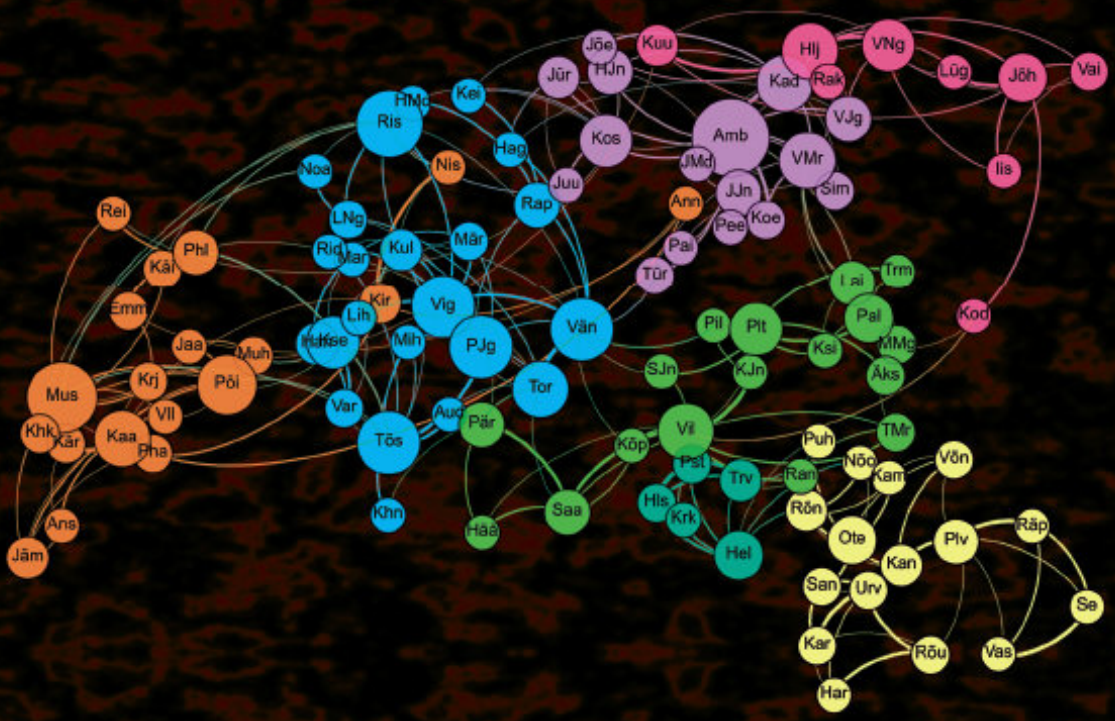

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SEVEN YEARS OF THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN ESTONIAN STUDIES: DIALOGUES WITH ESTONIA

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The current issue of the journal Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore bears witness to seven years of fruitful cooperation between the members of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies (CEES). The CEES (supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund) is a project brought together in 2015 by a group of renowned scholars of Estonian humanities research, led by Mare Kõiva at the Estonian Literary Museum. They aimed to achieve an interdisciplinary and transnational perspective, mapping and modelling Estonian linguistic and cultural patterns created by the local communities and their historical and modern trajectories of cultural diversity. During the seven years, the CEES research has been related to the five focal areas of study expressed in a wide temporal-geographical context: (1) the Estonian culture, (2) its diasporas and related ethnic groups, (3) local adaptations of global cultural trends, (4) expressions of contemporary culture, including

transmedia texts, and (5) integration of IT and digital humanities to develop novel methodological solutions for researching the humanities. The CEES as an umbrella organisation brings together many interdisciplinary fields. The research is based on huge corpora of language and cultural phenomena compiled, archived, and made available by the CEES participant institutions and their partners.

Today, the CEES assembles more than 60 internationally recognised researchers and more than 50 post-graduate students from six institutions: the Estonian Literary Museum (initiator and holder of the project), the University of Tartu, the Institute of the Estonian Language, Tallinn University, the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, and the Tallinn University of Technology. All institutions involved in the CEES have a common goal of advancing Estonian studies. Head of the CEES consortium is Mare Kõiva, Executive Manager Piret Voolaid (2016–2022; since 2023 Liisi Laineste), project managers Meelis Roll and Anne Ostrak.

Twelve interdisciplinary research groups were established at the very start of the CEES project: corpus-based linguistic, literary, and folklore studies (led by Helle Metslang, Heiki-Jaan Kaalep); digital humanities and linguistic technologies (led by Liina Lindström, Einar Meister, Mari Sarv); historical expression and cultural practices (led by Epp Annus, Kristiina Ross, Mari Sarv); life writing studies (led by Irina Belobrovtseva, Maarja Hollo); literary studies and textual culture (led by Liina Lukas, Arne Merilai); migration and diaspora studies (led by Leena Kurvet-Käosaar, Triinu Ojamaa); narrative studies (led by Marina Grišakova, Eda Kalmre); religiosity and myth studies (led by Tõnno Jonuks, Mare Kõiva); speech and music studies (led by Jaan Ross and Marju Raju); studies of contemporary culture (incl. the media) (led by Liisi Laineste, Saša Babič, Piret Voolaid); gender studies (led by Eve Annuk); and last but not least, ethics and philosophy of mind and language (led by Margit Sutrop). The researchers have successfully worked together to analyse data, organise seminars and workshops, publish special issues and collected volumes, and popularise their joint research results of their explorations of the Estonian culture in a globalising context.

Thanks to the CEES, the compilation and editing of monographs and thematic collections by recognised scholarly publishers in the field of Estonian humanities research has grown exponentially. Research results that have been published in monographs, collections of articles, and special issues of journals, are numerous and the numbers speak for themselves: more than 700 publications indexed in Clarivate Web of Science (WoS) and ERIH PLUS, and equally many articles in publications published by other recognised international publishers. More than 110 issues of peer-reviewed journals and 140 volumes of articles

and monographs have been published, and the CEES researchers are editors and contributors to most of Estonian humanities journals and scholarly series.

A great part of Estonian language and culture -related text corpora and databases are based on the work of the scholars of the CEES. Comparative fieldwork and extensive experimental studies have been conducted in Estonia and beyond.

Popularisation of results has taken place on all social levels and has reached various audiences, including academic research networks, cooperation partners, and professional organisations. The research teams vigorously participate in scientific international and interdisciplinary communication, using various channels for disseminating research results. This targets various age and interest groups including educational and cultural institutions, professional organisations (e.g. Academic Folklore Society, Estonian Association for Applied Linguistics, Estonian Society for Digital Humanities, Estonian Life Stories Association, Estonian Musicology Society, etc.) and others. The CEES has witnessed the advance of a next generation of scholars. During the working period of the CEES, more than 70 new doctoral theses have been defended, 13 doctoral school events were organised. Annual doctoral schools have been organised by the CEES in cooperation with the Graduate School of Culture Studies and Arts (GSCSA), side by side with actions, science schools, and conferences targeted at young people (e.g. HUNTS).

The conference series of the CEES, "Dialogues with Estonia", has been organised twice a year from December 2015 onwards. Listening to the presentations has always been open to the public free of charge (as have been all other academic events organised by the CEES). The CEES has so far organised sixteen big international and interdisciplinary conferences with a wide and inclusive attendance of academic and non-academic participants:

1) Annual conference of the CEES and annual 59th Kreutzwald Days conference "Dialogues – I. Communication, Politics, Text Creation" December 16–17, 2015, in Tartu (programme and abstracts at http://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/2015/krzwld/), 100 participants.
2) The opening conference of the CEES "Interdisciplinary Dialogues of Estonian Studies", April 28–29, 2016, in Tõrve village, Jõgeva County (programme and abstracts at http://www.folklore.ee/CEES/2016/konve_1.htm), 75 participants.
3) Annual conference of the CEES and annual 60th Kreutzwald Days conference "Oral and Written in Culture: Connections and Collisions", December 12–13, 2016, in Tartu (programme and abstracts at https://folklore.ee/CEES/?id=6&sid=1), 100 participants.

4) Annual Conference of the CEES "Across Borders: Cultures in Dialogue", April 27–29, 2017, in Tartu (programme and abstracts at http://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/AcrossBorders/2017/), 115 participants.
5) Annual conference of the CEES and 61st Kreutzwald Days conference "Variation in Language, Literature, Folklore, and Music", December 7–8, 2017, in Tartu (programme and abstracts at https://www.folklore.ee/CEES/2017/akonve_e.htm), 160 participants.
6) Spring Conference of the CEES "Let Us Be Europeans, But Also Become Estonians! Dialogues with Estonia", April 27–28, 2018, in Rakvere (programme and abstracts at https://www.folklore.ee/CEES/2018/kevad/), 70 participants.
7) Annual Conference of the CEES "On the Move: Migration and Diasporas", November 29–December 1, 2018, in Tartu (programme and abstracts at https://www.folklore.ee/CEES/migrationdiaspora2018/), 130 participants.
8) Annual Conference of the CEES "Mythology of Metamorphoses: Comparative & Theoretical Perspectives", June 10–13, 2019, in Tartu (programme and abstracts at https://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/2019/mythолog/), 90 participants.
9) Annual Conference of the CEES "Perception and Performativity in Arts and Culture in the Age of Technological Change", September 5–7, 2019, in Tartu (programme and abstracts at https://www.folklore.ee/CEES/2019/performance/), 80 participants.
10) Annual Conference of the CEES "Between Individual and Collective Trauma", March 12–13, 2020, in Tartu (programme and abstracts at http://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/2020/trauma/), 40 participants.
11) Annual Conference of the CEES "Dialoogid Eestiga: Kaljujoonistest robootikani", October 20–21, 2020, in MS Teams (programme and abstracts at https://folklore.ee/CEES/2020/dialoogideestiga/kava.pdf), 70 participants.
12) Annual Conference of the CEES "Arvo Pärt – Texts and Contexts", October 15–16, 2021, in Arvo Pärt Centre in Laulasmaa (programme and abstracts at https://www.arvopart.ee/arvo-pardi-keskus/keskusest/konverents/), 55 participants.
13) Annual Conference of the CEES "Ilmar Laaban. Luule on ülim ehmatus", December 9–10, 2021, in Tartu (programme and abstracts at https://www.kirmus.ee/laaban-100/), 40 participants.
14) Annual Conference of the CEES "Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity in Language and Culture", May 12–13, 2022, in Tartu (programme and abstracts at https://www.folklore.ee/CEES/2022/), 125 participants.
15) Annual Conference of the CEES "Nature and Culture in the Rituals, Narratives and Beliefs", September 18–22, 2022, in Tartu (programme and abstracts at https://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/bbs/2022/), 90 participants.

16) Seven Years Milestone CEES Conference "Dialogues with Estonia: New Beginnings", February 15–16, 2022, in Tartu (programme and abstracts at https://folklore.ee/CEES/2023/finaal/), 70 participants.

Annual conferences have enjoyed great popularity; they enable different working groups to present their findings and foster a discussion of highlighted topical issues.

Another important outlet for the CEES results is the popular media, where Estonian and multilingual data and research results are frequently published in print, presented on the radio, television, and on the internet, using the established channels and popular formats (ERR Novaator (https://www.err.ee/), Vikerraadio "Keelekõrv", "Keelenõu", "Galileo", "Huvitaja", Klassikaraadio) and creating new ones (poster presentations, roll-up-posters, flyers, lectures on the media, podcasts, blogs). Novel and attractive means of popularisation are being used in communicating with the public, e.g. data visualisation tools, GIS applications, etc. Workshops for various educational, age, occupational, ethnic, and other groups have been organised (training for nursery teachers, Estonian language teachers).

Figure 1. *Researchers of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies at the spring conference "Let us be Europeans, but also become Estonians! Dialogues with Estonia", in Rakvere in April 2018. Photograph: Alar Madisson.*

The CEES has created several new research opportunities in building the infrastructure needed for effective functioning. More precisely, CEES has supported mutual data and knowhow use, developing opportunities for analysing heterogeneous and variable phenomena (e.g. humour, singing culture, speech-music studies), providing IT solutions and novel analysing possibilities for literary science, poetics, folklore, and other disciplines, developing opportunities for research directions not focused on so far in Estonia (e.g. gender studies, contemporary studies), fostering research in the areas of migration and diaspora studies, and enabling cooperation between researchers from different countries (e.g. to compare the occurrence of the same processes and influential factors in different groups, to observe similarities and differences).

All these outlets and actions provide strong evidence to the fact that the CEES stands in constant close dialogue with the broader public and its aims, and that the actions and results of the CEES are motivated by the needs of a broader knowledge-based society.

Research activities during the seven years of the CEES have offered new innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to societally salient problems, integrating insights from (computational) linguistics, literature, folkloristics, philosophy, music studies. The CEES is a unique research centre both on local (Estonian) and on international level due to its integrated, interdisciplinary, and careful study of a culture's past and present, making it possible to develop models for understanding cultural processes that would apply not only for the Estonian society but also globally on a larger scale. The CEES has enabled successful international cooperation and dialogue with partners and associated members. Well-reputed foreign experts were included in the working groups (also in the leading position), bringing added value to the already existing expertise. The CEES has thus jumpstarted a close collaboration between R&D institutions within and outside of Estonia and thus enabled insightful generalisations of more global nature.

The CEES was launched with enthusiasm and energy that carries on into the present day and beyond that. A proof of this spirit was the pre-CEES conference held already before the results of the funding applications were announced, in December 2015, to bring together the interdisciplinary fields and point at opportunities for collaboration. All subsequent actions have built on that initial enthusiasm, and this will no doubt carry us on to the future.

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THE PROCESS OF BECOMING A WAR REFUGEE: THE CASE OF A FINNISH BOY

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Abstract: The article observes the different stages of the gradual process by which Olev Mikiver became a refugee, following the formation and interweaving of his professional (artist's) identity, his identity as a soldier and as a refugee, based on his private letters. The study mainly focuses on four letters written by Mikiver during the Finnish Continuation War, in which he participated as a volunteer in 1943–1944; these volunteers later became known as the Finnish Boys. The analysis of the letters focuses on the topics discussed in the letters and on Mikiver's word usage. In addition to verbal means of expression, visual means have also been observed to gain additional information about the changes in identity, attitudes, and mood of the letter-writer. The analysis showed that despite Mikiver remaining a devoted artist, he adopted the soldier identity in a relatively short time and no conflict arose between the two identities. In 1944, Mikiver fled to Sweden. Based on the letters he sent to his friend Ilmar Laaban between 1948 and 1993, some observations have also been made about how he coped with refugee life in Sweden. In the post-war period, the opportunity to continue as an artist in exile, on the one hand, and the sense of solidarity with other Finnish Continuation War veterans on the other hand, helped Mikiver overcome his depression as a refugee.

Keywords: Finnish Boys, identity, Olev Mikiver, private letters, refugee

INTRODUCTION

The article deals with the different stages of the process by which Olev Mikiver became a refugee. Mikiver was born in Loksa, Estonia, in 1922, and died in Malmö, Sweden, in 1994. In 1941, Mikiver graduated from Tallinn Secondary School of Science and continued his studies at Pallas Art School with the dream of becoming a professional artist. This was during World War II, with Estonia under German occupation. In 1943, many young men who came under pressure to join the *Waffen SS* Estonian Legion, but who, despite their anti-communist

beliefs, were not ready to wear a German uniform, escaped to Finland, Mikiver among them. In Helsinki, he tried to continue his studies at Ateneum, but since all Finnish male students had gone to the front, he decided to join the army as a volunteer and fight in the Continuation War against the Soviet Union. According to statistics released by the Finnish Headquarters in January 1944, about 26% of the 2,500 Estonian volunteers were students (Uustalu 1977: 41); these were men in the early stages of their ideological, ethical, and professional formation. At the end of the war, they planned to return home, thus their stay in Finland can be considered a kind of temporary stay abroad during which the volunteers didn't define themselves as refugees. They fought on the Karelian front until August 1944, when the Estonian infantry regiment was disbanded.[1] Some of the volunteers then fled to Sweden and sought asylum, marking the beginning of their real period of exile. Some others returned to Estonia and continued fighting under the command of the German army. Since they had come from Finland, Estonians at home started calling them the Finnish Boys (Pillak 2010: 451). In late autumn, the German troops retreated, the Red Army conquered Estonia and Mikiver fled across the sea for the second time – this time to Sweden. His temporary stay abroad came to an end and he became a refugee of war in the most conventional sense.

This article examines, firstly, the development of the balance between occupational identity and the soldier's identity of Mikiver as a young creative person and, secondly, his understanding of himself as a refugee. In addition, some observations are made about his coping with the changes in the war and in exile. The study is based on the principle according to which identity formation is a process that continues throughout life. The origins and meanings of the individuals' multiple identities usually derive from their interactions with the social groups that surround them (Ryan & Deci 2014: 225–226). Individuals create their unique identities from various components, with refugees, soldiers, and artists as social groups playing a central role in this study. Identity is inherently context-sensitive and thus, as a consequence of changes in social context, shifts can occur in one's identity process (Oyserman et al. 2014: 81). In different situations some traits, roles, social group memberships, etc. may prove more important than some others, but some identities can maintain their position in changing circumstances. A good example here is the artists' occupational identity, about which Simpson (1981: 63) writes that for artists, it is a kind of mode of consciousness or a way of being in the world, not simply a type of work.

In this study, I use Mikiver's private letters as the main research source. Previous research has shown that there are several reasons why letters could be relevant material for my research. Firstly, it is widely accepted that writing can stimulate self-reflection and thus act as a prerequisite for identity construction

(see, for example, Elliott et al. 2006: 19). As for soldiers, letter writing can also be regarded as a means by which they maintain their civilian identity in the midst of war (Hanna 2003: 1339). In the case of refugees, correspondence first and foremost helps maintain emotional ties between family members (DeHaan 2010: 107; Kurvet-Käosaar 2019: 83). Secondly, examining the letters from the reader's point of view, one can say that in these letters we can learn not only what the soldiers were doing, but also what they were thinking, feeling, and experiencing (Kohn 2010: 9), which helps us understand the shifts in their identity and their sense of belonging to a certain group. Several studies (e.g., Stanley 2004: 208) show that letters always represent the moment of their production. Taskinen et al. (2022: 579) write about the letters written in wartime, arguing that these handwritten sources, similar to diaries, "have the most immediate connection to the actual war events as experienced by ordinary people. In the case of soldiers' letters, they are usually the only written source material available directly from the trenches and from the midst of combat." Thus, these sources provide valuable information about historical events in a broader sense, as well as about each individual who happened to be in the midst of these events.

RESEARCH SOURCES AND APPROACH

Olev Mikiver's letters belong to the personal collection of Ilmar Laaban, and are preserved at the Estonian Cultural History Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum.[2] Four letters have survived from the years 1943–1944, when Mikiver participated as a volunteer in the Finnish Continuation War; twenty-six letters are from the years 1948–1993, when he lived as a refugee in Sweden. The addressee of the first letter is unknown. At the beginning of the letter, Mikiver addresses his comrades who, like himself, escaped from Estonia to Finland, but who had not joined the Finnish army. They probably shared lodgings, wrote and read letters together, which was common practice during wartime.[3] Mikiver's first letter finally reached Ilmar Laaban, who kept it among his belongings until his legacy was handed over to the archives. The rest of Mikiver's letters were addressed to Laaban, his closest friend, who after World War II became a famous surrealist poet, translator, art and literary critic. A month after arriving in Helsinki, Laaban, who did not intend to become a soldier, moved illegally to Sweden. Despite the differences in their wartime decisions and choices, their friendship survived. They spent their lives in different cities in Sweden and exchanged letters until Mikiver's death.

In my research, I focused in more detail on letters written during the war. I analysed the topics discussed in the letters to show what were the most important problems for Mikiver at the time of writing. Since word usage can reflect the letter-writer's process of identity formation and indicate changes in the understanding of the war, I paid special attention to Mikiver's word usage in his letters. In addition to verbal means of expression, I also observed visual means. I analysed differences in signatures, through which additional information can be obtained about changes in the writer's self-identity, attitudes, and mood. I analysed each letter in its context, trying to (1) show the military and/or political situation at the time of writing,[4] and (2) identify the geographic location of the letter-writer in Finland at the time of writing.[5] In doing this, I relied on the articles of historians and activists of the Finnish Boys' movement, published after the war, as well as Mikiver's memoirs. The twenty-six letters Mikiver wrote to Laban in exile provide a kind of retrospective dimension for his development during the war. The main aim of the article is to demonstrate how a balance developed between Mikiver's artist and soldier identities in his war letters. I also present an insight to the letters written in exile striving to highlight some details that show how Mikiver's two important identities, artist and soldier, are intertwined with the refugee identity.

ANALYSIS OF OLEV MIKIVER'S LETTERS

The first war letter

The first letter[6] is undated and the place of writing is not indicated. Based on its content and contextual sources, the time of writing may be the summer of 1943. In his memoirs, Mikiver (2004: 66–67) writes that together with about 150 men who fled from Estonia to Finland in the early spring of 1943, he was recruited into the army in May. According to the procedural rules of the Finnish Army, all recruits were first sent to Infantry Training Centres. The Estonians who arrived in the spring were settled in Jalkala, a nice rural place more than twenty kilometres from the front line, where they stayed until the autumn (Rebas 1962: 17; Uustalu 1977: 22), which means that Mikiver probably wrote the letter in Jalkala. At the beginning of the letter, Mikiver turns to his comrades without mentioning any names. In addition to an overview of his first volunteer experiences in the Finnish army, he asks them to write about their life in Finland after fleeing their homeland and to forward his field postal address to Laaban if they were to meet him in Helsinki, which they succeeded in doing. The letter is very short and hardly touches on the topic of the

war – the emphasis is on volunteers' leisure. Mikiver writes that in addition to military training, eating, and sleeping, which are among soldiers' obligatory activities, men can often lie in the sun and go boating. Mikiver himself was mainly engaged in painting, for which he used every free moment. He painted landscapes and portraits of his Finnish comrades that they could send to their girlfriends. He was waiting for a holiday to visit Helsinki so that he and buy some oil paints and watercolours.

In the text of the first letter, Mikiver's tendency to write about serious things in a funny way emerges clearly. His sentences may or may not be ambiguous, they hide his real feelings and attitudes, and this peculiarity complicates analysis of the text of his letters. I will start analysing the first letter from its final part, which attracts attention first of all due to its visual design. At the end of the letter, Mikiver plays with the word *goodbye* (*Kut pai!!!*), distorting its spelling. He signs the letter with his nickname *Olts* where the first letter *O* is designed as a laughing face which looks like a modern good mood emoticon (see Fig. 1) and indicates a carefree mood, which seems unconvincing in a wartime context.

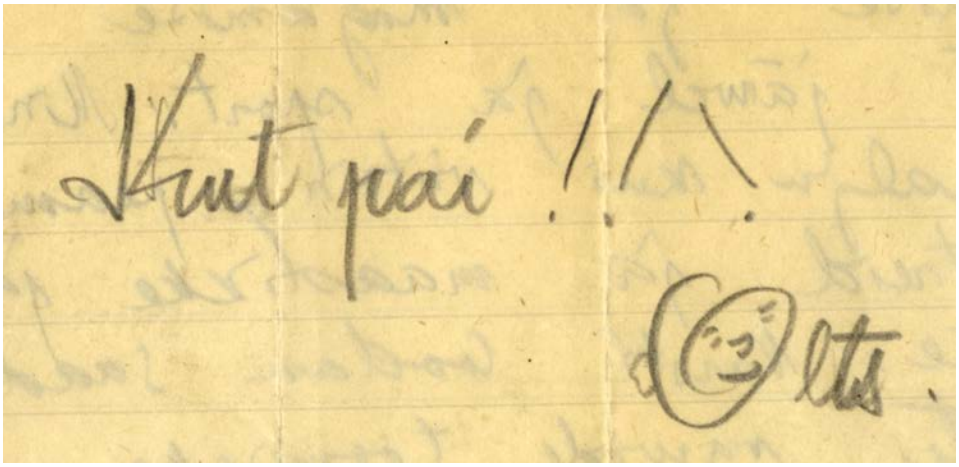

Figure 1. *Olev Mikiver's signature in the first letter (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 30/45).*

The word usage in the text paragraphs that describe life in the training camp can easily mislead the reader. When reading, the question of whether it is his intention to sound naïve and ignorant, or whether he is indeed naïve, arises. Irony cannot be excluded from the following paragraph:

> *As you know, I am in the Finnish army. Our life here is extremely comfortable. We are currently in a training camp and will probably move*

> *to the front sometime in the autumn. Some guys have already been there and, according to them, life there was* quite enjoyable. (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 29/45; my emphasis)[7]

The words *extremely comfortable* and *quite enjoyable* do not fit with the general imagination about war; therefore, the attitude towards the war expressed by Mikiver does not seem to be serious. Reading the whole letter reveals that after about three months in the training camp, Mikiver is still thinking mainly about painting and tries to act like an artist. Since he had joined the army, his freedoms and opportunities to practice painting were limited and, in his view, this was the only negative aspect of being a soldier. The first letter shows that Mikiver respected the military order, but his sense of belonging to the army was completely formal. His perception of war and soldier's identity were very weak and his occupational, or artist's, identity dominated.

The second war letter

The second letter[8] was written four months later, on 12 October 1943, and addressed personally to Laaban in Stockholm. At the time of writing, Mikiver was serving as a private in the Vallila Battalion (III/IR 47), which was located in Ollila, approximately three kilometres behind the front line. There was no intensive military activity in this area. The soldiers were busy digging trenches, but at the same time preparations were made to move closer to the front line (Mikiver 2004: 69–70). At the beginning of October, the unit was transferred to Rajajoki, where the volunteers gained their first experience of the front (Laar 2010a: 442), thus Mikiver moved to the front line right after writting his second letter. The second letter was written in response to the one sent by Laaban from Stockholm and, as in the first letter, various cultural topics dominate. Mikiver writes that he misses the training-camp days, where soldiers had much more time for cultural activities, which were similar to those they had both participated in in Estonia before the war. Mikiver discusses Finnish wartime art life and says that during the next holiday he will visit an art exhibition in Helsinki. He is also interested in the latest trends in Swedish fine art and asks Laaban to send him the catalogue of an exhibition in Stockholm. The letter reveals that Mikiver still paints as often as possible, despite the situation at the front, where shooting, which, admittedly, is not intense, happens every day. Nevertheless, he feels that he is becoming a bit amateurish and supposes that this is caused by certain changes that are guiding his current life – his use of time is becoming more and more affected by daily military duties. In his first letter, Mikiver uses

the phrases *extremely comfortable* and *quite enjoyable* to describe military life; in the second letter, he characterises his life as entirely soldierly hustle and bustle (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 1/1–1/2). The carefree mood that was characteristic of his first letter has faded and his attitude toward being a soldier seems to be moving rapidly in a negative direction. However, in the same letter, he also expresses an opposite view, which is summarised in the following sentence:

> *Despite our continuous cursing, sometimes brighter thoughts still burst out, as does* pride in our current mission. (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 1/1; my emphasis)

Based on the works of historians, I will point out some reasons that may have triggered Mikiver's pride in the mission. In 1943, at the time of writing the letter, the secret Men to Finland! campaign was running in Estonia, launched within the framework of the resistance movement directed against the German occupation. According to the principles of the movement, the main goal of the Estonians' struggle in Finland was to support the restauration of independence in their homeland. The volunteers' sense of mission was expressed in a patriotic slogan, The Freedom of Finland and the Honour of Estonia, which supported their pride of mission (Laantee 1975: 17; Laar 2010a: 443). In parallel with pride, the Finnish Boys' sense of togetherness and group identity developed. Mikiver's second letter contains several details that point to his identity formation process, including changes in word usage. At the beginning of the service, the volunteers' Finnish language skills were poor, which caused misunderstandings between Finnish instructors and Estonian trainees. Language courses were organised to teach Estonians Finnish military commands (Uustalu 1977: 41). Together with acquiring military vocabulary, the Finnish Boys' mixed language or slang also began to develop, in which the military terms as well as some Estonian ordinary words were replaced with Finnish words (for example, *sotamies* (soldier), *korsu* (trench), *rippuli* (stomach flu), *loma* (holiday), etc.). The mixed language, used first and foremost for volunteers' in-group communication, became an important identity marker.[9] To some extent, it also spread outside the group, perhaps with the aim of demonstrating their soldier identity. For instance, in the first letter, Mikiver used the Estonian word *puhkus* (holiday) (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 29/45), but in the second, despite the fact that he knew that his addressee did not speak Finnish, we can find its Finnish equivalent *loma* (holiday) (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 1/1). Two conclusions can be drawn from Mikiver's word usage. Firstly, these two letters reflect Mikiver's gradual adoption of the soldier identity. Secondly, using the slang-like mixed language of his new in-group, Mikiver hints at the fact that in addition to their sense of

belonging together as school friends, sharing common interests, values, etc., they now, in this situation of war, belong to different groups: Mikiver to soldiers and Laaban to war refugees.

By the time of writing the second letter, Mikiver had served in the army for about half a year. During this time, his naïve imagination almost disappeared. His attitude towards war, shaped by both pessimism and optimism, can be considered more realistic. According to the letter, the main source of Mikiver's pessimism is the endless military routine. His optimism reflects best in the signature *Olts*, where *O* depicts an eager soldier going to fulfil his mission with a gun on his shoulder (see Fig. 2).

Figure 2. *Olev Mikiver's signature in the second letter (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 1/3).*

Mikiver's second letter reveals several important details about his being an artist and a soldier, but in addition it reveals something inherent about the role of correspondence in soldiers' lives. He writes to Laaban:

> *Your letter was in every sense an uplifting phenomenon in our present stage of life; it brought a kind of peace and the vibe of ordinary life to our entirely soldierly hustle and bustle.* (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 1/1)

Several researchers have pointed out that letter writing has a therapeutic role for people who are isolated from normal life, be they soldiers or prisoners (see, for example, Maybin 2000; Laanes 2020; Hollo 2023). Mikiver's letter shows that both writing a letter and receiving one have an important effect when coping with the stresses of war.

The third war letter

The third letter[10] was written on 10 February 1944, four months after the second one. At the beginning of 1944, an officers' school and liaison courses for Estonian volunteers were established in Finland (Talpak 1962: 13). Mikiver was interested in an officer's career, but due to others' perception of him as an artist, he was considered too bohemian to become an officer and was sent to liaison courses. Mikiver wrote the third letter right after returning from these courses to his unit, where his life continued in a bunker and in the trenches. At the same time, Marshal Mannerheim signed an order to form Infantry Regiment 200, which consisted of only Estonian volunteers, whose number had increased to 2,400 men. On the one hand, this event influenced the volunteers' self-esteem in a positive direction (Laar 2010b: 35), although on the other hand, for some soldiers this reorganisation seemed a sign that tough battles were to be expected. These speculations affected the volunteers' mood and attitude to the war in a negative way.

In the third letter, Mikiver alludes to his contemplations about a possible escape from Finland to Sweden for the first time – he knew that several volunteers had already left the army and fled there. Mikiver writes how happy he was when he received the art exhibition catalogue sent by Laaban from Stockholm: he would have liked to be there and live a normal life. In order to analyse Mikiver's attitude to the war at the beginning of 1944, I would highlight the following sentence:

> *We live under* anxiety *specific to our current times and feel, so to say, a certain restlessness in our blood.* (EKM EKLA, F 351, M 20: 4, 2/5, my emphasis)

This sentence, especially the word *anxiety*, indicates fading optimism and an increasingly depressed mood, thus perfectly reflecting Mikiver's changed attitude to the war in comparison with the previous letter. In addition, the third letter shows that Mikiver critically monitors his own and his fellow soldiers' behaviour. He writes that before the soldiers do something, for example, go to the sentry post, "they tell everyone and everything to fuck off just in case" (EKM

EKLA, F 351, M 20: 4, 2/5), because they may never be back and they feel hopeless about the nearest future. Over time, the volunteers' language has become more vulgar and rude; however, this can be considered a common phenomenon in war.[11] Why do people, including soldiers, use the so-called F-word? Bad or rude language can be characterised as social action used to mark and strengthen identification with a group (Tysdahl 2008: 69). In addition to that, swear words can have a cathartic role in a situation in which people experience strong negative emotions, thus helping them cope with anger (Popuşoi et al. 2018: 215). In the case of the Finnish Boys, swear words probably helped to suppress their anxiety for a moment, but in the context of Mikiver's letter, his sentence containing the F-words can also be regarded as a symbolic act of ending relations with life. By the time of writing the third letter, being a soldier had gained at least as much weight in Mikiver's life as being an artist. He writes that it is impossible to work on an oil painting in a bunker as it requires long preparation, but that he can occasionally only use watercolours. He feels that his cultural fanaticism is beginning to recede, and he is worried about his mental decay. The signature of the third letter (see Fig. 3) seems to be simply a neutral name which, unlike the previous two signatures, has no connotations. Based on the signature, it can be concluded that there is nothing left of the cheerful

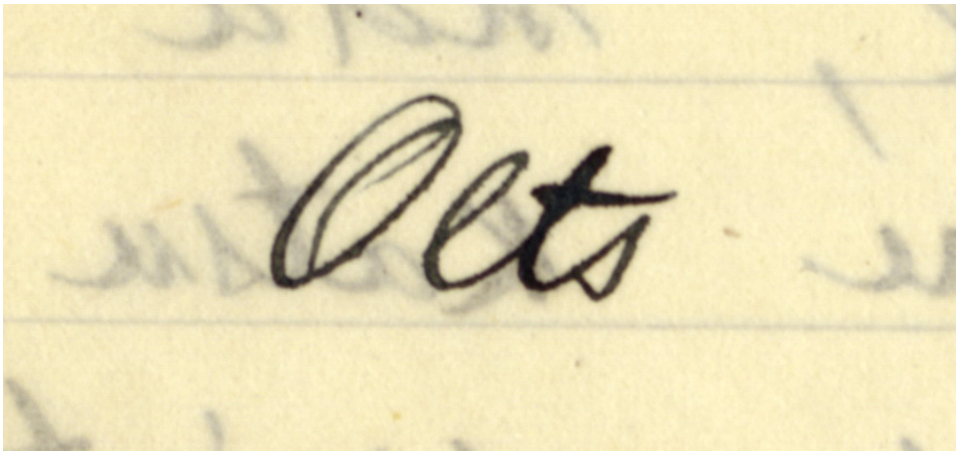

Figure 3. *Olev Mikiver's signature in the third letter (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 2/5).*

artist or soldier with an optimistic sense of mission. The signature could show a developing identity crisis between being a soldier and an artist, although this is just one possible interpretation.

The fourth war letter

The fourth letter[12] was written half a year later, on 7 August 1944. In the meantime, the most dramatic events took place on the Karelian Isthmus. On 9 June, a well-prepared Soviet attack began using their superiority in armament and manpower. In those battles, the volunteers who found themselves in the midst of retreating Finns, had to go through a real baptism of fire (Uustalu 1977: 44–45; Laar 2010a: 442–443). The events of summer 1944 changed the course of the war radically. Finland began to move towards a peace treaty with the Soviet Union, a political step that influenced Finnish soldiers' and civilians' expectations (Kivimäki & Hyvärinen 2022: 94) as well as the Estonian volunteers' future possibilities to stay in Finland. After the surrender of Vyborg, the situation in the region stabilised, and the Finnish Boys were reassigned to the River Vuoksi line, where military action was modest (Laar 2010a: 443). Mikiver's fourth letter originates from this period.

In the letter, Mikiver informs Laaban about the fate of their mutual friends. He also talks about the most important things that had happened in his own life over the past six months, such as getting stomach flu, staying in hospital, and returning to the front in early June – just on the eve of the Red Army offensive. He describes some military activities in which he took part, as well as the tasks he had to perform as a liaison officer. In his letters to Laaban, Mikiver does not write much about the war. Several researchers have made similar observations about letters written on a front line; for example, Hämmerle (2014: 2/4) writes that the war functioned as a catalyst for letter writing, but also that the subject of the war remained marginal in letters. One reason may have been censorship, which prohibited the description of military details, especially if they showed the failure of the army. Another possible reason is the letter writer's desire to escape from reality: exchanging letters with someone living in the normal world allowed them to go back in time in their mind's eye to their pre-war self (see, for example, Laanes 2020: 12–13). In the fourth letter, Mikiver writes more about events in the war than in his previous letters. This can be explained by the fact that the volunteers' service in the Finnish Army was coming to an end, and the censor's interest in the content of their letters decreased.

The fourth letter shows that the vague feeling expressed in the third letter – that something bad was about to happen – had become a reality. The letter also reflects a new shift in Mikiver's personal relationship with the war, which is clearly summarised in the following passage:

> *So hello, Labunn.*[13] *I felt deep happiness that you could not resist the temptation to write to me. Since I, too, am a mere weak* mortal being, *I answer you almost immediately.* (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 3/7)

According to my interpretation, Mikiver here comes to understand his own mortality, admitting that when planning activities in a war, one has to take into account that any moment can turn out to be one's last. First and foremost, this realisation could have been influenced by the death of their close schoolmate Sergei Veskimets, who was killed in the battle near Jäppilä on 10 June 1944 (Leemets 1997: 382). Using a euphemistic expression, Mikiver informs Laaban about what had happened. He writes that things with Sergei are really bad because all the signs indicate that "he was pushing up the daisies" (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 3/7). In the same letter, Mikiver also talks about some other schoolmates who were wounded or killed in action. He always finds or invents a variant instead of the word *death*. In his unusual idioms, one can see Mikiver striving for a unique expression, and there is no doubt that the incidents he writes about made him face his own possible death.

The fourth letter is unusual for its thematic structure as Mikiver writes alternately about tragic and funny things. The section talking about death is followed by a sudden turn in the mood of the letter: Mikiver begins to tell stories about his absurd war experiences.

> *I did not take part in the clashes in June, which were really the most terrible and where Sergei got lost. At that time, I was returning from my holiday and was looking for my unit, following all the rules of military arts to the letter. I once found myself near a village that, as some soldiers swore by all saints, was full of Russians. We were placed on the edge of the village, we had to lie on our stomachs, with guns in hands, and the point was that the Russians could get out of the village only at the price of our lives. After a day-long wait, a right-minded Finnish soldier came to us from the village, hauling a sick cow, saying there were no more living souls there. Thus, the words from the hymnal songbook, "All our labour is in vain", came true. I experienced something similar also under Vyborg, when with a group of ten men I went to conquer a small island, which, in that case, turned out to be inhabited by sheep.* (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 3/7–3/8)

When writing his letters, Mikiver knew that Laaban, a young surrealist poet, did not value the humorous style, which was completely different from the erudite and sophisticated manner of expression used by Laaban himself. Commenting

on his humorous stories, Mikiver wrote self-ironically that his texts could merely be considered experiments that tried to shock the reader with vulgarity (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 3/7). According to Kaugver (2020: 43), who also participated in the Continuation War, humour was still a good companion for the soldiers in this "damned war". Humour never disappears in times of conflict but continues to function in different ways and plays different roles; for example, it releases tension and helps people survive in spiritually difficult situations (Holman & Kelly 2001: 247). Mikiver was aware of the fact that Laaban was not interested in the subject of war at all, regardless of whether the stories were funny or dramatic. Nevertheless, he wrote these stories and sent them to Laaban; an important reason may be his need to write as a creative activity. In one of his post-war letters, Mikiver sent the verses in which he characterises himself as a person who is used to scratching paper with a pen devotedly, because writing has a therapeutic effect on him (EKM EKLA f. 352: 20: 4, 18/32). These verses are dated 5 May 1982, when Mikiver was living in Malmö, Sweden, and refer to the therapy he then needed to overcome his problems as a refugee. In the days of the Continuation War, Mikiver tried to maintain his mental balance primarily as an artist, with literary activity of secondary importance. In the summer of 1944, however, it was easier to engage in writing than painting. In the course of retreating, Mikiver could only make a few drawings in pastel because their unit was constantly on the move and often came under fire, as he wrote to Laaban in the fourth letter.

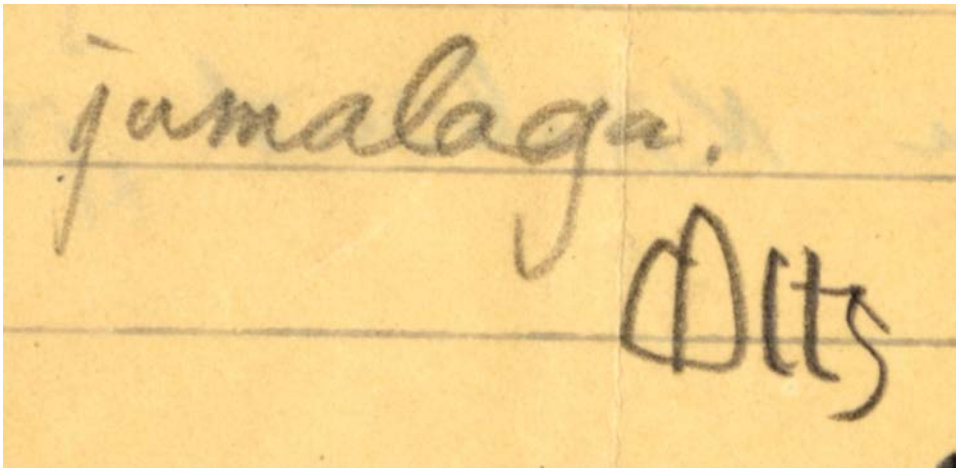

Figure 4. *Olev Mikiver's signature in the fourth letter (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 3/8).*

The signature in the fourth letter (Fig. 4) offers various possibilities for interpretation; for example, the *O* bisected by a vertical line gives the impression of Mikiver's spiritual split. This interpretation is strongly influenced by the content of the letter. It is also possible that the signature just consists of stylised letters that do not carry any special meaning.

The fourth letter was also the last sent by Mikiver to Laaban from the front line. On 19 August 1944 Mikiver, like the majority of the volunteer group,[14] was repatriated to his homeland to continue fighting for a free Estonia, and together with this, his temporary stay abroad, or the pre-exile period, came to an end.

I will summarise the changes in Mikiver's identity formation process, which are revealed in his war letters. In the first letter, Mikiver expresses attitudes that are appropriate for a civilian and an artist. Despite the fact that he already wears a soldier's uniform, the war touches him as part of a background that is inevitable, but not particularly important. The two months of training camp life that preceded the writing of the letter have not shaped him into a soldier, in fact his soldier identity is almost non-existent. The second letter shows that Mikiver has developed a stronger sense of belonging and camaraderie towards other soldiers. His artist identity has not receded, but the soldier identity has begun to form alongside it. This change in Mikiver's identity structure has taken place over the four months that separate the second letter from the first. The interval between the second and third letters is four months. During this time, Mikiver's identity as a soldier has stabilised and he seems to be concerned about maintaining his artist skills and identity during wartime. In the third letter, Mikiver hints for the first time in correspondence with Laaban that he is considering his opportunities for exile in Sweden. But he does not develop this topic, nor does he use the word, perhaps because of censorship. In the last war letter, Mikiver's soldier identity dominates; however, the reason is probably not the weakening of his artist identity, but rather the complicated situation at the front.

Some observations on letters written in exile

In November 1944, the Soviet Army occupied Estonia for the second time. One-hundred-and-sixty-two Finnish Boys who had fought for Estonia's freedom had to escape the homeland again; many others were sent to forced labour camps in Siberia (Laar 2010a: 445). Mikiver managed to flee to Sweden and after he settled in Malmö, his correspondence with Laaban, who lived in Stockholm, continued. They shared a common ethno-cultural background and participated in the activities of the exile community; however, unlike Laaban, Mikiver belonged

to the veterans of the Finnish Continuation War. Several studies examining the war veterans or ex-soldiers show that the impact of war can last a lifetime, causing ongoing depression. Hunt (2007), who interviewed World War II veterans about their distress, noticed that in addition to the issues caused by the war, their problems could also be related to some recent event that had nothing to do with the war. Thus, the war was not the interviewees' only or most important stressor. Similarly to Hunt's interviewees, the Finnish Boys also had different stressors. In addition to the memories of the horrors of war that they had to deal with in their minds, they had lost their homeland and family and had to overcome stigmatisation as refugees, finding a way to survive in a new cultural environment. Mikiver's letters to Laaban after the second half of the forties do not contain allusions to traumatic war experiences, but rather the depression of the refugee is clearly expressed. In 1948 – Mikiver's fourth year in Sweden – he writes that he is suffering bouts of depression (F 352: 20: 4, 6/12). In an undated letter, scribbled with a watercolour brush, Mikiver tries to explain his inner cultural conflict, which seems to be caused by his inability to be an Estonian and a Swede at the same time (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 30/50–30/52).

All the Finnish Boys tried to adapt to the new society. They looked for (professional) work or continued studies in universities, and in parallel with adaptation tried to maintain contact with their brothers-in-arms. In the 1950s, they established Finnish Boys' organisations in Toronto, Stockholm, and Gothenburg. They had meetings in which they recalled the war, but they also held parties like all young people. They launched some publications, including *Põhjala Tähistel* (Beacons of the North), in which Mikiver, who continued his studies in arts, was active as an illustrator (Rebas 2010; Pillak 2010). Later, Mikiver worked as a professional theatre decorator and artist in Malmö; he also contributed memoir-based stories to the Swedish Estonian newspaper *Teataja* (Gazette). Themes of war and life at the front persisted in his creative works until his late years, but there were no indications of the deeply painful consequences of war – his paintings and stories were rather nostalgic and full of simple human warmth and humour. Some references to serving in the army can also be found in his letters to Laaban. For example, in December 1981, he writes that when painting, he behaves as if he were still a soldier. His painting supplies are arranged in a specific order so that he can follow the principle of "take it from here and put it there", which originates from the volunteers' training camp where they practised disassembling and assembling a gun until they could do it with their eyes closed (EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 17/29). Previous studies have shown that the transfer of wartime habits to peacetime life is not an unusual phenomenon, in addition to which the creation of veterans' organisations in exile,

which provide social support to their members, can be considered a widespread practice. For example, in the article ""Once a Soldier, a Soldier Forever": Exiled Zimbabwean Soldiers in South Africa" Maringira and Carrasco (2015) analyse the stories of soldiers who went into exile in South Africa as deserters and formed the Association of Military Men of Zimbabwe. One of the members recalls how the instructor of the training camp moulded him into a "soldier forever", which means that he became a soldier both in the physical and mental sense; he also explains how the skills and habits acquired in the war help him make a better career in exile (op. cit.: 321–325). Thus, it is possible to find universal features in the attitudes, ways of coping, and sense of belonging to brothers-in-arms of all ex-soldiers, no matter in which war they have fought and in which country they have established a new home after the war.

CONCLUSION

The article deals with Olev Mikiver's process of becoming a refugee, which was triggered by his escape from Estonia to Finland. Today, Mikiver is known in Estonia as an exile artist. In 1943, during the German occupation, many young men left Estonia for Finland. There were several art, music, and philology students among them who hoped to continue their studies abroad. In Finland, it turned out that their only legal opportunity to stay there was to join the Finnish Army and fight as volunteers in the Continuation War against the Red Army. Thus, the students became soldiers, and Mikiver was one of them. Like other volunteers, Mikiver did not define himself as a refugee. He came to Finland for a short period and intended to return to his homeland as soon as it was liberated from occupation. In the autumn of 1944, after a peace treaty was concluded between Finland and the Soviet Union, he left Finland for Estonia and continued to fight against the Red Army as it conquered Estonia. In the late autumn of 1944, when Soviet troops occupied Estonia, Mikiver fled for a second time, to Sweden. He sought asylum and became a war refugee in the most conventional sense of the term.

The research on the gradual process of becoming a refugee was based on the war letters that Mikiver wrote to his friend Ilmar Laaban at the Karelian front in 1943–1944. In addition, his private letters written in exile between 1948 and 1993 have been examined. The article demonstrates how the relationship between Mikiver's artist and soldier identities change. It also highlights some details that show how Mikiver's two important identities are intertwined with his new, refugee identity. The analysis of the letters shows the process of his identity formation very clearly as they express the author's immediate feelings

and thoughts in chronological order. During the war years, being an artist and a soldier were the two most important components of his identity. Since identity is a situation-sensitive phenomenon, the balance between Mikiver's professional (artist) identity and his soldier identity changed remarkably over time. In the first letter, his artist identity dominated and the sense of belonging among soldiers was completely formal. Each subsequent letter showed that the importance of being a soldier shifted to achieve a more significant position. In spite of his remaining a devoted artist, Mikiver began to feel a stronger sense of belonging among his fellow soldiers, now known as the Finnish Boys. Mikiver's letters to Laaban sent during exile reflect his feelings, attitudes and mood as a refugee. In Sweden, Mikiver worked as an artist, but his post-war letters show that, in addition to his artist identity, he also retained his soldier identity. Based on the letters, we can say that the soldier identity supported Mikiver in coping with depression as a refugee. Former volunteers founded their own organisations, which continued to generate the Finnish Boys' sense of pride and also helped them avoid the feeling of being stigmatised as refugees. When reading the memories of the Finnish Boys, one gets the impression that some of them became even "more Finnish Boys" afterwards than during the war. Based on Mikiver's letters, we can conclude that the opportunity to preserve his artist identity supported his ability to cope during the war and helped avoid the internal tension that could accompany the acquisition of a new, soldier, identity. In exile, in turn, the soldier identity and Finnish Boys' camaraderie helped him overcome depression as a refugee.

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NOTES

[1] For political reasons, Estonian volunteers were not a topic in Finland. Several decades after World War II, in 1991, Finland began to recognise officially the participation of the Estonians in the war between Finland and the Soviet Union, and in 1992 Finland awarded commemorative medals to the volunteers. Due to that, the signs of a struggle for their recognition are totally missing from the life stories collected in the 1990s. In the stories of those who fought in German uniforms, the authors, on the contrary, feel the necessity to justify their status and activities in the war (see, e.g., Kõresaar 2011: 9).

[2] EKM EKLA, F 352.

[3] Often, soldiers' letters were not intimate documents, but addressed to a wider circle (see, for example, Kalkun 2015: 143), be it family or friends.

[4] The letters were subject to censorship. The censors were primarily interested in the transmission of information about the course of battles, soldiers' criticism of military life and their attitudes towards war (Junila 2012; Demm 2017).

[5] Date, place, and signature are among common letter parameters (Bossis 1986: 63). The letters written at the front line corresponded to the listed formal features only partially, for example, instead of place the field postal address was used, which consists of numbers and letters.

[6] EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 29/45.

[7] All quotes from Mikiver's letters have been translated into English by the author of the article.

[8] EKM EKLA, F 352, M 20: 4, 1/1–1/3.

[9] About the role of language in the formation of the sense of commonality in war as well as other factors that contribute to the creation of camaraderie, see also Rahi-Tamm & Esse 2022: 255.

[10] EKM EKLA, F 351, M 20: 4, 2/4–2/5.

[11] In connection with the use of swear words, a certain parallel can be drawn with the case of Snake Island in the Russo-Ukrainian War. On 24 February 2022, the Russian Navy attacked this small island in the Black Sea, the Russian officers demanding its surrender; the Ukrainian soldier answering the demand used swear words in his response. An audio clip with the conversation was leaked to the public and as a result, the international media became flooded with titles containing the phrase "Russian warship, go f*** yourself" (see, for example, Howard & Wright 2022). This episode came to symbolise the soldiers' contempt for death.

[12] EKM EKLA, F 351, M 20: 4, 3/7–3/8.

[13] Labunn was Ilmar Laaban's nickname, used by his schoolmates and friends until his later years.

[14] Among the Finnish Boys who decided to return to their homeland on board the German ship Waterland were 168 officers, 162 non-commissioned officers and 1,422 soldiers. Some of the volunteers stayed in Finland and some moved illegally to Sweden (Laantee 1975: 18–19; Uustalu 1977: 73).

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HEROES AND VILLAINS IN MEMES ON THE 2022 RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

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Abstract: Wars and other acute social conflicts are a fruitful ground for the emergence of heroes and villains. This is true for the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine: both the news media and ordinary people have found targets for villainisation (Russian president Vladimir Putin) and heroisation (Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy) since the outbreak of war. The article discusses how the public images of the two leaders appeared in internet memes collected in Estonian and Belarusian social media between February 24 and April 8, 2022. Analysing them against the backdrop of the (stereo)typical traits of heroes and villains in folklore, we outline how the new media format affects the way these two juxtaposed images are portrayed in memes. We also focus on the juxtaposition as one of the key strategies both in the processes of villainisation/heroisation and of humour production. The clear juxtaposition between good and evil in war humour distinguishes it from disaster jokes, which do not usually take a definite stance towards their targets.

Keywords: internet memes, juxtaposition, Putin, Zelenskyy, war humour

INTRODUCTION

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 has split the world: on the one side, Russia has been trying to occupy Ukraine with the indirect help of its few allies, and on the other side, most European, North American and other

democratic countries stand united in their support for Ukraine. As often happens in armed conflicts, both sides created their own heroes and villains during the first days of the war. The selection of targets for heroisation and villainisation is based on the convictions of the people who create the oppositions, i.e. whether they support the war or are against it, which belligerent side they empathise with, and what information space they follow. Whereas the heroes and villains of the Russian side are largely confined to the Russian pro-Kremlin propaganda media, the heroes and villains representing the Ukrainian side of the war became prominent in different parts of the world. In this article, we will take a look at the Ukraine-centred heroisation and villainisation patterns displayed in internet visual and audiovisual memes immediately after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. The (sometimes humorous) strategies for creating a hero or a villain are listed as a result of qualitative analysis, with special focus on juxtaposition as a typical strategy in the context of social media, the environment for meme dissemination.

The heroisation and villanisation of prominent personalities was often contested in Ukraine during the pre-2022 war period, with Stepan Bandera being a case in point (see Marples 2007: 96–100). After the outbreak of the war, these opposite categories were legitimised and became clearly outlined. The majority's acceptance was backed up by the globally emerging narratives of good and evil, of us and them (Sukhorolskyi 2022): the democratic world versus the autocratic regimes. In the public sphere – official media outlets as well as social media – Russian president Vladimir Putin became the most visible villain, while Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy was glorified as a hero.

During the first months of the war, Zelenskyy's popularity skyrocketed in Ukraine; this is especially striking given the criticism and the loss of public support he was facing before the war (Armstead 2022). He also experienced a rise in international popularity. Though some of the United States mainstream media have not introduced significant changes to the portrayal of Zelenskyy after Ukraine was attacked by Russia (Vrba 2022: 94), for many people he has revived the idea of hero and heroism. His courage and commitment, and the fact that he neglected his personal safety for the sake of the nation, inspired many people who are not directly involved in the war – and living far away from it, for example, in the USA – to believe that heroes also exist outside of popular culture (see, e.g. Sarat & Aftergut 2022).

While Zelenskyy's heroisation is a fairly recent phenomenon, Putin was villainised before the 2022 war, especially in the US media, as part of the process of personification of the Russian nation state (Hartblay 2020: 141). His image has been given with "vampiric" traits by cartoonists and online commentators (Lucey & Miller 2018), and even religious artwork such as a contemporary Ukrainian icon – The Last Judgement – represent Putin as a symbol of evil (Lesiv 2022).

The war in Ukraine, which Putin initiated, exacerbated this trend (Vrba 2022) and made Putin's image the epitome of aggression (the "war criminal", ibid.: 91) both in mainstream media and in vernacular expressions triggered by the war.

The typology of heroes and villains

The roles of the hero and villain are widely recognised around the world (Hanke et al. 2015). Any societal crisis or conflict is likely to give rise to opposition between villains and heroes (Klapp 1954). For example, the rhetoric of Swedish COVID-19 news coverage in spring 2020 clearly constructed groups of villains (virus-spreading tourists and unnecessary healthcare claimants) and heroes (healthcare staff) (Skog & Lundström 2020); the hero–villain opposition has also been noted in earlier conflicts, for example WWII narratives and comic books (see Murray 2011). This fundamental dichotomy, however, leaves ample room for nuanced and different representations of the groups, which vary depending on the nature of a crisis, as well as group dynamics and the rhetorical strategies used by the people who are directly or indirectly affected by the conflict.

The term 'villain' is usually employed in instances where there is an individual character who is directly opposed to an individual hero (cf. while 'enemy' is used when the adversary is collective; see Kerr 2016: 52). Villain derives from the Medieval Latin word for a farm worker (vīllānus), denoting a lower-class person (ibid.: 52). The opposite term, 'hero', derives from Greek ἥρως (hērōs), the possible original meaning of which is 'protector' or 'defender' of superhuman strength or physical courage (though its origin is uncertain), demi-god who is endowed with the attributes of patriotism, bravery and loyalty, which are essential during warfare and particularly during periods of total war (Schwartz 1969). We will use the terms 'villain' to refer to Putin versus 'hero', applied to Zelenskyy, to mark the individual-bound personifications of the two fighting sides in the war in Ukraine. These depictions dramatise the war as a mythic narrative of the struggle between (personalised) good and evil.

In the Ukrainian context, the Russian side seems to have accepted the label of the evil villain to some extent, as it supports their rhetoric of a powerful state and underlines their strength, visualised for example in tropes like the Russian army being called "orcs" (J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy villains that are a parodic version of elves, see Poveda 2005). Putin's propagandists sometimes call themselves, jokingly or seriously, the "horde of Mordor" (Sukhorolskyi 2022). The Ukrainian side, on the other hand, has welcomed the label of defenders of democracy, or in biblical allegory, the David who fights the much bigger and more powerful Goliath for the good of others (ibid.: 9).

Heroes and villains in folklore and fiction

Heroes and villains are important characters in folktales. They set the story in motion and the conflict between them is often the focal point of folk narratives, creating the suspense and climax of a story. Their function is to provide prosaic routines that deliver hope to the audience (Klapp 1954). In folklore, as well as in works of fiction, heroes and villains become clear-cut categories through juxtaposition: one needs the other to function properly. The depiction of heroes and villains follows certain conventions and key characteristics outlined below.

In folk imagination heroes are exceptionally gifted (Campbell 2004: 35). They symbolise success, perfection and conquest of evil, they function as a "better self" of the group and are depicted as powerful and charismatic leaders who are widely imitated and followed (Klapp 1954). In folk narratives heroes usually embark on a journey or a quest for some higher aim; the journey consists of "a separation from the world, a penetration to some source of power, and a life-enhancing return" (Campbell 2004: 33). This return must be triumphant: either on a domestic level (for fairy tale heroes) or on a macro-cosmic level (for mythical heroes) (Campbell 2004: 35). Sometimes heroes are demi-gods by birth, but there are occasions when an everyman can become a superman (Bal 1997), represented by folk characters such as Ivan the Fool. Even though they initially might not be recognised as heroes in their own community, they are eventually glorified and empowered (for example male heroes are often depicted as symbols of masculinity). They are often physically attractive, representing the desired state of humanity. They have the (moral) power and authority to defeat the villains, and the audience has no reason to doubt them (Alsford 2006: 93). The primary aim of the hero is to disempower and degrade the villain (for example sexually), make them seem smaller in size and thus less threatening and dangerous.

Villains, on the other hand, are often repulsive and unpleasant, both in their appearance and in their actions. They tend to counter moral actions because of their inherently malicious will (Klapp 1954) and easily transgress social norms (Poveda 2005: 156). Despite generally taking human form such as robbers, merchants, etc. (Propp 1968: 91), they are at heart monsters, hated as enemies of the weak and the good – like the witches and ogres of folktales. Although they can have physical (super)power, in all other ways they are the opposite of the hero. Their physical appearance is usually straightforwardly unattractive, even repulsive, or, if the vile features are hidden, they are revealed after close contact. Villains are cursed and their death is sought for. These monster-like creatures are incompatible with social organisation and must be expelled for the society to be safe (Klapp 1954).

The juxtaposition of heroes and villains across different media and its humorous potential

The juxtaposition of heroes and villains is a strategy that has been used since the beginning of narration in myths, fairy tales, legends, etc., although these genres carry a specific twist typical to each (cf. McLuhan & Fiore's [1967] assertion that "the medium is the message"). For example, humour-related genres such as jokes or internet memes use juxtapositions to create humour, while in fairy tales juxtapositioning adds drama with the aim of creating tension and building legitimacy. The contrast between the mythical hero and the villain in a legend is usually clear-cut and lies at the basis of their confrontation. At the same time, juxtapositions that are used to create humour are more controversial and ambivalent. Furthermore, heroes and villains are represented differently in serious and humorous media: while serious narratives underscore the traits that evoke empathy towards heroes and aversion towards villains, humorous genres focus on more ambiguous features that can be viewed as incongruous, unexpected and thus funny.

In 'serious' genres such as folk tales, heroes do not usually display comic traits, even if their features are presented in an exaggerated manner. Propp (2009: 65) describes non-humorous exaggeration as a way to create heroes, be it appearance (as in the case of a Yakut) or strength (in the case of a Russian): "There is a shade of humour … but it is not comical". In order to pursue the unambiguously morally and socially acceptable agenda, heroes act seriously and inspire feelings of compassion and admiration, but not laughter.

