

Conference VOICE,
CONNECTION
AND
MESSAGE
IN TRADITIONAL
SINGING

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Estonian Literary Museum / MS Teams

.....>>ABCSTRACTS

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Welcome to the conference „Voice, Connection and Message In Traditional Singing“ which offers us the opportunity to discuss several interesting topics on contemporary song research.

This conference is the 11th in a series of biennial conferences, currently expanding its focus from Finnic runosongs to the singing traditions of the whole world. The tradition of these song conferences was started in Tartu in 2000.

The singing voice is the physical mediator of the song. It conveys information about the singers themselves and their messages, with the voice itself representing a part of the message. In different contexts, we can also use the “voice” in a wider sense, for example to ask, how the digitization of archival materials affects their research and reception in society. Another topic of the conference is the singer’s presence in a singing situation, her/his perception of the surroundings and other people. We are also interested what kind of messages are conveyed through a traditional song.

THE ORGANISING TEAM

at the Estonian Folklore Archives, The Estonian Literary Museum



The 1st Seto Leelo Day in Värška. The joint choirs, in the first row are singers of the Leiko choir: Marta Luigelah, Maria Sitik, Jekaterina Sai, Jevdokia Kiisik, Aleksandra Hade, Anna Mäeste, Anna Mehine, Akulina Pihla. Setomaa, Värška borough (1977). Photo: ERA, DF 775

The Traditional Songs of the Assamese: Voice and Connection

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The folk songs of Assam are mainly associated with rites and rituals; these folk songs reflect the livelihood of the Assamese community. The songs are related to rituals, such as *Sitala Puja* ('puja' is an Assamese term meaning ritual), and there are specific terms for songs, such as *Koli Burhi Nrityar Geet*, *Gopini Naam*, *Biya Naam*, and *Bihu Geet*, which have a unique position in traditional singing among the Assamese community of Kaliabor. Sitala is a folk goddess who is believed to have an intimidating personality. She distributes infected pulses in village markets and sends hordes of disease-demons, thus causing outbreaks of smallpox and other contagious illnesses. Only when properly worshipped does she agree to heal her victims (Ferrari 2015: 2). The women sing *Aai Naam* to please the goddess Sitala as the deification of smallpox. *Koli Burhi Nritya* is associated with *Magh Bihu*, which is a post-harvest festival held in January. *Koli Burhi* is an Assamese term, which means a black woman. Women put burning banana leaves on their bodies and sing songs known as *Koli Burhi Nrityar Geet* ('the songs of black women'). It is believed that burning banana leaves removes the obstacles from their lives. *Durga Puja* is a famous festival held in India. During this puja Assamese women sing *Gopini Naam* to please the goddess Bhagavati, or Kamakhya (a form of the goddess Durga). Naam is one kind of devotional song used in ritual, the singers of these songs are known as *Gopini*. Songs related to marriage, called *Biya Naam*, are also very significant among the Assamese community. The songs

related to *Bihu*, the main harvest festival of Assam, held in mid-April, are known as *Bihu Geet*. Merriment, love and sad feelings are described through these *Bihu Geet*. In this paper, an attempt has been made to highlight the traditional singing that is related to rituals among the Assamese community of Kaliabor sub-division, Assam, India.

Ferrari, Fabrizio M 2015. *Religion, Devotion and Medicine in North India. The Healing Power of Sitala*. London: Bloomsbury Press

Arrange Your Little Coffin: Rhetoric and Performance in Romanian Mourning Songs

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Lamentation songs for someone's death are impressive testimonies of Romanian folklore. In these *bocete* or *jelituri* (or many other terms depending on the region), a family member, a woman or group of women specially dedicated to singing these verses cry for the dead and express their pain. It is difficult for the folklorist to record these dirges out of their funerary context, considering that they are performed only during those sad days. Nevertheless, I was able to interview some women in Transylvania between 2014 and 2019, who recited or sang some of them for me. In this contribution, I would like to give some examples and videos, as well as texts collected between the 19th and 20th centuries, to examine characteristics such as rhetorical elements and deep meaning: diminutives (“your little backbone is rotten”; Petrovici 1935: 107, no 85); metaphors (“please, make me some room,/ I want to fit in your coffin too”; Smochină 1939: 53, no 144); exclamations and repetitions (“Mum, mum, my beloved mum,/ please don't go where you intend to/ because it's night and you won't get there!”; 2014, personal collection); interrogations (“and who will give you dinner?”; *ib.*). In addition, I will focus on the way these compositions are being adapted to diverse contexts. In this sense, I will emphasise those deaths which, in the performer's opinion, should have not occurred: unexpected

