Through the Ages
II

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Time, Space, and Eternity

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Calendar Feasts: Politics of Adoption and Reinstatement

Abstract: Calendar feast system, the changes within the system and factors responsible for them present an important research topic in the study of the contemporary societies in the Soviet-influenced area. This paper elaborates on the trends of invention and reinvention of feasts in the first Republic of Estonia (1918–1940), after World War II (in the Soviet Socialist Estonian Republic) and since the re-establishment of the independent Republic of Estonia (1991). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries the structure of feasts in Estonia underwent profound changes due to modernisation and urbanisation. The article describes some important feasts (disguise traditions, student feasts, Christmas, etc.), and invented holidays like Mother's Day. In the 1920s, a system of state, national and public holidays was created; after 1946, national feasts established during the time of independence were banned, Christian feasts were excluded from public holidays, and invented feasts were inserted from the common communist calendar (Women's Day, Red Army Day). In the 1960s, fairs, international days dedicated to certain professions (fishermen, miners, etc) and public festive days emerged. The 1990s saw media-propagated newcomers (St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Halloween), a reinvention of Walpurgis Night (*volbripäev*), and Mother's Day. The present study of the calendar feast system reveals that 1) the celebration of feasts follows a nonlinear model of behaviour (as seen in continuing celebration of unofficial feasts among one's family), 2) the contemporary system of feasts is highly institutionalised; the celebration of official feasts is canonised, and 3) the importance of church feasts has constantly decreased under the influence of the secularised society.

Continuously introducing new holidays which aimed at constructing identity and fostering humane values was characteristic of the 20th century. Significantly, people yearned to take part in entertaining holidays and festivities. The demand brought

about village days and local gatherings, including fairs, festivals, celebrations of new holidays, and other events.

Keywords: Estonian calendar feasts, ritual year, Christmas, Mother's Day

Introduction

The system of calendar feasts is a construction created by the authorities rather than originating from among the people. It has an important role in defining the values of the members of a certain society. It is also a tool for creating national identity and the basic rationale for celebration and feasts.

Feasts are undoubtedly a state's means of manifestation – as important as the flag, anthem and other official attributes. An American researcher of time and calendar, Eviatar Zerubavel (2003), has described the practice of establishing political power through the system of feasts. Also Gabor Barna, the Hungarian scholar studying the ethnology of religion, formulated the role of state power in his research:

> *The state organisation is an institution not only for administration but also for the exercise of power. The feast culture of a state power reflects the goals projected before the community. The political culture of the given regime can also be observed in the feasts.* (Barna 2011).

Estonia is a perfect example of a European state where holiday celebrations in the 20th and 21st centuries have been influenced by four different political regimes (Russian Empire, the first Republic of Estonia, Soviet Socialist Republic of Estonia, and finally the newly independent Republic of Estonia). It is noteworthy that a significant portion of changes in the 21st century have been brought about, in addition to global influences, by directives and initiatives of the European Union.

As one cannot ignore the political influences in addition to the cultural, social and economical factors when observing changes in the calendar system, the article discusses feasts that display different degrees of institutional involvement, politics of adoption, invention (cf. Hobsbawm 1983; Halbwachs 1992), and reinstatement/reinvention process. Besides, the models of

Mother's Day festive meeting at Kehtna Basic School. Private collection.

behaviour relating to holidays that have either lost their status or become banned will be under discussion.

As background information, it is important to know that the Estonian territory was very monoethnic until 1946.[1] Estonian calendar customs are characterised also by their division into mainstream Lutheran and Orthodox background systems in the mid-19th century. Orthodox calendar customs arose mainly following a trend of religious conversion that took place at around the same time. Regardless of the fact that Orthodox churches had by that time been built almost everywhere in Estonia, the Orthodox Church and its calendar feast system mostly dominated on the western islands; it was also observed in the eastern part of Estonia where there was a mixed population of both Estonians and Russians. As before World War II, Russians formed only 8% of all the inhabitants in Estonia, it was natural that churches were established primarily for Estonians and services were held in Estonian, although in the south-eastern part of the country services were conducted in both languages, switching from one language to another during the ceremony.

Estonia, which was different from the nearby eastern areas by its confession, language, as well as the fact that the region

for a long time held a special cultural-economic status because of the local Baltic German population, started developing its national holiday system in 1918. During the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century, the structure of feasts in Estonia changed mainly because of the influences of modernisation and urbanisation (for same tendencies, see Etzoni 2004: 5; Aveni 2004). Major changes were introduced in the structure of the state and its national feasts after the independence in 1918. At the same time, the importance of church feasts constantly decreased in the increasingly secularised society. The changes in economics minimised the need for agrarian rituals and festivities. In the early 20th century, some new feasts were invented (e.g. Mother's Day and Labour Day, see also below in the section on holidays during the first Republic of Estonia).

After Estonia became independent in 1918, the Lutheran Church remained the state church. The Estonian Orthodox Church became divided into two branches in 1924 on the basis of whether it obeyed Constantinople or Moscow. The western islands, with mainly Orthodox religion, were well integrated with the rest of the country also in terms of holidays, which was hardly the case with south-eastern Estonians, who observed a completely different calendar system.[2] In general, the first Republic of Estonia separated the state and the church, and religious education was voluntary at schools. A significant feature was that the Orthodox minority (the subordinate group) got more folkloristic attention than the dominant Lutheran group.

As the hypotheses for this study, I propose that:

1) Two independent dynamic models of collective behaviour operate in the cultural space: the linear model supported by the state, which helps to create and inscribe new festivities (also state feasts), behavioural manners and identities into the society, and the heterogeneous nonlinear model, which continues, at the level of family and social networks, to observe earlier traditions and to preserve values. Similar tendencies are certainly valid for ethnic groups that have survived a crisis, undergone the decline of an empire, as well as gained or lost their statehood. Specific personal behavioural strategies vary and, at least in the case of festivities and celebrations, there is a fusion of both these behavioural models and choices;

2) People, living their everyday life, have played their part in preserving, continuing, inventing/reinventing, and interpreting the traditions. I propose that this is highly dependent of political processes. Besides, also intellectual resources are involved in the creation and staging of calendar feasts.

My aim is to outline some processes characteristic of Estonian ritual year, and to examine what happens to calendar practices when new and alien cultural practices interact with the local ones. First, I will describe the calendar system and its most popular features at the beginning of the 20th century, i.e. during the first Republic of Estonia. Secondly, I will address the various celebrations in the calendar system after World War II (the period under the Soviet rule), and thirdly, I will provide the general description of the tendencies connected with ritual year during the re-established Estonian Republic.

Estonian Calendar System at the Beginning of the 20th Century

Before gaining the independence in 1918, the main holidays for Estonians were fairs, church holidays, and the celebrations of the birthdays of Tsar's family. Estonia started to re-develop its state and national holiday system after gaining independence in 1918. Eric Hobsbawm (1983) distinguishes between three types of invented traditions, each of which have a distinctive function: a) those establishing or symbolising social cohesion and collective identities, b) those establishing or legitimatising institutions and social hierarchies, and c) those socialising people into particular social contexts. The first type has been most commonly referred to and often taken to imply the two other functions as well (Hobsbawm 1983: 9).

The most important national holidays during the first republic were February 2nd (anniversary of signing Tartu Peace Treaty), and February 24th (publication of the document titled the Manifesto to All Peoples of Estonia, which declared Estonia an independent democratic republic). As of 1934, the unofficially celebrated Victory Day (June 23) was added to the list of national holidays to celebrate the victory over the Baltic Landeswehr.

On this day, a military parade was held and war casualties were commemorated all over Estonia at the monuments erected in the honour of the War of Independence.

Different regions displayed special local features of celebrating calendar feasts. This formed a basis for the local identity. The islands and southern Estonia differed from the other parts of the country as to their wide variety of traditions. The islands alongside with western Estonia displayed cultural similarity to Scandinavia, having been influenced by historical contacts; southern Estonia had similar features to the Baltic Latvian culture, the north-eastern and south-eastern parts of Estonia were influenced by the Fenno-Baltic and partially also Slavic culture. The calendar traditions of this period had many special local features like specific food, clothing, and different celebration customs.

Important church, domestic and popular feasts at that time were Christmas, Shrovetide, Easter, Whitsun and St. John's Day (*jaanipäev*). Christmas was associated with the oldest pagan traditions due to its Estonian name '*jõulud*' (*Yule* was a Low German / Scandinavian name for the celebrations of the holidays of the season in general), a proposition which was put forward during the national movement in the 19th century. This trend was supported by folklorists (e.g. by M. J. Eisen, who collected and published bulky volumes of folklore) and it continued throughout the 20th century), despite the fact that the political power did not approve of it. The new name for the period around New Year's Eve, accepted by the Soviet power, was '*näärid*' – also an old name borrowed from the Low German language, designating New Year.[3]

It was noteworthy how disguising traditions (primarily St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day) were adapted into the modern urban settlements and communities of that time. This meant that the structure of traditions and the masks themselves had to be adjusted, songs modernised, whereas the clothing style did not change much. People who disguised themselves were given money and urban presents (e.g. sweets).

The most popular holidays associated with the tradition of wearing masks and mumming occurred in the period between November and Easter. Throughout Estonia (except for the Orthodox south-eastern Estonia), the most important disguising

On Estonian Independence Day (February 24) a military parade is held in the capital. This is a tradition originating in the pre-war Republic of Estonia. View of the parade dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia in 1938. Private collection.

and mumming holidays with rich customs and regional idiosyncrasies were the eves of St. Martin's Day (November 10) and St. Catherine's Day (November 23) (cf. Kõiva 2014). Already centuries ago, this was particularly diverse in western Estonia and on the islands, and shared similarities with the corresponding customs in Scandinavia (Christmas and New Year's goats, whips, etc.; see Eike 2007) or other wide-spread customs (Three Kings; cf. Simpson & Roud 2000).

The traditions of celebrating St. Lucia's Day were somewhat popular in the area settled by the Estonian Swedes in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Within the last 15 years the custom has spread in Tallinn and in the revitalised area inhabited by Estonian Swedes, but in both places it is supported by some institutions and it is not sporadic.

On St. Thomas's Day (December 21), according to old traditions of the western mainland and the islands, Thomas's moved in the neighbourhood – young men wearing white clothes who

were looking for beer which was being brewed around this period. Another tradition, even more popular, involved making the so-called Black Thomas or Grime Thomas (a straw or rag doll), which was then taken out and secretly placed behind the neighbour's door or taken out of the village (Tedre 2007). This was initially, in the ancient layer of traditions, meant to symbolise dirtiness and laziness, and taking Grime Thomas figure to other households was a way to fight against these vices. Besides, this was the day when usually the stove stones in the sauna were washed clean of the soot that had accumulated over the year, and this was then suitably used for staining the figure. The custom of making a figure of Grime Thomas out of old rags is sporadically alive even today, but now it is considered just a joke and the ancient magical meaning had disappeared already by the first decades of the 20th century.

Wearing masks at Christmas strictly remained the privilege of adult men. Groups of men, all of them disguised, went from household to household as the Bucks. Sometimes the Bears had Tamer(s) or the Crane joined them. During the New Year's Eve, the Bucks and the Bears moved around once again. A specific feature of the animal disguise was that their visit included many verbal elements, although from time to time a musician accompanied them and played dance music. The masked men gave a dance performance to the household (sometimes also inviting the people to join in the dance) but on the whole there was no singing. Elsewhere in western Estonia, young masked men walked from house to house, begging for a sip of beer.

Wearing masks and mumming on Easter used to be more widely known. During the 20th century it was a characteristic feature of the tradition in western Estonia and on the islands. 'Mummers' in animal or bird costumes visited people to wish them good luck or health. For example, a 'goose' visited families to birch them for good health on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

Another masked creature characteristic of the region was the Meat Woman, sometimes called Meat Kai, who first appears in texts recorded in the 19th century. Meat Woman was a personification of Lent and was believed to keep guard of how people observe fasting and work prohibitions, and is therefore similar to the personification of hunger around New Year. A

Tahma-Toomas (Grime Thomas or Black Thomas) has been brought outside the farmhouse. Photo from the Estonian Open Air Museum.

female creature who peeped through windows during Lent before Easter made sure that nobody did forbidden needlework or broke the fast. According to a popular saying, she would break the neck and pull out the guts of whoever is caught at a forbidden activity.

The first republic saw the invention of some new holidays (Mother's Day, Labour Day / May Day) – these were person-focused holidays (both were introduced in America in the 19th century by women activists who by then had finally acquired national support). Mother's Day was introduced in Estonia also by women's movement. The song lists and celebration programmes that were introduced primarily at schools finally bore fruit when the day was nationally recognised and officially celebrated in the 1930s (Kõiva & Särg & Vesik 2004).

The Workers' Day on the 1st of May was legalised with less resistance around the same time by the liberal-minded and socially sensitive people. It was initially based on the idea of equal social rights, opportunities and freedom for everybody.

An ethnic religion (Taara belief, *taarausk*) created at the beginning of the 20th century (Vakker 2012) aimed at introducing religious traditions partly connected with folklore. This was a

thoroughly invented tradition, created by a small group of military people who borrowed some religious customs from folklore but mostly improvised the tradition without relying on any previous beliefs. Taara-believers celebrated St John's Day and other feasts among themselves. At the same time, the 1920s was a period when people from different areas tried to revive old life cycle traditions. Traditional wedding and child christening customs were adapted and reintroduced. It is obvious that the traditions of urban life and these of urban intellectuals differed from the annual ritual traditions of rural people. But people living in the countryside also became aware of the new adaptations, and for example student songs were popular and became part of the collective traditions. Beside Estonian student corporations, Estonian schools developed their own specific customs, some of which have been preserved for more than a century already.

Estonian Calendar Traditions under the Soviet Rule

Before describing the mutual influences between the celebrations of holidays prescribed by the authorities and those practiced by the people among family and friends, we must have a closer look at the general nature of changes caused by power. From the perspective of significant memory fields that played a part in this process, it is important to remember that there were two massive deportations (one right before World War II and the other in 1949) which had a direct influence on the collective memory of Estonians, as well as the fact that more than a third of all Estonians and some indigenous ethnic minorities (Estonian Jews and Swedes, as well as other groups) were extinguished, forced to escape, or left the country voluntarily during the war.[4]

After World War II, the population started to change very quickly. It is important to mention several migration waves as they influenced the ritual year too. Only a few migration segments which directly influenced cultural and ethnic composition of the country will be referred to in this article. The successors of former migrants (Russian Estonians and their descendents

who had migrated to Russia in the 19th century; they and their descendents had by then lived for about twenty five years in Soviet Russia) were sent back or came voluntarily from other Soviet countries to Estonia to be political leaders and officials (incl. establishers of the Communist Party and the cell leaders of the Young Communist League). This was a part of the political tactics of the federal state. According to H. Kulu, more than 50,000 descendants of nineteenth century Estonian emigrants migrated from the Soviet Union back to Estonia in the 1940s (quoted by van Ham & Tammaru 2011). This group of people had a significant role in restructuring and sometimes initiating extreme radicalism in the Estonian economic and cultural system.

Some twenty thousand or more Russian Ingrian Finns who were subject to extermination in the 1930s (Anepaio 1999) returned from deportation sites, being freed after the death of Stalin. The same applied to roughly a thousand Tatars (see Tatari keel 2004), who left the prison camps and arrived in Estonia due to ethnic persecution in Russia, and also to Jews from Russia who fled because of anti-Semitism in their former homeland.

The extensive migration was further supported by campaigns that advocated expanding communist construction sites and mines, and bringing the military industry (so-called post box factories) and permanent military units into Estonia. The country had become the western border of the Soviet Union, which meant that the coastal areas and islands belonged to the military. Secret military bases were established and civilian population was resettled from their original homes near these bases, or had to live in a border zone that had limited access. The proportion of (foremost) Russians or people speaking Russian increased due to immigration, by 1950 constituting as much as 40% of the whole population (van Ham & Tammaru 2011). All these factors, together with the arrival of new religious and ethnic groups, led to a series of fast changes in the population structure. At least some Estonians kept hoping that the Soviet rule would soon come to an end through an intervention by the West. Repressions and change only made the holidays which were unfavourable by the authorities more treasured by the Estonians.

The Soviet calendar system was imposed on Estonians at the period when it had already been developed for 30 years and the basic holidays were already fixed. Eviatar Zerubavel refers to

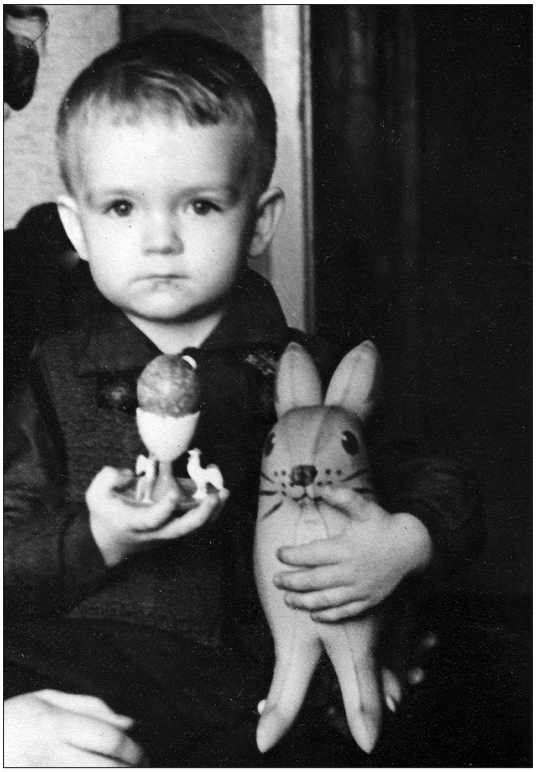
At workplaces the International Women's Day was festively celebrated. Women's Day festive meeting in the hall of the Consumers' Association in 1963: on the wall a slogan reading "Long live the International Women's Day!" side by side with a picture of Lenin, and a male colleague giving a speech. Agnes Joala's private collection (jalutuskaikajas.blogspot.com).

the great revolutions that often strive to begin a new era by reforming chronology, among other things. As an example, he talks about the Great French Revolution and Russian October Revolution, both of which radically changed the calendar (cf. Zerubavel 1981; see also Zolotova 2002). The transmission to a new time system started with introducing the Gregorian calendar (February 1, 1918). The Russian Orthodox Church favoured the same time system, but later reinstated the Julian calendar. The subsequent radical calendar reforms were partially related to the country's economic status: from 1918–1929 the week lasted for 5 days, from 1929–1939 for 6 days, and in 1940, the 7-day week was established in order to ensure a steady economic growth (Shilova 2007). In the new Soviet calendar every year had two numbers that were used parallelly: the first indicated the number counted from Common Era (CE, the equivalent of Christian era traditionally marked as AD), and the second from the establishment of the Soviet power (*ibid.*).

In Estonia, major changes were made in the calendar system mainly after 1946. These consisted of excluding the previous state and national holidays and also Christian feasts from the list of public holidays. Invented holidays from a relatively stabilised communist calendar like the Red Army Day, 1st of May, and October Revolution Anniversary Day were publicly celebrated. The introduction of days dedicated to Soviet heroes and victories also meant that some of formerly important holidays like Mother's Day were no longer celebrated. Mother's Day was later replaced by Women's Day on March 8. Many previously active students' organisations and their celebrated days became prohibited as well.

In the 1950s, the public holidays in Estonia included extensive celebrations of St. John's Day with song- and dance festivals, open-air plays and other performances. Communal swinging, singing, decorating towns with birches as well as selling national food and beer was borrowed from the older fair customs. Several central holidays were celebrated similarly, in an organised manner, including *vastlad* (Shrove Tuesday), and St. Martin's and St. Catherine's Day, which supported their celebration at homes. The popularity of the latter two may be vested in a linguistic rather than a spiritual aspect; namely, the names (and holidays) were adapted to the Estonian culture (respectively Mart and Kadri) already in the 14th century, when they became suitably blended with the local pagan customs, and it had nothing to do with any particular affinity to the saints. As both of these masking feasts are celebrated towards the end of the year, it may have be connected with the traditional period of disguising among young men, signifying a time of initiation rites when young couples were welcomed into the world of grown-ups. During the Soviet times, St Martin's and Catherine's Days as well as Shrove Tuesday were celebrated in culture houses and schools but also at homes; people were given a day off on St. John's Day. The official politics in regulating these holidays needs further study.

Perhaps the biggest difference in comparison to other countries was the high level of secularisation before World War II, which softened the painful shock other nations had to undergo due to church feasts being excluded from the official calendar. Individual celebration of church feasts was popular already



Easter. I bought this from an antique shop, I like it a lot. There is a well-behaved boy on this picture looking straight in the camera as was asked, but this look is almost hypnotising for the viewer. Egg cups were rare during Soviet time, but inflatable rabbits were produced in the factory "Tegur". And the boy also has another popular toy – hen pecking grain (beginning of 1970s, photo: Agnes Joala).

during the first Republic of Estonia, and most families kept celebrating church and national feasts at home like before. Naturally they tried to return to older systems of social life and festivities at any opportunity. This was successful in more liberal

years but then became prohibited again as a consequence of stricter policies.

How did the non-institutional domestic celebrations of holidays develop? There have always been persons and groups who are not interested in calendar feasts or are too exhausted from physical work to celebrate anything, so they have rather vague ideas about holiday traditions. At the same time, there are always groups and individuals who (consciously or unconsciously) follow the official policies and accept the changes in calendar holidays. It is obvious that people simultaneously preserved older traditions and went along with new ones to some extent. The invention of new holidays and their acceptance took time. J. Helslooth describes the long and controversial process of introducing Mother's Day into Dutch culture, concluding: "Through the combined effects of the introduction of Mother's Day in primary schools, through extensive media coverage and commercial advertising, the new rituals became ever more widely known and gradually less novel, thereby slowly but steadily becoming "traditional" (i.e. more or less inevitable), whether as something to negate or with which to comply" (Helslooth 2007: 219).

As seen in the following examples, it becomes obvious how state institutions, also on the level of schools, influence the continuation and popularity of feasts also in Estonia:

> *New Year's Eve was the only holiday our family celebrated from the official Soviet calendar (this only included a late dinner, perhaps a glass of champagne, and permission for children to stay up as long as they wanted). Children naturally made gifts and cards for the mother and granny on Women's Day (and bought something if it happened that dad gave them money), but we didn't even have the chance to cook something on our own in the kitchen because our granny made sure we wouldn't be able to make a mess there. And our mom kept repeating that Women's Day is rather a day for humiliating women as it clearly indicates that all other days are men's days. I only remember that once the new constitution was adopted in the Soviet Union and the Constitution Day was moved from December 5 to October, my family was pleased because this day coincided with the birthday of my great-aunt Anna, so working people and schoolchildren could now drive to Kernu to cel-*

The New Year's Eve celebration in kolkhoz Tulevik (The Future) in Tartu district in 1964 was a real kolkhoz party with a long table. Agnes Joala's private collection (jalutuskaikajas.blogspot.com).

ebrate Anna's birthday (she was very sociable) (Woman, born in 1955, Tallinn – Lilleküla[5]).

New Year's Eve was special because guns were fired and occasionally fireworks as well. All people gathered on streets at midnight where friends and strangers were congratulated when the New Year arrived. I remember especially clearly visiting my relatives at Järvakandi when I was a preschool child – my uncle, who was a glass maker, had a gun, and to my ears it seemed like the whole country would break apart from the bangs (Woman, born in 1954, small town in central Estonia).

Occasionally we "poured fortune" during näärid *(New Year's Eve). It was fun. If we weren't able to get any lead, e.g. in the 1980s, we used paraffin wax instead – hot wax was poured into a bucket of cold water – we could still tell our fortune. When decorative candles went out of sale, they*

New Year's Eve party for the children of journalists and cultural workers in Tallinn in 1958. A big hall had been rented for the party, with a huge fir-tree decorated with ornaments and electric candles. As was the custom at kindergarten, school and institutional New Year parties, Father Frost brought a gift to all the children – a cellophane bag with candies. Private collection.

> *were poured from the ends of big white household candles. Perfume and detergent bottles became candle moulds; people learned how to dye them by domestic means. These were very nice gifts for family and friends, but foremost they were nice for lighting during holidays* (Woman, born in 1954, Tartu).

Liisa Vesik has pointed out that in the 20th century, many folk holidays turned into important family holidays, which united and strengthened family ties, village communities, relationships between godparents and godchildren, teachers and pupils, friends and relatives (cf. Vesik 2000: 189). An increase of subjectivity and individual creativity, establishing a personal emotional connection with holidays and their celebration, and introducing new, sometimes agrarian elements into urban homes were global trends (compare Santino 1995, Aveni 2004).

Fairs, which had been an important economic-cultural event in the last centuries and a marker of locality, were revived in the 1960s. The first such events were a mixture of ethnic/traditional and contemporary/modern aspects. I remember from my childhood (in mid-1960s) the first fair that took place at my neighbouring town Jõgeva. People traded with national food, took part in different traditional competitive games and listened to a student band where Nikoli Laanetu, Priit Pärn,[6] and other known figures played. This made a simple agrarian event diverse and attractive. Many of such fairs also presented a legal possibility to trade the products produced in private households which otherwise were taken to Russian markets, primarily to Leningrad. For example, exotic plants were exchanged at Türi Flower Fair which was first held in 1977, and this became the peak event of the year – it was an exciting occasion for which people came from all over Estonia, having planned it long ahead, in order to sell and buy plants and other agrarian products.

The integration of international occupational holidays (Children's Day, Teachers' Day, Museum Day, Theatre Day, Fishermen's Day, Miners' Day, etc.) into the collective awareness of the Soviet peoples as of the 1960s was among new social trends. I presume these changed the importance of calendar holidays, at least in urban settlements, and started to involve different social strata to a growing extent. In the 1970s, many celebrations and competitions were powered by the local initiative. The

New Year attractions from 1969. Private collection of Agnes Joala (jalutuskaikajas.blogspot.com).

Games of Lake Võrtsjärv, initiated by the agricultural holdings' managers of Võrtsjärv Lake and led by Kalev Raave, became very popular among the people who lived in the area. Fishermen's Day, Miners' Day and other secular holidays were celebrated widely by the people working in the trade as well as others. Celebrations were organised by the local community, with the primary aim to have fun and spend quality time. Thus, attractive holidays initiated by and aimed at the rural people developed alongside similar holidays in the urban areas. Holiday traditions which concerned specific professions, however, were not publicised as widely as they were in the countryside (e.g. truly influential Tartu Vanemuine Theatre Conference held on the International Theatre Day, March 27).

We can see the same tendencies in the ritual year traditions of the Soviet Russia: public celebration of the more entertaining festivities connected with older church feasts were tolerated in Russia after Stalin's death; so was the reinvention of several traditional feasts. Russian researchers have characterised the

years 1960–1970 as the period of introducing entertaining holidays that would fit in the urbanised environment of the Soviet cultural space. The celebration of clearly ethnically oriented new holidays became common, targeting mainly the dominant ethnic group, the Russians, held at town squares and in culture centres in the countryside. These included Russian Winter (*Russkaya zima*) and the Russian Birch feast (*Prazdnik russkoi berezki*; added about a decade later) (e.g. Zolotova 2002: 166 ff.).

We will now turn to discussing the role of student organisations in the Soviet-era ritual year. Tartu University (est. 1632) has a long history of student corporations (fraternities and sororities), some of which were re-established in the early 20th century. These are notable for their rich customs. Belonging to a student corporation was considered one of the markers of intellectuality in the pre-war society. In spite of prohibitions on organisational and public celebrations, an aggregate of students' associations were developed during the Soviet times, although it acted on different basis and only some of the previous student union features could be retained. Students' cap (*tekkel*)[7] was connected with students' identity. There was a symbolic competition between the universities (i.e. between those of Tartu and Tallinn). It was considered very important to own a student cap, differently coloured for different faculties and course years. Some of the earlier traditions also remained. The students' processions carried a high significance for the people. The beginning of the 1970s is considered a period of increased political control as in these years, students' procession carrying torches became officially prohibited.

Under the Soviet rule, many of the obliterated holidays were still celebrated in the family circle. Not all official holidays were received with equal enthusiasm. For example, Women's Day was institutionalised in the 1960s, and many traditions originally related with Mother's Day, an earlier holiday, were transferred to the 8th of May. Nevertheless, Mother's Day, which used to be celebrated institutionally (in the form of festive gatherings) and then rooted into domestic family traditions, remained important for some families throughout the Soviet times, visible also in the excerpts from the interviews below:

> *Unlike Women's Day, which was to be organised by us, the children, and towards which the grown-ups had a rather*

ironic attitude, Mother's Day was the only holiday led by father. To be precise, he organised picking the flowers and bossed the children around: "Make sure you draw cards for your mother and grannies!" Everybody loved to draw, so it wasn't a punishment that we had to make the cards. [---] *We definitely had to pick the flowers from the forest. We went there with our dad on the Saturday before Mother's Day, and always to the forest. Dad always bought a cake for Mother's Day, although we ate most of it, but the centre of the cake, which in the event of birthdays belonged to the birthday boy or girl, was for mom this time* (Woman, born in 1955, Tallinn).

Our Santa Claus and Eeli in 1970. Santa is wearing a brand new rabbit fur hat (1970, photo by Agnes Joala).

International Women's Day, the best income day for florists, was made fun of as a somewhat hypocritical holiday, but it was still celebrated (compare Helsloot 2007 about Mother's Day in the Netherlands). However, Father's Day was never successfully introduced, besides, it was tied to the Red Army's Anniversary Day, February 23, by the Soviet authorities – one reason for the opposition was the desire not to associate father's role with the military system. This holiday practically coincided with the anniversary of the Republic of Estonia, which originally signified the day of independence of the first republic – another uncomfortable aspect for the people.

Celebration of Christmas displayed the same tendencies and models as other holidays. Christmas was still celebrated at home (about Christmas during Soviet time cf. Hiiemäe 2003; Kõiva & Vesik & Särg 2004). Here are some examples that reveal how Christmas was celebrated:

> *I think Santa Claus visited all my classmates* [---]. *Later I have heard my contemporaries (but not my classmates) say that on Christmas Eve a feast was prepared, whereas presents were left for children on New Year's Eve, or that Christmas was hidden behind another family event or celebrated afterwards at the week-end. At least no one (from my classmates) dared to say that Santa Clause did not visit them.* [---] *For us, the children, Christmas period started already at the beginning of December when we wrote wish lists to Santa Claus, or, before we learned how to write, whispered our wishes into mother's or father's ear. It was noticeable that it was Christmas time and that it preceded the next holiday,* näärid *(the official seasonal holiday in the atheist Soviet Union). We wrote wish lists many weeks before Christmas, but it didn't actually set us in the Christmas mood just yet. Okay, so snowflakes were always five- or eight-pointed, but at least there were some! And Christmas trees were sold before Christmas – we always had a tree at home. But at that time, they weren't sold at each store, rather at markets. Our market place was Kalinini market located at the current Mööblimaja (furniture store). Christmas trees and spruce branches were sold there already on December 20th. We usually bought it on December 23rd, because you never know what circus there might be on December 24th – and*

it stood behind our house, in the back corner of the yard. [---] *The Christmas tree that was put up at Võidu (Victory) Square, now called Vabaduse (Freedom) Square, was lit up only after Christmas, but store windows were decorated earlier. The most pleasant memory about this is the window of a toy store located at either Karja or Viru Street* [---] *which had full decorations for a long time. And what fine decorations these were: there was a small circulating stage with dolls standing on it, each one holding a present (one had a package of colourful dominos) and these dolls disappeared behind a plywood spruce and then appeared again. I could watch this thing move endlessly, especially because there weren't usually many stores that would have moving window decorations. Besides, toy store windows were anyway most attractive (except the office of Aeroflot at the corner of Võidu Square with its TU-114*[8] *model, which didn't move, but looked very real).* [---] *When we went to secondary school, Christmas was also*

My father kept a ferret fur coat in the wardrobe, and it was used only during Christmas, We turned it around to make a costume for Santa Claus. Father never wore that coat because it was too heavy, but it was bearable to wear it only as Santa. We lended our Santa out also to our neighbours (1985, photo by Agnes Joala).

> *"celebrated" at school. This meant that someone took candles and matches along; the number of these was different each time, but sometimes there were enough candles for all desks. And so teachers were tested – how they reacted when they stepped into the dark classroom, candles burning on desks and spruce branches here and there (not only on the teacher's desk). Most teachers just told us to blow out the candles and that was that. Around that time*[9] *people also started to go to church on Christmas Eve. It was not prohibited at home and not spoken about at school* (Woman, born in 1955, Tallinn).

Although different national groups did not accept other groups' customs, certain unification and adaptation still occurred:

> *Even during the Soviet times, when half of the sales personnel were Russians, they said that December 24 is* estonski prazdnik *(Estonian party), Estonians* hotšet *(want) pork, I make pork at home because it's Estonians'* prazdnik (Woman, Tartu).

New Tendencies in the Republic of Estonia

In the early 1980s and 1990s (before regained independence) the system of holidays had changed in Estonia. After the socialist political system collapsed, the Soviet monuments, street names, and place names changed. At the same time, the change in the celebration of traditions never displays sharp changes (except for state holidays): they have fluid borders. We can observe the continuation of major holidays like Christmas, New Years Eve, Easter (Kõiva 2005), St. John's Day, St. Martin's and St. Catherine's Days, and other holidays throughout the 20th century. The list of present-day national holidays includes, in addition to an increasing number of days dedicated to historic events, the renamed May 1 (Spring Day, *kevadpüha*), some church feasts, including November 2 (All Souls Day), and a day dedicated to education and national symbolism (March 14, Native Language Day invented in 1999). New holidays advertised in the media gained popularity: St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Halloween, and Walpurgis Night (*volbripäev*). After 1990s, Moth-

Christmas performance at a kindergarten in Tallinn in the 1990s. Private collection.

er's Day and St. Lucia's Day, as well as revived medieval festivities and rituals like the so-called electing of the Count of May (*Maikrahv*), were celebrated. The Mediaeval and Hanseatic Days have given a new opportunity for former Hanseatic towns to celebrate holidays from the mediaeval or even earlier period. This includes a wide selection of events – fairs, entertainment and cultural events. It is an opportunity to make music, dress up, perform small plays, trade with art, handicraft and eco-products, and participate in parades, wearing suitable costumes. The mediaeval festivals, where culture and trade are mixed tradition in a very productive way, have now peaked, although they have been popular for some time already.

The majority of calendar holidays are celebrated in educational institutions on all levels. They form a part of the programmes at cultural centres and other institutions. The most popular festivities are Christmas and New Year's Eve parties, Shrove Tuesday, Women's Day and Mother's Day. Schools have adapted and celebrate a number of international and local holidays, among which there are some holidays that have been forgotten a long time ago and were (re)invented only in the 20th century. For example, *hingedepäev* – All Souls Day – was the

first calendar holiday to have an Estonian name in the medieval calendar in the 13th century (Mänd 2004), but despite its original prominence, it was largely merged to a more general "time of souls" (*hingedeaeg*) as the scope of Catholic influence diminished. It was again officially reinstated in 1992 in the Republic of Estonia. Since the holiday had some political support, it was initially uncertain whether the holiday will shove aside other traditional cemetery traditions and commemoration days of departed relatives.

Let us have a closer look at some features of reinvented Walpurgis Night (*volbripäev*), which is the carrier of two different traditions. Firstly, the celebration of April 30th may include organising a witches' feast (this is especially true in schools and day-care centres, but also in towns and villages) and provides an opportunity for wearing a costume in public, staging minor improvisational plays, and simply having fun. While little time and effort is spent on preparing and wearing masks on Walpurgis Night, wearing a stylised costume consisting of a few typical elements (witch or wizard hats, capes, and, most importantly, face painting) is still widely practiced. The popularity and availability of face and body paint is perhaps the reason why these have become more widely used instead of masks. Since no other joyous public masking festivities are celebrated in the spring/summer season, the Walpurgis Night celebrations are all the more important. The adoption and reinstatement of Walpurgis Night has acquired a special significance in the tradition of Estonians but also among the local Russian-speaking minorities.

Secondly, April 30th is connected with traditions of the student corporations, revived at the end of the 1980s, among them the public procession of students through the city of Tartu, and the very popular parody procession on the following day through Supilinn, which is a district near the city centre and has traditionally been the place for affordable students' rental apartments. The parody procession was the most popular student tradition also in the first half of the 20th century. The students' rituals in Tartu follow a clear pattern: at 8 o'clock in the evening, the student corporations and societies march singing in a procession through the city. They go to the Town Hall Square, where they accept the keys of Tartu from the mayor, because for this night the power in Tartu is handed over to students. The pro-

cession then heads towards the main university building, where students greet the university rector with a song and the rector responds with a speech. Next, the head of the statue of the biologist Karl Ernst von Baer on Toome Hill is subject to ritual washing with champagne. Students also sing at the other monuments and then head to corporation buildings, which open their doors at midnight for visitors from other corporations and for non-affiliated students. The next morning, students take a boat down the Emajõgi River, drinking beer and singing, or finish the party with other rituals – for example, eating porridge together.

There is also a third way of celebrating the night, spread among those who are not students and who do not like crowded public events. They light bonfires in the company of family and friends, which attests to the incorporation of Walpurgis Night tradition into the general cultural tradition.

Student culture and its traditions have also been adopted in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, by the new universities established in the 1990s. Regardless of that, student traditions have been most prominent and popular in Tartu, where the percentage of students is highest and where the traditional student feasts can be traced back throughout centuries. A current trend

Already by the 1990s Easter had become a commercialised holiday. Photo by Ain Protsin, 1999. Archives of the newspaper Postimees.

is the expansion of the student traditions, once characteristic only of Tartu, to other university towns.

The reinstatement process of local fairs, reinvention of the different forms of masking tradition, promotion of the older traditions by the followers of the ethnic religion *maausk* ('earth faith') and a long list of festivals and village days – all these features are similar to the trends in the ritual year in the first Estonian Republic. The main difference is that all that happened in the frame of two contrasting processes: the growing urbanisation during the first republic, and suburbanisation in the present day. The process of urbanisation started in Estonia in the beginning of the 20th century, and by the 1930s 30% of the population lived in towns. According to the Estonian demographics profile from 2012, 69% of the inhabitants of Estonia live in towns, while a third of them (ca 400,000) live in the capital (Estonia Demographics Profile 2013), but there is a gradual increase in suburbanisation which started already in the last decades of the 20th century. This has resulted in a change in calendar traditions: adjusting celebrations to fit an urban setting was visible in the calendar year of the first republic, and from the end of the 20th century there has been a move towards celebrating feasts in a suburban environment.

Conclusions

There are many opposing and heterogeneous factors that affect the ritual year and traditions connected with it. The system of Estonian calendar holidays has changed considerably in the last hundred or more years. The official national holidays have followed the directions set by the political power, affirming its currently dominating discourse. Regaining independence brought along an increase in the number of national holidays, as the holidays of both republics were taken into account.[10] It is obvious that an increasing number of state holidays connected with the more recent history and dedicated to independence are introduced into the public life. In addition to that, adding new holidays that are celebrated all over Europe, such as the ceremony for acquiring citizenship (and other celebrations concerning the relations of state and its citizens), is very com-

mon. The Estonian version of the ceremony includes a festive reception at the Town Hall, meeting with the representatives of state authority, giving out the certificates, and a concert. One of the new trends includes celebrating the day of one's land or town. This has led to a discussion among ethnologists, who have pointed out how difficult it is to find, choose, and establish such new holidays and understand what to celebrate and emphasise with this event – i.e. how to find a content for a holiday (compare discussions about Sweden's Day in Petterson & Ulftrand 2007: 22 ff.; Gustavsson 2007: 191 ff.). As Hobsbawm (1983) has stressed, all these state holidays must establish or symbolise social cohesion and collective identities, and socialise people into particular social contexts.

