

# Folklore Fellows' NETWORK



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Internet Memes  
as Statements  
and Entertainment

Futuristic  
Paremiography  
and Paremiology

Julius and Kaarle Krohn  
Anniversary Symposium

Folklore Studies  
at the Chinese Academy  
of Social Sciences

Doing Folkloristics  
in the Digital Age

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The Archipelago Research Institute (University of Turku) on the island of Seili will host the Folklore Fellows' Summer School 2015. Photo by Hanna Oksanen.



# Let's get Digital

## The Folklore Fellows' Summer School 2015

A typical piece of folklore, a narrative, a song, a proverb or a picture, cartoon or combination of them can be defined as a diversion, which is considered in some way so significant that people wish to foster it. These days, information networks provide an excellent and all the more supported means to this end. For example, Facebook, YouTube and various discussion forums provide every user with the chance to take part in discussion and get his or her message out there. Keeping in touch has through peer networks become two- or many-sided, where previously the means offered by modernisation made the mediation of messages very much one-sided, as for example through the printed word, the radio or television. At the same time the net and various mobile apps form a way that is becoming natural for more and more people to keep up contact with those close to them and to create and maintain groups, which it has also been the task of folklore to bring about.

For some time, students have found objects of research and gathered research materials for themselves from the internet, and a mass of researchers have also done this. On the web, jokes, proverbs and narratives are communicated and gathered into banks of materials, and on the web many activities arise which folkloristics may have its own perspective on, although the material as such may not resemble traditional folklore. The gathering of web materials and work on the web also alter problems and behaviours in the area of research ethics, although the main principle, of respecting the people that are being researched, is maintained as before.

While we are seeking folkloristic perspectives on these phenomena, we also arrive at a renewed view on what folklore in fact is, and what its basis is, and what remains relevant from earlier definitions. By this I do not mean that we should draw some sort of line between what belongs to folkloristics, to 'real folklore', and what does not in terms of objects of research. Folklorists have formed their own perspectives on the basis of their research tradition, and developed a view about what a folklorist can research, and how folkloristic research can bring to light what elsewhere remains obscure.

It is therefore high time to update our participation in digital folkloristics and to adopt it as an object of

systematic investigation in the Folklore Fellows' Summer School. Further details will be found in this edition of *FF Network* about the forthcoming summer school, 'Let's get Digital – Doing Folkloristics in the Digital Age', which is being held in June 2015 in Finland.

The Folklore Fellows' Summer School was last held in 2010. In the closing ceremonies, I promised that the next summer school would be arranged in 2013, but we have needed an additional two years for it. The most important thing, however, is that the tradition is continuing and the next summer school is in the pipe line. When we began to speak of the plan and its topic and to ask tutors, it was heartening to note how enthusiastically the information about the 2015 summer school has been received, and how easy it has been to recruit international tutors to hold keynote lectures and take part in the instruction.

The summer school is an excellent way to gather and disseminate expertise. The topic this time is such that many have something to do with it, but real specialists in the field of folkloristics are scarce. At the same time the summer school is a fine way to network internationally. Participants in previous summer schools have continued to remember the experience warmly, and the chance to get to know folklorists from other countries more deeply than is possible at large-scale conferences. Working together is ideal for creating friendships and collaborations, which may well last long.

The summer school is being arranged for 2015 in the Archipelago Research Institute of the University of Turku, on Seili island in the Turku archipelago. The research facility in this isolated site of natural beauty offers an opportunity for intensive work together and for group work, as participants are together for a week. Naturally, there are internet connections, although geographical connections depend on the link vessel. This setting may provide the topic with a fitting perspective on the world: physical isolation alongside open access by means of the information highway. As this newsletter appears, the application period has already begun, and it lasts until the end of September. It will be interesting to see how many applications are made, and what sort of thematic spectrum opens up from them. ■

# Internet Memes as Statements and Entertainment

ANNE HEIMO & KAARINA KOSKI

The internet has been accessible to us for over twenty years, and social media for a decade. By now, they have become an irrevocable part of everyday life for around a third of the world's population. At the same time, our everyday work surroundings have become digitised into something global, and internet use has gradually become ubiquitous, ever-present. While still in the 1990s researchers related differently to online and offline life, they are now viewed as continua of each other. People do everything on the internet that they do elsewhere too: take care of relationships, reminisce, rejoice, weep, argue, seek and produce information, study, teach, go shopping, use up time and show their creativity in many different ways. Nor has the internet lessened people's need to belong to communities and to communicate with each other, even though the ways of maintaining contact have changed somewhat.

Folkloristics investigates vernacular activity, to which technology mediated tradition also belongs to. The majority of research into the phenomena defined as folklore on the internet has, however, been carried out in other fields, for example in media studies and sociology. Although folklore materials have been digitised and catalogued in archives and on internet sites from the 1990s on, folklorists, with a few exceptions, have warmed rather slowly to researching tradition mediated by technology.<sup>1</sup> The folklorist Alan Dundes judged already in the late 1970s that the development of information technology would offer new and exciting opportunities for the mediation and production of folklore. In the next decade, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1996) reassured folklorists that information technology would not destroy oral culture but work as a base for it to develop. It is not, however, clear what is meant by folklore on the internet. Trevor J. Blank, the editor of the first article collection to deal with the topic, *Folklore and the Internet* (2009), suggests a fairly broad definition: 'the outward expression of creativity – in myriad forms and interactions – by individuals and their communities' (Blank 2009: 6). Despite the virtual nature of

the internet, the web is always a matter of communication between people, as Robert Howard points out in an interview: 'folklore is the informally shared knowledge that we perceive as connecting us to each other' (cf. Owens 2013). Texting and chatting, which have arisen in the internet age, are forms of face-to-face communication (McNeill 2009: 84).

Internet folklore can refer to folklore which occurs on the internet or which has been born in and of the internet, making use of or commenting on its facilities. Internet-mediated contemporary folklore is not particularly stable, which poses new challenges for its analysis. Among 'the folk' who have the technical equipment and skill to use it, ideas and items transform easily from one mode of expression to another and spread via various channels. The study of rapidly spreading and constantly changing material requires a knowledge of vast imageries with which the analysed phenomena mix and merge. In the study of folklore on the internet, performances offline and the creative process of an individual are noteworthy, as well. The interaction between the actions online and offline is what keeps many of the internet phenomena spreading.

In this article, we sketch an outline of the internet as a site of participatory culture and concentrate especially on internet memes as an emergent form of contemporary folklore.

## Social media and participatory culture

The use of social media has made the internet a setting for active involvement. The audience has grown from information seekers and consumers into producers and participators, who share their own thoughts, video clips, images and personal memories. The media scholar Henry Jenkins calls this creating and circulating of one's own work *participatory culture*. This mode of cultural activity blurs the division between amateurs and professionals, consumers and producers, grassroots and mainstream. However, participatory culture is not only about production and consumption; it is also about affiliation, expression, collaboration and distribution, and it shifts the focus from individual expression to community involvement (Jenkins *et al.* 2006). The folklorist Robert Howard (2013) stresses the importance of

1 Apart from Americans, Estonians have been pioneers in this matter (see e.g. Kõiva and Vesik 2009; Kõiva 2014).

examining the construction and use of power relations, in other words vernacular authority, in participatory media, where the institutional and vernacular often occur side by side. According to Howard, vernacular authority 'emerges when an individual makes appeals that rely on trust specifically because they are not institutional'. The appeal is backed up, for instance, by tradition and not by a formally instituted social formation like a church, a media company or an academic publication (*ibid.* 81).

In participatory culture which spreads via the internet, the local and the global merge and interact (see McNeill 2012). Group dancing videos shared on the internet and imitated all over the world serve as a good example of this interaction. In spring 2013, thousands of people created their own *Harlem Shake* video in their local communities and shared it on YouTube. In *Harlem Shake*, a masked person starts to dance in a bizarre way in some public space, such as a café or office, and after a while, other people join in, wearing costumes or carrying random objects. This trend lasted a few months (Know Your Meme 28.4.2014). In spring 2014, we have observed a parallel phenomenon called *Pharrel Williams - Happy We are from (Name of City)*. In these videos, people from 1,477 different cities – ranging from Dakar to Turku – and from 135 different countries from Taiwan to Iceland, dance to Williams's song<sup>2</sup> (We are happy from 28.4.2014). In March 2014, Tunisian Star Wars fans published their own version *Happy - We are from Tatoonine* (YouTube 28.4.2014).

For a folklorist, the internet provides an endless flow of creative expression. However, just like the offline world, the internet is in constant flux and contains too much information and patterns to be mastered or adopted. With its numerous sites, applications, actions, practices and modes of expression and interaction, it also appears dissimilar to each user. Our interests, skills and networks on the internet mould our practices and what we get out of the whole. It is typical that in a discussion with his or her students, a folklore teacher finds that they do not share the same internet phenomena that 'everybody' seems to know at the moment. The gap between generations and interest groups exists both online and offline.

### Meme as an etic and emic concept

Ten years ago, a typical example of technologically transmitted folklore might be a humorous image or a chain letter delivered via email. Today, it is the internet meme. Memes are shared on internet pages and social media in various forms. They can be images with or

2 At the time of writing this, a search for *Harlem Shake* results in 9,700,000 matches on YouTube. *Happy We are from (Name of City)* gives 20,600,000 hits (YouTube 28.4.2014).



President Obama's call to President Putin on 16 March 2014 about the Crimean crisis has produced a whole variety of memes about what was actually said during the call. Here, Putin humiliates Obama with the traditional knock-knock joke and refers to the popular song 'Cry Me a River', which has been used a lot during this crisis.

without text, video clips, catchphrases or requests to do something, such as to share some particular information or picture on Facebook.

The meme is thus a concept which refers to cultural units propagating in human populations in various forms. The meaning of the term varies according to the context. As a scholarly concept it is subject to constant debate. The British biologist Richard Dawkins (1976) coined the term 'meme' as a parallel to gene, in order to explain the transmission of cultural ideas, skills and trends by means of evolutionary theory. Memetics parallels the propagation of cultural items with the spread of biological information in DNA which, via reproduction, leads to the similarity of biological organisms and ensures the continuity of the genes themselves. Thus, memes are mental units which spread via mimicry from brain to brain. They adapt to various forms to survive and propagate, and use people and communities as hosts. Academic reactions to the meme theory have been diverse. While the advocates of the theory have welcomed it as an explanation of human cultural behaviour, opponents have stated that the meme theory offers nothing new and explains nothing. Critics note that memetics tends to deny human agency and to overlook cultural complexity, reducing it to a biological metaphor. The theory has also suffered from serious biases in its evaluation of religious and scientific ideas (see e.g. Ellis 2003: 77–83; Shifman 2013: 362–6). From a folklorist's point of view, memes are nothing other than folklore (Ellis 2003: 83). However, folklorists tend



'Batman slapping Robin' memes have been popular on various networks. The text of the Finnish version goes: 'Today I had school...' - 'It's the university!'

to think that biological metaphors and other attempts to imitate natural sciences belong to the past of the discipline. Rather than a natural phenomenon parallel to a biological organism, folklore is now conceived as a social achievement sustained by performance and human agency. (Hafstein 2001)

As an emic term especially among internet users, meme refers to viral contents, such as various forms of photoshoplore, video clips, jokes, gestures, facial expressions and verbal phrases, which have gained a wide distribution and popularity (McNeill 2009: 84–5). Internet insiders generally understand and acknowledge that the point of memes is in social activity and sharing (Stryker 2011). Memes are a phenomenon of contemporary culture which need not be studied only in the frame of memetics. Memes have attracted the attention of scholars in various fields, such as media and communication studies and linguistics. The internet has made the processes of propagation, variation and recirculation visible and salient not only by accelerating the circulation of cultural phenomena but also by offering metadata about the circulation and popularity. As an emic term, meme usually refers to the concrete expressions, such as video clips, facial expressions, parodic characters, or certain types of images. The users of the term do not usually refer to the biological and neural implications which it has in Dawkins's theory (Knobel and Lankshear 2007: 199–202; Shifman 2013: 364). In vernacular use, an item is called a meme when it has rapidly gained a wide distribution and popularity. Many also think that it has a life span and eventually dies (Koski 2012). Memeticists, in turn, assume that memes live long and survive. Many researchers define the actual forms and expressions as meme vehicles, and the meme is the idea behind all the variation. The question whether memes are only the ideas or rather the concrete practices and artefacts, divides researchers, while some of them accept both forms. (Shifman 2013: 366–7)

As a vernacular concept, the meme flexibly ranges

from the abstract idea of any catchy and widely propagated phenomenon to very concrete expressions. A typical meme consists of an image (or video) and a text which expresses a message neatly and humorously. A recurrent form of memes is demotivational posters or demotivators, which show the image and the text in a black frame, portraying the phenomenon in a critical light. Memes are distributed as such or they are adjusted to serve a new purpose by reworking the text or changing the image (see Baran 2012: 172, 176; Kaplan 2013: 136–7; Shifman 2013: 362). Even though the digital environment presents the opportunity to share the viral contents as they are, it seems that people want to recreate them: to make their own versions by mimicking and remixing (Shifman 2013: 365). This is easy to do with meme generators, *i.e.* internet pages and applications which provide the currently circulating pictures and the means to add a new text, as well as the opportunity to share the fresh version of the meme. There are numerous web pages which serve as repositories of internet memes. Cheezeburger is a website which presents internet humour, and it has subpages which are specialised in memes; Memebase and Know Your Meme. The latter provides information about each recognised meme, its history, distribution and forms, as well as its popularity. Know Your Meme shows for example graphic figures about the rise and decline of the search interest in popular memes.

