

Department of Folkloristics at the Estonian Literary Museum
Estonian Academy of Sciences

International Academic Interdisciplinary Conference

FROM LANGUAGE TO MIND 3

On the Occasion of the 70th Birthday
of Academician Arvo Krikmann

10–11 September 2009, Tartu, Estonia

ABSTRACTS

Tartu 2009

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Conference web-site: <http://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/2009/kriq70/>

CONFERENCE VENUE:

Estonian Literary Museum
Vanemuise 42
51003 Tartu
Estonia

SPONSORS:

Conference is supported by the target financed project SF0030181s08
“Narrative aspects of folklore. Power, personality and globalization”



Compiled by Maris Kuperjanov, Piret Voolaid
Edited by Liisa Vesik, Nikolay Kuznetsov

ISBN 978-9949-446-41-4 (publication)
ISBN 978-9949-446-42-1 (electronic publication)

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Эстонцы, латыши, литовцы, русские и “европейцы” в анекдотах Балтии

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В докладе рассматриваются анекдоты об эстонцах, латышах, литовцах, русских и “европейцах”, наиболее известные в странах Балтии в период социализма, постсоциализма и евроинтеграции, как отражение стереотипных представлений об этнических общностях в рамках бывшего СССР и в постсоветском пространстве (после демократических перемен).

Предметом анализа являются основные механизмы конструирования анекдотов, связанные со стереотипами о национальном характере, языковых компетенциях, политической ситуации, с исторической судьбой, прогнозами о будущем и пр. рассматриваемых народов в странах Балтии. Работа демонстрирует как специфическую и динамичную “модель мира”, создаваемую анекдотом, основные этнические и национальные стереотипы, которые он в равной степени отражает и моделирует, так и основные функции анекдота в кризисные социально-политические моменты.

Доклад подготовлен на базе полевых исследований автора в Эстонии, Латвии и Литве в период с 2006–2008 гг. и опубликованных материалов (в литературе, прессе и Интернет-коллекциях).

Identity and Stereotypes: Humour Manifestations

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In the European Union, two approaches to identity are emerging – that of collectivity and of individualism. These can be treated as the positions of nationalism in search of similarities and differences, formulating expressive prerogatives of identity in the modern context and adopting attractive projections. Historically, stereotypes are conditioned by nationalist objectives – to demonstrate one's ethnic distinction and uniqueness, to lay the groundwork for moral and spiritual superiority. The juxtaposition of one's own vs. alien, Lithuanian vs. foreign, we vs. they, promulgated by the traditional community, is losing its oppositional integrity. Challenging negative stereotypes is a strong motive for integrity. The idea of identity as a national ideal requires new, unusual forms of expression.

Traditionally, Lithuanians have been most likely to notice features such as the different religion, customs, social status, language, appearance, temperament and personality of strangers. The image of the stranger in any nation's folklore is negative, and only rarely neutral, due to the otherness. Sometimes the ridiculing of strangers is of a friendly nature, while at other times it comes across as belittling and humiliating. I am going to analyze the image of the neighbouring nations (i.e. Russians, Latvians, Estonians, Poles) in contemporary Lithuanian folklore. Anecdotes, chain letters, comic video materials and other folklore materials circulated online reflect the stereotypes of Lithuanians. I am going to discuss the historical, political, cultural, social and psychological factors which influence the good or bad image of a nation.

Тот, кого нельзя называть: табу и субституты имени Сталина в "текстах власти" и в разговорах "шепотом" (1920–40 годы)

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Доклад посвящен проблеме табуированности имени Сталина. В отличие от имен других вождей, во всех слоях общества в "профанных контекстах" упоминать напрямую имя Сталина было мало принято, таких случаев старались избегать. Первые упоминания об этом явлении появляются довольно рано – в 1929 году – в кругах 1) партийной элиты и 2) партийной оппозиции. Советские люди – как в официальном дискурсе, так и неподцензурном устном – использовали (с разными целями) все мыслимые типы субституции *po men sacrum*, что формировало соответствующую советскую вербальную и фольклорную традицию.

The Use of Phraseologisms in the Estonian Online Media

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My paper will discuss the use of Estonian phraseologisms in online media: online versions of newspapers, news portals and message board comments. Today we are faced with the fact that the use of written language and that of oral speech have largely merged owing to computers and the Internet, and that e-mailing, forums, online networks and communication, etc. have become scenes of active language use. I will try to point out tendencies that are characteristic of figurative use of language in the environment where the key concepts are urgency and wittiness. Clearly, as a fast and convenient medium, the Internet offers the chance to quickly respond to daily news; the ambition to be the first is the reason why journalism has resorted to the use of expressive casual phrases in traditionally formal presentation of the news. The short and witty phrases are most commonly used in headlines, the function of which is to attract attention, especially in the colourful, though mostly yellow, world of online journalism. Quite another matter are the comments; sections in online media and news portals, and also weblogs which also feature an array of interesting expressive phrases.

Next to the creative and playful use of traditional phrases, the Estonian online media includes a number of rough translations of English phrases, used often instead of existing Estonian equivalents. On the basis of examples from online sources I will analyse the most recent developments in Estonian phraseology.

