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## BNN Newsletter, June 2021

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Sincerely,

Kristel Kivari

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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.*

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Book review: Valodzina, Tatsiana and Kõiva, Mare. 2020. Миссия выполнима-2: Перспективы изучения фольклора: взгляд из Беларуси и Эстонии [(“Mission Possible-2: Prospects for studying folklore: Belarusian and Estonian perspective”)]. Minsk: Belaruskaya navuka.

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Alena Leshkevich

The edited volume “Миссия выполнима-2” features the articles by Belarusian and Estonian scholars that discuss the perspectives of folklore studies. The title “Mission possible” dates back to the first edited volume of Estonian and Belarusian academic articles that was published in 2018. It rehashes the “Mission Impossible” film title and renegotiates folkloristics as a promising and topical academic field that can be applied for the analysis of both traditional culture and multifaceted information trends of contemporary world.

The edited volume “Миссия выполнима-2” is one of the outcomes of the collaboration between The

Center for the Belarusian Culture, Language and Literature Researches of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Estonian Literary Museum. Since 2016 there have been numerous joint fieldwork projects, conferences, publications as well as Belarusian scholars’ internships in Estonia. The collaboration resulted in experience exchange and mutual enrichment between Estonian and Belarusian scholars.

Most of the articles in the edited volume cover particular empirical topics within the framework of Belarusian or Estonian traditional culture. Several contributions shed light on the parallels between Belarusian (or broader Slavic) folklore and cultural phenomena of Finno-Ugric (Estonian, Seto) and Turkic (Tuvan) peoples. Jury Paciupa’s article “The problem of text and tune correlation: concerning the differentiation of prosodical and musicological competence” is a theoretical research paper that suggests that folk song texts can be – and even should be – studied separately from their tunes. The author discusses the historical background of the issue and reviews earlier interdisciplinary studies in this field. Paciupa’s article follows up on his contribution to the first “Миссия выполнима” volume.



Alena Paulava's article "Main aspects of the ethnocultural activities of Belarusians living in Estonia" is dedicated mostly to family and calendar rituals of Belarusian diaspora. She touches upon the history of the diaspora and its activities, the ways it maintains the ties with the motherland and its food culture. The researcher recorded lullabies, short child songs and spells from Belarusians in Estonia. She notes that the diaspora does not preserve the conventional structure of the lullabies ("introduction"-prayer – narrative part – "fixation"). The recordings illustrate that only the narrative part remains in the charms. This might become a hypothesis for further studies of memory in folklore that would be based on a broader range of sources.

Two articles discuss charms and incantations and give the readers an opportunity to compare Estonian and Belarusian material on their own. These are Tatsiana Valodzina's article "A historiola in Belarusian charms: priorities and regional specifics" and Mare Kõiva's work titled "Prayers and incantations. Bible motifs and characters in incantations". Tatsiana Valodzina explains that "Historiola is a magic text tactics the essence of which is to appeal to precedent situations, when the cure strategy is based on the following the sacred situations" (p. 49). The activities of Jesus Christ and Old Testament characters constitute the patterns. The "folk Bible" topic is further explored in Elena Bohaneva and Mare Kõiva's article "Essays on mythology: pharaohs in the contexts of Slavic and Baltic-Finnic beliefs". "Pharaohs" are mythical creatures (half-people, half-fish) whose origin is usually traced to the biblical events described in the Exodus.

Andres Kuperjanov's article "Tree related narratives" analyses etiological legends. They represent a symbiosis of folk Christianity and Christian sacred tradition. In the 20th century the legends revolving around trees had a marginal status in Estonian folklore studies and Andres Kuperjanov's article intends to fill in this gap.

