Folklore

Electronic Journal of Folklore 93

Folklore
Electronic Journal of Folklore
http://www.folklore.ee/folklore

Vol. 93
2024

Folk Belief and Media Group
of the Estonian Literary Museum

Estonian Institute of Folklore

Folklore

Electronic Journal of Folklore
Vol. 93

Edited by Mare Kõiva

ELM Scholarly Press
Tartu 2024

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The journal is supported by the research grant of the Estonian Literary Museum EKM 8-2/20/3.

Indexed in EBSCO Publishing Humanities International Complete, Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (Arts & Humanities Citation Index), MLA International Bibliography, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, Internationale Volkskundliche Bibliographie / International Folklore Bibliography / Bibliographie Internationale d'Ethnologie, Open Folklore, C.E.E.O.L., Scopus

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ISSN 1406-0957
doi:10.7592/FEJF2024.93

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https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2024.93.jaago

SUCCESS STORY OR TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE? AN ATTEMPT TO INTEGRATE TRAUMA THEORY WITH ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF FIRST-PERSON STORIES

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Abstract: This article focuses on the following issues: (1) how a narrator describes life under political repression in a retrospective first-person story; (2) the extent to which such a story can be analysed from the perspective of trauma theory; (3) what the use of trauma theory in combination with the methods of folk narrative and oral history research can offer for a more diverse interpretation of such a story. The story selected for observation was written in 2001, focusing on events in Soviet Estonia (1940–1941, 1944–1991). At the time of telling this story, the Soviet era was publicly interpreted as a period of interruption of Estonian cultural and political continuity. Social scientists observed the Soviet period from the perspective of cultural trauma. In this way, the narrator presented complex past events in a framework that points to the restoration of historical justice. Although this story represents a positive attitude towards historical and cultural developments in Estonia, the analysis of this story indicates that traces of trauma can be found at the levels of the story that reflect the formation of the narrator's identity.

Keywords: conflicting identities, life story, oral history, Stalinist era, trauma

INTRODUCTION

Writing this article goes back to the second half of the 2010s, when I was involved in a trauma research project that had just been launched.[1] Because I had previously researched oral history for two decades, the question arose of how to reconcile these concepts and methods in the study of real-life narratives. This article aims to introduce the results of this research and present new

methodological possibilities by incorporating insights from trauma theory into the study of oral history and first-person stories. Combining these theoretical concepts made it possible to better interpret the narrative about the past, and to understand how the narrators simultaneously present difficult (traumatic) experiences and success stories.

Initially, however, it was necessary to find an impetus to start this research. One incident with students gave me inspiration on how to deal with this issue. A multidisciplinary course, "Life Story in the Study of the 20th Century", was taught at the University of Tartu. This course provided MA students with an opportunity to discuss how the events of the twentieth century are recalled in the stories told in the 1990s and 2000s, based on manuscripts of life stories (EKLA f 350).[2] The discussion topics focused on the years of the Soviet regime in Estonia, including political repressions and the events of the Second World War on Estonian soil. These are the subjects that the researchers of life stories had studied mainly from the perspective of oral history research and memory studies (see, e.g., Kirss & Kõresaar & Lauristin 2004; Kõresaar 2011).

What caught my attention was an opinion expressed by the students that the narrators often too readily laid the blame for their personal failures and misfortunes at the door of the Stalinist regime. The issue came to the fore when discussing the story of one particular narrator (EKLA f 350:1:1120). The students were unconvinced that the narrator's relationship problems and difficulties at work in the 1970s could be linked with the imprisonment of her father in the 1950s. My initial reaction was to question why they would not be linked. But then I started to wonder how I would know that my interpretation was the right one. In other words, which arguments could I use to defend my interpretation? And also, to ask what has shaped the students' interpretation.

In order to find arguments for interpretation, I decided to analyse this story from the trauma perspective. The choice was based on the premise that since a traumatic experience can be seen as a process, it enables us to see the links between different events and situations (see, e.g., BenEzer 2014 [1999]: 29–30). In addition, researchers of trauma expression have noted that the return to the same topic in the story can be one of the indications of trauma (Sütterlin 2020: 19–20). By closely observing this story, I try to find arguments supporting my interpretation and also answer the question of why the narrator justifies the events that took place in the 1970s with what had happened twenty years earlier, during the Stalinist era. To better understand the events and situations described in the observed life story, the oral history viewpoint was added to the analysis. Combining the techniques of trauma theory and oral history allowed me to arrive at a deeper and more diverse interpretation of the narrative, which I would not have achieved using just one of these approaches.

NARRATIVE AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT TO THE ANALYSED TEXT

The life story analysed here is one of the almost 3,500 manuscripts from the collection *Estonian Life Histories* (EKLA 350). A significant proportion of the stories written in the late 1990s and early 2000s focus on the splitting of the narrator's identity caused by the conflict between the individual and the Soviet state. Before the Soviet period, these narrators or their parents were ordinary citizens of the Republic of Estonia. However, the Soviet authorities regarded them as enemies who had to be isolated from society (imprisonment, forced resettlement) or whose activities had to be significantly restricted and controlled. At the same time, these stories cover topics that were not discussed in public during the Soviet era. The narrators' and their relatives' status was restored after the Republic of Estonia regained independence. As the stories were told after the restoration of this status, the stories are framed by the victory of the people's sense of justice, although the topics to be told relate to very difficult experiences from the past decades (Kirss 2004: 123; cf. Dawson 2014). The general tonality in the stories reflects the concept of cultural continuity.

The above also applies to the story which is examined in more detail here (EKLA 350:1:1120). The narrator and main character of this story is Urve,[3] who was born in a village in central Estonia in 1934. Her parents were farmers whose ancestors had lived and worked in the same village since the early eighteenth century. Urve emphasises the generational continuity of life and field of activity, which had lasted for more than two centuries and ended abruptly with the establishment of Soviet power in Estonia in 1940. The period of individual farming ended in the late 1940s due to the socialist restructuring of agriculture. Urve's family moved to the city because her father and mother did not want to work on a collective farm (kolkhoz). Her father was arrested in the early 1950s, and his family members now belonged to the group of people that were ostracised by the Soviet rule and who were called "enemies of the people" in the rhetoric of Soviet authorities. This status did not allow Urve to obtain her desired education. After Stalin's death, the situation normalised, and she could continue her studies and become a teacher. During the Soviet era, she worked as a school principal and a teacher of Estonian language and literature. At the time of the narration, she was retired.

In this and other stories in the same text collection, the turning point of the narrator's life is the establishment of Soviet power in the 1940s. Although the level of events in the stories primarily reflects Soviet repressions, the narrators' view of the past focuses on preserving the nation, language and culture. Hence, it should be emphasised that the narrators do not use the concept of trauma.

Instead, these stories express satisfaction at achieving national independence and cultural continuity. This very controversial issue has been discussed by Leena Kurvet-Käosaar. She has studied the Gulag experience based on Baltic women's life stories from the point of view of trauma. In these stories, the narrators describe survival and avoid re-opening the wounds from the painful experiences of Stalinist repressions (Kurvet-Käosaar 2020: 312). Referring to the study of the Gulag experience in general, Kurvet-Käosaar talks about the need to consider specific cultural and historical factors when studying the ways of expressing trauma in this context (ibid.).

A similar contradiction – describing difficult past events on the one hand, but acknowledging the success made through national independence on the other – also characterises Urve's story analysed here. This is one of the reasons why it is justified to combine oral history research techniques with the analysis techniques of trauma theory. The need to combine research methods from the aspect of memory research has also been explained by trauma researchers: the combination of research methods is seen as an opportunity to find out more about the connections between the past and the present without going to the extremes, be it success or trauma (Rigney 2018: 369–370; Bond & Craps 2020: 139–141).

TRAUMA, ORAL HISTORY, AND FOLK NARRATIVE RESEARCH

In defining trauma in life story analysis, the social and literary researchers' views proved to be effective. According to them, both collective and individual trauma is defined based on an event or events that significantly change the narrator's identity, wherein the change is perceived as negative (Jackson 2002: 45; Debs 2012; Aarelaid-Tart 2016 [2010]: 43; Talebreza-May 2015; Balaev 2018: 366). The assessment of the Soviet period in Estonian society in the 1990s has been described based on the concept of cultural trauma (Aarelaid-Tart 2006: 53–56). Although cultural trauma is a social and discursive construction and does not necessarily describe an individual's experiences, society must shape its picture of history, considering the traumatic experiences of the individual members of society. Jeffrey C. Alexander emphatically states: "Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (Alexander 2017 [2012]: 6). Also, the *pluralistic trauma theory*, according to which trauma is subjective and defined in cultural terms, is worth bearing in mind (see, e.g., Balaev 2018: 366). Thus, it is an interpretive, rather than an unambiguously identifiable phenomenon. The experiential diversity

of trauma is manifested both in the way it occurs and how it is presented, and in the plurality of the opinions of the persons who define it.

Trauma is, above all, an analytical category in this observation, which allows me to interpret the assessments presented by the narrator. To define trauma, I use (1) narrative research techniques (positioning, self-presentation); (2) the sociological concept of cultural trauma, which, among other issues, indicates that the described events are perceived as negative; (3) and I closely study the interrelations between keeping silent, or not talking, and talking. The latter topic has significant relevance to why the narrator made these choices in the story written in 2001, and whether and how the narrator and the story's listener or reader understand each other.

Two more approaches have been used here to make the trauma-centred interpretation more versatile: the folkloristic perspective to narrative research and the oral history research.

From the folkloristic perspective, I interpret Urve's life story (EKLA f 350:1:1120) as one of the presentations of her life narrative. In folklore research, the term *variant,* or *version,* is used in this context. To find variants, the above-mentioned life story is compared to other presentations of the same narrator. Her book *Minevikku minemine* (Going to the Past; Buschmann 2014) is used here. In the book, she published the correspondence of her imprisoned father with the family members and added her memories and explanatory comments to the letters. The book reflects how the narrator's family coped in the 1950s. While writing the article, and especially, trying to find an answer to the question that arose in communicating with students, I contacted Urve Buschmann. So this analysis includes my conversations and communication with her in March 2018 (MK: EKLA f 350:1:1120. Annex).

Comparing the texts as the variants of the same life narrative enabled me to understand whether the link between the 1950s and 1970s, which raised the questions, was an isolated case or whether this connection also appeared in Urve's other presentations. Since this connection was evident in more than one writing, it can be concluded that the connection in the story written in 2001 was not coincidental.

In addition to identifying recurring elements, the folkloristic (variability-based) approach draws attention to how the text is affected by the situation in which a story is told (cf. Bronner 2006: 226; Metsvahi 2004: 138–147; Latvala 2005: 39–47; Palmenfelt 2006: 111–112). This perspective is necessary to discuss why Urve structured her life story this way, and why she chose the specific events and subtopics to compile her life story. This approach also helped me understand why Urve expected empathy from the reader when telling her story.

An analogous view of the early decades of the Soviet era was generally common in Estonian society in the 1990s and early 2000s.

The use of oral history research techniques offered me opportunities to understand both the ways of recounting history and the historical-political context of the observed story.

TEXT ANALYSIS TOOLS

The text analysis techniques used in this study come from trauma theory and oral history research. The choice of these tools depended, on the one hand, on the need to notice signs of trauma in the text, and on the other hand, to find in the text details that are, at first glance, overshadowed by the storyline. Although most of the techniques involved are based on the analysis of an oral interview, this knowledge can also be adapted for analysing a written text; because orality and writing relate to the technique of presentation but do not change the narrator's relationship with what he or she is talking about (see, e.g., Pöysä 2006: 228–231; Jaago 2014a: 294–299).

According to researchers, one of the important markers of trauma is related to the narrator's emotions. Gadi BenEzer, for instance, when distinguishing signs of trauma in an oral interview, notes, among other things, loss of control over emotions (this can include crying and extreme numbness), repeated return to the topic or silence, as well as changes in the body language or use of the voice (BenEzer 2014: 34–36). Alessandro Portelli, a researcher of oral history, also describes the ways to interpret oral speech, pointing out emotional information contained in the speech. Although Portelli does not offer unambiguous rules for associating the nuances of volume, intonation and rhythm with specific meanings, information is hidden in the changes in these features (Portelli 1991: 48). Social psychologist Harald Welzer (2000) points out the same aspect: emotions either support or hinder memorisation, and by way of this, emotions have an impact on how the event and the relevant experiences are presented in the narrative (Welzer 2000: 55–56). Analysing the life stories of Hungarians residing in Sweden, Katalin Henriksson notes that the shock of traumatic experience prevents narrators from describing the events without the story touching the narrators themselves. She believes this is one reason why it is so difficult to speak about traumatic experiences. At the same time, she as a researcher has seen that traumatic experiences need to be expressed (Henriksson 2015: 41–42). Thus, Henriksson highlights the peculiarities of expressing trauma and the reason for this: traumatic experience touches the

narrator differently from everyday experiences. This statement is in line with Welzer's assertion discussed above.

We cannot see emotions in written narratives in the same way as in an oral interview. Based on the research results of oral interviews, however, we can say that it is also important to monitor changes in the style of a written story, as these changes point to the narrator's relationships with the events or situations described, as well as to changes in these relationships. The analysis of Urve's life story is based on a definition of trauma that focuses on the change in the narrator's identity, caused by the events related to the establishment of the Soviet regime. Urve's identity is apparent, for example, from the way she introduces herself in the story and positions the characters in the story realm. In light of the above, trauma is analysed using the *positioning theory* (see, e.g., Block 2017). Urve positions herself in her story based on her role in the recounted events and situations and in society at large. She introduces herself, on the one hand, from the viewpoint of herself and her family members, and, on the other hand, from the position assigned to them by the regime. The multi-layered story setup enables her to present herself and her family as "enemies of the people", which is the regime's perspective and contrasts with her self-identification. The identities presented in the story conflict with one another. It has been argued that in the case of conflicting identities, an individual is trying to suppress one of the identities (Ataria 2017: 170). This is also clearly visible in Urve's story.

The analysis also includes aspects of interpretation. In addition to the self-presentation and positioning presented in the story and the emotional attitude expressed in it, other layers appear that create and affect interpretations; for instance, the intertextuality that has taken shape in the socio-historical and cultural contexts, as well as social and institutional opinions that have developed over time, but also change from time to time (cf. *the extending positioning theory*, Block 2017). In this context, it is essential to distinguish between the time of the events described in the story and the time when the story is told: they both influence how the past is presented. On the one hand, the described events in Urve's story take place during the Soviet era between 1944–1991, which offers the context for the formation of the double identity of Urve. On the other hand, she told this story a decade after the collapse of the Soviet regime, in 2001, when the public and cultural/interpretive contexts had drastically changed.

In summary, the following aspects are important in the analysis of Urve's life story: the identity of the narrator, which opens up in how she positions herself in the story realm; her attitudes towards the narrated events and situations, which are expressed in the choice of the narration style; non-narrative factors that influence her choices in presenting her story (general social attitudes during narration; motivation for narration, among others).

ANALYSIS OF URVE'S STORY: TEXT AND INTERPRETATION

This analysis aims to find arguments justifying Urve's choice to link the events and situations of the 1970s with those that happened in the 1950s. I focus on the reader's perspective rather than the narrator's, i.e., on the interpretation, rather than the narrator's self-presentation. I used the concept of trauma as a means of analysis that offered one way of achieving the goal mentioned above.

Urve's story is titled "My life story". It was submitted to the life story collection competition titled "My life and the life of my family in the Estonian SSR and the Republic of Estonia" in 2001. The competition organisers asked narrators to recount how they had lived during the Soviet period to open up the everyday life of that time to readers who had no personal experience with it (Eesti Päevaleht 2000). This aspect is relevant to the discussion amongst the students. They were born in the 1990s, yet the story describing the life of that time remained incomprehensible to them.

Urve's story is twelve and a half typewritten pages long and divided into eleven sections or chapters. The first two chapters are titled "A short family history" and "History breaks in". The first one is devoted to a short history of the development of farming society, while the second one deals with the events leading to the destruction of that society. This is also the first reference to the upheaval that the establishment of the Soviet regime in Estonia in 1940 brought along.

At the end of the chapter "History breaks in", Urve stops the flow of personal memories. She has recounted the pre-war history of her family and the events of 1941, the first year of the war. She then changes her style, addressing the imaginary reader directly. She has doubts about the reception of her story by the reader. The narrator's appeal to the imaginary reader has been described as one of the narrative strategies (Latvala 2002: 367) that also points to the communicative nature of the narrative (Abrams 2010: 109). From the aspect of the interpretation of narration, such a technique is helpful for understanding what kind of dialogue with the reader the narrator expects. Starting a dialogue with an imaginary reader by interrupting the narrative flow about the events also allows Urve to emphasise the impact of these events on her and her family. She is in doubt: perhaps the organisers of the collecting competition were expecting a nostalgic reminiscence of the past, but her story is harsh. An opposition between expectations and reality makes the complication of the situations described in her story even more pronounced. She adds that perhaps she needed to write the story to "finally vent [her] hidden frustrations", which had accumulated over time and were "still brewing deep inside" (EKLA 350:1:1120, p. 3). She appears to be driven not so much by nostalgia but suppressed grievance.

The upheaval (which is also emphasised by changing the style of narration) is related to historical and family events and the narrator's transition from one life period to another. It also appears that the emotional condition caused by these upheavals persisted.

She describes the upheaval in more detail in her book, lamenting that the "farm that had been in the hands of the same family for at least eight generations" (ibid.) has been destroyed and is gone now (Buschmann 2014: 7). Urve places her and her sisters' childhood into a turning point, i.e., the moment continuity was interrupted: the continuity created by her ancestors over centuries, in contrast to the action of the Soviet regime directed at interrupting that continuity.

The chapter of her life story titled "History breaks in", describing the interruption in her former lifestyle, is followed by a description of adapting to the Soviet pattern of living. People must adapt to the circumstances in both their family life and the life of the community – to the circumstances that they perceive as unfavourable. She comments on her experience with school: "You had to be aware of what to think and what to say", referring to the discrepancy between attitudes/opinions and what was said aloud, to avoid getting on bad terms with the authorities (EKLA 350:1:1120, p. 5). What is even more important from the perspective of research is Urve's remark about a shift in her feelings: while in the past she had been afraid of ghosts and spooks, now there was an added fear of people. This fear of people was not abstract. It seems to have been more a sense of danger and a defence mechanism rooted in the collective experience aimed at avoiding imprisonment, forced resettlement or similar political action. When the extreme actions ended after Stalin's death in 1953, the fear receded into precaution. To what extent can this feeling of fear be associated with a traumatic experience? It no longer seems to influence the narrator's consciousness and feelings at the time of narration. However, the existence of this feeling is one of the essential features of the described period (cf. Kalmre 2007: 74–77).

In the chapter with the expressive title "Like being in a toothpaste tube", she expresses her experiences from the next period of her life, from the end of the war in 1944 to the establishment of kolkhozes and mass deportations in 1949.[4] Among other things, she describes how she and her school friends planned to express their opposition to the Soviet regime. Somebody in the community got wind of their plan and stopped them. She describes what happened next, "It was quietly made clear to us how close we had been to Siberia" (EKLA 359:1.1120, p. 6). This illustrates how the rhetoric related to imprisonment was formed in people's minds and speech – here, *Siberia* is used as a synonym for prison. The phrase "Siberia is close" refers to the eagerness of the Soviet authorities

to arrest people, rather than to the geographical distance between Estonia and Siberia. The word *quietly* should also be noted. This word is characteristic of that time: it was reasonable not to speak out, not to talk about oneself or others, about the past or one's attitudes.

The title of the next chapter, "From village to city. Enemies of the people", refers to two turning points in Urve's life. Firstly, the fact that her family was forced to move meant that they had to adapt to a completely different lifestyle. Moreover, leaving the family home and moving to the city was not voluntary. The loss of the family home is an experience that Urve does not narrate in more detail in her life story. She presents this period as a sequence of facts: the job her father found, where the family found lodgings, and other practical issues. Such a style of presentation is often used in life stories to describe critical situations (see, e.g., Kirss 2004: 125; Jaago 2018: 125–127). The topic of losing the family home, however, is discussed in considerable detail in the letters sent by her father from prison as well as in her comments in the book *Minevikku minemine* (Buschmann 2014: 244–245). The family members experienced the same events and situations, but the father's and the daughter's life trajectories were different. The father talked about how his dreams and aspirations had been shattered, asking who he was after that. The daughter, however, dreamed about studying and mused about what she would like to become and to what extent it was possible, considering the political restrictions. The common denominator of both situations was the political status of the father and daughter: the regime considered both of them enemies of the people, which had an impact on their life choices.

In her life story, Urve explains her situation after her father was imprisoned for political reasons: she had enrolled in the teacher training college and realised that her life at school and at home were at odds with each other.

> *I was sixteen when my double life began: at school I had to recite the history that was taught, march in demonstrations, vote at Komsomol meetings that lasted whole weekends … At home, we worried about our future, but mostly about our father who was being taken from one prison to another...* (EKLA 350:1:1120, p. 6.)

She also describes her double life and involuntary double role in her book *Minevikku minemine* (Buschmann 2014: 56). At school, she assumed the role of an *exemplary citizen*. At home, however, she had to stay beside her mother, which meant both *fighting deep depression* and taking care of everyday chores. Although her parents' political status was not her fault, she had to bear the consequences. Her description reveals that the dividing line was not only between

the regime and the family but also between her and her family members, "I felt it was unfair that I had suddenly become an outcast – a 'kulak's kid' in terms of that time." She admits that such a feeling was a *bitter secret* that she did not share with her family (Buschmann 2014: 56). This aspect is not highlighted in her life story.

In her life story, she describes the ambivalent feeling she had at school (the discrepancy between what people thought and what they said), "It was weird to talk in history class about the 'bootlickers' of the Nazis and the liquidation of kulaks as a class". The phrases *bootlicker of the Nazis* and *the liquidation of kulaks as a class* belonged to the rhetoric of the Soviet regime. It was odd because she could have been one of those, as had already happened to a number of her classmates. She concludes the episode with a sigh: why did she have to be the one stigmatised? Why couldn't she be "an upbeat and enthusiastic exemplary citizen"? (EKLA 350:1.:1120, p. 7.)

In her life story Urve does not dwell on what happened after she was expelled from school. She notes briefly that she worked in a factory and continued her education at night school. After Stalin's death in 1953, she was able to continue her studies at the teacher training college. The letters exchanged between her father and family members, published in the book *Minevikku minemine*, however, reveal how difficult it was for the young woman to reconcile her choices, which were determined by political restrictions, and her expectations for self-development, as well as to reconcile the latter with the needs of her family. Her father was imprisoned, and mother struggled to earn enough to feed and educate four children. These aspects become evident in the letters written at the time of events and are revived in the context of the family archives. This topic is not touched upon in the retrospective life story – a text that explains, rather than reconstructs, the events.

Urve started her independent life in 1956, when her father returned from prison. To a certain extent, the style of the life story changes at that point: feelings are no longer related to fear, and the topic of political repressions is replaced by the depiction of everyday life in the Soviet Union. However, the topic of being an "enemy of the people" does come up when she describes her struggles related to work and family in the 1970s – but not so much in the 1980s. While my students felt that references to the Stalinist era in connection with the 1970s were unjustified (as explained above at the beginning of this paper), the text analysis reveals that there were reasons for such references.

The episodes that gave rise to the debate were work relations in the 1970s and family relations in the same period. We learn from the chapter of the life story titled "Life with a huge bunch of keys" that Urve, who was working as a teacher, "never, under any conditions, wanted to become a school principal"

(EKLA 350:1:1120, p. 9). This is followed by a description of the nature of the job of a school principal (major repairs to the school building are in progress, but building materials are hard to find) and the Communist Party's control over the school principal. As a result of enormous stress and injustice, "at the age of 37, I was hospitalised for one and a half months with pre-heart attack symptoms" (EKLA 350:1:1120, p. 9). However, it is not in her character to be passive. She seeks to voice her opinions and experiences by writing articles for newspapers. This leads to a proposal from the Minister of Education that she should accept the post of editor-in-chief of the newspaper for teachers. She would have liked to accept the job but the local Central Committee of the Communist Party did not approve her candidacy for the post because her dossier included information about her father's imprisonment. Urve summarises the topic by stating, "The system defined me based on my dossier, not on who I was." (EKLA 350:1:1120, p. 9.)

Her family situation at the time is described as follows: Urve and her husband were given a flat, thanks to the husband's job: "My husband accepted a job with the local Communist Party committee, and we were given a 32 square-meter (!) two-bedroom flat" (EKLA 350:1:1120, p. 8.). She also reveals that her husband's career was developing more slowly than expected.

> *My husband's expectations were bigger than the reality – he is a decent, hardworking, and ambitious person and was hoping to progress up the career ladder but got stuck. At one time, he took it out on me, complaining that I had not helped him to be successful. Perhaps he was being polite, not wanting to say that his marriage to a daughter of an enemy of the people had prevented him from becoming the big cheese*. (EKLA 350:1:1120, p. 8)

Her wording (marriage to a daughter of an enemy of the people) points to both internal and external tensions. As mentioned above, she was tormented by her double role in the early 1950s and by her dossier in the 1970s, which meant that her father's imprisonment determined her life. Urve herself would have liked to be at the forefront, both at work and in public life, but this was impossible for political reasons. The episode also sheds light on life during the Soviet time. The situation in the 1970s was a direct result of the events of the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1970s, the everyday lives of Estonians were shaped by the political framework and legal model imposed on Estonia in the early days of the Soviet regime – in the 1940s and 1950s. By the 1970s, Urve had achieved what was possible, considering her political baggage from the 1950s. This included the conditions of getting a home (a flat) and opportunities for self-realisation – both areas were controlled by the Soviet authorities through the Communist

Party and trade unions. Her opportunities as a daughter of an "enemy of the people" were more limited than the opportunities of those who had merit in the eyes of the Soviet regime. She refers to these restrictions when writing about problems at work and in her personal life in the 1970s.

In the 1980s, she could utilise what she had achieved a decade earlier, and in describing the events of that decade, she no longer refers to the political context of her youth. She revisits the topic of repressions when talking about the 1990s. During this period, there was also a great public interest in the issue of repression. Naturally, the public discourse of the 1990s concerning Stalinist repressions differed by 180 degrees from what it was during the Soviet era. Among other things, the documents related to the victims of repression were published in the book *Political arrests in Estonia 1940–1988*. The first volume of the book contains information about the imprisonment of Urve's father (Õispuu 1996: 608).

Trauma (which is defined by the researcher, not the narrator herself) in this story is manifested in the persistent split of identity in Urve. A split between the natural life course and the historical-political events that interrupted that course; a split between her feelings/desires and the retributions of the regime; a split between the official/public discourse and what was said at home / in private settings; and, last but not least, an internal split caused by her double roles.

This life story was written a decade after the collapse of the Soviet regime, and this allowed Urve to describe the difficulties experienced in the Soviet period retrospectively. She no longer had to adapt to the circumstances that had led to the traumatic experience, and which also fed and preserved it. However, she could not let them go completely, although the interpretive context of her double role and the difficulties caused by it had changed. It seems that despite the change in the external framework of the story (the political situation and the attitude of the public), she could not really get rid of the experience of the past. Consequently, her life story is not based on the juxtaposition of isolated life events. Rather, the focus is on the narrator's contradictory identity, the development of which she describes through events chosen to be included in the story.

In conclusion, it can be explained why I gave a negative answer to the students' question about whether the narrator's linking the repressions of the 1950s with the events and situations of the 1970s is habitual rather than justified. The students' decision was based on an analysis of the events of the story rather than the narrator's attitudes and feelings. They also based their interpretation of Soviet life on their experience gained from post-Soviet era discussions. The analysis, however, revealed that the events of those decades were connected through traumatic experience. Although Urve had not used that concept at the interpretation level, trauma was revealed through the evolution of her identity.

TO REMAIN SILENT OR TALK: THE QUESTION OF UNDERSTANDING

While writing the article, I contacted Urve Buschmann to ask what she thought of the students' opinions. She answered that the students had no personal experience with those years (the 1970s). A precondition for understanding a text was, in her opinion, that the reader was familiar with the time and situation described in the text (MK: EKLA f 350:1:p. 120. Annex). It turns out that the choice to either speak or remain silent is significantly related to two aspects: what factors form the narrator's identity (as described above) and the extent to which the narrator expects understanding or dialogue from her audience. The last-mentioned statement is related to the communicative aspect of storytelling which may also lead to social forgetting (Vree 2013).

Could the theme of silence appearing in Urve's stories refer to trauma? Remaining silent has indeed been considered to be one expression of a traumatic experience (BenEzer 2014: 34; Baddeley & Singer 2010). It may indicate a shock caused by trauma (Eyerman 2012: 565; Henriksson 2015: 41–42; Brooker 2017: 289). At the same time, trauma theorists have also discussed the associations between remaining silent and cultural norms: what is said or not said may stem from the cultural background at the time of narration (Balaev 2018: 360–367). It means that remaining silent (shutting up) can result from the narrator's feelings (control of emotions or loss of control, self-protection, shame, etc.). The narrator's choice to speak or not to speak can be influenced by cultural context (e.g., taboo, norms, courtesy).

Only indirect references to the reasons for remaining silent, such as shame, cultural norms, etc., can be found in Urve's narratives. Instead, Urve emphasises being silent for political reasons, both in the social context and in the family. For instance, she mentions that she did not talk at home about her desire to be a prominent young woman in Soviet society. (She did not have the opportunity to be active in society because of her father's imprisonment and the resulting social status.) It would have been inappropriate from the perspective of her home: it would have seemed as if she had betrayed her parents.

What did remaining silent mean during the period of repression? Urve mentioned the fear of people. This fear, driven by the desire to survive, included information on how to know things that were not to be talked about. In the observed historical and political circumstances, the way how community members interacted with each other (i.e., outside formal interrogations) also changed. For instance, a man born in Estonia in 1904 describes the post-war years – the early years of the Soviet regime – as follows:

> *It wasn't the destruction of war that left the deepest imprint on the life of the city. The biggest changes occurred in people. People did not trust each other anymore. When people met, they did not talk about the pre-war and war-time lives of their families and relatives. Nobody knew who was who anymore. Only true friends were open-minded without fearing that what they said would reach the ears of informers*. (EKLA f 350:1:1759)

While Urve mentioned a new fear in her life that emerged with the establishment of the Soviet regime – the fear of people – the text fragment above speaks about exactly the same phenomenon. The period of social change is often described through the changes in people, their relationships and roles (see Lotman 2009 [1992]: 15; Jaago 2014b: 1084–1086).

If the situation was ambivalent, how did people acquire the skill of knowing when to talk and when not to talk? An example is provided by a man born in 1953: on the one hand, he mentions that by the time he started school, he already knew what to say and where to speak; on the other hand, he points out that such things were not explicitly taught and that he was not expected to be hypocritical.

> *I am one of those who was told the truth about our history and the fate of the Estonian people from the time I was very young. It may seem surprising, but that's how it was. And another thing that seems somewhat surprising to me when I think about it now, although I am confident that there is no mistake, is that when I started school at the age of seven, I knew very well what I could or could not speak about at school. Based on the prior knowledge obtained from home, it was self-evident that the truth learned at home was not disseminated, and certain matters were not to be discussed outside home. Therefore, I do not remember being specifically instructed before starting school. What is certain is that I was not taught to be hypocritical: say this at home and that at school (i.e., pretend to praise the communist regime). I took note of what was told at school during that controversial time, and if I had to give a recitation on a lesson in class I recited what I had been taught at school and kept my opinion to myself; in any other case I tried to avoid discussing the matter as much as possible.* (EKLA f 350:1:2744)

When comparing this explanation with the double role described by Urve in her life story, it is apparent that by the 1960s people had adapted to double roles and double truths. Naturally, the situation considerably improved after Stalin's death.

How does the time of talking affect how the past is talked about? The issue of repressions in the early Soviet years featured prominently in the public debate in the 1990s and 2000s. Therefore, it is understandable that Urve pays the most attention to this topic in her life story. Of the total twelve and a half pages, family history is covered on one page, and life in the early Soviet period of 1940–1956 on five and a half pages. The next four pages contain a description of everyday life in Soviet times over three decades, only half of which is dedicated to personal life events (under the title "What about personal life?"). The life story ends with a two-page summary titled "No whining!". In this section, she gives clues to what happened in the late 1980s and in the 1990s: she describes the ways of coping with an economically difficult situation; talks about the last days in her mother's and father's life and the well-being of her children. This segment also includes two joyful acknowledgements: firstly, that her parents took part in the rebuilding of the Republic of Estonia, and secondly, that she is so active in her retirement.

Three-quarters of Urve's life story is devoted to Stalinist repressions and the formation of the life course that accompanied them. It is characteristic of the stories told during this period generally. However, the situation developed gradually. For instance, a survey on Stalinist repressions carried out by the Heritage Society in the late 1980s showed that the answers were brief. Of course, this can result from the genre – after all, these are answers to questions. Nevertheless, the answers are laconic and display that respondents are confused about this topic (see Mälu). Literary scholar Tiina Kirss points to the fact that the recounting of Stalinist repressions may be inhibited by the passage of time, by the Soviet-era ban on public debate of this issue and, consequently, the lack of discursive strategy (Kirss 2004: 134–135). At the same time, the issue of repressions remained alive in family tradition: it was characterised by defiant resistance to the injustice experienced (ibid.: 123). Kirss argues that the memories preserved in the private sphere began to shape the tonality of the life stories sent to the archives in the 1990s and early 2000s (ibid.: 135).

The time of storytelling favoured the emergence of the issue of Soviet repressions. The public discussion of the topics shaped the situation where the narrators perceived the retreat of the suppressed sense of injustice, which had taken place for half a century, and the restoration of justice. It was thus logical that they also expected the reader to understand their point of view. At the same time, however, it can be seen that the preferred topics of conversation vary, probably related to the change in the expected (understanding) audience. The Soviet past has been exhaustively discussed in society today. Public interest has shifted to new current issues. The students' opinion mentioned above reflects namely changes in the framework of interpretation.

In conclusion, the persistence of the traumatic experience lies in the conflicting identities of the narrator. When external factors influencing the narration change, it also changes the narrators' strategies for silence or speaking. At the same time, these external factors also shape the narrator's identity, including the multilevel nature of identity. However, the layers contained in the identity remain despite the change of time. Also, in Urve's life story, it seems that the traumatic experience associated with the formation of her identity levels manifests itself in the narrative, regardless of how she presents the level of events.

CONCLUSIONS

In this analysis, defining trauma is related to the researcher's aim to analyse the link between different events and situations in a life story. We can see from Urve's storyline how the loss of the family home and her father's imprisonment after the establishment of the Soviet regime transforms from a description of past events into an interpretation of the past. Both the presentation and interpretation of historical events take place within the political context (independent Republic of Estonia versus the Soviet regime in Estonia). The change of power and the period of war in the 1940s are depicted as negative changes at the levels of both events and emotions: death of family members, loss of family home, and the fear of people (as a new feeling). After these events, the narrator's life continues on two levels. On the one hand, she is an active and exemplary citizen with excellent leadership qualities; on the other hand, she is one of the people called the "enemies of the people", whose life is repeatedly shaped in an undesirable way for political reasons. Such a split identity provides an opportunity to analyse trauma in her story, which results in parallel chronologies (cf. Ataria 2017: 166 ff.). On the one hand, there is family history and its continuity; on the other hand, there is a series of events caused by the interruption ("History breaks in"), which fits in with the double identity (i.e., the topic of identity conflict). Although the environment that leads to a traumatic experience (splitting of identity) disappears, and the frame of narration changes, the trauma persists at the level of identity.

From the research/methodological point of view, the inclusion of techniques of trauma theory in the analysis proved fruitful. This point of view made it possible to notice more profoundly the aspects related to the narrator's feelings, which were overshadowed by the superficial layers of the series of events. The splitting of identity and the related multifaceted conflicts both in the narrator and in her relationship with her parents and the authorities point to the narrator's traumatic experience. At the same time, the general tonality of the story

is related to the search for and formulation of lasting values, which provides a positive background for understanding the whole story. Trauma-theoretical approach also provided an opportunity to understand the narrator's arguments about why she linked events and situations that took place during the Stalinist period and twenty years later. On the one hand, these events were related through the cause-and-effect principle, and on the other hand, through the split identity of the narrator.

Using the techniques of folkloristic narrative research confirmed that the narrator does not change her view of the past, although the scope and style of the performance are determined by the narrative situation and genre. The oral history study provided opportunities to contextualise the historical background of the events mediated in Urve's story. It was also necessary to use an oral history view to describe the effect of the narration time on the structure of the story under consideration. Through this approach, it is possible to understand what life was like in a situation of repression. This approach also provided opportunities to point to the conditions that prevailed at the time of narrating and made this narrative a success story rather than a trauma story.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by the Estonian Research Council grant PRG670, "Vernacular Interpretations of the Incomprehensible: Folkloristic Perspectives Towards Uncertainty".

NOTES

[1] This research project was titled "Traumatized Borders: Reviving Subversive Narratives of Borders, and Other" (2016–2020), supported by the Academy of Finland. The author thanks the members of the project team, especially Kirsi Laurén, discussions with whom greatly contributed to the completion of this article.

[2] Life story (Est. *elulugu*), in the context of this article, is a first-person story covering the narrator's entire life course and pointing to the narrator's choices through which he/she interprets his/her own life. From a literary point of view, these stories have been associated with the genres of memoir literature, for instance, memoirs, autobiographies, life writing, etc. (Kurvet-Käosaar 2010: 7–10; Hinrikus 2010; cf. Kadar 2013). From the perspective of memory research in Estonian ethnology, the narrator's experiences, which narrators have mediated with the familiar cultural narration techniques, have been emphasised in connection with these stories (Kõresaar 2005: 14). From a folkloristic point of view (also represented in this article), these stories have been associated with the so-called thematic writing: they are stories told by volunteer correspondents of the archive, motivated by the researchers' appeal. In most cases,

researchers also suggest a specific topic for writing in these appeals. Nevertheless, the thematic writings are freely structured by the narrators (Jaago 2014a: 290–299).

[3] Urve Buschmann's life story was published in the collection *Eesti rahva elulood* (Life Stories of the Estonian People), edited by Rutt Hinrikus, in 2003. In connection with the publication of her story, she also gave permission to publish her name. According to the practice of studying Estonian life stories, researchers often use the narrator's first name in their writings (see, e.g., Kirss & Kõresaar & Lauristin 2004). In order to facilitate reading while avoiding too much personality, I have used this practice in this article as well.

[4] In March 1949, mass deportations took place in Estonia (as well as in Latvia and Lithuania). "20,702 people were deported from Estonia, about 70% of them being women, children and the elderly". The operation was intended by the Soviet authorities to destroy the Estonian village and farming society and to support the establishment of collective farms (kolkhozes and sovkhozes) (Rahi-Tamm 2005: 29).

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MK – fieldwork materials collected by Tiiu Jaago. The Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, Estonia

Mälu [Memory] – the collection of the Estonian Heritage Society, 1989. Haapsalu and Lääne County Museums Foundation, Estonia

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https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2024.93.cechova

ARCHTYPOLOGY OF THE FIGURAL ANTAGONIST IN CLASSICAL FAIRY TALES AND OTHER CULTURE-FORMING STORIES

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Abstract: The present study focuses on the semiotic profile of a literary character acting as a villain/antagonist (Propp) as one of the central factors of the existential problem situation (the *de facto* "originator" of problems), which represents a general theme in the folk fairy tales and/or culture-forming stories. The aim of this paper is neither to cover all the principles and manifestations of antagonists exhaustively, nor to present a complete typological description of antagonistic characters, but to cover those basic forms and most frequent or otherwise essential attributes that canonically standardize and significantly universalize the archetype of an antagonist in the selected range of narratives. The issue is approached from the perspective of literary theory (with an emphasis on the morphological, structural, and thematic analysis of the literary characters), and it is materially and argumentatively based on the representative sets of folklore and culture-forming narratives (Aarne-Thompson-Uther's international catalog of fairy tale types, world myths, canonical texts, etc.), as well as on their national (Slovak) variants.

Keywords: antagonist, archetype, fairy tales, culture-forming stories

The world was already dualized to polar principles or phenomena as early as in the oldest myths and religious texts: chaos – cosmos, earth – sky, light – darkness, life – death, good – evil. The symbolic and allegorical representatives of these principles act as opponents and bearers of archetypal values.

The cosmogonic myths describe how the world is organized through the victory over chaos, or how the established universe is threatened by the return of

chaos. These scenes take place at the level of players in hostile disputes: the gods of light are in a constant battle with the demons of darkness.

This dualistic mythological worldview assumes that the world originated as a result of a struggle between good and evil deities. The section on mythological motifs in the *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (1955–1958) by Stith Thompson includes several semanthemes that iconize the struggle between good and evil (e.g., motif A50, "Conflict of good and evil creators"; A106, "Opposition of good and evil gods"; A106.2, "Revolt of evil angels against god"; A107, "Gods of darkness and light: darkness thought of as evil, light as good"; A525, "Good and bad culture heroes"). According to Russian philosopher Jakov Golosovker, these images embody the absolute good and evil (in terms of the absolute criteria of cultural values). The positive moral ideas are embodied by the "Savior", "Messiah", "Prophet", "Saint", "Hero" just like the images of sovereign negativity: "Chaos" as a natural will, "Chimera" as the greatest delusion, "Lucifer" as satanic pride, "Cain" as the first murderer, etc. (Golosovker 2021: 52–53).

From the perspective of literary theory, we are dealing with a figural confrontation between the *protagonist* and *antagonist* (from the Greek agónistés 'wrestler in the games', prot 'first', anti 'against'), while our attention is also focused on the hero's opponent as one of the central factors of the existential problem situation (the *de facto* "originator" of problems), which is the general theme of folk tales and/or culture-forming stories. The antagonist resists the protagonist and causes contradictions and trouble. His motives, actions and intentions are contradictory in relation to the protagonist. They lead to a violent reversal of the status or events to the detriment of the hero and/or other literary characters.

The English *villain* represents this type of character and is originally derived from the French *vilaine* 'rustic' (Barnhart & Steinmetz 1999: 1204), later used in a shifted meaning of a "slave" (Baldick 2015: 353), "unknightly and treacherous person" (Lewis 2013 [1960]: 118), a villager as a villain, a "person of indecent mind and morals". With the initiating impulse of medieval English aristocracy, the connotations of this word grew worse over time. The word *villain* currently refers to an *evildoer*, *criminal*, *violent person*, *the main culprit*, while the adjective *vile* (from the Latin *vilis*, French *vil*) means *morally disgusting*, *morally wrong*, *evil*; *having no value*, *having no respect* (Barnhart & Steinmetz 1999: 1204).

In the fictional world of folk- and culture-forming stories, the antagonist represents a fundamentally negative character (the substance of evil) that intentionally harms the hero or other characters. From the point of view of deep psychology, it is an archetype of the shadow, which Carl Gustav Jung and his followers defined in terms of the collective image of "evil as a principle"

(destructiveness as a modality of human behavior), and also in terms of weakness and dark and amoral aspects of human personality (Jung 1970 [1951]: 8–10).

The image of the shadow as an archetype is purely and essentially conveyed by the classic fairy tales and archnarratives (culture-forming stories): the hero experiences the clash of good and evil as a challenge. He develops internally by struggling with dangerous obstacles and hopeless situations. The confrontation with evil causes a significant change in the hero himself and his life (for more information, see Čechová 2019).

ANTAGONIST VERSUS PROTAGONIST: MORPHOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF THE ANTAGONIST

The opposition between the protagonist and antagonist represents some of the key figural components of the ancient folk and contemporary artifacts, building on the iconization of the struggle between good and evil (the moral antithesis of heroism and wickedness). Their characteristic corresponds to the dialectic of the genre structure of classical folk and/or culture-forming narratives. Although the hero and the villain form a clear axiological opposition, they are united by the motif of desire, driven by scarcity, loss, incompleteness (a desire for another being, ownership, knowledge, status, power, etc.), or it stems from a constitutional disposition (aggressiveness, animal lust, instinctive destructiveness, etc.). Regardless of the above, desire is a catalyst for the plot, action, behavior (for a meticulous interpretation of this thematic component under the categorial heading of "action", see Miko 1987).

The plot-forming purpose of the negative character in the fictional narrative world is to act in opposition to the positive (heroic) character, while the actions of both characters form the central plot of the story, which is the source of a sharp tension and dramatic expression (these are Miko's expressive categories). The traditional hero acts in an effort to achieve the goal that stands at the heart of the story. The antagonist is a contradictory character: he introduces a problem to the image of the protagonist's existential situation that must be solved or overcome in order for the hero to succeed in his efforts.

Unlike the hero, who is characterized by virtue, courage, ingenuity, and the pursuit of justice and good in the fictional world of the archnarratives, the antagonist is in principle characterized by actions stimulated by selfishness, addiction, cunning, meanness, cruelty or evil-doing.

The plot function of the antagonist is to provoke a conflict (to create an extremely problematic existential situation) and stand in the protagonist's way.

In other words, he makes the hero's life difficult by placing obstacles and challenges in it (various forms of difficult or impossible tasks, kidnapping, theft, expulsion, lying, etc.).

In his syntagmatic model of the Russian fairy tale, Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp assigned the first circle of action to the villain, and the seventh to the false hero (a treacherous character with unjustified claims). Of the thirty-one fairy tale functions, eleven were linked with the villain or false hero. He considered the eighth function (the antagonist causes harm or loss to a family member) to be extremely important because it "triggers the story of a fairy tale" (Propp 2008 [1928]: 33). The antagonist either initiates the story (causes harm to the hero, his family or loved ones in the exposition phase – for example, the dragon kidnaps the princess, the witch bewitches a castle, or the evil judge casts a bad spell over the newborn), tries to thwart the protagonist's intentions (older brothers steal a miraculous elixir from the youngest brother, which is meant for their father, etc.), or comes into conflict with the hero in the subsequent sequences of the plot backstory within the compositional principle of chance (e.g., the Slovak hero Lomidrevo wins over the devious Laktibrada, who he accidentally met on the way to the dragons), he finally measures his strength in a struggle or competition (or riddles), and usually pursues the hero with the intention of killing him after the loss.

The villain usually appears twice in the fairy tale: he first suddenly appears out of nowhere (arrives, appears, etc.), and later enters the story as a found character (ibid.: 69), e.g., the Little Red Riding Hood meets the wolf in the forest and then finds him in his grandmother's bed, the dragon kidnaps the princess and the hero finds him to punish him and free the king's daughters.

In the basic structure of a classic fairy tale, the hero, his opponent and the object of the search are in a mutual relationship. Since the plot consists of a meeting between the hero and the object of the search, these semiotic entities must first be separated from each other. The object either belongs to another world and is linked with the supernatural villain (for example, the miraculous light that Vasilisa has to acquire is with Baba Yaga), or the hero and the object of the search/desire belong to this world and it is the villain's job to separate them (the stepmother pushes her own daughter to be married to the prince instead of the stepdaughter).

The forms of confrontation between the protagonist and antagonist in the classic fairy tales and archnarratives range from the relatively innocuous ones (the stepmother prevents Cinderella from meeting the prince) to the extremely destructive ones (the stepmother poisons Snow White). The villain often uses deception to do this, so the hero considers him a friend, helper or donor, and in

some cases the antagonist actually performs these functions (for example, the witch gives the hero a miraculous horse).

BASIC TYPES OF CONFLICTS

There are three types of conflicts – and three ways of dramatization of the plot – in how the protagonist is confronted by the antagonist in the archnarratives.

Overt conflict

This is an open dispute between the protagonist and antagonist. The antagonist (usually) acts in a way to harm the protagonist, or shows his/her clearly negative attitude towards him/her. This is how he/she engages in an open confrontation with the "opponent". Usually, it involves physical or mental harm. The protagonist and antagonist usually either get into a direct clash (e.g., a clash between the hero and the dragon, devil, giant, witch, enemy troops), or their dispute takes the form of mutual subterfuge (one slyly outwits, deceives or blackmails the other, often with the help of magic), or the antagonist's animosity and hostility towards a defenseless hero is openly manifested (e.g., the stepmother and Cinderella or Maruška in the fairy tale "The Twelve Months"). This usually happens in the family: an irreproachable girl or boy is harmed by his/her blood relatives or kinship (sister, stepmother, mother-in-law, father, etc.). According to the Aarne-Thompson-Uther International Catalog (hereinafter ATU), this is the case, e.g., in the fairy tale type 510A, "Cinderella" (persecuted heroine); 510B, "Donkey skin"; 403, "Black and white bride"; 425C, "Beauty and the beast"; 923, "Love like salt"; 327A, "Hansel and Gretel"; 706, "Maiden without hands"; etc.

Covert conflict

In the archnarratives, we also encounter a hidden conflict between the protagonist and antagonist. Neither the hero nor the environment is aware of its existence, at least not at first sight: the hero has no idea that he has an enemy trying to harm him or is not expecting an attack. In classic fairy tales, it is mainly the stepmother's plots against the stepchild. The vicious and often deadly traps are secretly set by the stepmother herself in disguise while attempting to win the hero's trust (e.g., Snow White unwittingly succumbs and falls for the trickery and deceit of the evil stepmother). A similar narrative scheme (with

the figural opposition adult – child, or old – young, old – new) can be found, e.g., in the fairy tale type ATU 461, "Three hairs from the devil's beard", and ATU 930, "Prophecy".

Potential conflict

The two performative modes (overt, covert) of the conflicts outlined above primarily concern the conflict between the opposing factors (characters) in an unfolding story. However, even the very threat of a conflict, which is only present latently and does not break out in the fictional world, can be the source of a dramatic tension in the story – and a very strong one. It is noteworthy that we can encounter the interaction between the protagonist and antagonist in the classic fairy tales, which does not result in an open dispute or clash between the central characters; however, both characters are aware of a possible collision. This type of conflict is usually due to the ambivalent relationship between the hero and his opponent (e.g., Vasilisa and Baba Yaga).

Since the classic fairy tales belong to ancient culture-forming stories (i.e., archnarratives), one can assume that the performative conflict modes outlined above could represent the basic typological outline as a vital source of dramatic expression even in other art forms and genres (so long they have a topic, i.e., they mediate certain aspects of the fictional world). This would mean that it is possible to derive a much broader, more modern (present in contemporary art), and therefore a more sophisticated and – in its relativistic ambiguity – more complex and structured diapason of "dramatic" storylines.

PHYSIOGNOMIC AND CHARACTER-BASED PARALLELISM

In the case of a directly expressed function of a negative literary character, the narrator in a classic fairy tale portrays his/her character "blatantly" when describing the body: the antagonist has ugly or disgusting (often hyperbolized) facial and bodily features, "is afflicted by strange bodily features ... unnatural body size (exaggeration as a remnant of mythical thinking, which endows the beings connected with the divine world with a supernaturally large or, on the contrary, miniature body – giants, dwarfs)" (Hodrová 1993: 164). When describing the villain, the emphasis is placed on his repulsive or terrifying look, which mirrors the antagonist's inside in the conventional encoding of the magic archnarrative (e.g., Gashadokuro, a ghost in Japanese mythology, who takes on the form of a giant skeleton; the Scottish demon-centaur Nuckelavee, who has

no skin and one can see black blood flowing in his yellow veins and fire burning in one eye; the menacing Gorgon Medusa, turning those who look at her into stone; ugly women with long unkempt hair, skewed eyes, a body covered with scales and hooves, called meridians or kneelers in Czech legends).

