

THE SIGN OF THE APPLE-TREE IN LATVIAN FOLKSONGS: THROUGH FORMULA TO SIGN

LAILA VĀCERE

Latvia University, Rīga

S u b j e c t: The system of signs in Apple-tree *dainas*.

P u r p o s e o f s t u d y: To illustrate how the notion of “sign” could be referred to the Latvian folksongs.

M e t h o d: Application of semiology to the investigation of the structure of the text.

K e y w o r d s: Semiotics, sign, formula, structure, *dainas*, poetics, apple-tree, woman.

The lexeme semiotics has a root *semio* (Old Greek ‘sign’). From ancient times, language used to be studied as a system of signs. This study became so refined; there were lots of achievements. Semiotics not only borrowed terms from linguistics but also methods of research.

As an indication of the provisional status of semiotics, its being still usually defined in terms first proposed by its so-called father, i.e. the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, may be regarded. In his book published in 1916, de Saussure suggested to term it the “science that studies life of signs within society”. The suggestion was principally taken up by the French literary critic Roland Barthes, and by many other scholars as well, who were chiefly responsible for popularizing and extending semiotics in the 1960s. According to Barthes, semiotics (or semiology) constitutes an application of principles taken from the structural linguistics to the study of literary texts, media and cultural phenomena. It is the underlying rules of cultural texts and practices that interest structuralists. It is a structure, which makes meaning possible. The task of structuralism therefore is to make explicit rules and conventions (the structure), governing the production of meaning¹.

When investigating and analyzing folklore texts, Latvian scholars have applied method based on the Lord-Perry theory on formulas that defined formula as “a group of words which are regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea”².

The formulas comprise phrases, clauses and sentences characterized by specific poetical grammar. The poetical grammar of folksongs and oral epics is based on the formulas. It is a grammar or parataxis and of frequently used and useful phrases.

Further in this article, the ongoing research will be viewed not only in terms of the theory of formulas but also with regard to the ideas of sign and its interpretations. The author will illustrate how semiology can be applied to decode the folklore texts and how the notion of “sign” could be referred to the research.

The author of the article proposes another way of analyzing folklore texts that is based on semiology. Semiotics may reveal a more profound layer of poetical semantics within a folklore text.

The most numerous and distinctive genre in Latvian folklore is the 4-lined verses, i.e. the classical quatrains. From the point of view of textual structure, these short songs are highly formularized. Many of them are built on the principle of analogous parallelism, where the first two lines present a certain exposition, while the second part reflects the idea related to the human life as a summary and gives some solution or synthesis of the problem. The whole corpus of traditional quatrains constitutes a linguistic sub-system. Meanings of the individual words emerge mainly through the semantics of the whole quatrain, the thematically related songs, or all the texts with similar formulas. The couplet appears to be the basic unit in Latvian folksong tradition. It may be considered as a fundament of the parallel verse construction, which plays a central role in the folksong poetics. The parallel construction that is fundamental compositional device in most folksongs also brings into focus the role of nature images and metaphors in the songs.

Regarding semiotics in social context, two concepts related to the issue, i.e. codes and conventions have to be mentioned.

Code is a system of signs governed by the rules agreed on (explicitly or implicitly) by the members of the using culture; in other words, codes are essentially what we define as “culture”, i.e. the systematic organization of meaning in reality. Codes organize the world into categories, telling us what is a significant relationship, what similarities and what differences are meaningful and matter. As regards the folksongs, in a narrower scope, formulas might be considered as codes of the particular text.

Conventions are the ways by which we put codes into use. Latvian folksongs, *dainas*, i.e. the phenomena of Latvian oral culture, have been analyzed taking into account these two key concepts of semiotics in communication and cultural studies. In this case codes are standards of life, moral values, codex of behavior, relationships between males and females expressed through formulas or a system of formulas. The intertextual meaning is produced through the articulation of codes, which make up social reality exposed in the songs.

First of all, some basic concepts of the sign employed in the paper should be clarified.

A *sign* is something physical and perceivable by senses, an object with the meaning, which cannot be reduced to the physical properties.

According to Charles S. Peirce, the sign is “something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity”²³.

According to Umberto Eco, “the sign is a gesture produced with the intention of communicating, that is, in order to transmit one’s representation of the inner state to another being”⁴.

Signs are organized in categories called paradigms. These categories are typically organized on a binary or dichotomous basis, e.g., West / East, black / white, male / female, etc.

A *paradigm* has two basic characteristics: 1) all the units in a paradigm must have something in common; they must share characteristics determining their membership in the paradigm; 2) each unit must be clearly distinguished from all the others in the paradigm; we have to be able to tell the difference between various signs in a paradigm in terms of their signifiers.

The *signified* and the *signifiers*, in Saussurean terminology, are components of the sign. The plane of signifiers constitutes the plane of expression (form, material manifestation of the sign) and that of signified – the plane of content (meaning). Signification (semiosis) coincides with the relation of the two planes: the plane of expression and the plane of content. The substance of the signifier is always material (sounds, objects, images), but signified is a mental representation of the “thing”. People create the signified, which are the meanings we constantly invent to cope with the “entropic” nature of the human existence, our way of bringing a pattern into the reality in which we live⁵.

In our case the signifier is the image of an apple-tree and the signified is the variations of the meaning it bears depending on the context.

The apple-tree in Latvian folk poetry can be considered as the sign that acquires its significance (meaning) in a context.

From the point of view of semiotics, there are two levels to every cultural phenomenon: i.e. a denotative and a connotative.

Denotation is the thing pointed by a word (rather than feelings or ideas connected with the word).

Connotation is the meaning or idea suggested by a word or thing in addition to the formal meaning or nature of the word or thing.