The quest for the typological parallels not only underscores commonalities and differences, but also stimulates a deeper understanding of the elements of the particular traditions. Siarhei Hruntoŭ's article "Rural cemeteries in the Belarusian folk culture and beyond" and Irina Smirnova's paper "Typological parallels in the Belarusian rite of carrying candles ritual and Setos rite in honor of god Peko" focus on the well-researched issues, but introduce new fieldwork materials and broaden the comparative context. This creates an opportunity to supplement or even refute earlier theories. Siarhei Hruntoŭ problematizes the concept of rural cemetery and shows that broadening its semantic area opens up new ways of its interpretation. He brings the example of naruby (house-like constructions built over the graves) at the cemeteries. They are commonly regarded as monuments that have an ancient origin, a part of Belarusian peasant culture, even a defining ethnic feature of Belarusian culture. While the ancient origin of these constructions is undeniable, a broader comparative context reveals that house-like monuments can be also found among the Jewish as well as among the nobility. The author does not bring any parallels with Finno-Ugric peoples. This probably lies outside of the scope of his study as he describes the house-like constructions only on Belarusian territory and the aim of his work is to show that they spread beyond the peasant culture. Meanwhile, Finno-Ugric peoples also built house-like monuments, such

constructions were wide spread across Europe (Labacheuskaya 2009: 195). Cross-cultural data would allow for even further expansion of the research field, especially given that the edited volume also includes contributions on Estonian folklore.

A “candle” is a set of ritual objects that may include a candle, an icon and a towel that covers the icon. Alternatively, it can be just a candle or just an icon, but it is labelled “a candle” in any case. The candle is kept for a year in one household, next year it is transferred to another house. Irina Smirnova argues that the cross-cultural comparison of Belarusian candle ritual and similar rites of Finno-Ugric peoples may be a key to the understanding of the essence of these phenomena. The author concludes that “the main ritual object (a candle and a wooden figure with the candles) represents a common ancestor that can influence the well-being... of the family, a good crop harvest and the fertility of domestic animals. Belarusian and Seto traditions have kept the main idea and content of pre-Christian rituals” (p. 227).

Cross-cultural comparison also lies at the basis of Inna Shved’s article “The image of a cuckoo in Tuvan and Belarusian traditional non-fairy tale prose in the light of typological parallels” and Liisi Laineste, Anastasiya Fiadotava and Tõnno Jonuks’s paper “The clergy as a joke target – a comparative study of Estonia and Belarus”. The studies outline the peculiarities of the phenomena in question and delineate their common and diverse features. Inna Shved concludes that “the mythical status of a cuckoo in Belarusian and Tuvan tradition is defined by their ideas about the extraordinary biological features of this bird” (p. 195). Laineste, Fiadotava and Jonuks argue that clergy jokes reflect the issue of social and class relations whereas “neither atheism nor serious stereotypes about clergy were among the main triggers for the jokes” (p. 276). The peculiarity of Belarusian data lies in the reflection of gender aspects of religion while Estonian jokes play with the language barrier between Estonian peasants and foreign clergy.

In her article “Threats of institutionalization of folk art on the State list of historical and cultural heritage of Belarus” Tatsiana Marmysh argues that the inclusion of intangible cultural heritage elements into the State List of Historical and Cultural Values of Belarus does not only contributes to their safeguarding, but can also create certain threats for it. Among these threats the author mentions the construction of national culture model by expanding the list, commodification and commercialization of folk art, decontextualization, the invention of traditions, the competition between different regions, the distorted understanding of the authenticity of folk culture.

Several articles discuss particular genres of Estonian folklore: “Estonian tales about imaginary death. Some historical moments about the formation of tradition” by Eda Kalmre, “Hidden treasures in Estonian folklore” by Mare Kalda and “Colour terms and colour symbols in the subgenres of Estonian riddles” by Piret Voolaid. Eda Kalmre argues that the emergence and development of the topic of imaginary death in Estonian folklore is conditioned by the development of medicine and publishing. Mare Kalda shows that money features in every genre of Estonian folklore, but her paper focuses on legends and tales from the Estonian Folklore Archives. Piret Voolaid conducted a statistical analysis of the mentions of different colours in a riddle corpus. The most popular colours tended to be black, white and red. These

colours are also highly symbolic in Belarusian folklore. Moreover, the author analyses the ways how the colour names contribute to the figurative language of riddles.

The edited volume “Місія выконма-2” introduces its readers to high-level research works in the field of folkloristics and the neighbouring disciplines (ethnology and poetry studies).