Distribution of Tricksters Across the World

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The folklore Trickster is usually considered a universally known combination of features intrinsic to human nature. However, there are strong anomalies in the area distribution of such a figure. Sub-Saharan Africa, North America (except for the Arctic), Northeast Asia and South American Chaco not only are the preferred zones of tricksters' activity but also share some peculiar trickster motifs unknown in most of the other areas. The range of animals which play the role of tricksters is also restricted and not always easily explained. E.g. Hare and Spider, known in both Africa and North America, are neither "mediators" between life and death (that was suggested by C. Levi-Strauss for Coyote) nor "really tricky" ("materialistic" hypothesis of M. Harris). The set of trickster motifs and the zoo- or anthropomorphic impersonations of the Trickster are independent variables. The same episodes are easily linked to different tricksters while every trickster usually attracts episodes characteristic of a particular region. Though the original emergence of Trickster as a mental construct can indeed be rooted in human psychology (and where else?), the distribution of tricksters in folklore is discretionary and depends of many uncertain, i.e. chance, factors. The wide spread or the lack of tricksters in certain cultural areas hardly reflect any fundamental differences in the psychology of habitants of these regions. The study of trickster motifs, just as of any other folklore motifs, helps us reconstruct possible historic links between populations. The African – North American links remain enigmatic (independent emergence is possible but slight historical links can not be completely excluded) but the parallels between Western Siberian and Northeast Siberian – North American tricksters are almost certainly due to former cultural ties across the Northern Asia. Another interesting case is the proliferation of tricksters with different zoomorphic and other identities (Mink, Bluejay, Raccoon, Ice, South Wind, etc.) inside a small area of North America (Plateau and the adjacent part of the Northwest Coast) between two large zones of Raven and of Coyote. Study of such cases helps us reconstruct cultural processes that little is known about, some of them very ancient.

The Semantics of Proverbs in the Cultural Globalization of the Igbo of South East Nigeria

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The aim of this paper is to explore the proverb as part of the linguistic heritage of the Igbo tribes of Nigeria. The use of proverbs among these people marks oratorical wisdom and is a test of oratory and attainment of maturity. Proverbs are regarded as the “palm oil with which words are eaten”. It carries cultural didactics and exhibits semantics beyond the ordinary.

In traditional folklore, stories, songs, riddles and proverbs are used to convey witty observations and carry on the wisdom, truth and knowledge of the tribe. It is by means of an elevated but witty statement that values are passed from one generation to another. In context, they offer insight to the Igbo world and tribe members are expected to consciously internalize them.

In the current trend of globalization and changing society, proverbs are still considered relevant to the Igbo society. Proverbs have been employed prominently in literature of Igbo origin to mark ethnic identity and the sharing culture embodied in the treasured heritage of the Igbo tribe. Despite their diverse representations and variations, proverbs throw light on the core of intangible heritage of the culture, its logical phraseology and semantics of figurative speech.

The presentation will include quotes from the novel “Things Fall Apart”.

Key words: Proverbs, Igbo, heritage, folklore, culture, globalization and semantics.

The Unique Insights of the Joke-Tellers Under Socialism

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The jokes that were told in the Soviet era tell us a great deal about the socialist social, political and economic order. Much of it has been confirmed since the system's total collapse and the subsequent possibility of free inquiry into its failings. Those who invented and told the jokes knew from the inside what socialism was really like. Western experts failed to predict the socialist system's collapse either because they were unable to or did not want to recognize its inner rottenness. They were too sanguine about the realities of life in and the possibilities of reform of the socialist order. The only scholar who successfully and accurately predicted the downfall of the Soviet Union and the gaining of freedom by its oppressed colonies was the British academic Alexander Shtromas, by origin a Lithuanian, who also saw the truth that was embedded in the jokes. The jokes did not in any sense undermine the system but they revealed its fatal flaws, its lack of legitimacy and the cynicism of its peoples at a time when Western social scientists were far too uncritical and too prone to accept as true the official Soviet data they were given; indeed they were often biased in favour of the untrustworthy official version and unwilling to listen to what the people were saying. The jokes were truly a people's humour that circulated entirely outside the mass media and defied censorship and persecution.

Фразеологические эквиваленты и квази-эквиваленты
(на материале русско-французских сопоставлений)

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Для анализа использованы фразеологические единицы и топики, связанные с темой ротозейства и пустословия, использованные в описании детских забав Гаргантюа и в русском переводе этого текста (Н. Любимова). При наличии общего смысла ‘заниматься пустяками’ и общего образа – *bâiller aux mouches* “зевать на мух” и *ловить мух* (который дополняется во французском тексте идиомой *courir après les papillons* “гоняться за бабочками”, а по-русски может сворачиваться в сложное слово *ротозей*) – присутствуют и специфические различия: французские праздные занятия чаще связываются с букашками, мухами, птицами (*ferrer les cigalles* “подковывать кузнечиков”, *faire perdre les pieds aux mouches* “отрывать мухам лапки”, *connaître mouches en lait* “узнавать мух в молоке”, и даже *si les nues tombent esperer prendre les alouettes* “если опустятся облака, надеяться поймать жаворонков”), русские – чаще с водой (*толочь воду в ступе, переливать из пустого в порожнее, черпать воду решетом*); общий мотив праздношатания, бестолкового блуждания (*patrouiller par tout lieux* “шляться везде” – шлепать по всем лужам) объединяется с мотивом пустословия и словоблудия (*revenons à nos moutons* “вернемся к нашим баранам”, *tourner le truiе au foin ?* “поворачивать свинью к сену”, *sauter du coq à l'âne* “прыгать с петуха на осла”), причем блуждания русского дурака – на просторе (*не в ту степь, заблудиться в трех соснах*), а французского – во дворе, в кругу животных.

Общие сюжеты могут иметь разные оценочные коннотации (фр. подковывать кузнечиков – рус. подковать блоху). Общие идиомы могут иметь неэквивалентные смыслы (*s'asseoir entre deux selles le cul à terre* – *садиться между двух стульев*, *cracher au bassin* – *плевать в колодец*), что создает своеобразную межъязыковую омонимию.

Пословицы и поговорки на медицинские темы
(к проблеме прикладного фольклора)

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В последние годы усилился интерес к прикладному использованию малых жанров фольклора (прежде всего, пословиц, поговорок и анекдотов). Появились статьи по экономической, юридической и медицинской тематике малых жанров, а также тематические сборники. В 2009 г. Ларисой Фиалковой и ее отцом врачом Львом Фиалковым был издан сборник пословиц и поговорок народов мира (есть в нем и небольшое количество эстонских пословиц) на медицинские темы. В отличие от ранних сборников подобного типа, внутри рубрик материал сгруппирован не в алфавитном порядке, а по принципу образной близости (пословицы разных народов, близкие по тематике и образному выражению, расположены рядом). В данном выступлении проводится сравнение разных сборников на медицинские темы. Основные тенденции в отражении медицинских проблем показаны на примере сборника Льва и Ларисы Фиалковых.

