

## **Multimedial Parallelism in Ritual Performance (Parallelism Dynamics II)**

### **Frog**

Ritual performances create situations in which language, movements, spaces, and objects can all be coordinated in powerfully symbolic ways. The turn to performance expanded studies of verbal art from viewing tradition as text to tradition as embodied behavior wherein language is only one part.<sup>1</sup> This expanded view on verbal art was well established already decades ago and continues to evolve.<sup>2</sup> However, frameworks for analyzing relationships between linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of performance, relationships between speech, gesture, and movement through space, have remained less developed. The present article contributes to discussion by applying parallelism as a tool for approaching some of these relations in ritual practices that engage with unseen forces. On the one hand, the social perceptibility of parallelism between speech and other aspects of performance can be less ambiguous where it appears connected to a ritual's efficacy. On the other hand, this type of parallelism in ritual leads into significant questions about imaginal understandings of the world where the unseen referred to in verbal art is considered no less "real" than empirical experience. Emphasis is on theory and discussed in relation to a variety of traditions, including those addressed by other authors in this special issue of *Oral Tradition*, traditions of magic and ritual of cultures in the Baltic Sea region, and some traditions of shamanism.

Parallelism is here viewed as a general semiotic phenomenon of sameness or similarity and difference in commensurable units that allows those units to be perceived as parallel members of groups (see also Cureton 1992:263). In traditions involving verbal art, parallelism is customarily treated as a purely linguistic phenomenon of co-occurring sequences of text that are similar in form and/or meaning without being identical (for example, Fox 1988:*passim*; 2014:3-199; Fabb 2015:140). Roman Jakobson (for example, 1981 [1966]) considered parallelism more broadly as "the essence of poetic artifice," organizing everything from sounds to meanings and structures. Nevertheless, he only considered the phenomenon at "every level of *language*" (1981 [1966]:98, emphasis added) rather than extending it to other aspects of performance. Restricting parallelism to linguistic signs is an outcome of text-centered

---

<sup>1</sup>Emblematic works associated with this turn are for example Abraham (1968) and Bauman (1975; developed into Bauman 1984).

<sup>2</sup>Classic works include Hymes (1981), Sherzer (1983), Tedlock (1983), and Bauman (1984); see also works such as Foley (1995) and Agha (2007).

approaches. When verbal art is viewed not as text but as embodied behavior or performance, restriction to language becomes arbitrary and potentially inappropriate. Parallelism between linguistic and non-linguistic expression is here described as “multimedial parallelism” (distinguished from other potential terms below). Parallelism is here revealed to be a phenomenon of intersemiotic syntax, viewing syntax in Charles W. Morris’s (1971 [1938]:22) broad sense as “the formal relation of signs to one another.” Intersemiotic syntax of parallelism is related to the metrical structuring of performance discourse (see also Kataoka 2012:117-23).

This approach to multimedial parallelism is developed from my work on parallelism at different levels of signification in verbal art (“Parallelism Dynamics I,” this volume). There, I address parallelism not only in sounds (alliteration, rhyme) and language (semantic, grammatical, morphological parallelism), as familiar from the approach of Roman Jakobson (for example, 1981 [1960]), but also in signs or symbols mediated by language, from basic images and motifs to more complex units. Put simply, once parallelism is considered between two images or motifs mediated through language, it is a small step to consider a verbally expressed motif and its coordinated enactment as a form of parallelism. The present article is intended to be accessible without knowledge of my broader approach to parallelism in verbal art. Relevant terms and principles are outlined in §1. In §2, forms of multimedial parallelism between ritual speech and non-linguistic features of performance are introduced. The emic perception of unseen realities is discussed in §3, where it is argued that people naturalized to a tradition can undergo a shift in how they think about and perceive the world in relation to a performance. In §4, relations between verbal art and imaginably projected agents, forces, and events are discussed as dialectically constructed through parallelism between expressions in performance and their presumed reality. In §5, symbolic correlation between verbal art and the performance space or environment is discussed as a means of construing its meaningfulness through parallelism. A brief summation is then offered in §6.

## **1. Terms and Concepts**

### *1.1. Metered Frames*

In order to address the correlation of expressions across different media, I employ the concept of “metered frame.” As David McNeill (1992:19) stresses, “[l]anguage has the effect of segmenting and linearizing meaning.” For the analysis of parallelism in co-produced conversation, Michael Silverstein (1984:183) proposed that each unit of utterance presents a “metered frame” in relation to which co-occurring utterances can be perceived. In oral discourse, language organizes meaningful units of communication in time at levels of words, phrases, clauses and so forth, each of which can be construed as forming a metered frame of different scope. The concept of metered frame is here extended to non-linguistic expression, such as gestures, music, discreet actions, and also activities that may be ongoing but that are nevertheless recognized as having a beginning and ending, forming a unit in time. The metered frames of each medium can then be coordinated within the uniting rhythms of performance, construing such frames across media.

Following McNeill (1992:23-25), speech and bodily expression are aspects of a single system of communication. Generally speaking, speech and gesture are synchronized (26-29) and “[a]s a general rule there is one gesture, one clause” (94), although there may be many clauses without gestures. In the terminology used here, the clause forms a metered frame in relation to which the gesture is coordinated. The timing of a gesture is according to its stroke and duration. The stroke and duration of the gesture are coordinated with verbal units and rhythms in the clause’s “linearization of meaning.” The stroke must first be anticipated, for example by positioning the hand to make the gesture, and thus may precede the clause’s metered frame (25-26). When multiple gestures are coordinated with one clause in spontaneous speech, McNeill observes that “utterances are often accompanied by dysfluencies” (94). In order to coordinate units of meaning, pauses are introduced in speech. This coordination is made visually apparent in example (1) by adapting John W. Du Bois’ (2014:362-63, 376-68) “diagraph.” The diagraph was developed for analysing parallelism in conversational speech by aligning parallel elements on a grid. Here, elements of speech and gesture are aligned (with additional adaptations below). Example (1) is adapted from McNeill’s example of a narrator whose first gesture is completed before continuing the spoken clause (1992:21-22, 94):

(1)	Speech	. . . and she . . .	grabs	the knife
	Gesture	HAND GROPE IN CIRCLE	HAND TURNS & CLOSES IN FIST	

Dysfluencies in spontaneous speech are instructive concerning the coordination of units of expression across media. A tradition of ritual speech will most likely equip a competent performer to express him- or herself with abnormal fluency. Such fluency will integrate non-verbal aspects of performance at least insofar as these are part of the performance tradition. In (1), speech may seem semantically dominant in the expression because the gesture is not intelligible without it. However, the clause’s metered frame does not subordinate gestural expression as secondary: gestural expression extends the rhythm of speech with pauses in order to coordinate the relevant signs of each medium.<sup>3</sup> Coordinated rhythms can similarly be observed at the level of signs in the simultaneous use of speech and indigenous sign language among the Warlpiri of Australia (Kendon 1989:299-301). The word-based rhythm produces slight pauses in signs and speech so that the expressed words are synchronized (304-09; McNeill 1992:54-55). Although clauses or similar units might be considered the primary units of utterance as discourse, the word-based rhythm construes a metered frame for each word and aligns them across sign systems. The coordination of signs across media in relation to emergent metered frames of expression appears as a primary strategy for producing the relation between them. This relation can be described as “intersemiotic syntax,” viewing syntax in the sense of Morris (1971 [1938]:22).

<sup>3</sup>McNeill (2005:93) asserts that “[n]either speech nor gesture is primary” in such coordinated communication. However, linguistic parallelism can organize verses in a semantic hierarchy (for example, Steinitz 1934:136). Even if linguistic and gestural signs are dialectically engaged in communication, there also seems to be a semantic hierarchy when gestural signs only carry relevant meanings in conjunction with speech. The ritual formalization of speech and gesture may also give rise to one or the other being primary.

Metered frames vary considerably in scope. Signs like motifs are organized in metered frames of broader scope that are structured by the language or expressive behavior that mediates them (“Parallelism Dynamics I,” this volume, §1.2). Gestures do not generally combine to form more complex units of gestural expression (McNeill 1992:21). However, a discrete action like donning a belt or an ongoing activity like walking may have a longer duration that can be perceived as a metered frame of greater scope. Larger frames can be coordinated across media, as shown in Fig. 1:

<i>Mode rhythm</i>	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•
<i>Verbalization</i>	words	words	words	words	words	words	words	words
<i>Symbolic articulation</i>	image or motif		DONNING A BELT [metapragmatic unit]		image or motif		image or motif	
<i>Higher order</i>	theme				theme			
<i>Higher order</i>	ritual’s narrative pattern							
<i>Embodied action</i>	[anticipation of action]		DONNING A BELT		action			

Fig. 1. Visual illustration of expressions manifesting metered frames. The levels of signification from the rhythm of the mode of expression, through language, and symbols mediated by language, are shown as structuring one another in a hierarchy. Embodied actions manifest their own metered frames, which can be coordinated in order to produce a multimedial parallelism (shaded).

## 1.2. Medium and Mode

“Medium” and “mode” are used here as complementary terms. “Medium” is used in a broad sense of that which mediates communication, such as language versus movement, gesture, and posture of the body, costuming, props, and so forth. “Mode” involves a structuring of a medium’s use in ways that produce predictable, socially distinguishable formal differences in expression. For example, “sung performance” and “dictation” are different modes of verbal art.<sup>4</sup> A single mode may also coordinate and formalize multiple media. Following Richard Bauman (1984:9), “the nature of performance” is “conceived of and defined as a mode of communication.” Where performance coordinates different media (some of which may exhibit formalized modes), it can be considered “multimedial.” Some scholars use “mode” the way “media” is used here, and would thus use “multimodal” (for example, Bell and Gibson 2011:558, 566-67). Even if modes of speech are distinguishable, not all media coordinated in a performance necessarily qualify as being in one particular “mode” as opposed to another. Gesture, for example, is not generally subject to standards of well-formedness like units of language (McNeill

<sup>4</sup>The term is adapted from Michael Halliday’s treatment of “mode of discourse” as a determinant on register (1978:64, espec.). However, Halliday did not develop this concept more than superficially (see also Shore 2015:63-64), with a primary distinction between speech and writing, which would here be considered different media for language. Foley did not use this concept in his application of register theory to oral poetry, although he mentions it with reference to Halliday’s approach (1995:50). I earlier addressed this problem with a more basic concern of arguing that poetic meter should be distinguished as an aspect of mode and not conflated with register (2012:52-54, espec.); in that discussion, mode blurs with medium.

1992:22) and may be integrated into a performance mode without being markedly formalized. It also seems dubious to extend “mode” to media like props. Adapting Jakobson’s terminology, parallelism between “verbal signs [and] signs of nonverbal sign systems” can also be called “intersemiotic” parallelism (1959:233, on intersemiotic translation),<sup>5</sup> but this term would refer to a more specific phenomenon. Multimedial parallelism is not restricted to sign systems *per se*. It may include, for example, the coordination of formal parallelism between units of verse and rhythmic units of music. It may also include parallelism that engages objects and spaces that come into focus and become meaningful through parallelism: rather than intersemiotic parallelism *per se*, things in other media can take on the quality of signs through parallelism.