> *The character's appearance... is an important means of characterizing it mainly because it directly singles it out from other entities around, and thus helps its identification across the narrative ... in the case of the character's appearance, certain global characteristics of characters are demonstrated to a lesser or greater degree*. (Fořt 2008: 66)

In the archnarratives, the literary character (protagonist or antagonist) enters the story as a complete character in terms of its semantic structure, with a stable costume, props, typical behavior, character or name (Hodrová 2001: 560–561). Thanks to his articulated and expressive figural drawing, the villain's opposite (antinomic) position towards the innocent, loving and visually charming heroic figure is accentuated not only with his repulsive appearance, but also, and especially, with his corrupt inside, which results in malicious actions. Since this literary character has outright negative traits, it must be defeated by the hero, and his/her further actions must be prevented in accordance with the logic and value-moral norms of the archnarratives.

ARCHETYPES OF THE VILLAIN

Supernatural monsters

Supernatural monsters embody evil in its purest and essential form. Unlike human villains (stepmother, brothers, sisters, bandits, traitors, etc.), whose actions are usually motivated by greed, wickedness, malice, jealousy, lustful desire, etc., most supernatural monsters act destructively on principle – for the sake of evil itself. They can distinguish good from evil, but they choose the second option. And even if they love, their "love" stems from a perverted desire, callous obsession, and violent greed (e.g., an abducted princess becomes the dragon's wife). They crave the death of others and cause trouble to the hero or the wider community, which is what satisfies them (e.g., Grendel – a raving murdering monster and Beowulf's opponent, a hero from the eponymous Old English epic). According to the fairy-tale canon, they are incorrigible: they do not feel sorry for their deeds, they do not show remorse for those they have hurt, and therefore cannot be redeemed or saved.

One of the most universal characters of supernatural (divine) nature, which embodies destructive and misanthropic power, is the *dragon* (with the exception of the Chinese tradition). According to mythological notions, the dragon is the largest, most powerful and most dangerous monster that threatens the entire human community. Ancient myths often associate it with the original chaos that comes into conflict with the creator of order (God, who establishes order and the necessary balance, is usually the winner of these cosmic battles). Many cultures equate the dragon with the snake because of their appearance, characteristics and symbolism.

An iconic example is the Akkadian cosmogonic poem *Enuma Elish* (2nd millennium BC), in which the young god Marduk wins over the original deity, the demonic sea monster Tiamat (dragon-snake). Marduk models the celestial dome from its shattered skull and determines the course of the stars. He eventually creates humanity to celebrate his victory over the dark chaos. Marduk is thus given the role of the creator of the world and organizer of the cosmos. In the Indian *Bhagavata Purana*, the hero Krishna (an avatar of God Vishnu) fights Kali, a hundred-and-one-headed serpent demon, who dwells in the depths of the River Yamunā, destroys the surrounding region with his fiery breath and threatens its inhabitants:

> *The enraged Kaliya bit him in the chest, stretched his hood around Krishna and almost completely covered him. ... Krishna saw that the whole pastoral nation looked up to him as the only savior and refuge. ... He straightened himself and started to scramble out of the snake's hood, which almost burst under the pressure. The enraged snake could not bear the pain anymore, released his deadly grip and raised his head in front of Krishna's huge stature. ... Krishna then made him bow down and ... started to dance beautifully on top of Kaliya's head. ... When Kaliya's wives saw that their husband fainted under Krishna's weight because he carried the whole world, and there were holes from the dancing feet in his hood, they panicked: 'Oh, Lord, even though our husband Kaliya was born in darkness, the essence of his nature is ignorance, and his every action is motivated by malice, yet he has succeeded in achieving what others only dream of. After all, the touch of your foot brings absolute bliss. ... The Lord Almighty is merciful, and he will surely forgive those who have resorted to iniquity and done evil here on earth. Lord, have mercy on our husband.' And the Lord truly had mercy on him. Kaliya humbly bowed before Krishna: 'Oh, Lord, we were born as snakes, and therefore our whole life is one great evil. Everything we do is controlled by darkness and endless evil. But it is almost impossible to rid ourselves of our own*

> *nature. We have a proclivity to evil in ourselves from the very beginning, from the first moment we came into the world. You are the creator, Lord, you created the whole universe. ... Whatever you think is best for us, be it forgiveness or punishment, order it. We will do it without hesitation,' said Kaliya.* (Život vznešeného Kršny 2021: 127–136)

In the Indian *Rigveda*, the thunderous god Indra defeats the dragon serpent Vritra. The Syrian myth about Baal, the god of rain, who fights with his brother Yamm, the water dragon, has two meanings. First, at the level of imagination associated with agriculture and the seasons, Baal's victory means the triumph of the 'rain' over the 'sea' and groundwater; the rhythm of the rain representing the cosmic order replaces the chaotic immensity of the 'sea' and catastrophic floods (with Baal's victory, confidence in the stability of the seasons triumphs). Second, the duel with the water dragon illustrates the arrival of the young god as the victor and the new ruler of the pantheon. In the ancient Egyptian archnarratives, this cosmic struggle takes place between the celestial dragon-snake Apophis and the god of the sun Re; in Greek mythology, the clash occurs between Typhon, a monster with a hundred dragon heads, and Zeus.

One of the most common mythological scenes (the "Fight with dragon", motif B.11.11 according to the *Motif-index of Folk Literature*) can be observed in the heroes who won the respect of their surroundings by defeating the dangerous monster and achieved the highest goals – Hercules' tasks, Jason's duel with the dragon in the story of the Argonauts, Perseo's liberation of Andromeda, Sigurd's victory over dragon Fafni, etc. In the European folk tradition, the theme of the princess saved from the dragon by a young hero is one of the oldest and most widespread thematic algorithms (fairy tale type ATU 300, "Dragon-slayer"; 301, "Three stolen princesses"; 303, "Twins or blood-brothers"; etc.).

In a dualistic mythical religious system, the negatives are completely attributed to the rival of the good god, i.e., to the rival demiurge. In European culture, it is mostly the *devil*. In the Christian sense, he represents a fallen angel (Satan-Lucifer), an adversary of God and Christ (Mt 4:1-11), who seeks to oppose God's order, seize the human soul and lead man to sin. In the Old Testament, no single unified character of the devil appears, but rather the Yahweh's supernatural opponents known from ancient Middle Eastern myths, such as the sea (Yam), water monsters (Tannin), Leviathan (Job 3:8; Isa 27:1; Ps 74:13-14), mawet and/or Mot (death), plague (Deber) and contagion (Resheph) (Hab 3:5; Ps 91:3 and 6), as well as the serpent (Gen.), Asmodej (Tob 3:8 and 17), Moloch (Exo 20:2-5), Lilith (Isa 34:14), etc. The New Testament contains approximately three hundred references to the devil who is synonymously referred to as Belial (2 Cor 6:15), Beelzebub, the prince of demons (Mt 12:24), devil

(Mt 4:1), Satan (Lk 10:18-20), prince of this world (Jn 16:11), liar, murderer (Jn 8:44), tempter (Mt 4:3), beast (Rev 13), dragon (Rev 12:7-9), etc. God's deputy, archangel Michael, leads the heavenly hosts in the war with the dragon (Satan) and subdues the "great dragon, the old serpent" who seduced the whole world (Rev. 12:7-10; 20:1-3). Many folk tales and legends explain how the holy beings fight the devil, thwart his plans and capture or trick him.

In the fairy tales, the character of the devil usually does not cause fear. He usually makes a deal with human characters to win their souls (e.g., ATU fairy tale type 810, "Snares of the evil one"; 812, "Devil's riddle"; 360, "Bargain of the three brothers with the devil"). Their openness to the deal is motivated by the desire to achieve wealth, power, knowledge, supernatural abilities, extension of earthly life, etc. through an alliance with an alien power. The diabolical antagonist then acts as a false (hostile) donor who uses deception to achieve his intentions (at first he behaves friendly and helpfully). The deal means a short-term gain for those who accept it, but in the long run it only benefits the devil. However, within the development of the plot, the hero usually finds a way to cancel the deal before it is executed. The specific form of this motif is strongly influenced by the Judeo-Christian tradition, according to which the deal with the devil is a contradictory counterpart of God's covenant (ratified at the individual level by baptism). Accordingly, the deal with the devil is conditional to the rejection of God or Christ.

Elves

The little demon, a vicious and cunning little man, is represented in folklore by an elf (dwarf, permon, Laktibrada). According to S. Thompson (1946: 48) he appears under the name Rumpelstilskin (English) in one of the oldest and most widespread European stories, "Guessing the helper's name" (fairy tale type ATU 500) and/or Rumpelstilzchen in the German version by the Brothers Grimm (from the German *rumpelstilt* 'a little rattle' – a crooked elf who rattles his stilts; in a similar sense as the *rumpelgeist* 'a rattle spirit' or *poltergeist* 'a malevolent spirit', who smashes and moves household objects) or the Slovak Martinko Klingáč. This type of villain is a false helper who offers his services to a desperate girl (he weaves golden threads out of straw for her) on the condition that she gives him her most valuable first-born child. However, despite his supernatural powers, Rumpelstilskin cannot take the child arbitrarily. He has to do a barter with the girl. In the fictional world of fairy tales, the character agrees with the deal when she finds herself in an existential crisis or a hopeless situation. Then the human contracting partner unknowingly sells or promises

her own child to the demon (motifs MI S211, S240, 241, 242 according to the *Motif-index of Folk Literature*) because she does not know the subject of the agreement (e.g., the black lady's mischievous contract with a poor blacksmith who is just about to hang himself in the Slovak fairy tale "Goldilocks":

> *'Don't hang yourself, blacksmith, don't hang yourself! I will help you in your poverty, I will give you as much wealth as you desire; only if you promise me what you don't know of yet.' When the blacksmith comes home and tells his wife what had happened, she starts to grumble: '... you sold your own child before it was even born!'* (Dobšinský 1996: 156)

In the stories about Rampelstilskin, the elf tries to make the woman give up her child, but at the same time he gives her an opportunity to redeem herself: if she guesses his name, he will not insist on his request. The attitude of the little man corresponds to his "ambivalent nature" (Danišová 2021: 171), which is typical of elves and fairies in the world of fairy tales.

Witches

Female characters that use their magical abilities to cause harm to the protagonist appear in the folktales of all cultural circles (motif G200–G299, "Witches" according to the *Motif-index of Folk Literature*; ATU fairy tale type 405, "Jorinde and Joringel"; 442, "Old woman/man in the forest"; 708, "Wonder child"; etc.). According to the established descriptive procedures (the above-mentioned physiognomic character parallelism), the witches are portrayed as old and abominable beings, appearing on the border of the human and demonic realm. These beings are of a high and/or indefinite age, have access to secret guidance, practice black magic and possess consciousness-changing (e.g., magic ointment, wand) or body-changing (including killing) substances. The witch in Slovak fairy tales is usually an old hunchbacked woman with eyes like fists, teeth like pegs, and a scorched face. In the fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel" by the Brothers Grimm, the child heroes look in horror into the witch's wet red eyes. Baba Yaga from the Russian stories is portrayed as a monstrous, bony, old and unruly woman with fuzzy hair. Her descriptions emphasize her large nose and teeth resembling wolf's fangs or iron teeth in the gigantic gaping (voracious) esophagus: "Baba Yaga is sitting by the window. She is grinding her ominous teeth and stretches out her arms hands like a rake" (Kuncová 2008: 215). The mountainous Yamauba (or Onibaba – an old female demon) with her long yellow hair,

piercing eyes and a large open mouth on top of the head (see, e.g., Luffer 2009) is her counterpart in Japanese fairy tales.

The witch's abominable or even demonic appearance corresponds to her hostile and dangerous character. She is characteristic of cannibalism (type ATU 327, "Children and the Ogre"; ATU 327A, "Hansel and Gretel"; ATU 327C, "Witch carries the hero in a sack"; ATU 327F, "Witch and a fisher boy"). Almost all fairy tales with Baba Yaga directly mention her immense hunger (she has a chamber full of food and pursues her victims with her mouth open wide, which is reminiscent of the folk image of the "hungry death").

The witch uses against the hero her miraculous abilities, which include, e.g., cursing him and transforming him into an animal (ATU 450, "Little brother and little sister"; ATU 425C, "Beauty and the beast"), stone (ATU 303, "Twins or blood-brothers"), poisoning (ATU 709, "Snow White") and other deadly snares (ATU 516, "Faithful John"), persecution of the protagonist by magical means (ATU 313, "Magic flight"; ATU 431, "House in the forest"), etc.

The witches from the western circle of magical folk narratives often act as stepmothers (see Jung's archetype of the mother). German researcher Nathalie Blaha-Peillex (2008: 112) made a case that the stepmother is an initiator of extreme evil, which she carries out in a particularly cruel way. The difference between the fairy-tale stepmother and the witch stepmother is that the fairy-tale stepmother constantly humiliates and mistreats her stepchild (e.g., "Cinderella", "Jack Frost"), but she does not want to kill them. In contrast, the witch stepmother acts as a murderess (or a villain with murderous intentions) and usually uses black magic. Her motives mostly include an effort to gain benefits for her own offspring (e.g., the Brothers Grimm's tale "The dearest Roland, brother and sister"; in the fairy tale "Snow White" the stepmother's/witch's murderous conspiracies against her stepdaughter are driven by uncontrollable jealousy and narcissism). The stepmothers-witches are modeled as monofunctionally negative (evil, malignant and criminal) characters in a way that they are "perceptually impressive and clearly identifiable, easily classifiable, unquestionable and unmistakable in their substitution function" (Milčák 2006: 63). Without an exception, they can be classed as an antagonist operating in the vicinity of the hero from the beginning of the exposition phase of the narrative. In addition to the role of a stepmother, they also have the position of a biological mother ("Crystal ball"), chambermaid ("Goose shepherd"), wife ("Ferdinand the Faithful and Ferdinand the Treacherous"), etc., that is, a mortal being (*mortalisis*) with supernatural abilities living in the terrestrial (human) world (*mortalitas*). This type of witch appears in the so-called "family-social fairy tales" (Marčok 1978: 53), which primarily deal with microsocial (kinship) relationships. In the western cultural circle, however, we also find fairy tales in which the witch lives

in social seclusion, in a remote forest, and has no family relationship with the hero (e.g., "Gingerbread house", "Forest witch", "Cannibals").

The fact that the witch is severely punished (bursts out of anger, turns into resin, etc.) for her actions in the finale of the story as a semiotic incarnation of pure evil is the common denominator of both forms of this character in the fictional world of the Western fairy tale. It is naturally predestined for extinction by extreme negativity, spiritual emptiness and incompetence.

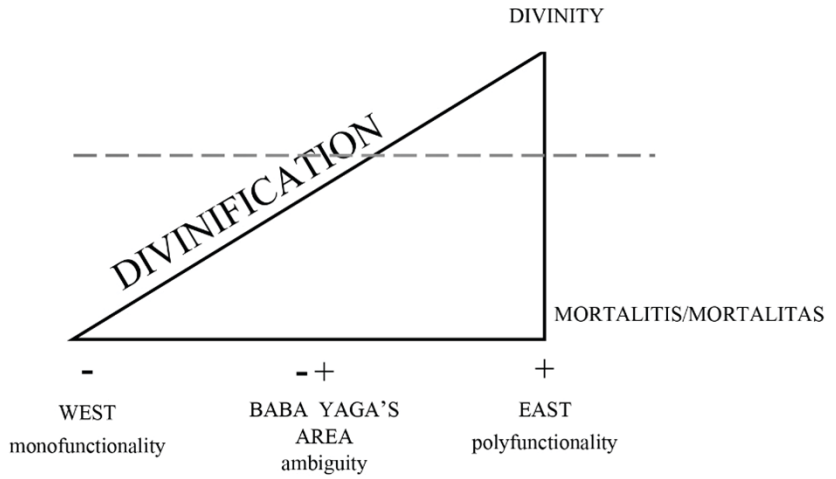
In his monograph *Baba Yaga: The Ambiguous Mother and Witch of the Russian Folktale*, American Slavist Andreas Johns (2010 [2004]) presents the Russian (but also Ukrainian and Belarusian) witch Baba Yaga in the context of classic fairy tales as an exceptional phenomenon thanks to her ambiguous (ambivalent or contradictory) profile, which differs significantly from the clear polarization (especially on the value axis good–evil or functional axis helper–villain) of the figural "pantheon" of this genre, as is the case with the western witch. From Propp's morphological point of view, she has two opposing functions: 1. the villain (hurting the hero or his loved ones and persecuting him), and 2. the donor (trying and rewarding the hero) (Propp 2008 [1928]: 139). She often fulfills both functions in a single story. These opposite attributes of the fairy-tale Baba Yaga are supported by the attempts to liken her to the Great Mother archetype, which is characterized by ambivalent properties (dangerous and kind, terrible and loving, cannibal and wise counselor). Both characters embody something mysterious, scary, dangerous, but also lively, endowing and helping the protagonist's success (the visitor of Baba Yaga is either facing death or a favorable magical transformation). The heroes of the tales about Baba Yaga, who encounter this mysterious seeress, usually undergo strange crucial trials.

In the Russian fairy tale "Beautiful Vasilisa" (from the collection by A. N. Afanasjev; ATU 333B, "Girl goes to the witch", and/or ATU 334, "Household of the witch"), an evil stepmother and her two daughters send an eight-year-old girl named Vasilisa into the dark forest to the dangerous Baba Yaga to bring them the lost magic light. Vasilisa visits Baba Yaga and stays with her as a servant. In the unmanageably difficult tasks, she is helped by her magical doll, which was given to her by her mother before her death. The conversation between the heroine and the dangerous witch, which determines Vasilisa's fate, is the key passage and the dramatic link in the fairy tale. Baba Yaga is irritated that Vasilisa is not asking her anything: "Why don't you talk to me? As if you were mute! Ask me something!" (Afanasjev 1932: 49–50). So Vasilisa asks her three questions. They are about three mysterious riders (a white rider on a white horse, a red rider on a red horse, and a black rider on a black horse) who she saw enter the witch's hut. Baba Yaga tells her that the first rider is her "bright day", the second rider is her "red sun" and the last one is her "dark night"

(ibid.). However, the next question on Vasilisa's mind (what the meaning of the three magical pairs of hands without a body is, which serve and carry out Baba Yaga's orders in the hut) is never verbalized. The witch says: "You should only ask questions about what you saw outside the house and not inside – I don't want gossip to spread from my house" (ibid.: 50). This formula reminds us of the saying: dirty clothes are not washed in public. The mighty Baba Yaga's mystery thus cannot cross the threshold of her home. However, something very essential depends on it. Had the girl even touched on what should have remained shrouded in mystery, Baba Yaga would have surely punished her, as is clear from her reaction. Yet, both participants in this *partie remise* mutually respect their magical powers. Vasilisa does not ask her the last question concerning the witch's mysteries (three hands without a body), and the witch is not "analyzing" the girl's secret (help from the magical doll). When Baba Yaga asks her how she managed to do all the chores she was commissioned to do, she is satisfied with an abrupt and vague answer that it is a "blessing of my mother" (ibid.: 51). In the fairy tale, life or death and reward or punishment are all decided upon in a rather short conversation. In order for the heroine to survive, she must, so to speak, walk on very thin ice: conceal something or, on the contrary, confess to other things; react appropriately at a crucial moment because the whole situation depends on it. The result of the "conflict" between Vasilisa and Baba Yaga is a matter of a consensus (win-win): neither party must give up anything important (Vasilisa her life, Baba Yaga her mysterious nature). Their confrontation is resolved to mutual satisfaction because they mutually respect their taboos (for more details, see Čechová 2015: 52–65). The girl thus passes the witch's trials (she respects the Baba's fear-inducing and untouchable mystery, which the mortals should not know unless they are forced to do so) and returns home with a burning light hidden in a human skull. Its sharp glare burns the stepmother and her daughters, and Vasilisa marries the czar after a while.

The Indian female deities Mahadevi/Durga/Kali, the Balinese Rangda, or the Sumerian goddess of the underworld, Ereskigal, who appear in a multifaceted way in the archtexts (they give, help and protect, but also kill and destroy), can be considered the typological counterparts of Baba Yaga in the pantheon of eastern mythological deities: their divine nature (divinity) predisposes them to react to the lower (human) beings in such a way that by their behavior and actions they multiply in many ways the clearly defined fairy-tale polarity of good and evil, as is the case with the ambivalent Baba Yaga. All contradictory forms of the goddess Kali (on the bipolar axis of fertility and destruction, harmony and downfall) allow for a gradual transition of the human hero's consciousness to the highest attainable state – enlightenment. In terms of the result, they have

a favorable effect on the hero. In other words, the evil perceived in Western European thinking is becoming positive in the world of Eastern archnarratives. The polyformity and multifaceted meaning of the typological similarities of the villain is manifested in the archtexts of various cultures and nations, while the value shift on the West-East civilization / cultural axis is noteworthy.



Avengers

The function of the villain can be transferred to another character in the story who takes over his malicious intentions after his death. This intention is most often transmitted through the bloodline (family) or a devoted follower. For example, if a dragon played the role of a villain in a fairy tale but the hero killed him, another character (e.g., the dragon's sister) takes over his antagonistic role and persecutes the hero for a revenge (Grendel's mother fights the hero Beowulf after having killed her son). It is a vengeful enemy – a *nemesis* (derived from the Greek goddess of revenge).

Human villains

The hero's opponents are often members of his own family, such as an evil stepmother and siblings, or servants, or closest friends who turn into traitors in the course of the story. They mostly play the role of a false hero who takes

credit for the hero's performances and temporarily prevents him from receiving a fair reward. For example, insidious brothers need to get rid of the youngest sibling who is the only one who can complete the required mission. In the fairy tale "Water of life" by the Brothers Grimm, the sick king sends his three sons to the world to find life-giving water for him. After arduous ups and downs, the youngest son manages to get the water. Envious brothers steal the miraculous elixir on his way home and return to their father as saviors (e.g., ATU 550, "Bird, horse and princess"; ATU 551, "Sons on a quest for a wonderful remedy for their father"). Another subgroup of this type of villain is the so-called comrades/companions who join the hero on an adventure. A model example is the Slovak fairy tale "Lomidrevo or Valibuk" from the collection by Pavel Dobšinský (ATU 301, "Three stolen princesses"). Two strongmen – Miesiželezo and Valivrch – accompany Lomidrevo on his way to the princesses kidnapped by the dragon. They perform two Propp's functions in the story: first, they act as the hero's helpers/companions on the journey, and later they act as villains and/or false heroes. Their actions lead to some tense plot twists: false heroes go side by side with the actual hero on an adventurous expedition, but they cowardly leave him in a life-threatening situation, kidnap the princesses previously rescued by the hero and pretend to be their liberators in front of the king.

This subtype of villain does not come into a direct conflict with the hero and does not fight him. Because, unlike the dragon – the representative of another (superhuman) world – the villain has family / gender / social ties to the hero, the hero "bears the reprisals like all socially impoverished heroes of the family and social fairy tales, and is liberated from his position by performing difficult tasks" (Marčok 1978: 128). According to Jeleazar Meletinskij, we are dealing with the third (last) stage of the hero's trials: the so-called "identification test" (1989: 309), which the hero takes after fighting a supernatural enemy. It is about recognizing the protagonist who performed a heroic act, as a result of which his opponents and false candidates for the princess's hand are disqualified in the finale. However, unlike the supernatural adversary (dragon, giant, witch), they are not executed but forgiven.

The archetypal image of a treacherous betrayal of those closest to us is also recorded in the Holy Scriptures. The stories of Joseph and his brothers who sell him to Egypt for twenty shekels of silver (Gen 37:28), and of Judas, the fallen apostle, who betrays Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Matt 26:14-16), are emblematic. In both cases, the traitors regret their actions over time: the brothers ask Joseph for forgiveness, and Judas commits suicide out of remorse.

Murder is the ultimate act in the scope of the villain's action. This motif is often tied to kinship relations in the archnarratives: brothers and sisters are killed (e.g., the biblical story of "Cain and Abel", the story of "Romulus

and Remus", the fairy-tale type ATU 403, "Black and white bride"; ATU 780, "Singing bones"), the parents (ATU 756, "Three green twigs"; ATU 931, "Oedipus"), sons and daughters (ATU 720, "My mother slew me", my father ate me"; ATU 590, "Faithless mother"; ATU 781, "Princess who murdered her child"). The driving force behind the murder is lust, which is fueled by envy, jealousy, hatred, infidelity, or desire for property or status. In the folk narratives, the motif of murder is used mainly in the so-called family and love ballads: e.g., about John whose unfaithful wife has him drowned in a well; about John who is poisoned by his own mother due to illicit courting; about the mother-in-law who inadvertently poisons her own son instead of the bride; about the daughter who does not want to get married and is walled in by her mother in a convent, or about the newlywed husband who murders his bride during the wedding night (Medvecký 1923; Zilynskyj 1978).

In the folk tales, murderous plots are usually attributed to women: stepmothers and unwilling sisters who are usually unable to bear the heroine's beauty, kindness or success. They use female deception in their actions – they pretend to be helpful, willing or caring. They kill insidiously and brutally. In the Czech fairy tale "About the golden wheel" (from the collection of B. Němcová), and/or in K. J. Erben's ballad "The golden wheel" (from the collection *Bouquet*), a jealous sister kills her younger sister together with her mother, cuts off her limbs and plucks out her eyes. In the Slovak fairy tale "The killed sister" (from the collection of P. Dobšinský (1996)), the older sister kills the younger one because she collected more strawberries. In the fairy-tale ballad "The juniper" by the Brothers Grimm (ATU 720), the stepmother slyly kills her stepson, cooks him up and serves him to the unsuspecting father. The stepmother's daughter collects the brother's bones and places them under a juniper. A bird rises from the bones and reveals the terrible secret by singing (motif E613.0.1, "Reincarnation of murdered child as bird" according to Thompson).

The archnarratives about murders among the relatives, which are revealed as a result of the reincarnation of the victim, appear in all cultural circles (Thompson 1946: 136). The motif of reincarnation of the victim into a musical instrument made of his/her bones is very frequent (ATU 780; ibid.). The stories in which the killer himself is somehow forced to confess his heinous crime stand in contrast with the motivic complexes associated with the supernatural revelation of murder. In the tale "Bright sun reveals this" by the Brothers Grimm (ATU 960, circulating mainly in Germany and the Baltic countries), a journeyman tailor kills a Jew for money. The dying Jew's last words are: "The bright sun shall reveal it!" (1988: 184). The journeyman gets married after a while. One morning, as he is sitting at the window with his wife, he pours coffee into the cup and notices the sunrays reflecting off the surface and forming circles on

the wall. The man raises his eyes to the ceiling and says: "You'd like to reveal it, but you can't!" (ibid.). His wife does not understand the message behind his words and urges him to explain. The man finally confesses to what had happened years ago but begs the woman not to tell anyone. However, the wife does not keep her promise, and in three days the whole city knows what had happened. The tailor is sentenced to death (motif N271.1, "Murder comes to light"; "The sun brings all to light" according to Thompson).

The metaphor of light and darkness is used in the archnarratives to distinguish good from evil and innocence from sin. In a figurative sense, by designating God as the source of light and a righteous judge, this motif also appears in the Gospels: "For there is nothing secret that shall not come to light, and nothing has been so hidden that it will not come to light" (Mk 4:22; Lk 8:17; 12:3). In accordance with the conventional order of the archnarratives, a felony must come to light and the perpetrator must be punished adequately for the offense committed.

CONCLUSION

The figural, transtemporal and transculturally present archetype of the villain as the originator of tension in the story (collisions, crises or catastrophes in the plot outline of a classical ancient tragedy) is an iconized (thematized), stylized and personalized expression of universal human experience with the existential problem situation as a general topic in art (and the constitutive disposition *Dasein* in Heidegger's notions). The source of its problems, after all, is the resistance, which is precisely the sovereign role (Propp's function) of the villain or antagonist. The survey of its types (modes), which I attempted to present in the previous sections, could therefore contribute to a more detailed understanding of its semiotic modalities and create the preconditions for a deeper penetration into the universal sources of problems of human existence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was made possible thanks to the VEGA project No. 1/0050/22, "Archtextual analyses of fundamental topics".

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https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2024.93.ikonomi

PAYING PUBLIC DOMAIN AND THE ALBANIAN PROTECTION OF FOLKLORE

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Abstract: Paying Public Domain (PPD) is probably a contradictory phrase for everyone firmly attached to the idea of free-access and no-remuneration public domain. With French origin, the *domaine public payant* is an incentive to creativity, applied to creations already in the public domain because of their expired copyright protection or rather when they are legally excluded from it. This paper aims to explain the PPD regimes still standing and analyze how they are applied. Albania is among the countries with the PPD related to an important cultural heritage: folklore. The paper clarifies the role of the PPD and its characteristics and highlights the need to activate it by proposing concrete legal measures in achieving this goal.

Keywords: copyright, folklore, Paying Public Domain, term of protection, free access

INTRODUCTION

It is believed that the public domain originates from Roman law, although it did not exist *ipso jure* as a legal concept. Like many other concepts of Copyright Law, it was created through judicial practice. Its abstract existence or the idea of it was recognized in England through a series of court cases (Ochoa 2002: 223–224) up to 1774, when in *Donaldson v Beckett* the House of Lords decided that the copyrights were, in fact, limited (Lessig 2005) and that after the term of protection copyrighted works could be freely copied for all to enjoy.

The principle that all works would enter the public domain was reaffirmed by the US Supreme Court (Ochoa 2002: 224) in the case *Wheaton v Peters* (1834), when it was ruled that there was no right of an author to perpetual copyright, like the inventor's rights on the patent. Thus, the copyright must naturally transpire. Also, the French Decree of 1791 stated that works of the authors who

had been dead for five or more years were *propriété publique*. According to the Decree, the protection of the author's dramatic work and the recognition and enlargement of the public domain were equally important (Guibault 2006: 89). In the court case *Veuve Buffon v F. Behmer*, the Court of Cassation in France, especially referring to the territorial character of copyright, highlighted that a work of a French author could be counterfeited and published with impunity whenever it crossed the national borders (Peeler 1999: 439), thus implying the creation of a foreign public domain for it.

The French origin is also attributed to a particular regime, the Paying Public Domain. The idea can be retraced to Hugo's speech in 1878, when he argued about setting up the *domaine public payant* that would consist of paying a small fee for each exploitation of a public domain work into a fund devoted to the encouragement of young writers and creators (Dusollier 2011: 40).

Currently, there are a few countries with PPD regimes and lately Albania has become one of them. The PPD regime is appliable only to crucial cultural heritage – folklore, with the primary objective to preserve it and guarantee that traditional creativity is passed through generations. The paying regime is not popular, but there is no legal impediment to applying it, even though it seems to overthrow the rules of a classic public domain. As stated by UNESCO and WIPO (1985), folklore is an important cultural heritage of every nation, a means of people's self-expression. It is still developing as a living, functional tradition rather than a mere souvenir of the past.

It is understandable that Albania is interested in folklore and its protection as still a good part of modern art and literary works are not only inspired by folklore but expressly contain its unchanged elements, intertwined with new ones. Thus, the publishers reap profits without compensating the nation's culture as the creator. Folklore, because of its evolutionary and unfixed form, is subject to many threats, like integrity violations, when used outside its natural habitat (Berryman 1994: 311–312). The PPD was recently introduced into Albanian law, to be applied only to folklore's communication to the public. There is a total absence of other provisions necessary to govern its effects. Thus, this turns the PPD into a "dormant" institution, unable to fulfill the purpose for which it was introduced into law.

The paper is divided into two major parts. The first part of the paper analyzes the characteristics of the PPD and the way it works in those countries where it is still alive. The second part of the paper discusses the Albanian legal provisions for copyright and folklore and their common point: the PPD. It points out the lack of national adequate measures to profit from the PPD and offers practical and reasonable suggestions to enable its activation in Albania.

DEFINING PAYING PUBLIC DOMAIN

There is no public domain definition in the Berne Convention text or other copyright international treaties or conventions. WIPO (2010) has described the public domain as an elastic, versatile, and relative concept not susceptible to a uniform legal meaning. Rightfully or not, based on its specifics, the public domain makes you think of something for free. Generally speaking, the public domain related to copyright is considered a big pool of free access to intellectual materials or everyday cultural heritage objects. This is the traditional view of the public domain associated with the subject matter never protected or not protected by copyright anymore (Dusollier 2011, annex 6). It is regarded as a wealth of information, free from the barriers to access or reuse, which acts as a mechanism that ensures its availability and which all members of society can build upon (De Rosnay & De Martin 2012: xix). Free access to works already in the public domain implies no authorization and no remuneration for use and further exploitation. Still, there is at least the PPD as an exception to the rule. Under the Berne Convention and TRIPS Agreement provisions, countries may introduce statutory remuneration rights outside the scope of the minimum exclusive and remuneration rights provided by these treaties in their national copyright legislation (Geiger & Bulayenko 2020: 23).

According to WIPO (2003), the Paying Public Domain is explained as the legal requirement of national copyright laws of some countries to pay specific amounts for works and objects of related rights in the public domain. These amounts, contributions from the proceeds from the sale of copies of public domain works, must be paid to state-controlled funds responsible for promoting creative productivity in society (Angelopoulos 2012: 21) and for the social purposes of authors. The main objective of the PPD is to provide minimal sustenance for living authors; to that end, a fee is levied on the use of works that have fallen into the public domain (Govaere & Sheena 1996: 28). Dietz (1990: 14) called it a "revolving system of authors' royalties" where incomes from the use of the works of the dead generations of authors serve to support a generation of living authors.

Copyright, public domain, and Paying Public Domain have an exciting relationship with each other. There lies the idea that the public domain is enriched with a new work at the exact moment its copyright protection term expires, thus implying that copyright and public domain are two different spaces that follow each other and that make impossible the existence of the same work both in copyright protection and in the public domain. In addition to this, while it lasts, copyright protection is characterized by two elements of use and exploitation

of the work: (prior) authorization and royalties, whereas the public domain offers the possibility of free access. The PPD approaches a bit of both. On the one hand, the PPD regime implies the same rules to its filling as the classic public domain. On the other hand, even though the objectives are different, it seems similar to copyright due to the need to pay a fee, similar to royalty payments to authors. Paying Public Domain is a *sui generis* regime based on the idea of the continuance of paying small amounts of money, beyond the term of protection, which is intended to be used generally as incentives for intellectual productivity and preservation of cultural heritage. The PPD as a remuneration right (Guibault 2006: 90) is an alternative to the public domain, which imposes certain conditions for the use of works already fallen into the public domain, such as the payment of fees that are generally destined to promote intangible cultural heritage (ICH) practices in the country licensing the manifestation of heritage. The PPD thus provides financial means for safeguarding and protecting intangible heritage (Lixinski 2013: 199).

The system of the PPD works like a compulsory license: the use is conditioned on payment of the prescribed fee but not upon securing prior authorization. The operation of such a system may constitute an impediment to the unrestricted use of public domain works. The extent of such interference depends, at least in part, on the level of the fees, which vary considerably (WIPO 2010: 12). It is a reasonable expectation that the fee for the use of works in the public domain has to be cheaper than the royalties paid for the use of copyrighted works. In theory, it seems easy to determine the fee for works in the PPD in terms of percentage, like 30–50 percent of the royalties payable under copyright. In practice, the royalties are privately set by contracts, and it is difficult to calculate the PPD fee and so it might prove to be unworkable in practice. So, a fixed percentage is recommended to be levied on the sales price of the work. As copyright royalties often constitute 10 percent of the selling price of a protected work, it would seem reasonable to charge 3 to 5 percent of the selling price of an unprotected work under the system of the PPD (Govaere & Sheena 1996: 36–37).

The PPD is primarily applicable in African countries such as Algeria, Rwanda, Kenya, Senegal, the Republic of the Congo, and Côte d'Ivoire (Dusollier 2011: 39). In Algeria and Rwanda, only the commercial or for-profit exploitation of public domain material is subject to payment, and in Algeria even prior authorization is required (Dusollier 2011: 40). The best part of Latin American countries, such as Mexico, Bolivia, Chile, Argentine, Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil, and Costa Rica, established *dominio público pagante*. With time some of them abrogated the PPD; others like Paraguay and Bolivia kept it in the law, but not applicable in practice (Lipszyc 2016: 24–25). In Argentine, the

use of a material in the public domain must be preceded by filling out a form to declare that use at the *Fondo Nacional de las Artes* (National Endowment for the Arts – FNA) and to pay a fee, which will be returned to contemporary artists through scholarships, subsidies or loans granted by the entity. This obligation extends to the use of all intellectual works in the public domain or part of them, original or derivative works (Dirección Nacional del Derecho de Autor 2021). Like in Argentine, the national law in Uruguay provides the extension of payment to all the works in the public domain, both domestic and foreign ones (Lipszyc 2016: 27). While Italy was the most recent country to repeal its PPD in 1996, only a few European countries, for example Hungary, still provide some forms of the PPD for the resale of the original works of art, and Norway for the broadcasting of phonograms (Geiger & Bulayenko 2020: 25). Croatian copyright law (Copyright and Related Rights Act, CRRA), Article 18, §7, provides for the payment of remuneration for the communication in public of unprotected creations, such as folk literary and artistic creations:

> *Folk literary and artistic creations in their original form are not subject to copyright, but for their communication to the public a remuneration is paid as for the communication to the public of protected copyright works. The remuneration shall be used to encourage appropriate artistic and cultural creativity of a predominantly non-commercial nature and cultural diversity in the relevant artistic and cultural field…*

This mechanism that covers communication to the public of folk literary and artistic creations requires mandatory collective management of the right to remuneration for using these works in the public domain (European Commission 2021).

Usually, the PPD does not require prior authorization, but the use of the works in it is conditioned upon (a low) payment. This payment is what put the PPD at the center of the debate. There are at least two categories that disagree with the PPD concept: (1) all persons and industries which derive their profits from using ex-copyrighted or not-copyrighted materials, and (2) all persons who cannot get used to the idea that after the expiration term of the copyright, financial obligations are imposed to them instead of free access. The most recent case (just 25 years ago) of a repealed PPD sends a clear message about the difference in the intensity of the use of public domain material. In Italy, before repealing the PPD, the use of a work in the public domain was preconditioned by the payment of a tax which discouraged the desire to disseminate useful "cultural tools".

After the repeal, the operation of the publishing market was facilitated and encouraged, particularly with respect to the "great classics", ensuring enormous savings both to publishers and consumers, on whom the cost of the work inevitably fell (Innocente 2018). The publishers or users of commercial works tend to object to the PPD. They are vested with direct financial interests and used to the idea of being able to exploit intellectual material for free. They basically fear the rise in costs. Even though they can pass on the extra cost to the consumer, under competitive conditions, they may themselves choose to absorb the increase in expenses, thereby also suffering a loss in profits (Govaere & Sheena 1996: 25). The second category does not object to the PPD based only on their beliefs that the public domain has to guarantee free access to any ex-copyrighted or never copyrighted creation, but mainly to the perception that the PPD is a barrier to further and wide knowledge dissemination because of the application of the fee.

ALBANIAN FOLKLORE, A(N) (UN)PROTECTED DIVERSITY OF CREATIONS

The PPD derived from the idea of a French mastermind, and it was later materialized in different national laws. Afterward, part of them repealed the PPD for a classic public domain of public free access. The previous Albanian laws on the author's rights did not recognize protection for expressions of folklore. The new law on author's rights (ALAR) entered into force in 2016, on the example of the Croatian Copyright Act. ALAR, *quasi-fully* approximated with European directives, for the first time aligns Albania on the side of the PPD countries.

The Albanian legal definition of the public domain states that the public domain of copyright is the typology or the regime of free public use of works whose term of protection has expired or which have never been protected by the copyright law. From the definition, ALAR ensures free access to ex-copyrighted works and never-copyrighted creations. The first category incorporates the non-exhaustive list of the intellectual creations considered works, thus copyright-protected within the term of protection. The expiration of the specific term of protection of economic rights of authors marks the fall of works into the public domain, implying public free access, yet obliged to regard the author's perpetual moral rights. The second category refers to the list of creations that do not have the status of works and lack copyright protection. Among other intellectual creations, which are expressly excluded from copyright protection, are folk literary and artistic creations in their original form. After the two last revisions of

the Berne Convention, the direct result is its Article 15, § 4, which is the only international legal instrument concerning copyright protection of folklore but that does not define folklore (Collins 2018: 6). The Tunis Model Law on Copyright for Developing Countries defines folklore to be "all literary, artistic and scientific works created on national territory by authors presumed to be nationals of such countries or by ethnic communities, passed from generation to generation and constituting one of the basic elements of the traditional cultural heritage" (WIPO & UNESCO 1976: 19). There is no specific legal definition of folklore in Albania, probably because of the diversity of creations it contains. Still, Article 5 of the Albanian law on cultural heritage and museums provides specific and smaller definitions for different parts of folklore, like oral folklore, instrumental folklore, vocal folklore, and choreographic folklore.

The absence of adequate protection for the creators of genuine folk art is particularly disadvantageous, especially considering the spectacular development of technology and the newer ways of using it abusively. Folklore is not only frequently commercialized without due respect for the cultural and economic interests of the communities in which it originates but it is often distorted or mutilated to better adapt it to the needs of the market, without returning their fair share to the communities that have developed and maintained it (WIPO 2003: 93). It has been suggested that some aspects of folklore could be regulated by copyright laws based on the similarities between folklore and copyrighted works, such as creativity and similar means of exploiting them (Kuruk 1999: 792).

Although folk creations do not convincingly differ from other copyrighted works, their similarities refer only to the final result, without considering the differences between their creative processes. The long and continuous process that creates and shapes folklore relies on different contributors and the original ways of passing it to next generations. Copyright-based protection of folklore requires certainty over the creations' elements and attribution, which a "living creature" like folklore cannot offer. It seems that copyright law is not the right kind of law to protect folklore possibly because "whereas an expression of folklore is the result of an impersonal, continuous and slow process of creative activity exercised in a given community by consecutive imitation, works protected by copyright must, traditionally, bear a decisive mark of individual originality" (UNESCO & WIPO 1985: 5). If expressions of folklore were fully copyright-protected, this could almost have the effect of casting it in concrete. Thus, folklore may not be able to evolve and may risk its very existence as it would lose one of its main features: its dynamics (WIPO 2010: 17).

Like other copyright laws, ALAR cannot protect folklore creations as works, so it introduced the Paying Public Domain regime, which ensures an indirect way of protecting and promoting folklore. ALAR does not protect folk literary and artistic creations *per se*, but it imposes that their communication to the public is subject to payment of remuneration. The exclusive economic right of communication to the public means doing one or more actions, which in accordance with the works' genre and characteristics, intend to make them available to the public or enable public access to them. This right includes the traditional ways of communication to the public, such as live (stage) performances and exhibitions of visual artworks, or public communications through broadcasting and re-broadcasting by radio or television program-carrying signals, intended for reception by the public, either by wireless means (including satellite) or by wire (including cable or microwave systems). Communication to the public is an expression of the use of the rights of a monopolistic nature with which the copyright law provides the rightsholders who have a legitimate expectation for financial benefits. Following this logic, ALAR justifies the payment of remuneration for communication to the public of folklore creations similar to copyrighted works, in the sense that if remuneration is required for the communication to the public of copyrighted works, it is also required for the communication to the public of folklore creations. The Albanian legal framework relating to folklore is silent about regulating every aspect of the PPD. This situation is similar to Paraguay. Even though the PPD is incorporated into its copyright act of 1998, it is still ineffective due to the lack of publishing the specific implementing regulation (Marzetti 2021). So, the Albanian PPD does not share the same fate, and there are at least three important issues that need to be addressed as soon as possible.

First, since 2017 the National Council for Author's Rights (NCAR) has approved the methodology and the fees only for the use of copyrighted works, thus neglecting to set the fee applicable for folklore creations. Nor has it determined some way of calculating the amount of remuneration payable for folklore creations referring to the approved fees for copyrighted works, defining it as a percentage of the copyrighted work's fee. As a result, this precise lack of provision means that in theory folklore creations and copyrighted works, when communicated to the public, are both, and to the same extent, subject to payment of remuneration. The NCAR needs to determine the fee (or the way of calculating it) applicable when folklore creations are communicated to the public. It might be recommendable that the fee, in such a case, be half the usual fee applicable to copyright-protected works. The ratio behind this difference, as mentioned above, lies in finding a proper balance between the demand for

the public communication of folklore and the collection of remuneration from this activity. In short, applying an excessive fee (equal to the fees for other copyrighted works) is a real obstacle to the public communication of folklore and achieving the PPD's goal.

Second, ALAR defines the purpose of the PPD regime by specifying that the income will be used for artistic and cultural encouragement and stimulation of a non-profit nature, as provided by the rules of distribution of remuneration by collective management agencies for copyright and other related rights. Despite no other ALAR provision regarding the PPD, there is also no specific regulation or decision which comprises rules for the activation of the PPD. The national body responsible for its proper implementation is the NCAR, which has left without attention the way of collecting and distributing the remuneration from the communication of folklore creations to the public. Thus, the Albanian PPD and its management are both unclear and ineffective until the NCAR determines the responsible body for collecting the remuneration. To make the situation more difficult, the collective management of folklore communication to the public is not obligatory but optional, unlike the Croatian copyright act. On the other hand, the Albanian Directory of Author's Rights does not act as a collective management organization. In these conditions, especially in the absence of an identified rightsholder, even if the fee is determined, there is no authority to collect it. This situation demands law amendments. Either ALAR has to be amended to further provide for the obligatory collective management of folklore communication to the public like in Argentina and Uruguay (Marzetti 2021), or authority has to be given to the National Council of Intangible Cultural Heritage to collect the fee. This solution is in accordance with what is expressly proclaimed by Section 6 of the Tunis Model Law on Copyright for Developing Countries, regarding the limitless protection and exercise of moral and economic rights by a competent national authority to prevent any improper exploitation and to permit adequate protection of folklore (WIPO & UNESCO 1976: 9–10).

Third, ALAR states that the remuneration "will be used for cultural and artistic promotion and encouragement of a non-profit nature in the respective artistic and cultural fields". It is a broad and general provision that requires the determination of how the collected fees will be used, to avoid any abuse. ALAR provides that the collected fees shall be distributed in accordance with the remuneration distribution rules by collective management organizations. The optimal solution for the administration of the collected fees could be the creation of a national fund that can be depleted each year to be used as a prize in young creators' contests or for funding small projects for promoting folklore

to young generations, in collaboration with the National Council of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which has the power to approve the strategy, activities, and educational programs in the field of intangible cultural heritage. Although Albania provides for a narrow application of the PPD only to the communication to the public of folklore creations, it already has the legal basis to create a new copyright holder – *the community of living and creating authors* as proposed by Dietz (1990: 14), to directly profit from this income, which would change the PPD perspective from a kind of tax or charge into the form of a right of participation in the exploitation of folklore creations.

CONCLUSIONS

Folklore "works" are an essential part of cultural heritage, which constitute the hallmark of cultural identity. Folklore creations are intellectual literary and artistic creations, similar to copyrighted works, though lacking the possibility to establish authorship over them. This is the most crucial feature of folklore that makes it unique. Folklore is not the work of someone, but a work in process through generations, thus becoming the treasure of its community. As folklore does not meet the criteria set by copyright laws, it cannot receive fixed-term copyright protection. On the other hand, countries protect folklore as part of their cultural heritage by specific rules. In this way, folklore has perpetual protection.

The classic public domain, characterized by free access and no authorization, is a real incentive to a further exploitation of ex-copyrighted works or not-copyrighted creations and other derivative works. But there are different shades of public domain, as recognized by some countries. These are often called PPD, meaning that the public domain is not an absolute free zone. According to some PPDs, after their term of protection has expired, revitalization of works needs to be charged; others establish charges despite the type of the creation exploited. Among them stands the Albanian PPD, which requires the payment of remuneration every time folklore creations are communicated to the public. This regime strengthens the legal approach towards the protection of folklore, in addition to the specific protection of the law on cultural heritage and museums. The PPD regime does not provide for copyright protection of folklore. Still, it enables revenue collection by (not expressly) requiring equal remuneration for the communication of folklore and other copyrighted works in public.

Behind the PPD regimes like the Albanian one, there lies a good intention, generating incomes through the exploitation of folklore, which is not envisaged in any way from the law on cultural heritage and museums. Whilst it is easier to exploit tangible cultural property, generating a steady income, most commonly used to preserve, maintain and promote it, this is not possible for folklore as intangible cultural property. But law provisions should be activated; they should not be left in oblivion or sleep. The PPD in Albania is not further regulated except for the sole ALAR provision, which identifies this regime. Since the adoption of ALAR in 2016, the NCAR, the body responsible for launching the PPD, has not proposed concrete and appropriate regulations to enable the collection of remuneration from the public communication of folklore. For this reason, the Albanian PPD is inactive, hampering the goal achievement for which it was introduced to ALAR.

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https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2024.93.omen

ALGEBRAIC STRUCTURE OF ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIAN OMENS

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Abstract: In this paper,[1] it is shown that we can reconstruct an intuition of Boolean algebra in Mesopotamian divination with different omen series organized as catalogues. Each separate omen was formulated as a conditional statement "if a sign p, then an event q" so that it has only the positive truth value in the Boolean algebra. This means that omen catalogues can be considered as a dataset containing some logical axioms (only true propositions). It is the earliest form of binary thinking which was logically correct.

Keywords: omen, divination, Boolean algebra, Mesopotamia, logic, divination

INTRODUCTION

This paper represents a study of ancient Mesopotamian omens within the framework of formal logic. Divination was a significant art of Mesopotamian culture for thousands of years, used to communicate with gods and to entail information from them (see more on divination and prophecy in Ulanowski 2020 [2019]; Nissinen 2010). But some of the logical aspects used by the Mesopotamians in compiling lists of omens have traditionally been overlooked by

scholars. For instance, K. Ulanowski (2020 [2019]: 49) conventionally affirmed that "[d]ivination appears to have been natural and common in the ancient world. Generally, the art of divination provides answers to questions *post hoc ergo propter hoc*". This *post hoc ergo propter hoc* ("after this, therefore because of this") means a logical fallacy, when something appears first, and after that, the second appears and the first is declared the cause for the second. For example, a witch spat on the ground and it started to rain. So spitting on the ground is considered the cause of the rain: if she spits, then it is raining. And the Mesopotamian omens were regarded in the way of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy. Nevertheless, in our study we are going to show that divination is not a wrong teaching on causes, based on this fallacy, but it is a teaching on signs that had some features of logical calculus.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MESOPOTAMIAN OMENS

Divination in ancient Mesopotamia is first attested in the written record in the 3rd millennium BCE, although it likely had oral precedents (Frahm 2011: 20–21). The first indisputable evidence for a divine message sent to a mortal is from the time of Gudea, ruler of the 2nd Dynasty of Lagaš (c. 2124 BCE) (Annus 2010: 1). However, omen literature formed into a distinct textual genre during the Old Babylonian period (2000–1595 BCE) (see Köcher & Oppenheim & Güterbock 1957; Jeyes 1989; Zorzi 2017). People in ancient Mesopotamia (Sumer, Akkade, Babylonia, Assyria, etc.) believed that the gods communicated with mortals by placing omens everywhere in the universe, seeing the heavenly bodies as the 'writing of the gods'. This is also why the interpretation of the omens required a learned professional to 'read' and interpret them, to translate their message for the lay audience.