It is also important to note that just a few religious holidays (e.g. those connected with saints) have been reinstated; instead there is a tendency to stress the importance of family relations. Some of these include the second Sunday of May as Mother's Day, the second Sunday of November as Father's Day, invented in 1988, and since 2010 the second Sunday of September as Grandparents' Day. In comparison, there is also a tendency in the Russian calendar to add saints and holidays dedicated to love, marriage, and other "soft values" (Sedakova 2008).

It was noticeable already from the 1960s to 1980s that people wanted and needed entertaining holidays and festivities, especially during summer, in addition to winter holidays. That is why the whole summer was and still is usually filled with fairs, festivities, festivals, new holidays, village days, social gatherings, or newly created cultural events (e.g. related to the day of some saint which has traditionally not been celebrated for centuries). Many of invented local festivals and days from the Soviet period (the Games of Lake Võrtsjärv, professional days like Fishermen's Day, and Miners' Day) are popular again.

Different communities, with their particular calendars and tactics for using them undoubtedly exist side by side. The members of other communities may join in the celebrations of its neighbouring groups out of solidarity or curiosity. We can even say that celebrating holidays that are historically or ethnically alien to a certain group of people is part of a recent trend. Chinese New Year celebrations, becoming more and more popular each year, are a good example of that.

The contemporary system of holidays is highly institutionalised and the celebration of official holidays is canonised. The linear model supported by the state inscribed many state holidays into the Estonian society, but only a few of them came with a set of traditions and are celebrated also in the family circle. Nevertheless, there have been several holidays which were celebrated primarily among family members during the periods when they were looked upon unfavourably by the state. At the same time we can see how the reinstatement of holidays de-sacralised their essence (e.g. in the case of Mother's Day) or how the nonlinear model supports the celebration of some "Soviet" holidays (e.g. International Women's Day, or May 9, the Victory Day).

Variability, invention and creation of new rituals, as well as the preserving, reinvention and interpretation process was very rapid and intensive during the 20th and 21st centuries; it needed cultural adaptation and more intellectual choices than ever before. A continuing increase of new holidays directed at identities and humane values is a characteristic feature of the 21st century ritual year. This is not a less political or symbolic activity than introducing other national holidays. Institutionalising and regulating the private sphere with state holidays carries a symbolic message.

Comments

[1] Ethnic Estonians constituted 88% of the population, with national minorities constituting the remaining 12% (cf. Katus & Puur & Sakkeus 1997).

[2] The churches of Constantinople, Greece, Romania, Finland, the Baltic States, and Poland adopted the new calendar in 1924 (Moss 2012).

[3] Christmas and spring feasts have been discussed in numerous other studies (Eisen 1931, 1932; Kõiva 2005; Kõiva, Särg, Vesik 2004, and therefore they are not treated at any length here.

[4] With the beginning of the Soviet occupation of Estonia in 1940, Jewish cultural autonomy and Jewish organisations were terminated. Teaching Hebrew and Yiddish, and lectures on Judaism and Jewish culture, were banned. All Jewish schools were closed and 430 Estonian Jews (10% of the Jewish community) were deported to Siberia in

the course of the mass deportations of June 1941 (The Jewish Community in Estonia).

[5] Here and later: all the interviews are conducted by the author in 2012.

[6] N. Laanetu – a biologist, P. Pärn – a famous caricaturist and filmmaker.

[7] Different universities had their own caps; so did high school students. The common school cap marked the belonging to a particular youth community.

[8] TU-114 – The Tupolev Tu-114 Rossiya is a turbo propeller-powered long-range airliner designed by the Tupolev design bureau and produced in the USSR from May 1955.

[9] End of the 1960s – beginning of the 1970s.

[10] February 2 – Anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty in 1918; February 24 – Independence Day, June 4 – Flag Day, June 23 – Victory Day, August 20 – Day of Restoration of Independence in 1991, August 23 – European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism, September 22 – Resistance Fighting Day dedicated to 1944; November 16 – Sovereignty Declaration Day in 1988, and in 2013 a new state holiday – Veterans Day (April 23) instead of former St. George's Day.

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Interviews were recorded all in 2012, and are kept in the personal archive of the author.

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Under Foreign Stars

Australian Estonian Diaspora and Adaptation Narratives

Abstract: The article is concerned with the adaptation narratives of Estonians, who arrived in Australia after World War II. The adaptation stories reveal that people who arrived at different times had to adapt to all possible settings, make relevant changes in themselves, their beliefs and physical space. Presumably, adaptation depends on the migration policy of the country, presence of personal support network, personal choices, personality traits and people's learning capacity. Excerpts from longer chains of narratives have been chosen to characterise arrival and modes of adaptation into the new environment; also, language use and single controversial customs have been highlighted.

Keywords: adaptation, Australian Estonians, language, migration

Introduction

Ted Lewellen (2002: 171) refers to the 20th century as the era of refugees, the war and political violence depriving 140 million people of their homes. As many as 23 million refugees were added during the year 1994 alone. Steven Vertovec defines diaspora as a form of social being, a type of consciousness and a means for the creation of culture (Vertovec 1997: 2).

The ethnic group of Australian Estonians, rather than living in geographically homogeneous communities, prevailingly

reside as single families in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods, with a considerable distance to their nearest compatriots, with the exception of the Thirlmere Estonian village. The Eesti Maja 'Estonian House' and the native media amalgamate the Estonians with dispersed residences into a joint cultural and social network. Seven Estonian Houses with concurrent social life have preserved until today (together with Tasmania): Adelaide, Brisbane, Sidney, Canberra, Melbourne, Perth and Hobart. They consolidate cultural and sports societies, student corporations, joint festivities, the archives, etc. Such a shared ethnic space simultaneously affects the customs and habits for shaping personal spaces, visual ethnic markers and the models for the accrual of innovations (cf. Kõiva 2008).

The article describes the evolvement of the Diaspora of Australian Estonians on the background of the local migration policy, and, by way of the narratives, characterises their arrival and ways for adapting in the new environment, the relevant different perceptions and reactions. Also, the article shows how the personal narratives, obtained by way of relevant interviews, reflect the adaptation process of Australian Estonians in Australia, the alteration of their physical and cognitive space, the place of living and communication. Identity creation is a more lengthy process, with ups and downs, and it is recurrently being recreated.

The Adaptation Stories the Article Is Based on

The article is based on interviews conducted in New South Wales and the State of Victoria in 2001. The interviews were conducted in Estonian and the samples presented here have been translated into English. The interviewees had arrived with different migration waves; the majority of them comprised the refugees of World War II and their descendants. There were also those who had arrived during the Soviet time, with different reasons and strategies, and those who had emigrated later, either temporarily or permanently. The current article concerns the narratives of the post-WW II refugees.

At the beginning of the oral interview, the interviewees were asked to recollect their life in Estonia, their departure from Es-

tonia and life away from the homeland, their journey to Australia and the first impressions upon arrival. During the first part of the interview, a few elaborative questions were asked. Other questions concerned the celebration of national holidays, the activities of the Estonian community, and also obtained data with regard to the relationships with the Soviet and independent Estonia.

The majority of interviewees were well-informed about Australian and Estonian history, politics, migration laws, and also about the standpoints declared by the media with regard to migration and ethnic groups; they had their own opinions and more generalised viewpoints on history, politics and migration related issues.

In the last ten years, an enthusiastic group of amateurs operating at the Estonian House in Sydney has videotaped and recorded the life stories of the senior members of their community, first in the Estonian language, and later also in English. This undertaking had prepared many people to narrate about the quirks of their lives and conspicuous events. The narrators had already contemplated on some of the problems, recalled them and put them into words.

Analysing messages posted in the diabetes forum (Kõiva 2010), the term 'narrative chain' was used, which is also appropriate to characterise the life stories told during the interviews of Australian Estonians. In addition to the main narrative (or several main narratives), the presented life story also comprises the parts of daily communication, (loosely) related to the main narrative, presenting different stories and comments to the theme, and highlighting the arguments and contra-arguments in connection with certain subject matters. Such a chain intermittently involves parts without any plot, judgmental clauses, beliefs, and formulations with a length of a sentence or a couple of sentences, everyday philosophical generalisations and contemplations. Such a life story narrative/interview could be divided into multi-meaningful and non-multi-meaningful areas.

The concept of narrative chain has also been used in order to signify partially sequential narrative cases to define a network which has a common actor, a protagonist. A narrative event is the cortege of events and participants and presents typical tendencies (Chambers & Jurafsky 2008). The protagonist of a life

story is usually the story-teller who represents him/herself and conveys the position of his close ones, other Estonians and that of antagonists.

The term narrative chain has also been used by William Labov, in whose view each narrative in the chain narrative is constructed of the most reportable event: i.e. that the event is at least general and it has the broadest consequences with regard to the safety and well-being of the participants. This is also in correlation with reportability and trustworthiness. "The recursive rule of narrative construction produces a narrative chain, a skeleton of events, linked by their causal relations" (Labov 2004: 37). Australian Estonians tell their personal life story in exactly this kind of chains. Inevitably, these are real life stories, although they also contain elements and motifs of internationally known folk narratives. Beliefs and prejudices are very common and the events happening in one's life can be transferred to be a part of another's story.

Australian Migration Policy

Australian migration policy used to give radical preference to migrants of British origin and set strict limitations for non-Europeans migrating from nearby countries. The White Australia law, i.e. the Immigration Restriction Act passed in 1901 officially relied on the egalitarianism of British culture and education. The non-white people formed a so-called invisible class of the unwanted, comprising also the coloured wives of Australian soldiers (interviews 2001; Hugo 2001). The laws favouring the white people and constraining immigration were still valid in the 1970s and were thereafter alleviated due to the already commencing massive wave of immigration. As of the 1980s, the Australian government became radically re-oriented towards a multicultural policy.

The first Estonian re-settlers arrived in the 18th century, more at the end of the 19th, yet the more mass-scale resettlement indeed took place at the beginning of the 20th century, particularly in the 1920s. The first archival records of Estonians in Australia date back to 1864 (Taemets 1988: 80). Letters and the abundant material of the Estonian Archives in Australia

provide a multi-faceted reflection of the life of the immigrants of the 1880s. Although personal history related data has so far been scarcely analysed, it is known that the early re-settlers kept in contact with each other, and the first national Estonian Society was formed already in 1912, in Sydney, i.e. at the same time with the Caucasian Estonians (Mikkor 1998). The people of this pre-war population, comprising representatives of different occupations (farmers, miners, builders, tradesmen), were interrelated by way of joint get-togethers and entertainment. Social life was particularly thriving after the major migration in the 1920s, from the neighbouring areas (incl. China) and homeland. A compact Estonian settlement of 25 families emerged spontaneously in Thirlmere, where forests were felled as of the end of the 1920s to build chicken farms; in the immediate vicinity of the site there were also the Buxton farmers (Rampe 1988: 2; interviews 2001). Within the diaspora, the re-settlers from the beginning of the 20th century are customarily referred to as the Old Estonians; they are the ones who established libraries, ethnic national societies, Estonian Houses and other associations which serve as the centre of cultural life up until today.

The largest wave of migration occurred in the time after World War II. Decisions were made during WW II and the post-war period to increase the Australian population and develop the economy independently from England; immigration policy continued to be explicitly oriented at the white British population (Vasta 2002; interviews 2001). However, as the number of British immigrants could not satisfy the demographic or economic needs and new hands were needed, Baltic and Slavic war refugees were selected as suitable for their racial characteristics and anti-communist ideas. The resistance of the local people against mass-scale immigration was alleviated with the help of the strategy to select candidates with appropriate looks from the refugee camps – young, culturally prone people. As a result, 180,000 Eastern Europeans arrived in Australia during 1947–1951, i.e. 37% of the entire volume of immigration at the time, and according to estimations, they coped very well in the host country (Vasta 2003).

The post-war immigration model supported the arrival of British emigrants and Northern Europeans, they could come together with their families, and their rights in the labour mar-

Photo 1. The majority of Estonians had to try unknown occupations: In Australia they took single men only to work in the forest. We were simply brought here as workers, without any money, and were made to work in the forest for two years. Picture from Bonegilla's beginnings by A. Tündern-Smith (2007: 116).

ket were equal to those of Australians. However, Eastern and Southern Europeans had fewer rights, the concurrent arrival of their families was not an automatic right; frequently, the arrived persons were directed to less desirable work places and treated as a lower class (Collins 1991; Collins & Henry 1993). The Estonians who arrived after World War II were also subject to such a status.

The conditional stratification "the Beautiful Balts" is even today an important marker among the Estonian community and it is frequently referred to in the narratives. The arrival of this group in Australia was a political event and thus consciously covered by the media. Cuttings from newspapers and photos are still kept in the home archives regarding the quondam reception; the event is also reflected in family tradition and self-written cultural history (interviews 2001; Haas & Siska 1988).

> (1) *We came on the board of the ship called General Stewart Heinzelmann, an American military transport vessel, the first DP-transport to Australia. The ship landed us in West-Australia, Fremantle where we were put into a camp. And of course, we were extremely noteworthy objects – the first post-war ship of immigrants – and were constantly photographed and interviewed.*
>
> *Afterwards I saw a film on the history of Australian immigration and it said there that the most beautiful and healthy people were selected, the ones who would look like Australians, in order for Australia to accept us. [Smiling]*
>
> (Interview 2001, Sidney, woman 1)

> (2) *When they had landed in Fremantle, they had given a concert on the ABC radio, an Australian radio station, and earned their first wages. This was enough for every one of them to buy an ice-cream and a milk-shake. At least they knew that it is possible to earn money somehow. It was really interesting that these men could stay together as a group and found a job together, and they were given preferences in order for them to remain together.*
>
> (Interview 2001, Sidney, woman 2)

The Italians who had resettled at the beginning of the 20th century had established areas of living and their own economic domains, similarly to other more numerous ethnic groupings. To a certain extent, the resettlement of Estonians also followed a similar model. The newly arrived could use the help of earlier Estonian settlers, whereas the majority of them had to try unknown occupations, order special literature for the implementation of their business ideas and subsistence; similarly, they strived for better education and training in order to find a more

rewarding and cleaner occupation. The two-year-long work permits granted by the trade unions upon their immigration, indeed guaranteed a non-qualified job, thus preventing competition with local workers – this was one of the conditions of the immigration legislation. People worked in hospitals, in workplaces demanding hard physical labour, immigrants were employed in large labour-intensive undertakings such as the Snowy River project and mines, in building infrastructure, and they also concentrated in ever-expanding industrial centres, Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide (Lever-Tracya & Quinlan 1988). Within the Australian continent, Estonians tended to move towards the south, and established Estonian houses in larger places.

Different Models of Living and Working

The life stories, formatted as interviews, highlight that Australia was chosen as the country of destination due to different reasons. Frequently, the decisions proceeded from practical possibilities and the relevant selection could have been partially forced-upon, e.g. the asylum seekers were not in compliance with the requirements set by Canada or the USA as both countries refused to accept those who had served in the German army, and the persons who were either too elderly or had large families. The service of men in the German army inevitably prioritised Australia as a destination, similarly to the intention to resettle together with parents or even grandparents who were in general not acceptable by the committees of host countries.

The closest neighbours, particularly Finland and Sweden were apprehended because of the vicinity of Russia and its presumable impact on the official politics of these countries. Similarly, political instability, e.g. Peron's rise to power in Argentina, ruptured the emigration to South America for quite a few people. The wish to flee quickly as far from Europe as possible was reasoned by the instability of Europe and the two world wars.

Australia was not the first choice for many Estonians as their knowledge of the country was meagre, obtained mainly from school textbooks, and thus their understanding of the continent was not realistic. Having imagined a warm country with exuberant nature, the dryness and non-compliance with the im-

Photo 2. 180,000 Eastern Europeans arrived in Australia during 1947–1951. The arrival of the first group in Australia was a political event and thus consciously covered by the media. The group of Estonians in Bonegilla camp – young and full of energy. Picture from Bonegilla's beginnings by A. Tündern-Smith (2007: 114).

aginations were indeed frustrating. There were also people with idealised fancy ideas from literature and textbooks, however, as an exotic host country, Australia seemed extremely exciting. The knowledge with regard to the political system was particularly scarce, hence the possible idealisation.

(3) *I did not want to go Canada either. It is very cold there.*
(Interview 2001, Thirlmere, woman 1)

(4) *In our case too, they just came to the camp one day and said you can go where you want to. I said as far as possible! That was Australia and in Australia they took single men only to work in the forest and so. We were simply brought here as workers, without any money, and were made to work in the forest for two years. It was very dry and nothing had been built at all since the war until almost that time. It was relatively underdeveloped then.*
(Interview 2001, Sidney, man 10)

(5) *We still talk about Australia and what it looked like. Now it is quite different. When we arrived, in the fifties, then I thought, oh my god, if I had the money, I would go back to Europe. But, well, then more Swedes arrived and in the town the gardens were made pretty and in the country the old trees were cut down. Now it looks quite good.*

(Interview 2001, Thirlmere, woman 8)

(6) *And it was raining and I was walking alone along the reddish sand road and cried. I was thinking: Why did I come to this dead land?*

(Interview 2001, Sidney, man 2)

Many existing conceptions and factors operate simultaneously in the process of adaptation of an individual in a new cultural environment. "Cross cultural adaptation is a dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish (or re-establish) and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal and functional relationships with those environments" (Kim 2001: 31). The above-presented personal narratives highlight group emotions and individual psychological experience in relation to changes and adaptation to the new environment. By way of perceiving the emotional experience and the similarities in expression, group emotions affect group experience and thus increase the uniformity of the conduct of group members (Parkinson & Fisher & Manstead 2005: 123).

Irrespective of the differences in details, the narratives tend to be similar in their main features, with the trauma narratives regarding the arrival in the DP camps and leaving the homeland being part of nearly every life history. Likewise, the first experiences in setting up the place to live also involve stereotypical motifs and analogous memories.

(7) *Yes, and we had a big-big barrack. We all lived there in rows. And then the men came. The men had already been taken to work. And men came home for Christmas and they had army blankets and then everyone started to hammer. A small separation for every family: bit by bit. And my son was at that time walking on all four, going around and gathering all the boots so in the middle was row of boots [Laughter].*

(Interview 2001, Sidney, woman 4)

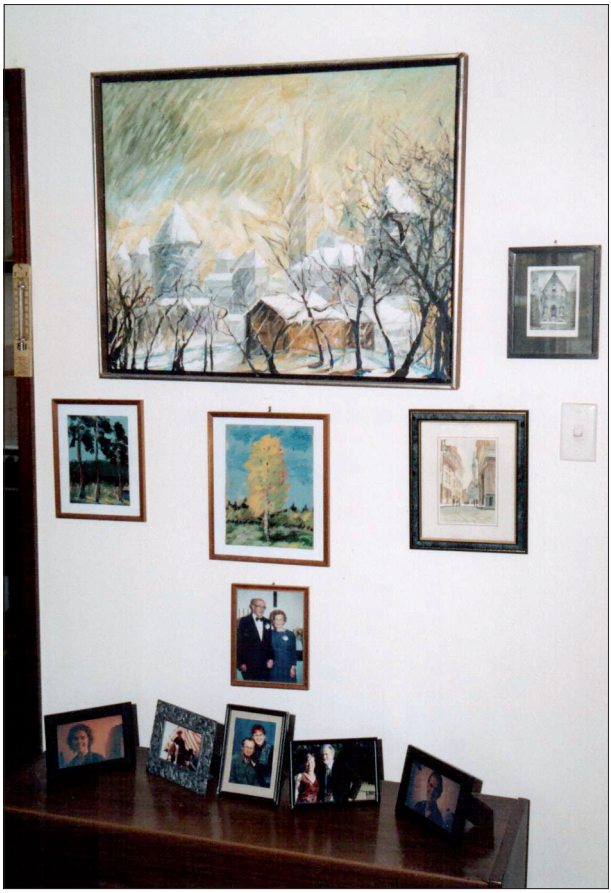

Photo 3. Väino Jaaniste's home at Thirlmere. Family's sacral corner, in which they display artefacts and photos of their loved ones. Photo by A. Kuperjanov 2001.

(8) *We lived in tin barracks and they also had this habit of starching all bedlinen. So you went to bed and thought it was like going to the morgue! Everything was thin, you know, and in the barracks everyone was walking back and forth. It was made of tin and the opossums were looking in. And the nature was so sad. Only the dead trees.*
(Interview 2001, Thirlmere, woman 3)

Photo 4. Estonian House in Melbourne. Carpets depicting Estonian national themes in national colours, paintings and photos as well as portraits of great Estonian historical figures make the appearance of the house uniquely ethnic. Photo by A. Kuperjanov 2001.

The adaptation takes place within different communication processes inside the host state and identity transformation processes. Nature and the environment were shocking, but most of the newcomers were very optimistic concerning their future life. The personal experience stories reflect rejection by members of the Australian society, confusion in roles, values and expectations, also surprise and anxiety because of cultural differences. In the beginning, primitive living conditions were seen as a major problem.

> *In 1957, we arrived in Thirlmere to settle for good. The phone was installed after one year but electricity took over two years before it was installed. We never received city water. Prior to electrification, lighting was by 'Aladdin' kerosene mantle lamps, hurricane lamps and cooking was on a wood fuel stove in the kitchen and a coal burning 'Cosi' heater for winter.*
>
> (Alas 2006)

Elderly people experienced distress and emotional reactions as a result of losing the familiar signs and symbols of social interaction and of misunderstanding or misinterpreting new experiences. For instance, the habit to use the second person's singular and the first name even when approaching less familiar people causes

a lot of misunderstanding and profound offence in Estonians who are accustomed to use the polite 'you' form with strangers.

> (9) *My mother was greatly perturbed that people addressed her by her first name – she used to call her maid by the first name, and now she was in this position. But this was an act of pure friendliness. In Australia people start to call you by the first name very soon – and this indicates that you are accepted as one of them. [Laughing] But my mother didn't think of it like that.*
>
> (Interview 2001, Sidney, woman 1)

Similarly, problems also occur due to the habit of men to give a helping hand to women or assist them in a job which is not directly their task. Australians interpret this as an attempt to take over the job of others. The fact that Australians tended to mock and use every possibility to hint that they would send the people back from where they came from was indeed irritating for the migrants deprived of any possibilities to choose. As a

Photo 5. Dolls in folk costumes are being made for the state's handicraft exhibition. Estonians have won main prizes throughout years. Photo by A. Kuperjanov 2001.

reaction to such behaviour, Estonians feel they are better and come from a better environment.

> (10) *Yes. We were satisfied with a little. – Yes, we were, and in the end, we liked the warm climate and we got used to this. We even looked down at the Australians a little. We started to build our own homes. And they were definitely better than theirs.*
>
> (Interview 2001, Thirlmere, woman 4)

According to official statistics of the 20th century, only 25% of the Australian women worked outside the home; even more recent research indicates a relatively low employment rate of women outside home (54.4% – Hugo 2001). Indeed, this was a differentiating feature between the locals and those arriving from Estonia who were forced to enter the labour market due to the need to quickly improve their standard of living, in addition to the fact of being accustomed to a different employment model.

> (11) *The rule here was that you could get a full salary once you were twenty-one years old, but I was only fifteen, so I got only a third of the salary, although I worked just as much as other people.*
>
> (Interview 2001, Sidney, woman 1)

The attitudes towards speaking a foreign language were more incredulous in the case of simple co-workers, however, even more educated people could react painfully to the use of a non-understandable language.

> (12) [---] *a few houses further lived a Latvian family. And the Australian lady was saying: "To think, they not only talk Latvian among themselves, but also to the dog!" [Laughter] And she was really amazed that the dog is so wise it can understand Latvian. [Laughter] But I think the lady was missing something in her head.*
>
> (Interview 2001, Sidney, woman 4)

Likewise, the Estonians too had hesitant stereotypes with regard to Australians – perceiving differences in culture and the environment the Estonians believed the Australians to have different valid norms. Thus, typically to categorisation and stereotyping, they presumed their inner group to behave positively and the others, i.e. the outer group, to have a negatively signed conduct. One of the most widespread narrative motifs is associ-

ated with the unusual Australian nature and one of the many prejudices with regard to the local inhabitants:

> (13) W4: *We were really frightened in the beginning and thought how Australians treat their children – throw them out at night when it's really cold. Yeah. And what was it then? Auuu... auuu.... auuu... This bird cries like that, and we thought it were children. As we were the first transport to Bathurst and we had no idea who is the one crying like that. And we thought it were children. Because they make a weird sound. This kookaburra is a ... Yes, in the Bathurst camp there were the birds who sounded exactly like children. And we hear it and think where on earth the children cry like that.*
>
> W5: *We were thinking who those parents are pushing their children out in such a cold.*
>
> (Interview 2001, Thirlmere, women 4, 5)

Conclusions

Schneider has drawn a distinction between the oral tradition and oral history which consists of the stories that a group of people know, that they consider important enough to retell, and that they actually do retell and pass on to others (Schneider 2008: 161). In this article, I have highlighted certain selected themes from the narrative chains, starting with the reflection of the immigration policy and moved further to the first experiences in Australia. However, many popular narrative themes were not addressed, such as prior work experience or failures and mishaps caused by lack of skills, misunderstandings emanating from different lifestyles, up-bringing and related comic situations, and other incidences associated with the adaptation process.

Humour is present in many, or even in the majority of stories, recollections of past events are presented in a warm tone. The norms and violations of norms concerning the education, behaviour and different social background of people make the storytellers laugh and smile during their narration. It is conspicuous that beside humour, the adaptation stories of Estonians reflect the stereotypes and prejudices in the form of a narrative, and primarily the non-tangible relationships elicited from the memory

Photo 6. Folk dance, choir singing and native language theatricals occupy a prominent place in Estonian diaspora communities. Painting of folk dancers at the Estonian house in Melbourne. Photo by A. Kuperjanov 2001.

by emotions and mental values.

The stories have their own sentiment, contextualised by the history of resettlement. Sherna Berger Gluck notices that peoples' representations change depending not only on their own personal developments but also on the changing socio-political context in which the interview is conducted (Gluck 2008: 120 ff.). Nearly ten years after Estonia's regained independence and several decades of multicultural policy in Australia, these narratives also reflect the quondam experience with regard to categorisation and stereotypes obtained from each other, from the media and politics. The stories also describe a particular society and the relevant cultural values at the time of arrival, reflect the interpretation and effect of the laws, and personal and human conflicts emanating from the contradictions between the 'own' and the 'other', between the Australians and the newcomers. The narratives tell about much more than mere personal adaptation and survival experiences when arriving in Australia.

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The Last Minutes of Our Earth

Abstract: The article seeks to compare popular omens of the end of the world with the auguries of prophets. Both traditions reflect societal and cultural changes, the fears for doomsday tend to integrate new interpretations and causes for destruction. Astronomic celestial phenomena retain their relevance whereas the recent discoveries in astronomy, physics, genetics and other sciences have remarkably complemented the list omens for the end of the world. Latter-day prophecies leashed by human behaviour and intellect, alien civilisations and other relevant motifs have come to the forefront during the last century. Prophetic predictions propose fixed dates, represent certain political or ideological trends, associated with social norms and evoked as a result of changes therein.

Among the prophetic messages there are stereotypical expressions and omens which have been adapted and attributed to different persons. Karl Tõnisson's leaflet Meie maakera viimased minutid 'The Last Minutes of Our Earth', printed in 1907, is a political-apocalyptic contemplation based on scriptural passages substantiated by references to scholarly works, illustrated with five woodcuts. The omens of the end of the world, listed by the author, comprise an earthquake in Lisbon in 1795, a dark day in New England in 1780 and the 1833 meteor storm in America. The discussions presented in the leaflet differ from Tõnisson's later self-centred political fantasies on Pan-Baltonia, and the ideology and rhetoric of the booklets endeavouring to create a native religion merged with Buddhism.

Keywords: end of the world, Karl Tõnisson, leaflet, prophecy, prophets, The Last Minutes of our Earth

Introduction

The leaflet, *Meie maakera viimased minutid* 'The Last Minutes of Our Earth' (Tõnisson 1907), compiled and illustrated by Karl August Tõnisson (20.08.1873 Umbusi – 05.05.1962 Rangoon)

inspired me to observe the end of the world prophecies in the 20th century. In addition to the doomsday omens recorded from oral tradition, the collections of the Estonian Folklore Archives also comprise prophetic lore written down by the close ones of the prophets, and the prophecies preserved by the mediation of their memories, whereas the material written by the prophets themselves is more infrequent. Auguries, prophetic messages, revelations and brief life stories form a series of sources concerning religious life, helping us to observe the changes in the rhetoric of the prophesies and their social meanings, within the framework of the non-alternated invariant basic message.

Proceeding from the standpoint that narratives are an archetype, a fundamental way to talk about the world (Georgakopoulou 2007: 27), the narratives and printed publications of an individual fall into the context of other similar printed matter and earlier tradition, allowing us to position this specific leaflet in a more general discourse. The interpretations of the world, conveyed in the leaflet, constitute a part of a shared mental resource which, in turn, is associated with earlier narratives. Likewise, the end of the world omens are, at least partially, a branch of daily conventional knowledge, whereas the conventional truth and everyday narratives, furcating therefrom, are also covered with social practice. End of the world omens, constituting the other part of this branch, are usually a part of a wider social critique or ideology, individualised lengthier narratives. These stories are characterised by the reminiscence of personal and collective history, enriched with the highlighting of mental and religious values.

The Last Minutes of our Earth is an example of religion related discussions. The small-size printed prophecy published in the format of a leaflet is, regarding its nature, similar to hand-written religious chain letters and to the tradition of heaven-letters or protective letters emanating from religious innovations. In the Estonian context, the author of the leaflet, Karl Tõnisson, is more commonly known as one of the first persons spreading the message of Buddhism. His path towards Buddhism is similar to that of others who discussed religious issues in the secularising society at the beginning of the 20th century: exploration of Christian values, inclination from thereof towards a syncretic faith and theosophy, quests in the field of ethnic native reli-

Figure 1. The Last Judgement. One of the popular leaflets used as a decoration in the homes of many Estonians at the end of the 19th century.

gion, and the amalgamation of all the relevant knowledge in writing. The choices of Karl Tõnisson, who had started off as a religious innovator, differed from the other seekers of truth at the beginning of the 20th century, regarding their final solution. For instance, at the time when Anton Schultz, known as the collector of Estonian folklore, elaborated fantasy-rich native mythology and pre-history (Kikas 2006: 18 ff.), Karl Tõnisson advanced to become the advocate and promoter of Buddhism. In his vernacular writings Tõnisson combines Buddhism with a social state utopia, envisaging the unification of the three Baltic countries (referred to by the author as Eesti, Latvija, Lietuva) in a Pan-Baltic state, with a niche left also for ethnic deities. His unusual and scandalous attire, behaviour and presentations brought about town gossip and rumours. Recurrently, Tõnisson has presented his life story in a poetic format, describing the change of his faith and principles, by way of using great words (according to Brother Vahindra's use of language, the religion of Jews equals to Christianity):

[---] *kord oli aeg, kus*	Once there was time
hullustuses	when I was crazy
Ma juute lora uskusin	An believed the non sense of the Jews
Ja nõtru vendi –	I called upon my feeble
ilma rahvaid –	brothers –
Küll valet kuulma	The men of Earth – to
kutsusin.	believe their truth.
Kord oli aeg, kus	Once time was ripe for an
pööre tuli	upheaval
Ja päästmine mu hingele,	And soul of mine was saved,
Siis juudausu maha	I left behind the Jewish faith
jätsin ja –	and –
end andsin Buddha	Gave myself to Buddha
Dharmale.	Dharma.
Siis algasivad hirmuajad	Then times of terror dawned for me
mul tagakiusajatega.	With persecutors all around.
Küll sõimasivad Eesti	In their newspapers
mehed	Estonian men
Mind oma ajalehtedega	Relentlessly reviled me
[---] (Vahindra 1928).	

The connections of Barefoot Tõnisson with Estonia were ruptured as early as 1930, his later notoriety was enhanced by media publications, and also by the visits of Estonians to Buddhist centres in Asia and face-to-face contacts with him, forming a legendary part of his image (see, in detail, Talts 2003; Gerodnik 1973). The records of his after-death miracle in Rangoon and the fact that he was proclaimed an Arhat and Bodhisattva provided him with a special nimbus in his homeland.

The article introduces Karl Tõnisson's omens of the end of the world, in comparison with the auguries of other prophets, and provides an analysis, regarding the relationships of the popular corpus of end-day omens and prophetic lore, their common features and differences, and the position of this leaflet in the worldview axis of Karl Tõnisson, bearing in mind his Buddhist and ethnic-pagan mindset in the later stage of his life.

End of the World in Folk Tradition

The diverse system of popular omens of the end of the world is based on the empirical observations of nature and society, yet in turn, it is being affected by scholarly standpoints. The significance of scholarly standpoints has increased in the course of centuries, facilitated by the media and school system. Kathleen Stewart and Susan Harding are critical with regard to the 20th century media, stating that American media, which is always there on the spot, presents the global events as a continuous tautological crisis (Stewart & Harding 1999: 291) and intensifies contradictory standpoints.

Throughout the ages, most attention has been attributed to unusual celestial phenomena: eclipses or the emergence of a bright comet, halos, circles or crosses in the vicinity of the Sun; unusual colouring of the sky, asteroids, comets and their tails comprising toxic gases; enormous meteorites falling on the Earth causing the potential destruction of everything living; the Earth, shifted from its axis; disorder caused by the sequence of planets shifting the position of the Earth or the equator; and, during the last century, the possibility of occurring in the influence zone of a giant star, absorption into a black hole, collapse of the galaxy – these are just some examples of a long list of con-

cern narratives and belief motifs, brought about by astronomic phenomena and associated with human living space, that have worried mankind. In many cases the scenes witnessed with one's own eyes have been explained by way of Biblical passages, amalgamating personal experience and the future forecasts into one integral whole.

This is a story from my aunt, Triin Vakkum in 1932.

For nation shall rise against nation, and brothers against brothers. There shall be earthquakes and floods. People wouldn't know what it means and from who to look for help [---].

Once, when going back home from our place Triin became the victim of an unprecedented revelation. The northern sky was severely red, covering half of the firmament. Red as blood. And some kind of light flashes illuminated this red sky. My aunt had fallen on her knees and prayed to God as she was afraid of the "Doomsday", i.e. when everything is destroyed, and only the angels and God alone would live. Whether they would look like people or rather like animal images, my aunt could not explain. She thought they would probably look like humans. The poor soul had been on her knees for several hours, and prayed reverently as she thought herself to be very sinful.

Drowsy after crying and many long prayers, she had stood up to go home. When she had turned her face towards the morning, the eastern direction, she had noticed a bloody red cross, formed of clouds, on the vault of the sky. Now, Triin had fallen on her knees, anticipating an immediate end of the world. She wouldn't dare to make a step. In the morning, she was found by a villager who had helped her go home.

Triin had ailed for several weeks. She did not complain about any pain or bother anywhere, but still could not get out of her bed. When I went to see her, she looked at me with a strange glance and whispered: "A war will break out, a big war; a lot of people will be dragged into this. Many will be killed and you will also go."

I did not believe her at first but in 1938, when I served as a conscript in the polygon unit of Valkla artillery I recalled this again. World war II commenced in 1938. The fascists attacked Poland. In 1939, Soviet troops marched

into Estonia. Fascist occupation. Concentration camps and crematoriums, I also had to take part in this as a prisoner of Kaunas Stalag 336, currently P fost.

Is there a person wise enough in the world who could tell as to how many perished in World War II – there is no one to be found! The prediction of aunt Triin turned out to be true. After the Great War, when I came into contact with my aunt for the last time, she still remembered this, but refused to retell her revelation. Still, my aunt was convinced that all this had been the foretelling of God, as the young and old have withdrawn from faith, they don't go to church nor pray to God. There were many, many more awful "things" for us to anticipate in the future (RKM II 385, 524/7 < Pärnu town < Jämaja parish (1985)).

However, there are many more recordings of religious generalisations which have not been individualised:

When the northern lights are really widely displayed and when crosses and lines are seen on the sky, and when the sky is red – this means war or great changes (H, Kase, 100 a < Halliste parish).

The descriptions in the sample texts are associated with symbols and signs heralding the coming perdition and imminent changes. The conception of the cyclic nature of the world – destruction would occur after the passing of predestined years, after which the world would born new – is a part of the end of the world belief. The length of the cycle is determined differently in different cultures. Estonian tradition narrates about the length of the world of several thousand years, whereas the references made in the 19th century recordings indicate that "this is written in the Bible" or "this is how it has been predicted". A century later, it is the association with the turn of the millennium that becomes salient as a sign of the end.

In the year two thousand, when it expires, the end of the world will come. It would not come right away and maybe it would take a year or two (RKM II 461, 321 (8) < Võnnu parish (1986)).

It seems that one of the functions of conventional beliefs is to check the morale of human society, uniting the end terms with the downfall of the world and creation. Pursuant to popular

logic, the vital force of creation becomes exhausted in the course of time, and at the peak of its degradation, everything that has decayed or spoilt will perish or be ended. The reason for this destruction can be the physical and moral degeneration of people and wildlife (popular explanations: hens are not able to lay eggs, people have big heads but small hands and legs; a hen's egg has to be carried between two men as mankind has weakened to an extent that one man could not be able to carry an egg). Another outbreak of a wave of fear, anticipating mankind with a large head and weak physical body occurred again concurrently with the spread of personal computers, and later, a relevant concern was launched by the Internet, associated with its entertaining opportunities and communication networks. Those worrying about the issues comprised ordinary citizens, teachers and literati.

Most of the beliefs, including the prophetic messages of Nostradamus (1503–1566) that had aroused the cultural space of Europe for centuries were associated with the year 2000. The exact timing of the end of the world enlivened discussions during the second half of the century and impelled people to look for signs of crisis in technology, nature and society. Global wars, economic crises, dissemination of information and the media were merely augmenting the meaning of the threatening signs. Relying on the appearing of comets (Kõiva 2007) and signs in nature, certain dates had been set for the end of the world, decades prior to the coming of the new millennium. Hardly could one date pass when a new one was suggested. Armageddon, and the exchange of the eras concurrent with the millennium, i.e. the coming of the so-called era of light, together with the beginning of the world of the creatures of light, was frequent topics for conversations. Global warming was considered the cause of destruction – Tallinn would drown due to melting icebergs or flood waters released as a result of an unexpected catastrophe – or global pollution or the coming of an ice age. Likewise, rumours spread about a new untreatable disease starting off in Africa, similar to AIDS, killing everyone irrespective of the gender, age and nationality, thus eliminating people in the majority of the regions in the world. Large cities with a high concentration of inhabitants were supposed to experience particular destruction. People were also afraid of a global nuclear war as the only living

creatures to survive would be spiders and rats, and hopefully also a few people somewhere on the islands of the Southern Sea. The regaining of independence in Estonia released warning narratives of a mass-scale famine and, simultaneously, of a locus deserving a special wrath of God, destined to undergo full destruction during a major catastrophe in the near future.

Folklore and mythic thinking connects the end of the world with more substantial mythical catastrophes: everything alive would perish in the course of the war of the worlds. The perishing would be unleashed as a punishment for the disgraceful deeds of divine creatures, as a consequence for violating legitimate norms, as the tragic perishing of gods and people in the *Older Edda*, as a result of treacherous and mean acts. The opinion prevalent from the early Modern Times, i.e. that the persistence of the world is jeopardised by the sinning of people, violation of the laws of the Kingdom of God, and lack of faith, is still clearly perceivable in the written records from the end of the 19th century.

It is only in the 20th century when the main reason for the end of the world – violation of the rules set by God, followed by a punishment, i.e. the end of the world mutually effected by God and nature – is complemented by the relevant beliefs which highlight the latter times as a consequence of thoughtless and selfish behaviour of people. Such beliefs, in the form of narratives, express fears and warning motifs against excessive consumption, pollution of nature, and the attempts to clone wildlife and human beings, genetically modify crops and animals, regarded just as dangerous as the inevitably imminent third World War with power weapons of mass destruction, the final act of everything living.

