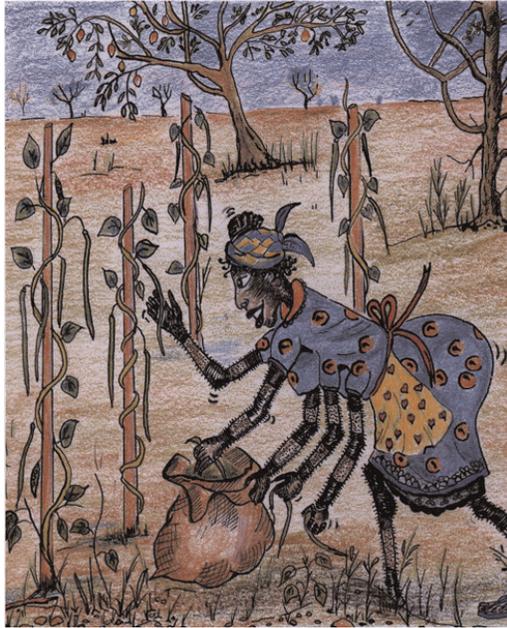


Image 4: Anansi's wife picks black-eyed peas. In the Antillean Nanzi tales, she is called Shi Maria, in the Surinamese Anansitoris, she is called Ma Akuba. Drawing by Mirelva Romano (Pinto 2006, 48).

Multicultural icon

In the course of the twentieth century, the Anansi stories travelled to the Netherlands, along with the large migratory flow. And once again, the stories showed their flexibility: elements of modern life, e.g. cars, television, Coca Cola, taxi drivers and mobile phones are integrated into the animal tales.⁸ The stories are adapted to a different audience by the contemporary storytellers. Originally these stories were meant for the transmission of culture in the Caribbean, and thus they had an exclusively Caribbean background. Their relocation to the Netherlands led to the intrusion of elements of the new culture, also because the “local eye” had now changed. The children lived in a Dutch environment with a heritage of Caribbean cultural elements. The Anansi tales adapted in part to both the local colour and the altered cultural identity of the intended audience. A nice illustration of this is a self-invented story by Hilli Arduin (recorded by Flora Illes in 2008) about Anansi at the Albert Cuyp market in Amsterdam. Anansi and his family go to the Amsterdam market where they smell nice mangos, climb onto the stalls and be-

gin to fill their stomachs. Before the police and the fire brigade arrive, they have gorged themselves sufficiently and disappear. In this context, Anansi appears in a concrete, modern setting of the Dutch Creoles, but in his traditional form, i.e. as a spider.

Many references to the concrete, new environment and everyday reality got a place in the animal tales, for instance by the introduction of integration problems or multicultural neighbours. Many of the updated stories have a socio-political touch: they mock Dutch bureaucracy or make mention of the emancipation of women. But perhaps the biggest change is an alteration in Anansi's character: he is now milder; less cruel and selfish, thereby losing his complex dual character (Van Duin 1994 and 2003, 187; Ronhaar-Rozema 1978, 264; Van Kempen 2002, 248). He increasingly loses his perfidious and selfish traits, and adjusts himself to the contemporary morals of social adaptability and mutual respect. This change can be the result of the adaptation to the morals of a wider intended audience. In the country of the colonizer, a vicious folktale character, unmotivated cruelty and a disharmonic ending of fairy tales have become less acceptable over time. As a result of this development, Anansi's arrival in the country of the colonizer makes his transformation into a milder creature culturally determined.

Another very important addition concerns one of Anansi's new functions in Europe: identity reinforcement. The Anansi tales are part of the cultural heritage of the Surinamese and the Antilleans. They are carriers of the specific ethnicity of these groups in the foreign, sometimes hostile environment the Netherlands are. They play a role in the "integration with retention of own identity". The narration of spider tales is often a way to manifest one's own identity and "roots" (Meder 2007b). The stories of the spider are simply part of the proper education of a Surinamese child, and Hilli Arduin finds it a disgrace if a child is no longer capable of singing the elementary song about B'Anansi:

For I sometimes meet Surinamese people, and their children can't even sing B'Anansi *tingelingeling*. Well, then I tell the mothers off... and I say to the children: "Tell your mother she hasn't brought you up right"... Yes. [...] Children really should be able to sing B'Anansi *tingelingeling*. (Arduin 2008).

The spider thus turns into an ethnic icon, and as an exemplary figure, he plays an important role in the process of the attribution of cultural identity.

At the same time, Anansi has also been appropriated by the white Dutch natives and for that reason he is now part of the multicultural canon of Dutch children's literature. The spider also managed to secure a position in the Dutch "canon with a small c".⁹ This small canon links to the bigger official Canon of the Netherlands, and provides stories from everyday culture to match the "big" history of the Netherlands (Van Oostrom 2006-2007). When the big Canon discusses the Dutch colonial past, the small canon provides spider stories that match this

past. Anansi has become a figure of history, with which the Creoles share a similar past. In Noni Lichtveld's contribution, the old African Ananse says to his son Anansi, who follows the slaves to the Caribbean:

Son of the spider, and son of Africa,
 Follow our black brothers and friends.
 Bring them relief when the chains are galling,
 Bring comfort, by telling my stories.
 [...]
 If you want to be sure
 That you will succeed,
 Bring comfort to all
 Who are being oppressed. (Lichtveld 1984: 8)

Here we can see once more how the crafty spider from Africa – by storytellers and some researchers – is attributed the role of freedom fighter and resistance hero in retrospect. He is placed in the service of the historical memory and appears as an icon of cultural identity. His mythical primal roots provided him with an enormous vitality, which led to the attribution of his role as a cultural hero who keeps alive the important values of freedom and independence.

Another important change in the contemporary Anansi stories concerns the means of communication: the manner in which they are passed on. Both in Africa and in the New World, the stories were mostly distributed orally. In the colonies some sound recordings were made, but only a handful and all relatively late, by people interested in anthropology, like e.g. the Dutch geologist Herman van Cappelle in 1903 (for the final result, see Van Cappelle 1926). Only after the animal tales had properly arrived in the Netherlands, where written culture was dominant, were these stories written down and published in (children's) books. We can witness the emergence of specific illustrations accompanying the spider tales, complementing the long Anansi tradition with a new medium: visual language. In this newly-developed tradition of illustrated children's books, the edition entitled *Kon Nanzi A Nek Shon Arei* ("How Nanzi tricked the king") is a unique, literary specimen. The book contains the recorded spider stories of the Antillean schoolmistress Nilda Pinto from the 1950s. The stories had originally been written down in Papiamentu and were translated into Dutch thirty years later by the minister and researcher Wim Baart. His translation formed the basis for the modern edition mentioned before in this paper. This edition attempted to retain the authenticity of the original stories and the final result is a wonderfully designed bilingual book, with drawings by six illustrators, who portrayed several different interpretations of the spider figure.

