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From Language to Mind 4

On the Occasion of the 110th Birthday
of Academician Oskar Loorits and
75th birthday of Pille Kippar

ABSTRACTS

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From Language to Mind 4
On the Occasion of the 110th Birthday of Academician Oskar Loorits
and 75th birthday of Pille Kippar,
Conference is organized by the Estonian Literary Museum

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Mare Kõiva
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Tõnno Jonuks

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Polish Comedy – Themes and Forms

Wladyslaw Chlopicki

The presentation will focus on the themes that have been most common in Polish stage comedy from the 1960s on. The most common themes, drawn from the excellent selection published in 15 installments by a cabaret artist and journalist as well as one of the commentators in the celebrated “Contact Lens” TV show (see my article in “Permitted Laughter”) Artur Andrus, include the following: patriotism (Poles and other nations); men and women; children and their fairy tales; high culture for the masses; housing; talking on the phone; radio, TV and other media; alcohol (drinking); health service; sports; work and working people; politics; justice system; school and education; the army. The forms are most frequently cabaret scenes and sketches, which are the favourite form for Polish audiences, whose tradition goes back to the early 20th century. There are also cabaret songs, spoken and sung parodies and grotesques, non-verbal acts (including parodies of classical music) as well as attempts at standup, which has been traditionally referred to as monologue. Some of the types will be illustrated with examples from the collection, provided with commentary and English translation as appropriate.

The Materiality of Religion – Does a Pot Shard Tell about Religion?

Tõnno Jonuks

Religion was one of its main subjects of study even before archaeology became an independent discipline in the 19th century. However, so far the religion studies have been limited to the Mediterranean, Central America and other regions with attractive and (seemingly) more easily interpreted material. Northern Europe with its more uniform findings, on the other hand, has become a research area only in recent decades. Even so, the studies have mainly focused on attractive and single findings that may not be related to widely spread religious concepts.

My paper concerns the religious interpretations of archaeological source material. However, my source material is that which has generally been ignored – gray and, at first glance, completely pointless shards and stones. If we consider the past religions of Estonia, especially from the Middle Ages forward, needed little representation, these are in fact the main sources that indicate any religion existed at all.

Since archaeological material by itself is “mute”, I will begin with ethnographic examples from 20th century Estonian folk belief and then see how far back in the past can we take these sacrifice and magic customs. I attempt to demonstrate that presumed former religious archaeological source material or studying findings from former holy sites can show us different ways of deposition, backed by different reasons why an object is left behind and what the purpose could have been.

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A Brief Catalogue of Estonian Fantasy Animal Tales

Risto Järv

It goes without saying that the paraphrase in the title pays homage to Pille Kippar, whose thorough typology of Estonian animal tales was published in 1986 (“Estnische Tiermärchen”, FFC 237). Kippar’s catalogue of animal tales that contains a list of all characters from all the type variants has provided a basis necessary for obtaining a comprehensive survey of Estonian animal fairy tale variants.

The presenter’s research so far has been focused first and foremost on fairy tales. Thus, the present survey will attempt to outline the main characteristics of animals belonging to the fantasy world of fairy tales. According to Heda Jason, such creatures do not belong to any real system of belief. Therefore, it is hardly rewarding to search for them in treatises like Oskar Loorits’s major works “Livonian Folk Belief” (I–II, 1926–1928) or “Grundzüge des estnischen Volksglaubens” (1949–1960).

First of all, these creatures exist in the fairy-tale world.

The presenter’s interest in typology has triggered the aim to place these fantasy animals in a defined framework. Shaped by the occasion of the conference, the classification necessarily remains brief, and thus may be reminiscent of J. L. Borges’s taxonomy of imaginary animals in the alleged Chinese encyclopaedia “Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge”.

The Joint Creation of an Informational Environment or Storytelling on the Internet?