Winitzer correctly pointed out that "the study of Mesopotamian divination literature or, more specifically, the omen collections reflecting the various divination techniques from ancient Mesopotamia, has occupied a curious place within its parent discipline of Assyriology" (Winitzer 2017: 1). We know now that divination was an essential part in ancient Mesopotamian cultic and ideological practices (see, e.g., Snell 1974; Starr 1977; Biggs 1985; Jeyes 1989; Reine & Pingreer 1998; Richardson 2006; Maul 2007, 2013; Archi 2010; Glassner 2012; Annus 2010, 2015; Koch-Westenholz 2000, 2002, 2005, 2013, 2015; Winitzer 2010, 2013, 2017), among other forms of witchcraft (see, e.g., Abusch 2002, 2008, 2010, 2020). Ancient conceptions of magic can be divided into attempts to *influence* the physical world by suprarational means and attempts to *derive information* about the physical world using suprarational means, the latter of

which describes divination. The connection between divination and magic and their easy equivalence has been questioned in recent literature (e.g., Nissinen 2020; Sørensen & Petersen 2021), although standard anthropological literature views them as two sides of the same coin: magic being used to manipulate the supernatural world in order to affect the perceived connections between things, whereas divination is based on observing these connections (e.g., Stein & Stein 2015 [2005]: 148; Greenwood 2020 [2009]: 125). One of the forms of Mesopotamian divination was presented by omens – a list of signs on the basis of which a prediction can be made about appropriate events in the future. At the same time, there was a strong correlation between an omen (sign) and a forecasted event such that the prediction was formulated as a conditional statement (implication): "if an omen, then an event". We are going to show that this implication was treated by the Mesopotamians as a special logical connective along with a conjunction ("… and…") in the antecedent: "*if* an omen *and* another omen *and* …, *then* an event".

There were two broad categories of omens in Mesopotamia: omens that could be produced or *provoked* at will and those that happened without human provocation and were merely *observed* (Koch-Westenholz 1995: 10). In the first category were omens requiring a medium, including extispicy, hepatoscopy, teratomancy, lecanomancy, and libanomancy. Divided further into celestial and terrestrial omens, the second category consisted of astronomical, calendric and weather-related observations, the configuration of waterways and the appearance of inanimate objects and vegetation, the behaviour of animals, and even the behaviour of humans, including the observation of sexual acts and birth defects in children. Omens of the latter kind were collected in vast text editions, some of them including up to 12,000 omens (e.g., *Šumma ālu, Šumma izbu*; see Zorzi 2011, 2021).

Omens concerning eclipses were considered to be the most potent. Many types of omens were analysed by several scholars (Abusch 2020; Koch-Westenholz 2002; etc). One of the last profound studies was done by Abraham Winitzer in 2017. Previously, Sallaberger devised a threefold typology for Mesopotamian omens. The first category consisted of omens observed in wild nature, such as signs in sheep livers, small animals, and the stars. The second category represented phenomena in cultivated nature, such as rain, plant and animal species in agriculture. The third group was connected to some human actions, such as housebuilding or some rituals (Sallaberger 2000: 242–243).

People in Mesopotamia (in our context people writing in the Akkadian language in Babylonia, Assyria, etc.) believed that the omens were sent by the gods, but the fates announced by the signs were not considered unavoidable; they were considered warnings rather than absolute portends of coming events.

Hence, they examined the omens not as causes of events, but strongly as their signs. The *Weltanschauung* of omens assumed that the heaven connects all the parts of the world together, especially since the stars could be observed every night and, therefore, all signs could be recorded (Koch-Westenholz 1995: 19; Maul 2013: 49; Hirvonen 2014: 5).

In ancient Greece, the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers developed logic, based on inferences from signs (σημείωσις) with the following major premise: "if a sign (σημεῖον), then an event". For example, "if she has milk in her breast, then she has given birth to a child" or "if he has a scar, then he had a wound" (Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes* II: 106; *Adversus Logicos* II: 252, 254–255). Then they applied some inference rules, such as *modus ponens* and *modus tollens*:

> "If the sign p, then the event q; there is the sign p; therefore, the event q is forecasted", if p, then q; p; then q (*modus ponens*).
> "If the sign p, then the event q; there is no event q; therefore the sign p cannot be applied", if p, then q; not-q; then not-p (*modus tollens*).

Some Stoic examples of *modus ponens* were taken from the Mesopotamian divination: (i) "If somebody was born at the rise of Sirius, he never dies at sea" (*si quis oriente Canicula natus est, in mari non morietur*); (ii) "Fabius was born at the rise of Sirius" (*Fabius oriente Canicula natus est*); (iii) "Fabius never dies at sea" (*Fabius in mari non morietur*) (Cicero, *De Fato* VI, 12). It is known that the Stoics published many books on divination. For example, Chrysippus, the father of propositional logic, discussed the whole theory of divination in two books (*Chrysippus, qui totam de divinatione duobus libris explicavit sententiam*) (Cicero, *De Divinatione* I, 6). We assume that the Stoic propositional logic was grounded on some logical ideas of Mesopotamian omens. In any case, the Stoics were inspired by divination in developing their own logical system.

Divination was inferred by means of *modus ponens*: *Omen list*: "If the sign p, then the event q"; *observer*: "there is the sign p"; *diviner*: "then it will be the event q"; and concerned the future of individuals (e.g., their health, safety, and happiness) or various social groups (e.g., ecological, political or military concerns). It was thought that such information could most readily be attained through communication with the divine realm (Koch 2013: 4). The event announced by an omen could be avoided or prevented by appropriate actions and rites to avert evil, the chief one among them a ritual called *namburbû* (Sum. nam.búr.bi). These were prophylactic rituals meant to avert inauspicious portents before they took on tangible form (Maul 1994). Omens were for the most part interpreted in order to influence the king, and in some cases the unfavourable omens could even be neglected (Maul 2013: 48–49).

The empirical basis for assuming a connection between a sign and an event was first based on an observed repetition of a temporal connection between a certain sign and an event. Regardless of the type of omen, their formulation was similar: there was a *protasis* ("if *p* happens…"), followed by an *apodosis* ("…then *q* will happen"). These can further be divided into three different types. Omens could consist of 1) a simple protasis followed by a simple apodosis, 2) simple protasis followed by a complex apodosis, and 3) a complex protasis, where singular signs are connected by a conjunction, followed by a simple apodosis. There were also complex apodoses followed by asyndetically joined forecasts. Mesopotamian omen catalogues also sometimes contain 'impossible omens', omens that could not possibly come to pass. But they were enumerated along with 'possible omens' to cover all possible logical combinations of different omens and their negations. Let *p* be a sign for divination. Then we have the following prediction: "if the sign *p*, then the event *q*". Let us take *p'* as the sign that is opposite to *p*. It is possible that one of the two signs (either *p* or *p'*) is impossible, then its opposite sign is ever possible. For instance, if "the sun appears in the evening watch" is a sign opposite to "the sun appears in the morning watch", then we see that only one sign from both is possible, namely "the sun appears in the morning watch".

Omens can serve as an important source for reconstructing the everyday lives, religious beliefs and ideological views of the Mesopotamians. U. Jeyes (1989: 1) argues that "divination played a major role in Ancient Mesopotamia and of the various types of divination in use, extispicy was perennially the most esteemed," likely due to the material cost of the practice. As Winitzer (2017: 456) correctly remarks: "Mesopotamian divination, as met in the early omen collections, reflects the realization of a new way to conceptualize knowledge, or, indeed, a new attitude toward what the very meaning of knowledge is or could be." But omens can also be considered sources for reconstructing the logical thinking and rational mental processes practiced and accepted by the people of ancient Mesopotamia. In modern terms, logical thinking is understood by logicians not only as rational thinking but also as mechanical thinking within an algebraic structure. Therefore, we do not think logically in everyday life because it is not a natural way of thinking. So, logic is not innate knowledge and we can know it only after deep learning.

Traditionally, the Greeks have been seen as the first to develop methods of deduction upon which all later schemes of systematic thought are based. There were two logical theories established in ancient Greece: the Aristotelian syllogistic and the Stoic propositional logic about inferences from signs (the so-called σημείωσις). Some Mesopotamian roots can be readily traced for the Stoic theory. The fact of the matter is that the Mesopotamian art of divination by

means of omen catalogues is a kind of logical inference from signs to the same extent as the Stoic theory, as we are going to show. The ancient Greek habits of thought, practices of language and mathematical methods are seen as laying the foundation for what we call logic (Corcoran 1972; Netz 1999). Nevertheless, in the list of omens we can reconstruct an algebraic structure (see the truth tables below), which shows that the Mesopotamians were the first to propose an algebraic way of drawing conclusions – centuries before their Hellenistic counterparts.

Omens are grouped as lexical lists, having evolved into prestigious repositories of traditional knowledge by the first millennium BCE (Veldhuis 1996: 113–114, 132–133). A number of similarities have also been detected between the legal codes and the omen catalogues (Lawson 1994; Rochberg 2004; Annus 2010; Guinan 2014). The internal structure of law articles resembles the structure of omen lists, containing the same implications "if p, then q". To the same extent, it is assumed that to these implications the following two inference rules are applied: *modus ponens* and *modus tollens*. It is clearly visible in the trial records in Akkadian. It would seem that the similar structure of omens and legal codes had some common reasons (Lawson 1994: 82–83; Rochberg 2004: 53; Guinan 2014: 105–119). Like Mesopotamian laws, omen lists are usually composed by using *šumma* ('if') at the beginning of a clause (Manetti 1993 [1987]: 6). Choosing signs in omens was based on binary oppositions like either raven or falcon, either front or back, either right or left, etc. (Guinan 1989: 229; 1996: 6). It is very important, since it means that each sign is considered as either a positive or a negative omen and, therefore, we deal with a binary (Boolean) thinking in the divinatory reasoning. The syntagmatic association of omens refers to the connection between a specific protasis and the following apodosis, while the paradigmatic association refers to applying different opposing signs (Sallaberger 2000: 240).

LOGICAL CONTEXT OF MESOPOTAMIAN OMENS

From the very beginning omens were compiled through the so-called "divinatory empiricism" (Manetti 1993 [1987]: 7), consisting of recording events which had actually occurred in the past one after the other (*vaticinium ex eventu*): "if a sign (omen) [was], then an event [was]". It was a logical fallacy, called *post hoc ergo propter hoc* ("after this, therefore because of this"). This rule of composing omens is typical for "historical oracles", in which the apodosis of the conditional occurs rather in the past tense. Nevertheless, over time omen texts were organized as "codes which cover a finite series of completely identifiable

cases" (ibid.). This type of structure of omen series started to appear from the second quarter of the second millennium BCE in the Old Babylonian period. Here we find codes or systematic collections of very detailed divinatory signs presented in all possible combinations. Zorzi (2009) paid attention to the fact that in the bird omens (BM 108874) there is an asymmetry in implications with opposite signs. For instance, let us consider the following four signs: 'falcon', 'raven', 'crossing from the right of the man to his left', 'crossing from the left of the man to his right' (Zorzi 2009). As a consequence, we have the four signs where there are the two possible directions of crossing. This means that there are 2^2 possible combinations: (i) 'falcon' & 'crossing from the right of the man to his left'; (ii) 'falcon' & 'crossing from the left of the man to his right'; (iii) 'raven' & 'crossing from the right of the man to his left'; (iv) 'raven' & 'crossing from the left of the man to his right'. Thus, the algorithm for composing omens of this type is as follows. Let us take $2k$ signs, where $k \geq 1$, since only binary oppositions are considered. Then we have 2^k of all possible combinations of the protasis in conditionals. At the same time, each possible combination is presented as an item in long lists of divinations containing all the combinations.

Hence, we deal with a code of conditionals: (i) **if** 'falcon' **&** 'crossing from the right of the man to his left', **then**…; (ii) **if** 'falcon' **&** 'crossing from the left of the man to his right', **then**…; (iii) **if** 'raven' **&** 'crossing from the right of the man to his left', **then**…; (iv) **if** 'raven' **&** 'crossing from the left of the man to his right', **then**…, where for $2k$ signs, where $k \geq 1$, we always have 2^k conditionals for foreseeing. With this, foreseeing any logical inconsistency or contradiction is thereby avoided. Each opposite sign is contained in another protasis of another conditional. And for different oppositions at the place of consequent, we observe different oppositions at the place of protasis.

Each combination from (i) to (iv) gives either the positive sign "favourable" or negative sign "unfavourable". From the context we know that 'falcon' is a positive sign and 'raven' is a negative sign. At the same time, 'crossing from the right of the man to his left' is a positive sign and 'crossing from the left of the man to his right' is a negative sign. Let us denote a positive sign by +1 and a negative sign by –1. Then we have:

(i) If (+1 & +1), then +1;
(ii) If (+1 & –1), then –1;
(iii) If (–1 & +1), then –1;
(iv) If (–1 & –1), then +1.

Logically, we can reconstruct the following truth tables for 'not' (negation or opposition), & (conjunction), and ⇒ (implication), respectively:

Truth table for 'not', where "not-p" converts the sign's value of p to its opposite, i.e., makes a positive sign negative and a negative sign positive:

p	not-p
+1	–1
–1	+1

Truth table for '&', where "p & q" gives a positive sign if and only if p and q are simultaneously positive and otherwise it gives a negative sign:

p	q	composite sign "p & q"
+1	+1	+1
+1	–1	–1
–1	+1	–1
–1	–1	–1

Truth table for 'if then', where "if p, then q" gives a negative sign if and only if p is positive and q is negative and otherwise it gives a positive sign:

p	q	composite sign "if p, then q"
+1	+1	+1
+1	–1	–1
–1	+1	+1
–1	–1	+1

From these truth tables, we obtain:

(i) If (+1 & +1), then +1 = if +1, then +1 = +1;
(ii) If (+1 & –1), then –1 = if –1, then –1 = +1;
(iii) If (–1 & +1), then –1 = if –1, then –1 = +1;
(iv) If (–1 & –1), then +1 = if –1, then +1 = +1.

We see that in the protasis from (i) to (iv), we have all possible combinations of positive and negative values: (+1 & +1), (+1 & –1), (–1 & +1), (–1 & –1). But in the apodosis, the positive value +1 takes place if and only if in the protasis both values are positive simultaneously or negative simultaneously. Then in the apodosis there is assumed to be a logical operation of equivalence ('if and only if then') with the following truth table.

Truth table for 'if and only if then', where "if and only if p, then q" gives a negative sign if and only if p is positive and q is negative or p is negative and q is positive:

p	q	composite sign "if and only if p, then q"
+1	+1	+1
+1	–1	–1
–1	+1	–1
–1	–1	+1

Then each separate omen with two signs p and q has the following formal notation: "If (p & q), then (if and only if p, then q)", with the following truth table:

p	q	p & q	if and only if p, then q	If (p & q), then (if and only if p, then q)
+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
+1	–1	–1	–1	+1
–1	+1	–1	–1	+1
–1	–1	–1	+1	+1

This means that each separate omen of this series was formulated by the Mesopotamians in the way to be an always true proposition in the Boolean algebra. Hence, verses of divinations from (i) to (iv) give propositional tautologies (axioms) – expressions which are always true (positive).

Let a separate omen have only one sign p. Then its formal notation is as follows: "If p, then q". This expression is also a tautology of Boolean algebra. For example, "[if a snake…] is seen, [th]at house will be dispersed" (Freedman 2006: 121). In this omen there is only one sign ("snake") that is negative. It gives, therefore, a negative forecasting. If it was positive, then it would give a positive forecasting.

Let a separate omen have three signs or more: p, q, r, … then its formal notation is thus: "If (p & q & r & …), then (p, q, r, … are equivalent)". But this expression is a tautology of Boolean algebra, too. Summing up, in the divination list of BM 108874 (Zorzi 2009), we can reconstruct the Boolean algebra <{–1, +1}, 'not', '&', 'if then', 'if and only if then'>, defined on the positive +1 and on the negative value –1 with the following four logical operations: negation ('not'), conjunction ('&'), implication ('if then'), and equivalence ('if and only if then'). In this Boolean algebra, each omen is defined in the way to be an axiom, that is, to be a proposition that always has the truth value +1, according to the truth tables.

In the protasis of omens we can find a conjunction connecting different signs. But sometimes we deal with a strong disjunction in the apodosis. For instance:

> šumma *ṭulīmum ziqtī sāmutim mali* ⇒ *ummānātī ina ṣērim ṣūmum iṣabbat* še'am *samānum iṣabbat*
> If the spleen was full of red pocks ⇒ thirst will seize the troops in the hinterland; (or:) *samānu*-disease will seize the barley (Winitzer 2017: 96).

In this example, we see only one sign ("the spleen was full of red pocks") that is negative and, hence, gives a negative forecasting. Nevertheless, this forecasting is one of the two possibilities: either "thirst will seize the troops in the hinterland" or "*samānu*-disease will seize the barley".

The binary thinking based on the Boolean algebra is universal for many other omen series, e.g., for some tablets 1–21 (OPKF 17). Let us show it. From the context, we see that "white fungus" (*katarru peṣû*) is a negative sign. Their possible combinations with other signs are as follows:

5. DIŠ KA.TAR BABBAR *ina ne-rib* KÁ T[ÙR …] SAG.PA.LAGAB É NA […].
15. DIŠ KA.TAR *ina É iš-pik-ki* GAR É BI *i-ḫar*-[*ru-ub*].
16. DIŠ KA.TAR BABBAR *ina qi-rib* É [NA GAR] É BI *ip-pe-eḫ*-[*ḫi*?].
17. DIŠ KA.TAR BABBAR *ina* šu-*bat* NA ZAG GAR BIR-*aḫ* É BI.
18. DIŠ KA.TAR BABBAR *ina* šu-*bat* NA GÙB GAR *sa-dir* É BI.

> 5. If white fungus […] in the entryway of the gate of the court[yard? …] grief in that house […].
> 15. If there is <white> fungus in a warehouse, that house will be devas[tated].
> 16. [If there is] white fungus in the middle of [a man's] house, that house will be closed up.
> 17. If there is white fungus on the right in a man's residential quarter – dispersal of that house.
> 18. If there is white fungus on the left in a man's residential quarter, that house will be normal. (Freedman 1998: 192–193)

The logical meaning of these verses is as follows:

5. If –1 ("white fungus") & +1 ("in the entryway of the gate of the courtyard"), then –1 ("grief in that house"). It is equal to +1.
15. If –1 ("white fungus") & +1 ("warehouse"), then –1 ("that house will be devastated"). It is equal to +1.
16. If –1 ("white fungus") & +1 ("in the middle of [a man's] house"), then –1 ("that house will be closed up"). It is equal to +1.
17. If –1 ("white fungus") & +1 ("on the right in a man's residential quarter"), then –1 ("dispersal of that house"). It is equal to +1.
18. If –1 ("white fungus") & –1 ("on the left in a man's residential quarter"), then +1 ("that house will be normal"). It is equal to +1.

On the other hand, "black fungus" (*katarru ṣalmu*) is a positive sign that along with all other signs gives only positive prognoses:

49. DIŠ KA.TAR GE_6 *ina tal-lak-ti* É NA GAR *ka-liš* $AL.SA_6$.
50. DIŠ KA.TAR GE_6 *ina* GÚ.ḪAŠ *šu-bat* É LÚ *it-tab-ši* SUḪUS É BI GI.NA.
51. DIŠ KA.TAR GE_6 *ina šu-bat* LÚ ZAG *it-tab-ši lu* ÚKU NÌ.TUK.
52. DIŠ KA.TAR GE_6 *ina šu-bat* LÚ GÙB *it-tab-ši* LÚ *ú-wa-at-tar*.
54. DIŠ KA.TAR GE_6. EŠ ŠÀ É NA *ma-lu-ú* EN É NÌ.TUK SUḪUŠ.BI GI.NA.

49. If there is black fungus on the path to a man's house, it will be entirely favourable.
50. If black fungus appears on the back of the residential quarter of a man's house, the foundation of that house will be secure.
51. If black fungus appears on the right in a man's residential quarter if he is poor, he will become rich.
52. If black fungus appears on the left in a man's residential quarter, the man will become prominent.
54. If black fungi fill the interior of a man's house, the owner of that house will become rich; its foundation will become secure. (Freedman 1998: 194–197)

Formally:

49. If +1 ("black fungus") & +1 ("on the path to a man's house"), then +1 ("it will be entirely favourable"). It is equal to +1.
50. If +1 ("black fungus") & –1 ("on the back of the residential quarter of a man's house", then +1 ("the foundation of that house will be secure"). Hence, we have "if (+1 & –1), then +1", but it is equal to +1 in the Boolean algebra.
51. If +1 ("black fungus") & +1 ("on the right in a man's residential quarter if he is poor"), then +1 ("he will become rich"). It is equal to +1.
52. If +1 ("black fungus") & –1 ("on the left in a man's residential quarter"), then +1 ("the man will become prominent"). It is equal to +1.
54. If +1 ("black fungus") & +1 ("the interior of a man's house"), then +1 ("the owner of that house will become rich; its foundation will become secure"). It is equal to +1.

The sign "red fungus" (*katarru sāmu*) is negative and gives only an unfavourable forecasting together with all other signs:

60. DIŠ KA.TAR SI.A *ša mi-iq-tu*$_4$ MU.NI *ina* É LÚ ZAG GAR ŠUB-*di* É.
61. DIŠ KA.TAR SI.A *ša mi-iq-tu*$_4$ MU.NI *ina* É LÚ GÙB GAR ŠUB-*di* É.

60. If red fungus named *miqtu* appears on the right in a man's house – abandonment of the house.

61. If red fungus named *miqtu* appears on the left in a man's house – abandonment of the house. (Freedman 1998: 196–197)

Formally:

60. If –1 ("red fungus named *miqtu*") & +1 ("on the right in a man's house"), then –1 ("abandonment of the house"). It is equal to +1.
61. If –1 ("red fungus named *miqtu*") & –1 ("on the left in a man's house"), then –1 ("abandonment of the house"). It is equal to +1.

Thus, different omen series are composed in the way to be axioms of Boolean algebra (that is, to have only the value +1) and, therefore, we can reconstruct the same Boolean algebra <{–1, +1}, 'not', '&', 'if then', 'if and only if then'> in different omen series.

CONCLUSION

We may conclude that the algebraic structure of ancient Mesopotamian omen catalogues since the Old Babylonian period reconstructed in the form of the truth tables, as defined above, is a kind of binary calculus applicable to all forms of ancient Mesopotamian omens presented as a list of opposing signs. This binary logic is a by-product of Akkadian *šumma*-clauses (conditional statements of the form "if p, then q"), which were simply treated by the Mesopotamians logically – through an application of *modus ponens* and *modus tollens*; in the same way conditional statements were understood by the Stoics and are understood nowadays in modern logic.

Each separate omen was formulated as a composite conditional statement "if a sign p & a sign q & a sign r …, then an event s" so that this statement has only the positive truth value in the Boolean algebra. This means that omen catalogues can be considered as a dataset containing only logical axioms (always true propositions). It is the earliest known form of binary thinking which was logically correct from the point of view of modern logic.

NOTE

[1] This paper is an extended version of the short paper "Omens as Logic" (Schumann & Sazonov 2021).

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https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2024.93.kazakh_youth

YOUTH IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF TRADITIONAL KAZAKH FOLK MUSIC

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Abstract: This study strived to determine the most popular music genre among young Kazakhs in the context of personal, social, and national identity development, specify the relationship between musical preferences and personality type, and disclose the level of influence of traditional Kazakh folk music on the identity of the Kazakh youth. The authors conducted a survey and a test by taking advantage of such research methods as sociological survey, statistical analysis, social phenomena cognition (assessment, analogy tracking, comparison), psychological and typological concepts of Jung, as well as Abulkhanova-Slavskaya's methodology for revealing personality traits. As a result of the investigation, hip-hop and rap were identified as the most popular music genres among the respondents (42.2%). Analysis of the data obtained in accordance with Abulhanova-Slavskaya's personality typology revealed that 89% of the respondents preferring blues/jazz, classical music, and folk music demonstrated personality traits corresponding to the reflexive personality type; 91% of punk/rock and heavy metal fans showed conformity to the contemplative personality type; 87.5% of pop-music lovers were attributed the harmonious personality type; 93.5% of hip-hop and rap music fans –

the productive personality type; 84% of traditional music fans – the performing type; and 96% of fans of pop with folk tunes – the functional type. It was also uncovered that 89% of the respondents who preferred traditional music belonged to the sensitive personality type characterized by impressionability, openness, empathy, alertness, firmness, conscientiousness, and, at the same time, inferiority complexes, and a tendency to psychogenic depressions and phobias.

Keywords: folk music, identity, Kazakhstan, music, musical art, self-identification, traditional folk music

INTRODUCTION

Globalization currently acts as a key integration process across the globe. It affects both external and internal spiritual and cultural values of different countries, societies, and nations, and impacts social consciousness, traditional art, education, and self-identification (Kaztuganova et al. 2019). In its very essence, globalization is a process reflecting a revolution in the consciousness of society and its cultural and spiritual values (Narikbayeva & Karibayeva 2021). As the modern education system is developing in the context of distance education, it requires the adoption of new methodological approaches. One of the directions of educational policy presented in the address of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to the people of Kazakhstan is the improvement of educational programs to meet modern challenges in the field (Kaztuganova et al. 2019). This is proposed to be done by setting an emphasis on distance learning and introduction of information technology.

The processes of globalization, closely related to the expansion of the boundaries of industrialization, nowadays affect all aspects of human activity, including musical art (Varriale 2016). Traditional folk music and instruments convey the deepest cultural, spiritual, and aesthetic values of civilization, transmitting knowledge through various forms (ibid.). Kazakh folk music is based on the historical traditions of the development of creativity of the Kazakh people (Mukhitdenova 2016). Folk songs are characterized by syncretism – singing is combined with dance, game, instrumental music, verbal and visual folklore (Omarova et al. 2020). In modern Kazakh musical culture, the stylization of folklore, the combination of folklore traditions with music of other genres is gaining popularity (Narikbayeva & Karibayeva 2021).

Ethnic identity is a burning topic in Kazakhstan, especially for adolescents born after Kazakhstan gained independence. Today's youth demonstrate a complex mix of civic and ethnic identities (Laruelle 2019). In contrast to the older generation, young people in Kazakhstan are very individualistic and more disposed toward elements of the market economy, such as the private sector and

entrepreneurship. They show more respect for individual success and less interest in the public sector (Werner & Emmelhainz & Barcus 2017). The youth represents the backbone of the economic liberalism that has shaped independent Kazakhstan.

Music has the ability to influence national identity as one of the means for different cultures to express their customs and ideologies. Adolescence is a critical period for the gradual development of identity, and music here acts as a source of social cognitive norms influencing identity development. Music is often taken advantage of by the youth as a resource for social image development (Aucouturier & Canonne 2017). Music subcultures created by groups of peers with similar views contribute to the development of youth culture identity as well as informational and normative social influences (Danabayev & Park & Konieczny 2021). It is not infrequent that famous musicians serve as role models or idols that affect young people through their creativity and media image (Mukhitdenova 2016). Thus, music is often perceived as a means by which young people internalize various social images and styles that are everyday cultural practices and acquire meanings in certain contexts shared (or not) with their peers (Robson 2015). Despite the differences between the different musical styles absorbed by the youth, in one way or another, each of them contributes to the formation and reinforcement of their personal identities (Albekov & Alpysbayeva & Auyesbayeva 2017).

Archaic layers, reflected in folk, are always closely connected with the life of the people, their worldview, and philosophical views (Kaztuganova et al. 2019). Hence, traditional folk music with deeply rooted authentic, social, and linguistic aspects is essential for constructing both individual and social identity (Danabayev & Park & Konieczny 2021).

Highly modernized societies contain cultural codes, the origins of which are rooted in the past. The first condition for the modernization of a new type is the preservation of its own culture and national code. As stated by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in his address to the Kazakh people, the preservation of ethnic integrity and national traditions is one of the central directions of the modern cultural policy of Kazakhstan (Sardiñas et al. 2017). Accordingly, despite the fact that society is retreating from the roots in the direction of cultural diversity, Kazakhstan tries to preserve the national culture and, within the framework of modern views, observe its customs and traditions, draw knowledge and strength from the wisdom of ancestors (Kuzembayeva et al. 2014). In this regard, the art of music, with its centuries-old customs and artistic and aesthetic content, can be considered the most effective.

Reliance upon traditional music determined the identity of modern Kazakh pop music, which is especially important in the era of globalization (Kuzembayeva et al. 2014). As a result, ethnic music, which in its time became the basis for

the formation and development of professional music of European orientation, in the present times serves as the basis of national pop music (Kaztuganova et al. 2019). The modern pop culture of Kazakhstan represented on the world stage is nurtured on the national soil, which determines the originality of the Kazakh music industry. At the same time, although most features and trends of Kazakh music are borrowed, some music genres and styles popular in Kazakhstan have features similar to national genres of other countries (for example, *terme*[1] and *tolgau*[2] and American rap and hip-hop) (ibid.).

This paper is an original study analyzing the features of youth identity development based on traditional Kazakh folk music against the backdrop of globalization, the popularity of different music genres among the young generation of Kazakhstan, and the relationship between musical preferences and personality types. The rapid modernization of the state, socioeconomic and sociocultural spheres of Kazakhstan, development of the modern music industry, formation of new musical subcultures, and the increasing influence of globalization processes on the worldview of individuals and society as a whole determine the relevance of this paper.

The scientific novelty of this study resides in the performed comparative analysis of different music genres intended to outline the most popular of them among the youth of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This research is necessary for understanding the development of national, sociopolitical, and individual identity of the Kazakhstani, the formation of civil and sociocultural self-determination of an individual, and public cohesion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Features and trends in youth identity development based on traditional Kazakh folk music have been partially studied in the global academic literature (Bortolotti 2020; Laruelle 2019; Werner & Emmelhainz & Barcus 2017). Most works have concentrated on studying traditional Kazakh folk music in general due to the direct relationship of music to national and ethnic identity, in-group human interaction, and ethnic language development (Danabayev & Park & Konieczny 2021). The reason for the scarce study of the presented topic can be the constant processes of cultural and ideological exchange in the modern global world and the integration policy of the world states, which may have a significant impact on the internal culture of Kazakhstan and its values in the process of modernization (Werner & Emmelhainz & Barcus 2017). Researchers note that modern Kazakh society does not want to lose its national identity in favor of global social transformations but strives to develop in modern realities

and cooperate with nations striving for self-identification (Kaztuganova et al. 2019). Kazakhstan is a state with a rich past and age-old customs preserved to this day, and the primary condition for the modernization of its society is the preservation of its cultural and national code (Umbetalieva & Rakisheva & Teschendorf 2016). Empirical studies on ethnic identity and popular culture show that previously marginalized ethnic groups often desire to rediscover their ethnic and cultural roots and convey different identity statuses through different styles of contemporary and traditional folk music (Lidskog 2016). Traditional or folk music with a deep historical, cultural, and linguistic background is still an important marker of national identity (Ramadani 2017). Music has been multiply confirmed to contribute to social identity among the youth through the establishment of social solidarity among fans of the same music genre, the influence of parents' musical preferences, the establishment of personal musical preferences opposite to those prevalent in the parental home or community, music-making, gaining social and political knowledge from songs, choosing political positions based on music, etc. (Tanieva 2014). Accordingly, young people's identities are shaped by many factors – family, cultural and social expectations, school experiences, the media, friends, and different types of art and culture – ruled by which young people make choices that form their personalities (Pfeifer & Berkman 2018).

The orientation of the Republic of Kazakhstan towards the formation of a nation-state that would follow the ideas of ethnonational unity, civil peace, social stability, intra-national and intra-religious consensus, and tolerance is reflected in the text of the concept of forming the state identity of the Republic of Kazakhstan (О Концепции формирования государственной идентичности Республики Казахстан; see Decree 1996). In 2015, the decree on the approval of the concept of strengthening and developing Kazakh identity and unity (Об утверждении Концепции укрепления и развития казахстанской идентичности и единства) was adopted, proclaiming the desire to build Kazakhstan's identity based on the principle of evolution, development of a modernized generation, and freedom from gender and sociocultural stereotypes (see Decree 2015).

Scholars have noted that spiritual values are of key importance in civil society as far as they are based on humanistic norms of morality, ethnonational traditions, patriotic political orientations, and individual responsibility of citizens (Dossanova et al. 2018). Traditional folk musical art is deeply embedded in the modern society of Kazakhstan as an educational practice and a means of preservation of national and universal significance (Musagulova & Kasimova 2021). Like almost any independent state, Kazakhstan strives to enrich the knowledge of traditional Kazakh culture. Traditional Kazakh folk

music is represented by such national instruments as *dombra*,[3] *kobyz*,[4] and *jetigen*,[5] which, together with the vocal accompaniment, play a central role in group ceremonies and family celebrations (Ospanova & Jumaniyazova 2018). Scholars agree that the use of these musical instruments, to some degree, unites people with their historical roots and traditions through classical and improvised works, engaging the audience spiritually and emotionally. In this respect, music serves as one of the most important means of social communication and facilitates the transmission of knowledge and skills related to Kazakh culture. It is quite expected that contemporary music of Kazakhstan has been influenced by Western musical styles. Their blending with traditional melodies has given birth to a style called "modern ethnic classic" (Cârstea 2021). The role of music in the modernization of Kazakh national identity is reflected in the official policies of the republic, including the *Rukhani Zhangyru* program[6] aiming to modernize Kazakh individuality in the eyes of citizens and the international community (Bortolotti 2020). As is evidenced in academic literature, traditional folk music with firmly embedded historical, cultural and linguistic aspects can contribute to the process of social, personal, and national identity formation among the youth (Case 2021). It is pointed out that young people tend to belong to a particular social group sharing their musical preferences, which allows them to define their own identity (Fingerhut et al. 2021). In line with this, researchers claim that young Kazakhs tend to move away from Russian cultural influence and embrace the impact of economic globalization, liberalization, individualization, and consumerism (Kuzembayeva et al. 2014). However, they remain strongly opposed to Western values (e.g., democracy) and the imposition of Western cultural traditions through globalization. Thus, the Kazakh youth is characterized by a distinctive national identity that embraces cultural pluralism while protecting traditional cultural practices and norms (Kaldybai & Abdrasilov 2020).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study considers the ways and characteristic features of the development of youth identity on the basis of traditional Kazakh folk music, reviews musical art as a method of national identity formation in Kazakhstani society, and plans to determine the level of popularity of traditional folk music among the youth of Kazakhstan compared to other musical directions. This would allow obtaining new statistical data on the most popular music genres that influence the identity of young people and establishing the relationship between preferences in musical choices and personal (behavioral) features of individuals.

The ultimate aims of this research were to identify the most popular music genre among Kazakhstanis aged 18–29 and disclose the level of influence of traditional Kazakh folk music on the identity development of the Kazakh youth.

The primary objectives of this study were:

- to consider music genres as channels affecting personal identity and social identification;
- to analyze the relationship between traditional folk music and the development of Kazakh youth's identities;
- to define the influence of traditional folk music on the world outlook of the Kazakh youth and their sociopolitical views.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

The success of this study was ensured by means of statistical analysis, sociological survey, social phenomena assessment, analogy tracking, and comparison. Also, this paper benefited from psychological and typological concepts proposed by Carl Gustav Jung as well as Abulkhanova-Slavskaya's methodology revealing the personality traits developed on their basis. The research object was represented by the citizens of Kazakhstan aged 18–29 and registered in the city of Almaty. They were addressed an online survey about the most popular music genre (Supplement 1) and an online musical preference and personality test (Supplement 2). The subjects of the research were two expert sociologists from the Public Opinion Research Center (Moscow), who conducted the survey and the test and analyzed the results. The aim of the survey was to determine the level of popularity of different music genres among the Kazakh youth. The test, in turn, sought to define the relationship between musical preferences and personal (behavioral) features of individuals, recognize the most influential music genre in the context of the youth's national identity development, as well as determine the personality type of traditional Kazakh folk music fans to understand the ways of identity development on its basis. The survey and test were both conducted in English among 982 respondents, from which a sample of 500 individuals was formed.

Research sample

The sample of respondents was selective, i.e., made up of those who wished to participate in the study voluntarily. The criterion for the selection of participants

was their age and residence registration – the citizens of Kazakhstan aged from 18 to 29 years and living in Almaty (Kazakhstan) were considered. The age of the respondents selected for the experiment is explained by the topic of the article, which is primarily devoted to youth identity. Particular attention was paid to the sample to be relevant to meet the objectives of the study.

Intervention peculiarities

The online surveys and data analyses were conducted over six days (from January 14 to January 19, 2022). The statistical error of the survey results did not exceed 1.3%. Overall, the study was carried out in two stages.

Stage 1 – implementation (4 days). During this stage, respondents were surveyed, and data were collected. The survey question addressed was "What is the most popular music genre?", provided on the SurveyMonkey online platform (SurveyMonkey 2022). Since the first questions were about participants' age, this survey was also used to screen respondents. Once those willing to participate in the study met the sampling criteria, they were allowed to join the research and were given a link to the second survey. The survey questions and answer choices are given in Supplement 1.

Along with the survey mentioned, the people involved were also to take the Musical Preference and Personality Test (MPPT) available on the Musical Universe online platform. The questions and choices of the test are presented in Supplement 2. The MPPT also included a multimedia part (see Musical Universe 2022).

Links to the survey containing the socio-demographic block necessary for the formation of the sample were spread through targeted advertising and recommendations on the social networks VKontakte, Instagram, and Facebook. Thus, all the interested individuals could participate in the surveys of their own volition.

Stage 2 – data analysis (2 days). During this stage, the data were analyzed, and reports were compiled.

The survey "What is the most popular music genre?" (Supplement 1) was chosen due to its socio-demographic block, necessary to sift respondents by age, as well as its simplicity and extended range of music genres for consideration.

The MPPT (Supplement 2) was selected due to its focus on the determination of musical preferences following from one's personality traits (Part 1) and personality type emanating from musical preferences (Part 2). The test also

had a multimedia component, which greatly simplified the choice of answers for the respondents, as well as reduced the risk of inaccurate responses due to ignorance of the name or misunderstanding of the features of a particular musical genre. This allowed assessing the musical composition not only by the genre name but also directly by the auditory perception.

Statistical analysis

Mathematical and statistical analyses were performed using the SPSS-12.0 program.

Research limitations

The limitation of this study is expressed in the possible inaccuracy of the data processing methodology, as it was partially based on the personal observations of the experts. In addition, obtaining reliable results could be complicated by the possibility of conscious or unconscious distortion of the respondents' answers, an attempt to portray themselves in a more favorable light, or follow popular social musical trends. All these aspects could lead to errors in the interpretation of results.

Ethical issues

To minimize possible prejudiced attitude, an anonymous analysis of the responses to both the survey and the test was conducted by independent experts. In order to ensure anonymity, the response forms were numbered and transmitted via links. All the data provided by respondents were confidential and were processed and stored in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated May 21, 2013, No. 94-V, on Personal Data and Their Protection (Закон Республики Казахстан от 21 мая 2013 года № 94-V "О персональных данных и их защите"; see Law 2013). Along with this, the study was approved by the Kazakhstan Education Research Association (KERA).

RESULTS

In accordance with the established objectives, the most popular music genre among Kazakhstani young people aged 18–29, in the context of identity development, was determined. After this, the main personality traits inherent to fans of different musical trends and features of their identity were defined. In the course of the study, the following music genres were analyzed:

- blues/jazz, classical music, folk;
- punk/rock, heavy metal;
- pop;
- hip-hop, rap;
- traditional folk music;
- pop with folk tunes.

Based on the mathematical-statistical analysis of the survey outcomes, hip-hop and rap were defined as the most popular music genres among the respondents (42.2%). The next most popular music genres were: pop – 20.4%, pop music with folk tunes – 16.8%, punk/rock, heavy metal – 11.6%, traditional folk music – 5.6%, blues/jazz, classical music, folk – 3.4% (Fig. 1).

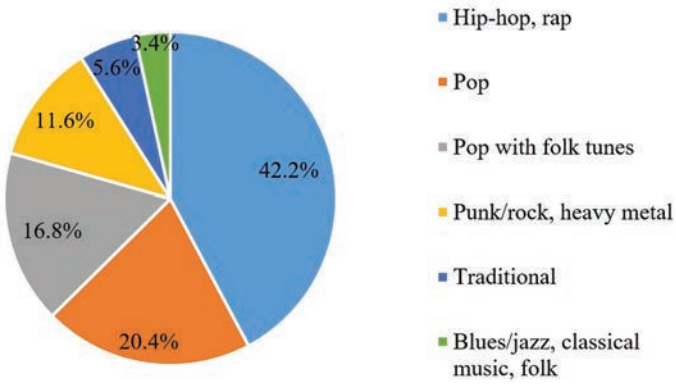

Figure 1. *Popularity of the key music genres among the Kazakh youth.*

Based on the responses to the MPPT, the main personality traits of the fans of different music genres were identified. In this fashion, it was found that respondents preferring blues/jazz, classical music, and folk tend to be reflective,

self-confident, charismatic, and open to new opportunities in everyday situations. Besides, fans of these musical genres identified themselves as liberals and intellectuals.

Respondents preferring punk/rock and heavy metal were likely to have a rebellious spirit and revolutionary and even anarchic sentiments. Such people were defined as prone to increased anxiety and emotional instability.

Research participants opting for such a music genre as pop music were marked as extroverted, open-minded, optimistic, and communicative. Furthermore, such individuals were characterized by relatively conservative sociopolitical views.

Those giving priority to hip-hop and rap were portrayed as energetic, self-confident, adhering to liberal-democratic values, and aspiring to cosmopolitanism.

Traditional folk music lovers were likely to be very friendly, open-minded, communicative, as well as featuring a high level of ethnonational self-consciousness and political involvement.

Finally, those preferring pop music with folk tunes were found to have a high level of patriotic sentiments while supporting modernization processes. They were open to new things but strived to preserve their own national identity and the values ingrained in the state.

The agreement between musical preferences and personality types (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya 1985), which the respondents-fans of different music genres demonstrated to the greatest extent, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Agreement between musical preferences and personality types*

Music genres	**Personality type**
Blues/jazz, classical music, folk	Reflexive
Punk/rock, heavy metal	Contemplative
Pop	Harmonic
Hip-hop, rap	Productive
Traditional folk music	Performing
Pop music with folk tunes	Functional

Less briefly, among the surveyed fans of such music genres as blues/jazz, classical music, and folk (17 people), 15 respondents (89%) demonstrated personality traits corresponding to the reflexive personality type. Of 58 punk/rock and heavy metal fans, 52 individuals (91%) demonstrated character traits consistent with a contemplative personality type. As many as 89 people (87.5%) out of 102 pop music lovers demonstrated character traits corresponding to the harmonic personality type. Among the hip-hop and rap music fans surveyed (211 people),

197 respondents demonstrated character traits consistent with a productive personality type, which is 93.5%. As for the fans of traditional music (28 people), 23 (or 84%) individuals had personality traits consistent with the performing personality type. At the same time, of all the surveyed fans of pop music with folk tunes (84 people), 80 respondents (or 96%) exhibited personality traits consistent with the functional personality type.

The agreement between the respondents' musical preferences and personality types according to Abulkhanova-Slavskaya's typology is shown in Figure 2.

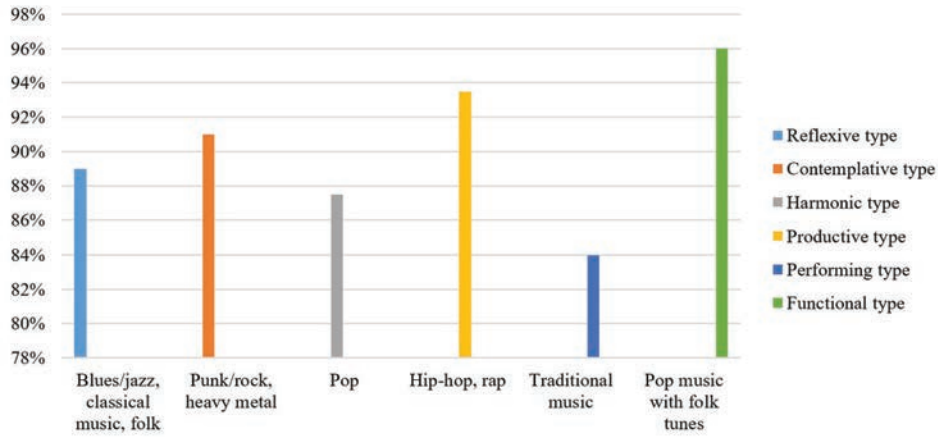

Figure 2. *Agreement between the respondents' musical preferences and personality types according to Abulkhanova-Slavskaya's typology.*

According to the data obtained in the course of the MPPT, 89% of the respondents who preferred traditional folk music were attributed the sensitive personality type (Lichko 1983). That is, distinctive traits inherent in this type of personality (impressionability, openness, empathy, communication skills, vigilance, firmness, conscientiousness, inferiority complexes, a tendency to psychogenic depression and phobias) were demonstrated by 25 people from the total number of respondents (28 people) preferring traditional music to other musical genres. Psychological mechanisms, which are the basis of the sensitive personality type, evidence the desire of the individual to identify his/her self with the artistic image of a musical work. Traditional music fans are recognized as conscientious performers of their duties, patriots, owners of stable self-regulation skills, personalities prone to reflection, and socially responsible individuals with strong civic positions.

DISCUSSION

This study analyzed the level of popularity of six major music genres that can influence young Kazakhs' identity, and revealed the relationship between these genres and the personal characteristics and socio-political views of their fans. Also, this paper paid particular attention to the matter of demand for traditional Kazakh folk music among the youth and the distinctive features of its influence in the context of identity. The conducted investigation allowed unveiling characteristic features of traditional Kazakh music admirers and the dominating personality type inherent in such people, from which the ways of development of youth integration could be traced. These data are regarded as exceptionally useful in view of the current rapid modernization of the cultural sphere of Kazakhstan due to globalization, formation of new musical directions and values in society, and introduction of reforms transforming the state culture.

Unfortunately, the tendencies and ways to develop the identity of the Kazakh youth based on traditional Kazakh folk music have been only partly reviewed by world academic circles. Available US studies claim that traditional Kazakh folk music, performed mostly at secular events, festivals, and holiday celebrations, serves as a vital social and cultural experience for the younger generation, strengthening people's identity and promoting solidarity and mutual understanding in society. It is one of the most important attributes of family and community gatherings and plays an important role in strengthening social cohesion of young Kazakhs while providing them with a sense of identity and belonging (Tatkenova et al. 2019).

The conclusions of the above studies are partially similar to the data obtained in the course of the current work, as respondents who preferred traditional music demonstrated a high level of sociability and benevolence, as well as ethnonational self-consciousness. In addition, 89% of the respondents preferring traditional music were attributed the sensitive personality type characterized by impressionability, openness, empathy, communication skills, vigilance, firmness, conscientiousness, inferiority complexes, and a tendency to psychogenic depression and phobias. Nevertheless, traditional folk music is one of the least popular trends among contemporary youth in Kazakhstan (5.6%). Its influence on youth identity is less pronounced compared to that of other musical genres. At the same time, what is particularly interesting in the obtained results is that hip-hop and rap music were the most popular musical genres among the youth (42.2%), which suggests an orientation toward Western values.

The influence of musical art on the development of the identity of young people in Kazakhstan has also been reviewed by European scholars. Available works on the topic evidence the indisputable role of music art in people's

comprehension and acquisition of national identity. Also, it is often pointed out that the Kazakh youth is far from being a revolutionary generation. They do not challenge their parents' values and lifestyles and trust family more than any other institution (Laruelle 2019). These inferences only partially corroborate with the data we obtained in the course of our work, as the second most popular genre among the respondents was pop music (20.4%), whose fans were characterized by optimism rather than conservative sociopolitical views. They were noted to accept the values of older generations but did not seek to abandon them for the benefit of global modernization processes.

Russian researchers point out that contemporary pop music with traditional folk motifs has deep historical, cultural, and linguistic bonds, and thus it is still an important marker of the national identity of Kazakh society (Dobrovolskaya 2014). It is not infrequent that contemporary pop songs of Kazakhstan contain traditional folk tunes that have a powerful potential to improve their adaptability to modern conditions of perception, forming the basis for renewal and advancement of new musical currents (Belozer 2015). What is more, it is claimed that altruism and participation in civic initiatives are not at the top of the lists of priorities for young people in Kazakhstan, as they are quite happy with society as it is (Mashanlo 2019). The results of the above studies have much in common with the points delivered in the present research, since pop music with folk tunes turned out to be the third most popular among the respondents (16.8%). Fans of this music genre were described as those having a high national identity level, and patriotic sentiments prevailed among them, not excluding modernization.

The issue of the youth's hip-hop culture in Kazakhstan and its role as a system of values, attitudes, modes of behavior, and lifestyles different from the dominant in society has been addressed by some scholars from South Korea (Tan 2021). Along with this, hip-hop lovers are often referred to as more sympathetic to the processes of globalization and lifestyle westernization that are being broadcasted through the media and the internet and firmly entrenched in the youth's consciousness and behavior (Koh & Baek 2020). Hence, fans of the genre contrast their own Eastern mentality with that of the West, creating a new form of tolerant culture. These data are in partial agreement with the findings of this study, as respondents who preferred hip-hop and rap to other music genres were regarded as open- and broad-minded, drawn to liberal and democratic values, and aspiring to cosmopolitanism.

Academic sources indicate that those who prefer more sophisticated musical genres, such as jazz, soul, and classical music, tend to be more creative and have higher IQ scores (Ramadani 2017). In this vein, classical music and blues are favored by people with liberal socio-political views and extended cultural capital,

as well as intellectuals (Aucouturier & Canonne 2017). Interestingly, the results obtained during the study show the lowest level of popularity (3.4%) for blues, jazz, classical music, and folk compared to the rest of the studied music genres.

In general, scholars say that the absence of interest in the existing order is a distinctive feature of young people because this social and age group has not yet made their own contribution to the socioeconomic and sociopolitical structure of the state (Teslenko 2016). The position of the outsider acts as a key aspect here. It determines an individual's tendency to rebellion and anarchism, which in turn converges with the worldview of other social groups who find themselves on the edge of society for other reasons (oppressed social strata, representatives of free crafts – writers, artists, etc.) (Pfeifer & Berkman 2018). These factors explain why young people often act as zealous revolutionaries and reformers, reinforcing their marginality and singularity (Kaldybai & Abdrasilov 2020). The data obtained in the course of this work are only partially consistent with the above arguments. Respondents preferring hip-hop and rap to other music genres were indeed characterized by their rebellious nature, revolutionary views, and rejection of the values accepted in society. In the meantime, such musical genres as punk/rock and heavy metal ranked fourth in popularity among the surveyed Kazakh youth representatives (11.6%).

CONCLUSIONS

This paper analyzed the level of popularity of the key music genres in Kazakhstan, revealed the relationship between different musical trends and the personal characteristics and socio-political views of their fans, as well as determined the level of demand for traditional Kazakh folk music among young people and the features of its impact on individuals' identity. A survey and a test were conducted to reveal the level of popularity of different music styles in the context of identification of the youth of Kazakhstan and demonstrate the relationship between music genres and personality traits of their lovers. Mathematical and statistical analysis of the data obtained during the survey addressing the most popular music genre made it possible to identify such music genres as hip-hop and rap as the most popular ones (42.2%). The next ones in popularity were pop – 20.4%, pop with folk tunes – 16.8%, punk/rock and heavy metal – 11.6%, traditional music – 5.6%, and blues/jazz, classical music, and folk – 3.4%. Assessment of the MPPT outcomes enabled us to unveil the relationship between the musical preferences of young people and their personal (behavioral) features in accordance with the typology of personalities proposed by Abulkhanova-Slavskaya (1985). It was determined that 89% of

the surveyed fans of blues/jazz, classical, and folk music showed personality traits corresponding to the reflective personality type; 91% of punk/rock and heavy metal admirers demonstrated conformity to the contemplative personality type; 87.5% of pop-music fans were attributed the harmonious personality type; 93.5% of hip-hop and rap music fans – the productive personality type; 84% of traditional folk music fans – the performing type; and 96% of fans of pop with folk tunes – the functional type.