It has been difficult for some folklorists to accept the fact that memes as well as urban legends and jokes do not only circulate on the internet, but can also be found on websites, which not only resemble archives, but are archives *per se*. These archives hold massive collections of folklore items and are curated by the same people who use them. All members of these sites may not have the right to add items to the collection or edit it, but they can discuss and debate on what counts as a meme (Kaplan 2013: 128, 136–9). These websites can be compared to what Elisa Giaccardi (2012) calls *new heritage*, digitally born and non-institutional heritage. In contrast to former notions of cultural heritage as a product, as something stable that must be protected from changing, with this protection necessarily in the hands of experts, new heritage acknowledges change to the point that it should be seen as a process,

which is dynamic, ever-evolving and managed by the same people who created it or participate in the process. Digital archives and repositories of memes are not, however, outside the circulation and use of the memes. Internet searches are a recurrent form of entertainment in internet culture. Memes, as well as contemporary legends and jokes, are not only enjoyed one by one in social discourses but browsed in books and websites, where there are dozens of them.

### Meanings and pointlessness

Online memes such as images and videos are not only products or messages. They are cultural practices of participation in social interaction. For example, on YouTube, sharing and commenting on videos is the primary medium of social interaction between active users (Burgess 2008: 102). Like any folklore, memes can have multiple meanings and functions for communities and individuals alike. Online memes particularly need to be catchy and easy to grasp to become widely known and propagated in a short period of time.

Michele Knobel and Colin Lankshear analysed nineteen online memes, mostly video clips, which were particularly popular among internet users and had also been reported in broadcast media. They found three patterns of characteristics that were likely to add to the meme's popularity and productivity. First, the popular memes had some element of humour. The humour the researchers observed could be quirky, absurd or potty, as well as ironic or parodic. Second, the popular memes gave potential for intertextuality, which was realised in user-generated versions as rich cross-references to various phenomena of popular culture: to movies, to news or to other memes. Third, they showed anomalous juxtapositions, which included incongruous couplings of images or for example provocative paralleling of harmless characters with evil or terrifying deeds (Knobel and Lankshear 2007: 204–5, 208–16). Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green have used the word *spreadability* for contents which are continuously reworked, given new meanings and recirculated by individuals and corporations. The question is not only about vernacular culture; the commercial producers also seek to design spreadable products which can start circulating in user-generated content (Jenkins *et al.* 2013). Thus, the key to the popularity and propagation of online contents, or memes, or folklore, is the adaptability to multiple purposes. Jean Burgess emphasises the difference between participatory culture and mere popularity. Some videos may have millions of views around the world while others trigger creative responses in the form of new videos and other mimicking actions (Burgess 2008: 101–2). While traditional folklore genres tend to have certain limits, guided by cultural competence, to how much a story or poem can be altered in order to

properly represent the tradition, internet culture can involve surprising, absurd and random elements. However, what can generally be mimicked or changed are the form, content and stance. Limor Shifman has used the term *stance* to describe the addresser's position in relation to the meme, to his or her own performance of it and to the potential audience. When recreating the meme, the person can decide to share the same stance as previous users or to change it, perhaps even make a parody of it (Shifman 2013: 367). The variation of stances can be seen for example in the Pepper-Spraying Cop meme. A photograph of a pepper-spraying policeman started spreading after a student protest at the University of California had been forcefully put down by the police in 2011. The meme shows a cop pepper-spraying the faces of students, who sit peacefully in a row. The image generated a myriad of new versions and quickly became a meme. The first wave of them was political and showed the police pepper-spraying American symbols like the monument of former presidents and the Constitution. Another group of them shows characters and imagery of popular culture as the target of the spray. These versions show a more complex interpretation: the meme has become more playful and the original meaning, which was the criticism of the police officers' excessive force, has in some cases even been reversed. The political use of the meme turned into having fun by remixing various memes in Photoshop and expressing dislike towards celebrities by means of the pepper-spray (Shifman 2013: 371–2; see also Blank 2012: 8–11). Memes can be used to point at social injustice or to make political arguments. However, the same meme can serve as entertainment, poetically referring only to itself or to other currently popular memes and



Batman slapping Robin in offline reality. In the annual Finnish carnival for graduating from high school, students cruise on lorries decorated with topical slogans. Here, Batman argues that it is more important to read for your final exams than to watch the winter Olympics, in another lorry, Batman viewed boozing as more important than preparing for your exams.



The image on the left parallels friendly and non-friendly visits to neighbouring countries. These started circulating right at the beginning of the crisis. The mascots of the 2014 Sochi Olympics on a tank (above) express the contradiction between Russian actions in the sports games and in the Ukrainian crisis. Putin's political decisions (on the right) were questioned in Western-minded memes and he was compared to Hitler. Hitler and his actions during WW2 are commonly used as parallels to current political events.

having no particular point. Julia Rone suggests that the whole point may even be that there is no point. Memes can be made just because they can be made and because they have no exchange value, which dictates most production. The pointless memes are useful as a domain of freedom. An example of a pointless meme is a ten-hour-long version which only repeats a sequence of one or two seconds from a well-known video meme (Rone 2013: 10–11). Even if the meme itself may seem pointless, the act of making and sharing it has meanings. The easiness to create and rework memes with internet applications may mask the fact that the question is of a creative process and a conscious decision to create and share a new version. By referring to other well-known memes, the makers of new versions show their knowledge of the tradition and deliberately link their contribution to it (see McNeill 2013). Thus, participation in a wider phenomenon is a social activity. It is also possible that a video clip or image which seems difficult to understand was part of an ongoing discussion at the moment of uploading. It is not always possible for an outsider to distinguish between 'pointless' entertainment, disguised cultural criticism and a comment in a discussion long gone.

### Memes as newslore and political arguments

The folklorist Russell Frank (2011: 9–13) calls folklore that arises from the news *newslore*. Memes are often newslore, where a stance is adopted towards current affairs. Subjects range from world political crises to the

characteristics of public figures. A political viewpoint is announced, for example, by publishing a humorous picture or picture collage, where a politician is made fun of by manipulating his image or twisting his words (Baran 2012). The leaders of particular countries, such as Russian president Vladimir Putin, former US president George Bush<sup>3</sup> and North Korea's Kim Jong Il, are the dominant figures of the meme tradition. Historical politicians, especially Adolf Hitler, are also popular subjects of internet humour and memes. Hitler is presented as a comical figure in many memes, of which the video-memes known as 'Hitler reacts' or 'Downfall' are some of the most popular (see Rone 2013).

Researchers disagree about the political role of newslore. Some argue that it only substitutes for the real opportunities to power or resistance. Others suggest that the critical examination of problems in folklore is a first step towards solving them. At least newslore is a form of engagement in political discussion and often requires a lot of background information to be understood properly (Frank 2011: 11–12). According to Zeynep Tufekci, who has studied the use of social media during political outbursts, countries that are between democracy and dictatorship are those which most easily fuel political satire. She also points out that it would be an understatement to consider online activism as 'clicktivism' or 'slacktivism', which has no impact

3 Russell Frank (2011: 107–27) even talks of *Bushlore*.

(Tufekci and Wilson 2012: 377). We will present two different cases of newslore in memes. The first case is international and links to the Ukrainian crisis commented on in memes during the spring of 2014. The other is a Finnish discussion which burst out when Swedes commented on traditional Christmas pastry.

Russia hosted the Olympic winter games in February 2014. In public discussion, the games were regarded as a way to show Russia's capability and to polish its reputation. Soon after the Olympic Games, it was claimed Russia had sent military forces to a politically unstable Ukraine, which President Putin categorically denied. The situation of Ukraine and the Crimean Peninsula was commented on in a myriad of memes, which juxtaposed the friendly atmosphere of the Olympics with hostile military occupation.

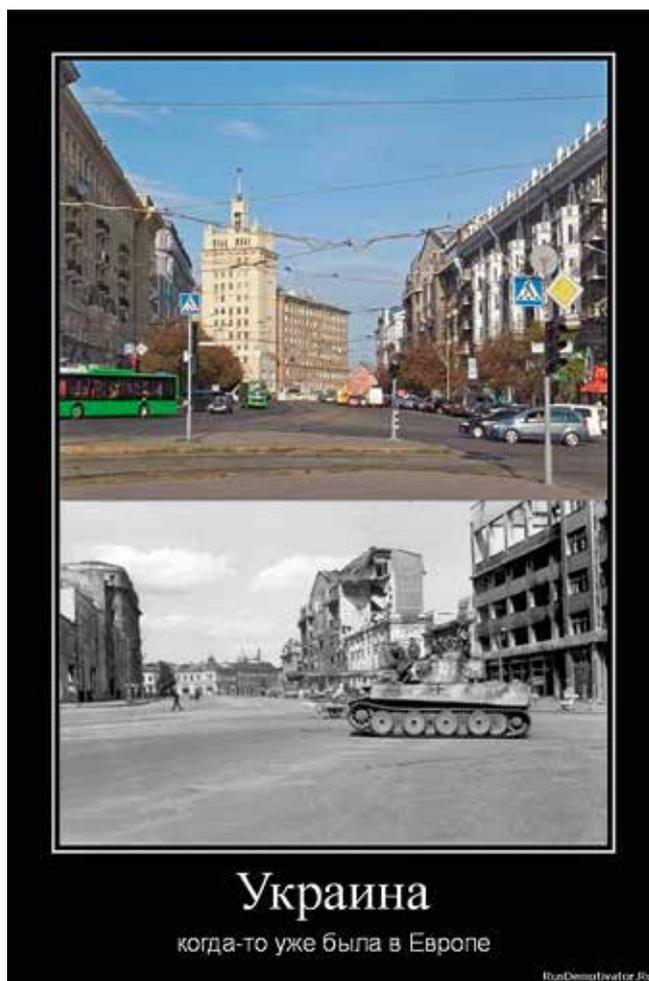
Russian internet sites had their own demotivators, which portrayed Ukraine as backward and incapable, and its possible union with Europe as a poor or immoral decision.

As the Crimean crisis grew into an international question, memes indicated that it had also become a contentious issue in US domestic politics. The question was whether the United States should have used more power to influence the parties of the Crimean crisis. Especially the conservative wing in the US has been unsatisfied with the cautious diplomacy of Barack Obama in his relation to Vladimir Putin. In their memes, Putin rules over him in every respect. The tough image of Putin engaging in masculine activities is juxtaposed with Obama as a polite or even sissy character. The opposite view of the US policy is expressed, as well. Especially the 'American Eagle' meme is used to criticise the aggressive foreign policy of the US and its earlier actions.

Memes may not necessarily affect the political elite and their decisions. However, they spread arguments and insights, and the neat and often emotionally charged way they do it can affect the minds of countless internet users who happen to see them. (See also Tufekci 2013: 849)

Another example of newslore and memes is the emotionally charged debate which emerged around the traditional star-shaped Christmas pastries in Finland. These delicacies, filled with plum jam, had previously been common in Scandinavia, but lately they have been a well-known and beloved tradition only in Finland.

Russian demotivators seek to show Ukraine as incapable of credible military action or independence (above and middle). They also ridicule and question its pursuit of unity with Europe. 'Ukraine - when once it was in Europe'. The black-and-white photograph dates from World War II. The meme 'Joker Mind Loss' or 'Everyone Loses their Minds' is based on a screen shot of the villain Joker in the Batman film *The Dark Knight* (below). These memes usually point to some injustice and humorously refer to the original film with the words 'no one bats an eye'.





## Kuin kaksi marjaa...



Natsien  
tunnus



Joulutorttu

[naurunappula.com/675181](http://naurunappula.com/675181)



Traditional Finnish star-shaped Christmas pastry paralleled with the swastika (middle). This meme uses a juxtaposition model familiar to Finns from the leading newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, which used to publish humorous look-alike photos of celebrities under the title 'Like two berries'. Here, too, the texts are reversed to underline the misleading similarity. Home-baked pastry and gingerbread in the form of a swastika (left and right). Activities around this meme ranged from statements to cheerful participation.

On 10 November 2013, a leading Swedish newspaper, *Svenska Dagbladet*, published a recipe for traditional Christmas pastry with a photograph of this traditional dish. The Swedish TV company SVT reacted by wondering why the newspaper was promoting swastika-shaped pastry. The picture of this 'Nazi pastry' started circulating in Swedish social media.

The Finnish press released the news a week later. The reaction that soon followed was probably strengthened by the fact that Sweden, the Finns' hated and beloved neighbour, was involved. The internet pages of the newspapers in question were soon filled with emotional comments. The commentators were upset about such accusations against Finnish Christmas traditions. The same arguments were repeated again and again: that the pastry is star-shaped and not a swastika; that a swastika is actually a millennia-old symbol which had originally nothing to do with Nazism; that pastry cannot possibly offend anybody; and that Swedes are stupid and should mind their own business. While some were annoyed about the patronising attitude of the Swedes and anybody who thought there was a problem, others ridiculed the whole situation and made suggestions about which traditional dishes should be prohibited next. Still one strong emotion was defiance: we will show the Swedes and all moralist-idealist patronisers that we make our pastry in whichever shape we want! The phenomenon of Nazi pastry spread rapidly in blogs, Facebook, Tumblr and various other internet sites, showing photos of swastika-shaped pastry and gingerbread that the public had started to bake or memes which placed the Finnish star-pastry in connection to Nazi symbols. Swedes got their share, too. The Finns' relationship with the Swedes has been competitive and ambiguous, involving a stereotype of the Swedes' sexual orientation. Thus, the picture of 'a politically correct Swedish arsehole pastry'

– a simple dough ring with dark brown filling – which somebody actually baked, makes an intertextual reference to a long tradition of jokes about gay neighbours. In the case of Nazi pastry, the internet phenomenon was a short-lived reaction to topical news. This case shows that while the internet mediated the news, the discussion and the memes, a great deal of the action happened in the kitchens and on home computers with graphic applications. The memes made use of models which were familiar from the internet. The pictures, the meaning of which would be difficult to understand without the context, belonged to a discourse which defended the local cultural heritage and expressed a reaction to excessive requirements of political correctness. This case also shows that beside the chance to make a statement, it has been important and rewarding to participate in the internet phenomenon shared on one's social networks and to contribute with comments, actions and pictures to the topical discussion or joke, as many saw it.

