



Contemporary Folklore IV

Edited by Mare Kõiva

Media & Folklore
Contemporary Folklore IV

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Media & Folklore Contemporary Folklore IV

Edited by Mare Kõiva

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Introduction

This collection of studies on contemporary folklore and its relations to media, internet communities and their folklore make up an important milestone of folklore research. The first print of the book you are holding in your hands was published in a very small run in 2002, in the middle of economic difficulties and that is why we decided to publish a second, improved collection of the studies.

Contemporary Folklore 4 is also dedicated to the memory of Harry William Mürk (8 June 1954 – 24 February 2009) and Anu Vissel (16 December 1952 – 6 September 2005).

As a linguist who had studied language and literature at the universities of Helsinki and Toronto and defended PhD on Estonian morphology at the Indiana University in 1991, Harry Mürk understood the nature and dangers of language segregation. During his scholarly and teaching career he published a handbook of Estonian language in the Uralic and Altaic series at the Indiana University in 1997, and worked as professor and teacher of Estonian language and literature at the University of Toronto, later as teacher in the school. His ever increasing work load made Harry Mürk use his spare time for work, and his unexpected death left many unfinished manuscripts lying on his table. Harry's contribution to mediating Estonian culture was incredible. He translated fiction, the Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg*, folk songs, and choir songs by Veljo Tormis, also scholarly texts, compiled the monumental text anthology of Estonian Kalavala-metric songs *Taevased kosilased*. It is only short list of his everyday duties.

Since the collection action in 1992, school lore and children's folklore became Anu Vissel's primary research interests. For more than a decade, she as ethnomusicologist observed the transformation of traditions on the isolated Kihnu island and the Setu

region. The focus of her research was on the renewing of game tradition and musical culture, including children's song repertoire.

Studying contemporary folklore in Estonia has been closely related to collection initiatives (1992 – pupil folklore in Estonia and Finland, 1993 – Estonian Russian school folklore, 1993 – Estonian student folklore) and research projects but first and foremost with the researchers' own interest in cultural and societal change. This was what led to the 2007 collection initiative targeting Estonian schoolchildren with a questionnaire adapted from the 1992 one. The task force included initiators of the Estonian-Finnish 1992 collection Mare Kõiva, Astrid Tuisk, researchers of contemporary folklore Risto Järv, Piret Voolaid and coordinator Ave Tupits.

The actions of collecting contemporary folklore were preceded and followed by seminars and conferences on the subject: 1991 – anecdotes, spiritism in schoollore, scare stories, games, children's songs, etc., 1992 – Estonian school folklore just collected, 1993 – Russian Estonian school folklore, 1994, 1997 – media influences on folklore, 2007 Kiidi seminar on school folklore and the 2008 winter folklore conference panels – concentrating on the material gathered in the 2007 initiative. Compared to the school folklore collected in 1992, there had been profound changes in the whole mosaic of youth traditions, both in the genres and topics, certainly related to the transformed social cultural setting. The seminars analysed the renewed genres and topics, offering first in-depth analysis of internet folklore. Attention was also paid to youth folklore phenomena that had previously received little attention: versebooks, anecdotes, chain letters, gestures, horror stories.

Accepting change takes a while in the academic research discourse. This is well illustrated by the 1990s habit of considering the flourishing new folklore subgenres like the visual doodles or the word games bordering on linguistics and gaming as part of the periphery of riddles. Internet communities were a brand new phenomenon, and from the point of view of classical folklore, the very periphery of peripheries. Collecting internet folklore, observation of internet communities became actual only in late 1990s and resulted in databases, working papers, articles and monographs.

Conference papers and articles outlined in addition to social and political influences also the constant continuing impact that media has on the folklore process, but also the trends of merging phenomena. In many areas, the question of authorship or, in other words, the role that the personal and the individual in reinterpretation and representation of folklore, not to mention its creation.

Besides providing feedback for the society and studying the transformation of traditions in the changing society, the inquiry into contemporary folklore rejuvenated Estonian folkloristics, emphasizing new approaches, metamorphosis of folklore genres and the issues of transplantation. The latter is largely characteristic of internet folklore.

Popular text anthologies and readers compiled by Eda Kalmre, Piret Voolaid, Astrid Tuisk, Anneli Baran were met with great reader interest. The same can be said about the series *Tänapäeva folkloorist* (1995-) and *Contemporary Folklore* (1996-) that she signed initiated and has edited. In 1993, after the collection campaign for school lore from Estonian Russians, Anu Vissel and Mare Kõiva published and edited a collection of school lore with parallel Estonian and Russian texts. This publication (*Koolipärimus* 'School Lore') was the first in the *Pro folkloristica* publication series.

Mare Kõiva



ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Das Handy – oder: vom erzählerischen Umgang mit dem Mobiltelefon

Sabine Wienker-Piepho

Das kulturwissenschaftliche Denken muß sich den Folgelasten der Modernisierung durch Naturwissenschaft und Technik stellen. Helge Gerndt 1997.

Umberto Eco hatte schon 1992 die Besitzer von Mobiltelefonen in verschiedene Gruppen eingeteilt; einerseits die Zwanghaften, die ständig die Sicherheit brauchen, mit dem Arzt oder einem Notdienst in Kontakt treten zu können; andererseits diejenigen, die – beruflich bedingt – immer erreichbar sein müssen – beispielsweise Feuerwehrmänner, Schiedsrichter, Hausmeister oder Präsidenten. Drittens schließlich die Ehebrecher. Für alle drei Kategorien solle man Verständnis haben, forderte Eco, insbesondere für die Ehebrecher, da sie zumeist äußerst diskret vorgehen. Keinen Respekt konnte Eco hingegen für Handy-Benutzer aufbringen, die sich aufgrund innerer Leere und Schwatzhaftigkeit nie dem Drang zur Interaktion entziehen können oder ständig öffentlich zeigen müssen, wie begehrt sie sind (Eco 1993: 143). Das Handy als Prothese des beziehungsgestörten Menschen – den “Handy-Geschichten” zufolge, um die es in meinem Beitrag gehen soll – macht gerade diese Benutzergruppe heutzutage den Großteil der Mobiltelefonierer aus.

Wandel und Kontinuität. Als Anfang der neunziger Jahre die ersten Handys in Deutschland den Markt zu erobern begannen, kursierte eine Variante über einen neuen Berufszweig, den “Rent-a-Call”-Servicebediener:

Handybesitzer konnten sich bei Rendezvous’ oder Geschäftsbesprechungen für eine bestimmte Summe von einem extra angemieteten Call-Service anrufen lassen. Beliebt waren besonders getürkte Anrufe, angeblich aus dem Ausland, bei denen der



Arheoloogia: esimene mobiil?
(Frans Hals 1580–1666) Verdonck ca 1672. Šoti Riiklik Galerii, Edinburgh.

Angerufene so tat, als müsse er Englisch parlieren oder Börsenaufträge erteilen. Sinn der Übung war es, dem Gegenüber den Eindruck zu vermitteln, es handele sich bei dem Handybesitzer um eine äußerst wichtige, einflußreiche Persönlichkeit, die immer und überall erreichbar sein müsse. Nichts, so hieß es in den entsprechenden Glossen, sei schließlich peinlicher, als wenn er bei einem Rendezvous oder Geschäftsessen von seiner Mutter oder überhaupt nicht angerufen würde.

Ein Jahr später. Ein Volkskundler-Kollege berichtete aus Bremen, er habe

“...’fake Handys’ aus Holz oder Plastik gesichtet, die dem Benutzer zweifellos das Flair einer VIP verleihen sollen” (Rainer Alzheimer).

Dazu paßt der Bericht, den mir ein Autotelephonhersteller aus Heidelberg kolportierte: Seinen größten Umsatz (neun Zehntel) habe er seinerzeit, da Mobiltelefone als Statussymbole aufkamen, mit Attrappen gemacht, die ab und zu leise Piepstöne von sich gaben. Seine Kunden bildeten sich ein, zur neuen Funktionselite der *global players* zu gehören.

Die Geschichten über das sog. Handy haben sich inzwischen deutlich verändert. Drei Jahre später (als im übrigen clevere Touristikunternehmen bereits kostenlose Ferienhandys verteilten, um ihre Kunden damit zu ködern¹⁾), kursierte folgende, wie ich meine: bezeichnende Anekdote:

Ein Dresdner Verleger beobachtete in einem Wiener Kaffeehaus im Sommer 1995 folgende Szene:

Drei smarte Geschäftsleute ließen sich an einem Tisch nieder und legten ihre drei Handys darauf. Da kam eine Kellnerin, wischte den Tisch mit einem Tuch ab und fetzte dabei die Geräte zu Boden. Zur Rede gestellt soll sie gesagt haben: "Geht's, schleicht's euch! stinkt's mir doch ab mit Euren Yuppie-Knochen".²

Man sieht aus diesen drei Status- bzw. Schlüsselsymbol-Geschichten, daß im "Wandel der Aneignung" (Bausinger 1981) die Exklusivität des Mobiltelefons offenbar rapide im Schwinden begriffen ist, man kann auch sagen: sein Zeichenwert wird immer geringer (cf. Wienker-Piepho 1998). Längst ist das Handy nicht mehr der *identity marker* oder der *image-tuner*, als der es noch vor fünf Jahren gehandelt wurde. Längst gehört folglich auch das Phänomen der Attrappe, des *fake Handy*, der Vergangenheit an.³ Heute verbergen stilempfindliche Trendsetter vielmehr ihr Gerät verschämt in ihren Aktenköfferchen, der Besitz ist ihnen

¹⁾ In Naples im Bundesstaat Florida stellt das lokale Fremdenverkehrsbüro Touristen neuerdings eine Woche lang kostenlos ein Funktelefon zur Verfügung. Zudem hat das Naples Area Tourism Bureau eine Reihe von Anschlüssen freigeschaltet, sodaß viele Anrufe in Hotels, Restaurants, Geschäften und anderen Institutionen kostenlos sind (tdt, BZ vom 8. Nov. 1996).

²⁾ Mündlich durch Andreas Hartmann, Bamberg, Weihnachten 1995.

³⁾ Stories von *fake handys*, die sich in brenzligen Situationen als Attrappen erweisen, wurden schon 1996 in aller Welt erzählt (Vgl. Brednich 1996: 68), ihre Konjunktur ist allerdings vorbei.

nachgerade peinlich.⁴ Das Handy erlebte somit die übliche Ontogenese *all* jener technischen Innovationen, die als typische “Lifestyle-Produkte” zunächst Exklusivcharakter haben, dann aber ihren Wert als Distinktionsmerkmal durch die in solchen Fällen übliche Inflationierung verlieren (vgl. de Sola-Pool 1977, Schneider 1996: 15).

Ein so rasanter Wechsel in der Einstellung der Menschen zu einem Medium, das – so die erste These – wie kaum eine andere Erfindung der letzten Jahrzehnte unseren Alltag verändert hat, *muß* zwangsläufig – Erzählforscher wissen das – eine große Gruppe von Geschichten provozieren. Sie alle künden irgendwie von der sozialen Aneignung des Mediums. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich beschrieb den Kausalnexus von Innovation und Geschichtenproliferation in einem seiner Bücher über moderne Sagen folgendermaßen:

“Unsere heutige Welt bringt ständig neue technische Errungenschaften hervor, und kaum sind sie Teil unseres Alltagslebens geworden, bemächtigt sich ihrer schon die Phantasie der Menschen” (Brednich 1996: 5). So haben sich auch um das Handy herum zahlreiche phantastische, sagenhafte, ja märchenhafte Geschichten entzündet, die – so meine zweite These – gewisse erzählerische Kontinuitäten aufweisen und die – so meine 3. These, eine subtile Blickweise auf unsere Gesellschaft eröffnen, die durch den exzessiven Gebrauch des Mobiltelefons neu geprägt worden ist.

Das Wort *Handy*. Ich möchte diese Geschichten, auf die ich seit nunmehr rund fünf Jahren mein Augenmerk lenke, “Handy-Stories” nennen, obgleich das Wort *Handy* ein deutscher Pseudogalizismus ist; Die Bezeichnung *Handy* für Mobiltelefon tauch-

⁴ Der Autor und Publizist Michael Althen, (“Früher hatten es die Wichtigtu-er, heute haben Wichtigtu-er keins. Das Handy ist inzwischen nicht mehr gut oder böse, es ist einfach nützlich”) nennt das Handy “nach Notdurft und Geschlechtsverkehr die drittintimste Sache der Welt”, sonst würden sich die Telephonierer auf der Straße nicht so “verschämt abwenden” (in “Jetzt” Jugendmagazin, Nr. 21 v. 18. 05. 1998). Auch in Kreisen der Kulturwissenschaftlerinnen, etwa “...bei der Mehrheit der Tübinger EKWlerinnen ist das öffentliche Zurschaustellen eines Handy ein rotes Tuch auf das man mit Ablehnung reagiert” (in Das Outfit der Wissenschaft. Zur symbolischen Repräsentation akademischer Fächer. Ludwig-Uhland-Institut für Empirische Kulturwissenschaften der Universität Tübingen. Begleitheft zur Ausstellung im Haspelturm vom 24. April bis zum 1. Juni 1998, 76).

te – wie die Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache verlauten ließ – in Deutschland vor etwa sieben Jahren “aus dem Nichts” auf, danach bemühte sich eben diese Gesellschaft jahrelang (und im übrigen vergeblich) um ein Ersatzwort (z.B. wurde *Funki* vorgeschlagen).⁵ Aus dem Englischen kommt die Bezeichnung jedenfalls nicht, denn dort spricht man vom *portable*, vom *cellular phone* (kurz: *ce*) oder vom *mobile telephone*. Ich erwähne diesen Umstand ausdrücklich, denn er ist wiederum für ein anderes Phänomen bezeichnend: für die neue deutsche Konsumenten-Mentalität und deren linguistische Möchtegern-Globalisierung. Danach können eben nur Produkte mit englischen Namen mit Akzeptanz auf einem Markt rechnen, dessen zumeist jugendliche Endabnehmer mit dem Besitz dieses Produktes etwas Bestimmtes ausdrücken wollen.

Handys international. Die Handybegeisterung ist – international gesehen – sehr unterschiedlich,⁶ und auch statistisch

⁵) Laut dpa-Meldung vom 19. Januar 1996.

⁶) Über den technischen Hintergrund des Mobiltelefons soll hier nicht gehandelt werden. Deshalb an dieser Stelle nur soviel: Das Handy als Notfallmedium gab es zwar schon ab etwa 1940, aber die Anfänge des eigentlichen Mobilfunks für die Massen datieren erst auf das Jahr 1958 (Booz, Allen & Hamilton 1995:18). Das “Handy” ist derzeit (1999) eines der lukrativsten Geschäfte der Zukunft. Bis Ende des Dezenniums, so die Prognosen, werden über 10 Mill. Deutsche ein mobiles Telefon haben. Derzeit sind es etwa 4 Millionen. Zur Zeit der Jahrtausendwende telefonieren ca. 150 Millionen Teilnehmer schnurlos. Es gibt vier verschiedene Netze (C, D1, D2 und E-Netz). Das Geschäft boomt insbesondere, seit Privatanbieter dem einstigen Monopolanbieter Telekom Konkurrenz machen dürfen. Um so verwirrender ist die Fülle der Dienste- und Geräteanbieter: es gibt rund hundert Handymarken und etwa ein Dutzend Service-Offerten, der Markt unterliegt also dem freien Kräftespiel der Anbieter. Die D-(Digital) Netze werden inzwischen in 23 Ländern von Finnland bis Australien und von Südafrika bis Estland angewandt. Außenseiter sind die USA, sie hinken mit einem Analog-Netz technisch hinterher. Das E-Netz zeichnet sich durch besonders kleine und leichte Apparate aus, es ist aber in dünn besiedelten Gebieten der Bundesrepublik noch nicht erreichbar. Der weitere Ausbau sieht vor, eine neue Generation von Hybrid-Handys zu entwickeln, die zuhause wie ein Schnurlos-Telefon funktionieren und automatisch auf Außerhaus- oder Autobetrieb umschalten, wenn man sie mitnimmt. Global soll das Handy schon bald nach der Jahrtausendwende über Satelliten geschaltet werden und damit auch in den entlegendsten Gebieten der Welt jedes letzte Abenteuer flächendeckend verändern. Handys sind heutzutage sehr preiswert in der Anschaffung (auch daher haben die Fake-Handys sich längst überlebt), aber teuer im Betrieb. Von 99 Pfennig bis zu 1000 DM pro Gerät ist alles auf einem Markt, der angeblich zu 20% privat und zu 80%

erweist sich die Akzeptanz (je nach Nation) als grundverschieden, zudem gibt es binnenkulturell Unterschiede in der sozialen Aneignung (vgl. Zelger 1997: 43). Das globale Gefälle zeigt bereits ein eher impressionistischer und ganz persönlicher Streifzug, bei dem nur jene Länder herausgegriffen werden sollen, zu denen ich selbst einen gewissen Bezug habe. So fielen mir in Israel bei einer Reise im Jahre 1995 ganz besonders viele Handys im Straßenbild auf. Sie gehören dort, wie z. B auch in China, wie selbstverständlich zum Alltag⁷ und wirken besonders grotesk und schockierend dort, wo man diese Form der *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* nicht erwartet.

Auf einer Exkursion durch die Wüste sah ich einen Kameltreiber, der ein Handy aus der Satteltasche des Tieres zog und telephonierte. In Korea telephonieren Schamaninnen mit dem Handy während einer Jenseitsreise.⁸ Aus England berichten Lehrer, sie könnten in einem Internat kaum Stunden geben, da die Kinder immer wieder während des Unterrichts angerufen würden. Auch in Italien, wo man tiefverschleierte Nonnen mit Handys sehen kann, sorgen mobile Telephone – man nennt sie dort liebevoll "*Telephoninos*" – für Unruhe. Deshalb sind sie per Gesetz z.B. während der Parlamentsdebatten und während der Papstwahl⁹ in Rom verboten. Bis zum Jahr 2000 will man auch auf der Mittelmeerhalbinsel über 10 Mill. *Telephoninos* verkauft haben. Wie in anderen Ländern mit technisch extrem unterent-

geschäftlich genutzt wird. Billigstgeräte haben allerdings einen Haken: man muß gleichzeitig einen teuren Vertrag auf die Dienstleistungen eingehen, also eine Chip-Karte erwerben. Einen Boom verzeichnet auch der Zubehör-Markt, der elektronische Zusatzgeräte wie etwa pager (v. engl. to page: jmd. ausrufen), aber auch Handyschonhüllen, Handyhalter ("holster") und Handyköcher bis hin zum "Handy am Stiel" anbietet. Eine Reihe von Fachzeitschriften leben derzeit von der Orientierung der Deutschen an der digitalen Ego-Krücke: Connect, und "mobiletelefone und pager" Telephon, Funkschau mit Handy Special, Mobilfunk und Handy. In diesen Zeitschriften sind auch *handy-stories*, meist in Form von Leserbriefen, abgedruckt – sie bilden einen Teil meiner Quellen.

⁷) Anfang Mai 1995 Bericht in ARTE über Israel, wo das Handy, ganz genau wie in China zum Straßenbild gehört. China sei, so der Redakteur Adler vom SWF Baden-Baden technologisch *in puncto* Handys mittlerweile am weitesten entwickelt.

⁸) Vgl. die im Hamburger Museum für Völkerkunde gezeigte Ausstellung: Heilrituale und Handys (23. 1. 1998 – 21. 2. 1999).

⁹) KNA-Meldung. Badische Zeitung vom 24. 2. 1996, S. 1.

wickelten, entlegenen Regionen sprechen andere Argumente als bei uns *für* das Medium. Es erschließt z.B. entlegene Dörfer, die vorher von der Außenwelt völlig abgeschlossen waren. Besonders hoch ist die Akzeptanz in **Schweden**;

In der liebevollen Bezeichnung des Handy schwingt ein geradezu zärtlich-ironisierendes Meaning mit: dort nennt man es "Yuppie Teddy".

In den **neuen Ostblockländern**, z.B. im Baltikum und in Polen oder Litauen ist das Handy mit einem ganz anderen *meaning* besetzt. Es war zunächst zum Symbol des kapitalistischen Erobers aus dem Westen geworden, dessen "social practice" so skizziert wird: er sitzt in maßgeschneiderten Yuppieklamotten in großen, schnellen Limousinen mit schwarzen Scheiben, *telephoniert drahtlos* und betreibt den Ausverkauf der Ost-Länder zur eigenen Profitmaximierung.¹⁰ Andererseits sitzen die *nowije russkij* und die Mafiosi längst schon ihrerseits in denselben Limousinen und möbeln ihr Image mit Handys auf: Im sonnigen Bulgarien kursiert ein entsprechender „Handy-Witz“: „Woran erkennt man einen Mafioso? Am weißen Fleck an der Schläfe!“¹¹ Der Sende-, bzw. Empfangsbereich der Ost-Geräte reicht allerdings nur in Einzelfällen bis nach Westeuropa. Gerade im Ostblock muß an der "Marktpenetration" – so drückt sich die Branche aus – noch viel gearbeitet werden.

Jahrelange Beobachtungen in **Deutschland** ergaben vor allem Skurriles, nachgerade Absurdes, und Absurdität nährt sich bekanntlich von der Unangemessenheit zweier verschiedener Ebenen, oder (nach Freud und Iser) verschiedener "Erwartungshorizonte". Lassen Sie mich dazu einige Beispiele vorführen: Auch in Deutschland (Ost wie West) nehmen die Handys in der Schule überhand. Ein 17-jähriger Firmengründer ("komme sofort ins Haus bei Computerproblemen, Anruf genügt") läßt sich während des Unterrichts und in der Schulpause anrufen oder bestellt per Handy eine Pizza in den Unterricht.¹² Einer Volkskundlerin begegnete ein telephonierender Abfahrtsläufer auf der Skipiste (C. Köhler-Hezinger, Marburg 1995), einem anderen ein

¹⁰) Eigene Recherche im Sept. 1996 in Vilnius, Litauen.

¹¹) Freundlicher Hinweis von Prof. Dr. Klaus Roth, München.

¹²) Johannes Kiem, 17 Jahre, Gymnasiast, Freiburg.

¹³) In Israel telephoniert man einem Witz zufolge, übrigens am preiswertesten mit Gott, denn es sei schließlich ein "local call".



Handyaficionado, der im Herrenpissoir einhändig weiterredete – kommunikative Notdurft! Inadäquat wirkt es auch, wenn eine Handyfirma ein wasserdichtes Modell anbietet, das man auf sein Surfbrett mitnehmen kann. Überhaupt gehört das längst zum Kultgegenstand avancierte Handy inzwischen fest zum Equipment der *fit-and-fun-society*: auf dem Vorplatz der Münchner Oper etwa sitzen jugendliche *Roller-Blader* mit *disc-men* im einen Ohr auf den Stufen und telephonieren per Handy durch das andere Ohr miteinander, obgleich die isolierten Akteure ebenso gut miteinander sprechen könnten. – Seltsame Interaktionsrituale haben sich auch auf dem Erotik-Markt entwickelt: Call-Girls haben mit dem Handy neue Dimensionen des “remote sex” ausgelotet: Sie benutzen den “magic channel” als ideales Medium für ihren sog. “interaktiven Telefonsex” und sind außerdem sofort und allenthalben verfügbar. Absurd, grotesk und sehr skurril wirkte auch eine Agentur-Meldung, man rüste sich technisch auf mehr als tausend mit Handys ausgerüstete Pilger, die im Frühjahr 1996 an der Trierer Wallfahrt zum Heiligen Rock teilnehmen wollten.

Gerade der Aspekt des “Unangemessenen” ist denn auch Thema Nr. 1 eines Handy-Karikaturenwettbewerbs gewesen, den die Zeitschrift *mobilelephon und pager* 1997 ausschrieb: hier sieht man z.B. einen Börsenmakler mit einem Handy am Ohr auf einem sinkenden Schiff während er die Order durchgibt, alle Aktien der Schifffahrtlinie sofort abzustoßen, einen Beichtvater im Beichtstuhl, der sich per Handy Rat bei höheren Instanzen einholt oder auch einen Kanzelredner, der drahtlos mit Gott verbunden ist,¹³ und während der Predigt Inspirationen von oben bekommt. Telefonieren mit dem Jenseits ist übrigens – wie der Karikaturist vielleicht nicht wußte – schon zeit längerem traditioneller literarischer Topos (vgl. Schneider 1996: 17, Zelger 1997,67).

Handystories: Die größte Gruppe von mündlichen Erzählungen um Handys, und nur um diese *Geschichten* soll es hier ja gehen,¹⁴ spiegelt die amorphen Ängste der Menschen vor dem



¹⁴ Als literarischer Topos hat sich das Handy offensichtlich noch nicht durchsetzen können: “Viele Schriftsteller hüten sich noch davor, die Protagonisten ihrer Werke mit Handys auszustatten” schreibt auch Zelger in ihrer Studie über das Telephon in der Hochliteratur (Zelger 1997:92).

Unheimlichen, vor dem Numinosum technischer Innovation. Offensichtlich werden Zivilisationsängste massiv auf die Handy-Technik projiziert. Solche Übertragungen sind im übrigen klassische Parameter jeder sozio-technischen Evolution.

Häufig schlagen sich bereits kursierende Geschichten über die Gefährlichkeit des Handy in Zeitungsmeldungen nieder, hier ein Beispiel aus der deutschen Frauenzeitschrift "Petra", es geht um das Thema "Elektrosmog":

Der Heilpraktiker Franz X. Kohl aus München warnt:

'Elektrosmog schadet der Schönheit. Er stört den Zellstoffwechsel und den Lymphfluß. Beides kann die Haut vorzeitig altern lassen.' Also: Keine Dauergespräche. Normale Telephone sind ungefährlich, weil sie mit Schwachstrom betrieben werden.¹⁵

Dies Beispiel gehört zu einer Gruppe von Angstgeschichten, die sich um *Gesundheitsgefährdung* durch Handys drehen,¹⁶ eine Panik, die nach Worten des Kommunikationssoziologen Manfred Schneider inzwischen Züge "kulturkritischer Paranoia" ange-

¹⁵) Nach "mobiltelefone und pager" 7-8-95, S.97.

¹⁶) Kanadische Forscher haben in einer Studie mit 699 Autofahrern zeigen können, daß die Unfallgefahr um das Vierfache erhöht war, wenn während der Fahrt telephoniert wurde (deswegen ist z.B. in Singapore das Handy im Auto verboten. Mißbrauch wird mit hohen Geldstrafen und Entzug des Gerätes geahndet). Auch unter den Herausgebern des New England Journal of Medicine scheint reges Interesse an der Handy-Forschung zu bestehen. Dort wurde kürzlich eine weitere Arbeit zum Thema Gesundheitsgefährdung durch Handys publiziert: Eine US-amerikanische Forschergruppe untersuchte 980 Patienten mit Herzschrittmachern auf mögliche Störungen durch fünf verschiedene Mobilfon - Typen. Eine ähnliche Studie mit drei Handy-Typen im C- und D-Netz war bereits im vergangenen Jahr von einer Arbeitsgruppe aus Göppingen veröffentlicht worden. Während die schwäbischen Kardiologen Herzschrittmacherträger jedoch eher von der Benutzung des Handys abrieten, stellten die amerikanischen Kollegen zwar in einer Häufigkeit von 7,2% "Symptome" fest, konnten aber auch versichern, daß Handys kein Gesundheitsrisiko bergen, wenn sie - sofern im Gebrauch - am Ohr gehalten werden (wo sonst?). Schließlich deuten tierexperimentelle Befunde einer australischen Arbeitsgruppe sogar auf eine erhöhte Krebsgefahr hin. Die Forscher aus Sidney hatten 100 Mäuse zweimal täglich 30 Min. lang telephonieren lassen. Nach 18 Monaten entwickelten die Handy-Mäuse 2,4fach häufiger Lymphdrüsenkrebs als die Kontrollgruppe.

nommen hat (Schneider 1996: 19). Beim Stichwort Elektrosmog (etwa Klitzing 1996: 242f.) kommen *Handystories* damit übrigens ganz nahe an ein anderes, traditionelles Sujet der Volkserzählungen heran, nämlich an das ebenfalls von numinosen Ängsten umwölkte Thema "Gift" (vgl. Hartmann 1987).

Handy – wie Gift-Geschichten gehören, so möchte ich es einmal formulieren, zur "Semiologie des Unheimlichen", von dem Julia Kristeva in anderen Zusammenhängen gesprochen hat (Kristeva 1990: 202), das Handy kann eines seiner Zeichen sein. Unheimliches tradiert z.B. eine mehrfach variierte Geschichte, derzufolge einer eifrigen Handybenutzerin sämtliche Haare ausgefallen sein sollen.¹⁷ Eine andere Frau soll, seitdem sie ein Handy verwendet, unter unerträglichen Kopfschmerzen gelitten haben, die erst nachließen, als sie wieder auf ein konventionelles Telefon umstieg.¹⁸ Unheimliche Hiobsbotschaften kommen auch seitens naturwissenschaftlicher Studien, welche diverse "handycaps" im Experiment feststellen wollen: zuletzt teilten britische Wissenschaftler im September 1997 warnend mit, daß Telefonieren mit dem Handy dick macht. Grund: die Benutzung eines Mobiltelefons spare jährlich etwa 16 km Fußweg und den entsprechenden Kalorienverbrauch ein. Neben dem Risiko der drahtlosen Verfettung wird (wie einst bei der Mikrowelle) auch immer wieder das Gesundheitsrisiko für Herzschrittmacher-Patienten hervorgehoben, außerdem erhöhe sich – so eine Studie aus Sidney – auch das Risiko für Krebs.¹⁹ Solche Meldungen schüren Ängste weiter und auf dem Nährboden der Zeitungs-Meldungen hat dann bekanntlich die sog. *Rückkoppelung* Hochkonjunktur; die in Volksundlerkreisen wohlbekanntesten Zeitungsmeldungen wirken als Stimuli und Multiplikatoren: sie fördern Re-Oralisierung und erweitern die Diffusion der Geschichten.

¹⁷) Nach eigenen Recherchen.

¹⁸) Tatsächlich verzeichnet die offizielle Handymarkt-Statistik viele Neugierige, die nach anfänglichen Versuchen mit dem Handy wieder auf ihr gutes, altes Telefon zurückgreifen. Solche Unzufriedenheits- und Angst-Aussteiger – man nennt sie in der Managerterminologie "churn" – machen übrigens Marktanalysen zufolge heute noch etwa 22% aus (Booz.Allen & Hamilton 1995: 45), eine – wie mir scheint – relativ hohe Quote.

¹⁹) Vgl. Handycaps: Neue Leiden an der mobilen Kommunikation. Drahtlose Verfettung. In: Badische Zeitung v. 6.1.1998.

Handystories sind dabei gewissermaßen gattungstransitorisch und bevor man sie vorschnell ausschließlich den modernen Sagen, den *contemporary legends* zuschlägt, sollte man sich noch einmal vergegenwärtigen, daß dieses Genre bislang nicht eindeutig definiert ist.²⁰ Prüfen wir trotz der derzeit propagierten "Gattungsdämmerung", ob sie dem bislang erzielten Forschungskonsens zufolge überhaupt Sagen sein könnten.

Als Sagen: Angstgeschichten bilden die größte Gruppe unter den Handy-Stories.²¹ Die Narratologie weiß, daß Angst- und Warnerzählungen traditionell mit der Gattung Sage verbunden sind, und so würde man denn im Sinne von Brunvand, Portnoy, Brednich, Dégh, Fine, Burger, af Klintberg, Fischer, Bennett und anderen unsere Handygeschichten wohl tatsächlich zunächst den "*contemporary legends*", den "modernen Stadtsagen" bzw. den "modernen Wandersagen" oder den "Zeitungssagen" zuschlagen müssen, und zwar trotz der bislang offenbar ungeklärten Taxonomie.²² Wie jede Sage haben sie als *fabula credibilis* einen Wahrheitsanspruch, und wegen ihrer Nähe zu einem oftmals wahren Kern kann man sie mit Brednich (Brednich 1996: 8) und dem ungarischen Erzählforscher Réthey-Prikkel²³ auch als "Wahrgeschichten" bezeichnen. Formal entsprechen sie zumeist den *Erlebnissagen*, die man auch als "Ich-Erzählungen in der dritten Person" charakterisiert. Funktional dürfte das Erzählen von *Handy-Stories*, die "Sagenarbeit" also gewissermaßen, als Geistesbeschäftigung zu sehen sein, deren Sinn darin besteht, numinose und erschreckende Angelegenheiten zu entschärfen, indem man sie in vertrautere Deutungsmuster zu übersetzen versucht (vgl. Jeggle 1990: 55).

Psychologisch gesehen sind die Ängste in *Handygeschichten* alle ähnlich strukturiert, sie unterscheiden sich nur in Details. So geht es in einer zweiten Angst-Gruppe nicht um Krankheit,

²⁰) Zum Letztstand der Gattungsdiskussion zur modernen Sage vgl. Ingo Schneider 1997.

²¹) Campion-Vincent/Renard (1992) sehen in Angstgeschichten allgemein die größte Gruppe moderner "légendes urbaines" und "rumeurs". Vgl auch die Rezension ihres Buches durch Christine Shojaei-Kawan in *Fabula* 36 (1993) 324.

²²) Vgl. Bill Ellis: Legend Taxonomy and the mysterious "Woman in Black". In: Voigt 1995, 288–298.

²³) Miklos Réthey-Prikkel: Die Wahrgeschichte – Generative Aspekte zur Theorie der Erzählung. In: Voigt 1995 653–673.

sondern um die unvorhersehbaren *Folgen* einer Erfindung, die sich *verselbständigt* und am Ende der Kontrolle der Benutzer entgleitet. Dazu zählt die sehr verbreitete Meldung vom Handy, das den Airbag-Alarm im Auto auslöst oder in Flugzeugen die Autopiloten abschaltet.²⁴ Dieser Effekt führte dazu, daß man z.B. in Brasilien seit Anfang 1997 die Handys wie Waffen behandelt: Passagiere müssen sie vor dem Start abgeben und bekommen sie bei der Landung wieder ausgehändigt.²⁵ Seit dem 1. März 1999 sind Handys auch in deutschen Flugzeugen gesetzlich verboten.²⁶

Eine dritte Gruppe von Angstgeschichten handelt von der *Abhörbarkeit* des Mediums. Man kennt diese Angst auch von Geschichten, die sich um das herkömmliche Telephon ranken. Zu dieser Kategorie gehört folgende Zeitungssage:

Ungewollt wurde das britische Ehepaar Paul (38) und Sylvia (34) Harker zum Stadtgespräch von Newton, Uncliffe (Grafschaft Durham). Ihre Telephonate mit drahtlosen Handys, auch über heikelste Intimitäten, sind tagelang auf der Frequenz des lokalen Radiosenders zu hören gewesen. Alle wußten es, nur die beiden nicht. Die wurden erst von Sylvias Mutter informiert. Paul hat inzwischen sein Telephon durch ein konventionelles Modell mit Netzanschluß ersetzt.²⁷

Die letztgenannten Handy-Stories bringen sämtlich die Urangeist der Menschen zum Ausdruck, die Innovation, mit der sie plötzlich im Alltag umgehen müssen, nicht zu beherrschen. Auch sie gehören damit einer Kategorie von Sagen an, die eine lange Tradition haben und deren bekannteste Variante wohl die Geschichte vom Zauberlehrling ist, der mit den Geistern, die er

²⁴) vgl. SPIEGEL 2/1996 S.28.

²⁵) dpa 6. Nov. 1996, in: Badische Zeitung vom gleichen Tage, Rubrik "Aus aller Welt".

²⁶) Nach AP v. 11.2.1999 tritt dann die neue "Luftfahrzeug-Elektronik-Betriebsverordnung" in Kraft. Bei Zuwiderhandlungen drohen Geldstrafen oder Freiheitsentzug bis zu zwei Jahren.

²⁷) Die in Ülzen erscheinende Allgemeine Zeitung der Lüneburger Heide berichtete am 24/25.Nov. 1994: (ppl Uncliffe). Freundlicher Hinweis von Rolf-Wilhelm Brednich, Göttingen, dem sie eingeschickt wurde von "Einrichtung für umfassende Forschung, Kleinpahs-Archiv, Lintzel, Eichwald 5. Die Geschichte hat Ähnlichkeit mit Jucca 82: "Porno im Hochhaus".

rief, nicht mehr fertig wird (cf. AaTh 325 *The Magician and his Pupil* und 325* *Apprentice and Ghost* und *Demon enclosed in bottle released*, Mot R 181).

Eine weitere Gruppe von Geschichten kombiniert zwei deutsche Alltags-Mythen:

den alten Mythos vom Auto und den neuen vom Handy. Hinter einigen Neo-Mythen können Tatsachen stehen: so rief z.B. der deutsche ADAC im Dezember 1995 – wie gesagt – alle Handybesitzer auf, sich als offizielle Staumelder auf den deutschen Autobahnen zu betätigen,²⁸ und prompt brach angeblich das Netz zusammen. Andererseits, so heißt es, würden auch Radarfallen per Handy sofort an eine Zentrale durchgegeben, um die anderen Raser zu warnen. So tricksen pfiffige Autofahrer – sie erzählen diese Geschichten gerne von sich selbst – per Handy die Staatshoheit aus. Daneben nutzen viele autofahrende Handybesitzer das neue Medium vor allem auch, um ihrem Ärger spontan Luft zu machen, was wiederum der Polizei durchaus nicht gefällt: Autofahrer etwa mißbrauchen dauernd die deutsche Notrufnummer 110, die dann blockiert.²⁹

Innerhalb der großen Familie der Handy-Angstsagen fallen weitere zwei kleinere Untergruppen von Geschichten auf, in denen das Handy regelrecht dämonisiert wird. Die erste Gruppe sind extrem negativ besetzte Handy-Geschichten um kriminelle Aktionen: entweder gelingt den Verbrechern jetzt mittels Handy endlich der große Coup (Häftlinge telephonieren angeblich aus ihren Zellen miteinander, oder sie unterlaufen staatliche und soziale Kontrollen, wie etwa den “großen Lauschangriff” mit Handy usw.), oder aber verfangen sich selbst in den Tücken des Mediums. Ende 1995 ging folgende dpa-Meldung durch die Presse, die dies Pech exemplarisch illustriert:

Kopenhagen (dpa) seine Geschwätzigkeit am Mobiltelefon ist einem dänischen Dieb zum Verhängnis geworden. Die Kopenhagener Polizei schnappte einen Serientieb, weil er einem Bekannten in der Bahn per Handy von einem besonders erfolgreichen Streifzug berichtet hatte. Eine Mitreisen-

²⁸⁾ Vgl. ADAC Motorwelt: Werden sie Staumelder! Heft I, Januar (1996) S. 6–8.

²⁹⁾ Nach einer dpa-Meldung vom 28.10.1995.

de informierte an der nächsten Haltestelle mittels eines konventionellen Münztelefons die Polizei.

Hinter einer solchen Meldung – es handelt sich um eine Zeitungssage – steckt neben der Angst wohl auch die *Schadenfreude* der Erzähler, die sich selbst kein Handy leisten können oder wollen. Auch diese Story enthält übrigens ein traditionelles Motiv, nämlich Mot J.2136.5.2 *Numskull brings about his own capture by talkativeness (Dieb verrät sich selbst durch Geschwätzigkeit)*. Sie wurde mir u.a. auch aus den USA als personal story zugesandt, war spürbar dabei die Häme des Informanten, der selbst kein Handy hat.

Hier wird deutlich: Wer über die Handys Anderer spricht, spricht letztenendes über sich selbst. In diesem Sinne sind die meisten Handy-Stories zwar Heterostereotypen-Geschichten über “andere”, gleichzeitig aber auch *narrator-marker*. Im Falle der Numskull-Geschichte ist dessen Attitude gekennzeichnet von ein wenig Neid aber auch von Schadenfreude. Das kann soweit gehen, daß man das Handy als lebensgefährlich darstellt. In den Niederlanden kursiert seit Mitte der neunziger Jahre beispielsweise eine “Stadtsage”³⁰ über einen Handy-Telephonierer, der gegen einen Baum lief oder anderweitig tödlich verunglückte, weil er des Gesprächs wegen nicht auf seinen Weg achtete.

Andererseits roulieren nahezu jenseitig anmutende Mirakelgeschichten. Mehrfach gehört habe ich zum Beispiel folgende phantastische Horrorgeschichte, die u.a. von der Nachrichtenagentur Reuter verbreitet wurde:

Hund schluckte Handy: – Auf der Suche nach seinem Handy wählte ein Londoner die Nummer des Mobiltelefons und hörte das Rufzeichen aus seinem Hund, der das umherliegende Gerät verschluckt hatte. Ein sofort konsultierter Tierarzt riet zur Geduld. Und tatsächlich tauchte das Handy 24 Stunden später voll funktionstüchtig wieder auf.³¹

³⁰) Unter dieser Rubrik ist sie in der “Volksverhalenbank”, einer Datenbank des Meertens-Instituts in circa 10 Varianten gespeichert. Ich danke Theo Meder für dessen diesbezüglichen Hinweis.

³¹) Ich danke Prof. R. W. Brednich für diesen Hinweis. Quelle: Der Standard, Wien 3./4. Jänner 1998.

Das hier waltende Prinzip der Dämonisierung und der Divinisierung wurde unlängst auch von Kvideland beschrieben. In seiner neueren Studie mit dem Titel "Narratives of New Technology" heißt es zu entsprechenden Technik-Geschichten aus dem 19. Jahrhundert: "Technology is given both a demonic and a divine dimension" (Kvideland 1996: 100).

Das gute Handy: In einer zweiten, allerdings sehr *positiv* besetzten Untergruppe von Stories wird das Mobiltelefon zum Lebensretter emporstilisiert. Motivisch erinnern sie an klassische Erzählungen von Kugeln, die an Amuletten oder an in die Schlacht mitgeführten Bibeln abprallen (vgl. Mot D 1344.3 *Amulet renders invulnerabe*). So z.B. folgende Geschichte, nach der das Handy einem Manne das Leben gerettet hat:

Trompie Heilbron, südafrikanischer Geschäftsmann, hat sein Leben einem in der Jackentasche mitgeführten Mobiltelefon zu verdanken. Heilbron war auf dem Wege nach Hause, als er in Port Elisabeth von einer bewaffneten Gang überfallen wurde. Die Angreifer eröffneten das Feuer. Eine Kugel durchschlug zunächst einen Arm und blieb dann im Mobiltelefon stecken, das der Mann in die Innentasche seiner Jacke gesteckt hatte. 'Ohne Mobiltelefon wäre ich tot,' sagte Heilbron.³²

Zu den "*Handys are good*"-Stories gehört auch eine Reihe von Geschichten über Unfälle, die tödlich geendet hätten, wäre nicht ein Unfallbeteiligter per Handy in der Lage gewesen, rasche Hilfe herbeizutelephonieren.³³ Hier mutiert das Handy endgültig zu einem Gegenstand mit größter Dingbedeutsamkeit, ja nachgerade Magie, es wird gleichsam beseelt und zu einem Übernatürlichen Helfer. Das paßt zu Angst-Geschichten, die z.B. in Schweden zum Thema *Tod und Handy* kursieren: da nämlich die Handy-Manie inzwischen auch den Friedhof erreicht hat, nimmt nicht wunder, daß in den Zeitungen von Handys die Rede ist, die – geradeso wie ehemals Telephone oder Klingeln – wegen der Angst vor dem Scheintot mit ins Grab genommen wer-

³²) Süddeutsche Zeitung, abgedruckt in mobiltelefon und pager 11-12-95, S. 88.

³³) vgl. z.B. einen BILD-Leserbrief, abgedruckt in "Mediensplitter", mobilfunk und pager 1.96. S. 88.

³⁴) Freundlicher Hinweis von Bengt af Klintberg, Stockholm.

den,³⁴ ganz abgesehen davon, daß es schon Grabsteine in Form von Handys gibt.³⁵ Funktional kann es sich bei positiven Handy-stories auch um *Rechtfertigungs* – bzw. um *Legitimations*-geschichten mit apologetischem Charakter handeln (Cf. Lehmann 1980), mit denen einerseits die inzwischen vielfach ironisierten Handybesitzer ihre Würde verteidigen und mit denen andererseits die Verkaufsstrategen letzte Hemmschwellen beseitigen wollen.

Als Märchen: Das Handy als Zaubermittel und über-natürlicher Helfer evoziert v a. die Gattung *Märchen* und meine dritte These lautet: Technische Neuheiten lassen sich heutzutage besonders erfolgreich vermarkten, wenn sie mindestens ein märchenhaftes Element enthalten. Bei den märchenhaften Handy-Varianten fällt noch ein weiteres traditionelles Erzähl-thema auf, und dies gehört nach Lüthis Märchen-Phänomeno-logie nun geradezu gattungsdistinktiv zum Bereich der *magic tales*, der Zaubermärchen: gemeint sind die Phänomene *Omni-präsenz* oder *Bilokation*,³⁶ und die mit der Isolation des Helden korrelierende sog. *Allverbundenheit*³⁷ (engl. "Isolation and Uni-versal interconnection"): danach ist der Märchenheld – so Lüthi – in der ihm eigenen Isolation befähigt, sofort Verbindung mit al-len weiteren Figuren einzugehen; Dazu sagt Lüthi z.B.:

"Nächstes kann zu Nächstem ohne Beziehung bleiben. Fer-nes kann sich mit Fernem verbinden. Denn im Märchen ist sich alles gleich nah und gleich fern..." (Lüthi 1978: 53). – Triumphierend und enthusiastisch beschrieb ein von mir befragter, junger Vater diese seine märchen hafte "Allverbundenheit" fol-gendermaßen: "Mit dem Handy bist Du weg, aber voll da". Er hatte das Taschensprechgerät mit in den Urlaub genommen, um auch am einsamen in der Massenterminologie ostasiatischen Palmenstrand stets ansprechbar zu sein und um zu kontrollie-

³⁵) Am 14.8.1998 veröffentlichte die Berliner Zeitung (S.8) eine Meldung der Nachrichtenagentur Reuters. Ein Photo von einem israelischen Friedhof mit einem riesigen, schwarzen Handy als Grabplatte trug folgende Unterschrift: "Handy-Manie erreichte Friedhof. Diese Grabplatte, die als Mobiltelefon gestaltet ist, hat die Familie des Isrealis Guy Akrish ausgesucht. Grund: Der 17jährige, der bei einem Verkehrsunfall getötet wurde, war ein leidenschaftlicher Telephonierer. „Hallo, hier spricht Guy, wie geht's? lautet eine der Inschriften."

³⁶) Vgl. in der EM die Artikel: External Soul, Dissoziation, Doppelgänger, Entrückung, Gestalttausch und Fernzauber.

ren, ob seine Kinder nicht die Schule schwänzten. "Man ist überall erreichbar", sagte er munter, "und überall mit dabei, ob in Wüste oder Dschungel, auf Berggipfeln oder am einsamen Palmenstrand." Allverbundenheit!

Als Schwänke: Andererseits haben viele Handy-Geschichten auch deutlichen Schwank-Charakter. Das "tremendum", die Angst vor dem Numinosen, ist in Schwänken bekanntlich auf ein Minimum reduziert und kippt um zur Lust, wenngleich auch diese Lust noch Beimischungen von Angst haben kann ("Angstlust"). Am Ende lacht man die Ängste weg. Auch dazu liegen bereits Arbeiten vor. So hatte schon Ulrich Bentzien in einer Studie zur erzählerischen Bewältigung des Novums Technik gezeigt, daß dabei die komischen Formen generell überwiegen (Bentzien 1993), ein Befund, der auch durch Kvidelands Beispiele³⁸ bestätigt wird. Wie die eingangs genannten komischen Stories vom "fake-handy" und vom "Juppie-Knochen" zeigen sollten, eignen sich schwankhafte Handystories besonders gut als Snob- und Aufschneidersatiren, an denen der Erzähler seine intellektuelle und emotionale Distanz zum Gegenstand der Erzählung unter Beweis stellen kann. Die skeptische Erzählhaltung kann sich dabei gelegentlich zu massiver Kritik an Handy-Arroganz steigern: So mokieren sich in vielen Handy-Schwänken die Erzähler über Handyangeber, die direkt vor den Telephonzellen stehen, an denen andere in langen Schlangen warten müssen, um ausgerechnet dort äußerst provokant ihre Anrufe zu tätigen, oder sie freuen sich, wenn dumme Verbrecher in die Handyfalle tappen:

Ein belgischer Taxifahrer, dem das Handy gestohlen war, wählte die eigene Handynummer – und schon hatte er den Dieb am Ohr, den er an seiner eigenen Stimme erkannte. (Zeitung am Sonntag, Freiburg, 18.10.1998)

Die meisten *jocular stories* drehen sich um die Tücken der Technik und die Unfähigkeit von Naivlingen, bes. von Frauen, damit umzugehen. So kursierte in Weißrußland eine Story über Stu-

³⁷⁾ Vl. Max Lüthi: Das europäische Volksmärchen. München: Francke (61978) 49–62, 103f.

³⁸⁾ sowie durch eine Karikaturenanalyse von Brune (Brune 1996)

dentinnen, die so doof sind, daß sie das Handy immer umdrehen, wenn sie sprechen, weil sie denken, dort wo der Ton heraustritt, müsse man ihn auch hineintun.³⁹ Diese Story ist zusätzlich aufschlußreich für einen *gender*-Aspekt des Erzählthemas: Während *Handy-Sagen* zumeist *male tales* sind, Geschichten über Männer, die von Männern für Männer erzählt werden, handeln Handy-Schwänke nach Art der Blondinenwitze vielfach von dummen Frauen.

Als Witz: Die verkürzte Form des Schwanks ist bekanntlich der Witz und zur Angstlust gehört letztlich ja auch, daß man Angst mit einem Witz erledigt. Und so kursieren inzwischen auch die ersten Handy-Witze in Deutschland: Auf einem für Ausländer unverständlichen Sprachspiel mit dem Schwäbischen Dialekt beruht die Volksetymologie von Handy: angeblich sagen die Schwaben verwundert über Handys: "*Hän di kei Schnur?*" (mündlich). Ein anderer ist weit und in vielen Varianten verbreitet: "Ein Ehemann geht in ein Bordell und bekommt dort einen Anruf von seiner Frau. Entsetzt fragt er: Wer hat Dir gesagt, wo ich bin?"⁴⁰

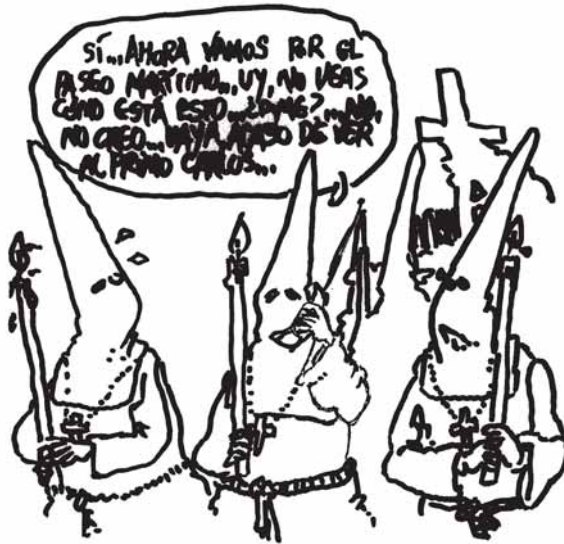
Funktional gesehen gehören alle Gruppen von Handy-Stories zu den Kommunikaten, zu den Alltagserzählungen,⁴¹ zum mehr oder minder beiläufigen "Erzählen in Gesprächen". Sie sind damit auch das, was die Linguisten eine "konversationelle Erzählung" nennen (cf. Bausinger 1991: 6). Sie sind eher kunstlos: Allenfalls die *komischen* Formen könnte man mit Roger D. Abrahams der "verbal art" zuschlagen, die in diesem Fall mit "patterns" auf Pointen zusteuert.

Als intellektuelles Spiel: Nachdem vor allem die Intellektuellen ihre Breitseiten gegen die Banalitäten losgelassen hatten, die die Handybenutzer auf Bahnhöfen und Flughäfen ins Gerät sprechen (vgl. Eco!), starteten einige Meinungsbildner in der renommierten Zeitung FAZ auch eine Feuilleton-Glosse mit Leserzuschriften, in der ein reizvoller Konjunktiv durchgespielt wurde: Was wäre gewesen, wenn man in bestimmten großen Momenten der Geschichte ein Handy gehabt hätte? Diese *history-*

³⁹) Eigene Recherche in Weißrußland, Frühjahr 1997.

⁴⁰) Die bereits erwähnte Datenbank des Meertens-Instituts hat eine Variante dieses Witzes als Blondinenwitz gespeichert: "Was sagt eine Blondine, wenn ihr Mobiltelefon klingelt? – Woher weißt Du, wo ich bin?" (Amsterdam 1998).

⁴¹) Der Begriff wurde von Hermann Bausinger eingeführt (vgl. id.: Strukturen des alltäglichen Erzählens. In: *Fabula* 1 (1958) 239–254.



games, wie ich sie einmal nennen möchte, gehen alle nach folgendem Muster:

Eines Tages brach der alte Bach auf, um Händel in Halle zu besuchen. Als er ankam, war dieser vor gerade einer halben Stunde abgereist. Alle späteren Versuche Bachs, Händel doch noch zu treffen, scheiterten... Man stelle sich vor, beide hätten ein Handy gehabt oder jemanden gekannt, der ein Handy hatte. Johann Sebastian Bach hätte Händel sagen können, daß er auf dem Weg zu ihm sei, auch wenn ihn dringende Geschäfte in London erwarteten, hätte er doch noch eine Stunde später abfahren können....⁴²

Möglicherweise hätte die Musikgeschichte des Abendlandes einen anderen Verlauf genommen.

2. Beispiel einer *history-game-story*: Hätten die Revolutionäre 1848 Handys gehabt, hätten sie ihre Aktivitäten besser koordinieren können und die Revolution wäre geglückt. Deutschland sähe heute völlig anders aus...⁴³

⁴²) Michael S. Cullen: Eins zu null für das Handy in: FAZ 9. Mai 1997.

⁴³) Man hat auch Kriege durchgespielt, etwa die absurde Situation eines im Schützengraben liegenden Soldaten, der mit seiner Liebsten telefoniert, während um ihn herum die Granaten explodieren, usw.

Handydiktatur: Mittlerweile gibt es erste Gegenbewegungen gegen die Handy-Diktatur, und auch sie sind kulturell codiert und haben ihre eigenen Warn- und Schreckgeschichten. Vorbehalte gegen das Handy werden z.B. in einem "Handy-Knigge" artikuliert, der 1997 unter der Überschrift "Handy bei Beerdigungen nicht "comme il faut" in der "Süddeutschen Zeitung" abgedruckt wurde:

Tragbare Handy-Telephone verstoßen nach Ansicht von Benimm-Experten oft gegen den guten Ton. 'Wer immer noch glaubt, mit dem Piepsen seines Funktelefons an jedem Ort und zu jeder Zeit seine Wichtigkeit beweisen zu müssen, steht schnell in der Ecke,' warnte der Informationsdienst 'Stil und Etikette.' Tabu seien Handys bei Beerdigungen, Trauerfeiern und in der Kirche.⁴⁴ Am Krankenbett dem Telephon mehr Aufmerksamkeit zu widmen, als dem Kranken, das grenze an 'menschliche Roheit.' Bei gesellschaftlichen Ereignissen sollte das Handy nur bei zwingenden Gründen benutzt werden. Im Konzert und im Theater produziere es Mißtöne. Wer bei einem Vorstellungsgespräch mit seinem Mobiltelefon protze, laufe Gefahr, als Wichtigtuer eingestuft zu werden.

In England will man die rücksichtslosen Handybenutzer inzwischen per Dekret ausgrenzen: Im Oberhaus wurde debattiert, ob man nicht – ähnlich den Raucherabteilen – in Lokalen und öffentlichen Verkehrsmitteln gesonderte Bereiche für Handy-Besessene einführen solle.⁴⁵ In Deutschland wird das Handy-Verbot schon längst auch ohne Gesetz praktiziert: in meiner Heimatstadt Freiburg hängt an einigen Lokalen schon ein entsprechendes Piktogramm (neben Hundeverbot und Rauchverbot). Mit Appellen an die Etikette ist es nicht getan, besonders nicht in den USA. Dort haben sich erste Selbsthilfegruppen gegen den Telefon-Terror formiert (vgl. Stadelmann 1994: 90). Sie entstanden angeblich aus echtem Leidensdruck. Last und Lust

⁴⁴) Dazu auch eine Meldung aus der BZ vom 6.8.1996: "Telephonieren mit dem Handy während des Gottesdienstes ist nach dem Beschluß einer Nürnberger Kirchengemeinde unerwünscht. Ärger hatte es bei einem Gottesdienst gegeben, als ein Teilnehmer telephonierte. Allerdings darf das Handy auch künftig in die Kirche mitgebracht werden, um ,in dringenden Fällen" erreichbar zu sein".

⁴⁵) Süddeutsche Zeitung, Nachdruck in mobiltelefone und pager 2/96, S. 97.

der permanenten Erreichbarkeit sind nicht mehr ausbalanciert. Es sei ein großer Druck, so ließ man verlauten, einerseits immer erreichbar zu sein und andererseits gar nicht oder nur irgendwelcher Nichtigkeiten wegen angerufen zu werden.⁴⁶ Der virtuelle Raum, den unsere Telephone, unsere Anrufbeantworter,⁴⁷ die Tele- bzw. Mailboxen, Telekopierer und das Internet aufbauen, koexistiert offenbar mit einer ständigen, suchtartigen Erwartung, daß unbedingt irgendwelche Nachrichten ergehen müssen. Es ist dies ein Raum (so sieht es der bereits zitierte Kommunikationswissenschaftler Manfred Schneider) der “zugleich ein Freiheitsraum und ein Gefängnis” ist (Schneider 1996: 21). Psychologen sprechen bei diesem Paradoxon auch von “sensorischer Deprivation”, die bei permanenter Pseudokommunikation zwangsläufig eintreten müsse (ebd: 20).

Eine Sonder-Fraktion der amerikanischen Handy-Gegner rekrutiert sich aus Kreisen der sog. *Luddisten*, benannt nach einem britischen Weber, der Anfang des 18. Jhs. gegen die Einführung maschineller Webstühle protestierte. Die Luddisten sind nicht nur gegen das Handy, sie fordern ganz allgemein das Ende des computergesteuerten und digitalisierten Zeitalters. Unter dem Motto “Kill the Computers” wird alles verdammt, was Technikfreaks *cool*, *geil* oder *smart* finden: Internet, Kreditkarten, elektronische Fensterheber und alle möglichen anderen Gadgets. Noch einmal: für solche Apokalyptiker – sie treten dem Sozialhistoriker und Telephontheoretiker de Sola-Pool zufolge (wie gesagt) bei Neuerungen immer auf (de Sola Pool 1977, und Schneider 1996: 16f.) – markieren Handys ganz eindeutig das Ende der Menschheit.⁴⁸

⁴⁶) An dieser Stelle sei auf Bausingers Referat beim DGV-Kongreß in Hagen 1991 verwiesen (Bausinger 1995), in dem Bausinger vom Telephonterror, von ständiger Kontrolle spricht und vor dem “Handy” warnt: “Das Extrem dieser Kontrolle wäre verwirklicht, wenn sich das drahtlose Telephon durchsetzte – jeder könnte dann jederzeit und überall unter seiner Nummer angerufen werden. Mit Recht hat man festgestellt, er oder sie wäre dann diese Nummer, jederzeit verfügbar, jederzeit unter Kontrolle”. Er erinnert auch an den bekannten Ausspruch des amerikanischen Philosophen Henry David Thoreau, man beeile sich, eine Telephonverbindung zwischen den Staaten Maine und Texas zu konstruieren, “obwohl doch Maine und Texas möglicherweise gar nichts miteinander zu besprechen hätten”.

⁴⁷) Vgl. dazu Gutwinski-Jeggle 1990.

⁴⁸) Vgl. mobiltelefone und pager 9-10-95, S. 88.

Etwas nüchterner können wir als Folkloristen beobachten, daß das Handy neben anderen Geräten v.a. das Verschwinden herkömmlicher Kommunikationsformen zur Folge hat. Zusammen mit dem Internet drängt der Telefonkult viele traditionelle Formen kommunikativen Lebens, wie etwa das direkte Gespräch (man denke an die Rollerblader auf den Stufen des Operplatzes in München) und die Kunst des *Briefeschreibens* zurück. Im Gefolge seiner Vorläufer, z.B. dem Anrufbeantworter, der seit Mitte der 80er Jahre immerwährende Erreichbarkeit suggerierte, hat das Handy ein gesellschaftsveränderndes Potential: es greift jedenfalls in extremem Maße in die Privatsphäre der Menschen ein. Während aber der Anrufbeantworter noch als "Selbstdarstellungsinstrument" und als "narzistische Maschine" oder als "elektronischer Türsteher" belächelt werden konnte,⁴⁹ hat die Handy-Diktatur offenbar eine an den hier präsentierten Geschichten ablesbare Unausweichlichkeit, über die selbst der Volksmund kaum noch lachen kann. Das Gefühl des Ausgeliefertseins, der ausweglosen Zwangsintegration in eine durchtechnisierte, erbarmungslose Zivilisationsmaschinerie führt zu Panik oder zu Resignation und schließlich auch zu bewußter Verweigerung.

Schlußüberlegungen (Stichwortartig): Inwiefern profitiert die Erzählforschung von der Beschäftigung mit Handy-Stories? Handygeschichten verraten verbreitete Denkmuster ("Erzählforschung als Bewußtseinsforschung" Lehmann). Sie geben Auskunft über den Kommunikationsstil der urbanisierten, globalisierten Gesellschaft, sind Kollektivgut und keineswegs singuläre Phantastereien, und dabei **internationales Wandergut**. Isolation-Pseudokommunikation. Welcher Gattung diese *modern legends* angehören, läßt sich nicht definitiv ausmachen. Sie veranschaulichen das Verhältnis des Menschen zum technischen Fortschritt, sind dessen Indikatoren. These:

Das Thema "Handy" kann man im volkskundlichen Kanon weder unter der Rubrik "Sachkultur" abhandeln, noch ist bei diesem Thema der Volkskundler seiner "Andacht zum Unbedeutenden" wegen zu schelten. Im Gegenteil: Der Banalität des kleinen Gerätes stehen die hier zitierten, unendlich zahlreichen Geschichten gegenüber. Die Banalität ist ohnehin nur eine

⁴⁹) So der empirische Kulturwissenschaftler Wolfgang Kaschuba in einem telephonischen Interview mit Ulrich Lange, Medienwissenschaftler, Berlin, im Deutschlandfunk am 29. Mai 1996.

scheinbare, denn sie steht in keinem Verhältnis zur ungeheuren Tragweite der durch Zukunftsvisionen noch erweiterten Möglichkeiten (Omnipräsenz, Allverbundenheit). Die revolutionäre Erfindung ist nicht nur im Begriff, unsere alltägliche Kommunikation grundlegend zu verändern, sondern unser gesamtes Lebens- und Weltgefühl. Handygeschichten markieren den Übergang in eine neue Phase der Kommunikation.

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Magaznigeschichten. Erzählen in berichtend-kommentierenden Rundfunksendungen

Helmut Fischer

ERZÄHLEN IM MEDIENZEITALTER

Der Alltag ist voller narrativer Äußerungen. Legt man der Erörterung ein dreigliedriges Modell zugrunde, dann werden die ursprünglichen und herkömmlichen, an den Körper gebundenen Darstellungsmittel, die im unmittelbaren zwischenmenschlichen Kontakt wirken, insbesondere die mündliche Rede sowie Gestik und Mimik durch zwei weitere mediale Austauschweisen ergänzt. Die sekundären Medien benutzen wahrnehmbare, technisch produzierte Zeichen, die ohne ein technisches Gerät empfangen werden. Geschriebenes und Gedrucktes wird im Lesen aufgenommen. Diesen inzwischen schon traditionellen weil seit langer Zeit kulturvermittelten Verfahren folgen die tertiären Medien. Sie bedürfen sowohl zur Erzeugung und Übertragung der Zeichen als auch zu ihrem Empfang bestimmter technischer Einrichtungen. Rundfunk, Schallplatte und Kassette, Telefon und Compact Discs, diese auditiven Medien und ihre Verbindung mit bewegten Bildern in Film, Fernsehen und Video, Fernschreiber und Fernkopierer haben die kommunikative Dimension des Erzählens, Hörens und Betrachtens erweitert (Hunziker 1988). Die neuen Medien haben gerade der Erzählkultur weitreichende Perspektiven eröffnet. Weder hat sich die Menge der produzierten Texte verringert, noch ist das Erzählvermögen verkümmert oder sind die Erzähler verstummt (cf. Merten & Schmidt & Weischenberg 1994; Fischer 1995: 211–233). Vielmehr ist es eher so, daß das Erzählen im Internet die kommunikativen Möglichkeiten nochmals vergrößert hat. Dank der weltweiten Vernetzung von Computern wandert das Erzählgut und ist ständig zu

erreichen (Schneider 1996). Die technischen Grenzen des auditiven und visuellen Erzählens scheinen endgültig überwunden.

Die Entwicklung der Kommunikationsmittel zeigt, daß bislang noch kein Medium ein anderes aufgehoben oder verdrängt hat. Wohl hat jedes neue Medium einen Funktionswandel bei den bereits vorhandenen Medien herbeigeführt (Faulstich 1994). Der Äußerungstyp Mündlichkeit zum Beispiel, also der mündliche, gesprochene und hörbare Austausch zwischen Menschen, wird in außerordentlicher Vielfalt und Intensität über elektronische Medien vermittelt. Der Rundfunk, um den es im folgenden geht, ist ganz und gar lautlich organisiert. Visuelle Erfahrungen scheiden aus. Der Sprecher ist unsichtbar. Er wendet sich an ein großes, räumlich weit verteiltes Publikum unterschiedlicher Art und Interesses, das sich auf ihn im Zuhören ausrichtet. Die Hörer stellen zum Sprecher eine persönliche Beziehung ohne körperliche Nähe her, die eine Pseudointimität erzeugt. Sie können verfolgen, was gesagt wird, ohne eine spezielle Fertigkeit wie das Lesen erlernt zu haben. Die Mündlichkeit erreicht dadurch einen höchsten Grad an Allgemeinheit und befindet sich unter der professionellen Kontrolle einer besonderen Institution (cf. Holly 1995). Den Vorrang hat die Ein-Weg-Kommunikation. Die Unterschiede zur *face-to-face*-Kommunikation des primären Medienbereichs sind offensichtlich. Der Rundfunk als akustischer Kanal vertritt die sogenannte sekundäre Oralität, die von den elektronischen Medien wahrgenommen wird (Ong 1987: 136). Allerdings heißt das nicht, daß das Radio die Mündlichkeit erneuert, die vor dem Aufkommen der Printmedien bestand. Der Rundfunk ist ein wichtiger Träger der populären oralen Kultur. Es entspricht seinem Wesen, daß er Informationen mit einem beträchtlichen Anteil von Sprache vermittelt. Unter anderem werden viele Mitteilungen als Geschichten gefaßt, also nach den Regeln des Erzählens den Hörern vorgetragen. Die Erzählstoffe stammen aus dem Angebot der täglichen Nachrichten (Neumann 1984: 98). Bestimmte Programme, etwa die Magazinsendungen, leben geradezu von Wortbeiträgen narrativer Art.

MAGAZIN-SENDUNGEN IM RUNDFUNK

Die Magazinsendungen der verschiedenen Rundfunkanstalten verkörpern Mischprogramme aus populärer, internationaler Musik, informierenden sprachlichen Kurzbeiträgen, vor allem aus den Bereichen Politik, Kultur, Sensationen und Persönlichkeiten sowie stündlichen oder halbstündlichen Nachrichten und Verkehrsdurchsagen (Berg & Kiefer 1992). Die Musik hat eine Trägerrolle für die Texte inne, die von Moderatoren oder Moderatorinnen mit Worten begleitet, vorgelesen oder im spontanen Austausch mit Gesprächspartnern entwickelt werden (Brandt 1985: 1672). Alles, was aus den Tagesereignissen von Interesse erscheint, soll unmittelbar und möglichst aktuell umgesetzt werden. Im Vordergrund steht das Dabeisein und der Live-Charakter sowie die Vielgestaltigkeit der journalistischen Darstellungsformen. Berichtende Texte, Nachricht, Interview und Reportage mischen sich mit kommentierenden Äußerungen, mit Glosse und Diskussion (cf. Donsbach & Mathes 1996). Das Ziel ist, mit den Hörern und Hörerinnen in Fühlung zu gelangen und gegebenenfalls Reaktionen bis hin zum telefonischen Anruf in der Redaktion zu bewirken.

Unter den Sendungen des Westdeutschen Rundfunks (WDR) stechen zwei Magazinprogramme hervor, und zwar das Morgenmagazin und das Mittagmagazin. Das Mittagmagazin wird seit dem 1. Februar 1965 täglich außer sonntags gesendet, zunächst von 12 bis 13 Uhr, zur Zeit von 12 bis 15 Uhr. Es wendet sich vor allen Dingen an Hörerinnen, die im häuslichen Umfeld tätig sind und die man für aktuelle politische Informationen gewinnen zu können glaubt. Aus der Sicht der Rundfunkmacher leitete die Sendung die Renaissance des Radios in den sechziger Jahren ein (Thoma 1997: 279). Der Erfolg veranlaßte den WDR zwei Jahre später, das Morgenmagazin zunächst unter dem Titel "Heute morgen" auszustrahlen. In der Zeit von 6.05 Uhr an, seit 1995 zwischen 5.05 und 9 Uhr, unterrichtet das Programm über das, was in der Nacht geschah und was der Tag bringen wird. Die Beiträge werden in die Musikfolge aus populären Titeln und Tophits der siebziger, achtziger und neunziger Jahre eingebettet. Das Morgenmagazin erreicht mehr als zwei Millionen Hörerinnen und Hörer. Jeweils halbstündlich werden vor den Nachrichten und Verkehrsmeldungen Werbespots eingeblendet. Bei

de Magazine bemühen sich darum, eine Bindung der Hörerschaft durch eine Erkennungsmelodie und einen Stamm von Moderatoren und Moderatorinnen herbeizuführen. Letztere lassen sich durch saloppe Anreden und standardisierte Floskeln identifizieren (Koscyk & Pruys 1970: 231). Informationen werden unaufdringlich und unterhaltsam dargeboten. Ihre Seriösität unterstützen kritische Kurzkommentare, Liveinterviews und die ständige Präsenz der Sprecher und Sprecherinnen.

THEMEN DER MAGAZINSENDUNGEN

Der Westdeutsche Rundfunk wirbt mit dem Slogan "Wir bringen's an den Tag. Das Morgenmagazin. WDR 2: Der Sender". Was an den Tag gebracht und veröffentlicht wird, bestimmt die Tagesaktualität. Dazu gehören die Geschichten unterschiedlichen Inhalts und wechselnder Form, die erzählt und gehört werden und auf diese Weise die Gemeinsamkeit des kommunikativen Textes herstellen (Röttgers 1992: 159). Aus diesem Anspruch bestimmt sich die Vielfalt der Themen.

Die Untersuchung bezieht sich auf 50 Texte, die im Februar und März 1997 (33; *Morgenmagazin* 17, *Mittagsmagazin* 16) und im März 1998 (17; *Morgenmagazin* 7, *Mittagsmagazin* 10) in den genannten Magazinsendungen des WDR präsentiert, mitgeschnitten und verschriftet wurden. An der Spitze der thematischen Felder stehen die Geschichten, die sich mit Persönlichkeiten des öffentlichen Lebens, der High Society, der Politik und des Showbusiness befassen. Bemerkenswert erscheint zum Beispiel der Gedenk-Absprung des früheren amerikanischen Präsidenten George Bush aus einem Flugzeug:

WDR 2 um 10 vor 9, Der ehemalige amerikanische Präsident George Bush hat ja eigentlich viele Höhen und Tiefen erlebt in seiner politischen Karriere, aber es reicht ihm offenbar noch nicht. Jetzt will George noch mal wissen, wie tief man fallen kann, und zwar heute. Es geht um einen Fallschirmsprung aus 3500 Metern Höhe. Heute soll er stattfinden über dem US-Bundesstaat Arizona, und es geht dabei um ein altes Versprechen aus dem zweiten Weltkrieg, das Bush sich selber gegeben hat. Damals konnte sich Marineflieger Bush mit einem Sprung aus seinem abstürzenden Flugzeug über dem

Pazifik retten. Und damals habe er sich geschworen, irgendwann noch einmal nicht aus Not, sondern aus Vergnügen aus einem Flugzeug zu springen. Heute mit 72 tut er es. Immerhin ganz schön mutig. (*Morgenmagazin* 25.3.1998, Moderator Oliver Thoma)

Die übrigen 11 Texte beschäftigen sich mit dem saudiarabischen Prinzen, der eine amerikanische Fluglinie kauft, mit der Zweckwohngemeinschaft zwischen Sarah Ferguson und Prinz Andrew und dem Double von Prinzessin Diana, das seine Tätigkeit aufgibt, mit Präsident Clintons angeblichen Sexaffären und der Kastration seines Hundes sowie mit dem Tod des chinesischen Parteivorsitzenden Deng Cio Peng, mit der koreanischen Seniorin, die eine Aufnahmeprüfung für die Oberschule bestanden hat, mit dem italienischen Modemacher Max Mazza, der eine Obdachlosenjacke als Schlafsack entwarf, mit dem fünfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag des Schokoladenfabrikanten Hans Imhoff, mit der Exhumierung des französischen Schauspielers und Chansonsängers Yves Montand zwecks Feststellung seiner Vaterschaft und schließlich noch mit der Schlagkraft des Boxers Graciano Roccigiani aus Berlin außerhalb des Rings, seiner eigentlichen Arbeitsstätte.

