

Religion vs tradition: Folk motives of saint's holidays in Estonian and finnic culture

Ana Marić

MA student of Semiotics, University of Tartu

maric.ana@ut.ee

Estonia is considered to be one of the least religious countries in Europe, and yet there are so many christian holidays, especially the saint's holidays in Estonian culture and tradition that are celebrated in a unique and traditional way and are one of the main and important parts of Estonian heritage and national identity.

The main aim of this research paper is to analyze and depict the folk motives and their meaning carriers in the saint's day of Estonia and how they resemiotize the religious customs of the saint's days and present them in the new sign system. The saint's holidays which will be the focus of the analysis are: Mardipäev (Saint Martin's day), Kadripäev (Saint Catherine's day), Jaanipäev (Saint John's day) and Jüripäev (Saint George's day). The main methods which will be used in this paper are Juri Lotman's notion of semiosphere and Charles Sanders Peierce's semiotic triade, in order to establish and produce the new signs from the folk motives.

Also, one of the goals is to portray these saint's holidays as the symbols of finnic culture, tradition and history and the reflection of the religious and traditional contrast among the finnic nations and their own ways of celebrating these holidays and passing them by from one generation to another and thus creating a wide image of finnic pride and identity.

Key words: saint's holidays, tradition, resemiotization, semiosphere, triade, finnic culture and heritage