It is at the level of connotation that ideology (the meaning of a message) enters the reproduction of the social reality. Connotation is not directly presented in the basic material itself (the plot of songs). Connotation is, in fact, partly indicated by denotation. Every cluster of folksongs has certain significance, to put philosophically, morals and ethics. This significance is connotation, which is conventional.

Folksongs possess the following conventional properties:

- they make for easy decoding, because we all share the same culture,
- they express cultural membership and rely on similarity of experience.

Folklore is the text transmitting traditions and values to other generations. From this point of view, the apple-tree as a sign is used to communicate messages.

For our research purposes, a particular genre of the Latvian folk poetry was chosen, i.e. the apple-tree *dainas*. The choice of this particular genre for the study

of the apple-tree concept was determined by several reasons: firstly, the material at hand has preserved the concept of the apple-tree better than other traditional genres, beliefs and customs; and secondly, *dainas* contain a very elaborate imagery of the apple-tree.

The method employed in this investigation comprises the following stages:

- selection of the particular folksongs, called the apple-tree *dainas*,
- analysis of the notion of “sign” relying on the context and structure of the text (the main emphasis being placed on denotation and connotation);
- illustration of how the structure of songs (the highly formulized four-line songs having strict metric rules) develops the meaning, i.e. the connotation of the sign of the apple-tree.

The goal of this research is demonstrating how semiology is practically applied to the cultural studies, particularly to the analysis of the apple-tree *dainas*, and proving that apple-tree functions as a sign in the chosen corpus of the folksongs.

Daina may briefly be described as a quatrain with trochaic meter, mostly lyrical in content, widely employing comparisons with nature that are coined in the so-called parallelisms, i.e. the parallel constructions wherein two first lines of a folksong picture a natural image, and the last two lines of the quatrain give a corresponding scene from human life. Thus both parallel and contrasting effects are achieved. Parallel images, shaped by formulas or formulaic expressions, and signs borrowed from nature embrace the whole human life span from cradle to grave and also give description of the other world. The individual social position, family status and moral qualities are converted into images with symbolic meaning. At the same time, content of the *dainas* condenses the worldview of traditional rural community into a stable system of values, with clear division between good and evil, honor and shame. The collective wisdom of the traditional rural community is coined in these short, easily remembered sentences that can be called “codex of the moral values” shared by the Latvian peasants⁶.

Dainas are being analyzed taking into account the two previously mentioned key concepts of semiotics in cultural studies, i.e. codes and conventions, where codes are principles of life, moral values, and relationships expressed by standard generic expressions (or distiches) corresponding to the formulae.

Upon investigation of songs, it could be concluded that the word “apple-tree” in *dainas* is not used in its basic linguistic meaning only, i.e. ‘a tree bearing apples’. Instead, certain associative bonds (mental concepts) can be traced in every cluster of songs, sometimes producing opposite textual connotations, and thus acquiring properties of a sign. According to the principles of semiology, it is possible to organize these opposite implications into paradigms. E.g., a blossoming apple-tree has two opposite meanings: that of a young girl and a married woman, while the falling blossoms mean an orphan girl’s tears and the arriving suitors.

Besides, the tree image in Latvian folksongs is commonly used figuratively, e.g. a tree substitutes the exact personal name. The ethical and emotional content of the

tree symbol is far more distinctly emphasized, and the emotional interpretation of the tree prevails.

The tree as a poetical element possesses special semiotic potential; some levels of its connotation exceed the boundaries of linguistic and poetical semantics. In this case the usage of the notion “sign” is reasonable.

Therefore some *properties*, which the apple-tree possesses as a sign, should be pointed out, e.g.:

– an apple-tree is a twofold entity, where the signifier is the image of the apple-tree and the signified is variations of meaning depending on the context (in terms of semiotics, these are connotations);

– folksongs do not speak of an apple-tree outside the cultural context;

– there is no link to any kind of physical resemblance or similarity between an apple-tree and a female, which is arbitrary, acquiring signification only in the context, while the apple-tree acquires polysemantic features possessing opposite connotations;

– the information embedded in folksongs is transmitted by means of a binary code.

The principle of binarism (binary oppositions) is the very basis of the folksong structure. It makes meaning possible, creating the significance. Binarism can be traced in the plane of expression and in the connotations of the apple-tree: e.g., fertility / death, high social status / low social status, virgin / defamed girl.

Thus the “apple-tree” acquires properties of a sign: rather than being simply a lexical unit, it forms a wide notional field and is open to interpretations. The sign of the apple-tree derives its value also from its surroundings.

The material was analyzed in terms of images (signs) and their connotations (signification of the second order) imposed by the whole body of *dainas*, viewed as “one text”. All the *dainas* about the apple-tree are viewed as a coherent story of an apple-tree and a woman. The tree is compared to a female thanks to the same particular features belonging to both of them.

The connotation of an apple-tree to a woman is the most elaborated theme within the apple-tree *dainas*. It covers all stages of the female life, e.g.:

an unmarried girl –

*Ziedi, ziedi, ābelīte,
Vai tev vien ir balti ziedi?
Man ziedēja pūriņā
Trīs deviņas villainītes.*

LD 7843/5

Blossom, blossom apple-tree,
Do you only have white blossoms?
I have blossoming in my dowry
Three times nine [woolen] shawls.

a bride –

*Ziedi, ziedi tautu meita
Kā ābele kalniņā.
Drīz jāš mani bāleliņi
Tavus ziedus birdināt.*

LD 13.096

Bloom, bloom young girl
Like an apple-tree on the hill.
My brothers will ride soon
To shake off your blossoms.

a wife –

*Kādas vietas es gribēju
Tāda man gadījās:
Upe tek lejiņā,
Ābel' zied kalniņā;
Pie upītes mazgājos,
Pie ābeles pušķojos.*

LD 25.885

What place I wanted
That I have got:
The river flows in the valley,
The apple-tree blossoms on the hill;
I wash myself in the river,
I adorn myself by the apple-tree.