Mode is a determinant on the structure and organization of expression. This quality is particularly clear where sung rhythms with strict poetic meter structure language into regularly recurrent metered frames. Where signs are mediated by another system of signs, such as motifs mediated by language, the mediating system operates as a mode and is a determinant on the structure and organization of the next order of signs. To oversimplify somewhat, this basically means that the metered frame of a motif communicated through language will be structured by the units of language, for instance countable in verse lines. Dell Hymes (for example, 1977) revealed that even speech we might describe as prose, organized on the basis of syntax and prosody rather than metrical and poetic devices, is organized in what are here described as metrical frames of different scope (lines, verses, stanzas, and so on). A unified mode of performance implies that structuring principles such as rhythms are interfaced across media. In other words, language, melodies or music, kinesics and choreography are linked through the rhythms of a mode of expression; the performance mode’s rhythms govern and coordinate the meter of each medium.

Although “meter” is normally considered exclusively in terms of language, it can be applied by analogy to principles structuring signification in any medium. Just as meters organize language according to sounds, syllables, and so forth, meters for other media will be based on the features of the particular system of signification. In other words, a meter of choreography will not include rhyme—or at least not a rhyme based on phonology. However, where meters for different media are interfaced with a common performance mode, they must be somehow compatible in order to be coordinated in time, aligning and abutting metered frames, for example of melody, verbalization, and choreography. The alignment of frames at one level does not necessarily mean that they align at higher levels of complexity. For example, Kati Kallio (this volume) shows that, in kalevalaic poetry, units of melody and units of language correlate at the level of the line but can remain independent in how each of these organizes lines in larger groupings. Metered frames of choreography may be fully aligned with those of music and language, even at the level of internal rhythm (Kataoka 2012:118, 120). Choreographic units may also be equivalent to several lines of language in scope, more similar to a unit communicated through language, even if their internal rhythm coordinates with line-units. Because choreography operates alongside language rather than being mediated through it, the boundaries of its metered frames may potentially be staggered relative to frames of other media

---

<sup>5</sup>“Intersemiotic parallelism” has been narrowly defined by Yu Liu and Kay L. O’Halloran (2009:372) to refer specifically to relationships between visual images and linguistic text in printed discourse.

rather than aligned (see also Kataoka 2012:121-22). If choreography only begins at a certain stage of performance, it might have an (unmetered) anticipation phase in which the performer gets into position while other media of performance are engaged with the performance rhythm. Although different media may have quite different metered frames, the mode of performance coordinates them within a unified rhythm.

### *1.3. Register and Levels of Syntagmatic Relations*

Socially predictable expressive behaviors are here approached in terms of “registers.” “Register” emerged as a term in social linguistics to designate language varieties associated with recurrent social situations.<sup>6</sup> The concept has gradually extended to include a broader range of expression, and “a register’s linguistic repertoires often comprise only a part of its semiotic range, the range of devices deployed routinely and appropriately in its use” (Agha 2001:40). Register was developed as a framework for approaching performance traditions of oral poetry by John Miles Foley.<sup>7</sup> Today, register is a calibratable tool, which may be adjusted to different degrees of inclusion or exclusion according to the investigation (Frog 2015b:89-97).

Generally speaking, register-based approaches in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology have been centrally concerned with social aspects of registers as alternative varieties of expression (for example, Agha 2007). Registers are normally addressed as “context-appropriate alternate ways of ‘saying the same thing’” (Silverstein 2010:430). In research on oral poetry, concern has instead been with the internal workings of the particular register and its capacities to produce meanings (for example, Foley 1995). In all cases, register is viewed in terms of the primary system(s) for signification like language and gesture while what is expressed is either reduced to semantic content or to a complex unit of language, such as a “theme” in Oral-Formulaic Theory (for example, Foley 1999:83-86). The approach here acknowledges that a sign system like language can mediate other signs and that the same meaningful unit of tradition, such as an image or motif, can be mediated verbally, visually, or enacted.

The term “register” here refers to the system of semiotic resources that characterize a socially distinguishable expressive behavior *at a particular level of syntagmatic relations*. Basically, this means that the register of speech is distinguished from both its mode of performance and a register of signs communicated by speech. Words can mediate motifs but words and motifs do not combine to make a sentence: they are at different levels of syntagmatic relations. However, words and basic gestural signs enter syntagmatic relations such as saying “Look at that!” while pointing, or saying “The rabbit went along” while making a bouncing motion with one hand. Speech and expressive behavior can be collectively referred to as a “performance register.” The performance register can mediate meaning-bearing units of tradition, signs, which, for simplicity’s sake, are here referred to as symbols or symbolic units (even if specific signs might be, for example, more iconic than symbolic). Images and motifs are minimal

---

<sup>6</sup>Register-based approaches to language are most widely known through the seminal work of M. A. K. Halliday (espec. 1978; see also the survey in Shore 2015).

<sup>7</sup>See Foley (1995:49-53, 82-92, 110-15, 150-75 and 1999:65-88); see also Frog (2015b:78-82).

symbolic units. An image is static, analogous to the grammatical category of a noun. A motif is dynamic, involving change or placing images in a relation. A motif is here considered equivalent to a rite as a minimal symbolic integer of ritual behavior. Minimal symbolic units operate at a level of syntagmatic relations here called symbolic articulation,<sup>8</sup> where they form a symbolic register. Images and motifs may be used in combination to mediate complex symbols at higher orders of signification such as a theme, as a socially recognizable constellation of images and motifs forming a complex unit, and a narrative pattern, which may incorporate themes as well as images and motifs.<sup>9</sup>

#### *1.4. Multimedial Semantic and Symbolic Parallelism*

Parallelism is here considered a perceivable quality of recurrence of sameness or similarity in commensurable units that co-occurs with difference in relation to a metered frame. Units of language are always organized in time. The history of considering parallelism as a purely linguistic phenomenon has given rise to the presumption that “parallelism involves the replication of units *over time*” (Urban 1991:80, emphasis added). However, synchronized spoken and signed Warlpiri express the same semantic units in multimedial parallelism with sign to sign equivalence. This type of parallelism can be used for emphasis or other rhetorical effects, as well as redundancy (Kendon 1989:299-300). On the other hand, Adam Kendon points out that parallel signing and speaking does not normally add semantic information, in contrast to uses of gesture with speech (298; see also McNeill 1992:55). Gesture can simply add to communication through deictics like pointing or nodding in the direction of something. When verbal narration is accompanied by gestures that describe the size and shape of objects, imitate events, and so forth, this manifests a form of semantic parallelism across media of expression (Lindfors, this volume). In example (1) above, speech telling about grabbing a knife is coordinated with gestures illustrating the actions described. The commensurable units expressed in relation to the metered frame of the clause lead speech and gesture to be interpreted as alternative representations of a coherent unit of information. Within this syntax, parallel imagery and language manifest a dialectic that resolves difference into coherence of communication (McNeill 2005:87-163).

Coordination of a gesture within a metered frame of speech may only manifest parallelism with part of the spoken unit of utterance, as is also found with some forms of verse parallelism.<sup>10</sup> To take a clichéd expression, the statement “I caught a *really big* fish” can be coordinated with a gesture of holding one’s hands a relevant distance apart. When I do this, I anticipate the gesture as I begin to speak, bringing my hands into position. I then slow my speech, affecting my voice for emphasis, and slightly bob my hands in time with stresses on

---

<sup>8</sup>The term “symbolic articulation” is adapted from Ruqaiya Hasan (1989:90-106 and 2007:23-32), who, however, uses the term to refer to linguistic patterns within a text rather than a level of signs that are linguistically mediated.

<sup>9</sup>For discussion of signs at these different levels and how they interrelate, see “Parallelism Dynamics I,” this volume.

<sup>10</sup>In this volume, see for example also Hull on parallelism in Ch’orti’ Maya ritual discourse and discussion in the introduction.

“really,” “big,” and to a lesser degree or with a slightly varied motion on “fish.” Parallelism is coordinated in relation to the series of semantic units “*really big fish*” and rhythmically in the linearization of meaning through language, as illustrated in (2):

(2)	Speech	I caught a	<i>really</i>	<i>big</i>	fish
	Gesture	[anticipation]	BEAT	BEAT	(BEAT)

The coordination of speech and gesture aligns the metered frames of each medium so that their relationship is salient even without a deictic term (for example “a fish *this big*”).<sup>11</sup> A syntactic relation is inferred: the gesture presents an iconic representation of the size of the fish (“*really big*”). Of course, the meanings produced by this parallelism depend on whether the coordinated gesture suggests more or less accurate equivalence of a sizable fish. When I was growing up, this cliché was in vital (and near-exclusive) use through humorous adaptations, whether contrasting verbal “big” with a gesture indicating something small, or with a gesture of clearly exaggerated size. The correlation of word and gesture is through an image “fish.” Even if the words of speech are interpreted as referring to the gesture or vice versa, the meaningfulness of communication is dependent on the activation of the image “fish” as a sign or symbol that becomes the referent for interpretation.

## 2. Multimedial Symbolic Parallelism

### 2.1. Metapragmatic Representation versus Parallelism

A commonly observed feature of ritual speech is that verbal expression presents a metapragmatic representation of performance itself (Keane 1997:50-51). In other words, ritual speech describes what is being performed or parts thereof. When speech and action or activity come into formal alignment, the expressions in different media can be viewed as semantically or symbolically parallel. Metapragmatic representation is a broad category that is not exclusive to ritual activity (for example, Silverstein 1993; Agha 2007:16-23), and it is only one form of reflexivity in practices of oral poetry (Tarkka 2013:128-30). Parallelism is not an automatic outcome of metapragmatic speech. Interestingly, metapragmatic statements can even be embedded in the speech of characters within a historiola (that is, a mythic narrative integrated into a charm). In the following Danish charm of the Second Merseburg type, metapragmatic speech is attributed to Jesus (underlined). This offers a simple example that helps to illuminate boundaries qualifying parallelism, while anticipating parts of the discussion below (all unnecessary punctuation is omitted from verse examples; unless otherwise noted, translations are my own):

---

<sup>11</sup> See also McNeill (1992:23-29, 218-44 and 2005:87-163).



- (3) Jesus Christus op ad Berget Red  
 og da forvred sit Fodled  
 nu satte han sig ned ad Signe og sagde  
jeg signer eder  
 Sener i Sener  
 i Aare i Aare  
 i Kjød i Kjød  
 Blod i Blod  
 etc.  
 (Hansen 1960-61 [1942]:166, line breaks added)

Jesus Christ up to the mountain rode  
 and then his [horse's?] ankle was sprained  
 now he set himself down to charm and said  
 “I charm you  
 sinew to sinew  
 to vein to vein  
 to flesh to flesh  
 blood to blood  
 etc.”

A metapragmatic announcement such as “I charm you” is not necessarily perceived as parallelism because there is no clear formal correlation of metered frames in the performance. Within the text, resonance (Du Bois 2014:372-75) emerges between this announcement and “he sat down to charm” through reproduction of the verb. However, the two clauses differ both syntactically and in scope, which instead aligns “I charm you” with the units of the conjuration (the magically effective words): the two clauses do not form a clear parallelism as members of a parallel group. Within Jesus’ performance (and in the historiola narrative more generally), the charming activity seems to be purely verbal. The metapragmatic speech “I charm you” is not an essential part of the conjuration in the tradition.<sup>12</sup> It seems to introduce and explain the 4+ line conjuration. Explanation entails a syntactic relation, but does not manifest parallelism.

## 2.2. Metapragmatic Representation and the Alignment of Metered Frames

The mode of performance coordinates metered frames so that parallelism may manifest across expressions in different media even if these differ in scope or duration. Example (4) is a description of an Evangelical Lutheran anointing service (Hauser 1987:69):

- (4) The minister lays both hands on the head of each person, and following a brief silence, says:

---

<sup>12</sup> This is particularly evident in the corpus, where such metapragmatic statements are absent from the vast majority of variants of this charm-type.