illnesses, young girls and boys who died too soon without being married. This last element, as Gail Kligman (1988) wrote, is the most relevant because a marriage with Death is performed: the youngsters are dressed in marriage clothes and will encounter a banquet in which elements of nature, like trees, stars, the sun, the moon will be the guests. Finally, Death (with a capital letter), an inevitable, real figure attending the event, is depicted in a macabre way: “here comes Death, enraged/ and she is looking for me in the house/ with a knife and a sickle” (Smochină 1939: 54, no 145). To sum up, I will stress not only the literal and metaphorical meaning of dirges, but their performative context, which is essential to comprehend them, taking into account how the gradual disappearance of many customs in rural areas affects the loss of lamentation songs.

Kligman, Gail 1988. *The Wedding of the Dead*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press

Petrovici, Emil 1935. Folklor din Valea Almăjului. – Ion Mușlea (ed.). *Anuarul Arhivei de Folklor III*. Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 26–158

Smochină, N. P. 1939. Din literatura populară a românilor de peste Nistru. – Ion Mușlea (ed.). *Anuarul Arhivei de Folklor V*. Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională, 7–56

Giving Tradition Voice in Mediaeval Manuscripts: Eddic Poetry, Performance and Emic Conceptions of Text

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Research on eddic poetry has given increased attention to the textual form of eddic poems as they are preserved in manuscripts. Recent decades have increasingly acknowledged that these mediaeval manuscripts were not oriented toward private, silent reading but rather to oral delivery to an audience. However, no attention has been given to how a person would recite these texts at a fluent rate of oral delivery or to the implications of fluent oral recitation for a reader's knowledge of the poems or poetry and for how people engaged with the mediaeval written texts that are our source of knowledge for contemporary oral poetry. This paper briefly introduces the manuscripts of eddic poetry and develops perspectives on the relationships between written text and voice in practices relating to these written texts, which provide a window onto mediaeval traditions of oral poetry.

Melancholy and Vitality in Early Estonian Folk Songs

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The study focuses on depicting the difficulties of life in the early Estonian folk song tradition: how and when sadness is expressed; what is of concern; what seems laborious, and how to overcome it. The subject of traumatic or other such difficult experiences appeared in folklore texts at the end of the 19th and in the 20th centuries. The concept of destiny (*saatus*) is introduced in personal stories. How similar themes (such as homelessness, the lives of orphans, longing for something inaccessible, etc.) were expressed in the earlier folk song tradition, considering that the characters of these songs are members of a collective rather than individuals with unique destinies.

Folk songs by Ann Kõlm (1830–1898) and Leena Reek (1827–1909) form the base of this presentation. Oskar Kallas and Mihkel Ostrov (students of the University of Tartu at that time) transcribed these texts in western Estonia in 1889. Now these 78 texts can be found in Jakob Hurt collection at the Folklore Archives, Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu. The observed songs represent the early folk song tradition, which was already starting to recede at the time of collection. At the same time, these songs represent the worldview of the pre-modernist community.

In this discussion, songs by Ann Kõlm and Leena Reek are placed in the context of other folk songs that were written down in the same region at the same time. The personal data of the two women, which come from Lihula church books, have been used to interpret the message expressed in the songs.

Traditional Songs and their Messages in Contemporary Contexts: Experiences from Serbia

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Folklore in the ‘secondary oral tradition’, i.e. in its ‘neotraditional’ forms, has significantly changed its performing contexts in relation to the original context. The cultural and social positions and roles of songs have suffered and are in need of reconsideration. In Serbia, traditional melodies gained new lives primarily in towns, primarily at concerts, different internal/private and public ceremonies, and at performances connected with Church occasions. In these situations, the favourites were those traditional musical pieces that are considered attractive to listeners because of their specificities in structure, form, melodic and chord/harmony characteristics. This is where the functional aspect of songs moves to become aesthetic, although it seems this is only the beginning of this field in terms of a new understanding. In Serbia, as ‘attractive’ songs (with exceptions of very popular ones that are recognisably in the style of the Kosovo and Metohija musical tradition) are generally lyric, narrative songs, which mainly belong to the newer Serbian rural musical layer, are sometimes considered; their sound characteristics and expressivity gain the most attention during the public performances. Meanwhile, songs that belong to an older musical layer, with specific structure and ethos, are included in these programs only as contrasting to the

main numbers in the performance. It is hard to translate their original messages, with ritual, hermetic ethos and character, into the contemporary contexts (as has also been found in other European countries). The messages and semantics of such songs – primarily ritual musical folklore genres, and especially those relating to the annual ritual cycle – are much less accessible to the wider public.