Villains, however, evoke not only hatred or contempt, but also become objects of ridicule even in more serious folklore genres. The representatives of evil in myths (for example, devils) are often reduced to the status of clowns, even if they employ clever deception strategies (Campbell 2004: 273; see also the category of the trickster, Klapp 1954). Moreover, some of heroes' antagonists are labelled *comic villains* who are defined as "really bad guys—assassins, rapists, traitors, false friends and the like—who are nevertheless portrayed as absurd, contemptible, or inept, and are ultimately unsuccessful in carrying out their intended villainy, exiting the play world, mocked, abashed and shamed" (Whitworth 2011: 219).

Genres that typically embed humour as technique or, even, as an outlook on life, depict villains as inadequate, laughable targets. Humour can be used as a weapon against villains. Even though villains possess a certain power, they can be "dethroned" with the help of humour (cf. 'cult' figures in the Soviet period, see Adams 2005: 5). A reliable method of humorous dethronement is mock aggression, or alternatively the introduction of homosexual, scatological, and

zoophilic references (cf. Frank 2011: 82–95, who describes vengeance narratives related to Bin Laden that were ripe with scatological and sexual humiliation). For a villain to become the target of a joke, he must have some clearly flawed features; to induce not just fear but also laughter and contempt. Humour deprives a villain of his humanity (and masculinity), and gives the humour producers and recipients a chance to look down on him (cf. superiority theory, Martin 2007: 5–6). In some cases, villain's features are deliberately recontextualised to make them look ridiculous and therefore less threatening (a possible origin of clowns' baggy pants and hats is the mockery of Ottoman Turkish clothing, see Nicolle 1995: 3). They are also ridiculed because they display exaggerated propensities or tend towards extremes that do not fit into socially acceptable conventions (see Davies 1990).

However, villains are accused and heroes are glorified in a non-humorous way (cf. pro-Trump memes, alt-right memes and others that try to forward a particular agenda through memes employing the concept of meme magic[1], see Prisk 2017; Asprem 2020). This becomes particularly obvious during wars and other acute social conflicts. The difference lies in the context: wars change established power relations, making humour thus sometimes serve non-humorous or even propagandistic purposes instead. It is necessary to pick a side in the conflict and there is thus not much flexibility left to look at the goings-on from various, colliding and controversial angles at once.

War humour can also be compared to another type of black humour, namely, disaster jokes. Both frame unpleasant events in a humorous way, and both can be regarded as coping mechanisms (Dundes 1987: 73; Cook 2013). However, war humour is different from disaster humour in that it contains more aggression and displays solidarity by targeting someone outside the group. This is in turn conditioned by media coverage of the conflict – sides are already created and taken there. In some cases, however, disaster jokes and war humour can interweave. For example, analysing 9/11 disaster jokes, Kuipers notes that Bin Laden is portrayed as the ultimate villain, as the "enemy who has to be crushed and degraded" (for example Bin Laden being hanged, gutted, raped, or beheaded; 2005 [2011]: 35). She admits, however, that "the humorous clash jokes … do not really take a stand against the villain or in favour of the hero" (ibid.: 31), stressing the playfulness of the images that appeared right after the Twin Towers attack in the USA. The early disaster memes from 2001, when the genre was only gathering popularity, comment first and foremost on the way the attack was covered in the media. War humour, which becomes an important mechanism that reaffirms one's belonging to the group (Holman & Kelly 2001), displays, on the other hand, again a clear stance in relation to the belligerent parties.

In terms of their generic particularities, disaster jokes focus on topics rather less common in other types of joke (for example, sex, religion, ethnicity) – specifically, on innocent or innocuous themes such as advertising, games, fairy tales. A mixture of an extremely serious topic and such unserious themes may cause amusement because they are odd (Kuipers 2002: 21), but also because the connections are unexpected, easily graspable for large audiences, bringing them to the genre of fiction where they belong. This is also true to some extent of war humour which makes ample use of popular cultural references and fictional characters' images to frame the conflict in a playful, less threatening way. Both war and disaster humour draw on the genres of press images, but approach them in a different manner. While war humour often focuses on the less important but incongruous details of the official press images, disaster jokes generally aim to reach beyond the "speakable media images" and revolve around the (bodily) horrors that are extensively shown in press coverage (Oring 1987: 282–283).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Estonian and Belarusian data

The data was collected during the first months of the war (February 24 – April 8 2022) mainly from social media. The source of Estonian data is the Facebook group *Ukraina meemid* created by the Estonian Folklore Archive during the first days of the war to collect the memes circulating in the Estonian mediasphere that revolved around the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Out of 712 images posted there by April 8, 365 involved personification strategy – referring to the war by depicting a person or a group of people. Belarusian data derives from 4 humorous groups on Telegram, 2 humorous Facebook groups and 1 humorous group on Vk, as well as data collected from personal Twitter accounts that have a long-standing history of posting humorous content reflecting on current news, and finally the mainstream Belarusian media. Altogether, the Belarusian data consisted of 800 items, with personification appearing in 227 of the total number of memes. In our analysis, we focused on images of the Presidents of Russia and Ukraine, Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskyy. This resulted in 264 memes from the two data subsets, Estonian and Belarusian. All the memes have visual elements, and most of them are accompanied with verbal textual captions.

Method

The data was collected and systematised in AirTable, a spreadsheet-database hybrid cloud collaboration tool. First, all memes were inserted into AirTable and coded for their format (image, text and image, audiovisual) as well as country of dissemination (Belarus, Estonia) and personification (Putin, Zelenskyy, other actors). Even though Estonia and Belarus differ in their officially expressed attitudes towards the war, the memes in both datasets put forth a similar stance, and also used many of the same visual and verbal elements and humorous mechanisms. Therefore, we are not aiming to contrast the national datasets, but rather use them in a complimentary way to clarify how juxtaposing heroes and villains functions in the context of war memes. A pilot sample of 100 first memes was co-coded; as there was a significant agreement between the coders, the authors coded their respective samples independently, also noting, in addition to the initial categories, the intertextual references and the primary attributes of the hero/villain referred to in the image or video. We then performed a qualitative analysis of the data, with the aim of revealing the main heroisation and villainisation strategies and motifs in the memes. The research questions guiding our work were the following:

- how is Putin represented in the memes: what are the attributes and intertextual references, and what are the primary villainisation strategies;
- how is Zelenskyy represented in the memes: what are the attributes and intertextual references, and what are the primary heroisation strategies;
- what are the features and logic of one particular strategy – juxtaposition of the hero and the villain (especially in memes that show Zelenskyy versus Putin in one image) – and in what way this related to juxtaposition in humour;
- how the social media format affects the way heroes and villains are represented in memes.

ANALYSIS

The memes chosen for this analysis depict the two conflict sides of the war in Ukraine, adopting the strategy of personification (i.e. showing Putin and Zelenskyy as the symbols or 'faces' of the war). Other possible personification strategies, including depicting the war through armies, civilians or characters from popular culture (see Laineste et al. forthcoming), are not included in this study.

Putin memes

There are 236 memes featuring Putin (either alone or with someone else) in our dataset. Putin's rhetoric and self-positioning have long aimed at constructing a (hyper)masculine, rough image (for example using criminal slang in speeches, see Weiser 2018). At the same time, it has also displayed the features of "masculinity in crisis" or "male hysteria" (Novitskaya 2017). For example, the memes of Putin the gay clown (Cooper-Cunningham 2022) give evidence of that. Putin as a meme character is a combination of these features, using unflattering memetic imagery from earlier years (Putin riding horses, bears or other objects like biscuits etc., the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse meme[2]) and the press images (for example Putin at the long table). The logic of these depictions is twofold (though not always overlapping in memes): constructing Putin as a threatening, callous villain who should be feared, versus the idea that he is a ridiculous and stupid coward who should not be taken seriously. The two directions are outlined below.

In his threatening and fear-inducing memetic image, Putin is portrayed as a terrorist and a blood-thirsty warmonger, with blood being one of the key visual elements to signal his evilness. His sole aim is to kill people and make them suffer, and he has no remorse or mercy (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *I will enjoy watching you die. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=7239197469484614&set=g.534314991238265.*

There are also references to him as an anti-social person. He is portrayed as a liar or a thief; in the latter case the image of Putin is likely to personify the marauding Russian army as per extensive reports in news media during the first months of the war. Another way to show Putin's deficiency is to depict him as a mentally ill person or one with very negative personality traits. This depiction strategy stems from the long-standing tradition of stigmatising mental disorders in popular culture (Figure 2; see, for example, Eisenhauer 2008). A closely connected topic are the memes that allude to one of the most recurrent Putin's nicknames, *huilo* (deriving from an obscene Russian word for male genitalia). It is evoked both visually and verbally. This in turn relates to a number of scatological, sexual and other straightforwardly degrading motifs that are often found in the way Putin is portrayed.

Figure 2. *Is this military superpower in the room with us now? https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1016130668 3062439&set=g.534314991238265.*

Another serious topic prominent in the memes is that of Putin's death, which is defaming and unflattering in the memes (putting "putin" into the waste bin, for example with the label "Poo tin"; cf. dead baby joke cycle, see Dundes 1979). Memes contain allusions to a lot of variants and aspects of Putin's death, employing such symbols as rope, coffins, axes, etc. In one meme, the Pope hints that Putin's suicide would not be a sin. Putin's villainsation is intertextual, referring to other widely recognised symbols of evil, such as Nazi symbolics (combined with motifs like blood mentioned above). Putin is sometimes portrayed in a Nazi uniform, adorned with Nazi symbols or in other ways visually compared to Adolf Hitler. Memes also establish connections between Putin and Stalin, but such memes are much scarcer in our datasets. There is a shift of attitude towards this historical figure that has often been taken to stand for the epitome of evil (within the WWII context, see Laineste & Lääne 2015; Pidkuimukha 2021), even though not as frequently as Hitler. Sometimes the

motifs of Putin's desired death and his similarity to other (historical) dictators are combined (Figure 3).

Figure 3. *The negotiations that everyone is dreaming of now. Putin and Lukashenko are depicted among the dead dictators – the meme makes allusions both to their desired death and to the fact that they belong among the dictators. https://vk.com/belmems?z=photo-83285883_457240097%2Falbum-83285883_00%2Frev.*

In some memes Putin is depicted with his subordinates and allies (Russian politicians, Russian people, Lukashenko, see Figures 4 and 5), where Putin takes a position of authority (gives out orders), but (especially in the Belarusian dataset) the allies can also be depicted as equally dangerous villains who verge on the margin of being ridiculous fools (for example in the meme where Putin and Lukashenko are photoshopped as the two thieves from *Home Alone*, or the two of them performing ballet on the stage, dressed as swans, or disguised as old ladies trying to escape the war, Figure 4). Against the backdrop of a prolonged war with little progress, Putin looks worried, ill, and powerless in these memes.

Figure 4. *Putin and Lukashenko as old ladies. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10161340795757439&set=g.534314991238265.*

Figure 5. *Putin and Shoigu riding a wooden cart pulled by a Russian soldier. https://www.facebook.com/Viejsnoryja/photos/a.128705417756206/994283254531747/.*

These memes portray Putin as not so much a threatening but rather ridiculous and foolish character. Though Klapp (1954) regards the categories of the hero, villain and fool as separate, Ukraine war memes tend to combine the two latter. They become a means to transform and degrade the villain into a less threatening, weak and sub-human character. Memes thus display Putin as a man of flawed masculinity, problematising his manhood and showing him in mash-ups that are generally unflattering, or, more specifically, degrading (see a parallel with Bin Laden memes, Kuipers 2005 [2011]: 32). This not only follows on a dichotomous good/evil narrative of geopolitics but also feeds into the trope of Western / Euro-American hegemonic masculinity being the key status marker of a capable politician. Straightforward effeminisation of Putin's image in the 2022 memes is, however, only occasional (Figure 4), as are the references to his use of Botox injections (as opposed to earlier demasculinisation strategies described in Riabov & Riabova 2014; see also Laineste & Kalmre 2017). Putin is also the object of more amusing attacks than the straightforward killing, death or defamation described earlier. A prominent visual symbol of Putin's bodily disempowerment that can be found both in Estonian and Belarusian datasets is an image of a trident (the central element of the Ukrainian coat of arms) stuck into Putin's backside (Figure 6). In an attempt to make the symbolic representation more symmetrical, Putin's body is substituted with that of a chicken in some of the memes (alluding to the eagle on the Russian coat of arms). In some memes, he is dwarfed in size and represented visually as a Lilliputian (Figure 7) thus creating a morally and physically weakened image of the enemy – a recurrent strategy in dealing with enemies in caricatures (Laineste & Lääne 2015).

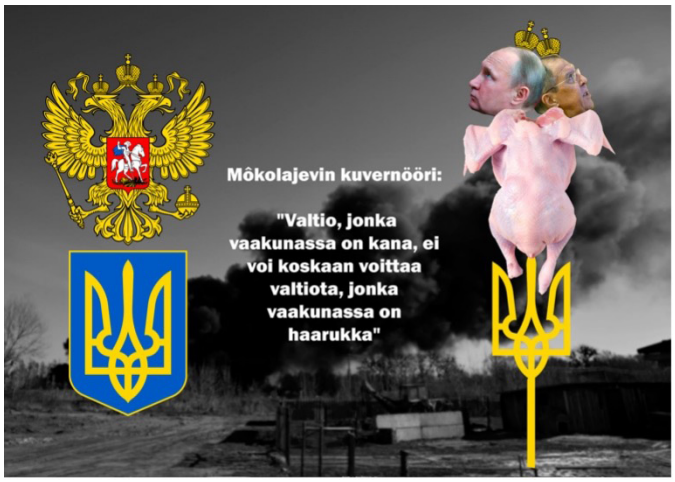

Figure 6. *Mõkolajev's governor: A country with a chicken in its coat of arms can never defeat a country with a fork in its coat of arms. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10159769746628864&set=g.534314991238265.*

Figure 7. *Belarus has two allies: leprechauns and dwarves. The meme was posted on March 17, when Lukashenko congratulated the Irish people on St. Patrick's day. https://t.me/belteanews/22268.*

Putin's personality becomes a target of ridicule when his anti-social character is distilled into a shameful trait like cowardice (Figure 8). In the war context, this is highlighted as one of the key negative features (cf. jokes about cowardly Italians, Davies 1990: 173–202), hence the frequent references in the memes to the bunker where Putin is presumably hiding. Several nicknames derive from this motif: 'Bunker king' (a pun referring to the fast-food chain Burger King, which is an allusion to the economic sanctions placed on Russia), and 'old man in a bunker' (used by Belarusian humorous social media groups).

At the same time, Putin is depicted as an inept leader whose army's achievements are not just unprofessional but first and foremost laughable, especially when contrasted with the efforts of Ukrainian farmers who tow away Russian tanks with tractors, managing to defeat the Russians without really having proper equipment for modern warfare. He has to sit helplessly behind his desk and observe his similarly inept army marauding the Ukrainian homes and making tactical errors on the front. Putin's internal politics are also ridiculed, as is his perspective on the world (Nazis are everywhere except in Russia). He is portrayed as backward character dreaming of a USSR-like empire, unable to plan for or think of the future (Figure 9; cf. stupidity jokes on backwardness, Laineste 2008).

Figure 8. *Medvedev and Putin posing as White Sun of the Desert film characters. Putin's speech bubble: "Now we have two options: either we attack and get f*cked, or we retreat and crap our pants". https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=2284259381712348&set=g.1716227065346657.*

Figure 9. *Putin degenerating. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=7207713669299661&set=g.534314991238265.*

Zelenskyy memes

Memes depicting Zelenskyy are much scarcer than those depicting Putin; 43 in total (either Zelenskyy alone or with some other character). The reasons for this are twofold: first, he does not have a long-standing history as a memetic character, and secondly, his heroised image does not leave much room for playfulness, compared to the foolish villain Putin. The memes project a heroisation of Zelenskyy, underlying his masculinity, often connected to courage (for example by claiming that his "balls can be seen from space") and leadership qualities. He is shown as a hero who almost single-handedly protects the entire world from the threat that Putin poses not just for Ukraine, but for democracy, freedom and other Western values.

Some of the memes attribute supernatural powers to him (for example, he and his officials are compared to cats who have 9 lives, or he is depicted as a superman, or the Earth is said to be spinning because Zelenskyy has kicked it into motion). In memes, Zelenskyy's speeches are allegedly more appealing than sex (a frequent topic in Belarusian memes, see Figure 10), and his image can be used for the best protection magic (including protection against pregnancy).

Figure 10. *"Where are you, darling?" – "I'm coming…" https://vk.com/belmems?z=photo-83285883_457240112%2Falbum-83285883_00%2Frev.*

He also appears alongside other prominent heroes from popular media or history, for example Chuck Norris or Winston Churchill. In a humorous meme (Figure 11), Zelenskyy, in full battle attire and standing in a trench, quips that he has never heard of the woman called Chuck Norris, again playing on the masculine image of the Ukrainian leader who is even manlier than the (comic) action hero.

Figure 11. *Chuck Norris? Never heard of her. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10161757182438345&set=g.534314991238265.*

Figure 12. *Lavrov: "Zelenskyy is hiding in Kyiv like a coward instead of coming to Minsk for the negotiations like a man". The meme was posted on February 27 when Zelenskyy was constantly rejecting the US offer to evacuate him. https://t.me/Sn_and_Cu/908.*

There are also occasional jokes referring to Zelenskyy's career as a comedian: in these cases there is a juxtaposition between the comedian (Zelenskyy) and the clown/clowns (Putin; other political leaders).

The memes depicting Zelenskyy do not straightforwardly target him (as they do in the case of Putin, where the target is set to be denigrated and ridiculed in a variety of ways), but rather use his image to ridicule his enemies through the mechanism of juxtaposition, mainly targeting Russian politicians and propaganda (Figure 12).

In these cases Zelenskyy's courage is juxtaposed to Russian politicians' cowardice and mendacity. Sometimes European and American politicians are also ridiculed in these memes for not helping Zelenskyy enough or standing aside to see how Ukraine and Zelenskyy do the dirty work (for example visualised as digging a hole, with Ukraine working and the others standing by the hole and giving instructions or simply observing).

Putin *versus* Zelenskyy memes

The age-old trope of the juxtaposition of good and evil is revived in the memetic portrayal of the war in Ukraine. In our sample, the juxtaposition memes – those where Putin and Zelenskyy appear in one and the same meme as two sides, two panes or pictures (left/right, up/down) – aim to express how Zelenskyy is everything that Putin is not (Figures 13 and 14). Zelenskyy is portrayed as a good leader who listens to his advisors and people, courageously taking part in the conflict, while Putin submits others to his will like a dictator and keeps a safe distance from the war. This juxtaposition strategy was especially relevant at the beginning of the conflict. That said, straightforward juxtaposition is not very frequent in the memes: 11 instances of such memes cropped up in our dataset.

Figure 13. *Hero versus zero (reference to Z, the symbol of Russian warfare against Ukraine) https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10158750164330496&set=g.534314991238265.*

Figure 14. *In a world full of Putins and Trumps, be a Zelensky. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10224481075908223&set=g.534314991238265.*

The central focus of Putin versus Zelenskyy memes plays out on the idea of distance between the leader and the people. A hero steps in to protect the people whereas the villain retorts to scheming while his officers fulfil his orders on the front. This is why a popular juxtaposition between Putin and Zelenskyy lies on the axis of courage vs cowardice. Another tightly connected contradiction is Zelenskyy's closeness to the people as opposed to Putin's distance from even his own ministers, especially visualised through the image of the long table that Putin has used for international meetings and that has stimulated the creation of innumerable memes (see Laineste et al. forthcoming).

Visually, the Putin–Zelenskyy memes display a formal, grim-looking image of Putin taken from press photos, sometimes wearing sunglasses (conveying a more unfathomable, distanced look). The pre-2022 memetic images of Putin, for example, riding bears or storks are not common in the juxtapositioning memes. It is worth noting that Zelenskyy does not have a grounded memetic representation in the way that Putin does and which could be used as a template, apart from photos from his earlier career as an entertainer and actor. In his case, when juxtaposing his image to that of Putin, press photos are often used, in which he usually wears khaki army clothes and is at times surrounded by soldiers of the Ukraine army.

One of the ways to underscore the hero/villain opposition in the memes is to compare Zelenskyy and Putin to well-known comic villains and heroes, for example, characters in the Harry Potter series, or *Home Alone* characters.

Photoshopped images of Zelenskyy celebrating victory over Russia have become memetic as well, such as in the Estonian dataset where we can find an image of Zelenskyy taking a selfie with Putin in his coffin (see Figure 15). This, in fact, is an unusual portrayal of their relationship, as usually there is a separating line or two different frames (cf. Figures 13 and 14 above) that juxtapose the two opposite worlds of Putin and Zlenskyy, while here they are edited into the same picture:

Figure 15. *Zelenskyy taking a selfie with Putin in his coffin. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=5311734798857912&set=g.534314991238265.*

Juxtaposition works as a (not so frequent) visual and conceptual strategy in Ukraine war memes, but it is not always accompanied with humour. Humour is more recurrent when the juxtaposition is merged with pop cultural references, whereas in other cases the juxtaposition non-humorously aims to highlight the superhuman qualities of the Ukrainian leader and degrade the Russian leader, accusing him of cowardice or other vices. The (press) images are taken to "speak louder than a thousand words" without much photoshopping (thus, Putin or Zelenskyy appear in their normal surroundings; there are no images that merge them, and no animals or other creatures).

It is interesting to note that Putin is contrasted not just to Zelenskyy, but also to other Ukrainian politicians (cf. the meme of Vitaly Kim and Putin conversing at Putin's long table[3]) and to Ukraine as an entity (present in the

internationally spread meme of bursting a balloon in the colours of Ukrainian flag, represented both in the Belarusian and the Estonian datasets, Figure 16).

Figure 16. *Putin being burst while attacking a Ukrainian flag-coloured balloon. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=102244 76362070380&set=g.534314991238265.*

Thus, we can adopt a broader perspective on the personified juxtaposition and conclude that Zelenskyy's (and his allies') presence in the memes might stand not just for himself, but for a larger entity (Ukraine, the democratic world) that he represents. This tendency also underlines the fact that the ongoing conflict is framed as Putin's war and he is the villain to be blamed for all the war atrocities: he is in opposition to the entire world, both in the actual conflict as well as in the memes. The depiction of Zelenskyy is more straightforward and not so nuanced nor multifaceted.

DISCUSSION

The popular press has been shown to project a masculine, heroised image of Zelenskyy, opposed to a cowardly Putin (Sarat & Aftergut 2022; Vrba 2022) who plays the part of the global villain in this conflict. The same appears to be true for social media, and more particularly, Ukraine war memes. Both of these roles have emerged naturally from the well-established folkloric narrative tradition, and both of them need each other to function properly. The role of the hero needs a villain (and, as we see in our data, a fool) against whom to draw his sword (Klapp 1954; cf. heroes and villains in Nazi propaganda, see Chalmers 2011: 49; for a longer discussion, see Kerr 2016: 78–79). Juxtaposed types have a central role in tale plots, supporting them with a solid, predictable structure, and having such a structure to rely on is particularly crucial at times of uncertainty. Amidst the precariousness of the ongoing war in Ukraine when every day – if not every hour – can bring dramatic and unpredictable changes to the world as we know it, the familiar images of a hero and a villain act as anchors that stabilise our perceptions of reality and provide ready-made patterns and symbols to talk about the conflict.

Putin's representation as a villain and Zelenskyy's representation as a hero thus follows a tested folkloric strategy. As mentioned above, heroes are the demi-gods or superhumans who rise above regular people, setting an example in difficult times. Zelenskyy shows solidarity with and inspiration for his countrymen through press images that sometimes seem to have been taken "straight out of an action movie" (Susarla 2022), and which are later used as memes. This highlights the strategic use of social media as an effective way of conveying heroism on the screen (Comerford 2022), and also the close interconnection between the fictional images of heroes and the ways real heroic people are depicted in the vernacular digital realm. Not only is the static image of Zelenskyy tailored to fit the well-known representations of fictional heroes (for example being dressed in a Superman outfit), but the dynamics of his political career also resemble the hero's journey (Bal 1997). By starting as a common person – and moreover a comedian, a job that is often compared to the mediaeval jester and is usually not perceived seriously – and going through some turbulent moments as head of state, Zelenskyy emerges as a true leader (cf. Soviet cultural archetypes of a jokester "becoming a 'real man' through military service" in Fraser 2022). He displays the character features that are sought in Ukraine during the war (primarily courage and the willingness to sacrifice himself for a better future), features that also appear in memes (sometimes in an exaggerated manner to produce a humorous effect). One of the best delineated features that we observed in the analysed memes was the display of a masculine

Ukrainian leader, which combines all of the aforementioned character traits and makes him a good choice for a hero (Wojnicka et al. 2022; Pfleger 2022).

Villains, on the other hand, do not respect social norms and are unfit for a life within a society. In our data, Putin is marginalised and depicted as the enemy of the world; a mentally ill person, a thief or a liar. The strategies to represent him in this way are twofold: first, the serious, more straightforward degradations, and secondly the humorous, playful and ambivalent depictions. Putin's image in Ukraine war memes is thus that of the blood-thirsty villain, but also the inept and foolish coward, with the latter displaying more variations and shades of expression. Memes ostracise Putin who, as a villain, has to be defeated and eliminated. Putin's death is portrayed as a plausible, wishful scenario in memes – hence the references to him being hung, put into a coffin or killed in some other way (cf Kuipers 2002 on Bin Laden). The visual representations of Putin often include scatological references that add to his image as a non-human and disgusting villain. Despite the fact that Putin is not turned into a fictional monstrous creature but rather is usually depicted in an anthropomorphous form, meme-makers often add visual markers to underscore his monstrosity: stains of blood, weapons, etc. The memes do not deny Putin's power entirely, but they clearly demonstrate that he can only exercise his power over completely helpless and amorphous masses of people, whereas when he faces a real opponent – be it Zelenskyy, Ukrainian farmers or a generalised image of Ukraine – his power does not match theirs. While the Russian president was already a popular memetic character before 2022 (Laineste & Kalmre 2017), his depiction acquired new traits after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Earlier memes that mocked his "hypermasculinity" were more detached from Putin's persona – the humour of these memes did not entirely depend on his personal features but followed a more universal strategy of ridicule (Davies 1990). War-related memes, on the other hand, are not only more serious and display a more pronounced stance, but they are also tailored specifically to depict Putin and his role in the war, and can only be applied to him. He is *the* villain of the war in Ukraine at this particular time and space, not just *a* villain who can easily be replaced by another similar character. On the other side of the spectrum, Zelenskyy, Ukrainian soldiers and farmers, and Ukraine as an entity are all equally heroic.

While a hero and a villain are necessary for the advancement of the plot, the juxtaposition serves the purpose of keeping the proportions of the villain 'manageable', not too scary or invincible. It is important not to portray the enemy as an absolute evil because this disseminates fear and gives the enemy excessive power. In the memes analysed in our study, it is not surprising that Putin is symbolically defeated and dwarfed by Zelenskyy, either militarily or

morally. By 'othering' Putin and presenting him as a weak character meme makers deprive him – at least partly – of his subjectivity (cf. Kinnvall 2004: 762) and therefore depict Zelenskyy as the one in control. Like many of the Putin/Zelenskyy memes topics, this also draws upon the real-life events covered in the news media. For example, right before the outbreak of the war Zelenskyy addressed Russian citizens and urged them to prevent the then-impending invasion of Russia into Ukraine (Sonne 2022). Sarat and Aftergut (2022) note that by delivering this address and talking to Russian people over the Russian president's head Zelenskyy treated Putin "like a Lilliputian". By metaphorically making Putin smaller in size, it becomes much easier to switch from fearing him to ridiculing him; from the villain to the fool.

The analysis of the memes revolving around the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine also calls for further reflections on the similarities and differences between war and disaster humour. Our dataset demonstrates that the war memes display a clear stance on the issue and maintain the dichotomy between heroes and villains very explicitly. Unlike disaster humour, which constitutes an ironic perspective on a catastrophic event and does not usually contain any positive characters, war humour relies not only on ridiculing evil but also – although to a lesser extent – on glorifying the hero. Disaster humour is more playful, while in the context of the war meme makers need to take a stance, pick a side; this often leads to less ambiguous representations of memetic topics and characters. Looking at the form of humour, however, we can see that the intertextual aspects of war and disaster humour remain similar as both of these types of humour employ a lot of references to popular culture, advertising, etc. The difference transpires in the recurrent use of institutional symbols (such as coats of arms, flags, etc.) in war humour, symbols that mark the presence of the opposing sides of the conflict in the memes. This clearly delineated aspect of humorous war memes – their explicit stance – makes them a part of global hybrid confrontation, a way to mark one's position for those people who live outside the war zone and are not taking part in the military activities themselves (Laineste et al. forthcoming).

At the same time, memes often spread within echo chambers of like-minded individuals with similar political stances, therefore their (potential) effect on the minds of the other side of the conflict is limited (Young 2018); memes are rather used to enforce group solidarity between people supporting the same side of the conflict and promote shared identity within a community (Newton et al. 2022). Spreading war-related messages via internet memes also implies taking into account the peculiarities of digital social media and the very genre of internet memes. Among these peculiarities are (audio)-visuality and frequent references to popular culture (which has shaped our perceptions of the concepts of hero

and villain through characters like Batman, Superman, Harry Potter, etc.). On the one hand, these aspects simplify the message, while on the other hand they open up its metaphorical dimension and allow its producers and audiences to make versatile conclusions using the allegories embedded in internet memes.

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NOTES

[1] The term "meme magic" has been used on image boards (such as 4chan and 8chan) to refer to the alleged possibility to influence current events by posting internet memes on social media.

[2] Https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/four-horsemen-of-the-apocalypse.

[3] Https://nashaniva.com/?c=ar&i=286589&mo=b3627a83f78ec849ab8c03f97d5f0eeb74600e77.

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"I AM LIKE GREEN FIREWOOD – NOT GOING OUT, NOT CATCHING FIRE!" A PRISONER'S SELF-PORTRAIT IN LETTERS

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Abstract: This article provides an overview of letters written by Fromhold Veidenberg (1906), a communist who entered the Republic of Estonia from the Soviet Union in secret in December 1932, to his relative from Võru, Johanna Eisen (1910–2002). Veidenberg's intelligence mission failed: he was caught at the border and detained. The suspect's interview revealed he was a student at The Communist University of the National Minorities of the West in Leningrad, and was sent across the border for a secret mission. After capturing, he was sentenced to six years at the Central Prison in Tallinn. Over four years in prison, in the period 1934–1938, he exchanged letters with several people, including Eisen, who initiated the correspondence. This article is based on 22 letters sent by Veidenberg from prison – he destroyed most of Eisen's letters before being released in 1938. I will regard Veidenberg's letters as biographical material, shedding light on the person writing them, to find out how Veidenberg depicts himself in his letters and which strategies he uses to create emotional intimacy with the addressee.

Keywords: communists, intelligence mission, private letters, romantic feelings, the Republic of Estonia, the Soviet Union

A short article titled "Communists Captured" was published in the newspaper *Vaba Maa* in October 1933 about two young men, one of whom was caught sneaking across the border in Narva on 18 December 1932, and detained. The other man managed to escape the border guard. The newspaper covered the story as follows: "At around 10 pm on the evening of 18 December last year, border guard Sirkel was riding his bicycle from Narva towards the border. Near the former Komarovka request stop a man came up to him from the opposite direction. The border guard jumped off his bicycle to ask where the man was coming from. At this moment he happened to look towards the border. Then he

saw a black shape escape into a bush and found a young man squatting behind it. He explained that he had come from Russia, crossed the border over the bog. But who was the other man? The young man who was caught explained that he didn't know him but said the guard would not catch the stranger as he had been across the border several times" ("Sissekukkunud Kommunistid" 1933). The suspect's interview revealed that the captured man mentioned in the article was a citizen of the Soviet Union, Fromhold Veidenberg who arrived in Estonia to fulfil a secret mission.

This article will give an overview of Veidenberg's letters sent from Tallinn Central Prison to his relative Johanna Eisen in Võru, who had initiated the correspondence. The letters were handed over to the Estonian Literary Museum by Eisen's daughter during the letter collection competition *Kirjad minu elus* ("Letters in my life"), organised by the Estonian Cultural History Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum and the Estonian Life Histories Association in October 2020.

Veidenberg's letters are unique in the context of the mentioned competition, as well as in the context of research into letters and feelings. They are also an important addition to archival sources on Veidenberg available at the National Archives, which shed light on the thoughts and feelings of a communist and his daily life in prison. As Eisen's letters to Veidenberg have not been preserved, the research is based on a fragment of a larger full picture that can only be imagined. Hence, we cannot say anything of the addressee as a person, or the reason why she decided to write to Veidenberg, a person she did not know and had never met.

Other articles have been published in Estonia about different aspects of private letters (see Kalkun 2015; Kurvet-Käosaar 2015; Raudsepp 2018; Ojamaa 2022), but none have been focussed on the person sending the letters. In this article I will regard the private letters as biographical sources, which is why the posed research questions are connected to the writer's person. The first aim of this article is to explore how Veidenberg presents himself in his letters, i.e., how he portrays himself. Secondly, based on his letters, I will study which strategies Veidenberg uses to create a sense of intimacy with the addressee, which allows one to consider his letters as love letters.

FROMHOLD VEIDENBERG'S FAILED MISSION

Veidenberg's case was not special among other instances of espionage between the two world wars: historian Reigo Rosenthal has estimated that in the 1920–1940 period the Republic of Estonia brought over ca. 500 people suspected of

crimes of espionage to trial, with a judgment pronounced in 393 cases and the accused found guilty in 315 cases (Rosenthal 2013: 57). In the early 1930s Soviet intelligence became more active, especially in the 4th department of the Leningrad Military District, which organised intelligence missions in Finland, Estonia and Latvia. In 1932, 16 cases of espionage were filed in Estonia, and 19 in the following year, for which 40 people were convicted. The majority, 70% of people engaged with the cases from 1932 to 1933, had ties to the 4th department of the Leningrad Military District (ibid.: 231). The number of people recruited and sent over the border to Estonia with an intelligence task increased. At the beginning of the 1930s many Estonian communists were recruited by the Leningrad Military District Intelligence Department as well, with the hope that they "could organise intelligence activities more successfully owing to their knowledge of the Estonian language and acquaintances in Estonia" (ibid.: 231). Moreover, Estonian communists were recruited all over the USSR and sent to Estonia, tasked with recruitment or as couriers. They were often students of the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West in Leningrad. The university was founded in 1922 to educate future 'revolutionaries' and political officers.

The book *Sõda enne sõda. Nõukogude eriteenistuste tegevusest Eestis kuni 1940. aastani* (The War Before The War: The Activities of the Soviet Special Services in Estonia until 1940) mentions Veidenberg and his failed intelligence mission in Estonia, among other Estonian communists from the Soviet Union. According to Veidenberg, he was born in 1906 in Novgorod Governorate. In 1930, he began his studies at the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West. In December 1932 he was sent to Estonia on a secret mission, and detained. During interrogation in Narva Veidenberg claimed that he intended to move to Estonia and was helped by a person he had met by chance in Leningrad, who gave him money, new clothes, an Estonian ID by the name of Richard Aug, and sent him to the train station in Kingissepp, where he was supposed to meet a man who would help him over the border (Rosenthal 2013: 336). The order committing Veidenberg to custody reveals that he first introduced himself as Herbert Aaman, citizen of the Soviet Union.

As this story was not believable, Veidenberg later changed his testimony, revealing his real name and membership of the communist party, as well as the fact that he had been a student at the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West in Leningrad since 1930. He also held the position of secretary of the university party community. Veidenberg admitted to having met Heinrich Ross, who worked for the intelligence department of the Leningrad Military District, in his first year of study (ibid.: 337). Ross gave Veidenberg the task of travelling to Tartu and meeting up with a young man, from whom he

would receive some information or materials (ibid.). Ross also gave Veidenberg money, clothes and an ID. In the autumn of 1933, the military district court sentenced Veidenberg to six years of penal labour in accordance with § 102 and clause 2 of § 273. The military district court documents reveal that the convict was accused of joining the Estonian Communist Party and promising to find collaborators for underground activity with the aim of overthrowing the Republic of Estonia at the party's request. Veidenberg started serving the sentence on 5 October 1933 at the Narva prison, and on 22 November of the same year he was transferred to Tallinn Central Prison. Veidenberg was released in May 1938 in accordance with the Amnesty Act, which covered most cases of political prisoners, including 79 members of the Estonian league of freedom fighters and 104 people sentenced for communist activity, including Veidenberg (Kuuli 1999: 64).

PRISONER AT TALLINN CENTRAL PRISON

In prison people are given minimal privacy, and their lives are subject to countless rules; they are stripped of almost everything. This is why prison has been compared to an operation room in hospital or a mental institution: "The processes which in regular life develop slowly, and usually away from prying eyes, are visible to all in here" (Maiste & Vseviov 2011: 16). Michel Foucault has stressed the importance of the instructional function of a prison, describing it as an exhaustive disciplinary apparatus which "must assume responsibility for all aspects of the individual, his physical training, his aptitude to work, his everyday conduct, his moral attitude, his state of mind", to impose a new form on the perverted individual (Foucault 2014: 339). Foucault emphasises that the main principles by which to achieve this goal are isolation, work, and the tendency of prison as an institution to assume the right to set a penalty (ibid.: 351).

The Tallinn Central Prison, or Patarei Prison, where Veidenberg served his sentence, was opened in 1920 and was supposed to house ca. 1,000 inmates (Saueauk & Maripuu 2007: 297). In the 1930s the prison was overhauled, but the inmates' living conditions remained poor. William Tomingas, who was arrested in the summer of 1934 for supporting the Estonian league of freedom fighters, started serving his sentence in the autumn of the same year. In his memoir he reminisces about how the budget to maintain each prisoner was 18 cents per day, for which the inmate received half a pound of bread, 12 grams of sugar, 2–3 potatoes, a few salted Baltic herring, coffee, half a litre of soup for

lunch and tea for dinner (Tomingas 1961: 321). Moreover, the prisoners' time for exercise was limited, it was supposed to be half an hour, but was cut down to ten minutes, and the inmates were only taken to the sauna once a month instead of once a week, as regulated (ibid.: 337). The main events of the day were roll-call, meals and exercise (walking), recalls Tomingas, which allowed prisoners to tell what time of day it was (ibid.: 338). To maintain a spiritual balance, Tomingas adhered to a strict schedule in prison: before lunch he did physical exercises three times, and walked the length of his cell 120 times, then read a few chapters of a book; after lunch, he held up a dialogue for an hour, and then played with fleas (ibid.). In 1934, prison life changed due to the start of the Era of Silence. Communists, who until then had been paired up in cells in a separate block, were moved to cells along the 5th corridor, which had 12–15 bunk beds per room (Maiste & Vseviov 2011: 142).

Veidenberg's file, kept at the National Archives, sheds some light on how his re-education at the Tallinn Central Prison went. The file contains documents about taking him into custody and his time in prison from 19 December 1932 until 7 May 1938. Conclusions about Veidenberg's behaviour in prison may be drawn from an evaluation document, which reveals that every inmate was to pass two stages, a probationary stage and an improvement stage (which in turn, had three sub-stages), until they reached the stage of excellence. By the time Veidenberg was released, he had reached the second level of the improvement stage, which offered more freedom and benefits compared to the probationary period. A document called "A Description of the Everyday Behaviour of Persons in Custody" also describes Veidenberg as an inmate and reveals that his behaviour in the first year of imprisonment was good, although every year on 1 May he acted in a disorderly manner and sang, for which he received a 7-day disciplinary punishment. On 9 September 1934 he sent a letter to the Minister of Courts with a complaint about poor food and demanded "the food ration to be increased to a level sufficient for people to live on and the full ration of food to be delivered" (ERA.1868.1.1285). Veidenberg wrote his next complaint to the prison warden on 15 July 1935, accusing prison officials of brutality towards a fellow prisoner, Teodor Okk. On 19 May 1936 Veidenberg addressed a protest letter to the Minister of Courts, protesting against forcing political prisoners to work: "I will emphasise again that work in the prison has turned to a remarkable exploitation of the inmate workforce, as the hours are extremely long and the pay so low it's nearly non-existent. [---] To draw attention to my protest, I will not accept food today, on 19 May" (ERA.1868.1.1285). His eagerness to learn is illustrated by his request to the prison warden from 22 June 1937, asking to allow triangle rulers, a pair of compasses and a protractor into his cell for studying

mathematics, for which he received permission. The documents on Veidenberg's time in prison show that he was an active prisoner, aware of his rights, that he stood up for himself and did not hesitate to step up to help his fellow inmates.

VEIDENBERG'S LETTERS TO JOHANNA EISEN

The portrait that Veidenberg painted of himself can be viewed in the letters to his relative Johanna Eisen (1910–2002), from Võru, who was 24 when the correspondence started. Veidenberg's first letter to Eisen reveals that she initiated the correspondence, sending the first letter to Veidenberg in the spring of 1934. Veidenberg committed his first letter to paper on 5 June the same year. Altogether, 22 letters from Veidenberg to Eisen have been preserved, having been sent from the Tallinn Central Prison in the years between 1934 and 1938. Although Veidenberg ended the first letter with the hope of meeting the girl someday, his later letters reveal that this wish did not come true. Before his expulsion from Estonia in the spring of 1938 Veidenberg wrote to Eisen that he had destroyed most of her letters, but she carefully kept all of Veidenberg's letters, which indicates that they were important to her for some reason. In the case of Veidenberg's letters, one must emphasise the fact that they were thoroughly read before they were allowed to exit prison. Therefore, self-censorship is one of the main keywords in handling such letters.

According to Anita Wilson, an ethnographer who has researched life in prison, reading and writing are significant aspects of prisoners' routine social practices, and various forms of correspondence play a central role in maintaining modes of communication in prison (Wilson 2000: 179). A prisoner, who has many letters and cards to prove his wide social networks, is considered to have higher status in the eyes of his fellow prisoners compared to a prisoner with no outside connections (ibid.: 192). A prison is a place of extremes, hence, according to Wilson, prisoners' letters may be characterised by excessive language, heightened emotionality and various forms of exaggeration, including the visual side dominating in most letters, and inordinate length (ibid.: 194).

Janet Maybin, a scholar researching the correspondence of death row prisoners, identifies social isolation as the main reason for writing letters, although her subjects also saw penfriends as potential sources for funds, romance, or sex (Maybin 2000: 158). For some prisoners, exchanging letters was important to emotionally overcome the death sentence and keep them sane. The most important aspects in the prisoners' relationship with their penfriends were trust and honesty. Creating trusting relationships with their penfriends al-

lowed the inmates to express emotional attachment, affection and care, which were absent from their daily life in prison (ibid.: 160). Exchanging letters was undoubtedly one of the main outlets for creating and expressing emotional ties for Veidenberg as well, who, being a man in an unregistered marriage, found Eisen to be a trustworthy penfriend, but also a woman to whom he could express his romantic feelings, sometimes implicitly, sometimes expressly.

LETTERS IN THE CONTEXT OF LIFE WRITING

Letters have been characterised as small stories or episodes forming part of a bigger story (Eiranen 2015: 82) – a life story or biography. Letters and other autobiographical texts, such as diaries and memories, can be viewed as a form of telling a person's story, often containing elements of other genres. Letters in which the writer's acknowledged aim is to create a portrait or an image to the addressee whom he has not met, have many similarities to confessional novels, in which the author's aim is to explain thoroughly their life and place the most intricate details and secret feelings of their inner life in the spotlight for the reader. However, the process of self-creation is still different in letters compared to confessional writing, the reason being that letters are dialogical (Stanley 2004: 202): the writer directly depends on the addressee's response in their previous letter. Hence, in correspondence life is not "a singular, static, one-sided entity, but is rather dialogically-constructed at the intersection of where the perspectives of the writer and the anticipated perspective of the reader meet" (Salter 2013: 102).

An interesting question to ask upon considering letters as a form of self-portrayal concerns the role of relayed feelings, emotions and self-interpretations. The letters may form a kind of an archive of feelings, to borrow Ann Cvetkovich's term, which she has used for cultural texts that can be studied as sources of feelings and emotions (Cvetkovich 2003: 7). Letter researchers have, however, underlined that letters are not factual accounts of how people used to live or live now, but rather are "evidence of how they represent changes in how they understand their lives and their relationships with their addressees, with 'how' here recognising changing conventions about letter-writing and also of the material means available for engaging in it" (Stanley 2013: 69).

As any other author of an autobiographical text, a person writing letters analyses their own life, creating a story comprehensible for them and the addressee of what they have experienced (Lahtinen et al. 2011: 21). This process may be conscious in part, but it can be directed by random circumstances, the

writer's feelings, unacknowledged wishes and conventions related to letter-writing (ibid.). Comparing Veidenberg's letters to other documents from his time in prison clearly shows that the manner in which he depicts his life in prison to the recipient of his letters is the result of a careful process of choice. For example, in several letters he writes of working at the prison shoemaking workshop, first mentioning it in a letter from January 1938 as a great way of killing time. Meanwhile, he stays silent about protesting against working in prison with the other communists. Such choices are characteristic of the construction process of an autobiographical subject. People tend to portray themselves in a better manner and ignore the more unpleasant characteristics and experiences. Comparing Veidenberg's letters to Tomingas's memories of prison leaves the impression that Veidenberg ignored many uncomfortable everyday details of prison life, such as poor bathing facilities, as well as the fleas and bed bugs which were ubiquitous in prison. Since Veidenberg's letters contain many discussions and thoughts about the writer himself, they provide great material to study how he presents himself to the addressee and what kind of image he creates of himself in writing.

VEIDENBERG'S SELF-PORTRAIT IN LETTERS

Veidenberg writes about himself a lot, which leads to the conclusion that he is the central topic of his letters. He regularly writes of his physical well-being, as well as his current mood, hopes and dreams. In his first letter he introduces himself to Eisen as a simple, mundane person who is not fluent in Estonian, and "who has the lowest expectations in life, in terms of personal gain" (EKM EKLA, reg 2022/70). This is followed by a confession: "In my life I have been through fire, water and copper pipes, which have certainly left their mark on my character. I must say, I am a bad person by nature, I am stubborn, principled, I hold a grudge, I seek revenge, I am jealous, etc. But I must say, I have striven to be fair, direct and 100% abstinent" (ibid.). Veidenberg repeatedly emphasises honesty in his later letters, declaring that he detests lies, which is why he never lies to his friends and comrades, and interprets ending up in prison as an accident of fate.

In addition to honesty Veidenberg emphasises his love for nature in his letters. In December 1934 he reminisces about a Christmas eve from his childhood, segueing from a memory of a Christmas tree to his love for nature: "I love nature, even its smallest, most insignificant phenomena. Since childhood I have spent many an hour dreaming in wild nature, building castles in the air in my

youth like everyone else, imagining my future. I like the Northern nature most for its subtle colours, quiet lakes, waterfalls and ancient forests" (ibid.). On 17 July 1936 he writes "I love to row somewhere on a river or a lake on a quiet summer night, all alone" (ibid.).

Another important component of Veidenberg's self-portrait is his intellectuality. He often writes of reading or books he had just read or wanted to read, mentioning, for example, that he prefers philosophical literature but would gladly read Heinrich Heine's and Henrik Visnapuu's poetry as well. In a letter written at the beginning of 1938, he recollects his early passion for reading: "...my youth revolved around books. Oh, the battles I had to wage with my mother! I would read through the night, during meals, my mother would hide and threaten to burn them. I would carry books home from the local library 13 km away, everything available nearer I had already read" (ibid). He often asked people to send him books – he was interested in the *Elav teadus* (The Living Science, a popular science series), and *Eesti rahvuslikud suurmehed* (Remarkable Estonian National Figures, a series of biographies) series. In his letters he also portrays himself as a big theatre lover, nostalgically reminiscing about the plays he had seen: "I was a frequent visitor to the academic theatres in Moscow and Leningrad. Operas, operettas, dramas, comedies, ballet – all are of great quality in Russia" (ibid.). In one of his letters, he mentions his great interest in cinema: "... I would go to the cinema a lot, to both silent and talking pictures, but when my head was heavy with work, I would go there to rest, I was not picky and watched whatever was shown. There were days when I would indulge – I watched 3–4 movies, one right after the other" (ibid.).

Veidenberg admitted to Eisen that as a student he had a thirst for knowledge, but acquiring it was hindered by the lack of necessary books. Nevertheless, he managed to learn some German and English from books written in these languages. In the later letters he writes of attempts to learn mathematics, in which he has "fallen behind greatly", from Russian textbooks, as well as physics and economics.

In his letters Veidenberg briefly mentions life in prison as well. In his words it is monotonous and promotes unhealthy egoism, and he is afraid this sentiment has been carried over to his letters as well. To bring meaning into his life in prison, he spends a lot of time reading, for example, in one letter he claims to have read 260 books in one year, and he passes the time playing chess, dominoes and novuss. The letters reveal that taking care of his physique is as important for Veidenberg as feeding his soul. Already in the first letter he informs the addressee that when he was free, he would "play many kinds of sport", but in prison he could only do exercises in the morning and wash himself with cold

water. He found exercises to be of great importance for "future life". In August 1937 he admits that prison has affected his physical condition and health:

> *My health is not at all coming up roses, objectively, there are not many healthy parts left to my body. But my spirit is strong.* [---] *My breathing organs are not working, many teeth are missing, the ones that are not, are broken and ache, etc., but I'm not planning on complaining to anyone, to whom would I complain?* (EKM EKLA, reg 2022/70)

Among other issues, bad health was caused by poor prison food, which he complains about in several letters, next to shabby clothing and isolation from the outside world. In spring of 1935 he writes "It would be great if you would send a few words about some news in your letters every now and then, that would be awfully nice of you. Would you be so kind?" (ibid.). As a prisoner in the probationary stage, Veidenberg could not send more than one letter every two months, and the inmates were not allowed to read newspapers or magazines. Relationships between inmates are important in prison life. Veidenberg's letters reveal that he was happy with his cell mates, characterising them as great comrades with whom he could share all the joys and troubles of prison life.

In 1937, Veidenberg started working at the prison shoemaking workshop, where he was to work eight hours a day, six days a week. Working prisoners received slightly better food, and they were allowed to take a walk for one hour every day. In his letters, Veidenberg announces his new job with some self-irony: "Dear Hanni, just do not start calling me a 'bootblack'. Do you promise? I will make you a pair of stomps if you don't" (EKM EKLA, reg 2022/70). In 1938 Veidenberg was moved to the first level of the improvement stage, and he could be sent 4 kg of food from the outside every six weeks, he could write one letter every month, see his relatives once a month and read month-old magazines, which he considered the most important changes in his prison life.

In his second letter to Eisen Veidenberg admits to being in an unregistered marriage and feeling guilty for "ruining her chance of happiness in life" (ibid.). He claims to have asked the woman to forget him and leave him up to fate so she would not spend her best years lonely, waiting for him. This confession calls for an explanation of why he was writing to Eisen at all. Veidenberg explains he needs to "talk to someone of my struggles" (ibid.). He hopes to find a friend in this girl "to whom [I can] trust anything and ease [my] heart" (ibid.). In a subsequent letter the same year Veidenberg admits that exchanging letters with Eisen and other relatives offers moral support and helps to cope mentally in prison.

Although Veidenberg repeatedly confirms he is bold and optimistic by character and "has never built castles in the air" (ibid.), his letters take on more pessimistic tones every now and then. For example, in the autumn of 1934 he writes:

> *You can imagine how time drags on for me, compared to life in freedom, hence the occasional bitterness. I hope you understand me! You are the only one who still writes to me more or less regularly, but how long this will last, I do not know, I suppose you cannot predict this either.* (EKM EKLA, reg 2022/70)

A letter written at the beginning of 1938 relays a more optimistic mood: "Sad thoughts emerge every once in a while – but leave them behind, life's tough, truth must be accepted boldly, without despair" (ibid.). Veidenberg is often the one to encourage his addressee to be more optimistic: "Yes, Hanny, more optimism! One must not only be strong and cheerful in all misfortunes on the outside, but keep up inner conviction, certainty, backbone!" (ibid.). Then, in another letter he admits: "I have developed such immunity that it does not allow for my mood to drop too low" (ibid.). Consistently assuring his addressee and himself to remain optimistic was undoubtedly a way for Veidenberg to make life in prison more tolerable. It is indeed possible that it was specifically writing letters that helped Veidenberg to survive the years in prison, far from his family and friends. In addition to Eisen, he corresponded with his mother, wife and friends in the Soviet Union, as well as other relatives in Estonia. Even so, writing letters does not fulfil his need for self-expression entirely – for example, in a letter from 1934 he regrets that keeping a diary is not allowed in prison, as he loved keeping one when he was free. In February 1937, he complains that he only received 30 letters the previous year, 10 of those from Eisen, while admitting that most of the letters he sent were for her.

CREATING INTIMACY IN LETTERS

Veidenberg and Eisen's relationship gets closer with every letter, which is, among other things, characterised by the way Veidenberg addresses her: in the first four letters he calls the addressee by her first name, Johanna, but from the fifth letter onwards, Johanna has turned into Hanny or dear Hanny; he even uses a diminutive "little Hanny, good girl". His longing for close relations is manifested in Veidenberg's plea for her to write of "everything, even

the most trivial things" to get to know her better. Leena Kurvet-Käosaar – who has studied the correspondence between her maternal grandmother, who lived in the Estonian SSR, and her sister, who first fled to England during the Great Escape to the West in 1944, and later moved to the US – brought out the three main strategies of creating intimacy in their correspondence: reliance on shared memories, verbal confirmation of closeness, and various ways of familiarising each other with the details of their everyday lives (Kurvet-Käosaar 2015: 167).

The last strategy is the most prevalent in Veidenberg's letters to Eisen. By writing about the details of his everyday life, he creates an intimate space into which he invites the addressee; in one of his last letters, he even calls sending a letter "visiting by letter" (EKM EKLA, reg 2022/70). These mundane things mainly involve health and food. Veidenberg writes about missing fruit, which was only available to exemplary inmates, as well as vegetables, especially tomatoes, and dairy and oils, which were not made available to the prisoners. In January 1938 he admits: "Sometimes I'd like some vegetables, milk, cheese, etc., but let's try and satisfy those and other earthly needs in 1939" (ibid.).

The second strategy of creating intimacy in Veidenberg's letters involves imagined discussions with the addressee. Usually such an imaginary conversation begins by recalling a question posed in the addressee's previous letter. For example, in his second letter Veidenberg describes how he imagines the addressee, first asking: "By the way, you would like to know how I imagined you? I think you are girl full of the joy of life, energetic, looking for activities; a girl who tries to bring herself into consonance with her environment, despite the fact that it cannot satisfy her demands and the scope of her vision. Indeed, isn't everything narrow, petty, all those small everyday worries. But perhaps I am mistaken – and I imagine myself instead of you" (EKM EKLA, reg 2022/70). In another letter he ponders why the girl does not trust him enough, and concludes it is because he is of the opposite sex: "Although I am your friend in the most earnest sense, you are hesitant towards me. You are not like me, who has confessed to you all the twists and turns of my life, all my little and large secrets that interested you, except the secrets of the party and my profession. But I guess the difference lies in our sexes – I am a man, but you must make exceptions for some men: doctor, teacher, prisoner, right? Or not? Oh, Hanny-Hanny, I have put together my own picture of you, Hanny" (ibid.).

Another way for Veidenberg to create intimacy in his letters is to mention an emotional connection to certain places. In his first letter from 6 June 1934, he nostalgically recalls Eisen's hometown Võru, which he visited in his childhood, mainly lake Tamula: "I, too, remember the beautiful lake in Võru, and the bog next to the road leading from the station into town. And the great old

pear tree growing in Aunt Anna's garden I remember clearly as well" (ibid.). In his letters he also recalls the village of Urvaste, where he was taken to visit his paternal relatives as a child.

The fourth strategy to create intimacy in Veidenberg's letters, although marginal compared to others, is to comment on the addressee's photos and ask questions about them. The photos, which on the one hand are a way "to imagine a reality", deepen the longing to meet face to face (Kurvet-Käosaar 2015: 169). Already in his first letter Veidenberg asks Eisen to send a photo of herself, comments on it in later letters and asks for more detail about the addressee's appearance. He writes about one photo which he especially likes: "Great *sposibo* for the photos. You look especially sweet in the one with the stone steps, you sitting in the foreground, smiling. You weren't sad in that moment, were you? I wouldn't think so" (EKM EKLA, reg 2022/70).

Figure 1. *Trade workers in front of the store of Aleksander Sibul in Võru, Tartu str. 11, in 1937. The first from the right is Johanna Eisen. VK F 1363:24 F / n, Võrumaa Museum. http: / / www.muis.ee / museaalview / 1099823.*

In another letter he asks again: "Could you pinch your family's photograph and send it to me; that way I can also get acquainted with your family. When will you send me your copy, perhaps you have one? You won't come to Tallinn anyway, so it would be a good thing to see you in a picture" (EKM EKLA, reg 2022/70). Veidenberg is also interested in whether Eisen herself has a camera, which would enable her to send photographs of herself and her family more often. Nevertheless, Veidenberg did not take much care for the addressee's photos, as his letters show. In one letter he asks for "the same or even a different picture", as "an accident" (ibid.) happened with the one sent with the previous letter, upon which he does not elaborate.

LETTERS AS AN ARCHIVE OF FEELINGS

Love letters have a special position among other correspondence, although they have been considered the least original type of letter, as the vocabulary to express love is limited (Bray 2001: 552). Veidenberg often expresses his feelings, connecting them with reflections on nature. In February 1937, he writes: "Spring is coming, the days are getting longer, there is excitement in the air, new life emerging, new hope in human hearts. Only I must experience it all in my mind in the prison cell, which is a miserable reflection of real life, real spring. I hope you can instil some sense of spring in me through your letters. It would be great for my soul, which would otherwise get very very hoarse" (EKM EKLA, reg 2022/70). A letter from May 1938 highlights the writer's conflict between the necessity of expressing romantic feelings and defining himself as a rational man: "I am bound to you with invisible ties – you have done this with your attitude towards me! But no, I cannot, I do not have the courage to commit my feelings to paper, as this might be a temporary, passing feeling – I belong to a race of 'rational people'" (ibid.).

In addition to his longing for freedom, Veidenberg's letters reflect his hope to meet the addressee. He often ends a letter with a message of hoping to see the girl soon. Longing is also the main topic of Veidenberg's last letter. He writes: "Just now I finished reading an article titled 'Quiet summer in Võru' published in the newspaper *Rahvaleht*, and if you only knew how that small town is calling me! I want to swim in lake Tamula, walk in Võru park, but most of all I want to see you in your home and in the neighbourhood, see your family and the famous Võru ice cream manufacturer" (EKM EKLA, reg 2022/70). However, the dream to meet Eisen in her hometown did not come true: in accordance with the Amnesty Act passed in May 1938 Veidenberg was released

from prison and, in August the same year, he was taken to Narva-Jõesuu with seven other communists and sent to the Soviet Union.

CONCLUSION

Veidenberg's letters are a fragment of a larger, merely imagined whole: sadly, Eisen's letters to Veidenberg are lost. In addition to meeting relatives, exchanging letters was a means for Veidenberg as a prisoner to keep in touch with the free world and relieve the tediousness and mentally oppressive atmosphere of the prison. The importance of the correspondence is well characterised by a request at the end of one of the letters, to write "about everything more often", as her letters bring "great joy" (EKM EKLA, reg 2022/70). Exchanging letters allowed Veidenberg to form a close relationship with a woman whom he never met in person, but to whom he could express his thoughts, confessions, and moods, and, in the end, his romantic feelings. This private space created in letters offered an alternative to the fully controlled prison, a space where the writer seemed to turn into the protagonist of a confessional novel, whose self-image was at the same time influenced by constant self-censorship.

Veidenberg's letters to Eisen are a valuable biographical source that allow the researcher to peek into the thoughts and feelings of an Estonian communist and his everyday life in prison. As Veidenberg mainly writes about himself, in his letters he creates the portrait of an almost perfect man – honest, brave and optimistic, a person who believes that "life is a battle and only the strongest win" (ibid.). Eagerness to learn and intellectual interests, including reading, theatre and cinema take pride of place in his self-portrait. He also describes himself to the addressee as a young active man who loves nature. His self-portrait in letters places equal importance on bodily experience and feelings, thoughts and confessions, the latter often turn into an imagined conversation with the addressee. Interestingly, Veidenberg tries to instil optimism in his addressee, although he admits that "sometimes this life gets tedious" (ibid.). Veidenberg's letters can also be thought of as an archive of feelings, reflecting ways of expressing romantic feelings and strategies for creating intimacy in his era.