Mare Kalda

Since 2004, I have been observing the global sport of Geocaching, where the basic idea is to hide and locate caches and to do it with the help of modern technology. In the years between, the game has rapidly advanced: at the present moment, over a million active geocaches have been hidden in different places of the world (in summer 2006, there were 269,715 caches hidden in 221 countries). Until now, both applied and descriptive studies have been published on the topic (for example, see Lynne McNeill's article 'Portable Places: Serial Collaboration and the Creation of a New Sense of Place'; ("Western Folklore" 66, 3/4 Summer & Fall 2007 pp. 281-300)), which explores the circulating objects, people passing by the objects, and also the experiences shared by participants who visit the same places.

The practice of geocaching is currently represented by the hobbyists themselves on the Geocaching website. The results of treasure hunting are posted on subpages of particular caches in the Internet. Logs are an important source of information about the game for the (potential) next seekers. In the course of years, the style and recurrent topics have been developed: players who post entries write about problems encountered during the search, contacts with non-geocachers, and encounters with other geocaching teams. Despite being game-related, the log entries refer to the physical and social reality that remains outside the game. The logs also convey immediate impressions, often repeating the phrase that has inspired a particular thread headline.

An alternative way of self-representation of a group is forum discussion: this gives a chance for holding heated debates and self-expression. In forums both the collective and the individual are at work: the community controls the course of the game, while individual players construct and reinforce their geocacher identity. In my paper I will analyse these processes on the example of Geocaching practices in Estonia and also present parallels with the global game.

The research has been carried out within the ETF grant 8137 "Cultural processes in the Internet societies. Narratives, values and places."

The Tradition of Girl's Manuscript Love Stories in the Last Century and Today

Eda Kalmre

The paper provides an initial comparative insight in manuscript albums of girls during the final decades of the 20th century, and the teenage girls' blogs of *rate.ee*, the largest communication portal of Estonia, as collections of material focusing on love prose.

Interactive love stores of the *rate.ee* blogs are very similar to their handwritten analogues from the second half of the 20th century. Russian folklorists S. B. Borissov (2002) and S. I. Zavoronok (1998), who have studied the domain thoroughly, have classified these stories as the borderline of naive literature and folklore. Self-sacrificial love is a frequent topic in the manuscript stories by girls, ending with the death of one or both heroes. The content of these narratives is usually relatively simplistic, entailing a three-stage plot: 1) meeting, falling in love, 2) testing of love, 3) tragic end. Misfortune or tough destiny can be the motifs permeating through the narratives. Still, the happy ending, whereby the first love would not perish, can also be possible in addition to the generally tragic orientation, referring to fairy-tale and melodramatic implications.

Short narratives of love seem to be one of the most actively used and recognised modes of self-expression among the *rate.ee* bloggers, being also one of the most popular ones among the readers-users, gathering the largest number of comments and rated most highly. The literary creation by the girls is affected by the earlier tradition of written love stories and, simultaneously, by the current role-models of contemporary pop culture and literature.

The research has been carried out within the ETF grant 8137 "Cultural processes in the Internet societies. Narratives, values and places" and state financed programme 0030181s08 "Narrative aspects of folklore. Power, personality and globalization".

Books in the Folklore-Collectors' Letters to M. J. Eisen

Katre Kikas

Collections of folklore archives are often regarded as resources for text-centered approaches to folklore. However, there are many other viewpoints – one of which is concentrating on the people who collected the archived texts and especially on the ways of their recording, rather than on the texts themselves. The focus of my presentation on is the folklore collection of Matthias Johann Eisen (1857–1934), which consists of about 90 000 pages and was completed with the help of more than thousand local co-workers. Most of these co-collectors had received just the basic three-year schooling and folklore collecting was probably one of the quite few possibilities for them to practice their writing skills. This means, on the one hand, that possibility to participate in written communication was a significant factor in making the decision to collect and, on the other hand, that the collected material as it is represented on the pages of the manuscripts is an excellent resource for studying the phenomenon that David Barton and Mary Hamilton have termed vernacular literacy.