The collected data can be further applied in pedagogical practice for teaching music and music history or used by psychology professionals benefiting from music to study how people respond to musical stimuli in psychological experiments and the framework of art therapy. The conducted research is universal, as it can find its place both in Kazakhstan and in the world's cultural, political, psychological, and scientific-sociological activities directed at studying musical art as one of the main factors promoting personal identity at different stages of its development. Also, the research results can be applied within the culturological study exploring national cultures and the peculiarities of traditional folk music of different ethnocultural strata. The methodology developed by the authors can be used to study folk music of other nations, taking into account the musical preferences of young people and defining the specifics of the youth identity of different countries based on this. Its conclusions can be found useful in the study of individual patterns of music use and their relationship to the personality traits of individuals. Another possible application of the inferences presented is seen in the social activity for understanding the importance of the social, national, and personal identity of individuals in the global world and within a separate society for determining the criteria for the assessment of social relations within different social and age groups.

APPENDIX 1

What is the most popular music genre?

How old are you?

- 0–5
- 6–10
- 11–15
- 16–20
- 21–25
- 26–30
- 31+

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other

Roughly how long do you listen to music a day?

- Less than 30 minutes
- 30 minutes
- 1 hour
- 2 hours
- 3 hours
- 4 hours
- 5 hours
- More than 5 hours

What is your least favorite genre of music?

- Jazz
- Folk music
- Hip-hop music
- K-pop
- Pop music
- Country music
- Rapping
- Reggae
- Rock music
- Rhythm and blues
- Punk rock
- Classical music
- Disco
- Heavy metal
- Funk
- Techno
- Opera
- Gospel music
- Other (please specify)

What is your favorite genre of music?

- Jazz
- Folk music

- Hip-hop music
- K-pop
- Pop music
- Country music
- Rapping
- Reggae
- Rock music
- Rhythm and blues
- Punk rock
- Classical music
- Disco
- Heavy metal
- Funk
- Techno
- Opera
- Gospel music
- Other (please specify)

What other music genres do you enjoy listening to? (multiple choice)

- Jazz
- Folk music
- Hip-hop music
- K-pop
- Pop music
- Country music
- Rapping
- Reggae
- Rock music
- Rhythm and blues
- Punk rock
- Classical music
- Disco
- Heavy metal
- Funk
- Techno
- Opera
- Gospel music
- Other (please specify)

APPENDIX 2

Musical preference and personality test

PART 1

Instructions: You will now be presented with 10 statements. Each statement will have a pair of two adjectives that may or may not apply to you. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.

1. Extraverted, enthusiastic
   - Disagree strongly
   - Disagree moderately
   - Disagree a little
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Agree a little
   - Agree moderately
   - Agree strongly

2. Critical, quarrelsome
   - Disagree strongly
   - Disagree moderately
   - Disagree a little
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Agree a little
   - Agree moderately
   - Agree strongly

3. Dependable, self-disciplined
   - Disagree strongly
   - Disagree moderately
   - Disagree a little
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Agree a little
   - Agree moderately
   - Agree strongly

4. Anxious, easily upset
   - Disagree strongly
   - Disagree moderately
   - Disagree a little
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Agree a little
   - Agree moderately
   - Agree strongly

5. Open to new experiences, complex
   - Disagree strongly
   - Disagree moderately
   - Disagree a little
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Agree a little
   - Agree moderately
   - Agree strongly

6. Reserved, quiet
   - Disagree strongly
   - Disagree moderately
   - Disagree a little
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Agree a little
   - Agree moderately
   - Agree strongly

7. Sympathetic, warm
   - Disagree strongly
   - Disagree moderately
   - Disagree a little
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Agree a little
   - Agree moderately
   - Agree strongly

8. Disorganized, careless
   - Disagree strongly
   - Disagree moderately
   - Disagree a little

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree a little
- Agree moderately
- Agree strongly

9. Calm, emotionally stable
   - Disagree strongly
   - Disagree moderately
   - Disagree a little
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Agree a little
   - Agree moderately
   - Agree strongly

10. Conventional, uncreative
    - Disagree strongly
    - Disagree moderately
    - Disagree a little
    - Neither agree nor disagree
    - Agree a little
    - Agree moderately
    - Agree strongly

PART 2

Instructions: You will now be presented with 25 musical samples. Each sample is 15 seconds long. Please indicate your degree of liking for each of them. The samples should be unfamiliar to you and have been carefully selected by experts in the music industry to represent specific features in music (music available on the online resource).

Every option will have the form "How much do you like this music in general?"

- Dislike extremely
- Dislike very much
- Dislike moderately
- Dislike slightly
- Neither like nor dislike
- Like slightly
- Like moderately
- Like very much
- Like extremely

NOTES

[1] Song and recitative genre of Kazakh folklore.

[2] A genre in Kazakh music.

[3] Long-necked string instrument.

[4] Ancient Turkic bowed string instrument.

[5] Plucked zither.

[6] See https://official.satbayev.university/en/university/roukhani-zhangyru-, last accessed on 3 June 2024.

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https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2024.93.haas

THE BOWED LYRE OF ESTONIA'S SWEDES: ORIGIN, DIFFUSION, DECLINE, REVIVAL

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Abstract: Once played across Northern Europe in the Middle Ages, as early as the Viking Era, the bowed lyre has survived in an unbroken tradition in the Baltic region. The traditional playing method uses a loosely strung bow to stroke drone and melody strings simultaneously, while pressing the latter with knuckles or fingernails through a handhole. Iconographic, archeological, and ethnographic evidence points to the likely derivation of the bowed lyre from the bowed lute of Moorish Iberia or the Byzantine Empire. After a long decline in popularity, revivals occurred in Sweden (1970s), Finland (1980s), and Estonia (1990s). Focusing on the last case, the analysis shows how international contacts led to the bowed lyre's emergence and diffusion, as well as to its decline and revival. Traditional designs, tuning schemes, playing styles, and repertoire are still preserved today, though the social function, lore transmission, and performance settings of the bowed lyre have changed.

Keywords: bowed lyre, bowed harp, bowed lute, Swedes in Estonia, Baltic string instruments

INTRODUCTION

The bowed lyre is a musical instrument traditionally played by pressing the left hand's fingernails or knuckles against strings stretched across the handhole (Fig. 1), while the right hand bows two or more strings simultaneously. Once widespread in Northern Europe, it came very close to extinction. Interest was rekindled in recent decades in several countries around the Baltic Sea. The focus here is on the Swedish-Estonian bowed lyre, put into a broad geographic and historical context through comparisons with other relevant traditions. This involves clarifying the relationships between the oldest types of string instruments in the Baltic region, exemplified by the reproductions shown in Fig. 2. With this context in mind, this study considers the bowed lyre's likely origin and routes of diffusion and explains the reversal of a long decline in popularity via a recent revival movement.

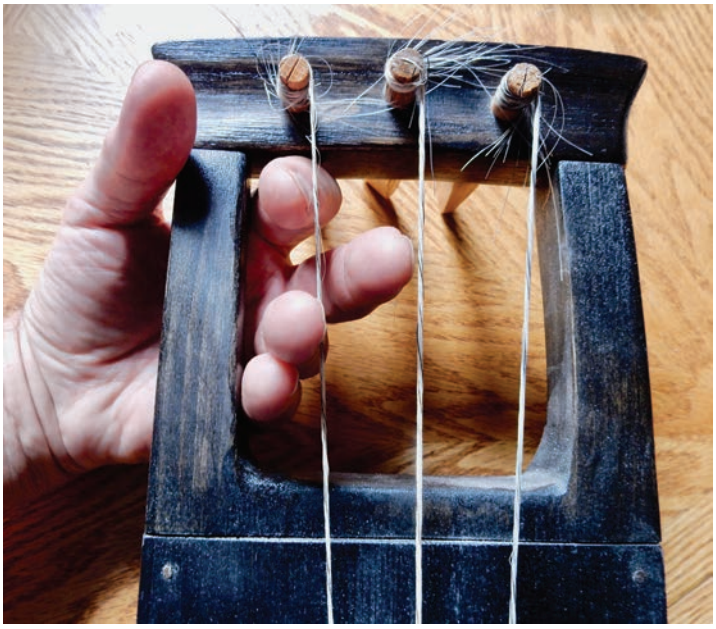

Figure 1. *Hand position in handhole for Swedish-Estonian bowed lyre. The left hand typically presses with knuckles or fingernails, mostly against the first string (closest to the player's body), with occasional pressing of the second string.*

Figure 2. *Reconstructions of archaic-style northeast-European string instruments. From left to right: 1. bowed lute (*gudok*), Novgorod, NW Russia, 10th century; 2. plucked lyre, Nerevsk site, Novgorod, NW Russia, 13th c.; 3. modern bowed lyre (*jouhikko*) from Finland; 4. bowed lyre (*talharpa*), Nuckö/Noarootsi, NW Estonia, mid-18th c.; 5. plucked Baltic psaltery (*kannel*), Rõngu, SE Estonia, from c. 1820. All but the* jouhikko *made by the author.*

Much information on bowed lyres can be found in several works of Finland's Swedish ethnomusicologist Otto Andersson (1879–1969). His dissertation (1923) and book (*The Bowed Harp*, 1930) report on his fieldwork among Swedish-speaking Vormsi (Ormsö) Islanders of Estonia in December 1903 and January 1904. Finnish ethnographer and ethnomusicologist Armas Otto Väisänen (1890–1969) covers the Finnish/Karelian tradition in a 1928 monograph. He was in the border area in 1912 and 1916, which Andersson also visited in 1922. Finnish folk music researcher and instrument maker Rauno Nieminen examined the history, repertoire, and playing technique of the bowed lyre in *The Bowed Lyre: Jouhikko* (2007) and wrote a report on instrument construction (2008), both for his dissertation project at the Sibelius Academy. Estonian researcher Janne Suits wrote a master's thesis on Estonian playing techniques (2010). Other information came from museum specimens, archives, musicians and descendants, training workshops, performances, recordings, and films.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Some aspects of the instrument's distribution are puzzling. Finland's Swedish minority lacked it, but in Estonia the Swedish minority was initially the main base – on the northwest islands of Vormsi (Ormsö), Hiiumaa (Dagö), Saaremaa (Ösel), Noarootsi (Nuckö, now a peninsula), and the nearby coast.[1] The bowed lyre was not played by Swedes on the islands of Ruhnu (Runö), Pakri (Rågö), Naissaar (Nargö), Osmussaar (Odensholm), or in Estonian towns. Some Estonians near Swedish areas made and played it.[2] It was not played in most parts of Estonia, nor in the adjacent lands of Latvia and Russian Ingria.

The bowed lyre was played in southeastern Finland and adjacent southern Karelia. Both Finns and kindred Karelians played it. Swedes and Russians in these areas were not known to have done so. Such activity was concentrated on Lake Ladoga's north shore, now a Russian territory.

How and when the bowed lyre arrived in the Baltic area is undocumented. Andersson (1904: 168–170, 174–175; 1930: 132–134) noted the predominance of simple rhyming songs among Estonia's Swedes, plus a lack of ballads, other song types, and instruments that spread in mainland Sweden in the thirteenth century or later. He concludes that settlers left Sweden before such musical innovations appeared there, and stayed isolated from such trends in Estonia. Jonathan Lindström (2015: 249) also thinks the bowed lyre arrived with Swedish settlers, during a crusade to convert Estonia to Christianity in the early thirteenth century.

The bowed lyre's arrival in Finland/Karelia may also be linked to a Swedish enclave, such as the Baltic port of Vyborg (Viipuri) in Karelian territory, now in Russia. A bowed lyre player with a Finnic surname performed there in 1859 (Nieminen 2007: 23). The instrument could have arrived much earlier, perhaps via another thirteenth-century crusade or Hanseatic League trade. Hanseatic-Novgorod treaties of 1262 and 1270 mention a long-established pattern of visits by Swedish merchants from Gotland Island to Karelian settlements via the Vyborg area (Ruuth 1906: 5).

Scandinavian sagas hint at an even earlier Viking base on this Karelian shore (Ruuth 1906: 3). This may explain why bowed lyres had a greater geographic range in Finland/Karelia than in Estonia and involved more players of the aboriginal population (see maps in Andersson 1930: 257a; Nieminen 2007: 14; 2008: 104). This would also give Finnish/Karelian instruments more time to develop features like narrow or double handholes (Figs. 2(3), 3, 4), to diverge from the oldest images of bowed lyres, dated to the eleventh century (discussed below). The latter are symmetrical, with a wide handhole and a separate peg-yoke, like Swedish-Estonian specimens (Figs. 2(4), 5–11).

In Sweden, bowed lyres were collected from the regions of Småland and Dalarna. The bowed lyre may have spread to Småland and other parts of southern Sweden from Denmark, which had the earliest image of bowing in Scandinavia, dated to the twelfth century (Panum 1971 [1939]: 345). By the thirteenth century, Southern Swedes settled on Vormsi Island, probably from Öland Island (Lindström 2015), and on the Karelian coast, where Vyborg's founders and early leaders came from Småland (Carlsson 1927: 46). In the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries, some Southeastern Finns relocated to central Sweden (including Dalarna) to help in forest clearing and mining (Montelius 1960). By then they were probably familiar with the bowed lyre via contacts with Karelians or Vyborg Swedes. This may explain why the Dalarna bowed lyre has a look and name evocative of Finnish/Karelian tradition.[3] Elsewhere in central Sweden, the bowed lyre was apparently never adopted or soon replaced by other bowed instruments.

Long before the Forest Finns went to Dalarna, settlers from central Sweden had arrived on the Ahvenanmaa/Åland Islands (now a Finnish territory). They spread to the western and southern coasts of Finland at an accelerated pace after the Swedes' crusades began in Finland in 1157, and thence reached Estonia's northern coast (Rußwurm 2015 [1855]: 80–83; Lagman 1979: 4, 59, 85), some decades after the initial migration from southern Sweden to Vormsi. Absence of bowed lyres in some Swedish enclaves of Finland and Estonia may thus simply reflect the situation in the region of Sweden whence the colonists or their ancestors came.

INSTRUMENTS AND PLAYING STYLES

Nieminen (2008) lists 49 bowed lyres in collections in Finland, Estonia, Sweden, Russia, Germany, and the USA. These were made between the mid-eighteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. Two more are now known in Latvian and Lithuanian museums.

The 23 instruments from Finland/Karelia, known as *jouhikko* or *jouhikantele* 'horsehair/bow psaltery', have 2–3 strings, an asymmetrical shape, a narrow handhole, and one-piece (monoxylic) construction of the handhole's frame, so the soundbox and peg-holding yoke are of the same block of wood (Figs. 2(3); 3). Some specimens have a second hole (Fig. 4).

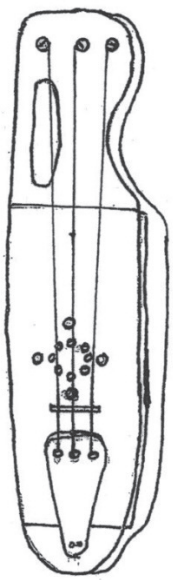

Figure 3. *Karelian* jouhikko *of Matti Koikkalainen, Sortavala, Lake Ladoga, Russia (item K1855:30, obtained 1877, Finnish National Museum, Helsinki).*

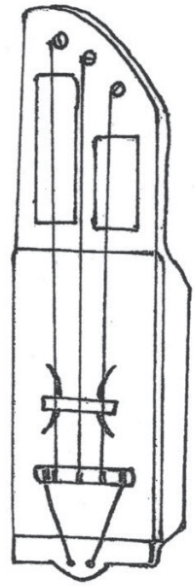

Figure 4. *Two-holed Finnish* jouhikantele *of Juho Villanen, Savonranta, Finland (item 89, obtained 1915, Sibelius Museum, Turku).*

The average size of Finnish/Karelian specimens is 58 x 15 x 7 centimeters – longer, narrower, and deeper than the 51 x 19 x 6 cm for specimens from Estonia. Both types weigh an average of 0.8 kilograms. Calculations are based on Nieminen's data (2008: 189) and the author's measurements of three Estonian specimens.

The 26 specimens from Estonia are called *talharpa* 'horsehair harp' by the local Swedes,[4] *tagelharpa* in standard Swedish, and *hiiu kannel* 'Hiiu Island psaltery' or *rootsi kannel* 'Swedish psaltery' by Estonians. (Nieminen lists 24; two more found by the author in Riga and Kaunas, are shown in Figs. 5–7.) They have 2–4 strings, a symmetrical shape, a wide handhole, usually a two-piece design, with a peg-yoke attached to arms projecting from the soundbox (Figs. 2(4), 8–10). Some late specimens are made of joined boards, not hollowed out (Figs. 11, 12). The latter type often has a broad soundbox, dovetail or box joints, and sometimes an arched peg-yoke (Fig. 11). Some late models have a waisted violin-style soundbox (Figs. 12, 13) and strings of metal rather than spun horsehair or gut.

Figure 5. *Hiiumaa (Dagö)* talharpa, *late 19th or early 20th c., item 253155 in Latvian National History Museum, Riga. Its unique features include the insertion of (now missing) pegs upward from the handhole, a piece of horn on the peg-yoke's edge with slots for strings, and carved serpentine sides of the handhole frame.*

Figure 6. *Enlarged detail of Hiiumaa* talharpa*, side view of handhole frame, showing archaic Viking-style decoration and newer type of assembled soundbox.*

Figure 7. Hiiu kannel *made by Elmar Luhats of Räpina / Tartu in 1958, played by son Toivo Luhats, item LTMM 192 in Folk Music Branch, Kaunas City Museum, Lithuania. The bisected peg frame is unique.*

Figure 8. *Vormsi bowed lyre (*talharpa*), obtained in 1857, item SU 734:1 in Finnish National Museum, Helsinki. Typical features include attachment of string through split ends of pegs and nailing of arching soundboard to soundbox.*

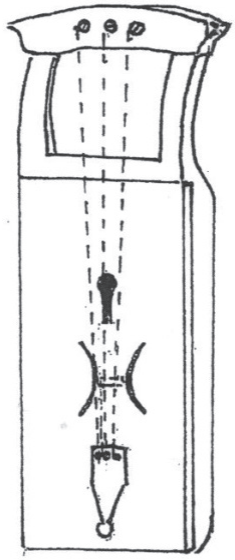

Figure 9. *Three-string* talharpa*, Nuckö/Noarootsi, Estonia (item N104366, made ca. 1750, Performing Arts Museum, Stockholm).*

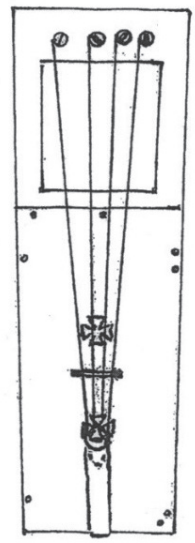

Figure 10. *Four-string* talharpa *by Hans Renqvist, Borrby, Vormsi, Estonia (item 1962-07-00036, obtained 1903–1904, Mathers Museum, Bloomington, Indiana, USA).*

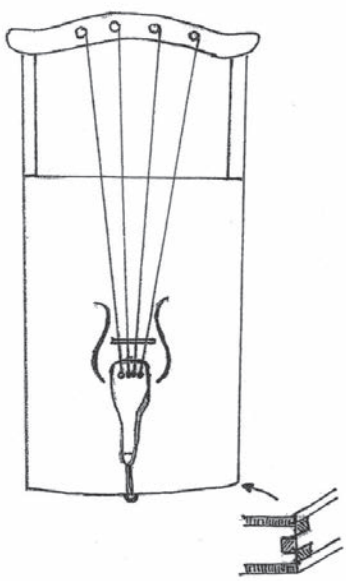

Figure 11. *Wide bowed lyre with box joints, of Jurri Bruus, Hiiumaa, Estonia (item 180, obtained 1908, Sibelius Museum, Turku).*

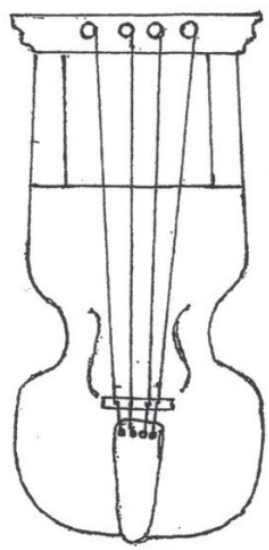

Figure 12. *Violin-shaped* rootsi kannel *of Aadu Volberg, Lääne-Nigula, Estonia (item A348:9, early 1900s, Estonian National Museum, Tartu).*

Figure 13. *Vormsi* talharpa *with violin-style soundbox, by Hans Renqvist of Borrby, obtained in 1903 by Otto Andersson, item 179, Sibelius Museum, Turku.*

Sweden's two specimens are starkly different from each other. One is like a wide-holed instrument of Estonia's Swedes (Fig. 14), only 47.5 cm long. The other is much larger and of the narrow-holed Finnish/Karelian type (Fig. 15), 77.8 cm long.

Andersson (1930: 117) and Bergelt (1986: 230) see the Swedish-Estonian design (Fig. 2(4)) as a later development, but it is consistent with the oldest images of bowed lyres and with relics of plucked lyres (Fig. 2(2)), from which bowed lyres apparently evolved. The Finnish/Karelian design (Fig. 2(3)) may be a result of later simplifications of construction, to reduce labor or avoid peg-yoke breakage. Some Swedish and Estonian instruments also have a one-piece design. Totally independent invention of the two regional types of bowed lyres is implausible, as the traditions have so much in common.

The playing method and tuning are quite similar in the Finnish/Karelian and Swedish-Estonian traditions. The seated player may hold the instrument vertically between the knees, with the bow over the left knee (Fig. 16), or horizontally across the thighs, with the bow between the knees (Fig. 17). In both cases, the left hand's nails or knuckles press against the melody string(s) (Fig. 1).

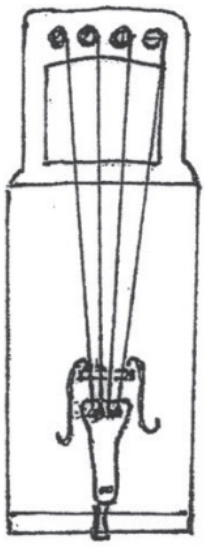

Figure 14. *Småland bowed lyre, Sweden (item M448, obtained 1912, Performing Arts Museum, Stockholm).*

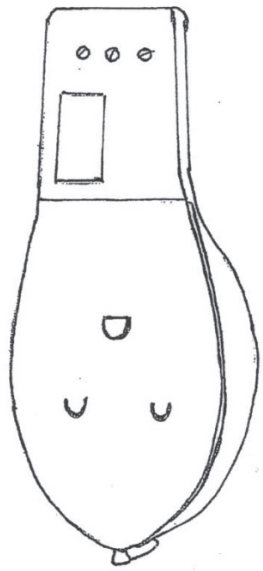

Figure 15. *Dalarna* sotharpa*, Öje, Sweden (item N9757, obtained 1869, Performing Arts Museum, Stockholm).*

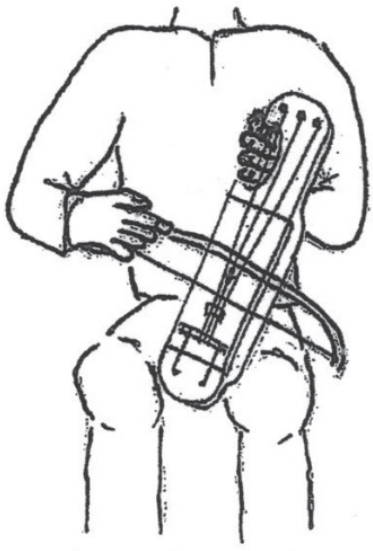

Figure 16. *Karelian* jouhikko*, vertical position.*

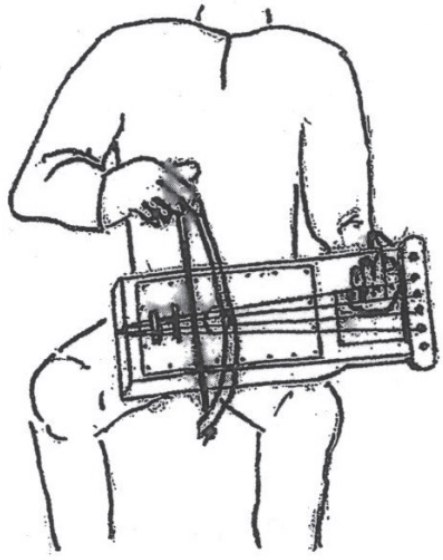

Figure 17. *Estonian* hiiu kannel*, horizontal position.*

In Finland/Karelia, the melody tends to be played on the string nearest the player, at the narrow handhole. This string is tuned one note above the tonic note, thus D in the key of C. (All tunings are given in the key of C, to facilitate comparisons.) Pressing the D-string with the index finger close to the peg yields E, the middle finger placed a half-step higher or just beside the index finger makes F, the ring finger makes G, the little finger makes A and with stretching even a high C. The second string is a low drone, at the dominant tone (low G). The tonic note (C) comes from pressing the drone string with the ring finger, and/or from the open third string (if available), tuned higher or lower than the open drone.[5]

Swedish-Estonian bowed lyres typically have the same set-up, plus a fourth string at the low tonic note (low C).[6] In this tradition, both the first and second strings are used for melody (Fig. 1). Pressing the second string (low G) with the index finger near the peg yields low A, the middle finger yields low B natural, and the ring finger yields C when placed a half-step higher or just beside the middle finger.

THE TRADITION AMONG ESTONIA'S SWEDES

The bowed lyre was especially popular on Vormsi Island. In the mid-nineteenth century, Carl Rußwurm noted that virtually all men there knew how to play it, taking turns during all-night dancing at wedding feasts. He presented a transcribed tune played on it, plus an 1854 lithograph of a Vormsi player at a wedding dance (2015 [1855]: 427, 462, 750, 783). The instrument was also used for entertainment in homes, especially in winter, at young folks' gatherings in summer, and at alehouses (Andersson 1930: 116).

A religious revival on Vormsi Island in the 1870s led to widespread rejection and even burning of bowed lyres, leaving only a few active players (Andersson 1930: 112). Johannes Österberg recalled hearing from his instructor that this happened in 1875 (on tape from 1974–1975), but the first revival was in 1876, followed by others in 1878, 1879, 1881 (Österblom 1927: 26, 33, 35; Carlsson 2019: 63, 69, 71, 78, 124). Lindström (1977: 141) reports the year as 1876. A student wrote vividly of a bonfire of such instruments, based on his father's childhood memories of Hullo village on Vormsi Island (Söderbäck 1964: 262–263). The pastor who reportedly sparked the fervor was sent from Sweden by a new evangelical organization, but may actually have tried to dissuade zealots from destroying instruments seen as tools of the Devil (Aman 1992: 58). The pastor's efforts to promote education, hygiene, and morality made a strong impression on worshippers, receptive to trying a new way of life because of increasing burdens imposed by estate owners. From the late sixteenth century, the village

lands the islanders had occupied for centuries under the relatively benign rule of bishops[7] were claimed for large estates, whose owners were pressed to contribute to the coffers of the Swedish king and later the Russian tsar. By the 1870s, Vormsi Swedes' long legal battle to defend their historic exemptions and privileges had ended with the ruling that their only special right, compared to Estonian peasants, was the right to leave (Kanarbik 2003). This context makes it understandable why desperate, overworked islanders abandoned old lore and artifacts to try something new. A resident of the nearby mainland district of Riguldi (Rickul) reported the memory of his mother (born 1859) about a similar bonfire of "sinful" bowed lyres during her youth (Söderbäck 1964: 263). A century earlier, dance instruments (bowed lyres and bagpipes) were reportedly burned on Hiiumaa Island (Utas 1969: 61); Norrman (1986: 7) refers to an unspecified form of destruction there.

During an expedition to collect Swedes' folk melodies in Estonia in late 1903 and early 1904, Otto Andersson spent four weeks on Vormsi Island, where he unexpectedly came upon the bowed lyre. He found only two players willing to perform traditional tunes: Hans Renqvist (1842?–1906) and Anders Ahlström (1873–1959), both in Borrby village.[8] Two others refused to do so on religious grounds (Andersson 1904: 199). A few more Vormsi players were found by later researchers (Andersson 1930: 113, 116–117; Nieminen 2008: 184; Suits 2010), but little is known about them or their repertoire. Nieminen (1984, 2007) presents transcriptions of 20 Renqvist and 10 Ahlström tunes Andersson sent to the Swedish Literary Society in Finland (SLS), which funded his expedition. Some transcriptions diverge a bit from fieldnotes at the Sibelius Museum in Turku, where there is an extra Renqvist tune, omitted from the report to the SLS.

Per Söderbäck from Sweden thought the bowed lyre might no longer be heard after his visit to Vormsi in the 1920s. He bought the instrument of Anders Vaksam, who found it hard to play at the age of 84 (1964: 263–265). Yet the island's tradition lingered until World War II, when it was transplanted to Sweden by refugees.

Andersson solicited lore about the bowed lyre in the February 18, 1920 issue of the newspaper for Estonia's Swedes, *Kustbon* (Coastal Dweller) (Andersson 1920). Teacher John Berggren sent his grandparents' stories and other reports from Vormsi. Berggren was even inspired to learn to play on a bowed lyre his students had rescued from a trash pile. Tragically, he was among the first deported in 1941 after the Soviet invasion of Estonia, and died in Russia two years later.[9]

Another external stimulus contributing to Vormsi Islanders' renewed appreciation of the bowed lyre was an invitation from Stockholm to reenact an old-fashioned Vormsi-style wedding at Skansen, the Swedish ethnographic

open-air museum, in 1930. A new bowed lyre was made for the event, and a knowledgeable (unnamed) player from Borrby was enlisted to tune and play it (Lindström 1977: 142). A Vormsi choir also went on a tour to Sweden, so islanders from other villages saw the Borrby player's art. This could explain why youths elsewhere (at least in Kärrslätt, as detailed in endnote 21) took up the instrument around then.

The bowed lyre tradition endured surprisingly long also among Hiiumaa Islanders, under most adverse conditions. Andersson found Jurri (Georg) Bruus of Hiiumaa playing the bowed lyre at Helsinki harbor in 1908, after Bruus sailed there to deliver cargo. Andersson even recorded six tunes by Bruus – the earliest audio recordings of folk music from Estonia.[10] Bruus could not speak the language of his Swedish parents, but by 1894 had learned to play the bowed lyre from the "almost centenarian" Swedish sexton/cantor of the Lutheran church of "the Swedish village", presumably *Rootsi küla* (Andersson 1921: 120; 1930: 117–118).

Most Swedes of Hiiumaa had been deported to Ukraine by tsarist officials in 1781, to end a long dispute with estate owners. Their deportation took nine months, and barely a tenth of the thousand exiles survived a year after arrival in Ukraine (Utas 1959: 39, 208; Hedman & Åhlander 2003 [1993]: 26–31, 40–46). Somehow the bowed lyre passed through this ordeal, as well as the abovementioned destruction of instruments before deportation and an 1835 firestorm in the new settlement beside the Dnepr River in Ukraine (Norrman 1986: 7, 17).[11]

The bowed lyre endured for over a century there, surviving even longer among the descendants emigrating from Ukraine to British Columbia in Canada. Bowed lyre player Andreas Hindriksson Sigalet (1844–1913) arrived in Canada in 1889. His instrument inspired Johannes/John Simonsson Hoas (1895–1969), who arrived from Ukraine in 1913 to work first as a farmhand at Sigalet's farm, to make and play a copy in the 1950s. Side-by-side photos in the December 2002 issue of *Kustbon* (Hedman 2002: 5) reveal a striking resemblance between Hoas' bowed lyre from the 1950s and the one Anders Vaksam had at Vormsi in the 1920s, despite lack of contact between their communities since 1781. Both instruments had a narrow, rectangular four-string design, with a pair of S-shaped soundholes plus a heart-shaped one (Figs. 18, 19).

Hoas' correspondence with a nephew in Sweden suggests that Sigalet made his instrument in Ukraine and Hoas did not learn of it until his marriage to Sigalet's granddaughter around 1918, years after the elder musician's death (Jörgen Hedman's e-mails of August 18, 2018, and April 17, 2019). Whether Hoas had access to Sigalet's instrument or relied on a description or drawing of it is unknown. The former seems more likely, since Hoas worked on Sigalet's farm (Hoas 1962: 6) and married into Sigalet's family. How Hoas learned to

play is also a mystery. The published accounts about Hoas' *talharpa* and his correspondence archived at the Institute for Language and Folk Memories in Uppsala do not mention his exposure to any research on the instrument. He notes that all men in the Sigalet family were good musicians (Hoas 1962: 4), so one of them might have shown him how to play the bowed lyre. In a 1960 photo, Hoas' fingers reach toward the third and fourth strings, traditionally left open.[12]

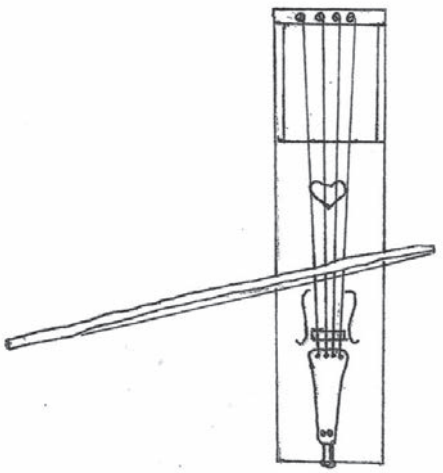

Figure 18. *Bowed lyre of Johannes Hoas, Vancouver, Canada, made in the 1950s.*

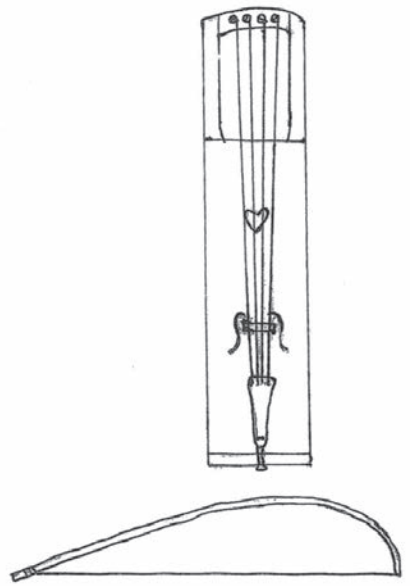

Figure 19. Talharpa *and bow of Anders Vaksam, Vormsi, Estonia, obtained in the 1920s.*

Some of the bowed lyre repertoire of these migrants may have survived. On a tape of Swedish folk music from Canada (Norrman 1986: 22, 51–54), Hoas plays two tunes reputedly from Hiiumaa, including one with "a ceremonial character".[13] The latter could be a wedding tune. Several tunes attributed to Sigalet, including a wedding march, were transcribed by Olof Andersson from Swedish refugees allowed to leave Soviet Ukraine in 1929. Although Sigalet left Ukraine under duress four decades earlier, after tsarist officials closed his family's tavern and his windmill was torched in a religious dispute (Utas 1959: 115, 140), he was recalled as the community's last master of old tunes (Norrman 1986: 13, 21, 40–42). Though both Sigalet and Hoas were also fiddlers, the limited range of notes and ceremonial nature of several of their tunes make it likely that these were once played on the bowed lyre.[14]

EVOLUTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The earliest bowed instruments in Europe were in Moorish Iberia in the southwest and in the Byzantine Empire in the southeast. In both cases, instruments of the fiddle or lute type, with necks instead of handholes, were depicted with bows in the tenth century. This was shortly after the documentation of bowing in the Turkestan Basin in Central Asia in the ninth century (Bachmann 1969: 24–43, 47–53, 136–137).

By the eleventh century, bowing had spread across Europe, and was used even on lyres. The practice could have spread to Viking ancestors of Estonia's Swedes via Celts of Western Europe or Slavs of Eastern Europe. Direct contacts with Moors, Byzantines, and Central Asians were also possible in Vikings' extensive travels. There are no images of bowed lyres in Viking art. Remnants of instruments and references in folklore are ambiguous as to how strings of their "harps" were activated (Andersson 1930: 144–166). Yet at the Vikings' settlement of Dublin in Ireland, a bow was found, dated to the mid-eleventh century, decorated with a Viking-style dragon-like animal's head (Homo-Lechner 1996: 98; Buckley 2000: 173). Was it used on a lyre or something else?

Figure 20. *Bowed lyre player, eleventh-century painting, Saint Leopold's prayerbook, Kloster Neuberg, Austria.*

Figure 21. *Bowed lyre player, painting in eleventh-century psalter, Werden Monastery, Germany.*

The earliest proof of bowed lyres may be in a painting in the eleventh-century prayerbook of St. Leopold at Kloster Neuberg in Austria (Andersson 1930: 231–234; Panum 1971 [1939]: 222–224; Bachmann 1969: xiv, Plate 89; Seebass 1973: Plate 100). Three players have bowed lyres, with a waisted form (like the number 8) and rounding of both the soundbox and handhole frame, plus a visibly separate arched peg-yoke in two cases. One instrument has a cross-shaped soundhole (Fig. 20), also seen on some Baltic bowed lyres. Strings (3) are seen on only one instrument.

Another eleventh-century painting, from Werden Monastery in Germany's Ruhr Valley (Fig. 21), shows the back of a figure-8 instrument, with three strings clearly visible and hints of two more. The left hand grasps a side of the handhole's frame. Its nails or knuckles reach toward the nearest strings, as in the later Baltic traditions.

A rectangular shape, like the Swedish-Estonian type, is another early form. One example is in a bas-relief at St. Finan's Church on Church Island in southwestern Ireland (Fig. 22). It has been dated variously – to the end of the first millennium AD (Leisiö 1997: 105), no later than the eleventh century (Panum 1971 [1939]: 226–227), and ca. 1200 (Andersson 1930: 242, 250; Bachmann 1969: xiv, Plate 93). The musician uses his right hand to bow four strings spanning a wide handhole. Another rectangular example, dated ca. 1200, is a sculpture at Grossmünster Church in Zürich, Switzerland (Bachmann 1969: xiv, Plate 96; Seebass 1973: Plate 127). It shows right-handed bowing on a lyre with four strings and an indistinctly demarcated handhole (Fig. 23).

Other early images of bowed lyres are from France (eleventh century), Italy (twelfth), England (eleventh/twelfth–fifteenth), Scotland (twelfth), Germany (thirteenth), and Norway (fourteenth century) (Andersson 1930: 167, 213, 228, 235, 239, 242; 1970: 4–5; Panum 1971 [1939]: 224, 228, 231; Bachmann 1969: ix–x, xiv; Plates 23, 90, 91). Some show a fingerboard or neck across the handhole. Others show a playing position unknown in the Baltic region: the instrument held upside-down (pegs below), or the tailpiece end against the chest or under the chin, violin-style.

These images do not prove the bowed lyre was played at a particular time or place. The artwork or artist could have been brought from elsewhere. The images do establish some exposure of the local population to the concept of a bowed lyre.

Figure 22. *Bowed lyre player, tenth–thirteenth century bas-relief, Saint Finan's Church, Church Island, County Kerry, Ireland.*

Figure 23. *Bowed lyre player, sculpted ca. 1200, Grossmünster Church, Zürich, Switzerland.*

AMBIGUITIES

There are ambiguous cases whose classification as bowed lyres can be questioned. For example, a small, 5-string, thirteenth-century instrument from Gdansk, Poland, with an oval handhole, was called a *Streichleier* 'string/bowed/struck instrument' by Ernst Emsheimer (1964 [1961]). No bow, stringholder, or bridge was found with it, and there are no images of bowing of this type of asymmetrical instrument. It may actually represent a forerunner of the Baltic psaltery, a plucked instrument of a similar shape, minus the handhole (Fig. 2(5)).

An instrument with a vestigial handhole may belong to the lyre family morphologically, but not functionally. In Figures 20 and 23, strings are pressed from the front, and the handhole is unused. A functional handhole (Fig. 24) also becomes irrelevant with a neck for all strings to be pressed against (Figs. 25, 26), creating a fingerboard instrument with expendable bracing. These cases are still deemed lyres here, because they clearly derive from lyres and could yield versions where the handhole is again used to reach a string. The latter outcome occurs when some strings are offset from the neck, as on the modern Welsh *crwth*[15] (Fig. 27).

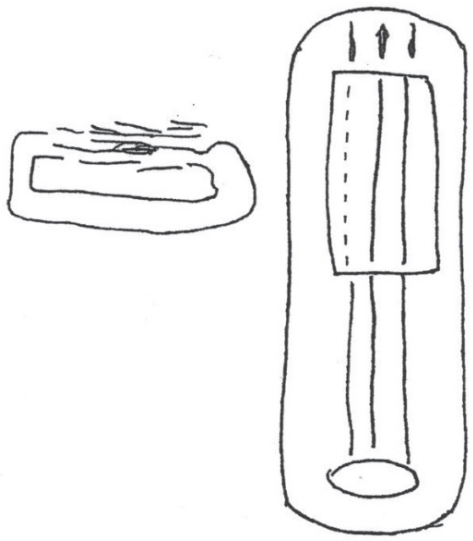

Figure 24. *Welsh* crwth *with a bow, undivided handhole, 1605-10 (after Crossley-Holland 1948: 18).*

Figure 25. *Bowed* crwth*-like instrument with a neck, from a painting in an eleventh-century verse-book, Saint Martial Abbey, Limoges, France (Bachmann 1969: Plate 91).*

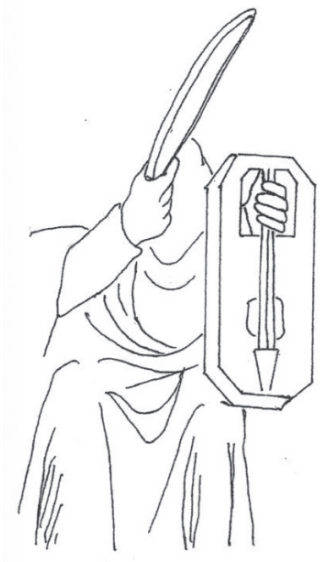

Figure 26. *Three-string bowed lyre with a neck, fourteenth-century fresco, Westminster Abbey, London, England (Panum 1971 [1939]: 231).*

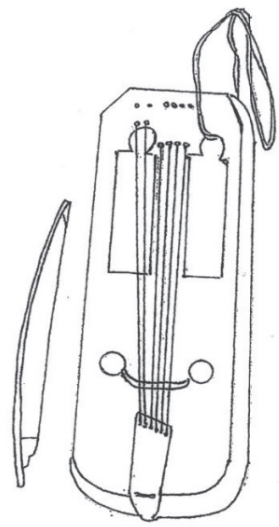

Figure 27. *Modern Welsh* crwth *from 1770 and 1784 sketches (Andersson 1930: 215).*

There can also be ambiguity in depictions due to artistic license. For example, Nidaros Cathedral at Trondheim in Norway has a puzzling sculpture of a bowed lyre player (Fig. 28), dated to the second quarter of the fourteenth century[16] (Andersson 1930: 167; 1970: 4–5; Bachmann 1969: Plate 97). The instrument of 3–4 strings, depending on interpretation of lines or bands by the player's knuckles, lacks pegs and a recognizable stringholder. The stylized depiction leaves unclear whether the handhole is narrow or wide.

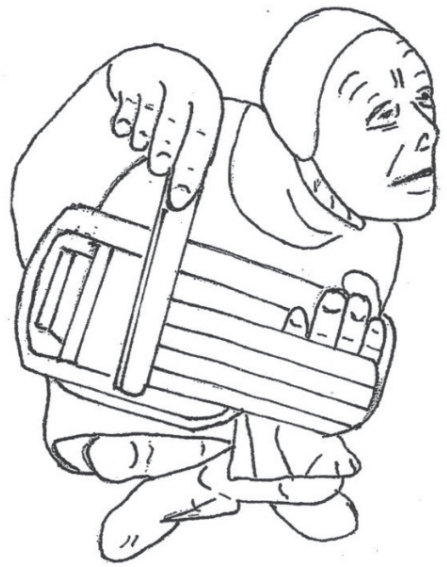

Figure 28. *Bowed lyre player, fourteenth-century sculpture, Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim, Norway (reproduction in Nieminen 2008: 46).*

THE BOWED LUTE

Both of the likely sources of European bowing (Moorish and Byzantine realms) had a small instrument known as *rebab* or *lyra*, respectively, later called *rebec / rubebe*. Originally plucked but bowed by the eleventh century (Panum 1971 [1939]: 342–344), it had no handhole, so it does not qualify as a lyre, but this type of bowed lute probably inspired the development of the bowed lyre. A sculpted two-string version at the twelfth-century Gamtofte Church at Funen (Fyn) Island in Denmark (Fig. 29) is the earliest known image of a bowed instrument in Scandinavia (Panum 1971 [1939]: 345). The bowed lute disappeared from most of Europe long ago, but is still played in the southeast, among South Slavs, Greeks, Cretans, and Turks.

Figure 29. *Bowed lute, twelfth-century stone carving, Gamtofte Church, Funen (Fyn), Denmark.*

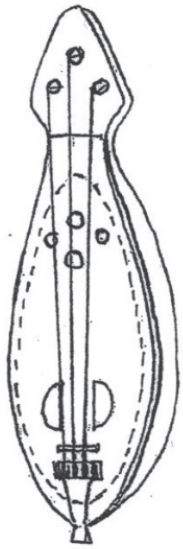

Figure 30. *Novgorod* gudok*, tenth–fourteenth century, Russia (from a sketch and photo in Povetkin 1982: 313).*

A Polish version may represent the longest survival in Northern Europe. It is known from Martin Agricola's 1545 treatise, later drawings and paintings, and even twentieth-century recollections (Panum 1971 [1939]: 361, 472–473; Dahlig-Turek & Pomianowska 2014; Knast n.d.). This wide-necked knee-fiddle, called *suka*, had a waisted violin-like body and 3–4 strings, widely spaced for lateral pressing (Dahlig-Turek & Pomianowska 2014: 24, 36, 44, 169–171).

The Russian *gudok* (Figs. 2(1), 30) also had room for lateral pressing, until the fifteenth century (Morgenstern 2018: 110–112).[17] Its other features typical of medieval European bowed lutes included a pear shape, minimal neck, and sagittal pegs, inserted from the back rather than sides of the peg-holder. Archeological specimens date back to the tenth century in Novgorod (Povetkin 2007: 376–380).

An even earlier find of this type is from the ninth century, in the Danish town of Hedeby/Haithabu, now on the German side of the border (Lawson 1984: 151–153). This specimen lacks a soundboard and peg holes but does have a hole for the tailpiece. The unfinished state suggests it was not an imported curiosity but being made locally.

The dating of the Hedeby and oldest Novgorod specimens may seem too early. Bachmann (1969) finds that bows did not arrive in Europe until the tenth century. Yet the varieties of instrument designs, bow shapes, and playing positions in the earliest depictions across Europe hint at an earlier period of unrecorded diffusion and experimentation.

The earliest lutes were perhaps played with a proto-bow. Implements that could get prolonged tones from strings, but were unsuited for picking individual strings, include a fan-shaped pick in a fifth-century Byzantine mosaic, an S-shaped one in a tenth-century German painting, and short friction sticks in paintings from Italy in the tenth and from France in the early eleventh century (Bachmann 1969: Plates 16–20). The latter case is most interesting, involving a small instrument just like those of Hedeby and Novgorod (and southeast Europe today), held vertically on the left knee, with fingers positioned for lateral pressing.

It is easy to imagine the invention of the bowed lyre in a place where both the bowed lute and plucked lyre were known. This seems likeliest where ethnic diversity and mercantile activity promoted cultural borrowing and experimentation. Someone curious about how a bow would sound on a lyre would have had both inspiration and freedom to innovate in such a setting.

Among the reasons to think the bowed lute provided inspiration for the bowed lyre are structural similarities. Both commonly have three or four radiating strings, wider apart at the sagittal pegs than at the bridge, and a hollowed-out body. A Swedish bowed lyre even has a lute's spoon shape (Fig. 15). Vestiges of this shape may also be seen in the curved backs or rounded corners of other bowed lyres. For both types of instruments, the bow is typically curved, with loose horsehair strands tightened by the right hand's grip (Panum 1971 [1939]: 339–340).

There is also a basic similarity in how strings are stopped to change tones. For both instruments, the left hand's curled fingers straighten somewhat to press sides of strings with nails or knuckles (Panum 1971 [1939]: 245), whether fingertips rest atop the lute's neck or reach through the lyre's handhole.[18] In both cases, the left hand's wrist stays near the pegs, in violinists' so-called first position, rather than shifting along the strings.

In an eleventh-century Austrian painting (Fig. 20), a bowed lyre player's left hand reaches around the handhole's frame on the far side, rather than through it. A Swiss sculpture of ca. 1200 (Fig. 23) has the player's left hand in a similar position. So a playing style reminiscent of the bowed lute's, where the left hand's fingers stretch around the far side of the neck, was tried on bowed lyres, before reaching strings through the handhole became standard.

Tuning schemes for bowed lyres and bowed lutes are similar. For both, the gap between the main melody string and the next is a fifth, and the next gap is also commonly a fifth: D G C for the bowed lyre and the reverse C G D for the bowed lute.[19] (In the case of a fourth string on a bowed lyre, it is usually an extra C, as noted above.) This enables droning or continually bowing two or more strings, as opposed to episodic harmonization on the violin.

TRANSITION TO BOWING

To spread so quickly and widely across Northern Europe after the tenth century, the innovation of bowing a lyre must have had some really appealing aspect(s). The new instrument's timbre was quite unlike the plucked lyre's. A bow rubbing a string makes a steady buzzing and rustling sound, unlike the sharp plink and quick fade of a struck string. Interest in prolonged tones is shown by the early use of proto-bows (noted above). Bowed instruments evoke the human voice, in terms of sustained sounds and sliding effects, making them eminently suitable to accompany singers (Bachmann 1969: 56–57, 137). However, a bowed lyre's tone is less predictable in comparison with fingerboard instruments, varying with the pressure on the string in open air.

The novelty of a drone was surely appreciated. The medieval era in Europe was a time of experimentation with bourdons on a variety of string instruments, as well as on bagpipes.[20] Yet this meant a loss of rich and varied chords, which require more strings than bowed lyres tend to have.

Bowing promoted modification of the lyre, from a design suited for plucking. The latter technique gets only one clear note per string. Shortening a plucked string's vibrating section yields other tones, but these are muffled without a hard fingerboard to press against. Finger-stopping during bowing yields multiple clear notes per string, so complex melodies fit onto just one or two strings. This favored reduction of the number of strings, a narrower shape, and a curved bridge to raise strings to different heights for selective bowing. A twelfth-century Freiburg sculpture illustrates the process: its lyre is set up for eight strings (Seebass 1973: Plate 31; six strings in Andersson's drawing, 1930: 228), but only four pegs hold strings; the player's scepter may be a proto-bow.

The changes may not have been immediate, as a lyre could be alternately plucked and bowed. Bergelt (1986: 230–232) offered a plausible scenario, where some strings became inaccessible to the bow by being wound lower around pegs. This would prevent cacophony from bowing all strings simultaneously, without impeding access to any string for plucking.