Human activity, or more widely, the development of technology brought about a renewal of some old motifs: the destruction is released by the revolt of machines against their creators. The motifs of a human being as a dangerous creator, the one whose mind and creation would affect the destiny of the planet, or as a creature destroying the globe, emerged in the 20th century, next to the problematic concerning the responsibility of mankind and collectively generated negative sum total, proceeding from the moral behaviour of all people. Belief motifs narrate about the destruction unleashed by the stupidity and

flippancy of Homo sapiens, his lust for gaming, etc. The idea of the revolt of machines evolved into dreadful stories of how machines would unexpectedly develop and reach the same level as human beings, or how there would be an accidental deviation or a programming error in the machines. Only a decade ago, prior to the year 2000, the United States of America were overwhelmed with the panic of the Y2K problem. Official institutions and agencies recommended people to procure food, candles and cash and stay at home in order to avoid the chaos caused by the fact that home utensils, banking systems and industrial machines would cease to operate due to programming errors at the turn of the millennium. According to Brenda E. Brasher, an online-religion researcher, such prophetic forecasts moulded the public, whose initial attitude with regard to the new had been relatively neutral, into the audience participating in the panic. Predictions and cyber-panic met the expectations of fundamentalist Christians (Brasher 2004: 56 ff.), however, our own contemporary memories of the time allow us to see the effect of prophetic messages on human behaviour.

> *The "latter-day" prophets have again awakened from their hibernation during the last decade. In 1997, my parents moved away from the San Francisco Bay area in order to be saved from a great earthquake prophesied for South-California. This earthquake was supposed to destroy Hollywood due to its immoral pollution and the perverseness of San Francisco homosexuals. The same prophetic message declared that North-California is going to be a coastal area.*
>
> *My father and mother moved from the Bay to Nevada, in the vicinity of Lake Tahoe, to find the prophesied "restricted aviation space". At the time when my parents were settling in their new place, several prophets began to proclaim the forthcoming global famine, known all over the world as the "Y2K" fever. We had to be judged for the reason that we had celebrated our intellect as god. This was a perfect "God's plan", according to which the blind hope in one's smartness was actually the stupidity of man. It seemed that the Lord had obscured the eyes of all computer freaks, in order for them not to discover that soon, due to the absence of one number, the entire world would starve. What an end! Mutinies were supposed to break out*

> *on streets and people were to face a temptation to cannibalise their neighbours and children. As a next step, businesses and governments were to fall. Some were even prophesying that this would initiate the so-called "Mother of All Wars". People were massively buying generators and weapons to protect their dinner table "in the name of the Lord". Not to mention that all these preparations turned out to be senseless, but my parents still have to spend hours to drive to the seashore* (Valloton 2007).

Another old motif was modified – the birth of a (human) creature or a messiah ruining the world, primarily bearing in mind a person growing up in an unknown rural area to change the destiny of the world, yet who sometimes acquired a specific name and face of a ruler of a large country. An unusual birthmark – symbol of the beast – on Mikhail Gorbachev's face, together with the reforms shaking the policy of the Soviet Union and the standstill economy caused the foretellers and the common people to see in him the embodiment of the beast who would destroy the world. The fear of changes, connected with the collapse of the Soviet Union, was expressed in the prophecies of the newest era, prediction of a symbolic apple cart that Gorbachev was to turn over, causing destruction.

Interesting political fantasies entail fears that scientists would put a new body (computers) to Stalin's or Lenin's head, preserved somewhere in a laboratory, and thus regenerate an extreme evil to rule and destruct the world. Such motifs, similarly to some of the above-mentioned technological phobias, are inspired by a fear regarding science as a destructive force.

The new super-creatures of belief narratives are aliens, UFOs, a higher and hostile civilisation whose mission, according to folklore narratives, is to experiment with people, and, as a more long-term plan, destroy our world (cf. the relevant American subject matter Stewart & Harding 1999: 296 ff.).

The common denominator for all the listed omens of doom is the setting of the given terms, either as a definite date and year, or as an ambiguous near future. The 20th century is particularly abundant in soothsaid certain end-of-the-world dates and years (the relevant list related to comets, e.g., Kõiva 2007: 181). Retrospectively, these dates were later associated with the beginning of certain wars and other subversive pivotal events:

> *I was still a schoolchild at the time, when one day the Sun was supposed to move low across the sky. I looked at the sun and it was really lower. This was in mid-winter. It was in the thirties and this was the day when people said that it was going to be the end of the world. That it wouldn't be just for nothing, the sun being like that* (RKM II 371, 699/700 (11) < Viru-Jaagupi parish).

Reflection of social and cultural changes is another common feature of the omens of the end of the world. For instance, technological and social alterations of the last centuries are clearly apparent in folklore records, similarly to the fact that the doomsday fears tend to constantly integrate new interpretations and causes for destruction. The presented non-exhaustive list characterises the great changes of the previous century and altered cultural-economic circumstances, and highlights the impact of the scientists' newer explanations on popular beliefs. The more up-to-date discoveries in astronomy, physics, genetics and other sciences have also substantially complemented the list of the omens of the end of the world. Symbols, signs and explanations point out the typical, stereotypical, repeated messages and novel original ideas from the context of the era. Likewise, the production of a certain ideology and fixation of social norms seems to be the task of the omens of the end of the world. The omens reflect and are closely connected with the events that intimidate social groups – be it unexpected changes in the law or surmised reforms. Every major social change, particularly in the economy or in the behavioural strategies of male and female genders would also unleash doomsday omens. Thus, at the beginning of the 20th century, when women began to have short hair and miniskirts, Estonians were predicted to be witnessing the end of the world.

Predictions by Prophets

The advice and doomsday predictions by prophets have a special place in the landscape of the end-of-the-world omens. By way of transmitting an invariant message and publicly proclaiming the divine truth, prophets indeed affected the popular belief system. Biblical prophets (Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Habakkuk,

Isaiah and others) acted in crisis situations. Likewise, Estonian folk prophets who interpreted the word of god in an idiosyncratic and personal manner, and mediated this with personal visions, revelations and messages, emerged at the times of crisis or religious reforms. Personal charisma, combined with spontaneous behaviour, was the common feature of the autodidactic explicators of the Scriptures, with different backgrounds and aspirations.

Prophetic lore has been in the focus of scholarly interest during a couple of periods, providing a rare opportunity to obtain data of the specific features regarding the religious feelings of people, and the personalities of prophets. Järve Jaan, an 18th century prophet represented in the Folklore Archives with a number of texts, has been categorised by Johann Matthias Eisen as the one belonging within the discourse of earlier non-Estonian prophets (Eisen 1921). The next researchers (Rudolf Põldmäe, Olav Sild, Uku Masing, Kristi Salve) have dealt with the origin, destiny and revelations of individual prophets, and their impact on the proximal religious grouping (Põldmäe 1935, 1937; Sild 1929, 1935; Masing 1935; Salve 1998, 2000). Primarily, the relevant observation has encompassed the religious leaders and prophets of the awakening movement of the 18th and 19th century Brethren congregations.

The more extensive prophetic movement – the so-called heaven-goers – was practised at the beginning of the 19th century; among the prophets of the time there were also women and teenage girls (Põldmäe 1935; Sild 1935; Kalkun 2006). The major figures of the 19th century also comprised prophet Maltsvet (Masing 1993 [1934–1935]), Habakkuk II, Kordo, from the area of Vastseliina (Salve 2000), Järva Jaan (also Järve Jaan; Eisen 1921) and others. According to Rudolf Põldmäe's estimation, the movement of heaven-goers entails abundant general human characteristics, apparent among every nation upon the emergence of appropriate circumstances. In conclusion, Põldmäe highly appreciates this prophetic movement:

> *Conditioned by the specific dispositions of our bondservant peasants, this movement, purely religious in the beginning, evolved also into an economic-social endeavour striving towards a goal, thus, to a certain extent, it was a preparation for the later political and cultural awakening*

period, maturing both men and women in joint actions protecting their rights and teaching them to stick together during the most difficult turning points (Põldmäe 1935: 176–177).

When observing the predictions by prophets, and the religious and lifestyle related requirements set for the members of the congregation, prophecies are a part of a wider social critique or ideology. The criticised stratifications of society have attempted to mitigate the prophecies by way of punishments, supervision, admonitions and healthy expertise.

For instance, Tallima Paap, an 18th century prophet strived for social equality (the manor-owners were regarded to be devils who should be deprived of their manors, their assets and property divided between people in a brotherly manner), whereas at the same time, he also called upon people to renounce mundane conceited things and decorations, and follow an ascetic lifestyle.

Similar requirements are repeated in the standpoints of the prophets of the 19th century. When comparing the predictions by Järva Jaan and prophet Kordo from Orava, Vastseliina, it is possible to note great similarities. Predictions concerning daily life are outlined by way of the mediation of lengthy individualised narratives. Some of these stories, due to the general human message therein, have become adapted and been spread from mouth to mouth during a longer period of time.

Järva Jaan (also Järve Jaan)

- **Technical innovations:** train (instead of horses, fire and water would be once used for dragging heavy loads), telegraph; a musical instrument would sound in the church and the congregation would be quiet.
- **Changes in daily and social life:** attire (boots – the footsoles of men would be pasted), draining of marshlands, scarcity of fish, loads of juniper berries travelling in the seas.
- **The destiny of individuals:** concerns the fate of people or building in Pärnumaa and old Läänemaa.
- **Political changes:** Russia would shrink and would once be of a horse-shoe shape. He predicted the victory of the Swed-

ish sword. One thousand years of peace cannot come before the Russian Tsar would see the borders of the Tsarist Russia from his Kremlin windows. According to the forecast, the manor-owners would come back for some time in order to soon leave forever. The Turks would once reach as far as the Kirbla church.

- **Religious issues and the end of the world:** the completion of the bridge on the Rumba River would be followed by the end of the world or a great war. (The bridge on the Rumba River was finished in 1939, a week later the Germans attacked Poland, starting the World War.)

Kordo

- **Technical innovations:** railway, airplanes, cars, telegraph (there will be time when as if a human spirit would move around the world, and at such a speed, and it would do and take care of everything; and the iron horse would move around, drinking water and eating fire).
- **Changes in daily and social life:** money would be measured in bushels, and there would such a demand for bread; a lot of officials, destruction of manors, manor-lands would be redistributed; Estonians would have their own land but the plots would be very small, with boundary marks noted down for everyone.
- **Religious issues and the end of the world:** the faith would disappear, so that people would not go to church any longer and the devil would walk on the land; "A time of great wars will come and the people will perish so that there will be no rooster singing or dog barking from Riga to Pskov. The people who would survive would look for the traces of others but not find any. Such a time will come, when a human being, finding the traces of another man, would burst out crying; mankind would weaken so much that a man would not be able to turn an egg over the sharp edge.

Several doomsday motifs can be found in the prophecies of heaven-goers, described by Rudolf Põldmäe and collected in the folklore corpus, thus allowing us to make conclusions with regard to the existing reciprocal effects of both parts of the tradition:

> *God would send white rats as a menace to attack people, to eat flesh off their bones. There would also be other castigations, if people did not repent and turn to God. His speeches confused people to such an extent that the manor owners considered it necessary to build a house of prayer on the spot to calm the souls* (Põldmäe 1935: 168).

> *According to another prediction, the heaven-goers from Viljandi prophesied that iron would start talking against iron prior to the doomsday – this would be the telegraph. When women start walking with uncovered heads – earlier, this would have been an unthinkable violation of the valid custom – and when hair is tied in the back of the head (a fashion of the time!), this would again mean that the latter days are coming nearer. But before all this, there would be a great awakening and many will be blessed in the course of this* (Põldmäe 1935: 172).

Uku Masing is of the opinion that in the beginning, the Juhan Leinberg or prophet Maltsvet movement "was much more eccentric eschatologically than in the later stage. At first, Maltsvet predicted the end of the world, and as it was imminent, he demanded that people should repent" (Masing 1935). Likewise, in addition to religious reforms, certain guidelines for conduct and daily norms, Maltsvet's prophecies also comprise political and social demands, criticism and scepticism with regard to the Russian state. Disposition with the official church (the Brethren congregations, in the case of Maltsvet) is similar to the one of the earlier prophets; his predictions also amalgamate personal and collective history, enriched with rendering value to a proper religious conduct.

Juhan Leinberg has repeatedly determined the time for the end of the world. Accidentally, he made an error when predicting the date for doomsday in 1858. However, Leinberg himself and his assistant prophets have given twelve dates for the coming of the White Ship and the doomsday, from February 3, 1860 to May 24, 1861. This fact indicates that the disciples and followers had an unwavering faith in their prophet – although nothing happened and new dates for doom were set over and over again, the prophet's message was still being believed in. Matthias Johann Eisen, relying on different folk

tales, refers to failed miracles and prophecies within a longer period of time, yet this did not deprive the followers of their faith:

> *He found a lot of followers when delivering his sermons and demanding repentance. He promised to take them to Samaria, through the sea yet still dry. In addition to preaching, he was eagerly prophesising: "Everyone who is not following me will perish in 1862. There will be such bloodshed in Estonia, with blood reaching up to the ankle-bone." In another time, he predicted again: "Next spring the Holy Spirit will take all the chosen ones away on a cloud." And in yet another instance he shouted to the river: "Stop! So that we could cross with dry feet!" When his prophecies were not fulfilled, he accused the people of being incredulous. Later, he promised to take his followers from Lasnamäe to Canaan on board a white ship. Instead of the ship that never came, Maltsvet took his disciples to the Crimea, on the land* (Eisen 1921).

Uku Masing is of the opinion that for Maltsvet, who had extensive knowledge of the Bible, the end of the world was actually a passing catastrophe and rather an omen of tougher times. Masing refers to an instance when the exiles had given orders to their children to follow them to the Crimea, as "within three years, Estonia would become empty, and then the fire and sword would follow, bringing an end to the country". According to other data, a war was supposed to break out, killing all those who were not the followers of Maltsvet (Masing 1993: 153). The latter prophecies are similar to these of the great famine and destruction, predicted more than a hundred years later, in the 1990s, referred to above, and also to the soothsaying of the Elu Sõna church (Word of Life congregation). Järva Jaan's omens of the end of the world are related to changes in the proximate vicinity, whereas the time-wise distance with the forecasted events is more ambiguous: the burning of villages for the second time (e.g. Lavassaare village), sinking of the ground in front of the Vee inn, Ott would become the owner of the Alttõnise farm in Kuresoo, the land under the dam of Kõima water mill would be turned into a field, Naartsi sacred grove would dry and the village of Naartsi would be lost, a bridge would be built on the Rumba river, etc.

Some of his omens of doom are associated with the forthcoming social and economic changes: when Pereküla becomes a town, i.e. when chimneys are built on houses and curtains put in front of the windows, when fatted oxen are used as draught animals, when people start going to shops, the end-day would come soon.

Several deadlines suggested by the prophet are extremely stereotypical and generalised, allowing adjusting them to different historical circumstances: when an ox goes berserk in Mihkli church or when Turkish stallions neigh in Kirbla church, doomsday would not be far away. Such messages were fitted with the anti-clerical policy of the Soviet power in the 20th century, providing reasoning for empty churches and secularising society. Explications associated with the Turks have obtained a new meaning after joining the European Union, which now out-shadows the earlier interpretations related to the Crimean War and the migration of people after World War II. Many of Järva Jaan's prophecies provide a wide freedom for interpretation even today, with regard to technological achievements and changes in the environment (*the latter day would come soon when iron rails are placed all over the country*). Likewise, the salient activities in the case of the important prophets of the 20th century, Saaremaa Seiu (Seiu from Saaremaa Island) and Karl Reits, comprise social (harsh maltreatment of the lower populace, the wrong lifestyle of the manors and the church) and general political criticism and calls for repentance prior to the coming of the one thousand years of peace, besides religious issues and the critique of the official church.

The Last Minutes of Our Earth and Karl Tõnisson's Religious-philosophical Developments

Where should we position the Bible-research-based leaflet by Karl Tõnisson, nicknamed as Brother Vahindra and Barefoot Tõnisson, foretelling the end of the world? As of the middle of the 15th century, leaflets were spread, as a medium of political views, and later as business advertisements, in churches, at fairs

and in other crowded events, charging for them a small fee. The content of leaflets was broadened during the 18th century, yet format-wise, the illustrated visual side retained its relevance, comprising nearly a third of the entire printed matter. Such designed leaflets were used as decorative elements on the walls, even in homes of illiterate people. The ones with strange wild animals and landscapes, unknown creatures and monsters were particularly appreciated. One of the oldest illustrated leaflets, Ensisheim thunderstone (1492), designed by Sebastian Brant, depicts falling meteorites as an omen of a disaster. According to Rudolf Põldmäe (1935: 153), inserts of coloured pictures of judgement and doomsday, in popular books at the end of the 19th century, were abundantly used as decorative elements in farmsteads; one of such depictions is presented as an illustration to this article.

In addition, the leaflets described sensational news and talked about miracles, predictions, curing of souls, and conveyed political and military news. Since the Reformation, leaflets became an important medium for disseminating religious viewpoints. Thousands of flyers on specific subject matters, distributed free of charge, were a significant method in the 20th century, used, e.g., for spreading false information about Jews in Germany, intimidation, and primarily for political and military propaganda and campaigns, although the leaflets did not fully lose their purpose to inform people of health issues, etc.

The Last Minutes of Our Earth (Tõnisson 1907) falls in the period when the author was a questing Lutheran – descendant-wise he indeed was one – and is coherent with his status of mind, i.e. at the time he was still looking for a new means of expression and ideology to explicate the world. The author's self-presentation as a biblical and history researcher, and citations of the Books of Revelation, Daniel, Matthew, Jeremiah and Ezekiel indicate his good command of the scriptures, whereas the text refers to his skills to transfer his message by way of operating with reference books, fiction and historical facts. There are five illustrations in the leaflet: the image seen by King Nebuchadnezzar in his dream, with the meaning thereof explained to him by prophet Daniel; two pictures of a dark day in New England on May 19, 1780; a meteor shower on November 13, 1833, captured as "The destruction of our Earth that would soon

happen", with a reference to Matt. 24, 27. Regarding the design of the first and second pages of the leaflet, there are two wood carvings adjacent to each other placed next to the picture of the symbol image in the header. The leaflet begins by explaining the decline of the world, using the scriptures of the Book of Daniel and the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Let us follow his way of thought, without altering the presented factology. Each part of the image is associated with a certain political-historical statehood. The head, made of gold, depicts the Babylonian Kingdom (677–538 BC), silver chest and arms the Persian Empire (538–331 BC), copper stomach and hips the Greek statue (331–161 BC) – he mentions that the founder is Alexander the Great who had conquered Asia and other known countries of the time, within 12 years –, iron shins depict the Roman Empire (161 BC – 483 AD): one shin is pagan Rome and the other papal Rome – after the collapse of one the other would rise from the ruins. Tõnisson writes: "The Pope of Rome was a mighty man of power (referred to in the Bible as the beast and false Christ) who made all the most powerful rulers shiver." The ten toes of the figure are made of iron, and partially, of clay; these 10 states are, according to Tõnisson (and in his manner of writing) are: Huns, Eastern Goths, Western Goths, Franks, Vandals, Suevics, Heruls, Burgundians, Anglo-Saxons and Lombardians who gave birth to Italy, Portugal, Spain, Germany, France, England, Austria, etc.

Karl Tõnisson continues with a biblical citation where Nebuchadnezzar sees a stone falling on the feet of the image (Daniel 2:34–35), where after the entire image is broken into pieces "and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them". According to Tõnisson, the stone epitomises the eternal Kingdom of Christ which will end all current states in our days and remain forever. This is the time, according to his subsequent discussion, when people would live in the "toes" of the image, the time of small states, and he is of the opinion that there will be no more empires and large states, even individual countries cannot be united and remain alone until the end.

In retrospect, his 1907 conviction that the time of large united states was over, seems humoristic. Particularly in the background of his later personal political utopia, Pan-Baltonia (he began to plan this in the 1920s), or when recalling that the Soviet Union (one sixth of the whole planet – the self-designation of the

Figure 2. The image seen by King Nebuchadnezzar in his dream.

gigantic state) was about to emerge in approximately ten years of time, with Greater Germany and other new unions to follow.

K. Tõnisson's discussion categorises countries into rich and poor ones, concordantly to the material of the toes of the symbol image: powerful states comprise England and North-America, and weak ones Switzerland, Belgium and other states of the clay toes. As usual with economic prognoses, neither has this proved to be right in the course of time. In his further discus-

sion, Tõnisson commences with prophesising the last minutes of our Earth. "We are living quite close to the end, and it is possible to ascertain this with the help of the Bible that the current mankind is the last one. A couple of examples of this," he writes, referring that in Matt. 24, Jesus talked about the end of the world and mentioned three signs: 1) earthquake, 2) darkening of the sun, 3) stars falling from heaven. Tõnisson, referring to those who have beheld this: "The people of this generation shall not end until all this will take place." Karl Tõnisson introduces the three omens of the end-times. The first was an earthquake in Lisbon in 1795 and the second, a dark day in North-America and elsewhere on May 19, 1780. In an interesting way, he hereby highlights the person whose works are used even today as an ancillary source – Tõnisson mediates the darkened day related information by way of Noah Webster's work: [---] in his globally noted dictionary (under the title of famous names), he writes the following: "The dark day, a day (May 19, 1780) when a remarkable and unexplained darkness extended over all New England. The darkness in some places was so intensive that for several hours, it was impossible to read simple printed letters outside." The third sign, according to Tõnisson, is the meteor storm on November 13, 1833, the largest of a kind during the last couple of centuries. Again, he finds confirmation from the writings of scientists: "Professor Almstead writes about this: "The shower of stars in 1833 was substantial enough to extend over a significant part of the country, spreading from the East-Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, far towards the west, and from the shores of the northern part of South-America to the undeterminable boundaries of British colonies in the north. It was visible everywhere, and almost everywhere the scene was the same. This event cannot be regarded a mundane phenomenon any longer and has to be considered as one of the celestial ones.""

Karl Tõnisson's further elaboration relies on the Bible, on one hand, and also on the fact that 75 years had passed from the last sign – the storm of stars:

> [---] *we reach the firm and unwavering yet also formidable decision: people who are 80 years old will see the coming of Jesus from the clouds – yes, all of us living on the Earth at the moment, we will see through those terrible*

times which can be expected to happen soon. We will all face a terrible fate. All people to the last will be liquidated from the Earth, slaughtered and their bodies will cover the Earth from one end of the land to another (see Jer. 25, 33), will be given as food to birds under the sky (see Ezek. 39:17–29 and Rev. 17–21). Only a small group of people will be saved, the ones whose names have been written in the Book of Life in the heaven, and who do not worship the beast or his image but who keep to the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus (Rev. 14:12, 22:14). The only way of salvation is the one shown to us in the Bible. Let us all make the effort to carefully study the Bible and fill all the prescriptions and orders therein. The eternal knowledge and commandments of God are written in the Bible and all those who follow them will get to eternal life – to the new land, whereas those who disdain these shall be destroyed together with this planet.

And he finishes his brief discussion with an exclamation: "Let everyone now choose either eternal life or death!"

His prophesy has a clear and logical structure, relying on the knowledge of the Bible and the authority of learned men. Science and the printed texts of scholars are an equally trustworthy source as the Bible, an objective and authoritarian confirmation of what has happened. This is a new trait in prophetic lore, similarly to the use of different levels of quotations to confirm and disseminate one's message. These symbolic signs are the important events in history, there is no reason to doubt in them, and although two of the relevant events have been visible only in America, they are more widely known by way of art and printed matter. The calls for studying the Bible and living a proper life are presented only at the end of the leaflet. The entire prophesising is a well-contemplated discussion, not an imagery obtained by way of a specific revelation or a retelling of a supernatural experience. The location of the revelation is symbolic, remains obscure and is not transmitted to a local landscape. The author aims at appealing for repentance and biblical studies prior to the doomsday, yet he endows this in the discussion affirmed with specific years, dates and quotations. At the same time, the belief in the end of the world is nothing eternal or physical, the relevant torments are known from the texts of books.

This leaflet, with argumentations therein, is indeed in concordance with the rationally minded norms of the 19th century. Historical facts are skilfully chosen and effective. At least the 1833 shower of stars was widely reflected in folklore and served as a basis for a number of quondam prejudices (e.g. Kronk 2010; Space Science 1999).

It is difficult to assess the impact of the printed leaflet on the quondam community; it was one of the interpretations of the beginning of the new millennium. In his religious pursuits, Karl Tõnisson moved further from Christian scriptures and proclaiming of faith, searching for the old native religion of Estonians, writing on this subject matter and creating the native faith relying on his knowledge. Undoubtedly, he had scarce and superficial knowledge of the Estonian native religion, sustained by the popular texts of literati, and the ones published in the media during the national awakening era, and by his own fantasy rather than relying on a more thorough knowledge of folklore. In his home area, Umbusi, located in the vicinity of a massive bog, there were neither rich and old farms nor abundant folkloric knowledge. Indeed, this fact allowed Tõnisson, a person who had repeatedly ruptured, altered, synthesised his self-image and self-identity towards a direction filled with new symbols, to freely elaborate on fantasy-rich and home-made philosophic approaches. Mait Talts (2003), a researcher of Karl Tõnisson, indicates that Tõnisson fantasised on his life history and constantly falsified his biography. Anyway, the leaflet and the published books form an integral entirety with the life history. The leaflet mediates religious contemplations, soothsaying of the doomsday, reflecting the texture and content of the alternating identity in a specific phase of his life.

His subsequent writings form an integral entirety with his altered identity and life history. His contacts with theosophy, which had gained popularity in Europe, during his travels to Riga and Russia, and closer contacts with Buddhism experienced in the expanses of Russia, changed Tõnisson's mentality. In 1923, he returned from St. Petersburg, the Babel of people and centre of red ideology, to Estonia, having obtained Latvian citizenship. According to Mait Talts, the Estonian embassy refused to issue him a permission to return as Tõnisson intended to start preaching Buddhism.

Figure 3. Different symbols used in the cover design of Karl Tõnisson's book.

In his printed texts, particularly in the small publications at the end of the 1920s, Tõnisson presents the cult of sun and lightning of ancient Baltic peoples, referring to relevant similarities in Vedas and, more specifically in the Buddhist worldview, recurrently intertwining his conflicts with the local society and his dreams of future. Indeed, he remained to be the bearer of the mentality of village poets, and spoke of his life and society in the form of poetry, a trend more prevalent at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. Inserting exaggerations and using sharp language, he conveys real life and fantasies, being original in some instances, yet more prevailingly, the speaking trumpet of the trends of thought of his era and popular standpoints. Admiration of his body and the promotion of his spirit are the common features of his written works; he also opposes his standpoints to the "vertebral god" of the Christians.

I am the first Buddhist priest on the Baltic coast. My official or secular name is Karlis ennisons, and Vahindra – as a monk or clerical. I am persecuted and ridiculed by the masses of Christian Estonian people, as a robber, thief, killer, arsonist, etc.... and also smeared as a lunatic-barefoot pagan priest. I am an evolutionist but not a revolutionist. I am an idealist and a sportsman practising a special kind of sports. I am a member of "Sangha", the order of Tibetan friars. I am a philosopher and the apostle of the first promoter of Buddhist philosophy in the three current Baltic States: in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. I am a neo-nationalist and a neo-anti-Semite.

And then in future
The black or red hell can never intimidate us.
One day, far away in the east
Tshingiz Khan will appear.
Emperor of the Turanian people,
The famous Tammerlaan.

Tõnisson, when speaking of the native religion, highlights the ideal sides thereof, refers to the nation's difficult past, which, in his opinion, is still not yet in the past but instead, continues to exist in the present of the 1920s. Mait Talts has referred to another popular movement emerging in Europe at the time – in the 1920s, native religions were taken to the political and identity-related arena which brought about a more broad-based promotion and practising of paganism. For Tõnisson, this period, the post-latter-day-omen era was also the time of building and melting paganism with Buddhism in his idiosyncratic manner. Tõnisson's written work partially fits in with the contemporary treatises on the elaboration of the native religion. Under the name of Brother Vahindra, he writes in a small booklet *Tulevane Pan-Baltoonia Ilmariik ja selles kuldses riigis asuvate Buddha-, Päärkonsi, Pikse- ehk taarausu preestrite seadus* ('The future Pan-Baltonia and the law of Buddhist, Perkunas or Taara priests in this golden state'):

[---] *if you are patriotic and truly love your fatherland, please purchase this book and believe in my prophecy, and be aware that the ancient pagan national heroes of the peoples on the Baltic coast are about to come, the bold and mighty former historical leaders of these peoples who had*

> *fearlessly fought against the knights, the faithful servants of the Jewish god, i.e. the disseminators of Christianity, and protected our national faith until the last drop of blood, as did the ancient national heroes of Estonians-Livonians and Latvians-Lithuanians: Imanta, the quondam commander of the joint armies of Latvia and Livonia, and Lembit, the Estonian hero, and Gediminas, the ancient hero and king of Lithuanians* (Vahindra 1928).

The fighting anti-Christian style in Karl Tõnisson's writings (what he had managed to change primarily into an anti-Jewish attitude, as, at the beginning of the century, he had ignored living as the subject of the gigantic state of Russia) merges with fantasies and tacit imitation and citation of cultural texts. E.g., in his publication *Mina ja minu jüngrid usume nõnda* ('Me and my disciples believe so') he writes:

> *Taara aka Perkunas is helping us, we look forward to the kingdom of justice. We don't need arms and lances for establishing the state of Pan-Baltonia. We look forward to the coming of Imanta, where after our enemies shall perish. The bunch of those who hesitate, disbelievers and Jews the crooks would then disappear.*
>
> *Oh, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, how sad is your past! I prophesise, there'll be a golden future once. We've walked the path of freedom for ten years by now, but religious-wise the Baltic peoples are still in slavery.–*
>
> *Oh, come a breeze of wind and wipe away the darkness,*
> *So that the sounds of Baltic prayers*
> *Could still be heard in the sacred grove....* (Vahindra 1928).

In frequent occasions, Tõnisson utilises the prosody intrinsic of the newer folk song, simple rhyming patterns and stereotypic expressions for presenting his ideas:

Hom mani Padme Hum	Om Mani Padme Hum
Suur Buddha kaitse Baltimaad,	Great Buddha, protect the Baltic lands,
Me isa-ema hällimaas,	The cradle of our mothers and fathers,
Meid Balti ema sünnitand	The Baltic mother has given birth to us

Ning Balti pind meid kasvatand.	And Baltic soil has brought us up.
Ma Buddha jünger naeratan,	As the disciple of Buddha, I smile
Kui piinab, mure, rist,	When toil and hardship tortures me
Mul Eesti rahvas punununud	The people of Estonia have
On pärja ohakaist	Made me a juniper wreath
Om mani Padme Hum	Om mani Padme Hum

(Vahindra 1927).

Conclusion

In addition to the time-wise distinct prophesies, there are also many, passed on by oral tradition throughout times, which have been associated with different prophets. Mostly, these involve statements regarded as political omens, constituting a part of the popular interpretation process and offering hope for another future. *Russia would shrink and would once be of a horse-shoe shape. The triumph of the Swedish sword. One thousand years of peace cannot come before the Russian Tsar would see the borders of the Tsarist Russia from his Kremlin window* – these prophesies have been attributed to the heaven-goers, to Järva Jaan and Kordo. As a more recent relevant example, Hermiine Jürgens (1892–1976), known as the witch of Äksi, was said to have predicted in the 1980s that the Russian border would be seen from the Kremlin windows. Hermine Jürgens was not a prophet but instead, a lady with clairvoyant abilities residing in the vicinity of Tartu, and she mainly helped in looking for missing people. Indeed, political utopias and expectations, recollected by the mediation of prophecies, offered alternative opportunities to deal with history.

Some recurrent prophecies, as the ones by Kordo "there will be no rooster singing or dog barking from Riga to Pskov [---] when a human being finds the traces of another man, he would burst out crying" belong to the category of stereotypic legend formula. Earlier, this used to be an inseparable part of plague legends, depicting the awful emptiness when commencing with the creation of new life after the destruction of the pestilence.

Besides folk tradition, the prophesies and visions of Estonian prophets either rely on the Bible or follow the biblical message (see Kalkun 2006: 813). The language, metaphors and symbols used by the religious formulators of different centuries, are strictly related to their era and confessions. For instance, in the earlier prophetic lore, it is customary for the prophet to present herself as the bride of Jesus, and the entire semantics of the prophecy is Christ-centred (Salve 2000). However, the rhetoric of the prophets at the end of the 19th century and during the 20th century is totally different, highlighting the argumentative part and the relevant essence.

A number of Estonian prophets of the previous century can be characterised as the prophets of letters: well-known prophets have written down their standpoints and experience, the recordings have been also done by others, and their prophecies have been disseminated in writing. In this regard, Karl Tõnisson's leaflet serves as an authorised continuation of a longer tradition. Still, it is characteristic that at the beginning of the 20th century, prophesies focused on the sky and celestial phenomena, in addition to moral and religious issues.

Several prophets have come forward at difficult and economically unsuccessful times. The actions of prophets, however, or their emergence on the scene, are not solely related to external, socio-political, economic and identity-related issues. Instead, prophesising is associated with religious changes or with a need for such alterations. The behaviour and the message of the prophets can indeed give an impetus for changes or, instead, affect the alterations.

The leaflet about the last minutes of the Earth presents a logical part of folk-Christian views integrated with book culture, knowledge of history and the Bible. Due to the non-existence of an appropriate system of old Estonian native religion, Karl Tõnisson had to formulate it himself, render value and attribute certain ethical categories to the system. Tõnisson's writing-related activity and his Buddhist-pagan propaganda took place in a secularised society, the members of which were searching for new ways of religious expressions and bonds. Nevertheless, the writings by Karl Tõnisson refer to feelings and values distinct from the surrounding hegemonic social discourse.

The quondam news columns of the press informed the readers of the events which sought to be syncretic, combining Buddhism and the ancient native religion of Estonians, of dances in the scared groves and lectures diversified with gymnastics. The news items were complemented with printed publications wherein Karl Tõnisson self-centredly presents his immaculate naked body. He provides information about the establishment of a Buddhist sanctuary in Riga, and about Buddhism in general, in his weird idiosyncratic manner. Together with Friedrich V. Lustig (Buddhist name Ashin Ananda), his disciple and lifelong companion, Tõnisson travels to Paris in 1930, where after his direct contacts with Estonia break off.

Karl Tõnisson mediated several messages to society – the need for religious severity, Buddhism, theosophical amalgamations of different faiths, and the native religion, still in the formulation phase at the time.

As a token of respect and trust with regard to the message of the prophet, many of his disciples would not subject their symbol to an analysis. Maurice Bloch refers to respect as a general aspect of human life which always reveals itself when we do something or believe that something is true, relying on the authority of others, and we tend to constantly consider this (Bloch 2005: 135).

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Fear of Comets and Coping Mechanisms: Social Dynamics on the Example of a 17th Century Japanese Diary and Estonian Folklore Records

Abstract: The aim of the article is to outline comet-related folklore, the fear of comets, doomsday omens and the mechanisms for coping with this. The way comet folklore is reflected in social space, prophetic predictions and the dynamics of the process are viewed, using the example of the 17th century diary, written by the Japanese boy Matasaburou in 1664, and comparatively Estonian records.

Keywords: comet lore, doomsday omens, social dynamics, Japanese folklore, beliefs

After I had worked through the text corpus of comet sightings of about four hundred records digitised from the manuscript collections of the Estonian Folklore Archives, I was faced with questions I could not answer. The Estonian material represents a cross-section of verbal accounts describing one single phenomenon – from the middle of the 19th century to date, from the agrarian village society to the ever more urbanised present. The corpus is made up of short belief accounts and narratives with features of memorate accounts. First and foremost, they are retrospective omens of disaster or interpretations of such. Like other omens, comet omens include those of natural catastrophes, political, meteorological, astrological, luck and success omens. However, in the case of comets, bad omens make up the majority, compared to the dozen good omen accounts. Older

books and periodicals did not have much to add to this variability. Estonian comet omens are very much similar to German and the general international beliefs (cf. Bächtold-Stäubli & Hoffmann-Krayer 1987; Leach 1984: 243).

So, based on folklore and media texts – are good omens really the extreme minority? How are different omens activated with the appearance of a visible astral phenomenon, a comet? Considering the periodic nature of comets, shouldn't there be more accounts of relations between catastrophes and specific astral phenomena? We can't really answer these questions based on the archived folklore material. However, the mechanism of dispersion and action of comet folklore was revealed by an unexpected source I discovered in the Internet – a diary written by the Japanese boy Matasaburou in 1664.

Next I am going to review how comet lore acts in society, using the example of the 17th century diary, and comparatively Estonian records. The aim of the article is to outline comet-related folklore and the fear of comets and the mechanisms for coping with this.

The appearance of the Comet as Reflected in the Society

Astronomer Erik Tago points out that in the last three thousand years, nearly 70,000 comets have been registered:

> *Contemporary telescopes make it possible to discover a few dozen comets a year, but only one in every three years is visible to the naked eye and one in ten years is bright enough to merit wider attention from the public. So the few hundred brightest comets have been noted down in history one way or another* (Tago 1997).

A high frequency of appearances leads to the emergence of belief systems and their activation on recall, oral transmission of the heritage and presumably also a natural variability. Communication between different social groups within a society flows along networks of kinship, friendship and professional connections, jumping group borders by help of the media disseminating belief to all groups. For the last three centuries, at the least, what

people know has been also unified in many cultures by uniform school education and statements published in the media.

Studies about rumours assert that they involve some statement whose veracity is not quickly or ever confirmed. Gordon Allport and Joseph Postman (1947: 75) concluded that, over time rumour grows shorter, more concise, more easily grasped and told. Allport and Postman used three terms to describe the progress of rumour. They are: *levelling*, *sharpening*, and *assimilation*. Levelling refers to the loss of detail during the transmission process; sharpening to the selection of certain details which to transmit; and assimilation to a distortion in the transmission of information as a result of subconscious motivations. Just like rumours, discussions of beliefs and prejudices move across borders of social groups and, no doubt, contribute to the dramatization of a crisis situation. Beliefs are also similar to rumours in their social dynamics and the ability to transform into a socially disruptive panic.

One of the most noteworthy comets of the 19th century was seen in 1843, a very bright and long-tailed comet that was visible beside the sun for a long time. Its impact on the society can be found in many records, both in Estonia and elsewhere. The situation in America is described by Moncure Daniel Conway in his autobiography:

> *But the greatest sensation was caused by the comet of 1843. There was a widespread panic, similar; it was said, to that caused by the meteors of 1832. Apprehending the approach of Judgement Day, crowds besieged the shop of Mr. Petty, our preaching tailor, invoking his prayers. Methodism reaped a harvest from the comet. The negroes, however, were not disturbed; – they were, I believe, always hoping to hear Gabriel's trump* (Kronk *s.a.*).

That same comet was also noteworthy from the astronomer's point of view:

> *One of the most outstanding comets appeared in 1843. It passed very close to the surface of the Sun, being 60 times brighter than the full moon and visible during the day beside the Sun. Its tail was also the longest ever seen – approximately 300 million kilometres, i.e. two astronomical units* (Tago 1997).

