

## Humorous Folklore in Everyday Life

(ARIS BI-EST/25-27-002, ARIS P6 0088)

9 October–10 October 2025

Gospodka dvorana ZRC, ZRC SAZU Ljubljana

### 9 October 2025

**9:00–9:30**

Boštjan Nedoh: **“The end is near! Near what?”** Freud, humour and catastrophe

**9:30–11:00**

Katarina Šrmpf Vendramin: **Serious about jokes: Thinking about ethics in humour research**

Anastasyja Fiadotava: **Humour and sensitivity: Approaching controversial topics during and after fieldwork**

Sergei Troitskiy: **Problems and interesting cases of collecting school lore in Estonian “Russian-speaking” schools**

**11:00–11:20 Coffee**

**11:20–12:20**

Nataša Jakop: **Humour as a lexicographical category: The case of the label *šaljivo* (‘humorous’) in Slovenian**

Piret Voolaid: **The graffiti database [www.folklore.ee/graffiti](http://www.folklore.ee/graffiti) as an example of functional community science and international co-creation as well as a research source for comparative studies**

**12:30–14:30 Lunch**

**14:30–15:30**

Saša Babič: **Local humour: Collecting strategies and challenges**

Rok Mrvič: **Between humour and survival: Methodological challenges in uncovering the peddler of Ribnica**

**15:45–17:00**

**WORKSHOP**

Liisi Laineste: **We love coding: Simple solutions for complex (humanities) data**

### 10 October 2025

Excursion to Ribnica

## Abstracts

Boštjan Nedoh, ZRC SAZU, Institute of Philosophy, [bostjan.nedoh@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:bostjan.nedoh@zrc-sazu.si)

### **“The end is near! Near what?” Freud, humour and catastrophe**

We live in the end times. Wars, pandemics and the general state of anxiety is spreading everywhere. Not surprisingly, people all over the globe are developing various forms to cope with the threatening reality of the catastrophe. So-called “humour of the end” is one of those forms. The lecture will highlight psychoanalytic contribution to the theory of the humour, showing how humour (as different from comedy and joke) may function as an ideological form, which protects the subject against the burden of social reality, and at the same time also as a social symptom, revealing the traumatic status of this reality itself.

Katarina Šrimpf Vendramin, ZRC SAZU, Institute of Slovenian Ethnology, [katarina.srimpf@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:katarina.srimpf@zrc-sazu.si)

### **Serious about jokes: Thinking about ethics in humour research**

Humour is never just a joke – it reveals social tensions, creates connections and sometimes challenges authority. But how can we collect it responsibly? Collecting humour during fieldwork raises unique ethical and methodological questions. How should researchers document jokes that are based on stereotypes, address traumatic events, or are offensive to certain groups? What about moments when humour makes participants – or the researcher – uncomfortable? As researchers, do we adequately consider the potential impact our publications may have on the people we are studying? "The aim is not to find definitive answers, but to explore together how ethical considerations can deepen our understanding of humour as a cultural practise.

Anastasiya Fiadotava, Estonian Literary Museum, [anastasiya.fiadotava@folklore.ee](mailto:anastasiya.fiadotava@folklore.ee)

### **Humour and sensitivity: Approaching controversial topics during and after fieldwork**

Humour has long been known not only as a light-hearted emotional and cognitive phenomenon, but also as a means of causing and spreading scandal. While (almost) any joke can be potentially controversial, certain topics and forms of humour are more likely to cause distaste, distress or even external conflict. In this presentation, I will discuss ways of dealing with humour-related sensitivities both during fieldwork and in the analytical phase of humour research. The discussion will focus on the different levels of contexts involved in the production and appreciation of humour, as well as the role and positioning of a researcher in the process of humour collection and interpretation.

Sergey Troitskiy, Estonian Literary Museum, [sergei.troitskii@folklore.ee](mailto:sergei.troitskii@folklore.ee)

**Problems and interesting cases of collecting school lore in Estonian “Russian-speaking” schools**

The lecture highlights a number of problems in the approach and tools for collecting school records in a linguistic minority environment. Some of these problems may apply to all similar practical data collection among students, while others remain specific to data collection among linguistic minorities. I will talk about ambitious plans, the sociological aspect of folklore studies and promising areas of research in the field of school folklore from the perspective of humour studies.

