

International Symposium
“Traditional and Literary Epics of the World:
Textuality, Authorship, Identity.
The Kalevipoeg 150”

Tartu, November 29–30, 2011

Venue: University of Tartu History Museum (Toome Hill, Lossi 25)

Organisers: The Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory, the Estonian Literary Museum and the Institute for Cultural Research and Fine Arts, the University of Tartu.

Tuesday 29.11.2011

10.15 Symposium opening (University of Tartu History Museum, White Hall)

10.30 Plenary lecture: **David Elton Gay** (Bloomington, IN, USA)
The Idea of an Epic: Some Problems of Genre Definition

11.15–11.45 Coffee/tea break

11.45–12.30 Plenary lecture: **Dmitry Funk** (Moscow, Russia) The Last Shor Epic Singer

12.30–14.00 Lunch

14.00–15.30 Two parallel sessions

White Hall:

Lotte Tarkka (Helsinki, Finland) The Dialogue of Genres in Kalevala-Metre Oral Epics

Tiina Kirss (Tallinn, Estonia) Core and Trunk: The Textuality of the Kalevipoeg in Estonian Culture

Frog (Helsinki, Finland) Traditional Epic as Genre: Definition as a Foundation for Comparative Research

Conference Hall:

Niina Hämäläinen (Turku, Finland) Emotions and Authenticity. Reflections on the Epoch in the Kalevala

Liina Lukas (Tartu, Estonia) The Baltic-German *Sagen-dichtung* around the Kalevipoeg

Aldis Pūtelis (Riga, Latvia) The Epic Need for an Epic: Latvian Literary Epics of the Late 19th Century

15.30–16.00 Coffee/tea break

16.00–17.30 Two parallel sessions

White Hall:

Mari Sarv (Tartu, Estonia) The Success Story of a Verse Form

Madis Arukask (Tartu, Estonia) Lamenting Kalevipoeg

Mare Kõiva (Tartu, Estonia) Kalevipoeg as the Basis of New Narrative Forms

Conference Hall:

Hasso Krull (Tallinn, Estonia) The Mystified Landscape: The Kalevipoeg and the Reversal of Tradition

Marin Laak (Tartu, Estonia) Traces and Threads: The Kalevipoeg in Modern Estonian Culture

Kärt Summatavet (Tartu, Estonia) Mythology and the Artist's Imagination

18.00 Reception by the City of Tartu in the Town Hall (for registered participants)

Wednesday 30.11.2011

9.00 Visit to the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore (Ülikooli 16-208)

10.00–11.30 Two parallel sessions (University of Tartu History Museum)

White Hall:

Rein Veidemann (Tallinn, Estonia) The Epic Kalevipoeg as a Source of Principal Clauses of the Estonian Narrative

Ülo Valk (Tartu, Estonia) The Kalevipoeg, Mediumship and Discursive Authority of the Other World

Mihály Hoppál (Budapest, Hungary) Heroic Epics of the World – Research History and Future Tasks

Conference Hall:

Ranibala Khumukcham (Imphal, India): Folk Epic: A Study on *KhambaThoibi* of Manipur

Paul Hagu (Tartu, Estonia) A wave of Epics in Setomaa (1920–1930)

Sonja Petrović (Belgrade, Serbia) Oral Epic Tradition about the Battle of Kosovo 1389: Story Models, Forms, Ideologies

11.30–12.00 Coffee/tea break

12.00–13.30 Two parallel sessions

White Hall:

Eve Pormeister (Tartu, Estonia) Das estnische Epos „Kalevipoeg“ in der Spannung zwischen Nationalem und Menschheitlich-Universellem am Beispiel der Höllenfahrt-szenen

Risto Järv (Tartu, Estonia) Construction of ‘Pre-Kalevipoeg’: K. Ganander/K. J. Peterson’s Finnische Mythologie

Cornelius Hasselblatt (Groningen, Netherlands) German Rewritings of the Estonian Kalevipoeg. On the German Reception of the Estonian Epic in the 19th Century

Conference Hall:

Tatiana Bulgakova (St. Petersburg, Russia) The Motif of Competition in Siberian Shamanic Tales

Nina Yurchenkova (Saransk, Russia) From Mythology to Heroic Consciousness (Based on the Example of the Mordovian Epos)

Margaret Lyngdoh (Tartu, Estonia) Elements of Epic in Ritual among the Khasis

13.30–15.00 Lunch

15.00–16.30 Two parallel sessions

White Hall:

Arne Merilai (Tartu, Estonia) The Kalevipoeg: Aspects of Authorship

Katre Kikas (Tartu, Estonia) “Dr. Kreutzwald Has Been Blamed...” A Village Tailor H. A. Schults Defending the Authenticity of Kreutzwald’s Kalevipoeg

Conference Hall:

Jouni Hyvönen (Helsinki, Finland) Elias Lönnrot’s Ethno-historical View of the Finnish Mythology in the Kalevala

Pille-Riin Larm (Tartu, Estonia) Estonian Mythopoeia. Myths, Epics and Identity

Ott Heinapuu (Tartu, Estonia) Estonian Civil Religion: The Kalevipoeg and Sacred Oak Groves of Taara

16.30–17.00 Coffee/tea break

17.30 Visit to the Estonian Literary Museum (Vanemuise 42)

Preface

The epic is an extraordinary form of artistic expression because of its history of more than three thousand years and its outstanding role in building ethnic and national identities. Epics have excelled both as literary masterpieces, and as highly esteemed oral genres performed by well-trained singers. Starting with the Sumerian Gilgamesh, the Babylonian Enuma Elish, the Greek Iliad and Odyssey, and the Indian Mahabharata and Ramayana, epic traditions have continued throughout the Middle Ages into modern times when the Romantic movement produced new monuments, such as the Ossian by James Macpherson, the Kalevala by Elias Lönnrot and the Kalevipoeg by Friedrich R. Kreutzwald. These and other literary works have string connections with oral epics – traditions that have become obsolete among many nations, but thrive among other peoples even in the 21st century.

Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko has defined epics as grand narratives about exemplars, originally performed by specialised singers as super-stories that excel in length, power of expression and significance of content over other narratives, and which function as a source of identity representations in the traditional community or group receiving the epic. Thus, epics provide core symbols for group identities and function as master-narratives for many cultures.

The symposium is organised to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the publication of the first edition of the Estonian epic Kalevipoeg (1857–1861). Papers on oral and literary epics of the world cover a range of subtopics, such as:

- Texts and contexts of world epics
- Authorship and epic traditions
- Comparative studies of oral and literary epics
- Performance of oral epics
- Epics and identity
- Epics and mythology
- Epics and intertextuality

- Epics and the related genres
- Epics and their reception
- ‘Forgotten’ epics of the world

The organisers of the symposium are the Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory, the Estonian Literary Museum and the Institute for Cultural Research and Fine Arts, University of Tartu.