#### References

Labacheuskaya, Volga. 2009. Вясковыя могількі: зрубныя надмагіллі (на матэрыялах усходніх раёнаў Віцебскай вобласці і Магілёўскага Падняпроўя Беларусі) [Rural cemeteries: log constructions on the graves (based on the data from the eastern districts of Vitebsk region and Dnieper area of Mogilev region of Belarus)]. In Dzianis Duk, Uladzimir Lobach (eds.) Беларускае Падзвінне: вопыт, метадыка і вынікі палявых даследаванняў (да 80-годдзя пачатку археалагічных раскопак у г. Полацку): зб. навук. прац рэсп. Навук.-практ. семінара, Полацк, 20-21 лістап. 2008 г. [The Dzvinia area of Belarus: the experience, methods and outcomes of fieldwork research (dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the first archeological excavations in Polotsk): edited volume of the national academic seminar, Polotsk, November 20-21, 2008]. Novopolotsk: PDU, pp. 195-204.

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## Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore, volume 82 “Health & Pandemic”

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Volume 82 of the journal Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore is titled “Health & Pandemic” and it offers an operational insight into the role and opportunities of folkloristics and, more generally, the field of the humanities in interpreting and analysing the current exceptional period.

Reet Hiimäe, the guest editor of the special issue, emphasises the multidimensionality of the topic, pointing out that, in addition to physical and mental aspects, health research needs to take into consideration the topic’s social, narrative, religious, belief, and other nuances, and here folkloristic approach with its empirical quantitative and qualitative groundedness can offer significant added value.

All the eight articles of the special issue are quite expectably at least in some sense related to the coronavirus, describing, for example, changes in the religiosity and the emergence of new forms of rituals during the pandemic, but also representations of alternative medicine in the media, new facets of the vaccine hesitancy problematics, characteristic features of health-related conspiracy theories and other narratives, and the rise of emblematic hero and horror figures during the same period. The geographical grasp of the journal issue is remarkably wide – analyses of the situation come from Estonia, Finland, Bulgaria, Netherlands, Udmurtia, Tanzania, and even as a global cross-section of reactions in the social media.

Reet Hiimäe, Mare Kalda, Mare Kõiva and Piret Voolaid analyse vernacular reactions to COVID-19 in Estonia. Angelina Ilieva makes an overview of the (humorous) fandom surrounding the general Ventsislav Mutafchiyski who was in charge of dealing with the pandemic in Bulgaria. Nikolai Anisimov and Galina Glukhova examine the impact of COVID-19 on the traditional culture of the Udmurts. Thomas J. Ndaluka, Magolanga Shagembe, Jonas Kinanda and Vendelin Simon discuss the connection between religion and the fight against COVID-19 in Tanzania. Theo Meder looks at COVID humor and rumor on Dutch social media. Maris Kuperjanov uncovered the earliest social media responses to the COVID-19 outbreak. Reet Hiimäe and Terhi Utriainen compared CAM landscape and boundary-work in Estonian and Finnish mainstream media. Marko Uibu reflected on the ways doctors are portrayed in a vaccine-critical Estonian Facebook group. The issue also offers overviews of a doctoral thesis and an international autumn school, as well as a book review.

Folklore: EJF is a peer reviewed open access academic journal published since 1996 and is available online at <http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol82>.

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## Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore, vol. 81 “History matters”

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Tõnno Jonuks [tonno@folklore.ee](mailto:tonno@folklore.ee)

Volume 81 of Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore is dedicated to the role of history. Its guest editor is Tõnno Jonuks, a leading researcher at the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum.

In the introduction to the journal issue, Tõnno Jonuks draws attention to the fact that history is often referred to in a certain ideological or religious context and is used to legitimize one's own views. "This method is particularly visible in contemporary pagan and spiritual movements, in which history has a crucial position not only in justifications of religious claims but also in searching inspiration for contemporary beliefs and for providing a structural framework for (re)constructing past religions."

The core of this issue originates from a session titled “History matters” at an annual conference of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies (TK-145). The session analysed strategies and rhetoric for using history in contemporary religious ideologies. This issue includes five articles from the panel and three studies from the close area. An article by Kurmo Konsa analyses the alchemical roots of transhumanism, a joint article by Atko Rimmel and Tõnno Jonuks discusses the development of the Estonian forest people concept, and Eda Kalmre's article reflects on the treatment of death in the Estonian tradition. The other focal points include the sacred trees in England and Ireland (article by Ceri Houlbrook), the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster (article by Siarhei A. Anoshka), as well as the role of Jizo statues in Sendai temples in Alīse Eishō Donnere's study and the role of contemporary legends in regional development in Barbara Ivančič Kutin and Monika Kropelj Telban's article.