Die Beliebigkeit der Themen setzt sich im Bereich Kultur und Literatur fort, etwa mit dem Nacherzählen einer Auseinandersetzung über die Schaltjahrproblematik:

8 Uhr 10., zehn Minuten nach acht. Schöne, hitzige Diskussionen, die ich da gestern beim Einkaufen verfolgen durfte zwischen zwei Herren über die nun wirklich wichtige Frage, was denn heute am Samstag eigentlich für ein Datum sein würde, 29. Februar oder doch der 1. März. Der eine versuchte hartnäckig, den anderen zu überzeugen, aber es klappte nicht so richtig, auch nicht mit Argumenten wie "ein krummes Jahr kann doch nie ein Schaltjahr sein", und "siebenundneunzig ist nun wirklich ein krummes Jahr". Es nützte alles nix, am Ende hat er tief durchgeatmet und gesagt: "Kapier's doch endlich, wir haben kein Schaltjahr, wir haben ein Automatik-Jahr!" (*Morgenmagazin* 1. 3. 1998, Moderator Tom Hegermann)

Des weiteren geht es in 8 Texten um Ostereiergeschenke an junge Burschen im Rahmen landschaftlicher Jahresbräuche, um die Verleihung der Goldenen Himbeere für den schlechtesten Film der Saison und um die Oscar-Preise, um die sprichwörtliche Redensart und den Schwank vom Hornberger Schießen unter der Anzeige "WDR 2 macht schlau", um eine abenteuerliche Nach-Reise der Fahrt der Meuterer von der "Bounty" in der Südsee nach der Erzählung von Sir John Barrow (1831), um die Besprechung eines Kriminalromans und einen Hinweis auf die Verfilmung des Untergangs der Titanic, um ein Zitat aus einem Roman und um die Beendigung der Fernseh-Krimi-Serie "Derrick" im Zweiten Deutschen Fernsehen (ZDF).

Die Natur, und darin die Tiere, finden eine beachtliche Aufmerksamkeit. Es ist das von der Normalität abweichende Verhalten oder das sonderbare Ereignis, das die Geschichten erzählenswert macht, beispielsweise die Geschichte von der betrunkenen Kuh:

Eine Bäuerin hat in Belgrad aus Versehen Slibowitz, den ihr Mann gerade im dunklen Keller hergestellt hatte, der einzigen Kuh in die Tränke gegeben. Das arme Tier trank angeblich acht Liter davon, spricht: Sie hat sich so richtig einen gebrannt. Und heute ist sie die einzige Kuh, die einen Kater hat. (*Mittagsmagazin* 28. 2. 1997, Moderator Jan-Peter Schwarz)

Die anderen acht Geschichten erzählen von der Eule, die in Schweden einen Stromausfall verursachte, vom Raben, der eine psychiatrische Klinik aufsuchte, von der Brieftaube, die von England bis China reiste, vom Tiertransport in Personenkraftwagen, vom Klonen eines Schafes, den Möglichkeiten des Klonens beim Menschen und der Verarbeitung in Filmstoffen sowie von den Einwirkungen des strengen Winters auf die Pflanzen.

Beliebt sind Mitteilungen über Kuriositäten allgemeiner Art, die im Rahmen alltäglicher Auffälligkeiten hervorragen:

WDR 2. In sechs Minuten ist es halb neun. Harte Sitten gegen Falschparker in Chicago, und ohne Rücksicht gegen ältere Damen. Bruce Wechsler ist mit seiner fünfundachtzig Jahre alten Mutter Ruth zum Einkaufszentrum gefahren, und hat

er gesagt: "Mama, ich geh nur schnell was besorgen. Warte im Auto hier auf mich!" Das hat Ruth Wechsler auch gemacht. Aber nicht gewartet haben die eifrigen Polizisten. Schon nach zehn Minuten wurde der Wagen abgeschleppt, weil er falsch geparkt hatte. Der Abschleppwagen kam, auf Kran gehievt und so weiter mit Oma Wechsler drin. Zwei Stunden später fand der Sohn dann seinen Wagen wieder, wieder mit der Mutter, hat sich furchtbar aufgeregt: "Was haben Sie da eigentlich gemacht? Die alte Dame hätte einen Herzinfarkt bekommen können!" Das stimmt allerdings nicht. Die Mutter hat gedacht: Das hat alles seine Ordnung, vielleicht ne Reifenpanne, deswegen muß der Wagen abgeschleppt werden. Und hat seelenruhig die ganze Zeit die Zeitung gelesen. (*Morgenmagazin* 17. 3. 1997, Moderator Oliver Thoma)

Vier andere Texte behandeln die angebliche Umbenennung des Fußballklubs CD Teneriffa, der früher LP hieß, die Problematik englischsprachiger Aufschriften auf Nahrungsmitteln, die Abschaffung von Titeln in der kirchlichen Hierarchie und die Frage nach dem Alter des Himalaya-Gebirges. Mit der Politik befassten sich aus unterschiedlicher Perspektive vier Erzählungen. Gleich zweimal geht es um ungerechtfertigte und überhöhte Politikerbezüge am Beispiel der Gehaltssonderzahlungen an den Bundesbauminister Klaus Töpfer. Die Tatsache, daß der I.FC Köln wenig erfolgreich in der Bundesliga spielt, wird zum Ratschlag für demonstrierende Saar-Bergleute umgemünzt, nicht ins Köln-Müngersdorfer Stadion zu kommen, in die "Heimat der Looser". Schließlich begleitet man ein Brautpaar, das im Museum in Denver, Colorado heiraten möchte, wegen des dort stattfindenden G 7-Gipfels jedoch ausgeschlossen wird, in dem Plan, in der Abwesenheit von Präsident Bill Clinton doch um Überlassung des Weißen Hauses zu bitten.

Die Technik kommt ebenfalls in vier Texten zu Wort. Ein Formel-Eins-Flitzer, ein Ferrari, ist nicht in einer Ausstellung, sondern auf dem Randstreifen der Rennbahn zu sehen. Der überfrisierte VW-Käfer eines Autotüflers, der ohne Tüv-Abnahme und Versicherung unterwegs war, wird nach kurzer Zeit von der Polizei still gelegt. Die Kölner Ford-Werke streiten mit der Zeitschrift Focus um denselben Namen für ihren neuen Kleinwagen.

Die extraterrestische Technik greift mit Ufos in die irdischen Verhältnisse ein.

Drei Geschichten verarbeiten Themen der Geschlechterauseinandersetzung, eine die Frage der männlichen Problemzonen im Gesicht aus weiblichem Blickwinkel, die andere den sonderbaren Vorfall, wonach ein italienischer Zahnarzt einer Patientin so viele Zähne zog, daß sie nicht mehr küssen kann, und ein merkwürdiges Rezept aus einer Frauenzeitschrift. Ebenfalls drei Texte befassen sich mit Kriminellem und Gerichtsfällen, mit dem Voyeur, der in Köln mit seiner Videokamera Frauen unter den Rock schaute, mit einer Gerichtsverhandlung über undichte Kondome in Bochum und mit dem Diebstahl eines Gemäldes unter Zuhilfenahme einer Angel. Ganz am Rande wird mit einem Beleg noch der Gesundheit gedacht, indem von der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis erzählt wird, daß täglicher Weingenuß gegen altersbedingte Verkalkung und die Alzheimer Krankheit hilft.

Die Themenauswahl bezweckt einen kaleidoskopartigen Wechsel unter der Voraussetzung, daß die Hörer die Inhalte nicht kennen, aber kennenlernen wollen und sollen und mit der standigen Aktualisierung und schnellen Vermittlung einverstanden sind. Es liegt im Wesen des Mediums Radio, daß häufig alltägliche Belanglosigkeiten zum alsbaldigen Verbrauch auf unterhaltsame Weise dargeboten werden. Die Rezipienten dürfen von ihren Haupttätigkeiten, vom Frühstück oder der Autofahrt und der Hausarbeit, keine Ablenkung erfahren.

ARTEN DES ERZÄHLENS

Das Erzählen auf dem akustischen Kanal Radio unterscheidet sich stark von der vorliterarischen Mündlichkeit (Dégh 1984). Der Erzähler oder Moderator der Sendung ist unsichtbar und allein über das Medium für die Zuhörer an einem entfernten Ort vorhanden. Er besitzt Sprachkompetenz, beherrscht verschiedene Sprechweisen, verfügt über grammatische Regeln, einen angemessenen lexikalischen Vorrat, semantisches Unterscheidungsvermögen, ein sicheres phonetisches Artikulationsverhalten und die notwendigen stilistischen Gestaltungsmittel. Er ist in der Lage, einen Text entsprechend den Textbildungsregeln zu entwickeln und zuhönergerecht sowie medienspezifisch

zu äußern (Fischer 1993: 116). Insbesondere zeigt er sich fähig, die Geschichten durch Lesen, im spontanen Vortrag oder im Dialog in das über mehrere Stunden ablaufende, von Musik gestützte und mit anderen Wortbeiträgen versetzte Programm einzubringen.

Die narrative Leistung des Moderators besteht darin, daß er (1) eine vorgefertigte, geschriebene einsträngige Geschichte vorliest:

Ein neununddreißigjähriger Kölner, der wochenlang mit einer versteckten Videokamera die Unterwäsche ahnungsloser Frauen fotografiert hatte, ist heute zu einer Geldstrafe von 600 Mark verurteilt worden. Der Spanner hatte die Kamera in eine speziell präparierte Reisetasche eingebaut und das Objektiv in Fußgängerzonen und Kaufhäusern und Straßenbahnen unter die Röcke der Frauen gerichtet. Eine der heimlich gefilmten Frauen, der das Verhalten des Mannes mit der Tasche merkwürdig vorgekommen war, hatte die Polizei alarmiert, und bei einer Hausdurchsuchung stellten die Ermittler zahlreiche Videobänder mit Aufnahmen unterm Rock verschiedener Frauen sicher. (*Mittagsmagazin* 18. 3. 1997, Moderator Randy Krott)

Zum anderen erzählt er

2. eine einsträngige Geschichte aus einem persönlichen Erlebnis heraus:

Schalke 04, das haben wir ja eben in den Nachrichten gehört, trifft im Halbfinale des Uefa-Cups auf den Fußballklub von Teneriffa, und der heißt CD Teneriffa. Ich versteh ja nichts vom Fußball, und deshalb hab ich meinen Redakteur Wim Dornbusch mal gefragt: "Wieso eigentlich CD Teneriffa?" Der hatte natürlich sofort die Antwort parat: "Die haben sich umbenannt", hat er gesagt. "Früher hießen die LP Teneriffa!" (*Mittagsmagazin* 21. 3. 1997, Moderator Uwe Möller)

Darüber hinaus gibt er

3. eine zweiteilige Geschichte zum besten, die aus der Nachricht und einer meist ironischen, subjektiven Schlußfolgerung besteht:

Neues aus London heute: Fergie zieht wieder bei Prinz Andrew ein. Wirklich wahr: Sarah Fergusson ist mit ihren beiden Töchtern und Sack und Pack wieder in das House Sunninghill eingezogen, und das nach der Scheidung. Fragen wir uns also: Kommen sich die beiden wieder näher? Neue Liebe flammt auf, Versöhnung, soll es ja alles schon gegeben haben. Also, ist es wohl nicht. Es geht ums Geld. Denn Fergie hat, wie wir wohl wissen, massive Geldprobleme. Und so zieht sie nun eben dort in die Wohnung des Butlers. Könnte sie doch eigentlich auch noch dessen Dienst mitübernehmen und dann auch noch ein bißchen Geld verdienen. Auf jeden Fall, zwischen Andrew und Fergie eine ganz neue Form der Zweckwohngemeinschaft im Königshaus. (*Mittagsmagazin* 26. 2. 1997, Moderator Ralf Andreas Bürck)

Der Moderator läßt auch erzählen, indem er

4. eine Fragestellung aufgreift und einleitet, dann einem Interviewpartner das Wort überläßt und den Ablauf des Gesprächs mit dem "Experten" durch Fragen und Reaktionsäußerungen steuert:

A (weibliche Stimme): Mein Name ist E. aus Bergisch Gladbach. Ich hätte gern gewußt, woher der Ausdruck stammt "Das geht aus wie das Hornberger Schießen".

B (Moderator): Ja, wer wüßte die Antwort besser als jemand in Hornberg selbst. Im schönen Schwarzwald begrüße ich Th. K. Er ist der zweite Vorsitzende des Historischen Vereins der Stadt Hornberg. Guten Tag, Herr K.

C (Experte): Guten Tag, Herr B.

B: Ja, woher kommt das Hornberger Schießen?

C: Ja, das Hornberger Schießen, das ist ne lange Geschichte.

B: Machen Se's kurz.

C: Ja, ich versuch's. Man schrieb das Jahr 1564, und wir waren damals württembergisch, und Hornberg war die west-

lichste Amtsstadt, und der Landesvater wollte seine Untertanen besuchen.

B: Ja.

C: Und es war ein sehr heißer Sommertag, und der Wächter, der Nachtwächter, hatte die Aufgabe, vom Turm oben die Ankunft des Landesherrn anzukündigen, und der hatte die Fehlalarme. Zuerst war's die Postkutsche, dann ne Rindvieherde und zum Schluß ein Krämerkarren. Und als er schließlich kam, war kein Pulver mehr da, weil die Kanoniere jedesmal schossen wie verrückt, und so ist halt zu früh das Pulver ausgegangen, und der Herzog war darüber sehr erbost und hat da alle in den Turm geschmissen. Da konnten sie dann piff paff schreien, denn das hatten sie in ihrer Verzweiflung getan.

B: Also, das Hornberger Schießen, wenn ich das richtig verstanden hab, war gar keins, weil kein Pulver mehr da war. Oder haben die so getan, als ob sie schießen?

C: Als der Herzog kam und das Pulver weg war, haben sie so getan, als würden sie schießen. Sie haben nämlich gemeint, wenn sie oben aufm Berg piff paff schreien, würde er im Tal nicht merken, daß es kein Pulver ist.

B: Ist ja köstlich.

C: Ja.

B: Eine pazifistische Variante der Auseinandersetzung mit Waffen. Und "es geht aus wie das Hornberger Schießen", haben Sie dafür ne Erklärung?

C: Ja. Es ist wie im richtigen Leben. Wenn etwas sinnlos ist oder unnütz, dann gehts eben aus wie's Hornberger Schießen, wenn man zu früh sein Pulver verschießt, also sein Geld oder sonst was, dann geht's eben so aus.

B: Auf nach Hornberg! Scheint eine friedliche Ecke zu sein. Wir sprachen mit Th. K., dem zweiten Vorsitzenden des Historischen Vereins Hornberg über das Hornberger Schießen. Schönen Dank. (*Mittagsmagazin* 18. 3. 1998, Moderator Ralf Andreas Bürck)

Der bekannte Schwank, unter dem Slogan "WDR 2 macht schlau" eingeführt, wird dialogisch zur Erklärung einer sprichwörtlichen Redensart aufgelöst. Die Fragestellerin wie der Moderator und der Erzähler kommunizieren über das Telefon, während die

Hörerschaft über das Radio an dem Erzählvorgang teilnimmt. Den größten Anteil am Redeaufkommen hat der Erzähler der Geschichte. Dieses Modell liegt anderen Beiträgen ebenfalls zugrunde, nur ist der Gesprächspartner, ein Berufskorrespondent oder eine andere Person, aus einem Studio zugeschaltet.

Endlich nimmt noch der Moderator die Steuerungsrolle ein und vertraut einem Korrespondenten

5. das Erzählen mehrerer Geschichten zum selben Sachverhalt an:

A (Moderator): Wenn Südeuropäern am Himmel etwa spanisch vorkommt, da ist es entweder diese Raumpatrouille Orion auf dem Irrweg durchs All, oder es könnten vielleicht unbekannte Flugobjekte sein, Ufos. Die gibt's zwar bekanntlich nicht, aber das hat die spanische Luftwaffe in den siebziger und achtziger Jahren nicht gehindert, meterweise sogenannte x-Akten anzulegen über diese Ufos, und diese Akten sind jetzt freigegeben worden für die Erdlinge. J. B. in Madrid, was steht denn in den Akten drin?

B (Korrespondent J.B.): Da steht drin, daß es insgesamt 83 Berichte über Vorkommnisse mit unbekanntem Flugobjekten gibt. Und da steht weiter drin, daß 63 von diesen 83 alle einen ziemlichen Blödsinn beinhalten, wo man sehr genau festgestellt hat, also da haben sich die Leute mit viel Phantasie was Nettes ausgedacht

A: Aber es bleiben 20!

B: Es bleiben 20, und einer davon ist besonders interessant, weil man natürlich immer im Zusammenhang mit den Ufos nach seriösen Zeugen sucht, nach Zeugen, die irgendwie den Eindruck machen, das können sie sich nicht zusammengesponnen haben. Und siehe da: Bei diesen Dokumenten aus den siebziger und achtziger Jahren findet man einen ganz besonders prominenten Zeugen, das ist der frühere Regierungschef Spaniens Adolfo Suarez. Der gilt nun wirklich nicht als Mann für's Übersinnliche, sondern viel mehr für's Irdische und für's sehr Politische. Der soll auf einem Heimflug von einem Staatsbesuch in Deutschland mit der gesamten Crew der Luftwaffenmaschine, mit der er damals zurückgekehrt ist, einen merkwürdigen Lichtball am Himmel gese-

hen haben. Zusätzlich hat man noch vorne in der Kabine merkwürdige Radarsignale empfangen, die man überhaupt nicht identifizieren konnte. Und das ist natürlich einer der Berichte, eine der x-Akten, wo man heute sagt: "Jetzt kuck doch mal, irgendwas muß ja doch dran sein!"

A: Und möglicherweise sollen sich da mehr Leute drum kümmern, nachforschen und sich erinnern, ob sie so was auch gesehen haben.

B: Natürlich wird das auch der Fall sein. Ich denke, das ist auch einer der Gründe, warum man diese Akten aufmacht, um eventuell noch ein paar Zeugenaussagen mehr zu kriegen. Nun ist es im allgemeinen so, daß in Spanien kein Mangel an Zeugen und Beobachtungen herrscht. Es gibt...es gibt in Spanien zwei Zeitschriften, die sich allein um die Ufos kümmern. Die haben sehr sinnreiche Titel, die eine heißt "Das Jahr null" und die andere noch schöner eigentlich "Jenseits". Da melden sich alle möglichen selbsternannten Experten, die sich mit diesen Phänomenen befassen. Ich erinnere mich, im vergangenen Sommer beispielsweise, also wurde über Saragossa angeblich ein Ufo gesehen, das soll ein ziemliches Riesending gewesen sein, hundertfuffzich Meter im Durchmesser, eine riesige Scheibe, die man gesehen haben will, die sei relativ langsam über die Stadt geflogen und dann irgendwann verschwunden. Das haben auch ne ganze Menge Leute gesehen. Bis heute nicht aufgeklärt, bis heute nicht klar. Ist das nun absoluter Unsinn, nur der Auswuchs blühender Phantasie, oder ist da wirklich was dran.

A: Ich les hier in ner Meidung, daß in einem Fall sich ne Linienmaschine, ne Passagiermaschine gezwungen gesehen hat auf nem Inlandsflug, wegen eines solchen Ufos umzukehren und zwischenzulanden.

B: Sehn Sie, so ist das mit den Geschichten, ne. Diese ganzen Akten sind früher top secret gewesen. Dieser Fall mit der Linienmaschine, die ... 79 war das, glaub ich, war auf dem Flug von Palma de Mallorca rüber nach Teneriffa, dann zwischengelandet ist, die hat rote Lichtchen gesehn, die sich angeblich mit sehr, sehr großer Geschwindigkeit dem Flugzeug genähert haben. Angeblich ist dieses Phänomen auch auf anderen Radarschirmen im Land zu sehen gewesen. Der Pilot hat gedach: "Es ist vielleicht dann doch besser, wenn

ich einfach mal auf den Boden zurückkehre, bevor mich diese roten Lämpchen da oben irgendwie nervös machen.”

A: Oder bevor ich entführt werde irgendwie in die Tiefen des Alls.

B: Bevor er entführt wird, ja, das soll's ja auch gewesen sein. Es gibt andere Fälle, da haben...da hat ein Landwirt in Galizien beispielsweise...der will gesehen haben, daß da eine riesige leuchtende Kugel über seinem Acker erschienen ist, die sei zur Erde niedergegangen, und da seien fünf Leute rausgekommen, die hätten ausgesehen wie Affen. Und zwei Freunde von ihm, die seien dabei gewesen, die hätten das auch alles gesehen. Man habe dann erst mal schleunigst Fersengeld gegeben. Angeblich haben dann nachher Wissenschaftler in dieser Gegend, die dieser Bauer geschildert hatte, Fußabdrücke gefunden. Wie die jetzt genau ausgesehen haben, ist leider nicht überliefert.

A: Na, vielleicht erfahren wir das ja auch noch. J.B.war das über "Ufos über Spanien". Was heißt eigentlich Ufo auf Spanisch?

B: Das sind *objetos voladores no identificados*, und die haben die schöne Abkürzung *ovni*.

A: Gefällt mir irgendwie besser. 8 Uhr 46, das Morgenmagazin, 14 vor 9.

(*Morgenmagazin* 21. 3. 1997, Moderator Michael Brocker)

Der Korrespondent als beauftragter Erzähler erzählt im Zusammenhang seines Berichtes vier Geschichten, welche der Moderator durch seine Eingriffe in das Gespräch miteinander verknüpft. Es lassen sich auf Grund der Materialanalyse fünf typische Erzählerpositionen unterschiedlicher Frequenz erkennen. Drei Positionen besetzt der Moderator, die beiden anderen delegiert er an sachkundige Partner, an thematische Fachleute und Korrespondenten außerhalb des Sendestudios. Die Typologie umfaßt

1. eine einsträngige, geschriebene und vom Moderator vorgelesene Geschichte, 6 Belege;
2. eine einsträngige, vom Moderator erzählte Geschichte, 15 Belege;
3. eine zweiteilige vom Moderator erzählte Geschichte, 21 Belege;

4. eine einsträngige, von einem Partner erzählte Geschichte, 4 Belege;

5. mehrere einsträngige, von einem Partner erzählte Geschichten, 4 Belege.

Von der Zahl her überwiegen die kurzen, vom Moderator dargebotenen Geschichten (42), oft im Umfang von 2 bis 3 Sätzen. Sie unterliegen allein seiner Verfügungsgewalt hinsichtlich der Präsentation. Die längeren Geschichten, die von einem Partner erzählt werden, baut er durch Frage, Impuls und Kommentar auf, oder er fügt sie mit Hilfe dieser Steuerungsmittel zusammen.

ERZÄHLVORGÄNGE, HERKUNFT UND GESTALTUNG DER GESCHICHTEN

Die Organisation des Erzählens ist linear in der Zeit. Der Moderator bedient sich unterschiedlicher Gestaltungsmittel. Gelegentlich spricht er einsträngige und zweiteilige Geschichten unvermittelt in das Musikkontinuum hinein, und zwar dann, wenn die Titelfolge wegen ihrer Länge einer Unterbrechung bedarf. Am häufigsten benutzt er die Anmoderation des nachfolgenden Textes, etwa die Zeitangabe: "WDR 2. In sechs Minuten ist es halb neun", "WDR 2 um 10 vor 9", "8 Uhr 17, 17 Minuten nach 8" oder "WDR 2, Morgenmagazin, 8 Uhr 21, 9 Minuten vor halb neun". Die Uhrzeit gehört zum Grundbestand des Serviceangebots der Sendung. Andere Anmoderationen beziehen sich unmittelbar auf den Inhalt der Geschichte. Der Moderator nimmt sich dabei die Freiheit der spontanen Formulierung heraus, wenn er feststellt: "Ja, ziemlich nackt steht sie jetzt da. Demy Moore, nachdem eine Jury ausgezogen war, ihren Film "Striptease" mit der Goldenen Himbeere als den schlechtesten Film des vergangenen Jahres auszuzeichnen". Das ironische Wortspiel "nackt" und "ausgezogen" richtet die Aufmerksamkeit der Hörerschaft auf den anschließenden Beitrag. Mit dem Satz "Von einem Boxer nimmt man normalerweise an, daß er nur im Ring aktiv ist und sich ansonsten in entspannter Zurückhaltung übt" wird auf die Prügeleien des Profiboxers Graciano Roccigiani angespielt, von deren neuestem Fall ein Korrespondent erzählt. Mitunter wird ein musikalisches Beispiel verwendet und die Hörer-

gemeinde direkt angesprochen, wenn es heißt: “Erkennen Sie die Melodie? frage ich Sie einmal mchr. Es ist die Filmmusik aus dem Streifen “Die Meuterei auf der BOUNTY”, die Geschichte eines Schiffes, eines englischen Schiffes, dessen Mannschaft 1789 in der Südsee meuterte”. Das darauf folgende Interview mit einem Abenteurer auf der Fährte der ausgesetzten Matrosen verarbeitet mehrere Geschichten. Gelegentlich verweist die Anmoderation mit allgemeinen Floskeln auf das Erzählte, indem gesagt wird: “Dann gibt’s eine Meldung aus München, die ist überschrieben mit dem Satz “Beim Crah wird der Hund zum Elefanten”, “Das ist auch nicht schlecht”, “Und hier noch eine Meldung aus der großen weiten Welt der Wirtschaft” oder “Neues aus London heute”. Schließlich werden die Hörer oder eine Hörergruppe unmittelbar miteinbezogen in Anreden wie “Das hören wir gern” oder “Das waren noch Zeiten, Mädels!” Die Hörserschaft soll durch die Lebendigkeit der Äußerungen gepackt und zum intensiven Zuhören angeregt werden.

Die Abmoderation der Geschichten geschieht vielfach mit der Angabe der Uhrzeit: “Uhr 12”, “8 Uhr 48, 12 Minuten vor 9” oder “8 Uhr 21, 21 nach 8”. Ab und zu gebraucht der Moderator Höflichkeits- und Redefloskeln, etwa “Schönen Dank”, “Mehr sage ich dazu nicht” oder “Ja, doll!” Beliebte sind ironische Reflexe auf die vorangehende Geschichte. Der Text von der Eule, die einem Stromausfall verursachte, unter Strom gesetzt wurde und sich bloß ein bißchen die Federn ansengte, wird mit der Floskel “WDR 2 weiter unter Strom” beschlossen. Die Reaktion des Moderators auf eine Geschichte, in der unter anderem vor dem Trugschluß gewarnt wird, daß man Wein trinken muß, um Alzheimer zu vermeiden, gipfelt in dem Ausruf: “Schade, wär ja auch zu schön gewesen!” Der Moderator bezeugt dadurch seine persönliche Anteilnahme. Ein anderes sprachliches Mittel, die Geschichten für Hörer anregend auszustatten, sind die Sprachspielereien, die auf die Mehrdeutigkeit und den Kontrast von Wörtern und Ausdrücken abheben. Sie gewinnen ihre Wirkung dadurch, daß der Moderator unerwartet einen sinntragenden Austausch vornimmt wie in diesem Beleg:

Ein schwieriges Problem wird auf den Richter des Landgerichts Bochum zukommen. Die werden sich im April beschäftigen

müssen mit 900 000 möglicherweise undichten Kondomen. Ein Justizsprecher sagte, derzeit sei noch völlig unklar, was mit den Kondomen geschehen sei, ob sie in den Verkauf gelangt seien. Das muß doch ein Druckfehler sein. Das muß doch heißen: Daß sie in den Verkehr gelangt seien! Oder? (*Mittagsmagazin* 21. 2. 1997, Moderator Uwe Möller)

Gern werden auch sprichwörtliche Redensarten gebraucht, um an sich triviale Sachverhalte geistig-witzig zu interpretieren:

Einige Raben haben in Tschechien eine psychiatrische Klinik aufgesucht. Was haben die Raben zu dem Psychiater gesagt? Wir sehen immer so schwarz!“ (*Morgenmagazin* 20. 2. 1997, Moderator Tom Hegermann)

Selbstverständlich suchen Raben keine psychiatrische Klinik auf. Die fiktive Behauptung enthüllt ihre Gleichnishaftigkeit jedoch durch die Redensart “etwas schwarz sehen”, und das heißt “pessimistisch beurteilen”. Der Moderator nutzt auf diese Weise sein erzählerisches Monopol voll aus.

Die Geschichten werden dem reichen Angebot der Nachrichtenagenturen entnommen, von der verantwortlichen Redaktion ausgewählt und unter Umständen für eine mündliche Übermittlung bearbeitet. Der jeweilige Moderator hält sich lesend an die Textvorgabe oder ist bemüht, seine Äußerung spontan und hörergerecht umzusetzen und zu präsentieren. Oft ist der Presstext noch erkennbar, wie in dem folgenden Moderatorenbeleg:

Da hat sich ein zwanzigjähriger Tüftler sein Wunschauto gebaut. In einen VW-Käfer, Baujahr 1975, baute er einen 160 PS starken Porsche-Motor ein. Dann hat er ihn vorne auch noch höher gelegt und preschte mit dem Gefährt, ohne den Segen von Tüv und Versicherung, über Stuttgarts Straßen. Er konnte sich aber nur vier Stunden an seinem Vehikel erfreuen, dann zog es die Polizei aus dem Verkehr. (*Mittagsmagazin* 21. 2. 1997, Moderator Uwe Möller)

Der Geschichte dürfte die folgende Meldung eines Nachrichtendienstes aus einer Tageszeitung zugrunde liegen:

Polizei stoppte tollen Käfer

Stuttgart. – Nur vier Stunden hat sich ein Autobastler an seinem auf 160 PS starken VW-Käfer freuen können, dann zog die Stuttgarter Polizei den Wagen aus dem Verkehr. Der 20jährige Besitzer habe den 60 PS starken Serienmotor gegen einen Porsche-Motor ausgetauscht, teilt die Polizei am Freitag mit. Zudem habe der Hobbybastler eine höhenverstellbare Vorderasche eingebaut. Die Veränderungen habe der Besitzer aber weder dem Tüv noch der Versicherung gemeldet. Der Käfer Baujahr 1975 sei gerade vier Stunden zugelassen gewesen, als er aufgefallen sei. (rtr) (*Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, nr. 45, 22/23. 2. 1997)

Manchmal wird sogar eine Schlagzeile als Geschichte vorgestellt und mit einem Kommentar versehen:

Ive Montand – nach Exhumierung wieder begraben. Es hat anscheinend keinen Zweck. (*Mittagsmagazin* 12. 3. 1998, Moderator Kurt Gerhardt)

Die Pressemitteilung mit der Schlagzeile “Ives Montand wieder beerdigt” lautet demgegenüber:

Paris – Der Leichnam des französischen Schauspielers Ives Montand ist nach der Entnahme von Genproben für einen Vaterschaftstest noch in der Nacht zum Donnerstag wieder bestattet worden. Dies teilte die Verwaltung des Pariser Friedhofs Pere-Lachaise gestern mit. Für die Untersuchung waren Montands sterbliche Überreste ins gerichtsmedizinische Institut von Paris gebracht worden. Sowohl die Exhumierung als auch die Bestattung fanden unter Ausschluß der Öffentlichkeit statt, damit Fotografen und Kameraleute keine Aufnahmen machen konnten. Das Ergebnis des Vaterschaftstests soll spätestens bis Ende Juni feststehen. (afp) (*Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, nr. 61, 13. 3. 1998)

Die Kenntnis zumindest dieses Textes und der Zusammenhänge ist für die Zuhörer der Kürzestgeschichte notwendig, um den Sachverhalt verstehen zu können.

Ganz selten führt der Moderator Geschichten in die Sendung ein, die er glaubhaft selbst erlebt hat:

Im Rahmen der Internationalisierung und Globalisierung habe ich bei mir im Supermarkt um die Ecke kürzlich eine Ochsenchwanzsuppe gesehen, auf der nur noch Ox-tail-soup draufstand, sonst nix mehr, auch auf die Gefahr hin, daß der Kunde dann wie der Ochs vor der Soup steht.

(*Morgenmagazin* 15. 3. 1997, Moderator Tom Hegermann)

Es sind die Alltäglichkeiten, die beobachtet und zum Gegenstand einer privaten Erlebnisgeschichte gemacht werden.

MEDIENGESCHICHTEN UND MAGAZINGESCHICHTEN

Die Medien haben ohne Zweifel die Erzählkultur verändert (Weingarten 1994: 573). Gerade die tertiären oder auditiven Medien, in Sonderheit der Rundfunk, haben den Anteil der Mündlichkeit am Erzählen beträchtlich erweitert. Das "alltägliche Erzählen" bezieht gerade aus dem Radio wesentliche Anstöße und Inhalte (Bausinger 1975).

Die Magazinsendungen der Rundfunkanstalten wiederum gewinnen durch ihre narrativen Beiträge einen Großteil ihrer kommunikativen Aufmerksamkeit.

In den elektronischen wie in den Printmedien werden weiterhin Texte vorgestellt, welche den Anspruch des Erzählens, nämlich die Vermittlung folkloristischer Inhalte eines auffälligen und unerwarteten Ereignisses, erfüllen und Mediengeschichten genannt werden können (Ehlich 1983: 137). Ohne den Anspruch einer begrifflichen Systematik zu erheben, aber im Hinblick auf die Verwendung in Rundfunksendungen berichtend-kommentierender Art, in sogenannten Magazinen, läßt sich von Magazingeschichten sprechen. Eine strenge Textsortenzuweisung erscheint nicht möglich, wohl öffnet sich das Feld der "Einfachen Formen" für das Anekdotische und Sagenhafte, für das Erlebte

und Realistische (Bausinger 1981). Die Grundformen menschlicher Aussage treten hervor.

Der Rundfunk als "Erzähl-Kanal" konstituiert eine sekundäre Oralität, deren Geschichten ständig auf eine narrative Ausgangslage rekurrieren. Der Moderator ist die Instanz, die aus der Menge der Texte auswählt, die Art und Weise der Präsentation verfügt und in mögliche Dialoge mit Gewährsleuten, Hörern und Korrespondenten einsteigt (Reumann 1996). Er wendet sich an eine Massenhörerschaft, deren Bedürfnisse und Interessen er inhaltlich und durch sein Verhalten bei der Darbietung zu beachten hat. Im wesentlichen zeigt er eine optimistische, ironisch-kritische, manchmal etwas forsche Haltung.

Die Magazinsendungen gehen intensiv auf die Höreransprüche ein. Ihrem Auftrag als Mischprogramm gemäß verbinden sie Musik des Unterhaltungsgenres mit informativen Wortbeiträgen. Innerhalb der Wortbeiträge fällt den Magazingeschichten ein beachtlicher Anteil zu. Die Themen werden der alltäglichen Aktualität entnommen und zumeist von professionellen Erzählern, von den Moderatoren und Moderatorinnen, medienspezifisch und zuhörerangepaßt eingebracht. Die Beobachtung und Untersuchung der Erzählphänomene im Feld der tertiären Medien und besonders des Rundfunks erweist sich als ein wichtiges Erfordernis (Röhrich 1994: 428). Die Erzählforschung öffnet sich damit ein weiteres Stück im Bereich der Performanz.

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Media as a Mediator of Games and the Source of New Ones

Anu Vissel

INTRODUCTION

The Estonians became acquainted with media a long time ago. The first Estonian magazine was published in 1766 and the first newspaper in 1806. In the middle of the 19th century the Estonians became regular readers of newspapers. The Estonian language radio began broadcasting programs in 1926, the Estonian television in 1955. After reemerging from the closed Soviet regime media underwent major changes, bringing about the emergence of numerous competitive channels and publications. Besides public television and radio, programs (news, advertisements, entertainment) are transmitted also by numerous commercial channels,¹ as well as foreign satellite channels. No wonder then that a media critic mentions as a matter of course that the Estonians watch television as ardently as the ancient Finno-Ugrians used to stare at their fires (Laasik 1998). Reading newspapers, listening to the radio, but most importantly, watching television has become a daily ritual, a habit that today's people cannot do without.

In recent years success in professional life is measured by computer skills. We can hardly think of a field where computers are not used. Since 1996 Estonian schools have been computerised in the course of the "tiger leap" project: so that by now today 200 schools have access to Internet (Runnel 1998a). According to a survey conducted by *Eesti Meediauuring Ltd.* in the Balti Media Information Service as of February 1997 33% of the

¹) At the end of 1998, there were 4 active television stations in Estonia (together with cable television and several local transmitters), nearly ten times more radio stations: state, regional and local stations (Mihkelson 1998).

population had used computer, by September the figure was 37%, and by October 1998 40% of the population.² The increase in computer usage was most intense in 1997, when by autumn the number of daily computer users had doubled.

Media brings the world to people's homes, reshaping their cultural conceptions and by that people themselves. At the end of the 20th century we might conclude: the main force sustaining (our) country and the whole western community is media (Peets 1998). Lately, media's impact on people and culture has come into focus. It has been studied by journalists, sociologists, educators, etc. Even folklorists have made reference to media influence in their research, or have touched on the matter to a certain extent (Rüütel 1999; Hiimäe 1998: 225; Kõiva 1998: 17; Peebo 1995; Vissel 1996, and others). What might be the proportions of traditional culture and the sc. media culture; to what extent is the symbiosis of traditional and media culture possible; will media obliterate traditional culture: these issues will hopefully be sorted out in future research.

In this article I will observe media games through the somewhat empirical, rather randomly collected and accumulated material. I intend to focus on game-shows, which have captured the Estonian viewers for the last five years. They will be observed against the trends and changes in society and media. I will discuss the impact of media on the worldview of adults and children, outline the game types transmitted over the Estonian television networks during the last 30 years, and their folkloric sources, point out the changes in values and behavioural standards imported by foreign game-shows.

INDIVIDUAL CONCEPTIONS AND THOSE IMPOSED ON US BY MEDIA

Mass communication succeeded in crossing the spatial and temporal boundaries where earlier forms of communication failed (De Fleur & Ball-Rokeach 1975: 4). Transmitting messages became easier as direct communication between the sender and receiver of information or the use of long linear and diverging

²) Baltic Media Facts survey "Usage of computers and internet among population of Estonia" (BMF).

chains was no longer necessary. Due to the retail data transmittance, information from a communication source reaches a variety of individuals who are remotely located more directly (Lauristin & Vihalemm 1977: 14). Thanks to various means for preserving and recording we can return to past events again and again. Mass media today is a powerful system that offers operative and versatile information on what is happening in society. Media conveys daily news from home and abroad, educates us on societal matters outside our daily working and living environment. Ostensibly, media functions in the least stable layer of the communication field of today's person, i.e. on the operative communication field, which reflects changes, events, random situations, etc. in the surrounding world, personal situations and emotions (Lauristin & Vihalemm 1977: 21). Even though media cannot be considered responsible for establishing social constructions, it actively takes part in the establishment processes by transmitting, circulating, confirming or refuting information (Annist 1997: 11). Due to the specific means for transmitting information characteristic only to mass communication (the centralised nature of information, the speed and extent of circulation, simultaneous participation of different societal groups in the receiving process of information, its periodic and cumulative effect), it is able to affect and change the knowledge, values and standards of people. Media affects the formation of the values that members of a community attach to the topical events or processes in society, the change in taste, attitude towards cultural phenomena, etc. As a result of its lasting influence, mass communication affects the elementary basis of an individual worldview, i.e. the convictions and conceptions about oneself, other people and the surrounding world formed during the process of socialisation. It can alter and reshape them (Lauristin & Vihalemm 1977: 22–32).

Nowadays, media has become the subject of frequent discussions and debates. Because of its authority several institutions, structures and scientific branches are involved in exploring and analysing the impact of mass media. Originally the study was inspired by political and economic concerns (e.g. how could mass media promote the achievement of political goals, how to make effective advertisements, etc.). Much later people became concerned about the cultural and educational influence of media.

They realised that along with the intended purposes it brought along rather unexpected consequences. Media has been accused of disparaging the cultural level of the audience, increasing crime, promoting moral degradation, numbing the political interest of masses, suppressing creativity, etc. (De Fleur & Ball-Rokeach 1975: 11). Such accusations have been pronounced in different countries, and should not be ignored in the situation of commercial media policy. Also, each country has its own specific weak areas that media, as today's fourth power, has magnified. Estonian media has been accused of being oriented to valuing and adopting western mass culture (Hiimäe 1998: 225).

MEDIA AND CHILDREN

The people of today are connected to media since early childhood. Radio and television are a part of their natural daily surroundings. Impersonal voices over the radio as well as television images, which are in opposition to the physical existence of parents (appearing to be from a different reality), capture the child's world as soon as it is able to perceive them. In recent years educators have drawn public attention on the fact that young people live in a constant information field whose consequences are unpredictable. They have warned that as long as the influence of mass communication on children and young people is considered neutral, it can serve as an anonymous clandestine educator, but the real extent of its impact will be revealed only after several decades (Kraav & Uring 1975: 3–4). Media, but TV in particular, has become both a great friend but also a (liberal) absent-minded bohemian governess. On the one hand television complements the knowledge that the child acquires at home, school or community: all about children, grown-ups, life itself, or moral values (Kurg 1997: 51). On the other hand, TV as such (as well as the rest of the industry of entertainment) leaves "the door to the adult world wide open for the children" with no consideration to their age (Viilup 1997: 39). Children's programs, which supposedly intend to help the child with studies, discipline them and make them caring and affectionate (Viilup 1997: 46), cannot compensate for the harm done. For a child television is an inexhaustible source of information, but also an unlimited means for spending one's spare time. Some



One of the many radio appearances of Jüri Randviir. Courtesy of Epp Saarmann.

surveys even claim that young people acquire but 10% of their knowledge at school, the remaining 90% they get from media (Vassiltšenko 1997: 47). People have always tried to raise their children by traditions established in society, commonly accepted standards and ideals (Saarits 1998: 55). In earlier times children from farmsteads were raised under the care and scrutiny of several generations (parents and grandparents). The learning period was relatively short, whereas the period of parental control was long, since children stayed in their parents home even after they had grown up and married. Such family structure ensured the preservation of traditions through the scrutiny of different generations. In today's society the socialisation process is considerably longer (home-school-occupational training-job), while the family scrutiny and influence lasts for a shorter period as the young people do not stay in their parent's home. In principle, the extended chain is becoming obsolete, too, and is being substituted with an open infinite system of learning and acquiring information all through one's life (Võhandu 1997: 15 ff.). For children media is an effective source of information already at the first two links of the chain (home-school). For years people have debated with perhaps undue emphasis the rhetorical question which affects the moral values of today's children more: is it the parents or the media? The role of grandparents in today's society, where the number of extended families has decreased

considerably, is gradually weakening. The changed family structure has caused confusion in the techniques of raising children related to the parent's own approaches to humanity and values, bringing along uncertainty in what should and should not be allowed to children (Kraav 1998: 18–24). In many families parents have lost control over their children's media consumption. The domestic lives of parents are also scattered: an average marriage lasts for four and a half years in Estonia (Peets 1998). As suggested above, children's programs might complement a child's learning when they consider the needs of different age groups and advocate lasting values (caring, ethics, etc.), but the subsequent films for grown-ups, etc. question the very same truths. Children are not content with only watching programs intended for their age group: the mysterious world of grown-ups has always enticed the younger generation. And the chances to choose one's course in the flood of information by oneself or under the parents' guidance are becoming virtually unlimited.

The educational techniques of media differ considerably from the ones formerly used in the family. Television has been accused of mediating the hidden aspects of adult life to children too prematurely for normal development (Kraav & Uring 1997: 76). TV has always been considered the instigator of sex and violence, sometimes also of material values and the power of money. It has been assumed that children might adopt all they see without further thought. While ten years ago sex was considered a problem among young people, by now it has become the problem of children. Experts argue that the Estonian community would be better off if sexual liberation had not invaded us to its full extent (Hint 1997: 12). Children will no longer grow up through playing, as the human and creative standpoint might suggest: instead, they are brutally forced participate by direct involvement (Veidemann 1997: 24).

Television changes the worldview and daily activities of children and young people.³ By following the programs intended for grown-up viewers and observing the behaviour of adults, children adopt an adult-like attitude towards television. Watching TV helps them relax, rest, escape to the pseudo-world of the rich and famous. A wish to entertain oneself passively becomes gradu-

³ In 1970s people began to talk about the sc. DTT (*diivan-tuhvlid-televiisor*) [couch-slippers-TV]-phenomenon as typical for the Estonians.

ally stronger, while people's creative activities are slowly dying out.

RADIO, THE COFFEE BUDDY, TELEVISION, THE YEAR-ROUND SANTA. MEDIA AND GAMES

In recent years the proportion of game-shows⁴ as a genre in the Estonian entertainment industry has grown considerably. Radio and television, Internet chatrooms and lists offer unlimited opportunities for their followers, interest groups to follow or participate in the games, or comment on them. The follower is no longer passive. Thus argues one media critic that any game induces activity on the part of people, by forcing them to think and participate more than any other television program (Sisask 1995).

Of course, every one of us has heard of game shows. Different games have been played over radio and television channels for decades. The program *Children's radio* broadcast student chess tournaments with Jüri Randviir, a professional chessplayer, for over thirty years. Also, various radio and television quiz-shows were popular already in the late 1960s.

The content and orientation of Estonian television programs underwent major changes only in 1993. In August the first commercial channels with independent programs emerged next to the Estonian Public Television channel (ETV): RTV and TV1 managed by Mart Siimann,⁵ and Kanal 2 (Channel 2) managed by I. Taska. Nationalistic euphoria and programs concerning nationalism and independent statehood had lost its appeal. So, Estonian media began to shape the Estonians into cosmopolites. The limited perspective open to the Soviet cultural space became wider and seemed to open up the cultural space of the rest of the world. At the same time the proportion of original Estonian-language programming decreased considerably and imported films and entertainment programs paved the way for western mass culture. The endless heroic sagas of Soviet sol-

⁴ Hereby I have discarded the specific fields generally associated with games, such as sports, theatre, cinema, arts.

⁵ Journalist, CEO of ETV (1989–1992), executive director of the first Estonian commercial television channel *Reklaamitelevision* 1992–1995, politician and Estonian prime minister during 1997–1999

diers and the metaphysical brotherhood of happy nations were replaced by neurotic Cinderella-stories from Latin America, the powerful industrial and monetary dynasties of America, good old Australian family sagas and a plethora of action and thriller series from all over the world. In November 1993 a Mexican soap opera⁶ *The Wild Rose* and an American-like dating show *Tripping with You* (*Reisile Sinuga*) began to run on ETV. Both got the highest ratings in Estonia.⁷ It was the beginning of the era of game-shows.

While the Soviet period could be characterised as a period of a desperate clinging to intellectual, respectable and ethical pastimes, this was now substituted with an easygoing superficial entertainment which required no particular sophistication. It aims for the crème of society, but is oriented to the “man in the street”. The fact that the influx of information is set in opposition to the short (limited) memory of an individual person, is at the same time both the defence an individual possesses in the age of information as well as a paradox. People live in a single moment, and the whole entertainment industry is based on this (Koppel 1996). In order to get on the screen or become a panelist, people do not have to pass quizzes or competitions: all they need is some courage or good luck in a lottery. Program formats which have proved successful in different parts of the world and are broadcast in different countries with slight modifications, in local language and with local panelists, serve to unify cultures. It seems that people would do anything if they are convinced that what they do is “normal” (Floren 1997). Most media critics agree with the viewers in that the imported game-shows outmatch the former home-made ones considerably, as they suggest comfortable western intimacy and closeness to the viewers (Sisask 1995), as well as open behaviour. Some critics, however, have appreciated the uniqueness of local programs (the very “home-made” quality of them) (Soiver 1995a). Game-shows that follow the older format are now referred to as archaisms.⁸

⁶) Before that Estonian television audience could follow the television series *Lihtsalt Maria* [Simply Maria] and *Ka rikkad nutavad* [And the Rich Cry Too] over the Soviet monopolistic central television channel.

⁷) Already in December 1993 the highest ratings were given to the series *The Wild Rose* (1), news program *Aktuaalne kaamera* (2.), and game-show *Reisile sinuga* (3.). *Televiioon*, 1994, 17.–23. I., p. 17.

During the last five years several game-shows have lost their appeal and have been replaced. The duration of airtime might vary,⁹ but they are still eagerly played both in radio as well as television. At the beginning of 1999 the programming of all radio and TV stations in Estonia contained a game-show.

Compared to the figures of last year the number of give-aways in radio programs has decreased slightly, nevertheless, the weekly programming still contains 8 game-shows:¹⁰ mostly short phone-in quizzes on weekends or weekday mornings (the sc. coffee-quizzes), where the program's listener can call the station and answer 3–5 questions on the air and win a small prize (packet of coffee, CD, videotape, concert tickets, etc.). Usually the programs are broadcast for a short period of time, and then replaced or renamed. The only exception here is *Mnemoturniir* [Mnemonic tournament] which has been broadcast since 1967. It is a radio quiz-show that pits the listeners against the "Wise Men's Club" (a small group of people competent in encyclopaedic knowledge and experts in different scientific fields). At the end of the game the listener whose question remains unanswered and is voted most interesting wins a prize (most recently, a bank share).

13 different game-shows¹¹ run on three out of the four TV channels, which take about 10 hours of airtime in a week. While the games used to run on TV on Sunday and Monday nights, by now they are spread over almost all weekdays (the number of

⁹ The new structure of the program excludes the older one "All this [game-show *Kuldaju* on TV 3] was reminiscent of Soviet quiz tournaments to the extent that it left the impression as if a TV viewer was watching a quiz-show broadcast over 25 years ago."

⁹ In 1996 the majority of game-shows ran on TV 3 (4.5 hrs per week) (Veldre 1996).

¹⁰ *Vikerraadio* – 2 radio games (on Sunday at 9.10 'Coffee-game', at 11.10 *Mnemoturniir*); *Raadio 2* – 3 games (on Monday 6.00–10.00 MAA, the morning program hosted by Romi Erlach and Urmas Leinfeld (incl. some game; on Saturday 11.00 *Kull või kiri* [Heads or Tails], on Saturday 16.00 *Timbulimbu Show*); *Klassikaraadio* – 1 game per month (On Sunday 10.00 *Teame ja Tunne*) Russian-language *Raadio 4* – 1 game (on Saturday at 22.10 musical quiz-show *Favoriit*); *Raadio Elmar* – a morning game-show at 8.45 weekday mornings.

¹¹ 6 games on ETV (on Saturday at 20.00 *Tähed muusikas*; on Sunday 17.30 children' game-show *Memoriin* (every other week), at 20.30 *Reisile Sinuga*; on Monday at 20.30 *Kuulus ja kummaline*, at 21.30 lottery game *Topelttosin* and on Thursday 20.30 *Klaver põõsas*); *Kanal 2* – 2 games (Mon-Fri at 16.30 *100%*, Saturday at 19.00 *Uudistekütid* etc.); *TV 3* – 5 games (Saturday 19.50 *Õnneratas*, on Sunday 21.10 *Kuum hind*, on Monday 20.00 *Kuldvillak* [original title: Jeopardy!], on Wednesday 21.50 *Ice Dog M Show*, on Thursday 21.30 *Bingo Loto*).

game-shows is the smallest on Fridays). Most of the game-shows run on the public television station ETV and the commercial station TV 3. The game-shows on ETV are mostly easygoing entertaining dating and guessing games, on TV 3 lotteries with sterling prizes, and on *Kanal 2*, which is new at this, quiz shows. From time to time ETV and TV 3 have extended their programming with games of different orientation: TV 3, for instance, has shown different dating-shows (*Ainus ja õige* [Singled Out], *Ice Dog M Show*¹²). TV 3 has stopped broadcasting quizzes only recently (*Kuldaju*, jt.), but has complemented its programming with an easy guessing show (*Õnneratas* [Wheel of Fortune]) and ETV has begun showing a lottery-game (*Topelttosin*).

The characteristic features of the new television shows are the following:

1. Contestants are either celebrities, or celebrities and a regular TV viewer. Tabloid press mentality has taken over game-shows. In several games (*Klaver põõsas*, *Tähed muusikas*, *Kuulus ja kummaline*) participate celebrities. The show is hosted by a well-known media reporter. And the ordinary player is chosen by his/her weird (resp. unusual) occupation or hobby. Celebrities often promote new game-shows; also, the scenarios of the sc. demo-versions of newer game-shows are played through with different celebrities attending. But the commercial and dating games are open to almost anyone.

2. Inciting the audience. Game-shows like many other public programs strive to bring the viewers and television personalities closer together by offering the former a chance to participate actively in the show. Recently, the number of such game-shows has grown (*Tähed muusikas*, *Klaver põõsas*). Next to the “tried and true” question for the viewers (*Kuulus ja kummaline*), the viewers can actively participate the show either in the studio (lottery-games, various quiz-shows, dating shows) or by phone. The interactive game-shows on TV 3 allow their viewers to affect the course of the show (e.g. in a dating game *Ice Dog M Show*) or enter into competition with the show’s host (e.g. the former *Pildimäng*).

3. The dominance of personalised game-shows. Team games have been replaced by contests for individual persons. The So-

¹²) Radio programs aiming to bring lonely people together are also *Üksildaste südame te klubi* [The Lonely Hearts’ Club] and *The Timbulimbu Show on Raadio 2*.

viet media stressed collectivism as one of the fundamental principles of its ideology. Thus, it is logical that today's individual-oriented society centres around successful individuals. The role of a strong individual is prevalent even in the few team games (e.g. celebrities against the few "weird" guests in the game-show *Kuulus ja kummaline*, which ends with a duel between the celebrities and the mystery guest). Another possibility is the attendance of passive lottery players who cannot affect the course of the show but have to follow the host's instructions (*Bingo Loto, Topelttosin*). Games for couples, for example, suggest a change in family structure. *Uudistekütid* [News Hunters] is a quiz for couples, not necessarily married couples. *Memoriin*, a game show for children, requires the attendance of the child and one of its parents. In contrast, earlier the family had to be represented by at least three members.

4. Commercial scores and prizes. The degree of difficulty in the questions of a quiz show are matched with monetary value, and the smartest contestant leaves the television studio with a comfortable sum on his or her bank account; not to mention the lottery games with luxurious prizes, which according to an expert TV-viewers, glue the viewers in front of their TV screens with an urge to possess (Remsu 1997). Similar to the lottery-games, which lure with fabulous sums of money and prizes, the quizzes and dating games have quite respectable prizes. The only exception here are the participants in the guessing game *Kuulus ja kummaline*, who take home a humorous prize. Similarly to children's games, the contestants have to retain symbolic "lives". The scores of sports games are counted in the children's game *Memoriin* and the two musical quiz-shows mentioned above. The rest of the games reward the contestants with good results money.¹³

TV game-shows have shaped the public perception of television stations. According to popular opinion in 1996, for example, TV 3 was characterised as "food for lucre", ETV as "food for spirit", and *Kanal 2* for "illusions" (Veldre 1996). The evaluation of the first two is largely based on the trends of game-shows, programs

¹³ There is grain of truth in O. Remsu's satirical comment that if in former (Soviet) times they had propagated the Komsomol [communist youth organisation] as eagerly as they propagate glossy products today, we'd be all communists (Remsu 1997).

with the highest ratings. The present day in television game-shows is said to be symbolised by a frantic giveaway of odds and ends and the opinion that if formerly television was influenced by ideology and ideologists, then now it is ruled by money and plutocrats (Remsu 1997).

PROVINCIAL GIRL VERSUS THE RICH AND THE BEAUTIFUL. TRADITIONAL AND TELEVISION GAMES

Even though old folk games have never been much favoured by television, which is traditionally oriented to the contemporary world, sometimes, however, old popular games have been used to make a game-show more exciting or playful, to vary its structure. In this case media acts to use or revive some well-known games, to create and propagate a new version of it. For example, *Entel-tentel*, an extremely popular children's song contest from 1969–1970, began with a famous adaptation of a counting-out verse. The child or program's host who was "it" had to make an opening remark. The deeper non-semantic text of the counting-out formula was substituted with a thematic rhymed verse *tāna laulavad kōik meil, / sina alustad, juhei!* [everybody sings today/ you will start, hurrah!]. Recent research reveals that the adapted counting-out verse has now become a part of children's lore. And instead of taking its place beside the original verse, it ousted the latter almost completely. Even today, 30 years later, the version of the counting-out verse *Entel-tentel* is better known than the folkloric version (Vissel 1993, 1997), although in the case of tag, hide-and-seek, and other games, television text is bound to a real game situation.

Imitation of everything that surrounds us, grownups and other children's behaviour is a part of the process of discovering the world and accommodating oneself to it. Media has changed the essence of simple imitation-games or role-play.

The characters and ideals of imitation games are drawn from universal entertainment culture via printed press, literature, and, particularly, through television (Korkiakangas 1996: 75). If formerly children usually imitated life at home, school, a visit to the doctor's or shopping in their games, then in the recent decades they imitate famous newscasters, pop-artists, actors, or other celebrities on television or movie screen. Children and

young people impersonate popular celebrities earnestly (aiming to behave, sing, act like the person they pretend to be) or humorously (emphasising and magnifying certain prominent features of the person, i.e. parodying). Although people impersonate others all through their lives to some extent, the role-players are usually the youngest ones, while the teenagers and young people prefer parody. Jovial parodies of well-known people can set the mood at teen parties or social gatherings. At school parties, for example, some children entertain themselves by parodying teachers, while others guess whose imitation it was. Professional actors give parodies at parties, concerts, in radio and television shows. In 1990s, lampoons of L. Brezhnev and M. Gorbatchev were very popular; an imported show “Royal Canadian Air Farce” entertains TV viewers by parodying Queen Elizabeth II, Bill Clinton, Boris Jeltsin, etc. Children and young people prefer to imitate the style of performance, vocabulary and pronunciation of pop-musicians and television newscasters, who are more popular than politicians.¹⁴ And often the role-play develops into a guessing game, where the viewers have to guess, who was being imitated.

The trend of recent decades is to imitate the music videos of pop-artists. The popularity of domestic and foreign stars changes fast. The indisputable favourite of 1998 was the pop-group “Spice Girls”. Young girls imitated the artists both among themselves as well as at social events and gatherings. And already in 1996 a program series on ETV called *Kooli TV* [School TV], a television contest between schools, required an imitation of a popular music video by the contestants. Other tasks included taking part in a quiz, sports and singing competition and forming a computer crossword.

Media also exerts its influence on tests of strength and skill, providing people with role-models to measure up to. Young boys imitate the heroes of action movies, and for some time already the tests of strength among the boys also contain in addition to rough fighting and wrestling elements of karate, judo and other oriental martial arts. This is not so much due to the introduction of these sports in Estonia as it is to action films that propagate them.

¹⁴) Collecting of school lore in Võrumaa schools. Antsla. M. Patte. See archival reference.



The Estonian team (Hardi Tiidus, Valdo Pant and Voldemar Panso) at "Naapurivisa" in 1966. KM EKLA B-183:86.

Tests of strength and skill are closely connected to role-play. In the 1930s-1940s young boys fanatically imitated Tarzan from the movie, or their wish was to become an airplane pilot; in the 1960s boys wanted to become astronauts, etc. In different periods people have yearned for their thrills; every era has had its noble knights, be they Rinaldini, the robber, the Estonian Jüri Rumm, the immortal Scottish romantic highlander Duncan MacLeod, the invincible Rambo, etc. Today's musclemen look like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jannie Chang, the A-Team, and other such actors. The film industry of today creates such grandiose visual effects around its heroes, that it is physically impossible to imitate them. And like the stunt master of a film studio, the child imitates what he has seen with the technical tools available to him, i.e. toys (Lego-bits, cars and model toys).

Guessing and solving puzzles has always been and still is an engaging way of entertaining. During the recent 20–30 years quizzes have been extremely popular in Estonia, and in a wider context in the former Soviet Union as well. The popularity of radio and television quizzes began in 1966 with a quiz-show between Finland and Estonia entitled *Naapurivisa*, which was broadcast over the radio and television in both countries. Under

the Soviet regime a joint entertainment show with a capitalist country was truly exceptional. The contest between the two neighbouring countries lasted for five years and, finally, ended with the Estonians' victory. The Estonian team of three (Hardi Tiidus, Valdo Pant and Voldemar Panso) were very popular both in Finland as well as Estonia. The same team expanded and continued under the name of the "Wise Men's Club" in a radio program *Mnemoturniir*. The team or its separate members were often asked to participate in various game-shows.

But media-quizzes were only the tip of the iceberg. Quizzes acquired an indispensable role at school, class and college parties. In decades various forms of quiz-games were put to the test: contests of several rounds between institutions/schools and other teams, contests between the teams of institutions and the "Wise Men's Club". In 1977 *Mnemoturniir* expanded into state quiz championships.

Television has always nurtured the quiz tradition, although the names of the quiz-shows have constantly changed and new cycles of quizzes are introduced nearly every season. Quizzes are still popular in schools and different companies, the contests are held at the reunions of various organisations and societies, as well as at various entertainment events. Even the Internet



Naapurivisa in Helsinki 1969. KM EKLA C-68:32.



*"Naapurivisa" judges professor Paul Ariste and professor Lauri Posti.
Helsinki 1969. KM EKLA C-68:29.*

home pages of today's young people mention quizzes as a rewarding and interesting hobby.

Television quiz-shows also employ the 'game within a game'. In *Trips-traps-trull* [Tick-tack-toe], a program which ran some couple of decades ago, teams of contestants had to choose the subject of questions by playing tick-tack-toe. Years later a quiz-show made use of *Kriegspiel*. It is almost impossible to determine the degree to which television programs have influenced one game or another, but my guess is that it might have affected them to the extent of keeping them alive or reviving them among those who knew the game before, as well as among those who learned the game from a TV show. Recent research has shown that tick-tack-toe and *Kriegspiel* are still very popular pastimes (Vissel 1885: 261) during long drives or boring school classes.

Media can invigorate almost forgotten game traditions and bring a particular game into circulation again. Syncretism is relatively common here in that only a part of the game is retained in the secondary tradition. For example, the rich tradition of round-game from the late 19th and early 20th century was revived by folk-singing groups (*Kukerpillid*, *Untsakad*, etc.). In the secondary tradition the function of the round-games has

slightly changed: the former round-games circulate as social songs, whereas the intermediary song that was danced to has turned into a refrain.

TELEVISION AS A MEDIATOR AND SOURCE OF NEW GAMES

“And there he comes!”¹⁵

At the same time media can also mediate new games. Television channels can introduce new games fast and spread them widely over the whole country, both in towns as well as in the countryside, in larger centres as well as in the periphery. On the basis of the few known examples we have reason to claim that new games have remained relatively unaffected by the media, and demonstrating a new sport or a game does not necessarily result in its becoming popular. Elastic skipping, for example, was first shown in 1974 in a children’s program over ETV called *Kel lusti, lööb kaasa* [Who wants to have a good time, can come along], but the single presentation did not bring along a growth in its popularity. Rather the game spread among the girls in Tallinn, and then travelled slowly to smaller towns and countryside, and to the remotest corners of Estonia. In the 1980s the game became extremely popular through natural chain of circulation, i.e. it was passed on from child to child without the medium of television or books (Vissel 1997: 108).

During the last five years children have adopted two new games into their pastimes under the influence of television: the imitations of the international game-shows *Reisile sinuga* and *Kuulus ja kummaline*. Originally, both game-shows were produced in the United States. *Reisile sinuga* (the original title *Blind Date*¹⁶) has run on ETV channel since November 1993. *Kuulus ja kummaline* (the original title *What’s My Line*¹⁷) has been shown on the same channel since autumn 1995. The game-shows rapidly gathered the highest ratings and are the most popular entertainment shows up to the present day.¹⁸

¹⁵) The hostess’s customary exclamation to greet the entering guest in game-show *Kuulus ja kummaline* has become a characteristic saying.

¹⁶) Under the name of *Napakymppi* on the Finnish TV.

¹⁷) Originates in the 1950s United States.

Competitive game-shows in the Estonian media field

The game-show *Reisile sinuga* turned into a remarkable media hit. During the five years a huge number of people have registered for the show. They have chosen travel companions from so many different places in Estonia, that there cannot be very many places left. Not only single contestants but fellowships of three friends, colleagues and fellow students, servicemen, etc. have participated in the show. Surprise guests have been three secretaries of ministers, the members of Estonian pop-group *Ummamuudu*; bold single contestants have been local celebrities, businessmen and the “confirmed bachelor” Carl Danhammer. Once, on the eve of September 1st [September 1st is the first day of school in Estonian schools], the contestants were all children entering the first grade. All these facts indicate that the game-show has attracted tremendous appeal in Estonia, being the most popular show as well as the dullest show ever broadcast (Jahilo 1998). *Reisile sinuga* is a talked-about show (it has been discussed even more often than the weather), it has been the object of criticism, and comparison with other popular programs. People write about it,¹⁹ do parodies of it,²⁰ and have done everything that can be done to it, but first and foremost – they have watched the show (*Eesti Päevaleht* 1998).

The game where a young man or woman makes his or her choice of travel companion on the basis of answers he or she receives (Haavikko 1989: 293), was a novel and fresh one for the

¹⁸⁾ Baltic Media Facts survey “Usage of computers and internet among population of Estonia” (BMF).

¹⁹⁾ Some 50–60 articles concerning the game-show have been published in newspapers such as *Eesti Päevaleht* and *Postimees*. While in the first couple of years, media critics tried ironically to unravel reasons for its popularity, later the articles focused around Maire Aunaste’s person. Before M. Aunaste quit the show, the papers concentrated on the issue of the new game-show host, Vahur Kersna, who unanimously approved of this. Another media event was when the young reporters of two larger papers *Eesti Päevaleht* and *Postimees* participated in the show, and published their comments on the game-show and the ensuing trip (Tali 1995, Tali 1996). The high ratings of the show have set a standard for other popular or significant broadcasts (the Eurovision song contest, Olympic Games, coverages of events significant to Estonians, debates between the members of *Riigikogu* and presidential candidates, etc.).

²⁰⁾ A feuilleton by A. Kivirähk *Staarid osalesid telemängudes*, vaudeville by E. Baskin *Raadio Null* in Vanalinna Stuudio etc.

Estonian television viewers. Its lasting international success proves that its authors have come up with a truly witty and marketable idea, based on establishing contacts between different sexes. The wish to help young people find each other goes back to antiquity, and is found in different countries and at different times alike. The subject is intriguing to both those who are looking for love as well as bystanders, it feeds into both the higher arts and the tabloid press, as well as local rumours.

In traditional societies young people of marriageable age were allowed to go out more often, young men could even go to the parties in neighbouring villages, and roam around the village at nights. Nubile daughters were often taken to visit faraway relatives for longer holidays. This social function is now, either consciously or unconsciously, performed by television.

People like what they see on television, because of its resemblance to actual life, and they are excited about the possibility of seeing or hearing themselves in the media, which has been flattering their egos since the beginning of the printed press. Those who go on television to seek a boyfriend or a girlfriend are not required to possess any particular skills or to do anybody any favours. The game-show participant has to make a choice, much like in real life, and might end up with a rather slow-witted egoist or a nice trip to Cyprus or Egypt. If the contestant is lucky, both the chosen companion and the trip are good, if not, they can end up with the wrong partner and a short trip somewhere within Estonia (Remsu 1997). *Reisile sinuga* is all about human relationships across the spectrum of infinite variations uttered over and over again by the oncoming contestants. The players determine whether the game-show includes brilliantly witty dialogues, smart shyness, lavish self-praise, innocent foolishness, mature sophistication or a nonrecurrent combination of all thinkable possibilities. Whether the impression left is stupid, but delicate (Remsu 1997), illusory and unnatural (Bakhovski 1997a) or more pornographic than x-rated movies, which make soap operas look like some creation of Shakespeare (Floren 1997), depends on the audience's principles, taste, attitudes, evaluation criteria, moods. Some viewers enjoy the easy-going atmosphere in the studio, others consider the bigger picture (Remsu 1997). The main reasons for entering to contes might be a desire to be

seen, go behind the scenes of the show, win an exciting trip. When the show was hosted by Maire Aunaste, a witty and slightly ironic hostess who became the star in the mating game, the overall opinion was that several participants had a vain desire to outmatch the hostess in dialogue (Remsu 1997).

Estonian viewers have been concerned with the question of personal privacy in the media. The same problem, although not to the same intensity, was also posed in Finland. A.-L. Haavikko pointed out that while appearing on TV the players lose their social immunity, at the same time the audience is offered a chance to share it without any contribution on their part (Haavikko 1989: 302). The issue of the line between private and social life shocked the world with the tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales, the famous media-heroine. The interest of society is never the same for all people. The degree of socialising private life depends on the person's position in society. While public figures are concerned with concealing the boundaries of their private lives, then people who do not worry about it (and rather hope for it) try to create the illusion of belonging to the circles of celebrities by bringing their private life out in the open. A television viewer makes an effort to make his personal relationships public in a dating-show, hoping to appear as a member of a circle of celebrities (Stolovitš 1997). What people reveal of themselves and how they do it is purely up to them, and, as a rule, they are in control of the situation. The consumption of global mass culture has a levelling effect on different cultures. They give up uniqueness for the sake of novelty, and the models of behaviour of different nations and countries get evened out because the first requirement of a media character is to appear unusual, then even the man on the street tries to look or display himself as unusual. Game-shows, incl. *Reisile sinuga* are a unique way of "putting the viewer to the test". A player who wishes to be seen has to appear as modern as possible to the other contestant and the TV viewer; so he or she starts repeating the lines dictated by media itself. J. Kaus notes that the presentations of players manifest a mentality typically propagated by mass media.²¹ Among the young, the words 'people' and 'ordinary' have become synonyms for the inactive conglomeration of 'the masses'. The only thinkable target group for even the most ordinary young-

ster is 'the middle-class' as opposed to 'the common people' and 'the masses'. This hunger for unconventionality is satisfied by media, incl. the commercials, the 'basic art form' of today, which inspires even housewives to be unconventional, by using extraordinary laundry detergents, tooth paste, etc. (Kaus 1998).

The Finnish learned from their *Napakymppi* experience that society was full of single people. The easy entertainment and matchmaking show *Reisile sinuga* reflects the disappearance of former strict moral standards and the equal opportunities for both sexes.

The other favourite game-show *Kuulus ja kummaline* is an amusing guessing game. The studio panelists have to guess the unusual occupation or hobby that the studio guest tries to act in mime. During the third round the panelists cover their eyes and try to guess the identity of the famous guest by asking questions. The famous guest can answer the questions either affirmatively or negatively, and if the guest happens to be known by his or her voice, then he or she can choose an alternative way to answer the questions. If the panelists fail to guess the identity of the guest under ten 'lives', they have lost the round.

Once again, the role of the host is of great importance. As the game-show does not directly focus on people's private lives, the hostess Reet Linna has not quite become the media star Maire Aunaste or her successor Vahur Kersna were. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that it has contributed to her great popularity and renown. And in this game the viewers are again better informed than the players: they have the answers from the very start. The panel of players is formed of cheerful and easy-going people (actors, artists, musicians, other public figures), who make the show enjoyable and gain popularity in their turn.

²¹⁾ In the game-show "Reisile sinuga" people often characterise themselves as: "My friends tell me I'm a little/absolutely crazy." And also "I love to sleep in the mornings." The idea is that ordinary people work: and they always get up at 8 in the morning to go to work. But original, somewhat crazy people are usually students, even if they are .. awfully lazy. [---] The lazy, but still enthusiastically studying student is taken as the future leader and boss of the "ordinary" people. [---] Or, in other words, a master (Kaus 1998).

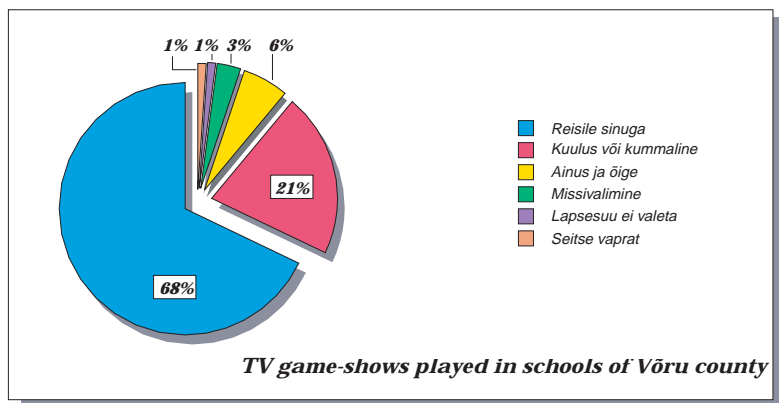
From television show to children's pastime

A weekly TV game-show often attracts the younger generations and becomes their favourite show. While the preferences of adult TV viewers are revealed in yearly ratings, best programs and best host awards,²² then children's interest towards the game-show *Reisile sinuga* is revealed in the results of a 1995 survey published in *Eesti Päevaleht*.²³ The top five television programs according to children between ages 4–13 who were questioned in the survey were *Seitse vaprat* [Top 7 of most popular songs], game-shows *Reisile sinuga*, *Lapsesuu*, *Pildimäng* and *Kuraditosin*. They were followed by the children's favourite character – a dinosaur child *Otto-Triin*. Media influence was also felt in children's selection of the most popular persons. In this interesting list Lennart Meri, President of Estonia was followed by the hostess of game-show *Reisile sinuga*, who was followed by Nancy, a pop-artist known from the program *Seitse vaprat*, and then by the United States President Bill Clinton. The TOP 10 included Maarja, a pop-artist who represented Estonia at the Eurovision song contest, Mart Laar, prime minister; Mihkel Raud, the host of the program *Seitse vaprat*, the German Formula-1 pilot Michael Schumacher, and then, surprisingly, a mother, who appeared to have gotten lost among the “true media celebrities”, followed by Teet Margna, the host of *Pildimäng* on TV 3.

The exciting weekly game-show inspires children and youngsters to imitate it. The first video-recordings and reports of the imitations of *Reisile sinuga* were submitted to the folklore archives in 1995. The increasing popularity of both games is confirmed in recent random surveys, the 1997 Internet project “Break”, the collection of school lore in Võrumaa schools in spring 1998, various articles published in printed press as well as on the Internet. Of the 13 Võrumaa schools questioned in the course

²²) The game-show *Reisile sinuga* has been the indisputable favourite of TV viewers since 1995, only on single occasions (in Autumn 1997 and Summer 1998, when the game had a substitute host) was it exceeded by *Kuulus või kummaline*. The show regained popularity in August 1998, with the new host Vahur Kersna. The game-show has been awarded the title of the best entertainment program in ETV in 1995, 1996 and 1997, during 1996–1997 Maire Aunaste received awards as the second best show-host. Reet Linna, the hostess of *Kuulus või kummaline*, took the third prize.

²³) *Eesti Päevaleht* 1995, 11 November.



of collecting the school lore 10 schools confirmed of playing the very same TV game-shows. *Reisile sinuga* was mentioned most often: it was also considered the most popular game played at grade parties over the last few years. Sometimes they played the imitations of *Kuulus või kummaline*, on rare occasions also the dating game *Ainus ja õige*, other games mentioned were *Lapsesuu ei valeta* and the lottery game *Kuum hind*. School beauty pageants, as another phenomena introduced to us through the media, were most popular some ten years ago, when the first Miss Estonia after WW2 was crowned. The tradition is still followed in many schools²⁴ (see the chart). Next to the television game-shows school children also play the conventional class party games, such as Eye-Winking, Long Nose, Odd-Man-Out, Spinning the Bottle, etc.