Memes dealing with defects and stereotypes can also show self-irony. For example, the memes published on Facebook's Suomi Memes site deal with and repeat stereotypes and cultural characteristics associated with Finns: apart from *sisu*, also self-isolation, violence and alcohol-dependence. On the basis of the memes, a picture of Finland is mediated as a land where it is always cold and grim. In some of the memes, Finnishness is assessed in relationship to other countries' inhabitants, especially the neighbouring Russians and Swedes. Although the memes published on the site depict Finns and Finland in a rather negative light, this is self-irony. On the basis of comments, this is amusing to the 25,000 or so likers of the site. Very few question or oppose the picture of Finns that is presented.

In memes that play with national stereotypes there may also be more serious political aims. Memes can be

used with the intention of bolstering one's own country or a people's status, and even in circumstances where this is unintentional, others may nonetheless interpret it as nationalist activity, as with Julia Rone's (2013) 'Nyan Cat' example. 'Nyan Cat' is a widely spread video meme in which a pixelated grey cat, whose body is a pop tart pastry, flies through outer space and leaves behind a rainbow-like trail. The originally Japanese Nyan Cat video can now be found for example in French, Mexican and Albanian versions on YouTube, where the original rainbow has been replaced with the national flag and the music changed to the appropriate local folk music. In some instances the imposition of these national elements has led to heated debate in the comments posted.

#### Multi-purpose images and variation for fun

Popular culture is the most powerful source of memes. While politicians come and go and news loses its topicality, certain classics of popular culture persist and flourish year after year. Such favourites involve *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*, as well as *The Lord of the Rings*. Their characters are useful and known by everybody in the relevant networks. Beside the commercial production, the internet creates its own popular culture. Memes can be born from scratch and lift some previously unknown character or phenomenon to celebrity. Some memes become tradition dominants; they can be used for various kinds of purposes. There are memes to send to your friend as SMS messages to announce you are amused, bored or curious. There are memes which function like proverbs, naming a situation by coupling it with a well-known traditional unit. These are typically images which can be easily sent or shown in face-to-face contact from a mobile device. Widely distributed memes serve as a means to make a statement when needed, but especially because of spare time and handy meme generators, they are also manufactured and varied just for fun.

One such multi-purpose meme is the 'Batman slapping Robin' meme, also known as 'My Parents are Dead'. The meme originated in 2008, when it started spreading in the blog service Tumblr. Six years later, the Cheezburger archive alone houses over 4,000 variants (Cheezburger 28.4.2014). According to Know Your Meme, the image originates from an exploitation comic book published in 1965. The story behind it presents an alternative reality in which Batman believes his parents were killed by Superman and harbours revenge. In the meme, the original image in which the furious Batman slaps Robin has been turned into a mirror image. Like this, the meme portrays Batman interrupting Robin with a slap just when Robin is suggesting something stupid. This enables the meme users to place in Robin's balloon a claim, message or sentence which Batman will powerfully negate by his slap. For example, in Finnish

universities, many scholars have been annoyed by the students' habit of calling the university 'school'. The Batman meme in which Batman yells 'It's the university!' kept circulating in academic networks on Facebook. Even though the 'Batman slapping Robin' meme has a relatively fixed pictorial form, it can also be encountered offline.

#### Conclusions

Even though the definition of meme is wide, we have here chiefly dealt with one particular type. As folklorists, we could say that we are dealing with a folklore genre, which is characterised by a relatively stable form as an image with a varying text and a digital distribution. These images are a form of communication which contemporary internet insiders use and recognise. The competence to produce this genre requires not the traditional oratory skills but the knowledge of the right applications and internet sites, a competence to use them, and the appropriate equipment, which the bearers of this line of tradition usually have. The interpretation and also the successful production require a good knowledge of related material because these online memes play with rich intertextuality. Typical of vernacular communication, these memes are not only used online but they are referred to in offline activities and communication.

It seems that memes are here to stay, whether we appreciate them or not. Though at first glance this folklore genre may seem trivial, in reality memes are one of the most popular ways of making statements and taking a stance in today's world. People have always contested political power and criticised their leaders by ridiculing



The 'American Eagle' is a meme frequently used to criticise US politics and undesirable social phenomena such as xenophobia and excessive consumption. Here, it comments on the economic interests behind military actions. This meme opposes the US conservative hankering for a stronger leader to put the rest of the world in order.

and making fun of them, but the scope and pace that it can be done on the internet and especially social media is unique. We have presented some examples here of how this is done with memes. Memes can be used to make statements on everyday matters too, to express one's feelings on the result of yesterday's ice hockey game or today's weather. They can even be used to comment on other memes. Like all folklore, some of them disappear quite quickly if they do not have the capacity to say something or amuse us, and some of them will continue to live their lives in limitless new variations. ■

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# Futuristic Paremiography and Paremiology

## A plea for the collection and study of modern proverbs

### Introduction

As various branches of the study of folklore are making impressive steps forward in theoretical and pragmatic approaches, it is always good to recall the voices of earlier masters who were perfectly capable of pointing to desiderata of future research to be done that would, hopefully, include not only the survival of old traditions but also include newly created verbal and material folklore. In the case of proverbs, Archer Taylor (1890–1973) and Matti Kuusi (1914–98), the two friends who founded the *Proverbium* journal (1965–75; repr. 1987) that helped to legitimise paremiography and paremiology as part of serious folkloric scholarship, come to mind as international giants of the field. Both of them were well aware of the fact that folkloristics in general and paremiology in particular must overcome their dominant retrospective orientation. After all, even the invaluable monographs published in the magisterial Folklore Fellows' Communications looked primarily backwards while at the same time ignoring how fairy tales, legends, proverbs and other folklore genres carried on in the modern age and how new items of folklore continue to be created. In his seminal article 'Sananparsien suosionmuutoksista' (1953) that four decades later fortunately also appeared in English translation as 'Variations in the popularity of Finnish proverbs' (1994), Kuusi contrasted twenty 'old popular proverbs' with twenty 'new popular proverbs' and demonstrated how the Finnish proverbs of the two sets differed in style, structure, syntax, length, metaphor, content and worldview. He was thus very much aware that new proverbs must be part of the diachronic and synchronic analysis of proverbs. And Taylor definitely agreed with this desideratum, as he emphasised in his article on 'The Study of Proverbs' (1939):

In spite of all the collecting from written and printed material, there still remain proverbs in everyday use that are not brought to book. ... The collecting of this body of material would be a service both to our own time and to posterity. Especially significant would such a collection be if it were

made as complete as humanly possible, showing not only old proverbs and variation of old ones that are still current, but also new ones that have come into use, thus giving a complete cross-section of the proverbs of our time. (Taylor 1939: 45)

But, of course, there were also those voices claiming that proverbs are dropping out of existence in the modern age and that new ones are not created any longer. Already in 1931 the sociologist William Albig made the absurd observation that 'it must be clear that the proverb has largely disappeared from our general communicative culture' (Albig 1931: 532), with Ruth Ayaß in her otherwise interesting study 'On the Genesis and Destiny of Proverbs' (2001) more recently coming to the equally questionable conclusion that 'proverbs are a communicative fossil and – due to the shape of moral communication in our society – even an endangered species' (Ayaß 2001: 252). In fact, I shall never forget with what disbelief I read the following remark on a section on proverbs in Susan Stewart's 'Notes on Distressed Genres' (1991) some twenty years ago:

In its oral form, the proverb is 'worn,' in both the positive and negative senses, because of its status as a transcendent and time-proven form of discourse. A new proverb would be as unimaginable to tradition as an original Aesopian fable or a private fad. Thus the literary tradition of the proverb takes one of two paths – that of new collections of previously known proverbs, or that of invented proverbs that never survive to be applied to concrete situations. (Stewart 1991: 17–18)

Popular magazine and newspaper articles on proverbs add fuel to such unfounded claims by pointing out that proverbs are antiquated artefacts in modern societies that deserve to die out and that certainly no new proverbs will be coined in the future (see Mieder and Sobieski 2006). Nothing could be further from the truth, as a plethora of modern proverbs shows, i.e., proverbs

that cannot be found in written sources prior to the year 1900 as a somewhat arbitrarily chosen date as a starting point for new proverbs. But be that as it may, scholars appear to have bought into this misconception of the non-appearance of new proverbs in modernity 'hook, line, and sinker', to put it proverbially, and that so much so that there is still very little known about the new proverbs of the modern age.

Not to be misunderstood, here is one caveat that needs to be added before moving on to the paremiography of new proverbs and the paremiology of such texts. Both paroemiographers and paroemiologists around the world have published valuable proverb collections and have presented significant dissertations, books, and articles on the multifaceted aspects of proverbs during the twentieth century and more recent times. The *International Bibliography of Paremiography* (Mieder 2011), the two-volume *International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology* (Mieder 2009a) as well as the annual bibliographies of proverb collections and studies in *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* (1984-) with literally thousands of publications bear overwhelming witness to this fact. Many proverb collections continue to be published, but for all general purposes they do not include truly modern proverbs. Even Bartlett Jere Whiting's large collection with the promising title *Modern Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings* (1989) does not really include new proverbs but rather traditional proverbs found in modern (primarily twentieth-century) literary sources. And such seminal studies on the use, function and meaning of proverbs in modern societies as, for example, Outi Lauhakangas's "*Puheesta ihminen tunnetaan.*" *Sananlaskujen funktiot sosiaalisessa vuorovaikutuksessa* ('A Man is Known by His Words': The Functions of Proverbs in Social Interaction, 2004), Gulnas Umurova's *Was der Volksmund in einem Sprichwort verpackt ... Moderne Aspekte des Sprichwortgebrauchs anhand von Beispielen aus dem Internet* (2005), Liisa Granbom-Herranen's *Sananlaskut kasvatuspuheessa – perinnettä, kasvatusta, indoktrinaatiota?* (Proverbs in Pedagogical Discourse: Tradition, Upbringing, Indoctrination?, 2008), Anna Lewandowska's *Sprichwort-Gebrauch heute. Ein interkulturell-kontrastiver Vergleich von Sprichwörtern anhand polnischer und deutscher Printmedien* (2008), and my earlier *Proverbs are Never out of Season: Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age* (Mieder 1993a) deal at best tangentially, if at all, with such new proverbs as are still awaiting registration in proverb collections. That is absolutely not to say that these scholars and others have not provided deep insights into the modern biology of proverbs, but they occupy themselves with traditional proverbs, even if they include variations, modifications and parodies in the form of so-called 'anti-proverbs', of which, to be sure, some have become new proverbs in

their own right (Litovkina and Mieder 2006). Again, of interest in the following discussion are only truly new proverbs of modernity that have been ignored for far too long by folklorists, cultural historians, linguists, paremiologists and others.

### The identification of modern proverbs

As can be imagined, a major problem arises from the fact that it is difficult to find or discover new proverbs! It is much easier to listen for traditional proverbs in everyday discourse and public rhetoric or to look for proverbs in various print media from literature to newspapers and comics. The first task at hand is for paremiographers everywhere to undertake a conscious and deliberate 'hunt' for hitherto unrecorded proverbs. For this to happen, it is necessary to cast the proverbial fishing net as wide as possible, starting with going through all proverb collections as well as quotation and monolingual or bilingual dictionaries of a particular culture and language to check whether perhaps they do include at least a few proverbs that were not recorded before the beginning of the twentieth century. When Charles Clay Doyle, Fred R. Shapiro and I began the work on our *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* (2012) that can claim to be the first proverb collection dedicated to new proverbs exclusively, we chose the 1900-date as a cut-off point, thinking that this might well qualify as the beginning of the modern age not just for the United States but elsewhere in the world too (Mieder 2009b). Other paremiographers may agree to this date as well, so that the forthcoming collections of modern proverbs start with the same basic premise. And we did in fact find some proverbs that qualified for inclusion in some previous collections, notably in Nigel Rees's *Sayings of the Century: The Stories behind the Twentieth Century's Quotable Sayings* (1984), Fred R. Shapiro's *The Yale Book of Quotations* (2006), Jennifer Speake's *The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (2008), Gregory Titelman's *Random House Dictionary of America's Popular Proverbs and Sayings* (2000) and my own *A Dictionary of American Proverbs* (Mieder et al. 1992). But culling twentieth century collections was just the 'easy' beginning, for the question very quickly arose how we would find the new proverbs when we did not necessarily know them. How do you look for proverbs that have not been identified as such before? Luckily, all of us had over the past decades quite independently from each other begun to collect texts that because of oral and written frequency as well as poetic and structural characteristics combined with an underlying expression of some insight or wisdom qualified as proverbs. In fact, Charles Doyle had published a ground-breaking article on all of this with the appropriate title 'On new proverbs and the conservativeness of proverb dictionaries' (1996) that became the basis of our subsequent work. It is to be assumed

that most proverb scholars have at least some new proverbs in their personal files or archives as well.

