

IN MEMORIAM

LINDA DÉGH

March 18, 1920 – August 19, 2014

Linda Dégh was born in Budapest, Hungary, where she graduated from Péter Pázmány University. She began her teaching career at the Folklore Department of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. As Soviet power strengthened in Hungary, she left her homeland and started work at the Folklore Institute of Indiana University, Bloomington, in 1965. When the Folklore Institute needed an Europeanist, she became an Indiana University Distinguished Professor of Folklore and Ethnomusicology in 1982.



Linda Dégh was a folklorist and ethnologist, who specialised in the identity issues of traditional rural and modern urban communities as well as individuals, both in Europe and North America. She also focused on groupings and folkloric phenomena which had not been formerly studied, such as spiritism, use of folklore in films, person's and personal folklore, and new forms of folklore.

Dégh published 18 books and about 200 essays, which have been internationally recognised as initiators of a new approach to folklore study. In 1968, she founded the journal *Indiana Folklore*, to publish her students' studies of folklore. This journal developed and tested a new method for collecting, analysing and interpreting what is now internationally known as urban or contemporary legend. In 2001, she initiated a pilot study of Hungarian-Americans, which offered students a unique possibility to observe the essence and evolution of ethnic cultural identity.

She was an honorary member of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research and the International Society of European Ethnology and Folklore, as well as Fellow of the American Folklore Society (1971) and a member of the Folklore Fellows of the Finnish Academy of Sciences, Helsinki, Finland (1993). During her long academic career (her last lectures were delivered in 2013) she received numerous awards and research grants.

The American Folklore Society commemorated Linda Dégh at its 2014 conference in Santa Fe. Also, each participant was able to leave a personal note on the memorial board or bring an item in her memory.



Photograph by Andres Kuperjanov 2014.

Estonian folklorists will always remember the ever-energetic and industrious Linda Dégh. When looking down at folklorists and the hustle and bustle of the world, you must have found interesting material for research!

AFS & Folklore: EJJ

NEWS IN BRIEF

SCALA NATURAE: SYMPOSIUM IN HONOUR OF ACADEMICIAN ARVO KRIKMANN

On August 18, 2014, an international academic event under the heading “Scala naturae: Symposium in honour of Arvo Krikmann’s 75th birthday” took place at the Estonian Academy of Sciences in Tallinn. This marked the 75th jubilee of Arvo Krikmann, one of the most versatile and productive Estonian folklorists, senior researcher of the Estonian Literary Museum, and member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences.

Arvo Krikmann, who celebrated his 75th birthday on July 21, is undoubtedly one of the most interdisciplinary folklorists, whose contribution has been recognised a number of times, most recently in early 2014, when he was awarded the Wiedemann Prize named after linguist Ferdinand Johann Wiedemann. This distinguished award highlights his work with short forms in Estonian folklore, advancement of linguistic folkloristics, linguistics of humour, introduction of Estonian literary cultural heritage, and promotion of the humanities in general. His main fields of interest have covered source history, historiography and textology of short forms in Estonian and Baltic-Finnic folklore (including the study of the older sources of Estonian phraseology and folk rhetoric); structural levels of short forms of folklore and their interrelationships: syntax, logic, modalities, and semantics of figurative speech; classification in paremiology; theory of figurative speech, humour theories and political humour; geographical distribution of folklore and dialect lexis, etc.

All the presentations at the symposium were, to a smaller or greater extent, associated with Arvo Krikmann’s main fields of research. Along with his Estonian colleagues, his academic friends from Finland, Russia, Poland, Austria, and the United States participated.

The festive day started with complimentary speeches from Leo Mõtus, Secretary General of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, and Peeter Tulviste, board member of the Academy of Sciences. These were followed by nine academic presentations. Linguist Joanna Szerszunowicz from Białystok University, in her presentation *Priamels as Carriers of Cultural Information*, discussed sayings in the form of priamels and their culturally specific nature. Priamels are utterances, in which a string of words, phrases or short sentences are followed by a point, explaining the enumeration of previously listed elements. The speaker focused, above all, on Polish, English and Italian priamels, the comparative analysis of which indicated several cultural differences emanating from ethnic and gender stereotypes.

