

BNN Newsletter IX 2017.

Dear members of Belief Narrative Network,

This is the ninth issue of monthly newsletter of Belief Narrative Network. And with some delay, I wish you a very happy start for the new academic year!

This newsletter includes the CFP of the ISFNR conference in Ragusa with all the important dates. I think it will make no harm to repeat the CFP of BNN affiliated conference “Human-Animal Relationships in Belief Narratives” within it. In addition to this you will find some other information regarding the conferences. The newsletter depends on contributions, so thank you all, who sent their notes!

With the very best wishes,

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On behalf of the BNN Committee:

Mirjam Mencej, Willem de Blécourt, Terry Gunnell, Anders Gustavsson, Desmond Kharmawphlang, Fumihiko Kobayashi, Mare Kõiva, Kaarina Koski, Dilip Kumar Kalita, Mirjam Mencej, Maria Ines Palleiro, Tok Thompson and Ülo Valk.

1. Announcements from the BNN

Below please see the Call for papers for the BNN conference to be held within the ISFNR interim conference in 2018. Please note that you should submit the abstract directly to the ISFNR, when the Call for papers will be officially launched. Merely indicate on your abstract that the submission is meant to be presented as part of the BNN conference.

Human-Animal Relationships in Belief Narratives

Current histories of the relations between humans and other species range from hunting and husbandry to vivisection. They habitually treat humans and animals as two separate bodies, but such a vision is only part of what the human mind has produced. A proper look at the merging between human and animal may yield surprising and intimate insights in human history and culture, with regard to both how we treat animals and how we “think with animals”. The range of human expressions concerning human-animal relationships, and especially animal metamorphoses, encompasses language through to literature, and in particular belief narratives, ritual performance, material culture and art, and should offer promising insights as it centres on the concept of physical and conceptual transformation. Yet our understanding of this fundamental aspect of human culture remains fragmented. Our aim is to at least lift a part of the veil.

Drawing on a variety of sources, conference participants will focus on belief narratives and chart the variety of aspects of human-animal relationships and the range of animal shapes – both wild and domestic – that figure in human to animal shifting or vice versa; consider the means of transformation; and uncover possible underlying concepts about body and soul. One of the most important aspects of the conference will be to explore the importance of context in determining specific expressions of metamorphosis. In this respect, key questions will consider the role of individual identity in and outside of society, the role of ethnic and cultural identity, gender, impacts of religious conversion and the relevance of local ecology. The conference will also explore broader contexts of human-animal relationships in belief narratives, such as animal comparisons in language (proverbs, fables), monstrosity and hybridity in art, animal disguise in ritual and custom, totemism, sexuality, bestiality and the animalisation of deviancy.

More specifically we hope to be able to offer, among other things, sessions on the following topics (these sessions will be organised around polarities; participants are free to explore any position):

Animal belief narratives between fables and mythology: Shape-shifting legends are situated according to genre but also to the media of transmission. To what extent do they influence each other?

Animal versus botanical (or mineral) shapeshifting: In this session, questions will be asked about the particular forms of metamorphosis, where they arrive from, how they matter and what they entail.

Culture or ecology? Specific animal shapes can be offered from natural surroundings but also from available meta-narratives. Are there options for one animal or the other subject to change?

Agency and counter-agency: People can have an animal shape subscribed to them or make their own choice. How is this related to gender? What are the available defence mechanisms?

Animal spirits as opposed to fantastic animals: Today different animal concepts from different cultures are often combined. How do we deal with such combinations?

(Contribution by Willem de Blécourt and Mirjam Mencej)

**1.2. CALL FOR PAPERS Interim Conference of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) 2018
Ragusa, Italy, June 12-16, 2018**

FOLK NARRATIVE IN REGIONS OF INTENSIVE CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Organizer: SDS of Foreign Languages and Literatures of Ragusa - Department of Human Sciences (DISUM), University of Catania, The Special Didactic Structure of Foreign Languages and Literatures of Ragusa (University of Catania), in cooperation with the Department of Human Sciences (DISUM) of the University of Catania, is proud to invite the members of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research to hold an Interim Conference in Ragusa, Italy, on June 12-16, 2018.