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MULTILINGUALISM IN ESTONIAN POETRY

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Abstract: Apart from Estonian, some other languages – from local dialects to major languages such as German and Russian – have usually also been spoken on the territory of Estonia. As a result, the literary culture of the local (small) language evolved in close contact with some foreign literatures and cultures. However, there is still no thorough analysis of how the historical change in the linguistic situation manifests itself in Estonian literature. Our article aims to draw attention to the multilingual nature of the Estonian literary field by giving a historical survey of the relations, contacts, and intertwining of the languages used in Estonian poetry from the 17th century to the present. To reflect the multiple facets of multilingualism revealed in poetry we mainly use a four-level approach partly based on Jaan Undusk's typology of Estonian–German cultural contacts, adding the literary field as the level covering whatever is left. Thus, we treat multilingualism as a phenomenon observable within a language, text, author, and literary field. In terms of this study, intralinguistic multilingualism means language mixing in otherwise monolingual poetry, while intratextual multilingualism refers to abrupt transitions from one language to another (code-switching) within a text, and author multilingualism assumes a multilingual poet. Apart from the phenomena just mentioned, multilingualism within literature covers literary subfields in different language variants (for example literature created in South Estonian or Russian, but on Estonian territory). First, we will survey multilingualism in Estonia poetry before the Republic of Estonian was established in 1918, concluding that because German was the major cultural language up to the beginning of the 20th century, all poets, whatever their ethnicity, must have been fluent in two (or more) languages. The second period analysed spans the 20th century. The local Estonian poetry of the Soviet period stands out, with a few exceptions, for consistent use of Estonian, while some expatriate poets would also use English or Swedish. Third, we analyse contemporary poetry, where multilingualism is manifested not only by the use of local minority languages but also through intertwinings with English, Chinese or Japanese, thus giving evidence of an open society. Based on the picture emerging from the

article we can say that apart from a historical overview, the multilingualism of Estonian poetry also needs closer poetic analysis.

Keywords: Estonian poetry, literary contacts, multilingualism

Estonia has historically been, and still is, a multilingual country, which is also reflected in Estonian poetry. Several literary cultures have co-existed here side by side but, until recently, these have been the subject of separate disciplines and studies. Approaches to Estonian literary history so far have proceeded from "the monolingual paradigm" (Yildiz 2012) – Estonian literature has been viewed as literature written in the Estonian language (most recently, see the programmatic approach in Hasselblatt 2006: 2), and for that reason, texts in other languages have eluded research attention. In the past few decades, studies and overviews of Estonian literature in other languages have been published in Estonian in the form of approaches to Baltic-German poetry (e.g., Lukas 2006; Klöker 2014; Kaur 2009; 2011), poetry written in Latin (e.g., Viiding 2005, 2014; Viiding et al. 2007), in dialects (e.g., Velsker 2014, 2019, 2021a, 2021b), and Estonian Russian-language poetry (e.g., Sukhovei 2008; Belobrovtseva 2018a, 2020; Kotyukh 2020). However, all these studies have focused on a single language. It has long been suggested that Estonian literature should be studied from a regional perspective, as a common, shared multilingual literary culture, although the realisation of this approach has been held back by its complexity. Furthermore, in the reference companion *Balti kirjakultuuri ajalugu* (The History of Baltic Literary Culture) (Lukas 2021), the volume on poetry is still waiting to be published.

In compiling a regional multilingual literary history, the focus of research shifts to the interaction and intertwining of languages, reciprocal translations and transmissions, and manifestations of multilingualism in its various forms, all of which are marginal, sometimes altogether unnoticeable, aspects for a monolingual approach to literature.

Poetry that emerges from or transgresses language boundaries, switching from one language to another, has been created in the territory of Estonia through the ages. So far, language contacts in poetry have been explored in the context of Baltic-German literature (Kalda 2000; Aabrams 2007) and Russian-language literature published in Estonia (Belobrovtseva 2018b). However, multilingualism in poetry is increasingly widespread in Estonia today and merits further consideration. The first steps have been made: In 2019, a conference on multilingualism in Baltic and German literatures was held in Tartu, among the outcomes of which was the publication of a collection of articles in

German (Pajević 2020), and a special issue of the journal *Interlitteraria* on multilingualism and exophony in Baltic and German cultures (2021, vol. 26, no. 1), both of which aimed to integrate the Baltic experience into international multilingualism studies. Multilingualism has attracted considerable attention in the last decade, especially in German literary studies, where non-German writers, including poets (such as Japanese-born Yōko Tawada) have emerged to integrate the linguistic and poetic experience of their homeland into German poetry. A companion on this topic has now been published (Dembeck & Parr 2017). Of course, in the era of globalisation, multilingualism in its various forms is ubiquitous, impossible to ignore, and, as a result, has come to attract increasing interest among researchers. Then again, this interest has also resulted in revisiting seemingly monolingual texts, and in noticing the intertwining of languages in texts that were previously considered monolingual.

In this paper, we will explore multilingual phenomena in Estonian poetry. While a literary work can be regarded as inherently multilingual, with different codes intertwining and interchanging, we will leave aside the more complex cases of the intertwining of poetic languages (for example, in terms of different language registers), and consider language to mean natural languages, including slang and (social) dialects.

We will present an overview of the possible manifestations of multilingualism in Estonian (written[1]) poetry throughout its history. First, we will look at poetry before the birth of the Republic of Estonia, when the colonial situation in the region dictated the relationship between the local languages. We will then observe which previous manifestations of multilingualism continued to be relevant in the post-colonial situation, since the establishment of the Republic of Estonia, and how the Soviet period altered the distribution of languages in poetry. Finally, we will examine which manifestations of bilingualism can be distinguished in contemporary Estonian literature(s). More prominent manifestations of multilingualism will be highlighted from the historical to contemporary examples of multilingualism in poetry. The theoretical framework of the study is based, among others, on Jaan Undusk's 1992 typology of German–Estonian literary relations, which includes forms of bilingualism but can also be applied in the study of other linguistic relations in literature.

We distinguish between multilingualism on four levels[2]: in language, within the text, by the author, and in the literary field. Intralinguistic multilingualism is a grammatical mixing of languages rather than their alteration, with clearly distinct code-switching. Here a distinction can be made between the use or imitation of an existing linguistic variant (for example, "*ja nüüd siis küsibki ta minult oma toreda / ajuti aimatava aktsendiga: / kas teie ei kavatsegi endale DAKTARIKRAADI teha?*" (And now he asks me in his cute/occasionally

noticeable accent: / aren't you going to get yourself a *DACTARAL* DEGREE?"[3]) (Kivisilla 2019: 25), and the macaronic use of the grammar, lexis, concepts, and phraseological expressions of another language in poetry (for example, in a poem by Kristiina Ehin Estonian and Russian are used in the same sentence: "*neis silmis tuhamägedele üles / siis läksime* на санках *me* кататься" (Ehin 2000: 19)).

Intratextual multilingualism can be defined as an alteration of languages within a text without adapting one language to the syntax or morphology of another. There is an abrupt switch from one language to another, whereas both languages serve a specific cultural function in the text.[4] Author-based multilingualism means that the author of a text uses several languages when writing, with one text in one language and another text in another. Authors who have grown up in a multilingual family or have changed their language of creation after migrating to a new environment have become increasingly common in today's globalised world. This has come to be termed 'exophony' (*Anderssprachigkeit*, see, e.g., Arndt et al. 2007).

In terms of literary multilingualism[5], Estonian literature is viewed as a shared multilingual literary field (see Lukas 2006: 26), including subfields in different languages; these are interrelated both through common institutions (for example, publishing houses, societies, journalism, school education, theatre, etc.) and through indirect contact, for example, translations, reception, thematic allusions, reciprocal references or shared mentalities (see also Undusk 1992). Parts of the literary field may also overlap, for example, in poets' collaborations when creating parallel texts, such as *Целлюлоза / Tselluloos* (2015), co-authored by P. I. Filimonov and Katrin Väli in Russian and Estonian.

Literary multilingualism is also furthered by contact with world literature, which is seen as a guarantee for the development of a small literary culture (see, e.g., Talvet 2005). While contact of this kind are outside the focus of this study, falling rather under the scope of translation and reception studies, in the context of literary multilingualism studies, we should mention here poetry collections that contain the original creation and reciprocal translations by Estonian- and non-Estonian-speaking poets and which bring together bilingual (parallel) texts from the works of authors from different cultural backgrounds. A particularly versatile work in this regard is *白い火 / Kuitund / The If Hour* (2010), which includes poems by Andres Ehin and Fujitomi Yasuo in Estonian, English, and Japanese. The book's layout allows the reader to start reading both from front to back, as is usual in the Estonian language, or from back to front, as is common in Japanese so that either cover is both the front and the back of the book, and the text is correctly oriented when read in either direction. This simple nuance makes the book appropriate for both the Estonian and

the Japanese printing tradition, thereby allowing the texts of the poets to be perceived simultaneously in a familiar and a foreign context.

The overview given below focuses on examples of intralinguistic, intratextual, and author-based multilingualism in Estonian poetry.

TYPES OF MULTILINGUALISM IN POETRY BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA

Among the languages and their varieties that have historically been used for writing in the territory of Estonia are Latin, Low German, German, South Estonian, North Estonian, Russian, Swedish, Polish, Greek, French, and, less frequently, others. Authors writing in these languages often used another language in speech or as their mother tongue, and the choice of language was based on the function and audience of the composed text. These authors were proficient in several languages and often used them interchangeably in speech and writing. The distribution, functions, and hierarchies of local languages varied, depending on social and political trends. Before the 16th century, the most prestigious written language was Latin, which since around the end of the 14th century was gradually superseded by Low German, which, in turn, was replaced by High German by the beginning of the 17th century. Indeed, the earliest poetic texts from this area are either in Latin or Low German. Latin and Greek rose to prominence as languages of poetry in the first half of the 17th century among the local academic circles, the members of which used to write poems in several languages. The very first poems in Estonian (North or South Estonian variety) were written in this very humanistic tradition.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, the Estonian literary field was predominantly German-language. Then, an Estonian-language subfield began to emerge, which was divided, in turn, into South and North Estonian (both language varieties were also used in poetry[6]). The German language used in the area was in a constant state of flux, borrowing from both written and locally spoken oral (Estonian, Latvian, and Russian) languages. This gave rise to a new variant, called Baltic German, which was mainly a spoken language and had very fluid boundaries, ranging from the locally coloured and regionally idiosyncratic manner of speaking by Germans to the ways Estonians and Latvians spoke German. Baltic German speakers continued to use High German in their writing so that they could be understood in Germany. In the 19th century, Baltic German began to be used, to some extent, in writing, especially for composing poetry.

A Russian minority has lived on the territory of Livonia and Estonia since the early Middle Ages, but its proportion among the total population used to be tiny, rising to 5% only in the late 19th century. The minority was largely made up of peasants, Old Believers who had settled in the shore areas of Lake Peipus in the late 17th century. They had a peculiar relationship with literary culture: although they spoke a special dialect with archaic elements, they read and wrote in Church Slavonic. Despite the fact that Estonia and Livonia had become part of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 18th century, German continued to be the main language of imperial institutions in administrative matters, while Russian translations were used for communication between the central and local authorities. The teaching of the Russian language in schools became more systematic under Catherine the Great's viceroyalty (1783–1796). Since the early 19th century, in connection with the re-establishment of the university in Tartu, Russian became more prominent in the literary sphere, as an increasing number of Russian-language publications, initiated by Russian students, were published here (Lukas 2021: 15–19).

The mid-eighteenth century saw an increase in the use of French, which was the language of education throughout Europe, was used as a written language at the Russian imperial court, and may also have been used for writing poetry.

Multilingualism, the availability of choice between different literary languages, became a characteristic feature of Estonian literature. Until the end of the 19th century, poets, regardless of their ethnic background, were at least bilingual. They had been educated in German but also wrote poetry in Estonian, Latvian, and occasionally in French or Russian.

Examples of author-based multilingualism in the poetry of the Baltic countries, such as the parallel use of German and Latin, date back to the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. In seventeenth-century occasional poetry, the use of different languages was almost programmatic. The first Estonian-language poem was also a result of the humanistic practice of writing poetry in several languages. In 1637, Reiner Brockmann, a German from Mecklenburg, wrote a poem in Estonian alongside other poems in Greek, Latin, and German, giving it the Latin title *Carmen alexandrinum esthonicum ad leges Opitij poeticas compositum* and using a poem in German praising the Estonian language (*Andre mögn ein anders treiben* (Others May Do Otherwise)) as an introduction to the Estonian poem. The Estonian Kristian Jaak Peterson and the German Georg Julius Schultz-Bertram wrote poetry in both Estonian and German, and even as late as at the beginning of the 20th century, Aksel Kallas, a native Estonian poet, composed poetry in both German (*Am Moor* (On the Moor), 1912 and *Nervenvibrierungen im Tintengewande: Futuro-kubistisches* (Nerve Vibrations in the Guise of Ink: Future-cubist), 1920) and Estonian (*Au*

langenuile! Tänuhelid ja troostihääled (Glory to the Fallen Ones! Sounds of Gratitude and Voices of Comfort), 1922).

There is less intratextual multilingualism in poetry (code-switching within a single text), although it is quite common in other areas of literary creation. This phenomenon can be traced back to seventeenth-century ecclesiastical texts (for example, Georg Müller's sermon notes from 1600–1608, which demonstrate a smooth transition from Estonian to German or Latin). A pioneering example from the 18th century is August von Kotzebue's play *Die väterliche Erwartung* (Fatherly Expectations) (1789): the third act of the play, which is predominantly in German, begins with a dialogue in Estonian, and all the parallel action performed by the servants is in Estonian. Intratextual multilingualism can also be found in the correspondence of nineteenth-century Estonian intellectuals.

Intralinguistic multilingualism – the merging of two languages into a single sociolect – has led to rather unique results in poetry. While in written use authors tried to keep the languages separate, in oral use the interaction between them was lively and the transitions smooth, and depending on the situation of use and the social position of the speakers, sometimes transformed into pidgin as intermediate or transitional variants (*Kleindeutsch*, *Halbdeutsch*, *kadaka-sakslane* (juniper German), as well as local Russian varieties). Baltic German, with its slang and sociolects, was one such variety of pidgin language: a more or less creolised German in an Estonian- or Latvian-speaking environment, used by local Germans who adopted Estonian or Latvian words and expressions in their speech. The language variant that had evolved over centuries separately from the language spoken in Germany acquired a distinctive accent. (Bender 2022) The Baltic German variety with all its jargon served a comedic function in poetry, resulting in nineteenth-century literature in the so-called "*Halbdeutsch* poetry", which has been considered Baltic-German macaronic poetry (Kalda 2000; Aabrams 2007).

The first and most popular example of such poetry is '*Die Oberpahlsche Freundschaft*' (Friendship in Põltsamaa, 1818/1857) by Jacob Johann Malm from Tallinn:

Vart', tenkt' ich mal in meine Sinn,
Willst wahren toch heinmal
Su Wreind nach Oberpalen in!
Und ging nu in tas Tall[7]*,*

Und nehmt tas Wuchs mit lange Wanz
Und pannt tas wor tas Saan[8]*;*

Tann nehmt' ich meine Mütz und Ans
Und wangt' su jagen an;

Und nu katsait turch Tuchk und Tolm[9]
Ich tuhhat neljad[10] *wort,*
Und wie tas Wind war üks, kaks, kolm[11]
Ich an tas Tell und Ort.

Vart', tenkt ich, willst toch machen Paß
Mit oberpalse Wreind!
Tu willst ihm trehen lange Nas';
Laß sehn, was tas toch meint!
(Malm 1861: 3)

The poem's protagonist is not a Baltic-German, but a German-speaking Estonian, a snobbish semi-literate person representing a certain social personality type, who used to be disparagingly called a *Wacholderdeutscher* ('juniper German'). Such people wished to break out of the boundaries of their nationality, as well as of their status and the social roles assigned to it, and used the more prestigious German language, though incorrectly, to boast about education or success. The author's perspective of this character is comical, and he uses irony to depict people's snobbish attempts to rise above their identity.

Bilingualism functions as a poetic device in Malm's poem: two languages are used together for a comic or parodying effect. The syntax and morphology of High German are used as the base language, with added Estonian words; the poem's German phonology is adapted to that of Estonian so that, for example, voiced consonants are replaced by voiceless consonants, or consonant compounds are stripped of vowels so as to be more convenient for native Estonians to pronounce the words (see Ariste 1981).

An analogous linguistic variant, but in reverse – with German words and expressions sprinkled into Estonian text and adapted to Estonian grammar – can be also found in Estonian literature. A fairly common example of that is the character Kniks-Mariihen in August Kitzberg's *Veli Henn* (Brother Henn) (1901):

"Bitte," ütles Mariihen. "Astuge aita, sääl on toolisid, ja võite ennast natuke erhoolida." [---]
"Herr Lehepuu, üks väga peenike kawalier, – herr Birkenbaum, minu Freundini Bräutigam, – herr Sissa, minu Tänzer, kui Vereinis ball oli, – herr Enilane, ka üks hää Tänzer…"

> ("*Bitte*," said Mariihen. "There are some chairs in the barn, where you can *erholen* for a while." […]
> "*Herr* Lehepuu, a very fancy *Kawalier*, – *Herr* Birkenbaum, the *Bräutigam* of my *Freundin*, – *Herr* Sissa, my *Tänzer*, from that ball in *Verein*, – *Herr* Enilane, another fine *Tänzer*…")
> (Kitzberg 1915: 18–19)

In both of the above examples, the target of the parody is the same social personality type, as well as the attitude towards such snobbery; the desire to present a different identity than what one currently possesses is similarly ironic. Compared to Baltic German literature, this phenomenon is quite rare in Estonian literature in general, and no such linguistic variant is found in Estonian poetry.

In addition to Estonian/Latvian and German, Baltic-German macaronic poetry sometimes adopted words in Russian or French that were also used as concepts in the local German language.

Of course, there are also more random cases of the intertwining of another language in poetry. One of the early examples is a fragment from Paul Fleming's poem '*Liefflándische Schneegräfin*' (The Livonian Snow Princess), in which Low German and Estonian words are mixed into the German substrate:

> *Die Braut, bald rot, bald blaß, fing endtlich an zu reden:*
> *Wat schal ich arme Kind. Gott wet, wat sy my theden!*
> *Das ander, Ycks, Kacks, Koll*[12]*, hub sie auff Undeutsch an,*
> *Das ich noch nicht versteh', und auch kein Gott nicht kan.*
> (Fleming 1636)

At the beginning of the 20th century, words in Estonian can be found, for example, in the works of Maurice von Stern (see his poem with the title in Estonian '*Jaanililled, kullerkuppud*' (St John's Flowers, Globeflowers), where the title is repeated as a refrain at the end of each verse (Stern 1911: 88)).

POSTCOLONIAL MULTILINGUALISM IN ESTONIA

The evolution of the monolingual paradigm in the Baltic States was on the one hand technical and functional – it was a precondition for the emergence of a public literary sphere – and on the other hand political, i.e., an example of postcolonial emancipation (see also Dembeck 2021: 43). The birth of the Republic of Estonia instated Estonian as the country's official language and, with

that, made it available for use in all spheres of life, including those in which it had not been widely used until then, such as science. Estonian was yet to be established in science at university, so in academic circles, the use of German and Russian continued for a while alongside Estonian, but the transition to Estonian in research and education was consistent.

In reality, multiple languages remained in parallel use for some time. The population was multilingual (8% Russians, 1.7% Germans) and could speak the "three local languages" (Estonian, German, and Russian). The Act on cultural autonomy for national minorities (Hasselblatt 1997: 37–46), which was exemplary in world practice, also allowed the preservation and development of journalism, societies, and schools in German and Russian, as well as a local German-language literary (sub)field. Despite the rather marginal German-speaking minority, Estonian publishing houses and German-language periodicals continued to publish poetry in German until their resettlement in 1939 (see Lukas 2002).

The resettlement of the Baltic Germans as a result of the Hitler–Stalin Pact, the ulterior aim of which was to subordinate Eastern Europe to Germany not only politically but also culture- and language-wise, instead marks the end of Estonian–German bilingualism in Eastern Europe as well as in Estonia. Within a short space of time, this event deprived German of the status of second language and the main language of science and education, which it had enjoyed until then in (not only) the Baltic States. From then on, German was hardly ever used in Estonian literature. Only isolated words, sentences, quotations, or strophes can be found in the poetry of Jaan Kross, Ene Mihkelson, Mats Traat, Jaan Kaplinski, and others. The use of German in poetry texts was either references to cultural history, to a shared cultural heritage, or, as in the poem '1944 II' by Jaan Kross, to the Second World War.

Writers in exile also rarely used German (Urve Karuks, for example, began writing poetry in German and Estonian in a German refugee camp). An exception here is the poetry of Ivar Ivask. He was born in Riga in 1927 and grew up in a family where German was spoken next to Estonian (by his father) and Latvian (by his mother). Influenced by Rainer Maria Rilke, he wrote his first poems in German at the age of 16. In 1944, Ivask migrated to Germany, attended the University of Marburg, and later became professor of comparative literature at the University of Oklahoma. He wrote poetry in Estonian, English (the collection *Baltic Elegies*, 1987), and German (*Gespiegelte Erde*, 1967). In the preface to Ivask's collection of poems in German, Herbert Eisenreich argues that Ivask introduced something new to German poetry with this book, and elaborates further:

> *His poems in the German language acquire* […] *their unique quality and a double value of sensibility and expression most likely in and through the process of* [language] *acquisition: in this still foreign idiom, nothing is for granted, everything comes through costly, desperate conquests – and it is precisely through this process that he transcends the limits of conventionality (for example, with his downright shameless assemblage of word stems, or the innocent reclaiming of the imagery of seemingly overused figures of speech). Or, in other words: I notice that a foreigner is speaking my mother tongue and that in this fleeting foreignness the language sounds literally unheard of, and regains its virginal purity through this fleeting foreignness. And in its foreign accent, this language conveys more to me than it would in my own routine practice.* […] *these verses show how elsewhere, in foreign countries, one finds himself. And vice versa.* (Eisenreich 1967: 6–7)

Following the Second World War, as many Estonian authors found themselves exiled in Sweden, the US, Canada, Australia, or elsewhere, multilingualism in Estonian literature became a phenomenon that mainly characterised exile literature. While the first generation of writers in exile wrote predominantly in Estonian, the second generation, i.e., those who had been expatriated as children, began to use both languages in their work. Elin Toona wrote the novel *Lotukata* (1969) in Estonian and English (under the title *In Search of Coffee Mountains*). Urve Karuks wrote poetry in Estonian and English, Karin Saarsen in Estonian and Swedish. Saarsen's last collection of poetry, *The Lion and the Orchid* (2002), includes poems in Estonian, Swedish, English, and German. Text-level multilingualism also increasingly appeared in literature, often in the form of quotations or mottos in other languages, as in multiple of Karl Ristikivi's poems in the cycle "Hårsfjärden", for example *'Minagi olin Arkaadia teel'* (I too was heading to Arcadia), the motto of which is borrowed from the poem 'Sing me a song of a lad that is gone' by Robert Louis Stevenson. The generation born in exile seldom used Estonian as the language to compose poetry, and instead preferred to use the language of the host country.

In Soviet Estonia, against all the attempts of the authorities to strengthen the use of Russian in all areas, education managed to continue in Estonian at all levels. The western part of the Soviet Union represents a good case study for observing how languages respond to and, in turn, influence historical-political changes. The coerced transition to the Russian language by any kind of (educational) political measures led to a closer guard being kept over Estonian. The internal protest of this cultural field against the imposed language transition also explains the low representation of Russian in Estonian poetry

(and literature in general). Although Estonians had good Russian-speaking skills and Russian–Estonian bilingualism was very common in everyday life, Estonian–Russian bilingualism in literature was rare.

Eha Lättemäe, who learned Finnish by listening to radio programs and also began to write poetry in Finnish, is unique because of her use of Finnish–Estonian bilingualism in poetry (her collections in Finnish *Uskon aurinkoon* (I Believe in the Sun, 1969), and *Poimin marjoja sinisestä metsästä* (I Pick Berries in the Blue Forest, 1975), were published in Karelia). Her later poems in Estonian are translations of the Finnish ones.

MULTILINGUALISM IN CONTEMPORARY ESTONIAN LITERATURE(S)?

According to the 2021 national census, the most common second languages spoken by residents of Estonia in addition to Estonian were English, Russian, Finnish and German (see Statistikaamet 2022). As studies on contact linguistics (e.g., Verschik 2012) have shown, Estonians often combine several languages in their everyday speech. As in the past, contemporary literature also reflects the social and everyday language situation. The languages of Estonian poetry, however, have changed: in contemporary poetry, Estonian most often intertwines with Russian, English, and various Estonian dialects. German is represented in contemporary poetry, with a few exceptions, as a special cultural layer in the form of concepts, citations, and phraseological expressions. Contemporary Estonian poetry often also interacts with Finnish, as well as with the Romanic and classical languages. Asian languages have a notable role, for example, in Kalju Kruusa's poetry collection *灵血茶(ing•veri•tee)* (ging•er•tea), Estonian overlaps with Chinese ("*viibin lennujaama väravas / olen juba kiiresti (magnethylukrongi)ga / teinud hiinale pika ja pehme pai*" (I am at the airport gate / I have already, quickly with a *磁浮列车* (maglev train) / softly caressed China') (Kruusa 2013: 40)) as well as with Japanese, both in Kruusa's original texts and in poems translated from the two languages. The intertwining of a distant and a local language could be seen more generally as characteristic of an open society, in which language proficiency no longer necessarily depends on the speaker's geographical neighbours or the predominant (foreign) language.

Estonian literature in Russian and in the South Estonian dialect have established themselves as part of the Estonian literary culture. In light of this article, two facts are of particular interest here. First, how and to what extent do literary cultures in different languages overlap each other, especially in terms of the texts and authors who switch between them – both of which will

be addressed below. Second, it appears that, although Estonian is still regarded as a minor language, in some aspects of the relations of literary cultures in different languages it sometimes acquires the role of a major language. As already mentioned, Estonian literary history has been largely based on monolingualism. Therefore, the literary criticism that monitors and shapes the functioning of Estonian literary culture prioritises Estonian literature, which means that the reception of Estonian literature in Russian may be delayed until its translation is published in Estonian. In addition, when the translations do later appear, they tend to invite a more politically focused reception than literature originally written in Estonian (on the reception of Estonian Russian-language literature see, e.g., Kotyukh 2013). For instance, only one review was published in Estonian following the publication of Jaan Kaplinski's book of poems *Белые бабочки ночи* (White Butterflies of Night) (2014), and wider reception was delayed until the Estonian translation titled *Valged ööliblikad. Wegeneri naeratus* (White Butterflies of Night: Wegener's Smile) was issued in 2018. There is, however, hope that the audience's receptiveness is changing because an increasing number of studies and reviews are being published on Estonian Russian-language literature as well as on dialect literature. Furthermore, in the literary magazine Looming, most authors participating in the recent discussion mapping twenty-first-century Estonian literature ('*Mõttevahetus: XXI sajandi eesti kirjandus*'), most discussants mention Russian-language literature as a non-excludable part of Estonian literature (see, for example, Kraavi 2022: 263–264; Väljataga 2021: 1416; Velsker 2022: 121; Viires 2022: 549; Pilv 2022: 1706).

Among the poets writing mainly in Estonian, there are some who also compose in some other language. For example, Kätlin Kaldmaa's poetry alternates between Estonian and English. Jaan Kaplinski's poetry exhibits the broadest range of multilingualism – he was one of the few Estonian poets to publish original work in more than three languages. Since Kaplinski's poetry deserves a separate study, especially from the angle of multilingualism, we will consider here just a few highlights of this linguistic exploration.[13] In 1991, Kaplinski's first collection of poems written entirely in another language, *I am the Spring in Tartu and Other Poems Written in English*, was published in Vancouver. Among his subsequent collections, *Öölinnud, öömõtted* (Nocturnal Birds, Nocturnal Thoughts, 1998) included texts in English and Finnish in addition to Estonian, and in 2005 the Estonian, South Estonian and Russian book *Sõnad sõnatusse*. *Инакобытие* (Words into Wordlessness: *Existing Otherwise*) was published. In 2010, Kaplinski published the text 'Goodbye my Estonian' on his blog, in which he promised to stop writing in Estonian (Kaplinski 2010). Which he also did. However, as Mikhail Trunin (2018: 18) has noted, Kaplinski's promise held true specifically in poetry, as he continued to publish his other

writings in Estonian. Following this change of language, Kaplinski published one collection of poetry in the South Estonian dialect (*Taivahe heidet tsirk* (A Bird Cast into Heaven), 2012), after which he changed both his pen name and language, and the next three books of poems were published in Russian under the name Ян Каплинский – *Белые бабочки ночи* (White Butterflies of Night, 2014), *Улыбка Вегенера* (Wegener's Smile, 2017) and *Наши тени так длинны* (Our Shadows Are Very Long, 2018).

Poet Igor Kotyukh, whose Russian-language debut collection *Когда наступит завтра?* (When Will Tomorrow Come?, 2005) was followed by the collection of poems in Estonian *Teises keeles* (In Another Language, or In the Second Language, 2007), went through a reverse route. Kotyukh has consistently made sure that his texts are available in both Russian and Estonian, translating his poems both himself and in collaboration with Estonian-speaking poets. Irina Belobrovtseva (2018b: 18) argues that such parallel creative existence is not at all common: multilingual authors often create their texts as original works in one language or another, but do not engage in their constant mediation into other languages. In an interview with Ekaterina Yashina, Kotyukh mentions that, when writing his poems, he already considers how a text would work in another language (Yashina 2019: 57–58). Kotyukh's earlier work tends to be essayistic, brief, and monolingual throughout, addressing multilingualism primarily at the level of content. "*On emakeel / ja teine keel. // Aga inimene / on sama"* (There's mother tongue / and the other tongue. // But the person / is the same) (Kotyukh 2007: 31). In his later work, the poet began to blur clear boundaries between the two languages, publishing poems using intralinguistic multilingualism as a structural tool. One of the most fascinating examples is the prose poem '*14 юния*' (14th of June), which is published in the same way in the original collection *Естественно особенный случай* (A Naturally Special Incident) as well as in Aare Pilve's translation into Estonian *Loomulikult eriline lugu*: "*ряагиме эриневайд кеэли, куйд олеме икка неэдсамад инимесед, тейнетейсе пеэглид йа пеэгельдусед*"[14] (Kotyukh 2017a: 75, 2017b: 73). The only differences between the two published poems are the language and spelling of the title.

There are also other authors in Estonian contemporary literature who have acquired Estonian as a second language, such as Adam Cullen from the US and Øyvind Rangøy from Norway. Cullen's *Lichen / Samblik* (2017) is bilingual, containing both original parallel texts (their peculiarities will be discussed below) and monolingual poems. Rangøy's *Sisikond* (Viscera) (2019) is almost entirely in Estonian, although it does include an example of intratextual multilingualism. The poem 'Kodeveksling. Koodivahetus' (Code-switching) reflects the experience of a bilingual subject once they have finally acquired the language

that seemed unattainable: "*Olen eesti keeles ka olemas* // [---] *Lugu, mis kunagi kaugel / mere ja okastraadi taga vaid virvendas, on nüüd ka minu* // Eg lever på to språk. Slik er det." (I am also present in the Estonian language // […] The story, which once, far away/only flickered beyond the sea and the barbed wire, is now mine too // *I live in two languages. This is how it is*.) (Rangøy 2019: unpaginated p. 15) Furthermore, Rangøy's text puts the Estonian reader, who does not speak Norwegian, in a situation where meaning flickers behind the language barrier: the code-switching in this poem is consistent with the idea being expressed even if the language (or not knowing the language) prevents one from understanding the meaning of the text.

Two closely related issues have frequently been addressed in relation to contemporary multilingual poets. First, the reasons that lead a poet to switch languages are explored. Code-switching is often justified as an attempt to expand the audience, but the reasons are usually more complex. Since the 1990s, English has been used in Estonian song lyrics, among other reasons to make the songs more accessible to Western audiences, although such a rationale for language change has not prevailed in the printed word. For example, Kätlin Kaldmaa, who writes poetry in English, considers the language of her work an aspect of little importance: "[…] I just write, without holding myself back, without getting stuck in the words, as it is given and as it comes, and the text can later be revised in the right language. So the initial versions of my writings may include sentences composed of three languages" (Kaldmaa 2020: 13). Irina Belobrovtseva (2018b: 14–15, 20), who has studied code-switching between Estonian and Russian in literature, has argued that creative multilingualism can be motivated by a number of complex reasons, including, for example, emotional affinity to another culture, language as a form of escapism, but also as postmodernist play.

Second, there has often been a debate about the literary context in which Estonian authors who write in several languages should be viewed – partly, apparently, because of the assumption that the target audience for writers in another language does not speak Estonian and is therefore non-Estonian. According to research done by Igor Kotyukh (2012, 2013, 2020), it is possible to distinguish between three approaches to contextualising multilingual authors: considering authors writing in a second language as (special) representatives of Estonian literature; viewing them in the context of the language in which they mainly write; or considering multilingual authors as inherently cosmopolitan, transnational, i.e., authors of world literature. However, national literary definitions inevitably entail political issues. After Jaan Kaplinski's turning point in 2010, there has been much debate about how to categorise the work of his latest period. Juxtaposing Kaplinski's political activities (he was an MP in

the 7th *Riigikogu*) with his creation, Sirje Olesk (2014) has concluded that in both respects Kaplinski was an emigrant who did not emigrate, who constantly swam against the tide. Ene-Reet Soovik (2016) suggests the same, arguing that Kaplinski used to write in languages that were less "popular" at the time, and which, for the most part, could not be counted on for expanding the audience. The delay in the reception of *Белые бабочки ночи* fits into this context well. Aare Pilv (2018: 139), in his afterword to *Valged ööbliblikad. Wegeneri naeratus*, has speculated that a writer is first and foremost part of the literature of the language in which he or she is read, the author's affiliation is determined by the receiving community. Since it appears that it is code-switching itself – rather than a cleverly conceived aim or attempt to become part of more than one poetry culture – that prompts the expansion of the audience, perhaps it is also worth considering, as far as multilingual poets are concerned, how code-switching affects their work in the artistic sense. In other words, the work of multilingual authors should be viewed from the perspective of multilingualism, not of monolingualism.

Typically, questions about a writer's linguistic affiliation do not emerge as readily in the case of poets who speak mainly Estonian and whose work is intratextually or intralinguistically multilingual. Perhaps the reason for this is that there are not many collections in contemporary literature that are entirely multilingual at the language or text level. The exception here are the texts and collections in which the parallel bilingual presentation of a poem serves as a completely original text without a distinction made between the original and the translation – the phenomenon of parallel texts. This has been pointed out in relation to Kalju Kruusa's (2013: 43–44) cycle of poems *Tali ja lumi* (Winter and Snow), in which Estonian and Japanese run in parallel. Both languages form a homogeneous whole in the poetry cycle and are part of a single text and its means of expression (see Lotman 2014: 308). A trio of texts, 'THE SUN', 'THE SUN (albescent version)', and 'THE SUN (albescent version): Berk Vaher's o sole dada dub', from Aare Pilv's collection *Päike ehk päike* (The Sun or the Sun) quite obviously function in the same way. The first is a poem in Estonian (for the most part), the second is entirely in English, and the third extensively mixes English and Portuguese (or, in fact, "dubious Portuguese") (see Pilv 1998: 23, 25, 47). The Estonian text is presented first and, regardless of the title, functions as an original text; the other two are kinds of intertextual remixes of the first. The texts thus point out the various linguistic possibilities of realising an idea, the apparent and actual similarities and differences between these possibilities, and also reflect the title of the poetry collection – *Päike ehk päike*.

The meaning of parallel texts depends on readers' language skills: if the reader understands the two languages set side by side, the poem's meaning may be revealed on the boundary of the two different languages, where the expressible and inexpressible emerge in either language. For example, in Adam Cullen's bilingual poem, the verse "*Oled täna / sõnaline, / aga napilt, / katsumustest / karastunud*" corresponds to the parallel English poem on the same page: "You're tied / today / by tongue, / trained by / tribulation" (Cullen 2017: 29). However, a parallel text may also appeal to a reader who speaks only one language: in the Japanese-Estonian cycle, published in Kruusa's collection, most readers are likely to read primarily the Estonian part, and the Japanese text acquires a graphic rather than a linguistic meaning.

The methods of using intratextual and intralinguistic multilingualism in contemporary Estonian poetry are more varied, however. Neither type of multilingualism is the main creative method used by any of the best-known contemporary poets, although most poets do employ both techniques from time to time. Although the following examples are mainly retrieved from poetry that is generally written or published in Estonian, it is likely that the same set of methods can be found in poetry written in all the locally spoken languages. For example, the chapter on language poetry titled '*Kiil kõnõlas*' (The Language Speaks) in the collection *Kõnõla mõtsan mädänü puuga* (Speak With a Rotten Tree in the Forest) by Evar Saar (2014) contains poems in South Estonian dialect that are characterised by the use of similar methods.

The most remarkable manifestation of multilingualism in contemporary poetry is the use of quotations and loans from other languages. In these cases, using the original language maintains a strong connection with the original context. Extensive use of this method can be found in the works of Sveta Grigoryeva, who writes mainly in Estonian. At the same time, it is closely embedded with the language and references of contemporary culture: "*mina olengi selle põlvkonna esindamiseks nagu iga teinegi / lihtsalt liiga eriline sest* / the only thing thats bigger than my ego is my mirror / bitch" (indeed I am, like any other person, for representing this generation / simply too special because / the only thing that's bigger than my ego is my mirror / bitch) (Grigoryeva 2020 [2013]: 47; the line "the only thing..." is quoted from rapper A$AP Rocky's song "Wassup"). The word loans appear, among other things, as words without translation equivalent (as neologisms) in Estonian (for example, "exgirlfriendilikult kummitav / mahajäetud industriaalsus" (*exgirlfriendlily* haunted / abandoned industrialism), Grigoryeva 2020 [2013]: 26) or as vulgarisms in other languages (for example, "teiste luulet viitsin harva lugeda / (see peab ikka selline pizdets luule olema et / peale teist rida jätkaksin […]" (I rarely bother to read other

people's poetry / (it must be such *fucked* poetry for / me to continue after the second line […]) (Grigoryeva 2020 [2013]: 66)).

Other poets who often use devices of multilingualism are Maarja Kangro and the abovementioned Kalju Kruusa. Both are poets and translators who, in their original creation, relate Estonian primarily to major world languages. In addition to borrowing quotations from other languages, their poems often take place in a foreign language setting. The setting can move away from Estonian language in terms of geography, as in Kruusa's poem '*Shanghai muuseumis*' (In a Museum in Shanghai): "*imestan miks ei teha / takitorudelegi 火纹(tulekirja) / lennukitiibadelegi 透雕(ažuur)set 云纹(pilvekirja)"* (I wonder why they don't make / *火纹*(fire signs) on tank guns / or even *透雕*(azure) *云纹*(cloud signs) on aeroplane wings) (Kruusa 2013: 38), and in Kangro's poem '*Tikitud kõht*' (The Embroidered Belly): "*töpatunde ma põlgasin* [---] / *vahetusõpilasena torinos / via garibaldil poekest nähes* / lavori femminili / *nõelad ja vardad / mõtlesin kas akent sisse pole visatud*" (I despised the crafts classes at school […] / as an exchange student in Turin / seeing the shop on Via Garibaldi / *women's work* / the needles and knitting needlesrods / wondering if someone had not broken in through the window) (Kangro 2019: 84). Sometimes distance from the native language is obtained on an intellectual level, as things can exist differently in different languages: "*kassid ütlevad hiina toonidega* niao[15] / *kassid suudavad* / / *niikuinii jätkuda* […] / *emakeel ei meigi senssi* / / *tuleks enestelgi* / *näugumisele üle minna*" (cats say *niao* in Chinese tones / cats can // last anyway […] / mother tongue does not make sense // we should ourselves start / meowing, too) (Kruusa 2010: 50); "*varsti sain teada, et* / жизнь *ja* смерть *on naised* / *ja et sünd on kesksoost* / *ja ma nägin, et see õige on* / *mõne aja pärast selgus, et* / *eriti õiged on romaani keeled:* / la nascita la morte la vita / la naissance la mort la vie" (I soon learned that / *life* and *death* are feminine / and that birth is neutral / and I saw that this is right / after a while it became clear that / romance languages especially are the right ones: / birth death life / birth death life) (Kangro 2013: 52).

In contemporary poetry, both intralinguistic and intratextual multilingualism often manifest themselves in a way that can be referred to as interlingual slips. These slips may occur on different levels of language, for example phonetically: "*suur kirjandus, ahhaa! (ach!, haa!, ah, well, ai-jaaa, / ajaa, jjawohl, heh, heil, ja-ja, si, oui, jaaha, jahwe)*" (Viiding 2003: 33). But there are also semantic slips between different languages: "*aga vabadus mida saab osta ja müüa / maksab allkirja ja veel midagi midagi / väga väikest hinge hingekese* [---] *piimast ja uudseviljast selle hingekese / maksis vabadus svoboda priius freiheit / ja peale selle hulga tänukirju / tänupalveid tänulaule ja / tänulaulupidusid*" (but freedom that can be bought and sold / costs a signature and

something something else / a very small soul of a soul […] of milk and crop of this soul / cost freedom *svoboda* freedom freiheit / and on top of that a bunch of thankyou letters / thankyou prayers thankyou songs and / thankyou parties) (Kaplinski 1991: 24); "*prügi ja praht rämps sodi ja romu* / rubbish junk TRASH debris *ja* slime / *Tohuwabohu Wirrwarr ja Chaos*" (Krull 2001: 93). At the same time, the two possibilities are not entirely mutually exclusive, in some cases they also intertwine, for example, in Kaplinski's texts the words 'vabadus' and 'svoboda' form an internal rhyme while also being semantically equal; in a poem by Liisa Mudist, phonetic and semantic slips alternate: "*vull vull vee seest tõusev / michelangelo veenuse lokkide spiraalsus / ma tahan ma tahan ma tahan / ich will ich will / vull vull vull vull / full full on full on*" (bubble, bubble, rising out of the water / the spirals of the curls of michelangelo's venus / I want I want I want / *ich will ich will* / bubble, bubble, bubble, bubble / full full on full on) (Mudist 2019: 1). Often, such slips serve as a tool of emphasis, introducing a nuanced parallelism to the text: intralinguistic slips accentuate the semantic differences of similarly sounding languages, while intratextual slips point to different aspects of the same idea using homonymous expressions in different languages.

Estonian literary scholar Maie Kalda (2000: 121) has noted that while no continuous macaronic tradition has developed in Estonian poetry, it contains many macaronisms, i.e. expressions in mixed language on a smaller scale. Even today, consistently macaronic texts are rare, although there are a few examples. Among the most recent worth noting are two texts by Darya Popolitova (2021), which opened a special issue on Ida-Viru County of the culture newspaper *Müürileht*. Despite the consistently used code-mixing in these texts, a reader's language skills are not of primary importance here, the texts rather convey, through ambiguous connections, the Estonian-Russian speaking environment (in Tallinn): "*Мина олен естланэ. / Ütlen vanadele retuusidele lihtsalt tšaupakaa! / Интергацыоон – kakije seksualnõi kingad. / Рабарбар максаб – davai максуй tengi. / Суларахи нет, но есть кюсимусы. / / Plja, što takoi? / Где пальк? / – На Балтияме или в кескусе, / Там, где сок в топсике.*" (I am Estonian. / I'll just say to the old leggings bye-bye! / Integration – what sexy shoes! / *Rhubarb* costs – *let's make a payment.* / *There is no* cash*, but there are* questions*.* / / *Blyad, what's this?* / *Where's* the pay? / *At the Baltic Station or Downtown,* / *Where the juice is served in a little cup*) (Popolitova 2021). The macaronic methods used in these poems are more generally characteristic of contemporary poetry: the distortion of one language according to the rules of another (for example, writing Estonian in the Cyrillic alphabet or Russian in the Latin alphabet), loanwords, and so on.

Multilingualism in Estonian contemporary poetry can be broadly divided into two categories, or, to borrow a metaphor from Karl Ristikivi's (2003: 7) poem 'Kojuigatsus – kauguseigatsus' (Longing for Home – Longing for Remoteness), into a two-branched tree: poetry that relates to the locality (for example, embedding local languages) and poetry that relates to the globality or distance (for example, embedding distant languages into some local languages). Both branches include authors writing in several languages, intratextual code-switching, as well as examples of intralinguistic multilingualism. We could also tentatively distinguish between a situation in which multilingualism characterises the subject of the poetry, and a situation in which multilingualism is more of a feature of the environment that the subject experiences. In this way, multilingualism in contemporary poetry is related to the language proficiency of the local population and audience, on the one hand, and to the wider political and cultural function of the languages of the text, on the other. Kalda (2000: 121) has noted that mixed-language poetry can be seen as "a method that occasionally re-emerges in order to react to changes in or threats to the ethnic language, etc., while changing itself as well". In the context of Estonian literature as minor literature, language is constantly under scrutiny, subject to external influences, and thus to change.

Mart Velsker (2018: 437) argues that poetry speaking about language is rather common in the history of Estonian literature, more noticeably in the early days of the history of Estonian literature, but also now, in recently published poetry. He adds that composing poetry in mixed language holds a special role in poetry about language: "Is it not the case, after all, that the realisation of language takes place in an ordinary situation where familiar and unfamiliar voices and scripts meet each other? This gives rise to heightened regard for the mother tongue, the thoughts, and the play, for everything that poetry, infatuated with language, could still contain" (Velsker 2018: 437). Velsker's comment that language has only recently started to be reflected upon largely coincides with Belobrovtseva's (2018b: 19–20) observation that contemporary multilingualism operates against the backdrop of postmodernist fusion of borders and globalisation.

CONCLUSION

Estonian poetry has been multilingual throughout its history. Thus, the devices of multilingualism have also served different functions and found different forms of expression in poetry, among which the most prominent are the comic mixing of languages, the reflection of a socio-cultural situation or identity, the

establishing of cultural contacts through translation, and interlanguage parallelism. In early Estonian poetry, the most prominent feature of multilingualism was author-based multilingualism (exophony): authors who spoke several languages wrote poetry alternating between one language and another. In the 17th century, Estonian emerged among the languages of poetry on the wave of the humanistic, enlightened poetry tradition, the authors and the target audience of which were educated people who spoke several languages. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, poems in Estonian were mainly written by German-speaking intellectuals with an aim to educate the Estonian-speaking population: poetry was seen as a means of moral and aesthetic education. At the same time, poets of Estonian origin could use the more prestigious German language in addition to Estonian (e.g., K. J. Peterson, Aksel Kallas). Intratextual and intralinguistic multilingualism are rather rare in early Estonian poems, while intralinguistic multilingualism is characteristic of Baltic-German poetry, where it was mainly used in a humorous, parodic vein.

After the Second World War, composing poetry in several languages became a characteristic feature of exile literature. In homeland Estonia, exophonic poets were an exception, and intratextual and intralinguistic multilingualism was found in the works of only a very few poets (e.g., Jaan Kross, Eha Lättemäe). In contemporary poetry, multilingualism is highly common and quite diverse. In addition to Estonian, Russian, English and the local dialects are the most common languages used in the poetry scene today, while the use of German has declined, compared to earlier literature. The multilingual nature of contemporary literature, and especially the multilingual poets' code-switching (for example, in the case of Jaan Kaplinski), has raised important questions about defining literature as monolingual. Quotations and loans stand out among the devices of mixed language in contemporary literature, while intratextual multilingualism is most often found in the form of phrases and parallel poems in other languages. The impact of multilingualism in poetry strongly depends on whether local languages are juxtaposed (for example, Estonian and Russian in the work of Igor Kotyukh) or more distant languages are used (as in the poetry of the poets and translators Maarja Kangro and Kalju Kruusa), although in both cases the text refers to the local social and cultural function of the languages used. Thus, on the one hand, the multilingualism of contemporary poetry can be explained by globalisation and the fact that people's increased mobility has led to the acquisition of different languages; on the other hand, artistic play and the post-modernist attempt to transgress and fuse borders also contribute to the abundance of languages in literature. Thirdly, multilingualism in modern poetry can be linked to the linguistic diversity that has prevailed in the territory of Estonia throughout the ages.

Literary history seeks to reflect the literary process, in which inevitably texts emerge that shape the turning points and push literary culture forward. Manifestations of multilingualism always prompt the question of what kind of literature they belong to, which means that both the literary cultures in other languages and multilingual authors may remain peripheral in the core literary process. The methods of multilingualism in contemporary literature, however, demonstrate that the use of different languages is characteristic even of the authors who mainly write in Estonian. Therefore, we believe that the manifestations of literary multilingualism could be included in several literary histories, including the history of Estonian literature, which could also include chapters on Baltic-German and Russian literature published in Estonia, macaronic poetry, and exophonic authors.

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NOTES

[1] Multilingualism in oral poetry and folklore is an interesting topic in its own right, but falls outside the scope of this paper, see further in Kõiva 2014. It also excludes slam poetry, where in recent years notable poets of Finnish origin have emerged, such as Heidi Iivari, who has now published a bilingual collection of poetry in Finnish, *Tarton sarjarakastaja / Tartu sariarmastaja* (The serial lover of Tartu, 2021), and Iina Gyldén.

[2] Similarly, Stefan Helgesson has recently highlighted the fact that studies of literary multilingualism tend to focus on one level out four: author, text, reader, or the larger social context (Helgesson 2022).

[3] For ease of understanding, if the quotes are translated, then the different languages used in them will be marked in translations as follows: 1st language is unmarked, 2nd language is in cursive, 3rd language is underlined with one line, and 4th language underlined with two lines. In Baltic German examples, Estonian is marked with a translation in the footnotes. The use of multiple scripts to write in one language (e.g. using Cyrillic for Estonian words) will not be marked in the translations.

[4] Language theorists have distinguished between latent and manifest forms of language diversity (Dembeck & Parr 2017). According to Dembeck, manifest multilingualism

refers to language alternation in a text, for example, when untranslatable compounds are used in a literal sense. For example, in Sveta Grigoryeva's poem 'Court queen 4 ever': "*ole tema esimese korruse rõdualune / kus on igaveseks kustunud odava markeriga kirjutatud / саша + свема 4 ever*" ('be someone living under her first-floor balcony/where it is written with a cheap marker, forever faded / *саша + свема 4 ever*') (Grigoryeva 2020 [2013]: 27). Latent multilingualism refers to situations in which one character in a text speaks another language and this is marked accordingly in the narrator's voice, for example, "he said in English". It also refers to text passages which are intended to be in another language but are conveyed in the language in which the text is composed (for example, a letter in a foreign language, headlines or signs in a foreign city, etc.), as in one of Grigoryeva's untitled poems: "*seal kus liigse naeru ja lapselikkuse eest saadetakse / ikka korralikult keset hoovi vales keeles perse*" (where for too much laughter and childishness, one is told / still properly in the middle of the courtyard to go fuck oneself in the wrong language) (Grigoryeva 2020 [2013]: 34). Our focus here is on manifest forms of multilingualism.

[5] The term 'literary translingualism' is also often used to more explicitly encompass both exophonic and otherwise multilingual literature (see Kellman & Lvovich 2022).

[6] Dialectal poetry in the context of multilingualism in Estonian poetry deserves individual attention and will not be discussed in this article.

[7] Est. 'stables'.

[8] Est. 'sleigh'.

[9] Est. 'ash and dust' ('at lightning speed').

[10] Est. 'at great speed'.

[11] Est. 'one, two, three'.

[12] 'One, two, three' in broken Estonian.

[13] Switching between Estonian and Russian in Kaplinski's (and Igor Kotyukh's) poetry has previously been studied by Irina Belobrovtseva (2018b), and by Ekaterina Yashina (2017, 2019) in her bachelor's and master's theses.

[14] The text in Estonian is spelled in Cyrillic: "we speak different languages, but we are still the same people, the mirrors and reflections of each other".

[15] *Niao* – they want 'a bird' if said with a falling-rising tonal pattern, or 'to have a pee' with a falling tone (Author's note in the original – S. L. L.).

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THE ESTONIAN LANGUAGE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON MUSIC: A COGNITIVE SCIENCES APPROACH

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Abstract: Musicology may seem a specific small sector of humanitarian scholarship to the layman, but it hides variety within from highly theoretical subjects such as music theory to the fieldwork with indigenous repertoires and their performance, as found in ethnomusicology. There is a shift in contemporary musicology, its focus moving more towards studies of musical performances and the use of empirical study designs to complement the analysis of musical scores. These interdisciplinary empirical studies cross the border of humanitarian scholarship and apply the methods of the natural sciences, for example spectrogram analysis of singing and the measurement of the temporal structure of recorded music. The cognitive sciences of music (CSM) can be looked at as an umbrella term for branches of musicology that use empirical research methods and draw their research questions from music related individual and group processes. One of the major topics of CSM relates to research in linguistics. Music and language, as well as speech, are closely linked as the human voice is a natural part of vocal music and is considered a quintessential element in musical thinking, vocal and instrumental alike. The music–language–speech relationship intrigues Estonian musicologists as research questions focusing on related topics arise in different fields of musicology, including natural settings and functional songs (musical development, spontaneous singing, runosong, ecclesiastical singing) to the vocal art music performed by professional singers (some chronological examples: Ross & Lehiste 2001; Raju 2015; Lippus & Ross 2017; Jõks 2021; Vurma et al. 2022). The purpose of this referative overview article is to introduce a selection of previous research and discuss the results. The endeavour of the authors is to find an abstract common denominator of selected CSM research projects to establish the most estimable useful knowledge that Estonian CSM has to offer to the international scholarly community, as well as to follow-up research in Estonia. Although we can see the results of that support, and we can

see the universal perception and cognitive processes of language and music in Estonian research, there are also several interesting prosodic-musical differences relating to the fact that Estonian belongs to the Uralic language family, more specifically Western Finnish language group. Indo-Germanic (mainly German, Russian, Latin, Italian, and English) language related prosody and singing culture does not necessarily support the natural language usage and therefore represses emotional and spontaneous involvement in singing. It seems that in the process in which Estonian scholars deal with their distinctive mother tongue, indigenous musical repertoires, and idiomatic singing, intuition – more precisely a scholarly intuition –, might play an important role.

Keywords: idiomatic singing, language, music–language link

1. INTRODUCTION

Musicology may seem a specific and small sector of the humanities to the layman, but in fact it hides variety within. Contemporary musicology is in constant development. Initial flirtation with innovative analysis methods has today become a more or less stable cohabitation that proposes new scholarly solutions with every passing year. The previous relationship between musicology and philosophy, general history, theology, and mathematics has grown into interaction of different branches of musicology with social sciences, pedagogy, linguistics, computer science, medical and cognitive sciences and psychotherapy. To put it in a nutshell, development is clearly towards interdisciplinarity. The reason behind this development is probably exhaustion of the tools of literature-based classical humanitarian scholarship in the 20th century, in which musicology is not an exception. Other branches of humanitarian scholarship such as theology have also turned towards the natural sciences, for example neurotheology tries to explain religious behaviour and religious experience through the prism of neuroscience (in Estonia, for example Karo 2005, 2009).

Another example of the clear interdisciplinary tendency is a relatively new and growing branch of artistic research that combines a systematic methodological approach with active creative processes. The Estonian Artistic Research Framework Agreement (2021: 3) says: "Artistic research is research expressed in and based on creative activity, the aim of which is to create new knowledge, new forms of culture and new creative and research methods or techniques, and thereby contribute to the development of research fields, society and economy." This innovation has probably emerged due to the advent of artistic studies at the doctoral level in the 1990s, with performers and composers having gained doctorates in music since then. Their qualification is not designed as 'mainstream' musicological study, rather they are well equipped to conduct a type of research that can produce new useful knowledge in the musicological discourse

that is possible only with creative musical components. In the early days there was strong tension between the ideas of artistic research and more conservative 'mainstream' musicology. Although this tension has substantially diminished it is still current in some countries. One of the reasons for such hesitation lies in a crucial differentiation of artistic research: in the classical research model the result must be repeatable with the same material and method used in an original research. In artistic research alas there is an insurmountable scientific blind spot – the creative component of the artistic researcher, which is isolated, unique, and unrepeatable. Therefore, in artistic research it is considered satisfactory if a reader can clearly follow the process of the creation process and link it with a theoretical research in the same work.

The robust way to approach musicology is through methodology, the research process can be (1) descriptive, observational and based on expert opinion, or (2) empirical in nature using qualitative or quantitative methods. In contemporary Estonian musicological discourse it is customary to think about four main categories of musicology: (1) music history, (2) music theory, (3) ethnomusicology, and (4) cognitive musicology (Maimets & Ross 2004: 9). In 2000 Jaan Ross listed three major achievements of the Estonian musicology of the 1990s: (1) widening the concept of the timeline in Estonian music history writing to include earlier periods than 19th century and starting methodological discussion of history-writing; (2) diversification of the discipline in research projects and academic syllabi; (3) beginning the graduate programs of musicology at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (EAMT) and the University of Tartu (Estonian and Finno-Ugric philology included ethnomusicological courses) (Ross 2000: 1984). Now, about twenty years later we can complement the list with (4) founding the international academic journal *Res Musica* in 2009[1]; (5) building up a foundation from which to develop artistic research; (6) initiation of the major interdisciplinary collaboration projects[2] that bring together researchers from different disciplines but also encourage cooperation within the field of musicology.

The purpose of this article is to introduce a selection of previous research and discuss the results. The endeavour of the authors is to find an abstract common denominator in the selected CSM research projects and establish the most estimable knowledge that the Estonian CSM community has to offer to the international scholarly community and follow-up research in Estonia.

1.1. Main concepts and changes over time

According to the Western canon, a musical work can exist in the form of a score or performance. Scores, however, may be lacking in cultures or genres more

improvisational in their nature than the mainstream Western music. Meanwhile the concept of 'musical work' in Western music is also scrutinised by music philosophy – yet another scholarly field that is associated with cognitive musicology (for example Goehr 2007). In Estonia there is also some new interest in music philosophy. Student Aurora Ruus (b. 2001) has recently written (2022a, 2022b) about the problem of the definition and thus the identity of music and musical works. The aim of her research was to compare the identity of musical works and music itself as a metaphysical entity based on phenomenology and ontology, mainly using theories constructed by Roman Ingarden, Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche. Based on these theories the short conclusion of her research is that we cannot fully define the ontological identity of music because music would lose its metaphysical value. Nevertheless, when speaking about musical works and their phenomenological identity based on such qualities as notation or recording, etc., one has to admit that musical work isn't as easy to define due to its various and unstable characteristics (Ruus 2022a).

There is a shift in contemporary musicology, its focus moving more towards studies of musical performance instead of scores of musical works. While such an approach has traditionally been accepted in ethnomusicology, the concept of dynamic form has opened new ways of analysis in music history and music theory. John Butt has suggested that material that was meant to be performed should also be analysed through performance. Even more, "[---] performance might be a useful parameter in understanding how a piece of music came to be created and notated" (Butt 2002: xii). We now see research into the reception of music in Estonia in broader terms, meaning not only traditional and professional music as created and practiced by ethnic Estonians, but also music by other groups who have lived or presently live in Estonia, such as historical groups like Baltic Germans or coastal Swedes, and different marginalised subgroups who live in contemporary Estonia.

1.2. Cognitive sciences of music (CSM)

Cognitive sciences of music (CSM) can be looked at as an umbrella term for social sciences (music psychology[3] and music sociology) and musical acoustics. These disciplines use generally sociological research methods (interviews, questionnaires, observations) or designed perception experiments with constructed auditory stimuli, drawing their research questions from music-related cognitive individual and group processes. Acoustic research employs segmentation methods to measure and analyse sung text with the smallest perceivable units (Vurma 2017a, 2017b, 2020; Jõks 2009, 2014; Raju et al. 2010). Ross explains the

concept of CSM as meaning that the results of these studies can be discussed in a wider context than just psychology in its narrowest definition of only focusing on human behaviour. For example, music psychology focuses on the relationships between the individual and music in its different forms rather than just on the measurable behavioural aspects. Music sociology analyses music at different societal levels, including minority and marginalised groups (Ross 2007: 13).

1.3. Geographical, historical and linguistic influences of Estonian and of certain specifics of spoken Estonian

An important study sector in CSM is rooted in the research of language–speech–music relations. Estonian together with Finnish represents an exceptional linguistic oasis within the Indo-German cultural sphere. There are two language families in Europe: Indo-German and Indo-European, and Uralic and Uralian. Both Estonian and Finnish are Uralic, or to me more precise Western Finnish, languages, and both are surrounded by exclusively Indo-German languages.

