

FOREWORD

An International Academic Interdisciplinary Conference, “From Language to Mind 3: On the Occasion of the 70th Birthday of Academician Arvo Krikmann”, took place in the Estonian Literary Museum in the autumn of 2009. A. Krikmann is indeed genuinely the embodiment of what is said in the conference title: being involved in folklore, he has strived to bring out and interpret the mindset captured in these texts.

The core research fields of the inter-disciplinary conference were the ones Krikmann has been deeply delving into during nearly 45 years of research – be it the short forms of folklore (proverbs, riddles, phraseological expressions), Kalevala-metric songs or folk humour (jokes and anecdotes). All these domains have been of interest for him from different – source history related, structural, semantic, lexicological, geographical-statistical and pragmatic – aspects, just to mention the most relevant ones. As a fruitful author, Krikmann has published nearly 120 research papers and articles in the above-described topics. Still, his research interest has not been limited to Estonian matter *per se* as he has broadened this to other Balto-Finnic languages. In addition, in his numerous works he has referred to more substantial parallels between Estonian and its kindred languages with these of more distant languages and cultures as conventionally presumed. The outcome of such encompassing is also evidenced in the international representation of the conference participants – altogether 45 presenters from 14 countries.

The current special issue of *Folklore* mainly comprises the conference papers delivered by nine presenters. With regard to the subject matter, the articles fall into two broader categories – with focus on humour and short forms of folklore.

Seppo Knuuttila (University of Joensuu) discusses the theoretical humour-related issues, pointing out the trends and tendencies of the recent years, while also relying on Krikmann’s work, and devising future visions.

The articles by Christie Davies (University of Reading) and Stanoy Stanoev (Institute of Folklore, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) represent the research of political humour – observing the societal and ideological reflections in the jokes spread in former socialist countries of Eastern Europe. In addition, Davies also analyses the reasons for the popularity of political anecdote among the members of a totalitarian society.

In his treatment on sub-cultural humour, Aimar Ventsel (University of Tartu) takes a closer look at political and social circumstances involved in identity-creation.

Outi Lauhakangas (Finnish Literature Society), Liisa Granbom-Herranen (University of Jyväskylä) and Larisa Fialkova (University of Haifa) dwell upon the subject matter of proverbs. Lauhakangas takes a retrospective look at her cooperation with Krikmann within the project of Balto-Finnic proverbs and the theoretical issues that emerged in the course of the work. Granbom-Herranen discusses Finnish proverbs as pedagogical resources in the quondam peasant society and the role of women as the users of proverbs and the transmitters of inherent moral knowledge to children.

Fialkova differentiates between medical proverbs and proverbs in medicine, giving an overview of the latter in proverb-collections, contemplating also on the application of proverbs.

The article by Piret Voolaid (Estonian Literary Museum) remains on the borderline of the above-mentioned domains. Voolaid observes the abbreviation riddles, wherein humour and socio-cultural implications play a significant role. Yuri Berezkin (Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences) dissects the essence and origin of trickster, and gives a detailed panorama regarding the spread of this motif in the belief of different peoples, with accentuation on North America and Siberia.

Rui Soares (Tavira, Portugal) provides an overview of the International Association of Paremiology (AIP-IAP), the aim of which is to enhance international paremiological research, and to organise regular conferences as one of the outcomes of this endeavour.

The conference “From Language to Mind 3” was organised as a joint effort of the Estonian Literary Museum, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Estonia, and the Cultural Endowment of Estonia.

Enjoy reading!

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