One of the special traits of the collection agenda of M. J. Eisen was focusing on publishing all the material as fast as possible (in the form of cheap chapbooks). As the other major folklore collectors of the time (e.g., Jakob Hurt, Jaan Jung, etc. etc.) he used newspapers for communicating to his co-workers, but beside the customary credits and summaries he also mentioned which kind of book he was working on at the moment and asked collectors to send urgently everything they knew on the subject. This kind of focus on publishing has evoked a lot of criticism by folklorists - his publications are termed non-academic and tales in them too processed; besides, a lot of feedback can be detected – i.e. folktales published by him being taken up by tellers, written down by collectors and sent to Eisen or some other collector. Others have criticized that a lot of co-workers collected for Eisen only in order to get their name into the books. However, from the viewpoint of vernacular literacy, this focus on publishing creates quite interesting possibilities for scrutinizing the ideas and feelings those collectors expressed in relation to writing and written materials.

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Tales About Hodja Nasreddin

Arvo Krikmann

Archival and other source materials suggest and support the hypothesis that the non-punchlined “ATU”-Schwanks with their well-known subcategories (like deception tales, tales about numskulls and another fools, so-called tall tales, and tales of lucky accidents) and punchlined jokes represent just two different historical strata in the jokelore of many European nations (including Estonians). Some German folklorists (H. Bausinger, S. Neumann, L. Röhrich, N. Neumann, etc.) have even attempted to corroborate that many of the contemporary punchlined German Witzes are the direct typological descendants of their older non-punchlined Schwank ancestors. This can be well (at least partially) true for the European (particularly Northern-European) area, and can be supported by various more general theoretical observations as well.

On the other hand, there are numerous old empirical sources (like the notorious “Philogelos” and others) consisting mainly of short punchlined jokes and thus verifying that the punchline as such is altogether not a historically recent invention in the development of joke-making.

But the most serious empirical argument that has totally confused me, dissolved my faith in the strictly bivalent distinguishability between the punchlined and non-punchlined humorous narratives and completely demolished my hitherto perception of what the punchline “as such” is, was the existence of the huge and extremely heterogeneous corpus of tales about Hodja Nasreddin that have been, and continue to be, very popular and productive in the very large area of the Oriental world. The repertoire connected with Nasreddin includes a lot of classical “ATU”-Schwanks, a lot of inevitably punchlined items, and a lot of texts, the funniness of which remains totally obscure for a historically and culturally distant contemporary “bystander”. Besides, being perhaps the most well-known representative of “wise fools” in the world folklore, Nasreddin totally destroyed my earlier perception of axiological rules governing humorous narratives, the very concepts of “good” and “bad” in humour, of relationships between the cleverness and stupidity, between the philosophical depth and seriousness (Idris Shah and others, as we know, consider Nasreddin

an outstanding Sufi poet and philosopher) and coarse vulgar clownade, between the intentional and the spontaneous in general, etc.

However, there is an empirical fact and some remarks made by İlhan Başgöz & Pertev Naili Boratav in their book “I, Hoca, Nasreddin, Never Shall I die. A Thematic Analysis of Hoca Stories (Bloomington, Indiana, 1998) that can indicate another, perhaps more promising, aspect for structural division of humorous narratives. It is the technical fact that in the book “Двадцать три Насреддина” [Twenty Three Nasreddins] (1986) by M. S. Khari-tovov, the best compendium of Nasreddin tales that I know, 83% of texts are ending with a phrase said by Nasreddin, in the Turkish material of Albert Wesselski’s book “Der Hodscha Nasreddin, Türkische, arabische, berberische, maltesische, sizilianische, kalabrische, kroatische, serbische und griechische Märlein und Schwänke” (1911) – even 94%; the frequencies are similar in other sources as well (e.g., by G. Borrow, P. N. Boratav, and others). Such an ending comment can include a critical or approving evaluation of a situation, make a generalising conclusion from it, be a witty retort to a verbal attack of some other character, etc. So, the main structural watershed seems to go not between the non-punchlined Schwank as such and contemporary punchlined joke as such, but between the tales with a certain “real” or “material” solution of a certain problem and tales ending with somebody’s comment, i.e. the direct speech. This ending remark can be considered as one of the focal “points of dissemination” which, according to the configuration of conditions, can be qualified as a unintentional self-exposure of the butt of the joke, a witty retort of the clever antagonist, or just a “sub-punchline” humorous comment of a neutral bystander (e.g., in wellerisms), axiologically ambivalent or totally asemantic saying of a “wise fool”, a remark reminding the moral conclusion in the end of fables, etc. etc.