From Proverbs and Idioms to Ethnic Stereotypes:
The Bulgarian Case

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Proverbs and idioms are among the most stable expressions of the colloquial perception of the ambient world and people. On the other hand, in Bulgaria they have long been an object of scientific interest and today there are big proverb collections spanning 150 years of usage.

Ethnic stereotypes are usually implied by fixed expressions – and conversely: simplified notions about other nations or cultures generate lots of proverbs or idioms.

In this paper I will try to find the connections between, on the one hand, proverbs and idioms and, on the other – ethnic stereotypes as conduits and borders of the community's identity on some levels: relations between subject-object, good-bad, we-they (us-them); maintenance of old cultural realities as contemporary ethnic stereotypes and the development of proverbs in terms of interethnic communication; the influence of nationalistic and civil policies on the content of the proverbs and idioms.

Finnish Proverbs and Gender in Childhood Memories

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The pedagogical discourse has always been a part of everyday life and proverbs are a part of that. When using a proverb the speaker is supposed to use “the wise words”. This is one of the reasons proverbs have been seen fitting in bringing up children. They have been regarded as a powerful method of bringing up and teaching children, especially when the information was based on unwritten memory. The aim of my research has been to explore the relationship between proverbs and pedagogical occasions in bringing up children. Two collections from the Folklore Archives of Finnish Literature Society in Helsinki are used as research material. The approach is multidisciplinary.

Traditions, different folkloristic genres are mostly bound to some specific group which can be defined by age, gender, locality, etc. Groups have their own way to create and maintain oral tradition and cultural customs. Proverbs are mainly the tradition of adults. Gender has been seen as a subject of proverbial speech and proverbs have widely been seen as a characteristic of patriarchal, masculine speech. In this paper I deal with the gender-connected part of proverb-related memories. What do the life-stories and memories of childhood tell us about proverbs heard in the past? Are proverbs merely a cultural tradition or are they a gender connected part of sociocultural living?

The Joke Cycle *Island of Cannibals* – Theme, Structure, Function

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After a shipwreck people of different nationalities are captured on an unknown island by cannibals – this is the beginning of a popular joke cycle. The survivors are faced with a new challenge – to save their lives they have to accomplish an impossible quest and paradoxically only Our hero is successful, although he is the weakest of all. I will make an attempt to prove that there is a fundamental connection between the shipwreck (as a theme), the gradation (as a structural model of organizing the text) and the overturned image of the traditional descriptions of the rites of passages (as a plot invariant).

Show and Tell: Communicative Function in the Proverbs of Iranian and Georgian Jews

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Study of proverbs of an ethnic group by exploration of narrative and behavioral contexts of proverbs together with poetical analysis of the text has developed into a recognized paremiological research methodology (Hasan-Rokem 1982) and has been implemented in fruitful works on specific communities (Hasan-Rokem 1993). Consequently, digitized proverb archives, containing layers of contextual and textual information, promise to become an important medium for future paremiological research, as they will allow extension of the methodology to new contextual layers, development of interdisciplinary methods and possibility to conduct research based on larger corpora or multiple corpora.

In this work we make the case for this research direction by performing comparative analysis of corpora of proverbs used by the Iranian Jews and the Georgian Jews in Israel. Our study concentrates on the reconstructed behavioral context of the proverbs on the one hand and poetical and syntactical characteristics of the text on the other. We show how the analysis of interaction of these levels helps to differently position each one of the corpora within the dichotomy of prescriptive and descriptive functions of text.

Further we apply Jakobson's model of the communicative functions of language and show how the difference between corpora can be interpreted by individual components of the function, prevailing in each one of the corpora.

The Popular Nobel Prize Award Banquet –
The Distanced Participation of an Interacting TV-Audience

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When chemist, inventor, and businessman Alfred Nobel died in 1896, he left a will establishing the Nobel Prize. The Nobel Prize Award Ceremony and the Nobel Prize Award Banquet developed into a grand and well-known event that in parts was broadcasted over the radio. Then, in the year 1950, it was broadcasted on Swedish television for the first time. Although these broadcasts from the Nobel festivities were part of the first years of testing televised broadcasting in Sweden, the event was among the first to be broadcasted on television, which may have contributed to the special status it came to secure in the public mind. In the decades that followed the television became part of almost each and every household, and the viewing audience could now follow the festivities as they occurred, almost as if they had been invited themselves. A playful attitude towards the event developed, consisting of banter but also of distanced participation in which people dressed up and staged their own Nobel Prize Award “banquets” in front of their television-sets. In later years this phenomenon has developed, simultaneously becoming both more elaborate and more common, and today there are a variety of privately arranged Nobel Prize Award “banquets” to be found throughout Sweden, some even including their own Nobel Prize Award Ceremonies and attending Royalty. In my paper I will present this public parallel to the highly exclusive Nobel Prize Award Banquet, and touch on international counterparts to it and the banter that surrounds it.

Using Proverbs as Argument and Reaction:
The Case of the Comments on the Delfi Internet Portal

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Among the rhetorical devices used in contemporary written communication proverbs can be seen to function effectively. While today a major part of folklore has connotations such as “empty talk”, “fantasy”, proverbs still appear to be a much-used and effective genre. The presentation discusses conversations in readers’ comments in the Delfi Internet portal that use proverbs either as reactions to some topics raised or as arguments to defend the writer’s views. Proverbs are related to a wide range of topics, and can occur both in expressions of dissatisfaction with burning social issues as well as in pieces of advice concerning relationship problems.

There is a noticeable tendency of proverb accumulation: whenever a user offers a proverb, in many cases others will follow suit. In addition, such threads include other developments of folklore topics or discussions of popular uses and traditions. On the other hand, on (less numerous) occasions proverbs have turned out to be irritating factors against which commenting readers will protest. Thus proverbs have a quality that often makes the portal user react to it. The tone of the reactions can be “right! and I still know this” or, in some other cases, the argumentative “today, this is not valid any more”. And certainly there are also attempts at being witty – contemporary rewrites or new interpretations of proverbs.