The complexity of the field of Folk Narrative Research provides ample opportunities to compare different points of view and methods of study. In particular, the renewed interest in “identifying the origins of themes and motives, the reconstruction of their history, the process of their spread, their journeys and their metamorphosis” (Pioletti, *Miti, temi, motivi fra folklore e letteratura, oralità e scrittura*, 2010, p. 302) offers a multitude of perspectives on the encounters with the Other by focusing on regions of intensive cultural exchanges. As folklorists know well, the transmission (and ensuing transformation) of narratives over time is subject to processes of selection and assimilation. This often happens for ideological purposes which endorse views focused on the uniformity of cultural identities, rather than comparison and exchange. At the same time, folk narratives display a unique capacity to migrate, on the way crossing numerous borders and transforming the cultures they touch as well as being transformed themselves. Many other stories are hidden behind the transformations of folk narratives.

Within this framework, we invite papers and panels dealing with “the encounter” of cultures, with a particular focus on folk narratives. We encourage contributions with interdisciplinary approaches related to enlarged, dialogical, and critical perspectives. In particular, we suggest contributions to focus on the “journey” of oral narratives, myths, themes, and motives, through time and space, by analyzing the plural and intercultural nature of processes related to building and re-building identities (Lotman, *Una teoria del rapporto reciproco fra le culture*, 1992, pp. 126-127). In addition to enlightening aspects of regional relevance, the study of areas of extensive cultural exchange will

lead to reassessing fundamental categories, such as the relationship between memory and function in myth and legend; linguistic strategies of exchange; the dynamics of losing, latency, interpolation, reactivation of meanings, structures, themes and “itinerant” motives in the folk tales.

We welcome scholarly presentations concerning any of the following topics:

- Reassessing Approaches to Narratives: Theories, Models and Definitions
- Storytellers and Their Strategies
- People and Places: Etiological Legends Composing Memories
- Revisions and Memories in Times of Migration
- Heritage and the Construction of Identities in Oral Tradition

- Linguistic Strategies in Cross-cultural Contact

Submission of Abstracts [Deadline: November 1st, 2017]

You are welcome to submit your conference registration by sending an e-mail to: **isfnr2018ragusa@unict.it**

The deadline for proposals is November 1st, 2017

Please make sure to include the following information with your proposal:

- full name, e-mail address, and institutional affiliation;

- membership status;

- the title of your proposed paper;

- a 250 word abstract;

- a 150 word bio-note;

Sessions and panels will be structured according to topics (with a maximum of four participants). Proposals will be reviewed by a committee of ISFNR members and of Scholars who live in the region hosting the meeting. The committee will send notification of acceptance or rejection for the meeting program in early February 2018 and post an online preliminary program schedule by March 2018.

N.B. Presentations should not exceed 20 minutes followed by 10 minutes of discussion.

Panels: [Deadline: October 1st, 2017]

Participants wishing to suggest a panel are most welcome. Those wishing to organize a panel need to submit their suggestions following a specific form (chair/convenor of the panel, topic, titles of papers and participants). In doing so they must comply with the thematic guidelines of the sub-topics and general topic of the congress.

Please submit your registration by e-mail: **isfnr2018ragusa@unict.it**

Registration Fee

Regular Registration (until January 10, 2018)

regular member rate: € 180

reduced member rate (unemployed colleagues and PhD students): € 120

additional fee for non-members: € 50/25

Late registration or on-site payment (after January 10, 2018)

regular member rate: € 210

reduced member rate (unemployed colleagues and PhD students): € 150

additional fee for non-members: € 50/25

Note. Participants of the Interim Conference are reminded that this is an event organized primarily by and for members of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research. To ensure their full ISFNR membership status participants will be asked to check with the treasurer or the treasurer's representative, and ISFNR members who have not yet paid their dues will be asked to do so during on-site registration. The current membership rates are 25 Euros or 30 US Dollars per annum. Non-members wishing to participate in the Ragusa congress are welcome, but will be expected to pay an additional registration fee of 50 EUR prior to registration. Reduced rates at 25 EUR for non-members will only be applicable for students, unemployed, and accompanying persons. Please note that all payments to the ISFNR treasurer must be made in cash.

