

**Doktorantide sügiskool “Dialogid keskkonnaga” /
Autumn school “Dialogues with the environment”**

21-22 November 2019, Pühajärve (www.pyhajarve.com)

Program

21 November

9.00 Joint start in bus from Estonian Literary Museum (Vanemuise 42, Tartu) towards Pühajärve

9.45-10.30 Dialogues with Estonian environment and vernacular culture live: visit to Otepää hill fort and Otepää energy pillar

10.30-11.00 Arrival, coffee in Pühajärve

11.00-11.15 **Reet Hiimäe**. *Introduction: dialogues with the environment*

11.15-12.45 **Minna Opas**. *Politics of relationality – Amazonian perspectives on human relationship with 'nature'*

12.45-13.15 **Muzayin Nazaruddin**. *Natural disaster and the changes of human-environment relations*

13.15-14.15 Lunch

14.15-15.45 **Carlo Cubero**. *Soundscapes: The simultaneous perception and design of the sonic experience*

15.45-16.00 Coffee break

16.00-16.30 **Patrizia Sergio**. *A techno-ecosemiotic perspective on the translatability between the environment and imaging technologies. Mode of formation of a human/nonhuman encounter*

16.30-17.30 **Eve Rannamäe**. *Animals and their roles in ecology and culture: two case studies from zooarchaeology*

17.30-18.00 **Piret Voolaid**. *Language-folklore-environment. Depicting animals in contemporary riddle forms*

18.00-19.00 Dinner

19.00-23.00 Socializing, networking and leisure

Poster presentation: Tenno Teidearu. *Healing minerals: Crystals and energy of the earth and nature in new spirituality*

22 November

8.30-9.30 Breakfast

9.30-11.00 **Ekaterina Velmezova, Kalevi Kull.** *Environmental dialogues and conversations around Tartu semiotics (with some hints to language sciences)*

11.00-11.30 **Auli Viidalepp.** *Digital sublime: what cyborg science fiction can show us about human–nature relationships*

11.30-11.45 Coffee

11.45-12.30 **Kristel Kivari.** *The paranormal and the sacred on the landscape: hills, brinks and sacred groves in the changing tradition*

12.30-13.00 **Lona Päll.** *Dialogue or monologue? Communicating the place-lore as an evidence of sacredness in the Paluküla hill conflict*

13.00-13.30 **Andrius Kaniava.** *Experiencing environment: Sacred natural sites as story-places. A phenomenological perspective*

13.30-14.30 Lunch

14.30-15.30 **Marjetka Golež Kaučič.** *An ontological/animal turn in science and society and zoo/ecofolkloristics*

15.30-17.00 **Anna-Sophie Jürgens.** *The parasite as performer*

17.00-17.15 Conclusions

17.15-17.45 Good-bye-coffee, bus back to Tartu (arrival in Tartu appr. 6.30 pm).

The event is supported by the European Union via European Regional Development Fund (ASTRA project of Estonian Literary Museum, EKMDHUM) and Estonian Literary Museum



Abstracts

Soundscapes: The simultaneous perception and design of the sonic experience

Carlo A. Cubero

Associate Professor, School of Humanities, Tallinn University, Estonia

This presentation will address different ways in which anthropologists have relied on sound recording technologies in their research. My talk will discuss some methodological and epistemological potentials of sound recording technology and relate these approaches to understanding the space and time. I will contextualise these exercises within the field of sound studies and focus on the ways in which sound has been theorised as a time-based medium and as a space-based medium. During the second part of the lecture I will offer examples of how these different theoretical approaches inform sound recording and listening practices in an urban context.

An ontological/animal turn in science and society and zoo/ecofolkloristics

Marjetka Golež Kaučič

Associate Professor, Research Advisor, ZRC SAZU: Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Institute of Ethnomusicology, Ljubljana, Slovenia

The author discusses whether an ontological/animal turn is also possible in folkloristics, bringing about a different research on animals and nature within folklore that would contribute to a change in people's attitudes towards non-human subjectivities and their position in a multi-species community – taking into consideration that in the 20th century a paradigm shift in the perception of animals and nature already occurred in science as well. Based on the turn from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism and discussions that build upon various theoretical discourses, new concepts and multidisciplinary knowledge, the author proposes a new complex research approach in the fields of folkloristics, ethnology and

anthropology, as well as in literature, for instance, – a new academic discipline of zoo/ecofolkloristics supported by critical animal studies.