When discussing the main special features of Estonian we must focus on at least five aspects.

(1) There are three degrees of length in the Estonian language, because it is a durational or quantitative language. This means that the duration of a phoneme may determine the meaning of a word. Let us look at three sentences: (a) "Palun anna mulle *sada* roosi", "Please give me a *hundred* (sada) roses"; (b) "Palun *saada* mulle *sada* roosi", "Please *send* (saada) me a *hundred* (sada) roses"; (c) "Ma soovin *saada sada* roosi", "I wish to *get* (saada) hundred (sada) roses". The word "*sada*" (the first degree of length), which means "one hundred", is spelt with a single *a*, pronounced with a short duration. The word "*saada*" (the second degree of length) in a meaning of "send" is spelt with two *a*s and pronounced with a long duration. The word "*saada*" (the third degree of length) in the meaning of "to get" is also spelt with two *a*s and is pronounced with a very long duration.

(2) There is no grammatical gender in the Estonian language. Estonian humanities scholar and polyglot Evald Saag (1912–2004) believed this to be an indication that Estonians are one of the few "*loodusrahvas*" (lit. "nature people") who have reached high culture (Saag 2004).[4]

(3) Descending intonation in all sentences, even in interrogative sentences. Willy Peters realised in 1920 that Estonian has predominantly descending intonation curves (Asu et al. 2016: 163). It has been confirmed in numerous

textbooks (for example Ariste 1953; Ehala 1998; Kraut et al. 2004) that Estonian has descending intonation in all types of sentence (see Asu et al. 2016: 174 for details). However, some analysis suggests (for example Pajupuu 1999 and Asu 2004) that there is much more variety in Estonian intonation if one can abandon the myth of monotony in Estonian (Asu et al. 2016: 163).

(4) Estonian is an initial syllable stress language. There are only very few exceptions, many of which are foreign words. One of the Estonian exceptions is "*aitäh*" (thank you) where the stress is on the second syllable.

(5) Extension of an unstressed syllable. From a (vocal) musical viewpoint the relationship between word stress and the extension of the stressed syllable has crucial importance. In German, the stressing and extension of a syllable are largely linked (Marasek 1997; Dogil & Williams 1999; Rapp 1994; Jessen et al. 1995; also, Jessen 1993; Dahmen & Weth 2018: 20). In other words, the main principle is that a syllable that is stressed is also extended. In Estonian there is no such regularity – an unstressed syllable can also be perceived as the longest syllable in the word. For example, "*tuba*" (room), which belongs to the first degree of length, has a stressed first syllable, while the second syllable is longer. If we change the duration of the first syllable (either just orally or in a written form) the result would be "*tuuba*", which belongs to the second degree of length and translates as tuba (brass musical instrument).

We have to admit that Estonian is in many respects rather different from Indo-Germanic languages. The dominant influence in Western culture, however, is Indo-Germanic languages. Estonians, although an ancient nation with an indigenous culture, are newcomers on the scene that we might call the family of Western European cultural nations. The full Estonian Bible translation was published only in 1739, whereas for example the first full German Bible was published in 1534, shortly after the beginning of the Reformation in 1517. Our written language was created by Baltic Germans, and only in the 19th century can we talk about the first Estonian linguists, as well as Estonian professional composers. Even some of our best-loved popular national songs are adaptations from German music.

2. ESTONIAN LANGUAGE AND MUSIC RELATED CSM RESEARCH

The next section of the article will give an overview of a representative selection of recent[5] research in music and the Estonian language covering different fields of interest and different methods. To give some brief historical background, it is important to state that early studies (up to the 20th century) did not have

intentional musicological aspiration but are, however, crucial reference for any language-related musicological study in Estonian linguistics. Long before the era of CSM, linguists had discovered and explained some of the music-related qualities of the Estonian language. As an example it would be proper to refer to Eduard Ahrens (1803–1863). Ahrens was a Baltic-German Lutheran minister who also studied Estonian. He was only one amongst many Baltic-Germans who can be called the 'midwives' of the Estonian written language.

> *The first linguists were foreigners who saw the prosodic system of Estonian through models developed based on German (and other Indo-Germanic languages). Lexical stress on the first syllable was probably known before it was mentioned in the grammar (Stahl 1637), while the existence of secondary stress was clearly stated by Hirschhausen (1827). However, Estonian perception was of the utmost importance in discovering three degrees of length, as the (supposed) first recording of three vowel lengths (*Agenda Parva*, 1622, author unknown, presumably of south Estonian origin) as well as their theoretical description (Masing 1824) were given by Estonians.* (Särg 2005: 226)

In 1865 Ahrens separated the static connection between stress and length in Estonian using Finnish as an example.

2.1. CSM and ethnomusicology

Estonian traditional songs (runosongs) have a strong emphasis on the lyrical content, serving therefore as a form of oral history and pedagogical guidance for younger generations. Rather simple melodies are often a cross used between different sets of lyrics in the traditional runosinging. This is possible due to the repeating prosodic rhythm – one verse of a traditional runosong text is usually a trochaic tetrameter. The first ground-breaking studies in Estonia that combined ethnomusicology and specific linguistic analysis tools arose from cooperation between Ilse Lehiste (1922–2010) and Jaan Ross (b. 1957), who started to segment and analyse old recordings with the help of computer software in the 1980s.

> *The temporal analysis has been done with recordings of runic song. When studying the temporal structure of vocal music with Balto-Finnic texts, Jaan Ross and Ilse Lehiste have concluded that, for example, in the performance of Karelian lament, there is one basic note value [BNV] of 450 milliseconds (ms), which is varied into notes with both longer and*

> *shorter durations (Ross & Lehiste 2001: 125–126). On the other hand, Jaan Ross has identified in the performance of the old Estonian swing song "The Swing Wants Gloves" (*Kiik tahab kindaid*) two different basic note values of 300–350 ms and 800–850 ms, both of which vary agogically (Ross 1989: 68). In a swing song, thanks to the impulses mimicking the movement of the swing, metric thinking arises, which creates another, longer base note value*[6]." (Jõks 2021: 148–149)

There is no doubt that their significance in the field of cognitive musicological studies cannot be overestimated. Only knowledge of the temporal structure of different styles of Estonian runic song is very important. Knowing that in ordinary Estonian runic singing there is one basic note value – approximately 400 ms –, which is agogically varied in both directions, introduces an important aspect of Estonian-language singing. These findings have had an important effect in further studies, for example studies of Estonian ecclesiastic chant by Eerik Jõks (these will be introduced later in this article).

However, an even brighter contribution by Lehiste and Ross lies in the empowerment of scholarly thinking. In order to measure the temporal structure of recorded music it is necessary to segment the music into sections divided by time.

> *There are two basic methods for measuring the temporal structure of the recording of a musical performance. The first is so called "taping". The principle of this method is to mark certain points along the time axis using specialist software. As a result, we will get a set of values that divide the recording into segments. The length of each segment is then easily calculable by subtracting the length of previous segments from a particular value on the time axis.* (Jõks 2009: 254)

However, this method is not satisfactory for precise measurement of the length of every note (ibid.: 256).

The second method, which is more accurate, demands digital segmentation of the syllables with specialist phonetic software, for example Praat. In the process of digitally segmenting a recording, there is a methodological problem that needs to be solved, i.e. how to detect boundaries between successive syllables. Is the boundary between notes marked by a change of pitch or stress on a new note? The main difficulty lies in the detection of boundaries between syllables where the involvement of consonants create ambiguity. There is no single solution to this problem and two alternative methods for digital segmentation are in use: (1) the onset to onset principle (STS), according to which segments (a syllable or a note in a multi-note syllable) are measured from the

beginning of the first or only phoneme to the end of the last or only phoneme; (2) the vowel onset principle (VTV), according to which notes are measured from the beginning of the initial vowel to the beginning of the initial vowel of the next segment. The VTV principle is widely accepted and is advocated by the grand old man of musical acoustics professor Johann Sundberg (for example Sundberg 2000: 98). Lehiste and Ross have questioned the use of the VTV principle in the segmentation process of Estonian runic song. They argued that Estonian, being a durational language, demands the STS approach. The most remarkable part of their argument was the claim that the VTV principle is "intuitively unacceptable" (Ross & Lehiste 2001: 66) in Estonian runic song.

2.2. Studies of child development

Studies of child development and singing have been a focus of Estonian musicologist and psychologist Marju Raju (b. 1982). Music and language are closely linked as the human voice is a natural part of vocal music (songs). One evolutionary hypothesis states that before the separation into two vocal communicative systems (spoken language and singing) there was a *musilanguage* – vocal communication with elements of both language and music, but which was not yet quite either. This hypothesis can be supported by the fact that overlapping regions in the brain support both music and language processing (Trainor & Hannon 2013: 462).

> *Well-known and frequently cited studies (Moog 1976; Davidson; Colley 1987; Davidson; Scripp 1988; Davidson; Welch 1988; Davidson 1994) state that the ability to sing develops at approximately two years of age: first, the lyrics appear, which shape the contour of melodies and provide rhythm for the songs; when the child grows older, the melodies become more recognisable and the ability to hold a key appears. This theory places language development as a precondition for the development of singing. However, due to easily available recording devices new evidence has recently emerged from case studies on children who were able to produce melodies of nursery rhymes before the appearance of spoken language* (see Raju 2015: 14–15 for more details).

The development of the process of speech and singing in childhood are so connected that distinguishing the two communicative domains is sometimes only down to methodological definitions, despite children being able to choose and clearly state their intention to either speak or sing at a very young age (before 2).

There is one developmental case study by Raju and Ross (2015) of one Estonian girl in which musical development and linguistic development were observed from birth to the 25th month. Raju and Ross used Music Micro Analysis Tools (MMATools) (Stadler Elmer & Elmer 2000) to analyse home video recordings in order to be able to visualise and analyse speech and singing data (see Figure 1). This method makes it possible to visualise unstable pitches or spoken syllables and information about joint singing with the child (Raju 2015: 22). The results confirmed the theory according to which the acquisition of language is a prerequisite for the development of singing skills. Although the child was able to separate the melody from the original set of lyrics and perform melodies only by humming or inventing new lyrics to them by the end of the observation period, the songs always had to be learnt as a whole first, while the learning process started with learning the lyrics. The child could hum the melody of a children's song only after she had learned it together with the lyrics. Her abilities to sing a children's repertoire and to vocally improvise developed in parallel. Initially, her musical self-expression appeared only on an individual level (as vocalised inner speech), whereas by 23 months of age she had started to appreciate singing as a social activity and developed an ability to sing along with others as well as starting to initiate such activities.

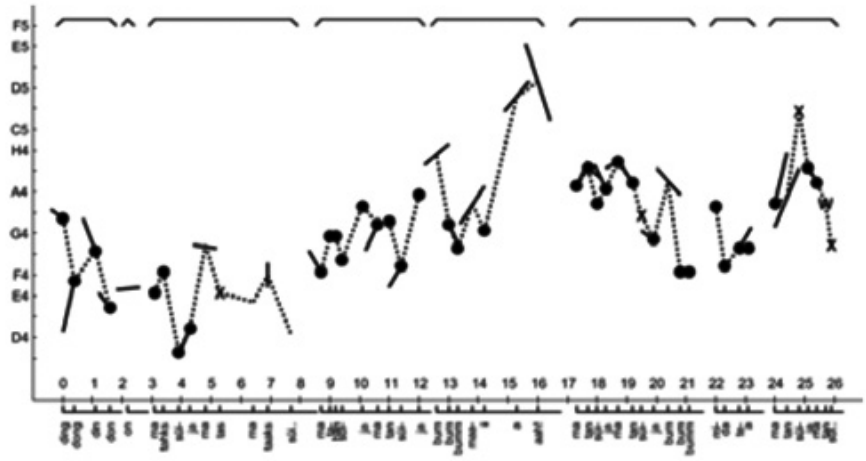

Figure 1. *Transcript of improvisational song by 24-month-old girl notated using MMATools. Symbols: dot, stable pitch; tailed dot, beginning of pitch is stable, after which the pitch declines (or vice versa, after unstable glissando the voice reaches a stable pitch); vertical dash, unstable pitch between notes; X, conjectural pitch due to technical difficulties; W, spoken syllable or word. Syllables and notes from the same phrase are connected with a dotted line (Raju & Ross 2015: 326).*

How children think about music, especially about singing, is also rooted in language and culture. A study by Raju, Välja and Ross (2015) of the song-making process used by Estonian children to describe a picture revealed different concepts of 'song' founded on two categories: lyrics and melody. Some children made a song consisting of original lyrics and melody, some borrowed a known melody and composed new lyrics, some hummed a melody without lyrics and some cited only a poem without melody. Similar results were also gained a few years earlier by Raju and Ross (2012) leading to the conclusion that one of the reasons for this breakdown could lie in the Estonian language. In Estonian, the word *laul* ('song') does not have a specifically musical meaning, as it is used to indicate poems in oral or written form, epic texts, or even stories, alongside singing in its narrower sense. *Laul* can also be used in the context of instrumental music; for example, in kindergartens, children learn to play new 'songs' on musical instruments (xylophones, etc.) that do not include singing at all. Comparing melodies and lyrics created by children in the study by Raju, Välja and Ross (2015), the focus of the song-making process was mainly on the lyrics rather than on the melody as new lyrics tend to be more original than melodies. There were also some gender-specific differences in the choice of words. For example, in response to iconic pictures of a red heart and yellow sun, the girls were inspired by emotion and often used the Estonian word *armas* (lovely, darling) in their songs. The boys seemed to take their song material from real life, for example, one boy sang about a heart being inside the human body and another sang about the planet Earth circling around the Sun (Raju et al. 2015: 288).

2.3. Studies of the sequence from spoken word to poetry to singing

Among many intriguing questions about music there is the aspiration to define what carries the identity of (art) music or a musical work. In the past musicologists tended to prefer scores rather than recordings for analysis. This is due to the wide variety of performances and recordings. Every musical interpretation is more or less unique because of its variations in intonation, timbre, dynamics, agogics and because of the undefined musicality of each and every performer and conductor. Another puzzle that has for a long time intrigued musicologists is the idea that music can reflect the rhythm of the composer's mother tongue, something that has been proven by Patel, Iversen and Rosenberg (2006) in the case of British English and French. Patel et al. used a linguistic method, the normalised Pairwise Variability Index (nPVI[7]), for the first time to analyse well-known art musical scores from different periods. Another study by Daniele and Patel (2004) showed that in German and Austrian music, there

is a clear tendency for the nPVI values to increase with time, i.e., that those values are greater in the work of composers for example from the 19th century than composers from the 17th century. These results also intrigued Estonian researchers, and only a few years later Raju, Asu and Ross (2010) used the nPVI to compare scores and different performances of the same solo songs by Estonian composers Artur Kapp (1878–1952), Mart Saar (1882–1963), Eduard Oja (1905–1950), Eduard Tubin (1905–1982) and Veljo Tormis (1930–2017). Raju, Asu and Ross (2010) decided to study (art) solo songs as they were more likely to reflect prosodic features of the language than instrumental music and should, at least in theory, show an nPVI more similar to speech rhythm. The recorded sound files were analysed with the speech analysis software Praat[8] (Boersma & Weenink 2007), which, as it is generally based on a spectrographic representation of sound, enables one to determine the inter-onset time intervals for successive notes in a performance. Raju, Asu and Ross carried out two studies (2010). In the first study, they hypothesised that the nPVI values calculated on the basis of recorded performances could be higher than those for the same works calculated on the basis of musical scores. The results, based on data from four Estonian composers (Kapp, Saar, Oja and Tubin), demonstrated that although the nPVI values for recorded vocal performances were higher than the nPVI values for scores of the same parts, the differences between the two were rarely significant. In the second study, nPVI values were calculated for a larger corpus of musical works by three composers on the basis of scores. One composer (Tormis) exhibited significantly different nPVI values in his works, as compared to the other two who worked earlier; this was attributed to a different aesthetic program underlying his creative activity. This result may indicate that the tendency of nPVI values to increase with time, i.e. that musical works created later have greater nPVI values, might not be universal (Raju et al. 2010: 65). On the question of whether the Estonian language is reflected in the Estonian music, the results compare nicely to the nPVI values for Saar (43.3–47.0) obtained on the basis of musical scores with the nPVI value for Estonian speech rhythm (44.0) measured on the basis of syllables (Asu & Nolan 2006; Nolan & Asu 2009). The nPVI value for Tubin (42.1) is also sufficiently close. The lower nPVI value for Tormis (22.1), on the other hand, is not surprising considering that his melodies are to a considerable extent of isochronous character, resembling those from Estonian runosong where speech rhythm is subordinate to melody.

Poetry can be considered a sort of a transitional form between prose text and singing. In his studies, music theorist Kerri Kotta (b. 1969) has analysed sound poetry pieces (*häälutused*)[9] by Estonian poet and performance artist Jaan Malin (b. 1960) (Kotta 2017; 2021).

> *In his works, Malin uses several techniques to achieve timbral continuity in a text, including repetition, fragmentation, and liquidation, timbral 'links', timbral palindromes or retrogrades, transformation of the sound of words, and formal overlaps and interpolations. Occasionally Malin applies metrical structures that characterise the main theme, i.e., the entire musical phrase or group of phrases in a musical work. To connect larger formal units, Malin sometimes uses 'links', i.e., the words or word-like fragments with similar sounds. Malin does not use the techniques of musical development for their own sake. Rather, he uses them to enter the dimension of music as he uses the semantic content of words to return to the dimension of language. From the perspective of language, switching between the two dimensions, can also be understood as semantic 'release' or 'recharge' accordingly.* (Kotta 2017: 121–122)

Kotta's analysis shows that although forms of Malin's text are describable using musical terminology (analogous with analysing a musical score), their real form is only perceivable by listening (and differs from solely text-based analysis). Despite performative style also being grounded in the text, there are certain limitations. Kotta showed that traditional score analysis methods from music theory can also be applied to other audible art forms that have some common characteristics with music (see Figure 2).

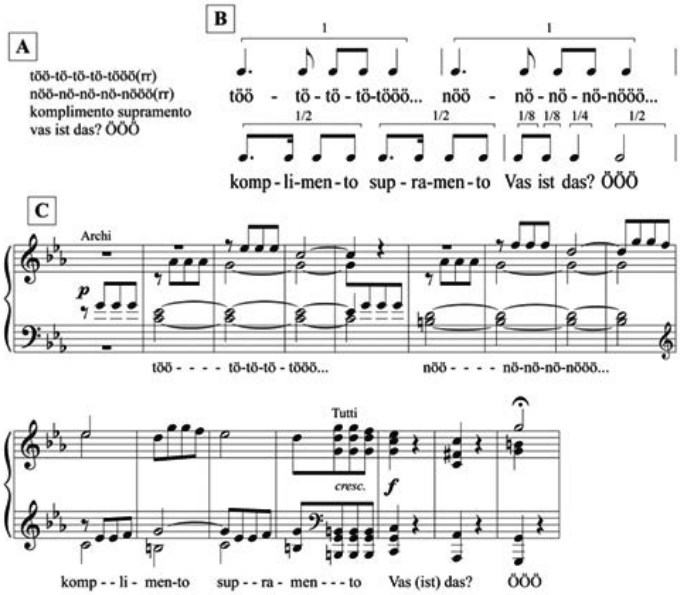

Figure 2. *The structure of long sentences in Malin's sound poetry "Ma-zö-zu-ää" (Estonian word play that resembles spoken French and means "I am going to eat you") and the phrase in Beethoven's 5th symphony (Kotta 2017: 109).*

A large proportion of mainstream music still needs analysis using a variety of methods. For example, rap music offers considerable difficulties for score-based musical analysis as it is created using short musical loops of electronic keyboard and percussion instruments and is not meant for to be transcribed into musical score. Being a word-centred musical genre, the main research focus is usually also on the lyrics analysis or cultural-semiotic analysis of the accompanying music video. Raju (2022) analysed Estonian rap musician nublu's (b. 1996)[10] early period music (the first songs to get him recognised by all age-groups in Estonia) using form analysis, analysis of lyrical content, interviews with listeners and rap music experts, and concluded that he uses *hooks* (refrains) very cleverly by borrowing lyrics from well-known Estonian pop and folk songs from different time periods, therefore making his song automatically familiar and easy to sing along to. Form analysis showed that songs that presented hooks more times and more regularly, also got more views in YouTube. Another component the respondents mentioned was nublu's word art, with several responses mentioning how his identity seems to be more that of a poet than just a singer.

2.4. Problems of the intelligibility of sung text

The most influential studies of the intelligibility of sung text in professional art music (opera) from the last decades, those by Allan Vurma (b. 1955), combine acoustic research, empirical experiments and practical applications. Vurma is a former opera singer and singing teacher and therefore acts as a good example of combining traditional and artistic research strategies. We can say that his work is a perfect example of true fundamental acoustic science rooted in artistic research with the prospect of applicable solutions in singing teaching. Vocalists are expected to sing with intelligible diction, although they also have to obey constraints dictated by the music. Thus, the methods used to enhance diction in speaking may not necessarily be fully applicable to singing. The standpoints of singers on how to achieve clear pronunciation are controversial, and studies on the subject are scarce (Vurma et al. 2022). In a study of opera singers Vurma and Ross (2003) showed that certain terms that have developed over the course of the history of vocal pedagogy ("place your voice forward/backward") lack a clearly delimited meaning. In addition, according to his numerous studies, Vurma (2007: 35) has concluded that both in performing music and more narrowly in singing, good intonation cannot be universally defined on the basis of the fundamental frequencies corresponding to equally tempered values. The relationship between these values and good intonation would be more appropriate to approach intonation as a compromise between various eventually

conflicting tendencies. Vurma (2007: 35) states that "…engaging in scientific research in addition to my professional activities as a musician has not only introduced me to new factual knowledge about my professional field but also improved my intuitive perception of it".

Vurma's ongoing research project aims to create a scientific basis for the further development of strategies to achieve a good balance between intelligibility and the requirements of the music, such as cantilena and phrasing, when singing in various acoustics and with the presence of accompaniment. Project includes two research hubs at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre and at Tallinn University of Technology's School of Information Technologies. The first results of the project from the pilot acoustic analysis showed that the length and intensity of plosives influence the intelligibility of a sung text, although there are some differences according to singer style ("operatic" (*bel canto*) vs "easy"). In addition, it is not clear how much playing room there is for the singer to alternate the plosives without affecting the quality of musical expression (Vurma et al. 2022). Results from perception tests where Estonian participants had to recognise the sung plosives /k/, /t/ and /p/, showed that increasing intensity does not facilitate the recognition of /t/ and /p/ in acoustic conditions that have a small level of reverberation, although the singer has to be more precise when singing /k/ to ensure its intelligibility to listeners. Singing in difficult acoustic conditions, such as halls with a large amount of reverberation, or singing far from the audience or with instrumental accompaniment obliges plosives /k/ and /t/ to be sung with greater intensity to help intelligibility, although with /p/ the singer must be more careful (Vurma et al. forthcoming).

2.5. Recent studies in ecclesiastical chant and its performance

Studies in linguistics are substantially and congenitally intertwined with musicological research because the root of Western professional music lies in vocal music, particularly in Medieval Sacred Latin Monody (MSLM). Western musical culture was predominantly a vocal musical culture until the Renaissance. Only in the baroque era did idiomatic instrumental thinking reach the same level (both in quality and quantity) as its vocal counterpart. This fact makes vocal music, with its quintessential textual component, a core of Western musical thinking and it therefore deserves special musicological attention. This is even more true in ecclesiastical chant as the earliest repertoire of chant, Medieval Sacred Latin Monody, especially Franco-Roman or Gregorian chant, is considered an absolute peak of so-called idiomatic or language-shaped music. The togetherness of text and melody in some genres of MSLM are so exclusive

that differentiation between text and melody seems not only impossible but also unnecessary. Therefore, it is only logical that ecclesiastical singing is an important field of study in CSM in the area of vernacular languages.

Eerik Jõks (b. 1970), a singer, musicologist and composer, began his CSM investigations into text and music with MSLM. Using the example of Jaan Ross (Ross 1989; Ross & Lehiste 2001) he measured the temporal structure of 35 specially made solo recordings of the gradual responsory *Haec dies*.[11] Most performers (19) had one basic note value (BNV), as in the recordings of Estonian runic song analysed by Lehiste and Ross, varying from 250 ms to 550 ms. Twelve performers had two BNVs, as in the Estonian swing song "The Swing Wants Gloves" analysed by Jaan Ross in 1989. However, there were four performers whose result was most intriguing. They did not have a BNV at all. All durations were equally distributed on the axis of duration. One of them was a performance by Professor Godehard Joppich (b. 1932) who is considered one of the most detail-sensitive Gregorian chant performers (Brunner 1982: 328; Jõks 2009: 276, 549). Due to his vast knowledge of Gregorian semiology, he treats every aspect of medieval notation with great care. This triggers a very agogically varied performance that results in a temporal structure with no detectable BNV (Jõks 2009).

Eerik Jõks' next CSM endeavour by was a complex perception experiment (Jõks 2014).

(1) Jõks recorded Gregorian chant (primary recording) by experienced performers (primary performers) who used original medieval chant notation (primary notation).

(2) By digitally measuring the recordings he created an accuracy-orientated transcription in Western classical notation (secondary notation).

(3) Singers who had little or no experience of Gregorian chant (secondary performers) recorded their performance from this transcription (secondary recording).

(4) Experts in Gregorian chant from all over the world compared these two sets of recordings by answering a questionnaire. The experts did not know the details of the experiment (Jõks 2014: 183). This project resulted with a highly nuanced modern notational version of Gregorian chant (see Figure 4). Comparison with the medieval notation (see Figure 3) showed the level of complexity of prose text ecclesiastical chant. This complexity fascinated Jõks and prompted him to look at the same complexity in Estonian prose text chant.

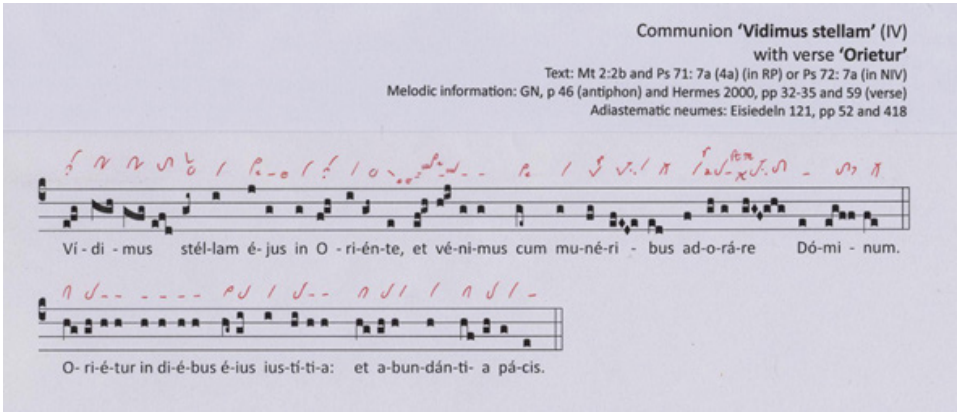

Figure 3. *Example of primary notation. Communion antiphon "Vidimus stellam" with a verse "Orietur". [---] (Jõks 2014: 157).*

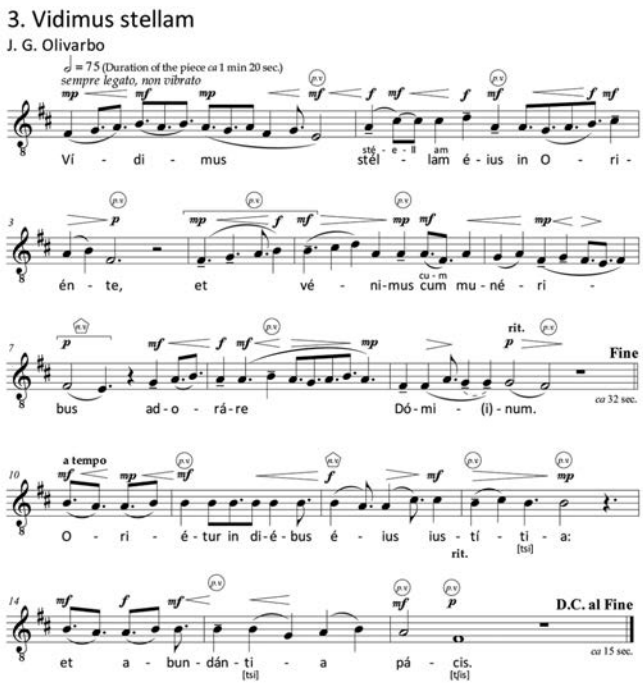

Figure 4. *Example of secondary notation. Communion antiphon "Vidimus stellam" with a verse "Orietur". Transcription of a recording by primary performer "Abraham". The name J. G. Olivarbo is a fictional name for the composer that is derived from the original name of the performer. [---] (Jõks 2014: 160).*

Since 2014 Eerik Jõks has focused on Estonian ecclesiastical chant and the connection of language and music therein. He mainly concentrated on monodic and unaccompanied chanting with prose text. As there was no word for prose text chant in Estonian, Jõks instituted the Estonian neologism *pühalaul* (sacred chant) and devised a so-called speech curves method for composing *pühalaul* (Jõks 2017: 71–73). This method considers all three prosodic parameters of Estonian: intonation, duration, and dynamics. Jõks instituted another term *keelemuusika* (language music) that is a 'translation' of spoken text into melody. He has applied this method fruitfully and published a massive collection of Estonian pühalaul in *Eesti laulupsalter* (Jõks 2020). Inspired by outstanding specialities of the Estonian language Jõks devised a method of formula-based psalmody that takes into account features of Estonian prosody. For this he resurrected an ancient type of psalmody that uses cursive cadences instead of accentual cadences.[12] It is believed that because of the very simple principles, cursive cadences were used in Latin psalmody earlier than more complex accentual cadences (Bailey 1976). However, the use of cursive cadence falls into the era of oral tradition (before the 9th century), and that by the time of written tradition only remnants of cursive cadence remained in the vastly accentual cadence-dominated Latin psalmody.

Recently (2020–2021) Jõks also turned to the study of ecclesiastical chant that uses strophic poetry as its text (hymns or chorales). In order to consider prosodic idiomaticism, he introduced an analytical method to measure the compatibility of the rhythm of the Estonian text with that of a chorale melody. He also proposed methodological tools that could be used to improve conformity of the prosodic rhythm and the rhythm of the melody. The results of this research showed vividly the field of tension between Estonian prosodic rhythm and melodies that are born in the context of German. In so-called rhythmised chorales the deviation between the German melodies and Estonian text were as high as 57% and in some verses even 67%. This shows that there are more words the musical rhythms of which contradict natural prosodic rhythm than those resembling it. In isometric chorale tunes, the deviation was considerably lower or non-existent (Jõks 2021).

If we recall the temporal structure of runic song recordings analysed by Lehiste and Ross, we see a resemblance. An ordinary runic song performance has one basic note value that is agogically varied in both directions. Isometric notation allows the same phenomenon to happen in chorale as the main notational value is a quarter note that will probably vary the same way in performance if a static organ accompaniment does not quantise it.

Speaking and researching the Estonian language gives an opportunity to propose very specific new research questions and hypotheses that are not within

the scope of scientists not familiar with Estonian. For example, Eerik Jõks has recently proposed two hypotheses: (1) If we digitally measure a recording of an isometric chorale performance, we will probably end up with one basic note value, and in the case of a recording of a so-called rhythmised chorale we will have two basic note values (Jõks 2021: 149). It is very important that this hypothesis should be tested soon. In the same fashion we might suggest that the temporal structure of Estonian prose text chant will give the same kind of variation as found in the temporal structure of performance of Medieval Latin chant. It would be fascinating to compare both Latin and Estonian recordings of the Estonian performers. (2) Estonians are well-known for not having substantial Christian denominational allegiance (see for example Jõks & Soom 2016). Eerik Jõks has proposed that one of the factors that influences the void between Estonian and the Lutheran church is that ecclesiastical song in the church is not Estonian chant but German or Latin chant with Estonian words. We know the importance of chanting in Christian practice. Could it be that on the level of Estonian ecclesiastical song the core values of the Christian church have not yet reached the deeper consciousness of the Estonian nation (Jõks 2022)? To test this hypothesis there is a need for wider interdisciplinary study involving a qualitative sociological approach.

2.6. Comparison of historic and contemporary recordings

Language is in constant flux, something is most recognisable in changes of vocabulary, for example those that are apparent through a study of old thesauruses and dictionaries. Now, in the 21st century, we also have about a hundred years of recorded history that gives us a unique opportunity to analyse whether there have been developments in Estonian word prosody over the past century (Ross 2022). Linguist and phoneticist Pärtel Lippus (b. 1980) has conducted a study with Jaan Ross that compared parallel recordings of spoken (recited) and sung utterances of the same three songs from two groups of informants, historical (recorded in 1916[13]) and contemporary (recorded in 2011), by segmenting and measuring the speech and musical units (Lippus & Ross 2014, 2017; Ross 2022).

> *The results showed that song and group had no large-scale effects on normalised syllable duration, nor were there any significant interactions within group. Therefore, historic and contemporary participants were not differentiated from each other. There were highly significant main effects of mode and length, which means that the acoustic durations of the recited and sung syllables as well as of the phonologically short and long syllables*

> *were different from each other.* [...] *The findings of the present study do not suggest a significant diachronic change between the performance of contemporary singers and the material recorded 100 years ago.* (Lippus & Ross 2014: 194, 197)

In addition to a slightly faster speech rate in contemporary participants, the pitch is a little lower than in the historical data (Ross 2022).

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In recent decades Estonian CSM research has taken particular interest in music- and language-related research questions, using various methods, as the referenced studies showed in the previous chapter. Although we can see a variety of different research questions and interesting results, it is quite a challenge to include them under very specific research questions in this discussion as there has not been an overall common strategic approach in Estonian CSM in the language-specific research domain. On the other hand, Estonian researchers have had great academic freedom to choose their own research questions and methods. In addition to individual collegial relationships, institutional support mechanisms such as the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies have provided opportunities to build CSM as a discipline in Estonia and have provided a platform for researchers to present and publish their work in Estonian in addition to international journals in English. It is possible that in the next decades more systematic cooperation and larger-scale research projects will emerge.

Results show that we can use quantitative methods borrowed from linguistics such as nPVI to measure musical scores and performances, but we should also be careful when interpreting results based on only one characteristic (in the case of nPVI, the rhythmical contrast of the piece) as there is great variability within different composer's intentions, and between mainstream and niche music (this is also the case in the art music arena) (Raju et al. 2010). Studies with children (Raju & Ross 2012; Raju 2015) show some similarities with international studies, such as the universal aspects of developmental trajectories. On the other hand Estonian presents some linguistic and culturally specific features that influence children's concept of song, which they express through different emphasis when creating their own songs. Results from Vurma et al. (2022; forthcoming) show that illegibility of certain single sung plosives can differ under the same acoustic conditions for Estonian listeners. Although the design of the research by Vurma et al. (2022; forthcoming) is based on the concept of a 'bottom-up' perception, the question of possible influence of so-

called language templates remains as pronunciation nuances and sometimes even semantically meaningful units start from even single phonemes. Further studies with participants with different mother tongues can shed some light on the topic as well as applying a parallel qualitative approach, for example, by interviewing singers and singing teachers about their experiences, and perhaps even intuition, or by recruiting more singers to the field as researchers through the process of artistic research.

As scholars and scientists, we are usually not expected to rely on intuition, yet this particular word is already used by Ross & Lehiste (2001: 66) and Vurma (2007: 35) when describing their methods and conclusions. In addition, Ruus concluded that "we cannot fully define the ontological identity of music, because then music would lose its metaphysical value" (Ruus 2022a). In the case of Ross and Lehiste (2001) however, the intuitional argument to not apply the VTV principle of segmentation, sounds totally logical. If you have linguistic, melodic, ethnomusicological, and artistic components to be considered together, intuition seems to be quite an unavoidable tool. Even more so if we are talking about the researcher's mother tongue and native indigenous musical repertoire. Therefore, it is fairly important that Lehiste and Ross added intuitional tools to the toolbox of methodology. This is something other than an everyday intuition. We might call it "a legitimate scholarly intuition". Using such "a legitimate scholarly intuition" encourages us to open new doors to a deeper level of linguistic-musical studies. Vurma states that his studies and academic knowledge helped him to understand the process of singing and the choices he already made intuitively to achieve the best results balancing good text intelligibility and achieving the musical goals of the piece. Yet, intuition is highly subjective and comes with previous experiences and knowledge, therefore we still need a proper methodological approach and scientific facts.

As this overview article shows, future language- and music-specific research in Estonia already has solid ground on which to build. The unique, living and constantly changing Estonian language and our vivid and diverse music landscape offer new possibilities for both local and international research. Speaking and researching the Estonian language gives an opportunity to propose very specific new research questions and hypotheses that scientists not familiar with Estonian would not formulate (see for example new hypotheses raised by Jõks in the previous chapter).

The purpose of this article was to find an abstract common denominator from the works of the Estonian CSM community. The goal was achieved, and the common denominator can be considered the reliance on a certain amount of intuition in the study of language–speech–music connections. In all the scholarly works described, intuition has played an important role in forming the research

questions (studies by Jõks; Vurma; Kotta) or interpreting the results (Ross & Lehiste 2001; Raju & Ross 2012; Raju et al. 2015). The inclusion of intuition in the toolbox of cognitive musicology can be explained by the fact that scholars who deal with the connections between Estonian language–speech–music are forced to get out of the comfort zone of Indo-Germanic languages, which in many ways defines the background linguistic system of the world scientific and scholarly community. Intuition also plays an important role in creative research, where, unlike conventional research, it is not possible to achieve the same result using the same material and the same method because the unique artistic contribution of the creative person is decisive in the process. In creativity, intuition plays an important role, with any form of 'autopsy' of creativity remaining, at least for the time being, within a scientific blind spot.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES

[1] Over twenty years ago Ross (2000: 1979) considered the idea of having a national academic journal dedicated to musicology unrealistic, but luckily his predictions were overturned in 2009 when the internationally acknowledged peer-reviewed yearbook *Res Musica* was founded jointly by EAMT and Estonian Musicological Society (EMS). *Res Musica* provides a wide forum for published articles on Estonian musicology. In addition to articles based on musicological research, each issue of the journal includes a Review section and an overview of the past year in Estonian musicological life.

[2] For example, The Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies (CEES) founded in 2016, and the Graduate School of Culture Studies and Arts (GSCSA) founded in 2009. Both initiatives are financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

[3] In the field of music psychology both concepts are sometimes used as synonymous, but the latter is used in the name of the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music (ESCOM). ESCOM (founded in 1992) is an international non-profit society for the promotion of theoretical, experimental, and applied research in the cognitive sciences of music. ESCOM organises regular conferences and publishes the academic journal *Musicae Scientiae*.

[4] "Me oleme üks neid loodusrahvaid veel, kes on kõrgkultuuri jõudnud. Me võime kõiki õpetada" (Saag 2004).

[5] This article does not give a systematic bibliographical overview of the field of Estonian CMS as it focuses only on topics related to language.

[6] In addition to solving the question of temporal structure of Estonian runic song there are many other aspects in the scholarly work of Lehiste and Ross that will not be discussed here.

[7] PVI is widely used in linguistic research to quantify speech rhythm, which provides an alternative to the traditional view of rhythm isochrony according to which languages are divided into those that are "syllable-timed" and those that are "stress-timed". This metric enables the rhythmic differences between languages or varieties of the same language to be quantified by capturing the difference between adjacent linguistic units (for example syllables). The more syllable-timed a language or its variety, the lower is its PVI (Raju et al. 2010: 51–52). The letter 'n' means normalised value; after calculation the result is multiplied by 100.

[8] Praat software has also been used by Estonian researchers Allan Vurma, Jaan Ross and Eerik Jõks.

[9] Term "häälutused" used by this poet is not a real word in Estonian. In Estonian *"hääl"* means voice and *"luuletused"* poems. This new word consists of hints that these poems should be voiced out.

[10] Civil name Markkus Pulk. His Wikipedia page uses an initial upper case letter in his artist name (Nublu), while on his own official webpage and social media he uses initial lower case (nublu). He has patented the latter form of the name. Available at https://et.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nublu_(räppar), last accessed on 16 December 2022; https://nublufy.ee, last accessed on 16 December 2022; https://andmebaas.epa.ee/avalik/#/trademarks, last accessed on 16 December 2022.

[11] The gradual responsory is a liturgical song that is sung during Mass between the readings of the Old Testament and the Epistle. If there are only two readings (from the Epistle and the Gospel), the gradual is sung together with alleluia between these two readings. *Haec dies* is an Easter gradual.

[12] Most material in the formula-based psalmody is chanted on the same pitch. "There are two kinds of melodic formulas in Western plainchant: (1) formulas with accentual cadences, and (2) formulas with cursive cadences. Accentual cadence takes into consideration the prosodic principles of Latin as well as other Indo-European languages in which an accented syllable is usually perceived as the longest syllable of a word. This means that the accented syllables are always marked with dominant notes of a cadence. Cursive cadence, on the other hand, always applies the same amount of syllables in the cadences without any accentual considerations. Estonian prosody differs significantly from Indo-European prosody, as the accented syllable is not always the longest syllable of the word. Therefore, in Estonian formula-based plainchant a cursive principle should be preferred." (Jõks 2017: 81–82)

[13] For background and more information on these recordings, see Ross 2012.

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GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN THE STUDY OF ESTONIAN SOCIETY AND CULTURE: CURRENT STATE AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract: Gender issues have become increasingly compelling for both scholars and the general public in Estonia in the past twenty years. This can, for example, be seen in the March 2022 issue of the Estonian cultural magazine *Vikerkaar* which published a lengthy overview of the history of Estonian feminism (Karro 2022). The overview attempts to show the length of this history and its continuity under different political regimes, refreshing older surveys published by Vera Poska-Grünthal (1936) and Helmi Mäelo (1957 in Sweden, reprinted in Estonia in 1999). Such surveys list notable women and significant milestones, but do not usually delve into the nuances of gender history or feminist thought like in-depth case studies. This more nuanced work has been done in the past seven years by the gender studies research group within the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies. The present article reviews the state of Estonian research, both within the research group and more broadly, and points out the main challenges that scholars face.

Keywords: Estonia, feminism, gender, post-Soviet

INTRODUCTION

Gender has held a complex position in Estonian social and intellectual history. In many ways, women's social position has been relatively good (early access to vote, relatively high levels of education and employment in the 20th century, etc.). Yet – perhaps even because of this public visibility – there has been less of a social demand for feminist activism and gender research. Gender fascinates,

but is simultaneously surrounded by silences, gaps and stereotypes. This article looks into the history of both Estonian feminism and gender research, to place the work done within the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies within a broader context and into a dialogue with other Estonian scholars to show where we stand and what still needs to be done, in terms of subject matter and methodology.

Estonian analyses of gender have moved in two waves, as a result of the complex historical legacies of the country. The first wave of interest in the late 19th century did not lead to a feminist movement or extensive textual production because of the conservative Baltic-German cultural environment and also because of the prioritisation of national self-determination over women's rights among the Estonian intellectual elites of the time (Annuk 2021c; Annuk 2014; Mattheus 2008; Põldsaar 2009). Like in many other countries, women's rights were perceived to be secondary to national sovereignty, and women's role in nation building was seen primarily through their reproductive role as mothers and homemakers (cf. Kivimaa 2009; Annuk 2013a). Estonia gave women the right to vote around the same time as the neighbouring Nordic countries, after declaring its independence in 1918, and women were actively involved in different aspects of social and political life in the brief period of independence between the two world wars (Põldsaar 2006). The Soviet occupation (1940–1941, 1944–1991) disrupted many aspects of life, including the development of local feminism and women's activism. In fact, many women activists (for example Social Democrat Alma Ostra-Oinas) faced repressions under Soviet occupation, despite the gender equality rhetoric of the regime. Thus, while the second wave of feminism developed in the West, Estonia was behind the Iron Curtain that at best only let through vague echoes of feminist ideas. In the Soviet Union, the equality between men and women was supposed to have been achieved, and thus officially the obvious gender inequalities of Soviet society could not be analysed academically and all civic society was channelled into a very narrow, state-sanctioned channel (cf. Ruthchild 1983). The Soviet state needed women in the workforce and working was defined as a duty to the state. Therefore, women could be and were actively involved in the labour force and the public sphere, but not in positions of power. Perhaps even more importantly, gender inequalities persisted in the private sphere, despite state paternalism that seemed to provide ample public services, such as free health care and childcare services. Thus, seemingly, there was gender equality by many measures, but very limited critical discussion of the meanings of gender, gender relations or sexuality (indeed, male homosexuality was criminalised in the Soviet Union and thus also in Soviet Estonia) (Annuk 2015). Western feminism was introduced in a limited and censored fashion in the media, and although there have been

attempts to find traces of feminist movements in the Soviet sphere of influence (e.g., Grabowska 2012), this state-sanctioned feminism had a limited scope, especially within the confines of the Soviet Union. Many gender scholars have called the Soviet Union a patriarchal society (Miroiu 2007).

Thus, gender equality and feminism gained renewed attention in Estonia only in the 1990s, when the country assertively turned itself towards the West after the collapse of the Soviet Union. While initially viewed with curiosity mixed with suspicion, as being rhetorically too reminiscent of the Soviet equality rhetoric that Estonia was eager to forget, integration into the European Union and its legal frameworks normalised the discussion of many gender issues, from the gender pay gap to life-work balance (Marling 2010). This period also made gender into an object of academic study. Today there are already two generations of academic gender studies scholars and a new generation of feminist activism that challenges the nationalist, pronatalist and homophobic policies of populist and conservative parties (Marling & Koobak 2014). The initial cautious curiosity has become an intense engagement with and involvement in international research and activist networks.

However, gender studies as a discipline has existed in a somewhat marginalised position: there are no departments or degree programmes and the work is being conducted by enthusiasts within their disciplines. This means that the gendered aspects of Estonian society have been studied unevenly: while there is a rich array of important studies in the context of folklore, art and literature, there is as yet relatively little work in history or linguistics, to give but two examples.

There has also been little systematic research into the history of gender and feminism. This gap can also be explained by the scarcity of parallel studies of Estonian social and intellectual history. After all, the study of the history of feminism requires a good command of the ideas circulating in society in any given period, to grasp the interplay of international influences and local strategies of adaptation. There are attempts, such as Karro (2022), to show the length of the history of Estonian feminism and its continuity across different political regimes. However, these studies have tended to limit themselves to listing prominent women and their achievements, instead of problematising the construction and meaning of gender in different periods and gender's complex intertwining with surrounding discourses, especially religion, nationalism and socialism.

One can often also see terminological inconsistencies around even basic terms like sex and gender (the two are not clearly distinguished in Estonian), as well as the terminology surrounding sexuality. While the terminology has been debated for over two decades, we are far from a public consensus even

on relatively simple topics like the existence of multiple masculinities and femininities, not to mention complex issues (for example terminology on queer, trans and cis identities, on which new research is expected at the time of this writing). There should be more dialogue between activist communities and scholars on this topic.

This is the context into which our research group stepped. When the Centre of Excellence started, it proposed gender as one of the transversal axes that could connect the different research projects and scholars who gathered under the aegis of the Centre. Several of the projects already had a gender angle, some developed it within the Centre of Excellence.

In view of the relatively short time span and limitations of staff, we tried to provide insights into topics that are important from a gender perspective but that have remained under-researched in Estonia thus far, as well as to suggest new methodological and theoretical approaches through seminars, conferences and research publications in English and in Estonian. The seminars highlighted under-researched topics in Estonian gender research, such as theatre, music, the cultural meanings of motherhood and sexual minorities. Work continued on the gendered aspects of national identity as well as the history of Estonian feminism and the work of first feminist authors such as writer and educator Lilli Suburg (1841–1923) and teacher and politician Marie Reisik (1887–1941). Members of the group also published on contemporary fiction and social tensions, for example the gendered dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the thematic seminars, the research group also systematically worked to expand the methodological basis of Estonian gender studies. Alongside traditional humanities methods like archival research and text analysis, our seminars tackled the possibility of applying discourse and affect theories, as well as postcolonial approaches in the study of culture. The post- and decolonial perspective in particular has not been fully integrated into the study of Estonian culture, despite its usefulness in interpreting the presence of many foreign powers in Estonia and the complex process of borrowing from them and adopting their influences into the local culture. This translation process, in the broadest sense of the word, has also played a critical role in gender issues.

The seven-year period has allowed us to shed light on some corners of Estonian gender history. Our work has created the basis for writing a nuanced history that does not limit itself to listing notable women but also maps out the network of gendered cultural practices.

WHAT IS ESTONIAN FEMINISM?

The first challenge one has to tackle in studying the history of Estonian feminism is the question of what constitutes Estonian feminism. Does it mean the history of women's movements, the history of gender-focused intellectual debate, the history of women's achievements or only the history of activism explicitly aligned with feminism? Does the history of feminism mean the history of women or should it also include queer history and the history of sexual and gender minorities? Does the history of Estonian feminism concern only women of Estonian origin or women of other ethnicities who lived and worked in Estonia (above all, Baltic Germans or different Russian-speaking minorities)? What about the role of diaspora communities in Sweden, the USA, Canada and Australia? The chosen perspective determines what will be highlighted and how.

Traditionally, the beginning of Estonian feminism has been dated to the work of Estonia's first feminist, journalist, writer and educator Lilli Suburg (1841–1923) in the last decades of the 19th century (Annuk 2013b, 2016, 2018, 2021b, 2021c). Suburg, however, remained alone at that time and we can speak of the beginning of the women's movement as a form of social activism only at the beginning of the 20th century, in connection with the events of the 1905 revolution and the spread of socialist ideas (cf. Kirss 2015). Educated women such as Marie Reisik (Annuk 2019b), educator and feminist politician Emma Asson-Peterson (1889–1965; Sakova 2005/2006), politician and feminist Minni Kurs-Olesk (1879–1940) and attorney and politician Alma Ostra-Oinas (1886–1960, attorney, politician) played the central role in this process. It is worth repeating that there were nine women in the first parliament of the newly independent Estonia, and that two women (Kurs-Olesk and Asson) participated in drafting Estonia's constitution (Hillermaa & Viljamaa 2020). While far from formal equality, this is remarkable when we compare these numbers to those in many other countries at the time. The creation of a new state allowed Estonia to establish new institutions, taking into consideration the best practices of the time.

While women were taking increasingly active roles in social life and politics at the beginning of the 20th century, the activism advocating for Estonia's national sovereignty was led by men, with women relegated to the role of the symbolic embodiments of the nation. Indeed, the history of the Estonian national movement has been told from a male-centred perspective that marginalises women, despite the fact that a woman, the poet Lydia Koidula (1843–1896), was a symbol of the national awakening. In fact, the example of Koidula has been used to argue that Estonia does not require feminism, as Koidula was able to achieve prominence without it (Marling & Sepper 2018). The lack of a publicly

visible feminist activism, like that of the suffragettes in the UK, has also been used for the same purpose. The new Estonian republic was progressive for its time,[1] although this did not lead to prominent feminist activism and a wide public discussion of women's roles (misogynist rhetoric can be seen in the media and fiction of the interwar period more than proto-feminist arguments).

The Soviet period also complicates the analysis of the history of gender relations and feminism, as Soviet equality rhetoric hid the reality of patriarchal gender relations (cf. Voronina 1993 on the broader Soviet framework). While women's labour force participation rates were high, they were underpaid, in comparison to men, and scarce in leadership positions, with the exception of some token women. Women's daily lives were characterised by the triple burden of paid work, reproductive work at home and the labour necessary to cope with persistent shortages (queueing for essentials, growing and preserving food, sewing and knitting clothes, etc.). The modernisation of Soviet society did not always reach the level of private residences (for example, many homes even in cities did not have running water, not to mention automatic washing machines). These material limitations increased the burden of domestic work, which affected women's lives and opportunities in a major way (Annuk 2019a). In parallel, the privileged nomenklatura had access to goods and services unavailable to the majority through special shops and trips abroad. This further generated scepticism about the double standards of Soviet society and undermined the credibility of its rhetoric of equality.

The experience of the Soviet (per)version of gender equality has often been used to explain resistance to gender equality in post-socialist Estonia (Pilvre 2002; Marling 2010). This was particularly stark in the 1990s, when society was especially allergic to anything resembling former Soviet practices and eagerly embraced neoliberal economic policies and pronatalist gender norms (Marling 2015, 2017; Velmet 2019). These tensions were especially prominent during the process of accession to the EU, when the adoption of gender equality legislation, a condition of accession, was hotly debated in parliament, revealing the strength of deep-seated essentialist stereotypes. Despite this hurdle, the legislation was adopted and it mainstreamed the discussion of gender not just among activists but also at the level of different government bodies. There has been considerable progress in terms of law and social practice, but the frequent ironic speeches by prominent political leaders continues to show that gender issues and gender equality have not become the self-evident norm. In this sense, Estonia has not really come to resemble its Nordic neighbours but rather faces the same anti-gender tendencies as many other post-socialist East European countries (Marling 2021b). While Estonia managed to adopt and implement gender equality policies, there have been more tensions around LGBTQ rights.

WHY STUDY GENDER?

While the political pressure to engage with gender issues has increased, this has not meant a parallel pressure to research gender. There is an increasing amount of research on media and social media representations and contemporary art, but the historical picture has received much less attention. Yet it is the gender-informed analysis of society and culture, past and present, that allows us to identify and decode gendered practices and thought patterns that continue to shape today's ideas about gender and sexuality. While cultural images do not seem as vital as measurable social problems, like gendered poverty, the gender wage gap or the glass ceiling, we cannot understand those social problems without understanding what has created them: gendered power relations, social roles, privilege and access to resources and their variation across time.

Historian Joan W. Scott in 1986 proposed that gender should be used as an analytical category in history research to highlight the role of women in history and also the social and cultural conditions that affect this role (Scott 2008). This allows us to take a fresh look at old problems or to redefine old questions to make women more visible as agents of history (Scott 2008: 133). It is this perspective that is still missing in Estonia. While we know about prominent women in Estonia's past, we are still missing research that takes an in-depth view of, for example, how the historically divergent understandings of the body or reproduction have shaped women's ability to act on their bodies. This type of research requires focus on the practices of Estonian peasants, filtered through the rigid sexual morals of the Baltic-German elites who left the extant written records. In later centuries, the deep German cultural substratum in Estonian culture (where even nationalist intellectuals habitually spoke German as their everyday language of communication) shapes interactions with Russian and later Soviet culture. The latter's sexual puritanism, in turn, explains the persistence of homophobia and suspicion of female sexuality in today's neoliberal Estonia. Research that places gender within a complex web of cultural influences, is sorely needed to move beyond simplified stereotypes that persist about gender and feminism in the daily press and social media. Research into such stereotypes contributes to dispelling misleading beliefs. In Estonian cultural mythology one stereotype that has failed to disappear is that Estonian men and women have been equal across history and that thus Estonia does not need gender equality campaigns or feminism. The latter, especially, is viewed as a foreign import, while only very few realise that it is today's anti-gender campaigns that have clear foreign roots.

We need more in-depth analyses of women's and men's roles and activities in the public and private spheres to map the boundaries of activities across social

classes, ethnic groups and social periods. There may be times and contexts where women had more agency than we imagine (Merili Metsvahi's (2015) research into pre-marital peasant sexuality allows us to think so) and others where they had less than we have come to assume (as different analyses of the Soviet period show). We need to focus on the interplay of influences, as in Johanna Ross's (2018) study of the latent presence of nationalist discourses in the interpretation of women writers from Soviet Estonia that made gendered reading perspectives unlikely. The research of Tiina Kirss and Leena Kurvet-Käosaar has drawn attention to the complex cultural discourses in Estonian life writing (e.g., Kurvet-Käosaar 2020; Kirss & Hinrikus 2021). Mirjam Hinrikus has called attention to the tensions between emancipatory and misogynist attitudes in Estonian modernism and the tensions between gender and nation-building efforts (Hinrikus 2015). Our research group also continued this tradition of research, above all in Eve Annuk's scholarship on nationalism's role in early Estonian feminism and her pioneering research into discourses of motherhood in the Soviet period (Annuk 2021c; Annuk & Seigel 2020). Andreas Kalkun's archival research into the history of Estonian homosexuality opens a new page in Estonian gender history (Kalkun 2018, 2020). Kalkun and also Janika Oras have studied women's traditions within Estonian folk song (Oras 2017).

One must hope that more similarly nuanced analyses will be added, especially in under-studied fields such as theatre, film and music. Theatre, for example, is a powerful shaper of gendered perception as it not only represents gender norms, but also performatively enacts them for audiences. Thus, we are glad that our research group was able to nurture work on theatre and music in our seminars and to encourage two young scholars (Riina Oruaas and Hannaliisa Uusma) in pursuing their PhD degrees on gender-related topics.

The research group was able to bring together the top Estonian researchers from different academic institutions (University of Tartu, Tallinn University, Estonian Literary Museum) to discuss the history of sexual and gender minorities. These meetings resulted in a number of publications on discourses and practices surrounding male homosexuality (Kalkun 2018, 2020) and, more broadly, the complex intra-actions in representations of sexual and gender minorities (Põldsam 2020). These studies are sensitive to local histories and international links, as well as the complexity of analysing gender practices, for which vocabulary was only emerging. Põldsam's work is also attentive to the need to be careful when applying international terminology without critical reflection. These first studies, we hope, will pave the way for a wave of research into this unwritten chapter of Estonian social and cultural history. An encouraging step was taken in the autumn of 2022, with a collection of LGBT+ people's experiences from the Estonia of the 19th and 20th centuries (Põldsam et al. 2022).

These discussions have been enriched by the presence of associated members of the Centre from universities abroad, such as Kai Stahl from the University of Turku and Redi Koobak from the University of Bergen. Debating and testing concepts from the international context allows us to sharpen our local analyses. This active movement between the global and the local has been inspiring across the history of Estonian gender studies.

HOW TO STUDY GENDER?

The challenges facing gender studies are not just those of materials and topics. As gender studies has not yet been institutionalised in Estonia, the value of frameworks like the one provided by the gender studies research group within the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies is immense. Because it brought together scholars from different academic institutions and different disciplines, it formed the basis for the kind of interdisciplinary research that is vital in gender studies. Our group's most active members came from literary research, cultural history, folklore research, art history, and philosophy. People from other fields visited our events, thereby increasing the interdisciplinary mix. The Centre of Excellence also increased the visibility of gender studies, as papers on gender were presented at each of the Centre's annual conferences, as well as many smaller events.

In gender studies, methods largely depend on how the specific discipline within which gender-oriented research is conducted. For example, in the case of literary history, it continues to be important to do archival research, as in Estonia much of the archive on women and gender remains unexplored. In the case of contemporary fiction, scholars employ text-oriented methods. In both, the addition of the gender perspective allows us to make visible the tacit gendered power relations. This also sheds light on not just fiction written by women or men, but also the historical circumstances within which women and men wrote. Women's limited access to higher education and to the publication infrastructure in the past made it harder for women to be accepted as creators in their own right. In parallel, women's work has tended to be valued less than that of men and this helps to explain women's marginal status within the canon and literary history (Annuk 2017, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). The last event of our research group, a conference at the Literary Museum in October 2022, was dedicated to precisely this attempt to find forgotten women authors in Estonian literary history and to analyse them in the light of both archival research and different theoretical approaches.

Our research group also attempted to expand the methodologies we employ in the study of gender. In the context of our research group's work, it is worth lingering on two directions: postcolonial and decolonial approaches on the one hand, and the combination of discourse and affect theories on the other. Neither of these directions is new in transnational gender studies, but they have been used in a very limited manner in Estonia before the seminars of our research group.

Important work has been done with postcolonial theories in Estonian humanities more broadly, especially in the interpretation of the complexities of Soviet heritage (called socialist colonialism by Epp Annus in her publications (e.g., Ross & Annus 2020)). Yet, when we think about Estonia's geopolitical position and the complex layers of colonial experience in Estonia, the postcolonial and decolonial lens should hold a more prominent position in Estonian humanities research. As can already be seen from the notes above, different waves of colonisation have left a deep mark on gender norms and gender relations. Such historical analyses are still to be written, especially when it comes to Estonia's history and its complex interrelations with Baltic-German elites and the German-language church establishment. Some work has been done by Liina Lukas (2006) and Kairit Kaur (2014) but there is much to be explored from the perspective of gender.

