

BNN Newsletter V 2017.

Dear members of Belief Narrative Network,

Here comes the fifth issue of monthly newsletter of the network.

BNN Committee has prepared a **preliminary draft** for its own meeting which will be held within the ISFN conference in Ragusa, Italy from June 12th-16th 2018. Please read and comment the draft below. Also, BNN will launch its **student prize** – you can find the call from the newsletter as well from the attachment.2018. BNN will soon launch the Call for its own conference which is going to take place within the ISFNR congress.

Besides it you can find couple of calls and other information from this newsletter.

Hope you enjoy the reading and have a nice early-summer!

Best wishes,

Kristel Kivari

kristel.kivari@ut.ee

kristelkivari@hotmail.com

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

1.1. In the next e-Newsletter (to be issued on 1 July 2017), the BNN Committee will announce a call for the forthcoming BNN conference, which will take place within the framework of the interim ISFNR conference in Sicily in June 2018. We have decided that the main topic of the conference will be **Human-animal relationships in belief narratives**. While papers on other topics relating to belief narratives will also be considered, we strongly encourage members to try to offer papers relating to this topic, or the general topic of the ISFNR conference.

Below you will find a draft of the Call for Papers to which a range of potential under-topics are yet to be added. Before we complete our list of under-topics which will be given in the final Call for Papers, we would like to encourage all of you to send any comments and suggestions you might have about potential sub-themes relating to the topic – given the fact that one can assume that important differences must exist in belief narratives related to this theme in various cultures. Please send your ideas, suggestions, comments directly to Willem de Blécourt (wjcddeb@historicalanthropologist.eu) by June 20, 2017 ! The preliminary conference proposal composed by Willem follows:

Current histories of the relations between humans and other species range from hunting and husbandry through 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, both as how we treat animals and how we “think with animals”. The range of human expressions concerning animal metamorphoses encompasses language through to literature, 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, as studies have focused on specific aspects such as shape changing in East-Asian cultures, metamorphosis in pre-Christian iconography, post-medieval ritual animal disguise, or body metaphors in modern belief narratives. The topic has certainly not been thematised across the different disciplines and in order to catch up with cutting-edge academic paradigms, requires a novel and significant inter-disciplinary framework.

Rather than seeing metamorphoses as something entirely exotic, this conference purports to include the Western World (i.e. Europe and North America), from Antiquity to the twentieth century. Drawing on a variety of sources, conference participants will chart the range of animal shapes – both wild and domestic – that figure in human to animal shifting, consider the means of transformation, and uncover 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, gender, impacts of religious conversion and the relevance of local ecology. The conference will also explore broader contexts of metamorphoses, 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. It will also encompass critical and contextually-sensitive biological, anthrozoological and psychological perspectives.

(Contribution by Willem de Blécourt and Mirjam Mencej)

1.2. Call for submissions for the 2018 student prize for best student paper in the field of belief narratives.

The Belief Narrative Network of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research invites submissions for a student prize for the best student paper in the field of belief narratives. The award will be given every second year, that is at the interim ISFNR conference and at the ISFNR congress.

We have envisioned the winning paper being published in *Folklore, Electronic Journal of Folklore* (Tartu), along with 300 euros of honorarium for the participation in the ISFNR interim conference or congress. Additionally, the conference participation fee will be waived. For 2018, this would be at the ISFNR interim conference in Ragusa, Sicily, Italy, June 12-16, 2018.

Submissions: All research papers by undergraduate or graduate students, in English, written after January 1 of the previous two years (e.g., January 1, 2016 for the 2018 Prize), unpublished at the time of submission, and written on belief narratives (broadly construed) are eligible. Entries should be a minimum of 5,000 words.

Interested applicants must submit the following:

- 1. An electronic copy to the evaluation committee. For 2018, please send materials to Mirjam Mencej, at mirjam.mencej@ff.uni-lj.si or mirjam.mencej@guest.arnes.si for distribution. To ensure blind judgment of papers, please remove the author's name from the paper. Papers should be sent as Microsoft Word document attachments or pdf.
- 2. A short (100-word) biographical statement about the author, including the author's current graduate or undergraduate status, and about the research.

Confirmation of receipt for electronic submissions will be sent. One submission per person please. The committee is under no obligation to award any winner. The online deadline for the submissions is 31 December 2017.

(Contribution by Mirjam Mencej)

2. Current publications published by the BNN members

3. Other relevant publications

4. Calls for papers

4.1. Annual conference of the CEES and 61st Kreutzwald Days conference "**Variation in language, literature, folklore, and music**" **December 7–8, 2017, at the University of Tartu** and the Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia. Submission of abstracts – June 10.

NB! There will be a special panel "History matters the role of the past in contemporary spiritual movements" <https://www.folklore.ec/CEES/2017/p7.htm>

Variation is a universal phenomenon permeating language, culture, and the entire worldview, and as such connects the different domains explored by the Centre of Excellence in Estonian

Studies. We invite you to discuss the issues related to specific and common in variation in language, literature, folklore, and music, and the confluences and connections between different variations. The conference also features round-table discussions on the methods for studying variation and problems concerned with data (large and small databases, so-called bad data). We are open for suggestions for workshops, especially those dealing with interdisciplinary topics.

