



6TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF YOUNG FOLKLORISTS

Us and Them: Exploring The Margins

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

VILNIUS 2016

Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore
Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu

6th International Conference of Young Folklorists

Us and Them: Exploring the Margins

June 1-3, 2016 Vilnius, Lithuania

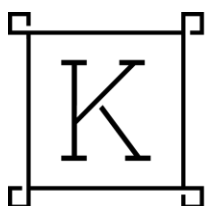
Conference Abstracts

Vilnius, 2016

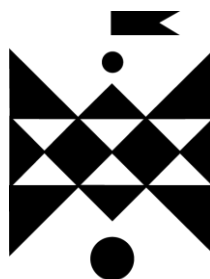
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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Wednesday, June 1

10.00–11.00 Registration + Coffee/tea

11.00–12.30 Opening of the Conference and 1st keynote lecture

Prof. Laura Stark – “Self, Reality, and the Supernatural: Reflections on Witchcraft and Magic in 19th-Century Rural Finland and a 21st-Century Tanzanian Slum”

12.30–14.00 Lunch (on your own)

14.00–15.30 Presentations (3+3, 2 paralel sessions)

Session 1 (Great Hall)	Session 2 (Conference Hall)
Margarita Moisejeva (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore) “Reflections on Regionality: Orthodox Church Chanting in Lithuania”	Julia Liakhova (Russian State University for the Humanities) “Constructing the Look of Genii Loci in the North of Mongolia”
Igor Mikeshin (University of Helsinki) “Aren't You My Brother Yet? What Makes a Brother in the Russian Baptism”	Yulia Naumova (Russian State University for the Humanities) “That's What My Grandma Did... How and Why Subjects Deny What They Know”
Daugailė Braziulytė-Glinskiene (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore) “Traditional Catholic Chanting in Funeral: Prayer and Performance”	Elvīra Žvarte (Latvian Academy of Culture) “The Retirement Home: Folklorist's Research Perspectives”

15.30–16.00 Coffee/tea

16.00–17.30 Presentations (3+3, 2 paralel sessions)

Session 1 (Great Hall)	Session 2 (Conference Hall)
Tetiana Volkovicher (The National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine) “A Fence, A Well, A Grave and A River as the Boundaries between ‘Ours’ and ‘Theirs’ on the Ukrainian Epigraphic Towels”	Ruxandra Ana (Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw) Heritage, Identity and Cultural Tourism: A Case Study of Cuban Rumba
Digne Ūdre	Rustam Fakhretdinov

(Latvian Academy of Culture) “Added value — Latvian ornament between tradition and marketing”	(European University at St. Petersburg) “Studying the Russian War Songs Inside and Outside”
Olga Vorobyeva (European university at St. Petersburg) “Live-Action Role-Playing Game as Constructing the Image of the ‘Other’”	Svetlana Tsonkova (Hungary) “Stories from the Vigil – The Use of Folklore Material by the Hungarian Metal Band <i>Virrasztók</i> ”

19.00–21.00 Reception at Lithuanian Folk Culture Centre, Great Hall (Barboros Radvilaitės st. 8)

Thursday, June 2

9.00–10.00 2nd keynote lecture

Prof. Sadhana Naithani “Moving the Margins”

10.00–10.30 Coffee/tea

10.30–12.00 Presentations (3+3, 2 paralel sessions)

Session 1 (Great Hall)	Session 2 (Conference Hall)
Tatiana Romashko (Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, St. Petersburg) “Discourses of Exclusion: ‘Otherness’ in Russian Cultural Policy”	Monika Bogdzevič (Vilnius University) “The Concept of Stupidity in Lithuanian and Polish Paroemiology”
Anna Krylova, Elena Yugai (Vologda State University, Russian State University for the Humanities) “The Portrait of a Regional Protest”	Anna Chiara Pagliaro (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II) “ <i>Lo sposo può baciare la sposa: The Expression of Kiss in Gestures And Language</i> ”
Natalia Petrova (Russian State University for the Humanities, The Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences) “ <i>Enemies of the People</i> in the Soviet Uncensored Folklore”	Anastasiya Fiadotava (Belarusian State University Lyceum) “We are from the Same Place but from Different Times: A Diachronic Analysis of Belarusian Family Humor”

12.00–13.30 Lunch (on your own)

13.30–15.00 Presentations (3+3, 2 paralel sessions)

Session 1 (Great Hall)	Session 2 (Conference Hall)

Roman Urbanowicz (European University at Saint-Petersburg) “Multifarious <i>Russians</i> in Belarusian Poles’ Narratives: On Epistemologies Being Breached”	Justīne Jaudzema (Latvian Academy of Culture) “Humans and Animals as a Building Sacrifice in Latvia: Folklore, Archeology and Written sources”
Rokas Sinkevičius (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore) “Ethnic Groups and Relations in Gulag Camps in the Memoirs of Lithuanian Political Prisoners”	Viktorija Varanauskaitė (Lithuanian Institute of History) “How to Find Other in Contemporary Society: Cases of Architecture”
Vita Džekčioriūtė-Medeišienė (Vilnius University) “The Process of ‘Them’ Becoming ‘Us’: Child Raising Practice of Scaring in the Traditional Lithuanian Culture”	Lina Leparskienė (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore) “The Outsiders vs. Locals Living in the Tower Blocks of Trakai”

15.00–15.30 Coffee/tea

15:30–17.00 Presentations (3)

Session 1 (Great Hall)
Rajat Nayyar (Tallin University) “Dying in Kashi – India’s Holiest City: Folklore of Dying and Death in the Bhojpun Region”
Šarūnė Valotkienė (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore) “Archaeological and Ethnological Approaches to Grave Goods: Is There Common Ground?”
Inga Butrimaitė (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore) “The Communication Between the Living and the Dead Trough the Dreams in Lithuanian Culture”

18.00–19.00 Musical lecture with Marija Krupovec at Tolerance Center (Naugarduko st.10/2)

19.30–23.00 Educational programme in Žuklijai village

Friday, June 3

9.00–10.30 Presentations (3)

Session 1 (Great Hall)
Reep Pandi Lepcha

(SYLFF Fellow, Jadavpur University) “Landscapes to Mindscapes: Engaging with the Personal and Impersonal in Lepcha Folk Beliefs”
Ikhlas Abdul Hadi (University of Leeds) “What We Talk About When We Talk About <i>The Swan Maiden</i> ”
Julia Amatuni (European University at St Petersburg) The Image of “Football Hooligan” In Academic Literature: Searching New Approach”