I lay my hands upon you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, beseeching him to uphold you and fill you with grace that you may know the healing power of his love.

Then dipping a hand in the oil, the presiding minister makes the sign of the cross on each person's forehead and, addressing him or her by name, says:

I anoint you with oil in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Each of the two parts of the ritual involves a physical action and a coordinated statement. The spoken text of the ritual varies while the coordination of speech and action is dependent on the customs of local ministers. In each part, the physical action and ritual speech are recognized as two elements of a whole. First, the laying on of hands is enacted, followed by a pause that emphasizes intention and significance. Ritual speech then represents the action ("I lay my hands upon you"), the source of its power ("in the name of"), its pragmatics ("beseeching him"), and aims ("to uphold you and fill you"). The laying on of hands begins prior to the speech and establishes a static position. The speech is coordinated and co-occurring in performance with this position in an immediately perceivable parallelism. The physical enactment of anointing with oil in the sign of the cross follows. Ritual speech represents the action ("I anoint you") and the source of its power ("in the name of"). In this case, speech is coordinated with the symbolically central element of the action of making the sign of the cross with oil (see also McNeill 1992:26-27). Dipping the hand in oil anticipates the anointing proper, while the duration of speech may exceed that of making the sign of the cross. In the first case, the metered frames of speech and action may seem to overlap without being fully correlated while in the second the frames of speech and action may seem staggered, as shown in (5):

(5)	Speech		SPEECH			SPEECH	Amen
	Action	[ANTICIPATION]	LAYING ON HANDS	(END)	[ANTICIPATION]	ANOINTING	

In the laying on of hands, the action establishes a metered frame to which the speech is linked as a metapragmatic expression. A distinct metered frame may be construed from the unit of speech. However, the metered frames of these media are coordinated by the rhythm of performance. Within that rhythm, silence preceded the speech in the metered frame (in (5), the transition from speech to silence is indicated by a dashed line). In the anointing, ritual speech begins at a particular point in the action sequence and continues beyond the conclusion of the action. Within the rhythm of performance, speech and action are coordinated but the differences in duration are compensated, as was seen in example (1) about grabbing a knife. Here, a pause follows the action (in (5), the transition from action to pause is indicated by a dashed line), and the metered frame of greater scope concludes before the next unit begins. In both cases, the conclusion of speech marks the conclusion of the metered frame of the performance mode. Performance coordinates frames of different scope across media within metered frames of the

performance rhythm. At the same time, the metered frames of performance are structured by onsets and conclusions of the metered frames that they coordinate.

Rather than a discreet action, an ongoing activity may be subject to metapragmatic representation. The activity manifests its own metered frame, but this may be as great in scope as the ritual itself. In contrast, the metapragmatic representation in speech may be only a motif, a basic symbolic unit that is mediated through language. In terms of scope, these units are not commensurable. However, the rhythm of performance leads metered frames to be construed across media. The ongoing activity occurs in relation to those rhythms and their metered frames. Metapragmatic speech can thus bring ongoing activity into focus and produce multimedial parallelism for the duration of a metered frame although the activity as a whole forms a unit of much larger scope, as illustrated in Fig. 2:

<i>Mode rhythm</i>	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•
<i>Verbalization</i>	words	words	words	words	words	words	words	words
<i>Symbolic articulation</i>	image or motif		motif [metapragmatic unit]		image or motif		image or motif	
<i>Higher order</i>	theme				theme			
<i>Higher order</i>	ritual's narrative pattern							
<i>Embodied activity</i>	ongoing behavior		ongoing behavior		ongoing behavior			

Fig. 2. Metapragmatic representation of an ongoing activity brings that activity into focus during the metered frame of speech, enabling multimedial parallelism in relation to that frame (shaded).

An example of this is found in references to kneeling and praying in Chatino prayers discussed by Hilaria Cruz:

- |     |  |                                |
|-----|--|--------------------------------|
| (6) | Ne <sup>2</sup> wa <sup>42</sup> re <sup>2</sup> ntqan <sup>32</sup> xtyin <sup>3</sup> wa <sup>42</sup> | Now we are kneeling down       |
|     | Wa <sup>42</sup> re <sup>2</sup> jnya <sup>1</sup> yaq <sup>2</sup> wa <sup>42</sup>                     | We are asking with our hands   |
|     | Wa <sup>42</sup> re <sup>2</sup> jnya <sup>1</sup> tqwa <sup>32</sup> wa <sup>42</sup>                   | We are asking with our mouths  |
|     | Ndon <sup>42</sup> xtyinq <sup>42</sup>  | I knelt down                   |
|     | Sweq <sup>1</sup> lon <sup>32</sup>  | Scraping my face on the ground |
|     | Sweq <sup>1</sup> kyanq <sup>32</sup>  | Scraping my feet               |
|     | Nka <sup>42</sup> sten <sup>4</sup>  | For you are my father          |
|     | Nka <sup>42</sup> yqan <sup>20</sup>   | For you are my mother          |

(Text and translation from Cruz, this volume: Text 2, II. 93-100)

The first three lines render a motif of embodied prayer that corresponds to the speaker's ongoing activity, also describable as a motif. The performed activity significantly exceeds the scope of the verbalized motif in duration, beginning well before it and continuing well after (see Cruz, this volume). The verbalized and enacted motifs can be considered equivalent or identical. Their co-occurrence allows the verbal expression to unambiguously refer to the performed

activity. The performance mode coordinates and links expressions across different media, and its rhythm manifests a framework for the unitization of those expressions. From this perspective, performance involves an ongoing process of organizing expressions into metered frames and construing relationships between them. When the linguistically mediated motif converges with the bodily performed motif in the performance rhythm, symbolic parallelism manifests in relation to the corresponding metered frame(s). In other words, parallelism only manifests for certain metered frames of the ongoing performed activity rather than the metapragmatic representation referring to it in its duration.

The precise duration for which parallelism is perceived in a case of ongoing activity is ambiguous and should be considered subjective. The parallelism is most salient with the verses rendering the motif. The second set of three lines in (6) uses the past tense and refers to the whole preceding period of the activity. However, parallelism seems to remain in relation to concurrent metered frames: rather than manifesting parallelism, reference to the beginning of the activity situates the metered frame relative to a broader unit of performance. Once the parallelism is apprehended, it might continue to be perceived for the duration of a unit of greater scope if it is perceived as an element within a parallelism on that scope. Otherwise, it might also shift to a resonance, a perception that the ongoing action links back to the metapragmatic representation.

### *2.3. Actualizing the Mythic Side of Actions*

Metapragmatic representation may still manifest parallelism although it is not in empirical agreement with embodied action. Symbolic parallelism based on contrast can fill a variety of functions. It may accomplish ritual deception, explicate or redefine ritual action, actualizing its mythic significance, or it may remain ambiguous, without resolution. In contrastive parallelism involving verbal art, the verbal element often seems to be semiotically dominant. In ritual deception, for example, language expresses what should be believed.<sup>13</sup> Uralic bear hunting rituals can incorporate counter-factual claims to avoid the bear's retribution by reassigning responsibility elsewhere or redefining what occurs. During an Ob-Ugric bear feast:

- (7) Each person received the first mouthful on the tip of a knife and had to croak like a raven. Those present repeated from time to time the sentence: "The ravens came, the ravens eat." (Honko et al. 1993:130)

Speech assigns responsibility for eating the bear to ravens rather than to the human community participating in the feast (who also perform raven identities by croaking). In this case, parallelism between speech and activity is not manifested only for the duration of a single unit of utterance. The intermittent but ongoing reproduction of "The ravens came, the ravens

---

<sup>13</sup> Of course, not all referential contrasts across media produce parallelism. While a slain bear's snout and claws were being removed, Karelian hunters would sing that they had been incompetent and that the bear had died of a fall owing to its own clumsiness (Honko et al. 1993:137 and 184, #45.11-20). The counter-factual claims refer to an earlier event and redefine it; the event and the unit of verbal art do not enter into a structural relation that produces a parallelism.

eat,” by different participants shifts it from a discreet action to an ongoing activity. That activity produces an extended metered frame that correlates with the duration of the portion of the feast, which is redefined through language. In other contexts, examples of which can be found below, language seems to redefine the parallel action in some way or to actualize the mythic side of the action. However, the reverse parallelism seems far less common for ritual: deception is not performed through action while speech is not deceptive; action does not actualize the mythic referent of otherwise more mundane speech.

Contrastive parallelism is not infrequent in healing rituals and apotropaic magic. Speech frequently seems to redefine a performed action or ongoing activity, whether spoken by a lone performer or co-produced dialogue (for example, Vaitkevičienė 2008:135-36, 718, #84). Of course, redefining an action through speech does not necessarily resolve its ambiguity. The following is part of a description of a Lithuanian practice for healing *grižas* (an affliction of the joints):

- (8) Ir paskui padėt ant slenksčio tą skaudamą ar koją, ar ranką, kur jau susinarinęs būni, I kirst su atbulu kirviu. I reik sakyt:

- Ne aš kertu, grižas kerta. Ne aš kertu . . .

Irgi 55 kartus. Ir tas grižas prapuol (Vaitkevičienė 2008:143, #105).

Then you must take the hand or leg that hurts and place it on the threshold and strike it with the backside of the axe. Then you must say:

“I’m not chopping, ‘grižas’ is chopping. I’m not chopping . . .”

You do it 55 times and that “grižas” disappears (Vaitkevičienė 2008:719, #105).<sup>14</sup>

Here, the performed motif of “chopping” with an axe is correlated with a verbal statement that refers to the motif of chopping. In this type of a ritual, correlation does not necessarily mean synchronized. In (5) above, action and speech are timed to coincide although they are of different duration. As is common in descriptions of rituals like that in (8), only the necessity of coordinated action and speech is clear, not whether they should be concurrent, as shown in (9), or sequential, as shown in (10):

---

<sup>14</sup> In this particular case, the informant considered the charm something silly that people used to do in the past. The individual’s view of whether such performance activity would be effective on bodily ailments does not, however, affect the general pattern of construal and interpretation of a syntactic relationship between units of verbal expression and units of performed activity, even if (the ambiguity of) that syntactic relationship and its significance might be interpreted differently by different people in different times.

(9)	Speech	SPEECH		SPEECH		SPEECH	
	Action	CHOP		CHOP		CHOP	
(10)	Speech		SPEECH		SPEECH		SPEECH
	Action	CHOP		CHOP		CHOP	

Even if the units of expression occur sequentially rather than simultaneously, they are readily interpreted as formally equivalent and dyadically paired members forming a group. They exhibit parallelism in their coordinated reference in different ways to a common symbolic motif. Whether synchronized or sequential, the recurrent sequence constructs a distinct metered frame in the rhythm of performance. The parallelism is contrastive in that the actor in the performative chopping (the healer) does not correspond to the actor identified in the verbal unit (the *grīžas*). The members can also be interpreted as complementary and exhibiting “additive” parallelism (Stepanova, this volume): speech presents additional information about the enacted motif (that is, assigning it to an agent). This contrastive parallelism is comparable to forms of semantic parallelism in which one parallel term defines and specifies what a corresponding term in a parallel member refers to (for example, Hull, this volume).