Apart from the increasing number of children's books, the spider stories also led to a continued oral existence. Over the past twenty years, the Netherlands has

experienced a revival of storytelling (Booy 1996, 22). Anansi enters the world of organized culture and makes more frequent appearances on the stage – the modern variant of oral literature (Kempen 2002, 149). Some examples of professional and semi-professional storytellers and actors/actresses in the Netherlands who have incorporated Anansi tales into their repertoire for a considerable time are the Surinamese storytellers Gerda Havertong, Thea Doelwijt, Marijke van Mil, Paul Middellijn, Hilli Arduin, Winston Scholsberg and Guillaume Pool, as well as the Antillean storytellers Wijnand Stomp and Olga Orman (Meder 2007b).

The oral corpus of this study also finds its origin in a theatrical communication setting. The Anansi Masters Foundation organized storytelling competitions in Rotterdam and Amsterdam to find out how the stories are being told in the Netherlands nowadays. The competitions were held in theatres and recorded on film. Despite the fact that this narrative setting could be described as artificial and staged, the initiative still provides an insight into the form in which the spider stories are circulating in the Netherlands today. The aforementioned corpus, along with the drawings by Noni Lichtveld and the illustrations from *Kon Nanzi A Nek Shon Anei*, are the most important data of the research presented below.

Anansi in the Netherlands

Our research into contemporary Anansi tales in the Netherlands focuses on the cultural meanings in the stories, which allow us to consider the animal tales as essential characteristics of Creole cultural identity. To arrive at these insights, we took our inspiration from the framework for assessing culture by Geert Hofstede from the 1960s, which provides a concrete and (for our purpose) workable set of instruments for the description of cultural manifestations. Hofstede (rightfully) received criticism on his framework, because it suggested a hierarchy of cultural manifestations, which does not match reality, and which also carries the danger of ending up with exclusive cultural stereotypes (see Tennekes 1995, 69-70, 72-74). According to another critic (Holden), Hofstede's conception of culture carries the danger of essentialism, because it supposedly leads to the categorization of cultures in static terms.¹⁰

In our research, however, Hofstede's model is not used to arrive at hierarchical cultural structures or to isolate static Creole stereotypes on the basis of folktales, but rather to discuss the dynamics and the interrelation of cultural identity and folktales. Culture manifests itself most concretely in cultural products, like folktales, and by the analysis of these concrete data, we hope to be able to expose the more implicit and subconscious connection between stories and values. The application of Hofstede's framework with symbols, rituals, heroes and values to folktales is concrete and above all innovative: hardly ever has it been done before with the intention of retrieving cultural meanings from folktales. We chose to research the following folktales on the basis of four criteria. The symbols, the

locations, the heroes (or characters) and the rituals are studied and their implicit or explicit cultural meanings semanticised.¹¹ By revealing and semantising these four criteria in the stories and the illustrations, we hope to answer the question of how the spider stories, the illustrations and the cultural identity of the Surinamese and the Antilleans in the Netherlands are interconnected.

The core of the analyzed data consists of an online database of contemporary, orally-transmitted Anansi stories. The corpus includes the animal tales that were told by Surinamese or Antillean storytellers in Rotterdam and Amsterdam in 2006 and 2007. Most of these recordings – together with recordings from Ghana – were added to the Anansi Masters DVD from 2008, entitled *Waarom alle verhalen Anansi's naam dragen* (“Why all stories carry Anansi’s name”). The visual material used in our research comes from the publications of Noni Lichtveld, an artist and writer of children’s books with a Surinamese background. Lichtveld is the writer of the text, as well as the designer and creator of the visuals. In her books, text and image are constantly complementing one another, visual and linguistic elements are mutually supportive. During the writing process, Lichtveld draws on the oral tradition of her ancestors, the stories of her father (Lou Lichtveld, known by his author’s name Albert Helman), aunts, friends and the work of Surinamese writers. Being an illustrator, she strongly relies on images during the writing process: “In the beginning, there was the image, from which the word arose.” Up to a point, the story is told by the images (Kempen 2002, 249). The unity of the books reaches a higher level due to the constant harmonious interaction between text and image. Lichtveld was also the illustrator of *Het Grote Anansiboek* (“The great book of Anansi”) by Johan Ferrier, which saw a colourful reissue in 2010. Besides Lichtveld’s drawings, we take a look at the new images accompanying the recent reissue of Nilda Pinto’s animal tales (2006).

Symbols

The first level of research focuses on the symbols in the oral and visual corpus.¹² Symbols are broadly conceived here as (variable) signs in a culture, containing a symbolic value for the identity of the group, such as objects, clothes, hairdos, words and gestures. In the Anansi stories on the Anansi Masters website, we encountered some recurring elements that possess a specific meaning to the cultural identity of the Creoles. These are: the tropical hammock for taking an afternoon nap, the pitcher Anansi took along from the African forests and which recalls the spider’s mythological roots, and above all the many dishes. As an object of desire, food is a central motif in the Anansi tales. In the animal tales, it always concerns food characteristic to the tropical climate, and which is designated by its original, Creole name. Food is part of the identity of the individual and of the collective group, and Anansi’s choice for a specific dish makes him part of a specific group with its own preferences and traditions.

Many linguistic elements refer to the Creole roots. Titles of stories, songs being sung together with the audience, as well as personal names occur plentifully in Sranan and Papiamentu. Especially in strongly emotionally charged dialogues, arguments and shouting matches, there is the tendency to resort to the mother tongue. The (austere though not particularly clever) white king, for example, is called Shon Arei in the Antillean stories. This Papiamentu name is likely to be a composite of the English name of John and the Spanish word “el rey”, meaning “the king”. The ritual of singing together in the indigenous language creates a powerful feeling of oneness during the performance, and takes the act of narration back to old storytelling traditions.¹³ So these elements refer directly to people’s own cultural identity and traditions. Apart from this, the orally-transmitted animal tales display an increasing number of elements bearing witness to a modern existence, albeit frequently on the superficial level of objects, such as photos, glitter suits, psychiatrists, civil servants, policemen and gymnastic exercises. The admission and integration of these new elements in the animal tales demonstrates the tendency of the stories to undergo changes, and their constant need to adapt to the expectations of a changing intended audience.

On the level of the images, the portrayed objects provide information about the social context in which a story is set. The attributes of the daily environment, the depicted pieces of furniture and objects for everyday use strongly determine the atmosphere of children’s books and have a major symbolic value to the attentive observer. They provide an insight into the daily behaviour and the material culture of certain groups, showing the “actor” behind the objects (De Bodt & Kapelle 2003, 147). The images can also be interpreted as “genre paintings” of children’s books, in which scenes from daily life are featured. In the illustrations of Anansi stories, we often see traditional inherited houses (“erfhuizen”), which are also described in Surinamese literature. Activities portraying an ideal household match those images, like broom sweeping and dishwashing, thus adding a didactic value to the depicted world for the benefit of the audience. But we also frequently encounter images of interiors which, in all their plainness and bleakness, assume a world of poverty. Among the portrayed objects, clothes also carry a symbolic meaning. They imply the cultural and social background of the depicted world. In this area, the changeability and the adaptability of the spider is aptly expressed. The African garments, the traditional Surinamese hats, headscarves, wide skirts and shirts (image 2,4), as well as the prestigious Western suits with top hats, and the contemporary jeans, sneakers and baseball caps represent stages implying the cultural metamorphoses Anansi underwent, and they also visually illustrate the ever-changing cultural identity.

