BOOK REVIEWS

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KEEL JA KUNST (Langugage and Art). Oxymora 3. Tallinn 1999: Underi ja Tuglase Kirjandusselts. 225 pp. Summary in English.

The development of 20th century art can be described as a struggle between the visual and verbal aspects of art. Especially during the first half of the century, the mainstream tendency was the search into the visual, and the denial of the verbal, the prohibition of literary representation and narrative. Nevertheless, in the course of its existence, every work of art is inevitably accompanied by words.

Word can be related to a picture in two ways – as a part of a picture or when a picture enters a verbal space. The title of a work is dualistic and ambiguous in this sense – on the one hand it is part of the picture, on the other hand it can be seen as merely an accompanying supplement. The most characteristic example of the intrusion of word into art is the use of script on the surface of the painting. Writings on a painting always have an aggressive, attention-attracting and tension-generating impact, even if it is unreadable or in an unknown language. Indirectly, also a depicted narrative can be considered an intrusion of language because traditionally, narrative is considered a linguistic act. Thus a narrative depicted in a picture can be treated as a verbal unit of the picture.

The role of language in art can be studied from an even broader perspective, embracing the verbal surroundings of a work – cotexts, context and criticism. Language is an unavoidable medium for analysing and describing pictures. The mediatory role of language demands also language-centred notions.

Articles presented in the book discuss the role of language in visual art; a phenomenon, that should be alien to art by its very nature. The occurrence of language in art can be perceived as a series of concentric circles. Language first appears in the title of the piece of art, and the name of the author – an inevitable intrusion of the word. This is analysed in the first part of the book, "The accompanying word". Then under discussion are the issues concerning language as deriving from the work of art itself: a linguistic paradigm and the possibility of a language of art and the problem of natural and conventional signification. The further issue of the direct intrusion of word into pictorial art – the use of script as a part of a painting, and also the problem of narrative in art are studied in the second part of the book, "Art and Word". The third part – "Verbal Bed" – deals with texts accompanying or concerning works of art, and the verbal representation of the work of art, using specific examples from Estonian art history. One possible focal point is the question: what survives of a work that no longer itself exists as a tangible object?

Mare Kõiva (ed.)
MEEDIA. FOLKLOOR. MÜTOLOOGIA (Media. Folklore. Mythology). Tartu 2000: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumi rahvaluule töörühm. 388 pp.

The present issue is the third in the series of article collections about contemporary folklore and is this time devoted more to the trends of modern society. An English version of the article collection is to be published soon.

The subdivision *Electronic Media* includes an articles on mobile phones, radio programmes, the role of television and radio in a rural district, and the role of telemedia in games played.

Mobile stories provide information about the communication modes of urban and global society as well as about attitudes towards these. Most of the tales can be
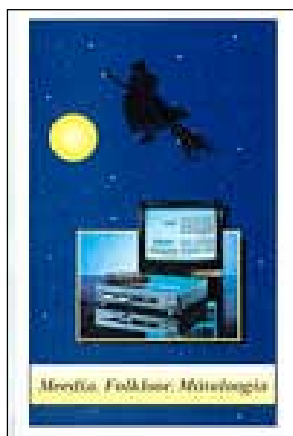
classified to the genre of legends, although all of them share similarities with jokes and fairytales.

Storytelling in the age of media dictates that electronic and printed media provide texts which follow surprising or unexpected folkloric plots. In the case of *something-about-everything* programmes of a German radio station, radio is viewed as a narrative medium, reflecting the main forms of human expression.

In Estonia, Setu parish live Orthodox Estonians who have maintained their old beliefs and songs. It is interesting how the television and radio affect the archaic traditions and discusses their role in the quick abandonment of the old.

Media acts as a mediator of games and a source of new ones – media games, specifically game-shows, have captured Estonian viewers over the last years. The impact of media to the worldview of adults and children is discussed.

In the subdivision *The Internet*, on-line shamanic writings, the history of media computers and the cross-cultural interaction of computer-mediated communication are discussed.

Shamanic writings in the internet can be classified according to their ideology and content. The article focuses on the reasons for why various religious movements are so popular today and what are these people like, who participate in these movements.

An exhaustive account of the development of multimedia from its beginning to the present day is presented, outlining the development of the companies of Apple, IBM and Microsoft and their products on the one hand and the related folklore on the other.

Computer-mediated communication in cross-cultural interaction is analysed based on the project *Babel*. The project involved e-mail communication between teams representing different cultures. The purpose of the project was to study whether the globalising world may induce a situation where the seeming similarities involve a danger for misinterpretation and conflict.

The subdivision *The Press* presents articles on mediamyths, presentation of violence in media, the ethics of visual anthropology, the

impact of mass media on a remote ethnic group, proverbial expressions and proverbs in media publications.

The changes in the essence of journalism are under discussion: the illusion of defeating the distance, which, being so pervasive and strong, affected universal processes; with mankind's triumph over the speed and distance, the world has become smaller, more concrete and perhaps better perceivable in its entirety.

The purpose of media is not to inform us as well as possible, but to attract audience as much as possible. That is why shock effects emerge, and stereotypes come into being. These tend to pass on to oral folklore and circulate both in media and individual level.