Television game-shows are played during birthday parties, class parties, school gatherings, on Valentine's Day. In several schools they have been performed by teachers on Teacher's Day, when the roles of students and teachers have been switched. *Reisile sinuga* is a game for strangers. It cannot be played in a small circle of children very well, as people are bound to recognise each other too soon. Still, it is interesting to observe what one's class-mate might want to know, how and which answer he or she is given, and who is finally chosen. Matchmaking also attracts children to play another game called Long Nose, where

²⁴) In fact, beauty pageants were organised by school children already during the Soviet times, since the late 1960s.

the players' own preferences are disregarded,²⁵ although it is naturally more interesting to observe class-mates' choices and preferences. Many children have emphasised that such games are not to be taken too seriously, and they are often played just for fun, as an attempt to parody the game. Sometimes children imitate some unusual incidents that have taken place in real game-show: e.g. an attempt to chose the right girl with the help of a laptop computer. The winners are presented with either a mock trip,²⁶ or an actual trip in the local area, or a walk.²⁷

Children also try to retain the original structure of the game, the number of participants (1+1+3), imitate the studio setting (the players who answer the questions are separated from the one who asks them with a barrier). For them it is important that the game take place according to the same rules as on the TV screen. The role of the game's host is of course the most desirable one.

So we'll play it the same way: one player is Maire Aunaste and there are three girls and a boy, or the other way around. (Lüllemäe school, Grade 5A, 1998).

Reisile sinuga.

We play it at class parties. And it goes like this: If there is nothing in the classroom where to hide yourself from the boy, so that he wouldn't see your face or where are you sitting, then just draw the table closer and stay behind it. So that no one can see you. The guy has to turn his back towards you. You can ask really anything. You can make them up during the game or write them down on a piece of paper. The same thing goes for the trips. Trips can be, for example: eating a cake in the cafeteria, patting a reindeer, and the best trip is Africa. You write them down and fold the slips of paper together. Then you number the papers and they must draw the card with numbers 1,2,3,4. And 'Maire Aunaste' distributes them. When the guy has asked his question, he can

²⁵) The host matches the couples, while contestants remain fully unaware of this.

²⁶) America, patting the reindeer, trip to the hen hous, sewage, etc.

²⁷) A walk around the school house, hand in hand around the schoolhouse, drive to a local shop to buy ice-cream, a date at the school cafeteria, etc.

name a number. And if he guesses correctly, they might get a prize for that. So they don't have to go on the trip. Chocolate is certainly a good prize. And the same goes for the boys. Have fun. (Antsla Secondary School 1995).

After decades of fanatic quiz-playing it is only natural that the endless quizzes have become less popular among young people than, say, the fresh guessing game *Kuulus vői kummaline*. By playing this game children have discovered that it is possible to find people with unusual occupations or hobbies even among themselves or people they know. People save and collect the strangest things.²⁸ Depending on the players, the game focuses on finding out the 'unusual' or imitating the television show, as in the next account:

Kuulus vői kummaline? This is how we play it at our class parties. We drag a classroom table near the blackboard. We sit down facing the audience. If you don't have room for sitting at the table, you can also sit on the sides. And, of course, you must have four chairs. And sit on them. When the person, who is supposed to imitate his or her occupation, enters, he or she might choose a name for himself or herself. Say, some pop-singer's name such as Maarja, Pearu Paulus; or actor's, author's name. But only when you are the mystery guest. And then you also have to change your voice: you can talk on a high or low pitch. So others won't recognise you. If you want others [the audience] to know your name, you could write it down on the blackboard. The four players have to put masks on. They can be made of paper, but I wouldn't advise you to use paper, as it falls apart very easily. Better use cardboard or fabric. And the masks have to cover the eyes, so that no one could see through them. You can make the eyes of paper and glue them on. Or if you make it of cardboard, then just draw the eyes on the mask. The masks must be large enough to cover the player's head. It can be flower-shaped, or Mickey Mouse or another animal face. This is how you can make the masks. First you have to draw the face on

²⁸) The most peculiar hobby was collecting cut nails: someone had collected over 3 litres of them (Põlgaste School, 5th Grade 1998).

a piece of cloth. On its inside. And then cut out the face. And then you tie some elastic tape in there. You do it like this. You cut two holes on each side. Right from the middle. You can also make a hairdo, if you want to look more interesting at the class party. If you have some soft and lustrous yarn, you could use it for the hair. Or if you have some old cassette tapes, you can use the tape for hair. This is how you can do it: you cut out a strip of stiff paper and glue it together at the ends. The strip must fit onto your head. [The players] in the show are Katrin, Jüri, Tarvo, Hins. Katrin has blond hair. So you can make them yellow. Well, you do the hair like this: you have to take some yellow yarn or whatever the hair colour. Then you take a large needle. You thread the needle and start sewing. You have to start from the upper edge. But before that, you leave a loop of 3 cm. The yarn or whatever has to cover the edges of the paper strip. And if you're done, then just cut the yarn and the hair is ready. And you look much more fun than usual. (Antsla Secondary School 1995).

The game-show follows a quite traditional game pattern. Guessing someone's identity (occupation) by using mime is traditionally used in various European games (Opie 1969: 283). The popular Estonian game *Mooramaa kuningas* must be a German loan.²⁹ In the third part of the game-show, *the Mystery Guest*, the players try to guess the identity of the counter-player blindfolded. In traditional games the player's identity is guessed at by hearing,³⁰ movements,³¹ touching.³² (Kalamees 1960: 71 ff.)

Reisile sinuga is not so directly connected to traditional games. The earlier matchmaking games paid no attention to verbal communication and selection based on that. In the old singing-games (e.g. *Nukumäng*) with their tripartite structure (song, dialogue and final solution) the partner was attired primarily through

²⁹) Under the names *Meister*, *Meister*, *gib uns Arbeit* or *Wir kommen aus dem Morgenland*.

³⁰) Kalamees 1960, game no. 127 – *pimekull* [Blind Tag], no.136 – *linnavahetamine*.

³¹) Kalamees 1960, game no. 125 – *pime arvab* [Blind Guess].

³²) Kalamees 1960, game no. 120 – *pimesiku nimi* [Blindman's Name], no. 130 – *kelle süles sa istud* [In Whose Lap are You Sitting?]; no. 133 – *arvamine kehaosade järgi* [Guessing by Body Parts]; no. 135 – *kuldasi* [the Golden Thing]; no. 138 – *palav käsi* [Hot Palms].



*The TV-show
"Kuulus või
kummaline" with
Reet Linna. Cour-
tesy of Reet Linna .*



*The election of the Miss and Mister in Nõo Reaalgümnaasium in 1999.
Arhive of the Nõo Reaalgümnaasium.*

*Pictures of a game of
"Reisile Sinuga".
Valga Gymnasium,
November 16. 1995.
Photo converted from
video by
A. Kuperjanov.*



... and the winners are ...



physical activity (running, chasing, catching), rather than by means of intellectual tests. These might then reflect the remnants of ancient initiation rites or “woman snatching”. Similarly, in more recent games the partner is found first and foremost through running. Naturally, the decision is based on what he sees and what he likes, but he does not make an effort to find out what the partner’s opinions of one issue or another, or of herself might be. Posing riddles while redeeming the pledge is a test of a keen mind; and although it is not directly connected with choosing a partner, it helps in forming an opinion of him or her. Choosing a partner by intellectual qualities is characteristic of some *Märchen*-types, where the suitor might be asked to solve some complex problems or riddles, in addition to fulfilling the physically demanding tasks. The game-show shares similar features with the games which are played in the dark, where a person or an object is chosen without seeing it.³³ There is no doubt that the erotic allusions on the television show are much more tangible and intense than in most of the older folk games, where they were rather secret and allegorical.

CONCLUSION

The interrelation of media and games have been somewhat one-sided: television promotes newer imported entertainment specifically for showing on TV, while the old traditional games never make it to the screen or a radio program. In addition to several fields of life and phenomena, media also seems to influence games, as certain game-shows appear to be adopted into children’s and youth lore. Nevertheless, adopting games from the radio or television show is only one way of introducing and spreading new games in the field, and does not disrupt the life of other games. During the last five years traditional Estonian games have become even more ‘endangered’ by computer games, however.

Children complete their game-repertoire with game-shows, which seem fresh and novel, which can be imitated in real life, which provide new opportunities and roles for the players, create gripping game situations.

³³) Cf. in earlier tradition *Pime rätsep* [Blind Taylor] (Kalamees 1960, game no. 139) or in recent tradition *Auhinnanöör* [Prize-Fishing], where the player receives the prize s/he had managed to cut blindfolded from the string.

Games reflect our cultural surroundings and changed cultural patterns. Though the new games appear to be focused on easy-going entertainment, they manifest the changed values of society (preference of material wealth, individualism, certain superficiality). And as society becomes oriented toward a strong individual, it is only logical that individual games are beginning to replace collective games. Older popular games have undergone transformation. The former serious quiz-shows have been substituted by those, which focus on playfulness and tossing random answers (*Topelttosin, Önneratas, 100%*). Never before has knowledge been equalled with money the way it is now, thus leaving people without illusions as to the position of intellectual values, which was formerly reflected in moral standards and values. Television game-shows seem to promote the idea that success leads to wealth, wealth, in its turn, leads to decent life, decent life offers freedom of choice and pleasures. Media propaganda is gradually turning into ideology, which is too tolerant of everything foreign, unusual, and aggressive. Today's media educates and guides children more than the educational system or the home ever can. Part of this education is shared by television games, which pave the way for global mass culture.

We cannot stop renewal and changes, the same way we cannot stop media's increasing influence in society. Today's media should on the other hand take all possible steps to help members of society integrate into society. And in addition to circulating information it must also be able to bring lonely individuals together.

The children of today grow up in totally different surroundings than their parents did. A conflict between the generations of grandmothers who grew up on a farm under the conditions of some natural economy, and the environment of tamagoochi-feeding (great)grandchild is inevitable. Young people adjust to the new faster than the older generation. Advanced technology constantly produces new toys, game equipment and games for the children (ActiMate Barney, interactive Teletubbies, or Wise Man). Beside these, traditional games are still played, while media serves as a vast source of new games.

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Contemporary Folklore, Internet and Communities at the beginning of the 21st Century

Mare Kõiva, Liisa Vesik

Estonian folklorists first became interested in folklore online and archiving that material in the period 1996–2002. On the one hand, internet studies were a logical continuation of working with bringing folklore materials online, on the other hand these people were personally interested in following the fast onslaught of internet in Estonia. In the late 1990s, many of the researchers as well as assistants working in the department of folkloristics were actively creators of web interfaces for publishing, learning and teaching folklore (cf Kõiva 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005; Kõiva & Vesik 2002, 2005; Kõiva & Kuperjanov & Vesik 2007). They were aware of what was happening in the web in Estonia. Some of us belonged to an internet community, participated in a chatroom, moderated or posted to a mailing list, was a recognised contributor. For some, work and personal interest coincided.¹

The internet has been, from the start, the ideal fieldwork location for folklorists because of the multitude of heritage genres that it carries. Cyberspace was simply an instrument for transmitting the traditions as they stand and it created a lot of new genres or mutations of the old genres. Collective Intelligence-oriented Semantic Web, based on a universal ontology, expressed by an ideographic language, as dreamed P. Levy (2007) was a distant future as well as term like Collective Intelligence Oriented Cyberspace.

¹ What Estonian folklorists have achieved with bringing material online and studying online material is thanks to financing from the Open Estonia Foundation, Estonian Cultural Endowment and the Estonian Science Foundation. In recent years, internet studies have been carried out within the ESF grants no 5117, 6284.

For closer study, the internet web communities or virtual communities membership and their heritage seemed a good starting ground. The crucial question was how much of the existing folklore will change mediums and continue to spread in the internet; what would internet-specific folklore turn out to be like; the internet as an archive of folklore; which new customs and rituals are introduced by the internet and globalisation? But also the questions of what will be process whereby folklore with a practical value, for example knowledge of calendar customs and vernacular medicine, or entertainment value like jokes, caricatures, etc. will move online? What kinds of changes are brought into folklore consumption and folkloristic communication by the new means of communication?

During this first period of internet studies, in computer mediated communication there was a clear distinction between indirect and direct communication. Indirect communication, characterised by mediated and written communication, guaranteed the distribution of traditional and novel heritage via e-mail and static web pages. Textual direct means of communication pointed to the blending of the oral and the written and, in turn, the blending of folklore genres. Direct written communication in Estonia included talk, IRC, chatrooms (both textual and with audio-visual add-ons), MUD etc.

The second period of in internet studies, in 2003–2009, concentrated on topical pages, databases (the contribution of folklorists in the WWW), observation of groups gathered into specific communities or around certain interests.

For a folklorist, the chance to observe directly communication in the internet was and is equal to the opportunity to observe folklore in an authentic situation of use. What makes the internet valuable, is the fact that new folklore phenomena come fourth, their function and area of application changes while observed. As a classic of the new media, Lev Manovich, says: “all culture, past and present, is being filtered through a computer, with its particular human-computer interface. Human-computer interface comes to act as a new form through which all older forms of cultural production are being mediated” (Manovich 2002).

ARCHIVING AND RESEARCH

Although the branch of psychology – cyberpsychology – concentrates on the connection between people and the cyber world, the topic has also been discussed by a wider range of experts: anthropologists, computer scientists, sociologists, communicational and behavioural psychologists, etc. The pioneers of establishing, furnishing and studying of the Estonian cyberspace were computer scientists. They are the compilers of the largest computer folklore archives of the 1990s, they established and maintained channels of communication.

Tartu University has taught internet skills and promoted the use of internet in teaching since 1993, and there have been numerous theses on the topic. Naturally, in addition to the general issues, they paid attention to the phenomena developing in the local web and this turned into an interdisciplinary research field. For example, students of the TU sociology department analysed in the late 1990s different web sites around the world in how they segmented information, how easily accessible it is and whether the site is user-friendly. Linguist Liina Lindström's thesis on narrative analysis, part of which was based on humour spread by the internet was one of the first thesis. Leen Rahnu defended in 1997 her thesis on application of computer-mediated communication in cross-cultural communication considered the CCED (Cross Cultural Exploration and Dialogue) projects carried out by TU professor Anne Villems and the so-called Babel team.

The new media transmits, in addition to classical folklore, also folklore that has adapted to the media as well as that which has come to life and lives only therein. Folklorists strived to collect and archive some of the folklore online. One of the largest collections is the ca 30,000 anecdotes from the Estonian-language internet (Laineste 2003a, Lainesteb, Krikmann 2004). Material was also collected from a few Estonian-language chatrooms, mailing lists (Kuperjanov 1998; Vesik 2003), Delfi.ee family life discussion boards, pet portals (Vesik 2008). Some of the single phenomena considered were classical internet folklore items like ASCII-art, chain letters, computer-related folk-

lore, smilies, chatroom aliases (Vesik 1996, Kuperjanov 1998).² There was a mushrooming of popular pages about customs and religion (folk calendar customs, vernacular medicine, death and birth customs presented on personal pages, later teaching materials and institutional web pages). Some attention was also paid to the late 1990s popular portal message boards with their discussions and comments, with thorough studies conducted in the field of postsocialist humour, especially concerning ethnic and political humour, anger speech and identity (Krikmann 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2007, 2006, 2004; Laineste 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, Laineste 2009a, 2009 b).³

Internet folklore is well suited to characterise tradition as a means of social self-realisation wherein traditions are viewed as a chain of phenomena, a constant process created by the person and whereby the person influences his life. Therein the task of the observer and tradition-determinator is not the finding and naming of single objects, rites and beliefs but following their progression.

According to this point of view, everyone and every group tries to become traditional. In other words – will try to generalise some aspects of their experience and actions, to present them so that other people would adapt that generalised form. People realise themselves not only through their physical children and creative work, but also through what of their lifestyle and mentality they can make carry on. The urge to create and establish traditions is universal in its nature. Individuals as well as groups differ in how successful they are in turning their experience into tradition. In the case of internet folklore, we often see the need to make oneself seen and heard, to add one's voice to the general flood of information, to share personal experiences with other and to establish oneself. Observation of home pages indicates that they often display opinions, stereotypes and trends which their author does not demonstrate elsewhere online, or even those which the author does not knowingly harbour but can be

² We are planning a collection of articles on internet studies, with a more in-depth discussion of these topics.

³ From the point of view of ethnology and communication theory, the most intriguing were P. Runnel's discussion of the internet as an archive and identity as broadcasted on personal web pages (Runnel 2001a-d).

“read between the lines.” Since the internet has been so far more the domain of men than women,⁴ this is a golden opportunity to study men’s misconceptions, prejudices and superstitions as well as attitudes. Personal and family web pages are also ideal to keep tabs on changes in family lore (cf Luks 2002).

International folkloristics took to the topic of internet slowly – in 1996, *Fabula* published the first longer study of narratives (Schneider 1996). The next treatises on new phenomena were by Gudrun Schwibbe and Ira Spieker (2001) and considered virtual graveyards and memorial sites, a thorough article that clearly outlined the globalisation and opportunities for disregarding long distances that the internet offered. But it also affirmed that traditionally very personal feelings and tragic events can be shared and alleviated in virtual reality. Larisa Fialkova and Maria Yelenevskaya (2001) discussed ghost stories in the news group `alt.folklore.ghost` and highlighted the issues of narratives, performers, moderators, believing and scepticism, truly one of the first interesting characterisations of an internet community in folkloristics.

At the beginning of the 21st century, it was easy to foresee an increase in the number of studies on internet folklore – it is, after all, a blend between mediated and direct communication, an irreplaceable open forum and the ideal source archive for many many topics.

Estonian web as analogy for phenomena appearing elsewhere

Although the wider spread of internet started in Estonia in 1993 (see also Sein 1998, Vesik 1996), the Estonian web is in the case of many phenomena a backwater or periphery where innovations arrive with a delay or where the initial leading position is quickly lost since the material-creating community is so much smaller that it can not compete with, for example, the English-

⁴ According to many researchers during the 1990s the majority of internet users are men with higher education. A similar trend is noticeable in Estonian news groups and mailing lists. Consequential communicating styles have been discussed by, e.g. S. Herring 1996, 1999; Savicki, *et al.* 1996.

language communities. The spread of several phenomena has been stunted because the in the establishing and maintaining of private, closed, anonymous communities, a community with a potential membership of 1 million (and of these, one third were internet users in 2002) acts like a village community. Lev Manovich juxtaposes cyberculture as the study of various social phenomena and a new forms of network communication. Examples of what falls under cyberculture studies are online communities, online multi-player gaming, the issue of online identity, the sociology and the ethnography of email usage, cell phone usage in various communities; the issues of gender and ethnicity in Internet usage (Manovich 2002).

The identity of web networks, the behaviour and heritage therein was a most rewarding object of observation. Networks control the behaviour of a computer user just as much as real-life social groups do. A created-for-web role and description is in Estonia fairly easily connected with a real person, which means that any kind of self-presentation requires conscious need for exposing and courage. Also, the generative basis is limited – active communications are also active as experts and creators in several fields (cf Vesik 2008 – pet portals have an increasing number of users posting under their own name and identity; while people with chronic or incurable afflictions prefer aliases or only present their first name in forums, Kõiva 2008a, 2009).

Estonian web often get additional material when something is adapted from the English language web. It was only when connection speeds and hosting spaces increased that visually attractive material like video clips became massive online and induced discussion. A good example is e-cards which developed with the advance of technical possibilities from the simple drawn pictures in 1997 to animated cartoons with sound effects. However, in Estonian web they have remained marginal and the local selection includes only a few providers⁵ and single photographers or artists. Adding a text in Estonian is what makes the

⁵ The Estonian National Library cardsender <http://www.nlib.ee/vKaart/>, the art centre: http://www.kunstikeskus.ee/galerii/galerii_e_kaart.php; there is also a collection of cards provided by portals that are either with a nationalistic theme or have been adapted for that purpose: <http://www.ee/ekaart/>, <http://www.eestifoto.ee/ekaart/index.shtml>, <http://www.top.ee/ekaart/index.php>, <http://www.delfi.ee/kaart/>

card part of the Estonian cultural space. Locally produced animated cards are practically non-existent.

In the 1990s, computer folklore was extensively archived on personal computers. However, precisely because they were personal archives, most of these were lost with time and failure of hard drives. Some of those kept on web pages were lost when hosts disappeared or accounts were closed. ASCII-art, for example, was distributed mainly through news groups and personal e-mails: topically suitable pictures and cards were forwarded. Even today, some of the old pictures from the early 1990s are still circling.

Internet also played a role in the influx of worldwide joke types into Estonia. Earliest records of personal e-mail communications including anecdotes come from the year 1993, e.g. series of blond jokes.

Simulations and conferences in virtual reality

One of the most noteworthy among the early phenomena of Estonian computer mediated communication studies are simulation games organised by Anne Villems and her team. Already the first simulations joined distance learning and learning through playing. In addition to creatively taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the internet, it paid attention to the opportunity to develop group work skills, to imitate intercultural communication situations, to make young people discuss social and cultural problems in various fields and via an international project. With the initiation of simulation games, a dialogue developed between people engaged in the humanities and in the IT. The first simulation, called Simuvere took place “within” Estonia. The population of the virtual city was made up of Estonian pupils who played social and ethnic groups. They communicated through e-mails and acted the daily problems of citizens of various social groups. The third game, named Babel, targeted cross-cultural communication. This game was participated by a few dozen student groups from all over the world. Problems leading to voicing national prejudices, dealing with stereotypes and questions of identity made the participants genuinely react. Representatives of large nations could feel like a cultural periphery does and contemplate the misconception they have of their

neighbours (Kõiva 2008b; for more on cross-cultural communication issues see Rahnu 2000). The answers to 90 questions about traditions revealed stereotypical attitudes and prejudices as well as general values towards heritage. Later projects have tackled problems of nature preservation, the European Union, etc.

A basis for further actions in folkloristics was the 2001 e-conference and distance learning programme prepared within ESF grant project 5117. Before that, in 1999 and 2000, there had already been some experiments with installing and using internet conference programmes (CVW – Collaborative Virtual Workspace). The environment was tested during the annual young researcher's conference to discuss an article by M. Mikkor. The first actual virtual conference was held in the Tartu University WebCT environment (Jaago & Kõiva & Vesik 2002; Jaago 2008; Vesik 2004, 2008). The aim of the conference *Dialogue between private and public lives* was to initiate discussion on attitudes towards pets, migration, home, death, birthday and other events of the life arc. The e-conference attracted quite a bit of attention and was participated by 80 people from all over Estonia and Finland. Activities in the chatroom were interspersed with online discussion group work, written individual and group work. In all topics, there appeared to be distinctive points of views taken by urban versus rural people, with the rural population being more conservative in their views as well as being less open to change.

Folklore distributed in direct communication networks

Virtual reality encompasses a range of interactive computer environments, from text-oriented on-line forums and multiplayer games to complex simulations that combine audio; video, animation, or three-dimensional graphics; and scent. The emergence and reign of chatrooms fell to the 1990s. The chatrooms were typically translated into Estonian and established by first students and later professors of the mathematics faculty of Tartu University. They became also the first moderators. One of the reasons chatrooms bloomed was the opportunity for social interaction and exchange of information it provided. At that time, cell phones were not ubiquitous and long-distance calls between towns were expensive. Personal computers and dial-up internet



Abiinfo
Kuidas liituda?
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Reeglid
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moomin.ee 2010 on õppäevaringselt töötav jutukas, mis baseerub EW-Too koodil. Alates 1995. aastast on seda koodi pidevalt ümber ja juurde kirjutatud.

- telnet moomin.ee 2010
- java-telnet
- Ametlikuks kliendika muumisse on TKTurf. Loe siit õpetust nr installimise kui muu kohta. Muumi jaoks tõmba alla järgmine fail: TKTurf. (Seda on modifitseeritud Unicode'st aru saama ning vaikimisi muumisse sisenema. Vali "Download to disk", mitte "Open".) Screenshot.

Kui oled päris algaja, siis enne liitumist loe läbi help algus

Kui Sul on probleeme moomin.ee jutukaga liitumisel, siis saad superitele saata oma probleemi kirjelduse aadressile moomin-w@lists.ut.ee

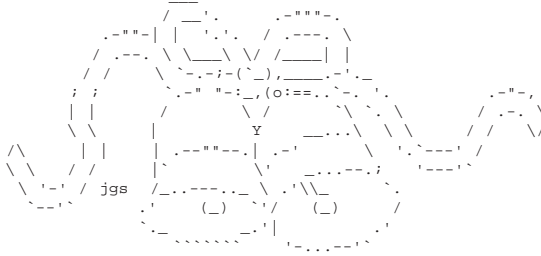
NB! Muumi toetab unicode'i. Dumbuserite keeles tähendab see lihtsalt seda, et Muumis saab sisestada praktiliselt kõigi maailma keelte tähti ja sümboleid. Loe siit õpetust selle kohta, kuidas Muumis unicode'i kasutada (kui oled Windowsikasutaja). Pikem abi on siin.

*Home page of one of the more advanced chatrooms Moominvalley.
<http://www.moomin.ee>*

connection were becoming more common. It helped if the users could divide their attention between several activities, either at work or at school. However, even if the environment and commands used therein were in Estonian, most of the adopted online aliases were borrowed from world literature, movies, etc. There was also a bias towards people with good (English) language skill.⁶

The most active members quite quickly formed subgroups and networks that met in real life. The real-life events helped establish acquaintance with people of various ages, fields of occupation and from all over Estonia. Get-togethers with so different people inevitably led to exchange of folklore from different regions. The chatroom was a place to meet people outside your home region and profession. But there were also those united by common occupation – those taking a night shift (medics, policemen, etc.). For time, it was very popular to add a small chatroom to your personal web page, but this was soon replaced by the interactivity afforded by blogs and comments.

⁶ For preliminary results see also Kuperjanov 2009.



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News groups and mailing lists

Following the example of the rest of the world, mailing lists and newsgroups in Estonian soon sprouted. Some of these became central nodes for information exchange for the virtual community, perhaps even a manifestation of the grouping. For example, the mailing list SF2001 formed a culturally interesting web environment created by young people in 1996, uniting those interested in science fiction genres and leading to marking the genre in Estonian culture more than a literary phenomenon. Science fiction mailing lists developed into fandoms all over the world and thus what took place was wider than the trends in Estonian literature and cultural space, it was merely a local aspect of a global phenomenon and identity. The activities initiated by the Estonian mailing list quickly diverged: an additional mailing list for philosophical discussions, an online journal to publish original works of fiction, community members' book-exchange and web databases for book reviews. The social activity online is often connected with the creation or reinforcement of social bonds offline. The findings in religious communities suggest that the weak to moderate social relationships formed online are likely to become stronger if they migrate offline, for a time at least (Dawson & Cowan 2004: 35). The core part of the list members meet in real life at least once a month as well as an annual summer event where a literature prize is awarded for the best works of the last year. The list continued to actively attract new members for ten years, before more visual web environments became prevailing. Active members include more men than women and includes more people with university degree than not. In the time since the group was incepted, the fantasy genre has become widely popular and has brought more people with humanities background to the genre, making it also more interesting for folklorists (mythology, fairy tales and other themes closely related to fantasy literature).

Discussions between women on family-themed discussion boards were recorded in the 2000s. For analysis, some topics, like advice for sick babies, home delivery, etc. It was interesting to note that a plethora of irrational suggestions repeatedly crop up, suggested by omens and advice from a friend of a friend. This indicates that the advising voice of the wider society has

grown, when compared to earlier range of formal institutions, family and close friends. Since the forum is mostly participated by young mothers, the membership is in constant flux, leaders change and topics are repeated with short intervals. The field has received closer attention only recently, however (Reinaus 2008).

ADAPTATION OF CLASSIC FOLKLORE PHENOMENA TO THE INTERNET

Classic folklore genres that have well adapted to the internet include music, song culture, urban legends, anecdotes, chain letters, supernatural phenomena, medicine and calendar customs. Existential and religious issues always provoke massively participated discussions: the end of the world, life after death, Y2K, etc. problems.

Genres that became powerful and specific of the internet, include simple chain information types that involve painful social, political, religious and ethical topics. Many of these work by means of a mechanism similar to panic-inducing beliefs, rumours. A similar old genre that has well adapted is chain letters. While those in their twenties do not consider the classic chain letters prestigious enough to be forwarded, their subtypes (e.g. chain letters enriched with ascii or visual artwork, PowerPoint formatted chain letters or slide shows) are made an exception (for more on chain letters see Seljamaa 2004). A new wave of chain letters are political (pseudo)petitions, calls for help (to promote a political candidate or donate for a cause) where the receiver of the letter seems unable to discriminate between disinformation and actual information and forwards the letters based on a gut feeling. Some subtypes make people spread viruses or false notifications of viruses, causing them to harm their computers, unwittingly take part in political manoeuvres, etc. – hoaxes have been the fastest growing portion of computer-specific folklore. Since people had such difficulties in discerning fact from folklore, in 2000 and 2001 several institutions started to actively campaign against chain letters and spreading truthful information. Nevertheless, there is no denying that internet folklore invokes in people the need to be socially active.

The screenshot shows the website for Meeste Kliinik, Tartu and Tallinn. The header includes the logo, navigation links (Avalik, Raha, Webmaster, Kontakt), and the site name. Below the header is a search bar and a list of categories (Allergoloogia, etc.). The main content area features a forum post titled "Küsimus: päikese allergia" (Question: sun allergy) dated 17.nov. The post discusses skin reactions to sunlight and asks for advice. The response, from Dr. Mare Vasar, suggests using sunscreen and avoiding sunbathing.

Screenshot from the oldest and biggest portal where patients can consult doctors. The material in these forums has given much cause to contemplate on the everlasting nature of disease myths. <http://www.kliinik.ee>

In conclusion, we have discussed here only a small portion of the processes, trends and currents active in the web communities and web folklore or heritage of cyberculture and the new media.

While in the 1990s it was not certain that internet folklore can create something that would be truly effective and which would work as well as oral folklore, this question is now moot. Internet folklore is an existing and actual independent heritage genre that has ties with tradition spread via other communication channels.

Lev Manovich's states that new media today can be understood as the mix between older cultural conventions for data representation, access and manipulation and newer conventions of data representation, access and manipulation. The "old" data are representations of visual reality and human experience, i.e., images, text-based and audio-visual narratives – what we normally understand by "culture." The "new" data is numerical data (Manovich 2002), but for the user the new media is still, first and foremost, an audio-visual and read-written mixture of all his contemporary identities.

More and more important is not just information and tradition regarding virtual communities, but also its wider sociocultural context. The process of identity-forming and categorization presumes collective cohesion, integration and separation from another group, all understandable in certain historical context and situation. Communicating via the internet, two people can be joined by interpersonal ties, or they can be members of two or more groups. Such participation forms intergroup ties connecting all members of different groups, helping the flow of information and heritage between groups. Similar intergroup bridging, improved by intragroup relations creates an important social capital and allows for study of actions and signs of symbolic value. These problems were studied on the example of diaspora communities (Kõiva 2008b), medical communities (Kõiva 2008a, 2009), geocaching (Kalda 2007), pet heritage (Vesik 2004, 2008). For example, in the case of medical heritage, information flow is controlled and manipulated by medics for the non-medics, first of all patients. The portal offers various e-medicine services, such as questions to specialists (psychologists, pharmacists). Communication groups created by medics offer medical advice to patients, give feedback, alternatives or a second opinion on a treatment scheme, while for the patient this is an opportunity to share their knowledge and personal experience and emotional support. Inter-patient group communication exhibits various communication styles and language usage, from informal remarks to narratives and emotional presentations. The general attitude is supportive of the official medical system but there is a number of narratives and threads that present personal reactions to social and situational events.

In conclusion, all observed groups were based on exchange of information, narrating or writing, emotional stability and the importance of belonging to a group with similar interests. Recently, there has been a significant reduction of anonymity towards registered and identifiable userdom, a sign of the widening reach of netiquette and intra-group control. Although forums are dedicated to information exchange, the amount of entertaining content has sharply risen.

A recent attention spot are the processes that guide the shaping of small corners of the internet. This involves servers (sites, blogs) that do not have very many visitors but the geographical locations of whose may be worldwide. Despite the public nature of the internet, the globality and wide opportunities of information exchange and other factors, there is obvious need for more intimate e-communication in smaller groups. We see here a novel kind of locality creation that often has a local counterpart offline. This kind of place creation process results in intriguing bonds between cyber and physical space, and their analysis requires attention to the characteristics of both types of space as well as their interaction a deep need for local stability.

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INTERNET

Shamanism and the Internet

Aado Lintrop

In searching for articles about shamanism on the Internet, it soon becomes evident that links attached to the subject are largely connected to keywords such as *pagans*, *paganism*, *wicca*, *magick*, *newage*, *techno*, *psychedelics*, *drugs*, *rave*, *ecstasy*, etc. Readers can also come across prophetic writings similar to the following:

The shaman seers of the Fourth World generally agree that those who tenaciously cling to the past will fall into mass insanity. The serpent power of the Aquarian Age is upon us. The Kundalini of Gaia is about to awaken. No one can avoid being affected. Most human beings may go out of their minds; others will go beyond mind. (John Hogue. *Neuroshaman*. <http://www.reocities.com/researchtriangle/5657/>)

He or she might also read announcements like the following:

“Shamanic ecstasy is the *real* “Old Time Religion,” of which modern churches are but pallid evocations. Shamanic, visionary ecstasy, the *mysterium tremendum*, the *unio mystica*, the eternally delightful experience of the universe as energy, is a *sine qua non* of religion, it is what religion is for! There is no need for faith, it is the ecstatic experience itself that gives one faith in the intrinsic unity and integrity of the universe, in ourselves as integral parts of the whole; that reveals to us the sublime majesty of our universe, and the fluctuant, scintillant, alchemical miracle that is quotidian consciousness. Any religion that requires faith and gives none, that defends against religious experiences, that promulgates the bizarre superstition that humankind is in some way separate, divorced

from the rest of creation, that heals not the gaping wound between Body and Soul, but would tear them asunder... is no religion at all!" (Jonathan Ott. <http://deoxy.org/shaman.htm>)

THE CLASSIFICATION OF SHAMANIC WEBSITES

Having browsed through hundreds of webpages, I realised that all sites connected to shamanism can be divided into five ideological groups.

1. Neoshamanic sites, particularly those based on the writings by Michael Harner.
2. Compilatory sites, deriving from the Neopaganist and *wicca* strive for harmony and balance.
3. Sites introducing some past or preserved tradition.
4. Sites advocating mainly ecstatic experience.
5. Sites guided by the "That's great stuff!" mentality.

As to the contents the sites could be divided in four major groups.

1. Homepages of Shamanic Centres.

Michael Harner's '**Foundation for Shamanic Studies**' (<http://www.shamanism.org/>)

Jonathan Horwitz's '**Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies**' (<http://www.shamanism.dk/>)

'**FoxFire Institute of Shamanic Studies**' – School of Experiential Shamanism and Advanced Healing Arts (<http://www.foxfireinstitute.com/>)

'**Buryat Shamanism**' (<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Oracle/8226/shamanism.html> – lost with the closing of geocities.com)

These sites provide articles on shamanism, schedules of practical courses, advice for practitioners, chat groups, etc. Foxfire, among other things, has an online store for shamanic supplies and a request form for being included in a prayer circle and for a distant healing session .

2. Homepages of Shaman Healers and Healing

'HealingBear' (<http://members.xoom.com/HealingBear/shaman.html> – no longer available)

'Dancing Bear' – Shamanic Practices and Healing (<http://www.dancing-bear.com/shaman.htm>)

'Shamanic and Family Therapy' (<http://www.aracnet.com/~lochness/> – no longer available)

Don Pedro's **'Shamanistic Healing Energies'** (<http://www.prgone.com/bus/dpedro/dpedro.html> – no longer available)

The above sites mostly contain articles that introduce or propagate the healing (of body and soul, primarily) through different compilations, which is called shamanism (on rare occasions also through actual shamanic tradition). Some pages even offer an online healing service. Schizophrenia & Shamanism (<http://www.tightrope.demon.co.uk/skzindex.htm#menu> – no longer available) aims to make sense of schizophrenic hallucinations from the perspective of shamanic experience and offers the patient an alternative outlook to his/her formerly diagnosed psychotic experience.

3. Websites Offering Personal Views, Experience and Perceptions.

'A Shamanic Path' (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~airyn/shamanic/> – no longer available)

'Magna' Nordic Chants (<http://www.algonet.se/~moon/magna.htm> – no longer available)

'Medicine Lodge' (http://members.tripod.com/~Medicine_Lodge/medicinelodge.htm)

On these sites participants of shamanic workshops and other practitioners of shamanism share their experience and visions. A larger number of similar writings however can be found on the sites of chat groups of different shamanic centres.

4. Websites Containing Mostly Links.

'Castaneda and New Age Shamanism' (<http://www.hist.unt.edu/09w-ar7l.htm> – no longer available)

'Ayahuasca' (<http://www.deoxy.org/shaman.htm>)

These pages often present a wide variety of very different links of the editor's choice in random order. Links to the use of psychotropic substances and New Age material seem to be unavoidable.

(RELIGIOUS) HISTORICAL DIGRESSION

From the religious historical aspect it is virtually impossible to differentiate between Shamanism on the Web and Neopaganist and witchcraft (*wicca*) practices spread via the Internet. The following discussion attempts to point out some probable reasons to explain why various religious persuasions are currently so popular.

1. Disillusioned in science

After the huge leap in scientific and technological progress in the early 20th century and into the 1960s (antibiotics and organ transplantation, the application of transistor, landing on the Moon and the application of nuclear energy, to mention just a few achievements) faith in the omnipotence of the scientific-technical revolution faded in the 1970s. Humankind was faced with the fact that for the time being interstellar distances would remain unscalable, various diseases still incurable, and inexhaustible sources of energy a mere fantasy. At the same time hypotheses about the dark matter of the universe and the black hole theories inspired grandiose fantasies about short-circuiting space or travelling and communicating through hyperspace. Unable to launch a real space expansion, people set out to conjecture it in their minds. The realisation that science has remained powerless in solving several problems gave rise to numerous secret practices. Religious ideas inundated not only the sphere of science fiction but also that of science.

2. The happy savage – a new human ideal

The definition of the future human ideal underwent considerable transformation. While some early 20th century thinkers with pagan conceptions envisioned a human spirit free from all societal barriers, whose actions are beyond all human standards, a powerful teacher (Zoroaster, for example), whose hatred for everything bourgeois could release destructive forces in order to renew mankind through death and suffering, then the post-war world weary of ravages yearned for a new myth. This was found in an ancient concept recognised in one form or another in different cultures, in which humans used to exist in harmony with nature and the human race. They revered the elemental forces and exerted their own influence on it by practising different rites. Perhaps it was not just the ravages of war people had to suffer, but also the concept of the so-called happy savage, revived by anthropologists-ethnographers, that affected this new way of thinking. The latter definitely influenced the subsequent formation of the Hippie Movement, which was a form of social protest.

3. The powerful progress of countercultures

During the same years when the first gigantic computers exchanged the first bits of information, social protest reached its height in the countercultural movement. The world had seen it all before, like so many other recurrent tendencies in the history of humanity. Even early Christianity might be regarded, in a way, as a counterculture to the ancient world that was dying. The aspirations of the whole generation were voiced as a belated manifest by the rock group Pink Floyd in their album *The Wall*:

We don't need no education
We don't need no thought control
No dark sarcasm in the classroom
Teachers leave them kids alone
Hey! Teachers! Leave them kids alone!
All in all it's just another brick in the wall.
All in all you're just another brick in the wall.

The hope was to break through the wall generally known as western civilisation, built by previous generations. Perhaps it was also predisposed to this due to the thriving popularity of Afro-American music, which spoke of a totally different worldview. Be as it may, the countercultural movement differed from all the previous ones in that all events were rapidly broadcast to millions of people. The younger generation with its as yet underdeveloped worldview, who realised that the message was addressed to them directly rather than to their parents, was most vulnerable to its influence.

4. A wish to expand the mind

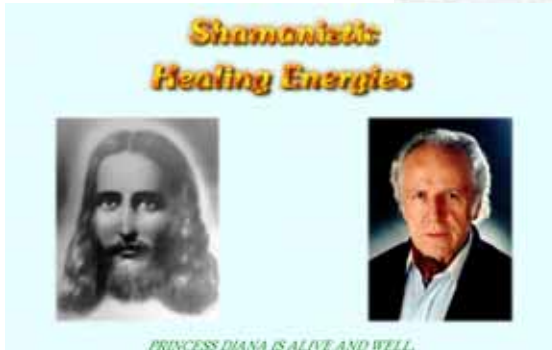
People soon understood that only a few could live out the slogan *all you need is love* longer than the tumultuous years of youth. Those, who had no intention to die young, turned in their search for new ways and new meaning in their lives to the East and into their inner selves. They discovered things that had always existed, but had never gained much popularity except in smaller circles, like meditation, for example. Protesting and using drugs for a mere kick was substituted with “expanding the mind”. In 1968 John Lilly, who had become famous for his experiments in isolation tank and the study of dolphin’s brain, published his work “Programming and Metaprogramming the Human Biocomputer”, which was guided by the principle that humans are essentially a biological computer, which uses innate and acquired programs. The ability to take in new information and to develop ideas beyond these innate programs depends on our capacity for “metaprogramming” or learning to learn. Lilly argues that by altering the brain’s normal operations with psychotropic substances (in this case LSD) or freeing it of daily routine, the range of human thought can be increased beyond all previous expectations. Other ideological excuses were found to justify the use of drugs. One of them was the use of hallucinogenic plants practised by wise men and shamans in different cultures with the purpose of seeking answers from the supernatural realm. The *vegetalistas*¹ of the Amazonian people and the users of *peyotli*, a plant used by Mexican Indians, became the focus of

¹) Shamans, whose practice is based on belief in the spirits of hallucinogenic plants



<http://www.snail.dircn.co.uk/SCSS/SCSS.htm>
 Jonathan Horwitz's
 'Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies'
 (currently: <http://www.shamanism.dk>)

<http://www.foxfireinstitute.com/healingrequest.html>
 (no longer active)



<http://www.prgone.com/bus/dpedro/dpedro.html>
 (no longer active)

<http://www.deoxy.org/shaman.htm>



attention. Then the world discovered hallucinogenic mushrooms. In 1975 brothers Terence and Dennis McKenna published their work "The Invisible Landscape: Mind, Hallucinogens and the *I Ching*". A year later it was followed by "Psilocybin: Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide". Both works were based on the folk medicine and shamanist practices of the Amazon people.

5. Symbiosis of secret wisdom and science

Many followers of alternative culture saw works on cultural anthropology and religious history as an invaluable body of thought, which in the search for one's own roots (and the roots of one's spirituality) led to secret, condemned or censured religions and magic practices. Witchcraft and occult practices were at their peak. The general trend in the late 1960s and the early 1970s was thus esoteric religions as opposed to mass culture.

The time was ripe for a symbiosis of secret wisdom and science. Anthropology, dominated by authorities who had primarily in the past century achieved fame for themselves with the study of exotic cultures, was along with medicine the first casualty. The motto of many of the new generation of anthropologists seemed to be that the supernatural world did exist, it had to be experienced and that knowledge shared with the whole of humanity. Since in many cultures only a few chosen ones could communicate with spirits, anthropologists began to look for all kinds of wise men, witches and shamans. As many leading anthropologists came from North America, the search focused on the southern part of the New World. All those scientists, who succeeded in finding themselves a spiritual teacher, sank one by one into the world of spirits.

THE GENESIS OF NEOSHAMANISM

As far as the genesis of Neoshamanism is concerned we should emphasise the following:

In the years 1961 and 1964 the father of today's Neoshamanism, anthropologist Michael Harner, studied shaman practices among the Indians in the Upper Amazon, and then worked out his methods of shamanic practices and healing in the United States. At the beginning of the 1970s he began to teach his meth-

ods to a small group; and in 1979, as interest grew, he founded the Centre for Shamanic Studies in Norwalk, Connecticut. In 1980 he published his work "The Way of the Shaman", which soon became a handbook of shamanic studies. In 1968 Carlos Castaneda published his first book in the series of the teachings of Don Juan, entitled "The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge". And even though many have regarded Juan Matus as a purely fictional character, Castaneda's books have had a tremendous impact on forming the worldview of a whole generation. In 1977 Felicitas D. Goodman, professor of anthropology at Denison University, Ohio, brought together the first group of students that wanted to "expand their minds" in a state of trance. Since the phenomenon of F. Goodman is an illustrative example of how a scientist can turn into a sage, we will discuss this case in more detail.

FROM A SCIENTIST TO A SAGE

In 1965 F. Goodman, a Hungarian-born philologist, who had just turned 51, entered the University of Ohio, where she attended a course in anthropology taught by Erika Bourguignon. Under her guidance Goodman began to study the phenomenon of "speaking in tongues", greatly revered by the Pentecostal Church, and came to the conclusion that glossolalia, which occurs in a hypnotic trance, is not dependent on the mother tongue of the individual who "speaks in tongues". In 1976 at the meeting of the Ohio Academy of Science F. Goodman delivered a presentation, where she argued that

The trance experience itself is vacuous. If no belief system is proffered, it will remain vacuous. It is a neurophysiological event that receives content only from signals present in the respective culture. (Goodman 1990: 17)

Perhaps due to the fact that her study was unable to attract wider attention, or due to her critical age and problems in her personal life she soon began to attribute special meaning to many extraneous things, considering them prophetic signs from the invisible world. Contemplating on the factors that affect the essence of hypnotic trance she concluded that one of these factors

is the bodily posture the experience of the trance has assumed before entering the trance state. In 1977 she conducted an experiment to prove her point, and encouraged interested students to participate in it. In its initial stages the process might have been considered a scientific experiment: she worked with each test subject individually. Using rhythmical rattle to influence them in a variety of assigned positions, she asked them to speak of their experience after the test. The results of the experiment revealed that bodily posture does have an effect on the hypnotic experience, but since F. Goodman was unable to find any scientific method for analysing the results (even the most precise instruments failed to register any posture-related differences in the physiology of people in a state of trance; Goodman 1990: 25), her interpretation favoured the supernatural approach, i.e. regarding posture-related trance experiences as messages from these religious authorities of different times and cultures, whose characteristic postures were used. Scientific experiment was gradually transformed into a ritual, its participants into a congregation who declared their adherence to their new religion and who continued to discuss the matter even outside the 15 minute sessions and ensuing discussion time. The scientist in F. Goodman noted:

There was another aspect of the group trance experience emerging that I also had seen evolve in the Apostolic congregations that I knew from my fieldwork. The shared trance shapes a ring around the community, keeping the members in and closing others out. (Goodman 1990: 45).

Regardless of that she continued her workshops.

The participants in both Europe and this country [the US – A. L.] represent pretty much the same groups. For many of them, what they are learning in the workshops is simply yet another step on the path to finding out more about themselves. "Esoteric tourists", as one of my friends calls them, are a characteristic feature of our waning century. (Ibid.: 51.)

Over a period of ten years (1977–1987) 890 people attended Goodman's lectures, 227 of them more than once (ibid.: 226).

Even though Goodman did not directly propagate Shamanism, her workshops have had a tremendous impact on the formation of Neoshamanism. The second largest television station in Germany, for example, televised an extensive introduction to Goodman's experiment involving a trance session followed by the sharing of the experience (ibid.: 43 ff).

Congregation and the acknowledgement of faith are the key words to use in speaking about the effect of the Internet on different persuasions. But before we come to that, we should ask is there anything in the international computer network as such that might inspire people to mythologise it.

CYBERSPACE AND SHADOW REALM

Though a large part of the population abandoned their belief in the scientific and technological revolution, progress in technology has not stopped. Having failed in its attempt to control time and space or create inexhaustable sources of inexpensive energy, people directed a large part of their intellectual abilities (in part with a militaristic goal) to the sphere of telecommunication and information technology. Thus, in the final decade of the previous century the very computers, that science fiction writers some 20 years ago considered as some far-fetched future fantasy, came into daily use.

We might argue that the Internet reached many people before they were ready to comprehend it. The average person's notion about the technology of transmitting information sees the Internet as a real global network with a cognitive aspect, so that browsing through different Web sites people truly are connected with different parts of the world. This is not far from the idea that the Internet is an electronic world, which exists parallel with the real perceivable world. Mark Pesce (one of the inventors of VRML) has said:

One of the philosophical arguments I was making at that point was that there is no fundamental difference between the virtual world and the shadow realm, in other words, the dreamtime. And what I wanted to do was to say, "Okay, if the god is in the shadow, he can also be in the dreamtime of cyberspace." And so the ritual was constructed around wel-

coming the god into cyberspace, because that was the time for entering. (Mark Pesce interviewed by Gordy Slack, Oct 28, 1997, <http://www.hyperreal.org/~mpesce/ctnsinterview.html>).

True, chatrooms and MUDs (Multi-User Dungeon) enable anyone to lead an altogether different life in cyberspace, experience travels similar to shamanic trips, where the traveller can communicate with other virtual creatures, whose prototypes have been borrowed from science fiction novels. Science fiction authors, in their turn, have often borrowed their characters from mythology.

There is yet another factor favouring mythologisation of the web. Since the Web is often depicted as a certain space (cyberspace), and the orientation in any space is based on attaching different values (significance) to different parts of that space, their different relation with percipients, we have reason to believe that the same applies to the Internet. In fact, many computer gurus have said the same:

Without the sacred there is no differentiation in space. If we are about to enter cyberspace, the first thing we have to do is plant the divine in it. (Mark Pesce, *Ibid.*).

Like the real world, cyberspace should include good and evil, pleasant and scary, commonplace and sacred sites. Comparing page headings of some Shamanist sites (which often contain words like *lodge, cave, way, path*), it appears that these are presented as ritual sites or travel routes. The Internet can also be inhabited by deities or supernatural forces. All that needs to be done is announce that some web site is the homepage of a deity or source of some supernatural force. Just like Kashpirovsky, who claimed he could heal people via television, or a Neoshaman from South America, who has declared that his homepage has a healing effect (Don Pedro's '**Shamanistic Healing Energies**' – <http://www.prgone.com/bus/dpedro/dpedro.html>, where he among other things displays numerous letters to confirm this effect; the site is unfortunately no longer available online), why cannot there also be people, who achieve their fame, say, as cyber prophets of some deities.

THE INTERNET AND MINORITIES

Of course, it isn't just that the Internet *per se*, which is intangible and somewhat elusive, is inherently connected to the sphere of supernatural. The huge preponderance of various sects and minorities is rather caused by the accessibility of the Internet and its democratic nature in the sense that everyone is welcome to propagate his order (naturally, if it does not directly instigate people to kill or overthrow governments). Mostly those, who for one reason or another have not been able to express themselves in the printed press or media, have made use of this opportunity. Before the advent of the Internet, selling one's ideas in words, image and sound used to be a privilege of only the few. Only now people are beginning to realise that as the amount of available information is increased, the number of those who avail themselves of the information decreases.

Furthermore, the Internet is anonymous enough and quite freely allows active users to use any code name or image they wish. Not everyone feels comfortable to confess their faith or make complaints in front of a wider audience, but then they have enough courage to write something like this:

I am a single young man who has a great love for all beings, but lately I have been letting my anger get the best of me when dealing with other people. I know that mountain lion is my animal totem but lately I've felt abandoned by him. I used to dream of being a great white lion with blue eyes and he would help me with bad dreams or when dealing with people that I deem as bad I would use his silence as a form of control. There were times that I would hear him yell in the back of my mind or he would talk using my voice. I really came to rely on him alot but lately he doesn't even call and I don't know what to do. He was a control for my rage and anger... (Posted by Ron on January 22, 1999, Foundation for Shamanistic Studies. Interactive Message Forum <http://www.shamanism.org/messageforum.html> – no longer available)

Even the codenames that shamanistic authors have chosen for themselves say a lot about them, such as: *Aerig Meginlu*, *Evi WhyteHawke*, *Aufsteigender Adler*, *WindStalker*, *little fawn*, *anita-owl-woman*, *HeartBringer*, *Stephen Speaking Wheat*, *windflower*, *Lightening Woman*, *Sage Healing Wolf*, *Joseph Bearwalker Wilson*, *Pale Horse* (all names are cited in their original form). Each of these names indicates that its user has assumed a certain role in the Internet. A cursory survey leaves an impression that such names are used by advisors rather than those who seek guidance. The latter tend to use first names:

hi there, i am looking for a shamanic healing to retrieve my lost souls. I live in Santa Cruz California and I am in need of this ASAP.² If you are a shamanic healer or know of someone who can do this, in central or northern coast of california, please contact me ASAP. Thank you for your help! (Posted by Victoria on February 22, 1999. Foundation for Shamanistic Studies. Interactive Message Forum
<http://www.shamanism.org/messageforum.html> – no longer available)

Many of those who seek guidance seem to be people who believe that a Shaman or sage can truly help them. Most of them seem to have been involved in some Neopagan movement. Still, we cannot rule out the possibility that people write and advertise with the purpose of attracting attention or establishing new contacts.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS – FOR WHOM?

Superficial analysis indicates that narratives, where people describe their Shamanistic experiences, are very similar. Moreover, texts concerning other trance experiences also share similarities. When recipient-narrators have not developed an approach for interpreting their experiences they tend to focus on their emotions. We have for example the following account describing hypnotic trance recorded during the scientific phase of F. Goodman's experiment, when without any previous information

²) as soon as possible

the test subject was asked to assume the pose of one of the rock paintings in the Lascaux Cave:

Anita: "The hand position seemed to indicate polarity to me, and I began to experience that more and more as I went into trance. The left hand that pointed down and was pushing away was getting warm, the right one was cold. This seemed to develop a flow of energy that became circular. The energy wrapped me into a cocoon, and for a while I was floating in this very nice, golden cocoon." (Goodman 1990: 23).

Now, for comparison, an account of a recipient during a workshop nine years later:

Isi: "I was afraid because I was feeling so light, and that I would lose touch with the ground. But by that time it had already happened, and I was in the sky. I saw on the ground below me the shadow of a big bird, and when I moved, the shadow moved too, so I knew that I was that bird. I kept somersaulting backward through the clouds, and saw behind them lots of peacocks, spreading their tail feathers. I kept going higher and higher, I couldn't stop. Finally I arrived at a star, it was really a door, and there was a bright light behind it. I went through the door and saw a sculpture, but it had no head. There was a lot of light around; people were dancing, and they all seemed very happy." (Goodman 1990: 73)

While the experience of the uninformed test subject, who tells the researcher of her experience tête-à-tête, involves a flow of energy, then the member of a trance circle sees a journey consisting of certain mythological elements. The narration of the latter must have been affected by the experiencer's expectations as well as by the accounts of other members of the circle. In order to assess this influence we need to understand how people handle their experiences. Discussing the importance of signs in human psychological development, the Russian psychologist L. Vygotski wrote:

In the course of direct perception and passing on the perceived form a child, without using speech, grasps and memorises the whole impression (a spot of colour, the main characteristics of form, etc.), irrespective of the level of accuracy or complexity. As the child begins to use speech its perception becomes separated from the imminent impression; new centres established by words and connections between different points and these centres are formed in the visual field; perception ceases to be “the slave of the visual field” and regardless of the accuracy and perfection of the solution, the child receives and passes on a impression deformed by words. (Vygotski 1984: 18)

The use of speech reshapes the child’s behaviour, and also the attention, which “transforms from passive registrant to the performer of active choices and intellectual reminiscence” (Ibid.: 37). Vygotski treats speech as one of the symbolic stimuli, which organise human behaviour, namely the sign systems. Signs play an important role in memorisation process:

Operation with memory involves the presence of certain external signs, which participate in the process. The subject does not solve the task by directly mobilising his natural abilities, but exercises certain external manipulations, organising himself through organising things by creating artificial stimuli, which differently from others have an after effect: these are not addressed to other people but to the subject himself, thus enabling him to perform memorisation. (Ibid.: 61–62)

Of course, in addition to the actual external signs (like knots, labels, etc.) people also use words in memorising things. Returning to our discussion we can conclude: signs have an important role in memorising even complex experiences or impressions. That is why people need to attach significance to everything experienced. I believe that rendering unusual or new experiences meaningful is the same exercise of “symbolic stimuli”, without which any wilful activity would be impossible. In order to attach meaning to and memorise a new experience, it has to be associated with an already established experience by means of signs. First the new experience has to be translated into the

same sign system that all the other experiences are in, i.e. the visual, auditory, etc. details of experiences must be defined within the framework of the system. In the case of complex visions or other experiences there are two ways to do this: the experience has to be reproduced in speech or in the mind (both processes are similar, but the latter lacks the feedback characteristic of narration). The feedback that follows narration functions as a certain control mechanism: the final evaluation of the experience, its values on the scales of normal/abnormal and ordinary/unusual depend on the reaction of the audience. The narrator certainly attempts to influence the audience's disposition towards his own evaluation of the experience, therefore narration can never be objective. Rather it serves the narrator's interests. Among other things, the response of the audience also determines the narrator's position within any given social group.

INTERNET INTEREST GROUP - A VIRTUAL CONGREGATION?

To conclude from the above discussion we might argue that people who narrate their trance experiences and soul travels are fulfilling two goals: they attribute a significance to the experience which is acceptable to the group, and by doing that hope to secure a desired position within the group. By the way, the same applies to traditional shamans.

The people, who advocate their religious convictions and share their religious experience on the Internet, might be viewed as a type of congregation, which as it organises its members' spiritual life must, like any other congregation, see to it that its teachings are right, but also the need to minister to the chaste religious experiences of members of the congregation. It must provide support and advice to the believer, but, if necessary, also reproach and punishment. Those, who work towards becoming religious leaders share wise words and blessings, while reproach like the following is very rare:

There is also a tendency today to project some kind of aura around a shaman and pretend that he or she is some embodiment of peace and serenity, living totally in harmony with Spirit, doing good for everyone, (and for free of course),

and naturally being a wonderful magical healer. This tendency is making many Westerners the laughing stock of real shamanic practitioners throughout the world. In the preface to "Shaman: An Illustrated Guide" by anthropologist Piers Vitebsky is a quote that I find highly amusing, as well as highly reflecting of reality. "A shaman from Nepal met a Westerner who remarked how good it must be to live in harmony with the cosmos. The shaman replied, "The main part of my job is killing witches and sorcerers.'" (Joseph Bearwalker Wilson. "So you wannabe a shaman, huh?" Bearwalker's Shamanic Teachings and Techniques <http://www.metista.com/shamanism/part1.html> – no longer available online)

New members join this virtual congregation by confessing their faith. Confessing is a personal account for the purpose of establishing and strengthening the ties between believer and congregation. The believers declare their adherence to a certain doctrine in front of the whole congregation, and admit that the teachings have an acceptable religious effect on them. As to shamanism the Internet contains narratives like the following:

"I put in the tape, on the first side. I immediately liked the sound of the drums, and felt a shift, perhaps not so much in consciousness, but ...hmmm...well, in body, in mind? Something. So I laid down, put my arm over my eyes, and began to visualize my hole in the ground. I sort of imagined myself turning into the possum and going into my tree trunk. After a few attempts, this worked, and I started going down. All the while, tho, I'm still pretty darn aware of my physical body. The path down is all twisty and turny, and roots and dirt and stone. and I keep getting looped back to the beginning, I just can't hold the image, especially since I have no idea where I'm going. I pictured it sort of at a diagonal down. Anyhow, the path just kept going on forever, so I decided to try Harner's crystal tunnel approach, which worked for a few minutes... [--] By this time, the tape had ended, so out of curiosity, I flipped it over. as soon as this side started, I felt really good about it. This time, I imagined approaching the possum, and picking it up, petting it and whatnot, then slowly shape-shifting into it. I saw myself walking towards the tree trunk, sniffing

the leaves, hearing them crunch under my little feet, etc. sniffing the moss around the opening and then going inside. I just sort of sat there for a minute, waiting, because I wasn't sure whether I was going to go up or down, then the floor fell out from underneath me, and I started plummeting down. I turned back into myself and released the possum back up. I fell for a long time, sort of turning in the air, not afraid, just falling. I landed in a swift-running stream which went for a short ways, then dropped me off this huge waterfall. I fell through the waterfall for a long time also, and landed in a calm clear greeny-blue pool of water. When I tried to surface, I couldn't really look around. I remembered in Harner's book it was important to remember your steps, so I thought I'd retrace. So I went back up the waterful, becoming a salmon as I did so (I had salmon for dinner last night), and I felt my strong little salmon body pushing up thru the waterfall in leaps and bounds." (http://www-personal.umich.edu/~airyn/shamanic/journeys/first_journey.html – no longer available online)

Such narrators often leave some details of their account for the congregation (i.e. religious leaders) to interpret. By doing that they imply that they are ready to bend their beliefs to conform to the principles of the group.

“Anyhow.. I have a question for you. Yesterday i did a journey to the upper world to meet a teacher and receive information that she saw i needed and was ready to have. It was a long journey, full of delight, flight, and awe. I ended up sitting at the foot of the Goddess's throne, my teacher, with my head on her knee. She indicated to me that i was to relax, a lesson i am trying to integrate into my being. As i sat there, deep relaxation and comfort permeated all of me. I began to feel sleepy (?) and lose my focus. The drum return sounded and i DID NOT WANT TO RETURN! Big time. [---] My question has to do with this drowsiness and fuzzy focus in the journey. Has anyone experienced this? Should one guard against this; is it at all “dangerous” ? I have certainly never experienced this pull to stay in the spirit world as strongly as that.” (Posted

by Cielle on February 25, 1999, Foundation for Shamanistic Studies. Interactive Message Forum
<http://www.shamanism.org/messageforum.html> – no longer available online)

Similar texts can be found very frequently on the Internet. Comparing such texts with the travel descriptions of shamans in North-Eurasian traditional cultures, we can point out the following:

1. Except for the accounts describing initiation visions, the descriptions of traditional shamanic journeys pay little attention to the circumstances at the beginning of the journey. This is understandable, since the journey takes place within the frames of shamanic ritual. At the same time the reason why the shaman undertakes the journey is always discussed. Usually it involves some community member's request to help someone.

Neoshamanistic narratives appear to describe initiation visions. These stories include detailed accounts about the situation at the beginning of the journey and describe different ways to go into trance. The journey often has no other purpose than improving one's own spiritual balance.

2. In the Siberian shamanism much attention is paid to the helping spirits of the shamans who usually appear in large numbers. At the beginning of the ritual the shaman summons all necessary helping spirits, consults them and only then begins his journey. The future shaman can visit the abode of his helping spirits only in his initiation visions, an experienced shaman can visit these places while searching for new helping spirits.

According to Neoshamanistic narratives a person must travel to the realm of supernatural before he can meet any of his spiritual assistants. The number of assistants is usually small, most often only one.

3. Shamans either describe the path to the underworld or the higher spheres in great detail or pay almost no attention to it and start their account from the moment when the shaman (i.e. his soul) encounters the first inhabitants of the supernatural realm. The path to the netherworld goes through natural landscape, crossing rivers (and seas) or mountains; the abodes of spirits, whom the shaman visits or secretly passes through, mark the different stages of the journey. The places the shaman visits

are often densely inhabited with spirits, whereas his description of spirits is based on both the tradition of his cultural group as well as his family traditions and personal fantasy.

In Neoshamanistic accounts the description of the path to the supernatural world is mostly based on established literary patterns. The path does not proceed in nature, but through a passage, tunnel, etc. Places rather than inhabitants mark the different stages of journey. The Neoshamanistic visionary world is generally very sparsely inhabited. Any larger number of inhabitants are regarded as anonymous (either people, birds, etc.), and have no specific meaning for the traveller. Supernatural beings, whom the traveller encounters on his way, are either representatives of animal kingdom or characters from different Neopagan traditions or world religions.

There is another distinctive difference between traditional shamanic journeys and Neoshamanistic practices: during the traditional Siberian shamanic journey the shaman describes and reproduces his journey and actions to the audience both in words and movements as the journey goes on. This involves continuous interpretation/rendition of visions and constant controlling of feedback and one's emotions, therefore shaman's trance cannot be unvaryingly deep, but has to fluctuate enabling immediate interpretation of even the most intense experiences.

Neoshamanistic practices, on the other hand, are mainly based on the shamanistic traditions of the New World (*vegetalistas*, the medicine men, etc.). Compared to the Siberian shamanism these are less concerned with rituals and tend to focus on the ensuing description of the trance experience.

Translated by Kait Realo

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Means of Online Communication in the 1990s

Maris Kuperjanov

Media and communication channels enabling face-to-face interaction have made significant progress and their numbers have increased considerably during the last few decades. One of the most recent growing phenomena is communication via computers and Internet. In the 1980s when several countries initiated the setting up of their own computer networks (MFENet, HEPNet, UseNet in the USA, Minitel in France, and the common EUNet in Sweden, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Denmark), the number of Internet users was relatively small. Since then on there has been an exponential increase in the use of the net. In 1983, 562 computers were connected to the Internet. By 1989 the number was over 80,000, in January 1998 – 26,670,000, in July 1998 – 36,739,000 (*Internet host count history*). According to 1996 statistics 186 countries or territorial units had some kind of Internet connection, while in 51 countries there was no Internet connection at all (OTI). A year later the corresponding figures were 195 and 42 (Connectivity). The number of Internet users in January 1998 was estimated at 117 million people, a year later the corresponding number was already 183 million (ITU). In Estonia, the UUCP-connection¹ was introduced in August 1990, the online connection in April 1992. The results of a public survey conducted by Baltic Media Facts in February 1997 revealed that the number of every-day computer users was 116.000 people, i.e. 10,5% of population between the ages 15 and 74, and the average daily number of Internet users was 38.790, or 3,5% of people between the ages 15 and 74 (BMF).

¹) UUCP – Unix-to-Unix CoPy. A method, protocol and set of programs for transmitting UseNet news, e-mail and files between Unix-computers. As compared to TCP/IP it requires less resources, but has also limited functions. It is quite popular in Estonia. It is the most inexpensive way of connecting to the Internet.

The Internet provides several technologically different means for interactive communication. People are becoming used to the fact that with the spread of Internet ordinary correspondence, or snail-mail is being substituted by e-mail and any information needed is easily accessible on web-pages. Far less information is available through other means of direct communication, such as an ordinary telephone connection. Every kind of human interaction benefits greatly from the spread of folklore, irrespective of whether it is transmitted face-to-face, by letter or phone or via a computer network. While chain-letters sent by e-mail, anecdotes on web-pages, and urban legends and horror stories are considered to be written folklore as spread through the Internet, then any textual means of direct communication is a combination of both oral and written folklore. It is almost speech in real time travelling between communicators in the form of ASCII symbols. In folklore studies the study of means of direct communication is comparable to the study of application of folklore (e.g. anecdotes, urban tales, paremia, etc). Here new computer-related folkloric phenomena can be discovered. The current article focuses on the introduction of a new means of direct communication.

Five different types of textual direct communication that operate in real time can be distinguished in Internet, i.e. its users can exchange texts within seconds, depending on the congestion of communication lines. These five types are:

1. talk
2. IRC
3. text-related chat rooms
4. chat rooms with audio-visual supplements
5. MUD.²

Talk is an Internet protocol enabling the communication between two people in real time. A less common service is multi-talk which enables the simultaneous communication of 2–4 people.

² In addition there exist or are being developed a number of ways of using the Internet for phoning. This poses a potential threat to giant telephone corporations.

When phoning via the Internet the user has to pay local tariffs in both countries. For this reason interest in ordinary long-distance telephoning is fading and this will consequently lead to a reform in the price of telephone services.

IRC (Internet Relay Chat, the first similar network was set up in 1988) is another way of communicating via Internet. IRC is a global cluster system consisting of a number of servers and its customers. Using the service requires a certain customer program, then a connection to a IRC server (the ones closest to Estonia are located in Finland and Sweden). The system is divided into a number of channels which can be added or deleted at any time. These channels help to organise the chat groups by topics. A channel with a certain name and topic will attract people with similar interests to discuss various issues. A user can monitor different channels simultaneously, and also have private conversations with other IRC-chatters, irrespective of what channels they use.

Additionally, there are several IRC systems with independent server-networks in the world, the most extensive ones are Effnet, Undernet and Talnet.

The line between IRC and a chat room, or talker, is quite thin with respect to its users as well as some specialists. Tiit Rammo argues that a chat room is merely an IRC-service accessible by an ordinary telnet-protocol instead of the IRC customer program (Rammo 1995: 46). However, this is not quite true. As mentioned above, IRC is a global cluster system where all the users of this particular Internet service are connected to each other through the IRC-servers of their choice. A chat room, on the other hand, is located at a certain port of a certain server and is usually not connected to others of its kind. However, establishing a connection to netlink or some other chat room is possible for talkers based on the NUTS-code³, although this is rarely used. An exception to Estonian chat rooms is the Moomin-valley talker based on the EW-Too code, which is constantly connected to a few dozen talkers in different part of the world. Such a netlink or intercom system enables the logged-ins to a local chat room to communicate with the users of other talkers easily without taking an additional username or logging in at another place. This system, however, has not been accepted by chat room users very extensively. The reason is probably the popularity of IRC service for global direct communication. Chat rooms tend to

³) NUTS, EW-Too – MUD or talker programs

retain their locality, and a limited set of users as well as its atmosphere.

There are several different chat rooms with audio-visual capabilities: chat rooms in JAVA-script are spread as www-pages (the chatroom OK in Estonia), 3D and graphical chat rooms are sold as program packages by authorised dealers (Palace-type talkers in Estonia) as well as talkers with sound and even video images. All such specialised talkers require fast communication lines as the transferring of any kind of images or sound requires more resources than that of an ordinary text.

MUD or Multi-User Dungeon (sometimes also Multi-User Devices or Multiple User Dimension) is used for interactive role-play. It enables users to converse in real time just like IRC or chat rooms, but the focus is rather on the game and competition, completing levels and scoring points than on conversation. The whole process of the game is passed on in the form of text.

Apart from "talk" all these means of direct communication are relatively anonymous. Every user decides whether and how much personal information he or she wishes to give by creating a character (slang: *char*) or later in communication. While in oral media it is possible to pass on detailed personal information, for instance, social status, age, sex, condition of health, mood, etc. non-verbally (Pittam 1994), then in written media this information is encoded through semantic and syntactic choices made by the writer. In talkers, IRC and other channels of computer-communication all information and action is passed on in the form of text.

Researchers of human interaction have always been interested in how communication is started, who shows the initiative, which are the most popular opening strategies or greeting formulae. The opening phrase in all multiple user means of direct communication is more or less the same. I would like to discuss some specific examples of these from MoominValley chat room (moomin.ee 2010).

According to researchers of both face-to-face interaction (Laver 1975) as well as computer-mediated communication (Sean Rintel and Pittam 1997: 518) it is almost always the newcomer who starts the conversation. This also applies in most cases when the in-logger found himself in a public room. The entering text can be divided on different basis. Here we could mention inter-

personal purposes, previous experience and the level of acquaintance. In the material on computer-mediated communication it is argued that the established entering procedures are more common than those of leaving, the latter are also shorter (Sean Rintel and Pittam 1997: 526).

The customary procedure is that right after logging in all the persons in the chat room are addressed impersonally (receive the sc. "blind" group greeting). The Estonians use various addressing formulae, their abbreviations or variations: *hei 'hallo', tere, tre, ter 'good day', tere kõik 'hi all', tere kallid 'hello, darlings', re* (in English net-slang: – re-hello or 'hello again'), *hi, hoi, hai 'hi'*. If the user is acquainted with the others then his server-message and blind greeting is quickly responded to and the communication is enlivened by responsive greetings of much greater variety – starting with the distortion of the newcomer's name (e.g. Evita -> Ävita, Jevita, Evitjushka), followed by the addition of a nickname *mailaav* (transcription of the English 'my love') or the assigning of an original title (*Angel mu vanniheeringas 'Angel. my bath herring', Torukmutakso 'Toruk, my taxi'*). New or unfamiliar users receive almost no attention at first.

Smileys and the sc. socials have an important role in greetings and further communication. Completing a sentence with a popular smiley suggests to others present in the room (or the partner in private conversation) whether the speaker smiles, winks his eye, sticks out his tongue, is sad, etc. Thus, traditional gestures are used as means of communication. Socials are direct and definite means of communication, and in order to enliven the conversation their meaning is rendered through the use of various set phrases. These phrases are prone to variation in both group and private conversations. For example, instead of the social "Hiya" those present in the room see the text "X rubs everyone's noses", or in private conversations "X strokes the cheek, rubs the nose and says 'Hi'". The socials are changed usually by one person (the editor of the talker), sometimes this right is extended to the small group of most regular users. The set phrases and sayings of ordinary language, often distorted, are also used.

The parting phrases are more similar to those used in real life, as the body of used expressions in oral speech and ordinary correspondence tend to be brief and concise as well. Because the

thorough parting from many people might take too long then users tend to avoid this by employing short general expressions like *head aega* 'Goodbye' – *daega, paih; leff* referring to the gesture of waiving the hand (*lehvitama*) and other expressions are used for non-verbal communication. Sometimes people log out with no parting notice whatsoever, in such cases it is not certain whether the conversation was dull, the disruption was caused by technical problems or lack of time.

The group of consistent users of one chat room is relatively determined, which does not necessarily mean that these new joiners are rejected. More and more people use Internet and its services, and the means of direct communication are no exception here. If years ago the communication channels were used mainly by those who earned their living or specialised in computers (today referred to as computer geeks), then now its user group consists of people less familiar with computers (the best example according to Muumiorg and other Estonian communication channels might be the recent 'invasion' of policemen, coast guards, medical workers or pager operators).

The novice users of chat rooms find it often difficult to start a conversation, even if they have adopted a figurative or a humorous nickname. The name is the first thing a beginner chooses for himself. The most popular virtual names are the names of a) characters from fiction (the favourite ones seem to be taken from science fiction or children's literature – Pipi, Mio, Lotta, Myy, Zaphod, Marvin); b) characters from movies (Alf, Mulder, Scully, MacGyver); c) pop singers (Madonna, Prince); d) names referring to outward appearance (Piku [The Tall One] who IRL is a tall person); e) real names of persons or nicknames derived from Christian names. At the same time the chosen name and the intended (future) character might not be related at all. The development of the character depends on the behaviour of a certain user and his consistency in staying in the role.