a mother –

*Tai ābelei balti ziedi,
Tai sarkani āboltiņi;
Tai māmiņai daiļas meitas,
Tai ik dienas tautas jāņ.*

LD 14.309

That apple-tree has white blossoms,
That [tree] has red apples;
That mother has beautiful daughters,
[To] that [mother] suitors arrive daily.

a mother-in-law –

*Dēlu māti suņi dzina
Par ābeļu līdumiņu;
Meitu māte pasmējās
Pa lodziņu lūkodama.*

LD 23619/7, 8

The sons' mother is baited by dogs
Through the clearing of the apple-trees;
The daughters' mother laughs
While looking out of the window.

and an old woman –

*Laimiņ' manu mūžu lēma
Pie ābeles stāvēdama:
Kā liepiņa es uzaugu,
Kā ābele noziedēju.*

LD 1199/5

Laima decided my fate
Standing by the apple-tree;
I grew up like a linden tree,
[I] blossomed like an apple-tree.

Taking into account all the adjectives and verbs used to picture the apple-tree compared to a young girl, the following description could be derived: a small or sweet apple-tree with white or red-white blossoms, which is blossoming or growing (Appendix 3, 8, 9, 17, 23, 31, 35, 41). Quite separately from this stand images of an apple-tree broken by the wind, but blossoming nevertheless (Appendix 39), of a tree growing and blossoming on the fallow (Appendix 4, 16, 34), or of an apple-tree with blossoms nipped by the frost, which is compared to a young girl (Appendix 25). A young girl just before marriage is connoted by a white blossoming tree or a red-white or sweet blossoming tree (Appendix 8, 9, 17, 23, 29, 31, 34, 41). The first intercourse is poetically described as shaking off the white blossoms of the apple-tree (Appendix 28), while falling blossoms stand for the maiden's tears (Appendix 20, 43). The crucial watershed in a woman's life, i.e. her marriage, is illustrated by the image of suitors coming to shake off the blossoming tree (Appendix 28). A mother is connoted by a tree with blossoms and apples or by a branchy apple-tree (Appendix 18, 27). An old woman is never connoted by a blossoming tree, but is paralleled to a dry, crooked tree, standing alone (Appendix 46, 48). The transition from one age group to another is expressed through the image of the tree as well. The most necessary

capacity of a bride, emphasized by use of the apple-tree image, is to be ready to bear children just like an apple-tree bears fruit after successful blossoming (Appendix 29, 47). The position of a mother is expressed by pointing out the lack of this feature, i.e. she has branches rather than blossoms like a young girl (Appendix 19, 43). The clear distinction that is drawn between the blossoming tree and the dry one directly relates to the age of the woman.

These two connotations clearly form an opposition: fertility and richness implied by a blossoming or branchy apple-tree in the songs about a young girl, a bride and a young married woman vs. lack of fertility and low social status expressed by a crooked or broken tree in the songs about an orphan girl and a defamed girl.

Along with other binary oppositions, it could be pointed out that the apple-tree can grow at quite different spatial loci, and its specific features depend on the place where it grows. The apple-tree occupies positions that can be categorized as top vs. bottom and center vs. periphery. The vertical spatial axis is represented by location either on the hilltop or in the valley at the bottom of the hill. The image of the hill and particularly of the hilltop is very prominent in *dainas*, usually employed to express the idea of a turning point, the climax of life. Hilltops probably were once used as places for worship; therefore placing the apple-tree on the hilltop can lend it sacral significance. Actually, within the poetic imagery of *dainas* connected with trees, only apple-tree and oak are placed on the hilltops. Here, the connotation of the tree as a young girl prior to marriage is so powerful, that even the features of a tree (its blossoms) are ascribed to a girl. Moreover, a girl might not be mentioned at all, and the blossoming apple-tree symbolically replaces her (Appendix 5, 40, 44, 47, 49).

The horizontal spatial axis related to the trees includes the center and the outside position (periphery). The most positive values are associated with the tree located in the center or on top, e.g., in the middle of the garden or on the hilltop (Appendix 4). A girl compared to such a tree has a large family; her mother and brothers take care of her (Appendix 44). Other positive qualities may include richness, good life and its climax (Appendix 1, 42).

A single tree located on the outside position (e.g. on a fallow) represents lack of these positive values; such tree is compared to an orphan girl belonging to the social margins. The tree on a peripheral position may connote sorrow, desolation or instability. Thus, spatial location has connotations of the female social and family status.

Along with these images, a distinct image of the apple orchard invested with clear sexual connotations prevails (Appendix 10, 13, 15, 45, 49, 50). This is particularly obvious in the opposition of the blossoming orchard vs. the destroyed apple orchard, respectively signifying a virgin and a dishonored girl.

The blossoming apple orchard is taboo for men until marriage; it belongs to the female world instead. Only a mother and her daughters are allowed to enter it, to work and stay there.

The image of the clearing of the apple-trees forms an opposition to that of the apple orchard. The clearing, the cultivated place is dominated by men (Appendix 51) and is not invested with positive quality for women, therefore having connotation of a fertile plough. Moreover, it can be regarded as the most crucial border and a dangerous place in the female life (Appendix 37, 53, 54), because crossing of the clearing means loosing the virginity, e.g.:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Tumsāi teku vakarāi</i> | In darkness I am crossing |
| <i>Caur ābeļu līdumiņu;</i> | The clearing of the apple-trees; |
| <i>Lai nedziedz ļauni ļaudis,</i> | Not to let the wicked people hear me, |
| <i>Lai balsiņu nemaitātu.</i> | Not to let them wreck my voice. |
| <i>Kad balsiņu vien maitātu,</i> | They wouldn't wreck only the voice, |
| <i>Maitā daiļu augumiņu.</i> | They could wreck my lovely body, too. |