Professor Ülo Valk from the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore at Tartu University focused in his paper *Animals, Animism and Vernacular Theorising* on animal image in neo-animistic theories and Arvo Krikmann’s former research on animal proverbs and animal metaphors, also discussing proverbs as religious messages.

Professor Alexandra Arkhipova’s (Russian State University for the Humanities) presentation *To Fear Stalin, to Laugh at Fidel: Two Ways of Tabooing in Authoritarian Societies* focused on the official and popular discourse of name taboos on the example

of authoritarian societies. According to Arkhipova, earlier cases of prohibitions related to the name of authoritarian leaders (e.g., using the leader's name after his death) go back to the rule of the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC) in China. In this country, official name taboos persist even in the 21st century (e.g., the firewall preventing internet search of the family names of the members of the Politburo of the Communist Party). The presenter gave a brief overview of official name prohibitions and the popular nicknames of the great leader from the Stalinist period, paying special attention to the case of Fidel Castro, the influential Cuban ex-leader: the *Comandante's* private life concealed from the general public, several beliefs related to naming (e.g. saying the name out loud might evoke unwanted presence of the person or bad luck), and euphemistic (e.g. *el Caballo* 'horse') and dysphemistic (e.g. *el Camello* 'camel') nicknames. Widely spread verbal and non-verbal nicknames could serve as a favourable ground for alleviating fears and prohibitions; yet, according to Arkhipova, people in Cuba today use them rather for fun or from force of habit. In conclusion the speaker admitted that in Cuban tradition a kind of independent oral language emerged on the basis of these pseudo-taboos, euphemisms and dysphemisms, in opposition to the official political language. The presentation caused a lively discussion and questions about analogous taboos in the Russia of today.

Yuri Berezkin, Head of the American Department of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) at the Russian Academy of Sciences, discussed in his comprehensive paper *Three Tricksters: World Distribution of Zoomorphic Protagonists in Folklore Tales* the image of the trickster as a zoomorphic character in the folktales of different peoples all over the world. Based on the database of the distribution area of folkloric-mythological motifs created by the researcher himself (available in Russian at <http://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/berezkin/>), Berezkin pointed out the distribution and loan relations of three zoomorphic trickster figures – fox/jackal/coyote, hare/rabbit, and raven (crow) – in world folklore. As to geographical spread, the fox/jackal has no competitors in the whole of Europe, eastern and southern Siberia, central, south-western and southern parts of Asia, and northern and north-eastern part of Africa. In the New World, the trickster-coyote appears in the western part of North America and the trickster-fox in Central and Northern Andes, Chako and Patagonia. Hare as a trickster appears in a major part of Africa as well as in south-eastern and eastern parts of Asia, and is widely spread also in the eastern part of North America.

Mare Kõiva, leading researcher of the Department of Folkloristics, the Estonian Literary Museum, in her presentation *Invented Sacrality* compared and gave an overview of Estonian holy places of today, describing the diversity of these cultural places and interpreting their re-evaluation with the help of Hobsbawm and Ranger's concept of *invented tradition* (1983). As an example of a recently invented tradition, Kõiva mentioned the benches dedicated to Wiedemann Prize laureates in Haapsalu (a seaside town in Estonia), one of which bears the name of Arvo Krikmann as of May 2014.

Professor Peter Grzybek from the Institute of Slavistics at Graz University presented his paper titled *Estonian Proverbs: Some Linguistic Regularities*. By using quantitative linguistic analysis, he tried to find an answer to the question about the linguistic organisation of Estonian proverbs: how long they are, how long are words in a proverb, whether the length of words depends on the length of the proverb, the position of the word inside the text, etc. Grzybek based his analysis on Krikmann's article from 1967 about the linguistic statistics of Estonian proverbs, which is one of the earliest and most remarkable works in this field.



Research without friendship is worthless. Old friends: Arvo Krikmann and Wolfgang Mieder, professor of folklore and German at the University of Vermont. Photograph by Alar Madisson 2014.

Professor Pekka Hakamies from the University of Turku gave a personal-style presentation entitled *Meetings with Arvo Krikmann*, in which he shared his reminiscences of proverb projects that he had carried out jointly with the jubilarian. Hakamies gave a detailed historical overview of a Baltic-Finnic proverb project, *Proverbia septentrionalia*, launched on the initiative of Matti Kuusi in the 1970s (the database was compiled in 2000), providing background information about the Soviet-period obstacles that the Finnish and Estonian researches had to overcome.