However, traditional songs in general can be considered ritual by their nature, not to mention that all human contexts in which songs are performed are potentially ritual ones. This paper, based on the experience of the Moba female vocal ensemble from Belgrade, will deal with this subject in the attempt to offer an answer to questions about the contemporary place of the specific messages found in different folklore genres, accenting songs that have messages relevant to the times of a pandemic.

Mari Treial-Treier-Wierland-Viirland: The Echoes and Transformations of a Folk Singer

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Herbert Tampere's five-volume anthology *Eesti rahvalaule viisidega* ('Estonian Folk Songs with Melodies', 1956–1965) introduces two folk songs written in the village of Pääsnä, in Räpinä Parish: the local variants of *Kadrilaul* 'St Catherine's Day Song' and *Tähemõrsja* 'Star's Bride'. Both songs later gained fame through arrangements. The name of the singer and the parish of her residence are different for both songs in Tampere's anthology (as well in the Estonian Folklore Archives, on which the publication is based), although a closer examination reveals that it was the same person, Mari (1871–1921), recorded before and after getting married. In light of this knowledge, the recordings and transcriptions which led us to look for two Maris in different years, can be seen as melody variants made by the same singer. Mari's melodies also deserve attention in the context of the local folk song traditions of Põlva and Räpinä parishes. The data about the singer's biography and family let us make assumptions about the transmission of the songs.

The presentation will be held in South Estonian Võro language with English subtitles.

Connections between the Estonian and Finnish Corpus of Finnic Oral Poetry

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:: Researchers of the project FILTER

Historical Finnic oral poetry – runo-songs, *regilaul*, or Kalevalaic poetry – makes a versatile corpus in multiple dialects and archaic forms of Estonian, Finnish, Karelian, Ingrian (Izhorian) and Votic. All in all, there are over 240,000 digitised texts of Finnic tetrametric oral poetry in the Finnish Literature Society and the Estonian Literary Museum, and more archival texts and sound recordings in other Finnish, Estonian and Russian archives.

Most of the Estonian poems are included in the corpus of Estonian *regilaul*, and most of the Karelian, Ingrian and Finnish poems in the Finnish SKVR-corpus. Apart from some small experiments, the connections, similarities and variations between these two corpora have not been analysed properly. In addition, foundational analyses have often concentrated on the most regular forms of tradition and on the ‘best’ regions, genres and singers.

FILTER (<https://blogs.helsinki.fi/filter-project/>) is a project combining folklorists and computer scientist to examine the digital corpus of Finnic oral poetry. Our aim is to combine the two corpora and folkloristic approaches with computational means to analyse the variation of the poetics, themes, and formulas across all of the Estonian and Finnish data. We have begun with experiments with the SKVR-corpus: 1) setting it into an Octavo interface (Mäkelä) that enables flexible searches and some statistical analysis, 2) making some rough statistical comparisons to get a better overall view of the data, and 3) developing a Runoregi interface (Janicki) to enable computational comparisons of similar lines, sections and poems across the corpus. Our next step is to combine the Estonian corpus, SKVR-corpus and the Finnish corpus of unpublished poems into one set to enable further comparative work.

In this paper, we introduce some preliminary results on the intersection of the Finnish and Estonian corpora discovered with the help of similarity detection analysis. Although the Estonian and Finnish corpora are built up following a similar metadata structure, the typology or thematic indices used in the Finnish and Estonian databases have not been brought together. In this current state it is extremely hard to track down the common themes and motifs among the vast number of texts and song types. Computational analysis is able to bring together similar verses that are then of help to folklorists bringing together the song types that have different names in the Finnish and Estonian corpora.