LD 437

The apple-tree *dainas* constitute just a small, though essential part of the wedding songs. The image of the falling white blossoms may be used to designate all the stages in the wedding cycle, from the suitors' arrival until the very moment when the bride obtains her marital headdress. E.g., the idea of betrothal is expressed by shaking off and dropping off the blossoms, or even digging out the apple-tree (Appendix 28, 29, 30, 31, 36). The connotation is of the brutal force directed against the girl. Falling blossoms that cover the girl's head express the next step in the development of meaning. This stands for the loss of virginity and acquiring status of a married woman. The second connotation of the falling blossoms is bride's tears (her crying) when leaving her mother's house, e.g.:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <i>Apsēdosi, nopūtosī</i> | I have sat, I have sighed |
| <i>Pie ziedošas ābelītes;</i> | At the blossoming apple-tree; |
| <i>Birst ābelei balti ziedi,</i> | The white blossoms of the apple-tree are falling, |
| <i>Birst man gaužas asariņas.</i> | My bitter tears are falling, too. |

LD 3942

Another wedding-related motif includes breaking-off an apple-tree branch, which is equal to death (i.e. death of maidenhood): either real or as a transition to a new status, e.g.:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Kas ābelei zaru cērt,</i> | Whoever cuts the bough of an apple-tree, |
| <i>Lai cērt visu ābelīti;</i> | Should cut the whole tree; |
| <i>Kas mauc manu gredzentiņu,</i> | Whoever takes off my ring, |
| <i>Lai ņem visu augumiņu.</i> | Should take my whole body. |

LD 6294/1

To summarize it may be said that the analysis proved the image of the apple-tree to be highly polysemous. Polysemy is usually revealed in a particular context by means of the signs. E.g.:

- a tree + a particular location (top / bottom; center / outside) connotes the social or family status, discussed above;
- a tree + particular features (rich blossoms = fertility, richness / lack of the blossoms = lack of fertility) connotes a young girl or a bride / a defamed girl (a blossoming

apple-tree with small, sweet, white, red blossoms / an apple-tree with the blossoms nipped by the frost);

– a young woman, mother / an old woman (a blossoming, branchy apple-tree or an apple-tree with apples / a dry, crooked or broken apple-tree);

– a single tree / an apple orchard (a single young girl / a girl among her kin);

– a tree broken by the wind but still blooming / a broken apple-tree (a defamed girl or an orphan girl having rich suitors / symbolic death);

– an apple orchard / clearing of the apple-trees (a place for women, taboo for men / a place for men, dangerous to women).

The list of oppositions reveals crucial parameters of life pertaining both to the nature and to the social life: a tree up or down stands for the wealth or poverty, high social status or low social status. Thus natural parameters connote the social and moral ones.

As mentioned above, all the phenomena in social life have two dimensions, i.e. denotative and connotative. In this case, the connotative level is activated, and relationships between unrelated categories are created (an apple-tree becomes symbol of a female, bringing together two otherwise unrelated categories, i.e. plants and humans) by conventions and codes. Therefore formulas and formulaic expressions make the usage of the notion “sign” justified.

There are, however, other possible explanations of the same texts and the problem of interpretation will never be solved completely. On the other hand, the image of the apple-tree occupies special place in perception by contemporary readers, therefore the sign of an apple-tree may still be regarded as bearing values relevant to the modern society. The apple-tree is a sign in philosopher’s C. S. Peirce’s special sense, only it has to be extended that its significance depends on human conventions (conventional rules) or on arbitrary decision (coding). The operation of a sign depends on a process of interpretation⁷.

To conclude, it has to be stressed that formulas and formulaic expressions in folksongs allow for the interpretation of the apple-tree as a sign in its syntagmatic relations. Moreover, these formulas that created the sign of the apple-tree out of the cultural context, are rooted in cultural codes and conventions.

At last, it should be noted that in a short paper it is impossible to encapsulate all the semiotic systems pertaining to the nature. Therefore only one sign was demonstrated here, i.e. that of the apple-tree, in its relations to the semiotic subsystem.

¹ Roland Barthes. *Elements of Semiology*. Hill and Wang, 1983, pp. 42–50.

² A. B. Lord. *The Singer of Tales*. Cambridge, 2003, p. 30.

³ Charles S. Peirce. *Selected Writings*. Ed. by I. Buchlew. New York, London, 1940, pp. 80–116.

⁴ Umberto Eco. *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*. Bloomington, 1988, pp. 15–17.

⁵ Ferdinand de Saussure. *Cours de linguistique générale*. Paris, 1973, pp. 25–30.

⁶ Velta Rūķe-Draviņa. *The Apple-Tree in Latvian Folk Songs*. – *Linguistics and Poetics of Latvian Folk Songs*. Kingston and Montreal, 1989, p. 171.

⁷ Charles S. Peirce. *Op. cit.*

REFERENCES

- Barthes, R. 1983. *Elements of Semiology*. Hill and Wang.
- Burke, P. 1988. *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. Aldershof: Wildwood House.
- Culler, Jonathan 1989. *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*. London: Routledge.
- Eco, Umberto 1988. *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Erdmane, H. 1988. „Koku tēli, to semantika un mākslinieciskā slodze dziesmu folklorā” [The Images of Trees and their Semantic Meaning within Latvian Folkore]. In: *Pasaules skatījuma poētiskā atveide folklorā*. Ed. J. Darbiniece. Rīga: Zinātne.
- Saussure, Ferdinand de 1973. *Cours de linguistique générale*. Paris: Payot.
- Finnegan, R. 1977. *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jason, H. 1982. “Content Analysis of Oral Literature: A Discussion”. In: *Patterns in Oral Literature*. Eds. H. Jason and D. Segal. Paris: Mouton.
- Latvju Dainas. Parindeņu izlase* 1984. [Interlinear translation: M. Andersone, M. Pavara. Editor: T. Zālīte]. Rīga; (abbreviation – LD).
- Linguistics and Poetics of Latvian Folk Songs 1989. *Essays in Honour of the Sesquicentennial of the Birth of Kr. Barons*. Ed. V. Vikis-Freibergs. Kingston-Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press.
- Lord, A. B. 2003. *The Singer of Tales*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Oguibenine, B. 1989. “On the World Tree symbolism: The sources of an analytical pattern”. *Semiotics of Culture*. Ed. H. Broms and R. Kayffman. (Helsinki: Arator) 35–50, 39.
- Peirce, C. S. 1940. *Selected writings*. Ed. by I. Buchlew. New York, London: Harcourt, Bruce&Co.
- Rūķe-Draviņa, V. 1989. “The Apple-Tree in Latvian Folk Songs”. In: *Linguistics and Poetics of Latvian Folk Songs*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press.
- Vikis-Freibergs, V. 1989. “Oral Tradition as Cultural History in the Lyrical World of the Latvian Daina”. In: *Linguistics and Poetics of Latvian Folk Songs*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press.