Władysław Chłopicki from the Jagiellonian University in Kraków presented his paper titled *Power of Metonymy*, in which he first summarised the difference between metaphor and metonymy, broadly explaining them in terms of the neck (metonymy), allowing access to the head (metaphor), and referring to Krikmann's contributions to the discussion of the role of metonymy in humour research.

The last academic presentation was given by one of the honorary guests of the symposium, Wolfgang Mieder, professor of folklore and German at the University of Vermont. His paper *Futuristic Paremiology: A Plea for the Study of Modern Proverbs* included a manifest to future paremiology. In his view, modern paremiology has not paid particular interest to the collection and study of modern proverbs; therefore this field is gaining more and more importance. The main problem (which the jubilarian has also tackled in his research) is how to find and detect new proverbs if it is considerably simpler to identify the old ones, which are well known and fixed in publications dedicated

to proverbs. Mieder maintains that researchers have to start a systematic creation of a modern proverb corpus, which, despite the developing IT support, is a complicated and time-consuming process.

The academic speeches were followed by book presentations. Anneli Baran, Liisi Laineste and Piret Voolaid introduced a collection of articles in English, *Scala naturae: Festschrift in Honour of Arvo Krikmann*, published by the Scholarly Press of the Estonian Literary Museum. Alexandra Arkhipova presented the 21st issue of *Antropologicheskii Forum* (Anthropological Forum), a scientific journal in Russian, published in St. Petersburg, which, as a tribute to Arvo Krikmann, included a chapter on short forms and humour, entitled *O znamenakh, drakonakh i anekdotakh* ('About flags, dragons, and anecdotes').

It should be mentioned that the heading of the symposium and the Festschrift, *Scala naturae* (literally, 'ladder/stairway of nature') is well in line with the direction of Arvo Krikmann's academic interests. This concept with a long history has served as a basis to a philosophical theory, which is known as the Great Chain of Being. The beginnings of the theory originate in antique philosophy, and according to this all matter and life in the world forms a certain hierarchical system. Those who have an in-depth knowledge of Arvo Krikmann's academic research are well aware of how strongly he has been inspired, since the 1990s, by the chapter dedicated to the metaphors of proverbs, *The Great Chain of Being*, in the book *More than Cool Reason* (1989), written by cognitivists George Lakoff and Mark Turner. If we apply the theory of the Great Chain of Being to proverb studies, we can say that the creation and understanding of metaphors in proverbs is based on conceptual distinctions 'human-inhuman' and 'natural-cultural'.

The symposium was organised by the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum (research project IUT-2205) in cooperation with the Estonian Academy of Sciences. The programme of the event is available on the event's homepage at <http://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/2014/scalanaturae/>.

Piret Voolaid

EUROPHRAS CONFERENCE IN PARIS

On September 10–12, 2014, two of the thirteen universities in Paris – Sorbonne Paris Cité and Sorbonne Universités – organised yet another conference of Europhras, the European Society of Phraseology, at Paris-Sorbonne University, under the heading *Phraseology: Resources, Descriptive Studies and Computational Processing*. Due to political instability, the conference that was initially planned to be held in Tunisia was transferred to Europe. The organising committee was headed by Salah Mejri and Ines Sfar, who represent the French-speaking researchers of Europhras recently active in organising phraseology events. This is proved by the fact that only a few years ago a paremiology conference in cooperation with Europhras took place in Paris. Despite the name of the organisation, it assembles researchers also from outside of Europe; this year, for instance, from Japan, Taiwan, Brazil, Nigeria, Egypt, Senegal, Tunisia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Madagascar, and Northern Korea.

This year the conference listened to 183 presentations, including 10 keynote speeches, and organised 6 round table discussions. As the heading of the event suggests, the main topics were concerned with digital resources or text corpora, computational processing and descriptive studies. The programme of the conference can be found at <http://extranet-ldi.univ-paris13.fr/europhras2014/download/Programme-Europhras-2014.pdf>.