Lamenting Kalevipoeg

Madis Arukask (Univeristy of Tartu, Estonia)

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The Kalevipoeg is a semi-literary heroic epic in which different folklore genres, first of all legends and regilaul, but also fairy tale motifs, charms and phraseological units, have been used. Because of this the shape of the leading character of the epic varies in different parts of the text, extending from a character who is becoming psychologically human, to a nature giant. We can recognise the dictation of different folklore genres here, the problem that Kreutzwald had to solve when compiling the epic.

Especially in the first nine cantos of the epic, Kalevipoeg appears as a relatively human-like character for whom reflections about his deeds are not unfamiliar. Amongst the folklore genres that Kreutzwald had the possibility of using, laments are missing. To the 19th century, laments were already missing from the Estonian folk tradition (although this was not the case in Setomaa). At the same time several self-expressions of Kalevipoeg (as well as other characters) in the epic can be analysed as laments or functionally as lament-like speech acts – especially after or before the crisis situations in the fabula. In all of these situations (e.g. the death of Kalev, the disappearance of Linda, the loss of Island Maiden, etc.) the broken social cohesion somehow has to be restored, which is one of the main functions of lament as a genre in living tradition. In some cases Kreutzwald has used motifs from the Estonian necromantic folk songs (regilaul), although his assortment is relatively limited. This kind of song-like par in the epic can be essentially handled as (occasional) laments because by function, composition and register they are often close to the genre.

In this paper I reflect about the lament as a genre disappeared from Estonian folklore using examples from Kalevipoeg. I also investigate other speech acts that may function similarly to laments in the folk practices.

The Motif of Competition in Siberian Shamanic Tales

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Heroic epic narratives represent one of the most popular folklore genres, which until recently continued to exist among the indigenous Siberian population. My indigenous informants consider that stories about a hero's vengeance upon the enemy, who killed his father, expose the factual events, which a shaman experiences in the spiritual world. Following their opinion I name those narratives 'shamanic tales'.

The motif of competition represents the central and culminating episode in such tales. That motif represents either a contest of human and spirit (as in the famous plot about competition between man and the devil) or emulation of two persons (shamans) who act by means of their spirit-helpers. The hero, who takes vengeance on an alien shaman for his father's death, almost never kills him directly, but calls his rival for a contest. Having won in a competition a tale hero gets power over the population of some alien villages and joins them to his property. In the tales, competition is also a means to find a proper groom for a girl, etc.

Competitions were an important part of the traditional life of the Siberian peoples (contests in jumping, in lifting heavy stones, throwing, etc.). In the Soviet time those competitions were forbidden and replaced with very similar sports contests, which only lost their religious component and became an integral part of the official feasts. According to traditional ideas, winning in these competitions was a means of influencing the future and changing it in a desired direction. In turn competition (in its spiritual form) was an integral part of ritual practice, especially the shamanic ritual practice, and there were paramount shamanic contests, which were represented in tales. This is why tale heroes compete using such unreal (but inherent to shamanic spirits) abilities as the capability to crack a red-hot metal with their teeth, to quickly skin and eat a huge bear, to run with the speed of a flying ball, to walk on the

blade of a huge sharp knife, etc. Those tale personages who lost the contest either died or were killed, which can also be explained by shamanic practice: battles that occur in dreams and rituals usually end in the real death of the loser. Not only did shamanic tales narrate some inter-shaman competitions, but could also be a means of a duel against the alien shaman: in certain situations narration itself was a method of competing with a hostile shaman.

Traditional Epic as Genre: Definition as a Foundation for Comparative Research

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The understanding of epic genres has been shaped by Western scholarship. Already in the Middle Ages, Classical models had an established position informing the discourse surrounding epics and their political significance. Definitions of epic therefore tend to emphasise formal characteristics (e.g. stylistic features, length), which are questionable in cross-cultural contexts. This does not mean that formal characteristics may not have relevance within broad cross-cultural isoglosses, but asserting them as universals is problematic. The present paper outlines these problems and takes a semiotic approach to genre, setting out to offer a cross-cultural definition of the epic genre which can circumvent these issues.

This paper approaches genre in terms of a constellation of prescriptive conventions related to form, content and applications within a vernacular genre system. The specific conventions are all culture-dependent. An abstract cross-cultural typology of genre is therefore proposed according to social, semiotic and discourse functions within a vernacular genre system maintained through applications. Generic products are identified according to vernacular conventions of form and content within that discourse. A traditional epic genre is identified as such through the capacity of its formal conventions to confer the quality of 'epic' on new or unfamiliar contents (i.e. a 'new' narrative). The use of formal characteristics for content which does not conform to prescriptive conventions (e.g. parody) is described as only 'metaphorically' epic. Narrative content conventionally associated with the epic mode of expression is described as only 'metonymically' epic when presented in another mode of expression (e.g. summary).

The abstract definition outlined here is intended to provide a frame of reference for identifying and approaching vernacular epic traditions and their social and semiotic functions in cultural practices. It is not intended to be prescriptive. The paper will close with a brief address of its value and limitations in analysis.

The Last Shor Epic Singer

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The Shors are one of Siberia's smaller populations, 13,975 according to the 2002 Russian census. The Shors live mainly in the south of Western Siberia and mainly (about 70% of the entire Shor population) in towns in the southern part of the Kemerovo region. Apart from many other cultural features, this ethnic group is especially well known thanks to its rich epic tradition, examples of which have been recorded over the last 150 years by many scholars and enthusiasts. According to the author's data, there are at least 280 texts from the Shor epics stored in different archives and/or in private collections.

This paper discusses peculiarities of the Shor epic tradition and their reflection in the Russian literature of the last 30 years. Through biographical details of some famous storytellers (like epic singers, *qaiči*, Stepan Torbokov (1900–1980), Viktor Tokmashov (1914–1973), Vladimir Tannagashev (1932–2007), Mikhail Kauchakov (born in 1934), and of ordinary keepers of the epic tradition) the paper will show who, when, under what circumstances, and why the idea of 'the last epic singer' has been exploited. Based upon my own field data I will be able to find out how it corresponded – and still corresponds – with the Shor epic tradition.

Another aspect that will be touched upon in the paper is the role of those epic singers who felt they were the last in preserving Shor culture by transcribing their rich epic repertoire. I will provide descriptions of archival texts and touch upon some important ethical and technical issues related to working with these materials. As a result of the author's work the first two volumes in the series "Shor Heroic Epics" will be presented, as well as an electronic corpus of folklore texts.