There are more examples of the use of postcolonial methods in the analysis of the gender norms of the Soviet period (also see Annus 2018, 2019). The enforced gender equality of the occupying Soviet regime, as indicated above, created complex forms of resistance and adaptation: compliance in the public sphere, and the simultaneous reinforcement of a patriarchal division of duties in the domestic sphere, were often justified as a form of resistance to imposed Soviet equality ideology. The postcolonial lens would also be productive in the analysis of Soviet and exile biopolitics and discourses of reproduction. Women's rights and autonomy have often become secondary to aspirations for national self-determination. There are also attempts to forge theoretical dialogues between postcolonial and post-socialist experiences (collection edited by Redi Koobak with her colleagues Madina Tlostanova and Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, which also contains one chapter on Estonia (Marling 2021a)).

More recently, Estonian scholars, above all Redi Koobak, have also attempted to bring the decolonial lens to the study of gender in Estonia. While in postcolonial approaches the focus tends to be on hybridity created in postcolonial conditions, decolonial work is more emphatically critical of the institutions and epistemic practices imposed by the colonising power, as Redi Koobak explained in her presentation at one of our research seminars. This is a potentially fertile area of research for semi-peripheral countries like Estonia where centuries of colonisation have assertively overwritten indigenous practices and forms of

knowledge. Another potentially productive direction of analysis is the investigation of the post-socialist countries within the epistemic practices of transnational feminism (Koobak & Marling 2014; Tlostanova et al. 2019). Second-world feminism, as many scholars have observed, is still often viewed in the West as lagging behind or catching up with the international norm, without attention to the fact that this norm tends to be written in English in US and UK academia, excluding many voices. This is particularly vital because Estonian gender studies, too, has tended to apply internationally developed theoretical models to local empirical data instead of critically investigating theories or engaging in theory-building.

The other productive area of research explored in our seminars is the potential of combining discourse and affect theories. Discourse analyses of various kinds have been present in Estonian gender research since the beginning of the 1990s, especially in the analysis of media texts and political discourse (Põldsaar 2005/2006; Marling 2010) to trace the complex processes of reception and domestication of international influences. This work has been crucial in showing how feminism and gender have not been blindly imported from abroad, but have been adapted to local circumstances, in particular in a dialogue with the discourses of Europe and the nation. Another valuable strand of discourse research in gender studies has produced a rich selection of literary analyses, in particular from the period of Estonia's nation building of the early 20th century (for example, Mirjam Hinrikus' work over the past decades).

However, the past twenty years have also seen the international publication of many critiques of discursive approaches, including from within feminist research. The main target of criticism is that discourse analysis prioritises language and power over the living body. This, needless to say, is an issue particularly central to feminist criticism that has, at last starting from the 1980s, been critical of philosophy's lack of attention to and devaluation of the body and emotions, domains habitually associated with women. Thus, affect theory has been taken up keenly in gender research. However, as many feminist critics (e.g. Hemmings 2005) also point out, the tendency towards flat ontologies within affect theory makes it hard to discuss power, a vital concept in feminist analyses. It is therefore important to incorporate elements from discursive approaches into feminist analyses of affect (cf. Wetherell 2013). This was a topic of one of our seminars and has already resulted in some productive analyses of gender and sexuality (e.g. Marling & Põldsam 2022) as well as fiction (Marling & Talviste 2022; Annuk 2021c) and correspondences (e.g. Annuk 2019b, 2021a).

Regardless of the specific methods, Estonian gender research has, over the past ten years, become more intersectional. Since the first systematic introduction of the term (Koobak 2008), it has become habitual not only look at gender

in isolation but also in combination with class, ethnicity, sexuality, age and other identity categories. This has come to characterise analyses commissioned by the state (e.g. in Marling et al. 2021), as well as academic research.

This does not mean that our seminars neglected more traditional methods. For example, the collaboration with autobiography studies enriched our methods. By focusing on the individual as the author of autobiographical texts and the subject of biography, we can look at the gendered aspects of culture through the perspective of the individual, rather than impersonal historical processes. Such micro-level analysis allows us to trace the role of the individual in culture and the links between gender identity and culture, in particular in the private sphere that inevitably shapes the public activities of both men and women. The strong tradition of life writing research at the Estonian Literary Museum has been one of the key strengths of our group.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Many of the investigations began before the project period and will continue after it. However, it is possible to say that after seven years of research we have managed to add nuance to Estonian gender studies analyses, in particular through the systematic incorporation of intersectional and postcolonial approaches. It is important to continue the archival work of finding forgotten women and gender minorities in Estonian history and fleshing out their lives to show the scope of their agency, which has been forgotten in the national narrative. This, however, needs to be combined with critical studies that identify and uncover tacit discourses and their intersections in the life stories and in the national narrative itself. In parallel, we need to move our attention increasingly from published texts to the private sphere as it played a central role in limiting women's access to the public sphere. These investigations need to use as wide a theoretical range as possible, adapting international theories to the local context.

This needs to happen in a wide array of disciplines. We are proud that in addition to the fields where gender research has been traditionally strong in Estonia (literature, art, life writing, folklore, ethnology), our research group was able to build dialogues with theatre research, music scholarship (both the historical tradition of Estonian folk song (Oras 2017) and contemporary pop music (Davidjants & Uusma 2019)). Our seminars were also attended by linguists and this collaboration will continue after the project ends.

The lens of gender also needs be applied not only to the historical heritage and written texts from the past but also to the analysis of contemporary Estonia and its social challenges. During the project period we managed to analyse

gender and urban culture (e.g. graffiti (Annuk & Voolaid 2020)). Our group also participated in the analysis of different gendered aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic in different media outlets (e.g. Marling & Käsper 2022). This research also brought quantitative corpus tools more assertively into our gender studies research. This is an area that is likely to be pursued by others, as the first quantitative analyses of the gendered patterns of the Estonian language were recently published (Kaukonen 2022).

Our research group both continued and expanded Estonian gender research. It is important to continue this work even after the project ends. We believe that the collaboration within the centre has built strong ties between individual scholars and forged new interdisciplinary networks. It is worth noting that many of the members of the group continue to work with PhD students who will carry on the research in different fields ranging from ethnology to linguistics.

Estonian gender studies might not be institutionalised, but it is heterogenous. The work we have done within the Centre of Excellence has helped to highlight the multi-layered presence of gender in many aspects of Estonian cultural history and present cultural reality. The lack of local scholarship has allowed conservative Estonian politicians and public intellectuals to argue that gender awareness and gendered knowledge are not relevant in Estonia. This blindness is increasingly impossible to accept, as new generations of scholars unearth materials from different centuries and analyse it in the light of contemporary theories.

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NOTE

[1] Estonia granted women the right to vote in its first constitution in 1920 without public opposition. The ban on gender discrimination was retained in the constitutions of 1933 and 1938. This ban, however, only covered the public sphere, although the 1938 constitution also extended to women's rights within marriage (Leppik 2017: 346, 350). However, although the constitution guaranteed equal rights, this equality did not manifest itself in reality, as family law kept married women under their husbands' guardianship for most of the Republic of Estonia, despite the efforts of women politicians of the time (Leppik 2017: 357).

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THE POPULAR BALLAD, RUMOURS AND MEMORIES AS A SPECIAL NARRATIVE FORMAT

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Abstract: In principle, the new folksongs or folk ballads of the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century telling about dramatic events could also be called versified media news, as their aim was to mediate topical shocking events, in particular accidents or murders, thus serving as rumours, news and entertainment all in one. The popular ballad '*Saatuse vangis*' ('Bound by Fate') tells a sensational story from southern Estonia. The song spread together with hearsay concerning the central event, the circumstances of the making of the song, and the characters involved. Over time, a specific type of story-telling developed, that mingled prose with parts of the song. The ballad together with the pertaining lore allows us to view the events descried from different aspects, creating a broader picture of the development and meaning of a popular text. The rumours, comments and personal memories accompanying the song helped both the contemporary and subsequent generations to understand and interpret the event. The stories spreading in the community by word of mouth addressed various circumstances "beyond the song", and the narrator's own emotions and opinions on the matter.

Keywords: commonplace books, folk ballad, narrative, remembrances, rumour, vernacular literature

In Estonia, many versified village chronicles or popular ballads of the late 18th and early 19th centuries were created by men who held a prominent position in the village community. We know this because their creations sometimes ended up in publications and newspapers (Tedre 2003: 242–243). Quite often a song was ordered from the village songsmith to mark a special occasion. Such a folk ballad or village chronicle may have been inspired by a specific event and its characters were real living people. The songs were quite lengthy and often spread with hearsay related to the central event and the characters involved,

sometimes also the circumstances of the making of the song, such as the song's origin and details of the author (Rüütel 1974: 232; Tampere 1970: 240). In time, this developed into a kind of narrative format, consisting both of prose and fragments of the song, as people often remembered only the climax or some more remarkable part of a longer song, the rest was told in prose form, often accompanied by personal comments and rumours that spread in the local community.[1]

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, local village songs and masterful male singers were known to exist in all parts of Estonia, in greater numbers on the poorer and more densely populated islands off the western coast and in the villages around Lake Peipsi in the east. Ingrid Rüütel has noted that at the time "Mulgimaa, wealthy but torn by social conflicts",[2] was also rich in village chronicles. One of the best known singers of the region was Mihkel Rätsep, also known as Laulu-Mihkel (Mihkel the Singer), who deserves a separate study because of his personality and because of the prototypes and inspirations of his songs (Rüütel 1974: 232–233).[3] Unfortunately, both the Mihkel phenomenon and his creative work have failed to attract the interest of folklorists to this day, because the study of newer folk songs (rhyming folk songs) has never been a priority in Estonian folkloristics compared to the study of runo songs. At the same time, the Estonian Folklore Archive has an outstandingly large collection of newer folk songs.

Proceeding from the historical context of the late 19th century and a ballad by Mihkel Rätsep titled '*Saatuse vangis*' ("Bound by Fate", see the Appendix for a rough translation) – which was in many ways exceptional because it was inspired by a specific sensational event and the main characters of the song were real people and the ballad was well known in the Estonian folk tradition – I will delve deeper into the context of the song in this article. I will also attempt to indicate the potential interpretations and information that a study of such an embedded genre of song and related narratives might give rise to, as well as analyse how this tradition functioned in late 19th and early 20th century society and how this special narrative format helped this event to remain in memory and tradition. Naturally, I was also interested in the event described in the song, which happened to a woman called Anu of Sambla (Sambla Anu).

To introduce this event, I have used as my source articles published in newspapers at the time as well as historical documents. In addition to written sources I have also used face-to-face interviews because I was as interested in the community's comments about the event and its placement in the historical context of its time, as about the song itself.

Here it is worth noting that I came to study this topic not as an ethnomusicologist but rather as a researcher of contemporary narratives that have a social message (rumours, legends and memories). The article proceeds from the reasoning

that texts of different genres are poetic forms of expression that represent a certain worldview and attitude towards social reality, and that texts are attributed their meaning in social circulation and context (Bakhtin & Medvedev 1991: 133–135).

THE POPULAR BALLAD AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR RUMOUR, NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT

According to a narrower definition of the genre, the song *'Saatuse vangis* ('Bound by Fate')[4] could be regarded as a folk ballad that tells of dramatic events in a versified form. The ballad, which merges prose, poetry and often also music, represents several phenomena in the European cultural space, for example – the Old French danced songs (*chanson balladée*), lyro-epic ballads or legends, news ballads spread at market fairs, distributed commonplace books, dramatic or lyrical romantic ballads, literary narrative, sentimental newly composed ballads. The most characteristic features of a ballad are assigning value to the personal, remarkable and rebellious, emphasis on a democratic sense of justice and its themes, including people in their existential border situations, family topics, etc. Here, anyone's personal story could capture the interest of the general public and any typical song might acquire personal significance (Merilai 2003: 797–798).

The social and legal situation of women was a popular subject in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century folk and literary ballads based on traditional material. Many Estonian poets have used these sources since the 19th century (Salu 1978: 7–59).

Somewhat more innovative are the contemporary views according to which ballads, like other old genres, are considered to have historically functioned in a similar way to today's genres. Specifically, earlier in the 19th century and before, common people could integrate a certain sensational event through various communication filters known to them: rumour, joke, belief, folk song and folk ballad.[5] In the pre-media era, folk ballads as well as rumours were considered part of popular politics (Shagan 2001: 30).

For example, the folk ballads of the late 19th and early 20th centuries describing accidents, murders or other dramatic events could be tentatively regarded as versified media news because their aim was to mediate topical shocking events, particularly accidents or murders, thus serving as rumours, news and entertainment all in one (Kalmre 2005: 23).

It is important to note that the spread of such narrated folk songs or folk ballads was associated with both printed publications and popular written culture.

Having spread as cheap popular prints in the European and Scandinavian cultural space since the 14th or 15th century, when there were no newspapers, the circulation rate of books was low and people were largely illiterate, ballads mediated 'newsworthy' daily events. Depending on the style and place of performance, such songs have been called street or news ballads, and sometimes 'bench songs' (*pingilaulud*). This means that news about a shocking event, accident or murder was versified by a local songsmith, the ballad was printed and people (mainly women) performed it on the street or in the marketplace, at the same time selling the printed ballad sheets.[6] The print usually consisted of two sheets folded into four pages, with little attention paid to the literary value of the text. News ballads directed the attention of large crowds to dramatic and exciting songs, which were printed, read and sung using a familiar melody (Salu 1978: 38–44; see also Würbach 1990).

This phenomenon is connected with oral culture and the evolution of folk literature and reading habits. While many ballads circulated in print, there is no doubt that they were also circulating orally. Until modern times, reading would have generally meant reading out loud and in terms of the ballad, singing turned the audience into a "community of readers" or a "textual community" (Atkinson 2013: 126; and others). These notorious street prints of ballads have been viewed as the forerunners of newspapers because they helped modern journalism to develop. This is exactly how the eighteenth-century bench song type performance (where an exciting song was sung on a stage with the performer pointing at certain images on a board) was the predecessor of both cinematography and popular music concerts (Merilai 2003: 798).

The street, news and bench songs described here were connected with both business and entertainment, mainly through urban culture, markets and fairs which brought together large crowds, but also through the development of general literacy and reading habits and the availability of printing. There were no big cities in 18th–19th century Estonia, and urban culture also developed somewhat later. In Estonia this type of early culture of printed street or news ballads quite likely did not emerge, or at least if it did it has not been documented. There are only a few known poets from the end of 19th century, who drew their examples from village singers, whose works published in print and who would have been set to music and sung by the people (Vinkel 1966: 270–271). On the other hand, in Finland, this use of folk prints (*arkiveisut*) published in the border areas of oral and written song culture took place much more intensively in the 19th century, and their influence on folk lore was probably greater (cf. Hakapää 2013). The effects worked both ways: scholars never doubted that the ballads partook of a popular oral tradition, their discourse is shot through with the rhetoric of oral performance and adaptation (Cowan 2018: 81).

Here, local master singers and the village songs and folk ballads that they created served the same function – to memorise, interpret and spread information about an event. This period coincided with the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, which is considered the period of convergence of local folklore and literature, with the increase in printing activities, the increasing popularity of newspapers and magazines and the publishing of single verses from village poets in newspapers and as separate booklets. The spread of similar rhymed folk songs, as well as poetry written by poets and writers, were greatly facilitated by the widely popular establishment of personal written archives by Estonians in the final decades of the 19th century, its most characteristic representatives being the notebooks where people wrote down local poetry and song repertoires (see Kalmre 2015; Tedre 2003: 243).

ABOUT MIHKEL, THE SINGER FROM MULGIMAA, AND HIS FOLK BALLAD 'BOUND BY FATE'

The Mulgimaa in the first decades of the 20th century is characterised as a region of early capitalist society, i.e. a region of noticeable social stratification, with many large properties and farmsteads possessing fertile land, excellent cultivation technology, and the majority of people involved in agriculture. Since the large farms required many workers, the number of hired labourers was larger here than anywhere else in Estonia. At the same time the rate of marriage was low and a significant number of young people left the region for other counties. The region was also characterised by a larger share of people with secondary and higher education (Pullerits 1936: 26–29). These changes took place in the second half of the 19th century, during the era of the national awakening, when fertile Mulgimaa stood out as a wealthy and self-aware region in Estonia.

From the end of the 18th century growing flax became one of the most important sources of income for the people of this region. The shortage of cotton caused by the American War of Independence (1861–1865) had raised the price of flax on the world market and the profit made from selling flax accelerated the buying out of farmsteads and contributed to the general growth in wealth in Viljandi County. Here, changes took place gradually and the transition from corvée labour to levy happened sooner than elsewhere in Estonia. During the first period of independence in Estonia (1918–1940), there was even a discussion about whether the people of Mulgimaa could be considered minor nobility, because they lived in large modern country houses, with soft furnishings and often a piano (Riisalo 1968; Murakin 1936: 36–38).

The song creation of Mihkel Rätsep (1858–1900) gained popularity at the end of the period of the national awakening. "A poet who was 'one of us' and sang about the common people of the Viljandi County, about romantic love stories, everyday work and tragic or dramatic events in his community's life, was well suited to the period." (Valtšuk 2008: 19). In fact, little is known about Mihkel Rätsep's life, and even the accounts that can be found in printed sources, travel guides, and overviews of local history and literature (of varying degrees of credibility), tend to be similar to personal stories. The sources will be summarised in the following.

It is speculated that Mihkel Rätsep did not come from Mulgimaa, but was born to a cotter's family at Veltsa, Mihkli parish in western Estonia.[7] In the 1890s, in search for employment, he moved to Viljandi County, settling temporarily in Laatre, Vana-Kariste, Uue-Kariste, Abja, Kõpu, Õisu and Rimmu, also living in the vicinity of Mõisaküla, etc. During the winter he worked as a flax thresher and in summer as a ditch digger. In Mulgimaa, such migrant workers had the special name 'bag men' (*kotlased*, *kotimehed*) (Riisalo 1968:11).

Reportedly, he could speak Russian and German and play a psaltery and the bellows. In his poem '*Kimbatus*' ('Quandary', 1902) he also claimed he could play the violin. The farmhouses where he stayed often became places that drew people together to hear Mihkel's singing and playing skills. In addition, he sang and played instruments in taverns. Before settling in Halliste parish he had already created songs about great noble love and performed them to the accompaniment of his instrument. In Halliste, his songs were about local events. For example, he sang about Sepa tavern, which ruined poor people's lives, about his bellows, which had been sold at auction, the stinginess of large farm owners and their attitudes towards the poor, about how he was left without pay, etc. Mihkel Rätsep died unexpectedly at a young age at Tõõtsimõisa farm, Peraküla, Abja parish. The location of the singer's grave in Halliste cemetery is unknown (Priidel 1966: 123–124; Riisalo 1968: 7).

The church records of Mihkli and Halliste congregations (available at www.saaga.ee) reveal more reliable information about Mihkel Rätsep's life and background. Mihkel Retsep was born on 6 January 1858 to the family of overseer Writs Retsep and Liso Ostmann in Mihkli parish. The family's connections with the gentry and its more privileged status is indicated by the fact that all three of Mihkel's godparents were German, and by the fact that he received confirmation in 1874 at Jaani Church in Tallinn. In 1894, Mihkel married Jula Saarahof in Halliste; he died on 5 August 1900 at the age of 42. The Russian-language entry on the cause of his death reads "internal injuries". Thus, Mihkel was by no means an ordinary landless labourer. He had seen the world, and could probably speak several languages as well as being able to play several musical instruments.

Mihkel's song creation also captured the interest of the local educated people. For example, the local schoolteacher Mats Laarman (1872–1964) collected his songs and biographical information. Another former schoolteacher, Mihkel Ilus, mediated the publishing of the singer's songs in Viljandi (Riisalo 1968: 11). The first songbook of Mihkel's songs was published in 1895 (Laulu Mihkle vana kannel 1895), the second book and its reprint were issued posthumously in 1902 (*Laulu Mihkli Uus ja vana kannel* 1902) and 1903 (*Laulu Mihkli Uus ja vana kannel* 1903), respectively. The print runs of the songbooks were reportedly quite large: 1,000 copies in 1895; 2,000 in 1902, and 3,000 in 1903. Both collections contain mainly romantic poems ('To My Loved One', 'True Love', 'The Lost Maiden', etc.).

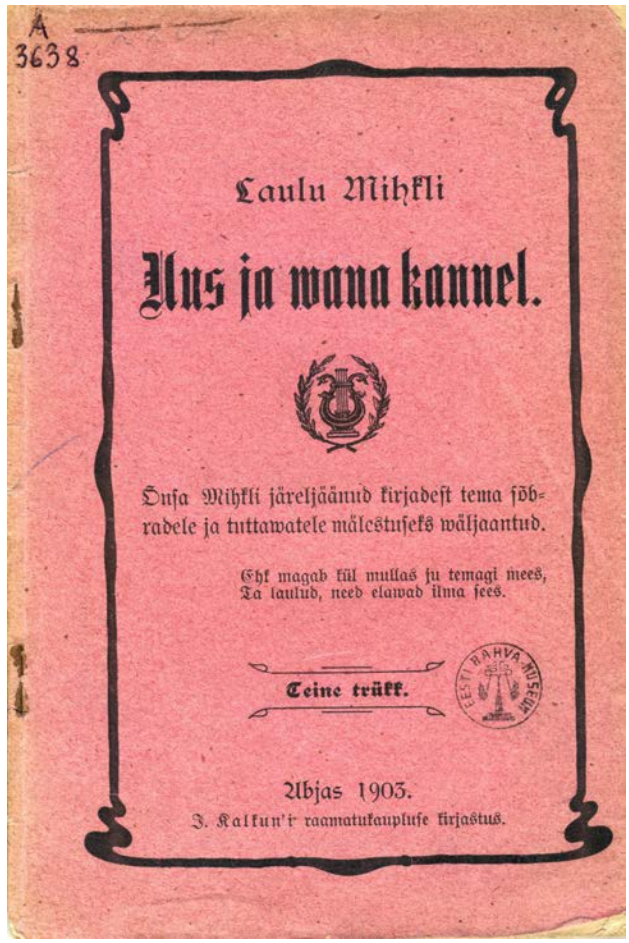

Figure 1. Laulu Mihkli Uus ja vana kannel *(The New and Old Psaltery). Published in Abja, Mulgimaa in 1903.*

Mihkel probably created 'Bound by Fate' at some point in the late 1890s[8], as the ballad was first printed in the posthumously published 1902 booklet *Uus ja vana kannel* (The New and Old Psaltery), and its reprint in 1903. In the following decades the ballad became known not only in the Mulgimaa region, but also spread widely over the entire country; it was copied in manuscript songbooks from hearing the performance or from printed songbooks. The catalogue of newer folk songs in the Estonian Folklore Archives reveals that the song was known all over Estonia, and was also collected on the islands. The greatest number of song variants was collected in Viljandi and Pärnu Counties. The titles of the variants are different as well: 'Bound by Fate', 'Anu of Sambla', 'Juula of Sambla', 'The Fate of Kaie of Sambla', etc. The material stored in the folklore archives indicates that the rumours and narratives explaining the events which circulated alongside the song were quite important, and regardless of the fact that the lyrics of the ballad do not refer to any specific person, even 70 years later comments about the song connect it with an existing person (Anu) and place (Sambla farm). There is generally no doubt about the truthfulness of the event.

During fieldwork carried out in 1970 near Tartu, folklorist Ingrid Rüütel recorded the song and a highly typical comment about the song and the event that inspired it.

This interview demonstrates how the story that spread as hearsay alongside the ballad was strongly associated with the event, with the song's creation, and with the characters of the song.

> I. Rüütel: *I don't know, was it a true story or what?*
> J. Vään: *Yes, a true story. This really happened in Viljandi County.*
> I. Rüütel: *Where did you hear it?*
> J. Vään: *I got it from another boy. He had written it down.*
> I. Rüütel: *You mean that he had handwritten it down himself?*
> J. Vään: *Yes.*
> I. Rüütel: *And where were you living at that time, in Kambja, was it?*
> J. Vään: *I was living in Kambja, yes.*
> I. Rüütel: *And so he also told you that this was a true story.*
> J. Vään: *He had written it on a sheet of paper, and I took the sheet and learned it by heart.*
> I. Rüütel: *But did he also tell you that this really happened?*
> J. Vään: *He did. An elderly person told me that. I used to be a farmhand at Sirvaku Lintsu's place in Kambja. And people used to sing this song there, and some older person had come there from Viljandi. I don't know*

which Mari he was talking about, the song of which Mari it was, that this was a true story.
I. Rüütel: *But you don't know who created the song?*
J. Vään: *A farmhand had made it, composed it. The woman's farmhand. She had a farmhand, and when the story was over, the farmhand had created the song.*
I. Rüütel: *Do you know the name of this farmhand?*
J. Vään: *I don't. I don't know.*[9]

The ballad 'Bound by Fate' was not only a poetic interpretation of a dramatic incident that happened to a young woman, but also a personal story typical to folk ballads, with its alternation of the protagonist's lyrical and rhetoric monologues, and a poetic narrative that is built upon smaller scenes (see also Merilai 2003: 799).

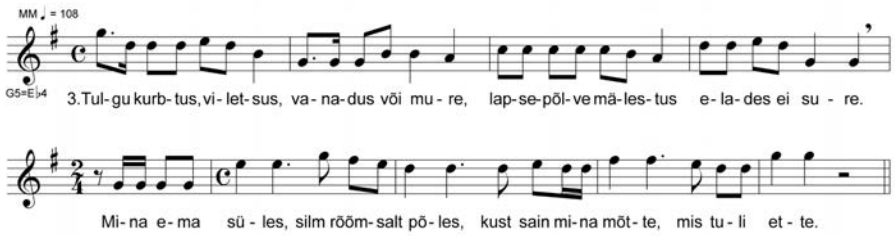

Figure 2.[10] *The ballad. RKM, Mgn. II 1740, singer Juhan Vään, born 1881, recording from 1970 by Ingrid Rüütel, Estonian Folklore Archives. Scores written by Janika Oras.*

Choosing this approach enabled the song's author to draw, by means of simple devices, a picture of a girl's carefree childhood with her loving parents. But carefree maidenhood is interrupted by harsh and unjust obligation, which is imposed on the protagonist by her parents and leaves no room for sentimentality or dreaming. These loving parents forced her, still pure and innocent, to marry a rich old man, of course without love. Then follows a description of life with the elderly husband, which first brought only suffering to the young wife. Still, as the ballad continues, it suggests that it is possible to become accustomed to this life and find peace in it. The period of peace lasted a short while and ended when the old man died and left his young wife a considerable fortune. The large inheritance would be the cause of further problems. Despite

this, everything seems to be correct and the will comes into effect. The wife acquires her husband's house and money as a reward for her wasted youth. But there was more suffering in store for the young woman. First, her husband's heirs questioned his will:

Vastaliste kaval püüd,
viimati läks nurja.
Testament ei kandnud süüd.
Ei ma kartnud kurja…
Sain mehe koha
ja tema raha.
The adversaries' cunning plan
was all in vain,
the will was without fault.
The evil ones would not scare me…
I got my husband's house
and his money.

Then the heirs accuse her of murder. A court trial follows and the husband's body is exhumed for criminal investigation. The ballad's protagonist expresses her emotional suffering because of these serious allegations. However, everything seems to go well and the young woman is found not guilty. But the dramatic story does not end here. The first forensic test proved unreliable and the grave is reopened for another test. The ballad's ending is rather confusing, as it appears that the grave was opened one more time, the third time ("*Ja kolmat korda, said kaevjad murda*"). In addition, the song does not clearly say whether the wrong person was exhumed the second or third time. In any case, this dead person had a beard ("*habe suus*"), which could not have grown in the grave as the deceased husband did not have one.

THE STORY OF ANU OF SAMBLA IN HISTORICAL AND NEWS SOURCES

'Bound by Fate' was a poetic folk interpretation by Mihkel Rätsep of a sensational event that took place in Mulgimaa. In fact, at the end of the 19th century, this scandalous story also captured the attention of newspapers, which allows us to date the course of the events in greater detail. First, on 29 May 1897, the newspaper *Sakala*[11] mediates news from Pärnu County about a dead

man who had been buried three and a half years before and was disinterred in Halliste graveyard on 20 May the same year on suspicion of poisoning. The same news is discussed in greater detail in the daily paper *Postimees* on 9 June 1897. Towards the end of the year, on 11 December, *Eesti Postimees* mediates news from Halliste Pärnu County: "The grave of a man buried four years ago, was reopened for the second time. Reportedly, a wrong grave was pointed out and so the grave will be reopened for a third time. The reason for that was suspicion of poisoning."

Less than a month later (on 1 January 1898), the same newspaper published a longer overview, which deserves to be reproduced here in full as it reflects the typical points of emphasis of the period:

> *There's more to the case of poisoning described above than an accusation. There was a rich owner of a manor farm, but he was older, over 50 years of age. He married a 15-year-old girl who was forced into the marriage by her parents. The defendant had made a will, stating that upon his death, be it sooner or later, all his movable and immovable assets would be left solely to his young wife, and he had had the will notarised. A year later the man got cancer and even though he visited all the doctors and tried all the treatments, he still died from the disease. Now the dead man's brother sued his sister-in-law, first claiming that his will was made after his death, second, that his brother had been insane when he made the will, and third, he had other complaints, so that the case was tried three times, but the widowed wife still won. Seeing that his complaints about the will gave no results, the protester heard years later that his brother could have been poisoned. Now he had to try this way to get his brother's fortune back from the widow. Upon his complaint, the dead body was removed from the grave, but no sign of poisoning could be found. Now there was the problem with the wrong grave being pointed out, but the complainant had been present during disinterment and had not shown the right grave to his knowledge. Now the same grave had been opened once more, but what was searched for is not yet known.*
>
> *Since the dead man had cancer, which had destroyed his body, he could not have lived anyway. And since his wife had already been named as his sole heir, – why would she have to poison the sick man. Still, the court has an obligation to hear out the complaint, even if it is ungrounded.*

However, the grave was reopened for a third time, as briefly also mentioned in the ballad ("*Ja kolmat korda said kaev'jad murda, kirst oli näha, mis jälle teha*", 'And the diggers went to work for the third time, the coffin was there,

what's there to do'), because *Sakala* writes on 2 April 1898: "On the 24th day of March, a grave was opened in Halliste's Lutheran graveyard upon the request of Volmar [Valmiera] County court investigator, and it was already the third opening of the grave. The investigation was brought about on suspicion of poisoning, expressed by someone because of the inheritance left by the testator. Reportedly, the investigation did not bring any clarification."

These were the media reports of the events at the time. The news confirms what was said in the song, that the reason for exhumation was indeed suspicion of poisoning and also that the first exhumation took place as late as three and a half to four years after Anu's husband's death. The news also confirms that in the second exhumation, the wrong grave was opened, although the right man was exhumed later, and about five years after the burial the third exhumation took place. The last newspaper report indicates that for some reason the third exhumation was not carried out on the demand of the local court, but rather by Valmiera's (i.e. Latvian) court. This fact suggests that the complaint may have passed through several levels of the Livonian court system ("*nõnda et asi kolm korda palatis ära käinud*") and eventually became the responsibility of the Valmiera county court investigator. According to the song, the widow herself was present at the first exhumation and pointed out the right grave. The second time, the accusing relative pointed out the wrong grave and Anu had nothing to do with it, because, as the song suggests, she was not even present in the graveyard.

Thus, media articles basically confirm the main facts that the ballad has brought to us in a more poetic form. Delving into the contents of the news and the song even suggests that both mediate the public opinions of the period, demonstrating the emergence of certain discourses in the Mulgimaa region at the turn of the century.[12] These are the themes of financial disparity and social stratification, but also the fate of women. A lengthier review of the event, published on 1 January 1897 in *Eesti Postimees*, gives justice to the young widow and condemns the avarice and cunning of the deceased man's brother in trying to get his hands on the inheritance. The news piece emphasises the widow's young age (only 15), contrasting it to her husband's old age and affluence, and how the parents forced her into the marriage.

The media articles and the ballad 'Bound by Fate' about this event, which happened a century ago, describe true events that occurred in Mulgimaa and the real people involved with them. But who were these people? A more thorough investigation of the archive material would, no doubt, disclose more detailed information about Anu and her family, but here I limit my study to the more general information provided by church registers (available at saaga.ee) and genealogical studies (geni.com).[13]

Figure 3. *Burial place of Anu and her family in Halliste graveyard. Photograph ERA DF 32847, by Vahur Kalmre 2016.*

The Halliste church registers reveal that on St. John's Day, 24th of June, 1890, Hen Kase of Samla farm, the son of Jaak and Tina, was married to Anno[14] Raba of Allika farm, the daughter of Hans and Reet Raba. According to the church entry, Henn was 50 years old and Anu was 17. Henn was born on 18 March 1840 and Anu on 28 October 1872. Thus, while Anu was quite young, she was not 15, as was argued in the newspaper article, and Henn was middle-aged, but the age difference of more than thirty years was still rather remarkable. Anu and Henn lived together for barely three years (not a year, as the news articles suggested), because Henn Kase died on 20 October 1893, indeed from cancer as mentioned as the cause of death in the church registers. Anu and Henn did not have children, but Henn Kase had four brothers and three sisters.

Anu married her second husband Hans Mikk on 25 March 1899, nearly a year after the third and final exhumation of Henn Kask in Halliste graveyard. Anu and Hans lived a long life together. Anu died on 2 November 1949 at the age of 76 at Veske farm in Abja parish from myocarditis, according to the church register. The birth date of Anu's second husband, Hans Mikk, was 1864 and

the date of his death 1937. Anu and Hans were buried in Halliste graveyard in the same plot, number 51, section 30, as Anna Matson (1905–1982), Ants Mikk (1908–?) and Juhan Raba (1883–1970). The inscription on the large tombstone – *Perek. MIKK SAMLA* ('MIKK SAMLA Family') – emphasises the relationship of the deceased family members with the former large farmstead in Mulgimaa.[15]

In sum, in light of the historical sources, Mihkel Rätsep probably created his 'Bound by Fate' after Henn Kase's third exhumation in 1898, because the song also mentions the third opening of the grave. Mihkel had composed the song either before Anu's second marriage or during her first year of marriage. So, in fact, Mihkel was able to perform this ballad, based on a sensational event, only in the final two or three years of his life.

ANU'S SONG AND THE STORY IN THE RIVERBED OF MEMORIES

There is no doubt that the lyrical interpretation of this spectacular event – the read, sung and heard narrative – helped it to spread and gain popularity among other songs of the time, and in the end, laid the foundation for the perpetuation of the event in memory. We would know nothing about this sensational late-19th-century event if Mihkel Rätsep had not created his ballad 'Bound by Fate'. At the same time, it is safe to assume that even during the most active spread of the ballad few people were familiar with the most striking episodes of the song. One of the most memorable parts of the song was Mihkel's verse: "*surnul näha habe suus, haudas habe tulnud*" ('the dead man had a beard, a beard grown in the grave'). Even if a person did not know any other word of the song and the story was retold in prose, this verse was usually known by heart.

The Folklore Archives holds comments and memories recorded in two different periods. As the above interview conducted by Ingrid Rüütel shows, the material collected earlier includes informants' short responses acquired during fieldwork about the song, the circumstances of making it, its characters and the events that happened.[16] Regardless of the laconic nature of the comments, one can sense here several themes that emerged in the song and the newspaper texts, such as financial disparity, social stratification and the fate of the woman. One of the earliest comments on the song 'Anu of Sambla' that I could find was documented by Mari Sarv in 1934. This gives us some idea about the creation, spread and popularity of the song, and about Anu and Mihkel Rätsep individually.

> *So, 35 years ago the song was very new. Everybody used to sing it, be they children or adults, so that people of today more or less know this song over here, and there aren't many who don't know at least some verses of the song, but I couldn't get the sequence from anyone. Luckily I happened to come across the handwritten songbook of a school child who had written down the song in 1927. The origins of the song can be traced back to Kariste, where a young and beautiful motherless farmer's daughter had been forced to marry a rich old farmer. I'm not sure whether she used to be at Sammle farm before or if she was married there, but when after being widowed she drove her fancy horse and carriage to Abja Paluoja, then people always looked at her, saying there goes Anu of Sammle, so she must have been at Sammle farm later. Around that time there used to be this deadbeat fella called Laulu-Mihkel in the area, and he arranged this woman's life story into a song, for which the woman had even paid. This is what they said about it back then.*[17]

The informant's characterisation – "a young and beautiful motherless farmer's daughter had been forced to marry a rich old farmer" – not only expresses his attitude towards a clearly unequal marriage, as revealed in the song, but also gives it a special emphasis by using a familiar formula from folk tales. According to this comment, Anu had come to wealth and an honourable position through marriage and had ordered the biographical song from Mihkel Rätsep. Most commonly, however, the comments conveyed the content of this unusual event, which was popularised by the song and reflected on the event from a personal perspective. The content of many comments can be found in the Estonian Folklore Archives. The reason for the rumours that spread following the events was probably the criminal aspect, i.e. speculation on the poisoning, and on the exhumation of the body. Informants remain ambivalent on the question of Anu's guilt. Generally they take Anu's side, but like the ending of the ballad, which remained ambiguous, many informants also expressed their doubts about what happened and how it ended. In general the comments characterised Anu as a meddlesome woman who despite initial hardships and an unequal marriage shaped her own life and successfully managed her property. Ordering the song to be written was also considered a clever move. Yet, the question whether the ordering of the song might have been a way to remove the burden of guilt from her own shoulders was left in abeyance. What if Anu really murdered her husband? The vague verses at the end of the song neither confirmed nor refuted it. All these subjects and points of emphasis are present in the following comments, collected by Ottilie Kõiva in 1961 in Halliste.

Anu [of Samla] *was a farmer's daughter. She was married off to a rich old man, who went by the name Veermann. Old Veermann died quite suddenly. Then he was taken from his grave. He had been poisoned, of course. The police demanded that he be exhumed, but they intentionally opened the wrong grave – the body had grown a beard in the grave. … she* [Anu] *was also in the graveyard when the body was taken out.*[18]

[About Anu of Samla] *She was a good person! Anu's husband had been sick for quite some time, fighting illness, and didn't die all of a sudden as he would have if he had been poisoned.*[19]

The woman was 18 and the husband over 70 years old. Her parents forced her into the marriage. I think she poisoned him. Got married young. A year later the husband's brother had the grave opened. The woman [Anu of Samla] *commissioned this song.*[20]

Anu of Sambla was a kind woman, understanding and industrious. She didn't live long with her first husband. Was married at the age of 16, while the man was over 60. Anu came from Allika farm. This was also a large farm, not much smaller than Sambla farm. Her husband died and people said that he had been poisoned. There was all this commotion around it. A dead body was exhumed from Halliste graveyard. It happened to be some other dead person. It could have been that Anu had poisoned him, but there was no way to find out – there was money involved.

Laulu-Mihkel was a traveller. Came from someplace else. Didn't he come from Saaremaa? The boy stayed at Anu's farm, I think, for two years. And made this song right here. This is what really happened. Anu paid him 25 roubles for the song.

Anu's second husband was Mikk. He was a builder and a stonemason. He worked here as a builder, they became friends and got married. The old man was already dead when the two met. There were three houses for farmhands at Sambla, and the girls lived upstairs in the main house. There was a brick kiln in the forest and many workers. In Pärnu, Anu owned two houses, and stocks of ships and a linen factory. On the other side of Lake Peipsi there were two forest manors – Loodna and Sitinga. [21]

The earlier comments above are somewhat different than the longer interviews from the years 2006–2008[22] about Anu of Sambla and her fate. In connection with her research Sirle Valtšuk, a student at the University of Tartu's Viljandi Culture Academy, interviewed five people from her home village of Sarja, and

in Tõõtsimõisa.[23] (Anu lived in the Sarja village and the dramatic event also took place here, whereas Tõõtsimõisa was the last place where Mihkel Rätsep lived.) These interviews may be regarded as memoirs or biographical narratives in which people talk about their past from the perspective of their life history and their community's history (see Jaago 2001: 231–233; Ukkonen 2000: 140; etc.). Three of the informants interviewed in the 2006–2008 period were born in the 1930s and two in the 1950s. In addition to the ballad and the related events, the interviews focused on the war and post-war periods, with Anu's fate described in this context. One comment emphasises that she was forced into marriage to pay off a larger debt, and that Anu had promised Mihkel dozens of gold roubles for writing the song but had cleverly wiggled out of paying the whole sum. The stories of older informants characterise Anu as a wealthy privileged woman ("she was no labourer, she gathered wealth") and emphasise an incident in which she courageously saved a man from her home village from imprisonment by the Nazis during World War II: "She [Anu of Sambla] was such a beautiful person in these olden times." It is believed that this incident, or some other fact, saved the elderly lady from Sambla farm from being deported to Siberia. The interviews, conducted by Sirle Valtšuk, reveal that the community's memory and narrative repertoire includes a story about the burning down of the main building of Sambla farm in 1941, according to one version, by a Russian destruction battalion.

The women informants were born in 1953 and 1956, and had had no direct contact with Anu and her time. They had heard about what happened to her from their grandparents, who spoke about the large Sambla farm as an important place in their and the community's life during the period of the Soviet regime because Sambla had become the centre of a department of the local state farm. For the children and young people, the old farm and its ruins were an exciting playground where they used to play and dance and have midsummer bonfires in the oak grove and the barn. People remembered that there were always stories about hidden treasure there and both informants recalled digging in the ruins as children. The fact that the case was never solved and there was no clear and definite answer ensured that the rumours about hidden treasure and a hidden body continued to spread.

> *Anu practically lived there at Järvekuru.*[24] *The threshing room was turned into a bed chamber and all. But the ledge in the threshing barn was high and there was empty space between the two ceilings. People were saying that the dead body was buried there, or in Järvekuru farm flower garden. She used to grow so many flowers there, and kept her dead husband there, this is what people were thinking. This is what people were saying. The treasure was most sought after.* (Valtšuk 2008)

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the last century, the ballad 'Bound by Fate' was a popular song which communicated and described a sensational event that happened in Mulgimaa, southern Estonia. Information about the origins, prototypes and contexts of such folk ballads has generally been forgotten and 'Bound by Fate' is thus one of the few songs in the then Mulgimaa region and in Estonia in general that gained popularity, leading to the context and content of this song being explored in this study. While we know very little about the person and creative life of Mihkel Rätsep, it is safe to say that he and his creative work played a culturally pioneering role in mediating written and oral culture, and 'Bound by Fate' stands out among the creative work of the songmasters of the period, and also among Mihkel Rätsep's own sentimental songs, because it depicts the fate and inner world of a contemporary woman and discusses a serious and topical event.

This distant tale of the fate of a woman has been brought to us by special narratives composed of a mixture of folk ballad, prose and song fragments, rumours and newspaper articles – in other words, by both oral and written traditions. The folk ballad and the narrative lore around it enables us to view the events from different angles, constructing thus a broader picture of the development and meaning of a popular text. After all, the influences and fragments of the folk ballad which interprets these events become reflected in folk culture and are topical in regional tourism even today.

The stories helped the knowledge of the song, and the event and characters it describes, to be perpetuated in the tradition. It is likely that the availability of written sources, manuscript songbooks and prints from which to check the full text of the ballad also played an important role in the process. In addition, it is reasonable to conclude that the fact that Mihkel's songbooks were printed and widely read (a songbook could very well have been owned by every family in the Mulgimaa region at the beginning of the last century) possibly influenced and established the tradition about Anu of Sambla and the song's creator Mihkel Rätsep (see Valtšuk 2008: 9).

The rumours, comments and personal memories accompanying the song helped both the contemporary and subsequent generations to understand and interpret the event. The stories that spread in the community by word of mouth addressed various circumstances that remained 'outside of the song', as well as the narrator's own emotions and opinions on the matter, rumours about Anu's subsequent fate, and about Mihkel as the author of the song. Thus, the song and the related stories and comments have a clear social dimension. The public opinion of a Mulgimaa village community, expressed by means of a song, the

informants' brief comments, the news pieces, and rumours, clearly condemned marrying for money, but also criticised the significant age gap and the lack of opportunities for women to shape their own destiny. Even in the rather wealthy Viljandi County in the late 19th and early 20th centuries opportunities for women compared to men were far from equal, making women's participation in the economy and business quite uncommon. However, notwithstanding this it was still possible, and Anu was able to become successful in these spheres.

In the recollections recorded between 2006 and 2008, in which the events of the past are assessed from today's viewpoint, the story of Anu's fate was viewed in a wider context and associated with dramatic events in Estonian history, whereas the stories mainly emphasised Anu's positive character traits. In the light of depicting a woman's sad and harsh fate, the folk ballad 'Bound by Fate' in a way bears a similarity to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary and folk ballad lore about the tragic fates of women who are permitted to love according to their social positions rather than according to their free will. At the same time, the recollections reveal that the event with its exceptional beginning has a rather realistic ending, characteristic of the modern world, or, to be more precise, it could have had more than one possible ending. The woman's story with an unfortunate beginning, as described in the song, could and should end on a much happier note in the informants' narratives, with a happy family, a wealthy life and a fancy farmhouse, had the families not been scattered and the homes destroyed by the war. Thus, the story and the song about Anu's fate also tell about the fate of many Estonians.

NOTES

[1] On the relationship between song and prose in narratives, see also Mägi & Toulouze 2003: 70, 81.

[2] Historically, Mulgimaa encompassed the wealthiest parishes of Helme, Halliste and Karksi in central Estonia, covering southern Viljandi County and southeastern Pärnu County. Newer studies also include areas in Paistu and Tarvastu parishes (see Entsyklopeedia.ee/artikkel/mulgimaa1).

[3] Rüütel limits her comments about him to this remark, but has given a more extensive overview of village songs and master singers of Saaremaa Island, off the western coast of Estonia (Rüütel 1974).

[4] Hereafter I will refer to the song by its translated title.

[5] Cf. in contemporary media practices, a similar phenomenon has been called *newslore*, suggesting that the newslore that has emerged around a particular event and has been discussed in the media and social media may take multiple forms: rumours, jokes, urban legends, songs and parodies of songs, commercial advertisements, digitally edited images, cartoons, etc. (Frank 2011: 7).

[6] In the Anglophone cultural space such prints have been referred to as *broadside (printing)*. Historically it was a large sheet of paper or a poster, printed on one side that could also be hung on a wall. In Early Modern Europe, the popular literature made available in print in this manner was also represented by *chapbooks*. Chapbooks could consist of one or several sheets folded (into a booklet) (see also Atkinson 2013).

[7] See 'Forgotten poets' at http://www.nlib.ee/eesti-looduse-fond/index.php?id=17953/.

[8] The estimated time of writing 'Bound by Fate', based on available data, will be given below in the article.

[9] Juhan Vään, born 1881, recording from 1970 by Ingrid Rüütel, RKM, Mgn II 1740 c, Estonian Folklore Archives, Tartu.

[10] The ballad follows a simple rhyme, using simple rhyming words and paired and alternate rhymes: *näha-teha*, *uus-suus*, *harvad-karvad*, *kaua-haua*, *lahti-vahti*, etc. A closer look at Mihkel's other songs reveals similarities in the use of words and rhyme pairs. The ballad combines two melodies in major scale. It is not clear whether the melodies were combined or composed by Mihkel Rätsep, who adapted the lyrics to an already combined/composed melody, as was a common practice in newer folk songs (including village songs). Regardless of this, the melody of the ballad of Anu of Sambla was a popular one in the early 20th century, used among others to sing the Estonian and Russian macaronic folk song '*Vihma sajab kak s vedra, skoro budet Narva…*' ('It's raining buckets, we'll soon be in Narva…').

[11] Hereinafter all information published in the press is from the bibliographical catalogue of the Archival Library of the Estonian Literary Museum, databases references DEA and DIGAR.

[12] On the social context of media texts and their role as promoter of particular discourses as well as how they serve to have effect, see Lõhmus 2006.

[13] The entry about Anu of Sambla in geni.com was added by Priit Last, who claims that the information derives mainly from saaga.ee.

[14] Hereafter the modern Estonian name forms Henn and Anu will be used.

[15] Information for locating the grave was acquired from the 2006–2007 Halliste congregation graveyard inventory list; see Rajari 2007. Information about the tombstone inscription is provided by the author, who visited Halliste graveyard on 12 September 2016; see photos of this visit in the photo collection of the Estonian Folklore Archives, ERA DF 32843-32847.

[16] All the following comments (except no. 16) about the song and its context were collected during fieldwork carried out by the Estonian Folklore Archive in Halliste parish in 1961.

[17] Anton Sarv, 49, from Karksi parish, recording by Mari Sarv in 1934, ERA II 74, 321, Estonian Folklore Archives, Tartu.

[18] Nelli Vomm, 63, from Halliste, recording by Ottilie Kõiva in 1961, RKM II 103, 379/80 (12), Estonian Folklore Archives, Tartu.

[19] Mari Tamme, 79, from Halliste, recording by Ottilie Kõiva in 1961, RKM II 103, 378 (11), Estonian Folklore Archives, Tartu.

[20] Märt Tiks, 76, from Halliste, recording by Ottilie Kõiva in 1961, RKM II 103, 399 (50), Estonian Folklore Archives, Tartu.

[21] Mihkel Holtsmeier, 64, from Halliste, recording by Ottilie Kõiva, RKM II 103, 300/302 (1), Estonian Folklore Archives, Tartu.

[22] The interviews are held in the Estonian Folklore Archives, catalogue ERA, DH 71, see also Valtšuk 2008.

[23] The author of this article supervised Sirle Valtšuk's BA thesis on The Folk Song and Tale about Anu of Sambla: Sung and Narrated Reality, part of the course for Leisure Manager Creative Activities Instructor at the University of Tartu's Viljandi Culture Academy (Valtšuk 2008). The interviews carried out in the course of the thesis uncovered several intriguing details about the topic.

[24] This was said to be Anu's second home after Sambla farm burned down.

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

ERA DK – Estonian Folklore Archives collection of digital photographs
ERA KK – The Estonian Folklore Archives, collection of unpublished research and manuscripts
ERA – The Estonian Folklore Archives, manuscripts (1927–1944)
RKM – The Estonian Folklore Archives, manuscripts (1944–1996)
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APPENDIX 1

Bound by Fate

(*Uus ja Vana Kannel*, Mihkel Rätsep, Abja parish, 1902)

A baby, tears glistening in her eyes, is picked up and tenderly cuddled on mother's bosom. She is cared for and tended for, so than no harm would come to her. If I was carried by mother's caring arms until I die, no others would know or rock me. Let there be sadness, misery, old age and worries, but a childhood memory will never die. And in my mother's lap, when my eyes were shining with happiness, how could I know what lay ahead? How could I predict my future, that I would be defamed, my honour and life destroyed… Since I left my mother's bosom, I went through the fire of life, to live in honour or shame!

Maidenhood was not happy – it was soon gone! I lived at home under my parents' protection. I had not been touched, I had not been changed by the fire of love as others had been. The hearts of others beat for a young man, but I was taken and I was dragged so it broke my heart. I wasn't captured and held by the force of love, but by cold hands.

Who asked me: who do you love? Who was I to tell? Had I refused him, the fear of beating made me step forward. I was dragged from my bed like a thief from a prison; do what you will, I had to lay with him…

A prisoner in the court of death repents the crime; like a lamb I was silently dragged to the furnace of suffering. My eyes were red from crying – and the shadows of death surrounded me, chasing me.

I felt little consolation in my husband's arms. I didn't care. Life was ruined! Year after year, I grew accustomed, the cruelty was gone. And after a long time I was again at peace…

The Righteous Judge turned another page; the Saviour from all troubles took my husband. Death will come to help, with keys in hand, which will save many.

Once again I was a lone bird. Still young… Only father was there to protect me from the heirs. It was no fun, I had to step up and defend myself at court. The adversaries' cunning plan was all in vain, the will was without fault. The evil ones would not scare me … I got my husband's house and his money. Everything was calm – I have my soul back… I thought all my troubles that were holding me down had ended. But the well of woes was not yet full. My adversaries, like blisters and boils wouldn't disappear, but burst.

A horrible story went around: the man had been given the drug of death! The adversaries were quick to sue me. They wanted to see me in chains and look into my husband's grave.

Grand courts and police arrived at the graveyard. They demanded to see the man's grave. I showed them where his body was laid. People laughed at me, the rich and the poor. The grave was opened, the body was exhumed. I was tortured in vain, my heart was burning in my chest. I tried to show that I was innocent. It was all in vain, there was nothing to do.

The body was laid back to his sanctuary. Rest in peace, again, there will be noone to cut you!

It didn't take long before the grave was reopened, to take another look at it. There was a strange smell, when they cut it, I was not there. They filled the jars with the stinking pieces. Now a doctor was found, who would soon tell whether it was all about the drug of death. Another grave, right next to it, was opened. They didn't know where the right body was buried. And the diggers went to work for the third time, the coffin was there, what's there to do.

The news again – what's new and wasn't known before…: the dead man had a beard, a beard grown in the grave. Though thin, he still had black hair growing on his face. Like a miracle…

It is believed that anything would grow and bud in soil. Whatever you sow, will wake with the force of creation. It's still a miracle where the seed came from, from old wood or clay?

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DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES IN ACOUSTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SPEECH OF ESTONIAN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract: The paper introduces the Estonian Adolescent Speech Corpus and explores the developmental changes in speech production based on acoustic characteristics of fundamental frequency (F0), formant frequencies, and speech tempo as a function of age and gender. Age- and gender-related anatomic changes in adolescence have implications for speech acoustics: a sudden drop of F0 at puberty in boys, and an almost gradual decrease of the acoustic vowels space. In parallel with anatomic changes, the development of the speech motor system is manifested as the increase of speaking rate. The analysis of fundamental frequency (F0) shows that in both male and female speakers, the F0 decreases gradually at the age from 9 to 12 years, then in males F0 drops ca by 100 Hz at the age of 12–15 due to puberty voice change, and becomes stable at the age of 15–18; in female speakers, a gradual decrease of F0 continues till the age 18. The formant frequencies of vowels decrease gradually from 10 to 15 years in both genders and the quality of vowels stabilizes at the age of 15–18 years, gender-specific differences emerge at the age of 12–13. Speech rate increases from 4 syllables per second in 9–10 years to 5.1 syllables per second in 14 years and becomes stable between the ages of 15 and 18, gender differences are not significant. The results of the current study can be considered as reference data that are typical for Estonian-speaking individuals aged 9–18 years with normal language development.

Keywords: acoustic analysis, adolescent speech, formant frequencies, fundamental frequency, speech corpus, speech motor development, speech tempo

INTRODUCTION

The acoustic characteristics of children's speech differ considerably from those of adults' speech, e.g., higher pitch and formant frequencies, longer segmental durations, and lower speech rate are repeatedly reported features of children's speech (e.g. Lee et al. 1999; Jacewicz et al. 2010). Age- and gender-related anatomic changes of the vocal apparatus during childhood and adolescence are manifested in a sudden drop of fundamental frequency (F0) at puberty in boys, and in a gradual decrease of the acoustic vowels space and formant frequencies in both genders. In parallel with anatomic changes, the development of speech-motor control as well as cognitive and linguistic processing takes place, which is revealed in the increase of speech and articulation rates (Smith & Zelaznik 2004; Logan et al. 2011).

The length of the vocal folds in infants (younger than 1 year) is 4-5 mm, at the age of 20, the vocal folds have reached a length of approx. 11-15 mm in women and 17-25 mm in men (Hirano et al. 1981; Rogers et al. 2014). The vocal fold growth and the enlargement of the larynx have acoustic implications to F0, and consequently on the perceived voice pitch. According to Lee et al. (1999), the mean F0 for 7-year-old English-speaking boys is 266 Hz and for girls 275 Hz (the difference is not statistically significant), the gender difference becomes significant at the age of 12, where the mean F0 for boys is 226 Hz and for girls 231 Hz. A large change in F0 for boys occurs between the ages of 12 and 15, dropping to 127 Hz by age 15, with marginal changes thereafter. A study of German youth aged from 13 to 19 found that boys' mean F0 dropped by about 80 Hz (206.7 Hz – 126.6 Hz) between ages 13–15 and only 4 Hz between ages 15–19 while girls' F0 fell steadily from 230 Hz to 218 Hz between the ages of 13 and 19 (Draxler et al. 2008).

During speech production, the shape of the vocal tract varies depending on the position of the jaw, tongue, and lips, and as a result, forming different spectral and temporal patterns for different speech segments. The acoustic quality of vowels is primarily determined by the first two formants (F1, F2), which form the acoustic vowel space (Fant 1960; Stevens 2000). The formant frequencies of vowels and the size of the vowel space are directly related to the anatomical size of the vocal tract – a longer vocal tract results in lower formant frequencies compared to a shorter vocal tract. As found in magnetic resonance imaging studies, the average length of the vocal tract (measured from the vocal folds to the lips) is 9.9 cm in 2–4-year-old children, and 13.9 cm in 13–14-year-old children. Differences in the length of the vocal tract of boys and girls have been recorded since the age of 15: 14.6 cm in 15–16-year-old boys and 13.7 cm in girls, 15.6 cm in 17–18-year-old boys and 14.4 cm in girls (Fitch & Giedd 1999). In a work aggregating data from different studies (Vorperian & Kent 2007), it has been found that the formant frequencies of boys' vowels are systematically lower than the

formant frequencies of girls from the age of 7–8, the gender difference becomes statistically significant at the age of 12 and develops further till the age of 15.

Articulatory movements involve temporal and spatial control, which requires the coordinated interaction of the motor and the language systems (Smith 2006). Research on speech-motor development (e.g. Sharkey & Folkins 1985; Smith & Goffman 1998; Goffman & Smith 1999; Green et al. 2000; Schötz et al. 2013; Barbier et al. 2020) has shown that children's articulatory movements are slower and more variable than those of adults. For example, a study by Smith & Zelaznik (2004) investigated native English-speaking children and adults (in total 180 subjects) aged 4–22 years by recording upper lip, lower lip, and jaw movements while reading different sentences. The results showed that with increasing age, the variability of articulatory movements decreases and the time taken to form a sentence shortens, and the processes of speech-motor control in both boys and girls become similar to adults only after the age of 14. The authors conclude that the age-related increase in speaking rate is due to improvements in cognitive and linguistic processing and speech-motor control.

The most common measures of speaking rate – speech rate and articulation rate – are calculated as the number of speech units (words, syllables, or segments) produced in a unit of time (a minute or second) (Tsao et al. 2006). Speech rate includes pauses in the utterance (e.g. hesitations, pauses between words), while calculating the articulation rate, pauses longer than 250 ms are excluded (e.g. Ingham & Riley 1998; Crystal & House 1990). According to various studies, the articulation rate in the spontaneous speech of 3–6-year-old native English-speaking children varies from 2.9 to 4.3, and the speech rate ranges from 2.3 to 2.6 syllables per second, for 7–12-year-olds, 4.5 to 5.6 and 2.4 to 2.9 syllables per second, respectively (Logan et al. 2011: Table 1). As a rule, the speaking rate increases equally with age in boys and girls, and the differences within age groups are not statistically significant (mostly, the speaking rate of male speakers is slightly faster) (e.g. Robb et al. 2004; Verhoeven et al. 2004; Jacewicz et al. 2009, 2010; Lee & Doherty 2017). In adults, speaking rates of 220–280 syllables per minute (3.7–4.7 syllables per second) and articulation rates of 200–346 syllables per minute (3.3–5.8 syllables per second) have been documented (Lee & Doherty 2017: Table 1).

While reading aloud written texts, the speaking rate is affected by the text length as confirmed in several studies (e.g. Lehiste 1974; Sadagopan & Smith 2008; Amir & Grinfeld 2011; Bishop & Kim 2018; Darling-White & Banks 2021). This is known as anticipatory shortening, according to which in the speech planning process the speaker adjusts his average syllable duration to the expected length of the phrase (see, e.g., Bishop & Kim 2018 and references therein). Sadagopan and Smith (2008) investigated the relationship between

text length and speaking rate in a comparison of children (aged 5–16) and adults (aged 20–23). Their study revealed that the duration of the test phrase read in isolation is longer than when read in a frame sentence both in adults and in 9–16-year-olds, but not in 5–7-year-old children. The authors hypothesize that children and adults use different motor planning strategies when reading more complex sentences: younger children plan their speech in smaller speech units (words or syllables) while older children and adults in longer speech units (phrases). The results also suggest that the transition to an adult-like speech-motor planning strategy begins around age 9.

The present study aims to document the acoustic characteristics of Estonian adolescent speech and gain a better understanding of the variations related to the speaker's age and gender. In particular, we will explore (1) the acoustic variations of F0, (2) vowel formants and duration, and (3) changes in speech tempo using the measures of speaking rate.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Speech corpus

The Estonian Adolescent Speech Corpus (Meister & Meister 2014) consists of speech samples from 309 subjects (175 girls and 134 boys) in the age range from 9 to 18 years (Table 1). The corpus represents cross-sectional speech data of different age groups. The subjects were recruited in ten schools across Estonia (four schools in the capital area, two in the North-East, two in the South-East, and two on the island Saaremaa in Western Estonia). The school teachers selected the volunteers according to the given criteria – native Estonian, no hearing and speaking disorders, and fluency in the reading of unfamiliar texts. All subjects signed a consent form and filled out a questionnaire in which they provided information about their age, gender, place of residence, class, school, mother tongue, and foreign language learning. Written consent was also obtained from the parents and the schools.

