

FOREWORD

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The 39th volume of Tautosakos darbai / Folklore Studies focuses on the issue of creativity. In what extent and in what way can this issue be discussed against the background of traditional folk culture? Tradition is usually perceived as preservation and transmission of the same, as ceaseless repetition. It is associated with memory, stability and conservation. What is being inherited is frequently regarded the more traditional, the more precisely it corresponds to what had been transmitted.

Thus, can repetition be creative? Can creativity be connected with repetition? Aren't these concepts contradictory?

Repeating, repetition, recurrence embody a significant theme discussed by the contemporary philosophy. In philosophy of modernity, repetition used to be regarded as mechanical or replicating action, as imitation of the original; while contemporary philosophers (among them, Gilles Deleuze, author of the book "Difference and Repetition" should first of all be mentioned) exalt repetition as a recreating, establishing and instituting action, which creates the identity of the actor. The point of view here is situated not in the primeval past, in which all things that can be repeated had been established, but in the present of repetition, demonstrating how past things acquire meaning and power in our consciousness only when they are repeated. The duality between the original and its copy is replaced with the act of repetition, which retains the past and the present in itself. Repetition is perceived as an inevitable and meaningful something, without which life, to use the words by Søren Kierkegaard, would just be "a void and empty noise". Such understanding of repetition modifies the notion of tradition. If we acknowledge the creative nature of repetition as re-creating and instituting act, we accordingly understand tradition as a dynamic process.

The concept of tradition actualized by repetition is significant not only as a prerequisite for scholarly research. Understanding of tradition either as static or dynamic correspondingly shapes attitudes related to preservation of cultural heritage and teaching of traditional culture. Whether the reality of tradition should be measured by precision of the external repetition, or whether it should acquire the full-rate status of the repeated presence – these are important practical aspects related to the theoretical issue of creativity, discussed in this volume of Tautosakos darbai / Folklore Studies.

The problems of creativity are introduced in three chapters of the volume, i.e.: "Creation as Repetition", "Creative Practices", and "Flow of Tradition". The articles

of the first chapter present different perspectives of viewing creation as repetition. An article by Algis Mickūnas is first in this chapter; showing cultural images as masks which cover and simultaneously display primeval notion of the particular culture. By the creatively construed images and narratives the same prototype is repeated. Viktorija Daujotytė-Pakerienė connects literature and folklore in her discussion of creativity appearing in the movements of repetition. This author also reconsiders our relationship to heritage. Philosopher Jurga Jonutytė surveys development of the ideas of tradition, repetition and creation, revealing conventionality of the established notions. Ethnographer of dance Egil Bakka and the phenomenologist philosopher of dance Gediminas Karoblis on the grounds of fieldwork research methodologically consider the relationship between separate variants of the dance and its invariant, questioning what unites all individual occurrences of dancing into the allegedly same dance.

The second chapter deals with creative practices. Symptomatically enough, four authors analyzing diverse materials and raising the issue of creativity in folk culture adopt the perspective of action, not dissociating the folklore piece from personality and environment. Describing the most creative variants of the tale “Eglė – the Queen of Serpents”, Leonardas Sauka focuses on their performance. Giedrė Šmitienė reveals singing to be an integral part of life, discussing singing from the point of view of the folk singers, manifested in their life stories. Reflecting on the experience of singing old folk psalms, Jurga Jonutytė elucidates two notions of creation, namely, creation as an event and creation as an action, drawing the historic boundaries of spread and credibility of these notions. Aistė Andriušytė discusses the old architecture of the villages presenting attractive visual materials. This author continues and strengthens the argument by Jonutytė, demonstrating creation to be simply the appropriate actions.

Jurga Sadauskienė’s article on transformations of image of the rue garden opens the third chapter entitled “Flow of Tradition”. Here, concrete descriptions of changes taking place in tradition display wish and will for its continuation, which is stronger and more stable than shifting forms, only covered by various masks, to use the term by Mickūnas. Austė Nakienė parallels recordings of the choral music from 1907–1911 and their critique by Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, revealing principles grasped by this composer, which should secure identity of the song to be preserved in the flow of its change. Aušra Žičkienė notes a new phenomenon – tradition of composing anthems. Rūta Žarskienė describes the way of the originally Mexican song “Little shoes” (or “I will buy a pair of little shoes for you”) into the Lithuanian folklore.

The horizons of European folklore are opened up by the Hungarian folklore professor Vilmos Voigt. His article deals with the prominent character in the Balkan folklore, King Mathias. Mathias Corvin was a historical person who ruled the Hungarian kingdom in the 15th century, expanding its territory and establishing a powerful empire. There are at least three especially attractive aspects in the article by Voigt: strong school of the Hungarian folkloristics, continuing detailed

comparative research of the motive ever since the very beginning of the 20th century; context of the folkloric motive in question – panorama of the thriving Hungarian kingdom from the Mathias' time; and (most impressively) the integral approach of the author, joining together folklore, written sources, literature, historical events, and cultural epoch.

Further, the usual chapters of Tautosakos darbai / Folklore Studies follow: publication of folklore source materials, anniversaries, reviews, etc. Jurgita Macijauskaitė-Bonda has edited a publication of contemporary anecdotes. An article by Kostas Aleksynas is written to the occasion of the 250th anniversary of Antanas Strazdas, introducing variants of the popular “Song before Mass” (or “Down on Our Knees”) composed by this poet. Contributions by Lilija Kudirkienė, Adelė Seselskytė and Jūratė Šlekonytė are meant to celebrate anniversaries of Laurynas Ivinskis, Matas Slančiauskas and Jonas Jablonskis. Also, folklorists from the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore convey their cordial greetings to the prominent folklore professor Bronislava Kerbelytė on the occasion of her 75th birthday.

In the “Pro Memoria” chapter, the famous researcher of the Baltic culture and a good friend of Lithuania having just passed away, Nikolai Mikhailov is remembered by Algirdas Sabaliauskas.

Under the heading of reviews, Saulė Matulevičienė discusses the second volume of the fundamental publication of “Lithuanian Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases”. Rūta Žarskienė introduces a book edited by Gaila Kirdienė “Traditional Wedding Music in Eastern Aukštaitija”; while Dainius Razauskas analyzes a work by Ilya Lemeskin “The Saga of Sovius and the Chronograph of 1262”. Kostas Aleksynas presents several corrections to the publication of sound recordings “Phonograms of the Lithuanian Ethnographic Music 1908–1942”. Giedrė Buftienė introduces the collection of Sorbian Proverbs. Serbske přislowa, edited by Susanne Hose in collaboration with Wolfgang Mieder. The volume is concluded by chronicle of important folklore events and the Lithuanian Folklore Bibliography of 2007, edited by Vitas Agurkis.