The Idea of an Epic: Some Problems of Genre Definition

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Epic, chronicle, romance and history are usually considered separate genres, though the seemingly clear generic boundaries between them are often obscured. In the Persian epic *The Shahnameh*, for example, all four exist side by side, yet there is little doubt among modern scholars that this work should be called an epic. At other times scholars have been hesitant to apply the genre of 'epic' to a text. In the case of the Armenian *Buzandaran Patmutiwn* (*The Epic Histories*), the obscurity of the meaning of the name of the text led to its long being considered a chronicle, and thus it is only recently that scholars have attached the term 'epic' to it, as, for example, in Nina Garsoian's excellent translation of the epic – although Garsoian also applies the terms history and chronicle to it. Another Armenian text, *Elishe's History of Vardan and the Armenian War*, is typically treated as a history, though it has elements of epic and romance in it.

Using the *Shahnameh*, *The Epic Histories*, and the *History of Vardan and the Armenian War* as my primary examples, I will explore in my paper the problems of defining epic as a distinct genre. Why do we label some texts epics and not others? Are there objective standards through which clear definitions of the genre of a particular text can be made, or are our definitions subjective – and if they are, how did we come to have these definitions? In particular I will be examining the role of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars – and especially W. P. Ker – in shaping our concepts of these genres.

A Wave of Epics in Setomaa (1920–1930)

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A wave of composing/singing Seto epics began with Seto folk singer Anne Vabarna performing her first long-format epic “The Maiden’s Death Song & The Great Wedding” (5580 verses) to Finnish folklorist Armas Otto Väisänen in summer 1923.

Anne Vabarna performed a total of 16 long-format epics: in addition to the first there was “Peko” (7929 verses), a verse novel “Ale” (10942 verses), the second part of “Peko” (4318 verses), “Founder of a Church” (2209 verses), “Ivan the Terrible” (1724 verses), “Song of Spring” (2578 verses), “Song of an Oak” (2781 verses), “Song of a Birch” (1152 verses), “Song of a Pine” (927 verses), “Song of a Fir” (1180 verses), “Song of a Juniper” (610 verses), “The Manor Apple Tree and the Farm Apple Tree” (1176 verses), “Song of the Wind” (1918 verses), “Song of the Fire” (1078 verses), “Song of Water” (1158 verses).

Until now the general public did not know that the folklore manuscript collection of Samuel Sommer also contains oral epics from three Seto folk singers.

Anna Sonts has performed her “Song About a Miserable Year” (540 verses) [S 8024/48 (1) < *Mäe v, Mikitamäe k – I. Sonts < Anna Peetri t Sonts, 1870 (1928)*] on her own initiative.

Matrjona (Mat’o) Raudla seems to have performed “Wedding Poem” (1690 verses) [S 21273/379 (8) < *Järvesuu v, Väiko-Rõsna k – J. Ojaverre < Mat’o Raudla, 1888 (1930)*] at request of the collector. What was claimed to be her second epic “The Maiden’s Death Song” (1518 verses) [S 40512/607 (4-7) < *Järvesuu v, Väiko-Rõsna k – J. Ojaverre < Mat’o Raudla, 1888 (1932)*], is in fact most likely a falsification by collector Jaan Ojaverre.

From **Ksenia (Okse) Linna** her son Timofei wrote down two long format epics: “Song About a Rich Farm/Old Liisa’s Life Story” (3985 verses) [S 27503/702 (1) < *Vilo v, Ojaverre (Lõkova) k < Misso v, Põrste k – T. Linna < Ksenia Linna (1930)*] and “Life Story of a Great Sorceress” (3989 verses) [S 28943/29142 (1) < *Vilo v, Lõkova k < Misso v, Põrste k – T. Linna < Ksenia Linna, 1880 (1930)*].

Undoubtedly the initiative to compose the epics came from the collector. However, Okse did not need any help when finding words for the song.

My report will discuss the contents, conditions and reasons for the genesis of these epics. All three composers of long-format epics were good singers. It's a pity that their songs have been forgotten among other manuscripts in the Estonian Folklore Archives.

German Rewritings of the Estonian Kalevipoeg. On the German Reception of the Estonian Epic in the 19th Century

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Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald's bilingual publication of the epic Kalevipoeg in an Estonian-German edition (1857–1861) immediately gave accessibility to the German reader. Moreover, the publication within an internationally dispersed series guaranteed that the epic was noticed by the scholarly community. Therefore it is not surprising that there were several rather quick reactions to the Kalevipoeg.

In the paper I will focus on the scholarly treatments of the epic (e.g. by Wilhelm Schott) as well as on some adaptations and rewritings which appeared soon after (e.g. Israël, Grosse). These texts are generally known as bibliographical entries but they have hardly ever been scrutinised. A closer look at them should, firstly, help us better understand the reception of foreign literatures, and, secondly, give us more insight into the intention of the respective authors.

References

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- Israël, C. C. 1873: Kalewipoeg oder die Abenteuer des Kalewiden. Eine estnische Sage, frei nach dem Estnischen bearbeitet. Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag von Heyder & Zimmer.
- Schott, W. 1863: Die estnischen sagen von Kalewi-Poeg. – Abhandlungen der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Nr. 7 (1862), 413–487.

Estonian Civil Religion: The Kalevipoeg and Sacred Oak Groves of Taara

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I will argue that Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald's epic Kalevipoeg has contributed to Estonian civil religion and take a closer look at one of its elements, namely the sacred oak grove of the Estonian national god Taara.

The sociologist Robert Bellah characterised American civil religion as inherently Abrahamic so that the rhetoric and the value systems embedded in it encompass, and are compatible with, different Christian denominations as well as Judaism. In contrast, there is the fiercely secular French civil religion the values of which have been applied by politicians in banning public prayers on streets and barring religious symbols from public schools.

In Estonia, one of the foundations of the national civil religion is the ancient loss of independence during the Baltic crusades in the 13th century, and the restoration of this independence in the 20th century. The loss of independence is also enshrined in the national epic.

The sacred sites of Estonian folk religion, including the reputed oak groves of Taara as enshrined in the national epic, and these of the Estonian national civil religion (or *lieux de mémoire*) constitute two quite different sets.

The difference is often blurred in public discourse as the two sets have a prominent overlap and common public knowledge on the sacred sites of Estonian traditional folk religion remains scarce and fragmented. The prominence of some elements of civil religion leads to misconceptions about landscape heritage dating back to the 19th and earlier centuries.

One probable point of origin for such discrepancies seems to be the text of the epic Kalevipoeg, as it has been seen as a reliable document on pre-Christian Estonia rather than a creation of a Romantic poet.

Heroic Epics of the World – Research History and Future Tasks

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My presentation will be on the series of “A világ eposzai” (“Epics of the World”) books in Hungarian published by me in my European Folklore Institute. There is a long history of research on the heroic epic in Eurasia. A short outline will be given in the presentation about the great effort that has been made by the Russian scholars in publishing partly unknown texts. In Hungary we also recently published some volumes of translations. The editor will outline future plans and the possible outcome of future volumes.