Belief Tales and Humour

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Humour has a key role in helping the spreading of legends and rumours and establishing the credibility of the stories. Legend presentation is accompanied by laughter and teasing as well as witty descriptions and skeptic comments and so on. Even gestures and facial expressions made during a presentation are humorous. And there are still more ways humour is seen in the storytelling process. It seems as if a legend told for entertainment is not meant to be believed in. Nevertheless, humour is an integral part of the legend process and in many cases helps make it believable. The part humour plays in the spreading process of a belief account is best seen when we analyse taped and transcribed narrations. The paper takes a look at the role humour plays in the dynamics of contemporary legends.

Восприятие пространства в литовских загадках

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В одной трети поэтических образов исследуемых загадок пространственные параметры вообще не существуют. В текстах, имеющих эти параметры, можно выделить статичное и динамичное представление пространства, его восприятие тесно связано с движением. В некоторых текстах пространственные параметры подчеркиваются через разные оппозиции, одна из них – оппозиция вертикального и горизонтального сечений. Вертикальное восприятие пространства загадок чаще всего связано с центром – человеком, находящимся в своем доме, и его взглядом, который редко спускается ниже этого центра, а выше поднимается немного чаще. Горизонтальное пространство простирается дальше, появляются конкретные расстояния (которые иногда выражают определенные промежутки времени), географические названия. Несмотря на первое впечатление фрагментарности мира, создаваемого текстами загадок, пространство в нем часто обобщается, взгляд бывает всезнающим, популярными определениями являются ‘весь’, ‘полон’, ‘круглый’, ‘вокруг’.

Вообще, пространство в загадках часто воспринимается как трехмерное, сферическое, ему свойственна интегральность, причиной которой обычно бывает именно движение персонажей и чередование разных уровней.

Fishes and Laughter in Tongareva

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In 1929, the great researcher of Polynesian cultures Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa) described a comic ritual involving visiting guests. In the ritual guests were identified as fishes. In the paper I will discuss deep semantics of such identification – “fish” is a Polynesian verbal substitution for human sacrifice victim. The comic ritual can be described as a tool for incorporating dangerous guests into the local community.

Комизм в посланиях по электронной почте

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Объект доклада – юмористические послания, распространяемые по электронной почте. Анализируемый материал неоднороден по жанровой природе. Это и подражания сюжетам и формам традиционного фольклора, и разные “приколы”, и послания в форме писем по цепи и их пародии. Весь массив объединяется формой представления – презентацией PowerPoint (файлы в формате PPS и PPT). Эта программа позволяет представить средства выражения, свойственные не только письменному фольклору. Применяются анимация изображений и слайдов, звуковые эффекты, музыкальное оформление.

В большинстве случаев каждый слайд – отдельная фраза или небольшой текст. Прелегентом ставится вопрос о связях отдельных компонентов всего текста, о роли упомянутых медиа в достижении комического эффекта. При сравнении принципов достижения этого эффекта обнаруживается много общих точек как в виртуальном пространстве, так и в устном и письменном дискурсах, а значит и в традиционной и современной фольклорной коммуникации.

“Yurop” According to Estonians: Some Ethnic Stereotypes

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A stereotype embodies an exaggerated or misguided generalisation about some group that is not applicable to every single member of the group. Stereotypes are today seen as necessarily negative, while in fact they can show a group in a better light. Implications of political incorrectness make them a difficult subject of investigation. Nobody is willing to admit to having a negative stereotype about someone while in fact their opinion can be very low, and a positive stereotype is not considered a stereotype.

Still, stereotypes do exist.

Stereotypes in the form of prejudice, belief accounts and bywords can be found in all genres of folklore, but are, as also in social face-to-face situations, often hidden behind humour. There are humorous, self-ironic, satirical, black humour identifications of own and other groups and perceived stereotypes of both.

We are going to have a look at graphic and verbal material on ethnic stereotypes Estonians have of other European nations.

Regilaul through the Looking-Glass:
Remarks on the Figurative Language

Kanni Labi & Mari Sarv

Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia

The use of figurative language in *regilaul* is related to the nature of parallelism used in *regilaul*. Its unique techniques for creating meaning make it possible to use various words in a shifted sense of meaning, figuratively, and in combination without comprehension problems. Juhan Peegel noted the relevance of the relation between the parallelism and figurative language and coined the term of poetic synonyms of *regilaul* – a word or combination of words with figurative meaning, which in the parallelism of *regilaul* is synonymously parallel to a word or combination of words with regular meaning. Peegel's research on this subject resulted in his dictionary of the poetic synonyms of Estonian *regilaul*, and a couple of articles. Today, there is still no overview of the use of various kind of figures in poetic synonyms, of the relation of figurative speech and parallelism types, and of the possible regional peculiarities of poetic synonyms. Relying on Peegel's hints and assumptions, in our paper we try to shed some light on those issues.

Some General Trends in Post-Socialist Humour

Liisi Laineste

Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia

Humour reflects on and helps to outline the specific cultural, political, economic and other social processes, features and functions that are characteristic to the whole period or region, in this presentation limited to the post-socialist framework. My aim here is to pinpoint the common grounds and features as well as uncover the most essential differences, in order to analyse folklore in transition and eventually account for the justification for using the overarching term of post-socialist humour. Some authors have supported the idea that of all the phenomena and traditions in culture, it is precisely jokes and other forms of humour that offer a unique topical prism for a boarder discussion of post-socialist culture (e.g. Mesropova 2008). This implies that there is something specific about humour in the way it informs the researcher about its environment, and it may depict the context that gave rise to it even better than investigations in other areas of culture. Deriving from this, one can assume that the qualities of Soviet humour have rubbed off to the contemporary humour of the post socialist region, and it is not just a random adaptation of the globalising jokelore, translated from the Anglo-American cultural space.

