

BNN Newsletter II 2017.

Dear members of Belief Narrative Network,

Here comes the second issue of monthly newsletter. Thank you all, who sent their information! As you will find from this issue, many wonderful books have been published with the contribution of members of the network. as well as many events and venues are calling for the participation. The newsletters will be placed regularly on the ISFNR/BNN website. For the further circulation of information, please keep this newsletter in mind and send me short notes about your activities.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

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

2. Current publications published by the BNN members

2.1 Ingman, Peik; Terhi Utriainen; Tuija Hovi; Måns Broo (eds.) 2016 *The Relational Dynamics of Enchantment and Sacralisation. Changing the Terms of Religion Versus Secularity Debate*. Sheffield: Equinox

Information about the book:

This volume revisits the concepts of enchantment and sacralization in light of perspectives that challenge the modern notion that man alone is the measure of all things. As Bruno Latour has argued, the battle against superstition entailed shifting power away from God/the gods to humans, thereby disqualifying the agency of all the other objects in the world. Might enchantment and sacralization be understood in other ways than through this battle between almighty gods and almighty humans? Might enchantment be understood to involve processes where power and control are not distributed so clearly and definitely? Like social constructionists, Latour emphasizes that things are constructed; yet, like many other new materialists, such as Jane Bennett, Manuel De Landa and Karen Barad, he emphasizes that this construction is not the result of projecting meaning onto a passive and meaningless world, but a matter of compositional achievements, whereby assemblages of actants co-compose each other and frame, enable and delimit one another's agency. This move recognizes the active and entangled participation of players beyond the humans versus God(s) framework that informed the modernist project. Understanding enchantment and sacralisation as compositionally and relationally constructed does not mean the same as understanding them as constructed by humans alone. What it means is one of the main questions posed in this book. In other words, if enchantment and sacralization are not understood (solely) in terms of projecting anthropocentric meaning onto mute objects, what are some promising alternative approaches — old and new — and what are their implications for how we understand modernity and for method and theory in the study of religion?

<https://www.equinoxpub.com/home/the-relational-dynamics-of-disenchantment-and-sacralization/>

Flyer of the book, see Attachment 1.

(Contributed by Tuija Hovi)

2.2. Willem de Blécourt, 2017. Witches on Screen in: Owen Davies (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of Witchcraft and Magic*. Oxford University Press

Information about the book:

This richly illustrated history provides a readable and fresh approach to the extensive and complex story of witchcraft and magic. Telling the story from the dawn of writing in the ancient world to the globally successful *Harry Potter* films, the authors explore a wide range of magical beliefs and practices, the rise of the witch trials, and the depiction of the Devil-worshipping witch. The book also focuses on the more recent history of witchcraft and magic, from the Enlightenment to the present, exploring the rise of modern magic, the anthropology of magic

around the globe, and finally the cinematic portrayal of witches and magicians, from *The Wizard of Oz* to *Charmed* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-oxford-illustrated-history-of-witchcraft-and-magic-9780199608447?cc=ee&lang=en&#>

Information about the book and list of contents can be found from the Attachment II

2.3 Willem de Blécourt, 2017 The Laughing Witch: Notes on the Relationship Between Literature and History in the Early Fifteenth Century. In: Louise Nyholm Kallestrup & Raisa Maria Toivo (eds), *Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe Heresy, Magic and Witchcraft*. Palgrave: Macmillan

Information about the book:

This book breaks with three common scholarly barriers of periodization, discipline and geography in its exploration of the related themes of heresy, magic and witchcraft. It sets aside constructed chronological boundaries, and in doing so aims to achieve a clearer picture of what 'went before', as well as what 'came after'. Thus the volume demonstrates continuity as well as change in the concepts and understandings of magic, heresy and witchcraft. In addition, the geographical pattern of similarities and diversities suggests a comparative approach, transcending confessional as well as national borders. Throughout the medieval and early modern period, the orthodoxy of the Christian Church was continuously contested. The challenge of heterodoxy, especially as expressed in various kinds of heresy, magic and witchcraft, was constantly present during the period 1200-1650. Neither contestants nor followers of orthodoxy were homogeneous groups or fractions. They themselves and their ideas changed from one century to the next, from region to region, even from city to city, but within a common framework of interpretation. This collection of essays focuses on this complex.