Elias Lönnrot's Ethno-historical View of the Finnish Mythology in the Kalevala

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Elias Lönnrot's (1802–1884) most famous work is the Kalevala, which came out in different versions in 1835, 1849, and 1862. He explicitly articulated his goals in the 1835 version of the epic in the following way: (1) to study the ancient past, (2) to describe Finnish mythology and (3) to bring forth rich linguistic resources which would benefit the future development of the Finnish language (see the preface of Old Kalevala in Lönnrot's *Valitut teokset* 5: 179). So Lönnrot's one prime reason was to reconstruct the past of the pagan Finns. To be logical in his historical description of the story-world, Lönnrot paid no attention to the Christian influences, which for example are very common in Kalevala-metric charms. In principle Lönnrot tried to extract the Christian influence from the epic, but this is not the whole picture of Lönnrot's editorial aims. Lönnrot deleted the Christian 'surface layer' from the Kalevala, while on the other hand he constructed, following the ideals of Romanticism, a 'smooth and clean' ethno-historical picture of Finnish mythology. So Lönnrot did not, in his editorial work on the folk poems in the Kalevala, stick only to publishing and organising the data, but also acted as an interpreter of mythical knowledge.

I will analyse Lönnrot's editorial changes. His editorial aims reflect the idea of 'beginning monotheism' or Ur-Monotheism – belief typical to the 18th century. While re-writing the 'Finnish' mythology, Lönnrot created an omnipresent Christian perspective in the story-world, and by doing so tried to give an impression that Christian guidance was also present in the archaic past. From this perspective Lönnrot's ethno-historical view of the Finnish mythology in the Kalevala is a creation of the Romantic movement.

Emotions and Authenticity. Reflections on the Epoch in the Kalevala

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Elias Lönnrot emphasised a collective authorship of the Kalevala (the longest version, 1849) in his textualisation process. For Lönnrot, although he had collected folk poem material, the material represented the people themselves and their voice. Lönnrot constantly repeated the idea that the Kalevala was created by the guidance of folk singers, while his own compilation and interpretation were insignificant.

In my paper, textualisation is defined as the process in which oral text is transferred into a written context and redefined in this context. Lönnrot's textualisation of folk poems was not only a technical and editorial process but also a historical and cultural procedure during which folk poetry was reinterpreted on the basis of the national (collective) culture. The textual strategies which Lönnrot pursued to bring archaic language and the world of the epic closer to the 19th century bourgeois audience are of specific interest in this respect.

Lauri Honko has characterised the Kalevala as an epic located between oral and written tradition (tradition-oriented epic). It is based on the models of oral culture and singing tradition, but it does not represent oral tradition as such. In addition to its traditional content, the Kalevala, as an epic written by Elias Lönnrot, is a social and historical representation of the 19th century society in which Lönnrot, influenced by social and historical dialogue, interpreted and redefined folk poems.

In my presentation, I examine the textualisation of the Kalevala with examples that illustrate Lönnrot's textual choices and interpretation and exhibit how Lönnrot increased folk lyric sequences in the epic to reflect the objectives of 19th century society and its views on family and emotion.

Construction of ‘Pre-Kalevipoeg’: K. Ganander/K. J. Peterson’s *Finnische Mythologie*

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The Estonian poet Kristjan Jaak Peterson translated the Finnish pastor Kristfrid Ganander’s *Mythologia Fennica* (1789), written originally in Swedish, into German under the title *Finnische Mythologie* (1822). While revising the main part discussing Finnish folk religion and shaping it into a systematised treatment, Peterson added a considerable number of comments about characters in Estonian folk belief. The final comment on the Estonian tradition refers to a character called “Kalewa’s Son” (*kallewe-poeg*), who was known to have ploughed with his wooden plough through grasslands so that not a blade of grass would ever grow there. There is also a mention of this malevolent giant chasing after womankind.

In addition, the index of *Finnische Mythologie* includes a reference to a giant called Kalewa and “Kalewan-pojat, sons of the said giant”.

The text mediated by Peterson relies heavily on pastor Arnold Friedrich Johann Knüpffer’s comments to A. W. Hupel’s dictionary, published in the ninth issue of the journal *Beiträge* (1817). Here, the character is mentioned under a separate key word and this is why it is Peterson, who has become known as the person who “discover[ed] the tale of Kalevipoeg” (Villem Reiman), despite the fact that the character is already mentioned in the works of Heinrich Stahl (1641) and August Wilhelm Hupel (1790).

In his revision of *Mythologia Fennica*, Peterson devised a mythological scheme that found, in a considerably elaborated form, an influential application in the compilation of the Estonian national epic created in the 1850s and 1860s. The paper discusses the representations of Estonian folklore and folk belief in Peterson’s treatment, and the character, of Kalevipoeg on the borderline of this mythological sphere, which could be tentatively referred to as ‘Pre-Kalevipoeg’.

Folk Epic: A Study of KhambaThoibi of Manipur

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The paper will firstly try to underscore an introduction to KhambaThoibi in brief. Secondly, attention will be given to KhambaThoibi as a folk epic by giving proper perspective to this folk epic study drawing on some important features in it, for example its historicity, magic elements, heroic and romantic features, etc. Specifically, some Manipuri points of style will also be considered.

The story of KhambaThoibi, a unique item of Manipuri Folklore narrated in the form of a lengthy song, has about thirty-four thousand lines; it consists of ballads about the heroic adventures of Khamba, the hero, as well as of his love for Thoibi, the heroine. The story of KhambaThoibi has been transmitted orally over the centuries; but it is distinguished from other tales in our oral tradition by its enormous length, romance and heroic exploits of the hero and above all by its style. By all means the story of KhambaThoibi has all the folk epic requisites, especially in regard to the theme, style, characterisation and structure. Like other folk epics this is highly stylised in its growth through generations, although the basic theme and framework have remained almost unaltered. Within its framework it provides a vast panorama of human life, set against a tragic background, and all human actions are pre-determined. This is in contrast to the literary version, which tends to have a happy ending.

“Dr. Kreutzwald Has Been Blamed...” A Village Tailor H. A. Schults Defending the Authenticity of Kreutzwald’s Kalevipoeg

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The Kalevipoeg has been acknowledged as the Estonian national epic. Reference to ‘nation’ means that it is not a traditional folk epic but rather a literary creation meant to strengthen the patriotic feelings of a particular community. However, the definition Benedict Anderson has given to the concept of nation – that of an ‘imagined community’ – may lead us to the understanding that the creation of the text is not enough. It must be read, interpreted and talked about to have the effect it was meant to have; the text must be adaptable to different social and historical situations.

In my paper I am going to focus on a particular interpretation of the Kalevipoeg from the beginning of the 20th century. The text I am referring to was written by Hans Anton Schults (1866–1905) – a village tailor with three years of schooling – in the context of folklore collection and its aim is to defend Kreutzwald’s work from contemporary criticism. In this text Schults both expresses his faith that Kreutzwald’s work is based on genuine folklore and admits that he has not actually read the epic himself – his faith in its authenticity relies on fragments he has seen in several other books. So on the one hand we see that Schults still represents the synecdochal way of thinking (the idea that contemporary folklore consists of fragments of some kind of now forgotten whole, Undusk 1995) which was the drive behind the creation of the epic, although as well as this we see some more vernacular ideas about writing and written texts at work in his rebuttal of Kreutzwald.

