

Eessõna

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Käesoleva ajakirjanumbri teemaks on „Esemete elulood”. Number ise on kujunenud ja sündinud paralleelselt pildil näha olevas vankris lesiva noorhärraga. Kuid keskendugem seekord vankrile ja tema eluloole.

Esemete elulugude (*object biographies*) teooria klassik Igor Kopytoff kirjutab oma krestomaatilises artiklis, et esemete elulood kujunevad vastavalt sellele, kuidas need omanikke vahetavad ning sellega seoses üha uusi eluetappe läbivad. Millal eseme elukaar läbi saab ja mis siis juhtub, sellest teoreetilistes käsitlustes väga palju juttu ei tehta. Oma lemmik-lapsevankri elulugu kirja pannes leidsin end aga üha uute küsimuste ees, millele teoreetilisest kirjandusest sageli head vastust ei leia. Olgu need küsimused edasise arutelu edendamiseks siinse jutu sees ära toodud.

Pildil olev neonroheline-kollase-mustriline krimpleenkäru¹ valmistati Poola Rahvavabariigis millalgi 1970. aastate esimeses pooles. Muhu saarele jõudis ta 1975. aasta sügisel, olles siin esimene nii edev omasugune – tavalised olid halli-valgekirjud vakstuvankrid. Tädi² Endla, kes oli Leningradis lapse saanud, oli seal niisuguseid vankreid näinud ja palunud tädi Martal endalegi selline hankida. Kuna tädi Marta töötas Tallinnas viinapoes, oli tal palju tutvusi ning nende abil õnnestuski tal üks kuuest tol aastal Eestisse saabunud defitsiitesemest just meie suguvõssa hankida. Kui käru kaubaautoga Muhusse saabus, oli poetäis naise seda uudistamas. „Väljamaa titt ja väljamaa vanker,“ kõlas nende tunnustav hinnang.

Vankri esimene omanik oli niisiis tädi Endla ja esimene kasutaja tema tütar Monika. Tädi Marta ei olnud rangelt võttes omanik, kuid tema panuseta oleks vankri elulugu suure tõenäosusega kujunenud hoopis teistsuguseks. *Kuidas mõtestada hankija ja vahendaja rolli esemete elulugude kujunemisel?*

Kahe aasta pärast andis Endla vankri edasi oma sugulasele Õiele, minu emale, kes pruukis seda mu nooremate vendade kärutamiseks.³ Rohelise vankri rataste külge monteeris isa talvel suusad, et see ka lumel kasutatav oleks. Toona nimelt külavaheteid lahti ei aetud ja auto, millega vanemad

1 Erinevalt levinumatest vakstutaolise kunstnaha kaetud korpusega kärudest on selle sõiduki kere kaetud sünteetilise krimpleenriidiga.

2 Naissugulusliinide keerukuse tõttu nimetagem siin kõiki asjassepuutuvaid Muhu naise lihtsalt tädideks.

3 Kuna olen käru esimese kasutaja Monikaga liialt ühealine, siis mina selles titena paraku sõitnud ei ole. Mul oli see tavaline vakstust käru. Hiljem ehitas isa selle raami peale muruniitja.



Kadri Tüür rohelise krimpleenvankriga. Hannes Pehlaku foto.

töole ja meie vanavanemate juurde saime, seisis majast pooleteise kilomeetri kaugusel suure tee ääres. Hommikupimeduses panid vanemad suusad alla, rakendusid vankri ette ja juba napi poole tunni pärast olimegi auto juures väljas. Vanker jäi tagasitulekuni teeäärsesse talusse hoiule. *Kuidas mõtestada eset mitte kasutavate ajutiste hoidjate rolli esemete elulugude kujunemisel?*

Vanker jäi meie perre pikemaks. 1991. aasta augustis lükkasin selles mööda õue ringiratast oma pisikest õde ja mõtlesin murelikult, et kui sõda peaks tulema, siis pean ilmselt gümnaasiumi mineku asemel sügisel sellesama tegevusega oma aega edasi sisustama. Pikemaajaline suhe rohelise vankriga ei tundunud absoluutselt huvitav. *Kuidas mõtestada esemest lahti saada soovijate rolli esemete elulugude kujunemisel?*