THE LATVIAN APPLE-TREE SONGS (*DAINAS*)

Appendix

1. *Zied ābele pret ābeli
Katra kalna galiņā;
Dzied māsiņa pret māsiņu
Katra kunga novadā.*
LD 251
[One] apple-tree blossoms in front of another one,
Each on the top of a hill;
[One] sister sings in front of another one,
Each in her husband's domain.
2. *Laimiņ' manu mūžu lēma
Pie ābeles stāvēdama:
Kā liepiņa es uzaugu,
Kā ābele noziedēju.*
LD1199/5
Laima decided my fate
Standing by the apple-tree:
I grew up like a linden tree,
[I] blossomed like an apple-tree.
3. *Ziedi, maza ābelīte,
Vasariņa ziedus gaida;
Audz, mazaļa brāļa māsa,
Tautas gaida malējiņas.*
LD 1930
Blossom, small apple-tree,
Summer awaits blossoms;
Grow up, little brother's sister,
Suitors await maiden [who grinds flour].
4. *Ābelītei zelta ziedi
Ziedēj purva lejiņā.
Kad tev bija zelta ziedi,
Kam neziedi kalniņā?*
LD 2754
The apple-tree has golden blossoms
Blossoming down in the marsh.
If you have golden blossoms,
Why don't you blossom on the hill?
5. *Daiļa sēta arājamī
Pašā kalna galiņā.
Visapkārt liepu koki
Vidū ziedi ābelīte.*
LD 3682
The splendid farm [belongs] to the ploughman
On the very top of the hill.
All around [are] linden trees,
The apple-tree blossoms in the middle.
6. *Apsēdosi, nopūtosi
Pie ziedošas ābelītes;
Birst ābelei balti ziedi,
Birst man gaužas asariņas.*
LD 3942
I have sat, I have sighed
At the blossoming apple-tree;
The white blossoms of the apple-tree are falling,
My bitter tears are falling, too.
7. *Sveša māte, ne māmiņa,
Pie ābeles rīkstes grieza;
Ābelei birst balti ziedi,
Man birst gaužas asariņas.*
LD 4292
The alien mother, not my mummy
Cuts switches of an apple-tree;
The white blossoms of the apple-tree are falling,
My bitter tears are falling, too.
8. *Balta ziedēj' ābelīte
Novadiņa maliņā;
Balta gāja sērdienīte
Par visām meitiņām.*
LD 4508/2
The apple-tree blossoms in white
On the edge of the land;
The orphan girl walks in white [dress]
More so than all the other girls.

9. *Balti bija ievas ziedi,
Sarkanbalti ābelītes;
Balta bija mātes meita,
Sarkanbalta sērdienīte.*
LD 4509
- White blossoms belong to the bird cherry,
Red-white [ones] to the apple-tree;
The mother's daughter is white,
The orphan girl [is] red-white.
10. *Mātes meitas pušķojās
Ābelīšu dārziņai;
Garām teka sērdienīte
Asariņas slaucīdama.*
LD 4599
- Mother's daughters adorn themselves
In the apple orchard;
The orphan girl is running by
Wiping [her] tears.
11. *Sīka, maza ābelīņa
Liela ceļa maliņā;
Sīka, maza es paliku,
Svešas mātes klausīdama.*
LD 4649
- Small, small apple-tree
[Grows] on the wide road side;
Small, small I stayed,
Obeying to the alien mother.
12. *Laima sēd ābelē,
Bārenīte pazarē.
Laima saka uz bārenes:
– Vij, bārene, vainadziņu!
– Ej, Laimiņa, licējiņ,
Kas ņems manu vainadziņu?
– Ej, bārene, nebēdā,
Tautas ņems vainadziņu.
– Ej, Laimiņ, licējiņ,
Man nevaids gatavības.
– Ej, bārene, nebēdā,
Es tev došu gatavību:
Es tev došu simtu govu,
Simtu baltu villainīšu,
Tavam, miežu arājam
Simtu bērnu kumeliņu.*
LD 5025
- Laima sits [high] on the apple-tree,
An orphan girl [sits] low on the branches.
Laima says to the orphan girl:
– Weave, orphan, a wreath!
– Alas, dear Laima, decider [of the fate],
Who will take my wreath?
– Alas, orphan, do not worry,
Suitors will take [your] wreath.
– Alas, dear Laima, decider [of the fate],
I am not ready.
– Go, orphan, do not worry,
I will give you the dowry:
I will give you one hundred cows,
One hundred white [woolen] shawls,
[And] to your barley ploughman
One hundred bay horses.
13. *Ekur skaista tautu meita
Sēd ābeļu dārziņā:
Baltas zeķes, melnas kurpes,
Sarkans rožu vainadziņš.*
LD 5400
- Look, what a beautiful young girl
Sits in the apple orchard:
[She wears] white socks, black shoes,
[And] a wreath of red roses.
14. *Tecēšu sētā
Stāstīšu mātei,
Ko dara meitiņas
Ābeļu dārzā:
Vilniņu kārse,
Sakšīņas aude,
Ābeļu malciņu
Uguni kūre.*
LD 7465
- I will go into the yard
[And] tell [my] mother
What the girls are doing
In the apple orchard:
Wool is combed,
Shawls are woven;
Apple-tree's wood
Is used for fire.