The following steps in the establishment of a viable corpus of modern proverbs are much more difficult and will take considerable time and effort. Actual field research will prove invaluable, and the more informants that can be found to participate in the search, the better the results will be. People from various professions, different socioeconomic backgrounds, varying age groups, and so on will help to find proverbs that have not made the jump from a particular 'folk group' to the general population. Here is a great example that involved the renowned folklorist Alan Dundes (1934–2005), who once sent me a manuscript on the origin, history and meaning of the proverb 'When you hear hoofbeats, think horses, not zebras' for publication in *Proverbium* (Dundes, Streiff and Dundes 1999). He had co-authored the article with his daughter Lauren Dundes and her husband Michael Streiff, who happens to be a physician and who had told his father-in-law about this medical proverb. It is well known among medical students and doctors and expresses the idea that they should first look for common diseases like a cold before jumping to the conclusion that a patient might be gravely ill and in need of costly tests. Neither Dundes nor I had ever heard of this proverb before, and yet it is common among the medical profession! One more personal story about my nephew Tom Skinner, a passionate snow-boarder at the University of Colorado, who, when asked whether his young sports friends have proverbs they use, supplied his happy uncle with the proverb 'Go big or go home' that tells snow-boarders to take risks and get a rush from racing down the mountain. Without that thrill, it simply isn't worth doing it! Our students have certainly supplied us with many other texts we did not know and they continue to do so as they stay in touch after graduation.

But the possible sources for new proverbs are limitless, both in oral transmission and via written publications (Mieder 1989b). Many new proverbs have their start in popular songs or movies, to wit 'It takes two to tango' (1952) from a song with that title or 'If you build it, they will come' from the motion picture *Field of Dreams* (1989). Others start with a speech by a politician and then take root among the population by way of television and the rest of the mass media, as for example John F. Kennedy's 'Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country' (1961), uttered during his inaugural address as president of the United States. Literary works continue to be sources for proverbs, just as proverbs originated with William Shakespeare, Friedrich Schiller and others. A modern example would be the proverb 'Love means never having to say you're sorry' from Erich Segal's novel *Love Story* (1970). Such proverbs from known literary works

and their authors might be 'literary quotations' to some, but they have become anonymous proverbs over time. In any case, realising that proverbs are ubiquitous and that it appears to be part of human nature to couch common experiences and observations in easily maintained and recalled bits of wisdom, it should not be surprising that modern humankind continues this tradition. It is important to keep in mind that 'a proverb is concise statement of an apparent truth which has, had, or will have currency among the people' (Mieder 2004b: 4). In other words, there are proverbs in actual use at any given time, there are proverbs that have dropped out of use over time by having become archaic or inappropriate, and there will be new proverbs as time goes on.

As we hopefully will zero in more on the modern 'monumenta humana', as Matti Kuusi defined proverbs many years ago in his still important book *Parömiologische Betrachtungen* (1957: 52), it is important to make ever increasing use of modern electronic databases. After all, whenever proverb scholars identify a particular statement as proverbial, they do well in establishing whether in fact it has gained considerable currency. While this can be done in part by way of electronically distributed questionnaires, computer searches are extremely helpful in this regard. Just a basic Google search alone will establish in a split second whether an apparent modern proverb has established itself beyond a mere 'one-day wonder'. It does make a

*The New Yorker* (January 24, 2000), p. 53



difference whether Google finds but 3,000 references or more than a million! More sophisticated searches can help in establishing which variant – modern proverbs also often exist in variants – might be considered the standard form, which in turn is important for its registration in a new proverb collection. But again, all of this can only be done once a new proverb has been identified. Computers can't really find things for us, when we can't tell them what to look for in the first place! So it will continue to take much listening and much reading as well as a solid proverbial intuition to find new proverbs to collect and study. It is not an easy job, but it is a most rewarding and necessary task if we want to establish modern corpora of proverbs that will in turn enable us to study this new wisdom as part of human communicative processes.

### The paremiography of modern proverbs

The fact that paremiography has not made much progress in the collection and registration of modern proverbs is certainly not due to a lack of awareness of such texts. There are definitely some impressive studies that have looked at the modern origin, dissemination and meaning of individual new proverbs, as for example Alyce McKenzie's 'Different strokes for different folks: America's quintessential postmodern proverb' (1996; Mieder 1989a: 317–32), Charles Doyle's 'A good man is hard to find: the proverb' (2007a), and my "'The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence": an American proverb of discontent' (1993b). The importance of such detailed studies can best be shown by what happened to us with the proverb 'Use it or lose it' that we had collectively thought of as definitely being of modern origin. But having become particularly interested in this text, Charles Doyle undertook a special investigation and found out that it predates the beginning of the twentieth century; see his intriguing *Proverbium* article 'Use it or Lose it: The Proverb, its Pronoun, and their Antecedents' (2009). His discovery meant that we had to delete the proverb from our evolving manuscript of *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* (2012). Obviously it is not possible to study every proverb candidate for possible inclusion in a dictionary of modern proverbs in such detail, but an example like this shows how complex serious paremiographical work can become.

Archer Taylor, having undertaken numerous individual proverb studies, which, however, with the exception of his short note on the modern proverb 'The Customer is Always Right' (1958), deal with traditional proverbs traced back to antiquity, nevertheless called for paremiographical work on modern proverbs. In an essay with the interrogative title 'How nearly complete are the collections of proverbs?' (1969) he made the following statement, that unfortunately is still valid today: 'The characteristic deficiency of collections of proverbs

is the fact that they copy freely their predecessors and therefore cite proverbs that cannot be reliably asserted to have been in current use at the time when the collection was printed. This deficiency has vitiated collections since the earliest records' (Taylor 1969: 369). To prove his point that paremiographers have ignored adding hitherto unrecorded new proverbs to their collections, he cites a number of examples that he identified in Jon Wain's at that time modern novel *The Contenders* (1958). It should be noted, however, that his texts are mere proverbial expressions, yet another indication that new *bona fide* proverbs are not that easy to find and identify. But even though Taylor did not play a significant part in the 'hunt' or discovery of new proverbs, he most certainly was aware that such work must be undertaken. This is also true for Lutz Röhrich (1922–2006), yet another giant among proverb scholars, who in 1977 declared 'es wäre verkehrt, der Gegenwart die Fähigkeit zur Neubildung von Sprichwörtern abzuerkennen' ('it would be wrong to deny the present time [modernity] the ability to create new proverbs'; Röhrich and Mieder 1977: 117). But just as such other great paremiologists as Grigorij L'vovich Permyakov (1919–83) in Russia and Demetrios Loukatos (1908–2003) in Greece and the others already mentioned, Röhrich also did not undertake a concentrated and deliberate study or collection of modern proverbs. Standing on the broad shoulders of these giants, I published my survey essay 'Prolegomena to prospective paremiography' (1990b) with this concluding statement:

Paremiography cannot remain a science that looks primarily backwards and works only with texts of times gone by. Modern paremiographers can and should also assemble proverb collections that include new texts of the 20th century. While fantastic progress has been made in paremiography over the past dozen years or so, many clear challenges still lie ahead to be tackled by nationally and/or internationally oriented paremiographers. (Mieder 1990b: 142)

One of those obvious challenges would be to take all extant African proverb collections and create a database that would give us an idea of which African proverbs from hundreds of tribal languages have reached a more general distribution that might allow us to speak of a certain common stock of proverbs from that large continent. We have collections that show this for European as well as Asian proverbs, of course. In fact, multi-volume national collections for Czech, Estonian and Lithuanian proverbs have appeared in more recent times, adding rich materials not only for the study of national proverbs but for the comparative analysis of some of them on the European scale. Kazys Grigas (1924–2002) from Lithuania has described 'Einige Probleme der modernen Parömiographie und Parömiologie' (2000) and

Julia Sevilla Muñoz even looked at ‘The challenges of paremiology in the XXI. century’ (2009), but while they deal with these modern accomplishments, they say nothing about the need to make a concerted effort to include modern proverbs. It is then fair to state that there has for far too long been a definite reluctance to take on the challenging but exciting task of assembling annotated collections of modern proverbs.

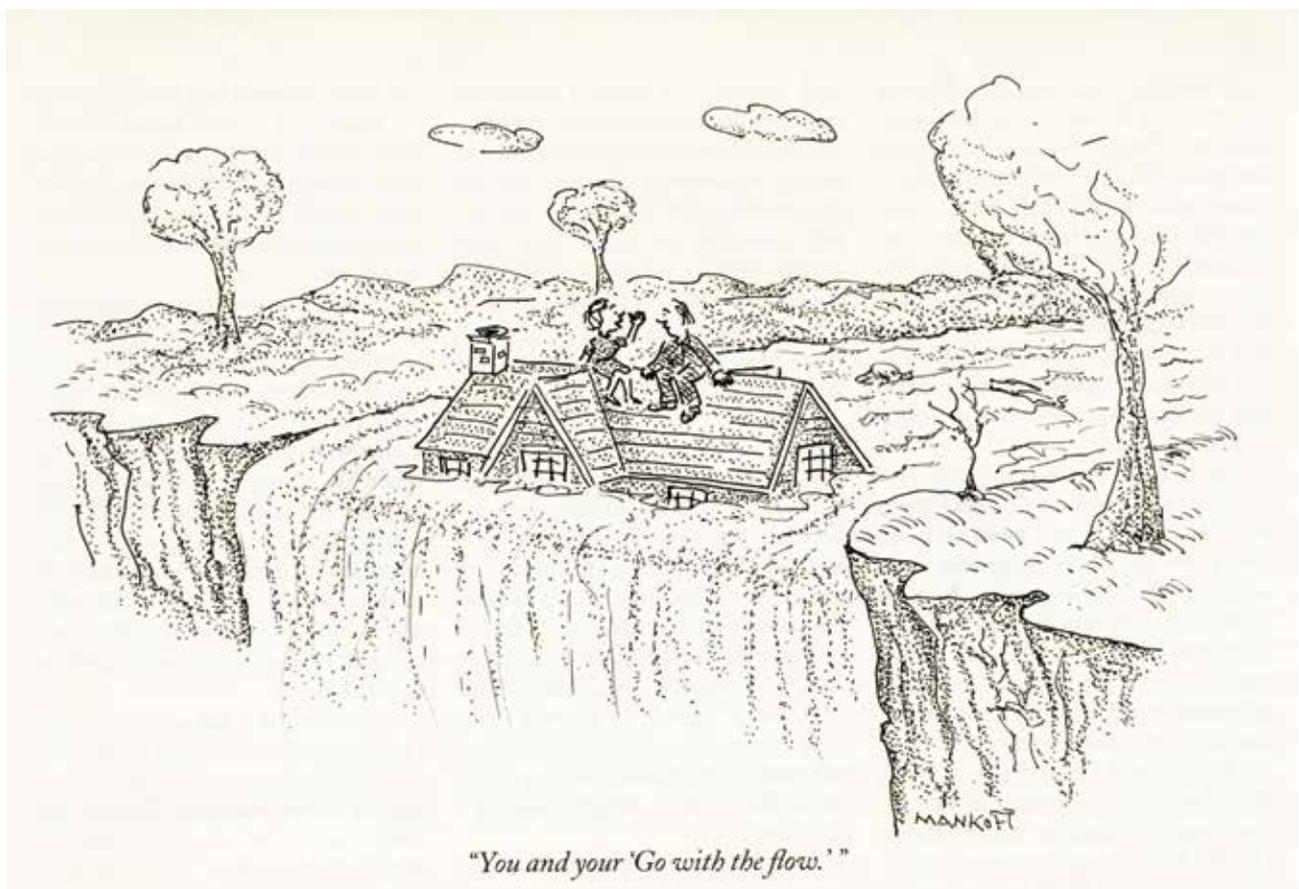
Turning to more pragmatic issues of the paremiography of new proverbs, Charles Doyle, Fred Shapiro and I can perhaps with all humility observe that our combined work on establishing the first corpus of modern Anglo-American proverbs in *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* (Doyle *et al.* 2012) might serve as a model to follow for other paremiographers. I have already mentioned the difficulty with identifying new proverbs, and it is important to keep in mind that once such a proverb is discovered in oral or written form, the difficult and laborious task of establishing its date of origin begins. For some texts a precise determination will not be possible, but attempts must be undertaken to see whether a proverb under consideration might be older than the 1900 cut-off year for being considered a modern proverb. The few extant collections and investigations of individual proverbs help with this task, but clearly the majority of new proverbs will each require a painstaking analysis. This is where electronic databases like Google, Google Books, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, Lexis-

Nexis Academic and many others come into play to find the earliest possible citation. The new generation of proverb scholars has done pioneering work in using databases for their work, albeit not primarily for the discovery, registration and analysis of modern proverbs (Chlosta and Ostermann 2002, Hrisztova-Gotthardt 2010, Kleinberger Günther 2006, Lauhakangas 2001, Steyer 2012, Winick 2001). While finding the ‘first’ recorded reference is, of course, of much importance (with the caveat that an earlier citation might well be found as more databases become available), the internet in all of its shapes and forms also helps to locate additional contextualised references over time of a proverb under investigation. This is a time-consuming task of utmost importance, as I stated a few years ago:

Texts alone no proverbs make, and as with all folklore genres, it takes currency and traditionality, usually also variants, for such invented proverb-like statements to become *bona fide* proverbs. This vexing problem is exactly what paremiographers will face when they finally attempt to assemble collections of modern proverbs. It is very difficult in many cases to decide whether a text is in fact in more or less general use beyond being a mere one-day wonder! (Mieder 2009b: 257)

*continued on p. 20*

The New Yorker (November 22, 2004), p. 75



## Ploughing with a Pen – New Publications on ‘Ordinary’ Writers

*Valkia pelto,                    [White field,  
siemenet mustat.               black seeds;  
Kylvää ken taitaa?            who can sow?]*

Although the riddle quoted here comes from oral tradition, the question that it poses points to another realm: the white field is paper, the black seeds ink, with sowing thus referring to the act of writing. When the riddle was first recorded in the mid-nineteenth century, the majority of Finland’s rural population was not able to put their thoughts down on paper. From the eighteenth to the early twentieth century, reading and writing were regarded as separate skills in Lutheran Finland, and the latter was regarded as unnecessary for much of the population. Nonetheless, there were a number of ordinary people with no access to formal schooling who nevertheless learnt to write and subsequently used their skill to produce texts of many different kinds – writings which have opened fascinating vistas for research during the past decade.