According to Jonuks, the question of the role of history and the past in religious phenomena is at the heart of all the articles. The authors discuss how the past creates contemporary forms of religion. All the authors have kept the role of the concept of history in different religious or spiritual contexts under careful observation. The articles are followed by an overview of an international conference, and an overview of a thesis defence.

Peer-reviewed scientific journal Folklore: EJF has been published regularly since 1996 and can be read online at: <http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol81>

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## “Mäetagused” journal at the time of lockdown: the special issue on COVID-19 folklore

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Asta Niinemets [asta.niinemets@folklore.ee](mailto:asta.niinemets@folklore.ee)

The authors of the 79th issue of the “Mäetagused” journal discuss the problems of the coronavirus era, coping mechanisms, models of cultural and social communication, as well as folklore based on the data from different European countries.

The focus is on the culture-specific humour and memes, relationships with nature and the climate crisis, sports culture and the revival of archaic protective rituals. The article on Polish intertextual memes featuring the COVID-19 pandemic (by Dorota Brzozowska and Władysław Chłopicki) highlights the local and global sides intertwined in memes, including 1) the importance of culture-specific visual aspects of the characters; 2) intertextual references to film scripts, works of art, etc. and their connection with the COVID-19 pandemic; 3) metatextual elements such as a title or a punchline; and 4) visual and verbal relationships within the meme cycle. The authors make a conclusion that creativity expressed in memes shows the enormous potential of cultural memory for strengthening the community feeling and underscore the role of humour in coping.



Anastasiya Fiadotava discusses the Belarusian COVID-19 humour. The article “Nature is coming back: Dolphins and dinosaurs. About fake news, photoshop-legends and memes during corona quarantine” by Eda Kalmre discusses the impact of the pandemic on utopias and dystopias.

Belarusian folklorists Tatsiana Valodzina and Tatsiana Marmysh analyse the revival of old magic rituals in their article "COVID-19-conditioned folkloristic reactions in Belarus". The revitalization of an ancient ritual is discussed in detail on the example of a procession with a ritual towel and sacrifices in sacred places. Describing the interaction between the pandemic and archaic rituals, the authors conclude that their performance during the crisis was particularly important for the community. The article shows that the humour hidden in the new forms of folklore is also a way to overcome the crisis situations.



Anastasiya Fiadotava and Piret Voolaid analyse the relationship between sports culture and the COVID-19 crisis on the example of fan groups in two countries that are physically hundreds of kilometres apart - Estonia and Belarus - in the article "Constructing fandom at the time of corona crisis: The case studies of Estonian and Belarusian football clubs". Countries had different approaches towards the pandemic and sports events. In Estonia, as in most European countries, all sports competitions and field games were banned between 12 March and 17 May 2020 during the state of emergency, but in Belarus normal sports continued (except in cases where there was a coronavirus outbreak in the sports club). The unique situation in Belarus drew the attention of world football fans to Belarusian football.

The authors of Tallinn Health Care College Kadi Lubi, Eliisa Metsoja, Kaie Eha, Silja Mets-Oja and Lilian Ruuben discuss the reasons why some people do not want to get vaccinated in their article "'Death is the only thing that scares': The construction of meaning about vaccination decision on the example of influenza and coronavirus".

Triinu Ojamaa has examined whether and to what extent the coronavirus crisis has changed Triinu Meres' blogging behaviour in the article "The year of corona in Triinu Meres' blog 'Down with angst'". The results show that the number of posts in the personal blog in question did not increase and the discussions in the commentary did not become more active compared to previous years. Likewise, the global coronavirus crisis did not become the dominant topic of the blog.

The only paper that leaves the COVID-19 topic aside is "An imprint on Estonian folkloristics: Elmar Daniel Päss 120" by Tiiu Jaago and Mare Kõiva.

The journal provides an overview of the past conferences and the published literature and dissertations. Each article is accompanied by an English summary.

The peer-reviewed scientific journal "Mäetagused" has been published regularly since 1996 and is available online at <http://www.folklore.ee/tagused/nr79>.

