

Folk Narrative Studies Today

Symposium at the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research

Seminarraum im Historischen Gebäude der Niedersächsischen Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Papendiek 14, 37073 Göttingen

25.-26. Juni 2012

Montag, 25. Juni 2012, 13.00-13.30

Begrüßung/Welcome

Montag, 25. Juni 2012, 13.00-13.45

“Old Words, New Words, Key Words: Coming to Terms with Fairy-Tale Scholarship in the Twenty-First Century”

Donald Haase (Wayne State University, Detroit)

Taking its cue from Raymond Williams’s concept of “keywords,” this paper examines basic terms and concepts central to fairy-tale scholarship. In addition to focusing on selected terms and terminological complexes that have influenced folktale and fairy-tale scholarship in the course of the last 200 years, the paper also considers new terms and new foci that have emerged in light of recent trends in the production and reception of fairy tales. The critical examination of historically dominant terms reveals not only the fundamental assumptions and ideological bases informing approaches to the fairy tale but also, in some cases, their associated metaphors, which have a remarkable endurance and may have problematic implications of their own. The embattled and often beleaguered concept of fairy-tale “origins,” for example, is closely associated with natural, organic, and biological metaphors that have endured—or been replaced by competing “archeological” imagery—despite changes in the scholarly view of the genre’s history. Other terms (or dichotomous pairs of terms) and terminological complexes deserving reexamination could include oral/written, universality, anti-fairy tale, to name just a few. The critical examination of such terms, associated

concepts, and metaphors, along with recent developments in the production and reception of fairy tales, also leads us (not “naturally” but logically) to question the degree to which such terms are still viable or useful, and whether new terms describing new phenomena are not more important in coming to terms with the relentless and still emerging history of the fairy tale in the digital era.

Montag, 25. Juni 2012, 14.15-15.00

“Folk narrative research in contemporary contexts: Some aspects of inherent mutability”

Marilena Papachristophorou (University of Ioannina, Greece)

Shifting the constitutional aims of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research, from a main initial goal “to develop scholarly work in the field of folk narrative research” (1962) into “covering all aspects of narrative as representing the pivotal category of human communication” (2012) summarizes already deep changes in the perception of a field which is visited by a growing number of disciplines and professions. Several issues automatically emerge from this constitutional change: who may be considered as “folk” nowadays and what are these “all aspects of narrative” - once again? Is “storytelling” a valid synonym? How taxonomy borders can be affected by updated definitions? What can be considered nowadays as “field” for folk narrative research? And, who are its “specialists”?

This paper aims to explore the development of generic and performative aspects of, mainly oral, narratives in contemporary social contexts as they pass on from the so called traditional societies to the new World Wide Web global community.

Montag, 25. Juni 2012, 15.00-15.30

Pause/Coffee Break

Montag, 25. Juni 2012, 15.30-16.15

21st-century Fairy Tales and the Mixing of Genre Systems: Some Problems of Translation

Cristina Bacchilega (University of Hawai'i, Honolulu)

Taking the intertextual and geopolitical fairy-tale web as its methodological field, my current project is to put in relief the widely divergent yet interwoven social projects that fairy-tale adaptations circulating in early twenty-first century globalized popular culture envision. Today's fairy-tale transformations activate multiple and different intertextual and generic links that both expand and decenter the genre as narrowly fixed in (20th-century) pre-1980s popular cultural memory. It is evident that genre mixing is an increasingly popular strategy in the 21st-century fairy-tale web, and I take this as an invitation to reexamine the relationship of the fairy tale with other genres, including the folktale. In this paper, I plan to focus on how fairy-tale productions that mix not just genres, but genre systems—across disciplines, media, and cultural traditions—pose translation challenges and promises.

Montag, 25. Juni 2012, 16.15-18.30

Die Amerikanisierung der Grimmschen Märchen

Jack Zipes

Das amerikanische Publikum sieht die Grimmschen Märchen (wie wohl die meisten Menschen weltweit) in ihren unterschiedlichen Formen – als Bücher oder Filme, Theateraufführungen oder Elemente der Popularkultur – als ‚amerikanisch‘ an. Nachdem sie zuerst von britischen Schriftstellern übersetzt und adaptiert worden waren, wurden die Grimmschen Märchen im Lauf des 19. Jahrhunderts in Amerika zu unterhaltsamen und moralisierenden Geschichten für Kinder entwickelt. Dabei gab es zunächst keine speziellen Anzeichen für eine Amerikanisierung. Zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts begannen dann allerdings amerikanische Schriftsteller, Illustratoren, Dramatiker und Filmemacher, mit den

Märchen zu experimentieren und sie für junge wie für ältere Leser radikal zu ‚amerikanischen‘ Geschichten umzuformen. Anspielungen auf deutsche Qualitäten oder Charakteristika der Grimmschen Märchen wurden dabei minimalisiert. Im Wesentlichen wurden alle Bezüge zu den Grimms sowie zur ursprünglichen Aufmachung und Intention der Märchen beseitigt.