The research has been carried out within the ETF grant 8149 “Cultural processes in the changing society: Tradition and Creativity in Post-socialist Humour.”

The Druze Tito Figure in YouTube

Mare Kõiva, Andres Kuperjanov

According to Istvan Povedak (2009), historical heroes and contemporary celebrities are in close relation. Their formation was generated by similar circumstances but their cult and its peculiarities accommodate to the parameters of a given historical period. Which time period and heroes does the YouTube Titoana reflect?

We are going to use YouTube clips to analyse myths and anti-myths in a popular visual media environment. Among others YouTube contains multivoiced video clips about the life of the former Yugoslavian president Josip Broz Tito, the development of Yugoslavia under his rule as well as snippets from annual secular pilgrimages and festivals held in Tito's home village Kumrovec. Additionally there are large corpuses of commentaries and messages of YouTube users, an additional part and verbalisation of visual narratives.

We are going to analyse the YouTube Tito archives using the discourse of a star politician and former Yugoslavian history, viewed via the prism of the president's biography and visual narratives. Important keywords in video clips include partisan war, democracy, songs and music, youth, unified symbolics, but also the discourse of an enlightened leader with of simple origins (cf Belaj). Some of the video clips parody the political discourse and "former comrades". Besides nostalgia, fixing history and political narratives, humour plays a major part. A separate corpus is made up of clips featuring Kumrovec, reflecting how the place turned into a cult and festival site.

The research has been carried out within the ETF grant 8137 "Cultural processes in the Internet societies. Narratives, values and places."

Cannibal Nations: Man-Eating as a Motive in Estonian Interwar Caricatures

Liisi Laineste

Ethnic relations in Estonia have long been a sensitive issue. Partly due to the small size of the nation, reactions to foreigners, above all “big” nations like Germany and Russian, have been sharp and disturbed in many genres of folklore (sayings, jokes, tales, etc.). Negative folklore that is said to foster ethnic or other hatred carries the function of defining the borders between us and them, negotiating identity on all levels and at all times. It is possible to give a good account of the identity strategies of a nation through describing these (sometimes stigmatised as politically incorrect) expressions of opinion.

The aim of this presentation is to list the main targets of ethnic caricatures in the interwar period (1920s–1940s), describe the representation of these characters and, consecutively to focus on the narrower theme, the motive of cannibalism in the material. The research deals with the primary targets for ethnic fear and ridicule – the Germans and the Russians – but also with the image of a largely harmless ethnic group – the Jews. Issues of censorship and repression are introduced by the fact that the frightening and funny “Other” was the holder of unjust power.

The research has been carried out within the ETF grant 8149 “Cultural processes in the changing society: Tradition and Creativity in Post-socialist Humour.”

Decoding Ritual in Archaeological Record: A Case Study Based on Alulinn Enclosure

Ester Oras

The question of how to define rituals and ritual sites in archaeological record has been discussed in various studies. However, there seems to be no single answer to the question, except for the continuously stressed importance of context in ritual studies. In my paper I am trying to point out the possibilities of using contextual approach for interpreting archaeological material. An interesting enclosure named Alulinn (“town of Alu”) is used as a case study. As the interpretations of the enclosure so far seem to limit with fortifications referring to prehistoric hill fort, the aim is to raise a question whether we might be dealing with probable ritual site.