Õnneks sõda ei tulnud, õde kasvas ka suureks ja kärü pandi maja peale täöse⁴. Uuesti sai ta välja otsitud järgmise põlvkonna jaoks. Värske muuseumijuhataja ja lapsevanemana tundsin, kui šeff oli sellise käruga turistide vahel ringi kruuisida ja mitmes keeles lausunud komplimente vastu võtta. Hiljem kahe lapse koos sõidutamiseks leiutasin kärü metallraami vahele paigaldatava „käigulaua“, mille peale astudes vanem laps sai titekärutamisel samuti

4 Muhukeelne sõna millegi tähtsa, kuid parasjagu ebavajaliku pikemaajaliseks säilitamiseks ärapanemise kohta.

kaasa sõita. *Kuidas mõtestada esemete ad hoc täiendamise või ümbertegemise rolli esemete elulugude kujunemisel?*

Siis sündisid ka kärü esimesel kasutajal Monikal lapsed ja väärt sõiduriist rändas Muhu teise serva tagasi. Transpordi käigus tekkis kärü raami ühe metalltoru sisse kogemata mõra, nii et vaner kiskus pisut kiiva, aga kõlbas veel kasutada ikka. Tädi Endla naabrimehed parandasid seda jõudumööda, aga päris korda ikka ei saanud. *Kuidas mõtestada paranduste rolli esemete elulugude kujunemisel?*

Kuna tegu on väga heade praktiliste omadustega käruga, mille lükkamine on mulle aastatega juba käe sisse kulunud, palusin ta sel kevadel siiski enda kätte tagasi. Isa keevitas murdunud torule sobivaks painutatud kaarega toe; abikaasa täiendas korpuse lonti vajunud küljekonstruksiooni toeka kadakase hargiga.

Mis saab kärust edasi? Karta võib, et peale kümme-konnan lapse sõidutamist hakkab tema praktiline kasutusväärtus siiski ammelduma; jääb vaid nostalgiline, mis aga takistab kõvasti kärü minemaviskamist. Milline muuseum sellise kärü enda kogusse võtaks? Kas eseme elulugu lõpeb, kui ta satub muuseumisse? Aga prügimäele? Aga kui ta võetakse osadeks ja tehakse temast koguni terve hulk uusi asju – ratastest näiteks muruniitja, krimpplenkattest karnevalikostüüm, korpusest mängumaja? *Kuidas oma elutee lõpetanud esemest väärilikalt lahkuda?*

Loodetavasti leiame üheskoos vastused vähemasti mõnede neist küsimustest käesoleva Studia Vernacula kaante vahelt. Suur tänu uue ajakirjanumbri sünni ja kasvatamise juures olemast kõigile kaasautoritele, toimetamisprotsessi osalistele, headele kolleegidele ja muidugi meie lugejatele!

Foreword

Kadri Tüür

Editor-in-Chief, Studia Vernacula

The title of this special volume is ‘Object Biographies.’ The volume itself has developed and grown alongside the young fellow resting in the pram in the photo. But for now, let us focus only on the pram and its biography.

In his authoritative article on object biographies, Igor Kopytoff, the classic theoretician of the field, writes how the cultural biographies of things evolve as things change owners and pass through new stages of life. At what point does the life of an object come to an end, and what takes place after that, is rarely explored in theoretical works. As I was trying to write the biography of my favourite pram, I found myself constantly facing questions that had often not been adequately dealt with in the theoretical literature. For the sake of encouraging further discussion, I will list them below.