Apparently not all the newcomers enter the chat room with the intention of staying there. It happens quite often that the newcomers try to provoke the reaction of the other users by any means possible – such newcomers behave according to the principle that even negative attention is worth having. Often, they start attracting attention by greeting all the insiders / in-loggers in person (perhaps in hope for entering into conversation with

someone), accuse others of being 'asleep', complain of boredom and accuse others of being boring (*you are so boring, why don't you say anything*, etc). Convinced of the inefficiency of any of these methods they might employ others, some extremely persistent newcomers might simply start using profane language or spam (i.e. the (repeated) spreading of a random text for offensive purposes). The word comes from "Monty Python's Flying Circus," the popular series of sketches shown on BBC during 1969–1974⁴). The latter method is severely reproached by regular users, whose reaction is generally extremely negative and in the case of some super-users certain forms of punishment are employed – restriction on talking, expulsion from the main room or public rooms, expulsion from the talker, blocking the user's name, denial of log-in from the user's server. It is possible that such computer-related strategies for starting up communication that are different from those used by the usual face-to-face interaction have been formed by the slightly more complex circumstances of the opening phase characteristic to computer-mediated communication channels (Sean Rintel and Pittam 1997: 521). People who use such means of communication for the first time find it hard to adapt to the technical side as well as to the fact that they are not acquainted with and cannot see the other users, and that all the non-verbal action has to be passed in the form of text. Part of such behaviour is caused by anonymity – it is thought (and usually it is also true) that "no one will ever know who I am". Still, generally such constantly disturbing behaviour leads to the denying of log-in, as the server that the disruptive individual uses is known anyway.

The regular users of Estonian IRC, talkers and MUDs keep contact by communicating quite lively IRL, outside virtual space, by organising several parties, gatherings, birthdays and other events. The anonymity of the users in this case is not too important. The gatherings of the sc. computer-freaks which have been held for many years now (BBSummer, BBWinter) and the events of the graphical talker Palace.ee have even certain initiation rites for newcomers to their programme (AM). The novice participants of BB-events have to perform certain computer-related

⁴) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spam_\(Monty_Python\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spam_(Monty_Python))

duties, such as for instance act out the nature of a printer, modem or scanner (Liitmaa 1995: 15).

Lately, there have been several discussions about Internet dependency in the press. As Internet is first and foremost a means for acquiring and exchanging information (the means of direct communication are mostly used for similar purposes, except for MUD⁵), then we cannot say that it is any worse than the dependency on radio, television, newspapers or telephones. Those who use Internet as a means of direct communication consider this method of communication the fastest and most informative one. This might also be the reason why these are the means that are being used and enhanced more and more.

Translated by Kait Realo

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⁵) The MUD-type programs are an exception because they focus mainly on the playfulness of the program and, therefore, the dependency of MUDs should be treated the same way ordinary computer games are.

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Folklore on the Internet: About the Internet (and a Bit about Computers)

Sander Vesik

Times change and so does fashion. The once popular subject of fashion trends has gradually been replaced by cyber trends – it might very well be that in the future, people are not judged so much by the way they dress or which stores they visit, but by the brand of computers and software they use and by their philosophy. Fashion trends have been substituted by cyber trends and day-to-day interaction revolves not around snakes being imported from exotic countries in handbags and dresses impregnated with embalming liquids, but around the newest, most dreadful computer viruses and cyber criminals.

Folklore on the Internet and circulated by means of the Internet is shaped considerably by the evolution of its users and the Internet itself. Since its introduction in the 1960s until the end of the 1980s the Internet was a communication channel used mostly for academic as well as military use. The Internet was neither known outside these circles nor had it received any significant feedback, it was not something “a man on the street” would have been interested in. Originally, an Internet connection was used for exchanging messages (the slang term ‘snail-mail’ denoting ordinary mail was probably coined around this time), later also for exchanging files. The enhancement of the Internet was carried out under laboratory conditions, which were closely monitored to ensure that it evolved in a certain direction.

Despite all this the Internet gradually made its own way. New possibilities emerged that no-one could have foreseen. UseNet, for example, which is used mainly for transmitting web-news – news often being any message that a follower of UseNet news finds worth circulating. In order to avoid confusion the news

items of UseNet are classified under different 'newsgroups'. Of course, if necessary, a message can be sent to different newsgroups simultaneously.

Besides UseNet other possibilities cropped up, for example, gopher making the Internet information accessible as a tree-shaped catalogue system. Chat-rooms and MUDs¹ – multiplayer interactive games played via net have also emerged.

The Internet was created from the ideas of its original users. The ideas of a relatively independent and at the same time free information channel almost impossible to destroy or censure by any given organised pressure group, generated by people from academic circles and others, including hackers², were used to develop the Internet. The unfavourable side-effects of it were crackers, people who break into the computers of others in order to gain profit or for some other reason.

The beginning of the Internet and in a way the beginning of cyber space dates back to the mid-1960s when more-or-less modern computer networks were created. The intention of DARPA (Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency) to develop network technology for creating a computer network which would be extremely difficult (if not impossible) to put out of work contributed to the process. It developed into a network which unlike the earlier ones had no centralised information channels but consisted of a cluster of smaller nets interrelated by different channels. At the beginning of the 1980s the protocols of Internet now adhered to were agreed upon.

With easier access to the computers, the growth of the professional folklore of computer-users and specialists started to accelerate. The process boomed at the end of the 1980s in the course of Internet's sudden expansion followed by an interest in mass media. Sometimes incompetently done, it often propagated urban legends and beliefs. Rumours over mass media travel fast and tend to become a real and true information for some people.

¹) MUD – an acronym denoting 'Multi-User Dungeon/ Dimension'.

²) A hacker is a person who differs from ordinary users in his interest in acquiring the bare minimum of the information, he likes to study the details of programming systems and expand their possibilities; is an enthusiastic programmer or a person who enjoys programming, not theoreticising over it. [From a jargon file containing different terms, acronyms, abbreviations, etc of hacking].

FOLKLORE SPREAD VIA INTERNET

Here we are concerned with a perfectly ordinary kind of folklore which differs from the traditional only by its untraditional mode of transmission. Not all traditional genres of folklore are spread over the Internet – it has generated accounts of the supernatural, UFO and ghost stories, and also the vast number of jokes. Jokes are one of the few genres where the tolerant and racially correct philosophy of the Internet has been ignored. Thus the jokes on the Internet are a perfect vehicle for voicing one's biased attitudes towards certain groups of people (Afro-Americans, blondes, etc). According to the general opinion this is the only way such texts could appear over the Internet altogether.

In addition to the jokes, certain chain-letters and personal artistic mail-signatures resembling a synthesis of album verses and graffiti have also been circulated over the Internet.

BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

There are many beliefs and attitudes towards the fear of technological, and in particular computer- and Internet-related innovations. It is not clear why technological progress has caused anxieties in people. Such fears may change the way people think about their future. Unlike in former times when people speculated on ideal future societies – utopias, we are now concerned with dystopias. We now believe that our world either repels technology or, on the contrary, gets entirely lost in technology and its waste. The former belief results in chain-letters over the Internet, concerned mainly with disturbances over the UseNet, the self-destruction of the Internet, the modem tax which will be imposed any minute by the FFC and other similar topics (generally, a situation without the accustomed society, communication, etc seems totally unacceptable for most people). The popularity of the subject among the vast number of Internet users is demonstrated by the mere fact that similar rumours reappear every other month and are spread extremely fast.

The latter belief – that the world has fallen under the control of an ultra-modern high-technology and/or the giant corporations employing it – is supported by the gradually increasing rate of development of computing technology, as well as the emer-

gence of totally new trends. Regardless of all our speculations, virtual reality (or VR) has become a part of our every-day reality.

We can speak about a whole category of commonplace beliefs concerning the employment of virtual reality or virtual futures. Sometimes it is combined with beliefs concerned with performing certain surgical operations on people or applying various genetic impulses for enhancing the efficiency of mankind in using future technology. The image of virtual reality is extended by visions of unstable ecological systems, where a part of our planet has been turned into a desert and the other part is exposed to constant cloud, gloom and excessive rainfall. The virtual futures are often seen as ones where the majority of mankind (or all of it) has been transplanted from reality, or has voluntarily settled in virtual reality.

In virtual space a 3D image resembling reality of some environment is created for people, who receive it through a specific headset. Interaction with the environment is performed by the means of special gloves or a suit augmenting the movements of the human body. Nowadays, virtual reality is mainly used for the remote operation of robots, training people (surgeons, aircraft pilots, etc) and entertainment.

This poses real dangers. There is hardly any computer user who has not heard of or even passed on numerous stories of new and terrible computer viruses; however, along with real virus warnings and cautionary stories the Internet also spreads a certain number of sc. mind-viruses and warnings against them.

The most expressive examples of mind viruses are probably "Good Times" and "Energy Matrix". The former is a warning against one of the 'deadliest' viruses in history which is transmitted via e-mail, spreads by itself and is initialised by opening the message containing the virus. The warning "Good Times" started to circulate on the first days of Dec. 1994 and is still making its rounds. Along with the version in English it is also spreading in Spanish. A typical warning mail looks like this:

Please be careful and forward this mail to anyone you care about.

WARNING!!!!!!! INTERNET VIRUS

**

The FCC released a warning last Wednesday concerning a matter of major importance to any regular user of the Internet. Apparently a new computer virus has been engineered by a user of AMERICA ON LINE that is unparalleled in its destructive capability. Other more well-known viruses such as “Stoned”, “Airwolf” and “Michaelangelo” pale in comparison to the prospects of this newest creation by a warped mentality. What makes this virus so terrifying, said the FCC, is the fact that no program needs to be exchanged for a new computer to be infected. It can be spread through the existing email systems of the Internet.

Once a Computer is infected, one of several things can happen. If the computer contains a hard drive, that will most likely be destroyed. If the program is not stopped, the computer’s processor will be placed in an nth-complexity infinite binary loop – which can severely damage the processor if left running that way too long.

Unfortunately, most novice computer users will not realize what is happening until it is far too late. Luckily, there is one sure means of detecting what is now known as the “Good Times” virus. It always travels to new computers the same way in a text email message with the subject line reading “Good Times”. Avoiding infection is easy once the file has been received simply by NOT READING IT! The act of loading the file into the mail server’s ASCII buffer causes the “Good Times” mainline program to initialize and execute. The program is highly intelligent – it will send copies of itself to everyone whose email address is contained in a receive-mail file or a sent-mail file, if it can find one. It will then proceed to trash the computer it is running on. The bottom line there is – if you receive a file with the subject line “Good Times”, delete it immediately! Do not read it. Rest assured that whoever’s name was on the “From” line was surely struck by the virus. Warn your friends and local system users of this newest threat to the Internet! It could save them a lot of time and money.

Could you pass this along to your global mailing list as well?

“Energy Matrix” is a warning against a virus which is said to exist on every on-line service and WWW and which not only infects the computers but has a damaging effect on people.

VIRUS*WARNING*VIRUS

This is not a joke or some “X-Files” spoof or some other kind of hoax. There is a virus on the WWW and all online services. Disinfect programs are of no use. This virus is an energy matrix that uses on-line and other communication services as a conduit to infect you mentally via your computer screen.

There is no way to screen for this virus and no way, as of yet, to prove its existence beyond a doubt. Downloading or uploading text/e-mail files should not put you at risk; however, prolonged exposure to your screen while it is on-line is dangerous. All forms of communication services including radio and television can act, to some extent, as a conduit for this virus, but not as strongly as the computer on-line interface.

If you are irritable, depressed, emotionally upset, or otherwise have negative or destructive thoughts that do not seem to be your own then the virus has infected you. Repeat exposure will be increasingly harmful.

Your only protection is to use these tools for constructive or helpful purposes, and not for mindless entertainment, playing around or the dissemination of disharmonious messages. Chat rooms are the most contagious areas! If you feel you really need to use the Net, use it as judiciously as possible.

Regrettably, this warning sounds like a poor attempt at humor; nevertheless, it is completely serious. This warning is not a plot, part of someone’s political agenda, or the raving of a delusional paranoid. Ignore it at your own risk. **YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!**

Despite the existence of numerous believers of such stories, the general attitude is that there is no truth to them (it is quite inconceivable) and they were started as a practical joke that went out of control.

THE EVERYDAY-USERS

Folklore about ordinary computer users is generally related to a genre of jokes aimed at the ordinary computer user who often fails in his work. The jokes can be divided into 3 groups according to their content and/or credibility:

1) How users with no technological knowledge whatsoever do it?!

Here are jokes where those who have never seen a computer or used it and know nothing of the functions or control of certain hardware. The most common piece of hardware is a mouse, keyboard, discs, and also drives. Quite popular are stories about users who complain about the computer not working, when it is not switched on.

a) Mouse. The target of 'mouse jokes' is generally characterised by his inability to use the mouse properly – it is usually impossible to use the mouse as a remote control aiming it towards the screen, or as a foot switch.

A user called the PC Support line of the university having trouble with her Mac. It was handed off to one of the Mac guys... "What seems to be the problem?" "It's not working." Eyes roll. "What's not working?" "My Mac." (Five minutes of drawing the problem out of the woman deleted) "Okay, to access the files on the disk click the mouse on the picture of the disk." Pause. "Nothing happened. I told you, I've already tried this." Support guy makes as if he is strangling the phone. "Okay, do it again. Is the mouse moving?" "Yep." "On the screen?" "Yep." "Now click twice on the picture of the disk." Pause and the consultant hears the two clicks again. "Nothing." "Ma'am, double-click once more for me." Clink-clink. "Ma'am, are you hitting the screen with your mouse?"

A salesperson hoping to demonstrate to a skeptical corp. how easy it is to use windows. "Just point and click" he says. "Just point to the application you want and click on the mouse button." So the exec takes the mouse, lifts it, hefts it like a tv. remote points at the screen and clicks the button.

I remember when my new Amiga arrived (way back in 86!). I had a class to go to, but my roommate was kind enough to set it all up for me. When I got back from class, he was having a great time playing with it. His only problem was using the mouse. Turns out he was holding it in his hand and rolling the ball with his fingers! I don't even remember how he was coping with the mouse buttons.

b) Keyboard. The main topic of “keyboard jokes” is a text ‘press any key to...’, appearing on the screen every now and then, which should be followed by the user’s press on a random key. Such jokes are based on an understanding that the user tries to press the key marked ‘any’ that he cannot find. It is a pun – the commands to press any key and ‘any’ key are identical.

I was trying to teach this sales person (for automated entrance system[they made gates]) how to enter his letters into Word Perfect. I told him to select Word Perfect from his menu and when he did it gave him the opening screen which said, “Press any key to continue...” He looked at the keyboard for a while then asked me, “Where is the ‘any’ key?”.

2) How can people misunderstand such simple things!

Here we are concerned with jokes about people who have failed to understand certain computer commands – the majority of such jokes are allegedly true stories. They are mainly puns based on the similarity of names of different computer parts (a request to close the drive door is followed by a loud banging of door heard over the phone; the user installing a program asking whether he can take out some of the four inserted floppies as there is no more space in the drive).

3) Let's see if they get the joke...

The jokes of this group may seem somewhat cruel, even sadistic at first. Just imagine someone truly capable of doing such things. One of the best examples was provided by the Estonian computer magazine “Arvutimaailm”: Advice: 12 different ways to take care of a floppy. As you might suspect, following even one piece of advice about caring for your floppies would permanently damage the floppy and cause the inevitable loss of information

on the disc. Stories about people who have actually thought them as true might be classified under urban legends.

4) Folklore about computer specialists or spread by them. Most of the hacker-related attitudes, beliefs and information belong in this group. Several translations of hackers' slang have been published in "Arvutimaailm".

COMPUTER AND SOFTWARE FOLKLORE

This genre includes stories and beliefs about the 'mythic' peculiarities/characteristics of different software/hardware, incidents with different computers and/or programs. Certain explanations of different acronyms belong here as well: e.g.

PCRCIA – People Can't Remember Computer Industry Acronyms;

MACINTOSH – Machine Always Crashes If NoT Operating System Hangs.

In addition to these it also features several stories about the origin or actual meaning of a name or an acronym.

FOLKLORE ORIGINATED IN AND BELONGING TO THE ENVIRONMENT OF COMPUTERS AND COMPUTER NETWORKS.

New jokes and legendary personalities have emerged in the course of progress in computer and network technologies. A person later known as KIBO used UNIX's search program Grep to surf through the information in UseNet, located articles containing his name or nickname and replied to them all. This resulted in the emergence of a certain cult around his virtual pseudo-person called kibology. The process of searching the whole UseNet data for one's name or some other information is called kibosing.

Another legendary character of UseNet is BIFF (also B1FF). It is a made-up character who allegedly sends stupid messages with spelling mistakes and capitalised letters from his brother's computer. Over the Internet texts in capital letters are considered as shouting or at least containing some special emphasis. One of the peculiarities of BIFF's writing is the substitution of letters with numbers (O > 0, I > 1, E > 3), and also the seeming

mistyping of exclamation mark without pressing the shift-key resulting in number 1. The latter mistake was somewhat exaggerated as the keyboard of the Commodore 64 that BIFF said he used did not have these functions under the same key. BIFF came into being in 1988 as the prototype of a freshman computer user unaware of the ways of the world.

“WHO IS BIFF?”

BIFF IZ A REELY K00L D00D !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!1 HE POSTS 2 THE
NET FROM HIZ
BIG BROTHERS C-64 !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!111 BIFF IS AWESUM

By now Internet folklore is being transmitted in written form. But part of it has been passed on orally. Further research should reveal what part of it and to what extent it is actually orally transmitted.

Internet folklore can be found in easily accessible lists. It is easy for everyone to add his or her own stories. The biggest problem here is those who are trying to be witty or to attract attention with self-created jokes instead of forwarding an anecdote or a similar folkloric story. A large part of folklore is lost in the vast flux of correspondence, messages and self-promotion.

The material on WWW-sites and different FAQ lists is more even and of higher quality, generally reviewed/ edited by a certain editor/collector of stories. Sometimes, folklore can be found in the introductory homepages of WWW, as well.

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On-Line Medicine. Communication and Narratives

Mare Kõiva

Health is one of the issues central to our life. Ailments are both-ersome companions that follow us around now and then. Many of the chronic diseases that even contemporary medicine considers incurable are quickly gaining ground in the whole technologically developed world. For example, consider diabetes, the most prolific metabolic disorder in the whole world. Type I diabetics need several injections of insulin daily, they need to constantly keep track of their blood sugar levels and a strictly regulated diet. Out of the 1.5 million people living in Estonia, approximately 70,000 are diabetics. In the whole world, more than 100 million people suffer from diabetes. By the year 2010, WHO foresees a doubling of the number of diabetics. I used here the scope of diabetes because one of the sources for this paper is the Estonian diabetes online forum.

Recent research has pointed to the erosion of community relations, increasing isolation, social fragmentation and a distancing from responsibility towards others. This also means a decrease in political, social and religious participation, voluntarism and also that 90% of adult social relations are connected with their workplace (Putnam 2000, also Shklovski & Kraut & Rainie 2004). This leads to the question whether internet communities follow the same trend or are they a substitute replacing former civil and family communities? Are they an example of transformed communication models? Besides the scientific concepts and practices it applies, the medical sphere has both a human and personal dimension. How are you coping with your illness? How do you live your daily life? What does the internet and virtual communities give you?

Within the research grant „Internet. Processes of construction, reproduction and transformation of narratives, values and identities” (ETF6824) my area of research has been on-line medicine and new religious on-line communities. In addition to their communication strategies and key values characteristic of the community, I viewed their communication opportunities and narratives. My aim is to overview the types of communication that have changed the logistics of doctor-patient communication, e.g. online medical information and narratives, communication acts.

Inter-doctor communication benefits from the possibilities for professional communication, and application of multi-professional knowledge; it helps shape and unify professional terms and nomenclature, guarantees the confidentiality and security of data, while providing easy management of high-quality data; makes provisions for knowledge management and ambulatory e-services. I consider here the narratives in the forums www.kliinik.ee and www.diabetes.ee which redistribute medical information and personal experience stories.

MEDICAL INFORMATION ON THE WEB

With the expansion of multimedia, in the late 1990s e-medicine became in Northern Europe and North America with funding from the national governments and the big medical corporations a “big business.” The large information management systems and support became a political issue.

The 1990s saw the emergence of great medical resources online, initially from personal initiative and later as state policy. Troves of knowledge accumulated in portals and mailing lists. Official home pages of medical institutions, information about academic teaching and research centers as well as international professional unions became easy to find online. These sites also published useful information on, for example, general medical terminology, techniques, etc. There was also historic discourse: writings about the history and founders of the disciplines, propagandist calls upon people and user feedback interfaces (see e.g. Estonian Midwives Union). The portion dedicated to professional schooling and self-improvement has constantly increased.

All large medical online portals have, from the beginning, been specialising in providing different kinds of information. Arst.ee (www.arst.ee, *arst* ~ doctor) is a portal uniting professional medics and institutions. Since it opened in 2005, it has offered free online advice requests and the service is ever popular. The site claims to contain information about more than 13,000 medical workers, 1500 institutions, 2500 drugs and about 35 diseases (www.arst.ee). A similar site, inimene.ee (www.inimene.ee, *inimene* ~ human) introduces doctors who hold family practices.

Use of computer-mediated communication has brought a change to the logistics of communicating with the patient. Following the course of a disease, finding suitable drugs as well as other doctor-patient communication aspects became more easily manageable for both the medical workers and the patients. That is why already in the mid-1990s the great perspectives of computer mediated communication in medical science and inter-doctor communication were emphasized: in addition to professional communication, computer network allows to share and distribute medical and multi-professional knowledge and shape the professional terminology and nomenclature, as well as use groupwork in medical practice. At the same time, guaranteeing the quality of data is easy, data management is easy and it can be used to carry out monitoring actions and develop research. The fast installation of network to clinics and use of personal workstations as well as the spread of computer mediated communication was inspired by the need of saving, maintaining and processing patient data. The wide range of opportunities offered by and use of computers is made certain by the statewide introduction of e-patient cards. In this field we can also see a constant development, for example in May 2008 East-Tallinn Central Hospital was the first to make e-patient histories accessible to ID-card users (BNS 2008).

Computers and internet make helping the patient easier, considering that family practitioners usually have a patient list of up to 2000 people (www.perearstikeskus.ee, *perearstikeskus* ~ family practitioner centre), and their primary task is to provide a preliminary diagnosis, treat general diseases, provide health advice, prophylactic care and referrals to specialists when necessary. Today, only single family practitioners have their own website, they use both phones and e-mail to communicate with

the patients, and the phone is the more prevalent means. The phone is in the lead simply because it is a direct interactive emotion-carrying means of contact. We should also take into account that people talk faster than they write, saving time for both parties. One should also consider the calming effect oral contact has on the patient. E-mail is, however, well integrated into everyday communication as an administrative tool for dispensing formal information, e.g. test results.

Medical information online can be divided according to who is the provider and the target group: medical information for medics, from medics to patients, from patients to patients. Historically, health information has been a sphere reserved for specialists and medical knowledge has been strictly related to a career in the profession. Knowledge was protected by the high price of the service and the to an extent esoteric closed nature of the professional community. The side-branch of medical knowledge – vernacular healing – includes a wide and profitable network of publications that has profitably operated without input from top medical practitioners nor top medical researchers.

In the more liberalized medical circles, professional medics are more and more often engaging in dialogue with future and current patients. They often provide general information and advice for the wider public – which is one of the fastest-growing medical internet services.

We expect online medicine and online education to be a trustworthy source and to provide a good level of help via the internet. Of course, the user is the one who decides which e-medicine services to use, who to consult, who to trust and whose advice to follow. To find trustworthy medics and websites, the common source is feedback from personal social networks, but also the medical discussion groups and everyday online networks. Opinions given in medical discussion groups indicate that the most trusted consultants are the ones who are institutionally affiliated and have documented proof of professional degree. Making advice from a network of vocational medics available to patients and the healthwise uninformed gives them the best quality of online help.

NARRATIVITY IN THE DOCTOR-PATIENT FORUM

Every patient has the right to get information about and additional opinions on his health from an independent medic. Getting a reliable opinion from professionals helps reduce illness-related stress. Information portals manned by medics and for the layperson give authorized information on specific medical problems, provide complex e-service packages, notify of new drugs and publications in the field, give advice on diet and food consumption; they also support discussion groups. A patient has the option to remain anonymous, but my observation is that people often provide actual personal data or first name and age.

The largest advice portal in Estonia is the site *kliinik.ee* (*kliinik* ~ clinic), with *arst.ee* (*arst* ~ doctor) provide multifaceted information: online diagnosis and opinion on treatment scheme.

Information provided by medics is usually free of charge, with the exception of one portal where some of the doctors take a symbolic fee (<http://www.kliinik.ee/index.php?4>) – 5–10 EU. In addition to professionals of various physical ailments, there are consultations by psychologists as well as pharmacologists, there are links to useful articles, interviews, health tests and topical discussions.

The site *kliinik.ee* not only helps get instant and specific answers, but earlier questions and answers form a local archive and ultimately a large corpus of disease narratives. Going through the corpus of data about any one disease gives one an overview of the disease progress, healing methods and symptoms.

A discussion board gives users the opportunity to discuss health-related topics among themselves. It is noteworthy that the range of topics discussed in forums is narrower than that discussed with consultants, and the communication style is more similar to general discussion forums like *delfi.ee* or any other portal that hosts topical discussion forums.

Doctors and patients follow different cognitive models and represent not equal but different socio-political interests (cf Kleinman 1980; Singer & Baer 1995: 375). Indeed, the environment gives rise to specific choices in language usage, the structure and length of a communication act, its level of complexity and use of different styles. Change of communication codes is determined by the motivation of the partners as well as percep-

tion of the setting's nature. If a patient is looking for help from a representative of the medical profession on an institutional page, the communication codes and language are formal and polite, with a serious matter-of-fact tone. Word choice indicates that the patient is aware of the severity of the situation and his position. As mentioned above, official forums maintain the anonymity of the patient, while patients often decide to suffice self-presentation by giving a first name and age, or a broader geographical region. The doctors, however, write under their full name, adding weight to the value of their expert judgment.

Let me present an example from a doctor-patient forum:

Katrin, cardiology 24.02.2008

High blood pressure

I am a woman 23 years old. I have had high blood pressure for about 8 years already (100–115/134–170). I have done all kinds of analyses (heart, kidneys). Everything seems to be in order. It is probably hereditary (my father has it, too). I am reluctant to take pills. I am aware about healthy lifestyles (sports, weight, nutrition, etc.), but they do not help lower blood pressure.

What could I do on my own to keep blood pressure within norms?

How long can the body take high blood pressure? How long before possible complications (clots in blood vessels, etc)?

Thanking you in advance Katrin

Reply: Märt Elmet 25.02.2008

Hello,

Such blood pressure values are too high, they must be attended to.

You are much too young for hypertension and thus doctors should seriously look into what causes the high blood pressure. There are many possible causes and they are often hard to determine.

Hypertension begins its devastation at once. Finally the constant damage to organs reaches a critical level and causes serious health trouble. Unfortunately, the first complications of hypertension may be disabling or fatal (for instance, insult), thus the problem requires instant action.

Drugs can only be proscribed when analyses have determined the dysfunction in the organism.

Märt Elmet

The poster uses formal language to pose the question. This is characterized by choosing words not used in oral speech but common in medical jargon. The case history is also striving for accuracy. Such pretensions to objectivity in written narrative are close to the real-life patient-doctor dialogue, except here there is no dialogue development and the communication is limited to one exchange. We could view a patient story as a short formal and informative piece of communication. Narrative components are simple and repeat from one story to the next. In this case:

A: greeting, self-presentation, earlier case history, information of medicines used, question about diseases, thanks.

B: greeting, an evaluation of the patient, case history, warning, suggestion to get further opinions/ analyses. Signature.

evelin cardiology 19.02.2008

pain in chest

Hello, I am a 28-year-old woman. The problem: after the birth of my second child (2007 Nov) I developed chest pains that are now projecting to my left hand, back and neck. I feel a constant mild pain in the back, shoulder and arm and then sometimes a strong, sharp pain stabs in the chest, projecting slightly to the shoulder (the pain lasts about 3–5 sec.) Family doctor gave me the drug Preductal, which is what I am taking.

But I would still like to find out, what causes such pains? Maybe it would be better to not take drugs and what does it help against, after all? What to do?

Answer: Märt Elmet 25.02.2008

Hello,

It is impossible to determine by your letter what causes the pains.

In young people, chest pains are often related to chronic nerve or muscle inflammation. There are other possible causes, but these should be investigated by the family doctor.

Preductal is proscribed to enhance the metabolism of heart muscles in case of blood vessel atherosclerosis. It probably has little effect on your condition.

Märt Elmet

Also this poster uses formal language to pose the question, also a bit of medical jargon. After the short description of the history of illness she asks for expert opinion.

A: greeting, self-presentation, earlier case history, information of medicines got from doctor, asking for expertise.

B: greeting, an evaluation of the patient, case history, suggestion to get further opinion from family doctor. Evaluation of drug. Signature.

The doctor and patient are carriers of different cognitive models and in an act of communication they participate as partners with different interests. To gain objective expert opinions requires regard to certain communication norms just as in a real life visit: greeting, introduction by name (the sex of Estonians is in most cases obvious from the first name) and a few minimal introductory sentences, diagnosis, etiology, administered drugs, reactions. The doctor's reply is in neutral language, giving an opinion on the symptoms and drugs. In addition to providing expert evaluation, the doctor's narrative should give advice and warn of possible dangers.

Another important function for the Q&A is testing how serious a problem is. It is not rare that the doctor urges to get analyses done quickly, warns of danger, suggests calling the ambulance, etc. This helps patients get over a mental barrier that, at least in Estonia, does exist – nobody wants to trouble a medic with trivial symptoms to avoid being ridiculed as a hypochondriac or eccentric.

Doctor's answers in any other key are rare. Here is an example of a case where a licensed psychiatrist acts almost as a prophetic preacher:

Honorable Mr. Ennet!

I would like to ask You whether there is an increased risk for depression among type I diabetics? I do not mean hereby additional stress from the additional burden or worry over health,

but for example whether the constant fluctuations of blood sugar (inc. hypoglycemic) could cause serious disruption, on the so-called organic level, for example of serotonin or other “happiness hormones” and thus the risk for contracting depression?

Looking forward to your reply, with best wishes.

Reply: Dr. Jüri O.-M. Ennet, psychiatrist and sports doctor, private psychiatrist practitioner 2008-03-21 12:44

An organism is a whole, everything affects everything else. If we sit by with idle hands, then depression can really set in. Do psychoregulatory exercises and the mood gets better. Consequently – keep diabetes under the wise guidance of the endocrinologist and guide those hormones of happiness with psychoregulation (begin with my exercise – Prayer-Meditation).

The whole world was created for us so that we would be happy. Thus use those objects-situations that make us happy, and do not use those that do not make us happier.

Have strength!

With best wishes,

Jüri O.-M. Ennet

The aim of the text is to give the patient a positive feeling and inject a piece of optimistic outlook. Still, the style of this one doctor is exceptional in the portal and his replies have minimal structural differences between them. Doctors have also other individual style differences in how often are drugs recommended and if then how much background information is provided about them.

There are some, though few, cases where a patient asks for help recurrently or when the doctor recognizes a previous patient – in such cases, familiarity induces personal warmth and emotions in the dialogue. This way, even the formal situation can lead to communication through repetitive speech turns or a personal connection between the patient and doctor, leading to a relaxation of the social barriers.

PATIENT WEB COMMUNITIES AND THEIR NARRATIVES

Virtual communities of patients with a serious disease are usually gathered around the union of the corresponding disease (Cancer Union, Estonian Diabetics Union, etc.). Discussion groups that unite patients with a common diagnosis or patients in general have a more relaxed communication style and do not have such clearly structured narration patterns or writing styles.

If we take into consideration the fact that individual identity is constructed in social interaction, during which one's self is both determined and re-evaluated and redefined according to life experience, then we can see the main reason why a certain forum or topical discussion group attracts people who have survived a trauma, disease, act of discrimination, or people who are in a crisis situation.

One of the most important factors inducing people to participate in the discussions is the opportunity to present and share personal experience stories about traumas and disease narratives, an opportunity that people often find they do not have with their regular social network. Although relatives and friends are likely to listen to a short-term repetition of disease narrative, it is psychologically difficult for them and they do not know how to adapt to this. Workplace acquaintances often ward negative emotions and do not act empathically towards the disease and suffering of a colleague. This can traumatize the patient and lead to his ostracism from the community or, in drastic cases, to loss of job position.

Web forums uniting people with difficult or fatal health problems can help the afflicted support each other morally and spiritually, to analyse their state of health, to exchange tips about making things easier, share successful healing stories, teach coping strategies and – once again – help each other with the question of why did I have to fall ill.

There is more and more attention to the writing therapy for the seriously ill, with a spontaneous branch budding online. Forums for diabetes, cancer and other difficult/ impossible to cure disease patients are found everywhere. The internet setting has several advantages, for example the fact that it is not a monologue, but a dialogue with people in a similar situation. At the same time, it is possible to keep one's privacy and anonymity, to the extent they desire this.

In the diabetes online community, the virtual community has a stable core member group and a flow of members coming and going as they get older or migrate and go through other life changes. When the Estonian forum for diabetics opened in 2004, there were many anonymous posts. In the first years there were also many questions and participation by family members and relatives of the afflicted. Later, majority of forum members were diabetics.

The community of diabetics follows the model of the real society in its division of roles, activity, etc. The range of ages goes from teenagers to the middle aged, and even retired people. Women are more active in organizing get-togethers, more active in discussions about cultural events, accessories, decorations – just as in real life. Speculatively, I would suggest that written media favours women.

We can see that typically to all open web communities, the number of readers, lurkers, stalkers, observers vastly exceeds the actual posters. Smaller threads have been viewed by 350, while popular ones are viewed more than 10000 times. The passive portion of the community is so much bigger. The bridge person between the active and the passive is the official head of the union, who is not actively involved in discussion but whose announcements are always read.

The diabetes community has a strong I- and us-identity, in several topics there is a strong oppositional positioning against “them” – the healthy, the non-diabetic. For example, when discussing how and in particular how dangerously distorted is the image THEY paint about diabetics. One point is that the American movie industry uses diabetics often as the general figure of an afflicted person and if people followed the instruction shown in movies – get the syringe from his pocket and give an injection – a real diabetic would probably die. This can also be seen as an example of the cocktail party effect – out of all the background noise, you clearly pick out your own name, or in this case, the mention of your affliction.

THEMES OF DISCUSSION

Threads fall into two main types. The first type is where someone posts a personal experience narrative. This kind of posts

form up to a third of those posted every year. Often a single person starts only one (a max of 14) such threads all in all.

The second type is where an anonymous question of wide scope is posed. The anonymity of the thread starter seems to be used as an indicator that responses from all possible contributors are welcome, and such threads quickly attract hundreds of responses.

An interesting picture is painted by what are the central and most discussion-provoking topics. Naturally, the gamma of topic is different from that of pet-forums, SF, geocaching, etc. interest communities. In the diabetic community, the most central worry is around healthy, unafflicted children – is it possible to have them, what is the chance of hereditary carriage, what if the kid becomes diabetic when young, when do the unavoidable side effects like wounds and skin ailments, blindness, decrease of intelligence, personality changes, etc come.

The other great block of interest circles around pharmacological help. Are there alleviating medicines, what about wonder-healers, or alternative medicine, are there any new approved good medicines. This subset includes many encouraging personal experience stories, practical advice and didactic stories. And also other amenities of modern life and their opportunities to take part in life fully, whether fashionable clothes and accessories can be used, daily rhythm and breaking the rules, self-help and notifying the world (special signs, wrist chains, tattoos) for emergencies.

Virtual community events include personal events that community members celebrate – birthdays, finding a life partner, children, marriage. But there are also real-life events for the virtual community. The first all-Estonian get-togethers were major events as they offered the opportunity to meet face to face. And having met face to face seems to have strengthened their virtual ties.

IMPORTANCE OF (TEXT-BASED) NARRATIVE COMMUNITIES

In our changed society where urbanization has reduced family size to the nuclear family, the closest relatives are often a long way away. This means you are more likely to find friends and

similar minds among work colleagues – or online, in shared interest groups.

For the patient, the online environment and web-mediated communication gives, in addition to medical information and expert evaluation of healing scheme and disease, also the opportunity to take on the role of expert. The forum also offers the opportunity to feel valued, needed and competent on a topic otherwise shunned.

The virtual community has an equally important function: they are understanding and compassionate companions who are not frightened by the progress of the disease and symptoms. They offer the opportunity to discuss topics that are unwelcome in a general social setting, your problems and get competent advice. Here, you are the norm and not a deviant.

Since postmodern lifestyle and interpretations recognize various forms of knowledge and is oriented to subjectivity, the multitude of contradictory opinions presented in a discussion group corresponds well with the modern style. In many ways, this opposes to the rational objectivity so much valued in molecular biology and medicine.

The opportunity to present and exchange trauma and disease experience narratives is really very important if the afflicted do not have a spiritually close person they can interact with face to face. We should also not ignore the rule of thumb that relatives and friends do not mind a few repetitions of disease narrative, but they do not (know how to) respond in a supportive manner. Protecting oneself from depressing experience and showing little empathy towards the fellow person's illness and suffering is typical of contemporary society. This can even go as far as causing the afflicted a psychological trauma or social ostracizing or, in drastic cases, loss of employment.

NARRATIVE CHAINS

The majority of stories told in the community are short pieces on everyday life or short informative accounts of events. The so-called “little narratives” are informative short stories that carry generalized morale – you can do anything, this is a lifestyle and not a disability, we have worth, etc., they contain goals and symbols important for the community.

In many cases, narration takes place as a dialogue between several people simultaneously communicating, answering and replying in turns, now and then offering expert opinions, vying for attention or trying to push one's personal point of view. Situation descriptions are interspersed with humour and metaphoric expressions. These acts of communication are a narrative chain of socio-cultural acts of speech, where different personal communication and narration styles as well as personal identities meet. In that case texts are in complexity, but we as readers can divide a text into ambiguous and unambiguous regions.

I am going to next present as an example a communicative narrative chain, a discussion about an alternative medic. The term narrative chain has been used in several connotations. Usually it denotes a partially ordered set of narrative events that share a common actor, the protagonist. A narrative event is a tuple of an event and its participants, represented as typed dependencies (Chambers and Jurafsky 2008). However, on an internet message board it is a chain made up of arguments and narratives told by different voices. For example, William Labov used narrative chain since "any given narrative is constructed about a *most reportable event*: that is, an event that is the least common and has the largest consequences for the welfare and well-being of the participants. It is also a product of the inverse relationship of reportability and *credibility*. A recursive rule of narrative construction produces a *narrative chain*, a skeleton of events linked by their causal relations" (Labov 2004) but also in the meaning "reportable events united with unreportable events into the chain" (Labov 2007).

The healer Viktor has been active as a folk doctor since the 1980s, he has been widely discussed in the media. He has a wide range of patients and many people have had contact with him. In addition to providing diagnoses and healing, there is a number of homes that bought Victor's healing painting. The following discussion forms a cohesive narrative whole, with personal experience and narrative insertions from various parties. Such narration is characterized by Monika Fludernik's term natural narratology or spontaneous conversational storytelling (Fludernik 1996: 235). Manfred Jahn suggests that Mark Turner has recently demonstrated that "most of our experience, our knowledge, and our thinking is organized as stories" (Jahn 2000). The

initiator is the story of a kid's father's visit to the healer Viktor is the mother asking people their opinion of whether the visit had a point at all. The first question, itself part of a reportable event, initiates a chain of communication acts (see Discussion 2008).

01.02.2005 15:25

The father of my kid took the kid to the healer Viktor (in Tallinn) and he had proscribed some kind of medicine (produced by himself). I really would not like to give this to the kid just so.. has anyone heard anything about healer Viktor??? He's said to be world famous???

This post is followed by a communal discussion of preferring folk healers versus medical doctor, belief versus trust, informative messages and expressive evaluations on relations between diabetics and folk healers, as well as stories of specific folk healers. The discussion stretched over eight days. We see a predominant discourse of didactic warning and preference/trust of official medicine.

Angry anonymous, 01.02.2005 15:56

I don't want to take away anyone's hopes, but if someone has heard of a healer that could bring back the dead [,] and knows of an actual case where someone has been brought back from the dead, that bonesaw I'd try myself too... But since that (bringing the dead to life) is obviously impossible, there's no point trying [them]. A type II diabetic could try all this rubbish. Those that promise to heal type I diabetes don't know nothing about diabetes at all and similarly do those that take their kids to such healers.

Then follow shorter (disparaging) comments from fellow forum members.

The discrete line of the narrative episode from February till April brings forth different cognitive approaches, narrativity, argumentation skills (?arguments) and experience. All in all, it is quite similar to oral dialogue between several parties. In both cases we are dealing with a communication act that allows a

multitude of opinions, and during which concessions are made and judgment on the situation is offered. The discussion is joined by both people who themselves or whose relatives or friends have positive experiences with that folk healer or some other folk healer. Their opposition is made up of skeptics, people with negative experience stories, the prejudiced, the upholders of official medicine or those convinced of the efficacy of chemical drugs.

01.02.2005 16:02 Mother

I guess he didn't really promise to heal fully but to make the state better??? And also seems to have said that thyroid readings are not quite well either. But, well, I don't know, I would not like to believe him.

01.02.2005 18:07

Hello,

I don't know if it's the same so-called healer, but I have heard of someone of the same name for years. Once he offered the easily impressed some kind of "miracle pictures" that you look at and then your physical troubles are eased. Can't really comment on the success rate of such healing methods, but I dare doubt a positive result. In any case, those miracle doctors should not be trusted. But naturally they praise the effects of their "medicines" and "healing methods", because otherwise nobody would come to them and where would they get money from then.

Mirka

01.02.2005 20:54

hello. also something positive. he did help the father of one of my friends. that man was written off by the doctors. he was cut open and they said there's nothing to do, a tumor in the liver. that viktor instructed what and how to do, and unbelievably he got well and lived another 5 years but then died of high blood sugar.

02.02.2005 15:30

i would never dare give some kind of x stuff to my kid. i have been diabetic since childhood and my parents also took me to some healer. he also gave some kind of medicine, i took it a

few times and then refused, the parents forced me, i didn't take it. it all ended in hospital. PLEASE, DO NOT HARM YOUR KID WITH SOME KIND OF STUFFS – GO TO THE ENDOCRINOLOGIST – THEY ALSO CHECK THE THYROID GLAND. I can understand that this gives you hope, but your kid is far from dying. help him with self-control and be supportive. ALL THE BEST TO YOU! KAKUKE.

04.02.2005 08:51

I advise not to undertake such things. If diabetes is being compensated, blood sugar is fine with temporary and natural fluctuation – then the situation is good. I have experience with various healers and one thing is for sure: none of them know anything about diabetes or any other chronic (or maybe simply any) diseases. Even many real doctors have strange beliefs about diabetes, what do you expect of “healers”. He probably inserted thyroid problems to make it sound more serious, the more troubles – the more profit. Those wannabes are shameless people.

The initiator of the thread, the mother asking for advice, culminates the discussion with a description of the healing ritual she received from her child. This helps her solidify her already negative opinion of the healer, also it is the *resolution* of the narrative.

08.02.2005 08:25

Yes, that “medicine” I sent back.

Thanks to all who answered. I thought the same myself that it's not worth the trouble (but, well, the kid's father was all full of power and belief).

It was very interesting what the kid was telling me yesterday... that when they were with father still at the reception then the healer had said that right now blood sugar is around 20 but he's going to take it lower right away... then he wrote something on the paper and said that now it's 4... the kid then said, oh great, I'll go home and measure it right away.. then the healer was like taken aback and asked where do you live... the kid then told him (around 2 km)... then the “healer” said that this is such a “long” way.. by that time it

might be higher again... LOL!!!.. Pity the kid did not describe that incident before, I'd have known right away what to do.

Viktor as a healer is discussed again about a week later, from another angle, and once again a month later, but then interest wanes within a few days. The posts are short informative narratives and belief accounts. The briefness of the following episodes is probably caused by lack of an intriguing real life episode or narrative that would inspire emotional discussion. Unlike on the doctor-patient forums, the writing style here is emotional and personal, making use of all the means of expression offered by the written medium. We can see quotation marks denoting pauses, all caps for loud voice or insistent intonation, written shorthand for paraverbal and emotional expressions (e.g., LOL). Full stories or episodes are alternated with freely associated trains of thought and argumentation. Any one discussion is made up of the speech acts of different participants, some of them narratives, story-like forms, some of them claims, assertions, counterclaims, making up a complete discussion for the reader. Since we form our own impression of the event and its surrounding discussion based on what we read, we do not actually feel the time gaps between actual posts spread out over days but see it as one unit. Therefore, every narration is split between two realities: a communication process progressing from compressed to expanded, direct narration and communication, and secondly a readable authored story. This has maintained the authorship of different parts. A story read is more compact than real-time communication that lead to the creation of the final written story. Significantly, people present stories in the first person, their own generalizations, experience, but for argumentation give examples of second or third person stories or refer to such. The number of communication acts on the patient forum can be 1 to over 300 posts/stories. What is it that unites the stories with so different numbers of communication acts? Monika Fludernik links the narration with its human experiencer: "In my model there can be narratives without plot, but there cannot be any narratives without a human (anthropomorphic) experiencer of some sort at some narrative level" (Fludernik 1996: 9).

CONCLUSION

It is easy to see how discussion groups are used as a replacement for the role once played by the extended family or geographical community – discussing illness and health and looking for solutions in the discourse. Since the postmodern lifestyle and interpretations find a different set of knowledge acceptable, and is largely oriented to subjectivity, the multitude of opinions expressed in an online discussion group conforms well with the modern style. Nevertheless, people act differently in socio-culturally different situations, using also different styles of narratives.

Communication on doctor-patient forums are characterised by a certain beginning, central point and ending commonly found in classical narratives (cf Thornborrow & Coates 2005: 7), a short and clear structure. Also, communication takes place on unequal levels where the patient is the subordinate with a lower position. This leads to neutral wording and a limited scope of information exchange (only the specific complaint and related information).

Communication on patient-patient forums is relaxed in the range of styles and topics, closer to how an offline interest group interacts. People afflicted with a difficult or fatal disease find moral and mental support from people in similar circumstances participating in online forums. They get help evaluating the state of their health, they can exchange experiences with the progress of the disease (whether for the worse or for the better), and share their coping strategies. Similarly, so-called writing therapy is gaining ever more ground with the seriously ill. The online communities can be seen as a spontaneous branch of the same. Online environments created oriented to disease-specific groups have several advantages in this respect, in fact. They offer the opportunity for dialogue with people in similar situation. At the same time, it is possible to maintain privacy and anonymity.

Communication in patient forums is relaxed and includes different genres of narration and writing styles. This ranges from simple informative announcements, claims, arguments to both simple and extended natural conversational or even classical stories. Besides short narratives that carry information and important symbols and messages, there are also joking or didactic

stories and communication threads, forming a didactic whole. Attractive real-life events give rise to longer communication situations. Such groups are based on first-hand information, the shared disease experience and narratives and they play an important role in achieving mental balance. Typically of internet communication, in addition to realtime communication and storytelling, even in the case of interrupted and sporadic information and communication flow, it is important that the communication act is archived as a single readable unit. In this way, the forums produce permanent information, narratives and texts that can be repeatedly used and interpreted. Communicative narration chains analysis points to advantages in adopting William Labov's approach. This allows us to evaluate stories on the scale of their reportability and credibility, to differentiate between textual structural elements like orientation of the narrative, the resolution of the narrative, coda, etc.

Medical forums spread not only narratives, but also folk belief. Researcher into politics and communication, Kay Richardson, pointed out in her book *Internet Discourse And Health Debates* (Richardson 2005: 53 ff) the influence various media channels have on oral/written internet heritage: "discussion of risks and illnesses online may not be objective, but it does bring forth the issues of trust and expert judgment and teaches to rationally question political, scientific and producer the points of view forced on us daily" (Richardson 2005: 209).

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PRESS

Mediamyths: the Struggle to Influence Society through Journalism

Maarja Lõhmus

When in the 1920s the United States was caught into a debate over the influence of the media and controlling public opinion (first postulated in 1922 by Walter Lippmann in his work *Public Opinion*), no one could possibly have conceived that by the end of the century this issue would become the focus of media studies. The emergence of the sc. global electronic media irrevocably changed the essence of journalism all around the world. It began with the illusion of conquering distance, which, being so strong and intense, affected universal processes. With humanity's triumph over the speed and distance of media the world became smaller, more substantial and perhaps more perceivable in its entirety. Media texts were attributed with more significance, but at the same time single media texts lost their singularity and importance as they merged into general media flow. Although McLuhan predicted the emergence of the global village already in 1964, it only assumed its actual mythological form after the next wave of technological innovations, reaching its peak in today's turn of the millennium atmosphere (see e.g. Castells 1997).

Getting to the bottom of mediamyths researchers usually turn to the relationship between society and media. Media functions as a means of turning phenomena and processes into social and institutional ones and presents these as such. Digital form attributes mythological qualities – narrativity, voiced performance, anonymity, the obsolete use of universality-generalisation, closeness, plausibility – to social texts.

In order to study the main problems associated with the functions of media, we should first and foremost look at texts in the field of media (I) and then look at the struggle within journalistic texts. (II) In the interests of comparing them together these subjects will be generalized under 26 general points.

I. JOURNALISM AS A BATTLEFIELD

1. The **need to communicate** belongs to the basic human needs along with the need for nutriment, habitation, warmth, etc. Journalism came into being when the basic needs of communication had not only been satisfied but had also been subjected to different social purposes. If people of today buy a newspaper to satisfy their need for communication, they get something more with the paper. The linear nature of radio and TV programs is unavoidable. The multifarious utilisation of humanity's communicational needs and the creation of new needs, together with other interests, constitutes the history of journalism.¹

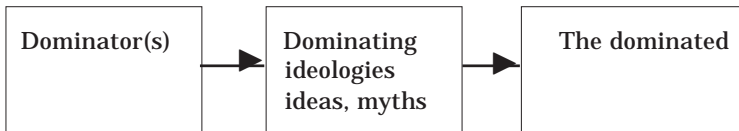
2. The principal means and principal carrier of the need for communication is the journalistic text, which for various interest groups functions as a vehicle of self-expression, in order to influence the public and opposition.

3. The struggle to make oneself publicly known and heard continues in society.

4. The most serious struggle in society concerns the **definition** and **interpretation** of those processes as they occur in society.

5. Different interest groups attempt to impose their ideas into the text either covertly or overtly.

6. Journalism is essentially a field of mediating ideas and the means for establishing and consolidating ideologies.



7. The large number of interest groups and overlapping interests (different directions and mutual intersections) complicates the situation.

The empirical point of view of communication theory is that the 'truth' of the first source and its interpretation is crucial. Later interpretations will not make it non-existent but might have the ability to shape this. Thus the struggle is for quick interpretations of events and phenomena.

In the battlefield of texts the main issue is whose text and with what kind of structure will it be published first.

8. Journalism is one of the specific public domains whose **ideas** and **myths** affect other public (and social) domains (cf. Bourdieu's 'political domain', 'symbolic systems' – 'art', 'religion', 'language'). His approach to 'domains' is based on their role in society). Using the conceptual system of Bourdieu, journalism is seen as the arena for all struggle for political and symbolic power, for the determination of exchange values: symbolic power, a subordinate type of power, is merely the transformed, i.e. misrecognised, transfigured and legitimated version of other forms of power.

Contemporary myths, spread by the press, form a part of every established ideology.

9. Interest groups whose texts do not proceed from established ideology must use more complicated structures to express their ideas. The more closed the situation in the social battlefield and the more difficult the access to publicity is, the more complicated is the inner structure of the text and the more intensive are the inherent problems within the text.

10. Assuming that we are seeking objectivity, then on the first level we encounter semantic problems, on the second level shared rules concerning particular texts. On the third level, however, we observe general ethical rules (cf. Habermas 1967/1988). As a rule, journalistic texts do not strive for objectivity, as the application of rational principles in journalistic texts is inconsistent.

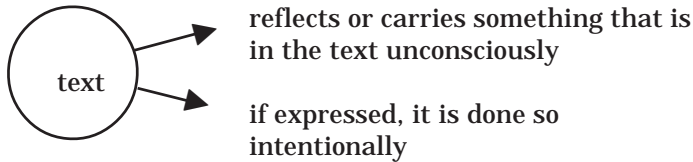
11. Each text forms a 'cloud of meanings' which in turn is a part of semiosis (cf. Biber 1989). Semiosis includes all possible meanings of the language, shades of meanings in different discourses in different contexts of the linguistic environment.

12. The state of society and the semiotic use of the language spoken in society are interconnected. The more closed the situation in social (public) battlefields, the richer and more activated the semiosis is, and therefore the inner potentialities come to use. By increasing in density, semiosis generates more mean-

ings. The struggle in a closed society goes on in terms of a hyperdense semiosis.

With the opening of society semiosis expands and becomes thinner.

13. We must carefully consider comprised and non-comprised semiosis: does all that is expressed coincide with what can be expressed.



Journalistic texts reflect the conscious and unconscious voice of interest groups. Journalists are rarely aware of whose domain they work in. In speaking of journalistic texts it is also important to determine whether they are conscious and to what degree they are so. The unconscious forms a deeper structure which affects all people in the same way (Levi-Strauss 1955).

14. Journalistic text as '**an active text**' is a social phenomenon; it has the power to influence social processes.

15. It is characteristic of the text that apart from what is intentionally expressed in the text (objectivity, unambiguity) something additional is always expressed in it (subjectivity, ambiguity).

The struggle within the text is evident even if it is not explicitly expressed in it.

16. Media favours self-domination. Media may choose to pass existential judgement: while being subordinate and susceptible to influence, it might choose to turn participating subjects into objects, attempt to become the only irreplaceable link between the dominator and the dominated, increase its power of influence. Media develops towards higher control in order to make dominators dependent on themselves.

17. We could picture text and everything that affects it in the form of a model (Fig. 1). Here I use the notion of 'model' in a very general sense: a model is the analogue of the cognised object, which replaces the object in the cognition process. The model does not conceive of media as an independent phenomenon but

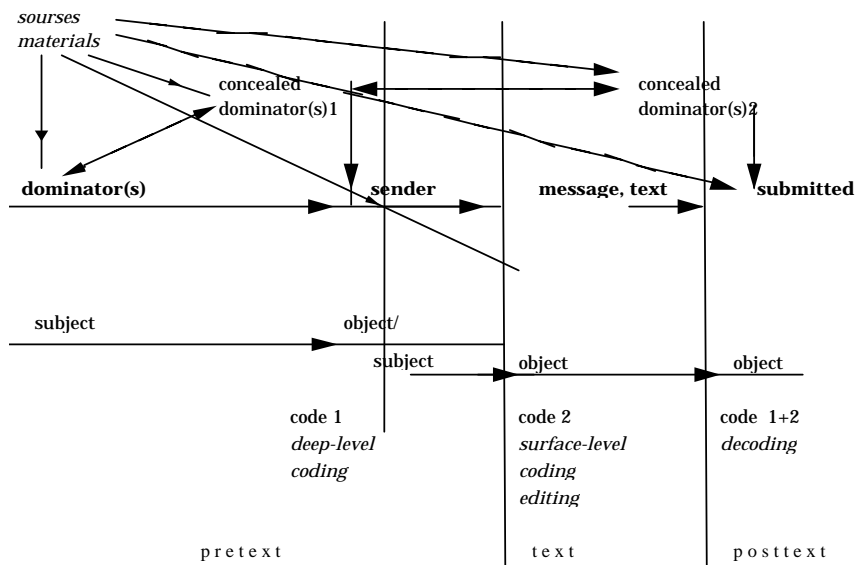


Figure. Model of struggle-field in media

as a part of the struggle of ideas (myths) and for domination. (Even the most independent publications present texts that express evaluative manners of thought.) The main questions here are therefore: How to characterise the battlefield of journalistic texts? Who are the participants and how are they interrelated to each other?

Participants in the symbolic battlefield are:

1) **Dominators** (overt and hidden) who directly wish to make sure that their ideas will reach the public through the journalistic text.

2) **Concealed dominator(s) 1** representing (independent) attitudes towards other dominator(s), material and topic, and whose existence influences the sender.

3) **Sources and materials** existing independently of the battlefields and those who participate in these, although the main struggle of how to encode them takes place in the phase of pretext.

4) **The sender** who encodes the material and sources it in some way (independent, influenced) using the journalistic message. In complicated semiotic situations the central role is played

by the author who him/herself becomes a distinctive sign (and code) in the field of texts. (Senders can be dominators, concealed dominators, authors, interpreters-editors).

Society, environment, publication, sender-author determine whether the encoding takes place only once (code1), in the form of deep-level encoding, or it is completed by additional, surface-level encodings (code 2).

5) The message, or the text, is the result of the struggle. It is also an instrument of the struggle. (Text as institution; text as instrument.) It contains some manner of thought, which has been encoded in a specific way.

Journalistic text can be very effective when advocating different social interests. It is the means of influencing and also the object of the struggle aiming to influence.

In the battlefield, texts acquire symbolic meaning as representatives of corresponding discourses. The appearance of one or another text attests to this fact that one or the other discourse has appeared in society. (In a closed society such appearance has been called 'the front line' and journalists, the senders of the texts – the 'soldiers of the ideological front'.)

6) The submitted are the recipients who turn to journalism in times of need for communication and they become submitted to the power of journalistic texts. In the process of decoding the texts they are often unable to distinguish the different structures hidden in the code.

7) Concealed dominator(s) 2 representing other (independent) attitudes towards the dominator(s), material, topic, and journalistic message, influencing those submitted with its own existence.

II TEXT AS A BATTLEFIELD, THE STRUGGLE WITHIN THE TEXT

18. In the symbolic battlefield the text undergoes three phases:

- 1) pretext
- 2) text (itself)
- 3) posttext

The struggle about and for the journalistic text takes place mainly in the first phase, in the pretext (see Tarasti 'pre-sign').

19. Text contains tensions, which arise from the nature of the text itself and are manifested on different levels:

1) grammatical tensions – sentence structure and the relationship between parts of sentence;

2) semantic tensions – content components and inner logic;

3) semiotic tensions – relationship between the text and the surrounding semiosis, codes used, and text as a discursive whole.

20. Text therefore has its inner parameters, which, if changed, change the text. In the course of the struggle around the text this changing may be exercised purposely. The struggle within the text primarily involves hidden meaning and textual codes.

21. The potency, or potential energy of the text, which becomes altered in order to exert an influence, is also important. The potency of text consists of the inner tensions of the text, when the text provides all alternatives for interpretation. Thus the text becomes an effective asset in the battle.

An unambiguous text contains no tension. The appearance of alternative thoughts brings along tensions between different ways of interpretation of the text and within the text itself, which instigates a struggle to influence the possible alternative meanings of the text, and by this means to manipulate it.

The **covert** problem of the struggle is that it seeks acceptance to, say, two out of three meanings, whereas the **hidden** problem lies in the fact that all the alternative meanings of the text can never be unambiguous and unidirectional, otherwise the text would be reduced to a one-dimensional level. One of the important characteristics of the text is its meaningfulness, and difference in meanings creates the **inner tension** of the text.

22. The more complex the deep-coded textual code of the sender (code 1), the stronger the inner tension within the text. The more the text contains surface codes (codes 2), the stronger is the reciprocally related inner tension in the text (different tensions follow different directions, their vectors and force diverge). Text potentials become contradictory, thus rendering the influence of strongly edited (on the surface level) and/or censored text insignificant.

23. Censoring and editing of the text is the same as encoding, subjecting the text to new codes. In this process the inner force of the text decreases. The tension between deep coding, or code 1, and surface coding, or code 2, causes inconsistencies within the text structure, which is reflected in the weakening potential of the text. The greater the differences between code 1 and code

2, the stronger the structural inconsistencies and inner tensions between different encodings. If the sender, who uses code 1, and the editor, who uses code 2, happen to be one and the same person, he or she might experience a conflict of (roles) on the personal level, as he or she must assume two different roles in order to be able to perform the encodings.

24. Repeatedly encoded text can never be complete, because additional encoding changes the text. Censoring has the effect of causing surface codes to hinder the coding of the deep code, decreasing the influence of deep coding, destroying the wholeness of the text. It appears that the larger the number of contradictory surface codes in the text, the more chaotic the deep structure becomes.

25. Even though each encoding may have been performed according to a systematised code, their interaction can produce a totally unsystematic code, or one with an unrecognisable pattern.

26. Each code should have a structure and a key. However, numerous codes together rarely convey the code structure necessary for actual decoding. The recipient-submitter performs decoding by using deep and surface code, the total sum of different codes, but is unable to open the code structure necessary for actual decoding. The recipient is unable to differentiate between and decode single codes, which are too different from the total sum.

One of the prerequisites of censorship is the possibility of encoding the texts by means of different codes, while decoding can be performed only through one code, where the total sum of components does not conform to the structure of component codes.

In a closed society, the text can never be a public battlefield: the struggle occurs on the structural level and on the level of hidden signs-codes. The text is therefore public, but the struggle to interpret signs and codes remains hidden. In an open society, media texts develop their own structure, and their key elements are organised differently from the texts of a closed society. The status of text in the media field is far more important than the structural issues of the text.

Nevertheless, the main issues of media texts in both models of society are surprisingly similar.

Translated by Kait Realo

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Violence in Mass Media: Stereotypes, Symbols, Reality

Reet Hiimäe

With the evolution of media the traditional folklore declined and folklore influenced by the media started to prevail. Although it spreads faster and on a wider scale, local peculiarities might still be detected, say, in the case of the readers of a particular newspaper or news about the events in some local town. One difference between the old folk heritage and the media is that generally a popular narrative was not supposed to bring financial profit, although the number of listeners might have been important for a narrator. There was no need to shock the listener constantly, such elements were used only to achieve figurative expressiveness. The media, on the other hand, is a product, and reality 'for sale' must be presented in an acceptable form (cf. Scharlau 1986:189). Or as J.Hornby (1983: 100) argues: "The aim of media is not to inform us as well as possible, but to attract audience as much as possible." That is why shock effects, or conscious and unconscious abstractions of the kind emerge. The media determines the topics and emphases, secretly shaping the structure of the human mind and in a wider sense popular culture as well. While the rule that good news is bad news applies to media (Finkelstein 1969: 57) and violence is constantly emphasised, it is only natural that such a tendency is spreading on the personal level as well. The community as a whole is beginning to select and emphasise reports of violence from amongst other information. This has brought us unconsciously and unwillingly to the dissemination of chaos where an almost religious background could be detected – first, in connection with the apocalyptic expectations of the end of the millennium, but after the mystically sounding year 2000 arrived and the ones who were expecting an end of the world were left disappointed, people were eager to find a new landmark of their apocalyptic fantasies. Now newspa-

per stories and whole horror books (e.g. “Apocalypse 2012”) are written about the date 21.12.2012. Scientists find the whole idea ridiculous, but the media sees no reason to stop, because the year 2012 phenomenon is just a too good journalistic marketing idea. Not surprisingly at all, a Hollywood catastrophe movie named “2012” is already shot, only adding to the 2012 panic.

The daily recurrence of reports of violence is occupying people’s minds, it seems that nothing can get better – it only gets worse until finally an end comes to everything. Or as Olev Remsu says commenting on the criminal report programs in Russia: “They employ the tone of disaster, every morning starts with gore and horror. They are trying to tell us that we have reached the stage where death follows us everywhere.” (“Postimees”, Oct. 24, 1997). There can be no legal censorship in the media over reporting or propagating violence, since that would conflict the Constitution’s provision about the freedom of speech.

Mass media is so flooded with negative news that no space is left for anything positive. For example, statistics of the news in the front page of “Postimees” reveal that negative news strongly outnumber positive news. Thus, reports on acts of violence are not in proportion with the ratio of other news (cf. Prokop 1986: 136). People trust the media and if some infamous act of violence is retold to others, people tend to add that the information is taken from a newspaper or television to prove their story. The consumer never really contemplates on the fact that news are being created using a real event as source material, that what they are seeing is sc. ‘media-reality’ (cf. Faulstich 1995: 87). However, we are faced with a question – how many of the reports of violence are actually stereotypical, artificial, and based on myths?

ACCOUNTS OF REMOTE COUNTRIES

Even when there was no mass media, the world suffered from earth-quakes, floods and violent murders just as it does today, but due to the lack of a mediator these did not become a part of people’s everyday life. Such information was not a part of popular culture (Postman 1996: 17). In fact, even the folk narratives about far-off lands suggest something unusual and strange to the audience – the narratives are about evil dog-muzzled war-

riors on the other side of high mountains and about cannibal people living somewhere at the world's end. These stories are based on incomplete information and the result is a non-realistic image of some region. Today, the informative function of a folk narrative is taken over by mass media, still, information circulates the way it used to and the status of the receivers is the same. There are no other witnesses of the events other than the correspondents and, therefore, no one can be certain what is right and what is not. The information received through the media is adapted into the background knowledge (also folkloric knowledge) of the receivers and the missing gaps in the information are added randomly.

Generally we receive information which emphasises only a certain angle of the event. For example, the reports on the war in Iraq left the impression that the only participant in the conflict was Saddam Hussein, the existence and the morale of the tens of thousands of soldiers who actually fought the war was hardly mentioned. Some countries are known only as places of assassinations and conflicts (say, the rebellion of the Hutu and Tutsi in Africa, or the Palestinian-Israeli conflict). Such tendencies creates a false illusion of the hostile and dangerous world around us. The place names where the disasters take place have often no meaning. We receive the facts of the events without any actual context. The media provides photographs of evidence but even these do not make the unknown places any more real for us. We only remember the information as a whole, often eluding reality (cf. Postman 1996: 97). So people warn those who intend to spend their holiday in Turkey: "Do not go there, there's a war going on." Or they say to people travelling to Thailand: "Thailand is a dangerous place, they kill people for anything, they will accuse you of trafficking drugs and put you in prison." And if you ask them how they know that, the answer is: "Oh well, everybody says that." On the other hand, when speaking to those who have actually visited these countries, the comments are totally different.

Many people form their perception of coloured people in the same way. As the personal contact is often non-existent, the attitude (either positive or negative) is generally based on forms of media (mainly films on racism) and it is thus, in fact, folkloric by nature.

LOCAL NEWS

The shock-provoking rash presentation of acts of violence is characteristic of the local news as well. Even the fact that a reporter interviewing a folklorist about the customs of the All Souls' Day asks first whether the tradition also included something frightening, amply illustrates this particular tendency on the part of the journalists in their attempts to make news.

Quite recently the newspapers featured a sensational account of a woman suffering from burns who told her listeners that aliens were trying to clone her. The newspaper account is based solely on the victim's own words and there is nothing to prove its accuracy, but for a reader the information is truthful and is therefore passed on to other people. It is merely another piece of evidence for the existence of hostile "humanoids" that has brought a hidden fear anew to life. Nobody realises that the interpretation might actually be based on sc. urban legends about UFOs which the victim might have heard from someone else. A hundred years ago similar burn-marks might have been taken as evidence of an earthly disease caused by gnomes – an explanation in keeping with the contemporary understanding.

Local news is characterised by its emphasis on details. For example, the criminal reports in the daily paper "Postimees" aimed mainly at the readers in Tartu are sometimes extremely specific in their accounts: "The woman was killed by a blow with a square piece of wood on the head, according to our sources the murderer hit only once. Although the clothes of the woman were torn, experts could find no evidence of violent rape on the woman's body. Her money was stolen." ("Postimees", Nov.7, 1997). The reports also describe murder scenes with extreme precision, mentioning the building and the street where the murder took place or the body was found. Such precision makes the criminal case more real. There are more and more places which provide a setting for horror stories, and these stories are taken seriously. Then if one person assures ten others that a murder was committed in his back yard and these ten people, in their turn, will tell the story to ten others, it seems as if a hundred murders have been committed. Therefore, we can by no means talk about giving objective accounts of reality.

STEREOTYPES

Murders and bomb threats are classified as daily news but there is hardly anything new about them. These themes are recurrent and that is the reason why such stereotypes come into being. Media researcher N. Postman compares the flow of this sort of information with the sea: there is water everywhere, yet nothing to drink (Postman 1996: 87). Being aware of reports of violence neither relieves fears associated with it nor reduces crime. The mere fact that one has read about thirty stabbing attacks does not make him behave correctly in any given situation. On the contrary, the flood of information causes an overload to one's analytic capabilities. There is not enough time to work through all the material and analyse everything objectively. People often merely retell the received news to others, thinking that if it has been broadcast, the news has to have something to do with us. In face-to-face interaction, the comment: "Did you read it – it was written on the criminal reports page?" has acquired an important role. And the person who is told the story passes the information heard on to others. As the number of reports on acts of violence is constantly increasing, the reporters have time neither to formulate them in a less stereotypical manner nor check their accuracy. A sensational piece of news has to be published immediately before competing newspapers get their hands on it. With respect to the information itself the reporters are constantly using an abundance of totally irrelevant expressions, such as: "killed in an extremely brutal manner, the victim suffered for hours." An article about a bomb explosion in Jerusalem on the front page of "Postimees" (July 31, 1997) states: "The market place was covered with pools of blood and scattered fruit, the explosion had torn off a leg of one of the injured. The two dead bodies which were most ruptured belonged to suicide terrorists." Certainly, such descriptions cannot be classified under the laconic and formal style of news and are aimed at evoking fantasy. Really, a detailed description of a disaster scene thousands of kilometres away from us is totally irrelevant, still, this is the part of the news that we will actually remember.

Media tends to focus on victims, the number of survivors is often not worth mentioning (Heilmann 1990: 204). We get the

impression that there were casualties only, but in reality only one of the ten thousand people died.

Crime reports might be considered as certain narrative variants that are illustrated with corresponding photographs. The news of different newspapers or radio stations about the same event are just different versions of the same type of narrative. Although the news tries to be unexpected and shocking, same scenes that have already proved effective are repeated over and over. For example, a photo taken at the scene of a crime might be added to the text, although with the absence of the text it includes nothing that would refer to the crime. The photographs of murderers have a similar effect. When they know who it is on the photo people search for certain signs in their faces and state: I would have known the moment I met him that he was a murderer. And a stereotypical image of the criminal is formed. Walking along streets in the dark people compare everyone they meet with the image in their minds lest the passers-by might have such features. Such patterns of thought result in the belief that only murderers walk around late at nights. The mere fact that the passer-by is compared to a murderer, makes him in a way a criminal.

Even the structure of reports of violence is stereotypical: the headline reports the accident, it is followed by a speculation as to the motivation and a detailed description of the act, then by a statement whether the victim will survive or not, and the final solution – the suspect is either caught or not and the nature of a (possible) punishment. Certainly, crimes do follow a logical progression, but this is why it seems unnecessary to go through it in detail again and again in each new report. The result is the formation of a stereotypical understanding of murders.

Although media reports are similar to folk narratives, one of the differences is its employing of violence. The earlier folk tales might have contained sadistic elements but they still had a happy ending. The cruel and terrible fate fell upon the bad characters who had earned their punishment. The massmedia reports of violence include distinctively typical criminals and typical victims, but the course of events is different. Often the reports try to arouse sympathy towards the victim, the report is illustrated by the description of the victim's extraordinary character using epithets like 'the ladies' man', 'always smiling and sociable'

("Kuller", Nov 10, 1997). The criminal, on the other hand is a natural born bad-guy: "He symbolises corruptness. In talking about a wasted youth he will be the first one mentioned. Now that he has become a murderer, it is possible that people might start using his name to scare children." ("Kuller", Nov 10, 1997). Most common plots describe the death of the victim, the rest of the report is concerned with the procedure for the search for and apprehension of the criminal and the trial which ends with his sentencing. One of the recent examples is a heartbreaking incest drama in Austria: the case of Joseph Fritzl, who was accused of holding his daughter captive for 24 years and fathering her seven children. In this case the victim and her children were able to get away alive, but the media was again full of even the smallest details of the case for months, slowly nearing to the grand finale – the sentencing of 'the monster of Austria' by a lifelong imprisonment ("Postimees" 24.08.2008). The repertoire of urban legends follows a similar course of events. All this alludes to a change in the human mind. The prime objective of reports of violence today is the wish for revenge. The reader follows the actions of a dangerous criminal very anxiously indeed. Having heard about the catching of the criminal satisfies the reader since the brute gets what he deserves and that reduces the risk of any possible further aggressions on his part.

INFLUENCE

The influence of violence as reported in the media might not have immediate results. But it accumulates over a period of time. Acquired patterns of behaviour might remain latent but they are just waiting to become activated. We get the impression that if violence is so common in the media and happens so easily, we will finally cross the ethical line and violence becomes a norm in life. The objective evaluation of various situations may change and the same methods repeatedly experienced through the media will now be applied to situations that are not in fact dangerous. The repetition suggests that this is the normal behaviour (cf.: Faulstich 1995: 79).

In Germany, for instance, where the economy supporting a free press is more developed than in Estonia, the influence of mass media appears to be stronger. The negative world-view it

suggests is so common that even in several scientific German grammar-books three out of four model sentences talk about a disaster (earth-quake, assassination, fire). In any case I can find no reason why the rule for forming the plural should be illustrated with a model sentence like: The train accident ended with four casualties and six people injured. (Sommerfeldt, Starke). Or an example from Estonian in colloquial speech: "This year we are going to have so many apples that it will kill us."

A person might also start picturing himself in certain situations as the witness of some final solution (Doltinchem, Hartung 1986: 286). This enables us to follow an unpleasant situation not taking part in it directly (cf. Goodlad 1986: 106). Perhaps it is out of fear that we read violence reports, as if knowing a great deal about them might reveal the source of our fears. Specific cases seem to confirm the belief that such acts happen to someone else and not the reader. But the truth is that the new and new amounts of horror stories reinforce the self-induced myths. People experience the most horrible murder scenes in their minds, they repeat them over and over even for days depending how shocking is the nature of the report and the images that it causes in their mind. Thus, a human mind might create a lengthy "mind film" with multiple versions on the basis of a single criminal report only a few lines long. Often the mere headline of an act of violence might do. Sentences in bold print such as "Train Bisects a Man's Head", "The Fatal Night Ride" or "Fellow Tippler Stabbed in Kidneys" are symbols that have the power to evolve certain associations. The text adds no further information but it helps to confirm the image already created.