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The Mystified Landscape: The Kalevipoeg and the Reversal of Tradition

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1. In Estonian oral tradition the landscape is an image of a primordial time, when the earth was created and when it acquired its present shape. In the recorded fragments it is often referred to as a period when the stones were soft (*vanal hallil ajal, kui kivid olnud veel pehmed*). This primordial time can be compared to some of the oldest and remotest oral traditions, like the *altjeringa*, or dreamtime, among Aboriginal Australians or the First Order among African Bushmen.

2. In the primordial time there were two principal figures. One was the first or more perfect creator and the other a trickster, who added necessary ‘imperfections’ and continued the process of creation for a long time. The first creator is often called Grandfather (*Vanaisa*), while the trickster is called Old Pagan (*Vanapagan*). Together they form a classical creator pair. The story usually goes like this: Grandfather creates the earth all flat, but Old Pagan also creates hills and valleys, etc.

3. Gustav Schüdlöffel noticed in 1836 that the oral tradition is seminal and cares very little about geographical singularity. “Was hier als an einem Orte geschehen erzählt wird, mag auch anderswo von andern Orten gelten, je nachdem der nationale Erzähler es seiner Gegend oder einer ihm bekannten Gegend anzupassen für gut hält,” he says in an introduction to a short sequence of trickster stories published in *Das Inland*. The reason for this seminality is simple: in the oral tradition each locale embodies a cosmological totality, or as Christopher Tilley would put it, “all places have metonymic qualities”.

4. In 1839 Friedrich Faehlmann reversed this principle of the oral tradition, introducing a concept of Tartumaa as “der classische Boden der Ehsten”, where the alleged epic narrative cycle has

presumably established univocal relations between the local singularities and epic events, presented in a linear order. This innovation was taken for granted by Friedrich Kreutzwald, who imagined the Estonian landscape as a geographical stage for his epic hero Kalevipoeg. However, the real oral tradition did not fit in with this preconception and Kreutzwald was frustrated. Nonetheless he passed through this phase of depression and produced a new, mystified landscape, represented in his epic Kalevipoeg, thus bringing forth a fundamental reversal of tradition.

Kalevipoeg as the basis of new narrative forms

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The epic Kalevipoeg is the basis of short stories as well as plays, comics, graphic novels, video narratives, and even science fiction. Many narratives do not only reproduce the epic but confront us with new narrative worlds which rely on principles of humor, or adapt the epic to an everyday environment, demythologising the content. I will investigate some techniques and strategies that relate to these forms.

Traces and Threads: The Kalevipoeg in Modern Estonian Culture

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Literary studies of the Estonian national epic Kalevipoeg have mainly revolved around its cultural-historical meaning. This paper concentrates on the textuality of the epic from the literary and semiotic point of view. My aim is to analyse the impact of the text of the epic by following its textual traces at different levels of contemporary Estonian culture, especially on the literary landscape. This treatment is based on the conviction that the meaning of the Kalevipoeg is shaped by the intertextual relations established between the source text and modern intertextual artefacts. It can also be said that intertextual analysis, in a way, ‘splits’ the linearity of the epic as a source text, revealing the intertexts hidden under the linear surface. Analysing the intertextual relations of the epic Kalevipoeg we can clearly see that smaller linguistic and semantic units – motifs, scenes and themes – have been picked out of the rich plot and given extremely heavy semantic loads in later texts. We can notice an interesting phenomenon: the same textual units have frequently been re-interpreted in different kinds of social and artistic artefacts. Using the terminology of new digital media we can talk about intertextual threads as new cultural units. My paper will present examples of such threads, focusing on the thread of the redeeming homecoming of the hero at the end of the epic.

Estonian Mythopoeia. Myths, Epics and Identity

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Mythology is founded on belief. It comprises something beyond simple communication, something that cannot be verbalised and is wholly comprehensible only within its own cultural environment – it should not be written down. In contrast, mythopoeia as an artificial mythology is a rational creation, a written product of considered thinking.

The Estonian mythopoeia that was created by Estophiles at the start of the 19th century culminated in the epic *Kalevipoeg* (1857–1861). Further success for an artificial creation was possible due firstly to it becoming a tool of national ideological rhetorics, and secondly due to its continuous rewriting. The mythopoeia and the new national myth have created a special mythological consciousness, which is visible in the number of literary texts written from the 1870s onwards. Many popular mythopoeic texts have been counted as folklore. As Paul Veyne has said: “Men do not find the truth; they create it, as they create their history. And the two in turn offer a good return.” This presentation describes how mythopoeia, transmitted in belles lettres and music, has influenced Estonian identity. It emerges that artificial mythology can successfully become the base of meta-mythology and bring about changes in cultural circulation.

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The Baltic-German *Sagendichtung* around the Kalevipoeg

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The interest of Baltic-Germans in Estonian folklore heritage goes back to the 18th century, when at the request of J. G. Herder the first collecting action of Estonian and Latvian folk songs took place. Systematic collecting work started in the 1830s and, in the Estonian language area, peaked with the Estonian epic Kalevipoeg (1857–1861), implemented by F. R. Kreutzwald but also influenced by very many collectors and adaptors, published in parallel in both languages, German and Estonian. Literary adaptations of folk tales very quickly found their way into journals, newspapers, poem collections and anthologies, often in the popular form of a ballad. In my paper, I will identify what role Estonian folklore played in Baltic-German lyroepic poetry.

Elements of Epic in Ritual Among the Khasis

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Ritual and the accompanying recitation of narratives make up the core component in any ceremony among the Khasi indigenous community in North Eastern India. Yet it is not the exploits of a single individual or his heroic actions which constitute the verbal dimension spoken or chanted during a given ritual. Instead, a series of narratives chronicling the central myths that make up the psychological consciousness of this community are chanted. If we follow the definition given by Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko (1998) that epics are “grand narratives about exemplars, originally performed by specialized singers as super-stories that excel in length, power of expression and significance of content over other narratives and function as a source of identity representations in the traditional community or group receiving the epic”, then the oral component of the ritual among the Khasis becomes relevant.

This paper will focus on a specific esoteric paddy ritual among the Bhoi, who are a sub-tribe of the Khasis. The verbal dimension of the ritual performance will be examined with special reference to the singer/performer and the oral narratives that are chanted/spoken.