Bowed instruments' names among Finnic peoples suggest diffusion from Swedes. As noted above, Estonians usually call their bowed lyre *rootsi kannel* 'Swedish psaltery' or *hiiu kannel* 'Hiiumaa psaltery', after the large island where many Swedes once lived and played it. Finns may have applied the term *harppu* to the bowed lyre, derived from the Swedish *harpa* 'harp'. Unlike Väisänen and Andersson, Nieminen (2007: 19) thinks this loanword applied to the Finnish bowed zither (with a fretboard, no handhole), but it is still noteworthy that Finns linked a Swedish word to bowing and to an instrument having a melody and a drone string (Panum 1971 [1939]: 274–275). In both Finland and Karelia, the implement for stroking strings could be called *roka* (Andersson 1930: 62–64), evidently a Finnicized version of the Swedish *stråke* 'bow'.

DERIVATIVE INSTRUMENTS

Why did the bowed lyre generally decline in popularity after the Middle Ages? It was at a disadvantage against similar-sounding instruments offering more volume from a larger soundbox, greater range from a long neck, and more precision via wooden keys pressed against strings (hurdy-gurdy, keyed fiddle). Such instruments used tangential string-stopping and supplementary (drone or sympathetic) strings resonating along with the melody string(s), so basic features of the bowed lyre and bowed lute remained in vogue.

A likely derivative of the bowed lyre is the Icelandic elongated *gigje* or *fiðla*, with 2–4 strings of horsehair or metal. Lacking a handhole, the design was influenced by the Norwegian *langeleik* (like the Swedish *hummel* or German *Scheitholt*), a plucked trough-shaped instrument to which Icelanders applied the bow and evidently the string-stopping technique from a lost form of the bowed lyre. To play the form that survived in Iceland (Fig. 31), the back of the left hand rests on the soundboard's edge, and curled fingers rise to press knuckles against the elevated melody string (closest to the player) in open air, while the right hand bows melody and drone strings simultaneously (Panum 1971 [1939]: 269–270; Heimisdóttir 2012: 11–13). The left thumb is not needed to hold the instrument, which rests on the knees or on a table, so this digit can be used for string-stopping. An extra-long melody string also enables surpassing the bowed lyre's range.

The trough-like version of the Latvian two-string *giga* closely resembles the Icelandic *gigje* in name and appearance. Used for bass accompaniment, it is played by pressing strings down against a fretboard, however. Its playing style suggests derivation from something other than a bowed lyre, like the Swedish *psalmodikon*.

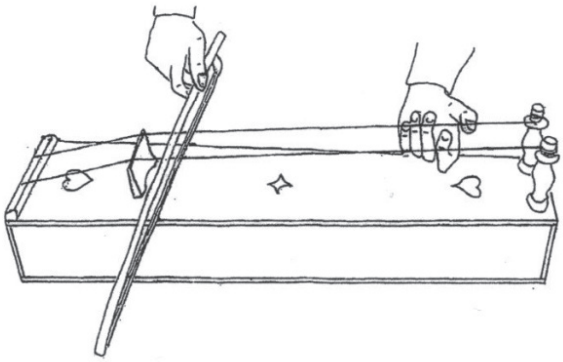

Figure 31. *Icelandic* fiðla *reconstructed by Chris Foster, traditional hand positions (from a photo in Heimisdóttir 2012: 13).*

REVIVAL IN SWEDEN

During World War II, most Vormsi Islanders evacuated to Sweden, mainly to the Stockholm area. The few bowed lyre players among them left their instruments behind. A quarter century passed before bowed lyres appeared at gatherings of the refugee community. This began with a 1968 presentation of two bowed lyres, representing Vormsi and Nuckö, that Anders Westerberg (1912–2000) had just made. Johannes Österberg (1919–1975) and Johan Ahlström (1901–1989) soon followed his example, each making two instruments.

Virtually no one outside their transplanted group knew of the tradition until 1975, when Swedish Television 1 showed Johannes Österberg playing *talharpa* in the program *Visor kring Östersjön* (Tunes around the Baltic Sea). He recounted how he had learned to play as a lad at Vormsi, when an old man (probably Anders Appelblom)[21] decided he did not want to die with the secret of how to play. Two of three parts of the medley Österberg performed were variations of tunes Hans Renqvist played in 1903–1904, and Anders Ahlström played another version of one of these back then. This suggests considerable stability in the bowed lyre repertoire of Vormsi.

Swedish amateur musicologist Styrbjörn Bergelt (1939–2006) learned to play the traditional way, mostly from Österberg.[22] Inspired by Andersson's research, Bergelt had already made a bowed lyre in 1971, but was unsure about how to play until he saw Österberg perform (Leydon 2006). Bergelt published transcriptions of bowed lyre tunes with his phonograph record *Tagelharpa och*

videflöjt (Bowed Lyre and Willow Flute) (1979) and in the music newsletter *Sörmlandslåten* (Sörmland Melody) (1982) (Suits 2010: 30). He also taught courses in instrument-making and playing, and shared his knowledge through articles, compact disc (CD) booklets, concerts, and radio programs.

Among Bergelt's students were two prominent descendants of Swedish refugees from Estonia. Svante Lagman of Linköping (born 1955, with ancestral roots in Estonia's mainland district of Rickul/Riguldi) played radio duets with Bergelt and still performs for the refugee community. Sofia Joons Gylling (born 1972, with roots on Naissaar/Nargö Island) took instruction from Bergelt after moving from Sweden to Estonia in 1994 and getting a replica of a bowed lyre she measured at the Estonian National Museum in Tartu, from restorer and instrument maker Roland Suits. During 19 years of study and work in Estonia, she produced CDs featuring bowed lyre music, helped organize instruction camps and an international bowed lyre video project, and directed the August Pulst School (headquartered in Viljandi), for tutorials on folk instruments. After moving back to Sweden and later to Finland, she kept up ties with musicians in Estonia and still performs there.

Bergelt expressed disappointment that the bowed lyre did not get more attention in Sweden (Leydon 2006). He noted that the *nyckelharpa* (keyed fiddle) is much more popular there. But his legacy also includes his impact on musicians and researchers in Finland and Estonia.

EAST BALTIC REVIVALS

After wartime evacuation of Swedish-Estonian players and deaths of the last prominent Estonian ones in the 1950s, no active musician familiar with the bowed lyre tradition remained in Estonia. In the 1970s, Toivo Luhats of Tallinn (born 1938) taught himself to play a *hiiu kannel* made by his father Elmar Luhats from southeast Estonia. Toivo Luhats decided to tune his four-string bowed lyre like a violin, with the farthest string tuned the highest (rather than the closest string, as was traditional on the bowed lyre). He found it natural to press strings with fingertips, as on a violin. His televised performance in 1983 reveals other non-traditional aspects of his playing, including general neglect of the first string for melody and use of a thumb sling of leather in the nearest corner of the handhole.[23] Traditional aspects include a rectangular-shaped instrument, a loosely strung bow, and steady droning. Promoting the bowed lyre as an integral part of Estonia's folk music heritage, Luhats taught his style at the Piibarid Hobby Center for youths' folk music education in Tallinn and performed with the Leegajus ensemble. He oversaw the production of 15 bowed

lyres by music teachers at a camp at Leisi on Saaremaa Island (telephone interview of October 30, 2012, in Tallinn).

A larger revival began in Estonia in the early 1990s. Ain Sarv (1948–2006), a bagpipe and *kannel* player in the Leegajus ensemble and a founder of the Swedish-Estonian Culture Association (in Estonia) in 1988, met Styrbjörn Bergelt in 1985 and received two bowed lyres made by him and one by Anders Westerberg. Sarv did not become a bowed lyre player himself, but his daughter Maarja did.

Sarv loaned one instrument by each maker to Raivo Sildoja (born 1970), studying at Viljandi Culture College (now Academy) in the early 1990s. After making repairs, Sildoja copied Bergelt's lighter and more sonorous instrument, made of thin pieces of wood, with a soundpost and bass bar under the soundboard, as on violins. He respected Sarv's insistence on using horsehair instead of metal strings. Sildoja became the main producer of bowed lyres in Estonia, having made some 75 so far. He has performed with his family ensemble and the folk-rock group Oort. His wife Krista (née Kaljumäe, born 1973) has performed in several ensembles and became an instructor for bowed lyre and violin at the Estonian Music and Theater Academy, at Viljandi Culture Academy, and at the Folk Music School of Mooste in eastern Estonia.[24]

Bowed lyre instruction is included in the folk music program of Viljandi Culture Academy, an institution of higher learning affiliated with the University of Tartu. Joining Sarv to lobby effectively for such a curriculum in the early post-Soviet era (1990s) was Anneli Kont-Rahtola (born 1964) of the Sibelius Academy, today part of the University of the Arts. She had gone to Finland from Estonia to study violin in the late Soviet era, and learned to play *jouhikko* and *talharpa* in 1990 from Maija Karhinen, who was taught by Rauno Nieminen. Kont-Rahtola made bowed lyres for herself and Viljandi's new academy (e-mail of Dec. 12, 2012).

In Finland, decades of decline in bowed lyre playing had ended by the 1980s. Leading the revival there was Rauno Nieminen (born 1955).[25] He learned to play from folk music professor Martti Pokela and other self-taught players, but credits Jouni Arjava of Helsinki (born 1930) most for showing him the traditional style, with constant droning and a tightening grip of the bow. The latter had learned the art from his father Väinö Arjava/Lamberg (1899–1976), son of renowned *jouhikko* player Pekka Lamberg of Sortavala in Karelia (1863–1929). Jouni Arjava first performed at a school event in 1945/1946, on his grandfather's *jouhikko*, as reported by Nieminen in an interview on June 3, 2024. The violin-maker Carlo Bergman (1938–1989) was the foremost *jouhikko* maker in the early years of the revival, crafting some 100 instruments from the 1950s to the 1980s.

Nieminen began making *jouhikkos* in 1977, and has helped some 300 people make their own, mostly at the College of Craft and Design in Ikaalinen. As a member of Primo (Primitive Music Orchestra), Jouhiorkesteri, and other ensembles, he has popularized the bowed lyre through many radio and television broadcasts. He was inspired to do research on the instrument by Bergelt, with whom he exchanged visits and information. Demand for bowed lyres has grown significantly in recent years. Nieminen now makes even Swedish-Estonian *talharpas*, for players in Finland who opt for a wider handhole, so they can play the melody on two strings.

A noteworthy Karelian customer was Leo(nid) Sevets (1965–2016) of Petrozavodsk, in the Lake Onega area in northwest Russia. He played *jouhikko* in the ensembles Talvisovat and Myllärit, also as a soloist. At Nieminen's home in Finland in 1990, Sevets took lessons, and two years later got a *jouhikko* from his host.

The Karelian visitor already knew about the bowed lyre, perhaps via Ruth Niskanen, of the Kantele Ensemble of Petrozavodsk from 1939 to the 1950s (Nieminen's e-mail of December 4, 2018). It is unclear how she and another violinist in the group (Lili Rautanen) learned to play the *jouhikko*. They may have used *jouhikkos* solicited by the ensemble's founder Viktor Gudkov through a newspaper ad in 1935. When Niskanen arrived in Karelia in 1932 as a youth from Minnesota in the United States, the *jouhikko* was still being made and played in the Karelian countryside, e.g., by Semoy Tupitsin (Semyon Vasilyevich) at Tulomajärvi in the Aunus/Olonetsky district, as late as 1943 (Nieminen 2007: 35–36).

MOMENTUM IN ESTONIA

Encouraged by both Bergelt of Sweden and Nieminen of Finland, Janne Suits (Mängli) (née Tamm, born 1980) became the foremost researcher of the bowed lyre in Estonia. She was among the first Estonian students to study the instrument at Viljandi. She organized an international bowed lyre conference at Vormsi in 2005, and with Sofia Joons arranged a second one in Viljandi in 2008, resulting in the film *Talharpa* (2009). At Rauland Folk Culture Institute of Telemark University in Norway, Suits wrote a master's thesis (2010) on the Estonian bowed lyre. At the Traditional Music Center in Viljandi, she has directed the music library and the August Pulst School for folk instrument tutorials.

Vormsi's bowed lyre workshop is held every summer for several days, usually at Hullo. Instructors have included Janne Suits (Mängli), Krista Sildoja, Sofia

Joons Gylling, and others from Finland and Sweden. Bowed lyre making has been taught there by Mart Aardam, Mihkel Soon, Rauno Nieminen, and local crafts teacher Algor Streng. Learners include local residents, music teachers and musicians from across Estonia, and foreign visitors. The instrument is being heard again at local festivities, and lore about it has spread far beyond Vormsi. Participants have arranged bowed lyre tutorials, jam sessions, and concerts elsewhere in Estonia.

Dozens of players often meet to upgrade skills and learn new tunes. Respect for tradition is evident in their interest in tunes from over a century ago, including Finnish/Karelian ones. Players generally avoid applying violinists' effects, such as glissando, vibrato, staccato, prolonged trilling, not traditionally used on the bowed lyre. Players generally do not use sheet music to learn tunes, or written instructions to pick up new techniques. Instead, they rely on watching and listening to others, with some attention to audio tracks and video/film clips. So the process of transmission is semi-traditional, based on observation and imitation in intimate settings but not in the family and village contexts of yore.

There is a major departure from tradition in fingering style. Some players with violin experience press the first melody string with the fingerprint side, while using nails or knuckles on the second string. This mixed method is popular and efficient, enabling very fast movement between strings. Some Finnish players also use this ergonomic style.

The number of players in Estonia is greater than at any time since the instrument-burning fervor of a century and a half ago, yet small enough to raise concern about the long-term viability of the tradition. Bowed lyre makers are really rare. Yet several developments justify optimism. Interest in the instrument has spread far beyond the areas of Swedish settlement in northwest Estonia. The bowed lyre is widely accepted even by ethnic Estonians as part of their own folk music heritage. Young musicians are proud to show mastery of an archaic instrument, not just for domestic audiences but for tourists and listeners abroad. The social base of the bowed lyre has shifted from isolated rural settings to urban areas, where it is easier to meet other enthusiasts. Once played only by men, the bowed lyre now has many female players, especially prominent as leaders of the revival in Estonia. A new institutional base promoting the bowed lyre includes the Viljandi Culture Academy, Folk Music Heritage Center in Viljandi, Folk Music School at Mooste Manor, the Swedish-Estonian (Rannarootsi/Aiboland) Museum in Haapsalu, a non-profit association called Iiu Kintsuviiul (Hiiu Thigh Fiddle) in Käina on Hiiumaa Island, workshops and camps for learning how to make and play the instrument. More Estonians than ever now know of the bowed lyre, which has an image of being both ancient and "cool" or intriguingly fashionable. No longer restricted to traditional folk

music, it appears in new contexts such as performances of the folk-rock group Oort, heavy-metal rock group Metsatöll, Estonian-Welsh duo Sild, and experimental duo Puuluup, featuring looping and other surreal effects. The latter group's combination of traditional playing style and innovative choreography was featured in the internationally televised Eurovision Song Contest of 2024, as part of the act that first won the national competition in Estonia. What better evidence that the bowed lyre has come to draw unprecedented attention?

CONCLUSION

The development, spread, decline, and revival of the bowed lyre were all profoundly affected by international contacts. Inspiration for applying a bow to a lyre probably came from North Europeans' exposure to bowed lutes of Moors and/or Byzantines, possibly via Celtic or Slavic intermediaries, respectively. In the two countries where bowed lyre traditions are most viable today, Baltic Finnic groups (Finns and Estonians) have linked bowing with Swedes, a hint that bowed lyres arrived via Vikings, Crusaders, or traders from Sweden.

The relative isolation of the Swedish-Estonian islands and Finnish-Karelian frontier favored the preservation of bowed lyre traditions, against pressures and temptations to convert to new instruments with stabler tuning, louder volume, and wider ranges of notes. Yet severe outside threats to such endurance eventually extinguished bowed lyre playing in Estonia by the mid-twentieth century, as had happened in Sweden and elsewhere earlier, and nearly did so in Finland/Karelia. Imported religious fervor led to bonfires of instruments linked with secular pleasures – at least thrice among Estonia's Swedes. Invaders' interference led to deportation and exile of players in both tsarist and Soviet eras. Exposure to new instruments (e.g., via military service and radio) made the bowed lyre seem passé.

The recent revival of bowed lyre traditions in Estonia is due to transfer of instruments, information, and encouragement from Sweden (where Swedish refugees from Estonia helped rekindle interest) and Finland (where the bowed lyre tradition still flickered). Foreign museums, archives, publications, recordings, and researchers provided important resources. Bowed lyre enthusiasts are now linked to a wide network, with modern methods of electronic communication and rapid travel facilitating exchanges and visits. This makes the bowed lyre's extinction less likely, in any land where it is now played, and even favors its spread to other lands where it was once known or where immigrant groups want to reconnect with their ancestral musical heritage.

NOTES

[1] Archeologist Jonathan Lindström (2015) found in a Danish archive the earliest documentation of Swedish colonization of Estonia on Vormsi Island in 1206, during a Crusade led by the Archbishop of Lund (southern Sweden, then under Danish rule), with support from both Danish and Swedish kings. The migrants evidently came from Sweden's southeastern isle of Öland (Lindström 2015: 16–18, 189, 198–201, 224, 262–263, 371–372, 382–386, 396–397).

[2] Players of Estonian ethnicity appear in the memoirs of August Pulst, who organized tours of folk musicians in the 1930s to fund the Music Museum he founded (Sildoja 2014). These include Aadu Volberg (1851?–1923?+; he was reportedly 72 years old in 1923), Mart Kaasen (1870–1955), Anton Proos, Peeter Piilpärk (1872–1948), and Johannes Rosenstrauch (1891–1958). The last two did not live in areas with bowed lyre traditions but learned to play from others on tour.

Kaasen played in a 1938 film clip, at the Estonian National Studio (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQHAfhIjP5M). Eight of his recorded tunes are included on the CD that Nieminen added to his 2007 book. Two of Piilpärk's tunes are also found there.

[3] Andersson (1930: 171) points to similar narrow handholes of the Dalarna specimen and Finnish/Karelian ones. Bergelt (1986: 232) links the Swedish term *sotharpa* 'sootharp' to the Finnish/Karelian word *soitto* 'musical instrument'. The Swedish term dates from the late sixteenth century (Andersson 1930: 191), when Forest Finns began relocating to Sweden.

[4] Larsson (1977: 7) reports that variants of the word *talharpa* were used on the islands of Vormsi and Hiiumaa. That this meant 'horsehair harp' (*tagelharpa* in standard Swedish) and not 'pine harp' (*tallharpa*), both meanings offered by Rußwurm (2015 [1855]: 462), is clear from the form *tageL-harpa* used by Pakri Islanders, who did not play it themselves.

[5] Väisänen (2002 [1928]: L) and Andersson (1930: 64, 68) report the D G C tuning, with the lowest note as G or C. Andersson gives a reportedly older tuning of C low-G low-C, noted by Väinö Salminen in Karelia in 1906–1908. This is suitable for minor-key (Cm) melodies, where fingers press the melody C-string to get D Eb F G.

The tuning of two-holed *jouhikkos* is unknown. One player said the second handhole was just a way to reduce weight (Nieminen 2008: 79–82). Another used it for fingering the third string (Anderssson 1930: 69, 96). A two-holed design allows quick transitions between tunes/passages in different keys or octaves, with the middle string over the dividing pillar providing the same drone note for both of the other strings. The player can move his left thumb so that it grasps the middle pillar, so the other fingers do not need to stretch so far to play the melody through the far hole.

[6] The tonic note (C here) can be obtained on a 4-string *talharpa* by shortening the drone string (from low-G to C) or bowing the open third and fourth strings (also C's, but typically an octave lower). Johannes Österberg and Johan Ahlström, both of Vormsi and Stockholm, did this on tapes obtained from their descendants – son Kenneth Österberg and granddaughter Monica Ahlström, respectively. The same move is seen in Johannes Österberg's 1975 televised performance, in Styrbjörn Bergelt's film (Leydon 2006), and among current players in Estonia. One could leave the drone string open and the first string unbowed, to get a G C C chord; adding an E on the first string yields a full chord.

Recordings, transcriptions, and string thicknesses reveal that the tuning scheme of Jurri Bruus of Hiiumaa (D low-G C low-C) was like the typical Finnish/Karelian

one, with a bass tonic string added as the fourth string. Mainland Estonian players Mart Kaasen and Peeter Piilpärk also used that scheme.

Rußwurm (2015 [1855]: 462) and Andersson (1930: 119 re Bruus) report that the *talharpa* was tuned in fifths, like a violin, which would mean D G C F (in descending order) for the four-string version. This is plausible with metal strings, but not with horsehair or gut strings, as the lowest string (F) is too slack and weak-sounding. Such a note is not heard on old recordings. When instrument maker Raivo Sildoja tried the all-fifths tuning with horsehair strings, he was disappointed, and arrived independently at the Österberg/Ahlström tuning (D low-G low-C low-C).

[7] The bishop of Ösel-Vik (Saaremaa Island and Läänemaa County) saw the Christian settlers from Sweden on Vormsi Island as allies in the mission to convert Estonian pagans, so Vormsi Swedes had a rather light burden to carry for their bishop-landlord. Local lore about the medieval era recalls Vormsi's obligation to provide a couple of maidens to tend the bishop's gardens at Haapsalu Castle in summer (Rußwurm 2015 [1855]: 141). When the Swedish king created estates on Vormsi from the 1580s and made islanders answer to lords of the new manors, ever-increasing demands for tax payments, grain deliveries, and labor obligations – enforced by flogging and eviction – eventually made Vormsi Swedes as poor as Estonian serfs (Kanarbik 2003: 12, 26–27, 48–49; Rußwurm 2015 [1855]: 84).

[8] Ahlström is also called Urbas Anders, after the name of his farm. Andersson (1970: 8) reports 1842 as Renqvist's birth year, but an age of 62 is given in fieldnotes of December 1903 or January 1904. The birth year could thus have been 1840, 1841, or 1842. Nieminen first reports 1840 (1984: 57), then 1849 (2007: 98). In the register of persons at the Cultural Association of Estonia's Swedes in Stockholm, Sven Ahlström found Renqvist (spelled Rönnkvist) with an 1840 birth year (undated letter to *Kustbon*'s editor prior to the December 2007 issue, obtained from his daughter Monica Ahlström). The same database currently shows 1842 as the birth year.

[9] Berggren's learning to play the bowed lyre was recalled by his daughter Ingrid Berggren Samson, interviewed by Lena Weesar in Stockholm (e-mail of October 23, 2015). His deportation is noted by Sven Ahlström (2000: 5). Weesar reports his place of death as Irkutsk, Russia. Ironically, shortly before his deportation, the Communist Party in Läänemaa County expressed appreciation for Vormsi's preservation of folk songs and *talharpas*, in the face of religious opposition to "sinful" traditions (see N. 1941).

[10] The recordings were neglected for almost a century. *Jouhikko* player Pekko Käppi found a taped copy at the Sibelius Museum in Turku in 2004. Phonograms then turned up in archives in Berlin and Stockholm. Nieminen's book (2007) has a disc with all six tunes Bruus recorded.

[11] The earlier fire is noted in a photo caption by Jan Utas (1969: 61). The 1835 fire was accidental, due to thatched roofs catching fire during a windstorm (Utas 1959: 73–74).

[12] This is atypical, but not unique. Anders Ahlström of Vormsi (in transcription from 1903–1904) and his son Johan in Stockholm (on tape) both pressed the third string to get a rare low-E, in different melodies. Johan also got low-F from pressing the third string, which made low-C when left open.

[13] Village leaders (priests, sextons, teachers) suppressed the community's secular musical culture, except for old ceremonial music and "harmless" song- and dance-games (Norrman 1995: 113). Nevertheless, Hoas learned from Sigalet some waltzes the latter said were from Hiiumaa (Hoas 1962: 4), and these are on the tape Norrman analyzed. It is unclear whether Hoas played the bowed lyre on the tape.

[14] Some of their tunes are unsuited for the bowed lyre, due to overly high notes, a key change, or an awkward grace note, on a different string than the next note.

[15] The archaic form of the Welsh *crwth* is seen in a drawing from 1605–1610 (Fig. 24), with no neck and a wide handhole, like a Swedish-Estonian bowed lyre (Andersson 1970: 7, 31–32, Plate IIIa; Crossley-Holland 1948: 18). The modern *crwth* (*crout, crouth, crowd*) (Fig. 27) is a 6-string hybrid instrument. Some strings are pressed against the neck spanning the handhole; others are plucked by the thumb in open air or bowed as drones (Panum 1971: 241–242). The tuning recalls Baltic bowed lyres: an octave pair for each of the three notes C G D or G C D (Andersson 1930: 226).

Plucking (not bowing) of a fingerboard lyre is shown in the ninth-century Bible of Charles the Bald, ruler of the Franks and Holy Roman Empire (Andersson 1930: 227–228). The neck was evidently adopted for the lyre, perhaps from the lute, *before* bowing arrived in Western Europe.

[16] Andersson first dates the sculpture to the twelfth century (1921: Plate VI, Fig. 1; 1930: 166–167), then the fourteenth, due to new information (1970: 4–5).

[17] Whether to call the medieval Russian instrument *gudok* is debatable. The term is not documented until the late fifteenth century (Morgenstern 2018: 110–111).

[18] Andersson (1930: 138) credits Swedish musicologist Tobias Norlind (1922: 117–118) for drawing attention to this, as well as to similar nail-stopping techniques. Neither scholar is explicit about how the two types of instruments might be linked.

The bowed lute's main melody string is the outermost one, while the bowed lyre's is the innermost one, for an ergonomic reason. Playing the melody is easiest on the string closest to the instrument-grasping hand's fingers.

[19] The C G D tuning was noted by Martin Agricola for sixteenth-century bowed lutes, including Polish ones (Panum 1971: 361; Knast n.d.), and by Bachmann for current ones in southeastern Europe (1969: 97–98). Morgenstern (2018: 118–119) notes a G G D tuning for Russian *gudoks* in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries, congruent with the G D on a two-string *rebec* noted by Jerome of Moravia in 1250 (Panum 1971: 360–361). Like the D G C (C) of Baltic bowed lyres, these set-ups allow droning, with chord accents from three or four strings. This could involve the *dubbelgrepp* (double-grip or -stop) Bergelt saw in photos of Estonia's Swedish players (Suits 2010: 39–42) and can be inferred from some transcriptions (Nieminen 2007: 112–142). Clear evidence of stopping two strings simultaneously can be found in the 1938 film of Kaasen.

[20] Droning with a crank was done on the *organistrum*, a two-man guitar-shaped wheel-lyre for sacred music, depicted in Western Europe in the twelfth century. It was analogous to the one-man hurdy-gurdy from the thirteenth century (Panum 1971: 292–300). Bagpipe drones first appeared in thirteenth-century England (Allmo 1990: 411–412, citing Fritz Schneider's research).

[21] Bergelt (1979: 4) calls Österberg's instructor Mas-Anders, born in 1862. This is the same man Lindström 1990 [1967] calls Mas-Bill, as confirmed by Lena Weesar (e-mail of June 30, 2022). Mas is the name of her great-grandfather's farm, and Bill means 'childless married man', so Mas-Bill is a nickname. Anders Appelblom (1861–1939) held his bowed lyre for a 1930s photo, but could no longer play due to illness (Suits 2010: 27). He lived at Mas farm in Kärrslätt village, and was a farmhand at nearby Smenes farm, where young Österberg lived. Both monikers Mas-Anders and Mas-Bill applied to Appelblom. Another Stockholm player, Anders Westerberg, grew up on nearby Kampesa farm in Kärrslätt, and may also have been taught by Appelblom. The third Vormsi player in Stockholm, Johan Ahlström, presumably learned to play in Borrby from his father Anders.

[22] Bergelt was a hospital photographer, renowned for his knowledge of folk music. He received Swedish government grants for research and recording, designation as a national folk musician (*riksspelman*) and prestigious Zorn prizes for performing on the bowed lyre and other folk instruments, commendations from the Swedish Music Museum, invitations to present at ethnomusicology meetings and to write about the bowed lyre for the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1999). He prepared and narrated radio programs about the bowed lyre in 1980/1982 and 1988.

One report (H.M. 1983) says Bergelt took up the bowed lyre after finding a damaged one among the effects of his father, a friend of Otto Andersson. Actually, Bergelt credits getting Andersson's book (titled with the name of the instrument) from his father in 1970 as his source of inspiration (Sjöberg 1982: 8–9).

Bergelt usually reports first meeting Österberg in 1974 (1979: 1; n.d. (in his undated and archived musical autobiography for a grant application); Allmo & Bergelt 1995: 70). In Leydon's film, he mentions that the 1974 meeting came after seeing Österberg's televised performance in a program led by Olle Adolphson. The only such broadcast in the Swedish Media Database, at the Royal Library in Stockholm, was on May 21, 1975, with a slightly longer version on July 19, 1976. Bergelt's earliest report (1979: 5, 8) presents the initial 1974 meeting and the 1975 TV show as unconnected events.

[23] Luhats' televised performance is available online at https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/59759. A thumb sling is also seen in photos of Piilpärk, Kaasen, and Rosenstrauch, while Proos has his thumb atop the peg-yoke, instead of grasping the side of the handhole's frame (Nieminen 2007: 138; Sildoja 2014: 23, 116, 136, 160, 163, 291).

[24] Information from e-mails by Maarja Sarv (July 30, 2017), Anneli Kont-Rahtola (December 21, 2012), Raivo Sildoja (October 15, 2015; February 12 and 19, April 1, 2019; February 23, 2024), Krista Sildoja (October 9, 2012), and the Sildojas' segment in the *Talharpa* film (2009).

[25] The information in this paragraph is from Nieminen's undated manuscript, "My Jouhikkohistory".

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https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2024.93.controversies

HUMOROUS REACTIONS TO CONTROVERSIES IN THE ESTONIAN PUBLIC SPHERE: FORM, CONTENT, MECHANISMS AND COMMENTS

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Abstract: The article investigates the humorous reactions to two important controversies that received a great deal of attention in the Estonian public sphere during the summer of the year 2023. These are the Wagner group rebellion and the scandal involving Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas. Building on theories of the public sphere and observations on how humour functions in such a context, by comparing the two cases, we tested the hypothesis that the content, form, humour mechanisms, and the comments on humour can be influenced by the nature of the controversy and by the psychological distance to the source of the initial triggering controversy. We used the data collected and coded within the CELSA[1] network project "Humour and Conflict in the Public Sphere: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Humour Controversies and Contested Freedoms in Contemporary Europe". The analysis revealed that 1) the most popular forms of humour in the online public sphere (primarily memes) are shaped by the patterns of the online communication in general and not by the particular cases or controversies; 2) humour mechanisms depend moderately on the nature of the controversy and their distance from the meme-makers; 3) content is most dependent on the nature of the controversy, and is affected by the tension between globalisation and localisation trends; and 4) the distance to the controversy influences the humorousness of the comments.

Keywords: global, local, meme, public sphere, psychological distance

1. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts and controversies often result in the prolific use of humour in the public sphere. In contemporary globalised and mediatised society where news spreads faster than lightning, both national and transnational controversies trigger humour. This happens even in the countries that are not directly involved in the controversy. Important events, conflicts and controversies have habitually become topics of humour; for example, disaster jokes about the attack on the World Trade Center immediately became popular not only in the USA, but also in the Netherlands and elsewhere (Kuipers 2002). It has been noted in the case of historical events as well – e.g., jokes and caricatures about the sinking Titanic were reported in Czech newspapers from 1912 (Chovanec 2019). With the increasing availability of social media, humorous reactions to important international events are also on the rise, having become an indispensable part of the public sphere.

The article builds on theories of the public sphere and observations on how humour functions in such a context. We focus on two public controversies that sparked plenty of humour in Estonia to reveal the global/local dimensions and the humour aspects (format, mechanisms, etc.) in the vernacular reactions. We test the hypothesis whether the controversy, form, humour mechanisms and comments to humour are influenced by the nature of the controversy, and the psychological distance to the source of the initial triggering controversy, by comparing the two cases.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE TWO CASES

This article focuses on 1) the Wagner group rebellion and 2) the scandal involving Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas. These cases were selected because both of them were notorious controversies in the Estonian public sphere that, on the one hand, have a number of differences, but on the other hand, have some shared features. The two cases differ in their degree of closeness to Estonian politics and in their nature (one belonging primarily to the economical domain, and the other primarily to the military domain). As for their similarities, they both occurred in summer 2023 against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, have strong political content, their media coverage was intensive but relatively short (around a week of daily coverage and later only occasional mentions), and there were clearly identifiable targets for blame and/or ridicule. The combination of such similarities and differences makes the humour revolving around these two cases a suitable target for comparative analysis.

2.1 Wagner group rebellion

The Wagner group rebellion took place on 23–24 June 2023, when the then leader of Wagner group, Yevgeny Prigozhin, announced the march on Moscow. The Wagner group is a Russian private military company that has been actively involved in the Russian war in Ukraine, but as the war progressed, Prigozhin started criticising the Russian Ministry of Defence for their lack of support for his company. The controversy culminated with the abovementioned march, during which the Wagner group occupied a part of Russia but stopped around 200 km short of Moscow, and after Prigozhin's negotiations with Belarusian illegitimate president Aleksandr Lukashenko, his army moved to Belarus.

2.2 Kaja Kallas's case

In August 2023, the Estonian (and later, also international) media revealed that a logistics company that is partly owned by Kaja Kallas's husband has continued doing business with Russia even after the start of the Russian full-fledged invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Moreover, earlier in the summer of 2023 Kaja Kallas lent 350,000 euros to the company via which her husband owns his stake in the logistics business. The sharp contrast between Kaja Kallas's rhetoric – since February 2022, she has been constantly urging European businesses to stop cooperating with Russia – and her husband's involvement in this business caused heated discussions not only in Estonia but also on the international scale.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Public sphere (and humour)

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1991 [1962]), Habermas described the public sphere as belonging to small-scale bourgeois circles. Originating in the nineteenth century in countries such as France, England and, to a lesser degree, Germany, the public sphere was a landscape where political journals challenged the traditional feudal rule and referred to a new authority, namely the consensus emerging from societal debate. Although originally exclusive and limited to certain social classes, Habermas pointed out that the fact that the public sphere was ruled by the principle of universal participation meant that inevitably access would have to be granted to other groups. During

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries voting and political rights were indeed extended to previously disenfranchised groups, but the media system also became commercialised, and the public sphere lost its independent critical edge and became more sensationalised and trivialised.

Moreover, in today's polarised, mediatised, and diverse societies, a unified idea of the public sphere, organised around the media system – no matter how mainstream and manipulable – no longer captures the reality of public communication. As Dahlgren puts it, the term "public sphere" is used in singular, but sociological realism points to the plural (2005: 158). In his critical assessment of the concept, Bruns (2023: 1) highlights that the public sphere "fractured into a multiplicity of online and offline, larger and smaller, more or less public spaces that frequently … overlap and intersect with one another".

The Estonian public sphere does not constitute an exception and presents a polarised and mediatised scenario where social, political, and cultural topics (particularly those of a conflictive nature) are played out. In Estonia, as in other Western societies, humour plays a fundamental role in these public discussions. All kinds of controversies are often expressed in the public sphere through humour, and these humorous responses are related to group membership and cultural or political allegiances (Becker 2014).

The freedom to joke and to satirise in the public sphere is a defining attribute of democratic societies and is widely recognised as one of the hallmarks of the freedom of expression. Halliwell observes that a classical Athens comic drama was characterised by a high degree of ridicule and vilification of notable individuals. However, this practice often generated undesired consequences and had to stand "*vis-à-vis* explicitly legal and political restrictions" (1991: 48). Not much has changed in the present day, as public humorous expression often sparks controversy and is employed actively to express and fuel social divides. However, this freedom of expression is nowadays generally defended by politicians, supported by the media, applauded by the public, and often protected by law. For instance, current politics in Europe present daily opportunities to mock the events and their key participants through various channels and by using different genres (see, e.g., Lockyer & Pickering 2005; Tsakona & Popa 2011; Kuipers 2011). It has been shown that the use of humour in public conflicts increases political polarisation (Nissenbaum & Shifman 2017; Herkman 2019) and may lead to increasing social and political tensions but at the same time more public involvement in the political sphere (Chiaro 2018; Wiggins 2019). Fast movement and adaptation of humour across borders causes a simultaneous globalisation and localisation of humour (Shifman & Thelwall 2009; Kuipers 2011; Boxman-Shabtai & Shifman 2016). This may result in transnational controversies (e.g., the 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* tragedy; see Sienkiewicz 2018).

Therefore, humour shows itself as a multifaceted phenomenon in relation to the public sphere. On the one hand, humour and satire contribute significantly to a healthy public sphere, since discrepancies and criticism in their different degrees of intentionality and guises (including humour) are key indicators in assessing the democratic health of a country. Certainly, restrictions on humour are deeply at odds with the ideal of open debate that is central to European public culture. On the other hand, it is difficult to maintain that some forms of humour (e.g., anti-democratic memes; see Laineste & Fiadotava 2024) make positive contributions to public life; quite the contrary, they can aggravate social tensions. For instance, as Kuipers (2011) and Nieuwenhuis and Zijp (2022) have observed, humour can be used as a weapon to divide and draw boundaries between political and religious communities. Thus, debates on humour and the public sphere highlight the central dilemma of the freedom of expression: what can be done when the freedom of expression articulated through humour clashes with other fundamental democratic values.

3.2 Humorous reactions to societal controversies and what influences them

Humour reacts to topical events and comments on phenomena that are currently fashionable, interesting or talked about in society. Not all events and controversies, of course, receive the same amount and type of humorous reverberations in the public sphere. What are the factors that the nature of humour depends on is the focus of interest of this article.

3.2.1 Nature of the trigger and subsequent humour

Not many studies have tried to establish a connection between the nature of the trigger (whether the controversy is political, whether it refers to socially sensitive problems like xenophobia or discrimination, etc.) and the humour that follows it online. An exception is Denisova (2019: 99–100), who argues that the economic problems of Russia gave inspiration to many memes that used juxtaposition/opposition as one of the principal humour mechanisms. The topic afforded this choice because of the obvious clash between the optimistic forecasts and the economic reality. Additionally (and perhaps to support this choice), a juxtaposition of image and text is used to produce a shocking effect. Image (the harsh reality) confronts the slogan (the optimistic forecast), and a meme is born.

Memes about politics often use satire to critically address the shortcomings. Memes following Putin's victory in the 2018 presidential elections in Russia have been analysed by Wiggins (2019: 72–74) as an example of "digital analgesic": satirical humour needs to accompany such public discussions in order to attract the audiences and to advance the visual argument (ibid.: 75). The criticism underlying the fun is delivered through the satire that the internet natives are always ready to employ (Milner 2013).

Through humour, people intend to attract attention and enhance audience participation on serious subjects. Simarro Vázquez (2016) has analysed tweets from 1 March 2016, the day when Arnaldo Otegi was released from prison. Otegi is a Basque politician who was sentenced to ten years for membership of the terrorist organisation ETA and was released in 2016, after serving a full sentence. He then announced that he would run for president of the Basque Country. Simarro Vázquez (2016: 35) observes that anonymous authors use verbal humour with the ultimate goal of criticising Spanish society and politics, even if the discussed topic – terrorism and politics in this case – is not funny originally. According to the author, funny Twitter remarks are surprising "since it is a serious subject for the Spanish society, where any issue related to the terrorist activities of ETA is of a delicate nature" (ibid.: 42). The author tries to find out how such an event can generate humorous reactions (1.4% of the tweets in her corpus are humorous) (ibid.: 37). According to her (ibid.: 44–45), Twitter users make use of different logical mechanisms (outlined in the General Theory of Verbal Humour) to generate incongruence between the serious topic and a funny remark by the tweet, the latter serving as a punchline. This opposed script usually exploits a superficial aspect related to Otegi, thus avoiding the seriousness of the topic (ibid.: 47–48).

In our data, some of the humorous items focus on the incongruity of the fact that Kaja Kallas's husband kept doing business with Russia, despite her public harsh anti-Russian stance, but there are also other, less relevant topics that are brought on the table. In the following examples, humorousness is achieved via attacks *ad hominem*: e.g., calling her a liar[2] or someone who has a limited mental capacity.[3] Some others refer to her willingness to be kept in ignorance about her husband's dealings.[4] In these reactions, a serious debate on her possible resignation is not undertaken, instead internet users jump at every opportunity available to react humorously to the trigger by using universal stereotypes (politician as a liar; target as stupid). Similarly, in the Wagner rebellion case, the items do not discuss the consequences of Prigozhin's decision to attack only Russia. Instead, they highlight in a condensed way the spectacular and unexpected turnaround caused by Prigozhin's decision, either verbally[5] or combining image and text.[6]

However, in both cases humour can still act as bait to promote further, more serious discussion on the main topic. As we see in the analysis (5.4), many of the comments on these items are indeed non-humorous and go into more detail regarding the controversies around which they revolve. Studying the reactions to humour is a useful analytical tool to explore people's attitude to the topic that triggered humour (see, e.g., McGraw & Williams & Warren 2014). Comments on humorous items tend to be milder in their tone than comments on serious texts (Elsayed & Hollingshead 2022), but they still reflect their authors' concerns about the controversial issues.

3.2.2 Psychological distance and subsequent humour

In an earlier article about memes on the war in Ukraine, we analysed the main characters that personify the war in Ukraine in Russian, Belarusian, Estonian and Spanish memes, and studied their dependence on the psychological distance from the source of the conflict (Laineste et al. 2024). As a result, we posited that the psychological distance from the events does have an effect on the choice of characters representing the war in memes. For example, the memes circulating closer to the source of conflict feature a larger variety of mostly local actors and their content is connected closely to the war. On the other hand, the memes originating and shared in the public sphere further away from the conflict are more general and global. Studying humour via personification indicated that psychological distance not only relates to the perception of and reaction to humour as confirmed earlier (see Bischetti & Canal & Bambini 2021; Skalicky et al. 2023), but also to its creation and sharing.

The studies that address the effect of psychological distance on humour have so far been scarce. Skalicky et al. (2023) have pointed out that humour may have an impact on the perception of spatial and social distance, while McGraw et al. (2014) advocate that psychological distance shapes humorous responses to tragedy. Hee et al. (2022: 12) also mention that personification in humorous climate change posters attenuates psychological distance from the problem, but the nuances of the relation between psychological distance and humour are yet to be studied thoroughly.

The distance between humour creators/sharers and the topics of humour also has an impact on how memes oscillate between critical commentary and entertainment. How the humour is adapted to a particular cultural context may vary: humour adjusted to meet the local circumstances is more disruptive and socially critical (Nissenbaum & Shifman 2022) and can be less ambiguous. Global political humour tends to be more entertaining and does not aim at

changes in the public sphere (see also Wiggins 2019). Events can be reflected in memes by pronouncing the distance (Nissenbaum & Shifman 2022: 938), showing that "they" are ridiculous, while "we" are sane and act reasonably. The further the controversies, the easier it is to create this alienating effect, and to laugh at the result. However, the quick pace of meme domestication and adaptation between local and global contexts makes the boundaries between the entertaining and critical aspect of memes fuzzy (see also Laineste et al. 2024).

According to Laineste et al. (2024), there are more variations in the memes circulating closer to the conflict, while those meme-makers who are further away use simpler humour mechanisms like ridicule to "create localization through *estrangement*: a concurrent cynical and distanced look at the other and self" (Nissenbaum & Shifman 2022: 938). The memes about local events, thus, want to deliver a point about the state of affairs, engaging in and extending on it through discursive practice (Wiggins 2019). By doing this, they become a vehicle for political critique. The proximity to the source of the controversy makes it relatively easy for the meme-makers to critically comment on the actions of the local politicians, as their knowledge of the cultural, political and social background as well as of their audience is sufficiently deep. Subsequently, the further we get from the event/controversy/trigger, the thinner and more superficial the depiction of it becomes.

Delving deeper into the earlier research and results, we suggest that in the same way that personification in memes (who is depicted and how) is influenced by the psychological distance, also other aspects of public humour are affected by how far away the public perceives to be positioned from the source of the problem. Thus, the format of humour along with the humour mechanisms and language used in the humorous communication is dependent on the perceived distance from the public controversy. This study sets out to check the hypothesis, using a database of humour in the public sphere.

The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: Is the form of humour affected primarily by the nature of the controversy (topic, other particular features) or by the distance of meme-makers to the source of controversy?

RQ2: How are the humour mechanisms affected by these factors?

RQ3: How does localisation / globalisation affect the content of the compared cases?

RQ4: How do the comments to humour differ in the compared cases?

In the following sections, we provide the information on the database of humour in the public sphere that we have used and summarise the results that we have obtained from it.

4. METHODS AND DATA

The article uses the data collected and coded within the CELSA network project "Humour and Conflict in the Public Sphere: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Humour Controversies and Contested Freedoms in Contemporary Europe". The project focuses on humour that revolves around conflicts and controversies in four countries – Estonia, Belarus, Poland, and Belgium. In each of the countries we have identified at least two events that provoked plenty of humour in the public spheres of these countries in 2022–2024. We collected 50 humorous items per event, trying to ensure the variability of their content, format, stance, and professional/amateur nature. For the current study we single out the Estonian data revolving around two events – the controversy involving Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas and the Wagner group rebellion. Both of these controversies were widely covered by the Estonian media and discussed in Estonian online public sphere. The Estonian data were collected from social and mainstream media and the satirical news portal *Lugejakiri* (Reader's Letter). The Estonian data on the Wagner rebellion were collected mostly from Facebook, namely, from the group "Ukraina meemid" (Ukrainian memes), which is dedicated to Estonian humour revolving around the Russian war in Ukraine, and individual publicly available Facebook accounts of Estonians, as well as from the major Estonian news portal *Postimees* and the satirical news website *Lugejakiri*. Similarly, the Estonian data on the Kaja Kallas case were collected mainly from individual Facebook accounts and from the Facebook group "Nõuame Kaja Kallase tagasiastumist" (We demand the resignation of Kaja Kallas). Some of the data were retrieved from news portals *Postimees* and *Õhtuleht*, as well as the satirical news website *Lugejakiri*.

We coded each of the items based on several criteria that define their form and content. Firstly, we identified their genre or combination of genres, namely, video recording of an event, photo, cartoon, internet meme (image only), internet meme (image and text), internet meme (video), text-only joke, humorous comment, satirical news article, blog post, stand-up performance, television comedy, non-humorous comment, or other. Secondly, we indicated whether verbal, visual, or both verbal and visual elements are present. Thirdly, we coded the humour mechanisms of the items (humorous stereotype, sexual innuendo, status reversal or challenging, transgression, grotesque, juxtaposition of text

and image, parody, caricature, ambiguity, exaggeration, irony, recontextualisation, word play). Fourthly, we marked whether communication style of the items that had verbal element(s) was direct and/or based on overstatement, or indirect and/or based on understatement (cf. the discussion of verbal communication styles in Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988). Fifthly, for the items that had verbal text we coded its rhetorical format using the following categories: statements, questions, commands/imperatives, verbless phrases, expletives, paraverbal comments, longer texts including several of the above.

In the coding phase we selected 25 most commented items out of 50 per event and coded the comments to these items. The comment sections of the humorous items that we analysed were open for anyone to comment; in social media such as Facebook, internet users commented using their personal accounts while the comments on news media (including the satirical news portal) were anonymous. We looked at the humorousness of the comments (distinguishing between humorous responses, non-humorous responses, unlaughter and unclear responses) and their assessment of humorous items (positive/negative/neutral or unclear). We also looked at the format of the comments and categorised them in the following way: verbal responses only, emoticons only, responses in the form of images/gifs, combination of verbal and non-verbal responses and hyperlinks. For the comments that had verbal elements, we also coded their rhetorical format (see categorisation of rhetorical formats above). Finally, we calculated the number of meta-comments, comments about the people who posted the items / other users in the comment thread and meta-linguistic comments.

Using the comparative method and quantitative analysis, we explore if – and if yes, then how – the formats and content as well as humour mechanisms differ in these two events. We also look at the comments on the humorous items to find out if Estonians preferred to discuss these events in predominantly humorous or serious terms.

5. ANALYSIS

5.1 Format (RQ1)

The format of the humorous items seemed rather homogenous and did not differ across the two cases – most of the items reflecting on these are memes that combine verbal and visual elements. Much of the data that we have collected fits under the notion of a meme, i.e., texts, images, audio or video items, or a combination of these that spread online, often in mainstream and social media (see Shifman 2014). Verbal-only humour was rare. Kaja Kallas controversy

invited slightly more visual humour: 78% of the items are memes that include static visual elements (as opposed to 66% in the Wagner rebellion case), 16% are cartoons (as opposed to 14% in the Wagner rebellion case), 4% of the items include videos (as opposed to only 2% in the Wagner rebellion case). Curiously, we have not found any recorded text-only jokes on the Kaja Kallas controversy (as opposed to the Wagner group case, where text-only jokes constituted 12%). This discrepancy might stem from slight differences in data sources, but also from the fact that more images were readily available and easily findable for Estonian humour creators and sharers as the Kaja Kallas controversy was closer to home.

A closer look at the genres of humorous items reveals that photos or video-recordings related to the events were not actively used to create humorous items: they feature only in 6% of both cases. The only exceptions are photos and videos that have become backgrounds for internet memes (that were accordingly coded as internet memes and are not included in the count of photo- or video-recordings) – for example, a screenshot of Prigozhin standing against the dark background and shouting (see Fig. 1). The screenshot derives from a video published by Prigozhin on 4 May 2023, where he emotionally accuses Shoigu (Russian Minister of Defence) and Gerasimov (Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces) of not sending enough ammunition to the Wagner group soldiers in Ukraine. His words, "Shoigu, Gerasimov, where the fuck is the ammunition?", imposed over the screenshot immediately became memetic. During the Wagner group rebellion the meme was adapted to the current event – for example, Figure 1 uses it to comment on Prigozhin's "disappearance" (i.e., silence in social media) during the day following the march.

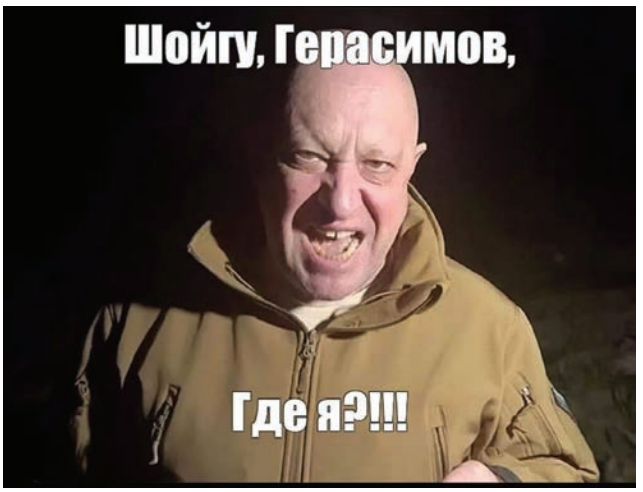

Figure 1. *The text reads (in Russian): "Shoigu, Gerasimov! Where am I?" Source: https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1022423575894 1261&set=a.1114729788055, last accessed on 9 April 2024.*

On the whole, we can see that Estonian internet users strongly preferred visual formats in both cases.