The neon green and yellow crimplene pram¹ in the photo was made in the People’s Republic of Poland somewhen in the early 1970s. It was brought to Muhu Island in the autumn of 1975, where it was the first of its kind – ordinary prams tended to be made from oilcloth and were a less flashy grey and white. Auntie² Endla, who had had a child in Leningrad, had seen similar prams there and asked Auntie Marta to get her one. Since Auntie Marta worked at a liquor store in Tallinn, she had plenty of connections which she managed to tap to secure one of the six exotic baby carriages delivered to Estonian SSR that year for our family. When the pram arrived in Muhu on a lorry, it was pored over by a whole shopful of women who passed a favourable verdict: ‘A foreign baby and a foreign pram.’

The first owner of the pram, then, was Auntie Endla and the first user, her daughter Monika. Auntie Marta had not been an owner in the strict sense of the word, but had it not been for her the biography of the pram would in all likelihood have turned out completely different. *How to conceptualise the role of the acquirer and the middleman in the evolution of the biographies of objects?*

Two years later, Endla passed the pram on to her relative Õie, my mother, who used it for transporting my younger brothers.³ In the winter, my father

1 Unlike other prams, which were usually covered in an artificial leather fabric resembling oilcloth, the body of this trolley was covered in synthetic crimplene.

2 Due to the complexity of female kinship lines involved, let us call all the Muhu women involved Aunties.

3 I did not have the good fortune to travel in this pram as a baby, as I was too close in age to its original user, Monika. I had one of those ordinary oilcloth prams. My father later used the frame of that pram for a lawn mower.

bolted skis to the wheels of the green pram to make it usable in snow. Back then village roads were not cleared of snow and the car that my parents used to drive to work and to take us to our grandparents' place was parked by the main road a kilometre and a half from home. In the early hours before dawn, my parents put on their skis, harnessed themselves to the pram, and barely half an hour later, we were at the car. The pram was left at the farm by the road until we returned. *How to conceptualise the role of temporary custodians who do not use the item in the evolution of the biographies of objects?*

The pram stayed with our family for years. In August 1991, I pushed my little sister around the courtyard, worried that if war came, I would probably have to spend my time in the same way in the autumn, instead of going to high school. A long-term relationship with the green pram did not seem attractive at all. *How to conceptualise the role of people wishing to get rid of the item in the evolution of the biographies of objects?*

Fortunately, there was no war; my sister grew up and the pram was put away in the attic.⁴ It was taken out again for transporting the next generation. As a new museum director and parent, I found much joy in cruising around among tourists with the old pram and accepting compliments in a variety of languages. To carry two children at once, I invented a 'gangplank' that could be fitted to the metal frame of the pram to allow the older child to ride along. *How to conceptualise the ad hoc improvement or modification of items in the evolution of the biographies of objects?*

Soon after, Monika, the first user of the pram, had children of her own, and the cherished trolley was taken back to the other side of the island. One of the pipes used for the frame was damaged in transportation, and the pram developed a slight lean, though it was still usable. Auntie Endla's neighbours tried to mend it as best they could, but they could never get it completely right. *How to conceptualise the role of repairs in the evolution of the biographies of objects?*

Given the solid practical qualities of the pram and the fact that I had grown accustomed to pushing it over the years, I asked Monika to return it earlier this spring. My father welded a suitably bent support for the fractured pipe, and my husband supplemented the sagging side braces of the body with a sturdy juniper fork.

What will the future hold for the pram? Unfortunately, it appears that after carrying nearly a dozen children, any practical value it had is nearly exhausted; what is left is sentimental value which is, however, a strong deterrent to

4 The Muhu language has a special phrase for putting something important, but currently unnecessary, in long-term storage: 'täöse panema'.

throwing it away. What museum would be willing to have it in its collection? Does the biography of an object end when it is taken to a museum? And what about to a garbage dump? And what if it is taken apart and turned into a whole host of new objects – the wheels used for a lawn mower, the crimplene covering for a carnival costume, and the body for a dollhouse? *How to let go with dignity of an object that has reached the end of its life?*

Hopefully, we will be able to find the answers to at least some of these questions in the present volume of *Studia Vernacula*. Many thanks to all the authors, everyone involved in the editing process, our kind colleagues and, last but not least, our readers for their help in the birth and growth of the new volume!