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Alevtina Solovyeva, the receiver of BNN student paper prize, defended her PhD dissertation “Reawakening Spirits in Post-Socialist Mongolia: Vernacular Theories and Practices” on May, 7<sup>th</sup>.

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Mongolia, the “Land of the Eternal Blue Sky and Golden Earth”, is a special area of Inner Asia. It is also the name of a nation-state officially representing the distinctive culture of Mongols, descendants of those who in medieval times were famous as invincible nomadic conquerors, holders of the great Mongolian Empire founded by Genghis Khan and regarded as the largest



contiguous state formation between Asia and Europe. Mongolian culture has ties to multiple cultural traditions including the ancient Iranian, Uyghur, Turkic, Tibetan and Central Asian cultures. Mongolia has not been as visible on the world stage over the last few centuries, and most people (at least, most western non-scholars) only began to rediscover it recently and in a new perspective: this time as a hidden land of freedom, wild nature, living traditions and flourishing spirituality. Indeed, nowadays Mongolia represents a peculiar culture, combining very different features and facing contemporary challenges. It is a culture that is sandwiched between Russia and China and must move in a complex web of geopolitical interests, maintaining a position between the eastern and western worlds, undergoing the processes of globalization and a rapid urbanization, while still attempting to preserve traditional values and lifestyle and remaining close to its pastoralist heritage. Between now and then, there has been a long road of great and dramatic events influencing Mongolian culture both gradually and harshly. The most significant and cruel of the recent ones was the experience of socialism which lasted for more than seventy years (1924–1991). Hence, nowadays Mongolia presents an example of handling, conceptualizing and overcoming this arduous experience, which has more general importance for understanding ‘Soviet-type societies’ in a number of such countries with a similar past. Significant roles in the ‘national revival’ and post-socialist Mongolian society were played by various categories of the supernatural and religious – the atheistic regime’s enemies and victims, suppressed and condemned for dozens of years to a hidden, ‘whispering’ form of existence. In the early 1990’s, the supernatural burst back into Mongolian culture, clearly demonstrating its superior vitality and taking its revenge on the ruined atheistic ideology. Traditional images and motifs of the supernatural occupied various realms and contexts, revealing their important social character: the spirit of Genghis Khan, the main patron of the nation, supernatural lords of the state worshiped mountains, local nature spirits, the lord of the fire, hearth, various demons, ghosts and restless souls, etc. They became symbols of the national revival and the new state ideology, expressions of collective memories

and social relations, as well as of the sorrows of private life, the hopes and fears of post-socialist reconstruction and the present time, demanding (and receiving) the attention of an increasing number of specialists in ritual concerns. The Mongolian example of national and religious revivals has a number of peculiar features. One of these is that while the supernatural figures are the most active mouthpieces of independence and nationalism, the creators of post-socialist spiritual and public environment, they are not from 'high' pantheons or epic traditions as often would be the case when constructing national identities. On the contrary, Mongolian representatives of the supernatural belong to realm of vernacular beliefs very close to everyday life. This work tries to follow the clues and to reveal the grounds for vitality of some supernatural and religious concepts in contemporary Mongolia.

Her dissertation is accessible from the digital repository of UT

<http://hdl.handle.net/10062/71766>

Please see Alevtina's CV and list of publications from Estonian Research Information System

[https://www.etis.ee/CV/Alevtina\\_Solovyeva\\_001/est?tabId=CV\\_ENG](https://www.etis.ee/CV/Alevtina_Solovyeva_001/est?tabId=CV_ENG)

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## CFP: 80th annual conference of Western States Folklore Association

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Tok Thompson [tokthompson@gmail.com](mailto:tokthompson@gmail.com)

Western States Folklore Association (WSFS) is hosting its 80th annual conference from April 7-9, 2022, at University of Southern California, in Los Angeles, California.

Presentations on any aspect of folklore are welcomed, although a special theme will be announced shortly. WSFS holds its meetings in the western states of the US, but its membership and purview are both global. WSFS publishes *Western Folklore*, a highly-rated folklore journal. <http://www.westernfolklore.org>

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CFP: Annual conference of the Centre for Excellence in Estonian Studies. Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity in Language and Culture. May 12-13, 2022, Tartu, Estonian Literary Museum and University of Tartu.