We expect presentations on different aspects of variation, for example:

- Synchronic and diachronic variation, levels of variation (individual, local, regional, historical), comparison of variants (registers, dialects, genres), factors influencing variation; methods for studying variation; variation in web environments;
- Intra-linguistic factors of linguistic variation (e.g. system constraints, regularities of linguistic changes);
- Extra-linguistic factors of linguistic variation (e.g. extra-linguistic context of language varieties, contacts with other languages and language varieties, language planning);
- Linguistic variations in folklore, variations in writer's choices, usage of dialects in fiction;
- Variation as the main basis of dynamics of folklore, variation as an issue of typologisation;
- Variations of myths and motifs; intertextuality, transmediality;
- Cultural variation in the Baltic area incl. the Russian-language culture of the Baltic states;
- Type and variant in folk music, variational nature of traditional musical thinking.

Working languages of the conference are Estonian, English, Russian, and German.

Please register and submit the heading and abstract (up to 300 words) of your 20-minute presentation through the conference registration form <http://folklore.ee/CEES/regform.html>.

(Contribution by Mare Kõiva)

4.1. National Conference on Oral Cultures: People, Poetics, Performance 22nd – 23rd August, 2017. North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India.

Organised by: the Department of Cultural and Creative Studies, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong Meghalaya, India in collaboration with Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, NewDelhi and Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal

Sub-themes:

1. Authorship and Authority of Oral Culture(s)
2. Tradition-oriented Communication: Episteme and Praxis
3. Vernacular Poetics
4. Ethnopoetics
5. Verbalization and Performance
6. Folk to Classical: Liminality in/of Performance
7. “De-shrined” Worship: Dance, Drama and Music
8. City Carnavalesque: Heroes, Heroines and Hierarchies

Interested participants are asked to submit their abstracts no later than July, 20th.

See the full CFP, application form and additional information from attachment.

(Contribution by Desmond Karmawphlang)

5. News on future events and conferences

6. News on past events and conferences

6.1. CONFERENCE REPORT – PRESENT AND PAST (Budapest, compiled by Emese Ilyefalvi)

A three-day international conference was held on the anthropology of religion in Budapest at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Ethnology from 5th to 7th May 2017 organized by Prof. Éva Pócs and supported by the ERC Project Vernacular religion on the boundary of Eastern and Western Christianity: continuity, changes and interactions (№ 324214). The conference entitled Present and Past. Contemporary and historical perspectives in the anthropological study of religious life aimed to negotiate methodological problems: how is it possible to examine the past with the help of the present, and vice versa? The main goal of the conference was to discuss the various relationships between the past and the present in the light of the anthropology of religion and of religious studies in general.

On the first day Gábor Vargyas (Senior research fellow, HAS, Institute of Ethnology) opened the conference and highlighted the importance for Hungarian academics of the international conferences organized by Éva Pócs in the last 10 years. For Present and Past conference 35 scholars from various disciplines (folkloristics, medieval studies, cultural history, classical philology, anthropology, ethnography, literary studies) arrived from 12 different countries (Austria, Bashkortostan, England, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Norway, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, USA) to Budapest for the discussion.

The first two sections examined the problems of continuity and change (Anastasiya Fiadotava – Tartu, Lehel Peti – Cluj-Napoca, Baburam Saikia – Tartu) and methodological challenges and consequences for connecting present and past (Evy Johanne Håland, Ilona Nagy – Budapest, Gábor Klaniczay – Budapest, William A. Christian – Gran Canaria, Laura Jiga Iliescu – Bucharest, Mirjam Mencej – Ljubljana, Bea Vidacs – Budapest, Eszter Gyórfy – Budapest/Cluj-Napoca). On the second day scholars focused on survivals and continuity in different religious customs and phenomenon (Ildikó Csepregi – Budapest, Anna Judit Tóth – Budapest, Judit Balatonyi – Budapest/Pécs, Tatiana Minniyakhmetova, Innsbruck – Margarita Suleymanova, Bashkortostan, Bernadett Smid – Budapest, László Koppány Csáji – Pécs). After lunch the conference continued with the topic of construction and reconstruction of the past (Nancy Caciola – San Diego, István Povedák – Szeged, Sonja Petrović – Belgrade, María Tausiet – Madrid, Judit Kis-Halasz – Budapest, Éva Pócs – Budapest). On the last day, a separate panel was dedicated to research on vernacular religions at the University of Oslo led by Marion Bowman. The panel entitled Vernacular Religion on the move: Routes and roots of contemporary religious life in Norway aimed to illustrate the roots and routes of contemporary vernacular religious phenomena in Norway, capturing the importance of movement in relation to places, people and objects over time (Hannah-Kristine Lunde, Dirk Johannsen, Åmund Norum Resløyken, Marion Bowman, Ane Ohrvik). The very last section of the conference dealt with archival investigations and source criticism focusing on the anthropology in the archive. Four Hungarian researcher gave papers about early modern Hungarian witchcraft trials (Ildikó Németh – Sopron, Ágnes Hesz – Budapest/Pécs, Emese Ilyefalvi – Budapest, Tünde Komáromi – Budapest), finally James A. Kapaló and Kinga Povedák from Cork spoke about a new project Creative Agency and Religious Minorities: ‘Hidden Galleries’ in the Secret Police Archives in 20th Century Central and Eastern Europe led by James Kapaló questioning the possibilities and limits of doing ethnography in the Secret Police Archives, problematizing several ethical issues too.

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

10. Study programmes

Tartu University will open an extra admission for 5 MA positions on the study programme “**Folkloristics and Applied Heritage Studies**”. The eligible applicants must be from EU countries, but the managers want to open the admission also for Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian students. The information will soon appear to the website <http://www.flku.ut.ee/en/learning/folkloristics-and-applied-heritage-studies>

11. Notes and Queries

11.1 Questions

11.2 Replies