One of the focal topics was the classification of phraseology, i.e., how to operate with the multifaceted phraseological linguistic material in the easiest and most reasonable way. For one, it is difficult to elaborate universal and uniform criteria, as the concept of phraseological units covers entirely different constructions. One of the problems, for example, is the relativity of its stability, which prescribes how variants of phraseological units must be treated. There is no common understanding and most probably will never be, which is also proved by the ongoing arguments in the field, which have been continuing for decades. Different schools have different starting points for defining figurativeness and analysing linguistic material. With regard to descriptive studies, it was suggested to pay attention to the fact that researches have mainly dealt with synchronic studies, especially within the framework of discourse analysis, whereas the diachronic aspect finds increasingly more treatment. This is beneficial in investigating grammaticalisation, but also in the study of phraseology in general. So phraseology studies still focus on theoretical and methodological issues waiting to be solved.

Of the ten keynote speeches, two were delivered in English and one in German; all the others were in French. The presentation of the grand old man of proverb studies, Wolfgang Mieder, under the heading *The Proverbial Rhetoric for Women's Rights by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* was dedicated to the first American female feminists and their powerful rhetoric. Elisabeth Piirainen and Dmitri Dobrovolski, in their presentation *Idiom Motivation and Corpus Data*, discussed the problems of translating and analysing idioms on the basis of concrete language examples. Peter Blumenthal from the University of Cologne, in his presentation *Kombinatorisches Wortprofil und Phraseologieforschung*, introduced a statistical analysis of the changes in German language of journalism, which emerged in research carried out over a period of sixty years.

The round table discussions, mainly in French, focused on pragmatic phraseologisms, phraseodidactic studies, translating of phraseologisms and the aspect of diachrony in phraseology. The only discussion held in English, *Computational Phraseology in Huge Linguistic Corpora: Tools, Methods and Perspectives*, led by Jean-Pierre Colson, with the participation of Adam Kilgarriff, Gloria Corpas-Pastor and Ruslan Mitkov, was dedicated to the management of huge linguistic corpora, the nature of the Sketch Engine and possibilities of applying it in phraseology research, as well as its perspectives in the work of phraseologists.

Drawing on the English- and German-language presentations, I would like to point to the main trends and more topical issues in the studies of phraseology today: to ascertain and analyse phraseological units on the basis of language corpora, comparative study of the phraseological material of two or more languages (for example, on the basis of expressions drawn on somatics and gestures), compound words as part of phraseology and lexicographical treatment in language corpora, the role of phraseologisms in (foreign) language learning, differences and similarities of phraseological expressions in journalism and fiction, the aspect of visuality and its applications. Year after year,

there are growing numbers of young researchers still working at their doctoral theses, who take the floor at the conferences of the Society of Phraseology, talking about how they use the possibilities that modern information technology offers, and presenting the results of their work. This tendency is bound to continue, the more so that the past conference elected a board for Europhras, with a new leader – Dr Kathrin Steyer from the University of Mannheim. K. Steyer has been actively engaged in corpus-based lexicography, including phraseology, as well as in the development of the SprichWort-Plattform, a project financed by the European Union.

Within the conference framework, a workshop for the project *Widespread Idioms*, run by the project leader Elisabeth Piirainen, took place. The problems under discussion were associated with the idiomatic equivalents in different languages, material for the next questionnaires, and the content and structure of the publication completed as a result of the material collected with the help of the questionnaires. A great number of phraseologists contribute to the project and nearly all the European languages are represented; yet, representatives of smaller language groups are also welcomed to join.

The next Europhras assembly takes place in Trier, Germany, in two years' time.

Anneli Baran



Main entrance of Paris-Sorbonne University. Photograph by Anneli Baran 2014.

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE 26TH CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR HUMOR STUDIES IN UTRECHT, NETHERLANDS

The 26th Conference of the International Society for Humor Studies was held at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands from July 7 to July 11, 2014. The conference was hosted by Sibe Doosje from the University of Utrecht, with essential support from professors Jeffrey Goldstein and Giseline Kuipers. 133 participants from a number of European, Asian and American countries took part in the event, along with a few participants from Australia and Africa.

The University of Utrecht provided its historic University Hall for the main conference venue. The five-day conference started off with pre-conference tutorials. The grand old men of humour research, Victor Raskin and Christie Davies, together with the local organiser Sibe Doosje, gave lectures about recent trends in humour research in the fields of linguistics, sociology and psychology.

