

University of Tartu

Conference

International Folkloristics

IN HONOREM ÜLO VALK

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ABSTRACTS

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Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore
Institute of Cultural Research
University of Tartu
Ülikooli 16
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23.09.2022

Ülikooli 16-212, Tartu

- 14:00** Avasõnad / Opening words
- 14:15** Regina Bendix The Devil at Sixty?
Lina Būgienė Lithuanian Folklore:
 A National Discipline in an International Context or Vice Versa?
Dace Bula Interpreting Metaphors of Folklore
- 15:15** paus / break
- 15:30** Pertti Anttonen How Folkloristics Is and Is Not International in Finland
Camilla Asplund 'Climate Change Is the Biggest Lie in the World':
Ingemark Nordic Climate Change Sceptics as Part of a Global Movement
Lotte Tarkka National and Transnational Folklore
 – The Kalevala, Cultural Appropriation and Identity Politics
- 16:30** Kokkuvõte / Conclusion

Konverentsi on võimalik jälgida ka Zoomis / Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 994 2007 2180;
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Lisainfo /more information: Liilia Laaneman-Nekoliak, + 372 737 53 04, liilia.laaneman@ut.ee

Pertti Anttonen

University of Eastern Finland

HOW FOLKLORISTICS IS AND IS NOT INTERNATIONAL IN FINLAND

How do we measure internationality in a scholarly field? These are some of the easily quantifiable aspects: 1) Local visibility of international networks and organizations in research and publishing, including the organizing of international conferences, seminars, summer schools, and researcher visits; 2) Participation in international debates on theory and methodology; 3) International comparisons of research objects and materials; 4) Adoption of international theories and methods to discuss local and national materials and phenomena; 5) Access to / popularity of studying and/or graduating abroad; 6) Attracting international students, supervisors, and dissertation opponents; 7) Doing fieldwork abroad; 8) Publishing one's dissertation in a foreign language; 9) The use of foreign or international textbooks in curriculum; 10) The use of transnationalism as an analytical perspective.

Relevant information can be obtained by using a quantitative approach, but a qualitative approach may provide a more accurate narrative. This includes the following aspects: 1) The presence and influence of nationalism and patriotism in international activities, including a sense of competition in contact networks and comparative research; 2) Individual experiences of power relations within "a national team", concerning, for example, the "ownership" of preferred international contacts; 3) Ideological selectivity in the adoption and/or distribution of international theories and methods; 4) Domestication and colonization of research objects and archived materials from across political boundaries.

I will discuss these issues in my presentation from a personal perspective.

Camilla Asplund Ingemark

Uppsala University, Gotland

"CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE BIGGEST LIE IN THE WORLD": NORDIC CLIMATE CHANGE SCEPTICS AS PART OF A GLOBAL MOVEMENT

In my presentation, I will address the chosen theme of what makes folkloristics international by examining the international character of climate change skepticism on the one hand, as well as the likewise international methods we can use in approaching this topic as folklorists, on the other. I am suggesting that the tenets of climate change skepticism function in a manner similar to folklore, as they constitute an international repertoire of malleable arguments or beliefs that climate change sceptics draw on when they debate climate change with others.

While what these sceptics say chimes well with the results of prior research in political science, media studies, sociology and other fields, how they say it is something that is more seldom scrutinized. This is where folklorists can make significant contributions to understanding climate change skepticism, by applying the tools of narrative analysis to their statements. Then some interesting patterns emerge, which will be the focus of this presentation.

Regina Bendix

University of Göttingen

THE DEVIL AT SIXTY?

Mere mortals in late modernity have the habit of marking birthdays and celebrating important biographical steps in more or less elaborate festivities. To what extent can the same be said of mythological figures? Expanding on Ülo Valk's extensive work on "the black gentleman", and drawing on present-day popular series, this paper explores the extent to which a figure representing evil has been imagined biographically. How ageless is the devil, how contemporary his minions? Are their traces of devilish rites of passage and markers of age in how demons and devils are drawn?

Lina Būgienė

Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Vilnius

LITHUANIAN FOLKLORE: A NATIONAL DISCIPLINE IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OR VICE VERSA?

Folklore in general is a discipline with heightened levels of self-awareness, self-reflection and self-criticism. Its relationship with national vs international issues is one of the targets of such critique. Having appeared as part of nationalism (which in itself was very international, following similar patterns in various countries), folklore has debated its "nationalistic" nature ever since. In Lithuania, like essentially in any other country of Eastern and Central Europe, folklore was for over a century regarded as part of the national agenda. Its role in the national liberation movement, taking place at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries, or during formation of the interwar Lithuanian Republic is described in great detail. However, under the subsequent Soviet regime, the national engagement of folklore became more problematic: even the term "tautinis" (national) was replaced with "liaudies" (folk) in the official discourse on popular creativity. The latest rise of folklore as means for introducing the national agenda took place during Sąjūdis and the "singing revolution", which, incidentally, was essentially similar in all the three Baltic countries, and therefore can be regarded as an international phenomenon!

Comparative research also does little to help highlighting some purely national aspects of the folklore material. The motif indices and catalogues for tales, beliefs and ballads testify to a great measure of "transnationality" in these compositions. Moreover, international cooperation of folklorists results in exchange of the research trends and methods, which in turn become similar in every country. So far, the only indisputably national side of folklore seemed to be entrenched in the language; however, the spread of the social media and growing popularity of the Internet folklore has set out to undermine even that. Currently, jokes, rumors, memes and other pieces of modern popular creativity spread across the national boundaries either in quick amateur translations or even regardless of the language. Today, I would be hard put to point out any purely national features of the contemporary Lithuanian folklore (or folkloristics). Therefore, it seems that folklore, as human culture in general, increasingly turns out to be a global phenomenon, while folkloristics, rather than being a national discipline, may be justly considered an international one with certain national applications.

Dace Bula

Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia

INTERPRETING METAPHORS OF FOLKLORE

The paper addresses international efforts of analysing the metaphors used to denote folklore. Its primary focus lies on the range of tropes rooted in nature or the relationships between human beings and environment, such as biological metaphors (Hafstein 2001), agricultural metaphors (Valk 2004), and organic metaphors (Handler, Linnekin 1984). These metaphors have been widespread in both academic and popular discourse since the inception of folkloristic pursuit and their interpretation has changed along the dominant thought patterns. Recent environmental turn of the humanities and social sciences provides a new impetus and novel intellectual context for reconsidering the metaphors we think by.

Lotte Tarkka

University of Helsinki

THE KALEVALA, CULTURAL APPROPRIATION AND IDENTITY POLITICS

Folklore, as a discipline and as an object of study is entangled in national attributions. Simultaneously folklore itself is locally and socially rooted in interaction that defies national claims of ownership; lastly, folklore is also transnational in its manifestations. In the context of post-national discourses and identity politics many groups are questioning the legitimacy of national attributions of specific traditions. This is the case of the runosong, or poetry in the Kalevala-meter. Karelian young activists are reclaiming ownership of this tradition and argue that Finnish national culture is based on appropriating Karelian folklore and that its status as Finnish cultural heritage should be cancelled. The paper examines the rhetorics of present-day Karelian activism through the concepts of the transnational, postnational and national.