Japanese astronomers Steve Renshaw and Saori Ihara have deciphered 17th century drawings by a 12-year-old boy of the celestial sphere and other astronomy descriptions that are remarkably captivating and tell us a lot about contemporary knowledge of astronomy and observations of the starry sky. The diary excerpts also give a golden opportunity for insights to the everyday life of the society and the heritage as well as the raw emotions of contemporary people. The youngster has meticulously recorded accounts of his daily life. Between everyday errands and work there is the story of the comet intertwined. So are the events of his home town, his visits and meetings, rumours and beliefs, circulating in the town. Matasaburou is objective within the limits of the knowledge of his time and age, noting down daily events, being sceptical and analytical towards hearsay. On December 16, 1664, he writes:

> *Some people are saying those 13 years ago, after the Siege of Osaka, there was a comet. Some people say this is right, and some people say this is wrong. Other people are saying that there was a comet the day before the Siege of Osaka Castle, and people also say there was a star like this at the time of the Shimabara conflicts* [riots by farmers in the early part of the Edo era, around 1637–1638] (Renshaw & Ihara 1996).

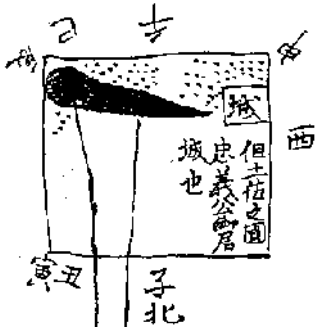
So, people refer to several earlier comets and connect their appearance with bad omens for the society. The next day, after having a discussion with the doctor whom the boy respects, Matasaburou adds:

> [---] *Dr. Jian also told me that the appearance of comets is a sign of evil. Something bad can happen like the emperor getting sick, or something bad could happen to the governor's health, or the land [feudal domain] could be changed.* [---] (Renshaw & Ihara 1996).

The Japanese youngster writes in his diary about the bad health of the aged governor already before the comet appeared – which suddenly casts a bad omen on his prospects of healing. Since the comet stays in the sky for months and the situation remains undecided, rumours take on the role of disseminating information. The trends and dynamics of beliefs are fascinating – initial connections with revolts are soon joined by ill health of ruler(s) and administrative land reforms.

Over time, different new explanations rise: the comet as a foreteller of good events is opposed to the distressing accounts of the comet as portender of some bad event.

In Estonian heritage, the appearance of a comet is related to all bigger wars of the 19th and 20th centuries that Estonians were involved in, as well as disease outbreaks. Since the Antiquities, the defeats and retirement from power of famous emperors and rulers (e.g. Augustus, Claudius, Nero, Vespasianus, and Napoleon) has been related to comets appearing in the sky. As a rule, the fate of the small people is governed by that of their ruler and great dangers such as hunger, plague or war.



Close-up of Matasaburou's First Drawing.

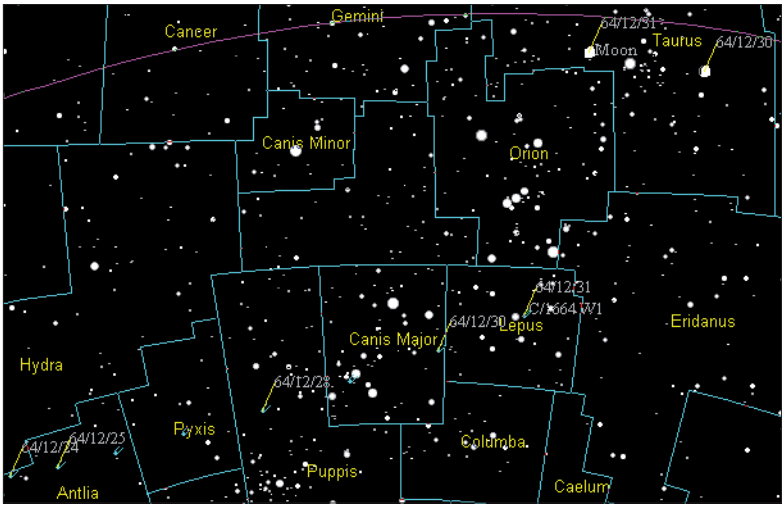
The content and context of rumours are universal. Comparing the 17th century Japanese notes with the 19th century Estonian folklore records show us few differences. The dynamics of dissemination, the locality of events and interpersonal relations are, however, more clearly seen from the narrative format of the diary. Although explanations typical of a nervous setting are predominant, there is no way to determine the extent to which people believed what they were telling. Probably the proponents of various positions believed their interpretation of whether it was a good or bad omen. Presumably, some role in this is played by the subconscious wish to maintain stability, to avoid outbreaks of panic and to that end present good omens to balance the bad ones. Or was it wishful thinking? Matasaburou writes in his diary that people are confused. We can see from his notes that more is talked about the possible good the comet augurs than we could imagine from what we know about any society, including the Estonian archival records:

> *People worry too much about it because every day they say some kind of revolution will happen. It may be true. But some say we don't have to worry about the comet because something good may happen.* [---] *Some people think there*

> *may be a war, but others say it's just not true... war or revolution or something to the emperor or something that will make high people fall. People are confused.* [---] (Renshaw & Ihara 1996).

The boy's daily notes have a routine beginning: "I woke up in the morning, fed my bird and did some homework" – the latter refers to copying poems and other small jobs. This is followed by descriptions of what kids, servants, adults do, festivities and everyday life and stories about the comet during the months it stayed in the sky. We also get to know Matasaburou's social network – for example the doctor he refers to is the personal doctor of the governor. Already on December 16 he knows that the comet was observed by the governor himself at 2 at night. His notes also report his own nightly observations of the comet,

The mass suicide of Heaven's Gate religious group recorded the Hale-Bopp comet in cultural history. The comet as photographed at Raadi, Tartu, on March 12, 1997. The picture presents both the white dust tail and the light-blue gas tail. Photo by Jaak and Helle Jaaniste.



The Sky Simulation of Comet C/1664 W1 and the Moon through December 31, 1664 (Gregorian). Full Moon will be on the morning of January 2, 1665.

which may also explain his more detailed descriptions of the weather conditions.

The boy also records what people remember about peculiarities in the sky during past events. Discussions continue in town for several months, their main topic is the previous appearances of comets and the catastrophes they supposedly evoked. In time, the boy realizes the superficiality and conflicts in the adults' knowledge, that they are based rather on hearsay and memories than regular observations. The town is also getting used to the comet and more and more often the question is raised – when will it disappear?

I have picked two noteworthy events from the diary as regards to the bad omens. One is a political decision – on December 25 the governor cancels sumo contests due to the comet, to give no reason for harmful rumors or interpretations of the contest results. The 73-year-old local governor Tadayoshi falls ill on January 6 and dies of lung disease on January 10. The diary-keeper skips eating fish the following morning (a sign of honour) and notes a new bad omen – in the evening, a hundred

crows flew crowing over someone's house. But no following disaster is mentioned.

The diary is a mixture of personal and objective accounts of events, centring naturally on the writer's person:

> [---] *Tonight, I went over to Hisabe's house. Six people were there including me. We began to talk about the comet, and then we decided to watch it all night and not go to sleep. Hikozaemon's servant Nanahei told us that when he came by to get his pay at 10 o'clock tonight, he saw a fireball. He said everyone else in town saw it too.*
>
> *After awhile, I asked Nanahei to check outside and see whether or not there was a comet. He ran back into the house and said that there was a comet faintly visible from the ESE to the NW. So I went over to Hikozaemon's backyard, and I saw that it was faintly visible. As I watched it, it became brighter and brighter.*
>
> *I woke grandma and Choutarou and Mr. Kakubee and showed the comet to them. Everybody was so surprised. I was too scared to watch it by myself.* [---]
>
> [---] *This morning, I did some homework and went to see Dr. Jian. But he was gone to the castle because Governor Tadayoshi's illness is much worse. I heard that Samurai in the castle are in a panic. On the way back from Dr. Jian's house, I went to see the big gate of the castle. Though the big gate was quite beautiful, I couldn't stay there and watch it peacefully because there were many horses and vehicles and people and swords and spears. They were all visiting the sick governor.* [---] (Renshaw & Ihara 1996).

The governor's death was the first fulfilment of negative forecasts and it seems to also have been all the local trouble the comet caused. There were no retrospective evaluations about the fulfilment of the omen. On the contrary, the Estonian archival records include mostly fulfilled omens – the disaster and what preceded it.

Matasaburou's documentation indicates how different and contradictory explanations of the heavenly phenomenon by members of one community were. The boy himself considered the comet a herald of a new era that began when the comet

disappeared in spring. We are witnesses to the emergence and diminution of interest in the comet.

Conclusion

Recent studies in the field of rumours found that rumour transmission is probably reflective of a "collective explanation process" (Bordia & DiFonzo 2004). The 17th century diary indicates that the comet had been sighted in nearby settlements some weeks before already and it was the question whether they could also see it that made inhabitants of Matasaburou's home town look it up in the sky. We can see from the diary how people in different social positions treated those belief omens, making them into narratives or using their authority to prevent rumours driven by comet folklore and the harm these could do.

Researcher of the history of modern cosmology, Sara J. Schecher has argued in her monograph that advances in science in the 17th century created a gap in the way the intellectual elite and common people treated comets (Schechner 1997: 105) – this was the beginning of an unalterable process of distancing. However, the 17th century diary shows us the general level of knowledge and social agreements had the same influence on all members of the community, but in a crisis situation they did have different responsibilities, for example in this case the authorities forbidding sumo wrestling to curb the spread of hearsay. Here we can see a difference in the way the comet and comet lore were evaluated as potential destabilizing factors. Different social groups had various degrees of power over preventing or eliminating comet lore and beliefs by their decisions.

The 17th century diary indicates that during the four months the comet was visible in the sky, the omens discussed were practically identical to those found in much later folklore records, but their proportions are different – beliefs with a negative prognosis are contradicted by beliefs that prevent negative or signify positive prognoses. Naturally, the length of the time the comet was visible resulted in diminishing acuteness and loss of interest.

Folklore accounts in the archives provide insights in the beliefs and opinions of the common people, but usually reveal little about how this influenced their behaviour. From the diary,

we can see that people were confused when the comet appeared. 344 years later we can only say they were lucky there was no medium nearby to collect and channel that fear and confusion into a full-blown panic.

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Comets with Poisonous Tails, Risk Narratives and Comments Online

Abstract: The article compares the societal reflections of two comets: Lulin and Halley. The Lulin comet caused a wave of internet comments in 2009, and the Halley comet inspired panic and risk narratives in 1910. The narratives conform to G. Mairol's model of risk narratives. Estophone comments are inspired mostly by political banter, while Anglophone comments reflect fear (of the celestial body, among others). The hybridisation of culture and science has led to the situation where both the media and scientists' expert opinions have an influence on how the society perceives a comet.

Key words: Halley comet, internet comments, comet panic, Lulin [comet], end of the world, risk narratives

Today, comets are spotted long before they become visible to the naked eye or the amateur's telescope. About the time they become visible, media takes on the task of wringing news out of the celestial phenomenon. Practically every comet creates its own wave of doomsday and catastrophe omens. Due to the scarcity of written sources it is difficult to generalise whether what happened in the society after a comet appeared during the Middle Ages or even Early Modern Age was similar to more recent reactions. Incomplete records make it difficult to guess which ideas, fears and beliefs were activated by the appearing of a comet and how influential they were.

A unique opportunity for insight into ancient society is provided by the detailed drawings depicting the path of the comet and accounts of daily life and attitudes in the diary of the Japanese boy Matasaburou from the 1660s (cf Kõiva 2007; Ren-

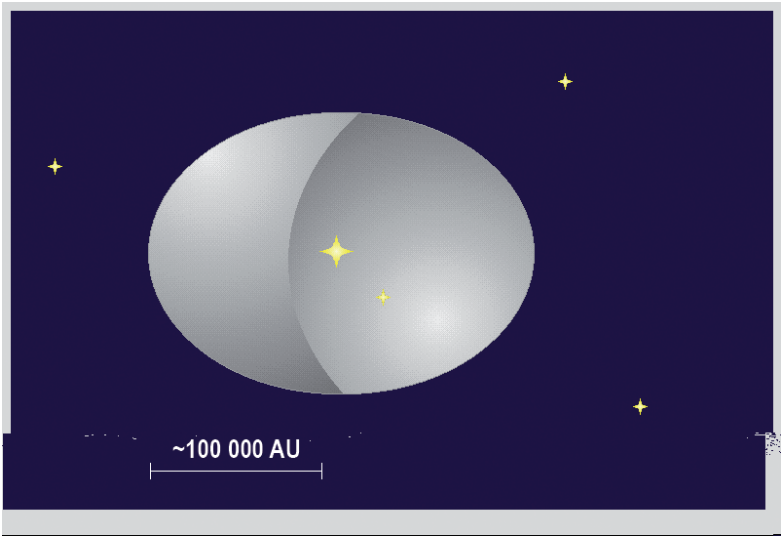
shaw & Ihara 1996). The diary records show how people became increasingly curious after the comet was sighted. Step by step, connections to prior appearances of comets and concurrent societal events are mentioned, accounts of tragic past events. But we also see a plethora of differently shaped and voiced opinions and beliefs: while some people agreed with the possibility of threat and catastrophe, others regarded the predictions with humour, some denied any connection between the comet and earthly events and reasoned why such connections were impossible.

Today, written online sources make it much easier to follow the belief system that used to spread orally only. Online written news and discussions with reader comments open the context and connotations of the events. It is also easy to observe reactions to one and the same event in diverse communities over a large geographical area. We can also distinguish personal narrative belief lines, religious attitudes, and how they combine into a mentally cohesive unit.

I am going to overview vernacular beliefs related to two comets. Information and comments on the comet Lulin characterise the needs fulfilled by comet folklore in contemporary society. For comparison purposes, risk narratives and preceding-following panic related to the periodically appearing beautiful and noteworthy Halley comet is used. The tails of both comets are known to contain poisonous gases which have led to speculation as to their threat to life.

For habitants of the planet Earth the comet Lulin was undoubtedly an insignificant celestial phenomenon. Without attention from the media and scientists, it would have remained in the knowledge of the first and foremost professional and hobby astronomers only. However, mini-narratives, beliefs and arguments recorded online indicate that a phenomenon almost invisible to the naked eye is verbalised, inducing contemplation of the future and various emotions.

Unlike Lulin, there have been hundreds of comets that were easily observable during their approach to the Earth over a longer time period, creating fertile ground for proliferation of panic and narratives. While the same comet passes the Earth repeatedly, the long interval (sometimes spanning thousands of years) between its reappearances keeps people from perceiving it as recurrent. One of the most remarkable comets appeared



Most comets with a long orbit are thought to originate from the Oort cloud that surrounds the Solar system – a cloud of ice and gas of immense proportions. The Oort cloud was first described in the 1950s. Drawing by Andres Kuperjanov.

in 1843 and passed very close to the surface of the Sun. As the comet was 60 times brighter than the full moon and visible during daytime beside the Sun, people experienced a flash flood of rumour and predictions. Estonia was among the places where it caused expectations of the end of the world. The comet's appearance coincided with hard times and one of the doomsday prophets was (the locally renowned prophet) Maltsvet. The tail of that comet stretched to 300 million kilometres or 2 astronomical units and was a significant for people alive at the time. Forty years later, in 1882, the brightest comet of all times was visible in the sky (Tago 1997).

About a century ago, the Earth was approached by the comet Halley that orbits the Sun in about 75 years and is visible to the naked eye. If you are lucky, you can see the Halley comet twice in a lifetime. One of the best publicised examples is related to Mark Twain's: the American writer was born two weeks after the Halley's Comet's perihelion, and died on April 20, 1910, one

day after Halley's Comet brushed. In 1909 he wrote in his autobiography:

> *I came in with Halley's Comet in 1835. It is coming again next year* [1910]*, and I expect to go out with it. It will be the greatest disappointment of my life if I don't go out with Halley's Comet. The Almighty has said, no doubt: 'Now here are these two unaccountable freaks; they came in together, they must go out together'* (Litt 2009).

However, connections between the human life and a comet were drawn among the higher and middle class long before the time of Mark Twain. Knowledge from the sphere of interest among the higher and middle classes reached laymen orally or via calendars and newspapers. Information about the fate of rulers and the likelihood of war breaking out is always interesting for everyone as they have a profound impact on everyone's life.

Risk narrative researcher Gaspar Mairal points to the long-term hybridisation process that has been going on between culture and science, making them inseparable. He also draws attention to matrices, a narrative texture used by the media when talking about possible threats and catastrophes. This is undoubtedly a key to some comet fears and narratives. According to G. Mairal:

> *Thus, the narrative texture is laced with a little science, including calculations such as the temperature (which could be measured accurately) and precise references to chemistry. These and other features would contribute to the creation of a journalistic prototype for narratives of risk, to the point where the very origins of journalism are directly related with accounts of catastrophes and epidemics in which scientific data forms a central pillar of credibility* (Mairal 2011: 69).

The Comet Lulin – a Far Out Comet with a Poisonous Tail

On July 11, 2007, student Quanzhi Ye from China's Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou discovered a new comet. He was working in Taiwan at the Lulin observatory, and named the comet

after the observatory. The comet followed an orbit relatively distant from the Sun and Earth, and displayed a green tail.

Comets are often compared to a dirty snowball composed of dust and ice. This nucleus "snowball" is followed (rarely preceded) by a gaseous tail. Sunlight reflected off the tail leaves a beautiful multicolour line in the sky. The chemical composition of comet tails varies, Lulin's tail is similar to Halley's as both contain cyanogen. Lulin became visible to the naked eye only in January and February of 2009 and it was well publicised that it will pass the Earth at a far distance.

Alan Hale, who discovered the Hale-Bopp comet, describes his first sighting of the comet Lulin in 2007 and informs of the opportunity to observe it in winter 2009:

> *Comet Lulin's main treat for us will come after the beginning of the New Year, and in fact it should become visible in the morning sky in late December or early January* (Hale 2007, 2009).

The new comet was the focal point of observer interest right before sunset throughout 2008. The observers calculated and refined its orbit, and predicted when the comet will be visible. An overview of astronomy news shows how G. Marsden calculated the trajectory of its parabolic orbit with the perihelion of 1.24 AU for January 2009. The comet was becoming increasingly larger during late 2008, displaying a magnitude of around 11.0 in early July, 10.5 in early August, 10.0 in early September and 9.5 by October. Chris Wyatt in Australia sighted the comet with his 25 cm reflector on October 18. J. J. Gonzalez from Spain announced that he observed Lulin on October 18 and 19 with a 25x100 spyglass – the comet's altitude was only 7–8 degrees – and measured the nucleus's diameter as 4'. D. A. J. Seargent from Australia spotted the comet with a 25x100 binocular before it coincided with the sun on October 17, determining its magnitude at 8.1 and the nucleus diameter as 5'. One of the most persistent observers J. J. Gonzalez spotted the comet again on December 21 – Lulin was 7 degrees above horizon, nucleus diameter 2.5'.

Later, astronomy news pages and the media specified that

> [---] *comet Lulin will pass from Earth on 2009, February 24. Lulin will stop 38 million miles short of Earth, utterly*

> *harmless. Lulin's green color comes from the gases that make up its Jupiter-sized atmosphere. Jets spewing from the comet's nucleus contain cyanogen and diatomic carbon (C2)* (e.g., Phillips 2009).

The comet could be observed in the south sky before sunrise, at around 3 AM.

Reactions to Lulin in Online Comments

Although the distance and timing of its visibility from Earth did not encourage media attention or influence on the society, both before Lulin appeared in the sky and while it continued to be visible, printed media and online publications continued publishing informative news pieces and overviews. The public reacted with online comments.

A quick glance at Estonia's most popular news portal (Delfi 2009) confirmed that the news was broadcast in Estonia as well. However, the approach of the comet brought a wave of humour, self-irony and political irony – the Republic of Estonia celebrates its anniversary on February 24, the same day the comet passed the planet. Banter concerning the celebration of the anniversary leads to allusions of little green men or ufonauts patrolling the Estonian-Russian border. The humorous comments are

Photo: R. Ligustri (Talmassons, Italy) on Feb. 6, 2009 with an 11-cm refractor and STL11000 CCD camera in New Mexico (USA) telescope.

largely inspired by the comet's coloration, referred to in connection with the blue-black-white national flag, as well as the centrist party well remembered for their ad campaign involving dairy products decorated with a green clover leaf. References to person names are distorted in a manner common to Internet joking (e.g., Anzip instead of Ansip). A few examples:

> nujah, 17.02.2009 13:11
> *good timing… for the republic's anniversary.. a green comet will fly over the freedom square during the parade (or over Narva, depending) when the men are marching in uniform. those on the Russian side of Lake Peipsi will see that we're a space nation, too.*
>
> ss, 17.02.2009 13:14
> *yeah-yeah, actually the comet is blue-black-white [colours of the Estonian national flag], it only looks green from the space.*
>
> Em, 17.02.2009 13:35
> *Cool, if it's green then interesting what compounds is it made of? Natural resources fly to us, no need to go mine outer planets?*
>
> irf, 18.02.2009 00:18
> *This is a greeting from the Keskerakond [centrist] party to anzip [the prime minister they oppose], the green color of Lulin comes from their ad posters.*

Next are presented a number of jokes alluding to rumours of Nibiru, the baneful planet that was supposed to cause the end of the world in 2012. Fantasies regarding Nibiru had circled for some years, though they received much less attention than the Mayan end of the world predicted for 2012. The second comment is cautioning rather than humorous, as indicated by the saying "mouth full of water" meaning 'to keep quiet, be silent', and the request for survival advice. The black humour response – "why don't you finish yourself off, why suffer" alludes to anecdotes on advice in case of an atomic explosion – wrap yourself in a white bed sheet and head for the cemetery. The fourth comment again addresses the green colour, now related to an absurd comet wallowing in greenery.

doktor, 17.02.2009 13:46

Yes, it is Nibula. You can see it in the sky because it is circling around the orbit of Earth (read: airport) so as not to collide with other celestial bodies. Just like planes make circular circles above an airfield. According to all predictions, the landing trajectory will be clear by about winter 2012.

From observatory, 17.02.2009 13:48

If Nibiru passed this closely, you all would have your mouths full of water, in the direct sense of the words. I repeat, this is not a joking corner, take this seriously and please give instructions for survival, point by point.

Bb, 17.02.2009 13:53

From observatory, 17.02.2009 13:48

I recommend: why don't you finish yourself off, why suffer here with Nibiru?

dr. känd, 17.02.2009 14:12

T*he green color comes from the fact that the comet is all covered with grass and bushes. NB!*

Contagious on contact, you can catch grass from it.

Only single commentators had read the news piece attentively and asked additional information. Inquiries are freely worded and use a rather more colourful vocabulary (kõõritama – 'to look askance at, to sneak a glance at, to look cross-eyed at', here 'to eyeball tensely, constantly'):

?, 17.02.2009 14:12

I would like to know when I should be looking with a binocular and in what direction? Wouldn't want to stare / to eyeball tensely at the skies all day long.

There were also some worried about the potential danger of the poison in the comet's tail.

Astronomy news on Anglophone sites and elsewhere were mostly constructive estimations with single calls to, e.g., consider the arrival of the comet as a sign, to take it as a serious warning, and (just as in Estonian comments) speculations whether this could be Nibiru, the presaged planet that will bring bad luck. The comments are mostly serious and there is no banter.

For example, someone named Sudhir asks, after Jeremy Perez posted matter-of-fact information about the movement of the comet Lulin on January 14, 2009:

> *Thanks for the information.*
> *Can we call it a nibiru? Change of earth pole seems to be very high?*
> *What do u say?*
> *Have a nice day! We all are sailing in the same boat – why lie now.*
> *Bye*
> *sweet dreams* (Perez 2009)

Halley – a Comet with a Poisonous Tail

The Halley comet has repeatedly been described since 240 BCE by Babylonian and Chinese sky observers, renowned astronomers from the Middle Ages have described details pertaining to the comet's path and semblance. In 1705, the English astronomer Edmond Halley made the discovery that the comet returns every 75 years, and determined its earlier times of appearance. It was news of the Halley comet's repeated return that fuelled contemporary scientific inquiry and initiated the rumours that sooner or later it will crash with the Earth. The comet's malign influence on people and livestock was debated. In 1910, the comet was very close to Earth - on 18 May, the Earth actually passed through the tail of the comet. There was widespread panic when it was revealed that one of the substances in the tail was the toxic gas cyanogen. Astronomer Nicolas Camille Flammarion (1842–1925) claimed that when the Earth passes through the tail, the gas "would impregnate the atmosphere and possibly snuff out all life on the planet" (Strauss 2009).

Since Flammarion published his opinion also in the media, the so-called educated expert opinion spread like a flash all over Europe and America. His opinion led to panicked purchasing of gas masks, "anti-comet pills" and "anti-comet umbrellas" in order to survive the critical time period (Strauss 2009). There were reports of suicides in Hungary and panic spread throughout Europe. People also made their own gas masks, plugged holes,

bought oxygen tubes to live a little while after the rest had died (Leonardoh 2009). The yellow press chose to pursue the story in more fanciful ways, helping to fuel the fears of the impressionable that the end of the world was coming (Long 2009).

News pieces on the poisonous tail of the Halley Comet and the induced rumours and panic were to a large extent based on media information and expert opinions expressed by scholars. Gaspar Mairal (2011: 65) generalises accordingly that

> [---] *transoceanic voyages, commercial calculations and the narration of catastrophes and epidemics, all of which are manifestations of modernity and of the development of scientific and expert knowledge. Hence, we may affirm that risk is an expert concept that nonetheless crossed over into the cultural sphere through narrative, which spread the idea among a progressively wider public in a process that began in the broadsheets, gazettes, newspapers and journals of the eighteenth century and still goes on today in the modern mass media.*

Evolution of Risk Narratives

Gaspar Mairal has pointed out that the 18th century is when journalistic depiction and narration styles of catastrophic events underwent a rapid evolution. The Lisbon earthquake followed by a tsunami with heavy toll on lives, the windstorm that ravaged the Kingdom of England in 1703 (killing more than 8000), as well as the Great Plague of London in 1665–1666 have been recorded in many fictional and semi-fictional pieces. The pioneer in journalistic depiction of catastrophes and epidemics was Daniel Defoe who published a book on the windstorm that devastated Britain one year after the event: an exceptionally fast and immediate reaction.

Defoe's style was characterised by maximum intimacy with the depicted events, on-the-spot interviews and an accurate timeline of events, but also a little melodrama in the name of sensationalism in order to capture the reader's interest. These formed the basis for the journalistic style still in use, relying on characteristics of the so-called relayed information – full of credibility and verisimilitude (Mairal 2008: 47).

A few years ago, as I was writing about the fears, beliefs and narratives related to comets and other celestial phenomena, I noticed a regular repetition of motifs and connections with real life events (Kõiva 2007) but was unable to determine what underpins this phenomenon. However, I now believe that orally transmitted comet folklore (and probably religious narrative heritage in general) can be easily analysed by application of G. Mairal's so-called risk narrative matrix concept. The narrative matrix of threats and risks is a structure used for warning about pandemics, earthquakes, traffic accidents, etc. by highlighting the repetitive nature of these and their risks. Narrative matrices can be dormant in latent form long periods of time until they emerge again due to suitable circumstances.

In 1722, D. Defoe published the novel *A Journal of the Plague Year* wherein he used a new narrative strategy to retell the horrendous events (55 years previous) of the past and to introduce the idea of the probability of these events happening again. G. Mairal believes D. Defoe was aware of his influence as a journalist and the value given to his expert advice which helped his message – the plague can return and immobilise London – reach the audience with expedience. He made use of his childhood memories in order to write the "journal" of a merchant who lived through the 1665 devastation. Personal memories augmented with material unearthed from libraries and archives, narrated in the first person, gave the manuscript unprecedented depth.

This is how descriptions of earlier catastrophes were used to warn from the (potential) repetition of a threatening event, focusing on realism, plausibility and expert opinion, adding a pinch of didactics.

Conclusion

The process of hybridisation of science and culture seems to characterise contemporary risk narratives. Gaspar Mairal's analysis points out that a similar structure is found in older narratives. High frequency of appearances leads to the emergence of belief systems and their activation on recall, oral transmission of heritage and presumably also a natural variability.

The Estonian piece of news with the comments I discussed here was published in the science section of the popular news portal Delfi. The outside source references for the news were scientific: Gary W. Kronk's *Cometography.com: C/2007 N3 (Lulin)*, Seiichi Joshida's astronomy pages: *Weekly Information about Bright Comets* and the NASA science page news *Green Comet Approaches Earth.*

Anonymous comments trailing the news articles indicate that the poisonous tail of the comets caused only negligible waves of rumours and beliefs, unlike in 1910 when some scholars unwittingly pandered to the panic. Panic affected people's behaviour, they sincerely believed in the imminence of a catastrophe, acquired protective gear and even performed suicide.

It is noteworthy that the interpretation of scholarly opinion is not the only source for belief dissemination and risk narratives. For instance, opinions expressed by influential individuals: group leaders, prophets, clairvoyants, media stars. The Hale Bopp comet as a suicide inducer indicates that in addition to fear of comets there are simultaneously circulating other religious and trust-related interpretations and narratives that can in extreme cases lead to self-destruction. For example, the Hyakutake comet visible during the winter of 1996 and the Hale-Bopp approaching the Earth a year later were both breathtakingly beautiful and observable with the naked eye in the sky. While both comets were accompanied by the circulation of various beliefs, including the end of the world stories, the Hale-Bopp stood out in the context of the 20th century due to the mass suicide of the prophet Applewhite and his religious group Heaven's Gate. They regarded the comet as a messenger to be followed by a space ship that will take the members of the religious group to meet a new era. The life and motivation behind the actions of the group are still one of the most studied topics in anthropology of religion and related fields (e.g., Holliman 1998; Howard 2006; also Kõiva 2007). In a way, what happened was uncannily like a continuation of Early Modern Age and more recent discussions where the heavenly bodies were associated with mental landscapes and moral principles. For example, Hell was placed upon a comet by the renowned scientist and philosopher William Whiston (1667–1752) (Jakapi 2005; Schechner 1997). According to the

vernacular beliefs of the 19th century, the gates to heaven (paradise) and hell were connected to celestial bodies.

The comet of 2009, passing the planet further out, allowed for humorous responses and witty remarks. People did not perceive it as a real danger, or very few did. Estonians based a lot of their comet humour on the coinciding with a national holiday, being at the same time self-ironic, and poking fun at political parties and neighbouring countries. Only a diminutive portion elaborated on the topic of the world-destroying Nibiru, which did not induce any reaction from the Estonian general public.

Anglophone web comments are well represented by Jeremy Perez's answer to Sudhiri regarding Nibiru:

> *I've seen no astronomical evidence for Sitchin's proposed, planet Nibiru, but if for a moment we were to consider that such a populated planet actually did exist, I doubt its gravity would be so uninhabitably low that it would be voluminously outgassing as this and other typical comet do.*

Obviously, the brighter and of more spectacular size the heavenly body, the more it is reflected in culture. For instance, comments alluded to rumours about other, similar phenomena. Lulin was accompanied by rumours and beliefs of a heavenly catastrophe caused by Nibiru, while the greatest resonance was caused in 2009 by the Mayan end-of-the-world prediction for 2012.

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Time and Space in the Incantations

Abstracts: The aim of the paper is to deconstruct and compare time and space in the incantations on the bases of Estonian and Bulgarian traditions. The incantations are related with different time anchors, and with physical and mental time: they are related to the cyclic holidays and linear progression of the ritual year, or to the day of the week, phase of the moon, a certain time of the day, sunrise and sunset, etc. Time scale in incantation texts ranges from mythical past to potential future, while the ritual side represents the present real time. The segmentation of time, the chronological order and duration of charming and charms, the compression and dilation of time with the help of ritual are all part of the time characteristics. Charming was also related with real living spaces. Usually incantations are performed at home, indoors, or in the closer outdoor sphere, but sometimes in the peripheral and liminal locations of the farmstead. In the texts we can find different types of mythical space.

Keyword: incantation, mental time, physical time, ritual space

With incantations we are dealing with a tradition that has been active for thousands of years and that has kept changing in the course of time. More than other traditional folklore genres, incantations are bound to fixed sets of rules, prohibitions and rules. They were performed, passed on and recorded heeding various strategies. Since their heyday in the middle ages and early modern times, incantations yielded to other healing methods and (magical) means of asserting influence. In Estonia, the field of incantation use diminished greatly in the early 1920s with the spread of the medical network, instalment of hygiene requirements and other health-influencing habits. The decline

after the WW2 was especially sharp, incantations remaining only in use for healing ailments that medicine was powerless to cure (and still is, by the way), e.g. rose and other allergic dermatitis reactions. They were also practised in poorly accessible boggy and forested peripheral regions in cases requiring urgent intervention, such as a viper bite or traumas (e.g. sprains), which were, however, considered not worth the time of making a trip to a doctor. In addition to their practical usefulness, another factor contributed to the survival of incantations to our times – incantations were written down and were passed on in writing so that we have written records.

I am going to examine at close time and space as they are represented in Estonian and Bulgarian incantations. My opinion is that the dominant confession in the region has a strong influence on incantations. Estonian beliefs, calendar customs as well incantations corpora display strong Lutheran influences. We can also see that the main actors in incantation texts vary in regions with different dominant confessions. The Orthodox Church spread in Estonia only in the 1840s and did not have time to influence a genre as conservative as incantations. The Orthodox Church found little support in the mainland of Estonia, spreading more in the peripheral regions bordering on Orthodox areas (southeast Setu region, a narrow slice of north-eastern Estonia, the coast of Lake Peipus and the western islands). South- and north-eastern Estonian areas had, in addition to Orthodox neighbours, also mixed populations of Estonians and Russians (who were predominantly Orthodox) – and from these regions we find records of incantations typical of Orthodox regions. Presumably, we should expect greater similarity between incantations from the Orthodox regions of Estonia and (mostly Orthodox) Bulgarian incantations. However, since those are incidentally also regions where little verbal magic has been recorded (perhaps because in the early 20th century it was a region of high illiteracy and archaic attitudes), my arguments are based on the general Estonian incantation corpus. From the whole of Estonia, approximately 35,000 incantation texts and samples with accompanying rites, etiquette, attitudes and experience stories have been written down or recorded. The Bulgarian comparison material comes from two books: Iveta Todorova-Pirgova's "Bajanija i magii" (Todorova-Pirgova 2003)

and Irina Amrojan's "Sbornik Bolgarskikh narodnyhk zagovorov" (Amrojan 2005).

The Temporal Dimension of Incantations

Since charms and charming are associated with the stages of people's lifetime and supported their yearly economic endeavours, helped with sudden social or physical traumas, we inevitably face the problem of relations between cyclic and linear time. However, it is important to point out that the norms regarding incantation time markers derived from common practice and the demands of everyday life, and response depended on the specific situation. In the case of traumas or (human or animal) problems that required urgent intervention, no regard was given to beliefs or time requirements; help was provided as quickly as possible. Also, search for lost animals or objects begun immediately. For example, one small traditional rite demanded the devil to return the lost object (knife, scarf, etc). The devil was "bound up" or "his neck was wrung" (i.e. growing grass was twisted together and knotted, and a stone was placed upon the knot with the command: "Devil, return my lost xx!" or "Devil, do not sit upon what is mine!"); when the lost item was found, the knot had to be unbound, since otherwise an accident would befall its maker.

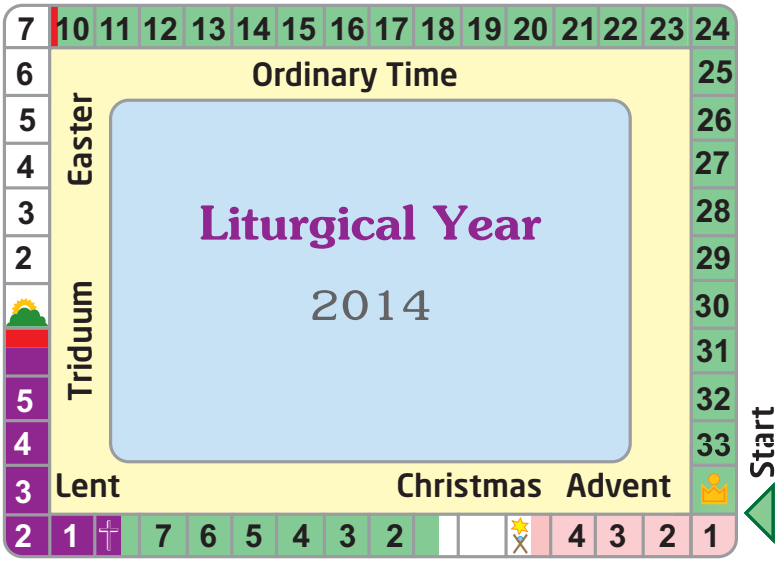
Part of incantations is related to specific calendar holidays:

1) Rituals fostering household chores and work: bringing Christmas (or the New Year) indoors, cajoling winds at the end of the year, shaking apple trees for a good harvest during the same period, repelling hunger, etc. took place.
2) Preventive rituals: grinding flies on St. Matthew's Day (Estonian islands, West Estonia, narrow area in South Estonia; known also among Latvians (Straubergs 1939: 249) and the Finnish (SKVR). On St. George's Day or on Good Friday, the wolf's muzzle was bound, so that it would not harm the herd in the summer. According to Mirjam Mencej (Mencej 2001), this rite was widely performed by the eastern and western Slavonians, and also Finland and South Estonia (Kõiva 1983), Latvia (Šmits 1941: 2047).

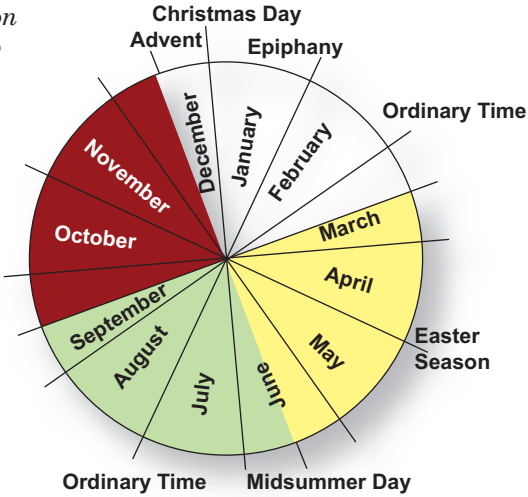
Rites and incantations which are related to specific holidays of the ritual year have a starting time and ending time. Their period of effect begins with rites in winter or spring. Often they also have one certain time of ending, a certain holiday finishing the season in the second half of the year. For example, the mentioned binding of the wolves' muzzles, coming to effect on St. George's Day (April 23 or the day before cattle was sent to pastures), and the untying of muzzles taking place on St. Michael's Day (September 23, when the cattle was settled into the barn). The untying abolished the magical bond that was made on St. George's day, and from that time onwards wolves were free and could quarry any animal in their way. It brings the relationship with the forest to an end. The majority of symbolic rituals and incantations are part of the annual ritual cycle and they are repeated again at the same time next year. This forms a cycle that is maintained with repetition.

Another important time anchor is the day of the week. Although the general belief held that healing is to be performed on even days of the week (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday), Thursday was clearly the preferred one. If there was time to delay with the healing ritual – e.g. to heal congenial developmental problems, joint problems and rheumatism as well as other chronic diseases – a Thursday of a suitable phase of the Moon was chosen. Estonian records of wrist joint and congenial problems claim approximately 80% of cases when the curing was performed on a Thursday (or rather on three consequent Thursdays). Thursday as a beneficial time for curing is also known in Bulgaria (Amrojan 2005: 122, epilepsy is cured three times, beginning and ending on a Thursday; the same in several texts of Todorova-Pirgova). The suitability of Thursday for performing magical rites and healing was supported by the 19th century beliefs and general customs – on Thursdays, people finished working earlier and young people used to gather for evening entertainment, the girls busy with handicraft and the young men spinning tales. From spring to autumn, and in larger farms also in the wintertime, this was followed by dancing. This "celebration of" and lesser workload on Thursdays has been considered a leftover from the worship of Thor (Est. Taara).