We can thus establish a twofold tendency in the development of the Anansi stories on the level of symbols. On the one hand, there is the attempt to maintain and emphatically portray the motifs of the traditional culture; and on the other hand, there is room for flexibility and adjustment, although this is the case in

only a minor number of stories. Furthermore, all this underlines people’s awareness with regard to the dynamic and changing character of their own cultural identity: depending on time, place and the “period eye”, several different cultural traits can become apparent and seen as part of one’s own identity.

Locations

When taking into consideration the locations of the stories, we can also discover specific cultural meanings. This layer of interpretation contains real and fictitious places with a symbolic value to the community, which contributes to the identification and the retention of cultural identity. In the oral corpus, we encounter places like the heavenly forest with tropical plants and bright sunshine, or the plantation with a poor “erfhuis” and a rich king’s palace. In some way, such representations are “lieux de mémoire”, stereotypical places of memory that refer directly to a historical period in the life of the Creole people. One of the stories contains a concrete historical event, the construction of the Brokopondo reservoir in Surinam in the 1960s (*Bonen met zoutvlees* [“Beans with salted meat”]), told by Jacqueline Balsemhof in Rotterdam). As a result of this construction, thousands of Maroons were forced to move to the city and start a new life there. The animal tale allows people to ventilate their feelings of discomfort about this event in a humourous way. Furthermore, we can see the emergence of the city as a modern



Image 5: Anansi hides in the bushes. Drawing by Noni Lichtveld (1984, 73).

habitat, e.g. when Anansi goes shopping in the big contemporary department stores or garden centres – a very clear reference to Dutch reality. In the stories, the locations thus serve as a cultural setting for daily life, or they are called upon as historical places which serve to embed the past of the people. Especially in the context of migration, the value attributed to traditional, tropical and historical locations tends to increase. The inclusion of Dutch cities as modern locations is symptomatic of the changed cultural identity: as a real survivor, Anansi should also be able to hold his own ground in this “new jungle”.



Image 6: Anansi's daughter as Little Red Riding Hood in the Bijlmer (a multicultural Amsterdam “banlieu”). Drawing by Noni Lichtveld (1997, 88).

We can observe a clear opposition in the iconographical and stylistic characteristics of the images set in the Caribbean and those set in the Netherlands. The drawings of the Caribbean display bright sunshine, flowers, trees and leaves, or, in other words; a light, warm, colourful and plentiful world. In the image by Noni Lichtveld entitled *Anansi houdt zich schuil in het bos* (“Anansi hides in the bushes”) (image 5) with its abundance of exotic plants and animals, one has to make a real effort to discover Anansi, given the lushness of the tropical scenery, which appears as background, but also as a place of memory. Supposedly, this motif refers

to the episode of the Maroon uprisings in Surinamese history, when the escaped slaves hid in the dense bushes of the inlands. The Maroon slogan saying that one has to feel at one with nature to survive is portrayed here. The pictorial means used by the artist evoke a lively, exotic atmosphere, and at the same time, they represent the concealing function of the forest in which Anansi is barely perceivable. The meandering lines, the abundance of shapes, colours and scents, the large number of visual elements and details, and the lively composition display the energetic world of the jungle. Storyteller and author Johan Ferrier (1910-2010) also recalled the history of the Maroons when he had Anansi going down the river in a boat with two chickens to win half a village for the king (i.e. the white authority!):

In this story Anansi paddles along a river past several villages. The thing is, the Maroons from the inlands of Surinam had run away from the plantations in slavery times. They had fled into the jungle and lived along the upper reaches of the rivers, past the waterfalls and rapids.

The image of the Netherlands clearly functions as the opposite of the tropical world. Iconographically, we see attributes of modern, European life: blocks of flats, mills and typical Amsterdam houses (images 1, 6 and 7). Like the stories, the drawings move with the times and express Anansi's modern perception of the environment. The changes in the stylistic solutions are striking: the visual language becomes more austere, restrained, both with regards to the shapes and the use of colour. The colours are more subdued, the air gets darker, and there are more taut lines and geometric shapes. The uninhibited, free, exuberant visual world which was so close to nature in the jungle drawing gives way to the controlled order of the human mind and civilization. In the picture of the story about Anansi's daughter (as Little Red Riding Hood), who is on her way to her grandmother in the Bijlmer, we can even see a Mondrianesque image in a geometric building style (image 6). The technical design of this picture also corresponds to the developments in visual arts in the sense that it uses modern collage techniques and integrates photography and the art of drawing into one image. The visual material has been intensely adjusted to the new setting and to the "local eye" of the intended audience.

These examples show that both the spider tales and their illustrations are open to modernization and inclined to adapt to new surroundings. The visual material has experienced a kind of creolization process, in which the indigenous, familiar elements from the old culture and environment have mingled with new attributes. In this way, the integration of two worlds leads to the emergence of a third, unique one. In terms of cultural identity: the fusion of the two cultures leads to the creation of a third culture.



Image 7: Anansi in wooden shoes, drawing by Minke Priester (Meder 2008a, unpagged colour section).

Heroes

The third level of our research concerns the heroes or characters in the animal tales. The question how the characters in the spider tales are being presented, which values they represent and how they interact with each other can provide a better insight into the social norms and values of the narrative community. Anansi is the main character of all the narrated stories in the corpus, and in the narrative culture of the Caribbean, he is still a liminal figure situated between two worlds. He displays many animal traits, which are primarily expressed in the references to his eight legs and his extended circle of animal friends. But his cleverly executed tricks, his recurring position as head of a family and owner of a house make him very human. Ambiguity and paradoxes are still very prevalent. He is hero and antihero at the same time; he is a figure of identification, but also someone who constantly breaks the norms. Wit and cleverness are the characteristics that make him attractive as an identification figure for the Creoles. Most of the stories emphasize the mental process of the clever Anansi, which he uses to

once again come up with something and give a new impulse to the course of action.