Nataša Jakop, ZRC SAZU, Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language, [natasa.jakop@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:natasa.jakop@zrc-sazu.si)

**Humour as a lexicographical category: The case of the label *šaljivo* (‘humorous’) in Slovenian**

The article examines the stylistic label *šaljivo* (‘humorous’) in Slovene dictionaries, focusing on general monolingual dictionaries – SSKJ and eSSKJ. The term characterises expressions that are used in a playful or joking tone and often overlap with metaphorical usage, but differ from terms such as ironic or pejorative. The examples illustrate how dictionaries capture the humorous dimension of language. A brief comparison with similar terms in other languages reveals both parallels and differences. The study shows that humour can be treated as a lexicographical category in its own right.

Piret Voolaid, Estonian Literary Museum, [piret@folklore.ee](mailto:piret@folklore.ee)

**The graffiti database [www.folklore.ee/graffiti](http://www.folklore.ee/graffiti) as an example of functional community science and international co-creation as well as a research source for comparative studies**

Graffiti is an ephemeral cultural text that is simultaneously personal and collective, humorous and political. The digital database [www.folklore.ee/graffiti](http://www.folklore.ee/graffiti) was created to document this ephemeral form of urban expression and preserve it as a source for future research. The project functions as an example of community science: contributions are open to citizens, students, researchers and travellers who can upload and describe graffiti in their own language. The project is also linked to HUMLIT (Humorous Literacy), which explores how humour influences perception, resilience and communication in different cultures. By documenting humorous graffiti, the database supports the development of humorous literacy and strengthens our understanding of humour as a form of civic and cultural expression. In the future, the expansion through international partnerships and digital tools (mapping, visual analysis, AI-supported tagging) will further increase the research and educational potential of the database.

Saša Babič, ZRC SAZU, Institute of Slovenian Ethnology, [sasa.babic@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:sasa.babic@zrc-sazu.si)

### **Local humour: Collecting strategies and challenges**

The presentation will discuss the methods by which contemporary humour material can be collected in places traditionally known for highly humorous societies (such as Ribnica, Višnja Gora, Lemberg in Slovenia) and where people identify with the humorous reputation. The example of Ribnica (Slovenia) will be used to discuss the question of where tradition ends and contemporary humour begins, especially in terms of identity and reputation with which people feel connected to.

Rok Mrvič, ZRC SAZU, Institute of Slovenian Ethnology, [rok.mrvic@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:rok.mrvic@zrc-sazu.si)

### **Between humour and survival: Methodological challenges in uncovering the peddler of Ribnica**

This paper focuses on the methodology for investigating the figure of the Peddler of Ribnica (Slv. suhorobar) — a man who travelled to both near and faraway places to sell wooden household items. Humour was his most important tool of persuasion, an essential part of his survival strategy. The paper explores the diachronic treatment of humorous figures in general, as memories of them, characterised by both loss and preservation, gradually evolve through personal and folklore narratives of local communities, whether from their home environment or from the foreign places they only occasionally visited. The peddlers of Ribnica were known not only for their wit, but also for their distinctive behaviour and attitude towards others and their surroundings: they were characterised by self-irony, cynicism, cunning and slyness, all characteristic of their trickster-like role-playing and the interplay between the real and the portrayed. The article outlines the main characteristics of this figure as they emerge from various materials through the use of different, primarily ethnographic, methodological approaches. In this way, the figure is illuminated from several perspectives, which opens up new insights and raises new questions about its complexity.

## **WORKSHOP**

Liisi Laineste, Estonian Literary Museum, [liisi@folklore.ee](mailto:liisi@folklore.ee)

### **We love coding: Simple solutions for complex (humanities) data**

The workshop will give an overview of some coding tools for qualitative analysis that make coding easy and fun. All you need to do is bring your laptop, I will give you the data and we will try to make sense of it using QDAcity, AirTable and Tableau. Result: Increased confidence in using qualitative analysis tools and as a registered user of these free online software tools.