The following four days were filled with interdisciplinary symposia and paper presentations. One of the key topics was a follow-up to the question posed by Victor Raskin at the 2012 conference in Kraków: identifying what is funny to whom and why. Several presenters tried to pin down the essential features of the humorous. For example, Julia Taylor from Purdue University applied the Ontological Theory of Humor (Raskin & Triezenberg 2005; Taylor 2009, 2010) to witticisms in online social media like Facebook. The fuzziness and contextuality of these data explains well why not many humour researchers want to go outside canned jokes, into studying speech (or CMC) instead.

In fact, many of the papers used internet humour as the main source of their data. A number of these explicitly tackled the unique aspects of this material, focusing on its intertextuality, multimodality and globality. Limor Shifman and Lilly Boxman-Shabtai identified six textual attributes that augment polysemy in mediated humour, including the display of un-stereotypical stereotypes applied to joke targets, self-deprecating humour, or the situation in which a negative character “wins” a situation, etc. Among others, they pointed at polysemy embedded in the intertextuality of the text. Although this term has a different and wider array of connotations in literature studies, it describes the processes that enable the globalisation of humour quite adequately. Jan Chovanec from Masaryk University in Brno also argues that much of the humour contained in YouTube videos is intertextual and relies on background knowledge assumed to be shared by the recipients; the success of such a meme is, to a great extent, decided by the success of the references it contains. It follows logically that the more various references there are, the greater are the chances of its appeal to wider audiences, as also mentioned in the presentation of Liisi Laineste.

Among the various genres discussed during the conference was stand-up. Sharon Lockyer from Brunel University in the UK gave an overview of the first year of the Centre for Comedy Studies Research, which has recently launched a project on comedy and disability. Disability has a long history within comic discourse – from court jesters to freak shows to the disabled making fun of their own disabilities. She has conducted interviews with disabled stand-up comedians and studies the questions of laughing at the forbidden, self-deprecating humour and empowerment in comedy. Eddie Naessens from Trinity College in Dublin, also a stand-up comedian himself, elaborated further

on the interaction between the performer and the audience, stressing that a comedian has to “manage the room”, i.e., work with the audience to create the atmosphere. He or she can be seen as performing on a stage that is missing the fourth wall – the invisible line between him/her and the onlookers.

When talking about the audience’s reactions, the question of failed humour inevitably arises. Moira Marsh from Indiana University in the US has dwelled upon this topic for several years by now, and gave her presentation on public reactions to a century-old hoax that was referred to as “gruesome” by the journalists of that time. Studying the context and reactions, she suggested that amusement is not something that happens to us, but something we choose to do, sometimes thoughtlessly, sometimes deliberately. She also claimed that an essential constituent of humour perception is disagreement – a sudden comprehension that there is something wrong in this picture; not for “us”, but for “them”. Of course, a joke can also function without a target, but laughing at someone adds enjoyment.

Through the past decade, there has been a growing number of participants from Asian countries. For instance, Japanese humour research is on a very high level, especially in describing humour from a folkloric perspective.

For those interested in the whole range of topics addressed at the 26th ISHS Conference, the programme and abstracts are available at the conference home page at http://www.eventure-online.com/eventure/welcome.do?type=public&congress=7_14015.

According to a long-standing tradition, several young researchers received awards for their work in humour studies. This year Jennifer Hofmann received the Don and Alleen Nilsen Young Scholars Award for her paper, *The Perception of Facial Features of Intense Laughter in Animations*. Three students received Graduate Students Awards (GSA) for their work: Tristan Miller for *Towards the Automatic Detection and Identification of English Puns*, Sarah Seewoester Cain for her *When Comedians Laugh: Laughter as a Signal for Meta-Communicative Shifts in Monologue Performances*, and Dick Zijp for *Humor, Authenticity and Absorption: Re-Thinking the Conservative Functions of Humor*.

Awards were allocated not only to students of humour research, but were also presented to long-standing members of the ISHS. Victor Raskin received a well-deserved ISHS Lifetime Achievement Award for his service and scholarly work in humour studies.

The next ISHS conference will be held in Oakland, California, on June 29 – July 3, 2015.

Liisi Laineste

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**THESIS DEFENCE: TIINA SEPP
PILGRIM'S REFLECTIONS ON THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO
AND GLASTONBURY AS EXPRESSIONS OF VERNACULAR
RELIGION: A FIELDWORKER'S PERSPECTIVE**

On 28 April 2014, Tiina Sepp defended her PhD thesis, *Pilgrims' Reflections on the Camino de Santiago and Glastonbury as Expressions of Vernacular Religion: A Fieldworker's Perspective*, at the University of Tartu.