It may be worth our while to briefly pay attention to a story entitled *Kompa Nanzi en Kompa Raton*, which throws a remarkably different light on the spider.¹⁴ In this story, Anansi appears as a judge facing his nasty neighbour, who displays unreliable and mean behaviour. This story shows a major shift in the original characteristics of the spider: he now uses his intelligence and his tricks for the sake of justice. This is another example of the enormous flexibility and employability of the narrative character. We are dealing here with a creative adaptation of the old motifs, resulting in entirely new issues. We are touching on a deeply-rooted characteristic of the spider: he turns from (sympathetic) trickster into judge, from an “*exempla contraria*” into an “*exempla virtutis*”, i.e. someone who punishes objectionable behaviour (Beheydt 2009, 11). This is however an exceptional case in the corpus – in most cases, Anansi’s basic character remains untouched. He is still not a positive model of social behaviour. He is rather an antihero who manifests rebellious and unsettling behaviour, thereby shifting the moral boundaries in society. At the same time, he embodies many positive values, like intelligence, love for his family, the power to survive, and a good sense of humour, all of which manoeuvre him in a position between antihero and hero. Nevertheless, Van Duin (2003, 187) observes – with some storytellers in the Netherlands – a process of “bourgeoisiation” or even “dulling”, which takes the sting out of Anansi and leaves us with a “one-dimensional joker”.



Image 8: Anansi’s wife on a bicycle (Lichtveld 1997, 86).

Anansi has been portrayed by various illustrators in many different ways. In most cases, he is depicted as a hairy wood spider with eight legs, living in a human environment, wearing clothes. His African tribal-culture origins are expressed in the drawings depicting him with a mask-like face and a body covered with linear scar marks, appearing between lianas and exotic animals. Apart from such references to his mythological primal roots, his role as a comforter for the slaves lives on too. An image displaying him tied to a chair with a big chain by way of punishment for a theft contains an implicit reference to the colonial past (Lichtveld 1997, 77). The chain to his legs could refer to the period of slavery and has a veiled symbolic value for the collective past of the narrative community. The modernization of Anansi can also be discerned in the visual language, combining traditional Caribbean characteristics with Dutch elements. In one image, for instance, we can see Anansi's wife balancing on a bicycle, which is just another visual adaptation of the contemporary process of creolization (image 8). A black spider lady wearing a typically Surinamese headscarf and traditional clothes, riding a very Dutch upright bicycle – the mixed symbols in the image represent the modern reality of the Creole inhabitants of the Netherlands. In short, we can see that the spider, depending on the place, the time and the surrounding culture, can take and incorporate any possible shape, while still remaining a principal carrier of Creole identity. After all, the metamorphoses of the narrative character reflect the awareness of the cultural changes that have taken place in the history of the narrative community. Anansi is a living example of the dynamics and changeability of cultural identity.

Besides Anansi, the animal tales and the drawings display his extended family with his wife, his twelve children, nephews, nieces, and cousins with their own families. The family relations can be called rather close – here applies a broader concept of “family” as a cultural value than is usual in the Netherlands. In the more modern stories, we can see that the family image increasingly deviates from the traditional Caribbean image with the submissive children and the great respect for the father figure, and that it tends to adapt to the Dutch family image with more rebellious children.

In the world of the spider tales, the “opponent”, the antihero who is being tricked, plays an essential role. As we have explained before, this opponent can be a more powerful character than Anansi himself, such as the king or the tiger, but more often they are fellow animals or relatives, who are Anansi's equals or even his inferiors. In the oral corpus, the king is in all cases the personification of the mighty, though not always very bright opponent. He is severe and merciless; his fixed attributes are the palace, the prison, and the soldiers, emphasizing his wealth and his position of power. In the world of the Caribbean animal tale, the king is the adversary against whom the puny spider rebels. The tricks Anansi plays on him are attempts to recalcitrance, resistance and the circumvention of authority.¹⁵

In the folktale illustrations, the tiger makes more frequent appearances than the king (image 7). He can be regarded as the personification of the strong and merciless slave driver and plantation owner who always wants to devour the puny, tiny spider, but whom Anansi constantly manages to make look foolish by his cleverness. In the case of the tiger – even more so than with the king – there is a rather unequivocal division of roles between hero and adversary: the adversary personifies power, strength, oppression and violence. The hero acts against him using his wit, cleverness and tricks. A nice example of the mixture of traditional and modern fairy-tale elements can be seen in image 7: the picture shows traditional characters in a new, Dutch environment. Anansi, in Dutch wooden shoes, is standing next to a mill. The tiger leers at the chicken with hungry eyes from behind the mill. This image is yet another adaptation to the contemporary “local eye”, which has moved from the tropics to the Netherlands and which is, in this case, also being appropriated by Dutch storytellers.¹⁶ Alternatively, it can be interpreted as an establishment of the fact that in the modern world, not much has changed in the situation of the spider, and that in Dutch society, one is confronted with oppressive powers as well.

It should not be forgotten, though, that in a large majority of the stories, Anansi is dealing with his equals, his relatives and friends, and even his inferiors. In the corpus of oral stories, the king, the tiger and other mighty opponents appear in only twenty percent of the animal tales; in eighty percent of the cases, the spider tricks his equals and his inferiors (see the appendix following this article). So Anansi stories are not just about the struggle against oppression; the spider is not just an icon for the fight for freedom, but rather remains the crafty survivor who spares neither its superiors, nor its equals, nor anyone inferior whilst pursuing his own goals. In most of the stories, Anansi is hardly a popular hero with noble motives, since his motives frequently remain limited to stomach filling and selfish gain, preferably without an excess of physical strain. His dealings with equals and inferiors are mostly characterized by unreliable and unfriendly relations (image 2). The material and mental possessions of fellow animals are abused for his own benefit. Anansi tries to construct his position of power at the expense of his fellow animals. Rivalry, conflict and strife are characteristic of their social relations. There is a total lack of respect and the constant attempt to improve one’s position and status in society at the expense of others, using trickery as the primary means to reach that goal.

The stories and illustrations dealing with the stronger opponents say a lot about the power structures and about the ways power is used. Although the power and the strength of the king and the tiger are absolute, there is a subtle and complex armamentarium in development to use the system to one’s own ends. Power is continually evaded or undermined in order to survive. On a superficial level, one acknowledges the superiority of the ruler and takes part in the social game between authorities and subjects. But in reality, the authorities are

being ridiculed, denounced and exploited by means of clever tricks. The spider's ability to profit from his opponents' weaknesses is a mechanism in the stories which has existed since the period of slavery, and apparently modern times have hardly brought about any change in this department. The common man is still the cultural hero who manages to hold his ground within a system of inequality, in his own contrary way.

Anansi's opponents are not, however, always colonial oppressors. Alternatively, they can also come from the spiritual domain. There are several stories in which the spider has to take a stand against the devil, and in one story, he falls victim to a cacodemon. To free himself of this cacodemon, Anansi seeks the help of a local mediator between the earthly and the spiritual world: a *lukuman* or clairvoyant (image 3).

Rituals

The last level of our analysis of the contemporary Anansi stories concerns the rituals, that is to say the conventional collective activities that are being considered essential within a particular culture to shape and maintain the social order.



Image 9: Rituals. Drawing by Noni Lichtveld (1997, 93).

