

About the presentation „Manifestations of the Concept 'the Enemy' in Literature and Visual Arts of the Twentieth Century in Estonia”:

The report will be focused on the project „Estonia between East and West: The paradigm „own”, „other”, „strange”, „enemy” in XX century cultures of Estonia”. Due to the scope of scientific interests of the project participants it is centered within the triangle Estonia – Russia – Russians in Estonia (with some examples related to Latvians, Germans, etc).

Our aim is to create the functional typology of the paradigm’s components on the basis of their presence in such spheres of culture as literature, visual arts, mass media, the Russian trace in others spheres of Estonian culture and vice versa the Estonian trace in Russian culture. Specific aim is to focus on the paradigm’s action of the following historical periods: 1918-1940, the period of independence of Estonia; the Soviet period; since 1991, the period of regaining of independence. Finally, the important aim is to reveal the way the image of the “strange”/”enemy” is created to exteriorize the problem and to rationalize the current tensions in the society.

As a concrete example of the study of the paradigm, the report will include the study of political cartoons, which are traditionally popular in times of major social and political conflicts. In this case we mean the period of the Estonian War of Independence in 1918-1920, when the young Estonian Republic fought against Soviet Russia and Baltic Landeswehr. The warring parties in this war were: at first, the same enemy with the White Russians – the Bolshevik Red army; secondly, the Estonians and Latvians sworn enemy for centuries – the Baltic Germans and their Landeswehr. Thirdly, it is a gray area, i.e. the Russian White army, later called the general Yudenich’s North-Western Army, which for the time was an allied army (before the frontline was moved outside the Estonian borders), later becomes a danger, in which Estonia saw a potential threat to the sovereignty of the Republic (it was well-known that during the seizure of power in Russia, white forces promised to restore the limits of former Russia, where for the new limitrophe states was promised, at best, autonomy within the future of Russia).

Prof. Irina Belobrovtsseva will explain the project goals and approaches, and her colleague Aurika Meimre will expand a concrete case from the project.

About the speakers:

Prof. Irina Belobrovtsseva is a philologist and cultural scientist at the University of Tallinn. Currently, she directs the research project „Estonia between East and West: The Paradigm of Notions of 'Own', 'Other', 'Foreign', 'Enemy' in the Estonian Culture of the 20th Century”, published and promoted by the Archimedes Foundation Estonia and the Estonian Research Council (IUT 18-4 & Tk TAU16078).

Aurika Meimre is a senior research fellow and associate professor of Russian Culture at the School of Humanities at the Tallinn University. She is also a part of the research project „Estonia between East and West: The Paradigm of Notions of 'Own', 'Other', 'Foreign', 'Enemy' in the Estonian Culture of the 20th Century”.