The phase of the moon is another very common time anchor in incantations. Generally, charming was forbidden in Estonia



Drawing 1–2. Division of liturgical year into sacral and ordinary time periods.



when both the moon and the sun were in the sky – the same applied to planting plants, while being a good time to exterminate pests. For warding disease, the old moon was best suitable; to promote economy, heal broken bones, sprains, guarantee subsistence, a favourable court ruling and plant growth, the new

moon was addressed. In the early 20th century it was still common practice to "send away" small tumors during the full or old moon period, when they were offered to the moon with the words "Look what I have and you don't – take it!", or a symbolic throwing gesture was made towards the moon with similar accompanying words. There are still people making use of the short charm and custom in Estonia today.

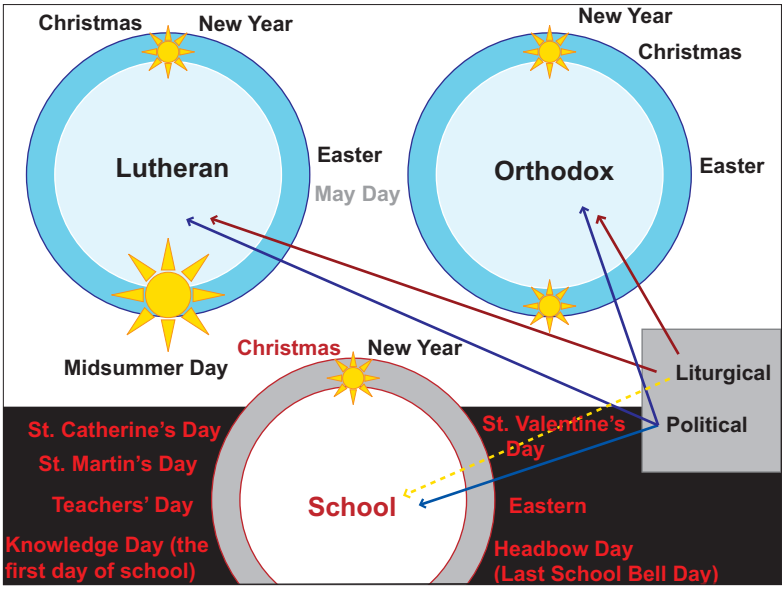
Moonlight as treatment was also important. Chicken-pox was cured using whisking in moonlight – the patient was in the moonlight, the charmer in the shadows, shaded from moonlight, and performing the whisking with a specially made whisk. Sprains and warts were also treated by folk doctors by symbolically palming moonlight and "washing" the affected area with circular motions. Sometimes the patient was told to wash hands with moonlight and imitate hand washing.

One of the fixed formulae using moonlight to cure was "Go like the old moon from the sky!" that was repeated three or nine times. The same incantation formula was often used as the final phrase of a longer curing formula. The phase of the moon was also important in Bulgarian incantations, the same principles applied (Amrojan 2005: 7).

Bulgarian records highlight sunset and sunrise as both suitable times to perform curing rituals as well as a good time to draw water for treatment from a well or spring. Similarly, in the Estonian tradition these times were considered good for reciting formulae that regulated social relations, healed tumours and wards, warded against pests, and performing rituals that required "no stranger to see it" or "not talking to anybody". However, usually incantations were performed during the daytime.

Incantations and their accompanying rituals is also subject of Svetlana M. Tolstaya's proposed rules for the compression and dilation (elongation) of time. Identical phenomena are well known in the psychological and philosophical discourse, where they are used in a somewhat different sense.

Cyclicity and dilation of time are found in many incantations. Curing incantations are commonly performed three or nine times in a row. The curing ritual could be held on one but also on three consecutive Thursdays (or over an even longer time interval, as in the case of Bulgarian method for curing epilepsy: the procedure was repeated twice every twenty days) – the heal-



Drawing 3. Interaction of calendar cycles in today's Estonia.

ing cycle is of considerable length. Often also objects used in the ritual or performance location are changed during the ritual. For example, the patient's back is cured on the threshold of the bedroom, kitchen and house door, but children's diseases are treated in the sauna using various objects.

On the one hand, the times incantations is repeated is determined (three or nine times in a row on a certain day) and points to the chronology of the ritual (the incantation is performed in a certain position and in fixed order), but on the other hand the frequency depends on the choices and decisions of the charmer. If the patient is cured, there is no need for repetition any more.

Besides chronological order and frequency, the third time parameter is duration. Incantations are short texts and their performance takes a lot less time than performing the accompanying curing ritual. Shorter incantations take, for example, 0.20 min, longer ones 1.2–3 minutes. The ritual accompanying the incantation takes 10–20 minutes, less often up to 60 minutes or longer. Not only is the duration of the incantation so

much shorter than the accompanying ritual, it can be performed either at the beginning, middle or end of the ritual. In dialogue incantations, the short dialogue may take up to half of the duration of the treatment session, and in the case of traumas the incantation may take about as long as the accompanying acts. However, patients do not perceive the powerful text as briefly as it actually lasts when recited, but the psychological tension, trust in the charmer, the disease and novel situation, chronology of the ritual, make it seem much longer, as my experiments have pointed out.

Sample text:

> *Curing snakebite. The healer inspected the patient, took a cord of willow bark and tied above the bite site so the swelling would not go further. Then took a stone from the ground and started rubbing it around the bite mark. While rubbing, the healer was reciting:*
>
> *"Evil girls, evil boys,*
>
> *They poked my boy (daughter, in the case of a woman).*
>
> *Be you motley or black or grey*
>
> *Or coloured erase your mistake."*
>
> *After reciting the words the healer spat on the ground. After spitting, made like a cross on the bite site, saying "Christ Jesus!" All the time while reciting, the stone was moved around the affected spot* (ERA II 234, 283 (5) < Rõuge parish (1932).

Application of Gerald Gennette's model for chronological representation of events (outlined in "Narrative Discourse", 1983) reveals that performing an incantation is generally depicted as a scene – a one-on-one correspondence between the act and the discourse, and less often as a summary (events presented in abbreviation), or rarely as a pseudo-recording of the dialogue between the characters (the latter primarily in the case of dialogue incantations).

Recital of incantations follows the general rules for ritual performance, namely it observes chronological order and time anchors, prescribed duration and performance frequency. There is also a typical pattern of pauses during which no observable treatment or charming takes place. Holding pauses is characteristic of traditional folk healing as a whole and its role is as

important as the ritual crying, laughing or swearing performed as part of traditional customs.

Despite the fact that each new performance of a ritual contains opportunities for inserting variation and personal choices, regular repetition has forced the memories and folk beliefs to fixed ruts that new performances deter rather than encourage innovation in performance and discourage variation. Cognitivists believe that the stability of religious rituals is increased by their (to an extent) public nature – the rituals require collective and simultaneous co-ordinated action. Since the success of religious rituals depends on the co-operation of numerous participants, this severely limits freedom in performance.

Secondly, all such rituals are related to a special cultural mode of performance that does not tolerate variation but reduces the variation of rituals (McCauley, Lawson 2002: 50).In the above we considered the time of performing an incantation and the requirements of the related communicative strategy. However, in addition to the process of performing the incantation, a separate time category is constructed by the incantation text, which is a linguistic and folkloric product with its own time categories and time terms.

Time as it is presented in incantation texts is often synchronous with the accompanying performing situation or ritual and representative of the present real time – it is also delivered as first person appeals to either the disease, people, beings, or higher powers.

Examples:

> *Court words. When you go to the court hall and see the judge, you whisper quietly:*
> *"Me lamb, you wolf,*
> *But I will eat you up!"*
> *or*
> *Harm caused by the evil eye.*
> *"Hendrik, Hendrik,*
> *Do not come to my house!*
> *I have two dogs,*
> *Three black cats.*
> *They will eat and rend you*
> *And beat you with briar branches"* (RKM II 213, 24 (4) < Rõuge parish).

Written records describe the ritual aspect of performing incantations often with construction of "if-then" or as a potential future while the text represents the present. In written memories of healing rituals, the charming and healing ritual is described as a past event that is often also dated. "When my aunt's daughter, now 47, was doctored at three years of age" – the record from 1974 allows us to date the event to about 1930–1933. In one account the schoolteacher Juhan Saar of Kihnu Island dated the charming of his wife's shoulder to when his new house was finished, adding with the precision of year and month when that took place – January, 1931 (he wrote to the folklore archive a few months after the event, using the help of his diary). Several of such reminiscences describe the experience of not the immediately involved, but the experience of someone who observed the event, the reflections and attitude of that observer, mediated emotions and knowledge. Incantation texts very rarely allow us to date them. Even general time references, such as mentioning the waning moon, do not allow us to conclude the treatment was performed necessarily in a moonlit period as the reference is a cliché, a metaphor.

However, many curing incantation texts do describe a mythical or very ancient time when Jesus, the apostles or saints were alive and roved the land, Moses saved his people from slavery, Jonah was swallowed by the whale – the time of the events described in the Bible. Another time anchor in the legendary healing words is the epic past or the time of the other side (other world). This is a time where absolute silence reigns, trees are growing backwards, a man in black clothes steps from the sea to the shore (in Estonian incantations), or the time of the so-called left-handed world (in Bulgarian incantations). Incantations also used schemes built on impossibility: a disease can not spread before a stone has developed roots and a tree grows without roots, a bird flies without wings.

The Spatial Dimension of Incantations

Next we are going to consider the dimension of space in incantations. Up till now, space has been described primarily from the point of view of mythical landscapes (Ilomäki 1989; Krohn 1924).

Lived space with its socio-cultural relations and the terms of opened and closed, private and public space were brought to the spotlight in folkloristic only recently in connection with studies of oral literature and its narrating. These categories of space are interesting also in the case of magic texts.

Although intuitively we would presume that in the case of incantations and their performing relations to performance location would be very important, in actual fact the place and performing location are both less often and more ambiguously mentioned than time in written records, the place is only broadly outlined. Additional requirements are made, if at all, about the quarters and centrality-periphery of the location, especially in the case of buildings located in public space.

Of course, to an extent it is the essential feature of language – there is no need to define spatial relations in detail. Language is by its nature selective and codes only some features. Linguistic mechanisms central to recreating space are selection and enrichment. Spatial and visual details are outlined only in general, causing a need for information enrichment.

The space that the ritual was performed in was the landscape of a specific town or village. In many cases we can see (or read between the lines) that the written record gives us or outsiders only the general direction to understanding the spatial relations, while the same scant spatial description is sufficient to orient the performer and patient, and from their point of view there is no need for additional details. A similar scarcity of spatial pointers is characteristic of other folklore genres as well. The next sample is a case where the location for performing the ritual can be derived from the context:

When a dog puppy was brought home, it was put in the kettle and a little fire was made underneath it. Then one went and shouted three times in through the smoke-hole:

> *"What are you boiling there?"*
> *And the other replied from indoors:*
> *"I am boiling a portion for the wolf."*
> *Then the puppy was let out of the kettle and the wolf shouldn't attack it* (H II 13, 165 (7) < Koeru parish).

What we can conclude from this sample text is that the ritual was not performed in the main living house but either in a

summer kitchen, sauna or grain-trashing room. People orient themselves in space with the help of mental maps, but these maps are created, in addition to personal room experience, also from texts they read. American narrative researcher David Herman (2002) observes that cognitive mental maps help us to model spatial relations between people – in the above sample, the deictics "one" and "the other" define the farmstead household members.

Rules regulating the incantation performance reveal that in some cases the healing rituals were performed in inaccessible locations. This does not mean far-away wilderness, but once again the home and nearby locations that were transformed inaccessible by the way of a ritual performed by certain people at a certain time. One of the conditions of uniqueness of rituals is, according to religion researcher J. Tambiah, the relation to special places and special time, as well as the fact that rituals are never merely copies of prior or future performances (Tambiah 1979: 115).

Some diseases required the patient to visit the charmer. They were asked to wait either outside or in a certain room. Records about wonder healers of the 19th and 20th century indicate that sometimes they had so many patients that they needed to wait several days for their turn. In that case, the village people helped in providing them accommodation (and in some cases this became an additional source of income for the villagers, for example healer Jaesche). In most cases, however, the healer was called to the patient's home so that the charming took place in the home sphere, indoors (in the sauna, near the heating stove, in the living space, in the stables) or at liminal borders (the front door's threshold, thresholds between rooms, the sauna threshold, next to the window). Suitable outside locations included fence-posts, the gate, the closest crossroad, a field or forest edge near the household, a specific land spot the disease was believed to have been gotten from. The rocks, stones, trees and bushes that the disease was transferred to as well as the healing water spring were usually in the shared public village space, or sometimes in the village periphery.

Let us have a look at the typical spaces of incantation texts. In incantation texts we see side by side mythic, foreign and

far-away landscapes (sea, bog, morass, forest), as well as man-made space (manor, village, household or farmstead). Man-made spaces are seldom specified – the disease was sent to another village, the wolf to the manor's herd, the disease to a stone and tree-stump – obviously there was no need to enrich the spatial location with detailed specifications. Bulgarian incantations name existing high mountains (Stara planina, Pirin), locations such as Samokov, Sofia, the Black Sea, the Danube River, as well as mythical places. The Danube is called a bottomless river of blood; the Pirin Mountain is an empty place where nothing happens. Such locations situated on the borderline of real and unreal are side by side with Tilimis-mountains, or bare and empty mountains, Tilimis-town, situated behind nine seas, the weird so-called "left world" where everything is different, as well as Biblical landscapes. Mythical landscape objects in Estonian incantations include the Black Sea – a strange water body that black men come out of, and a mythical house where Mary or the saints are boiling woollen thread (the thread of life). Biblical landscapes ranging from an unspecified desert where Jesus travelled on a donkey to specific locations related to the life of Jesus and the apostles (e.g., the Jordan River, Gethsemane Garden, Zion Mountain, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and the Red sea) as well as landscape objects mentioned in the Apocrypha are usually found in healing words with legend motifs.

We can presume that far-off landscapes, the authority of the Bible and the mythical "other world" played a significant role in the sacralization of time and space. Associations with sacred people and landscape, with model events that have to help a contemporary healing ritual and bring a successful recuperation, or bring order to economic or social space, are of primary importance. At the same time, it is not really important whether the incantation reciter knows where the river of Jordan geographically runs and how it is related to the most sacred events and canonical texts, or believes naively that the river is perhaps in the neighbouring district. Likewise is it probably immaterial whether the charmer and the patient, being participants in the ritual, place the mythical word together with its landscape objects onto their mental map, or they perceive it as a reality that needs no further specification.

Conclusion

The time characteristics of charming are more strictly regulated than its spatial aspects. Narratives do not give precise spatial details, and neither do descriptions of charming events. However, the description does refer in general to the movements and spatial relations of the participants. Spatial deictics work as strategic hints, calling on the reader or listener to imagine the action site creatively, adapting the position of a hypothetical observer. We can conclude from written records that charming was usually performed at home, indoors, or in the closer outdoor sphere: they did not go far to perform the incantations, usually it was done on the territory of the farmstead and its economically active area, less often at some point within the home village. Besides living and working structures, charming locations could be peripheral or liminal locations of the farmstead: the location suitable for disease transfer could be on the border of the village, intersection of fields, etc. Connection to a potential point of contagion was created by means of an object, earth or water brought from there or by the incantation text. Incantation texts send harmful animals and people, expansive evil and disease to unspecified wild places or remote real places.

Like incantation performance includes the living space and the mythical space (acting as the sacraliser, transformer and focaliser of actions of space), both actual and imagined world acting as a complicated orchestration of near and far-off room, the dimension of time is just as multifaceted. In addition to incantations related to the cyclic holidays and linear progression of the ritual year, there are a number of charms that are related to the day of the week, phase of the moon, a certain time of the day, darkness and light, sunrise and sunset. The segmentation of time, the chronological order and duration of charming and charms, the compression and dilation of time with the help of ritual are all part of the time characteristics, some of which are always taken into account and some of which are used depending on the situation and (disease) etiology. Time scale in incantation texts ranges from mythical past to potential future, while the incantation text itself usually represents the present real time. Thus, actions and actors of

the mythical past are transported to the present; the incantation models are re-established and activated by empathy and associations.

There are a lot of similarities in stereotypes and in choice of time and space of incantation performance in Estonia and Bulgaria. Place names and biblical locations are also very similar in the texts. However, there is a marked difference in relation to actual and mythical locations. Estonians are less likely to use location indicators: the disease and the evil are sent to the neighbour or the landlord (human-created locations), or to unspecified forest, bog, tree or stone (non-cultured landscape elements). In Bulgaria, these locations are much more often specified and related to actual surrounding landscapes – specific mountains, rivers and places. Those locations can be attributed mythical qualities and there is an advanced system of named mythical cities and other localities.

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Multilinguality and Code Change in Incantations

Abstract: Healers can switch from one language to another in the midst of an incantation or presentation of a healing rite. The type of alteration, or code switching, may take a number of different forms. Words meaningless in the mother tongue (quasi-words and reduplicates) are common in incantations – they act like elements of holy language and make the texts closer to the higher, supernatural sphere, since gods and the supernatural would rather speak a language dissimilar to ours. The incantation corpus includes incantations in foreign languages, usually in that of neighbouring ethnic groups, pointing to reciprocal socio-cultural influences, exchange of linguistic and incantation practices. Article analyzes primarily switches from Estonian to Russian language, incantations used parallely in both languages and adaptations of Slavic incantations in Estonian.

Keywords: incantations, multilingualism, code switching

Introduction

In the present paper I am going to view the issues of alien language use and code change in incantations. I am going to view primarily switches from Estonian to Russian language, although the same could be observed on the example of other language pairs. Gods and supernatural beings use a language different from that used by humans, and myths contain holy messages and elements of holy language that have no meaning in our everyday language, or which are incomprehensible for us. The use of meaningless words (quasi words and reduplications)

is also common in incantations. They act like elements of holy language and make the texts closer to the higher, supernatural sphere.

Language switching in Estonian folk songs (from Estonian to Russian language) has been thoroughly analysed by Paul Ariste (Ariste 1987). Mixing two languages into a text creates special types of humour. Researchers have pointed out how certain languages are attributed special status, for example languages used to record Holy Scripture gained the status of holy languages (cf. Wheellock 1987; Hymes 1987), with every culture giving higher status to the language of their holy scriptures. Mixing holy words and phrases (quotations from the Bible) into a text changes the connotation of the text: raises its authority, taking the incantation to another level in the eyes of the patient. The language used in incantations and prayers has features of holy language. The name of god and other holy names have been used for healing purposes: Elochim, Adonai, Adam, Abraxas, Abracadabra, as well as fixed phrases from the Bible (e.g., the last words of Jesus), which have power by way of their innate holiness.

Linguist Crystal (1987) postulated that people use the code switching as a socio-linguistic tool when they are unable to express themselves in one language (to compensate the deficiency), or they want to express solidarity with a particular social group, or to exclude others (who do not speak that language) from a conversation, to convey their attitude to the listener, or to create a special effect. Use of language switching in incantations is driven by the same reasons, although all aspects are equally important. For example, creating a special effect is important as this enhances the effect of the ritual.

Incantations in Foreign Languages – Linguistic and Cultural Contacts in Estonia

The incantation corpus of every nation includes incantations in foreign languages, usually in that of neighbouring ethnic groups, pointing to reciprocal socio-cultural influences, exchange of linguistic and incantation practices. We can assume Estonian wise man shared and exchanged professional knowledge with non-

Estonian ones. There are reports from the 17th century of incantations learned from non-Estonians (Mansikka 1945), just as from the latest fieldworks. The same applies to the Siberian Estonian communities (cf. Korb 2010). This is a wider phenomenon known, e.g., in Latvia with incantations in Finnish, a language totally foreign and incomprehensible (Krohn 1929: 15 ff.).

The Estonian Folklore Archives include incantations in Russian, Latvian, German, Finnish languages recorded from Estonians, plus texts in Swedish, Livonian, and Votian languages. Chronicles, witch process protocols and other historical sources include also excerpts of and mention incantations and prayers in Latin (Ariste 1987, Uuspuu 1938a, 1938b, Kõiva 1996, 1999). It is also worth mentioning that from the point of view of ethnic minorities and cultural contacts, Estonia was a monoethnic region up to the middle of the 20th century (in 1939, 80% of inhabitants were Estonians), and that of the languages listed above, only Finnish is closely related to Estonian, all the others are incomprehensible to anyone who has not learned the language.

Before the 20th century, larger Estonian minorities included Swedes on the western coast and islands (who settled there in the 13th century) and Russians (mostly merchants, living in urban centres since the 16th century). In the 17th century, the Estonian shore of Lake Peipus was settled by Russian Old Believers, who despite relations with Lutheran Estonians maintained their own culture and language. The latest publication on Estonian Old Believer folklore (Novikov & Morozova 2008) showed that they have preserved a rich folklore and that contemporary fieldwork has much to add on even a folklore genre as archaic as healing words.

Another ethnic group, Germans (settled from 13th century, diffused) belonged to the higher and middle class, while Estonians were predominantly lower-class peasants. Votians lived in north-eastern and eastern Estonia.

Most minority groups shared the low social status of Estonians, as did most habitants of cultural contact areas. North-Estonian coastal areas have been much influenced by Finnish dialects and culture from centuries of informal communication. South-Estonians, in turn, have had more contacts and share much with Latvians, with whom they for centuries also shared the administrative unit Livonia (since the 13th century until

practically the 1905 revolution). The whole of Estonian culture was in many respects similar to German or Baltic German culture, there are many shared cultural models; the language has German loans and adoptions. The land border in South-East and North-East Estonia provided contact with Slavic peoples. The influence of the Russian cultural sphere increased with the state-supported spread of Russian Orthodox Church in the 1840s, not to mention the status of Russian language as the official language of the state. During the 20th century, the roles of Estonian and Russian language depended on political circumstances. Since WW2, the largest ethnic minority in Estonia has been and still is Russians.

Although most minorities were small in number, they all had an impact on our incantations. Incantations in a foreign language have spread from the initial points of contact in oral as well as written form.

Preference for Healers of Different Ethnicity, Different Religious Affiliation

There was an underlying common belief that healers from further away, living up north, in Sõrve Peninsula, or people of different nationality, or of a different denomination have stronger powers than others.

We know from documented cases that healers of other nations were seeked out as early as in the 17th and 18th century (Westren Doll 1925, Uuspuu 1938a, 1938b, Mansikka 1945), but certainly the custom is older than that and still thrives. Sometimes, people took up a longer trip to healers living outside Estonia, mostly Latvia or Russia. There are well-documented cases of 20th century South-Estonian habitants turning to Latvian wise men (Kõiva 1989).

We should here also mention the travelling Gypsies who were a special case as they were feared for their evil eye and their alacrity in putting a curse on those who did not meet their wishes or consent with forecasting or healing. Nevertheless, Gypsies were called to heal animals (ERA II 273, 15 (3) < Tarvastu parish), and were welcome on certain calendar holidays – on St.

Martin's Day, bear dancers with a bear were welcome in the byre (and a fee was paid for the visit).

Estonia was predominantly Lutheran until the Russian empire started a campaign in support of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 1840s. Russian Orthodoxy later remained strong in the western islands, in South-East Estonia and North-East Estonia, where also many of the Russian minority were established. People very quickly came to believe the Russian Orthodox priests and healers of that concession are more powerful. In addition to the belief in their stronger powers, there were also significant differences in incantation texts. Texts recorded from the Estonian Orthodox regions featured characters and motifs clearly differing from those recoded from the rest of Estonia, Lutheran by confession.

The syncretical beliefs in the Russian Orthodox areas are well characterised by the (until recently practiced) custom of asking the priest to bless farm animals. This was part of herding customs which included herding incantations.

> *On St. George's Day, the horses were taken to the church. When the service was over, a prayer was said for the horses. The horses stood on both sides of the road. The priest said a prayer, then sprinkled blessed water. Those who had two horses took both of them there* (RKM II 44, 489 (4) < Setu region (1953).

Incantations in Russian: Original Texts, Translations, Adaptations

Next, let us have a look at Russian incantations in Estonian folk tradition. Incantations in Russian use the Russian language, garbled Russian, translated texts or a mixture of Estonian and Russian languages. Incantation repertoire in Russian has expanded several times, one of the last larger waves dating to the 1920s and 1940s when Estonians remigrated from Russia. There are also earlier reports of incantations learned from non-Estonians (ERM 21, 56 < Võnnu parish) and reports that Estonian mariners returned from Russia with knowledge about healing and incantations that they put to use locally. 19th and 20th century farmhands working outside Estonia also brought

incantations home (Kõiva 1990). The reason why some incantations remained in Russian can be explained by what Crystal (1987) called the inability to express oneself in one language, or situation-based usage.

Sometimes one and the same text was known both in the mother tongue as well as foreign language. An example of this comes from the South-East Estonian Setu region where incantations were sometimes read in Russian. The verse includes a small blunder, logically *nosh horoshi* – 'good nose' should be *nogi horoshi* 'good legs'.

> *In autumn when the cranes were actively flying about and calling out, then we, children minding the herd, sang that "Cranes went to hopping":*
>
> *"Up-and-down, long legs along ground,*
> *And like this hopping-hopping."* [indicating up and down with hands]
>
> *If we did not sing this they just waved their wings. Usually they started jumping right away, sometimes after a little while. If we shouted very loudly they started to really twirl.*
>
> *We also used Russian to make them jump:*
>
"Surov, surov uplyashi!	Cranes, cranes, dance!
Tebe nosh horoshi."	You have good nose.

> RKM II 30, 61/2 (85) < Setu region (1949)

Incantations in mixed Estonian and Russian could also be used. In the following example, the first two lines of the verse are in pidgin Russian, the last an addressing formula in Estonian.

> *My husband's mother used to read, when a child was crying:*
>
"Sarooka, varoona	Magpie, crow,
ja kassit variila	was making porridge
ja meie lapse käsi	and our child's hand
jälle terve!"	is healthy again!

> *She wetted the index finger with saliva and rubbed it on the child's palm.*
>
> KKI 24, 104 (8) < Jõhvi parish (1957)

North-East Estonia and South-East Estonian Setu region Estonians used to adhere to Slavic calendar customs and used incantations that were unknown in the rest of Estonia. In some

cases the text was translated, in others Estonians used Russian text.

> *Well, this was another one...*
> *On the night of Epiphany they boil peas and then take them atop a post and say: "Maros, maros, pai garoh!"* [explains that 'pai' means 'kushate' = 'eat' in Russian] [garbled Russian "Cold, cold, eat peas"]. *That then better peas will grow next year. This is another old custom.*
> KKI 20, 574 (89) < Iisaku parish (1955)

In linguistic transition areas, texts could also be translated into Estonian. The Estonian phrase *ei sulge, ei sulevart* in the following example translated from Russian *ni pukha, ni pera* ("not a feather, not a rachis") is, however, not grammatically correct. The common Estonian phrase in this situation is *Tõuse ja lenda!* "Rise and fly!":

> *"Ei sulge, ei sulevart", is wished to someone going hunting. The one leaving says: "I will go hunting for luck, maybe I will get steak." The one staying home wishes the goer luck: "Ei sulge, ei sulevart!"*
> KKI 26, 120 (11) < Jõhvi parish (1957).

The next examples show how the foreign language can be distorted so much that it is only with difficulty that we can guess what the original was. The first two lines of the incantation are in a garbled foreign language, nonsenss words, the last three in correct Estonian dialect:

> The other words for rose:
> *"Eeri-peeri, Luuha, luuha.*
> *Täitä tuupõ, Matsi kress!*
> *Üteh paigah viis, tõsõh viis,* — In one place five times, in another place five times,
> *„tulitungõl" keskmäne,* — the rose is the middle one,
> *nakas takah juuksma."* — it started to run.
> KKI 6, 351 (99) < Setu region (1948)

In the following disease warding words, the first three lines are in broken Russian, followed by Estonian. The first line uses also

an archaism *himbi* ('girl'), a rare word from Older Baltic-Finnic language.

Snat, snat, tsistaja himbi,	Take, take, clean girl,
tsistaja palota,	Clean bog,
sitsid krasnaja tsevitsa,	a beautiful girl sitting,
sitsa krasnaja tola.	Sitting on a red/ beautiful chair,
Musta mõtsa koh	Go to the black forest
kikka kirre-ei	where no cocks crow
ja kana kõõruda-ie.	or hens cluck.
Sinnä võdõtas häti ja viko	That is the place where troubles and disease
inemisõ luust,	are taken out of the
lihast ja soonist vällä.	bones muscle and sinew.
Amin.	Amen.
Spit three times.	

ERA II 10, 441 (5) < Setu region (1927).

The following sample text is quite similar to the previous one, but wholly adapted: no words or verses in other languages. The text in Estonian (Setu dialect), with loans from Orthodox incantation tradition – a place where no dogs bark or cocks crow, symbols of nonexistence and impossibility – does not seem so foreign at all.

A healer read those words nine times on the painful spot. The healer put a stick on the hurting place and pressed a knife criss-cross into it and read pain-words. If the afflicted sent somebody else to the healer instead, then the healer made a cross onto butter and instructed to salve the hurting place with this. Shoes could not be taken off on the way home.

Halu, haigõ, mingu	Pains and diseases, go
mõro mõtsa pääle,	into dark forest
kirivähe kivvi,	into piebald stone
verevahe merde,	into red sea
koh kikas õi kiri,	where no cock crows
koh pini õi haugu.	where no dog barks.
Sääl om illos tütrik,	There is a beautiful girl
valus tütrik, toolõ mingu.	White girl, to her should they go.
Halu, haigõ, tuu kand	pains, diseases, this

	tree-stump
halu haigist,	pains of disease
Maarja luust, Maarja lihast	out of Mary's bone, Mary's body
kuioma ja kaoma	dry and disappear
kui vanakuu taivahe.	like the old moon from the sky.
Timä noorest ja tervest,	[Make] her young and healthy,
halu haigõlt kaoma.	pains away from the diseased.
Arsti käsi, Jumala abi.	Healer's hand, God's help.

S 93370 (19) < Setu region

Conclusion

The samples given here concerned Estonian-Russian incantation relations and the code switching taking place therein. A similar line of examples can be provided about German influence in Estonian incantations – in most cases, these are internationally spread incantations like "Three roses", Merseburg words, etc. Just as we saw in examples of Russian incantations, there are incantations in German, half-translations from German, as well as adapted texts. In archived healer's notes we sometimes see side by side an incantation in Estonian and the same incantation as it first spread in a clumsy translation with German phrases.

It is well known how in the Middle Ages and in Early Modern Times healers used prayer texts in Latin for healing purposes (Kõiva 1985), and garbled Latin can be found also in more recent incantation texts and letter formulae. We find excerpts of Latin in healing words even in 19th and 20th century incantation manuscripts. For example, against ganglionic cyst ('dead man's bone' in colloquial Estonian):

> *When the moon is waning, after sundown, call a dead person by name three times and stroke the cyst clockwise and press it while saying:*

"Oh Jehova, father of god, send this dead one, [name], in the name of the holy spirit to take its dead-man's-bone away. Come and take your dead-man's-bone."

And stroke by hand and press the cyst:

"[name] come and take your dead-man's-bone, [name] come and take your dead-man's-bone. Rein, Christ, Peter, Naman, Naman, [garbled Latin In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti], Jesus, Mary, Jesus, in the name of god the father, god the son and god the holy spirit. Amen."

RKM II 22, 528/9 (8) < Jõhvi parish (1949/50)

Depending on how similar the backgrounds of the patient and incantation performer are, the messages and symbols of a text can be interpreted differently. It is obvious that switching depends on the person being addressed and it also depends on the location.

Analyses of incantations used in the mixed-ethnicity Estonian and Russian areas showed that recent loans (mid-19th century onwards) are used in Russian (e.g., the cold showed incantation example). The distorted Russian language indicates low Russian language skills among Estonians, rote memoration and according errors. However, in South-East Estonia, where the ethnicities have co-existed for a long time, we also see texts that have been translated and adapted to Estonian.

People attribute different social values to different codes and languages. Since a different social value is associated with each code, the speaker considers use of one code more appropriate than the other. Language switching induced by various triggers and code change helps change the social meaning of communication during the ritual, to express one's wishes and emotions in a more precise manner.

There are specific requirements for the time and space of performing a ritual, making demands also about the mystic and uncommon nature of the language used. Healers can change from one language to another in the midst of the incantation or presentation of a healing rite. The type of alteration, or code switching, may take a number of different forms, including alteration of sentences, phrases or words. In the case of incantations, the performer and listener are users of different languages: the text of the healer addresses disease demons and helpful elements or gods using the possibilities offered by the holy language, the

patient understands only a part of that, his linguistic paradigm is mundane and only familiar allusions allow him to follow the general outlines of the incantation content.

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The Doctor Sent Me to a Folk Healer

Abstract: For a short period in the 1980s, some folk healers in Soviet Estonia announced they will only receive patients with an official referral from a medical doctor. The requirement was a response to state prosecution, and aimed to promote the image that they work in cooperation with medical doctors. Not all patients brought referrals, but the referrals brought make for interesting research material. The article concerns the patients of one South Estonian folk healer: the healing ritual, patients' self-diagnoses, origin of doctors and patients, printed material in the healer's tradition, written narratives as part of the ritual, the magic power of miraculous healing.

Keywords: folk healer, folk medicine, alternative medicine, Laine Roht, letters of referral, healing rite

In recent centuries, the institutionalized medical system and folk healers have become increasingly separated. Today they share only the aim of helping people get better and stay healthy. Doctors with a degree in medicine follow a lengthy road to education. They have to pass a period of practice where they apply their knowledge under supervision and hone their skills. A medical doctor is supported by a network of laboratories, the pharmaceutical business, medical publication series, drug catalogues and medical staff. Patients can be referred to specialists for further study, to rehabilitation or hospitalisation.

A folk healer is, we could say, the opposite. He or she is usually not a single player, has helpers and a network for obtaining herbs, exchanging information and receiving patients. Clearly, a folk healer has no supporting laboratories or pharmaceutical industry, not to mention rehabilitation centres. Working outside the medical system, relying heavily on the folk healer's person-

Folk healer Kaika Laine (Laine Roht; 1927–2013) on her birthday with a TV talk show host Vahur Kersna.

ality, the healer serves to change the patient's mentality and psyche. A folk healer's method of diagnosing relies heavily on intuition, the cures centre on (miraculous) remedies and (both oral and written) communication with and faith in the healer. A folk healer requires from a patient not only belief but also adherence to instructions. The healing process operates on remarkably brittle and ambiguous verbality. On the other hand, in some cases people do need to change their life and mobilize themselves in order to conquer the disease, for which purpose the folk healer's system is well suited.

Presumably, the best results in healing patients would come from coordination of both systems, but such instances are truly exceptional, heavily dependent on the people involved and the specific circumstances. I am going to address a phenomenon widespread in the 1980s USSR: well-known folk healers announced they will only receive people with official referrals from a medical doctor. In the 1980s, this was highly irregular, illegal, and the doctors risked their license doing by this, but some patients re-

quested and received the referrals to folk healers. The folk healers were acting out of their fear of the soviet system which viewed their activities as prohibited and punishable. Asking the patient to provide a letter from a licensed doctor seemed like an indication of cooperation with the authorities – it was mimicry, at least I believe that the behaviour can be described as such since the purpose was to remain invisible and unnoticed.

The following analysis of a South Estonian folk healer (and her patients) uses as source material her personal archive. The archive includes referrals from doctors, the book of registration (where a patient's complaint and case history were recorded together with the folk healer's opinion), and the book of thanks (where patients wrote about their successful recovery when they came to thank or were seeking help for a different problem). For the purposes of this article, data from one year (1988–1989) only is analysed, using folkloristic methods.

Laine Roht, a Folk Healer from South Estonia

Laine Roht (1927–2013) was known also as *Kaika nõid* 'Witch of Kaika' or *Kaika Laine* 'Laine of Kaika'. Her healer's aliases are related to the popular tradition of calling, even today, folk healers witches, and the popular name creation where someone is called after their place of origin – Laine Roht lived in South Estonia, in the village of Kaika. Laine Roht came from a family that has yielded several folk healers (her father and great-grandmother were witch doctors), but also medical health care professionals.

> *My father knew how to massage and cure animal diseases. He cured horse joint problems and sprains. And he delivered calves. He had a gadget with which he could sound animals. He was called when someone had sprained an ankle or something. His main remedies were turpentine, spirits of wine, and neat's-foot oil. Our great-grandmother (grandfather's mother) also knew how to heal. She delivered babies.*

Reportedly, the midwife noticed the doctor's sign – a snake and a cup – on Laine's forehead at birth. However, she never received official training. Laine had 6 classes of school education

and subsequently worked her whole life in the post office, mainly delivering mail to the village houses. She married, but had no children. In the 1990s, her brother's son and wife moved in with her and she became her daily assistant. Before that, various acquaintances, mostly similar healers or would-be healers assisted her in receiving patients (Ellermaa & Pitsner 2013).[1]

She started to heal people at the age of 33 and became famous in early 1980s as a healer using archaic methods. Laine's local fame gradually spread and in ten years she became nationally renowned. She lived in her father's house, a wooden house in the 1930s style in the South Estonian hilly countryside. The household included a byre, storehouses, and later a hillside fireplace. Her methods were classic: saying prayers and spells over remedies. Herbal remedies were what she used most, both herbs she or her trustees had collected and potions made thereof. She also mouthed incantations and prayers over substances brought along: patients were asked to take along water or vodka, sugar, honey, salt, fat. Remarkably, she had learned her incantations from the anthology of Estonian folk songs ("Eesti rahvalaulude antoloogia"), and for prayers used the catechism or church calendar Biblical excerpts for the respective day (Kõiva 1995).[2] In one interview, she emphasised the range different written sources she uses, for example tooth ache words from the children's magazine "Pioneer" (Ottas & Tammer 2000). It was also common at that time for folk healers to visit each other in order to become acquainted, compare methods, have fun or learn from each other (Kõiva 1995, 1996).

Laine belonged to the local church committee and in the mid-1980s stressed she only receives the Christened. In actual fact, she received everyone except cancer patients who had had operations or radiation therapy. At that time, most people were attached to no congregation and the requirement of being christened was novel as children were not regularly christened. People did, however, have themselves and their children Christened in order to attain Laine's audience. The issue here was not whether people were religious or atheists, not of science or rationality but purely one of a desperate yearning for healing. Unfortunately, there is no way to characterise the process in more detail as we have archived interviews and published memories but no basis for a generalised overview of behaviour. She

Television recording crew at Kaika Laine's home. Next to Kaika Laine, television producer Georg Jegorov. Private collection.

did not send away anyone nor argue with people who claimed to be christened but were not.

Laine Roht spoke to patients in local dialect, making herself homely for the south Estonian patients while sounding foreign and mysterious to north Estonians and those familiar only with orthographic Estonian. Laine loved to use a humorous tone in talking to patients, to make jokes, talk of famous people from the region the patient came from or to talk of patients she had received from the same region. Her communication style and structure served to becalm and reassure the patient.

Personally, I had recommended Kaika Laine and Gunnar Aarma, and they were accepted, for a folk medicine conference in Finland. I suggested them as representatives of different schools and methods. That visit abroad was the first time Laine experienced comforts unknown to the average Estonian village dweller. However, even more important was her contact with similar Finnish traditional healers who received wages and worked daily with classic massage, bloodletting and other methods at the Kaustinen folk medicine centre. It was a good

At leisure at the Kaustinen folk medicine centre. In the foreground Laine Roht in the swing of dance. Photo by A. Hernesniemi.

opportunity to see other masters in practice and show you off both formally and informally. Although Laine was approaching 70 at the time, she managed nicely in all situations. She was convinced that Finns used generally similar methods and they had nothing much to offer. Laine mixed well with the company, not least because of her humorous attitude. She danced a lot and felt like a star. She later visited other medical conventions abroad (Ellermaa & Pitsner 2013). She was also thrilled with tourist bus trips to European religious centres.