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The Kalevipoeg: Aspects of Authorship

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I. The Question of Genre

As I have discussed in a previous article (2004), the ‘scientific’ pursuit of F. R. Kreutzwald was to make his contemporaries believe that the Kalevipoeg and its source texts were authentic folklore, thus overshadowing his own prevalent role in its creation. He took active measures against accusations in ‘Ossianism’, renouncing his right to have his name printed on the title page and arguing against the work being called an epic rather than ‘an old folk tale’ or ‘a bunch of old sagas’ written down ‘straight from oral tradition’. The work was indeed first regarded as consisting of genuine folk songs, thus earning the compiler the Demidov prize from the Academy of St. Petersburg. It was only later that the Kalevipoeg acquired the status of an author’s work. As a result, the problem of author and genre persists in the text. From the structural point of view the Kalevipoeg is an artistic epic of a romantic flavour, tending more towards an epical-lyrical than a classical epic. This can be proved by a typological comparison of traditional and lyrical poetics à la M. Bakhtin, as well as by Kreutzwald’s earlier devotion to ballad, which was the height of fashion in European literature of the time. In addition, Kalevipoeg contains many a lyro-epic folk song. Thus, a ballad-like lyro-dramatical-epical structure bears upon the Estonian national epic in both a synchronic and a diachronic plane, blurring the boundaries of genre and authorship in the best romantic tradition. Consequently, a twofold definition – the Kalevipoeg: a giant ballad (a huge ballad; a ballad about a giant) – seems quite irresistible.

II. The Question of the ‘Death of the Author’

Partly inspired by R. Barthes’s notion of text as a tissue of polyphonic quotations, many (interwoven) layers of open or hidden authorship can be extracted from the Kalevipoeg:

- (1) Kreutzwald as a folklore collector
- (2) Kreutzwald as a compiler/composer

- (3) Kreutzwald as a literary inventor/interventor (both in form and content)
- (4) Kreutzwald's advocacy of non-Ossianism
- (5) Kreutzwald's actual Ossianism
- (6) Normal (Kreutzwaldian) fictional author ≠ Kreutzwald
- (7) Specific fictional author = Viru Bard
- (8) Blurred fictional author ≠ Viru Bard
- (9) Fragments of fictional narrator = Viru Bard (presented by Kreutzwaldian fictional author)
- (10) Fragments of fictional narrator ≠ Viru Bard (presented by Viru Bard as fictional author)
- (11) Kreutzwald himself as virtual Viru Bard
- (12) Folklore sources (anonymous stories/songs/sayings, recorded/retold; Toa Jaagup, etc.)
- (13) Cultural motifs (antiquity, mythology, Homer, the Bible, *Edda*, germanic/slavic epics, etc.)
- (14) Kalevala influences
- (15) Mythopoeia as creator (structuralism: not people but myths/narratives are thinking)
- (16) Romantic discourse (humanistic emanation; indigenous cultures; Herder)
- (17) Romantic balladry (lyro-dramatical-epical structure; sentimentalism – love, family, war, etc.)
- (18) Voices of contemporaries (Ganander, Peterson, Merkel, Faehlmann, Knüppfer, Neus, Schultz, etc.)
- (19) Budding national ideology (discursive constructivity; Kreutzwald's personal efforts)
- (20) Kreutzwald's invention of pseudo runic verse
- (21) Runic verse (both original and ad hoc Kreutzwaldian) as poetic speaker
- (22) Estonian language as Heideggerian speaker
- (23) Kreutzwald as an integral author in general
- (24) Kreutzwald as a main/single author (of folklore-based fiction) in today's perception"
- (25)

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Oral Epic Tradition about the Battle of Kosovo 1389: Story Models, Forms, Ideologies

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In the Battle of Kosovo (Jun 28, 1389), the most famous battle of Serbian medieval history, the Serbian Prince Lazar was killed, and Sultan Murad I was murdered by the Serbian nobleman Miloš (K)Obilić. The rumors of such unprecedented events spread quickly across Europe and instantly entered oral tradition, as well as historiography and literature. In the following centuries, various forms of oral tradition (epic songs, ballads, heroic tales, legends, etc.) took their own course, adapting and changing in the complex historical and social processes and migrations of the Serbian people that the Ottoman conquest brought on. Apart from these, other impulses also influenced development of particular story models and their ideology: the cult of Prince Lazar, incited by the Serbian Orthodox Church; the cult of the sultan Murad, who was proclaimed a shahid; interaction of oral and written literary and historiographic forms; the second Kosovo Battle in 1448, when János Hunyadi and the Christian coalition were severely defeated by Murad II; the First Serbian Uprising 1804 and struggles for national liberation against the Turks; the First Balkan War 1912–1913, when Kosovo and Metohija were liberated.

In more than 70 historical, literary and semiliterary sources (14th–19th centuries), and more than 400 epic songs and legends (17th–20th centuries) written down in different cultural and ethnic surroundings of the Balkans, specific story models are distinguished. The ideology of the story models is discussed from the perspectives of narrative and of poetic structure (who are the heroes, what ideas do they represent, what is the focus of a story model, what kind of discourse supports the ideology?), adaptations and changes (the problem of variants), and form (the larger epics/epopee; individual epic songs and fragments of songs as parts of the Kosovo epic cycle).

Das estnische Epos „Kalevipoeg“ in der Spannung zwischen Nationalem und Menschheitlich-Universellem am Beispiel der Höllenfahrtszenen

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Im Prozess des *nation building* brauchen die Nationen bzw. Gesellschaften einen identitätssichernden und wirkungsmächtigen historisch-kulturellen (bzw. historisch-geistigen) Gemeinbesitz. Fehlt einem Volk eine solche Vergangenheit oder entspricht sie nicht ganz den Erwartungen und Wunschvorstellungen, die es gesellschaftlich zu legitimieren gilt, kann sie erfunden oder korrigiert werden. Man projiziert diese Erwartungen und Visionen in eine bestimmte Vergangenheit bzw. in die nationalmythologische Geschichte zurück und schafft einen *formativen Text*, ein großes (literarisches) „Narrativ“, wie beispielsweise ein (National)Epos, das für die Selbstbestimmung einer Nation und für ihre Kulturgeschichte zumindest als exemplarisch gelten soll. So gesehen kann auch bei den Epen in gewisser Hinsicht im Sinne Eric Hobsbawms und Terence Rangers von *invented traditions* gesprochen werden, oder, um den Ausdruck zu paraphrasieren, von *invented myths*.

Auch Friedrich Kreutzwald, Nachfolger der Arbeit von Friedrich Robert Faehlmann, sah sich genötigt, die uralte estnische Geschichte von Kalevipoeg neu herzurichten. Bewusst und / oder unbewusst griff er auf intertextuelle Quellen zurück und hob mit dem Einbezug des so genannten Fremden zugleich die nationale Verengung auf. Zudem erhob er gar keinen Anspruch auf den Begriff „national“ – und damit auf die Originalität – und auf den Begriff „Epos“, obgleich im Kontext eines *nation building* die Nationalisierung des „Kalevipoeg“ sich durchaus als berechtigt erwies. Denn es ging um einen *eine Geschichte schaffenden Text* (Georg Schulz-Bertram) und um einen *eine Nation schaffenden Text* (Jaan Undusk), also um eine historisch-kulturell und zeitlich bedingte konstitutive Funktion und Notwendigkeit, um die Bewusstseins- und Nationsbildung, um die Selbstdefinition. „Kalevipoeg“

wurde zu einem *nationalen Kerntext*, der „unter dem flachen Alltag die alten unterirdischen Kammern öffnete“ (Jaan Undusk).