Die Märchen der Grimms waren nicht die einzigen, die im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert einen solchen Säuberungsprozess durchliefen. Andere Autoren, deren Märchen das gleiche Schicksal widerfuhr, sind etwa Charles Perrault, Hans Christian Andersen, Madame d'Aulnoy oder Madame Leprince de Beaumont. Auch deren Geschichten wurden vollständig amerikanisiert und den nach amerikanischer Auffassung ‚global gültigen‘ Normen und Moralvorstellungen angepasst.

Der Vortrag untersucht den historischen Prozess der globalen Amerikanisierung und die Konsequenzen, die er für das Verständnis der ursprünglichen Absichten der Brüder Grimm und der von ihnen gesammelten und herausgegeben Märchen hatte.

The Americanization of the Grimms' Fairy Tales: Twists and Turns of History

Jack Zipes (independent scholar)

Americans (if not most people in the world) tend to view the Grimms' tales in all their forms -- books, films, theater and popular culture -- as American. Translated and adapted first by British writers, the Grimms' tales were changed into entertaining and moral tales for children during the course of the nineteenth century. There were no great signs of Americanization. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, American writers, illustrators, playwrights, and filmmakers began to experiment with the tales and radically transform them into *American stories*, whether produced for young or old. Any allusion to Germanic qualities or characteristics of the Grimms' tales was minimal. Essentially, any credit to the Grimms and their original designs and intentions were more or less

effaced. Nevertheless, the Grimms' tales did become a kind of exotic brand that connoted fairy tale, and fairy tale was associated with children's culture.

The Grimms were not the only ones who suffered such effacement in the twentieth century. Charles Perrault, Hans Christian Andersen, Madame d'Aulnoy, Madame Leprince de Beaumont, and other writers suffered the same fate. Their tales were also fully Americanized and altered according to American "global" norms and standards.

This paper examines the historical process of globalized Americanization and the consequences that it has had for understanding the intentions of the Brothers Grimm and the meaning of the tales that they collected and edited.

Dienstag, 26. Juni 2012, 9.00-9.45

Post- Folklore Afghanistan: Recoding Gender, Violence and Transcendence in *The Patience Stone* from Folktale to War Novel

Margaret A. Mills (Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio)

Atiq Rahimi's war novel, *Syngué sabour*, winner of Le Prix Concourt in 2008 (translated into English as *The Patience Stone* in 2009), is the first Afghan work to aspire to and achieve deep seriousness and psychological complexity in the genre, through a startling yet rigorous recoding of a well-known traditional folktale. The *afsána* (fictional folktale) most often designated by the same name, *Sang-e Sabour*, Type 894 (*Der Geduldstein*) in Marzolph's *Typologie*, is widely represented in collections from 20th c. Iran. In this researcher's experience it was also very widely told in Persian-speaking Afghanistan, as represented in prewar folktale research. This talk will concern the oral story's structure and content as it exemplifies traditional folk narrative meditations on the sources and varieties of structural violence and virtue, alongside Rahimi's preservation and transformation of narrative content and technique in transit from one genre to another and one language / culture to another. Among the areas of exploration will be double-reading, the possible resonance effects of knowledge of oral

traditional tale versions upon readings of the literary derivative, beyond the complex readings readily available through the European-language novel alone.

Dienstag, 26. Juni 2012, 9.45-10.30

Coping with State Control and Vernacular Creativity: Folk Narrative

Research in Estonia in Retrospect

Ülo Valk (University of Tartu)

Folklore research in Estonia was motivated by the national movement at the end of 19th century and institutionalised in 1919 when the chair of Estonian and comparative folklore was established at the University of Tartu and W. Anderson became the first professor. By the year 1927 when the Estonian Folklore Archives were founded, large manuscript collections had already been formed thanks to the activities of J. Hurt, M. J. Eisen and other early folklorists. World War II brought along the occupation of the country by the Soviet army and social chaos, caused by the new Communist regime. While some folklorists fled the country, others were imprisoned or persecuted; those who maintained their positions as professional folklorists had to work under the authoritarian power of Marxist-Leninist slogans. However, the standards of philological research, principles of source criticism and positivistic empirism that had become dominant during the previous decades were developed further.

The paper sheds light on the ramifications of state control and achievements of folk narrative researchers in Estonia during the last fifty years. It also discusses the hardships of a scholarship with normative theoretical frameworks attempting to cope with vernacular creativity in its endless forms, modes and ideas. Finally, the paper addresses the current situation and future tasks of folk narrative research in Estonia.

Dienstag, 26. Juni 2012, 10.30-11.00

Pause/Coffee Break

Dienstag, 26. Juni 2012, 11.00—12.00

Will there be Folklore in the Global Village?

Sadhana Naithani (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)

As we witness the ever increasing physical mobility and virtual interconnectedness between peoples of different languages and cultures, we may be reminded of several other movements of peoples in times gone by and how those influenced the spread and regeneration of folklore. The present context of international and inter-cultural mobility and interconnectivity is already being reflected in the analytical works of many scholars. Looking to the future, I face a few questions: Will there be folklore in the global village? What would be folklore in a global village and whose story will it tell? What are the new challenges that the notional 'global village' pose for folklore studies? Can ISFNR as an international body see new roles for itself in this situation whereby technology has radically changed realities and theories? By 'new roles' I mean roles beyond reflecting realities through theoretical analyses. In other words, how does ISFNR plan to define and institutionalize folklore in the global village?