

Humour in the conditions of the war

Online seminar

May 22, 2023, 16:00-18:00

Guillem Castañar (University of Helsinki)*

Anastasiya Fiadotava (Estonian Literary Museum / Jagiellonian University)*

Liisi Laineste (Estonian Literary Museum) *

The power of memes

Memes offer responsive acute commentary on societal matters. They provide non-violent and democratic spaces of discussion for conflicts. The paper studies memes on the war in Ukraine that spread in Eastern (Russia, Estonia, Belarus) and Western Europe (Spain). We analyse who are the main actors/characters that personify the war in the memes in these countries, how these characters are represented in memes, and what are the global and local aspects of their portrayal. We show the connections between the degree of a country's emotional engagement in, and geographical proximity to, the conflict and the humorous memes revolving around this conflict that circulate in the country.

*Bio

Guillem Castañar is currently working as a Visiting Lecturer of Catalan Studies at the University of Helsinki. His main areas of research are ethnic humour and more contemporary forms of digital humour. He will soon join the University of Tartu as a postdoc researcher and will take part in a European research project about humour and the public sphere. He has co-authored articles on Russian-language ethnic jokes, humour in political communication, and the role of memes in the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Liisi Laineste is a senior researcher at the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum. Her main research object is folk humour and its online manifestations. She has published articles and edited books and journal issues on ethnic humour, internet folklore and online communication, many of which represent an interdisciplinary angle and combine folkloristics with linguistics, psychology, sociology or communication studies. She has a standing interest in digital humanities, organising the Estonian yearly DH conferences and promoting digital methods through workshops, lectures and research.

Anastasiya Fiadotava is a senior research Fellow at the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu and an Assistant Professor at the Institute of English Studies of the Jagiellonian University. Her fields of interest include the use of humour in family communication, the spread of jokes and memes in social and mainstream media, and the reflections of current political and social issues in humour.