Table 1. *The distribution of subjects by age and gender.*

Age	Male	Female	Total
9	2	2	4
10	12	12	24
11	18	22	40
12	12	23	35
13	18	32	50

14	17	28	45
15	21	15	36
16	16	20	36
17	8	11	19
18	10	10	20
Total	**134**	**175**	**309**

For the recordings, a text corpus was compiled that contained linguistically diverse material: phonetically rich sentences, sentences containing names of places, persons, and organizations, time expressions, phone numbers, random number sequences, IT terms, and short stories. To elicit spontaneous speech, the subjects were asked to describe pictures and talk about themselves, their family, school, friends, and hobbies or tell a story on a freely chosen topic. From each speaker, 60 read and 10 spontaneous items were recorded in a quiet room using a laptop with BAS SpeechRecorder software (Draxler & Jänsch 2004), two microphones (desktop and close-talking microphone), and an external monitor to show the prompts. The signals were stored directly on the hard disc in *wav* format (sampling at 44.1 kHz, resolution 16 bits). In total, the corpus contains approximately 70 hours of speech, about 15 minutes from each subject.

In the current study, the acoustic analyses were performed on a subcorpus of read speech samples consisting of 21 phonetically rich sentences per subject, in total 6489 read utterances. The duration of utterances ranged from 4.95 to 13.67 seconds, with an average of 7.8 seconds. All utterances were segmented manually on the word and phone levels using Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2022). Syllable boundaries and types were added using a custom Praat script (Lippus 2015).

Acoustic analysis

In the study, the following acoustic features were investigated: (1) fundamental frequency (F0), (2) vowel formants F1 and F2, and vowel duration, and (3) speech and articulation rates.

F0

For the F0 analysis, a custom Praat script was compiled using the two-step procedure recommended by Hirst (2007). First, the F0 values of each utterance were found in the frequency range 75–600 Hz, then the range was narrowed

according to the speaker's F0 variation as follows: F0 max = 1.5 x 3rd quartile value, F0min = 0.75 x 1st quartile value. This approach takes into account the subject's individual F0 range and thus provides more reliable results. However, about 20% of the utterances required manual F0 validation in cases where the automatically found F0 values seemed unlikely, e.g. when boys had maximum F0 values above 400 Hz or girls had minimum F0 values below 150 Hz. There were also more errors in the speech of boys with a voice mutation period, where F0 variations were larger and sometimes reached the falsetto register.

Vowel-related features

The Estonian vowel system includes nine vowels /i ü u e ö õ o ä a/ characterized by the articulatory features as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Articulatory features of Estonian vowels.*

	Front		Back	
	Unrounded	Rounded	Unrounded	Rounded
High	/i/ [i]	/ü/ [y]		/u/ [u]
Mid	/e/ [e]	/ö/ [ø]	/õ/ [ɤ]	/o/ [o]
Low	/ä/ [æ]		/a/ [ɑ]	

All vowels occur in a primary stressed syllable and only five vowels [ɑ e i o u] can occur in non-initial syllables. The duration of vowels is mainly defined by the three-way quantity system of Estonian (Lehiste 1960; see Asu et al. 2016 for further references). The three-way length contrast in vowels occurs in the primary stressed first syllables of a foot, and there is no length contrast in the unstressed syllables.

The formant frequencies F1–F2 and the duration of vowels were measured using a custom Praat script that implements the Burg method with adapted parameters for different gender and age groups. For all girls and boys aged 10–13 the formant ceiling value of 5500 Hz was applied, and of 5000 Hz for boys aged 14–18; the max number of formants was 5, window length 0.025 s, pre-emphasis 50 Hz. The formant frequencies of 65720 vowels were measured around the vowel midpoint. The formant values were obtained first in the Hz scale and then converted to the psychoacoustic Bark scale. Mean values and standard deviations of F1 and F2 were calculated for each age and gender group and the values that deviated by more than ±1.5 standard deviations from the group mean (as obvious outliers) were excluded from further analysis. The final data set consisted of 60 216 vowels grouped according to their position in

a word – first (stressed) syllable vowels (in total 24500, hereinafter referred to as V1) and the vowels in second (unstressed) syllables (in total 23 343, hereinafter referred to as V2) (Table 3). The vowels in further syllables (V3–V5) were not included in the analysis. Formant data of 9-year-old subjects were excluded as this group included 2 boys and 2 girls only.

Table 3. *The number of analyzed stressed (V1) and unstressed (V2) vowels.*

	[ɑ]	[e]	[i]	[o]	[u]	[ɤ]	[æ]	[ø]	[y]
V1	7515	3081	2590	4010	2792	1096	1536	604	1276
V2	7437	4930	7426	262	3288	-	-	-	-

In order to explore the change of vowel quality over the age range from 10 to 18, the means of F1 and F2 of all vowel categories for each age and gender group were calculated and presented as a developmental trajectory in the F1 by F2 acoustic plane. The developmental vowel trajectory consists of eight sections corresponding to each consecutive age group (10–11, 11–12, 12–13, 13–14, 14–15, 15–16, 16–17, and 17–18 years), whereas the vowel section length (VSL) is given by the formula (Fox & Jacewicz 2009):

$$VSL_n = \sqrt{(F1_n - F1_{n+1})^2 + (F2_n - F2_{n+1})^2}$$

The developmental vowel trajectory length (DVTL) is the sum of the eight sections:

$$VTL = \sum_{n=1}^{8} VSL_n$$

Speech tempo

Two measures of speech tempo were used, the speech rate and the articulation rate. To derive each measure, the number of syllables in each utterance was counted, and utterance duration was measured. Pauses shorter than 250 ms were included in the calculation of speech rate and were excluded when calculating articulation rate. Utterances with up to 20 syllables were used for further analysis (in total 7125, the average number of syllables in utterance 11.8, median 11). Two speaking rate measures for each utterance were calculated:

- the speech rate = the number of syllables in an utterance / the duration of an utterance including pauses,
- the articulation rate = the number of syllables in an utterance / the duration of an utterance without pauses.

Statistical analysis

The R environment (R Core Team 2018) within the RStudio program (RStudio Team 2020) was used for statistical data processing. Generalized Additive Mixed Models (GAMM) with the *mgcv* package (Wood 2017) were used for modeling, *itsadug* package (van Rij et al. 2022) was used for model validation and visualization of the results; for formant plots, we used the R package *phonR* (McCloy 2016).

RESULTS

F0

The histograms (Figure 1) show the distribution of mean F0 in boys and girls. In the case of boys, the F0 distribution is binomial with clearly distinguished peaks at 110 Hz and 215 Hz. The first peak represents the most frequent mean F0 value of boys who have undergone a pubertal voice change period (boys aged 15–18), and the second peak corresponds to the most frequent mean F0 value of younger boys (aged 9–12) before voice change. As expected, there is only one peak in the histogram for girls, representing the median F0 value for all girls (226 Hz).

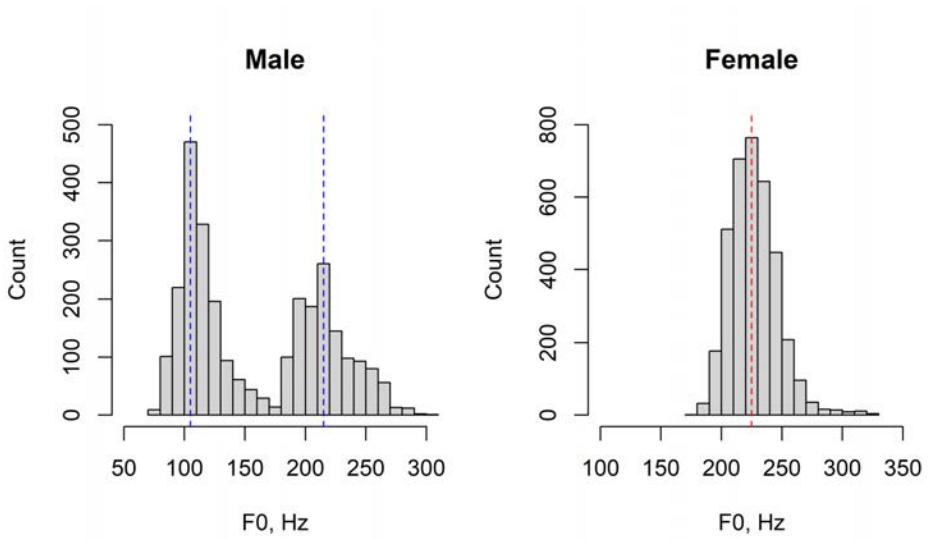

Figure 1. *Histograms of F0 mean values, boys on the left, girls on the right.*

Figures 2 and 3 represent the boxplots of the measured F0 means for each age group in boys and girls, respectively. In boys, the general developmental pattern of F0-mean values shows a gradual decrease between the ages 9 and 12 by *ca* 17 Hz, a more prominent decline (by *ca* 28 Hz) occurs between the ages 12–13 followed by the largest drop (by 51 Hz) between the ages 13–14, a further decrease (by 21 Hz) continues till age 15. During the ages of 15–18, the F0 mean stabilizes around 110 Hz (in pairwise comparison, the differences between the age groups are still statistically significant). However, individual F0 developmental paths can be different from a general pattern, as the outliers in Figure 2 manifest. E.g., there are two 13-years old (F0 means 101 and 113 Hz), three 14-years old (F0 means 228, 194, and 164 Hz), two 15-years old (F0 means 149 and 141 Hz), and one 16-years old (F0 mean 201 Hz) boys whose F0 mean values deviate significantly ($p<0.001$) from the other speakers in the respective age group (F0 means 199, 114, 105, and 111 Hz, respectively). We suggest that these deviating F0 mean values reveal an early (in the case of 13-year-olds) and late (in the case of 14–16-year-olds) beginning of the pubertal voice change period.

In girls, F0 development shows an almost linear decline pattern between the ages 9 and 18, with F0 mean decrease from ca 245 Hz to 212 Hz (Figure 3). The outliers occurring in several age groups can be attributed to the individual peculiarities of the subject's larynx.

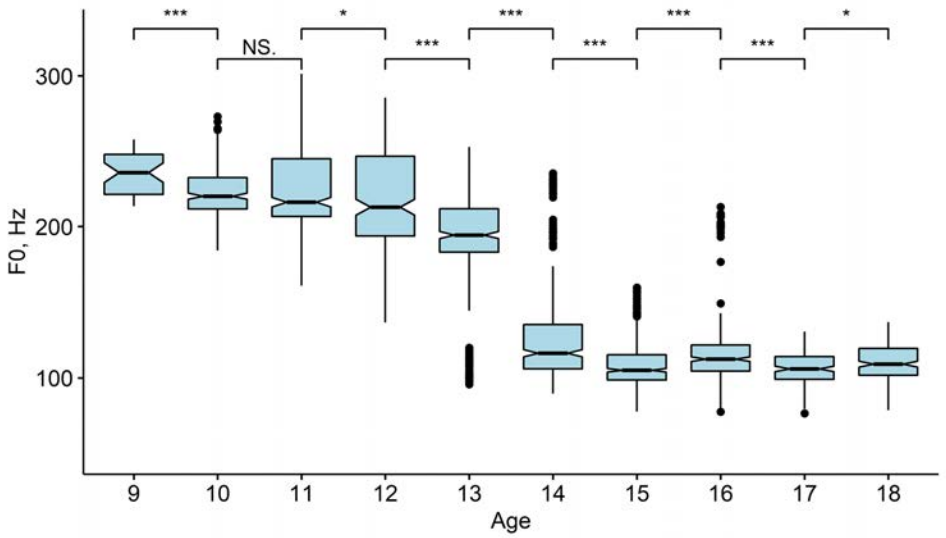

Figure 2. *Male speakers' boxplots of F0 means by age with significance levels of pairwise t-test (NS. $p > 0.05$, * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$).*

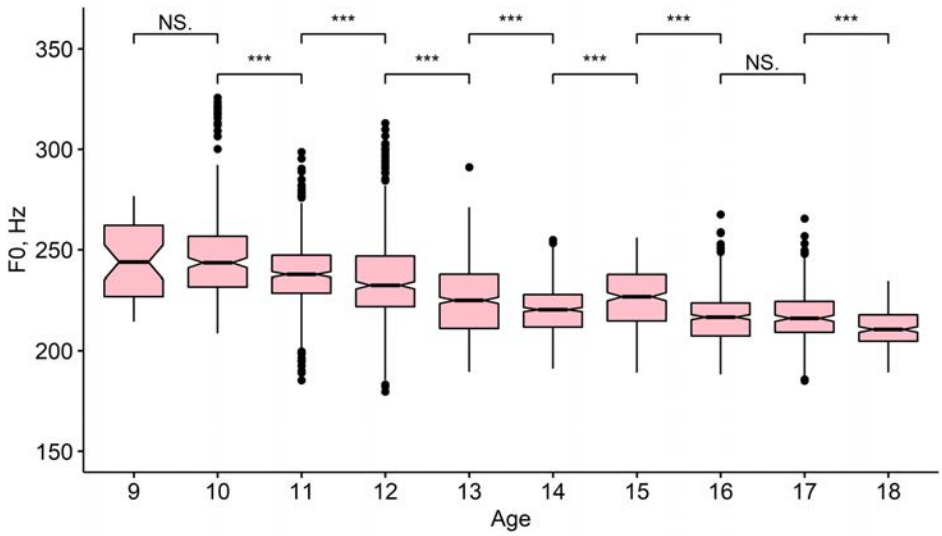

Figure 3. *Female speakers' boxplots of F0 means by age with significance levels of pairwise t-test (NS. $p > 0.05$, * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$).*

The measured F0 mean values for each read utterance were used to fit the GAMMs for both gender groups with the smooth term *age* and *subject* as the random effect. The model-predicted mean F0 values and the standard errors for each age group by gender are presented in Table 4 and in Figure 4.

Table 4. *The GAMM-predicted mean F0 values and the standard errors (SE) for each age group by gender (in Hz).*

		9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Female	F0	250	244	238	233	228	224	221	218	215	212
	SE	4.4	2.7	1.6	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.6	2.2	3.4
Male	F0	230	225	224	216	184	134	111	112	110	108
	SE	15.6	6.2	4.9	5.5	4.8	4.8	4.4	5.1	6.7	7.8

According to the GAMM's prediction, in girls between the ages of 9 and 18 years, the F0 mean gradually decreases from 250 Hz to 212 Hz. In boys between the ages 9–12, the F0 mean decreases from 230 Hz to 216 Hz, followed by a rapid drop of F0 (by 105 Hz) between the ages 12–15, with the most significant decline (by 51 Hz) occurring between 13 and 14 years; the minor differences of F0 at the ages of 15–18 show the natural subject-specific variations.

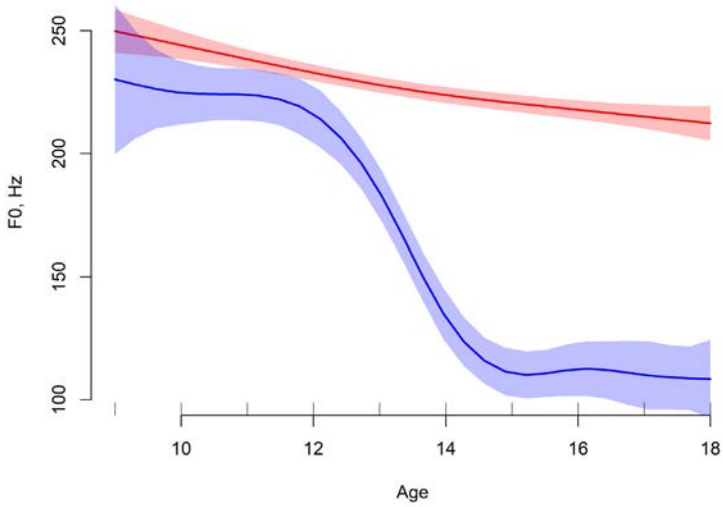

Figure 4. *The age-dependent change of F0 mean with 95% confidence bands for girls (red) and boys (blue) as predicted by the GAMMs.*

Formant frequencies of vowels

GAMMs were fitted for the vowel formants F1 and F2 with the smooth terms *age* depending on the factors *gender, vowel, quantity,* and *vowel position*, and *subject* as the random effect. The models for F1 and F2 showed significant main effects of all predictors in both stressed and unstressed vowels. The plots of partial effects of the explanatory features on F1 and F2 are shown in Figure 5, GAMMs' numeric summaries are given in Table 5.

In both F1 and F2, the largest changes in formant frequencies occur between the ages of 10 and 15, with significant differences between boys and girls ($p<0.001$). In ages 15–18, the changes in formant values are small, and the vowels acquire a stable quality. For all vowels, the formant frequencies of girls are higher than the corresponding values of boys in the same age group, and gender differences become significant at 12–13 years of age ($p<0.05$). There is a significant effect of *quantity* ($p<0.001$) and *vowel position* ($p<0.001$) on both vowel formants revealing that overlong and long vowels are more peripheral than short ones, and the quality of vowels in unstressed syllables tend to be reduced compared to the counterparts in the stressed syllables. Thus, in adolescent speech, the factors *quantity* and *vowel position* have similar effects on vowel quality as reported for adult speech (Eek & Meister 1998; Lippus et al. 2013).

Table 5. *Estimated parametric coefficients for the factor variables and approximate significance of the smooth terms from GAMMs for F1 and F2. The reference levels for the factors are: Gender – Male, Vowel – /a/, Quantity – short, Vowel position – V1.*

Formant	Parametric coefficients				
F1	Factor	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
	(Intercept)	5.97	0.0256	232.71	<0.001
	Vowel /e/	-0.64	0.0089	-71.72	<0.001
	Vowel /i/	-2.19	0.0073	-299.55	<0.001
	Vowel /o/	-0.96	0.0105	-91.61	<0.001
	Vowel /u/	-1.84	0.0083	-221.77	<0.001
	Vowel /õ/	-1.30	0.0171	-76.27	<0.001
	Vowel /ä/	0.417	0.0193	21.68	<0.001
	Vowel /ö/	-1.20	0.0232	-51.99	<0.001
	Vowel /ü/	-2.14	0.0137	-155.96	<0.001
	Quantity long	-0.12	0.0122	-10.12	<0.001
	Quantity overlong	-0.207	0.0106	-19.45	<0.001
	Gender Female	0.542	0.0333	16.28	<0.001
	Vowel V2	0.169	0.0060	28.07	<0.001
	Approximate significance of smooth terms:				
		edf	Ref.df	F	p-value
	s(Age)	3.804	3.826	54.27	<0.001
	s(Subject)	291.944	302	39.76	<0.001
Formant	Parametric coefficients				
F2	Factor	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
	(Intercept)	10.39	0.0268	388.19	<0.001
	Vowel /e/	1.94	0.0143	135.79	<0.001
	Vowel /i/	3.26	0.0144	227.36	<0.001
	Vowel /o/	-1.30	0.0148	-87.89	<0.001
	Vowel /u/	-1.55	0.0125	-123.20	<0.001
	Vowel /õ/	0.32	0.0295	10.78	<0.001
	Vowel /ä/	1.52	0.0278	54.73	<0.001
	Vowel /ö/	2.14	0.0452	47.46	<0.001
	Vowel /ü/	2.12	0.0316	67.18	<0.001
	Quantity long	-0.41	0.0198	-20.58	<0.001
	Quantity overlong	-0.62	0.0181	-34.23	<0.001
	Gender Female	0.69	0.0340	20.15	<0.001
	Vowel V2	0.17	0.0103	16.60	<0.001
	Approximate significance of smooth terms:				
		edf	Ref.df	F	p-value
	s(Age)	3.667	3.727	69.18	<0.001
	s(Subject	278.958	302	13.67	<0.001

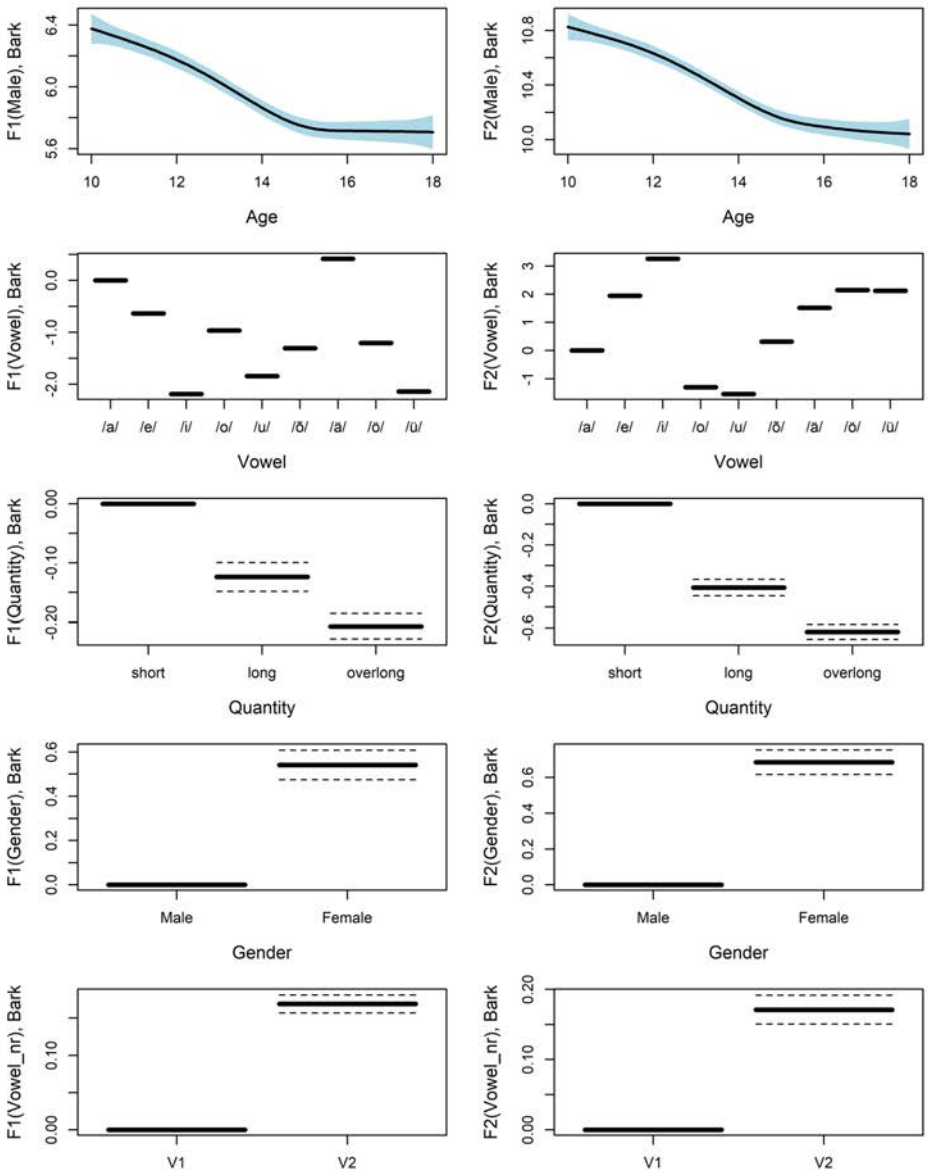

Figure 5. *The term plots of the GAMMs for F1 (left column) and F2 (right column) of adolescent vowels. The upper row represents the fitted F1 and F2 values depending on Age (shaded area corresponds to ±1 standard error), further rows represent F1 and F2 variations depending on the factors Vowel (the reference level is /ɑ/), Quantity (the reference level is short), Gender (the reference level is Male), and Vowel_nr (the reference level is V1), respectively.*

Vowel trajectories

The numeric values of developmental vowel trajectory lengths (DVTL) of stressed vowels are presented in Table 6. Both boys and girls have the largest DVTL values for vowels /i/ and /e/ and the smallest for /o/ and /u/. Except for /u/, boys have higher DVTL values than the respective values in girls. Vowel trajectories in Figure 6 illustrate the developmental changes in the quality of stressed vowels depending on age and gender.

***Table 6**. DVTL values (in Hz and Bark) of stressed (V1) vowels for male and female speakers.*

	/a/	/e/	/i/	/o/	/u/	/õ/	/ä/	/ö/	/ü/
Male, Hz	378	592	744	182	94	245	504	418	470
Female, Hz	155	347	366	73	146	169	220	297	273
Male, Bark	1.96	2.21	2.33	1.16	0.77	1.28	2.42	1.72	1.82
Female, Bark	0.88	1.10	0.96	0.51	0.97	0.84	0.98	1.13	1.05

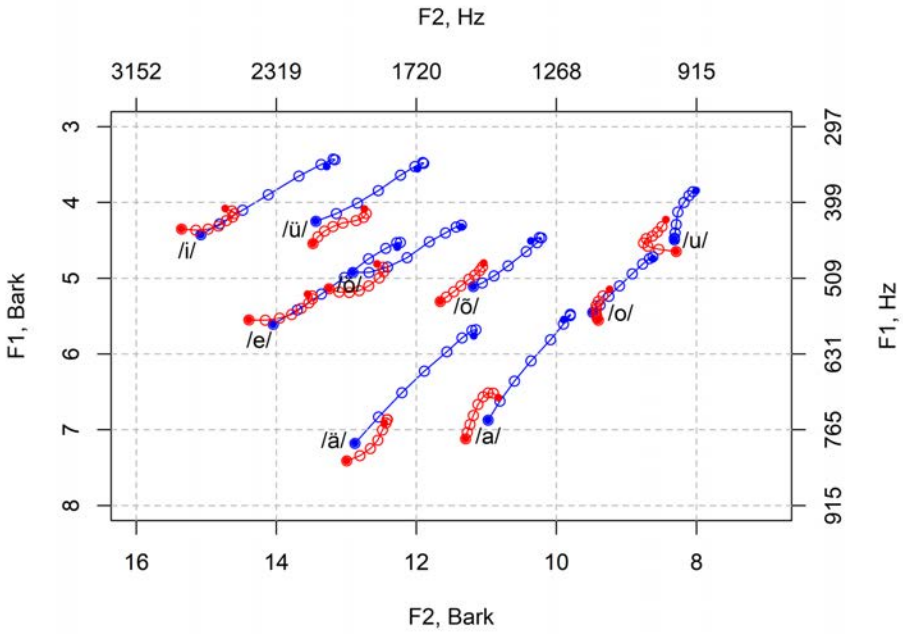

***Figure 6.** Vowel trajectories representing the age-related changes of the stressed vowels in boys (blue) and girls (red) in F1&F2 acoustic space. The filled circles represent the positions of the vowels at the age of 10 and 18 years, the empty circles represent the intermediate ages; the vowel characters are placed close to the points corresponding to the vowels of the 10-year-olds.*

For visual comparison, Figure 7 illustrates the acoustic vowel space as the area between the corner vowels of V1 (top) and V2 (bottom) vowels for 10-years-old (left column) and 18-years-old (right column) speakers.

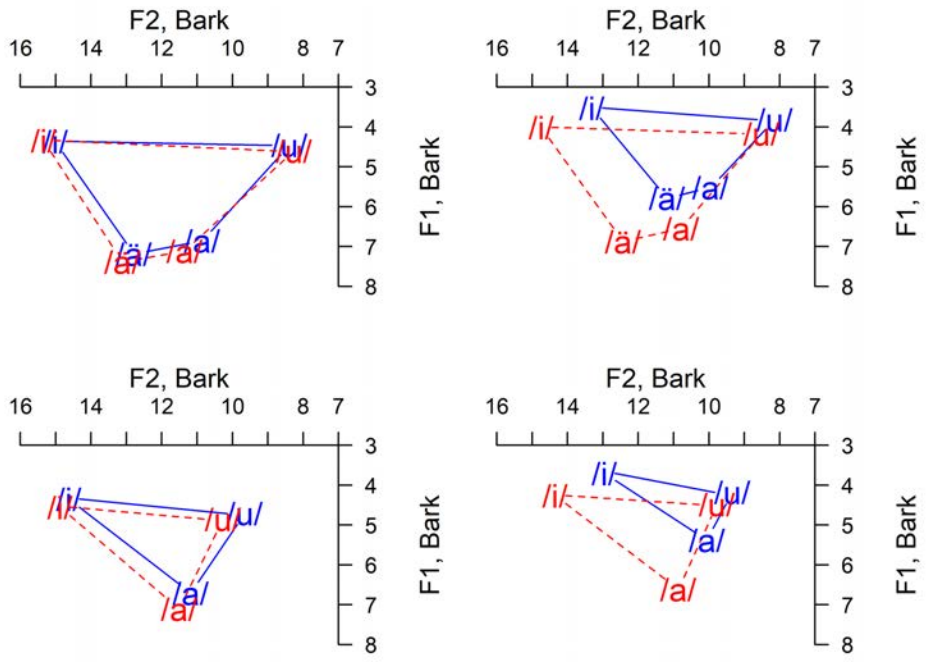

Figure 7. *The acoustic vowel space of V1 (top) and V2 (bottom) as the area between the corner vowels in boys (solid blue line) and girls (dashed read line) for 10-years-old (left column) and 18-years-old (right column) speakers.*

Vowel duration

The measured duration of V1 and V2 vowels were allocated to GAMM-modeling with the smooth terms *age,* the explanatory factors *gender*, *vowel*, *quantity* and *vowel position*; *subject* was added as a random variable. Figure 10 shows the plots of the partial effects of the explanatory features on vowel durations, the numeric summary of the GAMM is given in table 7.

Table 7. *Estimated parametric coefficients for the factor variables and approximate significance of the smooth terms from the GAMM for vowel duration. The reference levels for the factors are: Vowel – /a/, Quantity – short, Gender – Male, Vowel_nr– V1.*

Parametric coefficients				
Factor	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
(Intercept)	83.91	0.939	89.35	<0.001
Vowel /e/	-5.20	0.378	-13.76	<0.001
Vowel /i/	-8.88	0.345	-25.75	<0.001
Vowel /o/	-0.96	0.507	-1.89	0.058
Vowel /u/	-7.23	0.401	-18.05	<0.001
Vowel /õ/	-5.75	0.825	-6.97	<0.001
Vowel /ä/	-4.28	0.716	-5.98	<0.001
Vowel /ö/	2.64	2.001	1.32	0.187
Vowel /ü/	-10.24	0.737	-13.90	<0.001
Quantity long	65.91	0.994	66.30	<0.001
Quantity overlong	87.07	1.027	84.82	<0.001
Gender Female	-0.06	1.209	-0.05	0.962
Vowel V2	3.54	0.280	12.62	<0.001
Approximate significance of smooth terms:				
	edf	Ref.df	F	p-value
s(Age)	3.41	3.45	39.47	<0.001
s(Subject)	286.06	302	19.07	<0.001

The results show that age has a significant effect on vowel duration ($p<0.001$) and there are no differences between male and female speakers ($p=0.962$). The duration of vowels decreases from age 9 to age 14, and the variations in further ages are marginal. As expected, the factor *quantity* (with levels of short, long, and overlong) has a significant effect ($p<0.001$) on V1 vowel duration. Although the duration of vowels decreases with age, the long/short and overlong/short duration ratios of V1 vowels (1.8–1.9 and 2.0–2.2, respectively) stay rather stable among all age groups and are close to those reported in several studies on Estonian adult speech (1.9 and 2.5, respectively) (cf. Meister 2011: 29, Table 4). However, the adolescent overlong/short duration ratio (2.0–2.2) tends to be smaller than that of adult speech (2.5).

The duration of V2 is longer than the duration of V1 short vowels ($p<0.001$) and has a developmental pattern analogous to that of V1 (shortening till age 14, marginal variations thereafter). GAMM output shows significant duration differences between the reference vowel /a/ and most other vowels ($p<0.001$),

except the vowels /o/ (p=0.058) and /ö/ (p=0.962). Duration differences reveal the intrinsic microprosodic variations – low vowels tend to be longer than high vowels (Meister & Werner 2006, 2009). In current data, this tendency is only partly evident (see the vowel panel in Figure 8), as in read speech higher prosodic levels (word, utterance) might override the microprosodic features.

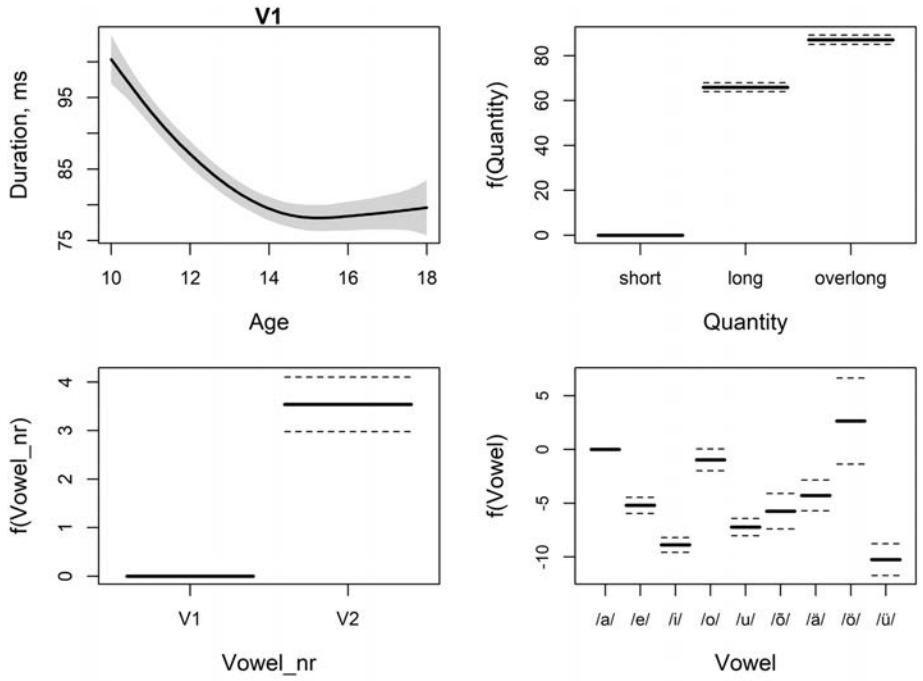

Figure 8. *The response plots of the GAMMs for vowel duration. The top row represents the model-predicted V1 duration depending on age (shaded area corresponds to ±1 standard error) and the effect of the factor Quantity (reference level short), the bottom row represents the effects of the factors Vowel_nr (reference level /V1/) and Vowel (reference level /a/).*

Speaking rate characteristics

GAMMs were fitted for the articulation and speech rates with the smooth terms *age* and *text length*, and the explanatory factor *gender*; *subject* was added to the models as an independent random variable. The numeric output of the GAMMs is given in Table 8 and the partial effects of *age* and *text length* are shown in Figure 9. The results reveal that both articulation rate and speech rate depend on subject's age ($p<0.001$) and text length ($p<0.001$), and there is no gender difference in both rates ($p=0.587$ for articulation rate and $p=0.767$ for speech rate). The difference between articulation rate and speech rate is rather small as pauses and hesitations are rare in read speech. The predicted values of the articulation and speech rates are given in Table 9.

Table 8. *Estimated parametric coefficients for the factor variables and approximate significance of the smooth terms from the GAMM for speaking rate characteristics. The reference level for the factor gender is Male.*

Articulation rate	Parametric coefficients				
	Factor	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
	(Intercept)	5.01	0.041	122.44	<0.001
	Gender Female	-0.03	0.054	-0.543	0.587
	Approximate significance of smooth terms:				
		edf	Ref.df	F	p-value
	s(Age)	3.47	3.52	40.03	<0.001
	s(Syl_count)	4.68	4.94	273.37	<0.001
	s(Subject)	283.05	306	14.10	<0.001
Speech rate	Parametric coefficients				
	Factor	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
	(Intercept)	4.90	0.042	115.4	<0.001
	Gender Female	-0.02	0.057	-0.3	0.767
	Approximate significance of smooth terms:				
		edf	Ref.df	F	p-value
	s(Age)	3.59	3.65	41.35	<0.001
	s(Syl_count)	4.70	4.95	188.28	<0.001
	s(Subject)	286.06	302	19.07	<0.001

Table 9. *The GAMM-predicted articulation and speech rates and the standard errors for each age group (in syllables per second).*

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Art. rate	4.0	4.3	4.6	4.9	5.0	5.2	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2
SE	0.13	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.09
Speech rate	3.8	4.2	4.5	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.1
SE	0.14	0.07	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.09

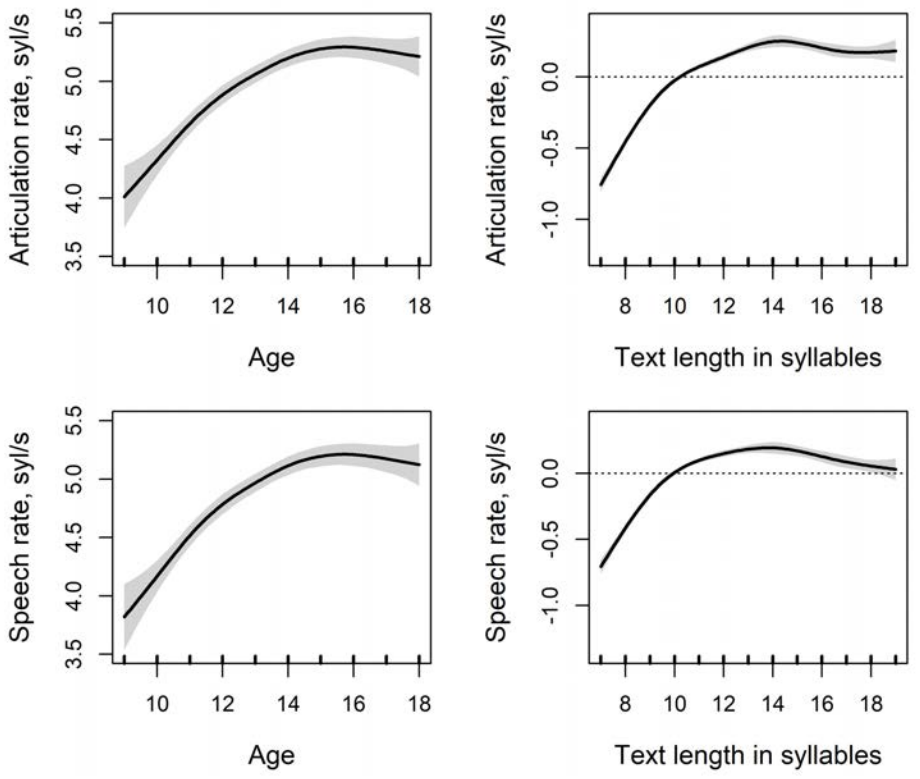

Figure 9. *The partial effects of Age and Text length fitted with GAMM models for articulation rate (top) and speech rate (bottom), shaded gray areas represent the 95% confidence interval of the mean.*

The data in Table 9 and Figure 9, left show similar age-related development patterns of both speaking rate characteristics: at ages 9–15 both rates increase significantly (pairwise comparison of age groups is statistically significant, $p<0.001$) and reach a maximum at 15 years of age, in ages 17–18 both rates slightly decrease ($p<0.05$). The effect of text length on the speaking rates has similar patterns (Figure 9, right): in sentences with 8–12 syllables the speaking rates increase with the text length (differences are significant at least at the $p<0.05$ level), in sentences with 12–18 syllables the speaking rates are stable, followed by a decreasing trend (differences are insignificant) in longer sentences (19–20 syllables).

DISCUSSION

In this study, we explored the acoustic characteristics of F0, vowel formants and duration, and speaking rate in Estonian adolescent speech. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the corpus, the findings reveal general patterns of the age- and gender-related changes along each acoustic dimension characterizing speech development.

In boys, the largest drop of F0 (by 105 Hz) occurs between age 12 (F0 = 216 Hz) and age 15 (F0 = 111 Hz). This finding is in line with Lee et al. (1999) which suggests that pubertal voice change in male speakers starts between ages 12 and 13, and ends around age 15. Similar to previous studies (Hollien et al. 1994; Whiteside et al. 2002), individual differences in 13–16-year-old males have been found in our corpus, as well, with mean F0 values that significantly differ from those of age-matched peers, suggesting that the onset of puberty varies among speakers. More detailed information on individual F0 development is provided by longitudinal studies in which participants are recorded at regular time intervals over several years (e.g. Whiteside et al. 2002; Bennet 1983; Hollien et al. 1994).

We have worked with speech material that was read in a neutral speech style with a relatively monotonous F0, therefore, the results do not represent the entire vocal range of the speakers. In different speech styles, e.g. in a spontaneous or emotional speech, higher F0 values would be expected for joy and lower for anger, the F0 range would be larger for anger and smaller for sadness as it has been found in adult speech (Tamuri 2015).

Although there are several minor differences in F0 characteristics in comparison of Estonian subjects with English- (Lee et al. 1999) and German-speaking (Draxler et al. 2008) subjects, Estonian adolescents follow similar development patterns. Studies exploring F0 differences between languages (see Patterson

2000 for a review) have found that the differences can be due to organic (e.g. differences in the vocal tract influenced by height and racial origin), linguistic (e.g. the role of F0 in the language's prosodic system), and socio-cultural factors. These factors should be considered when exploring the F0 differences between Estonian adolescents and their German- and English-speaking peers.

The variations of formant frequencies of the vowels reported in the study reflect the age- and gender-specific changes in the vocal tract of children – as age increases, the length of the vocal tract increases and, as a result, the formant frequencies of all vowels and the area of the acoustic vocal space decrease. The age-related development patterns of formant frequencies are similar in both genders, i.e. the main changes in formant frequencies occur between ages 10 and 15 and further changes are minor. Since the length of the vocal tract in boys is bigger than that of girls, the formant frequency values for boys are always lower than those of girls. Similar results have been reported in several studies on the vowel acoustics of English-speaking subjects (e.g. Flipsen & Lee 2012; Lee et al. 1999). A comparison of the lengths of the developmental vowel trajectories (Table 6) shows that the front vowels /i/ and /e/ undergo the largest quality change, while the smallest changes are in the quality of the back vowels /u/ and /o/. The reasons for these differences may lie partly in the different growth rates of different vocal tract regions, i.e. oral and pharyngeal cavities (Vorperian et al. 2009, 2011), and in the different roles of these regions in the articulation of front and back vowels. The relationships between the anatomical development of the vocal tract and its acoustic properties are more complex and non-linear, however, the changes in vowel quality cannot be fully explained by the developmental changes of the vocal tract only. In addition, e.g. the spoken language, the dialectal background of the subject (Fox & Jacewicz 2009; Jacewicz et al. 2011), and sociolinguistic factors (Pettinato et al. 2016) influence the development of vowel quality.

Unlike the variations in F0 and the spectral characteristics of vowels, changes in speech tempo are primarily related to the development of speech-motor skills. The effect of age on articulation and speech rates is apparent: both increase between the ages of 10 and 15 and become stable at further ages. According to previous studies, the temporal characteristics of children's speech are acoustically more variable up to the age of 12 years (Lee et al. 1999) and articulatorily up to the age of 14 years (Smith & Zelaznik 2004). These results have been interpreted as evidence of the achievement of adult-like speech-motor skills at 12–14 years of age (e.g., Redford & Oh 2017). On the other hand, it has been argued that the development of motor patterns continues into late adolescence (Smith 2006). In line with the latter, it has been reported that the speech rate

of 13–14-year-old British children has not yet reached adult levels (Hazan & Pettinato 2014) and the speech rate of 13–17-year-old Hebrew-speaking children continues to increase (Amir & Grinfeld 2011). The average speech rate of 14–18-year-old Estonian speakers (5.1 syllables per second) compared well to the read speech rate of Estonian young adults of 4.9–5.3 syllables per second (Meister & Meister 2022). Thus, we suggest that the speech-motor control of Estonian adolescents achieves adult-like levels between the ages of 14 and 15 with further improvement of proficiency in ages 15–18.

When reading aloud written texts, speakers make significantly fewer pauses compared to spontaneous speech, therefore the differences in speech and articulation rates in the analyzed speech material are small. The difference between articulation and speech rate becomes larger when reading longer sentences as readers group the text into smaller fragments, depending on the structure of the sentence or the need to breathe, and therefore the number and length of pauses increase. The dependence of speech tempo on text length has been confirmed in many studies and is known as anticipatory shortening, according to which the speaker adjusts his average syllable duration when planning his speech according to the expected phrase length (see Bishop & Kim 2018 and references therein). In this study, the effect of text length was found to be significant for speaking rates in sentences up to 12 syllables long; when reading texts longer than these, the speech rate shows a slightly declining trend, while the articulation rate stays stable (or has a slightly increasing trend) and drops again when the sentence is longer than 18 syllables. Such patterns of speaking rate variations may be related to motor planning in text reading.

SUMMARY

The study explored the changes in F0, vowel formants and duration, and speech tempo in Estonian adolescent speech as a function of age and gender. The discovered developmental patterns are as follows: (1) a decline in F0 with a sharp drop of about 100 Hz in boys aged 12–15 years due to puberty voice change and a gradual decline in girls during ages 9–18, (2) formant frequencies of vowels decrease gradually from 10 to 15 years in both genders and the quality of vowels stabilizes at the age of 15–18 years, gender-specific differences emerge at the age of 12–13, (3) vowel duration decreases and speech tempo increases up to 15 years of age and becomes stable in further ages, gender differences are not significant. The results are in line with the findings reported for several other languages.

The results of the study will further the knowledge about the age- and gender-related variability of the acoustic properties of adolescent speech, and can be considered as reference data that are typical for Estonian-speaking individuals aged 9–18 years with normal language development.

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BASE FORM AND OTHER FORMS OF THE ESTONIAN VERB

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Abstract: The article discusses the implicational patterns present in the Estonian verb paradigm: which paradigm slot acts as the base form, which slots act as other principal parts, and what does their dependency hierarchy look like. The argument relies on data from three different types of source: acquisition of Estonian as the first language by children; verbal inflectional classes that are reconstructed from the 17th century Tallinn variety of Estonian; and statistics from different contemporary corpora. The article arrives at a different implicational schema than that which is generally accepted in the Estonian grammar tradition. The article suggests that the base form is the bare stem (which is used as the 2nd person imperative and prohibitive, as well as the negation of present indicative), and that the other three principal parts are: the infinitive; the wordform representing simultaneously the past participle impersonal and past indicative negative impersonal; and third-person singular past indicative. The supine, which is traditionally regarded as the base form, is relegated to being dependent on the third-person singular past indicative. The article acknowledges that the proposed schema causes difficulties with the algorithm of generating paradigm slots for words that now exhibit strengthening gradation pattern, traditionally considered to be unproductive for Estonian words, and even completely missing for verbs.

Keywords: child language, corpus linguistics, historical linguistics, linguistic variation, morphology, old Estonian, paradigm structure, text statistics, verbal inflection

INTRODUCTION

A description of a language has to indicate how inflectional forms of its words are formed. In addition to explicating rules, linguists have traditionally presented exemplary paradigm tables in grammar books and dictionary guides. Exemplary paradigms provide an intuitive insight into similarities and differences both between inflectional forms and also between inflectional classes – declinations and conjugations.

Over time (often over centuries), starting from the very first description of a language, linguists have continued to search and argue for rule sets and exemplary paradigms that would match the language better. A specific set of questions has concerned intra-paradigm implicational relations between inflectional forms: which ones are more basic and which are their dependents, how is a form inferred from a more basic one, and which forms have to be memorised. This is also the focus of the present paper, looking at Estonian verbal paradigm.

It is customary to use supine (*ma*-infinitive) as the base (and index form in dictionaries) for Estonian verbs. This article, however, agrees with those authors who are dissatisfied with this tradition (Ehala 1997; Help 2004).

One may propose different algorithms for generating the complete set of inflectional forms of Estonian verbs. The algorithms may differ in what is chosen as the starting point for the generation (base form or forms), what the applicable rules are, and how the vocabulary should be divided into inflection classes sharing identical (sub)sets of rules. To check that an algorithm is not merely a speculative proposal by a linguist, but is actually used by people, it is common to look at evidence from children who are acquiring their first language, the history of the language, and also inflectional form usage statistics. These three perspectives are used in this article.

It is reasonable to expect that the base form of a paradigm should be the form that changes the least over time, the one that children acquire first when learning their first language, and the one that is more frequent than other forms of the same word in texts. The first form acquired by Estonian children is a bare stem that expresses command, prohibition, and negation (Salasoo 1995; Kohler 2003: 52–68; Argus 2008: 14; Argus & Bauer 2020). When researching morphology, it is customary for children's language researchers to consider this as the base form. Therefore, the task of this article is to make its argument through language history and usage frequency.

The plan of the article is the following. Section 1 gives an overview of sound gradation as a mechanism of Estonian word inflection and its role in the decisions of earlier linguists as to what might be the base form of a verb. Section 2 describes the Estonian verbal paradigm as a set that consists of a small number of subsets of uniformly inflecting paradigm cells, i.e. conjugational series each of which is modelled after a principal part. This view of a paradigm as an arrangement of different conjugational series will be the one used subsequently in the article. Sections 3 and 4 present empirical evidence relevant to determining the base form of the verbal paradigm. Specifically, Section 3 describes conjugations from the 17th century, juxtaposing them with contemporary conjugations, and Section 4 looks for the paradigm slot with the highest prevalence in the vocabulary of different corpora. Section 5 arrives at

a suggestion of paradigm slots for base form and other principal parts, and shows how their intra-paradigm hierarchy plays out with different conjugations, with Section 5.4 paying special attention to deciding on the dependency relationship between the supine and past tense in the indicative mood. Section 6 in turn presents algorithmic and descriptive issues that arise from the proposed base form selection. Section 7 gives conclusions and hints at new perspectives that subsequently arise for historical, lexicographic and morphology theory-related issues relating to Estonian verbs.

1. BACKGROUND AND TRADITION

Inflectional forms of a word are not used with uniform frequency; certain forms are encountered and produced less likely than others. (We use **word** to denote an item of vocabulary; when used, a word has to be inflected, i.e. appear as an inflectional word form.) A speaker needing to use an unseen form has to create it in a transparent manner on the basis of a known form. Intra-paradigm inheritance structure is thus an inevitable result of language being used by people (Bybee 1995: 237).

Choice of the base form and correspondingly the index form for representing a verb in a dictionary is closely tied to the manner in which words are (non) transparently inflected, and particularly to grade changes in word stems.

In Estonian, in a stress-initial disyllabic sequence, i.e. foot, the first syllable may be characterised as being in quantity degree 1, 2 or 3; the number is related to the syllable length and weight. If this foot happens to be a disyllabic stem (or a word form), then this quantity number is also used to characterise the **quantity grade** (**first**, **second** or **third**) of the word form. Inflecting a word may result in sound changes in its stem. If it is only the length of some phones that alternates, causing the stem to be in either the second (i.e. **weak**) or third (i.e. **strong**) **grade**, then the pattern is called **quantitative gradation**. If the change in stem involves (dis)appearance of a consonant (which is possibly accompanied by phonologically conditioned changes in neighbouring phones), then it is called **qualitative gradation**.

For both the quantitative and qualitative gradation, **weakening gradation** means that the base form is in the strong grade, and **strengthening gradation** means that the base form is in the weak grade.

A disyllabic word may exhibit strengthening, weakening or no gradation, and although native speakers have no difficulties in choosing the right pattern, linguists have found it to be challenging to explicate the rules that the speakers appear to be following.

Anton Thor Helle, the author of the first Estonian–German dictionary, published in 1732, chose supine as the index form and suggested rules for how other verb forms should be inferred from it (Helle 1732: 29–31). In the middle of the 19th century, Eduard Ahrens said that "the verb stem is an imperative from which all other forms are made" (Ahrens 1853: 85). However, despite this, he still justified the choice of the supine as the base form by stating that "…it is much easier to form a weak form from a strong form than a strong form from a weak one, and as the illative (*ma*-infinitive) is always a strong form, it seems expedient to treat the illative (without the *ma* suffix) as the verb stem…. But it should not be forgotten that this way is followed only for practical and not theoretical reasons" (Ahrens 1853: 88).

F. Wiedemann also opined that it is not good for a verb's index form to be sometimes in a weak and sometimes in a strong grade (although this is the case for declinable words). He therefore wrote: "in the interests of consistency, I have decided to use the verbal noun ending in *m* (whose usage partially corresponds to the German infinitive) as the base form, and the verbs are accordingly arranged in an alphabetical order. After all, such a verbal noun formed from any verb is always in the strong grade, and it is easier to form a weak grade from a strong grade than the other way around" (Wiedemann 1875: 438).

The same tradition is continued by several contemporary approaches that either merely state that the choice of the base form is traditional (EKK: 204) or add their own semantic reasoning to the traditional view (EKG: 121).

2. PARADIGM SLOTS, WORD FORMS AND ANALOGY GROUPS

This section introduces the reader to the view of the Estonian verb paradigm as an arrangement of different conjugational series, a view that will used subsequently in the article.

A paradigm is an orderly set of grammatical category value bundles, expressible as word forms (EKK: 289). These bundles are commonly referred to as **paradigm members** or **slots**, reflecting the intuition that paradigm has fixed structure, and every word should have inflectional forms that correspond to category value bundles.

It is known that certain word forms of a verb can be used as models for generating other inflectional forms of that verb: using simple analogy rules, one may infer a set of forms from one basic form, a **principal part** of the paradigm. All the forms connected by these analogy rules form an **analogy group**, i.e. a conjugational series. However, it is not immediately obvious which member of an analogy group should be considered its basic form, and how many groups

are there overall. Specifically, languages have words the morphology of which is more or less irregular, the forms of which are distributed between analogy groups differently, and/or the full paradigms of which require more principal parts than others. Excluding these irregular words in various ways makes simpler language descriptions possible, although this comes with the cost of decreased vocabulary coverage. For example, in his grammar, Elmar Muuk (1927) considers that seven principal parts are necessary, Ülle Viks (1992: 47) thinks that four primary, plus eight secondary, principal parts are needed, and the EKG and (Viht & Habicht 2019: 108–109) regard four principal parts as essential. This raises the question of whether the number of principal parts (and thus analogy groups) is something that is decided by the describer of the system of analogy rules, or whether there are other arguments aside from the elegance of the description of the system itself.

One possibility is to assume that there is a natural connection between the expression of grammatical categories and the grouping of forms into analogy groups, and that with a good description the groups emerge on their own. Therefore, the question is whether inferring forms via principal parts is related to the system of grammatical categories or whether it is independent of it. In other words, are the forms that share a certain category value also similar? For example, all forms that express past simple could be similar, regardless of voice or mood (though not in Estonian).

A way to explicate what categories and values are bundled, and how they are expressed in word forms, is by drawing a table where every grammatical category forms a separate column and the rightmost one contains the word form that expresses the set of values for these categories, one per row. If the ordering of categories in this table is based on the principle that the order of the category columns should reflect the order of the morphs representing those same categories, i.e. starting from the stem and proceeding from left to right, then in the case of a perfectly agglutinative inflection system (one with no allomorphs, i.e. one grammatical category value is expressed by exactly one morph, and a bundle of values is expressed by the sequence of such morphs), the word forms that share common left morphs are grouped in aligned rows in the table. In other words, in such a table, similar word forms are grouped according to their grammatical meaning simply because each morph expresses a single grammatical meaning.

However, if the inflectional system is fusional, i.e., one morpheme can express values for a number of grammatical categories (for example, number along with person, as in Estonian) and one such bundle can be expressed by different allomorphs, then it is possible that two sequences of allomorphs (or formatives) encode completely different grammatical meanings, while the forms of these

sequences themselves coincide. In this case, it may happen that no matter how the category columns are arranged, similar word forms are still not grouped. Or, if we approach it differently and place similar word forms in rows close to each other, then the part of the table expressing categories and their values becomes chaotic.

Although the morphology of the Estonian verb is not perfectly agglutinative, after positioning category columns according to the order of morphemes, and arranging formatives that express category value bundles suitably into rows, we arrive at Table 1. Table 1 helps to see how the paradigm can be grouped by word form formation patterns. In terms of categories and the columns that reflect them, it follows Kaalep's (2015) approach to verb morphology. In this table, the word forms that are formed from one principal part, i.e., belong to one analogy group, are arranged into aligned rows and express similar grammatical meanings.

In Table 1, each such group is surrounded by a rectangle with rounded corners and is denoted by the formative of its principal part (Ø, *GE*, *MA*, *S*, *NUD*, *DA*, *TUD*), the highest frequency paradigm member among those belonging to the same analogy group. All forms of one group are formed from the same stem, and there is no allomorphic alternation of affixes for this stem inside that group. Rows with infinitive forms are situated between rows of finite forms; concord of grammatical meanings with analogy groups is thus achieved, albeit at the expense of systematicity in presentation of categories.

The attempt to present analogy groups by aligning rows, i.e. by similar grammatical meanings, leads to separation of some word forms that could be part of one analogy group. Only 5 to 22 irregular words such as *julgeda – julgenud / julenud – julgege* (dare); *näha – näinud – nähke* (see) have slots separated into groups *DA*, *GE* and *NUD*. The exact number of such words depends on whether some phonologically conditioned stem alternatives are counted as different stems. For example principal parts *tuua – toonud – tooge* (bring) could be regarded as having the same stem, just with long vowel heightening in front of *a* and with alternation of the quantitative grade.

Ovals denote two analogy groups that occur in a small number of paradigms and are clearly irregular in terms of the system. Firstly, only one word – *minema* (go) – has the 2nd person singular present imperative (*mine*) based on the stem that is not the same as the stem for the present indicative (*lähe*). Secondly, 16 words use allomorph *a* for the infinitive (e.g. *müüa* (sell)), and according to the written language norm these words also have the affirmative form of the impersonal indicative (*müüakse*) in that same *DA* analogy group, in contrast to the rest of verbal vocabulary where that paradigm slot (row with example *ela-TAKSE* in table 1) belongs to *TUD* analogy group.

Table 1. *Verb paradigm (both finite and infinite forms) with analogy groups and principal parts' formatives as their symbols.*

voice	tense	mood	number and person	aspect	example	symbol
personal	present	indicative	sg1, sg2, sg3, pl1, pl2, pl3	affirmative	*ela-N, -D, -B, -ME, -TE, -VAD*	
			unspecified	negative	(*ei*) *ela*	
		conditional	sg1, sg2, pl1, pl2, pl3	affirmative	ela-KSIN, -KSID, -KSIME, -KSITE	**Ø**
			unspecified	unspecified	*ela-KS*	
		imperative	sg2	unspecified	*ela*	
			unspecified	unspecified	*ela-GU*	**GE**
			pl1, pl2	unspecified	*ela-GEM, -GE*	
		quotative	unspecified	unspecified	*ela-VAT*	
		participle			*ela-V*	**MA**
		supine and its forms			ela-MA, -MAS, -MAST, -MAKS, -MATA	
	past	indicative	sg1, sg2, sg3, pl1, pl2, pl3	affirmative	*ela-SIN, -SID, -S, -SIME, -SITE*	**S**
			unspecified	negative	(*ei*) *ela-NUD*	
		conditional	sg1, sg2, pl1, pl2, pl3	affirmative	*ela-NUKSIN, -NUKSID, -NUKSIME, -NUKSITE*	
			unspecified	unspecified	*ela-NUKS*	
		imperative	unspecified	unspecified	*ela-NUD*	**NUD**
		quotative	unspecified	unspecified	*ela--NUVAT*	
		participle			*ela-NUD*	
infinitive					ela-DA	**DA**
gerund					ela-DES	
impersonal	present	indicative		affirmative	*ela-TAKSE*	
				negative	*ela-TA*	
		conditional		unspecified	*ela-TAKS*	
		imperative		unspecified	*ela-TAGU*	
		quotative		unspecified	*ela-TAVAT*	
		participle			*ela-TAV*	**TUD**
		supine and its forms			*ela-TAMA*	
	past	indicative		affirmative	*ela-TI*	
				negative	(*ei*) *ela-TUD*	
		conditional		unspecified	*ela-TUKS*	
-------	--------	~~imperative~~		---------	---------	
		quotative		unspecified	*tarvita-TANUVAT*	
		participle			*ela-TUD*	

3. VERB CONJUGATION CLASSES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 17TH CENTURY

This section juxtaposes contemporary conjugation patterns with those from 400 years ago highlighting what has changed and what has stayed the same.

Change in the manner a word is inflected should mean that the base form remains the same while the formation of other forms will be different. If the change included the base form, it would be changing the word itself. Changes in inflectional system do not take place evenly throughout the lexicon, but via changes in conjugation classes as well as by words moving from one conjugation class to another. There are words the paradigm formation of which does not change over time, and analogy groups that persist over time within paradigms. Thus, one could see here a process of analogical change that has certain regularities.