15. *Spīdi, spīdi Saulīte,
Ābeļu dārzā,
Tur mana māmiņa
Villanes velēja.*
LD 7534
- Shine, shine Sun
In the apple orchard,
There my mummy
Launders [woolen] shawls.
16. *Redz kā koši noziedēja
Papuviķes ābelīte;
Redz, kā koši novalkāja
Sērdienīte vainadziņu.*
LD 5196
- Look, how brightly has blossomed
The little apple-tree on a fallow;
Look, how nicely did wear
The orphan girl [her] wreath.
17. *Ai, Dieviņi, ai, Dieviņi,
Par meitiņu viegla dzīve!
Dzīvo bites vieglumiņu,
Ābeļziedu baltumiņu.*
LD 5260
- Oh, my God, oh, my God,
[It is so] easy to live like a girl!
Life is easy like a bee
[And] white like the apple-tree's blossoms.
18. *Aitiņ, manu, vilniņ' tavu
Māmiņ tavu darījumu!
Kā ābeli sagšu sedzu,
Kā magoni vilnanīti.*
LD 5576
- My dear sheep, [what beautiful] wool you have,
[And what beautiful is] your work, mummy!
[I] sit like an apple-tree, covered in a linen shawl
[And] a woolen shawl like a poppy flower.
19. *Balta ziedi laukmalē,
Vai bij ieva, vai ābele?
Balta gāja pa celiņu,
Vai bij sieva, vai meitiņa?*
LD 5590
- [Something] white is blossoming on the edge of the field,
Is it a bird cherry or an apple-tree?
[Someone] white is walking by the road,
Is that a [married] woman or a girl?
20. *Kādi ziedi vasarā,
Tādu viju vainadziņu.
Ābels ziedu vien neviju,
Tie raud gauži valkājot.*
LD 5930
- What flowers are there in summer,
Those I put in my wreath.
Only the blossoms of the apple-tree I don't take,
They cry bitterly [when one] wears them.
21. *Kas ābelei zaru cērt,
Lai cērt visu ābelīti;
Kas mauc manu gredzentiņu,
Lai ņem visu augumiņu.*
LD 6294/1
- Whoever cuts the bough of an apple-tree,
Should cut the whole tree;
Whoever takes off my ring,
Should take my whole body.
22. *Ābelīte Dievu lūdza,
Lai ved meitas šoruden:
Visi zari nolīkuši,
Dzīpariņus žāvējot.*
LD 7121
- The apple-tree prayed to God
Asking that [suitors] would marry girls this autumn:
All the branches are leaning down
[Because of] the dried yarn.
23. *Maza, maza ābelīte
Pilnus ziedus piekrāvuse;
Maza, maza es meitiņa,
Pilnu pūru pielocijse.*
LD 7737
- The small, small apple-tree
Is blooming in full blossoms;
I am a small, small girl,
I have made a full dowry.

24. *Ziedi, ziedi, ābelīte,
Vai tev vien ir balti ziedi?
Man ziedēja pūriņā
Trīs deviņas villainītes.*
LD 7843/5
- Blossom, blossom apple-tree,
Are you the only [one] having white blossoms?
I have blossoming in my dowry
Three times nine [woolen] shawls.
25. *Salnas ēsta ābelīte
Zied celiņa maliņā;
Ļaužu pelta tā meitiņa,
Nes ar godu vainadziņu.*
LD 8862
- The apple-tree nipped by the frost
Is blossoming on the roadside;
The girl slandered by the people
Wears her wreath with dignity.
26. *Trīs gadiņi tautu dēlis
Mani rāmu rāmināja.
Kad aiziešu, laidīs māte,
Tad tu rassi rāmulīti.
Es to tavu māmūlīti
No krēsliņa lecinašu;
Es to tavu veco tēvu
Aizkrāsne iegrūdīšu;
Es tos tavus bāleliņus
Pa vārtiem izvedīšu
Tad es tavus krūzu matus
Gar rociņu sitināšu,
Tad es tavu sierdi vilkšu
Caur ābeļu saknītēm.*
LD 10.857/8
- For three years the young lad
Was calming me down.
When I will come, [when] my mother lets [me],
Then you will find a quiet one.
I will push your mummy
Off the chair;
I will push your old father
Behind the stove;
I will send your brothers
Out through the gate;
Then I will jerk your curled hair
With my hand;
Then I will draw your heart
Through the roots of the apple-trees.
27. *Kas man deva to ābolu,
Kas ābeles galiņā?
Kas man deva to meitiņu,
Kas viena māmiņai?*
LD 11.220
- Who will give me that apple
That is on the top of an apple-tree?
Who will give me that girl
Who is the only one at her mummy's?
28. *Ziedi, ziedi tautu meita
Kā ābele kalniņā.
Drīz jās mani bāleliņi
Tavus ziedus birdināt.*
LD 13.096
- Bloom, bloom young girl
Like an apple-tree on the hill;
My brothers will ride soon
To shake off your blossoms.
29. *Tai ābelei balti ziedi,
Tai sarkani āboltiņi;
Tai māmiņai daiļas meitas,
Tai ik dienas tautas jāj.*
LD 14.309
- That apple-tree has white blossoms,
That [tree] has red apples;
That mother has beautiful daughters,
[To] that [mother] suitors arrive daily.
30. *Buciņš grauza ābelīti
Abām kājām atspēries;
Puisīts lūdza meitu māti,
Abas rokas bučodams.*
LD 14.873/6
- The billy-goat gnaws at the apple-tree
Having placed his both legs firmly on the ground;
The lad begged the daughter's mother
Kissing both [her] hands.