Paremiological Correspondence Never Out of Date

Outi Lauhakangas

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I had the privilege to commune with acad. Arvo Krikmann during our Finnish-Estonian project on common proverb types of Baltic people, “Proverbia Septentrionalia” II, over ten years ago. I became familiar with his profound knowledge of proverbs and his rich and ironic style of using Estonian language or sometimes “sikasuoimi” (pig’s Finnish). I was quite eager to ask by e-mail anything that seemed interesting or funny for hairsplitting and Kriku was patient enough to answer me often thoroughly. I got a new approach to proverb types that differed from my routines to deal with the international type-system of proverbs with acad. Matti Kuusi. Now I had to look at proverbs and the motives to use them from the near distance. We had to ask, could we really understand the situations and archaic mentality connected to some cryptic texts without any further information or supporting evidence given by authentic users. And on the other hand, how exclusive had the use of some proverbs originally been? I shall re-examine and reappraise our intensive paremiological correspondence from a temporal distance after having had some further experience of proverb research.

The Figure of the Child Reading a Riddle about the Devil in
One Lithuanian Belief Legend

Jurgita Macijauskaitė-Bonda

Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

The presentation is dedicated to one Lithuanian belief legend where a newborn or a small child recites a riddle about the devil. The aim of the present study is to analyze how a young child would be able to recite riddles about a mythological being. What is the source of such knowledge? I am going to argue that the mythological legend reflects ancient perspectives on early childhood. In ancient beliefs, children were considered to have come from the mythical “other” world. I will demonstrate that even after birth, children were thought to retain a strong relationship with the other world and the experiences they had there.

Ethnic Humour: What Do Portuguese People Laugh at?

Pedro Martins

University of Siena, Siena, Italy

The concept of ethnic humour may be defined as a type of humour in which fun is made of different traits (especially personality, behaviour and customs) of a group and/or of its members thanks to their social, political, cultural and economic background.

In Portuguese society we can find innumerable jokes, riddles and puns on several nations and countries with which Portugal by virtue of its history has had some kind of connection. We may thus individuate Portuguese mock targets in over five continents: in Europe the Englishmen, Germans and Spanish people, in Asia the Russians, Japanese and Chinese, in Oceania the Australians, in Africa the Angolans and Mozambicans and in America the Americans and Brazilians.

From the anthropological perspective it is particularly interesting to try to identify the reasons hidden behind each and every nation selected. By recalling the three major humour theories we are naturally sure those jokes, riddles and puns were specially generated either to release tension before a tragic situation, or to reveal the incongruity of certain behaviours, or to show Portuguese superiority.

The aim of my presentation is not only to introduce and share Portuguese humour but also to analyse which may be the particular causes for its original creation and today's evocation.

Minor Genres on Blindness and Blind People

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The report considers some minor genres on blindness and blind people presenting different stereotypes, social arrangements for blindness, and mutual images and relationships between the blind and the seeing. The work is grounded on personal field explorations in Bulgaria, archives, and published sources. A model is proposed for systematization and classification of these verbal forms.

Концептуализация понятия *сутки* в эстонском языке

Asta Õim (Аста Ыйм)

Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia

Время, то есть его восприятие и исчисление, связаны со многими сферами конкретной культуры и развиваются вместе с ней. Наряду с годом, месяцем и неделей сутки являются отдельной единицей времяисчисления. В разных языках, а также в разных подсистемах внутри одного языка, границы между сутками проводятся по-разному. Момент, который считается началом новых суток, также может быть различным.

В докладе рассматривается эстонское народное времяисчисление суток на фоне экономической и духовной истории эстонцев. Особое внимание уделяется принципам деления суток на периоды.

В основе членения суток на периоды в эстонском языке лежит представление, согласно которому эстонцы обращаются со временем весьма бережливо. В эстонском языке имеется большое количество слов для обозначения как первой, так и второй половины дня. Это не случайно. Полдень имеет большое значение, поскольку структурирует важнейшую часть суток – светлое время, которое предназначено для работы (преимущественно для сельскохозяйственных работ).

В представлении эстонцев, например, *hommik* ‘утро’ концептуализируется как часть суток, которая охватывает период с восхода солнца до полудня (обеда). При этом *hommik*, в свою очередь, делится на части весьма детально. Поэтому, определив точное время, человек знает, как ему надлежит себя вести и что ему следует делать. Иными словами, в эстонской языковой картине мира характер деятельности, которой надлежит заниматься, детерминируется временем суток: *keskhommik* (букв. ‘среднее утро’) обозначает одновременно как соответствующий момент времени (для эстонца середина утра наступает около 9 часов), так и (второе) принятие пищи в это время.

The Social Function of Verbal Arts in
the Yoruba Indigenous Healthcare Practices

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The paper focuses on the Yorùbá verbal arts used in the indigenous healthcare system. By verbal arts, we mean the various literary genres used in reflecting and expressing the beliefs, religion, worldview and values of the society. Specifically, the verbal arts under study are the genres used among the Yorùbá people to manage their physical, mental and social well-being in the pre and post colonial era. Before we go further, it is also important to give a brief definition of the term ‘function’. The word ‘function’ conveys to our mind a ‘special activity or purpose of a person or a phenomenon’. Macdonald (1980: 526) refers to ‘function’ as the doing of a thing, activity appropriate to any person or thing, duty peculiar to any office. In this study, we regard function as a service rendered by a certain thing. Therefore, we shall attempt to discuss the functions of the verbal arts used in the Yorùbá indigenous healthcare delivery system. The Yorùbá verbal arts used in indigenous healthcare practices, as we observe, have various functions among the users. These functions are discussed at three different levels – communicative, aesthetic and ritual functions. By their nature, some of these functions of the said verbal arts are therapeutic, because of their psychological relevance. Therefore, their efficacious nature is discussed in this paper, so as to exhibit the power of the verbal arts among the Yorùbá.

What Makes Deaf People Laugh? Categories in Deaf Humor

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Deaf people have an added sense – sense of humor.
(Martina J. Bienvenu, Professor of Gallaudet University)

Humor is an important part of deaf culture. It reflects their cultural values, norms and beliefs.