In the mid-1990s, the Witch of Kaika became a media star: she not only performed at the great forums of folk and alternative medicine practitioners and new age healers (for example, the prominent annual "Maaema mess" 'The Mother Earth Fair'), but also on the radio and TV. Interviews were conducted by various media celebrities interested in alternative solutions and phenomena. Some of the films and shows broadcast on the national TV were prepared by folklorists and concerned various aspects of Laine's activities since the 1990s. A short interview to BBC introduced Laine to the Anglophone world and she felt

honoured by this. The visit by the news crew was a novel experience for both sides. Members of the crew had their health checked and took the advice seriously. Laine managed to spot lovers among the crew, causing excitement for both sides.

However, such crews were rare visitors. The media people among her acquaintances were mostly Estonians who first visited with a recording crew and later returned on their own. A better insight of this network is certainly gained by considering the albums Kaika Laine kept at home, the books she received as gifts, but first and foremost the various records of her daily life and meetings. In her old age after she had given up active healing practice she was in the focus of extraordinary attention. A local media celebrity Vahur Kersna opened a bench dedicated to Laine while she was still alive.[3] Her 80th birthday found mention on TV and in media as the birthday of "our healer". Laine posed in national clothes, with TV show host Vahur Kersna, who was one of the main organizers of the broadcasted birthday party. Unexpectedly, several officials including the minister of culture (also wearing a national costume) arrived to personally congratulate the witch doctor. Wearing national costume is in contemporary Estonian clothing style limited to a restricted range of events – their usage emphasises the symbolic feeling of our-ness, affinity towards traditional heritage.

It's also worth mentioning that the ongoing boom of bibliographical publications has also produced one on Laine Roht (Kudu 2009), labelling her the woman of the century; and at least one more book about her was written by the journalist Ellermaa and is titled "The people of Kaika Laine" (Ellermaa & Pitsner 2013). The latter became quickly a bestseller and includes interviews with a number of people who had known the healer. Roughly a third are well-known people, including doctors she had close contact with, naturally telling multiple successful healing stories. The publication is certain to widen the perspective on clairvoyants and healers in contemporary society and is worthy of closer attention. Somewhat unexpectedly, the book also considers issues related to growing old and the life of an old person, the years when she was no longer receiving patients.

There is also a line of books on herbs and vernacular recipes sold under Laine's name, pretentiously titled "Kaika Lainest Vangani" (*From Kaika Laine to Vanga*; Jõgioja 2008, 2009–

2010). The title compares Laine to the Bulgarian prophet Baba Vanga who has gathered much acclaim in Europe. Interviews of and nuggets of wisdom by the Witch of Kaika have been published in books combining advice from various healers (e.g., Ottas & Tammer 2000).

The Healing Rite and Its Written Aspects

As we saw above, Laine's knowledge was mostly in the domains of family and local lore as well as various printed material she mixed into her knowledge. Written and manuscript material formed an inseparable part of the healing rite. The folk healer's healing ritual in general is largely similar to what happens during a regular doctor's visit, though somewhat differently organised. Based on personal participant observations and descriptions by other researchers, I am going to give a short outline of the healing ritual Kaika Laine used – the general structure remained the same throughout the years, though the elements changed in the course of time (e.g., for a time in the 1980s she used also acupressure).

Laine Roht received patient(s) in a dedicated room decorated with icons, pictures and flowers – the reception room. The room included a table and chairs for patients. There, the folk healer greeted the patient and instructed to record a short summary of their case in the reception book (or it could be recorded by the healer's helper). Having received the remedy components the patient had brought along,[4] she proceeded to the room next door to charm these over her birthmark, sitting behind a writing-table. She returned within half an hour to an hour, handing the patient the ready-made drug, accompanied by oral instructions of use, and saying farewell.

As regards the story written into the registrations book before the remedy was prepared, the summary is similar to a case history prepared by a medic according to what the patient tells. However, the descriptions in the folk healer's registration book include more details, more ailments, background information and causal relations. These short records are, in fact, in the majority a list of self-diagnoses, listing disease after disease, but also thorough analyses and data on the patient's social situation (e.g., problems with aging, family, colleagues, etc). Together

A selection of books about Kaika Laine.

with the referral forms and book of thanks the summaries form a written disease narrative. These are quite interesting data.

While the remedy was being prepared, the patient was given the visitor's book or book of thanks, which could be read silently or aloud in turns if the patient had come with family members or in a group. Reading the messages and letters from prior patients had a therapeutic effect as most were success stories and injected the waiters with optimism that even the worst can be

cured. The book of thanks indicates that many came to Kaika Laine for help on several separate occasions, interspersed over several years. The book of thanks served to increase the reliability and authority of the folk healer (cf. Altnurme & Lyra 2004 for comparison with New Age healers).

The Range of Referral Diagnoses

In the late 1980s, in response to the state's efforts to root out alternative medicine practitioners, Kaika Laine was among those who announced both in radio broadcasts as well as through word of mouth that she works in cooperation with medical doctors and will thus only receive patients with a doctor's referral. Laine's personal archive shows that, indeed, for a few years patients did present referrals. However, this was still a minority of all patients she received within that time period.

Looking at the diagnoses in the referrals, in 1988–1989, Kaika Laine had patients with more than 200 different ailments. The severity of disease varied widely among those referred, ranging from incurable or complicated diseases requiring close medical supervision to chronic problems and simple colds. All disease groups are seen in referrals, all organs are mentioned as needing checkup or restoration to health: diseases of the heart and blood circulation (including myocarditis), problems of the respiratory system from pneumonia to asthma and bronchitis; gastrointestinal problems and other internal organ problems (haemorrhoids, stomach functions, pancreas, kidneys, pancreatitis, liver, gallstones), otolaryngology issues including maxillary sinusitis, gynaecological problems ranging to infertility; mental problems; oral cavity and dental problems; cosmetic problems; psychological problems (weight and eating problems, depression); alcoholism and other addictions. Patients with a referral also had problems needing specialist or rehabilitator address, such as logopaedic problems or post-bonehealing weakness or stiffness in joints.

Sometimes the prompt for a visit to a folk healer came at a critical point: right after being diagnosed with cancer or before an operation, when people are prepared to change their lifestyle in the name of health and life, or are looking for another way to save them. There are, however, some very severe problems that were

not taken to a folk healer: e.g., serious kidney failure, profound movement disorders, congenital genetic defects.

The referral diagnoses lead us to the conclusion that the patients sent to a folk healer covered the large majority of the general practitioner's area of praxis as well as that of specialists': there are a number of diseases that merit specialist attention as well as those with no possible cure. There are also referrals where the doctor has not been able to give a diagnosis, but has left it up to the folk healer to identify the nature of the problem.

Like a medical worker. Laine Roht in her office in the 1980s.

Surprisingly, there are also traditional diagnoses not found in official lists of diseases, for example, the evil eye or verbal harming of health. This is surprising because this is a natural part of diagnoses given by folk healers, similar to being cursed – certainly not a diagnosis you would expect from a medical doctor.

The way referrals were formulated is most interesting. Most doctors have filled the referral blanks in the ordinary manner: name and age of patient, diagnosis in Latin and other pertinent information, including proscribed drugs. Doctors added x-ray pic-

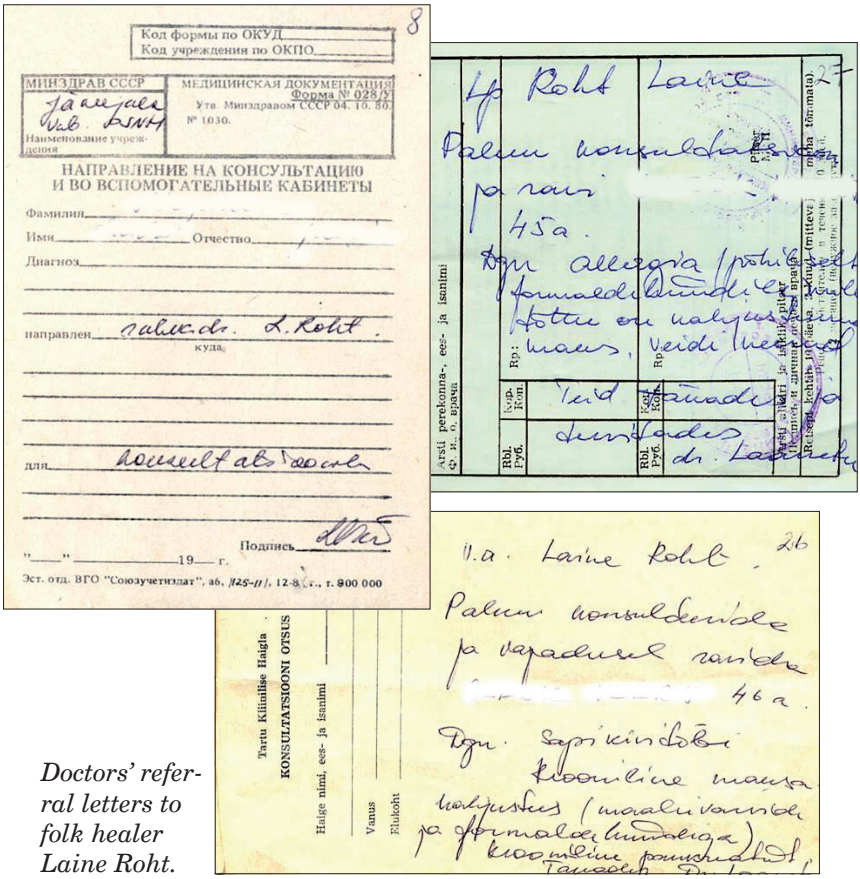
tures, EKG films, and blood and urine test results – just like when sending the patient to a specialist. Referrals were signed by the doctor and stamped with his personal rubber stamp. We see referrals complete with additional health data, addressed to valued specialists who had months-long queues, and we can only guess as to why the patient decided to visit the folk healer instead. It could have been their greater trust in the folk healer, disappointment in the medical system and personal choices in assembling a healing plan, preferring an unproven yet hope-infusing method of healing. However, some doctors rotated the referral blank and wrote the diagnosis in free form in Estonian, giving no diagnosis in Latin. They did not refuse to give the patient the referral, but obviously they had their reservations about this. The archives show that some patients had voluntarily brought along supplementary data that had been used to send them to a specialist.

The Doctors Who Gave Referrals to Folk Healers

Taking a look at who were the doctors that sent their patients to folk healers gives us a most interesting topographical picture. In the 1980s, as Kaika Laine was becoming a well-known healer, most of her patients came from South Estonia, but as her fame spread, she started to attract patients from other regions of Estonia.

In the period when she asked for doctors' referrals, patients came mostly from specialists and regional doctors from larger south Estonian cities of Tartu, Võru, Viljandi, Võhma, Valga, less frequently from further in Estonia (western Haapsalu, central Paide, Jäneda, northern Kohtla-Järve, regional capital Tallinn in the north). However, the cooperative doctors had, in a broad sense, South Estonian roots, and only single doctors came originally from other regions. Doctors who had given one referral were likely to also refer other patients. Probably these doctors were sympathetic to alternative medicine – one of them is currently working with Waldorf methods.

We can not be certain about the gender balance among referring doctor. As for the referral letters, many doctors have not signed their name but in illegible signature only. We can only assume that as there were more female than male doctors, and



Doctors' referral letters to folk healer Laine Roht.

since psychic phenomena in general attract women, the referring doctors were women rather than men.

However, despite the outward impression of cooperation, in actual fact there was no collaborative work on diagnosing, curing or analysis of method efficacy. The referral to a folk healer was a concession to patient wishes and delegation of curing certain diseases to folk healers. We can see that patients with serious medical problems were sent to folk healers, as well as hopeless cases, ambiguous diagnoses, people with social or mental problems. Analysis of the self-diagnoses recorded in folk healer's reception book indicates that people often had problems other than what the official medical diagnosis was. Besides medical problems, patients had social, cultural, psychological problems that induced

a visit to a witch doctor as they could not get help from the system. There was no point asking a doctor or even psychotherapist whether the mean boss will quiescent or would it be wise to start looking for a new job? What to do when a member of the family receives a bleak diagnosis? Is the child dim-witted, rebellious or ill? There were a number of difficult life and health problems where a person found himself alone or in opposition with the near and dear – where a dependable ear or expert advice was welcome. Clearly, some of these and dozens of other questions could be answered by an experienced and dedicated psychologist or psychotherapist, but a folk healer provided a faster and more comprehensive answer with no additional clauses or need to reform your lifestyle. We should also bear in mind that at the time visiting a psychologist or advisor was regarded with prejudice.

Conclusions

Medical professionals were undoubtedly daring in their actions as they could have lost the doctor's license which they had studied and worked for many years. This could be the reason why some formulated the referral in a non-standard manner. The phenomenon discussed here derived from a specific situation – limited access to medical help and enmity to folk medicine. Control exerted by authorities forced folk healers to, in turn, search for legitimacy and ask their patients for referral letters from doctors to prove they are working together with medical doctors. That is the starting point from which a cascade of interpretations and rationalisations disperse, all explaining why in late 20th century a famous healer from the periphery was chosen over a representative of the medical profession. People saw cooperation between doctors and folk healers as natural and this raised their opinion of folk healers. The need for doctors' referrals disappeared in the early 1990s together with the end of the Soviet Union and its restrictions, and consequently the number of patients arriving with referrals dried up.

Folk healer records reveal that a remarkable proportion of difficult diseases were conquered using symbolic healing – using verbal influence on simple remedies – and many patients received help or substantial support. While undoubtedly medical science

has made headway with hereditary and incurable diseases like epilepsy, cataracts, asthma, diabetes, new alleviating medicines and props have become available, most of these were not available during the Soviet era and for some problems there still is no remedy. There is a grain of truth also in the fact that most of the medicine-making (out of ingredients provided by the patient), the related verbal and magical practices as well as related locations remained a mystic area of sacredness and miracles, a secret. Some were revealed by media but the majority still remained *terra incognita*. This opened the door for other possibilities. Looking back at the recorded material, it seems that people did not explain it in terms of magic or religion but instead as personal fluid and powers.

Analysis of records also highlights a very important aspect of 20th century healing rituals: the written word and reading as means of influencing the patient and supporting the ritual. To get better, one needs not only belief, trust and the right expectations, but also stories of success and communication indicating the authority of the healer. This niche is filled by the written getting-well and thank-you stories the healer keeps and presents to her patients.

Comments

[1] In time, Laine was visited by intellectuals, healers and people with something on their mind or wishing to meet someone with special powers. A certain cross section of people of different motivation who either alone, with a friend or accompanying a patient visited the Kaika witch is provided by Ellermaa & Pitsner 2013. The book highlights long-term relations with folk healers, doctors, adherents of alternative medicine.

[2] She provides different references in interviews over time, and the list is further widened by printed and written sources people remember. Laine was not the only one making handwritten copies and typically of the folk healers active in the 1980s she generously shared her manuscripts with others (cf. Ellermaa & Pitsner 2013).

[3] Establishing benched dedicated to and named after people important for the community was initiated by Vahur Kersna in the first decade of the 21st century. The idea led to controversy. Estonia had at the time no such tradition, it was perceived as personal initiative relayed by media. This led to discussions on who determines the names

and funding. Since the tradition took root as memorial plaques and stones, the only change was in the shape. According to established traditions money was donated for the monument by local government and cultural organisations as well as local people. Today, benches of this nature have been established in various locations ranging from appreciating hidden aspects of culture to representatives of popular mass culture.

[4] Information pertaining to what needed to be taken along, how to behave, register, where to go and much more spread orally from visitor to visitor. In interviews and media mediated addresses of the 1990s she always gives a list of recommended substances that need to be taken along and provides various instructions.

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The Witch of Äksi – Clairvoyant Person and Soviet Time

Abstract: This article is about constellations in which communities accept extraordinary personalities and the traditional clairvoyant/witchcraft narratives. The person under discussion is the witch of Äksi, Hermine Elisabeth Jürgens (1892–1976), one of the best known Estonian 20th-century clairvoyants. In Estonian, the word *nõid* ('witch') is still used by the general public (a witch is a person with extraordinary powers, a healer, a wise(wo)man). During the Soviet period and later the term *nõid* ('witch') was interpreted as an important keeper and interpreter of national knowledge. The article focuses at the life of the witch of Äksi, and the corpus of narratives that talk about her, focusing on the most common subtopics of narratives and motifs that lead to the folklorisation or narrativisation of her life. The narratives are divided into oral biographies, patient or client narratives (among which stories of divination stand out), and a smaller corpus, which contains the occurrences of narrativisation the person. The witch of Äksi was a city-born urbanite, she adapted to country life and unfamiliar socio-political circumstances. Narratives reflect the traditional duties of witch /clairvoyant person: the looking for missing family members; searching for criminals or suddenly missing people in co-operation with authorities; looking for stolen goods and animals; helping with matters of love and family relations; divining one's future and fate; healing, and single political prophesies.

Keywords: Äksi witch, Hermine Jürgens, clairvoyant, narratives about divination, modern witchcraft

Introduction

This article is about constellations in which communities, groups, local residents (not people who believe in witchcraft and the paranormal) accept extraordinary personalities and the traditional clairvoyant/witchcraft narratives. The belief narratives reflect the real experience, people's opinions and feelings when they are exposed to magical practices, their real results. At the same time the experiences touches their lives far more emotionally and immediately than a mere narrative is able to do.

The article is the first step to analyse stories about the witches and witchcraft connected with the 20th-century influential personalities. The person under discussion is the witch of Äksi, Hermine Elisabeth Jürgens (1892–1976), one of the best known Estonian 20th-century clairvoyants. Her life was shaped by the unstable course of the 20th century, as she moved from St. Petersburg, Russia, to Estonia, where she lived in various places. She spent most of her life in Estonia, "in a foreign land in a foreign setting". The majority of the stories that are concerned with her originate from the post-Second World War period when she was already well known for her extraordinary talents.

In Estonian, the word *nõid* ('witch') is still used by the general public. A witch is a person with extraordinary powers, a healer, a wise(wo)man; in this meaning, the word has different connotations, which are not negative, but rather indicate unknown powers. Just as many other phenomena, magic, witchcraft, and witches are not free from international cultural influences. For example, such idiomatic expressions as *damn witch* and *old witch* represent an evil or a spiteful individual, also someone with skills of worming things out (Justkui 2002, keyword *witch*). In the older idioms, the sex of the subject is not explicit; in the newer recordings it seems that it is rather a female person. There are also examples of literary works, in which the witch's identity is associated with healing but also with malicious magic. During the 19th and 20th centuries, ethnography (folklore studies, ethnology) used the linguistic etymological interpretation, according to which the word's semantic meaning is *the wise, the shaman*. It coincides with the popular way of explanation, in which the word *witch* combines a whole complex, an orchestration of semantic discourses, which associated with the

witch's person an individual who is wise and has unconventional abilities. The word *witch* also means someone who is a borderline person or who communicates with feared forces; according to the agrarian peasant, often has the qualities of someone eloquent and good at manipulating, and much more. The importance of the role of the witch as an important wise person and the one associated with ethnic mentality was stressed by both the national movement predecessors (Jakobson 1991 [1870] in his *Three Patriotic Speeches* [Kolm isamaa kõnet], which gave meaning to the history of Estonians) and by the spokesmen of the national movement, the first archaeologists, collectors and interpreters of folklore, authors of textbooks and writings that appeared in journals (Jaan Jung, Jaan Jõgever and others), as well as by the learned representatives of folklore studies (cf. Oskar Loorits 1928, III: 11, 67 ff.; 1952: 476–480).[1]

The same attitude resounded in the interpretations of the Soviet period and during 1990s, in which the witch was an important keeper and interpreter of national knowledge. The term lived an independent life in villages and towns, where the use of the name continued in spite of the new different cultural interpretations.[2] Even today, famous sensitives and healers are called witches. Earning this title means earning the respect of the people.

Below, I will have a brief look at the life of the witch of Äksi, and then the corpus of narratives that talk about her, focusing on the most common subtopics of narratives and motifs that lead to the folklorisation or narrativisation of her life story and personal events.

Biography of the Äksi Witch

Hermine Jürgens (née Blaubrück) was a moderately well-educated woman. She was born in Saint-Petersburg, Russia, into the family of a piano manufactory owner, in 1892. Her father was born on Topa farm, in Kärevere village, near Tartu[3]. She went to high school in St. Petersburg, where she acquired excellent Russian and German, while her Estonian retained an accent until the end of her days. Hermine Jürgens graduated from the Viiburi[4] Music School (*Musiikkiopisto*). She married a long-distance captain, Gustav Jürgens, when she was 18. They

had two sons, Karl and Artur. When the family got into financial trouble, they came to live on her uncle's farm in Kärevere, Estonia. They returned to Estonia when it was still part of the Russian Empire. Her husband developed increasing alcohol problems and finally he left to live in the capital city, Tallinn.

Hermine Jürgens was very active during her youth. She took part in the Estonian War of Independence (1918–1920) as a frontline nurse. Prior to the Second World War, Hermine Jürgens lived in Tartu, earning her living by providing piano accompaniment to mute films, giving piano lessons, but mostly by fortune-telling. For some time, she lived with Harri Lindner, a famous illusionist at the time. When Hermine came to Estonia, she had two pianos with her, and she used the Bechstein concert grand piano until her old age to make a living.

Later on, Hermine Jürgens lived in the countryside in Tartu County, in different places with different men. Jürgens herself claimed that her innate clairvoyant powers had strengthened during her thirties. The reason was a period of clairvoyance in 1935, when she saw her current partner (the forest warden of Ahja) together with another woman. Stories from Ahja tell of how the man was in trouble with his evil clairvoyant wife.

Although the folk stories picture her as a good-hearted woman, her biography points to a complicated and unusual (even for a city woman) type – a fervent smoker, passionate coffee-drinker, sometimes quarrelsome (lost the leader position in the women's home defence organisation due to a quarrel).

In the 1940s, Hermine moved to the neighbourhood of Äksi[5] and became known as the witch of Äksi. She lived in a small house and had a library of several hundred books; she read and wrote avidly. She was also one of those who consistently kept a diary (Grünfeldt 2004).[6]

In Äksi, she earned her living by giving piano lessons and playing the church organ. Her fame for finding lost people started during the Second World War, and later came to include finding stolen goods and healing people. The archived descriptions and recorded interviews speak of her as a clairvoyant; there are fewer stories of her as a herbalist and a healer. The special personality and city-like manners of the Äksi witch, however, are often emphasised. This list includes her love for coffee and smoking, trips to cafés in Tartu, and the furnishings of her home, which

follow the pre-war style. The descriptions of Hermine Jürgens's appearance are vivid and indicate that she followed the pre-war, first Republic era style. The stories project good relations with the local authorities, which spared her trouble, as well as cooperation with those representatives of militia who acknowledged supernatural powers in finding missing persons.

In the 1960s–1970s, she was often visited by artists, Tartu University professors and students as well as those interested in mental phenomena. It is the students who arrived from farther away, intellectuals and artists that, in her lifetime, but especially about twenty years after the death of the Äksi witch, published memories of their encounters with her and pointed out her brilliant personality (Suuman 1974, 2001; Paju 1994; Truus 1999; Talva 2011). Comprehensive biographical material was collated and published as a book, for example, by Kalle Truus, a well-known chemist, who, as a student, had had a personal contact with the Äksi witch. Into this publication the author of the article added the texts that by that time had been collected into

Hermine Jürgens in her early years.

Hermine Jürgens on the doorstep of her last home. This is one of the last pictures taken of the famous Äksi witch. Photo by Kalle Truus.

the Estonian Folklore Archives. In the 1990s, the Äksi witch was presented in a lengthy television broadcast. It should be noted that the pre-independence time and the following decades are characterised by an awed and reverent attitude towards witch doctors. It was a new process of giving meaning to ethnic values, identity, and history, in which witch doctors were promoted to stars of ethnic culture by various movements.[7]

The witch of Äksi used to visit the Werner Café in Tartu, which was legendary for its elite clients.[8] There she met, for example, the linguist and polyglot professor Paul Ariste, with whom an interesting dialogue lasted through decades. In 1980s Paul Ariste held a presentation in the Academic Folklore Society on the powers of the Äksi witch and on some of his experiments with her. He used to call and ask the Äksi witch to describe, for example, what his wife was doing at the time. According to Ariste, the description might have been accurate, but sometimes she also failed. Unfortunately, during the Soviet period, there were fewer opportunities for publishing than for performing, which is why the treatments and material collections of the crossing themes of folklore and paranormal phenomena were left unpublished. The same is valid for presentations on eminent clairvoyants.[9] Linguist Eduard Vääri and sculptor Aulin Rimm can also be mentioned as café acquaintances and friends of the Äksi witch (interview RKM Mng II 4306 < Tartu (1991), Talva 2011).

Her relations with partners and sons were aloof. She died in the Kastre nursing home on July 1, 1976, was buried in Äksi,

Hermine Jürgens at the Werner Café in Tartu.

Folklorist Mare Kõiva recording memories of the Äksi witch in the summer of 1999, on the day that a memorial stone was opened on the site of the witch's last home in Puhtaleiva village.

and in accordance with her wishes, her grave has a limestone slate engraved with "Äksi nõid" – Witch of Äksi. Her last place of residence, a small house in the middle of a grain field near a highway, was destroyed after her death during undertakings typical of the Soviet way of life: it was set on fire and burnt down during civil defence exercises.

In July 11, 1999, the locals and her clients unveiled a big commemorative stone in her last place of residence. The author of the memorial was sculptor Ado Koch from the capital (also had had a personal contact with the witch), who prepared several drafts. Librarian Eve Toots, who had taken a responsible attitude towards maintaining local culture, assisted in the process of creating the memorial in every way. The local people, municipality government and various funds contributed to the creation of the monument as well as media (Jõesaar 1996; Piller 1998; Taal 1999), The whole process of setting up a memorial stone is a great example of an informal initiative by the local people and those belonging to the so-called outer circle, an action that honoured a prominent figure in the 20th century alternative culture.

Stories about the Witch of Äksi

The narratives about the witch of Äksi form an interesting corpus featuring the witch's biography, her work as a witch or clairvoyant, as well as completely fictional tales. A bigger part of the corpus was recorded after her death, during expeditions in various parishes near her place of residence. Local people were questioned in more depth, for example, by folklorist Anu Korb, who lived in Äksi. The corpus of texts also includes stories told in common situations, sent by local correspondents, and recollections of their contacts with her by people who visited the Literary Museum for interviews. At the opening of the memorial in 1999, local people reminisced about a women who was accustomed to city-living, yet came to live in the countryside; various patient or client narratives were also told. Some of the motifs were unique, which was another example of the importance of the correspondents and nearby residents, with their insider's view of what was happening. It also showed clearly that at an event dedicated to a local resident, one can hear and collect a wide range of various stories and significantly supplement the subject material.

Here I leave aside the intellectuals who came into contact with her, and concentrate on the corpus of narratives collected by recording folklore, or narratives available through audio interviews. It is the narratives of people who went to her for help. Such narratives are divided into oral biographies, patient or client narratives (among which stories of divination stand out), and a smaller corpus, which contains the occurrences of narrating and mythologizing the person, including, for example, a transfer of familiar motifs from legends and vernacular religion.

These are shorter and generally single-episode informative patient or client stories. Each of these narratives will be regarded as a version of a true story. They are believed to be true and reflect concrete events and experiences of concrete people. The tellers and witnesses have used highly similar kinds of narratives, which are closely connected with the similar historical and socio-cultural settings. Although the Äksi witch used to earn a living by divination already before the war, the situation changed dramatically before, during, and after the Second World War. The Soviet era trips to clairvoyants in the city or countryside were actually a follow-up phenomenon of practices of the 19th and especially of the beginning of the 20th century. Turning to clairvoyants and seers

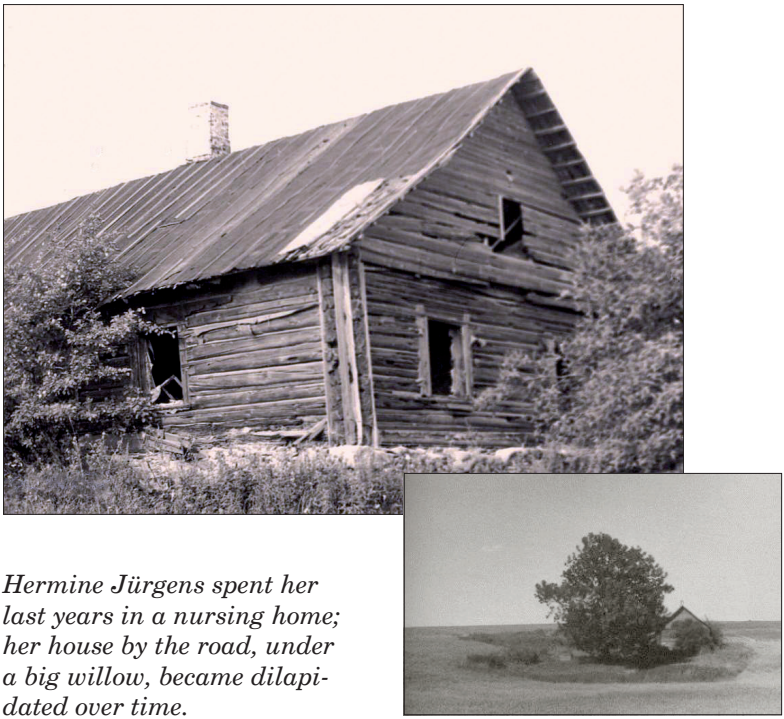
acquired wider dimensions after the Second World War, when the predominant issue was searching for missing persons, rather than seeking aid for troubles related to one's own person. Such visits were a chance to get answers to the questions of whether relatives and acquaintances were still alive and in which part of the world they were located. The Soviet-time practice of limited and segmented information dissemination and manipulation of information raised the prestige of alternative sources of information.

Let us have a look at the prototype situations in the given settings. Extensive changes in the population and economic and political systems over a very short period explain the importance of people like Hermine Jürgens in society. After twenty years of the independent Republic of Estonia, the Russian troops entered in 1940. The loss of independence was a sad experience, but deeper wounds were afflicted by the big deportation to Siberia in June 1941. Mainly intellectuals, military people, government officials and wealthy people were deported. This was one reason why during the Second World War nearly one third of the population migrated from Estonia. After the Second Wold War the Soviet regime was restored, and in March 1949 the second deportation to Siberia followed. Rapid restructuring took place in the economy: farmsteads were deconstructed, private property was abolished, and the cooperative system was changed. The end of the 1940s saw a coerced transition to collective farms (kolkhozes or sovkhozes).

Every family had members who went missing in the deportations. Often, it was only known through hearsay that the person ended up in prison or on a trial, as there was no further information. Traces of men vanished during military service, and many went missing during war-time escapes. Even the fate of the so-called Forest Brothers, who had hidden in the forests of Estonia to escape different mobilisations, was unknown. So, for decades after the Second World War, people searched for their relatives through the Red Cross and non-formal organisations.

A. Biographical Stories

Above I pointed out the three types of stories related to the Äksi witch, which I will describe in more detail at the respective subcategories. Biographies stand out as a special genre. During expeditions folklorists come into contact with storytellers, whose



Hermine Jürgens spent her last years in a nursing home; her house by the road, under a big willow, became dilapidated over time.

best type of story is a(n) (oral) biography that includes the ability to highlight some details in the biography, a character trait or reactions, an ability to analyse the subject's personality, to generalise the human behaviour. Such oral biographies (or, in a wider sense, genealogies) are probably one of the oldest genre of spontaneous narrating. Even today, there are people in almost every family who are able to recite lengthy genealogies and biographies of specific people. The oral tradition of these men and women includes a wide range of stories, but the core genre of traditional communication is the biography. Such biographies are presented in different discourses. This may be an oral history or folklore discourse; the biography is either based on history and events or governed by experiences, allegory and traditional motifs. Biographies are used in the family internal and territorial communication; they are recited at parties and gatherings, during communication between generations, in everyday communication. Often the folklorist must break through

the biography to reach the traditional stories, songs, or expressions created in the community.

Collectors prefer the biographies in which events acquire a narrative outlet following traditional models, or the ones that at least include interpretations, comments on what happened (for example, a personal meeting with a ghost), which are connected with folklore or provide additional information about it. In such a case, the biography is like a cloud or warp that holds together various tales about a personality. At the same time, oral biographies are exactly an indispensable genre if you look for information on onetime bards and musicians, healers or local correspondents.[10]

Biographies are definitely an important source for obtaining additional data. Obviously, the descriptions of a person's life are shorter, they focus more on some facts, and sometimes luckily concentrate on his or her experiences, generalising the personality. They tell of the appearance of clairvoyant abilities after personal suffering: a child left unjustly at home by its parents during his or her childhood decides to look at what the parents are doing and discovers the powers. Common motifs speak of an unexpected appearance of clairvoyance that became known in connection with discovering the spouse's infidelity.

I will next present some of the typical biographical stories that were spontaneously narrated in a storytelling milieu. They were told in response to the interviewer's question: Did you know the witch of Äksi? The biographies that villagers tell about each other are certainly an interesting folklore genre, containing intriguing schemes of fictionality and truthfulness. These stories are quite close to actual biography. Although the witch of Äksi did not always get along with the village people, she must have told them about her life. Both examples are recorded four years after her death, in the parish that she lived in.

> *Äksi witch. Jürgens was her name. Died a few years ago. She was often sought, even after her death. Now this has stopped. Her father was a piano-maker. Gave the church a piano. Also played very nicely. Spoke German, Russian, English and French languages. She had a big library.*
>
> *She used to go to sauna in Tartu. Whisked her hands in hot steam to keep them nimble. It was about 1935–36 when she appeared in the Äksi neighbourhood. Lived on various farms. She did not have many friends here.*

She also went to Valga County and the city of Tartu, received people there. They brought foodstuffs. Later also money.

She was a wise person. Her knowledge of herbs was great. Turned the legless into walkers. Knew the wild herbs. [A list of diseases and herbs used to heal them.] *She was a clairvoyant. Missing people and stolen things were sought with her help. Girls also asked help in matters of love* (RKM II 348, 474/5 (31) < Äksi parish (1980)).

The second story blends a divination episode into the biography.

Äksi witch. She had higher education. Graduated from St. Petersburg conservatory. Her father owned a piano factory. She gave piano lessons. She had education in astrology and a good memory. Spoke languages (Finnish, German, French, Russian), Estonian with a little accent. Her mother was Estonian, father I don't know about. Her husband was a ship captain. Two sons as well. Husband died long before she moved here, to Äksi (about 1934–35). Income mainly from fortune telling and piano lessons.

She had many visitors. My mother-in-law also believed, went to her. She did not charge much. You had to bring a pack of cigarettes. People brought foodstuffs (flour, honey, fat and eggs). She baked cakes in the morning and evening. That was her food. When someone asked her of news about the missing, she started to meditate. Looked at the ceiling. Then spoke. For example, is making a spade handle, thin in the face, with perhaps two weeks' beard.

I, too, asked her for a divination. She told me that my husband was alive, my son was alive. Both were actually long dead. When I later told her she was wrong, she said: "Would it have been better if I had said that they were dead?"

Actually, she knew zilch, but people believed. In the end she was living alone, in a small house outside Lähte (RKM II 348, 477/9 (1) < Äksi parish and village (1980)).

B. Visits to the Witch of Äksi

A larger portion of stories concerning the witch of Äksi describe visits to her or meeting her. As a rule, the storyteller's narrative presents one incident; talking about several experiences is rarer. The corpus of narratives describes different motives for vis-

Initially, there was a simple white wooden cross on Hermine Jürgens's (died in 1976) grave (above); in 1996 it was replaced by a memorial stone (below).

its and aims at the situations due to which the witch of Äksi was visited. The following list shows whether the cases ended with a positive result and are so-called success stories, or whether they failed or had an unwanted outcome for the narrator. (Sample texts are presented for some subclasses.) The corpus, however, includes relatively few stories about failed visits.

A. First of all, looking for missing family members both during the Second World War and after that, up until she

went to the nursing home. People lost their relatives in the tides of war and deportations; most recorded stories are about fulfilled and true prophesies, whereas some turned out to be wrong.

B. Some of the stories are concerned (mostly in cooperation with the militia) with searching for criminals, killers or suddenly missing people: with varying success.
C. Stolen goods and animals was the third popular topic. Both common people and the militia ask for help; most stories are about success.
D. Help in matters of love and family relations; with varying success, the witch often desists giving advice or help.
E. Divining one's future and fate as well as diseases with cards; mostly successful.
F. Narratives and data about healing.
G. Single political prophesies.

In addition to first person narratives or memorates, there are a number of mediated, second or third person narratives. Typically the narrative has three or two main actors: the narrator, the visitor, and the witch of Äksi – the "hero" or principal character. Usually the relation between the narrator and central character is distinguished. Sometimes the narrator is the central person – the autobiographical "I". But the narrative takes on a more complicated structure if another person is introduced as the main character, which is more common in fictional stories.

The general motive is divination. The main conversation style of narration is close to the basic form of divination: this means that the arrived person presents their question, to which they receive a reply in symbols, in the so-called language of symbols, and must find a more precise interpretation to the reply themselves. An interesting aspect of narratives is also the spatial relations within the stories: the story gives a general description of the physical space of the witch's place of residence, which contrasts the place depicted through symbols, in which the person, on account of whom one came to the witch, is situated. This description is a vague and general divination, mostly using the deictics *far away, in the village, in the forest, somewhere in a big building, in a factory, over the sea,* etc. To interpret this, one need to, in part, know the models used to spell out divinations, dream interpretations, and faith narratives. The storytellers and experiencers

define and explain, often retrospectively, the existing geographical space the divination is concerned with. The most important marker of a respective resolution is often *alive or dead.*

> *Armilde Pajo and her parents were deported to Siberia on June 14, 1941, but her brother Ants was not at home at the time and was spared from deportation. Once, during the German rule, the brother went to see the Äksi witch in hopes that she might know the fate of the deported. They talked for a while and in the end the witch started to stare into a corner of the room. Stares and stares and then finally says: "I see two grave mounds and a person between black currant bushes." At the time the brother visited the Äksi witch, the parents had died and been buried in Siberia; therefore the two graves. And the person in the black currant bushes was Armilde Pajo, still alive of that family, and when she was by the River Ob, there were indeed black currant bushes there* (RKM II 438, 34/5 (23) < Põltsamaa parish (1990)).

Often, varied additional information about the Äksi witch's way of life is added to the narrative as in the following story:

> *It was around the year 1965. At that time I was studying in Tallinn and I needed to…er… go to a doctor… er… because I had face surgery. It was a trivial thing but as a result, the face was covered in band aids and. And then when I had to get all kinds of pills to prevent blood poisoning from developing and. One day, when I had taken the pills again and I was at the Werner Café, an old lady turned to me asking what was wrong with me then. Well, I then explained to her what was wrong with me, because I knew the lady's face and she knew me too. We had often been on Saadjärve, Jõgeva, and all those busses to Tartu together. And so I, for the first time, got personally acquainted with Mrs Hermine Elisabeth Jürgens or, as the locals called her, the Äksi witch. Every Friday Mrs Jürgens visited the Werner Café and from there left for the Emajõe sauna. It was a full, total tradition, which she never violated, except, of course, when she was already so old that she was unable to do it. At the Werner Café, her closest acquaintances were waiting for her: Paul Ariste… er… then there was Eduard Vääri and artist Aulin Rimm. They then came up, greeted, chatted, and treated her with utmost respect* (RKM Mng II 4306 < Tartu (1991)).

Next to missing people, missing animals and precious objects were also important reasons for visiting the witch. For these divinations, the stressing of details is also characteristic:

> *The Äksi witch also helped with cases of theft. Right here on the farm. A cow was stolen at Västriku. The militia was used to search. The cow was supposed to give birth soon. Old Mann went to the witch. The witch spoke and saw: a woman wearing a white scarf on the head is milking in a clay cowshed.*
>
> *Outside Tartu, where the cow was, a woman wearing a white scarf was indeed milking. The militia brought the cow and the calf back* (RKM II 348, 443 (39) < Äksi parish (1980)).