The parasite as performer

Anna-Sophie Jürgens

Feodor Lynen Postdoctoral Fellow (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation)

Australian National University/Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

The parasite's footprints can be seen everywhere, for example in genetics, epidemiology, medicine, history – and, as this seminar clarifies, parasites play a vivid part in our cultural imagination. Drawing on trailblazing studies of the parasite as a cultural force, this seminar explores the interplay between biological parasites, circus arts and their comic emblem, the clown, in different narratives and media. What kind of cultural work does the parasite do in popular entertainments? What parasites have produced comic cultural fantasies?

This seminar documents not only fantasies of a collaborative relationship between flea performers and their masters, and of the relationship between clowns and parasites, both of which are mischievous characters, but also circus-related imaginaries of parasitic remote control. It also illuminates the mysterious genre of flea porn.

Experiencing environment: Sacred natural sites as *story-places*. A phenomenological perspective

Andrius Kaniava

PhD student, Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Lithuania

In Lithuania, no cult buildings and only very few artefacts are related to the pre-Christian religion. Sacred places are natural objects – hills, rocks, streams, forests, etc., rich with folklore traditions from the 19th–20th century. These traditions are part of a sacred landscape, full of meanings and ideas instead of material culture. However, ancient sacred places, as a rule, belong to the field of archaeology and history. And as far as conventional archaeology operates, lack of artefacts makes it difficult to apprehend this kind of places. Natural sacred

sites are significant parts of the environment where special meaning is given in the form of folk narratives and place names. This is a wide topic that needs to be part of interdisciplinary discussion.

In this paper, I am going to introduce a phenomenological approach to sacred natural sites' studies instead of the usual historical one. The phenomenological approach is centered on human experience, thus the focus shifts from the archaeological artefacts or historical data to the stories and meanings behind them. A new term *story-places* is introduced as a different definition for places that we usually call sacred sites. This allows the researcher to temporarily set aside the religious meaning of these places and apprehend them as objects of consciousness. I am going to tell a story about such a story-place in order to show how complex a human relationship with environment can be. In this way, a simple folk narrative becomes much more complicated than it seems at the first glance. It reveals different meanings of the place and ways people use stories to make the environment their home.

The paranormal and the sacred on the landscape: hills, brinks and sacred groves in the changing tradition

Kristel Kivari

Folklore researcher, Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, Estonia

My presentation revisits the old questions related to the source of sacrality on the landscape and in the nature. The core of the question is very much part of the central idea behind dowsing practice – namely that nature has its concealed quality revealed in special places, often related to the encounters with the supernatural: sense of awe, healing, losing orientation, ufos. These places are seen as active, having some kind of concealed agency, logic and pattern.

I will introduce some main theories of the web of concealed energies that rise the question of the source of sacrality: whether places have some kind of immanent, authentic quality that determines their special agency or whether the meaning of sacrality is rooted in the cultural tradition, in social and historical use.

Despite of these often heated disputes over the right of representation, the problem of the sacrality and the way how different theories approach or rise the question is worth of

analysing. Here I find intriguing parallels with the approach of ecosemiotics that addresses the semiotic potential of different forms of nature that highlights perspective, bodily and sensual aspects of the observer. Besides the attempts to find pre-linguistic ways of communication or immanent sources for sacrality, the process of theorizing as a communicative act or as a form of dialogue is also worth of notice as these theories shape the relationship with the landscape and nature in general.

The presentation is based on interviews with dowsers and other people interested in various aspects of supernatural and paranormal, and related fieldwork material from 2012-2019.

Natural disaster and the changes of human-environment relations

Muzayin Nazaruddin

PhD student, Department of Semiotics, University of Tartu, Estonia

The paper combines cultural and ecosemiotic frameworks to study the changes of human environment relations in the context of post natural disaster. The empirical part of the paper is based on my ethnographic fieldwork in two post-disaster sites, namely post 2004 earthquake and tsunami in Banda Aceh and post 2010 eruption of Mt. Merapi in Sleman, Yogyakarta, both of them located in Indonesia. The study finds that cultural responses to natural disaster are tied to the pre-existing human-environment relations. The natural event is perceived not only as a disaster, but also as a sign of another cultural phenomena. The local people's responses to the event are constituted by these cultural definitions of the natural event. The study also finds that the disaster triggers the affected culture to reflect the human-environment relations in their own cultural sphere. This act of autocommunication transfers the human-environment relations issues from the archives to be the active side of cultural memory. This, in turn, will possibly change the human-environment relations after the disaster. The affected culture would be more aware about their own culture-environment relations, including how to understand and interpret environmental signs preceding the natural events. However, the very strong penetration of modern disaster knowledge which usually happens in time of disaster aftermath also contributes to the cultural ideas of human-environment relations that are not always aligned with the local culture's reflections of human-environment relations.