Finnish Rhyming Folksongs and Literature at the turn of the 20th Century

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Finnish writers became fascinated by the rhyming couplets (*reki-laulut*) in the middle of the 1890s, when young poets began to write poetry that resembled these songs. This interest lasted roughly a decade. Rhyming couplets, and singing, were also mentioned in the prose and drama of the period.

This particular singing style was a form of contemporary oral tradition different from the oral poetry sung in Kalevala meter. It was also characterised as a youth tradition that focused on love and longing.

The interest of writers in the contemporary oral singing tradition was not only a national but also a transnational phenomenon. Poets in France, Russia and Sweden were inspired by the rhyming folk songs and utilised them in their literary production. In Finland, attitudes towards rhyming couplets were however contradictory. Despite writers being attracted by the songs, most of the elite perceived them as immoral and reprehensible.

In my paper, I will outline some of the main lines of the phenomenon in Finland focusing on the following questions: Why were writers attracted by Finnish rhyming couplets and why did some people oppose this singing style and its literary use so aggressively? What kinds of cultural meaning are embedded in literature through these songs? How did the literary use of folk songs, and

the processes where oral songs were transformed into literature, affect how we comprehend the meanings and messages of this particular singing tradition today?

Frequency Tree for Analysing Estonian *Regilaul* Folk Song Tunes

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Based on the collections of the Estonian Folklore Archives, Ingrid Rüütel and Koit Haugas established the database of *regilaul* melodies, the ERMA, in the 1990s, which is still under further development. The melodies are encoded into sequences of symbols, each corresponding to a note in the database.

The database is used to teach and experiment with digital humanities methods at Tallinn University. The paper demonstrates how the analysis is carried out to discover similar strings of musical symbols, which might be of different lengths. It is possible to analyse separately the sections of two, three, four symbols or of other lengths, and to discover the sections more specific to a melody type or region and thereby find fundamental variations from the mean of t-test. The placement of ordered notes in a tree and ranking of branches by frequency allows us to better grasp the overlaps in strings of different lengths and thus to explore similarities. The simplest analysis is to place the beginnings of the tunes in a tree, allowing characteristic information to be obtained from the endings, the stress groups, and the sections using a sliding window.

The Singing Style (Re)imagined

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When the research and communication context of a cultural expression becomes restricted and controlled by external conditions such as the current Covid-19 pandemic, an archival investigation acquires new potential and dimension. This presentation looks at the dynamics of the cultural practice of *regilaul* in Estonia by focusing on its position and social imaginary in the late twentieth century by combining different types of documented and ethnographic sources in order to pose questions about how communicative mechanisms are applied. There are different modes of engagement and temporal perspectives to be considered both in research and practice. This presentation proposes theoretically grounded reflection on the triad of voice, connection and message through an analysis of modes of transmission that pertain to historical and social circumstance.

The Art of Insulting through Song: Conflict, Collaboration and Censorship in *Lütsütep Ken* (Verbal Duels)

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The Ao Naga variant of verbal duels known as *Lütsütep Ken* is an interesting study on the craft of the spoken word and the intricate connection between conflict and collaboration. '*Lütsütep*' means to insult and 'Ken' means song. As the name implies, this is a traditional form of folk singing in which performers engage in back and forth insults by singing poetic verses. One of the most popular themes of such duels is the classic battle of the sexes, in which male and female performers are pitted against each other. Such duels are spaces where dissent can be voiced, as well as resolved under the subterfuge of humour. This paper will explore the complex gender dynamics at play in Ao Naga society in India as well look at how the advent of Christianity has been integral in the expurgation and eventual diminishing of this tradition.

The Embodying Voice of the Singer: A Study of Direct Speech in Northern Karelian Poems

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The physical voice of singers, the sounds and vibrations they create, are at the core of any traditional singing performance. Through their voices, through their bodies, singers communicate with their audience, but also with beings from the other world; they create images and make things present.

Collectors of folk poetry in Finland in the 19th century were mainly interested in epic poems and incantations. They recorded a number of texts that are now preserved in archives and published in the volumes of the *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* ('The Ancient Poems of the Finnish People'). Reconstructing the original performance corresponding to written archive texts is an impossible task, as we do not have much more information than those texts. They do contain, nevertheless, metapragmatic motifs that comment on the performance and can help us hear the voice of the singer.