10.30–11.00 Coffee/tea

11.00–12.30 Presentations (3)

Session 1 (Great Hall)
Valentina Semenova (University of Tartu) “Reflection of Mari Concept of Eclipse of the Moon in Folk Games” (Video Presentation)
Asta Skujytė-Razmienė (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore) “Construction of Disease as ‘Other’ in Lithuanian Malaria Narratives”
Rūta Latinytė (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore) “Gift Giving and Transformation from Stranger to Acquaintance”

12.30 Closing of the Conference

KEY-NOTE LECTURES

Self, Reality, and the Supernatural: Reflections on Witchcraft and Magic in 19th-Century Rural Finland and a 21st-Century Tanzanian Slum

Prof. Laura Stark
(University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

In 2006, I wrote a book about magic and witchcraft in 19th- and early 20th century rural Finland. In 2010, when I started fieldwork in a slum in Tanzania, residents began to tell me, without my asking them, about their experiences of everyday magic and witchcraft. Their stories challenged what I thought I knew about supernatural beliefs, but more than this, they challenged my own understanding of reality. In this talk I explore why African accounts of magic and witchcraft were much more difficult for me to 'explain away' than archival accounts from premodern Finland, and what this suggests about the co-existence of multiple versions of reality in human experience.

Moving the Margins

Prof. Sadhana Naithani
(Jawaharlal Nehru University, India)

Where are the margins between 'us and them' in an increasingly globalized world order? Where are the margins between the folk and the elite in a world penetrated by satellite connections? Indeed, one may even wonder if there is folklore in a world dominated by popular culture. Are there really no margins then? What is the task of the folklorist in a world characterized by violence and migration?

The traditional boundaries between 'us and them' are faced with newer realities today. This paper takes a deeper look at reality to understand whether the traditional boundaries have become redundant and the margins have moved elsewhere, or, whether traditional boundaries have become shape-shifters and the folklorist needs to move the margins. Based on some concrete examples, this paper highlights some of the margins that need to be moved by the folklorist.

Image of the 'Football Hooligan' in Academic Literature: Searching for a New Approach

Julia Amatuni
(European University at St. Petersburg, Russia)

The still most commonly used term within academic literature to define forms of spectator violence is 'football hooliganism'. In tracing the development of this type of disorder it is obvious that this term does not belong to the academia; it is a media construction first occurring in England in the 1960s. Early researchers have continuously applied this label to a set of varied and dissimilar disorderly behavior without a proper attempt to examine what 'football hooliganism' actually is and who the participants are. Thus, the use of the subjective terminology framed the approach to the subject, limited its perception, and set a particular discourse for debating the problem from the outset.

The question of definition has acquired particular importance in the case of the post-Soviet football-related disorder in Russia. After the collapse of the USSR, young people adopted different Western subcultures. While Russian supporters started to call themselves 'hooligans' after the English supporters, Russian researchers started to consider 'football hooliganism' as a particular type of the subculture, thus excluding other scientific perspectives from their analyses. As a result, neither relevant definition nor understanding of the phenomenon in question has been provided in Russia.

The purpose of this paper is to trace the meanings and contexts for the use of the term 'football hooliganism' in academic literature and to discover how it has been framing an approach to the problem both in England and in Russia.

Concept of Stupidity in Lithuanian and Polish Paremiology

Monika Bogdzevič
(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

This paper attempts to reconstruct the concept of stupidity in Lithuanian and Polish paremiology. In order to present the most thorough understanding of stupidity, entrenched in language and culture, the linguistic-cultural images based on the cognitive definitions of stupidity, understood as concretizations of the concepts, are used. Linguistic-cultural images reveal the similarities and differences of stupidity and the cultural contexts of their occurrence.

The features of character, the portrayed behavior, the way of speaking, interpersonal relations and the way that others perceive someone as stupid are treated similarly in Lithuanian and Polish proverbs. Both Lithuanian and Polish proverbs present the understanding of stupidity as the inborn vice. Meanwhile, the causality of some actions carried out by the stupid differs. The Lithuanian proverbs emphasize the visible features (appearance, actions) as the ones determined by the stupidity, whereas the Polish proverbs stress the psychological aspects and importance of experience while talking about the behavior and concrete actions of the stupid. The Lithuanian proverbs compare the stupid with something / someone based on external similarities, while the Polish proverbs – on inward logical coherences and associations.

The cognitive pictures of the stupid enable perceiving the semantic and axiological substance of stupidity hidden in the consciousness of two different, yet geographically and culturally contiguous linguistic and cultural communities, namely, the Lithuanian and the Polish.

Communication between the Living and the Dead through Dreams in Lithuanian Culture

Inga Butrimaitė

(Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Lithuania)

A number of folklorists have investigated dream narratives, in which the dead play an important role. However, they mostly pay attention to the meaning and classification of the dreams and the social process of their interpretation. The aim of this paper is exploring the communicative aspects of the dreams by investigating the relationship between the living and the dead in Lithuanian culture. To achieve this, I follow the 'process school' of communication theory and use the H. Laswell's model. I propose distinguishing between the ways of these relations according to the effect that dreams may have, i.e. obliging, informing, transmitting the knowledge and certain capacities, and maintaining the community relations. The paper shows that the dead are perceived as actively seeking to find persons that would replace them in the world of the living.

The Process of *Them* Becoming *Us*: Child Raising Practice of Scaring in the Traditional Lithuanian Culture

Vita Džekčioriūtė-Medeišienė

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

In the traditional Lithuanian culture, children are perceived as strangers, representing 'another' and 'foreign' world; therefore, they are often associated with mythical creatures, mythological animals and such groups of people as beggars and foreigners. One could also say that newborn babies are not considered human: they only gradually become human through growing up, developing their physical and mental capacities and adopting the cultural constructs introduced to them by their immediate social environment.

This presentation briefly discusses manifestations of this 'non-human' nature of children in the traditional Lithuanian culture. It also introduces the means by which children 'become human' and their effect on the physical and mental development of the children. The presentation focuses on the child raising practice based on scaring, namely, the short daily warnings about danger, issued from the mythical worldview perspective, which is typical for the traditional Lithuanian culture. In the presented typology, such scaring practices are classified according to their presentation, subjects, the importance of surroundings, and the outcome. The effect of these scaring practices on the physical and mental development of children is analyzed, along with their significance and functions. Then, the ritual nature of such everyday child raising practices is discussed, establishing some links with initiation rituals.