<https://www.palgrave.com/de/book/9783319323848>

Information about the book, see Attachment III

(contributed by Willem de Blécourt)

3. Other relevant publications

4. Calls for papers

4.1. Call for Papers for the 11th Annual Conference of the International Association for Comparative Mythology “**Creatures of the Night: Mythologies of the Otherworld and Its Denizens**”, which will be held on **June 8-10, 2017** at **University of Edinburgh, Scotland**, United Kingdom. By **March 15, 2017**, please send, if you intend to participate, a short (300 words or less) abstract of your talk to this address: iacm.admin@gmail.com

For more information, please see Attachment IV.

(Contribution by Louise Milne)

4.2 Call for papers for International Conference "**Slavic Worlds of Imagination**" **Cracow, Poland, September 25-26, 2017**. Please send the abstracts by **May 1, 2017** to this e-mail

address: slavic.worlds.imagination@gmail.com The conference is organized by Children's and Youth Literature Research Centre, Faculty of Polish Studies, Jagiellonian University, Institute of Slavic Studies, Faculty of Philology, Jagiellonian University.

The CFP can be found from Attachment V.

4.3. Call for articles. The Editorial board of **Folkloristika, the Journal of the Serbian Folklore Association**, invites contributors to submit original scientific papers, and unpublished field material concerning the topic of *Water Bulls and Water Cows in Oral Traditions of the World*. The Issue editor is Djordjina Trubarac Matić.

Besides this call, the journal invites contribution from different themes of folklore study.

See Attachments VI and VII.

(Contribution by Sonja Petrovic)

5. News on future events and conferences

5.1. A conference on *Deities, Spirits and Demons in Vernacular Beliefs and Rituals in Asia*:

Tartu, Estonia, November 9-10, 2017:

<http://www.ut.ee/folk/index.php/en/events/524-cfp-conference-spirits-and-demons-nov-2017>

[contributed by Ülo Valk]

6. News on past events and conferences

6.1 The conference “Grimm Ripples”, December 2.-3. 2016, Amsterdam

On Wednesday-Friday, 2nd and 3rd December 2016, an international workshop was held at the University of Amsterdam entitled “Grimm Ripples in the North 1816-1900: The Influence of *Deutsche Sagen* on the Collection and Publication of Folk Legends in Northern Europe and their Role in the Development of Northern Romantic Nationalism”. Organised by Terry Gunnell of the Department of Folkloristics and Museum Studies at the University of Iceland (with the assistance of Simon Halink), and financed and housed by S.P.I.N. (The Study Platform on Interlocking Nationalisms: <http://spinnet.humanities.uva.nl/>, run by Prof. Joep Leersen), the workshop aimed to examine the powerful cultural influence exerted on northern Europe by the Grimms brothers’ *Deutsche Sagen*. Indeed, this key work which appeared in two volumes in 1816-1818, probably had more influence on the collection of folklore and the development of the field of Folkloristics than their earlier *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. It seems to have started off a tsunami of folklore collection (the focus being on legends and beliefs rather than wonder tales) which over the next fifty years swept through the Nordic countries, bringing about in each country new cultural networks of national romantic artists, playwrights, composers, authors, and poets who drew on the motifs in these collections. These figures and the collectors also often worked closely with politicians, historians and philologists. All were closely engaged in creating new forms of national culture and national image. The workshop involved a range of

presentations relating to the new folklorists, their works, their aims, their networks (both local and international), the ways in which they saw the work they were collecting, and their anxieties about how it should be presented for posterity. A focus was placed on the letters they wrote and the introductions they composed for their collections, explaining how they should be read and understood.