Anna Kuismin’s multi-disciplinary research network focusing on the processes and practices of literacy in nineteenth-century Finland was founded in 2001 at the Finnish Literature Society. It has organised campaigns for collecting manuscripts, arranged conferences and produced both scholarly and popular publications. The most recent one is *Kynällä kyntäjät* (‘Ploughing with the Pen’), edited by Lea Laitinen and Kati Mikkola and published by the Finnish Literature Society (SKS) in 2013. Genres such as letters, autobiographies, diaries, stories, plays and hand-written newspapers are discussed, and attention is paid to lay folklore collectors, rural correspondents of newspapers and the publishing of popular broadsheets.

The network’s collaboration with scholars from other Nordic countries led to the research project *Reading and writing from below: Toward a new social history of literacy in the Nordic sphere during the long nineteenth century*, funded by a NORDCORP grant from 2011 to 2014. One of the outcomes of the project is the anthology *White Field, Black Seeds* edited by Anna Kuismin and M. J. Driscoll and published by the Finnish Literature Society in 2013.

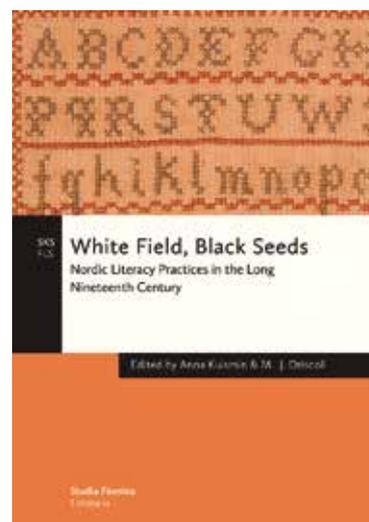
This collection presents the work of scholars from fields such as linguistics, history, literature and folklore studies who share an interest in the production, dissemination and reception of written texts by non-privileged people. As Laura Stark writes in her review published

in *Elore*, the articles “not only present new source materials and writing from unstudied groups among the lower classes and rural commoners, but also ponder important theoretical, conceptual and methodological issues regarding the heretofore hidden history of the interplay between informal literacy, society, and culture.”

More information on *Reading and Writing from Below*: <http://blogs.helsinki.fi/nord-corp/>



*Kynällä kyntäjät. Kansan kirjallistuminen 1800-luvun Suomessa. Ed. by Lea Laitinen & Kati Mikkola, SKS 2013.*



*White Field, Black Seeds. Nordic Literacy Practices in the Long Nineteenth Century. Ed. by Anna Kuismin & M. J. Driscoll. SKS 2013.*

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The bibliography of Academician Matti Kuusi (1914–1998) has been published in the ARTO Reference Database of Finnish Articles. The bibliography contains 849 references from the 1930s to the present day.

More information:

<https://arto.linneanet.fi/index.html>

## Coming events

25.9. Matti Kuusi (1914–1998) Symposium

1.10. Seminar on Laments

30.10.–1.11. Textual Trails. Transmissions of Oral and Written Texts, XI Conference of the ESTS (European Society for Textual Scholarship)

27.–28.11. Finnish Oral History Network Symposium

*Matti Kuusi. Photo: SKS, Literary Archives. »*



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continued from p. 17

What needs to be done after having identified a textual candidate for consideration as a new proverb is to establish its earliest possible reference and citing it within a context and with precise bibliographical information. Variants should also be included and, where appropriate, short explanatory comments. Databases will help in establishing the currency and frequency of the proverb, thus becoming an indicator of the actual proverbiality of the texts. In those cases where a particular proverb has indeed been registered in a recent proverb collection that information should be added as well as a cross-reference. As can be seen from the following three examples, scholarly collections of modern proverbs should continue the historical documentation of proverbs with as much additional information as space allows, thereby following in the footsteps of Robert Dent, Archer Taylor, Morris Palmer Tilley, Bartlett Jere Whiting and F. P. Wilson, who have done this in an exemplary fashion for the older Anglo-American proverbs:

**If life hands you lemons, make lemonade.**

1910 William G. Haupt, *The Art of Business College Soliciting* (Chicago: for the author) 89: "Don't be a pessimist, but be optimistic. If anyone 'hands you a lemon' take it home and make lemonade of it." 1911 "Health Hints", *Illinois Medical Journal* 19: 675: "If anyone hands you a lemon, make lemonade of it. It is both healthful and pleasant to take." (The proverb there seems to have been understood – and misapplied – literally!) 1917 *Plumbers, Gas and Steam Fitters' Journal* 21, no. 4 (Apr.) 29: "If life hands you a lemon adjust your rose-colored glasses and start selling pink lemonade." 1919 Homer Randall, *Army Boys in the French Trenches* (Cleveland: World Syndicate) 132: "'I wish I had your cheery disposition,' growled Tom. 'When any one hands you a lemon – 'I make lemonade out of it,' came back Billy, and there was a general laugh." YBQ Modern Proverbs (51); ODP 184. The proverb's imagery had been anticipated: 1908 *The Real Optimist [Reno NV]* 25 Apr.: "An optimist is a man who can make lemonade out of all the lemons handed to him" (credited to *Biddleford Journal*). (Doyle et al. 2012: 140)

**A ms. (miss) is as good as a male.**

1942 *Chicago Daily Tribune* 25 May: "Now that women are to be inducted into the army we may revise the old saying to read, 'A miss is as good as a male.'" 1948 Aldous Huxley, *Ape and Essence* (New York: Harper) 13: "I picked up the nearest of the scripts. 'A Miss is as good as a Male, Screenplay by Albertine Krebs.'" 1974 *Interim Study by the Select Committee on Inter-School Activities, the Montana High School Association and Montana Inter-School Activities* (Helena: Montana Legislative Council) 27, citing the title of a speech by New York state commissioner of education Ewald Nyquist (3 Jul.

1973): "Equity in Athletics; or, A Ms. Is as Good as a Male." Litovkina and Mieder (2006) 72. The proverb originated as an anti-proverb based on "A miss is as good as a mile." (Doyle et al. 2012: 175)

**Think globally, act locally (Think global, act local).**

1942 W. H. Cameron, "Personal Challenge", *Safety Education* 21: 387: "Our vision of a better world is limited to our vision of better communities. We must think globally, but first act locally" (the words are said to be quoted from Edgar Dale, in the Feb. 1942 issue of the newsletter of the Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University). 1947 *Vidette-Messenger [Valparaiso IN]* 27 Mar. (quoting from a letter from Jane Sense): "... [T]he objective and slogan of the right worthy grand matron and the general grand chapter [of the Indiana Order of the Eastern Star]: 'World Friendship' and 'think globally, act locally.'" YBQ Dubos; ODP 316–17; Rees (2006) 665. (Doyle et al. 2012: 256)

There are entries in the dictionary that are considerably longer and others that are a little shorter than these three. It had been our wish and hope to list at least one additional reference for each decade, but Yale University Press did not want *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* to grow beyond 300 column-printed pages. It was a shame, since we had collected this wealth of materials for the 1400 proverbs registered in the book. This would naturally be quite possible, if one were to create dictionaries of modern proverbs as electronic books. This is something for the next generation of paremiographers to accomplish. For the moment, it is still of value to produce printed collections for scholars, students and the general reading public to hold, read and enjoy.

**The paremiology of modern proverbs**

It has already been stated that paremiographers have basically failed to make the jump into modernity, as can be seen so well from Charles Doyle's survey of 'Collections of proverbs and proverb dictionaries: some historical observations on what's in them and what's not (with a note on current "gendered" proverbs)' (2007b). Unfortunately the picture is equally disappointing when looking at what paremiologists have accomplished in regard to modern proverbs. As I have shown in my own survey, 'Modern paremiology in retrospect and prospect' (2000), they have actually published superb scholarship regarding the survival of traditional proverbs in modern society:

Modern paremiology is an absolutely open ended phenomenon with many new challenges lying ahead. There is no doubt that proverbs, those old gems of generationally tested wisdom, help us in our everyday life and communication to cope with the complexities of the modern human condition. The traditional proverbs and their value system give us some

basic structure, and if their worldview does not fit a particular situation, they are quickly changed into revealing and liberating anti-proverbs. And there are, of course, the new proverbs of our time, such as “Different strokes for different folks”, that express a liberated worldview. Proverbs don’t always have to be didactic and prescriptive; they can also be full of satire, irony, and humor. As such, the thousands of proverbs that make up the stock of proverbial wisdom of all cultures represent not a universally valid but certainly a pragmatically useful treasure. In retrospect, paremiologists have amassed a truly impressive body of proverb scholarship upon which prospective paremiology can build in good faith. Modern theoretical and empirical paremiology will doubtlessly lead to new insights about human behavior and communication, and by comparing these research results on an international basis, paremiologists might add their bit to a humane and enlightened world order based on experienced wisdom. (Mieder 2000: 30–1)

Regarding the actual creation of new proverbs, let me draw special attention to Richard Honeck’s and Jeffrey Welge’s revealing article on the ‘Creation of proverbial wisdom in the laboratory’ (1997) and Stephen Winick’s ‘Intertextuality and innovation in a definition of the proverb genre’ (2003). The authors stress that actually any invented proverb-like statement is already a proverb, especially if it has many of the poetic and structural markers that are usually part of proverbial texts. Personally I continue to feel that every proverb once started that way, but each ‘invention’ must over time prove itself worthy of being accepted as a piece of wisdom by some folk group, from a family, club, profession etc., all the way to an entire nation and beyond. In other words, such ‘invented proverbs’ must gain currency and traditionality by going through a proverbialisation process (Schapira 2000), something that admittedly in the modern technological age can happen with incredible speed. Special attention should be paid to the proverbs of the youth culture and the mass media as fertile grounds for the creation and dissemination of new proverbs. But be that as it may, these theoretical paremiologists have added invaluable insights to the creative processes involved in proverb making.

Many other studies have looked at proverbs in, for example, modern literature, advertising, the mass media, graffiti, film, music, politics. In particular their appearance as modified anti-proverbs has rightfully become a fashionable undertaking, especially since they can become new proverbs (Litovkina and Lindahl 2007, Mieder 2004a, Valdaeva 2007). Our *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* has registered numerous modern proverbs that had their origin as invented anti-proverbs, to wit ‘Absence makes the heart grow wander’ based on ‘Absence make the heart grow fonder’, ‘You booze, you lose’ on ‘You snooze, you lose’, and ‘Better late than pregnant’

on ‘Better late than never’. Some new proverbs are also nothing more than so-called counter-proverbs in that they turn a positive proverb into its negative and vice versa, as for example ‘Flattery will get you everywhere (anywhere)’ contradicting ‘Flattery will get you nowhere (nothing)’, ‘Life is not a bowl of cherries’ rebutting ‘Life is (just) a bowl of cherries’, and ‘Size does matter’ undermining ‘Size doesn’t matter’. All twelve modern proverbs of these six proverb pairs are current in today’s Anglo-American verbal and written communication, and they belong in newly published proverb dictionaries.

But this is not the place to review the massive paremiological scholarship that has dealt with the multifaceted roles that proverbs play in the modern age. They all show that proverbs are alive and well, and while some may die out, new proverbs enter as times and mores change. This also means that the so-called paremiological minima need to be adjusted. As one looks at such lists of the most common proverbs of different languages, it is clear that they hardly ever contain new proverbs. This can well lead to distorted statistical numbers, for my American students tell me that they do not know the classical proverbs ‘New brooms sweep clean’ and ‘Cobbler, stick to your last’ any longer, while they all know proverbs like ‘No guts, no glory’ and ‘You can’t

*The New Yorker* (August 23, 1993), p. 60



“Garbage in, garbage out!”

kill shit' that might not be part of the cultural literacy of older people and that do not show up on questionnaires investigating the acquaintance with proverbs by various people differing in age and social background. Empirical paremiology must definitely pay more attention to modern proverbs (Chlosta and Grzybek 1995, Haas 2008, Lau 1996, Mieder 1992), and this even more so, since many Anglo-American proverbs in particular are disseminated internationally either in English or as loan translations, gaining currency and familiarity in the new cultures with unbelievable speed (Mieder 2005, Mieder 2010: 285–340). There is no doubt that the international European stock of proverbs made up of texts from Greek and Roman antiquity, the Bible and medieval Latin is now greatly supplemented by Anglo-American proverbs. Thus modern English-language proverbs like 'One picture is worth a thousand words' (Mieder 1990a) have quickly been adapted in Europe and beyond.