5.2 Humour mechanisms (RQ2)

In both cases the most popular humour mechanism was status reversal or challenging – 88% of humorous items employed it in the Wagner group rebellion case, and 96% in the Kaja Kallas case (see Table 1). This mechanism involves bringing down a powerful figure by ridiculing their behaviour; for example, making fun of their disgraceful or humiliating activities (the operational definitions of humour mechanisms derive from the project "Humour in the European Public Sphere"[7]). The focus on status is not accidental since both controversies featured people of power. The notable difference was that most humorous items related to the Kaja Kallas case reversed or challenged Kaja Kallas's status, whereas in the case of the Wagner group rebellion targets were more varied – mostly Prigozhin and Putin, but also other Russian authorities and Lukashenko.

In line with the slightly bigger emphasis on visual humour mentioned above, the humour of the Kaja Kallas case used the juxtaposition of text and image (48% vs 28%) and caricature (22% vs 16%) more often than the Wagner group rebellion humour. It was also richer in irony (46% vs 22%), probably because the context of the controversy – the contradiction between Kaja Kallas's anti-Russian rhetoric and her husband's involvement in the business in Russia – invited ironic commentary. The Wagner group rebellion humour had less irony as initially there was no sharp contrast between what was said and what was being meant – quite on the contrary, Wagner group's activities seemed pretty straightforward. As the rebellion progressed and eventually vanished, some ironic commentary cropped up, for example, comparing Putin's plans to capture Kyiv in three days and Prigozhin's plan to capture Moscow in an evening.[8]

The Kaja Kallas case was also richer in word play (20% vs 6%). This might be explained by the fact that all the examples in our dataset that revolve around this case are in Estonian only (except for the one that has no verbal text). In contrast, only 60% of Wagner group humour was in Estonian (or Estonian combined with other languages) – hence, even though we collected it from the Estonian (social) media, much of it was borrowed from other languages and cultures. As it is easier to make puns in one's mother tongue, it comes as no surprise that they were more notably present in the Kaja Kallas case humour. One of the most recurrent wordplays in the data was the use of the acrostic resulting from the first syllable of the name and surname of the Estonian premier, with obvious scatological connotations (KaKa meaning 'poo') (see Fig. 2).

Figure 2. *Text on the jar label (in Estonian): "Russian. KaKa soup. Without meat." Source: https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=701089868731252&set=a.296445385862371&locale=nl_BE, last accessed on 9 April 2024.*

On the other side, the Wagner group rebellion humour used grotesque (50% vs 10%), recontextualisation (46% vs 28%), exaggeration (38% vs 20%) and humorous stereotypes (18% vs 2%) more often. Grotesque might have become so prominent due to the fact that – especially at its initial stages – the rebellion of the Wagner group seemed so surreal and unexpected that humour was used, among other things, to underscore the fact that it did happen despite seeming so implausible. As Wiggins points out, the uncertainty and contentiousness that characterise the contemporary world "encourage a migration from the real" (2019: 69). The Kaja Kallas case, on the other hand, seemed much more real and tangible, and fit into the script of "corrupt politicians"; therefore, grotesque seemed a less suitable choice of a humour mechanism. Exaggeration also proved to be an effective mechanism in the Wagner rebellion case: humour creators both exaggerated the possible impact of the rebellion and its short-livedness and failure. The more prolific use of humorous stereotypes in the Wagner rebellion case may be explained by the fact that the controversy itself involved the characters (Putin and Lukashenko) that had become memetic before and thus had humorous stereotypes attached to them; humorous stereotypes about Russia and Belarus were also involved. Kaja Kallas and other participants of the scandal revolving around her, on the other hand, did not have a clear-cut "memetic personality".

The difference between the use of other humour mechanisms across the two cases was less significant (less than 10%), and some mechanisms, such as transgression and sexual innuendo, were almost or entirely absent in both cases. This can also be explained by the nature of the cases – none of them put sexual or other taboo topics to the forefront also in the serious discussions of the cases.

Table 1. *Distribution of humour mechanisms across cases*

Humour mechanism / Case	Wagner group rebellion	Kaja Kallas scandal
Ambiguity	10%	2%
Caricature	16%	22%
Exaggeration	38%	20%
Grotesque	50%	10%
Humorous stereotype	18%	2%
Irony	22%	46%
Juxtaposition of text and image	28%	48%
Parody	28%	20%
Recontextualisation	46%	28%
Sexual innuendo	4%	0%
Status reversal or challenging	88%	96%
Transgression	10%	2%
Word play	6%	20%

5.3 Globalisation and localisation in the content of humour (RQ3)

As we mentioned before, the humorous items revolving around the Wagner group rebellion were clearly more international in their origin. This is obvious from the language of the examples: in 60% of them Estonian language is present, only 30% of them are exclusively in Estonian, and 30% combine Estonian and other languages (Estonian is often the language of the post itself while a humorous item is in another language). 40% do not have any Estonian text at all.

The more global nature of humour also transpires in the content of humorous items. In the Wagner group case, most characters and settings that feature in humour are either Russian or Ukrainian. Only two items (4%) contain some references to Estonia: one of the items alludes that a person who looks like Prigozhin was spotted in Estonia,[9] and another one jokingly claims that Lukashenko promised to keep Prigozhin under control at least till Estonian singer Tanel Padar's wedding.[10] The unwillingness to localise and domesticate the humour on the Wagner group's rebellion may mean that Estonian internet users felt a certain distance between themselves and the controversy; even though they have shared, laughed at and commented on humour related to this case, they preferred to keep it separate from their local context. At the same time,

local references did spark the interest of the internet users – the item featuring a Prigozhin-like character is among the most commented ones in our dataset.

The humour revolving around the Kaja Kallas case differed in terms of its localisation/globalisation approaches. As opposed to the Wagner group rebellion case, all the humorous items related to the political scandal involving Kallas and her husband are in Estonian. Moreover, only a marginal number of comments on these items are in another language, namely in Russian. The fact that the languages used in both the humorous reactions and the associated comments are the ones most widely spoken in Estonia (Andmed 2021) gives an idea of the local nature of this case.

Content-wise, this case also shows its national scale. In most items, Kaja Kallas appears alone. When accompanied, she does it side by side with mainly Estonian political figures. They either belong to Kallas's political party, such as Hanno Pevkur (Minister of Defence), are members of one of the parties in the governing coalition, as MP Irja Lutsar, or supported Kallas when the scandal broke out, as did Alar Karis, the sitting president. Each of them can be found in one item (2%). Siim Kallas (Kaja Kallas's father, who also served as PM between 2002–2003) is also present in one item, as is the activist Johanna-Maria Lehtme, who resigned over another scandal involving Estonian aid to Ukraine. This might explain why she is in the humour production revolving around this case. One item shows Lehtme and Kallas taking office in a very similar position, as if they were the same person – the capture reads "Lehtmekaja" – and the accompanying text is an ironic reference to their alleged misbehaviour: "I will remain loyal to the Republic of Estonia and its constitutional order".[11] Kallas's husband Arvo Hallik appears in 12% of the items because the scandal was mainly about the misdoings of Stark Logistics, a transport company partly owned by Hallik, which continued its business in Russia even after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Stark Logistics and Metaprint AS, another firm involved in the scandal, are also frequent in the data (20%).

Finally, one of the items has a global character. In it, Kallas and Zelenskyy appear in what seems to be an official meeting. Kallas addresses the Ukrainian president and the caption reads "Don't worry, Volodymyr. It's just one truck a week".[12] The item highlights the alleged hypocrisy of Kallas, who publicly advocated for a harsh stance against Russia since the start of the war, but at the same time covered her husband's business transactions with the neighbouring country after the invasion.

5.4 Comments on humorous items (RQ4)

The analysis of the comments on humorous items helps to have a glimpse on how people in Estonian public sphere reacted not only to a particular humorous item but also on the issue in question. The comments on the Wagner group rebellion humour were mostly humorous themselves (60.3% of them were humorous, 33.5% were non-humorous and 6.2% were coded as unclear[13]). This means that the items that were posted often triggered online humorous banter: just like the oral joke-telling often reframes a conversation from serious to humorous (cf. Oring 2003: 86–93), digital conversations that were initiated by memes or other forms of internet humour can contain threads of humorous comments. Some of the commenters in such humorous threads respond to each other and co-create humour. Others post humorous images, videos or verbal jokes that do not constitute any obvious reaction to the humorous item that they comment on, except for the fact that they are (almost) always united by the same topic.

In the Kaja Kallas scandal the respective ratio of the comments was different: 37.8% were humorous and 52.8% were non-humorous. Many comments reflected on the political situation in a serious manner, with a humorous item being only a trigger for serious discussion.

At the same time, commenters on the Kaja Kallas scandal humour tended to express their opinion on humorous items more often in their comments, especially when it came to positive evaluations: 57.3% evaluated the humorous items positively, 0.7% negatively and 28.4% did not express a clear stance towards the humorous items that they had commented on. In the Wagner group rebellion case, only 12.5% of comments contain positive evaluation and another 1.5% contain negative evaluation, while 86% of the comments do not contain any evaluations at all. Such a discrepancy may partly stem from the fact that commenters were more willing to evaluate the locally created and locally embedded (i.e., with local references) humour than the humour that was clearly borrowed from other cultural and linguistic spaces and seemed less relatable. Another reason might be connected with the stance: by positively evaluating a humorous item, commenters often also (indirectly) supported the stance of its creators towards the issue itself. The Kaja Kallas scandal was closer to home, stimulated many people to take a stance towards it and thus showed the polarisation within the Estonian society, while the Wagner group rebellion did not provoke such strong feelings and clear-cut distinctions between different stances.

In terms of the format of the comments, the only notable difference was that the comments on the Wagner group rebellion humour combined verbal and non-verbal elements more often than the comments on the Kaja Kallas scandal

humour (37.8% vs 17.6%). Comments on the Kaja Kallas scandal humour were largely verbal only (65% as opposed to 46.6% of comments on the Wagner group rebellion humour). This pattern in the format of comments aligns with their content: comments that combined verbal and non-verbal (emoticons, images, gifs, etc.) elements often tended to be humorous.

6. DISCUSSION

The two cases present an opportunity to compare the content, form, and humour mechanisms in the humorous reverberations of controversies in the public sphere, as well as in the comments on the triggers. The cases differ in terms of psychological distance to the event (global/local dimension) and the nature of the controversy, i.e., the central focus of the case (military/political dimension). We examined the content, form, mechanisms, and comments in order to find out whether the humorous items (and comments on them) were influenced by the 1) psychological distance to the source of the initial triggering controversy, or 2) nature of the controversy (or by both, or by neither).

With regard to our first research question (RQ1), we can note that the form of humour remains largely the same regardless of the nature of the controversy and the distance of meme-makers to the source of controversy. We can thus conclude that the most popular formats of humour in the online public sphere – memes and other forms of multimodal humour – are shaped by the patterns of the online communication in general and not by the particular cases or controversies (see also the discussion in Denisova 2019: 163–170). The slight prevalence of visual humour in the Kaja Kallas case may suggest that the controversies that are closer to the humour creators make it easier / more likely to use visual humour, but this conclusion has to be tested on larger and more diverse datasets.

Humour mechanisms (RQ2) seem to depend more significantly on the nature of the controversies and the specific topics that arise within the conflicts. The popularity of some mechanisms – such as humorous stereotypes – also depends on the background of the participants of the controversies, and, to be more specific, their earlier appearance (or lack thereof) in memes. Humour mechanisms also depend on how real or surreal the controversy seems to the observers (Wiggins 2019). These results may relate to both the proximity to the controversy and its nature. Finally, some humour mechanisms are affected by the closeness to the controversy in another, more practical way, namely, via the language: our analysis showed that word play is more likely to occur when the humour on the controversy is created locally in the local language.

Online communication enables the fast sharing of news and related memes (sometimes even giving the humour a chance to replace the actual news; see Bolaji 2020). Even though the local news section remains important, more and more global events reach people's everyday newsfeed (see also Oring 1992: 38). This foregrounds the tension between globalisation and localisation (Cronin 2003: 10–17). The ways in which the affordances of the new media influence the spread of humour are especially visible in small languages that borrow memes from large "meme pools" (Coscia 2013: 100–101). Localisation and globalisation processes in humour (RQ3) work not only via language, but also via adaptation of meme themes, and the (sometimes mixed) use of local and non-local references. Understandably, a closer to home controversy would be richer in local references, but local references could also contribute to the increased attention to the humorous items that revolve around a more distant controversy. Localisation thus seems to contribute to the popularity of humour, but also – from another perspective – the omnipresence of a triggering situation in the news and media on the whole acts as a stimulus for localising the humorous reactions.

Whether the humorous reactions are more entertaining/global/unspecific, or, on the contrary, critical/local/detailed, is difficult to say based on the comparison of the two cases only. The Wagner case is characterised by the former features, being entertaining rather than critical and carrying global motives, while the Kaja Kallas case is characterised by the in-depth and often critical treatment of the controversy. It may be that in the case of the Wagner rebellion, the abundance of "foreign" memes made it impractical to create specifically local ones, especially as it did not relate to any local current topics (apart from the singer Tanel Padar's wedding). Similarly, Kaja Kallas memes were very local visually and textually (employing word play, predominantly in Estonian) because the global templates did not express the concerns of the Estonian internet users acutely and precisely enough. In any case, the opportunity to create humour is always welcomed by internet users, given the trigger carries a humour potential (see Laineste 2013: 43).

Reactions to the humorous items in the form of comments (RQ4) tend to be most dependent on the closeness or distance of the people to the controversial situation, in comparison with other factors analysed in the study. When discussing humour about a case that is psychologically closer to humour creators and sharers, serious discussions of the controversies come about more easily. Humour is then more than just a joke; it is a stimulus to reflect on an issue. When a case is more distant, commenters are more prone to playfully react to humour with further humour. They are more eager to enjoy humour as it is, without dwelling deeper into the serious aspects of a controversy that triggered such humour. At the advent of a controversy, internet users jump at every

possibility to be the wittiest in the digital jungle (Laineste & Voolaid 2020), using every tool in their toolbox – a catchy format, juicy content, supporting humour mechanisms – that they think might work. In the end, as we have shown in our analysis, many users resort to similar formats and humour mechanisms.

The interrelation between the closeness to the controversy and its nature, on the one side, and the format of humour, humour mechanisms and reactions to humour, on the other side, is summarised in Figure 3.

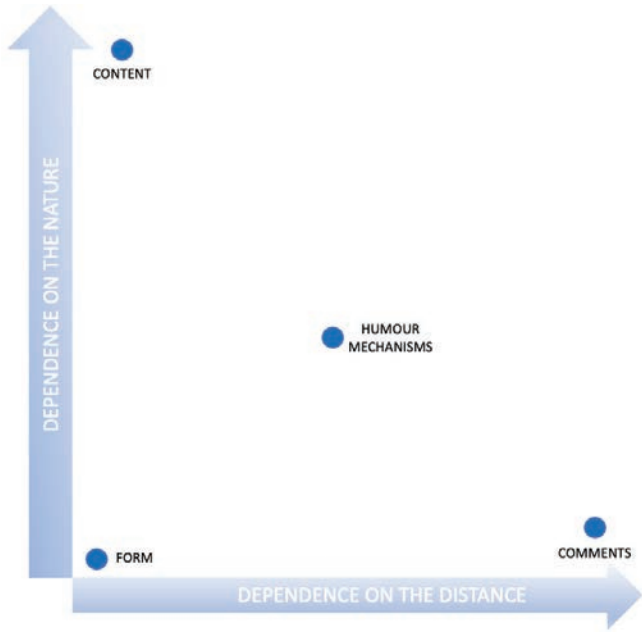

Figure 3. *Forms, humour mechanisms, content and comments and their interrelation with the nature of controversy and distance to it. The closer to the top of the diagram, the stronger the dependence on the nature of the controversy. The closer to the right side of the diagram, the stronger the dependence on the distance to the controversy.*

The limitation of this study is the small number of cases that we have analysed in the current article. Expanding the study in various directions (for example, adding cases that were discussed only locally, or broadening the range of countries) will help to enhance our interpretation of the interrelation between format, content, humorous mechanisms and comments on humour, on the one hand, and the nature of the trigger and psychological distance to it, on the other hand. Additionally, other factors that are embedded in humour could also be analysed – for instance, the stance of humour creators could be most

dependent on both the nature of the controversy and the psychological distance from it, because taking a certain stance involves both in-depth understanding of the nature of the controversy and a high degree of psychological closeness to it. The authors aspire to address these questions and test new hypotheses in their further research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was supported by the CELSA network project "Humour and conflict in the public sphere: Communication styles, humour controversies and contested freedoms in contemporary Europe", Estonian Ministry of Education and Research grant EKKD 126, "Source documents in the cultural process: Estonian materials in the collections and databases of the Estonian Literary Museum II", and research grants of the Estonian Literary Museum EKM 8-2/20/3 and EKM 8-2/23/5, "Contemporary crises and their online humorous representations".

NOTES

[1] Central Europe Leuven Strategic Alliance.

[2] See https://www.facebook.com/politicsandbullshitt/posts/pfbid0J9FAq1wbrJzyRSjd4irxtLM4bMTuUxdBbHJhKesZ6mVpUTxuf5Qf5fTf2Trs7UFel, last accessed on 10 April 2024.

[3] See https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=696045062569066&set=a.296445385862371&locale=nl_BE, last accessed on 10 April 2024.

[4] See https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=697435112430061&set=a.296445385862371&locale=nl_BE, last accessed on 10 April 2024.

[5] See https://www.facebook.com/aimar.ventsel/posts/pfbid09Jgdby3KJ4YP3t26BBeMHtmsDPxTsTwaw1NZwvKxpPERzjkv8WoPyvKhPTsrgFdhl, last accessed on 10 April 2024.

[6] See https://www.facebook.com/aimar.ventsel/posts/pfbid09Jgdby3KJ4YP3t26BBeMHtmsDPxTsTwaw1NZwvKxpPERzjkv8WoPyvKhPTsrgFdhl, last accessed on 10 April 2024.

[7] See https://humorinpublic.eu/glossary/, last accessed on 9 April 2024.

[8] See https://www.facebook.com/groups/534314991238265/posts/810427786960316, last accessed on 10 April 2024.

[9] See https://www.facebook.com/groups/534314991238265/posts/811190183550743/, last accessed on 10 April 2024.

[10] See https://lugejakiri.ee/lukasenka-lubab-prigozinit-vahemalt-tanel-padari-pulmadelopuni-kontrolli-all-hoida/, last accessed on 10 April 2024.

[11] See https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=700517918788447&set=a.296445385862371&locale=nl_BE, last accessed on 10 April 2024.

[12] See https://www.facebook.com/poliitilisedmeemid/posts/pfbid0dwv9AgF8SjB6rn7Gg6K3UZTS6qrD5E3UKdNZ8mou991PCAQvUbEYfN6jC9TdTGaUl, last accessed on 10 April 2024.

[13] The number of comments displaying unlaughter (i.e., explicit refusal to be amused by the humorous item in order to show discontent with it; see Billig 2005: 192) was insignificant in both cases: 1.4% in the Wagner group case and 0.7% in the Kaja Kallas case. Therefore, we do not analyse it separately.

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https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2024.93.karatas

RITUAL, RISK, AND DANGER: AVOIDANCE RITUALS AMONG ANTIQUITY LOOTERS

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Abstract: This paper deals with the role of taboos and avoidance rituals as a means of psycho-cultural adaptation to taking personal risks among illicit antiquity looters in the Black Sea region of Turkey. My ethnographic fieldwork showed that antiquity looters indeed cared more about the possibility of being crushed by spiritual creatures than of being caught by law enforcement. Spiritual creatures, namely jinn, are the most unpredictable threats imagined by illicit antiquity looters. They force looters to perform rituals to mitigate the perceived danger, including temporary or permanent loss of sanity, loss of limb, or loss of life. The paper concludes that looters' avoidance rituals play a functional role rather than a rational one, and they are performed to show that looters are willing to get along with a spiritual environment beyond their control.

Keywords: risk, danger, ritual, ritual avoidance, illicit antiquity looters

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the destruction of archaeological sites in Anatolia has escalated. The Turkish penal code defines looting as a crime against the Turkish nation and imposes imprisonment on looters from six months to five years plus a fine. Reports of the Department of Anti-smuggling and Organized Crime (KOM) show that more than 50,000 artifacts were recovered during operations in 2019 and 107,939 in 2021 (KOM: 2021). Turkey's archaeological loss through illicit excavations has been mentioned in prior studies focusing on the motivations of the looters (Özdoğan 2005 [1998]; Özel & Karadayı 1998; Özgen 2001; Rose & Acar 1995; Lawrence & Main 1995). The loss of cultural heritage has escalated as local looters have access to technological devices, software, and international connections, as well as spiritual helpers who help them find archaeological assets and extract them safely. Looters face two risks during

illegal excavations. The first is the police raiding and getting caught in the crime. For treasure hunters, being caught by the police while digging means going to jail, but such a possibility can be controlled with worldly measures. For this reason, getting caught by the police is associated with luck and caution. The other is being struck by a jinni, which threatens the looters' and their mates' physical and mental health beyond their freedom, which looters believe can upset the social and economic aspects of their lives. Since antiquity, looters have worked in deserted areas at night; their work entails risks that may result in the loss of limbs, abilities, and life. These risks are only eased by respecting taboos and performing rituals to get along with supernatural beings. Scholars from different areas have defined rituals in various ways, and there are still debates over what should or must be counted as a ritual. Throughout history, rituals have played an essential role in human society. In terms of folklore, anthropology, and sociology, rituals are closely related to religion and, regardless of their rationality and structure, involve supernatural beings (Benedict 1935: 396; Goody 1961: 143–160; Leach 1968: 521; Wilson 1957: 9; Fogelin 2007: 58; Bell 1997: 138). Goody defines ritual as a category of standardized behavior in which the relationship between the means and end is not intrinsic (2010: 36). Rituals are formalized acts that direct their performers' attention to specific thoughts and feelings which carry collective symbolic meanings (Lukes 1975: 291). Rituals appear perfect during the performance, but in reality, there are changes in every performance because they are dynamic and slowly change over time. Since alteration in performance is relatively slow, transformation in ritual form and discourse can be socially tolerated (Rappaport 1992: 250).

Drawing a line between ritual and ceremony, Wilson (1957: 9) focuses on the structure and function of particular acts and emphasizes the feelings and thoughts of participants expressed through ritual. Bell (1997: 139–164), on the other hand, suggests a model that can be applied to identify whether certain acts are more suited to be defined as ritual: formality, rationalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism, and performance are presented as characteristics of ritual. Gluckman (1965: 251) draws our attention to sacred and profane differentiation and refers to rituals as holy actions. While ritual, according to Turner (1967: 65), functions to transform the current situation of a ritual object, ceremony approves of it. Rituals are often likened to a distant past experienced by the ancestors of present performers. That is why Schechner (1987: 12) expands his definition of ritual by emphasizing that repetition, rhythm, and syntax transform actions into rituals over time. Even though its future cannot be predicted, its past is well-known. As Howe (2000: 68) points out, ritual is inherently risky because it opens gates between the earth and the supernatural, therefore making unavoidable contact with powerful and

unpredictable forces. Avoidance rituals, on the other hand, are rituals performed in situations that involve risk and may not be controlled by rational means. This study aims to understand if and to what extent ethno-archaeological research can reveal how, when, and why antiquity looters perform avoidance rituals to protect themselves from spiritual creatures. In doing so, I also aim to introduce an ethnographic insight into the mind of looters who have inherited rituals and incorporated them into their performances. Finally, I focus on whether digging for hidden, buried, or "protected and charmed" treasures with the assistance of spiritual creatures, namely jinn, is dangerous.

METHODOLOGY

When conducting ethnographic fieldwork in the Black Sea region of Turkey, I interviewed 68 active and 23 retired illicit antiquity looters during eighteen months, between June 2017 and October 2017, September 2019 and March 2020, and from May to September 2021. The center of my fieldwork was Safranbolu, a city on the UNESCO list since 1994. At the beginning of my fieldwork, I intended to understand whether the penal code could stop looters from illegal digging. The borders of my field research then expanded to neighboring towns as groups of looters in these towns were working on reciprocal terms. Reciprocity included consultation, exchange of technological devices, and, most importantly, exchange of spiritual mitigators who could control and communicate with spiritual guardians of treasures. With the help of my key informant Muslim, a retired antiquity looter who was a mentor to the active ones at the time of my field research, I gained my informants' trust. My informants introduced me to hodjas[1] and priests who were working with them from time to time. Antiquity looters from Safranbolu, Eflani, Ovacık, and Bartın were interviewed on a voluntary basis, promising that their real names would be anonymized in the texts and the audio recordings would only be listened to and decoded by myself. The interviews were labeled with pseudonyms that are common Turkish names, as protecting the privacy and security of participants is the crucial ethical responsibility of a researcher (Hicks 1977; Amstrong 1993; Guenther 2009; McCormack et al. 2012; Svalastog & Eriksson 2010; Brear 2018). I accompanied my informants day and night, observing their activities and conducting interviews at their convenience. I employed semi-structured interviews and recorded them when possible. However, recording interviews was not always feasible, so I wrote detailed notes at the end of each day about the day's events and the interviews. I kept my observation notes and audio recordings in a secure place until I transcribed them.

The region's written history goes back to the Hittites, Phrygians, Persians, Romans, Seljuks, and Ottomans. That is important in ritual avoidance because the treasure's original owner's religion is correlated with antiquity looters' perceived danger. During my field research, I interviewed nine hodjas and a priest who claimed to contact jinn to identify the exact place of hidden treasures, performing rituals to protect looters from jinn and extract the treasure from the ground. Apart from these, the hodjas also perform rituals to convince jinn to transfer their property rights over buried treasures or to deactivate ancient spells.

Digging with the help of jinn in illicit excavations in Turkey has been mentioned in studies conducted in Van, Nevşehir, and Adana (Uysal 1974, 1983, 1985; Savran 1997; Yolcu & Karakaya 2017; Şenesen 2016; Çalışkan 2019; Akkuş & Efe 2015). Even though I could interview six more hodjas, they withdrew their consents for fear of legal action. During fieldwork, I conducted unstructured interviews as I believed topics relevant to one of the various dimensions of my study could unfurl and present themselves unexpectedly. That helped me to come up with new questions that I asked my following informants and redirected me to my prior informants to fill the gaps. Informants' responses to questions about the methods and knowledge gained during the practices directed me to investigate avoidance rituals performed during excavations. Personal experience narratives of my informants encouraged me to participate in six excavations conducted in deserted areas out of town. In this way, I could observe and gain insight into the structure and functions of ritual in the realm of illicit antiquity looting. The following chapter aims to reveal the manners of Turkish antiquity looters who respect the taboos that must be observed to get along with jinn. I proceed to explain what kind of treasures require to be searched and surfaced using jinn. I also describe avoidance rituals developed to protect oneself from the spiritual guardians of treasures. Finally, the discussion reveals cases that show the risks of contacting jinn.

DANGERS AND SOURCES OF RITUAL AVOIDANCE

Risk is our prior knowledge about possible hazards, which might be social, economic, physical, and mental. Studies show that time, place, occupation, interest, and fears affect the perception of danger of individuals or groups (Abt & Smith & McGurrin 1985; Bhandari & Okada & Knottnerus 2011; Hecht 1997; Burgess & Donovan & Moore 2009; Moore 2020; Coleman 2009; Crawford 2004; Katz 1981; Poggie 1980; Tomlinson 2004). Avoidance rituals are performed in situations that are seen as beyond control. Their main distinction from other

rituals is that performers use rituals to ease or deflect the perceived danger, and they are only prescribed as a remedy to avoid possible consequences of risk. As Moore and Burgess (2011: 115) suggest, the central feature of these rituals is that the function of practice as a preventive measure is secondary to the form of ritual. During my field research, one of my informants showed me a YouTube video in which a house was on fire. The house owner was also a looter and was believed to be struck by a jinni. This was not the first calamity that he experienced. First, his children got sick. Then his marriage failed. The fire was the worst, and the only reason for what happened to him was that he spoke before the hodja sealed the excavation site. Having listened to this story, I found Mehmet in the video. He confirmed what was said and added: "I knew the rule. Since I had had ablution, I wasn't expecting to be struck. I understand now that it wasn't enough. Ever since I made this mistake, my life turned to hell" (Mehmet, personal communication, September 21, 2019).

The taboos of antiquity looters consist of a series of sayings, such as "Don't speak at an excavation site before it is sealed", "Don't pee or poop at work", "No women at work", "Don't sleep at the site", "Don't enter the excavation site without saying *Bismillah*[2]". These taboos have a wide distribution along the Black Sea coast. They have also been recorded in studies conducted in eastern, south-eastern, and central Anatolia regions (Uysal 1974, 1983, 1985; Savran 1997; Yolcu & Karakaya 2017; Şenesen 2016; Çalışkan 2019; Akkuş & Efe 2015). All these taboos are linked to cleanliness inside and outside and represent the helplessness of looters. Taboos of looters might be extended to Muslims because their interaction with jinn is taboo in the first place.

Most looters were able to list a number of these taboos without thinking. The taboos represent the requirements of rituals that must be performed to find or extract the treasure and leave the work site without bodily, mental, or social harm. All these taboos originate from common beliefs about jinn existing in Islamic communities. Jinn are described and defined in the Qur'an and the Hadith (deeds and words of Muhammad the prophet). Although Muslim societies have a common faith in jinn's existence, most Turkish societies transferred the prior spiritual creatures that they had in shamanism into Islam. Shamanic Turks believed in spiritual creatures named *iye (*possessor*)* who lived in their realm and could see, help, or harm people. They were free from time and space. They classified these creatures into the White (Tr. *Ak*) and the Black (Tr. *Kara*) according to their abilities and characteristics. While the White could help cure diseases, find lost items, and protect women and children, the Black existed only to bring disasters. *Iyes* were believed to live and reproduce in the space between heaven and earth, and they were worshipped, given offerings, and respected as they could strike those who did not respect them (Araz 1995: 50–70; Lewis

2003 [1971]). *Iyes* had characteristics similar to Islamic spiritual creatures, jinn. Jinn and shamanic *iyes* both live with human beings, have a long lifespan, travel throughout space and time, and can choose between right and wrong. The notion of *iye* must have been combined with jinni and dissolved in Islam, after which all the characteristics of *iye* were attributed to jinn.

Even though jinn and human beings are similar, their life formula and origins differ (Al-Ashqar 1998, 2003; Khalifa & Hardie 2005; Sakr 2001). The Qur'an validates the existence of jinn by stating, "and indeed, we created man from dried clay of altered mud and the jinn we created aforetime from the smokeless flame of fire" (The Qur'an, 1965, 15: 26–27). Jinn are said to inhabit caves, deserted places, graveyards, and darkness (Al-Ashqar 2003), and are believed to have the ability to possess different living forms, including humans and animals (El-Zein 2009: 89–103). Numerous individuals claim to interact with jinn to cure various sorts of physical, mental, and spiritual diseases and conditions, engage in witchcraft, and locate hidden, buried, or stolen objects (Khalifa & Hardie 2005: 351; Khalifa et al. 2011: 69–75; Cohen 2008: 104–108; Dein & Illaiee 2013: 291–292; Çobanoğlu 2003). The abilities and methods of these individuals are common to shamans who use spirit helpers to find lost objects, cure illnesses, guide the souls of the deceased, and visit deities (Anohin 2006; İnan 2006; Eliade 1999).

In Turkish-Anatolian folklore, jinn are introduced as daunting creatures, and all of the characteristics of shamanic spiritual creatures, *iyes*, are transmitted into jinn by classifying them into two: Muslim and non-Muslim (Tr. *kâfir* / Eng. infidel). They possess deserted houses, places, and unattended belongings. They are primarily active between evening and morning *adhans*[3] (Çobanoğlu 2003; Boratav 2013; Bayrı 1972). Therefore, Muslim Turks are expected to respect the taboos related to jinn during this period. Looters look for valid explanations to rationalize their reasons for interacting with jinn. Firstly, looters know that the treasures they seek belong to people who lived in the past. As the distance between the past and the present increases, so does the intensity of ritual avoidance because time is correlated with the status of the treasure. The earlier the archaeological objects, the older the claim of entitlement on them, which indicates a protected status for the treasure. Secondly, knowing jinn can live hundreds of years and travel through space and time, antiquity looters search for their spiritual help. Using spiritual guidance, looters want to harvest the abilities of jinn. At this point, it must be added that looters only perform rituals when they perceive danger at the place they are planning to work.

To illustrate, one of my informants, Erdem, dreamed of seeing green grapes. He asked the mufti, a religious official, to interpret his dream. The mufti interpreted this dream as a sign of good fortune. Erdem lived in a mansion that

used to belong to the Rums, the Orthodox Christian minority who were forcibly migrated to Greece by the population exchange agreement between Greece and Turkey in 1923. Convinced that the treasure promised in his dream was buried under his house, Erdem dug up the floor and the yard. Then, he searched under the roof tiles one by one. Not finding anything, he explored the chimneys. During these months of labor, he did not perceive any danger because he was working in his own house. He stated: "I grew up in this house. Of course, jinn are living with me. But they know me. They know I won't harm them. I respect them. That is why they don't harm me" (Erdem, personal communication, June 6, 2021).

Indeed, studies also agree that as the perceived risk decreases, so does the intensity of ritual avoidance (Katz 1981; Poggie & Gersuny 1972; Tomlinson 2004; Malinowski 1948). Looters are compelled to perform avoidance rituals when they perceive danger, such as working in deserted places at night or searching for a treasure claimed to be seized by a jinni. In both cases, they are expected to obey taboos and perform rituals. At this point, I must clarify that looters searched for three sorts of protected treasures. All my informants reported that they got spiritual guidance during their illicit excavations, depending on what kind of treasure they expected to find. Regardless of where they live, looters have networks that enable them to reach Muslim hodjas and other religious clergy members respected in their community. It is believed that there are three categories of hidden treasures: normal ones, captious (Tr. *tuzaklı*) treasures that set people up and harm them, and those seized or protected by jinn. Looters depend on their abilities, intelligence and luck while digging for the first two. Searching for the last category, on the other hand, is much more complicated and dangerous because these treasures are believed to belong to either ethnic or archaic people who lived in the area and are therefore safeguarded by charms and jinn. In this context, the treasures searched by looters might also be classified into normal, ethnic, and archaic treasures. Ethnic treasures belonged to the recent past when the Rums lived in the area. Since the Rums were forced to leave the country after Turkey and Greece signed a mutual agreement, looters assumed they had no time to take their valuables on such short notice. The Rums allegedly had to bury their assets because they hoped to return when the conditions improved. To protect their valuables until their return, the Rums buried them by activating charms. However, most of them either could not return or gave up on this dream. Therefore, hodjas are expected to use jinn to learn the recipes to break these charms. Ancient treasures, however, refer to the archaeological objects of people who lived in the area in the distant past, such as Romans and Byzantines, whose assets are believed to have passed into the hands of jinn over time. How they estimate the class of archaeological holdings in terms of the period during excavations is a question that one may

ask. Ethnic and archaic adjectives define treasures believed to be protected by the supernatural. Since it is impossible to estimate the period of archaeological assets that looters expect to surface, notions of ethnic and ancient treasures are only used to express the difficulties that supernatural beings pose on looters. In this context, the looters assume that the more trouble they face during excavation, the more ancient the treasure they seek. Additionally, hodjas tell looters that, to cover their failures in the face of supernatural beings, either the treasure was owned by a jinni, who was assigned to protect it in the first place, or the non-Muslim jinn inherited the treasure. Both ethnic and ancient treasures require the help of spiritual mediators as they are considered impossible to extract from the ground without spiritual help. Surviving the excavation depends on deactivating the charms and transferring jinn's property rights over archaeological assets. Only hodjas or priests can accomplish these. Interacting with Jinn and asking for their help to surface archaeological assets requires extreme precautions that can only be managed by spiritual mediators. Only mediators – hodjas and priests – can intercede with jinn and officiate rituals on behalf of looters.

RISK AND RITUAL PERFORMANCE

Avoidance rituals aim to overcome stress and anxiety in case of uncertainty, which is a classical interpretation proposed by Malinowski regarding Trobriand fishermen. He states: "It is most significant that in lagoon fishing, where man can rely completely upon their knowledge and skill, magic does not exist, while in the open-sea fishing, full of danger and uncertainty, there is extensive magical ritual to secure safety and good results" (1948: 14).

Risk and danger may be related to work, situations, circumstances, and our environment. People perform avoidance rituals because even though we can, to a certain degree, use technological means to estimate nature, we are aware that character has absolute power over us. That is why we cannot entirely rely on rational technology, and we cannot let ourselves ignore possibilities controlled by luck, destiny, and the environment. As scholars state, "man's cognitive image of his capacity to preserve his mortal self through rational technology can never reach the degree of confidence that he can control his environment" (Poggie & Pollnac & Gersuny 1976: 67). They hypothesize that rituals associated with protecting life and limb are more sacred than production-associated rituals. Looters are more concerned about surviving the excavation site, where they work in the presence of a jinni, than the possible yield of the excavation. However, their desire for overnight success forces them to keep digging anyway.

According to Radcliff-Brown (1965), ritual avoidance is nurtured by the idea of ill luck, misfortune, and uncertainties. While describing food avoidance practiced by parents after childbirth for a few weeks, he noted anxiety would also stem from the physiological effect of the rite. It might be a feeling of insecurity and uncertainty stemming from the feeling that something will happen to us, someone, or something, if the ritual is not performed as it should be. In his terms, *primary anxiety* occurs when a person desires specific outcomes and lacks the analytical techniques that can only be eased by a primary ritual. Even though my informants knew they got into these situations voluntarily, their desire to stay safe and sound during and after excavations forced them to seek ritual protection.

Since they avoid interacting directly with jinn, looters work with professionals whose occupation involves contacting jinn. Individuals who work for treasure hunters in Turkey make use of jinn to locate archaeological objects, convince them to give up their property rights over the treasure, learn recipes to break the spell cast upon the treasure or perform avoidance rituals to protect looters from exposure to jinn (Karataş 2021: 171–188; 2022: 303–305; Şenesen 2016: 292–293; Çalışkan 2019: 126). The informants who use jinn to find archaeological artifacts assert that once a jinni is called forth, they will be in command of the hodja and will not harm looters as long as the looters comply with their wishes. Extending Durkheim's (1915) approach, Goffman (1956) inferred that our many diminutive social actions bear traces of religion. He described avoidance rituals as deference coded with prescriptions, interdictions, and taboos that imply acts the actors must refrain from performing. As Schechner (1987) put forward, rituals provide ready-made answers to what thinking works through. Hence, we can say that avoidance rituals are socially approved prescriptions used for socially foreseen risks. It may be better for us to recall Benedict's account of the ritual at this juncture. She also defined rituals as forms of prescribed and elaborated behaviors that occur as spontaneous inventions of the individual (1935: 397).

In my fieldwork, all my informants were Muslim, and most worked with hodjas, who were home-educated and specialized in treasure locating. However, a few of these looters were also acting on the advice of Christian priests (Tr. *papaz*). A few of these hodjas worked as official imams at local mosques. Even though they worked for the government for a salary, they kept helping antiquity looters earn pocket money. When it comes to finding ethnic treasures, getting help from non-Muslim clergymen is a standard method among Turkish looters (Çalışkan 2019; Kocaoğlu 2021; Ibn-i Haldun 1996; Karataş 2021, 2022). As these treasures are believed to be charmed by their owners, looters tend to look for non-Muslims' help not to be struck.

During my fieldwork, I observed Christian and Muslim clergymen, who could control jinn, and perform a common avoidance ritual, namely sealing (Tr. *mühürleme*). While priests perform the sealing ritual with holy water, hodjas mostly prefer white pebbles. But the structure, form, and functions of the sealing ritual are similar in Christian and Muslim traditions. As contact with jinn is considered taboo in Islam, the sealing ritual opens a gate to interact with spiritual creatures. During the ritual, the hodja and looters submit themselves to the hands of Allah the almighty by admitting that only he can protect them from jinn. Accepting the strength of Allah, they perform the sealing ritual as a shelter that acts as an invisible helmet between looters and jinn. Although Islam forbids voluntary contact with jinn to seek help or cause harm to another person, looters ease their guilt for manipulating the taboo by yielding themselves to Allah. To do so, they seek professional mediators who can mediate between looters, jinn, and Allah. Taboos, according to Steiner, are primarily concerned with specific and restrictive situations (1956: 20). Therefore, the sealing ritual is a response to taboo and is prescribed as a remedy to perform excavation if it is the only way to work in a site where a jinni is present and, more importantly, to leave it without being harmed. Perception of this danger by illicit antiquity looters is evidenced by their frequent reference to near or actual mishaps. One of my informants lost his wife after excavation and was extremely hard on himself in his grief. As it was the cold season, he could not refresh his ablution during the last excavation he attended. He kept telling his family that his wife had passed away because of his failure. He believed that jinn retaliated against him by killing his wife. When I visited him at his house a few weeks later, he still blamed himself but also found consolation in that his children and his teammates were alive. There are parallels here with Radcliffe-Brown's interpretation of ritual avoidance (1965 [1952]: 142). His observations show the idea of misfortune, ill luck, and uncertainties nurture that ritual avoidance. Even though Durkheim's (1915) definition of ritual does not refer directly to avoidance rituals, it draws a line between sacred and profane practices, and he gives special consideration to the position of beliefs in a personal deity, guardian spirits, and other supernatural living forms.

Jinni is a guardian spirit who inherits buried treasures. As the original owners of treasures had their assets enchanted, ancient treasures are assumed to be possessed by jinn. According to treasure hunters, sorcerers order jinn to protect the treasure as long as the original owner lives. After the owner and sorcerer die, the treasure achieves a protected status, which means that the jinni possesses the treasure forever. Ancient treasures are believed to have been passed down through the ages since jinn bequeath their assets to their children. This means the present protectors of treasures are acknowledged as

descendants of the first jinni charged with protection. In this case, they are seen as guardian spirits who inherited ownership. Ethnic treasures, on the other hand, belong to a relatively recent past. Since a jinni's lifespan is much longer than that of humans, their first guardian spirits are imagined to be alive. In this case, looters are expected to convince them to transfer their property rights through hodjas. Both cases are required for the sealing ritual because jinn are strong, dangerous, and unpredictable creatures.

I was able to join a ritual for which looters had fetched a priest from Istanbul. In this case, Muhammet and his mates first received help from a Muslim hodja. This Muslim hodja declared that the treasure belonged to a non-Muslim jinni and could not be touched without professional guidance. Since Muhammet's budget was limited and not enough to seek the priest's help, he insisted on continuing with the help of the hodja. At this point, they knew that the treasure was in a cave. Muhammet and his friends had tried to work in this cave from time to time, but they fell asleep as soon as they entered the cave. After multiple failed attempts, the Muslim hodja told them it was impossible because his jinni was scared of the non-Muslim jinni, who was more robust. Then Muhammet asked the priest to perform a ritual that might let them find the exact place of the buried treasure. A priest arrived from Istanbul. He asked the looters to bring a little girl with blue eyes and blond hair. They fetched a little girl from one of the nearby villages. The priest recited some verses from the New Testament and had the little girl drink some holy water. The girl was then asked to look around and say whether she saw anything golden. She pointed to a spot a few meters to the right, on the wall of the cave. Then, the priest let her go and started to perform the sealing ritual.

SEALING EXCAVATION SITE WITH A RITUAL

The sealing ritual protects the area from being excavated in a circle of approximately two square meters to protect illicit antiquity looters from the spiritual guardians of the space. Priests or hodjas mark the area around the excavation site to close it to the entrance and exit of spiritual guardians who have invaded the deserted places. The protected area during this ritual is marked with flour, water, ash, or pebbles. I witnessed six sealing rituals where water and pebbles were used to mark the protected area. Christian priests use only holy water to seal the excavation site. Hodjas, on the other hand, use all kinds of materials mentioned above to seal it. However, the most potent material is pebbles because hodjas write certain verses of the Qur'an on pebbles.

At this point, it must be noted that hiring hodjas to perform the ritual with pebbles is quite expensive, as writing each verse of Sura al-Bakarah over a pebble is time-consuming, and only a few active groups can afford to have this ritual performed. Since hodjas know that finding a treasure is not guaranteed despite the sealing ritual, they require payment in advance for their labor. Hodja Recep told me he only performs sealing rituals with pebbles if looters and his jinni give him a guarantee. That is why most sealing rituals are performed with water. Hodjas and priests read verses from the Qur'an or New Testament over water. They then pour this water to seal the area to create a safe space free from spiritual creatures. As I mentioned above, jinn are believed to be living in deserted places, houses, caves, and graveyards.

Informants described the sealing ritual as the last resort when interaction with jinn is inevitable. Since interaction with spiritual guardians of treasures is the specialty of hodjas, looters are reluctant to be around jinn while working. While hodjas get ready to perform the sealing ritual, looters are expected to observe the abovementioned taboos. Their only duties are keeping taboos in mind during excavation and participating in a purification ritual. According to Douglas (1984 [1966]), three elements are essential in defining the clean-up ritual – dress, motion, and space. Sunni Muslims can achieve this sort of purification ritual by having a *ghusl*,[4] which has three stages: verbal and practical intention, ritual entering the bathroom, and having a bath. The verbal intention is expressed by saying, "I intend to have a *ghusl*". Practical intent is displayed by the individual by covering particular parts of the body, entering the bathroom with the left foot foremost, and washing the mouth and nose three times. Then the person rinses the entire body. Finally, they exit the bathroom with the right foot foremost. The meticulousness that the individual is expected to perform in the purification ritual is expressed in folklore with the saying "wash not missing a needle tip". Although the sequence of rites in the ritual does not have to be logical, they are followed anyway due to beliefs. The purification ritual is broken only after sexual intercourse or ejaculation (Sabiq 2012: 49–52). The looters I interviewed were Sunni males, and they were expected to be in a state of complete purification before digging. This is important as any supernatural trouble experienced on an excavation site is first attributed to the failure of ritual cleansing.

I observed that hodjas asked looters if they were immaculate. During an excavation, one of my informants, Ercan, claimed that he could hear people. It was after midnight, and the closest village was an hour and a half away. We heard nothing, but Ercan kept saying people were having fun around us. Then he heard gunshots. He was in shock and running around. He jumped into a pit to protect himself from invisible bullets. The hodja on site claimed that Ercan

had failed to have a *ghusl*. That is why he heard voices. Douglas's (1984 [1966]) account of the purification ritual is also valid regarding the cleanness of the dress. Since only bodily fluids, such as blood, vomit, or sperm, break the purification of dresses in Sunni tradition, looters are expected to keep themselves clean during excavation. Cleaning clothing is an essential component of the cleansing of looters because any pollution is an open invitation to the danger posed by the jinn. Cleanness of the dress is provided by putting on recently washed clothes just before the excavation. Şakir, my informant, was highly meticulous about the purification of his clothes and kept overalls on during all excavations. He told me that he did not drink anything before going on a dig.

The sealed area is imagined as a room with a locked door marked with a tree branch. The branch also functions as a threshold between the dangerous supernatural environment and our protected earth. Looters use this threshold to go out of or come into the excavation site, and they are expected to be inside the marked circle to be safe and sound. Antiquity looters believe that jinn cannot enter the ring as Allah protects the area. Before the sealing ritual is performed, hodjas contact jinn, using rituals. They conduct an opening ritual to learn the whereabouts of the treasure. They get a bowl of water and read the Qur'an over it. Then they invite jinn to come into the water. My informant, Kazım, who claimed that he controls jinn, described the ritual in his words as follows:

> *First, I perform a complete ablution. Then I invite jinn into the water. If they refuse to come, I pray to convince them. I can't see them but hear their voices. When they arrive, I feel their presence. I feel sick because of their energy. That is why we don't want to connect with them unless we must. Most of the time, my customers know the whereabouts of a treasure, but they want to pinpoint the exact location. So, I ask my jinni if he knows the place. If he does, he draws a map on the water. Then I describe the map to my customers. If charms or spells protect the treasure, I ask the jinni how to deactivate the charms. If the treasure is archaic and a Christian jinni protects it, it is almost impossible to extract it without paying a price.* (Kazım, personal communication, July 14, 2021)

The respondents confirmed that they were asked to offer extreme gifts to the jinn. Some informants (n=28) experienced that the jinn asked them to offer sacrifices. Even Muslim jinn wanted looters to perform pagan or polytheistic practices. The informants stated that they were asked to perform certain acts such as fornicating in front of the jinni, drinking alcohol, and sacrificing animals they were forbidden to eat, such as dogs, cats, and hedgehogs. I witnessed a hodja tell looters to offer a white rabbit.

In an excavation I participated in, the hodja sealed the site, but the looters could not find any archeological objects. Then the hodja told them that as they approached the treasure, the jinni relocated it. While the looters dug in the sealed area, the hodja recited verses from the Qur'an. It was already midnight when he told the looters that the jinni would not let them explore unless a white rabbit was sacrificed at the center of the sealed area. They started running after rabbits but could not catch a white one easily. It took them hours to catch a rabbit with white spots over a brown coat. They brought the rabbit into the sealed area, but none of the seven could sacrifice it since it was cute. The hodja came forward and offered it. Then he had looters open a hole in the wall of the excavation pit and put the head of the sacrificed rabbit in the hole. Such offerings are an internal part of the excavations that are charmed.

For the charms to be deactivated, looters expect to be asked to offer gifts to the guardian spirits of the treasure. Indeed, rituals, in general, often include offerings that express the performers' sincerity, and every attempt and sacrifice may be made to get along with the spiritual environment (Howe 2000: 69; Durkheim 1915: 302; Hubert & Mauss 1964: 13). In the careful excavation I outlined above, despite approximately five hours of labor, the looters could not find anything, and failure was attributed to being unable to offer a fully white-coated rabbit. Schieffelin's (1996) account of the failure of a shaman to mediate between the supernatural and earthly environments shows that trust is an essential part of the success of a ritual; I was not surprised that the failure of the excavation was not attributed to the hodja. However, my findings about the failure of the mediator challenge those of prior studies, which blame mediators for their mishaps in ritual performance (Keane 1991; Bloch 1989). I assume the differences result from the Islamic belief system in which Allah owns everything created, and hodjas would not fail unless God wanted them to.

Furthermore, there is always a valid explanation that one of the taboos was not appropriately observed. As Tylor (1920 [1871]: 135) stated, "By far the larger proportion, however, are what we should call failures; but it is a part of the magician's profession to keep these from counting, and this he does with extraordinary resource of rhetorical shift and brazen impudence". The credibility of hodjas is primarily ensured through verbal agreements with looters, who promise to share a specified number of archaeological objects anticipated to be discovered during excavations. I want to add that looters only questioned hodjas' credibility when they asked them to perform *haram*[5] and wanted to be paid in advance. Both looters and hodjas have many explanations about failed excavations: "One of us must have failed to observe taboos", "Jinn relocated the treasure", "The treasure is waiting for his original owner's descendants", "Allah must have spared us", etc.

Antiquity looters asked to offer paganistic and polytheistic gifts have been mentioned in prior studies. Looters generally refuse to perform *haram* since it is interpreted as a rebellion against Allah. Ambitious or helpless antiquity looters, on the other hand, reluctantly agree to perform *haram* to reach the promised treasure (Araz 1995: 163; Çalışkan 2019: 132–130; Şenesen 2016: 292; Savran 1997: 378; Al-Houdalieh 2012; Ibn-i Haldun 1996). Çalışkan's (2019) account of performing *haram* might be an extreme example of helplessness in antiquity looters. Her informants said they had to fornicate in front of audiences. Ethnographic studies conducted among antiquity looters show that they tend to get along with the spiritual environment, particularly with the spiritual guardians of treasures, and they tend to perform avoidance rituals regardless of their religious background, as the most dangerous experience would be harmed by these spiritual creatures (Ibn-i Haldun 1996; Atwood 2004; Coldwell 1977; Hurley 1951; Bayrı 1972; Al-Houdalieh 2012; Gündüz 2001). As these spiritual creatures pose mortal threats to antiquity looters who dream of getting rich overnight, they reluctantly agree to work in deserted places where jinn are believed to be living. At this point, it is necessary to add that the risk of being harmed by a jinni during excavation is given priority over the risk of being caught by the police. Ömer, my informant, explained that police officers are human beings like looters, and he knows what can happen if he gets caught.