Descriptions of Hermine Jürgens's abilities have been added to the following story, whereby the narrator's use of words is characteristic. Every era characterises clairvoyants, healers and witches using particular concepts. One stock expression of the Soviet period for someone with supernatural abilities or psychic people was the sixth sense, possession of it. Several tales describe in more detail the divination practices and her explanations of her abilities and their limitations. According to the explanations of the Äksi witch, divining information about people located far away tires her; she says she is unable to see the dead. Reports about family quarrels and predicting the future spouse are mixed: she was said to have assisted, yet, on the other hand, her customary answer is said to have been: "That you have to know yourself."

> *Indeed, she had that sixth sense. In her mind's eye she saw what others do not see. Help about finding missing people was sought from her, as well as about thefts.*
>
> *If the one consulted about was very far away (for example, in Japan), the witch would say: "It affects my health. It exhausts me."*
>
> *If the one consulted about was dead, the Äksi witch would reply: "I don't see them"* (RKM II 348, 443/6 (1) < Äksi parish (1980)).

Considering the education of the Äksi witch and her urban background, it can be presumed that her knowledge is related to publications. After such a long time, it is impossible to determine the composition of her home library, but there have been hints in in-

terviews about her possessing books on magic and other practical literature: "She had a lot of books. There was one book about the left hand (palm reading) in French." In the Estonian publications palm reading knowledge was published, handbooks on herbalism, magic, and astrology were printed, etc. (cf for example, Annus 1993, 1995 bibiographies). Next to palm reading, she was also said to have been able to read cards (this ability is denied by several informants, card readers are evidently regarded as belonging to a lower category), know astrology and draw up horoscopes. This skill was valued during the Soviet period as very few knew how to draw up a detailed personal horoscope.

Two emerging indicator themes are relationships with doctors, which are assessed as being good, as she was even placed in the role of an expert,[11] and the question of payment made to her. As oral regulations limit thanking for healing and prescribe acceptance of payment/donation but prohibit asking for payment, the reports about the Äksi witch reflect it. Primarily, there are references to accepting foodstuff (accepted food, mainly bread, milk, eggs) and packages of cigarettes. It is emphasised that sometimes she sent back some of what was brought, such as baked cakes and some other foodstuffs.

The healing of diseases, especially with herbal remedies, constitutes a modest part of the corpus, time wise dated to after the Second World War. The stories vary: she was considered an herbalist, her healing methods are described and the use of verbal charms is also indicated.

> *The Äksi witch did everything. She also healed people. Read some witching words onto you. It helped. Kokuta Marie got that knowledge of cards from the Äksi witch. The Äksi witch was nearly 90 when she died* (RKM II 430, 432 (20) < Kursi (1989)).

Her plant gathering skills are described in more detail: how she chose suitable time for it, considering the phases of the moon and part of the day; also, houseplants and other themes are discussed.

> *Knew folk medicine. Used to dry medicinal herbs in her home, pressed juices out of them. Knew when to collect, when a plant was in its prime blooming period. One of her rooms was full of all sorts of roots, buds and leaves. The Äksi witch used to say that a drop of her medicine is better*

than a litre of that picked at the wrong time. For collecting medicinal herbs the phase of the moon, and time of the day were said to be important. If necessary, she would even gather at night (RKM II 480, 123 (11) < Tartu (1983)).

There are also descriptions of fooling incidents, where the locals went to tell the Äksi witch that someone was waiting for her at the station and then giggled, while the seer searched for non-existent visitors. Experiments to test her clairvoyant abilities – mainly initiated by curious guests or famous contemporaries – were both successful and failures, as we demonstrated earlier. Sceptical stories of her failures are part of the normal heritage surrounding every wise(wo)man.

C. Fictional Stories in Which Well-known Folklore Motifs Are Transferred to a Specific Person

Stories concerned with the fate of a witch tell of supernatural incidences and extraordinary expression of talents, presume a punishment for their actions, but also include the motifs of loneliness and dying alone, a difficult death, and many more (cf. Loorits 1951: 482 ff.). Below, I will provide a few examples from that part of the corpus.

The first example originally appeared in connection with one of the most famous south-Estonian witche[12] (the male witch Suri). The patient is reluctant to pay for services with the eggs he has taken with him and the eggs turn into snakes. Significantly, since the 1970s the same story has become associated also with the witch of Äksi, often told as a first person memorate.

My uncle, my mother's brother, went to the Äksi witch, we went by horse. I and my mother went along; I must have been six years old. She had hen's eggs with her and my uncle said not to take eggs to the witch. Put these under the bridge; let us first hear what the witch tells us. After the witch had told them everything, she added that when we went back, we should take that snake parcel along, too. We went back and there were snakes in the bundle. Mother went to take the eggs and shrieked. (RKM II 447, 121 (8) < Torma parish (1991)).

One of the best known social prophesies that the witch of Äksi made was: "Estonia will become independent. Russia will be-

Memorial stone designed by sculptor Ado Koch, on the site of the last home of the Äksi witch in Puhtaleiva village, Äksi parish, Tartu County.

come so small that you can see the Russian border from a window of the Kremlin." The exact words vary and it was one of the leitmotifs about her in the 1980s–1990s. In fact, these prophesy was made by a famous 19th-century south-Estonian prophet who voiced a number of social prophesies (Kõiva 2010).[13]

There are also widespread motifs that are attributed to her death. She had two sons but stories tell of her wish to be buried together with her daughter:

> *Äksi witch. When she fell ill, she was visiting somebody. She told her host: "When I die, you [will have to] bury me and my daughter beside me."*
>
> *The man replied: "Your daughter still lives, she will bury you!"*
>
> *The witch insisted: "No, you bury! I cannot die if you don't promise to!" The man then made the promise.*
>
> *The daughter went to get a coffin for her mother. She was killed on the way. They were buried in the same grave.* (RKM II 431, 140a/1a (52) < Palamuse parish (1989)).

Conclusion

Clearly, the role of a witch was voluntarily chosen by Hermine Jürgens, but there was also the will of the community to remember her as such. The stories telling of the life and actions of the witch of Äksi blend fiction with non-fiction, and are adapted to fit the stereotypical image of a witch and her fate. At the same time, the corpus of stories surrounding the witch of Äksi is an interesting insight into life during the Soviet period, of how one could make a living as a fortune teller and healer as many did.

We find therein indirect reports of how a city-born urbanite adapts to country life and unfamiliar socio-political circumstances. We see in the corpus some of the strategies that people apply in crises, clairvoyance as an opportunity to cooperate with the authorities, and transmigration of witch story motifs to the witch of Äksi.

The narrative corpus offers an interesting view of the biographical stories, prophesies and transmigration of widespread motifs. In the majority of divination stories, the narrators have had to face difficulties or loss of relatives; the stories reflect the social situation. The positive image of witchdoctors trumps the negative.

The descriptions of her appearance include variously worded references, such as: short with curly hair and wearing a hat, she looked like a *tante*.[14] In addition, smoking, which at the time was not common among women, musical skills, and good relations with various scholars, townsmen and authorities are highlighted. Among quaint set habits are classified visiting the café and sauna in the city of Tartu. For sure, sauna would also have been available in Äksi, but perhaps it was an opportunity to meet old acquaintances in the Emajõe sauna? Maybe these visits and meetings with different people were a breath of fresh air for her? The Äksi witch not only continued the pre-Second World War tradition of clairvoyants, but she also learned a variety of new techniques and expanded her skills. At the same time, in her attitudes and behaviour, she continued to represent the pre-war Estonia. She was both an adapter to social settings and a maintainer of her own agenda.

There are two important sides to everyone in such a profession: their motivation and contribution to the community as

well as personal ethics. As was pointed out above, decades later it is difficult to answer many of the questions. But her motivation was certainly wider than earning a living. Her contribution to the community was important as a healer, but, above all, as a clairvoyant and as someone offering stability to people. It is also impossible to make clear decisions about her ethical credo.

People's faith in her is expressed in tying motifs to her person, attributing a prediction of the end of the Soviet Union to her, the memory of her in the community as a seer and a miraculous locator of missing people. It is really great if a community can boast a personality different from others, who makes one contemplate the spiritual issues.

Comments

[1] Oskar Loorits differentiates terms *witch/charmer* and *witch doctor, wise (wo)man, doctor;* he concludes that the term *witch* marked previously male person, close to shaman (Loorits 1952: 480).

[2] A typical generalised point of views was the following: "In Estonian, witch used to be a synonym for a wise person," he begins obscurely. "Only in Medieval Times, thanks to Christianity, did the word gain negative connotations. I am no witch or wiseman, I have only read a little more" (Kulli 2001). The connotations of witch and related historical arguments need further exploration. The witch figure in the centre of the New Age movement fits perfectly with the Estonian national interpretations, both with the learned and popular ways of explanation.

[3] At that time, the town of Tartu, situated in Estonia, was part of the Russian empire.

[4] Vyborg, Wiburg, Karelian and Finnish area belongs to Russia, 130 km from St. Petersburg.

[5] Äksi is a parish centre in Tartu County. It is located on the southern shore of Lake Saadjärv, some 20 km from Tartu. Äksi had a population of 300 people during WW2 period.

[6] Journalist Inna Grünfeldt's interview with biochemist Aili Paju reveals that the latter appears to have brought to the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu microfilms of the Äksi witch's diaries, which went missing. It is possible that they were not included in inventory during the Soviet period; microfilming it; however, was at that time regulated and required good contacts with laboratories. There are also other reports of reading the diaries of the Äksi witch.

[7] The biographical facts of the article are based on the database Geni.com (Hermine Jürgens) and on Kalle Truus's book. The television broadcast took place in the Werner Café setting and contained memories of the visits of the Äksi witch as a famous café frequenter.

[8] Werner Café has been operating as a café since 1895.

[9] One of the grandest examples of a collection of material on paranormal phenomena was that of paranormal cases started at the beginning of the 1970s by psychiatrist Ilmar Soomere (born 1942), who had a diverse set of interests, which developed into an extensive manuscript, entitled *1000 parajuhtumit Eestis* [1000 Paranormal Cases in Estonia]. It appeared in print only in 1997, under the title *800 parajuhtumit Eestis* [800 Paranormal Cases in Estonia].

[10] During the history of folklore collection, the local correspondents have repeatedly been asked for autobiographies and portraits. The first to ask for autobiographies was the great folklore collector Jakob Hurt. The received (in particular the ones received at the end of the 19th century) shorter written autobiographies form an extensive collection of self-written autobiographies, which is especially interesting due to the choices, motives, and values noted down by the people themselves. The later institutions to collect folklore also asked for biographies to be sent in, and additional questions about collecting strategies were asked.

[11] "Even the doctors recognised her knowledge. She was asked to come to Tartu to see patients with bile, bladder, and kidney illnesses" – typical conclusion in the interviews.

[12] Estonian language dos not have sexes; *witch* marks male or female person.

[13] Several versions of the augury exist: „The brightest pearl of Äksi witch's foretelling powers is undoubtedly her prediction that Estonia will become independent soon after the Germany reunites" (Luhaäär 2014).

[14] *Tante, tanta* – German loan signifying the word 'lady', in common language meaning a (city) aunt.

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RKM MGN – sound recordings, Manuscripts of Estonian Folklore Archives.

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Inter-patient Narratives in the Internet

Abstract: The paper analyses the communication acts on inter-patient forums using the model of narrative chain (cf. Labov 2004). The term narrative chain usually denotes a partially ordered set of narrative events that share general features. The stories analyzed come from the patient forum of the Estonian Diabetes Association (www.diabetes.ee), established in 2004. The article presents the statistics of the popularity of discussion topics, and discusses how people are coping with the illness by sharing narratives, communicating and arguing, and what kind of narratives they use. I am going to analyze two distinct topics: 1) exchanging information regarding alternative medicine, 2) discussion about re-homing a diabetic cat.

Keywords: alternative medicine, communication, diabetes, computer-mediated communication, disease narrative, narrative chain, inter-patient narratives

Out of the 1.5 million people living in Estonia, approximately 70,000 are diabetics. In the whole world, more than 100 million people suffer from diabetes, the most prolific metabolic disorder. By the year 2010, the WHO foresees a doubling of the number of diabetics worldwide. Type I diabetics need several injections of insulin daily, they need to constantly keep track of their blood sugar levels and follow a regulated diet. Diabetics have difficulty finding work in rural areas, and they are not treated equally with their colleagues. Stereotypes say that diabetes causes bad temperament, moodiness and bouts of illness, making those who suffer from the disease poor employees. Socio-cultural models and common beliefs claim that whining and bouts of anger are an intrinsic part of the disease. Naturally, complications such as loss of vision and skin problems induce both compassion and

guilt, making the relationship, between the healthy and the afflicted, intricate. How do you explain to yourself the fact that you are healthy while your friend, through no fault of his own, suddenly develops a condition with unpredictable progress? Your friend, meanwhile, is battling strong emotions of his own and feeling very defiant. Step by step the new negative aspects come to light, for example, the need for self-discipline and an enforced regular, measured way of life. It is just as hard as the sudden realization that growing old is inevitable. One young person, finding out that she has diabetes, expressed her painful feelings, ":(:(:(I don't want anything to happen to my beautiful nails, does diabetes mean that the whole body becomes ugly in time and health gets worse every day until at last you die?"

In human beings the emotional, psychological, spiritual and physical are inextricably linked, inevitably entailing provisionality, disturbance and lack of certainty. It is obvious that people are motivated to construct narratives centred on topics that help them deal with fundamental life issues, while sharing these narratives with others. Likewise, the philosophers Hermans and DiMaggio (2004) paid attention to the fact that some positions or voices in the self become exclusively important, and particularly in situations of anxiety and threat.

I have outlined the scope of diabetes since the sources for this paper comprise the Estonian diabetes online forum (www.diabetes.ee), stablished in April 2004. The narratives in the forum share personal experience stories of patients, and also common-sense beliefs, thematic argumentation, pieces of homemade philosophy, examples of figural speech in the context.

The paper will discuss how people are coping with the illness by sharing narratives, communicating and arguing, and what kind of narratives they use. I am going to analyze two distinct topics: 1) exchanging information regarding alternative medicine, and 2) discussion about re-homing a diabetic cat.

Method

The study is part of a project observing internet message board communication and narratives posted there. The stories analyzed here come from the patient forum of the Estonian Diabetes As-

sociation (www.diabetes.ee), established in 2004. All topics were spontaneous, not a response to outside provocation or a questionnaire. The discussed topics were posted in 2008–2009; the narrative chain connected with healer Viktor comes from 2005.

Research Setting

James W. Pennebaker and Janel D. Seagal (1999) have a very simple and clear scheme of how medical narratives are shaped:

> *Once a complex event is put into a story format, it is simplified. The mind doesn't need to work as hard to bring structure and meaning to it. As the story is told over and over again, it becomes shorter, with some of the finer detail gradually levelled. The information that is recalled in the story is that which is congruent with the story. Whereas the data (or raw experience) was initially used to create the story, once the story is fixed in the person's mind only story-relevant data is conjured up. Further, as time passes, we have the tendency to fill in gaps in our story to make the story more cohesive and complete.*

In online forums, people do not post in a monologue but in an active multi-party interaction. Stories are not shaped as they are retold over multiple presentations, people present different episodes in different topics, and usually set stories and opinions.

An online message board represents different forms of communication: written communication using language close to oral speech. Every conversation is carried out between several people who take turns in posting. Posts are written with a time interval just like in e-mail correspondence. Replies are posted either at once or after some interval, sometimes even days later, just as the poster wishes. Participation in any given "conversation" topic is voluntary and depends entirely on personal interest and free will. Writing in direct communication, it is possible to participate in discussions, to engage someone in a dialogue, to express your opinion or attitude, confirm or deny some event, present a version of event or to introduce personal points of view or the whole world view.

The final result, a textual whole or written narration remains in the forum and can be returned to at any time, to be re-read, re-interpreted, or to continue the discussion some time later. It is a never-ending online book where you can add a story or chapter, years after the story was finished. The reader needs to reconstruct the dialogue based on the flow of the text (or posted texts), to interpret the event and to make a decision on the matter. For example, the narrative researcher Manfred Jahn asserts that, in the context of cognitive orientation, both the narrators and characters are deictic centres representing their gender and holding opinions and they are sources of rhetoric as well as situative entities guided by affect, purpose, motives and intentions. In order to understand a described phenomenon and to share in the narrative experience, the reader needs to project herself into a pragmatic identity (Jahn 2000).

In the case of written online texts, in order to make decisions about the reliability of a character or narrator, readers attribute to them "a certain psychological identity, categorizing them into socio-cognitive types like liars, cheaters, exaggerators, neurotics, lunatics, etc. (Jahn 2000).

To characterize narrating on the forum of diabetics, I used the term "natural narratology" which was proposed by Monika Fludernik in 1996. Fludernik applied her theory to postmodern literature, pointing out that the text flows in there are interchangeably similar to communication during an act of social interaction. This was what lead her to experiment with the reverse – narrativity on a certain internet site where the text flow was supposedly reflecting real life information and living. Since Fludernik emphasizes that in narrativity parts/stories with and without a plot are equally common (Fludernik 1996: 235), the model is well suited for the analysis of the narrativity of internet communication.

Fludernik (1996, chap. 1.3) stresses the importance of the cognitive frames and structures, especially experience plans, narrating and echoing of the real world, as theoretical units. According to her, there are prototype narrative situations in any given conversation/communication style of narration, acting as the default framework for concepts like narrative communication, story and discourse, narrators and focusers, pragmatic agreements, good traditions, good performance, etc. Another

model, well suited to analyzing written text produced by forum interactions, is the scheme of William Labov. There are times when the written discussion is similar to narrating strategies used in oral conversations, making up narrative chains (Labov 2004). The majority of stories told in the community are short pieces of everyday conversation. These acts of communication are a narrative chain of socio-cultural acts of speech, where different personal communication and narration styles as well as personal identities meet. In that case texts are in complexity, but we as readers can divide a text into ambiguous and unambiguous regions.

The term narrative chain has been used in several connotations. Usually it denotes a partially ordered set of narrative events that share a common actor, the protagonist. A narrative event is a tuple of an event and its participants, represented as typed dependencies (Chambers & Jurafsky 2008). However, on an internet message board it is a chain made up of arguments and narratives told by different voices. For example, William Labov used a narrative chain since "any given narrative is constructed about a most reportable event: that is, an event that is the least common and has the largest consequences for the welfare and well-being of the participants. It is also a product of the inverse relationship of reportability and credibility. A recursive rule of narrative construction produces a narrative chain, a skeleton of events linked by their causal relations" (Labov 2004) but also in the meaning "reportable events united with unreportable events into the chain" (Labov 2007). Beside the main storyline (or several main storylines), people converse on topics (only slightly) related to the main topic, giving different comments, arguments and counter-arguments without the opinions forcing any one party to take any of the suggested courses of action. In this kind of a narrative chain, units without a plot (sentences expressing opinions, beliefs) have their specific role and function.

Communication is sometimes initiated by an announcement about, or question for, a solution to a specific situation. For example, whether to tell the teacher of the child's diabetes, how to keep blood sugar within norms, etc. Questions for advice are usually replied to with suggestions and experience narratives. These posts and simple informative life story fragments open

different personality types to us (some cannot take informing about the disease, other see a positive side to this and their special status, and yet others remark on the changing attitudes and diffusion of knowledge in society).

Results. Overview

In my previous article (Kõiva 2009) I analyzed doctor-patient communication and communicative chain narratives in patient communication. The doctor and the patient use different cognitive models and represent not equal but different socio-political interests (cf. Kleinman 1980; Singer & Baer 1995: 375). The patient is the subordinate with a lower position. However, the environment where communication takes place gives rise to specific choices in language usage, structure and length of a communication act, its level of complexity and use of different styles. Change of communication codes is determined by the motivation of the partners as well as perception of the setting's nature. If a patient is looking for help from a representative of the medical profession on an institutional page, the communication codes and language are formal and polite, with a serious matter-of-fact tone. Word choice indicates that the patient is aware of the severity of the situation and his position. Communication on doctor-patient forums is characterized by a definite beginning, central point and ending (cf. Thornborrow & Coates 2005: 7; Kõiva 2009), a short and clear structure common to classical narratives.

Communication on patient-patient forums is wider in the range of styles and topics, closer to how an offline interest group interacts. When the diabetes forum had just started, questions were posed and discussions initiated by family members, relatives, friends, but soon the environment were dominated by communication between the afflicted. There are periodic announcements posted by the co-ordinator of the Diabetes Association, mostly concerning changes in laws and social benefits.

The virtual community has a stable core member group and a flow of members coming and going, as they get older or migrate and their life changes. When the forum started in 2004, there were many anonymous posts. In the first years there were also

many questions from and discussions participated in by family members and relatives of the afflicted. After some time, they disappeared and the forum members' active majority became the diabetics.

Typically to all open web communities, the number of readers, lurkers, stalkers, observers vastly exceeds the actual posters. Smaller threads are read on 350 occasions, while popular ones are read thousands of times. The passive portion of the community is so much bigger. The bridging person is the official head of the association, who is not actively involved in discussions but whose announcements are always read.

People afflicted with a difficult or fatal disease find moral and mental support from people in similar circumstances participating in online forums. They get help evaluating the state of their health, they can exchange experiences with the progress of the disease (whether for the worse or for the better), share their coping strategies, and act as experts. There are important motivating factors contributing to patient forum interaction: interacting in a community, receiving objective evaluation on treatment, gathering information about the disease and treatments, the opportunity to just talk about the disease, hopes for alternate and effective cures. Web discussions tend to branch and include in addition to rationally explained suggestions also advice based on personal experience.

Popular Topics

Lorne L. Dawson emphasizes the connections between the internet and ordinary life:

> *For individuals, life online must be placed in the context of life offline. Life online is largely continuity with life offline and must be examined with that relationship in mind* (Dawson 2006: 33).

The posts in the diabetes forum indicate that the communication in the forum is primarily related to health and the disease. Naturally, people also write on other topics, yet the issues concerning diabetes remain as the dominant theme. Indeed, this fact is undoubtedly conditioned by the environment – this is the official forum of the Estonian Diabetes Association which simul-

Fig. 1. Posts

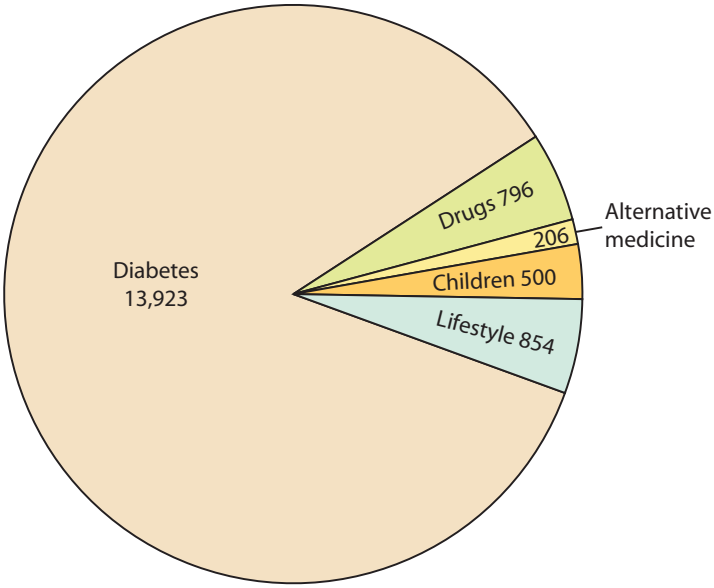

Fig. 2. Viewing

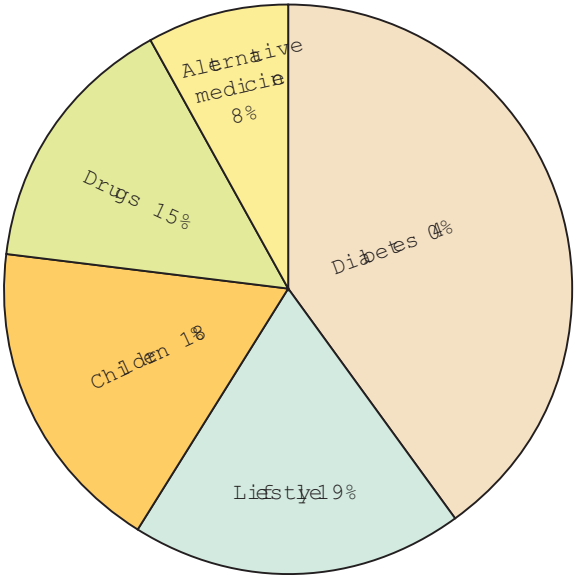

Fig. 3. Popular topics

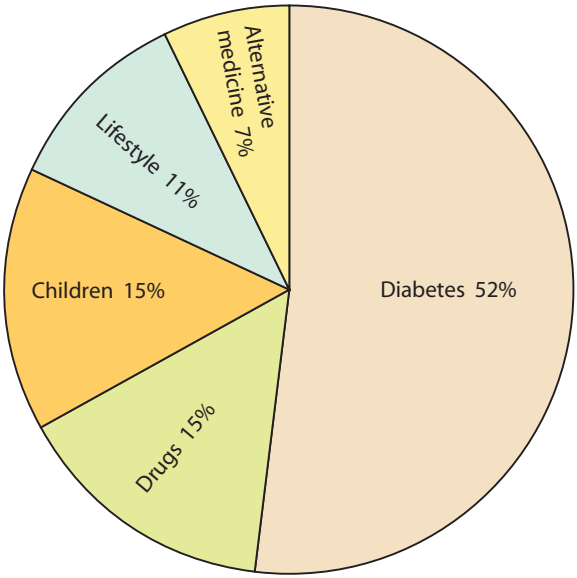

Fig. 1–3. The most popular posts, viewings, topics.

taneously directs and motivates the topics for the participants in the forum. Forum members value their community interaction space as a practical forum where people report on their disease experience, and more importantly, relay information on their empirical experiments with drugs and keeping diabetes under control.

The number of single posts during an episode is, on the diabetes forum, from one to more than three hundred. The number of views a thread has received is more than ten times of that. What is it that connects stories with such different amounts of posts? According to Monika Fludernik, narrative is related from a human experiencer:

> *In my model there can be narratives without plot, but there cannot be any narratives without a human (anthropomorphic) experiencer of some sort at some narrative level* (Fludernik 1996: 9).

International studies of various affliction-based forums indicate that the group has a positive influence on the individual participating. The most important factors are considered to be exchanging information, encountering emotional support, finding recognition, sharing experiences, helping others, and amusement. Empowering outcomes included being better informed; feeling confident in the relationship with their physician, their treatment, and their social environment; improved acceptance of the disease; increased optimism and control; enhanced self-esteem and social well-being; and collective action (Uden-Kraan, Drossaert, Taal *et al.* 2008).

The following statistics concern posts made in the year 2009 (1st half) that have been viewed more than a thousand times. During 2009, participants discussed 194 different topics. Having a look at the popularity of discussion topics confirms that the generalization is appropriate. The most read and discussed topics are, indeed, about drugs, discounts, the future of children and other daily concerns related to diabetes. The most popular topic was diabetes (28 topics, 13,923 posts: 95,102 viewings), central issues include the progress of the disease and its complications. I introduce only four of the most highly viewed problems: combinations of thyroid problems and diabetes (37 postings and 10,467 viewings), discount test strips (121: 9,191), nails and fungi (44: 8,208), high blood sugar (24: 5,789).

A central topic is also drugs as well as drug suggestions (8 topics, 796 posts: 35,923 viewings), for example Insulin (287: 7,098). A popular topic of reading was alternative medicine and the methods it employs. Herbal remedies (including herbal teas) can be helpful in the early stages. Although there were only 4 topics and 206 posts, it had 19,762 viewings. The most popular was the healer Viktor (more than 8,400 viewings), but we must mention that the main discussion took place as early as 2005.

Healthy children, the diabetic child in kindergarten, getting a disability paper for the child, pregnancy and diabetes are topics that lead to generalizations like: the probability of having healthy children is 2–10%. All diabetic children go to regular schools and kindergartens. The first year of diabetes is spent on learning about the disease and getting used to it. During 2009 there were 8 topics, posts, and 43,188 viewings.

An even more important one is youth lifestyle questions – to fit in, to wear studs in the nose, lips, eyebrows. Only 6 topics with 854 posts: 46,598 viewings. For example, the belly-button ring topic had 470 posts: 21,471 viewings. Of course there are everyday topics or some special cases like cats and diabetes (68: 1,864), something nice for the Christmas table (11: 1,510) and different get-together meetings (17: 4,000).

Over the years, the most popular topics are largely the same, as well as during the second part of 2009 the number of readers, of the most popular topics, grow.

Case Studies

It is clear that some topics enable the exchange of specific brief information which is rarely developed into a personal experience narrative, whereas other themes connect the varied-length narratives by way of narrating strategies. The majority of stories told in the community are short pieces on everyday life or short accounts of events. The so-called little narratives are informative short stories that carry and contain goals and symbols important for the community. Typically they have no strong structure, nor specific wider value, they are small pieces, narratives which are very important to the persons or their family or friends but not for public auditory.

The conversation can start from someone posting a personal experience narrative. These kinds of posts form up to a third of those posted every year. Often a single person starts only one (a max of 14) such thread all in all. The second type is where an anonymous question of wide scope is posed. The anonymity of the thread beginning seems to be used as an indicator that responses from all and any are welcome, and such threads quickly attract hundreds of responses.

In many cases, communication takes place as a dialogue between several people simultaneously communicating, answering and replying in turns, now and then offering expert opinions, vying for attention or trying to push one's personal point of view. Similarly to oral speech, the narrative as an integrity takes shape in the course of a longer communication, wherein details are being specified or confirmed. Situation descriptions

are interspersed with humour and metaphoric expressions. These acts of communication are a narrative chain of socio-cultural acts of speech, where different personal communication and narration styles as well as personal identities meet.

In the following, I will take a closer look at three cases. The first chain narrative is the topic of alternative medicine, with the largest number of readers, concerning those who have been to healer Viktor to be cured. While selecting alternative medicine for observation, I proceeded from the fact that people, when combating their disease, are ready to use all means and try even those medicinal products they would never even consider in case of a more lenient disease. This is particularly true in a situation where a child is inflicted with a disease and all opportunities are seized to combat the disease. Likewise, this topic involves folkloric and generally common motifs, attitudes and beliefs, the ones I have studied as a folklorist by way of interviews. The conversation in a web environment takes place in an atmosphere that is much more typical to a spontaneous conversation, without the disturbing factor of the researcher.

In the current phase of research, however, it is difficult to say how many people have visited alternative medics or healers. Pursuant to an intuitive estimation, one fifth of all families have probably utilised such possibilities, at least for consulting, or obtained relevant information from their acquaintances. Still, there are no elaborate studies regarding the actual choices of patients as there is a significant distinction between an intent and action. Approximation of the treatment methods of official medical care to biological cure, and the recommending of medicinal plants as an option would probably facilitate the search of other similar opportunities in an urbanised environment.

The second chain narrative has been selected as an example of expressing emotions and conveying information by way of experience narratives.

1. Case of Wonder Healer Viktor – Narrative Chain From 2005

I am going to next present, as an example, a concentrated discussion about an alternative medic. The healer Viktor (Viktor

Tõnissoo, 1931–2010) has been active as a vernacular doctor since the 1980s; he has been widely discussed in the media. His specialty relates to pictures that heal and he has sold them during the last 30 years. According to beliefs, the pictures helped against different diseases, whereas the fading or tarnishing of the colours would forecast a disease to the owner of the picture. He has a wide range of patients and many people have had contact with him. During 2001 Viktor was an official media hero – in the interviews he recounted finding a successful drug against AIDS. The next bigger media event happened in 2006, when a cancer patient, a 61-year-old lecturer of Pärnu College recited his pathography, which consisted also of treatment by Viktor.

The following discussion forms a cohesive narrative whole, with personal experiences and narrative insertions from various parties. The initiator is the story of a kid's father's visit to the healer Viktor, with the mother asking others their opinion of whether the visit had any point at all. The chain narrative is centred around one person, and to some extent also one story – after people have said all kinds of things about Viktor and treating in general, she presents her daughter's description of the visit, making Viktor out to be a cheater. At least that is the way the mother presents the story. The mother is also worried that people still visit Viktor – he is obviously a fraud, but there is something that does not let the desperately hopeful comprehend this. Out of the 67 posted letters, 40 posts are associated with the first episode. By way of applying the scarce web resources, the mother's letters skilfully convey emotions and hesitations.

> *01.02.2005 15:25*
>
> *The father of my kid took the kid to the healer Viktor (in Tallinn) and he had prescribed some kind of medicine (produced by him). I really would not like to give this to the kid just so... has anyone heard anything about healer Viktor??? He's said to be world famous???*

This post is followed by a communal discussion of pref/MCIig tollk

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The discussion stretched over eight days. We see a predominant discourse of didactic warning and preference/trust of the regular medical system.

> *Angry anonymous, 01.02.2005 15:56*
>
> *I don't want to take away anyone's hopes, but if someone has heard of a healer that could bring back the dead[,] and knows of an actual case where someone has been brought back from the dead, that bonesaw I'd try myself too... But since that (bringing the dead to life) is obviously impossible, there's no point trying [them]. A type II diabetic could try all this rubbish. Those who promise to heal type I diabetes don't know nothing about diabetes at all and similarly do those that take their kids to such healers.*

> *01.02.2005 16:02 Mother*
>
> *I guess he didn't really promise to heal fully but to make the state better??? And also seems to have said that thyroid readings are not quite well either. But, well, I don't know, I would not like to believe him.*

The following posts give additional details about Viktor's actions, together with the poster's personal opinion. The doubtful evaluation and conclusion with a negative subtext naturally they praise the effects of their "medicines" is followed by a shorter (principally true to the rumour or urban legend model) positive note about how the father of a friend had help in arresting cancer.

> *01.02.2005 18:07*
>
> *Hello,*
>
> *I don't know if it's the same so-called healer, but I have heard of someone of the same name for years. Once he offered the easily impressed some kind of "miracle pictures" that you look at and then your physical troubles are eased. Can't really comment on the success rate of such healing methods, but I dare doubt a positive result. In any case, those miracle doctors should not be trusted. But naturally they praise the effects of their "medicines" and "healing methods", because otherwise nobody would come to them and where would they get money from then.*
>
> *Mirka*

01.02.2005 20:54

hello. also something positive. he did help the father of one of my friends. that man was written off by the doctors. he was cut open and they said there's nothing to do, a tumour in the liver. that viktor instructed what and how to do, and unbelievably he got well and lived another 5 years but then died of high blood sugar.

The following stern admonition, according to netiquette delivered by shouting, is based on the personal experience of a diabetic, the childhood memory of how the disease was tackled by a folk healer, leading to a remission, as expected. This post, therefore, supports rational medical efforts and ends with the reminder that the situation is not the worst possible so long as rational behaviour is applied.

02.02.2005 15:30

i would never dare give some kind of x stuff to my kid. i have been diabetic since childhood and my parents also took me to some healer. he also gave some kind of medicine, i took it a few times and then refused, the parents forced me, i didn't take it. it all ended in hospital. PLEASE, DO NOT HARM YOUR KID WITH SOME KIND OF STUFFS – GO TO THE ENDOCRINOLOGIST – THEY ALSO CHECK THE THYROID GLAND. I can understand that this gives you hope, but your kid is far from dying. help him with self-control and be supportive. ALL THE BEST TO YOU! KAKUKE.

Negative personal experience with folk healers and corresponding advice is presented also in a post made two days later.

04.02.2005 08:51

I advise not to undertake such things. If diabetes is being compensated, blood sugar is fine with temporary and natural fluctuation - then the situation is good. I have experience with various healers and one thing is for sure: none of them know anything about diabetes or any other chronic (or maybe simply any) diseases. Even many real doctors have strange beliefs about diabetes, what do you expect of "healers". He probably inserted thyroid problems to make it sound more serious, the more troubles – the more profit. Those wannabes are shameless people.

The initiator of the thread, the mother asking for advice, culminates the discussion with a description of the healing ritual she received from her child. This helps her solidify her already negative opinion of the healer.

> *08.02.2005 08:25*
>
> *Yes, that "medicine" I sent back.*
>
> *Thanks to all who answered. I thought the same myself that it's not worth the trouble (but, well, the kid's father was all full of power and belief).*
>
> *It was very interesting what the kid was telling me yesterday... that when they were with father still at the reception then the healer had said that right now blood sugar is around 20 but he's going to take it lower right away... then he wrote something on the paper and said that now it's 4... the kid then said, oh great, I'll go home and measure it right away.. then the healer was like taken aback and asked where do you live... the kid then told him (around 2 km)... then the "healer" said that this is such a "long" way.. by that time it might be higher again... LOL!!!.. Pity the kid did not describe that incident before, I'd have known right away what to do.*

Then follow shorter (disparaging) comments from fellow forum members. The discrete line of the narrative episode brings forth different cognitive approaches, narrativity, argumentation and experience. All in all, it is quite similar to oral dialogue between several parties. In both cases we are dealing with a communication act that allows a multitude of opinions, and during which concessions are made and judgment on the situation is offered.

Personal experience forms the basis of all stories. Many stories include warnings and behaviour instructions based on the poster's experience. Similarly to oral folk narratives, there are no long detailed descriptions of people, places or actions. Timewise, the stories come from the childhood of the poster, from years ago, and less often from recent past. Viktor as a healer is discussed again about a week later, from another angle, and once again a month later, but then interest wanes within a few days. In the following posts we can see a lot of humorous joking, but also fending answers and irony towards naive questions and descriptions.

Evening.

Interesting, that if that Viktor does bring dead cells back to life, like he claims, then restoring one clouded eye should be piece of cake for him.

Blind boy from Tartu

Well if you are going to have anything done, have both eyes repaired.

Sceptic

Is this the same Viktor that I know?

I know that I have gotten help – he removed a curse that my own mother had laid on me. Many of the symptoms of the disease disappeared. I have waited for a long time to get Viktor's contacts. I did not visit him myself – a good friend of mine did, and Viktor also extended his life because the doctors could not understand how it was possible to live so long with such a difficult heart condition!!!

Do you think Viktor could also help with lymph cancer?

Angry

26.07.2005 08:18

Oh, well, he dangles the pendulum and heals all known and unknown diseases with it, wakes the dead back to life and makes other works of wonder....

Anonymous

Also later, in 2006, 2007, 2008 different people describe their experiences with visiting Viktor, ask for his contacts. There are long discussions about alternative medicine where the active forum member Skeptik explains why a miracle doctor can not help a diabetic and which are the main hoodwinking schemes. In 2008, a similar discussion with a narrative core emerges when a forum member describes how he sought treatment and then agreed with Viktor on a home visit that did not happen. The purpose of the home visit was to test the miracle healer's powers. After some admonitions on the forum, the poster expresses his regret since he is informed that Viktor had been hospitalized at the time.

The briefness of the following episodes is probably caused by lack of an intriguing real life episode or narrative that would inspire emotional discussion. Unlike in posts on a doctor-patient forum, here we can observe emotional and personal styles, taking advantage of all the means the internet as a medium provides. This is why we see interpunctuation used for pauses, all caps for a loud or insistent declamation, shorthand abbreviations for paraverbal acts (LOL – laughing out loud). Besides full-length stories and episodes there are also free-form discussions and arguments. The whole discussion is made up of the speech acts of different participants, narratives and narrative-like texts, statements, affirmations, denials, which the later reader will conceive as a full conversation. When we read a personal experience story and the surrounding discussions after the thread was finished, we do not perceive the time lapses or bumps in the flow of narration as the whole was built up over days. Therefore, a story is divided between two realities: a communication process moving from densely to loosely occurring acts of narration and communication, and secondly, an authored readable story. A case as it is read in retrospect is more compact than the communication producing the texts as it took place in real life.