Sometimes our general awareness based on the news we receive is so abstract that it results in the awakening of latent fears in people, expressed by vague anxiety and insecurity. A good example here would be the words of a German lady: "Actually, I have no idea what Mafia is, but it still scares me. People tell me all kinds of horrible stories about it." Similar indistinct symbols of evil or hostility might be found in the interviews of statesmen. If a situation becomes confusing people like to say: "It must be in somebody's interest," or "It must be good for somebody". This 'somebody' in this context is like a mythological creature – it has no clear form but no one doubts that it exists. The process is infinite since people pass it on. The final result is that

people start anticipating the attack of this vague “somebody” as they secure their apartment doors with more and more locks and view the whole of humankind with suspicion.

IN CONCLUSION

I would like to argue that: A news report in order to be effective must be shocking, and reports concerning violence serve as the best examples here. As the number of new and shocking reports is not infinite, stereotypes are created. Stereotypical reports tend to make their way into oral folklore and they start circulating in media as well as among individuals. It is possible that the creation of such stress and anxiety is actually quite different from real life, and the only way to avoid getting depressed when reading newspapers is to bear just that in mind. At the same time people’s attitude towards the structure of mass media is very stable making the likelihood of reports of violence disappearing from news reports almost impossible. People might get the impression that there are no news worth reading left. It would be just as risky to substitute crime reports columns with loving and glorified omissions. Recalling the media reporting of the Soviet times we have to agree that such tactics functioned only to a certain extent. Nevertheless, it is quite plausible that public awareness might only benefit from reducing the stereotypical reports on acts of violence in the mass media.

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Truth and Ethics in Visual Anthropology

Ingrid Rüütel

The following thoughts were inspired by films and discussions seen and heard at the Festival of Visual Anthropology in Pärnu, an annual event initiated by Mark Soosaar in 1987. I am also using my own years of experience in documenting folklore and ethnographic material, and of making video films as a point of dependence.

Problems concerning ethics play a significant role in any society but they emerge particularly in the case of cultures and peoples on the verge of extinction. In visual anthropology ethics appears on three different levels: the ethics of the film maker, the ethical principles of the people featured in the film, and the ethics of the TV or cinema audience. The latter may be relatively low (and in serious opposition of the subject matter filmed) and therefore it should be seriously considered what is to be filmed where and to whom it should be shown. The scientific documentation for archives, which is made public only for educational purposes or at academic events for a closed circle of scholars and specialists, is an entirely different aim than a film which is meant for a wider audience. In the case of the latter an especially sensitive sense of discretion is required. However, the academic approach may involve risks as well:

“The scholars of previous centuries had it so much better – they did not have to worry that someone might violently abuse the materials they had published. Today you can never be sure who might get hold of your work and what unpredictable consequences might follow.” Thus commented Galina Grachova, a famous Russian ethnographer who later perished in a helicopter accident in Siberia at one of the Pärnu festival discussions.

Obviously it all depends to a great extent on the general ethical standards within the society. It would be irresponsible to disseminate any information about sacred places in Siberia

where bands of criminals terrorize the local population by looting and perpetrating acts of arson even inside local villages. On the other hand, one of the festival programmes included a film showing a ritual ceremony of a tribe in China that attracts masses of tourists every year. That making of the film raises problems there too but the nature of these problems is quite different. The older generation wishes to preserve the religious function of the ceremony and wants to reject the alien audience. But the government provides financial subsidies in order to promote its development into a huge tourist attraction that would satisfy the younger generation. This situation has initiated an ethic conflict between the principles of the bearers of traditional culture and the market-oriented administrative policy, which in turn gives rise to opposition between different generations of culture bearers.

The ethics of traditional cultures and traditional concepts of ethics on the whole deserve much more research. Anthropologists are outsiders as a rule, even if they study their own culture, and this is all the more true about professional cameramen who usually have only a superficial knowledge of the people they are filming. Their contacts are not sufficient for them to understand the deep structure of traditional communities and cultures. The prerequisite of the latter is usually a close co-operation between cinematographers and anthropologists (folklorists, ethnologists), unless the film maker is him/herself a professionally trained ethnologist or folklorist, or the bearer of a culture.

The relationship between the film maker and the scholar, the art of cinematography and science involves actually a wide range of problems. To begin with, the aims are different – the scholar is foremost interested in making a direct documentation of authentic material, but the film director is interested in making an intriguing, artistic film to attract an audience. It depends largely on the director to what extent he/she departs from the general humanist mission of making a historical document of a traditional culture, or discusses social problems, presents a publicist message. Or whether the film foregrounds subjective visions and prejudices, departing from creative self-realization, or commercial interests. In this connection one cannot avoid the relationships between the creator of the film and the

financier or commissioner of the project. The French film maker Colette Piault also referred to this relationship in her interview at the Pärnu festival. Both in the east and in the west cinematographers must often take into account the requirements of television companies or other commissioners who are usually dictated by money. Ideology also plays a role.

An anthropological film should try to avoid unrealistic situations and staged scenes. An ideal anthropological film is a historical document. But sometimes one has to compromise, especially in case of receding traditions, when people still remember ancient customs, songs and dances but have ceased to apply them in primary authentic context. In this case it is important that the film displays a clear distinction between spontaneous performance and demonstrations in front of the camera. Colette Piault remarked at one of the Pärnu discussions that, "In an anthropological film everything must be honest. If a scene is a reconstruction, it should be clearly stated in the film. The audience should not be deceived."

For example, the credit titles of Hugo Zemp's film presenting Alpine herders list all the situations, which were authentic and which were reconstruction, and in which communities the shots were made, because the whole footage had been cut into one film for artistic and scientific purposes (depicting one day in the life of Alpine herders and the role of yodding in it). But the audience might not always be provided with the information that people were gathered from different locations in order to perform for the camera, or that they might even be bearers of different local traditions who in authentic situations could never perform the same rite jointly. Quite often the draft footage may be of greater scientific and historical significance, because the final editing of the film has to meet the requirements of screening, of formal unity, it has to meet certain time limits, etc.

The conflict between the scientific and "cinematographic" approach to the material become more profound in cases where a conscious "lie" is created – when ethnographic facts are violated, when singers and dancers are placed in artificial circumstances alien to the tradition, where they are forced to behave unnaturally; when the sequence shows things that would never appear concurrently, or when the soundtrack of a documentary presents music from a completely different culture (a charac-

teristic feature of Soviet ethnographic films); or when ethnographic details appear distorted.

For example, at one of Pärnu festivals a film was screened showing a Nganasan shaman who performed in a costume and attributes that had been specially made for the film and were heavily falsified. But in traditional culture details are especially important and expressive. Everything spiritual is expressed in things or in their signs or symbols, and vice versa – a sign carries the actual power of the depicted (an object or creature from the human or the divine world), and mediates its effect on the carrier. Therefore everything has to appear in its correct form. Distorted details reflect alien ethics.

Perhaps the ideological distortion of reality is even worse than deviation from scientific truth. In previous years Soviet films often fell into the imagined category “A Beautiful Lie”, which depicted an idealized picture of reality with the objective to demonstrate “the flourishing” of the peoples in the Soviet state. But after the recent opening of Siberia to western cinematographers encounters “beautiful lies” in their films as well.

At one of the festivals the film “Nganasans– A Siberian People” by the Swedish director H. Tiren was met with serious criticism. The film maker’s point of departure was quite ethical from a subjective perspective – a romantic image of a distant and exotic Siberia which he had longed to visit all his life. The artistic taste of the financing television companies had also played some role. But in addition to distorting traditional ethnographic details, such films give the audience a falsified picture of the small peoples of Siberia, and add to the illusion of the “beautiful lie” about the living conditions of the indigenous peoples in Russia in general.

An ethnological film should apply a specific cinematographic approach. It should try to avoid using explanatory narrative text, which is sometimes over-exploited in scientific films. Words sound more convincing if uttered by the performer, not the author of the film. And he should not dominate the interviews. The inside perspective, people’s views, evaluations and opinions, their manner of speaking, singing, dancing, playing of music, how they communicate, or behave in their traditional environment, or in the atmosphere that they’ve been forced into – all that is as important as the material culture, rituals and other

anthropological elements. Such features can only be recorded on film or video, because in written transcripts and drawings, on photos and even on tape recordings all those details are lost. But the documentation of such material presupposes a mutual close relationship, and good understanding of the people and their traditions.

When I was making a TV programme of the folklore and lifestyle on Kihnu Island, I was confronted with the fact that the prerequisites of TV go against anthropological films, especially where the final editing is concerned (during our field work I was able to convince the TV crew to record songs, dances, stories, rites in their entirety, showing all the performance details). But in the final editing they wanted to avoid “talking heads” or singing faces, and change scenes as often as possible, because in a “good” video one take can be shown for only three seconds! That might be true in the case of MTV music videos, although that is a matter of taste. Perhaps it really does reflect the hectic pace of life and the neurotic atmosphere of modern industrial society. But an anthropological film in such a style would end up being jumpy, unreal, and its rhythm would not reflect that of the actual filmed community.

Films whose aim is to present a the result of some research and to illustrate it are quite different in principle. There the pictures and images are foremost illustrations, the main stress is on the author’s narrative text.

Without a doubt we need various kinds of films – instructive films; authentic depiction of songs, dances, playing techniques of musical instruments, technologies for making the instruments; depiction of concrete results of research projects; publicist messages; documentation of lifestyles, circumstances and people. Scientific films need not be dry and dull, judging by *The Song of Harmonics*¹ by Hugo Zemp that was awarded the Grand Prix at one of Pärnu film festivals.

In the case of religious rituals one cannot avoid the question of how far can the camera be allowed to go in filming a sacred rite, or how deeply can one disturb a culture with cinemato-

¹) See more about the film in Hugo Zemp, *Filming Voice Technique: The Making of “The Song of Harmonics”*. *The World of Music. Journal of the International Institute for Comparative Music Studies and Documentation* (Berlin). Vol. XXXI. No. 3 – 1989: 56–85.

graphic means. The director of *A Visit to Evuk-ik*, A. Mikhailov from Tomsk claimed that he filmed in a Khant family ceremonial site only what he was permitted to. Indeed, it was clearly stated in the film that it was forbidden to shoot the following, because the results may prove dangerous for the performer of the ritual. This is definitely an ethical border which cannot be crossed. When he was asked how it was possible for him to take a camera to such a sacred rite, the author replied that the Khants were his friends. Earlier A. Mikhailov had actually been working together with ethnologists, and he took advantage of the mutual trust between the scholars and the local population. But here again the problem crops up of where and to whom the film is shown. One should be very careful about that. Knowing the problematic ethical standards of the audience on the one hand, and traditional ethic norms on the other, it is quite understandable why one Mari healer put a curse on the film makers who had shown their film (despite being asked not to) on the all-Soviet TV.

Sometimes quite unexpected situations can occur. For example, a few times actual weddings were filmed for recording the wedding traditions of the Kihnu and the footage was edited into documentaries, those marriages did not turn out happy. And now the islanders are convinced that weddings should not be filmed because that makes them unhappy! Therefore I have used wedding footage since then only in fragments for instructive or research purposes, not as material for a feature film.

However, the documentation of a ritual act is not always detrimental to the inside rules of a traditional culture. I recall an incident from a field trip in Southern Estonia where a local healer was pleased to share her knowledge with me and allowed me to record her cure methods. But she forbid me to use those methods myself or pass them on before her death, because otherwise she would lose her powers. Still, the traditional practices demand that the healer (*tark*, *teadja*, *nõid*) has to pass on the skills, otherwise he or she would not be able to die, i.e. death would be difficult. If it happens that the healer cannot pass on his or her skills in the family or to friends, a folklorist may be a welcomed target, provided that the folklorist is worthy of the trust and acts according to the ethical norm.

The preserving of disappearing cultures is an ethical act foremost from the perspective of historical memory and general cultural history. If a traditional culture is documented on tape, video or film, it may assist in prolonging or restoring a culture when it is still living in a phase of assimilation. On the other hand, such recordings might also provide to be helpful in applying the elements of traditional culture in a new cultural context – either in a so-called secondary tradition or in a new creation, which is a common practice in modern Estonian culture. And it is not unusual for traditional communities to renew their song repertoire from folklore archives. Films featuring traditional rituals with relative songs and dances in a traditional context may provide an enormous help here.

In various countries there are many examples of excellent collaboration between film makers and tradition bearers while the wishes and requirements of the traditional community are the primary consideration of the film crew. And the community featured is obviously entitled to a copy of the film takes. I have tried to follow that principle in my own work in documenting the lifestyle and culture on Kihnu Island and in the Setumaa district (Kihnu and Setu are two small communities in the marginal regions of Estonia where the elements of traditional culture are still consistent).

I have also asked for feedback and evaluations about my films, particularly after they have been shown on Estonian TV programmes. The series *Kihnlased* (The inhabitants of Kihnu) included 11 shorter or longer programmes: *Suvi 1991* (Summer 1991), *Suvi 1994* (Summer 1994), *Käsitöömeister Roosi Karjam* (The craftswoman Roosi Karjam), *Kihnu naise hommik* (The morning of a Kihnu woman), *Meeste mured* (Men's concerns), *Naiste tööd* (Women's chores), *Kaevandu Anni leivategu* (Baking bread with Kaevandu Anni), *Kaevandu Anni lugu* (Kaevandu Anni's story), *Järsumäe Virve ja tema laulud* (Jäsumäe Virve and her songs), *Marina Rooslaid*, *Matused Kihnus* (A Kihnu funeral), *Ristsed* (Baptizing). The author of the latter is Anu Vissel who assisted me in recording material for all other films. It is interesting that for the target people the most important criteria of evaluation have been truthfulness and ethnographic details, in addition they have mentioned categories like 'interesting' and 'informative'.

Scenes from the film “Funeral in Kihnu” by Ingrid Rütel



Lowering the coffin into the grave.



Performer of the funeral ceremonies (the priest's helper) Marina Rooslaid (in the middle) with singers at the graveyard.



Life goes on. A young relative of the deceased swinging in the farmyard.



On the other hand, the public expression of truth has its ethical limits. Mark Soosaar found himself in a serious conflict with Kihnu people because of his documentary *Kihnu mees* (Kihnu man). From an objective perspective the author had a truly ethical goal – to demonstrate the moral decay (alcoholism) of a traditional community, caused by the deprivation of self-determination under economic and political oppression. But the ways and means chosen to attain the goal were not acceptable to the community featured in the film. The film depicted actual people who themselves, or whose children or grandchildren, did not want to be marked for ever, they did not want to serve the purpose of a negative example, regardless of the positive aims of the author of the film.

I am fully aware of that rather closed community's sensitivity towards the invasion of their privacy, therefore I have often been hesitant as to what to depict. In case of people's private life I have never crossed the border set by the people themselves. In the community's social life, however, I have taken the liberty of discussing problems which the interviewed were not that eager to publicize. But I regarded it as necessary in order to shed some light on them and inform the wider public about them, especially when in my opinion it was eventually important for the future of the given community and their culture (e.g. the redistribution of land, and other problems concerning the social and economic changes after the restoration of Estonian independence). Obviously "candid camera" is completely out of the question in an anthropological film.

Another delicate aspect concerns the financial and moral profit gained on both sides ("earns himself honour and big buck at hour expense", was the comment by the local people about one film maker). The most general practice is to offer financial remuneration to the featured people. In some cases it is even inevitable. A few years ago a Setu wedding was celebrated with old customs and ritual songs, and with a special aim to be documented on film. The occasion lasted for three days – it was a real wedding, not a show – and it turned out such a grand event that without the financial support from the Estonian Cultural Endowment neither the local people nor the authors of the film could have afforded it.

But money brings along new risks. On the one hand – when being paid, people are ready to perform whatever show they are asked for. They would be willing to go even further. In a disintegrating society where people have lost faith in the future, they would be ready to sell their last remaining material and spiritual assets. Cinematographers from the former Soviet Union narrated a shocking example at one of the Pärnu festival discussions. In one Siberian village they could not find anyone sober, everybody, children included, were intoxicated. One man noticed that the crew was interested in old burial sites, and on the second day he attempted to sell them ritual dolls stolen from the graves, for booze. But according to traditional beliefs that doll carries the soul of a departed ancestor...

One cannot measure everything in money, of course. The moral feedback of a good documentary may weigh a lot more than any material reward. A film may present burning social issues to the wider public, it may serve as a means of political resistance for a nation or ethnic community struggling for self-preservation, it may promote and protect disappearing cultures and peoples, it may elevate the self-esteem of bearers of a culture, it may enhance a national, ethnic or local identity. An anthropological film may sometimes simply appraise man and humanity, or demonstrate the richness, versatility and attractiveness of the world, where so many different people and nations live with their customs, beliefs and traditions. It may simply promote their right to live their lives in a particular way. To communicate that ideal to the audience is one of the most important ethical missions of anthropological cinematography.

Translated by Kait Realo

Proverbial Expressions, the Local Press and the Current “Troubles” in Northern Ireland

Fionnuala Carson Williams

In 1989, twenty years after what came to be generally termed the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland began, a special train left Belfast for the short but significant 100 mile journey to Dublin. The journey was organised by a diverse group of people, with a solid base of trade unionists among them, who wished to draw attention to their objection to the constant violent disruption on the line indiscriminately jeopardising civilian workers and passengers. This rail line is the only one which crosses the border (established in 1925) between Northern Ireland, which remains part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland. Almost since 1969, when protracted violence began, the line has been a target for attack by, ironically, the IRA – Irish Republican Army – paramilitaries who aspire to a united Ireland. The attacks come mainly in the form of bomb scares, but there have also been actual bombs either on the line or, less frequently, on the train itself, causing fatality and injury. Ideologically there does not appear to be any coherence in severing a link between the two places, rather, the reason for the constant onslaught seems to be because the train is a “soft target” – easy to attack and causing great disruption. Even a bomb scare can tie up many troops for several hours and often days. Seven times the Peace Train Organisation, as the group called itself, ran a special Peace Train to demonstrate opposition to violence. After a short stop in Dublin the first one travelled back to Belfast with representatives from the Republic, many of whom had never been to Northern Ireland, or had not been for twenty years since the outbreak of the “Troubles”. On its journey back to Dublin it was stopped mid-way by a bomb scare which, in fact, gained it increased media coverage as most passengers elected to remain overnight on the train, hot food



and drinks being supplied by local support. Following ceasefires in 1994¹ and a marked decrease in the number of alerts the Peace Train Committee symbolically drew their peaceful demonstration to an end with a final Peace Train in October, 1995. However, subsequently, the train has increasingly been used in metaphor, probably initially, in relation to Northern Ireland, in a speech by the British prime minister Tony Blair, after being newly elected in May, 1997, although a similar metaphor had earlier been used in connection with the civil rights movement in the United States.² His phrase, which was duly reported in the media, is now widely heard. Frequency increased in the lead up to the political agreement in 1998. Sam McAughtry, writer, broadcaster and chairperson of the Peace Train Committee, in a recent article on the history of the Train, describes what was probably the expression's first public use with regard to Northern Ireland: "Until Tony Blair won his stunning victory in Britain, [becoming prime minister] I had thought that the Peace Train

¹) The IRA announced that "a complete cessation of military operations," widely referred to as a "ceasefire", would commence at midnight on 31st August, 1994. The Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) made a similar announcement in October of the same year

²) I am very grateful to Wolfgang Mieder, Department of German and Russian, University of Vermont, for pointing this out and for sending on various Internet references to "peace train". While the metaphor had been used in connection with the American Civil Rights Movement of the late 1950s and 60s the earliest specific example found so far is a song, released in October, 1971, composed and sung by Cat Stevens, born Steven Georgiou in 1948 in London, who converted to Islam and has been known since 1979 as Yusuf Islam. His song was titled 'Peace Train' and was an international hit. In the 1980s, when reissued on compact discs, the song experienced renewed interest. About 1987 the same song again enjoyed popularity when released by rock group – 10,000 Maniacs – however, two years later, when Yusuf Islam reportedly declared his support for Ayatollah Khomeini's condemnation of Salman Rushdie, the group stopped singing the song and asked that that track be removed from album pressings. All this would have been publicised in the media and given further airings to "peace train".

The phrase "peace train" was also used, in North American newspapers at least, throughout the 80s to describe other events around the world, for example, in a headline in *The Christian Science Monitor* 6/7/83 p. 3, *Independent French fail to hop on Europe's peace train* (story about lack of antinuclear protest in France) and in the *Chicago Tribune* 21/4/89 Friday section p. 24, in a piece by Neal Justin on a film festival: "The film world is opening up to glasnost. Facets Multimedia will join the peace train next week with a presentation of more than 30 recent documentaries filmed in the Soviet Union."

was truly a thing of the past but [he] gave us symbolic recognition, when he drew on our brain-child³ in his plea to Sinn Féin and the IRA to come out of the shadows and join the democratic parties around the table: “If you don’t”, he warned, “the peace train will move on without you”. McAughtry, himself, concludes the same article: “I hope that when Mr. Blair’s peace train pulls out of the station, all of our people will be represented on it. That was the intention of our organisation all along. It is a matter for pride that we gave Prime Minister Blair and President Clinton such a powerful metaphor for peace in our time” (McAughtry 1997). Since the prime minister’s use of the phrase in June, 1997, and intensifying in the fortnight or so before the Agreement in April, 1998, the metaphor has been frequently used by politicians when speaking on the importance of reaching an agreement. The Agreement itself, a paper drawn up over two weary years, was intended to form a basis on which all participating parties could move forward but was subject to many last minute alterations. A deadline of midnight on a Thursday had been set but this came and went and it was actually Friday before it was finally accepted by most participants in its drafting. As this was the Friday before Easter the Agreement, the official title of which is actually “The Belfast Agreement” in line with naming agreements after the place in which they are signed, for example, the Sunningdale Agreement of 1974, has become known orally and in the media⁴, as the “Good Friday Agreement” a name which imbues it with hope for the future, and bestows on it a certain aura. The religious reference may be taken to its deepest level of meaning of salvation through sacrifice.

Getting back to the reason for reaching an agreement, that is, the political instability which resulted in violent conflict which had been going on in Northern Ireland, with its repercussions elsewhere, for thirty years, the name which has come to be generally accepted for it is “The Troubles”. A title which, in fact, harks back to an earlier phase in Irish history when the whole island was part of the United Kingdom and attempts were being

³) While the idea of a train journey for peace was new to Ireland similar demonstrations had previously been run elsewhere, for example, in South Africa.

⁴) BBC Radio Ulster morning news programme 17/6/98. Radio Ulster is broadcast from Belfast. Ulster is the province in which Northern Ireland lies.

made for independence. This was in the early 1920s and resulted in the partition of Ireland in 1921 into the larger part with twenty-six counties which eventually became the Republic and a much smaller area of six counties in the northern part of the island which retained British links.

This short article is part of a wider brief commissioned by the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, a government funded body, to collect the folklore of the “Troubles”⁵ a topic which, for some reason, has been little investigated but which I am finding not only professionally but also personally satisfying and worthwhile. It seems that the term the “Troubles” came to be used early on in the period. At first most open violence, certainly bombing, often with no or inadequate warning, took place in the main city Belfast, the commercial heart of Northern Ireland and seat of government until 1972⁶. In terms of size it is really Northern Ireland’s only city, having a population of about half a million which is approximately a third of the whole population of Northern Ireland. A contributor (as I have decided to call my informants – a term too easily misconstrued as “informer” in a situation with undercover agents working for and against government) one contributor from a rural area when questioned about the emergence of the term “the Troubles” describes how people living outside Belfast would hear about a bomb there and say “Did you hear about the trouble in Belfast?” which, he surmised, rapidly and easily translated into “troubles”⁷. It is interesting that when interviewing elderly contributors in the Republic of Ireland they automatically assume that it is the 1920s “Troubles” that are in question, whereas there is no misunderstanding in Northern Ireland. Of course, while this term is understood by all and certainly used not only orally, but also in all the media, it would not be used by paramilitaries and their sup-

⁵ I gratefully acknowledge being awarded the John Campbell Cultural Traditions Fellowship of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council to begin this collection. The fellowship commenced in October 1997 and was of eight months, spread over eighteen months.

⁶ In 1972 Stormont, the Northern Ireland parliament, was suspended and the area ruled directly from Westminster, London.

⁷ Contributor in his early 50s born and reared in County Tyrone, John Campbell Cultural Traditions Fellowship Collection Tape 1 recorded 3/1/98. It is intended to house the Collection in the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra, Holywood, County Down.

porters either orally or in their publications. Instead the terms “the armed struggle”, “the conflict” and “the war” are used, for example, this quote from Gerry Adams, leader of the republican Sinn Féin party, about decommissioning arms where, rather than gloss over the term, it is repeated and repeated: ...*there is not even a possibility of addressing the **conflict**, the causes of the **conflict** or the symptoms of the **conflict***⁸. Ironically, now that most paramilitary groupings have declared ceasefires, the past violence is in a novel way being openly referred to in official circles as a “war” while the use of the term “conflict” is even more widespread⁹. This is but one example of terms which are or were not accepted across the board and, in fact, could be overt indications of political leaning. Different groups have different terminology, not only for the whole situation, but also for themselves, other groups, the British Army and the official security forces, prisons and all the paraphernalia of war – weapons, road blocks, and so on.

How does the media deal with the varying terminology? Obviously it depends what section one is considering; while broadcasting is largely confined to only two companies, operating to broadly the same standards, this does not apply to the press. I have chosen to focus on phrases in the most widely read newspaper – the *Belfast Telegraph*. It is widely read, according to scientific survey (Survey 1996), in the sense of being read all over Northern Ireland in both urban and rural districts and in the sense of its readership covering all socio-economic groups and with a wide range of political views. It is also read abroad, mainly by emigrants in North America, but also in Australia and New

⁸) *Belfast Telegraph* 14/7/97 second “News” page, p. 4, in a piece by Martina Purdy and Dan McGinn [reporters] titled *Arms issue must be removed: Adams*. Henceforth in such page references the newspaper will simply be referred to as *BT*. If the reporter’s job, for example, “Political Correspondent” is specified with his or her particular piece in the newspaper then this will be included, otherwise simply “[reporter]” or “[columnist]”, as appropriate, will be added.

⁹) The IRA ceasefire of 1994 ended in February, 1996. A “restoration of the ceasefire” (widely called “the second ceasefire”) was declared in July, 1997: IRA statement as quoted on the front page of the *Belfast Telegraph* 19/7/97. Despite many subsequent murders and other violent acts both the IRA and CLMC maintain that cessations obtain. I would like to thank Gordon Gillespie, political researcher, for help in clarifying chronology.

Zealand, and parts are available on the world wide web¹⁰. The paper has been produced in Belfast since 1870 and would now pride itself on appealing to all. While there is a choice of morning papers reflecting different political stances the *Belfast Telegraph* is, in fact, the only locally-produced evening paper. All this obviously affects the phrases it uses which must not only be *understood* by its readers but also be acceptable to them. As regards being comprehensible it is interesting to note that many of the books which are a product of the “Troubles,” whether intended for general or specialised readership, often include a glossary, indeed, a study of such specialised glossaries would be rewarding and they do form part of the collection which I am making¹¹. Writers are often not from Northern Ireland and have obviously had to learn the new vocabulary and are aware that the wider readership which they hope to reach outside Northern Ireland will need some explanation, however, newspapers, *and* films and plays, survive without glossaries and I suspect that the glossary has become part of the book genre itself.

An additional reason for choosing the *Belfast Telegraph* was that its contributors as well as its readers represent a politically broad sweep of the community. The phrases would therefore be much less likely to be transitory and ephemeral than the set of phrases of a small, limited group (of any kind, extreme or otherwise), and would probably endure. The newspaper contains material from a variety of people: as well as comments from the editor and columnists there is also reported dialogue and interviews with a miscellany of people. The letters from readers to the editor provide a further set of contributors.

With this one newspaper it is possible to detect the phrases which are being used by a range of people. The bigger the range of users the more likely they are to last. As regards dialogue this particular newspaper seems to accurately record what has

¹⁰) <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk>

¹¹) An example of non-fiction for general readership with a glossary is Sally Belfrage's *The Crack A Belfast Year*, Glossary viii-x (Belfrage 1987). This is a United States writer's descriptions and conversations with people involved in various ways with the conflict. The book's title *The Crack* is probably abbreviated from the common expression “What's the crack?” meaning “What is happening?”, “What is going on?”

A little of the terminology of the Northern Ireland conflict is included in Bernard Share's *Slangue* (Share 1997).

been said; other media such as radio and television verify what is in print. Within the newspaper it is possible to distinguish those phrases which enjoy a more oral than literary currency. A chief value of the newspaper in relation to phraseology is that for those phrases which it does adopt it provides context.

While there must obviously be a policy on how events are described it seems that the guidelines are unwritten and the only editorial comment¹² I have had regarding policy is that the city in the north-west of Northern Ireland is referred to as “Londonderry” (the unionist option) in preference to “Derry” (the nationalist option).¹³ The only other inkling of editorial policy which I have so far been able to gain is that the vicious attacks by paramilitaries on singled out individuals referred to orally, and formerly in print, as “paramilitary punishments” are now described as “punishment beatings”¹⁴ (there was also an intermediate period when such thuggery was described in the media as “*so-called* paramilitary punishment”[my italics]).¹⁵

Different parts of the paper display different styles and employ differing terminology, for example, the death notices, which, of course, record the deaths of those caught up in the violence alongside other deaths, have a distinctive terminology. Both it and the pseudonyms used by letter writers, however, often relate to the set phrases. It is unlikely that the editor exercises a veto on the pseudonyms of the letter writers or on the content of death notices.

While the editorial policy of the *Belfast Telegraph* is still being pursued a recent comment by the editor of another newspaper, this time a weekly, in a radio interview is of interest. He

¹³) Query from me in a phone call to the editorial office of the *Belfast Telegraph* answered by a young-sounding, possibly American, female June, 1998. A letter to the Editor, Ed Curran, enquiring about the newspaper policy with a copy of this article was sent in August, 1999.

¹³) With regard to the city name this has become such a political hot potato that a local light entertainment radio presenter on both BBC Radio Foyle (based in Derry) and BBC Radio Ulster has jokingly coined “Derry, stroke [/] Londonderry”, or simply “Stroke [/] City” for it and this now has a wide currency in certain contexts. Officially the city’s name is “Derry” while the county is “Londonderry”.

¹⁴) Information from same person during same call as mentioned at note 12.

¹⁵) Personal observation.

said: *A newspaper tries to walk the tightrope for both sides*¹⁶. His newspaper is published in a town – Portadown, County Down – which has suffered immensely.

In preparation for the paper delivered to the International Society for Folk Narrative Congress it was decided to take the *Belfast Telegraph* for one month and analyse the phrases contained; the phrases were located manually rather than electronically¹⁷. The month of July, 1997, was chosen as July is a month containing significant historical events which are commemorated annually, but which have caused much controversy in recent years. It also so happened that in July last year important political decisions were being made.

In this article phrases about the situation in Northern Ireland have come from several distinct parts of the newspaper – the front page, the editorial and readers’ letters, the news pages, interviews and articles by regular columnists. Frequently the paper reinforces phrases internally by using them on the front page and then again inside in a fuller piece on the same subject. These are in turn often taken up by readers and reused in letters to the editor.

The criterion for the phrases which are examined here is that they have been plucked from dialogue and transposed into print. This has proved relatively easy to distinguish as much of the content about the conflict is constituted from reported speech and interviews. A good deal of the dialogue is quite specialised as it comes from the lips of politicians and representatives of various kinds and some is even drawn from formal speeches and statements. In the newspaper particular phrases are highlighted, for instance, headings, and, in the case of the *Belfast Telegraph* at least, the editorial frequently fastens on key phrases.

As regards referents, phrases about the situation in Northern Ireland fall into four main categories – that based on war-

¹⁶) BBC Radio Ulster 28/7/98 “Sunday Sequence,” a regular, morning religious affairs programme.

¹⁷) The electronic version of the paper was much shorter than the printed one and excluded certain sections. I was interested in looking at the paper as a whole and, as there can be several editions, in examining the same edition – the Late edition – for each day; this is the most widely read edition which people buy on their way home from work and the one that is delivered to houses. In July there were 27 newspapers with an approximate average of 28 pages each.

fare itself, for example, in describing the new, fresh from Great Britain, Minister of Security and Economy's job: ***tiptoeing through the minefield that is Northern Ireland***¹⁸, ***London and Dublin want the Drumcree crisis defused***¹⁹ and ***Orangemen are engaged in a fierce battle on two fronts – political and spiritual – a Twelfth demonstration heard today***²⁰. Orangemen are members of a brotherhood called the Orange Order who annually commemorate the victory of the Protestant Prince William of Orange over the Roman Catholic King James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. A "Twelfth demonstration" would be one on the 12th July, held to be the date of the battle, would and include a gathering in a field of members of branches (or lodges) from different places and their families to hear speeches from officers of the order. Besides demonstrations on the 12th July there are public processions of Orangemen both before and after. The "Drumcree crisis" refers to a procession held the Sunday before the Twelfth where, after attending a service in the episcopalian Drumcree Church of Ireland, of the Anglian Community of Churches, on the outskirts of Portadown, Orangemen parade into the town. Their route takes them along the Garvaghy Road where they are not welcome and, in the past few years, this has led to intense violence. In the phrases not only the minefields and defusing of contemporary war but also ancient battles are evoked by reference to segregated education as ***an Achilles' heel***²¹ and a march which incited violence as ***a***

¹⁸) BT 2/7/97 ninth "News" page, p. 15, in an interview by Paul Connolly, Security Correspondent, with the new minister Connolly writes: "And security in itself is the toughest job around, tiptoeing through the minefield that is Northern Ireland."

¹⁹) BT 3/7/97 p. 16, Editorial titled "Images of Drumcree".

²⁰) BT 12/7/97 p. 14, page titled "The Twelfth" devoted to reports of speeches made at Twelfth demonstrations in a piece titled *Order "battling on two fronts"* quoting from a speech at Tobermore, Co. Londonderry, to members of the order by Brother Alfred Lee, Londonderry County Grand Master. County Grand Master is an Orange Order title and there are twelve grand masters in all (ten for counties and two each for the cities of Belfast and Derry). County Grand Master is just one grade below the highest rank "Grand Master".

²¹) BT 9/7/97 "Opinion" page, p. 12, in an article by Eric Waugh [regular columnist] titled *The mix and match approach to peace*: "This [segregated education] is the fatal Achilles heel which continues to cripple the process of growing together in Northern Ireland. Youngsters who go to school together are friends for life."

Pyrrhic victory²². *Drawing a line in the sand*, most famously associated with the 19th century Battle of the Alamo in Texas has also been recalled²³. Some in Northern Ireland – those who feel that they have been abandoned to fend for themselves in a hostile environment – are described as having ***a siege mentality*** and phrases such as: *Orangemen have been under siege*²⁴ are common. The relevance of siege references is obvious to most people in Northern Ireland because of the Siege of Derry (the place mentioned earlier) prior to the decisive Battle of the Boyne in 1690 where apprentice boys closed the city gates and held out until reinforcements arrived from England. The siege gave Derry its *blason populaire* the ***Maiden City***²⁵ and also the skeleton in its coat of arms. In July, 1997, when, after many tense days, the Orangemen altered their plans and decided not to try to parade along certain controversial routes the *Belfast Telegraph* banner heading was ***The Relief of Ulster***²⁶, a variation on the common phrase ***the relief of Mafeking***²⁷, in contrast often used ironically when help comes for a *minor* crisis. It, of course, refers to a siege during the Boer War and many would, as well as to Derry, see comparisons between Mafeking and Northern Ireland itself.

²²) BT 11/7/97 second “News” page, p. 4, in a piece by Martina Purdy [reporter] titled *How history may judge the Order’s momentous decision* [not to march along a contentious route]: “There are sharp divisions between those [in the Orange Order] who felt the only way forward was to continue to assert the right to march, and those who argue re-routing was the “least worse option”. The latter saw Garvaghy Road [where a recent Orange march was accompanied by massive violence] as a Pyrrhic victory which threatens all that Orangemen hold dear, including the state itself.” [in the text above I have capitalised ‘pyrrhic’]

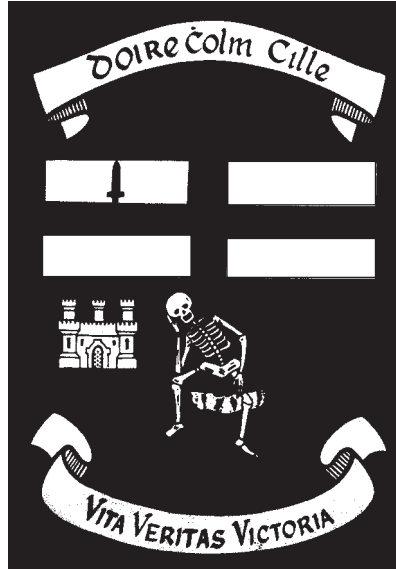
²³) BT 10/7/97 p. 12, Editorial: “Ground has been given, but now decisions have been taken to draw lines on the sand, beyond which the Orangemen will not be pushed”. The Orange Order had agreed to a certain curtailment of its activities

²⁴) BT 12/7/97 p. 14, page titled “The Twelfth” quote from Londonderry County Grand Master – see note 20.

²⁵) BT 10/7/97 seventh “News” page, p. 11, in a piece by Jason Johnson [reporter] titled *Tourist blackspot* about tourists cancelling visits to Northern Ireland because of the “unrest”: “And now it transpires that a Londonderry-based tour operator has begun taking his clients – mostly from the USA and Britain – into Donegal [the neighbouring county in the Republic of Ireland] instead of around the Maiden City.”

²⁶) BT 11/7/97 front page, title of lead story.

²⁷) For additional usages of this phrase see Partridge 1997: 143.



The Derry coat of arms.

A second category of phrases describes the situation in medical terms, for example:

Contrary to what some politicians keep saying Orange marches have always presented a **headache** for the authorities²⁸, the **cancer** of sectarianism²⁹ and If a ceasefire is to last, there can be no talk of Sinn Fein “**in quarantine**”³⁰.

²⁸) *BT* 1/7/97 p. 10, reader's letter signed "Non-Orange Protestant", Belfast 9: "Contrary to what some politicians keep saying, Orange marches have always presented a headache for the authorities, to such an extent that they were banned for more than thirty years last century."

²⁹) *BT* 11/7/97 third "News" page, p. 6: "We renew our offer to the Ballynafeigh Lodge to begin discussions immediately aimed at removing the cancer of sectarianism from the parades issue" – quote from Gerard Rice, spokesperson of the Lower Ormeau Concerned Community Group. The Orange Order is divided into local branches or lodges. Ballynafeigh Lodge is the one closest to the Lower Ormeau Concerned Community Group

³⁰) *BT* 19/7/97 first "News" page, p. 3, drop quote in a piece by Martina Purdy, Political Correspondent, on the recently announced IRA ceasefire. 'Fein,' from the Irish 'féin,' is often written without an accent in English-language texts

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Friday, July 11, 1997 12th Year

The National Newspaper of Northern Ireland

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'Courageous' Orange decision praised | **Mowlam calls for IRA ceasefire** | **'Orangemen's rights should be respected'**

THE RELIEF OF ULSTER

Drop protests after parades switch: Order

THE Orange Order today demanded that all nationalist residents "withdraw peacefully" from areas after Orangemen dramatically changed their parade routes.

The message from general Grand Master Jeffrey Donohoe to parades groups was: "What is requested is a withdrawal from the area." He said that the Orange Order would be prepared to accept a withdrawal from the area if the nationalist residents did so.

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DUP and Orange hardliners attack 'no walk' decision

By Chris Thornton

THE DUP and Orange Order hardliners today attacked the decision to withdraw from nationalist areas as a "sell-out" and a "betrayal" of the Orange Order's traditions.

Mr Donohoe said that the Orange Order would be prepared to accept a withdrawal from the area if the nationalist residents did so.

'Orange gesture gives community a breathing space': Comment, page 10

PEACE Petition

Signature petitions are a symptom of deep-seated distrust (distancing) which have caused both sides of this community Christian community for generations.

Our Protestant & Catholic traditions often involve selfish & controlling attitudes. This is evil. A true answer is humility, openness & forgiveness.

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Play your part in bringing peace. Call this number **FREE** to record that:

- 1 You are deeply sorry for the sins of this nation, and ask God for mercy and forgiveness.
- 2 You want to apologise sincerely to the 'other side' for their suffering and pain.
- 3 You desire to break with tradition, and instead to 'love your neighbour as yourself'.

'How good and powerful is it to witness together - from suffering as unity' - For those the Lord desires His blessing' Psalm 133

Molyneux plays down his role

Mr Molyneux said that the Orange Order would be prepared to accept a withdrawal from the area if the nationalist residents did so.

Belfast Telegraph

Resignation call: Jeffrey Donohoe, Assistant Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, pictured this morning.

BAUME & MERCIER GENEVE

Belfast Telegraph

Resignation call: Jeffrey Donohoe, Assistant Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, pictured this morning.

Weather Outlook

Orange Lodges' full statements | A step back from crisis | How history will judge the Order | Politicians praise decision

A third set of allusions is to sports and pastimes as in the following: *At Westminster last night, the Secretary of State told the republican movement that **the ball is in their court** [as regards joining the peace talks]³¹, Sinn Féin talks about **creating a level playing field** but with the IRA's weaponry still intact outside the talks chamber that will be far from the case³² and **to make up the ground already lost in the moral stakes**³³. As well as allusions to field and team sports there are also references to board games and indoor sports and pastimes as in the following: ...*politics in Northern Ireland should be like a game of chess, not a boxing match*³⁴ and *The final piece in the jigsaw seemed to be the Anglo-Irish meeting in London – when the two governments refused to yield to unionist pressure to toughen the stance on weapons*³⁵. There are, in addition, general references to pastimes like: *the gameplan*³⁶, *the main play-**

³¹) *BT* 1/7/97 second 'News' page, p. 10, Editorial titled *Time to decide* which exhorts representatives of the political party Sinn Féin to join the other parties in the peace talks and for the IRA to declare a ceasefire. The metaphor is derived from Dr Mowlam's speech in parliament the night before [see *BT* same date and page, in a piece by Mark Simpson, Political Correspondent: "Dr Mowlam said a political settlement was "an urgent necessity," but stressed that "the ball is in their (Sinn Féin's) court." " Dr Marjorie Mowlam is Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (the secretary of state is the government minister responsible for Northern Ireland).]

Advertisements for the *Belfast Telegraph* of this date outside newsagents carried this phrase.

³²) *BT* 18/7/97 p. 12, Editorial titled *Holding on to the guns*.

³³) *BT* 1/7/97 p. 10, signed female reader's letter from Belfast 9 about the difficulty not appearing as "bullies" parading Orangemen face where routes are heavily policed

³⁴) *BT* 21/7/97 p. 10, signed male reader's letter from Lisburn, County Down; "Politics should be like a game of chess" was also used for the letter's title.

³⁵) *BT* 19/7/97 first "News" page, p. 3, in same piece as described in note 33. While the Editorial frequently fastens on key phrases used elsewhere in the newspaper this particular phrase may have travelled the other way and been prompted by the opening words of the previous day's editorial *BT* 18/7/97 p. 12: "The publication of the text of a letter from the Government to Sinn Féin adds another piece to the decommissioning jigsaw..."

³⁶) *BT* 12/7/97 p. 12, reader's letter from Ivan Foster, a minister of the Free Presbyterian Church (set up in the 1950s in Northern Ireland by Ian Paisley, also founder and leader of the loyalist [extreme unionist] Democratic Unionist Party): "If Drumcree parades were cancelled forever, we all know that the focus would switch to another parade. The gameplan would move on until there was not one activity remaining that reminded Roman Catholic Ireland that there had been such a thing as the Protestant Reformation."

ers in the game and *everything to play for*³⁷ which do not mention specific sports.

Obviously the situation in Northern Ireland and the manner in which it is reported is operating against a broader background and it is occasionally possible to make connections between what is happening in the wider world and its impact on the phrases. The minefield remark, for instance, came at a time when there was much publicity for an anti-landmine campaign. An optimistic reaction by the then Lord Mayor of Belfast, Alban Maginness, in regard to the IRA announcement about restoring the ceasefire and the possibility of the peace that would follow, refers to the new (it was introduced in 1995), highly publicised British lottery: *It's like winning the jackpot and the lottery twice in one week*³⁸. *The ball being in their court* references in relation to the "Troubles" emerged during the very popular Wimbledon tennis championships which are televised live in full. Since these are an annual July event, coinciding with what has been the most difficult month in the Northern Ireland calendar for several consecutive years, it is likely that such phrases will remain connected with the "Troubles".

The final set of references, and the one with which I commenced, concerns journeys, often the imaginary journey towards peace, and this is the type on which I would now like to focus. The journey references themselves fall into two categories – those surrounding the processions of members of the Orange Order brotherhood and those the inspiration for which was the peace train. I will begin with the former. The processions or marches of the Orange Order take place between May and September, which period has for some time has been known as *the marching season*³⁹. The chief march is on 12th July which marks the date of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, Orangemen identifying with the winning side. The marches consist of members wearing regalia and accompanied by a band or band. They are usually

³⁷) *BT* 4/7/97 p. 14, Editorial about parade at Drumcree

³⁸) *BT* 19/7/97 second "News" page, p. 4, under general heading *IRA Ceasefire* in a piece titled *Parties' Mixed Reaction*.

³⁹) *BT* 2/7/97 first "News" page, p. 3, in a piece by Mark Simpson, Political Correspondent, on US investment in Northern Ireland, opening line: "A leading American financier warned today that US dollars were hanging on a peaceful outcome to the marching season."

in towns in areas where they have support but with changes in demography this has sometimes altered, leading to confrontation in a few places with those who oppose their views.

The controversy surrounding Orange parades has given rise to a set of phrases alluding to journeys on foot, for example: *the Orangemen's action* [not to march along certain controversial routes] was **a major step forward** in the political development of Northern Ireland⁴⁰ and we have other examples such as: **some irrevocable steps towards peace would help enormously**⁴¹ and the following: *Progress, if it is to be made, will only be obtained by mainstream politicians, both unionist and nationalist, taking short steps together, as they do in the local government sphere. For the moment, giant leaps of accommodation – towards a Northern Ireland Administration, are unachievable*⁴². Often the peace initiatives, when being described as footsteps, are likened to an infant learning to walk and these steps, illustrating the Law of the Weight of the Bow, while significant, are unsteady, as in: **a first step**⁴³ and **the first faltering steps**⁴⁴. Leading churchmen are also using such terminology, possibly with overtones of pilgrimage; the primate of the Church of Ireland, Archbishop Robin Eames, has exhorted: *Let us move forward together on the long haul to resolving the problems of which the parades issue is merely a part*⁴⁵ while Bishop Patrick Walsh of the Roman

⁴⁰) BT 8/7/97 second "News" page, p. 4, in a piece by Dan McGinn [reporter] titled *Bruton warns "patronising" nationalists*, remark by John Bruton, former taoiseach or prime minister of the Republic of Ireland: "Writing in the *Sunday Independent* [a newspaper produced in Dublin], Mr Bruton said the Orangemen's action was a major step forward..."

⁴¹) BT 2/7/97 quote from financier – see note 36 for details

⁴²) BT 8/7/97 p. 10, Editorial

⁴³) BT 12/7/97 p. 12, Editorial, final sentence: "We have a long way to go before live and let live becomes a reality in Northern Ireland, but at least a first step has been taken on the road to mutual understanding." This is a comment on the Orange Order's decision to cancel or reroute contentious parades.

⁴⁴) BT 8/7/97 "Features" page, p. 11, piece by Paul Connolly [reporter] titled *Relating to police and public*, opening sentence: "The first, faltering steps towards enhanced communication between the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] and the citizens it polices are being taken, largely unnoticed, in Belfast."

⁴⁵) BT 3/7/97 p. 7, in a piece by Noel McAdam [reporter] titled *Primate in plain talk on parade*; the original report had "are" not "is".

Catholic Church made a plea for *all to walk together*⁴⁶. More overt religious reference has also been noticed, for example, the following: **A huge exodus of people leaving Northern Ireland over the peak of the marching season was reported with airports and ports reporting brisk trade**⁴⁷.

On the other hand, walking has been shown in a negative light as in the phrases: **a backward step**⁴⁸, they [meaning the Orangemen] **just walked all over us**⁴⁹, *Might is not right. They [the Orangemen] have walked over our rights today*⁵⁰ and *The IRA, wrongfooted by the Orange Order move [altered plans], callously tried to stir sectarian tension on the Eleventh night by launching a bomb and gun attack on the security forces in Belfast*⁵¹. For a time the Orange people marching were referred

⁴⁶) BT 11/7/97 third "News" page p. 6, in a piece by Julie O'Connor [reporter] titled *Church leaders praise the Order* which draws together comments by the four main church leaders: "Is this not now the time for all to walk together in what unites us, namely the love of Christ?"; the original report had no question mark.

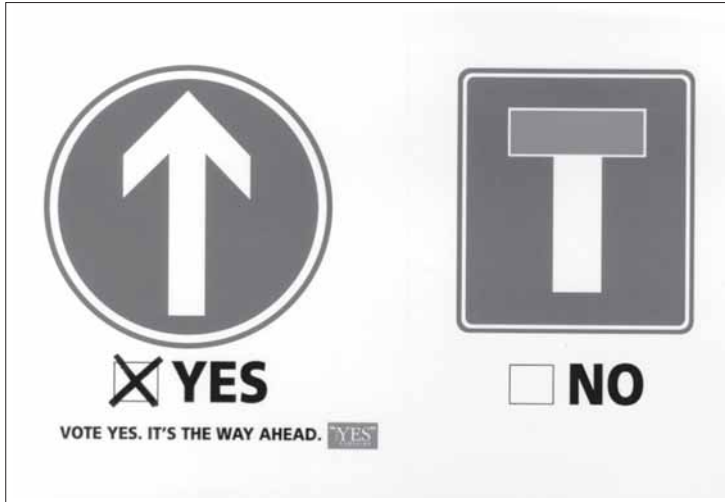
⁴⁷) BT 1/7/97 first "News" page, p. 3, in a piece by Paul Connolly [reporter] on the widespread tension and fear of impending violence.

⁴⁸) BT 7/7/97 "Opinion" page, p. 10, in a piece titled *What the Papers said*, quote from the *Irish Independent*, a daily newspaper produced in Dublin: "...when a march is seen so universally as a backward step, it is hard to carry it off with dignity".

⁴⁹) BT 4/7/97 first *News* page, p. 3, in a piece by Julie O'Connor [reporter] titled *Gloomy mood at road camp*: "a grandmother [named] who has lived on the Garvaghy Road for 24 years, explained: We stood back in 1995 and let them march and just look what happened. The people were shocked at the triumphalism shown and then the medals, that was too much....I guarantee you if that had not happened we would never have been so opposed to these marches. They just walked all over us." In 1995, following the first march delayed by opposition at Garvaghy, Orangemen who had been present could avail of a commemorative medal bearing the words "Siege of Drumcree".

⁵⁰) BT 7/7/97 first "News" page, p. 9, in a piece by Paul Connolly and Claire McGahan [reporters] titled *Garvaghy – the morning after* quote from a Garvaghy woman resident (who asked the reporters not to name her) commenting on the decision to allow the procession of Orangemen along the Garvaghy Road where it was not welcome

⁵¹) BT 14/7/97 p. 10, Editorial. The Eleventh Night, the eve of the Twelfth of July, in accordance with calendar custom in general, is when bonfires in certain places are lit at midnight; it would seem from personal observation that bonfires are becoming increasingly large to the extent that material collected for some (mainly in the form of wooden pallets) extends over whole or considerable areas of public car parks, for example, in 1999 at least, a car park at Hope Street, Great Victoria Street Station and a car park adjacent to Posnett Street, off Botanic Avenue, both in Belfast.



Postcard issued by the Yes-campaign. This was a political group independent of political parties, created to promote voting in favour of the Belfast agreement on the referendum following its signing on May 22. Posters of similar design were displayed also in public areas. They used the blue, white and red of traffic signs. 1998.

to by opponents simply as **Orange feet**. *Under no conditions will the residents of the Ormeau Road accept an Orange foot on the Ormeau Road and Mo Mowlam's game-plan for the Ormeau Road, I am sure, is how to put Orange feet on the Ormeau Road*⁵². Isolating part of the body in this way has a dehumanising effect, the feet becoming not only anonymous but mindless. The Orange processions take place on public roads and a phrase often used to support the right of such parades is that they occur

⁵²) BT 9/7/97 "Features" page, p. 13, in an interview by Mark Simpson [reporter] with Gerard Rice. The expression was also used again in the interview: "It [Dr Mowlam's visit to the area] was all part of how to get Orange feet on the Ormeau Road". "Under no conditions will the residents ...accept an Orange foot on the Ormeau Road" was also quoted in one of the joint lead stories on the front page.



*Black-and-white metal brooch issued
by the Peace Train Committee in 1989.
About 5 cm in diameter.*

on *The Queen's Highway*⁵³, emphasising the support for the monarchy which Orangemen espouse⁵⁴.

Other terminology linked to the journeys or processions are such phrases as: *Trying to solve the political problems of Northern Ireland by violence is a dead end*⁵⁵, *people in high places are hard at work, trying to find exit routes with honour*⁵⁶ and simply *U-turn*, used twice as headings on the same date⁵⁷. These maintain the metaphor of journeying and extend to vehicle journeys as in: *he [Gerard Rice, spokesperson of Lower Ormeau Concerned Community Group] is driving Saturday's protest*

⁵³) BT 11/7/97 "Opinion" page, p. 10, in piece by Kevin Myers [columnist] which originally appeared in the *Irish Times*, a quality daily produced in Dublin. The article is titled *On the precipice, our own footsteps took us to the edge*: "...the Garvaghy Road residents have some right on their side. So too do the Orangemen who wish to remember their war dead by walking along what they regard as The Queen's Highway."

⁵⁴) During subsequent controversy about Orangemen's processions along the Ormeau Road just north of the Ormeau Bridge, where there is a body of opposition to them, feet in orange were painted on the road, presumably as an act of defiance by those in favour of marching by that route and this was reported in the papers.

⁵⁵) BT 3/7/97 second "News" page, p. 4, piece by Marie Foy [reporter] titled *Mitchell upbeat on peace prospects* quote from Senator George Mitchell, chairperson of the peace talks.

⁵⁶) BT 3/7/97 p. 16, Editorial about the Drumcree march controversy.

⁵⁷) BT 11/7/97 second "News" page, p. 4, *Nationalists "on trial" over U-turn* & third "News" page, p. 6: *Dublin calls for a positive response to march U-turn* – both head pieces on the Orange Order's decision to cancel or re-route a number of parades which might have caused disturbances. The newspaper may have a title writer.

*campaign, with his eyes firmly on the road*⁵⁸ and *Loyalists will not become crash-test dummies for decommissioning*⁵⁹. We also find the following: *to kick-start the peace process*⁶⁰ and *what is important is that the peace process itself gets in gear and people see some momentum being reached by that*⁶¹. Allusions to roads have been carried into visual expressions of popular culture as in the posters (and murals) of mock road signs banning Orangemen and in the publicity for the referendum in May which followed the Agreement. These visual expressions then sometimes appear in newspaper photographs; the *Belfast Telegraph* does not, however, have a regular cartoon.

Moving on to the peace train references, Tony Blair's original metaphor was maintained throughout July, for instance: *Dr Mowlam was also working to keep the political talks process on track – even if the train stayed in the station*⁶² and *There was a clear, shared determination [between Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, taoiseach, or prime minister, of the Republic of Ireland] to try to keep the peace process on track...*⁶³. There are many references to tracks, particularly twin tracks, but it is sometimes difficult to determine whether or not these are, or have any resonance with, train tracks, for example: *Sinn Fein/IRA ... pursued a twin-track approach in the ballot box and the Armalite* [a Japanese AR 180 high velocity, collapsible rifle with

⁵⁸) *BT* 9/7/97 "Features" page, p. 13, [reporter] Mark Simpson's ending to his interview with Gerard Rice.

⁵⁹) *BT* 1/7/97 second "News" page, p. 4, in a piece by Mark Simpson, Political Correspondent, titled *Warning on guns deal*, quotation from an article in US based newspaper *Irish Voice* by Gary McMichael, leader of the loyalist Ulster Democratic Party.

⁶⁰) *BT* 7/7/97 second "News" page, p. 4, in a piece by Chris Thornton, Member of the *Belfast Telegraph* Reporting Team, titled *Garvaghy residents plan more protests* quote from Garvaghy Road Residents' Coalition spokesperson Breandán Mac Cionnaith.

⁶¹) *BT* 14/7/97 second "News" page, p. 4, in a piece by Dan McGinn [reporter] titled *Talk to stop street fights over parades urges Mo* quote from Dr Marjorie Mowlam.

⁶²) *BT* 5/7/97 second "News" page, p. 2, by Noel McAdam [reporter]: "As tension over the prospect of Drumcree III [a third successive period of summer violence there] grew, Dr Mowlam was also working to keep the political talks process on track...station."

⁶³) *BT* 4/7/97 second "News" page, p. 4, in a piece by Desmond McCartan [regular columnist but here acting as a reporter] titled *Differences over Drumcree parade played down*.

a deservedly notorious reputation used by the Provisional Irish Republican Army in the earlier part of the conflict]⁶⁴. While most of the proverbial expressions as they appear in the newspaper seem to be *verbatim* the peace train metaphor is one which has been particularly elaborately developed in print, usually just by extending the metaphor. Elaboration in the newspaper most often occurs in the editorial⁶⁵ and in articles by the regular columnists but can also be found in the letters, one even with the pen-name “Train Driver”⁶⁶.

With a year’s hindsight I was able to select from the newspaper only those proverbial expressions about the conflict which continued to circulate in oral tradition. I have kept the same paper for July, 1998, one year on, with a view to seeing which are still appearing in print. While these newspapers have as yet to be examined it is a safe bet that many will have reappeared⁶⁷.

⁶⁴) *BT* 2/7/97 p. 14, reader’s letter signed “Businessman”, Craigavon, County Armagh, opening sentence: “For 28 years we have had to suffer the warped ramblings and explanations of Sinn Fein/IRA as they committed atrocity after atrocity and pursued a twin-track approach in the ballot box and the Armalite”. Linking the ballot box and the Armalite is currently common. A similar phrase: “the ballot or the bullet” is associated in Detroit with Malcolm X, politically active from 1953, setting up the Muslim Mosque Incorporated in 1963 and who was shot aged 40 in 1965. A century earlier, in 1856, Abraham Lincoln had said “The ballot is stronger than the bullet.” I am grateful to Alvin Jackson, School of Modern History, The Queen’s University of Belfast, for alerting me to the Malcolm X connection (personal communication) and to Eoghan Williams for details of Malcolm X and for the Abraham Lincoln reference. Another more pacifist version dates back to at least the late 19th century when a Unionist presbyterian [?] clergyman in an election speech in Ireland said something like “We will fight with the ballot box in one hand and the bible in the other.”

“Sinn Fein/IRA” are often linked together in this way in speech to emphasise the close connection between Sinn Féin, the Republican political party and the Irish Republican Army, in order to discredit the party by inferring that it is undemocratic

⁶⁵) For example, *BT* 3/7/97 p. 16, Editorial titled *Images of Drumcree*: “It is to no-one’s credit that despite a year’s warning [the violence there the previous July], the British and Irish governments should be meeting in London today with the fuse of the Drumcree powder keg still burning” – an elaboration of the common oral expression “to defuse the situation.”

⁶⁶) *BT* 4/7/97 p. 15, reader’s letter from Ballyclare, County Antrim.

⁶⁷) A good deal could be done electronically. For a meticulous article on proverbs located electronically see <http://haldjas.folklore.ee/folklore/vol110/toughjob.htm> also available as a printed version (Järv 1999). For more details of the method used see his 1997 article (Järv 1997).

With the situation in Northern Ireland unresolved and the same drastic events regularly looming it is perhaps predictable that the same proverbial expressions will be employed in connection with them. It is interesting to note that at least one which came to light last year because of its use by a key figure (Gerry Adams): *The IRA will not go away* was subsequently observed in the *Belfast Telegraph* to refer to other things, often representing the politically opposite: *We Protestants are not going away*, used in a letter to the editor from a reader with the pen-name Lutheran⁶⁸ and *the marching tradition and culture are seen by many as a witness to their particular faith and will not go away*⁶⁹. When a phrase, however mundane, is used by a public figure its circulation is dramatically boosted. Indeed this expression, having risen to prominence in connection with Northern Ireland, is now being widely used about events elsewhere, for instance, it was heard in January, 1998, on a BBC Radio 4 news programme item about the United States: *The Monika Lewinsky affair will not go away*⁷⁰.

The *Belfast Telegraph* performs a highly significant function in a simple cycle whereby some orally transmitted material is transported briefly into print and subsequently quickly re-enters the oral sphere. The material could be likened to a sample of fish netted for a particular purpose and then released in a myriad of different locations. The chief effect of the brief passage through the printed medium is instant mass dissemination, with, possibly, an added seal of approval or endorsement. These can but enhance its chances of perpetuation.

Comment

This article, in a slightly shorter form, was read as a paper at the 12th International Society for Folk Narrative Research Congress in the section "Narrative Communication and the Media". I would like to record my great appreciation to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland for their support manifest in their award to attend the 1998 Congress in Göttingen, Germany.

⁶⁸) *BT* 1/7/97 p. 10, Lutheran, Belfast 5.

⁶⁹) *BT* 3/7/97 p. 16, signed male reader's letter from Castlederg, County Tyrone.

⁷⁰) BBC Radio 4 22/6/98 *PM* weekday news programme at 5 pm, 22/6/98.

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Aren't Proverbs there for the Taking?

References to Proverbs in Newspaper Texts

Risto Järv

POLITICIANS AS USERS OF PROVERBS

The novel by the Czech author Milan Kundera, *Immortality* contains the following passage: Johann Wolfgang Goethe is invited to an audience with Napoleon Bonaparte. At the beginning of the audience Napoleon, glancing at Goethe, utters a short remark, “*Voilà un homme! Hle, muž!*” [Behold, man]; towards its end he says “*divadlo – škola lidu*” [Theatre – school for the people] (Kundera 1990: 58, 60). As an experienced ruler, Napoleon knows that the greater part of what he is going to say will presently be forgotten. To making a speech memorable requires application of an **attention-grabber**. It takes but a brief impressive phrase – *une petite phrase*, as the French say – for the listeners to notice. If there were journalists present, these phrases would be repeated in the newspapers of the following day and the statesman has achieved his aim – he has made a memorable presence.

Phrases of this kind constitute the sc. “borrowed sayings” columns in today’s Estonian newspapers. These include quotations by politicians or other influential persons, usually one per day. Sometimes these columns draw attention to a politician’s infelicitous remarks, sometimes, however, they include such vividly expressive sayings as the ones described above.¹

The two phrases attributed to Napoleon represent two different methods of catching public attention. In the latter case, it is as if the utterer presents own ideas, which should attract the listeners’ attention with their figurativeness.² In the former case

¹) A 1997 overview of this column is accessible on the web-site <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/12/31/uudis.htm#viieteistkymnes>

the French phrase “*Voilà un homme!*” is comparable to the corresponding Biblical quotation, *Et Pilate leur dit: Voici l’homme*” (John, 19:5). Using a phrase that is familiar to the audience makes the situation in which it is uttered more memorable. When listeners encounter something familiar – flavoured with individual adaptations of the speaker – they are reminded of a text that is familiar to them and, through that, to a familiar situation.³

Thus, the memorability essential for success in politics is guaranteed by using well-known quotations (or paraphrases of these) as well as dropping witty comments of one’s own. One of the most effective categories of such quotations is made up of **proverbs**. These can be regarded as anonymous quotations, but – in contrast to anonymous letters – they nevertheless are perceived as coming from an authoritative source. The responsibility for their contents is projected on to an *anonymous past, anonymous folk* – as Alan Dundes and Erastus Ojo Arewa have formulated it their well-known essay titled “Proverbs and the Ethnography of Speaking Folklore” (Dundes & Arewa 1979: 35) which is among the first to draw attention not to proverbs as **texts**, but rather to the **context** in which they are used in oral speech.

²) Cf. e.g. the article in the Estonian daily newspaper *Postimees* (16 Dec, 1997), saying,

President Jacques Chirac of France has quoted Premier Mart Siimann’s promise, given at a dinner for European heads of states, that although on Saturday champagne was consumed both in Luxembourg and in Tallinn, next week Estonia will plunge into the serious work of preparing for the negotiations.

<http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/12/16/uudis.htm#kaheksas>

³) Cf. the news agency report in the daily paper *Eesti Päevaleht* (28 Oct, 1996):

[The Russian prime minister] Chernomyrdin also stated that the formation of a union of the four leading countries of CIS does not necessarily mean a vagueness of responsibilities or the destruction of the vertical hierarchy of executive power: “Every one of them [the four nations] will continue to carry out their own responsibilities and our meetings will be held along the principles of old folk saying – one head is good, two or four – even better.” <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel/12031>

THE AUTHORITY OF PROVERBS

That a proverb implies authority is reflected in many languages by the meaning of the corresponding generic term for it (i.e. the popular one, not the one used by researchers). In his work *Sananlaskut ja puheenparret* [Proverbs and proverbial phrases] (1954), Matti Kuusi has given a concise etymology for the word “proverb” in different languages. In addition to expressions such as “**word uttered**” or “**word said**”, they may also have the meaning of “a statement in support of something” (Welsh or Cymric), a “**wise word**” (Komi or Zyryan) or an “**influential word**” (Japanese) (cf. Kuusi 1954: 5–6).

In Estonian (“*vanasõna*”) and Irish (“*sean fhocal*”) the underlying meaning is “an **old word**”. While, in the case of “a wise word”, reference is made to the significant quantity of wisdom contained in the saying, in the case of old word another obviously positive concept is alluded to. The compound “old+word” assigns value to the saying by attributing it to the category of “old”, i.e. belonging to the past – as has been the case with folklore ever since Herder’s romantic conceptualisation of it.

Just as an aside remark, a line of thought that is based on the author’s impressions only and is not supported by any substantial proof might be mentioned at this point. At least in Estonian the use of the word “*vanasõna*” has an important shade of meaning attached to it, as the general attitude towards proverbs that represent a shorter form of folklore, differs significantly from the attitude of average uninformed person towards folklore as a whole, or “folk poetry” (“*rahvaluule*”), as the Estonians call it. For the man in the street anything that is included under the term “proverb” tends to have considerable truth value, whereas what is labelled as “folk poetry” is frequently viewed as fabrication, idle talk, as I have noticed during my folklore collecting field expeditions.

In addition to mediating old wisdom, the user of proverbs – e.g. a politician – acquires an aura of being one of the people. Although international by their very nature, proverbs seem nevertheless to belong to the domain of **our own people**; thus, the statesman attempts to leave the impression that he is voicing the people’s opinion. Abundant examples of politicians using proverbs can be found on the highest levels of the political hierarchy. Having chosen the Estonian words “*vanasõna*” (‘proverb’) and

“Meri” as my search words on the Internet, and using the Altavista search engine resulted in four proverbs from speeches given by Lennart Meri, President of Estonia, as well as several proverbs from interviews with him. It seems that he did not use proverbs merely for political eloquence, rather it stemmed from his wish to be memorable. Meri included proverbs in his speeches during his visit to Japan⁴ and on the occasion of the first visit of the Turkish head of state to Estonia,⁵ in his speech commemorating the sinking of the MS Estonia,⁶ as well as in his introduction to the Estonian Human Development Report in 1996 presented to the UN.⁷ The President of a country that has become very enthusiastic about the Internet concludes the latter speech with the following words:

[---] There is an Estonian proverb we would like the Internet to propagate over the world: “Kus viga näed laita, seal tule ja aita!” (“Where you find fault with something, come and give a hand.”) Proverbs never grow old, for they harbour the collective wisdom of the people – just the kind that people use as they talk among themselves or to their State.

“AREN’T PROVERBS THERE FOR THE TAKING”?

In the survey article on proverbs included in the new Encyclopaedia of American Folklore the influential proverb researcher Wolfgang Mieder, who has conducted similar research himself (Mieder 1997b) argues that the ways in which world leaders of both democratic and dictatorial persuasion have used proverbs as an effective political tool can be of similar interest to researchers as the use and functions of proverbs among the sc. *primitive peoples* (Mieder 1997a: 665).

The contents of Estonian proverb about proverbs (“*Vanasõna ei ole varrest võtta*”, EV 13584),⁸ could be conveyed into English

⁴) <http://vp1992-2001.vpk.ee/est/k6ned/K6ne.asp?ID=4112>

⁵) <http://vp1992-2001.vpk.ee/est/k6ned/K6ne.asp?ID=4084>

⁶) Meri 1996: 409; <http://vp1992-2001.vpk.ee/est/k6ned/K6ne.asp?ID=4224>

⁷) <http://web.archive.org/web/20010827185058/www.undp.ee/nhdr96/eng/Foreword.html>

⁸) Abbreviation EV stands for the register number of proverbs in the scientific edition of “*Eesti vanasõnad*” [Estonian Proverbs] vol. I–III, published 1980–1985.

approximately as, “proverbs aren’t there for the taking”. The proverb was sent to the Estonian Folklore Archives by the correspondent Marta Mäesalu, whose explanation of the meaning of the text says that a proverb “is not to be changed or distorted as one pleases” (*Eesti vanasõnad* III: 637). Also, the saying may mean that proverbs when used properly come to the user “on their own accord”, not when desperately looked for. According to the academic index of Estonian proverbs, this example has been attested only once. Nevertheless, considering the general reliability of the correspondent who sent it to the archive, it has been identified as an authentic proverb.

The distribution of proverbs contained in the Estonian Folklore Archives is governed by the so-called Zipf’s Law (cf. Krikmann 1997: 188) – a relatively small number of proverbs are represented by numerous attestations, whereas a majority of proverbs have only a small number of attestations. More than a half of the proverbs have been attested only once. Nevertheless, the uniqueness of the metaproverbial proverb may raise the question of whether using proverbs in vain could have been considered too insignificant for the people for proverbs to be coined about it. According to the electronic collection of proverbs “*Eesti vanasõnad*” [Estonian Proverbs], there are 13 metaproverbial Estonian proverbs, the number of attestations in each case is one or two only.⁹ Only two types have a significantly greater number of attestations – “*Vanasõna ei valeta*” [A proverb does not tell lies] (EV 13585, 25 authentic texts), and “*Vanasõna – vana hõbe*” [Proverb is old silver] (EV 13592, 15 authentic texts).

Thus we are faced with the question of whether proverbs are being used in the function of a purposeful embellishment, a rhetorical cliché or spontaneously.

SEARCH

In my research I have attempted to observe proverb usage in contemporary Estonian society. As the Herculean task of identifying all occasions of the use of proverbs by politicians appeared insurmountable, I decided to observe the context of proverb us-

⁹) <http://haldjas.folklore.ee/~kriku/VSR/TH.HTM#NHO>

age not by state authorities but by the so-called “fourth estate” that is the press.

My search for proverbs in today’s newspaper texts was restricted to those original articles, published in *Postimees* and *Eesti Päevaleht*, the two major daily papers in Estonia, that have appeared on the Internet during 1997–1999.¹⁰ In my search I followed my earlier practice and confined myself to a relatively simple method of searching (cf. Järv 1997: 31–34) – **only these proverbs are considered which the user has marked as being in a different level of text**. In Estonian this is done by using traditional phrases, such as: “as the saying goes...” (Est. “*vanasõna ütleb, et*”), “as folk wisdom has it...” (Est. “*rahvatarkuse järgi...*”), etc. It appeared also that in some cases users tended to call proverbs “proverbial phrases”; therefore, I have included those “proverbial phrases” as they were labelled, when they obviously turned out to be proverbs.¹¹ The search was limited to four keywords only – *vanasõna* (‘**proverb**’), *rahvatarkus* (‘**folk wisdom**’), *kõnekäänd* (‘**proverbial phrase**’), *vanarahvas* (‘**old folk**’). Thus the search has ‘flagged’ only those proverbs for which any one of these terms is applied as an ‘indicator’ of a proverb.

Table 1. General results: the marking of proverb usage with different terms.

The use of such simplified search system is justified by the fact that in the instances mentioned the authors of the articles draw the readers’ attention to the “proverbiality” of the utter-

¹⁰ The electronic version of *Eesti Päevaleht* has been published since 4 Oct 1995, the electronic version of *Postimees* has been published as of 24 Nov 1995. I included articles published before 13 Nov 1997.

¹¹ I tried to go by the degree of generalisation of the utterance, which in case of proverbial phrases is absent. The interrelationships of the two genres in the Estonian material are dealt with e.g. in Krikmann 1997: 52ff.

ances. Thus, in those instances, not knowing the proverb does not mean the the proverb would not be recognised as one. This aspect has been brought recognised by e.g. Shirley Arora who, having studied the perception of Spanish proverbs, polemizes with Dundes' and Arewa's above-mentioned essay. In the collection *Wise Words*, compiled by Wolfgang Mieder, she stresses that proverb performance is successful when the other party is **clearly aware** that what is used is a proverb, or "collective wisdom" (cf. Arora 1994: 6).

It is obvious that such a search method can not be exhaustive. A comparison of the newspaper material with all of the 15,000 types of proverbs identified in the volume *Eesti vanasõnad* would be more conclusive; however, it would involve too massive an amount of work to be gainfully employed. Moreover, the folkloric variation of proverbs as well as their conscious variations (e.g. paraphrases) would complicate the search in terms of the types' title texts or core terms.

The number of proverbs that remain undiscovered by this method cannot be estimated, as we lack statistics on how often the "proverbiality" of a proverb is emphasised and how often its presence is marked. A brief survey of the articles found by the above-mentioned search method demonstrated that proverbs not modified by the search keywords can also be used even in the same articles. For example, in addition to the concluding sentence of an article by the prolific proverb user Rando Soome, *I am reminded of the proverb about shoemakers who never have decent shoes to put on*,¹² there is an allusion to a proverb in the title of the same article "**Silence is Really Gold**" (recalls the proverb "Talking is silver, silence is gold" EV 9956).¹³

¹²⁾ <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/02/26/sport.htm#1>

¹³⁾ Other articles by this author contain combined proverbs, but not all of them refer to the 'proverbiality' of the text: e. g. <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/11/13/sport.htm#kolmas> and <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/11/21/sport.htm#kolmas>. Certainly other such prolific proverb users can also be found.

¹⁴⁾ <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/06/14/kultuur.htm#esimene>.

“PROVERBS ARE NOT POPULAR THESE DAYS...”