The materiality of ritual performance can be redefined through correlation with a verbalized mythic image or motif. Symbolic parallelism may ascribe supernatural quality or identity to what is empirically perceived in the ritual. The Finno-Karelian ritual specialist known as a *tietäjä* (“knower, one who knows”) would enter into a hyperactive trance state for ritual performance and then manipulate material substances and objects while relying on incantations in interaction with the unseen world.<sup>15</sup> Example (11) presents a description of a ritual to magically secure the specialist from supernatural harm. The *tietäjä* first creates a type of “belt” of out of wood. When girding himself with this, he performs an incantation. The performer thus describes his symbolic action as girding himself with a “belt”/“collar” not of wood but of metal:

- (11) Kun taikoja ruppee taikomaan, niin sen pittää ottoo ja veäntee juurillaan kolome pihlajata ja ne kiertee yheks pannaks ja panna ympärilleen ja sannoo:

Annappahan kun minä vyölle vyöttelen  
 Rautapantoihin panelen  
 Vaskivöissä on vaikea olla  
 Hopeavöissä on huokea olla  
 Tinavöistä en tiijä

(SKVR XII<sub>1</sub> 3512.1-5)

When one starts to work magic, then one should take three rowan saplings by the roots and twist them together to make one band and put it around oneself and say:

<sup>15</sup> On the *tietäjä* and his ritual technologies, see Siikala (2002:71-120).

Let me gird myself with a belt  
 Let me put on iron collars  
 It is hard to wear a copper belt  
 Easy to wear a silver belt  
 Of tin belts I do not know

(Siikala 2002:285, punctuation removed from verses)

The rowan trees from which the material artifact is prepared hold mythic significance in the tradition (for example, Krohn 1932:40-46). Rowans are also used in preparation rituals intended to “raise”<sup>16</sup> the *tietäjä*’s *luonto* (literally “nature”), his innate power and supernatural agency, for example preparing and drinking a potion made from rowan sap (*SKVR* I<sub>4</sub> 17). In incantations, “iron,” “copper,” and “steel” are symbolically parallel substances that indicate the supernatural quality of what they describe (for example, Siikala 2002:186); rather than variation between substances, the word for the metal used is normally dependent on alliteration. The preparation of the rowan belt is distinct from the motif “donning a belt.” The metered frame of enacting this motif is coordinated with that of the motif’s verbalization within the performance mode to produce a multimedial parallelism. The verbalized and enacted motifs fully correspond, juxtaposing different physical and poetic belt-images as symbolically equivalent. Parallelism ascribes the two images a shared identity. In a sense, the symbolic equivalence remains ambiguous: it is unclear whether the verses are interpreted as poetic and metaphorical, whether the woven rowan was reconceptualized as iron, or whether the belt was conceptualized as both and neither—becoming a supernatural attribute itself. However, resolution is not necessary for the parallelism to successfully assert and reinforce the mythic quality of the belt as an attribute of power and protection for the specialist. What is most relevant here is simply that parallelism across media in a particular performance register can involve equivalencies that would not be valid in other contexts, much as canonically parallel words are not necessarily synonyms outside of a particular speech register.

#### 2.4. Additional Types of Symbolic Parallelism

Multimedial parallelism can manifest through correspondences between embodied performance and events and actions of others described through verbal art. The self-referential expressions to kneeling and praying in (6) above participate in additional patterns of parallelism or “recurrent returns” (Jakobson 1981 [1966]:98) within the Chatino prayer itself. Use in (6) is preceded by a description of earlier generations’ practices, presented in (12):

- |      |  |                                     |
|------|--|-------------------------------------|
| (12) | Sa <sup>4</sup> nde <sup>20</sup> eq <sup>20</sup> yan <sup>42</sup> sti <sup>4</sup> wa <sup>42</sup>   | This was the way of our fathers     |
|      | Sa <sup>4</sup> nde <sup>20</sup> eq <sup>20</sup> yan <sup>42</sup> yqan <sup>1</sup> wa <sup>42</sup>  | This was the way of our mothers     |
|      | Sa <sup>4</sup> nde <sup>20</sup> eq <sup>20</sup> yan <sup>42</sup> kqyu <sup>1</sup> kla <sup>24</sup> | This was the way of the elder men   |
|      | Sa <sup>4</sup> nde <sup>20</sup> eq <sup>20</sup> yan <sup>42</sup> wqan <sup>1</sup> kla <sup>24</sup> | This was the way of the elder women |

---

<sup>16</sup> In this tradition, increase of the power and potency of dynamic forces connected with the body was referred to through the metaphor of “raising.”

Ndya <sup>32</sup> wra <sup>10</sup>	When the time came
Ndya <sup>32</sup> xa <sup>3</sup>	When the daylight came
Jnya <sup>1</sup> yaq <sup>2</sup>	With their hands they asked
Jnya <sup>1</sup> tqwa <sup>1</sup>	With their mouths they asked
Ndon <sup>42</sup> jneq <sup>42</sup>	They prostrated themselves
Ndon <sup>42</sup> xtyinq <sup>3</sup>	And they knelt down

(Text and translation from Cruz, this volume:text 2, II. 40-49)

The motif parallelism produces a linguistic “macro-parallelism” (Urban 1986:26-29; 1991:79-104), or concentrated recurrence of language with variation. Here, parallelism between the embodied performance and corresponding verbalized motif is also perceivable, although they are identified with different actors. If perceived, symbolic parallelism within the metered frame would suggest a convergence of symbolic identity between the performer’s activity and that of the ancestors. However, reference to historical activities might also remain only resonance, without creating a strong enough correlation with the performer’s behavior to produce a clear syntactic relation across media (see also Cruz, this volume). The symbols combined in performance may resonate across media without manifesting multimedial parallelism *per se*. Manipulating a sword in conjunction with an incantation that refers to men fighting with swords produces a resonance across the two co-occurring uses of the image “sword” (*SKVR* I<sub>4</sub> 473a), but that resonance will not advance to parallelism without a formal correlation in relation to metrical frames (Frog 2009:14-15). Caution should be used when considering where such parallelism occurs.

Symbolic parallelism may manifest among images rather than motifs. In Arandic *awelye* ritual poetry discussed by Myfany Turpin (this volume), thematic couplets are linked to particular phases of ritual performance. A couplet sung in the completion of the final stage of body painting refers to the image of the painted bodies rather than to the action as a motif:

- (13) Ngwenty-ngwentyarl arremerl-aneK Adorned with white ochre  
 Arlkeny marany alimarrankeK The traditional designs glistened  
 (Text and translation from Turpin, this volume:example 33)

Although the linguistic units involve the grammatical category of a verb, they mediate a static image that co-occurs with the image of the performers’ painted bodies. Performance of this poetry involves a series of repetitions of each couplet, which means that each couplet manifests a metered frame as a unit of utterance while the period of repetition forms a metered frame of larger scope for the semantic or symbolic unit mediated by that couplet. Within those metered frames, the verbalized image focuses attention on the co-occurring physical image, activating symbolic parallelism during the phase of performance in which the couplet is repeated.

Ritual speech may represent empirically observable discrete actions, ongoing activities, people, and things beyond the performer and the performance. Eila Stepanova (this volume) stresses that laments were an essential part of Karelian funeral rituals, which would last for a period of days. Laments were performed in connection with each major activity of the ritual, including washing the corpse, building the coffin, and digging the grave. For example, the



lamerter would go to where the coffin was being made and lament to the coffin makers. Laments would be organized in statements, requests and rhetorical questions that structure the situation and the activities of the coffin makers within the broader context of the ritual. Laments were first and foremost for communication, whether the lamenter spoke as her own ego, provided a voice for the deceased or for others. Two aspects of communication were particularly important: direct communication with the dead, and representing and discussing each part of the funeral in a way that the deceased could understand, even when he or she was not addressed directly. In other words, ritual laments were oriented to communication with supernatural beings (see also Keane 1997:51), even if individual performers varied in their concern for how much should be explicated to those beings (see Metcalf 1989:266). The lament register was believed to be the only language that the dead could understand, deviating markedly from other forms of speech (Honko 1974:43; Stepanova 2011:129 and this volume). The circumlocutions or avoidance terms of this register<sup>17</sup> often confer ritual or mythic significance on what they refer to, such as referring to the coffin as *igäzet kodizet* (“eternal home”) (Stepanova A. 2012:76). The very vocabulary that the lamenter used would symbolically structure the significance of activities like coffin making in relation to the unseen world.

Activities like coffin-making and digging the grave are independent of lamenting and thus the rhythm of the lamenter’s performance mode is not synchronized with the activity she refers to. From the perspective of lament performance, co-present activities like coffin making are nevertheless activated in relation to the metered frames produced by the performance, as in Fig. 2 above. In this case, performance actively implicates these activities in the lament itself, allowing parallelism to be perceived by the lamenter, her addressees, and ratified overhearers. Put another way, the lamenter verbally mediates images and motifs that activate co-present objects and activities in her vicinity as she refers to them and describes them, bringing them into focus. As a result, these co-present activities and objects become perceivable as symbols and their parallelism with verbally mediated correspondents becomes salient (see Stepanova, this volume). This parallelism constructs and explicates the significance of these activities and objects within the broader funeral ritual.

### 3. Performance Arena and Reality Orientation

A particular point of interest here is the potential for mythic or unseen realities to transform and supersede the empirical as an outcome of multimedial parallelism. Multimedial parallelism has the potential to transform objects and spaces in the ritual performance environment. An old sword or piece of burning tinder may be used as a concrete realization of a mythic symbol (for example *SKVR* I<sub>4</sub> 9; I<sub>4</sub> 473a); a post or tree may be engaged as a physical manifestation of the world pillar (Holmberg [Harva] 1922:142-45). When objects and spaces are engaged in this way, performance results in their explicit or implicit semioticization: the burning tinder or tree becomes a sign, something that has meaning. Material things may be fully integrated into the symbolic register of performance. For instance, some shamans claimed that a

---

<sup>17</sup> See Aleksandra Stepanova (2012); on this register more generally, see Eila Stepanova (2015:262-71).

ritual performance was not “real” if a particular piece of costuming is lacking (Eliade 2004 [1964]:154). Not all multimedial parallelism has this mythic dimension even in ritual,<sup>18</sup> but even so, the engagement of props and objects in the environment enables parallelism between them and verbally mediated symbols. This type of parallelism is linked to expectations about performance and the semioticity of objects, artifacts, and so forth in relation to performance.

A useful tool here is what John Miles Foley describes as the “performance arena,” the semiotic “locus where the event of performance takes place, where words are invested with their special power” (1995:47). Rather than a physical location, the performance arena is an experience-based framework that is internalized through exposure to, and participation in, a performance tradition. When the tradition is encountered, the performance arena is reciprocally activated as a framework for the reception and interpretation of relevant expressions. It extends from the performance register as a system of signifiers and their conventions of use to ideas about what a performance tradition is, how, when, why, and by whom it is used, and so on. For example, the activation of the performance arena of Karelian laments entails a shift in the appropriate speech register of a lamenter so that circumlocutions such as “eternal home” are as natural to the discourse as “coffin” would be unnatural (Stepanova 2015:263-68; see also Foley 1999:74-75). The performance arena would further identify the performer with a feminine gender role (Stepanova 2015:271) and mandate an embodied expression of grief, without which the performance would be interpreted not as “lamenting” but as “singing” (168). Such criteria for qualifying lament are directly comparable to a shamanic ritual not being considered “real” if an element of costuming is lacking. In both cases, the activation of the performance arena extends to expectations concerning the performer as an embodied signifier. Although the performance arena is a semiotic locus, its activation affects perception not only of language but of all elements that have been established in the tradition as relevant, significant, or meaningful in relation to performance. Such elements include embodied behavior, costuming, props like a piece of burning tinder, and may extend to physical spaces and environments in which performance takes place.