Neben den unterirdischen Kammern der grauen Vorzeit werden im „Kalevipoeg“ auch die unterbewussten Kammern und die Kammern der mit uns verwobenen Mythologie geöffnet. Unter anderem mögen diese im Unterbewusstsein und im Unbewussten liegenden Kammern Kreutzwald zu einer intensiven Hinwendung zum Motiv des Teufels, der Hölle und der Unterwelt sowie des Jenseits veranlasst haben. Kalevipoegs Fahrten in die Hölle erweisen sich als die wichtigsten Etappen auf seinem Entwicklungs-, Erkenntnis- und Initiationsweg und eröffnen dem heutigen Leser neue Lektüreperspektiven. Sie tragen dazu bei, die allgemeinmenschliche Botschaft des estnischen Nationalepos über die Landesgrenzen der nationalen Gemeinschaft der Esten hinauszutragen und seine universelle Eingebundenheit aufzuzeigen.

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The Epic Need for an Epic: Latvian Literary Epics of the Late 19th Century

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The 19th century saw the rise of numerous national movements. The struggle of the Latvians to become recognised as a nation in the 19th century was one of these movements. This struggle met strong opposition from the ruling Baltic Germans. The German-dominated Latvian Literary Society, though working extensively in the study of Latvian ethnic culture and folklore, expressed a rather indignant attitude to the people whose name it carried in the title. One of those learned men, Gustav Brasche (1802–1883), even wrote that the Latvians “have no past and therefore can have no future”.

In order to oppose such statements the missing past had to be found. With the Kalevala setting a trend, and with Wilhelm Jordan's (1818–1904) ideas expressed in his “*Epische Briefe*” being at least as influential as his rendition of “*Nibelungenlied*” at that time, the epic was seen as some kind of ideal to be achieved.

The Latvian tradition has not preserved any epic folk poetry that would lend itself to arrangement into an epic. The great work had to be created from other material, using motifs and fragments of both the available material and the extant scholarship on epics.

Although only “*Lāčplēsis*” by Andrejs Pumpurs (1841–1902) is widely known as the Latvian ‘national epic’ there was another author who had even stated his intention to devote his whole life to creating a proper Latvian epic, namely Tartu University Professor Jēkabs Lautenbahs (1847–1928). Being a follower of the best known theories of his time (including those of Max Müller), Lautenbahs tried to combine the available material into a vast work covering all respective and ‘necessary’ areas, most important among them – mythology. J. Lautenbahs approached his goal one step at a time, trying to be as careful and diligent as possible; he even expressed regret at Pumpurs’ ‘premature’ publication of his work. Still his (probably even more scholarly) work did not achieve any public acclaim, rather the opposite. There are different causes for this, from the general social-economic and cultural change to (probably) mere lack of literary talent.

The Success Story of a Verse Form

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1. F. R. Kreutzwald created his epic Kalevipoeg using and combining various elements from Estonian folklore – prose texts (for example legends of giants) and folksongs. As the poetic form of his epics he chose the verse form of Estonian folksongs.
2. The metre of Kalevipoeg is consistent with the contemporary theoretical view of the folksong metre (trochees alternating with dactyls), as well as of the poetic techniques of regilaul verse. Yet, the poetic form of Kalevipoeg is regularly slightly different from that of folksongs.
3. Thus, for his epics, Kreutzwald created a new verse form, close to regilaul. It is not known if he did it consciously or it just happened as a result of deficient imitation of regilaul.
4. The difference between regilaul verse and Kalevipoeg verse reveals itself in the metre, in the use of alliteration and parallelism, in the grammar and in the use of formulae.
5. Kalevipoeg verse was suitable for creating a folksong imitation with the untraditional thematic and narrative plot. It enabled the encompassing of new subjects more easily than regilaul, in which the traditional formulae support the use of alliteration and parallelism and whereof the metre is more demanding.
6. Kalevipoeg verse proved to be successful and has been used in new literary poems, although first and foremost it has been folklorised, taken into use as the form of celebratory poems with a national tint, etc. There are many examples by various people from ministers to schoolchildren. Today, if a person is going to “make a folksong” they normally use Kalevipoeg verse.
7. In general, people are unaware of the difference between regilaul verse and Kalevipoeg verse, and tend to use the latter as the verse form of Estonian folksongs.

Mythology and the Artist's Imagination

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An epic or a myth is an ancient story. In order to give it form, the artist has to create a credible work out of the expanse of the supernatural world. For an artist it is not easy to depict an epic because any supernatural and grand narrative is a multi-layered living organism with a vast semantic field. It is a big story, a wide ancient landscape arranged by human imagination, and it is not possible to reduce it to everyday life. How should an artist go into the eternal and universal themes of myths? Many Estonian artists have used mythical subjects, yet few have succeeded. Most of the artists have just limited themselves to illustrating ancient tales or mythical characters, paying almost no attention to mythical reality and the multiple semantic layers of oral and tangible folklore.

Kristjan Raud was neither a philosopher nor a fighter, he was an observer, a discreet and sensitive person and a quiet thinker, attracted by the intimate and deep emotions about which the tales, traditional songs, traditional objects and the epic Kalevipoeg spoke. For many years the artist searched for an appropriate form for the archaic tales, wanting it to be supported by the archaic and ancient feeling existing in folklore, and the emotion that old tales and songs created in him.

An artist who has dedicated his whole attention to the paths of folklore is entitled to keep the background of his creative process a secret and create individual philosophy and poetry, the origin and sources of which he is not obliged to explain or prove to anybody. He or she can connect apparently different cultural texts and interpret the heritage as a bard, a storyteller, an artisan and poet.

The Dialogue of Genres in Kalevala-Metre Oral Epics

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In my paper I will propose intertextuality as a methodological tool for fully acknowledging textual strategies evoking traditional referentiality in oral poetry. My argument rests on an analysis of a corpus of kalevala-metre poetry collected in the Archangel Karelian parish of Vuokkiniemi.

The density of the intertextual network is brought about by the wealth of recurring and versatile textual elements and the use of one common register in many genres of poetry: kalevala metre. A rich and allusive expressive economy emerges from a sufficient – but not excessively versatile – store of textual elements. Intertextual signification in a tradition of oral literature is built upon a tension between freedom of choice and power of convention.