“[---] and too often they just do not apply any more”, stated one of the articles considered.¹⁴ And yet, both daily newspapers make use of proverbs almost every other day; all in all, nearly 300 texts with proverbs warranting further discussion were found. In addition to these, about 50 of those articles that dealt with proverbs on one or another level, contained references to researchers, collections of proverbs etc.¹⁵ These were excluded from my survey; several texts were also ignored that were referred to as ‘proverbs’ by the users, but which did not in fact belong to our corpus of proverbs, representing e. g. so-called short proverbial phrases.¹⁶ As an exception, a popular saying remaining on the borderline between the proverb and the proverbial phrase “*Hundid söönud, lambad terved*” [Wolves fed, sheep whole] was included. It is not recorded as a proverb in EV but still was as a rule regarded as one by most of its users.

I have also included familiar quotations, which to a certain extent meet the criteria set for proverbs. In such cases the author’s name has usually been forgotten in the course of time or it might never have been known. The concluding sentence of an article on politics is an example of this:

[---] And, as the proverb goes: He who does not know his past may have to relive it. This is a tragedy I would not wish to befall even Russians.¹⁷

seems to be a free rendition of the aphorism by the Estonian author Juhan Liiv. “He who doesn’t know his past lives with no future”.

Of course, we can never be certain whether such subjective consideration of what to include or exclude has any effect on the statistics below. The following merely exemplifies some caveats here. One article begins with the sentence:

¹⁵) References to hypertexts of all included articles with proverb are at the web-site <http://haldjas.folklore.ee/tagused/nr10/vsviited.html>

¹⁶) In reviewing and extending the typology of proverbs, as well as searching for background information I received invaluable help from Arvo Krikmann to whom I am most grateful.

¹⁷) *Eesti Päevaleht*, 1. 08. 1997, p 2.

¹⁸) <http://epl.ee/artikkel/8354>

[---] According to folk wisdom a warm summer is usually followed by a warm winter, a hot summer, on the other hand, is usually followed by an extremely cold winter [---]¹⁸

This is indeed reminiscent of an attested text noted as a proverb “*Sui käib talve järele*” [Like summer, so winter], (EV 10983, 5 authentic recordings). Still, because the text was not used as an aphorism presented as a proverb, but rather it was an example of so-called *common wisdom*, it was discarded.

From the point of view of folklore research, the next extract also contains neither a proverb nor actual beliefs of people; rather, it could be classified as an everyday credo:

[---] A German proverb about catching a cold says that it takes three days to come, three days to stay, three days to disappear. There is another proverb about running noses as well. This states that if you treat it, it will be cured in a week, and if you don't, it will be gone in seven days [---]¹⁹

With some reservation I have included an extract from a literary review which attempted to characterise the book's protagonist with the help of the proverb “*Kudas küla mulle, nõnda mina külale*” [As the village treats me, I shall treat the village] (EV 5030, 115 authentic texts). To lend support her point, the author made a reference to the 2nd volume of “*Eesti vanasõnad*”, including the page number as well as the large number of variants found for the proverb obviously with the aim of proving the its reliability.²⁰

A fairly interesting letter from a reader was left out, that was titled “**Let's Remember Folk Wisdom**”. In the letter an annoyed parent uses nine proverbs from M. J. Eisen's book “*Estonian Proverbs*”, to defend her child's school (e.g. *Mis sa teed, teed enesele* [Whatever you do, you do unto yourself], *Seda, mis tahad teisele öelda, ütle enne enesele* [Whatever you wish to say to another, first say to yourself], *Mida vihaga tehakse, läheb viltu* [What is done in anger will fail], *On sul häda, kaeba enesele* [If you have a trouble, complain to yourself]).²¹

¹⁹⁾ <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel/4829>

²⁰⁾ <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel/2096>

²¹⁾ <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/05/14/tartu/kirjad.htm#esimene>

OWN AND FOREIGN, OLD AND NEW

The occasional interpretation of the Estonian term “vanasõna” whereby proverbs are regarded only as **old** wise sayings, might exclude more recent sayings reminiscent of proverbs, that have become firmly established in popular usage, from being classified under this name. Nonetheless, sayings such as “*Enne, kui lähed Pariisi, käi ära Nuustaku!*” [Before going to Paris, go and visit Nuustaku], “*Üks pilt räägib enam kui tuhat sõna*” [One picture says more than a thousand words], “*Kes maksab arved, tellib hiljem muusika*” [He who pays the bill can order the music] have become firmly established in modern usage and are perceived as proverbs by the people.

It is hardly surprising that such new sayings have an international distribution. A number of such “new” proverbs were discovered by Finnish researchers as the result of the 1985 proverb collecting composition. The bulky volume of this material contains the proverbs and proverbial phrases that had not been included in the archival records up to 1950 nor had they appeared in publications about proverbs before 1965 (Kuusi 1988: 14). The material includes equivalents to such sayings labelled as proverbs in our newspaper texts as “*Üks pilt räägib rohkem kui tuhat sõna*”²² [One picture says more than a thousand words] (Cf. *ibid.*: 253), “*Poolel teel hobuseid ei vahetata*”²³ [You don’t change horses half-way] (Cf. *ibid.*: 215; Archer Taylor (1931: 37) attributes it to Abraham Lincoln).

Proverbs of other nations have often been consciously used. As stated by the authors of articles included in my search, there were in all 29 instances of proverbs from 15 different countries (in fact, foreign proverbs were even more numerous than native ones). Russian (8), English and Chinese (both 3) were the ones used most frequently. Only a small portion of them was connected directly to the contents of the text, i.e. the article was concerned with the relevant country. For example, an article about the Russian Orthodox religion began with the words:

²² <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/10/11/valis.htm#neljas> and <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/05/07/tana.htm#teine> (the author of both articles is Kaido Floren).

²³ *Eesti Päevaleht*, 23. 05. 1997, lk 2

[---] “A priest’s beard is always soaked in butter” goes a Russian proverb [---]²⁴

An article that was inspired by the building of an oil terminal in Lithuania described the passionate debates around it:

Social democrats call the terminal a strategic issue, but president Brazauskas and prime minister Gediminas Vagnorius regard it as a commercial matter. There is a Lithuanian proverb: a name does not ruin the thing itself.²⁵

Generally, however, there was no obvious reference to the contents of the article and the proverbs were well-known maxims from ancient “classical” cultures (Latin, Arab, Hindu), or else they expressed the wisdom of indigenous peoples (Rundi, Mari). In a single case a proverb was attributed to another culture in order to achieve a comic effect.

Texts regarded as foreign proverbs were in some cases also known in the Estonian tradition, – for example the proverb, “*Peale kaklust rusikatega ei vehelda!*” [Do not fling your fists after the fight] occurred three times (and was twice identified as a Russian proverb). It is included in EV with one authentic version, “*Pärast riidu ei ole tarvis rusikad näidata*” [There is no need to show your fists after the quarrel], (EV 9622, a record from Vaivara parish where Russian influence has been strong).

It seems that a proverb from a foreign “high” culture may at times seem more effective to the user than a native one, e.g. the proverb quoted in the extract:

A popular Chinese proverb says that if everyone swept the pavement in front of his house, the whole street would be clean.²⁶

has an Estonian variant as well (EV 9372, “*Igaüks pühkigu oma ukseesist*” [Everyone should sweep their own threshold]).

²⁴) <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel/17817>

²⁵) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/03/06/valis.htm#kolmas>

²⁶) <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel/2738>

All in all, a total of 182 proverbs were found to have reference numbers in EV,²⁷ while the remaining twenty percent consisted of foreign loans, familiar quotations, etc. with no Estonian counterparts. Thus, we notice the fact that proverbs' absence from the EV index did not discourage the authors from classifying them as "proverbs" ["folk wisdom" etc] – "new" proverbs and those from other cultures were used without their origin or novelty posing any problem.

PARAPHRASES AND PARODIES

Naturally, the proverb texts exhibited variation; memory will play its tricks even when the texts have reached the user via a secondary tradition. The variations were also more complicated – for example, the merging of two proverb texts:

[---] Generally, the saying "kaua tehtud, hästi tehtud" [Slowly done, well done] does not apply to the production of Russian car industry. [---]²⁸

Apparently, this is a combination of the proverbs "*Kaua tehtud, kaunikene...*" [That which is slowly done, is nice] and "*Ise tehtud, hästi tehtud*" [Done by oneself, well done], (EV 8487+EV 7982).

In a few dozen cases the proverbs were intentionally paraphrased for the purpose of parody. While Arvo Krikmann noticed a "growth in intensity of the production of proverbial parodies" (Krikmann 1985: 474), the proportion of such parodies in our study seems to indicate that this is not the case at least with respect to the press.

In some cases, however, the paraphrasing of a proverb was probably not intended to have a humorous effect. The following text is an example of this

[---] I can't help recalling the old folk wisdom that an ox is to be feared from the front, a horse from the back and a career-climber from all four sides simultaneously [---]²⁹

²⁷) The more recent additions to the "Eesti vanasõnad" are available in Internet search: <http://haldjas.folklore.ee/ri/date/robotid/leht1.html>.

²⁸) <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel/6037>

²⁹) <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel/7936>

the actual proverb ends with the words, “and an evil person from all sides” (EV 3270); it is not certain whether the newspaper version is the author’s creation or a paraphrase heard from elsewhere. The evaluative force of a proverb (even if used humorously) may be retained in newspaper articles as has been observed, among others by Neal N. Norrick (1985: 24).

In an interview the sports physician Peeter Mardna argues that it is not only sports medicine that can guarantee Estonian skiers

“[--] high results at title competitions. Or, to paraphrase a proverb: Trust in medicine, but do some work yourself as well!” Mardna adds.³⁰

Apparently, this is a paraphrase of the internationally known proverb “Trust in God, but don’t be reckless yourself” (There are no authentic attestations of the proverb among the Estonian archival texts).

In the case of some paraphrases the comical effect was secondary, e.g., in the sentence “...*vanarahvas teadis öelda, ega tuumaõnnetus ei hüüa tulles...*” [... a nuclear accident brings no warning, as folk wisdom has it...], which refers to the proverb “*Õnnetus ei hüüa tulles*” [Misfortune brings no warning], (EV 14714).

The most numerous category of paraphrases discovered seems to consist of those created with the aim of producing a comical effect; the paraphrase acquired an additional element of parody. For example, introducing the picture “The First Wives’ Club”, a film critic wrote,

“Fool a woman once, and she will fool you nine times,” may be a topical interpretation of a well-known proverb [--].³¹

A special mention should be made of the journalist Tambet Kaugema, who has used modified paraphrasing on several occa-

³⁰) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/10/28/olympia.htm#kolmas>

³¹) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/05/24e/film.htm#teine>; refers to the proverb “*Narri põldu üks kord, põld narrib sind üheksa korda*” [Cheat the field once and the field will cheat you nine times’], EV 7398)

sions; he is the author of modifications such as “*Aga kus suitsu, seal välgumihklit, on vanarahvas ikka öelnud.*” [The old folk has always said that where there’s smoke, there’s a lighter]³² and “*Parem papagoi peos, kui kondor katusel*” [A parrot in the hand is better than a condor on the rooftop],³³ as well as the perhaps apocryphal “*Samojeedi rahvatarkus ütleb, et kahte asja ei tohi pilgata: mehe naist ja mehe palka*” [A Samoyed saying goes that you must not make fun of two things: a man’s wife and a man’s salary].³⁴

DISTRIBUTION OF PROVERBS IN DIFFERENT COLUMNS

As far as the differences between the divisions into sections of the two daily newspapers were concerned, the columns had to be categorised. Thus, token ‘conventional columns’ were formed, mainly on the basis of the more general columns found in *Eesti Päevaleht*. The more detailed division of *Postimees* had to be reorganised. A new separate section titled **Readers’ Letters** was also introduced. Originally, it did not exist in either of the papers. The **Opinion** column (“*Arvamus*”) of *Postimees* was divided in two, separating **readers’ letters** (even if these were concerned with politics) on the one hand, and **political** articles on the other. I also considered the **People** section of the weekend supplement *Extra* of *Postimees* and the column **Life** as equivalents of the **People** column of *Eesti Päevaleht*; these were classified as the section **Life, people**. As expected, some columns in one newspaper had no equivalent in the other, miscellaneous articles were classified as **Other**.

Measuring the “proneness to proverbs” in different columns of different newspapers did not necessarily provide the most reliable of results. Due to the paucity of the material observed, the conclusions reached might be arbitrary. The number of proverb occurrences in different token columns (see Table 2) is nearly equal as far as **Politics** and **Readers’ Letters** were concerned,

³²) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/10/21/kultuur.htm#neljas>; refers to the proverb “*Kus suitsu, seal tuld*” [Where there’s smoke there’s fire]; (EV 10650)

³³) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/07/27/kultuur.htm#neljas>; reference to the proverb “*Parem varblane peos, kui tuvi katusel*” [Better a sparrow in the hand than two on the branch], (EV 13795)

³⁴) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/02/12/kultuur.htm#teine>

column\ newspaper	Eesti Päevaleht		Postimees		Total	
		%		%		%
Politics	21	22.8%	23	16.5%	44	19.0%
Readers' letters	10	10.8%	33	23.7%	43	18.6%
Culture	16	17.4%	23	16.6%	39	16.9%
Sports	10	10.9%	21	15.1%	31	13.4%
Life, people	12	13.0%	14	10.1%	26	11.3%
Foreign News	4	4.4%	8	5.8%	12	5.2%
Environment	11	12.0%	1	0.7%	12	5.2%
Economy	7	7.6%	2	1.4%	9	3.9%
News	0	0%	5	3.6%	5	2.2%
Media Review	–	–	4	3.6%	4	1.7%
Other	1	1.1%	5	2.9%	6	2.6%
Total	92	100.0%	139	100.0%	231	100.0%

Table 2. The total of proverbs and percentage of articles containing proverbs.

followed by **Culture**, **Sports** and **Life, people**. However, the separate 'top lists' of the two papers somewhat differed from each other – e. g. in *Postimees* **Readers' Letters** are definitely in first place.

It must not be forgotten that the proportions of columns vary according to the newspaper as well. That the number of proverbs in readers' letters of *Eesti Päevaleht* is smaller than in *Postimees* comes as no surprise, since it was obviously caused by the smaller number of readers' letters printed. Furthermore, there was no such column as **Media Review** in *Eesti Päevaleht*. The column **Environment**, however, appears almost every day in *Eesti Päevaleht*, but quite rarely in *Postimees* (under the name of Nature), which is why this column was high in the 'top list' of the former newspaper.

As mentioned already, the frequent use of proverbs in the **Politics** column is hardly surprising, as politicians want to be remembered and seen as relying on the people. The high position of **Readers' Letters** in the list is fairly predictable – letters sent to editors are often intended as a protest or to teach others. The authors have probably assumed that the most efficient way of educating the public is by using arguments ostensibly created by the same public. While we can presume that politicians share the same psychological motivation to a certain extent, as far as

the writers of letters are concerned, there might be a latent concern that the man on the street might not get a hearing and so consequently “generally accepted truths” should be used.

The frequent use of proverbs in the **Culture** column can be explained by the fact that proverbs in fact belong to the cultural sphere more so than to the topics covered in other columns. Still, I would once again like to remain mindful of the possible “flaws” in the mechanism of choice. About a quarter of the proverbs (4) from the Culture column in *Eesti Päevaleht* derive from Mati Unt’s essayistic articles in the series “Everyday Mythology” where he often gives examples of wisdom of different nations. Often, however, it can be assumed that these are artificial and do not express a spontaneous reaction, but are rather the deliberate intention on the part of the author to demonstrate erudition (this is further correlated with the wide range of proverbs and familiar quotations of different origin that he uses). E.g. in the article “**Red Light**” Unt writes: “There is an English proverb that the red evening sky is the shepherd’s joy, and the red morning sky is a warning of bad weather”.³⁵ In his article “**Field**” he recalls the well-known proverb “*Narrid põldu üks kord, narrib põld sind üheksa korda vastu*” [Cheat the field once and the field will cheat you nine times], (EV 7398) arguing that this is a case of personifying the field.³⁶

What appears as a surprise is the sum total of the proverbs in the **Sports** column of *Postimees*. Almost all of these (18 out of 21) occur in Rando Soome’s articles, either in their original form (“*Kus häda kõige suurem, seal abi kõige lähem*” [Where the need is the greatest, help is nearest], (EV 1787),³⁷ or “*Töö kiidab tegijat*” [Work praises the one who has done it], (EV 12515)),³⁸ or as a paraphrase:

³⁵ *Eesti Päevaleht*, 11. 05. 1996, p 6, the thought has parallels in Estonia as well: “*Eha punab, hea ilm; koit punab, kuri ilm*” [Sunset is red – nice weather, sunrise is red – bad weather] (EV 514)

³⁶ *Eesti Päevaleht*, 31. 08. 1996, p 7.

³⁷ <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/09/03/sport.htm#kaheksas>

³⁸ <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/09/17/sport.htm#viies>

[---] I cannot help being reminded of the proverb about shoemakers who never have decent shoes to put on.³⁹

[---] Knight's words implied that at least in his opinion, business is thicker than blood, to paraphrase a popular saying.⁴⁰

This is an example of one author's uncommonly prolific use of proverbs that is not equalled by anyone else.⁴¹

Quite a number of proverbs could be found in the **Life, people** column. In some of the interviews included here the proverbs have been uttered by the person interviewed and the reporter has merely recorded them. But still, proverbs have also been used in asking questions: a reporter, for instance, asked the director general of the State Revenue Office whether the proverb "*Suured vargad sõidavad tõllas, väiksed ripuvad võllas*" [Big thieves drive in coaches, smaller ones are hanging from the gallows] still applies. The answer was the following

All thieves should be hanged, the bigger ones higher and smaller ones lower. (Laughs.) Actually, there should be no difference in how they are treated.⁴²

Of the major columns it is predictably the **Economy** column that contains relatively few proverbs. This is illustrated by *Postimees*, where the classification of two articles containing proverbs under "Economy" is ambiguous – although classified as such by the newspaper, both are connected with family planning rather and are not genuine articles on economic issues.⁴³ Prov-

³⁹) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/02/26/sport.htm#1>, cf. EV 3188 "*Rätsepal pole riidet ega kingsepal kinga*" [The tailor has no clothes, the shoemaker no shoes].

⁴⁰) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/08/21/sport.htm#kuues>, cf. EV 13944, "*Veri on paksem kui vesi*" [Blood is thicker than water].

⁴¹) When, in order to reduce the possible influence of such prolific user of proverbs as Rando Soome, I excluded him from the calculations. As a result, the percentage of proverbs published in the Sports column dropped to 6,9%, placing it in the same group with the columns Environment, Foreign News and Economy.

⁴²) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/03/22e/index.htm>

⁴³) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/11/14/majandus.htm#kolmeteistkymnes> and <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/05/11/majandus.htm#kuues>

erbs occurring in the **Economy** column of *Eesti Päevaleht* were comparatively more numerous, including a striking example of manipulation with a proverb that was included in an insurance agent's advertisement for buying insurance: "As the saying goes, "Being stingy is not efficient", and neither is not being insured."⁴⁴

It seems interesting that while *Postimees* has peppered its **News** column with five different proverbs (although admittedly two of them appear in interviews on topical matters), there is not a single occurrence of proverbs in the corresponding column of *Eesti Päevaleht*.

All these differences have had an effect on the general statistics, over the period of two years (see table 1) the numerous references to proverbs in *Eesti Päevaleht* are two thirds the number in *Postimees*. The uneven distribution for proverbs could be the result of the different size, or else by the different target groups of the two papers. *Eesti Päevaleht* has characterised its reader as an "ambitious Estonian",⁴⁵ while *Postimees*, which has wider circulation, has aspired to be a paper for "readers of all age groups".⁴⁶

DISTRIBUTION OF PROVERBS ACCORDING TO AUTHORS

As mentioned earlier, the articles containing the largest number of proverbs were written by Rando Soome – all in all he used proverbs in 17 different articles. References to proverbs in more than three articles occurred in the texts of authors such as Vahur Kalmre, Tambet Kaugema, Andrus Laansalu, Mati Unt, (4), Vahur Kalmre (4), . eslovas Iškauskas, Ülo Tonts, Devil Tserp, and Andres Varik (3). Among consistent proverb users there were not as many politicians as might have been expected. Nevertheless, more than one proverb was used by Andres Varik, minister of agriculture (3), Robert Lepikson, in his roles as the minister of internal affairs and the mayor of Tallinn (1 + 1), and the young politician Meelis Kitsing (2).

⁴⁴) <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel/15671> , cf. EV 15209, "Koonerdamine pole kokkuhoid" [Stinging is no economy].

⁴⁵) *Eesti Päevaleht*, 18. 12. 1995, p. 2.

⁴⁶) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/95/12/30/arvamus.htm#esimene>

The principal users of proverbs in newspaper texts are men – they contributed 72% of the proverbs under observation, whereas women were responsible for 17% (the rest of the articles were written by persons whose gender remained unspecified, the articles were anonymous or signed with initials only). Yet I believe that men contribute to 4/5 of the contents of a newspaper, while women are responsible for only 1/5. So, a cautious formulation might be that **men seem to use more proverbs in newspapers than women.**

It is interesting to observe how the use of a proverb by one author can bring along the repetition of the same proverb (at times even in a similar context) by another. This might lend evidence to the fact that a proverb sharpens the audience's attention. For example, one author made a critical comment, relying on the proverb "*Kelle leiba sööd, selle laulu ka laulad*" [You sing the song of the person whose bread you eat], (Cf. EV 5657).⁴⁷ In an answer published three days later the proverb was "returned", i.e. was directed against the original writer.⁴⁸ Thus, criticism through the use of a proverb must have been effective and conditioned its re-use.

Several examples of this kind could be noted. On April 16, 1996 the Sports column of *Eesti Päevaleht* included the following sentence:

[...] The winners are not judged – this saying would also justify [basketball coach Allan] Dorbek's behaviour [...].⁴⁹

Two days later the same phrase was repeated by another author, an editor of the sports column:

[...] After the match this situation was not mentioned, he was simply glorified. Even the saying goes: the winners are not judged [...].⁵⁰

⁴⁷) *Eesti Päevaleht*, 23. 11. 1996, p 2.

⁴⁸) *Eesti Päevaleht*, 26. 11. 1996, p 2.

⁴⁹) <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel/5301>

⁵⁰) *Eesti Päevaleht*, 18. 04. 1996, p 9.

We can also observe how the same proverb is repeatedly inspired by the same situation. Presuming that the following two texts have not influenced by each other, we have another – in this case Island-related – piece of evidence of how witty expressions are retained in people’s minds and are quoted in their travel-ogues with nearly a year between them.

[...] But yesterday’s weather refuted the Icelandic saying that if you don’t like the weather, wait for half an hour [...]⁵¹

[...] Icelanders have a proverb of the Murphy kind: if you do not happen to like the Icelandic weather, just wait for five minutes and it gets worse [...]⁵²

THE POWER OF PROVERBS

Due to its intertextuality a proverb exercises a distinct influence when it is merged in a text. The proverb is a complete text in its own right, constituting **a text within the text**. A proverb is even more powerful when it occurs in a stressed position, at the beginning or end of the text. In his survey of the use of proverbs in some newspapers Max Lüthi has mentioned the not infrequent use of proverbs “*an ausgezeichneter Stelle*,” as titles or concluding sentences (Lüthi 1970: 495).

It is a well-known fact that what is said at the beginning or end of a story is remembered best, psychologists, conducting experiments with sequences of unrelated words, have termed these phenomena as *recency effect* and *primacy effect* (see e.g. Gleitman 1991: 249). Thus, the positioning of proverbs will underline the author’s (perhaps even unconscious) wish to be remembered by the reader, reveal the general tonality of the story or provide it with an imposing final chord. Traditionally, proverbs have been used at the end of folk tales to make a rhetorical conclusion of what has preceded; however, unlike folk tales, newspaper texts are fairly utilitarian. It seems that the use of a proverb positioned at the beginning of a text, especially as the title, can be regarded as relatively “non-folkloric”; such an application

⁵¹⁾ <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/07/24/uudis.htm#seitsmes>

⁵²⁾ <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/09/21e/reis.htm>

of proverbs is a calculated action rather than the spontaneous reaction to a situation.⁵³

In the following I shall note proverbs in titles, at the beginning and end of texts. Also proverbs situated not at the absolute beginning or end of the article, but near the “border” of the text, are included. These additional proverbs were all situated in the first or the last paragraphs, and the “topic” of the proverb did not deviate from the topic of the text itself – the whole of the text between the proverb and the text border constituted a preparatory statement for the proverb or its conclusion. Examples from the beginnings of sentences:

Chairman of the Coalition Party Mr Tiit Vähi and Chairman of the Centre Party Mr Edgar Savisaar have been busily digging pits for each other for two weeks running. Supposing the well-known proverb be true, the digger should fall into the pit himself” [---]⁵⁴

In today’s technological world talking is an old-fashioned form of communication. Even a proverb states that talking is silver, silence is gold [---]⁵⁵

On one occasion a set of two proverbs was used to summarise the article:

[---] There are two good proverbs applicable in such a situation: “The pot derides the kettle” and “It is wiser to give in”. The choice you make will depend on hoe kind you are.⁵⁶

We should make a note here that some of the examples involving two proverbs in a row in one and the same article have been ‘devaluated’ for our statistics, e.g. the following concluding sentences

⁵³) The Estonian weekly *Maaleht* deserves special attention as a conscious user of proverbs. On the front page of every issue we can find a topical picture with a matching proverb (most likely selected by the editors).

⁵⁴) *Eesti Päevaleht*, 22. 08. 1997, p 2. The article, in fact, is entitled “Tiit Vähi in His Own Pit”.

⁵⁵) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/01/04e/jess.htm#esimene>

⁵⁶) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/07/19e/elu.htm#esimene>

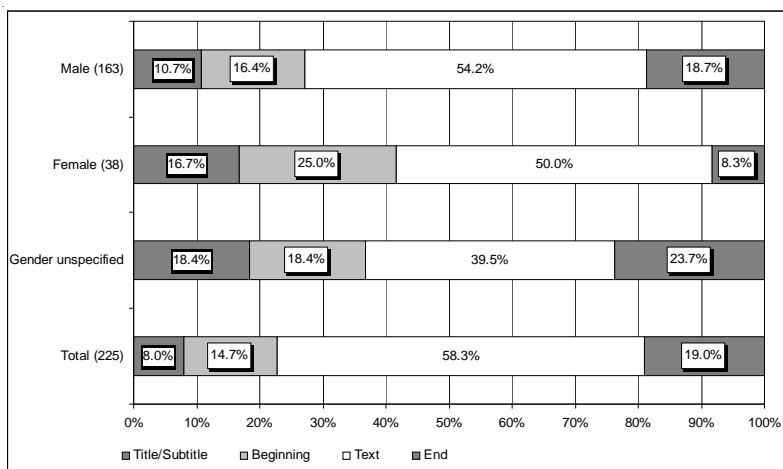


Chart 1. The use of proverbs at the beginning/end of the article according to the user's gender. Percentage among the particular distributions.

[---] Just be consistent and keep on looking. He who seeks shall find – as the proverb goes. And a mouse will not run into the mouth of a sleeping cat!⁵⁷

In distributions all of this kind (7) were considered to be a single reference to a proverb.

Chart 1 shows the tendencies in positioning the proverbs. As the chart indicates, men placed proverbs into beginning or end of the article in more than 40 percent of the cases. Women have proved to be even more conscious users of proverbs – three out of every five proverbs used by women (nearly 60%) were placed at the very end or beginning of the article. In other words, as such sentences constitute but a minor part of the bulk of the article, the function of the proverb as a rhetorical weapon is quite apparent.⁵⁸

The authors' awareness of the power of proverbs is convincingly demonstrated by including them in editorials. Half of the

⁵⁷⁾ <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/01/10/tartu/kirjad.htm#kolmas>

⁵⁸⁾ Another calculation also considered proverbs placed at the end or beginning of paragraphs – it appeared that most of the proverbs were positioned as the title (11%), at the beginning (32%) or the end (34%). Only less than a quarter of the proverbs were placed in the middle of a paragraph...

eight proverbs used in the editorials of *Postimees* were placed at the end of the text.

[---] If he [the current prime minister of Estonia Mart Siimann] really has no skeletons in his closet as he himself claims, there is no need to be worried. Nobody can lay hold of the skirt of a righteous man, as the proverb goes.⁵⁹

[---] And so the personnel policy of Siimann as far as the proverb reminds us: row slow and you shall reach far. And if there are no extraordinary elections, he may indeed get far.⁶⁰

[---] Better half an egg than an empty shell – “Postimees” would like to hope that the proverb does not apply here. All compensations that high state officials receive should be honest and made public. Only then can we decide whether Tiit Vähi’s [the then prime minister of Estonia] future salary of 16.560 kroons a month is appropriate for a politician.⁶¹

[---] Thus, at the visa negotiations with Finland Estonia does not have to play the role of the humble brother any more. “He, who has thirst, has legs,” says an Estonian proverb.⁶²

We cannot overlook the fact that in three cases proverbs are meant to reproach the Prime Minister in office. Obviously, proverbs are used as *vox populi* not only by the statesmen, but also against them.

In both newspapers proverbs (or paraphrases of them) were used as headlines:

Before Going to Paris, Go and Visit Nuustaku!
First Negligence, then Disaster.
Taking One’s Time Brings Good Results
Never Look a Gift Horse in the Mouth

⁵⁹⁾ <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/04/30/index.htm#esimene>

⁶⁰⁾ <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/97/03/17/index.htm#esimene>

⁶¹⁾ <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/05/18/index.htm#esimene>

⁶²⁾ <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/01/20/index.htm#esimene>

Repetition is the Mother of Wisdom
 He Who Asks is not Slapped on the Mouth
 You Shall Reap What You Sow
 A Name Does not Ruin the Man
 If a Cow Had a Grandmother It Would Keep an Eye on the Calf! (Estonian proverb)
 The Mote that is in Thy Brother's Eye... [+ in the article the text was continued as: "...and the beam in your own"]

The first example is not an 'authentic' proverb, but it is often used as one these days. In this regard, nearly all proverbs used as headlines belong to the ones used frequently, which demonstrates again that popularity in traditional usage has indeed served as a precondition for them to be included in headlines. An exception here is "If the cow..." – a proverb with a single authentic variant obviously derived from the collection *Vanasõnaraamat*.⁶³

Headline proverbs are often extended: "**Being Stingy on Insurance is not Efficient**",⁶⁴ and modified: "**The Big Cheats are Still Driving in Coaches**",⁶⁵ "**Half an Egg Does Not Replace a Whole**",⁶⁶ "**The Cranes Have Left, but Nasty Weather Has Not Come**".⁶⁷ An interesting example of proverb usage was an article where the headline "**Negligence Causes Increasingly More Fire Accidents**" was extended by the first sentence of the article "*First negligence, then disaster*".⁶⁸ Sometimes headlines question the validity of proverbs: "**Is Silence Consent?**",⁶⁹ or reverse folk wisdom, "**Wolves not Fed, Sheep Gone**".⁷⁰

⁶³ Presumably it is the first text under the sub-topic "*Oleks*" [If there were...] (*Vanasõnaraamat*: 557), containing a single record.

⁶⁴ See note 44.

⁶⁵ Cf. the proverb "*Väiksed vargad ripuvad võllas, suured sõidavad tõllas*" [Small thieves are hanging from the gallows, big thieves are driving in coaches], (EV 14474).

⁶⁶ Cf. the proverb "*Parem pool muna kui tühi koor*" [Better half an egg than an empty shell], (EV 8970).

⁶⁷ A polemization with the proverb "*Kured lähvad – kurjad ilmad [---]*" [When the cranes leave there'll be nasty weather], (EV 4574)

⁶⁸ EV 1496

⁶⁹ Cf. "*Vaikimine on nõusolek*" [Silence is consent], (EV 3225)

⁷⁰ Cf. "*Hundid sõnud, lambad terved*" [Wolves fed, sheep whole].

Mihkel Mutt's lengthy essay titled "Tying up the Ox's Mouth", an extensive speculation on the meaning of proverbs as its starting point, starts from a proverb derived from the Biblical quotation about not tying up the ox's mouth while he is threshing grain. The article was placed in the context of the then topical "housing scandal" (municipal government illegally selling apartments to statesmen and businessmen).⁷¹

There is little that is new under the Sun. The present article was already nearing completion when I discovered similar research conducted by Wolfgang Mieder in 1971 that was based on the weekly *Die Zeit* (Mieder 1983). The frequency of proverb occurrence in Mieder's survey provided a 'top list' nearly similar to the one listed above. (The division of Mieder's survey was to be sure more specific, and the columns with no equivalents in my survey might change the results to a certain extent): Modern Life – Politics – *Feuilleton* – Readers' Letters – Mirror of Country – Economy – Literature – Science – Sports – Topical (Mieder 1983: 12).

Wolfgang Mieder also studied the position of proverbs in articles. 36 (11.7%) out of the total of 306 proverbs were used as headlines, 64 (20.9%) at the beginning of paragraphs, 56 (18.3%) at the end of paragraphs. (Mieder 1983: 12). It deserves attention that only 65 (21.2%) of the proverbs detected by Mieder are marked, whereas the terms used as keywords in the present paper form only a minor part of Mieder's survey (Mieder 1983: 12). This demonstrates that the actual number of proverbs in newspaper texts might be considerably higher than the one presented in our survey.

TOP LIST OF THE MOST POPULAR PROVERBS

According to the result of the survey, the most popular marked proverbs were the following:

Üheksa korda mõõda, üks kord lõika [Measure nine times, cut once], (EV 14841, authentic archival texts 40) – 7 occurrences

⁷¹⁾ *Eesti Päevaleht*, 27. 01. 1997, p 2.

Väiksed vargad ripuvad võllas, suured sõidavad tõllas [Smaller thieves are hanging from the gallows, bigger ones are driving in coaches], (EV 14474, authentic texts 35) – 5

Parem hilja kui mitte kunagi [Better late than never], (EV 1262, auth. 40) – 4

Pada sõimab katelt, ühed mustad mõlemad [The pot derides the kettle, both are equally black], (EV 8196, auth. 220) – 3

Parem pool muna kui tühi koor [Better half an egg than an empty shell], (EV 8970, auth. 270) – 3

Ära enne vana kaevu täis aja, kui uus valmis ei ole [Don't fill up the old well before you have dug a new one], (EV 13525, auth. 195) – 3, occurred only as 'Don't spit into...'

Pea tehtud pilla-palla, kaua tehtud kaunikene [What is done quickly is a muddle, what is done slowly is nice], (EV 8487, auth. 165) – 3

Teise silmas näed pindu, enda silmas ei näe palki [The mote that is in thy brother's eye and the beam in thine own eye], (EV 11889, auth. 50) – 3

Tasa sõidad, kaugemale jõuad [The slower you drive, the further you get], (EV 11698, auth. 35) – 3

Pärast riidu ei ole tarvis rusikad näidata [There is no need to show your fists after the quarrel], (EV 9622, auth. 1) – 3

It is possible that 'proverbiality' is stressed first of all in the case of less known proverbs. We might, therefore, assume that more popular proverbs were consequently more poorly represented in our search. As a second phase of the study a renewed search for proverb texts that were already detected by the present search might have been conducted.

Nearly half (103) of those proverbs detected that were recorded as types in EV were attested only once. Part of them had obviously been used with certainty just because of their occurrence in the well-known "*Vanasõnaraamat*" or some other source. The position of the proverb was also important; cases in which the first proverb listed in a certain topical category or printed at the top of a page in "*Vanasõnaraamat*" are by no means rare.⁷²

⁷²) Here, I present a list of five references to the articles where this was the case: <http://www.zzz.ee/epl/961123/art61.html>, <http://www.zzz.ee/epl/961203/art48.html>, <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel/13443>, <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/04/13/arvamus.htm#teine>, <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/05/11/index.htm#esimene>

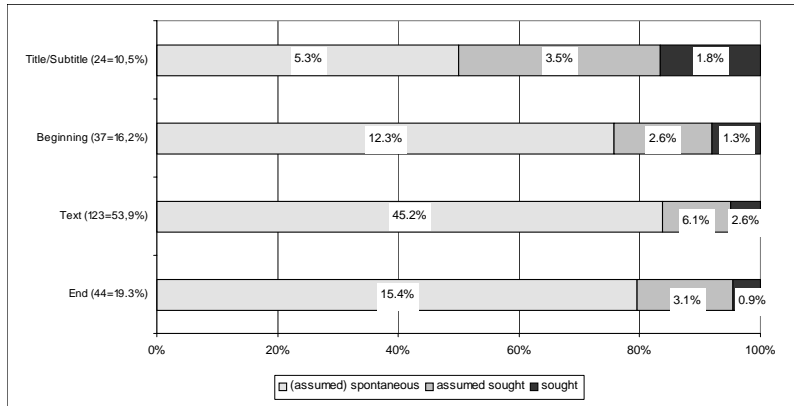


Chart 2. Use of 'sought' proverbs in the text titles & subtitles/ beginnings/ closures. Percentage among the total number of occurrences.

For instance, the proverb “Üks põle ühtigi” [One is nothing]⁷³ that is supposed to come from Paldiski is most likely taken from the introduction to the respective subsection in “*Vanasõnaraamat*”, that mentions Paldiski as the site of recording.

An interesting proverb found at the end of an article is “*Koduvärvat ei panda kinni, ütleb Võrumaa vanarahvas*” [One’s home gate will never be closed, says folk wisdom from Võrumaa].⁷⁴ “*Eesti vanasõnad*” contains three authentic records of the saying (EV 4003), all of them dialectal and originating from the Setu region. We might assume that the author of the article has borrowed it from the earlier, 1955 edition of the proverb collection, which indeed names Võrumaa as the place of recording (*Valimik eesti vanasõnu*: 196).

This kind of proverb use cannot be labelled as spontaneous, but may rather be described as a purposeful search in a “catalogue of goods”. An attempt to differentiate between the two situations resulted in the distribution of proverb use as presented in Chart 2. (In some cases identification of loans proved difficult and remained necessarily subjective.)

Although the role of purposely sought and presumably purposely sought proverbs is by no means overwhelming, it becomes clear that these appear to be more numerous in the titles and at

⁷³) <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel/4888>

⁷⁴) <http://www.postimees.ee/leht/96/08/14/kultuur.htm#esimene>

the beginnings of the texts (The ‘planned’ proverbs’ distribution was also similar within smaller text units – **paragraphs**). It seems that in the case of natural and oral use of proverbs the proverbs are mostly situated so as to conclude the text unit, to characterise what has been said earlier. The tendency, apparent in newspaper articles, to use proverbs at the beginnings of text units is a result of the (presumably) more calculated composition.⁷⁵ It is not surprising that publications facilitating proverb search have been used for this purpose. Nevertheless, most of the proverbs we observed in newspapers have been referred to because of an “inner compulsion”, thus in the spontaneous way.

Translated by E.-R. Soovik, K. Vassiljeva and K. Realo

Comment

This article has appeared earlier in the journal *Folklore* (Järv 1999). Unfortunately, a considerable number of the internet links have been moved or are no longer valid. The links referred to in the earlier version of the article were double-checked, and have been, when necessary, substituted with the new web-addresses. Those sources that could not be traced have been replaced with references to paper sources (including the entire political column in *Päevaleht*). In addition to this, the language of the present version was improved by Harry Mürk’s corrections, which has also been reflected in the alteration of the title. What has remained unchanged, however, is the use of proverbs in newspapers, by politicians, and by the society at large. This is evidenced by the continued practice of featuring proverbs in newspapers, for example on the front page of *Maaleht*, or by politicians, as shown in Wolfgang Mieder’s recent brilliant analysis of Barack Obama’s rhetoric (Mieder 2009). *Vanasõna om alati tark* – ‘There is wisdom in proverbs’.

⁷⁵ Also Charles L. Briggs (1994: 336) who has studied the proverb use by the inhabitants of the state of New Mexico has observed that proverbs used for didactic purposes nearly always constitute the final word on the subject.

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CATASTROPHES



“Born a Lady, Married a Prince, Died a Saint”: The Deification of Diana in the Press and Popular Opinion in Britain

Gillian Bennett and Anne Rowbottom

Unless you have been living on another planet, you will know that Diana Princess of Wales, the former Lady Diana Spencer, died in a horrific car accident in Paris on 31 August 1997. She was 36 years old and at the height of her fame and beauty. Perhaps she was also on the brink of a new chapter in her life. Her divorce settlement from the heir to the British throne had been agreed, and she had spent the summer in the company of a handsome international playboy, Dodi Fayed, son of the Egyptian millionaire, Mohammed al Fayed, the owner of Harrods. Rumours were afloat that there was a romance between Dodi and Diana, fuelled by pictures of the pair together on Fayed’s yacht in the Mediterranean, and Diana’s rash retort to bullying pressmen that her next announcement would be a bombshell. Dodi Fayed was killed with Diana as they attempted to avoid photographers in a highspeed chase from the Paris Ritz, where they had wine and dined together and exchanged expensive gifts. The exact cause of their deaths has not so far been established, nor the exact nature of their relationship.

This sensational story, involving royalty, romance, mystery, a car chase, and violent death wiped everything else from the front pages of British newspapers, and still grabs the headlines to this day whenever some new angle is uncovered. In Diana stories, the content of “popular” and “quality” newspapers have converged as they did in war and at the deaths of the wartime King and Prime Minister, though normally they are quite polarised. In the death of Diana, the sort of personal angle pre-

ferred by the tabloids and the historical angle preferred by the qualities have both found an ideal subject (Sparks 1992: 37–41).

After Diana's death had been announced normal broadcasting was suspended, sports fixtures were cancelled, and newspapers rushed to bring out special editions with attention-grabbing headlines. Meanwhile, flowers were being laid in London outside the royal palaces. Later, they were to appear at churches, townhalls, and at other official sites nationwide. Books of Condolence were set up at all these venues so that people could record their thoughts and messages. By the Wednesday following Diana's death, the waiting time to sign one of these books at St James's Palace was said to be 12 hours. The press printed pictures of hysterically weeping people, and the whole nation was depicted as sunk in deep shock and mourning: "a sea of tears in an ocean of flowers" (headline in the *Sunday Mirror*, 07.09.1997: 10–11); "two billion broken hearts" (headline in the *News of the World* 07.09.1997: 14–15). How far this picture of "a nation of tears" was the press's own creation is a moot question. Many witnesses have reported that they saw no noisy exhibitions of grieving and that the crowds were notable for the quietness and gravity of their demeanour (Monger & Chandler 1998: 104).¹ Indeed, some commentators have suggested that the press went deliberately in search of exuberantly weeping people in order to construct their preferred story (see Biddle & Walter 1998: 96–99; also Walter, Littlewood & Pickering 1995). Others, however, believe that there "there can be little doubt that what we witnessed [---] was the articulation of collective emotion" (Watson 1997: 4), and that there had been "undeniably mass grief" which the media "could only watch and follow" (O'Hear 1998: 183). However that might be, public feeling was strong enough to force the Queen to make several concessions to popular opinion, most notably to make a broadcast portraying herself as a bereaved person. It was difficult then – impossible now – to know whether the British people really had abandoned their famed reserve and spontaneously indulged in an orgy of emotion. However, as a folklorist and an anthropologist, we cannot help suspecting that at least part of the effect was caused by the interac-

¹) A similar quietness and decorum was observed among the crowds who assembled for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II (see Shils & Young 1953: 72).

tion of genuine emotion with powerful cultural images that could be shaped into a number of emotive story-forms.

The storytelling started immediately. Initially, questions about who was responsible for the accident and how it had happened took pride of place with explorations of Diana as an emblem of modern tragedy like Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, or J. F. Kennedy.² But, as the funeral approached, it was sentimental angles that dominated, and Diana was depicted as a fairytale heroine, a victim, a saint, and, in the Prime Minister's famous words, the "People's Princess." These are the stories that have endured to become the dominant popular discourse today, and which are the focus of this presentation. During her lifetime there had been other ways to respond to Diana, but her untimely death closed many of them off. In May of this year, for example, the popular press were outraged at the publication of an essay in which the author described the Princess as a muddled, self-obsessed woman who failed to understand her royal role (O'Hear 1998: 183). During her lifetime a substantial section of the British people would have approved these views. After her death, they became literally unspeakable.

Though, for the sake of simplicity, we shall be dealing with the various themes separately, they are part of an apparently seamless structure. When Diana fails to meet with the saintly ideals, the discourse switches into the victim image; when that fails to fit, Diana becomes the fairytale heroine. This image-switching does not cause any difficulty to speakers and hearers, and is hardly noticed, because the images are connected, not by logic, but by a sort of moral emotion. Together, they provide closure for Diana's lifestory. They also unfold a vision of ideal kingship. We think it is not insignificant that after her death she was widely acclaimed as "Queen of Hearts." It is this theme with which our presentation concludes.

It is as "fairytale" heroine, however, that the press most frequently constructed Diana in the immediate aftermath of her

²) The similarities to the lives and deaths of Marilyn Monroe, John F. Kennedy, Grace Kelly, Elvis Presley, Eva Peron, and so on were endlessly mined. Less obvious comparisons, however, were made by the more adventurous feature-writers; these included Princess Astrid, Joan of Arc, Marie Antoinette, Mary Queen of Scots, Dylan Thomas, Jimi Hendrix, Buddy Holly, Otis Redding, and the poets Keats and Shelley.

death. Alongside innumerable references to her “fairytale romance” and “fairytale wedding,” they indulged in more extended metaphorical fancies. “Surely she was immortal like other fairytale princesses?” mourned one columnist (Moore 1997: 13). “No earthly prince can wake her,” read a printed message in the *Daily Mail* (3 September 1997: 19). Changing the allusion, a leader in *The Independent* (1 September 1997: 8) was headed “The beauty that couldn’t tame the beast.” But it is as Cinderella that she was chiefly portrayed: “It was a fairytale alright [wrote a columnist famed for her venom] [---] a version of Cinderella in which the unsuspecting, virtuous heroine was not plucked from isolation and cruelty [---] but rather condemned to it [---] [F]rom the scraps she was thrown, sitting there in her sumptuous scullery, she made a life [---] amidst the Gothic gloom of our own House of Usher.” (Birchill 1997: 5).

Even where *Märchen* were not directly invoked, the Diana story was told according to folktale conventions. Though, as far as we know, no-one has yet produced a checklist of the typical characteristics of the *Märchen* heroine,³ it would be easy to put one together using the features attributed to Diana. “Young, beautiful, vulnerable and virtuous,” the archetypal story would go, “the heroine is subjected to the mindless malice of powerful forces, who bring her low and make her suffer. She battles patiently on, helped by the love of the natural or supernatural world. Eventually a further transformation brings the story to a close with the triumph of the heroine, her escape from suffering, or the downfall of her enemies.” This is exactly how the Diana story was told in numerous headlines: “The saviour spurned by the court” (*The Times*, 01.09.1997: 24); “A simple heart in a heartless world” (*Ibid.*); “Diana [---] embodied the right to follow the law of the heart. And what was on the other side? Repressed emotions, crabbed age, protocol which crushes the young and eager heart, a court fenced off from the ‘real world’” (Ascherson 1997: 22); or, our favourite because it gives a modern twist to an old theme: “We all knew that Di was defending herself and her kids from an alien life-form with acid for blood.” (Simpson 1997: 16). Readers’ messages printed in the press or written on floral

³) For a study of the hero, see Lord Raglan 1965.

tributes echoed these themes: “You were our fairytale Princess, who’s now a sleeping beauty.” Similar sentiments were expressed by people in the crowd who waited to see her funeral cortège pass by: “she was a universal human being who [---] could rise above all the adversity she had in her life [---] all the tragedy, terrible marriage”; “she always was a fairytale Princess and it broke our hearts to know that what we saw on the outside, the inside was being torn apart [---]”⁴

The Diana story, thus told, has two possible endings. In one, the heroine triumphs over her enemies. According to this scenario, the Royal Family were standing on the very brink of destruction. In headlines and comment the press announced: “Rock bottom support for the monarchy” (headline in the Manchester Evening News 31.08.1997: 21), “The crown tarnished before our eyes” (headline in the Observer 07.09.1997: 7), and so on. Interestingly, those who attempted to defend the royals did not argue that the Royal Family had behaved well or that change was not needed or that their position was secure; instead, they portrayed them as having “really” loved Diana all along.

According to the other ending of the Diana *Märchen*, the battered beauty escapes from the wicked family who do not know how to value her and walks into the embrace of her “real” Prince Charming. It is significant that from the moment of Diana’s death, press and public alike ceased to sneer at the romance between the princess and the playboy, and began to portray Diana and Dodi’s affaire as true love. There could thus be a happy, if posthumous, ending to the story. “She’s at peace for the first time in so many years,” said one bystander. “They loved together and they died together,” said another. “At least we know she found love and happiness at the end of her life which is some consolation to us all.” This, too, was Mohamed Fayed’s own closure on the story: “God took them to live together in Paradise.” (quoted in the Daily Mirror 02.09.1997: 2). Perhaps the most pleasing version of this “Happy Ever After” formula was written on a bunch of flowers left at Kensington Palace:

⁴) Unless otherwise stated, quotations from messages left for Diana or from bystanders at Kensington Palace or on the funeral route are taken from Anne Rowbottom’s fieldnotes.

Diana and Dodi

RIP

God Bless you Both

The world will never forget you

May you have as much fun in Heaven as you did in St Tropez.

(quoted in Monger & Chandler 1998: 104)

However, the most enduring image has been of Diana as a secular saint. The context for this image is popular religiosity. Though Christian clerics are wont to regret the declining figures for church attendance, Britain is not entirely the secular society they deplore. Figures for 1991–1995 in the most recent edition of UK *Religious Trends*, show quite high percentages of people believing in God, especially women and the over 55s. In addition, a smaller percentage of people said they believed in “a Higher Power of some kind.” (Brierley 1998–1999, Table 5.13). Even more convincing figures were obtained from a recent survey into attitudes to burial and cremation which took into account adherents of religions other than Christianity in Britain. Here, the researchers found that only 168 out of 1603 people surveyed in 3 British cities said they were agnostic or atheist. The vast majority of the respondents were prepared to give a religious affiliation of some sort (Davies 1995: 130, Table 1). Though figures like these do not prove that British people are religious in any formal sense, they do indicate that they are unwilling to completely turn their back on religious practice and worldview. It has been suggested that in recent years there has been a rise in “non-aligned spirituality” (Bowman 2000). Instead of attending the services provided in the traditional churches, many people have been believers not belongers (see Davie 1994); and many have devised their own vernacular forms (see Primiano 1995) ransacking the spiritual supermarket for ideas suited to their personal needs. Especially among young people, many are “seekers”.⁵ As Colleen McDannell has put it: “People construct meanings using a set of theological and cultural ‘tools’ to build responses to their own spiritual, psychological, and social longings” (McDannell 1995: 17). The crowds who converged on London, and who were photographed by the press, were mourn-

⁵ See Steven Sutcliffe’s (1997) useful categorisation of religious adherence.

ing within the framework of this popular religiosity with its generalised spirituality, its magpie selection of religious imagery and doctrine, its elevation of feeling, and its improvised ceremonies.

In this context, one significant trend has been the reinvention of ceremony both within and outside the institutional churches. This is particularly noticeable in rites of passage. Within the established church, the *Alternative Service Book* (1980) presents revised forms of baptism, marriage and burial which have angered traditionalists by the language of feeling being substituted for doctrinal correctness (Mullen 1998: 109–113); outside the Church, people often tailor these important ceremonies to their own requirements.

About five years ago, British folklorists, anthropologists and sociologists suddenly woke up to the fact that violent or accidental deaths were being customarily marked by the laying of flowers and other gifts at the home of the deceased or at the scene of the death. There has been some discussion about whether this practice is an entirely modern phenomenon in Britain; and, if so, at what point it became customary rather than occasional. A folklorist colleague has tracked down several instances from the early years of this century (Monger 1997: 113); another colleague, a sociologist, has suggested that the idea of laying flowers was probably disseminated by TV coverage of the Hillsborough football stadium disaster in 1989, when camera footage showed a carpet of flowers being laid for dead fans at the home ground of one of the teams (Walter 1996: 106; see also Walter 1991). But certainly, it has been the usual public response to death by violence or accident for perhaps the past eight or nine years.

Though they are plainly multivalent and may carry any number of meanings, we like to see the gifts that are laid for the dead as primarily love-tokens. (If you look at what is actually presented on these occasions they are typically the sorts of things one gives as expressions of affection – literally hearts and flowers, also cuddly toys, sentimental cards, and things that are precious and personal to the giver.⁶) However, there were enough

⁶) Gifts for Diana included a pair of ballet shoes, a pair of bikers' boots, a Tee-shirt, head-band and road map. Also, an old 78 inch record with the message, "This record is one of my most prized possessions. But I would like you to have it" (see Monger & Chandler 1998: 104).

religious overtones in the presentations for Diana to lead many people to interpret them as “offerings,” and the press invariably referred to the sites at which the gifts were laid as “shrines.” Alongside the flowers and toys were items with a religious or vaguely “spiritual” significance – candles, joss sticks, holy pictures, prayer cards, lilies – and these were often accompanied by what we think may be regarded as icons of Diana, photographs and drawings, and especially the Queen of Hearts playing card. In one notable example, observed by folklorists George Monger and Jennifer Chandler, a “sacred heart” picture had Jesus’s heart cut out and replaced with a picture of Diana.⁷ These displays were often accompanied by prayers, home-made verses, or messages.⁸

These were most often directly addressed to Diana herself – “Diana, our thoughts are with you”; “Rest in peace, beautiful lady”; “We’ll look after your boys.” These sentiments clearly imply the sort of vaguely spiritual beliefs in a universal afterlife that are encapsulated in newspaper “In Memoriam” columns (see Dégh 1994), and in verses commonly given to the newly-bereaved.⁹ They also reflect popular ideas about the transmutation of the good dead into saintly intercessors for the living (see Bennett 1987: 61–81; Davies 1997: 153–162).

In towns and cities, many shops created “shrines” in their windows by showing photographs of Diana alongside vaguely funerary or religious displays made up of urns, flowers and drapes (see Bowman 1998: 100). The tabloid press also created shrines to Diana within the pages of their newspapers. Their staff photographers toured the memorial sites in London taking pictures of the individual gifts and messages left there. They also invited

⁷) This mixture of sacred and secular is not without precedent. At the service held in Liverpool RC Cathedral for the victims of the Hillsborough stadium disaster, for example, members of the congregation laid football regalia, scarves, shirts and favours, on the altar during and after the service. See Walter 1991.

⁸) For a more detailed account of the love tokens left for Diana, see *Flowers for the Princess* by Rowbottom (forthcoming).

⁹) See, for example, Canon Scott Holland’s verses “Death is nothing at all” and Mary Fry’s “Do not stand at my grave and weep.” Both these sets of verses were reproduced full-page in two Sunday tabloids beside pictures of Diana, one under the heading “Thought for the Day” (also the title of a popular early-morning radio religion-slot) (see Sunday Mirror 07.09.1997: 47; News of the World 07.09. 1997: 13).

their readers to send in their own messages and memories. All these were then printed in double-page spreads: the centre was a picture of the carpets of flowers laid at the Royal palaces, the borders were composed of readers' and visitors' messages reproduced in their original form, and a banner headline with a sentiment such as "Britain lost a Princess, Heaven gained a queen" (The Sun 02.09.1998: 24–25) framed the whole display.

Religion was also invoked in a number of stories that linked Diana with saints and churches, or implied that she had recently had some sort of spiritual crisis or conversion. One journalist unearthed a report that one of her distant ancestors was about to be canonised (Bunyan 1997: 5); another suggested that before her death she had made secret visits to a Carmelite chapel in Kensington to pray "in front of the statue of a young female saint who led a troubled life with parallels to her own" (Morgan 1997: 19); others reported that mourners waiting to leave their gifts and messages had seen "visions" of her.¹⁰ Stories and headlines continued the religious theme. Her good works and her perceived warmth and gentleness of heart were an invariable focus, helped out by the portrayal of her relationship with the Windsors as a form of martyrdom, and her death as a final sacrifice to her celebrity.

These journalistic themes were not plucked out of thin air; they reflected the language and sentiments of many mourners. A verse left with a bunch of flowers at St James's Palace read:

Diana

We know what we'll see when we look in the sky
A new star is there – yes, it's our Princess Di
A star that is brighter than any above
Because it shines down with all of her love.

In prose, but no less poetically, a woman standing beside the funeral route expressed similar sentiments: "[---] she gave of her love, and she gave – it was so genuine so undiluted, it just poured from her [---]". Many messages printed in the press called for Diana to be canonised: "Thank you for the love you gave to the poor, may the Lord make you a saint"; "Diana should be made

¹⁰ See, for example, Marks (1997: 5). See also, item under heading "Early Campers in Abbey Vigil" in the *Guardian* (05.09.1997: 5).

patron saint of Britain.” Others already accorded her sainthood: “Saint Diana, the irreplaceable Patron Saint of Love,” one printed message read.

But it was through the visual images that the canonisation of Diana was completed by the press. The most frequently printed pictures of the dead princess showed her cuddling sick children. The most popular of all showed her robed in a floaty blue gown, holding a scarred child on her lap, looking down at him with a prayerful countenance. The headline to this picture in one paper was a quotation: “Anywhere I see suffering is where I want to be, doing what I can” – plainly, readers are being invited to see Diana as the Madonna (The Sunday Times Style Supplement 07.09.1997: 47). Another much printed photograph showed her with Mother Theresa of Calcutta: the two women face each other with their hands folded in a greeting which looks like a prayer; both are dressed in white and Diana is leaning attentively towards the diminutive nun. Again the quotation makes the connection: “You know you could not do my work and I could not do yours. We are both working for God. Let us do something beautiful for God.” (The Daily Telegraph 08.09.1997: 80)

This brings us to our final point. Why was Diana so consistently portrayed as the “People’s Princess” and the “Queen of Hearts,” that is, as “royal” in some special way?

There are several possible cultural connections between sanctity, Christian deeds and royalty. The history of our islands is mostly famous for its heroic failures, but there were ten royal personages in the first millenium who were canonised or venerated as saints: and in the second millenium there have been two; Henry V, the hero of the battle of Agincourt, who was widely regarded as a saint for many generations, and Henry VI who might have been canonised if his successor (the notoriously grasping Henry VII) had not been too mean to pay the fee the Pope demanded. Academic studies of the last fifty years have also drawn attention to a connection between religion, virtue and kingship in British popular sentiment about the Royal Family.¹¹ One of

¹¹) There are remarkably few of these, but see: Billig 1992; Birnbaum 1955; Blumler et al. 1971; Boccock 1985; Hayden 1987; Nairn 1988; Prochaska 1995; Rose & Kavanagh 1976; Rowbottom 1998; Shils & Young 1953; Wilson 1989; Zeigler 1977. The only anthropologist to seriously investigate British (rather than African) kingship was A. M. Hocart in a chapter entitled “In the Grip of Tradition” which looked at the abdication crisis of 1936 (see Hocart 1970).

the earliest papers to deal with the present reign, Edward Shils and Michael Young's "The Meaning of the Coronation," concluded that "the monarchy has its roots in man's beliefs and sentiments about what he regards as sacred." (Shils & Young 1953: 64). On a more domestic scale, a survey conducted twenty years ago asked people to say who was the earliest King or Queen they could name. Ninety percent picked out the "virtuous" monarchs of the previous hundred years and passed over the less admirable ones completely (Rose & Kavanagh 1976: 550).

The connection has also been made in the education of recent British monarchs. As part of their preparation for kingship, Kings George V and VI studied the writings of Walter Bagehot (see Cannadine 1984: 107, 1992; see also Cannon 1987: 17). In his great work *The English Constitution* (1867), Bagehot said that, though the idea of divine kingship was now untenable, the monarchy had a religious sanction which "confirms all our political order." (Bagehot 1867; 1928: 33). His rather dour interpretation of the monarch's role has been the model for the House of Windsor ever since it began calling itself that. From him they learnt that kings should be aloof and solitary and maintain a certain mystique; they should be removed from party politics, from enemies and desecration; they should be wise, and embody the domestic virtues (Ibid.: 40–48). Academic studies of what people expected of their monarchs undertaken in the 1970s largely reflected this traditional pattern (see, for example, Blumer et al. 1971; Zeigler 1977); and popular hagiographies of the Royal Family written in the 70s and 80s confirm the picture. Robert Lacey's book *Majesty* portrays the Queen as conscientious about her public duties and enjoying a "quiet evening at home"; Elizabeth Longford's *Elizabeth R* attributes to her the virtues of dignity, courage, energy, self-discipline and conscientiousness (see, for example, Lacey 1977: 223–224; Longford 1983: 9–11).

The Royal Family's image as this kind of monarch has been severely dented in recent years, especially because of the model's equation of fitness for rule with domestic virtues. The divorce of three of the Queen's four children and the antics of the Duchess of York have undermined the Windsor's reputation as upholders of family virtues. Prince Charles's admitted longterm adultery, Diana's well-publicised reference to herself as the "Prisoner of

Wales,” and, of course, her television interview in which she portrayed herself as a woman wronged by a man, and that man as unfit to be king, all added to the damage.

Diana herself of course, never fitted Bagehot’s model, and the stripping from her of her HRH title after her divorce could be interpreted as motivated by a desire to distance her from the Royal Family and limit any damage she might do to its image. If so, it backfired. After her death every action of the Royal Family was scrutinised for signs that the Queen did not regard Diana as really royal. Her failure to return to London immediately to lead the public mourning was particularly badly taken, and the more press and public believed that Diana was being rejected, the more they were eager to demonstrate that, for them, she was not only indubitably “royal,” but their preferred royal. A growing theme was that there was a better way of being royal than the House of Windsor knew about. “She was a sweet princess,” said one message, “and for me the real Royal Family.” Another addressed to Diana said: “The Royals didn’t deserve you. You showed the world what ‘Royalty’ is all about.” We suspect that this aspect of the mourning for Diana indicates that substantial numbers of British people in the 1990s are rejecting Bagehot’s sober model of the ideal monarch and looking for something more in tune with their needs.

We might seek this new ideal by recalling another way in which saintliness and kingship might be culturally connected. This is a familiar narrative connection drawn from the folktale themes with which we began. Many *Märchen* celebrate a natural aristocracy of courtesy and gentleness and reward those who possess these qualities by elevating them to the real aristocracy; so youngest sons gain royal brides, and scullerymaids win the heart of kings. In the world of the *Märchen*, kindness and sympathy with the downtrodden constitute a claim to the throne. Diana was, of course, consistently portrayed in just these terms. It is interesting in this respect that commentators in the press routinely suggested that the values that informed the mourning for Diana were the sensibilities (or, from another point of view, the sentimentalities) which had brought “New Labour” to power the previous year. In other words, in claiming Diana as “royal,” they were affirming the need for “heart” in national life.

There is another way that we might suggest that the traditional reliance on the Bagehotian ideal had failed the Royal Family. Bagehot had advised the monarch that his duties were “grave, formal, important, but never exciting.” By adhering to this model, the Windsors came to be seen as coldhearted, aloof, and miserably dull in contrast to Diana. The mourning for her had a strong element of yearning for excitement in national life, for something that would bring Britain glamour and glory. A leader in the *Daily Mirror* on 4 September perceptively pinpoints this longing, so I’ll quote it almost in full:

By every standard, this is the most supreme display of emotion this country has seen. It has reached deep inside the British people in a manner that seems beyond explanation.

After decades when the people of this country seemed to be losing their national identity, we have found one[---]

[---] in recent years it has at times been hard to find something to be proud of.

But we are proud of Diana. Proud that this country could produce someone who so captured and captivated the world’s heart.

The glory that she brought us puts our sporting and other failures into perspective. Here was someone who was a symbol of our nation and also a symbol of grace, charity and humanity. (*Daily Mirror* 04.09.1997: 11)

I wonder whether I am alone in finding this talk of “glory,” “grace,” “charity” and “humanity” strongly reminiscent of Camelot, King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table? Arthur is better known than almost any of Britain’s historical kings. Immortalised in verse, films, musicals, and children’s classics; locked into the seascape in local legends about the lost land of Lyonesse and into the landscape in innumerable “Arthur’s Seats” – the “once and future king” provides a narrative template of courtly kingship, a heady mix of glamour, virtue, and heroic action.

It is interesting in this respect that, in the forthcoming issue of *Folklore* Marion Bowman records that on the day after Diana’s death she was travelling to a conference and fell into conversation with a member of the British Order of Druids, a neo-pagan

religious group who see themselves as following ancient Celtic religion and practice. To quote briefly, this is what the Druid argued:

Diana Spencer was of the ancient British royal bloodline. Her “arranged marriage” to Charles had been engineered to re-introduce this ancient bloodline and legitimise the House of Windsor [---] The British people warmed so much to Diana because they instinctively recognised she was truly royal, their “real” monarch [---] Prince William, whose name is William Arthur, was born on the summer solstice; if he were to follow the ancient custom of kings using their second name, he would become King Arthur. Thus, through Diana, the ancient British royal bloodline would be restored to power, with a new King Arthur for the new millenium. (Bowman 1998: 101)

As Marion remarked, “This is as yet not a widely articulated reading of events,” but what a story it makes! In it, the narrative performance that was the mourning for Diana, reaches its apotheosis by writing her into a legendary history that suffuses the past with splendour and promises that the glory days will come again.

Through their gifts and messages and the stories they wove about her, those who mourned the princess had provided closure for her life. They had presented her with all that she had lacked, and given her back to herself in perfected form – loved, happy, crowned, beatified, immortal. But they had given themselves a gift too – a touch of magic, a glimpse of Camelot, a queen who made them “proud to be British.”

We want to end by presenting an image that, for us, encapsulates many of the themes we have been discussing. It was printed in the “Style” supplement of the *Sunday Times* on the 7th September (page 28), the day after Princess Diana’s funeral. In the foreground we can see a beautiful, golden-haired woman, the sun shining on her hair like a halo. She is dressed in green, the colour of renewal; and she is wearing a poppy, the symbol of remembrance for those who gave their lives for their country. In her left hand she carries two or three love-tokens in the form of bouquets of flowers. One has a note attached to it on pink paper. Behind her, the symbol of nationhood, the union flag, is being waved by happy girls and boys, symbols of the future. She is on

bended knee, her right hand on her breast, and she is looking up at the children in an attitude of devotion.

What more needs to be said? This is the woman who was “Born a Lady, Married a Prince, Died a Saint.”

Comment

The material for this essay is drawn from research conducted by the authors in the immediate aftermath of the death of Diana. Gillian Bennett sampled six daily newspapers and four weeklies for a month and recorded TV coverage over the same period. Anne Rowbottom mingled with the crowds gathered at public places in London, talked to people, made fieldnotes, and photographed the messages and flowers left there. She also interviewed research contacts known to be enthusiastic royalists.

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Legends Connected with the Sinking of the Ferry *Estonia* on September 28, 1994

Eda Kalmre

The Estonian folklorist Oskar Loorits (1900–61) has observed that most religions of the world have developed around death and funeral. Even today a great deal of folklore is created following catastrophes.

Traffic accidents involving numerous victims have already become a part of our everyday life. Radio, TV and newspapers allow us to follow all major natural disasters, mass murders, acts of terrorism or nuclear catastrophes occurring all around the world. Life and death are no longer strictly family or clan matters. In the late 20th century, Europeans have become used to the idea that progress in science has eliminated hunger and epidemic disease, and progress in technology can prevent catastrophes. The stronger the belief, the more severe is the shock following a setback.

The ferry *Estonia* sunk on the stormy Baltic Sea during the night of September 28, 1994, taking the majority of its crew and passengers along with it. Only a few people managed to escape from the ship during the twenty or thirty minutes it took the ship to go down. There were 137 survivors, 852 people were reported missing. The sinking of the *Estonia* is the worst accident that has ever occurred on the Baltic Sea, if we do not count the horrors of the Second World War.

After the *Estonia* catastrophe, oral traditions connected with the accident began to spread, just as it had happened after the *Titanic* went down. Quite similar rumours and legends appeared simultaneously in Estonia and neighbouring countries, Finland and Sweden. The Finnish folklorist Leea Virtanen has briefly mentioned them in her book on contemporary legends and rumours *Apua! Maksa Ryömii. Nykyajan Tarinoida ja Huhuja* (Virtanen 1996: 68). The Swedish folklorist Maria Hanberger

(Hanberger 1996: 109–121), and the Finnish folklorist Ulla Lipponen (collections in the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literary Society) have collected and studied jokes that appeared after the sinking of the *Estonia*. On the analogy of such terms as Xerox-lore or Aids-lore, this phenomenon has been called catastrophe-lore (Hanberger 1996).

The treatment of catastrophes has developed into an interdisciplinary area of research where the studies of historians, researchers of journalism and folklorists have several points of convergence. Hannu Salmi, a Finnish historian, provides a good example of the historical approach that can be taken with respect to catastrophes. The term *catastrophe* was originally associated with dramatics; it came from Greek and marked the turning point in a drama in the Aristotelian prosody (Salmi 1996: 21–22). Hannu Salmi argues that disasters, catastrophes and accounts of disasters are modern contemporary tragedies, which could be treated not simply as a piece of news but as an Aristotelian tragedy, a mimesis of fear and sympathy. According to Aristotelian theory, an accident caused by ignorance – and not malice – was the most tragic of all. Accounts of disasters often emphasise the results of mistakes caused by ignorance. Therein lies the tragedy of shipwrecks like these of the *Titanic* and *Estonia*. Travel across the Baltic Sea on m/s *Estonia* was something everyone could understand. “Unawareness”, a midnight voyage where nobody can anticipate potential disaster stirs deep emotions and feeds the imagination. The descriptions of possible disasters become a part of the narratives of eyewitnesses, the stories depicting the moments before the catastrophe, the “blissful unawareness”. The blissful unawareness and the ultimate disaster have been successfully employed in disaster fiction, movies and literature. Tendencies of the supernatural and the metaphysical are rather characteristic of contemporary media lore. The recurring components of news broadcasting catastrophes are: (i) the reproduction of the tragic incident (the case as a visual image); (ii) the search for the culprit and cause; (iii) describing the destruction following the accident. Also, testimonies of witnesses play an important role. It is namely these narratives that illustrate the metaphysical essence of disaster (Salmi 1996: 21–40).

Andres Kõnno has analyzed the media coverage of the disaster of passenger ferry *Estonia* from the angle of Clifford Geertz's concept of chaos and Roland Barthes's theory of myth.¹ (Footnotes) The dividing line between the known and the unknown has always been veiled in secrecy and has never lent itself to sufficient and unequivocal explanation. Chaos being one of its integral parts, a catastrophe gets inevitably labelled as 'mystical'. (Kõnno 1996: 88)

Folklore, jokes, rumours and legends that have sprung up during catastrophes partly contribute to the construction of the semantic field of the shocking event. There is a reason why rumours and legends have been studied by focusing on the "Three Cs": crisis, conflict and catastrophe. Both narrative forms provide the community important models of interpretation of the tragedy that happened to them.

The story might be presented in both journalistic and literary form. An important factor in the material is its surrounding psychological and social context. From a certain perspective catastrophes are even entertaining; the bigger the accident and the higher the number of victims, the more it finds coverage in the mass media, resulting in a larger number of popular songs, proverbial expressions, legends, jokes, beliefs, etc. Whether the disaster assumes international dimensions depends on the extent of the catastrophe, how many countries and nations are involved and how it affects society. The shipwreck of *Titanic*, for example, inspired more songs than any other event in American history.²

The focus of my paper is primarily on the *Estonia* catastrophe and narratives, particularly legends, concerning this incident. I will attempt to discuss the behavioural patterns characteristic in the media after major catastrophes and to observe the interaction of folklore, media and society. The present paper is based on materials published in the Estonian media after the shipwreck, and those collected by the Estonian Folklore Archives.

¹) Andres Kõnno's findings on the journalistic studies about the sinking of MS *Estonia* more or less coincide with the findings of Hannu Salmi and the ones proposed by author of this article.

²) The American folklorist D. K. Wilgus came to this conclusion after studying traditional ballads about the *Titanic* disaster in the United States, Ireland and the rest of Europe (see McCaughan 1998: 140).



*This Estonian postcard (Digipress Est. /P&S/ Printall)
still carries just one meaning: blue, black and white
are the flag colors of Estonia.*

In Estonia, Ilmar Soomere gathered parapsychological experiences, omens and dreams connected with the accident and published them in the parapsychological magazine *Paradoks* within the first three months after the accident (see Soomere 1994). These publications are now prime source materials. Literary visions published so far have nothing substantial to add to newspaper accounts and appear rather to be based on them.³ The

³) Novels and stories published till 2000.

Ehlvest, Jüri: *Päkapikk kirjutab* (Dwarf's Writings), *Vikerkaar* 1995, no.4.

Paju, Juhan: *Katkenud romaan* (A Disrupted Novel), Tallinn 1996.

"More than 100 kg of osmium was being shipped from Tallinn to Stockholm on board the liner. The market price of the shipment exceeded the price of the liner several times. The ship was wrecked in the middle of the sea and a special submarine collected the valuable contraband from the wreck. Russian Mafia, the KGB and well-known Estonian politicians had their hands in the incident."

In addition to the above two, five publications on media materials have been published in Estonia: *Mayday Estonia. Tragöödia Läänemeresel* (Mayday Estonia. Tragedy on the Baltic Sea), BNS 1994; *Mayday Estonia II*.

only exception here is a biographical narrative about the accident and the ensuing events by a Swedish survivor, Kent Härstedt.⁴

THE MEDIA, THE COMMUNITY AND TRADITION

Many of us have personally experienced accidents involving numerous casualties. In smaller communities mass media intensifies the shock felt by each individual. During the Soviet period talking about death was a taboo, discussing major catastrophes was avoided. Victims of catastrophes had to manage on their own. Today's society in contrast encourages people to confront the death. A belief in the purifying effect of death has become a truism. After the *Estonia* catastrophe crisis centres and crisis lines were established and church doors opened to the wider public for the first time in Estonia.

Details of accidents spread extremely rapidly via media, and the status of eyewitness is forced on each one of us. Through communication channels the victims of catastrophes are brought closer to us. After the catastrophe of the *Estonia*, the Estonian author Astrid Reinla wrote indignantly that:

One of the paradoxes of the end of the 20th century is that life, but especially death, are not private matters any more. They reach newspapers, broadcasting, TV screen and become everyone's property. Mass media show and multiply the ill Pope, Miterrand dying of cancer, as well as nameless heads chopped off during a bloody feud in a remote Chechen village, or a schoolbus which has driven into an abyss on a mountain road in Peru. (Reinla 1994)

Aasta hiljem (Mayday Estonia II. A Year Later), BNS 1995; A fictional story by Andi Meister, member of Estonian investigation committee *Lõpetamata logiraamat. Mayday Estonia III* (Unfinished Log-book), BNS 1997; *Miks Estonia? Sajandi laevahukk Läänemeres* (Why the *Estonia*? The Shipwreck of the Century on the Baltic Sea), Eesti Ekspress 1994; and Witte, Henning: *Uppunud tõde. Uued faktid ja teooriad reisilaeva Estonia huku kohta* (The Sunken Truth. New Theories and Facts on the Sinking of *Estonia*), Tallinn 1999.