Finally then, the question arises of what characterises or sets modern proverbs apart from the traditional proverbs. Based on our *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs*, I attempted to deal with this query in my lengthy analysis 'Think outside the Box: Origin, Nature, and Meaning of Modern Anglo-American Proverbs' (2012). Obviously the findings cannot be repeated here in much detail, but let me at least supply the following cursory observations:

1. **Modern proverbs do exist in variants:**  
It is (is always, must be) five (six) o'clock somewhere (in the world).  
There are no problems, only opportunities (challenges).
2. **Most modern proverbs are straightforward indicative sentences:**  
A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle.  
A rising tide lifts all boats.
3. **Prevalent negative patterns:**  
*You cannot* (can't) unscramble eggs.  
*Don't* fall before you are pushed.  
*Never* give anything away that you can sell.
4. **Prevalent structural patterns:**  
*If you* can dream it, you can do it.  
A live soldier *is better than* a dead hero.  
*When you* pray, move your feet.  
*Better to* cheat *than* repeat.  
*No* victim, *no* crime.  
*There is no such thing as* a free lunch.  
*There are no* bad dogs, *only* bad owners.  
*One man's* trash *is another man's* treasure.
5. **Two-word proverbs:**  
Sex sells.  
Speed kills.
6. **Many four-word proverbs:**  
Been there, done that.  
Go with the flow.
7. **Also longer proverbs, but not very common:**  
When you're up to your ass in alligators, it's hard to remember you're there to drain the swamp.  
You can take a boy (man, girl, etc.) out of the country, but you can't take the country out of a boy (man, girl).
8. **Proverbs created as so-called laws:**  
If anything can go wrong, it will. (Murphy's Law)  
Work expands to fill the available (allotted) time. (Parkinson's Law)
9. **Proverbs attributed to individuals:**  
Old age is not for sissies. (Bette Davis)  
Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee. (Mohammed Ali)
10. **Proverbs with known originators:**  
You can't go home again. (Thomas Wolfe)  
Speak softly and carry a big stick. (Theodore Roosevelt)
11. **Proverbs based on advertising slogans:**  
What happens in Las Vegas stays in Las Vegas. (Tourism)  
Number two tries harder. (Avis car rental)
12. **Proverbs from songs:**  
There's no business like show business. (Irving Berlin)  
All you need is love. (Beatles)
13. **Proverbs from motion pictures:**  
Keep your friends close and your enemies closer. (*The Godfather*)  
Life is like a box of chocolates. (*Forrest Gump*)
14. **Animal proverbs continue to be popular:**  
You have to kiss a lot of frogs to find a prince.  
You can put lipstick on a pig but it's still a pig.
15. **Proverbial somatisms are quite prevalent:**  
Every shut eye is not asleep.  
Keep your nose clean.
16. **Proverbs from the world of business:**  
Put your money where your mouth is.  
If you have to ask the price, you can't afford it.
17. **The world of sports:**  
You can't score unless you have the ball.  
Three strikes and you're out. (Baseball)
18. **Only a few proverbs derive from technology:**  
You never forget how to ride a bicycle.  
Nobody washes a rental (rented) car.

19. **Frequent key words:**  
 Age is just a number.  
 Beauty does not buy happiness.  
 God can make a way out of no way.  
 You cannot use your *friends* and have them too.  
 You never *know* what you have till it's gone.  
 Life is a journey, not a destination.  
 Make *love*, not war.  
 You can't trust *luck*.  
 Every *man* to his own poison.  
 Time flies when you're having fun.  
 You can't *win* if you don't play.  
 A *woman's* place is any place she wants to be.

20. **Scatological proverbs:**  
 Shit happens.  
 You can't polish a turd.

21. **Sexual proverbs:**  
 No glove [condom], no love.  
 Everybody lies about sex.

It can also be said that of the 1,422 proverbs in *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* 676 (47.5 %) are clearly metaphorical, with slightly more than half the corpus (746; 52.5 %) being literal statements. But no matter, these modern proverbs are ample proof that the time of proverb making is *not* over in the modern age. People continue to rely on traditional as well as new proverbs to express their attitudes, beliefs, mores and values in wisdom sayings or, to use a modern term, sound-bites of their worldview (Hakamies 2002). The polyfunctionality, polysemanticity and polysituativity of these modern proverbs deserve the attention of paremiographers and paremiologists everywhere who, proverbially speaking, need to think outside the box as they study the fascinating world of proverbial modernity in the languages of their countries. ■

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# Julius and Kaarle Krohn Anniversary Symposium

## Helsinki, 6 September, 2013

The hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the folklorist Kaarle Krohn took place in 2013. The event passed without great attention, since in recent years there has been no tradition of remembering the father of the geographical-historical method other than on the pages of histories of scholarship. The shift, beginning in the 1960s, towards performance, analysis of sound recordings or video tapes and varied contexts of expression moved the study of historical development and the quest for original forms to the periphery, away from the field of scientific research. Performance and the moment of recording arose as central objects of investigation, along with their various ideological, intentional and interactive features. In recent times, however, interest has arisen in different quarters in investigating the historical ranges of oral tradition from new perspectives. Hence there is also a need to redefine the relationship with early twentieth-century research traditions and their methodologies and ideological features.

The Julius and Kaarle Krohn Anniversary Symposium in Helsinki on 6 September 2013 was thus an opportunity not only to look at the period of the genesis of folkloristics and the deeds of the directors of the cultural and research institutes in question, but also to consider what remains of the geographical-historical method in modern research, and what may still be of use in it.

### Father and son

Julius Krohn (1835–1888) was a prominent activist for the Finnish language and culture. He worked in the areas of literature and the Finnish language, and finally as professor of Finnish language and literature, and he wrote poetry and translated into Finnish, and edited journals, was vice-chairman and secretary of the Finnish Literature Society and laid the foundations of the geographical-historical method and the comparative research tradition. His son Kaarle Krohn (1863–1933) became the world's first professor of folkloristics or comparative folk poetry studies, as it then was. He was also a long-serving chairman of the Finnish Literature Society, and founded, along with the Danish scholar Axel Olrik, the Folklore Fellows network.

The literary historian Pertti Lassila began the An-

niversary symposium by speaking of Julius Krohn and his relations with the folk and with literature. Lassila argued that it was characteristic of Krohn to launch off from a conviction or feeling and to keep away from the politics of the day. His attitude was a combination of romantic nationalism and explicit cosmopolitanism. In his research, Julius Krohn was interested in international influences and arenas of interchange. His great idea was the adaptation of the contemporary methods of the natural sciences and literary history to folklore research. He was among the first to speak openly of the fact that Elias Lönnrot's *Kalevala* was not valid as scientific source material of folklore. He began to research the original manuscripts of the poems and to organise more elaborate fieldwork projects. When he died at just 53 in a sailing accident, his son Kaarle edited and completed many of his central works; it is often difficult to say whether they are more the work of the father or the son.

Kai Häggman has written the second part of the history of the Finnish Literature Society, *In the House of Words* (*Sanojen talossa*, 2012), which covers the years from the 1890s to the Second World War. Many changes in society took place in this period: the Great Strike in Russia and Finland, the First World War, the Russian Revolution and Finland's move to independence from Russia, and Finland's Civil War. The swift and surprising gain of independence of the small country was reflected in scientific theories and in the ways the *Kalevala*-metric poetry was discussed in public. Although the international dimension of folk poetry was still recognised in scholarship, *Kalevala*-metric poetry



Julius Krohn. Courtesy of the Finnish Literature Society Literary Archives.



Kaarle Krohn. Courtesy of the Finnish Literature Society Literary Archives.

was presented in popular discussions of the 1920s to 1930s as emphatically national. Häggman estimated that the change of Krohn's theoretical viewpoints was tied to general political changes. He began to consider *Kalevala*-metre poetry as more ancient, a cultural phenomenon stretching back to the Iron Age, and its content as more historical than mythical. Kaarle Krohn was not the only one in the interwar period to seek out ancient, military roots for the Finnish people in the Viking Age.

### Can we get behind the sources?

Most of the seminar presentations dealt with questions, related to the Krohns' work, on the possibilities of diachronic research of tradition and on the characteristics of folklore studies. Folklore professor emerita Satu Apo made a critical analysis of interpretations made within the field of geographical-historical methodology. The investigation and typologising of poems and tales was, at its best, precise and well founded, but the conclusions drawn on the basis of the typologies leaped a long way from the source materials. In being carried from one book to another, the conclusions and interpretations tended to become more weighty than in the original studies. Apo also reminded us that the Krohns developed their methodology not only on biological theory of evolution and literary textual criticism, but also under the inspiration of trends in linguistic research of the time (cf. Hafstein 2001).

Roger D. Abrahams, the key representative of performance-oriented folkloristics and perspectives based on fieldwork, made his presentation 'Comparatism Revisited' via a video recording. One of his main observations relates to what ideological baggage is carried by theoretical concepts and frames of reference bound up with nationalism (cf. Abrahams 1993). Valdimar T. Hafstein (2001) has conceptualised how the biological metaphors used in folkloristics have in various ways defined the field of study and its objectives. Researchers reassessing old methods must also carefully position themselves in relation to the various ideological frames carried by the research traditions.

The anthropologist Jamie Tehrani is one of the

modern researchers of oral traditions using the opportunities offered by computer analysis. In his presentation, 'Folktale phylogenetics: a modern evolutionary approach to historic-geographic studies in folklore', he discussed his descent diagram based on Little Red Riding Hood (Tehrani 2013). The basis was 58 Little Red Riding Hood type tales from Europe, Africa and Asia. The analytical model he used is based on his codification of themes and characters, a computer analysis made on the basis of various biological network models concerning relationships between different features, and on his interpretations of the diagrams produced by the computer. He reminded that in this analytical model the researcher is still the one who decides the level of analysis, performs the basic work and interprets the results, but the computer is able to make numerous parallel comparisons, to notice connections not so easily discerned by the researcher and to quicken the analysis. Biology and the theory of evolution are not the same as they were a century ago: new observations on the complexity of organic processes and on the intricate ways of interaction between the environment and genotypes can make the analytical models used in natural sciences more appealing from the perspectives of humanities research.

Mr. Frog is one of the modern folklorists analysing the heritage of the geographical-historical school. In his presentation, 'Kaarle Krohn and the Historical-Geographic Method in the Light of Folklore Studies Today', he investigated the relationship between theoretical frameworks, methodological adaptations and ideological baggage. He noted that in fact the geographical-historical method was a bunch of different methods, which various researchers used in varying ways. The critique has been directed, however, mostly at the overall theoretical framework, at the nationalistic ideologies associated with it and at the ways individual researchers used the methods. Nonetheless, many methods adapted by the geographical-historical school are, under different names or in different contexts, still in use by researchers. In his work analysing uses of the method, Frog (2013a, b) has stressed the significance of multiple perspectives, commitment to modern research and the specification of the level of analysis.

Recently, there has been discussion on the ways to combine the perspectives of performance-oriented synchronic research with the diachronic methods investigating the history of the texts. Satu Apo (2010: 20) has noted that it is more characteristic of modern diachronic research to contextualise different themes of oral tradition in various social, economic and historical processes than to attempt to produce simplistic diagrams of descent or reconstructions of *ur*-forms. A worthwhile example of this is the Helsinki University's Folklore Studies open-access publication, *RMN News-*

letter, in which researchers in different fields discuss to what extent and in what circumstances it is possible to carry out diachronic, comparative and source-critical research.

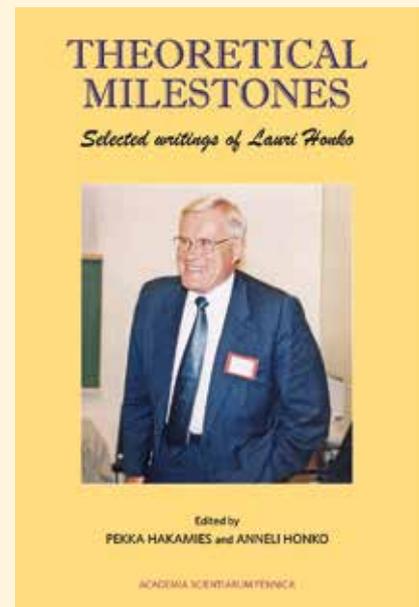
The seminar concluded with Valdimar T. Hafstein's presentation on intangible heritage, ownership and the changing uses of elements of tradition, such as an Icelandic lullaby that has taken various forms and been used in various contexts during its history. He drew a broad spectrum of examples, from histories of recording and publication, from the Brothers Grimm and the Krohns up to modern phenomena. Hafstein (2004) has reminded us that researchers' theoretical viewpoints on the nature of folklore may have many sorts of cultural, economic and political consequences, for example in patent rights, copyright and cultural politics. In essence, questions about the ownership and history of intangible heritage are bound up with classic folkloristic questions of variation, creativity, authorship and the temporal nature of tradition. It seems that we cannot avoid these questions in the process of changing our theoretical frameworks and the focal concerns of the scholarly field. If folklorists do not investigate them, others will. ■

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Honko's writings combine a typically strong empiricism with clear theoretical thought. His own theoretical framework was above all one of functionalism, within which he united other currents within folkloristics, such as 'composition in performance', 'ecology of tradition' and 'textualisation'. He was occupied by the question of how the individual performer used folklore, be he a teller of proverbs or jokes, a singer of oral poetry or a producer of written epic.

Honko was at no stage a representative of the traditional 'Finnish school' of folklore research, and origins and developments were a research challenge to him particularly from the perspective of how folklore adapts in different ways to its setting and circumstances of performance by means of variation, and how regularity may be discerned within this.

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# Folklore Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

## The Chinese Folklore Society

The Chinese Folklore Society was founded on 21 May 1983. It has 1695 registered members, and the current president is Chao Gejin. Since its founding, it has initiated a non-periodical publication for internal information exchange named *The Chinese Folklore Society Bulletin*,<sup>1</sup> and set up another publication, *The Yearbook of Folkloristics in China*, in 1999. In October 2003, the Chinese Folklore Society Network was founded; on 27 December 2008, the Chinese Folklore Network was officially launched.