Within the performance arena, symbolic articulation through language semiotizes co-present elements in the performer’s physical environment to produce parallelism between the experiential world and imaginal renderings in verbalization. Objects and environmental features that are customarily engaged in performance become primed for semioticization when the performance arena is activated: they become latent symbols pregnant with potential significance *for the performance* in the event that they are engaged by performer(s). This priming or semiotic staging turns empirical objects and experienced spaces into potential symbolic media. Thus, lament performance activates a performance arena that entails expectations of semioticity of a co-present activity of coffin making, the coffin makers, and the coffin itself. These are primed as latent, relevant symbols, which may be activated in relation to metered frames of performance and the construal of symbolic parallelism. In the case of Karelian laments, this priming extends from actors and objects specifically connected with a funeral to the cultural and ecological

---

<sup>18</sup> For example, a lamenter will describe paths to the home as dark, cold, and overgrown, producing a parallelism between verbal description and the observable paths (for example Stepanova 2011:136). This symbolic parallelism is easily apprehended by audiences as a metaphorical signification of grief without having necessary implications for the unseen world.

environment in which lamenting occurs. Verbal art renders the road, house, surrounding natural growth, and so on as symbolically charged and meaning-bearing when these are engaged in performance. The performance area entails the expectation that the verbal engagement of elements in the environment will render them as significant through symbolic parallelism (Stepanova, this volume).

In his approach to performance arena, Foley concentrated on signs and meanings, but the phenomenon extends to mythic understandings. For example, Karelian lament is one of many traditions where the performance arena entails unseen agents as addressees or overhearers (for example Lintrop 2012:403-04, 406-07, 409). The performance arena may thus induce a shift in the “reality orientation” of performers, audiences, or other participants so that they anticipate these unseen agents and their ability to affect the world. In her analysis of Siberian shamanism, Anna-Leena Siikala (1978:49-52) adapts Ronald E. Shor’s (1959) concept of “generalized reality orientation,” which he discussed in relation to hypnosis. She develops the term “reality orientation” to refer to the difference between experience with focus on the empirical world as opposed to focus on an imaginal world construed through verbal art. Siikala argues that the symbolic register mediated through verbal art plays a crucial role in a shaman’s (or similar ritual specialist’s) internalization and organization of knowledge of the otherworld (see also Siikala 2002:84; Stepanova E. 2012:261-63; Frog 2015a:47-50). Siikala argues shamanic singing connected with accomplishing the ecstatic state focuses the shaman on the oral poetry through which his knowledge of the mythic world has been internalized. She proposes that, in ritual performance, the shaman’s generalized reality orientation gives way and “experiences become related only to the sphere of special orientation, that is the shamanic world, which now becomes the only possible reality” (Siikala 1978:51). Siikala’s concern focuses on the shaman’s subjective experience of ecstatic trance as a real-time engagement with the unseen world. I propose that such a shift in reality orientation is encoded into the performance arena for audiences as well. Although they may not have first-hand perceptions of the unseen world, those naturalized to the performance arena are inclined to attend away from to the empirical to the symbolic world mediated and actualized through performance.

The shift in reality orientation is an operation of “mythological thinking.” Rather than approaching mythology narrowly in terms of “stories” about gods and the creation of the world, mythology can be considered more broadly in terms of symbols of mythic quality—emotionally invested symbols that provide models for understanding the world and interpreting experience.<sup>19</sup> From this perspective, mythology is a semiotic phenomenon in which the “mythic” is not a formal aspect of signs but rather a quality of signification. Mythic quality is linked to the symbol being emotionally charged or invested (Doty 2000:55-58) as a thinking model connected with convictions. Mythology thus forms a framework for understanding social, empirical, and unseen worlds as well as subjective experience (Barthes 1972 [1957]:110-36 *et passim*; Lotman and Uspenskii 1976 [1973]; Frog 2015a:35-38). Mythological thinking is the process of thinking through mythic symbols. It is not concerned with truth claims in relation to an absolute reality; it

---

<sup>19</sup> This is the approach to mythology that has developed with the shift to research on “mythic discourse,” or how mythology operates through engagements in social practices; on mythic discourse see, for example, Urban (1991:1-5), Siikala (1992:38-63 and 2002:43-70), Schjødt (2013:11-13), Frog (2015a:35-47); see also works collected in Frog et al. (2012).

is concerned with emotionally invested frameworks for understanding and experiencing “reality,” whether we think the sun is a ball of fire flying through the vacuum of space or a god in a very shiny hat. From the perspective of mythological thinking, Siikala’s account of the shift in reality orientation undergone by a shaman results from increasing attendance to the symbolic register of performance as a register of mythology (Frog 2015a:48-50). This symbolic register constitutes the knowledge and understanding of the unseen world, which becomes the performer’s dominant frame of reference in the trance state.

We all go through life engaging with frameworks of assumptions about how the world works. What we tend not to notice is that those frameworks shift in relation to context and situation (for example Kamppinen 1989:18-19). Simply put: we are more likely to believe in ghosts in the dark. Someone who is intellectually certain that “there is no such thing as ghosts” but who has internalized the relevant mythology can still get freaked out under the right circumstances, even if he or she is determined to resist it. For a shaman, the ritual performance context becomes an integrated part of inciting the shift in reality orientation, which s/he embraces. The shaman’s experience is individual and subjective whereas a performance arena concerns a socially constructed intersubjective framework as a semiotic field for interpreting and assessing performance. The performance arena of such ritual practices is built on the model of engagements with the unseen world. It is reasonable to consider that this semiotic field itself is characterized by a distinct, socially constructed inclination to a shift in reality orientation. Even if individuals engage with that field and performance in different ways (vary in subjective “belief”), the performance arena may equally instate, be oriented to, or socially imply its own “only possible reality.” In other words, assumptions about how the world works are built into the performance itself and must be presumed for it to seem practicable or functional to the performer or to the audience. The specialist does not shift his reality orientation alone, but rather engages a performance arena that is subject to a shift in reality orientation. In addition to the shaman, other participants are subject to a socially constructed expectation to attend to the symbolic and unseen and let their general reality orientation give way.

Activation of a performance arena evokes the frame of reference for semiosis of the particular tradition. That frame both enables the understanding of words and other signs of the particular performance register and also enables the assessment of the performer and performance. The position taken here is that this frame of reference extends from the propositional and indexical aspects of signs to their quality. From the potential of signs to produce meanings, metaphors and associations, the frame of reference extends to signs’ ability to operate as mythic models for understanding the world and interpreting experience. Thus, sounds produced in a Nenets shaman’s performance do not simply index associations with relevant animals and their movements as imitations; in ritual performance, such sounds directly signify the presence of unseen beings in the forms of those animals within the “only possible reality” of the performance arena.<sup>20</sup> This engagement occurs *for those acculturated to the performance arena*. Lacking access to the performance arena’s frame of reference (see Foley 1995:48-49), an

---

<sup>20</sup> The role of sound in Nenets shamanic performance has recently been highlighted by Karina Lukin (2015:124), who hypothesizes that auditory evidentiality is primary in this tradition: the unseen world is perceived primarily through sound and aural communication from the otherworld rather than visually perceived and represented.

outsider witnessing the same performance would not necessarily have any sensitivity to the relevant shift in reality orientation. For those with access, the reality orientation of the performance arena may bring the unseen, narrative world into sharper focus than the experiential world in which the performance takes place. With this shift in reality orientation, performance actualize that reality as experience.

#### 4. Representation of the Unseen World

When the performance arena is extended to the quality of signs and inclination to reality orientation, verbal art becomes a medium for information about unseen realities, and it simultaneously actualizes and orchestrates those realities (Frog 2010b:17-20, 26-29; Stepanova 2015:271 and this volume). From this perspective, representations of unseen realities through verbal art are equivalent to representations of what we would otherwise distinguish as empirical reality. For example, in the healing rituals of the Finno-Karelian *tietäjä*, the perception and handling of materially conceived causes of illness are expressed through incantations. The widely found concept of illness as caused by an unseen projectile (Honko 1959:32-33 *et passim*) is prominent, and is the cause of the ailment addressed in (14):

(14)	Pihet Pilvelän pajasta	Tongs from Cloudland's forge
	Hohtimet alinomaiset	Eternal pincers
	Joilla nostan noian nuolet	With which I raise the sorcerer's arrows
	Amputautia ajelen	Shot-illnesses I am driving <sup>21</sup>
	Ihosta alastomasta	From the naked skin
	Varsin vaattehettomasta	Right out of the unclothed one
		(SKVR I <sub>4</sub> 35.41-46)

In this case, verbal art mediates the motif of the specialist removing an unseen cause of affliction from his patient. Symbolic articulation includes the construction of both the observable and unseen. Communicated through verbal art, mythic images and motifs structure the perception of the unseen world for the performer and make parallel objects, actions, and activities of performance understandable for the patient. The “sorcerer’s arrows” receive presence in the location of the ritual although they belong to the unseen world.

The *tietäjä*'s healing rituals follow a basic pattern structured as a drama in which the performer is the hero, whose supporting and antagonistic counter-roles are perceivable to others only through his performance (for example, Honko 1959:202-07; Siikala 2002:100-01). Ulla Piela (2005:13) describes the *teitjä*'s incantations as “narratives that heal” in ritual performance. The performance was conceived as actualizing the script of the ritual as real-time engagements with the unseen world, actualizing the events as experience that, if accomplished correctly and with sufficient power, would successfully heal the patient (Frog 2010b:26-29). Representations

---

<sup>21</sup> This verb is determined by alliteration and can be considered semantically equivalent to *nostaa* (“raise”) in the preceding line.

of unseen realities in the *tietäjä*'s incantations thus extend to agents who may be active in remote otherworld locations. These agents are actualized and manipulated through verbal art, often by commands that are conceived as simultaneously implemented, compelled by the power of the specialist and his incantation, as in (15):

(15)	Kivutar hyvä emäntä	Pain-Maiden, good mistress
	Vammatar valio vaimo	Injury-Maiden, outstanding woman
	Kääri kivut helmohisi	Gather the pains in your skirt-hems
	Vaivat vasten rintoasi	Troubles to your breast
	Puohda kivut puohtimella	Clean out the pains with a washing staff
	Vaivat seulalla selitä	Sort out the troubles with a sieve
	Ota kivut kippasehen	Take the pains in your little bowl
	Vaivat vaskivakkasehen	Troubles in your little copper box
	Kivut tuonne viedäksesi	Thither may you take the pains
	Vammat vaivutellaksesi	May you draw down the injuries
	Keskelle kipumäkeä	To the middle of Pain Hill
	Kipuvuoren kukkulata	Pain Mountain's heights
	Siellä keittäös kipuja	There boil pains
	Pikkusessa kattilassa	In the tiny kettle
	Rautasessa riehtilässä	In the iron dish
	Yhden sormen mäntävässä	Which you plunge with one finger
	Peukalon mahuttavassa	Work them in with a thumb

(*SKVR XIII*<sub>3</sub> 9040.17-33)

The unseen world is dialogically constructed in relation to verbal art through parallelism. This passage constitutes a theme comprised of several concentrated motifs. It is one of several themes that describe the banishment of the patient's affliction to the otherworld location inhabited by Pain-Maiden and how she will torture it there (*SKVR XIII*<sub>3</sub> 9040.1-55). Within the ritual performance, verbalization actualizes Pain-Maiden and directs her activities in a remote otherworld location. The reality of Pain-Maiden is inferred: the verbal representation that actualizes her does so by projecting a parallelism in relation to that inferred, unseen reality.