Epic poems, as well as charms, are polyphonic by nature: the singer or healer makes various non-human beings heard by speaking with their words. Väinämöinen or Jesus could be called for help and would be embodied by the singer during the performance. These instances of direct speech make present beings that are not present in the physical realm: a confusion between the voices and bodies of the healer and the non-human helper

happens, thus helping the patient in the middle of a crisis. Charms were also embedded in epic songs, making the described situation vivid and present.

My aim in this paper is to make a comparative analysis of the use of direct speech in epic songs and charms collected in the parish of Ilomantsi in northern Karelia in the 19th century. I combine phenomenological and narratological approaches to the texts. Through a precise and detailed reading of the poems, I explore the place of the (human) body in those instances of direct speech and investigate the relationship between voices, words, and bodies. What strategies did the singers use when speaking with another voice? Ultimately whose voice is heard and why is a question of authority and power, an issue researchers must confront when making the voices of singers heard through time.

Letters from America: The Songs of Lithuanian Emigrants to the USA

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This paper presents the folklore of Lithuanian immigrants recorded by Lithuanian folklorist Jonas Balys. In 1944 Balys left for Germany with his family, and in 1948, having been invited by Professor Stith Thompson, he came to the USA. Lacking original collections, left behind in his native country, Balys decided to visit Lithuanian immigrants and record their folklore. The expeditions (1949–1951) proved successful and he recorded plenty of songs on magnetic tape, as well as folktales and other folklore genres. From this material Balys prepared a two-volume publication of songs called *Lietuvių dainos Amerikoje/ Lithuanian Folksongs in America* (the first volume was published in 1958 and the second – in 1977). The books contained folk songs representing the traditional rural way of life as well as some immigrant songs relating the reminiscences of their homeland.

Lithuanians had travelled to America since the 17th century, although mass emigration started only in the 1860s. Most Lithuanian immigrants were peasants who left in search of a better life in Pennsylvania's coal mines or Chicago's stockyards. The largest colony was the town of Shenandoah in Pennsylvania. Here Lith-

uanians built two churches, published newspapers, and established schools, brass bands, and choirs. They generally socialised and married among their own and tried to create an environment that was dear to their hearts.

Immigrant songs described the pain of parting from loved ones, the impressions of the strange new land, and reminiscences of the homeland. The most popular immigrant songs were *Užaugau kaimely, pas savo tėvelį/ I Grew Up In A Village with My Father*, and *Aš, Lietuvos bernužėlis, laiškėlį rašysiu/ I, A Lithuanian Lad, Will Write A Letter*. The latter was printed on postcards so that even an illiterate person could sign the card and send it home. The first immigrants, having grown up in rural villages, had a hard time adjusting to their new surroundings. They returned to their homeland in their thoughts, and, of course, through their songs.

Voice of the Past or the Present, Familiar or Foreign? Possible Interpretations of Laine Mesikäpp's *Leelo* Performances

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Laine Mesikäpp (1915–2012) was a well-known Estonian stage performer of traditional songs. Her career as a performer of songs in an older style started in the first period of Estonian independence and lasted until the second period. During the Soviet period, Laine Mesikäpp became extremely popular, opening all “evenings of folk arts” (later dance festivals, which belonged to the all-Estonian song festivals) from 1947 to 1995 with her improvisations and compositions in a traditional style. Characteristics of premodern and also modern tradition can be found in the singer’s repertoire and performing style. Among the modern characteristics in turn, representation of national or soviet modernity can be found.

In my presentation, I try to shed light on the wide space of interpretation of Laine Mesikäpp’s performances by asking what the performances meant to her and to listeners at different times. More direct and indirect evaluations can be found in descriptions of her performances made in different eras by listeners with various backgrounds. Laine Mesikäpp’s standpoint can be presumed, based on her media interviews and the memories of people close to her.

Aesthetic evaluations made by Laine Mesikäpp's contemporaries are intertwined with ideological assessments and can be described through the 'familiar-foreign' dichotomy within the socio-political, ethnic or generational/cultural-historical perspectives. What meaning Laine Mesikäpp herself attributed to her activity as a performer can be better understood by looking at her position in relation to the premodern and the non-modern (characteristic of folk revival) aesthetics of traditional performance, in connection with her attitudes towards decolonial national values and Soviet ideology.