Tiina Sepp's dissertation makes valuable contributions to the fields of vernacular religion, belief narrative, fieldwork – based methodology and pilgrimage studies. She has, above all, significantly enhanced the folkloristic study of the Camino de Santiago, and in addition has perceptively contributed to the study of Glastonbury, a later addition to her research field.

Her contributions fall into four main areas, which are subsequently dealt with one by one, although of course it is in the skilful intermingling of themes, genres, academic literature, fieldwork experiences, scholarly reflexivity and place-related study that the strengths of this dissertation lie.

1. Vernacular religion

Tiina Sepp has firmly situated her research in the academic context of vernacular religion, defined by Leonard Primiano as “an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the religious lives of individuals with special attention to the process of religious belief, the verbal, behavioral, and material expressions of religious belief, and the ultimate object of religious belief” (Primiano 1995: 44).

Because the focus of study in this approach is, in Primiano's words, “religion as it is lived: as humans encounter, understand, interpret and practice it” (Primiano 1995: 44), this approach “highlights the power of the *individual* and *communities of individuals* to create and re-create their own religion” (Primiano 2012: 383).

For this reason, the author has been careful to record the heterodox experiences and the heteroglot accounts of the people with whom she has worked. She has quite self-consciously avoided privileging the views or expectations of representatives of institutional religion over the lived experiences and perceptions of those self-identified pilgrims she encountered in relation to the Camino, for example.

As Professor Valk and I counsel in the Introduction to our book on *Vernacular Religion in Everyday Life*, Tiina has ‘observe[d] and capture[d] the flow of vernacular discourse’ and perceptively ‘reflect[ed] on it’ (Bowman & Valk 2012: 2).

As her fieldwork has been based in two rather complex locations, the author has *also* reinforced Primiano's comments in relation to vernacular religion of the “bidirectional influences of environments upon individuals and of individuals upon environments in the process of believing” (Primiano 1995: 44) and, in this case, in the process of *narrating* belief, which brings us to the second area in which the candidate has made a significant scholarly contribution.

2. The content, uses, and construction of belief narrative

Primiano comments that “one of the hallmarks of the study of religion by folklorists has been their attempt to do justice to belief and lived experience” (Primiano 1995: 41), something that has been successfully achieved by Sepp in relation to belief narrative.

Particularly in her research on the Camino, the author records and analyses the wide range of belief narratives expressed by pilgrims, thereby framing pilgrimage as a narrated journey, potentially including miracles, supernatural encounters and spiritual experiences.

Narrative is extremely significant in relation to pilgrimage, for as Jill Dubisch (1995: 126) has noted, “there is a large oral tradition, consisting of pilgrims’ own experiences and those relayed to them by word of mouth, a large part of which is not found in the literature of the church”. Through the many opportunities presented to the author by participating in the Camino on a number of occasions, and in a range of roles – pilgrim, hospitalera, researcher – she has collected numerous narratives and has commented perceptively on their significance. These narratives have been meticulously and non-judgementally presented for what they are – expressions of belief. As folklorist Gillian Bennett points out, belief stories

- 1) illustrate current community beliefs;
- 2) tell not only of personal experiences but also of those that have happened to other people;
- 3) are used to explore and validate the belief traditions of a given community by showing how experience matches expectations. (Bennett 1989: 291)

Tiina Sepp has not simply presented narratives as text; she has skilfully contextualised them to reveal the varied perceptions of interventions by other than human beings revealed in them, and demonstrated both overt and covert uses of narrative from entertainment to exemplar.

The author has also drawn attention to the role and influence of traditional pilgrim tales, published personal accounts of walking the Camino (her own included), New Age literature and fiction in framing expectations of, and experiences on, the Camino.

If the Camino is a narrated journey, Glastonbury is rather a narrated destination, a location whose multivalence is to a large extent created by and reflected in narrative. While the candidate appeared to move away from belief narrative, or rather to some extent became embroiled in competing narratives around pilgrimage, when the author had a narrative of her own to relate, the ‘green scarf story’, she returned to a familiar territory, demonstrating the importance of narratives, here in the form of explanations, as expressions of belief.

