

FUNCTIONS OF METAPHOR IN LITHUANIAN INCANTATIONS

DALIA ČERNIAUSKAITĖ

Summary

In terms of form, metaphors used in incantations and in other genres of folklore are not essentially different. The main distinctive feature of metaphors used in incantations is their function. Metaphors of snakes are used in incantations in considerations of taboo; also, as attempts to ingratiate with this reptilian, to win its favor and thus make its venom harmless. Incantations used to heal erysipelas acquire metaphoric character thanks to the polysemy of the word *rožė* in Lithuanian: it can denote 'rose' and 'erysipelas', i.e. both flower and disease. The disease is ascribed characteristics of the flower, thus expecting to facilitate healing. All poetical means used in incantations, including metaphors, are subordinated to achieve the pragmatic goals of incantation: curing of disease, protecting from evil eye, etc. Therefore function of metaphor is determined by the genre of the text it's used in. Unlike other kinds of folklore, metaphor in incantations is anything but a mere textual ornament or refined expression of emotions; instead, the metaphoric principle is used here in pragmatic considerations, i.e. in order to overcome the object of incantation.