Yukar the Messages of Spirits: Ainu Epics as a Form of Community Cohesion

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The Ainu are Indigenous people living in Japan and Russia who inhabited Honshū, Hokkaidō, Sakhalin, and the Kurile Islands. Ainu traditions have been heavily influenced by pressure to assimilate into mainstream society following colonisation of their traditional lands. Thus, the preservation of Ainu music has been fraught with many challenges. Practice and maintenance of traditions by observing *Ainupuri* ('Ainu customs') has been framed by many Ainu artists as a means of survival rather than as a form of activism or resistance against colonial structures. Women have been central to the processes of transmission of traditions surrounding ritual, performance, and the preservation of Ainu oral literature, as can be seen in Chiri Yukie's (1903–1922) *Ainu shin'yōshū* ('Songs of the Gods').

Chiri, who was bilingual in Ainu and Japanese, documented *Yukar*, Ainu epics typically sung or chanted in a rhythmic pattern. According to the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum, each *Yukar* contains a distinct melody with repeating phrases known as *sakehe*. The melody and the *sakehe* intertwine in a pattern that creates a unique rhythm. Some *Yukar* are narrated by the *Kamui*, which are sacred Spirits, Animals, or Deities of the Ainu tradition. Sarah M. Strong, who translated the works of Chiri, found that *Kamui Yukar* were not performed merely for entertainment but for religious efficacy and didactic purposes, thus comprising a sacred category of music.

In Chiri's time, it appears that the context of *Yukar* performance had already begun to shift towards entertainment and as a means of reinforcing community cohesion and heritage. Practices surrounding *Yukar* recitation have changed drastically due to the dispossession of Ainu lifestyles through the processes of colonisation. Traditional Ainu communities have been disrupted with many people being assimilated into modern Japanese society. *Yukar* recitation practices have suffered tremendously due to the shift in the vernacular lifestyles of the Ainu people. For proper recitation, these epics and heroic tales had to be committed to memory. Over time it had become more difficult to find one capable of performing *Yukar*. As the tradition has evolved, contemporary Ainu engage with *Yukar* in various manners depending on the context.

Lewallen, Ann-Elise 2016. *The Fabric of Indigeneity: Ainu Identity, Gender, and Settler Colonialism in Japan*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press

Strong, Sarah M. 2011. *Ainu Spirits Singing: The Living World of Chiri Yukie's Ainu Shin'yoshu*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press

Tamura, Yurika 2013. *Community of Non-Belonging, Bodies for Non-Philosophy: Intercultural Performance and a Sense of Coexistence*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University

Music between the Singer and the Collector: Notes About Musical Qualities in Fieldwork Reports

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The receptions and attitudes to folk music – similarly to folk song and folklore in general – have varied greatly over time, from the superiority of the colonist or the ‘higher class intellectual’ to warm resilience. At the same time runo song has been particularly appreciated as folk poetry in Estonian studies and cultural politics, although runic melodies have not been so honoured. However, their use as a basis of musical creativity and composition has been a significant part of Estonian professional culture.

In the folklore writings there is a lot of discussion about the content of the term *folk singer*. For example, what person can be called a singer? Personal characteristics like a good memory, performing skills, psychology, and functioning in society as tradition bearers and conductors of rituals are reasoned. In addition, descriptions by folklore collectors who personally contacted folk singers include characteristics like a good memory, and specific personal qualities. It seems that it is the quantity of memorised song lines and improvisation skills that have formed the basis of how singers are rated. Relatively little has been discussed about the musical skills of singers, as if a musical evaluation would be inappropriate.

Both verbal and musical criteria are used to assess the quality of singers in runo song texts. This reflects on the vernacular understanding that good singers have to possess both poetic and musical skills. On the basis of studies about Estonian folk singers and folklore fieldwork reports, I will focus on the question of whether the folk song collector attaches importance to the musical skills and talents of the singer. How are singers' musical characteristics described? I will also discuss the reasons why musical characteristics are so rare in folklore writings. Are folklorists even able to appreciate a singer's musicality? Perhaps musical qualities are left aside because of prejudice about the simplicity and inferiority of folk music?

The Difference Is in Her Voice

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Traditional Karelian laments express, create and convey emotions. A lament performance creates an affective connection between the lamenter and the audience, and it is said that a talented lamenter can make an audience weep with her performance. Performing a lament instigates lamenter's affects, and, in one sense, this affectivity between lamenter and lament can be seen as a similar affective connection. Moreover, an affective connection can develop between a lament performance on an archival audio recording and the listener of the recording. I approach these phenomena of affective interaction with a concept of affective circles.