Due to the presence of rituals in the folktales, they are constantly relived during narration and passed on to the next generations. Examples of such rituals are, of course, the feasts in the narrative corpus, like birthdays, family visits, and the large Caribbean carnivals. Anansi and his friends are always ready to join in, and in a great many of the stories, a cheerful, colourful world is conjured up, which includes attributes such as food, drink, music, dance and song. Besides celebrating, the ritual of being together at table is the main activity for maintaining group cohesion (image 9). In the drawings, we often see Anansi's family, dressed in traditional Surinamese clothing, sitting at the table with a dish in front of them. The role played by the food in the images refers to the gastronomy and the elaborate dishes of the Creoles that are an integral part of their cultural identity.

Conclusion

Finally, we can summarize the results of the research into cultural meanings in the contemporary oral Creole spider tales and their illustrations in the Netherlands. This survey does, incidentally, merely present an indication at a given moment in time of a constantly changing, dynamic phenomenon, showing in what way the spider stories in the Netherlands are currently functioning and changing. The research presented here places the spider stories in their broader cultural context and shows what sort of cultural meaning they carry for the narrative community.

The Anansi stories have an explicit cultural function: they serve as an instrument of transmission of Creole culture, and because of their flexibility, they contribute to an adaptation of this system of meanings to the surrounding culture. This flexibility and changeability is expounded here, in both a historical and a contemporary dimension. An attempt has been made to show that the metamorphosis of Anansi continually goes hand in hand with the changes in the cultural identity of the narrative community.

The Anansi stories have made a long journey from West Africa to the Caribbean and subsequently to the Netherlands. In this migratory process, the spider Anansi has constantly undergone gradual role changes, from a divine trickster to a human trickster and survivor with a family, subsequently reverting to a rebel with a sense of values and a growing ethnic self-awareness, applying retroactively for the iconic position of popular ethnic hero and freedom fighter.

In the contemporary Anansi stories in the Netherlands, we can see a constant interaction between Caribbean and European motifs, which indicates an interaction between tradition and modernity in cultural identity. Although dynamics and changeability are noticeable, the older cultural values tend to shine through in the stories. These values safeguard the preservation of the cultural identity of the narrative community, partly by telling stories to new generations.

Anansi is the most important fairy-tale hero of the Surinamese and Antillean Creoles, also in their modern Dutch living environment. The coexistence of old and modern elements symbolizes the changeability of the cultural identity and brings about a creolization of the semiotic system, which is supposed to guarantee the survival of the cultural identity in the changed environment. The supposition that the cultural identity of a group is reflected in its animal tales and illustrations is confirmed by the abovementioned results. In addition, these stories and illustrations are an excellent proof of the fact that this so-called “cultural identity” is a dynamic phenomenon.

Notes

1. Translation into English: Mereie de Jong.
2. See the folktale catalogue of Flowers (1980) for the Caribbean distribution. Introductions to and analyses of the Anansi stories can be found in Baart (1983), Broek (1988), Dubelaar (1972), Van Duin (1994 & 2003), Illés (2009), Van Kempen (2002), Meder (2007a & 2007b), Orman & Taekema (1997), Reaver (1977), Ronhaar-Rozema (1979), De Souza (2003) and Witteveen (1989).
3. See the appendix for a complete survey of the various Surinamese, Antillean and Dutch Anansi stories, the types and the written and oral sources we consulted.
4. Lichtveld (1984 & 1997), Lichtveld in Ferrier (2010), and Pinto (2006).
5. Surinam has more ethnic groups, such as Indians, Hindustani and Javanese, but they do not share the slave past of the Creoles: the Indians appeared unfit for hard labour; Hindustani and Javanese came to work in Surinam as paid foreign workers.
6. See Reaver (1977), Ronhaar-Rozema (1979, 262-263), Dubelaar (1972, 12), Van Kempen (1989A, 44), De Souza (2003, 347-348), Baart (1983, 28, 203-209) and Witteveen (1989, 49). In the words of the storyteller Hilli Arduin: “Of course, Anansi is originally from the west of Africa. During antiquity, Anansi was a messenger of God. Because the spider is the only one who can go up and down with a wire... So Anansi took along the messages of the people to God and God replied or returned a message and Anansi would come down again.” (Interview by Flora Illes with storyteller Hilli Arduin, 2008).
7. “He is an animal, human being or God, but basically it doesn’t matter, ‘cause Anansi uses all three qualities to be Anansi... That’s why we people can understand him, ‘cause he has a great many human qualities” (Arduin 2008).
8. “... and then people come to Europe, of course. And Anansi came along, of course. You then simply get entirely different stories taking place in this area. And also that Anansi is gonna mind politics...” (Arduin 2008)
9. See Meder, Koman & Rooijakkers (2008, 84-86, 160-163). Compare: Meder (2008b).
10. “Culture is seen as a relatively stable, homogeneous, internally consistent system of assumptions, values and norms transmitted by socialisation to the next generation. [...] this view of culture also tends to entail blindness as regards social variation and diversity within a nation or organisation.” (Holden 2002, 27)
11. Symbols, heroes and rituals are borrowed from Hofstede, whereas locations (as was mentioned before) are an addition by Beheydt (2009, 12-13). These are the four visible

elements that can be used for the interpretation of a culture and its immaterial values. The last criterium mentioned by Hofstede is values, which will be discussed hereafter while interpreting the first four criteria. Tennekes has conceptual objections to the terminology of this model. Following anthropological literature, he wants to consider the rituals and myths about heroes as part of the body of symbols, “which are used in a culture to express the conceptions of reality and the central values belonging to that culture” (Tennekes 1995, 72). He uses the concept of “practices” to indicate “patterns of action”, and apart from symbols and practices, he makes mention of “representation”, by which he means ways of speaking and reasoning. The notion of “practices” is ignored by us, not in the last place because of the (appropriate) criticism (Tennekes 1995, 73).

12. In response to Tennekes’ criticism, we do not intend to make any distinction in concreteness between the levels of our analysis. Hofstede considers the symbols, heroes and rituals as the hierarchically constructed layers of an onion, a concept which has become outdated in anthropological literature (regarding this, see Tennekes 1995, 72-73). We prefer to regard the symbols, locations, heroes and rituals in accordance with Schein (quoted in Tennekes 1995, 79) as artefacts, visible and concretely perceptible cultural products in folktales, which might refer to subconscious ideas, perceptions and feelings.
13. The element of song is still part of the Surinamese storytelling culture. Storyteller Arduin remarked: “When I had to tell a story in Surinam for old people, I did Anansi stories and I also did some songs to match, well, and it is a great combination, those old songs, ‘cause these old people really like singing along then.” (Arduin 2008).
14. An oral and self-invented tale by Liberta Rosario, recorded by Anansi Masters.
15. There are however also Anansi stories in which Anansi helps the authorities (for his own gain) or even tries to get promoted socially by entering into the royal family by marrying a princess. In such cases, his aversion to the authorities cannot be called substantial.
16. The illustration matches the storyteller, the location and the audience: the Anansi story was actually told in a mill and the storyteller was the Dutch, white storyteller Raymond den Boestert. The audience consisted primarily of white inhabitants of the Dutch city Utrecht (recording by Theo Meder in the multicultural Utrecht neighbourhood Lombok, 5 November 2000).