Studying the Russian Military Songs from the Inside and the Outside

Rustam Fakhretdinov

(European University at St. Petersburg, Russia)

The researcher's cultural background has an effect on his / her description of the studied culture. It provokes one filling-up the lacunas in the picture of a studied culture by

transferring features of one's own modern culture, especially when considering both cultures to be similar or the same, e.g. when exploring the past of the native culture. The researcher may also miss out some well-known features, although these are not so well-known to the foreigners.

The situation of the folklorist sounds like an observer's paradox: the researcher simultaneously has to dive into the culture and to stay outside. Some marginal groups are already in this situation and their members become sort of the special witnesses. Many significant observations on the Russian military songs belong to the foreigners living in Russia, to the mobilized civilians like students or doctors, to the Jews whose rights in the Russian Empire were restricted, and to the war participants speaking the enemy's language.

Taking into consideration the evidence from these people, this work focuses on the transformation of the Russian military song tradition: from the Napoleonic time, when Russian officers and soldiers were singing different songs in different languages (French for the officers and Russian for the soldiers), until the 20th century, when Russian soldiers and officers were both singing in Russian, and mostly European-like songs. These traditions are compared to other military traditions of the same time.

We Are from the Same Place but from Different Times: Diachronic Analysis of the Belarusian Family Humor

Anastasiya Fiadotava
(Belarusian State University Lyceum, Belarus)

The concept of 'otherness' is among the basic aspects in the humor research. The dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' normally lies in juxtaposition of joke tellers and joke butts. This juxtaposition is usually synchronic as joke tellers and joke butts are deemed to live at the same time. However, it can also be diachronic if one's analysis focuses on jokes from different times.

In my research on the Belarusian family humor I used jokes belonging to three different epochs: 1) the 19th and the early 20th century, 2) the Soviet period (1917-1991) and 3) the contemporary jokes. The basic assumption of my research being that jokes reflect the changes in the family life taking place over the past two centuries, I focused on differences rather than on similarities between the folk joke corpora of different epochs.

The 19th and the early 20th century Belarusians were in this case regarded as the 'others', their jokes serving to instantiate the 'otherness'. The Soviet jokes reflected the transition from 'them' to 'us', combining the features of both ends of the dichotomy. Finally, the contemporary jokes represent 'us' as the norm. All the other jokes were compared to them and analyzed in terms of their deviations from this norm.

This example proves that the concept of 'otherness', while typically employed for synchronic analysis, can be extrapolated to a diachronic perspective. Moreover, it shows that focusing on changes requires a norm to be established and this norm inevitably leads to the emergence of the 'other'.

Traditional Catholic Chanting at the Funerals: Prayer and Performance

Daugailė Glinskienė
(Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, Lithuania)

The relation between praying and representation is very important and interesting in general when discussing chanting. In this presentation, I concentrate on the traditional vernacular catholic chanting during the funerals in Lithuania. The tradition of the long chanting, sometimes for a three days after a person dies is still alive in Lithuania, especially in the villages or in small towns. This presentation is based on the data collected during the field research of this tradition in a little town of Žiežmariai. Using qualitative research methods, several groups of chanters were interviewed and recorded for quite a long period. The main purpose was to find out how the chanters themselves understand the act of chanting. Different aspects of this question are discussed in the presentation: 1) the deep perception of the chanters that the main purpose of the chanting tradition is first of all helping the soul of the deceased; 2) the unique attitude of the chanters towards reimbursement for their chanting: i.e., if God gave you a good voice, you have to chant and there is no need for the payment; 3) the importance of performance as the main difference between traditional and modern attitudes towards chanting; 4) the changing repertoire and its influence on the local chanter's worldview and the manner of chanting.

What We Talk about when We Talk about 'The Swan Maiden'

Ikhlas Abdul Hadi
(University of Leeds, UK)

'The Swan Maiden' refers to a tale-type that involves a woman of supernatural origin, a mortal man, and some trickery. The skeleton of the story involves the woman being deceived by the man, marrying him, and then discovering the deceit. The tale has been told across many cultures all over the world, spanning geographically from England to China. It is strange, however, that the tale-type continues to be referred to as 'The Swan Maiden' when the woman in fact appears as many things: a swan, a bird, a goddess, a fairy, even a 'battle maiden'. The swan is only one of these several incarnations of the woman, and one that seems limited to the European tales.

Focusing on 'The Swan Maiden', I aim to explore how the act of naming a tale-type affects the ability to conduct research on the topic. I will argue that specifying the character of 'the swan' limits the discovery of similar tale-types across cultures that feature similar plotlines but different incarnations of the woman. I hope to question how we name a tale and how this act of naming can either limit or expand our understanding of folktales from different cultures. By employing an evolutionary perspective and examining the lesser known 'Swan Maiden' tales from Southeast Asia, I will conclude my paper with a proposal: a new, inclusive category for future research purposes. This category will allow easier detection of other possible tales, and will create more opportunities for future cross-cultural research in folklore.

Humans and Animals as Building Sacrifices in Latvia: Folklore, Archeology and Written Sources

Justīne Jaudzema
(Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)

There is an international folk legend motif about building a church or a castle, when something goes wrong in the process and the building is torn down by some magical power. The human or animal sacrifice is walled in this building's foundation or walls in order to prevent this from happening again. Such legends are rather popular in Latvian folklore. In the Archives of the Latvian Folklore there are over 500 variants of these types of legends. The presentation splits in two parts: first, I analyze differences between these legends, focusing on distinction between the legends about sacred buildings – churches, and legends about secular buildings - castles, manors; and second, I present some archeological findings and written sources showing that it might have been a tradition to sacrifice humans or animals when building something. I also discuss parallels between the archeological data, written sources and folklore. By putting these sources together one can find more about this tradition than by looking at them separately.

Portraying the Regional Protest

Anna Krylova, Elena Yugai
(Vologda State University, Russia
Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia)

The study of protest in terms of folklore is usually focused on actions taking place in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Studies of the regional campaigns only appear sporadically. Our purpose is analyzing the regional protest campaigns and revealing the similarities and differences between actions taking place in the capital and in the regions. One of the objectives is to describe the self-identity of the protesters. We concentrate on the most important actions held in Vologda (the administrative center of the Vologda region). Both the first social and political actions are analyzed. To show the dynamic processes of the regional protest we describe the recent even taking place in Vologda, i.e. the All-Russian campaign - the rally "Russia!!! We wait for change!" It was held in 20 cities of Russia on February 6, 2016. About 200–400 people participated in this action in Vologda. In fact, the meeting brought together representatives from different opposition movements. All participants noted that their union was temporary and directed against the common enemy. Preliminary analysis of the speeches and posters shows the changes in the public issues, the inner motivations of the protesters, the reasons and goals of their social and political actions. The authors of the article use different methods: the comparative analysis, the focus group research, and others.