The conference fee includes:

participation in the conference sessions and guided tours to historic and artistic places of interest in Ragusa Ibla among the conference activities, stationery costs, printing and photocopying facilities, coffee breaks and conference dinner (with a coach transfer).

For those who may wish to extend their stay, at the end of the conference it will be possible to sign up for a full-day excursion that will include coach transfer, lunch with typical local produce, entrance to the Camarina archaeological museum, entrance to the Donnafugata Castle and its park, at an extra cost of € 60.

International Scientific Committee:

Sadhana Naithani, Ulrich Marzolph, Mirella Cassarino, Santo Burgio, Antonio Pioletti, Eliana Creazzo, Ilenia Licitra, Alba Rosa Suriano, Francesca Rizzo Nervo, Attilio Scuderi, Carlo Donà.

Local Committee:

Mirella Cassarino, Eliana Creazzo, Alfredo Criscuolo, Cristina La Rosa, Ilenia Licitra, Stefano Lo Presti, Rosa Pennisi, Daniela Potenza, Alba Rosa Suriano.

Further Information

Second circular including further information will be issued in February 2018.

A third circular including the definitive congress program will be issued shortly before the congress dates.

Should you have questions, please send us an e-mail: isfnr2018ragusa@unict.it

Please find regularly updated information regarding the congress, next circulars, registration procedures, etc., on the following websites:

www.isfnr.org

www.sdslingue.unict.it/isfnr2018

NB! TRAVEL GRANTS AVAILABLE! SEE P. 9 FROM THIS NEWSLETTER.

(Contribution by Mirjam Mencej)

2. Current publications published by the BNN members

Lithuanian Folk Narratives: Tales of Magic, Vol. 1, compiled and edited by Jūratė Šlekonytė Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 2016. - 724 p. [Lietuvių pasakojamoji tautosaka: Stebuklinės pasakos, t. 1, sudarė ir parengė Jūratė Šlekonytė, Vilnius: LLTI, 2016. - 724 p.]

Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore launches series of fundamental source edition of the “Lithuanian Folk Narratives”, which will introduce various genres of the traditional folk narratives. The biggest repository of folklore – the Lithuanian Folklore Archives of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, currently houses over 2 million recorded texts. Over 100 000 of them are folk narratives. The series starts with folktales, as the most numerous and popular kind of verbal lore. This edition aims at presenting the most authentic rendering of folktales, in order to introduce their archaic features, ancient realities and imagery. Arrangement and description of tales in this publication rests on their typology. In Lithuanian folk narrative tradition, about 175 types of the tales of magic can be discerned. The narratives comprising this volume belong to eleven types of the classification (300, 300A, 301A, 301B, 301D*, 302, 303, 304, 306, 307, 310). Altogether, this volume comprises 140 texts that best represent the generic character of the tales of magic. (Read more from the attached pdf)

(Contribution by Jurate Slekonyte)

3. Other relevant publications

4. Calls for papers

5. News on future events and conferences

6. News on past events and conferences

6.1. Brief Report on National Seminar on “Oral Culture: People, Poetics and Performance”

Date: August 22-23, 2017.