Stand-Up in Comedy Estonia

Ilona Piirimägi

Stand-up performance is a form of communication, way of making fun. The text of the comedian can be seen as small textual units – riddles, jokes, legends – but the phenomenon of stand-up cannot be studied only textually. We should observe how the joke is being built up and look how the communication develops between the audience and the comedian. In stand-up shows the environment, comedian and the audience are equal partners. In Tartu, the first show was organized on April the 6th 2010 and ever since the shows have become regular (at least once a month). This paper shows how the audience is interacting with the performer, what topics come up and how communication in these stand-up shows develop.

The research has been carried out within the ETF grant 8149 "Cultural processes in the changing society: Tradition and Creativity in Post-socialist Humour."

Orthodox Churches, Monasteries and Tsässons (Chapels) of Setomaa

Jaanus Plaat

Setomaa (Petserimaa) is a region that has still maintained its distinct culture and religious customs. The region stretches from South-East Estonia to Pskov oblast, Petseri region in Russia. In many ways, the distinct intangible heritage was saved thanks to the fact that the area habited by Setos was up until the 1920 Estonian-Russian peace treaty a part of Pskov, Russia, and thus the sphere of influence of the Russian Orthodox Church. Russian Orthodoxy may have started spreading as early as in the 12th century. It may have first reached the “Chudes” (Baltic Finns) when first Orthodox churches and chapels were established in the area. One version claims Christianity started spreading among the Setos in late 15th century when church-related topics appeared in folk songs and adapted Christian names appeared. In the 16th century, many wore Russian Orthodox names. Since the 16th century, the main carrier of Orthodoxy in Setomaa and neighbouring Võrumaa, has been the Petseri abbey (esp. since 1520) and to a lesser extent also Mõla abbey. In addition to constantly added new Orthodox Churches, the local Seto chapels (*tsässon*), first appearing no later than the 16th century, played a major role in the religious life of local people. However, despite the efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church, what the Setos believed remained a unique blend of their old belief and Orthodoxy (esp. the saint cults). Remnants of ancient religion and world view can still be found in the customs and beliefs of Setos.

Seto Orthodoxy was probably profoundly different from the Orthodoxy of Russians of the same region, as well as from Estonian Russian Orthodoxy after the 1840 church-hopping movement in South Estonia. The paper first considers the rold of first Orthodox churches and chapels in bringing Setos to Russian Orthodoxy and then how the village *tsässon* fit into their religious life. The presentation ends with an overview of currently standing churches in Setomaa today, both in its Estonian and Russian parts.

The Shortest Joke in the World

Līga Strazda

In Soviet Union, everyone used to tell jokes. Researchers admit that jokes had a unique place in the Soviet culture, but there are different scholarly explanations for this. The aim of this paper is (at least to try) to find an answer to the question why people joked endlessly under communism? Combining different viewpoints – of sociologists (G. Kuipers, C. Davies), psychologists (R. Martin), folklorists (K. Roth, A. Dundes) and neuroscientists (W. Jung) with different theories leads me to a better comprehension of why one of the popular jokes of the time stated communism to be the shortest joke in the world. The incongruity hypothesis presumes that any instance of funniness contains an agent with intention that fails. In Soviet countries mass media, on the one hand, showed obvious intentionality of the government to create an idyllic picture of all things being fine, while real life constantly proved the failure of the system. This theoretical framework explains why people couldn't stop laughing – because they were surrounded by incongruity.

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Holy Grove – For Whom and for What?

Kaisa Sammelselg

In my paper I am going to concentrate on explaining the meaning of the term *hiis* – holy grove – on the basis of ethnological field-work. In order to grasp the wider background of the term *hiis*, I used earlier folkloristic and religious studies and conducted interviews with both organised and self-proclaimed earth believers who hold these places holy.

As a case study, I am going to view the issues related to the Kunda holy grove hill. In order to answer the questions: what is a holy grove and what does it mean for people, I am going to briefly overview the historical heritage about the Kunda site and for a comparison with the contemporary situation use interviews with current Kunda mayor as well as local villagers.

