

Anastasiya Fiadotava (Estonian Literary Museum). The above-mentioned researchers gave a lecture titled “From Venus De Milo to Nike Ads: The Glocalization of Art References in COVID-19 Humour in Central and Eastern Europe”.

The theme of humour was continued after the workshop “Art in Covid-19 Humour”, with a presentation of the humour collection of Ivar Kallion. The venue of the event was the main hall of the Literary Museum. The event was followed by a visit of the conference participants to the Tartu Art Museum. After a five-day intensive scientific programme, the conference organizers announced its closing on the evening of 22 September with a cultural programme, an Indie group TARAI performance, preceded by a workshop on Estonian singing with **Taive Särg** (Estonian Folklore Archives, Estonian Literary Museum), who spoke about Forest Song Festivals, and **Janika Oras** (Estonian Folklore Archives, Estonian Literary Museum) on the topic “An Appetite for Singing. Singing Experiences of Elderly Singers in Estonia in the Context of Historical Singing Practices”. The content of the lectures given at the 14th Annual Conference of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies, and the 5th International Conference “Balkan and Baltic States in United Europe: History, Religion and Culture V”, is to be published in a book in 2023.

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WORKSHOP “ART IN COVID-19 HUMOUR”

The workshop “Art in COVID-19 humour” took place on 21 September 2022 within the framework of the 5th international conference “Balkan and Baltic States in United Europe: History, Religion, and Culture V”, which was held in Tartu, Estonia, on 18–22 September 2022. The project participants presented the research results of the year-long project “Study of Art in COVID-19 Humour”, which was sponsored by Jagiellonian University (Krakow, Poland).

The panel consisted of 13 researchers representing 10 countries and an array of different academic disciplines: folkloristics, linguistics, literature studies, art history, and communication studies. Using the material from the International Coronavirus Humour Corpus, which that was collected during the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic and consists of more than 12,000 humorous items, this workshop aimed to analyse COVID-19 humour, using references to art (e.g., painting or music) and popular culture (e.g., film, TV series, literature, etc.) as the area where the global and local collide and interweave, including some hybrid forms. In particular, the workshop focused on the Central and Eastern European and Baltic cultural spaces, looking into how local and regional traditions

are mixed with transnational references in order to produce humorous effects. Each of the presentations of the workshop was co-authored by researchers belonging to different countries and often also to different academic disciplines. This ensured a versatile approach to the data and enabled making cross-cultural comparisons on different levels.

The workshop consisted of 5 presentations and a discussant's comment. The first presentation titled "Turning 'Unknown' Paintings into COVID-19 Memes as a Means of Humorous Criticism" was delivered by Villy Tsakona (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) and Dorota Brzozowska (Opole University). It revealed that the recontextualization of lesser-known paintings helped to use them to criticize COVID-19 measures and peoples' reactions to the "new normal" of the pandemic, as well as the fact that by using the "unknown" paintings meme creators were more flexible as they were not bound by the cultural connotations of these artworks. In the next presentation titled "Mona Lockdown: The Use of Internet Memes in Humorous Corona Discourse" the focus was on the well-known artworks, such as "The Last Supper" and "Mona Lisa" by Leonardo da Vinci and "Scream" by Edvard Munch. The authors, Ralph Müller (Universität Freiburg, Institut für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft) and Agata Hołobut (Jagiellonian University, Kraków) adopted the General Theory of Verbal Humour to the multimodal meme genre and outlined the dominant themes of these humorous works. The issue of art was approached more broadly in the presentation "From Venus de Milo to Nike Ads: The Glocalization of Art References in COVID-19 Humor in Central and Eastern Europe" by Władysław Chłopiccki (Jagiellonian University, Kraków), Delia Dumitrica (University of Rotterdam), and Anastasiya Fiadotava (Estonian Literary Museum). By drawing upon art and popular cultural references in Polish, Romanian, and Belarusian humorous COVID-19 memes, the authors categorized the data according to the degree of adaptation to the particular culture of origin, thus dividing the corpus into local, regional, global, and glocal memes. Saša Babič (ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana) and Jan Chovanec (Masaryk University, Brno) further broadened the focus on popular culture in their presentation "Cartoons and Memes: Images from Childhood Used as Expressions in Adulthood". The researchers came to the conclusion that the intertextual popular cultural references in these memes are connected to the "hypermemonic logic" that guides the replication of images as well as the performative self which in this case indicated a contrast between pre-pandemic and new realities. The final presentation by Tsafi Sebba-Elran (University of Haifa) and Rita Repšienė (Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, Vilnius) was titled "'If God Asks...': Hidden Emotions and Folk Beliefs in the 'Mythical Meme' of the Pandemic", which explored the clash between the world of archaic mythical and religious references, on the one hand, and the realm of digital internet memes, on the other. The authors illustrated how these references contributed to the expressions of feelings and helped to regulate emotions during the initial stages of COVID-19 pandemic.



*Ralph Müller (Universität Freiburg, Institut für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft) and Agata Hołobut (Jagiellonian University in Kraków).
Photograph by Anastasiya Fiadotava.*

The panel presentations were followed by a discussant's commentary. Discussant Anna Pięcińska (University of Warsaw) summed up the key aspects of the presentations and pointed out that most of the humorous memes that employ art references are not based on the art per se but rather on its visual elements that have some inherent incongruities and inspire the creativity of the meme-makers.

The presentations of the workshop and the discussant's commentary provided different perspectives on the use of art and popular culture in the COVID-19 humour. The workshop also opened up several directions for future studies of multimodal humorous forms and the role of intertextuality in memes – hopefully, these directions will be explored in-depth during future conferences and academic projects.

Anastasiya Fiadotava