Convener: Prof. Desmond L. Kharmawphlang, Executive Board Member, Belief Narrative Network and Head, Department of Cultural and Creative Studies of the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya, India

To coincide with World Folklore Day on August 22nd, the Department of Cultural and Creative Studies of the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, recently hosted a two-day National Seminar on “Oral Culture: People, Poetics and Performance”, which was attended by Prof N. Bhathavathsala Reddy, Director, Institute for Indian Folklore, Folklore Society of South Indian Languages (FOSSILS), Dr. M. D. Muthukumaraswamy, Director, National Folklore Support Centre, Chennai, Damodar Mauzo, short story writer, novelist, critic and script writer in the Konkani language from Goa, and Haldhar Nag, renowned Poet and Padma Shri (the fourth highest civilian award in India) awardee. The Keynote Address was delivered by Prof. Temsula Ao, prominent Indian poet and academician, also a recipient of the Padma Shri in the "Literature and Education" field and a former Fulbright fellow in the University of Minnesota.

As part of the Conference, a total of 8 (eight) Technical Sessions were held over two days and the themes explored over the course of these sessions included “Authorship and Authority of Oral Culture(s)”, “Tradition-oriented Communication: Episteme and Praxis”, “Carnavalesque: Heroes, Heroines and Hierarchies”, “Verbalization and Performance”, “Folk to Classical: Liminality in/of Performance”, “Vernacular Poetics”, “‘De-shrined’ Worship: Dance, Drama and Music” and “Gender and Oral Traditions”. The deliberations also involved Also in attendance were scholars from different parts of India who brought with them their insightful and challenging perspectives gleaned from an extensive and wide-ranging work in the field of Oral Culture.

Apart from the wide array of academic papers on the chosen theme and sub-themes of the Conference, and in keeping with part of an endeavour to make the two-day National Conference a true celebration of World Folklore Day, space was given for Participants and members of the host University to take part in a themed Costume Party, based on figures and motifs from folklore its many constituents, that was held on the evening of the 22nd, after the technical sessions, for which prizes were given out to the best combination or costume and presentation.

(Contribution by Desmond W. Karmawphlang, report compiled by: Mr. Banphira B. Wahlang, Research Scholar, Department of Cultural and Creative Studies of the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong)

6.2. Brief report by Prof. Sabine Wienker-Piepho about her recent activities in creating research in relationships between fairy tales and belief narratives.

Sabine Wienker-Piepho is finished the translation and actualization of Ruth B. Bottigheimer's classical gender book: *Grimm's Bad Girls and Bold Boys: The Moral and Social Vision of the Tales*. New Haven 1987. The Translation is in print in Zürich under the German title: *Wertewelt*.

Prof. Markus Tauschek and Prof. Sabine Wienker-Piepho have realized a lecture on *Instrumentalisations of Fairy Tales and Legends in History and Presence* at University of Freiburg. She has organised a symposium on *Storytelling and Musical Accompaniment*, and will give a lecture on *Folktales and Tourisme* at Jena University in the winter term.

The commission for Narrative Research in the DFG (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde) will meet in autumn 2018 in Switzerland - central theme/focus of the conference will be "*Conspiracy Theories*" (contact brigitte.frizzoni@uzh.ch). Maerchen-Stiftung Walter Kahn will meet for a conference on *Maerchen and the Media (Film)* in Volkach.

7. Useful links to websites

8. Information on belief narratives and scholars of belief narratives in the media

9. Other useful or interesting information related to belief narratives

Travel Grant for ISFNR Members

The ISFNR will offer eight travel grants for presentation in its next conference to be held in Ragusa, Italy from June 12-16, 2018. Four grants of up to \$1000 will be offered to participants from Asia, Africa, South America and Australia/New Zealand and four grants of up to \$500 to participants from Europe and USA. The grants are meant only for active ISFNR members and preference will be given to young, independent and retired scholars. Applications should be made once the scientific committee for the conference has accepted the abstract of paper for presentation. A letter of application along with the abstract and CV may be sent to the President, ISFNR at sadhana.naithani@gmail.com

(Contribution by Mirjam Mencej)

10. Study programmes

11. Notes and Queries

11.1 Questions

11.2 Replies