2. The Diabetic Cat Samuel

Storytelling and narratives make emotions visible, just as Mattingly and Garro (2000: 11) have indicated in their analysis of medical texts. Verbalised emotions are echoed in many experience stories, from those about finding out about being diabetic to those of finding out about their child's diabetes to those describing the progress of the affliction. A topic read and emoted to do not mean a solved problem – this is the generalization we can make based on the topic of re-homing the diabetic cat Samuel.

One of the most read topics in 2008 was the search for a new home for a diabetic cat called Samuel. After visiting the cat in its foster home, one of the forum members decides to find the diabetic cat a home. The communication thread starts with a personal experience story where the cat, its habits and treatment scheme are introduced:

Me and my sister visited cats in a foster home and noticed that one of the cats was separate, in a cage. It came out that the cat had diabetes and therefore he needs special food and can not eat cat food the others have, and the others should not eat his food (they would gobble his special diet food). The cat was otherwise VERY friendly, no exaggeration here, just looking at him made he starts purring.

The forest home people said that this cat does not want to be stroked or strongly massaged :D. I stuck my fingers through the cage wires, and he at once settled so that he would be scratched behind the ears and under the chin. :)

The cat is young (2–3 years), male (as you can tell by the name), bigsized striped hunk. Found on Õismäe Street, behaviour indicates that he has been a pet thrown on the street. Neutered / vaccinated. According to the doctor, he has not been ill for long, his organs' work has been analysed – his health is currently very good, no complications.

In a word, the point of my story is that maybe one of you would be willing to adopt this cat – a cat like any other cat, but with a small quirk which we can so much better understand than the rest of people. As you know, diabetes is nothing to pity or fear, injecting is not torturing, the cat does not need to be starved, he is not about to "die" or "collapse" any moment, etc. The foster people mentioned that if it were not for diabetes, such a friendly cat would have found a home long ago.

NB! For obvious reasons, this cat must be an indoor-only cat that

can not be let outside alone.

If you can not adopt him but would like to help, and then just spread the word, maybe it will reach the right ears and the cat will get a new home :)

Finally, the poster decided to draw a picture of what would be the detailed budget of keeping a cat, without the expenses of diabetes. The sum is startlingly big, surprising even for the poster. Then a long letter overviewing diabetes in cats follows, more examples of the cat's especially sweet nature and a note that the expenses are actually not so big – only food and litter, the basics:

The doctors say that there is no scientific explanation but for some reason the cat is the only animal that can get well of diabetes. Because of his really great character, Samuel instantly became a favourite of the doctors.

The author obviously made a great communication mistake: she does not talk about the time, energy or financial responsibility towards an afflicted cat, but instead concentrates on the generic expenses of keeping a cat. There is also a lot of emphasis on the cat's truly fabulous character, but not the price of meds, special care, etc. Those aspects are highlighted only by the forum in the ensuing discussion.

The replies on the forum are hesitant and making excuses. People want to comment on the topic, but for different reasons, nobody is willing to take the cat: already have pets, not willing to take an adult pet, partner forbidding taking pets, the expenses of a diabetic are high and two means double the expenses, and forum members who have diabetic pets describe their maintenance. The replies often invoke empathic posters to tell their own story.

Many high-spirited portraits of the diabetic cat Samuel were put on the web. "Maybe I should play a little," Samuel seems to be thinking.

Already when I read the first post about Samuel I felt the need to say something but I didn't know what to say and I still don't have anything sensible to say.

I am very sorry, because the illness of a pet is almost the same as a child's when the pet is a member of your family. And animals are loved in our family. We have long debated taking a cat and dog for Pauline since she is crazy about them and we wanted to take the cat and dog simultaneously so they would be used to each other. [---]

This does sound like an excuse but reading all those posts it did make me feel kind of guilty...

As the conversation progresses, the initial poster reveals her motives – she is a diabetic and already owner of several animals, and it would seem rational that a diabetic cat would live with a diabetic human.

If anyone is interested why I am not taking the cat myself, I already have 2 cats and a dog and you need to draw the line somewhere.

Also, the argument that a child will get used to injections seeing the pet injected does not sound plausible. There are also much more rational arguments:

I would not make excuses but would explain the matter from another aspect. A couple of my friends have a dog with diabetes and you know, another thing is that animal diabetes seems to take as much money as human diabetes since there is probably no discount for veterinary insulin? We have discussed here the general topic that many spend a significant amount on strips and needles, which means that paying full-time for the pet's medical needs may be too much. It's just that it would be nice if the kitty found a quite healthy person who feels the need to take care of this animal. I really do hope you find this owner! We have a cat, a dear member of the family and a favourite of the children. Therefore I can very well understand what kind of animal a cat is and a how lovely they are, even with a small health problem (although diabetes is in fact no small health problem).

Diabetic cat Samuel finally got a new home. Photo by V. Nieminen, 2009.

As the year progresses, people inquire about the cat, they remember the topic, but there is no solution. In October, the cat is still homeless.

> *Hasn't Sam found a home yet? I discovered this topic and told my husband about it, too. He would not want a cat at all, he wants a dog. :D But if Sam is still looking for a home I could try persuading my husband. :D*

At least as a "temporary" home... If that is acceptable, of course...

Conclusion

One member of the diabetes forum reminds the others that diabetes is not a disease but a lifestyle. The profound generalization reveals the philosophical and truly important aspect in the discourse of illness and health that is often not consciously considered. The examples provided here make up a negligent part of narratives on the forum. The discussion groups are used as a replacement for the role once played by the extended family or local community – discussing illness and health and looking for solutions in the discourse. Since post-modern lifestyle and interpretations accept a different set of knowledge, and are largely oriented to subjectivity – the multitude of opinions expressed in an online discussion group conforms well to the modern style. Important goals for narrating are:

- Exchange of trauma of disease experience narratives
- Diagnosing the current state of health
- Exchange of experience on drugs and alleviating strategies
- Coping strategies
- Exchanging expert opinions and enjoying the status of an expert

People afflicted with a difficult or fatal disease find moral and mental support from similarly affected people participating in online forums. They get help with evaluating the state of their health, they can exchange experiences about the progress of the disease (whether for the better or for the worse), and share their coping strategies. Similarly, so-called writing therapy is gaining ever more ground with the seriously ill. The online communities can be seen as a spontaneous branch of the same. Online environments oriented to uniting disease-specific groups have several advantages in this respect, in fact. They offer the opportunity for dialogue with people in a similar situation. At the same time, it is possible to maintain privacy and anonymity.

Since interaction on the forum is close to natural oral interaction, we can use this to study narration and narratives that are hard to catch in oral telling. Communication in patient forums is based on information, the shared disease experience and narratives and they play an important role in maintaining mental balance. Besides short narratives that carry information and important symbols and messages, there are also joking, mocking or didactic stories and social interaction threads, adding up to a didactic whole. Attractive real-life events give rise to longer communication situations. Reading archived descriptions of the disease, one can provide an auto-diagnosis; get an overview of the progress of the disease, the symptoms, relapses and possible treatments.

Forums provide impressive possibilities to demonstrate emotions, and the role of emotions in everyday life. Also it is remarkable how often a discussion is based on personal experience and narration of personal life episodes as the model and example for solving a problem. This is perhaps a very promising evidence that benefitting from writing is linked to forming a story about one's experiences. Similarly to oral communication, a narrative chain is made up of parts of different genre and styles, of parts with and without motifs.

In discussion, we see clashing opinions, just as in oral conversation: people represent different positions, defend their views and present them for acceptance, present counterarguments; they are the authors of their narratives and the carriers of their identity. The forums contain many examples of generalizing and common philosophy, often as an inseparable part of a narrative. One discussion is summarised by someone who was helped by a folk healer:

> *I think that everyone has the right to choose between alternative and regular medicine. These two branches should work hand in hand, like elsewhere in the world. First of all you need a positive attitude toward life, which those having to deal with the regular medical system find hard to maintain. Many do not have progressed states of the disease and cold really use a positive charge. The matter is more in the person's mind, beliefs and goodwill.* [---]

James W. Pennebaker and Janel D. Seagal (2006: 1252) formulate that neither of the personalities variables of the author, nor qualities of the audience to whom the writing is directed matters in predicting benefits. An analysis of the writings that people produce has revealed copious use of positive-emotion words, a moderate use of negative-emotion words, and an increase in the use of insight and causal words.

The online community of diabetics follows the model of real society in its division of roles, activity, etc. Characteristically of internet communication, in addition to real-time interaction and narrating, even carried out in continuity-interrupted intervals, an important result is that the entire communication episode is recorded as a unit that can be reviewed at any time. In this manner, forums produce information, narratives or texts that can be interpreted or used multiple times.

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What Language Do We Talk to Pets

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to present research results examining the language use and switching between different languages when talking to pets. Based on a survey of 130 interviews and recordings, the findings indicate that people talk with pets using normal common adult language, slightly adapted sentences or baby talk. As Crystal (1987) points out, we see that switching code is connected with: 1) the unability to express oneself in a language – to compensate for the deficiency; 2) the intention to convey one's attitude to the listener; 3) the wish to create a special effect. The paper uses sociolinguistic and folkloristic methods.

Keywords: pet culture, human-animal communication

"What language will we speak in heaven?" asks Matt Dabbs in his blog and offers a number of answers, for example: "I often wonder if when we get to heaven we will all speak our own language and hear each other in our own language" (Dabbs 2008). One of the possible answers is a common mythical language that everyone understands. The famous studies by sociolinguists Dell Hymes (1974) and Wade Wheellock about the language god is spoken to (Wheellock 1987) point to the higher status of some languages as compared to others, simply because they were the original languages of the Bible. Preference of one language over others is characteristic of other religions besides Christianity as well. Considering the Czech linguist Jan Purcha's postulation that "All of linguistic reality is determined by certain purposes, programs or aims reflective of societal needs" (Purcha 1988). How do we communicate with our pets? Mankind's history of communicating with pets and cohabitating animals is long, but there have been significant changes in the last decades – some

species have become urban habitants, some are more and more often found in homes under human care. The statistics of European advanced industrial countries shows a sharp increase of pets. In Great Britain, in 1995 50% of families had at least one pet (5.2 million dogs, 4.8 million cats, 2.7 million fish, 0.8 million parrots). The statistics of 1997 about Ireland are similar. The statistics of 2009 counted 8 million cats and dogs both (PMFA 2009; more than half of households of the US also have a pet – Human Society 2008; in Australia, more than 60% of households have a pet – PetNet 2008). Let us say for comparison that in 2004 Estonia had the largest percentage of dogs per person in Europe.

Recent developments are most commonly summarized as "pets today have a completely different social function" (Gustavsson 2008: 101; cf. Vesik 2008: 69 ff.; cf. Manning & Serpell 1986; Ingold 1988; Baker 1993). The latest studies about the relations of people and animals do actually abolish widespread prejudices and stereotypes, pointing out that the mean age of pet-owners is less than 65, they are more often married than single or widows.[1] Pets are more common in families with children, especially families with more than four members (Serpell 1986, cf. PMFA 2008). Quite often the pet is a part of one's self image. Many studies indicate that in the western culture pets are treated like relatives or family members; sociological studies show that in many cases the family considers their dog a closer relative than an aunt, uncle, grandparents or even parents.[2] Also, people often express more emotions when talking to or about their pets than when the topic is other people. Swedish researcher Anders Gustavsson generalises: "The spiritual dimension after death is actually much more pronounced in Sweden with reference to animals than to humans" (Gustavsson 2008: 121). All the above demonstrates significant changes in kinship and family relations, and consequently also in power and obeisance relations and communication.

Folklore is a socially cohesive phenomenon, expressed via various communication acts. Changes in the social cultural and economic sphere are reflected in folklore by the re-emergence of stereotypes, beliefs, prejudices, preconceptions and specific narrative types. Folklore is closely related to not only changes in the society but also to the dialogical development of a person's self.

I presume that folklore includes numerous beliefs and information about attitudes about whether and how do animals

understand human speech, having an influence on our verbal communication. I believe that a part of the traditional communication means has stood the test of social change and loss of traditional genres they belonged to, and that there are no sudden crises or transitions in communication means, being rather characterized by Laozi's "flowing with the moment".

Conversations with Ülo Tedre, and Liisa Vesik as well as the seminar series exploring human-animal relations organised by the ELM Folklore Department is what made me examine more closely the forms of communication between animals and people, as well as the change that has been there over time, making use of folkloristic material and methods and some sociolinguistic methods. The source material comes from the manuscript collections of the Estonian Folklore Archives, my own records of oral and written interviews, including recordings in natural and artificial communication situations. For background, I took into consideration the 2002 on-line conference "Dialogue between public and private lives" subtopic "People and animals" (Jaago & Kõiva 2002) and the 2007 school lore collection's subsection "Free time about pets, their names and stories about them".

Animal Speech

Research into human thought processes, perception and language development has induced a revival of interest in animal communication and studies of their understanding human speech. However, different species have attracted varied amounts of attention – the number of experiments and interest is profound in humans' close cousins apes and species whose signal range or learning capacity have promised interesting results. In this context it is interesting to consider the results of, for example, experimental psychologist Juan Manuel Toro's group (2005), showing that rats were linguistically more capable than previously thought, being able to differentiate languages, just like humans and apes. At the same time, rats could not differentiate the same languages played backwards. By the by, this study received the 2007 IgNoble award in linguistics (AIR 2007).

Increase in the number of species studied as well as new discoveries has highlighted the unique features of how various spe-

"They are talking rubbish!" says Triibik, unaware of the fact that he will grow to be an IT-specialist and computer expert. Photo by A. Kuperjanov 2009.

cies communicate. Discoveries given impulse to make sounds plays a key role since this takes place in a social system, and that many species make sounds that have individual, group- or population-wide specific features denoting their social system; among the results is that animal speech has a syntax and they form sentences (Rendell 2006; Rendell & Whitehead 2001; Reiss & McCowan & Marino 1997; Bradbury 2003 – parrots make sounds that are more similar to dolphins and are dissimilar to song birds) have changed both our knowledge base and attitudes. Although animal speech does not match the five key features of human speech, "figurative speech" and "syntax" do give us reason to speak of animal culture.

Contemporary people often learn about the meaning of animal mimic, gestures and sounds from media and special courses and less through empiric experience. It is estimated, however, that talking to animals is fairly common. My results from recent questionnaires can be briefed as follows[3]:

1. People talk to animals in full sentences, simplified speech or kid-speech depending on what level of complexity they believe the animal iscapable of understanding. For special occasions such as praise, gaining attention, when hurt or ill or to subjugate, the intonation used when talking to little children is used, as well as sentences with simple grammar.
2. Change of linguistic code takes place in a manner similar to human speech, e.g. switches from normal speech to kid-talk depending on the communication situation.
3. Some pet-owners consider their language usage towards pets to correspond to the communication to someone younger, from another group, to poor language grasp or children; they also use the circumspection and foreign languages to keep the animal from understanding things that would concern it.
4. Directing speech at an animal is believed to advance its linguistic skills.
5. An animal brought up in a multilingual setting is believed to understand more than one language.

Language usage depends on the individual and his habits, but also the environment. Replies reveal that out of sub-languages, kid-talk_and other intimate methods that are out of place outside the family circle. Simplified short sentences characteristic of kid-speak, emphasis on objects and events, mispronounced or self-created words are also common in talking to animals.

Language usage is strategic – it could be rewarding: petting names, higher intonation, special speech rhythm, tempo, etc. Language tools, e.g. tone of voice are used also to convey commands, displeasure and punishment. Kid-speak, used when speaking to children, animals and one's beloved, is a taboo in Estonian public space – public verbal tenderness is condemned and regarded as a strictly private matter. Since emotional self-expression is not a part of contemporary society, using that same kid-speak in public to communicate with an animal is also considered improper (outside of pet owner group activities). Living side by side, especially in the urban setting, indoors, requires fluency in communication skills and has caused human-animal subordination to have become easygoing, and the rise of a variance of communication models.

In a world oriented to technology, there is a special freeware for bio-acoustical studies that help automatically identify species by their sounds (Lee & Chou & Han & Huang 2006), and for the common user, mechanical translators of animal speech. In 2002, the Japanese company Takara marketed its Bowlingual and in 2003 Meowlingual, translating respectively dog and cat talk into human. The revolutionary bestseller met, however, an unexpected obstacle in its conquest of the American market – the regiolect of the same species living in different geographical regions. Another obstacle could be seen in the fact that animal speech is not only made up of sounds, but the semantic meaning is detailed by body language. That same Japanese invention received an insightful online comment in the Estonian media: "In itself, an interesting undertaking where the translating technology breaks out of the borders of human speech. Maybe they should consider working out a reverse translating device that would translate human speech into barks, meows, oinks or something else" (Eesti Patendiraamatukogu 2003).

Matt Dabbs' dream of a universal form of communication does have a counterpart – there is a number of people who following the traditions of horse whisperers or speakers-to-animals advertise their skills in talking to animals. The head of their world organization, Penelope Smith, advises: "Is there a way to understand what your dog, cat, horse, and even wild animals are thinking and feeling? You can tap into the universal language of all species through telepathic communication with animals." (Smith 1997). The network of telepathic communicators is worldwide, but they are most numerous in North America. Only recently the Estonian national television interviewed an Estonian woman who offers our pet-owners that same service, introducing that movement to our cultural corner.

Early Archival Records Of Human-animal Communication

Some folklore genres are dominated by metaphoric or symbolic approaches. Figurative speech requires a solid object for comparison, and well-known (domestic) animals provided that object splendidly. Poetic songs use animals as descriptive objects or

symbols, the text reflecting the close bond some owners had to their animals are rare. Arvo Krikmann has highlighted a significant statistical fact about proverbs: proverbs are dominated by domestic animals (even in the case of hunters' cultures, for example the Yakuts) (Krikmann 2001: 11). The same applies to narratives of religious experience. A remarkable number of animal-, bird- and object-shaped beings act as mediators between people and the supernatural, the world of the living and the dead. The most common haunting beings are dog, cat, cockerel or hen, sheep, swine, cow, horse, goat (usually associated with the devil) and goose – domestic animals are much more common haunts than wild animals (Kõiva in press). The haunting stories in our folklore archives display no such abundance of species as found in the haunting stories of English writers (Presnakova 2010 – 31 species), the animals are those found in the everyday rural environment. On the other hand, folk-

Mimi and Riku at the window.

Expressing emotions is one of the benefits of animals: Kusti and the joy of snow. Photo by A. Kuperjanov 2010.

lore texts see a wild animal coming to the house or meeting them on the roads as a bad omen that was nothing to desire.
Early folklore records include accounts of communication with both wild and domestic animals. There are records of using instrumental, vocal and verbal means: whistling, musical instruments or auditory signals (cries, shouts, imitations of animal sounds). Most common verbal communication types were onomatopoetic sounds, calls and incantations. Other ways of communication are described in belief accounts and narratives, but in stories animals are addressed briefly, sometimes in phrases in mixed languages and due to the genre specifics, long dialogues are avoided.[4] Since folklore collecting was for a very long time dominated by genre-centrality, we can only make assumptions about some of the possible means of wider communication.

Animal and bird sounds were imitated by handy crude instruments (whistles, tree leaves) or vocally. This was of practical use in hunting, but also used for magical purposes and for fun, to confuse the birds or animals. For entertainment, a bird or animal was lured closer, for example a cuckoo was baited by cuckooing or domestic animals by imitating their sounds – their responsive actions and as-if-understanding replies made them attractive "conversations partners". Folk stories tell us about goats, rams or cockerels attacking because of such fooling. Ethnographer Aleksei Peterson quotes Reidolf's descrip-

tion of imitation used in elk hunt: "One ancient and interesting hunting method was baiting hunt. Namely when they were in rut, an elk bull was lured within shooting distance by imitating elk roars. Today there is probably no single hunter who could masterfully mimic the voice of an elk bull, but there used to be. An hour before sunset, they went to the forest to the sites where elks usually mate, betrayed by the clammy trampled ground and twisted bushes. Hunters walked stealthily. In dusk, they started to make sounds – first quietly, then more loudly and with greater intervals; first with roars characteristic to a younger bull. When an elk replied, they quickly chose a good site for shooting. It also happened that the elk bull did not receive the challenge and instead retreated together with the cows. In that case, they were followed, making sounds. Such onslaught does not scare the bull away but instead irritates him until he rushes towards the supposed challenger" (Peterson & Hiiemäe 1968: 651).

Hunters oriented and communicated in the forest by certain whistles and sounds. This archaic method of keeping contact was only recorded for archival purposes in the 1980s. On the other hand, onomatopoetic sounds of nature that concentrated on presenting a minimal verbal text in a tempo and intonation characteristic of that animal's sounds ("Siit, siit metsast ei vii mitte üks pirrutikk!" "You shall not get a piece of kindling from this forest!" – Chaffinch) is a genre that has received thorough philological attention. In 1931, Eduard Laugaste published a taxonomy oriented to the international (German) reader together with a foreword, and later also some monographs about bird song onomatopoeia (Laugaste 1931, 1931a, 1932, 1935). The songs of song birds with their easy to follow melody and tempo have been set to tens of different wide-spread versions (swallow, nightingale, jay, tit), with some text types having a clearcut distribution area, and some partially overlapping with Scandinavian traditions. A witty text helped characterize a bird, but their cultural bonds with, for example, legends, had been forgotten already by the 19th century.[5]

Communication with animals is also found in herding songs and calls that gave signals to the herd and other herders (see musical analysis by Vissel 1986). In a rural household, calls and herding repertoire were a part of everyday human-human and

human-animal communication. After vocal pieces, the second largest portion of herding songs is that of texts with nonsensical words or minimal text. Calls were often performed with a special higher and faster intonation, using mitigating, diminutive animal names that are today found only in kid-talk. When used, the names are repeated several times: *vissi, vissi* (lehm - cow); *notsu, kossu, kotsu* (siga - swine), *kiisu, miisu, kiss-kiss* (*kass* – cat), *kutsu, kutsa* (koer – dog); *ute* (lammas – sheep), etc. In religiously critical situations (respectively also in religious and fictional folk tales), but also when talking to little children, the name could be replaced with another derived from onomatopoetic rendering. E.g. *mää* – baa = sheep, *auh, aua* – bow-wow = dog, *nurr, nurr* – purr-purr = cat; or by combining several names (*vissi muu, ute mää* – a combination of diminutive and onomatopoetic names).

Folklore collected in the 19th century also reflects the taboo system: a complex system of prohibited words, a behest to not name or directly talk about the prey when fishing, using instead fishers' secret language and euphemisms (Loorits 1939). The same applied to hunting – or beginning important tasks, killing an animal and during meals. The many practical and religious explanations of such behaviour include the causal explanation that careful adherence to verbal magic keeps wild animals from multiplying and keeps them away. Some of these prohibitive phrases have survived in the language and become part of common speech (e.g. Where there is talk of the wolf, the wolf is behind the fence). However, the underlying logic of the taboo system is the belief that the animal will hear and understand what people talk about.

Traditional ways of communicating with animals included incantations to keep birds and animals away, to manage a dangerous animal (mad dog, wolf, bear, snake), getting rid of bugs and parasites (flea, cockroach, tick, cricket). Incantations were also used with maladies whose etiology related them to some animal (e.g. hare lip). Such formulae addressed the malady-causing animal or bird and asked it to take the disease away. Some incantations were based on old symbolic healing principles – the incantation was used to transfer the disease to a bird, animal, stone or tree. Well-known words for easing the pain send it to birds:

An aching stomach is healed by squeezing it, saying at the same time:
Disease to magpie,
Pain to crow,
Other illnesses to the black bird,
Our N.N.'s tummy [to] get well
(E 902 (17) < Suure-Jaani – Ernst Saabas (1893)).

Communication by way of incantations is characterised by addressing the animal in fully-fledged (poetic) language, it is cajoled by use of metaphors and figurative poetic address.

Human-animal Communication in the Light of Recent Folklore Tradition

The modernization and fast urbanization that began after the Russian-Japanese war culminated with the 1905 revolution and had a profound impact on the genre structure of folklore and their positions in the general heritage landscape. In the case of folklore genres related to disappearing (agrarian) practices, the question of how they can survive became acute. Do their texts or performing convey an aesthetic, ethic or religious message that would keep the repertoire alive without the support of function and milieu? Part of the folklore that was quickly becoming archaic had a shift in function and by adaptation and accommodation became part of the secondary tradition. For example, imitations of songbirds were used in pedagogics (published in primary school textbooks, taught in kindergarten) and in public events (actress Laine Mesikäpp blended them into her performance at the opening ceremonies of the general song festival). Secondary tradition also embraced herders' cries, calls and hoots, thought these found (due to scant verbality) less wide use.

Socio-cultural and lifestyle changes caused stories animal-related everyday activities or personal experience narratives, oral history narratives and true stories to become carriers of important cultural messages. That is also the narrative form that is the most common in relaying records and belief that animals understand human speech and can act with reason. The narratives reflect the whole spectre of verbal communication – discussions, orders and

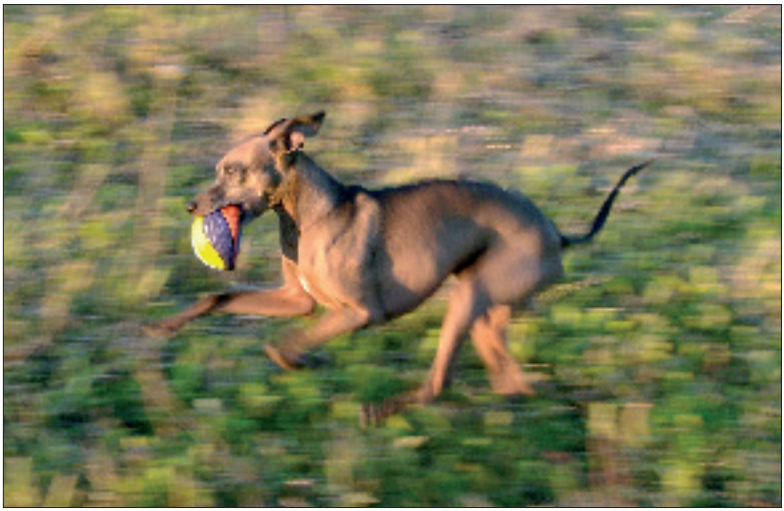
prohibitions, talking as if to a friend, companion, pet or merely domestic animal, as someone you train, order or employ.

One illustrative example of heritage shaped by social change is the Estonian hunters' folklore that became in the 20th century folklore of a group joined by common activities. They elaborated on the traditional hunting calls, interpersonal signals, signals to hunting dogs and hunter's tales – in short, they became a greenhouse for folklore. If the importance of training (purebred) dogs and horses to follow signals and orders was stressed even before that, in the 20th century this became a prerequisite of the subculture. This, in turn, became the basis for the emergence of pet culture and related folklore (see about the Estonian case Vesik 2008). The recent questionnaire about pupil tradition revealed the standards of pet culture and that taking care of a pet was one of the more common household jobs for children.

> *Training the dog and cat. I actually don't train the cat, it's stubborn. I train the dog for dog shows. It is kind of funny to spend time with the dog as it's a bit of a bonehead.* [---] (EFA, KP 2, 121 (1c) < Tallinn – Helena Pruuli, 15 yrs. (2006)).

> *My hobby is having pets. I play with him, clean his cage, change the water, and feed him. Once the rat cage door was left open and he ran into the clothes cabinet. When my brother came home, he was afraid that the rat has run away. When my brother looked into the clothes cabinet, the rat was sleeping between clothes* (EFA, KP 3, 36 (1c) < Tallinn – Anna Hiob, 11 yrs. (2006)).

Animal stories circulating among family, friends or workmates or based on personal experience are events worth retelling and remembering, coming from all periods of an animal's life arc (see Villandi 2007). Although the stories, as a rule, do not have a high aesthetic value, these stories are a part of the narrator's self-image and as such, important to him, but these are their stereotypical features that make them easy to listen to the others as well. They are usually situative stories of humorous or comic events, funny incidents, animals-clairvoyants or helpers, their loyalty and heroism, mischief and smartness, illness and old age. The discourse includes the supernatural (e.g. animal revenants in the classic revenant tradition) and animal-related



Expressing emotions is one of the benefits of animals: Tango and the joy of playing. Photo by L. Vesik 2012.

customs. Although roughly similar topics are found in earlier records, their social setting is different. Today, the stories have become more liberal, from higher and wealthy middle class heritage to urban and rural middle class and blue-collar heritage, and in the case of purebred animals the ethnic composition of owners has diversified. There has also been ongoing uniformication of ethnic groups – purebred and pet culture is similar in all ethnic groups. There is no longer such a gap as there used to be between Baltic Germans and rich landowners versus Estonians and other ethnic groups.[6] Contemporary pet culture displays rather a greater conservativeness on the side of Estonians towards novel phenomena such as pet cemeteries, compared to Russians and other recent immigrants (Kõivupuu 2003: 74; for the Scandinavian context see Gustavsson 2008).

As classic folk tales were dying out, everyday animal stories have gained a larger part of the tradition as a topic that is usually emotionally neutral or positive. Pet culture is based on social cohesion, significant in my opinion especially in its emotional aspect, including the feeling of exclusion and possibilities of easing this. Pet culture has been in constant development for

the last five decades, from the choice of domestic animals kept for practical purposes to the fact that the whole discourse is part of the general wider social discussion.

Preconceptions about the language grasp animals have and their language behaviour are reflected in questionnaires and narratives – an animal is sad or dumb after losing its habitual language environment. For example a dog bought from Russians is at first slow at catching on because it can't speak Estonian too well. Spontaneous evaluations about animals belonging to neighbours of a different ethnic group are the sane type: the dog understands Estonian enough to follow orders. Special use of language includes praise and punishment. Most usual punishment and admonitions are in the animal's "first language", e.g. the language it was spoken to in its childhood home.

An animal can also be an object of language practice. I saw one such instance in the case of a Vepsian kitten that spent a month with our family. The kitten became increasingly sad and only became happy again when the owner returned. There is an analogous story about a new melancholic elephant in the Riga zoo – an Indian was invited to help the elephant and its health and mood improved much when it heard the familiar language.

Instead of its home language, a pet can also be addressed in the majority language. For example, Estonians in the Diaspora often talk to their pets in the language of their hosts. The motive could be the animal's better understanding of orders and general well-being, but also automatism – pet training and addressing a pet outside the home environment supports the use of the majority language. Possibly some Estonians abroad are also limited by their command of the Estonian language in this subject. A decade ago, I interviewed an old Estonian lady in Malmö, Sweden, who had two cats that she addressed only in Swedish, despite her perfect command of Estonian. Her conversation language was on par with the conversation partner's language; her speech was characterized maybe a bit simpler or shorter sentences. My question "Why do you talk to your cats in Swedish?" she replied "It is better for the cats, they get along better in life then." I still remember the somewhat patronizing reply that seemed to be based on the belief that such an independent animal as a cat would need a Swedish-language envi-

ronment. First of all, however, I was surprised by the elderly woman's assessment of the cat's ability to learn a language – it can only properly master one language.

The above cases are based on the folk logic that animals can best understand the language they grew up with. Change of code is used to keep the pet from understanding what is talked about and to keep some things secret. Dog-owners are well familiar with how their friends get quietly lost when "cutting nails" is mentioned. A frequent motif tells how the family uses a foreign language to keep some things from their dog but the dog quickly learns the key words in that language as well (drive, to the country, food, nail-clipping, bath, combing, etc) and the family is forced to change language once more. Using change of code for service purposes is described in a narrative about US police dogs who received their orders in Hungarian.

> [---] *This comes from Paul Mulick. He writes, "In the official police handbook for the Springfield Police Department, there are two pages printed in Hungarian. The rest of the book is in English. None of the men or women on the Springfield police force is Hungarian. In fact, not one person in the entire city of Springfield speaks or understands Hungarian.*
>
> *The question is why the official police manual includes two pages in Hungarian. Here's a hint: the fact that no person in Springfield understands Hungarian is one of the reasons that Hungarian was chosen.*
>
> *You will remember that some time ago you and Berman and I were going to NPR in Washington.*
>
> TOM: I remember it!
>
> *RAY: We were at South Station and we met some law enforcement people. I think they were in the process of strip-searching Berman, but I'm not sure.*
>
> *TOM: And they had dogs.*
>
> *RAY: Right. And the fellow to whom we were speaking-- once he got the dog off your leg, that is-- said the dog understood only French. That's why the police manual has these pages in Hungarian because the police dog understand only Hungarian. There're two good reasons for that. Number one, they were probably trained where? In Hungary. And number two, commands can be given only by the person handling the dog. For example, a would-be*

felon couldn't tell the dog to sit, stay, roll over or play dead (Car Talk 200342).

Discussion and Conclusion

A folklorist commonly sieves a part of socially cohesive communication flow for his research topic. The current cross-cut took into account the communication within folklore genres as well as the communicative behaviour of stereotypes, prejudices and everyday communicative behaviour as expressed by the respondents. Folklore genres acquire and lose their meaning in a social setting. Of the types discussed above, bird song imitations were predicted to disappear already in 1931 (Laugaste 1931) and indeed the genre has become a part of the institutionalised curriculum and repertoire of hobby groups, along with a portion of herding traditions. Some of the traditional genres have irrevocably made their way to professional art: incantations are part of the New Age movement and neoshamans' orchestrated rituals. The classical genres of narrative have also disappeared from common use and have instead become part of the professionals' performance or the repertoire parents have garnered from media. Many instances, tendencies and motifs described above are still in need of further study, their fate in the changing society and folklore is undecided yet. This in itself is an area in need of study, though undoubtedly there is the rule of Laozi at work – according to this, everything acts spontaneously and transforms to better correspond to the ideal (Laozi 1916: 29). Convergence, on the other hand, is characteristic not only to the pet heritage but to the contemporary folklore as a whole. We can confirm that only the oldest universal simple communication means (the whistle, signals and calls) as well as telepathic communication, have remained relatively unchanged.

Pet heritage reflects emotions and different means of communication, leading us back to the question of what gives human-animal communication its significance. There is a reason to ask, what is relayed with these simple and charming, not really virtuous but just everyday stories? Why do we need them? What is their message? Surely there is more than just a means for avoiding pauses in the conversation and give something to talk about?

Having found no explanation in the folkloristic discourse, I turned to psychology and philosophy. Clearly people today are caught in the controversial duality of globalisation and the stability offered by locality. "The self is involved in rapid movement and change, as part of the globalizing process, but at the same time, there is a deep need for local stability" (Chandler & Lalonde & Sokol & Hallett 2003). Pets are a part of the local feeling of stability, just as animals have been throughout the years something that keeps us local, creates the milieu and atmosphere of a location that we often do not subject to analysis or find it even hard to describe. The famous poet of the national awakening movement Lydia Koidula has a poem called "In our garden-bordered street" ("Meil aiaäärne tänavas") tells of the expectations towards a childhood home, the nostalgic feeling towards discovering the world that comes from the inside of every person. Most likely the mental picture and tactile memory accompanying these lines included the soft lips of a horse and the sun-heated fur of a cat; perhaps the scritching of a pig or a chick's beating heart, though they find no direct mention in the poem. They are hidden between the lines, just like the joys and worries with a contemporary pet rat or rabbit; they are part of the home-feeling that can not be put into words.

The chain of social expectations and permissions and the social setting that spurns emotions and their expression has a profound impact on our behaviour. Psychologist James R. Averill claims that rules on emotions help create a corresponding network of emotional roles, or emotional positions. An emotional position can be analysed via its privileges, limitations, obligations and conditions of acceptance (Averill 1997). From the point of view of a personality, philosophers Hubert Hermans and Harry Kempen (2007) consider it important that depending on the position people find themselves in, certain emotions can be expressed in certain situations, though at the same time certain other emotions can not be displayed or they must be suppressed. Our whole repertoire of behaviour is limited by such emotional standards.

In our relations with pets, however, we are more free to express emotions, they are less rigid than social norms, they are expressed in separated, personal room where one can determine one's own emotional positions and roles and ignores social norms.

The most significant aspect in communicating with animals is the combination of different communication means; in addition to verbal, often para- and nonverbal communication is used. Social anthropologist Tim Ingold (1988) has pointed out the overemphasis on verbal communication, which is certainly true. Even as people talking to people we use more than just words. In human-animal communication, body language is of infinite importance. Touch, body heat, closeness, observation, etc. signals received by different senses and the feelings and thoughts they provoke have a key role in communication. The benefits and veracity of communication by such means are highlighted by several researchers (Tuan 1984, Raupp 1999). The same forms apply to inter-personal relations. Universal body language signals give a faster result (calling with a whistle, sound imitations), they are easy to use, they are less confusing, have a single semantic meaning and spread easily. The simple calls, species names that have degenerated to kid-speak and calling by replacement names gives unequivocal means to the communication. Its comprehensibility is raised by intonation, tempo of delivery and other qualities. Reasons listed above could be part of the answer to the question why is animal-related folklore and communication still so important in contemporary urbanized folklore.

Principally, human-animal communication seems to follow the same model that guide exchange of code between different languages or the written versus colloquial languages (Crystal 1987). Such exchange of code helps to compensate the lack of one language as a communication device; helps to convey the attitudes and achieve the lasting effect.

Comments

[1] According to statistics, in the Great Britain 60% of singles buy a pet for companionship, the predominant reason for getting a pet is finding a companion or friend; about 5% of cats are reported as choosing their own owner.

[2] Cf. PetNet statistics: 91% of pet-owners claim that they are very close to their pets and that their pet is a member of the family (PetNet 2008).

[3] Ca 130 respondents from age group 15–70, more detailed analysis to be published.

[4] We do not touch here on the fictional fairy tales, myths and legends where dialogue with animals is common or any narratives where one miraculously gains understanding of animal language and thus access to special knowledge. Also, the witch-masters of animals (wolf-masters, those who could summon snakes, etc) are not discussed here.

[5] E. Laugaste points out the relation the swallow's song has with a saint legend (Laugaste 1932).

[6] In the 19th century, pets were first of all related to the rich landowner's culture. The same is reflected in folk tales of a gravestone or memorial for a pet, with the grandiose burial site and other privileges seen as weird habits or sins of the others.

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Afterword

The articles were written in recent years and concern changes that have taken place in various sub-categories of folklore and folkloric communication: patients communicating in internet forums, zoofolklore, astral folklore or reflection of astral phenomena in culture; mediums or witches, temporal and spatial relations in incantations; influences on feasts and feasting, or forming diaspora community. As much as possible, I have provided a cultural background. When I was writing the articles, I was interested in the heterogeneous processes that have influenced folklore, including narratives, beliefs, and the general cultural space. As my research progressed, I saw the importance of what happened during the fifty years of totalitarian Soviet regime. Despite the laws and directives the authorities issued, many earlier cultural phenomena, healing methods, and communication types survived.

Every narrative and folklore phenomenon has several dimensions: oral presentations, commonly accompanied by movement, perception and emotions, mental and bodily experiences, memory and strategies of remembering. Contextual clues like the concurrence of cultural phenomena and social circumstances, media influence add another dimension. Folkloric narrative genres have their own conventions that influence retransmission and structure of any story. Oral, written, digitally recorded accounts spider networks of intertwined narratives. I mean to say that every folkloric narrative, story, informative short narrative, or piece of information is in itself an intricate complex, that they are by nature syncretic, in turn meaning that their analysis must employ different methods and approaches. I have

been applied here the perspective of folklore studies, integrating narratology, media studies, philosophy, results of psychological investigations, and other related disciplines.

I wish to express my gratitude for their good advice and help that made this book happen to: Liisa Vesik, Mall Leman, Lii Liin, Tiina Mällo, and Lembit Karu.

Mare Kõiva,
Tartu, June 22, 2014

Concerning the articles in this collection

Some are elaborations on earlier works published elsewhere.

Time and Space in Estonian and Bulgarian Incantations. – In: Anastasova, Ekaterina (Ed.). Balkan and Baltic States in United Europe: History, Religions, and Cultures. Sofia, Tartu: Bulgarian Academy of Science, 2009, pp. 14–23.

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