As early as the 1980s, folklore was listed as one of the twenty-two planning disciplines for further development at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Currently most of the influential folklorists work here. The current president, vice-president, secretary general, executive director etc. are researchers at the Academy, and together they have participated in the enactment of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, in the argumentation over Incorporating the Traditional Festivals into the National System of Statutory Holidays, as well as in the decision-making and consultancy related to the Problems of Folk Religions and Strategic Solutions. Folklore studies at the Institute of Ethnic Literature mainly focus on epic studies, the study of oral tradition and intangible cultural heritage. The Institute of Literature has won fame in areas of Chinese folk literature, literary anthropology, mythology etc. The Institute of World Religions is at the leading edge in the field of folk religions and beliefs in China; the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology leads in studies of shamanism, visual anthropology, endangered languages and ethnic cultures.

## The Institute of Ethnic Literature

The Institute of Ethnic Literature at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, established in 1980, is an academic institution that mainly studies literature of China's ethnic groups. It conducts folklore studies through vari-

ous approaches including projects, academic journals, networks, archives and field-study centres.

There are a number of centres and organisations affiliated to the Institute of Ethnic Literature, including national academic associations such as the Chinese Ethnic Literature Society, the Uygur History and Cultural Studies Association, the Chinese Association for Mongolian Literature, and the Chinese Association for Epic Jangar Studies, and two academic centres, the Centre for Studies on the Epic *Gesar/Geser* (1991) and the Oral Traditions Research Centre (2003); the National Leading Group's Office for Epic *Gesar/Geser* is also affiliated to the Institute of Ethnic Literature.

The Institute of Ethnic Literature has been undertaking various key projects, including national projects such as Studies of Ethnic Epics in China, Collection, Collation and Translations of the Epic *King Gesar*, the Transcribed Collection of Oral Texts of the Epic *King Gesar*, the Compilation of the 'Literary History or the Literary Survey of China's Ethnic Groups' Series, and Studies on Contribution and Inter-relationship among China's Ethnic Literature, as well as key projects of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences such as Chinese Ethnic Literature Archives, the Compiled Collection of Literary Materials for China's Ethnic Minorities, the Collection of the Mongolian Heroic Epic, the Selected Texts of Tibetan Epic *King Gesar*, and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences projects, such as Epic Studies of China; the Centre for Ethnic Minority Language and Culture, and Rescuing, Safeguarding and Studying the Epic *Geser/Gesar* were listed as the major projects of the National Social Science Foundation of China in 2010.

*The Studies of Ethnic Literature*, founded by the Institute of Ethnic Literature in November 1983, is the only national academic journal in this academic field. The Chinese Ethnic Literature Network was established in August 1999. Field study centres for oral traditions have been established in many ethnic communities throughout the country – in Inner Mongolia, Guizhou, Guangxi, Qinghai and Xinjiang – through the joint

1 All publications mentioned in this presentation have been written in Chinese unless stated otherwise.



Chengdu International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage, celebrating the tenth anniversary of UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Chengdu, China, 14-16 June 2013.

efforts of the Institute of Ethnic Literature and local governments.

The Institute of Ethnic Literature is also a higher educational institution operating under the Department of Ethnic Literature of the Graduate School of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, which was established in 1980. The department offers master's and doctoral degrees in both Chinese ethnic literature and folkloristics, and has a mobile station for post-doctoral researchers; more than thirty students have received their master's and doctoral degrees here in recent years.

The Institute of Ethnic Literature has established academic relations and international cooperation with other academic institutions throughout the world in various ways such as academic visits and bilateral cooperation projects. The Institute of Ethnic Literature and the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition at the University of Missouri, USA, initiated a cooperation project in 1999.<sup>2</sup> The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Royal Netherlands Academy have conducted two terms of collaborative research, and have published corresponding research outcomes.<sup>3</sup> The Institute of Ethnic Literature, the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Litera-

ture Society and the Leiden Institute of Area Studies have jointly launched the CO-REACH project 'Documenting and Archiving of Oral Traditions: Researches and Interdisciplinary Approaches', and the three stakeholders have organised three consecutive workshops on collecting oral traditions and constructing digital archives, starting in Leiden in 2009, continuing in 2010 in Helsinki and concluding in Beijing in 2011.

The Institute of Ethnic Literature has arranged international academic conferences and academic training activities. The Institute's seminar series 'International Seminar on Epic Studies and Oral Tradition Research' is organised under the sponsorship of the Academic Division of Literature and Philosophy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, with the aim of promoting the professional training and international discourse for the sustainable development of epic studies and oral tradition research. The seminars were launched in 2009, and have taken place annually for five successive years. The Chinese Social Sciences Forum (for 2012 on literature) entitled 'International Seminar on Epic Studies' was organised in Beijing, 28-9 November 2012, and the International Society for Epic Studies was founded at the forum.

The researchers at the Institute of Ethnic Literature are leading scholars in various academic fields of ethnic literature, and act as president and general secretary in various societies and academic organisations. The senior research fellow Chao Gejin, the director of the Institute, is the first and current president of the International Society for Epic Studies, the vice-president of the International Council for Philosophy and Human Studies, an expert in Intangible Cultural Heritage at

2 The two institutes have respectively published a special issue for American Oral Tradition and Culture (in Chinese) and a special issue for Chinese Oral Traditions (in English) in their own academic journals, namely on *The Studies of Ethnic Literature* (in Chinese) and *Oral Tradition* (in English).

3 *Epics and Heroes in China's Minority Cultures*, ed. Mineke Schipper and Yin Hubin (Guangxi and Beijing, Guangxi Normal University Press, 2004); *China's Creation and Origin Myths: Cross-cultural Explorations in Oral and Written Traditions*, ed. Mineke Schipper, Ye Shuxian and Yin Hubin (Boston and Leiden, Brill, 2011)



*Jingpozu munao zongge*, or the Munao Singing Party of Jingpo people, is listed among China's Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Munao Zongge festival is a traditional festival, scheduled for the annual lunar new year lantern festival, a sixteen-day festival period. The Jingpo people at the Munao Zongge festival on 22 February 2008, in Yingjiang county, Yunnan province.

and international communication.

In the fields of mythology and folktale studies, the Folk Literature Division has created a good tradition of academic research and laid a solid foundation in data collection. Meanwhile, the researchers have been actively participating in the investigative, recording and safeguarding work

UNESCO, a member of Folklore Fellows in Helsinki, and of the International Society for Folk Narrative Researches.

### The Institute of Literature

The Folk Literature Division of the Institute of Literature at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, established in 1953, currently has five research fellows, including three senior research fellows and two associate research fellows, and also one post-doctoral researcher.

The three-volume *Chinese Ethnic Minority Literature* (1983) and *The History of Chinese Folk Literature* (1999, 2008), edited by the Folk Literature Division, both filled academic gaps. With the completion of the eight-volume *History of Chinese Folk Literature* (a key research project of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) in 2011, the Folk Literature Division has achieved a superiority in the field of historical literary study within Chinese folklore circles.

Faculty members of the Folk Literature Division focus on various folklore genres, such as myth, folk belief, epic, legend, folktale, rumour, proverbs and intangible cultural heritage, with some of their studies taking a leading position on the national level.

In recent years, with the special attention paid to the new trends of folklore theory and methodology, the Folk Literature Division has increasingly shown its competence in aspects of inter-disciplinary dialogue

for intangible cultural heritage, paying special attention to the theories on intangible cultural heritage protection work within the framework of UNESCO as implemented in China.

The researchers at the Folk Literature Division have developed new ideas and theoretical insights in contrast to established folklore theory and methodology, and their research project on the comparative study of folk literary theory between China and foreign countries has also been initiated.

The academic exchanges with overseas research institutes have been promoted since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Many scholars from the Division have been invited to the United States, Germany, Finland, Japan, South Korea, Austria, the Czech Republic and other countries for long-term or short-term academic visits. The Division has in turn invited many renowned scholars from overseas academic institutions to give lectures and to carry out academic exchanges. It has thus established good relations with its partner institutes in the United States, Finland, Germany and Japan.

The master programme of folk literature at the Department of Literature was initiated in the early 1980s, and the doctoral programme began in 2008. More than twenty students have qualified with doctorates or master's degrees since then.

## The Institute of World Religions

Founded in 1964, the Institute of World Religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is the only official national institute for the academic study of religion in China. The research achievements of the Institute focus on multi-dimensional studies of the fundamental theory of religion and the doctrines, canons, history and present situation of the major religions around the world, including indigenous Chinese religion, as well as the relationship with Chinese traditional culture. Research related to folkloristics concentrates on the fields of folk religion and folk belief.

In the research of Chinese folk religion, *A History of Chinese Folk Religions* (published in 1992), written by Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, is the representative book. Ma Xisha's major works include *Folk Religion Annals*, *The Bagua Cult in the Qing Dynasty*, *Rare Books of Chinese Baojuan* (vol. 1), and these are also important publications in this field. Many young scholars like Chen Jinguo and Li Zhihong have produced pioneering studies of folk religion as well.

The Institute's main focus within religious studies is the study of Chinese folk belief. Jin Ze published *Folk Religion in China* in the 1990s, which is the earliest monograph in that field. He also wrote a series of academic papers on the features of Chinese folk belief, such as 'Initial Research on the Gathering and Scattering Phenomena of Folk Belief', 'Folk Belief: Driving the Theoretical Research of Religion', 'The Nature of Folk Belief and its Status in the Social Cultural System', 'The Political Leanings of Folk Belief'. Ye Tao has paid attention to the belief system of Mount Tai from the perspective of historical culture and the development of China. He has published *The Study of Mount Tai Incense Society* and *Mount Tai Shigandang*. Chen Jinguo has published a monograph on fengshui, entitled *Belief, Ritual and Rural Society: The Historical Anthropology of Fengshui in Fujian, China*, which has had great influence in this field.

The research of folk belief in Taiwan and overseas is also a focus of the Institute. Zhang Xinying, one of the earliest scholars from mainland China focusing on the folk belief of Taiwan, has published papers on 'Taiwan Religion', 'New Religion Emerging in Taiwan' and so on. Chen Jinguo has a monograph *An Onlooker to the Worshipping Practice in the Pan-Taiwan Strait Area*, which is a systematic piece of research on Taiwanese folk belief and Fujian-Taiwan cultural origins.

There are also many results pertinent to folkloristics in the study of institutional religions like Buddhism and Daoism. Zheng Xiaoyun mainly studies Theravada Buddhism and the local religions of Yunnan Province, China. She has some works related to folkloristics, such as the monographs *The Study of Theravada Buddhism of China*, *Buddhism and Yunnan Ethnic Literature*, and academic papers 'Guanyin Rescue Story and Ghost-stories in Six Dynasties', 'The Story of Buddhism and the Origin of Zhaoshutun of Dai Nationality', 'The Influence of Buddhism on Han and Bai Nationality and its Comparison', 'The Regional Features of the Water-Splashing Festival in the Theravada Buddhism Area of China'.

The Institute publishes two major journals, *Studies in World Religions* and *The Religious Cultures of the World*, which are pivotal in publishing the research results on folk religion and folk belief in China. The academic journal *Anthropology of Religion*, edited by Jin Ze and Chen Jinguo, has issued four volumes since 2009, presenting many papers concerning the history and recent situation of folk belief and the religious development of overseas Chinese. From 2008, the Institute has issued its *Annual Report on China's Religions (Religious Blue Book)*, which has a special column on 'Folk Belief', reporting the theoretical trend and regional development of folk belief. ■

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# Doing Folkloristics in the Digital Age

The next **FOLKLORE FELLOWS' SUMMER SCHOOL** will take place at the University of Turku's Archipelago Research Institute on the island of Seili, 11–18 June 2015. The theme of the international summer school, the ninth to be organised in Finland, is the investigation of the internet and digital culture from a folkloristics perspective. The keynote speakers include Anneli Baran, Trevor J. Blank, Lauri Harvilahti, Robert Glenn Howard, Timothy Lloyd, Lynne S. McNeill and Jaakko Suominen.

Eeva-Maria Soikkanen



What form are the objects of folkloristic research and the questions it poses adopting in a digital age? How have cultural and social changes affected folkloristic methodology, and especially the questions that folklore seeks to pose? What are the objects of folkloristic research like in the context of the internet, where social and professional boundaries are weak? What identities are built up on the internet? What facilities does folkloristics have recourse to, when everyday communication has shifted from the oral to the digital? How does folklore arising digitally fit in with our earlier conceptions of cultural tradition and its protection? What means are archives and other storage centres for memorabilia to use to carry out their recording and cataloguing work on the internet?

Seili has a dark history, but is nowadays a place of joy and research.

The programme of the summer school consists of five themes:

- 1) online communities and creativity;
  - 2) authorship and popular culture;
  - 3) new heritage and curation;
  - 4) the internet as a field for folkloristics; and
  - 5) digital archives, interoperability and common practices.
- Each theme will occupy one day, with two plenum lectures and participants' introductions and discussions.

The summer school is targeted primarily at doctoral students, but postdocs and other researchers are also welcome to attend. The participant quota for the summer school is 20; there will be 10 tutors in all. The language of the summer school is English. The school will be open for applications from 2 June to 30 September 2014. All applications are to be sent online; guidelines for the application and the application form will be published on the Folklore Fellows' website. Participants will be selected on the basis of their application, and applicants will be informed of their acceptance by 30 November 2014. The participation fee is 500 euros, which covers tuition, accommodation and full board for the period of the school, as well as journeys between Turku city and the Archipelago Research Institute. Unfortunately Folklore Fellows cannot subsidise fees, and applicants are therefore encouraged to seek out other sources of funding and will provide letters of recommendation for those accepted to the summer school.