Within a ritual healing drama, the stretches of discourse that engage in parallelism with unseen realities may differ considerably in scope. The healing ritual as a whole need not exhibit uniform parallelism. As in other examples of multimedial parallelism above, parallelism may occur in relation to certain metered frames of performance and not others. For instance, example (14) is a section from a longer incantation, which begins with a historiola that narrates the ultimate origin of magic shot in mythic time. The historiola is relevant to the healing: it provides a supernaturally empowering back-story to the event. However, it is not an engagement with the unseen world that produces a real-time parallelism with its inhabitants. Alternately, an incantation may be more or less completely devoted to engagements with agents and events in the unseen world, but make abrupt shifts between them and the locations they inhabit. The engagements of Pain-Maiden in example (15) extend across 55 verses, at which point there is a change in counter-roles and the thunder-god in the celestial sphere is brought into focus. In each

case, a narrative pattern or equivalent series of ritual themes manifests a distinct metered frame in the course of the ritual. The parallelisms with the unseen world that this can manifest is illustrated abstractly in Fig. 3:

<i>Mode rhythm</i>	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•	x•x•x•x•
<i>Verbalization</i>	words	words	words	words	words	words	words	words
<i>Symbolic artic.</i>	images motifs	images motifs	images motifs	images motifs	images motifs	images motifs	images motifs	images motifs
<i>Higher order</i>	historiola		mythic themes		mythic themes		mythic themes	
<i>Higher order</i>	ritual's narrative pattern							
<i>Activity in unseen world</i>	[—]		otherworld events		otherworld events		otherworld events	

Fig. 3. Visual illustration of stretches of expression manifesting parallelism projected onto the unseen world within the performance arena (shading indicates distinct parallelisms by color).

The performance arena (ideally) effects a shift in reality orientation that allows verbal representations of the unseen world's inhabitants and their activities to be perceived as manifesting parallelism. In this way, performance actualizes the unseen world and what transpires there as experience for those participating. The rhetorical structuring of this actualization may vary according to the tradition. For example, the *tietäjä*'s incantations render the otherworld through aggressive assertions as commands; laments build corresponding models by requests or questions (Stepanova E. 2012:276 and 2014:216-17). Such parallelism may also vary considerably in scope, from images and motifs to themes and whole narrative patterns. Representations of unseen realities differ from empirically perceivable phenomena because the metered frames of verbal art inevitably align with metered frames in the unseen worlds that they project. Metered frames of perceivable phenomena are either coordinated within the performance mode or independent of it (as in the case of laments and coffin-making). The metered frames of unseen realities always align with frames of the performance mode because the unseen world is imaginably projected through those frames.

## 5. Symbolic Correlation

### 5.1. Juxtaposed Symbolic Categories

Symbolic parallelism offers “an objective criterion of what in the given speech community acts as a correspondence” (Jakobson 1987 [1956]:111, with reference to linguistic parallelism). Parallelism tends to be particularly salient between metapragmatic representation and embodied enactments or between verbal art and imaginal projections. Other forms of parallelism are dependent on symbolic correlations that may be difficult to apprehend without relevant cultural knowledge and may even be idiomatic to a single performance register. Accessing such parallelisms can offer valuable insight into the interpretive frameworks of a

culture that produce correlations like the identification of a belt of rowan saplings with an iron collar in (11) above.

The ritual practices of the *tietäjä* present certain patterns in symbolism that, when recognized, favor the apprehension of multimedial parallelism. For example, one of the power-raising rituals of the *tietäjä* involves the opening couplet:

- |      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| (16) | Nouše luontoñi lovešta<br>Havon alta haltieni | Rise my power from the hole<br>From beneath the log, my spirit |
|------|---|--|
- (SKVR I<sub>4</sub> 11.1-2)

This couplet was verbally very stable with a key position in power-raising rituals on a wide-spread basis (Siikala 2002:250). The couplet is somewhat obscure, but it seems to situate the *tietäjä*'s *luonto* or "nature," his supernatural agency, in relation to a *hako* ("log") in a material landscape. The literal sense of *lovi* would seem to be "cleft, hole," but here may be related to the idiomatic expression *langeta loveen* ("to fall into a trance;" literally "to fall into a *lovi*") (260-63). For the most part, power-raising incantations were recorded only as text-scripts without accompanying information about the performance context. In one case, the *tietäjä* is said to situate himself in a hole in the earth beneath the roots of a tree that has been felled by a storm (SKVR I<sub>4</sub> 17; Frog 2009:16-17). A symbolic correlation is produced between the performer's physical position in the landscape and the location from which personal power is summoned through the verses. Other accounts indicate that performance should take place at an "earth-fast stone" (*alakivi*) (SKVR I<sub>4</sub> 15, I<sub>4</sub> 16; see also Frog 2009:11). The connection of this location with the verses is not transparent without access to the performance arena, which activates the referential associations of the tradition. The term *lovi* is not used in parallelism with *hako* ("log") outside of variations of the couplet in (16) and the connection with a stone is not transparent. Within the performance arena, *hako* has a well-established pairing with *kivi* ("stone").<sup>22</sup> In northern regions, this verbal pairing also occurs in power-raising incantations. The example in (16) continues:

- |      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| (17) | Havon alta hattupiäššä<br>Kiven alta kinnaškiäššä | From beneath the log, hat on head<br>From beneath the stone, mittens in hand |
|------|---|--|
- (SKVR I<sub>4</sub> 11.3-4)

When the log–stone pairing is recognized as conventional and the hole–log pairing is seen as context-specific, the use of *lovi* ("hole") appears related to forming an alliteration with *luonto* ("innate power"). The variation in the location of the ritual at a stone or under a fallen tree can be recognized as reflecting the symbolic parallelism encoded in the verses.

---

<sup>22</sup> This pairing is found in verse couplets like "künšiñ külmähä kivehe / hampahiñ vesi-hakoho" (for example, SKVR I<sub>1</sub> 172.21-22) ("Fingernails into a cold stone / Teeth into a water-log"); see also "Parallelism Dynamics I," this volume.



### 5.2. *Cosmology Actualized in the Performance Space*

The space in which a performance occurs may be implicitly or explicitly semiotized in symbolic terms. For example, an Iban shaman arranges his performance as a circuit moving through space within a hall. His movement through that space mirrors the verbalized description and choreographed enactment of a journey through imaginal otherworld locations and his eventual successful return (Sather 2001:156-59).<sup>23</sup> The shaman creates a formal correlation between the spaces in which the ritual is performed and the cosmos through which the journey takes him.<sup>24</sup> This correlation realizes a parallelism that confers symbolic identity on areas and directions in the hall and reciprocally informs their meaningfulness in performance.

The *tietäjä*'s power-raising rituals can similarly actualize cosmologically significant locations in the immediate landscape. Further contextualization of the mythic modelling behind the power-raising rituals reveals that use of an earth-fast stone for acquiring power can activate the mythic image of a cosmological stone as a center of power (Frog 2009:11-14). This cosmological image may be symbolically actualized in the performance landscape in the same way that a pole or other symbolic object may be erected as a symbol of the world pillar or world tree in connection with certain shamanic rituals. Without contextualization in the tradition, this parallelism is by no means transparent. Parallelism with the cosmological stone is not always unambiguous, nor was it consistent for every performer. This variation is unsurprising when power-raising rituals were not publicly performed so the interpretations of their symbolism was not shared and negotiated on a broad social level. They were transmitted as secret knowledge in what I have described as "closed-conduit transmission" (Frog 2009:13). Indications that this cosmological symbolism was carried with the tradition suggests that it was transmitted in at least some conduits.

Turpin (this volume) points out that the symbolic dynamics of space may also be constructed rhythmically in relation to metered frames of movement. She illustrates this in the case of repeated couplets and dance movements with a slow rhythm as the performer approaches within reach of a ceremonial pole, the highpoint of the action, alternating with a fast rhythm as the dancer moves away again. In this way, the meaningfulness and emphasis of movements are embedded in the metered frames of performance and correlated with the rhythms of verbalization. Among the Minusa Tatars, the shaman initially engages the Yurt as a natural social space, for example going to the door to look for the arrival of his helping spirits from the west (Siikala 1978:296-97). Later in the ritual, his journey in the otherworld can be performed in relation to the interior space of the yurt so that his position relative to the fire becomes an expression of the direction he is traveling (298). Within this space, his movements and speed "constitute a symbolic language at least partly familiar to the spectators" that allow them to interpret the course of his travel, such as when riding through a river in the otherworld (299). The

---

<sup>23</sup> I would like to thank Karina Lukin for introducing me to this example.

<sup>24</sup> Cosmological structures may also be materially organized for a ritual space, for example, to enable vertical movement of a performer (for example, Eliade 2004[1964]:120-27) or to manifest the world axis or levels in the celestial sphere of a shaman's journey (for example, 190-97, 232-33).

symbolic relationships between movements, rhythms, and space can become quite complex as an integrated part of a tradition.

### 5.3. Temporally Construed Symbolic Parallelism

Many magical practices are based on a temporally oriented parallelism. This is often associated with what James Frazer described as “sympathetic magic,” such as when a symbolic act performed in the present causes an equivalent symbolic outcome in the future. In some cases, the practice itself may involve an explication of the parallelism or parallelisms, as in (18), an example of Lithuanian love magic:

- (18) Pavasari, kada varlės ant viena kitos sulipusios, reikia perdurti vinimi ir sakyti: “Kaip jos sulipę tai kad ir mes butum taip sulipdyti” (Mansikka 1929:106).

In spring, when the frogs lie on each other, one must drive a nail through them and say: “As they are fixed together so will we become fixed” (adapted from Mansikka 1929:106).

Rather than manifesting a parallel member to the enacted motif of nailing frogs together, the verbal component explicates that the resulting permanence of the frogs’ otherwise transient (sexual) union anticipates a symbolic parallel in an equally enduring (sexual/romantic) union of the ritual performer with his or her beloved. Without such explication, the relationship between the symbolic act and anticipated parallel as an outcome would remain opaque and mysterious to most readers. This example highlights that, as with other symbolic parallelism, temporally construed parallelism is characterized by socially and culturally constructed patterns of linkages of equivalence.

The conventionalization of temporally construed parallelism may be selective as to which equivalences are foregrounded and why. For example, the Finno-Karelian kalevalaic epic *The Song of Lemminkäinen* was performed by a *tietäjä* as a ritual incantation to protect a wedding party on the journey from the home of the bride to the home of the groom. The epic recounts a dangerous journey on which the hero overcomes the series of dangers when travelling to a wedding in the otherworld (see also “Parallelism Dynamics I,” this volume). In ritual use at weddings, the whole epic could be performed as an incantation or only the hero’s successful journey; the journey might be separated from the epic and performed with additional verses (Frog 2010a:79-80, 82, 84). At a cross-regional level, the hero’s successful journey is unambiguously the symbolic center of this ritual use. One informant reported that, if performed by a powerful enough *tietäjä*, the epic could kill anyone intending harm to the wedding party (*SKVR* VII<sub>1</sub> 818). Co-occurrence is sequential between the ritual narration of the hero’s journey and the subsequent journey of the wedding party that it will protect. A parallelism is construed between the respective journeys of the hero to a wedding and of the wedding party to the portion of the wedding celebration at the home of the groom. The hero’s use of powerful magic on his journey is paralleled by the magical protection of the *tietäjä* who performs the ritual. The efficacy of the epic adventure appears rooted in a conception that the hero’s ability to magically thwart any threat on his journey is conferred on the protective magic of the *tietäjä* to ensure the

wedding party's arrival at their destination. The parallelism of the hero's movement between worlds and the wedding party's movement between communities engages general symbolic correlations of movement between communities in the tradition. The bride's movement to the household of the groom was analogous to the movement of a deceased member of the household to the otherworld community of the ancestors—it was conceived as a movement between worlds (Stepanova and Frog 2015:112-14):

(19)	Epic	Departure	Danger 1	Danger 2	Danger 3	Arrival
	Wedding	Departure	Movement			Arrival

When positive parallels are brought into focus, it is easy to overlook that they are selective. Such selectivity leaves other potentially corollary aspects “invisible,” or outside of the perceived frames of meaningfulness. In *The Song of Lemminkäinen*, the hero is not a member of a wedding party, in contrast to the *tietäjä* who performs the ritual. In fact, the hero disrupts the mythic wedding rather than securing it: more often than not, he kills the host or groom. Contrastive parallelism with this epic could also have easily been developed. Whether the whole epic or only the journey sequence is performed, parallelism was conventionally conceived as limited to the dangerous journey and the ability of the traveler to overcome any danger along the way. Within the epic, the journey follows a simple narrative pattern: the hero departs, the theme of his encounter with a danger is repeated (usually three times), and he arrives at his destination (see also “Parallelism Dynamics I,” this volume). In a wedding, the journey between communities is also structurally defined: departure, movement, and arrival. Here, the parallel members exhibit a formal equivalence of the narrative pattern “journey,” though the equivalence of journey-type is not bound by equivalence of metered frame, as shown in (19). This widespread ritual correlation in practice illustrates that such symbolic coordination is constructed through social conventions.