Studies about deaf humor are founded on American deaf culture. Deaf professor Martina J. Bienvenu of Gallaudet University (a university for deaf and hard of hearing people in the USA) has determined four aspects on which deaf humor is based: 1) the visual nature of humor; 2) humor based on deafness as an inability to hear; 3) humor from a linguistic perspective; 4) humor as a response to oppression.

American researcher Karen Baldwin has written about characters in deaf narratives. She describes the different images of the deaf: people (woman, man); plants (tree), animals (frog, bird, lion, etc.).

Guy Bouchauveau, a deaf comedian from France, said that deaf humor is always inspired by an image. He defined three different forms of humor in sign language, based on the visual logic:

- ❖ Punch line inspired laughter (story)
- ❖ Imitation of animals or people (imagination)
- ❖ Creation of absurd images (cartoon)

Humor is a natural part of deaf people's everyday life. The primarily visual perception and interpretation of the world causes the strong visuality of their humor. Deaf humor, expressing both positive and negative experiences of being a deaf in the hearing world has several categories. An important way to access and understand deaf humor is to catch an *image*.

Some Notes on Hungarian Proverbs

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A proverb dating back to the 15th century: “Peel the lime tree until it peels.” Sporadic appearances of proverbs in the 16th century in letters, poems (e.g. of Tinódi and Balassa), dramatic plays, (Tragedy in Hungarian from the Electra of Sophocles, 1558 by Péter Bornemissza). The One Hundred Fables of Heltai (1566). Books of sermons (by Bornemissza and others). The first Greek-Latin-Hungarian collection published in 1598 by János Baranyai Decsi (c 1560–1801) including more than one thousand proverbs and proverbial phrases, based on a Latin-Greek collection of Erasmus, Gilbertus Cognatus, Hadrianus Iunius and others. The correspondence of the Greek-Latin sources and their Hungarian equivalents.

The role of the Hungarian-Latin dictionaries of Albert Szenczi Molnár (1574–1634) – and of their revised editions (1604–1801) – in transmitting a selection of “used proverbs” from the Decsi collection. Actio Curiosa – a 17th century manuscript dramatic play. The 16th century books of sermons by Cardinal Peter Pázmány. The Kisviczay collection of Latin-Hungarian proverbs from 1713. and Paul Kovács’s collection from 1794.

Bible translations and Biblical proverbs in Hungarian, early and late appearances.

Close equivalents of Latin, German, Slavonic, Turkish and English proverbs and new proverbs in Hungarian. The 1000 Hungarian proverbs with translations and equivalents in English, Estonian, Finnish and German. A coincidence: the same proverb in Hungarian and Japanese: The pepper is small but hot (literally: strong).

From Compounds to Proverbs: South-Estonian *iks*-Constructions

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The paper focuses on the use of the affirmative particle *iks* ~ *õks* ‘again, still, absolutely’ in South-Estonian dialects (the Standard Estonian equivalent of the particle is *ikka*). The particle occurs in several types of South-Estonian proverbs, e.g. *illos iks ikunõ mõrsja* lit. ‘beautiful is the weeping bride’, *maias iks mao palutas* ‘sweet tooth is burning his stomach’, and it is the most frequent expletive in the compounds of South-Estonian folk songs, e.g. *imäkene* ‘motherDIMIN’ > *imä-iks-kene* ‘mother-oh-dear’, *risti-rästi* ‘crisscross’ > *risti-õks-rästi* ‘still crisscross’. This particle is typical also in expressive declaratives, such as *baaba õks baaba* ‘a woman is always a woman’. The study concentrates on the phonological and semantic characterization of *iks*-constructions of various types.

Visual Jokes about Christmas and Santa Claus on the Internet – Why and Why Not?

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A few years ago preparing for a “somewhat different” lecture on Christmas, I created a PowerPoint presentation featuring images, video clips and other visual material that had gathered in my computer. Just like my audience, I was astonished at finding in this material so many negative, “dark”, ironic and mocking jokes on the “most celebrated festivity” of the year and its symbols. I have supplemented this collection later on, trying to understand and analyse it.

What are we laughing at, when we encounter and forward these jokes? I find five different “levels”, that may be “mixed” in different ways: 1. just jokes, no deeper context; 2. carnival traditions; 3. the strive of merchants to create a positive and “light” mood, in order to promote shopping; 4. ironic distancing from the direction the festival has taken in the modern world; 5. protective reaction towards the over-commercialisation and desacralisation of the festivity, in order to relieve the stress created by these processes. During lectures and presentations on the topic I have also observed the audience, thus arriving at some assumptions about reactions towards these international jokes by different national, social and age groups.

Пословицы и поговорки: критерии разграничения понятий в рамках лексикографического описания

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В докладе идет речь о критериях, которые предлагается положить в основу разграничения двух основных видов паремий, а именно, пословиц и поговорок.

Актуальность данной работы заключается в необходимости однозначного определения терминов «пословица» и «поговорка». Подобная необходимость вызвана многообразием и взаимной противоречивостью существующих на данный момент определений этих понятий. В науке наблюдается неразличение понятий пословицы и поговорки не только на уровне лексикографического описания, но иногда даже как объектов изучения. В работе перечисляются наиболее распространенные в современном языкознании критерии различения пословицы и поговорки, а также присущие этим критериям недостатки.

Акцент в докладе делается на попытке дать четкое и исчерпывающее определение понятию «поговорка», а также на отграничении поговорки от пословицы, с одной стороны, и поговорки от фразеологизма, с другой. Современные исследования в области паремиологии часто основываются на определении поговорки, приводимом еще в научной литературе XIX века. При этом не берется в расчет тот факт, что в XIX веке понятия «фразеологизм» в русском языкознании не существовало, и все языковые единицы, причисляемые ныне к фразеологизмам, ранее относились к поговоркам. Получается, что в современном понимании множество поговорок и фразеологизмов пересекаются: одна и та же языковая единица может быть названа в контексте фразеологии фразеологизмом, а в контексте паремиологии – поговоркой. Таким образом, термин «поговорка» требует переопределения в рамках современной паремиологии.