Following an opening lecture by Joep Leersen (who also introduced the S.P.I.N. project and its new on-line *Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe*: <http://romanticnationalism.net/>), papers were presented by Timothy Tangherlini (UCLA, on the work of Thiele in Denmark); Herleik Baklid (University College of South East Norway, on Faye in Norway); Ane Ohrvik and Line Eseborg (University of Oslo, on Asbjørnsen and Moe in Norway); Terry Gunnell (with notes from John Lindow and Fredrik Skott, on the work of Hyltén Cavallius and George Stephens in Sweden); John Shaw (University of Edinburgh, on John Francis Campbell in Scotland); Elís Ní Dhuibhne Almqvist (**University of Dublin, on Crofton Croker in Ireland**); Jonathan Roper (University of Tartu, on the early collectors in England); Kim Simonsen (University of Amsterdam on Hammarshaimb, in the Faroe Islands); Terry Gunnell again (on Jón Árnason in Iceland); Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir (University of Iceland, on the role of Konrad Maurer in Icelandic collection); Liina Lukas (University of Tartu on the collection of Estonian legends); and Pertti Antonen (University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu Campus, on the situation in Finland with regard to the collection of folk legends). Final comments were made by Tom Shippey (previously University of Leeds, and Saint Louis University College); Joep Leerssen and Simon Halink (University of Groningen). Of particular interest was the way the papers illustrated a gradual development in the nationalistic role legends were seen as playing over time, and also the ways in which material was collected and presented.

The aim is for this highly fruitful workshop to be followed up by a collection of articles based on the papers presented, and various other digital projects.

For further information, contact Terry Gunnell at terry@hi.is.

(Contribution by Terry Gunnell)

6.2. The conference “Verbal Art: An Ethnography of Speaking Strategies” February, 23.-24., 2017 NEHU, Shillong.

The Department of Cultural and Creative Studies of the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, recently hosted a two-day National Conference on “Verbal Art: An Ethnography of Speaking Strategies”, which was attended by Prof. John Zemke, the present Editor of *Oral Tradition*, and director at the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition and the Center for eResearch at the University of Missouri, and Prof. Mehri Bagheri, Vice-President (Asia) of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research, and Faculty of Letters, Department of Culture, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.

The Keynote Address was delivered by Prof. Birendranath Datta, prominent Indian academician and folklorist, and recipient of the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India, in the "Literature and Education" field. The occasion was also marked by the release of *Folklore Imprints in North East India*, a new book by Prof. Desmond L. Kharmawphlang. The Plenary Session was devoted to a talk on “*Vak* and Verbal Art”, by Prof. Makarand Paranjape, Indian poet and Professor at the Centre for English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

As part of the Conference, a total of 9 (nine) Technical Sessions were held over two days and the themes explored over the course of these sessions included “Verbalization and Performance”, “Ethnopaleography and Narrative Construction”, “Gender and Narratology”, “Vernacular Poetics” and “Tradition-oriented Communication”. The deliberations also involved Prof. S. Simon John (Director, Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, Itanagar), Dr. Barbara S. Sangma (Head, Department of English, Don Bosco College, Tura), Prof. Margaret L. Pachuau (Head, Department of English, Mizoram University, Aizawl), Dr. Zothanchhingi Khiangte, Head, Department of English, Bodoland University, Debargaon. Also in attendance were scholars from different parts of India who brought with them their insightful and challenging perspectives gleaned from a extensive and wide-ranging work in the field of Verbal Art.

Apart from the wide array of academic papers on the myriad facets of the vibrant central theme of the Conference, and in keeping with part of an endeavour to make the two-day National Conference a true celebration of Verbal Art, space was given for Participants and members of the host University to take part in the Cultural Programme, Readings and Performances that were held in the evenings, after the technical sessions. Performances included a thought-provoking and genre-bending piece of performance art by the Space Theatre Ensemble from Goa, readings by eminent poets including Makarand Paranjape and Desmond Kharmawphlang, and Manas Ranjan Mahapatra, as well as a wide variety of musical performances, both vocal and instrumental, incorporating styles and themes ranging from the classical, folk to the popular and contemporary.

(Report prepared by: Mr. Banphira B. Wahlang, Research Scholar, Department of Cultural and Creative Studies of the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, and Conference Assistant, contribution by Desmond W. Karmawphlang)

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

10. 1 Masters in Folkloristics and Applied Heritage Studies at the University of Tartu, Estonia.

Applications are due on March 15, 2017.

Information about the programme can be found at:
<http://www.flku.ut.ee/en>; folkandheritage@ut.ee

11. Notes and Queries

11.1 *Questions*

11.2. *Replies*