#### 5.4. *Historiola, Healing Ritual, and the Assumption of a Mythic Identity*

Many healing charms present a narrative *historiola* that describes a mythic healing event. Such *historiolae* are themselves metapragmatic representations of healing practices. They describe people performing a healing and thus have potential to produce a parallelism with the healing ritual being performed. The narrative may be symbolically structured by the incantation genre so its representation of healing practices may be simplified in form or otherwise deviate from the embodied practices to which it refers (cf. Tarkka 2013:176-79, 189-92). A particularly striking form of parallelism emerges in incantations where the conjuration, the effective magical words, follow directly from the *historiola* narrative as words spoken by a character. The tenth-century Second Merseburg Charm is a classic example:

- (20) Phol ende Wuodan fuorun zi holza  
 du wart demo balderes folon sin fuoz birenkit  
 thu biguol en Sinhtgunt Sunna era suister  
 thu biguol en Frija Folla era suister

thu biguol en Wuodan    so he wola conda  
                                   sose benrenki  
                                   sose bluotrenki  
                                   sose lidirenki

ben zi bena

bluot zi bluoda

lid zi geliden            sose gelimida sin

(Domstiftsbibliothek Merseburg Cod, I, 136, 85 recto; line breaks added)

Phol and Wuodan    travel to the woods  
 then that lord's foal's    foot became sprained  
 then sang it Sinhtgunt    Sunna of her a sister  
 then sang it Frija    Folla of her a sister  
 then sang it Wuodan    thus he well knew how  
                                   thus that bone-sprain  
                                   thus that blood-sprain  
                                   thus that limb-sprain

bone to bone

blood to blood

limb to limb            thus be stuck together

In incantations like this, ritual performance and the entextualization of the charm are unambiguously coordinated. However, this does not mean that the parallelism of the *historiola* corresponds to the ritual whole, even if it may be emblematic of that whole. For example, such charms are often accompanied by additional activities that extend beyond the scope of the text. Charms of the Second Merseburg type were widely documented even in the twentieth century in forms more like that of example (3) above. Additional activities associated with performance could include performing additional texts such as prayers like Hail Mary or Our Father. The charm as a whole might also be repeated. Generally speaking, parallelism between a *historiola* and a healing performance does not require parallelism at the level of individual images and motifs; it may involve only a general correlation in the narrative pattern as a healing event.<sup>25</sup> When such a charm is used, the *historiola* occurs within the healing narrative actualized as a ritual performance. The narratives of the *historiola* and the ritual may manifest various parallelisms. When, as in most charms of the Second Merseburg type, the *historiola* narrative culminates in a mythic character stating the conjuration, the distinction between linguistically mediated narration and the healing ritual itself collapses. The parallelism of ritual performance and narration of the exemplar event converge into an immediate identity: the healer verbalizes the very words that actualize the healing event in the narrative. This convergence “establish[es] a double scene that will transform the spectator’s or listener’s perception of reality” (Lönnroth

---

<sup>25</sup> See also David Frankfurter’s (1995) broad discussion of narrative in charms and how these may (or may not) relate to the ritual performed or what the charm is intended to do.

2009:57).<sup>26</sup> When this parallelism is fully realized (or capitalized on), convergence of the ritual and narration around the role of “healer” identifies the performer as a supernatural agent, the primordial healer, while the role of patient is identified with the successfully healed patient in mythic time. Consequently, within the paradigm of mythological thinking, the successful healing of the patient becomes an inevitable outcome.

The range of varieties of symbolic correlation that can be manifested through parallelism extends to the construction of a direct identity between the performer and supernatural beings or mythic events performed. In incantations like the Second Merseburg Charm, performance advances to a convergence of symbolic identity. In the Arandic tradition discussed by Turpin (this volume), the correlation of the performer with a mythic ancestral identity is an integrated part of the performance tradition. In the examples from a Chatino prayer in (6) and (12), the correlation remains at the level of parallelism in the ritual activity of the performer to that of previous generations. Correlation and convergence of performer identity with the identity of a mythic agent in earlier time has not received attention as something widely found across cultures that can be looked at as a form of “parallelism.” Here, examples only open the door to more work with broader, detailed comparisons. Questions raised by how performer identities are constructed in relation to parallelism can be extended to the question of whether the performance arena itself is encoded with a performer identity like “lamerter,” with which the embodied performer forms a parallelism. The examples reviewed above foreground the need for a better understanding of how multimedial expression works in the contextual actualization of identity.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

The preceding discussion has been concerned with distinguishing the sites and interrelationships of parallelism as a pervasive phenomenon in the organization of discourse. It has taken as its thesis that parallelism is a semiotic phenomenon not exclusive to language. On that basis, forms of parallelism are considered that manifest especially between verbally mediated signs and signs rendered through other media in ritual contexts. Parallelism is of course a phenomenon of perception, and perception always involves people. Trying to pinpoint the perception of parallelism is problematic. Not only is it subjective, but asking whether someone perceives multimedial parallelism may be like asking whether he or she perceives syntax in a sentence. Parallelism is here approached precisely as construing a syntactic relationship across media organized within the rhythms of a performance mode. To experience multimedial parallelism in the flow of performance is to experience intersemiotic syntax: it might get missed, or it might get perceived; especially in the rituals discussed here, some individuals may engage with mythic models, others may apprehend the same parallelism as metaphor, and still others may even identify it as charlatanism. Discussion here has thus remained a step back from specific individuals to consider traditions and circulating discourse. Even if individual

---

<sup>26</sup> Lars Lönnroth (1978) has described this as a “double scene” that can be produced in any performance. The phenomenon has been further theorized by Lotte Tarkka (2005:133-36 and 2013:175-79) as a “doubling scene.”

perceptions and understandings vary, the preceding discussion offers evidence that multimedial parallelism is an integrated part of many ritual traditions around the world.

In order for multimedial parallelism to operate, the performance mode constructs metered frames that coordinate signs and units of expression across media. Co-occurring objects, activities, agents, or artefacts may also be activated as symbolic in relation to those frames. Construal of coordinated meaningfulness is primed by the performance arena, which entails internalized understandings of not only a register of signifiers but also of the operation of intersemiotic syntax. I propose that the performance arena entails the quality of signs in the associated symbolic register, or signs that form a register of mythology. Consequently, the performance arena inclines acculturated individuals to shift their reality orientation from empirical perceptions to attend to the mythic world opened through performance and to engage with its symbols through mythological thinking. Performative expression may then presume parallelism with unseen realities or, where parallelism is temporally oriented to produce effects in the future, presume the inevitability of an outcome.

Looking at parallelism across multiple media presents new ways for considering how parallelism manifests in different cultures and reveals new information about what operates as symbolic correspondence in these cultures (Jakobson 1987 [1956]:111). Parallelism holds great potential as a theoretical tool for examining the interfaces and complementary engagements of multiple media in a coherent performance. This tool can be engaged at the level of the performer producing expressions and how those expressions are organized. Multimedial parallelism is also a basic instrument for conferring cohesion across expressions in different media. Within the contexts of ritual engagements with the unseen world, such parallelism affects the semioticization of empirical and imaginal elements that are primed to be potential symbols by the performance arena. Although emphasis in discussion has kept focus on parallelism, the approach and strategies for analysis here offer foundations for further work on the dialectic construction of the otherworld and on the analysis of syntax uniting signs across media more generally.<sup>27</sup>

*University of Helsinki*

## References

- Abrahams 1968                      Roger D. Abrahams. "Introductory Remarks to a Rhetorical Theory of Folklore." *The Journal of American Folklore*, 81.320:143-58.
- Agha 2001                              Asif Agha. "Registers of Language." In *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Ed. by Alessandro Duranti. Malden: Blackwell. pp. 23-45.

---

<sup>27</sup> This paper was developed from the second half of "Parallelism, Mode, Medium and Orders of Representation" presented at the seminar-workshop Parallelism in Verbal Art and Performance, held 26th-27th May 2014 in Helsinki Finland. Research presented here was developed within the framework of the project, "*The Song of Lemminkäinen: A Finno-Karelian Epic in Parallax Perspective*" funded by the Kalevala Society, and completed within the framework of the Academy of Finland research project "Mythology, Verbal Art and Authority in Social Impact" (2016-21) of Folklore Studies, University of Helsinki.

- Agha 2007 Asif Agha. *Language and Social Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barthes 1972 [1957] Roland Barthes. *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Bauman 1975 Richard Bauman. "Verbal Art as Performance." *American Anthropologist*, 77.2:290-311.
- Bauman 1984 Richard Bauman. *Verbal Art as Performance*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press.
- Bell and Gibson 2011 Allan Bell and Andy Gibson. "Staging Language: An Introduction to the Sociolinguistics of Performance." *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 15.5:555-72.
- Cureton 1992 Richard D. Cureton. *Rhythmic Phrasing in English Verse*. London: Longman.
- Domstiftsbibliothek  
Merseburg Cod, I, 136 Ravani expositio sup. 5 Missam. Digitized images available at: [https://archive.thulb.uni-jena.de/korax/receive/Korax\\_cbu\\_00000880](https://archive.thulb.uni-jena.de/korax/receive/Korax_cbu_00000880) (85 recto, cited above, appears in image 87).
- Doty 2000 William G. Doty. *Mythography: The Study of Myths and Rituals*. 2nd ed. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Du Bois 2014 John W. Du Bois. "Towards a Dialogic Syntax." *Cognitive Linguistics*, 25.3:359-410.
- Eliade 2004 [1964] Mircea Eliade. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fabb 2015 Nigel Fabb. *What is Poetry? Language and Memory in the Poems of the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foley 1995 John Miles Foley. *The Singer of Tales in Performance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Foley 1999 \_\_\_\_\_. *Homer's Traditional Art*. University Park: Pennsylvania University Press.
- Fox 1988 James J. Fox, ed. *To Speak in Pairs: Essays on the Ritual Languages of Eastern Indonesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fox 2014 \_\_\_\_\_. *Explorations in Semantic Parallelism*. Canberra: Australian National University Press.