В докладе предлагаются принципиально новые критерии разграничения понятий пословицы и поговорки, основанные на семантико-функциональных характеристиках этих двух видов паремий. Поговорка выделяется как отдельный самостоятельный фольклорный жанр со своими структурными особенностями.

Estonian Sound Recordings in Berlin.
Some Remarks about the Informants and Collected Materials

Jaan Ross

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This paper will focus on sound recordings of the Estonian spoken language and folk songs made during the First World War from interned soldiers in prisoner of war camps of the German Empire. Between 1915 and 1918, 250 languages and dialects were recorded onto 1650 shellac records and 1022 wax-cylinders. In 1918, the collection was divided according to the recording medium. As a result of this division, the recordings on wax-cylinders are currently held in the Phonogrammarchiv, which is a part of the Ethnographical Museum in Dahlem, and the shellac-recordings are held in the Lautarchiv at the Musicological Seminar of the Humboldt University. Remarkable is the valuable written documentation of the disks held at the Lautarchiv. The total number of the Estonian sound recordings available in the Phonogrammarchiv and in the Lautarchiv at present time is equal to approximately 40. The total number of informants is equal to 15. The material recorded from the

Estonian informants includes:

- (1) excerpts from the Bible (Exodus and Gospel of Luke);
- (2) excerpts from literary works by Estonian authors;
- (3) fairy tales and jokes;
- (4) popular and folk songs both as sung and as recited without melody;
- (5) the so-called minimal word pairs or triplets focusing on quantity (of both vowels and consonants) and on palatalization;
- (6) successions of numerals between 1 and 20 as well as (decimals only) between 30 and 100.

From Paremiography to Paremiology:
The Role of AIP-IAP as a Cultural Change Facilitator

Rui Soares

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The wisdom of proverbs is an established fact well documented in the thousands of works by paremiographers collecting, writing down and classifying proverbs. For centuries, these popular sayings were and continue to be popular in many cultures and languages as a way of maintaining and passing on traditional values and thoughts from one generation to the next.

The increasing number of publications globally and the higher degree of connectivity between people internationally have facilitated the migration of proverbs around the world and made it possible to study these expressions on a comparative basis. The need for a common pattern leads paremiologists to address questions such as definition, content, structure, function, meaning, style, and value of proverbial expressions.

The Associação Internacional de Paremiologia – International Association of Paremiology (AIP-IAP) arises from the need for a facilitator to the exchange and diffusion of paremiological studies and related areas through the establishment of international network-based information systems. The AIP-IAP encourages international cooperation between academicians and motivates young researchers to conduct paremiological studies in order to protect and preserve the cultural heritage transmitted by our elders: AIP-IAP member No 0024, Arvo Krikmann is a fine example of such a person.

Dumb Blondes and Democracy

Stanoy Stanoev

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No joke personage is invented purely by chance, but rather marks substantially important aspects of contemporary human identity. Thus, the appearance and dissemination of a joke personage is connected with the interpretation and acceptance of real social processes.

Early in the democratic transition of Bulgaria everyday narration was invaded by jokes about dumb blondes. The features of these jokes personages were and continue to be the ones well known in the international joke repertoire. Respectively, blondes are always ignorant and narrow-minded, thus not being able to grasp the diversity and the multidimensionality of meanings. Some of these jokes also have an explicit sexist point of view, treating blondes as merely sexual objects or as appreciating the world merely through the symbolism of the sexual intercourse.

With the misogynic predispositions in mind, the blonde jokes are to be considered part of a long and rich narrative tradition. Nevertheless, these attitudes have never before been declared so openly and radically. As far as the post-socialist transition is commonly accepted to be a specific transition to modernity, the appearance and the wide dissemination of blonde jokes might be explained as a reaction to the new democratic values and norms. A considerable portion of them concerns equality of the sexes in all spheres of social life, which in modern times are still subordinate to the male point of view.

The Humour Theories and the Archetype of the Trickster in Folklore – An Analytical Psychology Point of View

Ana Stefanova

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The humour theories describe humour as a phenomenon, obtained both on a personal and a community level, and thus elusive and difficult to explain. The analytical psychology of C. G. Jung may help explain why the search of the “Holy Grail of Humour” is like trying to catch a shadow. The archetype of the Trickster in folklore may help us describe some common and different parts of the universal phenomenon of humour and its specific ethno-psychological traits. The paper presents an overview of essential humour theories, and making use of analytical psychology comments on the archetype of the Trickster in Bulgarian, Russian, Native American tribes’ folklore and Edda (Snorri Sturluson). I will attempt to explain how the traits of this “hero” could give us a list of which are sufficient components for something to be humorous for different peoples and which are the common traits that can be described as universal.

This overview could help trace the phenomenon of humour from the universal (most common) through the community (the group) to the individual level, trying to determine how important is the personal view in the search for the general characteristics.

On Some Functions of Political Jokes during the Soviet Period

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In the Soviet Union, people would joke endlessly, and jokes became some sort of a cult. There are different scholarly explanations for this, but everyone admits that jokes had a unique place in the Soviet culture, because they fulfilled various, reciprocal functions.

The aim of this paper is to study the application of jokes in Soviet times, analyzing (in context) a joke collection of 2006 entries, compiled by Professor of Archaeology J. T. Urtans in the 1960s and 1970s, and using the theoretical framework of A. Dundes, C. Davies, K. Roth, and others. The analysis led us to the conclusion that jokes were very significant in the process of self identification, which was closely related to identification of groups membership and apparently helped resist the forced Russification integration. Joke-telling was also a form of informal resistance to the totalitarian state and symbolic compensation for the lack of political power, as well as simple entertainment and an opportunity for psychological relief through laughter. It also widened the range of ways to assume control of the difficulties of everyday life. In fact, it was an attempt to deal with the situation people found themselves in, because on the one side there was the Soviet state with its arranged and fake reality promised by the media, but on the other – the actual “reality” of everyday socialism.