On the other hand, a jinni is an invisible and vital spirit with limitless power. Indeed, I met six individuals who claimed a jinni had struck them. Ömer, for example, had been unable to pull himself together since a supernatural event occurred. Even though he was working at a site appropriately sealed through ritual, he saw snakes seven meters below the earth while digging. Stunned, he yelled for help, but his mates did not hear him. He passed out on the bottom of the pit, and the others eventually pulled him up. At the time, two of his teammates were working with him, but they claimed that nothing strange had happened and everything seemed normal. He was working, and there was no snake in the pit. Ömer stayed unconscious for a while. When he woke up, he blamed his friends for not helping him.

The first thing his mates asked him was whether he passed wind while he was digging. Since the purification of an individual can be harmed by fluids and gas exiting the body, they questioned whether Ömer had been correctly purified. Douglas's interpretation of the relationship between pollution and danger is worth recalling in this context. She states that polluters are always wrong, develop a bad condition or cross a line that should not have been crossed, and displacement unleashes danger (Douglas 1984 [1966]: 114). Although Ömer did not intend to pollute his purification state, he did not act meticulously in this regard and became a threat to himself and his teammates.

Finally, I would like to describe the closing ritual performed to return to the earthly environment. Being in an excavation site for hours alongside jinn, looters believe they may also put their families in danger. To protect their families from the threat, looters are expected to have one more *ghusl* before they contact their families. The difference between the closing purification from the regular cleansing ritual is that the looters add vinegar to their bathwater. According to looters, vinegar can clean an individual's aura. As touching them can put their families in danger, they do not contact their family members before the excavation is complete. I witnessed that some looters carried vinegar in a spray bottle just in case. Water mixed with vinegar acts like soap, cleansing dangerous and polluted energy as prescribed by spiritual guardians. At this point, I liken being around jinn to exposure to radioactivity, which quickly makes individuals vulnerable to diseases.

CONCLUSION

Groups or individuals with high uncertainty tend to be associated with ritual avoidance. Avoidance rituals in the perception of danger help ease anxiety and overcome apprehensions. Furthermore, by conducting rituals, individuals can show their willingness to get along in an environment that is out of their control. Through ritual, they display their efforts and helplessness to show they are willing to resign themselves to the supernatural. Apart from the rites of passage accounted for by Van Gennep and Turner, avoidance rituals prioritize self-safety and stem from the mental image of the man that is aware of the limits of his capabilities (Van Gennep 1969; Turner 1991 [1969]). Douglas's and Tylor's interpretations of ritual avoidance parallel my findings, suggesting that pollution is viewed as contagious and can only be prevented through the practice of avoidance rituals (Douglas 1984 [1966]; Tylor 1920 [1871]). In illicit antiquity looting, where the body's social, mental, and physical integrity is more important than being caught by the police, rituals are performed to leave an excavation site safe and sound rather than to extract a treasure. This was expressed by hodja Kazım as well: "Leaving an excavation site in one piece is our priority, of course; all of us also want to leave it with priceless treasures too. But we first need to be alive and in one piece to find them" (Kazım, personal communication, July 14, 2021).

Given that finding a treasure represents the end product of excavation, the sealing ritual represents a desire to leave the excavation site without harm by the spiritual guardians of the treasures. According to Poggie and Gersuny (1972: 67), there is a distinction between production-associated rituals and

the protection of life; limb-aimed rituals and avoidance rituals or taboos are integral to a behavioral response to perceived danger. They emphasize that the contemplation of mortality requires sacred rituals. Looters' rituals prioritize the body's integrity over the excavation yield. Therefore, the sealing ritual ensures that spiritual guardians of buried treasures will not haunt looters. Rituals do not guarantee that looters will leave an excavation site with the treasures they expect to extract, negotiated through offerings and spontaneous contacts between the hodjas and jinn. During the excavations I participated in, the looters could not find any valuable archaeological objects. All failures were attributed to spiritual guardians who allegedly relocated, locked, or cursed the treasure, which was surprisingly enjoyable to witness. None of them accused the mediators. These mediators were mainly respected because they were considered competent in Islamic knowledge, particularly in contacting and controlling jinn. The credibility of hodjas was only questioned when they asked looters to perform *haram* or wanted to be paid in advance. Avoidance rituals are part of the illicit antiquity looters' religious system, which shows shamanic and Islamic characteristics. While looters approach spiritual guardians, they use the verses in the Qur'an and Islamic notions, such as prayers, *surahs*,[6] and hodjas, as well as the practices of the shamanic belief system. Even though they know their methods are marked as paganistic, they combine them into their sealing rituals. Having Islamic elements in the rituals eases the guilt of looters who are aware that their shamanic practices also put their afterlife at risk. While involved with danger, looters strategically appeal to the Muslim god by reciting verses from the Qur'an, writing or reading them over items such as pebbles, flour, or water. While they expect the help of the jinn to find and surface the treasures, they also appeal to god at the same time, considering him the ultimate effective agent when it comes to being protected from the jinn.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Prof. Dr. John Zemke for his moral and scholarly support during my research. I would like to thank the reviewers for their time and insightful comments. I want to express my gratitude to the copy editor of the journal, who edited and revised my work. I also want to thank the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) for funding this research.

NOTES

[1] In Turkish-Anatolian folklore, the title 'hodja' is bestowed upon individuals who perform acts with the assistance of supernatural powers or jinn and are also known for their roles as traditional healers and practitioners of witchcraft.

[2] Shortened from Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim, from Arabic, literally: in the name of God, the merciful and compassionate.

[3] The *adhan* is a call that invites Muslims to perform each of five mandatory *salah* (Tr. *namaz* / Eng. prayer).

[4] The *ghusl* is ablution that entails washing the entire body to reach a ritually pure state of the body. It is performed in case of ritual impurities such as sexual intercourse, seminal emission, menstruation, childbirth.

[5] *Haram* refers to any act or thing forbidden by Islamic law. Performing or having *haram* results in sin when committed by a Muslim.

[6] 'Chapters' of the Qur'an.

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https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2024.93.moon

TRADITIONAL BELIEFS AND REAL INFLUENCE OF FULL MOON DAYS ON THE BEHAVIOR OF COMMUNITY PHARMACY CUSTOMERS IN ESTONIA

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Abstract: Traditional beliefs about the influence of the moon's phases on human well-being and health remain vague in Estonia. The study hypothesized that Estonian pharmacists have noticed a periodic increase in the number of problematic pharmacy visitors, which can be associated with full moon days (3 days before and after). The observational study was conducted in 22 community pharmacies in Estonia (11 in standard and 11 in blind group), a total of 76 pharmacists filled out an observation diary daily for 10 months. Additionally, a questionnaire was used for 400 randomly selected employees of pharmacies. During the full moon period, the number of conflicts in the community pharmacies increased by 2.7 in the standard group and 3 times in the blind group ($p<0.01$). Pharmacists' opinions about the full moon's effect on the behavior of pharmacy visitors and themselves are described. Also, the sales of medicines for nervous system disorders increase on full moon days. Sensitive customers believe in the influence of the full moon and experience changes thanks to autosuggestion. The behavior of visitors is emotionally more unstable, with an increased level of anxiety. There is a need for further research on the impact of moon phases on behavioral aspects when providing medical and pharmaceutical care.

Keywords: folklore, conflict, pharmacist, customer, moon phases

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ASTROLOGY IN ESTONIA

Humanity has looked for parallels between heavenly bodies and earthly life since ancient times. In the early modern period, astrology's cultural and intellectual status changed dramatically: it came to be seen as disturbing information that was not sensible to be followed, was confusing and untrue, or was attributed the characteristics of superstition. Astrology was marginalized throughout Europe and beyond, including in the settlements and colonies. At the very end of the eighteenth century, G. A. Oldekop was the first who left out the astrological table in the calendars published by M. G. Grenzius (Annus 2000). In the early 1840s, the Learned Estonian Society (Gelehrte Estnische Gesellschaft) demanded that calendars no longer publish astrological information about the phases of the moon or indicate suitable sowing times, suitable periods for ablation and other medical procedures, and this became a rule. Interestingly, we find references to astrology in a reader for students (Jakobson 1867), which evidences that it

was still considered important information that deserved to be mentioned in the textbook. This indirectly indicates that astrology was cultivated among intellectuals and was not marginalized. At the same time, we find only a few reports about the moon's phases (Wiedemann 1876), two of which are related to mental disorders, in the accounts reflecting the worldview and beliefs of Estonians, compiled by Baltic Germans in the nineteenth century. The correspondence and analogy of creation between a celestial body or a certain configuration of celestial phenomena and an earthly event could not be lost without a trace. What is the question? Was this not common in the folk practice of the time? Or did those looking for the data not ask about them or write down these reports?

Looking over the results of the massive collection of folklore and religion initiated by Jakob Hurt (1839–1907) in the middle of the nineteenth century and written down by Estonians themselves (he was interested in folk astronomy; 113,000 pages of texts were sent to him), the paucity of information in his and other nineteenth-century collections becomes apparent. There is less data than in the thirties of the twentieth century, the time of urbanization and modernization. However, we see the same tendency in the writings of mythology and other religious phenomena. So there is one strong reason why the clarifying questions and varied collection methodology brought the data to the fore. For such an appearance these beliefs and practices must have existed a century earlier. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many different new teachings, esoteric hobbies, magicians, soothsayers and astrologers moved to the cities and spread from there to the countryside; also, some of the knowledge was presented in the press.

A substantive analysis of the existing information indicates that, although it is a contradictory system (as is common with oral information), the astrological information of the contemporary calendar and the behavioral structures of economic activity are related. A ritual and symbolic aspect could come into play in medicine. The creation of several analogies of both heavenly and earthly phenomena, human life and heavenly phenomena, trees used in the ritual and human life, etc., are evident, as we can see in the example presented by F. J. Wiedemann:

> *If you want to know if a weak child will survive, on Thursday night, under the light of the full moon, pull him from west to east through a hole previously drilled in the trunk of an oak tree, leaving there the clothes and some mercury …, and quickly move away without looking back. If the tree continues to grow well, the child will also survive, but if the tree dies after a while, the child will soon die…* (Wiedemann 1876: XVII)

There is no reason to doubt that in the twentieth century astrology continued in the city and certainly in the countryside. During the Soviet period (after the Second World War until the 1990s), the connection of the moon phases with various fields of human activity was a well-known topic; people were happy to talk about it to collectors of lore. In the late 1980s, regular horoscopes began to appear in the media and later on in social media; astrology spokespeople and experts also took the floor. In addition to entertainment (this is how the media justify their publishing tactics), for example, sowing calendars aimed at practical activities found a place in the media. At the same time, interest in the history of astrology also rose in European academic circles, especially among historians of science. It is probably a cyclical development, where ups and downs alternate; we can see this in several cultural phenomena.

MOON PHASES AND HUMAN HEALTH IN LOCAL BELIEFS

For a long time, it has been believed that moon phases exert influence on human somatic diseases. The story is much more complicated with knowledge of the relationship between the moon and mental problems, which include mood swings, depression, challenging behavior or more serious mental illnesses. Folk beliefs argue that fright and fear cause many diseases, so they were recommended to be avoided, and countermeasures and medicines were also used against them. According to the general belief, it is women who startle easily, as a result of which they have more diseases.

There were also direct connections: according to a widely known belief in the world, a person began to sleepwalk, i.e., fell ill with moonshine (became moonstruck) when the full moon shone on top of the head while sleeping. The disease (formerly called lunacy) is also on the international list of psychiatric disorders and there is no definitive scientific explanation for it. A close class of nocturnal sleep disorders is the nightmare phenomenon, which nowadays is associated with sleep apnea, but whose religious explanations are considerably more mystical and also include moonlight. The sphere of mental disorders is overshadowed by an unwritten norm, according to which it was not natural to talk about serious illnesses outside the very close circle of the home. This was even the case for casual workers and servants, for whom mental disorders and certain accidents were a taboo subject that was not discussed. Other reasons also contributed to this: depression and many other conditions could not be diagnosed but were characterized by sadness, indifference, lethargy, grumpiness, emaciation, etc. This list also includes references to several possible diagnoses.

When looking for reasons for mental disorders, mistakes against communal moral norms prevail, ranging from digging or sitting on the ground at the wrong time, to beating and torturing baby birds or animals, not to mention relationships with people who had gone crazy. We find the influence of the moon, sunrise and sunset, and the stars in the more archaic layers of explanations, which concern diseases affecting children from infants to two-year-olds (diarrhea, developmental disorders, so-called animal diseases[1]). These were caused by the wrong behavior of the pregnant woman with animals or being frightened by the sight of them; there were also other related explanations. They were tried to be eliminated with small rituals and reconciliations, treated with shock therapy, scaring, massage, etc. Severe forms were considered hopeless and were generally not treated; the sick were left to their own devices.

A more colorful picture is seen in the treatment of diseases in which, depending on the healer, the moon phase could be important even for sprained joints, broken bones, etc., but was widely used to ward off insects, pests, and wild animals, and also to influence economic activities and success (Kõiva 2011). Here the full effect of the moon phases is used to a large extent as based on analogies: the waxing moon grows (suitable neither for treating tumors, nor for crops, the edible part of which grows underground), the waning moon shrinks (suitable time for treating tumors), the moon and the sun in the sky at the same time – a dangerous time, the full moon is suitable for many activities, the lunar break is rather a dangerous time (Kuperjanov 2004).

However, there is still scant folk religious material in the archives, and it does not in any way reflect modern observations of how the full moon makes people with strange views and behavior move; drops of water on the window in the moonlight are the best remedy for this.

Sarv (2015) states in his popular science book *Kuu* (The Moon) that women's menstrual cycle has the same duration as the lunar cycle (28–29 days). In Estonian, this monthly period is called *kuupuhastus* (lit. moon cleaning). It is interesting to note that other religious associations exist between the moon and bleeding. Relating good health and effective treatments to lunar phases is also popular in Latvia, where many believe that during the full moon any bleeding is hard to stop, and the effects of remedies during this period are intense (Balode & Kārkliņš 2005).

In beliefs, moon phases are also associated with plants, including the choice of time to collect them. In connection with the collection of edible and medicinal plants and the phases of the moon, there is a fairly common belief in Estonia that aerial plant parts (flowers, leaves, fruits) should be gathered during the full moon, but underground parts before the new moon. It is believed that after

the appearance of a new moon, plant juices start moving from roots to the top, bringing the plant's 'energy' with them (Sarv 2015).

Raal et al. (2018) studied the most common modern beliefs regarding medicinal plants in Estonia among 1,205 randomly selected subjects. A quarter of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that herbs' effect depends on the moon's phase at the time they were collected, and 26% agreed slightly. 19% disagreed with the claim slightly, and 30% disagreed completely. The respondents' higher education correlated with higher disagreement rates with the presented claim, while higher age correlated with higher agreement rates (Raal & Relve & Kõivupuu 2018).

We are convinced that this study on the influence of the moon phases on the behavior of pharmacy visitors reveals valuable information about today's explanatory models of beliefs and social behavior and raises a serious problem. Can we rely solely on old and archaic reports, or do we have to add more extensive modern data sets and analyses to social, economic, health-related and cultural phenomena? The changing world is characterized by the transformation of worldview attitudes and, thus, the actualization of historical explanatory models in combination with scientific research. For this, it is necessary to organize well-designed experimental studies.

INTRODUCTION TO EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

The requirements for community pharmacies suggested by Good Pharmacy Practice are being tightened. According to that, each pharmacy must operate in a patient-oriented space that will allow the visitors to fully meet their needs for pharmaceutical care. The pharmacists' performance of their professional duties in the patient-oriented space of pharmacies can be full of conflict situations with different factors, accompanied also by temporary periodic increases in anxiety and depression. Conflicts are also one of the reasons why pharmacists are burned out at work; many healthcare professionals find it difficult to accept unfounded criticism (Peeples 2019). The health professionals are under constant stress, and if we add conflicts and unfounded criticism to this, it is difficult for many specialists to continue their work (Parikh 2019).

In most cases, conflicts between people are mainly investigated by studying psychological causes. The environmental variability, changing seasons, moon phases, solar activity, etc., can hypothetically play a role in the occurrence of conflicts. It is known that some of these factors significantly affect the behavior of animals, in particular birds (Slettebak 2012; Portugal et al. 2019). For decades, researchers from all over the world have been trying to explain the

impact of the phase of the moon on human behavioral aspects. For example, famous psychiatrist Thomas Weir studied changes in the behavior of patients suffering from bipolar disorder during different phases of the moon. Scientists in a number of experiments have been able to demonstrate the cyclicity of patients' bipolar disorders; in this cyclicity, the states of depression and mania regularly alternated depending on the phases of the moon.[2]

Historically, there has been an understanding that the phases of the moon also affect people's behavior. Raison et al. (1999) argue that the belief that the lunar cycle is associated with the onset and severity of psychiatric symptoms has persisted since the Middle Ages. The authors conclude that the bulk of lunar research has found no relationship between lunar activity and psychiatric presentations to emergency departments.

Some studies claim that human behavior is related to the moon's phases. For example, Welsh (2016) has found that the duration of children's sleep depends on the phases of the moon. According to well-known Australian forensic experts Sheldon and Prunckun (2017), police officers claim that the effect of the full moon on human behavior is significant.

Studies of the relationship between human behavior and the phases of the moon were also conducted at the Maryland Toxicology Centre in the USA, by analyzing 22,079 telephone calls (Oderda & Klein-Schwartz 1983). Thirteen monthly cycles were studied, and it was concluded that most calls, including those related to accidental poisonings, were made during the full moon period. Most accidental poisonings were reported during the full moon, while suicide attempts and substance abuse were reported during the new moon period. Parmar et al. (2014) have found that significantly fewer patients with anxiety disorders presented to the psychiatric emergency department during the 12-hour and 24-hour full moon models, but for the 24-hour model, significantly more patients presented with a diagnosis of personality disorders. Patients also presented with more urgent triage scores during this period.

The possible influence of the moon phases on the behavior of pharmacy visitors has not been studied so far. The aim of the research was to analyze the influence of the moon phases on the frequency of conflicts between pharmacists and pharmacy visitors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was based on the hypothesis that Estonian pharmacists have observed a periodic increase in the number of conflicted pharmacy visitors, which they associate with full moon dates. Therefore, we tried to find out whether increase

in the frequency of conflicts in the pharmacy during the phase of the full moon is statistically provable or it is a prejudice without scientific proof.

The observational study of pharmacy visitors was conducted in 22 community pharmacies in Estonia, of which 11 (standard group) knew the connection between the survey and lunar phases and 11 (blind group) were not aware of the focus of the study. Each pharmacy received a number from 1 to 11 as a random code, and the authors did not know which pharmacies they were working with when analyzing the data. Confidentiality also ensured that pharmacies of various chains participated in the study. Each pharmacy received a cover letter indicating the conditions of the written study and the criteria for recording the observation data. A total of 76 pharmacy workers (39 in standard and 37 in blind group) kept a research diary, recording the number of conflicts per day. The duration of the study was 303 days (from 1 November 2018 to 31 August 2019), of which 233 were "usual days" and 70 were full moon creation days with the preceding and following three days (= full moon days). Full moon periods were obtained from the dateandtime.com resource. In the diaries of pharmacy workers of the standard group the full moon day and the three previous and subsequent days were marked in color, while in the diaries of pharmacy workers of the blind group, the full moon periods were not marked, and they did not know that the researcher was interested in the possible influence of the moon phases on the occurrence of conflicts.

Pharmacists participating in the study were offered a 10-point scale to determine the level of conflict with pharmacy visitors: 1 – good-natured, smiling, laudatory; 2 – polite and aware of own desires; 3 – pleasant to communicate with; 4 – calm and firm, but reserved in behavior; 5 – neutral; 6 – a little tense, but holds on and maintains control within the bounds of politeness; 7 – slightly upset and demonstrating it; 8 – rude, arrogant; 9 – attacks, provokes conflicts, threatens to sue; 10 – raises voice, offensive and otherwise aggressive.

Points 7–10 were considered conflict situations, in the case of which the pharmacist participating in the study made a cross in the research diary. The total number of pharmacy visitors was also recorded in a special table every day.

Questionnaire for employees of pharmacies

In addition, a survey of 400 randomly selected employees of pharmacies was conducted, using an electronic questionnaire developed by us; it was sent out through eFormular.com and 20 questions were asked. The first block involved collecting general data: gender, age, position, work experience, and the number of pharmacy visitors per day. The second one was devoted to conflicts, to explain

their frequency, periodicity, and etiology. In the last block, the authors tried to find out what pharmacy workers themselves thought about the full moon period and whether they believed it was related to the number of conflicts. Then there were questions about whether the number of conflicts changed during the full moon period and how they occurred. It was also necessary to clarify whether the purchase of certain medications increased during the full moon period, since this period was associated with mental health disorders. Also, a public question was opened for comments.

Statistics

To confirm the hypothesis, it was investigated whether there was a difference between the results of the standard group and the blind group and whether this difference was statistically significant or not. The experimental statistical data were processed using the Microsoft Office Excel software. The method of analysis was the Student t-test using the TINV mathematical function. The analysis was based on the sample size and the number of users.

RESULTS

Study of pharmacy visitors

The average number of pharmacy visits per month was similar in the standard group (54,174–68,263) and in the blind group (54,132–61,041) from November to August. The average number of visitors in the standard group was 183 people per day and in the blind group – 175 people per day. Knowing this, we calculated the percentage of conflicting customers from all visitors per day. In the standard group, it was 3.8±0.4% of conflicting visitors on usual days and 10.2±1.4% on full moon days. In the blind group, the proportion of conflicting visitors from all customers was 1.9±0.3% on usual days and 5.6 ±1.1% on full moon days. Using the TINV function, it was found that using a 99% confidence interval ($p<0.01$), the average number of conflicting patients in the standard group was 7.0±0.8 on usual days and 18.6 ±2.5 on full moon days. In the blind group, the average number of visitors on usual days was 3.3±0.5, and on full moon days – 9.9 ±2.0 (Fig. 1).

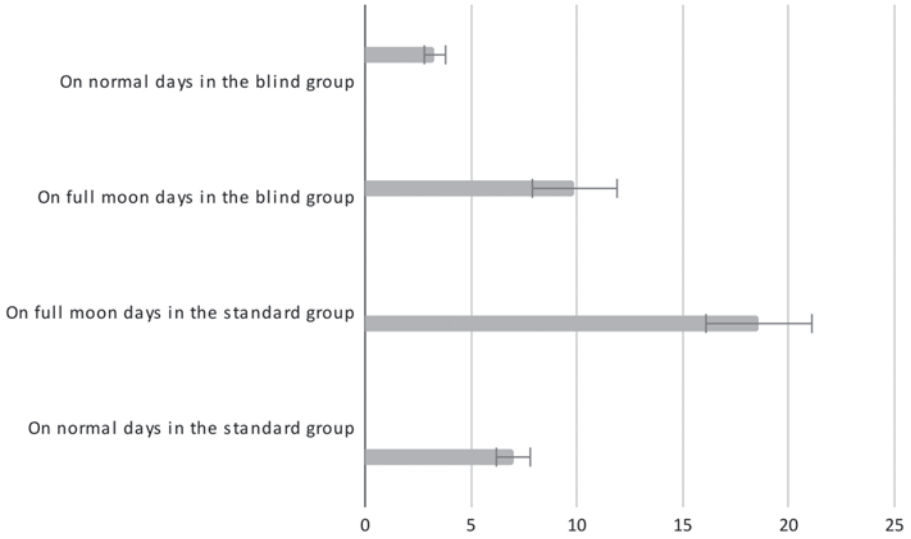

Figure 1. *The average number of conflicts per day on normal and full moon days in the standard and blind group, according to pharmacists who participated in the observational study.*

Study of pharmacy employees

General background of respondents

According to the results of the survey of 400 pharmacy employees in Estonia, they were segmented by demographic criteria. Most respondents were women (93%), which indicated the popularity of the profession of pharmacist among the females of the country. Most respondents had a higher professional pharmaceutical education (pharmacists, 53.2%), another bigger group were graduates of medical schools (pharmacy assistants, 39.8%) and a minority were persons without special pharmaceutical education (customer service personnel, 7%). By age, the largest part of respondents were experts over the age of 50 (28.5%); 33.3% of respondents had been working in a pharmacy for more than 20 years.

Periods of conflict in pharmacies

Pharmacy workers drew attention to the number of conflict situations in pharmacies depending on individual natural and socio-economic factors (Fig. 2). Thus, most respondents (41.5%) noted that the number of conflict situations in pharmacies increased on full moon days when a significant number of problem patients visited the pharmacy. The number of problem patients in the pharmacy increased by 33.3% on paydays or pension days, and by 26% on the days of a magnetic storm. Thus, many of those pharmacists who did not participate in the observation diary study also noticed an increase in the number of conflicted patients on full moon dates. This means that the observed experience is broad-based, which increases the reliability of the conclusion.

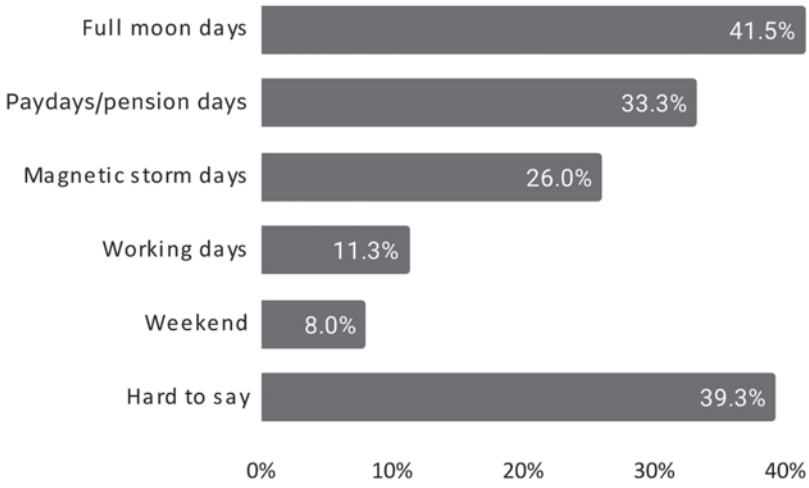

Figure 2. *Days when the number of conflicted pharmacy visitors increases according to the experience of pharmacists (%).*

Pharmacists' opinions about the effect of the full moon

Next, we investigated what pharmacy employees think about the possible influence of the full moon on the development of conflicts in pharmacies, and whether and how this period affects others and themselves. A total of 51.8%

of the respondents had noticed that the number of conflicting patients in the pharmacy increases during the full moon. At the same time, 21.8% of respondents did not notice such an increase, and 26.5% could not say anything about this issue. 60.8% of pharmacists noted the significant impact of the full moon on people's mental health. Therefore, a third of the respondents (32.3%) watched the approach of the full moon on the calendar and in the sky and were ready for a possible escalation of conflicts in the pharmacy. Only 13% of the surveyed pharmacists were skeptical about the effect of the full moon on the behavior of pharmacy visitors.

Causes of conflicts in the pharmacy

The commonest cause for conflict situations was problems with inaccurate prescriptions written by doctors (67%; Table 1). More typical errors included a prescription containing a wrong medicine, a wrong dosage, an unreliable discount percentage, etc. Some pharmacy visitors believed that if there was a problem with the prescription and the medication could not be bought immediately, then the pharmacy employee was to blame. Very often, in this case, the patient's emotional negativity, which may be due to their anxiety or depressive state, is transferred to the pharmacist and causes a conflict situation.

Table 1. *Causes of conflicts in pharmacies of Estonia according to the surveyed pharmacists*

Problems	**Mentioned by respondents, %**
Inaccurate prescriptions	67
Prices of medicines	61
Availability of products	39
Personal biases	34
Attempts to deceive the pharmacist	20
Behavior of a drug and alcohol-dependent pharmacy visitor	18
Service provided at the pharmacy	16
Types of payment	8
Other	6

A significant part of the employees (61%) indicated that conflicts arose when the patient was not satisfied with the prices of the drugs. The price increase of certain drug groups almost always causes a negative attitude among customers, which in turn affects the emotional state of all participants in the drug supply

system. Some clients cannot suppress this emotion, probably more often in the case of various affective disorders. The frequency of conflicts was also influenced by the availability of medicines in pharmacies. Thus, 39% of experts noted that the conflict increased when pharmacy visitors were not satisfied with the selection of pharmaceutical products; for example, when the pharmacy did not have a specific drug that the patient had seen in an advertisement or that had been recommended by neighbors, relatives, or acquaintances. In some cases, when medicines were not available in the pharmacy, the visitors considered it the pharmacist's fault.

A third of the surveyed pharmacy employees (34%) cited personal prejudices of customers as the cause of conflicts. For example, some visitors had a conflict with a pharmacist with a tattoo because it was considered unacceptable in the pharmacy, which affected their personal behavior regarding professional advice. Some of the visitors think that the pharmacy's activities are aimed only at business and that the pharmacist's goal is to make money off the sick person. These patients do not understand the importance of quality pharmaceutical care and provoke conflicts. Conflicts in pharmacies are also caused by visitors' attempts to steal (19.5%) or manipulate cash or the quantity of medicinal products (19.5%). 17.7% of the surveyed respondents considered the cause of conflicts arising in pharmacies to be the behavior of antisocial people and those suffering from drug and alcohol addiction. 16.2% of the surveyed pharmacists had experienced conflicts because the visitors were not satisfied with the quality of the service.

We investigated whether the shopping habits of pharmacy visitors can also change on the days of the full moon. Almost half of the respondents (44.5%) observed an increase in sales of specific drugs or food supplements during the full moon period (Fig. 3). A fifth (19.8%) of the surveyed pharmacists observed a connection between the full moon period and an increase in the purchase of certain pharmaceutical products, especially in relation to drugs affecting the central nervous system and dietary supplements (Fig. 3). According to the majority (74–77%) of the respondents who observed changes, the need for sleeping pills and sedatives increased on full moon days, but antipsychotics, antidepressants, and herbal preparations with a calming effect were also bought more (33–43%).

Finally, we asked whether the respondents had noticed that their physical and mental well-being changed during the full moon. Half (49%) of the pharmacy workers did not notice such changes, 28.6% of respondents felt changes, and 22.5% did not say anything. Pharmacists who answered "yes" most often had difficulty falling asleep as well as sleep disturbances during the full moon period (73%), followed by nervousness (59.1%), mood swings (53.9%), irritability (41.7%), weakness (36.5 %), dizziness (7.0%), changes in blood pressure (6.1%), panic attacks (4.3%), increased appetite (0.9%), etc. Therefore, more sensitive

servants experience changes in the functioning of the central nervous system during the days of the full moon. This supports the hypothesis that the same can happen to their customers.

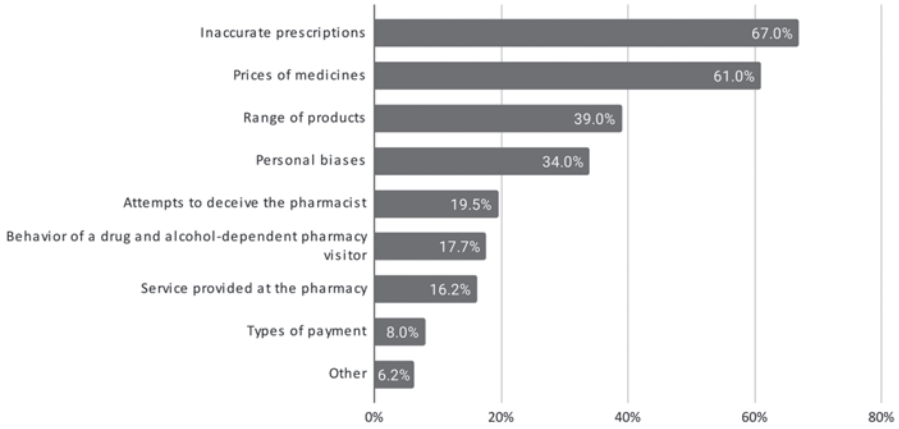

Figure 3. *The causes of conflicts between pharmacy employees and pharmacy customers, according to pharmacists (%) who participated in the observational study.*

DISCUSSION OF EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

The effects of moon phases on humans and animals have been studied before, but not thoroughly. A retrospective content analysis of scientific publications revealed that research into the influence of moon phases on animal behavior was popular. Facts are known about the existence of a connection between the phases of the moon and the life cycle of animals and etiological behavior. For example, it was determined that the reproductive cycle of animals depended on the phases of the moon. This association was found in fish, birds, amphibians, and mammals (Ikegami et al. 2014). Nishimura et al. (2019) investigated the effect of moon phases on the behavior of *Pogona vitticeps* lizards, showing that lizards' activity increased during the periods of full moon in both standard and blind groups.

Brazilian scientists conducted a study on the behavior of pack wolves on a full moon night. It was found that animal activity decreased on the night of the full moon: the nights are less dark than usual, and this makes the animals visible. If the animals maintained their normal activity, they would be very

easy food for predators. The activity of predators also decreases because there are no animals to feed on. Wolves have also been found to conserve their energy during the full moon. On average, wolves walked 1.88 km less on a full moon night than during a new moon period (Sábato et al. 2006). However, another study (Theuerkauf et al. 2003) found that wolves killed 1.8 times more animals on a full moon night than on a normal night because the prey becomes visible to predators. There is also a relationship between the life cycle of oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*) and the phases of the moon. The oysters were put in a dark place filled with seawater and monitored as they opened. The researchers concluded that even in the dark, oysters felt the influence of the phases of the moon and used them to synchronize their behavior (Payton & Tran 2019).

According to the data presented in a review article (Zimecki 2006), a significant number of human biological and behavioral processes can be associated with the phases of the moon. For example, the menstrual cycle is associated with the phases of the moon – the largest part of menstruation (28.3%) falls on the phase of the new moon. Individual researchers have found that more children are born in France between the lunar phases of the moon creation and the new moon; the number of accidents is the highest two days before the full moon; the highest number of crimes is observed during the full moon phase. There is also a definite link between the moon phases and suicides. Most often, suicide attempts are made during the new moon period. The cyclical nature of the immune response also correlates with the phases of the moon (Payton & Tran 2019).

In Estonia, specialists of the Road Administration together with the Institute of Informatics of the Tallinn Technical University conducted a study that revealed a relationship between the phases of the moon and road accidents. Although there was a weak correlation between the results of the study, the authors emphasized the need for further research. Based on the results of the study, the largest number of road accidents occurred during the new moon phase, but the next most dangerous period was during the full moon days. The difference in the number of road accidents on safe and dangerous days was six times. The number of accidents during the full moon was 2.2% higher than the average in other phases of the moon (Võhandu & Kirt & Raidna 2005). A study by Redelmeier and Shafir (2017) found that more fatal accidents occurred in the USA during the full moon period.

The analysis of the behavior of pharmacy visitors and the questionnaire survey of pharmacists have shown a statistically reliable relationship in the behavior of pharmacy visitors depending on the moon phase. The number of conflict situations in the pharmacy during the full moon days is greater than on usual days. In both the standard group and the blind group, there was a sig-

nificant statistical difference between the full moon days and ordinary days. As expected, in the standard group, where people knew what the study was about, the number of reported conflicts was numerically higher than in the blind group. This suggests that people have preconceived notions about the phases of the moon and certain expectations about how other people's behavior will change. Based on their experience, more than half of the pharmacy employees surveyed say that during the full moon, the frequency of conflicts with pharmacy visitors increases. It is also interesting that during the full moon period sales of medicines of certain pharmacotherapeutic groups increase, and there is an increase in sales of medicines used for nervous system disorders.

It is difficult to comment on the impact of the diagnosis of anxiety and depression on the frequency of conflicts in the pharmacy, but several respondents described the conflict situations that arose as a "madhouse". However, we can see from the survey that the question "Do the same conflicted patients visit the pharmacy repeatedly?" was answered as "yes" or "rather yes" by nearly 2/3 (64.8%) of the respondents (26.3 and 38.5%, respectively; Fig. 4). It is denied or rather denied by a clear minority (15.0 and 13.0%, respectively).

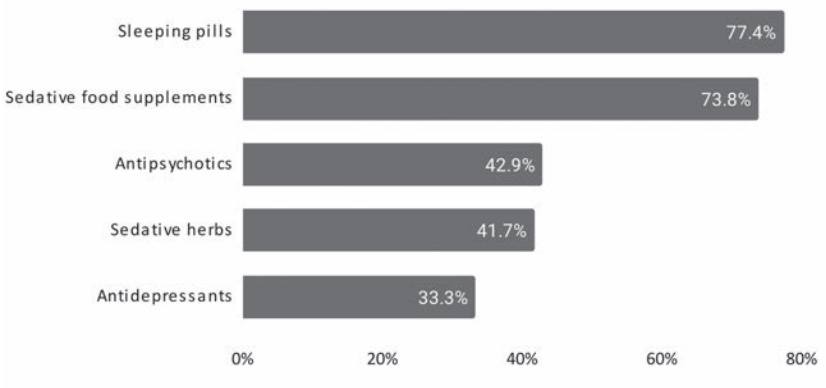

Figure 4. *According to pharmacists (%), sales of these preparations increase on full moon days.*

Most likely, during the full moon, people become more emotional and lose the ability to control their feelings and actions, and this leads to more frequent conflict situations. During the full moon, a significant number of people experience insomnia and a general increase in the activity of the central nervous system. Although, historically, attempts have been made to explain the increase in insomnia

with more light during the full moon (Lilienfeld & Arkowitz 2009), it cannot be taken seriously today, because people can make their rooms completely dark.

The possible effect of the full moon on the human psyche has been determined in several studies (Welsh 2016; Sheldon & Prunckun 2017; Oderda & Klein-Schwartz 1983; Zimecki 2006; Võhandu & Kirt & Raidna 2005; Redelmeier & Shafir 2017; Lilienfeld & Arkowitz 2009; Britt 2016). It is concluded that most reliable studies find no connection with moon phases, while some have proved inconclusive, and many that purported to reveal connections turned out to involve flawed methods or have never been reproduced. We argue that more sensitive people believe in the influence of the full moon and experience changes thanks to autosuggestion. The moon itself does not directly affect people's psyche and behavior.

The authors of the study believe that further research is needed on the influence of the moon phases on the social and behavioral aspects of medical and pharmaceutical care delivery, as well as on the effects of anxiety and depression. In our opinion, it is also recommended to carry out biochemical studies to determine the main mechanism of the effect of the lunar phases on living organisms. Hopefully, pharmacists can use the results of our study to predict and resolve conflicts in the pharmacy to provide quality pharmaceutical care.

CONCLUSIONS

There is still scant folk religious material in the folklore archives in Estonia. Therefore, traditional beliefs about the influence of the phases of the moon on human well-being and health remain vague.

Our experimental study proved that the number of conflicted pharmacy visitors increases on full moon days. The most important question is what could be the effect of the full moon itself here. The answer is that the moon itself does not directly affect people's psyche and, through it, their behavior. More sensitive people believe in the possible influence of the full moon and experience changes in themselves thanks to autosuggestion.

Author contributions: Conceptualization, A.R.; methodology, A.R. and A.O.; software, L.V. and O.K.; validation, A.R., A.O. and O.K.; formal analysis, L.V.; investigation, L.V., A.R. and A.K.; resources, A.R.; data curation, L.V., A.R., A.O., M.K., A.K. and O.K.; writing / original draft preparation, A.R., A.O., M.K., A.K. and O.K; writing/review and editing, A.R., A.O. and O.K; visualization, A.R. and L.V.; supervision, A.R.; project administration, A.R.; funding acquisition, A.R. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The study was supported by the EKM project 8-2/20/3, project "Narrative and belief aspects of folklore studies".

NOTES

[1] Such diseases were related to people's behavior towards animals (unfair punishing, beating) or startling when seeing an animal, which resulted in an infant's disease. According to the symptoms and causes they were called dog, wolf, etc. diseases.

[2] See https://sci314.com/news/314-luna-vliyaet-na-nashe-nastroenie-i-mozhet-dazhe-vyzvat-bipolyarnoe-rasstrojstvo 2022, last accessed on 28 May 2024.

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https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2024.93.kencis

ETHNO-GRAPHICS: FOLKLORE AND BALTIC PRINTMAKING IN THE PERIOD OF LATE SOCIALISM

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Abstract: Visual representations of folklore and mythology played an ambivalent role in Baltic art and society during late socialism. On the one hand, it was often a safe choice promoted by Soviet national cultural policy; on the other, artwork tapping into national and ethnic identities carried a subversive, anti-Soviet potential. Exploring folkloric themes, Baltic artists of the 1970s developed different strategies to navigate the cultural field between Soviet censorship, folklore revival, modern forms of expression, and resistance to sovietisation in their home countries.

The renowned Estonian printmaker Kaljo Põllu (1934–2010) created a powerful fusion of ethnographic research and creative practice to re-imagine Finno-Ugric mythology and build an alternative foundation for Estonian identity. Latvian printmaker Dzidra Ezergaile (1926–2013) laid the groundwork for an ethno- and eco-critical approach towards Soviet modernisation through a novel visual exploration of Latvian folklore motifs. Finally, Lithuanian illustrator and monumental painter Birute Žilytė (b. 1930) revolutionised Lithuanian childhood imagery, providing Lithuanian folklore and myths with bright and brave contemporary forms.

A postcolonial reading of Baltic printmaking during late socialism generates an interpretive grid for understanding the role of folklore and folklorism within broader cultural trends and political dispositions. A combination of folklore studies and art history might efficiently contribute also to gender studies and environmental humanities.

Keywords: Baltic art, Birute Žilytė, Dzidra Ezergaile, ecology, folklorism, Kaljo Põllu, landscape, late socialism, mythology, printmaking

Embracing a semantic and contextual understanding of folklore leads to blurred boundaries between traditional folklore and so-called folklorism, the second life of folklore outside the community of oral transmission. Thus, contemporary, authored, mediated interpretations of traditional culture acquire similar

valance, directing academic interest towards the social and creative life of specific motifs, formulas, ideas and images. Mediation and reoccurring new interpretations establish folklore as a site of collective memory and a binder of identities. Various forms of art have been the primary vehicles for contemporary interpretations of folklore over the past century, from staged folk dances and choral renderings of folksongs to folklore-themed poems, paintings and sculptures. These new forms provide visibility and influence to traditional cultures in a modern setting. When artists interpret and transmit traditional folklore through their works, folkloric subject matter provides specific opportunities for identity-building and cultural or spiritual meaning. It legitimises certain creative expressions under ideological regimes where such legitimation is necessary. The latter was characteristic of the Soviet Union and other Socialist Bloc countries, where 'the folk' were equated to 'the people'. However, an identification between the 'folk' and the nation has been heavily built up since the nineteenth century, and this remained present under communist rule too. This double relation created and sustained the ambivalent nature of folklore representations: ideologically correct and at the same time resisting the Soviet colonial discourse on national terms.

This article demonstrates the results of research into visual interpretations of folklore in Baltic printmaking during late socialism – in the Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republics in the 1960s–1980s.[1] I use the term 'printmaking' synonymously with the historical concept of the period – 'graphic art' – for both fine art expressions and products of graphic design or applied graphic art. The applied graphic art was an interdisciplinary practice, often bringing together and reinforcing the latest influences in various subfields of culture. Consequently, these artistic discoveries also affected the field of independent graphic artworks (cf. Žuklytė–Gasperaitienė 2018b: 7). Importantly, Soviet ideology was more tolerant towards applied arts, allowing various experiments without attaching the label of 'formalism', which was the most typical way of carrying out aesthetic censorship.

My research is grounded in three case studies of graphic artists from all Baltic states: Dzidra Ezergaile (1926–2013), Kaljo Põllu (1934–2010), and Birute Žilytė (b. 1930). All born less than a decade apart, they shared childhood experiences of their countries under authoritarian but independent governance, the hardships of World War II and the following Stalinist repressions against relatives and compatriots. The artists graduated in art from their respective higher education institutes, began their professional activities during the Thaw period when ideological control was slightly loosened, and gained international recognition in the early 1970s. As such, they represent a new generation of post-war intellectuals, known as the Generation of 1930 in Lithuania or more

widely by the Russian equivalent *shestidesiatniki* (Sixtiers) (cf. Davoliūtė 2016). All three suffered episodes of political censorship of their work, yet continued successful creative practice. Ezergaile, Põllu and Žilytė might be considered as rebels of a kind, who undermined the dominant art discourse, although each of them employed different strategies – partnering with science, focusing on children's literature, or just avoiding communist imagery as much as possible.

The late 1960s constitutes a key formative influence on the artists' oeuvre. With a slightly different focus in each case, the 1960s meant revival of interwar cultural traditions, exposure to contemporary Western popular culture, neo–avant–garde art and its socialist adaptations, the blooming of design, as well as the mobility and cultural exchange that occurred under the socialist banner of Friendship of Peoples. In 1968, the Tallinn Print Triennial was established, soon featuring all three artists among the participants receiving awards (Taidre 2018). The same year was marked by the violent suppression of the Prague Spring, when Alexander Dubček's so-called socialism with a human face in Czechoslovakia was replaced with Brezhnev's real socialism. The resulting disillusionment with the perspectives of the communist regime often took a national-conservative turn in the Baltic countries (cf. Annus 2018), encouraging increased interest in folklore, mythology and traditional culture in various forms. While Soviet authorities pushed forward with agricultural industrialisation (notably, through melioration projects and the destruction of many traditional homesteads) and urbanisation, the most popular works in Latvian and Estonian culture, just like in Lithuania, "started to express an anxiety and lament over the separation from the land that with time grew in intensity until it emerged as a widely shared vision of cultural apocalypse and national disaster" (Davoliūtė 2016: 56–57). The sentiments coincided with the global crisis of industrial modernity and also the rise of environmental awareness (Kaljundi 2022: 29). Exploring folkloric themes in art communicated a vital concern for one's land, nature, and national identity.

Informed by the recent advances in Baltic postcolonial theory (Kelertas 2006; Kalnačs 2016a; Annus 2018) and its application to both folkloristics (Naithani 2019; Ķencis 2021) and art history (Kangilaski 2016; Kaljundi 2022), I examine the appearance of folkloristic themes in the oeuvres of all three artists against the background of their subject positions within the Soviet colonial matrix of power. My focus is on the interplay of opportunity and legitimacy, ideological demand and creative freedom, taking into full account the specific Baltic situation, in which traditional culture was exposed to the double modernity characteristic of the Soviet western borderlands (Thaden & Thaden 1984; Annus 2018). Throughout the research, I have explored sources in the Latvian State Archive, the Estonian (KUMU) and Lithuanian national museums of art, and

other art depositories in all three Baltic countries, as well as primary, grey and secondary literature (see references in case studies). In addition, I had the privilege of meeting Birute Žilytė and interviewing art experts from the relevant countries, as well as contemporaries of the artists. Ezergaile's case study is almost exclusively based on archival and museum material, as there has been no scientific or extensive popular research on her heritage. This article is the most recent contribution to my investigation into the synergy between the fields of art and folklore in Latvia and the Baltics (Ķencis 2015, 2016, 2020).

The case studies of the three artists are followed by an analysis of the cultural logic that governed their creative trajectories and possible generalisations that might be derived from these cases. Furthermore, gender and environment appear as two emergent themes understudied in art histories of folklore.

CASE STUDY 1: DZIDRA EZERGAILE

Dzidra Ezergaile was a devoted and prolific, yet elusive Latvian graphic artist. Her approach of merging ethnographic references and abstract expression had the power to represent the high variability characteristic of folklore. At the same time, folklore in her works was a marker of Latvian identity. Born in the capital, she was raised in various towns and spent summers with relatives in the countryside. Ezergaile studied art vocationally and often created folklore-themed pictures in her teens, and then went to study architecture (1947–1950) and printmaking (1951–1956), majoring in so-called poster art at the State Art Academy of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR). Her tutors were graphic masters of the era, the national–minded Pēteris Upītis (1899–1989) and Arturs Apinis (1904–1975). Both had been students of Rihards Zariņš (1869–1939), a pioneer of folkloric representations in Latvian art (Ķencis 2015).

From graduation until her retirement (in 1976), Ezergaile worked as a designer at the magazine *Soviet Latvian Woman,* a local version of a global Soviet franchise. Joining the LSSR Artists' Union (1962) and becoming secretary of its printmaking section, she avoided other public obligations, later also confessing an aversion to the infamous artistic bohème. Instead, the artist regularly visited state-sponsored artist residences across the Soviet Union and participated in a record number of exhibitions, sometimes as many as 14 in a single year (Kaprāne 2008). To my knowledge, she led a solitary life with her parents until meeting the politically repressed neopagan poet and playwright Vidars Balts (1911–1994). They married in 1980 and moved to a humble house in the countryside in northern Latvia, where, after he suffered a stroke in 1986, Ezergaile virtually became her husband's caregiver, combating poverty and the

grim daily life of *perestroika* and the tumultuous 1990s. These circumstances heavily impaired the artist's creative and technical capabilities, reducing her artistic practice to miniature bookplate (ex-libri) etchings and later to small, simple ink drawings that she loved to bind or glue into improvised little books.

Landscapes were Ezergaile's favourite subject of both prints and watercolours. The artist remembered "[t]hose spontaneous, soulful works one could not display publicly. For commissions, I gave landscapes because it is impossible to make mistakes [in this genre]; there was nothing political" (Kaprāne 2006: 6). Most of the artist's landscapes are void of socialist realities; even a construction site is depicted as a serene view through the trees at night (*Night at the Construction Site*, 1963). The series *Our Sea* (1973–1974) does not hint at the achievements of the Soviet fishing industry, and a collective farm is represented by a lonely fish pond (*At Fish Ponds* from the cycle *Daily Life at the Collective Farm*, 1982). Her urban vistas mostly feature either architecture of long bygone times (e.g., the urban cycles *Kuldīga,* 1970–1972, and *Vecrīga,* 1965–1970) or decorative patterns of bridges (LVA 30: 6, 41: 27). After conducting multiple interviews with the artist, Dace Kaprāne wrote in her thesis, "The most crucial [aspect] in this traditional observation of landscape was to demonstrate the *characteristic* beauty of the Latvian countryside, avoiding the industrially degraded environment that was brought by the brutality of the Soviet regime" (Kaprāne 2008: 47). Ezergaile approached landscapes she encountered on her trips abroad – Lithuania, Estonia, Georgia, Crimea, the Moscow region – in a similar way. Visual rhythms and the linear etching the artist preferred allowed the organic integration of allusions to the folk ornament in works on almost any subject matter.

The highlight of Ezergaile's oeuvre is the series *Folklore Motif* (10 sheets, 1970). Prominently featuring her signature geometry of light, works from the series were widely reproduced, exhibited and included in museum collections, and received awards internationally, at the second (1971) and third (1974) Tallinn Print Triennial. The series consists of abstract ethno-scapes that integrate iconic ethnographic objects (such as a well, a barn, and a traditional dress) into abstracted natural space, with the multiple simultaneous positions of the sun gesturing at the timeless quality of the view. Similar folkloric elements and hints towards folk art spill over into her more than 500 bookplates, providing an interesting research opportunity for combined socio-semantic modelling.