In the analysis of regional corpuses consisting of a large amount of different genres, the most striking aspect of intertextuality is its capacity to traverse boundaries of genre. As differentiated models of cultural knowledge, genres not only offer distinct points of view on reality but also various possibilities for representing ideas. In this way, generic interaction affects the ways in which people create coherence in their worlds. The dialogue between modes of knowledge and understanding enables relativisation and contestation. In Bakhtinian terms, traditional discourse is a cultural reality with many voices, a heterology.

Dialogue of genres operates through many textual strategies. In the paper I will concentrate on strategies most common in epic poetry. A sequential combination of genres brings together elements drawn from different genres syntagmatically, by embedding elements of a genre within another or, alternatively, by creating larger narrative wholes or epic cycles in performance. Embedded generic inserts often appear within the dialogue of the heroes, as frames for these dialogues or within the performer's evaluations.

The Kalevipoeg, Mediumship and Discursive Authority of the Other World

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F. R. Kreutzwald's epic Kalevipoeg (1857–1861) is a literary monument that manifests multiple powerful discourses of the 19th century. As a representation of pre-Christian heritage it offers an alternative to the modern discourse of Protestant rationalism. The epic starts with a chant, summoning the pagan deities, and continues with an invocation, addressing the gloomy world of darkness and shadows that appears from ancient grave mounds. The narrator reminisces on how he, when still a young shepherd boy, once went to sleep near an old stronghold hill and in his dream saw people who had died long ago. Among them were old wise men who longed for eternal sleep, but could not find peace because they had not passed on their wisdom to the living. The narrator of the Kalevipoeg became their chosen one, a master of necromantic art and a medium, whose task would be to re-evoked the long-forgotten past. The whole epic thus reveals ancient wisdom and artistic poetry of the lost generations. Kalevipoeg, the main hero of the epic, similarly maintains close contact with the dead – his departed parents and a maiden from the island who had drowned in the sea.

Only ten years before the Kalevipoeg was published, the Fox sisters had become a sensation in New York as they communicated messages from the other world and kept contact with the spirit of a murder victim who had haunted their home. This partnership introduced the new religious movement of spiritualism, which arrived in Europe within a few years, became known as spiritism and spread rapidly, undermining the rising discourse of scientific rationalism. Mediumship, which was strongly connected with the female gender, has often been interpreted as the claim of women, who had been marginalised in patriarchal society, to achieve spiritual power.

The paper argues that there is an affinity between the spiritualist discourse, the mystic passages of the Kalevipoeg and the

Romantic discourse of ancestral heritage. These empowerment strategies of the marginalised challenge scientific, rational and pragmatic worldviews of modern societies with established class hierarchies and ethnic relations. In addition, conveying messages from the spirits through mediumship can be compared with the role of folklore collectors who mediate equally valuable knowledge from past generations whose voices can be heard in the last performances of traditional singers and storytellers, although the tradition is perceived as dying. Both discourses – folklore-based ethnic revivalism and spiritism (as a belief system, religious practice and mystic movement in literature) achieve authority due to their otherworldly origin. Both are alternative discourses that challenge the well-established truths of the existing society.

The Epic Kalevipoeg as a Source of Principal Clauses of the Estonian Narrative

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Each national identity can be interpreted as a self narrative. It constitutes the nation as the “imagined community” (Anderson 1991). The narrative, which consist some legends, fragments of the (glorious) history of the nation, biographies of the national heroes (hagiography), etc., has its own ‘syntax’. Some of the utterances of the narrative (= rhetorically powered clauses or phrases) acquire the position of the so-called principal clauses. The source of these kinds of clauses is mainly the Bible or other sacral texts. The epic Kalevipoeg has been treated (for example by the academician Jaan Undusk) as the Bible of the Estonian nation, as the constitutional text of national consciousness. Accordingly, in the epic Kalevipoeg some principal clauses can be found that characterise the Estonian national discourse or support its identity. The paper will focus on these types of clause in the epic.

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From Mythology to Heroic Consciousness (Based on the Example of the Mordovian Epos)

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A heroic epos is a heroic narration about the past, containing a complete picture of the national life and representing a certain epic world and warriors in harmonious unity. Epos has definite folklore sources. The main features of this genre have developed at a folklore level. Therefore the heroic epos is often called a national epos. In archaic forms of epos (Karelian and Finnish runes) heroism is shown in the fantastic-mythological form (warriors possess not only military, but also shamanic, force; epic enemies are shown in the form of fantastic monsters); the main themes of the epos are struggle against ‘monsters’, heroic courtship to warrior’s intended, patrimonial, revenge.

In the classical forms of the epos warrior-leaders and soldiers represent historical nationality, and their opponents are often identifiable as historical ‘aggressors’ and foreign oppressors. ‘Epic time’ here is not a mythical epoch of fundamental principle, but the glorious historical past at the outset of national history.

In the classical forms of the epos historical (or pseudo-historical) people and events are praised although the image of historical realities is subordinated to traditional subject schemes; ritual-mythological models are sometimes used. The epic background is usually represented by struggle of two epic tribes or nationalities (at any rate it is correlated with real history). A military event is often at the center of the narration – (it is usually a historical event); more rarely a mythical event (the struggle for Sampo in the Kalevala).

The Mordovian people belong to a number of ethnoses who created their own vision, their own picture of the Universe – their own epos. The first work in which the heroic-epic theme became the subject of art judgement is Y. Kuldarkaev’s poem “Ermez” (1935); the author names it as “a fairy tale on the remote past”. It

is written on the basis of the national legends and traditional stories. It tells of the ancient stories of the Mordovian people, describing the events connected with the names of Purejsh and Purgas, Moksha and Erzja, princes at the beginning of 13th century. The central character of the poem is Ermez, a Jack of all trades, a brave soldier, a warrior, a tamer of sorcerers, a handsome man, an exemplary son, and an enamoured young man.

In the Mordovian epos "Sijazhar" (Radaev 1960), sources of national poetry and literary creativity are integrally incorporated. Being the product of national epos, "Sijazhar" incorporates the idea of protection of the motherland. It is vividly revealed in the pictures of heavy battles and the capture of Sijazhar. The image of the protagonist of the epos has united features of the mighty warrior, corresponding to the ideal of heroic valor and physical strength.

The heroic epos "Mastorava" (Sharonov 1994) tells not about the destiny of heroes, but about the destiny of the people. The Mordovian epos combines archaic and classical forms simultaneously. The main feature of Mordovian national epos is its genre ambiguity. Keeping in mind social and poetic motives, the Mordovian epos has a certain fantastic-ballad character to a certain degree. In the same way that there are pure epic ways in which art displays reality, there are also evidently lyrical ways of poetic embodiment.

References

- Sharonov A.M. 1994. Mastorava. Saransk: Mordovijan' knigan' izd-vas'.
Radaev V. K. 1960. Sijazhar. Saransk: Mordovijan' knigan' izd-vas'.

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