Gift Giving and Transformation from Stranger to Acquaintance

Rūta Latinytė

(Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Lithuania)

The gift giving rituals between persons or communities (e.g. families) can be analyzed in terms of structure of the giving and the receiving subjects – who is giving what to whom and who is repaying. This track of the exchanged objects of value (gifts in various shapes) is related to the modal changes of the participating subjects. The social phenomenon of the gift can be observed when exchange of the gifts eventually transforms the relationship between two subjects and modifies their status.

The paper aims at revealing how society constructs and expresses itself via semiotic opposition of one's own vs. stranger and identifying the different types of gift giving, corresponding to four possibilities in the human relations: mutuality, reciprocity, rights and obligations.

The methodological background of the paper is the research for the notion of the gift, as defined in various discourses in the humanities during the 20th century, allowing understanding of the gift giving as a language and as an act of communication. Such theoretical basis is used to analyze the gift-giving phenomenon in Lithuanian culture and to define the meaning of the traditional Lithuanian holiday and family celebration gifts from early historical documents to the 19th century. The semiotic methodology developed by Algirdas Julius Greimas is used to reveal and analyze the structural functioning of the gift.

The Outsiders vs. Locals Living in the Tower Blocks of Trakai

Lina Leparskienė

(Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Lithuania)

A way of looking at the dynamic changes taking place in the course of the 20th century is via landscape. This paper presents the case of the small town in Lithuania named Trakai. In the second half of the 20th century, one part of this historically wooden settlement was drastically changed in order to build the new district of the block houses. The urbanistic headway of the last century changed the picture and the visual identity of many towns and villages. Block houses brought the new standards of daily living.

For the people who lived in the Soviet Union, getting a flat 'from the government' became the primary interest. From the cultural perspective, moving to the new apartments caused social reorganization of the communities, because people were to leave their private houses and native places to settle in the neighborhoods and localities where they did not belong. Trakai is a historically multicultural town; therefore the local community is used to living side by side with people from different ethnic backgrounds or religions. However, adaptation to the new urban landscape with the block houses is still under way. The local narratives show that the visual effects are less problematic in comparison to the challenges based on the ethno-social matters. Those block houses raise permanent questions concerning the identity of the people living there and their relationship to the genuine Trakai inhabitants, and discussions of who had more rights to be settled there during the Soviet period. The negative implications of the locals vs. strangers and the Poles vs. Lithuanians are continuously in the focus of discussion. Still, the dwellers of the block houses do not consider themselves different from the other locals.

Landscapes to Mindscapes: Engaging with the Personal and Impersonal in Lepcha Folk Beliefs

Reep Pandi Lepcha
(SYLFF Fellow, Jadavpur University, India)

Folklore scholars have charted numerous trajectories but often the inherently frequented course goes unexamined. The idea of ‘us’ exploring ‘them’ time and again finds itself within the folds of ‘objectivity versus subjectivity’ debate. This predicament is not just confined to fieldwork, but also weaves its way into the narratives and folklores of the people. It informs the identity choices and various approaches to the discipline of folklore thenceforth.

As soon as one takes on folklore research of one’s community, the dynamics of perception become multilayered and complex. The examination of the indigenous philosophies and the rooted introspection of the scholar get tested in this duration. The first half of the paper briefly focuses on mapping the dappled engagement with the existing theories and methodologies drawing from my own experiences from an ongoing fieldwork in Sikkim.

Then, I move on to engage directly with a few oral narratives and folklores of the indigenous Lepchas. The selected folklores delve on the theme of the conference and while examining them I concentrate on spatial and ideological contexts, which have shaped the history of the region and the process of ‘othering’. I am particularly interested in exploring the narratives, which harbor the idea of ‘hidden-land’ and Nye Mayel Lyang within a comparative framework. These tales are etched into the lives of the people thus influencing the socio-cultural and political milieu of the region.

Constructing the Look of *genii loci* in the North of Mongolia

Julia Liakhova
(Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia)

There is a group of texts in Mongolian folklore that describe the hunter meeting the spirit of the forest (*lusyn ezen*). When telling these stories, all the narrators mention special signs, which distinguish the forest spirits from the real animals: mostly an unusual color of the animal or one horn instead of the normal two.

Notably, such physical defect (one of the paired body parts, e.g. one horn instead of the two etc.) can be considered as a distinguishing feature of a mythical being. This pattern is used to create the image of mythical and demonic characters in different cultures. Here, I show that in the Northern Mongolia this pattern is still productive: the idea of the one-horned forest spirit influences the current mythology in the region, and is used to create new mythical beliefs. Therefore, other mythical beings are also represented in the narratives as creatures having only one of the paired parts of the body. In the course of fieldwork in the region of the recorded beliefs about one-horned animals, we also registered:

1. A story about a fisher who met a lake spirit that looked like a one-eyed fish. I consider that an innovation because fishing never was traditional in Mongolia; it appeared only in the late 20th century.
2. Narratives about one-horned bull that lived in the same lake. Inhabitants of this region believe that if one meets the bull walking out of the lake one is to become rich. Sometimes

they consider this bull to be the master of the lake. These beliefs are widespread; they exist in the folklore of Mongolian, Turkic, Baltic, and some Slavic ethnic groups. But the idea that this water bull is one-horned is found only in the north of Mongolia, so it must be influenced by the image of the forest spirit known in the same region.

Thus on the one hand, the widely distributed idea influences transformation of the older beliefs (the case of the bull), and induces new beliefs (in case of the one-eyed fish) on the other.

Aren't You My Brother Yet? What Makes a Brother in the Russian Baptism

Igor Mikeshin
(University of Helsinki, Finland)

I study a Russian Baptist rehabilitation ministry for the addicted people. One of the most remarkable examples of the Russian Baptist conversion as a radical moral and bodily transformation, the ministry emphasizes the concept of Christian community as the proper way of Christian living. This concept is enforced with distinction between born-again 'brothers [and sisters] in Christ' and outsiders.

The symbolic separation of brothers / sisters and friends comes from the Evangelical ecclesiology, proclaiming 'the assembly of the faithful' (Ps 149:1) - a community of fellow believers as a form allowing to grow in faith and receive the Holy Spirit. Even when spending a lot of time with unbelievers in a workplace, family, and company of friends, Russian Baptists give special value to the community of brothers and sisters in Christ.