The third area in which she has made a significant contribution relates to methodology.

3. Methodology, particularly in relation to fieldwork and reflexivity

In her very first sentence, Tiina Sepp states that “this dissertation has been completed through close collaboration between me and my informants”, signalling, I think, the importance for her of interpersonal and dialogic relationships.

American folklorist David Hufford, in what I consider a ground-breaking article, *The Scholarly Voice and the Personal Voice: Reflexivity in Belief Studies*, writes:

Reflexivity and the strong light that it shines on the importance of viewpoint and perspective urges on us a multiplication of perspectives. We can never have a set of observations made from everywhere any more than we can have a view from nowhere, but the more views we consider, the more reason we have to be hopeful about our conclusions. (Hufford 1995: 60)

I believe that the author has succeeded in shining some light on the importance of viewpoint and perspective.

Sepp emerges from these studies as a highly skilful and experienced fieldworker, both engaged and engaging. She has given considerable thought to the conduct of fieldwork, and indeed the conduct of the fieldworker, particularly in relation to her third article, somewhat sensationally entitled, *Interview as an Act of Seduction*. This article displays considerable candour and a high degree of reflexivity, but manages to avoid the self-indulgence that reflexivity can sometimes induce in researchers.

To quote Hufford again:

The tendency to count disbelief as the “objective” stance is a serious, systematic bias that runs through most academic studies of spiritual belief.

If impartiality in belief studies cannot consist of having no personal beliefs, then impartiality must be a methodological stance in which one acknowledges one’s personal beliefs, but sets them aside for scholarly purposes. Recognising that each of us has a personal voice, for research purposes we choose to speak instead with our scholarly voice. (Hufford 1995: 61–62)

The author’s reflections on her own ‘situated-ness’ in the fieldwork process, the potential impact of her personality, her own preferences – and to some extent prejudices – in relation to authority and institutional religion help her to recognise the personal voice that must exist in tension and negotiation with her scholarly voice. This is also relevant to the liminality of the fieldworker and the author’s recognition that “as researchers and fieldworkers [we] will always have one foot in the academy and one foot out”.

Although the author talks of emic and etic, and putting on her pilgrim’s hat and her folklorist’s hat, it is obvious that there are not simply two different positions, but a spectrum, along which the fieldworker constantly moves and recalibrates.

So, I think it is fair to conclude that the author has tackled difficult methodological issues, in ways that problematise but also progress the field.

4. Pilgrimage studies

Tiina Sepp said in her comments on her dissertation that when she finished her fourth article, she realised that the process of her research had directly (and unintentionally) reflected the history of pilgrimage studies (p. 22). She had moved, metaphorically, from Turnerian *communitas* to Eade and Sallnow’s contestation. This in turn highlights the

extent to which we as scholars frame our research and the impact this might have in relation to what we look for and what we see. Even in the author's first article, although she concluded that the experience of *communitas* was central to being a pilgrim, contestation was there. For example, this was amply demonstrated in the diversity of motivations, experiences and disharmony recorded by her in conversations and narratives.

Professor Ülo Valk and I have observed that "genre [--] has considerable power to illuminate the processes, how texts are produced, perceived and understood. As genres emerge and grow historically, they mix the voice of tradition with individual voices, and instead of being univocal, they are always ambivalent, dialogic and polyphonic" (Bowman & Valk 2012: 8). Producing nuanced, contextualised, folkloristically informed accounts of belief narratives on the Camino undoubtedly has been a valuable contribution by the author to the scholarship of the Camino.

Simon Coleman and John Eade in *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion* comment that in contemporary pilgrimage we see "diverse processes of sacralization of movement" and the idea of "meta-movement – the combination of mobility itself with a degree of reflexivity as to its meaning, form and function" (2004: 18). I think the careful recording of the extent to which hierarchies of pilgrim identities were formed in relation to means of transport, for example, contributes to such discourse.

One of the Glastonbury websites claims:

The growing interest in sacred places has led to a modern awakening in the value of Pilgrimage. In every age there have been Pilgrims travelling to the sacred sites and places of the world as an act of spiritual devotion to their particular creed [--] The difference now is that the modern Pilgrims visiting the sacred places are of many different beliefs and often of no belief.