This section, however, does not attempt to provide an exhaustive overview of the verb morphology of the early seventeenth century. Rather, it attempts to capture a moment in the development of the paradigms of individual verbs. This discussion is based on Georg Müller's sermons (Müller 2007).

3.1. Müller's verb conjugation classes

Georg Müller (c. 1570–1608) was an assistant pastor at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Tallinn. An electronic text corpus (VAKK) and an author's dictionary have been created based on 39 manuscripts of his Estonian sermons from 1600 to 1606 (Habicht et al. 2000). All the tokens in the corpus are morphologically tagged and provided with a modern Estonian dictionary keyword: for example, the modern equivalent of *neütis* is 3rd person past indicative of *näitama* (show). There are 99,000 text tokens in the corpus (whereas the elements of compounds are counted as different tokens), of which 18,000 are verbs (including compound words with the verb form at the end, for example, *vlles+toußnut* (up+risen, i.e. ascended)). The vocabulary size of the corpus is 1,800, including 370 verbs of which 30 are unknown today, for example, *günnima, ihastama, luulma*.

The orthography is variable according to the custom at the time, for example *ieema/iema/iæhma/iæma/iehma* (stay); *iooxma/ioxma/iohxma/ioxsma* (run); *leututh / leutut / leudtuth / leuduth* (found). In the following, however, contemporary orthography will be used to present Müller's verb forms. Problems in interpreting and translating historical orthography into modern forms have been extensively discussed elsewhere (Habicht et al. 2000; Prillop 2003, 2004) and will thus not be further elaborated on here. However, it must be acknowl-

edged that sometimes it is impossible to unambiguously decide how the word form was pronounced at the time.

From the point of view of verb morphology, it is important today whether the letter *d* or *t* is used – for example, *astuda* (step; infinitive) vs. *astuta* (step; impersonal present indicative negative). (The distinction between *t* and *d* marks a length contrast in Estonian, not voicing. Orthographic *t* represents a long voiceless stop /t:/, and *d* a short counterpart /t/.) However, according to Prillop (2020: 168), "the length of a consonant does not play a differentiating role in word meaning in German and is thus not given much attention." It is therefore natural that the Low German orthography followed by Müller does not require consistency in denoting the length of the consonant. Thus, it is impossible to tell the quantitative grade of disyllabic word stems with a long first syllable: for example, whether the forms *hackame*, *hackada* and *hackadta* of modern *hakka* (begin) were in the second or the third quantitative grade. It should also be noted that the *d* / *dt* alternation in Müller is also not reliable for differentiation. Therefore, it is impossible to determine whether or not in Müller's discourse the quantitative grade changed in *hakka* (and if so, was it with a weakening or strengthening pattern). In other words, did it belong to the contemporary *kasva* (grow) or *hüppa* (jump) conjugation class.

The procedure for grouping Müller's verbs was the following. As every token in the Müller corpus is accompanied by a corresponding modern Estonian dictionary headword and by the set of grammatical categories the word form represents, it was possible to gather automatically all the instances of one word, count the frequency of each of its forms and allocate the forms into analogy groups. The (dis)similarities of the analogy groups of different words became clear, and it was possible to determine whether a word inflects similarly to another one from the same corpus, i.e. belongs to the same conjugation. The result is available in https://www.cl.ut.ee/ressursid/mylleri_verbid/.

Defining conjugation classes based on the Müller corpus was similar to describing the grammar of a previously undescribed language or describing for the first time the grammar of the verb of a dialect. The problem of correct typology is indeed complex, as is well known from the historical attempts to describe conjugation class systems of Estonian, see (Viht & Habicht 2019: 365–373) for an overview of these historical attempts.

Considering a comparison with contemporary conjugation particularly important, the classification resulted in an impressionistic system of conjugation classes. In the case of several classes, the option of defining parallel forms was opted for, because due to the lack of corpus data, it is not possible to be certain that all actual forms of the word used at that time are represented in the corpus. In short, we cannot rule out that many words had parallel forms.

Following the example of analogy groups known today, Müller's verb forms can be divided into seven analogy groups, except for one difference: the third-person present indicative was sometimes formed with a strong grade stem, for example *istvad* (today *istuvad* (they sit)). This was a common practice in written Estonian until 1872 when the Society of Estonian Literati (Eesti Kirjameeste Selts) decided that in standard Estonian, this form should be based on the same stem as the rest of the indicative present tense forms. (Kask 1984: 139) However, as the difference in the formation of this form compared to the present day does not change the conjugation class of a single word, it is ignored in the present discussion.

The *GE* analogy group is relevant only for 59 of Müller's verbs and was disregarded because it does not affect inflection class affiliations – there are no such classes where only difference is the way the forms of *GE* analogy group are created. The remaining analogy groups appear for the following number of verbs: *Ø* – 258, *DA* – 198, *MA* – 195, *S* – 106, *TUD* – 152, *NUD* – 215, but only 43 verbs have them all. Therefore, some verbs are assigned to a conjugation class even if some of its analogy groups are empty, but other forms and the phonological form of the base form do not contradict the classification. As a final result, almost 200 of the 370 verbs used by Müller were classified. Too few word forms are available to reliably classify the rest.

Table 2 shows conjugation classes via principal parts of the paradigm. Forms that differ from contemporary ones are presented in bold. The forms given as principal parts are the word forms Müller used, so it may be that the principal parts of one conjugation class are represented by different word forms – the corpus simply did not have all the forms of the sample word. The size of a given conjugation class is also indicated for each example paradigm.

Table 2. *Conjugation classes identified in Müller's sermons.*

Ø	*DA*	*MA*	*S*	*TUD*	*NUD*	No. of words
ela	*elada*	*elama*	*elas*	*elatud*	*elanud*	19
kirjuta	***vihasta/*** *vihastada*	*kirjutama*	*kirjutas* / ***kirjutis***	***kirjutud***	*kirjutanud*	63
valitse	*valitseda*	*valitsema*	***valitsis***	*valitsetud* / ***valitsud***	*valitsenud*	10
ütle	*ütelda*	*ütlema*	***ütlis***	*üteldud*	*ütelnud*	5
otsi	*otsida*	*otsima* / ***otsma***	*uppus* / ***istis***	*otsitud*	*sattunud* / ***satnud***	30
hinga	*hinga[**d/t**]a*	*hingama*	*hingas*	*hingatud*	*hinganud*	9
pööra	*pöörda*	*pöördma*	*pöördis*	*pöördud*	*pöördnud*	14
kanna	*kanda* / ***kandada***	*kandma*	*kandis*	*kannetud*	*kandnud*	27

Many words that have irregular inflection rules today had either completely or almost the same inflection rules back then. For example, monosyllabic stem verbs (*joo* (drink), *jää* (stay), *käi* (walk), etc.) were conjugated as they are today, and were thus also irregular in terms of the conjugation system that existed 400 years ago. Irregular verbs are not reflected in Table 2.

Comparing the conjugation classes then and now, it is evident that the analogy group of a bare stem is the only one that remains unchanged in all classes for 400 years, and that when the word changes its conjugation class, the forms of this bare stem analogy group remain the same while others change. It can thus be concluded that the base form of the word is some form belonging to the bare stem analogy group.

4. PARADIGM SLOT FREQUENCY PROFILES IN TEXT CORPORA

Paradigm slot statistics based on a text corpus makes it possible to narrow the set of hypotheses concerning intra-paradigm dependencies.

Not all inflected forms are kept entirely in human memory; some are formed on the basis of other intra-paradigmatic forms (usually only one) of the same word. This principal part can only be a slot that is already known, i.e. it has been previously encountered. This means that we should not encounter a word's inflectional form representing a dependent paradigm slot without also encountering its principal part in that same synchronic corpus, and this should be true for every analogy group, as well as for the whole vocabulary.

To put it differently, the **type frequency** (i.e. the number of unique word forms) per any paradigm slot should not exceed the type frequency per its governing principal part, and the type frequency per the paradigm slot that acts as the base should not be smaller than type frequency per any other slot.

Counting and comparing type frequencies per paradigm slots reveals that different corpora are very similar in noun paradigm slot frequency profiles, and very dissimilar in verb paradigm slot frequency profiles. It can be said in advance that both the differences in verb paradigm slot frequency orders and the difficulties in associating them with other regularities (the history of language changes, the correlation between the length and frequency of forms, and the order in which children acquire the forms) force us to look at a number of different corpora.

4.1. Declinable words

In the case of declinable words, the corpus data are straightforward. On the basis of one from the family of UT corpora, the 0.5-million-token morphologically tagged corpus of written language, Kaalep (2018) has found that type frequency per singular nominative exceeds the type frequency per any other paradigm slot. This is followed (in decreasing order) by singular genitive, singular partitive, plural nominative, etc. Type frequency per singular case exceeds that of the same case in plural.

In four of the five 0.1-million-token sub-corpora of this corpus (journalism, Estonian literature, the popular science magazine *Horisont*, George Orwell's *1984*), the type frequencies per different cases coincide with the pattern found in the whole corpus. Only the 0.1-million-token corpus of legal texts is different, as its type frequencies per singular and plural genitive are unusually large. The order is: genitive, nominative, and partitive singular followed by genitive and nominative plural. Additionally, a 0.1-million-token conversation corpus representing spoken language has a nominal paradigm slot type frequency profile similar to that of standardised written language. The morphologically tagged 0.1-million-token chatroom corpus word usage differs from standardised written language only in that the type frequency per singular partitive is a little higher than per singular genitive.

In addition to the UT corpora, one might consider the 0.4-million-token caregiver language portion of CHILDES Estonian. It represents the language that children hear at the language learning age. This means that the frequency characteristics of this corpus are the ones which children base their language knowledge on. After automatic morphological analysis and disambiguation (for a description of the tools, see Kaalep & Vaino 2000), it turned out that the order of the topmost cases by their type frequencies was the same as in the corpus of written language described above.

The intra-paradigm implicational hierarchy is in accordance with the order of the type frequencies of its slots: nominative singular at the top, followed by genitive and partitive, and then the other cases (Kaalep 2018).

The order of the type frequencies is also in line with the rule that more frequent items are shorter. The singular nominative case has no ending, a theme vowel is added to singular genitive stem, the partitive must have a theme vowel and/or case ending *-d* / *-t,* etc.

4.2. Verbs

In stark contrast to the almost non-existing inter-corpus variation in type frequency order of the nominal paradigm slots, the type frequency order of verb paradigm slots shows great inter-corpus variation between the same corpora.

Figure 1 shows for five corpora (a subset of those eight described in section 4.1) the proportion of the verbal vocabulary (in percentages) that turns up to realise this paradigm slot. (The percentages add up to more than 100% because one verb can turn up in several different inflectional forms.) The slots are denoted by their affix formatives (as in Table 1). Importantly, they represent all seven analogy groups, with the top slots of every group in terms of their type frequencies.

Figure 1 shows that the frequency profile of even the most prevalent paradigm slots is quite different in different corpora. In the literature corpus, 55% of the verbs turn up as the third-person past indicative mood (*S*), 35% as *nud*-participles or negations of past tense indicative mood (*NUD)*, 35% as third-person singular indicative mood (*B*). In contrast, in the CHILDES corpus, more than 45% of the verbs turn up as the second-person present imperative or negations of the indicative mood (bare stem with no ending, marked as Ø), 45% as (*B*), 35% as the second-person singular indicative mood (*D*), and 30% as infinitive (*DA*). In the chat room corpus, too, almost 40% of the verbs turn up as bare stems (Ø), more than 30% as (*B*) and almost 30% as (*DA*). In the conversations corpus, 35% of the verbs turn up as (*B*), 35% as (*DA*), and almost 30% as supine (*MA*). In the journalism corpus, about 50% of the verbs turn up as (*B*), about 45% as (*DA*), and almost 40% as (*S*).

There are slots the lines of which do not really stand out in the figure (for example, *MA*) or do not stand out well. This means that the proportion of the vocabulary realising these slots is similar in different corpora.

Paradigm slot statistics for the different corpora provides conflicting evidence as to what could be the base form – *B*, Ø, or *S*. The recognition that the genre characteristics of the text corpus influences the choice of verb forms more and differently than that of noun forms means that the nature of the corpus must be carefully considered when examining the system of verb morphology. Only in the CHILDES and chat room corpus is the shortest verb form also the most common. One argument supporting the idea that literature and journalism corpora are not a suitable basis for studying language as a learnable system is that they include genre-specific texts the creation of which needs to be specially studied for. On the other hand, chat rooms, although having written communication instead of oral, seem to represent natural usage of language, i.e., language that does not require one to learn genre-specific features.

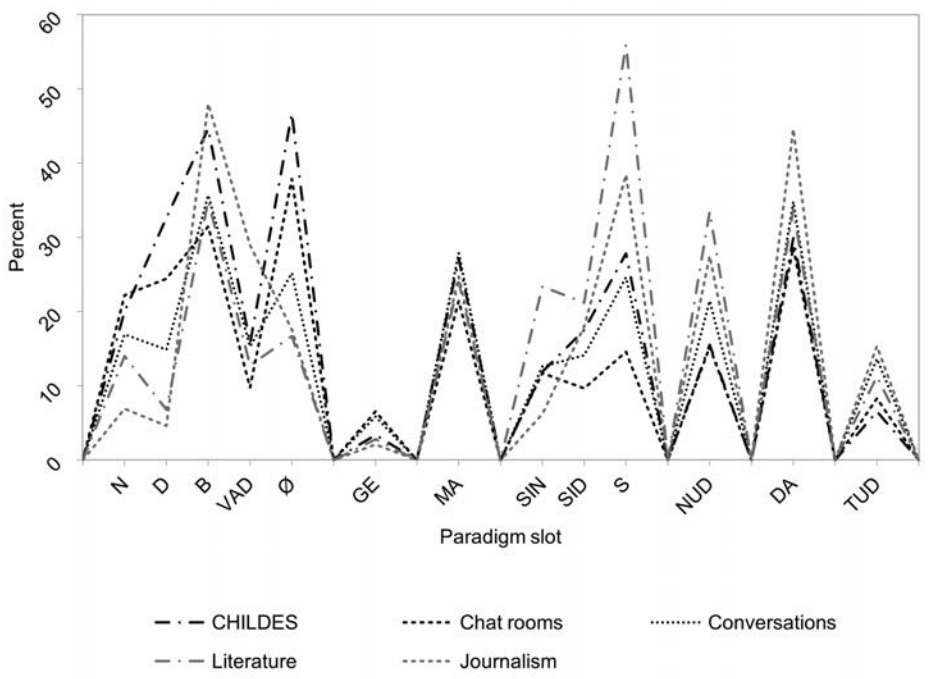

Figure 1. *Proportion of vocabulary realising a paradigm slot in different corpora.*

CHILDES should reflect the natural use of language on which language proficiency is based. On looking at the usage of verb forms, it could be said that there is a lot of talk about wishes, commands, and refusals in this corpus. This is typical of situations where people do something together, whether they are a mother and a child or builders building a house together (*anna haamer*, *võta ise*, *nii ei saa*, *ära siia astu* (give me a hammer, take it yourself, cannot do that, don't step here)). Interestingly, the usage statistics for the verb paradigm slots of the chat room corpus are very similar to CHILDES, indicative of a functional style that is used for similar (albeit mental, not physical) interactions. The frequency profile of verb paradigm slots in the literature corpus reflects the fact that it contains many narratives (descriptions of how someone once did something). The journalism and conversation corpora are both heterogeneous in terms of genre and thus their frequency profiles are not easy to interpret. For better interpretation, the corpora might need to be divided into even smaller sub-sections (for example, opinion articles, news; storytelling, talk during problem-solving).

Unsurprisingly, the caregivers' language in the CHILDES corpus is in harmony with the order in which children acquire inflectional forms. The corpus

of chat rooms, in turn, shows that the functional style represented by the caregivers' language is not different from the communication style of adults, insofar as it is manifested by the frequencies of verb paradigm slots.

The takeaway message from this section is that not every corpus is in accordance with evidence about language learning stages by children, although relevant corpora are.

5. IMPLICATIONAL HIERARCHY OF PARADIGM SLOTS

Having established (in sections 3 and 4) that the best candidate for the base form of the paradigm is the bare stem (Ø), we can start to sketch the rest of the paradigm hierarchy: how are the principal parts related to each other, and how do these relationships reveal themselves in conjugation classes?

Figure 2 shows a hypothetical implicational hierarchy of principal parts. The direction of the arrow is from the basis of inference towards the inferred. However, this does not mean that every form of every word should be inferred from its immediate head. The form may simply be memorised, or it may be based on another form higher up the same line of hierarchy. For example, in the case of *lepi* (agree), *S* is based on *DA* (*leppida*> *leppis*), and *TUD* is based on Ø (*lepi*> *lepitud*), but in the case of *hakka* (start), *S* is based on Ø (*hakka*> *hakkas*), and *TUD* is based on *DA* (*hakata*> *hakatud*). This means that Figure 2 is suitable for narrowing down the choice of possible principal parts, but for making the final choice, something specific to conjugation class or to the word still needs to be known. What it is, and how would possible additional rules and restrictions allow a more precise and stricter hierarchy to be presented will not be described here.

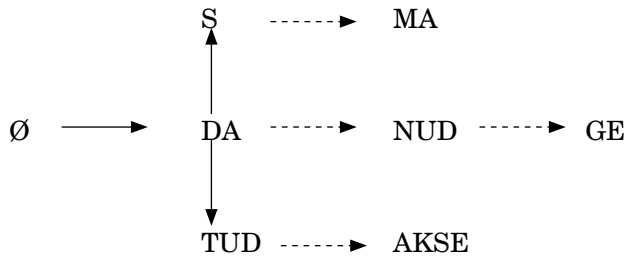

Figure 2. *Proposition for implicational hierarchy of principal parts.*

The principal parts linked with bold arrows represent the four traditionally distinguished analogy groups (for example, Viks 1992; EKG; Viht & Habicht

2019) with the exception that instead of the third-person singular (*B*) and supine (*MA*), the bare stem (*Ø*) and past tense (*S*) are used to represent them here.

The endpoints of dashed arrows represent secondary principal parts. They stand for analogy groups the very existence of which becomes apparent only in paradigms of a few words and in view of a few irregular forms. For the vast majority of words, the word forms of these groups may even be included in the analogy group higher in hierarchy. For example, a need to infer some word forms from *S* and some from *MA* is necessary for only 15 words the past indicative forms of which are formed by the (allo)morph *i* (*sõi – sööma* (eat), *pesi – pesema* (wash)). Using different rule sets and bases for *TUD* and *AKSE* analogy groups is necessary for only the standardised forms of 16 words (*viiakse,* not **viidakse* (take)). Separating *DA*, *NUD* and *GE* is necessary for 5–22 words (*süüa – söönud* (eat), *joosta – jooksnud – jooske / jookske* (run)), the exact number being dependent on what counts as differences in word forms, as explained in section 2.

The present approach differs from the traditional one in that it proposes that first, principal parts form a hierarchy, and second, that the bare stem is at the top and the supine is relegated to a secondary principal part.

This hierarchy becomes apparent only when we look at inflectional classes. Agglutinative morphological systems (such as Turkish noun declination) are not allomorphic or only have allomorphs that are phonologically motivated, i.e., each paradigm slot can only be realised in one way. All slots are easily predictable and there is only one conjugation class. However, if it is possible to express some grammatical category value by means of different allomorphs, i.e., for each word there is a need to choose between them, the question of basis of this choice immediately arises.

In the simplest case, the choice depends only on the phonological form of the base form. For example, all words with *a*-terminal base forms inflect in one way and all other words in another way (this one condition may affect the choice of allomorphs of several different morphemes, i.e., two conjugation classes differ in many forms). However, it is possible that some slots of the paradigm are not predictable from the base form: over time, the phonological structure of individual forms has changed and/or the rules that previously allowed one word form to be inferred from another are no longer applicable. In this case, language users simply have to memorise these word forms.

In fusional languages, words are divided into conjugation classes. Some conjugation classes are productive, i.e., new words can be added to them, and all forms can be constructed from the base form by rules. Typically, they already have a large number of words. Productive classes differ from each other by the set of rules that are applicable for inferring all the word forms, and also by the phonological-derivational structure of the base forms of their member words;

it is this difference in base form structures that allows a speaker to pigeonhole words into the correct classes.

In addition to productive classes, there are non-productive ones, i.e., no new words are added to them, and not all forms can be inferred from the base form. Non-productive classes vary in size and regularity. For some, it is enough to know two principal parts; in the case of the most irregular, even seven may not be enough (for example, *söö* (eat), *näe* (see), *mine* (go), *ole* (be)).

Before showing how the proposed hierarchy 'works', a few words on the phonological shape of words belonging to all five productive Estonian conjugational classes are necessary.

The word form by which to determine class membership is the bare stem. One must consider whether the word is a derivation, the number of syllables of the stem, the final vowel, and in the case of disyllabic stems, its quantity grade.

1) If the stem is non-derived, disyllabic, ends with *a*, and has the third quantity grade, it changes like *hüppa* (jump). One must also take into account whether the word can be changed into having the second quantity grade at all: for example, *koonda* (aggregate) is in the third quantity grade, but by the rules of the quantitative grade alteration, it cannot be shortened into the second quantity grade, and thus it cannot belong to this class.

2) If the stem is non-derived, disyllabic, ends with *i*- or *u*, and is in the second quantity grade, it inflects as *õpi* (learn).

3) If the stem is disyllabic, ends with *le*, and is in the third quantity grade, it inflects like *hüple* (jiggle).

4) If the stem is trisyllabic and ends with *ele*, it inflects like *rabele* (struggle) (i.e., like both *hüple* and *ela*).

5) In all other cases the word inflects like *ela* (live).

As the listed classes are productive, no dictionary can contain all the words belonging to them. However, based on the *Filosoft* speller dictionary, *ela*-class contains 5,000, *lepi*-class 1,800, *hakka*-class 400, *hüppa*-class 150, and *rabele*-class 40 words (of the words with grade alteration only those with quantitative grade alternation are considered here because qualitative grade alternation is a non-productive phenomenon, i.e., both the strong and the weak grade form must be memorised). There are about 350 words in the speller dictionary that do not belong to the five classes listed above, i.e., they belong to non-productive conjugation classes. 250 of these words exhibit qualitative grade alternation.

Below, the ways of inferring word forms from a slot higher in the hierarchy are outlined.

5.1. Bare stem (Ø)

The top of the hierarchy, or the base form, is a bare stem. In the class without grade alternation, i.e. *ela*-class, all other principal parts can be easily derived from this. In fact, formally one could choose any slot of the paradigm to be the base form for this class because producing any form is trivial: just append an affix to the bare stem. The building of *ela*-class forms is not discussed below.

5.2. Infinitive (*DA*)

In productive conjugation classes, the infinitive can be obtained from the base form in the following way.

The default affix allomorph is *-da*; in the *hüppa-class*, *-ta* (*hüpata*).

In the *hüppa*-class, a weak grade must be formed from the stem of the base form. In the *lepi*-class, a strong grade must be formed. This is further discussed in section 6 Problems.

Words belonging to the *hüple*-class are disyllabic words with a stem in the strong grade, i.e. in the third quantitative grade. When forming the infinitive, the stem is converted into the weak grade and the final *e* deleted. To eliminate pronunciation difficulties, an *e* is inserted in front of *l* (*hüpelda*). *Rabele* can be interpreted in two ways in terms of its phonological form. It is trisyllabic, so it has no grade alteration and belongs to the *ela*-class (*rabeleda*). However, considering it ends in *le*, it may belong to the same conjugation class as *hüple*, which means that when making the infinitive, the final *e* of the stem is deleted (*rabelda*).

If a word belongs to a conjugation class with grade alteration, meaning in *lepi-, hüppa-,* or *hüple-class*, and its grade-altering is qualitative, then speakers simply have to remember the form of the opposite-grade infinitive. Otherwise, they form the infinitive with quantitative grade alteration.

There are about a hundred words belonging to other non-productive conjugation classes (for example, *naera* (laugh), *seisa* (stand), *sööda* (feed), *nuta* (weep), *tule* (come), *too* (bring), *vii* (take)) and their infinitive is not predictable from the bare stem. It must simply be memorised.

5.3. The third-person singular of the past indicative mood (*S*)

By default, the past tense marker *-s* is added to the bare stem (Ø), although in the *lepi-class* it is added to the infinitive stem (*DA*) instead. The same rule applies to qualitative grade-changing words of the *lepi-, hüppa-*, or *hüple*-classes.

In any case, the final vowel of the stem remains the same as at the end of the bare stem.

If the stem of the infinitive (*DA*) ends with a consonant, i.e. the word belongs to an unproductive class *seisa* (stand), *naera* (laugh), *saada* (send), *leia* (find), *peta* (deceive), or *jäta* (leave), then the stem of (*S*) must be in strong grade and its creation requires knowledge of the bare stem as well as the infinitive form. The theme vowel of the stem will be *i*.

There are about twenty words in other non-productive conjugation classes and their forms simply need to be memorised.

5.4. The position of supine (*MA*) and past indicative (*S*) in the hierarchy

The morphology of the supine and *s*-allomorphic past tense forms is fairly similar across conjugation classes. Traditional approaches deeming *MA* to be the base form of the word think the forms of the past tense are derived from it. The rule would be as follows:

The forms of *MA* and *S* are based on the same stem. If *MA* has a consonant-final stem (*naerma* (laugh)), then *S* is formed by adding the vowel *i* (*naeris)*. If *MA* has a vowel-final stem (*uskuma* (believe)), then *S* is formed simply by adding the tense marker to the same stem (*uskus*). These regularities are valid no matter the conjugation class of the word. They do not apply only to 17 irregular monosyllabic words (*saama* (get), *tooma* (bring), etc.) and to 11 disyllabic words whose past tense marker is *i* (*pesi* (washed), *tegi* (did), *o*li (was), *lasi* (let), etc.). *Kaitsema / kaitsma – kaitses* (defend) and *maitsema / maitsma – maitses* (taste) are also exceptions to that rule.

However, if we assume that *MA* is not the word's base form (because Ø is), then the question arises whether *S* could be the base of *MA*. The rule would be symmetrical to the above rule based on *MA*, for only the base and the derived would have exchanged positions. If the stem vowel of *S* is the same as the vowel of Ø, then *MA* has the same stem. If the vowel of *S* is different (in this case it is the vowel *i*), then *MA* is based on the *S* stem minus the vowel *i*, i.e., on the consonant-final stem. In parallel to the case when inferring was assumed to be based on *MA*, this rule does not apply to irregular monosyllabic stems and to words with the *i*-marked past tense.

The exception and problem for both bases – *MA* and *S* – is the existence of parallel forms for *MA – kaitsema / kaitsma* (defend), *maitsema / maitsma* (taste), and singular for *S – kaitses, maitses*. The only theoretically plausible pairs of *MA* and *S* would be *(m | k)aitsema – (m | k)aitses* and *(m | k)aitsma – (m | k)aitsis.*

In earlier times, *(m|k)aitsis* was used indeed, according to VAKK, for example, A. Thor Helle 1739, Fr. R. Kreutzwald 1840). Now the question is: what was the chain of events that led to the contemporary forms? Did *(m|k)aitsis* change into *(m|k)aitses*, and this induced *(m|k)aitsema*, with *(m|k)aitsma* remaining as a remnant from the past? Or, alternatively, did *(m|k)aitsma* develop an alternative form *(m|k)aitsema* which in turn induced *(m|k)aitses*? This alternative seems unlikely, because how come the ability of *(m|k)aitsma* to induce *S* disappeared completely, as evidenced by the lack of *(m|k)aitsis* in contemporary Estonian?

To clarify the issue, we can turn to words that are currently leaving their conjugation class. In this case, alternative word forms for the same paradigm slot, with different frequencies, are used. Table 3 shows the frequencies in the etTenTen13 corpus of the principal parts of the three words *naase* (return), *veena* (convince) and *mööna* (concede) that historically belong to the *naera*-class. To form all the principal parts of the *naera*-class (except for the bare stem), it is necessary to remember the infinitive (*DA*). The top row of a cell contains the historical (which is also the contemporary normative) form, and the bottom row the form according to its new conjugation class. The numbers reflect the token frequency of the old/new form, respectively.

Table 3. *Frequencies of principal parts of words in the process of changing their conjugation class (etTenTen13).*

Ø	*DA*	*S*	*MA*	*NUD*	*TUD*	*GE*
naase 215	*naasta* *naaseda* 2002/95	*naasis* *naases* 1154/519	*naasma* *naasema* 415/44	*naasnud* *naasenud* 1462/18	*naastud* *naasetud* 217/0	*naaske* *naasege* 9/0
veena 546	*veenda* *veenata* 3523/3	*veenis* *veenas* 549/19	*veenma* *veenama* 502/2	*veennud* *veenanud* 274/2	*veendud* *veenatud* 102/0	*veenge* *veenake* 18/0
mööna 16	*möönda* *möönata* 346/0	*möönis* *möönas* 1785/43	*möönma* *möönama* 366/1	*möönnud* *möönanud* 121/2	*mööndud* *möönatud* 10/0	*möönge* *möönake* 1/0

These words have started to move from their historical conjugation class to one corresponding to the phonological structure of their base forms (bare stems), in which it is not necessary to memorise anything other than the base form for deriving any forms: the disyllabic *naase* (return), which ends with *e* and has a long first syllable, is on the road to the non-gradational *ela*-class, while similar *a*-final words *veena* (convince) and *mööna* (concede) are on the road to becoming gradational *hakka*-class words. For all three words, only the analogy group with the bare stem remains unchanged.

The frequency differences between the words themselves and between the principal parts (Ø, *DA*, *S*, etc.) are irrelevant, but the frequencies of possible alternative realisations are significant. Specifically, the numerical relations between the old and the new forms show that the analogy groups are moving to a new conjugation class at a different pace: some have barely started, i.e., the forms are still old-fashioned, while other groups use many new forms instead of old ones. New forms are most widely used in the past indicative (*S*), i.e., this group has reached the farthest point in its transition. In the remaining groups, new forms are far less likely to replace the old ones, i.e., they are much more conservative. For example, when comparing the ratios of old/new forms of *S* and *MA*, the likelihood of meeting an innovative *S* form is greater than the likelihood of meeting an innovative *MA* form: for *naase,* five times, for *veena* and *mööna*, ten times. (*Naase* seems to have gone further with conjugation class change than *veena* and *mööna*: the new forms of *naase* are now more likely to replace old ones than those of *veena* and *mööna*.)

From the point of view of the intra-paradigm hierarchy of paradigm slots, the logic is that the way the principal part inflects must change before the way the inferred form inflects: language users must see the new principal part before they can form anything on its basis. Thus, since *S* moves toward the new way of inflecting faster than *MA*, the latter cannot be the basis for the former. On the contrary, *S* must be the basis of *MA*.

In addition, during the period of learning to speak, children start using the indicative past tense (*S*) forms earlier than the supine (*MA*). (Vihman & Vija 2008; Argus & Bauer 2020)

It turns out that the supine is only a secondary principal part, i.e. occupies a far less prominent position in the paradigm hierarchy than the linguistic tradition assumes.

6. PROBLEMS

If the base form of the verb is always assumed to be a strong-grade stem, then the only possible grade alteration pattern would be towards the weak grade. Indeed, this has been the approach this far. However, if the data on language acquisition and change over time show that the base form may be in the weak grade, as in the *lepi*-class, then there is a need to describe how a productive grade alteration pattern towards the stronger grade can take place at all. This is a serious problem for the morphologist (which has been successfully ignored for 150 years through the choice of the base form), with no solution currently visible.

The most serious objection to the productive grade alteration pattern towards the stronger grade is that today a strong grade word form can be inferred from a weak grade one in several ways. For example, the strong grade infinitive (*DA*) of a word ending with …*angu* could be either …*anguda* (like *manguda* (cadge, scrounge)) or …*ankuda* (like *vankuda* (falter, teeter)). However, language usage data shows that possibly faulty alternatives are not created, i.e., language users unanimously choose the same correct way. This could mean that they do not create this strong grade form of this type of words according to a rule, but already have it in memory. This, in turn, would mean that *DA* still cannot be formed from Ø. All in all, this is a logical contradiction.

This logical contradiction is of the same type as seen when taking a closer look at nominative singular and genitive singular forms of declinable words. Consonant-ending nominative is moulded into genitive by appending a theme vowel, such as …*eit* > …*eide* (such as *eide* (hag)) or > …*eidi* (such as *kleidi* (dress)). The choice of vowel seems to be unpredictable. However, language usage data show that despite this seeming impossibility of predicting, users very rarely make mistakes, as if they had the right version in their memory. In this case, the solution comes from an observation that (depending on the phonological structure of the word) some vowels are appended to very few words. This means that the users really do have the right genitive versions stored in memory, although not necessarily for all the words, but rather just for a few of them. The users have to remember the short list of irregular words that inflect with exceptional vowels. For other words, the rule is that the suitable vowel is the one usually used for similar words (Kaalep 2012).

Would a similar solution be possible when choosing the right infinitive form (*DA*) for *lepi*-class words? There is some hope in the fact that for many words, the strengthening grade alteration can still be applied according to some rules and in that even if it cannot, the alternatives have unequal probabilities. In the *lepi*-class, there are 1,800 verbs with altering quantitative grade. The only group among them for which the formation of a strong grade is not unambiguously determined are words with the structure C* V [V | L] G [*u* | *i*], i.e. disyllabic *u*- or *i*-ending words in the second quantity grade, and their internal phones are either two vowels (a long vowel or a diphthong; V) or a vowel and a sonorant (L = l, m, n, r) followed by a short stop (G = g, b, d), for example, *vangu*, (falter, teeter) *mangu*, (cadge, scrounge) *räägi*, (talk) *määgi* (bleat). Their strong grade can be formed either by lengthening the short stop – *vankuda, rääkida*, which is done in 150 words, or by lengthening the sonorant (not shown in orthography) – *manguda*, *määgida*, which is done in 25 words. This means that, in principle, it would be easier to memorise the rarer pattern word by word.

If these 25 words were common and old, it would be very plausible that their irregular morphology was memorised. However, many of the 25 words have recently entered the language, for example, *svingi*, (swing) *hängi* (hang) and thus the existence and mechanism of a specific grade alteration pattern is not clear yet.

Another problem arises with qualitative grade altering words, such as *pöa – pügada* (shear, prune) the bare stem of which was originally in weak grade and is being replaced by a strong grade stem, i.e., *pöa* > *püga*. Such a development is incompatible with the claim that the bare stem is the base form: how can it be that the base form changes but other forms remain the same? As a solution, it could be suggested that for some words, the analogy group forms of a bare stem may be so rare that the bare stem really cannot function as the basis for other forms, and becomes similar to one of the more common ones (especially the infinitive). The word *pöa*/*püga* may serve as an example: in etTenTen13 *pügada* occurs 500 times, *pöetud* 130 times, and *pöa*/*püga* only 20 times.

7. SUMMARY AND FURTHER THEORETICAL PROBLEMS

This article offers explanations for some phenomena in the Estonian verb morphology, although in turn some things that were not unexplainable according to previous theory, have become so. Thus, the article highlights the need for clarification and rather asks questions than gives exhaustive answers.

The article presents structure of the verb paradigm by grouping paradigm slots according to grammatical categories, as well as by analogy groups related to the principal parts. The analogy groups might be called building blocks of the paradigm: to describe how to infer the word forms of a paradigm, it is sufficient to describe how to infer one word form of every analogy group. In this article, analogy groups make up the prism, or the method of grouping usage-based data, through which to look at language change over time, acquisition of the first language by children, and word form usage statistics. The choice of the paradigm slot that represents an analogy group, in turn, is arbitrary from the point of view of paradigm structure description. However, in this article, the slot with the highest type frequency has been chosen as this representative.

The article suggests that the bare stem should be considered as the base form of the verb. The other principal parts are the infinitive, the third-person singular past indicative, and the past participle of the impersonal voice/negation of the indicative mood. These suggestions are based on the phenomena that become visible in language usage: morphology changes since the 17th century, the order of the verb forms children acquire when learning their first language, and form usage frequencies in text corpora. In addition, the algorithmic possibility of

inferring one word form from another is also taken into account. If such an algorithm could not be proposed (for example, to infer every strong grade stem for *lepi*-class words), then failure is not considered a sufficient argument to immediately rule out the existence of an implicational relationship between word forms.

If the hierarchy of verb paradigm slots is as proposed in this article, several traditional positions need to be reconsidered. Further research should show whether the new perspective is better than the traditional one.

1) According to tradition (EKK), there are no strengthening grade alteration conjugation classes among verbs (which is surprising, as they exist among declinable forms). It now turns out that the productive *lepi*-class has strengthening grade alteration.

2) The claim that there has been an internal loss of phones corresponding to universal sound change in verbs (for example, *laulamaan* > *laulma* (sing)) (Kettunen 1962: 162) needs to be reconsidered, as it concerns one of the principal parts of secondary importance. Perhaps these are simply analogy shifts within the paradigm, which in turn are caused by the fact that allomorphs used to express the infinitive and the past tense have been replaced by others (*laulaa* > *laulada* > *laulda*; *lauloi* > *laulis*).

3) Some of the keywords in dictionaries that have very similar meanings to other words and are tagged as archaic are actually not different words but exhibit different conjugation patterns of the same word. For example, keywords *koolma* and *koolema* are supine forms of the same word *koole* (die); *ulguma* and *uluma* are supine forms of *ulu* (howl). (It is apparent in both cases that the word is moving into the *ela*-class.) Perhaps the tradition that supine is the index form of a verb should be changed?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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WEB RESOURCES

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etTenTen13 = A corpus of Estonian language webpages downloaded from the Internet on Keeleveeb www.keeleveeb.ee/dict/corpus/ettenten/about.html.

UT corpora = Corpora. The University of Tartu computer linguistics research group https://www.cl.ut.ee/korpused.

VAKK = The corpus of old written language https://doi.org/10.15155/TY.0005.

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LAYERS OF FOLKLORIC VARIATION: COMPUTATIONAL EXPLORATIONS OF POETIC AND NARRATIVE TEXT CORPORA

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Abstract: Variation is a core feature of folklore that plays a part in configuring the processes of folkloric communication, transmission and creativity. Computational analysis of large folklore collections offers new outlooks on the study of variation. The article explores the nature of folkloric variation on the basis of folk song and fairy tale text corpora from the Estonian Folklore Archives. Our enquiry into regional variation in Estonian folk song showed different patterns of geographic variation for metre, repertoire and language. To investigate further the possibilities to disassemble the components of variation we turned to a smaller corpus of fairy tale texts from the distinct Seto language community. The results of stylometric analysis of fairy tales collected within the close language community as a rule found that word usage patterns in stories told by the same storytellers were closer to each other than stories with the same content (i.e. tale types). However, other factors, such as collectors' individual styles, recording time, length of text, and storyteller's place of origin contributed notably to similarity as per stylometric scores.

The study has shown that the individual features and aspects of such a complex phenomenon as folklore can follow its own variation patterns. Computational analysis of the variation in large text corpora helps us get a better understanding of the functioning of variation, and the processes of folkloric creation. However, the layers of folkloric variation are not that easy to disassemble, one must be aware of the biases in text corpora and keep in mind the effect of the linguistic variation on the results.

Keywords: fairy tales, folklore, network analysis, runosong, stylometry, variation

INTRODUCTION

Variation is a core feature of folklore denoting diversification of an element or aspect of folkloric expression in its different occurrences whereby these occurrences reveal recognisable similarity. It intertwines the two poles of folklore, creative expression and transmission of existing knowledge and practice. In historical folkloristics, variation has generally been seen as a subtask of classification of folklore texts. However, variation as a phenomenon has rarely caught the specific attention of researchers. Combining large text corpora with the computational analysis might be expected to shed light on the essence and factors of folkloric variation in more general terms. In this article we explore the variation of different aspects of folklore texts in the corpora of Estonian folk songs and fairy tales with the help of various computational methods.

VARIATION AS AN ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF FOLKLORE

Variation is a universal natural phenomenon, and can be seen in the human mind and human expression. Michel de Certeau (1984) claims that the main attribute of cultural transmission is the changing nature of everything that is being passed on. In folkloristics, variation is usually defined as a continuous creative modification within certain limits given by tradition, the concept partly overlapping with improvisation and oral composition (Reichl 2007; Harvilahti 1992; Sykäri 2014). Variation is enacted in the middle field of the main categories of folkloric transmission (stability and innovation, communal and individual, acquisition and expression, knowledge and creativity), and is often shaped by external circumstances such as environment or language. It is a feature that allows folklore to react to events and phenomena with the help of traditional knowledge, to adapt to changing circumstances (Sarv 2008).

Alan Dundes (1989) has claimed that variation is a key concept in folkloristics, a phenomenon that distinguishes folklore from "high culture" and "mass culture". Lauri Honko (2000) states that variation is a defining feature of oral culture, a life-blood of oral tradition, whereas in literary culture, authorship and individual creativity have gained more importance. Juri Lotman (1977) considered the use of variation, instead of unrestricted creativity, to be an aesthetic preference characteristic of folklore, "an aesthetic of sameness" whereby creativity is restricted by given structures, models and rules. Walter J. Ong considers variative expression a practical preference and a tool to secure the preservation of relevant information in conditions of oral memorisation (Ong 1982).

Variation in folklore can be observed both diachronically and synchronically, at individual, situational, communal, regional levels. This complexity can be analysed either through the comparison of selected formalised features of folklore, usually on the basis of recorded performances or by surveying the process of composition and performance of folklore. The study of variation is a multi-layered task of comparison in which various features of folkloric communication (for example content, poetic formulae, meter, language use, melody, performance, functions, communicative aims and modes) and their density dynamics should be taken into account.

In folkloristics, variability has been seen, since the very beginning of the discipline, as an essential attribute of folklore texts; folkloristics has even been termed "the science of variation" (Levin in Beyer & Chesnutt 1997). Despite, or because of, this essentiality, variation as a phenomenon has rarely been the focus of folklore studies (Pöysä 2000).

Research into variation in folklore started in the historic-geographic school in the late 1800s and was mainly used in folk song (Krohn 1926; Kuusi 1949; Dorson 1963; Wolf-Knuts 2000; Tampere 1932; Normann 1935) and folk tale studies (Anderson 1923, 1951, 1956; Uther 2004), developing the concepts of type and variant. The structuralist approach analysed variation for the study of construction principles and the poetic features of folklore phenomena (Bogatyrev & Jakobson 1972; for example Propp 1968 [1928]; in folk songs, for example Steinitz 1934; Anderson 1935; Sadeniemi 1951; Leino 1970; Sarv 2000).

One of the most serious theoretical attempts to approach folklore variation as a phenomenon was Walter Anderson's Law of Self-Correction and his experiments on the transmission of folklore (Anderson 1923, 1951, 1956; see also Seljamaa 2005; Hafstein 2001). Oral-formulaic theory, as developed by Milman Parry and Albert Lord, saw variation as a natural result of oral composition (Parry 1930; Lord 1960; Foley 1985; Ong 1982; on application to Estonian folk songs, see Kolk 1962; Tedre 1964; Harvilahti 1992, 2004).

By the 1970s, the focus in international folkloristics shifted to communication, context and creative production. Variation was reconsidered as a tool of adapting folkloric knowledge according to a particular situation, presenting performers with the opportunity to express their creativity (Bauman 1984; Hymes 1981; Tedlock 1983; Foley 1992, 1995; Kaivola-Bregenhøj 2000).

For research using the methodology of the historic-geographic school, the existence of large text collections was critical in order to figure out, on the basis of comparison of variants, the historical spread and developments of plots and their hypothetical archetype or 'original form'. This aim led collectors to focus on texts and to carefully record even slightly differing versions of plot and wording. In the later periods, folkloristics has turned more to methods

focusing on individuals and performance, and previous text-centred collecting principles have come under severe criticism. The potential of large historical text collections has remained untapped by and large. The interest in formulaic language and composition seems to have got stuck in the missing ability to process large amounts of data.

The introduction of computers to humanities research created new perspectives in the study of large folklore text corpora. Arvo Krikmann has shown that, similarly to language (and other natural phenomena), Zipf's law applies to archival collections, for example there are a very few very popular proverbs, and very many proverbs that have been recorded only once or twice. Krikmann explained this regularity in distribution in folklore collections (and in live communication) in terms of the transmission of knowledge and creativity: widely known texts form the core of the genre, are more stable, safely transmitted, and function as a model for new texts, while the peripheries are characerised by live creativity and testing the acceptance of texts (Krikmann 1997). Materials in the large archives are able to elucidate variation as a process and give us hints as to how and why "types" (or groups of similar items) emerge in folkloric communication (Hiiemäe & Krikmann 1992).

With the development of computational methods, especially in the field of natural language processing, data mining and the use of geo-information systems, as well as the ever broadening digital availability of source materials, the field of digital folkloristics has grown alongside the general flood of digital humanities (e.g. Abello et al. 2012). There is a rich variety of possibilities for the application of digital methods to large archival corpora in order to advance folkloristic research.

Although the field of folklore research has increasingly become the examination of the relationship between the individual and his/her folkloric expression, it is important to know the mechanisms of variation in order to understand the essence of folklore. Computational models based on large material collections can help us better understand the patterns of formation of collective thinking and memory (see for example Tangherlini et al. 2020).

In the following we will observe the different layers of variation in our research material, Estonian folk songs and fairy tales, in order to find out to what extent the dynamics of similarities and differences in a text collection reflects variation in language, style, ways of expression, and content. The methodological challenge in studying the Estonian folklore text corpora derives from the highly variable non-standard language of folklore records, which tools designed for the standard language can neither automatically lemmatise nor grammatically analyse. Moreover, compared for example to English, Estonian is morphologically much more complex: words usually have a number of morphological

forms, sometimes along with stem variation. Dialectal variation involves all the levels of language. Estonian has two main dialects, South Estonian and North Estonian, both with several subdialects. In computational analyses we always have to bear in mind that linguistic variation contributes to a considerable extent to text variation.

REGIONAL VARIATION IN ESTONIAN FOLK SONGS

The current chapter focuses on an archaic folk song tradition called runosong[1] that has been shared by several Finnic peoples, and is characterised by a specific poetic structure that combines a specific meter with a trochaic core, alliteration and parallelism as key features. Runosong has been considered a way of expression that characterises Finnic peoples, and therefore the songs have been transcribed in large volumes, with the peak at the end of 19th century, and stored in the archives in Estonia, Finland and Karelia. The singing tradition has, in the majority, faded away along with the progress of modernity, but the archival collections have been in lively re-use by composers, musicians, writers, etc. Runosong has been at the focus of folkloristic research in the respective countries, and to date most of the texts have been digitised and brought together in well-organised databases that are available for computational research (ERAB 2023; SKVR 2021; cf. Järv 2016: 33–34; Sarv & Oras 2020). Linguistic variation, however, poses a noteworthy challenge to this in that the corpus is multilingual containing songs in several Finnic languages and their dialects. Runosongs use a specific idiom that in some regions differs from the spoken language in several respects. Recently, the FILTER project, funded by the Finnish Academy, has made significant steps in dealing with this question (see Janicki et al. 2022; Janicki 2022).

The issue of layered variation caught our attention in connection with the study of metric variation in Estonian runosong (Sarv 2008, 2015, 2019), which revealed clear regional variation (Figure 1). One might expect that metric regions would reflect the tradition areas of runosong in more general terms, but the pattern diverges from the general idea of Estonian tradition regions (Figure 2) or dialect areas (Figure 3) with the metric regions crossing the main dividing line between South and North Estonian linguistic and cultural areas. This prompted us to observe patterns of regional variation in two other aspects of runosong: (1) typological distribution, and (2) distribution of most frequent word forms (stylometric analysis).

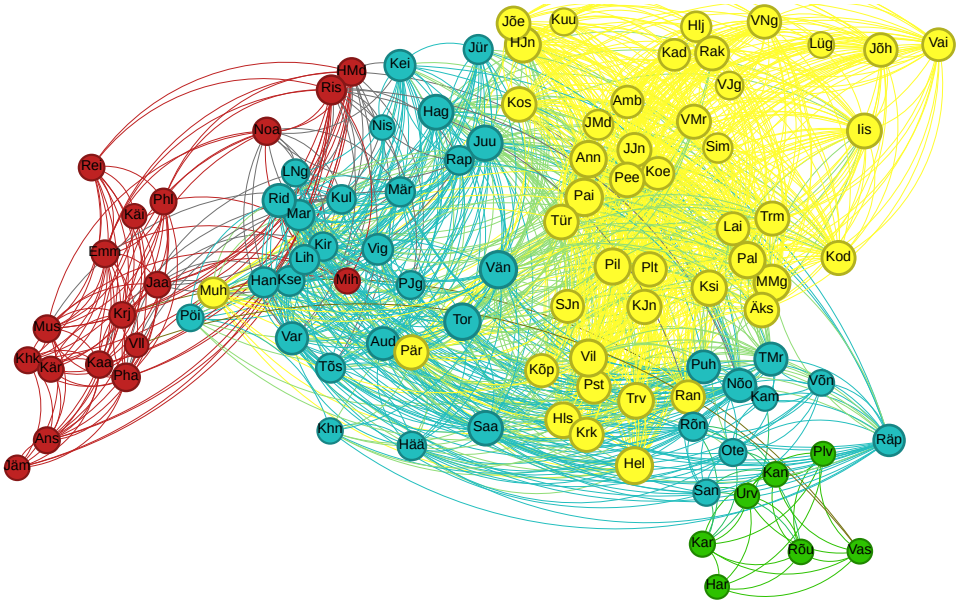

Figure 1. *Metric areas of Estonian runosong. Circles show parishes grouped together using the network modularity algorithm (Blondel et al. 2008) used in Gephi application (Bastian et al. 2009). The metric proximity of the parishes is calculated by summing the differences of percentages of lines with 7 different metric features (Sarv 2008, 2015) between each pair of parishes (map from Sarv 2019: 108).*

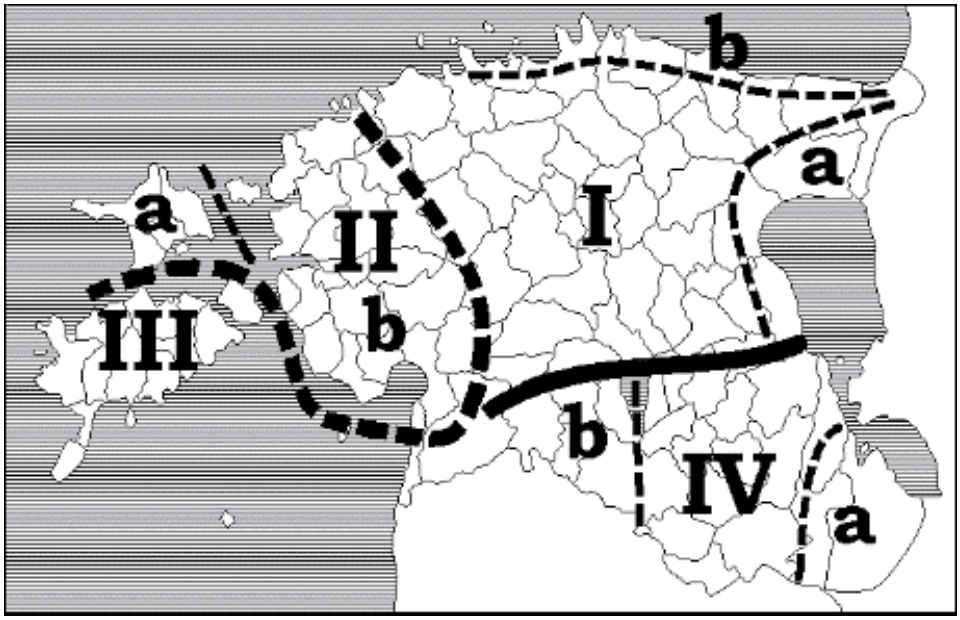

Figure 2. *Estonian ethnographic and folklore regions according to Oskar Loorits: I north Estonia, II west Estonia, III Saaremaa island, IV south Estonia (map from Krikmann 1997).*

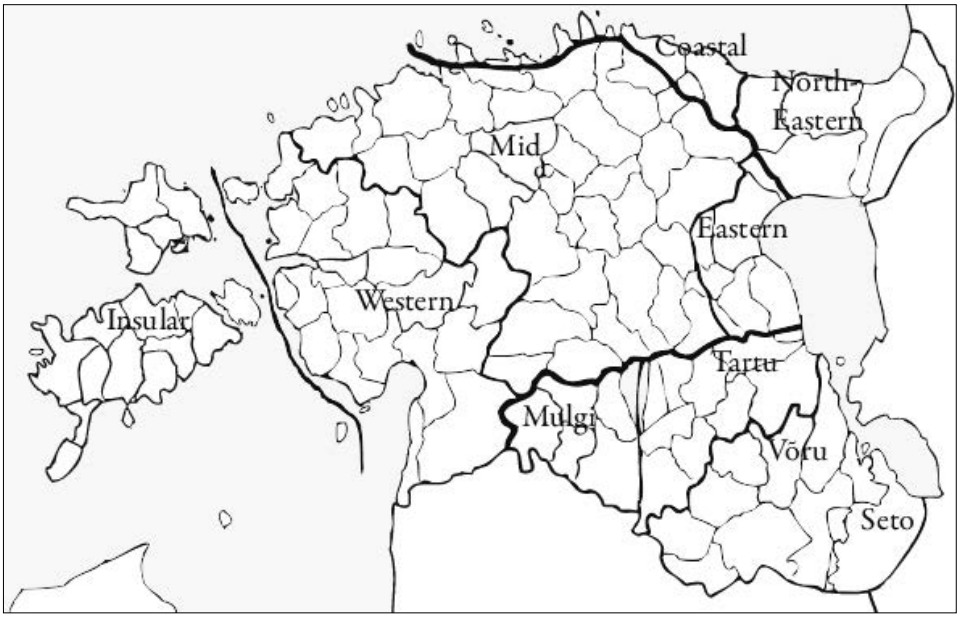

Figure 3. *Map of Estonian dialects:*
1) North Estonian dialect group: Mid, Eastern, Western, Insular dialects;
2) South Estonian dialect group: Võru, Mulgi, Tartu, Setu dialects;
3) North-Eastern Coastal dialect group: North-Eastern, Coastal dialects (Lindström & Pajusalu 2003: 242).

In order to analyse the regional distribution of song types we used the database of Finnic runosong compiled within the framework of the FILTER project, specifically the Estonian part deriving from the Estonian runosong database. The FILTER database as a whole currently contains around 100,000 Estonian texts, the great majority of which are runosongs, although it also includes a significant number of texts from other genres. Every text is usually localised to one or two parishes. For the analysis of typological distribution we used the data on folkloristic song types. Originally the type assignments were digitised along with texts from the machine-typed copies of manuscripts at the Estonian Folklore Archives, which were scanned and OCR interpreted for the database (cf. Järv & Sarv 2014; Sarv & Oras 2020). The mechanical transcription of songs took place over the ca 70 years of the folklore archive's history, and the classification was not consistent. Since digitisation the classification in the database has been revised, although this is still a work in progress: currently approximately half of the Estonian texts in the database have a revised type assignment, with all together 1943 different song types assigned. We considered this number to be sufficient to uncover how Estonia divides into regions according to song reportoire.

In order to identify regional divisions we first calculated the similarity scores for each pair of the 105 parishes in Estonia (the parish island of Vormsi was excluded as the runosong tradition was unknown among the Swedish population of the island). We followed the methodology applied by Arvo Krikmann in various folkloristic and linguistic geo-labelled data collections (for example Krikmann 1980, 1997, 2014). The procedure for measuring the similarity between two regions is based on a comparison of the share of their common repertoire in the total corpus with the shares of the repertoires of both regions in the total corpus. In other words, the real size of the intersection is compared with the expected size, taking into account the total folkloric capacity of the regions in question. The song types are of very different popularity, and thus also frequency in our collections, and it is not easy to find a procedure to balance an estimation of very rare and very frequent types.[2] As a basis of regional division we chose to observe only the geographic spread of each song type, not the number of texts collected.

For each pair of parishes we found the similarity index *sim* by subtracting the expected probable number of common song types from the actual number of common song types.

$$sim = \mathrm{CT}-\mathrm{ECT}$$

The expected probable number of common song types for two parishes ECT is calculated by multiplying (1) the proportion of song types occurring in parish 1 among all the combinations of type and parish by (2) the proportion of song types occurring in parish 2 and by (3) the number of all the different combinations of type and parish.

$$ECT = \frac{number\ of\ types\ in\ parish\ 1}{\sum_{n=1}^{105} number\ of\ types\ in\ parish\ n} \times \frac{number\ of\ types\ in\ parish\ 2}{\sum_{n=1}^{105} number\ of\ types\ in\ parish\ n} \times \sum_{n=1}^{105} number\ of\ types\ in\ parish\ n$$

The parish pairs with a positive *sim* have more common song types than would have been expected from their total size of repertoire, while the parish pairs with a negative *sim* index had fewer common types than expected.

As some of the song types are widely known, most of the parish pairs had mutual connections that formed a dense network. For network analysis we used the Gephi application (Bastian et al. 2009), and for community detection the modularity analysis method implemented in Gephi (Blondel et al. 2008).

The parishes on the graph were geo-located using the Gephi GeoLayout plugin by A. Jacomy. For the poetic meter of runosong, network analysis is proven to give more clear-cut results in detecting regional division (Figure 1), compared to other methods applied (see Sarv 2008: 44–45).

As a result of the analysis, Estonia was divided into three relatively coherent areas that differ considerably by song repertoire: (1) west Estonia, (2) south Estonia, and (3) north-east Estonia (Figure 4). The border of the south Estonian area almost overlaps the main dialect border that separates the South Estonian and North Estonian cultural and linguistic areas. The border between western and north-east typological regions does not overlap the dialect border, although it does overlap the main metric division between the western and eastern regions. The geographic coherence of the network communities obtained as a result proves the relevance and suitability of the chosen data analysis methodology.

The extent of variation also depends on collection density: in regions with a richer tradition during the period of active folklore collecting, the nature of the material is more variable; in regions where songs were collected during the phase of fading tradition, only the most popular and custom-bound songs survived long enough to be collected. The geographic outliers tend to be anomalous in terms of collection density.

In general the results are congruent with Krikmann's generalisation of the geographical distribution of Estonian dialect words, proverbs and riddles, as based on archival collections. The material that Krikmann used gave three main dialect and tradition areas:

1) The South Estonian dialect area;
2) The western islands and a large part of western Estonia;
3) The rest of the North Estonian dialect area.

(Krikmann 2014: 63).