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Herbal landscape as a phenomenon of perception

Renata Sõukand, Raivo Kalle

The way community accepts a new herb into the cultural landscape or how another herb acclimatizes in the natural landscape is the measure of sustainability and flexibility of healing traditions in the given society. If we draw a correlation with folklore, landscape is also spatial (heterogeneous, fragmentary, episodically remembered etc). Although herbal landscape theoretically already consists in the wider definition of the landscape (being a higher level of abstraction), as an interaction between culture and nature, it is important to define one more new perception of the landscape, to capture the phenomena existing among rural Estonians and concretise a model for analysis. We define herbal landscape as a cognitive field associated with plants used to treat or prevent diseases and established within specific cultural and climatic zones either personal or shared within a certain group of people (*sensu lato* Sõukand and Kalle 2010b).

The term ‘cognitive’ refers to the dynamic process of knowing (cf ‘cognitive map’, the term first coined by American psychologist Edward C. Tolman (1948) as representation of the environment that allows the making of decisions about orientation in it). *Field* is more static, representing an area, covered by this specific knowledge. As Farina (2008: 78) says, “signals from the landscape are transformed into signs by cognitive process only when a specific function is active, otherwise such signals are not carriers of meaning”. Thus the prerequisite for entering the herbal landscape is some health condition needing treatment or prevention. It can be either a search for medicine, healthy food or even recreation: everything needed to remain in or retain the status of health provokes the evolution of the herbal landscape in the persons mind. One may argue, that this kind of thinking can be peculiar to Estonians, but most probably it characterizes the existence of a long-term tradition of plant use and the development of a consistent intimate activity context between people and plants. Once created, the herbal landscape remains with the person or community and is constantly being upgraded by the knowledge developed

within (community exchanged, personal experiences) or coming from outside (media, books) (*sensu lato* on different ways of recognition of the plants Sõukand and Kalle 2010a). Herbal landscape also has a seasonal dimension. Recognizable plant features are present only in certain seasons (except for evergreen trees and pot plants grown on the window sill). Working (and usual plant collection) sites are normally visited in the course of seasonal activities.

Taking this into account can help to explain, for example, why original knowledge of plants gleaned by one set of inhabitants may be clearly distinguished from that of close neighbours, or why some of the knowledge, learned through personal experience within the herbal landscape, remains alive even within already urbanized generations.

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Estonian Websites Dedicated to Pets

Liisa Vesik

Estonian websites established by or catering for pet-owners have gone through a lot of changes of the last five years. Some of these changes are in response to new portals or social networks becoming popular, some reflect general changes in attitudes towards internet interaction. Examples include anonymity and censorship – how much is allowed, tolerated or aimed for.

Every virtual community is united by something – this something being a common mentality or value system. In the case of pet-owners, this concerns naturally the way they regard their pets. How a website or community broadcasts its system of values varies, as does the user base – what you are a member of tells also about what you value. Many are affiliated with several online establishments. Sharing experiences does not rule out entertainment, but entertainment often excludes advice, for example. If you want best of both, you join several communities.

The soaring popularity of global social networks like Facebook has also affected the Estonian pet-owners' virtual communities – for some, Facebook can replace all other social networks.

The research has been carried out within the ETF grant 8137 "Cultural processes in the Internet societies. Narratives, values and places."

POSTERS

Important Issues in Modern Folklore and Ethnology: Restructuring of the Ritual Year in the Post-Socialist Countries

Irina Sedakova

My opinion is that the first decade of the 21st century made “the restructuring of the ritual year” one of the most topical subjects in the fields of folklore and ethnology. It is obvious when we compare the Russian official calendars of 2000 and of 2010, or just list the changes in the calendar celebrations of any post-socialist country during the last 20 years. Many governmental decisions were made immediately after the decay of the USSR, in early 90s, when the new days of independence were established and religious celebrations were legalized. Even now, smaller and bigger corrections (like the date of the Day of Independence in Belarus – from 27 to 3 of July), innovations (a new memorial date on the 27 of June – the Day of Reconciliation in Tajikistan), discussions on potential calendrical changes (introduction of the day of the Soviet Occupation in Georgia), etc. demonstrate the hard work of the government on shaping of the ritual year.