This ecclesiastic separation is rooted in a Christian moral principle - a separation between 'this [sinful] world' and heavenly kingdom. This dichotomy addresses two possible ways to construct a life-purpose. According to the Russian Baptists, every human being aims his or her life towards one of these principles, without any third option possible.

In my presentation, I further elaborate on inclusion and exclusion in the Russian Baptist brotherhood using particular examples from my fieldwork, and address the methodological peculiarities of such dichotomy versus classical insider-outsider opposition in anthropology.

Reflections on Regionalism: Orthodox Church Chanting in Lithuania

Margarita Moisejeva
(Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, Lithuania)

The dichotomy of 'us' and 'them' is significant in regards to the Lithuanian Orthodox chanting. Each Christian Orthodox culture is based on musical regionalism - the traditional music features typical to the particular country. Ethnic differentiation separating 'us' and 'them' occurs within one religion. I study the Orthodox religion and chanting in Lithuania in the framework of the Russian ethnic minority. On the national level, Russians are a minority and Lithuanians are the majority in Lithuania. However, from the perspective of the Orthodox religion the situation is opposite: Russians are the majority and Lithuanians are a minority. So, the matter of majority and minority in this phenomenon is twofold. Yet the result in both cases is the same – there is no separate Lithuanian orthodox chanting tradition

as such. Even though it is difficult to define the local Orthodox chanting tradition in Lithuania, there are certain noticeable manifestations of 'Lithuanian-ness' in the Orthodox chanting, apparent from the historical and contemporary perspective.

Dying in Kashi – India's Holiest City: Folklore on Dying and Death in the Bhojpuri Region

Rajat Nayyar
(Tallinn University, Estonia)

"No other city on earth is as famous for death as is Varanasi [=Kashi]. More than for her temples and magnificent Ghats, more than for her silks and brocades, Banaras, The Great Cremation Ground, is known for death. At the center of the city along the riverfront is Manikarnika, the sanctuary of death, with its ceaselessly smoking cremation pyres." (Diana L. Eck)

From childhood the pilgrims coming to Kashi know about it through a type of traditional literature. These literatures describe Kashi as being the whole world but outside the world, as embodying all time, but being timeless. It is the home of Shiva and the City of Light, where reality and truth are illuminated. And it is the final pilgrimage stop on a long journey through a series of lives, for in Kashi death means Moksha: Liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

The audio-visual ethnographic research at the hospice in Kashi involved building a relationship with one of the priests responsible for daily readings of holy texts for each dying pilgrim and evening devotional singing ceremony broadcasted to each room. The dynamics between the priest and the family members of the dying pilgrim is also studied. The video naturally shows it or perhaps the camera exaggerates it with its presence. I use some of these a/v excerpts in my presentation.

Before or after death in Kashi, the families must make sure that the ritual for cow donation is performed in their own village. The cow is donated to the local priest of the village. They believe this to help in crossing the mythical river Vaitarni after (during) death. Holding the tail of the cow for the whole village community emphasizes the need to die in Kashi. In the presentation, I screen videos of one such ritual. Occasionally during or after this ritual, some members sing Nirguna folk songs, a tradition allegedly initiated by mystic poet, Saint Kabir. In the Bhojpuri region, it is common to find female groups and male groups, collectively singing these songs, which reminds of the temporary nature of the body and the need to become one with the universal spirit. The songs sometimes refer to the soul of the dead as a boat and its desire to reach the river bank, the abode of god. Similarly, crossing the Vaitarni (mythical) river is the test for anyone who dies. People who made donations in their lives, especially donated a cow, can cross it easily, holding the tail of the cow. Similarly to the Greek myth of the Styx River, the songs refer to these events. A few songs refer to the dead as a step-wife and express grief over the fact that it is meeting the Param Atman (Universal Spirit) before the ones who are still alive. We all share the same lover, for this reason sometimes the song playfully refers to this meeting with envy.

An excerpt of the visual research at Kashi Labh Mukti Bhawan (hospice) can be found here:
<https://vimeo.com/127392300>

Nirgun folk song sung by women from Naad village in Bihar (video):
<https://vimeo.com/142823438>

That's What My Grandma Did... How and Why Subjects Deny What They Know

Yulia Naumova

(Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia)

When transcribing many hours of interviews recorded during folklore-ethnographic fieldwork in Kazakhstan (between 2009 and 2013) I noticed one particularly interesting feature in the communication of my subjects - they answered questions with standard phrases that boiled down to negative answers: 'I don't know,' 'I haven't heard,' 'that doesn't happen round here,' 'I have seen others doing that but I don't do it myself,' etc.

In some cases we moved on in the interviews, putting the answers to our questions under the rubric 'I don't know', but sometimes we tried to re-phrase the question and clarify the context. The second approach gave some interesting results and enabled us to understand that behind every 'negative' answer hides a whole deliberately chosen communication strategy.

Tentatively, we identified the following communication strategies:

- 1) denial of one's own knowledge with reference to a more authoritative source ('I don't know why, but that's what my grandma did so that's what I do');
- 2) denial as a way of protecting oneself and one's knowledge (e.g., such strategy is often used by specialists in magic afraid of harming their kin, or of losing their powers if they talk about topics forbidden to them);
- 3) denial of the assumptions behind the question by referencing to other folkloric-mythological traditions ('We don't see that demon, but the Uzbeks have him').

Having collected field material within the framework of my dissertation on Kazakh demonology and understanding the specifics of the topic, I tried to distinguish and analyze these strategies, which helps opening up new ways of understanding demonological systems and representations of 'other' within research on Kazakh demonology. The results of my research are explored in the presentation.

Lo sposo può baciare la sposa: Expression of Kiss in Gestures and Language

Dr. Anna Chiara Pagliaro

(Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, Italy)

The expression of kiss means acknowledging and setting off the 'other' like potential agent and interlocutor because the presence of the word 'kiss' intensifies the illocutionary force of the idiomatic expressions and is a strong symbolic gesture. The gesture of kiss comes from our prehistoric past. At that time mothers chewed food and passed it to their babies by mouth. Probably, the passion kiss of lovers comes from this form of weaning. This paper aims at considering the kiss as touch and connection between 'us' and 'them', both as a gesture and as a part of politeness and ritual forms in the language.