Politics of relationality – Amazonian perspectives on human relationship with 'nature'

Minna Opas

Researcher, Department of Study of Religion / Adjunct Professor, School of History, Culture and Arts Studies, University of Turku, Finland

The recent ontological turn builds on the acceptance of the possibility for existence of ontologically and epistemologically distinct worlds. The aim in this kind of research is to make the epistemological hegemony of the western modernity visible and so be able to find new ways to study and learn from non-western and other-than-human worlds. Amazonian ethnography has played an important role in the development of the ontological vein of research especially in the field of anthropology. Anthropologists have studied Amerindian perspectival cosmologies, i.e. worlds held to be ontologically very different from their western counterparts, with the attempt to understand the human condition and human relationship with what in the west is called 'nature', in particular. In this lecture, I will examine these questions under the title of Amazonian politics of relationality. For Amazonian indigenous peoples, 'nature', in the first place, exists as social relations. These relations are governed by the ideas of a shared humanity between different beings, fluidity of corporeal perspectives, and possibility for metamorphoses and transformations. I will scrutinize how such perspectival logics affects people's actions in their everyday lives. In addition, I will discuss the difficulties in researching such ontologically different worlds. Examples will be drawn from Amazonian ethnographies and especially my personal experiences of doing research with the Peruvian Yine people.

Dialogue or monologue? Communicating the place-lore as an evidence of sacredness in the Paluküla hill conflict

Lona Päll

*Junior researcher in Estonian Folklore Archives, Estonian Literary Museum /
PhD student of semiotics, University of Tartu, Estonia*

Combining the frameworks of folklore studies, ecosemiotics, and environmental communication studies, the presentation analyses how local vernacular narratives are

mediated and re-storied in the course of the public, political and official communication of a conflict discourse.

As an example, the presentation focuses on one of the Estonian longest and most intense place-related environmental conflicts – the discussion that arose over the development plans of the Paluküla hill in northern Estonia. As illustrative material, the presentation makes use of nineteenth- and twentieth-century archive materials, contemporary media coverings, and other forms of public discussion. In Paluküla hill case, the sacredness of the hill became the dominant topic of the discussion and place-lore thus was considered by conflict participants as one of the main sources of different approaches on sacredness.

Place-lore represents a multilevel communicational relationship between the environment and the subjects inhabiting it. However, when shifted to be part of a conflict discourse, place-lore has assumed an important position in the rhetoric of various interest groups, and the argumentation and narratives are often used in the context of polarising conflict opinions. In Paluküla's case, the conflicting rhetoric resulted in altering and transforming the environmental relations in place-lore as well as decreased its potential to reflect the multilayered ways of adapting and interpreting the environment.

Animals and their roles in ecology and culture: two case studies from zooarchaeology

Eve Rannamäe

Senior Researcher, Institute of History and Archaeology, University of Tartu, Estonia

Research Scientist, Production systems, Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)

Animals play an important role in ecology and human culture. By ecology I refer to animal-human-nature relationships and the environment they sit within, and with culture I first and foremost refer to the themes of subsistence, production, transport and religion. To explore the role of animals in the past, zooarchaeology is a key discipline, studying animal remains, most often bones and teeth from archaeological sites, with a strong focus on human-animal relationship. The most common animal group studied in zooarchaeology is the vertebrates – mammals, birds and fish – on whom I will also ground my seminar talk. I will demonstrate how zooarchaeology can be used to study the environment, ecology, human culture, and animal populations of the past and present. To that aim, I will introduce two case studies. The first example is about the ecology of crusading, showing how the new power structures that

developed in the 13th century affected the environment and local faunal resources through the Middle Ages. The second example covers a much longer time period, starting from prehistory and reaching to the modern day, and displays how zooarchaeology can be applied to the study and conservation of native breeds.

A techno-ecosemiotic perspective on the translatability between the environment and imaging technologies. Mode of formation of a human/nonhuman encounter

Patrizia Sergio

PhD student, Department of Semiotics, University of Tartu, Estonia

The paper examines how imaging technologies transform the meaning of environment through the engagement between bios and techno. In this view, I argue that the proliferation of imaging technologies and visual practices establish a new regime of signification that entails a productive alliance between Human/NonHuman entities. Rather than focusing on visual perception as the edge of the human mind or body as usually described within the phenomenological analysis, the paper hints to a Techno-Ecosemiotic perspective to illustrate how Human/NonHuman encounter settles the mode of formation. It comprises of shifting ensembles of multiple humans and more-than-humans, environments and technologies, perception and practices that draw upon processes of both trans-action and over-coding. By decoupling perception from its exclusive human orientation, the paper tunes in to how imaging practices might be crafted to address the environment as A-Human/NonHuman inclusive collectives.