Taarapita and Sky Father

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The paper is devoted to the Estonian sky god Taarapita mentioned by Henry of Livonia in his chronicle. The possible meanings of this name are discussed. As a new idea the name Taarapita is analysed as Taara+father.

Sacred Language –
A Method of Creating a New Spiritual Consciousness

Svetoslava Petrova Toncheva

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Master Petur Dunov is a founder of the biggest and the most significant spiritual-religious group in Bulgaria in the modern times. His texts are considered to be sacred by his followers not only because they have been delivered directly from the divine world, but also because the Bulgarian language is the most appropriate one for transmission of the divine wisdom. Petar Dunov tries to fill the language with spiritual meaning, claiming that language is one of the most important methods for the transformation of the human consciousness. Moreover, he uses the so called “Vatanski” language which he represents as the most ancient and sacred language on the earth.

He offers analysis of the words, letters and sounds from a “spiritual” point of view. For example, the Bulgarian и (i) means “communication with God”, т(t) – a “victory over the contradictions in life”. “Each word has a deep inner meaning which shows that the creation of the letters and the words is not an arbitrary but a reasonable, intentional process.”

Letters are symbols of fine ideas. By writing and using those correctly people are able to work on their self-development towards the goal of creating a “new person” – a person of the “sixth human race”.

Our Beer is Better than Theirs:
Subcultural Comics as a Joking Relationship with Identity

Aimar Venttsel

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Many music-related subcultures have their own printed media known as fanzines. These journals often include comics, drawn by amateur artists who belong to the same subculture. In my talk I will focus on the comics in German reggae and punk fanzines. I am going to demonstrate that besides entertainment and fun, these comics also entail a wide range of political, social and cultural messages as well as attempts to define the subculture's identity. Punk-comics often discuss political issues, criticize certain features of punk culture (like local patriotism), but also raise issues like commercialization. Reggae-fanzines focus very often on stressing certain cultural traits like the use of colloquial language, behavior patterns and dress code which are considered essential to being part of that subculture. Considering the joking, the paper reveals that similarly to South African tribes, the humor of punk and reggae-fanzines hides very serious social, political and cultural issues.

Humorous Interpretations of Abbreviations as a Socio-Cultural Phenomenon

Piret Voolaid

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I am going to elaborate on the nature of abbreviation jokes, their possible formulation formulae, relations to humour and slang and the way their interpretation depends on the sociocultural context. My source is the abbreviation corpus (*ca* 3000 texts of about 330 types) in the folklore archives of the Estonian Literary Museum. Since 2004, the same is accessible online in the database “Estonian Abbreviation Riddles” – “Eesti lühendmõistatused” (<http://www.folklore.ee/Lyhendid>). This corpus incorporates full length texts and metadata, and provides a fine overview of the folkloric alternative interpretations of abbreviations and acronyms at different times and allows us to diachronically observe and describe the semantic changes of the genre in a socio-cultural context.

The majority of the texts in the abbreviation riddle corpus (and database) reflect the uppercase abbreviation interpretations of the Soviet era and the political folk humour of witty parodies. Just as language and folklore are strongly related to socio-cultural processes, so is the development of abbreviation riddles influenced by trends in culture and society. Abbreviation parodies used to be a strong orally spreading tradition, one part of which – political soviet abbreviation repertoire – has disappeared due to social processes, but its place has been taken by a new tradition, influenced primarily by technological development and the Anglo-American cultural space.

There are four common ways of making up abbreviation parodies bordering on the line between folklore and language: 1) a well-known uppercase acronym is given alternate interpretation, 2) an original abbreviation or acronym with folkloric interpretation emerges, 3) an existing word or phrase is attributed the status of abbreviation by later interpretation, 4) blends, i.e. syllabic abbreviations made up of first syllables and/or single letters of a phrase. Abbreviation heritage from the Soviet era followed primarily first creation principle, the second and third being little used. Contemporary abbreviation material is representative mostly of the fourth type and is more in the role of a communicative special language.

From the folkloristic point of view, abbreviation jokes are considered a subgenre of riddles: the question is the abbreviation that in the answer receives a cardinally different, witty and funny, often politically or sexually loaded explanation. A single abbreviation may have several interpretations – both the commonly known as well as the folkloric, joking one. Linguistically, (witty) (mis)interpretation of abbreviations can be considered one the important sources of the slang of group languages (e.g. closed subcultures, professional jargon) or a secret language.

Old Proverbs Die Hard – Their Use in Chick Lit

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Chick lit – contemporary, humorous, romantic novels aimed at young women, may seem an unlikely vehicle for the transmission of proverbs but one hugely successful author at least, the Irish writer Marian Keyes, used them frequently in her first best seller “Watermelon”, published in 1995.

I will examine her choice and use of proverbs, which consist of conventional proverbs and also her antiproverbs. If possible, I hope to see how these have carried into the Estonian or Russian translation of her novel.

I also plan to see if Keyes has continued to use proverbs in her writing by looking at her latest book – “This Charming Man”, published this year, and to consider the impact that proverbs in international best sellers have on their currency and geographical spread.

Our Proliferation on the Planet: Émigré Humor on the Ru.net

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Drawing on the material of humor portals, immigrant community sites, live journals and discussion forums of the Ru.net, this paper analyzes how mass emigration of the first post-Soviet decades is reflected in the jokelore. The advent of the Ru.net and increased mobility of the population made Russian humor transnational in terms of production and dissemination. Although *anekdot* has retained its role as the most popular type of verbal jokelore, amusing personal experience stories (*baiki*) are competing with it on the internet. Observational in nature, they enable the teller to capture unusual, bizarre and absurd situations and phenomena. Immersion into a new culture and language makes this type of humorous texts suitable for rendering migrants' experiences. Humor of post-Soviet émigrés is grounded in the Soviet culture and has inherited imperial attitudes to the *other*. Positioning themselves as colonizers of the host societies, émigrés display an ambivalent, often ironic vision of the self.

Keywords: diasporic culture, emigration, internet humor, post-Soviet folklore, transnationalism