The network picture, configured by similarity measures (Figure 5),[3] shows that western, northern, and even southern areas seem to be connected via the south-western county of Pärnumaa. We can hypothesise that this might have a natural background in the Pärnu river, which functioned as a communication route from the south-west towards the north-east in pre-modern times. It is logical to assume that ease of connection between regions would result in a common song repertoire, and thus also in the closeness of these parishes in the network graph. In addition, there seems to be an anomalously large divide between western and northern groups. We can speculate that the reason for this could be the location of the capital city Tallinn on the northern shore, between the two regions, which since the Christian invasion in the 13th century had mainly been inhabited by foreigners (Germans, Russians) and probably did not foster the spread of folklore.[4]

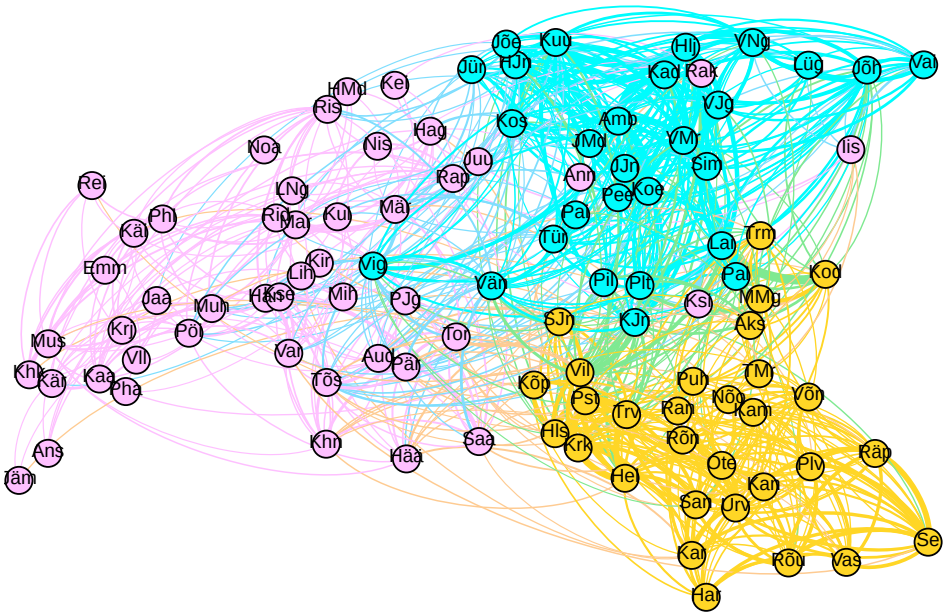

Figure 4. *Regional division in the Estonian runosong area on the basis of typology data.*

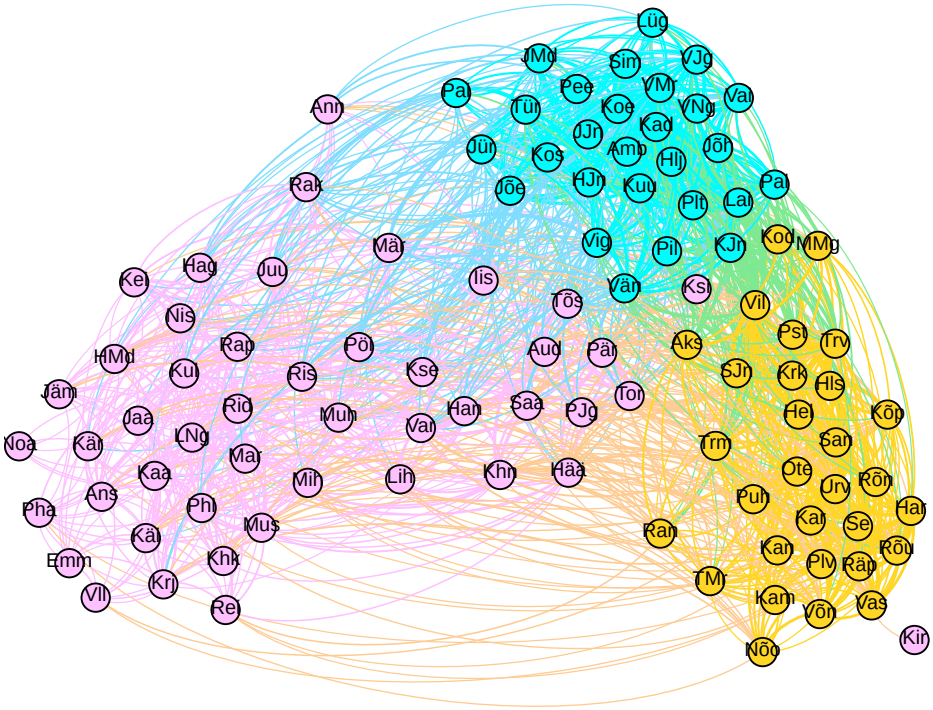

Figure 5. *Network of Estonian parishes on the basis of typological similarity measures. The parishes of Pärnumaa county, located in the graph in the middle of all the three groups, are circled in red.*

For the distribution analysis of the most frequent word forms we used stylometry and R package 'Stylo'. Stylometry is a method of assessing similarities between texts on the basis of the use of frequent words or other units (such as characters, combinations of two or more characters, combinations of two or more words, parts of speech tags, or other information). Stylometry is widely used for authorship attribution and in explorations of the stylistic variation of text collections (on the method as well as the Stylo package, see Eder et al. 2016). The method has also been used for the analysis of language change (Eder & Górski 2016) and variation (Mäkinen 2020). In our case, we expected stylometric analysis first and foremost to reflect dialectal variation rather than stylistics. Estonian can be divided into three main dialects, South and North Estonian, and the North-Eastern Coastal dialect, each of which is divided into several sub-dialects. Runosong language forms a specific language register, using systematically archaic word forms to conform to the requirements of meter. The major changes in the prosody and syllabic structure of Estonian that took place around 500 years ago are only partly reflected in runosong language, depending on the region (Sarv 2019). The aim of our observation was to detect runosong language regions with the help of stylometric analysis.

Proceeding from our aim for regional analysis, we decided to compile analysis files for every parish consisting of all the texts from each parish in the database. Thus, we organised the Estonian runosong texts labelled in the database with a parish name into a corpus consisting of 105 parish files with an average length of 47,880 tokens (ranging from 560 to 192,678). The stylometric analysis of the 1,000 most frequent word forms was performed by Stylo using the classic delta measure. The similarity measure sums the differences of relative frequencies for each word in both texts, normalised by standard deviation of relative differences in the same word in the corpus (Burrows 2002; Šeļa 2021). The network edges output was processed using Gephi, and the same procedures as in the previous case. The results are depicted in figure 6 (a network drawn on the basis of similarity measures) and figure 7 (a geolocational graph of the same data).

The stylometric analysis reflects a clear division between South Estonian and the northern dialects (North Estonian and the North-Eastern Coastal dialect), with relevant subgroups in both areas. Figure 7 shows that the groups in the network are also geographically coherent, thus the analysis reflects geographic (and presumably linguistic) proximity. In the case of South Estonian, one of the four main sub-dialects (Mulgi) is comprised of a separate subgroup. In the case of northern group, the network division very roughly overlaps the dialect division, i.e. the North-Eastern Coastal dialect, the Mid dialect, the Western dialect, and the Insular dialect areas form separate subgroups within the network. However, there is a separate subgroup in the border area with South

Estonian which in dialect division is split between the Eastern, Mid and Western dialects. Here the stylometric analysis shows probable influence from the frequent use of refrain words in this area. Songs with refrains are known in the South Estonian dialect area as well as in those parts of the North Estonian border area that are next to South Estonia, usually appearing in songs related to either calendar or family customs. Refrain words can occur among the most frequent words, as they are repeated often.

To find which word forms are peculiar to each region, we ran a keyness analysis for all the groups[5] and observed 20 positive keywords for each group. We expected the keywords generally to be dialect variants of grammatical words as they usually dominate among the most frequent words in any text. About the half of the keywords in each regional group were grammatical words, for example various forms of the verb 'to be' (*on*, *one*, *o*, *oo*, *uo*, *om*, *pole*, *põle*, *õli*, *olid*, *oll*, *oleks*, *ollin*), and more occasionally 'this/that' (*sie*, *see*, *sii*, *tuu*), 'on' (*peal*, *peale*, *piäle*, *pealla*, *peele*, *pääle*), 'there' (*seal*, *siel*), 'me' (*mina*, *minu*, *mind*, *moole*), 'we' (*me*, *mi*, *mii*, *mede*), 'then' (*siis*, *sis*), 'no' (*ei*, *es*). In addition, among the keywords were grammatical words that are used as filler particles in regional performance traditions: *iks/õks* 'ever', *no* 'now' in the south-eastern group, where this phenomenon mainly relates to the special characteristics of the Seto singing tradition with longer melodies and abundant filler words; *ja* 'and', *aga* 'but' in the western and insular groups, where the usage of these small words relates to a newer, rhythmically more complex performance style (Rüütel 2012).

Keywords, however, also reflect content words that are peculiar to each region. 'Mother' is one of the most central concepts in Estonian runosong, used along with rich poetic ornamentation. Keywords contain the regional dominant variants of mother (*eit*, *eide*, *eidekene*, *emm*, *emä*, *emakene*, *memm*, *memme*, *memmekene*, *ennekene*, *ime*, *imä*). The words *tere* 'hello' and *aitimal* 'thank you' among the keywords in the insular group illustrate the use of songs in live communication as runosong has traditionally been part of ceremonies, most notably weddings and mumming processions. The songs from the western group and Mulgi group contain the other keywords related to these customs (*langud* 'in-laws', *mart*, *marti* or *märti* 'mummers'). The central northern geographical area is known for its developed swinging tradition, and this is reflected in keywords from this area: swing (*kiike*, *kiige*) and swing smiths (*kiigesepad*). As we supposed, in the border area between the North and South dialects there are several refrain words among the keywords (*kaasike*, *kaske*, *kaanike*, *kaine*, *nuku*, *lõpele*).

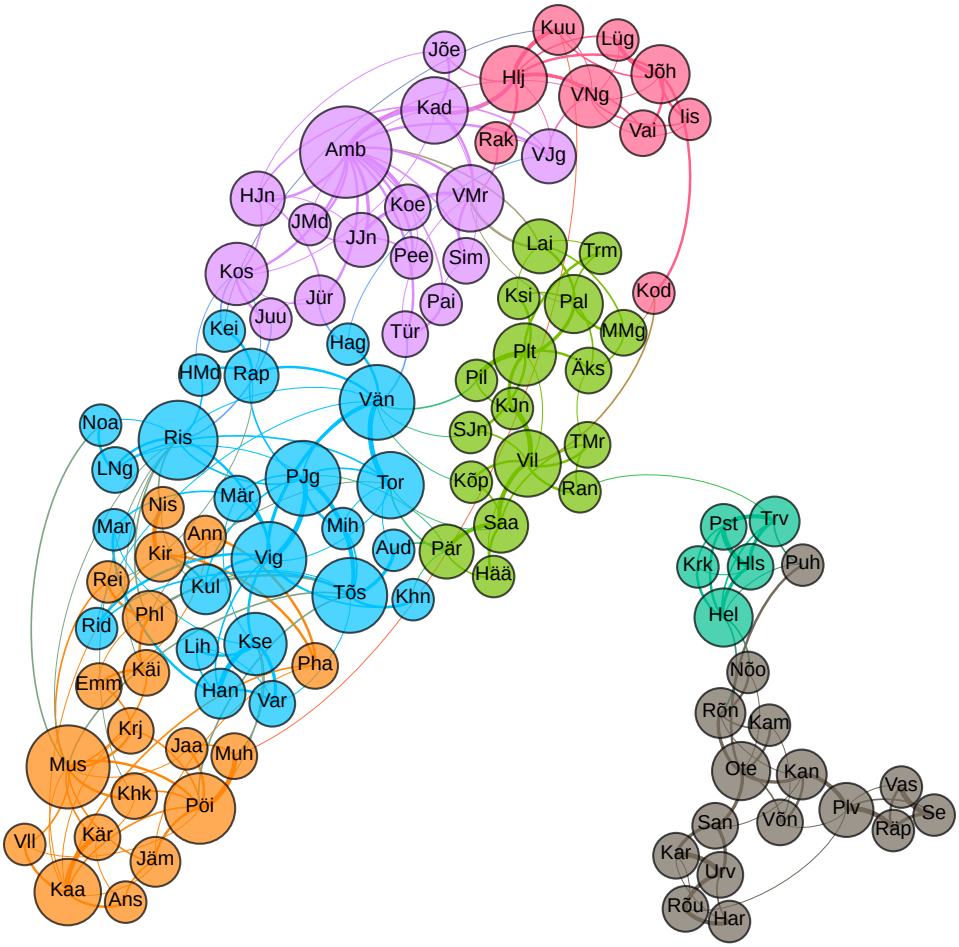

***Figure 6**. The results of stylometric analysis of the 1,000 most frequent word forms in the runosong texts that have a parish label in the Estonian runosong database, depicted as a network based on the similarity measure classic delta and grouped according to modularity analysis, as implemented in the Gephi program.*

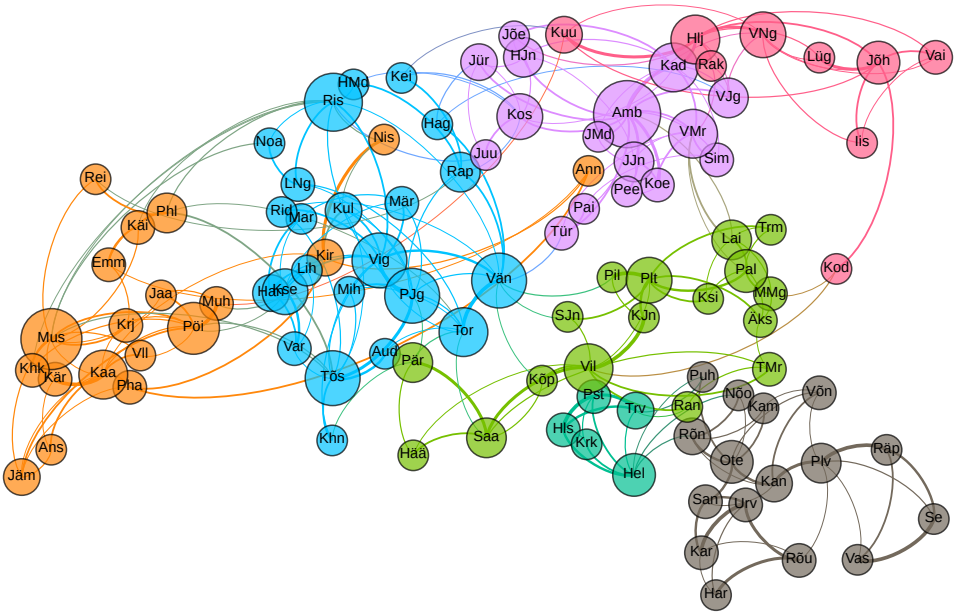

Figure 7. *The results from Figure 6, arranged according to parish location.*

According to these keyness observations we can conclude that stylometric analysis of the use of word forms, and the regional groups obtained, in the first instance reflect dialectal variation, but to a notable extent also derive from other aspects such as the specific features of performance tradition like filler words and refrains, communicative strategies (interaction vs narration), and the dominant genre of the region.

The study demonstrated that the regional peculiarities of runosong have formed as a combination of various features: the musical structures of songs, metric peculiarities, dominant genres, customs and performance habits along with communicative modes related to them. The observations showed runosong variation as a multi-layered phenomenon with the analysis resulting in geographically coherent regions in all the three observations, although in each case the outcome was different. It is not a trivial task to discover the effects of individual features that do not always follow the same regional patterns in the conditions of severe linguistic variation. Linguistic variation always underlies and contributes to textual variation in folklore, sometimes also motivating components of poetic structure.

STYLOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF SETO FAIRY TALES

As we saw from the previous part of our analysis, variation in folklore unfolds as a complex phenomenon, with different components having different variation patterns. It is often hard to discern these components in analysis. In order to be able to distinguish better the individual layers of variation, we decided to investigate – using texts from the same region and language group – if, and how much, the proximity measures gained as a result of stylometric analysis reflect the content of the texts, or of the performers' individual styles (as would be expected in case of stylometric analysis).

Runosong texts in general tend to be short, the average length in the Estonian part of the FILTER database currently being 68 words (stylometry is usually said to give more reliable results for longer texts).[6] Therefore we chose longer narrative texts for further analysis.

The database of Estonian folktales (cf. Järv 2016: 38–40) currently consists of 16,000 texts along with metadata, including approximately 6,000 fairy tale texts (ATU 300–749). About one quarter of the material comes from the Seto region at the south-eastern border of Estonia with its specific culture and language variant, a sub-dialect of South Estonian. An overview of the Seto fairy tale tradition can be found in *Setu lauludega muinasjutud* (Salve & Sarv 1987: 10–16, English summary 198–199), an academic publication on Seto fairy tales with songs.

The tradition of telling fairy tales has been preserved in the Seto region for longer than elsewhere in Estonia, which is also the reason for the abundance of Seto material in the archives. On average, the texts recorded in the Seto region are also longer and more elaborate. We chose for our analysis 125 texts with an average length of 1,409 words. Most texts (109) in this selection come from the folklore collection of Samuel Sommer, who also aimed to collect the life stories of the tradition bearers. This plan was fulfilled only partly (see Kalkun 2011: 193–195, 199–201), although luckily enough at least the name, age, birth and residence of the storytellers was noted down along with the texts, which does not apply to all fairy tale texts in the collections of the Estonian Folklore Archives. These texts were recorded by volunteer collectors, as are four texts from the same period from the collection of the Estonian Folklore Archives (ERA). Twelve texts, approximately one tenth of our sample, were collected by professional folklorists between 1946 and 1953. The number of texts in our selection is not large, but they come from the same linguistic area and are provided with basic metadata.

Classification of folklore texts according to their content has for a long time been one of the basic methods of folkloristics. The best known are international

folk tale typologies, first compiled by Antti Aarne (1910) and enlarged by Stith Thompson (1928, 2nd revision 1961), and most lately by Hans-Jörg Uther (2004), although the method has been used to classify other genres of folklore as well, such as song, legend, proverb, riddle. Despite criticism that the classification is based more on characters than plots (Dundes 1989) the system is used widely among the scholars of folk tales to this day. At the same time, it has been also a cornerstone for the historic-geographic method, which aimed to find the original form and home of each plot, as well as later additions. Although the aims of the historic-geographic method have generally fallen into disuse, the typological classification has retained its function as a useful tool in gaining an overview of the large number of records. It enables us to examine the geographical spread of a folkloric type and observe its variability, which in turn reveals characteristics of folkloric communication. When observing the voluminous folklore collections and archives it is evident that folkloric types are not a construct of the researchers, but rather are a reality typical to folkloric communication as texts (and melodies) tend to group into sets with the same or similar form and/or content. As typological classification in itself is a method to cope with big data, it would require a reasonable number of texts to find what is typical and what is exceptional. Today typological classifications can be used as source data for computational analysis, combined with other dimensions of folklore texts, for example their geographical spread, their linguistic properties, their performers.

For the current analysis we chose 125 Seto fairy tale texts from the database according to the following principles:

1. The texts were transcribed from the 22 storytellers who have the largest number of fairy tales in the manuscript collections. As a rule these people have also been versatile tradition specialists. In top spot are Maria Kütte, from whom the collectors recorded 187 fairy tales in total as well as a large number of songs (SNE 2014: 33), and Feodor Vanahunt with 176 stories (Kalkun 2015: 9). For most people included, the number of the recorded fairy tales is considerably smaller (~20).
2. Among the stories from these storytellers only fairy tale types that have been popular in the Seto region, and have been transcribed from several storytellers, have been included in our research corpus[7]. Most of these tale types are known more widely in Europe while some are found only in the Seto region. They may have been present more widely in Estonia as well, but the only versions to make it into the archives are from the Seto region. Compared to the animal tales (which are also popular in the Seto region), Seto fairy tales are longer and thus better suited to our study. Each type in our selection has at least 3 different texts; types ATU 480, 572*, 613 and 700 have more than 10 texts.

3. In our sample corpus we selected only the texts that consist of one tale type. Although types are often mixed and combined in the tradition as well as in the archival records, this decision was made with the intention of having a clearer understanding of the effect of the content of the tales on the results.

The sample consists, thus, of the 16 most popular Seto fairy tale types from the 22 storytellers who have the most fairy tale records in the archives.

For the analysis, all the information outside of the main text, such as titles, comments, final comments, was removed as it is not always clear if it was in the original story or added by the collector. The effect of the collector's linguistic style and ability, and the steps that form his or her method of writing down the text, upon the collected texts, has been discussed previously, especially in the case of the Sommer collection, where the collectors were paid and were thus motivated to produce more texts (Kalkun 2011: 195–199). We labelled every story with the surname of the storyteller and a four-digit ATU type number, for example Huntsaar_0300 is the variant of The Dragon Slayer (ATU 300) told by Vassä (Vassilissa) Huntsaar. If there were several variants of a story told by the same person, we numbered the variants with roman numerals (for example, 0480_I, 0480_II).

Stylometric analysis of the 100 most frequent word forms was performed using Stylo's classic delta measure. Figure 8 shows a network graph using Gephi, with nodes placed on the basis of similarity measures at network edges output of Stylo as in the case of previous runosong analysis. Placement of the texts in the graph reflects similarity in use of the most frequent word forms. The graph is coloured according to the Gephi modularity analysis, which divides the network into more densely connected parts. At the edges of the graph we see six more distinct clusters (with more distinct language use) consisting of tales from one or two storytellers. In the centre the grouping is less clear, but the tendency still seems to be the same – the detected groups generally formed from the tales of a small number of storytellers. In stylometric analysis the usage pattern of most frequent words is considered to be a characteristic feature of an author's individual style and thus we can expect, in the case of fairy tales, stories by the same author to cluster together.

However, if we look at the same graph coloured by storyteller (Figure 9), we see that the picture is not so even. We can see, especially in the central area of the graph, that there are quite a number of outliers, i.e. stories told by the same storyteller that are placed further away from the main body of his or her stories. In addition, the stories by storyteller Maria Kütte (together with the stories by Maria Laanetalu) form two close but still distinct communities in the network.

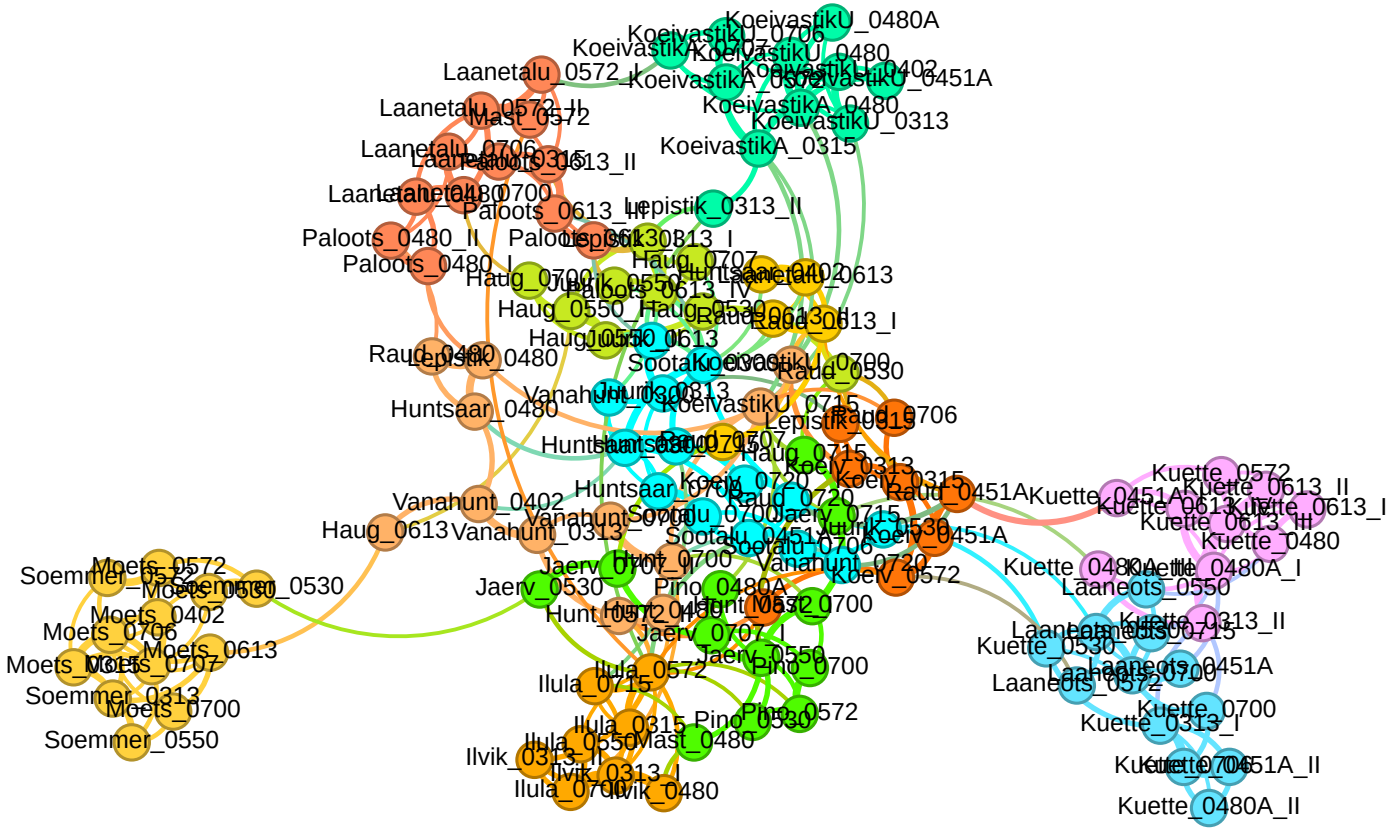

Figure 8. *Fairy tale network based on similarity measures from Stylo network output. The colours represent groups from the Gephi modularity analysis. The labels combine name of storyteller and tale type number.*

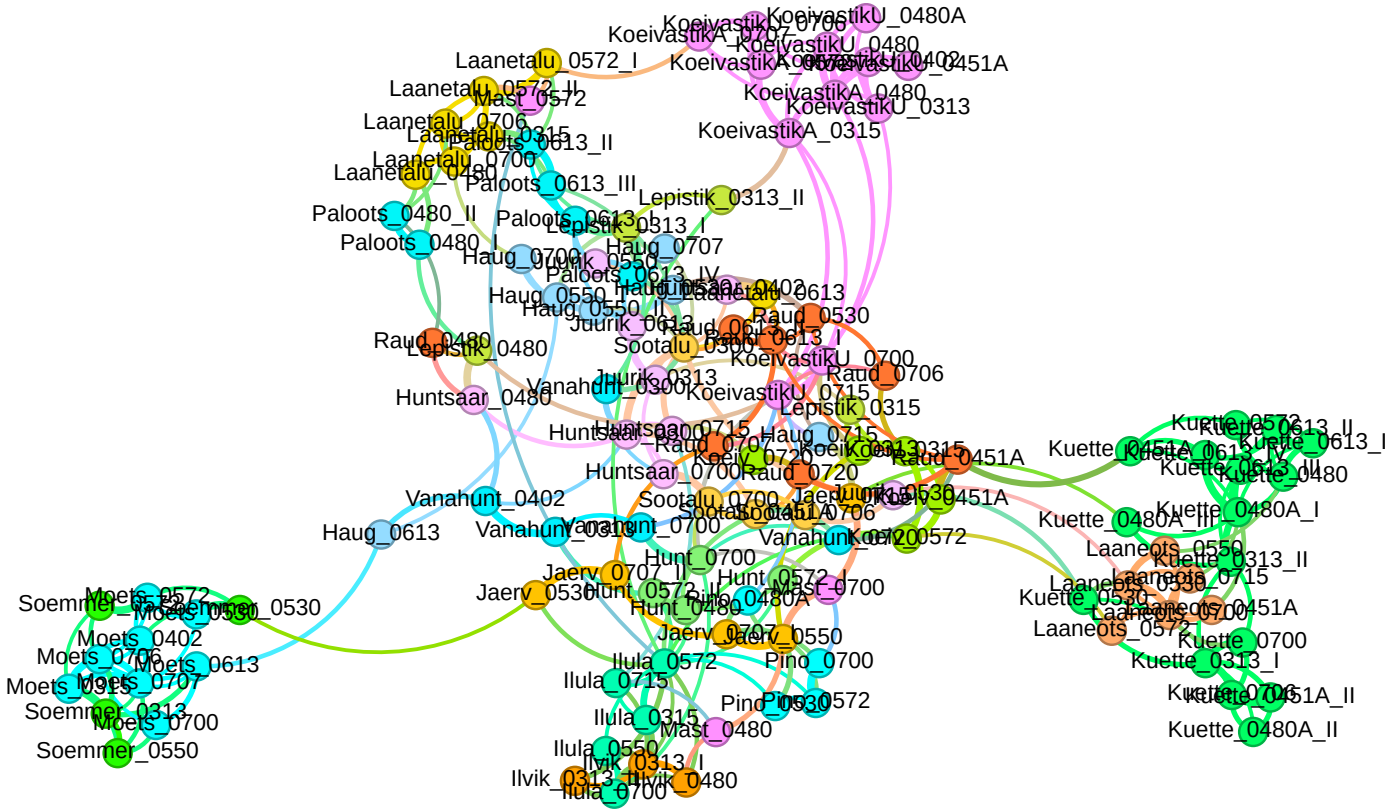

Figure 9. *Network of fairy tales with storytellers identified by colour.*

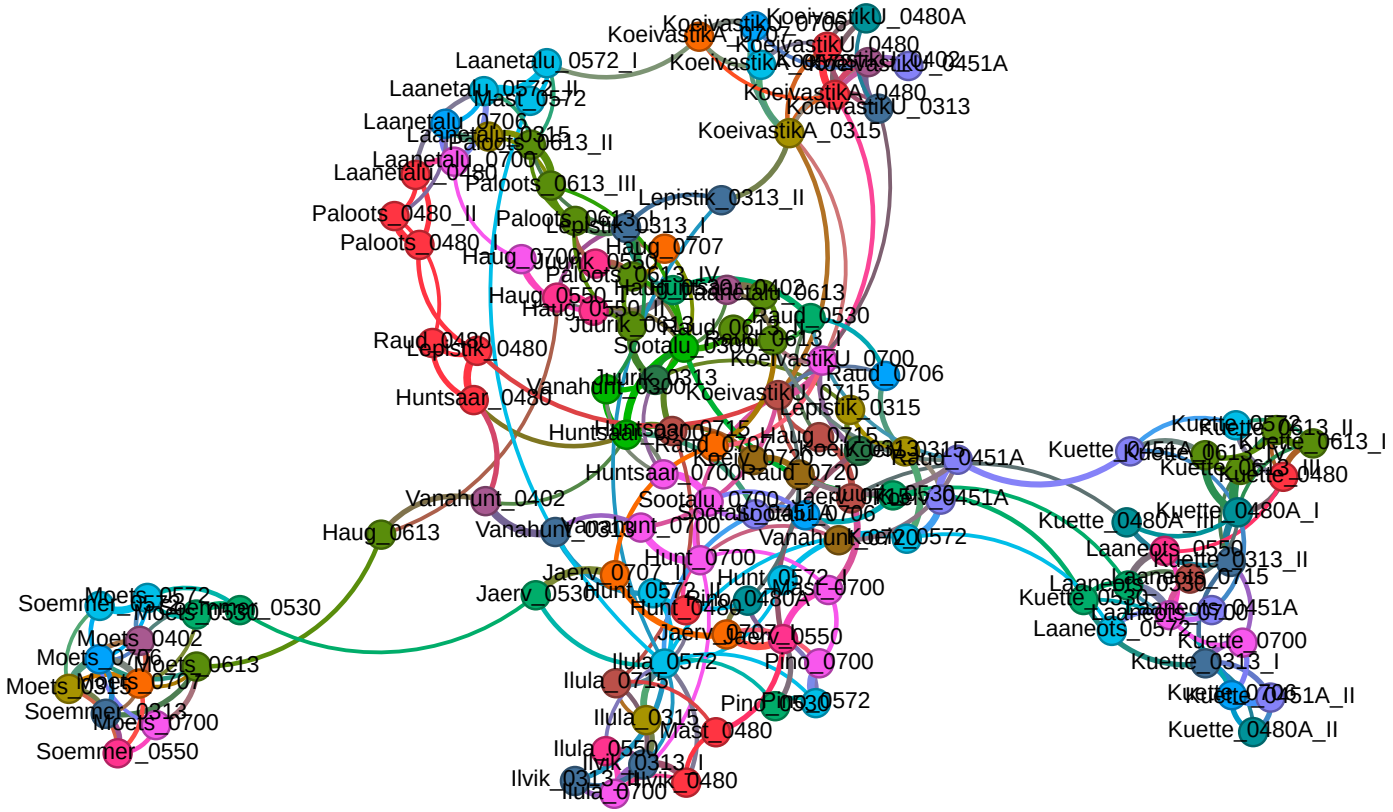

Figure 10. *Network of fairy tales, tale type identified by colour.*

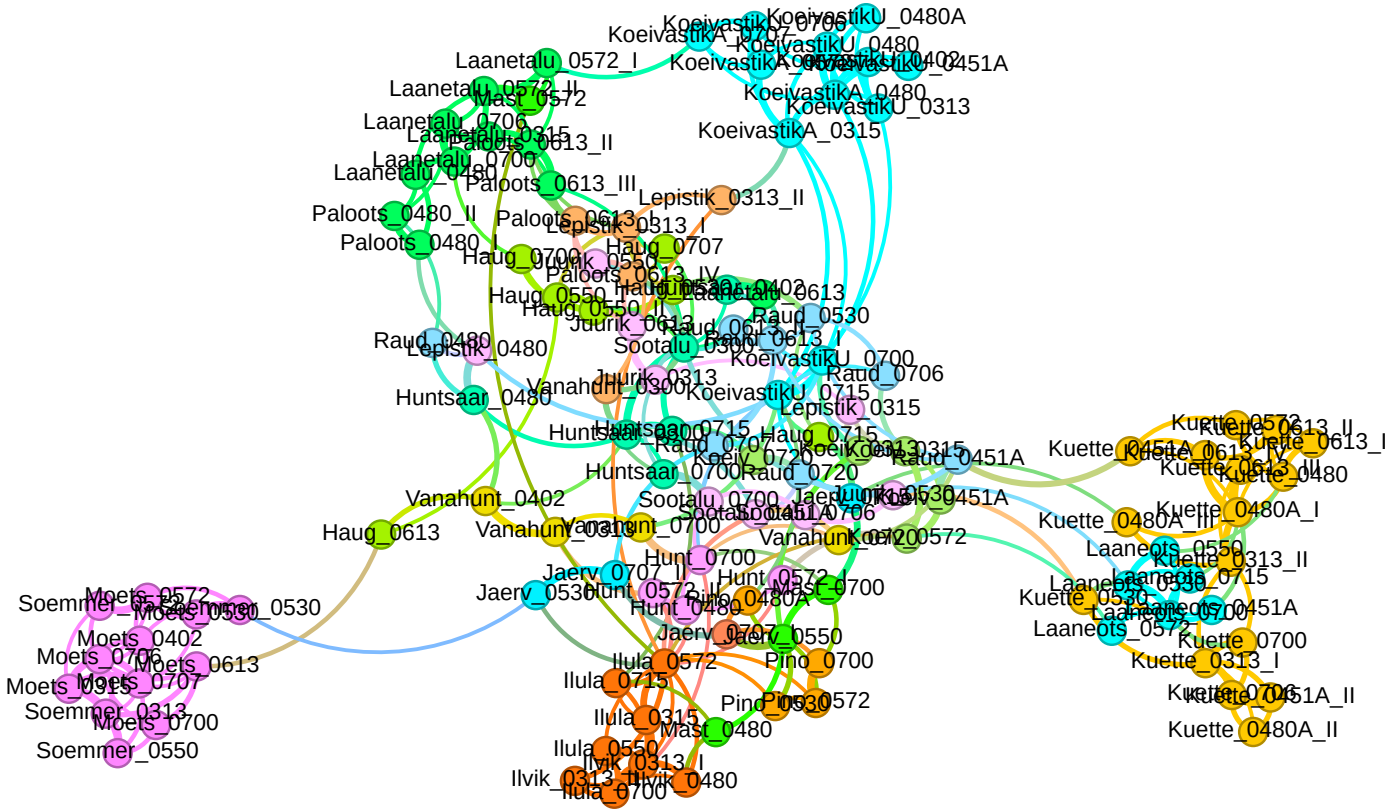

Figure 11. *Network of fairy tales, collectors identified by colour.*

We wanted to find what factors affect similarity in the use of the most frequent word forms, why stories from some storytellers form a distinct group and the others do not, what brings the stories of two storytellers together in a group at the edge of the graph, why the stories of one storyteller form two distinct groups, why some of the stories lie outside other stories by the same storyteller. Using the available metadata we could further check the effect of content, collector, linguistic variation, collection year and length of the story.

In figure 10, the graph is coloured by tale type (ATU index references) with each of the 16 types having its own colour. From the placement of the coloured circles we can see that in general the tale type is definitely not the cause of similar use of the most frequent word forms, and thus, as a rule, such an analysis does not bring together stories with similar content (except for cases of a storyteller telling one story several times, for example four variants of ATU 613 told by Maria Kütte, marked in dark green, cluster together). However, on closer inspection there are quite a number of instances when stories of the same type told by different storytellers occur next to each other, most notably a group of five variants of ATU 480 in the upper left corner (marked in red), as well as for example the same type told by Mast and Ilvik at the bottom of the graph, or type 451A by Raud and Kõiv (lilac) to the right of the central cluster, etc. Closer observation of ATU 480 variants, the Story of the Good and Bad Girl, reveals that this could be related to the frequent use of the *Kulla tütrik, tsirgu tütrik* ('dear girl', 'lovely girl') address formula, which multiplies the frequency of these words. Thus we cannot say that the content of the stories plays no role in similarity measures. Formulaic language characteristic to folklore has a particular impact on the word frequency structure.

As stories were recorded in writing by collectors from live performances, rather than by storytellers themselves, we can expect that in many cases these stories have been not written down word by word. It was usual to make more or less complete notes in the field, and write down a polished version of the story afterwards. In any case the collectors have contributed to the final version of the tales in the archives, and this may have an effect on the style and wording.

Figure 11 identifies stories by collector. In our sample the tales were collected by 19 different collectors, some of whom collected stories from only one storyteller while others from two people; one collector, Aleks Põhi, transcribed stories from three different performers (marked in pink in the upper part of the graph). We see in figure 11 that most of the distinct clusters at the edges represent the collections of individual collectors: the light blue group of stories were recorded in writing by Theodor Kõivastik from the same storyteller Anna Kõivastik; the green group was recorded in writing by Viktor Ruusamägi from Maria Laanetalu and Anastasia Paloots (which are in proximity to other stories in other groups

by her recorded by Põhi); the lilac group was recorded in writing by Mihhail Pihlapuu from Eudokia Mõts and M. Sõmmer; and the orange group are stories from Evdakia Ilula and Vassili Ilvik, recorded in writing by Paul Külaniit. The latter two collector groups also overlap with the Gephi network clusters. In the middle of the graph we can also see a tendency of stories recorded by the same collectors to cluster together. It is also noteworthy that 11 stories (all except one) collected by professional folklorists Selma Lätt, Veera Pino and Herbert Tampere in the 1940s and 1950s from three different storytellers are close according to their word use and gather in the same network cluster (green in figure 8). It is possible that the writing style of pre-war period amateur collectors and professional folklorists of the post-war period have some systematic differences. The proximity of word use in stories by Maria Kütte and Maria Laaneots (on the right side of the graph), as recorded by two distinct collectors, still cannot be explained.

It was evident from the study of runosong that the texts reveal clear patterns of regional variation. We aimed to exclude this by selecting fairy tales from one language region (although the Seto language also has its own dialects). We do not have any data on the dialect or subdialect of the fairy tales. However, the recordings have information on the storytellers' origin locations, according to which the graph is coloured in figure 12. Most of the storytellers in our sample come from the Vilo community (yellow in the figure). There are considerably fewer stories by storytellers from Mäe, Meremäe, and Saatse communities, although the stories from the same region, in general, tend to cluster together. The placement of stories from these four communities on the graph have a certain geographical logic. Mäe and Vilo communities are located furthest from each other, Saatse and Meremäe are in between. Among the overall yellow area of the network, the few outliers, stories that cluster together by type (independent of storyteller, collector or location of origin) are now clearly visible. We note that the storytellers of the rightmost distinct group both come from the Mäe community, which is the centre of the northern Seto dialect (Hagu & Pajusalu 2021).[8] Thus, it seems probable that regional language variation (but perhaps also regional variation in the folkloric way of expression) within the Seto region has contributed to the similarity and differences of word use, i.e. the geographic variation of language and culture may also have an effect on word use on smaller scales.

The ways of telling the stories and writing them down have been in constant evolution, as well as has been the language. Although the time period in question is short, from 1926 to 1953, it contains the remarkable turn in society caused by the events of the Second World War and Soviet occupation of Estonia from 1945. As folklore collections almost always provide the year of collection, we plotted this to find out if the date of collection has had any effect on the clustering of tales (Figure 13). As mentioned in the case of collectors, stories recorded

by post-war collectors are placed near each other (white circles). We can also see that for most part the oldest recordings form distinct clusters at the edges of the graph. The central part with less idiomatic word use has gathered the stories from a slightly later period, which probably illustrates the fading of linguistic differences as well as storytelling tradition.

Along with fading of the storytelling tradition the stories on average become shorter. And it is important to reiterate here that stylometry expects the texts observed to be long enough for the expression of idiomatic style. Thus we may also suppose that the length of the texts has something to do with the similarity measures. From figure 14, where the graph of stories is identified by length of story in words, we can see that in general the central part of the graph – where the stories have a less distinct style – the stories tend to be in general shorter.

The aim of the current analysis was to find out if and to what extent the content and/or individual style of storytellers contributes to the similarity patterns of word form use.

The general idea of stylometry, that each author has his or her individual style of word use, seems to be confirmed. Stories told by the same performer clustered together more often while the classification of texts only rarely had an effect on the clustering. The analysis also revealed, however, notable effects of additional factors on the frequency distribution of the most common forms, i.e. length of text, individual style of collector, period of collecting, as well as the origins of the storytellers along with their local subdialects.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis reveals the layered nature of geographical variation in a large corpus of Estonian runosongs showing how metric, stylometric, and typological variations follow different geographical patterns. The results of stylometric analysis, which detects the proximity of texts on the basis of the distribution of the most frequent words in regional runosong text collections are coherent in terms of geography, but relate also to linguistic, genre and content features of the texts. In order to explore further the application of stylometry to folklore texts, and how different aspects affect the results, we turned to the small regional corpus of fairy tales. The results of the stylometric analysis of fairy tales collected within the small Seto language community as a rule found the texts told by the same storytellers to be closer to each other than stories with the same content (tale types), although additional factors, especially the individual style of the collector, as well as the dialect variation within the Seto region, had a clear effect on the similarity of word use. The study also confirmed the principle of stylometry, which says that longer texts are in general able to reveal the style more clearly.

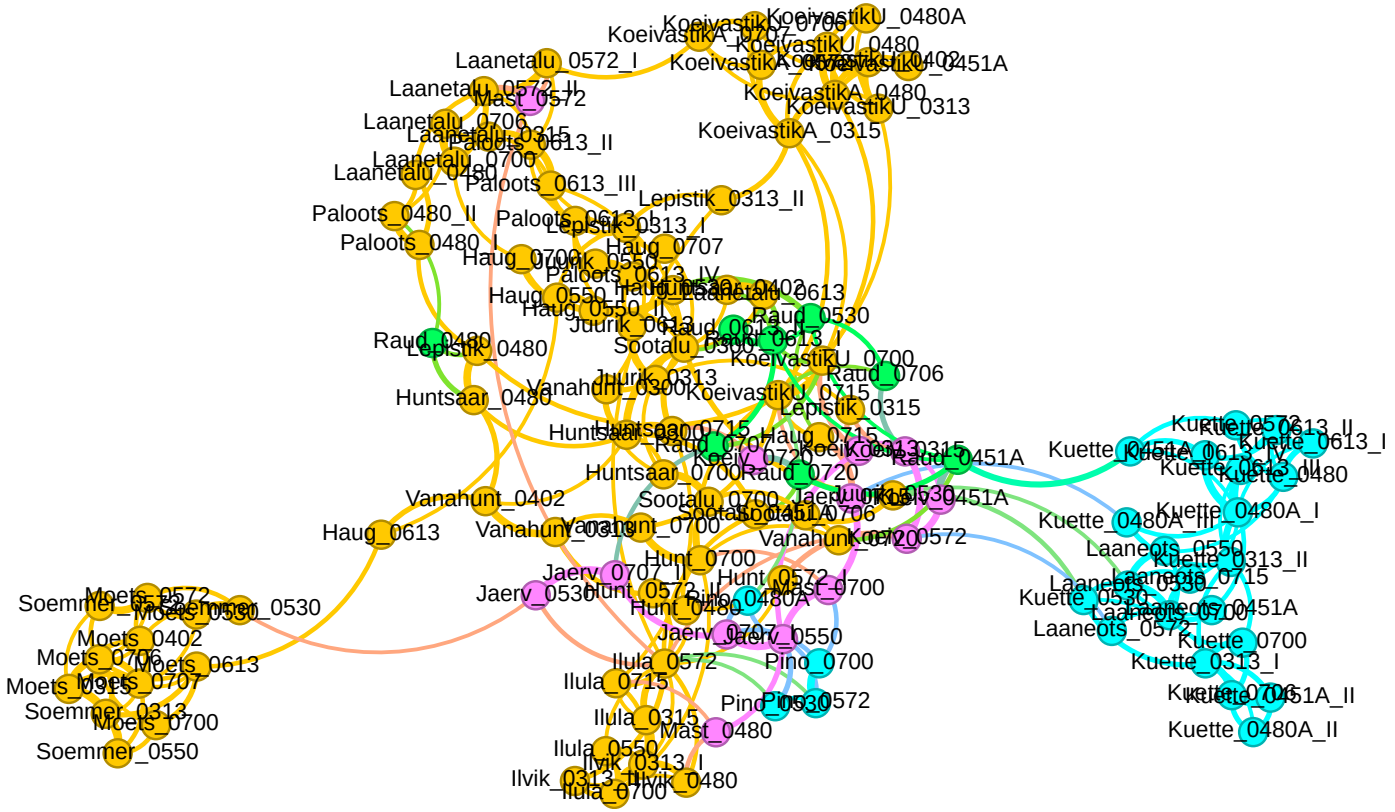

Figure 12. *Network of fairy tales, origin of storyteller identified by colour: Mäe community blue, Meremäe community pink, Saatse community green, Vilo community yellow.*

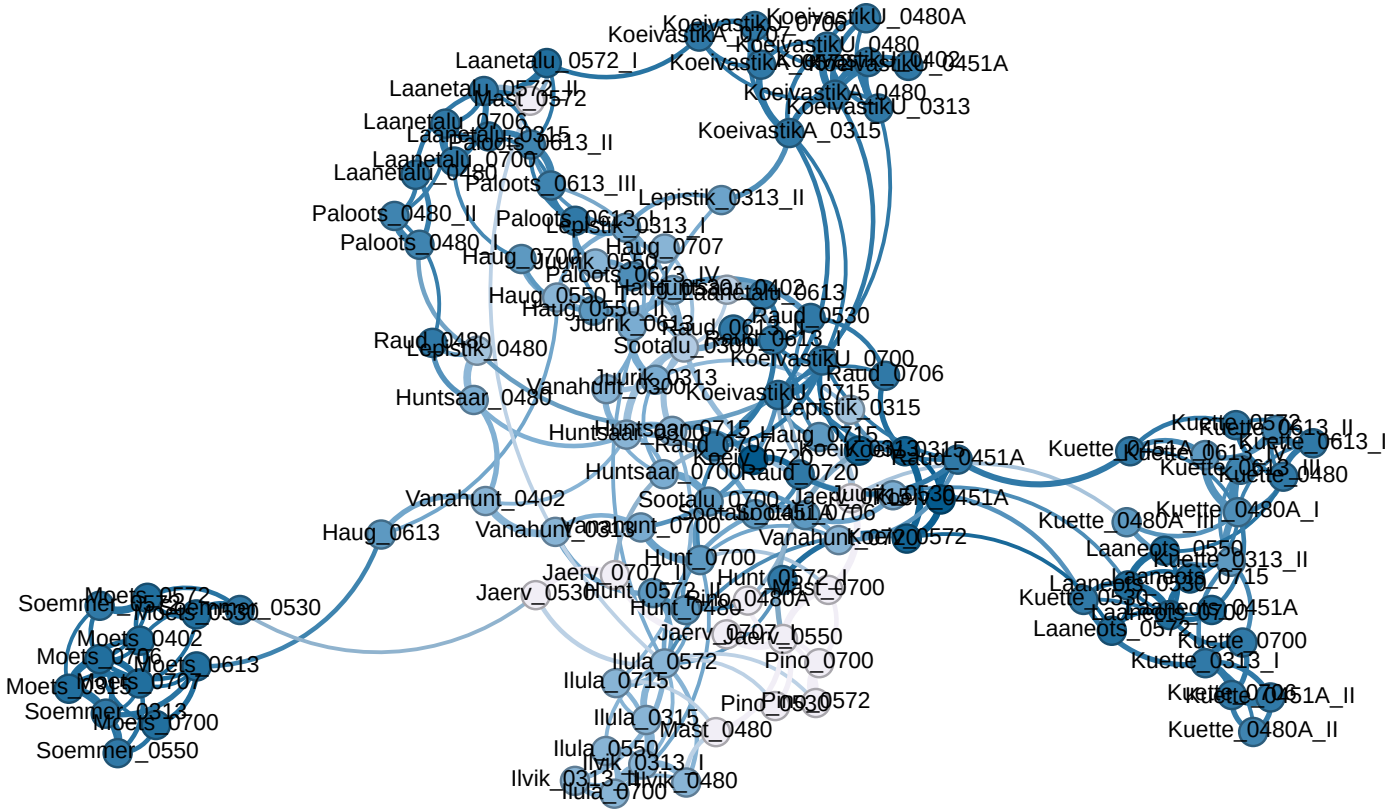

Figure 13. *Network of fairy tales, year of collection identified by colour from dark to light, i.e. from 1926 to 1953.*

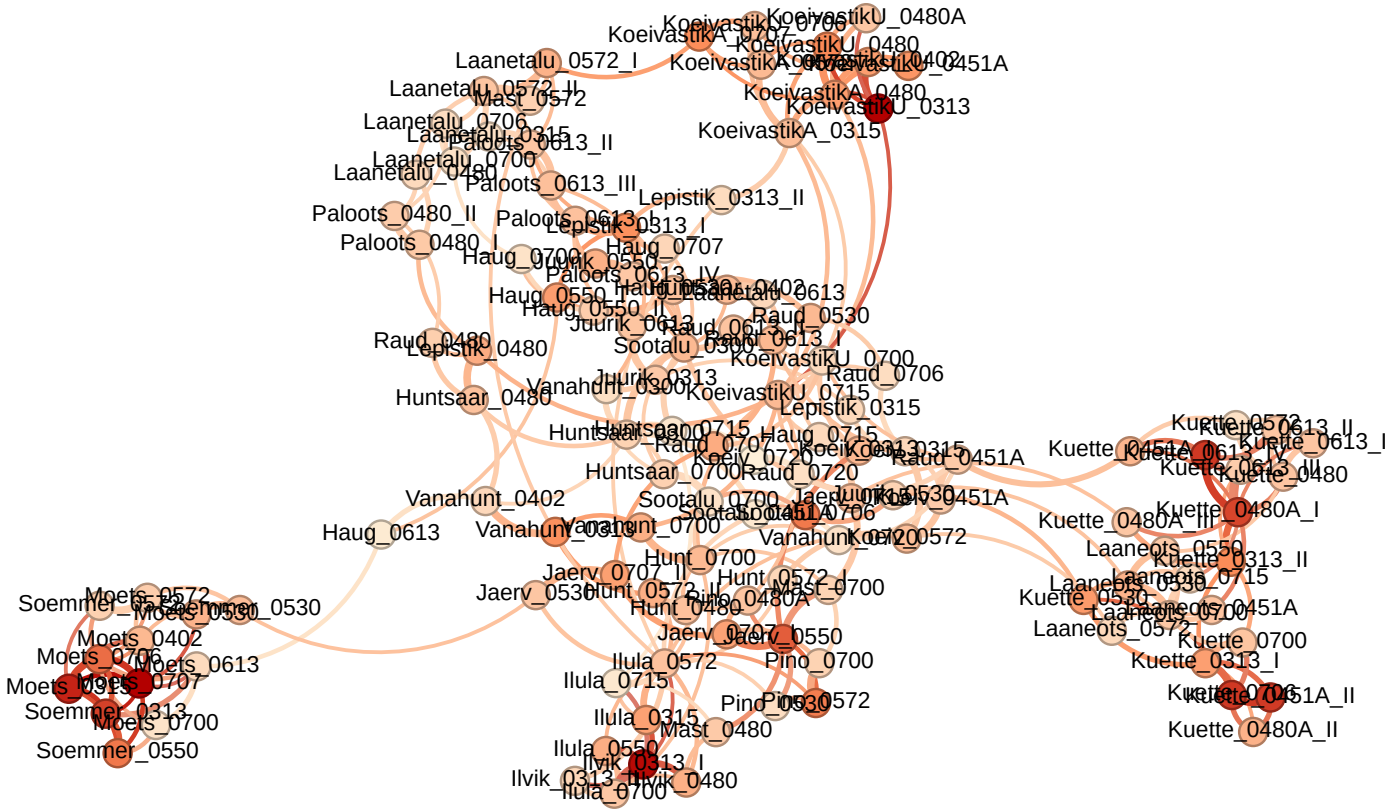

Figure 14. *Network of fairy tale text length identified by colour from light to dark, i.e. from 285 to 4,233 words.*

All in all, the study showed that textual variation is based on different factors that are not easily distinguishable. In the case of textual folklore, the folkloric variation is intertwined with linguistic variation. Regional and personal language usage influences folkloric expression through word choice, fixed formulae, alliterative constructions, etc, that design our way of thinking. An alliterative sentence, a line from the well-known runosong, *millal maksan memme vaeva* 'when will I repay my mother's love', is considered one of the most beautiful sentences in Estonian. Rather than a final answer to any of our questions, we ask the reader instead if the beauty of this sentence is in its style or in its content?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES

[1] On the popular and academic terms for this tradition see Kallio et al. 2017.

[2] The issues of popularity and creativity, spread and collection density in archival folklore collections is thoroughly analysed in Krikmann 1997.

[3] We used the Gephi layout ForceAtlas2 by M. Jacomy, and filtered out the connections with negative and small values up to the value of 2.7 where every parish remained connected.

[4] On the impact of the cities on the development of Estonian dialects see Pajusalu 2013.

[5] For keyness analysis we used the R package quanteda (Benoit et al. 2018) and log-likelihood ratio method.

[6] Burrows (2002) estimates that the method works with texts of at least 1,500 words, approximately speaking.

[7] The Dragon-Slayer (ATU 300), The Magic Flight (ATU 313), The Faithless Sister (ATU 315), The Animal Bride (ATU 402), The Sister of Nine Brothers (AT 451A/Ee 451A), An Orphan and the Mistress's Daughter (ATU 480), Devil Wooing in the Sauna (ATU 480A), The Princess on the Glass Mountain (ATU 530), The Golden Bird (ATU 550), Skulls Making Noises (ATU 572*), The Rich Brother and the Poor Brother (ATU 613), Tom Thumb (ATU 700), The Maiden without Hands (ATU 706), The Miraculous Children (ATU 707), The Magic Cock (ATU 715), The Orphan as a Cuckoo (ATU 720), cf. Estonian tale summaries EMj I-1 2009: 589–615; EMj I-2 2014: 709–738.

[8] The stories of a third storyteller from Mäe community, Irina Pino, cluster together with the stories of other regions.

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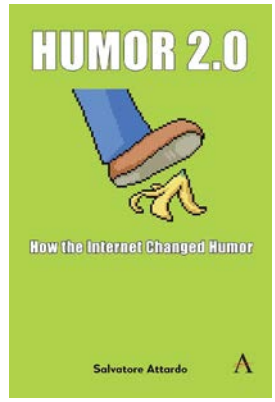
BOOK REVIEW

HOW THE INTERNET CHANGED HUMOR



Salvatore Attardo. *Humor 2.0: How the internet changed humor*. Anthem Press, 2023. 286 pp.

An account of how the internet has changed humour has been waited for. There is a lacuna in the overarching yet theory-driven understanding of the varied humour-related phenomena online. Salvatore Attardo's recent book Humor 2.0 is aimed, as the author states in the introduction, at two types of audience: a general audience interested in a serious discussion of the topic of humour in the age of the internet, and scholars from various disciplines. To be accessible for the former (but why not also the latter), the language used in the book is light and easily readable. Both mentioned groups should enjoy this quite rare feature of a scholarly book, even more so as the book puts forth ideas and provokes discussions among those who have picked it up and are curious about how, then, has the internet changed humour.

The book starts off with a compulsory overview of what is the internet and how it has developed since 1989. It states that the impact of internet on any walk of life is enormous: it's difficult to find examples of activities that have remained completely unaffected by it. Among other things, it's fair to assume that it has affected how we produce, consume, and react to humour. The author warns, however, that even though the internet has brought along changes in humour (new genres like memes, or ways of displaying laughter like emojis, etc), the changes haven't affected the deep-lying semantic mechanisms of humour. The readers should take his word for that, because Attardo is a renowned scholar who, together with other humour-researching linguists, had formulated an influential linguistic theory of humour (or more specifically the Script-Based Theory of Humour, SSHT). He then provides a loose list of things related to humour that are now different that they used to be: the meme and other new genres have evolved, the ways humour is produced and consumed have been affected, new characters have transpired, language has changed, multimodality has come to stay, and so on. The list is not meant to be exhaustive. Attardo then moves on to explaining memeiosis, or meme production, naming techniques (like remix) that are often used in the process. A tip for those who want to get most of the theory in advance: Chapter 16 also deals with the theory of memes, more specifically their lifespan; this could well be a continuation of the memeiosis. He concludes there that memes spread very fast and fall out of fashion (the former being more exponential and the latter more skewed) because they evoke

a strong emotional response, which leads to exponentially increased sharing, and then dies off when next memes take their place. The last 10 pages of the Introductory section are dedicated to an overview of humour theories.

The rest of the book is divided into four major parts; these are titled *New genres*; *Memes and more memes*, *Multimodality*, and finally, *The dark side of internet humour*. In Part 1, Attardo considers a number of features and types of texts that have emerged on the internet. The more clearly outlined ones have been given their own chapters: the compilation, internet cartoons, satirical and/or fake news, or very specific phenomena like dogecoin and the blog Stuff white people like. In these chapters, he makes observations about the specific features of new genres, for example acknowledging the central role of incongruity and superiority of humour in compilations of fail videos.

Part 2 is dedicated entirely to memes. They are referred to as "arguably the most Web 2.0 innovation in humor" (p. 108), and this statement is backed up by the first chapter that deals with specifically meme-related features: the formation of meme cycles, the idea of the memetic drift (when an anchor meme is progressively surrounded and possibly displaced by other, related memes), faulty grammatical constructions, and semantic bleaching (when the original meaning or usage is forgotten or lost in the process of the memetic drift). The idea of memeiosis is further elaborated in this chapter, suggesting that this process is an extension of the memetic drift, including also the intertextual and meta-textual appearances of the original meme. Attardo follows the argument by discussing a number of concrete examples: Grumpy cats (and why they are funny?), pastafarians, or Chuck Norris memes. In the first of these, he introduces the history of displaying cats in culture and arts, and then summarises that cats have came to stay in the meme business because they are cute and (not unimportantly) lucrative. The author's final conviction is that Tardar Sauce a.k.a. Grumpy Cat is funny because of the basic script opposition between old / young and animal / human, and as a non-threatening target it provides a relief from "doom scrolling" (or the almost obsessive practice of observing one's social media feed's negative news and posts). However, as the funniness of the cats is not only embedded their visual representation, the argument does not fully cover the whole spectrum of internet cats. Captions are often responsible for at least some of the humour in Grumpy cat (see eg Vásquez & Aslan 2021).

Part 3 addresses multimodality as one of the central features of internet humour, and the specific genres relying on multimodality: e.g. embarrassment videos (or cringe comedy), photobombing, video parody. He stresses the importance of context – the author, the intended audience, etc – in interpreting video parodies, eg the Downfall meme. When discussing photobombing, Attardo relates this to the figure ground reversal mechanism known from humour theory. He stresses that the popular genre of cringe comedy can't be explained by Schadenfreude but rather the opposite – a feeling of sympathetic embarrassment. He extends this to a discussion of humour videos in general, especially the emotional rants and reaction videos, all of which play on the empathy of the viewers.

The final Part 4 focuses on the dark and disturbing corners of the internet, which, as he rightly contends, need to be examined and at least academically understood, even if one does not share the "paleolithic sense of humour" (Sienkiewicz & Marx 2022) they employ. It follows the recent trend of writing and studying alt-right and other politically incorrect humour (ibid.) that for long now does not hide in the darkest corners any more but are out there for anyone to see. He turns to 4chan for his data on shitposting and trolling, and delineates their (small but not insignificant) differences: while shitposting is humour-oriented, the aim of trolling is more straightforwardly antagonistic. This kind of humour verging on aggressiveness functions as an in-group strengthener meant to foster a sense of belonging in an online community. Probably because they are disguised as humour, it fulfils its role much better than simple aggression.

The general audience might gain more from this book than academics as the light-heartedness and sometimes excessively condensed and/or brief way of addressing the (no doubt) vast number of types and genres available on the internet takes over the rigorous academic discussion promised in the outset of the book. On the whole, it is an interesting, yet quite a subjective list of "things a humour scholar has seen" on the internet. To back these observations up, the author has added links to websites, videos, and memes (not all of which are still functional). A good move would have been to put all web addresses in footnotes. In the print version, as much as one would like to, it isn't possible to click on the links anyway to find out more.

Attardo concludes the book with the same question he set out to seek an answer to: how has the internet changed humour? Having gone through all the numerous examples – hilarious, funny, strange, annoying (and everything in between) - he contends that although there are a lot of changes in how humour looks like, the basic features have remained unchanged. People still seek out humour, want to be amused and uplifted, and the underlying mechanisms of humour are the same. On an optimistic note, he finally states that humour is, after all, the highest expression of collective humanity, and all the aggressive, cringe, dank, ugly and cruel humour is just a phase, or – as a reader comment he aptly cites – "being an asshole is the new funny."

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