They do not necessarily come to be in touch with any specific divinity but they come to be in the energies of the sacred places and by being in these places to understand themselves more clearly and to see their role in the world.

Tiina Sepp's fieldwork and reflections on the role of energies as a focus of pilgrimage, and discourses around perceptions of male and female energies and competing energies helpfully develop this strand within the study of contemporary pilgrimage.

Eade and Sallnow have concluded that major shrines and pilgrimage sites have the "capacity to absorb and reflect a multiplicity of religious discourses, to be able to offer a variety of clients what each of them desires" (Eade & Sallnow 2000: 15).

Pilgrimage as a term and concept *is* contested, used in different ways by different scholars as well as by participants. I note that even for informants in the first article, pilgrimage could be a difficult concept. Pilgrimage studies, nevertheless, is a vibrant field, enjoying increasing interdisciplinary interest. Further additions of vernacular religious perspectives and genre-informed, folkloristic fieldwork data of the type produced by the author undoubtedly strengthen the field.

These are some of the contributions to scholarship that I believe have been made by this dissertation.

In the following I briefly discuss some issues related to the contrasting locations chosen by the author as foci for her research.

The Camino de Santiago and Glastonbury

Kim Knott (2005: 33) claims that the “particularity of a place arises from the complexity of its social relations and the sum of the stories told about it” and both the Camino and Glastonbury undoubtedly involve complex social relations and numerous stories. But there are significant differences.

As the author has indicated, on the Camino de Santiago the focus is on the journey, getting to the destination, reached by a variety of highly structured routes with established infrastructures (such as pilgrim hostels). Although people undertake the Camino for a variety of reasons – religious, personal, therapeutic, spiritual, self-discovery – they nevertheless appear willing to conform to this structure, and it seems that the majority want to have the *compostela* that confirms their status as pilgrim. The stress, though, is on the Camino as journey. Belief narratives, as presented in this dissertation, tend to relate to supernatural help in *getting* there, stories relate to appropriate behaviour by people ‘on the road’.

However, if the Camino is Europe’s pilgrimage superhighway, with service stations and to some extent policed by the Roman Catholic Church, Glastonbury is by comparison a country lane. There is nothing like the same formal pilgrimage infrastructure of the Camino, no unified tradition of what pilgrimage in the Glastonbury context might mean, and certainly something like the official *compostela*, certification of one’s credentials as a pilgrim, is simply impossible to conceive of in the Glastonbury context. While pilgrims arriving at the cathedral in Santiago de Compostello can engage in centuries old rituals such as hugging the statue of St James, Glastonbury Abbey, which was the traditional focus of Christian Pilgrimage, is a ruin as a result of the 16th century Reformation.

Pilgrimage and journeying in relation to Glastonbury, in contrast to the Camino, is focussed on the destination, and therefore it is anticipated that extraordinary experiences will result from **being there**. Belief narratives in Glastonbury tend to reflect spiritual encounter and instances of synchronicity or meaningful coincidence once there. While people might and do visit all year round for spiritual purposes, *formal* pilgrimage activity in Glastonbury – as indeed in many traditional pilgrimage sites and shrines in Europe and beyond – has been marked by the procession.

There were, therefore, significant adjustments to be made in relation to fieldwork in these two sites, including terminological and contextual adjustment and expectations.

Conclusions

Accepting, as Primiano claims, that “all religion is both subtly and vibrantly marked by continuous interpretation even after it has been reified in expressive or structured forms” (Primiano 2012: 384), we can comprehend that the study of pilgrimage and the study of vernacular religion *per se* can be enriched by *anticipating* heterogeneity, individual creativity and ‘non-conformity’, as the author has succeeded in doing. Focusing on pilgrimage as one aspect of religion, “as it is lived: as human beings encounter, understand, interpret, and practice it” (Primiano 1995: 44), folkloristically recording and analysing the stories told within the contexts of pilgrimage processes and sacred sites, and the myriad expressions of belief revealed thereby, can only lead to an ever deeper

understanding of the phenomena of vernacular religion. For such academic work to be conducted by a methodologically sophisticated and reflexively self-aware research is ideal.

As I said at the start, it is in the skilful *intermingling* of themes, genres, academic literature, fieldwork experiences, scholarly reflexivity and place-related study that the strengths of this dissertation lie, and Tiina Sepp has indeed made valuable scholarly contributions.

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