It is, in fact, the most intense expression of greeting gesture. In Europe and in Latin America the kiss on the cheek is very common: one (more informal and daily form) or two in France and in Italy, three in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Switzerland. Particularly, in the South of Italy, the region that this paper deals with, the kiss on the cheek is very common between friends. However, the handshake is the most common form of greeting between men, and the man's kissing the hand of a woman still survives.

Moreover, the Italian language has a lot of polite and ritual forms that include the word 'kiss' or the verb 'to kiss'. For example, greeting forms such as *ti bacio* or *baci e abbracci* are very

frequent both in the spoken and, particularly, in the written and digital communication. We can also talk about the common idioms such as *bacio della buona notte*, *bacio d'addio*, *bacio di Giuda* and, at the end of the wedding ritual, the officiant always says: 'lo sposo può baciare la sposa'.

Enemies of the People in the Soviet Uncensored Folklore

Natalia Petrova

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Soviet folklorists have been particularly active in collecting and studying the 'ideologically correct' and censored folklore, but vernacular texts and practices mostly went ignored. Now it is clear that the difference between the Soviet vernacular mass culture and folklore and the so called 'high folklore' is very important for the social history studies. As Carlo Ginzburg has pointed out, we should distinguish between 'the culture created by people' and 'the culture imposed on the people', and this demarcation line (in my case, between the vernacular 'uncensored' and official) has the utmost importance to the researchers. Apparently, the uncensored folklore tradition cannot be considered a system, isolated from the official Soviet mythology widespread through the media and propaganda.

My presentation is an attempt to investigate this problem on the basis of different sources. Personal memories and letters to the authorities (applications, complaints, petitions, and denunciations) along with the VChK-OGPU-NKVD's communiques and reports on public sentiments contain rumors from 1920-1940. In these sources, we can see remarkable social reflection of the term 'enemy of the Soviet state' created by the official propaganda: such as religious and monarchical impostors, wreckers (from Russian *vreditel'stvo* 'inflicting damage, harming') and doctors-killers or engineers-saboteurs. Well-known from the Soviet press and political posters, these characters became part of folklore, distinguished by prominent motifs (like 'the king in the mountain' and 'blood libel').

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Discourses of Exclusion: *Otherness* in Russian Cultural Policy

Tatiana Romashko

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Recently the cultural policy of the Russian State has turned out to be an effective tool of marginalization and sociocultural separation. Establishing cultural borders between Russia and the EU countries, on the one hand, and suturing Russian society around a single national identity, on the other, may be considered as result of the state policy. First, since 2013 almost all the large Western and EU projects in sociocultural and educational sphere were closed on the Russian territory. Second, numerous institutional regulations of national security were legally enacted (in culture, information policy and foreign issues). Third, the state reinforced its support to the production and circulation of high cultural and patriotic symbolical

manifestations. Hence such concepts as the single national identity, sovereign state and non-Western culture, and the distinct path of development became basic in this legislation and populism.

Recently, relational identity of 'other' or 'otherness' has acquired a character of fixation and stigmatization in academic practice of articulation. My hypothesis is that contemporary hegemonic discourse of exclusion creates a social basis for consent in resistance to the clearly defined 'other' – the dissolute Europe. Thus the 'West' as a floating signifier becomes equivalent to the otherness and loses its ambiguity in relations of academic subordination and lack of autonomy. The paper addresses the main features of the otherness in cultural policy discourses during 2013-2016. The analysis demonstrates evidence from the contemporary academic texts (official documents, programs of cultural development, expert advices, academic papers and textbooks, quotations and interviews).

Heritage, Identity and Cultural Tourism: A Case Study of Cuban Rumba

Ruxandra Ana

(Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw, Poland)

The paper discusses the contemporary contexts of Cuban rumba, a dance and music complex characterized by ambivalence and a multiplicity of divergent narratives that co-exist around it. The rumba was declared in 2012 Cultural Heritage of the Cuban Nation, which marked an important step towards having the genre included in the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, thus becoming part of the official strategy for promotion and conservation of heritage and at the same time continuing to develop and change in contemporary circumstances. With racial prejudice still widespread on the island, many of the performers and participants in rumba events admit to the importance of the genre in the construction of the idea of Cubanidad (Cubanness), while making it distinctly clear that the discursive valorization of the rumba as a national symbol is not always supported in practice. Through the analysis of performance space, contexts and local identities, the paper looks at the racialization of the rumba in relation to both the national discourse around race and the touristic modes of visualization and representations. Based on fieldwork conducted in Cuba for several months from 2011 to 2015, the paper addresses the polarities that define the rumba in relation to other genres of Cuban dance and to the official strategies for promotion and safeguarding of cultural heritage, in the broader context of the global tourist industry, perpetually in search of the 'authentic' and the 'exotic'.

Looking up at *Them*: Perception of Jews in Belarusian Childhood Narratives

Natalia Savina

(European University at St. Petersburg, Russia)

Studies on the Jews' perception in the Slavic culture enumerate folk stereotypes about neighbors, who always lived close, but at the same time differed in their way of living (e.g., disgusting scent, peculiar feeding habits, preferences in professions, blood libel etc.) It is interesting to trace how beliefs about Jews were transmitted from adults to children and which of them became the most widespread among children.

My research is based on the materials collected during the field Judaica school-expedition held by the Sefer Center in Hlybokaje (Viciebsk Region, Belarus) in the summer of 2015. During its long history, Hlybokaje has always been a place where Jews, Poles, and Belarusians lived adjacently. However, during the last twenty years Jews left Hlybokaje, and nowadays it is inhabited predominantly by Belarusians. The goal of the expedition was to reconstruct the life of Belarusian Jewish town on the basis of oral evidence. When talking with the locals about the Jews, we noticed that many of them began their stories trying to revive their memories about childhood and school years. Communication between Jews and Belarusians was presented as having no emphasis on the cultural differences (we all were friends; we all studied together), but at the same time there was a number of stories that employed folk stereotypes about the Jews (like boys throwing pieces of lard into the wells, so that the Jews could not take water from them because of prohibition of the pork).

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Reflection of the Mari Concept of Eclipse of the Moon in Folk Games

Valentina Semenova
(University of Tartu, Estonia)

Currently we have a great deal of knowledge about the Universe, stars, planets and some astral phenomena. One can find the necessary information in astronomy books, on microsites, forums etc. Modern devices and computer technologies assist us in the practical studying of the dark sky. However, the situation was quite different in the past. So, what kind of explanations did people find before for such astral phenomena like the eclipse of the Moon? Here I attempt revealing some astral knowledge of the Mari people about eclipses of the Moon exemplified in the folk game *Vuver patyr den Tylze patyr* ('Epic heroes Vuver and the Moon'). It is a popular folk game among Mari.