⁴) In Estonian: K. Härstedt. *See, mida ei saanud juhtuda* (It Never Should Have Happened). Tallinn, 1996.

This illustrates a negative attitude towards the intrusive aspects of media in connection with the most private right of a person – the right to die in peace. Such expressions remained very much a minority viewpoint in the general attitude of the press after the catastrophe. The editor of one of the major Estonian daily newspapers puts it as follows:

A respectable press can handle all subjects that are important for society; the difference lies in the point of view taken, and in the terms of expression and style. (Muuli, 1994).

Hannu Salmi notes that there are many similarities in broadcasting the news and mental exploration of *Titanic* and MS *Estonia*, but the channels of media have changes. A novel and clearly delineated issue that emerged in the television news of MS *Estonia* was the treatment of the concern and emotional crisis of the people who had lost their relatives. This has introduced a new meta-level in representing tragedy: We are witnessing a tragic play and at the same time have the chance to observe other people's reactions to the accident. (Salmi 1996: 36)

Analysing jokes, which appear after catastrophes, and the role of the media in promoting them, the American folklorist Elliott Oring says that the media triumph in national disasters. The disasters make news, and our awareness of national or international catastrophes depend primarily on the media (Oring 1987, 282).

Nowadays, the media in a post-catastrophic society are indeed behaving as a significant source of information. The majority of legends that spread after the *Estonia* catastrophe were inspired by and modelled after the materials the media had published about it. The largest number of such articles in Estonia were of course those published in tabloids, such as *Post*, *Liivimaa Kuller*, *Eesti Ekspress*, and in *Paradoks*, a relatively popular and widely distributed parapsychological magazine. *Hommikuleht* and *Eesti Elu* could be added to this list. In terms of genres, the material was published as a news feature, in-depth report, or a reader mail, but hardly ever appeared as the subject of commentary or interviews (although sometimes they were presented as veiled interviews).

With the help of the media, an aura of the supernatural was created around the accident. The Estonian press repeatedly depicted the shipwreck as a prophetic omen. The motifs of the shipwreck as an omen for Doomsday (Ots 1994), and as a punishment for atheism (*Paradoks* no 11/12, 1994), or the demoniac powers of *Russalka*⁵ (Vint 1994) were depicted as self-evident fact during the months following the catastrophe. *Liivimaa Kuller*⁶ (Väljaots 1994), *Liivimaa Kroonika* (Karp 1994) and *Paradoks* (no. 15/16, 1994) published a story of two little girls, who allegedly predicted the catastrophe of the *Estonia*. There is nothing new under the sun: the religious motif of punishment and revenge was also characteristic of the folklore that emerged after the *Titanic* catastrophe.⁷

For example, *Eesti Ekspress*⁸ (Nov. 25, 1994) published an article on the 'most original version' about the catastrophe of the *Estonia*. The police had received a complaint, alleging that certain words and letters in the advertisements published in the weekly *TV-Nädal* were connected with the shipwreck on Sept. 28. On the cover of *TV-Nädal* there had been a large capital "Ä" – the 28th letter of the Estonian alphabet – and the dots on the letter had been slanting exactly in the same angle that the *Estonia* later ended up lying on the bottom of the sea. The word 'Lloyd' had been printed on the cover in large letters as well.

⁵) A statue erected to commemorate the perished crew of the warship *Russalka*, which sank in the Baltic Sea in 1893. In Slavonian mythology *russalkas* (mermaids) were spirits connected to the ancient water and fertility cult, and were believed to bring misfortune. Slavonic peoples believed that drowned maidens and unbaptised children turned into *russalkas*. – Translator's note.

⁶) A weekly tabloid

⁷) After the *Titanic* catastrophe people in and outside the Belfast ship factory believed that the sinking of *Titanic* was caused by curses. Before painting the ship a worker had written the following words on the ship's hull: "Let God sink this vessel if He can!" (McCaughan 1998: 141–142) Catholic workers believed another story – the ship's number 3909 ON, if read backwards ("NO Pope"), expressed anti-papal attitudes, and the ship and its number were from the devil. *Titanic* as a religious metaphor is first and foremost associated with Protestant fundamentalism. The message of various religious sects in Northern Ireland is based on the *Titnic* catastrophe. This catastrophe is used as a propagandistic slogan for spreading the word of God, warning against punishment for blasphemy and speaking of reincarnation (Hayes 1994: 194–196; Plunkett 1978: 311–313; McCaughan 1998: 143).

Lloyd's was the insurance agency for the shipping company Estline to whom the *Estonia* belonged. Actually, the weekly had run an advertisement for Harold Lloyd's pictures from the 1920s.

In order to attract public attention and to fill the information vacuum, the media often behaved in an unpredictable way, publishing all kinds of articles, which belonged rather in the realm of folklore. The previous example falls into that category. The public was also keen on finding news with a cryptic undertone in the press. For example, one week after the accident, a computer firm named Korel opened their new building in Tartu, and a short news item appeared in the newspaper *Postimees* (Oct. 5, 1994) shortly thereafter: The house resembled a ship to a minor extent, so people started to call the building "a white ship" and "the sunken *Estonia*", and it was considered a bad omen for the firm.

People also started predicting nothing good for the young country of Estonia, as the ship bearing the same name had sunk. Several articles about name magic were published in the press after the catastrophe, pointing out the significance of names in old folk belief (*Paradoks* 13/14, 1994; Soosaar 1994). All this reminds us of the interplay between folklore and the media as described by Donald Allport Bird (1976) who quotes, as an example, the sensational news of Paul McCartney's supposed death.⁹ "The metaphoric notion of 'a state-ship' and the ship called the *Estonia* become identical objects in the human mind and fatalistic mysticism is developed around the name – one can never be sure that he/she won't go down to the bottom him/herself." (Kõnno 1996: 89)

After the shipwreck, a newspaper published a story which gave a numerological explanation for the accident in a letter to the editor, published in *Liivimaa Kuller* (Nov. 10, 1994). The author, armed with numerology, lay all the blame for the accident on the number 6. He also claimed that this unfortunate number had something to do with other major catastrophes, such as Chernobyl, Hiroshima, mass deportations and famines for example. Many numbers and operations in this letter do not fit

⁹ After the media had launched the news about the supposed death of this famous member of the Beatles, it spread widely and became the basis for pseudo-folkloristic beliefs and legends and magical games (Bird 1976: 290–292).

together; the fact was also pointed out by the editor's commentary. But the story was published anyway, because the newspaper wanted sensational material. When the press is short of real information, the preponderance of ambivalent stories following the principle 'it is unbelievable, but still believable' tends to grow.

The period after a catastrophe is a heyday for astrologers, psychics and healers. They got lots of publicity in the press. There were interviews with people prominent in this field in Estonia. Archival data and materials published immediately after the shipwreck support the opinion that most persons, who were in some way or other touched by the catastrophe sought help from psychics and fortunetellers.¹⁰ In difficult and unsettled times people tend to do just that more and more. Persons deprived of a safe daily routine find peace of mind in turning to traditional religion. Even dramatic changes in society cause an increase of public interest in UFOs, witchcraft, prophecy and alternative medicine. The period during the collapse of the Soviet regime, for example, witnessed an inundation of first parapsychological newspapers, magazines, reports describing UFO contacts, and the media began to publish everything connected to today's prophets and healers.¹¹ Oral tradition went rampant, and many newspapers later referred to the fact that during a public performance a week before the accident actually happened, the Russian astrologer Pavel Globa had foretold of a shipwreck with a number of victims that would happen on September 28. This was actually a piece of information that had been very freely interpreted by one newspaper, where it was changed to meet the circumstances.¹² That prediction became wellknown and was much talked about for some time after the catastrophe. In oral tradition this prediction became even more concentrated on that very

¹⁰ Many texts concerning the catastrophe of the *Estonia* that are found in the Estonian Folklore Archives include information or stories about visits to a fortune-teller. The psychic Veeliks Jalakas worked on the spirits of the people who went down with the *Estonia*, helping them to find peace on the request of their relatives. (Information from the catalogue of The Mother Earth Fair 1997, pp 26–27. This is a yearly fair devoted to alternative medicine and natural healing held in Estonia.)

¹¹ Folklorist Guntis Pakalns (1995: 2) has observed same phenomena in Latvia.

¹² According to the Russian journal *Argumenty i Fakty*, Pavel Globa predicted that fishermen would experience trouble caused by natural forces in March. For September 28, he predicted a great traffic accident.

subject, and in the course of time it attracted a lot of new details. A recording from the Estonian Folklore Archives, made in 1997, claims that

Estonians will suffer from three major accidents. The first one was the catastrophe of the *Estonia*, the second one was the Kurkse accident¹³, and the third one will happen next year. (EFA¹⁴ II 23, 223/4)

Omens of death, which had emerged spontaneously and were retold in many different places after the catastrophe, dealt with the same theme more generally:

My sister-in-law told me about this unaccountable incident. She had heard about it from a friend of a friend.

In Annelinn¹⁵, several people had seen a strange ray of light, which moved from the roof to the ground through the windows of one house, like a light, or the lights of a ship that was sinking. This happened in the night of September 28. (Informant: a woman of 38; EFA II 3, 407).

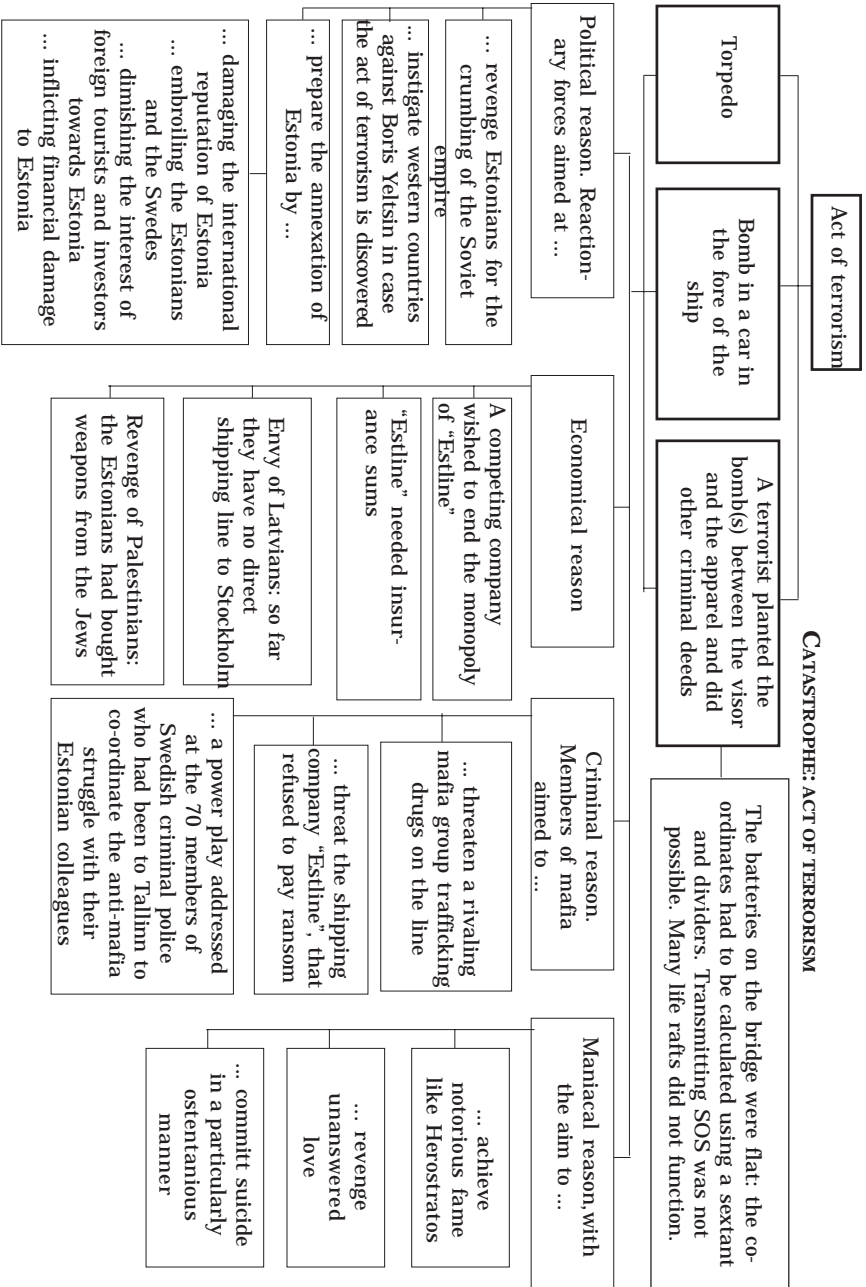
Family-centered legends were deseminated beyond the influence of the media, even among journalists themselves:

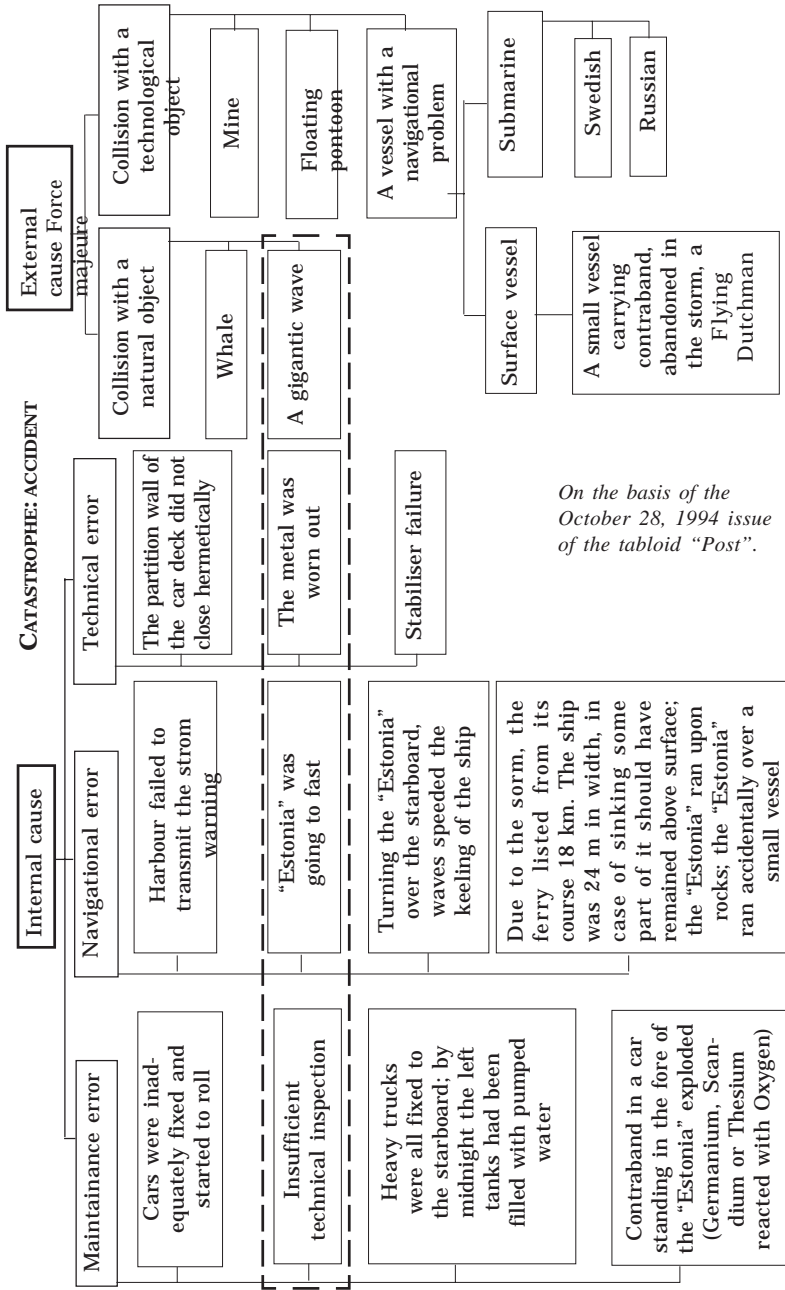
One of my husband's colleagues told this story at work after the catastrophe. A young man, a relative of his, had had to go to see his grandmother in the country on the evening of September 28. At least this was what his relatives thought. Instead, the man had gone on a one-day trip to Stockholm together with a couple of his friends. His grandmother, who knew nothing about his plans, had started to read the Bible that same evening. She had opened it at random and found a passage about a shipwreck. The parents of the man learned about his trip only when he came home after the shipwreck

¹³) The Kurkse disaster occurred in 1997 when a group of Estonian soldiers drowned while trying to cross the strait from island to mainland on foot as part of an army training campaign.

¹⁴) EFA = Estonian Folklore Archives, folklore collection.

¹⁵) Annelinn is a district of large apartment blocks in the city of Tartu, Estonia.





and told them about it. But his two friends did not survive. (Informant: a young journalist; the story was recorded from the husband [38] of the author of the present article; EFA II 3, 407/8).

Predicting the future by picking at random a passage from a book (especially the Bible) has been a folk practice up to the present day, and it has been preserved as a form of entertainment in everyday life in Estonia. This is also characteristic of children's lore.

Newspaper stories about people, who survived the accident or whose trip was for some reason cancelled, spread also in oral form. These stories circulated both in Estonian as well as in the international press and the Internet. *Paradoks* (no. 15/16, 1994) published an overview of those published in Estonian newspapers. Most published stories gave a material explanation to what happened, i.e. the trip was cancelled due to some practical obstacle (flat tyre, inadequate documentation, etc.). However, the materials sent to Ilmar Soomere immediately after the accident perhaps give a better idea of the omens, paranormal experience and dreams that actually circulated at the time (see Soomere 1994).

MEDIA LEGENDS

1) The materials published by the press inspired rumours about **the assumed causes of the shipwreck**. These spread very fast and were widely circulated among people. We have to agree with the Estonian catastrophe analyst Enno Reinsalu who states that although the technical causes of the catastrophe were constantly being scrutinised in the press, a consensus concerning all circumstances will never be reached (Reinsalu 1994). So many threads will remain untied forever, but they will offer plenty of material for endless discussions and will remain in the consciousness of the people and in their folklore.

Even the most sensation-loving newspapers published in Estonia in 1994 knew that many of the causes of the shipwreck, as suggested in their articles, actually belonged to the realm of folklore. A rather complete list of all sensational causes of the catastrophe that circulated among the public was published in



Clues disappear under water? Speculations about the sinking of the ferry were published in newspaper Eesti Elu, 8 November 1994.

the newspaper *Post* on Oct. 28, 1994, in an article entitled “Why the *Estonia* sank?” It presented a graph entitled *Folklore*, offering the following causes: it was sunk by a Russian submarine; it was blown up by a competing Mafia group; the captain of the ship destroyed the ferry, as it was carrying drugs, and he was afraid of the Swedish customs; the shipping line destroyed it as they wanted to get the insurance money; the accident was the result of a terroristic attack; etc., etc. Such sensational news produced material for discussion, and in spite of an official statement issued later (final report was published in 1998), they confirmed a firm belief that inexplicable and dubious things had lurked behind the disasterous fate of such a big and safe-looking ship. This is shown by recordings, made even as late as in 1998:

(About the sinking of the *Estonia*) Many people in my close circle of friends were convinced that the causes were either linked to contraband or a Russian mine. Nobody believed that there could have been something else. (Informant: a 35-years-old well-educated woman; EFA I 32, 27).

2) In this group, the informant usually added the incident of **the mysterious disappearance of the second captain of the *Estonia***. This was Captain Piht who was on board as a passen-

ger. He had been seen distributing life jackets on the deck, and he had been included in the first list of survivors. Members of the ship crew claimed that they had spotted him being taken to the hospital on a TV video clip. Later his name had been deleted from the list, and the video clip also went missing. Several other people, who had also been on the list, went missing with him, too. In many of these stories it was felt that Captain Piht was alive, but for some reason he was hiding from the world.

Naturally, this legend was the subject of much speculation in the press and such stories are still circulating among people. In any event, that story, as it was created and amplified into a legend by the mass media, reminds us of other modern tales which claim that president John F. Kennedy, Aristotle Onassis or princess Diana are still alive somewhere. After the Second World War, similar stories were circulating about Adolf Hitler and Martin Bormann.

The sinking of the *Estonia* raised many differing opinions, but one prevailing opinion was that there must have been something suspicious, as there were many policemen waiting for the ship in Sweden. Another suspicious thing was those two sisters (twins), who had been in the lifeboat together with Captain Piht, because they had already been rescued, and why did this part [of the video clip] go missing after the first showing. People are sure that these persons are somewhere, because if they were dead, the bodies would have been returned. This leaves the impression that they had been liquidated, but why, the captain probably knew something. (Informant: a 70-years-old woman; EFA II 25, 80/1).

3) The legends about **some people who were abducted by UFOs** is the direct elaboration of the materials published by the press. Another version of the accident, offered by the press, is a collision with a submarine; in several tabloids the submarine became an unidentified swimming object. The articles also stated that no bodies were found and that some of the persons who had been on the list of survivors (Captain Piht and some others) later went missing. The newspaper *Eesti Elu* of Dec. 6, 1994 writes:

The catastrophe of the *Estonia* has raised many questions. Where are these people now who were seen among the survivors and who later went mysteriously missing or died? No additional explanations have been offered. Such concealment of the real facts is very strange. It is direct evidence of dark forces at work.

And an account from the archives:

... On a gathering of mediums held some two years ago in Tartu some guy told that they had been abducted. Perhaps he wasn't even lying, because I came across an article found from Sweden and translated into Estonian in some newsgroup, where the divers were astonished that the number of people found from the wreck of *Estonia* was so small...(EFA I 32,26).

Evidently, alien intervention in disasters that claim a high number of victims has become a fixed motif. Alien attack was also one of the popular versions for the WTC catastrophe on September 11 (Noormets 2003).

These legends could well be interpreted in a very humanistic way – these people could still exist somewhere, they could be alive.

4) Stories about people drowned in the ship calling home on their mobile phones after the accident are directly connected with the previous legend. This legend was promoted by the media, where it was discussed, without sparing the feelings of the readers, whether and for how long a person could remain alive in the compressed air inside the cabin on board the sunken ship.

These stories were circulated in Estonia as well as in Finland and Sweden. On the one hand they are based on legends created by the media, on the other hand, they coincide with conceptions of the spirit in older folk belief. The spirits of people who have died an unnatural death cannot find peace and come back to haunt their relatives. A mobile phone as a means of contacting the other world represents an old belief which has acquired a new and more acceptable contemporary context. Many memorates concerning the *Estonia* deal with the same subject.



The one-time soap commercial "Vinolia soap and Titanic - The Highest Standard of Toilet Laundry and Comfort at Sea".

The belief that a close person could still be alive somewhere is predominant in these recollections.

Folklorist Reet Hiimäe recorded the following story during fieldwork in 1998:

One month before the sinking of the *Estonia* – my daughter Lea was one of them that went down with her – so, one month before it [the catastrophe] I was washing my milk churns in front of the cattle shed and suddenly I heard my own mother calling me: “Leida! Leida!” I looked around quickly, but saw nothing. My mother had died long ago, so I racked my brains, wondering what she had wanted to tell me. I guess that’s what it was. I asked a psychic too, but got no answer.

It was in winter, they were showing ‘Unbelievable Stories’ on TV. My husband had gone to Tallinn that morning. I

went to the hayloft to fetch some hay, and suddenly I became so frightened that even my knees started to shake. I was so stressed the whole day; I couldn't find any peace. In the evening I had a shot or two of brandy and that helped. Of course I had always been afraid of the hayloft, it just gives you the feeling of some power residing there. But after the *Estonia* I am not afraid any more, I tell myself that Lea must also come home now and then, and I would never be scared of her. But several psychics have told me that Lea is actually still alive somewhere. And so it happened that one day when I was doing my laundry in front of our sauna, I suddenly heard: "Mommy!" I listened, and heard it again twice, but no more, but I knew it was Lea calling me. This house had been my mother's home, she had loved it very much, maybe that's why she came back. (Informant: a woman of 56; EFA I 32, 25).

From the *Estonia* to the *Titanic* and titanicology. The story about Urmas Alender

The teacher in a school in Paide, small town in the middle of Estonia, is teaching the 6th grade. They are discussing musical theatres and where they are located. It turns out that there is one in Tallinn, but... A pupil, Rein, has forgotten what the theatre is called. The others try to help him, whispering that a ship with the same name sank recently. "The *Titanic*!" Rein happily cries out.

It is hard to tell, whether the story is true or not, but this light-hearted school story was recorded in 1998 by an informant for the folklore archives. How vivid must the impressions of a ship which sank more than 80 years ago somewhere on the Atlantic be, when these can still overshadow a tragic accident that happened to the Estonian people and their neighbours not far from here within the past decade?! Or is it something else?

Even at the end of the 20th century the *Titanic* continues to sink. Tens of millions of people relived the accident through the James Cameron movie. In one way or another we are all passengers on the *Titanic* and the catastrophe has turned into one huge business in a world ruled by the media and entertainment industry.

In today's world the *Titanic*, or to be more correct, titanicology has grown into a distinct international cultural phenomenon, sublimed as the bearer of certain meaning, messages and signs, covering the whole spectrum from low culture to high culture, from pop culture to refined culture. In Summer 1998, for example, people who dined in *Kuursaal* in Haapsalu could order an appetiser "*Titanic*", a cabbage salad in the shape of a ship. The whole country could read a newspaper article 'Hoiu-grupp sank like the *Titanic*' (*Hoiu-grupp vajus nagu Titanic*) about the collapse of one of the largest Estonian banks with a photograph of the well known painting by Willy Stoewer depicting the sinking *Titanic* attached to it (Vedler 1998), or they could discuss when the new night club *Titanic* would be opened in Tallinn, etc. The keyword *Titanic* appears in fiction, scientific literature, movies, fine art, music, folklore, poetry, graffiti, cartoons and comic strips, caricatures, computer games, etc. Media has exploited the *Titanic* as the embodiment of certain symbols and messages in case of *Herald of Free Enterprise* as well as the recent *Estonia* catastrophe. Along with the motif of the ship, other visual and textual motifs of the disaster, such as life jackets, dance orchestra, deck chairs and icebergs were repeated over and over. As clichés their power was almost metaphoric (McCaughan 1998: 137). Certainly, the *Titanic Historical Society* has done its best to keep the worst sea catastrophe in the 20th century alive. The Society consists of thousands of people all over the world. New facts are being discovered about the *Titanic* all the time.

Plenty of material about the *Titanic* catastrophe was published in the media after the sinking of the *Estonia*. Many similarities were found between these two accidents, and not only around the actual circumstances; people also compared, either consciously or unconsciously, the legends, beliefs and attitudes in the media.

For example, a well-known dramatic story, and a subject of discussion for many titanicologists, is the legend that the orchestra of the *Titanic* had been playing until the very end, and that their last piece had been "Nearer, My God, to Thee". The psychological background and roots of this legend, amplified by the media, are discussed in a book by Wyn Craig Wade (1986: 62–63).¹⁶ One legend about the *Estonia*, which got its start from

a cynical article in the newspaper *Post* resembles the legend about the orchestra on the *Titanic*:

According to the description of one survivor, at about one o'clock on that fateful night of Sept. 28, Urmas Alender was drunk. When the ship started listing, many people found themselves standing on the chimney. Alender had been there, too, clinging to the chimney. And what did he do? He sang! They say that Alender had been singing at the top of his voice over the blasts of wind. This is the way the famous Estonian troubadour went down – gallantly defying the storm. He could not swim. (Liiva 1994)

A short oral version of the same story was recorded in Tartu in 1998:

I have heard legends that Urmas Alender had been embracing a chimney and singing in the shipwreck. (EFA I 32, 26)

Urmas Alender was the expressive singer of an Estonian rock group; he had been performing on the *Estonia* on that memorable night, and had perished along with it. Most probably he was the best known and most loved public figure on board. After the accident many articles were published in the press about a memorial concert to Urmas Alender and about issuing a CD of

¹⁶⁾ A.A. Dick, a Canadian passenger, who had survived the accident, said in an interview that looking back at the sinking ship her last memory was of men standing still on the deck, facing death, and the orchestra playing their last piece "Nearer, My God, to Thee". It turned out to be a poetic vision, but was accepted as true by people and had a soothing effect in the overall chaos. Later it became known that the orchestra did, in fact, play until the very end, but their last piece was "*Songe d'automne*", a popular contemporary tune with a considerably harsher melody. The author argues that Mrs. Dick may have remembered and wove into her story a shipwreck from 1905, where survivors on the board of the *Valencia* had sung "Nearer, My God, to Thee". They were heard singing from the boat, which had come to rescue them. People remembered the touching story and the motif has later been used in movies and fiction. After the accident the song gained tremendous popularity. It is worth noting that moments before the *Estonia* catastrophe Swedish passengers who spent time in the swaying bar, recalled the same song (see Härstedt 1996: 36–37).

his songs. It was often pointed out that the work and behaviour of the singer all seemed to refer to a predestination of fatal events.

The apocalyptic end of Urmas Alender's life on the *Estonia* made him a legend, an Estonian Morrison. (Laulik 1994)

This brief legend spread its wings due to the image created by the media, and probably it also has something to do with searching for analogies with the well-known story of the orchestra on the *Titanic*. Obviously this legend suited the image of Urmas Alender and his last minutes on the ship. For comparison: the motif of the *Titanic* and its orchestra is repeated in other genres, such as the jokes about the *Estonia*, collected in Finland (Ulla Lipponen's collection in the Finnish Folklore Archives) and Sweden:

– Mikä vuosi silloin kun Titanic upposi ja mikä vuosi kun Estonia upposi.

– Silloin kun Titanic upposi, vuosi pohia ja silloin kun Estonia upposi keulaportti.

– *What year was it that the "Titanic" sank and what year was it that the "Estonia" sank?*

– *When the "Titanic" sank the hull leaked, and when the "Estonia" sank the hatch leaked.*

(The pun derives from the double meaning of the Finnish word 'vuosi', meaning both 'year' and 'leaked'; M47, 144–1)

– What orchestra was playing on the *Estonia*?

– I don't know.

– Brothers Deep (Bröderna Djup)

(The answer consists of a pun known from jokes referring to the trademark '7UP'. (Hanberger 1996, 116)

The general focusing in on the individual which is very typical to media (and also popular culture) makes the material more tangible and helps create a closer and safer atmosphere. Every accident has its scapegoats and heroes. The once chivalrous orders 'Be British' and 'Women and children first' heard on board of the *Titanic* still rouse sentimental and patriotic feelings. People still believe that Captain Smith saved a child before going down

with the ship (McCaughan 1998: 140). The American press sang praise to a Mrs. Strauss who stayed with her husband, although an officer had asked her to step in the boat. Another married couple, the Dickinson Bishops, had to suffer from public scrutiny all through their life. It was believed that in order to escape the sinking ship and get the seat in the life-saving boat Mr. Dickinson had disguised himself as a woman (Wade 1986: 324–5).

After the *Estonia* catastrophe the press tried to put together a touching story of the romantic survival of two young Swedes (see Härstedt 1996).¹⁷ I personally witnessed a TV report from a hospital where Kent Härstedt described his and Sara's escape on the stormy sea. The story centred on happy motifs: the optimism and unselfish help from two strangers, who right before jumping into the stormy sea agree to meet and have a dinner in a wonderful restaurant in Stockholm should they survive. This story was beneficent to the public in getting over the accident by finding something positive and beautiful in a tragic accident, to achieve balance and security.

CONCLUSION

Folklore material as a whole reflected two different sides of the crisis, which complemented and intermingled with one another, but were still clearly distinguishable. On one side there were personal experiences as reflected in individual stories, beliefs or behaviour; on the other side, there was the crisis affecting the whole community as reflected in the media. People were retelling meaningful dreams, omens, memorates, beliefs and rumours, short jokes and sensational stories. The press mediated and amplified all these, and gave a strong impetus to the nascent folklore.

Each legend about the *Estonia* has its own psychological and folkloristic background. From the folkloristic point of view, these legends are based on ready-made structures and the so-called collective memory, which has always existed in mythology or in story motifs, such as contacts with the spirits of people who have died an unfortunate death, an extreme cult of the dead – pro-

¹⁷) According to a conversation with a Swedish folklorist Maria Hanberger the story was discussed more in the Swedish press than in Estonian.

moted by contemporary pop culture – treating a dead person as a living being, fortune telling by opening a book at random, the use of the motif of the *Titanic* orchestra, amplified in literature, etc. From a psychological point of view, it is unavoidable that all kinds of mythologies and beliefs play a part in explaining catastrophes as the human mind tries to come to terms with these events even with scarcity of data. While suffering from a crisis, people search for a sense of security offered by legends, meanings, omens and other mythological constructions. In this case, the media took on the role of contributor, quick disseminator and amplifier. They most distinctly reflect the interpretation of the catastrophe provided by the community and its ability to overcome it. Psychologically it is likewise important that people should talk about the accident in order to find relief and detachment. This aspect is stressed, e.g. by scholars studying jokes.¹⁸ The Estonian linguist Juhan Peegel, who has analysed soldiers' vocabulary during the Second World War, stated:

People strive to ignore the worst, to diminish and ridicule hardships and dangers by renaming them, so as to enhance their capacity to endure and to find spiritual balance. That way the renamed grim reality may become illuminated by another, arrogantly contrastive light, creating a different, psychologically favourable climate." (Peegel 1976, 340)

In a postaccidental crisis situation, those social groups who are usually biased against superstitious traditions, such as premonitory dreams and parapsychological experiences, also described their experiences and retold stories (e.g. men aged 20 to 40). Those narratives circulated most widely and actively during the first two months after the accident. The stories spread almost explosively. By the third month the accident gradually became less important in the news. The community had vented the crisis; some sensational stories; some theories of conspiracy (the causes of the accident, the missing Captain Piht, etc.) continued

¹⁸) e.g. Dundes/Hauschild 1983 (jokes from Auschwitz Concentration Camp); Oring 1987 (jokes about the catastrophe of the space shuttle Challenger); Hanberger 1996 (jokes that appeared after the catastrophe of the ferry *Estonia* and about the mass murderer Mattias Flink).

to spread, as the media recalled them now and then. Stories with religious colouring and stories about miraculous escape were mostly told within the circles of close friends and remained within the family tradition.

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Roadside Cemeteries

Marju Kõivupuu

INTRODUCTION

The beliefs, customs and traditions associated with birth, death, wedding rituals and funeral practices of different peoples of the world have a rather similar origin. It has long been believed that when a person passes away, the soul continues its existence in some other form. The fact that stones are connected with burial mounds, cemeteries and places where a fatality has occurred is well known all over the world (cf. megaliths, pyramids, memorial stones, etc.). Similarly, people have regarded stones, trees and other natural objects as a residence of a soul – in a grave lies the body of the deceased, whereas the immortal soul resides in a stone or in a tree.

In modern society, we can distinguish between authorised and unauthorised monuments. The authorised monuments are memorials (statues, constructions, etc.) which have been erected by government order or by a public organisation, in accordance with the law, in honour of an important event or a person. In addition to fatalities or major catastrophes which receive wide media coverage, sites of death – mostly of road fatalities but also sites of violent death or accidents of the so-called ordinary people are unofficially commemorated all over the world.

In contemporary society, it is a common custom to mark the sites of catastrophes or violent deaths. Ever since Olaf Palme's murder in the 1970s, the media has covered the commemoration of death sites all over the world. Some locations of assault or terrorist attacks begin to resemble sites of pilgrimage. For example, people still bring flowers to the TV tower in Vilnius to remember and honour the casualties of January 13, 1991, or the

World Trade Center which was destroyed on September 11, 2001. A vast metal cross was installed at the site of the WTC.

In Estonia, the majority of the memorial stones and crosses dedicated to people killed in road or other types of accidents are **unauthorised** – they have been installed by individuals and most of these have not been authorised. The government of the Republic of Estonia does not have a common position on such monuments. The erecting of these memorials has been guided by people's conscience, the customs and the traditions. This has led to public discussions in the media regarding the issues of whether such behaviour is acceptable and how it reflects the problems, clashes and conflicts in a multicultural postmodern society.

Unlike in most post-communist countries where *the Italian syndrome*, i.e. the control by political powers over the media, both by direct interference as well as by economic manipulation, has been observed, in Estonia the media (the printed press in particular) rapidly became independent of the government, simultaneously growing dependent on the market and advertising. The relation between the media and the society underwent radical changes, shifting from an authoritarian model of the press working under strict ideological supervision to the other extreme, a model of the liberal American information market with almost no moral or ethical restrictions, based on satisfying a journalist's sales potential and consumer interests. Information is first and foremost a commodity. The model of social responsibility, characteristic of Nordic and European quality press, expects journalists to be informed about the media's impact on society and to exercise ethic stability. According to this model, journalists act according to a sense of mission and the citizens' need to comprehend and interfere. In both models the media functions as a watchdog of democracy (Lauristin 1999: 59–61).

In this article I am going to 1) describe the commemoration of sites of road fatalities from an ethnological point of view, and 2) make an attempt to analyse which model (either the authoritarian or liberal) has been used by Estonian journalists in their treatment of the same topic in 1998.

Ever since Estonia re-declared its independence in the 1990s, and due to a dramatic rise in the economic welfare of the population, the number of cars has considerably increased. At the

same time, drunk driving, speeding, total disregard of other motorists and pedestrians, and the bad state of roads are all indicators of a traffic culture that is extremely low. The percentage of fatal traffic accidents is relatively high in Estonia. For instance, in 1998, 1,302 traffic accidents were registered in the town of Tartu and its vicinity. Thirty people were killed, that is five more than in 1997. In 1998, a total of 281 people found themselves victims of road fatalities in the whole country, the number of serious accidents was 1,611 (Uustalu 1999: 6). In 2007, 196 people were killed in traffic accidents (Ekspress 2009).

Most of the fatalities were caused by drunken drivers, some without a driving licence, who misjudged their driving skills and killed themselves along with their fellow passengers.

On May 10, 1998, Ago Gashkov, a TV reporter from the Virumaa region, was the first to discuss the problem on the Estonian national television news program *Aktuaalne Kaamera* where he raised the issue whether permanent monuments should be allowed on the side of the road in places where people were killed in road accidents and, if so, then by whom and how should it be arranged. Ago Gashkov argued that the pompous memorial stones along Tallinn-Narva highway, commemorating people killed in accidents, violate the sense of decency. The roadsides look like cemeteries and have a gloomy effect on passers-by, including tourists. The reporter suggested that authorities should pass regulations to prevent the spread of this phenomenon and/or set restrictions on relatives who wish to raise conspicuous monuments to those killed in road accidents.

Ago Gashkov regarded people's need to mark the site of a death as a recent custom, foreign to our culture and most typical to the subculture of the Estonian *nouveaux riche*. To his mind, it has no connection with our ancient traditions and should be publicly condemned.

Let us consider the argument that the marking of a site where a person died is a recent phenomenon and foreign to Estonian culture. Erecting pompous individual memorial stones on death sites at roadsides is a relatively recent phenomenon indeed, typical of the 1990s. However, there is nothing recent about the custom of marking death sites with a memorial stone, the roots of the tradition lie in the past.

ETHNOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF COMMEMORATING DEATH SITES

The custom of marking death sites originates in ancient history, or to be more specific, in the pre-Christian animistic period. One of the characteristic features of animism is the belief that all things in nature have a soul. When a person died, the relatives had to care for both the soul and the body of the deceased.

Like everywhere else in the world, in Estonian folk tradition the deceased has been regarded from two points of view: the deceased had, in some mysterious and indistinct way, two different, yet closely connected forms of existence: a soulless body or a corpse on the one hand, and a more or less incorporeal form of the 'soul' or 'spirit' on the other. Both forms of existence represented, so to speak, the deceased as such: both the soul and the body were the deceased itself (Paulson 1997: 140).

The main objective of death-related ceremonies is to join the deceased with the community of the dead and to reorganise the life of the living. The more archaic the funeral tradition, the more it adheres to the belief that a person's or his soul's life after death resembles his previous life (as suggested by grave objects, later also coffin objects). Thus, the last transition rites of human life combine two goals: to secure a comfortable future existence as befits to the person's position in life, and to protect the living from the presumed malevolence of the dead.

The emphasis of transition rites is not directly associated with the moment of death but with liminal rites and the rites of aggregation through which the deceased is assimilated into the community of the dead (Gennep 1909; Honko & Pentikäinen 1997: 83–87).

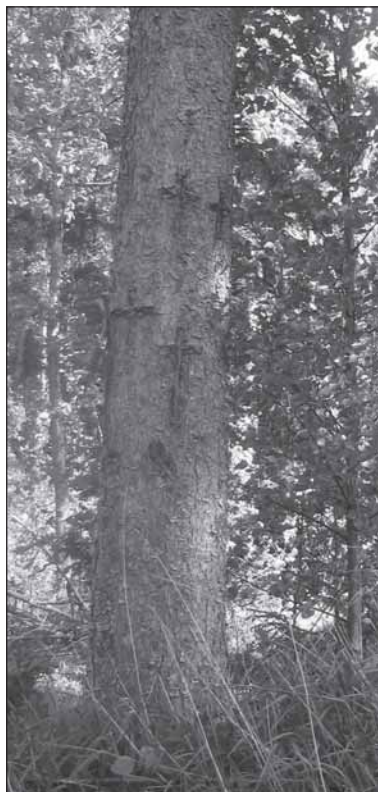
Similarly to a new-born baby, who did not yet belong to 'this world' and needed the help and care of its parents, godparents and other adults to obtain the necessary 'equipment' (power, name, etc.) for its future life in this world, the deceased needed the help of the living, too, to pass from terrestrial existence to the other world (Paulson 1997: 130).

The first and one of the foremost liminal rites of funeral traditions is keeping a vigil over the dying person, preparing for his death and opening the passage for the departing soul. Committing suicide, drowning, being killed or being run over while walking (pro: driving) on the road were considered an abnormal or an exceptional case of death. Some of the customary liminal rites could not be performed on them, some because the body was not always recovered. Such instances of death were the most frightening for the living. According to Livonian traditions, for example, those who had committed suicide or had been murdered or killed were known to appear to the living or haunt them until their God-appointed time of death. The living are also haunted by the deceased whose bodies have not been buried (Loorits 1998: 46).

This category also includes the murdered, abandoned, still-born, nameless and un-baptised children. The latter are the most unfortunate because they never belonged among the living and therefore can never make the transition to society of the dead but will forever remain in-between (Pentikäinen 1989).

Typical to the animistic worldview, people from traditional cultures believed that the soul of the deceased passed on to some natural object (tree, stone, spring) which then acquired magical powers and was therefore considered sacred. The belief that the souls of dead ancestors live on in trees is cosmopolitan. According to the Korean belief system, for example, the souls of those who have died of plague or on a journey, but also the souls of women who have died at childbirth, will find their place permanently in trees (Frazer 1986: 115–116). The funeral custom of carving a cross in a tree, which was well-known in Finland, Estonia and North Latvia, is still adhered to in South Estonia. This custom has preserved the concept of trees as the home of souls (Kõivupuu 1996: 55–74; Kõivupuu 1997: 35–61).

According to Estonian folk belief, the souls of those who died under abnormal circumstances may find their place in a tree or some other natural object. If the living had failed to find the body, the missing person appeared in their dreams to reveal the new home of his body and soul.



A cross-tree in the Urvaste cross-forest. May 2009. Courtesy of Marju Kõivupuu.

There was a man who died of booze – in old times the landlord used to offer a drop of liquor after work and some had a lot of it. This man left the estate to go home and on the way he froze to death. Then he appeared in a dream and said: “I’m not in the grave where you left me, my soul is in that old white willow stump.” (There was a large white willow stump at the place where he died.) ERA II 24, 212 (86) < Türi parish.

The living may also dream of the deceased whose fate or rank was unknown:

The master said that I’m dead but there is no place for me. So I live on top of the pine tree at the other side of the field until my time comes. H II 58, 27/28 (17) < Jüri parish.

Among other things, the living may dream of the deceased if they have some unfinished business in this world: either the relatives have ignored their last wishes or they have been buried improperly or prematurely (cf. a myth of an apparently dead woman who gave birth to a child in the grave), etc. When the living have satisfied the wishes of the deceased, the portent dreams and haunting will stop. Oskar Loorits has observed the same in Livonian folk belief (Loorits 1998: 31). In any case, this extremely intriguing area of religious history is not very relevant to the subject, so we will return to the marking of death sites of the abnormally deceased.

Tatjana Minnijahmetova, who has studied the funeral rites of the Udmurts living across the Kama River, also describes beliefs and customs connected with fatalities. According to folk belief, the people who die an unnatural death wish that the living communicate with them both at the site of death and at their grave. Trees are planted at the death site and relatives go there to talk to the deceased, while food offerings are reserved for when visiting the grave (Minnijahmetova 2000: 222).

People mark death sites either because of their religious beliefs (the death site is where the soul lies) or for emotional reasons: to commemorate (marking the site where the life of a person came to an unexpected and premature end) or as a token of mourning. The reason for commemoration could be to protest against the injustice of fate or the inability of the society to protect its members, but also a warning that life is not eternal and that no one is safe from an unfair or an unexpected death. Each individual case might have different reasons.

Tatjana Eggeling has identified three practical motives for commemorating death sites in the 21st century:

- 1) to keep the memory of the deceased alive;
- 2) to warn other drivers and pedestrians;
- 3) to observe a period of grieving (Eggeling 2000: 4).

Stones, stone crosses and gravestones functioning as markers of death sites have been mythologized in Estonian folk belief over the course of centuries and numerous folk tales have become associated with them. Many people have experienced supernatural phenomena, seen ghosts, etc., in such places. Some stone crosses and sc. 'wedding stones' are associated with a myth about the crash of two wedding processions where the bride-

groom of one couple and the bride of the other were killed; some are remembered as death sites of historical persons where people took offerings to as recently as the 19th century (Eisen 1996: 98–103). Referring to Tallgren, M. J. Eisen has pointed out similarities in Finnish and Scandinavian traditions (Eisen 1998: 101). Carving a cross sign as a symbol of death and a sign of warding against evil into a tree is well known in Estonian folk tradition and funeral customs (Kõivupuu 1997: 45–46). Since the end of the 19th century, collectors have recorded accounts of it from all over Estonia.

In some other place, a cross sign has been carved in the tree bark, often together with a date. Someone died or an accident happened there. A cross is a reminder of such accidents. E 80 14, 85 (247) < Rõpina parish.

Peasants started a revolt in Albu parish. The landlord sentenced them to death. Coachmen came from the village. The leaders of the revolt were driven onto the carriages. The men begged for mercy but it was too late for that. The carriages reached the Korba woods. All the men were killed. Their relatives picked up the bodies and buried them. And they carved as many cross signs in the fir tree as there were men killed. ERA II 220, 356/7 (6) < Järva-Jaani parish.

There's a pine with a cross near Sooniste estate. The cross was carved in the tree to commemorate a farm-boy who had tried to jump on a carriage but fell onto a scythe blade and died. ERA II 229, 189 (15) < Nissi parish.

The telegraph pole at Ahula road has some marks on it. (A man was shot there, so the place was avoided.) ERA II 219, 549 (24) < Järva-Jaani parish.

Funeral tradition and the shapes of gravestones reflect the concept of life continuing after death. Usually, grave stones and monuments are erected at the last resting site of the deceased. Epitaphs carved on them express the sentiments of mourners and outline the shape of the person's life.



A cross cut into trees to denote fatal accident sites.

In modern society, we can conditionally distinguish between authorised and unauthorised monuments. Authorised monuments are memorial plaques or statues erected in accordance with the law, by decree of the government or a public organisation in honour of an important event or a person.

Since Estonia declared its independence in 1918, and particularly after the War of Independence in 1920, the monuments erected in memory of the Estonian and foreign soldiers who died during the war, came to be considered as symbols of patriotism.

In 1945, after Estonia was annexed by the Soviet Union, the monuments celebrating the Estonian fight for freedom were removed and replaced with ideologically more appropriate monuments honouring the Soviet soldiers who had been killed in World War II. Significant anniversaries of the Soviet ideology were celebrated at these monuments. People say that several of these monuments had been raised by orders “from above”. The commemorated heroic deeds of some (most often Russians) were also fabricated (e.g., the monument commemorating the feats of Pavel Antsiborenko in Karula, South Estonia). The so-called common graves were sometimes created in a rather terrifying manner. On a 1990 expedition, informant Reinhold Riiga described to me how one of the common graves in Hargla was created. After the end of the war, the workers of the collective farm were forced to

dig up the graves of soldiers who were killed in the woods. Their remains were shovelled into a coffin lined with red fabric, and five kilos of human remains was assigned the value of one standard working day for a worker. A commemorative ceremony was held at the administrative building of the village and a monument was erected at the new burial site, the inscription of which read: The Unknown Soldier.



*Monument erected in memory of Soviet Soldiers by the road
between Pindi and Lasva villages (Võrumaa county).
Courtesy of M. Kõivupuu, 1997*

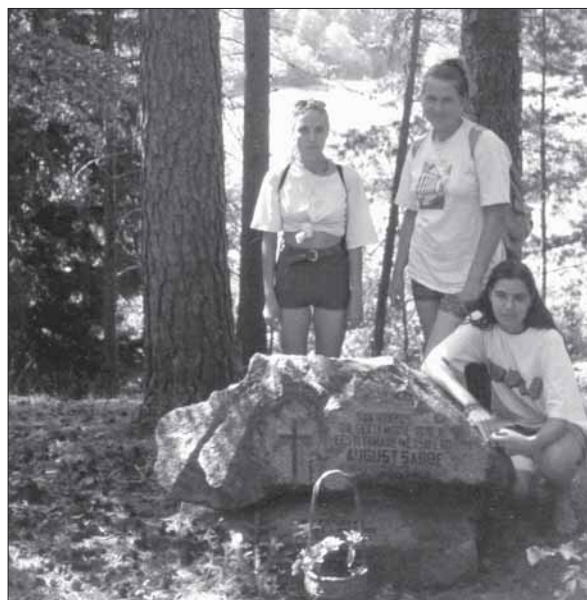
After World War II, it was not uncommon that tractor drivers sometimes got killed, e.g., run over by a tractor, etc., at melioration works. In the fields, one may find memorial stones marking such death sites.

After Estonia regained its independence, the monuments and memorials for soldiers killed in the War of Independence were restored or new monuments were erected in honour of the freedom fighters. One such monument is located on the bank of the Võhandu River marking the death site of the last Estonian partisan, the sc. 'forest brother' August Sabbe. The inscription on the granite stone reads: "The last Estonian forest brother August Sabbe was killed here on 28.08.1978."

On the night of September 28, 1994 the countries bordering the Baltic Sea were shocked at the news reporting the shipwreck



Monument in memory of meliorators killed during amelioration works. Viljandimaa county. October 2008. Courtesy of Marju Kõivupuu.



A monument in memory of the last Estonian partisan August Sabbe at the bank of the Võhandu river near Paidra village. Courtesy of M. Kõivupuu, 1997.

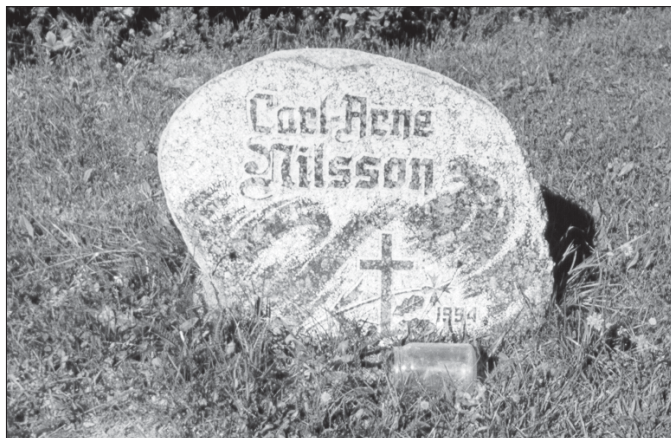
of m/s *Estonia*. Only a few people were rescued and even fewer bodies were later recovered. Most of the dead did not receive a proper burial. Trips to the site of the shipwreck and funeral ceremonies were organised enabling the relatives of the deceased cast flowers and wreaths with burning candles into the water. Monuments in honour of the deceased were erected in Tallinn, the island of Hiiumaa and the coast of Pärnu. Next to St. Catherine's church in Võru, there is a white wooden cross and a monument with the names of the 17 inhabitants of Võru who lie in their sea grave.



A monument in Võru in memory of its people that sank with the "Estonia." Courtesy of M. Kõivupuu 1998.

In the graveyards of coastal villages (in Käsmu, for example) there are many gravestones in memory of seamen who were lost at sea. After the sinking of m/s *Estonia* people placed plaques in cemeteries in memory of their relatives who found their last resting place at the bottom of the sea. Memorial plaques commemorate not just relatives. For example, at the yard of Pikäkannu Basic School in Võrumaa, there is a memorial plaque in honour of Carl Arne Nilsson, a Swedish sponsor of the school who was also killed in the accident.

In the Alps, (wooden) crosses mark the sites where alpinists and winter sportsmen were tragically killed. There are plaques, crosses and memorial stones for policemen and fire fighters. In Germany, in the towns and villages along the Elbe River, there are memorial tablets for those who were killed in floods



*A memorial plaque in honour of Carl Arne Nilsson,
a sponsor of the Pikäkannu school, who was also on "Estonia."
Courtesy of M. Kõivupuu 1997.*

In myths, memorates and belief reports it is often the deceased who appear to the living and reveal where to search for his body in order to give it a proper burial to put its soul to rest. This has become intermingled with Christian folk belief concepts: the person killed will not leave the living in peace (appearing in a dream to tell them where he died, haunting) until he is properly buried. His soul cannot rest until a prayer has been held on behalf of him and the missing person has been declared officially dead.

An ancient tradition of seamen regards the site of a shipwreck as a sea grave which is sacred and inviolable. This idea was also supported by Lennart Meri, president of the Republic of Estonia and Andres Paeorg, the chairman of *Memento Estonia*, in the column of *Postimees*, an Estonian daily newspaper, on November 17.

Lennart Meri said:

As president of the republic I cannot pronounce my opinion. The subject is too painful. As an individual, who has taken interest in our sea tradition, I can grant that for centuries the sea has been the sacred grave of those who have lost

their life there. The place where a person has lost his life is as sacred as any churchyard at any church (Putting 1998: 2).

The rapid progress of modern civilisation and technology has diminished people's sense of safety both on land as well as at sea. Passangers of large cruise ships want to reach their destination safe and sound, they do not identify themselves with seamen nor are they familiar with the traditions, superstitions, customs and habits of sailors. Being familiar with the folkloric background of dealing with the drowned, it is not surprising that the relatives of those who died in the shipwreck on both sides of the Baltic sea have voiced their demand over the media to raise the ship and/or bring up the bodies so that their relatives can give them proper burials in local cemeteries and perform the necessary funeral rituals for those who have left this world.

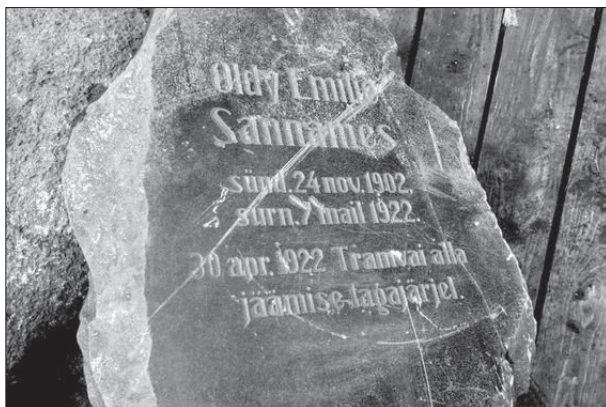
One of the main functions of funeral tradition is to put the mind of the living at peace and help members of the community during the crisis which is inevitable at the loss of close relatives.

According to the records found in the Estonian Folklore Archives, the Setus, for instance, kept a black ribbon, a scarf or a belonging of the drowned person in the icon corner for three months (70 days): the soul of the deceased was believed to visit the icon corner for exactly that long. After that period the soul found its peace. The Setus also regarded death by drowning as an offering to the god of water who chose his victims himself. People had ambivalent feelings towards such accidents: in essence, the tragic event gained a sacred meaning. This approach helped relatives to cope with their loss, to accept it as inevitable.

Folkloric material concerning drowning exists in a number of genres, ranging from myths and memorates to popular jokes and humorous euphemistic sayings: *He went to try out how it feels like living under water.*

A morbid popular joke *An epitaph to a drowned man* refers to the need to determine the location of the deceased's soul rather than his body:

In old times there was an epitaph on a cross at the graveyard of M. church. "Here breathes Nurga Jaan, a peasant who drowned in a river and whose body was never found." E 39383 < Kadrina.



Hit by the “tramvai” (tram) – cenotaph from Kalamaja Cemetary, Tallinn. June 2009. Courtesy of Marju Kõivupuu.

Let us return to the marking of death sites of victims of road fatalities. In her earlier research, Zorica Rajković has referred to commemorating the sites of road fatalities as a “specifically Yugoslavian phenomenon” unknown in Western Europe (Rajković 1988: 173). This statement, obviously, is not valid. Around the same time, post-socialist Estonia saw a campaign against traffic victim memorials. For example, the Czechs are proud to present their famous stone crosses to tourists (see: <http://smircikrize.euweb.cz>; 30.11.2009) and have also done some research on them (e.g., Preclík 1992). The tradition of marking death sites with flowers, candles, a temporary cross or a permanent memorial is not a new phenomenon at all – at present this practice is being followed all over the world, hence, memorial stones to road victims can be found at roadsides and along highways in Europe and in Australia, not to mention the United States. Sites of accidents are also marked in the South and Central American countries, e.g., in Chile, Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina. Crosses for traffic victims have been studied more thoroughly in Germany where the custom of installing memorial crosses at sites of fatal accidents is widely spread in all states. The marking of accident sites has also been researched in Poland, on the Balkan Peninsula, in Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Austria. In Finland, there are some references to commemorating the sites of

victims of drowning but no further research has been carried out (Eggeling 2000, Aka 2007, etc.).

As regards rail crashes, in Russia the sites of train accidents are marked similarly to the sites of road fatalities. People go there to celebrate the birth and death anniversaries of the deceased with a drop of liquor and some snacks (an anonymous male source to K. Saarso < Tallinn 2009).

In one of his travel stories, Urmas Vaino, a journalist, describes the situation on the roads of Kazakhstan as follows:

We drive out of the city and an accident has just happened. There are two wrecked cars and three corpses by the side of the road. A distressing sight. It is a local custom to erect columns by the side of road to commemorate those who have lost their lives. Sometimes there are more memorial stones decorated with wreaths and flowers than milestones (Vaino 2006).

According to Estonian legislation, it is forbidden to arbitrarily place anything within the road safety zone, i.e., 50 metres from the central line on both sides of the road. The records of the Estonian Road Administration reveal that a total of 83 memorials have been erected on the sides of roads in Estonia. Only five memorial stones have been erected in conformity with the Road Administration. Four of the seven memorial stones in Järvamaa, one of the two memorial stones in the Põlva region and one of the six memorials in Läänemaa have been authorised by the Road Administration. Thus, the majority of the monuments erected in memory of the people killed in road accidents are unauthorised: they have been erected either by groups of relatives or individual persons and usually they are not in concordance with the Road Administration. The government does not have a common position on unauthorised memorials. Such situation results from arbitrary and subjective decisions, partly due to tradition.

In Estonia, the earliest known stone cross still found in its original location is in Marta Street, in Tondi, Tallinn. It is believed that on September 11, 1560 a gentleman named Blasius

Hochgreve was killed there by the Russians. The inscription on the cross reads: May God have mercy on him and give him forgiveness for his sins on the day of judgement. A similar stone cross from the 16th century is found beside the Tallinn-Narva road, on the border of the present day Ida-Virumaa and Lääne-Virumaa regions, and was erected in memory of a killed Russian boyar Wassili Roskladini.

The earliest known memorial stone erected in honour of a victim of a road accident is located on the outskirts of Rakvere and it was put up in 1928 to commemorate Hans Winnal. He was one of the richest men of his times, the honorary consul of the Republic of Chile in Estonia, fanatically interested in cars and the sole representative of General Motors in Estonia. He was killed in an accident which he himself caused. On Saturday evening of July 14, 1928, he was driving from Tallinn to Narva-Jõesuu, accompanied by a Dane, Harald Sigetty, the representative of General Motors International, and his wife Helene Winnal. At the outset, the La Salle Convertible was driven by Valter Einmann, Winnal's driver but in a little while Hans Winnal himself took the wheel. Some twenty kilometres after Rakvere, the car skidded off the road, crashed into a rock at high speed and rolled over. The passengers fell out of the car; Hans Winnal hit a rock and died approximately ten minutes after the crash. It was thought that Hans Winnal mixed up the accelerator and the brake and accelerated instead of slowing down at the bend.

The epitaph on the stone reads:

Siin hetkekski rändaja seisata

ja pilgukski paljasta pea:

Sest sinu kivi veel teadmata,

kus lõpetada murede ea.

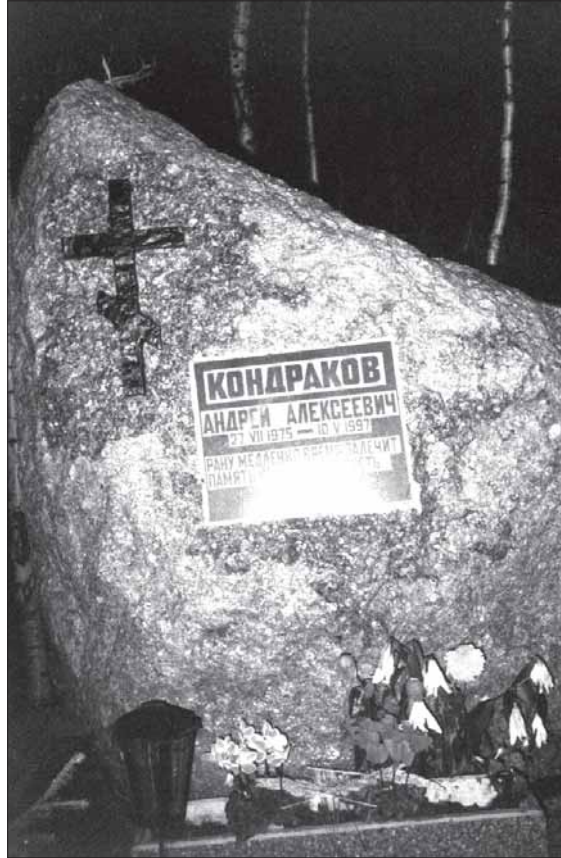
Traveller, stand still
here for a moment

And uncover your head:
For your grave stone is
not yet known,

Where your troubles
finally end.

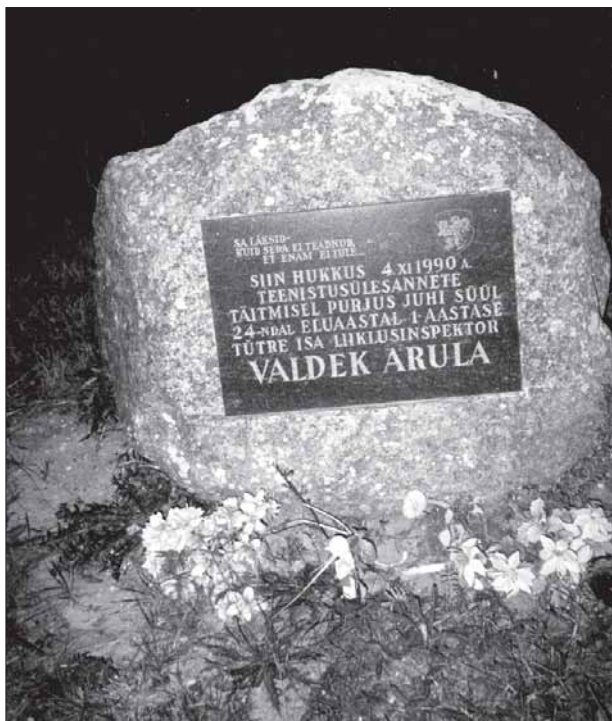
The largest known memorial was erected in honour of Andrei Kondrakov who died in 1997, and is located in the Ida-Virumaa region beside the Tallinn-Narva highway.

At the crossroads at Mäo, there is an authorised monument to the policemen who were killed in an outnumbered battle with



The largest known memorial was erected in honour of Andrei Kondrakov who died in 1997 and is located in the Ida-Virumaa region along Tallinn-Narva highway. Courtesy of M. Kõivupuu, 1998.

criminals. One of the unauthorised monuments along Tallinn-Narva highway was erected in honour of Valdek Arula, a traffic inspector who was killed in the autumn of 1990 while on duty. The father of a one-year-old daughter was murdered by drunkards who had stolen a lorry in Kohtla-Järve and rammed the inspector while the latter was investigating the cause of a car crash. Every year on the afternoon of November 4, Valdek Arula's brother and mother visit the stone with Valdek's former colleagues to relive the memory of the tragic event.



Monument to Valdek Arula. Courtesy of M. Kõivupuu, 1998.

The verse and text on the epitaph read:

*Sa läksid –
kuid ei teadnud,
et enam ei tule*

You went –
And never knew
You won't be coming back

Road inspector VALDEK ARULA was killed here while on duty by a drunken driver on 4.11.1990. He was 24 years old and the father of a one-year-old daughter.

Use of the symbol of the police (set in heraldic frame, a lion holding in its front paws the national coat of arms of Estonia) suggests that the monument was authorised.

By the Tartu-Võru road, approximately a kilometre after Maaritsa, there is a modest granite memorial stone in memory of forester Kaider Kütt. On the stone there are symbols typical to Estonian gravestones, a cross and a tree (birch) and also an engraved gnome: *Here stranded a ship of life.*



Here stranded a ship of life. Courtesy of M. Kõivupuu, 1998.

It is rare that a death site becomes also the burial place of the departed as, for example, is the case by the Rõuge-Sännä road in Võrumaa where a schoolchild's life came to an end.

Beside the Tartu-Tallinn and Tartu-Viljandi roads people have planted around the memorials decorative grade pygmy trees which grow in a “mourning” shape.

The memory of crash victims has also been honoured with items directly symbolising the casualty. Such items are most often tyres on which the names of those killed in the accident may be written, or which serve as flower beds for annual plants. The tragic event is also demarked by license plates or parts of a car (steering wheel, etc.) to which people take flowers and lighted candles. Candles are lit and flowers are taken to the death site on the birthdays and death anniversaries of the victim; obituaries and notices announcing the anniversary of the death are published in newspapers.



*Different tokens of mourning mark the sites of road accidents.
Courtesy of M. Kõivupuu, 1998.*



REFERENCES TO THE MONUMENTS IN ESTONIAN NEWSPAPERS

The printed press plays a rather significant role in exerting influence on people's conscience and opinions: through manipulation, pressure groups can shepherd human behaviour (see also Hennoste 1999: 62–65).

Rein Sikk, one of the journalists who brought up the subject of roadside monuments, wrote in *Eesti Päevaleht*:



By the Rõuge-Sännä road, right at the Sännä caves, the life of a pupil came to an end. Rõuge parish. Courtesy of M. Kõivupuu, 1995.

Even though people have erected unauthorised monuments on the roadsides in Estonia for the last few decades, the Road Administration began to count them only this year due media pressure. The Road Administration registered 92 monuments. Three of them commemorate soldiers killed in war; six of the monuments are reminders of historic events. 83 stones have been erected in memory of the people killed in road accidents. The Road Administration has authorised the instalment of five stones, four of which are located in Järvamaa. Several monuments in the Ida-Viru region, constructed of car tyres, have not been registered (Sikk 1998).

The campaign to remove such monuments most likely originates from a hidden conflict between administrative officials and Andrei Kondrakov, the businessman who erected a conspicuous roadside monument, the largest in Estonia, to his son and then refused to remove it.

After Ago Gashkov's public appearance on national television on May 10, 1998 where he attacked those responsible for erecting these monuments, *Eesti Päevaleht* published an article on May 28, 1998 by Rein Sikk, Urmet Kook and Anu Saar under the headline *Hundreds of roadside cenotaphs warn drivers* which initiated a heated debate in the Estonian media.

The Estonian media has been accused of being inaccurate, biased and blowing things out of proportion:

If the events or issues covered by the news do not personally concern the journalist, the news is generally objective and well balanced, whereas if the journalist has to broadcast something that concerns him/her personally, s/he cannot maintain these qualities. And while s/he cannot openly pronounce his opinion, s/he does it subtly. The most common trick is to ignore the sources when telling some unpleasant truth. Another such dirty trick is to give direct misinformation in the headlines (Hennoste 1999: 63).

As regards the abovementioned subject, the negative attitude of journalists is first expressed in the headlines where the truth is distorted. *The road to the cemetery* (Kaalep 1998); *Roadside monuments must go* (Päärt 1998); *Crosses without graves. Road*

administration calls for removal of roadside monuments (Väljaots 1998c); *Cenotaph placers take law into their hands* (Subtitle: *Road Service Worker from Ida-Virumaa Fears the Revenge of Stone Owners*. (Sikk 1998); *Memorials Unauthorised* (Tänavsuu 1998). The inclination of the reporters is also revealed in such subtitles as e.g., *Arbitrariness at Roadsides*; *Ditches Are Not for the Dead*. Often the subtitle actually contradicts the ideas expressed in the passage that follows.

The newspaper articles emphasise the illegality of people's actions: if it is not allowed, it must be prohibited. The article *Hundreds of roadside cenotaphs warn drivers* (Sikk et al 1998) lacks official statistics about the number of memorial stones at roadsides and fails to differentiate between temporary and permanent markings of accident sites; instead of presenting accurate figures, the reporters tend to use emotional proclamations: *No-one knows how many death site markers there are on Estonian roads* (*Eesti Päevaleht*, May 25, 1998).

Another aspect of the issue, i.e., the question of why so many innocent victims die in road accidents, has found much less coverage (e.g., Agnes Tali in her 1998 article *Drivers disturbed by roadside trees not monuments*).

The employees of Road Administration tend to regard the monuments with respect. According to Harri Kuusk, the deputy director general of the Road Administration, most of the stones are unauthorised. He fears that a monument erected in honour of one accident might become the cause of another (*Eesti Päevaleht*, May 25, 1998).

Even though there are no dead buried under the roadside monuments, the disposal of the monuments is an act of desecration.

During a campaign, the Estonian Road Administration decided that the memorial stones and plaques put up in honour of the victims of road accidents should be removed by October 1, 1998. Aare Pain, the head of the traffic department of the Road Administration stated three reasons why the monuments should be removed from the roadsides: 1) foreign tourists might regard the roadside monuments as tombstones; 2) the stones hinder the maintenance of roads or roadsides; 3) the monuments present a danger to drivers by distracting their attention (Pain 1998). Of

the three reasons, the second one appears rational while the other two are rather emotional.

The articles are generally dominated by an emotional point of view. The most emotional of all were the arguments by Tiina Kaalep:

Estonia is a strange country. Driving along the major roads you feel as if your car is on a pathway winding between graves in a cemetery. I'm not just speaking of the war memorials and graveyards so close to the road that a banana peel thrown out the car window might land on someone's grave. I would like to turn people's attention to the memorial stones marking someone's death site where people bring flowers to and light candles. I truly don't like these cemeteries at roadsides (Kaalep 1998).

The author argues further that our traffic culture is very low indeed and that nobody erects monuments in honour of the animals killed by cars – nobody even bothers to dispose of the corpses.

Strangely enough, tabloids seems to take the most neutral view of the subject of marking the death sites of the victims of road accidents. Jaan Väljaots argues that the opinion of the mourners which should primarily be considered, has never been asked for, and takes their side.

As to the argument that foreigners might feel awkward about the roadside monuments, a mother whose sons were killed in a road accident has a completely different story to tell:

A car passed us at the monument but then slowed down and backed up to us. First we thought that they were relatives of the other victim of the accident but they turned out to be Norwegians. They asked us about the stone, looked at it and said that it was a nice tradition. One of them was with some kind of a magazine; he photographed the stone and told us he would write about it in Norway. [---]

“Not everyone places a memorial stone anyway. Those which have already been placed could remain there”, reckons the brother of a talented neurologist who was killed in an accident. “If they are a danger to anyone, they should be shifted just a little further from the road but taking them

away is almost the same as going and vandalizing the cemetery. The people who knew the deceased person and the relatives need these stones to light a candle at”.

The deceased doctor's brother, a librarian, admits that a monument might capture drivers' attention for a moment but he does not believe anyone would be able to read the inscriptions on the stones while driving. [...] And like others who visit the stones, he argues that these roadside monuments might make the drivers contemplate death lurking at the road and ease up on the accelerator (Väljaots 1998).

In the same article, Jaan Väljaots has given his photos a common caption:

Do the stones irritate officials because they distract drivers' attention or because they draw the attention of passers-by to their own failure in securing road safety?

Aleksei Kondrakov who erected a two-metre high monument in memory of his lost 20-year-old son and takes there flowers every Saturday describes the situation as follows:

It is not just stealing the flowers but they took the vase as well. In South Estonia people are civilised, nobody would even steal a crystal vase from the cemetery. [...] In the Caucasus, where I come from, such roadside monuments are sacred (Tali 1998).

The argument of the Estonian Road Administration officials claiming that the roadside monuments are a danger to drivers is not based on a proper analysis of the matter but on the subjective opinion of the officials (Väljaots 1998).

Aare Pain, the head of the traffic department, admits that he has not heard of cases where the memorial stones have been the cause of new road accidents and argues that showy roadside advertisements are equally dangerous for drivers. Pain says that people can apply for permits to erect new monuments, provided the stones are not too conspicuous or block road maintenance crews, but his personal opinion is that if

the stone is not very showy and disturbs nobody, then let them be there even though they belong in the cemetery, the last resting place of the deceased (Väljaots 1998).

SUMMARY

Memorial stones and crosses on roadsides are a gloomy reminder of the fragility and the temporality of worldly life. The monuments to traffic victims symbolise the dangers of modern civilisation and the inability of individuals to avoid them. Furthermore, death no longer touches just a small social group – a family or a community. Various tragic events and catastrophes characteristic of modern civilisation (road accidents, shipwrecks and plane crashes) affect the entire humankind via the media news (newspapers, radio, and television).