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Anne Ostrak [anne.ostrak@folklore.ee](mailto:anne.ostrak@folklore.ee)

Subjectivity and intersubjectivity are at the core of any interaction and creative work. Subjectivity refers to the fact that speakers and writers, authors and presenters do not only convey content, but also express themselves, weaving attitudes, assessments and emotions into their texts and works. Intersubjectivity refers to relations with the discourse partner(s) woven into the text or work: the listener, reader, audience, co-presenter, another character in the work, or another work. Thus, these phenomena can be found in different spheres of activity of the Centre for Excellence in Estonian Studies. We invite discussion about what is common and what is distinctive in (inter)subjectivity in language, literature, folk culture, music, philosophy, and computer interaction, as well as what connections can be identified between different types of (inter)subjectivity. Proposals for workshops are welcomed.

We await papers addressing different aspects of (inter)subjectivity, such as:

- (means of) expression of modality, deicticity, expressiveness, and emotionality
- entrenchment of (inter)subjectivity in grammar
- discourse actions and their means of expression in language and creative work
- (inter)subjectivity in computer interaction
- corpus studies of (inter)subjectivity
- politeness and impoliteness
- truth-telling and lying
- authentic, imitated and altered (inter)subjectivity
- (inter)subjectivity in different genres, text types, and registers
- (inter)subjectivity in beliefs and mythology
- performance as collaboration

Please send your proposal for workshop via email to [anne.ostrak@folklore.ee](mailto:anne.ostrak@folklore.ee)

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

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## Unraveling Tales: Exploring Intersections between Folkloristics and Literature: 8<sup>th</sup> July to 28<sup>th</sup> August 2021 – Series of lectures in Zoom

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Kikee Doma Bhutia [keylabhutia@gmail.com](mailto:keylabhutia@gmail.com)  
[laftalk.smcut@gmail.com](mailto:laftalk.smcut@gmail.com)

Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, Estonia & Department of English, Stella Maris College (Autonomous), Chennai, India Presents series of lectures of the intersections between folkloristics and literature.

Zoom Link: <https://ut-ee.zoom.us/join/94567617271>

Meeting Passcode: 945 6761 7271  
Password: Folklore21

8th July 2021 – **Padma V Mckertich** Different Tunes, Same Songs – Bhakti Tropes in Popular Hindi Film Music

15th July 2021 – **D. Nazneen Marshall** The twist in the Tale: The Portrayal of Folktales in Indian Picture books for Children

22nd July 2021 – **Alina Oprelianska** Make Ukraine Great Again: Gogol's Vij, St, Cassian, and Ukrainian Beliefs

29th July 2021 – **Sadhana Naithani** Justice in an Unjust World: Herman Hesse's Fairy Tales

5th August 2021 – **P. Mary Vidya Porselvi** Earth as Akam: An Ecofemiotic Study of Folk-Lit Contours

12th August 2021 – **Merili Metsvahi** Pre-modern Estonian Peasant's Relationship with the Lakes and Rivers

19th August 2021 – **Mark Bender** Translating the Nuosu Book of Origins: A Cosmographic Approach

26th August 2021 – **Frank Korom** Medieval Bengali Literature and the Study of Folklore

For more info: Kikee Doma Bhutia: Junior Research Fellow (University of Tartu) & Nimeshika Venkatesan, Research Scholar (Stella Maris College, Chennai, India)

Download the poster:  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UzytVnhVdvfjfbEv1LQbxBMmi7BJG\\_vO/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UzytVnhVdvfjfbEv1LQbxBMmi7BJG_vO/view?usp=sharing)

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU  
Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore,  
University of Tartu, Estonia  
&  
Department of English,  
Stella Maris College (Autonomous), Chennai, India.  
Presents  
**Unraveling Tales:**  
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Different Tunes, Same Songs – Bhakti Tropes in Popular Hindi Film Music

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**26th August 2021 – Frank Korom**  
Medieval Bengali Literature and the Study of Folklore

8th July to 26th August 2021

LECTURE SERIES ON ZOOM

For further info:  
Kikee Doma Bhutia, Junior Research Fellow (University of Tartu, Estonia) &  
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Vocation, Mission, Profession. Vernacular Experts in the Context of Alternative Spirituality in Europe. An international online conference at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana 14 May 2021