The main characters of the game are the Moon and Vuver. In the past, people used to wear corresponding masks. As a rule, a girl played the Moon, and a boy played Vuver. Other players made a circle by holding hands. The girl Moon stayed inside of the circle while the boy Vuver was outside. In the very beginning of the game the girl within the circle symbolized the young moon. Vuver's task was finding and 'eating' the Moon. Vuver's character is interpreted in different ways in the Mari folklore and represented in various images (sometimes quite dissimilar ones). This particular game also supplies some names for the phases of the Moon. So, the growth of the Moon is compared to various things like *sorla* (sickle), *sava* (scythe), *salma* (pan). After the girl Moon grows large as a pan, Vuver tries to draw the Moon out of the circle by disconnecting the hands of the participants. The game lasts until Vuver 'steals' the Moon.

The game in question reveals the idea of the Mari people regarding the Moon and eclipse. Here one can also find the terminology for the phases of the Moon. According to representation of the Mari, the Moon is a female character, which is stolen and eaten by Vuver, when she gets fuller as a pan.

Ethnic Groups and Relations in Gulag Camps in the Memoirs of Lithuanian Political Prisoners

Rokas Sinkevičius
(Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Lithuania)

Up until the World War II, Gulag camps had a fairly homogenous Russian-speaking community. However, after 1939, hard labor camps saw an increase in the number of prisoners from Western territories occupied by the Soviets. These prisoners had a strong national consciousness, which resulted in increased ethnic divisions and the rising influence of certain ethnic groups.

The subject of this paper is the relations between different ethnic groups in the Soviet hard labor camps in the 1940s and the 1950s. The main focus group is Lithuanians, and thus the topic is approached from the perspective of their relations to other groups.

The aim of the research was assessing the impact of the ethnic self-expression of the separate groups and the interethnic relations on prisoner communities. The objectives of the research include the following: 1) exploring the divisions among prisoners according to the ethnic and religious attributes and analyzing the relations among various groups; 2) indicating the grounds that determined the durability and importance of the ethnic relations in the labor camps, and also served as means of maintaining and strengthening the ethnic identity.

The methods of research include historical comparison and interpretation. The views of the authors of the memoirs and the interviewees are explored from the emic perspective. In their stories, one may find subjective and ethnocentric attitudes towards people of other ethnicities, and these attitudes are employed to illustrate the points made in the work.

Construction of Disease as *the Other* in Lithuanian Malaria Narratives

Asta Skujytė-Razmienė
(Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Lithuania)

In the Lithuanian folk medicine, malaria (in Lithuanian *drugys*, *drugio liga*) is seen as one of the most tedious diseases. There were many ways in trying to cure this illness: from the use of herbs and various animal parts, to performing rituals of different complexity. Since various folklore texts describe malaria as something else, as the 'other', these rituals may be considered as an attempt to get rid of the unwanted 'companion'.

The aim of this paper is taking a closer look at the folk narratives, beliefs and folk medicine texts in order to reconstruct the portrait (or portraits) of malaria. By comparing this disease to others, I attempt to clarify the meaning of the appearances ascribed to malaria.

Stories from the Vigil – The Use of Folklore Material by the Hungarian Metal Band Virrasztók

Dr. Svetlana Tsonkova
(Hungary)

This paper will present the Hungarian metal band *Virrasztók*, whose music, lyrics and aesthetics are peculiar and original. The band's artistic concept is based on the traditional Hungarian folk custom of vigil for the dead. Rooted in this archaic cultural practice, the

band's songs combine ancient folk lyrics, melodies and rituals, and historical legends with authorship texts and modern metal music. *Virrasztók*'s stage performances represent and re-enact the ritual of the vigil and create a special type of contact and interaction with the audience. Focused on the lyrical aspect, this paper will discuss how the band re-interprets eternal human topics and sentiments through the re-interpretation of folklore. The paper will also analyze how the band's art uses the traditional folklore and beliefs to re-employ and re-charge with new meaning the themes, which have been over-used in the field of the heavy metal music. The paper is based on recent pilot study on *Virrasztók*, conducted through the methods of primary content analysis and fieldwork.

Multifarious *Russians* in Belarusian Poles' Narratives: On Epistemologies Being Breached

Roman Urbanowicz
(European University at St. Petersburg, Russia)

The presentation addresses some specific constellation of narratives, which the author ran into while conducting fieldwork research amongst local Polish population in Sopoćkinie region (North-Western part of Hrodna district, Belarus) in 2013-2015. Those narratives were about 'Russians'; in this case, it might mean not only Russians themselves, but occasionally some other Soviet-time newcomers of Slavic origins. Apparently, one can quite easily combine using the narratives that are as confusingly contradictive by origins, as by meaning. As an example, the following case can be suggested: the same person shared narratives about the despised, poor, ignorant, and merciless Bolshevik occupants (described mostly as 'Russians'), and narratives admiring the 'Russian man's generosity' and cordiality, on the other hand. The source of the first type of narratives is the family's memory, while the second type seems to be taken from the Soviet propaganda, implemented through films, literature etc. As a possible explanation I would like to draw on the ideas referring to the so-called 'cognitive turn' in the studies of ethnicity. Particularly, emergence of such constellation of narratives might be explained by certain corrosion of the once existing cognitive schemas, which used to provide relevant epistemology. Such epistemology is serving as a 'proper' filter on the information received. I use the word 'epistemology' here on purpose - to describe a system of ways and modes of seeing and understanding the world, which involves certain criteria for evaluation of statements and opinions: what rules and whose words are to be trusted, and what and whose are not. Existence of such a system should be explained through understanding of ethnicity as a certain perspective on the world with its set of classifications and categorizations.

Added Value: Latvian Ornament between the Tradition and Marketing

Digne Ūdre
(Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)

Archaeological and ethnographical material or its replicas can be considered as the original context of the Latvian ornament. Nowadays in Latvia, especially, during the last years, a specific tradition of using the Latvian ornament outside the traditional context appeared. The

Latvian ornament is widely used in commerce, environmental design, culture and even in untraditional medicine.

The wide usage of ornament is supplemented by a modern layer of beliefs related to the magical features of certain ornamental symbols. It is believed that Latvian ornaments can protect against different harmful influences, as well as attracting favorable forces to their users. The users (both producers and consumers) justify the special status of the ornament by its being very old, having been used for centuries and encoding the knowledge of the ancestors.