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APPENDIX: TYPES AND SOURCES

Hero: if this box has been ticked, we are dealing with a story in which Anansi competes with a superior (the king, the tiger, the hunter, the devil, etc.)

ATU = Aarne Thompson Uther, see: Uther 2004

Fl = Flowers 1980

VVB = Nederlandse Volksverhalenbank (Dutch Folktale Database)

Web = www.anansimasters.nl

DVD = Anansi Masters 2008

Story type	Hero	ATU / Fl	Written	Oral
01. Anansi and the tar-baby	X	ATU 175	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cappelle26 285-286 2. Pinto 171-179 3. Franke 4. Baart 32-37 5. Ferrier 67-71 6. Droog 41-47 7. Lichtveld84 44-46 8. Keizer 186-187 9. Oosterhout 13-16 10. DoelwijtB 190-191 11. Huyser 65-70 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hector Cruz (VVB) 2. Herma van Zutphen (web) 3. Darlene Westmaas (web) 4. Carry Ann Tjong-Ayong (VVB)
02. Anansi and the spotted cow: taboo on scratching	X	ATU 1565	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Latour 51-52 2. Pinto 154-157 3. Baart 128-131 4. Droog 1-2 5. Orman97 6. Witteveen 51-52 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hector Cruz (VVB) 2. Anna Petrona (DVD)
03. Anansi, bananas and the dearest child			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cappelle26 276-277 2. Franke 3. Ferrier 97 4. Lichtveld84 65-67 5. Tjon-A-Ten 8-9 6. Keizer 173-174 7. Mil 8. DoelwijtB 193-194 9. Huyser 79-80 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hector Cruz (VVB) 2. Missirin Sodjo (VVB) 3. Carry Ann Tjong-Ayong (VVB)

Story type	Hero	ATU / FI	Written	Oral
o4. Anansi rides horseback on the Tiger	X	ATU 72	1. Cappelle26 289-291 2. Cappelle26 297-299 3. Pinto 13-20 4. Franke 5. Baart 36-43 6. Droog 3-7 7. Lichtveld84 22-25 8. Tjon-A-Ten 24-26 9. DoelwijtA 167-168 10. Keizer 193-194 11. Keizer 202-203 12. Oosterhout 16-19 13. Huyser 31-37	1. Hector Cruz (VVB)
o5. Anansi borrows from beetle, chicken, tiger and hunter	X		1. Cappelle26 277-281 2. Franke 39-47 3. Lichtveld84 76-80 4. Ferrier 24-31 5. Tjon-A-Ten 44-48 6. DoelwijtA 164-166 7. Keizer 175-179 8. Oosterhout 66-70 9. Huyser 49-55	1. Raymond den Boestert (VVB) 2. Missirin Sodjo (VVB) 3. Janna van den Berg (VVB) 4. Carry Ann Tjong-Ayong (VVB)
o6. Tiger plays dead and eats the lot (unless the trick fails)	X	ATU 56A*	1. Franke 95-101 2. Pinto 36-39 3. Baart 50-53 4. Droog 12-16 5. Ferrier 126-128 6. Ronhaar 292 7. Lichtveld84 62-64 8. Huyser 99-104	
o7. Anansi cuts fat out of cow's stomach	X		1. Cappelle26 273-275 2. Pinto 21-24 3. Pinto 101-104 4. Pinto 191-194 5. Baart 76-79 6. Baart 98-99 7. Baart 148-149 8. Tjon-A-Ten 17-18 9. Keizer 170-172 10. Oosterhout 31-32 11. Oosterhout 56-58	
o8. Anansi and the king of birds		ATU 221	1. Franke 2. DoelwijtA 145-146 3. Huyser 105-111	

Story type	Hero	ATU / FI	Written	Oral
09. Anansi and the jar of wisdom			1. Orman97 2. DoelwijtA 147 3. Huyser 8-9 (preface Havertong)	1. Hilli Arduin (web) 2. Richard Ofori (web) 3. Carry Ann Tjong-Ayong (VVB) 4. Wijnand Stomp (web)
10. Anansi lends money to bird till he is grown			1. Franke 2. DoelwijtA 145-146 3. Huyser 57-64	
11. Anansi is called Bring for the Crew			1. Cappelle26 287-289 2. DoelwijtA 148-149 3. Keizer 191-192	
12. Anansi and the Thrower (syrup tree, stone, etc.)			1. Pinto 25-35 2. Franke 2. Baart 42-51 3. Ferrier 78-82 4. Lichtveld84 13-17 5. Tjon-A-Ten 53-55 6. DoelwijtA 155-157 7. Oosterhout 61-63 9. Huyser 117-120	
13. Anansi in elephant skin (trick to borrow money)			1. DoelwijtA 162-164	1. Esther de Jong (DVD)
14. Anansi's profitable exchange: half a village for two chickens		ATU 170	1. Cappelle4 314-327 2. Cappelle26 258-265 3. Franke 4. Ferrier 50-58 5. DoelwijtA 168-173 6. Keizer 155-161 7. Huyser 79-87	1. Carry Ann Tjong-Ayong (VVB)
15. Anansi plays dead and kills the Tiger	X		1. Pinto 40-43 2. Baart 52-55 3. Droog 38-40 4. Oosterhout 39-40	
16. Anansi gives the devil a beating	X		1. Pinto 44-46 2. Baart 54-57 3. Oosterhout 41-42	
17. Anansi out of the sack (barrel), the king into it (How Nanzi tricked the king)	X	ATU 1535	1. Pinto 164-170 2. Baart 56-61 3. Ferrier 59-61	1. Marieta Emers (DVD)

Story type	Hero	ATU / FI	Written	Oral
18. Anansi pretends to be a young child (baby)			1. Pinto 47-50 2. Baart 60-63 3. Ferrier 92-93 4. Droog 8-11 5. Lichtveld84 41-43	1. Farida Stellaard (DVD)
19. Anansi steals eggs from the snake (food of the gnomes): password door		ATU 954	1. Pinto 51-56 2. Baart 62-67	1. Yeboah Boadi Owusu (web)
20. Anansi has a cacodemon on his shoulder (Pedrito Bullepees, Temecu Temebe, Tecumbe Timbe)			1. Latour 47-51 2. Pinto 57-65 3. Baart 66-73 4. Ferrier 116-120 5. Droog 17-23 6. Oosterhout 19-23	
21. Anansi can lift something without moaning (trick)	X	ATU 1565	1. Cappelle26 354-359 2. Pinto 66-69 3. Baart 72-75 4. Droog 24-26 5. Keizer 255-259 6. Oosterhout 29-31	
22. Anansi shows unknown animal and guesses devil's age or: Anansi guesses age and makes devil straighten curly hair	X	ATU 1091 ATU 1175	1. Pinto 70-74 2. Baart 78-81 3. Lichtveld97 62-66 4. Oosterhout 42-45	
23. Anansi makes others repeat three words (third = wrong)	X		1. Pinto 75-79 2. Baart 80-85 3. Lichtveld84 34-37	
24. Anansi borrows pancakes from snake; is eventually bitten to death			1. Pinto 80-85 2. Baart 84-89	
25. Anansi sells the king's sheep	X		1. Pinto 86-90 2. Baart 88-93	
26. Anansi (actually rat) builds a house for aunt			1. Pinto 91-97 2. Baart 92-97 3. Droog 27-30 4. Oosterhout 27-29	
27. Anansi makes Tiger prevent rain barrel from falling over	X		1. Pinto 98-100 2. Baart 96-99	