In 2007 in Stražnice (Czech Republic) the SIEF (Societe International d’Ethnologie et de Folklore) working group (WG) “The Ritual Year” (President Dr Emily Lyle) held its annual conference under the general title “The Ritual Year and History”. Proceedings of this conference were published in the series of the WG publications (The Ritual Year and History (The Ritual Year 3) / Ed. Irina Sedakova. Stražnice, 2008). The correlation between holidays (be them official – state, church, or non-official) and history was set up as a target research problem, especially for the countries of the former USSR and socialist camp.

Even during the three years after the conference in Stražnice the changes in the ritual year(s) in the Eastern Europe and former socialist Asian countries have proved to be profound and permanent. Processes like gradual rejecting or re-thinking of socialist celebrations, restoring of older, pre-socialist holidays, and inventing of new national ritual complexes are still taking place in many countries along with the system shift of ideological and other values.

The Festival of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in National and Transnational Perspective (Bulgaria, Slavia and United Europe)

Ekaterina Anastasova

Global geopolitical changes in the 1990s created identity crisis due to disappearance old values and the imposition of new ones. The new festival system was intended to express a new ideological perspective (new ideals and values) in the post-socialist space. Cases include:

- a) March 3 – the day Bulgaria was liberated from the Ottoman rule in 1878. This holiday is no longer recognized by the Bulgarians because there was strong anti-Russian rhetoric in the first democratic years and it was an insufficiently positive “event”.
- b) Martenitsa, March 1, the first springday, a traditional Bulgarian feast.
- c) The festival of the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius, creators of the Slavic alphabet in the 9th century, celebrated on May 24.

In Harmony with the New Social Order? Feasts and Beyond Representation: The Case of Hungary

Gábor Barna

In the pluralist society of the 20th century feasts have divided and continue to divide society along the values represented, serving different group interests. Often these values and interests are mutually exclusive. While most of the values expressed in the socialist structure sounded very fine, practice showed something quite different. They proclaimed man to be the most important value, but the entire political system was based on the restriction and neglect of human rights. The practice and the system of feasts expressing the ideology came into conflict. This was why, at the time of the change of political regime in 1989–1990, the complete change of feasts was readily accepted by broad strata of society. Now, 20 years later, the new system is beginning to consolidate. One of its important characteristics is the balance between patriotic and national days, and the clarification of values.

The feasts are celebrated principally within political and school frames. The reason for this is the high degree of individualisation in earlier decades. The rituals of the state and national days are attended by representatives of the local authorities and the political parties and the organs of state power, as well as by schoolchildren we are also under state control. In the smaller settlements the schools provide the programme for the feast days, following the directions of guidebooks. Efforts are made to exclude daily politics from these programmes.

Some of our state and national days (e.g., March 15) do, in fact, bring together the nation as a whole on the basis of a centuries-old consensus. Others have been introduced at the initiative of the forces in power at the time and the general symbols of the feast culture together with the efforts to exclude direct daily politics are shaping them before our eyes. The former socialist days (e.g., April 4) have disappeared, or have lost their labour movement character (e.g., May 1). The new feasts (e.g., October 23) have become dominant. Some of the Christian feasts have remained within denominational frames, but at the same time under the

influence of globalisation they have also become feasts of consumption (Christmas, Easter). Others (e.g., August 20) have become occasions for the symbolical manifestation of traditional peasant culture. They all strengthen new forms and bonds of the community.