Historically registered names and traditions of using the ornament differ from the modern view about it; nevertheless, the aim of the present research is not to evaluate the authenticity of the tradition, but to review the tradition as a dynamic process. It is especially important because there is no borderline in the minds of the users of the tradition; rather the opposite – they keep emphasizing its ancient origins and connections to their forefathers.

The local producers offer a wide range of goods with what they call ‘an added value’ of the Latvian ornament. The concept of folklorism that is used in folklore studies has been chosen to analyze the modern use of the Latvian ornament.

Archaeological and Ethnological Approaches to the Grave Goods: Is There a Common Ground?

Šarūnė Valotkienė

(Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Lithuania)

Archaeology regards the grave goods as artifacts, buried with the deceased, which are or would be required in the afterlife. Meanwhile, in ethnology it is the deceased person’s clothing and accessories that come first, then any other items that mourners put into the coffin to facilitate the difficult journey to the afterlife. These definitions, while seemingly similar, reveal the main differences between archaeology and ethnology as methods of investigation. Archaeologists are faced with the remains of the funeral practices. They must use only part of the grave goods, since other parts have decomposed over time. In addition, their findings lack explanation as to their particular meaning and reasons for putting them into the grave. Despite all this, the grave goods are among the main sources for researching interment and funeral practices. Ethnologists, on the other hand, analyze ethnographic records along with grave goods like cerement, focusing on garments and then other items that mourners put into the coffin, especially things favored by the deceased. In this case, the grave goods are analyzed in the context of funeral practices, as part of decedent’s dressing and preparation for the burial. The main aim of this paper, then, is examining these different approaches to the grave goods and attempting to find one common ground for both of them.

Finding *the Other* in the Contemporary Society: Cases of Architecture

Viktorija Varanauskaitė

(The Lithuanian Institute of History, Lithuania)

As a human-constructed environment, architecture bears cultural meanings. Human-designed intentions often achieve tangible shape and signal about ethnicity of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. According to Anthony Cohen, signs in architecture help distinguishing between individual communities - an example here is the heterogeneous architecture of the ethnographic regions

of Lithuania. Distinctions between the 'self' and the 'other' are not only inherent in different areas and ethnic groups: architecture of the ethnic minorities in Lithuania is also significant by its certain exclusiveness that helps identifying the residents of the buildings as belonging to one or another ethnic group.

One of the major turns in the rural architecture was effected by industrialism, which led to alienation between people and their ethnic culture, traditions. Architecture gradually became pluralistic in terms of processes of globalization, such as increased mobility of individuals and, therefore, the local culture. Seeking for exclusiveness may be considered an attribute of the modern person, including rejection of authority and broad cultural orientation.

The main purpose of this paper is answering the question: is it possible to find the 'other' in the contemporary architecture when meanings of signs are changing and forms and technologies of architecture varying within the communities? To answer this question we are going to review historiography of the 'self' and the 'other' in the discourse of architecture, to discuss methodological issues of finding the 'other' and to represent the empirical data from ethnographic research on this issue.

Fence, Well, Grave and River as Boundaries between *Ours* and *Theirs* on the Ukrainian Epigraphic Towels

Tetiana Volkovicher
(National Academy of Science of Ukraine)

This paper investigates the dichotomy of 'ours' and 'theirs' as reflected on the Ukrainian epigraphic towels from the beginning and the middle of the 20th century. These towels were not genuinely of folk origin, as patterns for them used to be borrowed from different cross-stitch magazines, brochures, papers, etc. However, the embroidered inscriptions demonstrate that these pictures were not simply copied, but their meanings were transformed according to the folk view.

I explore the Ukrainian epigraphic towels depicting such objects as fence, well, grave, and river, which are perceived as boundaries between 'ours' and 'theirs' in the traditional folklore. My conclusion is that verbal texts and the scenes depicted on the Ukrainian epigraphic towels also contain the folk dichotomy of 'ours' and 'theirs'. Thus, a product of popular culture (which is a cross-stitch paper) was modified into a product of folk culture (which is an embroidered towel).

Live-Action Role-Playing Game as Constructing the Image of *the Other*

Olga Vorobyeva
(European University at St. Petersburg, Russia)

Live-action role-playing game (*larp*) is an adult leisure activity that consists of improvisational interactive performances, in which participants portray fictional characters in a fictional game world. Such activity allows participants to construct and experience 'otherness' in two different ways simultaneously: on the group and on the individual level.

Game worlds in Russian *larp* tradition are usually based on historical periods in different countries, fantasy or science fiction books. Putting contemporary world with familiar up-to-date personas into the game frame is extremely rare - unlike, e.g., the Nordic *larp* tradition. Thus, a character in Russian *larp* is always socially distanced from the player, and *larp*

preparation requires constructing an image of a certain in-game folk, nation (in case of historical *larp*) or even a non-human species (in case of fantasy). Such representations are always a kind of stereotype, even if more detailed information about the group in question is available, as the social system within the game world is always shifted and reduced in relation to the real (or prototypical, in case of fiction-based *larps*) situation.

At the same time, a *larp* gives to its participants an opportunity to experience the ‘otherness’ at the individual level: a player can portray a character of other race, religion, age, gender etc. The grade of ‘otherness’ can be different, from a character similar to the player (so-called ‘playing close to home’) to constructing a totally separate persona. Individual experience of ‘otherness’ seems to be a common feature of different *larp* traditions.

Retirement Home: Folklorist’s Research Perspectives

Elvīra Žvarte

(Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)

Since the second half of the 20th century folkloristics was extensively expanding its borders and fields of interests. Nowadays folklore can be found in any social group. Even more – it can be seen as manifestation of the social group’s shared identity, and folklorist in this case is seeking to identify folklore and traditions inside the social group.

A retirement home, old people’s home or nursing home is a place, where many people of certain age have come together. They are from different places with different experiences. Social environment with its new and specific conditions provokes emergence of an interesting research field: the retirement home becomes a place where previous experience meets the new one.

The particular research is based on the folklore fieldwork materials (1947–1986) from the Archives of Latvian Folklore. Among other information, these include descriptions of folklorists’ experiences at the retirement homes. Parallel to the source research, interviews with retirement home residents were organized. Fieldwork was conducted at one particular retirement home in Latvia, Cēsis. Interviews and fieldwork materials reveal several research fields, which can all define residents of the retirement home as a micro model of society: retirement home is a place, where folklore exists and arises, where people define themselves again, and where one can see various relationship patterns.