Hanna Oksanen

The Folklore Fellows' Summer School is arranged in collaboration with the departments of folkloristics at the University of Turku, University of Helsinki, University of Eastern Finland and Åbo Akademi University, and the Finnish Literature Society.

Further information: Professor Pekka Hakamies, University of Turku (pekhak@utu.fi); Secretary General Anne Heimo, University of Turku (anheimo@utu.fi)

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Seili harbour. The island is situated approximately 6 km from the mainland.

# Reviews

## Contextualising one hundred years of Karelian poetry

Lotte Tarkka, *Songs of the Border People: Genre, Reflexivity, and Performance in Karelian Oral Poetry*, FF Communications 305 (Helsinki, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2013), 631 pp.

In his Finnish-German edition of rune-poetry, published in 1819, H. R. von Schröter remarks in the preface: ‘As I am about to hand these songs over to the public with some introductory words, I feel doubtful whether my ability has been fully equal to the love that has led me to these songs. The honest conviction, however, that I have taken upon me something that has up to now been expected in vain from the best among the Finnish people, leads me to hope that they will excuse the shortcomings of my work.’<sup>1</sup> By now, almost two hundred years later, Finnish-Karelian rune-songs, and in particular Elias Lönnrot’s *Kalevala* in its various redactions, have been placed firmly on the map of European poetry, with translations into a great number of languages, both major and minor. There has also been a wealth of research, much of it in English (original or translated) and hence accessible to readers outside the Finnish-speaking world. When looking at the bibliography of Lotte Tarkka’s book, however, one realizes how much research there is that can be made use of only by speakers of Finnish. In this respect, perhaps, von Schröter’s remarks are not completely outdated: there is still space for more translation work. Anybody interested in rune-songs, and more generally in oral poetry, in particular epic poetry, but without a knowledge of Finnish will therefore be grateful to Lotte Tarkka for having made her study available to a wider readership, as well as to Leila Virtanen for her competent translation.

Lotte Tarkka’s study is based on a fairly large corpus of published and archival material, comprising in the main folklore texts (ca 3000, the majority from volume I of *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot*), but also historical documents and ethnographic accounts (on the corpus, see pp. 61–6, 581–2). The material is concerned with rune-singing in the parish of Vuokkiniemi in Archangel, Karelia, between 1821 and 1921, an area famous for the richness of its oral tradition, which was repeatedly visited by Elias Lönnrot and other collectors. The basic goal of Tarkka’s study

is to contextualize the rune-songs (or Kalevala-metre poetry)<sup>2</sup> with regard to the cultural praxis of rune-singing, the singers’ and their audience’s engagement with the songs, the runes’ *Sitz im Leben*, but also their place in the creative and transmissional processes of oral poetry and oral traditions. In her multi-faceted analysis a lively and fascinating account of the cultural world of Kalevala-metre poetry emerges, meticulously researched and incidentally beautifully illustrated by photographs from the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.

The book focuses on six themes, which are discussed in chapters Five to Eleven. It begins with four preliminary chapters, a general introduction, in which the methodological orientation of the study is presented (pp. 19–28), a chapter describing the people of Vuokkiniemi, their religious traditions and local culture between 1821 and 1921 (‘II. Vuokkiniemi 1821–1921’, pp. 29–52), a chapter on the corpus of the study and the genres of Kalevala-metre poetry (‘III. Rune-singing in Vuokkiniemi’, pp. 53–75) and a theoretical chapter on contextualization (‘IV. An intertextual reading of oral poetry’, pp. 76–102). In the introductory chapter it is made clear that the primary concern of this book is to study Kalevala-metre poetry in its social, historical, cultural and traditional context: ‘In this study the poems are treated as the outcome of a social praxis whose significance can only be grasped as a dialogue between individual subjects, the world outside the text – or the ethnographic setting – and the structures of meaning encoded in the poetic idiom’ (p. 21). This implies that the recorded texts are seen as variable entities, which take on specific shapes in specific performances, which are placed in specific performance arenas and which are woven into the warp and woof of traditional poetry. Hence the importance Tarkka confers on the terms ‘performativity’ and ‘intertextuality’: ‘Guided by the concepts of performativity and intertextuality, my reading of the poetry seeks to trace the cultural competence of the inhabitants of Vuokkiniemi

1 H. R. von Schröter, H. R. (ed. and trans.) 1819. *Finnische Runen. Finnisch und Deutsch* (Uppsala, Privately printed), p. v (my translation).

2 Lotte Tarkka uses the expression ‘Kalevala-metre poetry’ as a neutral descriptive term. Since her book’s orthography is American, the term is spelled ‘Kalevala-meter poetry’.

## A new publication in the FF Communications



### Songs of the Border People

Genre, reflexivity, and performance in Karelian oral poetry

by Lotte Tarkka

Rune-singing in the Kalevala meter is one of the few European oral poetics to survive the long nineteenth century. In her comprehensive study of the poems collected in the Archangel Karelian parish of Vuokkiniemi, Lotte Tarkka places this tradition within historical and ethnographic realities, contexts of local and elite ideologies, and the system of folklore genres. The songs of the border people emerge as praxis, the communicative creation of individual and collective identities grounded in a mythic-historical view of the world. The bond between the songs and their singers is articulated through an intertextual analysis of key cultural themes and the textual strategies used in their elaboration. In performance, singers and their audiences could evoke alternative realms of experience and make sense of the everyday in dialogue with each other, supranormal agents, and tradition. The poems, as powerful representations and performatives, endowed those who voiced them with godlike creative capacities, as coined in the proverb “The things I put into words, I make real.”

Lotte Tarkka is Professor of Folklore Studies at the University of Helsinki. Her areas of expertise include Kalevala-meter poetry, Finnish mythology, oral poetics and textualization, genre, and intertextuality, especially in the context of archival sources.

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during the period 1821–1921 and to describe the textual universe whose internal web of allusions and associations enabled the meaning of the poems to be processed’ (p. 22). Special emphasis is laid on the singers and ‘their perception of cultural reality’ (p. 25) and on viewing the individual texts within the full generic spectrum of Kalevala-meter poetry. This spectrum is further described in chapter III (in the section ‘Genres of Kalevala-meter poetry’, pp. 69–72), where it is stated that *ca* 500 texts in the corpus are epic in nature, with sixty plot types (p. 67). Epic poetry, however, is treated not as an isolated genre, but rather ‘as the synthetic level of the genre system, a meeting place for the voices and views from other folklore genres’ (p. 67). These other folklore genres comprise topical verse, incantations, lyrics, singer’s words, aphorisms, wedding songs, bear ritual songs, yoiks and others (pp. 68–72).

The first chapter gives a compact and cogent introduction to the main aims and theoretical paradigms of the book; the various points are taken up again in later chapters, the theoretical underpinnings especially in chapter IV. In chapter IV Tarkka focuses on the notions of context, textuality and intertextuality, notions that are critically assessed with reference to theoretical paradigms developed in performance-oriented, ethnopoetic and literary theories and illustrated by the primary material of her study. In its simplest form, the thrust of Tarkka’s study is summed up by her statement: ‘One of the aims of the present analysis is to weave the strands of contextual meaning—which were wrenched from it at the moment of documentation—back into the archived text’ (p. 79).

The following chapters are devoted to the six themes Tarkka enumerates in her introductory chapter: ‘metapoetic themes of poetry, performance, and knowledge, cosmogony, courting, the natural environment, and the otherworld’ (p. 25). The first theme is treated in chapter V (‘Metapoetic reflections’, pp. 103–67), the second, performance and knowledge, in chapter VI (‘Epic representation of song and knowledge’, pp. 168–206), the third in chapter VII (‘Matters of origin’, pp. 207–58), the fourth in chapter VIII (‘Courtship as social drama’, pp. 259–326), the fifth, the natural environment, in chapter IX (‘Forest and village’, pp. 327–82), and the sixth in chapter X (‘This world and the other’, pp. 383–424). Chapter XI, entitled ‘Between the worlds’, deals with outlaws and exiles, with the borderlands as a real space and as a topos in the conceptualization of the world in the time of upheaval after the end of World War I (pp. 426–91). Although these chapters build on one another and cross-refer to one another, they can also be read as comparatively self-contained analyses of different generic and thematic aspects of the corpus. Tarkka manages to breathe new life also into well-worn topics of rune and *Kalevala* scholarship. Myth and cosmogony, for instance, the subjects of chapter VII, are themes that have had the attention of generations of *Kalevala* scholars. This scholarship is fully acknowledged, but at the same time re-interpreted within the theoretical framework of the book. Furthermore, these thematic chapters are explicitly text-oriented, with nuanced and perceptive interpretation of specific texts, including longer texts that are discussed *in*

*toto*, such as 'Natalia's Laugh' (pp. 267–77 in chapter VIII), 'The Reindeer Song' (pp. 439–58) and 'The Refugee's Song' (pp. 469–77, both in chapter XI). Tarkka always goes back to the original documentation of the texts and occasionally opts for manuscript readings rather than editorial emendations (see p. 214, last line of SKVR I, 79 'Vuoninnen'). In accordance with the 'date-triangulation' stated in the introduction, i.e. the combination of folklore, ethnographic accounts and historical documents (p. 22), the textual analysis is supplemented by a detailed and illuminating ethnographic and historical commentary, often gaining further vividness by apposite illustrations.

For the reader specifically interested in epic poetry, chapters V and VI are perhaps the most rewarding. In the chapter on metapoetic reflection (chapter V), Tarkka addresses questions of the relationship between word and power and between word and song. The singer singing about the power of words and at the same time impersonating the speaker of powerful words is a theme that is discussed from various perspectives not only in this chapter, but also in the following chapter on epic representations of song and knowledge (chapter VI). Here the notions of the singer as transmitter of knowledge and as healer are explored with reference to the well-known 'Song of Vipunen', 'The Journey to Tuonela', and 'The Knee Wound'. The section on songs about singing in chapter V offers a number of suggestive observations on how singers perceive their singing and their performance, both as a manifestation of the voice and as a creative act. The last section of this chapter sums up neatly the keys to the rune-singing culture: 'Shaped in incantations, aphorisms, and lyric poetry, the key parameters for determining the notions of the word within the rune-singing culture are knowledge, power, tradition, and communication' (p. 166). Performance is taken up again in greater detail in chapter VI, where the discussion focuses on the role of both the singers and their audiences as well as on the occasions and settings of performance.

A book of 500 pages tightly argued text can hardly be done justice to in a review of restricted length. My comments about the contents of Tarkka's book can only skim the surface. The book contains a rich mine of material, which is presented and analysed with perspicuity and penetration. The discussion is persistently on a high theoretical level; the book also offers a dialogue with the relevant scholarship, both on general theoretical questions and on specific problems relating to Kalevala-metre poetry. Despite its length, the reader is never in danger of losing the thread of the argument; the book is well organized into twelve chapters (including an introduction and a conclusion), with consecutively numbered sub-chapters (36 in all) and further sub-titles in most sub-chapters. Lotte Tarkka's book makes stimulating reading. She writes in the introduction: 'It is the first full-scale monograph in which the socio-economic and cultural environment, the singers, and the whole corpus of Kalevala-meter poetry with all of its genres are related to each other systematically' (p. 25). In this endeavour she has brilliantly succeeded.

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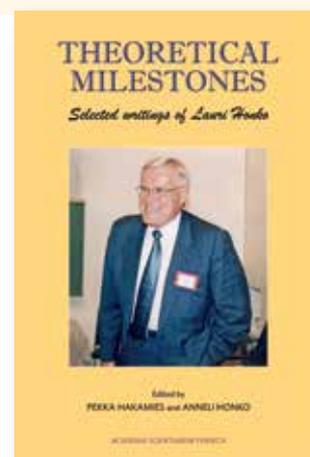
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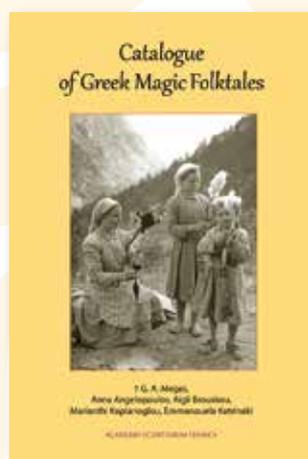


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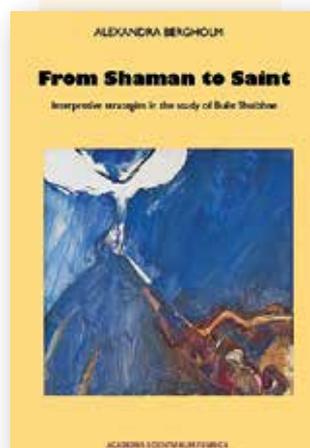
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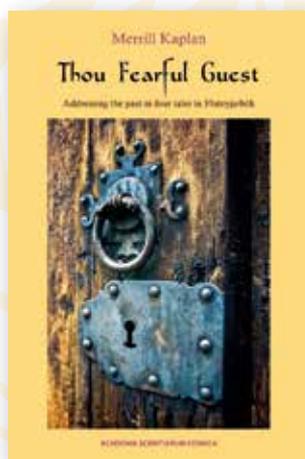
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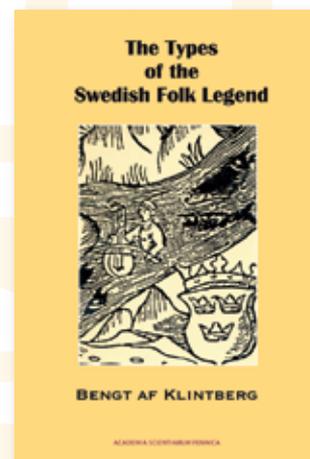
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