Story type	Hero	ATU / FI	Written	Oral
28. Anansi gets land the size of a cowhide	X	ATU 927C*	1. Pinto 105-109 2. Baart 100-103	
29. Anansi flies to island (peanut or mango-stone island); gets feathers from birds. Eats entire supply on island, drops heavy bags.			1. Pinto 110-119 2. Baart 102-109 3. Droog 31-37 4. Lichtveld84 26-28	1. Marie Goormachtigh (DVD)
30. Anansi makes cricket jump into the pan			1. Pinto 120-125 2. Baart 108-111 3. Oosterhout 25-27	
31. Anansi steals avocados from Tiger (throws iron ball from tree pretending to help)	X		1. Pinto 126-130 2. Baart 112-115	
32. Anansi, the magic apples and the princess (Fortunatus)	X	ATU 566	1. Pinto 131-143 2. Baart 114-123 3. Ferrier 121-125 4. Oosterhout 35-39	
33. Anansi eats his own merchandise and gets a beating			1. Pinto 144-149 2. Baart 122-127	
34. Anansi mistakes the tiger for a sheep (and sometimes frames friend)	X		1. Pinto 150-153 2. Pinto 180-190 3. Baart 126-129 4. Baart 140-147 5. Broek 20-21 6. Broek 21-23 7. Ferrier 102-106	
35. Anansi as master thief (white person in well)	X	ATU 1525	1. Pinto 158-163 2. Baart 132-135 3. Oosterhout 32-34	
36. Anansi, the magic pot and the magic belt (whip)		ATU 563	1. Pinto 7-12 2. Franke 2. Baart 136-141 3. Ferrier 62-66 4. Oosterhout 11-13 6. Huyser 121-136	1. Josette Evers (web)
37. Anansi steals food offerings to dead person			1. Cappelle26 362-366 2. Pinto 195-198 3. Baart 150-151 4. Keizer 260-263	

Story type	Hero	ATU / FI	Written	Oral
38. Anansi sells princess to the devil			1. Cappelle26 266-271 2. Keizer 162-166	
39. Granman Anansi marries princess as a musician			1. Cappelle26 271-273 2. Keizer 167-169	
40. Anansi at Watramama's banquet		ATU 60 (?)	1. Cappelle26 281-282 2. Franke 3. Ronhaar 288 4. Keizer 180-182 5. DoelwijtB 180-181 6. Huysen 81-83	1. Herma van Zutphen (DVD)
41. Anansi makes cat hunt rats			1. Cappelle26 282-285 2. Pinto 91-97 3. Baart 92-97 4. Droog 29-30 5. Ronhaar 290-291 6. Keizer 183-185	
42. Anansi pretends to be a clergyman and eats ducks			1. Cappelle26 286-287 2. Keizer 188-190	
43. Anansi is tricked by dog (cow's liver)			1. Cappelle26 291-293 2. Tjon-A-Ten 19-20 3. Keizer 195-196	
44. Anansi causes war between chickens and cockroaches			1. Cappelle26 293-295 2. Keizer 197-198 3. Ferrier 94-96 4. DoelwijtB 197-199	
45. Anansi donates his daughter to Death (in exchange for food; turns out to be flesh). Or simply: Anansi robs Death and makes him active			1. Cappelle26 295-296 2. Ferrier 111-115 3. Keizer 199-201 4. Tjon-A-Ten 27-29	
46. Anansi arranges tug-of-war between elephant and whale (sometimes: walks across rope to New World)			1. Cappelle26 299-303 2. Ferrier 38-44 3. Franke 4. Lichtveld84 7-8 5. Orman97 6. Keizer 204-206 7. Oosterhout 70-73 8. Huysen 25-29	1. Carry Ann Tjong-Ayong (VVB)

Story type	Hero	ATU / FI	Written	Oral
47. Anansi disguises as an American sailor			1. Cappelle26 303-305 2. Ronhaar 293-294 3. Lichtveld84 38-40 4. Tjon-A-Ten 30-33 5. Keizer 207-209 6. Oosterhout 63-66 7. DoelwijtB 194-195	
48. Anansi gets cooking pot on his head			1. Cappelle26 305-306 2. Keizer 210	
49. Frog spills the beans (sheep slaughtered)			1. Cappelle26 306-308 2. Keizer 211-212	
50. Anansi turns Rabbit and Tiger into each other's enemies			1. Cappelle26 308-309 2. Franke 3. Ferrier 32-37 4. Ronhaar 288-290 5. Keizer 213-214 6. Oosterhout 76-79 7. Huyser 70-74	
51. Anansi is killed by lightning (or barely survives)			1. Cappelle26 310-314 2. Keizer 215-218 3. Ferrier 129-135 4. Oosterhout 93-97	
52. Anansi takes pepper test and marries the princess		ATU 1565	1. Cappelle26 315-318 2. Franke 3. Keizer 219-222 4. Ferrier 107-110 5. Oosterhout 73-76 6. DoelwijtB 196-197 7. Huyser 39-47	
53. Anansi (ill) makes his wife slaughter sheep and eats it			1. Cappelle26 318-321 2. Ferrier 45-49 3. Keizer 223-226 4. DoelwijtB 191-193	1. Carry Ann Tjong-Ayong (VVB)
54. Anansi wins princess with elephant's tooth			1. Cappelle26 345-349 2. Keizer 251-254 3. Oosterhout 53-56	
55. Anansi converts the crabs (hunger; baptism in boiling water)			1. Cappelle26 371-373 2. Lichtveld84 68-71 3. Keizer 264-265	
56. Anansi fails to win Indian bride			1. Cappelle26 373-377 2. Keizer 266-269	