On the one hand, the theoretical assessment privileges a New Materialist approach supported by Posthuman Ecologies (e.g., Rosi Braidotti, Jane Bennett, and Deleuze). On the other hand, the argumentation heightens sense-making processes starting from an ecosemiotic perspective (i.e., Timo Maran, Wendy Wheeler). It is worth mentioning that the term 'eco' also leads to Guattari's Ecosophy. The emphasis of the paper falls on the prominence of developing a semiotic standpoint on the complexity of the contemporary digital scenario. For this purpose, I implement a techno-ecosemiotic perspective, having two aims in mind: 1. To rest on the creative unfoldment between imaging technologies and the environment, and 2. To turn the posthuman predicament into a robust semiotic understanding.

Environmental dialogues and conversations around Tartu semiotics (with some hints to language sciences)

Ekaterina Velmezova

Professor of Slavistics and of history and epistemology of language sciences, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Kalevi Kull

Professor of Biosemiotics, University of Tartu, Estonia

A. “Environmental discourse” in linguistics and semiotic solutions in environmental discussions

– Linguistics and ecology

We are going to begin our presentation speaking about languages vs ecological systems in the light of the use of biological metaphors in language sciences. More precisely, we’ll present a historical and epistemological view on the problem of the so-called “endangered languages”.

– Semiotics and ecology

Later on, we will discuss how semiotics can contribute to the contemporary discussions on environmental issues. There are some general environmental phenomena that can be explained by semiotic models. In particular,

- (1) human semiotic behaviour as both different and similar to the behaviour of other living beings – which has certain environmental consequences;
- (2) locality and boundaries as semiotic phenomena; universality of local community-based solution having a semiotic basis;
- (3) post-sustainability and the dominance of greenwash may have a cultural semiotic or ecosemiotic explanation.

B. Aspects of ecology in the history of Tartu-Moscow semiotic school

Analysing several interviews taken with leading contemporary semioticians, we are going to answer the following questions:

- (1) to what extent, within the framework of the Tartu–Moscow semiotics, one could speak about any interest of Tartu and Moscow scholars in “ecology” and in “eco-semiotics” (even if these words were not explicitly used by Moscow and Tartu researchers)?

(2) were the concepts of system and sign used in the works of Tartu–Moscow scholars (and taken in their development over time) close to the corresponding concepts in the works of experts in ecology and ecosemiotics?

(3) did the representatives of the Tartu–Moscow school have contacts with specialists in ecology and ecosemiotics, and if so, how much did these contacts influence the very dynamics of this school evolution?

(4) what theoretical background of the Tartu-Moscow semioticians' work allowed biosemiotics (directly related to ecosemiotics) to appear and actively develop in Tartu?

Digital sublime: what cyborg science fiction can show us about human–nature relationships

Auli Viidalepp

PhD student, Department of Semiotics, University of Tartu, Estonia

In my presentation, I observe how the environment (nature) is depicted in science fiction film and anime narratives on the topics of cyborg and Artificial Intelligence. I am interested in how the relationship between humans and their environment is described, its level of technification (for example, in some typical Hollywood AI movies the natural environment is completely absent, while in Japanese anime there are examples that specifically discuss the relationship between technology and nature). I am going to use a somewhat ecocritical approach to analyse these questions.

Language-folklore-environment. Depicting animals in contemporary riddle forms

Piret Voolaid

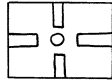
Senior researcher, Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Museum / Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies, Estonia

The presentation focuses on the use of animals in three major recently emerged subgenres: conundrums, compound word games, and droodles.

Conundrums are direct “wh”-questions, e.g., Q: How do you put an elephant in the fridge? A:

1. Open the fridge. 2. Put the elephant inside. 3. Close the fridge.

Doodles mostly consist of a visual image serving as the question and the description of the image serving as the answer, e.g.,



What is this? Four elephants sniffing an orange.

Compound word games mostly use the initial formula “What” or “Which kind?” and expect, instead of an adjective, a compound word as an answer, such as: Mis tõugu hobune on parim ujuja? Merehobune. [Q: What horses swim the best? A: Seahorses.]