31. *Maza, maza ābelīte
Trejus ziedus birdināja;
Maģa, maģa mūs' māsiņa
Trejas tautas bildināja.*
LD 14.956
- The small, small apple-tree
Has blossomed three times;
Our small, small sister
Has been wooed by three suitors.
32. *Pūt, ziemeli, nelaid sala,
Laid ābeli noziedēt;
Precat, tautas, nevedati,
Lai māsiņa pušķojās.*
LD 14.987
- Blow, north wind, [but] do not bring cold,
Allow the apple-tree to bear its blossoms;
Come, suitors, [but] don't take away [the sister],
Allow the sister to adorn herself.
33. *Redz, kur nāk ziedēdama
Svešas zemes ābelīte.
Te ir tīri klaji lauki,
Te raženi noziedēs.*
LD 15.890
- Look, here comes blooming
An apple-tree of the alien land.
Here are plain, flat fields,
Here it sheds its blossoms.
34. *Balta zied ābelīte
Papuvītes maliņā;
Balti māsa apģērbās
Tautiņās aiziedama.*
LD 17.076
- The apple-tree is blooming in white
On the edge of the fallow;
The sister is dressed in white
[When] getting married.
35. *Ziedi balta ābelīte
Laba zeme kalniņā;
Dzīvo vēl man' māsiņa,
Laba dzīve bāliņos.*
LD 17.609
- Blossom, white apple-tree,
[Here] is good ground on the hilltop;
Stay [here] longer, my sister,
[Here] is easy life among [your] brothers.
36. *Sen slavēja tautiņās
Niknus suņus, bargus ļaudis;
Es izraku ābeltiņu
Pašā dārza vidūnā.*
LD 18.331
- Since long ago people said
[That here were] fierce dogs, angry folks;
I have dug out an apple-tree
From the middle of the garden.
37. *Tautas mani žēl darīja,
Es tautāmi vēl žēlāk;
Dzinu tautu kumeliņu
Caur ābeļu lūdumiņu.*
LD 18.427/3
- Suitors have harmed me,
I have harmed them more;
I drove their horse
Through the clearing of the apple-trees.
38. *Zied' ieviņa, zied' ābele
Jau es vairs neziedēju;
Jau es vairs neziedēju
Ir pārno vasariņu.*
LD 21.479
- Bird cherry blossoms, [and] apple-tree blossoms,
I did not blossom any more;
I did not blossom any more
Already the last summer.

39. *Redz, kur koši noziedēja
Vēja lauza ābelīte;
Redz, kur godu sagaidīja
Izvainota mātes meita.*
LD 22.027
- Look, how beautifully has blossomed
The apple-tree broken by the wind;
Look, what honor has come
To the slandered mother's daughter.
40. *Kur vēl tāda dzīvošana
Ka manos bāliņos!
Lejiņā upe tek,
Kalnā zied ābelīte.*
LD 23.973
- Where has one such a life
As at my brothers'!
The river is flowing in the valley,
The apple-tree is blossoming on the hill.
41. *Kas man kait nedzīvot,
Vainadziņu nevalkāt!
Dzīvoj zīles vieglumiņu,
Ābels ziedu baltumiņu.*
LD 24.237
- Why shouldn't I live
And wear a wreath!
My life is easy like a tit's
And white like blossoms of an apple-tree.
42. *Kādas vietas es gribēju
Tāda man gadījās:
Upe tek lejiņā,
Ābel' zied kalniņā;
Pie upītes mazgājos,
Pie ābeles pušķojos.*
LD 25.885
- What place I wanted
That I have got:
The river flows in the valley,
The apple-tree blossoms on the hill;
I wash myself in the river,
I adorn myself by the apple-tree.
43. *Vai zied ieva, vai ābele
Pie tautieša durvītiņām?
Nezied ieva, ne ābele,
Sēd māsiņa raudādama.*
LD 26.302
- Is it a bird cherry or an apple-tree blossoming
At the groom's door?
It is neither a bird cherry nor an apple-tree,
Sister is sitting and crying.
44. *No tālienes es pazīnu,
Kura bija brāļa sēta:
Visapkārt oši, kļavi,
Vidū balta ābelīte.*
LD 26.556
- I recognize from afar,
Which is [my] brother's farm:
The ash trees and maples grow all around
[And] a white apple-tree is in the middle.
45. *Atjāj brālis vakarā
Ābolainu kumeliņu:
Nelaid, māsa, pieguļā,
Laid ābeļu dārziņā.*
LD 26.679
- Brother came riding in the evening
On a dapple-grey horse:
Sister, do not lead [the horse] to pasture,
Lead [it] into the apple orchard.
46. *Pusziedējšai ābelei
Vējš nolauza galotnīti;
Pusmūžiņu sadzīvoju,
Man nomira līgaviņa.*
LD 27.878
- The wind broke the top
Of the half-blossomed apple-tree;
I lived half of the life,
[And] my bride died.