Story type	Hero	ATU / FI	Written	Oral
57. Anansi makes rat's trousers drop			1. Cappelle ²⁶ 377-378 2. Keizer 270	
58. Anansi gets name of all stories				1. Anne M.C. Rozendaal (web) 2. Wijnand Stomp (DVD)
59. Anansi treats family to beans				1. Jacqueline Balsemhof (web)
60. Anansi becomes king of carnival			1. Orman ⁹⁸	1. Olga Orman (DVD)
61. Anansi eats everything at his own party				1. Nericha Marchena (web)
62. Why Anansi's head ended up the other way round				1. Lawrence Osei-Antwi (web)
63. Anansi and Anene go fishing with fyke nets				1. Esther de Jong (web)
64. Anansi, six helpers and ball for moon		ATU 513 (?)		1. Rens de Vette (VVB)
65. Anansi and the tied-up snake			1. Jones 6-13 2. Lichtveld ⁸⁴ 18-20	1. Winston Scholsberg (VVB) (2. Wijnand Stomp, DVD)
66. Anansi and the royal turd (pain and lie)	X		1. Ronhaar 292-293 2. Lichtveld ⁸⁴ 47-51 3. Tjon-A-Ten 10-11	1. Winston Scholsberg (VVB) 2. Juliette Esajas (DVD) 3. Erna Caprino (web)
67. Anansi knows the name of the ugly daughter (witch, king)			1. Ferrier 75-77	1. Mohammed Madat (VVB) 2. Hilly Arduin (DVD)
68. Anansi broke and thrown out of his house				1. Yamila Abou (VVB)
69. Anansi's legs chopped off for punishment				1. Abdouellah Akanni (VVB)
70. How Anansi comes to the Netherlands			1. Kempen ⁸⁹ 113-117 2. Tjon-A-Ten 21-23 3. Orman ⁹⁷ 4. Lichtveld ⁹⁷ 79-81	1. Omaira Villarreal (DVD)
71. Anansi and Tiger beat each other as hard as they can	X		1. Tjon-A-Ten 12-14	

Story type	Hero	ATU / FI	Written	Oral
72. Anansi beats his mother to death			1. Tjon-A-Ten 15-16	
73. Anansi buys a car thanks to bets			1. Tjon-A-Ten 34-36	
74. Anansi and the night-flower			1. Franke 68-72 2. Tjon-A-Ten 37-39 3. Huyser 75-78	
75. Anansi and the singing donkey			1. Tjon-A-Ten 40-43	
76. Smith, Carpenter and Baker Anansi grabs Tiger	X		1. Tjon-A-Ten 49-52 2. Oosterhout 82-86	
77. Anansi cures Tiger of lovemaking	X		1. Lichtveld84 9-11	
78. Anansi eats the eggs of the caiman			1. Jones 23-30 2. Lichtveld84 29-30	
79. Anansi sails in boat – promises to pay the other brother			1. Lichtveld84 31-33	
80. Anansi cures fish: eats it			1. Lichtveld84 52-54	
81. Dog and Anansi walk across backs of caimans to the other side (pretending to be counting)		ATU 58	1. Lichtveld84 54-55	
82. Anansi plays his own doctor and prescribes banquet			1. Lichtveld84 56-61	
83. Anansi blames snail for cabbage theft		ATU 967	1. Lichtveld84 73-75	
84. Anansi and the king's watch (rabbit sings song of guilt)			1. Orman97	1. Lies Cruden (web)
85. Anansi versus Won't-Be-Argued-With			1. Duin 188-189	
86. Anansi arranges for the offering of gifts (Old Higue)			1. Jones 14-22	
87. Anansi exchanges chicken for cow without tail			1. Jones 31-39	
88. Mrs Anansi emancipates			1. Jones 40-48	

Story type	Hero	ATU / FI	Written	Oral
89. Anansi mediates between heaven and earth			1. Lichtveld97 8-10	
90. Anansi digs pit for deer and falls in himself			1. Lichtveld97 10-13	
91. Anansi coaches soccer team of monkeys			1. Lichtveld97 14-19	
92. Dokter Anansi plays judge in conflict over buffalo			1. Lichtveld97 26-31	
93. Anansi exchanges hats, but gets the worst of it			1. Lichtveld97 32-35	
94. Anansi gives away that the most beautiful girl is made of foam			1. Sterck 90-94	
95. Anansi organizes song contest and wants to win himself			1. Lichtveld97 35-49	
96. Anansi shows devil biggest treasure: can scold and cook	X		1. Lichtveld97 55-61	
97. Anansi at the head of (drug) smugglers' gang			1. Lichtveld97 67-73	
98. Anansi steals weed (?) from parrot growing it			1. Lichtveld97 74-79	
99. Anansi's son has to go shopping for punishment			1. Lichtveld97 81-87	
100. Anansi's daughter goes to grandma in Bijlmer dressed as Little Red Riding Hood			1. Lichtveld97 88-93	
101. Makuba and Anansi as creators of man and beast				1. Eric Borrias (VVB)
102. Anansi is helped by Watramama; can sit on her shoulders				1. Carry Ann Tjong-Ayong (VVB)
103. Anansi sticks Tiger's tail into anthill	X			1. Lies Cruden (DVD)
104. Anansi gets too fat				1. Ann Harris (DVD)

Story type	Hero	ATU / FI	Written	Oral
105. Anansi and witch Five (goose refuses to count, tricks spider)				1. Hilly Arduin (web)
106. Running match between Anansi and rabbit		ATU 275C		1. Willy Djaoen (web)
107. Angry animals chase Anansi up Awara tree				1. Juliana Fikki (web)
108. Anansi and animals with six feet beat Tiger and animals with four feet	X			1. Jil Florence (web)
109. Anansi cures woman and takes revenge when she walks away				1. Nana Afuah Gyewaa (web)
110. Anansi and the toilet problem (not by day, no pressure)				1. Ray Landveld (web)
111. King gives Anansi riddle: is the bird dead?	X			1. Paul Middellijn (web)
112. Anansi's new wife: virgin without mouth (in arm-pit)				1. Yaw Frimpong Obeng (web)
113. Anansi builds solar panel				1. Walter Palm (web)
114. Anansi's neighbours and rat arguing about garden				1. Liberta Rosario (web)
115. Anansi sells umbrellas because it seems as if it's raining				1. Stephanie van Seventer (web)
116. Anansi empties mother's biscuit barrel				1. Six year old girl (web)
117. Anansi gets a beating: indicates wrong farter			1. Oosterhout 58-61	
118. Anansi turns Tiger and dog into each other's enemies			1. Oosterhout 79-82	
119. Anansi as nanny: impregnates three princesses			1. Oosterhout 86-90	
120. Anansi gets pig, but spirits eat pig			1. Oosterhout 90-93	

Story type	Hero	ATU / FI	Written	Oral
121. Anansi buys pigtails from monkeys: a blow per tail. Help from Busimama and magic razor			1. Ferrier 17-23	
122. Anansi gets princess by ignoring her; revenge animals			1. Ferrier 83-87	
123. Anansi frightens Busimama; rounded back for punishment			1. Ferrier 88-91	
124. Anansi releases prince from bat/evil witch			1. Ferrier 98-101	
125. Anansi prevents further slavery (threatening song young son)			1. Franke 2. Huyser 19-24	
126. Anansi and Rifle's funeral			1. Franke 84-95 2. Huyser 89-98	
127. Anansi and the magic arrow			1. Franke 2. Huyser 113-117	
128. Anansi becomes supervisor; end of slavery			1. Franke 2. Huyser 137-143	
129. Anansi cures Granman's daughter			1. Franke 2. Huyser 145-155	