In visual anthropology ethics appears in three different levels: the ethics of film makers, ethical principles of the featured people, and the ethics of TV or cinema audience.

The best Russian speakers among Ostiaks, who are translators in the community, are often influenced by mass media. It is quite common that in the process of translating the poetics of the original language is lost, and elements typical to the outer world are taken from mass media and used instead in trying to make the concepts understandable.

Based on the articles published on July issues 1997 of *Belfast Telegraph,* the most frequent phrases used in the articles concerning 'troubles' in Northern Ireland and their persistance a year later are analysed. Under discussion are differences in the terminology used by different groups, not only about the whole situation, but also about oneself, other groups, the British Army, war-related matters and other topics.

Observing the context of proverb usage in today's newspaper texts, original articles published in two major daily papers in Estonia during two years are analysed. The author focuses on the occurrences of proverbs and the distribution of them in different columns.

The subdivision *Catastrophies* features articles on princess Diana, the legends of the ferry "Estonia" and road-side graves in Estonia.

The deification of Diana in the press and popular opinion in Britain can be suspected to have at least partly been caused by the interac-

tion of genuine emotion with powerful cultural images, resulting in the development of the symbol of princess Diana as a secular saint.

Legends concerning the sinking of the ferry "Estonia" are in many ways comparable to those spreading after the "Titanic" went down in 1912. Quite similar rumours and legends appeared simultaneously in Estonia and its neighbouring countries, Finland and Sweden.

Road-side "graveyards" are created by the marking of death places of the casualties of road accidents. These are analysed from the ethnological perspective. Another point of interest is which model (either the authoritarian or liberal) was used by Estonian journalists in their discussion concerning the same topic in 1998.

In the subdivision *Oral and Written*, folk songs in death announcements, folk song covers, chain letters and information transmission between the "our" and "their" groups are under discussion.

Texts in the death announcements of Latvian regional newspapers are called "folk songs", but are entirely missing in scientific comprehensive publications of Latvian folklore. It is possible to assure now that these songs have been created over the last decades, but are admitted to be on a par with ancient folk songs.

The chain letter of Saint Anthony is a the tradition that takes its beginning from the prayer of the Medieval saint. The author analyses different versions of four letters, trying to open the meaning that the phenomenon.

A closer look is taken at Contra, a folk singer of contemporary Estonia. In melodizing his poems, Contra has made use of contemporary rock artists and different Estonian authors, often building his text merely on the sounds of English words. The whole performance in itself touches on different cultural domains, making connections with folklore, literature, music and drama.

Inter-group information transmission is analysed based on the materials of the religious conversion movement in the 1840s and 1880s and compared to a study of turmoil among Southern Estonian Peasants in the 1840s.

Moonika Siimets, Tartu

Mari Sarv
REGILAUL KUI POEETILINE SÜSTEEM (The Runo Song as a Poetical System). Paar sammukest XVII. Eesti Kirjandus-muuseumi aastaraamat. Tartu 2000: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum.

In her monograph Mari Sarv discusses the general regularities of traditional verbal expression of runo songs. The term 'runo song' comprises here these Balto-Finnic folk songs that have the verse of approximately eight syllables, where usually short-stressed syllables are on even-numbered verse positions, alliteration and parallelism are used to a considerable extent, and that are based on certain traditional formulae, images and themes.

Based on the premise that the basic elements of the poetics of runo song form an integrated system, the functioning of which depends to some extent on the language of songs, the author views these regularities from the perspectives of regional principles and song types.

There are certain linguistic preconditions of the emergence of runo verse, specifically of the relation of metre to the prosodic qualities of a language. The author studies – mostly on the basis of Southern Estonian songs - renewals in the verse structure of runo songs, most importantly the domination of stressed pattern over quantitative, the replacement of archaisms with newer forms, the acceptance of heptapositional verses beside the octapositional, the emergence of rhyme and the blurring of the features of verse parallelism. What the author tries to do, is find an answer to the problem: to what extent these renewals might have been based on changes in language.

An in-depth look is taken of the verse structures of runo songs in different regions. Analysis is based on 15,000 verses from the classical areas of runo song in Karelia, Ingria and Northern and Western Estonia.

The ways to use alliteration depend on both the qualities of sounds and on the verse structure. Alliteration is examined in different collections of texts (Dictionary of Kalevala, runo songs of Jõhvi-

Iisaku parish and Estonian proverbs) and in different genres of runo song (lyrical, wedding and lyric-epic songs of Jõhvi-Iisaku parish).

Antoher issued addressed is the parallelism of runo songs, especially versa and word parallelism. The author considers the canonical or structural parallelism of runo song to be a certain kind of syntactic-semantic parallelism in which the scope of a parallel unit ranges from a hemistich to a verse. A separate subdivision is devoted to the interrelation of parallelism and alliteration in expressing meaning. Parallelism helps to understand the shifts in meaning that come with the use of sound patterns, i.e. they help to clarify the alliterative haze. Alliteration and parallelism are studied also in the short forms of folklore - proverbs and riddles.

Liina Saarlo, Tartu