Restructuring of the Calendar Festival Cycle in Lithuania in the Second Half of the 20th Century

Arūnas Vaicekauskas

Lithuanian folk calendar cycle and corresponding festivities of the 19th century reflected the ritual needs of village people and featured the communal lifestyle. In the 1920s–1940s, the former agricultural ritual tradition transformed into traditional customs, the role of the Catholic Church liturgy in the calendar cycle in some sense increased. Further processes of the calendar customs' transformation led to gradual extinction of communal forms of calendar feasts. As the result – calendar customs which were of communal nature stopped being performed by all villagers together, and gradually become the traditions of individual peasant families. Despite the functional changes at the very beginning of the 20th century the calendar feasts content changed very little.

After the Soviet occupation the aspiration of authorities to control the tradition demanded the creation of new – “suitable to working class” – feasts – the anniversaries of the October revolution, the day of the Soviet army. At the same time popularity of the 1 May (the day of the solidarity of the all workers) and 8 March (the day of the working women) grew.

Some Ethnographical Aspects in the Study of the Tunguska Phenomenon: Its Reflection in the World View of the Evenks of Siberia

Natalia Dmitrieva, Vitalij Romeiko

On June, 30th, 1908 the planet Earth collided with a space body weighing more than one million tons. The monstrous explosion which occurred over the territory of Central Siberia (coordinates of epicenter of explosion 60°53'10" NW, 101°53'45" EL) and caused huge destructive consequences, received the name of the Tunguska phenomenon. Witnesses of the explosion were aboriginals of the Tunguska taiga – Evenks. We examine Evenki folklore at that time and different scholarly versions of explanations:

- comet theory (30.5%),
- meteorite theory (28.3%)
- nuclear theory (8.5%).

A review of various opinions about the nature of the Tunguska phenomenon, presented below, can be assessed not only by the academic perspective on the events of 1908, but the entire spectrum of human imagination, and sometimes even the sense of humor.

EXHIBITION

“Tsässons and churches of Setomaa in the 17th to 21st century”

Jaanus Plaat, the manager of the research and photography project “The Orthodox Churches and Chapels in Estonia”

The photography exhibition includes 80 photos of all the 23 tsässons and 6 Orthodox churches located within the Estonian territory of Setomaa (Setoland). All photos were taken by architecture photographer Arne Maasik (in 2008-2010) and all texts (in Estonian, Russian and English) are written by Jaanus Plaat, professor of Folk Art and Cultural Anthropology at the Estonian Academy of Arts.

This exhibition is part of the research and photography project “The Orthodox Churches and Chapels in Estonia” conducted by the Chair of Folk Art and Cultural Anthropology at the Estonian Academy of Arts, and supported by the Estonian Science Foundation and Cultural Endowment of Estonia. The project includes several scientific publications and online and photographic exhibitions of Orthodox sacred buildings in Estonia, which are associated with the compilation of the two-volume scientifically commented photo album “The Orthodox Churches and Chapels in Estonia” in Estonian, Russian and English. The exhibitions, exhibition texts as well as the album are based on the photos taken during the fieldwork in 2007–2010, interviews with Orthodox people and other sources. During this project, almost all the currently known Orthodox churches, their ruins, chapels (including the Seto tsässons) and monasteries in Estonia and within the Russian territory of Pechory County as well as all the churches and prayer houses of Old Believers in Estonia were photographically recorded. The project managers and authors of the exhibitions are the architecture photographer Arne Maasik (all photos) and Jaanus Plaat (all texts). The designer of the exhibitions is Martin Siplane, translators are from Avatar Translation Bureau. Jane Kalajärv and Tanel Tsirgu, Master’s students of art and cultural anthropology at the Estonian Academy of Arts, were also involved in the exhibition project.

The photography exhibition “Tsässons and churches of Setomaa in the 17th to 21st century” includes the photos of all the 23 tsässons and 6 Orthodox churches located within the Estonian territory of Setomaa (Setoland) and it will be exhibited in Tartu, Tallinn, Setomaa and other places.

Authors of the exhibition: Arne Maasik, Jaanus Plaata

Designer: Martin Siplane

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