47. *Kalnā zied ābelīte
Ar sudraba ziediņiem;
Sudrabiņa ziedi būs,
Būs sarkani āboliņi.*
LD 30.625
- The apple-tree blossoms on the hill
In silver blossoms;
If there are silver blossoms,
[There] will be red apples.
48. *Iestādu ābeli
Tīruma vidū,
Kur burvyjiem, raganām
Slapstīties.*
LD 32.470/1
- I planted the apple-tree
In the middle of the field,
There wizards and witches*
Will [have a place to] hide.
49. *Gauži raud Saulīte
Ābeļu dārzā,
Ābelei nokrita
Zel' ābolītis.
Neraudi, Saulīte,
Dievs dara citu
No zelta, no vara,
No sudrabiņa.*
LD 33.781
- The Sun cries bitterly
In the apple orchard.
The apple-tree has lost
The golden apple.
Do not cry, Sun,
God makes another one
Of gold, of copper,
Of silver.
50. *Iebrauca Saulīte
Ābeļu dārzā
Deviņi ratiņi
Simts kumeliņu.
Neguli Saulīte,
Ābeļu dārzā,
Tur tevi ziediņi
Apbirdinās.*
LD 33.788
- The Sun arrived
Into the apple orchard
By nine carts,
One hundred horses.
Do not sleep, Sun,
In the apple orchard,
The [falling] blossoms
Will cover you there.
51. *Mēnestiņis gudris vīrs,
Tas nejāja piegulē,
Nosegloja kumeliņu,
Laiž ābeļu līdumē.*
LD 33.848
- The Moon is a wise man,
He did not ride to pasture,
He took the saddle off his horse
And led it into the clearing of apple-trees.
52. *Ganīdama es atradu
Pieci zelta āboliņus.
Divi devu bāliņam,
Trīs es pati paturēju.
Par to vienu zirgu pirku,
Par otru novadiņu,
Par to trešo es nopirku
Sev raženu arājiņu.*
LD 19.290/2
- While herding I found
Five golden apples.
I gave two to [my] brother,
I kept three to myself.
With one apple I purchased a horse,
With the second one I bought land,
With the third apple I acquired
A handsome ploughman for myself.

* Traditionally, old wrinkled woman living in the periphery.

53. *Dēlu māti suņi dzina
Par ābeļu līdumiņu;
Meitu māte pasmējās
Pa lodziņu lūkodama.*
LD 23619/7, 8

The sons' mother is baited by dogs
Through the clearing of the apple-trees;
The daughters' mother laughs
While looking out of the window.

54. *Tumsāi teku vakarāi
Caur ābeļu līdumiņu;
Lai nedzierd ļauni ļaudis,
Lai balsiņu nemaitātu.
Kad balsiņu vien maitātu,
Maitā daiļu augumiņu.*
LD 437

In darkness I am crossing
The clearing of the apple-trees;
Not to let the wicked people hear me,
Not to let them wreck my voice.
They wouldn't wreck only the voice,
They could wreck my lovely body, too.

OBELS SIMBOLIS LATVIŅŪ LIAUDIES DAINOSE: NUO FORMULĒS IKI ŽENKLO

LAILA VĀCERE

Santrauka

Pats gausiausias ir rīškiausias latviŅŪ folkloro Ņanas – tai keturiŅŪ eiluŅŪ posmai, vadinamieji klasikiniai ketureiliai. TradicinīŅŪ ketureilīŅŪ visuma sudaro atskirā kalbos sistemos porūšŅŪ. PavieniŅŪ ŅodŅŪiŅŪ reikšmēs Ņia išrīškēja daugiausia viso ketureilio semantikos kontekste, per tematiniŅŪ poŅŪiuriŅŪ susijusias dainas arba visuose panašias formules turinŅŪiuose tekstuose. Toks kupletas laikytinas pamatiniŅŪ latviŅŪ liaudies dainū tradicijos vienetu. Jis sudaro ir poetiniŅŪ paralelizmū pagrindā, o šios konstrukcijos vaidina labai svarbū vaidmeniŅŪ liaudies dainū poetikoje.

Mokslinē dainū tekstū analizē atliekama ne tiktai pasitelkiant formuliŅŪ teorijā, bet ir remiantis Ņenklo samprata bei atsiŅvelgiant į daugelī jos interpretacijū. Straipsnio autorē parodo, kaip semiologijā galima taikyti šifruojant folkloro tekstus ir kaip tokio pobūdžio tyrimuose praverŅia Ņenklo samprata.

Tyrimo objektu pasirinktas itin savitas latviŅŪ liaudies lyrikos Ņanas – vadinamosios dainos apie obelī. Tokī pasirinkimā lēmē keletas prieŅasŅŪ: pirma, šis medŅiagos klotas geriau nei kiti tradicinēs kūrybos Ņanrai, tikējimai ar papročiai išsaugojo savitā liaudiškā Ņobels sampratā, o antra, dainose obels vaizdinys yra itin sudētingas ir išplētotas.

Tyrimu siekiama pademonstruoti praktiniŅŪ semiologijos taikymā kultūros studijoms, šiuo atveju – liaudies dainū apie obelī analizei, bei įrodyti, jog pasirinktame liaudies dainū klode obelis funkciojuja kaip Ņenklas.

Kiekviename dainū pluošte galima aptikti asociatyviniŅŪ ryšīŅŪ (mentalinīŅŪ koncepcijū), kartais sukurianŅŪ tekste netgi priešinias konotacijas ir tokiu būdu įgyjanŅŪ Ņenklo poŅŪymiū. Remiantis semiologiniais principais, tokias priešinias implikacijas įmanoma sudēlioti į paradigmas.

Analizuojama medŅiaga nagrinēta atsiŅvelgiant į vaizdinius (Ņenklos) ir jų konotacijas (antrinē signifikacijā), apimanŅias visā tiriamū dainū visumą, vertinamā kaip „vientisas tekstas“. Visos dainos apie obelī laikytos rišliu pasakojimu apie obelī ir moterī. Obelis jose lyginama su moterimi, remiantis tam tikrais joms abiem – tiek medŅiui, tiek moteriai – būdingais bruoŅais.

PaŅymima, jog dėl dainose vartojamū formuliŅŪ bei formulinīŅŪ posakiŅŪ obelī galima interpretuoti kaip daugeliŅŪ sintagminiŅŪ ryšīŅŪ susijusį Ņenkla. Nėgana to, formulēs kuria ypatingā kultūrinī obels Ņenklo kontekstā, nuaustā iš kultūrinīŅŪ kodū bei konvencijū.

Gauta 2006-04-03