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Mirjam Mencej

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The conference was organized by Mirjam Mencej and Judit Kis-Halas

The programme

Welcome addresses by Jaka Repič, head of Dept. Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Judit Kis-Halas on behalf of the organisers

**Bužeková, Tatiana** (Slovakia) Shamanic gift in the global village: Spiritual energy and biomedicine

**Aleknaite, Egle** (Lithuania) Healing self or others: Understanding a shamanic mission in contemporary Lithuanian shamanic milieu

**Hiiemäe, Reet** (Estonia) Sweatlodges, spirit animals, dream-catchers: appropriations of Native American spiritual concepts in Estonia

**Radulović, Nemanja** (Serbia) Magic roots of Serbian New Age: Ž. M. Slavinski

**Račič, Manca** (Slovenia) “The guardian of the most astonishing secrets”: Life and work of Pavel Medvešček-Klančar

**Jiga-Iliescu, Laura** (Romania) Sleeping and meditating at a healing stone cross: A case study from the Danube shore

**Kõiva, Mare** (Estonia) Mixing tradition, esoteric views and personal experiences

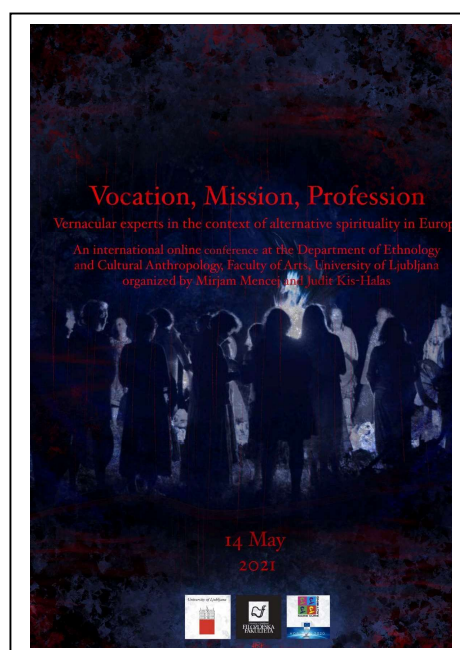
**Teissenhoffer, Viola** (Czechia) Becoming a “spiritual teacher”: Crafting cosmologies and rituals in contemporary pagan revival in Hungary

**Kis-Halas, Judit** (Slovenia) Female leadership, healing powers and charismatic authority in Hungarian neopagan subcultures  
Students’ presentations

**Krašovic, Tina** (Slovenia) “Now I recognize it had all been a manipulation” The stories of those who left the Healthy Atmosphere, a spiritual school of morality: A case study from Domžale and Celje, (Slovenia)

**Sosič, Katarina** (Slovenia) Crystals and their power between social media, entrepreneurship and personal growth: A case study of a spiritual entrepreneur

**Zlatovič, Nataša** (Slovenia) Epistemological approach to unity of body, soul and mind in



modern shamanic healing practices: A case study

[Please read the full abstracts of the conference!](#)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FexnEdDttcgxsaOfvFnK2npVgaFB11xB/view?usp=sharing>

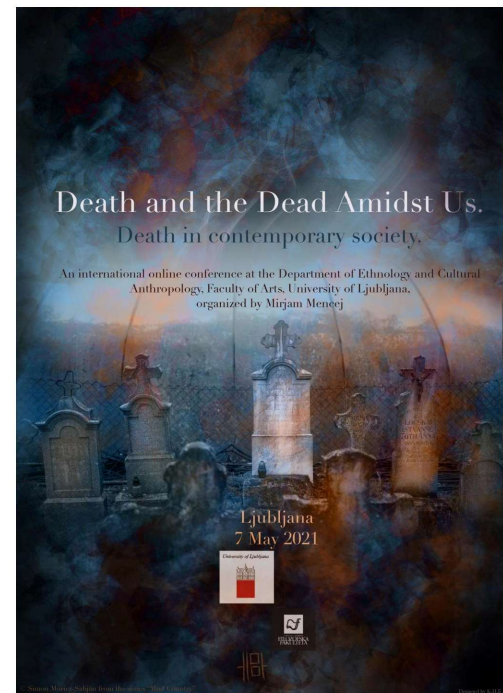
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Death and the Dead amidst Us. Death in Contemporary Society. Conference at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, on Friday, 7 May 2021.