The position of graphic designer at *Soviet Latvian Woman* was intertwined with the artist's creative practice in several ways. First, it was an opportunity to publish works in the most popular monthly periodical of the state, with a print run of up to 178,000 copies (Bērziņš 1972: 11). Similarly, Ezergaile's artwork regularly appeared in other monthlies (*Karogs, Zvaigzne*) and in newspapers.

Figure 1. Folklore motif. *Dzidra Ezergaile, 1970. Latvian State Archive, f. 2697: 41-0003.*

Second, the preparation cycle for journal issues provided enough free time to engage in art during her daily routine and gave ample opportunities to visit artist residences and carry out organisational tasks at the Artists' Union. The third aspect was a practical benefit reflecting the particularities of the Soviet economy: the artist used the reverse side of the journal's cover proofs as paper for her prints (LVA F2697).

In 2006, Ezergaile received a gold medal of Artist of the Year from the Board of the Latvian Artists' Union. This article is the first scientific exploration of her creative legacy.

CASE STUDY 2: KALJO PÕLLU

Kaljo Põllu made the first and most influential introduction of Finno–Ugric mythology into Estonian art, leaving behind a unique artistic heritage, huge ethnographic collections, and a living legacy of dozens of artists who he influenced. Põllu's artistic merit was recognised with multiple national awards both during and after the Soviet occupation; his works have been shown in more than 60 solo exhibitions worldwide.

The artist was born on the scenic Baltic island of Hiiumaa in 1934. He manifested an interest in folk culture as early as during his studies at the Haapsalu Pedagogical School (1949–1953). In 1962, Põllu graduated in glasswork from the State Art Institute of the Estonian SSR (the Estonian Academy of Art since 1996). Before returning to the Institute as a lecturer (in 1975) and professor (in 1988), Põllu became a leading figure in the artistic life of the spiritual capital of Estonia – the university town of Tartu. The artist headed the Tartu University Art Cabinet (1962–1975) at the Department of Pedagogy. Under Põllu's leadership, the cabinet became "one of the most important interdisciplinary cultural phenomena in Estonian art history" (Koll 2020: 33) and a liberal hub that gathered together a circle of young intellectuals, organised numerous art exhibitions and informal meetings, and translated and self–published foreign treatises on contemporary art. At the same time, the artist actively experimented with various styles of creative expression (most notably Pop, Op and kinetic art), becoming one of the most radical, if not the leading, neo–avant-garde artist of the late 1960s' Estonia. Põllu challenged the dominant paradigm of Socialist Realism and the Severe style. Moreover, some of his best-known Pop art images – like the iconic *Cornflower* (1968) – combined local ethnographic references, ready-made images and national symbols like the forbidden blue-black-white tricolour of independent Estonia. Perhaps this part of his oeuvre can be characterised as avant-garde in form and national-conservative in content.

The Thaw of the 1960s brought relative freedom in establishing informal art groups that voiced ideas different from the Communist Party and artists' unions. Together with Peeter Lukats, Enn Tegova and several other associates working at the Art Cabinet, Põllu established the *Visarid* group (The Discontented, 1967–1972) and characteristically became its leader and the author of its manifesto. Among other questions, the manifesto drafted a blueprint for local

and national identity in artistic practices, raising awareness of modern mass culture and blind following of international trends (Põllu 1997). The artist's pioneering relationship with modern art ended in 1972, after the period of Pop and Op art; at the same time, *Visarid* ceased to exist, and the following year the Art Cabinet was moved to less central premises (Kübarsepp 2005: 49). Põllu's nationalistic views and interest in folklore as an expression of national identity acquired a whole new quality in the 1970s, after the disillusionment with modernity (especially the Soviet variety) and contemporary art as its language.

Figure 2. Tare *(Peasant house). Kaljo Põllu, 1969. Art Museum of Estonia, j 13440.*

At the beginning of the 1970s, the artist radically changed his artistic practice, turning from the neo–avant-garde to what could be called expressions of national-conservatism. The central source of inspiration and ideological core for the latter became the folk art, mythology and folklore of Finno-Ugric peoples: a range of cultures in various stages of nation-formation scattered from Siberia in the east to Lapland in the north to Hungary in the south. The artist has considered the personal and ideological reasons behind this turn in various writings and interviews (Põllu 1997, 1999; see also Kübarsepp 2005; Koll 2020).

Põllu claimed that there were two turning points. First, the Prague Spring testified that Western powers (and the culture they represented) would not save the nations subjugated by Soviet power. That initiated a turn away from contemporary art and neo-avant-garde experimentation. The further direction was indicated and inspired by a colleague at Tartu University, the renowned linguist Paul Ariste (1905–1990), who suggested turning his attention to Finno-Ugric folk art (Põllu 1997, 1999; Kübarsepp 2005; etc.). As a result, the artist famously claimed to have discovered "an older and more durable foundation under the barely century-old layer of Estonian professional culture – a foundation still undamaged by modernism, or the original mentality uniting all Finno–Ugric peoples" (Põllu 1999: 6). Focus on the ancient past was also somewhat safer in the post–Thaw atmosphere of increasing control and restrictions on artistic life.

Theories of Finno-Ugric kinship and cultural distinctiveness predated the Soviet occupation. A particular Estonian ideology in this field was developed by folklorist Oskar Loorits (1900–1961) and theologian Uku Masing (1909–1985) (cf. Kangilaski 2016: 44). Põllu's change of intellectual trajectory coincided with a broader cultural movement in the 1960s and 1970s in Estonia, especially in Tartu, through close and direct ties within intellectual circles (cf. Kübarsepp 2005: 41). It was inspired by the most important poet of the 1960s, Paul-Eerik Rummo (b. 1942), and taken up by historian and filmmaker Lennart Meri (1929–2006) and composer Veljo Tormis (1930–2017). In the visual arts, for example, a similar turn from avant-garde to conservative interpretations of religion, folklore and myth was taken by Olav Maran (b. 1933) in 1968 (Tatar 2015) and by Jüri Arrak (b. 1936) a few years later (Taidre 2021). Ornament and psychoanalytical thinking formed a powerful symbiosis in the works of another leading printmaker Tõnis Vint (1942–2019). Friendship and numerous cooperations tied Põllu with another firebrand poet, Jaan Kaplinski, who eventually became the voice of Põllu's works (e.g. Park 1985). In the ethno-federal Soviet Union of 15 modern republics, defining the Estonian nation through belonging to the Finno–Ugric world was a powerful project of counter-identity (cf. Kangilaski 2016; Kaljundi 2022: 26; Tatar 2015).

Põllu's fieldwork expeditions were one of his most important contributions to this project. Põllu went on several student trips in the 1960s, visiting the Kola Peninsula (1964, 1967 and 1969), Siberia (1966) and Courland in Latvia (1967). Soon he started organising annual trips to different regions of Estonia with the Art Cabinet's students, later reflected in his monumental graphic series *Estonian Landscapes* (1971–1972). Within the same timeframe, as a legal but highly un–Soviet activity, it might be paralleled to the burgeoning of fieldwork-centred and interdisciplinary regional studies in Lithuania.

After returning to Tallinn in 1978, Põllu organised voluntary extra-curricular research trips to the homelands of Finno-Ugric peoples with the State Art Institute students. Since 1994, the work has been undertaken by textile designer Kadri Viires. Over time, Põllu's expeditions came to form an interdisciplinary, art-oriented ethnographic research platform. Participants documented a wide range of data, from textile ornaments and folk architecture to folklore and ancient petroglyphs. The cultural-historical material collected was afterwards deposited in museums and served as a source for the research and creative activities of participating artists. This experience may have influenced some 300 young artists, designers, and art and ethnography historians.

In the early 1970s, Põllu had established his distinctive niche in the Estonian art world by his distance from the Western avant-garde in forms of expression, the specific subject matter of his works, and his mastery of the complex, demanding mezzotint printmaking technique. The highlights of his oeuvre are the so-called mythological series: four impressive sets of prints on myth, folklore, history and national identity. Those award-winning series reflect artistic interpretations of findings made during the Finno-Ugric expeditions and related in-depth research in libraries and museums. The series *Kodalased* (Ancient Dwellers) (25 sheets, 1973–1975) continues to explore the Nordic landscape but combines it with ethnographic motifs and mythological references to reflect upon the existence and worldview of hypothetically shared Finno-Ugric ancestors. The same approach is evident in 65 sheets entitled *Kalivägi* (Kali People) (1978–1984). The artist's ideology is emblematically expressed in the first sheet of the series: "Where We Are Coming From, Who We Are, Where We Are Going" (1978), testifying to a belief in a collective identity connected over very long periods.

Moreover, the image features a larger-than-life patriarchal (or archetypical) figure of a bard, a *kannel* (psaltery, Estonian national instrument) player, and a narrator-creator-artist. *Kali People* dwells on the ancient myths of the world creation but also includes a set of prints dedicated to a rustic folk calendar that could be considered a separate series, as well as prints on ancient Estonian counties and symbols of Estonian national culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In such a way, the whole series suggests a national

answer to the questions of the first print. Art historian and curator Kersti Koll has concluded that this visual epic is one of the largest and most powerful series ever in the history of Estonian graphic art (Koll 2018: 26). With minor shifts regarding generalisations and precision of mythological references, Põllu also remains true to this approach in the 40-sheet-long series *Heaven and Earth* (1987–1991) and the coloured mezzotint set *Enlightenment* (1991–1995, 47 sheets). In the mid-1980s, the artist created a series of sizeable coloured cardboard print works, creatively interpreting ancient Estonian proverbs marked by ethnographic ornament and national symbols.

In stark contrast to Soviet historical materialism, the artist interpreted ethnographic findings as an embodiment of ahistorical, timeless truths:

> *We have to bear in mind that figurative folk art, the object of this research, as well as the scientific material brought back from the expeditions, is timeless in its character. At the same time, it belongs to the past, the present and the future, and focuses our thoughts on the main question: where we come from, who we are, where we are going, or, in other words, identification of our place in the universe.* (Põllu 1999: 7)

Figure 3. Humal *(Hop), from the series* Kodalased *(Ancient Dwellers). Kaljo Põllu, 1975. Art Museum of Estonia, j 54239.*

As such, it was a perfect vehicle for (trans)national identity-building. In his intellectual and creative progression, Põllu strove to uncover universal or archetypical content of folk art and narratives, paying particular attention to the oldest myths about world creation. In the artist's own words: "For in a deeper observation of folk art, we inevitably arrive at its most fundamental and ancient theme – cosmogony, or a man's attempt to define his place in the universe" (Põllu 1999: 191). He devised his version of comparative mythology along the way, referring mainly to post-Jungian scholars like Joseph Campbell and Mircea Eliade (e.g., Põllu 1999). Of course, searching for archetypes as the most basic, persistent structures of culture in myth and folklore was a fashion of the day. The artist resided in Tartu during the years that gave birth to the influential Moscow-Tartu school of semiotics, which was preoccupied with such subject matter too (Ķencis 2012: 98; Waldstein 2008: 113). In his artwork, Põllu creatively combined and interpreted a variety of ethnographic imagery, archaeological findings, petroglyphs, ornaments, and original visualisations of myths, folklore and imagined ancient life.

In this regard, original fieldwork was just one source. It was combined with extensive research in libraries and museums. Due to their composition, in most works from the mythological series, an important role is also played by landscape. Art historian Elnara Taidre has noticed an interesting distinction in this regard:

> *If Põllu has used a synthesising approach when depicting natural scenes, he has been quite precise when dealing with the motifs of rock drawings, archaeological finds and ethnographic artefacts: they seem to document the materials of the artist-explorer's Finno-Ugric expeditions*. (Taidre 2013)

Põllu's research activities, such as his affiliation with the field of science, facilitated a wide-ranging local and international cooperation with historians, linguists, anthropologists and other scholars interested in Finno-Ugric matters. Reflexively, that enhanced the circulation and popularity of the artist's works.

The late art historian Riin Kübarsepp traces Põllu's artistic genealogy to such national founding figures of Estonian art as painters Kristjan Raud and Oskar Kallas, both visual interpreters of the national epic *Kalevipoeg* and related themes in Estonian mythology (Kübarsepp 2005). Põllu mentions similarities between Raud's and his own activities in collecting data in field studies and interpreting folk art (Põllu 1999: 188). However, the scale of investigation and cosmogonic themes are at least two principal differences that set them apart. Põllu's creative output was inseparable from the active transfer of knowledge: scientific and popular publications, creative cooperations, and lecturing several

generations of students. While his expeditions made the Estonian Academy of Arts "a centre of Finno-Ugric studies of an original bias, with the artistic work of expedition participants as one of its outlets" (Põllu 1999: 37), his artwork became emblematic of Estonian culture in the period of late socialism, too. "They were frequently exhibited, displayed on the walls of cultural and other institutions, reproduced widely in print media, and re–mediated in various other forms of culture, etc." (Kaljundi 2021). Põllu's success was a perfect storm of original artistic mastery addressing deep concerns of society related to identity and nature, meeting contemporary trends in science and art, and enhanced by his overtly charismatic personality.

CASE STUDY 3: BIRUTĖ ŽILYTĖ

Birutė Žilytė is a graphic designer who creatively revolutionised Soviet Lithuanian childhood imagery. Janina Grasilda Žilytė was born in the village of Nainiškių, in the Panevėžys district in Lithuania, in 1930. From 1949 to 1956, she studied graphic arts at the State Institute of Art of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (now Vilnius Academy of Arts), and a year after graduation settled in the capital Vilnius to live together with her husband Algirdas Steponavičius (1927–1996), also a renowned graphic artist and an illustrator. From 1963 to 1987, she taught at the Vilnius Secondary School of Art (now Vilnius National M. K. Čiurlionis School of Art). A springboard to recognition for her was her work for the children's magazine *Genys*. From 1954 onwards, she illustrated numerous magazine issues, in parallel discovering her bold personal style of bright colours and surreal play with time, space and characters. In addition to regular participation in exhibitions at home and abroad, Žilytė illustrated more than 15 children's books on behalf of the State Publishing House of Fiction (later called Vaga).

Her passion for folklore and many creative inspirations, as well as the general strategy of escaping bleak Soviet reality through the niche of graphic design for children were wholly shared with her husband Steponavičius. They formed a unique, closely intertwined duo of modern Baltic artists. Together they created two monumental paintings that form a bright landmark in post-war Lithuanian cultural history. The first one, made in 1964 together with fresco painter Laimutis Ločeris (1929–2018), covered the walls of a 60-seat hall at the Vilnius children's café Nykštukas (Dwarf) at 24 Pamėnkalnio St. The café became an instant sensation, inspiring similar institutions in Lithuania and the rest of the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, the colourful frescoes filled with fairytale heroes, friendly animals and sunny countryside views were destroyed in the 1990s due

to accidental flooding, negligence and a change of ownership of the premises. A digital copy of about 30 square metres was restored from photos under the guidance of Žilytė in 2019, on the initiative of entrepreneur Audrius Klimas. Currently in the possession of his Vilniaus Galerija, this copy, in many ways a simulacrum artwork, shares similar questions of originality, authenticity and ontological status with a restored digital copy of another series of monumental frescoes authored by the duo (cf. Aleksandravičiūtė 2019).

At the beginning of the 1970s, the artists undertook the impressive task of creating frescoes at the sanatorium Pušelė (architect Zigmas Liandzbergis) in Valkininkai, in the Varena district near Vilnius, where children with tuberculosis were treated. Located in a long narrow passageway, the painting consists of 12 compositions separated by windows and covers an area of about 110 m^2. The range of characters in the frescoes is not limited to Lithuanian folklore alone. Besides Eglė, the Queen of Serpents, and other folktale heroines, there is a dragon and a sea monster, Venus and a flaming centaur, zodiac signs and medieval knights, and The Beatles in disguise.

Figure 4. Eglė. *Frescoe at sanatorium Pušele, fragment. Birutė Žilytė and Algirdas Steponavičius, 1969–1972. Vilniaus Galerija.*

Art historian Kristina Stančienė notes that "the strict rhythm of the painting of the walls of Pušelė, the angry, constructive stylisation of the image is related to classical modernism; it responds more to the spiritual anxiety, transformations and fractures of a physically and psychologically mature personality" (Stančienė 2015: 49). This work of original colour and plastic expression has been acclaimed as one of the most remarkable works of Lithuanian modernist art of the second half of the twentieth century (e.g., Aleksandravičiūtė 2019: 77; Žuklytė-Gasperaitienė 2018a). In 2015, the Minister of Culture Šarūnas Birutis declared the wall painting a state-protected cultural heritage object. Despite this status, it has already deteriorated and is steadily vanishing. However, the artist participated in the digital restoration of a considerable fragment (230 x 1872 cm) that the aforementioned Vilniaus Galerija carried out in 2016–2018. Now the piece adorns the wall of the MO Museum café in Vilnius, printed on an aluminium composite plate.

Žilytė and Steponavičius shared a keen interest in contemporary culture, Western art, and cultural heritage. Their home in the Jeruzale district in Vilnius was an informal intellectual centre, gathering not only artists of their generation but also scholars like the leading Lithuanian folklorist and mythology researcher Norbertas Vėlius (1938–1996). The artists' reluctance to take day jobs resulted in financial strain but allowed them to take every opportunity of staying at artist residences all across the Soviet Union, participating in Baltic graphic art plein-airs and taking part in ethnographic expeditions, as well as simply travelling to the nearby countryside to collect folk art, like the rough carvings of saints and crosses still on display in Žilytė's apartment.

By mostly choosing to create illustrations for fairy tales for children, the artists created fantastic visions in a legal way. In the highly regulated space of Soviet art, folksongs, fairy tales and myths gave creative licence for borderless and relatively censorship-free imagination. Art historians have characterised Žilytė's works as strongly influenced by Pop art and Surrealism (Žuklytė-Gasperaitienė 2018b; Korsakaitė 2011), as well as optical and psychedelic art, and belonging to the Lithuanian Baroque school and Renaissance visual poetry (Kisarauskaitė 2015). Repetitions and other Pop art elements align Žilytė's oeuvre with the early works of Kaljo Põllu, while his later search for cultural archetypes might echo her investigations into individual subconsciousness, characteristic of the surrealistic perspective. Folklore and myth were an inspiration and a starting point for both artists. It is part, not just an object, of artistic practice:

> *I do not like a superficial imitation of folk art. National forms could not be artificially created. An internal connection is necessary with the spiritual experience of one's nation and its artistic legacy. Folklore comes*

> *to professional creation through intuition; it can be understood and transformed in various ways*. (Počiulpaitė 1977: 11)

When Žilytė entered the art scene in the mid-1950s, the Lithuanian national printmaking style was defined by the use of crude, rudimentary forms and increasing diversity in interpretations of folk art, allowing one to speak of the "folklorist graphic art movement"[2] (Grigoravičienė n.d.). Her generation of graphic artists gave a new meaning to Lithuanian folk art, dissociating it from the blunt decorativeness of Socialist Realism (cf. Zovienė 2000: 204). One of the first books Žilytė illustrated was based on the Lithuanian folk song "The Wolf Sowed Buckwheat" (Vilkas grikius sėjo, 1964). However, references to Lithuanian folklore are integrated with other avenues that lead the artist toward national cultural heritage: landscape and history, state symbols and canonical literary texts. Akin to Ezergaile and Põllu, she addresses the native landscape by dedicating a series of prints to the Anykščiai region (1961) and Vilnius (1966). However, she did not choose to generalise particularities of a natural landscape in order to reveal their identity-building or spiritual potential. Quite the opposite, she starts with symbolic and narrative associations, projecting them on the highly deconstructed, nominal background of the land. A successful combination of patronage and particular gender dispositive allowed Žilytė to create something as unimaginable as a public display of forbidden state symbols of independent Lithuania. In a sanatorium fresco, a red raider holds a shield with Gediminas's Pillars, while the central part of the triptych *Žalgiris* features the heraldic Lithuanian knight Vytis. The triptych received an award at the second Tallinn Graphic Triennial in 1971.

One of the most popular subjects in Lithuanian art in the 1960s was the story of Eglė, Queen of the Serpents – an international fairy tale on the subject of animal husbandry (ATU 425M) turned into a canonical Lithuanian narrative through many artistic and literary renditions. It was often staged in theatres. In 1960, Eduardas Balsys composed a ballet on the subject, and a bronze sculpture by Robertas Antinis was displayed in the town of Palanga. A pen-pal of Ezergaile and Žilytė's friend, artist Petras Repšys (b. 1940), made an engraving of a version of the tale in 1967. Žilytė made a couple of prints of Eglė (1965) and her daughter Drebulė (1967) at this time, but it was in 1989 when a book with her illustrations of a powerful rendition of the tale in verse was published.[3] Eglė is just one of the tragic female characters that haunt Žilytė's oeuvre. There is also the folktale orphan Sigutė and Veronika, who is ostracised into suicide by society. Finally, with a happy ending but still packed with macabre details, is *Pasakos apie narsią Vilniaus mergaitę ir galvažudį Žaliabarzdį* (Tale of the Brave Vilnius Girl and the Assassin Greenbeard, 1970) by Aldona

Liobytė (1915–1985), a writer, and, from 1949, head of the editorial office for children's and youth literature at the State Publishing House of Fiction. Liobytė became a patron of young artists, both providing a flexible source of income and defending their creative freedom (Jankevičiūtė 2016: 116). Žilytė's illustrations for the *Brave Vilnius Girl* earned the artist a gold medal at the Leipzig International Book Fair in 1971, and the book has been reprinted at least four more times. She admits to sharing with the heroine a love of "the unknown, as if a forbidden, ever-opening creative space" that unlocks the reality of being (Marcinkevičiūtė 2010: 47).

Figure 5. *An illustration of the* Tale of the Brave Vilnius Girl and the Assassin Greenbeard *by Aldona Liobytė. Birutė Žilytė, 1970. Viliaus Galerija.*

Žilytė was one of the few talented Baltic artists of late socialism who could genuinely distance herself from Soviet ideology. An essential precondition for such a possibility was focusing on children's images and folklore subject matters and working mainly in the sphere of so-called applied graphic art or graphic design. Soviet censorship was less strict in applied arts and thus allowed more creative experimentation and individual expression. In addition, Žilytė reached and influenced much wider audiences than many of her contemporaries who were engaged primarily in fine arts. Her influence was amplified by her long-standing teaching role in the arts, while her oeuvre became "an example and

a point of reference for the later generation of artists"[4] (Zovienė 2000: 204). The eve of the twenty-first century brought public recognition of the artist's merits: a Fifth-Degree Order of the Grand Duke of Lithuania Gediminas (1997), the National Prize (2015), and the title of Honorary Professor at the Vilnius Academy of Arts (2020).

In Lithuanian art history, Žilytė's work is exceptional for its ability to constantly convey the themes of Lithuanian folklore in an original, brave and strikingly modern form. However, the artist's heritage reached further than that, allowing us to locate it among other works of Eastern European neo-avant-garde of the 1960s and 1970s. The creative method of subconsciously processing as many references as possible – besides Lithuanian folklore and folk art, Western pop culture and Romanesque European art, Peruvian and Mexican folk creativity, icons of ancient Slavs and so on (Žilytė 2014) – more likely suggests a cosmopolitan figure with unique Lithuanian quality.

FOLKLORE IN POSTCOLONIAL ART HISTORY

Folkloric representations might constitute and reinforce local identities as well as address universal issues of human existence. The contour of Soviet colonial history in the Baltic states points towards another essential function of folklore and folk art – the constitution of national identity. All three artists in the case studies speak about the spiritual essence of folklore that transcends time and can manifest through their creative practice. Furthermore, the practice weaves together folkloric representations with other references to nation like stately symbols, historical personalities, venerated natural sites, literary classics and the like, allowing one to interpret artist's oeuvre like a worldview, a coherent visualised ideology instead of a series of motifs. The case studies indicate three intertwined trends in artists' lives and creative trajectories that directly reverberate with Soviet colonial policies in the Baltics: nationally based resistance, escapism, and complex relationships with various trends in modernism as expressions of the art's autonomy.

Soviet colonialism as a form of governance over the occupied Baltic countries determined artists' subject positions and horizons of opportunity. In addition to influencing aesthetic matters and cultural processes, it also shaped the institutional and economic environment in the Baltic art field. In a postcolonial reading, the response to this situation was equally determined. Thus, searching for authenticity, the founding myths and primal roots of one's culture might be seen as a compensatory trend typical of postcolonial culture. As relevant to the interpretation of at least Põllu's views must be mentioned the non-colonialism

doctrine shaped and expressed by his close collaborator Jaan Kaplinski (1941–2021), which tries to invoke non–dualistic indigenous identity as an answer to the modernity of all political regimes (Salumets 2006). Tõnis Tatar even generalises that "delving into the artistic cultures of exotic people led Põllu to radically doubt the enlightenment project of modern art. In the spirit of postcolonial critique, Põllu inclined to see modernism as a repressive ideology that levels and assimilates indigent cultures" (Tatar 2015: 278). However, the artist's representations of indigeneity reflect an inherent ambiguity. As art historian Linda Kaljundi recently indicated:

> *The relationship Kaljo Põllu and his contemporaries had with Finno-Ugric indigeneity was in many ways controversial. On the one hand, they differed from the Western gaze, taking a step further and identifying themselves and their nation with these indigenous cultures. On the other hand, they did not position themselves as indigenous authors either, but rather took the position of intermediaries. They remained at a safe distance, maintaining their position as the more civilised, modernised white brothers to their Finno-Ugric Siberian siblings, who embody the* authentic *roots of Estonians.* (Kaljundi 2022: 28)

Põllu remembers that "it was in an atmosphere of oppression imposed by a foreign power, which posed a question mark over the preservation of the Estonian nation and its culture" (Põllu 1999: 7). While his early works express a modern affiliation with the free world, from the 1970s, Põllu oriented himself towards the Finno-Ugric past, which far antedates any of the possible Estonian-Russian relations that were so emphasised by the official histories of the day. Both periods of his oeuvre are stylistically opposite yet share a common anti-colonial intention. Art historian Jan Kangilaski has pointed out in this regard that "the resistance to oppressive ideology brought together the potential opposites: formal innovations in the Estonian art of the 1960s acquired an anti–establishment meaning, which was admired by both nationalists and avant-gardists" (Kangilaski 2016: 41; see also Kübarsepp 2005: 32). Neo–avant-garde interpretations of folklore as national cultural heritage returned to the national discourse a modern sensibility, which had been lost during the predominantly conservative years of the interwar authoritarian regimes and the first two decades of the Soviet occupation. Still, the relations between modernist expressions in art and possible anti–colonial intentions of artists are not always straightforward. The history of the most representative forum for Baltic graphic artists, the Tallinn Print Triennale, reveals the 1970s as a time of obsession with the aesthetic sense of form and colour, expressive discretion and technical purism as means to the

main goal of differentiation from Socialist Realism. The content and referential meaning of the artwork thus moved into the background. Moreover, various modernist trends appeared in the Baltic art of late socialism in a compressed manner, simultaneously and decontextualised from their ideological and philosophical origins. Artists drew contradictory knowledge from them and applied them to their works sporadically (Piotrowski 2011 [2005]; Žuklytė-Gasperaitienė 2018b: 5). In addition to her Western-like stylistic innovations, Žilytė challenges the all-too-happy socialist paradigm of childhood by invoking transformative processes of the subconsciousness and channelling existential fears expressed in gruesome folk–tale imagery. While in some cases intentional, the anti-colonial stance I read into those works might also be accidental.

Põllu, Žilytė, and Ezergaile demonstrate a dynamic variety of escape mechanisms from the oppression of Soviet coloniality and its ideological confines. While membership in their respective national artists' unions was mandatory in order to sustain themselves through art, none of the artists opted for the Communist Party member's card, which granted significant privileges and was a regular choice among Soviet creative intellectuals. Žilytė and Steponavičius freelanced and led a somewhat nomadic lifestyle, mirrored by the surrealist spaces of their works, which speak much more of internal than external reality. They illustrated children's literature, which seems to be the least ideologically engaged niche of graphic design. Žilytė confessed in an interview: "By illustrating children's books, we have created the freedom of artistic self–expression and the dissemination of unique worldviews. I draw illustrations for children as a picture for myself" (Korsakaitė 2011). Põllu more often than not chose archaic and mythical themes.

Similarly, with a few exceptions, Ezergaile stubbornly avoided human subjects, social relations and other references to contemporary reality. Converging pathways of escapism led to productively working through the cracks in the system. Põllu turned the dormant Art Cabinet into a humanities hub with unprecedented popularity and influence. Forced out of the latter, the artist designed his artistic-ethnographic expeditions that drew legitimacy and resources from the fields of both art and science. Due to their unique interdisciplinary design, the expeditions were not directly subordinated to either of the two domains or their control apparatuses. Ezergaile smartly managed time and other resources in her daily work to pursue her creative goals.

Coloniality should also be accounted for when we weigh the influence of late socialist artists and their interpretations of folklore. In short, the political power imbalance and control over free speech created a situation where creative elites played an exceptional role. Cultural historian Violeta Davoliūtė claims that it was in non–Russian Soviet republics like the Baltic states "where they took

advantage of the limited cultural autonomy that was a key element of Soviet nationalities policy, the intelligentsia served as mediators between society and political power. Their works of literature and art, architecture, film, and performance constituted the public sphere, constrained but real, in which various discourses of collective identity took shape and interacted" (Davoliūtė 2016: 55).

Repeated invocations and creative interpretations made folklore a vital identity marker (or sustained it as one) of the Baltic peoples during late socialism. Põllu's widely reproduced mezzotint series, Ezergaile's direct access to large print-media runs, and popular editions of Žilytė's illustrations play the most significant role besides the visibility of artists' works at exhibitions and their influence through the art education system.

Figure 6. *Untitled. Dzidra Ezergaile, n/a. Latvian State Archive, f. 2697: 51-0049.*

GENDERED FOLKLORE IMAGERY

The Soviet colonial dispositif also determined the artists' subject positions according to the established gender order. Was this reflected in their visual interpretations of folklore? Although the Soviet state boosted advanced welfare policy and vigorously declared emancipation of its female subjects, in reality, "the Soviet system replaced classical capitalist patriarchy where a woman is economically dependent on man – father, brother or husband – with a socialist patriarchy where a woman became dependant on the state and the Communist Party" (Kukaine 2019: 106). Gender hierarchy was clearly reflected in the disproportionate representation in power positions, and in the art world, where most of the limelight was reserved for male artists, while anonymous work in applied arts was commonly carried out more by women. Paradoxically, this invisibility allowed female artists more creative freedom and opportunities to advance in the art field. This imbalance was also replicated in art criticism and journalism.

> *In reviews of art exhibitions, interviews and other materials, the Soviet woman, regardless of the propaganda's image of a powerful working woman, still maintained the features of a weak, fragile, shy, humble, airy and childish creature in need of protection – one that was common in the preceding bourgeois society – while art forms were, as if by invisible hand, divided into 'feminine' and 'masculine'.* (Melngalve & Cipste 2020)

Žilytė remembered that it was exactly this disposition that saved her from trouble resulting from including forbidden emblems of independent Lithuania in her works. Her former teacher, Head of the Artist's Union of the Lithuanian SSR, professor Jonas Kuzmiskis (1906–1985) had told the worried authorities something along the lines of "Oh, do not bother; it is just that girl, she does not know what to do" (Žilytė, personal communication, 2022).

Ezergaile's oeuvre features representational portraits of socialist heroines and generic workers, but otherwise, she favoured the emblematic image of a woman in a folk costume. As a traditional depiction of women in Latvian art under all political regimes in the twentieth century, it is safely decontextualised from reality. Gendered differences in the treatment of folkloric subjects are striking in the juxtaposition of works by Põllu and Žilytė. The Estonian artist's famous series present a clear division of gender roles. Limited to a heteronormative masculine gaze, his representations of womanhood are strongly associated with fertility, childcare and primordial Mother Nature (see also Kaljundi 2021). Some of his works turn to the decorative eroticism characteristic of the era (cf. Kivimaa 2009), reducing feminine presence to objectified shapes (e.g., *Hay Month*, 1981).

Figure 7. Sigutė. *Birutė Žilytė, 1963. Vilniaus Galerija.*

Žilytė's depictions of women transcend self-serving decorativeness. These are peculiar visions of gender, character, and destiny. Although in the case of illustrations, they are closely linked with particular narratives, the images still speak in essential categories. Art historian Erika Grigoravičienė points out the similarity in the treatment of subject matter by Žilytė and by another prominent post-war printmaker, Albina Makūnaitė (1926–2001): both "were drawn to the difficult lot in life of women as portrayed in stories, songs and poetry, and they crafted their sombre prints and engravings to reflect that grief and pain" (Grigoravičienė n.d.). Their works reflect their generation's experience of the war and the following occupation, and may have been a way of decoding and

working through the trauma. The brave, beautiful, tragic female characters in Žilytė's images, so often against crimson, bloody red backgrounds, may be commemorating her murdered relative, interwoven with the artist's childhood memories (Žilytė 2014: 14).

Curiously, recent art history also projects the same gendered image of artists as the Soviet paradigm. Because of their co-created monumental works, Žilytė is most often mentioned together with her husband and sometimes also with their daughter, Daina Steponavičiūtė (b. 1952), also a graphic artist. At the same time, all research articles published on Põllu depict him as a standalone male genius, never mentioning his wives and children.

Figure 8. Kaliväe sünd *(The Birth of Kali People), from the series* Kali People*. Kaljo Põllu, 1978. Art Museum of Estonia, j 63401.*

VISUAL ECOLOGIES OF THE BALTICS

The prominence of nature and landscape in the works of Ezergaile and Põllu invites an ecological reading of their oeuvre, seeking possible connections between natural and cultural heritage, interest in folklore and environmentalism. In the historical context of the rising ecological awareness of the 1960s in the Socialist Bloc, in some respects pioneered in the Baltics, such a reading might contribute to addressing similar concerns today through discoveries of cultural history. Põllu closely cooperated with the Estonian Nature Protection Society (est. 1966) (Koll 2020: 38; Kaljundi 2021). While there are no other links, it might be mentioned that Ezergaile created several bookplates for the prominent Latvian environmentalist Guntis Eniņš (ANM 14306; LMA E4–20).

Figure 9. Sounds of the hills. *Dzidra Ezergaile, 1969. Latvian State Archive, f. 2696: 41-0061.*

When referentially connected to a particular site, land or region, artistic representation of a physical landscape is always political (cf. Kruks 2015: 11). In the case of all three artists, the link between national culture and land is certain, as their creative approach is based on embedding folkloric and ethnographic symbols in real or abstracted natural sites as identity markers. The interplay between references to nature and culture in a visualised landscape is a reflexive process of valorisation that generates and mutually reinforces the value-awareness of both components. Situatedness thus makes intangible components of the composition tangible and connects two trajectories of national identity. "Kaljo Põllu did not depict concrete places, but synthesised elements of Estonian landscapes, natural communities and signs of the climate" (Koll 2020: 37). Thus, balancing natural environments and creative generalisation, Põllu, in his series *Estonian Landscapes*, "seeks an objective expression of Estonian nationality" (Taidre 2013). Although primarily referring to the dominant approach in national identity building, his idealised depictions of a rustic way of life might be similarly read as a utopian, past-oriented critique of industrial modernity. The same is true of the ethnographic references in Ezergaile's prints. Kaljundi also points out the parallels with linking native communities with ideas of pure nature, as various indigenous groups became icons of environmentalism at the time when Põllu was visiting and depicting the Sami, Udmurt and other Finno-Ugric peoples of the North (Kaljundi 2021).

Imagining desolate natural spaces is one of the universal strategies of environmental discourse even today. Connecting them to national cultures through folklore might be the mechanism for a possible critique of civilisation reinforced by a sense of belonging and group identity.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the cases of Ezergaile, Põllu, and Žilytė situates their visual interpretations of folklore within the intersection of several cultural trends which connect Baltic and global histories in the period in question. The back-to-the-roots, environmental and counter-cultural sentiments of the 1960s were shaped in the Baltics through an anti-colonial prism, leading to the valorisation of folklore and mythology with clear national and nationalist connotations. At the same time, public appearance, circulation and critique of folkloric representations were legitimised and shaped by the particularity of Soviet cultural policy that gave a prominent status to folklore matters. Following the loosening of Socialist Realist dogmatism of the first post-war decade, interpretations of folklore acquired a diverse and modern outlook that reflected various branches

of neo-avant-garde expression. However, knowledge and impressions of trends in Western art and popular culture developed since the interwar period arrived through the porous Iron Curtain in a decontextualised and simultaneous manner. That led to a phenomenon which in the 1960s–1970s Baltics might be called compressed modernity – an original synthesis of various impulses rather than merely following Western trends. Due to the colonial hierarchies of taste and mechanisms of control, the dialects of the new visual language were pioneered and advanced in the field of applied art, and applied graphic art in particular. The latter's visibility was amplified by a sharply increasing demand from the emerging socialist consumer society. Simultaneously, a nationally articulated anti-colonial stance led to the rise of national-conservative forms of expression. Folkloric subject matters were easily accommodated within both aesthetic directions.

Literary scholar Benedikts Kalnačs once characterised "the turn toward history and mythology as sources of different, pre-Soviet or non-Soviet experience, simultaneously providing continuation of the tradition of the nineteenth century's anti-colonial and nation-building processes" (Kalnačs 2016b: 23). This allows folklore to be contextualised not only through its immediate role in post-war culture but also as a signifier that unites several historical layers of Baltic coloniality and decolonial histories. I argue that folklore might have a special place in collective memory due to folklore's mnemonic capabilities – it is designed to be remembered and adjusted to patterns of communication and the structure of consciousness. As modern collective memory is shaped through mediation, mediated forms of folklore, those new interpretations reaching broader audiences, are of the utmost importance for understanding the mechanisms that shape cultures and identities. Recognising the embeddedness of folklore in this context – as demonstrated in the case studies – highlights new opportunities to explore cultural heritage. A further inquiry from the perspective of trauma studies might discover transference and healing potential in the collective memory dispositif of collective trauma and folkloric knowledge. Meanwhile, discovering and intensifying links between natural and intangible cultural heritage might open new venues for efficiently addressing today's ecological concerns.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research and writing of the article were supported by the "ETNO-GRAPHICA: Visual Interpretations of Baltic Intangible Cultural Heritage" project (ERDF, No. 1.1.1.2/VIAA/4/20/628). The author expresses gratitude towards art historian Elnara Taidre and the KUMU museum for extensive support for this research.

NOTES

[1] Late socialism is a contested timeframe across various disciplines and approaches. Its mostly accepted borderpoints are Stalin's death in 1953 and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. It is usually analysed via three distinct periods colloquially called the Khrushchev's Thaw, Stagnation and Perestroika. For the purposes of this article, I look at the period as a relatively coherent cultural milieu in the Baltic countries, characterised by the modernisation of Soviet society, the increasing autonomy of the field of art, and growing national aspirations.

[2] Besides Žilytė, also other young artists, such as Albina Makūnaitė, Algirdas Steponavičius, Vytautas Valius, Aspazija Surgailienė, Sigutė Valiuvienė and Aldona Skirutytė, created a multitude of prints employing folk ornaments and motifs from folk songs, stories and related literary works.

[3] Created in 1940 by the controversial Lithuanian poet Salomėja Nėris (1904–1945).

[4] Including the most outstanding Lithuanian contemporary artist, Žilvinas Landzbergas, whose personal exhibition *Crown Off* (Vilnius, CAC, 2015) featured a video based on the Pušele frescoes.

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ANM – Museum of Alūksne District, Latvia

LMA E4 – E4 collection at the Art Academy of Latvia

LVA F2697 – the fund of Dzidra Ezergaile and Vidars Balts, the Latvian State Archives

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IN MEMORIAM

ALBENA GEORGIEVA

16.04.1954 – 02.02.2024

On 2 February 2024, after a long illness, Albena Georgieva, a prominent Bulgarian researcher of folklore and folk culture, Doctor of Sciences, professor, chief researcher of the Institute of Ethnology and Folkloristics with Ethnographic Museum (IEFEM), passed away.

Georgieva graduated from the Faculty of Bulgarian Philology at St. Kliment Ohridski University, Sofia, in 1978. Thereafter, she focused on the field of verbal folklore, studying legends and myths, stories, ethnic stereotypes, paying much attention to folk religiosity and analysing local biblical narratives and legends.

She was the author of four monographs: *Etiological Legends in Bulgarian Folklore* (Sofia 1990), *Narratives and Narration in Bulgarian Folklore* (Sofia 2000), *Images of the Other in Bulgarian Folklore* (Sofia 2003), and *Folklore Dimensions in Christian Lore: Oral Stories and Local Religiosity in the Area of the Bachkovo Monastery "The Assumption of the Virgin Mary' and the Hadzhidimovo Monastery 'St. George the Great Martyr'* (Sofia 2012).

Georgieva compiled and edited dozens of books on various aspects of folklore and ethnography, including popular books for adults and children, as well as art albums and guidebooks. She was a regular author of Bulgarian encyclopaedias and reference books. In the Bulgarian–Czech dictionary of verbal folklore terms (Yaroslav Otchenashek, Vikhra Baeva et al., *Rechnik na terminite ot slovesniia folklor. Bulgariia*. BAN, 2013) she published seven articles on folklore genres including blessing, curse, demonological story, etiological legend, and seven articles on characters: the Archangel Michael (co-authored with V. Baeva), the Lord, the Devil, Jesus Christ, St George, St Trifon, the Gypsy.

In the encyclopaedia *Bulgarian Folk Medicine,* she authored 44 articles on saints and other folklore characters (*Bulgarska narodna meditsina*, ed. M. Georgiev. Sofia 1999, 2nd ed. 2013). Her overviews are devoted to images of the storyteller and the mourner,

the place of the miracle, the category of time in etiological legends, analysis of dreams as "messages from the other world", the role of humour in folklore, and other conceptions. A bibliography of Georgieva's works was published in *Folklore, Narration, Religiosity: A Jubilee Collection in Honour of Albena Georgieva*, compiled by A. Ilieva, V. Baeva, L. Gergova, M. Borisova, and Y. Gergova (Sofia 2016).

An important part of Georgieva's activity was expedition work; her field notes are kept in the IEFEM Folklore Archive. These materials, together with other archival and published materials, form the basis of a number of collections, including the monumental volume *The Serpents Lamya and Hala: A Compendium of Folklore Texts* (Sofia 2016), of which she was one of the compilers and editors.

Georgieva's career is a model of devotion to her chosen path. She remained focused on her themes, although she was also actively involved in new initiatives. Thus, she served on national juries, for example, for the Blagolazh anecdote competition. Georgieva played an important role in UNESCO, recognising and including elements of Bulgarian tradition on the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, in particular *martenitsa* (white and red threads, an important part of the 1 March ritual).

From the end of the 20th century, when scientific work in Bulgaria became project-based, Georgieva pursued themes such as women's knowledge and women's roles in the folklore of the Balkans, and local religious cults in Bulgaria and Slovakia, in the shorter term. She was a member of many working groups that studied holy places in Sofia and the Sofia region, folkloristic aspects of identity in the process of globalisation, and the work of prominent Bulgarian scholars. Among her recent studies was an analysis of stable and changing elements in Bulgarian masquerades, the symbolism of masks, and the specificity of carnival humour.

Georgieva not only studied storytelling in Bulgarian villages, churches and monasteries, but was also an excellent storyteller and lecturer herself. She gave general lecture courses on Bulgarian and Slavic folklore and Bulgarian ethnography as well as specialised courses on verbal folklore, rites and ritual folklore, myth and folklore, and folklore as culture at leading universities in Bulgaria, Poland, Macedonia, Italy, and Greece.

To mark her 60th birthday, a jubilee roundtable was held, the proceedings of which were published as a collection. The articles reflect the interests of the jubilarian and, as Georgieva notes in her acknowledgements to articles, pick up and significantly develop her ideas.

The traditional Bulgarian obituary "Skrabna vest", a printed paper leaflet, now also an internet publication, written by Georgieva's colleagues, contains a brief enumeration of her scientific achievements, concluding with a heartfelt address: "A bright path to your soul, Albenka. You will remain in our hearts forever". I echo these words and add: "You will be in our eternal memories".

Irina Sedakova

BOOK REVIEW

NORDIC EVERYDAY POPULAR STORYTELLING

Blanka Henriksson & Susanne Nylund Skog (eds.) ***Vardagens triviala allvar och berättandets kraft: En festskrift till professor Lena Marander-Eklund*****. Åbo:** ***Åbo Akademis förlag*****, 2024. 322 pp. In Swedish.**

The Festschrift to the Finnish-Swedish folklorist Lena Marander-Eklund has everyday storytelling as its general theme. The editors are the Finnish-Swedish folklorist Blanka Henriksson together with the Swedish folklorist Susanne Nylund Skog. Of the eighteen authors, eleven are from Sweden, six from Finland, and one from Norway.

The book starts with Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto's investigation of emotions related to stories about simple everyday objects. These stories can be about family, upbringing, grief, and happiness. Emotions regarding the past emerge at the encounter of objects.

Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch investigates objects at three museums in the UK, Croatia, and the USA. These objects are considered powerful tools for creating stories that can produce strong emotional messages.

Helena Ruotsala has been doing fieldwork related to the Finnish-Swedish national border in Tornedalen and has studied how life changed for individuals living along the border during the COVID-19 pandemic. People in this area used to have close contacts across the invisible border regarding, for example, trade and commuting. There were many mixed marriages between individuals coming from either side of the border. There has been a lack of understanding of the significance of this invisible border from governments in Helsinki and Stockholm. Ruotsala uses the terms transnationalism and multilocalism in her analysis of the encounters across this border. Torneå in Finland and Haparanda in Sweden have grown together as twin cities. Ruotsala's observations are well in line with what I have found at the Swedish-Norwegian national border when it was closed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ulf Palmenfelt has performed a narrative analysis of stories he collected from fourteen Gotland farmers about the rationalization of farming in the 1900s. The farmers, nine men and five women with fictitious names, told him about how they perceived this change. Together these individual stories create an understanding of the transformation process that took place in Gotland's way of farming, from small scale family farming to

specialized large scale production. This pilot study bears actual relevance to what happened in rural areas in large parts of the rest of Sweden during the same time period.

Charlotte Hyltén-Cavallius has collected stories of experiences among the Romani people. She demonstrates how they, through their presentations of themselves in interviews on their life stories, are trying to appear as respectable citizens with no criminal records in Sweden. They have, however, felt themselves to be the target of negative treatment from the environment, which has produced feelings of shame. As of year 2000, the Romani people are included in the category of five Swedish national minorities.

Alf Arvidsson analyzes the description of the life story of a minister and son of a farmer, Pehr Stenberg, at the end of the 18th century. The focus is on Stenberg's studies at Åbo Akademi University, where he made a living as a tutor in Finnish-Swedish upper-class families. His own feelings are front and center when Stenberg describes the encounters with the upper-class families, the culture of which he does not understand. He reacts with shyness when he is unable to understand wordless communication such as the looks from younger single women.

Ulrika Wolf-Knuts has performed in-depth interviews with five informants in the revival movement of Laestadianism, which is widely prevailing in the northernmost Nordic areas. The interviews are about experiences in this movement in connection with revealed pedophilia cases regarding a highly appreciated member and preacher within the movement, who sexually molested his grandchildren. The abuse was carried out in the mid-1900s but was revealed first in 2009 when this man was already deceased. How could tolerance be achieved following such a disclosure that shook the whole movement? After all, the informants wanted to move on. One opinion was that God likely had a plan for the association concerning what had happened. It was important to be able to believe in the power of forgiveness.

Sverker Hyltén-Cavallius has interviewed an eighty-year-old musician, finding out how this person speaks about his life through his musical models, which have been guiding his life as spiritual signposts.

Kerstin Gunnemark and Susanne Rothlind, both born in 1953, returned, with an autoethnographic objective, to their hometown Örebro. Their aim was to investigate what individual recollections come to life when visiting places often frequented during childhood and adolescence in a medium-sized Swedish town. Gunnemark grew up in a middle-class home and Rothlind in an upper-class environment. The recollections of both authors are quite similar though, as they experienced that cross-boundary activity existed within social contacts.

Camilla Asplund Ingemark has analyzed answers to questionnaires from Finland, Norway, and Iceland. The informants talk about everyday phenomena relative to climate change and the future. One theme in this respect is laziness. It is lack of waste sorting that is bugging the informants and raises concern for the future. The view on climate change highlights issues of morality and responsibility.

Sven-Erik Klinkmann, using media information, discusses two statements allegedly made by Elvis Presley in the 1950s, linked to the black and white race issue in the USA. This happened at the beginning of the civil rights movement and the emancipation process for the black population. Presley came from a home emphasizing the equal value of all human beings and therefore deprecated racial prejudice. He belonged to the first generation of white Americans that showed an active interest in Afro-American music. Nevertheless, early in his career there were rumors that in his two statements he had expressed humiliating opinions about the black population. Elvis denied this, though, when answering questions from various journalists. However, the rumors still lived on in Afro-American circles.

Tove Ingebjørg Fjell has looked into new funeral customs implicating an increased individualization in Norway during the years 1990–2022, as evidenced in media debates where most cases (i.e., 41 out of 46 examples) are from 2014–2022. This occurring development potentially became the ground for tensions between funeral homes pointing to the respect for individual preferences, and ecclesiastical representatives that emphasize the solid structure of the funeral ceremony as a feeling of safety in the grieving process. The dividing line is related, for example, to what kind of music should be played.

Birgitta Meurling has, in the estate of her father, minister Hans Meurling, found a collection of sixteen personal letters addressed to him during the years 1953 and 1954. The female author of the letters, with the fictitious name Mimmi, herself married and from a middle-class environment, had a very personal writing style in her letters to the minister. Birgitta Meurling studies the narrative technical concepts used by the author of the letters and stresses the norms and ideals appearing in the texts. The letters present a lot of humor, as well as dreams and self-irony. The friendship with the minister developed into an infatuation at least from Mimmi's side.

Lars Kaijser has visited different places in Europe and the USA and observed various memory icons, both real and fictional, recurring in different locations. Memory icons tie together the local with the global. Kaiser takes three examples as his starting point: The Beatles, the scientist Carl von Linné, and the white iconic Shark from the movie *Jaws* (1975). This shark creates a link to global environmental issues. The reasoning in this chapter is based on what memory icons can contribute to popular culture and international studies on cultural heritage.

Fredrik Nilsson highlights the UNRRA-action in the summer of 1945 when more than 9,000 survivors were evacuated from the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp to Sweden. The idea was to rehabilitate the survivors to normal life during six months and then send them back to their home countries. Conscientiousness and working ability were to be enforced, as evidenced by medical reports. The traits of discipline created problems in the encounter between the survivors and Swedish medical experts, though. There are reports about lack of discipline and non-compliance among the care recipients.

Nevertheless, in summary these care recipients seem to have perceived themselves as being grateful for the care they received.

As a conclusive opinion of this book, I would like to emphasize the coherence of the book in concentrating on the analyses of everyday stories. Here the editors have done a great job. The stories have so many different dimensions and can be found in various types of source materials used by the authors. The book highlights current narrative research both in Finland and in Sweden and should be read by anyone with a folkloristic interest. I miss a presentation of the authors at the end of the book, though.

Anders Gustavsson

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On the cover: *Humal* (Hop), from the series *Kodalased* (Ancient Dwellers). Kaljo Põllu, 1975. Art Museum of Estonia, j 54239.

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Folklore EJF

ISSN 1406-0957