Animals appear as characters in these riddles in great numbers but in specific riddle subcategories the animal paradigm manifests in a unique way.

About one fourth of all Estonian conundrums feature animal names, and like in folk narratives (folktale, joke, tall tale) or other genres of verbal art (fable, cartoons, plays) the animal is associated with highly diverse imagery. Quite often these genres include anthropomorphic personification, where human characteristics attributed to a zoological creature tend to function as specific stereotypes and the animals often talk about humans and serve as embodiments of humans. The use of animal characters who act as representatives of different types of humans allows safe ridiculing of the vices of humans and the society. In other minor forms of folklore (proverbs and phrases), the most popular animals are generally local domestic animals and fowl, but the most popular animal characters in Estonian conundrums are rather exotic (elephant, hippopotamus, etc.). One reason for this is perhaps the predominance of international material (e.g., elephant jokes originating from the Anglo-American culture area) in the Estonian riddle material, and the exotic stranger is still appealing in folklore texts. The situations and settings in which the animal characters are presented in conundrums (and doodles) are often distanced from the reality, which is why the material associated with animals can be seen as zoological absurdity.

The compound word games point to the favouring of compounds in the Estonian language, and the frequent occurrence of zoological creatures as elements of the Estonian compound words prove that the animal kingdom has greatly inspired the naming of things, phenomena and qualities with compounds. Compound word games are most often based on fixed metaphors (e.g., kohtukull ‘legal hawk’, raamatukoi ‘bookworm’), in which the figurative image has become secondary and the user no longer recognises it.

In Estonian language, animals tend to be used as the end constituent of the compound noun, though there are many others in which the animal name figures as a genitive substantive in the attributive constituent.

One third of the entire corpus of Estonian doodles depict representatives of the animal kingdom, though the most popular ones are those with characteristic appearance (the hare's long ears, the elephant's trunk, the camel's humps, the giraffe's long and spotted neck, the zebra's stripes), because these are simple to sketch and thus are easily adopted in the tradition. The text samples used in the presentation have been taken from online folklore databases of Estonian conundrums (Eesti keerdküsimused, www.folklore.ee/Keerdkys, approx. 25,000 texts), of Estonian compound word games (Eesti (liit)sõnamängud, www.folklore.ee/Sonamang, approx. 5,000 texts) and of Estonian doodles (Eesti piltmõistatused, www.folklore.ee/Doodles, approx. 7,500 texts).

Additional reading and other resources

Classics: Roy A. Rappaport 1967. Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People. *Ethnology*, Vol. 6, No. 1. (Jan., 1967), pp. 17–30.

In internet: <https://asc2.files.wordpress.com/2007/08/ritual-regulation-of-environmental-relations-among-a-new-guinea-people.pdf>

Lectures: Eduardo Viveiros de Castro 1998. *Cosmological Perspectivism in Amazonia and Elsewhere*. (Four Lectures given in the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge, February–March 1998.)

In internet: <https://haubooks.org/cosmological-perspectivism-in-amazonia/>

Charles L. Briggs 2015. *Of bats, viruses, humans, trees, and chickens: Multispecies relations and the limits of knowledge*. VIII Annual Conference of the CECT.

Video: <https://www.uttv.ee/naita?id=21940>

Arjun Appadurai 2016. *Flows of globalization*. (Vienna Humanities Festival)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paGfRUTBTAM>

Film & environment: Carlo Cubero, Enrico Barone 2016. Cinema and landscape: Reflections from a film programme. *Anuac*, 5 (1), pp. 365–373.

In internet: <http://ojs.unica.it/index.php/anuac/article/view/2266/2081>

Databases: Piret Voolaid. *Estonian doodles*.

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Articles ja books:

Peter Howard, Ian Tomson, Emma Waterton, Mick Atha (eds.) 2019. *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*. Taylor and Francis.

In internet (contents): <https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Companion-to-Landscape-Studies/Howard-Thompson-Waterton-Atha/p/book/9781138720312>

Kivari, Kristel 2012. Energy as the Mediator between Natural and Supernatural Realms. *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, Vol. 6, Number 2, 49–68.

In internet: <https://www.jef.ee/index.php/journal/article/view/98>

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Art Leete 1997. Regarding the way-finding habits of the Siberian peoples, considering the Khants as an example. *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 3.

In internet: <http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol3/soros4.htm>

Robin Torrence, John Grattan (eds.). *Natural disasters and cultural change*. London, New York: Routledge.

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<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/804a/cb0d44a8a870d0d12a283d1bfb7bd28c631e.pdf>