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#### Programme

- Welcome addresses: **Jaka Repič**, head of Department, **Mirjam Mencej**, organiser
- **Hesz, Ágnes** (Hungary) Imagining the afterlife: knowledge construction about the dead and the afterworld in a Transylvanian village community
- **Koski, Kaarina** (Finland) Deceased relatives in nightmares
- **Mencej, Mirjam** (Slovenia) Ghost stories in post-war Srebrenica
- **Hudales, Jože** (Slovenia) Attitude of the local population to »their difficult heritage«: The case of mass grave of victims killed in June 1945 in an abandoned coal-mine shaft in Huda jama – Slovenia
- **Repič, Jaka** (Slovenia) Narratives of violence, death and mass graves as a persisting foundation of Slovenian diasporic identity
- **Hameršak, Marijana** (Croatia) and **Uršula Lipovec Čebren** (Slovenia) Researching border deaths in Croatia and Slovenia
- **Belaj, Marijana** (Croatia) Heroic death in religiosity and social cohesion
- **Jiga Iliescu, Laura** (Rumania) The holly grave as a multireligious shared site
- **Kis-Halas, Judit** (Slovenia) Angelic Presence in the Cemeteries? Transnational Angel Cult and the Material Culture of Commemoration
- **Risteski, Ljupčo S.** (North Macedonia) Death and laughter. Meanings and interpretations in tradition and in modernity. Examples from Macedonia
- **Rupnik, Nika** (Slovenia) Haunted houses. The Case of Rogaška Slatina
- **Dečko, Nina** (Slovenia) Contemporary channels of communication with ghosts



- **Kropivnik, Luka** (Slovenia) Communicating with the dead: case studies of various Slovenian mediums and individual experiences
- **Anclin, Lea** (Slovenia) Saying goodbye to our dogs: Funeral practices

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## 10th International Conference of Young Folklorists "Lore Makers, Law Breakers: Tradition, Change, and People" in (virtual) Tartu, May 19-21, 2021

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[Kristel.kivari@ut.ee](mailto:Kristel.kivari@ut.ee)

After several postponings, the conference took place online. Despite of lacking vibrant social part, so characteristic to the tradition of this conference, the event could be considered as successful. 2 plenary lectures, 3 parallel sessions with 67 presentations were held, many of which dealing with belief narratives. The presenters were not only from the Baltic states and Nordic countries, but also from Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, India, Island, Pakistan, Russia, Spain, and Ukraine.

In her plenary lecture, Mirjam Mencej spoke about the various social uses of belief narratives which she concluded „Usually, drawing upon belief narratives is not a calculated, manipulative act but rather a strategy based on the habitus.“

In another plenary talk, Elliott Oring analysed the concept of tradition delineating various ways how the term is used in the history of folklore research.



Next year the conference will be organised by young folklorists from Finland, expanding the circle of organisers, which could be considered a strong continuation of this tradition.

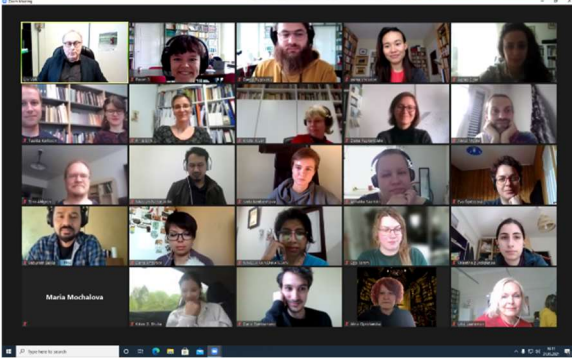
Please browse the book of abstracts

[https://www.flku.ut.ee/sites/default/files/fl/abstracts\\_2021\\_yofo.pdf](https://www.flku.ut.ee/sites/default/files/fl/abstracts_2021_yofo.pdf)

You can see the recordings of the plenary lectures from the UTTV

<https://www.uttv.ee/otsing?keel=eng#teema=233>





*photos: Anastasiya Fiadotava and Kristel Kivari*