I present a multidisciplinary theoretical and methodological frame within which I have tried to understand the various processes that influence the affective connection and how the affective intensity can be perceived across decades through archival material. The theoretical frame is a synthesis of social, cultural and biopsychological (neuropsychological) views and understandings about emotions and affects. With this combined transdisciplinary base, I formulate a methodology that employs sensory ethnography (cf. Sarah Pink) and two kinds of analytical listening, auditory and empathetic.

In laments, emotions appear as intentionally performed emotion emblems and as automatic manifestations of affective experiences. Both these are genre specific, inherent features of laments. While lamenting, the lamenter goes deeper and deeper into her own experiences and the affective intensity of her performance increases. This change is also perceivable through archi-

val tapes. The quality of the lamenter's voice and the extremely subtle nuances in it reveal changes in affective intensity and convey the affects. To analyse these nuances both auditory and empathetic listening methods are needed.

My research material constitutes approximately five hundred Olonets Karelian lament performances on archival audio recordings, of which I have made detailed analysis of approximately one hundred. The material was recorded over a few decades of the mid-20th century within ethnographic fieldwork interviews.

Attempts to Outline Some Semantic Aspects of Singing-related Concepts Based on Estonian Historical Text Corpora

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The aim of the present study is to analyse the historical concepts of *laul*, ‘song’, and *laulmine*, ‘singing’, in Estonian on the basis of text corpora. In Estonian *laul* ‘song’ is an old native stem. The Explanatory Dictionary of the Estonian Language (EKSS) contains a comprehensive entry about singing, from which we summarise that *laul* is 1) the process of human and bird singing and the sounds of other subjects/objects of living and non-living nature, 2) song, and in older Estonian also a written poetic text, 3) part of various idiomatic expressions. Thus, ‘song’ and related terms have a wide semantic field, where the music researcher is interested in the realm of musical sounds and attitudes, and how these are conveyed through language (Cmp. the ‘concept of music’ in Alan Merriam’s *Anthropology of Music* (1964)).

The corpora that we queried were the Corpus of Old Literary Estonian, the text corpus of Estonian *regilaul* compiled based on the Estonian Regilaul Database, the texts of Estonian Newspapers of the 1890s, and the texts of Calendars, published between 1854

and 1938. We initially had to determine some basic focus points, such as: 1) how to define goals that would help us get essential data from the corpora about the concepts of song and singing, and 2) how to use the text corpora to fulfil those goals.

The questions were set up on three levels: 1) on the word level the compounds and derivatives with the component *laul* 'song' were analysed, 2) on the sentence level, the collocations that contained *laul* and *laulma* were examined, and also the variation of the subjects and objects for the verb *laulma* 'to sing', as well verbs most commonly used with *laul* as subject or object, 3) in the broader context of occurrences of these words the typical semantical frames of reference were discovered: descriptions of sound or singing voice, evaluations and opinions about singing; the circumstances of singing, participant activities, the response or result of singing, etc.

Although not all the questions were answered, some interesting points emerged. Judging by compound words, different types of song dominated in different corpora. For example, there was a lively interest in choir music and song festivals in the press in the 1890s, while old folk songs were theorised about in calendar texts; the dominant song genre mentioned in folk song texts was bird song. Novel information about social singing, which is found neither in official music history nor folklore collections, mentioned singing of the Russian Empire anthem and "Ta elagu!" ('long live'). Remarkable results were found in the form of several court cases relating to offense caused through song.

The derivatives of *laul laulatus* 'church wedding ceremony' and *laulatama* (tr. verb) 'to wed' indicate singing as inherent in ecclesiastical marriage in Estonian, while the rest of the wedding celebration is called *pulmad*. Associating the term for wedding with singing seems rare in other languages, as the only parallel known to us, *lōlatimi*, *lōlatõ* ('wedding, to wed', *loul* 'song') occurs in the closely related and neighbouring language Livonian. Latvian *laulāt* 'to wed' is apparently the loan. The next parallel we found

came from quite far – one suggestion for the Spanish word *marachi* for a certain form of Mexican music is that it comes from the French *mariage* (*English Etymological Dictionary*). Some Finnic languages, and Russian, have the ‘song’-stem words for funerals.