Marking the death sites of road fatalities is a global practice which became more widespread in Estonia in the 1990s. In Estonia, this is a marginal convention of death culture which derives from the archaic belief that a man's soul is linked to his death site. The Estonian Road Administration has suggested that memorial stones may distract drivers and this opinion has also been supported by the press. Although, the Road Administration has no data on accidents involving memorial stones, the erecting of memorials on the roadsides is not considered appropriate. Still, memorial stones are not completely harmless. At the end of the 1990s, heated debates on memorial stones were held. The issue became topical once again when a car lost control and hit the memorial stone in Ussisoo – a section of Tartu road which is generally considered dangerous and where accidents happen often – as a result of which the accident had more severe consequences. The memorial stone which had been in Ussisoo for a decade was never returned to the roadside.

In Central Europe, marking a death site is a common practice motivated by the need to draw attention to the tragedy, the wish to warn other drivers and pedestrians of danger, and to mark the death site for commemoration.

A memorial cross or stone does not normally mark the last resting place but the place where a person's biological life came to its end. Such memorials are more significant to those who

have personal a connection with the accident. People visit these places to remember and to mourn their loved ones.

The shape, size, material and form of the memorial depend on the aesthetic faculties and the financial resources of those who erect it. Marking a death site, the relatively materialistic and urbanised people of today often choose to ignore the religious aspects of the custom, and the belief that the soul of the deceased will permanently stay at the death site.

The monuments are erected in memory of the victims of car crashes, not those who are responsible for the accident. Records of earlier folk tradition also contain references to the same type of behaviour describing the marking of the death (or murder) sites of innocent victims.

The author of this paper finds it significant that in 1998, when there was a campaign in the press against memorials for victims of road accidents, Henn Mikelsaar won a literary prize for his novel "Ristiratast" (1998) which talks about commemorating the sites of road fatalities, and the main issue raised and deliberated throughout the novel is a philosophical and ethical one of which place is more sacred – the one where a person's soul leaves his body or the grave where his body lies.

The press (newspapers *Postimees*, *Eesti Päevaleht*, *Eesti Ekspress*) has covered the issue subjectively, from the standpoint of officials rather than the relatives of the deceased, disregarding the possible effect such articles might have on the people who erected the stones. The reporters fail to analyse the cause of the accidents or the negligence of the road police, emphasising that the marking of death sites is unofficial and, therefore, inappropriate. To further emphasise the negative aspects of roadside monuments, the press came up with colourful headings, set Estonian customs against the non-Estonian ones (Kondrakov example) and emotionally played on the self-confidence of the Estonians (what foreign tourists might think of us).

The tabloids (*Sõnumileht*, *Kuller*) succeeded in adhering to the model of social responsibility by also presenting the opinion of those who erected the stones, the relatives of the deceased, and by producing the corresponding official statistics (Tänavsuu 1998). They connected the increase in the number of fatal road accidents accompanied by the raise in the number of roadside monuments with the shortcomings in the work of the traffic police.

“We visit that place on the fifth day of every month”, says a mother. Early on the morning of October 5, last year, her sons, former university students who had helped her in farm-work, drove in their Opel loaded with pig carcasses for a restaurant towards Tallinn. In the curves after Anna, a Subaru coming from Tallinn raced towards them. Even though the police initially said that the Subaru’s driver was drunken, the records later stated that a sober driver had nodded off for a second. How it actually happened will remain unknown since all three young men were killed in the accident. (Väljaots 1998).

The marking of tragic events at roadsides adds, in turn, to oral narrative tradition.

Seven years ago there was a tragedy where four people got killed. People have begun talking about an incident involving an ambulance from Tartu. In fact, there were two doctors from Tartu on their way to Tallinn in a car belonging to someone they knew. They all were all killed when they crashed into a car full of drunken people. Also a 16 year old girl from the other car, whose birthday had been celebrated, was killed. The monument bears no inscription in her memory (Väljaots 1998).

I have been keeping an eye on what journalists write on the topic in online media publications. Since about 2000, I have been doing the same with not only Estonian but also international press, leading me to conclude that European journalists do not condemn the marking of death sites; they express worry concerning traffic accidents and the rising number young people involved and killed in such accidents. Journalists take the view that public marking of death sites helps to prevent new accidents. The style of Central European journalists is often also emotional but with the emphasis on vandalising death sites or the reasons for car crashes (alcohol, drugs) or the young age of people killed in road accidents. Journalists do not compare roadsides with cemeteries and avoid presenting their subjective opinions.

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ORAL & WRITTEN



Covers and Folklore. Contra's Songs

Taive Särg

<i>kui on trumm</i>	<i>if there is a drum</i>
<i>tulevad pulgad</i>	<i>the sticks appear</i>
<i>iseenesest</i>	<i>by themselves</i>

Contra (1998: 50)

THE RELATIONS OF TEXTS AND MELODIES IN ESTONIAN FOLK SONGS

It has been a characteristic of Estonian folksongs since ancient times that one melody can be used with several lyrics. The oldest layer of Estonian folk music, the runosong, originates from the common runosong heritage of the Balto-Finns. Estonian runosongs have usually “group melodies”: one melody is used with several texts belonging to a certain (regional, functional, etc.) group of songs (Rüütel 1995: 128). A singer has some freedom to improvise or change the text according to her/his creativity and the particular occasion. New lyrics were (re)created by the most gifted singers and as a result more texts than melodies were common in oral tradition. A good singer was considered a person who was eloquent in words, had a good voice and great influence on the audience.

In the more recent layer of Estonian folksong that is characterized by end-rhymes, creating new texts for well-known melodies as also used. This layer has been influenced by European music, its influence continuing up to the present. Songs were also borrowed from neighbouring cultures, especially from the East during the Soviet period.

The multiple use of melodies is also known elsewhere, both at the times of the trobadors (Trobadors 1985: 20) as well as in contemporary Europe. Melodies that new words are written to have been called *kontrafazierende Melodien*, the same phenom-



*Contra at the Kaika summer university in Põlgaste.
Courtesy of Ülle Harju, 1998.*

enon in English is termed *the practice of contrafactur* (Klusen 1986: 195).

When end-rhymed songs emerged in Estonia in the 18th century, the songs spread from one person to another, but today the most important mediator of music – that of local origin, from the neighbours and from the West – is the music industry.

From the viewpoint of folklore the massmedia mediates a song to the human mind and acts as the teacher of a tradition. The Norwegian folklorist Torunn Selberg has claimed that media and folklore are opposite poles that can nevertheless have influence on one another. “Folklore is in ideal direct communication where the roles of the sender and receiver change and where everybody is a creator of common culture characterised

by historical depth” (Selberg 1993: 201). Ethnomusicologist John Blacking has said that although our contemporaries wish to see folk music as an intact and unchanged heritage from a distant past, one must admit that music heard over radio or other massmedia also has the essential features of any orally transmitted music tradition (Blacking 1977: 8). To learn a tradition, the repeating of audible and visible information is important. Quips from advertising clips and serials turn into folklore especially fast, because they recur most frequently (Peebo 1995: 7), and so do popular songs. Walter Anderson, the classic of folklore, emphasised the role of recurrent story-telling in learning the fairy tales by heart (Anderson 1923). Not only is a song learned from the massmedia, but also its style and situation of performing. For example, a singing child holds a toy in hand like a microphone and thus the singer performs as opposed to the audience.

There exist a large number of more or less well known songs in people’s active memory. Some of them are from the older and some from the newer layers of folklore, some are learnt at school, some from the massmedia. Two aspects in their performing in oral tradition can be distinguished:

1. Song are repeated from memory, making a choice from among known songs to be performed in a certain situation, creating **folk songs, popular songs and ways of performing**.

2. A song is chosen from among those known to one, but in performing they are arranged, **recreated in some popular way**. The aim may be to simply refresh an old song, to suit it to the current situation, or to create an entirely new one.

The main ways of (re)creating a song are:

1. adding new words to or changing the words of an existing song;
2. writing new lyrics, maintaining the melody;
3. creating a new melody, maintaining the lyrics;
4. translating into Estonian;
5. a foreign language text is adapted on the basis of sounds only, the contents of the song often turns into absurd nonsense;
6. combining different lyrics and melodies. (See Example 1.)

All these simple ways are used both in runosong and in the more recent layers of folk singing. A large part of contemporary student songs are based on well-known recorded pieces of music.

THE THREE TENORS OF VÕRU COUNTY

New texts are written to songs not only by translators or musicians in a band. Anyone can do it. In this article I would like to introduce Contra (Margus Konnula), who is quite a phenomenon with his creative attitude towards song texts. In addition I would also like to discuss Indrek Rüttele's and Olavi Ruitlane's lyrics (see Särg 1999). Both young men are foremost known as poets.

The young poet Contra lives in Suure-Horma farm, Urvaste village, Võru county, and also sometimes identifies himself as the king of Urvaste (Contra 1997: 1). He is 26 years old (born in 1974) and used to work as postman and head of the Urvaste post-office. In February 1999 he quit the job and has been freelanced since then.¹ Contra has published a cassette and CD as well as eight collections of poems, one of them available on the Internet (Contra 1997). More information about Contra as a person can be found in article by Veiko Märka (1998) and Peeter Sauter (1999).

I consider him more as a folk singer than a professional poet or singer. It is because he sings his songs with pleasure anywhere to any audiences: at different parties, while travelling by bus, etc.; he sings "a capella" and out of tune. Veiko Märka writes how after the interview was ended, "Contra rides a bike to a shop in Antsla and among other things buys sausages named after his dog (Spot). And sings the salesgirls and customers a couple of songs." (Märka 1998: 4). Arne Merilai, a reader of literature at Tartu University, was the first literary person to notice Contra, when he was selling copies of his poems on a local bus to Urvaste.²

I have repeatedly heard him singing to closed and open circles, at public events and birthdays. I have also taped or filmed his performances (with Einar Sinijärv or Indrek Särg).

Contra has published his songs in various books of poetry, two of them subtitled "singing book": *Üüratu üürlane* [Huge shriller] and *Naine on mees* [Woman is man] (Contra 1996, 1999), containing with few exceptions only lyrics of songs. The mentioned exceptions are also relative – while recording texts from

¹) Personal communication with Contra in *Peegli Pubi*, Tartu, 19.04.1999.

²) Personal communication with Arne Merilai at Järveküla Summer School, 12.07.1998.

Üüratu üürlane, Contra improvised on the spot melodies also for poems that originally had had none³ (e.g. Contra 1996: 26A, 27, 28A). He said on a recording session, that since he had already started to sing he may as well sing the song to the end.

The second young poet, Indrek Rüttele (born in 1971) lives in Puhja village, Tartu county. He has used popular songs as a source of material for his poems. He does not perform his songs as widely as Contra, but he can just as quickly as Contra improvise the poems to an original speech-like melody in a blues or rap style.⁴ The third poet, Olavi Ruitlane (born in 1969) comes from Võru, lives in Laeva village, Tartu county and can also play guitar. His source of material is Estonian-centered, singing mainly covers of Estonian children and pop songs. His covers include inserting small jokes as well as political satire, e.g. the song "Mine minema Savisaar Ets" (Go away Savisaar Ets) (Ruitlane 1999: 42). Neither Contra, Rüttele nor Ruitlane has tertiary education and they are mainly occupied with writing. In singing, they are often joined by Jan Rahman or Veiko Märka, creating different versions of a group called "Three tenors of Võru county".

COVER

Contra himself calls his texts *covers*. On the title page in the songbook *Üüratu üürlane* is written: "The book [...] consists of covers of famous songs as well as just so songs!" (Contra 1996: 2). According to the Finnish lexicon *Otavan musiikkitieto* 'a cover' is quite the same as plagiarism (OM 1987). The German handbook of popmusic *Rock. Pop. Jazz. Folk.* explains the term: "*Cover version* is the new performance of a song, which has already been put out on a record, by another musician at the time the original is still popular; cover is only aimed at commercial success, it is not an independent new interpretation of a composition, even if the press may call it so." (RPJF 1987). Hence, cover has two meanings: strictly speaking it is like a plagiarism, but in colloquial speech it can mean a new interpretation of a song by some other musician. Cover can more or less resemble its original. Based on the examples from the lexicon we can draw a con-

³⁻⁴) EKLA reg. 1999/49. Recorded in the Tartu office of Fenno-Ugristics in 1997 by Taive Särg.

clusion that cover can have a different title and probably a different text. It is a debatable point, whether there is any difference between a cover and a translation of a song.

During an interview with Contra, Indrek Rüttele and Sven Kivisildnik it became evident, that in their colloquial speech 'cover' indicates simply a new interpretation of a well-known piece of music.⁵ Consequently, a shift of meaning has taken place in colloquial speech.

Song lyrics translated into Estonian (Estonian covers), are usually more humorous and trenchant than the original ones; this is also the case with the songs by Contra and Rüttele. Quite a large portion of Contra's texts have been made to the music of *Nirvana* (see, e.g. Example 2; Contra 1996, 2000: 5, 7), while Rüttele has preferred *Pixies*. The original texts – usually in English – can lead the song-writer, but it depends on how much he understands the original. Contra said that he often proceeds from only one association or from the sound of the words in the original.⁶ A good example is *Tüütu kärbes* (Boring fly, Example 3), made to Suzanne Vega's "Tom's Dinner"; another example could be the Beatles' song "Lucy in the sky with diamonds", sung by Contra: *Bussijaamas on Valgre Raimond* (Raimond Valgre is at the bus-station, Example 4).

Thus, Contra's definition of 'cover' combines parody and self-irony, since his performance has no connections with plagiarism. True, he usually tries to use songs which are sufficiently well-known. But his style of singing differs greatly from the original and is very individual in its character. He always creates a new text and there is never the monotonous beat drum the covers usually have – he sings "a capella". Any way you look at it, it is difficult to imagine, that he could be a commercial success with his particular way of singing.

CONTRA'S SYNCRETISM

An important part of Contra's performance are his gestures, movements, mimicry and interaction with the audience. The manner of singing described above touches on several areas,

⁵⁻⁶) EKLA reg. 1999/49. Recorded in the Tartu office of Fenno-Ugristics in 1997 by Taive Särg.

there are connections with folklore, literature, music and play-acting. For this reason I consider his creations to be syncretic. Syncretism is considered to be especially characteristic to folklore, it is “a lack of dismemberment characteristic to the earlier stages of cultural development: the unity of action, world perception and artistic creation. Syncretism is an essential feature of folklore, e.g. in a folksong art of words and music (with dance and drama elements sometimes added) are inseparably united. When culture differentiates (e.g. the distinction of art genres), syncretism retreats.” (ENE 1975: 372).

Although Contra has been accepted as a member of the Estonian Writers' Union, his activities are not limited to literature. The definitions of literature point in two directions: on the one hand, it is perceived as the art of words (folkloric and other literature genres belong here independently of their form of appearance), and on the other hand, any written text (independently of its contents or quality). Newer definitions are even more ambiguous as notion is a difficult one and hard to define exactly (Fowler & Kegan 1987: 134).

The Estonian term *kirjandus* 'literature' includes the notion of *kirjalik* 'in written form' – but is literature restricted in written and mute form, or does it also include an oral component based on oral tradition? A poet of the older generation Hando Runnel recites his poems on an LP released in 1972, on the cover he has written a commentary:

A poem takes its origin from music. [...] Poetry is a voiceless song. Poetry is written for intimate reading, from books, with the eyes. Poetry written for the eyes can sound embarrassing and painful to the ears. Perhaps the author's voice can diminish the embarrassment. (Runnel 1972)

Contra does not experience any embarrassment while performing his poems. Quite the contrary: although Contra's poems have been published in book form, they were meant for singing in a loud voice, like folksongs in olden times.

Hasso Krull has stated that we should not oppose written poetry to songs sung. Poetry is not simply “reduced song”, quite the opposite may occur:

It would be easier to imagine that the primary “mode” of modulation of the human voice is humming without words, something starting off like an infant’s babbling which develops as a separate entity, and which later may be connected with the art of casting a spell with words or reciting a magic spell [---]. Consequently, the writing down of poetry may in itself not be a bigger transformation than the recital of a charm changing into a song. Thus a written letter is not alien to poetry in essence, but only an addition of a kind, a supplement, as Derrida once called it. (Krull 1998: 1).

Like a folk singer, Contra does not stress his being an author and does not try to hold on to his copyright: on the cover of his book he has written that the use of these texts without license is not liable to prosecution (Contra 1996: 2). Thus his endeavour is not to be individualistic, but rather he is outwardly orientated.

Trying to place Contra in Estonian poetry, we must consider the features in it that according to Hennoste, appeared in Estonian poetry in the 1970s: increase of daily life, quotations and songlikeness. The 1970s were also characterised by features of several *post*-periods (Hennoste 1997a: 117). Hennoste considers



Contra and Kauksi Ülle in Komi. Courtesy of Eva Toulouze, 1998.

the 1990s a jump towards both modernism and postmodernism (Hennoste 1997c); postmodernism is hereby understood as the negation of modernism or taking modernism to its extremes, losing in the process the opposition of high and low arts, including pop-culture among high cultures (Hennoste 1997b; Kangilaski 1995: 226). Postmodernism is also connected with the development of postindustrial information society, the spread of mass media, and suitable for Contra to paradise. However, this is also like breaking through a door he himself opened, as on the title page of his collection *Ei ole mina sinu raadio* (“I am not your radio”) is written:

<i>sisult – sotsialistlik</i>	content – socialist
<i>vormilt – eestipostmodernistlik</i>	form – Estonian
	postmodernism
(Contra 1998: 2)	

Contra’s sources and the style of singing originate from contemporary music disseminated through the massmedia. Unlike in literature, oral tradition is strong in music, and the listening experience and impressions thus received are important; usually one musician interprets a song composed by someone else, and changes it. And yet, a person well-versed in music will not accept the fact that Contra sings out of tune, he cannot be accepted as a singer proper. But actually Contra’s singing sounds particularly original and comical, because he sings out of tune. In the context of a general performance where the several features of the original have been shifted, Contra’s singing out of tune turns into a means of expression in itself, concurring with his characteristic abasement or even blasphemy. He parodies both the style of singing and performing, used by stars in front of an audience, as well as the way Estonian artists have tried to mimic foreign stars (e.g. the song *Maarja-Liis*⁷ in Contra 1999: 23).

Contra’s performance is quite fascinating in itself, he uses distinct dramatic elements. His clothing is quite original, one could state that he moves about in costume. Thus, due to his

⁷) Video filmed on November 7, 1997 in the room of Tartu Young Authors’ Assembly in Tartu Literary House. Collectors T. Särg ja E. Sinijärv.

lack of musical talent, his performance is closer to dramatic act. As a genre, Contra's songs can be considered parodies or travesties, often he turns things into the absurd.

What about Contra and folklore? The concept of folklore has become wider as it evolved (Honko 1998). The definition of folklore established in Bergen 1986 includes "even written and mass media forms of folklore to the extent that variations occur". (NIF 1986: 21). Contemporary folklore is often hard to distinguish from other forms of folk and mass culture.

One characteristic unique to mass culture has been considered standardisation as opposed to variation characteristic to folklore (Selberg 1993: 205). The American media researcher John Fiske has defined popular culture as emerging when people themselves use cultural products mediated via mass media (Fiske 1989: 2). The Norwegian folklorist Torunn Selberg sees this as a folkloristic view on mass media studies; use of products of mass culture is a social act and event that carries its own meaning in the social context (Selberg 1993: 206).

On the side of folklore fall Contra as a person (someone from the folk from the countryside, not too educated), his manner of creation (poems composed by himself to a well-known melody, based on repeated listening experience), performance situation (wherever the opportunity arises), and the manner of performance (according to his capacities and meeting the audience's request), and syncretism.

Single texts by Contra have been disseminated among the people and sometimes even become "anonymous". He recalled that he found one of his songs "Jimmy Troll" on a tape released by the band *Operatsioon Õ*. The lyrics had been assigned to "a guy from Tartu". The poem "Nekrofiil" ("Necrophile", Contra 1996b: 23) had been recited and copied even before it was published. At some public performances it turned out that the audience know his poems by heart. The most popular poem was recited in chorus:⁸

*Naised on nii imelised
harrastades odaviset.*

Women are marvellous
they practice throwing the javelin.

⁸) Personal communication with Contra in 1998 at Järveküla seminar "Lätete pääl".

Contra has listed his sources on the last page of *Üüratu üürlane*, where he admits that “I got hints etc. from the following collectives of artists and naturally from single individuals”. The list includes in addition to *Kukerpillid* and *Nirvana* also *people*, and *probably someone else* (Contra 1996a: 44).

Syncretism as a world view and the unity of activities is evident also from the publishing and the layout of Contra's books. The front cover of *Ei ole mina su raadio* (Contra 1998) is illustrated with postage stamps, indicating Contra's profession. The fact that he provides the finances for publishing his books reflects his farmer's pride. He jokes about all kinds of sponsors by writing on the title page of *Ei ole mina su raadio*:

Iuulekogu väljaandmist toetanud
this collection of poems was supported
AS Eesti Tugi
by Estonian Support Ltd.
sõnad luuletamiseks ette valmistanud
the words prepared for poetry by
AS Eesti Sõna
Estonian Word Ltd.
(Contra 1998: 2)

Self-financing forces one to economize. The thin booklets by Contra include more poems than one might expect, because the pages are covered with print and no decorative white patches have been left. The latter is considered essential for enjoying poetry in modern times.

THE SYMBOL-MELODY

Contra sings well-known melodies with his own texts, a popular way of creating songs everywhere. Many of these songs and melodies are well-known to the extent that they have become a kind of symbol-melodies in Estonia, signifying a certain content for us.

According to Evi Arujärv, a symbol-melody could be defined thus:

Music that tries carefully to illustrate and amplify ideological imaginations, does not maintain its pure nature. [...] The social context and the situation of its use have given a symbolic meaning to the music, and it is impossible to remove it from its temporal and cultural space. (Arujärv 1993: 38)

An example of the musical symbol can be the American folktune “Yankee Doodle”, that several authors have created words for. The tune with its simple harmony and clear melodies is reminiscent of newer Estonian folk songs, adding to why singers find it easy to use. The tune became well-known in Estonia since it was used as the signature by the radio *The Voice of America*. Listening to and co-working with *The Voice of America* was forbidden in the Soviet Union, rendering the broadcast political, a part of the forbidden West, and making this simple tune a symbol of the Western world, and implying that any message accompanied with this tune is political. Another reason is that the tune has been used by *Sex Pistols*.

I have found five Estonian texts written on this tune and I have heard of an additional two. Two of them were composed by students in EÜE (the Students’ Building Brigade) (EÜE 1998: 4, 15). Both of them refer to war. “Kuldre (või Kuldne) marsirood” (Kuldre (or Golden) Marching Company, Example 5) from 1981 deals more with internal policy, the lack of freedom and an organisation referred to with an euphemistic name *Ehhehhee*. Here the Estonian audience recognizes the KGB, an acronym that at the time was not said aloud in public. “Euromais” (Euro+maize, Example 6) from 1982 deals more with foreign policy, particularly with relations between Russia and the West, and colonization. A Conservative Britain, whose economy contrasts distinctly to the asiatic production of student brigades, is hailed by the refrain “I love Thatcher!”

Poet Jaan Malin has written the lyrics, titled “Jüriöö eelseisund” (Condition before Jüriöö, Example 7; Malin 1990: 29). The uprising of Jüriöö in 1343 is the most important armed resistance against Germans in Estonian history and has a symbolical meaning of rebellion and yearning for freedom. The poem refers to bloody injustice and mutiny, implying the Soviet order as the enemy.

The last text “Ei eesel pole elevant” (Example 8; Rüttele 1997: 29) was written in 1997 by Indrek Rüttele under changed political conditions when Estonia was already an established independent republic. He parodies the heroic history of America and stresses the contribution of Jewish capital and freemasonry in it. His version indicates an enlarged political horizon, because any criticism of America during the Soviet period would have been a collaboration with official politics.

Pop groups *J.M.K.E* and *Kulo* have written their own versions. The latter sings an advertisement for Saku beer in their chorus. Departing from *Sex Pistols* and *Kulo*, the students of Tartu University have composed a new version of the song (Rotten is former the singer of *Sex Pistols* Johnny Rotten):

<i>Nurgas istub Rotten</i>	In the corner sits Rotten
<i>kes näpib oma kotte</i>	who scratches his balls
<i>ja kallab enda sisse üha</i>	and swallows beer cans
<i>uusi õllepotte.</i>	one after another.
<i>Jooge Saku õlut (3x)</i>	Drink Saku beer (3 times)
<i>siis on elu sees.⁹</i>	then you'll stay alive

These texts have the same melody, all those new texts may be considered textual variants of the song.

Another example of a symbol-melody could be the *Kasatchok* “Tantsulaul”, composed by an Estonian composer Kustas Kikerpuu (Lauluraamat 1998: 202) on the motif of an Ukrainian folkdance. The song was well in keeping with Soviet national policy, which aimed at drawing different nationalities closer to each other, finally losing the borders and differences between them, which in real life actually meant Russification. Against this backdrop, the *kasatchok* featuring a Russian or Ukrainian accordionist Vanya was created. The song was quite popular in its time around the 1960s, and it was on a tape released by the group *Golden Ribbons* presenting the more popular songs of the 1960s and 1970s (KL: 6). The song has been rewritten into covers at least four times before Contra, by pop-groups *Kulo*, *Talong*, *Kuldne Trio* and singer Üllar Jörberg. Following the original

⁹) Mediated by Valdo Valper from the 1998 seminar “Lätete pääl” at Järveküla.



The three Võru tenors Contra, Jan Rahman and Olavi Ruitlane at the Kaika summer university in Põlgaste. Courtesy of Ülle Harju, 1998.

version, the song relates to the inner politics and the question of nationalities.

The song by Contra to the same tune called “Kassatshekk” (Cashier’s receipt, Example 9) was written in 1992, during the transition period to Estonian Republic and the hard economic crisis. It is about poverty, about waving a receipt received at a shop at night. Especially suggestive are the verses:

<i>toidupoest varastasin singi</i>	from foodstore I pinched a steak
<i>selle ümber joonistasin ringi</i> (Contra 1996a: 12)	around it I drew a circle

Vanya who blows up Tallinn before leaving it for good, does not leave much hope in solving the nationality problems peacefully.

The number of such musical symbols in people’s minds is large and they are often put to use in contemporary popular compositions. The symbol can involve several features of a song: melody, text and context (used for what, in what kind of situations it has been performed, etc.). Songs changed this way spread here and there and sometimes nobody knows the author. Usually such songs are treated as new musical folklore.

In spite of Contra's singing out of tune, we can still clearly distinguish the main outline of the melody movement, which is, according to Estonian researchers of folk music (such as I. Rüütel 1980: 3, U. Lippus 1995: 145), the most consistent part of melody. The simple recognition is sufficient for perceiving the symbolic meaning of the melody; the manner of performance, the shift in musical features and the new text provide it with an additional meaning.

In addition to symbol-melodies, Contra uses in his song texts many well-known symbols or symbolical objects and facts. For example, in the songs "Killukeski yesterdayst" (Example 10), the names of famous Estonian swimmers and politicians are side by side with obscenities and the patriotic song "Kaunistagem Eesti kojad" ("Let us decorate Estonian homes") as well as the Estonian tricolor flag.

THE SINGER OF COUNTRY PEOPLE

What is Contra's relationship with the songs he uses as his source material? He says that he always finds something fascinating in them, he does not aim at ridiculing them in the worst sense, or parodying them; his sole purpose is to have fun. Several of the songs he uses are among his favourites and he never sings anything he dislikes.¹⁰ Thus, Contra's songs could also be called pastiches. Pastish, like parody, is imitation of some style, but without satire or the wish to ridicule (Jameson 1997:131).

However, it is clear that to some extent Contra places himself in opposition to the original songs. He forms a part of a sort of counter culture, which is already reflected in his name – Contra. The word *contra* actually has two meanings – 'against something', and 'an extreme'. While explaining his choice of name Contra once said that he preferred the second explanation. He does not fight against anything, but he is something especially extreme.¹¹ But another time he said: "I am against it all. Also against being against. Consequently, I am in favour of all." (Märka 1998: 4).

¹⁰) EKLA reg. 1999/49. Recorded in the Tartu office of Fenno-Ugristics in 1997. Recorded by Taive Särg.

¹¹) Communication from Contra's evening recital of his work at "Legend" gallery in 1997.

Information imbedded in melody (and also the original text and its meaning) are usually opposed to Contra's words, or is at least less mundane and robust. Contra has a general tendency to vulgarise things, to treat topics that are especially mundane, for example the physical aspects of love, or metabolism.

The creation of the kind of mundane counter culture is reminiscent of the European carnival and laughter culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, where everything official and serious had a humorous folk counterpart. (I have treated the subject in more depth in Sörg 2000.) Laughter and vulgarisation helped reveal what was false and wrong, but also the high and too distant from everyday life. Vulgarising brought art closer to earth and the lower part of the body, signifying not only precipitation but also contact with the fertilising substance and rebirth (Bakhtin 1987; 194–195). This is well illustrated by Contra's famous statement about being the fertilising manure on the Estonian field of poetry (Sauter 1999; Contra 1998:3).

In conclusion, Contra's attitude is not destructive, but rather an affirmation of being himself. This being himself is emphasised by closeness to the country and earth, the clumsiness opposed to the world view obtained via the mass media that changes with the changing of time and fashion. Many of his songs have social content; more stable than the changing dominating ideologies (Russification, nationality, Europeanism) is Contra's point view that jokes about them (see Examples 10, 11; Contra 1999: 26). In his songs there are also many everyday phenomena that one is surprised to be sung about. With his manner of performing, Contra jokes about the differences which separate him as a country boy from the world we see on the TV screen. Referring to the film "Mr. Bean" we might compare Contra, singing a Suzanne Vega's song, to the face with a huge nose that Mr. Bean draws on a classical beautiful painting.

Contra's singing, his distancing from the originals, participating without participation, his musical inability that has reached the level of a new expression which is connected with eloquence and performance charm – all of that has been especially approved by the audience. Is this caused by the joy of recognition? Maybe Contra's original means of expression carry also messages about the audience itself: snappy country people who are inept in many ways, sceptical, used to the changing of holy men, and who ob-

serves the far-away dubious world from a distance. Contra's performance also shakes common beliefs – for instance, that a singer should sing in tune.

<i>kas viisi ma pean</i>	Do I sing to tune
<i>ei pea jah ma tean</i>	I don't, I know
<i>just seepärast laulma pean</i>	and this is why I must
sing	sing
(Contra 1999: 16)	

Ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl has observed the effects of the wide spread Western music all over the world and distinguished eight main types of reaction from the original cultures to this. One of these is the humorous parallel use of own and foreign musical elements (Nettl 1983: 352) that can also be observed in the songs of Contra and Röötle.

John Blacking has stated that new phenomena in music need not be the result of social change, the changes in music may be more radical, or precede them. "One of the challenges of studying artistic systems is the possibility that, because nonverbal communication and performative modes prevail in the performing arts, and because their ambiguity and polysemy allow people to assign to them a greater range of meanings, radical changes of thought are more likely to take place in the arts than in other social institutions." (Blacking 1986: 7).

In studying Contra (and other song writers) we may observe that man has preserved the urge to create integral syncretic art, and to perform it directly the way it occurred before the invention of print. The vitality of folklore cannot be measured primarily by how often it is performed, but rather, by how much of it and at which level it is created. The number of Estonian runosongs is so big because there were many creators; their diversity is explained by the fact that every now and then some new, nontraditional ways and means were introduced. The basis for everything is the creator, medium, singer, who intermediates the images in his consciousness and the collective tradition to real living people. Many great folk singers stood out from the crowd of others merely because of their ability to create, to improvise using traditional methods. Looking at Contra, we see

that the creative force of people is strong, the old custom of singing new up-to-date words to old tunes is still going strong.

Contra is quite fond of being compared to folk singers. If we use the definition where folklore is what folklorists research (Claus & Korom 1991: 31), Contra has every right to sing:

Kaido Kamal on tütar kelle nimi on Kärg,
et olen rahvalaulik avastas kord Taive Särg
*Kaido Kama has a daughter called Kärg
that I am a folk singer once discovered Taive Särg*
(Contra 1999: 16)

In the previous couple of years, Contra has repeatedly performed on television, he has his own show in *Raadio 2* called “Contrarünnak” (Contra’s attack) and columns in several Estonian papers. “But now I am a star and one of the most bought poets,” he comments (Sauter 1999: 5). Having taken the material of his songs from mass media, he is now with increasing fame on the way to mass media. Whether to merge with the media or to reshape it to his face?

Examples

Transcription and notation by Taive Särg. In notes, the following additional signs are used:

↑	insignificant pitch raise of a note
↓	insignificant pitch fall of a note
ˆ	insignificant duration lengthening
˘	insignificant duration shortening
x	note of an indefinite pitch

Example 1. New songs are created by combining different words and melodies. Students joined in the 1980s the words of *The Anthem of Soviet Estonia* with the melody and refrain of the Swedish folksong *Once I walked with gentlemen*. This way the part of the betrayed maiden is taken by up Estonia, or as J. Semper has put it in the lyrics – the people of Kalev. The originally asemantic interjections *joo, joo* in the refrain have in Estonian the meaning “drink, drink!”, acquiring in the context the imperative meaning. Recorded by Taive Särg. Original published in, for example *Laulik* 1955: 5, 6.

Jää kest - ma Ka-le - vi - te kan - ge rah - vas,
 joo, joo, Ka - le - vi - te rah - vas,
 joo, Ka - le - vi - te rah - vas. Ja
 sei - sa kal - ju - na, me ko - du - maa,
 joo, joo, Ka - le - vi - te rah - vas,
 (või: ko - du - maa,
 joo, Ka - le - vi - te rah - vas. /.../
 joo, ko - du - maa.)

*1. Jää kestma, Kalevite kange rahvas
 ja seisa kaljuna me kodumaa,
 Ei vaibund kannatustes sinu vahvus,
 end läbi sajanditest murdsid sa
 ja tõusid õitsvaks sotsialismimaaks,
 et päikene su päevadesse paista saaks.*

The Anthem of Soviet Estonia

1. Stay forever, bold people of Kalevs
 and stand as rock, our homeland!
 Your boldness did not drown in sufferance,
 you broke through centuries
 and rose to be a socialist country,
 so sun could shine into your days.

*Kõndisin kord härradega ringi
 Rootsi rahvalaul*

*1. Kõndisin kord härradega ringi
 joo, joo, härradega ringi,
 joo, kord härradega ringi.*

Once I walked with gentlemen

Swedish folk song

1. Once I walked with gentlemen
joo, joo, with gentlemen
joo, with gentlemen.

Example 2. *Ma ei tea ju* [I do not know]. The song is based on *Smells like teen's spirit* by *Nirvana*. Text published in *Contra* 1996: 23–24. The notes are based on the video filmed in May 1997 in Tartu Literary House at the recital of poems by the members of Tartu Young Authors' Assembly. Recorded by T. Särg and E. Sinijärv.

Ma ei tea ju

1. Mis pa - ha on, see po - le hea, eks
e - lan veel, kui mul ei vea. Ma
kin - ni reeg - li - test ei pea, ehk
peak - sin - gi, kuid neid ei tea. Ei
tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei
tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei

tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei

tea. Ma ei tea ju mit-te mis - kit,

ma joon ai - nult s(h)o - ti vis - kit,

ma joon ai - nult taa - ni õlt - se,

mi - da tean ma ü - le - ült - se.

Mi - da tean ma po - le tea - da,

o - len pea - ta, ä - ra pea - ta mind!

2.Ma sul - le täp - selt öel - da võin, mis

ei - le õh - tu söö - giks sõin, kuid

se - da ü - tel - da ei tea, kas

mait - ses mul - le toit ka hea. Ei

tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei

tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei

tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei tea.

Ma ei tea ju mit-te mis-kit,

ma joon ai-nult s(h)o-ti vis-kit,

ma joon ai-nult taa-ni õlt-se,

mi-da tean ma ü-le-ült-se.

Mi-da tean ma, po-le tea-da,

o-len pea-ta, ä-ra pea-ta mind!.../

I don't really know

1. What is bad is not good
 I'll go on living if I'm not lucky
 I do not stick to rules
 maybe I should but I don't know them

2. I can tell you exactly
 what I ate before dinner yesterday
 but I can't tell you
 if the food tasted good

3. *Ma jälle naeratama pean
kui räägin sulle, mis ma tean.
Ka sinu huulil naeratus,
kuid huuled on küll ei tea kus.*

I must smile again
if I tell you what I know
your lips are smiling as well
but the lips are I don't know where

Ref:

*Ei tea, ei tea, ei tea, ei tea...
ma ei tea ju mitte miskit,
ma joon ainult shoti viskit,
ma joon ainult Taani õltse,
mida tean ma üleüldse,
mida tean ma,
pole teada,
olen peata,
ära peata,
ära teata,
pole vaja,
kõik on jama,
kõik on jama,
kõik on jama...*

don't know don't know don't know ...
I really don't know anything
I drink only Scotch whisky
I drink only Danish beer
what do I know altogether
what do I know
is not known
I'm at a loss
don't stop
don't tell
there's no need
it's all rubbish
it's all rubbish
it's all rubbish

Example 3. *Tüütu kärbes* [Boring fly] by Contra, based on *Tom's Dinner* by *Suzanne Vega*. The refrain of the song takes from the similar asemantical sound of *tüü-tüü* or *tu-tu*. Contra has also used as a source another Estonian cover of the song by *Onu Bella*. Text published in Contra 1996: 6.

Tüütu kärbes

*1. näpin voodi nurgas kotte
und ei tule terve öö
vahelduseks tapan rotte
see on ainus meeldiv töö
närin ühte kohviuba
muud mul pole närimist
keegi lendab mööda tuba
see on tüütu kärbes vist.*

A boring fly

1. in the bed corner I scrach my balls
I cannot sleep the whole night
for a change I kill rats
this is the only nice job
I chew one coffee bean
I don't have anything else to chew
someone is flying about the room
it probably is a boring fly

Refr: tü-tü-tü-tü-tüütu kärbes..

Chorus: bo-bo-bo-boring fly

*2. rotilaipu terve hunnik
aina juurde tekib neid
edasi ei lähe tunnid
ärevalt loen minuteid
jääda magama ei julge
nagu mingi terrorist
keegi mööda tuba kulgeb
see on tüütu kärbes vist*

2. a heap of rat corpses
there will be more and more
the hours refuse to pass
nervously I count the minutes
I'm afraid to fall asleep
as a kind of terrorist
someone wanders in the room
it probably is the boring fly

3. võtan seinalt automaadi
 valanguid sealt lasen viis
 laua peale keset praadi
 tüütu kärbes kukub siis
 magades mu rind ei paisu
 pole mingit magamist
 kuskilt tuleb laibahaisu
 see on tüütu kärbes vist

3. I take the machine-gun from the wall
 shoot out five bursts
 onto the table into the meal
 then drops the boring fly
 my chest is not moving in sleep
 it is impossible to sleep
 from somewhere reeks the smell of corpse
 it probably is the boring fly

Example 4. *Bussijaamas on Valgre Raimond* [Raimond Valgre is at the bus-station]. The song is based on *Lucy in the sky with diamonds* by *The Beatles*. The refrain is based on acoustic similarity. The Estonian text is compiled of fragments from well-known pop songs (among others, by Raimond Valgre) and facts of life. Text published in *Contra* 1999: 14. Note based on the recording of the 1998 Kaika Summer School. Singing: Contra, Olavi Ruitlane and Veiko Märka. Recorded by T. Särg.

1. Muusi- kas kuu-len ma üht mui-nas-jut-tu, ma
 ar- mu-nud teis- se, sa ja muu- si- ka.
 Hel- mi, mull' näi- ta, kuis käib Bin- go lo- to,
 nii et ma võik- sin män- gi- da.

Loo-dan ma tões-ti, et ü - le sest saan,
 et sa ei ar-mas-ta mind,
 und po - le öö-sel, sest i - gat-sen sind, si - ni -
 lind. Löögid x x x ||
 Bus-si - jaa-mas on Valg - re Rai - mond!.../ 3 korda

Valgre Raimond is at the bus station

In music I hear a fairy-tale,
 I am in love with another
 you and music,
 Helmi, show me how to play Bingo
 so I could play it.
 I really hope I'll get over it
 that you do not love me,
 I have no sleep at night
 because I miss you, bluebird.
 Valgre Raimond is at the bus station!

Example 5. *Kuldre (Kuldne) marsirood* [Kuldre (or Golden) Marching Company]. 1981. Based on the *Sex Pistols*' version of *Yankee Doodle*. Text published in *EÜE laulik* 1998: 20–21.

Kuldne marsirood Kuldre 1981

*1. Käest lastud kuldne noorus,
 pead longus sabad sorgus,
 nii sammub nukralt malevasse
 Kuldre marsirood,
 mis sest, et meid on vähe,
 kuid meelest eal ei lähe
 need päevad, mis said veedetud meil
 marsiroodus koos.*

The Golden Marching Company

1. The golden youth wasted
heads bent, tails hanging
there is miserably marching to student camp
the golden marching company
it doesn't matter that our number is small
but we shall never forget
the days we spent together
in the marching company

*Refr: Elu – see on pidu,
elu – see on pidu,
elu – see on pidu,
kui me marsirood on koos.*

Chorus: Life is a ball
life is a ball
life is a ball
when our marching company is together

*2. Ning kadunud on sootuks
meil viimne elulootus
ja sellepärast võtame,
mis võtta annab veel.
Vist viimseks jääb see suvi,
sest meie vastu huvi
on tundma hakanud üks ühing
nimelt EHHEHHEE.*

2. And we have completely lost
the last hope to survive
therefore we shall take
whatever there is to take
probably it will be our last summer
because there is no association
showing interest towards us
and that is EHHEHHEE

*Refr: Elu – see on pidu...
Chorus: Life is a ball ..*

*3. Nüüd sööme EÜE leiba
ja loodame veel leida
me natukene vabadust,
mis ükskord oli meil.
Ja kui kord puhkeb sõda,*

*siis loodame, et mööda
ta läheb meie kodumaast
ja eeskätt EHHEHHEEST.*

3. Now we eat EÜE's bread
and still hope to find
a bit of freedom
which we once had
And when a war strikes out
then we shall hope that
it will pass our country by
and particularly EHHEHHEE

Ref: Elu see on pidu...

Chorus: Life is a ball ..

4. *Ehhehhees on pidu 3x*

kui me marsirood on koost

4. There is a ball in Ehhehhee
when our marching company is apart

Example 6. *Euromais* [Eurocorn]. The very popular song of Students' Building Brigade (EÜE) from 1982. Based on the American folktune *Yankee Doodle*. Note based on a concert by the group *Euromais* on the concert *Kuningad tõusevad tuhast* at Linnahall on 24. 11. 1990. Personal collection of Peep Puis. Text published in *EÜE laulik* 1998: 36–37.

EÜE ja Euromais

Vile

1.Me

vaen - la - sed on ve - ri - sed, neist
 mõrt - suk i - ga nel - jas, nad
 käi - vad möö - da Ve - ne - maad, pomm
 ko - ti - ga on sel - jas.
 E - Ü - E ja Eu - ro - mais on
 tüht - ne NA - TO pe - re, meil
 Rea - gan, That - cher, Pi - no - chet teeb
 pai ja üt - leb: te - re!
 I love That - cher!

EÜE and Eurocorn

1. Our enemies are bloody
 every forth is a murder
 they roam about Russia
 with a bomb in their backbag.

Chorus: EÜE and Eurocorn
 are a united NATO family
 whose heads are caressed by Reagan, Thatcher, Pinochet
 and who greet them
 I love Thatcher!

2. *Kuldpagunites huntamees*
on märatsemas Poolas
ja neegripealik Kuubamaalt
saeb palmipuid Angoolas.

2. Junta man with golder shoulder straps
is raging in Poland
and a black chief from Cuba
saws palm trees in Angola.

3. *Kuid meile kuulub Iirimaa.*
Hong-Kong ja veel Quajaana.
Port-Stanley kuulub meile ka
ei anna teda ära.

3. But Ireland belongs to us
and Hong-Kong and Guyana.
Port-Stanley also belongs to us
we won't give it away.

4. *Käi persse, ablas asiaat,*
su kõri närib kohe
ükssarvik, lõvi kuninglik
ja Vana Wales'i lohe.

4. Fuck you, greedy Asian,
your throat will be promptly bitten through
by a unicorn, a royal lion
and the ancient Welsh dragon.

5. *Kui Vene karu pöörane*
La-Manche'i alla jõuab
SIIS JUMAL KAITSEB INGLISMAAD
seob metsalisel lõuad.

5. When the frenzied Russian bear
reaches La Manche
THEN GOD WILL SAVE ENGLAND
ties the jaws of the beast.

6. *Kui Satterfieldi piknikul*
mind tabas sõjauudis,
siis tõstan tassid kõrvale,
teed rüüpan välikruusist.

6. While at Satterfield on picnic
I was struck by the news of war
then I put aside the cups
and drank tea from the field mug.

Example 7. *Jüriöö eelseisund e. Pardiajajatele* [Condition before Jüriöö]. The uprising of Jüriöö in 1343 is the most important instance of armed resistance against German oppressors in the Estonian history. Words by Jaan Malin, melody from *Yankee Doodle*. Sung by the quintet *Viies ratas*. Recorded by Jaan Malin in 1997. Text published in Malin 1990: 29.

Condition before Jüriöö

Me oleme nii verised, et silme ees läeb mustaks.

Ja tühje sõnu me ei tee, sest teame, et meid ustaks,

We are so bloody, our sight grows black.

And we make no empty words as we know we'd be believed,

kui välja ütlesime kõik, mis otsib väljapääsu.

Meie sõnadest ei ole nendel mingit pääsu.

if we said out all that looks for outlet.

They have no way to escape our words.

Kuid humanistidena me ei soovi nende surma

nüüd. Pikkamisi naudime vaid vere vänget hurma.

But as humanists we do not wish their death

now. Slowly we enjoy the strong enchantment of blood.

Nad tuleb panna mõistma, et ei ole kerge olla

kirp töötu hiiu parra sees. Mis sest, et neil sääl polla

They have to be made to understand that it is not easy to be
a flea in the beard of a jobless giant. So what if they don't have

ehk ühte teist ja kolmandat. Meid laske omaette

siin maa pääl elutseda koos, ning ütlemata ette,

this, that and the third. We are left alone

to live together on this earth, and without forewarning

kas ennast tühjaks väänata ning jagada see sinna,

kust keegi naasemist ei näe, sest põhja saab vaid minna.

whether to wring oneself dry and give it there

where no-one sees return as north is the only way.

Nad võtavad kõik võimuga ja irvitavad pääle.

Ei säändne sund või vohada, ei hoopis loota hääle.

They take everything by force and mock in addition.

No such force should thrive, nor should hope for good.

*Sest vägivald teeb veriseks ja susib vastuhakku.
Kes jääb meist siiski paigale, kes tõmbub ära pakku.*

Because violence makes one bloody and prods to mutiny.
Who of us still stays here, who flees to refuge.

Example 8. *Ei eesel pole elevant...* [A donkey is not an elephant] by Indrek Rüütle. Inspired by the American folktune *Yankee Doodle*. Text published Rüütle 1997: 29–30.

*1. Ei eesel pole elevant,
ei ammuilma kaamel –
meid vabastas juut Washington,
nüüd hangeldada saame.*

1. A donkey is not an elephant
and far from a camel –
we were liberated by the Jew Washington
now we can speculate.

*2. Ei tavad enam takista,
ei ammuilma seisus,
kui käpa all ka Pakistan,
kui väljas iseseisvus.*

2. The customs do not hinder
and so does not social status,
if Pakistan had been conquered
when independence is outside.

*Refr: Tegime, mis suutsime,
nüüd anda tuleb lisa,
me kapital poejuutide,
meil taevajuut suur isa.*

Chorus:
We did what we could
now we have to give more,
our capital came from merchant Jews,
the heavenly Jew is our great father.

*3. Me sõdurid Somaalias
on seni täitsamehed,
meid jälgivad kõik kaamerad,
meist kirjutavad lehed.*

3. Our soldiers are in Somalia
they have been okay up to now,
all cameras are watching us,
papers are writing about us.

*4. Me sõnum Briti kroonile
on: minge pätid persse,
au vabamüürlastoonile,
Gott strafe universe!*

4. Our message to the British crown
is fuck you bums
praise to freemasonry
Gott strafe universe!

*5. Kolmsada aastat maailma
üks idiotsus nikub,
miks tegu teete kraamiga,
mis mängud ära rikub.*

5. For three hundred years
the world has been fucked by an idiotism,
why do you deal with crap
that spoils all the game.

*6. Kui tülitama kipute
siis näitame afekti;
nüüd hõikame – “come here all boys”
noh, tulge meie sekti.*

6. If you come to bother us
then we demonstrate affect;
now we shout – “come here all boys”
well, come join our sect.

Example 9. *Kassatshekk* [Cashier's receipt]. The song was written in 1992 in the times of transition and economical crisis. The song is based on a dancing song *Kasatshok*, by Kustas Kikerpuu. Text published in *Contra* 2000: 24. Note based on a video made in the room of Tartu Young Authors' Assembly in Tartu Literary House on the 7th of November 1997. Recorded by T. Särg and E. Sinijärv.

Rubato

Siis vii - maks tõu - sep Vas - ja ka ja
 pük - sit jal - ga veap. Sest en - ne koi - tu Tal - li - na veel
 õh - ku lask - ma peap. Ja kui - gi jalg sul va - lu - tap, ees
 oo - tap ko - du - tee, sest pea - gi saa - teid a - lus - tap Os -
 tan - ki - no Te Ve - e - e - e - e - e!

Allegro

Kas - sa - tshek - ki kee - ru - ta - des kii - relt möö - dub
 öö, ku - ni kee - gi noa, sel -
 ga sul - le lööb. Ja üks au - to -
 maa - di - va - lang ra - pu - tab sind veel,
 mi - na o - len see, kes nõn - da teeb.
 Toi - du - poest va - ras - ta - sin sin - gi,

üm - ber sel - le joo - nis - ta - sin
rin - gi. Kas - sa - tshek - ki kee - ru - ta - des
kii - relt möö - dub öö, si - nu jaoks ei
e - nam koit - ma löö, ei löö.

Cashier's receipt

Then at last Vanya gets up too
and pulls up his trousers
because before dawn
he has to blow up Tallinn
and even if your leg aches
a road home awaits for you
because soon the programme will start
on Ostankino TV

Chorus:

swinging the cashier's receipt
the night passes quickly
until someone hits
a knife through your back
and one machine-gun burst
shakes you for a while
I'm the one who's doing this

Chorus: from foodstore

I pinched a stake
about it
I draw a circle
swinging the cashier's receipt
the night passes quickly
for you the dawn no longer comes

Example 10. *Killukesti yesterdayst* [Fragments from yesterday]. Based on *Yesterday* by *The Beatles*. Contra uses in his songs simultaneously different well-known symbols, objects and facts. In the current song, we can see hurled together the names of Estonia's best swimmers and politicians, obscenities, the patriotic song *Kaunistagem Eesti kodjad* (Let us decorate Estonian homes) carrying national spirit and the Estonian tricolor flag. This all serves to present the opposition between the beautiful yesterday and sadly real today, expressed in both the idea and structure of the song – our yesterday's dreams of an independent state were more beautiful than the reality. The original has been published in Estonian in *Laulge kaasa* 1966: 11–13; Contra's cover in *Contra* 1996: 30. Note based on a video made in the room of Tartu Young Authors' Assembly in Tartu Literary House on the 7th of November 1997. Recorded by T. Särg and E. Sinijärv.

Yes-ter-day, u-ju-mi-ses vöi-tis
 Ind-rek Sei, küm-nes tu-han-des Ste-
 fa-no Mei ja sa-jas meet-ri-s
 Ste-wart Ray. Sa-vi-saar
 Ot-sas-so-ni-ga on ke-na paar,
 ai-nult sel-lest a-ru ma ei saa, kumb kumma
 ot-sas on, ei a-ru saa.
 Kes küll mõel-da vöis, et on
 ei ja veel kord ei.

Miks mul on jäl - le põis, kui-gi
 vii - ma-ti jõin *rit.* yes - ter - day - ei.
a tempo
 Pee - ru - kott on üks i - ga - ve - ne
 ve - re - kott, ei - la te - gi mi - nu
 küü - nis prööt, nüüd kõlb - ma - tu on
 loo - ma - sööt. Kau - nis - ta
 ko - jad kol - me ko - du - vär - vi - ga,
 et siis po - jad saak - sid koon - du - da ja
 nen - de jär - gi joon - du - da.
 Tri - ko - loor - ne lipp alt on
 val - ge, kes - kelt must,
 ei - la i - ga tipp u - nis -
 tas sust u - nis - tust - ust - ust - ust - ust.

Example 11. *Korraks vaid* [For a (short) time]. Based on a popular Estonian love song from the 1960s (by R. German, lyrics by K. Kikerpuu), turned into political satire by the Estonian band *Talong*. The original chorus: “Only for a time I was with you. It probably must be so, that we were together only for a time, and you left.” The new chorus, sung by *Talong* depicts a foreigner from the East. The rest of Contra’s cover is less political than’s *Talong*’s, he uses different Estonian popular songs.

Note based on a video made in the room of Tartu Young Authors’ Assembly in Tartu Literary House on the 7th of November 1997. Recorded by T. Särg and E. Sinijärv. Original published in *Lauluraamat* 1998: 152.

Korraks vaid

Kor-raks vaid taht-sin tul-la sii-a e-la-ma,
kor-raks vaid, nüüd ei saa-gi e-nam mi-ne-ma,
kor-raks vaid, kuid siis ter-veks e-luks jäin,
kor-raks vaid, mis ma e-nam te-ha võin. Kolm
kol-pa läk-sid rii-du maa-põh-jas pi-me-das, nad
o-lid sin-na vii-dud ka suu-res pi-me-das, ei
tead-nud, kes on tut-tav ja kes on võõ-ras just, nad
vas-tas-tik-ku tund-sid kõik pöö-rast võõ-ras-tust.

Kor - raks vaid taht-sin tul - la sii - a e - la - ma,
 kor - raks vaid, nüüd ei saa - gi e - nam mi - ne - ma,
 kor - raks vaid, kuid siis ter - veks e - luks jäin,
 kor - raks vaid, mis ma e - nam te - ha võin.
 E - si - me - ne ar - mas - tus mul saa - bus ju - ba koo - lis,
 kah - juks nei - u see mi - nust vä - ga vä - he hoo - lis,
 mi - ne - ma läks tei - se - ga, kes is - tus au - to - roo - li,
 poo - le aas - ta pä - rast kat - ki jät - tis ü - li - koo - li.../

Comment

The mid-1990s were an interim period, after Estonia had become independent of the Soviet Union and had not yet become part of the European Union. One overflowing young man from Võru – who in times past would have made a great village singer – sang and recited everywhere his verses. Some of the poems he made up himself, some adapted on the example of well-known singers. His songs were entertaining, but also reflected on the problems of the contemporary Estonian society. In the decade since then, much has changed. First of all, living in independent Estonia and the European Union has become an everyday reality. A merry and enterprising country boy has become a media star and well-known poet, father of two, and together with his wife a leader of rural development in South Estonia, Urvaste village.

It is quite probable that as a researcher I chose from Contra's works the part that spoke to me the clearest. Compared to people who had lived under the Soviet rule of fear, censorship and social oppression, Contra shone with personal courage, the delight of creating and communicating, independence of political and aesthetic correctness, making him able to gaily word the joys and disappointments of both Estonian daily life as well as regaining national independence.

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Information Transmission on the Border of *ingroup* and *outgroup* Groups

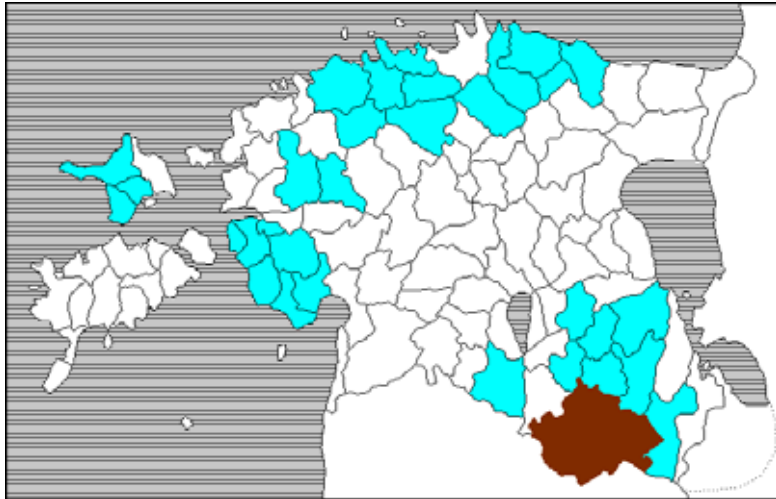
Opposition – integration

Tiiu Jaago

1.

The following article is based on historical folklore, mainly on the collection of historical tradition compiled in the Estonian Cultural Archives in the 1920s-1930s. The collection was put to test in 1997 by the author and the students of Estonian philology as well as students of Estonian and comparative folklore who thematically worked through the texts for their pro-seminar papers at the University of Tartu. The current article focuses on the religious conversion movement in the 1840s and 1880s. The data from the cultural archives have been compared with “Talurahva käärimine Lõuna-Eestis XIX sajandi 40-ndail aastail” [“The Turmoil among Southern Estonian Peasants in the 1840s”], a study by Hans Kruus (published in Tartu, in 1930).

Narratives about religious conversion movement (i.e. the conversion to Greek Catholic/Russian Orthodox from Lutheran) are quite different from the descriptions of other religious movements (Moravianism, Baptism, the Awakening Movement, etc.). Firstly, because these stories present explanations for the conversion (the same thing is found in the descriptions of other conversions as well, but it is not the most prevalent feature). Secondly, economic-pragmatic considerations are discernable as compared to other reasons. Economical or other rational reasons for conversion have been known throughout history (e.g. the Christening of ancient tribes); however, such conversions did not take place by means of a change in one’s *Weltanschauung*.



Areas that students have covered in their pro-seminar papers. Urvaste, Rõuge, Karula, and Hargla are the important areas from the aspect of religious conversion movement in the 1840s.

Hans Hattenhauer, a juridical historian, writes about the relationship between the religious conversion (Christenisation) and legal matters in Europe,

The Celtic, Germanic, and Slavic people were not prepared to change their archaic way of thinking yet. They understood conversion as replacing old and unstable values of well-being with newer and better ones. Adopting a new religion was not a matter of devotion and faith, but a legal transaction based on the benefits and risks involved (Hattenhauer 1995: 163).

The reasons for conversion might have been the profits and risks related to legal problems. This was prevalent among the other motives for adopting the orthodox religion in 19th century Estonia (Livonia). It is not a problem for a person to adopt a new religion, it becomes a problem when abandoning one's faith and not replacing it with similar beliefs (Geertz 1990: 2314).

In folklore, conversion is explained by the Russian Orthodox priests' promises of land and freedom, and tax deductions. For example, in the materials from Rõuge we read how

the ministers walked around the village and promised freedom, land, and a bucket of herring (or half a bucket of herring; or Baltic herring) (EKLA f 199 m 24, pp. 42–43; m 25 p. 7).

The feelings of local public figures towards conversion and the people involved are quite remarkable. We see distinct regional characteristics, which are not dependent on economical situation alone. Mutual relationships influence the process as much as economics. The students involved in the project write in their papers that conversion was not very active in the regions where the people and the church enjoyed a friendly relationship (Põlva parish).¹ In the materials from Rõuge it is stated that unlike the Moravians the opposition of the Lutheran Church did not achieve anything (EKLA f 199 m 24 p. 41). The nature of the transmission of information depends on the relationships among people (groups). If the groups involved are in opposition, the information is transmitted incompletely or deficiently.

The article concentrates on how the information is transmitted (by whom, in what circumstances) and how it is understood, based on historical folklore about the religious conversion in Livonia in the 1840s. Although the area is not extensive, it still gives a good example of the social aspect of information transmission. Thus, we can compare the situation of that time to that of modern society.

2.

According to historical folklore conversion resulted from:

1. believing the false promises of the Orthodox priests (Rõuge: *the ministers walked around the village...*);
2. trusting that the Russian Orthodox faith as the religion of the state and the emperor would satisfy their dreams for a better and more promising future (Karula: EKLA f 199 m 27, pp. 29;33;66);
3. believing the rumours that those who adopt Russian Orthodox faith will get private land, those who do not, will stay

¹) For details see: The pro-seminar papers of the students of Estonian Language and Comparative Folklore at the University of Tartu, 1997. Janika Safjanov, 22; Merili Metsvahi, 19; Katrin Roodla, 22.

slaves for the rest of their lives. (Urvaste: *“The Setu bowl peddlers particularly told such stories”* EKLA f 199 m 30, p. 280).

Let us now compare folk tradition and the historical facts to those found in Hans Kruus' book. We will attempt to discern the economical reasons for conversion, the influence of public figures, the mutual relationships – everything concerned with historical folklore. In addition, we look at a historian's viewpoint on how the people could have reacted to it.

The reasons for the peasant riots in the 1840s were as follows:

1) the agrarian reform law passed in 1819 that set the peasantry free without land, increased the amount of work done for the estate which eventually led to the crisis of existing economical regulation;

2) weather conditions at the end of 1830s caused crops to fail making the situation of peasantry even worse;

3) the peasants heard rumours about favourable land deals available for buying land from the Russian Crown (Kruus 1930: 49 ff.).

It seems then that the peasant riots resulted in part from the uncontrollable physical environment (weather, climate), in part from the legislative or juridical environment, and in part from rumours associated with emotional attitudes and folklore. In order to find out whether the latter really is significant, we will clarify the definitions of emotional attitude and traditional climate, and will finally return to the study by Hans Kruus to examine the importance of emotional attitudes and folklore during the period under discussion.

3.

The principle behind the study of emotional attitudes lies in comparing simultaneously predominant world views. Different mentalities, standards, and habits form the basis for thoughts and reactions in various groups (Peltonen 1991: 572). Priit Pirsko has studied the buying (selling) of farms from the points of view of different groups (Pirsko 1995). He relies on German and Estonian newspapers and historical folklore when dealing with the attitudes of various groups. Which factors determine the starting point and persistence of the process? Priit Pirsko writes,

In the author's opinion when dealing with the problem under discussion, it is even more important to point out the fact that **in principle** it was possible to sell farms, at least in Livonia. The 1804 agrarian reform law allowed the peasant ownership of real estate and movable property. [---]. For a serf this did not actually mean anything, however. After the emancipation of the peasantry, few farmsteads were being sold here and there in Livonia. [---] Although several legal issues were clarified in 1849, it was still not enough to initiate the land trade process. The situation even worsened in 1856. Hence, legislative action is only one (albeit essential) factor towards the initiation (or elimination) of an event. The author thinks that it is as important to have an emotional state of mind set to accept such legal transactions. (Pirsko 1995: 103)

In principle, the peasants were able to buy land in Livonia in the 1840s; however, in reality it was not possible. As far as the historical process is concerned it is very important to understand how the regulation came into effect and how peasants understood it. P. Pirsko writes that in addition to legal and economical



Unlike the pictures of Lutheran churches, the photos of Greek Catholic (Russian or Apostolic Orthodox) churches appear very rarely in architectural collections. There are not many of them in the photo collections of the folklore archives either. A rare photo was found in Pärnumaa. On the photo: Uruste Russian Orthodox Church of the Resurrection of Christ (built in 1871–1873). Photo: "Eesti arhitektuur" 1996: 158.

(financial) matters, in reality the individual persons and their attitudes also play a role. All these factors combined will influence the process, therefore it is interesting from the human perspective to observe the subjective elements in history.

The study of folklore shows the changes of tradition over time and space. And we are faced with the question: why does a specific folklore motive thrive in a particular time and location, while it does not adapt well in a neighbouring area (see Sarmela 1974). The way the motive is adapted, received and elaborated on is associated with the regional style, the so-called traditional climate, where the traditional motives are shaped by the following factors:

1. natural environment
2. artificial environment
3. accepted folklore of the period
4. the emotions and experiences of the bearer of a tradition

The traditional climate that prevails determines one's activities and life style. However, folk tradition does not reflect pure and simple nature, but rather a life style. Folk tradition does not emerge from the objective world, but from a subjective world view. Environment restricts one's life style, but not folk tradition directly (for details see Honko 1972).

The same problems can be observed in the conversion movement. Why the need to adopt a new faith? Why the regional differences? How was the process connected to other areas of culture (economy, church, peasantry-nobility relationship, etc.)?

4.

Hans Kruus argues that the first written records about rumours circulating among the peasantry about the possibility to travel to Russia in order to get a good bargain on land, date back to June 9, 1841, when some peasants were interrogated in Riga Province (Kruus 1930:51). The first phase of the peasant riots had started a month earlier which resulted in the religious conversion (the third phase, at the end of the movement) started a month earlier. At the end of May and the beginning of June the peasants turned to the provincial government in Riga to confirm the rumours and ask for permission to leave the country. At first, the provincial government respected the peasants, in turn-

ing to them they displayed a certain expression of trust. They did not pay attention to the fact that the peasants had broken the law by coming to Riga without electing their representatives or consulting their landlord. The peasants were informed the rumours were groundless and were encouraged to resume their responsibilities at home. The provincial government also issued a statement – the edict of June 2 which the local priests had to introduce to the peasants from the pulpit (Kruus 1930: 51–52; 59–60). It was clear that the rumours of land in Russia were not true, however, they did not stop. In H. Kruus's opinion this was due to the lack of language skills on the part of the priests and, consequently the contents of the June 2 edict was not properly conveyed to the peasants. He adds,

It is, however, even more plausible that the peasants excited at the prospect of leaving the country unconsciously misinterpreted the announcement heard in the church (Kruus 1930: 60).

Midsummer's Day marks the beginning of the second phase of the movement and reached the linguistic border of Estonia and Latvia. Many of the first peasants interrogated were Latvians, three peasants interrogated on July 2 were supposedly Latvians;

	16.07	18.07	1.08	4.08	5.08	7.08	8.08	9.08	11.08	Total
Hargla	22	2	3							27
Rõuge	4	2			1			4	1	12
Karula					5					5
Vastseliina				1	1	2			1	5
Urvaste						2	1	2		5
Sangaste						3		2		5
Rõngu						1				1
Nõo						1				1
Helme								1	1	2
Total										63

Table. 9.07–18.08.1841 Estonian peasants interrogated in Riga. Based on: H. Kruus. The Turmoil... Tartu 1930: 82–84. Date, parish and the number of peasants

four peasants were questioned on July 7 in Hargla parish (Kruus 1930: 53–57). The treatment of peasants became more severe, they were forbidden to appear in front of the provincial government of Riga, and were punished. On July 10, a new edict stating the unsubstantiality of the rumours were translated both into the Latvian and Estonian languages. After the issuing of the edict, the peasantry lost confidence in the provincial government and turned secretly to the Russian Orthodox bishop in Riga.

The third phase of the movement started on July 9 when the desire for land resulted in religious conversion. Now, the movement becomes located in Estonia, mainly in Võrumaa (Kruus 1930: 86).

Whenever lists of names (punishment, conversion) were compiled in June–July 1841 by the provincial government and after July 10 by the Russian Orthodox bishop, the people thought of them as lists giving permission to emigrate to Russia (Kruus 1930: 63–80; 117; 161).

The important factors in the peasant movement in the 1840s are the rumours about getting land and the emotional belief in the *ingroup* (peasantry) rather than anything coming from representatives of the *outgroup*. Everything was interpreted from the *ingroup* point of view based on rumour, particularly informative folk stories.

The rumour supposedly originated in the areas close to the border of Russia, since those who went to Riga were from this region. The Mõniste (Võrumaa) peasants interrogated by the provincial government on July 16 explained that their reason for going there was influenced by the rumour,

[---] that in the inland region it was possible to sign oneself up in order to get land, explaining that they heard of it during hay-making from neighbouring Latvians, who also told them that “a Russian military cleric” (“ein Russischer Militair Geistliche”) from St. Petersburg had come to Riga and was signing up peasants to emigrate into the interior, and people were to show up three days before St. Jacob’s Day. (Kruus 1930:88)



Häädemeeste Russian Orthodox Church. Photo: the Estonian Folklore Archives. RKM RO photo 2760.

Obviously, in addition to the rumour, the peasant information included the whole system: where to go, why, when, and how. The people “knew” what they wanted to believe. The legislative texts being written by the *outgroup* were ignored by the peasantry in the 1840s.

5.

A belief that turns into real knowledge comes from actual experiences. It can be based on a similar historical event or a historical event interpreted in a similar way. This seems to be the case when describing the period under discussion.²

We might consider the peasants’ trust in *ingroup* information to be uneducated, foolish, etc. The choices about who and what to believe, are based on the group’s experience and reasoning.

²) The records of both getting land when emigrating and the rumour of such a possibility date back to the 1830s. Thus, the emigration request combined with religious conversion in 1841 was connected to earlier incidents. The aim of the peasant movement was to acquire land and freedom of location, demands which were legally fixed in the 1849 agrarian reform law. See: Vassar 1975: 29–43.

Similar decisions were not only made in the past, but are also being made today. To learn about the attitudes, we need to study them. If the attitudes are known, it is possible to use them and start a dialog.

To digress for a moment from the subject of folklore we can observe an example illustrating the attitudes and conflicts of groups from contemporary media.

On July 23, 1997, an article was published in the newspaper *Eesti Päevaleht* by Kalle Muuli as a reply to the memorandum of July 4 concerning the murder of actor Sulev Luik. In his article he shed some light on the problem of attitudes with the explanation that it is the result of cultural differences and their influence on history. He compared two similar events: the killing of actor Sulev Luik and fashion designer Gianni Versace.

These brutal murders are separated not only by the ocean, but also by the attitudes of the victims' friends and fans. In the US, the murderer, a half-crazy gay prostitute, was the guilty one; in Estonia, the police, the minister of internal affairs, the government, finally the media, the state, and society are to blame. (Muuli 1997)

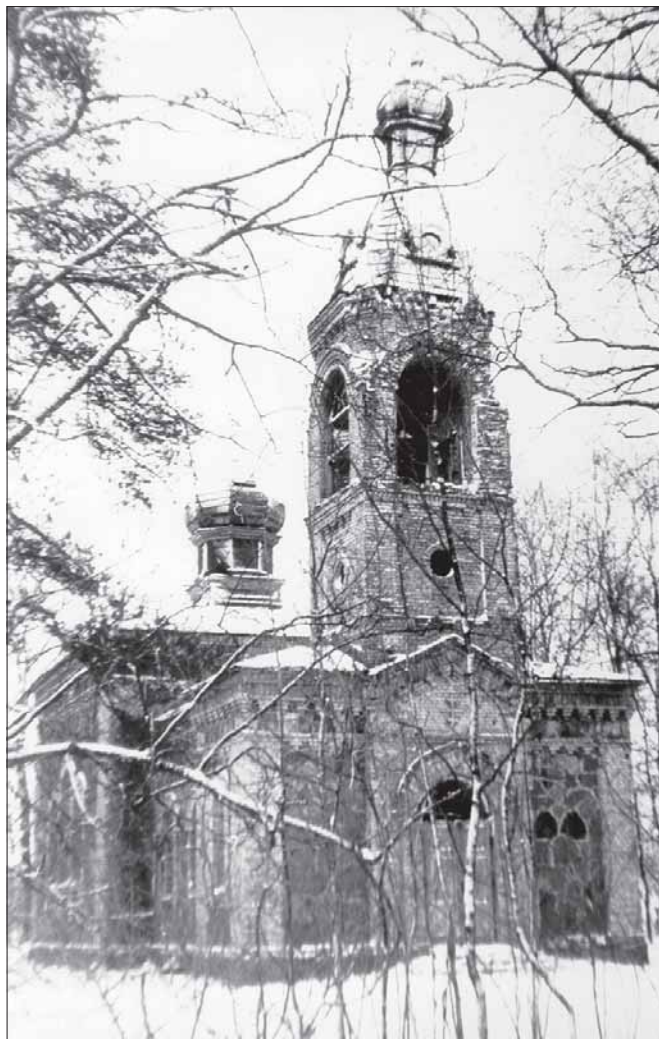
In the article titled *Sulev Luige tappis Miša* [Sulev Luik was killed by Misha] he warns the readers of the advent of a police state, adding,

[...] people seeking simple solutions for difficult situations have from time to time voted for "firm-handed" men who, by trying to establish discipline, have murdered many more cultural figures than drunken stabbers.

6.

Decisions based on beliefs are in principle neither good nor bad. The judgements depend on certain aspects and time.

In situations where members of different groups do not communicate as equal partners, it is natural that the *ingroup* is blocked from the *outgroup* and a dialog is not started. The blocking group appears to act against itself; however, it is a form of



Tõhela-Murru Russian Orthodox Church. Photo: the Estonian Folklore Archives.RKM RO photo 13214.

self-defence. As a rule, the blocking of a group is followed by a dialog with the opponent (the *outgroup*) and the parties take each other much more seriously. The *ingroup* has stated its purposes, which cannot be left unnoticed by itself and the others.³

The peasants in the 1840s wanted to get land, believed in it and saw the chance of getting it. The provincial government had to admit that the peasants who came to Riga were not merely there on a whimsy.

Neither the reproof of the peasants, the refutation of the rumours, nor the punishments were enough to solve the situation; it was necessary to revise the economy. The Russian Orthodox priests seized the opportunity to convert the peasants; however, mutual understanding, trust, or integration did not follow. The converters and the converts did not share the same goals. The latter were trying to solve their land problem.

Obviously, different groups communicate with and influence each other, even when they do not speak the same language. According to the historical tradition compiled in the 1920s-30s, it is clear that people cannot be tricked; the deception is not forestalled, but personally experienced and, thus, attitudes change. The problem of such attitudes is still present nowadays. Experience is connected to the character of the reciprocal relationship of the various groups: blocking means self-defence, dialog means equality and understanding. At the same time, we must bear in mind the number of cultural forms in tradition groups and the multitude of groups and folklores.

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EKLA = Estonian Literary Museum, The Estonian Cultural History Archives

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³) See e.g. the closed groups in Kohtla-Järve after WWII and the choices of local Estonians in the conflict between groups. Jaago 1996: 186–189; Jaago 1997: 52–53.

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