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## Baiba Krogzeme - Mosgorda about memory albums

**Baiba Krogzeme-Mosgorda:** I am Baiba Krogzeme-Mosgorda and I work in the Institute of Folklore and Art. Maybe you'll tell what is a memory album exactly, that is an album that is made as a dedication to one person by some other people. It means this is some kind of written evidence of people the album owner has made during his life. Can it be school, it can be school mates, it can be in an army or military service, it can be in a war, and so on and so on. But we are now talking about schoolchildren memory albums because memory album culture in the last century, also in Europe, also in United States were taken over by schoolchildren and wish for a good memory or eternal memory and a signature, therefore they're called autograph albums and it means that basically the entry of each of this album is like a dialogue between contributors to the entry and the album owner, as it is believed that the first memory albums were written by traveling students in German universities in the 16th century, so students traveled around and that was fashionable that they studied in different universities so they gathered the inscriptions of professors or also noble colleagues, so that is some kind of not only evidence of where they have been but also the proof of a status what professor they have listened to. Later memory albums come over to the middle classes and then they are also know in a trader's ... or so on and by end of 19th century there are already the so-called poetic albums of young ladies who gather romantic poems about love and friendship. When I made my research on memory albums I found out that basically there are some stereotypes we believe in that memory albums is a girl's culture, because for instance in Russian culture they're called girls albums, but basically memory albums have belonged also in Latvia here there are also boy's albums right, belonged also to the grown up men who were not all the time poets, right, they can be young men in countryside or a group of friends in one of a countryside small cities or also writers of course, and artists and creative people. Every contributor has his own view but you also have to remember that illustrations come not only from children's tastes, but also what is accessible for them and they say in Soviet times when these albums were created most of them, there was a limited access of let's say decorating things so most were used post cards, also sometimes etiquettes from bottles, sometimes they used of course children own drawings and copies mostly but postcards were very very popular as cutouts of postcards and in 70s became again more popular as a decoration, cutouts of fashion journals and cinema journals and some comic strips.

Memory albums as such belong to the more than folk traditions what we would usually talk about folklore and traditional culture and we say folk songs, fairy tales, and some of the oral culture ways which we know but with the development of the possibility to obtain education with capacity of more and more people to be able to read and write, appeared a new way of folk creativity and this is what we call the writing culture of ordinary people or I love to call it a folk writing culture and I was surprised how many examples we simply don't know because it's underground, because it is personal and people very rarely share these things.

There also belonged to a so called memory culture, we also say a private memory culture of individual collective, they're souvenirs, they're souvenirs for one period of a person's life. If we say that grown up memory albums are some kind of parallel world to the real world, every time hand-written tradition do this because in handwritten ways you can overcome all the restrictions you have, you can overcome any social taboos or power ideology, everything in your diaries or whatever but schoolchildren albums are so that they of course, children make their own world by themselves, this is already their own world opposite adult world. And it means that they have their own ways of communication, their own group structures according the gender and sex and different ages, they have their own values and it means that basically memory albums are some kind of a way how children cope with the school, everyday life. We can also say that albums help children to create and recreate relations to making their communities, we can also say that they show the taste of children, I can say that these memory albums come from countryside or these are from 50 or these are from 70s or these are from 80s. Both by appearance and also by things that put in them most texts and illustrations and here is one album which I want to show you as how memory albums came to Latvian pupils. This is an album which has belonged to two owners, at the beginning it belonged to a German young lady written in German language which is romantic poetry with a nice handwriting with a quite professional drawing. Later this album has become maybe as a family heritage to a younger schoolgirl, when younger children started to take over the albums of course the repertoire changed. Basically this memory album culture has died out with the internet, of course, right, but I'm not sure it has died out because I have not researched it after my dissertation, but when talk to girls they are now writing like secret diaries this is...handwritten belongs to this hand-written tradition, but best friends are writing diaries about important matters in their lives and in their own and in each others'.



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