- Frankfurter 1995 David Frankfurter. "Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical *Historiola* in Ritual Spells." In *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*. Ed. by Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki. Religions of the Graeco-Roman World, 129. Leiden: Brill. pp. 457-76.
- Frog 2009 Frog. "Do You See What I See? The Mythic Landscape in the Immediate World." *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 43:7-26.
- Frog 2010a \_\_\_\_\_. *Baldr and Lemminkäinen: Approaching the Evolution of Mythological Narrative through the Activating Power of Expression: A Case Study in Germanic and Finno-Karelian Cultural Contact and Exchange*. UCL Eprints. London: University College London. [discovery.ucl.ac.uk/19428/](http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/19428/)
- Frog 2010b \_\_\_\_\_. "Narratiiv kui ravi: Riituse-etendus ja narratiivi aktualiseerumine kogemusena." *Mäetagused*, 45:7-38.
- Frog 2012 \_\_\_\_\_. "On the Case of *Vambarljóð* I: Comments on Formulaicity in the *sagnakvæði*;" "II: Register and Mode from Skaldic Verse to *sagnakvæði*." *RMN Newsletter*, 5:22-38, 49-61.
- Frog 2015a \_\_\_\_\_. "Mythology in Cultural Practice: A Methodological Framework for Historical Analysis." *RMN Newsletter*, 10:33-57.
- Frog 2015b \_\_\_\_\_. "Registers of Oral Poetry." In *Registers of Communication*. Ed. by Asif Agha and Frog. *Studia Fennica Linguistica*, 18. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. pp. 77-104.
- Frog et al. 2012 Frog, Anna-Leena Siikala, and Eila Stepanova, eds. *Mythic Discourses: Studies in Uralic Traditions*. *Studia Fennica Folkloristica*, 20. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society.
- Halliday 1978 M. A. K. Halliday *Language as Social Semiotic*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hansen 1960-61 [1942] H. P. Hansen. *Kloge folk: Folkemedicin og overtro i Vestjylland*. København: Rosenkilde og Bakker.
- Hasan 1989 Ruqaiya Hasan. *Linguistics, Language, and Verbal Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hasan 2007 \_\_\_\_\_. "Private Pleasure, Public Discourse: Reflections on Engaging with Literature." In *Language and Verbal Art Revisited*. Ed. by Donna R. Miller and Monica Turci. London: Equinox. pp. 13-40.



- Hauser 1987 Martin Hauser. "The Fragrant Oil of Healing." *Liturgy*, 7.2:66-71.
- Holmberg [Harva] 1922 Uno Homlberg [Harva]. *Der Baum des Lebens*. Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemia Toimituksia, B.16.3. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia.
- Honko 1959 Lauri Honko. *Krankheitsprojekte: Untersuchung über eine urtümliche Krankheitserklärung*. Folklore Fellows' Communications, 178. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.
- Honko 1974 \_\_\_\_\_. "Balto-Finnic Lament Poetry." In *Finnish Folkloristics I*. Ed. by Pentti Leino with Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj and Urpo Vento. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. pp. 9-61.
- Honko et al. 1993 Lauri Honko, Senni Timonen and Michael Branch. *The Great Bear: A Thematic Anthology of Oral Poetry in the Finno-Ugrian Languages*. Poems trans. by Kieth Bosely. Pieksämäki: Finnish Literature Society.
- Hymes 1977 Dell Hymes. "Discovering Oral Performance and Measured Verse in American Indian Narrative." *New Literary History*, 8.3:431-57.
- Hymes 1981 \_\_\_\_\_. *"In Vain I Tried to Tell You:" Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Jakobson 1959 Roman Jakobson. "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation." In *On Translation*. Ed. by Reuben Arthur Brower. Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 23. Harvard: Harvard University Press. pp. 232-39.
- Jakobson 1981 [1966] \_\_\_\_\_. "Grammatical Parallelism and Its Russian Facet." *Selected Writings III: Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry*. Ed. by Stephen Rudy. The Hague: Mouton. pp. 98-135. [First published "Grammatical Parallelism and Its Russian Facet." *Language*, 42.2:399-429].
- Jakobson 1987 [1956] \_\_\_\_\_. "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances." In *Language in Literature*. Ed. by Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. pp. 95-114. [First published as Part II of *Fundamentals of Language*. Ed. by Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle. The Hauge: Mouton and Co. pp. 55-82.]
- Kamppinen 1989 Matti Kamppinen. *Cognitive Systems and Cultural Models of Illness: A Study of Two Mestizo Peasant Communities of the Peruvian Amazon*. Folklore Fellows' Communications, 244. Helsinki; Academia Scientiarum Fennica.

- Kataoka 2012 Kuniyoshi Kataoka. "Toward a Multimodal Ethnopoetics." *Applied Linguistics Review*, 3.1:101-30.
- Kendon 1989 Adam Kendon. *Sign Languages of Aboriginal Australia: Cultural, Semiotic and Communicative Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Liu and O'Halloran 2009 Yu Liu and Kay L. O'Halloran. "Intersemiotic Texture: Analyzing Cohesive Devices between Language and Images." *Social Semiotics*, 19.4:367-88.
- Keane 1997 Webb Keane. "Religious Language." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 26:47-71.
- Krohn 1932 Kaarle Krohn. *Zur finnischen Mythologie*. Folklore Fellows' Communications, 104. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.
- Lintrop 2012 Aado Lintrop. "Great Oxen of Twilight: Storytelling and Riddlemaking at Calendar Solstices." In *Mythic Discourses: Studies in Uralic Traditions*. Ed. by Frog, Anna-Leena Siikala, and Eila Stepanova. *Studia Fennica Folkloristica*, 20. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. pp. 396-412.
- Lönnroth 1978 Lars Lönnroth. *Den dubbla scenen: Muntlig diktning från Eddan till ABBA*. Stockholm: Prisma.
- Lönnroth 2009 \_\_\_\_\_. "Old Norse Text as Performance." *Scripta Islandica*, 60:49-60.
- Lotman and Uspenskii 1976 [1973] Iu. M. Lotman and B. A. Uspenskii. "Myth—Name—Culture." In *Semiotics and Structuralism: Readings from the Soviet Union*. Ed. by Henryk Baran. White Plains: International Arts and Sciences Press. pp. 3-32.
- Lukin 2015 Karina Lukin. "Lonely Riders of Nenets Mythology and Shamanism." *RMN Newsletter*, 10:118-27.
- Mansikka 1929 V. J. Mansikka. *Litauische Zaubersprüche*. Folklore Fellows' Communications, 87. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.
- McNeill 1992 David McNeill. *Hand and Mind: What Gestures Reveal about Thought*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- McNeill 2005 \_\_\_\_\_. *Gesture and Thought*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Metcalf 1989 Peter Metcalf. *Where Are You/Spirits: Style and Theme in Berawan Prayer*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

- Morris 1971 [1938] Charles W. Morris. "Foundations of a Theory of Signs." In *Writings on the General Theory of Signs*. Ed. by Thomas A. Sebeok. Approaches to Semiotics, 16. The Hague: Mouton. pp. 17-72.
- Piela 2005 Ulla Piela. "Parantajan Rituaalinen Kosketus." In *Tahdon sanoa*. Ed. by Sirpa Huttunen and Pirkko Nuolijärvi. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. pp. 11-31.
- Sather 2001 Clifford Sather. "Shamanic Journeys and Other Travels." In *Departures*. Ed. by Jukka Siikala. TAFAS, 46. Helsinki: Finnish Anthropological Society. pp. 144-78.
- Schjødt 2013 Jens Peter Schjødt. "The Notions of Model, Discourse, and Semantic Center as Tools for the (Re)Construction of Old Norse Religion." *RMN Newsletter*, 6:6-15.
- Sherzer 1983 Joel Sherzer. *Kuna Ways of Speaking: An Ethnographic Perspective*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Shor 1959 Ronald E. Shor. "Hypnosis and the Concept of the Generalized Reality-Oriented." *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 13:582-602.
- Shore 2015 Susanna Shore. "Register in Systemic Functional Linguistics." In *Registers of Communication*. Ed. by Asif Agha and Frog. *Studia Fennica Linguistica*, 18. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. pp. 54-76.
- Siikala 1978 Anna-Leena Siikala. *The Rite Technique of the Siberian Shaman*. Folklore Fellows' Communications, 220. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.
- Siikala 1992 \_\_\_\_\_. *Suomalainen šamanismi: Mielikuvien historiaa*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Siikala 2002 \_\_\_\_\_. *Mythic Images and Shamanism: A Perspective on Kalevala Poetry*. Folklore Fellows' Communications, 280. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.
- Silverstein 1984 Michael Silverstein. "On the Pragmatic 'Poetry' of Prose." In *Meaning, Form and Use in Context*. Ed. by Deborah Schiffrin. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press. pp. 181-99.
- Silverstein 1993 \_\_\_\_\_. "Metapragmatic Discourse and Metapragmatic Function." In *Reflexive Language: Reported Speech and Metapragmatics*. Ed. by John A. Lucy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 33-58.

- Silverstein 2010 \_\_\_\_\_ . “‘Direct’ and ‘Indirect’ Communicative Acts in Semiotic Perspective.” *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42:337-53.
- Steinitz 1934 Wolfgang Steinitz. *Der Parallelismus in der finnisch-karelischen Volksdichtung untersucht an den Liedern des karelischen Sangers Arhippa Perttunen*. Folklore Fellows’ Communications, 115. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.
- SKVR *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot I-XV*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1908-97.
- Stepanova A. 2012 Aleksandra Stepanova. *Karjalaisen itkuvirsikielen sanakirja*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Stepanova 2011 Eila Stepanova. “Reflections of Belief Systems in Karelian and Lithuanian Laments: Shared Systems of Traditional Referentiality?” *Archaeologia Baltica*, 15:128-43.
- Stepanova E. 2012 \_\_\_\_\_ . “Mythic Elements of Karelian Laments: The Case of *syndyzet* and *spuassuzet*.” In *Mythic Discourses: Studies in Uralic Traditions*. Ed. by Frog, Anna-Leena Siikala, and Eila Stepanova. *Studia Fennica Folkloristica*, 20. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. pp. 257-87.
- Stepanova 2014 \_\_\_\_\_ . *Seesjärveläisten itkijöiden rekisterit: Tutkimus äänellä itkemisen käytänteistä, teemoista ja käsitteistä*. Kultatneito, 14. Joensuu: Suomen Kansantietouden Tutkijain Seura.
- Stepanova 2015 \_\_\_\_\_ . “The Register of Karelian Lamenters.” In *Registers of Communication*. Ed. by Asif Agha and Frog. *Studia Fennica Linguistica*, 18. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. pp. 258-74.
- Stepanova and Frog 2015 Eila Stepanova and Frog. “Social Movement and a Structural Distribution of Karelian Ritual Genres.” *RMN Newsletter*, 10:112-18.
- Tarkka 2005 Lotte Tarkka. *Rajarahvaan laulu: Tutkimus Vuokkiniemen kalevalamittaisesta runokulttuurista 1821-1921*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Tarkka 2013 \_\_\_\_\_ . *Songs of the Border People: Genre, Reflexivity, and Performance in Karelian Oral Poetry*. Folklore Fellows’ Communications, 305. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.
- Tedlock 1983 Dennis Tedlock. *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Urban 1991

Greg Urban. *A Discourse-Centered Approach to Culture: Native South American Myths and Rituals*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Vaitkevičienė 2008

Daiva Vaitkevičienė, ed. *Lietuvių užkalbėjimai: gydymo formulės—Lithuanian Verbal Healing Charms*. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas.

This page is intentionally left blank.